

Liane Ströbel (ed.)

# Crosslinguistic Facets of the Subjunctive



AVM.edition

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Liane Ströbel

## **Crosslinguistic Facets of the Subjunctive**

No other grammatical phenomenon causes as many problems in teaching and learning as the subjunctive. Most grammars devote as many pages to the presentation of the rules as to the exceptions. This becomes even more frustrating when one deals with the differences, not only between different language families, but even within the Romance language family alone, since it seems that each language shapes the functional area of the subjunctive individually.

The aim of this volume is therefore to reconsider the representation of the subjunctive in Romance languages in a crosslinguistic and contrastive way. An overview of research in this area from its beginnings to the latest neurolinguistic findings will illustrate the complexity of this topic (Part 1). In addition, specific phenomena of the subjunctive at the interface of its functional domain with the indicative will be made visible by means of appropriate case studies (Part 2). On this basis, an attempt is made to trace the polyfunctionality and the different utilization in the Romance languages and beyond to a common pattern with language-specific margins, which allows us to explain, not only contrastive differences, but also the decline of the subjunctive in some domains and languages, as well as to illustrate the range of substitution possibilities (Part 3). Finally, the view is extended to other language families and new impulses for foreign language teaching are presented (Part 4).

Dealing with the subjunctive is important because, despite thorough and intensive research, it still leaves fundamental questions unanswered, namely,

- a) is the subjunctive more of a semantic or syntactic phenomenon?
- b) is it inherently heterogeneous or has it only evolved into a heterogeneous entity through the adoption of functional domains from other modes?
- c) why do the Romance languages display divergencies in the frequency and use of the subjunctive?
- d) Why does the use of the subjunctive in certain languages seem to be declining and by what elements can it be replaced?



The book begins with a very detailed look at the theories of the subjunctive with the contribution “The Unanswered Question – The Romanic Subjunctive” by Tobias Gretenkort, Sebastian Buchczyk, and Ingo Feldhausen. Based on four categories of argumentation, the research of more than 125 years is assembled and discussed. The four perspectives presented are, a) the philological position with a focus on the etymology, b) the formal approach, which primarily considers syntax, c) the pragmatic level of consideration, which foregrounds the speaker-listener relationship, and d) the cognitive deep structure, which is based on neuroscientific findings. With many excerpts and examples, it is illustrated that the question of the homogeneity or heterogeneity of the subjunctive becomes less important over time due to a shift in focus toward the communicative value of the subjunctive. As a consequence, the complexity of the subjunctive is usually described as a hierarchically ordered construct of interconnected networks or presented as a result of divers semiotic processes of abstraction (Regula 1929; Lerch 1931; Ruwet 1972; Wilson & Sperber 1993; Mejías-Bikandi 1998; Hummel 2001; Ahern & Leonetti 2004; Dam-Jensen 2011; Farkas 2003; Costantini 2006; Vesterinen 2012, 2014, 2016, 2017). In other words, networks as well as abstraction processes point to the fact that the speaker’s motivation, together with the listener’s interaction, might provide important insights into the nature and use of the subjunctive (Kulakova & Nieuwland 2016a, b; Gerstenberg 2017).

The critical overview of more of a century of different theories (Part 1), which serves as an extended introduction to this book and to the following case analyses (Part 2), as well as to the cognitive and contrastive considerations (Part 3), vividly illustrates the complexity of the subjunctive. It furthermore underlines that the subjunctive is a crosslinguistic phenomenon and that new directions need to be taken, especially in didactics (Part 4).

The questions that will consequently continue to accompany us are: What additional information does the speaker want to convey to the listener? Why can this additional information be relegated in certain contexts? How can the different utilization of the functional areas be vividly represented and explained?

In the second part, Michel Favre and Helene Rader go in search of answers to these questions, synchronically and diachronically, at the

intersection of the subjunctive with the indicative, namely in the realm of the probable and the possible.

In his article “Les adjectifs *probable* et *possible* eu égard à l’emploi du mode dans la complétive”, Michel Favre examines the two French adjectives *probable* and *possible* in the main clause. Both stand semantically at an interface where the choice of mode is not always clear, as the contextual interpretations of the two French adjectives *probable* and *possible* can be fluid.

Using nine anchor points, validation instance, adaptation dimension, strength, level, scope, speaker engagement, temporality, relativity, and metaparameters, an attempt is made to illustrate the context-dependency at this interface, as well as to discuss schematized conventions. In addition, the question of whether the subjunctive is a semantic or syntactic phenomenon is indirectly addressed. This, in turn, has implications for the teaching of the subjunctive in foreign language classes (see Part 4).

In her contribution “El futuro de subjuntivo en los verbos modales *poder*, *querer* y *deber*: un análisis comparativo de los siglos XIV y XVIII”, Helene Rader analyzes from a diachronic perspective the use of the future subjunctive, which, from a synchronic point of view, has already almost disappeared in Spanish. She traces its development and decline, with the help of the CORDE corpus of the Real Academia Española, by measuring changes in frequency between the 14th century (representing the medieval state of language) and the 18th century (as the first century of linguistic standardization) of three modal verbs: *poder*, *querer* and *deber*. Interestingly, she already observes a decline in usage between the 14th and 18th centuries, which in turn raises two questions, a) what motivated this decline? and b) was the functional area of the future subjunctive divided or dissolved? Furthermore, the niche area or text genre to which the future subjunctive seems to be restricted in Modern Spanish, namely legal language, seems to emerge in the 14th century. The article shows that the semantic modal auxiliary disappeared in many contexts precisely in competition with the future indicative and was therefore replaced by it over time, in connection with linguistic economy processes. However, it is interesting that especially in legal language the future subjunctive is still used. This suggests that especially in legal contexts semantic micro-differences may play a role.

In the third block, we will embark on a search for traces of these micro-differences with the aim of uncovering both the speaker's motivation in interacting with the listener (cf. Part 1) and an explanation for the interfaces between the possible and the probable as well as for the decline of the subjunctive (cf. Part 2). Moreover, a crosslinguistic hypothesis will be presented, which may allow for a new didactic approach to the subjunctive (cf. Part 4). Thereby, the focus will be shifted from the purely schematic memorization of subjunctive triggers and the setting of the subjunctive (syntactic perspective) to the sensitization for the speaker's motivation to use the subjunctive (semantic perspective).

In the three articles, “Las bases conceptuales del subjuntivo - Entre la implicación, la falta de control semántico y contextual y la conexión ilógica”, “Sur les traces de la base conceptuelle du subjonctif à l'aide des exemples du livre *Dans le jardin des mots* de Jacqueline de Romilly” and “Tre parole sul congiuntivo”, the additional semantic information of the subjunctive but also its substitution possibilities are investigated in three different Romance languages (Spanish, French, and Italian) and on the basis of different corpora: a) stereotypical examples from grammar, b) sentences extracted from a book by Jacqueline de Romilly (member of the Académie française), c) newspaper articles and d) oral utterances. In addition, linguistic contrastive differences between the three Romance languages are also pointed out, and the different boundaries of the functional areas are explained.

In the Spanish contribution “Las bases conceptuales del subjuntivo – Entre la implicación, la falta de control semántico y contextual y la conexión ilógica”, an attempt is made to trace the subjunctive in the main clause back to the semantic concept “control”, and to describe its role as a connector of inherently causally illogical action statements in the subordinate clause, using prototypical sample sentences from grammar. Furthermore, the author demonstrates that the subjunctive is largely replaced in German by adverbs or the use of the conditional.

In the French article “Sur les traces de la base conceptuelle du subjonctif dans le livre *Dans le jardin des mots* de Jacqueline de Romilly”, a literary corpus and newspaper articles are used to investigate whether the statements made in the Spanish contribution for the Spanish subjuntivo can also be transferred to the French subjonctif. In addition to pointing

out similarities and differences between the use in French and other languages, deviations within the proposed model are also explained.

Finally, in the Italian contribution “Tre parole sul congiuntivo”, the presented theory is examined on the basis of oral utterances. For better illustration, all Italian examples are additionally given in French and Spanish. Deviations and differences in the functional range of Italian over against the two western Romance languages (French and Spanish) or even the wider inner Romance (French) or outer Romance (Spanish) are discussed.

Taken as a whole, all three contributions provide an ideal basis for further research, possibly using even larger and more diverse corpora and including further languages, with the goal of moving closer not only to a definition of the subjunctive, but also to a new didactic concept for the subjunctive.

In the final part (Part 4), this is already heralded by the contribution “A diachronic comparison of the subjunctive mood in the Scandinavian and Romance languages illustrated by Icelandic and Spanish”, in which Helene Rader presents a contrastive comparison of Spanish (as the southwestern branch of the Romance languages) with Icelandic (as the northwestern branch of the Germanic languages). Here, on the one hand, the parallels in usage are striking, again highlighting the need for a crosslinguistic consideration of this phenomenon. Especially in areas where the subjunctive is used in both languages to distance oneself from statements made by others, the semantic concept of “control” or lack of control over truthfulness again resonates.

Once again it becomes clear that it is precisely its context sensitivity and its semantic micro-differences that make the treatment of the subjunctive in foreign language teaching so problematic. In her article “Le subjonctif espagnol: un nouvel apprentissage possible? *El último lector* de David Toscana: entre analyse linguistique et littéraire” Aurélie Scheffer explores this phenomenon and tries to present a new didactic approach to the subjunctive.

She is concerned with familiarizing L2 speakers with the meaning dimension of mode and the concept of intentionality at an early age. She relies more on induction and an intuitive understanding of language than on mindless memorization of the rules. Using sentences from the novel *El último lector* by David Toscana as examples, she also demonstrates the

advantages of including literary works and contrasting them in foreign language teaching to sensitize L2 speakers to language differences in the use and frequency of the subjunctive between, in this case, two related languages, rather than frustrating learners by juxtaposing grammatical rules with as many exceptions.

Overall, this book is an attempt to counter the oft-mentioned frustration vis-à-vis the complexity of this grammatical phenomenon and to give new impetus to further research in area of the subjunctive.

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## **PART I**





Tobias Gretenkort, Sebastian Buchczyk, Ingo Feldhausen

## **The Unanswered Question – The Romance Subjunctive**

### **Abstract**

Research on the subjunctive mood is abundant in the linguistic literature, especially in the Romance languages. In this introduction, we attempt to organize some selected works from the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> until the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century and identify recurring themes and arguments in the literature. We group the literature into four blocks that are loosely associated with the historical developments in linguistics and their corresponding schools of thought: i) philological accounts, ii) formal linguistic positions, iii) pragmatic contributions, and iv) cognitive and neurolinguistics. In doing so, it becomes apparent that recurring themes emerge independently of each other at both the diachronic and synchronic levels of research on the subjunctive mood in Romance. In particular, we identify the following points of debate: 1) Is there one or more than one subjunctive, 2) What role do speakers and listeners/hearers play in the construction of the meaning of the subjunctive, 3) How does the subjunctive relate to the reality or unreality of the information given, and 4) How is the subjunctive motivated by simpler grammatical or semantic concepts. We hope to contribute to organizing the vast body of literature on this topic for other researchers and help generate new research questions in the field. To this end, we finally contrast the linguistic literature on the topic with cognitive and neurolinguistic evidence on hypotheticals and counterfactuals in order to identify empirical findings that future subjunctive theories will have to be in accordance with.

**Keywords:** Mood, Subjunctive, Romance Languages, French, Spanish

### **1. Introduction**

After decades of thorough academic treatment of the topic, the Romance subjunctive continues to be in the spotlight of linguistic research. While major paradigm shifts have taken place in linguistics within the same lapse of time, it is our impression that the Romance subjunctive still

raises largely the same questions as it did in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. This is by no means to say that no advances have been made in subjunctive research in all this time. Rather, this introductory chapter aims to identify recurring arguments in the literature. We believe that the subjunctive is set apart from other phenomena in grammar mainly by its vast and sometimes repetitive bibliography. This statement is not meant to dismiss research hitherto, but illustrates our research interest, namely providing an explicit list of recurrent themes and arguments in discussions of the subjunctive. We thereby try to provide a point of reference to navigate the linguistic literature on the Romance subjunctive and to render the formulation of research hypotheses on this topic clearer and more contextualized. That is, we attempt to collect the main arguments that future discussions about the subjunctive will have to either scrutinize or avoid reproducing in order to either formulate genuinely new questions about this phenomenon or to answer the existing ones.

To tackle this objective, we put forth a narrative literature review of the past 130 years of research on the Romance subjunctive. This analysis is by no means exhaustive, but we have attempted to draw upon representative and relevant contributions to this body of research, ranging from Kalepky (1894) to Vesterinen (2017). In light of the number of well-researched and quite recent summaries of the subjunctive (e.g., Bachler 2010; Quer 2010; Becker 2014), it strikes us as pointless to make full accounts of the literature on the matter. Rather, we will try to restrict the reported literature to exemplary studies that stand in opposition to one another and point out recurring topics and quarrels. We analyzed works from early philological authors (e.g., Kalepky 1894; Lerch 1919), formalist researchers (e.g., Lozano 1972; Bolinger 1974), the pragmatist literature (e.g., Lunn 1989; Mejías-Bikandi 1994), and cognitive accounts (e.g., Pezzulo 2011; Vesterinen 2016).

This book chapter will hence progressively draw upon various linguistic sub-disciplines and, as we approach the present, more and more other language-related research disciplines such as semiotics, neuroscience, and psychology. This is not to feed into the already enormous body of literature, but to identify stable points of debate in contributions about the subjunctive and related phenomena. The goal is, therefore, to isolate fundamental questions in subjunctive research and justify our interest in revisiting such a heavily ploughed field. It is also to back up claims on the subjunctive

through the description of experimentally testable and replicable research that can be regarded as the basis for modern language research. It will, however, be beyond the scope of this article to propose an answer to the questions we have identified. Rather, we hope to formulate convincing arguments for our assessment, namely that the variety of approaches to the subjunctive in the literature can be boiled down to a few core parameters. By laying them out systematically, we hope to draw attention to these core problems and point to the direction where future investigators can be successful in dissecting the subjunctive as a linguistic phenomenon.

To fulfil this goal, our article is roughly structured in historical order, as was pointed out above. We first describe philological approaches to the subjunctive (§2). These are followed by formal (§3) and pragmatic (§4) contributions and the arguments contained therein. All the aforementioned, more strictly linguistic, approaches are then contrasted with cognitive accounts of the subjunctive and corresponding neuroscientific evidence and concepts (§5). Our conclusion (§6) will be dedicated to identifying recurring patterns and arguments in these rather diverse approaches to the subjunctive.

## 2. Philological positions on the subjunctive

The first substantial debate of interest about the nature of the subjunctive was fought around the *fin de siècle* between German Romance philologists Theodor Kalepky (1894) and Eugen Lerch (1919). Other representatives of the debate at the time were Brunot (1922) and Clédat (1923) in France. The philological method of analysis at that time was characterized by an emphasis on diachrony and structure. Furthermore, the attitude of these authors reflects an effort to use and teach ‘good’ language, resulting in prescriptivist positions which would be deemed unscientific in the current academic landscape. These particularities of philological approaches of the time may warrant some further explanation, as they will help us navigate the literature under discussion.

The focus on i) diachrony (see §2.1), or the etymological method, speaks to the idea that the ‘truest’ expression of a linguistic form is rooted in its history. That is, the closer a structural component of a modern language can be linked to its historical predecessors (in this case, Classi-

cal Latin and Ancient Greek), the better an explanation it is considered because, under this premise, the new phenomenon is the continuation of the old phenomenon. This extends to the philologists' focus on ii) structure or form (see § 2.2). The philological method has been very successful in establishing laws of continuity on the surface level, such as the description of regular phonetic shifts from one stage of language to the next, as is for instance, the palatalization of velar consonants from Latin to French (“canem” → “chien”) or diphthongization of the tonic vowel from Latin to Spanish („terra” → “tierra”) (Alkire and Rosen 2010: 60; Lausberg 1967: 9–15; Lloyd 1987: 122; Penny 2002: 54). However, this method is rather poorly equipped to deal with the possible impact of societal or even environmental changes on language(s) because it only regards language in contrast to other instances of language. Hence, extralinguistic considerations are of no interest to the authors cited below. Lastly, a great deal of effort is put into thinking about ‘proper’ ways of speaking and teaching the Romance subjunctive to the mostly German audience. This prescriptivist character of the literature is highly dependent on iii) the preconceptions that researchers at the time have on the semiotics of the subjunctive. That is, the proper usage of the subjunctive is subject to each researcher’s preconception on what it represents or is supposed to represent. The latter’s impact on the former will be of interest below (see § 2.3).

## 2.1. The diachronic argument for the Romance subjunctive

This section is focused on the debate between Kalepky (1894, 1928, 1929) and Lerch (1919). In the contribution *Die Bedeutung der Modi im Französischen*<sup>1</sup> (1919), Lerch articulates an account of the meaning of the subjunctive which is deeply rooted in the etymological method. His main intention, however, was to reduce theories of the subjunctive which would account for its many different use cases. Quoting Eduard Bottek and J.H. Schmalz<sup>2</sup> (Lerch 1919: 9–10), he establishes the system-

<sup>1</sup> “The meaning of the moods in the French language”

<sup>2</sup> We were not able to find the exact references from these documents. They were quoted by Lerch as follows: Bottek, Eduard (1899) *Die ursprüngliche Bedeutung des Konjunktivs in lateinischen Nebensätzen*. Wien; Schmalz, J.H. “Lateinische Grammatik”. in *Handbuch der klassischen Altertumswissenschaft* 2 (2); 476.

atic differentiation between at least five different subjunctives, namely *conjunctivus*<sup>3</sup> (1) *hortativus*, (2) *deliberativus*, (3) *potentialis*, (4) *optativus* and (5) *concessivus*. He even goes on to mention other, less formal, propositions of subjunctives of interest for historical syntax such as the *volitivus*, *prospectivus*, *jussivus*, *prohibitivus*, *fictivus*, *conditionalis*, and *adhortativus* (Lerch 1919: 9). He then argues that all these different concepts are reducible to merely two different instances of the subjunctive, namely the *Konjunktiv des Wunsches*<sup>4</sup> and the *Konjunktiv der Unsicherheit*<sup>5</sup>. Lerch's assumptions are justified by the historic observation that the optative and subjunctive in Ancient Greek were once two distinct moods, where the conjugational parameters later converged into a single one in Latin. He concludes that the subjunctive in French must perform the tasks of two, once morphologically distinguished, grammatical moods that displayed two distinct functions (Lerch 1919: 7; see also Gsell and Wandruszka 1986: 42 and 64). At the same time, he attempts to reduce the list of possible use cases for the subjunctive to no more than two, presumably to balance the complexity and truthfulness of his account. After all, the simplest explanation would be to reduce the subjunctive to one function, but this would go against Lerch's core argument referencing subjunctive usages in Ancient Greek.

Kalepky takes exactly this path and criticizes Lerch's etymologically driven theory. He presents two reasons: Firstly, he argues that the reduction of use cases to more than one isn't fruitful enough, albeit responding to another author:

Früher schrieb man dem Konjunktiv die beiden Bedeutungen des Voluntativen und Irrealen bzw. der Realitätsunsicherheit zu; Verfasser [Tobler] nun kommt zu dem Ergebnis, dass Konjunktiv (wie Indikativ) einmal **modale**, sodann **psychodynamische** Funktion haben. Ist dabei nun viel gewonnen? (Kalepky 1928: 67)<sup>6</sup>.

<sup>3</sup> The terms *conjunctivus* and *subjunctivus* are used interchangeably here.

<sup>4</sup> "The subjunctive of volition"

<sup>5</sup> "The subjunctive of uncertainty"

<sup>6</sup> "The two meanings attributed to the subjunctive were, in earlier days, volition and non-reality or uncertainty of reality. Mr. Tobler, however, concludes that the subjunctive (as well as the indicative) may once have a modal, then also a psychodynamic function. What have we gained, then?"

Thus, following a principle of epistemological parsimony, the ultimate consequence for Kalepky would have to be that the subjunctive should gradually be reduced to one function, as Schifko (1967: 176) summarized later:

Der Grundwert des Konjunktivs kann nur durch fortschreitende Abstraktion gefunden werden, indem man von den einzelnen Bedeutungen ausgeht und schließlich zu einem Wert gelangt, der alle Gebrauchsweisen in sich enthält und auf alle Gebrauchsweisen anwendbar ist<sup>7</sup>.

Kalepky's core critique of Lerch is that his reduction is not far-reaching enough. Lerch's theory thus faces a major challenge regarding epistemological parsimony through its rigid adherence to historical developments over form-meaning matches.

Secondly, and more importantly, Kalepky claims that Lerch (1919) misunderstands the nature of the many flavours of the subjunctive as the title *Verwechslung von Grundbedeutung und Gebrauchsweise in der französischen Tempus- und Moduslehre*<sup>8</sup> (1928) implies. Kalepky argues that the contextual use of the subjunctive does result in a great variety of etymological precursors to the subjunctive, but that the modern subjunctive does not represent a simplification of all the subjunctive use cases. Rather, actual use and the fundamental underlying function can be found on different levels of abstraction. With the description gaining in abstraction, the cases explained by the description will also increase. That means that a general base function of the subjunctive (cf. Hummel 2001) can give rise to many – apparently distinct – specific rules in different contexts. In this way, Kalepky manages to dodge the problem that the subjunctive doesn't exhibit the same exuberance as historical counterfactuals (cf. Kalepky 1928: 70–71).

In his reply, Lerch acknowledges that the „radikale **Zweiteilung** des frz. Konjunktivs kann nicht völlig befriedigen“<sup>9</sup> (Lerch 1931: 135), and

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<sup>7</sup> “The basic value of the subjunctive can only be found through progressive abstraction, starting from the individual meanings and finally arriving at a value that contains all usages within itself and is applicable to all usages.”

<sup>8</sup> “Confusion of base meaning and usage in the description of French time and mood”

<sup>9</sup> “The radical two-partition of the French subjunctive cannot be fully satisfying.”

so he goes on to attempt to motivate the existence of the *Konjunktiv des psychologischen Subjekts*<sup>10,11</sup> as a specific case of the *Konjunktiv des Wunsches* (Lerch 1919) or *Konjunktiv des Begehrens* (Lemon 1927: 195). However, he does not postulate the two as the same thing. His tendency to collapse categories of the subjunctive does push him to also consider psychological reasons, and hence design a historian's theory (cf. Lerch 1931: 191) of how the two subjunctives converge into one underlying psychological principle. But for grammatical and pedagogical reasons, he carries on distinguishing these two instances of the grammatical phenomenon:

Ich glaube noch immer, in der **Schule** sei es notwendig, diese beiden Konjunktivarten zu unterscheiden [...] Daß der „Konj. des psychol. Subjektes“ sich **letzten Endes** Konj. des Begehrens **herleiten** läßt, würde ich dem Schüler lieber **nicht** mitteilen – denn das könnte ihn nur verwirren. Für gänzlich verfehlt aber müßte ich das Verfahren halten, in der Schule den Konj. lediglich als Modus des Begehrens zu erklären und von einem „Konj. des psychol. Subjekts“ überhaupt nicht zu sprechen. – Andererseits glaube ich in der Tat, im wesentlichen mit diesen **zwei** Konjunktivarten auszukommen<sup>12</sup> (Lerch 1931: 190, original emphasis).

This quote is a prime example of the above claim that prescriptive and pedagogical elements play an important role for researchers at the time. It is clearly stated that the advancement in the scientific description of the subjunctive should have no bearing on the way of teaching or correctly using it. This assertion is later justified by a quasi-pragmatic distinction where Lerch argues that both subjunctives are distinguishable through the formal differences in their use in written and spoken language:

<sup>10</sup> Which had previously been termed *Konjunktiv der Unsicherheit* (subjunctive of uncertainty).

<sup>11</sup> More modern terminologies would be *thematic* (Regula 1936; Gsell and Wandruszka 1986; Quer 2016) or *factive* (Quer 2016) subjunctive.

<sup>12</sup> “I do still hold the belief that it is necessary to distinguish the two sorts of the subjunctive in language education. I do not recommend to teach students the fact that the subjunctive of the psychological subject can ultimately be motivated from the subjunctive of desire. This could merely confuse pupils. I would, on the other hand, argue that it is wrong to only teach the subjunctive of desire and leave out considerations about the subjunctive of the psychological subject. In fact, I think that these two kinds of subjunctive do cover the relevant range of possible subjunctive usages.”



Daß diese Scheidung der beiden Konjunktivarten nichts Willkürliches hat, zeigt die heutige französische Umgangssprache (Lerch 1931: 190)<sup>13</sup>

We observe that the etymological method directly leads to a discussion that will resurface at various points of this chapter namely the question, *how many subjunctives are there?* Lerch (1919) is a proponent of a pluralist explanation, based on his etymological approach while trying to reduce his position to a dualist distinction. Lemon (1927) on the other hand, who introduced a psychological criterion into the debate, is a proponent of a monist position, claiming that there is only one meaning of the subjunctive, namely expressing “*what the speaker does not present as an actual fact*” (Lemon 1927: 196). Kalepky, who was in fierce opposition to Lerch, argues for a special case of a monist position, a ‘nullist position’<sup>14</sup>:

So überraschend es klingen mag, die Antwort muss lauten: Er [der Konjunktiv] drückt weder Realität noch Irrealität aus, er besagt bezüglich der Realitätsfrage überhaupt nichts, ist modal völlig indifferent und steht in dieser Hinsicht auf gleicher Stufe mit „Gérondif“ (= lat. Gerundium) und Infinitiv. [...] Auch hier ist die Neigung zum „Hineininterpretieren“ den Grammatikern verhängnisvoll geworden, hat das leidige „Hineinlegen“ sich der Wesenserfassung in den Weg gestellt<sup>15</sup> (Kalepky 1928: 71–72).

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<sup>13</sup> “Today’s colloquial French shows that the differentiation of the two subjunctives [of desire and of the psychological subject] is by no means arbitrary.”

<sup>14</sup> The assumption already anticipates Paul Imbs (1953) emphatically designated nature of the subjunctive as a correlative subjunctive. Since the subjunctive in embedded clauses has no ‘modal autonomy’ itself (Gsell and Wandruszka 1986: 10), but is determined by the content and modality of the main clause, Gsell and Wandruszka also speak of the fact that – if one wanted to follow the distinction – one could no longer speak of a dubitative and optative subjunctive, but, strictly speaking, only of a subjunctive in a dubitative/volitive clause structure. This idea, whose origin could be traced back to Kalepky, is reflected in later considerations of the subjunctive, such as in Stowell (1993) and Quer (1998), in which the subjunctive itself is not assigned any meaning, but rather it is selected or licensed by its grammatical environment.

<sup>15</sup> “As surprising it may sound, the answer has to be as follows: The subjunctive does not express reality or non-reality, it does not address the issue of reality, is modally indifferent and is in this sense homologue to the gerund and the infinitive. The grammarians’ inclination to bring forth meaning in interpretation has become their phantom. The tiresome ‘insertion’ of meaning has gotten in the way of experiencing the core of the issue.”