Sequence-of-Tense, "tenselessness", and the scale of clausehood

Brenda LACA

Approaches to subjunctive tenses in Romance can be roughly split into two groups: those that propose that "the subjunctive" lacks a semantically independent temporal specification, and those that propose that subjunctive morphology follows the same patterns as indicative morphology and exhibits parallel Sequence-of-Tense behavior. However, the issue of the alleged "tenselessness" of the subjunctive has two sides to it that have not been sufficiently teased apart: either it is a property of subjunctive morphology as such, or it is a property of a particular type of clausal structure, flagged by subjunctive morphology, that lacks a full-fledged C/T domain. Raposo (1985) is, to my knowledge, the first theorist to have explicitly sided with the latter alternative. He claims that "tenselessness" is a property of a subtype of subjunctive clauses, those embedded under verbs of volition and directives (his *W-predicates*), which lack a tense operator in the C-domain. This subtype corresponds to the *intensional subjunctive clauses* later identified by Quer (1998) on the basis of four distinctive properties, none of which involves "tenselessness".

In this contribution, I will try to bring together some central ideas from two recent strands of research on clausal structure and on SoT. My goal will be to develop an analysis in the spirit of Raposo's original claim for a case of variation in the distribution and interpretation of the [*Present under Past*]-pattern in Spanish subjunctive clauses. The variation alluded to can be schematically represented as follows (Guajardo & Goodall 2019, Colonna et al. 2022, Laca et al. (in prep.)):

PRESENT-under-PAST	Dialect A Standard Spanish, Mexico, Spain	Dialect B Uruguay	Dialect C Argentina
	– DAR	– DAR	– DAR
Intensional Sbj-Cl	NO	YES	YES
Emot-Fact Sbj-Cl	NO	?NO	YES
Polarity Sbj-Cl	NO	NO	YES

Table 1: The interpretation of [Present under Past] in subjunctive clauses in three varieties of Spanish ([– DAR] = lack of double access reading)

In a nutshell, Dialect A seems to follow the SoT pattern for all subjunctive clauses alike, insofar as violations of the DAR-constraint (lack of double access reading) are disfavored in all cases. Dialect B deviates from the SoT pattern in the

case of intensional subjunctive clauses, insofar as in this case violations of the DAR-constraint are frequently attested and [Present under Past] is judged no less acceptable than [Past under Past] when the eventuality in the complement clause precedes Speech Time. However, Dialect B follows the SoT pattern in the other types of clause. Dialect C does not follow the SoT pattern in any type of subjunctive clause: violations of the DAR-constraint are attested in all types (although they are marginally more frequent in intensional subjunctive clauses).

The consensual view on the DAR-constraint is that it stems from an indexical present tense, i.e., a present tense that needs to be interpreted with regard to Speech Time, over and above being interpreted with regard to the matrix time (Ogihara & Sharvit 2012, Altshuler 2016). Against this background, the difference between Dialect A and Dialect C can be simply captured by the idea that Dialect A has an indexical and Dialect C a non-indexical present subjunctive. But what do we make of Dialect B, in which the present subjunctive behaves "non-indexically" in intensional subjunctive clauses, and "indexically" in other subjunctive clauses?

	Proposition	Situation	Event
Minimally required domains	Operator domain TMA domain Theta domain ($\cong$CP)	TMA domain Theta domain ($\cong$T/Asp-P)	Theta domain ($\cong$v/VP)
Complexity	most complex	intermediate	least complex
TYPE OF SUBJUNCTIVE CLAUSE	EMOTIVE-FACTIVE POLARITY	INTENSIONAL	

Table 2: Complement composition (adapted from Wurmbrand & Lohninger 2020)

For the analysis of argument clauses, I will resort to Wurmbrand & Lohninger's (2020) *Implicational Complementation Hierarchy (ICH)*, which distinguishes, from more clausal to less clausal, the three main semantic types represented in Table 2:

Since the ICH only establishes lower bounds, but no upper bounds for syntactic complexity, it explicitly predicts syntax-semantic mismatches, in which there may be (vacuous) syntactic structure that has no consequences for interpretation (Wurmbrand & Lohninger 2020). This feature of the ICH allows us to capitalize on Kauf & Zeijltra's (2018, 2022) idea that semantic Operator Tenses and Morphological Tenses both contribute a (possibly different but compatible) denotation of their own, in order to solve the problem posed by the distribution in Table 1. I will argue that (i) intensional subjunctive clauses, by contrast with the two other types, uniformly lack Operator Tenses; (ii) Dialect A's present subjunctive denotes an indexical present; (iii) Dialect B's present subjunctive denotes a "relative present" whose indexical interpretation is obtained from embedding under an Operator Present; and (iii) Dialect C's present

subjunctive is genuinely "tenseless" (infinitive-like, Wurmbrand 2014; Goodall & Guajardo 2019; Bochnak et al. 2019) and therefore neither requires nor allows licensing by an Operator Tense -it simply contributes a time variable that is equated to the attitude holder's NOW. A welcome feature of this analysis is that variation only stems from the different semantics of a morphological form, which is furthermore constant for each variety, and in no way compromises the overall typological status of the language as a SoT language.

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