



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

Gentili Ascoltatori, Dear Listeners,

Here's a transcript of *Build a better mousetrap*, our recent show focusing on the "tu" form of the **imperative mood**. You can hear this podcast by clicking on the following link:

<http://coerll.utexas.edu/ra/episode.php?p=09>

Buon divertimento!

Ha partecipato / Featured in this broadcast:  
Esmeralda Moscatelli as Colombina

### Transcript : TopoKill 9000

**Dottore:** Gentili ascoltatori, qui il vostro amico il Dottor Balanzone. Questa situazione vi è conosciuta? **Non vi vergognate** di dirmelo, lo so, lo so...

**Colombina:** Oh, Dottore, che orrore! che paura! che schifo!

**Dottore:** Come dico ai miei allievi all'Università, "*Pudor non in habere sed in tenere est.*"

**Colombina:** E la soluzione, Egregio...?

**Dottore:** Eccola qua! La nuova TopoKill 9000! La tecnologia anti-topo presenta una supertrappola, senza pesticidi, che rispetta l'ambiente, riutilizzabile, con esca naturale!

**Colombina:** Ma ci vuole molto tempo per-

**Dottore:** È pronta nel giro di secondi!

**Colombina:** Ed è di uso semp--

**Dottore:** Kind listeners, your friend Dottor Balanzone here. Is this situation familiar to you? **Don't be ashamed** to tell me so. I know, I know...

**Colombina:** Oh, Dottore, how horrible! How frightening! How disgusting!

**Dottore:** As I tell my students at the University: "The shame is not in the having, but in the keeping."

**Colombina:** And the solution, Professor?

**Dottore:** Behold! The new TopoKill 9000! Anti-mouse technology presents a supertrap, without pesticides, that respects the environment, re-usable, with all-natural bait!

**Colombina:** But does it take long to--

**Dottore:** It's ready in a matter of seconds!

**Colombina:** And is it simple to u--

**Dottore:** Di semplicissimo uso!

**Colombina:** Ma funziona veram---

**Dottore:** Efficientissima!

**Colombina:** E... non ci sono... cioè...

**Dottore:** Igienica!

**Colombina:** Ma per i bambini.--

**Dottore:** Innocua per i bambini e gli animali domestici!

**Colombina:** Oh, Dottore. questa nuova TopoKill 9000 mi sembra una meraviglia! Ma Lei crede che io sia in grado di utilizzarla correttamente?

**Dottore:** Niente sarebbe più facile! **Vieni**, mia cara. **Osserva** cosa vuol dire "semplicissimo uso"!

**Colombina:** Oh, non lo so... io, a dire il vero... è che io...

**Dottore:** **Non avere** paura! **Abbi** coraggio! Eccola! **Vedi** quanto è bella! **Dai**, prendi.

**Colombina:** Oh! E ora, come si fa...?

**Dottore:** **Spingi** la levetta...

**Colombina:** Così?

**Dottore:** Brava! **Spingila** verso il basso.... Ecco! Benissimo!

**Colombina:** Oh! È facile...

**Dottore:** Ever so easy to use!

**Colombina:** But does it really wo---

**Dottore:** Extremely efficient!

**Colombina:** And, there aren't any, I mean...

**Dottore:** Sanitary!

**Colombina:** But to children.--

**Dottore:** Harmless to children and pets!

**Colombina:** Oh, Dottore, this new TopoKill 9000 seems a marvel! But do you believe that I'm capable of using it properly?

**Dottore:** Nothing could be easier! **Come**, my dear. **Observe** what "Ever so easy to use" really means!

**Colombina:** Oh, I don't know... I, to tell the truth, it's that I...

**Dottore:** **Do not be afraid! Have courage!** Here it is! **See** how beautiful it is! **Come on, take** (it).

**Colombina:** Oh! And now, what does one do?

**Dottore:** **Push** the trigger...

**Colombina:** Like this?

**Dottore:** Fine! **Push it** down.... There! Excellent!

**Colombina:** Oh! It's easy...

**Dottore:** E che ti avevo detto? Ora, **togli** la protezione dell'esca...

**Colombina:** Ah! Fatto!

**Dottore:** Perfetto! La TopoKill 9000 è ora pronta per essere utilizzata! **Colloca** la trappola in un luogo adeguato...

**Colombina:** I topi raramente attraversano le superfici libere...

**Dottore:** Quindi, **posiziona** la trappola con l'apertura rivolta verso la parete!

**Colombina:** Qui? Così?

**Dottore:** Proprio lì, brava. Proprio così...

**Colombina:** E ora?

**Dottore:** **Esegui** un controllo a regolari intervalli di tempo!

**Colombina:** Caspita!

**Dottore:** Pulcinella! Accidenti!

Dobbiamo accennare che non è consigliabile l'uso degli spaghetti come esca.

**Colombina:** Ma, Dottore, come faccio ora a liberare il dito a questo disgraziato...?

**Dottore:** **Premi** semplicemente e rapidamente sul portello...

E la TopoKill 9000 è già pronta per essere riusata!

**Colombina:** Povero Pulcinella! **Vieni** con me, **non piangere** più...

**Dottore:** Gentile ascoltatore: **Prendi** la

**Dottore:** And what had I told you? Now, **remove** the bait cover...

**Colombina:** Ah! Done!

**Dottore:** Perfect! The TopoKill 9000 is now ready to be used! **Place** the trap in an appropriate place...

**Colombina:** Mice rarely cross open surfaces...

**Dottore:** So, **set** the trap with the opening turned to the wall!

**Colombina:** Here? Like that?

**Dottore:** Right there, fine. Just like that...

**Colombina:** And now?

**Dottore:** **Perform** a check at regular intervals!

**Colombina:** Gracious!

**Dottore:** Pulcinella! Zounds!

We must point out that the use of spaghetti as bait is inadvisable.

**Colombina:** But, Dottore, what shall I do now to free this wretch's finger?

**Dottore:** Simply **press** down rapidly on the little door...

And the TopoKill 9000 is already ready to be re-used!

**Colombina:** Poor Pulcinella! **Come** with me. **Don't cry** any more...

**Dottore:** Dear listener: **Get** the TopoKill

TopoKill 9000 è **di'** come dice il Dottore --  
*Mus musculus! Ave -- et vale!*

9000 and **say** as the Dottore says --*Mus musculus*, Hail -- and Farewell!

## Transcript: A phone call from Antonella in Italy

**Eric:** Pronto...

**Eric:** Hello...

**Antonella:** Ciao, Eric! Sono Antonella!

**Antonella:** Ciao, Eric! It's Antonella!

**Eric:** Ciao, bella! Come stai?

**Eric:** Ciao, bella! How are you?

**Antonella:** Bene, bene... va ora in onda Radio Arlecchino?

**Antonella:** Fine, fine... is Radio Arlecchino on the air?

**Eric:** Va in onda, sì! Meno male che ci sei anche tu, ora, telefonicamente...

**Eric:** It's on the air, yes! And it's a good thing you're here now too, telephonically...

**Antonella:** Grazie. **Senti, fammi** un favore, per favore.

**Antonella:** Thanks. **Listen, do me** a favor, please.

**Eric:** Come no! **Dimmi.**

**Eric:** Of course! **Tell me.**

**Antonella:** Ho lasciato una cosa lì nello studio che volevo portare in Italia. **Aiutami** ora a trovarlo, poi me lo spedisce...

**Antonella:** I left something there in the studio that I wanted to bring to Italy. **Help me** now to find it... then you can send it to me.

**Eric:** Va bene... Dov'è?

**Eric:** All right. Where is it?

**Antonella:** Dunque... **Guarda, vai** alla mia scrivania...

**Antonella:** Well then.... **Look, go** to my desk...

**Eric:** Ci vado... ecco, ci sono.

**Eric:** I'm going... I'm there.

**Antonella:** **Sposta** quel grande dizionario Zarganti...

**Antonella:** **Move** that big Zarganti dictionary...

**Eric:** Oh, è proprio pesante! Spero che non sia questo quello che ti serve...

**Eric:** Hey, that's pretty heavy! I hope that isn't what you need...

**Antonella:** No no no, sotto il dizionario -- cosa c'è?

**Antonella:** No no no, under the dictionary. What's there?

**Eric:** Be', ci sono due foto, una di Nanni Moretti... e una di -- Johnny Depp?! firmate pure! "ad Antonella, con amicizia..."

**Antonella:** No no no no no, quelle **non le toccare**... . **Lascia** quel libro....

**Eric:** Allora?

**Antonella:** Sopra la scrivania, su quello scaffale... **Prendi** quella scatola...

**Eric:** Cosa c'è dentro...?

**Antonella:** **Dai, dai, svita** il cappuccio...

**Eric:** Ahù... Antonella... ma cos'è questo?

**Antonella:** Oh, **scusa**, hai preso quella sbagliata, **scusa, scusa**... Ci dev'essere un'altra, **controlla**.

**Eric:** La vedo, ma oso aprirla?

**Antonella:** Ma sì! **Abbi** coraggio, Eric!

**Eric:** Accidenti!

**Antonella:** Oh, Eric! Che mani di pasta frolla che hai! Quelli sono i miei fagioli saltellanti!

**Eric:** Te li mando?

**Antonella:** No, no, quelli non mi servono! Ma mi raccomando, **non li lasciare** lì per terra!

**Eric:** Adesso pulisco...

**Antonella:** Bene, Eric, **non fare** più sciocchezze. **Prova** a vedere nel cassetto...

**Eric:** Well, there's two photographs, one of Nanni Moretti, and one of -- Johnny Depp?! Autographed even! "to Antonella, in friendship..."

**Antonella:** No no no no no, **don't touch** those.... **Let go** of that book....

**Eric:** Now what?

**Antonella:** Over the desk, on that shelf... **Grab** that can.

**Eric:** What's in it...?

**Antonella:** Go on, go on, **unscrew** the lid...

**Eric:** Yow... Antonella... what is this?

**Antonella:** Oh, sorry, you grabbed the wrong one, sorry, sorry... There must be another one, **check it out**.

**Eric:** I see it, but do I dare to open it?

**Antonella:** Of course! **Be** brave, Eric! (Have courage!)

**Eric:** Yikes!

**Antonella:** Oh, Eric! What a butterfingers you are! Those are my jumping beans!

**Eric:** Shall I send them to you?

**Antonella:** No, no, I don't need those. But please, **don't leave** them there on the ground!

**Eric:** I'll clean up now...

**Antonella:** Good, Eric, no more foolishness (**Don't do** any more foolish

things). **Try** looking in the drawer...

**Eric:** Va bene...

**Eric:** All right...

**Antonella:** Se è lì, è proprio in fondo, in fondo... dietro tutte quelle cartelle... **Stendi** la mano, **allunga**...

**Antonella:** If it's there, it's way in the back, behind all those folders.... **Reach out** your hand... **Stretch**...

**Eric:** Ma-- Ah--

**Eric:** Ma-- Ah--

**Antonella:** Eric! Se c'è un topo, **buttalo** via! Che schifo!

**Antonella:** Eric! If there's a mouse, throw it out! Gross!

**Eric:** Ormai si sarà spaventato...

**Eric:** By now he'll be frightened...

**Antonella:** **Senti**, Eric, ti richiamo dopo. Mi restano pochissimi minuti sulla mia scheda...

**Antonella:** **Listen**, Eric, I'll call you back later. I have very few minutes left on my card...

**Eric:** D'accordo, tanto, io devo trovare un'aspirina... Arisentirci.

**Eric:** Fine, I've got to find an aspirin anyway.... Talk to you later.

**Antonella:** A presto, mio caro...

**Antonella:** Soon, my dear...

## Nota Grammaticale

The **second-person singular form** of the **imperative**, the "**tu**" form, is possibly the most frequently used of the **imperative** forms, and it has the most variations. The formal "**Lei**" and "**Loro**" forms are always identical to the present subjunctive, and all the other forms are always identical to the present indicative. But the second-person singular form has two major anomalies.

The first occurs only with **first-conjugation verbs**, the ones whose infinitive ends in **-are**. The **imperative** for these verbs is the present indicative stem plus **-a**.

**guardare to look: guarda!**, **controllare to check: controlla!**, **spostare to move: sposta!**

The **second-person singular imperative** of **second- and third-conjugation verbs** is the same as the **present indicative**.

The second anomaly is in the the **negative** command form of second-person singular. Whereas all the other forms simply place a **non** in front of the **imperative** verb, the second person singular places its **non** in front of the **infinitive** of the verb. This is true for all three regular conjugations and for all verbs that are otherwise irregular in the **imperative**.

There are tables showing all of these forms in the pdf document that accompanies Episode 8, our introduction to the **imperative**.

You may have noticed some **imperatives** in today's episode that looked funny to you even though you may have been following along with those tables. Chances are those were imperatives that had **pronouns** attached to them, like "**Fammi** un favore" and "**Buttalo** via!" (*Do me a favor; Throw it away*). In Episode 10, we'll be looking at the "**noi**" and "**voi**" forms of the imperative and also at this issue of pronouns used with verbs in the imperative.

If pronouns in general are an issue for you, **Abbi pazienza!** *Have patience!* After we've summarized the imperative in Episode 10, we'll be moving on to the big wide world of pronouns in Episode 11!

## Nota Culturale

### Advertising and Broadcasting in Italy

For better or for worse, television is just as popular and pervasive in Italy as it is in the U.S. When broadcast television got its start in Italy in the early 1950s, it was a state monopoly, that is, there was no private television, only television broadcast and managed by the government. The RAI, *Radiotelevisione Italiana* (formerly *Radio Audizioni Italiane*), is the state broadcasting company, funded in part by the *canone televisivo*, a tax on the ownership of television sets--a controversial tax that many viewers refuse to pay. Many different individuals and businesses made proposals and requests to operate independent commercial broadcasting stations but the Italian Parliament and even the Constitutional Court resisted privatization and commercialization of the airwaves for some twenty years. Private commercial television broadcasting began in 1974 after plenty of legal wrangling.

Since then both the private channels and the RAI have grown and developed immensely. There are now the RAIuno, the RAIdue, and the RAItre networks in addition to numerous local RAI channels, some of which specialize in reporting news and information in regional dialects as well as in standard Italian. The private networks and channels have also proliferated and pay satellite and cable television is an important feature of the media landscape.

And just as in the United States, Italian television is usually surrounded by controversy. The RAI, as part of the state apparatus, is controlled by politicians, and is therefore susceptible to all the problems and polemics this can cause. In the private sector, ex-prime minister Silvio Berlusconi faced many challenges in the form of conflict-of-interest charges due to his vast holdings in every form of Italian mass media, including television.

Of course, commercial broadcasting means commercials, and not even the RAI in its early years was entirely free of those. Paid advertising on Italian state television debuted back in 1957, but the RAI introduced it with some typically Italian inventiveness and flair. Rather than bombarding its viewers with annoying interruptions to its evening programs, the RAI created a *new* program, *Carosello* (Carousel). Every night at ten til nine, to a fanfare of trumpets and mandolins, the

curtain went up on an amusing ten-minute merry-go-round of -- commercials! On *Carosello*, it was the quick sketches with live actors that interrupted the sequence of animated commercials (sketches with many of Italy's great performers like Totò, Dario Fo, and Vittorio Gassman).

This little festival of advertising soon became as popular as any show, a ritual for Italian families, and a whole generation of Italians grew up hearing a nightly warning that people still remember, since the show ran for twenty years: *a letto dopo Carosello!* -- "Carosello and then off to bed!"

Today's Italian commercial television is much more similar to its North American counterpart. For a hilarious, moving and surreal vision of Italian television commercials colliding with real Italian life, see Maurizio Nichetti's film, *Ladri di saponette*.

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

Your hosts with the most – grammar,  
Antonella Olson & Eric Edwards  
“*Out of our minds ... into your ears*”