

Article

Mind the Gap! Null Modals (and Other Functional Verbs) in Finite Complementation in Italo-Greek

Alessandro De Angelis

Dipartimento di Civiltà Antiche e Moderne (DICAM), University of Messina, 98168 Messina, Italy; adeangelis@unime.it

Abstract: Although Italo-Greek is characterized by a general retreat of infinitival complementation, it partly preserves the infinitive in restructuring contexts: a handful of functional auxiliaries—in an overt or covert form—allow for infinitival complements, with which they enter in a monoclausal union. Such a preservation also triggers consequences for finite complementation. Indeed, those predicates that still select for infinitival complements may lack finite complementation, resulting in only the lexical embedded verb surfacing instead of the complex sentence AUX + *na* + finite verb: *den du ékame típote* ‘he could not do anything to him’ (lit. ‘he did not do anything to him’). I claim that such an absence—which gives rise to a semantic or even a syntactic gap—depends on the effects of the restructuring rule, which creates a high level of dependency and interlacing between the matrix and embedded verbs. When finite complements gradually replaced infinitival ones, though only sporadically, some predicates stopped selecting for finite complements, ultimately depriving the sentence of modal and other functional specifications.

Keywords: avoidance of the infinitive; complementation; modal verbs; restructuring; monoclausality; *irrealis* dependent clauses; Greek and Romance contact in southern Italy



Citation: De Angelis, Alessandro. 2024. Mind the Gap! Null Modals (and Other Functional Verbs) in Finite Complementation in Italo-Greek. *Languages* 9: 249. <https://doi.org/10.3390/languages9070249>

Academic Editors: Virginia Hill and Adam Ledgeway

Received: 20 November 2023

Revised: 28 March 2024

Accepted: 29 March 2024

Published: 15 July 2024



Copyright: © 2024 by the author. Licensee MDPI, Basel, Switzerland. This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

1. Introduction

Italo-Greek—on par with both other Greek varieties since Late Antiquity and the languages of the Balkan *Sprachbund* (Joseph 1983; Tomić 2006, pp. 413–655)—is characterized by the general avoidance of the infinitive in dependent clauses, when the main verb expresses will, wish, aim or intention (see, among others, Baldissera 2013; De Angelis 2013b, pp. 20–24; Katsoyannou 1992, 2001, pp. 47–52; Ledgeway 2013, 2016, 2023; Manzini and Savoia 2005, I, pp. 650ff.; Rohlf s [1958] 1972, 1977a). Both in Calabrian Greek (Greko Bovese, henceforth: Greko) and in the Greek spoken in Salento (Griko), the infinitive¹ is replaced by a finite verb form (built on the aoristic stem), invariably inflected in the present tense. Such verbs are headed by a complementizer (=COMP_{SBJV}), generally *na*, derived from Ancient Greek *hína* ‘so that, in order that’, which originally introduced purpose clauses (Joseph 1981; Tsangalidis 2004, pp. 198–200):

- | | | | | |
|-------|--------------------------------|----------------------|----------|--|
| (1.a) | θeli | na | mini | |
| | want.3SG | COMP _{SBJV} | stay.3SG | |
| | ‘He/she wants to stay’ (Greko) | | | |
| (1.b) | iça | na | mino | |
| | have.IND.IMPF.1SG | COMP _{SBJV} | stay.1SG | |
| | ‘I had to stay’ (Griko) | | | |

As (1.a,b) show, the complementizer *na*² is generally selected for “future-oriented” predicates, that is, predicates that encode «[. . .] an action or state which cannot be verified at the time of speaking» (Ledgeway 1998, p. 21). As such, it is traditionally labelled as *irrealis* and is used to introduce subjunctive clauses, in which information relating to time and space anaphorically depends on the main clause predicate. Similarly, due to Greek influence, in most Italo-Romance dialects spoken in Salento, central-southern Calabria

nominal expression or an indefinite noun. See a possible paraphrase of the above-mentioned Italian example, as well as its English translation, *Non ho nessuno con cui parlare* ‘I don’t have **anyone** to talk to’, which both employ a negative indefinite pronoun (*nessuno* / *anybody*). Moreover, these clausal complements may only be used with a highly restricted set of verbs, especially the existential predicates ‘be’ or ‘have’ (Grosu 2004, among others).

In such structures, an overt modal operator spells out the possibility/ability (or necessity) of reading (Šimík 2011). However, the operator can remain hidden, as shown by the possibility of inserting *potere* ‘can’ in the above-mentioned Italian sentence: *Non ho con chi posso parlare* ‘I don’t have anyone I can talk to’. The evidence supporting the covert occurrence of a modal operator comes from the assumption that these clauses generally require an irrealis marker on the embedded verb (morphologically realized through the infinitive or the subjunctive), which triggers a modal interpretation (Caponigro 2021, pp. 11–12, 34–37). In Italo-Greek—on a par with the languages of the Balkan *Sprachbund* (Grosu 2004)—they are realized either by *na*-clauses (exx. 8–9) or by the infinitive (exx. 6–7), in free variation (Ledgeway 2023, p. 30). See the following examples from Greko:

- (6) Ma den íxai ti kámi
but NEG have.IMPF.IND.3PL what do.INF
‘But there was nothing they could do’ (Roccaforte, TNC 18.5)
- (7) Egò den éxo ti ađđáši
I NEG have.PRS.IND.1SG what change.INF
‘I have nothing to change’ (Roccaforte, TNC 19.21)
- (8) den éxi xristyanúse pu na kámusi ećíndese sonátese
NEG have.IND.PRS.3SG men REL COMP.SBJV make.3PL those songs
‘There were no men who could perform those songs’ (Roccaforte, TNC 36.4)
- (9) en éxo ti na su dóso
NEG have.1SG what COMP.SBJV you.GEN give.1SG
‘I have nothing to give you’ (Bova, TNC 1.2)

The same silent modal operator is also licensed in indirect interrogative sentences codified by infinitival complements (see e.g., *I don’t know what to do*), which share both formal and semantic properties with the infinitival relatives:

- (10) den éxo pu pái
NEG have.1SG where go.INF
‘I have nowhere to go’ (Rohlf 1977a, p. 191)
- (11) den izzéro ti grázzi
NEG know.1SG what write.INF
‘I don’t know what to write’ (Rohlf 1977a, p. 191)

Indeed, in these sentences, too, a modal operator taking an infinitival, indirect interrogative complement, which codifies deontic necessity (as well as a possibility/availability reading) is licensed; witness the possible paraphrase of the above-mentioned English example: *I don’t know what I have to/can do*. Similar readings point in favour of a structure involving an underlying covert modal auxiliary, which—unlike the infinitival complements of restructuring predicates—is not phonologically realized:

...[CP wh- [TP AUX_(CAN/MUST)...[v-VP V_{INF}]]]

However, Italo-Greek presents indirect interrogative infinitival and subjunctive complements very rarely. This is in line with the general avoidance of the infinitive with *MUST*, and, consequently, with the silent deontic operator *MUST* (Ledgeway 2023, p. 31).

Another structure that Ledgeway (2023) considers to be monoclausal is the second-person negative imperative, which in both Romanian and southern Italo-Romance (but not Italo-Greek) is codified by the negator followed by either the infinitive or a finite *irrealis* clause, which are in free variation:

- (12a) *Non ghiri aa casa*
 NEG go.INF to=the house
 ‘Don’t go home!’ (southern Calabrese, Reggio Calabria)
- (12b) *Nommi trasi!*
 NEG=COMP.SBJV enter.2SG
 ‘May he not enter!’ (southern Calabrese, Montebello Ionico, [Rohlf 1977b](#))

Although scholars generally analyze the occurrence of the infinitive in these structures as a phenomenon of suppletivism, where the infinitive replaces a dedicated finite imperative form, [Ledgeway \(2023\)](#) traces such constructions back to a monoclausal structure with a silent modal. Under this view, the sentential negator licenses a functional head, by forcing the projection of the T-domain, that is the possibility of licensing inflectional features that are otherwise absent in positive imperatives. Indeed, negative imperatives are said to instantiate reduced infinitival complements headed by a silent modal auxiliary, according to the following underlying structure:

[_{CP} [_{TP} NEG (AUX)... [_{v-VP} V_{INF}]]] ([Ledgeway 2023](#), p. 33).

3. Null Modals (and Other Functional Predicates) in Finite Complementation

To sum up, the stronghold of the infinitive involves a series of (covert and overt) functional predicates. This constitutes a highly limited subset of functional verbs, which undergo restructuring, at least until finite structures (almost entirely) replace the infinitival ones.

The association of a handful of functional auxiliaries with monoclausal structures selecting for infinitival complements seems to have also produced some effects on finite complementation. Indeed, albeit very sporadically, some modal verbs, as well as other functional predicates involved in restructuring contexts, are optionally absent from the sentence, alongside the overwhelming majority of cases in which they head a *na*-clause. If they are absent, the restructuring complex sentence [FUNCTIONAL AUX + infinitive] can optionally be replaced by a simplex one, consisting of the finite embedded verb only (which in the complex sentence corresponds to the verb in the infinitive), inflected for the same mood and tense as the (silent) auxiliary, as shown by the following almost-minimal pair⁴ ([Mallimaci Forthcoming](#)):

- (13.a) o kórakose típote ísoe kámi tu
 the crow nothing can.AOR.IND.3SG make.INF the.GEN
 kaćcavendúlu
 carrion crow
 ‘The crow could not do anything to the carrion crow’
 ‘Il corvo non poté far nulla alla cornacchia’ (Roccaforte, TNC 21.19)
- (13.b) O kaćcavendulose apétae spilà ce ðen du
 The carrion crow fly.AOR.IND.3SG high and NEG him.GEN
 ékame típote
 Ø make.IND.AOR.3SG nothing
 ‘The carrion crow flew high and he could not do anything to him’
 ‘La cornacchia volò in alto e quello non poté fargli nulla’ (Roccaforte, TNC 21.19)

I would like to propose that the absence of the modal is best interpreted as the consequence of a(n albeit residual) constraint, which originally prevented modal and functional verbs from surfacing in finite *na*-clauses.

As example (13.b) shows, the replacement of the monoclausal structure in (13.a) with only the finite verb produces a gap at the semantic, and even syntactic level, due to the absence of the functional auxiliary, which can only be recovered from the context. It is not by chance that most occurrences of these silent modal (and other functional) verbs are represented by interrogative, exclamative, negative, conditional and future-oriented sentences (see exx. 14–17), where the modal (deontic) reading originates from unrealized, potential or other counterfactual events⁵.

Such a gap mainly affects those predicates that (in an overt or covert form) preserve the infinitive more than others; in contrast, verbs that no longer take the infinitive only rarely surface as null auxiliaries, if at all.

To test the occurrences of finite verbs used to replace restructuring constructions, I selected two different written corpora: the short stories and fairy tales collected by Rossi Taibbi and Caracausi ([1959] 1994) from the villages of Roccaforte (pp. 10–266), Condofuri (pp. 277–78), Roghudi (pp. 300–6) and Bova (pp. 394–418), and Aesop’s fables translated into Greko by Crupi (2021).

In a survey of the corpora, I recorded the optional absence of CAN, KNOW, and (very rarely) MUST as the main verbs in complex finite structures, alongside the overwhelming majority of cases in which they are overtly realized, followed by *na*-clauses (as regards MAKE, see Section 3.1). Then, with the exception of MUST (see below), these very auxiliaries are the same which still partially retain infinitival complementation in Greko, though in alternation with an irrealis finite clause (see § 1)⁶.

Conversely, those predicates which over time favoured the total replacement of infinitival clauses with finite ones (LET, WANT, COME, GO), surface exclusively as overt heads of *na*-finite clauses:

CAN

- (14.a) Ma púpote tin ðv ðvre
but anywhere her find.IND.AOR.3SG
'But he couldn't find her anywhere'
'Ma non la **poté trovare** in nessun luogo' (Roccaforte, TNC 11.10)
- (14.b) Ti egð ðen dim bérro meðému apikátu xumátu
because me.NOM NEG her Ø take.1SG with=me under ground
'Because I cannot take her with me underground'
'Perché io non la **posso portare** con me sotto terra' (Roccaforte, TNC 12.3)
- (14.c) Óðe m'éstile o téftose principínose, ti
here me=sent.IND.AOR.3SG the such little prince because
théli, an éçi tósso onúri na tu
want.3SG if Ø have.3SG much honour COMP.SBJV him.GEN
dóite ti riginóta ya yinéka
give.2PL the big queen as wife
'The little prince sent me here, because he hopes that you will give him the queen as a wife, if he may have the honour'
'[. . .] se **può avere** tanto onore [. . .]' (Roccaforte, TNC 12.10)
- (14.d) An éço tósson onúri, eláste sto
if Ø have.1SG much honour come.2PL to=the
spitímmu
house=me.GEN
'If I may be so honoured, please come to my house'
'Se **posso avere** tanto onore, venite a casa mia' (Roccaforte, TNC 40.21)
- (14.e) Ka póse fégwome [. . .]?
COMP how Ø escape.1PL
'How can we escape?'
'Come **possiamo fuggire** [. . .]?' (Roccaforte, TNC 14.7)
- (14.f) Aš' óla ton ebúrlespa, ma me túndim
all the times him fool.IND.AOR.1SG but with this.ACC.F
máttsa ðen arriparégwo
club NEG Ø remedy.IND.PRS.1SG
'I managed to fool him every time. As far as this club is concerned, I cannot find a solution'
'[. . .], ma per questa mazza **non posso rimediare** [. . .]' (Roccaforte, TNC 27.16)

- (14.g) ca pion ammaló iche tundo nimali!
 COMP what brain Ø have.IMPF.IND.3sg this animal
 'What brain this animal could have had!'
 'Che quale cervello **poteva avere** questo animale!' ("Glossa", 61)

KNOW

- (15.a) Egò éxo mía lleddá [...] pu šéri kámi túnda prámata.
 I have a sister who know.3SG do.INF these things
 Ta kánni esú?
 them Ø make.2SG you
 [...] Dóppu ti tróvume, pettónnome na ívro
 After that eat.1PL let's.go.1PL COMP_{SBJV} see.1SG
 an da kámise
 if them Ø make.2SG

'I have a sister who knows how to do these things. Can you do them? [...]
 After we eat, let's go and see if you can'
 'To ho una sorella [...] che sa fare queste cose. **Sai farle** tu? [...] Dopo che
 mangiamo, andiamo a vedere se **sai farle**' (Roccaforte, TNC 8.11)⁷

- (15.b) Árte θoríse eéino pu su kámmo
 now see.IND.PRS.2SG that REL you Ø make.1SG
 egó
 me.NOM
 'Now you'll see what I can do'
 'Ora vedrai che **so fare** io' (Roccaforte, TNC 26.12)

- (15.c) ta emáθiese pu ekrúnnai ólese tes
 them instruct.IND.AOR.3SG so that Ø play.IND.IMPF.3PL all the
 sonátese pu ekánnai me ton gózmo
 songs REL make.IND.IMPF.3PL with the world
 'He instructed them so they learned how to play all the
 songs in the world' (Roccaforte, TNC 36.2)

MUST

- (16.a) Će o ríga tu ípe ti i θixatératu
 and the king him.GEN tell. COMP the daughter=him.GEN
 IND.AOR.3SG
 éne i yinékatu
 Ø be.PRS.IND.3SG the wife=him.GEN
 'The king told him that his daughter was to be his wife'
 'E il re gli disse che la figlia **doveva essere** sua moglie' (Roccaforte, TNC 25.19)

- (16.b) Egò éxi tósso pu patégwo ya esséna,
 me.NOM have.3SG so long REL suffer.1SG for you
 cé árte ađđizmonáo ya esséna?
 and now Ø forget.1SG for you
 'I have suffered for you for so long, and now I am supposed to forget you?'
 'È tanto tempo che soffro per te ed ora (**dovrei**) **dimenticarti**' (Roccaforte, TNC
 9.24)

- (16.c) cé épyae tósso ta šinérya
 and make.IND.AOR.3SG so much the.PL money.PL
 pu ta épire me éna tráino
 REL them.PL Ø take.IND.AOR.3SG with a pulling
 'And he made so much money that he had to haul it'
 'Ed egli ricavò tanti denari che **dovette portarli** con un traino'
 (Roccaforte, TNC 11.14)

In this scenario, the (albeit rare) occurrences of silent MUST would seem to contradict the hypothesis presented here. Indeed, the almost mandatory association of MUST with finite complementation is already observed in the texts collected in Rossi Taibbi and Caracausi ([1959] 1994) (=TNC), in comparison with other auxiliaries such as, among others, HEAR and MAKE, which still overwhelmingly occur with the infinitive (Ledgeway 2013). Indeed, a constraint on MUST surfacing in finite structures would not be expected.

However, that this predicate presents behaviour different from that of CAN can be found in the following evidence. In very few instances, an overt form of MUST replaces CAN, with the meaning of the latter, followed by a *na*-clause:

- (17.a) *éxi na mu kámise áše módo pu éxo*
 must.2SG COMP.SBJV it make.2SG of such a way COMP must.1SG
na mbéó ecóssu
 COMP.SBJV go.1SG inside
 ‘You have to build it in such a way that I can pass through it’
 ‘[. . .] e devi farlo in modo che io **possa entrarvi** dentro’ (Roccaforte, TNC 19.14)
- (17.b) *ma egò tóssó éxo na porpatío pu*
 but me.NOM far enough must.1SG COMP.SBJV walk.1SG COMP
éxo na tin drovésपो
 must.1SG COMP.SBJV her find.1SG
 ‘But I have to walk a great deal in order to be able to find her’
 ‘Ma io devo camminare tanto da **poterla trovare**’ (Roccaforte, TNC 33.22)
- (17.c) *pemu po ccrázese t’ echo na*
 tell.2SG=me how croak.2SG so that must.1SG COMP.SBJV
tos ipo oló [. . .]
 them.ACC tell.1SG all
 ‘Tell me how you croak so that I can tell everyone [. . .]’
 ‘Dimmi come gracchi affinché io **possa dire** a tutti [. . .]’ (“Glossa”, 7)

A reviewer rightly observes that examples (17.a–c) all involve the use of multiple modals: there is always a modal element in the matrix clause (specifically, an obligation modal in (17.a) and (17.b) and an imperative in (17.c)), followed by *éxo na* in the subordinate clause. The obligation/imperative modality in the higher clause could have triggered the selection of MUST in lieu of CAN in the lower clause, in a process of analogical modal replacement.

A different possibility lies in the restriction on licensing CAN—the true stronghold of infinitival complementation—as an overt functional auxiliary in finite complementation. Under this view, MUST—insofar as it is systematically associated with finite complementation—is allowed to surface as an overt modal, despite its deontic meaning. Thus, although MUST still shows very few remnants of its aversion to finite complementation—on a par with those auxiliaries that partially preserve infinitival complementation—it differs from these insofar as it behaves as a suppletive modal form in place of the operator CAN. As such, it shows a greater predisposition to licensing finite dependent clauses, whereas CAN is evidently constrained (and barred) due to its near-categorical association with the infinitive.

Crucial evidence in favour of the presence of null modal predicates in (14–16) is provided by the almost-minimal pairs in the examples below (18.a,b, repeated from 13.a,b). Indeed—although in both sentences the same possibility operator is required—only in the former is CAN overt, followed by the infinitive of the lexical verb ‘make’. In the latter CAN is silent, and the lexical verb ‘make’ (*ékame*) surfaces in the finite form:

- (18.a) *o kórakose típote ísoe kámi tu*
 the crow nothing can.IND.AOR.3SG make.INF the.GEN
kaécavendúlu
 carrion crow
 ‘The crow could not do anything to the carrion crow’
 ‘Il corvo non **poté far** nulla alla cornacchia’ (Roccaforte, TNC 21.19)

- (18.b) O kaććavéndulose apétae spilà ce den du
 The carrion crow fly.AOR.IND.3SG high and NEG him.GEN
ékame típote
 make.IND.AOR.3SG nothing
 ‘The carrion crow flew high and he could not do anything to him’
 ‘La cornacchia volò in alto e quello non **poté fargli** nulla’ (Roccaforte, TNC 21.19)

3.1. The Case of MAKE

The case of MAKE seems quite different. Indeed, the contexts that are otherwise predicted to trigger the recovery of silent causative heads generally present intransitive motion predicates as finite verbs. In the corpora under examination, these predicates include prototypical motion verbs, such as *pettónno* ‘ascend’, or other semantically related verbs, such as *apetáo* ‘fly’ and *spuntéggwo*, *spundéggwo* ‘sprout’:

- (19.a) Túnda peǵía [...] *espundéspai* éna ćentinari ce mía
 These children Ø sprout.IND.AOR.3PL a hundred and one
llaranghía
 oranges
 ‘These children grew a hundred and one oranges’ (lit. ‘made them sprout’)
 ‘Questi bambini [...] **fecero spuntare** cento ed un arancio’ (Roccaforte, TNC 18.11)
- (19.b) [...] i ǵilící *espúndespe* éna pódi
 [...] the female Ø sprout.IND.AOR.3SG a plant
milingána
 aubergine
 ‘The female grew an aubergine plant’ (lit. ‘made it sprout’)
 ‘[...] la femmina **fece spuntare** una pianta di melanzana (Roccaforte, TNC 18.15)
- (19.c) éǵome túndo piććuni ce t’ *apetúme*
 have.1PL this.ACC pidgeon and it.ACC fly.1PL
 ‘We have this pigeon and we’re making it fly’
 ‘Abbiamo questo piccione e lo **facciamo volare**’ (Roccaforte, TNC 40.20)
- (19.d) Póse *apetásai* to piććúni [...] *apetúme*
 when fly.IND.AOR.3PL the pigeon
 ‘When they made the pigeon fly’
 ‘Quando **fecero volare** il piccione’ (TNC 40.20)
- (19.e) póso ívrai ti *pettónmusi* ećindim
 and see.IND.AOR.3PL COMP ascend.IND.PRS.3PL that
máni gúveno
 beautiful woman
 ‘And they saw that they were inviting that beautiful young woman to come inside’
 ‘Ed ecco che videro che **facevano salire** quella bella giovane’ (Roccaforte, TNC 38.9)
- (19.f) epyásai ećindin ghinéka, tin *pettóai* apánu
 take.IND.IMPF.3PL that woman her ascend.IND.IMPF.3PL over
 ‘They took the woman and brought her upstairs’
 ‘Presero quella donna, la **portarono** sopra’ (Roccaforte, TNC 19.13)

Causative constructions codified by overt MAKE + *na* + motion predicate (or a pseudo-coordinated finite structure, as in 20.a), are attested only sporadically:

- (20.a) [...] se **kánni** ce *pettónmise* apánu
 you.ACC make.3SG and ascend.2SG above
 ‘He will bring you upstairs’ (= ‘He will invite you inside’)
 ‘[...] ti **farà salire** sopra’ (Roccaforte, TNC 25.30)
- (20.b) **Kámeto** na to *pettóai* apánu
 make.IMPV.2SG COMP.SBJV it climb.3SG over
 ‘Have them take it (= the mirror) upstairs!’
 ‘**Fai che lo salgano** sopra (*scil.* lo specchio)’ (Roccaforte, TNC 19.15)

In some cases (21.a,c), the causative construction with overt MAKE is attested in free variation with the construction presenting only the finite verb (21.b,d):

| | | | | | | |
|--|------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------|-----------------|
| (21.a) | Káme make.IMPV.2SG | na COMP.SBJV | <i>pettói</i> climb.3SG | apánu over | | |
| 'Have her come upstairs!' | | | | | | |
| 'Falla salire sopra' (Roccaforte, TNC 41.9) | | | | | | |
| (21.b) | Dóppu after | ti COMP | tin her.ACC | <i>epéttoe</i> climb.IND.AOR.3SG | apánu [...] over | |
| 'After that he made her climb over [...]' | | | | | | |
| 'Dopo che la fece salire sopra [...]' (Roccaforte, TNC 41.9) | | | | | | |
| (21.c) | Pái go.IND.PRS.3SG | éce and | kánni make.PRS.IND.3SG | <i>kámi</i> make.INF | tría three | míla apples |
| 'He is going to have three apples made' | | | | | | |
| 'Va a farsi fare tre pomi' (Roccaforte, TNC 36.24) | | | | | | |
| (21.d) | Éce and | <i>ékame</i> make.IND.AOR.3SG | tría three | míla apples | áše of | χrisáfi gold |
| 'He had three golden apples made (= built/fabricated)' | | | | | | |
| 'E fece fare tre pomi d'oro' (Roccaforte, TNC 36.21) | | | | | | |

The examples (19.a–f) show the transitive use of intransitive motion predicates with causative value. Although Greek varieties generally do not present this syntactic pattern, it is nevertheless attested in Italo-Greek and southern Italo-Romance (Ledgeway 2009, pp. 850–52)⁸.

It is highly probable that the transitive use of these verbs in Greko was triggered by interference with the Romance varieties of southern Calabria⁹. This change (i.e., the intransitive > transitive shift) may be connected with the resistance of MAKE to surfacing with finite complements, where the latter is replaced by the former. That is, newly transitivized intransitives (arising from contact-induced change) substituted the original causative structure encoded by the complex sentence MAKE + *na*-clause.

The few silent functional verbs in the corpora suggests that this represent a very conservative pattern, in which, at least in an earlier stage, modal and other functional predicates underwent restructuring and were prevented from surfacing in finite complete structures. In such contexts, only the lexical (embedded) verb can occur, ultimately replacing the complex sentence AUX + *irrealis* COMP + embedded finite predicate.

In this respect, the cases illustrated in the examples above could represent the last remnant of a diachronic stage in which some predicates could act exclusively as functional heads in monoclausal structures, whence the ban on surfacing as auxiliaries heading *na*-structures.

One may wonder, in these examples featuring silent modals, whether the modal meaning (as well as other functional values) is instantiated through the raising of the lexical verb into the I-domain, where it realizes its inflectional features. Indeed, in finite clauses, the verb phrase can raise into the Inflectional domain:

[Infl [VP]] > [Infl VP {VP}]

A well-known example is represented by the epistemic use of the future in substandard Catalan, which can codify supposition even in the absence of the modal auxiliary; see, e.g., (colloquial) Cat. *Tindrà raó* 'He must be right' (Cruschina and Ledgeway 2016, p. 560). However, lexical verbs involved in the Greko examples do not display special TAM features, as the future tense in Catalan. Instead of verb movement to the IP, I argue that the Greko examples present a "modality gap", likely triggered by the once mandatory union of functional verbs with infinitival complements in restructuring contexts.

4. How to Explain the Gap: Some Conclusions

In the corpus analyzed, some occurrences present the replacement of monoclausal structures with the lexical verb only, in its finite form (corresponding to the embedded verb in the infinitival complement), instead of a complex structure consisting of the functional predicate followed by a *na*-clause. Such a replacement is probably linked to the spread of finite subjunctive complements at the expense of infinitival ones. When finite *na*-clauses have been generalized (though not exclusively) to the detriment of infinitival complementation, the auxiliaries that prove more resistant to the use of finite complementation can remain silent, hence the optional replacement of complex restructuring structures by means of a simplex clause, made up of only the lexical finite verb (instead of the complex sentence AUX + *na* + finite verb).

The constraint—though anything but categorical—of these verbs on selecting *na*-clauses probably represents the last remnant of a diachronic stage in which some predicates (in our corpus, mainly modal and causative verbs) began to leave their previous restructuring contexts.

As a result, monoclausality is lost, giving rise to several phenomena all pointing to a decreased level of dependency between the matrix and embedded clauses. These include the cliticization of the pronoun to the dependent verb—without the option of climbing to the main predicate—in addition to the possibility of the embedded verb licensing a subject. This may have led modal and other functional predicates to acquire a greater lexical status, partially freeing themselves from their otherwise (exclusively) functional role. Should this be the case, their resistance to surfacing in finite structures could represent a step in the degrammaticalization process, which leads them to progressively realize more lexical features, and at the same time reduces their ability to act (exclusively) as functional heads. Their (albeit sporadic) absence in selecting finite complements could be a signal of functional instability, in which they still oscillate between a purely functional role and a lexical one.

This view is further supported by the finding that some of the predicates that select for *na*-clause over infinitival complements show a lexical value that is missing in restructuring contexts. This applies to CAN. Although rare, several occurrences of CAN followed by a *na*-clause are attested in the oral texts collected by Rossi Taibbi and Caracausi ([1959] 1994). In these cases, CAN takes on a series of meanings that diverge from its prototypically modal value, e.g., ‘to be (physically) able to, to have the physical strength to, etc.’, by encoding an ability (or, in negative sentences, an inability), which depends on the subject (De Angelis 2013a).

The following examples are particularly revealing:

- | | | | | | | | | |
|--------|--|-----------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------|------------------|--|
| (22.a) | Egò and | δε NEG | ssónno can.1SG | pléo (any)more | [na] COMP.SBJV | staθò stay.1SG | arrássu away | |
| | ‘I can no longer stay away’ (Rochudi, TNC 281.1) | | | | | | | |
| (22.b) | [...] and | ećínose he | đen do NEG it | ísonne can.IND.IMPF.3SG | mánko even | na COMP.SBJV | to it | |
| | movéspi move.3SG ‘He could not even move it (= the stone)’ (Roccaforte, TNC 27.8) | | | | | | | |
| (22.c) | O póverose the poor | prevíterose priest | đen NEG | ísonne carry.IND.IMPF.3SG | mánko even | δέka ten | rótula, rolls | |
| | će ísonne and can.IND.IMPF.3SG | na COMP.SBJV | féri carry.3SG | ećíndo that.N | šiní yomáto? rope full.N (of wood) | | | |
| | ‘The poor priest could not even carry ten rolls, and you think he could he carry that rope (with the wood)?’ (Roccaforte, TNC 27.11) | | | | | | | |

| | | | | | | | |
|--------|--|------------------|-----------------|------|----------|-----------------|--------|
| (22.d) | épyae | ta | áše metáši | će | tá | vale | óssu |
| | take.IND.AOR.3SG | the | clothes of silk | and | them | put.IND.AOR.3SG | inside |
| | sto vrastári. | | | | | | |
| | in=the boiler | | | | | | |
| | Poi ðen | ésonne | | na | ta | gwálice óšu | |
| | then NEG | can.IND.IMPF.3SG | COMP.SBJV | them | take.3SG | out | |
| | 'He had taken the silk clothes and put them inside the boiler, but then he was not able to take them back out' (Roccaforte, TNC 2.5) | | | | | | |

In almost all these examples—as revealed by the different contexts they represent—in negative sentences, CAN is used to convey an impossibility arising from constraints inherent to the state of the subject (psychological, as in 22.a, or physical, as in 22.b–d). The use of the first occurrence of *ísonne* in (22.c), with the value of ‘carry’, is noteworthy.

It should be noted that this also applies to Griko, where CAN may select for *na*-clauses with the same ability reading, see e.g., *en sòzo na pao* ‘I don’t have the strength to go’ (Castrignano [Lecce]) (Baldissera 2013, pp. 57–58)¹⁰.

In conclusion, not only does Greko prove to be more refractory in losing infinitival complementation in comparison with Griko and with the southern Romance varieties affected by the Greek sub-/adstrate (Ledgeway 2013), but it also displays a major deficiency, albeit at a very residual level, in the realization of verbal modality (as well as other functional values) in finite complementation. This state of affairs should be taken into account when the spread of finite subjunctive complementation is investigated. When infinitival complementation is partially preserved, its stronghold, i.e., restructuring contexts, can produce noteworthy effects (i.e., modal and functional deficiencies in the verbal system) in the finite complementation system, too.

Funding: This research was funded by the project “Manuscripta Italica Allographica” (MIA), PRIN 2022ZAH9HC, Unity of research University of Messina.

Institutional Review Board Statement: Not applicable.

Informed Consent Statement: Not applicable.

Data Availability Statement: Data are contained within the article.

Conflicts of Interest: The author declares no conflicts of interest.

Notes

- ¹ In Italo-Greek, the infinitive is formed by the aoristic stem (*-sai*) crossed with the present stem *-ein*; the outcome is *-(s)ein*, see e.g., Greko *thelísi* ‘to want’, *kúí* ‘to hear’, *kámi* ‘to make’ etc., see Rohlf (1977a, p. 110).
- ² In this paper, I use the term ‘complementizer’ as a general label, regardless of the actual use of *na* in Italo-Greek (and of the corresponding particles used in Romance varieties in contact with Greek). Indeed, as is well known in the literature, in some of these varieties, the *irrealis* particle acts as a subjunctive marker rather than as a subordinating complementizer.
- ³ In Griko, modal CAN selects for the infinitive especially in negative indirect interrogatives (Rohlf 1977a, p. 191) and in negative sentences (more generally). These evidently represent contexts that favour such a preservation (Ledgeway 2013, pp. 13–14, fn. 17). This is in line with the conclusions drawn by Mackridge (1996, pp. 197–98) for Pontic Greek, where the infinitive resists especially in negative clauses, both interrogative and conditional, that is in counterfactual contexts. Remberger (2011) signals the optional use of finite constructions with CAN and with other modal verbs in Greko.
- ⁴ Finite verbs preceded by a silent modal/functional auxiliary are marked in italics; the overt modal/functional auxiliaries are marked in bold. In the glosses, the silent modal/functional predicate is signalled through Ø. In order to highlight the absence of modal verbs in the Italo-Greek examples, English translations are followed by the original Italian ones given in Rossi Taibbi and Caracausi ([1959] 1994) and in Martino (in Crupi 2021). This approach is applied only to those textual passages in which modal contexts are attested.
- ⁵ As regards negative and interrogatives as “non assertive” sentences, see Palmer (2001, pp. 11–13).
- ⁶ HEAR is also among those auxiliaries that partially preserve infinitival complementation. However, instances where this predicate lacks finite complements were not recorded in this corpus.
- ⁷ In this example, the necessity of retrieving a modal operator of ability can be inferred from the fact that the speaker (the king’s son) asks his wife if she knows how to do ‘these things’ (*túnda prámata*) the same way his sister does them. In this latter clause, the

modal operator is overtly realized (*pu šéri kámi túnda prámata* ‘who knows how to do these things’), which confirms the necessity of postulating a modal operator in the interrogative sentence too (*Ta kánni esú?* ‘Can you do them?’).

- 8 It should be noted that in some examples (see 19.e,f; 20.a; 21.a,b), motion verbs take a [+animate, +human] object, otherwise ruled out by transitiv(ized) motion verbs in southern Italo-Romance dialects (Romagno 2021, 2023). This could confirm the hypothesis of a contact-induced origin, misinterpreted in the target language. Indeed, in Italo-Greek, the expansion of these transitively constructed intransitive verbs with animate objects would have taken place in spite of the original constraint against agentive referents in the role of direct object, which affects causative motion constructions in southern Italo-Romance dialects.
- 9 Starting at least from the Norman conquest of Sicily (1061–1091), extreme southern Italo-Romance varieties acquired more prestige, whereas Italo-Greek began its inexorable decline (Fanciullo 1996). Therefore—though in the case of Greek-Romance contact, interference phenomena are in most part due to influence exerted by Greek on the (southern) Romance dialects—the directionality of this influence is also documented in the reverse direction, see Ledgeway et al. (2020a, 2020b, 2020c) for multiple case studies.
- 10 It cannot be ruled out that this group of (non modal) meanings would derive from contact with extreme southern Italo-Romance. For example, in southern Calabrese, *putiri* ‘can’ takes a finite complement especially when it behaves as a lexical verb denoting an inherent ability (‘to able to’), that is, a speaker-oriented modality (De Angelis 2013a, pp. 429–31). In such contexts, it preserves a range of values similar to the original semantic core of Lat. POSSUM (‘have the (physical) strength; gain the upper hand (over sb.); overcome, win, put down’), from which it derives.

References

- Baldissera, Valeria. 2013. Conservative and Innovative Tendencies in Griko Infinitive Complements. In *Proceedings of the 5th International Conference on Greek Dialects and Linguistic Theory*. Edited by Mark Janse, Angela Ralli and Brian D. Joseph. Patras: Laboratory of Modern Greek Dialects, University of Patras, pp. 35–44.
- Calabrese, Andrea. 1993. The Sentential Complementation of Salentino. A Study of a Language without Infinitival Clauses. In *Syntactic Theory and the Dialects of Italy*. Edited by Adriana Belletti. Turin: Rosenberg and Sellier, pp. 28–98.
- Caponigro, Ivano. 2021. Introducing Headless Relative Clauses and the Findings from Mesoamerican Languages. In *Headless Relative Clauses in Mesoamerican Languages*. Edited by Ivano Caponigro, Harold Torrence and Roberto Zavala Maldonado. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 1–57.
- Chilà, Leonida, and Cinzia Citraro. 2012. Impopolarità dell’infinito nelle varietà calabresi meridionali estreme: la selezione dei complementatori e i contesti modali. *Rivista Italiana di Linguistica e di Dialettologia* 14: 113–44.
- Cinque, Guglielmo. 1999. *Adverbs and Functional Heads. A Cross-Linguistic Perspective*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Cinque, Guglielmo. 2004. ‘Restructuring’ and Functional Structure. In *Structures and Beyond. The Cartography of Syntactic Structures*. Edited by Adriana Belletti. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, vol. 3, pp. 132–91.
- Cinque, Guglielmo. 2006. *Restructuring and Functional Heads. The Cartography of Syntactic Structures*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, vol. 4.
- Crupi, Giovanni Andrea. 2021. *La “glossa” di Bova. Cento favole esopiche in greco calabro. Schema grammaticale, lessico*. Introduzione di Carmelo Giuseppe Nucera. Prefazione di Sisinio Zito. Nota del curatore Paolo Martino. Bova: Edizioni Apodiafazzi.
- Cruschina, Silvio, and Adam Ledgeway. 2016. The structure of the clause. In *The Oxford Guide to the Romance Languages*. Edited by Adam Ledgeway and Martin Maiden. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 556–74.
- De Angelis, Alessandro. 2013a. Binding Hierarchy and Peculiarities of the Verb ‘potere’ in Some Southern Calabrian Varieties. In *Synchrony and Diachrony: A Dynamic Interface*. Edited by Anna Giacalone-Ramat, Caterina Mauri and Piera Molinelli. Amsterdam: Benjamins, pp. 419–40.
- De Angelis, Alessandro. 2013b. *Strategie di complementazione frasale nell’estremo Meridione italiano*. Messina: SGB Edizioni.
- Fanciullo, Franco. 1996. *Fra Oriente e Occidente. Per una storia linguistica dell’Italia meridionale*. Pisa: ETS.
- Grosu, Alexander. 2004. The Syntax-Semantics of Modal Existential wh Constructions. In *Balkan Syntax and Semantics*. Edited by Olga Mišeska Tomić. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: Benjamins, pp. 405–38.
- Hill, Virginia. 2017. Early Modern Romanian infinitives: Origin and Replacement. In *Infinitives at the Syntax-Semantics Interface: A Diachronic Perspective*. Edited by Lukasz Jędrzejowski and Ulrike Demske. Tübingen: de Gruyter, pp. 147–68.
- Joseph, Brian D. 1981. On the Synchrony and Diachrony of Modern Greek *na*. *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 7: 139–54. [CrossRef]
- Joseph, Brian D. 1983. *The Synchrony and Diachrony of the Balkan Infinitive. A Study in Areal, General, and Historical Linguistics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Katsoyannou, Marianne. 1992. *Le parler gréco de Gallicianò (Italie): Description d’une langue en voie de disparition*. Paris: University of Paris VII “Denis Diderot”.
- Katsoyannou, Marianne. 2001. Le parler grec de Calabre: Situation linguistique et sociolinguistique. *LALIES* 21: 7–59.
- Ledgeway, Adam. 1998. Variation in the Romance Infinitive. The Case of the Southern Calabrian Inflected Infinitive. *Transactions of the Philological Society* 96: 1–61. [CrossRef]
- Ledgeway, Adam. 2007. Diachrony of Finiteness: Subordination in the Dialects of Southern Italy. In *Finiteness: Theoretical and Empirical Foundations*. Edited by Irina A. Nikolaeva. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 335–65.
- Ledgeway, Adam. 2009. *Grammatica diacronica del napoletano*. Tübingen: Niemeyer.

- Ledgeway, Adam. 2013. Greek Disguised as Romance? The Case of Southern Italy. In *Proceedings of the 5th International Conference on Greek Dialects and Linguistic Theory*. Edited by Mark Janse, Angela Ralli and Brian D. Joseph. Patras: Laboratory of Modern Greek Dialects, University of Patras, pp. 184–228.
- Ledgeway, Adam. 2016. Clausal complementation. In *The Oxford Guide to the Romance Languages*. Edited by Adam Ledgeway and Martin Maiden. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 1013–28.
- Ledgeway, Adam. 2023. The Final Stronghold of the Infinitive: (Silent) Modals in Romanian and southern Italy. *Revue roumaine de linguistique* 2023: 25–39. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Ledgeway, Adam, Norma Schifano, and Giuseppina Silvestri. 2020a. Changing alignments in the Greek of southern Italy. *Journal of Greek Linguistics* 20: 5–60. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Ledgeway, Adam, Norma Schifano, and Giuseppina Silvestri. 2020b. I costrutti causativi nelle varietà romanze e greche della Calabria meridionale. In *Tra etimologia romanza e dialettologia. Studi in onore di Franco Fanciullo*. Edited by Patrizia Del Puente, Francesca Guazzelli, Lucia Molinu and Simone Pisano. Alessandria: Edizioni dell’Orso, pp. 203–17.
- Ledgeway, Adam, Norma Schifano, and Giuseppina Silvestri. 2020c. Microvariation in dative-marking in the Romance and Greek varieties of Southern Italy. In *Dative constructions in Romance and beyond*. Edited by Anna Pineda and Jaume Mateu. Berlin: Language Science Press, pp. 317–49.
- Loporcaro, Michele. 1995. Recessività sintattica dell’infinito e vitalità morfologica della desinenza infinitivale in alcuni dialetti del reggino. In *Scritti linguistici e filologici in onore di Tristano Bolelli*. Edited by Roberto Ajello and Saverio Sani. Pisa: Pacini, pp. 331–58.
- Mackridge, Peter. 1996. The Medieval Greek Infinitive in the Light of Modern Dialectal Evidence. In *Φυλλάκη. Studies in Honour of Robert Browning*. Edited by Costas N. Constantinides, Nikolaos M. Panagiotakes, Elizabeth Jeffreys and Athanasios D. Angelou. Venice: Istituto ellenico di studi bizantini e postbizantini, pp. 191–204.
- Mallimaci, Mariateresa. Forthcoming. L’italo-greco calabrese: panorama sociolinguistico e analisi sintattica relativa al fenomeno della perdita dell’infinito. Bachelor’s dissertation, Degree-Granting University, Messina, Italy.
- Manzini, Rita, and Leonardo Savoia. 2005. *I dialetti italiani e romanci. Morfosintassi generativa*. Alessandria: Edizioni dell’Orso, vol. 1.
- Palmer, Frank R. 2001. *Mood and Modality*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Remberger, Eva-Maria. 2011. Morfosintassi verbale dei dialetti neogreci in Calabria. In *L’influsso dell’italiano sul sistema del verbo delle lingue minoritarie. Resistenza e mutamento nella morfologia e nella sintassi*. Edited by Walter Breu. Bochum: Brockmeyer, pp. 123–48.
- Rizzi, Luigi. 1976. Ristrutturazione. *Rivista di Grammatica Generativa* 1: 1–54.
- Roberts, Ian, and Anne Roussou. 2003. *Syntactic Change. A Minimalist Approach to Grammaticalization*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Rohlf, Gerhard. 1922. Apul. *ku*, kalabr. *mu* und der Verlust des Infinitivs in Unteritalien. *Zeitschrift für romanische Philologie* 42: 211–23.
- Rohlf, Gerhard. 1961. Su alcuni calchi sintattici dal greco nell’Italia meridionale. *Studi Linguistici Italiani* 2: 141–54.
- Rohlf, Gerhard. 1964. *Lexicon Graecanicum Italiae Inferioris. Etymologisches Wörterbuch der unteritalienischen Gräzitat*. Tübingen: Niemeyer.
- Rohlf, Gerhard. 1972. La perdita dell’infinito nelle lingue balcaniche e nell’Italia meridionale. In *Studi e ricerche su lingua e dialetti d’Italia*. Florence: Sansoni, pp. 318–32. First published 1958.
- Rohlf, Gerhard. 1977a. *Grammatica storica dei dialetti italogreci (Calabria, Salento)*. München: Beck.
- Rohlf, Gerhard. 1977b. *Nuovo dizionario dialettale della Calabria*. Ravenna: Longo.
- Romagno, Domenica. 2021. Caused Motion Constructions in Northern Calabria: Object Animacy and the Role of Dialect. *Lingue e Linguaggio* 20: 287–308.
- Romagno, Domenica. 2023. Ancora sull’uso delle costruzioni causative di moto in alcune varietà dialettali della Calabria settentrionale: principi semantici e variazione diasistemica. In *Perspectives de recherche en linguistique et philologie romanes*. Edited by Dolores Corbella, Josefa Dorta and Rafael Padrón. Strasbourg: Société de Linguistique Romane/EliPhi, vol. 2, pp. 875–85.
- Rossi Taibbi, Giuseppe, and Girolamo Caracausi. 1994. *Testi neogreci di Calabria*, 2nd ed. Palermo: Istituto siciliano di Studi Bizantini e Neellenici. First published 1959.
- Šimik, Radek. 2011. Modal Existential wh-Constructions. Ph.D. thesis, University of Groningen, Groningen, The Netherlands.
- Tomić, Olga Mišeska. 2006. *Balkan Sprachbund. Morpho-Syntactic Features*. Dordrecht: Springer.
- Trumper, John, and Luigi Rizzi. 1985. Il problema di *ca/mu* nei dialetti calabresi mediani. *Quaderni del Dipartimento di Linguistica. Università della Calabria* 1: 63–76.
- Tsangelidis, Anastasios. 2004. Unidirectionality in the Grammaticalization of Modality in Greek. In *Up and Down the Cline—The Nature of Grammaticalization*. Edited by Olga Fischer, Muriel Norde and Harry Perridon. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: Benjamins, pp. 193–209.

Disclaimer/Publisher’s Note: The statements, opinions and data contained in all publications are solely those of the individual author(s) and contributor(s) and not of MDPI and/or the editor(s). MDPI and/or the editor(s) disclaim responsibility for any injury to people or property resulting from any ideas, methods, instructions or products referred to in the content.