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An experimental analysis of embedded Bare Argument Ellipsis in Italian

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Introduction

Among the syntactic phenomena that have been in the spotlight in the last few decades, ellipsis certainly has a prominent position. This widespread interest has been due to the peculiar characteristic of elliptical constructions, i.e., the property of 'saying without saying': through ellipsis, in fact, messages can be conveyed without overt linguistic material. This feature appears to challenge contemporary linguistic theory, which views language as a threefold element comprising the sensory-motor interface, the conceptual interface, and syntax mediating between them. In ellipsis, in fact, there seems to be content retrieval without anything being operated by the sensory-motor interface and, as argued by some scholars, even without anything being operated by syntax.

The term ellipsis is an umbrella term encompassing numerous phenomena with the only shared feature being unpronounced[1] linguistic material. Among the plethora of elliptical processes, one seems to have been overlooked until the last decade: *stripping*, also known as Bare Argument Ellipsis. In their breakthrough article *Deep and Surface Anaphora*, Hankamer and Sag (1976:409) define stripping as "a rule that deletes everything in a clause under identity with corresponding parts of a preceding clause, except for one constituent (and sometimes a clause-initial adverb or negative)", as in (1a-b)[2]:

(1) a. Alan likes to play volleyball, but not Sandy.
    b. Gwendolyn smokes marijuana, but seldom in her own apartment.

The structure has long been thought to pertain only to main coordinated clauses, without the possibility of appearing in embedded contexts. However, recent studies have brought to linguists' attention the fact that some instances of embedded stripping are indeed allowed in some languages, such as English (Wurmbrand, 2017) and German (Konietsko, 2016).

Since proper studies on the matter in Italian do not seem to have been carried out , the present work is an experimental account of embedded stripping in Italian. The idea for the experiment stems from the aforementioned article by Wurmbrand, where the author draws some interesting conclusions on the phenomenon in English. As will be discussed in Chapter

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[1] The term 'unpronounced' is here used neutrally, without any reference to the existing theories of ellipsis.
[2] Hankamer and Sag (1976:409).

1, she concludes that, contrarily to what the majority of the literature on the subject states, stripping is possible in embedded contexts, provided that the complementizer in the embedded clause is deleted. Thus, Wurmbrand (2017:344) shows the contrast between (2a) and (2b):

(2) a. *Abby claimed (that) Ben would ask her out, but she didn't think that Bill (too).
    b. Abby claimed (that) Ben would ask her out, but she didn't think Bill (too).

In the light of this claim, formalized as *Embedded Stripping Generalization* (ESG), she notices that languages appear to be divided in two groups: those in the first group, comprising languages such as English and German, seem to follow the ESG, and therefore do not allow embedded stripping in the presence of a complementizer; the secondo group, comprising Spanish, Albanian, Hungarian, and Russian among others, does not seem to abide to such restriction and, therefore, allows embedded stripping without complementizer deletion (3)[3]:

(3) Me   dijeron que si llueve (que) se   queden   aquí, y que si
    1PS.DAT said.3PPl. that if rains   that 3PPl.REFL   stay.SUBJ.PRES.3PPl. here, and that if
    nieva (que) también.
    snows that too.
    'They told me that they are going to stay here if it rains or snows".

It might be then interesting to determine whether Italian belongs to the first group or to the second, and what the peculiarities of the language with respect to embedded stripping are, also given the specific behavior of the Italian language with respect to embeddedness and complementizer deletion (CD).

The work is thus organized as follows: in chapter 1 the state of the art is presented, the most relevant works on Bare Argument Ellipsis and embedded stripping having been selected and analyzed. Chapter 2, i.e., the Data and Methodology section, is divided into a preliminary part where the major theoretical premises are treated and a second part where the data of the survey are reported. Finally, in chapter 3, an analysis of the data is provided, with a subsequent commentary on some methodological issues that the experiment has encountered.

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[3] Villa-García (2010:210 (16)).

Chapter 1: State of the Art

Despite the great attention that Hankamer and Sag's 1976 article has generated towards elliptical constructions, stripping has rarely been thoroughly studied, at least until the beginnings of the 2000s, when Bare Argument Ellipsis began to be investigated independently from other elliptical phenomena. As a result, various and varied approaches have emerged, each explaining and analyzing Bare Argument Ellipsis by different means. In the following pages a review of the latest literature on the subject will be presented in chronological order, with a focus on the differences between approaches.

Reinhart (1991) and Johnson's (1996/2004) movement theories

Although the focus of Reinhart's 1991 work is Exception Conjunctions such as (4), the author offers precious insights into Bare Argument Ellipsis.

(4) a. no-one kisses his mother, except (for) Felix.

b. you should invite no journalist to the party, but Felix.

In her analysis, the except-conjoined is an NP attached to the IP[4], as in (5). However, for such NP to be interpretable, an intermediate structure has to be postulated, as NPs cannot modify a sentence. Thus, Reinhart proposes a structure such as (6)[5], where *everyone* undergoes rightwards raising.

(5) $_{IP}$ [$_{IP}$ everyone$_1$ smiled] [$_{NP2}$ [$_{CON}$ except] [$_{NP2}$ Felix]]

(6)
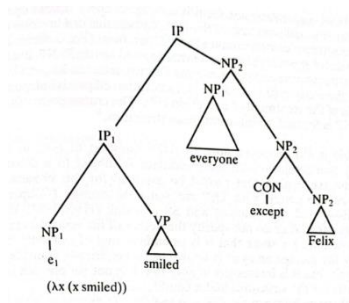
According to the author, the same rightward movement operation is the basis of Bare argument Ellipsis.

Another author who approaches Bare Argument Ellipsis through a theory of movement is Johnson (1996/2004). In his manuscript about gapping, he provides a more general theory of ellipsis as product of movement. Johnson introduces what he calls *predicate shift*, and characterizes it as across-the-board movement. This type of movement, also referred to via its initialism ATB movement, is strictly connected to coordinate structures, and consists in a "set of rules that move a constituent out of all the conjuncts of a coordinate structure at once" (De Vries, 2017: 1). In Johnson's terms, predicate shift allows both VPs and vPs to undergo such movement, the goal of which is Spec,PredP. In his view, PredP is the complement of TP, as shown in (7):
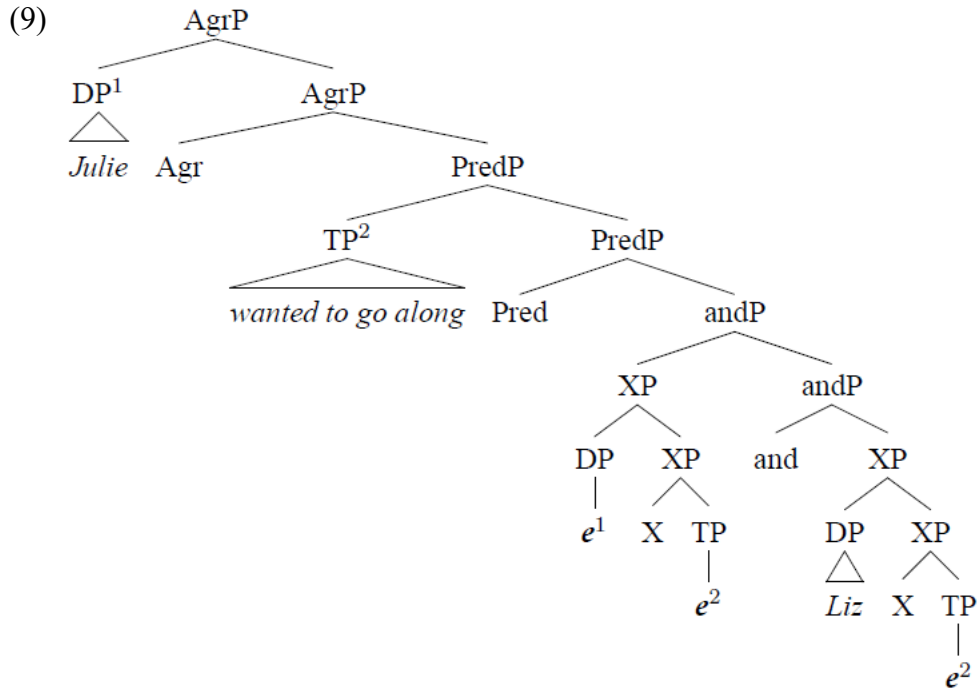
(7) a. Holly spoke to Sal.

b.
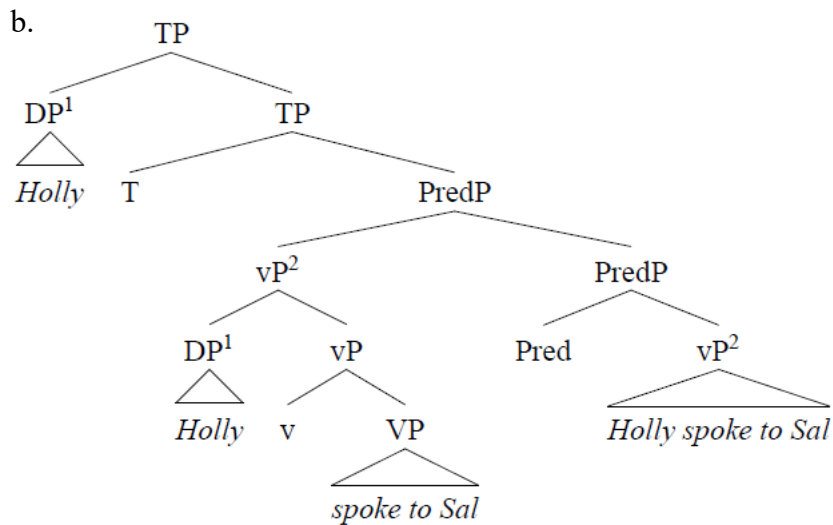
In a stripping or gapping situation, Johnson envisions predicate shift as the cause of complex gaps. Specifically, Johnson rejects the position according to which a stripped sentence such as (8a) is derived from (8b):

(8) a. Julie wanted to go along, and Liz as well.

   b. Julie and Liz wanted to go along.

He rather analyzes (8a) as a case of gapping and, therefore, of predicate shift, with a structure such as (9)[6]:

(9)

```
                        AgrP
              ┌──────────┴──────────┐
            DP¹                    AgrP
             △             ┌────────┴────────┐
           Julie          Agr              PredP
                              ┌──────────────┴──────────────┐
                            TP²                            PredP
                      ┌──────┴──────┐              ┌──────────┴──────────┐
              wanted to go along   Pred          andP
                                          ┌────────┴────────┐
                                         XP               andP
                                     ┌────┴────┐       ┌──────┴──────┐
                                    DP    XP   and           XP
                                     │   ┌─┴─┐            ┌────┴────┐
                                    e¹   X  TP           DP       XP
                                            │            △      ┌─┴─┐
                                           e²           Liz     X  TP
                                                                    │
                                                                   e²
```

Depiante (2000)

In a study of stripping in Italian, it is crucial to refer to studies which do not concern exclusively English data[7]. In fact, Depiante (2000) offers a contrastive analysis of stripping in English and Spanish. Beyond that, she accounts for a phenomenon peculiar to Spanish, that she names Pseudostripping: the difference between 'classic' stripping and pseudostripping is, at least on the surface, the order in which the non-elided elements of the second conjunct appear; in fact, while in the former case the remnant follows the negative particle, in the latter it precedes it, as in (10):

(10) a. Juan leyó El Quijote pero María no.

       Juan read El Quijote but María not.

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[6] Johnson, (1994/2006:78).

[7] Beyond the data in Depiante (2000) for Spanish and Konietsko (2016) for German, further information can be found in, Busquets (2006) for Catalan, and Matos and Kolberg (2018) for Brazilian Portuguese.

b. Juan no leyó el Quijote pero Hamlet sí.

Juan did not read El Quijote but Hamlet yes.

It is to be noted that Spanish displays both phenomena, and behaves exactly like English as regards stripping. The only difference appears to be the alternative order that Spanish speakers are given, as summarized in the table below[8]; moreover, an important difference between English and Spanish stripping is the availability of the affirmative particle *sí* (yes) in the latter language:

	Spanish	English
Negation + Remnant (Stripping)	O.K. (sí + Remnant)	O.K.
Remnant + Negation (Pseudostripping)	O.K. (Remnant + sí)	OUT

The same alternative is available in Italian, with particles *sì* (yes) and *no* (no); interestingly, stripping appears grammatical only with the negative particle (12b), while a sentence such as (12a), where the affirmative particle *sì* precedes the remnant, becomes ungrammatical; pseudostripping appears to be grammatical with both particles (11a-b):

(11) a. Luca non ama la matematica, ma l'inglese sì.

b. Luca ama l'inglese, ma la matematica no.

(12) a. *Luca non ama la matematica, ma sì l'inglese.

b. Luca ama l'inglese, ma non la matematica.

A further issue tackled in Depiante's comparative account is the asymmetrical distribution of preposition stranding in stripping contexts; in fact, while the phenomenon is allowed in English, it does not appear in Spanish, as shown in examples (13a-b)[9]:

(13) a. John talked about Mary but not (about) Susan.

b. Pedro sabe sobre geografía más que nadie y/e *(sobre) historia también.

Peter knows about geography more than anyone and *(about) history too.

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[8] Depiante (2000:106).
[9] Depiante (2000:107).

The author points out the fact that preposition stranding is altogether forbidden in wh-movement in Spanish, while it is grammatical in English.

Depiante then proceeds by analyzing the relationship between plurals and stripping. She underlines the double reading of plurals as collective or distributional: while the former is realized by direct reference, the latter is obtained through the scope of a distributor. Some scholars (cf. May 1991) have argued, however, that Bare Argument Ellipsis allows exclusively a distributional reading, and never a collective one. This is allegedly due to Quantificational Raising, which must bind only one variable, and the fact that "only distributive readings are quantificational" (Depiante, 2000:115). This claim is disproved by Depiante, who proposes an example with a forced collective interpretation whose stripping alternative is not ungrammatical (14):

(14) a. The pigs and the cows filled the barn to capacity.

b. The pigs filled the barn to capacity, and the cows too.

After a thorough analysis of the differences between English and Spanish stripping, the author focuses on an account of both stripping and pseudostripping phenomena in both languages. Starting with Spanish, Depiante rejects Lopez's (1999, 2000) theory of pseudostripping as VP-ellipsis, with sí/no particles as heads of a Σ-phrase licensing VP-ellipsis, where the remnant is viewed as a left-dislocated constituent adjoined to such phrase. Lopez also states that phonologically unrealized heads cannot license ellipsis. Depiante's alternative proposal involves the leftwards movement of the remnant to a functional head F[10] which encodes contrastive focus, and which is above both IP and ΣP; subsequently, IP is deleted; lastly, if Σ is left stranded, the particle sí/no are obligatorily inserted. In this view, sentences such as those in (10) above are structurally represented as in (15):

(15) a. Juan leyó El Qujote pero [$_{FP}$ María$_i$ [$_{ΣP}$ no [$_{IP}$ t_i ~~leyó El Quijote~~]]].

b. Juan no leyó El Quijote pero [$_{FP}$ Hamlet$_i$ [$_{ΣP}$ sí [$_{IP}$ ~~Juan leyó t_i~~]]].

Following this approach, Depiante provides an overview of the cases of pseudostripping in Spanish with two more elements other than sí/no, i.e., *nunca* (never) and *siempre* (always).

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[10] It is to be noted that throughout the text, when not referring to Depiante (2000), *focus* and *focus phrase* will be indicated respectively as Foc and FocP.

As regards Spanish (as well as English) stripping, the author embraces Hankamer and Sag's (1976) position which treats the phenomenon as a surface anaphor; additionally, she analyzes it as a case of IP deletion, with the remnant and negation raising to Spec,FP before ΣP is deleted. Thus, a sentence involving stripping such as (16) is structurally represented either as in (17a) or as in (17b):

(16) Ana leyó El Quijote pero no Pedro.

(17) a. Ana leyó El Quijote pero [$_{FP}$ [no Pedro]$_i$ [$_{ΣP}$ [$_{IP}$ t_i leyó El Quijote]]].

   b. Ana leyó El Quijote pero [$_{FP}$ [$_{ΣP}$ no pedro]$_i$ [$_{IP}$ t_i leyó El Quijote]]].

A matter that has not yet been discussed so far, but which has been integrated into Depiante's analysis is Bošović's (2000) theory of Neg: the author states that in Italian, Neg is an affix at PF which needs to be featured within an overt negative element such as *non* (no) or *nessuno/niente* (nobody/nothing). Depending on the position of such negative element with respect to the verb, it is then necessary to overtly express Neg: "[w]hen the negative element appears pre-verbally, Neg has its affixal properties satisfied ad insertion of no is not required; if the negative element appears post verbally, no must be inserted in order for Neg not to be left stranded." (Depiante, 2000:127). This results in the double negation of Italian (18a-b) and Spanish (19a-b), contrasting with English, where such constraint does not hold.

(18) a. *(Non) ha telefonato nessuno.

   b. Nessuno (*non) ha telefonato.

(19) a. *(No) ha llamado nadie.

   b. Nadie (*no) ha llamado.

Thus, in Depiante's analysis of pseudostripping (10) and stripping (16), Σ behaves in the same way and cannot be left stranded. Finally, ΣP is located above IP in Spanish, following Laka (1990) and Martins (1994).

In this view, the implications for English language can be now derived directly from the observations above: the lack of pseudogapping can be justified considering that the location of ΣP in English is between IP and VP, and not is not an affix, as opposed to Tense, which is a PF affix in the English language. Hence, a structure such as (10) is not acceptable in English, and pseudogapping is not supported in such language. As for English stripping,

Depiante considers it a case of ellipsis, where IP is deleted; before such deletion takes place, however, the author hypothesizes the leftwards movement of negation and remnant to a functional projection above IP, possibly FP (20). This iter takes place even in absence of negation, as shown in (21):

(20) a. John read El Quijote but not Mary.

b. John read El Quijote but [$_{FP}$ [not Mary]$_i$ [$_{IP}$ t_i ~~read El Quijote~~]]].

(21) a. John read El Quijote, and Mary too.

b. John read El Quijote and [$_{FP}$ Mary$_i$ [$_{IP}$ t_i ~~read El Quijote~~] too].

Lastly, it is important to note that Depiante assumes that no stripping can occur in embedded context, although she leaves room for further research on the topic. Some of the authors discussed below indeed focus on Bare Argument Ellipsis in embedded structures, and disprove Depiante's (2000) position.

Merchant (2001, 2004, 2007)

The relevance of Merchant's (2001, 2003, 2004, 2007) theory of ellipsis lies in his application of the Minimalist Program to the analysis pf the phenomenon. Thus, in his view, ellipsis must involve leftwards movement elicited by a specific feature to be checked. It is crucial, then, to focus on such feature, first proposed in an analysis of sluicing (Merchant, 2001): according to the author, the structure of sluicing such as in (22) is represented by (23):

(22) Abby was reading something, but I don't know **what (Abby was reading *t*).**

(23)
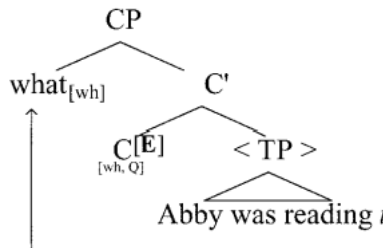
(Merchant, 2004: 670)

Merchant (2004: 670) suggests that the E feature "serves as a locus for all the relevant properties that distinguish the elliptical structure from its non-elliptical counterpart.".

Consequently, E is not a single feature, but varies according to the type of ellipsis that it licenses. In the case of sluicing, a type of ellipsis where all the TP is deleted except for a wh-constituent, the feature will be indicated as E_S, and will possess syntactic, phonological, and semantic characteristics peculiar to its type. What is common among all types of E is their position, that is as the head of a CP. As regards the syntax of E_S, the author formalizes it as follows:

(24) E_S [$u$wh*, uQ*]

The properties of E_S are wh and Q. They are both uninterpretable (as encoded by u) and strong (as indicated by *). Thus, they must be checked "in a local (head-to-head, here) phrase-structural relation." (Merchant, 2004:671). The importance of this view is that it accounts for cross-linguistic differences in licensing by postulating differences in E-features that must be checked. Thus, languages lacking VP ellipsis such as Italian will lack the type of E licensing such ellipsis. Phonologically, the representation is as follows:

(25) $\varphi_{TP} \rightarrow \emptyset/E$

where φ_{TP} means the phonology of the whole TP, i.e., the complement of C, which must not be parsed.

In order to understand the semantic properties of E, it is pivotal to address the concept of E-GIVENNESS introduced in Merchant (2001) and reproposed in his following works. What Merchant tries to do with e-GIVENNESS is to challenge the concept of isomorphism as a requisite for ellipsis, according to which elision of a segment is possible only if a structurally identical antecedent is present: "[the structural component of the theory of ellipsis consists […] of the claim that an elided phrase must have a structurally isomorphic twin available." (Merchant, 2001:17). The author thus proceeds by highlighting a series of issues arising from the postulation of what he calls "the isomorphism condition on ellipsis" (Merchant, 2001: 17). Firstly, sluicing can sometimes pose a problem to the isomorphism condition, as in example (26)[11]:

(26) Abby was reading, but I don't know what.

---

[11] Merchant (2001:19).

In fact, as Merchant claims, traces cannot be said to be structurally present at LF

Another important contribution by Merchant is his 2007 *Voice and Ellipsis*. Although the author deals with VP-ellipsis, the implications of his work can be extended to other elliptical constructions as well. In fact, the cases of voice mismatch in ellipsis only belong to VP-ellipsis, entailing that " when the target of ellipsis is a small amount of structure, such as a VP, mismatches in voice appear to be possible, but when more structure is targeted, as in sluicing and the like, no voice mismatch is allowed." (Merchant, 2007: 78). This is consistent with the data from Bare Argument Ellipsis, which seems to refuse voice mismatches as shown in example (27)[12] from German, where the case is overtly expressed, making the voice mismatch overt:

(27) *Der Junge wurde von einer Psychologin untersucht, und ein Kinderarzt auch.
    The boy   was   by   a   psychologist.DAT examined, and a pediatrician.NOM
    too

An important remark by Merchant is the fact that the acceptability/unacceptability of such mismatches in voice must be due to the elliptical process itself, as the grammaticality of the non-elliptical counterparts of the sentences is not affected by voice discrepancies (28):

(28) a. Someone murdered Joe, but we don't know who murdered Joe.
    b. Someone murdered Joe, but we don't know who Joe was murdered by.
    c. Der Junge wurde von einer Psychologin   untersucht, und ein Kinderarzt hat ihn
       the boy   was   by   a   psychologist.DAT examined, and a pediatrician.NOM has
       ihn auch untersucht.
       him too examined

What becomes interesting is thus the distribution of voice mismatches across ellipsis types, which appears to be systematic: only lower nodes can be deleted under the circumstance of a voice change from the antecedent, whereas higher nodes (such as T in stripping) cannot. Merchant (2007:87) justifies such distribution with the assumption that "the voice morphology of a clause reflected in English on the verb is merely a morphological reflex of

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[12] Merchant (2007:83).

a syntactic agreement relation with a separate head that asymmetrically c-commands the verbal head V.". Thus, the author agrees with Kratzer (1996) in postulating the existence of a functional head Voice, and the consequent existence of a VoiceP, resulting in a structure as in (29):

(29) a. Someone murdered Joe.

Since the value of Voice is categorial and lexically determined, it cannot be interpreted; what can vary is v[Voice], which is an inflectional value and must be interpreted via agreement with Voice. In VP-ellipsis, what is elided is the lower VP, leaving Voice outside of the operation. In stripping and other higher ellipses, the clausal node T' is deleted. Since one of

b.

$$
\begin{array}{c}
\text{TP} \\
\diagup \quad \diagdown \\
\text{DP}_1 \qquad \text{T}' \\
\triangle \qquad \diagup \quad \diagdown \\
\text{someone} \quad \text{T} \qquad \text{VoiceP} \\
\diagup \quad \diagdown \\
\text{Voice} \qquad \text{vP} \\
\text{[Active]} \quad \diagup \quad \diagdown \\
t_1 \qquad \text{v}' \\
\diagup \quad \diagdown \\
\text{v}_{trans} \qquad \text{VP} \\
\diagup \quad \diagdown \\
\text{murder}_\text{V} \qquad \text{DP} \\
\triangle \\
\text{Joe}
\end{array}
$$
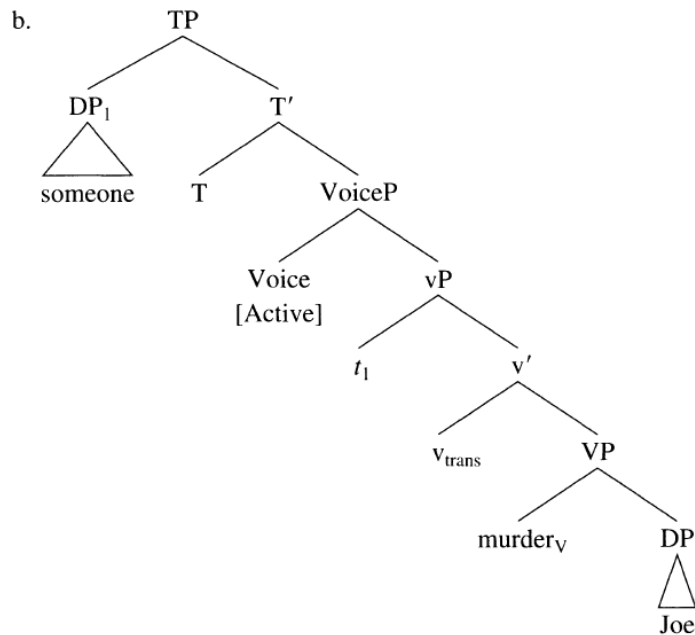
the licensing factors of ellipsis is the identity requirement, Voice need to be under identity condition with its antecedent when elided. As a consequence, higher types of ellipsis do not tolerate voice mismatches, whereas lower ellipsis, namely VP, allows it.

Kolokonte (2008)

In her doctoral dissertation, Kolokonte focuses on the connection between Bare Argument Ellipsis and Information Structure. In doing so, she provides the analysis of three phenomena to be encompassed under the broader scope of BAE, namely stripping, negative contrast,

and yes/no ellipsis. In applying such differentiation, Kolokonte lays the ground for the more fine-grained analyses of stripping and related processes which have been carried out in the last fifteen years. Thus, the author uses Information Structure as a source of explanation as to why stripping, negative contrast and yes/no ellipsis are to be considered separate phenomena.

Starting with the different nature of stripping and negative contrast, Kolokonte (2008: 34) adopts Drübig's (1994) distinction, which defines (30) as stripping and (31) as negative contrast:

(30) John bought the books but not Peter.
(31) John bought the books, not Peter.

Moreover, some contexts seem to be compatible only with negative contrast, while refusing stripping:

(32) a. John was born in Newcastle, not in London.
     b. #John was born in Newcastle, but not in London.

While such distribution might be justifiable by looking at the semantic properties of the predicate *to be born* in English, other languages showcase similar distribution with verbs which are semantically unmarked. Kolokonte (2008:36-37) takes Greek as an example:

(33) Q: O Yorgos ekane oles autes tis zimies;

         Did Yorgos do all this damage?

     A1: Ta piata ta espase o Petros, ohi o Yorgos.

         The plates, Petros broke them, not Yorgos.

     A2: #Ta piata ta espase o Petros, ala ohi o Yorgos.

         The plates, Petros broke them, but not Yorgos.

Some languages, such as Finnish, show the distinction between stripping and negative contrastives also morphologically through the suffixation of the negative in the latter case.

However, the novelty of Kolokonte's analysis lies, as stated above, in her application of Information Structure principles, i.e., focus and topic, to the analysis of such distinction. With this aim, she proceeds by specifying the difference between identificational and

corrective focus, stating that the latter term has been used throughout the years as an umbrella term covering various types of focus, namely exhaustive, contrastive, and identificational. While this may be true in some languages such as Italian, where contrastive focus encompasses correction, it is not to be taken to hold cross-linguistically[13]. Some scholars (Vallduví and Vikuna 1998, Molnár 2002) have proposed that contrastive focus may elicit a set of alternatives, which can be in turn either open or close: the Italian kind of contrastive focus belongs to the latter case. Kolokonte (2008) argues that stripping involves the kind of focus eliciting an open set of alternatives, while negative-contrast involves the one connected to a close set. Following this analysis, however, one must draw the conclusion that stripping can never occur in Italian, but only negative-contrast can.

It has been noted that in BAE, be it stripping (30)[14] or negative-contrast (31)[15], the remnant must be included in the set of alternatives that the focused antecedent evokes. Thus, (35a) is a proper answer to (34), while (35b) is not:

(34) Does John speak French and Italian?

(35) a. He speaks [$_F$Italian], but not French.

    b. *He speaks [$_F$Italian], but not Peter.

Konietsko (2016)

Konietsko proposes a thorough overview of Bare Argument Ellipsis, with a strong emphasis on focus and embedded stripping. Following the path initiated by Kolokonte (2008), he also introduces a detailed typological categorization of Bare Argument Ellipsis (BAE) , specifying the position of stripping as a subtype of the broader phenomenon.

After his typological categorization, Konietsko proceeds with his dissertation on stripping with regards to focus and embeddedness. In his discussion of the former case, he introduces the notion of contrastive focus, where the focus (normally considered new information) can contain given information, as in (36)[16], where *Mary* has to be common knowledge (common

[13] See Kiss (1998) for a discussion of the matter.
[14] Kolokonte (2008:45).
[15] Kolokonte (2008:45).
[16] Konietsko (2016:58).

ground) or part of the broader conversation in order to be a felicitous contrast with respect to *John*:

(36) Did Anna invite John?

   She invited Mary.

Likewise, focused pronouns are also considered given information, as they normally refer to a known entity. The notion of contrast is pivotal in Konietsko's dissertation, as it plays a crucial role in stripping due to its entailment of alternatives and also to the fact that remnants in coordinate ellipses are often contrasting with their correlates. However, topic and focus and contrastive are independent from one another, as it is only in the aforementioned instances (contrastive focus and focused pronouns) that contrast and focus overlap, whereas they would normally be complementarily distributed. Once the individual and independent status of these two concepts has been established, Konietsko proceeds in his analysis of stripping and information structure, where the author claims "that the remnant in contrastive topic (CT)-ellipsis indeed involves topicality" (Konietsko, 2016:59). In fact, as shown in (37)[17]:

(37) A: Will both of your siblings go to France?

   A': Will Maria go to France?

   B: Maria wird wohl fahren, aber HANS vermutlich NICHT.   **(CT-ellipsis)**

      Maria will PART go   but   Hans   probably   not

   C: #Maria wird wohl fahren, aber vermutlich nicht HANS.   **(CF-ellipsis)**

      Maria will PART go,   but probably   not   Hans

   C': Maria wird wohl nicht fahren, aber vermutlich HANS.   **(CF-ellipsis)**

      Maria will PART not go,   but   probably Hans

What differentiates (37B) and (37C) is the word order; moreover, (37C) is not an appropriate answer to (37A). This might result from the fact that "in the middle field, elements directly preceding sentential adverbs are topics." (Frey, 2004 in Konietsko, 2016: 60). Thus, *Hans* in (37C) cannot be considered Topic, but rather a focused element, and is not compatible with a question where siblings are presupposed (i.e., given information). Contrarily, and

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[17] Konietsko (2016:60).

predictably, (37C') is acceptable as an answer to (37A'), where the question is about *Maria*: in fact, in this context *Hans* represents new information, and is thus compatible with a focal position. This difference is accounted for by what Konietsko and Winkler (2010) name the Parallelism Constraint (38):

(38) *Parallelism Constraint for contrastive ellipsis (CE)*
   CE satisfies the Parallelism Constraint if the elliptical clause receives the same semantic and information structural interpretation as its antecedent clause […].

What makes Konietsko (2016) relevant is also his crosslinguistic focus on the role of focus-sensitive particles in Bare Argument Ellipsis, as he analyzes the German *auch* and *schon* and the English *too*, *also*, and *as well*. According to their stressed or unstressed status, structurally different varieties of stripping arise. As regards *auch* (also), it can appear both stressed and unstressed: when it precedes the remnant it is unstressed, while it becomes stressed when its position follows the remnant, as shown in (39):

(39) a. Maria liest oft Bücher und auch ZEITSCHRIFTEN.
   Maria reads often books and also magazines
  b. Maria liest oft Bücher und ANNA AUCH.
   Maria reads often books and Anna too

As reported in Konietsko (2016:66), it has been noted by Reis and Rosengren (1997) that this difference in stress corresponds to a different in attachment site: in fact, "while unstressed *auch* may attach to any lexical phrasal category, stressed *auch* has to be an immediate constituent of the verbal projection line".

The author then provides a distributional analysis of the English particles corresponding to German *auch*: *too*, *also,* and *as well*: the first is most common in rightmost position, but can also appear mid-sentence and in initial position, meaning that it can be associated with the initial element of a sentence. It cannot appear as an initial element itself. The mid-sentence distribution appears to be the most marked one, but some examples provided by Konietsko show that this position is not to be ruled out completely. Moving on to *also*, it mostly appears in medial position; the final position is also possible, with some variety in acceptability from speakers. *Also* has a stress/unstressed variance that corresponds to the German *auch*. Finally,

as well seems to be restricted to sentence-final only: its medial and initial positions show high levels of markedness.

Finally, Konietsko proposes a theory of embedded stripping based on German data, specifically on *ob*-clauses. Firstly, he compares different kinds of reduced subordinate clauses, and he concludes that only those introduced by *ob* are cases of Bare Argument Ellipsis. Interestingly, Konietsko (2016:124) observes that "stripping in German displays some properties typically associated with discourse bound ellipsis, i.e., ellipsis that can be embedded, such as sloppy and strict identity reading for pronouns.". The discourse-markedness of stripped embedded sentences is fundamental in the reconstruction of their meaning in the present analysis, too. Konietsko's central proposal for embedded Bare Argument Ellipsis is that the conditions to which the phenomenon is restricted have information-structural grounds.

> *Wurmbrand (2017)*

An interesting take on stripping in embedded contexts is given in Wurmbrand (2017). In fact, contrarily to the majority of the preceding works on Bare Argument Ellipsis, Wurmbrand claims that stripping is possible in embedded context, provided the complementizer is omitted (40a-b):

(40) a. *Abby claimed (that) Ben would ask her out, but she didn't think that Bill (too).
    b. Abby claimed (that) Ben would ask her out, but she didn't think Bill (too).

In the light of this generalization, which she names *Embedded Stripping Generalization*, the author deems both Johnson's and Merchant's approaches inadequate accounts of the phenomenon of stripping. Rather, Wurmbrand proposes a "Dynamic Phasehood Approach", where she considers phases in the minimalist sense to be responsible for the ungrammaticality of embedded BAE when a Complementizer is not deleted. In the minimalist view, phases can be characterized as follows (Wurmbrand, 2017: 346):

(41) a. The highest projection of a cyclic domain constitutes a phase.
    b. The cyclic domains of a clause are:
        i. the extended thematic domain of V and

ii. the combined T and C domains.

The author thus considers the issue of phasal boundaries in expanded layers such as tense, aspect, and v, and concludes her overview of minimalist phasehood by stating that "not only CPs but also CP-less clauses with a TP domain function as phases." (Wurmbrand, 2017: 347).

Subsequently, she exposes her theory of ellipsis as Zero Spell-Out, according to which ellipsis is an unpronounced phase domain at PF, triggered by a phase head that enables such phonetic "non-realization" of its complement. This view is similar to the aforementioned E-feature proposed by Merchant (2001), which functions as a feature that elides all phonetic material at PF.

Wurmbrand (2017) proposes that the *Zero Spell-Out Domain* in combination with the *Dynamic Phasehood Approach* can justify the *Embedded Stripping Generalization*. In fact, assuming that the remnant of stripping is moved to SpecFocP, the presence of a CP makes FocP a Spell-Out Domain (SOD). Contrarily to this, the absence of a CP makes FocP a phase, and TP its complement (thus, a SOD). Given that in Wurmbrand's (2017) view only SODs can undergo deletion, only the latter case allows the deletion of the TP. Whether this theory holds for Italian as well is to be discussed in the following chapters.

Chapter 2: Data and Methodology

The present chapter will propose a description of the experiment and the corresponding theoretical assumptions that must be considered in order to understand and analyze the collected data.

2.1. Bare Argument Ellipsis

Among all types of elliptical constructions, one that has only recently started to be investigated is Bare Argument Ellipsis. The phenomenon, also referred to as *stripping*, was described in Hankamer and Sag (1976:409) as "a rule that deletes everything in a clause under identity with corresponding parts of a preceding clause, except for one constituent (and sometimes a clause-initial adverb or negative)". As examples (42-45) display, such construction is well established across languages: Van Craenenbroeck and Tammermann (2013:12), in fact, report how stripping can be found in all languages studied in their book, which include, among others, English, French, Hungarian, Finnish Sign Language, Kiswahili, Japanese, and Shingazidja.

(42) I enjoy long historical novels, but romance too.

(43) Ho   sempre visitato le città prendendo il bus, ma il   taxi no.

Have.1PS always visited the cities taking   the bus, but the taxi no.

'I have always visited the cities by taking the bus, but not by taxi'

(44) Peter wurde eingeschult   und Anna auch.

 Peter was   sent-to-school and Anna too.

'Peter was sent to school, and Anna too'   (Winkler, 2005:159)

(45) maa raʔi-tu zaid-an   wa laa   khalid-an

 NEG   saw I   Zaid.ACC and NEG Khalid.ACC

'I saw neither Zaid nor Khalid'   (Al-Horais, 2001:2)

As is visible from the examples above, Bare Argument Ellipsis is strongly connected to coordination. Moreover, stripping very often appears in correlation with either a polarity particle such as *yes/no*, or an adverb as *too*. With respect to this property, however, a subcategorization is necessary, due to some terminological unclearness that surrounds Bare Argument Ellipsis.

2.1.1. Types of Bare Argument Ellipsis

Following the categorization by Konietsko (2016), a threefold subdivision can be applied to Bare Argument Ellipsis. The term, in fact, encompasses coordinate BAE, fragments, and subordinate BAE. The first category contains all those structures occurring exclusively in a coordinate environment; secondly, fragments are to be considered independently, as profusely discussed in Merchant (2004), among others; the third category of BAE is the case of subordinate Bare Argument Ellipsis which, as opposed to what the majority of the literature argues, appears to be allowed in some contexts and under precise circumstances. The whole systematization results in the following scheme:

- Coordinate BAE
  - Conjunction reduction
  - Negative contrast
  - Stripping
    - Sentential
    - Non-sentential
- Fragments
  - + antecedent
  - − antecedent
- Subordinate BAE (subordinate stripping)[18]

As can be noted, the term *stripping* is employed extremely restrictively, as it refers to a subtype of coordinate BAE whereby only one bare argument and negation or a focused particle appear as remnants. Such construction differs from negative contrast (also known as *replacives*), where also one bare argument remains together with a negative particle. The difference is shown in the examples below, where (46a) is an instance of negative contrastive and (46b) showcases stripping:

(46) a. Mozart visited Vienna, not Salzburg.

    b. Mozart visited Vienna, but not Salzburg.

<div align="right">(Konietsko, 2016:13)</div>

The core feature of negative contrastives appears to be its corrective meaning, while such meaning is not necessary in stripping. Moreover, some scholars (Drübig, 1994) consider the

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[18] Throughout the present work, subordinate stripping will be referred to as 'embedded stripping'.

semantic restrictions of (47a-b) below as proof of distinction: in fact, "stripping operates over a set of alternatives while negative contrast only permits one single alternative.". (Konietsko, 2016: 13) Thus, as Mozart could have been born only once, stripping is to be excluded, and (47b) is ungrammatical.

(47) a. Mozart was born in Vienna, not in Salzburg.

b. *Mozart was born in Vienna, but not in Salzburg.

Another issue concerning contrastive constructions is the absence of do-support in negative contexts such as (48). As the author suggests, this absence can only be explained by postulating a syntactic position where negation does not trigger do-support, or by postulating types of negation that do not require do-support in English.

(48) Lucy, not Albert, ate the apple pie.

Another distinction to be made is between stripping and Conjunction Reduction (CR). Although coordination is pivotal in both constructions, they need to be considered separately and analyzed accordingly. Conjunction Reduction is in fact, as defined in Wilder (2018:681), the process according to which identical material in the context of conjuncts in coordinates structures can be elided to avoid repetition, giving rise to sentences such as (49a), whose non-elided counterpart is provided in (49b):

(49) a. They offered money to the rich but nothing to the poor.

b. [They offered money to the rich] but [they offered nothing to the poor].

Wilder (2018:681-682)) distinguishes between *forward* and *backward* CR: the former is represented in (49), where the deleted material is in the second conjunct, whereas in the latter, also known as Right Node Raising (RNR), the deletion happens in the first conjunct, as exemplified in (50) below:

(50)   a. We are not responsible for and we will not reimburse you for any losses incurred.

b. [We are not responsible for any losses incurred] and [we will not reimburse you for any losses incurred].

A similarity with Bare Argument Ellipsis is the occurrence of these constructions with coordinative conjunctions as *and/but/or*, and their unacceptability in subordinated conjunctions. However, CR is not relegated solely to coordination, as it also appears in comparatives. Due to this similarity, forward CR is often conflated with stripping; in fact, sentences such as (51) are analyzed by some as BAE (Wilder, 2018:689):

(51) a. He left his phone at home, and his keys.

b. [He left his phone at home], and [~~he left~~ his keys ~~at home~~].

Moreover, the fact that both stripping and forward CR sometimes appear to evade the identity constraint further corroborates this view. However, other scholars (Konietsko, 2016) propose a distinction between the two phenomena.

A further aspect on which Konietsko's (2016) typological categorization focuses is tracing boundaries between stripping and fragments, be they interdialogic or in the form of short answers. This aspect has been extensively and thoroughly investigated by Merchant (2004), as described above, and Weir (2014), and will not be treated here, as it lies outside the scope of the present work; readers are thus advised to rely on the provided literature for a proper analysis.

2.1.2. Embedded stripping

Lastly, stripping has been recently acknowledged to be possible in embedded clauses, contrarily to what traditionally stated by the literature on the topic. Thus, embedded stripping, the object of the present work, forms the third distinct category of Bare Argument Ellipsis.

Some preliminary observations on the matter arise when looking at data from German. In this language, in fact, stripping can appear in secondary clauses, as is the case of (52), showing stripping in an indirect interrogative clause introduced by *ob*, albeit left-dislocated:

(52) In Europa hat sich   David Cameron mit seinem Veto isoliert. Ob auch in
     In Europe has himself David Cameron with his   veto isolated if also in
     SEINEM Land,   darüber   wurde in London im Parlament gestritten.
     his   country about-that was   in London in parliament argued

'In Europe David Cameron has isolated himself with his veto. If also in his own country, it was discussed in the Parliament in London.'

(Tagesthemen, 12.12.2011 in Konietsko,2016:121)

Thus, a reduced *ob*-clause in German can be analyzed as stripping, being it the result of deletion. Other reduced subordinates fall under the same analysis, although not all. Most importantly, embedded stripping appears to be acceptable only when a focus particle such as *auch* is present, as the degraded acceptability of (53) shows:

(53) ?? In Europa hat sich   David Cameron mit seinem Veto isoliert. Ob in
        in Europe has himself David Cameron with his   veto isolated. If in
        SEINEM Land,   darüber   wurde in London im Parlament gestritten.
        his   country about-that was   in London in parliament argued
        'In Europe David Cameron has isolated himself with his veto. If in his country, it
        was discussed in the Parliament in London.'

Evidence of embedded stripping has been found in English, too. As mentioned in both chapter 1 and 2, in fact, Wurmbrand (2017) has extensively worked on English embedded stripping data. However, the structure the author investigates differs from the one indicated by (56) and (57), as she concentrates on stripping in complement clauses. Thus, stripping is not to be found in an isolated secondary sentence, with the connection between elided part and its antecedent being discoursal. On the contrary, she focuses on cases where the embedded sentence is the complement of a bridge verb such as *think*, *say*, *imagine*, *believe*.

The notion of bridge verbs appears to be highly relevant in the present discussion, as it seems to be strongly connected to *that*-omission. Bridge verbs are those verbs that allow extraction from their complement clause, as in (54):

(54)   [What] did you say that he did __$_t$?

As Featherstone (2004:182) states, the interesting fact about bridge verbs is that they suggest that "movement restrictions are not merely syntactic but must also be related to lexical factors.". In fact, as noted in the seminal work by Erteschik-Shir (1973), extraction from different verbs display different degrees in acceptability according to the lexical properties

of such verbs. For instance, English verbs of saying are not homogeneous in their "bridgeness": extraction from verbs such as *say*, *tell*, *report*, *announce* is judged acceptable, whereas the same operation is judged unacceptable with verbs such as *purr*, *editorialize*, *coo*, *lisp*, *dictate*, *transcribe*, *ululate* (among others); an intermediate category is formed by verbs such as *grunt*, *murmur*, *mutter*, *scream*, *sigh*, *whine*, *exclaim* (Erteschik-Shir, 1773:84).

Thus, verbs that refer to the action of communicating information vary in their "bridgeness" according to the manner of communication that they convey:

> It seems to be true that verbs which mean only <u>say</u> and do not imply much about the manner of saying are best. Questionable are those that describe more or less precisely the manner in which something is being said. When the verb used to describe the manner of saying is somewhat rare in the context, such as <u>coo</u> and <u>jeer</u>, extraction is worse, as it is for verbs that imply the context of the saying, such as <u>eulogize</u> and <u>editorialize</u>.

<div align="right">(Erteschik-Shir, 1973:85-86)</div>

What is relevant to the present work, however, is the relation between bridge verbs and *that*-omission. More precisely, there is a systematic connection between the verbs that allow extraction and the possibility of deleting the complementizer *that*. As English and Italian behave distinctly with respect to Complementizer Deletion, it is necessary to deal with the two languages separately.

2.2. Complementizer Deletion and Double Access Reading

2.2.1. English Complementizer Deletion

English offers the possibility of omitting the complementizer *that* with seemingly no repercussions on the meaning of the sentence. Thus, a minimal pair such as (55a-b) does not imply any differences if not, partly, in style.

(55) a. Jack told me that Mary is not happy with her new apartment.

    b. Jack told me Mary is not happy with her new apartment.

This seeming equivalence of the two options posits some interesting challenges to the Minimalist theory. In fact, as noted in Llinàs-Grau and Fernández-Sánchez (2016:56)

> El PM (Programa Minimalista, *ed*.) parte de la premisa de que el lenguaje es un sistema de diseño óptimo que opera bajo los principios de economía lingüística: el lenguaje no contiene

elementos redundantes o constructos internos a la teoría y no realiza operaciones que no sean estrictamente necesarias. Ante este panorama de optimidad, sorprende *a priori* que la sintaxis sea capaz de realizar dos derivaciones [...] sin que estas repercutan en la semántica[19].

There appear to be, however, some constraints to the presence or absence of the complementizer *that*, a crucial one being that the complementizer cannot be omitted in subjunctive contexts, such as (56):

(56) The doctor suggested *(that) Susan *stay* in bed for at least two days.

Moreover, the complementizer *that* cannot be omitted in subject clauses, as (57) shows:

(57) *(That) Lara would run from the altar was expected by everyone.

It has been suggested by a great number of scholars, with minimal differences in analyses, that *that*-omission in English is to be treated as a case of null C. Stowell (1981) first suggested this interpretation, which was later revised and marginally modified by Bošković and Lasnik (2003), who suggested an affixation approach to null C. However, different proposals have been forwarded, too, as for instance the truncation reading provided by Rizzi and Shlonsky (2003) and the T-to-C movement theorized by Pesetsky and Torrego (2000). This last one is worth exploring, as it offers interesting insights which might be useful in the present discussion. The authors challenge the traditional analysis of English *that* as a complementizer, thus base generated as C°, and propose that in embedded clauses it could be an element moved from T to C which, instead of leaving a gap (a trace *t*), is phonetically realized, similarly to "instances of wh-movement that leave resumptive pronouns." (Pesetsky and Torrego, 2000:372). This movement is justified by a presupposed uT on C, an uninterpretable T feature that is proper of C and that must be checked. This uT feature is checked differently according to the presence or absence of *that*, as indicated in Pesetsky and Torrego (2000:382):

(58) a. ... [$_{CP}$ [$_T$that]$_j$ + [C, uT̶] [$_{IP}$Sue will$_j$ buy the book.]]

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b. … [$_{CP}$ [Sue, u̶T̶]$_j$ [C, u̶T̶] [$_{IP}$ *t-Sue$_j$* will buy the book.]

This difference in checking, however, results in a syntactic difference in terms of features, as *that* in (58a) still bears the interpretable features of Tense after its movement to C; instead, the phrase *Sue* in (58b), which moves to Spec,CP, does not contain such interpretable Tense feature, and this results in a lack of interpretable features in the C-layer in (58b). This difference is relevant in those contexts akin to (57), where the omission of that is not permitted. In fact, a finite T has a *u*φ feature that must be checked by the closest element bearing φ-features being merged to its specifier. If this element is the CP, this must also contain T features according to the Match Condition (Pesetsky and Torrego, 2000:383):

(59) *Match Condition*

If a head H enters an Agree relation with a set of phrases K, each syntactic feature of H must be present on some member of K (not necessarily with the same value, including value for EPP).

As all the T features in (58b) above have been checked and deleted, the only available option is a construction equal to (60a), where *that* bears interpretable T features that can check those of the finite T *was* in the main clause in (57). This can be formalized as follows:

(60) a. [T, uφ (+EPP)] was expected [$_{CP}$ [$_T$that]$_j$ + [C, u̶T̶, φ] [$_{IP}$Lara would$_j$ run from the altar.]] …

b. [T, uφ (+EPP)] was expected [$_{CP}$ [Lara, u̶T̶]$_j$ [C, u̶T̶, φ] [$_{IP}$ *t-Lara$_j$* would run from the altar.] …

2.2.2. Italian Complementizer Deletion and Double Access Reading

Italian appears to be the only Romance language where CD is allowed, although the phenomenon is submitted to rigid constraints. In fact, as noted by Poletto (2001), Giorgi and Pianesi (1997, 2004)[20] and Giorgi (2009, 2010) among others, complementizer deletion is only allowed with subjunctives, conditionals, or future tensed verbs; however, as the present research focuses exclusively on the differences between embedded BAE with subjunctive

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[20] Giorgi and Pianesi (2004:*fn*1-2) provide some interesting commentary on the availability of CD in relative clauses, as well as in future and conditional embedded clauses. As the present analysis does not deal with such context, the readers are referred to their work for further elucidations.

and indicative verbs, the details about CD will be provided only for the subjunctive case, while the readers are encouraged to refer to the literature provided above for a thorough analysis of Complementizer Deletion in conditional and future tensed sentences.

However, before dealing with Italian complementizer deletion, the readers need to be introduced to an interpretive phenomenon called Double Access Reading (DAR). This phenomenon, which pertains to the temporal interpretation of embedded sentences, will be useful in establishing some crucial characteristics of the Italian complementizer *che*. As will be discussed, it is pivotal to bear in mind that, although these considerations hold for both English and Italian, the phenomenon of CD is to be analyzed differently in the two languages.

Let us take into consideration a sentence such as (61) and its Italian counterpart (62):
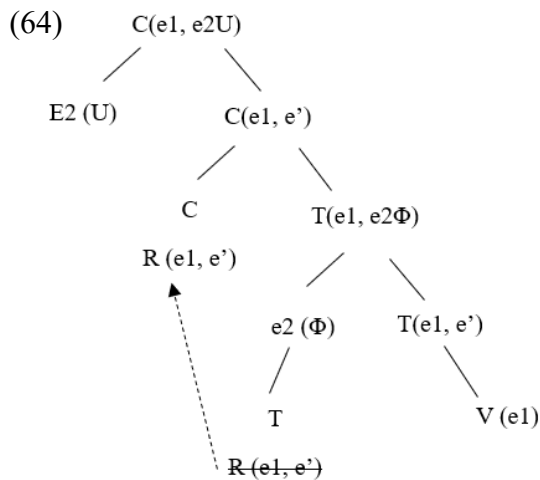
(61) Lucas said that Emma is 23 years old.
(62) Lucas ha detto che Emma ha 23 anni.

These sentences contain an embedded clause, namely *that Emma is 23 years old/ che Emma ha 23 anni*, introduced by a main clause containing a verb of saying (*say/dire*). The temporal interpretation seems uncontroversial, and Emma's being 23 is interpreted by every English (or Italian) as present i.e., holding at the time of the utterance. However, in order for (61) to be felicitous, the pregnancy must be true also at the time of Lucas's saying. Thus, the embedded event is temporally evaluated twice, once with respect to the time of the saying, and once with respect to the time of the utterance. This is corroborated by (63a), which is infelicitous as Emma's age could not be interpreted to hold at the time of the utterance, due to its being a state with a well-known inherent duration, which is 365 days.

(63) a. #Tre anni fa, Luca ha detto che Emma ha 23 anni.
     'three years ago, Luke said that Emma is 23 years old'

The twofold evaluation of the embedded event represents what has been referred to in the literature as Double Access Reading (DAR). As reported in the literature (Giorgi and Pianesi, 2001, 2004 and Giorgi, 2009, 2010), languages divide in two groups: DAR languages, where DAR is obligatory, and non-DAR languages, where the embedded event is temporally evaluated only with respect to the time of the saying, meaning that a sentence such as (61)

above could be felicitous also with the fact of being 23 holding only at the time of Lucas's saying, and (63) being thus possible in those languages. English and Italian belong to the former group, while languages such as Romanian or Russian to the latter; therefore, a sentence such as (63) is perfectly acceptable in languages such as Romanian. It is to be noted that in DAR languages this property must be applied *obligatorily* and, crucially, only to *indicative* embedded clauses. But how is this double temporal anchoring syntactically achieved? The literature indicates theta-identification as the underlying mechanism. The overall process is represented in the structure (64) below, following a formalization by Giorgi (2010:26-29):

(64)   C(e1, e2U)

     E2 (U)   C(e1, e')

         C   T(e1, e2Φ)

     R (e1, e')

            e2 (Φ)   T(e1, e')

             T   V (e1)

         R (e1, e')

It is to be assumed that T° (namely the head of the tense projection) is a bi-argumental predicate, with e1 (the embedded event) and e2 ("a variable whose reference is determined locally") (Giorgi, 2010: 24) connected by a relation R that can be interpreted as either *precedes* (for the past), *overlaps* (for the present) or *follows* (for the future); furthermore, the temporal anchoring of the embedded event with respect to the superordinate one is to be assumed as a property of Universal Grammar, as suggested by Higginbotham (1995); this anchoring is realized syntactically through the representation in the T-layer of a feature Φ, representing the spatio-temporal coordinates of the subject of the superordinate event; such coordinates are referred to in the scheme above as e2. The other variables, namely e and e' correspond respectively to the subordinate event and the event of the main clause (the speaking). As it has been stated above, R indicates the temporal relation between the

embedded and the speaking events: with the English/Italian minimal pair reported above, (61-62), R would be interpreted as *overlaps*, while for future or past events it would be interpreted respectively as *follows* or *precedes*. As noted in Giorgi (2010:26), "this first step holds in both DAR and non-DAR languages.", as the temporal anchoring of the subordinate to the main event is a universal property of languages. The difference between the two groups lies in the second part of the derivation: in fact, as in DAR languages the event in T must also be temporally anchored to the time of the utterance, a further layer must be added, where C holds a e2 akin to the one mentioned above, which however holds the spatiotemporal coordinates of the utterer[21] (indicated with U for *utterance*). Crucially, this means that, in DAR languages, in the C-layer, and more specifically in the Spec,CP position, the spatio-temporal coordinates of the *utterer* are represented.

Once some features of the complementizer have been explored, the phenomenon of Complementizer Deletion can be assessed. It has been argued by some (Poletto, 2000) that CD must be read as an instance of V to C movement, akin to the V2 phenomenon in languages such as German and mainland Scandinavian. According to this view, in fact, in CD cases the place of the complementizer is occupied by the inflected verb that moves to C°. However, some differences between V2 and CD are to be noted: firstly, Italian CD does not imply the movement of an XP to Spec,CP position, as it normally happens with V2; moreover, C° in V2 languages is thought to bear a morphological feature which triggers the movement, whereas in non-V2 languages (as Italian is) this feature is not present; this difference in features explains why Italian, despite showing a similar movement operation, is not a V2 language in all matrix clauses.

An alternative view of CD is offered by Giorgi and Pianesi (1997, 2004), according to which the phenomenon is not to be considered independently from the context in which it occurs, namely the Italian subjunctive mood; in fact, according to the authors, "CD phenomena stem

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[21] This is a terminological choice made by the author of the present work. In Giorgi (2009, 2010) in fact, what has been here called *utterer* is referred to as *speaker*. As the superordinate communicative event has been here referred to as "the speaking", *utterer* has been deemed less confusing in the context of the present work. Thus, *speaker* here refers to the subject of the main clause, while *utterer* refers to the subject of the utterance.

from the interaction between the morphosyntactic properties of the Italian subjunctive and the requirement of the embedded clause" (Giorgi and Pianesi, 2004: 198).

2.3. The Italian Subjunctive

As it has been discussed, the double temporal evaluation in DAR languages seems to hold only with embedded *indicative* events[22], and obligatorily so. Note the minimal pair in (65a-b:

(65) a. Luca ha detto che Roberta si   è laureata ieri/*domani.

     Luca has said that Roberta REFL is graduated yesterday/*tomorrow'

     b. Luca credeva che Roberta si   laureasse   ieri/domani.

     Luca believed that Roberta REFL graduate.SUBJ.PAST yesterday/tomorrow'

As can be noted, while (65a) does not allow a temporal indication referring to the future, given that it would contrast with the temporal evaluation of pastness with respect to the utterance time[23], (65b) does allow it. This shows how the double temporal anchoring holds only with embedded events in the indicative mood. However, as can be noted in the glossa in (65b), the subjunctive does hold morphological inflection for present and for past (although not for future). The different inflection is explicit in (66a-b):

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[22] The matter is indeed more complex, and DAR effect appear to hold also for a few subjunctive contexts, such as the case of *ipotizzare* (hypothesize) and the case of jussive verbs. However, both cases can be accounted for: in the case of *ipotizzare*, in fact, the distribution of Complementizer Deletion points toward a difference in the semantics of the verb: in fact, when *ipotizzare* expresses a mental process, DAR does not hold (2); however, when the verb is used with the meaning of "verbally expressing a hypothesis", it displays DAR behaviour (1). It is to be noted that in both cases the verb *ipotizzare* requires a subjunctive in the embedded sentence.
    (1) Gianni ha ipotizzato che *(che) sia incinta.
    (2) Gianni ipotizza (che) sia incinta.
The examples above are taken from Giorgi (2010:49-50).
Jussive verbs are those communicative verbs which, instead of selecting an indicative, select a subjunctive when they convey a jussive meaning (2) (Giorgi, 2009:1846):
    (1) Gianni ha detto *(che) partissero al più presto.
       'Gianni said that they leave at the soonest'.
In this case, the verb *dire* (say) behaves as *ordinare* (order); thus, the embedded event is taken to be located in the future with respect to the issuing of the order, and does not need to be in the indicative form.
[23] It is to be noted that there exists a way to indicate events where the temporal interpretation of the time of the utterance and the time of the communicative event do not coincide: in Italian, for instance, an event collocated *between* the time of the speaking and that of the utterance can be expressed trough a past conditional, as in (1):
    (1) Luca ha detto che Roberta si sarebbe laureata il giorno seguente.
       'Luca said that Roberta would graduate the following day'.

(66) a. Luca crede   che Roberta si   laurei   oggi/domani[24].

    Luca believes that Roberta REFL graduate.SUBJ.PRES today/tomorrow.

    'Luca believes that Roberta will graduate today'

  b. Luca credeva che Roberta si   laureasse   ieri/oggi/domani.

    Luca believed that Roberta REFL graduate.SUBJ.PAST yesterday/today/tomorrow

    'Luca believed that Roberta would graduate yesterday/today/tomorrow'

As is made evident by the temporal references, however, the morphological tense inflection of the subjunctive "does not instantiate a relational tense, i.e., a temporal relation between two temporal events" (Giorgi, 2009: 1842), contrarily to the indicative one, as shown in the previous section. More specifically, the subjunctive morphology holds an agreement with the verb of the superordinate tense, thus occurring in the present when the main verb is at the present, and in the past when the main verb is in the past tense. This phenomenon is assimilable to the Latin *consecutio temporum et modorum* (sequence of tense and mood).

Therefore, there appears to be a connection between DAR and the complementizer, so much so that in the indicative contexts, where DAR is obligatory, the complementizer cannot be deleted, whereas in subjunctive contexts, where DAR does not come into play, CD is allowed. The implication is that in DAR contexts (namely indicative) the complementizer cannot be deleted because the spatio-temporal coordinates of the speaker are necessary for the double temporal evaluation mentioned above; on the contrary, given that the subjunctive mood does not trigger such double evaluation, the complementizer can be deleted, as the aforementioned coordinates are not required for the temporal anchoring of the embedded sentence.

Moreover, Giorgi and Pianesi (1997) propose that Italian subjunctive and indicative do not share the same complementizer, despite what may appear. In fact, by looking at (66a-b) one

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[24] The impossibility of a temporal reference to the past is due to the time of the main event. In fact, as noted in Giorgi (2009:1842) "[a]nteriority can be expressed by means of the periphrastic perfective form", entailing that it "is therefore derivative on aspectual properties (perfectivity), and not directly obtained by means of a temporal morpheme.". (1) exemplifies the property:
  (1) Luca crede   che Roberta si   sia   laureata ieri.
       Luca believes that Roberta REFL be.SUBJ.PRES graduated yesterday
       'Luca believes that Roberta graduated yesterday'
As visible from the glossa, the present tense morphology is indicated on the auxiliary, and it follows the abovementioned sequence of tense and mood.

may conclude that both sentences contain the complementizer *che* (that), which is considered to be a "high complementizer" in Rizzi's (1997) terms, being it the lexical realization of Force. However, to a closer inspection, the characteristics of the complementizer in the two cases do not overlap. Giorgi and Pianesi (1997, 2004) and Giorgi (2009) carry out a thorough analysis of the phenomenon, and conclude that subjunctive *che* is part of its verbal morphology: "the Italian subjunctive exhibits a sort of *discontinuous morphology*, including both the verbal ending and the complementizer. The two can either be realized together […] or *scattered*." (Giorgi, 2009:1847). In the latter case, the complementizer case would be a lexicalization of mood features, while tense would be expressed via verbal suffixation, resulting in a structure as (67), taken from Giorgi and Pianesi (2004:199):

(67) a. Mario credeva che Carlo fosse partito.

    b. […[$_V$ credeva [$_{MOOD}$ che [$_{Agr}$ fosse…]]]]

Contrarily, the former case would see both mood and tense would be syncretically realized via verbal suffixation (as is normally considered to be the case for fusional languages as Italian):

(68) a. Mario credeva fosse malata.

    b. […[$_V$ credeva [$_{MOOD/Agr}$ fosse…]]]

On the other hand, the indicative complementizer has a completely different function, which does not concern morphology but rather interpretation and time anchoring. Therefore, there is no syncretic v. scattered realization, as the information that the indicative *che* encodes is not mood but the spatio-temporal coordinates of the speaker. This explanation goes beyond the mere "necessity of the complementizer", but rather offers a syntactic formal rationale for the different behaviors of the complementizer *che* in indicative and subjunctive contexts.

2.4. Data description

Given the premises above, let us now move to the experiment carried out in the present work. The study took into consideration both embedded indicatives and embedded subjunctives, with and without the complementizer.

The data were collected via survey, whereby the sample was presented. The subjects were asked to provide their acceptability judgment for a totality of 40 sentences, using a Likert scale rating from 0 to 5 (Likert, 1932), where 0 meant *completely unacceptable* and 5 *completely acceptable*. Of the 40 sentences, 20 were test sentences and 20 were control. The test sentences were designed to minimize the variables: the only conjunctions selected were coordinative *e* (and) and adversative *ma* (but). Moreover, all the sentences contain the adverb *anche* (too) as a focalizer and, despite the mobility that such adverbial is allowed in Italian, a choice was made to formulate all test sentences with the focalizer *anche* preceding the remnant argument. This decision was made in order to control the variables in the test, as different positions of the focalizer might elicit different acceptability judgments on the part of the speakers.

It is important to point out that Italian embedded Bare Argument Ellipsis is possible with other focalizers as well, such as *neanche* (not even), *solo* (only), and *perfino* (even), as shown in examples (69-71) below:

(69) Carlo non ha studiato abbastanza per l'esame di giovedì, e penso (che) *neanche* per quello del venerdì.

'Caro hasn't studied enough for the exam on Thursday, and I think (that) not even for the one on Friday'

(70) Nel frigorifero è rimasto un cartone di latte, e mio padre mi ha detto (che) *solo* due uova.

'In the fridge there is only a carton of milk left, and my father has told me (that) only two eggs'

(71) Al matrimonio Camilla ha invitato tantissima gente che non vedeva da anni, e mi hanno detto (che) *perfino* la sua maestra delle elementari.

'Camilla has invited a lot of people that she hadn't seen in years to her wedding, and I've been told (that) even her elementary school teacher'

Although it would be compelling to assess the response of the speakers to the sentences above, the present work does not tackle such constructions. Future experimental research on the topic would certainly be of high interest, especially with respect to the semantic and interpretive variation that different focalizers produce on embedded stripping.

As regards the experimental process, the survey was printed on paper and submitted to a sample of 58 university students, both graduate and undergraduate, on a voluntary basis. The subjects were asked if their native language was Italian and their possible dialectal background, in order to examine only the data from Italian native speakers. The dialectal status was asked to control the possibility of a dialectal influence on the acceptability judgments: of the 58 subjects, 36 spoke a dialectal variety from Veneto, due to the university from which the sample was selected (Ca' Foscari University of Venice), 17 did not speak any dialectal variety, and 4 spoke other varieties. As has been mentioned, the data were collected via paper survey, and an informed consent was signed by all voluntary participants. The surveys and the informed consents were not collected in two distinct folders, in order to maintain anonymity and to avoid a match between the signature and the survey. All the collected materials are stored at Ca' Foscari BemboLab, the linguistic laboratory of the university in Ca' Bembo, Dorsoduro 1075 in Venice.

The results of the survey show great variety in the acceptability judgments on the part of the subjects. However, some tendencies emerged. The responses were organized and, for each sentence, the weighted average of the answers was calculated. Subsequently, a ratio was established between the total of judgments from 0 to 2, which indicated null to low acceptability, and the judgments rating 3 to 5, suggesting medium to total acceptability. The results are here reported[25]:

Sentence	0-2	3-5	Weighted Average (WA)	$|f0 - f5|$
2	49	9	1.3	14
4	19	39	2.9	4
8	26	32	2.7	1
9	46	12	1.4	18
10	47	11	1.4	16
12	52	6	1	25
15	33	25	2.4	3
17	34	24	2	9
18	45	13	1.5	17

[25] The sentences are numbered according to their appearance in the survey, which is reported in the Appendix. Thus, sentence 2. here corresponds to sentence 2 in the survey, and so on.

20	36	23	2.1	11
22	28	30	2.4	5
23	19	39	3.1	7
25	45	13	1.5	17
26	55	3	0.7	32
29	7	51	4	22
32	17	41	3.2	6
34	45	13	1.3	20
36	35	23	2.1	8
38	15	43	3.5	17
39	34	24	2.1	8

From the data in the table above, the sentences can be divided into three groups according to their level of acceptability. Group A will contain sentences with a WA < 2, group B sentences with WA ranging from 2.1 to 2.9 and group C with a WA >3. This can be described as group A containing sentences which have received a low acceptability judgment, group B containing sentences with a medium acceptability judgment, and group C containing sentences having received a good acceptability judgment. The sentences are reported below, according to such categorization.

Group A:

2. Carlotta mangia sempre una caramella prima   di   andare a dormire, e
    Carlotta eats   always a   candy   before COMPL.NON-FIN   go.INF to sleep,   and
    Laura dice che anche Sofia.
    Laura says that also   Sofia
    'Carlotta always eats a candy before going to sleep, and Laura says that Sofia does too'

9. Tra   tutti gli animali pericolosi che ci   sono in Africa, non mi aspettavo   che
    among all   the animals dangerous that there are   in Africa, not REFL expected.1P.S that
    anche l'elefante.
    also the elefant
     'Among all the dangerous animals that there are in Africa, I didn't expect the elephant

too'

10. Eleonora immaginava che ballare   danza classica fosse   difficile, ma non
    Eleonora imagined   that dance.INF dance classical be.SUBJ.PAST difficult, but not
    immaginava   che anche la danza moderna!
    imagined.3P.S. that also   the dance modern
    'Eleonora imagined that dancing ballet was difficult, but she didn't imagine that modern
    dance was too'

12. A Lucia piace studiare i   minerali, e   Giovanni dice che anche la   geografia.
    to Lucia likes study.INF the minerals, and Giovanni says that also   the geography
    'Lucia likes studying minerals, and Giovanni says that geography too'

17. Carlo Magno era altissimo, ma Luca ha letto che Napoleone no.
    Charlemagne was very tall, but Luca has read that Napoleon not
    'Charlemagne was very tall, but Luca has read that Napoleon wasn't'

18. La prof. dice che solo io disturbo   sempre, ma io dico che anche gli altri.
    the prof. says that only I disturb.1P.S. always, but I   say that also   the others
    'the teacher says that only I always disturb, but I say the others do too'

25. Ginevra vince tutte le   gare di corsa campestre, e   io penso che anche le gare
    Ginevra wins all   the cross-country races,   and I think   that also the competitions
    di salto in lungo.
    of long-jump
    'Ginevra wins all the cross-country races, and I think the long-jump competitions too'

26. Elena scrive sempre il   suo diario prima   di   andare a dormire, ma sua
    Elena writes always the her diary before COMPL.NON-FIN   go.INF to sleep,   but her
    mamma non immaginava   che anche una poesia.
    Mum   not   imagined.3P.S. that also   a   poem
    'Elena always writes in her diary before going to sleep, but her mum did not imagine that
     a poem too'

34. L'avvocato ha convinto   la giuria che l'imputato   è innocente, e   ha dimostrato

the lawyer has convinced the jury that the defendant is innocent, and has proved

che anche il   suo complice.

that also   the his accomplice

'the lawyer has convinced the jury that the defendant is innocent, and she has proven that

his accomplice is too'

Group B

4. Giorgia ha preparato un pranzo buonissimo, e   mi   hanno   detto anche

Giorgia has prepared a   lunch   very good,   and me.DAT have.3P.PL told also

un'ottima cena

a   great   dinner

'Giorgia has prepared an amazing lunch, and they have told me a great dinner too'

8. A Chiara avevano detto che ci   sarebbero stati   i   suoi amici alla   festa, ma

to Chiara had.3P.PL told that there be.COND.PAST the her friends at the party, but

credeva anche i suoi parenti.

believed.3P.S. also the her relatives

'Chiara had been told her fiends would be at her party, but she believed her relatives

would too'

15. Ad Andrea avevano detto che cucinare la cassata era complicato,   ma non

to Andrea had.3P.PL. told that cook.INF the cassata was complicated, but not

immaginava anche la crostata.

imagined.3P.S. also   the tart

'Andrea had been told that cooking the cassata was complicated, but he didn't imagine

cooking the tart would be too'

20. Mara sapeva che la matematica   le   piaceva tanto, ma non pensava   anche

Mara knew   that the mathematics her.DAT liked   much, but not thought.1P.S.also

la fisica

the physics

'Mara knew she liked mathematics very much, but she didn't think physics too'

22. I   miei genitori dicono che mi   regaleranno   solo un gatto, ma io dico anche

the my parents say.3P.PL that me.DAT gift.FUT   only a cat, but I say also

un cane

 a   dog

'My parents say that they will gift me only with a cat, but I say with a dog too'

36. Sandro dorme sempre senza   il cuscino, e   Roberto dice anche Clara.

   Sandro sleeps always without the pillow,   and Roberto says also   Clara

   'Sandro always sleeps without the pillow, and Roberto says Clara too'

39. Giulio Cesare sapeva che molti senatori erano coinvolti nella sua congiura,   ma

   Julius Caesar   knew that many senators were involved in   his conspiracy, but

   non immaginava che anche Bruto.

   not imagined.3P.S. that also   Brutus

   'Julius Caesar knew that many senators were involved in his conspiracy, but he didn't

   imagine that Brutus too'

Group C:

23. Sotto   Natale   la gente   compra soprattutto il panettone, ma io credo   anche

   around Christmas the people buys   mainly   the panettone, but I believe also

   il pandoro.

   the pandoro

   'around Christmas people buys mainly panettone, but I believe pandoro, too'

29. Si   dice   che Diego porti   sempre una bussola con sé,   e   alcuni

   REFL.3P.S say.3P.S. that Diego carry.SUBJ.PRES always a   compass with himself, and some

   affermano anche un orologio da taschino.

   claim.3P.S. also a   pocket watch

   'It is said that Diego always carries a compass with himself, and some claim a pocket

   watch too'

32. Anna sosteneva che Riccardo   le   avrebbe chiesto di   uscire,   ma

   Anna claimed   that Riccardo her.DAT ask.COND.PAST   COMPL.NON-FIN go out.INF, but

   non pensava   anche Matteo

   not thought.3P.S. also   Matteo

'Anna claimed that Riccardo would ask her out, but she didn't think Matteo too'

38. Tutte le persone qui   in coda sono dirette allo   stadio, e   io penso anche quelle
    all   the people here in line   are   directed to the stadium, and I think also   those
    laggiù in fondo.
    down there
    'all the people here in line are directed to the stadium, and I think those down there too'

This classification method is useful as a preliminary step in the organization and subsequent analysis of the data. However, despite being useful in determining a general tendency on the part of the subjects, the weighted average does not provide enough insight. Some finer methods have to be used: as reported in the table above, for each sentence a sum has been made for all the judgments 0-2 and 3-5. In this way the general distribution of the answers is better understandable. Moreover, for each sentence whose difference between frequency of 0 and frequency of 5 was below 10, an independent analysis has been carried out. Specifically, the sentences in question are number 4, 8, 15, 17, 22, 23, 32, 36, 39.
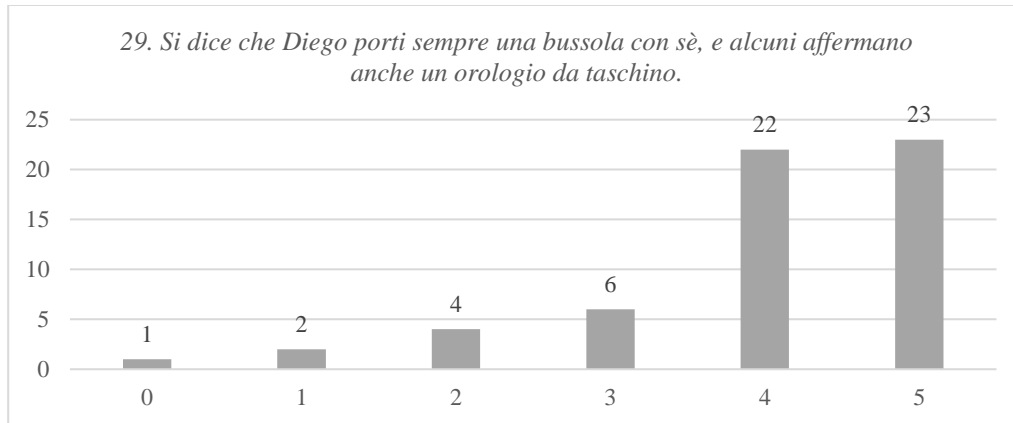
Chapter 3: Discussion

The data reported in chapter 3 offer interesting insights on the nature of embedded stripping in Italian. As the main question of the present work is whether embedded stripping is possible in this language, and if so, to what extent the presence or absence of the complementizer influences the acceptability of this construction, the following analysis will be twofold and will follow this order: the first part will be dedicated to a general assessment of the construction, while the second part will be centered around the role that the complementizer plays with respect to such construction. One last section will be dedicated to the detailed analysis of some selected sentences, which posit some interesting questions and are worth discussing.
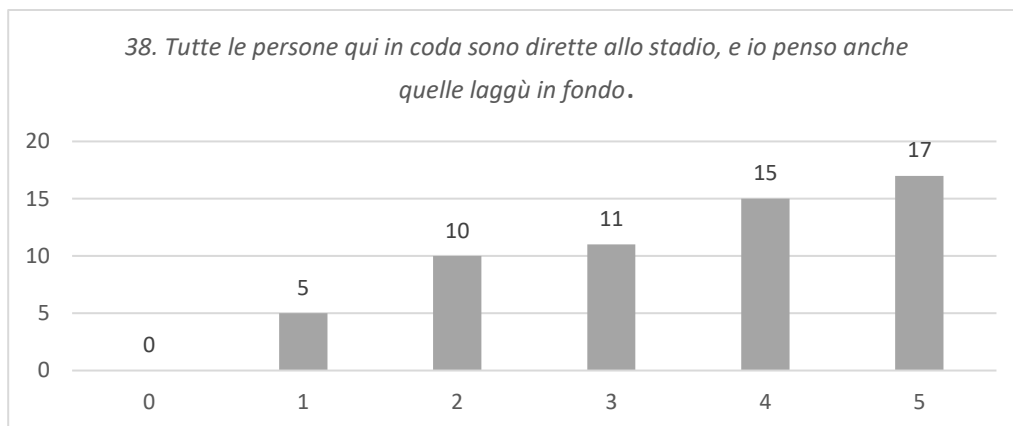
3.1. Is embedded stripping possible in Italian?

Of the 20 tested sentences, only 4 appear to have received an unquestionable positive judgment, thus belonging to group C: this datum alone is therefore not sufficient to claim the pertinence of embedded stripping to the Italian language. However, as has already been mentioned, the opening towards an acceptance of this construction is quite novel, as the literature has restrained Bare Argument Ellipsis to main coordinate clauses up until the 2010s. This means that embedded stripping is a construction that is not widespread and that might be restricted to some specific contexts and subject to some rigid constraints. Therefore, let us look at the collected data to assess this matter.

High acceptability sentences (Group C)

Group C contains sentences whose WA value is above 3, meaning that the subjects have expressed a judgment which is unarguably positive. Sentence 29 has received the highest score, with a weighted average of the answers of 4:

29. Si dice che Diego porti sempre una bussola con sè, e alcuni affermano anche un orologio da taschino.

The second higher in terms of WA value is sentence 38, with its weighted average at 3.5:

38. Tutte le persone qui in coda sono dirette allo stadio, e io penso anche quelle laggiù in fondo.

These first two sentences are undoubtedly instances of embedded stripping: they consist of a first conjunct, the coordinating conjunction *e* (and) in both sentences, and then a main verb followed by an embedded sentence which has been elided except for one argument and what in the literature has been referred to as a focusing adverb, *anche* (too):

(72) … e   alcuni affermano [[TP ~~porti~~   ~~con~~   ~~sé~~   *anche* [DP un orologio da taschino]].

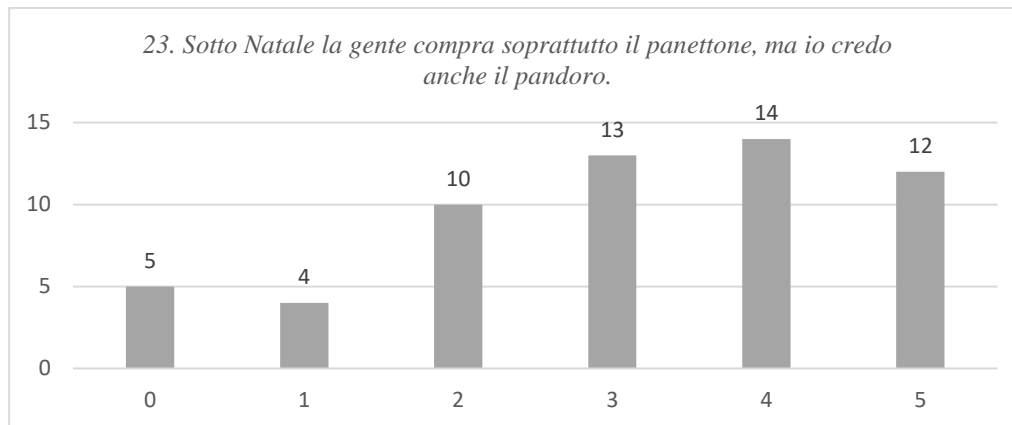… and some state   [[TP ~~carry.SUBJ.PRES.3PS.~~ ~~with himself~~ also [DP a pocket watch]].

'… and some claim ~~he carries~~ a pocket watch too.'

(73) … e io penso [[TP *anche* [DP quelle laggiù in fondo] ~~siano dirette allo stadio~~]].

… and I think [[TP also [DP those down there] be.SUBJ.PRES.3PPl. directed to the stadium.

… and I think those over there are directed to the stadium too.

Moreover, despite a slightly lower WA rate, other two sentences have received a positive judgment, namely sentences 23 and 32. The results for these two sentences are reported below:

23. Sotto Natale la gente compra soprattutto il panettone, ma io credo anche il pandoro.

Value	0	1	2	3	4	5
Count	5	4	10	13	14	12

32. Anna sosteneva che Riccardo le avrebbe chiesto di uscire, ma non pensava anche Matteo.--> subj. anteriority

Value	0	1	2	3	4	5
Count	4	4	9	13	18	10

Both sentences have received an acceptability judgment above 3; however, the results show a slightly less neat distribution of frequency with respect to the level of acceptability. In fact, as opposed to the previous two sentences, the number of subjects having assigned a 0 or 1 value is higher; additionally, both have received an overall judgment below 3,5 (sentence 23 has received a 3.1 and sentence 32 a 3.2). This datum elicits further questions that will be explored later on. Nonetheless, both sentences are undoubtedly instances of embedded stripping; however, they both share the adversative conjunction *ma* (but) instead of *e* (and).

It is important to highlight that sentence 32 is the Italian translation of one of the sentences contained in Wurmbrand (2017:344), specifically example (5b):

(5b) Abby claimed (that) Ben would ask her out, but she didn't think Bill (too)[26].

Interestingly, the sentence here reported is the one that respects Wurmbrand's Embedded Stripping Generalization, which states that embedded stripping is possible only in the absence of the complementizer *that*, as (5b) and its translation 32 show. At a closer look, this property can be extended to all the four sentences included in Group C, as they all lack the complementizer *che* (that). Another shared property is the nature of the verbs of the main clause: the sentences display verbs that in Italian normally call for the subjunctive mood in their complement clauses: *credere* (believe) and *pensare* (think). The only exception is represented by the sentence ranking the higher in terms of acceptability: sentence 29, in fact, contains the verb *affermare* (claim, state), which is generally considered to require the indicative (Serianni, 1989). However, the unelided counterpart of the sentence, reported in (74) below, appears to be grammatical with the subjunctive:

(74) Si dice che Diego porti sempre una bussola con sé, e alcuni affermano porti sempre con sé anche un orologio da taschino.
'It is said that Diego always carry.SUBJ.PRES.3PS a compass with himself, and some claim carry.SUBJ.PRES.3PS a pocket watch too'

The same sentence appears marginally grammatical once an embedded indicative is selected (75):

(75) ?? Si dice che Diego porti sempre una bussola con sé, e alcuni affermano che porta sempre con sé anche un orologio da taschino.

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[26] It would appear that English and Italian differ with respect to the obligatoriness of too (*anche*). The difference would appear to lie in the position that these two adverbs assume in the construction: Hoeksema and Zwarts (1991) distinguish between phrasal and sentential adverbial scope. Italian *anche* appears to have phrasal scope, being its position within the sentence, whereas English too seems to be mainly used with a sentential scope in embedded stripping contexts, with a sentence-final position. According to the authors, only sentential adverbs allow a stressed intonation, whereas phrasal adverbs lack such quality, being the phrases they modify the ones to be pronounced with a stress. As the authors suggest, "[t]he possibility of bearing stress also makes it possible to use these adverbs as remnants of the gapping construction." (Hoeksema and Zwarts, 1991:57). Thus, there would appear to be a connection between the possibility of bearing stress, the sentence-final position and the possibility of omission of sentential adverbs such as *too*. However, further research is necessary in order to formalize such assumptions.
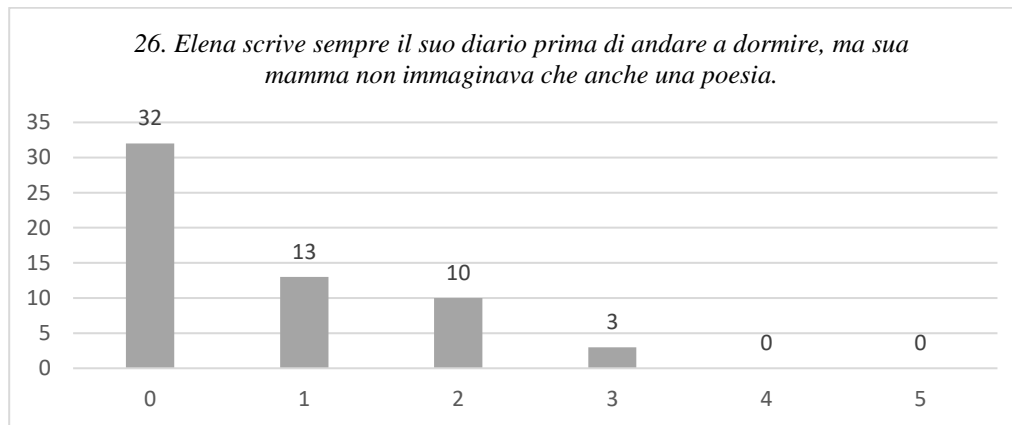
'It is said that Diego always carry.SUBJ.PRES.3PS a compass with himself, and some claim that he carries with himself a pocket watch too'

Thus, it would appear that all four sentences do indeed share the same pattern, namely an embedded subjunctive with CD. Although consistent, four sentences are not enough to draw general conclusions on the matter; however, these data do corroborate the existence of embedded stripping in Italian. Starting from this, one can proceed in the analysis of the other 16 sentences to assess what are the characteristics of Italian embedded stripping.

Low-acceptability sentences (Group A)

A compelling process is the analysis of the opposite data, i.e., the sentences belonging to Group A, which have received negative acceptability judgments. As has been indicated in chapter 3, such group contains sentences 2, 9, 10, 12, 17, 18, 25, 26, 34. As in the discussion of Group C, the sentences will be analyzed following their WA values, starting from the lower.

The sentence having received the lowest rate of acceptability is sentence 26, with WA of 0,7:

26. Elena scrive sempre il suo diario prima di andare a dormire, ma sua mamma non immaginava che anche una poesia.

As can be seen from the chart, the sample has provided quite consistent judgments: no subject has deemed the sentence 'almost perfectly acceptable' or 'perfectly acceptable', and only 3 subjects have indicated a medium level of acceptability. More than 50% of the subjects have selected 0 as an answer. These results are immediately followed by sentence 12, with a WA of 1:

12. A Lucia piace studiare i minerali, e Giovanni dice che anche la geografia.
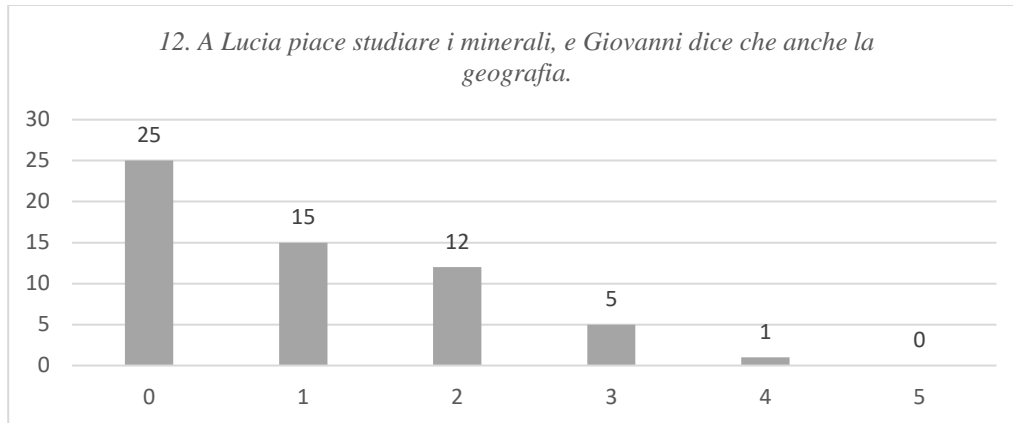
Again, no subject has judged the sentence as perfectly acceptable, and only one has deemed the sentence almost perfectly acceptable. However, compared to sentence 26 above, one can say that the answers in sentence 12 are less neatly distributed, as out of 58 subjects, only 25 have given 0 as an answer, thus indicating a marginal level of acceptability. This sentence is followed by the couple 2 and 34, both scoring 1.3 and both reported below:

2. Carlotta mangia sempre una caramella prima di andare a dormire, e Laura dice che anche Sofia.

34. L'avvocato ha convinto la giuria che l'imputato è innocente, e ha dimostrato che anche il suo complice.
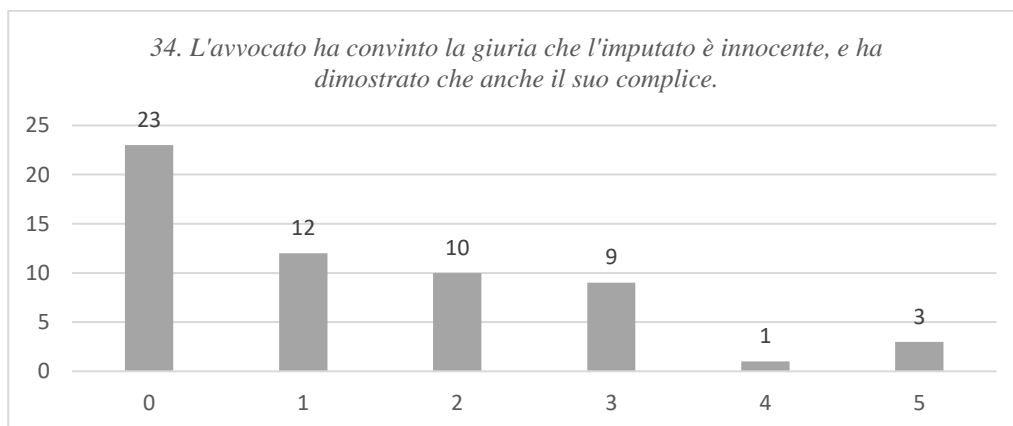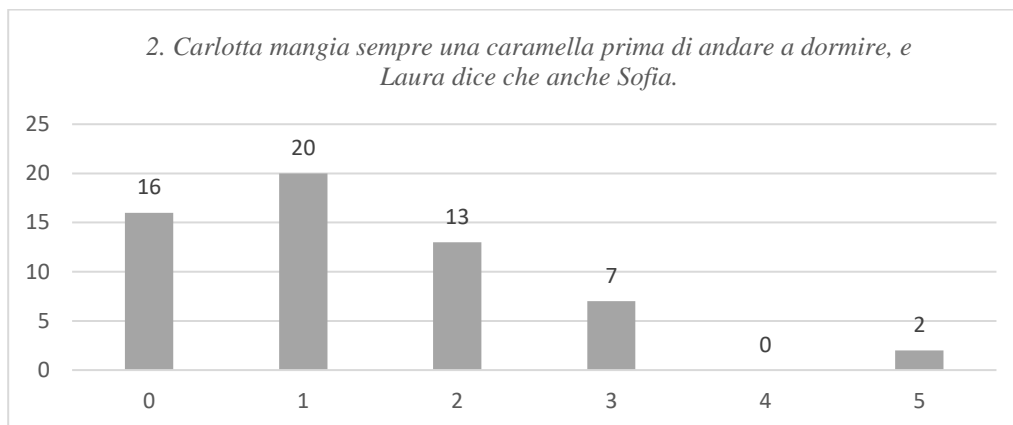
Despite their correspondence with respect to the weighted average of the responses, one can easily see how the answers are distributed differently in the two charts: in fact, whereas the majority of the judgments in sentence 2 indicate value 1 (almost completely unacceptable), for sentence 34 the majority of the subjects has provided answer 0, thus indicating the sentence 'completely unacceptable'. Whether this distributional discrepancy is due to structural differences between the two sentences will be analyzed later. Before dealing with this issue, however, it might be useful to have a look at other two pairs of sentences which have received equal acceptability rates, namely sentences 9 and 10 (WA = 1.4) and sentences 18 and 25 (WA = 1.5).
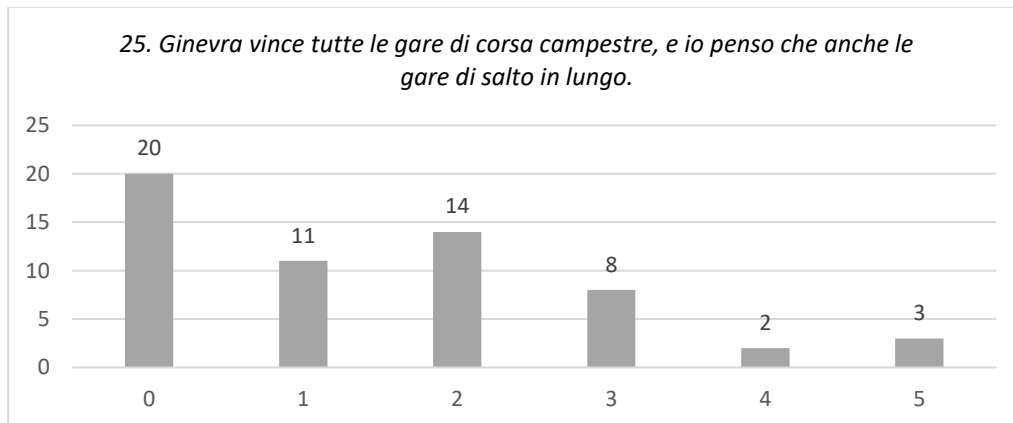
The first pair does display differences in distribution, as the two charts below display. In fact, while sentence 9 shows a linear decrease in frequency, sentence 10 has received an equal number of 0 and 1 answers. Despite the extremely marginal difference between 'completely unacceptable' and 'almost completely unacceptable', this datum cannot be ignored.

9. Tra tutti gli animali pericolosi che ci sono in Africa, non mi aspettavo che anche l'elefante.

10. Eleonora immaginava che ballare danza classica fosse difficile, ma non le avevano detto che anche la danza moderna!
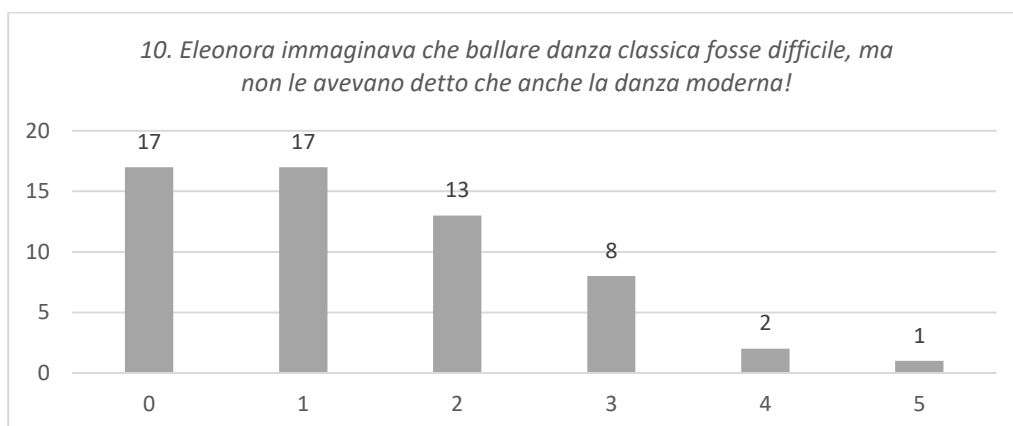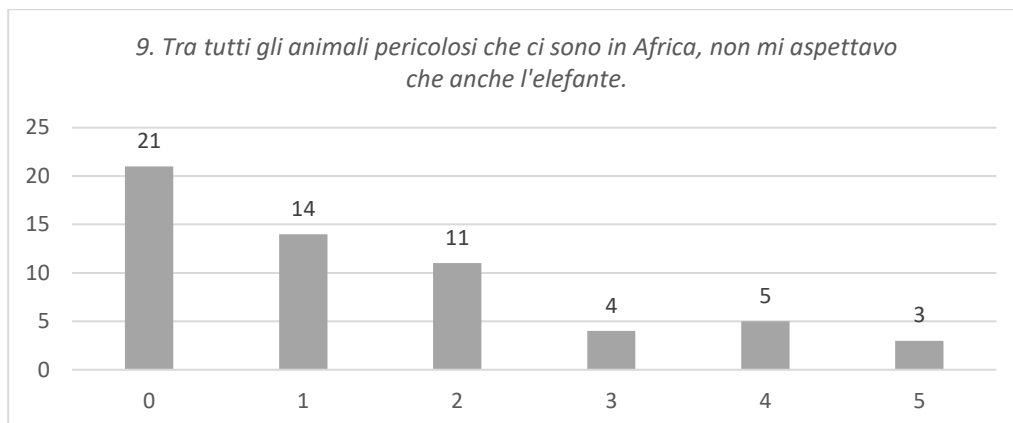
On the other hand, the pair of sentences 18 and 25 display a pretty similar distribution of answers: despite the differences in numbers, both sentences have received a high number of 0 and, interestingly, 2 ratings. However, one could not possibly disregard the difference between the two sentences with respect to value 5, being 0 in sentence 18 and 3 in sentence 25. However marginal this difference, it would be interesting to assess why 3 people considered this latter sentence completely acceptable, whereas none had the same linguistic intuition for the former one.

18. La prof. dice che solo io disturbo sempre, ma io dico che anche gli altri.

25. Ginevra vince tutte le gare di corsa campestre, e io penso che anche le gare di salto in lungo.
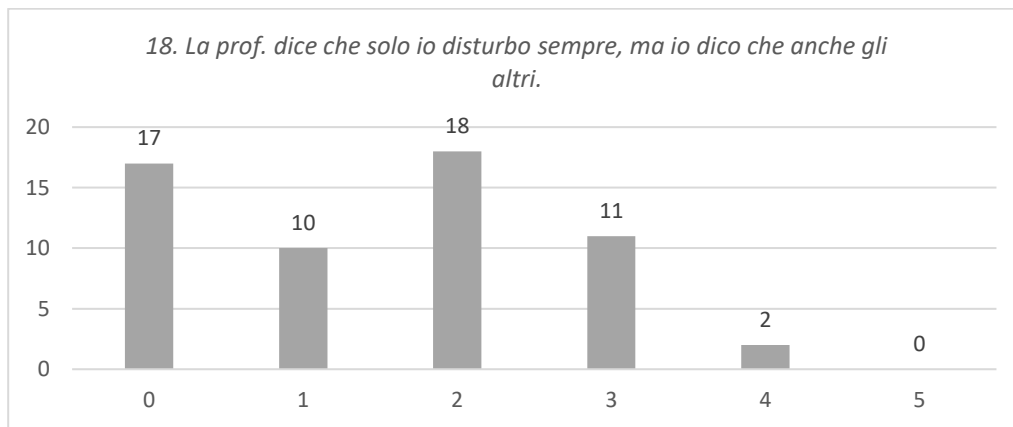
Finally, sentence 17 is the highest scoring sentence in Group A, with an average of acceptability at 2. As can be seen by the chart below, however, its distribution of judgments is extremely discontinuous, thus requiring further analysis.

17. Carlo Magno era altissimo, ma Luca ha letto che Napoleone no.

x	count
0	11
1	15
2	8
3	13
4	9
5	2

This sentence is actually in between Group A and Group B, as its acceptability rate corresponds to the uppermost limit of Group A. The sentences pertaining to Group B have in fact an acceptability rate starting between 2.1 and 2.9. Once all the sentences from Group A have been shortly analyzed, it is beneficial to 'dig deeper' and assess what the similarities and differences among these sentences might have contributed to their low acceptability rate, as opposed to the high rates received by the sentences in Group C. A first remark to make is that all sentences are instances of Bare Argument Ellipsis and, more specifically of embedded stripping. In fact, all the sentences contain instances of elided second conjuncts, either introduced by *e* (and) or *ma* (but), followed by only one argument as remnant and a focusing particle *anche* (too); only sentence 17 displays a negative polar particle *no* in the rightmost position, being thus an example of what Depiante (2000) refers to as *pseudostripping*. Moreover, almost all embedded sentences are introduced by verbs of saying, thus requiring an indicative. The only exceptions, as will be further discussed later, are sentences 25 and 26: these have, in fact, *pensare* (think) and *immaginare* (imagine) as superordinate verbs in the second conjunct, which are verbs that require an embedded subjunctive. Complementizer-wise, it strikes that all these sentences display an overt realization of the complementizer; this would not be an issue, considering that, as has been stated in chapter 3, CD is not possible in embedded indicative contexts. However, as will be evident later, sentences that have received a higher acceptability ranking than those in group A (thus being in the "medium acceptability" group B) do display in some instances CD with

indicative-bound bridge verbs. Whether those sentences are instances of complementizer deletion or other syntactic processes will be discussed in the following section.

Up to now empirical data has shown that high-acceptability sentences appear to be instances of embedded stripping with subordinate subjunctive and complementizer deletion, whereas low-acceptability sentences almost always display subordinate indicative with an overt realization of the complementizer. This data must be corroborated by a strong theoretical analysis that can explain and support these findings. The first issue to assess is whether this correlation between complementizer and embedded stripping is due to Italian CD phenomena or to some other syntactic operations.
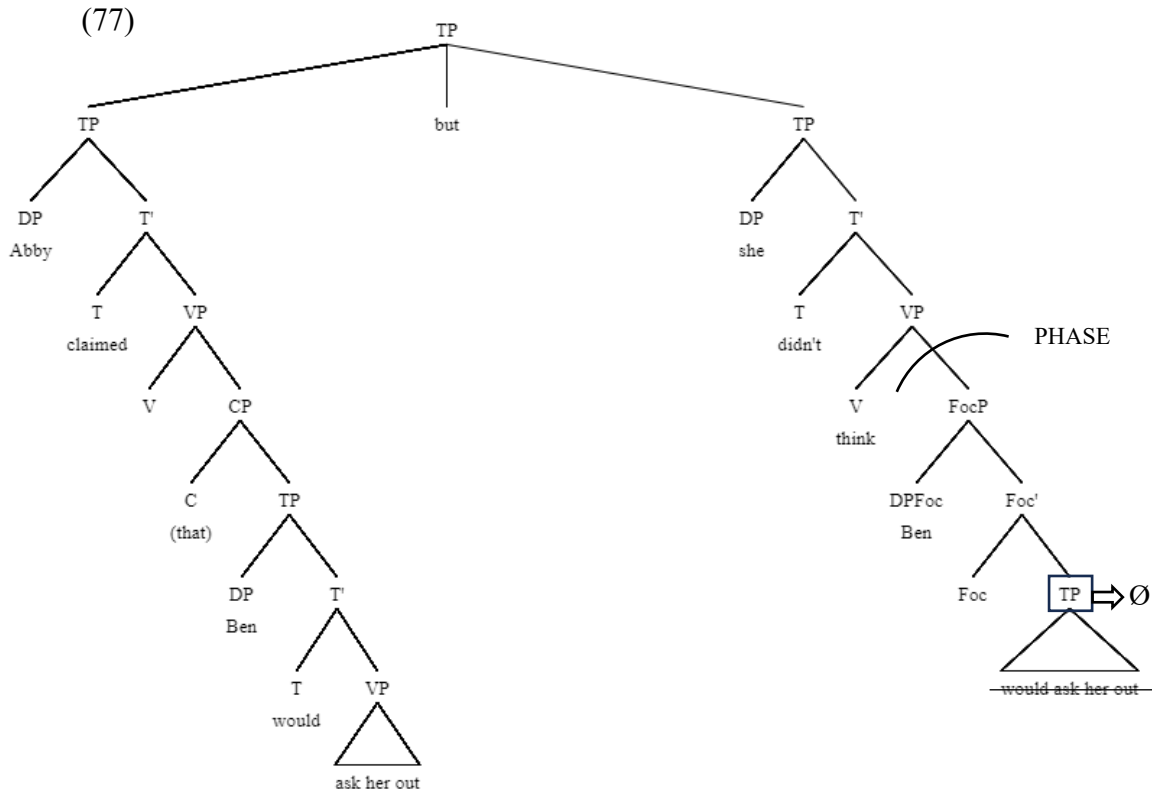
3.2. The role of the complementizer

As has already been mentioned, Wurmbrand (2017) accounts for the English data reported below in (76a-b) by postulating that not only v*Ps and CPs are phases, but also TP can be phases, and that ellipsis is an instance of Zero Spell-Out, where elided constituents are unpronounced Spell Out Domains (SODs).

(76) a. *Abby claimed (that) Ben would ask her out, but she didn't think that Bill (too).

     b. Abby claimed that Ben would ask her out, but she didn't think Bill (too).

When the sentence lacks a CP[27], as in (76b), if one postulates Merchant's (2003) position on remnants of stripping occupying focus positions, the structure of the embedded clause would be as follows:

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[27] Crucially, CP here indicates the maximal projection of C. The author of the present work agrees with Rizzi's position (Rizzi, 1997) whereby FocP is part of the CP-layer, not of the T-layer. In this sense, a CP-less clause means a clause where the complementizer head C is missing, and not where the C-layer is missing altogether. However, some scholars have challenged Rizzi's position, arguing that Focus cannot be restricted to a single position in the left periphery, but can appear also in the rightmost position of the sentence. With regard to this, interesting approaches are those by Samek-Lodovici (2005) and Bianchi, Bocci and Cruschina (2015).

(77)

TP
├─ TP
│ ├─ DP — Abby
│ └─ T'
│   ├─ T — claimed
│   └─ VP
│   ├─ V
│   └─ CP
│   ├─ C — (that)
│   └─ TP
│   ├─ DP — Ben
│   └─ T'
│   ├─ T — would
│   └─ VP — ask her out
├─ but
└─ TP
   ├─ DP — she
   └─ T'
      ├─ T — didn't
      └─ VP — PHASE
         ├─ V — think
         └─ FocP
            ├─ DPFoc — Ben
            └─ Foc'
               ├─ Foc
               └─ TP ⇒ Ø — would ask her out

Due to the lack of C, the Spell-Out Domain of the structure above would be TP, as the domain is defined as the complement of the head of the phase which, once the cycle is completed, is transferred to the two interfaces, the phono-articulatory one and the semantic one. Once the C layer is inserted, as in (76a), FocP is no longer a phase, and as a consequence TP is no longer a SOD, and thus cannot be elided. Could this explanation hold for Italian as well? In order for it to be the case, one should assume that Italian CD is a case of CP-less embedded clause. The literature would seem to endorse this option, with Giorgi (2009:1841) stating that "DAR sentences are introduced by a complementizer projection, CP, which is not realized when the complement clause does not exhibit DAR effects"; as it has been already mentioned, the mood exhibiting obligatory DAR effects is the indicative, as opposed to the subjunctive which does not display DAR effects. Consequently, one can assume that subjunctive embedded sentences are CP-less, thus seemingly depicting Italian embedded stripping as a matter of phasehood and Spell-Out Domain.

Medium-acceptability sentences

Some of the data collected via the present experiment, however, would appear to disprove such reading. Let us then analyze the sentences in group B, that have received medium-acceptance ratings and that have been ignored so far, but that could be nonetheless crucial in determining the nature of Italian embedded stripping.

Let us consider sentences 36, 22, and 4, which are reported below in said order for simplicity.

(78) Sandro dorme sempre senza il cuscino, e Roberto dice anche Clara.

'Sandro always sleeps without a pillow, and Roberto says Clara too.'

(79) I miei genitori dicono che mi regaleranno solo un gatto, ma io dico anche un cane.

'My parents say that they will gift me only a cat, but I say a dog too.'

(80) Giorgia ha preparato un pranzo buonissimo, e mi hanno detto anche un'ottima cena.

'Giorgia has prepared an amazing lunch, and I've been told a great dinner too.'

Sentence 36 (78) has received an overall acceptability score of 2.1, which is just above the threshold level to be in group B. Of course, as language is a continuum, the values to be contained in a specific group have been decided arbitrarily, as a means to organize the data. It is not surprising then that sentence 36 has received such a low acceptability rate, as the main verb *dire* (say) requires an embedded indicative, thus eliciting DAR effects. The complementizer of an embedded indicative contains the spatio-temporal coordinates of the utterer, as has been argued in chapter 3, and cannot therefore be deleted. This is in contrast however with the other two sentences, which display an indicative with complementizer deletion and which have, nonetheless, received a medium to high acceptability rating: sentence 22 (79) has received a 2.5 score, which might still point toward a general dissent in acceptability; sentence 4, on the other hand, has scored 2.9, just below what in the present study has been analyzed as the threshold for a high acceptability ranking (>3). As can be seen above however, both sentences contain a main verb of saying (*dire*), followed by an elided indicative and what would seem complementizer deletion. However, as has been largely discussed so far, Italian bridge verbs requiring an indicative do not allow CD. Given these premises two questions arise: firstly, how can two sentences that are structurally equal elicit such differences in acceptability by the speakers. Secondly, how is it possible that a

sentence such as 4 (80) has received a positive judgment given the apparent discrepancy with the theoretical assumptions on indicative, DAR, and complementizer deletion. Moreover, an additional controversy connected to these two sentences, which can also be extended to the majority of the sentences in group B, is why there is so little disparity between the number of subjects which have assigned a 0-acceptability rating and a 5: in almost all the sentences in group B: this datum is retrievable from the last column of the table in chapter 3.

In order to address the first issue, namely the difference in rating between two structurally identical sentences, it is necessary to verify such structural identity. In order to do so, it is necessary to identify the non-elided counterparts of both sentences, where the elided part is underlined:

(81) a. I miei genitori dicono che mi regaleranno solo un gatto, ma io dico <u>che i miei genitori mi regaleranno</u> anche un cane.
'My parents say that they will gift me only a cat, but I say <u>that my parents will gift me</u> a dog too.'

(82) a. Giorgia ha preparato un pranzo buonissimo, e mi hanno detto <u>che Giorgia ha preparato</u> anche un'ottima cena.
'Giorgia has prepared an amazing lunch, and they have told me <u>that Giorgia has prepared</u> a great dinner too.'

Considering only the underlined parts, that is to say the overt realizations of the elision, one can conclude that they are equal. What changes is the complexity of the subject XP, which in (81) is a complex DP modified by an adjective while in (82) is a NP containing only a proper name (Giorgia). Moreover, sentence (81) contains a DP in the form of a dative object, *mi* (me$_{DAT}$). Beyond this, the two sentences share the same structure, as in both cases the complementizer is deleted in the stripping process, and the remnant is in both cases a direct object. One element that might influence the difference in acceptability rating is the conjunction, which is an adversative in (81) and a coordinative in (82). In other cases the adversative conjunction seems to lower the acceptability rate, as sentences 23 and 32 in Group C discussed above which, despite the overall high acceptability rate (>3), have

slightly lower scores than the other two sentences in the group having a coordinative conjunction instead.

Let us now move on to the second question, i.e., how is it possible that, despite what has been discussed so far, two sentences with an indicative-bound verb as main verb receive medium-too-high acceptability judgments despite the elision of the complementizer *che*. This inconsistency inevitably leads towards questioning the nature of such complementizer deletion. In the examples (81) and (82) above, the complementizer has been inserted in the reconstruction of the unelided counterparts of the sentences under scrutiny; that is because the variants without a complementizer would have been ungrammatical:

(83) *… ma io dico ___ i miei genitori mi regaleranno anche un cane.

    *… but I say ___ my parents will gift me a dog too.

(84) * … e mi hanno detto ___ Giorgia ha preparato anche un'ottima cena.

    *… and I've been told ___ Giorgia has prepared a great dinner too.

Given the ungrammaticality of sentences (83) and (84) above, one must assume that in the derivation of the elided sentences the complementizer is at some point present. It is therefore inaccurate to talk about complementizer deletion, as one should rather talk about complementizer *elision*. This means that the complementizer is present in the derivation, but it is elided together with the TP, thus resulting in the whole CP being deleted. This must not be confused with complementizer deletion: CD in fact, as has been discussed above, gives rise to CP-less clauses; on the contrary, in this case the clause would have a C-layer in its derivation, which is then elided resulting in the elliptical constructions (79) and (80) above. What remains open is why embedded stripping with indicative-bound verbs seems to be preferred when the complementizer is elided together with TP. One reason could be that, as the complementizer in embedded DAR contexts is needed for the temporal interpretation of the embedded verb, when the embedded verb is missing there is no need for such temporal anchoring, as the elided part of the sentence can be temporally interpreted via principle of identity with the first conjunct. Thus, in a sentence such as 4, reported in (85) below, the tense features on the embedded verb in the second conjunct are retrieved from the tense features of the verb in the first conjunct, which is taken to be identical to the elided segment.

(85) Giorgia ha preparato un pranzo buonissimo, e mi hanno detto [che Giorgia ha preparato] anche un'ottima cena.

This view is corroborated if one looks at sentences 25 and 26, reported here for simplicity:

(86) a. Ginevra vince tutte le gare di corsa campestre, e io penso che anche le gare di salto in lungo.

'Ginevra wins all the cross-country competitions, and I think that the long-jump competitions too'

b. Ginevra vince tutte le gare di corsa campestre, e io penso che [Ginevra vinca] anche le gare di salto in lungo.

'Ginevra wins all the cross-country competitions, and I think that [Ginevra win.SUBJ.PRES.3PS] the long-jump competitions too'.

c. … *e io penso che [Ginevra vince] anche le gare di salto in lungo.

'…*and I think that [Ginevra wins] the long-jump competitions too'.

(87) a. Elena scrive sempre il suo diario prima di andare a dormire, ma sua mamma non immaginava che anche una poesia.

'Elena always writes in her diary before going to bed, but her mom didn't imagine that a poem too'

b. Elena scrive sempre il suo diario prima di andare a dormire, ma sua mamma non immaginava che [Elena scrivesse] anche una poesia.

'Elena always writes in her diary before going to bed, but her mom didn't imagine that [Elena write.SUBJ.PAST.3PS] a poem too'

c. …*ma sua mamma non immaginava che [Elena scrive] anche una poesia.

'…*but her mom didn't imagine that [Elena writes] a poem too'

As has been previously mentioned, both sentences have received a low-acceptability rate: sentence 25 (86) has scored 1.5, whereas sentence 26 (87) has received a 0.7 rate. This is in line with the so-called *identity conditions in ellipsis*, whereby "elided material (call it XP_E) must be identical or resolvable by some antecedent phrase (YP_A), where the identity (or parallelism, or resolution) may be semantic or syntactic, or some mix of the two" (Merchant, 2013:21). It is not in the scope of the present paper to assess the nature of this identity; however, it is necessary to point out that Bare Argument Ellipsis is subject to this constraint.

The fact that this rule seems to hold in embedded contexts, and cross-linguistically so, corroborates the existence of embedded stripping.

Proceeding with the analysis of the sentences in group B, one can find that sentences 8 and 15 have received a medium-acceptability rate despite following what until now seems to be the requirement for Italian embedded stripping: an embedded subjunctive verb with complementizer deletion. The sentences are reported below:

8. A Chiara avevano detto che ci sarebbero stati i suoi amici alla festa, ma credeva anche i suoi parenti

15. Ad Andrea avevano detto che cucinare la cassata era complicato, ma non immaginava anche la crostata.
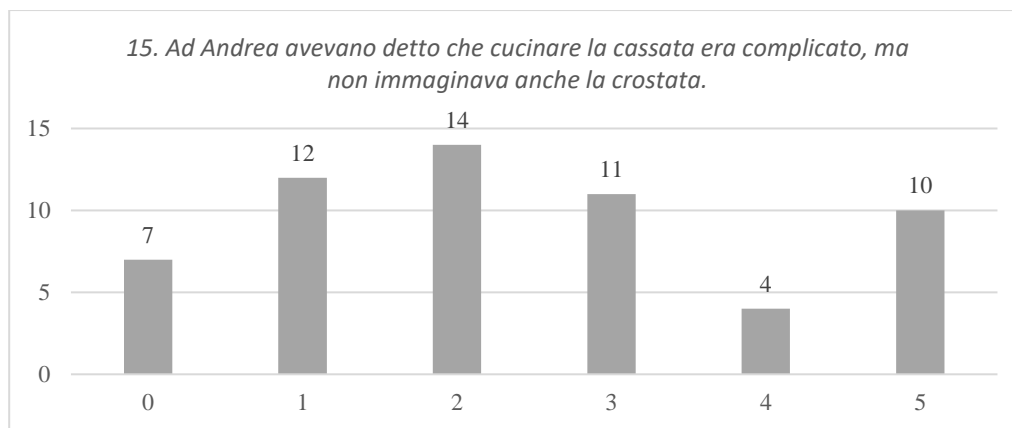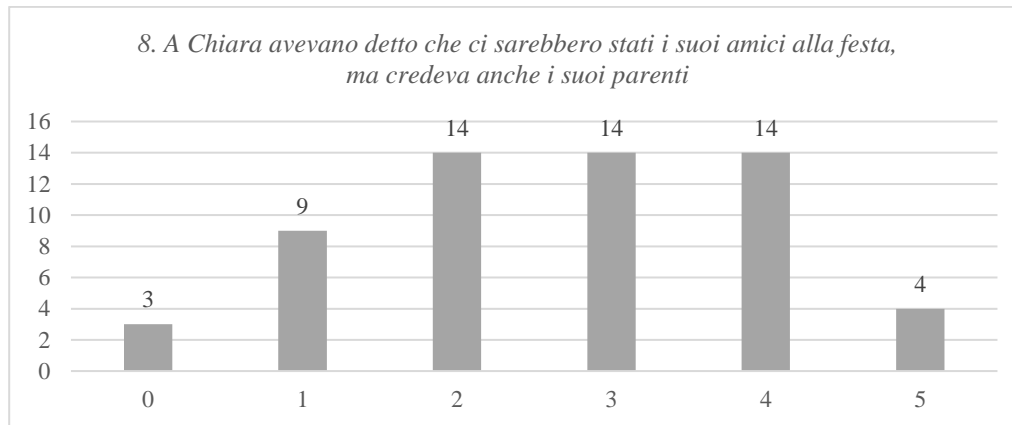
Could these data disprove what has been discussed until now? The first matter to address is the distribution of the answers, which appears uneven in both cases: until now, the weighted average of the answers has been a valuable resource in the organization and simplification of the data. However, the mere mathematical average does not account for the distribution of the answers, which is equally important in the analysis of acceptability judgments. A method to analyze the results with greater depth is to compare the results of the survey for the two sentences above with those of similar sentences that have received both higher and lower acceptability rates. Given that sentences 8 and 15 share an embedded stripping with

CD under subjunctive-bound verbs, they will be compared to sentences 23, 29, 32 and 38, which share the same structure. The six sentences are reported here below, to facilitate the readers:

(88) 8. A Chiara avevano detto che ci sarebbero stati i suoi amici alla festa, ma credeva anche i suoi parenti.

'Chiara had been told that all her friends would be at the party, but she believed her relatives too.'

(89) 15. Ad Andrea avevano detto che cucinare la cassata era complicato, ma non immaginava anche la crostata.

'Andrea had been told that cooking cassata was complicated, but he didn't imagine the tart too.'

(90) 23. Sotto Natale la gente compra soprattutto il panettone, ma io credo anche il pandoro.

'Around Christmas people buys mainly panettone, but I believe pandoro too.'

(91) 29. Si dice che Diego porti sempre una bussola con sé, e alcuni affermano anche un orologio da taschino.

'It is said that Diego always carries a compass with himself, and some claim a pocket watch too'

(92) 32. Anna sosteneva che Riccardo le avrebbe chiesto di uscire, ma non pensava anche Matteo.

'Anna claimed that Riccardo would ask her out, but she didn't think Matteo too'

(93) 38. Tutte le persone qui in coda sono dirette allo stadio, e io penso anche quelle laggiù in fondo.

'All the people here in line are directed to the stadium, and I think those down there too'.

A structural comparison does not provide a clear reading of the matter: in fact, sentences (90-93) have received a high-acceptability ranking and are themselves uneven with respect to the selected conjunction, with two sentences containing an adversative *ma* (but) (23,32), and two sentences containing a coordinative conjunction *e* (and) (29, 38). Thus, the lower acceptability rate and the heterogeneous frequency distribution of sentences 8 and 15 cannot be accounted for by the conjunction. An alternative explanation could be the mood mismatch

between the embedded verb and the verb in the first conjunct, which has been previously argued to lower the acceptability of the sentences, as reported for sentences 25 and 26. However, such analysis appears to not be supported by the data: if on the one hand it is true that sentence 15 (89) does display a mismatch between the verb in the elided string and the non-elided counterpart in the first conjunct, the same can be said for 23 (90) and 38 (93) as well. This disproves the theory according to which mood mismatch would result in a low-acceptability rating on the part of the speakers, as sentence 15 has received a medium-acceptability j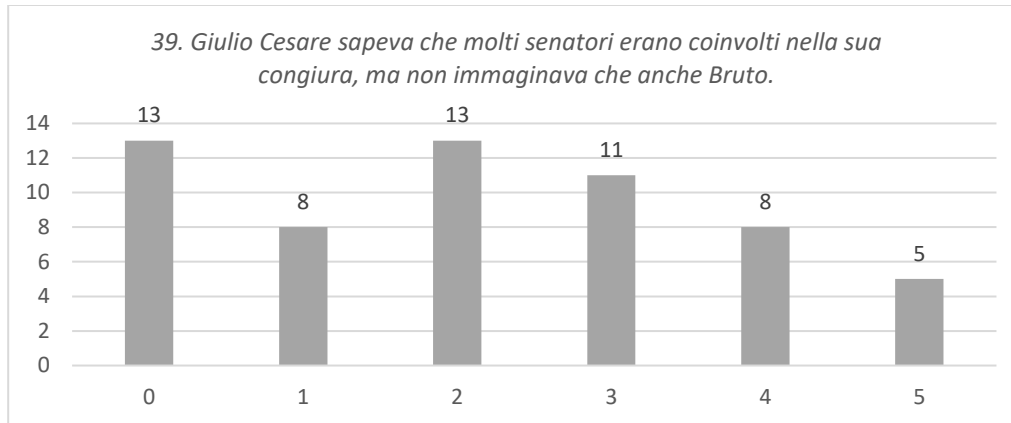udgment and sentences 23 and 38 have been judged acceptable. Interestingly, both sentences 23 and 38 display the 1st singular person of the verbs *credere* (believe) and *pensare* (think) as the main verbs of the second conjunct. In some recent work on these verbal forms (Giorgi 2010), *credo* has been analyzed as an epistemic head. In fact, it appears to be used more as an adverb expressing the grade of certainty that the utterer attributes to the asserted embedded proposition. With the form *credo* (I believe), the utterer qualifies the embedded assertion as "something less than a certainty" (Giorgi, 2010:69). Thus, the epistemic head selects a subjunctive as its embedded verb but, as stated by Giorgi (2010:69): "the embedded clause is in fact more similar to a main one, in spite of the fact that it appears with the subjunctive mood.". This property could be extended to the 1st singular person of the verb *pensare* (think) as well. In this way, the alleged inobservance of the identity constraint in sentences 23 and 38 can actually be accounted for. What remains open is then the issue of the uneven distribution of the ratings for sentences 8 and 15, which can be argued to be the result of the speakers' idiolectal microvariation, as will be discussed below.

Moreover, is interesting to note that the distribution of the answers is peculiar in the majority of the sentences belonging to Group B, in the sense that the number of subjects having provided 0 as an acceptability judgment and those who have provided 5 as an answer are pretty close, meaning that their difference is below 10. This is what in the table in chapter 3 has been referred to as |f0 - f5|. As it has already been indicated, these sentences are numbers 4, 8, 15, 17, 22, 23, 32, 36, and 39. Interestingly, some sentences among these belong to groups A and C as well: in fact, sentence 17 belongs to group A, thus being a low-acceptability sentence, whereas sentences 23 and 32 are high-acceptability sentences, pertaining to group C. This datum is relevant as it showcases that distributional unevenness does not necessarily correspond to medium-acceptability, meaning that there is no consensus

among speakers across all three groups. In fact, of the four high-acceptability sentences, two have an uneven distribution, indicating that such high-acceptability is in 50% of the cases not to be taken for granted. A stabler situation is to be found in group A, where only one sentence out of 9 has an uneven distribution of the answers. This datum is highly relevant, as it shows that speakers agree more on the conditions that make embedded stripping unacceptable than on the conditions that favor acceptability of this construction in Italian. In other words, the characteristics that have been analyzed for the sentences belonging to group A, namely a subordinate indicative with overt complementizer realization, do not allow embedded stripping in Italian. The only instance of embedded indicative and overt complementizer having received a medium-acceptability rate is sentence 20, with an acceptability score of 2.1, only marginally above the threshold dividing groups A and B.

20. Mara sapeva che la matematica le piaceva tanto, ma non pensava che anche la fisica.
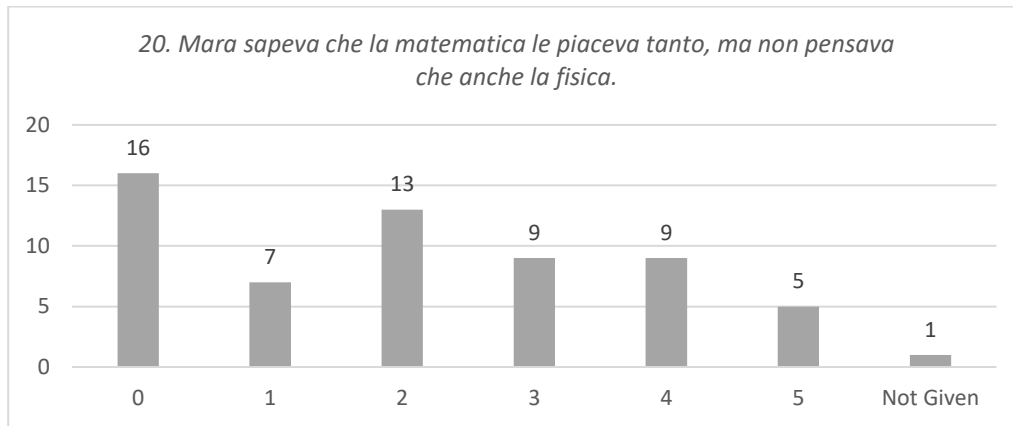
Likewise, sentence 39 has received an average acceptability rate of 2.1, possibly due to the presence of the complementizer. This pair of sentences (20 and 39) further corroborates the theory according to which the non-elision of the complementizer in the embedded stripping process hinders the acceptability of the sentence on the part of the speakers:

39. Giulio Cesare sapeva che molti senatori erano coinvolti nella sua congiura, ma non immaginava che anche Bruto.

3.3. Limitations of the study

Once some preliminary conclusions have been drawn, it is inevitable to discuss the limitations that the present study displays. The first problem is the reduced breadth of the sample. In fact, in order to obtain stable and general data, 58 subjects are not sufficient. Moreover, the selected sample cannot be said to be representative of the whole Italian population: firstly, given the geographical position of the institution from where the sample was selected, the majority of the subjects speak Northern varieties of Italian. Although in the analysis the dialectal substratum does not seem to interfere with the judgments of the subjects, from a methodological perspective the sample remains unrepresentative of the overall population. Moreover, due to the means of subject recruitment, the age range of the sample is majorly limited to young adults; again, this posits a problem of sample under-representativity.

Lastly, the present study is not immune to the methodological issues that empirical linguistic research is normally subject to: in fact, it has been long debated how to gather empirical data that could derive conclusions on the linguistic competence of individuals based on their behavior, i.e., their linguistic performance. Epistemological considerations on the matter have been made for decades; however, with the recent rise of experimental syntax the debate has prospered. The central issue appears to be that, a consequence to the extreme intuitiveness of acceptability judgments on the part of speakers, it is often the case that different subjects respond in very different ways to the same linguistic item; this has occurred

and has largely been noted in the present experiment, often resulting in a problematic assessment of the overall acceptability level of some sentences, especially those belonging to Group B, which contains all those instances of sentences that have received a medium-acceptability score. The considerations to be made are twofold: on the one hand, the methodologies of data gathering in experimental syntax need to be assessed and gauged, to understand whether a method other than a Likert scale could have produced a clearer picture of the syntactic phenomenon under scrutiny; on the other hand, some attention must be paid to syntactic microvariation.

3.3.1. Epistemological matters

As Labov once put it, "linguistic analysis will always rely to a large extent on elicited judgments, the intuition of the native speakers." (Labov, 1996:77). These elicited judgments often revolve around the acceptability of a given linguistic item: if the possible judgment is binary, then the judgment will be about the grammaticality of an item; if, on the contrary, the judgments can be expressed on a scale, the variable assessed will be acceptability. This latter element appears more difficult to assess, as the extension of possible answers to a number above two inevitably increases the possibility of variation. Such variation can be either the result of an effective variation in the personal mental grammar of individuals speaking the same language, as will be discussed in the following section, or the result of inadequate experimental methodologies that fail to account for "reliable, fine-grained continua in acceptability" (Labov, 1996:79). This is because there is no uniform treatment of this continuum in acceptability, and despite the recognition of its existence, its measurement has been subject to the arbitrary preference of the single researchers; as stated in Gervain (2003:409), in fact, " the number and the relative distance of the degrees employed vary from one publication to the other, rendering all principled comparisons impossible.". In the present study, for instance, the distinction between low, medium, and high acceptability rate has been made on the basis of the weighted average of the responses for each sentence. Despite the scale of possible answers being discrete, with the possibility of choosing only one whole number among 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5, the weighted average of the answers very often resulted in a decimal number. This does not come as a surprise, and is well in line with the graded nature of acceptability that has been mentioned above. However, the threshold levels

that have been chosen for low, medium, and high acceptability have been selected arbitrarily, as there are no shared guidelines on the matter.
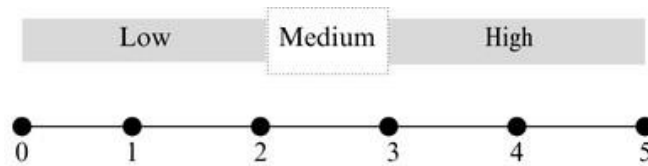
3.3.2. Microvariation

As has been previously mentioned, inhomogeneity in answers on the same stimulus may be the result of genuine discrepancy in the internal grammar of speakers. Intralinguistic variation has been long studied in sociolinguistic, and it has been known for years that speakers of the same language can have different parameters according to their geographical position, age, socio-cultural background, and even depending on the means of communication employed. These differences are what in sociolinguistics are referred to as diatopic, diachronic, diastratic and diamesic variations. However, such varieties are always the result of extralinguistic factors that influence the linguistic performance (but also competence) by different means and to different extents. Is there the possibility of microvariation as a result of mere parametric variation among the speakers of a given language? Until the rise of experimental syntax, and even after it, the general principle for syntacticians has been what Labov (1996:79) defines as the consensus principle, reported below:

(94) *The consensus principle:*
    If there is no reason to think otherwise, assume that the judgments of any native
    speaker are characteristic of all speakers of the language.

The Minimalist Program itself, to some extent, limits the concept of microvariation, as it envisions language as a set of rules tending towards maximal economy and optimality: by making such an assumption, the idea of variation clashes with the idea of language economy as, ideally, algorithmic language rules should be able to reach maximal optimality eliminating all variations that might hinder such optimality. As Henry (2005) highlights, what has been lacking in modern syntactic research is an account of idiolectal variation, i.e., an account on the variations that distinct internal grammars (I-languages) display. The notion

of idiolect has been long known and employed in sociolinguistics; however, the divide between this branch of study and theoretical linguistics has concurred in the latter eliminating the notion of idiolect in favor of an extremely abstract notion of "universal grammar", a system shared by the speakers regardless of their individuality. As has been said, the gradual resort to empiricism to account for theoretical matters has shown that idiolectal variability cannot be disregarded in the discussion of syntax. As Henry (2005:118) puts it, "we have found much about what is common to languages, now we need to find out the limits of how, at the individual level, they really differ.".

Conclusions

The present study takes its moves form an article (Wurmbrand, 2017) where English embedded stripping was acknowledged and characterized. According to such article, English embedded stripping could occur only in absence of the complementizer, as the Embedded Stripping Generalization states. Such restriction would be due to the fact that only Spell-Out Domains can be elided, ellipsis being an instance of Zero Spell-Out. The presence of the complementizer would prevent the stripped TP from being a Spell-Out Domain, hindering its elision. Wurmbrand notes that these considerations hold for a group of languages (English, German) while they are irrelevant in other languages such as Spanish, Hungarian and Russian, among others, where embedded stripping is allowed with an overt complementizer realization, and obligatorily so. The present paper has sought to assess a. whether embedded stripping exists in Italian; b. to what category Italian language belongs with respect to complementizer behavior; c. what characteristics the Italian embedded stripping presents, in case it is an available construction.

According to the results of the survey, embedded stripping appears to be a viable construction in the Italian language, and seems to be subject to the same restriction to which non-embedded stripping must abide, i.e., identity constraint, whereby the elided segment must be identical with respect to a previously uttered linguistic segment in the first conjunct. As embedded contexts in Italian differ from embedded structures in English, a distinction between the two languages must be made. A first difference was made between English and Italian complementizer deletion: while English offers the possibility of a null complementizer with a selection of some bridge verbs, Italian CD is restricted only to some specific contexts and is not a case of null complementizer. Rather, Italian seems to have two different *che* (that), one for indicative embedded verbs and one for subjunctive embedded verbs. While in the former case it is a non-elidable complementizer needed for the temporal anchoring of the embedded verb, whereas in the latter case it is a part of the subjunctive verbal morphology that is an overt realization of the feature MOOD that can be realized both syncretically on the verb via inflexion or separately via *che$_{MOOD}$*.

The analysis of the data shows that Italian embedded stripping does parallel with English embedded stripping, as it strongly favors the absence of the complementizer, even with

indicative embedded verbs. This apparently contrasts with the patterns of Italian complementizer deletion, as this latter phenomenon is not allowed with verbs in the indicative mood. However, the phenomenon must be analyzed from a different perspective, i.e., the two apparent complementizer deletions must be read as instances of two different processes due to elision. On the one hand, in fact, embedded stripping with subjunctive verbs would prefer the absence of the complementizer due to morphological reasons: once it has been established that the subjunctive *che* is a lexicalized MOOD realization connected to the morphology of the verb, it is evident that there is no need to express a MOOD feature once the subjunctive verb has been elided in stripping. On the other hand, it has been discussed how indicative complementizer deletion in embedded stripping should rather be referred to as complementizer elision, as the complementizer is at some point present in the derivation, and is later elided together with the TP: this has been theorized to happen because the Italian indicative complementizer is the locus of the spatio-temporal coordinates of the utterer, which are needed to anchor the embedded event to the time of the utterance. However, in a stripping environment, due to the identity constraints to which such construction is subject, the elided segment is identical to its antecedent in the first conjunct. Thus, the temporal anchoring of the stripped embedded verb can be achieved through identity with the verb in the first conjunct.

Moreover, it would appear that in most cases the adversative coordinator *ma* (but) gives rise to a lower acceptability rate than the conjunctive coordinator *e* (and). Further studies on the impact of adversatives vs. conjunctives in embedded stripping might be insightful and deepen the understanding of such construction. A preliminary consideration which might be worth exploring is the fact that, being stripping a construction inherently expressing counter-expectation, the insertion of an adversative conjunction might be considered redundant.

Finally, the study has shown inconsistency in the acceptability judgments of the subjects. This microvariation could be either the result of idiolectal differences among the speakers, or the result of fallacies in experimental design.

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Appendix: Survey

La tua lingua madre è l'italiano?   SI   NO

Parli anche un dialetto italiano?   SI   NO   Quale? _____

Se parli un dialetto, in quale/i contesto/i lo parli?   *(Più di un'opzione selezionabile)*

- o   Con i componenti anziani della comunità
- o   Nel contesto familiare
- o   Con gli amici

Con quale frequenza?

- o   Raramente
- o   Spesso
- o   Sempre

Per ognuna delle seguenti frasi, indicare il grado di accettabilità su una scala da 0 a 5, secondo la seguente legenda:

0: completamente inaccettabile
1: quasi inaccettabile
2: poco accettabile
3: mediamente accettabile
4: quasi perfettamente accettabile
5: perfettamente accettabile

1. Simone e la sua fidanzata vanno sempre fuori a cena, ma io e Michele no.
   0   1   2   3   4   5

2. Carlotta mangia sempre una caramella prima di andare a dormire, e Laura dice che anche Sofia.
   0   1   2   3   4   5

3. Mangio sempre il pollo a pranzo , e la pasta anche.
   0   1   2   3   4   5

4. Giorgia ha preparato un pranzo buonissimo, e mi hanno detto anche un'ottima cena.
   0   1   2   3   4   5

5. Quando mi chiedono chi sia la più preparata della classe, rispondo Sara.
   0   1   2   3   4   5

6. Tutti sostengono che fare l'astronauta sia bellissimo, ma io non credo.
   0   1   2   3   4   5

7. Mi hanno detto che Claudio era antipatico, ma non penso che lo sia.
    0   1   2   3   4   5

8. A Chiara avevano detto che ci sarebbero stati i suoi amici alla festa, ma credeva che anche i suoi parenti.
    0   1   2   3   4   5

9. Tra tutti gli animali pericolosi che ci sono in Africa, non mi aspettavo che anche l'elefante.
    0   1   2   3   4   5

10. Eleonora immaginava che ballare danza classica fosse difficile, ma non le avevano detto che anche la danza moderna!
    0   1   2   3   4   5

11. Nei biscotti ci va un po' di latte, e secondo la ricetta anche un po' di limone.
    0   1   2   3   4   5

12. A Lucia piace studiare i minerali, e Giovanni dice che anche la geografia.
    0   1   2   3   4   5

13. Per me andrebbe bene partire questa settimana, ma anche la prossima.
    0   1   2   3   4   5

14. A ogni compleanno mi regalano un pigiama, e quest'anno anche delle ciabatte.
    0   1   2   3   4   5

15. Ad Andrea avevano detto che cucinare la cassata era complicato, ma non immaginava anche la crostata.
    0   1   2   3   4   5

16. Marta dovrebbe proprio inviare il CV al museo, e secondo me anche tu.
    0   1   2   3   4   5

17. Carlo Magno era altissimo, ma Luca ha letto che Napoleone no.
    0   1   2   3   4   5

18. La prof. dice che solo io disturbo sempre, ma io dico che anche gli altri.
    0   1   2   3   4   5

19. Comprerò un ficus a mia sorella, e a mia madre una pianta grassa.
    0   1   2   3   4   5

20. Mara sapeva che la matematica le piaceva tanto, ma non pensava che anche la fisica.
    0   1   2   3   4   5

21. Tra gli esami che mi mancano, quelli che mi appassionano di più sono chimica e analisi, ma anche statistica.

      0   1   2   3   4   5

22. I miei genitori dicono che mi regaleranno solo un gatto, ma io dico anche un cane.

      0   1   2   3   4   5

23. Sotto Natale la gente compra soprattutto il panettone, ma io credo anche il pandoro.

      0   1   2   3   4   5

24. Credo che uscirò a comprarmi un paio di scarpe, e forse anche una borsa!

      0   1   2   3   4   5

25. Ginevra vince tutte le gare di corsa campestre, e io penso che anche le gare di salto in lungo.

      0   1   2   3   4   5

26. Elena scrive sempre il suo diario prima di andare a dormire, ma sua mamma non immaginava anche Marco.

      0   1   2   3   4   5

27. Quando le avevano detto che il professore era scontroso, Laura non immaginava così scontroso!

      0   1   2   3   4   5

28. Dicono che i libri su Poirot siano molto avvincenti, e anche quelli su Mrs. Marple.

      0   1   2   3   4   5

29. Si dice che Diego porti sempre una bussola con sé, e alcuni affermano anche un orologio da taschino.

      0   1   2   3   4   5

30. Dovevo consegnare i moduli firmati entro oggi, ma la segreteria ha detto anche domani.

      0   1   2   3   4   5

31. Tra tutte le persone che potevano venire alla mia festa, non mi aspettavo anche Luca!

      0   1   2   3   4   5

32. Anna sosteneva che Riccardo le avrebbe chiesto di uscire, ma non pensava anche Matteo.

      0   1   2   3   4   5

33. Questo cappotto è perfetto per l'inverno, ma anche per la mezza stagione.

      0   1   2   3   4   5

34. L'avvocato ha convinto la giuria che l'imputato è innocente, e ha dimostrato che anche il suo complice.

      0   1   2   3   4   5

35. Già che eravamo in viaggio abbiamo visitato Barcellona, e poi anche Siviglia.

      0   1   2   3   4   5

36. Sandro dorme sempre senza il cuscino, e Roberto dice anche Clara.

      0   1   2   3   4   5

37. Tutti dicono che Abbey Road sia l'album migliore dei Beatles, ma io dico Revolver.

      0   1   2   3   4   5

38. Tutte le persone qui in coda sono dirette allo stadio, e io penso anche quelle laggiù in fondo.

      0   1   2   3   4   5

39. Giulio Cesare sapeva che molti senatori erano coinvolti nella sua congiura, ma non immaginava che anche Bruto.

      0   1   2   3   4   5

40. Non sono un grande amante del mare, ma della montagna nemmeno.

      0   1   2   3   4   5