

HEARSAY EVIDENTIAL MARKERS: ON THE DEGREE OF GRAMMATICALIZATION OF ITALIAN *DICE CHE* AND ROMANIAN *CICĂ**

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1. INTRODUCTION

In this study, I aim to examine the hearsay evidential markers, namely *dice che* in Italian (central-southern varieties) and *cică* in Romanian, both of which convey the meaning ‘it is said that/allegedly’ and have solidified into functional elements within their respective languages. The primary objective of this research is to discern the differences in the degree of grammaticalization exhibited by *dice che* and *cică*. This phenomenon, present cross-linguistically, has received extensive attention in linguistic literature. However, to the best of my knowledge, this study represents the first attempt to scrutinize two distinct stages of grammaticalization in Italian and Romanian regarding this particular phenomenon (cf. a similar contrastive study by Cruschina (2011, 2015) in Italian and Sicilian). By undertaking this research, I intend to contribute to the cross-linguistic investigations of this phenomenon.

Both Italian and Romanian have a construction in which a sentence begins with a specialized form, comprising a fixed lexical element (such as an adjective, adverb, noun or verb) paired with a complementizer that introduces the sentence. Since the first element in this construction is fixed and invariable, such as an adverb, the sentence introduced by the complementizer has a strong independent-clause character. Typologically, a similar construction can be found in several other languages,

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whether a Romance origin or not (cf. Cruschina & Remberger, 2017, p. 81). The fact that this construction is found cross-linguistically suggests varying degrees of grammaticalization (cf. Brinton & Traugott, 2005, pp. 28, 109).

To provide a concrete overview of this construction, I present two examples from Italian (It.) and Romanian (Ro.) (underlined indicates the same type of construction; bold indicates the forms in question at the beginning of each sentence):¹

- (1) It. *“È così maligna!” si lamentò Mabel.*
*“**Sicuro che** è maligna” dissì vivacemente* (CHRISTIE It., p. 76)
 Ro. – *Sunt vorbe atât de răutăcioase, a suspinat Mabel.*
 – ***Firește că** sunt răutăcioase, i-am zis pe un ton aspru* (CHRISTIE Ro., p. 100)
“It is so wicked,” moaned Mabel.
“Of course it is wicked,” I said briskly’ (CHRISTIE Eng., p. 114) [1556–1557]
- (2) It. *Peccato non avere un caso veramente interessante. Ho sentito dire che è uno dei più bei cervelli d’Inghilterra. **Peccato che** qui scorra tutto liscio come l’olio* (CHRISTIE It., p. 200)
 Ro. ***Păcat că** nu avem de-a face cu o problemă spinoasă. Unul dintre cei mai inteligenți oameni din Anglia, din câte am auzit. Din fericire, avem de-a face cu un caz simplu* (CHRISTIE Ro., p. 254)
‘Pity we’re not up against a real teaser. One of the best brains in England, I’ve heard it said. Pity it’s all such plain sailing’ (CHRISTIE Eng., p. 294) [4693–4696]

The underlined construction in (1)It. begins with *sicuro* ‘certain/sure’ and in (1)Ro. with *firește* ‘naturally’, Italian *sicuro* being an adjective (at least originally) and Romanian *firește* being an adverb. Each of the first elements in the underlined sentence is followed by the complementizer *che* ‘that’ in (1)It. and *că* ‘that’ in (1)Ro. The form *sicuro che/firește că* corresponds to the original English *of course* and modifies the content of the sentence that reiterates Mabel’s complaint about some wickedness. Thus, this special form modifies propositional content with an epistemic value of certainty. Meanwhile, the English original in (2) contains two sentences beginning with *pity*, of which, in (2)It., the second sentence is translated with *peccato che*, whereas in (2)Ro., the first sentence is translated with *păcat că*, both meaning ‘pity that’. Both *peccato* and *păcat* are originally nouns denoting ‘sin > regret’. In the current scene, a character is thinking that the case is too simple for his guest to solve because his guest is “[o]ne of the best brains in England”. Each underlined sentence rewords this simplicity and the form *peccato che/păcat*

¹ The examples in (1) and (2) are quoted from Section I in the CD created in 2018 as a result of the joint research funded by a KAKENHI Grant (see the above footnote): *Parallel corpus in English, French, Italian, Spanish, Brazilian Portuguese, Portugal-Portuguese and Romanian of The Thirteen Problems by Agatha Christie*. The serial numbers in the Parallel corpus are indicated at the end of each original English text, used instead of English translation.

că evaluates the propositional content of each sentence, modifying it. Hence, this type of construction has an evaluative value.

Considering the nature of the content of the example sentences above, we understand that the construction expresses speaker-oriented pragmatic features, such as epistemic or evaluative value, rather than convey, in an objective way, the propositional content of the sentence that follows the complementizer. In other words, the core meaning of the sentence becomes subjective, expressing how the speaker recognises or appraises propositional content. In addition to epistemic or evaluative values, the same type of construction can provide a source of information, presenting a hearsay interpretation to express an evidential value. In the following examples of colloquial style, both sentences have equivalent meanings:

(3) It. ***Dice che domani pioverà*** (Cruschina, 2015, p. 2)

Ro. ***Cică mâine o să plouă***

‘Allegedly it will rain tomorrow’

Within the framework of the present analysis, in (3)It. the first element of *dice che* ‘allegedly’ (lit. ‘says that’) is in the process of losing its nature as a verb, becoming fixed and non-inflectable. Moreover, the corresponding form *cică* in (3)Ro. is spelt orthographically as a single word due to phonological reduction, which involves boundary loss and morphological fusion between an element reduced from the reporting verb (*ci-* < *zice* ‘says’) and the complementizer (*că* ‘that’).² The reporting verb (or its equivalent) in *dice che* and *cică*, united strictly with the complementizer, shows that the propositional content (‘it will rain tomorrow’ in (3)) is obtained by hearsay rather than presenting the act of saying itself. In other words, the form *dice che/cică* is (or is becoming) a marker of indirectly reported evidence, or, briefly, an evidential marker. Hereafter, I will put this type of marker in bold in every example, as I did in (3) (except (13)–(16) where the Italian verb *dire* ‘to say’ is inflectable).

In this paper, focusing on the form “reporting verb ‘to say’ + complementizer” that appears at the beginning of a sentence, I will treat Italian *dice che* and Romanian *cică*. To verify that these forms represent an evidential marker, I will analyse them phonologically, morphologically, syntactically and semantically. The results obtained will identify the differences in the degree of grammaticalization between *dice che* and *cică*. I will begin with Italian *dice che*, which has not undergone phonological reduction (§ 2). Subsequently, after an overview of other Romance languages (§ 3), I will examine Romanian *cică* to understand its degree of grammaticalization (§ 4).

² Besides *cică*, Romanian has similar reduced forms with an evidential value, such as *parcă* (< *pare că* ‘[it] seems that’) and an epistemic value, such as *credcă* (< *cred că* ‘[I] think that’; DEXONLINE registers this expression in the form of *crică* as the headword) (see Remberger, 2015, p. 38; cf. a similar situation of Sicilian in Cruschina, 2015, p. 16).

2. ITALIAN *DICE CHE*

2.1. Generalities: Alongside the general impersonal construction with *si dice che* ‘one says that/it is said that’, modern Italian has a construction with the special form *dice che*, which functions as a hearsay evidential marker through indirect speech. Common to the two constructions, *dice* is in the third person singular of the present indicative of the verb *dire* ‘to say’ and *che* is a complementizer, which corresponds to English *that*. Meanwhile, the particle *si*, which appears only in the former construction, is an impersonal clitic pronoun. While the former *si dice che* with the clitic is present both in spoken and written language throughout the Italian area, the latter *dice che* without the clitic is characteristically found in colloquial spoken language, especially in central and southern varieties of Italian (cf. Cruschina, 2015, p. 7). The following two examples are quoted from works in which the evidential marker *dice che* occurs:

- (4) *E poi non so cosa gli fanno... **dice che** li bastonano* (A. Moravia, *La romana*, II, cap. 8, *apud* Rohlfs, 1966–1969, vol. 2, p. 235, §520)
 ‘And then, I don’t know what they’ll [= the police will] do to him... Allegedly they beat them [= arrested men]’ (cf. MORAVIA Eng., p. 331)
- (5) ***Dice ch’era un bell’uomo e veniva dal mare*** (P. Pallottino & L. Dalla, *4 marzo 1943*, *apud* Serianni, 1991, p. 255)
 ‘They say that he was a handsome man and that he came from the sea’

Example (4) is a passage quoted from a novel by Alberto Moravia (1907–1990), a Roman author (central Italy), whose protagonist, a Roman woman, says this line. The form *dice che* plays the role of a pragmatic marker that provides the source of information, such as hearsay or rumour. Meanwhile, (5) is the beginning of a song by singer-songwriter, Lucio Dalla (1943–2012). Although Dalla was from Bologna (northern Italy), the text of this song was primarily written by Paola Pallottino (1939–), a Roman lyricist who moved to Bologna some years before its release.³ The form *dice che* in (5), introduced abruptly without any preceding context, turns out to be an impersonal evidential marker, similar to (4). To sum up, *dice che* (in bold) does not refer to the act of saying, but rather to the propositional content of the sentence following *che* as indirectly reported information (cf. Cruschina, 2015, p. 7). In other words, the first element *dice* ‘says’ does not specify any concrete agent of the utterance; therefore, the construction has an impersonal meaning.

In examples (4) and (5), *dice che* is univocally impersonal hearsay evidential, whereas in (6), it is not necessarily univocal:

³ For details, see the following webpages:

https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paola_Pallottino (date of access: 6 August 2022);

<https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/4/3/1943> (id.).

- (6) *Gianni non ha superato l'esame. **Dice che** non ha saputo rispondere a nessuna domanda* (Cruschina, 2015, p. 9)

'Gianni didn't pass the exam. (i) Apparently he couldn't answer any of the questions;
(ii) He [himself] says that he couldn't answer any of the questions'

If the form *dice che* (in bold) in (6) is used by a native of central or southern Italy in an everyday situation where s/he is not required to be formal, it would be natural to interpret this form as an impersonal evidential marker (i). Nonetheless, since the expression of the subject is not obligatory in Italian, it is possible to interpret *dice* as a real verb in the third person singular and its implied subject refers to *Gianni* as a continuous Topic already expressed previously (ii). In particular, for northern Italian speakers who do not accept *dice che* as an evidential marker, only interpretation (ii) remains (cf. Cruschina, 2015, p. 8).⁴

So far, we have seen that *dice che* indicates impersonal hearsay evidence without any specification of a particular subject of saying; in other words, "third-hand" evidence. Alongside this type of reported evidence, Cruschina refers to other minor types that use the same marker:

[W]e can define *dice che* as a marker of indirect reported evidence, which mainly indicates third-hand evidence [...], but could also indicate second-hand evidence when it refers to the subject 'under discussion', established as such in the previous discourse. It is sometimes used to indicate folklore, and in this use it would mainly be found with legends, proverbs, and sayings, rather than fairy tales (Cruschina, 2015, p. 8).

For the terms "second-hand", "third-hand" and "folklore", see Willett's schema (1988, pp. 57, 96). Accepting Willett's classification, I will use the term "hearsay" evidence to indicate both "second-hand" and "third-hand". Furthermore, in this paper, "hearsay" will not exclude even the meaning of "folklore". In what follows, I will illustrate second-hand evidence and folklore with some examples.

Regarding second-hand evidence, based on Pietrandrea's quotation from a spoken corpus representing the Roman variety of Italian, I rewrote two examples to simplify them:⁵

⁴ The following is my personal experience in this regard – when I asked the meaning of *dice che* in (5), a song widely known in Italy, to an informant from (the suburbs of Milan in) northern Italy, he was unable to answer immediately. He sent me the expected answer a few days later after checking the internet. This provides a clue to understanding the situation of the northern varieties of Italian.

⁵ The original transcriptions of the two examples are as follows (Pietrandrea, 2007, p. 56):
(7) < *mah ha detto che che grosso grosso modo va abbastanza bene solo solo l'aorta dice che è un po' dilatata*

- (7) *Ha detto che grosso modo va abbastanza bene, solo l'aorta **dice che** è un po' dilatata*
 'S/he said that more or less it is going well enough. Only the aorta seems a little bit dilated'
- (8) *M'avete cercato perché **dice che** volevate un grigliato, dovevate fare un'offerta. Me l'ha detto Gianni stamattina*
 'You were looking for me because it seems you wanted a form, you were supposed to make an offer. Gianni told me this morning'

Before observing the evidential marker in bold, let us note that the underlined verb *ha detto* 'said', which appears at the beginning of (7) and in the second sentence of (8), carries the full nature of a verb in the third person singular of the compound past indicative and has a concrete agent of the utterance in each example. In (7), the subject is implied and can be assumed (e.g., *il medico/la medica* 'the doctor'). In (8), the subject is expressed (*Gianni*). From the perspective of discourse analysis, *dice che* (in bold) in both examples, despite being solidified like (4) and (5), allows us to identify a more explicit source of information – the same person as the subject (implied in (7) and expressed in (8)) of the underlined verb *ha detto*. However, unlike interpretation (ii) of (6), *dice che* in (7) and (8) does not refer directly to the act of saying, instead it functions as an evidential marker, which suggests that the propositional content of the sentence following *che* is merely hearsay information. The only difference between *dice che* in (4) and (5), on the one hand, and in (7) and (8), on the other, is that the former indicates impersonal third-hand evidence, whereas the latter indicates second-hand evidence.

The evidential marker *dice che* can be used to indicate the meaning of folklore, such as legends and proverbs:

- (9) *Ti auguro un ottimo inizio di settimana! **Dice che** il buon giorno si vede dal mattino*
 'I wish you an excellent start of week! It is said that a good day is seen from the morning'

In (9), *dice che* introduces a proverb (*il buon giorno si vede dal mattino* 'a good day is seen from the morning'), whereas in the following examples, it introduces ancient legends (the construction that begins with *dice che* is underlined):

- (10) *Il buono re Ricciardo d'Inghilterra [...] fece d'i Saracini sì grande uccisione, che le balie de' fanciulli dicono, quand'elli piangono: "Ecco il re Ricciardo", acciò*

'Well, he said that that more more or less it is going well enough. Only only the aorta seems a little bit dilated'

- (8) < *senti na cosa m'avete cercato perché dice che volevate un grigliato, dovevate fare un'offerta. Me l'ha detto XYZ stamattina*
 'Listen, you were looking for me because it seems you wanted a form, you were supposed to make an offer. XYZ told me this morning'

*che come la morte fu temuto. **Dice che** Saladino, veggendo fuggire la gente sua, domandò [...]* (Novellino, LXXVI, *apud* Lorenzetti, 2002, p. 218)

‘Good King Richard of England [...] made such a great killing of the Saracens that the nurses say there to the children when they cry: Here comes King Richard, for like death was he feared. They tell that the Sultan seeing his men fly, asked [...]’ (NOVELLINO Eng., p. 174)

- (11) *Uno, lo quale ebbe nome Tale milesius, grandissimo savio in molte scienze, e specialmente in istrologia, secondo che si legge in libro De civitate Dei, in libro sexto: **dice che** questo maestro albergò una notte in una casetta d’una feminella* (NOVELLINO It., p. 215, XXXVIII)

‘There was one named [...] Thales of Miletus,] who was exceedingly learned in many sciences and especially in astrology, as can be read in the sixth book of De Civitate Dei. And it is said that this wise man once passed the night in the house of a poor woman’ (NOVELLINO Eng., pp. 106–107)

These two examples are cited from *Novellino*, a collection of short tales written in the Florentine dialect (central Italy) at the end of the 13th century, that is, in Old Italian. It is worth noting that the evidential marker *dice che* was found in medieval texts (cf. Rohlf, 1966–1969, vol. 2, p. 235, §520) and this marker has not undergone any phonological reduction to date.

2.2. Morpho-syntactic restrictions: In this subsection, we examine the uninflected nature of the first element of the hearsay evidential marker *dice che*, verifying that *dice* is morphologically fixed and invariable without the possibility of being replaced by any other tense, mood, person or number. Let us extract the first part of (5) for elucidation:

- (12) ***Dice ch’era un bell’uomo***
‘They say that he was a handsome man’

Here, *dice* is a form in the third person singular of the present indicative of the verb *dire* ‘to say’; however, as in the evidential marker, its morphological feature cannot be changed, because it is not subjected to conjugation in its paradigm. Hence, the forms in bold in the following examples do not have the nature of a marker of hearsay evidence:⁶

- (13) a. ***Diceva*** [IMPF] ***che*** *era un bell’uomo* (Cruschina, 2011, p. 110)
‘S/he said that he was a handsome man’
b. ***Disse*** [SP] ***che*** *era un bell’uomo* (*loc. cit.*)
‘S/he said that he was a handsome man’

⁶ The following abbreviations are used in the example sentences and in the glosses: CL (clitic), DAT (dative), IMPF (imperfect), IMPT (imperative), INF (infinitive), P (plural), PP (past participle), PRES (present), REFL (reflexive), S (singular), SP (simple past), SUBJ (subjunctive) and VOC (vocative).

In the two examples in (13), the verb *dire* changes to the past tense (imperfect in (13a) and simple past in (13b), although both leave the mood, person and number unchanged). These verbs do not indicate impersonal hearsay evidence. Instead, in these examples, the verbs *diceva* and *disse* (in bold), both meaning ‘said’ (though different in aspects), denote the act of saying, allowing us to assume their implied subject (e.g., ‘he’ or ‘she’ as in the translation). The evidential marker *dice che* remains unchanged in the present tense even if what was said was heard in the past. This can be verified by unaltered *dice che* (in bold) in (7) and (8), where the contexts in the past are created by the underlined compound past *ha detto* ‘said’ (lit. ‘(s/he) has said’). Furthermore, the fixed and invariable element *dice* of *dice che* cannot be denied by *non* ‘not’, nor can it be modified by another adverb (as underlined *spesso* ‘often’ in (14b)). Hence, *dice* in the following examples cannot have the nature of impersonal evidence. In other words, (14a) and (14b) do not mean ‘it isn’t said that...’ and ‘it is often said that...’, respectively:

- (14) a. *Non **dice che** era un bell’uomo* (Cruschina, 2011, p. 110)
 ‘S/he does not say that he was a handsome man’
 b. ***Dice** spesso **che** era un bell’uomo* (loc. cit.)
 ‘S/he often says that he was a handsome man’

Therefore, in (14), *dice* must have a referential subject, although implied (as ‘he’ or ‘she’ in the translation), which represents the author of the speech act (see Cruschina, 2011, p. 110).

As mentioned at the beginning of § 2, alongside *dice che*, Italian has the expression *si dice che* ‘one says that/it is said that’ with the impersonal clitic *si*. At first glance, both expressions appear to share a common impersonal meaning with similar constructions that introduce indirect speech, differing only in their range of usage. However, the features of both constructions are essentially different, as demonstrated by contrasting (15) and (16) with the impersonal clitic *si*, on the one hand, and those in (13) and (14) without it, on the other:⁷

- (15) a. ***Si diceva che** mio nonno era un bell’uomo*
 ‘It was said that my grandfather was a handsome man’
 b. ***Si disse che** mio nonno era un bell’uomo*
 ‘It was said that my grandfather was a handsome man’
 (16) a. *Non si dice che mio nonno era un bell’uomo*
 ‘It is not said that my grandfather was a handsome man’
 b. ***Si dice spesso che** mio nonno era un bell’uomo*
 ‘It is often said that my grandfather was a handsome man’

⁷ For the imperfect tense of the verb within each subordinate clause in (15) and (16), I use the indicative mood (*era* ‘was’) to avoid complication; however, unlike (13) and (14), the impersonal construction with *si* in (15) and (16) requires the subjunctive rather than the indicative mood (*fosse* instead of *era*).

As previously seen, the forms in bold in (13) and (14) cannot be interpreted as an impersonal evidential marker. This is because the evidential marker *dice che*, being a rigidly solidified form, can neither change the first element *dice* into any other tense, mood, person or number (13), nor deny this element with *non* ‘not’ or modify it with an adverb (14). By contrast, as obvious from (15) and (16), inflectable *dice* in *si dice che* has no such restrictions, retaining its full nature as a verb. In addition, the verb in the subordinate clause introduced by *si dice che* is preferred in the subjunctive mood (see fn. 7). In short, the forms *dice che* and *si dice che* constitute two different constructions (see Cruschina, 2011, p. 110; 2015, p. 9).

2.3. Word order: Referring to the syntactic nature of the evidential marker *dice che*, in most cases, it appears at the beginning of the sentence (see (3)It., (4)–(6), (9)–(12)). Cruschina affirms that it “can only appear in sentence-initial position” (2015, p. 14):

(17) **Era un bell'uomo, **dice che*** (loc. cit.)

Compare the ill-formed sentence in (17) with the well-formed sentence in (12). Furthermore, Cruschina illustrates another ill-formed sentence in which *dice che* appears in an embedded clause:

(18) **So che **dice che** non ha saputo rispondere a nessuna domanda* (Cruschina, 2015, p. 9)

‘I know that it is said that s/he couldn’t answer any of the questions’

In (18), *dice che* is at the beginning of the direct object complement clause; however, it is preceded by another complementizer *che* (underlined) because the whole complement clause is governed by the verb *so* ‘(I) know’. In this case, if we try to assign *dice che* an impersonal meaning (as in the English translation ‘it is said that’), the sentence becomes unacceptable. Nevertheless, as seen in example (8), and repeated in (19) below, *dice che* can be preceded by a subordinating conjunction *perché* ‘because’ (underlined). In addition to (19), in which *dice che* indicates second-hand evidence (see the comments on (7) and (8)), I provide another example with third-hand evidence:

(19) *M'avete cercato perché **dice che** volevate un grigliato, dovevate fare un'offerta. Me l'ha detto Gianni stamattina*

‘You were looking for me because it seems you wanted a form, you were supposed to make an offer. Gianni told me this morning’

(20) *Sei rimasta con me anche se **dice che** dovevi andare all'ospedale*

‘You still stayed with me, even though apparently you had to go to hospital’

Since the concessive conditional clause in (20) is introduced by a subordinating conjunction *anche se* ‘even though’ (underlined), as well as the causal clause in

(19), we conclude that some circumstantial complement clauses accept *dice che* as an evidential marker and allow it to follow a subordinating conjunction.⁸

Similarly, in (7), reproduced in (21) below, *dice che* appears in a position that, at first glance, cannot be considered sentence-initial:

- (21) *Ha detto che grosso modo va abbastanza bene, solo l'aorta dice che è un po' dilatata*
 'S/he said that more or less it is going well enough. Only the aorta seems a little bit dilated'

Due to the lack of suprasegmental transcription (see the original transcriptions cited in fn. 5), this sentence is ambiguous between (I) and (II) below.

(I) If we interpret *solo* as an adversative conjunction 'only/but', then it entails the thematization of the subject *l'aorta* 'the aorta' (of *è [...] dilatata* 'is dilated'), placing *l'aorta* as a Topic before *dice che*.⁹ Let us provide another example with a thematized element that precedes *dice che* (underlined is the Topic at issue, as in the current interpretation of *l'aorta* in (21)):

- (22) A: *I tuoi cugini come stanno?*
 B: *Gianni sta bene, ma Carlo, dice che è malato*
 'A: How are your cousins?
 B: Gianni is fine, but Carlo allegedly is ill'

In (22)B, enunciated by interlocutor B, both sentences are coordinated by the adversative conjunction *ma* 'but', equivalent to *solo* 'only/but' in (21). Both *Gianni* and *Carlo* constitute contrastive Topics, of which the latter, being thematized, precedes *dice che*, like *l'aorta* in (21).¹⁰

(II) We can also interpret *solo* in (21) as an adverb 'only', considering *solo* as a focusing operator that has *l'aorta* 'the aorta' in its scope. In this case, *l'aorta* is placed in front of *dice che* because of the Focus fronting. This second interpretation can be verified by the fact that the reply by interlocutor B in the context of (23) is acceptable:¹¹

⁸ It remains unclear why the acceptability diverges between (18) and (19)–(20). In this analysis, I have defined the criteria for this divergence based on the types of subordinate clauses (object complement clauses vs. circumstantial clauses). Nevertheless, there may exist an even more precise criterion that has yet to be uncovered. I leave this matter open for future research.

⁹ I use the term "thematization" to indicate Hanging Topic and Left Dislocation structure, which show Topic frontings in common (for details, see Benincà & Poletto, 2004).

¹⁰ Of the two types of thematization (Hanging Topic and Left Dislocation), (21) and (22)B are examples of Left Dislocation because the dislocated subjects *l'aorta* 'the aorta' in (21) and *Carlo* in (22)B do not entail resumptive pronouns (cf. Benincà & Poletto, 2004, pp. 64–65), in addition to the fact that Italian lacks nominative clitics.

¹¹ It is probable that this interpretation contradicts Cruschina (2015, p. 14, n. 16), because he seems to think that *dice che* could not be preceded by a focalized element. However, my informants, native of central Italy, judged (23)B to be acceptable.

(23) A: *Ho sentito che Gianni e Carlo sono malati.*

B: *No, solo Carlo, dice che è malato*

‘A: I heard that Gianni and Carlo are ill.

B: No, only Carlo allegedly is ill’

The subject *Carlo* (underlined) in (23)B, which precedes *dice che*, is a fronted Focus in the scope of the focusing operator *solo* ‘only’, similar to *l’aorta* in (21).¹²

Based on the ambiguity between the two interpretations of (21), we confirmed that two different types of elements, thematized and focalized ((22)B and (23)B, respectively), can be placed before *dice che*, which should be at the beginning of the sentence. However, (21), (22)B and (23)B are minor examples that constitute marked constructions, because the thematized or focalized element is not positioned *in situ*. Moreover, we confirmed that certain subordinating conjunctions that introduce circumstantial complement clauses can precede *dice che*. If we remove these subordinating conjunctions, which are placed before the clause, and the thematized and focalized elements, what remains as a sentence-initial element, in any case, is the evidential marker *dice che*. As a result, the residual construction that begins with *dice che* represents a theoretically unmarked word order.

3. EVIDENTIAL MARKERS AND THEIR GRAMMATICALIZATION

We have examined that *dice che*, which indicates second- or third-hand evidence or folklore, constitutes a rigidly solidified form as an evidential marker. Thus, it is superficial that *dice* of *dice che* appears equivalent to the verb *dire* ‘to say’ in the third person singular of the present indicative. Indeed, *dice* cannot be changed to any other form of paradigm nor does it accept negation or modification. All these phenomena suggest that, from the viewpoint of grammatical categories, *dice* deviates from the real verb and constitutes a secondary grammatical category with *che*. In other words, *dice che* enters a process of “decategorialization” (see Brinton & Traugott, 2005, pp. 25–26). Meanwhile, from a semantic point of view, *dice che* tends to undergo “semantic bleaching”, that is, the loss of the lexical content meaning of a *verbum dicendi* (ibid., p. 29). In short, the Italian expression is in the process of grammaticalization, albeit only partially (see also Pietrandrea, 2005, pp. 67–68).

Decategorialization and semantic bleaching are only two of the series of factors of grammaticalization listed by Brinton & Traugott (2005) for supporting the unidirectional nature of grammaticalization. The list includes “typological generality” (ibid., p. 28), which reveals that a phenomenon of grammaticalization is not necessarily limited to a single language, instead it tends to be attested cross-

¹² I am grateful to Edoardo Lombardi Vallauri for his valuable suggestions on the two possible interpretations of (21). However, I am the only person responsible for these interpretations.

linguistically. Even if we restrict ourselves to Romance languages, the expression corresponding to *dice che* is widespread and grammaticalized in a lot of varieties. Such an expression is composed of “reporting verb ‘to say’ + complementizer” in each variety; however, as will be seen in the below examples, it is often transcribed in a single word, having undergone phonological reduction as a result of a respective process of grammaticalization.¹³ Examples (24)–(28) – from American Spanish (Sp.), Sicilian (Sic.), Sardinian (Srd.), Romanian (Ro.) and Galician (Gal.) – are quoted from Cruschina & Remberger (2008, pp. 95–96):^{14,15}

- (24) Sp. *Esto **dizque** va a ser pantano*
 this SAYC go.PRES.3sto be.INF swamp
 ‘This is going to be swamp, they say’
- (25) Sic. ***Dicica** ci avivanu finutu i grana*
 SAYC to-him.CL have.IMPF.3P finish.PP the money
 ‘Apparently they had run out of money’
- (26) Srd. *Custas columbas **nachi** s’abbaidana e an cominzadu a faeddare*
 these pigeons SAYC REFL[-]look.PRES.3P and have.PRES.3P start.PP to talk.INF
 ‘These pigeons look at each other and started talking, they say’
- (27) Ro. ***Cică** banul n-aduce fericirea*
 SAYC the money not[-]bring.PRES.3S the happiness
 ‘Money doesn’t give you happiness, they say’
- (28) Gal. ***Disque** a filla da Antonia marchou á Coruña vivir co mozo*
 SAYC the daughter of-the A. go.PAST.3S to[-the] C. live.INF with-the boyfriend
 ‘Apparently Antonia’s daughter went to C. to live with her boyfriend’

As demonstrated, the Italian evidential marker *dice che* has not been subject to phonological reduction, whereas the corresponding markers SAYC in (24)–(28) are reduced morpho-phonologically to an extent that, compared to the Italian degree of grammaticalization, their degree is much greater (see Brinton & Traugott, 2005, pp. 27–28, the factor (c): “fusion and coalescence”). To examine the degree of grammaticalization of the hearsay evidential marker in comparison with Italian, in § 4, I will focus on Romanian *cică*, shown in (27). It should be noted that the linguistic register of *cică* is, in general, restricted to colloquial spoken language, similar to Italian *dice che*.

¹³ Brinton & Traugott (2005, p. 27, n. 27) distinguish between “fusion”, which means loss of phonological/morphological boundaries, and “coalescence”, which indicates loss of phonological segments. I will refer to both together as “phonological reduction”, where their distinction is not relevant.

¹⁴ Of the five examples, (24), (26) and (27) are quoted second-hand in the present paper. The sources of these three examples were enumerated by Cruschina & Remberger (2008) as follows: (24) C. E. Kany, *Impersonal dizque and its variants in American Spanish*, in “Hispanic review” 12 (1944), p. 172; (26) *Contami unu contu: racconti popolari della Sardegna*, vol. 1: Logudoro. Alghero, Archivi del Sud, 1996; (27) L. Ardelean.

¹⁵ In the gloss of each example, the acronym “SAYC” stands for the phonologically reduced marker “‘to say’ + complementizer”. For other abbreviations, see fn. 6.

4. ROMANIAN *CICĂ*

4.1. Phonological/morphological aspects: Italian *dice che* (lit. ‘says that’) would be translated verbatim to *zice că* in Romanian. Nevertheless, this Romanian form cannot function as an evidential marker. Instead, the Italian form *dice che* corresponds to *cică* in Romanian. DEXONLINE, in the default page (*Sinteză*) for the headword *cică*, records *[se zi]ce că* ‘it is said that’ (lit. ‘REFL says that’) as its etymology. The reflexive pronoun *se* of *se zice că* being an impersonal clitic, the Romanian *se zice că* is equivalent to the Italian impersonal expression *si dice che*, both in form and content. However, in his dictionary, Tiktin (1903–1925, vol. 1, s.v. *cică*) considered that *cică* is derived from *zice că* (lit. ‘says that’) without the intervention of the impersonal clitic. This interpretation is supported by Ciorănescu’s etymological dictionary (2002, p. 854). In line with their view, Zafiu (2020, p. 191) argues that the impersonal construction *zice că* has undergone phonological reduction. In this regard, Old Romanian texts (from the early 16th century to the late 18th century) demonstrate that *verba dicendi* in the third person singular could have subjects with an unidentified referent. The below example from circa 1600 uses, instead of *zice*, its equivalent *spune*, as in *spune... că* ‘it is said that’ (lit. ‘says... that’) (see Pană Dindelegan, 2016, pp. 92–93):

- (29) *Și spune în cărțile vechi că Solomon [...] îndrăgi o muiere ce se închina*
 and says in the books old that S. love.SP.3s a woman that REFL devote.IMPF.3s
idolilor (FLOARD, p. 125)
 the idols.DAT
 ‘And in the old books it is said that Solomon fell in love with a woman who was praying to the idols’

The pragmatic function of *spune... că* in (29) suggests that the origin of *cică* from *zice că* is equivalent to *spune că* used impersonally in Old Romanian (see Pană Dindelegan, 2016, p. 93).

Let us diachronically observe the contemporary evidential markers *dice che/cică* in both languages. We saw in (10) and (11) that Italian *dice che* has been used in the same form since the 13th century without any phonological reduction. However, the first attestations of the Romanian contracted form *cică* date back, according to Zafiu (2020, p. 191), to the late 19th century (see also Pană Dindelegan, 2016, p. 93). In current Romanian, the full form *zice că* cannot function as an impersonal evidential marker. Hence, we consider that *zice că*, which had once an impersonal hearsay meaning, has been replaced by *cică*. The latter form, compared to the Italian *dice che*, has advanced further in grammaticalization through its salient phonological reduction.

In § 2.2, replacing *dice* of (12) with the imperfect *diceva* (13a) and the simple past *disse* (13b), both meaning ‘said’, we verified that the last two altered forms, referring to the act of saying, cannot constitute impersonal evidential

markers. Based on this verification, we confirmed that Italian *dice che* is rigidly solidified and its verbal part *dice* cannot be changed paradigmatically. The same applies to Romanian *cică*, of which the former verbal part *ci-* can neither be inflected in the tense (e.g., **ziceacă* < *zicea* IMPF) or the mood (**zicăcă* < (*să*) *zică* SUBJ) nor be replaced by the etymological form (**zicecă* < *zice* PRES) (see Remberger, 2015, p. 34). The Romanian form *cică* involves both morpho-phonological fusion and coalescence, that is, the loss of phonological segments.

4.2. Syntactic aspects: Since *cică* is a hearsay evidential marker, its unmarked word order can be considered at the beginning of the sentence (see Cruschina & Remberger, 2008, pp. 110–111). We have observed this word order in (3)Ro. and (27). Additional examples are presented below:

(30) *Cică Ion e bolnav* (Cruschina & Remberger, 2008, p. 111)

‘Apparently Ion is ill’

(31) *Cică era odată o babă și un moșneag* (CREANGĂ, p. 44)

‘Once upon a time, they say there was an old woman and an old man’

Since (31) is quoted from a fairy tale by Ion Creangă (1837–1889), a writer of the late 19th century, this example, together with (38) below, is among the first instances that use *cică* in the history of Romanian (see § 4.1).

4.2.1. As in (19) and (20), *cică* can occur after a subordinating conjunction (e.g., *pentru că* ‘because’ in (32), underlined), introducing a circumstantial complement clause:

(32) *Trebuie să fi fost beat pentru că **cică** ai băut prea mult. Mi-a zis Ștefan după nuntă*

‘You must have been drunk because I heard you drank too much. Stefan told me so after the wedding’

Similarly, like (21), (22)B and (23)B, thematized and focalized elements may precede the evidential marker.

(33) A. *Verii tăi ce mai fac?*

B. *Mihai e bine, dar Ion **cică** e bolnav*

‘A: How are your cousins?’

B: Mihai is fine, but Ion allegedly is ill’

(34) A. *Am auzit că Mihai și Ion sunt bolnavi.*

B. *Nu, numai Ion **cică** e bolnav*

‘A: I heard that Mihai and Ion are ill.

B: No, only Ion allegedly is ill’

As regards *Ion* (underlined) in (33)B and (34)B, the former is thematized and the latter is focalized, each placed in front of *cică*.

Furthermore, Romanian *cică* is incompatible with negation or with any modification:

- (35) a. *Cică nu plouă la București*
 ‘They say that it’s not raining in Bucharest’
 b. *Cică adesea rămânea încuiat în odaie zile de-a rândul* (MAY, p.29)
 ‘It is said that he remained often locked up in the room day after day’

In (35a), the scope of negation by *nu* ‘not’ is limited to the propositional content (‘it is raining in Bucharest’), but it cannot cover the source of information (**nu cică*). The same applies to the adverb *adesea* ‘often’ in (35b), which can modify the stated information, yet not *cică*, irrespective of the word order (**adesea cică* or **cică adesea*) (see Cruschina & Remberger, 2008, p. 103).

Expanding our framework of research from sentence grammar to discourse grammar (in a similar manner to Italian *dice che* in (7) and (8) of § 2.1), for Romanian *cică* in (32) reproduced in (36) below, we can assume *Ștefan* to be the specific source of information. This is because the second sentence in (36) reveals the explicit author of the speech act. This revelation is determined by the independent reporting verb *a zis* ‘(he) said’ (lit. ‘has said’), underlined, which is inflected in the third person singular of the compound past indicative, with *Ștefan* as its subject:

- (36) *Trebuie să fi fost beat pentru că cică ai băut prea mult. Mi-a zis Ștefan după nuntă*
 ‘You must have been drunk because I heard you drank too much. Ștefan told me so after the wedding’

As shown in example (36), if allowed by context, Romanian *cică* could refer to second-hand evidence, making it possible for an individualized agent of saying to be assumed for *cică*. In this respect, I quote two more examples, seemingly similar to (36), from literary works:

- (37) *Și Dumnezeu cică «Bine, adu-l aici să stau de vorbă cu el»*
 and God SAYC well bring.IMPT.2s-him.CL here that talk.SUBJ.1s with him
 (M. Cărtărescu, *Orbitor*, apud Zafiu, 2020, p. 191)
 ‘And God seemingly said: “Well, bring him here so that I can talk with him”’
 (38) ... *să căutăm ceva de lucru, că burta, auzi, cică n-am*
 that look for.SUBJ.1p something of work because the belly hear.IMPT.2s SAYC not-have.1s
 mîncat de ieri și cere, sîrmana
 eat.PP since yesterday and beg.PRES.3s poor thing
 (INSPIRESCU, p. 160; cf. Remberger, 2015, p. 35, ex. (26) as well)
 ‘... let’s look for work because the belly..., listen, it seems to say: “I haven’t eaten since yesterday”, as if begging me, poor thing’

Here, (37) is a passage from a novel by Mircea Cărtărescu (1956–), while (38) is from a fairy tale by the 19th-century folklorist, Petre Ispirescu (1830–1887). In both the passages, the agent of saying can be identified as ‘God’ (*Dumnezeu*) and the personified ‘belly’ (*burta*), respectively. The fact that these subjects are entailed by *cică* leads us to consider *cică* like a full verb. Furthermore, (37) and (38) are examples of direct speech.¹⁶ This is especially clear in (37) by the quotation marks « ». As for (38), since the context requires that the subject of *cere* ‘(s/he) begs’ would be *burta* ‘the belly’, it is highly coherent to think that this personification continues from the expression of saying (*cică* in the non-impersonal sense). Consequently, the reported sentence (*n-am mâncat de ieri* ‘I haven’t eaten since yesterday’) cannot be considered indirect speech because the first person singular ‘I’ is denoted deictically by ‘the belly’ (cf., however, Remberger, 2015, p. 36, who points out ambiguity between direct and indirect speech in the same text).¹⁷

We have seen that Italian *dice che* and Romanian *cică* are similar, except for the absence or presence of phonological reduction. If Romanian *cică* can be used for direct speech, it diverges from Italian *dice che* in this aspect as well because, as mentioned at the beginning of § 2.1, the latter is only compatible with indirect speech. The potential coexistence of Romanian *cică* with direct speech suggests that the latter part of this fused form (*-că*) has lost its original function as a complementizer. Hence, it would not be surprising if a “real” complementizer *că* appears before a reported sentence (see Cruschina & Remberger, 2008, p. 104; Remberger, 2015, p. 34). In (39), we can assume that the interpretation of indirect speech is assured precisely by “repeated” *că* (underlined):¹⁸

(39) *Cică că aș fi cerut.... ieșirea României din UE* (stiripesurse.ro, apud Zafiu, 2020, p. 189)

‘They say that I would have demanded... Romania’s exit from the EU’

¹⁶ Considering that *-că* of *cică* represents the complementizer, we could relate the reporting types of (37) and (38) with “bound direct speech (*discurs direct legat*)”, which appears in colloquial Romanian (GALR, vol. 2, pp. 866–867; Manu Magda, 2013, p. 557). Bound direct speech, an intermediate structure between direct and indirect speech, maintains all the features of direct speech and introduces the reported sentence through the complementizer *că* (underlined in the following example):

(i) *Mama spune că „fetelor, veniți la masă?”*
the mother says that girls.VOC come.PRES.2P to table
‘Mother says: “Girls, are you coming to dinner?”’

Further observation will be needed for relating *cică* with bound direct speech (see fn. 18 below).

¹⁷ I would like to thank Rodica Zafiu and Anton Mihai Popa for their helpful suggestions in interpreting (38) as a case of direct speech. However, any misinterpretation belongs solely to me.

¹⁸ As in example (39), *-că* of *cică* cannot function as a complementizer. It would be prudent to think that the same element of (37) and (38) cannot be related to the complementizer used in bound direct speech (cf. fn. 16).

4.2.2. When the element *-că* has lost its original function as a complementizer, the evidential marker *cică* has further advanced its decategorialization process. First, *cică* does not necessarily introduce a sentence:

- (40) *E adevărat că Ion pleacă la New York?* – ***Cică*** *da* / ***Cică*** *nu* (Cruschina & Remberger, 2008, p. 103)

‘Is it true that Ion goes to New York? – Allegedly yes / Allegedly no’

Here, *cică* (in bold) is followed by an affirmative or negative pro-sentence adverb *da/nu* ‘yes/no’. Second, *cică* can occur at various positions in a sentence. As we have already seen, both Italian *dice che* and Romanian *cică* can occur after a subordinating conjunction introducing a circumstantial complement clause – (19), (20) and (32) – or after a thematized or focalized element – (21), (22)B, (23)B, (33)B and (34)B. In Italian, the reason for such positioning resides exclusively in the subordinating conjunction or the thematized or focalized element. In contrast, as shown by the variation of word order in (41), quoted from Remberger (2015, p. 36), the Romanian case is quite different. In some cases, *cică* changes its position, appearing between various elements of the sentence:

- (41) a. ***Cică*** *individul a fost prins*
 b. *Individul* ***cică*** *a fost prins*
 c. *Individul a fost* ***cică*** *prins*
 d. *Individul a fost prins* ***cică***
 ‘Allegedly the individual was arrested’

In (41a) and (41b), *cică* appears in the unmarked sentence-initial position and after the thematized or focalized position, respectively. By contrast, the other two positions in (41) would be impossible for Italian *dice che*. In fact, (41c) places *cică* in a parenthetical position, while (41d) in the sentence-final position, like an afterthought (cf. ill-formedness of Italian example (17)).¹⁹ In all the examples in (41), the sentence that entails the propositional content is *individul a fost prins* ‘the individual was arrested’. The evidential marker *cică*, as an adverbial, has a scope over all or part of this content according to its position. If *cică* can appear in various intra-sentential positions, it ought to modify any embedded clause:

- (42) *Știu că cică n-a putut răspunde la nicio întrebare*
 ‘I know that apparently s/he couldn’t answer any of the questions’

¹⁹ In connection with parenthetical and sentence-final positions, colloquial Italian has another evidential marker of reported speech that can appear in such positions (see Lorenzetti, 2002; Cruschina, 2011, pp. 106–108). This marker is formed by a single element *dice* ‘says’ solidified without the complementizer *che* ‘that’ and, unlike *dice che*, is an indicator of direct speech (although Calaresu, 2004, pp. 39–42, suggests its possible co-occurrence with indirect speech). In any case, the argumentation of markers that exclude the complementizer is beyond the scope of this study.

Here, *cică* is placed after the complementizer *că* (underlined) that introduces the direct object complement clause governed by the verb *știu* ‘(I) know’. Such a position of *cică* in the embedded clause would be unacceptable for Italian *dice che* (see (18)).

Hence, Romanian *cică* can be inserted into “the same positions where not only adverbials but also parenthetical expressions can be found” (Remberger, 2015, p. 36). As a result of the phonological reduction of the original form “‘says’ (*zice*) + complementizer (*că*)” (see § 4.1), the reduced form *cică* has been reanalysed as a single unit and decategorized as an adverbial or parenthetical element. Zafiu (2020) describes the process of *cică* until the latest stage as follows:

Transformarea în marcator evidențial (fenomen de pragmaticizare) a început cu etapa în care forma *cică* avea încă valoare verbală, de expresie *dicendi* urmată de reproducerea unei replici; apoi, probabil prin intermediul contextelor cu topicalizare (Remberger 2015), secvența a căpătat treptat autonomie, adverbul fiind folosit parantetic în propoziție și înaintea grupurilor sintactice modalizate (Zafiu, 2020, p. 191).

‘The transformation into an evidential marker (phenomenon of pragmaticalization) began with the stage when the form *cică* still had verbal value, of expression of saying followed by the reported speech; then, probably through contexts with thematization (Remberger, 2015), the sequence gradually acquired autonomy, the adverb being used parenthetically within the sentence and before the modalized syntactic phrases’.

At present, *cică* is registered as an adverb perhaps in all Romanian dictionaries (cf. DEXONLINE, s.v. *cică*).

4.3. Semantic aspects: As pointed out in §3, Italian *dice che* is in the process of semantic bleaching, given that it has weakened the lexical meaning of the act of saying. Meanwhile, if Romanian *cică* is decategorized as an adverb being fused into an indivisible element, we may argue that the memory of the etymological meaning, once provided by the verb *zice* ‘says’, is fading away and advancing semantic bleaching. In (43), for example, even though *cică* appears together with the full verb *a zice* ‘to say’, there is no overlap in the meaning:

- (43) *Ziua se cunoaște de dimineață, cică așa se zice* (Remberger, 2015, p. 35)
 the day REFL know.PRES.3s from morning SAYC so REFL say.PRES.3s
 ‘It is said that one recognizes the day by its morning’

The underlined reflexive verb with an impersonal clitic (*se zice* ‘it is said’), accompanied by *așa* ‘so’, constitutes a periphrasis that has the same content as *cică*.

If it is true that *cică* and *se zice* can appear one after another without any overlap in meaning, this is because the former has remarkably reduced the original lexical meaning of its verbal part. In contrast, although Italian *dice che* has been “bleached” semantically, if the full verb *dire* ‘to say’ were repeated as in (43), the Italian sentence would inevitably fall into a meaningless tautology.

5. CONCLUSIONS

Several Romance languages have fixed the form “reporting verb ‘to say’ + complementizer” and have changed it into a hearsay evidential marker. In this paper, out of such varieties, we limited ourselves to Italian and Romanian to examine the extent to which *dice che* and *cică* have advanced their respective grammaticalization. It emerged that Italian *dice che* is still in an early stage of grammaticalization, while Romanian *cică* is far more advanced.

I will summarize the features of the hearsay evidential markers *dice che/cică*, dividing their features based on the similarities and differences between the two languages. The features listed below constitute the study conclusions regarding the degree of grammaticalization.

I. Similarities between Italian *dice che* and Romanian *cică*

- I.1. Phonological and morphological aspects: It is true that the phonological differences between *dice che* and *cică* are rather more noticeable because of the absence/presence of phonological reduction, but from a morphological point of view, they are equally fixed in their invariable forms. Both *dice* within *dice che* and *ci-* (< *zice*) within *cică*, which are originally *verba dicendi* in the third person singular of the present indicative, cannot be inflected.
- I.2. Syntactic aspects: For both *dice che* and *cică*, their unmarked position is sentence-initial. However, they may be preceded by a subordinating conjunction when they appear within a circumstantial complement clause – (19), (20) and (32) – or allow a thematized or focalized element to move immediately before themselves – (21), (22)B, (23)B, (33)B and (34)B. Meanwhile, *dice che* and *cică*, as evidential markers, cannot be within the scope of negation or adverbial modification – (14) and (35). Furthermore, if we extend our framework from sentence grammar to discourse grammar in terms of their source of information, the author of the reported utterance, generally unidentified, may be referential, depending on contextual support – (7), (8) and (36).
- I.3. Semantic aspects: Originally, *dice che* and *cică* encompass the verbal meaning of the act of saying; however, they both weaken this lexical meaning. At the

same time, they focus on their source of information, emphasizing their hearsay evidential character.

II. Differences between Italian *dice che* and Romanian *cică*

- II.1. Phonological and morphological aspects: While Italian has retained the form *dice che* as an evidential marker since medieval Old Italian, Romanian morpho-phonologically reduced the original subjectless form *zice că* to the current *cică* in the 19th century.
- II.2. Syntactic aspects: In Italian, *che* in *dice che* preserves its character as a complementizer, while the Romanian counterpart *-că* in *cică* is in the process of losing its original function. In fact, *cică* can coexist with direct speech – (37) and (38) – or with a “real” complementizer *că* in indirect speech – (39). Thus, *cică* no longer needs to introduce a sentence and can appear adverbially or parenthetically between various elements. Due to the repeated reanalyses of the “reporting verb ‘says’ (*zice*) + complementizer (*că*)”, Romanian *cică* has undergone further decategorialization, becoming an adverb.
- II.3. Semantic aspects: In Romanian, the repeated reanalyses affected the original verbal part *ci-* (< *zice* ‘says’). Thus, they considerably weakened the lexical meaning of the act of saying in *cică* and, consequently, this marker can be expressed with the inflected verb *a zice* ‘to say’ without semantic overlapping within the same sentence – (43). Hence, in terms of semantic bleaching as well, Romanian *cică* shows an advanced degree of grammaticalization than Italian *dice che*.

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**HEARSAY EVIDENTIAL MARKERS:
ON THE DEGREE OF GRAMMATICALIZATION
OF ITALIAN *DICE CHE* AND ROMANIAN *CICĂ***

Abstract

In this study, I examined the hearsay evidential markers, namely *dice che* in Italian (central-southern varieties) and *cică* in Romanian, both of which convey the meaning ‘it is said that/allegedly’ and have solidified into functional elements within their respective languages. To verify that the forms *dice che/cică* represent evidential markers, I analysed them phonologically, morphologically, syntactically and semantically. I began with Italian *dice che*, which has not undergone phonological reduction. Subsequently, after a brief overview of other Romance languages, I examined Romanian *cică* to understand its degree of grammaticalization. The results thus obtained clearly show the differences in the degree of grammaticalization between *dice che* and *cică*: Italian *dice che* is still in an early stage of grammaticalization, while Romanian *cică* is much more advanced.

Rezumat

În acest studiu, am examinat marcatorii evidențiali citaționali, și anume *dice che* în limba italiană (varietățile ei centrale și meridionale) și *cică* în limba română, ambii având sensul de ‘se spune că’, încheiați ca elemente funcționale. Pentru a verifica dacă formele *dice che/cică* reprezintă marcatori evidențiali, le-am analizat din punctul de vedere fonologic, morfologic, sintactic și semantic. Am început cu italiana *dice che*, care nu a fost supusă reducerii fonologice. Ulterior, după o scurtă trecere în revistă a altor limbi romanice, am examinat româna *cică* pentru a evalua gradul său de gramaticalizare. Rezultatele astfel obținute arată clar diferențele în gradul de gramaticalizare între *dice che* și *cică*: italiana *dice che* este încă într-un stadiu incipient de gramaticalizare, în timp ce româna *cică* este mult mai avansată.