When doing is saying: a constructional account of *fare* ('to do') as a *verbum dicendi* in Italian

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Abstract

The asymmetry between the transitive behaviour of *fare* ('to do') as a verb of production and its intransitive behaviour as a verb of saying has been regarded as an anomaly in some accounts of Italian (e.g. Mortara Garavelli 1995, Giani 2002). In addition, another asymmetry in transitivity has been pointed out between reportative *fare* and *dire* ('to say') as the former is not able to take clausal objective clauses, i.e. to enter the indirect speech construction. These asymmetries were left unexplained or at best motivated by a change in the valency of *fare* related to its polysemy or to the information structure of the sentence. Drawing mainly on data from spoken and written Italian, a new hypothesis is presented, based on a Construction Grammar approach to reported speech. Finally, bridging contexts favouring the use of *fare* as a verb of saying are considered and related to cross-linguistic data from European languages.

Introduction

If asked about the meaning of *fare* 'to do' in sentences like (1), most speakers of Italian would not hesitate in putting forward the reformulation in (2):

(1) Un egocentrico incontra un amico e gli fa: "Ciao, come sto?"
     An egocentric meets a friend and tells (lit. does) him: "Hi, how am I?"

(2) Un egocentrico incontra un amico e gli dice: "Ciao, come sto?
     An egocentric meets a friend and tells him: "Hi, how am I?"

In doing so, they would clearly establish a relationship of equivalence between the verbs *dire* 'to say' and *fare* 'to do' in a given context. The native speaker consulted[1] about the uses of *fare* as a *verbum dicendi* also showed awareness of its distribution across registers and genres (see tables 1 and 2). The presence of *fare* as an introducer of reported speech in narrative texts, where it does not show its elsewhere typical interpretation as a colloquialism, were usually overlooked by the informants.

Subcorpus	*Fa*	*Fece*	*Feci*	*Faccio*
Press	0	1	0	0
Narrative prose	5	19	8	2
Academic prose	0	1	1	0
Administrative/legal prose	0	0	0	0
Miscellanea	1	1	0	0
Ephemera	1	0	0	0
Total forms of *fare* as a *verbum dicendi* in *Coris*, sorted per form	7	22	9	2
Total forms of *fare* as *verbum dicendi* in *Coris*	40			

Table 1. Distribution of some forms of *fare* 'to do' as *verbum dicendi* in *Coris*[2], divided by sub-corpora

Note: *faccio* 'I do/am doing'; *fa* 's/he does/is doing'; *feci* 'I did'; *fece* 's/he did'.

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[1] The native speakers intuitions mentioned in section 1 derive partially from introspection and partially from conversations I regularly had with family, acquaintances, friends, lecturers and professors over the Academic Year 2007-2008, while writing my MA dissertation at the University of Pavia (Italy).

[2] *Coris* allows to retrieve up to a maximum of 300 hits per query. Independent queries were carried out for every sub-corpus. This means that, for instance, in the case of *fa* '(s)he/it does/says', 1800 strings of characters corresponding to the query *fa* were manually examined and sorted. Table 1 presents data highlighting the distribution of some forms of fare as a *verbum dicendi* across *sub-corpora*, which roughly correspond to genres.

	Faccio	**Fa**	**Facevo**	**Faceva**	**Feci**	**Fece**	**Ho fatto**	**Ha fatto**	**Total**
Short stories	1	3	0	0	19	24	2	0	**49**
Blog	6	3	1	0	0	1	0	2	**13**
Forum	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	**4**
Jokes	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	**3**
Non classif.[3]		2				4	1		**7**
Total fare = dire	10	11	1	0	19	29	3	3	**76**
Sample[4]	3000	3000	3100	2200	1300	3000	2100	2200	19900

Table 2 Distribution of some forms of *fare* as a *verbum dicendi* in *itWac*, sorted by genre

Note: *faccio* 'I do/am doing'; *fa* 's/he does/is doing'; *facevo* 'I was doing'; *faceva* 's/he was doing'; *feci* 'I did'; *fece* 's/he did'; *ho fatto* 'I did'; *ha fatto* 's/he did'.

The distribution of *fare* as a verb of saying in spoken Italian, investigated through the *C-Oral Rom* corpus showed its almost exclusive use in the 'family-private' register, confirming native speaker intuitions. The native speakers consulted were also aware of the fact that *fare* as a verb of saying tends to occur in constructions where the recipient of the message is also profiled. *C-Oral Rom* was consulted on this point (table 3), and showed that native speakers have a good intuition of some relevant phenomena related to the collocational patterns of *fare* as a verb of saying and were likely to produce observations on them in a fairly spontaneous way.

Form of the verb *fare* 'to do'	***Fare* as a *verbum dicendi* followed by pronominal pronouns (dative) indicating the recipient of the reported message**	
	Raw frequency	%
Fa	18/24	75
Fanno	1 / 2	50
Fece	4/8	50
Face(v)a	3/6	50
Faccio	0/1	0
Feci	1/1	100
Facevo	1/1	100
Facevan(o)	0/1	0
Ho fatto	0/1	0
Ha fatto	1/1	100
Fai/fa'	2/2	100

[3] Some links were not active.
[4] Sampling was necessary given the dimension of the *itWac* corpus (about 2 billion words). The sample examined was checked for representativeness and then analysed manually.

Fare / fa'	0/1	100
Totale	**31/49**[5]	**63.3**

Table 3 Forms of *fare* as a *verbum dicendi* in C-Oral Rom

Native speakers of Italian, when (more or less covertly) elicited information about the behaviour of reportative *fare* spontaneously provided information of the type expressed above. They sometimes quoted characteristics of the behaviour of *fare* in order to highlight its similarities and differences with *dire*. However, they never pointed to some differences pertaining the grammatical behaviour of the two verbs, which are mentioned in the literature (see, for example, Mortara Garavelli 1995, Giani 2002). These 'asymmetries' are presented in the following sections and discussed throughout this paper.

Intransitivity of 'fare' as a verbum dicendi

It has been noted in the literature that *fare* as a *verbum dicendi* shows intransitive behaviour (3), whereas *fare* as a production verb can be followed by an NP direct object (4).

(3)   * La mamma fa una parola.
        Mummy says a word.

(4)   La mamma fa una torta.
        Mummy bakes a cake.

In relation to this, *fare* shows a different behaviour from *dire*, which can be followed by a direct NP object (5).

(5)   La mamma dice una parola.
        Mummy says a word.

(6)   * La mamma fa una parola
        Mummy says a word.

The variable behaviour of *fare*, behaving as a transitive verb where it is a production verb and as an intransitive verb when functioning as a *verbum dicendi*, is connected to a change in valency related to its polysemy.

Restriction of 'fare' to the direct discourse construction

The second asymmetry which has been noted between *fare* and *dire* is that, while both can appear in the so-called direct speech (D.S.) construction as exemplified in (7) and (8), only the latter can appear in both the so-called indirect speech (I.S.) and the D.S. constructions, as shown in (9) and (10).

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[5] This number (49) represents the total occurrences of *fare* as a *verbum dicendi* in the whole *C-Oral Rom* corpus (306,638 tokens).

(7)   La mamma dice: "Oggi c'è il sole!"
       Mummy says: "Today it's sunny!"

(8)   La mamma fa: "Oggi c'è il sole!"
       Mummy says: "Today it's sunny!"

(9)   La mamma dice che oggi c'è il sole.
       Mummy says that today it's sunny.

(10)   * La mamma fa che oggi c'è il sole.
       Intended meaning: Mummy says that today it's sunny.

The I.S. construction is usually described as made up by two clauses: the main clause, centred around an event of saying, and an objective complement clause relying on a parallel between the clausal object and the NP object (Tekavčić, 1972: 600-1; Dardano & Trifone, 1985: 296; Serianni *et al.*, 1997: 439). The restrictions on *fare*, compatible only with a D.S. construction, are then understood as deriving from its status of intransitive verb (see section 1.1) when having a similar meaning to *dire*.

Reported speech constructions and subordination: the traditional view

Traditional criteria for defining subordination and complementation (as discussed in Cristofaro, 2003: Chap. 2) are dependency and embedding.

The application of the dependency test to the reported speech constructions shows that clauses making up the D.S. construction show a greater degree of independence (11) if compared to those in the I.S. construction (12). Considering examples (11) and (12), (11b) can in fact 'stand on its own', whereas the same cannot be said of (12b).

(11)   La mamma dice/fa: "Oggi c'è il sole."
       a. La mamma dice/fa.
       b. Oggi c'è il sole.

(12)   La mamma dice che oggi c'è il sole.
       a. La mamma dice.
       b. * Che oggi c'è il sole.

According to the dependency test, the I.S. construction would be an example of subordination, whereas the D.S. construction would not. However, according to this

view, it is not clear what kind of relationship links the two juxtaposed clauses which make up the D.S. construction[6].

The second traditional criterion for subordination consists of clausal embedding: 'the subordinate clause is embedded into the main one as a constituent of it, and the two are linked by a part-whole relationship' (Cristofaro, 2003: 15). Applying the tests for object status in (13) and (14) to (11) and (12), it can be seen that both can be considered subordinate clauses.

(13)   a. La mamma dice: "Oggi c'è il sole!"

          b. "Oggi c'è il sole!" è detto dalla mamma.
          "Today it's sunny!" is said by mum.

          c. "Oggi c'è il sole"   lo   dice la mamma.
          Today there is   the sun   it.object   says the mum
             "Today it'sunny!". Mummy says it.

(14)   a. La mamma dice che oggi c'è il sole.

          b. Che oggi c'è il sole è detto dalla mamma.
          That today is sunny is said by mum.

          c. Che oggi c'è   il sole   lo   dice la mamma.
          That today   there is the sun it.object says the mum
          That today is sunny is said by mum.

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[6] A reviewer points out that an account of such relations can be found in Lehmann (1988). Lehmann's account of subordination (see Lehmann 1988: 182 for a definition) builds on the idea that it is a prototypical concept (ib.: 182), resulting from the clustering of values along six continua. By applying Lehmann's model to the Italian D.S. construction, it appears that it expresses a relationship of subordination between the main clause – containing the V of saying – and the subordinate clause – the reported speech proper. Such a relation, however, is one of the sociative type, and not one of dependency (embedding). Evidence for this can be found by considering the position variability of the two clauses, intonational factors, maintenance of features typical of full-fledged sentences, interlacing (the two clauses are disjoint) and lack of explicit clause linking.

Viewing the D.S. as expressing a type of subordination relation is of course possible since Lehmann (1988) considers the existence of three main types of clause linkage (parataxis, hypotaxis and subordinate-sociative relation). This position shares some similarities with the three-way distinction between coordination, subordination and cosubordination in Role and Reference Grammar (Van Valin & LaPolla 1997). In contrast to such three-terms models, theories considering a two-way distinction between coordination and subordination (embedding) face more difficulties in capturing the syntactic relation between the two clauses in D.S. constructions.

The fact that no examples in Lehmann's study relate to D.S. suggests that perhaps it is not regarded as a canonical type of subordination. This impression parallels the one given by standard grammars of Italian, which usually lump the description of the D.S. and I.S. into a section on reported speech and place it in an appendix to the syntax section. In doing so, they explicitly classify the I.S. construction as a case of subordination (embedding), while they do not qualify the kind of syntactic relation holding for the D.S. construction (Dardano & Trifone 1985: 312 ff.; Serianni et al. 1997: 430-440).

That the embedding and the dependency tests lead to contradictory results raises issues related to the reliability of these tests. None of these tests, however, seems to help solve the issue of the suspect 'split intransitivity' of reportative *fare*. The syntactic relations between the clauses which make up the D.S. construction with *dire* and *fare* still reveal a fundamental difference. In fact, as example (15) shows, object status cannot be proved for the reported utterance, in contrast to (14).

(15)   a. La mamma fa: "Oggi c'è il sole."
        b. * "Oggi c'è il sole" è fatto dalla mamma.
        c. * "Oggi c'è il sole" lo fa la mamma.

Alternative views to morphosyntactic criteria of subordination

As anticipated in section 2, traditional subordination criteria are considered to be not entirely reliable, as they often lead to contradictory results. Furthermore, the approach outlined in section 2 has been criticised for being 'syntactocentric' or 'verbocentric' (Goldberg, 1995) and for not being able to account for cross-linguistic variation (Cristofaro, 2003: 17 ff.). Sections 3.1 and 3.2 focus on the first of these two criticisms, showing how a different view of subordination can contribute to a better understanding of the behaviour of *fare* as a *verbum dicendi*.

Subordination as a cognitive-functional mechanism

Cristofaro (2003) critiques the traditional 'syntactocentric' notion of subordination in favour of a cognitive-functional view of the phenomenon, supported by typological data. Subordination is defined as:

> a situation whereby a cognitive asymmetry is established between two linked SoAs [states of affairs: CG], such that the profile of one of the two, henceforth the main SoA) overrides that of the other (henceforth the dependent SoA). This is equivalent to say that the dependent SoA is (pragmatically) non-asserted, while the main one is (pragmatically) asserted (Cristofaro 2003:33).

Complementation, in its turn, is understood as a particular type of subordination relation, whereby two SoAs are linked in such a way that 'one of them (the main one) entails that another (the dependent one) is referred to' (Cristofaro, 2003: 95).

The treatment of reported speech constructions according to Cristofaro (2003) sees a distinction between those languages which have only the D.S. construction (case 1) and those which have both the D.S. and the I.S. constructions (case 2). In case 1, the clause describing the event of saying is understood to be the main clause and the clause containing the reported utterance is interpreted as a complement clause. In contrast to the situation in case 1, the D.S. construction is excluded from a study on subordination in case 2. In fact, Cristofaro (2003: 47), basing herself on Haiman (1985: 222-28), states that in case 2 'direct report… is used to mention the sounds uttered by

somebody, regardless of their semantic content'. In other words, under such a view[7], the D.S. construction 'just involves a single SoA (somebody's saying something) and in principle is not relevant to subordination' (Cristofaro, 2003: 47). If a language has both the D.S. and the I.S. construction, then only the latter is a case of subordination (what the former would then represent is not made explicit in Cristofaro's account).

With these reflections about subordination in mind, it is possible to go back to the situation described for *fare* as a *verbum dicendi* in sections 1.1 and 1.2.

If one adopts the position described above, no 'problematic' behaviour for *fare* can be detected. In fact, given that Italian has both a D.S. and an I.S. construction (case 2) and *fare* enters only the D.S. construction, asking what kind of grammatical relation links *fare* to the reported utterance would simply not make sense.

At this point it could be useful to take a step back and focus on the definition of subordination mentioned above (Cristofaro, 2003: 33) with particular attention to the notion of 'pragmatic assertivity' (Cristofaro, 2003: 32). Starting from a definition of illocutionary force as the 'property whereby a sentence can represent a speech act' (Cristofaro, 2003: 32), the argument for subordination goes like this: 'if some part of the sentence lacks illocutionary force, it cannot represent a speech act, therefore it is not asserted and has no autonomous profile' (Cristofaro, 2003: 32), thus it can be considered subordinated to the part of the sentence which is asserted. As a means for testing the illocutionary force of a clause, a 'question-tag test' is proposed. Examples (16) and (17), which reproduce examples (5.38) and (5.39) in Cristofaro (2003: 108), show how question tags can be used to test the illocutionary force of different parts of the sentence:

(16) a. He said [that she will be late], didn't he?
      b. * He said that she will be late, won't she?

(17) a. He said: "She will be late", didn't he?
      b. * He said: "She will be late", won't she?

On the one hand, the very fact that this test is tried out on examples of D.S. in a case 2 language (English) for which D.S. is said not to be relevant to subordination, is interesting. In addition, the pragmatic assertivity test does not show any difference in behaviour between the two reported speech constructions and reveals that, despite the fact that the juxtaposed clause in D.S. can have the form of a statement, a question, a directive or an exclamation, their form does not signal the maintenance of illocutionary force belonging to the original speech.

These observations would lead to conclude that if the D.S. constructions had not been ruled out on an *a priori* principle, they would simply be a good example of subordination, understood on a cognitive basis. More precisely, the reported clause in both reported speech constructions would be complements to the main clause centred around the process of saying. This is exactly the view taken here. In this perspective,

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[7] Such a position, not making a distinction between reported speech with and without propositional content, e.g. between onomatopoeias and interjections on the one hand and clauses on the other, is debatable.

however, the 'asymmetry' in the behaviour of *fare*, participating in D.S. constructions but not in I.S. constructions, still remains unexplained.

A Construction Grammar approach to reported speech

Construction Grammar (CxG) (Goldberg 1995, 2006) represents a radical alternative to a 'verbocentric' conception of sentence structure. The basic tenet of CxG is that 'all levels of grammatical analysis involve constructions: learned pairings of form with semantic or discourse function' (Goldberg, 2006: 5). In order to posit a distinct construction in the language, it must be ascertained that its properties are not completely predictable from knowledge of other constructions already present in the grammar. Constructions are organised in hierarchical networks showing an increase in schematicity as one goes up the hierarchy. It can be said that constructions are organised in a network when 'the semantic and/or pragmatic function of different patterns are related' (Verhagen, 2005: 111). Finally, 'constructions can combine freely to form actual expressions as long as they are not in conflict[8]' (Goldberg, 2006: 10).

According to the what has been said above, two related constructions can be posited in the grammar of Italian, the D.S. and the I.S.. Both of them can be said to be instantiations of a more general pattern of complementation constructions. The generalised scheme for complementation constructions (see Verhagen 2005: 135 for an application to Dutch) can be instantiated by various classes of complement-taking verbs (see Noonan 1995 and Cristofaro 2003: 99 for a classification), among which also verbs of saying. The reported speech constructions are also related to other constructions which, although similar, cannot be considered instantiations of complementation constructions, because the reported utterance has no propositional content (18).

(18) a. La mamma dice: "No, no!"
          Mum says: "No, no!"

      b. "Buona fortuna!" – fa la vecchietta
          "Good luck" – says (lit. does) the elderly woman.

Given these premises, it is possible to go back to the puzzle related to the behaviour of *fare* as a *verbum dicendi* outlined in sections 1.1 and 1.2.

A Construction Grammar approach to the behaviour of reportative *fare* in Italian

A D.S. construction is posited for Italian (19):

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[8] A reviewer points out that in some accounts conflicting constructions can be combined through conceptual (and constructional) blending.

(19) La mamma   dice   al bambino: "Oggi c'è il sole!"
      The mum   says   to the child   today there is the sun
      Mum   says   to the child: "Today it's sunny!"

   Sem. sayer   SAY   recipient   sayee (propositional)
   Syn. Subj.NP   Vsaying Dative.NP/PP   S

The 'conceptual base' (Langacker, 2008: 66-70) of reported speech is evoked by the construction as a whole, which can be activated even if some of its elements are not profiled. This is the case of forms like (20), particularly frequent in narrative written texts.

(20) La mamma al bambino: "Oggi c'è il sole!"
      The mum to the child: "Today it's sunny!"

Not only cases like (20) contrast sharply with a verbocentric conception of grammar, but also cases like (21)-(24), where the underlined verbs, which resist a classification as verbs of saying, are understood as *verba dicendi*. In order to get such an interpretation it is not necessary to posit any phonologically empty element (Goldberg, 2006: 10), like the gerund of a verb of saying (cf. Mortara Garavelli, 1995: 43).

(21)   - Non so nulla io! – <u>Sbuffò</u> il Costa
          (*LIZ*, Pirandello, L., *I vecchi e i giovani*, 2, 3.13)
          - I don't know anything! – grumbled (lit. puffed) Costa.

(23)   Quaiotto <u>scattò</u>: "Domando la parola!"
          (*LIZ*, Fogazzaro, A., *Piccolo mondo moderno*, 3, 2.7)
          Quaiotto went off: "Permission to talk!"

(24)   Una sera <u>scoppiò</u>: - Devo dirti che ho fatto testamento.
          (*LIZ*, Svevo, I., *La coscienza di Zeno*, 4.22)
          One night he flared up: - I must tell you that I signed a will.

Turning now to the 'puzzle' related to the behaviour of *fare*, it can be shown that a CxG approach provides an adequate explanation for the phenomenon[9].

    Following this approach, it is in fact sufficient to state that *fare* is a verb able to fill the SAY slot of the construction. In order for this to happen, it is not necessary to postulate that *fare* is polysemous, having two meanings 'to say' and 'to do/make'. The semantics of 'saying' can only be retrieved when *fare* is in the reported speech

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[9] It must be noted that Serianni et al.'s (1997: 438-440) description of D.S. constructions with Vs other than Vs of saying or with an empty verbal slot is compatible with the view presented here. In fact, in the former case, the Vs of saying is said to be 'represented' by a different V, such as *inghiottire* 'gulp', and in the latter case the V of saying is said to be implied or understood.

construction, i.e. is inherited from the construction itself. This means that *fare* does not inherit the semantics of saying in other constructions, leading to unacceptable results like (3). Other cases in which *fare* contrasts with other constructions are illustrated in (25)-(27) for the imperative, the passive and the impersonal constructions.

(25)   * Fa': "Oggi c'è il sole".
       Say: "Tomorrow it's sunny."

(26)   * "Oggi c'è il sole!" è fatto dalla mamma.
       * "Today it's sunny!" is done by mum."

(27)   * Si fa che domani ci sarà il sole.
       * It is done / people do that tomorrow it will be sunny.

The constructional approach adopted here has allowed to explain the '(in)transitivity puzzle' identified for *fare* without making reference to the notion of change of valency, which is based on the idea that the syntactic structure of a sentence is entirely dependent on the sub-categorisation patterns of the verb.

A CxG approach also explains the fact that *fare* appears only in D.S. constructions. As noted above (section 3), it is possible to posit two related constructions in the grammar of Italian, the D.S. construction (28) and the I.S. construction (29).

(28)   La mamma   dice   una parola   al bambino
       The mum   says   a word   to the child

  Sem. sayer   SAY   sayee (propositional)   recipient
  Syn. Subj.NP   Vsaying NP   Dative.NP/PP.

(29)   La mamma   dice   al bambino   che   oggi c'è il sole
       The mum   says   to the child   that   today   it's sunny

  Sem. sayer   SAY   recipient   sayee(proposit.)
  Syn. Subj.NP   Vsaying Dative.NP /PP   COMP   S

The difference between (28) and (29) is twofold. At the syntactic level the presence of the complementiser is the most salient feature. At the semantic level, the two constructions encode a difference in the construal of the situation described.

In order to understand this, it is useful to recall that the base of a speech report situation involves the following participants and events:

      (a)   the original speaker, the original recipient and the original message, whose Ground (Langacker, 2008: 75) coincides with actual location in space and time of the original speech situation;

(b)   the final speaker, the final recipient and the final message, which is grounded in the final speech spatio-temporal co-ordinates.

In the case of the D.S. construction the vantage point is placed on the original speaker, whereas in the I.S. construction it is on the final speaker, thus (sometimes) causing a deictic shift. Information about the perspective on the reported event is coded in the semantic component of the two reported speech constructions.

Going back to the incompatibility of *fare* with I.S. constructions, it is sufficient to recall that the two reported speech constructions are members of a network of constructions and that there is no requirement for a verb entering one of these to enter also some or all the other constructions in the network.

Example (30) shows that this is the case for *esclamare* 'to exclaim' which does not seem compatible with the I.S. construction:

(30)   a. "Mi dica la santa verità" – esclamò il bibliotecario.
          (*LIZ*, Fogazzaro, A., *Piccolo mondo moderno*, 4.1)
          "Tell me the honest truth" – the librarian exclaimed.

       b. * Il bibliotecario esclamò di dirgli la santa verità.
          The librarian exclaimed to tell him the honest truth.

Yet the approach proposed in CxG is not a static one. In fact, it cannot be excluded that over time a verb which was not - at some stage of the evolution of the language - tolerated in a construction starts being accepted in it. This seems to have been the case for *fare*, which was described as a verb incapable of entering in the I.S. construction up until 2002 (Giani, 2002) but which recent data seem to show as followed by the complementiser *che* 'that'. A query run on the whole *itWac* corpus[10] retrieved six examples of *fare* in an I.S. construction. Three of the six examples are presented here as (31):

(31)   a. Io rido… lui mi fa che sono un po' strana, n[o]n mi capisce…
          I laugh… he tells (lit. does) me that I am a bit strange, he doesn't understand me...

       b. Lui separato in casa, io sola. […] Mi fa che la lascerà.
          He is separated [though living] at home [with his ex].
          He tells (lit. does) me that he will leave her.

       c. … gli faccio che mi interessava…
          … I tell (lit. do) him that I was interested...

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[10] About two billion words. The corpus consists of written language gathered from the web.

The results from *itWac* show that the use of *fare* in the I.S. construction is still quite infrequent, and a search in *C-Oral Rom* and *Coris* did not return any hits. A hypothesis can be put forward about the possibility of such a construction to be confined to a specific genre (blog, forum), or spreading from it, but at the moment there is no evidence for such claims.

A CxG approach to the '(in)transitivity puzzle' of *fare* as a *verbum dicendi* has dissolved the idea that *fare* displays a sort of anomalous or irregular syntactic behaviour. As already noted at the beginning of this section, it is sufficient to invoke the mechanism of semantic inheritance.

The only requirement for a linguistic item to enter a construction is (semantic-pragmatic) compatibility. It is possible to identify some factors which might have favoured the employment of *fare* in reported speech constructions. It is to these that section 5 now turns.

Factors favouring the use of *fare* in reported speech constructions

It is difficult to understand whether the presence of *fare* in reported speech constructions represents an innovation in the history of Italian. Even if the analysis of the *LIZ* corpus of literary Italian shows a single (ambiguous) example of *fare* as a *verbum dicendi* dating 1478[11], signs of its regular diffusion can only be seen since the XIX century[12]. However, it cannot be excluded that reportative *fare* was not attested before that time because of its colloquial nature. As already mentioned in section 1, the informal connotation of reportative *fare* is absent from novels, where it seems to represent an unmarked alternative to *dire* in introducing direct speech.

Not being able to prove that reportative *fare* represents an innovation in the history of Italian does not, however, represent a limit to the understanding of why it appears in reported speech constructions. The idea that *fare* as a verb of saying is an innovation seems to be somehow connected to its interpretation as a more expressive/emphatic form in comparison to *dire*. Yet expressiveness is not a necessary motivation for language change.

As pointed out by Croft (2007), 'variation is pervasive in verbalisation' is and it is not surprising that a light verb like *fare* is able to enter a number of constructions, among which the reported speech constructions. As mentioned above (sections 3.2 and 4), the only requirement is that the two constructions involved are not in conflict.

A number of situations, however, can be identified as favouring (though certainly not determining) the employment of *fare* as a verb of saying in reported speech constructions. It is possible to think about these situations as bridging contexts

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[11] The expression *Albanese, Messere!* 'Albanian, Sir!' used in Pulci, L., *Morgante*, III (octaves 47-8 and XXV octave 12) is introduced by *fare* in the former case and *rispondere* 'reply' in the latter. This context can be regarded as ambiguous between saying and doing since uttering the expression *Albanese, Messere!* is equivalent to 'pretending not to understand', therefore to performing the action of feigning ignorance (Brambilla Ageno 1994).

[12] The GRADIT dictionary dates back reportative *fare* to Ippolito Nievo (1831-1861).

(Evans & Wilkins 2000; Heine 2002). The bridging context phase is understood as a stage which precedes polysemy, as table 4 shows.

	STAGE 1	**Bridging context** masks the distinction between an individual's being at Stage 2 and Stage 3 allowing speakers to co-exist over periods while at different stages		STAGE 4
	STAGE 1	STAGE 2	STAGE 3	STAGE 4
	f has a meaning p	f has the meaning p, and a common implicature q	f has two meanings p and q	f has the meaning q
Form	F	F	F	F
Meaning	'p'	'p' (<'q')	'p', 'q'	'q'

Table 4 Bridging contexts and semantic change. From Enfield (2003: 29)

In contrast to what is pointed out in table 4, it seems that implicature plays a minor role for the phenomenon described in this paper. A major role is, on the other hand, played by metonymy (Barcelona 2000; Dirven & Pörings 2003; Haser 2005; Hopper & Traugott 2003; Otal Campo et al. 2005; Panther & Radden 199; Panther & Thornburd 2003; Stefanowitsch & Gries 2007). Metonymy is understood here as 'conceptual metonymy' or 'conceptual association', i.e. as a process in which 'one conceptual entity… provides access to another conceptual entity… within the same domain' (Kövecses & Radden, 1998: 38) or as a projection of a conceptual domain onto a neighbouring one.

The assumption here is that there are contexts in which a given form (*fare*) can be associated both with a conceptual domain (DO) and another contiguous domain (SAY). The two domains are understood as adjacent because they are linked by a relationship of hyperonymy-hyponymy: 'saying' is in fact also a way of 'doing' something.

Bridging contexts are thus understood as those situations in which 'speech participants do not detect any problem of different assignments of meaning to the form because both speaker and addressee interpretation of the utterance in context are functionally equivalent' (Evans & Wilkins, 2000: 550).

At least two are the bridging contexts which can be detected for *fare* as a verb of saying: (a) its use as introducer of non-propositional content such as onomatopoeias, interjections and discourse markers and (b) its role in describing the co-deployment of gestures and reported speech. The latter case can be illustrated through examples (32)-(34):

(33)   'No' – fece più col gesto che con la voce Lydia.
         (*LIZ*, Pirandello, L., *In silenzio*,   77)

Lit. 'No' – said/made Lydia more with the gesture than with the voice.

(35)   Lui? Come fa sempre, mi sorrise e, con la mano mi fece: "vai, vai pure."
         (*LIZ*, Pirandello, L., *Una giornata*, Una sfida, 36)
         Lit. Him? As he always does, he smiled and, with the hand did/said: "go, you can go."

(36)   "Ham!" Disse, o piuttosto fece Fermo scotendo la testa, e ricominciò a pensare.
         (*LIZ*, Manzoni, A., *Fermo e Lucia*, 3, 8.31)
         Lit. "Ham!" Said or rather did Fermo shaking his head, and he started thinking again.

These examples show that a certain communicative situation can be conceptualised both as an event of saying and an event of doing, especially when gestures and verbal expressions are co-deployed.

This aspect will not be explored in detail here, while attention will be paid to the use of *fare* and *dire* as introducers of onomatopoeias, interjections and discourse markers.

'Fare' and 'dire' as introducers of onomatopoeias, interjections and discourse markers

As examples (35)-(37) demonstrate, *fare* can introduce reported utterances whose content is non-propositional (onomatopoeias, interjections and discourse markers):

(35)   batte i piedi e fa /tun tun tun/ (*C-Oral Rom*, ifamcv 12)
       Stamps one's feet and goes (lit. does/makes) tun tun tun.

(36)   "Uff!" fece Ciro. (*itWac*)
       "Uff!" – went (lit. did/made) Ciro.

(37)   "E allora…" fece il fanciullino. (*itWac*)
       "And so…" went (lit. did/made) the child.

A hypothesis can be formulated in relation to *fare*, *dire* and onomatopoeias, primary interjections and discourse markers. In fact, intuitively it is plausible to think that onomatopoeias and primary interjections could be conceived of as something which is done instead of something which is said. On the other hand, it can be hypothesised that discourse markers and secondary interjections could be conceptualised mainly as something that is said. If this was the case, then the data should show a preference for *fare* to introduce primary interjections and onomatopoeias and for *dire* to introduce discourse markers.

In order to test this hypothesis, two corpora have been consulted: *LIZ* for primary interjections (e.g. *ah*!, *eh*!, *oh*!) and *C-Oral Rom* for onomatopoeias.

Primary interjections in LIZ

A sub-corpus of *LIZ* restricted to novels and short-stories written in the XX century (about 2 billion words) was selected for the study of *fare* and *dire* as introducers of primary interjections. Interjections are quite frequent in dialogues where they indicate and qualify the emotional involvement of the character who is speaking. Comparatively, they are more frequent in fiction than in naturally occurring reported discourse, where the reproduction of such elements is often left out.

In order to select which interjections to examine, a frequency list for spoken Italian (*C-Oral Rom*) was consulted and the primary interjections *ah*!, *eh*! and *oh*!, coming in the top positions (first, third and fifth respectively) were chosen. The three interjections were selected after discarding *mh* (second position), a filler typical of spontaneous speech, and *vabbè* (fourth position), which is a secondary interjection (< *va bene* 'alright' – lit. 'it's going well'). A sample was extracted out of the total occurrences of the three selected interjections. Then, only the cases in which the interjections appear in the direct discourse constructions were considered (table 5). Attention was finally concentrated only on the most frequent verbal introducers (*dire*, *esclamare* 'to exclaim'- classified as a hyponym of *dire* - and *fare*) of the selected types of reported utterances.

Interjection	Total Interjections	Sample	Interjections in D.S. constructions
Ah!	1719	344	72
Oh!	1345	270	64
Eh!	857	172	38
Total	3921	786	174

Table 5 Primary interjections in *LIZ*

As a second step, the reported utterances were classified according to the fact that they consisted only of (1) an isolated primary interjection (e.g. 'she said: Oh!'), (2) a primary interjection, a discourse marker or a secondary interjection (e.g. 'he said: Oh! Hallo!') or (3) of a primary interjection followed by a proposition (e.g. 'she said: Oh, he has just arrived!').

Type of utterance quoted	Verb	*Ah*	*Oh*	*Eh*	Total
(1) Primary interjection alone	*Esclamare*	0	0	0	0
	Dire	5	0	25	30
	Fare	20	5	10	35
(2) Interjection + secondary	*Esclamare*	40	40	10	90

interjection, discourse marker or other non-propositional content	*Dire*	20	40	20	80
	Fare	15	15	10	40
(3) Interjection + sentence (propositional content)	*Esclamare*	35	45	5	85
	Dire	35	45	10	90
	Fare	15	20	15	50

Table 6 Correlation between type of reported utterance and introductory verb
Data from *LIZ*: XX century prose sub-corpus

As table 6 shows, in those cases in which the content of an utterance is just a primary interjection, *fare* and *dire* appear to introduce the reported utterance almost with the same frequency (*dire* = 46.15%, *fare* = 53.84%).

On the other hand, in those cases where the content of an utterance is a secondary interjection (e.g. *mamma mia!*) or a discourse marker (e.g. *grazie!*), the frequency of *dire* (38%) is double as that of *fare* (19%). Secondary interjections and discourse markers are unmistakably lexical, whereas the same cannot be said of primary interjections. Despite their being conventional pairing of form and meaning (pragmatic function) their status as lexemes – or even words - is disputed (see for example (Serianni 1989: 369) who considers them 'at the margin' of the lexicon). It must be brought in mind that a primary interjection is often realised quite differently from its transcription, and is then less rigidly codified. For instance, a sigh could be transcribed as "*uhm!*" and this is the (conventionalised) form found in literary texts.

However, leaving the territory of literary texts and moving on to that of naturally occurring conversations, it seems to be plausible that the types of vocalisations commonly referred to as interjections are not conceptualised differently from other sound emissions (e.g. screams and even burps) which can hardly be conceived of as 'speaking'.

The small corpus exploration discussed so far seems to disprove the hypothesis put forward at the beginning of section 6. In fact, no complementary distribution is identified, such that *fare* would collocate with reported interjections alone and *dire* with situations in which the reported utterance is unmistakably lexical. In the situation described as (3), where the reported utterance has propositional content, *dire* (40%) outnumbers *fare* (22%), keeping proportions stable with the case of interjections/discourse markers. It can be hypothesised then that *dire* is more plausible when the reported utterance consists of clearly lexical content. Yet the domain of sound emission, codified by *fare* - but not by *dire* - is still available.

All these observations can be regarded as a clue suggesting that the domain of interjections represents a bridging context for *fare* as a reportative verb.

Onomatopoeias in C-Oral Rom

An analysis carried out on the whole *C-Oral Rom* corpus (about 300,000 words of spoken Italian) allowed retrieving six occurrences of onomatopoeias (38):

(38)   a. batte i piedi e fa / tun tun tun /
             (*C-Oral Rom*, ifamcv12)

Stamps one's feet and goes (lit. does) tun tun tun.

b. Cappuccetto Rosso / arriva / e fa / toc toc //
    (*C-Oral Rom*, ifamn25)
    Little Red Riding Hood arrives and goes (lit. does) toc toc.

c. Lì c'era / un imbocchino / che faceva vuum / vuum
    (*C-Oral Rom*, ifamcv 15)
    There there was a mouthpiece which went (lit. did) voom voom.

d. Qui / c'aveva 'un so / e girava // faceva / dum / dum //
    (*C-Oral Rom*, ifamcv11)
    Here it had a dunno what and it was spinning and it was going (lit. doing)
dum   dum.

e. <oppure fa> / mh / mh //
    (*C-Oral Rom*, inatte03)
    Or he goes (lit. does) mh mh.

f. No // devi fa + < tu tu >
    (*C-Oral Rom*, ifamcv24)
    No you must go (lit. do) tu tu.

g. Oppure fa semplicemente degli oh / uh //
    (*C-Oral Rom*, inatte03)
    Or he is simply like (lit. does) oh uh.

It can easily be noted that none of the examples found represents a case of reported speech. However, some interesting observations can be made regarding *fare* + onomatopoeias as a bridging context. The choice of *fare* instead of *dire* in (38a-e) can be connected to the fact that the sound reproduced by the speaker was not originally produced via the speech organ. In these cases, the substitution of *fare* with *dire* leads to results which show a change in meaning, as can be seen by comparing example (38b) and (39):

(39) Cappuccetto Rosso arriva e dice: "toc toc."
      Little Red Riding Hood arrives and says: "toc toc."

Example (38g) reproduces a pre-linguistic production by a small child. It is interesting as it shows a case which can be conceptualised as generic sound emission (requiring *fare* in Italian) or related to animal screams (*il gatto fa miao* 'the cat goes maow') rather than to human speaking.

Example (38f) represents a similar situation: an instruction is given by a carer to a child about how to reproduce the sound of a locomotive, i.e. a mechanical sound. Even *dire* would sound acceptable in such a context (40):

(40)   No, devi dire: "tu tu".
       No, you must say: tu tu."

The analysis of the few examples in *C-Oral Rom* thus leads to the identification of a second bridging context. Situations like reported interjections and onomatopoeias which can be conceptualised both as belonging to the domain of saying or of doing are particularly interesting from a cognitive point of view. Their existence as an overlap area between the cognitive domains SAY and DO is reinforced by the cross-linguistic evidence shown in section 7 for onomatopoeias.

'To do' as a verbum dicendi beyond Italian

No complete and thorough surveys on the languages of the world have been carried out focussing on the employment of lexical items connected to the domain of doing to express the event of saying. In this panorama, the studies by Schultze-Berndt (2008) on generalised action verbs in nine typologically different languages and that by Cohen *et al.* (2002) on the grammaticalisation of 'to say' and 'to do' in Eastern African languages are valuable. These readings stimulated a small pilot research conducted on ten European languages mainly through a questionnaire sent to native speakers[13]. The questionnaire was centred on a translation task from English or Italian and aimed at eliciting five points:

1)   the possibility of a verb of doing to express the activity of saying in reported speech;
2)   the existence of other verbs able to fill the SAY slot in a reported speech construction;
3)   the existence of other reported speech constructions without a verb as an introducer;
4)   the choice of verb in introducing animal screams;
5)   the choice of verb in introducing mechanical sounds.

The data elicited through questionnaires were then integrated by the consultation of *C-Oral Rom* for French, Spanish and Portuguese and by occasional conversations with speakers of seven following languages (Albanian, Bulgarian, German, Hungarian,

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[13] This small pilot survey would have not been possible without the help of these people, who patiently took time to go through my questionnaire or were willing to pass on information on specific points: Aline da Cruz, Corinna Dumitrache, Thanasis Giannaris, Tena Gnjatović, Laura Hainonen, Elena Kontolemi, Pau Maré Soler, Laureta Prelaj Shishmani, Steffen Sletvold, Lidia Tincu, Vassilis Vassilopoulos, Nicholas Veneri Rodriguez. To them, and to all those people who had more or less 'casual' conversations with me on the points presented in this paper, such as Steve Disney, Willem Hollmann, Ginguido Manzelli, Dan Ponsford, Elisa Roma, Anna Siewierska and Björn Wiemer, goes all my gratitude. All errors and shortcomings are, of course, my sole responsibility.

Polish, Russian and Ukrainian) who contributed to the first point above. The results of this pilot study are presented in table 7.

Language	1) DO as SAY	4) animal screams	5) mechanical sounds
Albanian	NO	–	–
Bulgarian	SCREAM/SHOUT/CRY	DO	DO
Catalan	DO	DO	DO
Croatian	COME	GO / CRY	GO / DO
English	GO / BE LIKE / ALL	GO	GO
Finnish	BE	Verbs derived from nouns specific to the sound in question. A mechanism similar to the English 'the dog barks' or 'the clock is ticking'.	
French	DO	DO	DO
German	SO (no verb)	DO	DO
Greek	DO	DO	DO
Hungarian	NO	–	–
Norwegian	DO	SAY	SOUND
Polish	NO	–	–
Portuguese	GO + SAY / CATCH + SAY	DO	DO
Romanian	?? DO	DO	DO
Russian	NO	–	–
Spanish	GO + SAY	DO	DO
Ukrainian	NO	–	–

Table 7 DO and SAY in the languages of Europe (a first exploratory survey)

Note: - = No available information

This small survey led to identify that the use of 'to do' as a verb of saying is shared by Italian with at least other four languages in Europe (Catalan, French, Greek, Norwegian) plus, although in extremely limited contexts, Romanian. The very same pattern of Italian, using 'to do' to introduce both reported sentences and animal/mechanical onomatopoeias is shared with Catalan, French, Greek and Romanian[14].

      The distribution of the languages employing 'to do' as a verb of saying in D.S. construction seems to exclude both genetic and areal phenomena. Yet a genetic/areal phenomenon cannot be excluded in principle if one considers the Catalan, French and

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[14] In Romanian, the use of *fare* as a *verbum dicendi* is even more marked in terms of register than it is in the other languages, and it is thus considered absolutely marginal.

Italian dialectal continuum. Considering *Sprachbund* phenomena, the data from Albanian, Bulgarian, Greek, Romanian and Croatian do not show a uniform behaviour. If the data collected so far do not seem to suggest a strong hypothesis of areal/genetic diffusion of the use of 'to be' as a *verbum dicendi* in D.S. constructions, at least they allow to uncover some patterns of expressions of the SAY domain in reported speech. English, Croatian, Portuguese and Spanish, for instance, employ a verb of movement ('come' or 'go'); English and Finnish use the verb 'to be', in the case of English followed by a 'quotative particle' (Lampert & Lampert forth.). The case of English 'like' shows similarities with German 'so' (Golato 2000) and with the use of *così* 'like this, thus' in Old Italian reported in (41):

(41) ... gli disse così: "Ser Ciappelletto, come tu sai…"
      (*LIZ*, Boccaccio, G., *Decameron*, 1, 1)
      ... he told him like this: "Sir Ciappelletto, as you know..."

The development of adverbs like Italian *così* into quotative particles or complementisers introducing reported utterances is a well-known grammaticalisation pattern across the world. On the other hand it can be observed that no cases of grammaticalisation of 'to do' into quotative markers have been registered whereas this is a quite common path for verbs of saying (Aikhenvald, 2004).

To conclude, the small survey carried out on (some) European languages seems lend some support to the idea that 'at a certain level of abstraction the three notions of "be", "say" and "do" are identical' (Cohen *et al.*, 2002: 247) and that the three domains are located in a 'semantic continuum' (Cohen *et al.*, 2002: 248). A third domain, that of motion verbs, can be added to this continuum. Possibly relying on the idea that a message goes out of the speaker's mouth (sound emission) and comes towards the hearer (sound vibrations), the domain of motion is also available for metonymic shifts enabling it to express a communication event.

Conclusion

Cross-linguistic evidence presented in section 7 and compared to the data in Schultze-Berndt (2008) and Cohen et al. (2002) showed that the use of *fare* 'to do' as a *verbum dicendi* is not a rare feature exhibited by Italian. Cognitive motivations for the employment of an action/production verb to express an event of saying were presented in section 6. Relying on the cognitive mechanism of metonymy and identifying some bridging contexts for the mapping of the domain of doing onto that of saying, it was possible to understand how *fare*, a verb of action/production, could enter reported speech constructions. A CxG approach to reported speech then allowed to take a fresh look at some aspects of the syntactic behaviour of *fare* (sections 3 and 4) which were considered problematic in the literature (section 1), and to reach the conclusions that there is no anomaly to be accounted for.

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