

Mood alternation in Spanish conditional clauses: Condition, cause and the dominion hypothesis¹

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The present paper analyzes the mood alternation between Spanish conditional clauses introduced by the particle *si* ‘if’, on the one hand, and by conditional conjunctions such as *a condición de que* ‘on the condition that’, *con tal de que* ‘provided that’ and *siempre y cuando* ‘as long as’, on the other hand. Situated within the theoretical perspective of Cognitive Grammar, the paper argues that the conceptual content of the linguistic unit that introduces the conditional clause determines mood choice. In particular, it is claimed that the indicative mood in *si*-clauses reflects the CONCEPTUALIZER’S reasoning about the causal relation between two events. By contrast, the occurrence of the subjunctive mood in other conditional clauses is analyzed as a natural effect of the condition expressed by the conditional conjunction. The analysis further shows that the mood alternation can be explained by the concept of DOMINION. The particle *si* introduces a clause that is located within the conceptualizer’s EPISTEMIC DOMINION, whereas other conditional conjunctions introduce clauses that are located outside THE DOMINION OF EFFECTIVE CONTROL.

1. INTRODUCTION

Studies on mood choice are primarily conducted from two perspectives. Since the influential study by Terrell & Hooper (1974), semantic and pragmatic approaches to mood have shown a strong tendency towards analyzing the meaning of verbal mood in terms of ASSERTION and PRESUPPOSITION (see Lunn 1989; Guitart 1991; Mejías-Bikandi 1994, 1995, 1998, 2009; Terrell 1995). The fundamental claim within these theoretical frameworks is that the indicative mood is used in asserted contexts, whereas the subjunctive mood appears in contexts of NON-ASSERTION and presupposition.² From a formal (or modal) perspective, by contrast, mood alternation has been explained by a change of model in which the proposition is evaluated (see Farkas 1985, 1992; Quer 1998, 2001, 2010):

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[2] The semantic notions of assertion and presupposition have been further extended by pragmatic approaches to mood choice, which developed the idea of PRAGMATIC assertion and presupposition (see Guitart 1991). The pragmatic approach to mood choice commonly postulates a relation between presupposition, old information, and a low degree of relevance (see Lunn 1989, Mejías-Bikandi 1998).

the indicative mood is claimed to designate events in which there is no change in model, whereas the subjunctive mood designates a model change. The model change constitutes a shift from the epistemic model of the speaker to the bouletic model of the referent of the conceptualizer expressed by the main clause subject.

Although the studies referred to above share some fundamental insights about mood choice, the theoretical frameworks in which they are conducted seem to imply certain limitations regarding the scope of analysis. In fact, they tend to focus on complements of epistemic verbs, on verbs of volition, or on presupposed complements (following Terrell & Hooper 1974), or on mood alternation in relative clauses and concessive counterfactual clauses (see e.g. Quer 1998, 2001, 2010). Relatively little attention has been paid to mood alternation in conditional clauses, such as those in examples (1)–(3):

- (1) Si estudias, vas a aprobar el examen.
'If you study.IND, you will pass the exam.'
- (2) A condición de que estudies, vas a aprobar el examen.
'On the condition that you study.SUBJ, you will pass the exam.'
- (3) Con tal de que estudies, vas a aprobar el examen.
'Provided that you study.SUBJ, you will pass the exam.'

The mood alternation displayed above represents a highly delicate problem for anyone trying to find a unified explanation for mood choice in Spanish. The difficulty resides in explaining the reason why conditionals introduced by the particle *si* trigger the indicative mood, whereas other conditionals trigger the subjunctive mood. In short, if examples like (1), on the one hand, and (2)–(3), on the other hand, are considered to be more or less semantically equivalent paraphrases, why is the indicative mood used in example (1), whereas the subjunctive mood occurs in examples (2) and (3)?

The present study aims at finding an answer to this question. From the perspective of Cognitive Grammar (Langacker 1987, 1991, 2008), I will offer an explanation for the fact that clauses introduced by the particle *si* trigger the indicative mood, whereas the subjunctive mood tends to occur in other types of conditional clauses. In particular, it will be shown that the difference between examples like (1) and (2)–(3) can be explained by how overtly the condition is expressed. I will argue that examples such as (1) designate THE CONCEPTUALIZER'S reasoning and inferences about causal relations.³ In examples (2)–(3), by contrast, the condition for the occurrence of the main clause event is in focus.

[3] The term CONCEPTUALIZER is used in accordance with the terminology of Cognitive Grammar (Langacker 1987, 1991, 2008). The term refers to the participant for whom the linguistic expression is relevant. Furthermore, it emphasizes the notion that 'meaning is identified as the conceptualization associated with linguistic expressions' (Langacker 2008: 4). In prototypical cases, the conceptualizer equates with the speaker or the main clause subject. In the expression *Peter wants to buy a new car*, the main clause subject ('Peter') is the relevant conceptualizer of the complement event, whereas the speaker is the conceptualizer of the entire linguistic expression. In impersonals such as *It is sad that you behave like this*, the speaker is the conceptualizer by default.

Moreover, extending Maldonado's (1995) notion of DOMINION, the present paper will argue that the particle *si* introduces a clause that is located within the conceptualizer's EPISTEMIC DOMINION. Hence, the indicative mood occurs. By contrast, other conditional clauses designate events that are located outside the relevant conceptualizer's (the speaker or the main clause subject) DOMINION OF EFFECTIVE CONTROL, which motivates the use of the subjunctive mood. The claim made in the present paper is that the mood alternation observed above can be explained by the DOMINION HYPOTHESIS (see Vesterinen & Bylund 2013).

The outline of the paper is as follows. In Section 2.1, I will discuss some previous studies on mood in conditional clauses and in Section 2.2, I will outline the position taken in the present study. Section 3 will present the notion of dominion and discuss how the dominion hypothesis can explain mood choice. The analysis, in Section 4, will focus on the motivation for mood alternation in conditional clauses. Finally, I will offer some general conclusions in Section 5.

2. MOOD CHOICE IN SPANISH CONDITIONAL CLAUSES

2.1 *Some previous studies*

Bustos (1986: 232) explains the occurrence of the indicative mood in *si*-clauses from a formal pragmatic perspective of linguistic analysis. The analysis departs from the notion that both the particle *si* and the subjunctive mood presuppose that the speaker is neutral regarding the veracity of the clause, and that natural languages tend to avoid redundant information. Within this line of reasoning, the subjunctive mood would duplicate the information provided by the *si*-clause, which is why the indicative mood occurs in *si*-clauses.⁴ Bustos (1986) focuses primarily on mood choice in *si*-clauses, whereas conditionals such as those displayed in examples (2) and (3) above are left outside the scope of analysis.

From a similar theoretical perspective, Haverkate (2002) makes a distinction between the REALIS, POTENTIAL and IRREALIS interpretations of *si*-clauses, and comments that clauses with realis and potential interpretations trigger the indicative mood, whereas the subjunctive mood occurs in clauses with an irrealis interpretation. Haverkate (2002: 171–173) illustrates the difference between the realis and the potential interpretation of *si*-clauses with the following examples:

- (4) Si llueve, las calles se mojan. (realis)
'If it rains.IND, the streets get wet.'
- (5) Si tardas, marcharé sin ti. (potential)
'If you are late.IND, I shall leave without you.'

[4] However, it is not entirely clear why the subjunctive mood should convey this information. It is also difficult to understand how this explanation may account for the subjunctive mood in counterfactuals introduced by the particle *si*, e.g. *si tuviera dinero . . . compraría* 'if I had.SUBJ money . . . I would buy'.

The difference between examples (4) and (5) relates to the description of causal links between events in the real world, as in (4), and the description of events that have the potential to occur in the real world, as in (5). Haverkate (2002: 171–173) argues that an example like (4) describes generic factuality, which from the perspective of formal logic has a ‘material implication’, i.e. it has the illocutionary force of a statement on general laws, rules and principles that apply whenever the described condition is met. By contrast, the causal link in (5) is purely ‘based on a virtual state of affairs’. That is, the causal link between the two events is not factual in character but hypothetical (see also RAE 2009: 3550–3551).

Haverkate (2002) observes that the distinction between realis and potential implies certain difficulties in finding an explanation for the indicative mood in cases such as (5) above.⁵ In order to provide an explanation, he refers to Bustos (1986) and to the idea that natural language tends to avoid redundant information (see above). He also argues that the particle *si* expresses ‘a condition, or a possibility, and natural language does not seem to allow redundancy by allowing the possibility to be expressed again in the verb’ (Haverkate 2002: 173). That is, the subjunctive mood would duplicate the condition or the possibility expressed by the particle *si*. Following the explanation provided by Lunn (1989), Haverkate (2002: 173) further hypothesizes that a high degree of relevance of both the PROTASIS – the subordinate clause – and the APODOSIS – the main clause – could explain the indicative mood in *si*-clauses.

The occurrence of the subjunctive mood in other Spanish conditional clauses is explained in accordance with the semantic meaning of the conjunction that introduces the conditional clause. The conditional conjunction *en caso de que* ‘in the case that’ emphasizes the potential character of the proposition, which motivates the occurrence of the subjunctive mood. By contrast, the occurrences of the subjunctive mood in clauses that are introduced by conditional conjunctions such as *con tal de que* ‘provided that’, *bajo/con la condición de que* ‘under/with the condition that’ and *siempre que* ‘as long as’ is explained by their directive force (Haverkate 2002: 177).⁶

In a MENTAL SPACES analysis, Mejías-Bikandi (2009) argues that the particle *si* represents a SPACE BUILDER that sets up a domain parallel to the speaker’s view of reality (see Fauconnier 1994: 115; Mejías-Bikandi 2009: 164). The indicative mood is thus a natural consequence of the fact that it designates asserted information. In other conditional clauses, the truth of the proposition depends on the fulfillment of the condition, and this is why the subjunctive mood occurs. It designates non-asserted information. Mejías-Bikandi (2009: 164) illustrates this difference with the following formulas:

[5] Haverkate formulates the difficulty in the following way: ‘With respect to modal input, it is a striking fact that *potentialis* conditionals do not select the subjunctive, but the indicative mood’ (2002: 173; italics in the original).

[6] This statement seems to imply that the meaning of the Spanish subjunctive mood varies depending on the context in which it occurs.

A con tal de que B = A holds on condition that B also holds.

Si B, A = In a situation in which B holds, A holds (the hearer draws relevant inferences).

According to Mejías-Bikandi (2009), these formulas describe the semantic relations that hold between the clauses. A prototypical conditional conjunction creates a semantic relation between the two clauses in which the achievement of the main clause event depends on the condition expressed in the conditional clause. By contrast, the particle *si* does not establish any particular semantic relation between the two clauses: 'Rather, *si* invites us to consider a situation in which the proposition expressed by the protasis holds. At the same time the assertion is made that the proposition expressed in the apodosis also holds in this situation' (Mejías-Bikandi 2009: 169).

From the standpoint of the present study, the analyses offered by Bustos (1986) and Haverkate (2002) imply some explanatory problems. The first one is related to the notion of REDUNDANCY OF INFORMATION. Although this concept is useful for explaining the indicative mood in *si*-clauses, it seems to conflict with the occurrence of the Spanish subjunctive mood in potential contexts, i.e. after expressions such as *quizás* 'maybe', *tal vez* 'maybe' and *es posible que* 'it is possible that'. Haverkate (2002) explains the occurrence of the subjunctive mood in potential contexts by the potential meaning of the subjunctive mood, but this would further suggest that the subjunctive mood repeats the information given by the conditional conjunction. Another problem concerns the theoretical notions of realis and potential. The distinction implies a static view of causal relations. In fact, the notion of MATERIAL IMPLICATION suggests that a causal relation only occurs in cases of the type: ALWAYS X > ALWAYS Y. As example (5) above clearly shows, however, a potential *si*-clause can be causal in nature.

If human reasoning about causes and effects is taken into account, the indicative mood in example (5) can be explained by the fact that the speaker considers the causal relation to be in accordance with his/her EXPERIENCE of causes and effects in the world. Even though we do not always leave if someone is late, it is true that there are times when we lose our patience and do just that. Accordingly, the indicative mood occurs in a context in which the speaker expresses what s/he considers to be a causal relation between two events: X LATE > Y LEAVE. That is, the indicative mood is consistent with the speaker's way of conceptualizing the CAUSAL FORCE of the *si*-clause.⁷

2.2 The present study

The explanation offered by Mejías-Bikandi (2009) is in many ways compatible with the one offered in the present paper. However, unlike Mejías-Bikandi, who

[7] See Lakoff & Johnson (1999) for a discussion on the skeletal concept of causation and the metaphor CAUSES ARE FORCES. From this point of view, causes are conceptualized as being determining factors for the occurrence of a particular situation.

explains the indicative mood in *si*-clauses within the theoretical framework of mental spaces, the present paper will focus on the causal relation between the *si*-clause and the main clause. That is, the ‘relevant inference’ drawn by the conceptualizer is causal in character. Although the causal link may be present to different degrees, the analysis will show that it is always there.

Moreover, the mood alternation in conditional clauses will be explained by the notion of dominion. The claim is that the indicative mood in *si*-clauses designates an event that is located within the conceptualizer’s epistemic dominion, whereas the subjunctive mood in other conditional clauses designates an event that is located outside the dominion of effective control. More exactly, the analysis will show that the meaning of the particle *si* – designating inferences and reasoning about causal relations – is related to the conceptualizer’s epistemic dominion, whereas other conditional conjunctions, overtly expressing a condition for the occurrence of the main clause event, evoke the dominion of effective control. Subsequently, mood choice designates whether the described event is located within or outside the conceptualizer’s dominion: (i) the indicative mood designates an event that is located within the conceptualizer’s dominion, and (ii) the subjunctive mood designates that the event is located outside the conceptualizer’s dominion.

It goes without saying that the Cognitive Grammar analysis pursued in the present paper conflicts with previous approaches to the analysis of mood choice, conditional clauses and the concept of reality. For example, Giannakidou (1998, 2011) claims that a fundamental feature of *if*-clauses is that they are NON-VERIDICAL in character. The reason for this assumption seems to be that they designate a hypothetical relation and imply a projection into the future (see also Section 2.1 above). From the theoretical perspective of Cognitive Grammar, however, the concept of reality is conceived of in more dynamic terms. As Langacker (1991) points out: ‘[the] evolutionary momentum is conceived of as being strong enough that the future course of reality can be projected with considerable confidence’ (Langacker 1991: 228). That is, given our experience of how the world has evolved until the present, we have the capacity to also integrate future events into our conception of reality – and into our epistemic dominion.⁸ The concept of dominion will be discussed in the following section.

3. DOMINION AND MOOD

The concept of dominion as a theoretical tool for explaining mood choice in Spanish was originally introduced by Maldonado (1995). For Maldonado, the concept refers to ‘the conceptualizer’s capacity to control actively and to manipulate a circumstance in order to assess its status with respect to elaborated reality’ (Maldonado 1995: 406). Accordingly, Maldonado focuses on the relation

[8] See also Achard (1998) for the notion of ELABORATED REALITY. The term refers to our capacity to not only consider actual occurrences as real but to also consider what can or cannot happen in the future on the basis of earlier experiences (Achard 1998: 224–226).

between the subjunctive mood and epistemic considerations. The indicative mood occurs when the description of an event is located within the conceptualizer's epistemic dominion. By contrast, the subjunctive mood designates events that are located outside the conceptualizer's epistemic dominion. The following examples are cases in point:

- (6) Pedro cree que María viene a la fiesta.
'Pedro believes that María will come.IND to the party.'
- (7) Pedro no cree que María venga a la fiesta.
'Pedro does not believe that María will come.SUBJ to the party.'
- (8) Pedro duda de que María venga a la fiesta.
'Pedro doubts that María will come.SUBJ to the party.'
- (9) Pedro no duda de que María viene a la fiesta.
'Pedro does not doubt that María will come.IND to the party.'

In examples (6) and (9), the main clause expressions *creer* 'to believe' and *no dudar* 'to not doubt' express the main clause subject's (the conceptualizer's) positive epistemic attitude towards the occurrence of the event described in the complement clause. Accordingly, the indicative mood describes an event that is located within the participant's dominion.⁹ However, the expressions *no creer* 'to not believe' and *dudar* 'to doubt' in examples (7) and (8) designate the conceptualizer's uncertainty regarding the occurrence of the complement. This being so, the subjunctive mood occurs in these contexts. Figure 1 illustrates the difference between events that are located within and outside the conceptualizer's dominion.

The fundamental idea underlying Figure 1 is that the main verb puts focus on the conceptualizer's (C) relevant dominion (illustrated by the oval). That is, verbs such as *creer* 'to believe' and *dudar* 'to doubt' designate the conceptualizer's epistemic considerations. Hence, these verbs are related to the conceptualizer's epistemic dominion. Moreover, the main clause in examples such as (6) and (9) above designate the conceptualizer's positive epistemic attitude towards the complement event (E), which is the reason why the indicative mood occurs. It designates an event that is located within the conceptualizer's epistemic dominion. This situation is illustrated in Figure 1a. By contrast, examples (7) and (8) designate a negative attitude towards the veracity of the complement event. Accordingly, the event is located outside the conceptualizer's epistemic dominion. This relation is illustrated in Figure 1b. The occurrence of the subjunctive mood

[9] Although the indicative mood is preferred when the verb *dudar* 'to doubt' is negated (see RAE 2009), the subjunctive mood may occasionally occur. See Vesterinen & Bylund (2013) for a detailed analysis of mood alternation in this context. The assumption is that the subjunctive mood entails a dislocation from one dominion to another, i.e. from the epistemic dominion to the dominion of effective control (Vesterinen & Bylund 2013: 194–195).

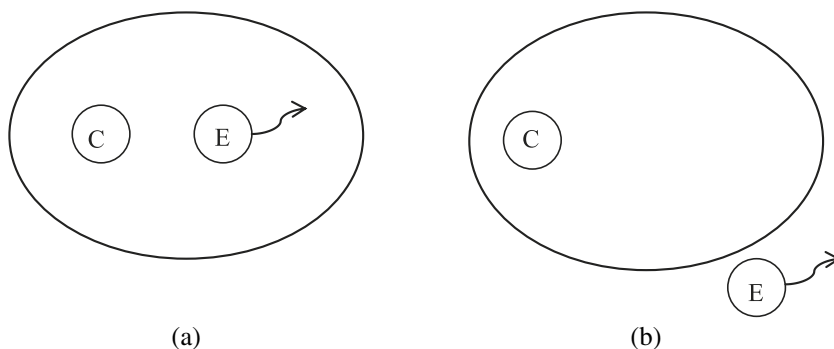


Figure 1
The concept of dominion: (a) within dominion, (b) outside dominion.

reflects this situation. This verbal mood designates events that are located outside the conceptualizer's dominion (see Maldonado 1995).

In a detailed analysis on the relation between nominal and clausal structures in English, Langacker (2009) extends the concept of dominion to not only cover epistemic considerations but also to account for the fact that we often try to influence the occurrence of events in the world. The concept of dominion is related to our EFFECTIVE CONTROL over events. Langacker (2009) explains this phenomenon in the following way:

For one thing, we have to bear in mind that epistemic control is not the only kind relevant to the analysis of grounding and finite clauses. Also important is effective control. These aspects of linguistic structure reflect not only our constant effort to acquire knowledge about the world, but also our efforts to change it – besides just learning what happens, we try to influence what happens. (Langacker 2009: 153)

Langacker suggests that this feature is particularly salient in verbs of volition (*to want, to hope, to aspire*, etc.) and in causatives such as *to order, to force* and *to persuade*. From the perspective of the present paper, the list of linguistic expressions that evoke the dominion of effective control can be further expanded to include, for example, expressions of an evaluative and deontic character. Expressions such as *it is sad* or *it is necessary* evoke the dominion of effective control by providing evidence for our attempt to influence and manipulate events in the world (see Vesterinen 2012a, b; Vesterinen & Bylund 2013). It is also interesting to note a correlation in which the Spanish counterparts of these expressions trigger the subjunctive mood. Consider the following examples:

- (10) Quiero que vengas a la fiesta.
'I want you to come.SUBJ to the party.'
- (11) Espero que vengas a la fiesta.
'I hope that you will come.SUBJ to the party.'

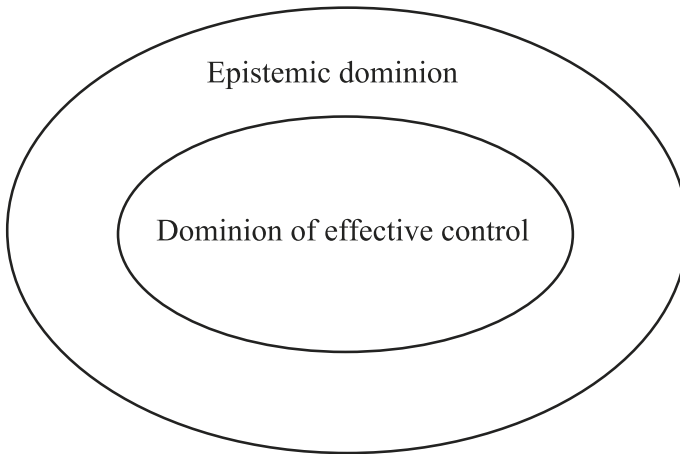


Figure 2
The bipartition of the concept of dominion.

- (12) Es triste que no vengas a la fiesta.
'It is sad that you do not come.SUBJ to the party.'
- (13) Es necesario que vengas a la fiesta.
'It is necessary that you come.SUBJ to the party.'

In fact, the bipartition of the concept of dominion accounts for mood alternation in a number of contexts. Not only is it valid for epistemic considerations, such as those exemplified in (6)–(9), but it also provides an explanation for the subjunctive mood in contexts of volition, as in (10)–(11), for the subjunctive in presupposed contexts, as in (12), and for its occurrence in deontic contexts, as in (13). In particular, there is a relation between the conceptual content of the linguistic expression that triggers the subjunctive mood and the occurrence of the subjunctive mood. That is, the expression that triggers mood choice evokes the relevant dominion: the epistemic dominion or the dominion of effective control. The subjunctive mood provides additional information. It designates that the event is located outside the relevant dominion. The bipartition of the concept of dominion is exemplified in [Figure 2](#).

[Figure 2](#) illustrates the idea that an event can be located within the conceptualizer's epistemic dominion and outside the dominion of effective control simultaneously. For example, factive expressions such as *es triste* 'it is sad' locate the complement event within the conceptualizer's epistemic dominion. Nonetheless, these expressions do not primarily designate the conceptualizer's epistemic considerations. They are related to the dominion of effective control, given that they designate the conceptualizer's evaluative attitude about events in the surrounding world. Similarly, verbs of volition and deontic expressions, such as those displayed in examples (10)–(11) and (13), are not related to the

conceptualizer's epistemic dominion. Rather, they designate the conceptualizer's attempt to manipulate and influence the occurrence of events. Although the complement events of these expressions are located outside both the epistemic dominion and the dominion of effective control, it is the latter that bears some importance for the conceptualizer.¹⁰ In the subsequent analysis, it will be shown that the dominion hypothesis provides a conceptually grounded explanation for mood alternation in conditional clauses.

4. ANALYSIS

It is pertinent to clarify that the present paper focuses primarily on mood alternation in Spanish conditional clauses. That is, the analysis does not offer an in-depth analysis on different semantic and pragmatic interpretations of conditional clauses, which is a complex issue that would require a totally different focus. In addition, counterfactuals such as *si tuviera dinero . . . compraría* 'if I had.SUBJ money . . . I would buy' are left outside the scope of analysis. Instead, I will deal with three domains in which English *if*-clauses tend to occur: the content domain, the epistemic domain, and the speech-act domain. Sweetser (1990: 114, 116, 119) illustrates these domains with the following examples:

- (14) If Mary goes, John will go. (content domain)
 (15) If she's divorced, (then) she's been married. (epistemic domain)
 (16) There are biscuits on the sideboard if you want them. (speech-act domain)

The meaning difference in these examples (14)–(16) depends on the conceptual relation between the *if*-clause and the main clause. In example (14), there is a real world content relation between the two clauses. The speaker argues that the event of Mary going (somewhere) leads to the event of John going there. Stated differently, if Mary does not go, this may cause John to not go. Example (15) differs from content domain in a fundamental way. In fact, it is difficult to sustain that the divorce is a condition (or cause) for the main clause event. Rather, the example illustrates an inferential link between the two clauses. If the speaker knows the truth of the protasis, s/he may infer the truth of the apodosis. Finally, example (16) does not seem to create any relation between the two clauses. However, the expression is perfectly relevant in a context in which the speaker believes that the hearer may want a biscuit (see Sweetser 1990: 119).

[10] The reason for locating the dominion of effective control within the epistemic dominion is rather obvious. We do not necessarily have effective control over events that are located within our epistemic dominion, but if they are located within the dominion of effective control, they are also located within the epistemic dominion. We tend to believe in the occurrence of events that we are able to control.

4.1 *Content domain*

This analysis will focus on the notion that *si*-clauses are less conditional in character and that they describe a plausible and/or possible cause for the occurrence of the main clause event. By contrast, prototypical conditionals, such as *a condición de que* ‘on the condition that’, *con tal de que* ‘provided that’, *siempre y cuando* ‘as long as’, etc., seem to describe a necessary condition for the fulfilment of the main clause event. This difference is illustrated in the following examples:

- (17) Si haces ejercicio físico, tu salud mejora.
‘If you do.IND physical exercise, your health will improve.’
- (18) A condición de que hagas ejercicio físico, tu salud mejora.
‘On the condition that you do.SUBJ physical exercise, your health will improve.’
- (19) Con tal de que hagas ejercicio físico, tu salud mejora.
‘Provided that you do.SUBJ physical exercise, your health will improve.’
- (20) Siempre y cuando hagas ejercicio físico, tu salud mejora.
‘As long as you do.SUBJ physical exercise, your health will improve.’

Example (17) is an accurate description of a context in which someone proposes physical exercise to a friend in order for him/her to improve the health, whereas (18)–(20) describe a situation in which physical exercise is a necessary condition for improved health. That is, the protasis in example (17) designates a causal force that may be used in order to achieve the event described in the main clause. By contrast, examples (18)–(20) seem to put emphasis on the necessary condition for the fulfilment of the main clause event.

The difference between examples (17) and (18)–(20) becomes more obvious if we try to add an alternative to the condition expressed in the protasis:

- (21) Si haces ejercicio físico, tu salud mejora, pero también puedes dar paseos.
‘If you do.IND physical exercise, your health will improve, but you can also take walks’
- (22) ?A condición de que hagas ejercicio físico, tu salud mejora, pero también puedes dar paseos.
‘On the condition that you do.SUBJ physical exercise, your health will improve, but you can also take walks.’
- (23) ?Con tal de que hagas ejercicio físico, tu salud mejora, pero también puedes dar paseos.
‘Provided that you do.SUBJ physical exercise, your health will improve, but you can also take walks.’
- (24) ?Siempre y cuando hagas ejercicio físico, tu salud mejora, pero también puedes dar paseos.
‘As long as you do.SUBJ physical exercise, your health will improve, but you can also take walks.’

The reason why examples (22)–(24) sound unnatural is probably because they create a semantic conflict between a necessary condition and an alternative to this condition. This is not the case in example (21). The relation between the two events is in accordance with the speaker's conception of causes and effects in the world and is not due to necessary conditions. Indeed, we know that physical exercise improves our health, but we also know that health can be improved by other means under normal circumstances. Therefore, the *si*-clause in (21) describes a causal force that leads to the effect of the main clause event. This causal force is located within the speaker's epistemic dominion and that is why the indicative mood occurs.

Another difference is related to the character of the effect. On a purely intuitive basis, causal relations can have either a positive or a negative outcome. Prototypical conditions, by contrast, tend to focus on a desired outcome. A condition is set up for the occurrence of an event with positive features. This is why the causal relations described in (25) and (26) are perfectly natural, whereas examples (27) and (28) seem to be less appropriate:

- (25) Si comes demasiado, vas a engordar.
'If you eat.IND too much, you will get fat.'
- (26) Si te asomas por la ventana, puedes caer.
'If you lean.IND out of the window, you may fall down.'
- (27) ?A condición de que comas demasiado, vas a engordar.
'On the condition that you eat.SUBJ too much, you will get fat.'
- (28) ?A condición de que te asomes por la ventana, puedes caer.
'On the condition that you lean.SUBJ out of the window, you may fall down.'

The examples displayed above refer to the conception that some events lead to the occurrence of other events. If you eat too much, it may have a negative consequence for your physical condition, and if you lean out of an open window, you may fall out. These relations are causal in character. Thus, examples (25)–(26) describe the speaker's conception of causal relations in the world and not a condition for the outcome of the event described in the main clause. By contrast, examples (27)–(28) illustrate a semantic conflict in which a condition is expressed in a context of causal relations.

Accordingly, the semantic difference between *si*-clauses, on the one hand, and other conditional clauses, on the other hand, refers to how overtly the condition for the occurrence of the main clause event is expressed. This difference can also explain why conditional conjunctions typically trigger the subjunctive mood. To put a condition on someone or something evokes the dominion of effective control. In prototypical cases, the fulfilment of the condition is located outside the conceptualizer's dominion of effective control. Consider the following examples:

- (29) A condición de que te portes bien, puedes salir con los demás.
‘On the condition that you behave.SUBJ, you can go out with the others.’
- (30) Con tal de que te portes bien, puedes salir con los demás.
‘Provided that you behave.SUBJ, you can go out with the others.’
- (31) Siempre y cuando te portes bien, puedes salir con los demás.
‘As long as you behave.SUBJ, you can go out with the others.’

The common denominator of examples (29)–(31) is that the conceptualizer (equated with the speaker) expresses a condition for the fulfilment of the main clause event. However, the occurrence of the event described in the conditional clause is located outside the conceptualizer’s dominion of effective control. In fact, placing a condition on someone to do something does not entail that the event will be realized. It is the referent of the subject of the conditional clause who is the active participant in the described event, and as such, s/he may decide whether to execute the action or not. The conceptualizer may wish that the action will occur but has no effective control over whether it in fact does.

The relevant conceptualizer can also be equated with the main clause subject:

- (32) El presidente está dispuesto a iniciar un diálogo con los terroristas a condición de que proclamen un alto de fuego.
‘The president is willing to initiate a dialogue with the terrorists on the condition that they proclaim.SUBJ ceasefire.’
- (33) Con tal de que la empresa aumente la seguridad de la fábrica, los trabajadores prometen no ir a la huelga.
‘Provided that the company increases.SUBJ the security, the workers promise to not go on strike.’

In examples (32)–(33), the participant referred to by the subject of the main clause puts a condition on the subject of the conditional clause. The conditional conjunctions *a condición de que* ‘on the condition that’ and *con tal de que* ‘provided that’ evoke the dominion of effective control. The completion of this event, however, depends on a willingness to cooperate with the main clause subject. This being so, the subjunctive mood expresses that the event is located outside the main clause subject’s dominion. Another participant, i.e. the subject of the conditional clause, represents the active participant of the described event. [Figure 3](#) illustrates the difference between *si*-clauses and clauses introduced by other conditional conjunctions.

As illustrated in [Figure 3a](#), the causal relation between the *si*-clause and the main clause focuses on the conceptualizer’s epistemic dominion. In [Figure 3a](#), the higher degree of salience of the epistemic dominion is illustrated with the bold line surrounding the conceptualizer’s epistemic dominion. This causal relation corresponds to the conceptualizer’s view of causal relations in the world, which is why the *si*-clause is located within the epistemic dominion. By contrast, prototypical conditional clauses designate the conceptualizer’s dominion of effective control.

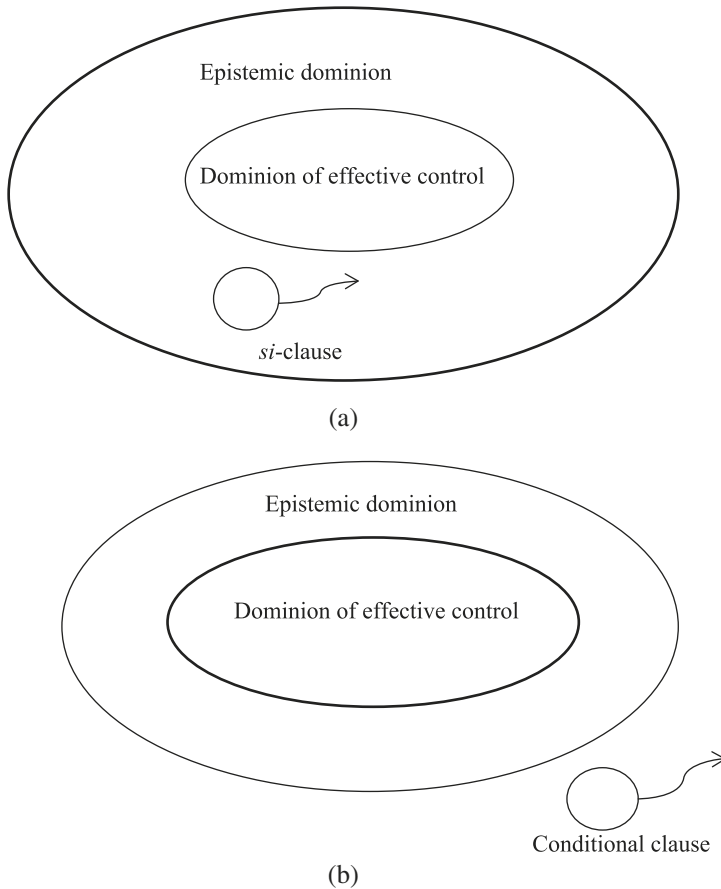


Figure 3

Si-clauses and other conditional conjunctions: (a) *si*-clauses and the epistemic dominion, (b) conditional clauses and the dominion of effective control.

This is illustrated in Figure 3b. The fact that the event described in the conditional clause depends on the action of a participant other than the conceptualizer entails that is located outside the conceptualizer's dominion of effective control.

To conclude, the mood alternation analyzed above can be explained by the concept of dominion. *Si*-clauses do not primarily focus on the conditional relation between two events, but rather they express the speaker's conception of causal relations. Accordingly, the indicative mood designates an event that is located within the speaker's epistemic dominion. By contrast, prototypical conditional conjunctions evoke the dominion of effective control. The subjunctive mood adds the information that the described condition is located outside the conceptualizer's dominion.

4.2 *Epistemic domain*

The epistemic domain differs from the content domain in that in the former the causal relation is more indirect than in the latter. Instead of designating a causal relation between two events, the *si*-clause designates the basis for the conclusion expressed in the main clause. This phenomenon was illustrated in example (15), e.g. *If she is divorced, (then) she's been married*, in which the knowledge of the protasis leads to the conclusion expressed in the apodosis. Knowledge of the proposition expressed by the *si*-clause causes the conceptualizer to conclude that the main clause event is true. Obviously, this feature rules out the use of prototypical conditional conjunctions:

- (34) ?A condición de que/con tal de que/siempre y cuando ella esté divorciada, ha estado casada.
 'On the condition that/provided that/as long as she is.SUBJ divorced, she has been married.'

The fact that the particle *si*, rather than a prototypical conditional conjunctions, is used in order to describe the speaker's inferences provides further evidence for the claim that this particle introduces a causal force that motivates the conceptual content of the main clause. Thus, the occurrence of the particle *si* in the epistemic domain can be conceived of as a functional extension from the content domain (see Sweetser 1990: 141). The following examples illustrate the inferential causal relation between the *si*-clause and the main clause:

- (35) Si la luz está encendida, los Pérez están en casa.
 'If the light is.IND on, the Pérez are at home.'
- (36) Si Pedro ha dejado un mensaje, ya se habrá ido.
 'If Pedro has.IND left a message, he has already gone.'
- (37) Si Mario puede permitirse el lujo de comprar un coche nuevo, debe ser rico.
 'If Mario can.IND afford the luxury of buying a new car, he must be rich.'

In examples such as (35)–(37), there is no direct causal relation between the two clauses: the light does not cause the arrival of 'the Pérez'; the message does not cause Pedro's departure; and the buying of the car does not cause financial wealth. Nonetheless, there is a causal relation if we consider the basis on which the speaker reaches a conclusion. These examples present inferential chains of the type: LIGHTS ON > THEY ARE AT HOME; LEFT MESSAGE > GONE; and AFFORD TO BUY A CAR > RICH. The conceptual content of the *si*-clause causes the conceptualizer to draw the conclusion expressed in the main clause.

In this sense, the function of the particle *si* within the epistemic domain resembles the function of the causal conjunction *porque* 'because'. It is a well-known fact that this conjunction not only designates 'purely' causal relations, but also the conceptualizer's inferences. It is thus perfectly natural to use *porque* 'because' in the epistemic domain:

- (38) Los Pérez están en casa, porque la luz está encendida.
'Pérez are at home, because the light is on.'
- (39) Pedro ya se habrá ido, porque dejó un mensaje.
'Pedro has probably already gone, because he left a message.'
- (40) Mario debe ser rico, porque puede permitirse el lujo de comprar un coche nuevo.
'Mario must be rich, because he can afford the luxury of buying a new car.'

A common explanation for the meaning of *porque* in this context is that it has an explicative function (see Oversteegen 1997, Sanders 1997, Pander Maat & Sanders 2000). The *porque*-clause provides an explanation for the reason why the speaker reaches a conclusion. In other words, the causal *porque* is analogous to the particle *si*. Both can introduce a clause that explains the underlying cause for the conceptualizer's inference. Accordingly, the indicative mood reflects the fact that it designates the basis on which the conceptualizer draws a conclusion. Needless to say, the described event is located within the conceptualizer's epistemic dominion.

4.3 *Speech-act domain*

The occurrence of *si*-clauses in the speech-act domain represents a further extension of the content domain. If the epistemic domain mirrors a CAUSE–EFFECT relation in which the *si*-clause is the basis for a conclusion, *si*-clauses in the speech-act domain tend to correlate with the speaker's reasoning – or inferences – regarding the situation described in the *si*-clause. Alternatively, the *si*-clause may represent known information (see Haiman 1978). These features cause the conceptualizer to express the conceptual content of the main clause. Examples (41)–(42) illustrate this phenomenon.

- (41) Si tienes hambre, hay comida en la nevera.
'If you are hungry.IND, there is food in the fridge.'
- (42) Si puedo decirlo, me parece que debes estudiar.
'If I may say.IND so, I think you should study.'

Although examples (41)–(42) differ in some aspects, they do evoke a causal relation between the *si*-clause and the main clause.¹¹ This causal relation is perhaps more overtly expressed in example (41). The act of informing the hearer that there is food in the refrigerator is only relevant if the speaker has some

[11] As with the epistemic domain, the speech-act domain does not seem to allow the use of prototypical conditional conjunctions such as *?On the condition that you are hungry, there is food in the fridge* and *?On the condition that I may say so . . .*. The fact that prototypical conditionals are peculiar in this particular context confirms the hypothesis that the particle *si* should not be treated as a conditional conjunction.

reason to believe that the hearer is hungry. On the one hand, the *si*-clause can represent known information; that is, the speech act has been preceded by the information that the hearer is hungry, e.g. ‘I am really hungry’. On the other hand, some contextual evidence may cause the conceptualizer to infer that the hearer is hungry. In both cases, the conceptualizer has a reason to believe that the conceptual content of the *if*-clause is true. Thus, the indicative mood describes an event that is located within the conceptualizer’s epistemic dominion. The *si*-clause in example (42) is more properly regarded as a discourse marker expressing politeness and, as such, it imposes a permission assumed by the speaker to make an assertion. The *if*-clause is in this sense the cause for expressing the main clause: IF I AM ALLOWED TO SAY IT > I SAY IT. In sum, the indicative mood in examples (41)–(42) describes events that are located within the speaker’s epistemic dominion.

Finally, Mejías-Bikandi (2009: 168) comments on what he refers to as INCRECULITY CONDITIONALS, e.g. *Si tú eres Bill Gates, yo soy un marciano* ‘If you are Bill Gates, I am a Martian’. From the perspective of the present analysis, the most plausible interpretation of this example is that the conceptualizer (equated with the speaker) does not believe the protasis to be true, which causes him/her to express the conceptual content of the apodosis. This causal relation can be formulated as IF YOU SAY X (WHICH I DOUBT TO BE TRUE), I SAY Y (WHICH IS NOT TRUE). The causal relation *per se* is located within the conceptualizer’s epistemic dominion.

5. CONCLUSION

The aim of the present study has been to provide a plausible explanation for mood choice in Spanish conditional clauses from a Cognitive Grammar perspective. In doing so, special attention has been given to the concept of dominion. The analysis has shown that this concept can account for mood alternation in a natural manner. In particular, it provides a conceptually grounded explanation for the fact that clauses introduced by the particle *si* trigger the indicative mood, whereas the subjunctive mood occurs in conditional clauses introduced by conjunctions such as *a condición de que* ‘on the condition that’, *con tal de que* ‘provided that’ and *siempre y cuando* ‘as long as’.

This is to say that the particle *si* does not primarily express a condition for the occurrence of the main clause event. Rather, it reflects the speaker’s conception of causal relations in the world. Accordingly, the indicative mood in *si*-clauses designates an event that is located within the conceptualizer’s epistemic dominion. By contrast, prototypical conditional conjunctions overtly express a condition for the event described in the main clause. The analysis has shown that the fulfilment of this condition is located outside the relevant conceptualizer’s dominion of effective control. As a natural consequence, the Spanish subjunctive mood occurs. The subjunctive mood designates an event that is located outside the conceptualizer’s dominion.

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