

The nature of complementizers

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Italian *che* introduces finite declaratives and finite relatives, as does English *that*. However *che* also introduces finite and non-finite interrogatives with the meaning of ‘what’. Furthermore *che* can appear as the *wh*-determiner of complex interrogative NP’s, e.g. *che camicia* ‘what shirt’. One possibility that we can reject is that *che* in Italian simply has two lexical entries one of which corresponds to the ‘that’ complementizer and the other to the ‘what’ *wh*-element. This straightforward solution cannot have any explanatory value, given that the pattern that it describes is not an accidental coincidence observed in one (or even a few) dialect(s), but a systematic phenomenon in Romance languages. Furthermore, data relating to the complementizer/ *wh*- system in Italian dialects highlight the existence of several parameters, briefly summarized below. In particular, we have listed as ‘complementizer-1’ the form (generally *ka*) which in all dialects introduces embedded declaratives in what may be generically described as non-modal contexts (complements of *say*, etc.), while as ‘complementizer-2’ we have listed a form which can take on different values according to the dialect. Thus it introduces what we may generically characterize as modal complements in the dialects of *Guglionesi*, *Ardaùli*. In the dialect of *Làconi* it is the modal complementizer as well as ‘if’, while it is ‘if’ in the dialect of *Miglionico*.

(9)	<i>comp-1</i>	<i>comp-2</i>	<i>relative</i>	<i>who</i>	<i>what</i>	<i>what N</i>
(<i>standard</i>)	<i>che</i>		<i>che</i>	<i>chi</i>	<i>che</i>	<i>che</i>
<i>Fontanigorda</i>	<i>ke</i>		<i>ke</i>	<i>ke</i>	<i>kuose</i>	<i>ke</i>
<i>Modena</i>	<i>ke</i>		<i>ke</i>	<i>ki</i>	<i>ksa</i>	<i>ke</i>
<i>Luras</i>	<i>ki</i>		<i>ki</i>	<i>kie</i>	<i>itte</i>	<i>itte</i>
<i>Guglionesi</i>	<i>ka</i>	<i>kə</i>	<i>kə</i>	<i>ki</i>	<i>kə</i>	<i>kə</i>
<i>Ardaùli</i>	<i>ka</i>	<i>ki</i>	<i>ki</i>	<i>kie</i>	<i>itte</i>	<i>itte</i>
<i>Làconi</i>	<i>ka</i>	<i>tʃi</i>	<i>tʃi</i>	<i>tʃinni</i>	<i>itta</i>	<i>itta</i>
<i>Miglionico</i>	<i>ka</i>	<i>tʃi</i>	<i>ka</i>	<i>tʃi</i>	<i>tʃe</i>	<i>tʃe</i>

I shall account for the (parametrized) distribution just observed by proposing that the general property of *che* is introducing a variable; ‘complementizer’ *che* binds a propositional variable, while ‘interrogative’ *che* binds an argumental one. Given this characterization I shall argue that the A'-chain interpretation that attaches to Romance interrogative sentences introduced by *che* cannot depend on the lexicalization of a copy.