

Romance causatives and ergativity

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1. V(P) movement, monoclausality, clause reduction

The Romance causative verb *make* (*fare, faire, hacer*, etc.) embeds an infinitival complement characterized by impoverished functional structure: complementizers are absent, no nominative case is assigned and the embedded subject turns up as an accusative (1a), or as a PP and correspondingly an oblique clitic (1b-c). The PP in turn can be either a *to* phrase (*faire infinitive*, henceforth FI), or as a *by* phrase (*faire passive* henceforth FP).

- (1) a. (Gianni), lo feci correre/partire
Gianni him I.made run/leave
'As for Gianni, I made him run/leave'
- b. Feci pulire la stanza a/da Gianni
I.made clean the room to/by Gianni
'I made Gianni clean the room'
- c. Gli feci pulire la stanza
to.him I.made clean the room
'I made him clean the room'

For reasons of space I can only discuss one language, namely Italian (Burzio 1986, Guasti 2017). However, the discussion applies also to French causatives (Rouveret and Vergnaud 1980, Sheehan 2020) and Spanish causatives (Torrego 2010, Tubino Blanco 2010). The interaction with cliticisation and with passivisation, yields some variation (with lots of uncertainty in the reported data as well), which I will note where relevant, leaving it open for further research.

Further cues as to the impoverished structure of causative complements come from a number of inflectional elements, excluded from the embedded infinitival. These include the negation (2c), auxiliaries (2s) and pronominal clitics (all of them in Italian, but as already noted, cliticisation is the source of some variation in Romance), cf. (2a, b).

- (2) a. Lo faccio comprare (a/da Gianni)
it I.make buy to/by Gianni
'I made Gianni buy it'
- b. *Faccio comprarlo (a/da Gianni)
I.made buy-it.f to/by Gianni
'I made Gianni buy it'
- c. *Faccio non correre/partire Gianni
I.made not run/leave Gianni
'*I made Gianni not run/leave'
- d. *Faccio esser pulita la stanza (da Gianni)
I.make be cleaned the room by Gianni
'I am having the room cleaned by Gianni'

Finally, the embedded object can be passivized into matrix subject position, see (3). The major source of variation is French where all passives of causatives are reported to be ungrammatical (Kayne 1975).

- (3) a. Il libro viene fatto comprare (a/da Gianni)
the book is made buy to/by Gianni

- ‘One made Gianni buy the book’
- b. I libri si fanno comprare (a/da Gianni)
 the books MP make.3PL buy to/by Gianni
 ‘One makes Gianni buy the books’

Most analyses of Romance causatives rely either on VP movement or on monoclausality. VP movement analyses are prevalent in the GB framework. Rouveret and Vergnaud (1980) propose VP-movement to S (i.e. IP in current notation). Burzio (1986) has a variant of this where the embedded VP moves to a position attached to the higher VP. Baker (1986) argues that the VP movement structure assigned to analytical causatives should also be given to morphological causatives in the Bantu languages. The latter simply present a further derivational step, namely incorporation of the embedded verb into the matrix verb, the former surfacing as an affix of the latter. Guasti (2017) adopts incorporation of the embedded verb into the matrix verb for analytical causatives. She motivates incorporation on the basis of data like (4), where the floating quantifier *tutti* ‘all’ quantifies over the matrix subject (the causer) yet it is positioned after the embedded verb.

- (4) I professori fanno commentare tutti il libro a Gianni
 the professors make comment all the book to Gianni
 ‘All the professors make Gianni comment the book’

Recently, Belletti (2020) reaffirms the central role of VP movement in the derivation of causatives, construing it as a special case of a type of smuggling operations in syntax. The original smuggling operation consists of the movement of VP to Pass(ive) Voice as a step towards passivisation (Collins 2005). For Belletti, causativisation involves movement of the embedded VP to a matrix Caus(ative) Voice.

The core claims of VP movement analyses are that complements of causative verbs involve full sentences (CPs/IPs), and the necessary locality between the matrix verb and the embedded predicate (or its arguments) is created by movement. For Rouveret and Vergnaud (1980) locality is defined by the notion of government. Following VP movement, the matrix causative verb governs the embedded object which can cliticise to the matrix verb (and undergo long passive). For Belletti (2020), the notion of locality is defined by the Minimality constraint on Agree. Following smuggling, movement of an embedded object to the matrix sentence (cliticization, passive) becomes possible in that it no longer crosses the embedded external argument.

In essence, VP movement analyses treat the reordering of the embedded verb to a position sufficiently close to the causative verb as the derivational trigger of the other behaviours noted in (1). However, some of these however are not locality related, beginning with the case treatment of the cause. In GB frameworks, this is derived via the *à* Insertion rule of Kayne (1975), triggered by VP-movement, but not forced by it. For Belletti (2020), *a* for causative voice and *by* for passive voice are “an essential part of the expression of these voices”. However, it is not clear why exactly the *a* preposition is involved, i.e. why *a* and not other Ps, or why conversely *a* does not appear in other Voices. Indeed, Belletti (2020, fn. 4) explicitly postpones the matter for “future independent work”.

The main alternative to VP movement is monoclausality. Wurmbrand (2001) argues in favour of a monoclausal structure where the causative verb takes a functional head position on the sentence skeleton. Folli and Harley (2007) reconstruct the classical difference between FI and FP within a monoclausal analysis in terms of different embedded predicates, either VP (FP) or vP (FI). Tubino Blanco (2010), Guasti (2017), Sheehan (2020) all adopt monoclausality, i.e. *make* is a functional *v*, and different types of embedded complements yielding FI and FP. Since in monoclausal analyses, a single sentential domain is involved, locality issues are automatically resolved. Apparently long distance passives turn out to be clause internal. Similarly, clitic climbing is in reality ordinary sentence-internal cliticization.

In general, the monoclausal hypothesis presents the problem that phenomena like those in (1)-

(3) can also be found in languages where the embedded clause is finite. Albanian varieties spoken in South Italy in contact with Romance (Arbëresh) are a case in point (Manzini and Savoia 2007, 2018, cf. Guasti 1993). For instance, in (5) long passive affects the embedded internal argument, namely the object of the lexical verb, which is inflected for tense and for (middle passive) voice. The causative verb in turn is inflected for middle passive voice (by the clitic *u*, rather like Romance *se*). The explanation for long passive based on monoclausality clashes with the presence of a double inflection.¹

- (5) a. cə kəmiʃ u pata ʎaf Barile (Arbëresh)
 this shirt mp make wash.mp
 ‘Somebody had this shirt washed’
 (lit: ‘This shirt was made to be washed’)
- b. latruni u bəta zu ŋga cəni
 thief-nom.def mp make caught.mp by dog-the
 ‘Somebody had the thief caught by the dog’
 (lit: ‘The thief was made to be caught by the dog’)

Leaving issues of variation aside, a monoclausal analysis for a simple FI sentence like (1b) implies that the causative verb is merged as functional *v* projection, embedding a *vP* build on the lexical *V*, as in (6). The recursion of *vP* is not problematic in itself – what is puzzling that each of the functional *v*’s supports an (external) argument. That *make* introduces a causer, is obvious. Similarly the role in the event (or in the caused event) played by the causee embedded in a *to* phrase or *by* phrase is entirely predictable on the basis of the external role of the lexical verb. Thus, the external argument of *clean* is an agent and this role remains constant in the causative (7b). But the external argument of *love* is an experiencer and so it remains in the causative (7a).

- (6) ... [_{VP} faccio [_{VP} [_{VP} pulire ...
- (7) a. Faccio amare la linguistica agli studenti
 I.make love the linguistics to.the students
 ‘I make students love linguistics’
- b. Faccio pulire la stanza alla cameriera
 I.make clean the room to.the maid
 ‘I make the maid clean the room’

Reduced complementation structures, taking *make* to be a lexical verb have also been proposed in the literatures. Burzio (1986) argues that the causative verb embeds a *VP* in *FP*. Manzini (1983), proposes structures like (8) for both *FI* and *FP*, where *make* is a lexical verb taking a *VP* complement inclusive of the external argument (hence a *vP* in current terminology).

- (8) ... [_{VP} faccio [_{VP(vP)} [_{VP} pulire la stanza] a/da Gianni] cf. (1b)

In this contribution, I pursue the idea that *vP* complementation represents the core of causativisation in Romance, and causative verbs themselves are not functional, but lexical. Furthermore, differences between *FI* and *FP* do not imply a gradation in the size of embedded complements. Transparency to movement and other operations follows if the *vP* complement of *make* is not a phase (i.e. not *v*P*). I argue that the special case alignment of causative (*FI* and *FP*) is simply an ‘ergative’ alignment, as in Postal’s (1977: 341) insight. That ergative alignments and reduced

¹ More generally, (5) raises the issue of hyperraising (Wurmbrand 2019 and references quoted there). Because of finite embedding, one of the core facts that monoclausality is meant to explain, namely long A movement, requires some independent explanation. Monoclausal analyses of restructuring (Cinque 2006) face the issue of so-called double finite constructions even within Romance (Manzini et al 2017 and references quoted there).

2. The ergative analysis of Romance causatives

Before addressing causatives, I need to briefly dwell on the analysis of case, for which I adopt the Agree construal of Chomsky (2001). English provides a standard illustration of how the Agree model applies to the accusative alignment. With transitive verbs (9a), the internal argument agrees with *v* (accusative); the external argument agrees with *I* (nominative). With unergative verbs, the external argument again agrees with *I* (nominative), as in (9b). Unaccusative verbs, on the other hand, are associated with a defective *v*, which is neither a probe (no accusative) nor a phase head. The internal argument then agrees directly with *I* (nominative), as in (9c).

- For the ergative alignment, I adopt a treatment along the lines of passive, amply represented in the generative literature since Hale (1970), see Nash (1995, 2017:187), Mahajan (2017) among others. Indo-Aryan languages, for instance Punjabi, have the accusative alignment in the imperfective but the ergative alignment in the perfective. In transitive sentences, like (10a), the internal argument appears as a bare DP, while the external argument bears the ergative postposition *-ne*; the verb agrees with the internal argument. The sole argument of unaccusative verbs appears as a bare DP and displays agreement with the verb, like the internal argument of transitives, as in (10c). With unergative verbs the sole argument of the predicate behaves like the external argument of transitives (so that more properly Indo Aryan languages can be characterised as having a so called active alignment). The argument is embedded by the ergative postposition and it does not agree with the verb, which displays a default inflection, as in (10b).

- I take the crucial property of ergative alignments to be the lack of a v^* phase – whence the parallel with passives. Consider transitive verbs. The defective v phase head is not a probe, in other

[illegible]

(12) [IP [vP kuri-ne [vP hassea] v] si] cf. (31b)

2.2 The case alignment of Romance causatives

Consider first causative embedding transitive verbs, as in (1b), repeated in (13a) for ease of reference. The relevant structure is as in (13b). Since the causative verb selects not just a reduced vP structure, but also a defective one, the embedded object is transparent to probing by the matrix v^* and can be assigned accusative (the v case) via Agree, as indicated. The external argument is forced to follow the fate of external arguments in ergative-like/passive-like alignments, namely it is turned into an oblique, hence in Italian into a PP.

- (13) a. Feci pulire la stanza a/da Gianni
I.made clean the room to/by Gianni
'I made Gianni clean the room'
- b. [v* [VP feci [vP [VP pulire la stanza] a/da Gianni
| |

In a language like Punjabi (or Hindi), the *-ne* postposition is specialized for inherent ergative case, i.e. for the external argument in ergative alignments. There is of course no sense in which the *da* or *a* prepositions in Italian can be termed ergative. The *da* ‘by’ preposition introduces external arguments in periphrastic passives (normally agents or causers), as is generally indicated by the literature. I provide just one example in (14). On the other hand, *a* is the dative preposition, namely English ‘to’. There is clear evidence that causative *a* and the dative *a* are the same element, since they are mutual exclusive, as in (15b), though both a goal and an agent reading are compatible with the single dative in (15a). Furthermore, two *a* phrases can easily combine when they dative and locative, as in (15c).

- (14) La lettera fu scritta da Paolo
The letter was written by Paul
- (15) a. Feci scrivere una lettera a Paolo
I.made write a letter to Paul
‘I made Paul write a letter/a letter be written to Paul’
- b. *Feci scrivere una lettera a Paolo a Lucia
I.made write a letter to Paolo to Lucia
‘I made Lucia write a letter to Paolo/Paolo write a letter to Lucia’
- c. Scrissi una lettera a Paolo a casa mia
I.wrote a letter to Paolo at home mine
‘I wrote a letter to Paolo at my place’

Now, in a typological study on ergative case, Palancar (2008) points out that “ergative case is often used across languages to express other semantic roles”. Specifically “instrument is by far the most common semantic category found in ergative syncretisms”. Furthermore “ergatives ... may encode locative as well as instrument”, and “possessor is another semantic category that ergative markers also express crosslinguistically”; in some languages “the ergative case has been treated as an ‘oblique’ marker ... they may even express a dative participant”. In short, though ergative may be a specialized case (e.g. Punjabi *ne*), it is as often or more often syncretic, with instrumental (the case of instrument and causer) and also with dative (goal, possessor, location).²

Since the Romance languages do not have a dedicated ergative preposition, they resort to the causer preposition *da* ‘by’ or to the dative preposition *a* ‘to’ for the ‘ergative’ (i.e. oblique subject) alignment in (13). Since *da* is the causer, or in any event the external argument in passives, its presence in causatives is in fact independently expected. Furthermore, the dative, as a high applicative in the sense of Pyllkanen (2008), can independently be construed as the possessor/locator of an event (experiencer, beneficiary, etc.). Indeed Torrego (2010: 459) analyses the *a* phrase of Spanish causatives as an ApplP.³

Let me then complete the picture briefly with reference to intransitive verbs. The argument of an intransitive verb, either unergative or unaccusative, shows up in the accusative case, as in (16a). That the embedded argument is accusative can be seen in examples like (1a) where it is cliticised as an accusative clitic. The approach to Romance causative constructions taken in (13) easily predicts the facts, as schematized in (16b) for an unaccusative verb and in (16c) for an unergative verb. In (16b), in the absence of any obstacles from Minimality or the PIC, the matrix *v** probe enters Agree with the embedded internal argument. The same happens in (16c), except that the embedded external argument is involved.

² In Punjabi, though the *-ne* ergative postposition is often connected to the Sanskrit instrumental, it is likely to be connected to Middle Indo Aryan dative *-ne*, still surviving in other Indo Aryan languages (see Manzini et al. 2015 and references quoted there).

³ This structural possibility is also open here, though I do not take it for a sort of structural parsimony, namely because the PP suffices, and also to highlight the parallelism between FI and FP.

- (16) a. Feci correre/venire Gianni
I.made run/come Gianni
'I made Gianni run/come'
- b. [v* [VP feci [VP [VP venire Gianni
|-----|
- c. [v* [VP feci [VP [VP correre] Gianni
|-----|

Among other things, the ergative approach sheds some light on a fact which has long been remarked upon, namely that the sole argument of unaccusatives can sometimes be oblique, as in (17). What enables this alternation is the ergative proper vs. active alignment parameter. In essence, the pairing of the external argument of an unergative with the 'ergative' (oblique) case in (17) corresponds to the active alignment, whereas (17c) corresponds to the ergative alignment proper.

- (17) a. Faccio discutere di queste cose agli studenti
I.make discuss of these matters to the students
'I make the students discuss of these matters'
- b. Faccio telefonare a tutti dalla segretaria
I.make telephone to all by the secretary
'I make the secretary phone everybody'

In short, the case alignment of causative constructions follows from the reduced nature of the causative complement and from parameters open under Universal Grammar, namely 'ergativity' (i.e. obliquisation of the external argument of transitives). This does not imply monoclausality, nor the need for V(P) movement, different sizes of embedded complements or other – which are not impossible, or necessarily incompatible, but just redundant. Still, the legitimate question can be asked, why 'ergativity' would show up just in causative constructions. Otherwise put, we might expect that the same case alignment shows up (impelled by various factors) in other contexts.

The connection between passive and FP made since the earliest studies on Romance causatives is of course relevant in this connection. But oblique subjects are forced also by certain lexical domains, the most famous of which are experiencer verbs. Thus *John like apples* can perfectly well be construed with a straight accusative syntax as in English, but is construed with an unaccusative syntax and a so called 'quirky subject' in many languages including Italian (18a). Nor are oblique subjects connected to the experiencer role; another lexical domain where they are found is that of necessity, as in (18b).⁴ Again English constructs the predicate *to need* with a straightforward accusative syntax, as we of course expect to be possible, and Italian with an 'ergative' one.

- (18) a. A Gianni piacciono le mele
to Gianni like apples
'Gianni likes apples'
- b. A Gianni necessitano dei permessi
to Gianni need some permits
'Gianni needs some permits'

2.3 Long passive and clitic climbing

The derivations provided in (13) and (16) depend on the assumption that the complement of the

⁴ Obligation constructs require ergative subjects in Punjabi, and dative subjects in Latin (the so called gerundive) (Manzini et al. 2015).

causative verb is a vP, transparent to the Agree probe of the matrix v*. If passivisation is applied to the matrix verb, which implies a defective phase head v, then we predict transparency all the way from the embedded object to the matrix subject, in other words long passive, from the embedded object to the matrix subject. This has been exemplified in (3a) above, repeated in (19a). As one may expect, the embedded subject (the causee) can also be passivized, with both unergative and unaccusative verbs (as also happens with embedded accusative subjects in English), see in (19b).

- (19) a. La stanza fu fatta pulire (a/da Gianni)
the room was made clean to/by Gianni
‘One made Gianni clean the room’
b. Gianni fu fatto correre/venire
Gianni was made run/come
‘Gianni was made to run/come’

The derivations in (13) and (16) for active causatives predict the passive outcomes in (19). In structure (20a) for (19a) it can be seen that in the absence of any intervening phases (or goals) the matrix I probes directly for the embedded internal argument, licencing nominative case on it (with possible subsequent movement to matrix subject position). Long passivization of the embedded subject of an intransitive embedded predicate is derived along the lines of (20b) for the internal argument of unaccusative predicates and of (20c) for the external argument of unergative predicates.

- (20) a. [IP I [TP fu [vP fatta [vP [vP pulire la stanza] (a/da Gianni)]]]]
|-----|
b. [IP I [TP fu [vP fatto [vP [vP venire Gianni]]]]]
|-----|
c. [IP I [TP fu [vP fatto [vP [vP correre] Gianni]]]]
|-----|

Since passivization is derived on the basis of the same assumptions as case alignment, there is again no need for VP movement or monoclausality. It must be noted that Spanish is fairly constantly reported to have examples like (20a) and (20b) (e.g. Tubino Blanco 2010: 335-336). French on the other hand is consistently reported as not allowing passive of causatives since Kayne (1975). This problem is beyond the scope of the present article.

Let us then consider clitic climbing. Not only is it possible for clitics lexicalizing arguments of the embedded verb to surface on the matrix causative verb – it is also obligatory, at least in Italian. This holds for the embedded subject of transitives (1c), repeated as (21a), for the sole argument of intransitives as in (1a), repeated as (21b) and for the object of transitives (21c). The examples in (21a’, b’, c’) show that cliticising on the lexical verb is ungrammatical.

- (21) a. Lo feci correre/partire
him I.made run/leave
‘I made him run/leave’
a’. *Feci correrlo/partirlo
b. Gli feci pulire la stanza
to.him I.made clean the room
‘I made him clean the room’
b’. *Feci pulirgli la stanza
c. La feci pulire (a/da Gianni)
it I.made clean (to/by Gianni)

- c'. 'I made Gianni clean it'
*Feci pulirla a/da Gianni

A brief aside on clitics is needed at this point. A widely held analysis has clitics moving from argument position to functional head position (Kayne 1991). Here, I will follow the other main line of analysis, namely first merge of clitics as functional heads. In the version of the analysis by Sportiche (1996), they are merged as specialized Voice heads. Following Manzini and Savoia (2017), I assume that they project ordinary functional nodes, corresponding to their intrinsic properties, including ϕ for direct case clitics (by Agree with v^*P or IP) and Appl nodes for oblique clitics. Sportiche further proposes that each clitics licences a *pro* in argumental position; nothing hinges on this here and I will simply ignore the matter. In short, in a simple sentence like (22a), clitics are first merged along the functional spine of the verb, projecting their labels on it, as shown in (22b).

- (22) a. Gianni gliela pulisce
Gianni to.him-it cleans
'Gianni cleans it for him (e.g. the room for Lucia)'
b. ... [v^*P V^* [ApplP glie [ϕP la [VP pulisce

Let us then go back to (21). Due to the transparency of the embedded complement (base generated or derived by VP movement), the possibility of clitic climbing is predicted, independently of the approach one takes to cliticisation. The obligatoriness of climbing is a more difficult matter. Indeed, as long as there is an embedded v , at least some clitics ought to be able to merge with it rather than with the causative v . Intuitively, we could invoke the idea that causative constructions involve a single causative predicate, consisting of the causative verb and of its result, namely the complement vP – and that clitics are merged with this complex predicate. Nevertheless, a formalization of the notion of complex predicate is needed in order to make the intuition work.⁵

Recall that Baker (1986) proposes that the morphological causatives of Bantu are obtained by incorporation, defined as head movement of the lexical verb to the causative verb; recall also that Guasti (2017) argues that incorporation is needed for analytical causatives, cf. example (5). As an alternative to head movement and incorporation (on which see Chomsky 2001), Chomsky (2020) suggests a Pair Merge formalisation for the idea that analytical and morphological causatives are different externalisations of the same underlying construct. In his words “it wouldn’t be too surprising to find causative inflection affixed by Pair-Merge in the underlying structure ($\langle \text{let}, \text{walk} \rangle$, $\langle \text{make}, \text{walk} \rangle$) and then spelled out with independent morphemes... and the pair-merged element is just immune to the passive operation, whatever you think passive is (e.g., dropping case)”. Note that Chomsky is seeking to explain why English causatives cannot passivise (**John was made run*). This further issue must be put aside here; the explanation for the impossibility of passive in English will require some extra parameter with Italian to be fixed.

Let me try to implement Chomsky’s idea for Italian causatives. Chomsky (2020) also suggests treating inheritance as an instance of pair merge. In (24), I have therefore modelled inheritance from the verbaliser v to the lexical root by Pair Merge, i.e. $\langle \text{pulire}, v \rangle$. The Pair Merge $\langle \text{pulire}_v, \text{feci} \rangle$ crucially defines the complex causative predicate. We may then tentatively enforce the constraint that all functional structure can be built only on top of the complex predicate – or technically, no operation can isolate one of the members of Pair Merge objects, including merge of functional material.

- (24) a. Gliela feci pulire
to.him it I.made clean

⁵ Monoclausal treatments do not fare better. For instance, according to Sheehan (2020: 372) “the lack of Voice in clause union contexts also explains why there is a single domain for cliticization, hence the obligatory nature of object clitic climbing”. Lack of Voice is equivalent to lack of a phasal v , i.e. v^* . But of course non-accusative clitics are normally seen to attach to lexical unaccusatives, so that the explanation offered may be necessary, but is not sufficient.

- b. 'I made him clean it' (e.g. Gianni, the room)
 ... [RP <<pulire, v>, feci> [vP <pulire, v>

As anticipated in the introductory section, some variation is observed in the Romance languages with respect to clitic climbing. Most clearly, both Spanish and French allow the *se* clitic on the embedded verb, and in fact require it in certain context, though Italian disallows it in all cases. It is possible then that Spanish and French lack the Pair Merge structure just introduced to explain obligatory clitic climbing in Italian.⁶

3. Some residual issues: FI, FP, ECM

In section 2, I have interpreted both FI and FP in terms of vP complementation and ergative alignment, differing only in the realization of the oblique case of the external argument. However, a long generative tradition recognizes several differences between FI and FP and generally imputes them to different structures. One such difference involves a type of causative sentence, not considered so far (but see fn. 6), where the embedded subject is not realised, as for instance in (25). For ease of reference let me call this type of causative F0 (*faire zero*).

- (25) Feci pulire la stanza
 I.made clean the room
 'I had the room cleaned'

Kayne (1975: 236) argues that non-passivizable idioms can appear in FI but not in FP nor in F0. For instance, the Italian idiom *tagliare la corda* 'escape' (lit: cut the rope) cannot be passivized – or to be more precise, passivization lets only the compositional meaning survive as in (26a). Correspondingly the idiomatic meaning does not survive embedding under FP or F0, as in (26c-d) – though it is preserved by FI, as in (26b).

- (26) a. La corda fu tagliata da molti
 the rope was cut by many
 ≠ 'Many escaped'
 b. Feci tagliare la corda ai prigionieri
 I.made cut the rope to the prisoners
 'I made the prisoners escape'
 c. Feci tagliare la corda dai prigionieri
 I.made cut the rope by the prisoners
 ≠ 'I made the prisoners escape'
 d. Come prima cosa, feci tagliare la corda

⁶ Italian sentences like (i) may be interpreted as instances of FP where the external argument is an implicit argument, but also as reflexives, where the external argument of the embedded predicate is identified with the internal argument. In all other contexts the reflexive reading requires the presence of the *si* clitic, absent from (i). Similarly in (ii) *spegnere* admits the anticausative reading ('go off') which in other contexts requires *si*.

(i) Il capufficio fece radere Gianni
 the boss made shave Gianni
 'His boss had John shave himself/shaven (by somebody)'

(ii) Gianni/il vento fece spegnere le candele
 Gianni/the wind made extinguish the candles
 'Gianni made someone put out the candles/the candles go off' / 'The wind made the candles go off'

In essence, it appears that in Italian the external argument of two place predicates can not only be obliquized and eventually left implicit (see FP in the next section), but it can also be interpreted by identification with the internal argument (reflexive) or in fact suppressed (unaccusative). The matter seems best treated in the context of a theory of *si* (i.e. the middle-passive voice of Romance), which is beyond the scope of the present article.

as first thing I made cut the rope
 ≠ ‘My first action was to make one escape’

For the sake of explicitness, I assume that the essence of an idiom is that it is not compositionally interpreted and its meaning is listed in the lexicon. I assume that this implies that operating only on one of its parts is impossible, for instance by applying passivization. What matters for present purposes is that the idiomatic reading is preserved in the FI construction but not in the FP or F0 construction. I propose that the explanation resides in the different status of *to* PPs and *by* PPs, and that no further differences between FI and FP need be implicated.

I assume that the *by* preposition introduces a relation between its object and the causation event embodied by vP (Manzini 2017 and references quoted there). Thus the theta role of the embedded external argument directly depends on *by* and only indirectly on the embedded vP. By contrast, I assume that in FI, the external argument is in a theta configuration directly with the embedded vP, though the ergative alignment means that it surfaces as an *a* phrase. One way to represent this difference syntactically is by treating the *by* preposition as projecting PP, while treating the *a* preposition as a mere adjunct of the DP (i.e. a case), along the lines of (27).⁷ As a consequence of the different structure, in (27b) the *a* DP is in a theta configuration (sisterhood) with vP, but in (27a) DP is in a theta configuration only with *da*.

- (27) a. [_{vP} tagliare la corda] [_{PP} da [_{DP} i prigionieri]]
 b. [_{vP} tagliare la corda] [_{DP} [P a] [_{DP} i prigionieri]]

It is natural to propose that idioms are incompatible with the argument of causation reading required by the *by* phrase, though no incompatibility arises with the *a* phrase. Something similar happens with stative verbs. While any external argument can be externalised by an *a* phrase, stative verbs that resist passivisation also resist embedding under FP, as in (28).

- (28) a. Feci sapere la verità a/*da Maria
 I.made know the truth to/by Mary
 ‘I let Mary know the truth’
 b. Feci avere la lettera a/*da Maria
 I.made have the letter to/by Mary
 ‘I let Mary have the letter’

As for F0, following Folli and Harley (2007) we may assume that since “the *da*-phrase causee of FP is an adjunct, not an argument, it may be omitted, while the *a*-phrase causee of FI may not”. Hence if idioms are excluded in FP they are excluded in F0. Despite widespread agreement in the literature on the need for an impoverished VP structure for FP, I see no need for abandoning a homogenous vP embedding structure for both FI and FP.⁸ On the contrary, if *v* represents the causative layer of a causation verb, it is necessary to support the reading of the *by* phrase (see Alexiadou et al. 2015), providing strong independent motivation for the embedding of at least a vP under *make*.

Finally, let me turn to another question not considered so far, concerning the embedding of Exceptional Case Marking (ECM) /raising to object complements under causative verbs. As is well known, English construes *make* with infinitival complements involving ECM/raising to object of the

⁷ See Manzini (2019) for a recent discussion of the two structures, Polinsky (2016) for a view of ergativity distinguishing PP ergatives from DP ergatives .

⁸ Folli and Harley (2007) state that “the idiomatic interpretation of the embedded verb depends on the entire argument structure being present”, i.e. requires the presence of a vP as in FI as opposed to the VP structure of FP. Yet, the idiom is entirely included in VP and definitely does not include the external argument, so that it is not clear why Folli and Harley’s restriction would hold.

(29) a. I made Mary clean the room
 b. [_{VP} V* [_{VP} made ... [_{VP} Mary [V* [_{VP} clean the room]]]]]

(30) a. *Feci Gianni scrivere un messaggio
I. made Gianni write a message
'I made Gianni write a message'

b. [_{v*P} v* [_{VP} feci... [_{v*P} Gianni [v [_{VP} scrivere un messaggio]]]]

|—————|

(31) a. ?Lo faccio mandare un messaggio a Paolo
him I.make send a message to Paolo
'I make him send a message to Paolo'

b. *Glielo faccio mandare un messaggio
to.him him I.make send a message
'I made him send a message to him'

c. *Lo faccio mandargli un messaggio
him I.make send to.him a message
'I made him send a message to him'

(32) a. ?Fui fatto mandare un messaggio a Paolo
I.was made send a message to Paolo
'I was made to send a message to Paolo'

b. *Gli fui fatto mandare un messaggio
to.him I.was made send a message
'I was made to send a message to him'

c. *Fui fatto mandargli un messaggio
I.was made send to.him a message
'I was made to send a message to him'

(33) a. ?Il ragazzo che feci mandare un messaggio a Paolo ...
the boy that I.made send a message to Paolo
'The boy whom I made send a message to Paolo ...'

- b. *Il ragazzo che gli feci mandare un messaggio
 the boy that to.him I.made send a message ...
 ‘The boy whom I made send a message to him ...’
- c. *Il ragazzo che feci mandargli un messaggio ...
 the boy that I.made send to.him a message
 ‘The boy whom I made send a message to him ...’

Interpreting the data in (31)-(33) is less than straightforward. I nevertheless conclude that ‘clitic ECM’ or residual ECM of any sort is not possible in Italian with the verb *fare*. The fact that the (b)-(c) examples are illformed seems to indicate that the non phasal nature of the embedded vP and the Pair Merge relation between the causative and the lexical predicates (required by obligatory clitic climbing) are still in place, even if the causee is a clitic, or is passivized or wh-moved. The amelioration effects in the (a) examples must then be due to some processing effect (some processing repair).

This is not to deny that perception verbs allow the FI and the FP construal and ECM/raising to object of the English type in (29), including of course, cliticisation, passivisation and wh movement. In order to capture this kind of data, it is sufficient to assume that perception verbs can also embed phasal complements, exactly as in English (29). These data are not illustrated here for reasons of space, but are uncontroversial and easily found in the literature (Guasti 1993, Sheehan 2020 and references quoted there).⁹

4. Conclusions

Generative analyses account for causative constructions either by means of VP movement, taking place in the sentential complement of causative verbs – or in terms of monoclausality, in which case the causative verb is a functional *v* in a recursive *v* structure. In the analysis that I propose, *make* is a lexical verb taking a reduced vP complement. This reduced complement of *make* displays an ‘ergative’ alignment in the sense that the object of transitive verbs and the subject of transitive verbs are treated alike, receiving accusative case from the matrix *v** -- while the subject of transitives is given an oblique treatment.

Long passivization is predicted on the basis of the phase organization of causative constructions, as is the possibility of clitic climbing to the matrix causative verb. On the other hand, Italian clitic climbing is always obligatory, suggesting that a single complex predicate is involved. This idea is generally executed in the literature by means of incorporation, i.e. head movement and adjunction of the lexical verb to the causative verb. Given the problems for head movement pointed out by Chomsky (2001), I tentatively notate the relevant relation by Pair Merge, in the sense of Chomsky (2020). Finally, I do not subscribe to the idea that FP presents a further reduced complement with respect to FP. Rather, I impute the differences between FI and FP simply to the differences between *to* PPs and *by* PPs.

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⁹ Romance languages do include a set of verbs with residual ECM/raising to object complements, namely propositional attitude verbs. With these verbs, wh extraction of the embedded accusative subject is possible, though leaving the accusative subject in situ, cliticising it or passivizing it yields ungrammatical results (Rizzi 1982).

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