

# Matrix complementizers in Italo-Romance

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Based on uncharted evidence from Italo-Romance, we describe and discuss three types of matrix clauses, i.e. jussives, concessives and optatives, which reveal a certain degree of consistency but also display different patterns of microvariation. We show how such clauses may be introduced by complementizers, whose insertion is strictly dependent on the utterance of speech-act material at the outset of the sentence. The variation in the overt realization of the complementizers and the utterance of initial interjections convey different pragmatic information. We finally interpret the morpho-syntactic behaviour of jussive, concessive and optative matrix clauses through the interplay of three semantico-syntactic variables, i.e. BEYOND-FORCE, Mood and Modality.

**Keywords:** matrix clauses, left-periphery, speech-act, complementizers, Italo-Romance

## 1. Introduction

In Romance, complementizers convey a number of functions, other than the core role of subordinators (Evans 2007: 367, 2009; see also Ledgeway 2000, 2005; Reis 2006; Truckenbrodt 2006; Heycock 2006; Franco 2009; Cable 2007; Hill 2012; Demonte and Fernández-Soriano 2014 a.o.). Namely, like in other languages of the world, in Romance too complementizers (e.g. *if*) can introduce in subordinate clauses, i.e. apparent subordinators that display the distribution of main clauses. A typical case of in subordination is represented by free-standing conditional predicates like the following in (1):

- (1) *Se solo potessi tornare indietro nel tempo...* (standard Italian)  
if only could.1SG return back in.the time  
'If I only could turn back time...'

Recent studies show that, especially in Ibero-Romance and in Italo-Romance, complementizers may introduce other types of non-embedded matrix clauses. Crucially,

the morphological makeup of the complementizer reveals the semantico-pragmatic type of the clause (cf. Etxepare 2008; Cruschina 2012; Demonte and Fernández Soriano 2014; Haegeman and Hill 2014; Hill 2012; Villa-García 2015; Corr 2017, a.o.). As for Italo-Romance, it has been noticed that in modern varieties the selection of a specific type of complementizer may depend on certain information with respect to the semantico-pragmatic meaning of the whole sentence. For instance, in modern Abruzzese the examples in (2) represent a minimal pair where the contrast in the pragmatic interpretation is conveyed by the selection of the complementizer (D'Alessandro and Di Felice 2015: 130; cf. Roberts 2004): the sentence introduced by *ca* expresses a reassuring meaning, whereas *chi* is selected to convey a warning stance (Prins 2014: 4).

- (2) a. *Ca nin chischə!*  
 that not fall.2SG  
 'You won't fall!  
 [Interpretation: 'Don't worry. It is the case that you will not fall.']
- b. *Chi nin chischə!*  
 that not fall.2SG  
 'You might fall!  
 [Interpretation: 'Watch out! It is the case that you might fall.']  
 (modern Abruzzese, D'Alessandro and Di Felice 2015: 2)

In this contribution we will discuss a selection of Italo-Romance matrix clauses introduced by the complementizers *CA* and *CHI* (and allomorphic forms thereof).<sup>1</sup> In particular, we will describe the morpho-syntactic behaviour of three types of matrix clauses: jussives, concessives and optatives.

## 2. Complementizers in matrix clauses in southern Italian dialects

We will provide a description of new data from extreme and upper southern Italian dialects (henceforth ESIDs and USIDs, respectively). We will discuss different patterns of complementizer selection in non-embedded contexts which, in turn, correlate with the modality of the whole utterance and the morphological exponence of the verb complex. The relevant data come from three USIDs, i.e. Teramo, Santa Maria Capua Vetere (Caserta) and Santa Maria del Cedro (Cosenza), and two ESIDs, i.e. Mèlito di Porto Salvo (Reggio Calabria; henceforth Melito) and Vernole (Lecce). All utterances have been elicited through face-to-face interviews to native speakers conducted by the authors. The selection of these Italo-Romance varieties witnesses the different distribution of complementizer forms between USIDs and

1. *CA* and *CHI* are the outcomes of Latin *QUIA* and *QUID*, respectively (Rohlf 1969: §786a).

ESIDs (see Ledgeway 2016: 1018ff and references therein). In particular, in all the matrix clause types described below (cf. §§2.1–2.3) the USIDs may employ either CA or CHI.<sup>2</sup> As exemplified in (3) for the variety of Santa Maria del Cedro, in embedded contexts CA introduces declarative (realis) complements (3a) and CHI volitional (irrealis) complements (3b):

- (3) a. Rita dicia ca non chiova.  
 Rita says CA not rains  
 ‘Rita says that it is not raining.’
- b. Rita vulera chə stërəsə afora.  
 Rita want.3SG.COND CHI stay.2SG.COND outside  
 ‘Rita would like for you to stay outside.’ (Santa Maria del Cedro)

By contrast, in the ESIDs the matrix clauses taken into consideration below (cf. §§2.1–2.3) are introduced only by complementizer forms (i.e. MI/CU)<sup>3</sup> which usually introduce embedded volitional (irrealis) complements. In particular, while in the dialect of Melito the complementizer MI introduces volitional (irrealis) complements (4a), in the dialect of Vernole the same irrealis complements are introduced by the complementizer CU (4b):

- (4) a. Mariu volia mi canta.  
 Mario wanted MI sings  
 ‘Mario wanted/would like to sing.’ (Melito)
- b. Lu Mariu ulia cu canta.<sup>4</sup>  
 the Mario wanted CU sings  
 ‘Mario wanted/would like to sing.’ (Vernole)

2. However, we acknowledge within USIDs a great wealth of microvariation concerning complementiser selection, see Ledgeway (2000, 2009, 2012); Manzini and Savoia (2005: vol. 1, Chapter 3); Colasanti (2015, 2017, 2018) *inter alia*.

3. MI and the allomorphs (m)i, (m)u and ma attested in central and southern Calabria derive from Latin MODO, whereas CU is the outcome of Latin QUOD (for further etymological details and different proposals see Roberts and Roussou 2003: 88ff; De Angelis 2017: 77). We will discuss in detail the *status* of MI and CU in §3.1.

4. In Vernole, as in several dialects of Salento, CU triggers *Raddoppiamento Fonosintattico* (RF, phonosyntactic doubling; (i)). More specifically, when CU is a subordinator (ia), it may remain unpronounced in some cases (ib). However, the RF occurs anyway and signals the presence of a phonologically and syntactically active CU (Rohlf's 1969: 105; Ledgeway 2015):

- (i) a. Lu Mariu ole cu [kk]anta  
 the Mario wants CU sings
- b. Lu Mariu ole [kk]anta  
 the Mario wants sings (Vernole)

Consistently with the distribution of complementizers among the ESIDs, in the dialect of Melito and Vernole declarative subordinate clauses are introduced by CA (cf. 4):

- (5) a. Mariu dici ca no chiovi.  
 Mariu says CA not rains  
 ‘Mario says that it is not raining.’ (Melito)
- b. Lu Mariu tice ca nu chiòe.  
 the Mariu says CA not rains  
 ‘Mario says that it is not raining.’ (Vernole)

The syntactic function of MI-clauses has been object of a number of studies (Calabrese 1993; Loporcaro 1995; Ledgeway 1998, 2007, 2012, 2015; Roberts and Roussou 2003: 88ff; Damonte 2005, 2009, 2011; De Angelis 2014, 2017). It has been shown that in the present day ESIDs, other than the function of complementizers, such elements are irrealis mood markers. Following Ledgeway (1998, 2007, 2013), MODO-forms have been reanalysed from complementizers to non-finite markers. For the purpose of this contribution, based on our first-hand data on matrix clauses in USIDs and ESIDs, we observe that the distributional properties of MI and CU validate the hypothesis (Ledgeway 1998, 2007, 2013) that MI and CU show a different distribution with respect of the complementizers found in the USIDs (cf. (3) with (4) and (5)). Hence, the distinct nature of MI and CU becomes evident both in embedded and non-embedded contexts (see §3.1 for more details).

## 2.1 Jussive clauses

The first type of clause which we call ‘jussive’ is related to the expression of command or exhortation. In order for the speakers to spontaneously produce the target-utterances of jussive type, we provided the description of a likely context situation. The discourse context given to the speakers was about some guy, Mario, who does not really want to go somewhere. Yet, the speaker demands that he goes and expresses the coercive stance to the hearer. The resulting utterances are the followings:

- (6) a. (Ca) (Mario) vənissə (Mario)!  
 CA Mario come.3SG.IMP.F.SUBJ Mario  
 ‘Mario had better come!’ (Teramo)
- b. (Ca) (Màriə) facessə u bravə (Màriə)!  
 CA Mario do.3SG.PST.SUBJ the good Mario  
 ‘Mario had better behave!’ (Santa Maria Capua Vetere)
- c. (Ca) (Màriə) vənissa (Màriə)!  
 CA Mario come.3SG.IMP.F.SUBJ Mario  
 ‘Mario had better come!’ (Santa Maria del Cedro)

- d. (Mariu) \*(mi) (\*Mariu) veni (Mariu)!  
 Mario MI come.3SG Mario  
 ‘Mario had better come!’ (Melito)
- e. (Lu Mariu) \*(cu) (\*lu Mariu) begna (lu Mariu)!  
 the Mariu CU come.3SG.PRS.SUBJ the Mario  
 ‘Mario had better come!’ (Vernole)

In the varieties of Teramo (6a), Santa Maria Capua Vetere (6b) and Santa Maria del Cedro (6c) the speakers may select the complementizer *CA* in jussive clauses. The subject of the clause (i.e. *Mario/Mària*) may linearly occur in pre- or post-verbal position (6a–c). In the varieties of Melito (6d) and Vernole (6e), by contrast, *MI* and *CU* have to be obligatorily selected. Moreover, the subject (i.e. *(lu) Mariu*) may linearly occur in pre- or post-verbal position but never between *MI/CU* and the verb (cf. 6a–c with 6d, e). Specifically, *mi veni* (6a, 7a) and *cu begna* (6b, 7b) form an unbreakable unity in that no constituents, such as the subject *(lu) Mariu*, can intervene between them.

More specifically, we tested if the declarative complementizer *CA* found in our ESID varieties (cf. 5) and the optative matrix complementizer *CHI*<sup>5</sup> can co-occur with *MI/CU* (7). The result is that the jussive clauses below are ungrammatical:

- (7) a. (\*Chi/ \*Ca) \*(Mi) veni Mariu!  
 CHI CA MI come.3SG Mario  
 ‘Mario had better come!’ (Melito)
- b. (\*Ci/ \*Ca) \*(Cu) begna moi lu Mariu!  
 CHI CA CU come.3SG.PRS.SUBJ now the Mario  
 ‘Mario had better come now!’ (Vernole)

As we can see in (8), speakers of USIDs often utter these clauses with an initial monosyllabic non-lexical interjection, typically *Oh!*<sup>6</sup> Whenever the interjection is realized, the complementizer *CA* in the USIDs is mandatorily uttered too.<sup>7</sup> Also, in jussives a prosodic pause occurs between the initial interjection and the beginning of propositional clause, revealing that the prosodic continuum of the utterance can

5. Other than *CA* and *MI/CU* the ESIDs discussed here avail themselves of *CHI* which in the varieties of Melito and Vernole occurs only in matrix clauses of the optative type (§2.3; see also De Angelis 2017: 142ff.).

6. The graphical realisation of the interjection is merely conventional. The non-lexical interjections that the speakers may use are more frequently monosyllabic and often correspond to a vocalic segment which can be lengthened for expressive purposes, e.g. *Oh!* corresponds to [o:(:)].

7. This co-occurrence finds striking parallels in Emilian and Venetan dialects, as well as standard Italian, where lexical interjections require the realisation of the complementiser (Munaro, this volume).

be broken before CA. In particular, this prosodic space between the interjection (i.e. *Oh!*) and the complementizer (i.e. CA) can host other speech-act elements, such as vocatives (i.e. *Combà!* / *Guagliù!*).<sup>8</sup> Moreover, as we can highlight in the examples (8b) and (8c) below, the utterance of a speech-act element, i.e. either the interjection or the vocative, makes the realization of CA obligatory in the USIDs.

- (8) a. Oh! Combà! \*(Ca) vənissə Mario!  
 INTJ VOC CA come.3SG.IMPF.SUBJ Mario  
 'Hey! Pal! Mario had better come!' (Teramo)
- b. Oh! Guagliù! \*(Ca) (Màriə) facessə u bravə (Màriə)!  
 INTJ VOC CA Mario do.3SG.PST.SUBJ the good Mario  
 'Hey! Guys! Mario had better behave!' (Santa Maria Capua Vetere)
- c. Oh! Guagliù! \*(Ca) (Màriə) vənissa (Màriə)!  
 INTJ VOC CA Mario come.3SG.PST.SUBJ Mario  
 'Hey! Guys! Mario had better come!' (Santa Maria del Cedro)

From a pre-theoretical perspective, the complementizer CA in (8) seems to mark the boundary between the speech-act field, placed at the leftmost area of the whole utterance, and the propositional clause structure (Ross 1970). Prosody consistently signals such configuration, as a pause (#) is realized between the two parts. A neat prosodic division within the same act of speech production arises. The utterance (8b) shows the prosodic organization in (9):

- (9) [<sub>speech-act</sub> Oh! (#) Guagliù! ... # [<sub>propositional</sub> \*(Ca) (Màriə) facesse u brave (Màriə)]]<sup>9</sup>

The speech-act area is further potentially endlessly expandable with the insertion of other speech-act elements, such as interjections (i.e. *Oh!/Ja!*), and vocatives (i.e. *Guagliù!*):

- (10) Oh! Ja! Guagliù! Ja!... \*(Ca) facessə u bravə (Màriə)!  
 INTJ INTJ VOC INTJ CA do.3SG.IMPF.SUBJ the good Mario  
 'Hey! Come on! Guys! Come on!... Mario had better behave!'

To conclude, the main properties of jussives concern the optionality of CA in the USIDs and the obligatory presence of MI/CU in the ESIDs. Concerning the complementizer CA, we pointed out that it must be realized whenever the speaker utters

8. The pragmatic purpose of this type of vocatives is for the speaker to catch the hearer's attention.

9. The speech-act elements used in jussives and concessives can also be uttered in isolation, as their semantic-pragmatic stance is conveyed even if they are not integrated in the prosodic contour of a propositional clause.

initial speech-act elements (cf. 8). As for the internal organization of the clause, we noticed that the subject of the clause can be placed before or after the verb in all USIDs, whereas it cannot stand between MI/CU and the verb in ESIDs.

## 2.2 Concessive clauses

We now move to the second type of matrix clauses, which we call ‘concessives’, whose characteristic is the expression of *acquiescent flavour*. In order to elicit the relevant data, the speakers were given a discourse context whereby a guy, Mario, really wants to take part in something, although he is not welcome by the speaker. Eventually, despite the initial situation, the speaker lets Mario participate and notifies the hearer. The relevant utterances are the followings in (11):

- (11) a. (Ca) (\*Màriə) vənissə Màriə.  
 CA come.3SG.PST.SUBJ Mario  
 ‘Mario may come.’ (Teramo)
- b. (Ca) (\*Màriə) vənessə Màriə.  
 CA come.3SG.PST.SUBJ Mario  
 ‘Mario may come.’ (Santa Maria Capua Vetere)
- c. (Ca) (\*Màriə) vənissa Màriə.  
 CA come.3SG.IMPF.SUBJ Mario  
 ‘Mario may come.’ (Santa Maria del Cedro)
- d. (\*Mariu) \*(Mi) veni Mariu.  
 MI comes Mario  
 ‘Mario may come.’ (Melito)
- e. (\*Mariu) \*(Cu) begna lu Mariu.  
 CU come.3SG.PRS.SUBJ lu Mario  
 ‘Mario may come.’ (Vernole)

In the upper southern varieties of Teramo (11a), Santa Maria Capua Vetere (11b) and Santa Maria del Cedro (11c) concessive clauses are optionally introduced by CA, i.e. the complementizer that in these varieties introduces the declarative clauses (cf. (3a)). Conversely, the extreme southern varieties of Melito (11d) and Vernole (11e) employ MI and CU, respectively, which are not subject to optionality and rule out the insertion of a complementizer, be it CHI or CA.

- (12) a. (\*Chi/ \*Ca) Mi veni Mariu.  
 CHI CA MI come.3SG Mario  
 ‘Pietro may come.’ (Melito)
- b. (\*Ci/ \*Ca) \*(Cu) begna lu Mariu.  
 CHI CA CU come.3SG.PRS.SUBJ lu Mario  
 ‘Mario may come.’ (Vernole)

Some common properties can be singled out. The position of the subject is consistently post-verbal across all varieties. Also, the verb expresses ‘irrealis’ mood through the synthetic subjunctive morphology in the USIDs (i.e. *vənessə/vəni:ssa*; 11a–c). In the ESIDs the ‘irrealis’ mood can be realized with the synthetic present subjunctive, as in the variety of Vernole (i.e. *begna*; 12b), or analytically with the complex ‘MI+verb’, as in Melito (i.e. *mi veni*; 12a). The different status of the ESIDs with respect to the distribution of the complementizers is also confirmed against the concessive clauses in that no complementizer can be inserted before ‘MI+verb’.

It is worth considering the response of native speakers to the request of uttering some speech-act elements before the concessive clause. It turns out that interjections and vocatives are uttered in a separate prosodic space, which is not integrated within the prosodic domain of the clause. The speaker can utter (12a) and (12b) consecutively, as two parts of the same sentence. Yet, the two utterances are prosodically autonomous, since an intonational break occurs.

- (12) a. Eh sì! Guagliù!...  
 INTJ yes guys  
 ‘Alright, guys!’
- b. (Ca) (\*Màriə) vənessə Măriə.  
 CA COME.3SG.PST.SUBJ Mario  
 ‘Mario, may come.’ (Santa Maria Capua Vetere)

More specifically, (12a) can convey the concessive stance through intonation only and independently from the utterance of the concessive predicate (12b). Such prosodic division and pragmatic interpretation is further corroborated by the distribution of CA. Namely, uttering the speech act elements (12a) right before the propositional part of the sentence (12b) does not make the realization of CA obligatory.

### 2.3 Optative clauses

We now sketch the third type of matrix clauses that in both the USIDs and the ESIDs of our database display a structural internal consistent behaviour, i.e. optatives with a negative stance (viz. curses). The context provided to our informants during data elicitation was a situation whereby the speaker is extremely upset about the hearer’s behaviour to the point of imprecating curses on him/her. Speakers resorted to the inventory of curses available in each variety which prove to be highly formulaic in terms of lexical content.

In all the varieties of our database, the complementizers CHI/CA are optionally inserted (13).




- (13) a. (Chə/ \*Ca) tə      pɔzzənə      accidə!  
 CHI CA YOU.OBJ CAN.3PL.PRS.SUBJ kill.INF  
 ‘May they kill you!’ (Teramo)
- b. (\*Chə/ Ca) tə      putessərə      accidə!  
 CHI CA YOU.OBJ can.3PL.IMPF.SUBJ kill.INF  
 ‘May they kill you!’ (Santa Maria Capua Vetere)
- c. (Chə/ \*Ca) tə      pəgghjissa      nu lampə!  
 CHI CA YOU.OBJ take.3SG.IMPF.SUBJ a lightning  
 ‘May lightning strike you!’ (Santa Maria del Cedro)
- d. (Chi/ \*Ca) \*(mi) ti      mangianu i cani!<sup>10</sup>  
 CHI CA MI YOU.OBJ eat.3SG the dogs  
 ‘May dogs devour you!’ (Melito)
- e. (Ci/ \*Ca) \*(cu) mueri!<sup>11</sup>  
 CHI CA CU die.2SG.PRS.IND  
 ‘May you die!’ (Vernole)

As a remark on the variation concerning the complementizer selected, we notice that all varieties employ CHI,<sup>12</sup> with the exception of the upper southern variety of Santa Maria Capua Vetere which may insert the complementizer CA (13b). From a pragmatic point of view, the speakers were strikingly consistent in providing the interpretation of the clause introduced by CHI/CA. Namely, the insertion of the complementizer corresponds to a stronger stance of the curse, mirroring a deeper involvement of the speaker. Further revealing properties of optatives become evident when the utterances in (13) are realized with an initial interjection which makes the pragmatic stance even more salient. Again, the utterance of the initial interjection makes the realization of CHI or CA mandatory (14).

- (14) a. Ih \*(chə) tə      pɔzzənə      accidə!  
 INTJ CHI YOU.OBJ can.3PL.PRS.SUBJ kill.INF  
 ‘May they kill you!’ (Teramo)

10. In the dialect of Melito CHI and MI coalesce and form an unbreakable element, phonetically resulting in [ˈkɪmmɪ]. Allomorphic variants (*chimma*, *chimmu*) are attested in several Calabrian varieties and introduce optative matrix clauses (Rohlf 1972: 335–336; Ledgeway 1998; De Angelis 2017).

11. As pointed out in footnote 5, CU may remain unpronounced. Yet, in Vernole CU cannot be deleted in optative clauses introduced by CHI.

12. In some other northern Calabrian varieties (Cosenza) which in the past  an opposition between CA and CHI, nowadays CA is the only complementiser used and CHI is only employed in restricted contexts such as optatives (Ledgeway 2009: 9).

- b. Ih \*(ca) tə putessərə accidə!  
 INTJ CA you.OBJ can.3PL.IMPF.SUBJ kill.INF  
 'May they kill you!' (Santa Maria Capua Vetere)
- c. Ih \*(chi) mi ti mangianu i cani!  
 INTJ CHI MI you.OBJ eat.3SG the dogs  
 'May the dogs devour you!' (Melito)

The prosodic contour of the utterance reveals that the interjection and the complementizer form an unbreakable speech unit, as no further element, such as a vocative, i.e. *Mari* (15a) and *Pè* (15b) can intervene.

- (15) a. Ih (\*Mari) chə tə pəgghjissa nu lampə!  
 INTJ VOC CHI you.OBJ take.3SG.IMPF.SUBJ a lightning  
 'May lightning strike you!' (Santa Maria del Cedro)
- b. Ih (\*Pè) chi mi ti mangianu i cani!  
 INTJ VOC CHI MI you.OBJ eat.3SG the dogs  
 'May the dogs devour you!' (Melito)

One can argue that the interjection and the complementizer form one prosodic unit. Evidence to support this claim comes from the elliptical use of the optative that speakers resort to in order to censor themselves and mitigate the invective. In this case, what is uttered is the unit 'INTJ+COMP' only (16a), necessarily followed by MI/CU in the ESIDs (16b, c).

- (16) a. Ih-chə...! (Santa Maria del Cedro)  
 INTJ+COMP
- b. Ih chi-mi ...! (Melito)  
 INTJ+COMP+MI
- c. Ih ci cu ...! (Vernole)  
 INTJ+COMP+CU

The utterances in (16) display prosodic and pragmatic autonomy. To conclude, optatives, as jussives and concessives, provide a complex picture based on the different degrees of pragmatic stance conveyed by the presence or the absence of the complementizer. In either event, the morphological mood expresses the irrealis modality of the sentence. In the unmarked word order of the clause the subject is placed in post-verbal position. Finally, whereas for jussives and concessives all USIDs select CA, for optatives they may employ CHI (13a, c).

### 3. Microvariation in matrix clauses

The empirical evidence described above (§2) from the USIDs and the ESIDs reveals a certain degree of consistency in the behaviour of jussive, concessive and optative matrix clauses with respect to different factors of internal variation. Namely, the optional overt realization of the complementizers CHI/CA, the utterance of initial interjections and the differences in the interpretive outcomes based on these elements result in recurrent patterns. In particular, we noticed that, when the speakers utter some speech-act related material, such as interjections or vocatives, the realization of the complementizer is obligatory. As for the selection of different complementizer forms, the most interesting case concerns optatives. Whereas in jussives and concessives USIDs make optional use of CA, in optatives CHI may be selected. Moreover, the realization of the interjection and the complementizer in optatives show a peculiar co-occurrence, as the two elements prosodically weld together. Given this evidence, we will account for the complementizer selection as a fact related to a specific pragmatic stance of the utterance. The realization of the complementizer and the pragmatic value of the utterance set, in turn, a specific modality of the whole clause. Therefore, we will provide an interpretation for the correlation between the presence of complementizer, the modality of the sentence and the verb mood morphology in jussive, concessive and optative matrix clauses (§§4, 5).

#### 3.1 The status of MI and CU

Among the dialects we described in the previous section (cf. §2), the extreme southern varieties of Melito and Vernole set apart, due to a number of properties contrasting with the USIDs. We observed that jussives and concessives in USIDs are optionally introduced by CA. In ESIDs jussives and concessives are obligatorily headed by MI/CU and no complementizer can be simultaneously realized, not even when the propositional clause is preceded by speech-act elements. One might wonder what the common behaviour of MI/CU in matrix clauses could reveal of their syntactic status of subordinators. It has been shown that in the syntax of subordination of the present-day ESIDs of southern Calabria MI functions as an infinitival marker (Ledgeway 1998, 2007, 2013) rather than a complementizer. One piece of syntactic evidence for such conclusion comes from the ordering of MI with respect to other clausal elements, such as the preverbal negator (Ledgeway 2007: 345ff.). In the ESIDs of southern Calabria the reflexes of MŌDO invariably follow the

preverbal negator *non*. The same ordering occurs in jussive (17a)<sup>13</sup> and concessive (17b) matrix clauses:

- (17) a. (\*mi) Non mi parra troppu Petru!  
 not MI speak.3SG too.much Pietro  
 ‘Pietro had better stop speaking!’  
 b. (\*mi) Non mi canta allura Petru, si no voli!  
 not MI sing.3SG then Pietro if not want.3SG  
 ‘Pietro may not sing, if he does not want to!’ (Melito)

In contrast, in the ESID variety of Salento (i.e. Vernole) *cu* precedes the preverbal negator *nu* in both jussives (18a) and concessives (18b):

- (18) a. Cu nu (\*cu) begna moi Petru!  
 CU not come.3SG.PRS.SUBJ now Pietro  
 ‘Pietro had better not come now!’  
 b. Cu nu (\*cu) begna chiùe Petru, si nu bole!  
 CU not come.3SG.PRS.SUBJ anymore Pietro if not wants  
 ‘Pietro may not come anymore, if he does not want to!’ (Vernole)

In the dialects of Melito (13d) and Vernole (13e) the optative clauses may be introduced by the complementizer *chi* (cf. 13d and 13e, respectively; §2.3). We observed that the same complementizer obligatorily precedes *mi/cu* when interjections and vocatives are realized at the outset of the utterance (cf. 14c; §2.3). Whenever a negator is inserted in the structure, the two varieties result in different configurations. More specifically, in the dialect of Melito the negator follows *chi* and, predictably, precedes *mi*, giving rise to the sequence *CHI > NEG > MI* (19a; cf. 17a, b). Such sequence is ruled out in the variety of Vernole, as the negator follows *cu* which, in turn, follows *chi* (*CHI > CU > NEG*) (19b; cf. 18a, b):

- (19) a. Chi nu mi (\*nu) ti faci jornu!  
 CHI not MI you.DAT= makes day  
 ‘May tomorrow never come for you!’ (Melito)  
 b. Ci (\*no) cu nu pozza mai ire bene!  
 CHI CU not can.2SG.PRS.SUBJ never go.INF well  
 ‘May you never live well!’ (Vernole)

The different placement of negator in all the three types of matrix clauses corroborates the different syntactic position and function of the heads *mi* and *cu*. More specifically, *cu* occupies a structural higher position than *mi*. This would mirror

13. For a detailed account of the morphosyntax of negative imperatives in the varieties of the extreme south of Calabria see Ledgeway et al. (2016).

the syntactic status MI and CU when functioning as subordinators. As shown in previous works, CU and MI occupy the head of two different syntactic fields of subordinate clauses, i.e. CP and TP, respectively. Namely, following Ledgeway's (1998, 2007, 2013) analysis based on Rizzi's (1997) rich structure of the CP, CU would occupy the lower head of Fin(iteness) P(hrase), whereas MI is a mere infinitival marker to be mapped in the TP field.

### 3.2 The role of intonation

We extensively show that the utterance of a non-lexical monosyllabic interjection at the outset of a matrix clause requires the spell-out of CA/CHI (§2.1, 2.2, 2.3), which would be otherwise optional. Also, we observed that, whenever some speech-act elements are realized, a different prosodic configuration distinguishes jussives and concessives from optatives. While in the former a prosodic pause occurs between the interjection and the complementizer, so that other speech-act related material (i.e. vocatives) can be inserted, in optatives the interjection and the complex 'CHI+MI/CU' coalesce. It follows that the outset of such matrix clauses hosts the most prosodically salient elements of the utterance. However, whereas in jussives and concessives the interjections and the vocatives can be analysed as a sequence of independent exclamations, in optatives the same speech-related elements fully integrate in the prosodic configuration of the propositional clause. Therefore, an optative clause introduced by interjections qualifies as a fitting case of exclamative prosody. As shown by Sorianello (2010, 2011) for standard and regional Italian, the syntactic elements which head an exclamation bear the highest tonal pitch, whereas the rest of the utterance displays a lower frequential level. The resulting prosodic contour of the whole utterance is of a descending type (D'Eugenio 1976; Avesani and Vayra 2005; Grice et al. 2005). Even though we do not provide here the results of an instrumental analysis of the intonation of matrix clauses,<sup>14</sup> we argue that optatives present a descending prosodic contour as the highest tonal pitch falls on the initial elements of the utterance, i.e. 'INTJ+CHI(+MI/CU)', which plausibly belong to the same tonal unit (Gussenhoven 1984: Chapter 6; Pierrehumbert and Hirschberg 1990; Truckenbrodt 2012). The prosody of jussives and concessives too can be accounted for in terms of exclamative type. Yet, they display an overall different prosodic configuration with respect to optatives. Given that the speech-act elements preceding jussives and concessives can be prosodically isolated by means of pauses, they are able to bear their own tonal configuration. The prosodic contour

14. The present work is part of a more extended study on the matrix clauses and speech-acts across standard and non-standard Romance varieties (Colasanti and Silvestri in progress).

of the rest of the utterances shows a pattern in which, arguably, the highest tonal pitch falls on the verb. However, jussives are further distinguished from concessives through a different sequence of high and low tones.

Such prosodic properties, i.e. the high tonal contour of the utterance outset as well as the intonation status of the syntactic heads of the matrix clauses (see 16), are to be accounted as by-products of different structural configurations. We assume that syntax determines prosody, thus we shall interpret the prosody of interjections and syntactic heads as necessarily mediated by syntactic functions (Heim 2017). What the prosody of such matrix clauses indisputably reveals is the strict interplay between the CP (and TP) field and the non-propositional, speech-act related field that exists beyond the last projection of the CP. Furthermore, the utterance and the distribution of the interjections reveals that such clauses cannot be embedded (20a–c).

- (20) a. \*Dicə ca oh guagliù (ca) vənissa Màriə!  
 say.1SG CA INTJ guys CA come.3SG.IMP.F.SUBJ Mario  
 b. \*Dicə ca oh (ca) stissədə accurtə Màriə!  
 say.1SG CA INTJ CA stay.3SG.IMP.F.SUBJ careful Mario  
 c. \*Dicə ca ih (chə) tə pəgghjissa nu lampə.  
 say.1SG CA INTJ CHI you.OBJ take.3SG.IMP.F.SUBJ a lightning  
 (Santa Maria del Cedro)

The embedding of jussives (20a), concessives (20b) and optatives (20c) introduced by the interjections is impossible. Hence, it seems that the speech-act elements do not display an unconstrained distribution. Namely, interjections and vocatives (*Oh! Mari!* in 21a) can occur at the beginning of the matrix clauses and cannot be realized at the outset of the subordinates (cf. *ca no chiova chjù* in 21):

- (21) Oh! Mari! Mə para ca (\*oh!) (\*Mari!) no chiova chjù.  
 INTJ VOC me.DAT= seems CA not rains anymore  
 ‘Hey! Mary! It seems that it stopped raining.’ (Santa Maria del Cedro)

Therefore, we argue that in non-embedded jussives, concessives and optatives the interjections occupy a structural higher non-propositional area. If spelt out, they interact with the syntactic lower structure and trigger the spell-out of the CP and TP heads.

In the next sections we provide a sketch of a unified structural interpretation for jussives, concessives and optatives. We will show how the interactions of three semantico-syntactic variables ultimately map the microvariation within the domain of matrix clauses.

#### 4. BEYOND-FORCE, Mood and Modality

In order to interpret the syntactic behaviour of matrix jussives, concessives and optatives, we will introduce three semantico-syntactic variables that play a crucial role in these clauses, i.e. BEYOND-FORCE, Mood and Modality.

We adopt the label *Force* with two different, albeit related, purposes. According to Rizzi (1997), Force corresponds to the highest projection of the split-CP, which among all its functions it seems to be also involved in the specification of the clause type (e.g. declarative vs interrogative). In structural terms the activation of a split-CP in southern Italian dialects (Ledgeway 2000, 2003, 2005; Paoli 2007; Damonte 2006, 2008; Cruschina 2012; Colasanti 2015, 2017, in press a.o.) will be here assumed to be subject to crosslinguistic variation. As already shown for other Italian varieties, the dialects of our database (cf. §2) present a rich left peripheral structure of the sentence. By way of illustration, in the upper southern variety of Santa Maria del Cedro in volitive sentences a Topic or a Focus can precede the complementizer CA (22):

- (22) a.  $[_{TP} \text{Vulera } [_{\text{ForceP}} \text{Force } [_{\text{FocP}} \text{ALLƏ GUAGLIUNƏ } [_{\text{FinP}} \text{ca}$   
 want.COND.1SG to.the kids CA  
 $[_{TP} \text{derənə } i \text{ solətə}]]]]$   
 give.COND.3PL the money  
 ‘I would like that they would give the money TO THE KIDS.’
- b.  $[_{TP} \text{Vulera } [_{\text{ForceP}} \text{Force } [_{\text{TopP}} \text{dumanə } [_{\text{FinP}} \text{ca } [_{TP} \text{derənə}$   
 want.COND.1SG tomorrow CA give.COND.3PL  
 $i \text{ solətə } \text{allə } \text{guagliunə}]]]]$   
 the money to.the kids  
 ‘I would like that tomorrow they would give the money to the kids.’  
 (Santa Maria del Cedro)

However, as we can see in the variety of Santa Maria del Cedro the unmarked structures are given too (23):

- (23) a.  $[_{TP} \text{Vulera } [_{\text{FinP}} \text{ca } [_{TP} \text{derənə } i \text{ solətə}$   
 want.COND.1SG CA give.COND.3PL the money  
 $\text{allə } \text{guagliunə}]]]$   
 to.the kids  
 ‘I would like that they would give the money to the kids.’
- b.  $[_{TP} \text{Vulera } [_{\text{FinP}} \text{ca } [_{TP} \text{derənə } i \text{ solətə } \text{allə}$   
 want.COND.1SG that give.COND.3PL the money to.the  
 $\text{guagliunə } \text{dumanə}]]]$   
 kids tomorrow  
 ‘I would like that tomorrow they would give the money to the kids.’  
 (Santa Maria del Cedro)

Given the possibility of a rich articulate CP,<sup>15</sup> we assume that the higher position Force may be activated and involved in the expression of speech-act related information. Specifically, the higher area of the CP seems to be involved in mapping speech-act material which we assume is lexicalized outside of the CP.<sup>16</sup> Therefore, we label such structural field as ‘BEYOND-FORCE’.

We consequently assume that a relation holds between the utterance of interjections (and vocatives) BEYOND-FORCE and the realization of the position Force in the CP in the matrix clauses of our database. In particular, we will show that in some cases what is crucial for the structural account of prosodically and pragmatically marked matrix clauses is the area above Force. In matrix clauses the activation of Force is strictly related to one of the three variables, i.e. Mood, which encodes features within the TP through the verb morphological exponence (Giorgi and Pianesi 1997:205 a.o.).<sup>16</sup>

Finally, all variables play a role in expressing the sentence modality which identifies the clause type at the semantico-pragmatic level.<sup>17</sup> ‘Modality’ ultimately defines a composite semantico-syntactic setting through the necessary combination of specific factors, such as the utterance of interjections (and vocatives) BEYOND-FORCE, the presence of the complementizer within the CP and the verb morphology (‘Mood’). By way of illustration, compare the clauses in (24) where neither complementizer nor speech-act material are uttered at all. Verb morphology only is sufficient to disambiguate the clause modality:

- (24) a. Ti pigghia nu lampə. [declarative]  
 you.OBJ take.3SG.PRS.IND a lightning  
 ‘A lightning strikes you (because you are nearby a tree during a storm).’  
 b. Ti pəgghiera nu lampə. [counterfactual]  
 you.OBJ take.3SG.PRS.COND a lightning  
 ‘A lightening could strike you (if you were nearby a tree during a storm).’

15. We claim here that this structure undergoes the phenomenon of truncation (Rizzi 1997, 2001). In short, we witness a reduction of a given structure at the lower layer that blocks the projection of higher functional categories. Hence, in our perspective the presence of a split-CP is possible but not always necessary in the varieties investigated in this paper.

16. See §5.

In this paper we will not present a formalisation of the variable BEYOND-FORCE and its syntactic structure. We acknowledge the presence of a great wealth of literature concerning the syntacticisation of the conversational domain (cf. Speas and Tenny 2003; Sigurdsson 2004; Bianchi 2006; Baker 2008; Giorgi 2010; Cruschina 2012; Miyagawa 2012; Haegeman and Hill 2014; Haegeman 2014; Wiltschko and Heim 2016; Hinterhölzl and Munaro 2015; Corr 2017, a.o.). However, for a formalisation of ‘BEYOND-FORCE’ adopting Martina Wiltschko’s neo-performative approach (2016, in progress) see Colasanti and Silvestri (in progress).

17. For a definition of modality see Palmer (1986) and Bybee et al. (1995).



- c. Ti pəgghissa nu lampə! [optative]  
 you.OBJ take.3SG.IMP.F.SUBJ a lightening  
 'May lightning strike you!' (Santa Maria del Cedro)

Therefore, it goes without saying that the three variables we build our interpretation on are tangled to each other and act concurrently. Therefore, modality in the matrix clauses is mapped through the setting of interjections (and vocatives) BEYOND-FORCE, the position Force in the CP and Mood, namely by the lexicalization of CP material and the indicative versus the subjunctive opposition within the TP (cf. Ledgeway and Lombardi 2014).

Furthermore, as we observed before, whenever some speech-act particles are realized at the outset of the utterance of all three types of matrix clauses, a different prosodic division emerges (see §3.2).

In the next Section (§5) a unified interpretation of jussives, concessives and optatives will be put forward. We will show how the interactions of the three variables ultimately give us the key to interpret the microvariation present within the domain of matrix clauses in Italo-Romance.

## 5. Interpreting jussives, concessives and optatives

With the definition of the three variables in mind, i.e. BEYOND-FORCE, Mood and Modality, we will proceed with the interpretation of the matrix clauses we described in this paper (viz. jussives, concessives and optatives). Moreover, it is worthwhile noticing that while the three variables are all necessary to interpret matrix jussives, concessives and optatives in Italo-Romance, these are not always at work simultaneously, as it will be clear below (§§5.1–5.4).

### 5.1 Jussive clauses

As shown in §2.1 above, three generalizations can be made concerning the morpho-syntactic behaviour of jussive clauses in the southern Italian varieties: (a) in all the varieties investigated in this paper the selection of the matrix complementizer appears to be optional.<sup>18</sup> However, when an interjection (or a vocative) is present, the realization of the complementizer is obligatory; (b) the subject of the clause may linearly occur in pre-verbal or post-verbal position; (c) the morphological mood present in jussive clauses is always an irrealis subjunctive.

18. We do not consider MI in the varieties of the extreme south of Calabria to be a complementiser (see §3.1).

As we can see in example (25) below, if there is no speech-act material beyond the higher position Force in the split-CP and the complementizer *ca* does not lexicalize any positions in the CP the sentence has a weak jussive stance (25a).<sup>19</sup> As we can see in (25b), if the complementizer *ca* lexicalizes the lower position Fin in the split-CP, the stance of the sentence is strong. However, if we have an interjection beyond Force (viz. *Oh*), then the complementizer *ca* in the higher position Force cannot be dropped (25c). In the sentence in (25b), we assume that the complementizer *ca* lexicalizes the lower position in the CP Fin and carries an [irrealis] feature which has to be checked with the verb *vinissədə* in the TP (that is endowed as well an [irrealis] feature). However, in the example in (25c) *ca* lexicalizes the higher position Force and carries a [speech] feature,<sup>20</sup> which has to be checked with the interjection *Oh* BEYOND-FORCE.<sup>21</sup>

- (25) a. [<sub>ForceP</sub> Force [<sub>TopP</sub> (Màriə) [<sub>FinP</sub> Fin [<sub>TP</sub> vinissədə<sub>[irrealis]</sub> (Màriə)]]]]  
 Mario come.3SG.PST.SUBJ Mario  
 ‘Mario would come!’ [weak jussive]
- b. [<sub>ForceP</sub> Force [<sub>TopP</sub> (Màriə) [<sub>FinP</sub> ca<sub>[irrealis]</sub> CA  
 Mario  
 [<sub>TP</sub> vinissədə<sub>[irrealis]</sub> (Màriə)]]]]  
 come.3SG.PST.SUBJ Mario  
 ‘Mario had better come’ [strong jussive]
- c. Oh<sub>[speech]</sub> [<sub>ForceP</sub>\* (ca<sub>[speech]</sub>) CA [<sub>TopP</sub> (Màriə) [<sub>FinP</sub> Fin  
 INTRJ Mario  
 [<sub>TP</sub> vinissədə<sub>[irrealis]</sub> (Màriə)]]]]  
 come.3SG.PST.SUBJ Mario  
 ‘Mario had better come!’ [very strong jussive]  
 (Santa Maria del Cedro)

By reinterpreting jussive clauses through the three variables described above (§4), we can see that all the three variables *can* be in action at the same time. Specifically, if speech-act material occupy the layer outside the CP (viz. BEYOND-FORCE), the

19. In particular, our informants pointed out that the speaker is less involved towards what is being said when *ca* is dropped. Hence, the ‘jussivity’ can be ‘weak’, ‘strong’ and ‘very strong’ according to our informants’ judgements.

20. We are considering the [speech] feature BEYOND-FORCE as an *edge*-feature (see Munaro 2010, this volume).

21. For the specific of feature checking and other syntactic mechanisms in action, especially concerning the structural relationship(s) between the CP and the ‘conversational domain’ above it (viz. BEYOND-FORCE) see Colasanti and Silvestri (in progress).

force of the sentence is shared between BEYOND-FORCE (viz. interjection *Oh!*) and the complementizer *CA* in Force.

Moreover, in all sentences the subjunctive mood expresses an [irrealis] feature. Hence, it seems that the irrealis modality of the sentence can be expressed only overtly or overtly and covertly at the same time. In particular, modality marking can be shared between the complementizer in Fin and the subjunctive verb in the TP (cf. 25b) or can be only expressed by verbal morphology (cf. 25a). More generally, depending on the interaction of the three variables (viz. BEYOND-FORCE, Mood and Modality) a matrix jussive can convey a different stance (i.e. weak, strong and very strong jussive stance).

To conclude, in matrix jussive clauses the three variables can be in action at the same time and the following interactions between BEYOND-FORCE, Mood and Modality are possible (Table 1):

**Table 1.** BEYOND-FORCE, Mood and Modality in jussive matrix clauses.

Sentence-type	BEYOND-FORCE	Mood	Modality	Examples
Weak jussive	x	✓	✓	(25a)
Strong jussive	x	✓	✓	(25b)
Very strong jussive	✓	✓	✓	(25c)

As we can see in Table 1, the variable BEYOND-FORCE plays a role only when a speech-act layer beyond the CP is activated, i.e. when speech-act material such as interjections and vocatives are present. As we can notice in the examples (25a) and (25b) for Santa Maria del Cedro, the stance of the sentence can be only weak and strong if the variable BEYOND-FORCE is not playing any role. At the same time, the other two variables, i.e. Mood and Modality are always active in all jussives. However, when all the variables are active at the same time, the sentence has a very strong jussive stance (25c).

## 5.2 Concessive clauses

As shown in §2.2, three generalizations can be put forward concerning the morpho-syntactic behaviour of concessive clauses in the southern Italian varieties: (a) in concessive matrix clauses it is not possible to have interjections BEYOND-FORCE; (b) the subject is always post-verbal; and, (c) the morphological mood is always an irrealis subjunctive.

As we can see in (26) for the variety of Santa Maria del Cedro, if in concessives the complementizer *CA* does not lexicalize any positions in the CP, the clause is a weak matrix concessive (26a). However, if the complementizer *CA* lexicalizes the



On the basis of the interaction of BEYOND-FORCE, Mood and Modality, a matrix concessive sentence can have a different stance, i.e. weak and strong, but never very strong concessive stance.

To conclude, in matrix concessive clauses it is impossible to have all the three variables in action at the same time. Only the following interactions between BEYOND-FORCE, Mood and Modality are given (Table 2):

**Table 2.** BEYOND-FORCE, Mood and Modality in concessive matrix clauses.

Sentence-type	BEYOND-FORCE	Mood	Modality	Examples
Weak concessive	x	✓	✓	(26a)
Strong concessive	x	✓	✓	(26b)
*Very strong concessive	x	x	x	(26c)

As we can see in Table 2, in concessives the variable BEYOND-FORCE does not play any role, at least overtly.<sup>22</sup> However, both variables Mood and Modality are always at play since the mood in the TP is always a morphological subjunctive and the modality of the sentence is always irrealis. As we have shown for jussives (cf. §5.1), the complementizer *CA* in concessive matrix clauses can be optional. The only difference between (26a) and (26b) above is the force of the sentence (i.e. weak or strong). It follows that the presence of the complementizer *CA* can have an influence on the force of the sentence. Moreover, it is impossible to have very strong concessives, since the speech-act field above the CP (i.e. BEYOND-FORCE) cannot be activated in concessive matrix clauses.

#### 5.4 Optative clauses

As shown in §2.3 above, optative clauses present similarities with jussives clauses (cf. §2.1, §5.1) rather than with concessive clauses (cf. §2.2, §5.2). Specifically, three generalizations can be put forward concerning the morpho-syntactic behaviour of optatives: (a) in all the varieties of our database the selection of the matrix complementizer appears to be optional. However, when an interjection (or a vocative) is present, the realization of the complementizer is obligatory; (b) the subject of the clause may linearly occur in pre-verbal or post-verbal position; and, (c) the morphological mood present in jussive clauses is always an irrealis subjunctive.

22. Following a comment of an anonymous reviewer, we want to specify that there is always an activation of the speech-act field in every embedded-clause we took into consideration in this paper. However, in the case of concessives the structure is just silent.

As we can see in example (27a) below, when there is no speech-act material beyond the higher position Force and the complementizer CHI does not lexicalize any positions in the CP the sentence is a weak optative. However, when the complementizer CHI lexicalizes the lower position in the CP (i.e. Fin), it carries a [irrealis] feature, which has to be checked with the irrealis subjunctive verb *ruppissədə* in the TP. The sentence results in a strong optative (27b). An optative matrix clause has a stronger optative force when an interjection, i.e. *Ih*, is present beyond Force and the complementizer CHI lexicalizes the higher position in the split-CP, Force, and carries a [speech] feature which has to be checked with the interjection *Ih* lying beyond Force (27c).

- (27) a. [<sub>ForceP</sub> Force ... [<sub>FinP</sub> Fin [<sub>TP</sub> si ruppissədə<sub>[irrealis]</sub> nu vrazzə]]]  
 CL break.3SG.PST.SUBJ an arm  
 ‘May he break his arm!’ [weak optative]
- b. [<sub>ForceP</sub> Force ... [<sub>FinP</sub> chə<sub>[irrealis]</sub> [<sub>TP</sub> si ruppissədə<sub>[irrealis]</sub>  
 CHI CL break.3SG.PST.SUBJ  
 nu vrazzə]]]  
 an arm  
 ‘May he brak his arm!’ [strong optative]
- c. Ih<sub>[speech]</sub> [<sub>ForceP</sub> \*(chə<sub>[speech]</sub>) [<sub>FinP</sub> Fin [<sub>TP</sub> si ruppissədə<sub>[irrealis]</sub>  
 INTJ CHI CL break.3SG.PST.SUBJ  
 nu vrazzə]]]  
 an arm  
 ‘May he break his arm!’ [very strong optative]  
 (Santa Maria del Cedro)

All the three variables involved in the interpretation of jussives *may* be in action at the same time in optatives as well. In particular, the activation of the layer above the CP, namely BEYOND-FORCE, is possible and plays a role in conveying the force of the sentence together with the complementizer in Force (cf. 27c).

In all the optative sentences in (27) the subjunctive mood carries an [irrealis] feature, so that the irrealis modality of the sentence can be expressed either overtly only or overtly and covertly at the same time. In particular, the whole modality of the sentence shared between the complementizer in Fin and the subjunctive verb in the TP (cf. 27b) or can be only expressed by verb morphology (cf. 27a). More generally, depending on the interaction of BEYOND-FORCE, Mood and Modality a matrix jussive sentence can have a different stance, i.e. weak, strong and very strong jussive stance.

To conclude, in matrix optative clauses the three variables can be in action at the same time but also the following interactions between them are possible (Table 3):

**Table 3.** BEYOND-FORCE, Mood and Modality in optative matrix clauses.

Sentence-type	BEYOND-FORCE	Mood	Modality	Examples
Weak optative	x	✓	✓	(27a)
Strong optative	x	✓	✓	(27b)
Very strong optative	✓	✓	✓	(27c)

As we can see in Table 3, the variable BEYOND-FORCE plays a role only when a speech-act layer beyond the CP is activated,<sup>23</sup> i.e. an interjection is uttered. The sentence results in a weak or strong stance when the variable BEYOND-FORCE is not at work. At the same time, the other two variables, i.e. Mood and Modality, are always in action. Finally, if all the variables are simultaneously activated (27c), the sentence has a very strong optative stance.

### 5.5 Three variables for an unified interpretation

The interpretation of jussives, concessives and optatives through ~~the~~ three variables, i.e. BEYOND-FORCE, Mood and Modality, allows us to put forward certain generalizations concerning the morpho-syntactic behaviour of matrix clauses in Italo-Romance. Specifically, ~~as we shown above,~~ not in all matrix clauses the variable BEYOND-FORCE is relevant, as only in jussives and optatives we observe the activation of the speech-act layer. While the variable BEYOND-FORCE is not playing any role at all in concessives (cf. §5.2), it may be active in optatives (cf. §5.3) and jussives (cf. §5.1). Furthermore, we ~~shown~~ that the variables Mood and Modality affect all matrix clauses. This might suggest that modality is a primitive phenomenon to be expressed in the language. In curse optatives the irrealis subjunctive mood is the only morphological option. More generally, this is linked to the fact that the modality of the sentence can be expressed either overtly only or overtly and covertly at the same time. In particular, the expression of the modality of the whole sentence can be shared between the complementizer in FinP and the subjunctive verb in the TP or it can be only expressed by verbal morphology. In all the matrix clauses of our database Modality plays a key role in any case. Namely, all sentences refer to an irrealis discourse context, i.e. a situation referring not to a scenario actually existing at the time of the utterance. What is more relevant in jussives and optatives is that the strongest stance of the sentence can be expressed employing specific means, i.e. utterance of interjections, realized with high pitch intonation, and presence of complementizers.

23. See footnote 22.

## 6. Conclusions

In this contribution we assessed and described new empirical evidence concerning three types of matrix clauses in southern Italian dialects, i.e. jussives, concessives and optatives. Our description highlights that the optional presence of the complementizer contributes to define the pragmatic function of the sentence. We also proved that peculiar patterns arise by realising interjections right at the outset of the utterance. The speech-act material requires the spell-out of CHI/CA. In order to accommodate these facts of microvariation within a maximally unifying interpretive account, we singled out three semantico-syntactic variables, i.e. BEYOND-FORCE, Mood and Modality, and their interactions at the structural level.

As a general point, we argue that the parameters of variation related to the speech-act material occupying an area placed BEYOND-FORCE, the irrealis morphological exponence (Mood) and its semantic/syntactic realization (Modality) are all paramount for the explanation of the microvariation in matrix clauses. Excluding or underrating one of the three would lead to an inadequate descriptive and interpretative account.

Arguably, most of the empirical observations concerning the matrix clauses in Italo-Romance can be said for other Romance varieties as well, in particular Ibero- and Gallo-Romance. We envisage that some of the intuitions on the variables which play a role in the morpho-syntactic distribution of matrix clauses in Italo-Romance represent ~~only~~ the first step towards a more comprehensive understanding of the syntactic status of matrix clauses in Romance varieties and beyond. A wider comparative assessment of such matrix clauses is left for further research (Colasanti and Silvestri in progress).

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