

**TWISTS OF MOOD:
THE DISTRIBUTION AND INTERPRETATION OF INDICATIVE AND SUBJUNCTIVE**

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The theme of this special issue is the distribution of indicative and subjunctive in languages that display this distinction in the mood category. Mood distribution and interpretation has not been deprived of enough attention in descriptive grammars and traditional linguistics, but it has never become a major focal topic in theoretical approaches. Mostly overshadowed by other verbal categories such as aspect or tense, mood often appears in the discussion of other phenomena as a co-occurring factor.

Following the editorial statement for the ‘Taking up the gauntlet’ special issues of *Lingua*, the contributors were asked to address some of the questions and puzzles raised in the questionnaire below, which are meant to constitute a significant selection of the problems that remain open in the existing treatments of mood. These are presented in the form of possible questions around specific sets of data and theoretical gaps in the existing analyses. Obviously, each author has chosen to concentrate on one or some of the aspects pointed out in the questionnaire. In some cases, the issues are addressed directly; in other cases, only indirectly as a consequence of the specific analysis presented. As a whole, the five contributions provide a whole range of new insights within syntactic and semantic analyses. These are put into perspective in the concluding section of this issue.

1. Determining the core cases of mood distribution

Beyond the crude *realis/irrealis* opposition, which has proven to be of little use, several theoretical attempts have been made at defining the interpretive contribution of indicative and subjunctive. To this end, the core distinctions are derived from a subset of subordinate contexts which are considered to be the crucial cases. One such strategy concentrates on mood selection in complement clauses of propositional attitude verbs. The main divide in Romance (with the exception of Italian ‘belief’ predicates) is established between epistemic predicates such as ‘believe’ or ‘say’ and volitional and directive predicates such as ‘want’ or ‘order’: the former systematically display indicative complements (1a), while the latter display subjunctive ones (1b) (Farkas, 1992; Giannakidou, 1997).

- (1) a. Marc croit que le printemps est arrivé. (French)
‘Marc believes that spring has-IND arrived.’
b. Marc veut que le printemps soit long.
‘Marc wants for spring to be-SUB long.’

Once this core divide is established, one has to address quite a number of other environments that do not fit into this pattern so nicely. Most noticeably, factive-emotive predicates show not only substantive variation across Romance concerning mood selection (Farkas, 1992), but also within a single language (Quer, 1998, 2000), and subjunctive selection is a priori unexpected, given that without a concrete modal interpretation, these predicates are taken to presuppose the truth of their complements. Even more problematic are the complements to causative and implicative predicates,

which invariably select for subjunctive despite the factual interpretation of the embedded proposition (Quer, 1997, 1998).

An alternative approach to the core meaning of mood has been constructed on the occurrence of mood distinctions in conditional antecedents. Conditionals are traditionally divided into indicative and subjunctive conditionals, even in languages where such mood distinctions do not occur overtly. The distinction correlates with the more neutral labelling of factual vs. non-factual/counterfactual or realis vs. irrealis conditionals. Indicative appears in protases that are realistic in the sense that they quantify over worlds close enough to the actual one (2a). By contrast, subjunctive conditional antecedents quantify over worlds which are more distant from the actual one (present non-factual/counterfactual) (2b) or even disjoint from the actual one (past non-factual/counterfactual) (2c).

- (2) a. Si el veig, t'avisaré. (Catalan)
'If I see him, I'll tell you.'
b. Si el veiés, t'avisaria.
'If I saw him, I would tell you.'
c. Si l'hagués vist, t'hauria avisat
'If I had seen him, I would have told you.'

In any case, the starting point for the characterization of mood interpretation here is rather different from the previous one, as selection (by a matrix attitude predicate) does not come into play and subjunctive by itself seems to make a clear contribution to the overall meaning of the sentence (at least, superficially).

(I) Are both sets of "core" cases equally relevant for the analysis of mood distribution or is one of them more central to the discussion than the other? On which grounds?

When answering these questions, one has to keep in mind that conditional antecedents do not always display the subjunctive there even in languages that have it (Greek, French).

In addition, the generalizations about mood distribution in conditional protases should probably be qualified. The particular behavior of 'if' as marker of a conditional antecedent with respect to mood has been observed for other languages like Catalan or Spanish (see e.g. Quer, 2001:102, note 23). A related pattern can be observed in French, where other periphrases introducing the protasis of an 'indicative' conditional can take subjunctive (or future or conditional mood/tense, significantly):

- (3) Au cas où il en soit encore temps... (Grevisse, 1993:1676)
'In case it's-SUB still time...'

Schlenker (2003) also notes that the second conjunct in a conditional antecedent can be in the subjunctive, unlike the first one:

- (4) Si Jean venait et qu'il soit malade, nous le soignerions. (French)
'If Jean came-IND and were-SUB sick, we would take care of him.'

2. Subjunctive types

Within the limits of the indicative/subjunctive divide, it has often been proposed that we must distinguish between more than one sort of subjunctive category marked by the same subjunctive morphology. A common one is the distinction between optative and dubitative subjunctive. A more recent one, put forth by Stowell (1993) and partially exploited in Quer (1998), is the divide between ‘intensional’ and ‘polarity’ subjunctive, which roughly corresponds to the distinction between subjunctive selected by a matrix predicate and subjunctive licensed by an operator such as negation or question. While intensional subjunctive is selected only in the immediately selected clause (5a), does not alternate with indicative (5b), and displays sequence-of-tense restrictions (5c) and subject obviation effects (5d), polarity subjunctive can be licensed in consecutively embedded domains (6a), does alternate with the indicative (6b) and shows no sequence of tense restrictions (6c) or subject obviation effects (6d) (for an overview, see Quer, 1998).

- (5) a. Quieres que creamos que tienes/*tengas razón. (Spanish)
 ‘You want us to believe-SUB that you are-IND/*SUB right.’
 b. Quieres que creamos/*creemos que tienes razón.
 ‘You want us to believe-SUB/*IND that you are-IND right.’
 c. Quieres que creamos/*creyéramos que tienes razón.
 ‘You want us to believe-SUB.PRS/*PST that you are-IND right.’
 d. Quieres que creamos/*creas que tienes razón
 ‘You want us/*you to believe-SUB.1PL/*2SG that you are-IND right.’
- (6) a. No piensa que creas que tienes/tengas razón.
 ‘S/he does not think you believe-SUB that you are-IND/SUB right.’
 b. No piensa que creamos/creemos que tienes razón.
 ‘S/he does not think you believe -SUB/IND that you are-IND right.’
 c. No piensa que creamos/creyéramos que tienes razón.
 ‘S/he does not think you believe/d-SUB.PRS/PST that you are-IND right.’
 d. No piensa que crea realmente que tienes razón
 ‘S/he_i does not think s/he_{i/j} really believes-SUB that you are-IND right.’

(II) *Where does the division between intensional and polarity subjunctive arise from? Can we really talk about two different sorts of subjunctive? Is it advisable to reduce both sorts of triggers to a single licensing factor?*

3. Markedness in mood contrasts

The perspective which is most commonly adopted takes it for granted that in the indicative/subjunctive opposition, the latter is the marked mood. The question becomes, then, what this markedness is about. Indicative is considered to be the mood of main assertions and non-modalized (or less modalized) embedded clauses. Subjunctive, on the other hand, is typically a subordinated mood and, except for a well defined set of matrix occurrences, it cannot appear in root environments on its own. It is the mood of non-assertion and it conveys a whole range of modal interpretations for embedded clauses. It is precisely the difficulty of giving a unified characterization of subjunctive what has led some scholars to propose that indicative is actually the marked mood,

subjunctive becoming then the default (Portner, 1997; see also Siegel, 2004; Schlenker, 2003 for related proposals). This is not just a choice without consequences. For instance, it implies accepting that one mood or the other has a stable interpretive contribution.

(III) *Do we have enough evidence to decide what the unmarked/default mood is? Does it make sense to articulate mood distribution in terms of markedness? Do we have to conclude necessarily that the marked mood must have a uniform interpretive contribution across contexts?*

The approaches that claim that subjunctive is the default mood are confronted with a number of empirical problems. The data that question subjunctive as a default category display contrasts where subjunctive does appear to have a semantic contribution. There are examples that arguably point in this direction. One of them is the apparent indicative/subjunctive alternation under ‘seem’, exemplified here for Spanish:

- (7) a. Parece que llueve (Spanish)
 ‘It seems that it is raining-IND.’
 b. Parece que llueva
 ‘It looks as if it were raining-SUB.’

While in (7a) there is a weak epistemic commitment on the part of the utterer that it’s apparently raining, in (7b) only a counterfactual interpretation obtains, as the impossibility of a continuation like “...and in fact it is raining” makes clear. So the subjunctive in (7b) does not seem to have vacuous semantics.

Another paradigm that casts doubt on the vacuous interpretation of subjunctive is the indicative/subjunctive alternation under verbs of communication and speech. Under the reported speech reading, they unproblematically take the indicative (8a), but when they combine with subjunctive they acquire the reading of a directive verb (order or influence) (8b). This is a totally consistent pattern within the class of verbs of communication and speech and across languages that display indicative/subjunctive contrasts. If we don’t want to appeal to systematic homonymy within this verb class, one has to resort to some covert predicate of influence to account for it, as has already been done in the literature. However, if such a step is not taken, the vacuity of subjunctive hypothesis stands no chance of success.

- (8) a. Diu que ve (Catalan)
 ‘S/he says that s/he is-IND coming.’
 b. Diu que surtis
 ‘S/he tells you to leave-SUB.’

In addition, we find other instances where no reasonable appeal can be made to covert predicates as triggers for subjunctive. Again, the indicative interpretation accords with the presupposition or assertivity associated with this mood, but the subjunctive variant does not simply have a “neutral” reading. On the contrary, the embedded proposition expressed in subjunctive is presupposed, that is it gets interpreted as integrating the common ground of the conversational context. One such case materializes with ‘admit’ (see (9) for French; also ‘understand, accept’). The obvious concessive nuance in (9b) can be interpreted as conceding that the proposition under discussion (‘you are right’)

can be incorporated to the common ground, whereas the indicative version simply asserts the content of the concession.

- (9) a. J'admets que vous avez raison (French)
 'I admit that you are-IND right.'
 b. J'admets que vous ayez raison
 'I admit that you are-SUB right.' (Grevisse, 1993:1618)

A similar interpretive contrast can be claimed to arise with mood alternation in a concessive adjunct clause (10). As argued in Quer (1998), subjunctive is marking a concessive conditional interpretation in such cases. This is an important piece of evidence, as it introduces interpretive contrasts that cannot be linked to the interpretation of specific embedded predicates.

- (10) a. Aunque se equivocan, no retirarán la propuesta. (Spanish)
 'Although they are wrong (IND), they won't withdraw the proposal.'
 b. Aunque se equivoquen, no retirarán la propuesta
 'Even if they are wrong (SUB), they won't withdraw the proposal.'

The type of objection raised by these data would apply to a number of other well documented cases of so-called 'presuppositional' subjunctives (Spanish past subjunctive relatives, Spanish and Catalan temporal clauses with *después que* 'after', etc.).

If we take a closer look at the other side of this type of proposal, i.e. that it is indicative the one that carries an invariant meaning (a certain presupposition, for instance, or assertive force), we run into similar problems. Both an indicative and a subjunctive protasis can be felicitously followed by the same parenthetical 'which I don't believe' (11). This makes it impossible that presupposition on the part of the speaker or assertive force are guiding the mood choice in the conditional antecedent.

- (11) a. Si llega a tiempo, cosa que no creo,... (Spanish)
 'If s/he arrives-IND on time, which I don't believe,...'
 b. Si llegara a tiempo, cosa que no creo,...
 'If s/he arrived-SUB on time, which I don't believe,...'

In this connection, a specific example set discussed in Quer (1998) must be introduced, because it has been used to attach a stable interpretation to indicative clauses, namely that they bear the presupposition of truth on the part of the speaker. A sentence like (12a) has an embedded subjunctive because the bearer of the attitude (the speaker, in this case) does not presuppose its truth. Its counterpart with an embedded indicative is infelicitous (12b), because it would lead to the contradiction of the presupposed embedded proposition and the matrix attitude stating that the speaker does not believe such a proposition.

- (12) a. No crec que encara el molestin.
 'I don't believe that they still bother-SUB him.'
 b. # No crec que encara el molestin.
 'I don't believe that they still bother-IND him.'

As noted there, though, indicative is not excluded under a negated epistemic in the first person, especially if *creure*'s is used, which can be paraphrased as 'come to believe'. In such structure, the indicative points to the assertion made by some other illocutionary agent and thus does not conflict with the utterer's beliefs.

- (13) a. No em crec que encara el molesten.
 'I don't believe that they still bother-IND him.'
 b. No m'ho crec, que encara el molesten.
 'I don't believe it, that they still bother-IND him.'

These data clearly show that the presupposition or assertive force of the indicative under the scope of negation is not linked invariably to the speaker (cf. Siegel 2004), but more generally to some illocutionary agent in the conversational context. It seems unavoidable that an analysis of mood distribution that aims at accounting for the whole range of data should work with theoretical tools which allow for such fine-grained distinctions.

4. Crosslinguistic variation in mood choice

We must also look at the crosslinguistic variation with respect to mood distribution in order to determine how languages divide the notional moods by means of the morphological categories available. In this connection, the most well-known case of variation within Romance is the fact that, unlike other epistemics such as *dire* 'say', belief predicates in (standard) Italian (*credere* or *pensare*) take the subjunctive even in the absence of any other triggering factor. The mood facts are the exact opposite in Spanish and French.

- (14) a. Credo che lei sia/*è stanca.¹ (Italian)
 'I think she is-SUB/*IND tired.'
 b. Dice che lei è/*sia stanca. (Italian)
 'S/he says she is-IND/*SUB tired.'
- (15) a. Creo que está/*esté cansada. (Spanish)
 'I think she is-IND/*SUB tired.'
 b. Je crois qu'il est/*soit fatigué. (French)
 'I think he is-IND/*SUB tired.'

This diverging pattern in Italian has been attributed by Giorgi & Pianesi (1997) to the way Italian grammaticalizes the indicative/subjunctive divide along a continuum: *credere* would fall under the non-realistic contexts that Italian marks with subjunctives, while *dire* would be situated in a weakly realistic context, flagged with indicative as in the rest of Romance. Portner (1999) points out the problems with this account. Faced with a comparable problem when discussing crosslinguistic differences in Romance and Balkan mood, Siegel (2004) actually suggests that Balkan indicative does not have the

¹ Notice, though, that if the matrix and embedded subject are first person, the pattern is just the opposite:

- (i) Credo che io sono/*sia stanco.
 'I believe I am-IND/*SUB tired.'

presuppositional commitment that it has in Romance, which leads to a slightly different distribution of moods.

(IV) *To what extent are languages allowed to vary with respect to morphological marking of notional moods? Why does variation arise precisely where it arises?*

5. The puzzle of mood choice with factive-emotive predicates

Variation in mood selection is attested in another well-known domain: factive-emotive/psych predicates. The rough generalization states that in languages like French, Catalan or Spanish these predicates select for the subjunctive, while Romanian or Greek select for the indicative.

(V) *If the evaluative or subjective component in the meaning of these predicates is responsible for the occurrence of subjunctive, why do some languages select the indicative?*

However, this has shown to be too coarse a picture which is based on a few examples that are considered to be prototypical. Even languages such as Catalan which are argued to opt for subjunctive, indicative also occurs in examples like (12b). The episodicity of the main predicate has been shown to play a role (Quer, 1998, 2001): while indicative is excluded from the argument clause of characterizing (generic/conditional-like) psych predicates (16c), it can surface with an assertive value when the main predication is episodic (16b), alternating with presuppositional subjunctive (16a).

- (16) a. Em va encantar que tots em fessin una pila de preguntes.
'I was delighted that everyone asked-SUB me a lot of questions.'
- b. Em va encantar que tots em van fer una pila de preguntes.
'I was delighted that everyone asked-IND me a lot of questions.'
- c. M'encanta que em facin/*fan una pila de preguntes.
'I'm delighted if they ask(-IND/*SUB) me a lot of questions.'

In this sense, the occurrences of indicative with this class of verbs in episodic predications parallels the one attested with factive-emotives that allow for an assertive reading more easily, as shown in (17): subjunctive is associated with a presuppositional reading of the embedded proposition (17a), while indicative is associated with the assertive reading of the same proposition (17b).

- (17) a. Es queixa que no li facin cas
'S/he complains that they don't pay-SUB attention to him/her.'
- b. Es queixa que no li fan cas
'S/he complains that they don't pay-IND attention to him/her.'

(VI) *Why should there be a link between subjunctive and presupposition, as data such as these seem to show? Can a common interpretive property be found between presuppositional subjunctive and 'intensional' subjunctive or 'polarity' subjunctive?*

Similar distinctions must be looked into in languages that are argued to display indicative under factive emotive predicates. Quer (1998) shows data from Farkas (1992:102) making this point for Romanian, but the same can be shown to hold for Greek. In this language, factive-emotives are often said to select for the indicative. Nevertheless, this holds true only for episodic predications in the matrix clause (18a) or in de embedded clause (18b). As shown in (18c), when the predication is generic or characterizing, both moods are legitimate, contrary to what is generally stated.

- (18) a. Tis arese pu/*na pighate moni sas.
 ‘She liked it that-(IND/*SUB) you went by yourselves.’
 b. Tis aresi pu/*na pighate moni sas.
 ‘She likes it that-(IND/*SUB) you went by yourselves.’
 c. Tis aresi pu/na pijenete moni sas.
 ‘She likes it that-(IND/SUB) you go by yourselves.’

What is interesting about both groups of languages is that the divide arises along the same lines: (non-)episodicity changes the mood options. However, it turns out that subjunctive is marking different interpretations with factive-emotives in the two groups of languages: while in Catalan-type languages indicative is associated to assertivity, in Greek-like languages it is marking presupposition. An additional factor, though, might be taken into account: the specialized *pu* complementizer that appears in Greek, which takes indicative next to the default *oti* ‘that’ complementizer.

(VII) *Faced with the complexity of these sets of data, is it licit to simplify saying that factive-emotive predicates select for a certain mood in a given language? To what extent should we take the co-occurring factors into account?*

6. The morphosyntax of mood categories

This last point opens up a non-trivial issue which has been scarcely addressed in the relevant literature:

(VIII) *Does the morphosyntactic makeup of the mood categories play a role in their distribution across languages?*

It has been suggested that operator-licensed subjunctive is not productive in Balkan languages such as Romanian or Greek, if compared to Western and Central Romance (Quer, 1998:91). One possibility mentioned there is that this might be due to the major role played by C in the morphosyntax of Balkan mood systems, as opposed to inflectional paradigms. Actually, the few cases of negation-licensed subjunctive attested in Greek (*dhen pistévo* ‘I don’t believe’, *dhen nomízo* ‘I don’t think’), were shown to constitute a very limited set in Giannakidou & Quer (1997) which was restricted to present first person epistemic attitudes:

- (19) a. Dhen pistévo na éfije norís. (Greek)
 ‘I don’t think she left-SUB early.’
 b. *Dhen pistévis na éfije norís.
 ‘You don’t think she left-SUB early.’
 c. *Dhen pistépsa na éfije norís.
 ‘I didn’t think she left-SUB early.’

Moreover, the epistemic predicate seems to license subjunctive even when it is not negated:

- (20) Pistévo na min fíji norís. (Greek)
'I think s/he won't leave soon.'

7. The relation of morphological mood with notional mood

Some adjunct clauses present also crosslinguistic variation, as in temporal when-clauses with future reference: Spanish takes subjunctive, French indicative future and Catalan has both options.

- (21) a. Cuando llegue, te llamará. (Spanish)
'When he arrives-SUB, s/he will call you.'
b. Quand il arrivera, il t'appellera. (French)
'When he arrives-IND, he will call you.'
c. Quan arribarà/arribi, et trucarà. (Catalan)
'When he arrives-IND/SUB, s/he will call you.'

(IX) *Can we say that when-clauses with future reference belong in the notional subjunctive category just because in some languages they can surface with subjunctive morphology? To what extent does it make sense to characterize future tense as indicative in such contexts? Is the indicative/subjunctive divide significant in such environments?*

8. Embedded counterparts of imperatives

'Intensional' (volitional) subjunctive has been analyzed as the embedded counterpart of a matrix imperative, both being instantiated in the syntax by an imperative operator in C (Kempchinsky, 1986). It systematically appears under verbs of volition and influence.

- (22) a. Vés-te'n a casa! (Catalan)
'Go home! (IMP)'
b. T'ordeno que te'n vagis a casa.
'I order you to go (SUB) home.'

(X) *If imperative mood grammaticalizes a specific type of illocutionary force, is it correct to extend it to embedded contexts? Apart from the modal interpretation and the fact that volitional subjunctive reports on the speech act realized by an imperative, are there any other formal properties that bring them together? If so, do they derive from imperative force or from some other interpretive factor?*

9. The transparency of subjunctive and infinitival clauses

Subjunctive and infinitival clauses are often grouped together vis-à-vis indicative clauses in terms of their transparency for long distance (LD) dependencies: while the former are deemed to allow them, the latter are said to constitute an opaque domain. One case at hand is LD licensing of n-words modified by 'absolutely' in a language like Catalan or Spanish (examples from Giannakidou & Quer, 1997):

- (23) a. No vull que saludis absolutament ningú. (Catalan)
 ‘I don’t want you say-SUB hello to anyone at all.’
 b. No vull saludar absolutament ningú.
 ‘I don’t want to say-INF hello to anyone at all.’
 c. *No han confessat que han vist absolutament ningú.
 ‘They didn’t confess having-IND seen anyone at all.’

However, this distribution pattern of mood and LD licensing is not complete. On the one hand, not all subjunctive complements are equally transparent:

- (24) *No lamenta que hagi ofès absolutament ningú (Catalan)
 ‘S/he doesn’t regret having-SUB offended anyone at all.’

On the other hand, not all infinitival complements are equally transparent either:

- (25) a. *No afirma tener absolutamente nada en contra. (Spanish)
 ‘S/he doesn’t claim to have (INF) anything at all against it.’
 b. No cree tener absolutamente nada en contra.
 ‘S/he doesn’t believe to have (INF) anything at all against it.’

(XI) Should we conclude from this limited set of data that the alleged closeness of subjunctive and infinitive vis-à-vis indicative is only apparent? Does the opacity/transparency of the embedded domain derive from the type of subordinating predicate? Are there any LD phenomena that only rely on the subjunctive/infinitive vs. indicative contrast?

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