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Conditional for Subjunctive in Old Castile  
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It is well-known that the linguistic system of natural languages is constantly changing at a more or less rapid pace. Some forms fall in disuse and disappear, new forms are created or existing ones extend or reduce their range of functions. One instance of this phenomenon is provided by the development of the tense and aspect system of Modern Spanish from Latin through Vulgar Latin and Romance. This paper concerns itself with a case of an innovation in this system, namely the use of the conditional form (C) for the past subjunctive forms (S) in Old Castile, as illustrated in example (1):<sup>1</sup>

- (1) CS: ¿Y para qué iban a hacer la represa?  
 T: Para que daría (C) luz al convento. Std. Spanish: diera  
 CS: 'And what were they going to build the dam for?' (S)  
 T: 'So that it gave light to the convent'

Grammars of Spanish (e.g. Alcina y Blecua 1980; Marcos M. 1980; Real Academia Española 1973) list four simple forms for the subjunctive mood: present ('cante', ex.2), two past imperfect forms ('cantara', 'cantase', ex. 3), and future ('cantare', ex. 4). Of these, the future (FS) is practically obsolete in all Spanish dialects and the -se form of the imperfect is quite infrequent. In Covarrubias, the -se form is used by some of the speakers,<sup>2</sup> but the FS is non-existent.

- (2) Quiere que cante.  
 'He wants me to sing'  
 (3) Quería que { cantara }  
                   { cantase }  
 'He wanted me to sing'  
 (4) Si cantare le darían un premio.  
 'If he sings they'd give him a prize'

In this dialect of Spanish the conditional variably substitutes for the simple past subjunctive forms only. Example (5) illustrates the variation, and examples (6) and (7) show that the simple present subjunctive and the -ra form in the pluperfect are regularly used:

- (5) CS: ¿Qué haría usted si ella tuviera un novio?  
 M: ¡Anda pues, dejarla! Que, que iría (C) con el novio, que se conocieran (S) hasta que llegarían (C) a casarse.  
 (Std. Spanish: fuera (S) - conocieran (S) - llegaran (S))  
 CS: 'What would you do if she had a boyfriend?  
 M: 'Well, let her! To, to go with her boyfriend, so that they would get to know each other, until they became married'  
 (6) Aunque tengan (S) ochenta años a lo mejor se ponen a bailarla.  
 'Even if they are eighty years old maybe they'll start dancing it'





likely candidate. In addition, it implies that examples like (11) would occur rather frequently in ambiguous contexts which create confusion between the report of a statement or a mand, but no supporting evidence is offered by Espinoza nor by my data.

Therefore, it seems that Espinoza's explanation for the change, analogy, is not adequate.<sup>4</sup> Indeed, as Anttila (1972) points out, analogy means regularity, rule-governedness, pattern, it is a linguist's way of describing the action of the speaker. Analogy is not the cause of change but provides the patterns according to which change takes place. Furthermore, since "all changes share the analogical mechanism" (Anttila 1972:181) it is inadequate to propose analogy as the cause of any one particular change.

Lavandera's hypothesis, on the other hand, responds to the principle that gaps in the patterns of a language system tend to be leveled out. She proposes that in Modern Standard Spanish the loss of the future subjunctive form and consequent use of the imperfect subjunctive in the protasis of conditional constructions to refer both to a hypothetical situation contrary to fact and a hypothetical situation which is probable in the future has created ambiguity. Speakers of some Spanish dialects resolve this ambiguity by using the C in contexts where the future subjunctive would have occurred, i.e. to express probability in the future. Examples (14) and (15) illustrate the two hypothetical situations:

(14) Contrary to fact

Si fuera (S) más joven me iría a vivir al campo.

'If I were younger I'd go live in the country'

(15) Probable

Si fuera (S) a España te vería pronto.

'If I went to Spain I'd see you soon'

Example (14) expresses a situation which is contrary to fact and improbable: it contradicts what is in the real world and this state of affairs is not expected to change. Example (15), on the other hand, expresses a hypothetical situation which is probable in the future. In earlier stages of the language,<sup>5</sup> the future rather than the imperfect subjunctive would have been used in (15). This is the context where the innovative use of the conditional supposedly started according to Lavandera's analysis.

The system including the innovation, then, offers three degrees of probability in the protasis of non-past conditional constructions as shown in (16)-(18), which are ordered in an increasing scale of probability. Example (17) corresponds to the older construction with a future subjunctive.

- |   |                       |
|---|-----------------------|
| (16) Si fuera (S) a España te vería allá.   | <u>least probable</u> |
| 'If I went to Spain I'd see you there'      |                       |
| (17) Si iría (C) a España te vería allá.    | <u>more probable</u>  |
| 'If I'd go to Spain I'd see you there'      |                       |
| (18) Si voy (pres.) a España te vería allá. | <u>most probable</u>  |
| 'If I go to Spain I'd see you there'        |                       |

Lavandera's hypothesis is attractive but, as she herself notes, the present subjunctive may also be used, though in other contexts, to refer to probability in the future, so the analysis does not explain why this form was not the one extended. Furthermore, at least in Old Castile, the system has not achieved the perfect balance predicted. Indeed, the imperfect subjunctive has almost disappeared in *si*-protasis and, when it rarely occurs in the data, it refers to a probable situation, as example (19) shows:

(19) No sé- si fue - que - si nos casáramos (S) los dos qué te parece, o así fue.<sup>6</sup>

'I don't know if - if it was - that - if we got married what do you think, or something like that'<sup>6</sup>

A further problem with the proposal that C makes up for the loss of the future subjunctive is presented by the fact that the innovation is attested as early as the 16th century (Keniston 1937:412), at a time when the future subjunctive was still in use. Therefore, if the speakers had felt the need to disambiguate [+ contrary] from [- contrary] non-past situations, why didn't they simply retain the future subjunctive?

Finally, Lavandera's hypothesis does not seem to account for the widespread use of the C in other contexts, namely sentential subjects, noun complements, adverbial and adjectival clauses.<sup>7</sup> Observe that in these clauses the imperfect subjunctive is in opposition to the present subjunctive which, as stated before, may refer to probable situations in the future (v. examples (20) and (21)) just as the imperfect subjunctive may (example 22), so the use of the C in example (23) seems unwarranted. Nevertheless, it is quite frequent in my data (72%).

(20) Le dará dinero para que viaje (pres. S) a España.

'He'll give her money to go to Spain'

(21) Le dio dinero para que viaje (pres. S) a España.

'He gave her money to go to Spain'

(22) Le dio dinero para que viajara (S) a España.

'He gave her money so that she went/would go to Spain'

(23) Le dio dinero para que viajaría (C) a España. Std. Spanish: viajara

'He gave her money so that she'd go to Spain' (S)

On the other hand, the alternation of present and imperfect subjunctive in the complement of indirect reports of mands is not conditioned by degrees of probability but by the tense of the reporting verb, as shown in examples (24) and (25). However, the use of the C for the S is also attested in this context (26):

(24) Dice que entres (pres. S)

'He says for you to come in'

(25) Dijo que entraras (S)

'He said for you to come in'

(26) ... y le dijeron que entraría (C).

[from Espinoza 1930]

'... and they told him to come in'

It seems clear, then, that analogy is too powerful a notion to propose as the cause of the change, and that semantic ambiguity supposedly created by the loss of the future subjunctive is insufficient to account for the various contexts where the C substitutes for the subjunctive and for the particular choice of the conditional form to resolve the ambiguity. Rather, the analysis of the data and the geographic distribution of the innovation (Province of Burgos and Basque country) lead me to propose the agency of complex causation: semantic ambiguity between C (-ría) and imperfect subjunctive (-ra), and a concurrent external cause, language contact with Basque. This proposal seems plausible for three reasons: 1. It is well-known that areal features may be the result of linguistic innovations originating in one dialect and then spreading to neighboring varieties (e.g. the spread of /j/ loss in Norfolk and Lincolnshire (Chambers and Trudgill 1980:182-183)) or the result of borrowing from neighboring languages (witness, for example, the existence of linguistic areas such as the Balkans (postposed definite article) and central Europe (uvular r)); 2. The use of C for S is impressionistically reported to be very frequent in the Spanish spoken by Basques. In addition, in spoken Basque the subjunctive is reported to be rare or non-existent (Eys 1883; N'Diaye 1970); and 3. Lavandera (n.d.) reports a strong correlation between C for S and Italian background in Buenos Aires. She specifically states that "it is speakers of Italian origin who constitute a large part of the -ría speakers sample, as well as producing the highest frequencies of -ría within this group" (p. 28). I find this a very suggestive correlation given the fact that in some Italian dialects the pluperfect indicative form in -ra has been retained with the meaning of a conditional (Wright 1932:19).

The internal motivation for the innovation is provided by the opacity of the semantic difference between C and S forms, created by the shift of the imperfect in -ra from a pluperfect indicative (realis) to an imperfect subjunctive function (irrealis). Given two forms, one indicative and one subjunctive, with almost identical meaning and distribution, the universal tendency is for the subjunctive form to fall into disuse, probably because of an overall lower frequency of occurrence in discourse.

The -ra form was originally the pluperfect indicative in Latin. The shift of this form from the indicative to the subjunctive in Spanish started between 1000-1300 A.D. (Wright 1932) and was practically completed by the 17th century. However, its use in the apodosis of conditions is attested already in early Classical Latin. In Old Spanish the -ra form had started to be used as an imperfect subjunctive in optative clauses (with querer 'want', poder 'can', and deber 'should'), and in the apodosis and protasis of conditions. The C -ría, on the other hand, alternated with -ra and -se in the apodosis,<sup>8</sup> and in non-conditional subordinate clauses.

In Modern Spanish both -ría (C) and -ra (S) may express subjective expectations, predictions, and intentions (i.e., irrealis situations), and may alternate in various syntactic contexts in the standard usage:

In main clauses

- (27) { Querría (C) } pedirte un favor. polite request  
 { Quisiera (S) }  
 'I'd like to ask you a favor'
- (28) Acaso { deberías (C) } trabajar más. polite suggestion  
 { debieras (S) }  
 'Maybe you should work harder'
- (29) Nadie { imaginaría (C) } lo que eres capaz de hacer. prediction  
 { imaginara (S) }  
 'No one would imagine what you're capable of doing'

In relative clauses

- (30) La casa que me { compraría (C) } con ese dinero sería grandiosa. intention  
 { comprara (S) }  
 'The house that I'd buy with that money would be magnificent'
- (31) Los problemas que { podrían (C) } surgir me asustan. probability  
 { pudieran (S) }  
 'The problems that might come up frighten me'

In noun complements

- (32) No creí que { resultaría (C) } igual que el otro. probability  
 { resultara (S) }  
 'I didn't think that it'd come out like the other one'
- (33) Dudo que tu situación { prosperaría (C) } en el futuro. prediction  
 { prosperara (S) }  
 'I doubt that your situation would improve in the future'

In apodosis of conditions

- (34) Si sólo pudiera verlo le { daría (C) } tu mensaje. intention  
 { diera (S) }  
 'If only I could see him I'd give him your message'

The semantic difference between C and S in examples of the type illustrated in (27) to (34) is opaque. It seems to me that at this stage of the language the difference is largely one of style in the dialects where both forms are used. The -ra form is associated with a more formal and conservative style. It must be mentioned, though, that it has been suggested that the S makes a statement slightly more polite, or less probable than the conditional.<sup>9</sup> In all its uses, then, the conditional is an irrealis form and signals the hypothetical status of a situation; this approximates it to the subjunctive. Given these overlapping functions, and the possible influence of neighboring dialects and/or language substratum, it is not surprising, in the light of historical preference for indicative forms, that the C started to take over the functions of the S. This explanation accounts for the geographic distribution of the innovation and for the fact that the C and the S (when it rarely occurs) are used variably both in plus or minus contrary to fact contexts (v. example (5) and (35)-(39) below), and in contexts where the factivity status of the situation is either ambiguous (40-41) or irrelevant (example 42):

[- contrary to fact]

- (35) Me gustaría estar cuando habría (C) una riada. Std. Spanish: hubiera  
 'I'd like to be here when there was a flood' (S)

- (36) Si yo estaría (C) en E.E.U.U. tú me mostrarías las cosas nuevas que hay allá. Std. Spanish: estuviera (S)

'If I were in the U.S. you'd show me the new things that there are over there'

- (37) Pues yo tengo una carta que si la vieras (S)...  
'Well I have a letter that if you saw it ...'

[+ contrary to fact]

- (38) Si ahora despertaría (C) y se viese con su trajecito del Corazón de Jesús. Std. Spanish: despertara (S)

'If she woke up now and saw herself in her Sacred Heart of Jesus dress'

- (39) Y no se podía hacer nada- esfuerzos para, pues pa' que llegaría (C) [el dinero]. Std. Spanish: llegara (S)

'And you couldn't do any- efforts to, well to make money'

Factivity is ambiguous

- (40) Y la encerró en la torre pa' que no la pasaría (C) nada. Std. Spanish: pasara (S)

'And he locked her up in the tower so that nothing happened to her'

- (41) No le creería aunque me lo diría (C). Std. Spanish: dijera (S)  
'I wouldn't believe you even if you said it'

Factivity is irrelevant

- (42) a. Dice que vengas (pres. S) mañana.  
b. Dijo que { vinieras (S) } mañana.  
          { vendrías (C) }  
a. 'He says for you to come tomorrow'  
b. 'He said for you to come tomorrow'

In examples (38) and (39) the conditional is used to refer to hypothetical situations contrary to fact which cannot change in any future state of affairs. The woman in the Sacred Heart of Jesus dress is dead and could not of course wake up, and in (39) the speaker refers to a past period of her life in which it was impossible to make money. In example (40) the speaker refers to a historical event and in view of the ensuing facts (the imprisoned lady was supposedly assassinated), the probability status of the purpose clause is unclear. Likewise, in non-past clauses it may also be difficult to determine the likelihood of occurrence of a situation, as in (41), where the concessive clause seems to express a very improbable situation: my telling the speaker that human beings have well-formed babies.

Furthermore, in indirect reports of mands the use of the S is not dependent on degree of probability but on the tense of the reporting verb, as exemplified in (42 a. and b.), but the innovation is also frequent in this context.

Conclusion. To summarize, then, I have suggested in this paper that an adequate account of the motivation for the innovative use

of the conditional for the imperfect subjunctive forms in some Spanish dialects should posit the agency of complex causation: the opacity of the semantic difference between conditional and subjunctive forms, and language contact. Future investigation should test this hypothesis through a quantitative analysis of a larger body of data and through an in-depth sociolinguistic study of the areas where the innovation is attested. In particular, it is necessary to find out the frequency of use of C for S in the Spanish spoken by bilingual Basques, the earliest attested uses of this phenomenon, and the degree of contact between Basques and Castilians.

## NOTES

- 1 The data for this study were collected in the summer of 1981 in Covarrubias (Province of Burgos, Spain). They consist of transcriptions of audio-recordings of conversations between the investigator and speakers of various ages. The analysis presented here is preliminary and based only on data from six speakers.
- 2 All of them were women, which lends support to the observation that women's language behavior tends to be more conservative.
- 3 I will not refer here to Espinoza's remarks on relative frequencies because his quantification of the data is not correct. He does not, for example, calculate percentages for each syntactic context where the variable occurrence of C is possible. Rather, he gives percentages only for the cases of application and across all contexts.
- 4 Espinoza does not explicitly refer to the extension of C to the protasis of conditional sentences as a case of analogy, but this is what is clearly implied.
- 5 Examples of the future subjunctive quoted by the Real Academia Española (1973) are from Cervantes and Garcilaso, i.e., 16th century.
- 6 The speaker is telling me about how her husband proposed to her.
- 7 Lavandera (1975) does not deal with these constructions. She only states (p. 250) that the conditional is very infrequent in these syntactic contexts.
- 8 The form amare habebam, which later became amaría (C) came to be used in the apodosis of a condition in late Vulgar Latin (Wright 1932:10).
- 9 Noticing these similarities, the Spanish Academy included for a long time the -ría (C) form as one of the forms of the imperfect subjunctive (Gili Gaya 1979:171). In the Esbozo (Real Academia Española 1973), however, the conditional is included as one of the forms of the indicative mood.

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