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**USES AND MISUSES OF THE SUBJUNCTIVE AMONG  
UNIVERSITY LEARNERS OF SPANISH**

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**GLASGOW, NOVEMBER 1997**

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**To my parents**

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# **1. INTRODUCTION**

## "La bestia negra"

When I began to teach Spanish as a foreign language, my first course was attended by a group of British and American students at intermediate-level of Spanish, who seemed to be at loss to select properly the subjunctive. Never before, as a native speaker, had I thought about the difficulties that this issue conveys for a foreign speaker and it was the students' questions and complaints that made me go further into this topic: Why is it so difficult, what is wrong with it, what are the factors that make the subjunctive so hard for them? Observing a similar uneasiness in later courses, I decided to focus my research on this aspect and thus get to know why the use of the Spanish Subjunctive mood is considered the most difficult aspect of grammar for English-speaking students to master. As a matter of fact, there would appear to be a black legend surrounding this mood: *el gran enemigo*<sup>1</sup>, *una de las bestias negras*<sup>2</sup> and *the Waterloo for all foreign language students*<sup>3</sup>, are some of the expressions used in relation to the "dread" subjunctive.

We may catch glimpses of different attempts that have been made to instruct students in mood selection in Spanish through the literature of the ages. However, it is also true that the issue most studied is not always the best understood. The subjunctive in Spanish is a good example of that. As a starting point of this piece of work I would like to refer to Michel Thomas' words about the nature of the language learning:

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<sup>1</sup>García Santos, J. F. (1993). *Sintaxis del español: Nivel de perfeccionamiento*. Salamanca: Santillana-Universidad de Salamanca, p. 42.

<sup>2</sup>Fernández González, J. (1992). "Guía del subjuntivo castellano para anglohablantes e hispanohablantes que estudian inglés. I". In *Actas del Primer Congreso "El estudio del español"*. Salamanca: Ediciones Universidad de Salamanca, p. 1.

<sup>3</sup>Ileusinkveld, P. R. (1987). "Subjunctive with spirit". *Hispania*, 70, p. 192.

*Learning has to be knowledge and learning has to be based on understanding. What you understand, you can absorb and internalise, and it becomes knowledge. What you know you do not forget. You can block something that you know, but you do not forget it.<sup>4</sup>*

Following this principle, should the subjunctive not be understood, the students will never learn it. That is, a lack of understanding is associated with an irremediable failure in the learning. Consequently, if we want to make understandable mood selection for students, we should work out the development of the learner's awareness of certain aspects of this issue in Spanish. In this connection, it is important to remember that the need to raise the students' consciousness of the grammar aspects of the target language is not a new development but goes back several centuries<sup>5</sup>. However, it has not been equally borne in mind through the history of language teaching.

Let me illustrate this strategy by referring to Juan de Valdés' *Diálogo de la Lengua* (1535). This could be considered an apt antecedent of the pedagogical approach that I would like to put forward in this study. From the first pages of this "dialogue", we meet the characters that could embody the main roles that people assume in learning a foreign language: the foreign learner (Marcio), the native-speaker (Pacheco) who keeps complaining about the discussion of formal aspects of his mother tongue and the instructor (Valdés). Furthermore, the motive for the dialogue is none other than Marcio's curiosity to understand better the Spanish language that he knows from the letters sent by his master (Valdés). Thus, he asks his master :

*Si no tenéis libros en castellano, con cuya autoridad nos podáis satisfacer a lo que de vuestras cartas os preguntaremos, a lo menos satisfazednos con las razones que os mueven a escribir algunas cosas de otra manera que los otros...<sup>6</sup>*

<sup>4</sup>Thomas, M. (1997). "The Language Master". *The Knowledge*. London: BBC 2 (TV production).

<sup>5</sup>Rutherford, W. F. (1987). *Second language Grammar: learning and teaching*. London: Longman, pp. 27-8. He comments on this aspect with the benefit of historical hindsight.

<sup>6</sup>Valdés, J. (1986). *Diálogo de la lengua* [1535]. Barcelona: Planeta, p. 12.

*...porque ay cosas que nos satisfazen y ay otras que no entendemos, es menester que en todo caso nos deis cuenta, no solamente de lo que avéis escrito, pero aun de lo que dello depende o puede depender.*<sup>7</sup>

Marcio embodies the student who is keen to command the language that he is learning. Therefore, he requires the knowledge of all processes beyond written language (letters). In doing so, the explanations will let him understand the language devices and build the pattern for a productive usage of the target language. From then on, the book develops a dialogued grammar ("*más sugerente que normativa*")<sup>8</sup>, that calls into question all the models that prevailed at that time and rejects a normative approach that for the Spanish language was led by Nebrija's work (referred to as Antonio Librixa in the book). This model only provides the language user with "*gramatiquerías*". It is not worth following this model. On the contrary, it is worthwhile to build up the knowledge of the target language out of the questions that may arise in the dialogue (in another case, in the classroom) through an active interaction between the instructor and the book's characters. That is, in our case, between the teacher and the students.

We have all suffered at some point the feeling of anguish with lists of restrictive rules that make the study of grammar a baffling area apparently governed by sets of do's and don'ts. On the contrary, the approach to be considered here should get away from the instruction of mood selection as a list of arbitrary problems without going further.

In the thesis that follows I have examined the existing theoretical approaches in detail in chapter 2. What emerges is that the theoretical debate has yielded only limited conclusions for the classroom. Where lists of rules have been developed they have invariably produced almost as many exceptions. This creates problems for the teacher which I have referred to in chapter 3. With this

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<sup>7</sup>Valdés, J. (1986: 14).

<sup>8</sup>Gómez Sierra, E. (1996). "Juan de Valdés. El *Diálogo de la Lengua* como obra literaria", Paper presented at the Hispanic Research Seminar, University of Manchester, November 1996.

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in mind, I prepared a controlled experiment in two parts which attempted to expose the limitations of students' existing knowledge (T1) and suggest that the problem of mood selection should begin to be addressed by introducing elements of analysis and contextualization (T2). In my conclusion, from a pedagogical point of view, I restate through this research a different perspective towards the treatment of grammar in the classroom in general and of mood selection in particular. What I have attempted through the following pages is to sketch out some of the major pitfalls in the teaching of the subjunctive and thus, some of the learning problems.

The structure of this study offers a view of the problem both from the theoretical side and, on the basis of a controlled experiment, from the practical side of the question. Bearing in mind that learning and teaching are bound to affect the learner's understanding of mood selection, I propose a shift in the conception of the language class. Let us have grammar workshops that let students become independent analysts of the Spanish mood. The classroom is not the place for mechanical activities (drill exercises etc.) that the student can work out on their own. The classroom is the place for active learning, where students and teachers may bring into question the problems that this issue produces in practice.

I hope that the outcome of this project will help to provide new insights into the presentation of the Subjunctive in the classroom. Above all,

*to teach a language is not to teach a body of knowledge but to teach how to learn, or to teach learners how to become better managers of their own learning.<sup>9</sup>*

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<sup>9</sup>Allwright, R. (1984). Quoted by Rutherford (1987:104).

## **2. QUESTIONS OF DEFINITION**

## 2.1. TRADITIONAL PERSPECTIVES

In the fifth edition of his *Gramática de la Lengua Castellana* (1847), Andrés Bello emends previous texts and gives the following definition of mood:

*Llámense modos las inflexiones del verbo en cuanto provienen de la influencia o régimen de una palabra a que esté o pueda estar subordinado.*<sup>10</sup>

He distinguishes Indicative, Subjunctive and Optative moods. The Imperative is included in the latter which is an equivalent of what we call nowadays the independent Subjunctive.

His definition of Indicative and Subjunctive is seen as the first example of the structuralist principle of linguistic distribution in a Spanish Grammar<sup>11</sup>. He divides verbal inflections into two main groups that depend on the potential of their combinations with other verbs. Indicative forms are those subordinated to verbs like *saber, afirmar...*; Common Subjunctive forms are those that depend on verbs like *dudar, desear...* After this syntactic approach, he adds semantic factors (expression of doubt, uncertainty, emotion...) when he speaks about the Common Subjunctive; the result is a syntactic-semantic criterion.

His main contribution as regards Mood theory can be summarized as follows:

-Indicative, Subjunctive and Optative are / can be subordinated moods.

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<sup>10</sup>Bello, A. (1984). *Gramática de la lengua castellana destinada al uso de los americanos* [1847]. Madrid: Edaf Universitaria, p. 158.

<sup>11</sup>Lázaro Mora, F. (1981). *La presencia de Andrés Bello en la Filología Española*. Salamanca: Ediciones Universidad de Salamanca, p. 83.

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-In every proposition, a superordinate element, either implicit or explicit, has to be inferred. Hispanic Generativism sees in this point a precedent of their analysis through abstract verbs<sup>12</sup>.

-Mood selection is ruled by both syntactic and semantic criteria.

For Rodolfo Lenz<sup>13</sup>, mood is the grammatical category according to which the verbal form is classified subjectively, from the speaker's point of view, according to its logical value.

He distinguishes three moods: the Indicative, the Subjunctive and the Imperative. According to him, the Indicative expresses real facts, whereas the Subjunctive and the Imperative express facts that only exist in the speaker's mind. The Subjunctive is divided into dubitative (possible or doubted facts) and optative (necessary or desirable facts).

Lenz's theories were largely ignored by structuralists and transformationalists until they were taken up by Terrell and Hooper, who looked again at his observations about the subjective nature of the Mood and how the speaker may adopt several basic attitudes towards a proposition. These attitudes govern the use of the Subjunctive and Indicative forms, and in Terrell's and Hooper's proposal they correspond directly to certain basic semantic concepts such as presupposition and assertion.<sup>14</sup>

The ideas of Bello and Lenz are combined in chapter V of Gili Gaya's *Curso Superior de Sintaxis Española*.<sup>15</sup> He follows the traditional semantic approach, according to which the Indicative suggests reality in contrast with the Subjunctive which expresses unreality. After that, he divides the Subjunctive into

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<sup>12</sup>Manteca, A. (1981). *Gramática del subjuntivo*. Madrid: Cátedra, p.15.

<sup>13</sup>Lenz, R. (1953). *La oración y sus partes* [1920]. 3rd ed. Madrid: Centro de Estudios Históricos.

<sup>14</sup>Terrell, T. and Hooper, J. (1974). "A semantically based analysis of mood in Spanish". *Hispania*, 57, pp. 484-94.

<sup>15</sup>Gili Gaya, S. (1989). *Curso Superior de Sintaxis Española* [1961]. 15th ed. Barcelona: Bibliograf.

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two categories: the Subjunctive of doubt and uncertainty (Potential) and the Subjunctive of necessity and desire. He remarks that this distinction has a basically didactic purpose, because in reality the limits are not clear.

On the other hand, there are cases that override the real/unreal contrast. They follow emotional reactions as in "*Me duele que estés malo*", "*Siento que estés descontento*", regardless of whether the situation being reacted to is actual or hypothetical, real or unreal. In those cases, he argues that matrices of comment, even though they express a psychological reality, do not represent real events in an objective (i.e. material) sense.

Despite the fact that he mistakenly characterizes the Subjunctive as a marker of unreality, he makes some interesting comments on the factors that determine the use of this mood; that is, the subject's emotional state and different degree of desire and uncertainty. With respect to matrices of doubt, Gili Gaya posits a semantic continuum that responds to the speaker's own discursive purposes and interpretations:

*Entre la afirmación y la negación, pasando por la duda absoluta, hay una gradación indefinible, de la cual es signo lingüístico, para el que habla y para el que escucha, el modo que en cada caso se prefiera.<sup>16</sup>*

With this latter comment, Gili Gaya seemed to go one step further than the traditional theories and intuitively lead us to approach the subjunctive from a different point of view that takes into account the speaker's purposes. Consequently, he anticipates subsequent recognitions that sometimes context is the only thing that can define the meaning of what is expressed by the Subjunctive mood.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>16</sup>Ibid., p. 135.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., p. 140.

The Spanish Academy's 1973 Grammar<sup>18</sup> represents a step forward in relation to previous editions (1890, 1917); however, it does not give a proper statement of the mood issue. In order to define the concept of mood, it refers back to the distinction between *dictum* (the content of what is said) and *modus* (the way of presenting that content according to the speaker's psychic attitude). Accordingly, it distinguishes three moods: Subjunctive, Indicative and Imperative.

Establishing a distinction between Indicative and Subjunctive based on the single opposition between reality and unreality has won this theory much criticism<sup>19</sup>. Suffice to say that it does not explain many of the cases where Subjunctive is used in Spanish. Thus, when counterexamples such as, "*Me duele que seas tan malo*" are introduced, this basic criterion is called into question and, it has to fall back on far-fetched explanations like *la fuerza subjetivadora de los sentimientos que imprimen su matiz modal al verbo subordinado, afirme o no afirme la realidad del hecho*.<sup>20</sup>

The distinction between *modus* and *dictum* is taken up again in Alarcos' 1994 Spanish Academy Grammar<sup>21</sup> to define the concept of mood. He thinks that because of its peculiarities the Imperative should not be considered as a mood. His criterion is based on the compatibility of the verbal forms and the modality of the sentence. That is, those forms that are possible with the interrogative modality, belong to the indicative mood, whereas those that do not allow this possibility, although they can appear when they depend on other verbal matrices, belong to the Subjunctive mood. Both categories coincide with Bello's division.

He admits that there is imprecision and heterogeneity in both terms:

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<sup>18</sup>Real Academia Española (1973). *Esbozo de una Nueva Gramática de la Lengua Española*. Madrid: Espasa Calpe.

<sup>19</sup>See in this respect: Manteca, A. (1981: 20-1).

<sup>20</sup>Real Academia Española (1973: 457-58)

<sup>21</sup>Real Academia Española (1994). *Gramática de la Lengua Española*. Madrid: Espasa Calpe.

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*ambos términos son válidos como tales, aunque imprecisos y heterogéneos en su manera de designar, el indicativo "indica", señala una determinada noción; el subjuntivo alude a un comportamiento sintáctico (se subordina a algo).<sup>22</sup>*

He also points out that there are cases where neither the syntactic criterion nor the modality is able to explain why a particular mood is chosen.

After comparing the different effects on the sentence's meaning produced by the use of the Indicative or Subjunctive, he concludes that there exist three moods:

- Indicative: The one used more extensively. Refers to what the speaker thinks is real or, on the other hand, refers to something whose reality or unreality is not in question.
- "Conditioned"<sup>23</sup>: Refers to facts that are subject to certain factors that will make them possible.
- Subjunctive: According to Alarcos, "*es el modo de menor capacidad de aplicación*"<sup>24</sup>. It points to the fictitious, not real character, of what is meant by the verbal root.<sup>25</sup>

It must be acknowledged that the R.A.E., through the grammar developed by Alarcos Llorach, makes a great advance with regard to its previous edition, and takes into consideration the relevance of the free mood selection made by the speaker as well as the different purposes of communication that a sentence might have. From all this, it follows that it is the speaker's attitude towards the facts that are communicated that becomes the basic criterion. This allows us to put aside previous misconceptions regarding the "meaning" expressed by the Subjunctive.

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<sup>22</sup>Ibid., p. 152.

<sup>23</sup>What is usually called Potential or Conditional now is called *Condicional*.

<sup>24</sup>Real Academia Española (1994: 154).

<sup>25</sup>Ibid.

## 2. 2. APPROACHES TO MOOD THEORY

In chapter XV of his guide for teachers, William Bull<sup>26</sup> holds that the difference between the Indicative and the Subjunctive cannot be stated in a comprehensive generalisation. He remarks that the student can be taught to choose either mood without being required to remember the names of the various type of clauses in which the Indicative or the Subjunctive is used. Two basic principles are put forward:

-Experience vs. non-experience: According to Bull, the speaker divides all reality (*events and entities*) into two sets: those that have been experienced, known or inferred and those that are anticipated, not experienced or not known. The former are associated with the Indicative, the latter with the Subjunctive. This principle underlies mood contrasts in many noun clauses, temporal clauses (except for those that use *antes* ), and relative clauses.

-Cause and Effect relationship: It is pointed out that in subordinate clauses, the Subjunctive appears when two events are related in the following ways:

-One event is carried out to produce the resulting event.

E.g. *Golpea el vidrio para que se rompa.*

-It is stated that one event cannot happen without causing the resulting event.

E.g. "*No golpea el vidrio sin que se rompa*". (Bull's example)

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<sup>26</sup>Bull, W. (1965). *Spanish for teachers*. New York: The Ronald Press Company. Especially chapter XV (pp. 174-95), from which much of the following is derived.

## Uses and Misuses of the Subjunctive

-The speaker predicts that the resulting event will occur as long as the other takes place (the *result-producing* event is in the subordinate clause).

E.g. "*El vidrio se romperá con tal que lo golpees*".

In this connection, he remarks that when a verb of communication introduces a verb, the Indicative is used in reporting an event, while the Subjunctive is used when there is an intent or desire to bring about the action of the subject of the dependent verb. It stands to reason that this special cause and effect relationship of attempting to influence behaviour cannot exist unless there are two entities or events related. For those cases in which the main verb is semantically ambivalent, the only clue to meaning is the contrast between the two moods. On the other hand, in indirect discourse, the contrast between the Indicative and the Subjunctive duplicates that between the Indicative and the Imperative in direct speech.

He suggests that examples of English Subjunctive may be used at the beginning as a pedagogical point of departure but he admits later that :

*English does not provide cues for choice in all the possible patterns and it is more effective, once the idea is grasped, to work with transformations in Spanish.*<sup>27</sup>

Despite the fact that his presentation is quite thorough, some problems arise when his analysis is applied to *si*-clauses. However, his distinction between experience and anticipation will be used by other scholars. William Cressey<sup>28</sup>, for instance, takes it up again in his transformational approach and proposes a distinction between *specific* and *non specific* as a rule to explain the usage of the Subjunctive in noun clauses and adjectival clauses (According to Cressey,

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<sup>27</sup>Ibid., p. 191.

<sup>28</sup>Cressey, W. (1971). "The Subjunctive in Spanish: A transformational approach". *Hispania*, 54, pp. 895-96.

adverbial clauses can be analyzed under one of the two categories mentioned before).

Cressey is an example of how Generativism deals with the problem of Mood. That is, in the beginning, it looks at Mood as a formal category but given the lack of success of this approach, they begin to look at it as a semantic category. Matrix verbs are analyzed together with the effects of certain factors like negation and transposition of phrasal elements. The Mood, then, is a syntactic constituent that must occur at the level of deep structure because it is subjected to transformational rules. In fact, Generativism does not make a significant contribution to the theory of Mood. Even their scholars accept that their practical results are not far from what is said by Traditional Grammar.<sup>29</sup>

Emilio Alarcos<sup>30</sup> adopts a structuralist approach. For him, the subjunctive morphemes have a correlation to the Indicative ones. This binary opposition has a marked member which is the Subjunctive mood. The Mood category is a category of morphemes that offers *heteronexual* directions. That is, the direction is dependent on the idea that an element within the phrase expresses. Therefore, the Subjunctive is ruled by verbs or words that express unreal ideas. On the other hand, in chapter IV of his book, he redefines the term, and concludes that the Subjunctive cannot be defined as the mood of subordination.

Mariner<sup>31</sup> makes an extreme proposal. He concludes that the Spanish Subjunctive as a category does not exist. It is neither the mood of subordination nor the mood of subjectivity. His theory includes two moods: one, potential and eventual; the other, unreal. Both form the so-called Subjunctive.

Togebly's study<sup>32</sup> of the problem of mood is essential. For him, the Indicative shows an affirmation whereas the Subjunctive is characterized by the

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<sup>29</sup>Manteca, A. (1981: 150).

<sup>30</sup>Alarcos, E. (1970). *Estudios de gramática funcional del español*. Madrid: Gredos.

<sup>31</sup>Mariner, S. (1971). "Triple noción en la categoría modal castellana". *Revista de Filología Española*, 54, pp. 209-52.

<sup>32</sup>Togebly, K. (1953). *Mode, aspect et temps en espagnol*. Copenhagen: Munksgaard.

notion of "suspension of affirmation".<sup>33</sup> The reasoning behind this conclusion deserves special consideration because he is the only structuralist scholar who points out that the Subjunctive can appear in sentences that indicate real facts. Thus, Togeby's characterization is crucial for the study of the Subjunctive. We will show how his influence is discernible even in pragmatic approaches to this mood.

### 2.3. DEBATING THE SUBJUNCTIVE

Between 1972 and 1976, the journal *Hispania* became the forum of a debate between Anthony Lozano and Dwight Bolinger about whether or not it is necessary to split the Subjunctive into two main categories: *optative* and *dubitative*.<sup>34</sup>

Lozano starts off the discussion holding that the concept of a single subjunctive has prevailed because of an overemphasis on surface structures. According to him, textbooks of Spanish do not provide insights into the features which determine subjunctives, and do not show the complex relationships that exist between subjunctives and syntactic structures.

Lozano posits two syntactic features which, when attached to specific lexical items in a sentence, necessitate the subjunctive in the dependent clause.

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<sup>33</sup>"On pourrait caractériser le subjonctif par la notion de 'suspension de l'affirmation' (...). Le mode s'applique donc parfaitement à des faits réels, mais seulement quand on ne veut pas les affirmer ou quand ce n'est pas nécessaire." *Ibid.*, p. 118.

<sup>34</sup>*Hispania* debate:

Lozano, A. (1972). "Subjunctives, transformations and features in Spanish". *Hispania*, 55, pp. 76-90.

——— (1975). "In defense of two subjunctives". *Hispania*, 58, pp. 277-83.

Bolinger, D. (1974). "One subjunctive or two?". *Hispania*, 57, pp. 462-71.

——— (1976). "Again - one or two subjunctives?". *Hispania*, 59, pp. 41-9.

Optative expressions have *querer* as an archetype whereas dubitative expressions have *dudar*. It is important to note that Lozano includes as dubitatives any expression of doubt (*negar, tal vez...*) adjectival and adverbial clauses of unexperienced events together with contrary-to-fact conditional sentences with *si*. On the other hand, he considers any command or emotional reaction, either explicit or implicit, as optative. According to Lozano, these two features *cannot be collapsed into one since they do not pattern in the same way*<sup>35</sup>. The basic contrast between them involves negation. He points out that the feature [+optative] always requires the Subjunctive in the presence or absence of the preverb *no* in the matrix sentence, whereas a negated [+dubitative] expression may or may not obligate the Subjunctive.

By positing these two features, he attempts to derive all subjunctives and imperatives from phrases embedded in *apparently* simple clauses. He then proceeds to classify matrix sentences according to subtypes of both characteristics, and to show how the different syntactic patterns follow the choice of a particular mood.

Although Lozano's features are syntactic in conception and in operation, we have to say that they respond in some way to the semantic features of volition, intent or obligation on one hand and doubt on the other. Bolinger replied two years later, saying that splitting the Subjunctive

*is not only unnecessary but harmful in that it destroys intuitive insights that were obvious to native speakers and teachers alike, however badly they may have stated them.*<sup>36</sup>

After that, he holds that there are neither syntactic nor semantic reasons for positing two subjunctives. The first evidence is that if there are two different features, then combining them with a single subjunctive should produce a

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<sup>35</sup>Lozano (1972: 77).

<sup>36</sup>Bolinger (1974: 462).

zeugma.<sup>37</sup> However, he combines the features proposed by Lozano without any difficulty:

*Es posible, tal vez necesario, pero sin embargo deplorable, que él sea nuestro representante.*

He puts Lozano's proposal to an empirical test, and appeals to the theory of performatives<sup>38</sup> as an essential way to understand moods in Romance languages. From this theory comes the traditional notion of the Indicative as the mood of reporting. On the other hand, Bolinger holds that the Subjunctive conveys an expression of attitude towards information. According to him, the Indicative-Subjunctive contrast does not depend on other structures except in a *loose statistical way*. I cannot share his point of view; it is clear that there are rules that govern mood usage and that this is not as random as Bolinger's comment seems to imply. He believes that the speaker chooses the Subjunctive as a direct reflection of what he means and, in order to emphasize this point he refers back to Searle's words: *The glue that holds the elements together into a speech act is the semantic intention of the speaker*<sup>39</sup>. This view of the facts, that I share in part, allows him to explain those cases which Lozano's proposal is unable to admit.

We should bear in mind Bolinger's concern with the pedagogical consequences of this approach. He remarks that the traditional cues for subjunctive -emotion, willing, unreality- are hints at semantic tendencies, and are pedagogically useful but cannot be stated by rules (They are just *rules of thumb*). However, he believes that there is an English cue that can help students. The teacher has to show them that they are making in their own language the same

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<sup>37</sup>According to Bolinger (Ibid.), zeugma is *the figure of speech that results when two things each connected to a third, but in different senses, are conjoined*. E.g. *After breakfast I brush my teeth and my hair*.

<sup>38</sup>A performative expression is one in which the act and the naming of it are one and the same.(...) *Performative Theory holds that underlying every utterance there is a declaration that indicates the type to which the utterance belongs*. (Ibid., p. 464).

<sup>39</sup>Quoted in Bolinger (1974: 465).

## Uses and Misuses of the Subjunctive

distinction that Spanish does. That is, if a performative expression can be placed after a clause (in English), then the equivalent Spanish clause will have the Indicative; if it cannot, the clause has Subjunctive. He gives some examples to illustrate this point:

*-I think he is coming.*

*-He is coming, I think.*

*Creo que viene.*

*-I insist that it stop.*

*-\*It stop, I insist.<sup>40</sup>*

*Insisto en que pare.*

*-It is probable that they know.*

*-\*They know, it is probable.*

*Es probable que sepan.*

It will be objected that Bolinger applies his test neither to relative clauses nor adverbial nor conditional clauses.

In 1975, Lozano claimed that his distinction had been misunderstood by Bolinger. He criticised his performative verb analysis, and held that, on the contrary, a scientific analysis of the Spanish Subjunctive had to be done internally. He argued against the so-called *speaker's freedom of choice* between Indicative and Subjunctive because certain syntactic constraints limit the mood selection.

In 1976, Bolinger's rebuttal insisted on his previous points and added more examples to show that none of the traditional features determine Indicative or Subjunctive. The determining factor is thus the speaker's meaning. He draws attention to the speaker's attitude as an indispensable element in understanding the contrast between both moods. This was to be crucial for later approaches which are examined in the following pages.

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<sup>40</sup>Starred examples: ungrammatical.

## 2.4. SEMANTIC APPROACHES

As we have said before, since syntactic analysis of the Spanish Subjunctive fails to explain many of its uses, semantics becomes the field in which advances in the description of Spanish Mood are made. What was described as *speaker attitude* is described now in terms of presupposition. That is, whenever one makes a statement, one asserts part of it, but presupposes or assumes as given other pieces of information. This crucial key<sup>41</sup> is taken from now on for understanding the choice of mood. Modern observers tend towards the position that the choice of mood has less to do with infallible mood-triggers than with the speaker's attitude towards a proposition he puts into a subordinate clause.

Like Bolinger, Mark Goldin<sup>42</sup> holds that native speakers do not select mood only on the basis of conjunctions or main verbs. On the contrary, he claims that native speakers follow a particular procedure to determine which mood to use. Two principles are put forward:

The first depends on the proposition expressed in the main clause. When it indicates someone's evaluating reaction to something, then the verb in the subordinate clause is in the subjunctive. This mood is used because the speaker is evaluating an assumed proposition rather than asserting it. They first try this

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<sup>41</sup>Whitley (1986: 130) remarks that this observation is not new and refers back to Keniston's approach (1937: 163). In the same way, Goldin refers back to his predecessors. See in this respect: Goldin, M. (1974). "A psychological perspective of the Spanish Subjunctive". *Hispania*, 57, p. 299.

<sup>42</sup>Goldin, M. (1974: 295-301).

*Reaction Principle*, and if it fails to meet the necessary conditions, they apply the second principle.

The second concerns the proposition expressed in a subordinate clause. It involves the nature of a speaker's belief about what he is discussing. According to this, a speaker has a *positive presupposition* about an event or an entity if he knows or believes that it is true or exists. He has a *negative presupposition* if he knows or thinks it is false and he has an *indefinite presupposition* if he does not express a belief one way or the other.

From this it follows that the Indicative will be chosen when the presupposition is positive whereas the Subjunctive will be used in negative and indefinite presuppositions. In *si*-clauses these principles apply somewhat differently: the Indicative corresponds to indefinite and positive presupposition and the Subjunctive is reserved for the negative presuppositions of contrary to fact conditional sentences. Goldin concludes that all sorts of linguistic variations can be explained in terms of alternative interpretations of the presupposition principle.

We have to say at this point that Goldin seems to use a peculiar notion of presupposition, quite distinct from the way it is discussed in current linguistics literature. On the other hand, his procedure to determine what mood to use is called into question by scholars like Anthony Bell<sup>43</sup> -who argues that it seems unlikely that native speakers would ever go through such a procedure, though it could be used as a heuristic method of learning the Spanish Subjunctive.

Tracy Terrell and Joan Hooper put forward the hypothesis that :

*the choice of mood in Spanish is directly correlated with what the sentence as a whole expresses about the truth of the proposition included in the sentence.*<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>43</sup>Bell, A. (1980). "Mood in Spanish: A discussion of some recent proposals". *Hispania*, 63, pp. 377-90.

<sup>44</sup>Terrell, T. and Hooper, J. (1974: 484).

### Uses and Misuses of the Subjunctive

According to them, a proposition in a sentence may be asserted, may be presupposed, or may be neither asserted nor presupposed. They divide sentences into six classes and study the correlation between the above mentioned semantic notions and the choice of mood. They provide a schema, which could be schematically presented in this way:

Semantic notion	Class	Mood
ASSERTION	Assertion	Indicative
	Report	Indicative
PRESUPPOSITION	Mental Act	Indicative
	Comment	Subjunctive
NEITHER	Doubt	Subjunctive
	Imperative	Subjunctive

In their interpretation, to assert something is to introduce or report it as confirmed or believed. It ranges in meaning from strong insistence, as in '*es seguro*' to weak belief as in '*me parece*'. To presuppose something is to take it for granted and proceed to comment on it.<sup>45</sup> They remark that assertion and presupposition seem to be mutually exclusive. When a complement is presupposed, it follows that negating the matrix does not change the truth value of the embedded presupposition. Finally, there are some cases in which a proposition is neither asserted nor presupposed. When this happens, the verb of the complement takes the Subjunctive mood. Matrices of volition or influence (*softened imperatives*) as well as sentences that express doubt or uncertainty are included in this class. They hold that the complements to matrices that describe a

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<sup>45</sup> The heading 'COMMENT' groups both mental states of emotion and value-judgement expressions.

mental act are exceptions to the general principle that asserted complements are in the Indicative while non-asserted complements are in the subjunctive.

Because of this, they conclude that there is an *area of instability* in the mood system. This would explain the use of the Indicative by some Spanish speakers in all types of presupposed complements. E.g. *Me sorprendió que vino / viniera*.

They illustrate their theory by focusing on matrices that have two possible semantic readings and according to each reading they fall within a different class. E.g. *Insisto en que no retiren las tropas / Insisto en que no retiran las tropas*. Like Goldin, they insist that it is not the Subjunctive that must be taught, but rather the distinction between moods. They propose that students should get practice to allow them to create new sentences using the six basic categories. For example, the teacher could introduce a clause like "*Mañana nos visitarán*", and then invite students to react to it by asserting it, doubting it, commenting on it, and so on.

Terrell and Hooper's basic pitfall is their inflexible categorization. The lines cannot be so clearly drawn, for mental act sentences float between assertions and non-assertions. In fact, Philip Klein<sup>46</sup> discusses this proposal and refines the six categories to the basic opposition between assertives and non-assertives, essentially similar to Bergen's semantic feature [ $\pm$  reservation ].

John Bergen<sup>47</sup> formalizes the fact that a single rule explains all Subjunctive and Indicative uses. He reduces all rules and features of selection mood to a single criterion:

*Whereas the indicative denotes that the speaker (...) regards the proposition (...) as an objective fact, the subjunctive expresses a subjective reservation on the part of the speaker (or the actor) concerning the reality of that proposition.*<sup>48</sup>

<sup>46</sup>Klein, P. W. (1977). "Semantic factors in Spanish mood". *Glossa*, 11, pp. 3-19.

<sup>47</sup>Bergen, J. J. (1978). "One rule for the Spanish subjunctive". *Hispania*, 61, pp. 218-34.

In this article he enumerates to thirty-four distinct rules proposed by structuralist analyses.

<sup>48</sup>Bergen, J. (1978: 221).

The problem arises when he deals with the subjunctives in independent clauses (commands, expressions of uncertainty or *softened* assertions). In such cases, he refers back to the Performative Theory<sup>49</sup> which shows that those three types of independent surface structures are (in their deep structure) embedded structures.

It is worth stating at this point that this single semantic criterion does not give a satisfactory explanation of all the uses of the Subjunctive cases. Moreover, it seems to us that it leads Bergen into a false interpretation. For instance, in order to explain the Subjunctive in simple sentences like "*Quizás lo comprara*", he provides a complex derivation of the sentence which demands the insertion and subsequent deletion from the surface of the matrix or main clause, in this case, '*Yo digo que*'. In the same way, he gives us a summary of the supposed applicability of his criterion which we would like to question. In this issue we share Bell's opinion. He reviews Bergen's approach and discusses some of his interpretations.<sup>50</sup>

Bell concludes that Bergen pushes a *useful interpretative device* beyond its limits in trying to use the single criterion [ $\pm$  reservation ] as the syntactic trigger of the use of the Subjunctive in Spanish. It is essential to realize that the speaker-reservation is not a single phenomenon and has different meanings depending on the case. Bell also compares the theories propounded by Goldin, Terrell and Hooper, Klein and Rivero and eclectically proposes his own. We will confine ourselves to a brief outline of it. He states that the Subjunctive is used for the expression of indirect commands, unexperienced entities and events; reservations about truth value (the Subjunctive frees the speaker from any commitment as to the truth of his statement); uncertainty; and for commenting on a fact. In the last case, it should be borne in mind that there is a

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<sup>49</sup>See note 38 above.

<sup>50</sup>Bell, A. (1980: 386).

presupposition on the part of the speaker that the complement is real<sup>51</sup> and the hearer may already know it.

We would draw attention to Bell's comments on the application problems of all these theories in the classroom. Assuming all improved linguistic description must always be an advantage to the teacher, he does not claim that any of the aspects he discusses can have a direct application in pedagogy. On the contrary, he accepts that:

*some aspects of mood are readily grasped by the learner, while in other areas it seems that persistence is the only really effective methodology.*<sup>52</sup>

Above all, researchers and teachers have to look at the use of mood as a *subtle linguistic device* which demands a similar flexibility in the study of its usage. Because of that, he observes with much truth that it is not sufficient to identify the Subjunctive with non-assertion. There is not just a binary contrast between assertion and non-assertion. Thus, he prefers to speak in terms of *reduced assertion* when he refers to the Subjunctive. In the final analysis, the question that he leaves open is why certain kinds of information are not asserted.<sup>53</sup> This question will be taken up by later pragmatic studies as starting point (Patricia Lunn)<sup>54</sup>.

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<sup>51</sup>Bell thinks that otherwise it would not make sense to utter these sentences if the speaker did not know them to be true.

<sup>52</sup>Bell, A. (1980: 378).

<sup>53</sup>"It does indeed seem strange that these sentences, in which the speaker stands most firmly by the truth of the complement proposition, should share the same syntactic marker with other sentences which express his doubt and lack of commitment to the complement proposition."

Ibid., p. 387.

<sup>54</sup>Lunn, P. (1989a). "The Spanish subjunctive and 'relevance' ". In *Studies in Romance Linguistics* ed. by C. Kirschner and J. De Cesaris. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing, pp. 249-60.

## 2.5. PRAGMATIC APPROACHES

In his research on the use of the Subjunctive in Spanish among Spanish-English bilinguals, Jorge Guitart<sup>55</sup> puts forward a hypothesis on mood choice in commentative sentences that links mood choices to a new/old, unshared/shared informational distinction. According to this, the speaker will use the Subjunctive in the clause if he believes that the information would not be unexpected by the hearer-even though the speaker may believe that the hearer does not have that information-but will use the Indicative if he believes that the information would be unexpected by the hearer.

His results are not indisputable but they represent an important attempt to formulate an explanation for the modal contrast within a more pragmatic framework.

More conclusive is Beatriz Lavandera's<sup>56</sup> analysis of modal switches in Spanish discourse. Her study focuses on the purpose of modal switches and the role of utterances in the Subjunctive mood within the argumentative process of a text.

First of all, she observes in discourse shifts from sentences in the Indicative mood to sentences in the Subjunctive. This formal observation leads her to the hypothesis that she is dealing with a meaningful discourse strategy. Next, she notices that shifts between utterances with different moods result in shifts in types of messages. Finally she sees how mood morphology, by

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<sup>55</sup>Guitart, J. (1982). "On the use of the Spanish subjunctive among Spanish-English bilinguals". *Word*, 33, pp. 59-67.

<sup>56</sup>Lavandera, B. R. (1983). "Shifting moods in Spanish discourse". In *Discourse Perspectives on Syntax* ed. by F. Klein-Andreu. New York: Academic Press, pp. 209-36.

distinguishing between assertive and non-assertive forms, is used to discriminate between utterances that should refer to events and entities in terms of more or less *relevance*<sup>57</sup>. This fact establishes that in the organization of texts, mood morphology helps to classify a statement as *peripheral* or *central* according to the *scale of relevance*.

From this, she deduces that mood morphology is a way of alerting the hearer as to how to interpret the content of what is being communicated. Thus, she concludes, the speaker uses the Subjunctive to tell hearers not to *rely very heavily* on the information that is marked by it.

Lavandera argues that modality is expressed in speech by both lexical and grammatical signs. From the point of view of discourse analysis, mood choices are never superfluous since language always offers an alternative expression of similar propositional content. In this connection, she draws our attention to the fact that similar propositional content among two or more utterances does not ensure that their discursive loads are equal. In fact, non-assertive forms are used to refer to *properties of events that the speaker wants to consider only marginally to his main line of reasoning*<sup>58</sup>.

Seeing the Subjunctive as an option which speakers may choose to organize the discourse opens up the possibility of embarking upon an analysis of the use of this mood. This could be done in two ways: on the one hand, to look at what motivates speakers to *subjunctivize* information (Lavandera's approach), and on the other hand, to look at what typifies that kind of information. This is the approach taken by Lunn.

Let us start reviewing Lunn's contribution to the theory of Mood by considering her paper on the Spanish Subjunctive and the notion of *relevance*.

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<sup>57</sup>According to Sperber and Wilson's theory, relevance is a attribute that it is assumed in acts of communication: "Every act of ostensive communication communicates the presumption of its own optimal relevance. (...) The relevance of new information to an individual is to be assessed in terms of the improvements it brings to his representation of the world. Sperber and Wilson (1986: 103-58). Relevance, thus, corresponds to informativeness. Quoted by Lunn (1989b: 690). Lunn applies this theory to Spanish and comes to crucial conclusions.

<sup>58</sup>Lavandera, B. R. (1983: 234).

She argues, using data that are problematic for previous analyses, that there is a single generalisation that can describe mood selection in Spanish. She applies to Spanish Sperber and Wilson's theory and deduces that

*verbs in clauses of relatively high information value are marked with the indicative; verbs in clauses of relatively low information value are marked with the subjunctive.*<sup>59</sup>

Based on this, she puts forward an analysis of the Spanish Subjunctive as a marker of low-priority information. Moreover, she thinks that this scope helps to explain the reason that the Subjunctive is acquired so late, both by native and foreign speakers of Spanish.<sup>60</sup>

She works on data gathered from journalistic Spanish and confirms through a pragmatic analysis that mood choice is used by the reporter for telling the readers how much attention they should pay to the information contained in embedded clauses. Following that, the Subjunctive appears in clauses that contain factual but unenlightening information. Lunn posits two kinds of *low relevance* information that are marked with the Subjunctive mood in Spanish: on the one hand, unreliable information and on the other hand, worthless information.

Let us look at her examples<sup>61</sup>:

*-Aunque esté forrado el tío, no me casaré con él.*  
(Although the guy might turn out to be loaded, I won't marry him.)  
*-Aunque esté forrado el tío, no me casaré con él.*  
(So what if the guy's loaded? I won't marry him.)

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<sup>59</sup>Lunn, P. (1989a: 249).

<sup>60</sup>Ibid., p. 258. According to Lunn, that comes from the fact that the Subjunctive appears in those clauses to which the speaker allows the hearer to pay less attention. Because of that we should not be surprised when the morphology in *de-emphasized clauses* is not noticed, thus, is not acquired until later phases in the acquisition process.

<sup>61</sup>Lunn, P. (1989a: 256).

## Uses and Misuses of the Subjunctive

In the first sentence, the speaker considers the possibility that the guy might be rich, while in the second one, conceding that the fact is real, she refuses it importance. The *speaker's unwillingness* to insist that a hearer pay attention to an utterance is for Lunn, the factor that determines the use of the Subjunctive in Spanish.

By contrast, there are certain cases where the Indicative appears in contexts where the Subjunctive is usually used. E.g. "*Me da lástima que se terminó*". These cases have been problematic for those approaches that identified the Subjunctive with presupposed information. Within this framework, however, it is possible to explain why a speaker might choose the Indicative in such cases. This choice is a sign by which a hearer knows that he should pay attention to that piece of information. We have to see this as a speaker's strategy for manipulating the information that is communicated.

Errapel Mejías-Bicandi<sup>62</sup> takes up Lavandera's and Lunn's proposals and presents an analysis that complements them both. His is the most recent account of mood in Spanish to be examined here.

Mejías argues for the validity of Terrell and Hooper's generalisation that the Indicative is the mood of assertion and the Subjunctive is the mood of non-assertion. What he notes is that they put forward a generalisation based on an *ill-conceived* notion of assertion which creates difficulties in its application which could be overcome with a different notion of assertion. Now, he defines it independently of the notion of logical presupposition and in relation to the notion of speaker's intention. That is,

*a speaker asserts a proposition P when the intention of the speaker is to indicate that P describes the world as s/he or some other individual perceives it.*<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>62</sup>Mejías-Bicandi, F. (1994). "Assertion and speaker's intention: A pragmatically based account of Mood in Spanish". *Hispania*, 77, pp. 892-902.

<sup>63</sup>Ibid., p. 892.

He thinks that Terrell and Hooper use a semantic notion that does not take into consideration the speaker's standpoint or the context of the utterance. Derived from this view, a proposition is asserted when it is not logically presupposed and it is not asserted when it is logically presupposed.

From a pragmatic notion of assertion, what is important and relevant is not that a proposition is not logically presupposed but that the speaker's intention is to indicate that the proposition is part of that individual's view of reality. As a result of this, the notion of logical presupposition is not correlated with the Subjunctive mood and logical presupposition is not incompatible with the notion of assertion.<sup>64</sup>

That is, there are different circumstances under which the speaker will not assert a proposition even if he regards the proposition as true. For instance, in "*Me alegro de que María venga mañana*", the speaker does not use an assertive predicate because his intention is not to indicate that the complement is true for him since it is assumed to belong to the mutual knowledge of both speaker and hearer. In this case, he merely comments on the information, he does not assert it.

He gives us a summary of the applicability of his new concept of assertion and points out that we have to consider what the speaker's intentions are bearing in mind the meaning of the matrix clause. Then, within this framework, the counterexamples that arise in Terrell and Hooper seem to disappear. For instance, problematic cases like complements with matrices that describe mental acts are analyzed from a new perspective that takes into account the speaker's intention. Let us look at his examples:

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<sup>64</sup>In the same way, Guitart (1990) discusses Terrell and Hooper's proposal and points out that they start out from a false assumption. That is, they think wrongly that semantic presupposition and assertion are mutually exclusive. By contrast, Guitart states that pragmatic presupposition and assertion are the ones that are mutually exclusive. Thus, a complement is pragmatically presupposed when the speaker assumes that the information contained in it is shared by the hearer. Consequently, it is not asserted.

*-Pedro se alegra de que tengas razón.*

*-Pedro se ha dado cuenta de que tienes razón.*

A different speaker's intention is the reason that tell us why a complement logically presupposed in both cases takes the Subjunctive in the first case and the Indicative in the second. In order to explain the former, we have to go back to previous observations about those cases in which the speaker simply wants to comment on the proposition expressed. The latter responds to a different purpose, particularly, to indicate that the proposition expressed by the complement is true. As a result of this, the speaker asserts it and therefore uses the Indicative.

Based on a pragmatic notion of assertion, Mejías-Bicandi claims that his analysis does not have to posit an assertion gradient to explain the use of the Indicative mood in complement clauses that have presupposed complements<sup>65</sup>. For Mejías-Bicandi, all of them are asserted in the same way. However, he falls back on *additional factors* in order to describe differences that exist for instance in the distribution of mood in the complements of *saber*, *creer* and *darse cuenta*. He insists on a feature that is shared by all assertive predicates:

*they are all used by the speaker when the speaker's intention is to indicate that a proposition is true for some individual.*<sup>66</sup>

Finally he briefly discusses possible extensions of this analysis to explain the use of mood in other contexts bearing in mind the relation between *relevance* and assertion.

It would appear then, that both *relevance* and assertion are the concepts at stake within a pragmatic framework to characterize the distribution of mood in Spanish.

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<sup>65</sup>Hooper (1975) points to a scale with different degrees of assertion: assertive predicates (e.g. *decir*), weak assertive (e.g. *creer*) and semifactives (e.g. *darse cuenta*). Quoted by Mejías-Bicandi (1994: 899).

<sup>66</sup>Mejías-Bicandi, E. (1994: 900).

### **3. THE PEDAGOGICAL PROBLEM**

### 3. 1. THE PROBLEM OF TEACHING

The Subjunctive mood is a complex issue that seems to be quite resistant to an adequate linguistic description. As Bell remarks:

*It is like a ball of wool with many ends sticking out: each one that you follow just seems to lead into the same tangle.*<sup>67</sup>

His concern with the application problems of the theoretical aspects in the classroom underlines the extreme difficulties in the teaching of this topic. Likewise, other scholars such as Terrell and Hooper address possible practical applications of their proposals and it is the authors themselves who briefly outline some techniques for practising mood distinctions. In fact, their suggestions *go beyond, rather than replace the traditional approach to the teaching of the Spanish subjunctive*<sup>68</sup>. As was pointed out previously, traditionally there has been a tendency to correlate the indicative mood with what is known or experienced by the speaker, whereas the subjunctive is conceived as the mood for what is yet to be known or experienced by the speaker. However, since many counterexamples arise when this criterion is applied, researchers have attempted to find different ways of going beyond this unconvincing rule.

The references in chapter 1 gave an indication of the search that has been carried out by theorists over the years for an universal rule for the use of Spanish Subjunctive. The common ground is that most linguistic analyses of the Subjunctive have been aware somehow of the importance of the context as a key

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<sup>67</sup>Bell, A. (1980: 377).

<sup>68</sup>Terrell, T. and Hooper, J. (1974: 493).

for understanding mood selection. As Lunn points<sup>69</sup> what has changed over the years is how this context has been looked at by different approaches. Syntactic analyses looked at main clause context whereas semantic approaches were focused on the whole sentence. Nowadays, due to factors that are explained in the previous chapter, pragmatic studies have centred on the discourse context. Given that interaction between speaker and hearer is relevant to understanding the selection of either mood, it is essential to employ a pedagogical approach that takes into account the discourse content. However, though interest in these aspects has grown in recent years, there is still a lot to do on the field of practice.

To sum up; on the one hand we have theoretical descriptions of the Spanish Subjunctive that have recently tried to explain this mood with the least number of rules, while on the other hand, it seems unclear how teachers can develop a methodology that embraces all the new keys for understanding mood selection. In fact, theory and practice seem to be very separated. In this respect, Fernández González is right to say that:

*... la aparente simplicidad y elegancia del esquema teórico se contraponen a las dificultades de su uso en la práctica. Sería ideal poder reducir la explicación del subjuntivo a una sola regla o a un conjunto muy limitado de rasgos. Sin embargo, sin infravalorar las aportaciones que, sin duda, hay, no parece que los enfoques que parten de estos supuestos den cuenta suficiente de todos los problemas que encierra el uso de este modo ni desde el punto de vista teórico ni desde el punto de vista pedagógico.<sup>70</sup>*

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<sup>69</sup>Lunn, P. (1989a: 250).

<sup>70</sup>Fernández González, J. (1992: 9).

### 3. 2. THE PEDAGOGICAL PROPOSAL: ASPECTS TO BE BORNE IN MIND.

#### 3. 2. 1. THE SUBJUNCTIVE IN ENGLISH

In order to familiarise the students with the subjunctive, some textbooks point out to students that English "also" has a Subjunctive mood. According to Swan,

*it is used in a few cases to talk about events which are not certain to happen, we hope to happen, or imagine might happen.*<sup>71</sup>

However, it is a matter of fact that the Subjunctive is not common in modern British English, and it is used mostly in formal style.<sup>72</sup> What in Spanish is expressed by this mood, in English relies more on modal verbs and infinitival constructions. This implies that there is no point in starting the teaching of the Spanish Subjunctive from its correlate in the students' language. Furthermore, it is the lack of parallel between both languages that Stockwell points to as the major source of *interference*. We would face here an example of *split type* negative correspondence in English; that occurs when in the target language -Spanish in our case- there is an obligatory choice between two categories whereas there is only one in the native language.<sup>73</sup> As we will explain in the next

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<sup>71</sup>Swan, M. (1980). *Practical English Usage*. Oxford: O.U.P., p. 580.

<sup>72</sup>Leech, G. and Svartvick, J. (1975: 126).

Despite this fact, it seems to be currently an interest in the defence of the English Subjunctive. See in this respect:

-Peters, J. W. (1987). "In defence of the Subjunctive". *English Today*, 12, pp. 31-2.

-Kaixin, Z. (1996). "A modest view on the Subjunctive Mood". *English Studies*, 77, pp.92-6.

<sup>73</sup>Quoted by Marton, W. (1981: 164). "Pedagogical implications of contrastive studies". In *Contrastive Linguistics and the language teacher* ed. by J. Fisiak. Oxford: Pergamon Press, pp. 157-70.

chapter, experience has shown that the *interference* is not the only factor to be taken into account when we want to find the causes that hinder the acquisition of Spanish mood, but it does have a role that we should not ignore in the pedagogical field.

### 3. 2. 2. OUTLINE OF THE PROBLEMS IN THE CLASSROOM

Bearing in mind the importance of formal instruction in the learning of the second language in general<sup>74</sup>, and particularly in this baffling point of Spanish, I would like to comment on some aspects that the instruction of the subjunctive has to face in practice. Firstly, the restricted time of a language course. Due to curricular guidelines, it is essential to carry out a selection of contents and thus, it is assumed that teachers will lack time to cover in much detail some aspects of the Spanish Subjunctive. Therefore, if students are going to deal with it on their own, a teaching approach that allows students to become independent analysts of the Subjunctive is necessary and in fact, has to be developed.

Secondly, the resources used for the instruction. With regard to this issue, I want to make a comment on the treatment that textbooks give to the Spanish Subjunctive. Some of them explain the different uses of the Subjunctive without going into further detail about what is implied by its choice. Indicative and Subjunctive are studied at a different stage. Most textbooks of Spanish concentrate first on the Indicative and later on the Subjunctive<sup>75</sup> and few pay attention to the context as a clue to determining the meaning of any particular

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<sup>74</sup>Ellis, R. (1990). *Instructed second language acquisition*. Oxford: Blackwell.

"Learners who receive formal instruction outperform those who do not; that is, they learn more rapidly and they reach higher levels of ultimate achievement." (Ibid., p. 171).

<sup>75</sup>To my knowledge, there are two exceptions that introduce the subjunctive immediately after the present indicative:

-Kite, R. (1982). *Puertas a la lengua española*. New York: Random House. Quoted by Heusinkveld, P. (1987: 192).

-Knorre, M., Dorwick, T., VanPatten, B. and Villareal, H. (1989). *Puntos de Partida* [1981]. 3rd ed. New York: Random House.

use of mood. The problem is that clear-cut formal distinctions lead authors to formulate rules of thumb that later fly in the face of common uses of this mood. Then, rules would appear to be just "half-truths". In this connection, Paul Westney offers an interesting study focused on the concept of rule<sup>76</sup>, a notion essential for any grammatical system. He points out that problematic exceptions to the rule do not make attempts to formulate rules impossible, but they should persuade teachers to think carefully about what rules they present and what the particular pedagogical circumstances may require.

### 3. 3. SEARCHING FOR A PROPOSAL

In view of these facts, I decided to start my experiment from what is actually common practice in the classroom; that is, the practice of filling in blanks according to sentential contexts. This seems to be a clear target of categorical approaches based on the application of general rules that at the end of the day are not so general and thus likely leave the student without any resources to deal on his own with the many aspects related to mood selection. Provided that the participants have to make a choice between Indicative and Subjunctive, lacking any contextual reference to the situation, a number of key issues may be expected to arise:

- Preference for the indicative option in those cases where they could use both moods.
- Different degrees of perception of mood variability in the sentences presented.

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<sup>76</sup>Westney, P. (1994). "Rules and pedagogical grammar". In *Perspectives on pedagogical grammar* ed. by T. Odlin. Cambridge: C.U.P., pp. 72-96.

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-Hierarchy of difficulty regarding the use of the subjunctive within different structures.

Taking into consideration the features of this kind of practice, I agree with Whithley that:

*As long as selection is made to depend solely on the rest of the sentence, students cannot be blamed for wondering why Spanish has such apparently useless machinery when the context suffices entirely.<sup>77</sup>*

In view of these considerations, it seems necessary to go beyond the sentential context and, to set a task where, given a number of contextualized items, the participants can make a realistic mood choice taking into account the keys provided by the context. This work-pattern goes beyond a mechanical use of mood selection and searches for an active process of learning. Above all, this proposal looks for a change in the role of the language class at this level of learning and seeks ways of aiding the student to become an independent learner.

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<sup>77</sup>Whithley, M. S. (1986: 129).

### 3. 4. TOWARDS A LINK BETWEEN THEORY AND PRACTICE.

From a pedagogical point of view, Spada is right to say that *learners need practice in both formal analysis and functional (communicative) activities and learning will suffer if either type of practice is neglected.*<sup>78</sup>

With regard to this statement, what I am mainly concerned with in this study is how we all, researchers and teachers, can contribute to the improvement of the formal analysis of the Spanish Subjunctive in the classroom. It is evident that if the student gets to understand how mood selection operates in Spanish, he/she will be able to use it properly in the future. Actually, the fieldwork set for this research pursues two goals. On the one hand, to find empirical data that clarifies which of the target language structures presents the most difficulties for the learner -in this case, for English speakers. It is reasonable to expect that those aspects which constitute learning problems, should receive in the future more emphasis in the arrangement of the teaching materials. On the other hand, to show that perhaps a shift in the pedagogical perspective could make viable the presentation of the subjunctive within real contexts of usage. Although this approach is slower, if it were successful, we would have found a pattern for the development of a method that gradually could bridge the gap that already exists between the theory and the practice of the Spanish Subjunctive.

<sup>78</sup>Quoted by Odlin (1994b: 14).

## **4. THE EXPERIMENT**

#### 4. 1. INTRODUCTION

##### 4. 1. 1. EMPIRICAL STUDIES

In contrast with the theoretical account of the Spanish Subjunctive, there are not many empirical studies about this topic which focus on how English-speakers learn the use of the Subjunctive.

We have found a number of articles describing empirical research carried out in the United States, which are concerned with certain grammatical structures where sociolinguistic factors like bilingualism are relevant. In this field, we mention Floyd's paper (1980) on the acquisition and use of the Subjunctive in Southwest Spanish and Torre's article (1989) about the mood selection among New York Puerto Ricans. García and Terrell (1977), Lantolf (1978), Blake (1985) and Guitart (1982) also report on different investigations designed to test mood selection in certain Spanish constructions among Spanish bilinguals. Studerus (1995) summarizes these studies and examines items which are quite problematic with respect to mood use. His survey (carried out in two border varieties of Spanish in the United States) deals with the question of considerable rule variation. Thus, he suggests that textbook rules for explaining Spanish mood use should *be evaluated in the light of research directed at speech production by natives.*<sup>79</sup> Bearing in mind the variability, cut-and-dried descriptions should be avoided in the teaching of Spanish mood.

On the other hand, Kirschner (1992) identifies in a group of bilingual university students a functional shift in the use of the Subjunctive with impersonal trigger expressions. He concludes that this change is a consequence of *internally motivated linguistic factors* rather than of direct English transfer. To sum up, what is the common in all these studies is the rule variability that

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<sup>79</sup>Studerus, L. (1995). "Some unresolved issues in Spanish mood use". *Hispania*, 78, pp. 94-102.

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does really exist in Spanish mood. In this research, I will refer back to this issue and comment on its importance with a different perspective (since the context of this experiment is not bilingual).

I note particularly Stokes' article<sup>80</sup> about some factors in the acquisition of the present Subjunctive in Spanish. The results of his survey reveal that certain structures, some noun clauses, are better performed than others, namely relative clauses. He comments on possible reasons that might explain different degrees of acquisition and he encourages further investigation in this field in order to get better results in the classroom. It is assumed that this kind of research

*would help in determining the optimum amount of emphasis and classroom time that should be devoted to each of the various structures in which a mode selection is required.*<sup>81</sup>

Among comparative studies, there are two works that deserve mention: Mansilla (1968) and Estapa (1975) are both unpublished dissertations on the Spanish Subjunctive and its equivalents in English. In addition we find interesting comments on the difficulties raised by the translation of this mood in Wandruszka (1976) and García Yebra (1982). Martinell (1985) also refers in her study to the issue studied by Estapa, i.e. to what extent the non-existence in English of a Subjunctive mood in the verb endings leads to the non-existence of the values expressed by this mood in the Spanish sentence.

On the other hand, Moreno Ibáñez and Ruiz (1986) have worked on some of the usual errors made by Spanish students of English as a second language. They wanted to know which were the high-frequency errors and whether they persisted as the student was progressing. In this field, the article that is closest to our approach is that by González Royo (1986). He studies the language

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<sup>80</sup>Stokes, J. (1988). "Some factors in the acquisition of the present subjunctive in Spanish". *Hispania*, 71, pp. 705-10.

<sup>81</sup>Ibid., p. 709.

difficulties (morphosyntaxis, lexicology and semantics) and orthography of Italian students in their learning of Spanish as L2. The author's purpose there is to make an error taxonomy and explain problems that Spanish raises for students who have Italian as their first language. He also tries to find out what causes these difficulties. In the same way, we start our study with the purpose of finding more empirical data in a field that seems to have been fully explored in one direction (acquisition of English by Spanish students) but not so much in the opposite direction (the acquisition of Spanish by English students). It is time now to collect data that will allow us to elucidate this point.

### 4. 1. 2. INTERLANGUAGE

In the account of our descriptive research we will use the terms commonly used in studies of the acquisition of a foreign language: *interlanguage*<sup>82</sup> (IL) and *interference* among others.

The former (IL) was first introduced by Selinker<sup>83</sup> in 1969 and more thoroughly defined in 1972. Since then, alternative terms have been used by different researchers to refer to the same phenomenon; Corder refers to *idiosyncratic dialects*<sup>84</sup> and *transitional competence* while Nemser uses *approximative systems*.<sup>85</sup> They refer to the structural system which the learner constructs at a given stage in his development independently of both his first language and the target language.

Larsen-Freeman<sup>86</sup> posits three principles governing IL development :

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<sup>82</sup> According to Ellis (1985: 299), *the term has come to be used with different but related meanings: firstly, to refer to the series of interlocking systems which typifies acquisition; secondly to refer to the system that is observed at a given stage of the process, and thirdly to refer to specific first language/ target language combinations .*

<sup>83</sup> Selinker, L. (1969). "Language Transfer". *General Linguistics*, 9, pp. 67-92.

———(1972). "Interlanguage". *IRAL* , 9, pp. 209-31.

<sup>84</sup> Corder, S. (1972). "Idiosyncratic dialects and error analysis". *IRAL* , 9, pp. 149-59.

<sup>85</sup> Nemser, W. (1971). "Approximative systems of foreign language learners". *IRAL* , 9, pp. 115-23.

<sup>86</sup> Larsen-Freeman, D. and Long, M. (1991). *An Introduction to Second Language Acquisition*. London: Longman.

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-ILs vary systematically.

-ILs exhibit common accuracy orders and developmental sequences.

-ILs are influenced by the learner's L1.<sup>87</sup>

Along with these principles Corder's and Krashen's proposals should be borne in mind in our report. Both view the L1 as a resource by which learners can use *ad hoc translation to overcome their limitations*.<sup>88</sup> Corder reframes the concept of *interference*<sup>89</sup> as *intercession* and suggests that in those cases where learners lack the necessary target language resources, they will turn to their L1 to make up the dearth. *Interference errors* result then not from negative transfer but from borrowing. From being a feature of learning, these errors are now seen as a feature of communication, an active learning strategy that can help us to understand the devices which a learner may use to acquire a specific language structure.

As Tarone claims<sup>90</sup>, we assume that interlanguage data consist of systematic and non-systematic elements and that there is variability of learner's performance depending on the type of task which the learner is asked to do. Therefore, we are aware of the fact that our students were doing a highly directed task and thus it cannot be considered a spontaneous stream of language. However, taking into account his considerations, we think it is a valid framework within which to start our study. Moreover, these findings can be applied to situations outside those in which our investigation was conducted.

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<sup>87</sup>Ibid., p. 81.

<sup>88</sup>Quoted by Ellis, R. (1985: 37).

<sup>89</sup>According to behaviourist theory, *the patterns of the learner's mother tongue get in the way of learning the patterns of the L2*. This is discussed as *interference*. (Ibid., 299)

<sup>90</sup>Tarone, E. (1982). "Systematicity and attention in interlanguage". *Language Learning*, 32, pp. 69-82.

#### 4. 1. 3. ERROR ANALYSIS

Larsen-Freeman (1991) reports on different types of data analysis and gives a general view of this method, based on the concept of *error*. She refers back to Corder's paper (1967) where he makes a distinction between a *mistake* and an *error*. Whereas an *error* is a *systematic deviation* made by students who have not yet mastered the rules of the target language, a *mistake* is a *random performance slip* caused by tiredness or excitement. Consequently, a *mistake* can be easily self-corrected by the learner. By contrast, since an *error* is a product which reflects the learner's current stage of L2 development, the learner cannot self-correct it.

Bearing this in mind, errors will give the teacher and the researcher very valuable data about the language-learning process. Clearly the method has limitations. On the one hand, the analysis of errors that L2 learners make can certainly give us vital clues to their knowledge of the target language, but these are only part of the picture. As Harley notices, *It is equally important to determine whether the learner's use of correct forms approximates that of the use of the native speaker.*<sup>91</sup> That is why this research takes into account not only errors but also those performances that show a correct use of the target form. An analysis of error-frequency for each student reveals several interesting tendencies that we highlight in our report.

After classifying the errors made by learners, different explanations are examined. The role of the first language<sup>92</sup> is also borne in mind. While errors no doubt provide important evidence for the strength or weakness of particular

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<sup>91</sup>Quoted by Larsen Freeman, D. (1991: 62).

<sup>92</sup>See in this respect:

-Ellis, R. (1985: Chapter 2).

-Odlin, T. (ed.)(1994a). *Language Transfer. Cross-linguistic influence in language learning* [1989]. 4th. ed. Cambridge: C.U.P. : "Transfer is the influence resulting from similarities and differences between the target language and any other language that has been previously (and perhaps imperfectly) acquired." (Ibid., p. 27.).

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native language influences, they are far from being the only evidence that can justify learning difficulties. Therefore, other reasons play an important part.

#### 4. 1. 4. THE PARTICIPANTS

Eighteen students in their second year of Spanish in the Department of Hispanic Studies at the University of Glasgow participated in our experiment. They were invited to take part voluntarily, outside the curricular requirements of their course and without getting any departmental benefit.

In order to obtain background information about the subjects, we adapted the *Language Contact Profile* (LCP)<sup>93</sup> and administered it to them. Through this questionnaire we learnt that the average age of the group is 25.6 years (This is higher than would be expected in this course because two of the participants were 47 and 67 years old respectively). Twelve of them were Scottish, five were English and one was born in Scotland but was brought up in Canada. All of them had English as their first language.

The length of formal study among the participants ranged from minimal to several years' study. In the second year, relative beginners of Spanish and more advanced learners share the same teaching. This explains why there are different amounts of formal language study (from one and a half years to seven).

None of them had lived in a Spanish-speaking country, except for one who had a short period of residence in Venezuela. The extent of contact with Spanish outside regular language classes was variable. Reading newspapers and watching television would appear to be the most widely practised activities for improving their knowledge.

As the linguistic performance of the eighteen students was collected in a single session, a cross-sectional approach was used for each part of the experiment.<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>93</sup>This is a revised version of a previous questionnaire devised by Selinger and Gingras (1976) for the study of language and motivation. Quoted by Allwright, R. (1988: 229-38).

<sup>94</sup>The first test was carried out in late March 1996, the second one was early in May 1996.

#### 4. 1. 5. COLLECTING DATA

The data was gathered via two tests<sup>95</sup> with different characteristics:

**T1-** The participants were asked to fill in the blanks in eighty-seven sentences in which a subjunctive form, or an indicative or in some cases an infinitive form had been omitted. The items were randomly ordered so that the students' outcomes could not be influenced by the item sequence. For cases where they could not decide, the instructions suggested that they choose both Indicative and Subjunctive if this was possible.

This test examines only context-free sentences. This was not done to minimize the complexity of mood choice in Spanish; on the contrary, the context-free focus allows us to isolate potential syntactic and lexical factors, in order to examine any patterns that could reflect essential learner tendencies regarding particular case of mood use.

**T2-** The participants were asked to fill in the blanks of fifteen sentences. This time, the items were contextualized in order to make the choice more pragmatic than in the first case consisting of isolated sentences. As in the previous test, in those cases where they thought a double choice of mood was possible, the instructions suggested using both.

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<sup>95</sup>The tests were designed according to the curricular requirements of the Second Year course at the University of Glasgow. I went through the materials used in the classroom as well as the textbooks of Spanish addressed to this level.

## 4. 2. ANALYSIS AND REPORT: (T1)

José Alvaro Porto Dapena<sup>96</sup> holds that choice of mood in Spanish depends on two factors. The first one is modality in independent clauses. The second regards dependent clauses and refers to the kind of syntactic relationship pertaining between the main and the subordinate clause. Following this approach in our report, the data is grouped in two main sections: independent and dependent clauses. For a clear exposition of the results, items studied are presented according to the syntax of the contexts in which they are contained. Subsequent divisions in each section are made to get better knowledge of the *interlanguage* (IL) of the participants and thus, to shed light on some the factors which may either facilitate or inhibit the acquisitional process of the Spanish Subjunctive mood.

### 4. 2. 1. INDEPENDENT AND NON SUBORDINATE CLAUSES

(Figure 1)

- This section begins with those items that contain an adverb of doubt or possibility like *quizá(s)*, *posiblemente*, *probablemente* or include a locution of similar semantic value such as *tal vez* or *a lo mejor*. All of them are expressions of probability or possibility. Except for *a lo mejor* which is always followed by the indicative, the others call for indicative or subjunctive depending on the

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<sup>96</sup>Porto Dapena, J. A. (1991). *Del indicativo al subjuntivo*. Madrid: Arco Libros, p. 56.

position of the adverb in the sentence.<sup>97</sup> In this respect, Borrego<sup>98</sup> points to the following *rule* for mood selection with adverbs of doubt or possibility:

-con indicativo, si se posponen al verbo;

-con indicativo o subjuntivo, si se anteponen al verbo.

*La aparición de uno u otro modo está ligada al grado de incertidumbre o duda, o a la certeza acerca de la no realización.*<sup>99</sup>

In other words, when the adverb precedes the verb, Spanish offers a mood choice based upon the speaker's degree of uncertainty involved with respect to a particular situation.<sup>100</sup> In this respect, Francisco Matte Bon<sup>101</sup> remarks that these adverbs can introduce either rematic or thematic hypothesis in the speech. The indicative will be used before the rematic hypothesis whilst the subjunctive will introduce the thematic one.<sup>102</sup> With regard to this option, I find impossible to accept some of Butt and Benjamin's comments on the use of tense after the adverbs mentioned above. They say that *if the event is still in the future, only the future indicative or (much more commonly) the present subjunctive may be used, not the present indicative*<sup>103</sup>. Therefore, they do not accept sentences such as "Quizá viene mi hermano mañana". This is a false assumption and it should not go unchallenged in this study. In fact, although some scholars recommend the subjunctive after *quizás* when it refers to the future, the indicative use is also accepted. In this respect, García Santos points that

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<sup>97</sup>Ibid., p. 60.

<sup>98</sup>Borrego Nieto, J., Gómez Asencio, J. I., Prieto de los Mozos, F. (1995). *El subjuntivo. Valores y usos* [1986]. 5th ed. Madrid: S.G.E.L.

<sup>99</sup>Ibid., pp. 179-80.

<sup>100</sup>Gili Gaya, S. (1989: 45). See also Renaldi (1977).

<sup>101</sup>Matte Bon, F. (1995). *Gramática Comunicativa del español (2v)* [1992]. 2nd rev. ed. Madrid: Edelsa.

<sup>102</sup>Matte Bon, F. (1995: II: 257-58).

<sup>103</sup>Butt, J. and Benjamin, C. (1994). *A new reference grammar of modern Spanish* [1988]. 2nd ed. London: Edward Arnold, p. 243.

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*Aunque el uso del indicativo parece estar extendiéndose cada vez más, el español cuidado, culto, sigue prefiriendo el subjuntivo: sobre todo referido al futuro.*<sup>104</sup>

Since the examples in our survey were context free, the participants had the opportunity to choose both moods in items 6, 25 and 49, where mood neutralisation is optional. On the contrary, only 33.3% of the subjects chose both moods. For item 6 which is preceded by *quizás*, the composite percentage of subjunctive chosen (83.3%) is higher than the indicative. Conversely, for 25 and 49, containing *tal vez* and *probablemente* respectively, the proportion of both moods use is similar. It would appear then that when there is a mood neutralisation, students do not follow a clear pattern regarding mood selection. In order to gather more data concerning this case, I will take up this issue again in T2.

On the other hand, when the adverb follows the verb (items 19 and 87) and therefore, the indicative is required, students also vacillate between both moods. Whereas 55.5% of the subjects link *quizás* with the indicative, *probablemente* is linked in the same proportion with the subjunctive.

- Regarding the expression of possibility and probability, T1 also includes an example containing the impersonal expression *puede que* (item 10). The participants' output show a lower proportion of indicative forms (27.7%) as contrasted with a greater preference for the subjunctive (66.6%). As for item 40, although it contains *a lo mejor* which always introduces new information (rematic) and therefore cannot be followed by the subjunctive, the indicative was only chosen by 61.1% of the participants.

- Following Porto Dapena's study, I also include in this section two items that present optative modality. Both are used for expressing wishes. Item 15 is an independent clause that contains the interjection *ojalá*. The composite percentage of subjunctive chosen for this example is the highest of any of the

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<sup>104</sup>García Santos, J. F. (1993: 56).

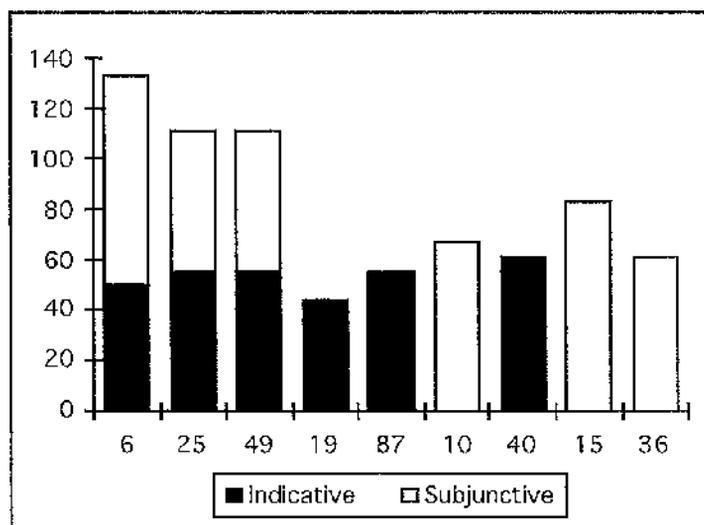
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items examined in this section (83.3%). Within the same field, item 36 is an example of what some authors refer to as pseudo-independent clauses. The reason for that is that although these sentences appear to be independent in the surface structure, they are not all they seem

*puesto que en lo que podría llamarse "estructura profunda" dependen de un verbo indicador de modalidad desiderativa del tipo 'desear', 'querer', 'anhelar' u otro equivalente.*<sup>105</sup>

With respect to this item, the results are biased toward the subjunctive (61.1%) but not as much as is observed for item 15.

**FIGURE 1**



### Independent and non subordinate clauses

- 6- Quizás (él,ser) \_\_\_\_\_ millonario, pero no lo parece.  
25- Tal vez (nosotros, viajar) \_\_\_\_\_ por Europa este verano.  
49- Probablemente Juan (dejar) \_\_\_\_\_ de fumar el próximo mes.  
19- Podemos llamar a tu hermano, pero no (él, estar) \_\_\_\_\_ probablemente en casa.

<sup>105</sup>Porto Dapena, J. A. (1991: 80).

- 87- Mis padres (venir)\_\_\_\_\_quizás en Navidad.  
10- Puede que mañana (yo, ir)\_\_\_\_\_a la piscina.  
40- A lo mejor yo (ir)\_\_\_\_\_a Mallorca estas vacaciones.  
15- ¡Ojalá me (él, llamar)\_\_\_\_\_esta noche!  
36- ¡Qué (vosotros, pasar)\_\_\_\_\_un buen fin de semana!

#### 4. 2. 2. SUBORDINATE CLAUSES: NOMINAL CLAUSES

##### 4. 2. 2. 1. Cases that require the use of the Indicative

- I propose to consider first the examples that follow the pattern:

[ **COPULA + ADJECTIVE / NOUN + QUE** ], provided that either the noun or the adjective indicates existence or truth (Figure 2). e.g.; *cierto, claro, evidente, seguro*. These adjectives are used by the speaker to inform and they do not refer to presupposed contents.<sup>106</sup> Furthermore,

*el hablante se pronuncia mediante la oración principal, acerca de la verdad de lo dicho en la subordinada, la cual, por cierto, puede ser tanto afirmativa como negativa.*<sup>107</sup>

Consequently, items containing this structure should logically be followed by the indicative. This seems to be well known to the majority of the participants. For items 14 and 35, composite percentages of indicative chosen are 83.3% and 88.8% respectively. On the other hand, indicative is also the mood required for sentences such as 9, 52 and for the lower verb of both items 18 and 66. Although the latter also includes a negation adverb in the subordinate clause, this does not change the affirmative statement of these sentences. With regard to this, composite percentages for the proportion of indicative chosen by all subjects show the following for each item: 9)77.7%, 52) 72.2%, 18) 88.8%, 66) 83.3%.

<sup>106</sup>Matte Bon, F. (1995: I: 61).

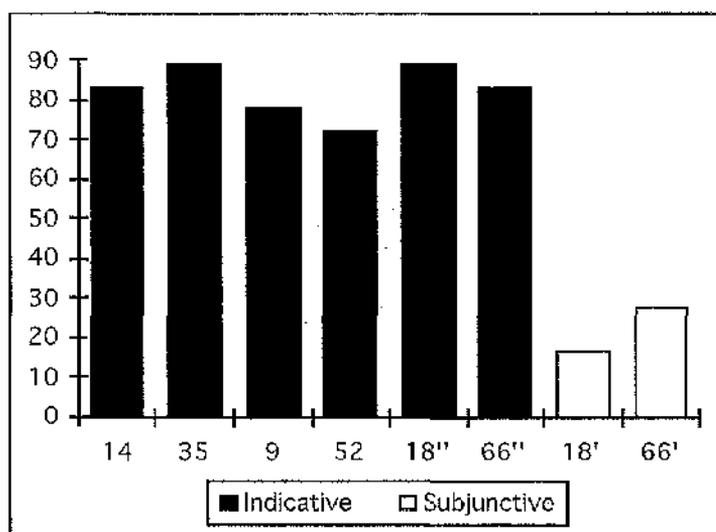
<sup>107</sup>Porto Dapena, J. A. ( 1991: 93).

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The first verb of both items 18 and 66 is in the negative and thus, they become a denial and call for the subjunctive.<sup>108</sup> However, students performance shows poor use of the subjunctive in these sentences. To be more specific, only 16.6% and 27.7% of them chose it respectively.

In view of the results, this structure seems to be quite problematic and thus, would need especial attention in the classroom in order to facilitate more effectively the selection of mood in this context.

FIGURE 2



### Nominal Clauses: [Copula + adj. (existence, truth ...) + que]

14- Es evidente que Juan no (él, ser) \_\_\_\_\_ muy inteligente.

35- Está claro que no (él, tener) \_\_\_\_\_ dinero.

9- Si no contesta es que no (él, saber) \_\_\_\_\_ la respuesta.

52- Ya sé que llego tarde pero es que (haber) \_\_\_\_\_ mucho tráfico.

18- No es que (yo, aburrirse) \_\_\_\_\_, es que (yo, tener) \_\_\_\_\_ mucho sueño.

66- No es que me (molestar) \_\_\_\_\_, es que simplemente no me (gustar) \_\_\_\_\_.

<sup>108</sup>Borrego, J. et al. (1995: 38-9).

### • Verbs of knowing, perceiving, stating and communicating. (Figure 3)

The key feature of examples such as 23, 73 and 84 is that each contain a verb of believing, thinking or supposing. All of them denote mental perception and call for the use of indicative when they are in the affirmative. In this connection, the composite percentage of indicative chosen for both items 23 and 84 (72.2%), contrasts with a higher (and erroneous) subjunctive preference in item 73 (77.7%). A possible explanation for the overall greater subjunctive choice is that the participants might associate *suponer* with the semantic notion of doubt, hesitation or uncertainty and thus, choose the subjunctive mood.

When both verbs that denote mental or physical perception and verbs of communication appear in the negative, the verb in the subordinate will be in the subjunctive but, depending on the context, the indicative is also possible.<sup>109</sup> With respect to the differences implied by mood selection, Borrego points out that:

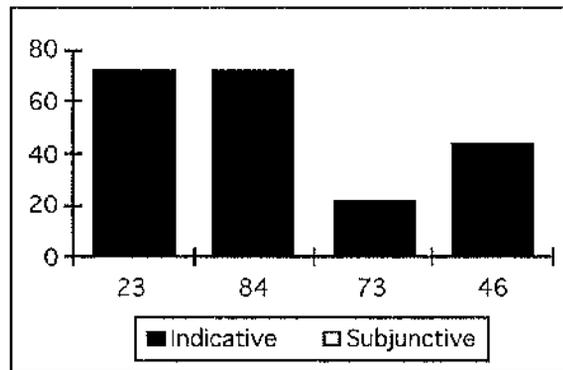
*lo propio del indicativo es aportar al oyente una carga informativa, un cierto compromiso del hablante con la verdad de la subordinada. Con el subjuntivo, en cambio, el hablante no se compromete sobre el valor veritativo de la subordinada, no da a entender si es cierta o no.*<sup>110</sup>

Because of that, the opposition indicative/subjunctive is neutralised in contexts such as item 46: the verb in the main clause is in the imperative form and the verb in the subordinate clause should remain in the indicative. However, the composite percentage of indicative chosen for item 46 is only 44.4%. In view of the results, what we could call a rule-restriction seems to be not fully acquired by the participants.

<sup>109</sup>Porto Dapena, J. A. (1991: 123-24).

<sup>110</sup>Borrego, J. et al. (1995: 86).

FIGURE 3



**Nominal Clauses: verbs of knowing, communicating ...**

23- Los socialistas piensan que (ellos, ganar)\_\_\_\_\_ las próximas elecciones.

84- Creo que Cristina (llegar)\_\_\_\_\_ mañana a Salamanca.

73- Supongo que Luis (estar)\_\_\_\_\_ en Alemania.

46- No pienses que (él, ser)\_\_\_\_\_ una mala persona.

**4. 2. 2. 2. Cases that require the use of the Subjunctive (Figure 4)**

▪ With regard to the sentences that contain verbs *afectivos, de emoción o de sentimiento*<sup>111</sup>, composite percentages for the subjunctive selected by all subjects show the following for each item: 13) 44.4%, 24) 66.6%, 20) 72.2%, 29) 27.7%.

Item 29 shows the least percentage of any of the four items examined. However, it should be borne in mind that another 22.2% of the students also chose subjunctive but they did not produce the tense required. This implies that the tense abilities of these learners also need to develop further.

<sup>111</sup>Porto Dapena, J. A. (1991: 107).

• Continuing with both verbs *de influencia* and verbs *voluntativos*<sup>112</sup>; that is, those which express influence or attempt to influence the behaviour of other people. Items 1, 5, 72 and 50 contain verbs that mean recommending, wanting, requesting, and banning respectively. In these cases, students chose the subjunctive in the following proportion: 1) 77.7%, 5) 72.2%, 72) 66.6%, 50) 44.4%.

• With respect to **statements of emotional reaction and value judgement**, it is true that sometimes the distinction from statements of fact such as *es indiscutible que* 'it is beyond dispute that' is quite difficult and thus, misuses of mood appear easily in the IL of the learner. This problem has been remarked on by scholars like Butt and Benjamin who observe that *the distinction may sometimes appear arbitrary to an English speaker*.<sup>113</sup> Porto Dapena summarizes the matter as follows:

*se usa obligatoriamente el subjuntivo en las estructuras atributivas, siempre que el predicado nominal no sea un sustantivo o adjetivo indicador de existencia o veracidad, o si lo es, la oración posea carácter negativo, aunque en este caso entra en juego una oposición indicativo/subjuntivo. Algunos autores observan que los predicados en cuestión han de expresar además un juicio de valor; pero en realidad cualquier atribución implica siempre ese contenido, por lo que nos parece tautológica tal aclaración.*<sup>114</sup>

Consequently, the use of the subjunctive in these sentences should be taught avoiding unnecessary classifications of adjectives. That is, those that indicate existence or truth will be followed by the indicative (in the affirmative), using the subjunctive after the others.

The students' outcomes show different tendencies. On the one hand, items 2 and 56 follow the pattern [ **SER + ADJECTIVE + QUE** ]. Both require

<sup>112</sup>Porto Dapena makes a semantic distinction between both types of verbs. (Ibid., p. 109)

<sup>113</sup>Butt, J. and Benjamin, C. (1994: 248).

<sup>114</sup>Porto Dapena, J. A. (1991: 103-4).

## Uses and Misuses of the Subjunctive

the use of the subjunctive but whereas the composite percentage for the former is 77.7%, just 16.6% of the participants chose the subjunctive for the latter. In this respect, some of the participants' comments on selection mood that were taped after T2 are quite helpful to understand better the low proportion of subjunctive selected. Most of them said that they assumed that after *no es posible* the indicative was required because there is no doubt or uncertainty and thus, they discarded the subjunctive.

On the other hand, items 7 and 79 are examples of value judgement that also call for the subjunctive. For item 79, just 61.1% of the subjects chose the right mood. Maybe they were less used to this structure when it contains a noun. Item 7 follows the same pattern, the only difference is that it is contained in an exclamation which usually favours the omission of the copula.<sup>115</sup> The results show similar proportions of both moods (50% for each one). Concerning mood variability within this structure, it is highly interesting to consider Guitart's findings, mentioned in chapter 2 as well as Mejías Bicandi's conclusions.<sup>116</sup> Matte Bon summarizes the matter as follows:

*cuando el hablante no está seguro de que su interlocutor disponga de la información en cuestión, o quiere recordársela y no sólo referirse a ella como a algo que ya está claro y establecido para ambos interlocutores, puede usar un tiempo informativo (en la mayoría de los casos se trata de indicativo). Estos usos son menos frecuentes.*<sup>117</sup>

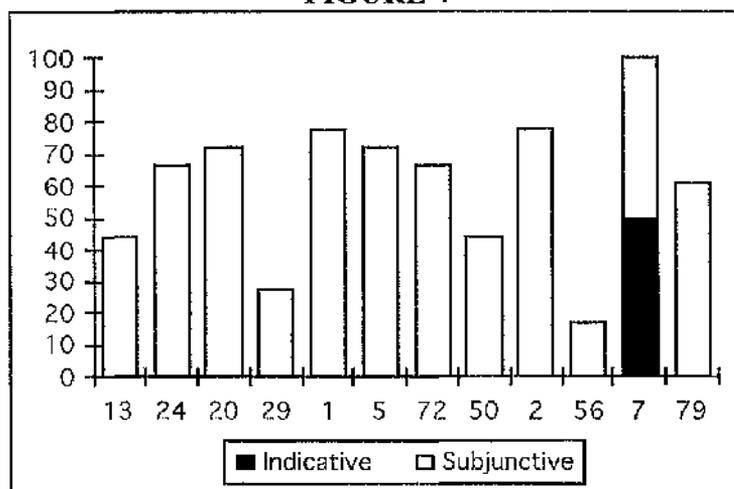
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<sup>115</sup>Ibid., p. 105.

<sup>116</sup>Mejías-Bicandi, E. (1994: 893-96).

<sup>117</sup>Matte Bon, F. (1995: II: 280).

FIGURE 4



**Nominal Clauses: statements of emotional reaction, value judgement ...**

- 13- ¿Te preocupa que (ella, llegar) \_\_\_\_\_ tarde a casa?  
 24- Me molesta que la gente no (ser) \_\_\_\_\_ educada.  
 20- No nos gusta que (tú, ser) \_\_\_\_\_ tan egoísta.  
 29- Les sorprendió que les (tú, hablar) \_\_\_\_\_ de aquella forma.  
 1- Te recomiendo que (tú, ir) \_\_\_\_\_ al médico.  
 5- Quiere que le (yo, llamar) \_\_\_\_\_ el lunes cuando (yo venir) \_\_\_\_\_.  
 72- Me pidió que le (yo, comprar) \_\_\_\_\_ un libro que (ser) \_\_\_\_\_ más interesante.  
 50- No nos prohibió que (nosotros, ver) \_\_\_\_\_ la televisión.  
 2- No es seguro que te (nosotros, poder) \_\_\_\_\_ dar una solución.  
 56- No es posible que (él, irse) \_\_\_\_\_ ayer sin despedirse.  
 7- ¡Qué pena que no (vosotros, tener) \_\_\_\_\_ aire acondicionado!  
 79- ¡Me parece una tontería que (ellos, tener) \_\_\_\_\_ miedo en casa!

**4. 2. 2. 3. Mood Neutralisation (Figure 5)**

If you examine only context-free sentences and therefore, there are cases where either indicative or subjunctive could be used. The instructions suggested

that students choose both moods if this was possible. Next I wish to focus our attention on the results for these items. This would help us to examine any pattern that could reflect essential learner tendencies regarding mood use.

- Let us start with a group of verbs (**knowing and communicating**) that were analyzed when they are in the affirmative and thus, the indicative is required. When they are in the negative, both moods can be used depending on the context. Take then item 38 to see how the students deal with this option. The composite percentage of subjunctive chosen is only 22.2%. From this it follows that results are clearly biased toward the indicative.

Bearing in mind that none of the participants chose both indicative and subjunctive, this brings us to the question of whether the indicative mood is the only one that they think can be used with these verbs in the negative.<sup>118</sup> The alternative between both moods must be acknowledged by the students. At any rate, T2 will take up again this issue in order to get more information about this tendency.

- Some verbs select indicative or subjunctive according to the meaning that they express in the context; consequently, a change of mood causes a change of meaning. This affects some verbs of communication (*decir, insistir...*), verbs of perception and similarly, verbs like *comprender* and *entender*. Mood selection after such verbs works as follows:

*rigen indicativo cuando significan 'ver, darse cuenta, observar objetivamente', mientras que llevan subjuntivo cuando indican aceptación subjetiva de una determinada situación de 'ser comprensivo o tolerante con algo, encontrarlo razonable'.<sup>119</sup>*

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<sup>118</sup>If that were the case, learners would lack the necessary target resources and thus, a greater amount of attention would need to be placed on the teaching of the subjunctive regarding the verbs mentioned above.

<sup>119</sup>Porto Dapena, J. A. (1991: 132).

Because of that, item 43 could just use subjunctive in the subordinate verb. However, results show that only 33.3% of the participants selected the right mood.

- Finally, what we are mainly concerned with in this section is students' performance regarding mood use in sentences which contain *el hecho de que* (items 12 and 44). The results are slightly biased towards the indicative. This is specially true of the 61.1% figure for the participants with respect to example 44 (headed by the phrase mentioned). Conversely, the composite percentage of subjunctive chosen for item 12 is only 38.8%.

Mood use will be determined in these contexts taking into account whether the information communicated by the subordinate clause is new or old, unshared or shared. In this respect, Borrego's comments should be borne in mind:

*Si bien es verdad que en la mayoría de los casos aparece con subjuntivo, ello se debe a que suele ser el presentador de algo ya conocido (...) o de algo cuya realización se presenta como eventual o puramente hipotética. En cualquier caso, no para informar de la subordinada (...) Pero no está vedada la utilización de 'el hecho de que' con voluntad informativa y no está vedada, por tanto, la posibilidad del indicativo.<sup>120</sup>*

What should be established at the very outset is that mood choice in a clause headed by *el hecho de que* depends on the informative value of the clause. That is, new information will be introduced by the indicative whereas shared information between speaker and listener is introduced by the subjunctive.<sup>121</sup>

Some scholars link *el hecho de que* in preverb position with the subjunctive. It is worth stating at this point that this is only a consequence of the shared information rule mentioned before. In other words,

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<sup>120</sup>Borrego, J. (1995: 107-8). Lipsky, (1978) also provides more information on this topic.

<sup>121</sup>See Guitart, J. (1982) and Matte Bon, F. (1995: 1: 61).

*la tematicidad estará marcada por el subjuntivo y con la información temática regirá el indicativo. Las cláusulas subjuntivas después de 'el hecho de que' aparecerán en posición inicial, antes del verbo principal. Las indicativas irán después del verbo principal y en posición final.*<sup>122</sup>

It is worth noting the importance of these comments. They shed light on the meaningful contrasts implied by mood choice after *el hecho de que*. In this regard, Butt and Benjamin admit that *they can detect no difference of meaning in some cases* where both moods, indicative and subjunctive, *appear to be interchangeable*<sup>123</sup>. However, from a pragmatic point of view, mood choices are never redundant. The conclusion to which our theoretical analysis leads is that this sort of comment should be avoided in the presentation of this topic. Moreover, mood switches after this phrase should be presented in the classroom by drawing the student's attention to the different speaker's attitude that mood selection -whether indicative or subjunctive- reflects in speech. In fact, Indicative and Subjunctive are not "interchangeable". The snag about this approach is that it needs a thorough and gradual practice.

In the meantime, and just from a pedagogical standpoint, it is advisable at intermediate levels to use the subjunctive in any context containing *el hecho de que*. The reason for that is that it is acknowledged that this phrase is largely followed by the subjunctive and only in those cases where it is not the heading of the sentence, could the indicative be an option.<sup>124</sup>

• In connection with mood use after verbs of communication and believing that are in the negative, I wish to focus attention on students performance regarding mood use after verbs such as *dudar*. As was the case with the verbs mentioned above, the speaker can choose in this case between the indicative and the subjunctive according to the speaker's commitment to the truth

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<sup>122</sup>Krakusin, M. (1992). "Selección del modo después de *el hecho de que*". *Hispania*, 75, p. 1292. See also Woehr, R. (1972).

<sup>123</sup>Butt, J. and Benjamin, C. (1994: 255).

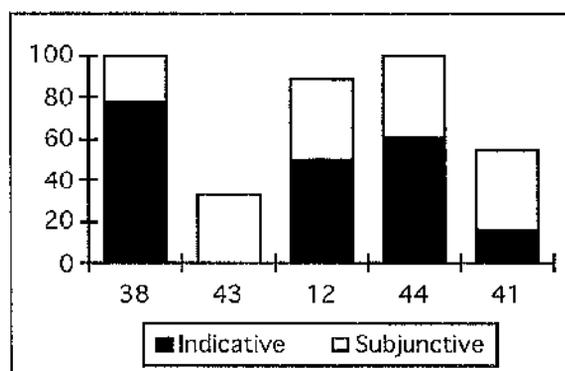
<sup>124</sup>I agree in this respect with García Santos' recommendation (1993: 83).

## Uses and Misuses of the Subjunctive

of what is expressed in the subordinate clause. Moreover, this option is not only restricted to the negative but also is possible in the affirmative. The fact that such examples are less usual does not mean that the speaker does not have the freedom of choice. For that reason, I cannot agree with Butt and Benjamin who say that *dudar* in the affirmative contexts takes the subjunctive.<sup>125</sup> In my opinion, it would be better to explain to the learner the differences implied by mood choice rather than giving a partial presentation of the facts that leave unexplained cases where the indicative is chosen.<sup>126</sup>

In view of the results for item 41, we can suggest that in this case, mood choice is not a difficult task for students. Subjunctive was chosen by 83.3% of the students, the main problem is that only 38.8% managed to use the right form. This lack is due to either tense misuses or morphological errors and draws our attention to the fact that drill exercises designed to develop learners' morphological abilities would also have to be considered when language learners fail to gain control over the production of morphology.

FIGURE 5



<sup>125</sup>Butt, J. and Benjamin, C. (1994: 253).

<sup>126</sup>For a clear explanation, see Borrego, J. et al. (1995: 98-100).

See also Pérez Soler, V. (1966). "Construcciones con verbos de duda en español". *Hispania*, 49, p. 287-89.

**Nominal Clauses: mood neutralisation**

- 38- El reportero no dijo que la noticia ( ser)\_\_\_\_\_falsa.  
43- No comprendo que (tú, querer)\_\_\_\_\_volver allí.  
12- No cambia nada el hecho de que (él, venir)\_\_\_\_\_hoy.  
44- El hecho de que (él, ser )\_\_\_\_\_tímido, no significa que no tenga personalidad.  
41- Dudaba que (ella, venir)\_\_\_\_\_a cenar.

**4. 2. 3. SUBORDINATE CLAUSES: ADVERBIAL CLAUSES**

•This section will present the results for adverbial sentences according to their semantic grouping. Take the case of **reason clauses** (Figure 6) and the three main conflicting issues of mood use that I have focused on.

First of all I will outline the results for items 32 and 60. Since both examples contain a preposition (*por*), they demand the use of the infinitive in the subordinate clause. However, students seem to supply the target form with the indicative. In fact, only 33.3% for the former and 38.8% for the latter chose the infinitive. For item 60, it is interesting to consider also an *interference error* revealed by the use of the gerund by some participants. In short, the use of the gerund in Spanish is borrowed from the English.

On the other hand, in view of the results for items 37 and 42, there is also conflicting evidence that mood use fluctuates after *como* when it means 'since' and 'because'. Composite percentages of the indicative chosen for both examples are 72.2% and 38.8% respectively. It seems to me that tense (temporal reference) might play a part in the differences but I do not have enough data to assert it.

Finally, I would like to draw attention to item 75. This is a sentence which we must look at carefully insofar as it is the only example in this section

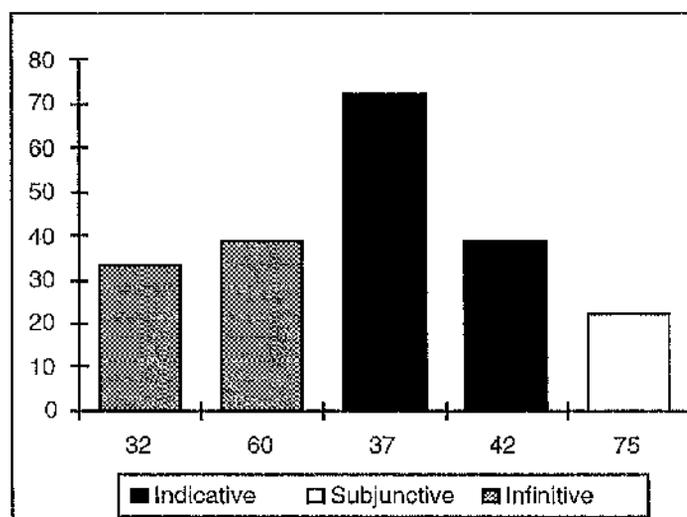
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that calls for the subjunctive. That is because the speaker denies the validity of the reason expressed by the subordinate. As Borrego says:

*en realidad, estamos afirmando el verbo principal ('estudiaba' in item 75) negando la validez de la causa, es decir, negando que B sea el motivo válido por el que se provoca A.<sup>127</sup>*

Students' performance regarding this issue is quite worrying. Just 22.2% chose the subjunctive form and, out of this percentage, 16.6% also suggested an indicative option. All in all, just 5.5% of the participants managed to use correctly the target form. The conclusion which emerges from what I have said is that 95.5% of students fail to choose properly a mood option in this particular structure. The extraordinary error frequency made me include it in T2 and thus, get to know more about the factors that motivate the results displayed.

FIGURE 6



### Adverbial Clauses: Reason Clauses

<sup>127</sup>Borrego, J. et al. (1995: 148).

## Uses and Misuses of the Subjunctive

- 32- Eso te pasa por (tú, ser) \_\_\_\_\_ tan despistado.  
60- Le detuvieron por (él, conducir) \_\_\_\_\_ borracho.  
37- Como Juan (estar) \_\_\_\_\_ enfermo, no ha venido a la fiesta.  
42- Como no (tú, traer) \_\_\_\_\_ el abrigo, tuviste frío.  
75- Estudiaba inglés no porque lo (ella, necesitar) \_\_\_\_\_, sino porque le gustaba.

•As for **purpose clauses** (Figure 7), the best way of summing up the results is to underline the high proportion of correct forms obtained in those cases where the infinitive is required (items 3 and 39). I can validate the above statement with the composite infinitive percentages shown for both examples: 72.2% and 77.7% respectively. This is likely due to *positive transfer*<sup>128</sup> from English.

By contrast, a high error frequency is observed regarding items that contain *a que* and *que*. For both sentences 31 and 76, the results show a lesser use of the correct target form. Just 38.8% and 27.7% of the participants chose the subjunctive to complete these examples. In view of the results, it would appear that the students are less used to identifying a purpose meaning in those sentences containing *que*. Nevertheless, they show a better performance of the target form when the subordinate clause is introduced by *para que*. In particular for item 71, 61% of the subjects chose correctly the subjunctive form.

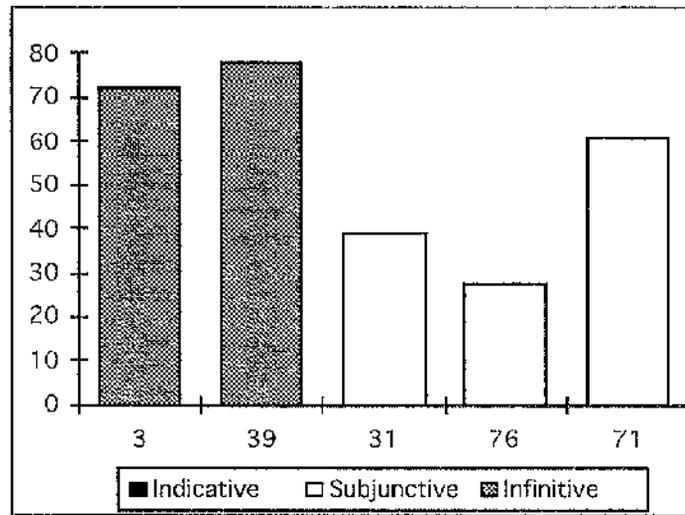
All this goes to show that more emphasis should be given in the classroom in particular to purpose structures that do not contain the purpose conjunction: *para que* commonly used in textbooks. Furthermore it would be essential to show the learners the difference that already exists between *a que* and *para que* since they are not always interchangeable; to be more precise, the

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<sup>128</sup>Positive transfer: "Any facilitating effects on acquisition due to the influence of cross-linguistic similarities." Odlin (1994a: 168).

former is restricted to certain contexts and cannot be used outside of them. A *que* will be used only when the main clause contains a verb of movement<sup>129</sup>; mentioning this will help to avoid misunderstandings and errors in sentences of this kind.

FIGURE 7



**Adverbial Clauses: Purpose Clauses**

- 3- Estudió alemán con la intención de (yo, completar)\_\_\_\_\_mis estudios.
- 39- Se ha ido a Australia para (él, vivir)\_\_\_\_\_nuevas experiencias.
- 31- Iré a su oficina a que me (ellos, dar)\_\_\_\_\_una respuesta.
- 76- Habla alto que te (nosotros, oír)\_\_\_\_\_todos.
- 71- Le escribo esta carta para que (usted, conocer)\_\_\_\_\_mi versión de la historia.

<sup>129</sup>Porto Dapena, J. A. (1991: 208).

•With respect to **result clauses** (Figure 8), students performance lays bare an important pitfall. Most of the participants fail to produce the target form in those sentences where the subordinate is introduced by *de ahí que*. Such clauses are not, grammatically, subordinate clauses of consequence<sup>130</sup>, but, logically, they might come in this section and for that reason are commented on here. For sentence 82 containing this structure, just 27.7% of the students chose the subjunctive. However, the results for items 59 and 65 show higher composite percentages of indicative selected: 55.5% and 72.2% respectively.<sup>131</sup>

Therefore it seems that the students interlanguage lacks the necessary target language resources regarding neutralisation mood cases such as item 82 for instance. In this respect, there are explanations that base mood choice in these contexts on the informative willingness of the speaker toward the listener.<sup>132</sup> That is, for sentences such as 59 and 69

*la oración consecutiva se emplea para informar al oyente de algo que se considera nuevo para él.*

On the contrary, for item 82,

*el emisor del mensaje no siente esa necesidad de informar, bien porque cree que lo que dice es ya conocido por el oyente, bien porque no considera oportuno centrar su acto de comunicación en lo expresado en la oración consecutiva.<sup>133</sup>*

In fairness I suppose that this reasoning helps learners to some extent. However, bearing in mind that the semantics of items 59, 65 and 82 seem to be the same, it would follow that each of those sentences would call for the same

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<sup>130</sup>Ibid., p. 207.

<sup>131</sup>With regard to both items, I would like to point at an additional significant percentage of indicative selected (22.2%) that unfortunately fail to use the right form.

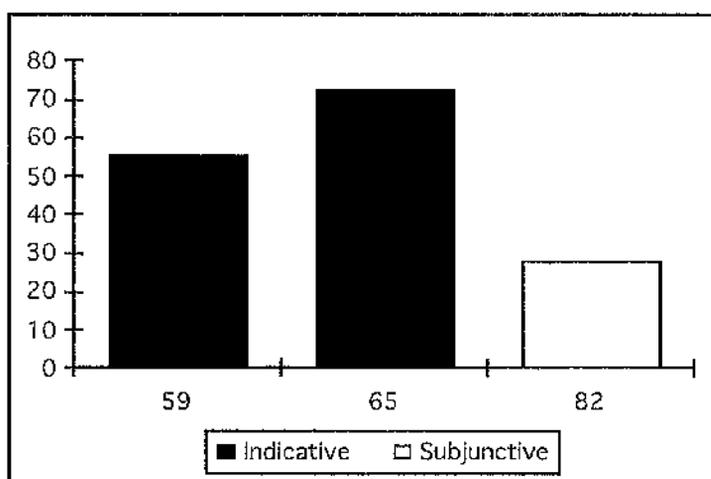
<sup>132</sup>Malte Bon, F. (1995: II: 230).

<sup>133</sup>Borrego, J. et al. (1986: 60).

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mood. Therefore, I think that this issue should be treated in the classroom under special circumstances. That is, as a student learns irregular verbs, he/she can also develop a certain ability to be aware of mood neutralisation cases such as the one mentioned above and then, automatically choose the proper mood.

FIGURE 8



### Adverbial Clauses: Result Clauses

59- Bebí tanto en aquella fiesta que no (yo, recordar)\_\_\_\_\_ nada.

65- Había mucha niebla; por consiguiente no (nosotros, ver)\_\_\_\_\_ nada.

82- No tenemos dinero; de ahí que no (nosotros, ir)\_\_\_\_\_ de vacaciones.

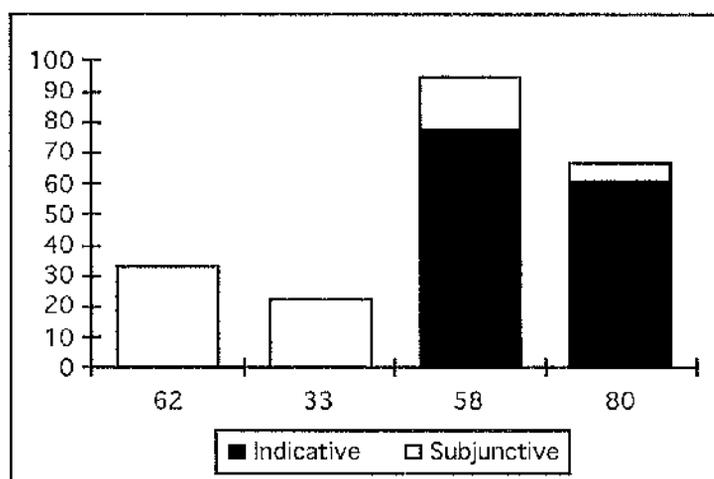
• Let us now examine the results for **clauses of manner** (Figure 9). The most striking aspect of the outcome is the low production of target forms in those sentences containing the locution *como si* ('as if'). For items 62 and 33 the composite percentages of subjunctive chosen show figures of 33.3% and 22.2% respectively. It would appear then that the participants did not see the difference

## Uses and Misuses of the Subjunctive

enshrined in this kind of sentence and for that reason they chose the indicative. By contrast, the subjunctive should be used here since there is an ellipsis and the *si* introduces what is really the protasis contrary to fact of a conditional sentence. When the speaker uses this locution in the speech, he is either referring to a situation that reminds him of the facts that he is commenting on or that could explain the facts that he is commenting on.<sup>134</sup>

For the other items, results are also clearly biased toward the indicative: 77.7% for item 58 and 61% for item 80. In order to collect more data to verify this tendency in contextualized sentences, I will take up again this issue in T2.

FIGURE 9



### Adverbial Clauses: Manner Clauses

62- Me trata como si (yo, ser) \_\_\_\_\_ su esclavo.

33- Después de la discusión del otro día, he hablado hoy con mi hermano y se ha comportado como si no (pasar) \_\_\_\_\_ nada.

58- Decoraré la casa como (yo, querer) \_\_\_\_\_.

80- Hizo el trabajo según le (ellos, mandar) \_\_\_\_\_.

<sup>134</sup>Matte Bon, F. (1995: II: 264).

• **Time clauses** (Figure 10)

Here, mood use depends on whether what is expressed by the subordinate clause belongs to the speaker's world of experience or, conversely, points to an event which is/was to be realized. Indicative is used in the former case whereas the subjunctive is used for the latter. Porto Dapena proposes the following rule:

*Se utiliza indicativo cuando el verbo de la subordinada (V<sub>2</sub>) se refiere al presente o pretérito en relación con el momento de la elocución y, además, es simultáneo o anterior al V<sub>1</sub>, y, por el contrario, se usa el subjuntivo cuando V<sub>2</sub> alude a un tiempo posterior al verbo principal (V<sub>1</sub>).<sup>135</sup>*

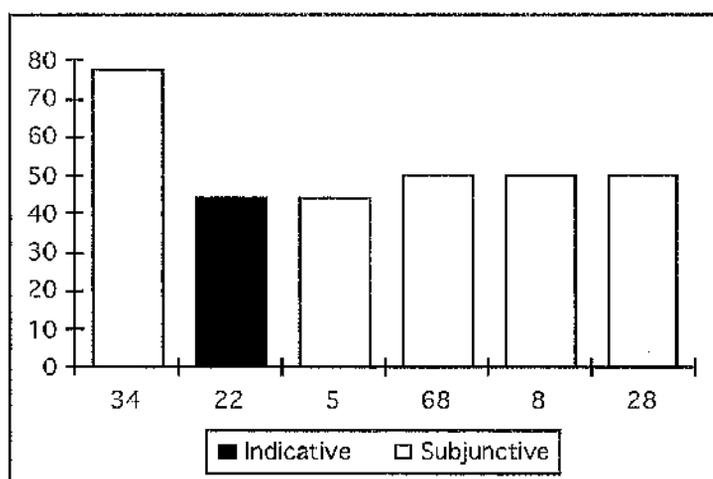
The best way of summing up the results is to say that except for item 34, with a proportion for the indicative chosen of 77.7%, the participants seemed not to follow a defined pattern and therefore, they chose both moods in the same proportion. Actually, the composite percentages of right mood selected show the following: 44.4% for both items 22 and 5, and 50% for items 68, 8 and 28<sup>136</sup>. I need more data to find the reasons for this strong amount of mood variability, even for item 22 where the indicative was required or, conversely, for sentence 8, an obligatory context for the subjunctive. Because of that, I will come back to this issue in T2.

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<sup>135</sup>Porto Dapena, J. A. (1991: 183).

<sup>136</sup>Provided that item 28 can be read in two ways, this sentence will be analyzed also under the conditional heading.

FIGURE 10



#### Adverbial Clauses: Time Clauses

- 34- Te esperaré hasta que (tú, salir) \_\_\_\_\_ de la oficina.  
 22- Cada vez que mi hermano (venir) \_\_\_\_\_, íbamos juntos al cine.  
 5- Quiere que le (yo, llamar) \_\_\_\_\_ el lunes, cuando (yo, venir) \_\_\_\_\_.  
 68- En cuanto (yo, llegar) \_\_\_\_\_ a casa, le llamaré por teléfono.  
 8- Se fue antes de que su madre (llegar) \_\_\_\_\_.  
 28- Siempre que (hacer) \_\_\_\_\_ frío, me pondré el abrigo.

• Finally I would like to draw our attention to students's performance regarding **concessive clauses**.<sup>137</sup> (Figure 11). First I must comment on the startlingly low percentage of students who produced the target form when the subjunctive was the only possibility. To be more specific, percentages of subjunctive chosen for items 27, 74 and 83 are 11.1%, 11.1% and 27.7% respectively. All this goes to raise the alarm on these clauses.

<sup>137</sup>See Matte Bon (1995: II: 211-18) for concessive sentences.

## Uses and Misuses of the Subjunctive

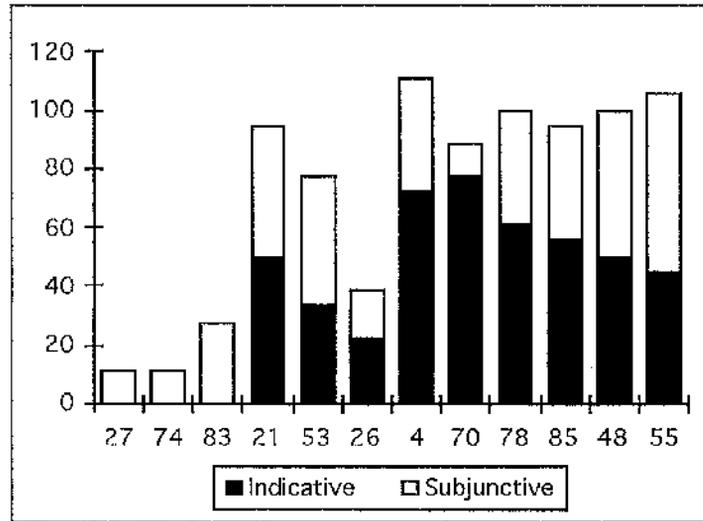
With regard to the items that show mood variability depending on the speaker's intention, students' IL seem not to know that both moods are possible alternatives in these sentences. In fact, the highest percentage of both moods chosen is 16.6% for items 4 and 55. Figures speak for themselves.

Moreover, the participants seem to be less familiarised to deal with concessive structures that do not contain *aunque* and this lack might explain the similar percentages showed for both moods. Slight differences between the indicative and the subjunctive chosen are not significant: 50% vs. 44.4% for item 21, 33.3% vs. 44.4% for 53, and 22.2% vs. 16.6% for 26. However, they lay bare a serious pitfall with regard to sentences such as 26, containing *por mucho que*. Given the importance of these structures, I think that this lack should be overcome in the classroom with a greater amount of attention through contextualized practice that lets students understand better the mood selection within this structure.

With respect to the examples that contain *aunque*, the results are biased toward the indicative for items 4 (72.2% vs.38.8%), 70 (77.7% vs.11.1%), 78 (61.1% vs. 38.8%) and 85 (55.5% vs. 38.8%). For 48, both moods are chosen at the same rate and only for item 55, the percentage of subjunctive chosen is slightly higher ( 61.1%).

It seems to me that tense (temporal reference) might play a part in the participants' outcome. The subjects chose the subjunctive more often when it was a context of future reference (such as item 55), hesitated with regard to the present and practically refused it when it was contained in a sentence that was in the past. However, more data is called for in order to confirm this hypothesis and thus, it will be analysed in detail in the next chapter.

FIGURE 11



**Adverbial Clauses: Concessive Clauses**

- 27- No habría aprobado aunque (yo, estudiar)\_\_\_\_\_.
- 74- No llegarías a tiempo aunque (tú, salir)\_\_\_\_\_ ahora mismo.
- 83- Aunque (él, ir)\_\_\_\_\_ no le dejarían pasar.
- 21- A pesar de que (yo, estar)\_\_\_\_\_ muy ocupado, iré a verle.
- 53- A pesar de que (él, comer)\_\_\_\_\_ mucho, no engorda.
- 26- Por mucho que lo (él, intentar)\_\_\_\_\_, no lo consiguió.
- 4- Aunque (nosotros, estudiar)\_\_\_\_\_ mucho, no aprobaremos.
- 70- Aunque (yo, terminar)\_\_\_\_\_ mis estudios el año pasado, no he encontrado trabajo todavía.
- 78- Aunque no te (gustar)\_\_\_\_\_ la comida, cómetela.
- 85- Aunque tú y yo (estar)\_\_\_\_\_ comprometidos, prefiero decir que sólo somos amigos.
- 48- Aunque (ella, ser)\_\_\_\_\_ una buena persona, no me gusta tu amiga.
- 55- Aunque (tú, ir)\_\_\_\_\_ no te dejarán entrar.

• The key feature for items 86 and 28 is that both examples are **conditional sentences** (Figure 12) which do not contain the conjunction *si* and

thus, only can be followed by the subjunctive.<sup>138</sup> The former is introduced by a subordinator of condition (*siempre que*) and the latter by a subordinator of exception (*a menos que*). Despite the fact that the subjunctive is the only possible choice for them, the composite percentages of subjunctive selected for sentences 86 and 28 are 55.5% and 50% respectively. Now, I will deal with the students' performance regarding conditional sentences introduced by *si*. In this respect, it is important to mention that nowadays only two subjunctive tenses are used after *si*: imperfect and pluperfect.<sup>139</sup>

For the nine items examined, I found different results in terms of how the participants related to normative rules. For example in 30, calling for the indicative, the outcome shows the highest proportion of target forms (88.8%). Conversely, for item 77 (calling for the pluperfect subjunctive), the composite percentage of correct answers is the lowest of any of the nine items analyzed in this section (16.6%). This low percentage might be due to the fact that the general sequence of tense in the sentence is broken. The reason for that is that there is a shift in point of view in the course of the sentence (the same thing may happen in English in parallel structures).

Between both extremes, I find poor results not only with regard to mood selection but also with tense use. It was with respect to items 47 and 81 (contrary-to-fact and unlikely conditions), and with respect to examples 54 and 69 (impossible conditions) that students produced a higher error frequency. Given that English offers similar patterns for conditional sentences, it would be expected that the participants would manage to complete successfully the items mentioned. However, the students' performance differs largely from the behaviour of native speakers when they deal with sentences that demand the use of the subjunctive. In this respect, the composite percentages for the proportion of subjunctive chosen by the participants show the following for each item: 47) 38.8%, 81) 33.3%, 54) 27.7%, 69) 22.2%, 77) 16.6%. Conversely, for items that

<sup>138</sup>Borrego, J. et al. (1995: 60-6).

<sup>139</sup>In the past, this was the context more appropriate for the future subjunctive.

require the use of the Indicative, the outcome shows better results: 11) 72.2%, 57) 55.5%, 64) 61.1%.

As a foreign learner of English, I was taught that English has three kinds of conditional sentences<sup>140</sup>. Therefore, I assumed that students whose mother tongue is English would know this distinction and thus, it would be easy for them to perceive the similarities between English and Spanish. By some means or other, there is a perfect parallel between English and Spanish with regard to sentences that follow the pattern: *If I were you...*. Given the limited choice, students should concentrate on the verb in the conditional clause. Therefore, they should practice the use of both tenses after *si*. That is, in unlikely or impossible conditions, they should keep the imperfect for the present and the future, and the pluperfect for the past.

However, the results are far from showing a good command of the subjunctive in these contexts. It remains unclear how much of a role English influence has in the acquisition of these structures. In other words, *positive transfer* seems to occur in instances that express real conditions but *negative transfer*<sup>141</sup> is easy to identify in cases such as item 77, where most of the students fall back on English conditional structures and thus, they use the indicative pluperfect. On the other hand, I must acknowledge that there is an important number of students who seem to control which mood they should use but fail to choose the right tense.

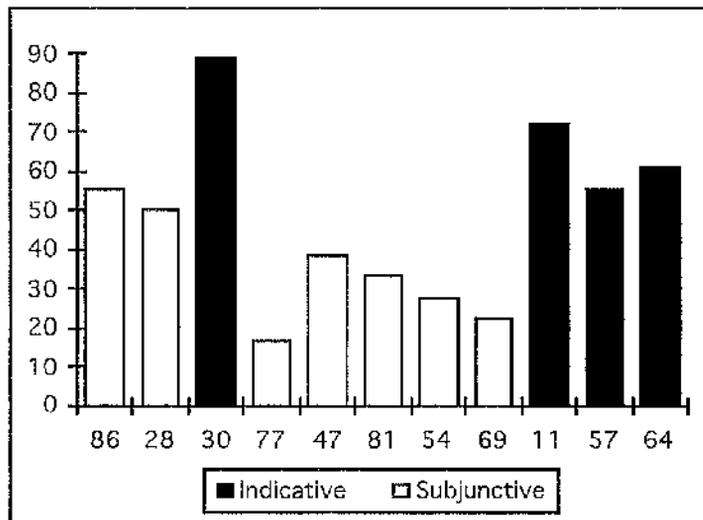
All this goes to show that more practice in this area is necessary to make the learners achieve the proper use of the subjunctive in conditional sentences. With regard to this issue, more data was collected in T2 and therefore I will take it up again in next chapter.

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<sup>140</sup>Collins-Cobuild (1990). *English Grammar*. Glasgow: HarperCollins, p. 350.

<sup>141</sup>Negative transfer: "Cross-linguistic influences resulting in errors, overproduction, underproduction, miscomprehension, and other effects that constitute a divergence between the behaviour of native and non-native speakers of a language". Odlin, T. (1994a: 167).

FIGURE 12



**Adverbial Clauses: Conditional Clauses**

- 86- Iremos al concierto a menos que (haber)\_\_\_\_\_ algún problema.
- 28- Siempre que (hacer)\_\_\_\_\_ frío, me pondré el abrigo.
- 30- Si (tú, querer)\_\_\_\_\_ ese coche, cómpralo.
- 77- Si (yo, ver)\_\_\_\_\_ la película ayer te la contaré hoy.
- 47- Si (él, ser)\_\_\_\_\_ rico, compraría una casa en el Caribe.
- 81- Te prestaría el libro si (él, ser)\_\_\_\_\_ mío.
- 54- Te habríamos llamado si (nosotros, llegar)\_\_\_\_\_ antes.
- 69- Hubiéramos llamado a la policía si (nosotros, estar)\_\_\_\_\_ en esa situación.
- 11- Si no (tú, tener)\_\_\_\_\_ cuidado, vas a tener problemas.
- 57- Despertará a todos los vecinos si (él, seguir)\_\_\_\_\_ tocando la guitarra.
- 64- Si (yo, quitarse)\_\_\_\_\_ las lentillas, no veo nada.

#### 4. 2. 4. SUBORDINATE CLAUSES: RELATIVE CLAUSES

(Figure 13)

The first thing that needs to be said in this area is that mood use in this section is mainly concerned with defining clauses (*oraciones restrictivas* or *especificativas*) since non defining clauses (*oraciones no restrictivas* or *explicativas*) will take the indicative. This does not apply to sentences where a marker of modality selects the subjunctive. e.g. *Luis, que puede que esté enfadado conmigo, no me ha llamado todavía.*

The real question at issue is whether the antecedent is specific or non-specific. In the first case, the verb in the relative clause will take the indicative whereas in the latter will take the subjunctive. As Dapena points out:

*Podemos decir que el uso del indicativo y subjuntivo depende, respectivamente, del carácter específico o inespecífico de antecedente, así como -si bien ello sea consecuencia de lo primero- de la existencia o inexistencia de un compromiso por parte del hablante en la verdad de lo expresado en la oración subordinada.<sup>142</sup>*

With regard to this, the subjunctive proportions shown for items 16, 45 and 72 are quite low. It would appear, then, that students' performance is clearly biased toward the indicative. This is especially true for item 45 (where none of the participants considered the subjunctive option) and for item 16. On the other hand, with reference to 72, results converge rather closely in the proportion of mood chosen. Students' performance show different preferences: 38.8% for subjunctive, 11.1% for conditional and 33.3% for indicative. A possible explanation for this diversity is the fact that this item contains two embedded

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<sup>142</sup>Porto Dapena, J. A. (1991: 159).

verbs. This might have confused the students who were undoubtedly expected to choose the subjunctive in the immediately lower verb.<sup>143</sup>

The key feature of examples such as 51, 61 and 67 in this free-context survey is that in each one the antecedent can be either identified or not yet identified and therefore, either subjunctive or indicative will be used respectively. Composite percentages for the proportion of subjunctive chosen show the following for each item: 51) 11.1%, 61) 38.8%, 67) 33.3%. This ratifies a strong tendency toward the indicative and shows that students do not seem to perceive the meaning contrast that mood choice implies in the sentences examined.

Porto Dapena comments on the importance of mood choice in these cases. He underlines that the relationship held between main and subordinate clause is directly affected by mood use. The indicative will imply causation whereas the subjunctive will determine a conditional link.<sup>144</sup>

On the other hand, items 17 and 63 merit closer examination.<sup>145</sup> In both sentences, the antecedent is denied and thus, the subjunctive is required since

*por una parte el antecedente, al estar negado, es el ejemplo más claro de inespecificidad, y, por otra, el hablante no se compromete con la verdad de lo expresado en la oración subordinada.*<sup>146</sup>

However, just 38.8% of students chose subjunctive for the former and 11.1% for the latter. All this goes to show that students' interlanguage presents a greater use of the indicative mood in all relative contexts, including those where the subjunctive was the only possible choice. What I am mainly concerned with here are the reasons that motivate this tendency. Thus, in order to collect more

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<sup>143</sup>Studerus (1995: 101) also includes in his survey two items with double embedding and points out that even from a theoretical point of view examples like these are problematic.

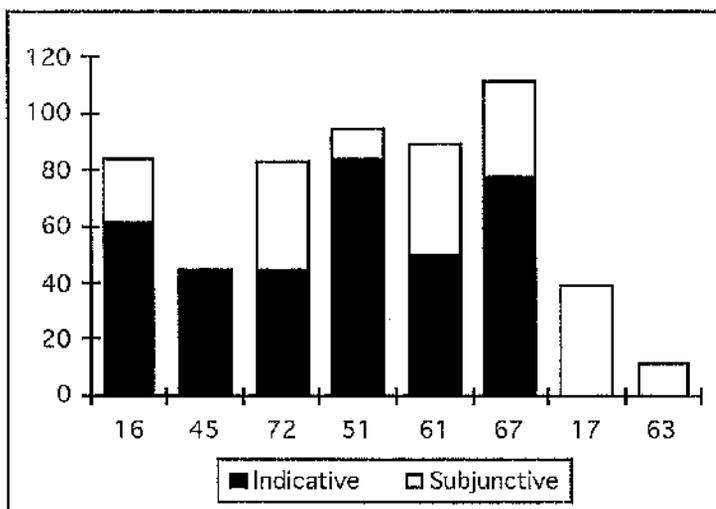
<sup>144</sup>Porto Dapena, J. A. (1991: 171).

<sup>145</sup>See Borrego, J. et al. (1995: 124).

<sup>146</sup>Porto Dapena, J. A. (1991: 162).

data that shed light on the factors which may inhibit the subjunctive use, this issue will be analyzed in T2 within a contextualized framework.

**FIGURE 13**



**Relative Clauses**

- 16- Tráeme el primer libro que (tú, ver)\_\_\_\_\_.
- 45- Las personas que (estar)\_\_\_\_\_ allí, ya habían expresado su opinión.
- 72- Me pidió que le (yo, comprar)\_\_\_\_\_ un libro que (ser)\_\_\_\_\_ más interesante.
- 51- Todos los que (hacer)\_\_\_\_\_ el examen tendrán una semana libre.
- 61- El reglamento dice que el que (venir)\_\_\_\_\_ tarde, no tendrá desayuno.
- 67- Todos, excepto los que (estar)\_\_\_\_\_ enfermos, pueden beber un vaso de vino.
- 17- No había ninguna persona que (poder)\_\_\_\_\_ ayudarme.
- 63- No encontramos nada que nos (gustar)\_\_\_\_\_.

#### 4. 3. ANALYSIS AND REPORT: (T2)

Bearing in mind that the pragmatic context of an utterance is crucial to characterise the distribution of mood in Spanish<sup>147</sup>, T2 contextualized a group of items (Figure 14). The fifteen issues treated here are taken from a previous base study (T1) and represent certain problematic cases seen in the participants'IL (Figures 15 and 16). These patterns, each illustrated by a pertinent survey item are the following:

- Mood selection after *quizás*
- **Nominal clauses:** ( Denials)
  - no digo que
  - no es posible que
  - no es que
- **Adverbial clauses**
  - reason clauses
  - clauses of manner
  - time clauses
  - concessive clauses
  - conditional clauses
- **Relative clauses**

T2 was followed by a **conversation** between the researcher and the participants about the task completed. Although it was not required, most of the students spoke in Spanish though sometimes, they fell back on English to

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<sup>147</sup>Mejías-Bicandi , E. (1994: 892).

explain themselves. In the conversation, the researcher prompted the students to comment on their answers for each item of T2, which mood they used and why they did so. In some cases, the participants made comments on problems with the translation into English.

The goal of this talk was to gather data on learners' intuition about differences in the use of mood in Spanish. The researcher also attempted to lead the participants to think of the differences implied by the mood selection in the speech. Bearing in mind the importance of the role that intuition plays in the teaching and the learning of grammatical structures<sup>148</sup>, it does seem useful to collect more information about the participants' abilities to analyse differences implied by mood selection and so forth, since such intuitions underline their capacity to analyse and talk about the language they are learning. As Odlin remarks:

*language learners can express their intuitions (even when the expression is inaccurate) and linguists can provide explicit descriptions of language and linguistic behaviour, including acquisition.*<sup>149</sup>

In view of the importance of the students' comments, they were taped and some excerpts will help us to understand better some misuses of subjunctive that we observed in the participants' outcomes for T2.

- Let us begin with the students' performance regarding mood selection after adverbs of doubt. The proportion of subjunctive chosen for item 8 (94.4%) is the highest of any of the fifteen items examined in T2. This example contains *quizás* in preverb position and thus, could also be followed by the indicative because of an optional mood neutralisation.

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<sup>148</sup>Odlin, T. (1994b). "The Introspective Hierarchy: A comparison of intuitions of linguists, teachers, and learners". In *Perspectives on Pedagogical Grammar*. Cambridge: C.U.P.

<sup>149</sup>Ibid., p. 272.

Concerning this option, the participants seemed to be quite confused. Some of them admitted in the interview that they were aware of the possibility of the use of both moods for this case but none of them was able to explain when. Other students did not even know of the possibility of using the indicative in this context. In spite of this comment, results show us an excellent performance of the subjunctive mood.

### 4.3.1. NOMINAL CLAUSES.

- With regard to item 6 (containing a verb of communication in the negative), students' performance presents identical proportions of mood selection to the ones shown for the same case in T1. It would appear then that the context does not make any difference here and thus, the composite percentage of indicative chosen is 72.2%.

It must be acknowledged that the subjunctive is normally used after these verbs used negatively though occasionally it is also possible to find the indicative. In such cases, it is implied that the subordinate clause is a statement of fact. Interestingly, it would appear that most of the students followed the *occasional* pattern. In this respect, I listened to the participants' comments hoping to get more information that could explain this choice. On the one hand, some of them said that they chose indicative because there was no doubt enshrined in the message and on the other hand, for some participants, the indicative was the only option that they would have considered here. In default of an alternative, they chose the indicative. In other words, most of the students displayed a lack of knowledge about the use of the subjunctive in this context.

In view of the results and bearing in mind that the subjunctive is more common in speech and in any case it is always acceptable, I feel strongly that from a pedagogical standpoint the subjunctive option should be recommended at

this level because of the context where it is contained (replying utterance). This issue is put, with commendable clarity, by Borrego:

*cuando se ha sugerido o está de alguna forma en el contexto que alguien se ha manifestado en determinado sentido, y queremos negarlo, entonces puede aparecer tanto indicativo como subjuntivo (incluso con la primera persona), si bien parece más frecuente el subjuntivo.*<sup>150</sup>

- Interesting results come from students' performance regarding item 5 (containing *no es posible que*). In this case, just 27.7% of the subjects chose correctly the subjunctive form. Conversely, most of the participants selected the indicative. As we pointed out in T1, a possible explanation would be that most of the participants read into these examples an expression of certainty and consequently chose the indicative. In fact, during the talk that we had after they had completed T2, students follow this reasoning regarding this structure. According to them, "if it were *possible*", it would be followed by the subjunctive. Given that the speaker denies the possibility, it follows that it is not an expression of doubt or uncertainty and thus, the indicative is required.

All this goes to show a common misconception about the subjunctive use in Spanish. In order to avoid it, I think that in the presentation of the subjunctive, a clear distinction should be made between adjectives that express truth, certainty or existence (group I) and any other adjectives (group II). Following this presentation, group I would contain adjectives that we use to inform, whereas group II would include those that express the speaker's point of view about a presupposed piece of information. Once this distinction has been presented, it should be clear that any adjective of group II will be followed by the subjunctive within this structure.

This basic criterion would follow pragmatic approaches that were commented on in chapter 1. That is, whereas the indicative will be used by the

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<sup>150</sup>Borrego, J. et. al. (1995: 92). See also Porto Dapena (1991: 138).

speaker to give a new piece of information to the listener, the subjunctive will be used in the case of presupposed information. Here, in item 5, the speaker cannot comment on the fact that a person left without saying 'good-bye' if he did not think of that fact before. As Matte Bon states:

*Con estas expresiones, el enunciador introduce verbos que no constituyen informaciones sobre su sujeto: generalmente, se trata de informaciones presupuestas. (...) Para poder expresar una reacción ante algo es imprescindible que ese algo se una información disponible, formulada explícitamente, o tan sólo concebida mentalmente, pero tiene que existir.<sup>151</sup>*

- Now I will analyse students' performance for both items 10 and 12 (in the following section). Although both call for the subjunctive, results show for these items the lowest proportions of subjunctive chosen in this survey.

Item 10 contains a denial that requires the subjunctive mood. This structure (*no ser que + subjunctive*), is commonly used in the speech by the speaker: *para descartar una primera formulación que no le satisface totalmente*<sup>152</sup>. However, only 11.1% of the participants chose the mood required. In view of their comments with respect to the item mentioned, the reason that motivated this choice is that most of them thought that they should use the mood selected in the main sentence.

### 4.3.2. ADVERBIAL CLAUSES

- On the other hand, item 12 contains a denial within the context of a **reason clause**. For this example, all the subjects chose the indicative (as also happened in T1). During the interview, although they admitted to being aware

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<sup>151</sup>Matte Bon, F. (1995: I: 61).

<sup>152</sup>Matte Bon, F. (1995: II: 222).

that the subordinate clause does not express the real cause of what is expressed in the main sentence, they were not aware of the change in mood selection that was implied by that.

They insisted that the subordinate expressed a fact and therefore, the indicative is required. However, what should be remarked in these contexts is that it does not matter whether or not the subordinate is an expression of a fact. Above all, what is relevant in this case is that the subordinate clause states a reason that is not what causes the content expressed by the main sentence. In this sort of context, the speaker does not communicate new information. What he actually does is:

*... retomar una explicación que acaba de formular otro o que se había formulado para sí mismo, ya sea para rechazarla y proponer otra explicación, ya sea para aceptarla y decir algo más ...*<sup>153</sup>

From these poor results we can see that students at this level seem not to be able to produce the target form in contexts containing denials. There is already conflicting evidence that mood use within these structures is quite problematic. As a result of that, a greater amount of attention needs to be placed on this issue in the presentation of the subjunctive in the classroom.

• T2 also included a contextualized **clause of manner** introduced by *como*. In theory, both moods would be accepted here depending on the specific or non-specific nature of the antecedent.<sup>154</sup> For this sentence (item 4), the key is whether or not the speaker asserts a definite decorative style at the moment of the speech. If that is the case, he will use the indicative. However, if he leaves it unidentified for the future -intentionally or not-, he will use the subjunctive. Obviously, the context here helped the students to choose the first option and consequently, the composite percentage of indicative chosen is higher: 77.7%.

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<sup>153</sup>Ibid., p. 221.

<sup>154</sup>Porto Dapcna, J. A. (1991: 197-8).

## Uses and Misuses of the Subjunctive

The importance of the context in order to select the proper mood in this example was also ratified by the students' comments.

- With respect to temporal clauses, T2 contained an item (3) calling for the subjunctive. It is a case of mood neutralisation that does not allow the indicative. Students' performance selected largely the right choice (77.7% out of the total chose the subjunctive option). With respect to the misuses observed, it must be acknowledged that either the present (16.6%) or the future (5.5%), are the indicative tenses with which students supply the target form. The occurrence of these errors do appear to be due to native language influence, English in this case.

- Let us now examine the results displayed for the four **concessive clauses** that were included in T2. The composite percentages for the proportion of subjunctive chosen by all participants show the following for each item: 7) 55.5%, 9) 50% +\*38.8%, 11) 61.1%, 13) 22.2%.

In general, two aspects of students' performance merit closer examination. On the one hand, learners' morphological abilities show poor results in the production of the pluperfect tense for item 59 (38.8% of the answers were morphologically incorrect). On the other hand, with respect to the accuracy with which they produce the indicative and the subjunctive in obligatory contexts, I have to say that students show the best results when the subordinate clause refers to a future fact (item 11). With respect to the results for sentences where a mood neutralisation is optional, such as item 7 and 13, results show a tendency biased toward the indicative, specially for the latter. With regard to this preference, students' comments based their indicative choice upon the fact that the subordinate clause (in item 13) refers to something that happened in the past, something that did not constitute a hypothetical event in the past (as happens in item 9). In fact, the vast majority of the subjects admitted

that they would never have thought of the subjunctive as an alternative for item 13. Conversely, they showed a greater amount of tolerance for the subjunctive in item 7. Studerus<sup>155</sup> included the same type of examples in his survey and gave different explanations for mood variability within these contexts. Porto Dapena also states an optional rule regarding this issue. That is, when the subordinate clause expresses a fact that is already shared information between the speaker and the listener, either indicative or subjunctive may be used. Furthermore, he comments on those cases such as items 7 and 13 contained in the speaker's reply to a piece of information commented previously by the listener. In these cases, the subjunctive mood causes the following effect: *expresa inhibición del hablante en cuanto a la aceptación de algo dicho por el oyente*.<sup>156</sup> Likewise, García Santos refers to the use of the subjunctive in these contexts as *subjuntivo polémico*<sup>157</sup>.

To sum up, Matte Bon states that mood selection here follows the basic criterion that determines the indicative/subjunctive usage. That is, whereas new information will be introduced by the indicative, the subjunctive will be used when the fact being mentioned is already shared information between speaker and listener. He points out that:

*En estos casos, presenta la información contenida en la concesiva como un presupuesto porque ya está en el contexto, su interlocutor ya la tiene, o simplemente porque no le interesa tanto, no le parece esencial, para él ya es algo adquirido (presupuesto), y lo que le interesa es ir más allá de dicha información para decir lo que expresa la principal.*<sup>158</sup>

Our survey shows that students do not perceive this variability and maybe contextualized practice would be necessary in this respect.

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<sup>155</sup>Studerus, I. (1995).

<sup>156</sup>Porto Dapena, J. A. (1991: 234).

<sup>157</sup>García Santos, J. F. (1993: 207).

<sup>158</sup>Matte Bon, F. (1995: I: 67).

## Uses and Misuses of the Subjunctive

In my opinion, by contrasting pairs of sentences that reflect the differences in speech implied by mood selection, learners would understand better the keys for mood use. Consequently, context and speaker's attitude toward the message would become the concepts at stake within a pragmatic framework to characterise the distribution of mood in these sentences.

- T2 included one example containing *si* (item 14). Keeping in mind the results observed in T1, students' performance regarding **conditional sentences** confirm indeed previous findings. It was not so much that students did not know which mood they should use, it was that they failed to produce the form required. Actually, 88.8% of the participants chose the subjunctive but out of that percentage, 38.8% produced wrong forms. In view of the results, the main difficulty that the learners experience here is with the production of the subjunctive morphology. From all this it follows that special attention to the morphological aspects of mood selection is called for in order to let students fully benefit from mood selection instruction.

### 4. 3. 3. RELATIVE CLAUSES

Three relative clauses merit closer examination in our survey. The high indicative proportion shown for both 1 and 2 (88.8%), contrasts with a greater preference for the subjunctive in cases such as item 15. Let us examine them separately. On the one hand, item 15 contains an indefinite adjective ('cualquier') that appears to be the marker of an antecedent not identified and thus, helps the students with the subjunctive choice. On the other hand, both items 1 and 2 reveal an interesting tendency biased toward the indicative that was justified later by the students' comments. As for them, the reason that explained such low percentage is that "*it is a fact*", "*the fact that all those that do the essay are exempted from the oral*", "*es seguro*"... Even the fact that the

sentence contains 'todos los que', made one of the participants think that he was dealing with an identified antecedent, and therefore, the subjunctive would never be a possibility for this item.

It is startling that the vast majority of the participants would never think of the subjunctive choice (even when the researcher suggested them to read into the sentence a futurity feature). In fact, just 5.5% of the subjects chose the subjunctive for item 1. It would appear then that the students' IL favours the indicative over the subjunctive for restrictive adjective clauses.

In view of the results, it seems that the participants fail to perceive a basic difference prompted by mood selection within these contexts. That is:

*el indicativo, al asociarse con el carácter específico del antecedente, supone la adhesión o compromiso por parte del hablante en la verdad de lo expresado por la oración subordinada, al contrario que el subjuntivo, que implica una pura potencialidad o eventualidad por referirse la oración a un objeto inespecífico, de cuya existencia, por tanto el hablante no tiene absoluta certeza.<sup>159</sup>*

On the other hand, item 2 shows a similar preference for the indicative. Students seem to read into this example an identified antecedent, a book (*the one nearest to you*) and therefore, they do not consider it a subjunctive choice.

The fact of the matter is surely that in some cases it seems quite difficult to make a clear distinction between specified and unspecified antecedent and then, students' IL uses the indicative as a default verb form.

To sum up, the results of this study make me think that more attention should be put on relative clauses in the presentation of the subjunctive. I agree with Stokes<sup>160</sup> that the Subjunctive/Indicative usage in relative clauses does receive much less attention than nominal or adverbial clauses in textbooks and in the classroom. It is not surprising then, that students show a tendency biased

<sup>159</sup>Porto Dapena, J. A. (1991:170-1).

<sup>160</sup>Stokes, J. D. (1988). "Some factors in the acquisition of the present subjunctive in Spanish". *Hispania*, 71, p. 709.

toward the mood that they are more exposed to. It must be acknowledged that all Spanish texts that I have examined give less attention to mood usage within relative clauses. Ramsey<sup>161</sup> dedicates a page to this aspect whereas Batchelor<sup>162</sup> sorts it out in one half page. Besides, he remarks that the subjunctive *frequently has a more polite overtone than the indicative and avoids the presentation of the relative clause as a fact.*<sup>163</sup>

I can agree with him up to a point but, it is not *a polite overtone* that is enshrined in this context. As has been said in chapter 2, mood selection tells us about the intention of the speaker that utters a sentence. In this respect, by using the subjunctive in these items, the speaker does not commit himself to the existence of what he is referring to (either because he does not wish to state it definitely or because he is not able to do that). That is, *el subjuntivo es el modo neutral (no marcado) que sirve para no informar acerca de las presuposiciones del hablante*<sup>164</sup>.

Above all, my main comment on this practice (T2) is that the students had to select mood according to contextualized references. However, they seemed not to be familiar with a task which asks them to make a mood choice depending on the speaker's intention introduced by the context.

I would like to underline that beyond the results, the talk with the participants was worthwhile. After it, most of them admitted that it was the first time that they had discussed grammar issues in the classroom. For me, that is the bottom line of the problem: they have not developed an analytical capacity with regard to this issue and thus, they are at loss when they face modal switches that go further than the cases studied in the classroom. It was the students' reaction that made me think that perhaps this is the way of leading them to the

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<sup>161</sup>Ramsden, H. (1985). *An essential course in modern Spanish* [1959]. Surrey: Nelson, pp. 192-93.

<sup>162</sup>Batchelor, R. F. and Pountain, C. J. (1992). *Using Spanish. A guide to contemporary usage*. Cambridge: C.U.P.

<sup>163</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 269.

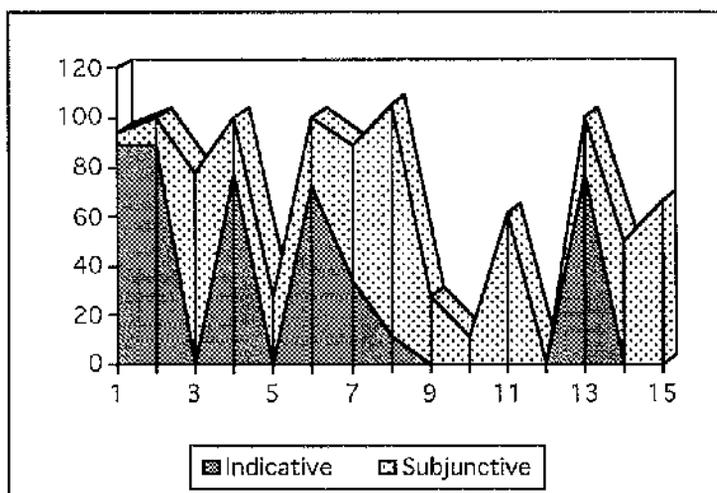
<sup>164</sup>Borrego, J. et al. (1995: 124). See in this respect Matte Bon (1995: I: 317).

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understanding of mood selection. Undoubtedly, T2 did not solve all problems but it set a valid framework for a pragmatic presentation of the subjunctive. Mood is not an arbitrary choice that only depends on several triggers outside their context (T1). Here, the students started developing an active understanding of mood selection. Surely the lesson to be learned from these results is that only contextualized practice in the classroom could help the learners to understand the differences implied in the speech by mood selection.

"*Aprendí mucho*", was the last comment of one of the participants in the experiment. Perhaps he had not learnt a lot at that time but surely he realised that the subjunctive is not an unattainable goal.

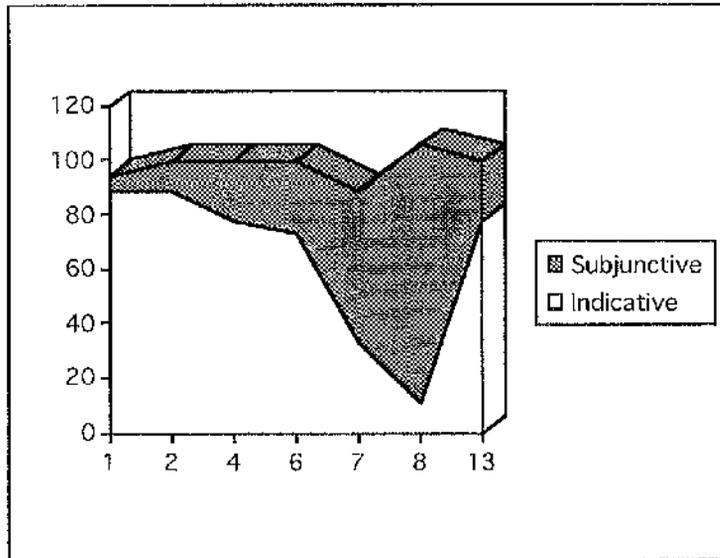
FIGURE 14



**T2: Items contextualized**

- 1- ... Todos los que (hacer) el ensayo, están exentos del oral.
- 2- ... Da igual...Dame el que (estar) más cerca de ti.
- 3- ... Vale, cuando (yo, venir) te llamo.
- 4- ... El próximo mes pintaré mi casa como (yo, querer).
- 5- ... No es posible que (él, irse) ayer sin despedirse.
- 6- ... No digo que (él, ser) serio, sólo digo que ...
- 7- ... No me importa. Aunque lo (decir) todo el mundo, eso es absurdo.
- 8- ... Quizás (él, venir) en octubre, pero no lo ha confirmado todavía.
- 9- ... Aunque (él, venir) a Glasgow, no la habría llamado.
- 10- ... No es que (yo, estar) enfadada contigo, es que necesitaba estar sola.
- 11- ... No tiene ningún sentido estudiar. Aunque (yo, estudiar), no aprobaré.
- 12- ... Lo hacía no porque (ella, necesitar) el dinero, sino porque así se entretenía.
- 13- ... En mi caso ha dado lo mismo, aunque (yo, terminar) el año pasado con buenas notas, no he encontrado nada.
- 14- ... Si (vosotros, venir) un poco antes, hubierais visto una puesta de sol alucinante.
- 15- ... por eso estoy buscando a alguien, a cualquier persona que (hablar) ruso.

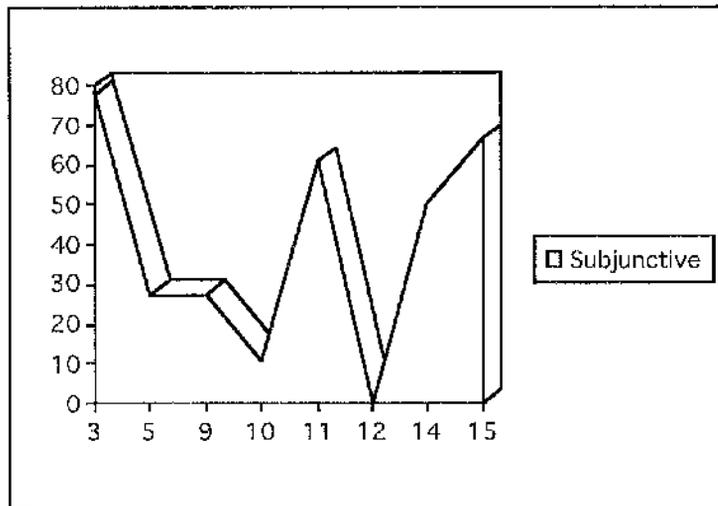
FIGURE 15



**T2: Mood variability**

- 1- ... Todos los que (hacer) el ensayo, están exentos del oral.
- 2- ... Da igual ... Dame el que (estar) más cerca de ti.
- 4- ... El próximo mes pintaré mi casa como (yo, querer).
- 6- ... No digo que (él, ser) serio, sólo digo que ...
- 7- ... No me importa. Aunque lo (decir) todo el mundo, eso es absurdo.
- 8- ... Quizás (él, venir) en octubre, pero no lo ha confirmado todavía.
- 13- ... En mi caso ha dado lo mismo, aunque (yo, terminar) el año pasado con buenas notas, no he encontrado nada.

FIGURE 16



### T2: Triggers for the Subjunctive

- 3- ... Vale, cuando (yo, venir) te llamo.
- 5- ... No es posible que (él, irse) ayer sin despedirse.
- 9- ... Aunque (él, venir) a Glasgow, no la habría llamado.
- 10- ... No es que (yo, estar) enfadada contigo, es que necesitaba estar sola.
- 11- ... No tiene ningún sentido estudiar. Aunque (yo, estudiar), no aprobaré.
- 12- ... Lo hacía no porque (ella, necesitar) el dinero, sino porque así se entretenía.
- 14- ... Si (vosotros, venir) un poco antes, hubierais visto una puesta de sol alucinante.
- 15- ... por eso estoy buscando a alguien, a cualquier persona que (hablar) ruso.

## **5. CONCLUSION**

## 5. 1. INFLUENCES ON THE LEARNING PROCESS

Given that the pragmatic context is an essential key for understanding the distribution of mood in Spanish, T2 will be considered in this chapter, the main source from which conclusions are made. T1, then will be a complement to them. Different aspects of the students' performance should be considered to go further into the understanding of the development of their mood selection abilities. According to Joseph Collentine<sup>165</sup> two important issues should be borne in mind here: on the one hand, the extent of the learners' syntactic development and on the other hand, the accuracy with which the participants produce the target form in the contexts required.

Let me confine myself to a brief outline of the first aspect above mentioned, looking more particularly at how it affects the students performance regarding mood use. It is highly interesting to consider Collentine's research on the development of complex syntax by intermediate level students of Spanish (since is focused on the same level of our analysis). According to him,

*the most important barrier to learners' benefiting from mood-selection instruction relates to their abilities to generate complex syntax.*<sup>166</sup>

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<sup>165</sup>Collentine, J. (1995). "The development of complex syntax and mood selection abilities by intermediate-level learners of Spanish". *Hispania*, 78, pp. 122-32.

<sup>166</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 130.

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The results of his investigation show evidence of the handicaps (*processing difficulties*) that learners of Spanish have in the generation of complex syntax and thus make them to rely on principles of English syntax. Furthermore,

*learners do not reach a point in their development at which they would have the appropriate linguistic foundation to fully benefit from instruction in mood selection.*<sup>167</sup>

Although his investigation is centred on the field of oral tasks, I think that it is worth keeping his conclusions in mind from now on. Since textbooks do not show much concern about the development of syntactic abilities, Collentine claims that the addition of a syntactic component to the Spanish curriculum would surely encourage learners' abilities in mood selection.

That being said, let us consider the participants' skills regarding the accuracy with which they produced the target form, the issue that our research is mainly concerned with. The first thing that needs to be said is that the results show a poor command of the basics of verbal inflection when the tense required is imperfect subjunctive. Moreover, the students' performance shows the worst results for items calling for the pluperfect subjunctive. One must reasonably suppose that such poor performance is due to a lack of practice with basic exercises of Spanish verb conjugations. I feel strongly that this kind of individual practice (that should be developed mainly out of the classroom) would enhance learners' morphological skills. In fact, they have to work on their own to gain control over the inflection requirements of mood selection. That is a task with top priority. The more they know about the "mechanical" side, the less they have to concentrate on formal aspects and thus the more they will benefit from the teaching of mood selection.

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<sup>167</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 122.

On the other hand, besides the pitfalls revealed by T1 and commented in Chapter 4, our conclusions take into account the performances that show a correct use of the target form. In this respect, the participants seemed to know when to provide the indicative, but they had many problems with regard to the subjunctive.

Concerning nominal clauses, results showed evidence of a good performance within most of the contexts calling for the indicative; that is, when either a modality of belief or inference surfaced in the main clause. Conversely, mood selection accuracy was lower when the subjunctive was needed. Furthermore, the extent to which the participants supply correctly the subjunctive form hinges on the modality of the sentence (similarly to Collentine's results). Whilst contexts of influence favour students' choice of the subjunctive (77.7% -T1), the participants seem to have problems within contexts of evaluation and reaction (16.6% -T1; 27.7% -T2).

Likewise, special mention should be made of the effect that negating the matrix can have in the case of nominal clauses (item 10 -T2) and within reason clauses where *porque* means 'just because' and the main verb of the sentence is negated (item 12- T2). With regard to this issue, students seemingly struggle with mood choice and thus, they provide the indicative in the contexts above mentioned. In this respect, the results displayed for item 12 speak for themselves. Although both items called for the subjunctive, none of the participants chose it. The figures lay bare an important snare for the students which was noted in T1 and clearly was confirmed in the second task of our experiment.

A vast majority of the answers for relative sentences also favour the indicative and, as was noted in T1, make extensive this preference for some contexts where the subjunctive is required. In connection with this, many scholars agree on the difficulties of English learners of Spanish regarding mood selection in relative clauses when the antecedent is not yet identified. Butt and

Benjamin, for instance, refer to the use of the subjunctive within these contexts as a way of expressing *a nuance that English usually ignores*<sup>168</sup>. Anyway, despite the fact that English does not make a distinction between specific and non specific mention in a systematic way, I think that it is possible to provide the students with some cues that may illuminate this striking aspect. As Fernández González states:

*La presencia (o la posibilidad de aparición) de verbos modales-especialmente 'may'/ 'might', la inclusión paréntetica de 'if any'/ 'if there is (are) any', o indefinidos del tipo 'whatever', 'whoever', 'wherever', etc. pueden, si no aclarar el cien por cien de los casos, sí poner al estudiante sobre la pista de esta distinción.*<sup>169</sup>

Concerning concessive and conditional clauses, the results show evidence of a stronger preference for the indicative mood even within those contexts that do not allow mood variability. Moreover, the contexts in which the participants produce subjunctive forms least reliably are those referring to hypothetical events in the past such as items 12 and 14. In this respect, students' outcomes let us conclude that for concessive sentences, past temporal reference correlates more strongly with the indicative mood than with the subjunctive. As already noted in T1, the results displayed for items referring to a past event such as item 13, are biased towards the Indicative.

According to the participants' comments, an explanation for such strong indicative preference in the above contexts is that most students do not consider the possibility of using the subjunctive in contexts referring to the past. Conversely, as was also perceived in T1, the participants associate in their minds the subjunctive with the notion of hypothesis, either for the present or for the future. Therefore they show higher subjunctive preference within contexts of

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<sup>168</sup>Butt, J. and Benjamin, C. (1994: 268).

<sup>169</sup>Fernández González, F. (1991: 351). "Guía del subjuntivo castellano para anglohablantes e hispanohablantes que estudian inglés". *Analecía Malacitana*, 14, pp. 347-60.

hypothetical events with either a present or a future temporal reference. All this goes to show that the students seem not to be aware of the speakers' freedom of choice that such contexts provide depending on the speaker's intentions. That is,

*cuando la información mencionada en la oración concesiva introducida por 'aunque' no constituye información nueva (porque se trata de algo que los dos interlocutores ya saben y aceptan o porque el enunciador no dispone de elementos que le permitan informar o no quieren informar), el verbo va en subjuntivo.*<sup>170</sup>

It would appear, then, that there are contexts in which the participants seem to be more or less comfortable and that different degrees of difficulty arise with regard to mood selection. However, the truth is that personal experience has shown that the amount of time devoted to the instruction of the subjunctive at this level is concentrated on nominal clauses, followed by adverbial and very scarcely within relative clauses. Hence, it follows that mood selection facilitates improved performance within the structures on which more attention has been placed in the classroom or within those structures that the participants are more exposed to. On the other hand, the participants grapple with mood selection within those contexts that offer mood neutralisation and thus, they largely provide the indicative as a default form. That is, they do not see clearly when they should use the subjunctive or what is the difference implied by a modal switch in the context. In view of the results, the participants seem not to master mood selection by the last term of the second year of the study at the University.

Furthermore, we can conclude that contextualized practice is called for in order to facilitate the understanding of mood selection in Spanish. In doing so, students could certainly be helped to fully benefit from mood instruction. It is pointless to speak in the theory about different mood choices according to the different speaker's intentions when those contexts that favour a modal switch are

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<sup>170</sup>Matte Bon, F. (1995: II: 212-13).

not also introduced into the classroom. Mood selection should be presented then, as a dynamic instrument that the speaker uses in Spanish according to his or her purposes.

### 5. 2. ADDICTION TO THE CLASSROOM

The results showed also that students lack resources to make a mood choice in sentences containing conjunctions or subordinators likely less used in the classroom and to which textbooks devote less number of examples (such as items 26 and 82 in T1, for instance). All indicate that the participants seem to be extremely reliant on the classwork insofar as they seem not to be able to deal with issues that their teachers lack time to go into in further detail during the course. That sort of challenge could only be faced by the students if they become independent analysts of the language they are learning (Spanish, in this case). As Odlin remarks:

*students who do not develop such capacities are unlikely to change their interlanguage very much after they have finished their course work.*<sup>171</sup>

Hence, we should provide the students with the keys that let them become autonomous learners in the future. In doing so, we would let them overcome their "addiction" to the classroom.

In this connection, I feel strongly that much more could and should be done to combine the teaching of mood selection within a pragmatic framework with the development of the students' capability of independent analysis of

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<sup>171</sup>Odlin, T. (1994b: 316).

Spanish. In fact, this is also a major challenge not only for students but also for teachers who will be required to work on their own knowledge of Spanish. Odlin is right to say that:

*The guidance that teachers provide will ideally include not only observations about what constitutes the grammatical system of the target language but also advice about how to explore the system independently. If teachers are to help students become independent analysts, they must be competent analysts themselves.<sup>172</sup>*

We should not forget that quite often (as is the case in our study), first and second year courses at University gather students of different departments who will or will not continue studying Spanish at the University. Furthermore, it is essential to realize that mood selection is a complex issue that needs much more than two academic courses to be acquired. Moreover, I share Van Patten's (1987) comments on the language teaching/learning relationship concerning second language grammar, which sometimes is a far from perfect one:

*Many foreign language teachers still believe that if they could explain a certain syntactic or morphological phenomenon in just the right way and then practice the structure sufficiently with their class, the students would somehow acquire the form. Second language acquisition research has shown us repeatedly that this is not the case. (There) is quite a bit of evidence that there are certain stages that learners must pass through in their acquisition of grammatical structures, regardless of method, text, teacher, error correction, or even first language.<sup>173</sup>*

In fact, every student will have much still to learn by the end of the second-year course. Bearing that in mind, what this study is mainly concerned with is how we can generate non mechanical-learning of mood selection. In this

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<sup>172</sup>Odlin, T. (1994b: 14).

<sup>173</sup>Van Patten, B. (1987). "Classroom learner's acquisition of *ser* and *estar*. Accounting for developmental patterns". *Foreign Language Learning: A Research Perspective* ed. by B. Van Patten, T. R. Dvorak and J. Lee. Cambridge: C.U.P., pp. 61-75. Quoted by Collettine (1995:122).

respect, I maintain that the practice of *pedagogical grammar*<sup>174</sup> would enable the students to go ahead with their language learning out of the classroom. That is the goal to be achieved by a successful presentation of mood selection.

Like the language itself, this approach is not static and would let the students perceive the patterns of mood variability that Spanish shows in speech. We cannot limit the presentation of mood selection to sets of descriptive mechanisms without highlighting what is beyond the regularities presented in the class. It is pointless to speak about the differences implied by mood selection in speech through materials that do not take into account the context where an utterance takes place. That is, if the students are not trained within a pragmatic framework, we cannot expect them to understand the role of the speaker's attitude with regard to mood selection.

### 5. 3. THEORY AND PRACTICE: INCOMPATIBLE?

As we noted in Chapter 3, the theoretical/ practical relationship with respect to mood selection in Spanish is a far from perfect one. Current theory takes a pragmatic approach focused on the discourse content whereas traditional guidelines, that do not pay much attention to the context, still prevail in the Spanish textbooks mainly used. Therefore there seems to be a gap between the theory and the practical approach and that, undoubtedly, raises problems in the classroom. If we look at the texts mainly used by the participants in the experiment<sup>175</sup>, we notice the lack of any contextualized references regarding mood selection. Hence, it is necessary to employ a new pedagogical approach in

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<sup>174</sup>Odlin (1994b: 1).

<sup>175</sup>Ramsden (1985), Butt and Benjamin (1994) and Batchelor and Pountain (1992).

textbooks if we want to make a proposal consistent with the actual theoretical scope.

In actual practice, Francisco Matte Bon offers the more complete pragmatic analysis of the Spanish grammar from the perspective of Spanish as a foreign language and thus, I mainly use his works as reference. He sets four parameters which organize all phenomena comprised in the language system. The four patterns established in his analysis are the following<sup>176</sup>:

*-referential axis*

*-informational axis*

*-metalinguistic interpretation axis*

*-evaluative axis*

Let us consider the informational axis insofar as according to Matte Bon it provides the framework for understanding all modal uses in Spanish. While the speaker will use indicative or conditional when he wants to communicate new information to the hearer, the subjunctive will be selected when the speaker presents contents that either are not new or in any case, are not presented as new to the listener. That is:

*El enunciador pone los verbos en subjuntivo cuando sólo se quiere referir a la relación entre un sujeto y un predicado, sin dar informaciones sobre el sujeto del verbo.<sup>177</sup>*

Matte Bon analyses all modal switches through the reference to the informative speaker's purposes. According to him, this analysis has nothing to do with misconceptions traditionally spread by teachers and textbooks because of disorganised and mixed up studies of mood selection. For instance, in traditional practice, the subjunctive applies to unreal events or entities whereas the

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<sup>176</sup>Matte Bon F. (1996). "Los grandes ejes regidores del edificio gramatical de cualquier idioma". Lecture given at the conference *Séptimas Jornadas de Didáctica del Español como lengua extranjera*. Instituto Cervantes of London, November 1996.

<sup>177</sup>Matte Bon, F. (1995: I: 49).

indicative is related to the reality. However, there many counterexamples that call into question this generalisation. That is the case of item 7 in T2. Within that context, both participants in the dialogue accept what is expressed by the subjunctive as real. Another example that easily puts down this false idea is the use of the indicative when the speaker refers in speech to past dreams ("Soñé que iba a Bahamas a trabajar") or, as Matte Bon points out, when he wants to create fictitious situations (especially for children games). Likewise, it has been common practice to analyze the subjunctive based upon the contexts in which it usually appears and then to suggest that the subjunctive expresses the meaning of verbs that usually appear in the subjunctive form. It is a false assumption that this mood means 'wish' or 'doubt' just because it usually follows verbs with this meaning. Furthermore, if the subjunctive refers to an uncertain content, then why is the subjunctive not used in Spanish for interrogative sentences? All this goes to show it is wrong to employ an analysis of mood selection based on the extralinguistic references. In fact,

*El subjuntivo (no informativo) no remite a lo extralingüístico: es el modo que, por excelencia, ignora lo extralingüístico. Es, pues un error querer analizar a toda costa en términos de lo real o irreal. Aunque con frecuencia haya una coincidencia entre los ejemplos de este modo y el hecho de que en lo extralingüístico se trate de referentes irreales, no es más que una coincidencia ... El subjuntivo remite en realidad a la lengua misma y al proceso de enunciación.<sup>178</sup>*

The above quotation underlines the importance of the subjunctive as discourse organiser. The language is a dynamic instrument that allow us to mean different things depending on the resources used. What we have to show the students is *how to do things with words*<sup>179</sup> in general, and how to do things with the subjunctive in particular. Now, the challenge is make the students develop

<sup>178</sup>Ibid., pp. 4-5.

<sup>179</sup>Austin, J. (1962). *How to do things with words*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

their sensibility for understanding the active process of mood selection. This will be a long and hard process and I feel strongly that it will cost us more in the short term but will be beneficial in the long term. Meanwhile, from the very beginning, significant cues should be given to the students in order to let them think about the use of the subjunctive in speech as an expressive strategy. As MatteBon states: *(constantemente) el hablante va expresando su participación y dejando clara su posición y su actitud con respecto a lo que dice.*<sup>180</sup> And in this field, mood selection is perhaps the most important speaker's communicative device.

### 5. 4. PRESENTATION IN THE CLASSROOM

In view of these considerations, we could draw some conclusions in terms of formulating a better pedagogical presentation of mood selection in Spanish. In this respect, a number of questions arise from the research findings. Let us try to answer them through the development of a method that contributes to avoiding the major pitfalls that students have with regard to mood selection. The questions are as follows:

- How can we encourage a non-mechanical mood-selection learning?
- How can we increase in the classroom the development of communicative activities regarding mood selection?
- How can students become less reliant on classwork and thus become independent analysts of modal switches?

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<sup>180</sup>Matte Bon (1995: I: X- Introd. ).

-How can we assist the students with their independent learning?

Firstly, we should not forget that our research was carried out with university students and therefore, we propose a pedagogical approach to be attempted at this level. We assume the different aims of evening classes or package courses in which this approach is likely not to be suitable because of its short-term classwork planning. However, an attempt within all learning contexts is always worthwhile and may be the focus of further research.

Bearing in mind the important role of grammar in the learning process, I propose a task-based approach for the presentation of the subjunctive in the classroom. In my opinion, this is a pedagogical approach that could aid the students to raise their consciousness of aspects of the grammatical structure in Spanish in general and in particular about mood selection. It is based in a cognitive approach to grammatical instruction carried out by Sharwood Smith<sup>181</sup> and Rutherford<sup>182</sup>. Since the mid-1980s research has been mainly focused in the role that grammatical consciousness raising (C-R)<sup>183</sup> plays in language learning<sup>184</sup> and a variety of research findings support the claim of this approach claiming for a place in language pedagogy.<sup>185</sup>

A task-based teaching approach seeks a balance between communicative and grammatical tasks. However, whilst communicative tasks have been largely developed, the grammatical tasks have only recently started to be discussed.<sup>186</sup> Therefore, there is still a lot to work out in the field of the so-called *actividades de concienciación gramatical* or *actividades de autodescubrimiento* ('exercises in raising grammatical consciousness' or 'of self-discovery'). The first goal of

<sup>181</sup>Sharwood Smith, M. (1981). "Consciousness-raising and the second language learner". *Applied Linguistics*, 2, pp.159-69.

<sup>182</sup>Rutherford, W. E. (1987).

<sup>183</sup>Consciousness Raising (C-R): "The drawing of the learner's attention to features of the target language". (Ibid., p. 189).

<sup>184</sup>Yip, V. (1994). "Grammatical consciousness-raising and learnability". In *Perspectives on Pedagogical Grammar* ed. by T. Odlin. Cambridge: C.U.P., pp. 123-39.

<sup>185</sup>Rutherford, W. E. (1987: 27).

<sup>186</sup>Gómez del Estal, M. and Zanón, J. (1996). *Tareas gramaticales para la enseñanza del español*. In *La enseñanza de las lenguas extranjeras mediante tareas* ed. by J. Zanón. Madrid: Edelsa.

these formal tasks is make the students raise their consciousness about several aspects of grammar -the subjunctive in this case. They are addressed to the students' analytical capacity which will attempt to formulate the "rules" that determine the use of the subjunctive.

Javier Zanón<sup>187</sup> proposes a work sequence that could be sketched out in this way:

- 1-Development in the classroom of a communicative interest towards the target structure.
- 2-Workgroup: observation, manipulation and formulation of hypotheses based on the data analysed.
- 3-Group Discussion.
- 4-Comments on learning strategies.

It is worth noting that task-material creates a workgroup's dynamic in which the learner goes through two steps. On the one hand, an inductive process (observation phase) that lets the learner attempt to make a rule. On the other hand, a deductive process that lets the learners export their conclusions to other subjunctive uses and thus, enables the student to reformulate or improve old hypotheses with new ones.

Formal tasks are addressed to cooperative work between the students. Firstly, this approach prompts an exchange of students' impressions, and then, after a group discussion, the proposal of an appropriate generalisation for the classroom. In doing so, the learner will practice in both formal analysis and functional (communicative) activities. Overall, they will use the target language in class to discuss grammar aspects. Actually, *la gramática es un buen tema para hablar en clase*<sup>188</sup>. Furthermore, learner progression requires a careful

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<sup>187</sup>Zanón, J. (1996). "La enseñanza de la gramática mediante tareas". Lecture given at the conference *Séptimas Jornadas de Didáctica del Español como lengua extranjera*. Instituto Cervantes of London, November 1996.

<sup>188</sup>Gómez del Estal, M. and Zanón, J. (1995). *G de gramática*. Colección Tareas (v. 4). Barcelona: Difusión, p. 15.

selection of data to be presented in the classroom. According to the range of data to which the students are exposed, they will be able to formulate hypotheses or to reject old attempts for new ones. As Rutherford states:

*The role of C-R here is thus seen as one in which data that are crucial for the learner's testing of hypotheses, and for his forming generalizations, are made available to him in somewhat controlled and principled fashion.*<sup>189</sup>

The quotation above underlines the important role played by the instructor in this approach whose success hinges largely on the teacher's guidance.<sup>190</sup> Concerning teacher's duties, it is important to say that the linguistic jargon should be reduced to a minimum. In fact, this approach seeks a non-mechanical learning where the C-R is the means rather than the end. That is the most important distinction that Rutherford draws when he compares this approach with conventional notions of "grammar teaching". He states that:

*C-R is a means to attainment of grammatical competence in another language (i.e. necessary but not sufficient, and the learner contributes), whereas 'grammar teaching' typically represents an attempt to instil that competence directly (i.e. necessary and sufficient, and the learner is a tabula rasa).*<sup>191</sup>

With respect to Spanish, and in particularly to the subjunctive in Spanish, a formal task project was developed in some *Instituto Cervantes* centres located in Europe and North Africa. Results<sup>192</sup> show evidence of an improved performance in most of the contexts analyzed. Further, in the task evaluation (last step in every activity for learner feed-back), students seemed to develop an interest in extending this learning strategy to other grammar issues.

<sup>189</sup>Rutherford, W. E. (1987: 18).

<sup>190</sup>Westney, P. (1994: 93).

<sup>191</sup>Rutherford, W. E. (1987: 24).

<sup>192</sup>Zanón, J. (1996).

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The project sets four different tasks to present the commonest uses of indicative and subjunctive. The first three deal with the following issues:

- 1-Introducing information.
- 2-Reacting to information.
- 3-Influencing others to do things.
- 4-Defining things, people, places, times ...

All of them can apply to a communicative use after the grammar workshop. That is essential to create a dynamic atmosphere in the classroom. It is pointless to work on a certain aspect of mood selection if the student does not see that he/she can benefit from their use in the speech.

The fourth part deals with the evaluation process. This approach draws special attention to the evaluation of the learning strategies. In fact, it responds to the concern with helping the students with their independent learning. In this evaluation, the students should make explicit the procedure followed to come to a conclusion.

All this goes to show that there is already a variety of empirical findings that lend support to the application of this formal approach to mood selection instruction. However, paradoxical though it may seem, new formal approaches have had little response within the teaching of Spanish as a foreign language at the University level, the focus of our study. This is hard to believe if we think of the extraordinary development of methodological issues within the teaching of English as a foreign language. Why does the teaching of Spanish seem to be so resistant to the introduction of innovations when they are already tested in many textbooks of English? It is undoubted that we all, researchers and learners, should bridge the gap in this respect and work up the practice carried out in the classroom through the development of a methodology consistent with a pragmatic analysis of mood selection.

To summarise, I propose a task-based approach for the presentation of mood selection in the classroom. This is a very valuable method to make the students become independent analysts of this complex issue in Spanish. To my knowledge, very little has been done in textbooks of Spanish devoted to English speakers. None of the books used by the participants in this research presented the issue of mood selection within a contextualized framework. Hence, the students' lack of ability to manipulate this issue, and their failure to take into account any pragmatic reference. The inevitable conclusion that emerges from all this is that it is necessary to modify the perspective and the materials used traditionally in the classroom. It is not that all that has been done until now is useless.

Above all considerations, it is essential to realize that the learning of mood use should be enhanced from a different point of view. As I have demonstrated, mood selection is the means used by the speaker to take a stand in speech. Consequently, it does not make sense to study this issue through independent sections mainly focused in structural exercises. This is not a task for the classroom. That is a task that the student should carry out on his/her own just for practice in the production of morphology. However, the classroom should be the place for the grammar workshop and the communicative use of the target language. The grammar workshop should not be considered a linguistic forum. Far from that, I insist on the fact that C-R is the means to an end, not the end itself. Providing the students with tasks designed to raise their consciousness about different aspects of mood use, we will train them to understand what is beyond the use of either the subjunctive or the indicative within a certain context. Of course, our proposal finally yields exhaustive programmes of language courses (Second Year in our case) that seem not to be aware of the limitations at this level. In my opinion, not all theoretical issues can be equally applied in the classroom and thus, more collaboration between researchers and

teachers would be very helpful for the selection of teaching content.<sup>193</sup> There appears to be a need for a more systematic research in addressing questions related to the subjunctive in Spanish. In doing so, we would find out what kind of input is most effective in helping instructors to improve their presentation of mood selection and thus, offer a model suitable for the classroom.

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<sup>193</sup> Handscombe, J. (1994). "The complementary roles of researchers and practitioners in second language education". In *The development of second language proficiency* [1990]ed. by B. Harley, P. Allen, J. Cummins and M. Swain. Cambridge: C.U.P. , pp. 181-86.

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## **APPENDICES**

**APPENDIX 1: LANGUAGE CONTACT PROFILE (adapted)**

Student's name \_\_\_\_\_ Sex M/F

Country of origin \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_

1-About how much time do you spend speaking Spanish outside of class every day? (circle one)

- a. none
- b. occasionally
- c. most of the time

2-How well do you think you speak Spanish now?

- a. poorly
- b. fair
- c. good
- d. very good
- e. excellent

3-How many years have you studied Spanish? \_\_\_\_\_

Where? \_\_\_\_\_

4-Do you live with anyone who speaks only Spanish? \_\_\_\_\_

5-When you have homework in Spanish do you

- a. do it as soon as you can
- b. do it if you find time
- c. do it at the last possible moment
- d. do it but turn it in late
- e. (none of these) \_\_\_\_\_

6-During Spanish classes do you

- a. have a tendency to daydream about your life
- b. have to force yourself to listen to the lesson
- c. listen at all times, even when it is not your turn
- d. listen when it is your turn but do other things when it is not

7-Do you watch television programs in Spanish?

- a. as often as you can
- b. once in a while
- c. not very often
- d. never

8-If you have a choice between listening to a radio program in your native language or in Spanish do you

- a. prefer Spanish

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b. sometimes listen to the Spanish programs and sometimes to those in your language

c. would not listen to the Spanish programs

9-Do you know any Spanish speakers? If you do, what is your relationship with them?

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10-Do you spend time trying to improve your Spanish outside of class? \_\_\_\_\_ How? (list all activities, e.g. watching t.v., reading, writing, speaking with friends , going to movies, etc.)

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**APPENDIX 2: (T1)**

*Completa las siguientes oraciones con una forma verbal adecuada. En aquellos casos en los que sea posible la utilización de Indicativo y Subjuntivo, escribe las dos opciones.*

- 1-Te recomiendo que (tú, ir)\_\_\_\_\_ al médico.
- 2-No es seguro que te (nosotros, poder)\_\_\_\_\_ dar una solución.
- 3-Estudio alemán con la intención de (yo, completar) \_\_\_\_\_ mis estudios.
- 4-Aunque (nosotros, estudiar)\_\_\_\_\_ mucho, no aprobaremos.
- 5-Quiere que le (yo, llamar) \_\_\_\_\_ el lunes cuando (yo venir) \_\_\_\_\_.
- 6-Quizás (él,ser)\_\_\_\_\_ millonario, pero no lo parece.
- 7-¡Qué pena que no (vosotros, tener)\_\_\_\_\_ aire acondicionado en casa!
- 8-Se fue antes de que su madre (llegar)\_\_\_\_\_.
- 9-Si no contesta es que no (él, saber)\_\_\_\_\_ la respuesta.
- 10-Puede que mañana (yo, ir)\_\_\_\_\_ a la piscina.
- 11-Si no (tú, tener)\_\_\_\_\_ cuidado, vas a tener problemas.
- 12-No cambia nada el hecho de que (él, venir)\_\_\_\_\_ hoy.
- 13-¿Te preocupa que (ella, llegar)\_\_\_\_\_ tarde a casa?
- 14-Es evidente que Juan no (él,ser)\_\_\_\_\_ muy inteligente.
- 15-¡Ojalá me (él,llamar)\_\_\_\_\_ esta noche!
- 16-Tráeme el primer libro que (tú, ver)\_\_\_\_\_.
- 17-No había ninguna persona que (poder)\_\_\_\_\_ ayudarme.
- 18-No es que (yo, aburrirse)\_\_\_\_\_, es que (yo, tener) \_\_\_\_\_ mucho sueño.
- 19-Podemos llamar a tu hermano, pero no (él, estar)\_\_\_\_\_ probablemente en casa.
- 20-No nos gusta que (tú, ser)\_\_\_\_\_ tan egoísta.
- 21-A pesar de que (yo, estar)\_\_\_\_\_ muy ocupado, iré a verlo.
- 22-Cada vez que mi hermano (venir)\_\_\_\_\_, íbamos juntos al cine.
- 23-Los socialistas piensan que (ellos, ganar)\_\_\_\_\_ las próximas elecciones.
- 24-Me molesta que la gente no (ser)\_\_\_\_\_ educada.
- 25-Tal vez (nosotros, viajar)\_\_\_\_\_ por Europa este verano.
- 26-Por mucho que lo (él, intentar)\_\_\_\_\_, no lo consiguió.
- 27-No habría aprobado aunque (yo, estudiar)\_\_\_\_\_.
- 28-Siempre que (hacer)\_\_\_\_\_ frío, me pondré el abrigo.

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- 29-Les sorprendió que les (tú, hablar)\_\_\_\_\_ de aquella forma.
- 30-Si (tú, querer)\_\_\_\_\_ ese coche, cómpralo.
- 31-Iré a su oficina a que me (ellos, dar)\_\_\_\_\_ una respuesta.
- 32-Eso te pasa por (tú, ser)\_\_\_\_\_ tan despistado.
- 33-Después de la discusión del otro día, he hablado hoy con mi hermano y se ha comportado como si no (pasar)\_\_\_\_\_ nada.
- 34-Te esperaré hasta que (tú, salir)\_\_\_\_\_ de la oficina.
- 35-Está claro que no (él, tener)\_\_\_\_\_ dinero.
- 36-¡Qué (vosotros, pasar)\_\_\_\_\_ un buen fin de semana!
- 37-Como Juan (estar)\_\_\_\_\_ enfermo, no ha venido a la fiesta.
- 38-El reportero no dijo que la noticia (ser)\_\_\_\_\_ falsa.
- 39-Se ha ido a Australia para (él, vivir)\_\_\_\_\_ nuevas experiencias.
- 40-A lo mejor yo (ir)\_\_\_\_\_ a Mallorca estas vacaciones.
- 41-Dudaba que (ella, venir)\_\_\_\_\_ a cenar.
- 42-Como no (tú, traer)\_\_\_\_\_ el abrigo, tuviste frío.
- 43-No comprendo que (tú, querer)\_\_\_\_\_ volver allí.
- 44-El hecho de que (él, ser )\_\_\_\_\_ tímido, no significa que no tenga personalidad.
- 45-Las personas que (estar)\_\_\_\_\_ allí, ya habían expresado su opinión.
- 46-No pienses que (él, ser)\_\_\_\_\_ una mala persona.
- 47-Si (él, ser)\_\_\_\_\_ rico, compraría una casa en el Caribe.
- 48-Aunque (ella, ser)\_\_\_\_\_ una buena persona, no me gusta tu amiga.
- 49-Probablemente Juan (dejar)\_\_\_\_\_ de fumar el próximo mes.
- 50-No nos prohibió que (nosotros, ver)\_\_\_\_\_ la televisión.
- 51-Todos los que (hacer)\_\_\_\_\_ el examen tendrán una semana libre.
- 52-Ya sé que llego tarde pero es que (haber)\_\_\_\_\_ mucho tráfico.
- 53-A pesar de que (él, comer)\_\_\_\_\_ mucho, no engorda.
- 54-Te habríamos llamado si (nosotros, llegar)\_\_\_\_\_ antes.
- 55-Aunque (tú, ir)\_\_\_\_\_ no te dejarán entrar.
- 56-No es posible que (él, irse)\_\_\_\_\_ ayer sin despedirse.
- 57-Despertará a todos los vecinos si (él, seguir)\_\_\_\_\_ tocando la guitarra.
- 58-Decoraré la casa como (yo, querer)\_\_\_\_\_.
- 59-Bebí tanto en aquella fiesta que no (yo, recordar)\_\_\_\_\_ nada.
- 60-Le detuvieron por (él, conducir)\_\_\_\_\_ borracho.
- 61-El reglamento dice que el que (venir)\_\_\_\_\_ tarde, no tendrá desayuno.
- 62-Me trata como si (yo, ser)\_\_\_\_\_ su esclavo.
- 63-No encontramos nada que nos (gustar)\_\_\_\_\_.
- 64-Si (yo, quitarse)\_\_\_\_\_ las lentillas, no veo nada.

## Uses and Misuses of the Subjunctive

- 65-Había mucha niebla; por consiguiente no (nosotros, ver)\_\_\_\_\_ nada.
- 66-No es que me (molestar)\_\_\_\_\_, es que simplemente no me (gustar)\_\_\_\_\_.
- 67-Todos, excepto los que (estar)\_\_\_\_\_ enfermos, pueden beber un vaso de vino.
- 68-En cuanto (yo, llegar)\_\_\_\_\_ a casa, le llamaré por teléfono.
- 69-Hubiéramos llamado a la policía si (nosotros, estar)\_\_\_\_\_ en esa situación.
- 70-Aunque (yo, terminar)\_\_\_\_\_ mis estudios el año pasado, no he encontrado trabajo todavía.
- 71-Le escribo esta carta para que (usted, conocer)\_\_\_\_\_ mi versión de la historia.
- 72-Me pidió que le (yo, comprar)\_\_\_\_\_ un libro que (ser)\_\_\_\_\_ más interesante.
- 73-Supongo que Luis (estar)\_\_\_\_\_ en Alemania.
- 74-No llegarías a tiempo aunque (tú, salir)\_\_\_\_\_ ahora mismo.
- 75-Estudiaba inglés no porque lo (ella, necesitar)\_\_\_\_\_, sino porque le gustaba.
- 76-Habla alto que te (nosotros, oír)\_\_\_\_\_ todos.
- 77-Si (yo, ver)\_\_\_\_\_ la película ayer te la contaría hoy.
- 78-Aunque no te (gustar)\_\_\_\_\_ la comida, cómetela.
- 79-Me parece una tontería que (ellos, tener)\_\_\_\_\_ miedo.
- 80-Hizo el trabajo según le (ellos, mandar)\_\_\_\_\_.
- 81-Te prestaría el libro si (él, ser)\_\_\_\_\_ mío.
- 82-No tenemos dinero; de ahí que no (nosotros, ir)\_\_\_\_\_ de vacaciones este año.
- 83-Aunque (él, ir)\_\_\_\_\_ no le dejarían pasar.
- 84-Creo que Cristina (llegar)\_\_\_\_\_ mañana a Salamanca.
- 85-Aunque tú y yo (estar)\_\_\_\_\_ comprometidos, prefiero decir que sólo somos amigos.
- 86-Iremos al concierto a menos que (haber)\_\_\_\_\_ algún problema.
- 87-Mis padres (venir)\_\_\_\_\_ quizás en Navidad.

**APPENDIX 3: (T2)**

1-(Dos estudiantes hablan de sus próximos exámenes.)

-Me han dicho que este año hay una nueva normativa en los exámenes de español.

-Sí, ¿cuál es la novedad?

-Resulta que si escribes un ensayo sobre la Historia de España, no tendrás que hacer el examen oral.

-¿De verdad?

-Sí, sí. Todos los que (hacer)..... el ensayo, están exentos del oral.

2-(Dos amigos trabajan juntos ordenando la biblioteca de su casa.)

-¡Dame un libro de Cervantes!

-¿Cuál de ellos?

-Da igual, todos esos son de Cervantes. Dame el que (estar)..... más cerca de ti.

3-(Dos amigos charlan sobre sus planes.)

-El próximo curso académico empezaré en septiembre. Como tengo que buscar alojamiento, vendré a finales del verano.

-Si necesitas ayuda me llamas.

-Vale, cuando (yo, venir)..... te llamo.

4-He leído varias revistas de decoración y después de pedir consejo a dos profesionales estoy totalmente decidida a ello. El próximo mes pintaré mi casa como (yo, querer) .....

5-(Dos amigos comentan la visita de Carlos.)

-Lo peor ha sido al final. No esperábamos una reacción así.

-Debe de haber una explicación. Carlos es muy raro. A veces se enfada por tonterías, nunca es puntual, es un poco egoísta pero... no sé... no es posible que (él, irse)..... ayer sin despedirse. Algo ha debido de pasarle.

6-(Dos amigas hablan sobre Ana.)

-Creo que Ana tiene problemas. Ultimamente está muy triste y callada.

-¿Piensas que se trata de algo serio?

-No exageres. No digo que (él, ser) ..... serio, sólo digo que debe de preocuparle algo. Simplemente eso.

7-(Dos amigos comentan sus preferencias sobre Edimburgo y Glasgow.)

-Aunque Edimburgo es más bonito, Glasgow tiene mucha más vida.

-¡Qué tontería!, ¿quién te ha dicho eso?

-Todo el mundo lo dice.

## Uses and Misuses of the Subjunctive

- No me importa. Aunque lo (decir)..... todo el mundo, eso es absurdo. Edimburgo no tiene nada que envidiar a Glasgow.
- 8-(Dos amigas hablan sobre la posible visita de Pablo.)  
-Me han dicho que a lo mejor viene Pablo en otoño.  
-No es seguro. Quizás (él, venir)..... en octubre, pero no lo ha confirmado todavía.
- 9-(Dos chicos hablan sobre la pareja Luis-Ana.)  
-Las relaciones entre Luis y Ana no van muy bien. Creo que están en crisis.  
-De todos modos, Luis no ha venido a Glasgow.  
-Es igual. Aunque (él, venir).....a Glasgow, no la habría llamado.
- 10-(Una joven se disculpa por su reciente comportamiento.)  
-Sé que últimamente he estado muy susceptible. No sé qué me pasaba.  
No es que (yo, estar).....enfadada contigo, es que necesitaba estar sola.
- 11-(Dos estudiantes hablan sobre el profesor de francés.)  
-Me han dicho que es muy estricto en sus calificaciones. El año pasado sólo aprobaron seis alumnos.  
-¡Uff! ¿Y qué vas a hacer entonces?  
-Nada, no estoy estudiando. No tiene ningún sentido estudiar. Aunque (yo, estudiar) ....., no aprobaré.
- 12-Durante los veranos, Claudia solía enseñar inglés por las mañanas. En realidad era un hobby para ella. Lo hacía no porque (ella, necesitar)..... el dinero, sino porque así se entretenía.
- 13-(Dos amigos están hablando... )  
-Tienes muy buen curriculum, seguro que no has tenido ninguna dificultad para encontrar trabajo.  
-Eso es lo que pensaba yo al principio. Ahora soy más realista, no importa nada tener un buen o un mal curriculum. En mi caso ha dado lo mismo, aunque (yo, terminar)..... el año pasado con buenas notas, no he encontrado nada.
- 14-Fue una pena que llegarais tan tarde ayer. Si (vosotros, venir).....un poco antes, habierais visto una puesta de sol alucinante.
- 15-Tengo que hacer una traducción al ruso; no sé ruso, ni tampoco conozco a nadie que lo hable, por eso estoy buscando a alguien, a cualquier persona que (hablar)..... ruso.

