MOOD, PROPOSITIONAL ATTITUDES AND METAREPRESENTATION IN SPANISH

Aoife Ahern, U.N.E.D. aahern@bec.uned.es

In this paper I will be considering how the data related to the lexical selection of the indicative and subjunctive moods in Spanish subordinate clauses reflect aspects of the interaction between semantics and pragmatics. My proposal consists of a Relevance-theoretically based analysis of the Spanish subjunctive as a grammatical marker of the meta-representation of propositions, which affects, *inter alia*, the interpretively expressed propositions functioning as objects of certain propositional attitude predicates. This basic, procedural semantic content of the subjunctive activates a variety of pragmatic assumptions during the interpretation process which correspond to the diverse communicative purposes that are often mentioned in the explanations found in traditional grammars of the "meaning" of mood selection and choice in Spanish.

That-clauses have been analysed (Bezuidenhout (2000)) as encoding the procedural information that they express propositions which bear a relation of interpretive resemblance to the content of the object of a propositional attitude predicate (OPA). The notion of interpretive use, as described by Sperber and Wilson (1995: 228) consists of the use of utterances to represent, not what they describe, but what they resemble. This resemblance relation consists of the propositions involved sharing some logical properties and giving rise to partly identical contextual implications. Interpretive use, thus, is a particular kind of metarepresentation: the proposition consists of a representation that *resembles* some other representation (for instance, the speaker's own (possible/previous) thought, or a thought or utterance the speaker attributes to some other contextually salient individual) which it is being used to represent.

A noteworthy property of propositional attitude predicates in the Romance languages is that certain semantically related groups of them select subjunctive arguments. In Spanish, for instance, these include predicates such as volitional ones (*querer*, *ordenar*, *pedir - want, command, request*), those known as evaluatives or factive-emotives (*lamentar, temerse, asustar – regret, fear, frighten),* negative epistemics (*dudar, negar – doubt, deny*), as well as other sentence-embedding predicates like those expressing probability and necessity (*necesitar, ser probable que – need, be probable that*). I would like to suggest that, in accordance with Bezuidenhout's analysis of the clauses embedded under propositional attitude predicates as interpretive representations, lexical selection of the subjunctive reflects that these interpretively used propositions are expressed under an additional layer of metarepresentation.

Therefore, in utterances such as:

1) *María quiere que coloquemos sus zapatillas al lado del sillón.*
   María wants that we-put (pres. subj.) her slippers beside the armchair.

2) *Lamentaron que tuvieras que repetir el examen.*
   They-regretted that you-had (imperf. subj.) to-repeat the exam.

the lexical selection of the subjunctive reflects the fact that the propositional attitudes represented by predicates such as *querer* and *lamentar* can be described as doubly interpretive. Firstly, they are interpretive by virtue of the fact that they are presented by the speaker as propositions that resemble, in contextually appropriate ways, the actual OPA as entertained by the subject. In other words, the speaker of (1) shows her intention, by way of this utterance, that the embedded clause

que coloquemos sus zapatillas al lado del sillón should interpretively represent the proposition María herself entertains (as a representation of the state of affairs which is the object of her wanting). On the other hand, the nature of the type of propositional attitudes which these subordinating predicates are used to represent entails that the contents of their object propositions is entertained as a metarepresentation by the subjects themselves. This occurs in the case of volitional predicates since they describe a relationship between an agent and a proposition such that the proposition is entertained by the subject as representing a description of a desirable state of affairs, as opposed to a descriptive representation of (what is believed to be) an actual state of affairs. As for factive predicates such as the one found in (2), the lexical semantics of these verbs determines that the proposition expressed by the embedded clause is "presupposed", which, for the present purposes, is equivalent to "already present in the conversational context"; thus they can be considered interpretive in the sense in which all that-clauses are, in addition to being interpretations of representations already present in the context of utterance.

The objects of other groups of propositional attitude and other sentence-embedding predicates in Romance languages, such as belief predicates, "positive" epistemics (i.e., the equivalents of *know, realise, find out*, etc.), and predicates of perception, are expressed in the indicative mood. The semantic properties of these predicates include the specification that their arguments consist of interpretations of what, according to the speakers point of view (as reflected by the choice of the particular embedding predicate), the agent of the propositional attitude regards as descriptions of (what can be assumed to be actual) states of affairs. Therefore, the interepretive use is carried out only by the speaker, in order to represent what she regards as a proposition that resembles the subject's descriptive representation of the OPA. As a result, the subjunctive is ruled out: there is no further level of metarepresentation beyond the one used by the speaker to represent the agent's belief. In sum, it seems that the selection of mood in argument clauses is directly related to lexical properties of embedding predicates which can be seen as describing either descriptive or interpretive propositional attitudes, although this kind of classification of propositional attitude predicates is certainly in need of further development.

In contrast with previous studies of mood in the Romance languages, for example those of Quer (1998), or Farkas (1992), my proposal is based on the idea that the subjunctive mood encodes procedural information, as described by Blakemore (1987; 2000) and Wilson and Sperber (1993). The communicative role of procedural expressions, as opposed to that of conceptual ones, is to activate contextual assumptions within the cognitive processes of utterance interpretation that belong to the computational, rather than the representational, aspects of interpretative processes. The analysis of the subjunctive mood as a procedural expression which activates the assumption that the speaker is marking a proposition with an additional layer of metarepresentation will be shown to account for some important facts about the use of this mood, as well as the connection with previously proposed analyses:

- Both traditional as well as recent proposals such as those put forth by Bustos and Aliaga (2002), Gregory (2001), Villalta (2000), and Quer (1998) share the underlying intuition of the subjunctive as a mark of speaker "distancing". This can be shown to be a result of the implicatures that tend to arise as a result of the expression of a proposition as a *meta-interpretive* use.

- The notion of the subjunctive as a mark of an **additional** layer of meta-representation itself explains the fact that this mood only appears in subordinate clauses and (polite) imperative utterances. The dependence on a primary metarepresentational context is the pragmatic construal of the traditional *subjunctive as dependent mood* idea.

- The often mentioned, though poorly described, interaction between mood and modality can be shown to be a result of the relationships which both of these semantic domains maintain with metarepresentational uses of propositions.