



Piazza della Grammatica 1 • Antonella Olson & Eric Edwards, Presentatori e Capocomici

Gentili Ascoltatori, Dear Listeners,  
Here's a transcript of "Opening Night Jitters" our recent show about the **present** and **past subjunctive**, which you can hear by clicking on the following link:  
<http://coerll.utexas.edu/ra/episode.php?p=05>

Hanno partecipato (Featured in this podcast):

Simone Sessolo	<i>Pantalone</i>
Esmeralda Moscatelli	<i>Colombina</i>

Buon divertimento!

## Transcript

### *Dialogue 1 - italiano*

*Dietro le quinte al Teatro San Carlo. Si è alzato il sipario per il Primo Atto. Ascoltiamo gli attori mentre aspettano di entrare in scena...*

**Dottore:** Quando usciranno le recensioni, Pulcinella vorrà che gli **leggiamo** solo quelle favorevoli.

**Arlecchina:** È importante che Pulcinella **impari** ad accettare anche i commenti negativi.

**Arlecchino:** Mi auguro che i miei colleghi **si comportino** bene sul palcoscenico. Sono così zotici! A presto -- Ora tocca a me entrare in scena!

**Dottore:** Voglio sperare che questo pubblico **sappia** riconoscere una rappresentazione di qualità!

### *Dialogue 1 - English*

*Backstage at the Teatro San Carlo. The curtain has gone up on the First Act. We listen in on the actors who are waiting in the wings...*

**Dottore:** When the reviews come out, Pulcinella will want us to read him only the favorable ones.

**Arlecchina:** It's important that Pulcinella learn to accept negative comments as well.

**Arlecchino:** I hope my colleagues will behave themselves on stage. They are so boorish. See you soon -- it's my turn to go on now.

**Dottore:** I certainly hope this audience know how to recognize a quality performance.

**Arlecchina:** Non credo che ci **sia** da preoccuparsi, Dottore.

**Dottore:** Invece io dubito che gli spettatori presenti **siano** in grado di apprezzare le mie innate qualità di attore teatrale.

**Arlecchina:** Non si turbi, Dottore. Credo che Arlecchino e Pulcinella **si siano** sempre **esibiti** qui a Napoli con grande successo.

**Dottore:** Proprio questa è la questione, mia cara. Non crederai che io **sia** felice di dividere questo palco con quei due disgraziati senza arte nè parte.

**Arlecchina:** Però mi pare che il pubblico **si diverta**. Sente come ridono?

**Dottore:** Voglio che **sappiano** ora cosa significa meravigliarsi davvero! Il più grande attore teatrale di tutti i tempi sta entrando.

**Arlecchino:** Ecco, arriva il Dottore! Temo che lui ce l'**abbia** con me. Mi arrampico sulla scala, così non mi vedrà...

**Dottore:** Ecce Doctor doctororum!  
Balanzone, a vostro servizio!

### *Dialogue 2 – italiano*

**Pantalone:** Colombina, hai visto quello che ha combinato il tuo Arlecchino durante la scena?

**Colombina:** Ho visto, ho visto! Qualsiasi cosa abbia provato a fare, gli è riuscita male!

**Pantalone:** Io credo che **abbia cercato** di

**Arlecchina:** I don't believe there's any reason to worry, Dottore.

**Dottore:** I rather doubt that these spectators are capable of appreciating my innate theatrical abilities.

**Arlecchina:** Don't upset yourself, Dottore. I believe that Arlecchino and Pulcinella have always performed here in Naples to great success.

**Dottore:** This is the very issue, my dear. You mustn't believe that I am happy to be sharing the stage with these two jobless and penniless wretches.

**Arlecchina:** However it seems to me that the audience are enjoying themselves. Don't you hear how they're laughing?

**Dottore:** Now I'll have them know what it means to be truly amazed! The greatest actor of all times is entering the stage.

**Arlecchino:** Behold, here comes the Dottore. I fear he has it in for me. I'll climb this ladder so he won't see me.

**Dottore:** *Ecce Doctor doctororum!*  
Balanzone, at your service!

### *Dialogue 2 – English*

**Pantalone:** Colombina, did you see what your Arlecchino managed to do during the scene?

**Colombina:** Oh, I saw it! No matter what he tried to do, it came out wrong!

**Pantalone:** I believe he must have been

fare il più bel lazzo della stagione...

trying to come up with the season's greatest bit...

**Colombina:** Hai visto quando stava per cadere veramente dalla scala? Forse perché c'ero io sotto! Credo che **abbia provato** a cadermi addosso -- invece ha fatto venire un bel bernoccolo sulla testa del Dottore!

**Colombina:** Did you see when he was really about to fall from the ladder? Perhaps because I was underneath! I believe he tried to fall on top of me – but instead he gave the Dottore a fine bump on the noggin!

**Pantalone:** Non c'è nessun altro qui che abbia visto quello che è successo?

**Pantalone:** Is there no-one else here who saw what happened?

**Colombina:** Te lo racconto io come è andata. Dunque, quando ha visto che ero proprio lì sotto, ha messo appositamente un piede male sulla scala!

**Colombina:** Oh, I'll tell you how it went. Now, when he saw that I was right there underneath, he deliberately let his foot slip on the ladder.

**Pantalone:** Ma che furbastro!

**Pantalone:** What a scoundrel!

**Colombina:** Allora io ho urlato 'Stai attento!' e sai che ha fatto allora Arlecchino? Mi ha guardato dall'alto e penso proprio che l'**abbia fatto** apposta a cadere. Ma io mi sono scansata e lui ha beccato il Dottore.

**Colombina:** Then I shouted, "Watch out!" and you know what Arlecchino did then? He looked at me from above and I really think he fell on purpose. But I got out of the way and he hit the Dottore.

**Dottore:** Maledetto Arlecchino!

**Dottore:** Confounded Arlecchino!

**Arlecchino:** Coraggio, Dottore!

**Arlecchino:** Courage, Dottore!

**Dottore:** Assassino!

**Dottore:** Murderer!

## Nota Grammaticale

### *Congiuntivo presente e passato*

As we've already said we have to use the subjunctive when the verb in the main clause belongs to the **WHEIRDO** category -- verbs of **Wishing and Wanting, Hope, Emotions, Impersonal expressions, Recommendations, Doubt, Opinion** -- and when the verb in the subordinate clause has a **DIFFERENT SUBJECT** from the one in the main clause.

NOTE: Beside verbs that belong to the **WHEIRDO** category, the subjunctive mood can be introduced by conjunctions such as **benché / sebbene / per quanto** (although), **affinché / perché**

(so that), **a meno che non** (unless) as well as indefinite expressions such as **qualsiasi cosa** (whatever), **chiunque** (whoever), **nessuno** (nobody).

Now we need to focus on how to choose the right tense--in this particular episode, how to choose between the first two tenses of the subjunctive: the **present** and the **past**. These two tenses of the **subjunctive** are used when our main verb is in any **present** or **future** tense, or if it is in the **imperative**. We pick between the **present** and the **past subjunctive** depending on **WHEN** the two actions take place in relation to each other.

So, we use the **present subjunctive** when the action in the subordinate clause takes place at the **same time** as or **later** than the action of the verb in the **WHEIRDO** clause.

Ho paura che lo spettacolo **stia** per cominciare.  
I'm afraid the play is about to start.

And we use the **past subjunctive** when the action in the subordinate clause took place **prior** to the action of the verb in the **WHEIRDO** clause.

Credo che **abbiano chiuso** le porte.  
I believe they've closed the doors.

As we said before, we use the **subjunctive** if in the main clause we have a verb that belongs to the **WHEIRDO** category and if the verb in the subordinate clause has a **different** subject from the one in the main clause. What happens if the subject of the two clauses is the **same**? In this case we use the **infinitive**.

Spero di **avere** ancora il mio permesso-stampa.  
I hope I still have my press pass. (*I hope—now—that I have it—now: **simple infinitive***)

Spero di non **avere lasciato** a casa il mio permesso-stampa.  
I hope I didn't leave my press pass at home. (*I hope—now—that I didn't leave it at home—earlier: **past infinitive**, **the infinitive of the auxiliary verb plus the past participle***)

And here's how we form the **present** and the **past subjunctive**:

For the **present**, the easiest part is that the three singular forms are always the same within the same conjugation, the first-person plural form is always the same as the first-person plural of the present indicative, and the second-person plural ending is the same in all three conjugations. Furthermore, you can always get the third-person plural form by adding **-no** to the singular form:

## Regular of the **subjunctive**

### 1<sup>st</sup> conjugation: **cantare**

cant-i	cant-iamo
cant-i	cant-iate
cant-i	cant-ino

### 2<sup>nd</sup> conjugation: **chiudere**

chiud-a	chiud-iamo
chiud-a	chiud-iate
chiud-a	chiud-ano

### 3<sup>rd</sup> conjugation: **sentire**

sent-a	sent-iamo
sent-a	sent-iate
sent-a	sent-ano

### 3<sup>rd</sup> conjugation with **-isc-: capire (-isc)**

capisca	capiamo
capisca	capiate
capisca	capiscano

The **past subjunctive**, like the *passato prossimo*, is a compound tense: it is formed with the **present subjunctive** of the **auxiliary *avere* or *essere*** + the **past participle** of the main verb:

#### Conjugation with *avere* as auxiliary verb:

abbia recitato	abbiamo recitato
abbia recitato	abbiate recitato
abbia recitato	abbiano recitato

abbia venduto, abbia sentito, etc.

#### Conjugation with *essere* as auxiliary verb:

sia andato/a	siamo andati/e
sia andato/a	siate andati/e
sia andato/a	siano andati/e

sia nato/a, sia uscito/a, etc.

As we know, in Italian some verbs like *andare, avere, bere, dare, dire, dovere, essere, fare, piacere, potere, sapere, stare, uscire, venire, volere*, are irregular, therefore they are conjugated in a different way. The good news, though, is that the three singular persons will always be the same, the first-person plural form will always be the same as the present indicative, and you can get the third-person plural form by adding **-no** to the singular form. As an example, we can look at *essere*, which is just about as irregular as any verb is going to get:

**sia, sia, sia, siamo, siate, siano**

In our next episode, Episode 6, we'll be looking at the **imperfect** and **pluperfect subjunctive**, and how they are used when the **WHEIRDO** verb is in any past or any conditional tense!

## Nota Culturale

If you go to Naples you must visit the [Teatro San Carlo](#). The theatre was built in 1737 and it is the oldest one in Europe. According to Stendhal, it is also 'the loveliest of the all world' but the French novelist loved Italy too much to be a reliable source...

The theatre is named after King Carlo di Borbone who conquered the city in 1734 after thirty-

four years of Austrian domination making Naples the capital of an independent and sovereign kingdom. Pretty important for a city that has a history of foreign domination!

The first performance at the San Carlo, *Achille in Sciro* by Domenico Sarro, took place on the 4th of November 1737. The theatre was completely destroyed by a fire in 1816; Ferdinand I di Borbone ordered the theatre to be rebuilt six days later and what you see today is the result of this latest architectonic manipulation.

The San Carlo contributed enormously to the development of the Italian opera, both the opera seria and the melodrama. Great composers of the Neapolitan school, Paisiello, Traetta, Cimarosa, as well as more internationally known artists such as Rossini and Donizetti were actively involved in composing for the San Carlo. Many of them also served as artistic directors of the theatre. If you go to Naples and decide to pay a visit to the San Carlo remember that the opera season begins in January.

The theatre is also renowned for its school of ballet, whose fame spread all over Europe along with that of the theatre itself. The Neapolitan ballet was born. Evviva. Grazie, Carlo!

### **Vocabolario: a teatro**

Everything went well *alle prove* (at the rehearsals) but the night *della prima* (of the premiere), all the actors are *ansiosi* (anxious). There are those who read endlessly *il copione* (the script), others who *lo recitano a voce alta* (recite it aloud) and the diva mysteriously locked herself up *nel suo camerino* (in her dressing room) where nobody knows what she is doing. Probably, *si sta provando i costumi di scena* (she is trying on her costumes) or *si sta facendo il trucco* (she is putting her make up on). “*Due minuti, solo due minuti*” (two minutes left) cries *l’assistente del regista* (the director’s assistant). Everyone’s ready *a entrare in scena?* (to enter the stage). Where is the diva? Ah... As any great theatrical actress, *la protagonista si sta fumando una sigaretta dietro le quinte* (the female main character is smoking a cigarette backstage). “*Tutti gli attori sul palcoscenico*” (all the actors on stage) cries now *il regista nervosissimo* (the very nervous director). *Buona fortuna!* Break a leg!

Thanks for listening! And be sure to tell your friends that you heard it here on **Radio Arlecchino!**

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Antonella Olson & Eric Edwards  
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