

Dialectal variation in mood choice in Spanish journalistic prose

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ABSTRACT

This article examines dialectal variation in mood choice in journalistic prose after the adverbials *después de que* ‘after’ and *luego de que* ‘after’ in subordinate clauses of past temporal complex sentences in Spanish. Because the matrix clause of sentences of this type contains a verb in a past tense, indicating that an action has certainly taken place, the event of the verb in the subordinate clause headed by *después de que* or *luego de que* is anterior to this completed event and is also a necessarily completed event that therefore is in a prescriptively indicative context. However, data collected from an on-line corpus of Spanish texts from Spanish-speaking countries and from on-line periodicals show that journalistic prose from Spain universally opts for the subjunctive mood in these contexts, whereas Mexico tends to use the indicative. Other Spanish-speaking countries show varying degrees of frequency of choice for these moods. Previous approaches to explaining mood choice have maintained that variation in mood choice in the complement clause is determined by the intentions of the speaker. The data in this study refute these claims by demonstrating that the use of the indicative or the subjunctive mood is well established in Mexico and Spain, respectively, and variable in the other Spanish-speaking countries.

The present investigation will focus on the mood selection in factual past time, in subordinate clauses following the temporal adverbials *luego de que* ‘after’ and *después de que* ‘after’ in Spanish journalistic prose. According to prescriptive grammar (Canteli Dominicus & Reynolds, 1998:142; Solé & Solé, 1977:17), if the temporal setting of the verb in the matrix clause is past, the mood choice for the subordinate clause following *luego de que* or *después de que* should logically be a preterit indicative such as in (1).

- (1) *Ellos fueron* (PRET IND) *al cine luego de que cenaron* (PRET IND) *en el restaurante.*
‘They went to the movies after they ate in the restaurant.’

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However, not uncommon are sentences such as (2), from a Spanish newspaper, in which the mood of the verb in the subordinate clause is the preterit subjunctive.

- (2) *La noticia se difundió* (PRET IND) *en estos días, luego de que Jack -el joven afortunado- naciera* (PRET SUBJ) *sin complicaciones y con un estado de salud bueno.* (El Eco de Virginia, Issue #206, Jack, el paciente más joven del mundo)
 ‘The news was released recently after Jack, the fortunate baby, was born without complications and in good health.’

In this sentence the temporal setting of the verb in the matrix clause is past, the adverbial *luego de que* indicates a retrospective relation between the matrix clause and the subordinate clause. In other words, the action of the verb in the matrix clause happened after the completion of the action in the subordinate clause. The inherent factual nature of these sets of circumstances creates an indicative context for which a verb in the indicative mood is prescribed, yet the mood choice for the verb in the subordinate clause in (2) is subjunctive. Web searches with the key words *luego de que* and *después de que* show that there is a great deal of variation in mood choice after these two adverbials in past temporal clauses in journalistic prose.

The observation that the preterit subjunctive is used as a preterit, imperfect or present or past perfect indicative in literature and in journalistic prose has long been noted (Staubach, 1946; Wright, 1926a, 1926b, 1947) and even criticized (Mallo, 1947, 1950). Although there are a plethora of theories and investigations into mood choice in Spanish in general, and a few studies specifically on the variation of mood choice after *luego de que* and/or *después de que* in past temporal subordinate clauses, none of these previous investigations can adequately explain the data presented in this study. The purpose of this article is to present data that counter previous hypotheses on mood choice by showing that mood choice in sentences of this type is dialectal in Spain and Mexico and is variable in other Spanish-speaking countries.

METHODOLOGY

The data for tabular analysis for this investigation were obtained through the *Corpus de referencia del español actual* (CREA), a data bank available on-line from the Real Academia Española (1989). CREA is comprised of a wide variety of oral and written texts produced in Spanish-speaking countries from 1975 to 2001. The written texts come from 100 different sources and include samples from newspapers, magazines, and books. A search engine allows one to type in a word or phrase, in this case *luego de que* or *después de que*, and sort by a year or span of years, by Spanish-speaking country (a total of 23 countries), and by type of document (newspapers, magazines, books, miscellaneous, oral, or all of the aforementioned). Once a selection has been made, a large portion of the text with the word or words selected is highlighted. At the end of the text, the year, author, title, country of origin, and theme of the document are described. Documents whose author was named as *prensa* ‘the press’ were selected for this investigation.

CREA uses articles from a variety of news sources for its database. For example, Mexican newspapers include *El Universal*, *Proceso*, and *Excelsior*; Spanish newspapers include *El País*, *Voz de Galicia*, *Diario Vasco*, *El Norte de Castilla*, *Diario de Navarra*, *El Mundo*, *El Faro de Vigo*, and *Canarias 7*. Only articles produced from within the specific countries were accepted for analysis, as indicated in the city of origin in the byline. Thus, if the article was bought from the Associated Press or another organization, the data were not accepted.

Luego de que and *después de que* can also be used after clauses in which the matrix verb is in the temporal present or future perspective. When the temporal present implies a habitual state of affairs, the present indicative is used in the subordinate clause. If the verb in the matrix clause is in the future temporal perspective (which can also be represented by a morphologically present verb), the subjunctive is used in the subordinate clause, as the action or state in the subordinate clause is dependent on the completion of the action in the matrix clause (de Bruyne, 1995:484). The focus of this investigation is limited to the past temporal perspective, as it is in this perspective that the action or state of the verb in the subordinate clause must be a completed event because the action of the verb in the matrix clause depends on this completion in order to have taken place at all.

The adverbial phrases *luego que* and *después que* followed by a subordinate clause share the same meaning and are equally valid as *luego de que* and *después de que* ([http://rae.es/rae/geostroes/gespub000005.nsf\(voAnexos\)/arch7F13F582E3397492C1256...](http://rae.es/rae/geostroes/gespub000005.nsf(voAnexos)/arch7F13F582E3397492C1256...)). However, using these key words in a search can yield constructions in which the adverb and *que* do not yield the meaning 'after', such as in *Primero dice que es chileno y después que es peruano* 'First he says he is Chilean and afterwards that he is Peruvian'. For this reason, the key word searches for this investigation were limited to *luego de que* and *después de que*.

Another option for using these adverbials is to omit *que* and use an infinitive in place of a subordinate clause. However, in this type of construction the subject of the matrix clause must be the same as that of the infinitival phrase. As the purpose of this investigation is to study mood choice in subordinate clauses, these types of constructions were not considered.

Of central importance to this investigation was the mood used in what is an apparently indicative context. Therefore, only those sentences in which the verb in the matrix clause was in the preterit, imperfect, pluperfect, or perfect anterior were considered for tabular analysis, as the semantic value of these forms indicate an exclusively past event. If the verb in the matrix clause was in the historical present, a verb with present tense morphology, yet presenting a past temporal perspective, the sentence was not accepted, as it could be construed that these sentences were in the present temporal perspective, thus invalidating the temporal balance of past actions. Similarly, the verbs in the subordinate clause were considered relevant only if they were in one of the indicative or subjunctive preterit forms.

To verify the data obtained in the CREA search, additional data were obtained from *La Jornada* of Mexico City, *El Mundo* of Madrid, and *La Nación* of San José, Costa Rica. These data were taken from articles written in 2003, so as not to rep-

licate data obtained from the CREA search. These particular newspapers were chosen because they had search engines that would accept the phrase *después de que*.

Additional data for analysis were obtained from the Google search engine, which also allows one to type in a phrase such as *luego de que* or *después de que*. These data were not used in the tabular analyses, but some samples were used as supplemental examples of mood choice within the same country, article, or sentence.

Journalistic prose was chosen because it offers the ideal medium for extracting complex sentences with the adverbials *luego de que* and *después de que*, as journalists are reporting events that indeed took place and are presumably dedicated to reporting straightforward facts. Therefore, given that the event or action in a matrix clause did reportedly take place, the reported action or event in the subordinate clause following *luego de que* or *después de que* must also have taken place, thus theoretically taking the indicative. While journalistic prose is universally considered to be a stylistic register in the literature, nevertheless, “*resulta particularmente importante el análisis de la lengua en los periódicos y revistas, porque se trata de un registro que goza de mayor permanencia que los que corresponden a otros medios de comunicación*”, ‘The analysis of the language of newspapers and magazines is particularly important because it is a register that enjoys more permanence than those corresponding to other means of communication’ (Martínez Albertos, 1989:36).

DATA

Not all countries have data available from CREA that contain sentences with *luego de que* and *después de que*. The countries with the most available data are represented in the current investigation: Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Mexico, Spain, and Venezuela. Table 1 lists the number of cases examined per country.

Each case was examined to determine the mood choice in the complement clause. Table 2 presents the frequency of the indicative mood and the subjunctive mood after the two adverbials according to the country in which the sample was found.

Three salient observations can be drawn from this data. First, the data from Mexico ($N = 50, 80$) indicate that there is an overwhelming preference for the indicative after both *luego de que* and *después de que*. The data from Spain ($N = 30, 85$) shows the opposite: an overwhelming preference for the subjunctive. Costa Rica tends to lean toward the indicative. Second, within the remaining countries there is a high degree of variability in mood choice after both adverbial conjunctions. Third, the adverbial conjunction does not appear to affect mood choice. Thus, if a particular country tends to favor the indicative over the subjunctive after *luego de que*, it will also favor the indicative after *después de que*. In a search for number of tokens of *luego de que* and *después de que*, it is apparent that *después de que* appears more frequently.

TABLE 1. *Cases of past temporal clauses following luego de que and después de que by country in CREA*

Country	<i>Luego de que</i>	<i>Después de que</i>
Argentina	46	50
Chile	49	50
Colombia	50	50
Costa Rica	12	24
Guatemala	19	16
Mexico	50	80
Peru	17	17
Spain	30	85
Venezuela	38	34

TABLE 2. *Frequency of preterit indicative and preterit subjunctive after luego de que and después de que in CREA*

Country	<i>Luego de que</i>		<i>Después de que</i>	
	Indicative	Subjunctive	Indicative	Subjunctive
Argentina	47.8	52.2	40	60
Chile	57.1	42.9	65	35
Colombia	50	50	76	24
Costa Rica	83	17	87.5	12.5
Guatemala	63	37	68.8	31.2
Mexico	96	4	90	10
Peru	41	59	38	62
Spain	12	88	0	100
Venezuela	36.8	63.2	32.3	67.7

Based on these observations, an additional test for frequency of mood choice after *después de que* was run from data collected in the newspapers *El Mundo*, *La Jornada*, and *La Nación* from Madrid, Mexico City, and San José, respectively. As in the CREA search, only articles verifiably produced from within the countries were accepted for analysis. These results, shown in Table 3, support the data obtained from CREA for Mexico and Spain. However the data obtained in this second search indicate that mood choice in Costa Rica is more variable than in the CREA search ($N = 56$ for Spain and Mexico, and $N = 50$ for Costa Rica).

The results from CREA and the individual journals are very similar. The data for Spain ($N = 85$) from the CREA search show that the subjunctive is used with

TABLE 3. *Frequency of preterit indicative and preterit subjunctive after después de que in selected newspapers from Spain, Mexico, and Costa Rica*

Journal	Indicative (number)	Indicative (frequency)	Subjunctive (number)	Subjunctive (frequency)
<i>El Mundo</i> (Spain)	1	1.7	55	98.2
<i>La Jornada</i> (Mexico)	51	91	5	8.9
<i>La Nación</i> (Costa Rica)	30	60	20	40

100% frequency after *después de que*. The data from *El Mundo* ($N = 56$) indicate a 98.2% frequency for the use of the subjunctive. For Mexico, CREA ($N = 80$) shows that the indicative is preferred with a 90% frequency after *después de que*, and *La Jornada* ($N = 56$) shows a 91% preference.

For Costa Rica, the data from CREA ($N = 36$) result in a 87.5% preference for the indicative, whereas those from *La Nación* ($N = 50$) indicate a 60% preference for the indicative. These results are more consistent with the results of the data from the other Spanish-speaking countries that demonstrate a high degree of variability in mood choice.

PREVIOUS INVESTIGATIONS INTO MOOD CHOICE

The structural approach

In explaining mood choice in past temporal adverbial clauses, various grammar reference sources state simply that the indicative is used for fulfilled events in the past (Canteli Dominicis & Reynolds, 1998:142; Solé & Solé, 1977:171). Some sources recognize that the *-ra* form of the preterit subjunctive may also be used in written Spanish, specifically in journalistic prose for these types of events (de Bruyne, 1995:486; Kattán-Ibarra & Pountain, 1997:86). Butt and Benjamin stated that “the media everywhere frequently use the *-ra* and *-se* forms even for fulfilled events in the past” (2000:227).

While structuralists tend to shy away from explaining the use of the preterit subjunctive in past temporal subordinate clauses, many do include the use of the preterit subjunctive in their descriptions of alternation of past perspectives in indicative contexts. The preterit subjunctive may be used in place of the preterit, pluperfect preterit, or anterior preterit, especially in journalistic, affected, or archaic style (Alarcos Llorach, 1999:159; Butt & Benjamin, 2000:227; Fernández Alvaréz, 1987:133; King & Suñer 1999:129). It is important to note that these scholars ascribe an indicative value to this substituted usage of the preterit subjunctive. Specifically, Alarcos Llorach states,

*Se utiliza **cantara** como arcaísmo o dialectalismo en lugar de la forma compuesta **habías cantado**, con valor modal de indicativo e indicando anterioridad respecto a un punto del pretérito* (1999:159).

'*Cantara* (PRET SUBJ) is used as an archaic or dialectal form instead of the compound form *habías cantado* (PLUPERF PRET IND) with the modal value of the indicative and indicating anteriority in respect to a point in the preterit.'

These descriptions of the use of the preterit subjunctive in place of indicative preterits serve no more than to state present usage of the preterit subjunctive instead of the use of one of the indicative preterits after *después de que* or *luego de que*.

The historical approach

The preterit subjunctive in indicative contexts may indeed be an archaic form, as the preterit subjunctive form held an indicative value during a period of linguistic history. As is commonly known, in Latin there existed a pluperfect preterit indicative *cantaveras* and a pluperfect subjunctive *cantavisses*. Sometime between Late Latin and Old Spanish the pluperfect preterit indicative was reduced to *cantaras* and competed with a compound tense *avias cantado*. Meanwhile, the pluperfect subjunctive continued in its same usage with the morphology *cantasses*. By Medieval Spanish, *cantaras* eventually lost out in its indicative form to the compound form *avias cantado*, leading to its specialization as a subjunctive form. Therefore, in Modern Spanish there are two competing preterit subjunctive forms, *cantaras* and *cantase*. The former is commonly referred to as the *-ra* form, and the latter as the *-se* form.

Given that the pluperfect preterit and the *-ra* preterit subjunctive shared the same mood during a certain time period, it is reasonable to expect that remnants of this historical usage remain today. Because, as Alarcos Llorach (1999:159) pointed out, the preterit and pluperfect preterit have taken on the functions of the anterior preterit, it is also understandable that the anterior preterit may be substituted for the preterit subjunctive. In sum, the preterit, pluperfect preterit, and anterior preterit have all merged to signify the past temporal perspective in Spanish. Since at one time this past temporal perspective could have been represented by either the current pluperfect preterit indicative or the current *-ra* preterit subjunctive, one can certainly understand why the *-ra* preterit subjunctive may now be variably used in instances where an indicative preterit should certainly be used. As Poplack (1992:259) noted, "(w)hat we know about linguistic change tells us the movements of verbs from one class into another could not have taken place without a period of prior variability. It is not surprising that this state of flux should continue in the language today." However, this historical approach cannot explain the apparent regional preferences for one mood over the other in countries such as Mexico and Spain, nor does it explain why the *-se* form of the preterit subjunctive is also used in these contexts.

Semantic, pragmatic, and discourse approaches to selection in mood choice

The semantic, pragmatic, and discourse approaches reject the idea that a subjunctive verb form has indicative value. With the exception of Terrell and Hooper

(1974), these approaches all maintain that the mood choice in the subordinate clause is related to the intention of the speaker. The issue that differentiates these theories is the specific intention that a speaker (writer) has in opting for one mood or the other.

Terrell and Hooper (1974) correlated the use of the indicative with, among other semantic categories, the notion of assertion and report. Yet, as we have seen, the subjunctive is also used in assertions and reports of past temporal events after *después de que* and *luego de que*.

Mejías-Bikandi (1994) claimed that mood choice is determined by the view of reality of the speaker and of the listener. The indicative is used if the speaker regards the meaning of the sentence to be part of the speaker's reality, or of the shared reality between the speaker and the listener; and the subjunctive is used if the sentence is not part of the speaker's reality or that of the listener. Bergen's (1978) one rule for mood choice in Spanish is based on the notion of the binary property [+reservation] or [-reservation]. Thus, if a speaker expresses any kind of reservation in the matrix clause (+res), whether through the verb, noun, preposition, or adverb, then the verb in the subordinate clause will be in the subjunctive. King and Suñer (1999:133) stated that if the intention of the speaker is to affirm without reservations and without additional commentary, the indicative is used because the affirmation is *unconditional*; it is affirming the information in the adverbial clause. However, they also pointed out that even if the action that has taken place is not in doubt, the subjunctive can be used if the intention of the speaker is not to emphasize the action. Mayberry (2000) concluded that mood choice after temporal adverbials depends on the speaker's commitment or degree of emphasis regarding the proposition expressed. If the indicative is used, the speaker has made a commitment to the occurrence of the proposition; if the subjunctive is used, the speaker does not make a commitment. Studerus (1995) offered the observation that there is a tendency to use the subjunctive when the set of speakers are talking about shared knowledge and to use the indicative when the information is new to the listener. Lunn (1989) and Lavandera (1983), investigating mood choice in the broader context of discourse, argued that the choice of mood alerts the listener to determine whether to interpret what is being said as new or relevant information (indicative) or old and not relevant information (subjunctive) in regard to the overall message of the conversation. Lunn and Cravens (1991:158) argued that the *-ra* forms of the preterit subjunctive serve pragmatically to background information "which a hearer/reader can safely pay less-than-careful attention to." Similarly, Klein-Andreu (1991), after examining the fluctuating use of the *-ra* subjunctive and the pluperfect indicative in *El Conde Lucanor*, a text written between 1328 and 1332, concluded that the *-ra* subjunctive was used to direct the readers' attention to low focus and less assertive information.

The fact is that in reported style, such as we find in our data, the job of the author is not to emphasize or determine the relevancy of one action over another, nor to interpret reality, nor to make a personal commitment regarding the proposition, nor to decide which information should be paid more or less attention to.

Rather, the job is to give straightforward fact. Once again, whether the action happened (indicative) or it did not (also indicative), apart from any personal interpretation or commitment, it is a report of what did unequivocally happen. The reporters' personal interpretations hold no place in the exposition of facts. Furthermore as Sankoff (1988:154) pointed out,

We have no more direct access to speakers' intentions than through their utterances themselves, nor to how hearers decode these than through their responses, particularly in natural situations. Analysts may be motivated by theoretical, normative, or critical considerations to discern intentions, or to deny them, whether or not these interpretations are accurate.

In written expositions we cannot presume to divine the intention of the writer or to know how readers will decode their responses.

Explanations specific to the use of the subjunctive after luego de que and después de que

Haverkate (2002) summed up three types of attempts to explain the use of the preterit subjunctive in factual *después de que* clauses. The first type postulates that there is an analogous relation with the symmetrical adverbial *antes de que* 'before', which, according to prescriptive grammar, always takes the subjunctive mood even in past temporal clauses, such as (3).

- (3) *María se levantó* (PRET IND) *antes de que Pedro almorzara* (PRET SUBJ).
'Maria got up before Pedro had lunch.'

This parallelism of structure is apparent in (4), taken from *La Jornada*. This sample is one of only five that used the subjunctive after *después de que*. In this sentence the subjunctive is also used after *luego de que*.

- (4) *Otro indígena, Miguel Vázquez, había sido asesinado el 4 de abril, en la Trinidad, antes de que se instalara* (PRET SUBJ) *el plantón, luego de que se recrudecieran* (PRET SUBJ) *los conflictos entre militantes del PRI y del PRD, después de que en enero del año pasado las comunidades realizaran* (PRET SUBJ) *una marcha a la capital del estado para exponer sus demandas.* (*La Jornada*, 2/28/1996. Mixtecos de Guerrero crean un municipio en rebeldía)
'Another indian, Miguel Vázquez, had been assassinated April 4, in Trinidad, before the sit-in, after the conflicts between the militants of the PRI and the PRD had intensified, after in January of last year the communities had undertaken a march to the capital of the state in order to state their demands.'

However, Mayberry (2000) found that some native speakers accept the use of the indicative after *antes de que* in this type of construction, which indicates variability in mood choice after this adverbial expression as well, as in (4).

- (5) *Mis padres compraron esta casa el día antes de que yo nací* (PRET IND)/*nacieran* (PRET SUBJ).
'My parents bought this house the day before I was born.'

Pérez Saldaña (1999:3316) believed that while the parallelism between sentence structures of *antes de que* and *después de que* has contributed to the use of the preterit subjunctive in factual contexts, he also maintained that the preterit subjunctive is used in informational contexts of low relevancy.

(S)eguramente, la causa principal que justifica estos usos del subjuntivo es semejante a la que se ha señalado para otros usos de este modo en contextos factuales; esto es: el carácter temático y la escasa relevancia informativa del contenido de la oración subordinada.

'Surely, the principal cause that justifies these uses of the subjunctive is similar to that which has been pointed out for other uses of this mood in factual contexts; this is: the thematic character and the light informative relevance of the contents of the subordinate clause.'

Even if we do not rule out the analogous relation theory, one must question why the data for Spain in this investigation preserve this modal relation, whereas those for Mexico do not, and why the data from other Spanish-speaking countries sometimes do, but not always.

The second type of attempt to explain the use of the preterit subjunctive in factual *después de que* clauses is the historical approach previously discussed that proposes that the current use of the preterit subjunctive in pluperfect indicative contexts results from the extension of its Latin indicative etymology. As we have seen, this approach does not explain apparent dialectal differences nor the use of the *-se* form of the preterit subjunctive in this context.

The third type of explanation is pragmatic. The etymological explanation for the use of the preterit subjunctive in the indicative domain has been rejected by Lunn and Cravens (1991), based on the observation that the *-se* form of the preterit subjunctive also appears in past temporal clauses following *luego de que* and *después de que*. This form of the preterit subjunctive did not develop in the indicative paradigm, as did the *-ra* form. Like Pérez Saldaña (1999), Lunn and Cravens (1991:150) asserted that

The *-ra* form can be used to mark information which readers or hearers of the news are expected to know, i.e. information mentioned in a previous edition or a prior paragraph, or information which is assumed to be common knowledge. In journalistic prose, which is very rich in information, this use of the *-ra* form marks low-priority clauses to which readers can safely pay less attention than they can to high-priority, indicative marked clauses.

In regard to the *-se* form, Lunn and Cravens (1991) contended that because the *-ra* form and the *-se* form occur in the same pragmatic contexts, they are competing subjunctive forms for the expression of this low-priority information. The data in this investigation for Spain and Mexico show that only Spain seems to use the *-se* form of the preterit subjunctive with any degree of regularity (13% with *luego de que* and 23.5% with *después de que* in the CREA search; 25% with *después de que* in the *El Mundo* search). The data from Mexico do not show any cases of the *-se* form. The data from other Spanish-speaking countries present very few cases of the *-se* form as illustrated in Table 4. It may very well be that in

TABLE 4. Number of cases of the *-ra* and *-se* forms of the preterit subjunctive by country

Country	Total Subjunctive	<i>Luego de que</i>		Total Subjunctive	<i>Después de que</i>	
		<i>-ra</i>	<i>-se</i>		<i>-ra</i>	<i>-se</i>
Argentina	24	23	1	30	29	1
Chile	21	21	0	14	12	2
Colombia	26	26	0	12	12	0
Costa Rica	2	2	0	3	2	1
Guatemala	7	7	0	5	5	0
Mexico	2	2	0	8	8	0
Peru	10	9	1	13	12	1
Spain	15	13	2	85	65	20
Venezuela	24	23	1	23	21	2

Spain the use of the *-ra* form or the *-se* form indicate some type of emphasis on priority, however, the focus of this study is to show that, regardless of morphological representations, Mexican journalists prefer the use of the indicative, and Spanish journalists prefer the subjunctive.

Because of the low frequency of occurrence of the *-se* form and the fact that in purely subjunctive contexts this form may be interchanged with the *-ra* form, I concur that the use of the *-se* form of the preterit subjunctive after *luego de que* and *después de que* is due to an analogy in usage with the *-ra* form, and that they are competing forms, particularly in Spain. Nevertheless, Lunn and Cravens' (1991) explanation that the subjunctive marks low-priority information cannot be upheld by the data presented in this investigation.

ANALYSIS OF DATA

Dialectal variation in mood choice in Spain and Mexico

The data from CREA and from *El Mundo* and *La Jornada* indicate that while the indicative is the mood of choice after *luego de que* and *después de que* in past temporal subordinate clauses in Mexico, the subjunctive is preferred in Spain. The previous approaches to mood choice cannot explain this discrepancy in selection. If so, then Spanish journalists would almost universally be expressing reservation toward the information (Bergen, 1978), or not emphasizing the action (King & Suárez, 1999), or not asserting a difference between the speaker's view of reality and that of the listener's (Mejías-Bikandi, 1994), or not committing toward the occurrence of the proposition (Mayberry, 2000), or not imparting shared knowledge (Studerus, 1995), or regarding this information as old or irrelevant (Lavandera, 1983; Lunn, 1989), or regarding this information as low-priority (Lunn & Cravens, 1991) or as low focus information (Klein-Andreu, 1991); yet almost all Mexican journalists would be expressing the opposite.

While it is next to impossible to find an exact minimal pair of sentences that demonstrate contrasting preferences for mood choice in Spain and Mexico, the following pair comes very close. The sentences offer parallel constructions: a simple noun phrase followed by a verb phrase containing the same verb (*ocurrir* 'to occur') in the preterit. Both sentences have the same temporal adverbial conjunction *después de que*. The subordinate clause in both sentences contains a proper name(s) as the subject, verbs with similar semantic properties, a prepositional phrase headed with the same preposition (*con* 'with'), and a specific time reference. Example (6a) comes from a newspaper printed in Spain, (6b) comes from Mexico.

- (6) a. *Los hechos **ocurrieron** (PRET IND) después de que José Alberto y Diana **cenaran** (PRET SUBJ) en un restaurante de Monóvar con sus respectivas parejas en la noche del domingo. (Canarias, 7/4/1999. Ingres a en prisión tras apuñalar a una joven ...)*
 'The events occurred after José and Alberto dined in a restaurant in Monóvar with their respective couples on Sunday night.'
- b. *Esto **ocurrió** (PRET IND) después de que esa tarde Jacobo Zabłudovsky **comió** (PRET IND) con el presidente de Televisa, Emilio Azcárraga. (Proceso, 7/7/96. Seis años de salinato y la amistad de Raúl ...)*
 'This occurred after Jacobo Zabłudovsky ate with the president of Televisa, Emilio Azcárraga, that afternoon.'

Many pairs of sentences can be found in the data from the two countries containing the identical verb in the matrix clause with different verbs in the subordinate clause, one in the subjunctive, the other in the indicative, such as (7a) from Spain and (7b) from Mexico.

- (7) a. *La operación policial **comenzó** (PRET IND) la primera hora de la mañana del domingo día 31 de diciembre después de que los agentes de policía **observaran** (PRET SUBJ) cómo dos jóvenes orinaban en mitad en la vía pública ... (Diario de Navarra, 1/5/2001. Detenido dos veces en el mismo día en Pamplona un hombre acusado de ...)*
 'The police operation began the first hour of Sunday morning the 31st of December after police agents observed that two youths were urinating in the middle of the street ...'
- b. *El rastreo del llamado Señor del los Cielos **comenzó** (PRET IND) el sábado 4 de enero después de que tres aerotaxis **despegaron** (PRET IND) del aeropuerto de Toluca e hicieron escala en Cuernavaca ... (Proceso, 1/26/1997. Proyecto en la capital: Resucitar la policía secreta.)*
 'The search for the so-called Lord of the Skies began Saturday the 4th of January after three airplanes took off from the airport in Toluca and made a stop in Cuernavaca ...'

Similarly, many pairs of sentences containing different verbs in the main clause but identical verbs in the subordinate clause, one subjunctive the other indicative, can also be found in the data, such as in (8a) from Spain and (8b) from Mexico.

- (8) a. *Talbott voló* (PRET IND) *horas después de que se produjese* (PRET SUBJ) *la llamada clave, el domingo.* (*El Diario Vasco*, 4/27/99. Clinton y Yeltsin seguirán en contacto.)
 ‘Talbott flew hours after the key telephone call was made on Sunday.’
- b. *El lunes 16, después de que en el vado de Aguas Blancas se produjo* (PRET IND) *un enfrentamiento entre soldados e integrantes del EPR, los militares le quitaron* (PRET IND) *su credencial de elector a Aníbal Pastrana Gallardo, sobreviviente de la matanza del 28 de junio de 1995.* (*Proceso*, 9/22/1996. Los retenes: la presencia militar se vuelve cotidiana.)
 ‘Monday the 16th, after a clash in the ford of Aguas Blancas between the soldiers and the members of the EPR was produced, the military took away the voting privileges of Aníbal Pastrana Gallardo, survivor of the killings of June 28, 1995.’

Variation within the same country

In her study on the variation of the use of the subjunctive and the indicative in Canadian French, Poplack (1992:242–243) offered the explanation of “inherent variability . . . (that) assume(s) that the subjunctive mood is one variant of a linguistic variable. . . . A linguistic variable in its most restricted sense involves two or more ways of conveying the same referential meaning.” The data offered next seem to support this notion of inherent variability for Spanish-speaking countries other than Spain and Mexico.

The data collected in this investigation indicate that mood choice in Colombia is quite variable. The past indicative is used 50% of the time after *luego de que* and the preterit subjunctive is used 50% of the time. After *después de que* the indicative is used 76% of the time and the preterit subjunctive is used 24% of the time. Examples (9a)–(9b) and (10a)–(10c) all come from *El Tiempo*, a Colombian newspaper, and show that despite similar semantic properties of both the verbs in the matrix and subordinate clauses and similar syntactic structures, the mood choice in the subordinate clause is variable.

In the following pair of sentences (9a) and (9b), the verbs in the subordinate clause following *luego de que* come from the same infinitive *quemar* ‘to burn’. The mood of the *quemar* in (9a) is subjunctive, while that of (9b) is in the indicative. Both articles deal with the same news event.

- (9) a. *Desde la tarde de ayer se encuentra suspendido* (PRES as PRES PERF) *el transporte de buses entre Barranquilla y el nororiente del país, luego de que la guerrilla quemara* (PAST SUBJ) *tres buses de la empresa Copetrán en el municipio de Aguachica (Cesar).* (*El Tiempo*, 9/15/1996. Guerrilla bloqueó la vía a la Costa.)
 ‘Since yesterday afternoon bus transport has been suspended between Barranquilla and the Northeast of the country after the guerillas burned three buses of Copetrán in the municipality of Aguachica in the province of Cesar.’
- b. *Esta ciudad permanecía* (IMP IND) *desde ayer en la tarde sin servicio de transporte urbano, luego de que la guerrilla en la tarde quemó* (PRET IND) *el bus de Copetrán XWA-146 al servicio de Ecopetrol.* (*El Tiempo* 9/24/1996. Renuncias en Puerto Wilches.)

‘This city remained without urban transport since yesterday afternoon after the guerillas burned bus XWA-146 of Copetrán in the service of Ecopetrol.’

Examples (10a)–(10c) all contain the lexically same passive verb in the matrix clause. The information in and the structure of the subordinate clauses are virtually identical: They all are preceded by a politician announcing something (10a), communicating something (10b), or responding to something (10c); they are all followed by a definite time period; and they all contain the adverbial expression *después de que*. Yet the mood of the verb in (10a) and (10b) is in the indicative, while that in (10c) is in the subjunctive. There is no evidence that the information in the dependent clauses are more or less relevant to the news story, and therefore mood choice appears to be arbitrary, or rather, variable in these past temporal clauses.

- (10) a. *El pronunciamiento se produjo* (PRET IND) 72 horas después de que el ministro del Medio Ambiente, Eduardo Verano de la Rosa, **anunció** (PRET IND) su oposición al uso del herbicida porque según un estudio encargado por su despacho esta sustancia pone en peligro la flora y la fauna de las zonas fumigadas. (*El Tiempo*, 7/17/1997. Si no es Tebuthiuron será Imazapyr.)
 ‘The declaration was made 72 hours after the Secretary of the Environment, Eduardo Verano de la Rosa, announced his opposition to the use of herbicides because according to a study carried out by his office, this substance puts the flora and fauna of the fumigated zones in danger.’
- b. *La decisión de esa célula congresional se produjo* (PRET IND) pocas horas después de que Lleras **comunicó** (PRET IND) que desistía de presentarse por la televisión, ante la solicitud del gobierno de que no podía hacerlo en forma de charla, sino como un reportaje y con preguntas formuladas por periodistas. (*El Tiempo*, 11/11/1996. Hace 25 años.)
 ‘The decision of this congressional cell was made a few hours after Lleras said that he would desist from presenting himself on television in view of the request from the government that he could not do it by means of an informal chat but rather as a report and with questions formulated by reporters.’
- c. *El pronunciamiento del diplomático se produjo* (PRET IND) 24 horas después de que el presidente Ernesto Samper **respondiera** (PAST SUBJ) a los pronunciamientos que hizo Frechette sobre la urgencia de la aprobación de los proyectos antimafia que cursan actualmente en el Congreso de la República y sobre la necesidad de reactivar la extradición con retroactividad. (*El Tiempo*, 11/8/1996. Política severa continuará: Frechette.)
 ‘The diplomat’s declaration was made 24 hours after President Ernesto Samper responded to the declarations made by Frechette regarding the urgency of the approval of anti-Mafia projects that are taking place now in the Congress and regarding the necessity of reactivating retroactive extradition.’

Interestingly, despite this variability in mood choice evident in the data collected from Colombian journalistic sources, Martínez Albertos (1989:37) stated that

(S)egún los datos que yo tengo, hay naciones latinoamericanas—Colombia puede ser uno de los ejemplos más destacados—en donde existe una presión social a favor

de la defensa de la pureza del idioma que supera con creces a la que existe hoy en España ...

‘According to the data that I have, there are Latin-American countries—Colombia being one of the most outstanding—in which there exists social pressures towards the defense of the purity of the language that far exceeds that which exists today in Spain ...’

Variation within the same article

The following sets of sentences came from the same article from a Chilean newspaper in a Google search. The CREA data from Chile also show a high degree of variability in mood choice.

- (11) a. *Duhalde: Argentina “necesita ayuda internacional” Las palabras del mandatario trasandino **surgen** (PRES, HIST PAST) luego de que el fondo Monetario Internacional **reiterara** (PRET SUBJ) que no aportará fondos al país mientras no efectúe el ajuste en las cuentas públicas que le exige. (La Tercera, 6/4/2002. Duhalde: Argentina “necesita ayuda internacional”).*

‘Duhalde: “Argentina needs international help” The words of the Andean head of state come about after the International Monetary Fund reiterated that it will not contribute funds to the country as long as the demanded adjustments to the public account are not carried out.’

Just three very short paragraphs later, comes (11b), virtually an identical sentence except that the verb of the subordinate clause is in the indicative.

- (11) b. *El mandatario **se pronunció** (PRET IND) así luego de que el FMI **retiró** (PRET IND) que no entregará fondos a la Argentina hasta que no realice el ajuste que reclama el organismo en las cuentas públicas.*

‘The head of state declared this after the International Monetary Fund reiterated that it will not give funds to Argentina until the adjustments to the public accounts that this body demands are carried out.’

None of the speaker-intention related hypotheses for mood choice in these types of sentences can account for the choice of the subjunctive in (11a) and the indicative in (11b). Even if we were to accept Lunn and Cravens’ (1991) hypothesis that the *-ra* subjunctive form marks low-priority information and the indicative high-priority, the indicative should appear in (11a), as it is the first mention of this fact and therefore new information of a higher priority, and the subjunctive should appear in (11b). Furthermore, if the information in the subordinate clause were backgrounded and therefore in the subjunctive (Klein-Andreu, 1991), we would again expect the indicative to appear in (11a) and the subjunctive in (11b), or the subjunctive in both instances.

Variation within the same sentence

Perhaps the most convincing argument for the variability of mood choice in Spanish-speaking countries other than Spain and Mexico is exemplified in sentence (12) from Argentina. The author has divided one sentence into two by

inappropriately separating the two subordinate clauses with a period. The two subordinate clauses are actually joined by the conjunction *y* ‘and’. Both of the verbs in the two subordinate clauses are dependent on the same verb of the main clause, yet the first verb appears in the indicative and the second in the subjunctive.

- (12) *El hecho volvió a ponerse* (PRET IND) *en el tapete en los últimos días, luego de que se estableció* (PRET IND) *que 2 de los sillones de la catedral—de los 4 que faltan—formarían parte de una subasta. Y luego de que, en un informe emitido esta semana pro Canal 13 en “Telenoche investiga”, se sugiriera* (PRET SUBJ) *que Primatesta optó por ignorar los sucesos. (Clarín, 4/24/97. Un trama que involucra a sacerdotes, anticuarios y coleccionistas.)*

‘The fact came to the surface again in the last few days after it was established that 2 of the armchairs of the cathedral—of the 4 that are missing—would be part of an auction. And after, in a report issued this week by Channel 13 on “Telenoche investigates”, it was suggested that Primatesta opted to ignore the events.’

The data in (11a) and (11b) and (12) indicate that previous explanations based on relevance of information, new versus old information, and intentions of the speaker, do not explain mood choice. A viable explanation based on the data from these countries that exhibit high variability in mood choice is simply that the choice of the indicative or the subjunctive after *luego de que* and *después de que* is indeed variable.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

So far we have seen that none of the previous hypotheses on mood choice can explain the data presented in this investigation. However, there remain other considerations to take into account. First, news events can be classified into many different categories, such as international news, sports, entertainment, and so forth. Examples (9a) and (9b) all take place within the context of the results of a bus strike. Examples (10a)–(10c) deal with pronouncements by politicians; examples (10a) and (10b), which come from the same article, are about economic issues, and (12) deals with a religious event. To further support the hypothesis that news context does not affect mood choice, I examined articles entering the search phrase *después de que* in the section dedicated only to sports from *La Hora*, a Guatemalan newspaper. Of 32 samples, 17 temporal adverbial clauses after *después de que* were in the indicative and 15 were in the subjunctive. The following two sentences demonstrate the variability in mood selection. The verb in the subordinate clause is a form of the verb *quedar* ‘to be’. In (13a) the verb is in the indicative, whereas in (13b) it is in the subjunctive.

- (13) a. *El medio boleto llegó* (PRET IND) *después de que el partido entre Coatepeque y Amatitlán quedó* (PRET IND) *empatado a uno y a falta de una so La Jornada, los pepesqueros se quedaron a cinco puntos de diferencia. (La Hora, 12/18/2001. Comunicaciones se quedó sin Corona.)*

'The ticket to the next round came after the game between Coatepeque and Amatitlán was tied at one point and lacking only one period, the players from Coatepeque remained at a five point difference.'

- b. *Miloc fue separado* (PRET IND), *después de que el equipo Albo, quedara* (PRET SUBJ) *eliminado de la fase de clasificación del torneo de Campeones y Subcampeones de la CONCACF, al caer derrotado ante la Liga Deportiva Alajuelense en Costa Rica.* (*La Hora*, 5/18/2002. Comunicaciones con difícil compromiso.)

'Miloc was separated, after the team Albo was eliminated from the classificatory phase of the champion and subchampionship tournament of the CONCACF upon being defeated by the Alajuelense Sports League in Costa Rica.'

The evidence from these data indicates that news context does not explain variation in mood choice.

Second, given the nature of the data, all examples retrieved from the CREA data bank, the various on-line newspapers, and the Google search contained subjects in the third person in both the matrix and subjunctive clauses. This, of course, is a feature of journalistic prose, as reported events generally do not include the first or the second person. Further studies must be carried out to determine if deixis will influence mood choice, especially in Spain and Mexico. Similarly, there may be other factors that condition mood choice either grammatically or semantically, such as passive voice in the matrix or subordinate clause or, perhaps, other inherent semantic properties, such as stativity, activity, telicity, or punctuality, as suggested by Vendler (1967).

Finally, we have examined mood choice in journalistic prose in terms of specific, and therefore linguistically arbitrary, geographic and political boundaries. To examine variation in more detail, it is necessary to examine data from various regions within the geographic boundaries that have been described here.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this article was to show that current hypotheses on mood choice do not explain data collected from a wide variety of journalistic sources. While I have postulated that mood choice is in variation in Spanish-speaking countries other than Spain and Mexico, the data from Spain show that this country almost universally prefers the subjunctive after *luego de que* and *después de que* in past temporal clauses, and that Mexico prefers the indicative. None of the speaker/writer-intention-based hypotheses can account for this dialectal variation.

Although mood choice in other Spanish-speaking countries is highly variable, it has similarly been demonstrated by comparing data within one specific country, one article, and one sentence, that none of the hypotheses on mood choice adequately explain the discrepancy in mood choice. In these other Spanish-speaking countries, there appears to be neutralization of function and form. The subjunctive does not indicate unfulfilled events after *luego de que* and *después de que*, nor does it seem to provide any additional semantic or pragmatic information. Journalists do not seem to take any functional differences into account when

using either the subjunctive or the indicative after *luego de que* and *después de que*. This variation does not seem to impede understanding of the information presented and, therefore, the preterit subjunctive and the preterit indicative are likely competing syntactic forms in these countries.

Haverkate (2002:140) agreed with this analysis, specifically in reference to subordinate clauses headed by *después de que*, “there are cases where no pragmatic distinction holds between the indicative and the subjunctive, which leads to the conclusion that free variation is at issue.” However, this free variation does not seem to be an issue in Spain and Mexico, as supported by the data in this investigation.

I would like to propose that the competing forms, the preterit subjunctive and the past indicative tenses (preterit, imperfect, perfect, pluperfect) in Spain and Mexico have come to resolution; the former opting for the subjunctive and the latter for the indicative. In other Spanish-speaking countries these forms are in a state of flux. Only the future will bear out the resolution of these competing forms.

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