

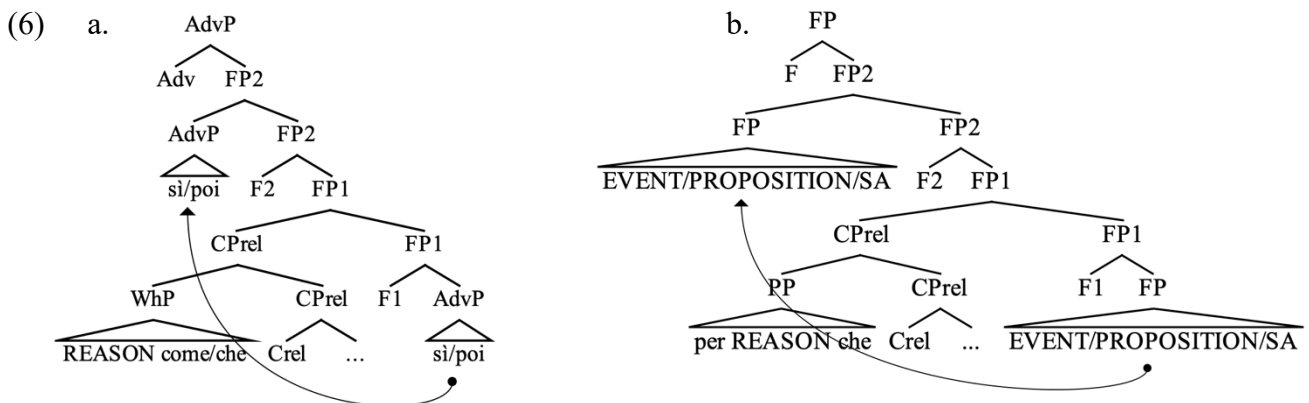
On the attachment site of adverbial causal clauses in Italian
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This paper investigates the syntax of adverbial causal clauses in the history of Italian by comparing three causal clauses introduced by *perché*, *siccome*, *poiché* ‘because/since’. We argue that adverbial causal clauses are merged at different heights in the superordinate clause and their merge position depends on the internal structure of their complex subordinate markers.

Perché/siccome/poiché are complex subordinate markers diachronically evolved from at least two independent morphemes: a preposition *per* ‘for’ plus a wh-pronoun in *perché*, an adverbial *si/poi* ‘so/then’ plus a wh-pronoun in the case of *siccome/poiché*. All three markers introduce a subordinate clause which encodes the cause of the event, the proposition or the speech act expressed in the superordinate clause (Frenguelli 2002; Dardano 2020; on other languages: Sweetser 1990; Frey 2016; Charnavel 2017). Although the three CPs encode similar causal relations, they exhibit different syntactic properties. (i) While *siccome/poiché*-CPs can both precede and follow the superordinate clause, *perché*-CPs can only follow it (1). (ii) Only *perché*-CPs can be fragment answers to ‘why-which reason’ CPs (2). (iii) While *perché*-CPs can be focalized (3a), can be in the scope of the focus particle *solamente* ‘only’ (4a), and can be clefted (5a), *siccome/poiché*-CPs cannot (3-5b).

- (1) a. **Siccome/Poiché/*Perché** mi hai invitato, sono venuto a cena da te.
 b. Sono venuto a cena da te, **siccome/poiché/perché** mi hai invitato.
- (2) **Per quale motivo** sei arrivato tardi?
Perché/*siccome/*poiché ero in palestra.
- (3) a. Sono venuto a cena da te **PERCHÉ MI HAI INVITATO E NON PERCHÉ NE AVESSI VOGLIA.**
 b. *Sono venuto a cena da te, **SICCOME/POICHÉ MI HAI INVITATO E NON SICCOME/POICHÉ NE AVESSI VOGLIA.**
- (4) a. Sono venuto a cena da te **solamente perché** hai insistito tanto.
 b. *Sono venuto a cena da te **solamente siccome/poiché** hai insistito tanto.
- (5) a. **È perché hai insistito tanto che** sono venuto a cena da te.
 b. ***È siccome/poiché hai insistito tanto che** sono venuto a cena da te.

We derive the differences between the three causal CPs in (1-5) from the internal structure of their subordinate markers. Extending the analysis in Haegeman (2006, 2007), we propose that all three adverbial causal clauses are relative clauses modifying the null nominal REASON. As in Cinque (2013, 2020), relative clauses are double headed: an internal head which is the XP merged inside the relative clause and an external head, non-distinct from the internal one, which is the XP modified by the relative clause itself. We provide diachronic evidence to claim that in both *poiché* and *siccome*-CPs the external head is lexicalized, i.e., *poi* ‘then’ and *si* ‘so’ respectively. In *perché*-CPs, the external head is null: the antecedent is the event/proposition/speech act of the superordinate CP (6).



Since RCs in Italian can only follow their antecedent and since the event/proposition/speech act in the superordinate clause is the antecedent of *perché*-CPs, *perché*-CPs can only follow the superordinate clause. Conversely, *poiché/siccome*-CPs have a lexical antecedent, the adverbial. Since they are RCs on the adverbials *poi/sì* and not on the event/proposition/speech act encoded in the superordinate clause, they can both precede and follow the superordinate CP. Thus, structure (6) accounts for the different behavior in (1).

The structure in (6a) implies that the two adverbials are meaningful, though unverbated to the wh-pronoun. The two adverbials provide the setting for the event/proposition/speech act encoded by the superordinate to occur. On the contrary, in *perché*-CPs the event/proposition of the superordinate is the antecedent and thus the prerequisite for the causal CP to occur. We therefore propose that *poiché/siccome*-CPs are merged in the specifier of SceneSettingP and *perché*-CPs are merged in the left periphery of the vP where the event is introduced (Higginbotham 1985, 2005) (7).

(7) [ForceP [TopicP [SceneSettingP [***siccome/poiché*-CPs**] [SceneSetting⁰ [IntP [TopicP-LeftDisIP [FocusP [ModP [Q_{emb}P [FinP [TP ... [vP [***perché*-CPs**] [vP ...]]]]]]]]]]]]]]]]]]]]]

SceneSettingP host non-focalized phrases (Poletto 2002; Benincà & Poletto 2004). Example (2) shows that the content of *siccome/poiché*-CPs is not at issue, while that of *perché*-CPs is. Since non-at-issue content cannot be focalized (at least, the entire content, Simons et al. 2016) and since SceneSettingP hosts non focalized phrases, we immediately derive the contrast between *siccome/poiché*- and *perché*-CPs illustrated in (2-5): only *perché*-CPs can be fragment answers, can be focalized, can be in the scope of focus particles and can be clefted, while *siccome/poiché*-CPs cannot. Since *siccome/poiché*-CPs can also follow the superordinate CP, we assume that in this case the superordinate CP further move in a higher position, say Spec,ForceP. That the contrast between *siccome/poiché*- and *perché*-CPs is due to a difference in the merge position inside the superordinate can be further shown with scopal facts. Since *perché*-CPs are merged in a position lower than T⁰, they are expected to be in the scope of epistemic adverbs like *probabilmente* ‘probably’. Conversely, *siccome/poiché*-CPs are predicted to be outside its scope, since they are merged higher. The prediction is borne out (8).

(8) a. Probabilmente Gianni è uscito in fretta e furia perché era in ritardo.

probabilmente > perché

b. Probabilmente Gianni è uscito in fretta e furia siccome/poiché era in ritardo.

*probabilmente > siccome

In conclusion, we propose that the internal structure of complex subordinate markers determines the attachment site of the subordinate clauses they introduce. During the talk we will also address the relation between (*sic*)*come* and *perché* as causal subordinators and their status as interrogative wh-pronouns in the history of Italian. If our analysis is on the right track, we predict complex subordinate markers like *visto che*, *dal momento che*, to pattern alike with *siccome/poiché*. This conclusion suggests that, although the original morphemes composing the subordinate markers have undergone grammaticalization, being nowadays unverbated, the grammaticalization process did not involve structural reanalysis.

Selected References: Cinque, Guglielmo. 2013. *Typological Studies. Word Order and Relative Clause*. New York/London: Routledge. *Cinque, Guglielmo. 2020. *The Syntax of Relative Clauses. A Unified Analysis*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press. *Haegeman, Liliane. 2006. Conditionals, factives and the left periphery. *Lingua* 116, 1651-1669. *Higginbotham, James (1983). ‘The logic of perceptual reports: An extensional alternative to situation semantics’, *Journal of Philosophy* 80: 100–127. *Higginbotham, James (2005). ‘Event positions: Suppression and emergence’, *Theoretical Linguistics* 31: 349–358.