1. Introduction

It is a well-established generalization that in Romance languages (but not only) the pronominal subject (clitic or null in pro-drop languages) of a subjunctive argument clause must be ‘obviative’ with respect to the attitude holder argument (in most cases, the matrix subject but also the matrix object of some psychological predicates).


The aim of this paper is to discuss the phenomenon of subjunctive obviation in a broader set of nonargument clauses and consider its theoretical relevance within this novel empirical domain. Particularly, I will address the following questions:

(i) In which nonargument clauses does obviation occur?
(ii) Does obviation display the same properties as in argument clauses?
(iii) Are the theories on obviation in argument clauses applicable to obviation in nonargument clauses?

The first two questions are clearly empirical, whereas the last one concerns which theory is fitter to explain the data. There are however connections between the three

¹. As far as I know, Manzini (2000) is the only work treating the question with respect to some types of subjunctive nonargument clause, before-clauses and purpose clauses.
questions. For instance, if the second question can be answered positively, then a theory that explains obviation in argument clauses should be able to explain obviation in non-argument clauses as well.

To address these questions, I will first discuss some background questions (section 2). In section 2.1 I describe the properties obviation displays in argument clauses. In section 2.2 I illustrate to which condition obviation tends to disappear, in section 2.3 I present the main theories on obviation in argument clauses. In section 3 I explain why obviation in nonargument clauses is a relevant empirical field to test previous theories of obviation. In section 4 I discuss the data concerning nonargument clauses. For each clause type instantiating subjunctive mood I consider four properties: whether obviation obtains, whether obviation obeys the same constraints as in argument clauses, and two general properties that will turn out to be crucial to assess which theory is more adequate, namely which clause type displays tense dependency, and which can contain an infinitive verb. In section 5 I analyse the data. The analyses points to the following conclusions:

(i) Obviation does not hold in each clause type type instantiating the subjunctive;
(ii) Obviation in nonargument clauses displays the same properties as in argument clauses;
(iii) Both obviative and nonobviative clause types display tense dependency;
(iv) Obviative clause types can be in the infinitive;
(v) Nonobviative clause types cannot be in the infinitive.

Thus, the data suggest that, while nonargument clauses provide no sufficient evidence in favor of the relation between tense dependency and obviation (the basic tenet of theories of obviation based on the Binding Theory), they appear to support the relation between obviation and infinitive). This substantiates the hypothesis that obviation is due to pragmatic principles bringing about mood competition (Bouchard 1984, Farkas 1992, Schlenker 2005). In section 6 I draw some conclusions.

2. Background

2.1. Generalities

Within the theory of Government and Binding framework, obviation was defined as a condition on the indexing of a subjunctive clause pronominal subject (clitic in non-pro drop languages, null in pro-drop languages). In sentence (1), for instance, the embedded
subject cannot be interpreted as coreferent with *Piero (the attitude holder). The accept-
ability of sentence (2), on the other hand, shows that the status of (1) only depends on
indexing.

(1) *Piero\textsubscript{1} vuole che pro\textsubscript{1} affronti questo problema.
    Piero\textsubscript{1} wants that pro\textsubscript{1} face.subj this problem

(2) Piero\textsubscript{1} vuole che pro\textsubscript{2} affronti questo problema.
    Piero\textsubscript{1} wants that pro\textsubscript{2} face.subj this problem
    ‘Piero wants him/her to face this problem.’

From a Minimalist perspective, where indexes are no more a primitive notion (Reu-
land 2001), obviation may be defined as the unavailability of the *de se* and the non-*de se*
reading, adopting the terminology introduced by Lewis (1979). The attitude report in (1)
would not be adequate to report the illocutionary act in (3), whereas an infinitive struc-
ture would be acceptable (see sentence (4)).

(3) a. Piero: “Affronterò questo problema!”
    b. Piero: “I’ll face this problem.”

(4) Piero vuole PRO affrontare il problema.
    Piero wants PRO face.inf the problem.
    ‘Piero wants to face the problem’.

Sentence (1) would also be inappropriate to report the illocutionary act in (4), uttered in
a situation in which Piero turns out to be the most competent person.

(5) a. Piero: “Voglio che la persona più competente risolva il problema.”
    b. Piero: “I want the most competent person to solve this problem.”

In this scenario sentence (6) would be considered true, but sentence (1) would certainly
not.

(6) Piero vuole che lui (stesso) risolva questo problema.
    Piero wants that he (self) solve.subj this problem
    ‘Piero wants himself to solve this problem.’
The attitude reports in (4) and in (6) illustrate a *de se* attitude and a non-*de se* attitude respectively. Sentence (1) appears to be unfit to express these kinds of attitudes and would be acceptable to report an illocutionary act as in (7).

(7) a. Piero: “Voglio che Maria risolva il problema.”
   b. Piero: “I want Maria to solve this problem.”

Thus, the attitude report in 0 can only be strictly *de re*.

### 2.2. The syntax of subjunctive obviation

A number of articles have shown that subjunctive obviation is sensitive to a series of syntactic properties that may ‘weaken’ it, making the *de se* reading available, to a variable degree of acceptability.

Among the properties that appear to ‘weaken’ obviation, the presence of tense, voice, and modal auxiliaries is crosslinguistically the most robust (Ruwet 1984, Picallo 1985, Raposo 1985). To illustrate, the embedded subject in sentence (8), where a modal verb in the subjunctive precedes two more auxiliaries, can be interpreted *de se* without particular effort.

(8) Piero riteneva che pro potesse essere stato licenziato a causa di quel grave errore.
    Piero thought that pro can.subj auxT auxVoice fired because of that big mistake
    ‘Piero thought that he might have been fired because of his big mistake.’

Thus, obviation obtains only in subjunctive clauses, but it does not obtain in *all* subjunctive clauses. Subjunctive obviation is not an all-or-nothing phenomenon, that is, it is not the case that a subjunctive clause is obviative as being in the subjunctive. Rather, only a subset of argument clauses displays obviation – clauses where subjunctive morphology is attached to the verbal theme (see example (1)).

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2. Other factors that affect obviation include the type of embedded predicate (agentive vs. nonagentive, Ruwet 1984), the type of subject pronoun (null/clitic vs. strong), and the presence of left dislocated constituents (Feldhausen 2008).
2.3. Theories about Subjunctive Obviation

A number of hypotheses have been proposed to capture the properties of subjunctive obviation. Among them, two main approaches can be singled out. The first explains obviation resorting to Binding Theory. The second derives obviation from pragmatic principles that rule the distribution of pro and PRO ad of subjunctive mood and infinitive mood.

2.3.1. Binding theory

Theoretically, the phenomenon of subjunctive obviation has drawn attention as early in the 1980s. The fact that a pronominal cannot be coreferent with a DP that is not a coargument was puzzling from the point of view of the Binding Theory as defined in the Governing and Binding Theory.

According to Binding Principle B, a pronominal is free in its binding category. A very natural hypothesis to explain obviation was then that the pronominal subject of a subjunctive clause and the attitude holder argument are part of the same binding domain. This is the line of reasoning of Picallo (1985), Raposo (1985), Everaert (1986), Kempchinsky (1986), Rizzi (1991), Progovac (1993, 1994), Avrutin and Babyonyshev (1997), Manzini (2000), among many others.³

Various technical implementations were proposed to answer the question why the attitude holder argument belongs to the binding domain of the embedded subject. A common point to all these analyses was that subjunctive must be someway responsible for the binding domain ‘extension’, because only subjunctive clauses display obviation—in indicative clauses a pronominal subject can be de se.

(9) Piero ha detto che pro affronterà il problema personalmente.

Piero has said that pro will face the problem personally

Piero said he will face the problem himself.'

Subjunctive tenses differ from indicative tenses in that their value depends on the matrix tense only (sequence of tense), that is, they behave as if they were ‘tense an-

³ Manzini (2000) adopts the Binding approach to explain some phenomena involving obviation in adverbal clauses.
Subjunctive obviation in nonargument clauses

phors’ (Picallo 1985). So, it was hypothesized that the ‘anaphoric’ nature of subjunctive mood caused the binding domain extension as to include the attitude holder argument.

2.3.2. Mood competition

The second approach to obviation builds on the observation that in syntactic environments where obviation obtains, the infinitive mood marks the de se reading.

According to these theories obviation does not derive from violations of syntactic constraints (such as Binding), but from pragmatic principles, such as the ‘Avoid Pronoun Principle’ (Bouchard 1984), ‘Blocking’ (Farkas 1992) or ‘Maximize Presupposition!’ (Schlenker 2005). Despite different implementations, they basically claim that a subjunctive clause cannot be de se if an infinitival clause is available.

Schlenker (2005), for instance, assumes that by the pragmatic principle Maximize presupposition!, the strongest possible presupposition must be marked on variables. This implies that linguistic expressions introducing a presupposition should be preferred to linguistic expressions that do not. He assumes that infinitives introduce the presupposition that a certain proposition is de se. Subjunctive mood, on the other hand, is a default mood, that is, it does not introduce presuppositions. In his view, this explains why subjunctive mood enters syntactic environments that, in his view, hardly can be reduced.

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4. In fact embedded indicative verbs are also interpreted w.r.t the matrix tense, but their interpretation does not depend on the matrix tense only, as they display double access reading (see Giorgi 2004, 2010 and Giorgi and Pianesi 2001).

5. Binding theory of subjunctive obviation is not devoid of shortcomings. First, it doesn’t explain the fact that non-obviative subjunctive clauses do exist, as shown in example (8). If obviation is due to the tense properties of subjunctive mood, one should expect that sentences like (8) were ruled out. Second, Schlenker (2005) observes that while overlapping reference is excluded in local domains, it is possible in contexts where obviation obtains.

(i) *Io ci pettino.
    I us comb

(ii) Voglio che pro partiamo.
    I.want that pro.1pl leave-subj.1.pl

‘I want we leave.’

This is not expected if pro and the subject of the matrix clause were part of the same binding domain.
to a unified semantic import — main clauses having imperative and optative illocutionary force, argument clauses of volitional, desiderative, epistemic, emotive-factive verbs, relative clauses expressing a volition or having a hypothetical meaning, various types of adjunct clauses expressing volition, future orientation, or conditionality). Thus, subjunctive verbs cause a semantic failure if it is used to report an illocutionary act like (3) — the form introducing the presupposition that the proposition is *de se*, i.e., the infinitive, is to be preferred.

On the other hand, if the syntactic environment disallows infinitive verbs, the use of subjunctive verbs is not incompatible with the *de se* reading, because its use does not violate *Maximize presupposition*! To illustrate, sentence (10) shows that a subjunctive clause cannot be coordinated with an infinitival clause (example from Schlenker 2005).

(10) *Je veux que tu partes et rester.*
   I want that you leave.subj and stay.inf

Thus, coordination with a subjunctive clause is a syntactic environment that prevents the occurrence of infinitival clauses. As in this context the form introducing the *de se* presupposition is unavailable due to syntactic reasons, the default mood is not constrained to express the *de se* reading, as sentence (11) shows.

(11) ?Je veux que tu partes et que je reste.
   I want that you go.subj and that I stay.subj
   ‘I want you to leave and myself to stay.’

3. Objectives and analysis outline

With this background in mind, let us consider nonargument clauses, that is, relative and adverbial clause, and what their import is from a theoretical point of view.

Nonargument clauses appear to be significant because if obviation is empirically comparable in argument and in nonargument clauses — that is, if it obeys the same constraints as in argument clauses, then it would be natural to assume that the same theory should be able to explain obviation in argument and in nonargument clauses. Particularly, if obviation in nonargument clauses turns out to be the same phenomenon as in argument clauses, then a new empirical field within Romance languages would allow us
Subjunctive obviation in nonargument clauses

to test the two different theories of obviation. Thus, if obviation were intrinsically due to the ‘anaphoric’ nature of subjunctive mood, one would expect that in all subjunctive nonargument clauses showing morphosyntactic dependency (sequence of tenses), obviation occurs irrespective of the existence of an infinitive ‘competitor’. If, on the other hand, obviation were due to pragmatic principles resulting in the ‘competition’ between subjunctive and infinitive, only the clause types allowing for an infinitival verb should display obviation in subjunctive clauses.

To test these hypothesis, it will be sufficient to consider for each clause type:

(i) whether obviation occurs;
(ii) if it does, whether obviation displays the same restrictions as in argument clauses; to check this, it may be sufficient to verify whether the insertion of an auxiliary or of a modal verb makes the de se interpretation available;
(iii) whether subjunctive tenses display ‘dependency’ as in argument clauses; this may be tested taking into account the sequence of tenses displayed in each-clause type.

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6. It is perhaps the case to note here that in nonargument clauses obviation should be considered as the unavailability of logophoric interpretation, rather than the unavailability of the (non) de se reading, because attitude may not be involved in nonargument clauses. I assume that the de se reading can be considered as a special type of logophoric reading, so obviation in nonargument clauses is not different from obviation in argument clauses in this respect.

7. To check whether obviation holds, one should exclude the syntactic factors that weaken it. Thus, all examples marked with (a’) discussed in section 4 are in the third person, include an agentive verb, and do not involve auxiliaries or modal verbs.

8. To check this, I examine whether rigid sequence of tense holds. In Italian the subjunctive mood has four ‘tenses’: presente (‘present simple’), passato (‘present perfect’), imperfetto (‘past imperfective’) and trapassato (‘pluperfect’). The distribution of these forms in subordinate contexts depends on the rules of sequence of tenses, summarized here:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Matrix verb</th>
<th>Subjunctive tense</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mood</td>
<td>Tense</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indicative</td>
<td>Present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Future</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Imperfetto</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Conditional    | Present                   | Past imperfective (imperfetto)/Pluperfect (trapassato) *
|                | Past                      | Present/Perfect (passato) |
(iv) whether it is compatible with infinitive verbs.

If obviation appears to be weakened in nonargument clauses as in argument clauses, then the phenomenon might be considered as the same in nonargument as in argument clauses.

If so, Binding-based theories predict that clause types triggering obviation should display tense dependency and clause types that do not trigger obviation should not display tense dependency, regardless of the possibility of having an infinitive verb. ‘Mood competition’ theories, on the other hand, predict that the clause types triggering obviation can be in the infinitive, no matter whether they display tense dependency.

4. Data

The subjunctive mood is instantiated in a diverse set of nonargument clauses. Among relative clause, restrictive and free relative clauses conveying a volitional and a conditional meaning trigger the subjunctive mood. As for adverbial clauses, the subjunctive mood is instantiated in time clauses introduced by *prima che* (lit. ‘before that’), *finché*

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I notice that when the matrix verb is in the present, in nonargument clauses there may be a temporal referent (overt or covert –that is, contextually retrieved) that licenses a past subjunctive. Moreover, if the nonargument clause has a conditional meaning (like in some relative clauses, time clauses, conditional clauses proper, and comparative clauses) the verb can be in the past subjunctive, conveying a higher degree of irreality.

(i) Chiunque abbia/avesse domande, mi trova nel mio ufficio.

Whoever has/had questions, me finds in the my office
‘Whoever has doubts can find me in my office.’

Sequence of tenses is more rigid if the main verb is past.

(ii) Chiunque *abbia/avesse domande, mi poteva trovare nel mio ufficio.

Whoever *has/had questions, me could find in the my office
‘Whoever had doubts could find me in my office.’

I will take this second type of sentences as the main evidence to show whether a clause type displays sequence of tenses.
Subjunctive obviation in nonargument clauses

(‘until’), and quando (‘when’), or non appena (‘as soon as’) having a ‘conditional meaning’ (Wandruszka 1991), purpose clauses, result clauses having a ‘purpose meaning’ (Wandruszka 1991), concessive clauses, conditional clauses introduced by different complementizers, such as se (‘if’), a condizione che, purché (‘on the condition that, provided that’), which have a volitional nuance, a meno che (‘unless’); in/nel caso (‘in case’), and without-clauses. Moreover, there are clause types that optionally select the subjunctive mood – negated reason clauses (in this case, subjunctive appears to be a negative polarity item) and comparative clauses.

For each clause types I will present data concerning the occurrence of obviation (example (a')) and obviation ‘weakening’ (example (a’’)), tense dependency (examples (b’) and (b’’)), and the availability of infinitival clauses (example (c)).

4.1. Relative clauses

4.1.1. ‘Volitional’ relative clauses

In this clause type obviation can occur (example (12a')). Obviation appears to be ‘weakened’ if a modal verb is inserted (example (12a’')). Subjunctive verbs appear to be dependent on the matrix tense, as they display the canonical sequence of tenses scheme (example (12b)). Infinitive mood is available to express logophoricity (example (12c)).

(12) a’. Piero cerca un insegnante con cui pro parli in inglese.

Piero looks for a teacher with whom pro talk.subj in English.

a’’. Piero cerca un insegnante con cui pro possa parlare in inglese.

Piero looks for a teacher with whom pro can.subj talk in English.

‘Piero is looking for a teacher to talk in English with.’

b’. Cerco una segretaria che parli /#parlasseinglese.

I look for a secretary who speak.pres.subj /speak.past.subj English.

‘I’m looking for a secretary who speaks English’.

b’’. Cerca un segretario che *parli /parlasse inglese.

I look for a secretary who *speak.pres.subj /speak.past.subj English.

‘I was looking for a secretary who spoke English’.
c. Cerco un insegnante con cui parlare inglese.
   I look for a teacher with whom speak English
   ‘I look for a teacher to speak in English with’.

4.1.2. ‘Conditional’ relative clauses
Relative clauses having a conditional meaning do not display obviation (example (13a)). They display sequence of tenses (example (13b') and (13b'')). They cannot be in the infinitive.

(13)  a. Piero saluta sempre chiunque pro incontri.
      Piero greets always anyone pro meets.subj
      ‘Piero always says hello to anyone he meets.’

   b'. Piero saluta sempre chiunque pro incontri /#incontrasse.
      Piero greets always anyone pro meets.subj /met.subj
      ‘Piero always says hello to anyone he meets.’

   b''.Piero salutava sempre chiunque pro *incontri /incontrasse.
      Piero greeted always anyone pro *meets.subj /met.subj
      ‘Piero always said hello to anyone he would meet.’

4.2. Adverbial clauses

4.2.1. Time clauses

4.2.1.1. Before-clauses
Before-clauses display obviation and obviation weakening (examples (14a') and (14a'')), sequence of tenses (examples (14b') and (14b'')), and can be in the infinitive (example (14c)).

(14)  a'. Piero ha parlato con Maria prima che pro uscisse.
      Piero aux talked with Maria before that pro went.out.subj

   a''.Piero parlava con Maria prima che pro fosse interrotto
      Piero was.talking with Maria before that pro was.subj interrupted
da una telefonata.
      by a phone call
      ‘Piero was talking with Maria before being interrupted by a phone call.’
b'. Uscirò prima che tu sia /*fossi rientrato.
   I.will.go.out before that you aux.pres.subj /aux.past.subj come.back
   ‘I’ll go out before you come back.’

b". Sarei uscito prima che tu *sia /fossi
   I.aux.cond gone.out before that you *aux.pres.subj /aux.past.subj
   come.back
   ‘I’d go out before you came back.’

c. Chiamerò prima di partire.
   I.will.call before P leave.inf
   ‘I’ll go out before leaving.’

4.2.1.2. Until-clauses

Until-clauses display obviation and obviation weakening (examples (15a') and (15a")), sequence of tenses (examples (15b') and (15b")), and can be in the infinitive (example (15c)).

(15) a'. Piero rimarrà finché non pro legga tutto il libro.
   Piero will.remain until neg pro read.subj all the book
   ‘Piero will remain until he reads the whole book.’

a". Piero rimarrà finché non pro abbia letto tutto il libro.
   Piero will.remain until neg pro aux.subj read all the book
   ‘Piero will remain until he reads the whole book.’

b'. Non partirò finché non sia /*fossi sorto il sole.
   neg I.leave.fut until neg is.subj /*was.past.subj risen the sun
   ‘I won’t leave until the sun rises.’

b". Non sarei partito finché non *sia /fossi sorto il sole.
   neg I.would.be left until neg *is.subj /was.past.subj risen the sun
   ‘I would not leave until the sun rose.’

c. Correrò fino a cadere.
   I.will.run until fall.inf
   ‘I will run until I fall.’

4.2.1.3. Time clauses having conditional meaning

This clause type does not display obviation (example (16a)). It displays sequence of tense (example (16b’) and (16b’")), Infinitival verbs are unavailable (example (16c)).
(16) a. Piero gli parlerebbe non appena pro lo incontrasse.
   Piero to.him would.talk as soon as pro him met.subj
   ‘Piero would talk to him as soon as he met him.’

b’. Voglio parlargli non appena sia/fosse possibile.
   I.want.pres talk-him as soon as aux.pres.subj/was.subj possible
   ‘I want to talk to him as soon as possible.’

b”. Volevo parlargli non appena *sia /fosse stato possibile.
   I.want.pres talk-him as soon as *aux.pres.subj /was.subj been possible
   ‘I wanted to talk to him as soon as it was possible.’

4.2.2. Reason clauses
Reason clauses do not display obviation (example (17a)). They do not display sequence of tenses (example (17b’) and (17b’’)). Causal clauses cannot be in the infinitive (in the relevant sense).⁹

(17) a. Piero si alza alle 6 non perché pro vada presto al lavoro,
   Piero refl gets.up at 6 neg because pro go.subj early to work,
   ma perché…
   but because…
   ‘Piero don’t get up at 6 because he goes to work early, but because…’

b’. Non voglio invitarlo non perché sia /#fosse taciturno,
   neg I.want invite-him neg because is.subj /#was.subj taciturn,
   ma perché è antipatico.
   but because is unkind
   ‘I don’t want to invite him not because he is taciturn, but because he is unkind.’

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⁹. Reason clauses can in fact be in the infinitive. However, the infinitive must be perfective, and negated reason clauses are rather marginal in the infinitive.

(i) Sarà licenziato per essere stato disonesto.
   She.will.be fired for aux.inf been dishonest
   ‘She will be fired for being so dishonest.’

(ii) *Sarà licenziato per essere disonesto.
    She.will.be fired for be.inf dishonest

(iii) *Sarà licenziato non per essere stato disonesto, ma…
     She.will.be fired not for aux.inf been dishonest, but…
b”. Non volevo invitarlo non perché sia /fosse taciturno,
neg I.wanted invite-him neg because is.subj /was.subj taciturn,
ma perché è antipatico.
but because is unkind
‘I didn’t want to invite him not because he is taciturn, but because he is un-
kind.’

4.2.3. Purpose clauses
Purpose clauses display obviation (example (18a’)) and obviation weakening (example (18a’’)), sequence of tenses (example (18b’) and (18b’’)), and can be in the infinitive (example (18c)).

(18) a’. Piero la andrà a trovare perché pro gli spieghi
Piero him will.go to meet in-order-to pro to-him explain.subj
la situazione.
the situation

a”. Piero va all’ ospedale perché pro possa essere visitato.
Piero goes to-the hospital in.order.that pro can.subj be visited
‘Piero is going to the hospital in order to be visited.’

b’. Lo vado a trovare perché mi spieghi
Him I.go.pres to meet in-order-to to-me explain.pres.subj
/*spiegasse la situazione.
/*explain.past.subj the situation
‘I’ll go to meet him in order that he may explain me the situation’.

b”. Lo andai a trovare perché mi *spieghi
Him I.went to meet in-order-to to-me *explain.pres.subj
*spiegasse la situazione.
/*explain.past.subj the situation
‘I went to meet him in order that he might explain me the situation’.

c. Lo vado a trovare per spiegargli la situazione.
Him I.go to meet in-order-to explain.inf-to.him the situation
‘I’ll go to meet him to explain him the situation’.
3.2.4. Result clauses
Result clauses having volitional meaning display obviation (example (19a')) and obviation weakening (example (19a'')). They display sequence of tenses (examples (19b') and (19b'')) and can be in the infinitive (example (19c)).

(19) a'. Piero studia in modo che pro superi l'esame.
    Piero studies so that pro pass.subj the exam.
    ‘Piero is studying so that he can pass the exam.’

a''. Piero studia in modo che pro possa superare l’esame.
    Piero studies so that pro can.subj pass the exam.
    ‘Piero is studying so that he can pass the exam.’

b'. Parlò in modo che tutti mi possano /*potessero capire.
    I.will.talk so that all me can.pressubj /can.past.subj understand
    ‘I will talk in a way that all everyone will be able to understand me.’

b''. Parlavo in modo che tutti mi *possano /potessero capire.
    I.talked so that all me *can.pressubj /can.past.subj understand
    ‘I was talking in a way that all everyone was able to understand me.’

c. Parlerò in modo da farmi capire da tutti.
    I.will.talk so to make.inf-me understand by all
    ‘I will talk so to make myself understood.’

4.2.5. Concessive clauses
Concessive clauses do not display obviation (example (20a)), strict sequence of tenses (example (20b') and (20b'')) and cannot be in the infinitive.10

10. Concessive clauses can also be in a nonfinite form—in the gerund, introduced by the conjunction pur (‘even though’). The subject of gerundive concessive clauses has different properties than the implicit subject of infinitives. It may not be coreferent with the matrix subject and it can be overt.

(i) Pur avendo piovuto tutta la notte, le strade non erano bagnate.
    even-though having rained all night long, the streets neg were wet
    ‘Even though it had rained all night long, the streets weren’t wet.’

(ii) Pur avendo Piero telefonato, Maria non era tranquilla.
    Even-though having Piero phoned, Maria neg was relaxed
    ‘Even though Piero had called, Maria wasn’t relaxed.’
(20) a. Benché/Nonostante/Sebbene pro lavori molto, Piero guadagna poco.
   Although pro worksubj a lot, Piero earns little.
   ‘Although he works a lot, Piero earns little money.’

b'. Nonostante abbia /#avesse la febbre, oggi Piero è al lavoro.
   Although has /#has the fever, today Piero is at work
   ‘Although he has/#had a temperature, today Piero is at work.’

b” Benché sia /*fosse inverno, ieri non faceva
   Although is.subj /*was.subj winter, yesterday neg made
   per niente freddo.
   at all cold
   ‘Although it is winter, yesterday it wasn’t cold at all.’

4.2.6. Conditional clauses

Conditional clauses do not display obviation, they display sequence of tenses, and cannot be in the infinitive.11

4.3.6.1. If-clauses

(21) a. Se pro studiassè di più, Piero avrebbe meno problemi.
   If pro studied.subj more Piero would.have fewer problems
   ‘If he studied more, Piero would have fewer problems.’

b’. Se non *piova /piovesse, uscirei.
   If neg *rain.pres.subj /rained.subj I.would.go.out
   ‘If it didn’t rain, I would go out.’

11. Unless and on condition-clauses can be in the infinitive, but the controller can only be impersonal.

(i) *Piero guarda sempre la partita a meno di non andare al cinema.
   Piero watches always the match unless neg go.inf to.the cinema

(ii) Si potrebbe partire domani a meno di non voler proprio restare qui.
    SI might leave tomorrow unless neg want.inf really stay here
    ‘We/one/you might leave tomorrow unless we/one/you really want to stay here.’

(iii) *Piero resterà a condizione di spiegare la situazione.
    Piero will.stay on condition P explain.inf the situation

(iv) Si può restare a condizione di non disturbare.
    SI can remain on condition P neg disturb
    ‘One can remain on condition that one do not disturb the others.’
b". Se non *sia /fosse piovuto, sarei uscito.
 If neg *aux.pres.subj /aux.past.subj rained I.would.be gone.out
 ‘If it hadn’t rained, I would have gone out.’

4.2.6.2. **Unless-clauses**

(22) a. Piero guarda sempre la partita a meno che pro non vada
 Piero watches always the match unless pro neg goes.subj
 al cinema.
to.the cinema
 ‘Piero always watches the match unless he goes to the movies.’

b'. Compreremo il libro a meno che non costi /*costasse
 We.will.buy the book unless neg costs.pres.subj/*cost.past.subj
 molto.
a lot
 ‘We will buy the book unless it costs a lot.’

b". Avrei comprato il libro a meno che non *sia
 I.aux.cond bought the book unless neg *aux.pres.subj
 /fosse costato molto.
 /aux.past.subj cost lot
 ‘I would have bought the book unless it cost a lot.’

4.2.6.3. **On condition-clauses**

(23) a. Piero (ha detto che) resterà purché/a condizione che pro lavori
 Piero (has said that) will.stay on condition that pro work.subj
 with Mario.
with Mario
 ‘Piero (has said he) will stay on condition that he works with Mario.’

b'. Compreremo il libro a condizione che costi
 We.will.buy the book on the condition that cost.pres.subj
 /*costasse poco.
 /*cost.past.subj little
 ‘We will buy the book on the condition that its price be reasonable.’

b". Avrei comprato il libro a condizione che *sia
 I.aux.cond bought the book on the condition that *aux.pres.subj
 /fosse costato poco.
 aux.past.subj cost little
 ‘I’d have bought the book on the condition that its price was reasonable.’
4.2.6.4. In case-clauses

(24) a'. Piero si porta la valigia in caso pro decida di rimanere.
   Piero refl bring the suitcase in case pro decides subj to stay inf
   ‘Piero is bringing its suitcase in case he decides to stay.’

b'. Piero preparerà la valigia in caso pro debba /dovesse
   /must past subj leave
   ‘Piero is preparing the suitcase in case he has to leave tomorrow.’

b". Piero preparò la valigia in caso pro *debba /dovesse
   Piero prepared the suitcase in case pro *must past subj /must past subj
   leave
   ‘Piero is preparing the suitcase in case he has to leave tomorrow.’

4.2.7. Without-clauses

Modal clauses introduce by senza che (lit. ‘without that’) display obviation (example (25a')) and obviation weakening (example (25a"')). They display sequence of tenses (examples (25b') and (25b"')) and can be in the infinitive (example (25c)).

(25) a'. Piero esce sempre senza che pro saluti
   Piero goes out always without that pro says goodbye subj

a". Piero rientrerà senza che pro debba giustificare il ritardo
   Piero will come back without that pro must subj justify the delay
   ‘Piero will come back without he has to account for his delay.’

b'. Uscirò senza che qualcuno lo noti /*notasse.
   I will go out without that someone it notice pres subj /*noticed subj.
   ‘I’ll go out without someone notices it.’

b". Uscii senza che qualcuno lo *noti /*notasse.
   I went out without that someone it *notice pres subj /*noticed subj.
   ‘I went out without someone noticed it.’

c. Sono uscito senza salutare.
   I am gone out without say goodbye inf
   ‘I went out without saying goodbye.’
4.2.8. Comparative clauses

Comparative clauses do not display obviation (example (26a)), sequence of tenses (example (26b') and (26b'')), and cannot be in the infinitive.

(26) a. Piero legge più volentieri di quanto pro non faccia sport.
    Piero reads more eagerly than pro neg does.subj sport.
    ‘Piero reads more eagerly than he does sport.’

b'. Piero legge più volentieri di quanto pro non faccia /facesse sport.
    Piero reads more eagerly than pro neg do.pres.subj/do.past.subj sport
    ‘Piero reads more eagerly than he does/did sport.’

b". Piero leggeva più volentieri di quanto pro non faccia /facesse sport.
    Piero read more eagerly than pro neg do.pres.subj /do.past.subj sport.
    ‘Piero used to read more eagerly than he did sport.’

5. Analysis

The data discussed in the previous section show that not all nonargument clause types display obviation – only 6 out of 15 do. In clause types where obviation obtains, it is weakened if an auxiliary or a modal is inserted. Thus, obviation in nonargument clauses appears to have the same properties as in argument clauses. As a consequence, a theory explaining obviation in argument clauses should then be applicable to nonargument clauses as well.

Table 1 below summarizes the data presented in the preceding section relative to obviation, tense dependency, and the availability of infinitive mood.

As for the hypothesized relation between tense dependency and obviation maintained by Binding-based theories of obviation, the data show that excluding reason, concessive, and comparative clauses,12 all nonargument clauses appear to be temporally dependent. Tense dependency occurs both in obviative (volitional relative clauses, before-
clauses, *until*-clauses, purpose clauses, result clauses, *without*-clauses) and in nonobviative clauses (conditional relative clauses, *as soon as*-clauses, conditional clauses).

On the other hand, all clause types showing obviation can be in the infinitive and all the clause types that can be in the infinitive display obviation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Clause types</th>
<th>Subtypes</th>
<th>Obviation</th>
<th>TD</th>
<th>Infinitive</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>Until</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>As soon as</em></td>
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<td>✓</td>
<td>✗</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Comparative</em></td>
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<td>✗</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. Obviation, tense dependency and infinitive in nonargument clauses.

Remember now the predictions of the two different approaches to obviation. Theories that associate obviation with tense dependency predict that if a clause type display tense dependency (as marked, for instance, through sequence of tenses), it should also display obviation, and if it does not display tense dependency, it should not display obviation either. On the other hand, theories that associate obviation with the availability of infinitive mood predict that if a clause type display obviation, it must be able to be in the infinitive, while if it does not, it cannot be in the infinitive.

The data show no clear evidence in support of the former approach, since there is no one-to-one association between obviative/nonobviative clause types and tense-dependent/independent clauses types. Some clause types displaying obviation also display tense dependency, but some clause types that do not display obviation do display tense dependency.

On the other hand, the data show that there is a correlation between obviation and
mood. Obviative clause types can be in the infinitive, whereas nonobviative clauses cannot be in the infinitive. This appears to support the theories of obviation that resort to mood competition (as the syntactic counterpart of pragmatic principles).

6. Conclusions

Subjunctive obviation has been a puzzling phenomenon in Romance linguistics (and not only) since the 1980s. Various theories have been proposed to account for the phenomenon, building on Binding Theory (Picallo 1985, Rizzi 1991, Manzini 2000, among many others) or to pragmatic principles resulting in mood competition (Bouchard 1984, Farkas 1992, Schlenker 2005).

All of them build on data concerning argument clauses. However, obviation obtains in nonargument clauses as well, that is, in relative and adverbial clauses, and in this syntactic environment obviation is ruled by the same syntactic constrains.

The data relative to nonargument clauses show that
(i) not all nonargument clauses in the subjunctive display obviation;
(ii) tense-dependent clauses may be obviative or nonobviative;
(iii) clause types allowing for the infinitive are all obviative;
(iv) clause types that do not allow for the infinitive are not obviative.

These generalizations suggest that no correspondence between tense dependency and obviation appears to hold. Rather, they appear to prove a relation between obviation and the availability of infinitive mood. Thus, they provide novel empirical evidence in favor of theories of obviation based on mood competition.

References


