The interplay between language contact and universal principles of grammar: Evidence from Corfioto

This work investigates the interplay between universal restrictions of grammar and the limits of variation in contact-induced morphosyntactic change. We compare and analyze the synchronic and diachronic morphosyntactic properties of clausal complementation in Venetian, Salentino, Greek, and Corfioto, the endangered variety traditionally spoken by Jews in Corfu and we argue that similar to standard diachronic change in any natural language, the emergent grammar of 'contact' languages maintains a universal tripartite distinction among *Event*-, *Situation*-, and *Proposition*-type clausal complements (Wurmbrand & Lohninger 2023), which is reflected in the clausal size of three minimal syntactic domains (vP, IP, CP) and the morphosyntactic realization of embedded subjects and predicates across the three types. While complementation in Corfioto reflects morphosyntactic properties of its 'source' languages, its hybrid synchronic properties are subject to a minimal universal tripartition with implicational morphosyntactic properties. Unlike Venetian and Salentino, retaining infinitival complements, *Event*-type complements in Corfioto are encoded via a finite verb form, like Modern Greek. The embedded verb may surface in a present-non-past 'subjunctive' form, depending on person, number, and verb class. However, no language licenses strong pronouns or DP subjects preverbally in this type. In *Situation*-type complements, Corfioto displays present-non-past subjunctive forms without sequence-of-tense marking, a pattern shared with Salentino and Modern Greek but contrasting with Venetian's strict past-tense subjunctive verb forms embedded under past-tense matrices. Moreover, unlike Venetian, subject obviation is absent in this type in Salentino, Modern Greek, and Corfioto. Moreover, strong pronouns and DP subjects are licensed in preverbal position in Venetian, Modern Greek, and Corfioto, but not in Salentino. *Proposition*-type complements show no TAM or subject-licensing restrictions across all languages. Based on evidence, we show that the implicational distribution of morphosyntactic properties, including infinitives, subjunctive and other TAM forms and pronominals, including clitics and strong pronouns is subject to an *ABA restriction which characterizes the grammar of all natural languages, including the 'hybrid' grammar of a 'contact' language, as shown in the table.

	***Event*-type complements**	***Situation*-type complements**	***Proposition*-type complements**
Corfioto	Subjunctive forms, 2SG clitic	Subjunctive forms, 2SG clitic, strong pronouns & DP subjects	Any TAM marking on the verb, strong pronouns & DP subjects preverbally
Greek	*na*-present-non past forms	*na*-present-non-past forms, preverbal strong pronouns & DP subjects	Any TAM marking on the verb, strong pronouns & DP subjects preverbally
Salentino	Infinitives	Subjunctive forms, no strong pronouns & DPs preverbally	Any TAM marking on the verb, strong pronouns & DP subjects preverbally
Venetian	Infinitives, no subject clitics	Infinitives/subjunctive forms, SOT, subject clitics, preverbal strong pronouns & DPs	Any TAM marking on the verb, strong pronouns & DP subjects preverbally

Wurmbrand, S., & Lohninger, M. (2023). An implicational universal in complementation—Theoretical insights and empirical progress. In J. M. Hartmann & A. Wöllstein (Eds.), *Propositional arguments in cross-linguistic research: Theoretical and empirical issues* (pp. 188–229). Narr Francke Attempto.