

Aspects of subjunctive: obviation and temporal relations

On the Nature of the subjunctive and temporal relations

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Abstract

Once we conceive of the subjunctive as not directly involved in the temporal dependency relation between the embedded and the matrix clauses, we manage to build a unified account of the subjunctive, establishing a relation between subjunctive and temporality. In particular, I suggest that the subjunctive is characterized for a certain type of temporal deficiency, if compared to the indicative. This is a welcome result since subjunctive forms have been widely reported to be temporally underspecified. Adopting Giorgi's (2010) theoretical proposal, which formalizes the semantics of the temporal relations between the embedded complement clause and the matrix clause, I dwell upon the consequences of the analysis of the subjunctive for the theory of temporality. I suggest that morphology is not a reliable factor for determining the nature of the phenomenon of temporality.