

*Verum a fontibus haurire*

**A Variationist Analysis of Subjunctive Variability Across Space and Time:  
from Contemporary Italian back to Latin**

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## ABSTRACT

This dissertation investigates the use of the subjunctive in completive clauses governed by verbs in Italian, both synchronically and diachronically, and in Vulgar Latin. By making use of the tools provided by the Variationist Sociolinguistic framework (Labov 1972, 1994), the current study sheds light on the underlying conditioning on variability using actual usage and speech-surrogate data. Contemporary actual speech data comes from LIP (De Mauro et al. 1993) and C-ORAL-ROM (Cresti & Moneglia 2005) corpora, providing spontaneous discourse in casual and careful speech as well as sub-sample divisions representative of geographical variation. In order to measure any changes in the underlying conditioning on subjunctive selection, a diachronic benchmark is established: a corpus of speech-like surrogates of 16<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> century Italian, COHI (Corpus of Historical Italian), and a corpus of Vulgar Latin (*Cena Trimalchionis*, from the *Satyricon* by Petronius). The subjunctives were extracted in adherence to the principle of accountability (Labov 1972), using the method developed by Poplack (1992): every complement clause governed by a matrix verb (governor) that triggered the subjunctive at least once was included. This method enables us to circumvent the issue of the lack of consensus in the literature on exactly which contexts, i.e. verbs and/or meanings, should trigger the subjunctive in discourse. This issue surfaces as well from the meta-linguistic analysis of a compendium of 58 Italian grammars and treaties (CSGI, *Collezione Storica di Grammatiche Italiane*), constructed for the purpose of this research.

A series of linguistic and extra-linguistic factors proposed by formal and prescriptive literature are operationalized and tested against the corpora of both Italian and Vulgar Latin, in order to ascertain the nature of variability in discourse: i.e. whether the use of the subjunctive is semantically motivated, productive in speech or undergoing desemanticization and lexicalization.

Despite widespread assumption of a change that occurred after the political and the subsequent linguistic unification of Italy, i.e. that the subjunctive has lost ground in favour of the indicative when it was supposedly used categorically in the past, quantitative and statistical evidence shows that subjunctive selection is largely determined by lexical identity of the governor as well as embedded suppletive forms of *essere*, and that this pattern has been operative at least since the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

On a more socio-linguistic aspect, this study confirms the linguistic prestige that the subjunctive has acquired in contemporary speech, being selected with a wider range of infrequent and singleton governors by highly educated speakers. Also, the highly lexicalized pattern on variability was found to be largely shared amongst the four main urban centres of Florence, Milan, Rome, and Naples, thus countering the assumption of divergent linguistic behaviour between northern and southern varieties of Italian.

The study also shows that despite the significant time span targeted, no evidence of desemanticization has been found. Likewise, the variationist analysis on the Vulgar Latin subjunctive shows that subjunctive choice was already largely determined by, and restricted, to a few governors, identified as ‘volitive’ and ‘emotive’ matrices. These governors remained strong predictors for the selection of the subjunctive in Italian as well, suggesting that this lexical pattern has been transferred and consistently retained in the daughter language.

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To my father.

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# 1 Rationale

“La crisi del congiuntivo [...] ha un’origine chiara: pochi oggi pensano, credono e ritengono; tutti sanno e affermano. L’assenza di dubbio è una caratteristica della nuova società italiana.”

‘The crisis of the subjunctive [...] has a clear origin: today very few people think, believe and consider; everyone knows and affirms. The absence of doubt is a feature of the new Italian society.’

— Beppe Severgnini, *journalist*  
from *Non calpestare i congiuntivi*  
‘Don’t step on the subjunctives’

## 1.1 General introduction

The Italian language has supposedly undergone a series of (sometimes dramatic) changes in an exceptionally short period of time after the political and linguistic unification of 1861 (Bruni 1984; De Mauro 1963), which might make it something of an exception in terms of both speed and breadth of linguistic change. Given the socio-historical characteristics and the diglossic situation observable in Italian today – i.e. the co-existence of the national Italian language with the local dialects – that arose from the acquisition of Italian by a large number of speakers, a multitude of linguistic features are said to have changed or be in the process of changing. For instance, it has been claimed that in contemporary Italian we observe a) a tendency to omit the negative adverb *non* in negative constructions, such as *ha fatto niente* ‘she/he has done nothing’ (example reported by Maiden [1995: 231]); b) the abandon of the personal pronouns such as *egli* ‘he’ and *ella* ‘she’ in favour of *lui* ‘he’ and *lei* ‘she’ (Renzi 2000: 287; Serianni 1986: 49); c) the use of the masculine singular indirect object pronoun *gli* ‘to-him’

as a plural or feminine singular indirect object pronoun (Lorenzetti 2002: 22, 79)<sup>1</sup>. The SUBJUNCTIVE is said to be one such changing grammatical feature. The last few decades have seen intensified interest from grammarians and linguists alike, as far as the motivation underlying its use in discourse, how it has supposedly changed across time, and the persistence or divergence of its usage vis-à-vis that of its ancestor, Latin. Over the last few decades, quantitative examination of this morphosyntactic paradigm has included a) whether the alternation between the subjunctive and the indicative in discourse is promoted by internal factors, especially semantic or pragmatic factors that may convey a wide range of meanings (e.g. Bronzi 1977; Giorgi & Pianesi 1997; Wandruszka 1991); b) whether the subjunctive is productive in speech or instead is on the verge of extinction (e.g. De Mauro 1963; Berruto 1987; Tavoni 2002; Binazzi 2015); c) whether differences in usage arise between geographically-distinct varieties of Italian (mainly northern vs. southern) (e.g. Fochi 1956) as well as between different speech styles (e.g. Santulli 2009); and finally, d) the extent to which Italian retains some of the functions of the Latin subjunctive as opposed to exhibiting innovative trends (e.g. Harris & Vincent 1997; Magni 2009). Despite the large number of studies, these issues have never been tested systematically under an accountable empirical methodology. This dissertation will adduce new evidence to fill this gap by investigating the use of the subjunctive in Italian both in *space* and across *time*, synchronically and diachronically, as well as by tracking the conditions licensing the subjunctive in Latin, which will enable me to empirically determine what has been transmitted to present-day Italian.

From a *sociolinguistic* point of view, the subjunctive is an interesting variable because it is apparently very salient (Della Valle & Patota 2014; Stewart 2002). Indeed, the non-standard

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<sup>1</sup> See also Berruto (1987 & 2017); De Mauro (2017) Sabatini (1985) for a comprehensive discussion of linguistic features that have changed or have been changing in contemporary Italian.

use of the subjunctive frequently provokes vitriolic reaction from writers, journalists, teachers, intellectuals, and the general public. Given the overt prestige that many speakers associate with the (standard) use of the subjunctive (Schmitt Jensen 1970; Serianni 1986 & 2006), its putatively incipient or ongoing loss is generally lamented, with some linguists claiming that it is threatened by the rising use of the indicative (Fochi 1956; Simone 1993; Trabalza 1908; amongst others). It has become a linguistic feature for speakers to parade as a sign of polished Italian and of belonging to a higher social rank, whereas its avoidance is often condemned as a feature of popular, uneducated, or careless speech (Fochi 1956, 1957; Schmitt Jensen 1970; González de Sande 2004). The subjunctive therefore represents something of a cultural inheritance that speakers should maintain and protect; the speaker who avoids it is often mocked and submitted to the scornful judgment of others. Thus, what emerges from the media, institutions, grammarians, and even linguists, is that the use of the subjunctive is a feature of standard Italian and more particularly of the *bon usage par excellence*.

## 1.2 The socio-historical context

This section outlines some of the socio-historical reasons that might be likely to underlie the decreasing use of the subjunctive and the loss of its internal (semantic) properties in Italian. Italian distinguishes itself from other major Romance languages, such as French, Spanish, and Portuguese, by the lateness of its political and, subsequently linguistic unification. Early Italian was mainly used by only a small number of the inhabitants of the peninsula and until the political unification of 1861, this situation had persisted for centuries. This caused Italian to be considered a static (De Mauro 1991: 28), or even an *immobile* language (Ascoli 1882: 124). In other words, Italian has been assumed to be unusually stable for an uncommonly long time, relative to other members of the Romance language family.

### 1.2.1 Growing literacy and diffusion of Italian

At the moment of political unification some 150 years ago, only 2.5% of the population had mastered Italian.<sup>2</sup> Since then, several factors promoted the rapid diffusion of Italian across the peninsula, including intra-peninsular migration, military service, industrialization, and urbanization, leading to the widespread use of Italian throughout the peninsula by the 20<sup>th</sup> century (see De Mauro [1963]) for a detailed report). In addition, schooling played a major role in this diffusion since an increasing number of Italians gained access to formal education in this time period, resulting in a drop of 30 percentage points of the illiteracy rate over 30 years (between the first census of 1871 and that of 1911, see Figure 1.1).

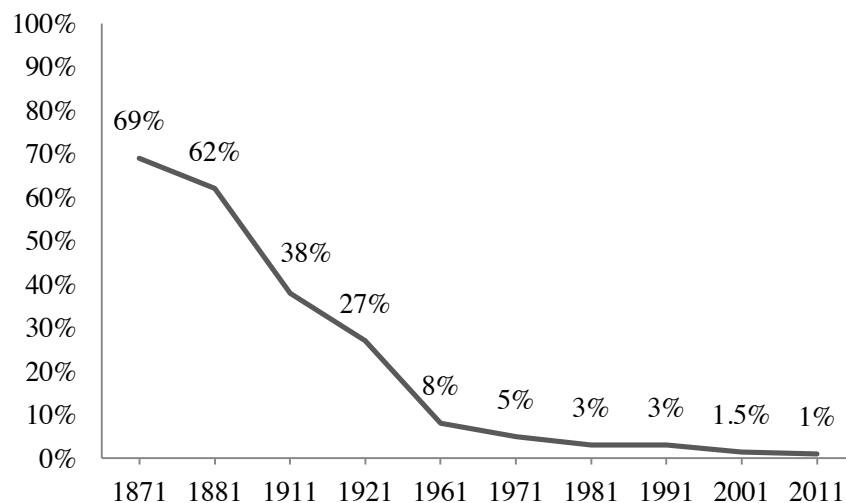


Figure 1.1: Rate of illiteracy according to census year after the political unification of 1861; adapted from De Mauro (1991: 63) and from the Italian National Institute of Statistics, *ISTAT*.

Since around 1950, various media outlets, including newspapers, radio, and television, helped in the diffusion of Italian as well.<sup>3</sup> However, the socioeconomic gap between northern and southern regions of Italy had a significant impact on the adoption of Italian as the language

<sup>2</sup> More generous is Castellani's (2009) estimate: around 10%.

<sup>3</sup> In 1958, 77% of families reported listening to the radio and/or watching television; source: *ISTAT*.

of common discourse. While the Italian language was gaining space (both literally and figuratively) in northern regions and ‘being able to speak Italian’ became a characteristic feature of more industrialized northern Italy (as reported by De Mauro [1991: 100]), southern regions remained essentially anchored to the various local dialects. This created a situation where millions of speakers of southern dialects – mostly uneducated or with little formal education – started acquiring Italian, which ultimately led to diglossia and, later, a new national language sometimes termed “a nationwide substandard” (Harris & Vincent 1988: 19; Berruto 1987; Cerruti, Crocco, & Marzo 2017; Mioni 1983; Sabatini 1985; to cite a few) or *neostandard* (Berruto 1987: 62). This is a widely accepted concept in Italian sociolinguistic research. Neostandard Italian includes features that are shared and widely accepted amongst regional varieties of Italian, although they do not necessarily coincide with the ‘true’ standard (Berruto 1987: 62-65). The use of the indicative in lieu of the standard subjunctive is considered a feature of Neostandard Italian.

### 1.2.2 The perceived change

The particular sociolinguistic conditions characterizing Italian are deemed responsible for a number of sometimes dramatic changes to many linguistic features, including the subjunctive, cf. Di Mauro:

“[È] indubbio che nell’italiano postunitario si siano avute *notevoli* trasformazioni nella sintassi del verbo: per quanto riguarda i modi del verbo si assiste a un processo di espansione dell’indicativo a spese del congiuntivo.” (emphasis mine, De Mauro 1991: 191-92)

‘[There] is no doubt that in post-unification Italian there were *considerable* transformations in the syntax of the verb: as regards verbal moods, there is an

observable process of expansion of the indicative at the expense of the subjunctive.’

The putative loss of the subjunctive in Italian is widely assumed to be underway and a few scholars even consider this feature to be on the verge of extinction (Bronzi 1977; Lepschy & Lepschy 1977; Simone 1993; Iacobini & Masini 2009). Concerns over the loss of subjunctive are also shared by linguists:

“È diffusa ormai nella coscienza collettiva della comunità linguistica italiana la convinzione che le forme del congiuntivo diventino progressivamente, e rapidamente, sempre più rare non solo nella conversazione quotidiana, ma anche negli usi più formali, orali e scritti.” (Santulli 2009: 152)

‘The conviction is widespread in the collective consciousness of the Italian linguistic community that subjunctive forms become progressively, and rapidly, increasingly rare, not only in everyday conversations, but also in more formal uses, both oral and written.’

If the increasing use of the indicative in lieu of the subjunctive is overall seen as a non-standard behaviour, this supposed “decay of the subjunctive’ (Durante 1981: 272) is considered more advanced in southern speakers: “the popular usage of southern Italy tends [...] not to employ the morphological present subjunctive, and this is certainly a simplification in terms of the number of distinctive morphosyntactic categories in the language” (Maiden 1995: 258; see also Rohlfs 1969: 59).

### **1.3 The general treatment of the subjunctive**

The loss of the subjunctive in speech is also associated with the loss of whatever semantic properties would have hypothetically triggered its use in the past, although no

widespread consensus has been reached as to whether a) the subjunctive actually has a semantic component in contemporary Italian or b) the semantic contribution has been lost. There is also little consensus with regards to which semantic components or contexts are supposed to trigger the subjunctive mood, which obscures the overall situation even more. Over the past decades, an increasing number of studies have examined the syntactic and semantic aspects of the subjunctive mood which has resulted in a shift away from the purely structural view that sees the subjunctive mainly as a subordination marker, towards a morphology that has a meaningful opposition<sup>4</sup> to the indicative. Thus, the treatment of the subjunctive could fall into two major categories: a) it is simply a formal marker of subordination (syntactic or structural view); or b) it conveys the [+irrealis] feature (traditional semantic view) or c) it conveys a wide range of meanings and pragmatic functions (contemporary semantic view). While the structural view posits that the subjunctive has an entirely syntactic role and therefore relegates the morphology to a mere automatic mechanism devoid of any meaning (Harris 1974 & 1978), the semantic views have arisen mainly because of the need to explain the inherent variability observed in speech between the subjunctive (1) and the indicative (2) in the *same* syntactic environment of completive clauses.<sup>5</sup> This is the phenomenon targeted by the current research.

(1) No, ascolta, loro non **vogliono** che venga<sub>SUBJ</sub> protetto dai rumori.

(COR.064.82)<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> I refer to a meaningful and meaningless opposition (see Harris 1974) as whether subjunctive and indicative alternation in completive clauses is carrier of a semantic distinction (i.e. meaningful alternation) or not (i.e. meaningless alternation).

<sup>5</sup> All dependent clauses are introduced by means of a complementizer (expanded in the category of CP, i.e. complementizer phrase). In Italian, completive clauses can be introduced by elements such as *che* 'that', *di* 'to' and *se* 'if', but the current study targets exclusively those introduced by *che*.

<sup>6</sup> These codes identify the corpus, the numeric speaker code, and the line number at which the utterance occurred. Examples from several corpora will be shown throughout this paper, including the C-ORAL-ROM (2005) (COR), the *Lessico di frequenza dell'Italiano Parlato* (1993) (LIP), the *Corpus of Historical Italian* (COHI), and the

‘No, listen, they don’t want it to be protected by the noises.’

(2) **Credo** che tutto *ritorna*<sub>IND</sub>. (COR.511.264)

‘I believe that everything comes back.’

Since mood alternation occurs in the same syntactic position and is governed by different semantic classes of verbs, e.g. a verb of volition in (1) and a verb of opinion in (2), it is reasonable to suppose that the choice of a specific mood in the subordinate clause is a consequence of the semantic class of the governing verb. Scholars have developed semantic accounts for cases such as (1) and (2), in which the different matrix verbs distinguish an epistemic from a volitive reading (Kratzer 2012; Wandruszka 1991). However, when the same verb governs both the subjunctive and the indicative, as in (2) and (3) below, scholars have appealed to a shift in the meaning to justify the choice of the speaker.

(3) **Credo** che tutti lo *sappiate*<sub>SUBJ</sub>. (COR.438.218)

‘I believe that everyone knows it.’

The appeal to semantic explanations of subjunctive use stems from the doctrine of *form-function symmetry* (Poplack & Dion 2009; Poplack, Lealess, & Dion 2013): the desire to establish a one-to-one relationship between a form and its meaning. Thus, under this doctrine, selection of indicative morphology rather than subjunctive morphology would necessarily imply a difference in meaning between the two forms. In both the prescriptive and mainstream linguistics camps, scholars either espouse a categorical view of the subjunctive, where it occurs only with a restricted set of specific semantic classes (i.e. volition, emotion, necessity), or a variable view, where the subjunctive is considered to be a marker of a meaning-based alternation – though there is little agreement on where exactly it *must* be used.

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Vulgar Latin Corpus (VLC<sub>o</sub>). The latter two corpora were assembled for the purpose of this dissertation. I refer the reader to Chapter 3 for more details.

Another commonality between theoretical and prescriptive accounts of the subjunctive is the type of data exploited to describe its use and to generate a theory: both typically base their conclusions on standard speech as described in prescriptive literature, or on speaker or analyst intuition. In other words, rather than accounting for how the subjunctive is actually used in speech, the standard norm is taken as the benchmark to establish the ‘appropriate’ contexts for subjunctive selection. The consequence of relying solely on this type of data is the frequent dismissal of cases considered by the analyst to be colloquial or informal linguistic behaviour, either by ascribing them to *popular speech* (Wandruska 1991; among others) or instead ignored *in toto*, thereby failing to acknowledge the *inherent variability* of this construction. Such a blind spot has led to divergent opinions on what constrains variability within the theoretical and prescriptive camps, but this issue permeates quantitative research as well. Although (non-variationist) quantitative research adopts a corpus-based approach, as we will see, previous studies either rely on data differing from actual informal usage or instead impose a series of limitations in terms of *which* contexts are considered to be eligible for an empirical investigation of subjunctive use in speech, relying most of the time on a few matrix verbs that are supposed to trigger subjunctive according to normative injunctions. We return to the above-mentioned issues in Chapters 3 and 4.

Using benchmark data as well as empirical methods of investigation are both of a particular importance in sociolinguistic research. In order to establish whether the subjunctive is undergoing or has undergone change, it is necessary to examine a “style in which the minimum attention is given to the monitoring of speech” (Labov 1972b: 208): i.e. the vernacular, in other words the most systematic speech mode characterized by linguistic features that are more stable and less affected by the normative pressure. Using this type of speech allows analysis to be

conducted in a systematic and exhaustive way. Also, as will become clear in the following chapters, casual, unsystematic observations cannot capture the highly structured pattern of variability, which requires systematic analysis in order to be fully unveiled. Whether the use of the subjunctive in completive clauses carries semantic meaning or not should not be exclusively informed by comparison with the standard; it should rather be subjected to objective testing of hypotheses against a corpus of vernacular speech data.

#### **1.4 Purpose of this research**

The subjunctive is a prime area of investigation in sociolinguistics because it incorporates effects from both internal (linguistic) and external (social) factors, and offers insight into language variation and change – particularly in this case as concerns inheritance from Latin into Italian. The case of Italian further distinguishes itself from studies of other Romance languages (e.g. French, Spanish, and Portuguese) because of the supposed sudden loss of the subjunctive in contemporary Italian as a result of changes that occurred after the political unification of 1861, and more particularly after the 1950s, which ushered in a considerable drop of the illiteracy rate and the diffusion and adoption of (Neo)standard Italian across the peninsula. Given this, the subjunctive could hypothetically have been stable for centuries, retaining a pattern transferred directly from Latin, but possibly underwent a dramatic change in just few decades of contemporary speech – leading to the suggestion of its putative ‘loss’ in contemporary Italian. Through a comparative sociohistorical study of subjunctive use across time, I aim to determine whether such dramatic change did occur in contemporary Italian or whether *natura in operationibus suis non facit saltum* (‘nature works gradually’), and consequently that such a change, if it did occur, could only be the continuation (and possibly acceleration) of some existing process (Labov 1971). In order to pinpoint the nature of subjunctive variation and

change in speech, I investigate it in this dissertation empirically and systematically within the framework of Variationist Theory (Labov 1972). The underlying grammatical structure of the subjunctive is discerned from examination of its distribution and variable conditioning within an objectively-defined variable context. The goal of the current research is to determine which factors within the internal and external environments contribute to subjunctive selection. In order to achieve this goal, I propose falsifiable hypotheses derived from the relevant literature, be it prescriptive, theoretical, or historical. These hypotheses are operationalized and tested, shedding light on what constrains the choice of the subjunctive mood, and whether and to what extent it has changed vis-à-vis Latin, and also in Italian over time.

### 1.4.1 Locating subjunctive

As described above and in the ensuing chapters, the study of the subjunctive imposes the challenge of identifying the contexts of study: which verbs are eligible contexts for variation in subjunctive selection? It is possible to distinguish the alternating forms insofar as each displays a distinctive morphology. However, as in other Romance languages, Italian also shows syncretism between the subjunctive and the indicative, as shown in Table 1.1.

	Present Indicative	Present Subjunctive	Simple Past	Imperfect Subjunctive
1SG. <i>io</i>	amo	ami	amai	amassi
2SG. <i>tu</i>	ami	ami	amasti	amassi
3SG. <i>lui/lei</i>	ama	ami	amò	amasse
1PL. <i>noi</i>	amiamo	amiamo	amammo	amassimo
2PL. <i>voi</i>	amate	amate	amaste	amaste
3PL. <i>loro</i>	amano	amino	amarono	amassero

Table 1.1: Conjugation of a typical first group (*-are*) verb, *amare* ‘to love’, in the present indicative and the present subjunctive, as well as in the simple past indicative and the imperfect subjunctive. Shading indicates forms that are ambiguous between the subjunctive and the indicative moods.

Overall, Italian has a rich morphological system. Homophony between the subjunctive and the indicative is limited to 2<sup>nd</sup> person singular of the present indicative and the present

subjunctive with first group verbs (-are), 1<sup>st</sup> person plural of the present indicative and the present subjunctive of all three conjugation groups, and finally, 2<sup>nd</sup> plural of the simple past indicative and the imperfect subjunctive of all three conjugation groups. These forms are thus excluded from the present study since they do not permit us to morphologically distinguish the grammatical mood – only the unambiguous forms are retained.

With the morphological contexts appropriately delimited, we must now identify which verbs are ‘supposed’ to trigger the subjunctive, whether these should select the subjunctive categorically or variably, and for what reasons. Prior to any data extraction or analysis, every variationist study undertakes the important step of circumscribing the variable context; that is, defining the context in which the forms (called *variants*) can alternate without any change to referential meaning or function (Labov 1972: 188). However, in the particular case of the subjunctive in completive clauses, we are confronted with a dilemma in defining the variable context since it is difficult (even impossible) to decide *a priori* where the subjunctive and the indicative have the same referential meaning or function. Indeed, the semantic function that is supposed to trigger the subjunctive mood remains a matter of some debate in the literature. A variety of different subjunctive-selecting matrices (e.g. *volere* ‘to want’, *bisognare* ‘it is necessary’, *credere* ‘to believe’, etc.), called *governors*, are mentioned in formal, descriptive, and prescriptive literature – all purportedly conveying different meanings (e.g. doubt, hope, fear, affection of soul, imagination, hesitation, etc.). Not only are many of the meanings ascribed to the subjunctive difficult or impossible to operationalize in running discourse (Poplack et al. 2013), there is no guarantee that the speakers actually use the subjunctive to convey these meanings. On the other hand, following Poplack’s (1992; 2013) methodology (outlined in Chapter 3), the variable context allows us to circumvent a priori selection of semantically-

eligible governors (doubt, assertion, non-assertion, volition, etc.). Instead, this method identifies governors where the subjunctive is *actually used*, which are then taken to represent the exhaustive set of possible subjunctive-selecting contexts in a given dataset.

Given the standard ideologies and the overt prestige supposedly conveyed by the subjunctive (at least in Italian), which inform linguistic research as well, Chapter 2 addresses the question of whether the standard is, in fact, a reliable benchmark for the study of the subjunctive. To make this determination, I describe the standard injunctions for the subjunctive as collected from a meta-linguistic analysis of the treatment of the subjunctive mood in a collection of historical grammars.

Chapter 3 describes the datasets for both our contemporary and sociohistorical research and the methodological apparatus of the current study. The contemporary datasets exploited in the current study require one additional qualification: the publicly available data used in this research was not gathered following variationist procedures. Little attention was paid to sampling, and thus the corpora are not fully representative of a given speech community in a statistical sense (Poplack 1989). As detailed in Chapter 3, only a portion of the data is accompanied by socio-demographic information, but where it is provided, it reveals that the data is skewed towards speakers with high level of education. This calls for general caution when interpreting any effect of external (social) factors, but if it is true that subjunctive has become a highly salient feature, we would expect more instances of the subjunctive from highly educated speakers as opposed to those with little or no formal education. Despite these issues, the data studied here is nonetheless a fair representation of spontaneous speech and will enable us to uncover linguistic conditioning and thereby identify any patterns that might be shared by a relatively large group of speakers. At any rate, the focus here is on the detailed analysis of

internal factors conditioning the selection of the subjunctive and the testing of hypotheses centered on structural and semantic assumptions provided by prescriptive and theoretical literature. Keeping in mind the limitations imposed by skewed stratification of speakers, we will be able, to a certain extent, to test some external factors by relying on the constraint hierarchies (i.e. how the factors are ordered within a factor group) rather than on the overall rates.

In Chapter 4, we identify the factors mentioned in previous research as contributing to the choice of the subjunctive through an overview of the relevant contemporary research on the topic of this study. In Chapter 5, we present a detailed empirical analysis of subjunctive in contemporary informal speech data. This variationist analysis sheds light on the underlying pattern of variability through the operationalization and testing of many hypotheses, as well as on the vitality and *productivity* of the subjunctive in speech, which is defined and measured in Chapter 5. Using *Comparative Variationist* analysis (Poplack & Meechan 1998; Poplack & Tagliamonte 2001), we compare the conditioning operating on the choice of subjunctive mood across four distinct geographic subsets, in order to empirically establish how different (or similar) northern and southern linguistic patterns actually are. The Comparative Variationist method is also used in diachronic analysis of subjunctive variability in Italian in Chapter 6. This sociohistorical analysis is included to empirically test assumptions on language change in real time and to ascertain to what extent the subjunctive has supposedly changed with respect to earlier stages of Italian, if in particular the change is desemanticization, using real speech data as opposed to casual observations. In addition, I include a case study on the subjunctive in Vulgar Latin [henceforth VL] in Chapter 7, which contributes to the understanding of the possible inheritance and transmission of subjunctive patterns from Latin to Italian.

As will be demonstrated in this dissertation, subjunctive variability is far from random. It is constrained by structural rather than semantic factors, and the results bolster previous observations of the *lexical routinization* that this feature is undergoing in Italian (cf. Poplack et al. 2018). Also, with the exception of a few city-specific strategies, similarities in internal conditioning are observed in geographically-distinct subsets, thus rejecting the received wisdom of divergent linguistic behaviour between northern and southern varieties of Italian. Furthermore, the fact that the subjunctive has become a sociolinguistic marker of prestige is empirically confirmed by the particular productivity of this form amongst speakers with higher levels of education and/or in more careful speech. Moreover, despite the widespread concern, no dramatic change in the use or pattern of the subjunctive is observed over time, therefore debunking another conventional belief, i.e. that the subjunctive is a feature that underwent dramatic change (or loss) after the political unification. Finally, we shed light on a core lexical property of subjunctive use in Latin, i.e. that the subjunctive is restricted to a handful of matrix verbs. The empirical evidence at our disposal suggests that no desemanticization has occurred and that the use of the subjunctive has rather always been characterized by lexical factors. Moreover, these contexts of use in Vulgar Latin are maintained in Italian, although Italian also shows an innovative trend: a) the use of the subjunctive in contemporary Italian has become a sociolinguistic stereotype, i.e. a feature recruited to display linguistic prestige; b) a few governors, such as *credere*, *pensare*, *parere* and more recently *sembrare* have been accounting for more and more of the variation in discourse over time, suggesting the increasing lexicalized use of the subjunctive. This paradigm therefore reveals lexicalization, albeit one that is still far from the advanced lexicalized use reported for other Romance languages, such as French (Poplack et al. 2018).

## 2 The normative grammar of the subjunctive

“The subjunctive performs a variety of functions that hardly can be reduced to simple rules.”

— Raffaele Simone, *linguist*  
(translation mine, [1993: 80])

The subjunctive represents a grammatical feature that is highly constrained by prescriptive injunction in Romance languages generally, and Italian is no exception. The abundance of prescriptive works and rules offers up many ‘appropriate’ contexts and conditions of use where the subjunctive mood is licensed, which can then be used to characterize the standard usage of, and attitudes towards, the subjunctive, including the alternately condemned or tolerated use of the variants as ‘non-standard’. What grammarians identify as non-standard is often simply the inherent variability characterizing informal, every-day speech (Poplack et al. 2013). In Italian, the normative enterprise has been vehemently attempting to standardize the language for centuries. The normative belief in a fixed, immutable language causes every deviation from the standard to be condemned and associated with (often very negatively-viewed) linguistic change. Thus, tracing the evolution of grammatical prescription is equivalent to tracing the evolution of the rules that speakers are *supposed* to follow when using the subjunctive.

Using the method designed by Poplack (Poplack & Dion 2009; Poplack et al. 2013; Poplack et al. 2015), I construct and examine a compendium of historical grammars (the *Collezione Storica di Grammatiche Italiane*, henceforth CSGI) as a gateway into the normative take on the subjunctive, in order to reach an understanding of what speakers should and should

not do according to prescriptive mandate. This metalinguistic analysis of centuries of grammatical prescription for the subjunctive draws from a sample of prescriptive works, and locates a) every mention of the subjunctive, b) when and how this construction is supposed to be used, and c) its reported semantic functions or meanings. This compendium is also used to ascertain how the normative treatment of the subjunctive has evolved across time and to what extent it is still influential in contemporary treatments of subjunctive mood. It consists of a compilation of 58 Italian grammars and treatises ranging from the year 1516 to 2009, and organized into four periods for analytical purposes (Table 2.1).

	<b>PERIOD I</b>	<b>PERIOD II</b>	<b>PERIOD III</b>	<b>PERIOD IV</b>
Century:	16 <sup>th</sup> /17 <sup>th</sup>	18 <sup>th</sup>	19 <sup>th</sup>	20 <sup>th</sup> /Early 21 <sup>st</sup>
Date range:	(1370) 1516-1677	1711-1790	1802-1891	1900-2009
N grammars:	9	6	31	12

Table 2.1: Distribution of the grammars among the four periods.

The temporal span of the compendium includes the period targeted by the synchronic contemporary analysis and the diachronic/sociohistorical analysis presented in subsequent chapters. Although this is by no means a comprehensive or exhaustive collection of grammars, I selected some of the most popular ones. I identified works that either are frequently mentioned in the literature (e.g. Fornaciari's [1974] grammar) or identified as influential references at their time of publication. In particular, the works of Schenone (1986), Skytte (1990) and Stewart (1996) on the inception and evolution of the Italian grammatical tradition helped me to identify the most popular and influential grammars over time (Bembo 1525; Corticelli 1809; Fortunio 1516; Giambullari 1552; among others). In addition, the compendium includes the very first grammar of *volgare* (Alberti 1370), i.e. the everyday language spoken by the uneducated masses, which is informative as far as the supposed conditioning of the subjunctive in the very early stages of what is now called Italian. For analytical purposes, this grammar was included in Period I even though it predates the earliest Period I grammar by some 150 years. The analysis in

this chapter is based on the treatment of the subjunctive in every grammar of the compendium, whether it was prescribed (4), proscribed (5) or considered variable (6).

- (4) Coi verbi *raccomandare, commettere, incaricare, comandare*, come pure coi verbi *pregare, consigliare, esortare, persuadere* e simili, se il verbo soggiunto si pone ad un modo definito, questo dev'essere il soggiuntivo. (Soave 1862: 100)

'With the verbs 'to recommend', 'to commit', 'to appoint', 'to command', as well as with the verbs 'to request', 'to advise', 'to encourage', 'to persuade' and similar, if the added verb is in a finite mode, it must be the subjunctive.'

- (5) Dopo i verbi *vedere, udire, sentire, sapere, pensare* e altri che esprimono una persuasione sta sempre l'indicativo. (Demattio 1872: 107)

'After the verbs 'to see', 'to listen', 'to hear', 'to know', 'to think' and others that express persuasion it is always the indicative.'

- (6) [...] al soggiuntivo, o all'indicativo dopo i verbi *dire, narrare, sentire, provare, affermare, negare*. (G.T. 1883: 149)

'In subjunctive, or indicative after the verbs 'to say', 'to tell', 'to hear', 'to feel', 'to assert', 'to deny'.'

Each mention of subjunctive morphology and its usage according to grammatical rules was analyzed according to three key elements (Poplack et al. 2015):

<i>Salience</i>	expressed through the number of grammars mentioning the subjunctive
<i>Persistence</i>	of the contexts and meanings associated with the subjunctive across grammars and over the centuries
<i>Consistency</i>	of the treatment of the subjunctive across grammars and over the centuries

Where grammars *failed* to mention the subjunctive, this was also noted, but few grammars failed to refer to the subjunctive at all, whereas 76% (N=45/58) of the compendium makes overt reference to it. Over the centuries, grammarians become more and more interested in the subjunctive mood and in describing the rules and exceptions related to the contexts of its use or the meanings it is licensed to express, such that by Period IV (20<sup>th</sup>/early 21<sup>st</sup> century), *every single grammar* makes overt reference to it (100%, N=12/12).<sup>7</sup>

	<b>% Salience</b>	<b>N</b>
Period I	56%	5/9
Period II	67%	4/6
Period III	77%	24/31
Period IV	100%	12/12
	<b>78%</b>	<b>45/58</b>

Table 2.2: Salience of the subjunctive for each time period expressed in terms of percentage of grammars making overt reference to it.

Typically, any given grammar illustrates the rules accompanied by examples to show the lexical, syntactic, and semantic contexts of use, often including tables of conjugations displaying the standard form to adopt. The first two periods pay particular attention to morphological clarifications and condemnation of non-standard morphologies, with indications of the ‘correct’

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<sup>7</sup> A variety of terminological labels have also accompanied the subjunctive through time, fluctuating between *subiuntivo*, *subiuntivo*, *soggiuntivo*, *soggiuntivo*, *conjuntivo*, as well as *modo relativo*, *modo indefinito* and finally *congiuntivo*; some of these coexist in the same historical period as well as in the same grammar (i.e. *soggiuntivo*, *modo indefinite*, and *congiuntivo* throughout Period III).

morphology (7), common mistakes to avoid (8), obsolete forms (9), and simply variable forms (10).

(7) *[D]assi, dassè, dassero*, non sono voci di buon calibro [...] Lo stesso dico di *diano* per *dieno*. (Corticelli 1745: 111)

‘*Dassi, dassè, dassero*, are not expressions of good caliber [...] The same goes for *diano* and *dieno*.’

(8) Talchè chi dirà ‘Dio voglia ch’io *abbi, temi, senti* ec.’ [instead of *abbia, tema, and senta*] farà errore. (Buonmattei 1807[2]: 250)

‘Therefore whoever says ‘Dio voglia ch’io *abbi, temi, senti* etc.’ [instead of *abbia, tema, and senta*] will make a mistake.’

(9) Anticamente si usarono pure le forme: io *abbie*, tu *abbie*, egli *abbie*, e *abbieno* nella terza plurale. (Demattio 1872: 59)

‘In ancient times, they also used the forms: *io abbie, tu abbie, egli abbie, and abbieno* in third-person plural.’

(10) Ch’io *veggia & vegga*. (Accarigi 1543: 13)

‘That I *see<sub>SUBJ</sub> & see<sub>SUBJ</sub>*.’

The CSGI also provides examples illustrating the personal interpretation(s) of the grammarian, who may comment on the meaning conveyed by the morphology (11) as well as examples of good authors to emulate (12).<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> It is worth mentioning at this juncture that, until the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, subjunctive and conditional morphology were merged under the same *congiuntivo* label, and a *future* tense of the subjunctive was also apparently in use, mainly in periphrastic form (e.g. *che io sia per amare* ‘that I am about to love’, *che io abbia ad amare* ‘that I have to love’ [Soave 1802]) or as a future perfect tense governed by the adverb *quando* (e.g. *quando io haverò amato* ‘when I have loved’ [Trissino 1529]). Beginning in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, conditional morphology ceased to be considered subjunctive and the future subjunctive disappeared completely.

- (11) Nel secondo esempio, se il verbo fosse in congiuntivo, il dicitore esprimerebbe che egli, per nessuna circostanza, conosce la persona a cui parla; laddove, usando l'indicativo, mostra che abbia già qualche idea di lui. (Cerutti 1860: 399)

‘In the second example, if the verb was subjunctive, the speaker would express that he, under no circumstances, knows the person he is talking about; whereas, the use of the indicative, shows that he already has an idea of who he is.’

- (12) [*Fare* in Boccaccio] seguito da *che* col soggiuntivo, ha bel vezzo. (Cesari 1829: 65)

‘[The verb *fare* in Boccaccio] followed by [the complementizer] *che* plus the subjunctive, is a charming mannerism.’

## 2.1 The prescribed and proscribed contexts of use

As also observed by Poplack and her associates (2009; 2013; 2015), normative injunction for the contexts of use of the subjunctive has mainly taken two directions: a) the type of main verb, here termed the *governor*, that is prescribed or proscribed with the subjunctive in the embedded clause (outlined either through a few examples or explicitly appearing in a list of verbs); or b) the (mainly) semantic reading attached to the morphology. I identified and analyzed over 1000 mentions of subjunctive governors and semantic readings, and uncovered a number of inconsistencies and contradictory claims in several grammars and time periods.

Hundreds of pages have been devoted to the elucidation of rules for the subjunctive mood according to its syntactic, semantic, and extra-linguistic characteristics, within a wide range of syntactic contexts, including *if*-clauses, indirect questions, comparative clauses, superlative

clauses, relative clauses, independent clauses, and embedded clauses where the subjunctive is governed by a conjunction (e.g. *benchè* ‘although’, *a meno che* ‘unless’, *affinché* ‘in order that’, etc.) or where the superordinate element is a verbal governor (e.g. *volere*, *chiedere*, *dubitare*, etc.). The focus of the current research is on the latter construction; as such, I will only report on the prescriptive treatment of the subjunctive in completive clauses governed by verbal governors.

### 2.1.1 The subjunctive governors

A huge number of governors are prescribed to take the subjunctive mood according to the grammatical tradition: a total of 488 different governors were culled from mentions in the CSGI (for a total of 1080 mentions over all four periods). Until the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century (Period II), these governors were not explicitly prescribed and they would simply appear in several examples. In contrast, Periods III and IV see an increased emphasis on prescription of the *correct* verb, and consequently grammarians adopt the strategy of advising a (sometimes quite long) list of verbs.<sup>9</sup>

	PERIOD I 1370 - 1552	PERIOD II 1711 - 1756	PERIOD III 1802 - 1891	PERIOD IV 1900 - 2009
N grammars	5	4	24	12
N governors prescribed	7	12	65	461
Average N/grammar	1	3	3	38

Table 2.3: Distribution of the number of grammars and of governors prescribed, and the average number of governors per grammar for each of the four time periods.

The most remarkable result of this metalinguistic analysis is the vastly inflated number of governors in the final period relative to all other periods: 94% of all prescribed governors were proposed in grammars from Period IV (N=461/488). As shown in Table 2.3, if we consider the average number of governors per grammar, the 20<sup>th</sup> century is clearly the outlier: the average number is extremely high compared to the other periods. Furthermore, given that 90% of the governors proposed in Period IV (N=416/488) were culled from grammars published after 1950,

<sup>9</sup> See Appendix A for the list of governors extracted from the CSGI.

we can infer that this high number corresponds to the *Modern Linguistics Period*, as already noted by Poplack and associates with respect to the prescriptive treatment of the subjunctive in French (Poplack et al. 2013: 146). In addition to the large number of governors prescribed, overall 12 distinct semantic classes (13) are also prescribed to take the subjunctive (i.e. *verbs of possibility*, *verbs of doubt*, *verbs of volition*, *verbs of hope*, etc.), but only in Periods III and IV.

(13) Dopo i verbi dubitativi *dubitare*, *credere*, *parere*, *stimare*. (G.T. 1883: 149)

‘After verbs of doubt ‘to doubt’, ‘to believe’, ‘to seem’, ‘to consider’.’

### 2.1.1.1 Persistence

Despite the longstanding grammatical tradition fueled by the work of many grammarians and scholars over time, only three governors out of the total number of 488 (1%) persisted throughout the four periods: *volere* ‘to want’, *dire* ‘to say’, and *fare* ‘to do’. In fact, 66% (N=322/488) of the governors were mentioned only once in any period, making them ephemeral. None of the semantic classes persisted through all four time periods, since we must wait for Period III before the first explicit mention of a verb class: “*verbi di volizione, desiderio, di credenza*” (‘verbs of volition, desire, belief’, Romani di Casalmaggiore [1826]).

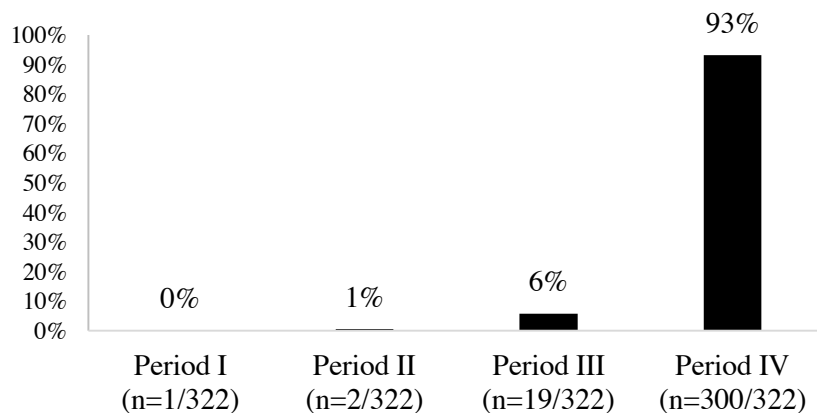


Figure 2.1: Distribution of the ephemeral governors culled from the CSGI according to time period.

The distribution of the ephemeral governors in Figure 2.1 above shows that Period IV is responsible for almost all of them, with 93% of ephemeral governors surfacing within this single period. This finding suggests that from the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, grammarians are particularly concerned with the correct contexts of use for the subjunctive. This finding, coupled with the categorical rate of saliency amongst contemporary grammarians reported above (100% in Period IV, cf. Table 2.2), further bolsters our observation that the issue of *where* the subjunctive should be used surfaced as a contemporary concern.

### 2.1.1.2 Consistency

The results shown above suggest that there is very little persistence over time as to the specific governors that take the subjunctive mood, which is made even more dramatically evident when we directly examine inter-grammar consistency (Figure 2.2). Only 3% of governors (N=15/488) were graced with a mention in more than 10 grammars, which is barely a quarter of the entire compendium.

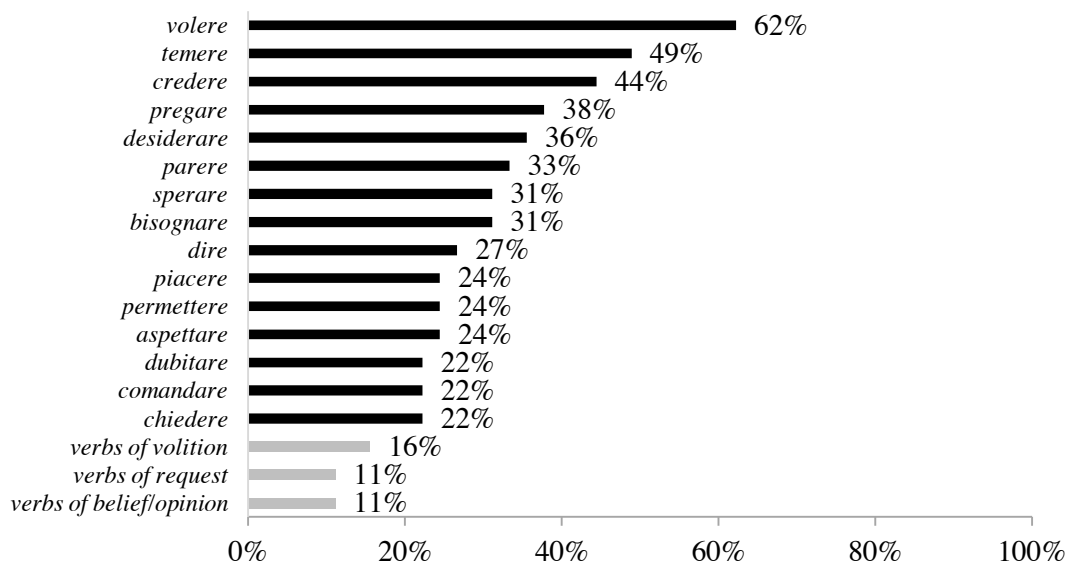


Figure 2.2: Governors and semantic classes having inter-grammar prescription agreement of at least 10 or more mentions for governor and 5 or more mentions for semantic class.

This is a surprising finding given the high number of governors found in contemporary grammars (Period IV), which might suggest more inter-grammar agreement on governors simply because there are vastly more governors prescribed. Only one governor, *volere*, was prescribed in 31 of 45 grammars, yielding a relatively high rate of inter-grammar consistency (62%). However, only seven grammars make mention of the semantic class of volition – the semantic class presumably containing the verb *volere* – yielding only a 4% rate of consistency. The same situation can be observed for verbs of opinion/belief: only five grammars mention this semantic class (3% rate of consistency), but the verb *credere* has a 44% rate of inter-grammar consistency. These noteworthy discrepancies in consistency between the prototypical verb of volition and the broader semantic class to which it belongs cast doubt on the notion that the subjunctive mood should be used according to any notion of ‘semantic class’. We do not observe a situation where a high number of governors has a relatively high rate of consistency, which would be taken as empirical evidence of a strong agreement on which verb or verb class takes the subjunctive. On the contrary, such a lack of inter-grammar consistency in both governors and semantic classes *refutes* the suggestion that the subjunctive mood *must* actually be used with specific governors or classes, thereby greatly lowering confidence in the normative description of rules and regulations of the use of the subjunctive.

### 2.1.1.3 The proscribed governors

Looking at contexts where the subjunctive is proscribed is another precious indicator of both past and contemporary usage of the subjunctive mood, since “offending forms must have reached a critical threshold well before the date that grammarians undertook to condemn them” (Poplack et al. 2013: 148). In fact, grammarians have occasionally designated specific governors or semantic classes that should *never* take the subjunctive. Whereas overall, grammarians are

more concerned with identifying those contexts where subjunctive mood is *prescribed* (despite all the previously highlighted discrepancies in inter-grammar consistency), a few of them concern themselves with where it *must not* be used: nine grammars out of 45 explicitly proscribed governors (14) and/or semantic classes (15).

- (14) Dopo i verbi *vedere, udire, sentire, sapere, pensare* e altri che esprimono una persuasione sta sempre l'indicativo. (Demattio 1872: 107)  
 'After the verbs 'to see', 'to listen', 'to hear', 'to know', 'to think' and others that express persuasion it is always indicative.'
- (15) Che se il verbo soggiunto vuol porsi ad un modo definito, questo deve essere indicativo, quando il verbo principale à affermativo ed esprime una cognizione certa. (Soave 1862: 99)  
 'Because if the subordinate verb needs to be put in a finite mode, it must be indicative, when the main verb is affirmative and expresses sure awareness.'

With no mention of proscribed contexts in the first two periods, the preoccupation over which verbs to avoid with the subjunctive seems to have started in Period III. In the last two periods, 60 governors were identified overall: Period III grammarians proscribed nine governors, while Period IV proscribed 55. Here we witness the same trends observed for prescription (cf. Figure 2.1): 93% of the governors (N=56/60) were mentioned exclusively in Period IV; half are ephemeral (52%, N=31/60) and 87% of these ephemeral governors belong to Period IV. Moreover, only 13 of 60 governors reached the threshold of a mention in at least five grammars (11%; Figure 2.3). This finding not only confirms that the preoccupation over which contexts are 'correct' is a more contemporary concern but also that, despite the high saliency of this

grammatical feature and the large number of grammarians offering both prescriptions and proscriptions for its use, there is no widespread consensus amongst grammars, suggesting the absence of any genuinely consistent norm.

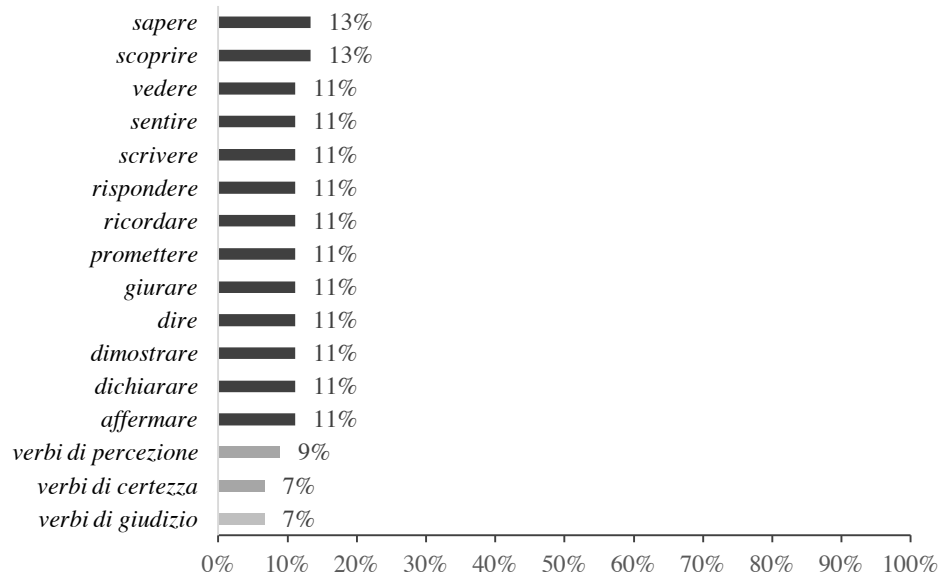


Figure 2.3: Governors and semantic classes of verbs having an inter-grammar proscription agreement rate of at least 10% for governors and 5% for semantic classes.

More interestingly, a third of these proscribed governors ended up being also prescribed, even within a single period (mainly Period IV). Table 2.4 displays the conflicting injunctions identified in the CSGI – in other words, the number of mentions according to which the governor was both prescribed and proscribed.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>10</sup> It is worth mentioning that the above table does not account for cases of synonymy, which could affect the conflicting situation even more (i.e. *è indubbio* and *fuori di dubbio*, ‘it is undoubtedly/without doubt’).

Governor	N Prescribed	N Proscribed
<i>avere la certezza</i>	1	1
<i>comprendere</i>	1	1
<i>essere sicuro</i>	2	1
<i>narrare</i>	1	1
<i>è noto</i>	1	1
<i>è chiaro</i>	1	1
<i>è certo</i>	1	1
<i>contestare</i>	2	1
<i>porre</i>	1	1
<i>essere certo</i>	2	4
<i>intuire</i>	1	4
<i>sostenere</i>	1	4
<i>affermare</i>	1	5
<i>dichiarare</i>	1	5
<i>dire</i>	12	5
<i>promettere</i>	2	5
<i>rispondere</i>	1	5
<i>vedere</i>	1	5
<i>sapere</i>	6	6

Table 2.4: Governors with conflicting injunctions.

In summary, from the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the concern about subjunctive governors (be they prescribed or proscribed) has been ever increasing. The meta-analysis of the CSGI revealed that the vast majority of these governors were entirely ephemeral or limited to a handful of grammars, and that most of them first appeared recently, which is especially remarkable given the 700-year timespan of the compendium and the longstanding grammatical tradition inherited from Latin.

Only 1% of governors (three verbs!) persisted throughout the four periods studied, although they were not necessarily systematically mentioned in each grammar. The highest rate of inter-grammar agreement is achieved by *volere*, which reached 69% inter-grammar agreement, whereas rates of inter-grammar consistency for other verbs and semantic classes were extremely low overall. Furthermore, although 69% inter-grammar agreement is remarkably high relative to other governors, we are still very far from the categoricity that one might expect with a verb such

as *volere*, which is arguably the best representative of a prototypical governor for the compulsory selection of subjunctive mood, because volitional contexts have been perpetuated as the prototypical context of subjunctive selection since Latin.

Inconsistencies were also identified with respect to semantic classes, which generally had very low rates of inter-grammar agreement, but also no correlation in terms of inter-grammar consistency with the governors that could belong to those classes, e.g. verbs of volition and *volere*. Furthermore, a few governors were both prescribed *and* proscribed, most of the time within the same time period, reducing consistency even more. In fact, it is difficult to reconcile the overall situation described above with the idea that grammars do, in fact, provide an accurate description of the rules constraining subjunctive selection, and that there exists some set of verbs or semantic classes that could reliably be considered categorical contexts for the subjunctive. On the contrary, such discrepancies and inconsistencies are empirical evidence of the grammatical tradition *failing* to provide the ‘correct’ set of subjunctive rules.

### 2.1.2 Meanings and functions

Although the grammars prescribed specific subjunctive-selecting governors to different degrees, only 58% of them (N=26/45) assigned one or more *meanings* or semantic functions to subjunctive morphology (16). This trend is once again far more present in Period IV, where 83% of grammars assigned one or more meanings and functions to the morphology, compared to other periods in which substantially fewer grammars did so (Figure 2.4).

- (16) a. Il *congiuntivo* dinota dubbio, o un fatto che può non aver luogo. (De Stefano 1843: 14)  
 ‘The subjunctive denotes doubt, or a fact that might not take place.’
- b. Il *congiuntivo* o *soggiuntivo* è il modo della possibilità. (Demattio

1872: 71)

‘The subjunctive is the mode of possibility.’

- c. Il modo soggiuntivo esprime *desiderio, incertezza, timore*. (Parato

1891: 129)

‘Subjunctive mood expresses desire, uncertainty, fear.’

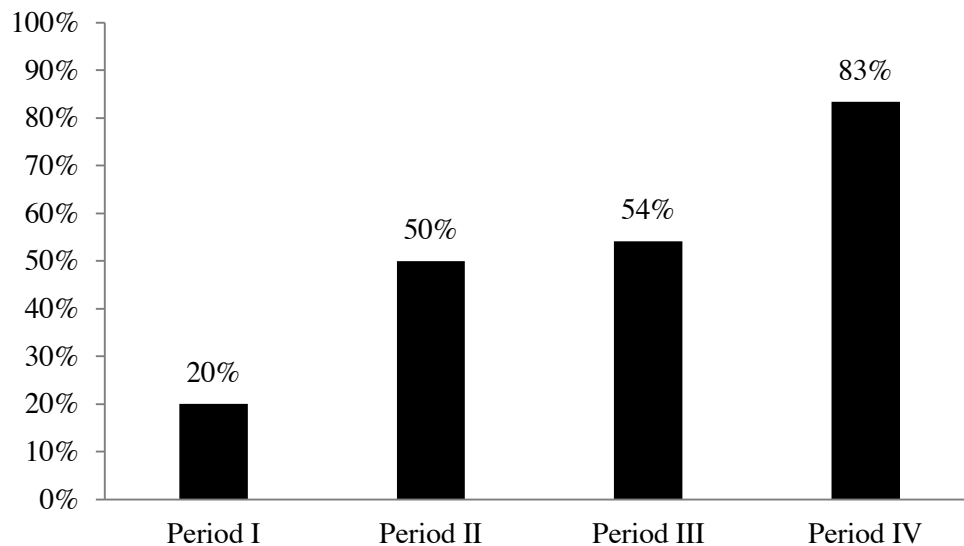


Figure 2.4: Proportion of CSGI grammars assigning semantic functions to subjunctive morphology over the four periods studied.

Despite the fact that not every grammarian assigned a semantic function to the subjunctive, those who did provided a wide spectrum of meanings: 82 distinct semantic functions were suggested overall (see Appendix B for the detailed list), including passion, intellect, reason, uncertainty, doubt, excitement, surprise, affection of the soul, worry, care, joy, pain, will, probability, prohibition, ignorance, desire, emotionality, happiness, intention, warning, and impotence, just to cite a few.

The long list of meanings provided is not consistent from grammarian to grammarian. In fact, the list includes some contradictory meanings such as conviction/certainty and non-conviction/incertainty. Categories that could be taken as synonymous, such as *richiesta* and *preghiera* (both ‘request’), are alternately treated as a single semantic function or as two independent functions (Dardano & Trifone 1995). Some semantic functions are also treated not only as synonymous (i.e. subjectivity, personal judgement and opinion), but are also subsumed under different broader categories, such as emotions (i.e. pain, fear, happiness, etc.) or beliefs (i.e. opinion, personal judgement, cognition, etc.)<sup>11</sup>, obscuring even more the identification of the exact context of use of the subjunctive.

Some proposals are especially eclectic, such as that of Moretti & Orvieto (1979: 77), who attach 43 different meanings to the subjunctive, as partially shown in the following excerpt:

- (17) Usando il congiuntivo, chi parla o scrive mostra di dare una *valutazione soggettiva* a fatti che alla sua coscienza appaiono poco, o molto, o del tutto *lontani dalla realtà obiettiva*, e dei quali segnala l’*eventualità* (la *possibilità*, la *probabilità*); o in merito ai quali propone la sua *personale opinione*, o confessa il suo *dubbio* (la sua *incertezza*, la sua *perplexità*), la sua *meraviglia* (il suo *stupore*, il suo *compiacimento*), la sua *insoddisfazione* (il suo *rincredimento*); o la cui realizzazione cerca di affrettare o di impedire con la sua volontà poco o molto risoluta (*ordinando*, *vietando*, *esortando*, *pregando*, *imprecando*); o davanti ai quali esprime la sua *speranza*, il suo *desiderio* (la sua *attesa*, il suo

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<sup>11</sup> For these reasons, given to the dissimilar treatment amongst grammarians, I made no attempt to group them by synonyms or by broader categories (e.g. pain, happiness, fear, etc.; all considered under the same category of *emotions*), but instead accounted for each meaning identified in the grammars independently to how they were treated by others.

*augurio*), il suo *rimpianto* (la sua *nostalgia*), il suo *timore* (la sua *apprensione*), la sua *accettazione* (la sua *rassegnazione*). [meanings are italicized here] (Moretti & Orvieto 1979: 77).

‘By using the subjunctive, whoever speaks or writes shows that he is providing an objective evaluation of the facts that to his consciousness appear a little, or a lot, or entirely distant from objective reality, and this conveys the eventuality (possibility, probability) [of these facts]; or with regards to these facts he suggests his personal opinion, or he confesses his doubt (his uncertainty, his perplexity), his surprise (his astonishment, his satisfaction), his dissatisfaction (his remorse); or that he is trying, with a more or less determined will, to hasten or to impede the realization [of these facts] (by commanding, prohibiting, exhorting, begging, cursing); or, in light of these facts he expresses his hope, his desire (his expectation, his wish), his regret (his nostalgia), his worry (his apprehension), his acceptance (his resignation).’

Furthermore, just as we observed with the governors and the semantic classes, 73% (N=61/82) of these semantic functions are ephemeral and 61% of them surfaced only in Period IV (mirroring the situation observed with proscription and prescription), which is already a clear indication of the extremely low rates of persistence. Only one function survived through time: the function of *subordination* (18), and it shows the highest rate of consistency, shared by 60% of the grammars (see Figure 2.5).

- (18) Congiuntivo, tolto da congiungere; così denominato, perciò che generalmente è giunto nella medesima proposizione con un altro verbo, e

a quello soggetto; come, per esempio, vorrei che tu dicessi. (Cerutti 1860: 7)

‘Subjunctive, drawn from ‘to conjoin’; so named since it is generally conjoined in the same proposition with another verb, and dependent on it; such as, for example, ‘I would like you to say’.’

Apart from this somewhat unique result, which is nonetheless far from perfectly consistent amongst all grammars, there is extremely little inter-grammar agreement as far as semantic function.

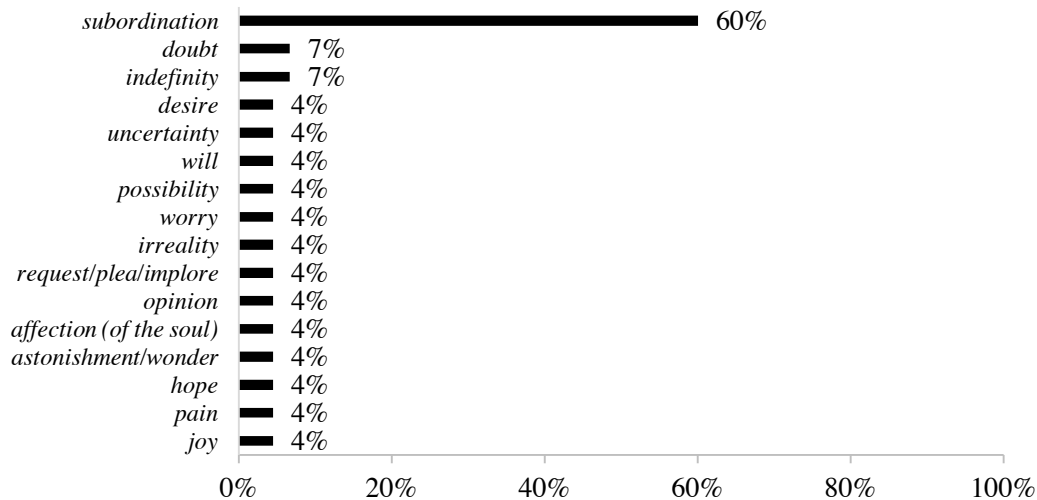


Figure 2.5: List of semantic readings having inter-grammar agreement of more than 5 mentions in CSGI grammars.

Other than the *subordination* function, the remaining 81 meanings are purely semantic in nature, and given the widespread assumption that subjunctive selection is semantically-motivated, it is astonishing that so little inter-grammar agreement was found. It is also difficult to reconcile these results with the idea that the subjunctive should be found with specific lexical governors and yet still convey such a wide array of meanings. If a given matrix verb is supposed to select the subjunctive mood categorically, this should apply independently of the meaning supposedly

conveyed by the speaker. Furthermore, we should bear in mind that a semantic motivation for selection of the subjunctive rests on the assumption that the speaker is conveying some meaning to an interlocutor who is able to consistently and properly interpret it as such. In this sense, the analyst can be considered to be on the same level as the hearer, since neither can truly *know* what the speaker wanted to convey in terms of meaning beyond the simple fact that s/he selected subjunctive morphology. Using semantic function to properly identify the contexts of use of the subjunctive is therefore impossible since – absent extremely rare semantic cues or signals in discourse – the analyst has no objective way to identify whether a speaker is actually conveying passion, impotence, worry, affectation of the soul, etc.

## 2.2 Acknowledgement of variability

The treatment of the subjunctive according to any of the above-mentioned criteria and contexts is typically considered by the normative enterprise to be *categorical*, with no room for exceptions. However, a minority of grammarians (18 grammars, 40% of the CSGI) acknowledge *variability* in mood selection. While there is no mention of variable selection of the subjunctive mood in Periods I and II, Period III ushers in this possibility.

Metalinguistic analysis of accepted *variable* usage of the subjunctive shows that a total of 141 governors are licensed with both the subjunctive and the indicative mood.<sup>12</sup> A total of 18 governors are shared between Period III and Period IV, while only four governors are mentioned exclusively in Period III and 133 are mentioned exclusively in Period IV, meaning that the bulk of the suggested variable governors (94%) is once again contained within the fourth period. Needless to say, with such little persistence over time and with such a disproportionate distribution of governors concentrated in just one period, rates of consistency between grammars

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<sup>12</sup> Cases of specific justification of variability are explored in the next section.

are low, with more than half the suggested governors being ephemeral (66%, N=94/141). Even using the very generous metric of ‘agreement between at least five grammars’ to establish the most consistent variable governors, we find that only eight governors meet or exceed this criterion, as shown in Figure 2.6.

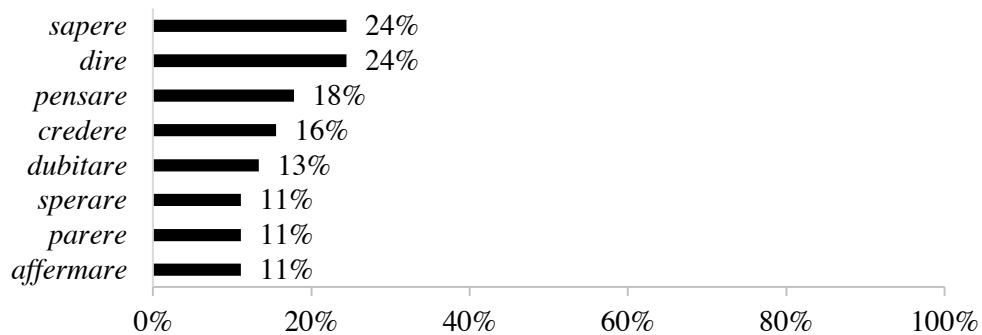


Figure 2.6: Governors qualified as variable by five or more grammars in the CSGI grammars.

More interestingly, some of the governors that were allowed by grammarians in the CSGI to admit both the indicative and the subjunctive in completive clauses were *also* prescribed or proscribed to take the subjunctive by other grammarians. Of the 141 governors, half of them have been considered to be contexts for the selection of the subjunctive that are alternately variable or *prescribed* (52%, N=74/141), 22% are alternately variable or *proscribed* (N=19/141), and 0.1% (N=12/141) governors are alternately prescribed, proscribed or variable (Table 2.5). This clearly demonstrates the lack of agreement, as well as the contradictory nature, of the normative injunctions, and their failure to describe the inherently variable use of the subjunctive.

Alternately PRESCRIBED, PROSCRIBED and VARIABLE contexts

1. <i>affermare</i>	5. <i>è noto</i>	9. <i>rispondere</i>
2. <i>comprendere</i>	6. <i>essere certo</i>	10. <i>sapere</i>
3. <i>dire</i>	7. <i>essere sicuro</i>	11. <i>sostenere</i>
4. <i>è chiaro</i>	8. <i>narrare</i>	12. <i>vedere</i>

Table 2.5: List of the 12 governors with severely conflicting injunctions in CSGI grammars.

### 2.2.1 Justifications of variability

As previously pointed out by Poplack and her associates (2013), grammarians tend to rule out inherent variability in favour of form-function symmetry. Indeed, a closer examination of variability from a prescriptive point of view shows that when the subjunctive is observed alternating with another mood, the selection of either option is justified by a distinction in meaning. In other words, using the subjunctive conveys one meaning, whereas using the indicative conveys another. Different types of justifications proposed to regulate the variability in mood selection under the same governor are reported throughout the grammars, as summarized in Table 2.6.

<b>Justification</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>N</b>
Sentence structure (i.e. negative/interrogative clause)	100%	141
Semantic difference	33%	46
No justification reported	11%	15
Social/stylistic difference	5%	7
<b>Total governors qualified as variable</b>	<b>141*</b>	<b>141*</b>

\* Some governors are counted in more than one category

Table 2.6: Justifications for variable mood selection under the same governor in the CSGI grammars.

As illustrated in Table 2.6, every single ‘variable’ governor has been claimed to alternately select the subjunctive or the indicative in different types of sentence structure (19). However, although this justification is explicitly structural, it is implicitly semantic. A difference in sentence type is equivalent to a difference in the interpretation of the proposition, since, for example, negated and interrogative clauses are considered to convey a less assertive predication (and one which is typically associated with subjunctive mood) (20).

- (19) Un verbo che usualmente reggia l’indicativo può tuttavia richiedere il congiuntivo qualora [...] si trovi in una frase negativa. (Serianni 2006: 557)

‘A verb that usually takes the indicative can nonetheless require the subjunctive if it is found in a negative sentence.’

- (20) I verbi [...] sono nel congiuntivo, per la sola ragione che la proposizione che precede, o dalla quale dipendono, è espressa in senso negativo. (Cerutti 1860: 397)

‘The verbs [...] are in the subjunctive, for the only reason that the preceding proposition, the one on which they depend, is expressed in the negative.’

On the other hand, for 33% of the governors, variability is *explicitly* reported as meaning-based (21).

- (21) [...] il verbo or all’indicativo ed ora al congiuntivo secondo i gradi di certezza o dell’incertezza. (Fulci 1855: 222)
- ‘[...] the verb is alternately in the indicative and the subjunctive according to degree of certainty or uncertainty.’

This is somewhat surprising since semantic function is said to play a significant role in determining the status of the subjunctive mood in contemporary Italian. However, where grammarians do report on the possibility of variation between the subjunctive and the indicative, there is no overwhelming consensus that this alternation is truly a meaning-based alternation. Instead, more consensus seems to occur for structural explanations of variability.

Lastly, variation between the two moods has been explained from a sociostylistic perspective, though to a far lesser extent than explanations rooted in structure or semantics: only 5% of grammars invoke this explanation. Use of the subjunctive is equated to *bon usage* or

prestige, whereas the indicative is a less elegant choice overall, either as a feature of central-southern Italian (22), or a more generally colloquial or informal form of speech (23).

(22) Un errore romanesco è quello di dire vi prego che m'*aspettate*<sub>IND</sub>, in luogo di *aspettiate*<sub>SUBJ</sub>. (Cerutti 1860: 12)

‘An error of speech in Rome is when it is said ‘I request that you wait<sub>IND</sub>’ in lieu of ‘I request that you would wait<sub>SUBJ</sub>’.’

(23) La lingua ufficiale adopera il congiuntivo, quella popolare preferisce l’indicativo. (Rohlf s 1968[III]: 59)

‘Official language employs the subjunctive, while popular language prefers the indicative.’

The less frequent association of sociostylistic meaning to variability in mood choice is also an unexpected finding, considering the social salience and public attention that subjunctive morphology has garnered throughout the years. The steadily increasing preoccupation with the loss of subjunctive mood as well as its non-standard and ‘incorrect’ usage are perpetuated in newspapers, on television, on the internet, and by government institutions, as well as by some linguists. However, the reality of this social situation is not echoed by injunctions in the CSGI since only seven grammars attribute mood alternation to a sociostylistic motivation.

We can conclude that overall, where variation in mood selection is acknowledged, grammarians stress the fact that selection of the subjunctive mood is not random, but that this choice is motivated by syntactic structure (by far the predominant explanation with the most inter-grammar agreement), by semantic function (though little agreement holds for *which* specific functions trigger each mode), or possibly by sociostylistic factors (though this explanation is avoided by most grammars).

### 2.3 The prescriptive picture

In sum, consensus between grammars remains very elusive overall, suggesting that there is no easily-defined and consistent prescriptive ‘norm’ for the Italian subjunctive that might inform the analyst’s circumscription of the variable context of study. However, one clear point of agreement has surfaced from this meta-analysis: subjunctive morphology is mainly recognized for its function as a subordinator, since the mentions exceed semantic mentions (cf. Figure 2.5), and for being governed primarily by structural factors, i.e. non-affirmative sentence types. However, while it is true that greater agreement has been reached with respect to the structural/subordinating function of the subjunctive, there are still no clear or consistent directives as to *which* verbs should trigger this mood. The meta-analysis failed to uncover any reliable list of matrix verbs that consistently license the subjunctive: the extremely low rate of persistence across time and consistency between grammars casts doubt on the nature of the appropriate verb to use with the subjunctive. Similarly, given the wide range of elusive meanings attached to the subjunctive, meaning-based explanations are similarly lacking. It is simply not possible to *empirically* test whether any of these meanings exert an effect of variant selection in the absence of explicit disambiguating semantic cues (which are very rare in discourse).

Prescriptive grammar therefore proves to be very inconsistent and contradictory in its description of *when* and *where* the subjunctive mood should be used and therefore cannot be used to establish which contexts/verbs should be included in the variable context. To overcome this issue, I rely on the method of identification of the contexts outlined by Poplack (1992, among others), and described in detail in the following chapter.

## 3 Data and methods

“I am not accustomed to saying anything with certainty after only one or two observations.”

— Andreas Vesalius, *anatomist*

The preceding chapter raised some methodological as well as data-oriented issues concerning the study of the subjunctive, including the choice of a source to supply both contemporary and historical linguistic evidence, and the implementation of a methodology that acknowledges and uncovers the inherent variability characterizing the data. In this chapter, I outline the data and method that I adopt for the study of subjunctive use in contemporary Italian, in historical Italian, and in Vulgar Latin.

### 3.1 The data

The task of finding a suitable dataset was an arduous one, given the lack of a variationist tradition for the study of Italian sociolinguistic variables. Using a corpus of *actual speech* data for the synchronic study was of prime importance, which meant discarding the many options of corpora of written Italian that do not enable us to test hypotheses about language variation and change in actual usage. The two corpora that qualified as good candidates for unmonitored spontaneous Italian speech are the *Lessico di frequenza dell’Italiano Parlato* (De Mauro et al. 1993; henceforth abbreviated LIP) and the *C-ORAL-ROM Integrated Reference Corpora for Spoken Romance Languages* (Cresti & Moneglia 2005; henceforth abbreviated C-ORAL). Additional details for these corpora are summarized in Table 3.1. These two corpora provide a

fair representation of everyday speech, as well as a variety of speech styles and speakers from different regions of Italy.

<b>Corpus</b>	<b>Time-span</b>	<b># Words</b>	<b># Speakers</b>
C-ORAL	Early 21st century	255,138	206
LIP	Late 20th century	352,709	<i>unknown</i>
<b>Total</b>		<b>607,487</b>	

Table 3.1: Number of words and speakers retained for each corpus of contemporary Italian.

The data used in this study are the vernacular or informal portions of the corpora, since vernacular speech is considered to be the most systematic data for capturing structured heterogeneity (Labov 2001), and provides the best representation of the language as it is spoken in everyday life, without the encumbrances of potentially confounding style-shifting and hypercorrection.

### 3.1.1 Contemporary Italian corpora

As detailed below, both corpora contain recordings from everyday life situations, including conversations in relaxed, naturalistic settings, which were retained for study. Recordings made in non-spontaneous/non-naturalistic contexts were not retained, including news broadcasts, weather forecasts, scientific press conferences – all of which are somewhat scripted – and human-machine interactions. In general, both informal portions of the two corpora provide recordings of private conversations between family members and friends, and the informal section of C-ORAL actually contains recordings that are very close to the standards of a sociolinguistic interview<sup>13</sup> and even includes narratives of personal experience (Labov 1984: 32).

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<sup>13</sup> Contrary to what one may think given the label ‘interview’, these are not interviews in the strict sense of the word. It is a conversation framework designed to elicit the full range of a speaker’s different styles, from their vernacular to their most careful style.

### 3.1.1.1 LIP (1993)

The LIP corpus is one of the first published collections of spoken Italian (De Mauro et al. 1993), hosted at the *Università La Sapienza* in Rome and available online. It is a compilation of 57 hours of short and long conversations recorded in a variety of conversational settings, gathered between 1990 and 1992 and making up roughly 500,000 words. It was collected with the goal of documenting unscripted spoken language (Voghera 2001: 87) from a variety of geographical regions, and to provide a source for the study of lexical, morphosyntactic, and phonological linguistic variation in the language of everyday life (Piemontese 1995: 477; Cardinale 1998: 135). The corpus targets the four main urban centres, Milan, Florence, Rome, and Naples, and each geographically distinct portion accounts for roughly 125,000 words, or one-quarter of the corpus.

In the general description of the corpus (De Mauro et al. 1993), the authors report the overall distributions for the socio-demographic categories of sex, age, occupation, and level of education, without providing specific information for each individual speaker. For example, the corpus as a whole is highly educated (80% of speakers have a secondary or post-secondary level of education), but there is no information to indicate *which* speakers have *what* level of education. Other than these overall trends, some information is recoverable from what is said during the conversation itself, e.g. the speaker makes specific mention of their age, gender, level of education, and/or work/occupation. However, such references are extremely rare and therefore impractical to extract exhaustively. Despite the lack of detailed information about the social characteristics of each individual speaker participating in the conversations, this corpus still allows me to test the social hypotheses of *style* and *geographic origin of the speaker*. I test the hypothesis concerning the supposed dichotomies in subjunctive usage a) between northern and

southern Italy, with the central/southern speakers diverging more from the supposed standard, and b) between casual and careful speech, the former supposedly characterized by a considerable use of the indicative in lieu of the subjunctive.

### 3.1.1.2 C-ORAL-ROM (2005)

The C-ORAL corpus is a collection of recordings of four spoken Romance languages: Italian, French, Spanish, and Portuguese (Cresti & Moneglia 2005), whose main goal is “to provide a comparable set of corpora of spontaneous spoken language of the main Romance languages” (*ibid.* 1) from which scholars can study phonological and syntactic variation according to “different types of spontaneous speech events” (*ibid.* 7-8). This is achieved by means of recording similar types of casual interviews, e.g. family/private conversations, teaching lectures, work related meetings, media interviews/talk shows, or political speeches, etc.<sup>14</sup>

Each of the four languages makes up roughly 300,000 words of the total collection. The Italian portion of the collection, hosted at the laboratory *LABLITA* at the *Università di Firenze*, consists of a collection of 32 hours of recordings that are entirely transcribed and publicly available. The transcriptions also contain information about the conversational setting, topic(s) of the conversation, as well as identifying information for some of the speakers, such as sex, age, level of education, or occupation. The corpus is divided into *informal* and *formal* portions. The informal portion was recorded in the western region of Tuscany and it contains private and public conversations between two and more speakers in a naturalistic setting. As noted above, its recordings are closer to the standards of a sociolinguistic interview (Labov 1984). Also, the Tuscan dialect targeted in this portion is the variety that is historically considered to be the

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<sup>14</sup> For a detailed description of the entire corpus, I refer the reader to Chapter 1 and 2 of *C-ORAL-ROM Integrated Reference Corpora for Spoken Romance Languages* (Cresti & Moneglia 2005).

source of the Italian language (Maiden 1995: 3). On the other hand, like the LIP, the formal portion of C-ORAL is a collection of recordings in a wide variety of conversational settings, and includes geographical locations and speakers from all over the peninsula.<sup>15</sup> The authors reported a total number of 451 speakers, but given that some recordings were not retained and that some speakers never used a subjunctive, the current study reports on the linguistic behaviour of a total of 204 speakers.<sup>16</sup>

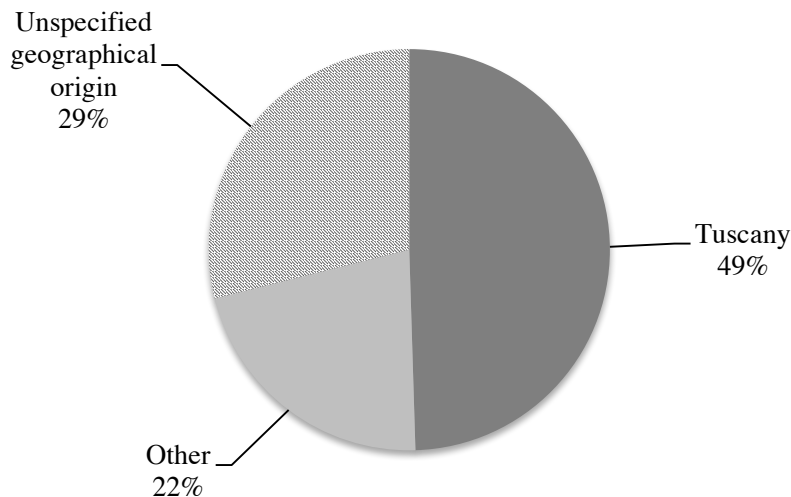


Figure 3.1: Geographic origin of speakers included in this study from the C-ORAL database.

Half of the speakers are from the Tuscan region (49%, N=101/204), mostly from Florence and surrounding areas, of which 80 have data in the informal portion of the corpus. Another 22% of the speakers are distributed amongst other regions (N=44/104), and the origins of the remaining third remains unknown (29%, N=59/104), as shown in Figure 3.2.

For both corpora, all the retained data was concorded by myself using the program *ConcorderPro* and all the available social information about each participant was collected and

<sup>15</sup> Some speakers were excluded from the analysis as they were revealed to be of foreign origin, from Romania, Switzerland, France, Hungary, Spain and Austria. These speakers were mainly students and researchers participating in some interviews.

<sup>16</sup> The total number of speakers that participated in the C-ORAL conversations that were retained for the study is 347. Therefore, 41% of them never used a subjunctive in their discourse (N=143/347).

gathered in a relational database in order to easily retrieve the information and code each token once the data was extracted.

### 3.1.1.3 General considerations

Although these corpora provide data of spontaneous unmonitored speech, they were not constructed following standard variationist procedures and therefore the speaker sample has limited representativeness. Speakers were not selected using random sampling, nor were they selected on the basis of their social characteristics. Furthermore, socio-demographic information was unavailable for some speakers – either in certain sub-sections (e.g. the formal section of C-ORAL) or throughout the entire corpus (e.g. the LIP, which only provides geographical and stylistic information). Given that the LIP does not represent a single speech community and contains relatively little socio-demographic information, we cannot know *who* is at the source of any possible variation/change, including who might be promoting a change, favouring the usage of a more standard form, or avoiding a stigmatized one – all of which are important elements of most variationist research. For this reason, this study focuses more on linguistic factors than social ones.

Where socio-demographic information is available, it does not fully mirror the actual social situation in Italy, since the majority of the sample is skewed towards speakers with a high level of education (see census data shown in Figure 3.1). This does not reflect reality, since comparison of level of education across geographically-matched samples of speakers (for instance, between the informal portion of C-ORAL, whose speakers are largely from Florence, and the Florence sample of the LIP) shows that the proportion of highly educated speakers in C-ORAL is vastly inflated relative to the overall proportion for that region (60% vs. 10%, respectively).

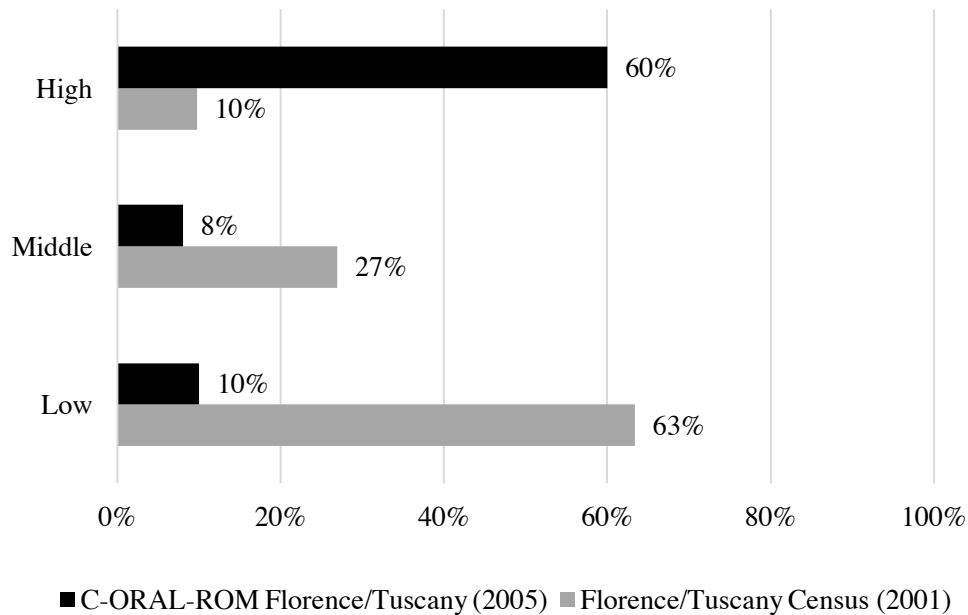


Figure 3.2: Level of education according to the 2001 census and largely Florentine speakers in the informal subset of C-ORAL.<sup>17</sup>

On the one hand, the over-representation of highly educated speakers in this corpus might affect our results, which warrants a careful interpretation of the contribution of external factors and possibly even a more tentative interpretation of the quantitative and statistical results. On the other hand, this unbalanced distribution has the advantage of allowing us to test the common assumption that the subjunctive is a feature of a more educated speech. If this assumption holds true, the more educated speakers of my sample should use more subjunctive in speech compared to the speakers with little or no formal education. Another advantage of these corpora is that they will allow me to directly address the question of the supposed geographical differences between northern and central/southern Italian. Received wisdom dictates that central and southern speakers of Italian are divergent from the supposed norm and are therefore often targeted as the

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<sup>17</sup> The data for the 2001 Florence census was adapted from detailed results available on the ISTAT (*Istituto Nazionale di Statistica*) website. This census year is the closest to the dates of (most of) the recordings in C-ORAL: 65% were recorded between 2000 and 2003, 31% between 1994 & 1999, 4% before 1999.

source of the supposed decline of the subjunctive in contemporary Italian. Thus, regardless of the limitations characterizing these two corpora in the extra-linguistic domain, they still allow for the testing of two important assumptions surrounding subjunctive use in Italian

Despite the fact that neither corpus follows standard variationist procedures, in addition to the concerns mentioned above with regards to the socio-demographic stratification, they are essential tools for quantitative analysis of naturalistic speech. Both corpora provide a fair representation of spontaneous speech, and as such allow us to test a series of external and internal factors that are said to condition the use of the subjunctive in contemporary Italian. The sample divisions provided by both C-ORAL and LIP enable us to study the geographical variation across four major Italian cities, including the purportedly more conservative Florentine variety as well as the hypothetically more divergent central/southern varieties of Italian (i.e. Roman and Neapolitan). Given that linguistic innovations are thought to originate in urban areas before spreading to more rural ones (Trudgill 1974), if a change in the use of the subjunctive has taken/is taking place, it should be observable through the analysis of these four major Italian cities. While the operationalization process is described in detail in Chapter 5 (hypotheses, coding protocols, and predictions), the extralinguistic factors that the corpora enable us to test are summarized in Table 3.2.

Factor to test	LIP (1993)	C-ORAL-ROM (2005)
Geographic origin	✓	✓
Style	✓	✓
Age	✗	✓
Sex	✗	✓
Level of education	✗	✓

Table 3.2: Summary of the external factors available for testing in C-ORAL and LIP.

### 3.1.2 Historical data

Two historical datasets are included to trace the variable usage of the subjunctive over time: a diachronic corpus of Italian and a corpus of Vulgar Latin. However, selecting an appropriate historical dataset for the study of language change is challenging. Since most putative changes originate in speech rather than in writing, the appropriate data would consist of a previous stage of the vernacular. However, without recordings or direct attestations of this previous stage of the vernacular, we cannot assume older texts to be a faithful representation of this variety (Ayres-Bennet 2000; Nevalainen & Raumolin-Brunberg 2017: 26; Romaine 1982: 14). Written texts may be a poor approximation of speech: even when they are supposed to mimic spontaneous speech, they are highly likely to be influenced by the prescriptive norm. Even non-standard linguistic features, especially sociolinguistic stereotypes, may appear simply by virtue of an explicit choice of the author to convey such low-class/uneducated speech, rather than as a genuine representation of the norms of vernacular speech:

“Historical documents survive by chance, not by design, and the selection that is available is the product of an unpredictable series of historical accidents. The linguistic forms in such documents are often distinct from the vernacular of the writers, and instead reflect efforts to capture a normative dialect that never was any speaker’s native language. As a result, many documents are riddled with the effects of hypercorrection, dialect mixture, and scribal error.” (Labov 1994: 1:11)

Despite these problems, several studies have made use of speech-like surrogates in order to tap into a variety of written texts purportedly closer to a naturalistic speech production (Poplack & Malvar 2007; Elsig & Poplack 2006; among others). These authors make use of theatrical plays written for popular consumption that mimic the everyday speech of various

social classes, be they lower, working, or upper/aristocratic classes. These plays are not solely selected on the basis of their popularity, but especially because they provide explicit linguistic evidence related to each social class and their (non-)standard features, as reported in the ensuing sections.

### 3.1.2.1 COHI

To tap into previous stages of spoken Italian, I compiled the *Corpus of Historical Italian* (henceforth COHI), a 97,450-word collection of theatrical plays, mostly comedies, published between 1513 and 1949 (Table 3.3).

CENTURY	AUTHOR	TITLE	DATE
16 <sup>th</sup>	Dovizi, Bernardo da Bibbiena	<i>La Calandria</i>	1513
	Ariosto, Ludovico	<i>La Lena</i>	1528
18 <sup>th</sup>	Fagiuoli, Giovan Battista	<i>Il marito alla moda</i>	1740
	Goldoni, Carlo	<i>La locandiera</i>	1753
	Goldoni, Carlo	<i>La bottega del caffè</i>	1750
20 <sup>th</sup>	Pirandello, Luigi	<i>Così è (se vi pare)</i>	1917
	Pirandello, Luigi	<i>Il giuoco delle parti</i>	1918
	Pirandello, Luigi	<i>Il berretto a sonagli</i>	1918
	De Filippo, Eduardo	<i>La grande magia</i>	1948

Table 3.3: List of plays in the Corpus of Historical Italian (COHI).

Delimiting the first period was informed by the fact that the 16<sup>th</sup> century is considered to be the point at which theatrical plays were written for the larger public and no longer restricted to the elite (Stefanelli 2006). The corpus includes plays that were very popular at the time, such as *La Calandria*, written in a language judged as “popular and colloquial” (Trifone 2000: 31) and representing the first play written in early Italian (Tuscan). Other material by the popular playwright Goldoni is described by the Italian literary critic Francesco de Sanctis in the following manner:

“Nel suo studio del naturale e del vero trascura troppo il rilievo, e se ha il brio del linguaggio parlato ne ha pure la negligenza; per fuggire alla retorica, casca nel volgare”

‘In his study of the natural and the true, he excessively neglects what is important, and even though he conveys the vivacity/liveliness of the spoken language, he also conveys the carelessness; to avoid rhetoric, he falls into the vulgar’ (De Sanctis 1890: 388–89).

Even though it remains a collection of written texts, the selected plays can be considered as surrogates of everyday spoken Italian throughout the centuries, because they clearly contain “features characterizing spoken language” (Stefanelli 2006: 57). In fact, the explicit linguistic choices made by the authors throughout the centuries represent spontaneous and informal speech by means of their features which diverge from the prescriptive norm. The texts are characterized by popular expressions, colloquialisms, and also swearwords, as in (24), suggesting that the dialogues are not always the polished version of the language. More importantly, there are many well-documented non-standard features, such as the one targeted in this study, i.e. mood alternation under the same matrix verb, here *credere* ‘to believe’ (25); the use of the adverb of negation *mica*, “characteristic of colloquial, informal, registers” (26) (Maiden & Robustelli 2007: 405); code-switching between vernaculars, here Italian/Neapolitan (27); cases of left dislocation with a resumptive pronoun (28); the particle *ci* preceding non-auxiliary uses of *avere* ‘to have’, known as *ci attualizzante* (29)<sup>18</sup>; the indirect object pronoun *gli*<sub>3SG.M</sub> (masculine) instead of *le*<sub>3SG.F</sub> (feminine) with 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular feminine indirect objects (30); personal pronoun

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<sup>18</sup> The use of the particle *ci* in this context is considered a case of desemanticization of the locative adverb *qui* (‘here’), which itself originated from the Latin *ecce hic*. Sabatini suggests that it is used to mark emphasis (1985: 160).

*lui*<sub>3SG.M</sub> instead of the normative *egli*<sub>3SG.M</sub> or *esso*<sub>3SG.M</sub> (31); and the use of the ‘all-purpose’ relative pronoun *che* (32).<sup>19</sup>

(24) Sappi che Lidio mio patrone è ermafrodito. – E che importa questo *merdafiorito*? (COHI.16C.038.1563)

‘You should know that Lidio my master is hermaphroditic. – And what should I care of this *merdafiorito*?’<sup>20</sup>

(25) Possono loro credere sul serio che la mia figliuola è<sub>IND</sub> morta? Che io sia<sub>SUBJ</sub> pazza? Che questa che ha con sé è<sub>IND</sub> una seconda moglie? (COHI.20C.098.754)

‘Can they really believe that my daughter is dead? That I am crazy? That the one who is with him is his second wife?’

(26) Non ho *mica* voluto io che s’ arrivasse a una cosa così grave. (COHI.20C.072.2253)

‘I didn’t really want to come to such a dangerous point.’

(27) [Neapolitan:] Ma tu me vuo’ fa’ ascì pazzo? [Italian:] Dio lo sa i sacrifici che faccio... [Neapolitan:] Chillo ‘ o miedeco fa ampresa ampresa: [Italian:] “Ci vuole questo e questo”, ma per comprare “questo e questo”, ci vogliono pure “questi”! (COHI.20C.112.373)

‘You want to drive me crazy? God knows the sacrifices I make... The doctor will be quick: “You need this and that,” but for buying ‘this and that,’ you need ‘this’ [money]!’

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<sup>19</sup> Sabatini (1985) referred to it as *che polivalente* (‘multivalued’ *che*).

<sup>20</sup> The pun cannot be fully translated since the joke exploits the similar pronunciation between the word *ermafrodito* ‘hermaphrodite’ as it was split in two parts and the two words *merda+fiarito* (lit. piece of shit+in blossom).

- (28) Ed io *quel che fo non lo dico*. (COHI.18C.002.47)  
 ‘Me, what I do I don’t say it.’
- (29) Ed io non ho genio a far né l’uno né l’altro; perché né a maritarmi, né a chiudermi per sempre, non *ci ho punta di vocazione*, Menica mia. (COHI.18C.025.74)  
 ‘I don’t feel like doing either of those two things; neither getting married, nor becoming a nun, because it’s not my calling at all, dear Menica.’
- (30) *Gli ho dato speranza di condurla*, ancor oggi, alle voglie sue. (COHI.18C.033.280)  
 ‘I gave her hope that I will persuade her again today.’
- (31) *lui è matto furioso*, e forse le farà villania. (COHI.16C.035.2210)  
 ‘He is a madman, and probably he will outrage her by his indecent behaviour.’
- (32) Va, *che ti spacco la faccia*... [lit. *that* but used instead with the meaning *otherwise*] (COHI.18C.001.041)  
 ‘Go away or I’ll smash your face...’

Assuming that the audience targeted by these plays (including innkeepers, merchants, servants, dancers, and the general peasantry) likely used many of these features, we may infer that the dialogue bears many of the non-standard linguistic forms associated with those sectors of the populace.

The historical data obtained from these speech surrogates will be compared with the contemporary speech data, but to bolster confidence in the results, I directly compare 20<sup>th</sup>-century plays with 20<sup>th</sup>-century speech data. The “comparison amongst them validates each as a

valuable source of information on language variation and change” (Poplack & Malvar 2007: 124). If the subjunctive patterns in the same way in both 20<sup>th</sup>-century popular theatre and contemporary speech data, this supports the assumption that the language of the speech surrogates is a fair representation of actual speech.

### 3.1.2.2 : *Cena Trimalchionis*: A Vulgar Latin corpus

This dissertation also has the goal of ascertaining the status of subjunctive use in VL, in order to examine whether and to what extent subjunctive use in contemporary Italian is a continuation of trends established in the ancestor language, or whether we can pinpoint any innovative trends in Italian. However, adopting the same accountable methodology discussed in Section 3.3 requires us to specifically target *Vulgar* Latin as opposed to Classical Latin, since the latter tends to be used for written texts while the former is a spoken variety that precedes the Romance languages. Distinguishing the two largely requires “approximation and hypothesis” (Sabanéeva 1996: 135), but a series of texts and inscriptions found among other documents in Pompeii has helped linguists to detect features of VL that diverge from the Classical variety.

One example of such material is *Satyricon*, which is attributed to Petronius, written approximately during the 1<sup>st</sup> century (Durante 1981: 29). Its core chapters, including the *Cena Trimalchionis*, will constitute the fourth corpus used in the present study. The VL corpus is made up of 12,576 words from *Satyricon*, transcribed and adapted in *ConcorderPro*, like the other corpora. The *Cena* breaks the normative Classical Latin tradition and lets a different social class of characters express themselves by means of an informal style closer to speech (i.e. VL). In fact, the ‘popular’ speech of Trimalchio and his rude dining companions represents by far “the happiest achievement of ancient realism” (Scarsi 1996: xix). The text is characterized by “stories, gossip, proverbs, astrological beliefs, and stereotypes” (*ibid.* xx), all of which provide the

naturalistic forms of expression that are valued in variationist research. Though it is not a theatrical play in the modern sense, the text was intended to be dramatized for a live audience of average citizens (Scarsi 1996: xix), which represents a social setting distinct from the one usually described in classical literature. Petronius reveals to us with Trimalchio and his guests “something of the *sermo plebeius* [Vulgar Latin spoken by the common people] of the first century A.D.” (Palmer 1988: 153).

The chapters of the *Cena* not only contain a vocabulary that is “forceful, coarse, often indecent” (Palmer [1988: 152]; also, Hultin [2008]), but they also lay bare some explicit linguistic choices diverging from the standard of Classical Latin, including errors of declension (33 and 34), vernacular verb forms (35 and 36), substitution of the accusative and infinitive constructions by subordinate clauses such as *quia*+NP (37), as well as mood alternation between the subjunctive (38) and the indicative (39) in indirect speech.

(33) *Lacte* gallinaceum si quaesieris invenies. [*lacte* instead of the normative accusative form *lac*] (VLC<sub>Co</sub>.XXXVIII.249)

‘You can have cock’s milk if you desire.’

(34) Ita meos fruniscar, ut ego puto omnia illa a *diibus* fieri. [*diibus* as dative plural form of the standard alternative forms *deis*, *diis*, or *dis*] (VLC<sub>Co</sub>.XLIV.400)

‘I would bet my kids, as I suspect that all these were sent by the gods.’

(35) Itaque statim urceatim *plovebat*<sub>[IMPRF.IND.3SG/ACT]}</sub>. [instead of *pluebat*<sub>[IMPRF.IND.3SG/ACT]}</sub>] (VLC<sub>Co</sub>.XLIV.405)

‘And immediately the rain came down in bucketfuls.’

- (36) *Faciatur*<sub>[PRS.SUBJ.3SG/PASS]</sub>, si tibi videtur, et triclinia. [instead of *fiat*<sub>[PRS.SUBJ.3SG/PASS]</sub>] (VLCo.LXXI.1032)  
 ‘Let there be made, if it seems good to you, a dining-room set of couches.’
- (37) Ego illi iam tres cardeles occidi et dixi *quia* mustella comedit. [use of the conjunction *quia* in subordinate clause with a saying verb such as *dico* ‘to say’ instead of the expected so-called *accusativus cum infinitivo*, i.e. accusative and infinitival construction such as *dixi mustellam comesse*] (VLCo.XLVI.448)  
 ‘I killed three of his linnets the other day, and said that a weasel ate (them).’
- (38) Ego primitus nesciebam ubi *essem*<sub>[IMPRF.SUBJ.3SG/ACT]</sub>. [instead of *eram*<sub>[IMPRF.IND.3SG/ACT]</sub>] (VLCo.LXII.801)  
 ‘At first I ignored where I was.’
- (39) Cum interim nemo curat quid annona *mordet*<sub>[PRES.IND.3SG/ACT]</sub>. [instead of *mordeat*<sub>[PRES.SUBJ.3SG/ACT]</sub>] (VLCo.XLIV.337)  
 ‘Meanwhile, nobody cares how high the market price is.’

With respect to the last two examples of mood variation in indirect speech (37-38), Adams (2013: 765) observes that this is a clear case of social variation since the subjunctive became a standard form in Latin and the use of the indicative seems to suggest that “Petronius must have been aware of certain substandard uses of the indicative, which he assigned to freedmen”. In other words, by putting the non-standard forms into the mouths of freedmen, this usage “must be associated by Petronius with lower-class speech” (*ibid.* 764). This observation is

further bolstered by the fact that writers of the early Imperial Period, such as Tacitus, Pliny the Younger, and Quintilian “rigorously avoid the indicative construction” (Adams 2013: 765).

In sum, many authors frequently opt for non-standard features associated with VL, thus emphasizing the specific social environment mirrored by these explicit linguistic choices. They represent non-standard features which are far from the cultivated language of the *sermo altus*. Although this is the smallest of the corpora, this data will nevertheless help ascertain how the subjunctive was used in VL and whether and to what extent its conditioning has been transferred into Italian.

### 3.1.3 Summary

The corpora described in this chapter are exploited to address questions about subjunctive variation and change, including the transmission of its patterns from VL to contemporary Italian. Despite the limitations of both the contemporary corpora and the historical datasets, we can use this data to uncover the internal conditioning of the subjunctive, which serves as major component of comparative analysis. Through comparison of the hierarchy of factors favouring the selection of the subjunctive, we will be in a position to ascertain whether, why, and to what extent the subjunctive usage differs from one city to another, or from one historical moment to another.

## 3.2 Fundamentals of Variation Theory

The theoretical approach adopted here falls within the framework of variationist sociolinguistics, which involves empirical investigation of language variation and change through systematic analysis of naturalistic language use. A key tenet of variationist sociolinguistics is the abstract construct of the *linguistic variable* (Labov 1972, 1982, 1984; to cite a few), which involves two or more forms, called *variants*, used alternatively to express the

same meaning or function in discourse (Poplack 2011: 212; Poplack & Levey 2010: 398). In other words, speakers have at their disposal “alternate ways of saying the same thing” (Labov 1972a: 188) that a) occur within a specific context, and b) are not selected at random. With respect to the specific context of alternation, the analyst must identify the exhaustive set of contexts where the variants alternate without change in meaning or function. This process is known as *circumscribing the variable context*. In order to fully account for the variation, the analyst must include “every case where the variable element occurs in the relevant environments as we have defined them” (Labov 1972: 72), which requires that we account not only for cases in which the variant *occurred*, but also where it could have occurred but it *did not* (Poplack & Tagliamonte 2001: 89). By doing so, we make sure that we are including each competing variant that may be chosen by the speaker to express a specific meaning/function, and that we are excluding those forms which at first sight seem to be relevant but are not part of the variable context, either because they do not enter into the alternation or because they do not convey the same meaning or function.

### 3.2.1 Circumscribing the variable context

Circumscribing the variable context for the subjunctive represents a particular challenge, since the variation between forms embedded in completive clauses is generally considered to express different meanings; i.e. for many analysts, the indicative and the subjunctive each have a *separate* function, whereas variationist analysis of this phenomenon would require both forms to have the *same* function in a given context. One way to circumvent this issue could be via the identification of those contexts where the subjunctive is *supposed* to occur and subsequently ascertain whether it actually does occur there in naturalistic speech. However, the overview of prescriptive treatments of the subjunctive in Chapter 2 showed that we cannot rely on

prescriptive grammars since they do not agree on the accepted contexts of use for the subjunctive. Alternatively, we could turn to linguistic studies, but as I report in the next chapter, there is considerable disagreement as to the contexts of use and the various semantic/pragmatic meanings that purportedly underlie mood selection in many theoretical analyses. In other words, the rules governing subjunctive usage remain generally elusive. One way to circumvent this issue, adopted by Poplack (1992, 2013, and 2018) is to identify the contexts of use *corpus-internally*, by locating all the contexts where the subjunctive is *actually used* to determine where it *could* be used.

After omitting the cases of syncretism previously outlined (e.g. morphological homophony between subjunctives and indicatives in Italian, cf. Section 1.4.1), I identified all the unambiguous subjunctive forms and exhaustively extracted them from the dataset. We can then identify which governors were accompanied by the subjunctive, as shown in (40), where the embedded subjunctive verb *sappiate*<sub>[PRES.SUBJ.2PL]</sub> is governed by the matrix verb *credere* ‘to believe’.

(40) Credo che tutti lo *sappiate*<sub>SUBJ</sub>. (COR.438.218)

‘I believe that everyone knows it.’

In light of these considerations, we can then define our variable context as done by Poplack et al. (2018: 229), as “every tensed clause governed by a matrix verb, i.e. governor, that triggered the subjunctive at least once.” This process yields the complete list of governors that selected the subjunctive at least once in my datasets. Once the lexical identities of the governors are identified, the next step is to go back through the data and to extract all of the variants that compete with the subjunctive, which in my case are the indicative (41) and the conditional (42).

(41) Credo che tutto *ritorna*<sub>IND</sub>. (COR.511.264)

‘I believe that everything comes back.’

(42) Io credo che le coscienze del nostro paese oggi *sarebbero*<sub>COND</sub> in piazza.

(COR.438.253)

‘I believe that our country’s consciousness today would be protesting.’

This method was applied to each corpus in the current study in order to ensure comparability across synchronic and diachronic datasets.

### 3.2.2 Exclusions

There may be governors that, according to previously published ‘rules’ for subjunctive usage, might have been *expected* to trigger the subjunctive (e.g. *dimostrare* ‘to prove’, *assicurare* ‘to ensure’, etc.) but that only selected the indicative in my corpora. These cases were left out of this study on subjunctive variability, since in this dataset the subjunctive is apparently not an option with these governors.<sup>21</sup>

All ambiguous forms were excluded from the study, such as cases of homophony, exemplified in (43), whose inclusion would skew the overall results.

(43) È inutile che (tu) *continui*<sub>SUBJ/IND</sub> a fare i corsi di nuoto (COR.452.85)

‘There is no point that you keep taking swimming classes.’

Other cases were excluded from the current study: cases that do not license variability because they are fixed expressions or titles of books and movies, as illustrated in (44); cases of interruption, reformulation, or incomplete sentences falling within the variable context (45); and cases where the token belonged to non-native speakers of Italian (cf. Section 3.1.1.2), as in (46).

(44) Io per esempio trovo eccezionale ‘Pensavo *fosse*<sub>SUBJ</sub> amore e invece era un calesse’. (COR.46.98)

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<sup>21</sup> I report on some of these contexts in Chapter 6.

‘Me, for example, I find amazing ‘I thought it was love, but it was a calèche’ [title of a movie].’

(45) Lui pensa che– lui, ora lui deve riuscire a indovinare. (COR.33.218)

‘He thinks that- he, now he needs to guess.’

(46) Ecco, dal nemico ci aspettiamo che *faccia*<sub>SUBJ</sub> il nemico. (COR.584.286)

‘Well, from the enemy we expect him to be an enemy.’

### 3.2.3 Elucidating structured heterogeneity

Once all the tokens within the variable context are identified and extracted from a corpus, following the principles described above, the analyst then has the task of identifying the factors conditioning the variation, which together constitute the *structure* of the variation (*structured heterogeneity*; Weinreich, Labov, & Herzog 1968: 100). Since Labov’s pioneering works (Labov 1963, 1966, 1972c), empirical studies have demonstrated that variation in any given feature, at any level of linguistic structure, is not random but rather constrained by independent variables. These constraints represent the *underlying grammar* of subjunctive use within a speech community.

Next, the analyst identifies factors that are considered to promote one or the other variant(s). Whether these linguistic and social factors actually affect variant choice is tested empirically both in a distributional and statistical manner. Each token is coded according to the series of hypotheses previously identified, and the coding string is submitted to *GoldVarb* (Sankoff, Tagliamonte, & Smith 2015) for multivariate statistical analysis. In order to carry out an accountable and reliable model elucidating variability, we need to be certain of the orthogonality of the operationalization process (Guy 1988: 126); since factor groups are assumed to have independent effects on variant selection, we must be sure that we are not coding for the

same thing in several factor groups. According to the *Principle of Multiple Causation* (Bayley 2002: 118), it is unlikely that a single contextual factor would account for all the variability; instead, the analysis establishes the combination of factors that actually contributes to variant selection, and the degree to which each one plays a role.

Distributional analysis reveals the independent effect of each factor on variant choice, based on rates of occurrence. Determining which factors are *significant* to variant choice can be achieved through multivariate analysis, a statistical method that considers all factors simultaneously, weights the effects of each factor, and assigns them a numerical likelihood of conditioning variant choice. The *pattern* of variability is assessed on the basis of three lines of evidence (Poplack & Tagliamonte 2001: 92):

1. The factors contributing statistically to variant choice;
2. The magnitude of effect, which is the indication of their relative strength, as gauged from the range value<sup>22</sup>;
3. The constraint hierarchy or the way factors are ordered within a single factor group.

The results of multivariate analysis are taken as evidence of the underlying grammar conditioning variability. I systematically exploit these measures in Chapters 5 and 6 in order to examine variation and change over time.

### 3.2.4 Combining the comparative method and inherent variability

One way to look at language change is through the lens of historical linguistics and the comparative method, which is a standard tool in reconstructing earlier stages of a single language or related languages (Rankin 2003: 183). This method involves a) the comparison of features (so-called *cognates*) among a group of languages to identify genetic (non-)relatedness (Kaufman

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<sup>22</sup> The range is reckoned by subtracting the lowest factor weight from the highest factor weight.

1990: 18), and b) on the basis of this relatedness, the reconstruction of the common system from which the targeted languages descend (also known as the proto-language, Campbell [2013]). Nevertheless, the standard comparative historical model is not devoid of limitations. It models change as proceeding directly from stage A to B, thereby overlooking the transition period from point A to point B in time and consequently portraying change as very abrupt. Other limitations of the comparative method derive from the assumption of invariance, i.e. that the system is “subject to neither internal nor external variation” (Poplack & Tagliamonte 2001: 96). The invariance assumption obscures the fact that the languages may have several forms to fulfill the targeted function. By means of the traditional historical comparative method, it is difficult to determine whether the variants can qualify as an inheritance from the ancestor language or as a subsequent innovation. These shortcomings limit the usefulness of the comparative method in trying to ascertain the origin of the subjunctive usage and of the nature of variability observed in contemporary speech.

If we instead consider that *inherent variability* characterizes language, we assume that a given language inherits the variants of a particular function from its ancestor, along with the linguistic conditioning of their variability. Thus, the genetic relationship is determined on the basis of the *conditioning* on variability, as revealed by the constraint hierarchy, rather than relying solely on the forms themselves. The implementation of this method, referred to as the *Comparative Variationist Method* (Poplack & Tagliamonte 2001), requires the performance of independent multivariate analyses and comparison of the constraint hierarchies over time. While other comparative approaches analyse isolated manifestations of linguistic features, with the assumption that these features are invariant, the Comparative Variationist approach adopted here recognizes the inherent variability of language and uses the constraint hierarchy as a comparison

point rather than a specific form. Thus, the Comparative Variationist Method promotes systematic and exhaustive comparisons of the linguistic conditioning as a diagnostic tool. This approach allows us to distinguish an isolated manifestation of the form alone, which is not informative, from the underlying pattern of selection of that form vis-à-vis others, defined as “a series of parallel occurrences [...] occurring at a non-negligible rate” (Poplack & Meechan 1998: 129). The key heuristic for comparison is the *constraint hierarchy* and not statistical significance *per se* (Poplack & Tagliamonte 2001). The linguistic pattern is identified by examining rates of variant occurrence alongside with the conditioning. However, as alluded to earlier, rates and conditioning do not have commensurate status: while the former can vary due to extralinguistic reasons, the latter (i.e. the underlying grammar) is expected to reflect more stable constraints on variation (Poplack & Tagliamonte 2001: 93-94; see also Poplack & Levey 2010: 400).

While the Comparative Variationist analysis outlined above relies on real-time comparisons, I also rely on the apparent-time construct (Labov 1966; Bailey et al. 1991; Bailey 2002).<sup>23</sup> The apparent-time method assumes that the vernacular, as the first variety acquired, remains stable over the speakers’ lifetime. Using this method, we can ascertain whether a change is taking place in Italian, which should be observable in the synchronic age distribution of the variable: older speakers would be more conservative whereas younger speakers would lead change.

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<sup>23</sup> This type of analysis is possible only with the actual speech data of C-ORAL (cf. Section 3.1.1.2).

## 4 The Italian subjunctive: Review of the literature

“L’avenir nous tourmente, le passé nous retient.  
Voilà pourquoi le présent nous échappe.”

— Gustave Flaubert, *novelist*  
from *Correspondance*

Three main themes characterize the contemporary Italian subjunctive in theoretical and quantitative literature: a) whether its variation with the indicative evokes semantic intent (when this variation is acknowledged at all), b) whether its conditioning is governed by extra-linguistic factors, and c) whether this construction is somehow attriting or weakening in speech.

### 4.1 Meaningful variation

The treatment of the subjunctive in academic literature and in formal grammars invokes a decidedly kaleidoscopic range of meanings to explain its distribution in speech: it is said to be a mood fluctuating “between opinion and perception” (translation mine, Binazzi 2015: 259); projecting “a modality of uncertainty and doubt” of the event in question (translation mine, Simone 1993: 80); or representing “the intense and emotive degree, the particular and the personal, the doubt and the unreal, the unexpected and the surprising, the desired and the feared, the extraordinary and the exceptional” (translation mine, Dorigo 1951: 322). As reported in previous chapters, linguists as well as grammarians attach these meanings to subjunctive morphology due to the observation that it is governed by verbs of different semantic classes, including those expressing volition (47), doubt (48), hope (49), and fear (50).

## (47) Volition

Senti, **vuoi** che *compri*<sub>SUBJ</sub> i popcorn e la Coca-Cola? (LIP.412.96)

‘Listen, do you want me to buy popcorn and Coca-Cola?’

## (48) Doubt

**Dubito** che ci *sia*<sub>SUBJ</sub> stata qualche polemica. (LIP.14.186)

‘I doubt that there has been any controversy.’

## (49) Hope

Io **spero** che *cambi*<sub>SUBJ</sub> idea. (COR.522.332)

‘I hope that he changes his mind.’

## (50) Fear

**Ho** un pochino **paura** che *sia*<sub>SUBJ</sub> tanto. (COR.002.27)

‘I’m a little bit afraid that it will be a lot.’

In the syntactic literature, the mechanism of mood selection is considered to be “implemented at a distance” (translation mine, Shlonsky 2006: 83), i.e. the main verb determines the type of complementizer and embedded mood, and therefore the mechanism underlying subjunctive selection operates by checking MOOD features (Poletto 2000). This view represents a general assumption in the literature: the governor’s semantic characteristics/features are responsible for the selection of the ‘appropriate’ mood for the embedded clause and governors that connote *volition*, *emotion*, and *doubt* are consistently deemed categorical subjunctive-selecting contexts (Tekavčić [1972: 611]; see also, Lepschy & Lepschy 1981; Bronzi 1977)). However, it is difficult to reconcile this view with what happens in spontaneous speech, where variability is observed in the purportedly categorical subjunctive-selecting contexts as well: in (51) a governor marking *volition*; in (52), *doubt*.

(51) Volition

**Vuoi** che ci *parlo*<sub>IND</sub> io? (LIP.401.230)

‘Do you want me to talk to him?’

(52) Doubt

**Dubito** che poi in un mixer ci *rientreranno*<sub>IND</sub> i bassi. (COR.005.482)

‘I doubt that you could hook up the bass guitars to a mixer.’

Subjunctive morphology also supposedly conveys other types of meanings as well, such as indefinite, uncontrolled, or uncertain readings, highlighting its non-assertive nature (Terrell & Hooper 1974; Hooper 1975; Lindschouw 2011). According to Hooper (1975: 123), “complements that are assertions, that is, complements to assertive verbs, have indicative verb forms. [...] complements to nonassertive verbs, and (imperative) complements to volitional verbs, all have subjunctive verb forms,” suggesting a clear-cut semantic division between subjunctive and indicative contexts. Klein leans in the same direction, suggesting that mood selection can be seen “as meaningful, with the indicative signalling ‘assertion’ and the subjunctive ‘non-assertion’ ” (Klein 1975: 345–55). Many other scholars have claimed that linguistic contexts marking uncertainty, indeterminacy, and non-assertion all trigger the subjunctive. Although they are not identified in the literature as explanatory factors for mood variability, certain contexts are said to function as ‘subjunctivizing’ factors, and therefore are supposed to trigger the subjunctive categorically: negation or the negative operator interacting with the governor (Giorgi & Pianesi 1997: 224; see also, Costantini 2011; Giannakidou 1995; Brugger & D’Angelo 1994), or sentences embedded under an *if*-clause (Manzini 2000: 243). Under this view, the governor alone is not of primary importance since the meanings of uncertainty, indeterminacy, and non-assertion expressed by means of, e.g. negative and

interrogative contexts, are responsible for the selection of the subjunctive, which embodies these characteristics of indeterminacy, uncertainty, and non-assertion. However, as shown in (51) and (52) above, volitional and non-assertive matrices (the former in an interrogative context), sometimes select the indicative in speech, which casts doubt on the categoricity of such classifications.

If one traditional approach also sees the distinction between subjunctive and indicative as *realis/irrealis*, more recent theoretical proposals add finer distinctions to the interpretation of a sentence (Giorgi and Pianesi 1997: 201). This makes the analyst's task of identifying the contexts that *should* license the subjunctive much harder, since the motivations behind mood choice are correlated with a more psychological or attitudinal dimension, i.e. the speaker's intent or state of mind at the time of the utterance (Costantini 2011: 39; Giannakidou & Mari 2015; Portner & Rubinstein 2013). Discerning such motivations in running discourse is not always straightforward; in the absence of explicit cues in speech, the analyst cannot objectively identify them. When variability is evaluated in terms of the speaker's intent, certain contexts are acknowledged as having variable mood selection, and concomitantly are seen as having two alternate semantic/pragmatic interpretations (Satta 1994: 5). Generally, with governors that fall within the semantic categories of *opinion*, *epistemic*, or *belief*, "the alternation of subjunctives and indicatives [...] corresponds to a difference in interpretation" (Manzini 2000: 247). Therefore, the selection of the indicative in lieu of the subjunctive is said to place the interpretation of the proposition on a more epistemic level and consequently marks more subjectivity (Lepschy and Lepschy 1981: 202; also Serianni 2006: 554-555). The prototypical verb *credere* is 'allowed' to select the non-standard variant, the indicative, but this choice supposedly corresponds to the speaker's semantic intent. For instance, it has been claimed that

when a speaker says “*credo che Dio esiste*<sub>IND</sub>” (‘I believe that God exists’), the use of indicative expresses a more certain predication according to what the speaker believes (Gatta 2002: 5), whereas the subjunctive would reveal some uncertainty or weakness of the speaker’s belief.

Under this view, there are two main subjunctive-selecting contexts:

- Some verbs only take the subjunctive, mainly those verbs expressing volition, doubt, and necessity such as *volere* (‘to want’), *ordinare* (‘to command’), *dubitare* (‘to doubt’), and *bisognare* (‘it is necessary’);
- Some verbs take both the subjunctive and the indicative, mostly *credere* (‘to believe’) and the impersonal *sembra* (‘it seems’), according to the beliefs of the speaker.

Nonetheless, as shown above in (51), counterexamples can be found in speech, which seems to disprove the categorical selection hypothesis. Even prototypically *indicative*-selecting contexts show occasional variability with the subjunctive in speech:

- (53) Se è bravo guadagna. Non **dico** che- che *faccia*<sub>SUBJ</sub> i miliardi ma si fa la vita discretamente. (COR.315.118)
- ‘If he’s good, he makes money. I’m not saying that- that he’s going to make millions but he’s going to have a decent life.’

In fact, according to Wandruszka (1991), verbs that are usually considered factives and indicative-selecting matrices are ‘allowed’ to select the subjunctive only to mark undetermined references. According to Chinellato (2001) a verb of communication such as *dire* ‘to say’ may be combined with evaluative features, shifting the original meaning of the verb ‘to say’ and placing the proposition in the sphere of the speaker’s opinion or point of view, marking non-engagement

towards the truth of the embedded proposition (i.e. *dicono* ‘they say’, *si dice* ‘it is said/we say/they say’), as shown in (54).

(54) Marlon Brando è Marlon Brando. **Dicono** che *sia*<sub>SUBJ</sub> omosessuale.

(COR.201.402)

‘Marlon Brando is Marlon Brando. They say that he’s homosexual.’

However, the same indeterminacy can be expressed when the speaker opts for the indicative counterpart as well (55).

(55) Qualcuno **dice** che ci si *mette*<sub>IND</sub> meno. (COR.207.218)

‘Someone says that it takes less time.’

The association of subjunctive morphology with greater uncertainty can also be challenged, as in (56) and (57). Given the interrogative context in (57), we could infer that the speaker in the example is uncertain as to the truth of the proposition in the complement clause: she is unsure of which neighbourhood the third person lives in. Nonetheless, the indicative is selected in this example.

(56) Mi **sembra** che *sia*<sub>SUBJ</sub> una felce. (COR.505.141)

‘It seems to me that it is a fern.’

(57) Mi **sembra** *abita*<sub>IND</sub> a Santa Lucia, è possibile? (LIP.314.28)

‘It seems to me she lives in Santa Lucia, is it possible?’

Other than the type of governor in and of itself, elements such as the context and the speaker’s own experience, are at the core of the *contextually committed* analysis (Portner & Rubinstein 2013) and these elements help to interpret the utterance, which is mainly affected by a) the modal interpretation and b) the common ground. Since the theoretical work of Lewis (1973; 1974), which developed a theory of modality, but especially since the more recent work

of Kratzer (1979; 1981; 1991; 2012) and Stalnaker (1976), the interpretations of the propositions are made in relation to the possible-world theory. The possible worlds are considered as alternative ways things could have been and are ordered based on the modal interpretation, and the *conversational background* of the communication act is essential to describe the meaning of the sentence through a logical expression, i.e. to *denote* it (Stalnaker 1974 & 1976; Kratzer 2012). The context is therefore responsible for determining the modal interpretation of the truth of the proposition: epistemic (what is known); deontic (what is ordered), doxastic (what is believed), bouletic (what is desired), etc. (von Stechow 2006: 2; see also Rubinsteyn 2017; von Stechow & Iatridou 2003). More technically, if we take a desiderative and volitional predicate, such as *to desire* or *to want*, the final denotation will return the interpretation of the sentence according to the ‘wishes and desires’ of the subject of the main clause. In the case of a predicate such as *to desire*, the conversational background imposes a bouletic interpretation, which is based on the relevant person’s desire. Since in principle one cannot assume that desires or wishes are realized in the actual world, a bouletic interpretation is made according to a *non-realistic conversational background*. Also, the interpretation of the sentence and the morphology chosen would rely on the *common ground* between interlocutors (Grice 1989; especially Stalnaker 1973, 1974, 2002), and on what the speaker is presupposing to be true. If we consider strong deontic predicates (e.g. *è peccato* in Italian, ‘it is too bad’), they are said to categorically select the subjunctive and presuppose the truth of the proposition. Furthermore, semantic categories do not behave in the same way with regards to the presupposition. If we contrast epistemic and deontic predicates, the theory of presupposition (Heim 1992: 187) informs us that they embed a different meaning with respect to the truth of the subordinate clause and the presupposition carried. For instance, if we examine the content of (58), the truth of the embedded proposition would ‘survive’ if the

sentence were submitted to the negative, interrogative, and conditional tests (Giannakidou 2009; Quer 2009; Rivero 1971; to cite a few). For instance, by negating the governor, the presupposition and the meaning of the embedded proposition remain unchanged. In the following example, this approach implies that the fact described in the completive clause, i.e. that the subject displays/shows his political colours at the moment he considers himself as spokesperson of the board, is not affected by the polarity of the governor.

(58) È un **peccato** però che il colore politico tu glielo *dia*<sub>SUBJ</sub> nel momento in cui ti dici portavoce del comitato. (COR.427.51)

‘It is too bad, though, that you express your own political views while calling yourself the spokesperson of the board.’

On the other hand, if we take epistemic predicates such as *credo* ‘I believe’ (60-61), they differ significantly from deontic predicates since the evaluation of what is reported in the embedded proposition shifts from a positive to a negative epistemic claim, based on the belief of the speaker. While cases such as (59) are said to express a relative uncertainty as to the state of affairs reported in the embedded proposition *p*, cases such as (60) are generally considered as non-assertive counterparts since the speakers themselves are expressing doubts on the truth of *p* (Wandruska 1991: 418).

(59) Io **credo** che *sia*<sub>SUBJ</sub> stata la meglio ditta di tutta l’Italia. (COR.322.151)

‘I believe that it has been the best firm of all Italy.’

(60) Non **credo** che Cragnotti *possa*<sub>SUBJ</sub> fermarmi. (COR.528.57)

‘I don’t believe that Cragnotti could stop me.’

However, this profound difference in terms of the survival of the presupposition does not seem to be an explanatory factor for subjunctive variability in itself either, since these types of

predicates are usually treated differently when it comes to variable mood selection. In fact, as reported above, deontic predicates are generally considered categorical contexts for the selection of the subjunctive although this categoricity does not necessarily hold true in speech, since *è peccato* (emotional factive predicate) can also trigger the indicative mood.

(61) **Peccato** che stavolta non s'è<sub>IND</sub> visto Capirossi. (COR.519.73)

‘Too bad that this time Capirossi didn’t show up.’

Even when we leave the domain of emotional factive predicates and turn to other types of governors, such as *accorgersi* ‘to notice’ (62-63), the fact that these trigger the indicative does not contrast with the fact that they do carry a presupposition (affirmative in (62); negative in (63)) and these are contexts that theoretically trigger the indicative categorically.

(62) Però tu ti **accorgevi** contemporaneamente che lui *voleva*<sub>IND</sub> fare il cattivo ma non ci riusciva. (COR.201.273)

‘But you were noticing at the same time that he wanted to play the mean one but he couldn’t.’

(63) Non ci si **accorge** nemmeno che c'è<sub>IND</sub>. (COR.442.112)

‘You didn’t even notice that he’s there.’

On the other hand, epistemic verbs are generally accepted with variable mood selection (Mari 2016; Wandruska 1991) such that the interpretation of (64) would suggest that the speaker is expressing a more assertive statement vis-à-vis the truth of the embedded proposition. By means of picking one mood or the other, the speaker would denote whether s/he shares their belief in the truth of *p* or not.

(64) **Credo** che da un certo punto di vista l'affare si è<sub>IND</sub> concluso.  
(COR.578.263)

‘I believe that from a certain point of view the case is closed.’

However, even when the speaker expresses doubts as to the truth of the embedded proposition, as in the less assertive counterpart to (65) reported above in (52), in which variable mood selection can occur (65), contrasting with the assertiveness that indicative would supposedly express.

(65) Ma non **credo** che *sono*<sub>IND</sub> state cambiate un po’ di cose. (COR.106.221)

‘But I don’t believe that they’ve changed a few things.’

Fiction predicates, such as *sognare* ‘to dream’ as in (66), are generally considered as indicative-selecting contexts (Giorgi & Pianesi 1997: 220), essentially because the action is displaced to a completely fictional world in which the embedded proposition would be true. However, as Prandi also points out (2002: 32), if we take a desiderative predicate, such as *desiderare* as in (67) – which theoretically is also interpreted on the basis of a *non-realistic conversational background*; see von Stechow (2006) –, one can equally shift the predication to a fictional world, but this predicate generally takes the subjunctive nonetheless.

(66) Mario **ha sognato** che Carlo *comprava*<sub>IND</sub> casa. Era bella e spaziosa.

[from Giorgi & Pianesi 1997: 221]

‘Mario has dreamed that Carlo bought a house. It was beautiful and spacious.’

(67) **Desidero** che Mario *compri*<sub>SUBJ</sub> una casa. Dovrebbe essere bella e spaziosa.

[from Prandi 2002: 32]

‘I desire that Mario would buy a house. It should be beautiful and spacious.’

### 4.1.1 General considerations

It is clear that theoretical assumptions can be challenged by the data of actual usage, and that overall consensus on what exactly constrains mood selection is not unanimous. The examples adduced above cast doubt on the nature of these constraints and it remains unclear whether and when a given context can be considered categorical or variable, and for exactly what reasons. Furthermore, the theory of presupposition can be difficult to test empirically since it tells us that a presupposition can also be accommodated by the interlocutor, even though the information is new to him: “presupposition accommodation is the process by which the context is adjusted quietly and without fuss to accept the utterance of a sentence” (von Fintel 2008: 137; see also Anderson 1951). This represents a major methodological issue because the analyst would need to know a) which information belongs to the common ground at the time of utterance, and more specifically b) whether and how the utterance has been accepted “without fuss,” i.e. the presupposition has been *accommodated*. The only objective way to test whether the presupposition has been accommodated by the interlocutor is if s/he provides explicit cues in the discourse indicating that the information was actually new to her/him, such as in (68), which illustrates the famous “hey, wait a minute” test to show *which* information is new to the hearer.

(68) *Speaker A*: The mathematician who proved Goldbach’s Conjecture is a woman.

*Speaker B*: Hey, wait a minute. I had no idea that someone proved Goldbach’s Conjecture.

[from von Fintel 2004: 317]

Unfortunately, such cues are extremely rare in discourse, making the task of operationalizing the accommodation of the presupposition almost impossible to undertake. In the

absence of explicit indications in discourse, the analyst has no objective way to measure the pragmatic dimension of the presupposition evoked in (68) and to establish what common ground is actually shared by the speakers at the time of the utterance. The same can be said for other verbal matrices, such as *è peccato* “it is too bad”: if we can objectively say that a main verb, such as *è peccato*, can be treated as a presupposition trigger, then in the absence of explicit cues in discourse we cannot make any inference as to whether the presupposition has been accommodated by the interlocutor, or that the choice of the indicative is suggesting that information was already part of the common ground shared between the speaker and his/her interlocutor.

Another methodological concern is with regard to the types of proposition, and therefore the verbs that fall into these types (epistemic, bouletic, deontic, etc.), since these are decided solely on the basis of intuitive observations and only represented by a few governors. More importantly, it is not clear if and to what extent these categories are relevant in spontaneous speech, nor to what extent they can be considered subjunctive-selecting contexts.

In summary, some of the semantic/pragmatic parameters reported in the literature represent a difficulty for the quantitative, usage-based approach, since they are not always possible to test objectively and empirically in unmonitored spontaneous speech – unless there are explicit contextual indicators present, which are uncommon (Poplack et al. 2013). Nevertheless, some useful observations do emerge from the review of the theoretical literature. First, it is possible to identify and test the effects of some broader semantic categories (e.g. volition, opinion, fear, etc.). There are also a number of more fine-grained semantic and pragmatic distinctions that are difficult to operationalize, but they are possible avenues of exploration since it seems fairly common to invoke them as in some way responsible for mood selection. These

fine-grained characteristics include the assertive vs. non-/less assertive distinction, the degree of commitment to the truth-value of the embedded proposition, and the degree of certainty of the predication, which will be operationalized in the current study (c.f. Section 5.3.1.2).

In order to ascertain whether and to what extent these conditions actually govern subjunctive selection, the analyst must test them by considering the contexts in which the subjunctive is selected in a given speech community. This brings us to another divergence between mainstream and variationist research: both theoretical and prescriptive accounts of variation (if variation is even acknowledged) are often based on idealized standard speech, elicitations, and grammaticality judgments or other intuitions, whereas variationist sociolinguistic data is composed of unreflecting vernacular speech. Drawing from a corpus of such spontaneous speech allows the analyst to locate counter-examples to the assumptions of theoretical and prescriptive accounts. In the data for this study (as we will see in Chapter 5), even stronger modal determination, such as verbs of volition and necessity, can be found to be variable in spontaneous speech. What does this mean? Although the examples shown throughout this report are, in a sense, cherry-picked, the conclusions drawn from the data are based on exhaustive extraction of all subjunctive-selecting contexts in the dataset. Whether speakers are selecting the subjunctive categorically with some specific semantic readings, such as volition and necessity, or whether they are alternating between subjunctive and indicative to express a more certain or assertive predication, are both empirical questions that can be (and are) answered by systematic analysis of actual production data. By implementing an objective method that allows us to test these hypotheses empirically in actual speech data, we can distinguish systematic linguistic behaviour from idiosyncrasy and account for how the subjunctive *truly* functions in discourse.

### 4.1.2 Semantic tests in quantitative research

The topic of subjunctive variation has garnered much scholarly attention from linguists and grammarians alike, yet very little of this body of work has been carried out within a quantitative approach. However, the limited number of quantitative studies tend to focus on the presumed meanings of subjunctive morphology as well. Many of the studies reviewed below had essentially two goals: a) to ascertain the productivity of the subjunctive (which is related to the widespread assumption that subjunctive is in danger of extinction, detailed in Section 5.1.2), and b) whether subjunctive variability is semantically motivated. The latter is tested under the assumption that the matrix governor dictates the mood of the embedded verb (Gatta 2002: 86; Santulli 2009: 38; among others). A common strategy is to test the contribution of the semantic class of the governor, with the goal of ascertaining whether the subjunctive is categorical with the classes of *volition* (Bonomi 1993; Loengarov 2006), *hope* (Bonomi 1993; Lombardi Vallauri 2003; Santulli 2009), and *fear* (Bonomi 1993; Santulli 2009), but is variable with verbs of *opinion* (Bonomi 1993; Lombardi Vallauri 2003; Santulli 2009; Veland 1991). However, methodological and analytical differences cause a lack of consistency from study to study, and consequently raise the issue of comparability of their results:

- (a) Some scholars mainly focussed on *verbs of opinion*, motivated by the fact that it is said to be the semantic class that suffered the most loss of the subjunctive, although these studies lack systematic comparison with other semantic classes as well as a diachronic comparison in order to measure linguistic change.
- (b) A few governors are chosen a priori to represent the semantic classes under investigation, and these are governors frequently reported in the literature (*credere, pensare, sembrare...*). In doing so, the analyst is imposing a restriction

on the variable context and possibly not accounting for all the variation in discourse.

- (c) Analyses were mainly based on raw number of tokens of the subjunctive with no reference to rates of occurrence, weakening the possibility of establishing whether a given context is more favourable than another.
- (d) The type of data selected for quantitative research diverges from one study to another, and does not always consist of unmonitored spontaneous speech.

For example, Veland (1991) only chose three governors belonging to the class of ‘verbs of opinion’ (*credere* ‘to believe’, *pensare* ‘to think’, and *ritenere* ‘to consider’) to ascertain whether the subjunctive is favoured or not in this context. Furthermore, his analysis relies solely on the raw number of tokens of the subjunctive for each governor, and rates of occurrence were not provided. The author concludes that the subjunctive is highly associated with opinion verbs nonetheless. However, it is not possible to determine how favourable the effect is if no systematic comparison with other semantic classes is provided. Moreover, all three of the tested verbs would have to favour the subjunctive over the indicative in order to claim that the semantic class of *opinion* verbs favours subjunctive morphology. Instead, once the results presented by the author are reorganized, and rates of occurrences calculated, only two governors are found to favour the subjunctive and one (*pensare* ‘to think’) disfavors it (Table 4.1).

	SUBJ		FUT/COND		IND		AMBIGUOUS		Total	
	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>
<i>credere</i>	69	57	23	19	6	5	2	2	27	83
<i>pensare</i>	52	61	22	26	25	29	2	2	39	118
<i>ritenere</i>	63	64	23	23	13	13	2	2	34	102
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>182</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>6</b>		<b>303</b>

Table 4.1: Veland's (1991) results for subjunctive selection under the governors *credere*, *pensare*, and *ritenere*.<sup>24</sup>

The author also claims that variation is semantically motivated since the subjunctive is categorically selected in the less assertive contexts of interrogative clauses, in line with what the literature suggests for such types of clauses (1991: 213). On the other hand, we notice that Veland also reported cases of *pensare* embedded under a conditional *se* ‘if’ favouring the indicative, thus apparently going in the opposite direction with respect to the assertiveness hypothesis. Based on what Veland reported, it seems that these results are incongruent with the assumption that less assertive contexts trigger the subjunctive.

Bonomi (1993) observes quasi-categorical selection of the subjunctive with verbs of opinion (N=53/57) and volition (N=18/20), while more variability is observed with verbs expressing a judgement (N=12/20). However, one should keep in mind two issues: a) conclusions were drawn using a limited number of tokens for each governor/semantic class, and b) the data used for her analysis is a collection of newspaper articles, and are therefore not fully representative of actual speaker behaviour in spoken Italian. If anything, we would expect written data to make greater use of the subjunctive, given the highly salient prescriptive character of this construction.

Some quantitative research limited the study of subjunctive variability to a handful of governors taken to represent an entire semantic class, while others further restrict the contexts of

<sup>24</sup> Totals and rates were calculated. Shading indicates a favouring effect. The fourth category, ‘ambiguous’, indicates tokens with morphology that could be either subjunctive or indicative.

selection to specific linguistic contexts. For instance, Loengarov (2006) only extracted a predetermined number of tokens per governor (N=100); two studies only included cases of embedded *essere* and *avere*, which was justified by the fact that they are highly frequent in discourse and would guarantee almost “half of the total verbal forms” (translation mine, Lombardi Vallauri [2003: 3]; see also Loengarov [2006]). Finally, with respect to the governors, we notice that Loengarov only included cases of 3<sup>rd</sup> person (2006: 183), while Santulli limited the extraction only to 1<sup>st</sup> person singular (2009: 165). These two scholars motivated their choices on the basis of the speaker’s point of view: Loengarov only selects contexts that ensure a weaker degree of speaker commitment (and are therefore less subjective), while Santulli focuses on the opposite pole of speaker commitment. This strategy is yet another methodological concern since by solely relying on 1<sup>st</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> person subjects, the analyst is taking for granted that subjectivity or the commitment of the speaker play a role, without taking pains to empirically assess whether that is, in fact, the case. Moreover, it is impossible to truly ascertain the contribution of grammatical person if a systematic comparison with other grammatical persons that supposedly mark more or less subjectivity/commitment is not provided.

When the indicative is chosen over the subjunctive, according to Gatta (2002), the speaker tends to mark modality elsewhere, such as by using the governor in a conditional tense, or adding relativizing expressions such as *a mio parere* ‘in my opinion’, *secondo me* ‘according to me’, *la mia sensazione* ‘my feeling’, etc.<sup>25</sup> By doing so, Gatta claims that the speaker weakens the interpretation and brings more subjectivity to it (2002: 88). Also, the presence of adverbs or constructions indicating [+certainty], such as the one underlined in (69), is said to disfavour the

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<sup>25</sup> Although the approach is descriptive, Durante (1981: 273) makes a similar observation, claiming that even though the Italian subjunctive is less and less used in discourse, modality is marked by means of adverbs such as *forse* ‘maybe’ or *probabilmente* ‘probably’.

subjunctive, though the lack of systematic investigation precludes confirmation of whether this generalisation is based on a solitary example or it is actually a pattern shared amongst members of a speech community.

(69) Non ha dubbi nel ritenere che non è<sub>IND</sub> stata.

‘He has no doubt in considering that it hasn’t been.’

[Veland 1991: 219]

The subjunctive is said to be semantically motivated by Gatta (2002) as well, although we note the limited number of tokens (N=8) submitted to quantitative analysis.

Santulli (2009) focuses mainly on verbs of opinion, and claims that the subjunctive is highly resistant in speech but that the indicative is slowly worming its way into these contexts with *penso* ‘I think’. However, if we calculate rates of occurrence according to the raw number of tokens provided by the author, we notice similar rates of subjunctive across the three governors, including *penso*, thereby rejecting Santulli’s claim and emphasizing the importance of analyzing relative rates of occurrence to make the pattern emerge (Table 4.2).

Governor extracted from NUNC <sup>26</sup>	SUBJ		IND		COND		Total
	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	
<i>credo</i>	87	528	9	53	4	24	605
<i>penso</i>	83	522	12	74	5	33	629
<i>spero</i>	89	238	10	27	1	2	267
<i>ritengo</i>	65	243	23	87	12	45	375
<b>Total</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>1531</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>241</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>1876</b>

Table 4.2: Results of variant selection according to governors selected by Santulli (2009). Totals and rates were calculated, and all the results were adapted from Santulli (2009). Favouring effects are shaded.

For some studies, a full breakdown of the distribution of the subjunctive and the indicative according to the governors is provided, but Lombardi Vallauri (2003) limits his results

<sup>26</sup> NUNC (NewsGroups UseNet Corpora) is a collection of texts taken from online forums hosted by the University of Turin. Data can exclusively be extracted through queries, therefore imposing the search of a specific word or linguistic categories such as *verb*, *adjective*, *adverb*, etc.

to the main semantic classes tested (opinion, hope, and communication), observing that verbs of opinion and hope favour the subjunctive while verbs of communication disfavour it. This is shown in Table 4.3, where rates of occurrence were calculated from raw token counts provided in Lombardi Vallauri (2003).

Semantic class	SUBJ		IND		Total
	%	n	%	n	
opinion	79	223	21	60	283
hope	100	30	0	0	30
communication	5	9	96	191	200
<b>Total</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>262</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>251</b>	<b>513</b>

Table 4.3: Subjunctive selection according to semantic categories selected by Lombardi Vallauri (2003).

Totals and rates were calculated, and all the results were adapted from the study. Favouring effects are shaded.

However, no breakdown of the verbs in each class was provided, so it is not possible to know whether we are observing a true effect, in other words if *all* verbs of opinion (N=223/283) favour the subjunctive at the same rate or if there is any fluctuation within this category (i.e. with some governors showing a favouring effect and others a disfavouring) which weakens the validity of the observed overall effect.

### 4.1.3 Summary

The quantitative results reported above exemplify a central methodological issue with respect to testing of the semantic class of the governor. It is in fact an important aspect to consider in quantitative research, since in order to claim that a given semantic class has an effect on the choice of the subjunctive, the analyst needs to ascertain whether the effect is consistent amongst all the members of that class or if is epiphenomenon of the lexical identities of some members of the class. By relying on rates of occurrence and on the proportion of each specific semantic class that a governor accounts for, Poplack and her colleagues (2013) found for French that the favouring effect of the semantic class of volition was largely due to the overwhelming disproportion of a single verb, *vouloir* ‘to want’, while other verbs within the same category did

not behave the same way. In other words, relying exclusively on overall rates of occurrence (even within a single semantic class) can be misleading, even more so if the analyst relies on raw numbers which do not give any indication of the importance of the effect.

In summary, the treatment of the Italian subjunctive in the (limited) quantitative literature is plagued by a number of major methodological and analytical issues, some of which were also observed in theoretical analyses. A chief concern is the delimitation of the variable context for subjunctive selection: none of these studies accounted for the full spectrum of variation since the contexts of subjunctive use were pre-determined on the basis of semantic class of the governor and assumptions from the literature (e.g. Bonomi [1993] using Serianni's grammar [1988] for the semantic classification). It is not possible to establish whether the subjunctive is actually used categorically, or is favoured more when a specific semantic meaning is conveyed if no systematic comparison with other potentially triggering semantic classes is provided. Moreover, very few governors were chosen as representatives of their semantic class, further restricting the dataset and erroneously omitting verbs that potentially convey the same semantic meaning from appearing in the variable context and therefore affecting the overall results. As a case in point, had Poplack not exhaustively considered all verbs of volition that triggered the subjunctive in her corpus, she would not have unveiled the lexical constraint for *vouloir*.

Also, linguistic contexts that are considered to function as subjunctive triggers (negative, interrogative, and conditional clauses; see Giorgi & Pianesi 1997) are actually excluded quite often (Loengarov 2006; Veland 1991), thus preventing the analyst from empirically measuring the contribution of sentence type to subjunctive selection. Rather than implement a pre-determined sample of subjunctive-selecting contexts, the analyst must use an accountable

method for variation in speech independently of predetermined categories, such as the one designed by Poplack (1992) and adopted in the current research.

## 4.2 Extra-linguistic conditioning

### 4.2.1 The geographical assumption

The second major theme that surfaces in the literature is that the supposed change to subjunctive use in speech stems from an extra-linguistic factor: the geographical origin of the speakers. The ‘wrong’ use of the indicative instead of the subjunctive is considered “an authentic syntactic mistake drawn from the roman vernacular and southern usage” (translation mine; Fochi 1956: 98). Even though the received wisdom surrounding this geographical factor has been mentioned by some linguists and grammarians, only a few researchers have tested this assumption empirically. Some, such as Bonomi’s (1993: 197) study based on written data Italian newspapers, did not find any difference in subjunctive usage according to the geographical northern/southern division.<sup>27</sup> Other studies make use of spoken data from the LIP corpus, which is geographically stratified into four subsets (Milan, Florence, Rome, and Naples) and thereby provides a way to directly test this assumption. Lombradi Vallauri (2003) claims that there are no significant differences between the four subsets, although no statistical evidence was provided to support this claim. Schneider (1999) finds a hierarchy amongst the four subsets, revealing a higher frequency of subjunctive use in Milan and Florence, and a lower frequency in Rome and Naples.<sup>28</sup> Beyond these minor differences in the overall rate of the subjunctive across the peninsula, none of these studies proposed any underlying conditioning of the variability, which is

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<sup>27</sup> Of course, we might expect variability in the subjunctive to be less apparent in written data, but these results are suggestive of the idea that geographical differences do not affect variant selection.

<sup>28</sup> Schneider reports that the ratio between subjunctive use and the total number of completive clauses is 1:3,51 for Florence, 1:3,74 for Milan, 1:4,34 for Rome and 1:5,27 for Naples (1999: 188).

a far stronger line of evidence on the set of conditions that favour the subjunctive over the indicative.

#### 4.2.2 A matter of style

Another leitmotif in the study of subjunctive use in Italian is its supposed stylistic effect. The subjunctive is considered to be a stylistic marker that is a “sign of a more polished linguistic behaviour” (translation mine, Santulli 2009: 176), and therefore would tend to be associated with more careful speech (Bonomi 1993; Gatta 2002; Poletto 2000; Santulli 2009; Schneider 1999; Veland 1991). Veland (1991: 129) relegates mood variation to a “stylistic parameter” and Santulli (2009: 174) asserts that when the subjunctive coexists with swear words, it sounds “curiously shrill” to the author’s ears, which seems to reinforce the intrinsic association of the subjunctive with careful or more polished speech.

In a similar vein, Santulli also judges the use of the subjunctive in casual speech to be like “a designer accessory worn with a casual outfit” (translation mine; 2009: 176), thereby assigning to the variant a rather ornamental quality.

The stylistic explanation is reported in the formal linguistics literature as well, ascribing cases of indicative selection to colloquial or non-standard speech, although this does not enjoy overall consensus. For instance, Giorgi and Pianesi (2004: 19) have explicitly stated that cases of the indicative in lieu of the subjunctive with verbs such as *credere* are acceptable in “many substandard varieties”. On the other hand, Wandruszka (1991: 425) assigns degrees of uncertainty to mood alternation with verbs like *credere*, while ascribing variability with emotive, necessity, and volitive verbs to popular speech that is “characteristic of a low style” (translation mine). However, these analyses dismiss whatever diverges from the idealized standard language and instead rely exclusively on casual intuitive observations, which can lead to erroneous

conclusions based on only a handful of possibly idiosyncratic occurrences, and can therefore lose sight of the *pattern* regulating variability. Moreover, the systematic metalinguistic analysis of the subjunctive described in Chapter 2 has also shown that, despite the consensus surrounding the subordinating function of the subjunctive, there is overall a high degree of inconsistency amongst grammarians as to what the standard usage *actually* is, which should caution the analyst against basing their conclusions on the so-called standard. Given the assumption that simultaneous and multi-dimensional factors have an impact on the speakers' grammar (Labov 1994: 26), the potential interplay between the semantic and the stylistic aspects of the subjunctive should instead be lifted out of the realm of speculation and be investigated simultaneously. In fact, each of these dimensions could potentially contribute to variant choice – though to different degrees. Nonetheless, it seems hard to reconcile the idea that semantic/pragmatic conditions would be operating simultaneously with stylistic ones. If alternation in mood selection conveys one meaning with the subjunctive and another with the indicative, this should be independent of speech style.

### **4.3 The supposed attrition of the subjunctive**

Scholars are also concerned with the attrition or loss of the subjunctive in speech. This is linked to the hypothetical semantic dimension of the subjunctive since the loss of this morphology in contemporary speech is generally considered to be the result of its desemanticization. While few claim that the subjunctive is dead (though see Marchi 1984), many subscribe to the idea that it is losing ground, based on observations that the indicative is taking over contexts traditionally associated with the subjunctive (especially in opinion verbs: Serianni 1986; Simone 1993; Trifone 2007).

Italian sociolinguists seem to agree that this feature is losing ground in vernacular speech because of a preference for a more transparent/regular and frequent indicative morphology (De Mauro 1963; Berruto 1987; Tavoni 2002; Binazzi 2015). The claim that the subjunctive is losing ground in contemporary speech relies on the assumption that subjunctive *was* actually used in the relevant contexts in the first place, e.g. with a specific semantic class or a specific governor. However, no empirical diachronic study has been carried out to test this assumption. In contrast, the diachronic analysis carried out within the Comparative Variationist framework in this study (Chapter 6) (Poplack and Tagliamonte 2001) will allow me to empirically address questions about the behaviour of the subjunctive over time.

#### 4.3.1 Lexicalization in discourse

Subjunctive attrition is also viewed by some (e.g. Bybee, Perkins, & Pagliuca 1994) as a case of grammaticalization; in other words, the subjunctive tends to get increasingly associated with certain governors, while ceding ground to the indicative in all others. The term *grammaticalization* generally refers to the process of the acquisition of a grammatical function by a lexical item, but also as the transition from less grammatical to a more grammatical status. As for the use of the subjunctive, the shift from a semantically-based usage to a generalisation into concomitants of subordination can be characterized as a case grammaticalization (*ibid.* 218–25). The result of this process is understood as a case of desemantization or ‘semantic bleaching’. In other words, loss of semantic contribution, through *ritualization* as “brought about through routine repetition” (Haiman 1994: 3; see also Bybee 2003), resulting in *obligatorification* (Lehmann 1995: 12), or what is referred to elsewhere as *lexical routinization* (Poplack et al. 2018: 238). Lexical routinization implies that the semantics makes little or no contribution to the choice of the subjunctive but its choice is rather dictated by some contexts,

e.g. some specific governors such as *falloir*, *vouloir* and *aimer* in French (Poplack et al. 2013). In fact, some scholars have pointed out the tendency of the subjunctive to be used (or even be entrenched) with specific governors. For instance, Gatta (2002: 87) claims that the subjunctive is mostly used with conventional forms, specifically with *credo che* ‘I believe that’, *penso che* ‘I think that’, or *mi sembra che* ‘it seems to me that’, hinting at a grammaticalized use in fixed expressions. Santulli claims that there is also an automatic mechanism of subjunctive selection with the more frequent subjunctive-*potere* form, i.e. *possa* [present subjunctive of 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular], which is used as a fixed semi-auxiliary. The subjunctive is claimed to be insufficient to express a modal value, and therefore *potere* comes in to support it (2009: 175). The rise of the fully-fledged analytical construction *potere*.PRES.SUBJ+INFINITIVE is considered to be a case of grammaticalization, i.e. desemanticization, which would be supported by the fact that it also goes against the rules of the sequence of tenses:

(70) Mi **farebbe piacere**<sub>[PRES.COND]</sub> che un biologo *possa*<sub>[PRES.SUBJ]</sub> inserire un breve riassunto. [2009: 175]

‘I would be glad that a biologist could insert a brief summary.’

[In this case, with a conditional matrix, the norm would predict the imperfect subjunctive *potesse*]

Santulli claims that this is due to economy of language or a general tendency towards simplification, and the survival of the subjunctive can be ascribed to these frequent irregular forms that are purportedly memorized by the speakers. In other words, the author suggests that speakers are memorizing *potere*-analytical constructions as fixed expressions, and that this strategy contributes to the maintenance of the subjunctive in speech (1999: 176). Santulli also proposes two changes in progress: a) the “fossilization of the expression *spero*+subjunctive”

(translation mine, 2009: 168), meaning that the association between this governor and subjunctive morphology would be entirely automatic in nature; and b) the increasing use of the indicative with *penso* ‘I think’ (1<sup>st</sup> person singular; present indicative).

Quasi-fixed expressions are reported by Schneider (1999) as well. He extracted around fifty examples from the LIP corpus and observed that cases of complementizer deletion are almost categorically found with an embedded subjunctive and the following governor forms: *credo*, *penso*, *mi sembra*, *spero*, and *immagino* (Schneider 1999: 191). With respect to *credere* ‘to believe’, Schneider (1999: 88) observed that it is only used with (*io*) *credo* (1<sup>st</sup> person singular, present tense). When the embedded verb is a subjunctive, a syntactic constraint is operative: dislocation of one of the constituents of the embedded clause, which favours adjacency between the main and the embedded verb as shown in (71). When the embedded verb is in the indicative, he observed a tendency to keep intervening material between the governor and the embedded indicative verb (72).

- (71) Il problema **credo** che *vada*<sub>subj</sub> posto– *vada* affrontato sul piano storico politico. [Schneider 1999: 87]

‘The problem I believe that needs to be raised– needs to be faced on a historical political plan.’

- (72) **Credo** che Trapattoni oltre a essere un buon allenatore *è*<sub>ind</sub> anche un ottimo dirigente. [Schneider 1999: 88]

‘I believe that Trapattoni in addition to being a good coach is also a good manager.’

Schneider observes that complex clauses are becoming syntactically less complex and moving towards a more nominal structure. Therefore, the outcome observed is (NP ((V<sub>MOOD</sub> V)<sub>V</sub>

COMP)  $_{VP)_P}$ , where the governor is said to be placed between the subject and the subjunctive complement clause with increasing frequency (1999: 192), which would favour the fixed use of the subjunctive, contra the assumption that its selection is semantically motivated.

#### 4.4 Summary

Previous research on subjunctive variability in Italian turns up some interesting findings and generalizations. Despite some claims that the subjunctive is relatively productive in speech (Bonomi 1993; Santulli 2009; Veland 1991), the general assumption is that it is nonetheless threatened by the rising use of the competing indicative form (Lombardi Vallauri 2003; Schneider 1999). A few emphasize the considerably lower rate of subjunctive clauses in speech, which is interpreted as an overall decline of this mood (Voghera 1993). The overall rate of the subjunctive does fluctuate across studies (Figure 4.1), ranging from 2% (Voghera 2001) to 83% (Santulli 2009).

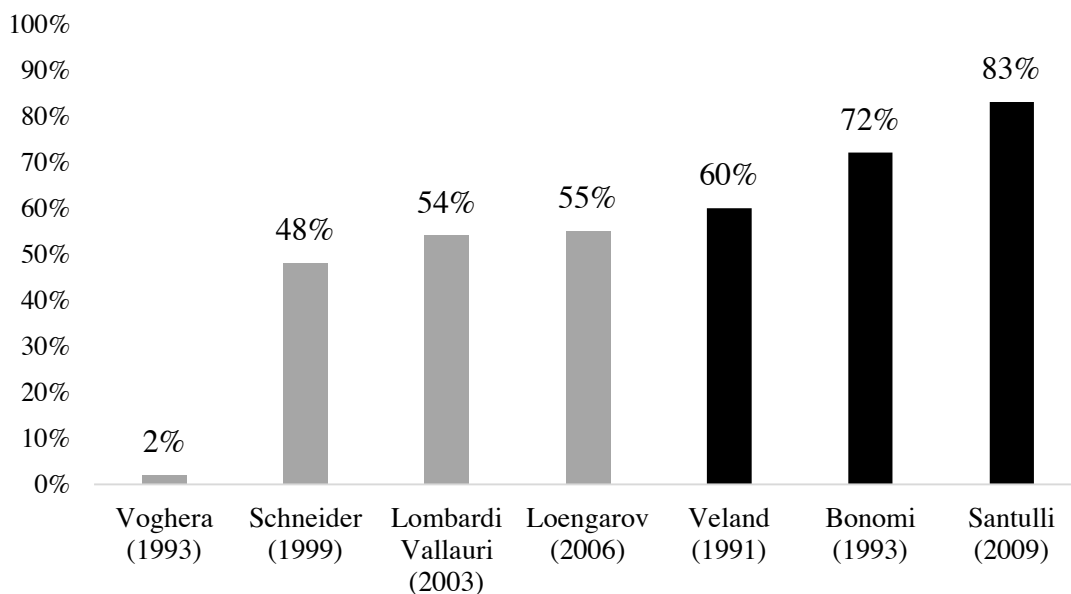


Figure 4.1: Comparison of the rate of subjunctive selection in previous quantitative research. With the exception of Voghera (1993), overall rates were calculated on the basis of the results provided by the authors in their publications. Results of the studies that made use of LIP corpus are in grey.

The above-mentioned quantitative studies either claim that their results support the hypothesis of a change in progress (Loengarov 2006; Lombardi Vallauri 2003; Schneider 1999; Voghera 1993) or that the subjunctive remains stable and productive in speech (Bonomi 1993; Santulli 2009; Veland 1991), and yet none of them supports their findings with diachronic evidence and no explicit measurement of productivity across time was provided.

Likewise, findings on the contribution of semantic class show high or categorical rates of the subjunctive across certain semantic classes (Bonomi 1993; Lombardi Vallauri 2003), despite claims that verbs of opinion represent the semantic class that suffered most from the supposed incursion of the indicative. Again, no diachronic evidence was provided, and neither the lexical identity of the governors nor the semantic classifications were tested systematically.

Circumscription of the variable context is another area where studies differ considerably: previous research selected some specific contexts (e.g. governors, grammatical person, etc.), based on the assumption that the subjunctive conveys a given meaning and that some governors or linguistic contexts such as interrogative or negative main clauses triggered the subjunctive in their datasets. In addition, the unmotivated exclusion of certain governors and/or linguistic contexts violates the *Principle of Accountability* (Labov 1972), since the subjunctive could have been selected with governors that were not included in the studies, or even with other forms of the governors that *were* included in the study, but which were restricted to some linguistic contexts. Violations of accountability skew the results and, by extension, the conclusions drawn from those results.

The other controversial aspect with previous research is the incommensurable data that served as the basis for quantitative analysis, including newspapers (Bonomi 1993; Santulli 2009; Veland 1991), text messages (Santulli 2009), on-line forum discussions (Loengarov 2006;

Santulli 2009), as well as literature (Soliman 2002), with only a few studies relying on corpora of spontaneous speech data (Schneider 1999; Lombardi Vallauri 2003; Loengarov 2006). Among those who opted for spoken datasets, scholars have alternately made use of a corpus of television shows (including talk shows) (Gatta 2002), a series of recordings collected in different communicative settings (a conversation between friends, a seminar of phonetics, a live radio broadcast, a university lecture, and a speaker’s conference closing remarks (Voghera 1993); or the LIP corpus (Loengarov 2006; Lombardi Vallauri 2003; Schneider 1999; Voghera 1999. Even when different studies have adopted the same corpus, as is the case for the LIP corpus, differences arise as far as choice of contexts, methodological decisions, and analytical solutions – all of which leads to mixed interpretations and little comparability between studies.

While all these studies targeted contemporary Italian, results show discrepancies and differences in rates of occurrence overall, but also when it comes to comparison of lexical governors. Once I calculated the rates of occurrence based on the number of tokens reported in the quantitative studies, I could also ascertain whether the relative rate of occurrence of each governor was higher or lower than the overall rate, which can be interpreted as a favouring or disfavouring effect on the selection of subjunctive, respectively (Table 4.4). It turns out that a governor can be found to favour the subjunctive in one study and to disfavour it in another. For example, the subjunctive is at the same time favoured (Veland 1991) and disfavoured (Bonomi 1993) with *credere*, and favoured (Santulli 2009) and disfavoured (Schneider 1999) with *ritenere*.

	<i>Credere</i>	<i>Pensare</i>	<i>Ritenere</i>	<i>Sperare</i>	<i>Sembrare</i>
<i>Veland (1991)</i>	✓	✗	✓	-	-
	Rate Subj	Rate Subj	Rate Subj	Rate Subj	Rate Subj
	69%	52%	63%		
<i>Bonomi (1993)</i>	✗	✗	✗	-	✓
	Rate Subj	Rate Subj	Rate Subj	Rate Subj	Rate Subj
	N/A	N/A	N/A		N/A
<i>Schneider (1999)</i>	✓	✓	✗	✓	-

	Rate Subj 87%	Rate Subj 83%	Rate Subj 65%	Rate Subj 89%	Rate Subj
<i>Gatta (2002)</i>	✓	✓	✓	-	✓
	Rate Subj N/A	Rate Subj N/A	Rate Subj N/A	Rate Subj	Rate Subj N/A
	✓	✗	✓	✓	-
<i>Santulli (2009)</i>	Rate Subj 87%	Rate Subj 83%	Rate Subj 91%	Rate Subj 89%	Rate Subj
	✓	✓	-	-	-
	Rate Subj 80%	Rate Subj 72%	Rate Subj	Rate Subj	Rate Subj

Table 4.4: Rate of subjunctive selection and the relative dis/favouring effect by governors frequently tested in quantitative research.<sup>29</sup>

Such discrepancies among studies obscure the true status of the subjunctive in contemporary Italian, and muddy its association with specific semantic classes/contexts or lexical governors. The type of methodology adopted in previous quantitative research leads to the extraction of a dataset of tokens that are not representative of the full range of variation. Such limitations should not be imposed by the analyst, who should instead account for actual, community-wide linguistic practices. In other words, the data itself indicates *where* the subjunctive is actually used, rather than relying on analyst assumptions as to where they *expect* it should be. The next chapter suggests a systematic method to tackle these issues and provides an accountable picture of the use of subjunctive in contemporary Italian. Some of the above-mentioned assumptions (listed in Section 5.2), be they related to linguistic or extra-linguistic factors, are operationalized as hypotheses and tested in the next chapter.

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<sup>29</sup> Favouring or disfavouring effects on the selection of subjunctive were determined according to their position relative to the overall rate of subjunctive indicated in Table 4.4: the symbol “✗” indicates that the governor disfavors the subjunctive and the check mark symbol “✓” indicates that it favours the subjunctive.

## 5 A variationist approach to the study of the subjunctive

“This adventure is made possible by generations of searchers strictly adherent to a simple set of rules. Test ideas by experiments and observations. Build on those ideas that pass the test. Reject the ones that fail. Follow the evidence wherever it leads, and question everything.”

— Neil deGrasse Tyson, *astrophysicist*

In the Romance domain, subjunctive variability has been widely documented for spoken French in Canada (Poplack 1990; 1992; 2013) as well as for the metropolitan region of Paris (Kastronic 2016). Other Romance languages have recently been integrated into the comparative study of the subjunctive, such as Spanish, Portuguese, and Italian, the latter of which has only recently made its debut in the variationist approach (Poplack et al. 2018). Following the key tenets of variationist linguistics (Labov 1972, 1994), these studies place the *linguistic variable* and its contextualization within a speech community at the heart of the analysis. After extensive analysis of subjunctive variability across a timespan of approximately 150 years, Poplack and her colleagues uncovered for the first time the underlying pattern of the subjunctive in speech – the way it is *actually used*. They observed that the overall rate of the subjunctive increased over time, but that these high rates were mainly due to the increasing entrenchment of few lexical governors accounting for the vast majority of subjunctive morphology used in French: *falloir* ‘it is necessary’, *vouloir* ‘to want’, and *aimer* ‘to like’. This lexical constraint operating on the selection of the subjunctive is strengthened when the embedded verbs are considered, since *être*

‘to be’, *avoir* ‘to have’, *faire* ‘to make’, *aller* ‘to go’, and *pouvoir* ‘to be able’ account for most of the subjunctive morphology. The discovery of this pattern through quantitative and statistical evidence contrasts with the state of affairs described in formal and prescriptive literature. Instead, it points to a process of *lexical routinization* (Poplack et al. 2018: 238-247): subjunctive selection is not constrained by semantic factors but rather restricted to combinations of a handful of lexical governors and embedded verbs. This unexpectedly turned out to be true for Parisian French as well, albeit to a lesser extent, despite the received wisdom that it is a more prestigious variety of French and therefore supposedly closer to the prescriptive norm (Kastronic 2016). It is important to stress that these findings were available to the analysts by virtue of an accountable methodology that takes into account what actually is going on in speech rather than relying on assumptions of how a given linguistic feature should work. The present research is carried out within the framework of Variationist Theory (Labov 1972b), thereby following in the path traced by Poplack (1992; among others) for the study of subjunctive variability in speech.

### 5.1 Methodology

The focus of the current chapter is the study of the variable selection of the subjunctive under verbal governors in contemporary Italian. The data comes from two corpora described in Chapter 3: C-ORAL-ROM (Cresti & Moneglia 2005) and LIP (De Mauro et al. 1993). I test a series of internal and external factors hypothesized to condition the choice of the subjunctive within these corpora. I use the results of a series of empirical and objective tests to determine whether the above-mentioned linguistic and extra-linguistic factors actually condition variability, and to what extent. I focus on the following research questions:

- 1) Is the variable use of the subjunctive triggered by semantic/pragmatic factors or is it triggered by elements of the morphosyntactic structure?

- 2) Is the subjunctive a feature on the verge of extinction or is it productive in speech?<sup>30</sup>
- 3) Are there parallels in the conditioning of variability across distinct geographical subsets of Italian, or is the conditioning instead different for each geographically-distinct subset?
- 4) Is any external conditioning operating on the choice of the subjunctive?

This variationist study will enable us to empirically establish the conditions under which speakers are more likely to select the subjunctive over the competing variant(s), be they structural, semantic, or stylistic/social.

As described in Chapter 3, the results of quantitative and statistical analyses are taken as evidence of the constraints on variability and if similarities or parallels in the direction of effect are found for two or more subsets (e.g. geographic) with respect to the factor groups tested, the subjunctive can be said to be used *in the same way* for these subsets. On the other hand, differences in the constraint hierarchies are taken as empirical proof of dissimilarities, and consequently, to reflect the different underlying grammars in these subsets.

### 5.1.1 Operationalizing hypotheses

Some claims about the semantic/pragmatic, syntactic, morphological, and socio-stylistic conditioning were operationalized and tested to ascertain whether and to what extent they affect variant selection in spontaneous speech. Previous research conducted in a variationist framework set the stage for operationalizing semantic hypotheses (Poplack et al. 2013), which informed the operationalization of such hypotheses in the current study.

I adduce several factor groups as tests of whether the putative effects of semantic and pragmatic factors are in fact operative here: the semantic class of the governor, the sentence type

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<sup>30</sup> Measures of productivity will be outlined in the following section.

of the main clause, the presence of other indicators of non-factual modality, as well as the lexical identity of the governor. Syntactic/structural factors are included as competing hypotheses: presence of the complementizer *che*, presence of intervening material between the governor and the embedded verb, lexical identity, and morphological form of the embedded verb. The relative effects of these competing factors will be taken to reflect the relative contribution of semantic vs. structural effects in subjunctive selection. Social and stylistic factors were also considered, where possible, such as speech style, geographical origin of the speaker, level of education, as well as sex and age. In order to establish if a change has taken place over time and also to ascertain the nature of variability at the source, I test the use of the subjunctive using both apparent time and real time. Each of the above-mentioned factor groups and the accompanying coding protocol is described in detail in the following sections, illustrated with examples taken from the corpora.

### 5.1.2 How to measure productivity

Productivity has often been invoked by linguists, especially within the quantitative paradigm, to assess the status and vitality of the subjunctive in speech. Opinions about the status of the subjunctive in contemporary Italian range from deeming it fully productive (Bronzi 1987; Serianni 1986; Simone 1983; Veland 1991), not productive (Tekavčić 1972; Lepschy & Lepschy 1977; Sabatini 1985), and even hyper-productive, i.e. when speakers ‘overuse’ it (Bricchi 2014). However, previous research often lacks explicit measures of productivity and instead largely relies only on the overall frequency of subjunctive selection. This is inadvisable, because research on other Romance languages (e.g. Poplack 1992) shows that a high overall rate of subjunctive occurrence (i.e. *frequency*) might hide the fact that the subjunctive is entrenched under only a few governors, and is therefore not actually *productive*. Previous quantitative research on Italian (reviewed in Chapter 4) suggests that the subjunctive is becoming grammaticalized and therefore

is used only with a handful of governors (e.g., *credere* ‘to believe’, *pensare* ‘to think’, *sembrare* ‘it seems to’, etc.). If this lexically-based restriction of the governor pool is observed in the present study as well, we would conclude that the subjunctive is *not* productive in speech.

In order to establish whether lexical restrictions are observed with the Italian subjunctive, I replicate the tripartite analysis implemented by Poplack and her associates (1992, 2013, 2018), which uses three lines of evidence:

TRIPARTITE ANALYSIS (Poplack et al. 2013)

1. The rate of the subjunctive associated with each governor.
2. The proportion that each governor represents within the entire set of governors, also called the governor pool (% Data).
3. The amount of subjunctive morphology accounted for by each governor (% Subjunctive Morphology).

These measures taken together will enable me to establish the role of the governors and to situate them with regards to subjunctive productivity. Overall *frequency* of the subjunctive must be supported by these three measures of *productivity*. Using this method, I can objectively determine the association of subjunctive morphology with each lexical governor, as well as the relative frequency of each governor within the variable context. For instance, if we observe a relatively small number of governors accounting for a relatively large proportion of all subjunctive morphology, then we will consider the morphology to be less productive in speech. On the other hand, the subjunctive can be deemed productive if the distribution of the morphology is not restricted to a small number of lexical governors.

## 5.2 Predictions

Poplack's tripartite analysis will enable me to empirically determine the extent to which lexical factors govern the selection of the subjunctive: if the lexical identity of the governor contributes to the selection of the subjunctive independently of any meaning to be expressed (as was found for French by Poplack), this is taken as one indication that the subjunctive may not be productive. A further measure to evaluate productivity is whether the subjunctive is largely associated with any one internal or external factor: if subjunctive use is restricted to, say, highly educated speakers only (and external factor), it cannot be said to be fully productive. A wide range of such factors are tested in a quantitative framework in this study, and their relative statistical importance to the selection of the subjunctive will enable me to determine the best variationist model to account for subjunctive variability in Italian. Analysis of these factors both in isolation and in combination with each other will help to answer the main research questions concerning the issue of 'meaningful' variation, i.e. whether subjunctive selection is semantically motivated, whether it is (lexically) productive, or whether the subjunctive is undergoing lexical routinization (Poplack et al. 2018), as instantiated by a relatively smaller contribution of semantic factors to subjunctive selection and the *obligatorification* of the subjunctive in lexical contexts (Lehmann [1995]; see also Bybee [2003]; Haiman [1994]). The factor groups investigated in this study are summarized in Table 5.1.

<b>INTERNAL FACTORS</b>	
<b>FACTOR GROUP</b>	<b>FACTORS</b>
Semantic class of the governor	Emotive Volitive Necessity Opinion Evaluative Communicative
Sentence type	Affirmative Negative Interrogative
Other indicators of non-factual modality	Presence Absence
Lexical identity of the governor	Each distinct lexical identity of the governor
Lexical identity of the embedded verb	Each distinct lexical identity of the embedded verb
Morphology of the embedded verb	Regular Irregular Suppletive
Intervening material (between the governor and the embedded verb)	Presence Absence
Complementizer <i>che</i>	Presence Absence
<b>EXTERNAL FACTORS</b>	
<b>FACTOR GROUP</b>	<b>FACTORS</b>
Geographical origin of the speaker	Milan Florence Rome Naples
Speech style	Casual Careful
Age	18-25 25-40 40-50 over 60
Sex	Female Male
Level of education	Illiteracy/Primary School High School University Education

Table 5.1: Summary of the factor groups operationalized in the current research.

There are two ways in which semantic meaning may contribute to variability: the subjunctive may be favoured in negative and interrogative sentences (which carry the semantic

meaning of less-assertiveness), or may be favoured by the presence of other indicators of non-factual modality (i.e. presence of a modal, presence of a conditional operator scoping over the subjunctive sentence, presence of other indicators of uncertainty). In order to be considered a genuine effect, any semantic/pragmatic factor underlying subjunctive variability should operate independently of stylistic or social factors.

If the subjunctive is undergoing lexical routinization, we can expect it to be restricted to a small number of governors and embedded forms. Also, if the subjunctive is mainly used in fixed expressions (as reported elsewhere, e.g. Bonomi [1993]; Schneider [1999]), it should be favoured by the absence of any intervening material between the governor and the embedded clause. These restrictions would mean that the subjunctive is not selected freely or independently of these measures, and therefore that a *lexical* effect is operative.

### 5.3 Results

I extracted and coded all tokens occurring under matrix verbs that were found to have governed a subjunctive at least once in my dataset (i.e. the *governors*), and identified three variant forms of embedded verbs occurring in these contexts: the subjunctive, the indicative, and the conditional. The subjunctive is by far the majority variant in our dataset (Table 5.2), occurring 66% (N=1139/1713) of the time, followed by the indicative (31%, N=524/1713) and the conditional, although the latter accounts only for 3% of the data (N=50/1713).

	<b>Contemporary Italian Data</b>	
	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>
Subjunctive	66%	1139
Indicative	31%	524
Conditional	3%	50
<b>Total</b>		<b>1713</b>

Table 5.2: Overall distribution of the variants in C-ORAL and LIP (combined).

Due to its relative rarity, the conditional variant was excluded from our analysis, which has the effect of bringing the overall rate of the subjunctive to 68% (Table 5.3).

<b>Contemporary Italian Data</b>		
	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>
Subjunctive	68%	1139
Indicative	32%	524
<b>Total</b>		<b>1663</b>

Table 5.3: Overall distribution of the subjunctive and indicative variants in C-ORAL and LIP (combined).

Judging by the rates, the Italian subjunctive appears on the surface to be quite productive, since it is selected more than two-thirds of the time. However, as outlined at the beginning of the current chapter, overall rates can be misleading since they may hide internal conditioning that is indiscernible on the surface. Thus, I turn now to the internal conditioning of variability.

### 5.3.1 Internal factors

#### 5.3.1.1 The effect of governor frequency on subjunctive selection

As noted in Chapter 4, previous non-variationist studies on subjunctive variability on Italian only focused on a few governors and reported mainly on the raw number of subjunctive tokens. In this study, I systematically and exhaustively located every matrix verb found to govern the subjunctive at least once, and coded tokens according the lexical identity of the governor. Following Poplack (2013), I suggest that, alongside the overall rate, productivity of the subjunctive can be inferred by the number of different lexical governors with which it occurs. In my data, the number of governors extracted totals 141. This is a high number of governors compared to previous findings in Italian's sister language, French. In Canadian French, Poplack and her colleagues found 34 governors (2013) in a corpus of approximately 2,500,000 words; in Parisian French, Kastronic (2016) found 49 governors in a corpus of approximately 800,000 words. In contrast, the contemporary spoken Italian corpus used in this study is smaller than those used by Poplack and Kastronic: it contains 607,847 words. If subjunctive selection was not

bound by lexical governor then we would expect the number of subjunctive-selecting contexts to increase as the amount of data also increases. Under this hypothesis, we should have observed the highest number of governors in the Canadian French corpus and the lowest number in the corpus of Italian used in this study. Instead, the Italian subjunctive is selected by a larger number of governors despite the fact that the corpus from which it was extracted is five times smaller than the larger of the two French corpora (Canadian French, Ottawa-Hull Corpus; see Poplack 1989) and nearly the same number of words as the corpus used by Kastronic. This hints at the possibility that the subjunctive in contemporary Italian might be genuinely productive. However, once we analyze the distribution of subjunctive morphology according to the first measure of the tripartite analysis, i.e. the rate of subjunctive associated with each governor, we observe a very chaotic situation overall. Table 5.4 displays, for each lexical governor attested in this dataset, the rate of subjunctive (% Subj), the number of tokens it represents (N), the proportion of the total data it represents (% Data) and the proportion of subjunctive morphology that it accounts for (% Subjunctive Morphology, abbreviated in the table as ‘S\_Morpho’).<sup>31</sup> The effect for any given lexical governor is inferred by comparing the individual rate of subjunctive for each lexical governor to the overall rate for the pooled data<sup>32</sup> (e.g. given an overall rate of 68%, *non è* at 32% subjunctive strongly disfavours it, while *credere* at 76% favours it).

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<sup>31</sup> A more detailed table can be found in Appendix C.

<sup>32</sup> This method is replicated for every factor group and is described in more detail in the following sections.

Effect	Governor	%Subj	N	%Data	%S_Morpho
<b>Highly frequent governors (100+ tkn/gov)</b>					
Fav.	<i>credere</i>	76	185/244	15	16
	<i>sembrare</i>	74	100/135	8	9
No effect	<i>pensare</i>	68	151/222	13	13
Disfav.	<i>non è</i>	32	53/168	10	5
<b>Medium frequency governors (10-99 tkn/gov)</b>					
categorical (100%)	<i>chiedere</i>	100	18/18	1	2
	<i>augurare</i>	100	10/10	1	1
Fav. (71-92%)	<i>parere</i>	71	46/65	4	4
	<i>volere</i>	92	59/64	4	5
	<i>sperare</i>	88	53/60	4	5
	<i>bisognare</i>	92	55/60	4	5
	<i>ritenere</i>	82	36/44	3	3
	<i>fare sì</i>	86	19/22	1	2
	Disfav. (18-62%)	<i>può darsi</i>	53	18/34	2
<i>bastare</i>		54	14/26	2	1
<i>essere sicuro</i>		44	8/18	1	1
<i>immaginare</i>		43	6/14	1	1
<i>aspettare</i>		62	8/13	1	1
<i>non sapere</i>		31	4/13	1	0
<i>essere convinto</i>		18	2/11	1	0
<i>dire</i>	18	15/83	5	1	
<b>Infrequent governors (2-9 tkn/gov)</b>					
Categorical (100%)	33 governors	100	121/121	7	11
Fav. (71-88%)	12 governors	80	62/77	5	5
No effect (67%)	8 governors	67	20/30	2	2
Disfav. (14-50%)	15 governors	39	19/49	2	4
<b>Singletons (1 tkn/gov)</b>					
Categorical (100%)	53 governors	100	53/53	3	5
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>68</b>	<b>1139/1663</b>		

Table 5.4: Rate of subjunctive selection according to all governors using Poplack's tripartite analysis (2013; 2017). Governors are sorted by total number of tokens. Horizontal lines in the table indicate analyst-imposed frequency divisions.

Table 5.4 shows that although subjunctive morphology in Italian is distributed across a wide range of governors, when we calculate the overall rate of the subjunctive for each, we see that rates fluctuate considerably from governor to governor (from a low of 14% with *capire* 'to understand' to 100% with *augurare* 'to wish'). Thus, in addition to the lexical governors that select the subjunctive categorically (e.g. *chiedere* 'to request' 100%), some governors seem to

strongly favour the subjunctive (e.g. *sperare* ‘to hope’, 88%), while others disfavour it (e.g. *non è* ‘it is not’, 32%) and still others display no effect at all (e.g. *pensare* ‘to think’, 68%).

Table 5.4 also shows that governors do not each constitute an equal portion of the data, and the subjunctive rates may fluctuate because of this. Among 141 governors, more than a third (38% of the governor pool<sup>33</sup>, N=53/141) are singletons, and given the protocol for circumscribing the variable context (cf. Section 3.3.1), these *must* categorically select the subjunctive. In contrast, four governors, *credere*, *pensare*, *non è*, and *sembrare*, represent only 3% (N=4/141) of the governor pool, but account for nearly half of the data (46% of all tokens, N=769/1663), and 43% (N=489/1139) of all subjunctive morphology. In other words, the most frequently-occurring governors in our dataset account for the most subjunctive morphology, but it does not seem to be the case that frequency directly contributes to subjunctive selection. Table 5.4 shows that the top four governors are *highly frequent*, with each verb representing around one-tenth, and together representing 46% of the data. The next 17 governors are of medium frequency (representing between 1% and 5% of the data) and the next 69 governors are infrequent. If frequency directly contributed to subjunctive selection, we would expect either a more or less monotonic trend whereby the rate of subjunctive increases as a function of governor frequency, or a trend where the most frequent governors all favoured the subjunctive, while the least frequent governors all *disfavoured* the subjunctive. Neither of these trends is apparent here. Within the frequency category of ‘highly frequent’, governors do not share the same pattern of subjunctive selection: two of them (*credere* and *sembrare*) show a slightly favouring effect, whereas *pensare* has no apparent effect and *non è* highly disfavours the subjunctive. The same could be said for governors in the medium-frequency or infrequent categories. In sum, only three governors

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<sup>33</sup> The governor pool is defined as the set of matrix verbs that hosted an embedded subjunctive at least once.

(*credere*, *pensare*, and *sembrare*) are responsible for 38% of all subjunctive morphology in this data. Figure 5.1 displays the disproportionate distribution of subjunctive morphology by governor and their relative frequency.

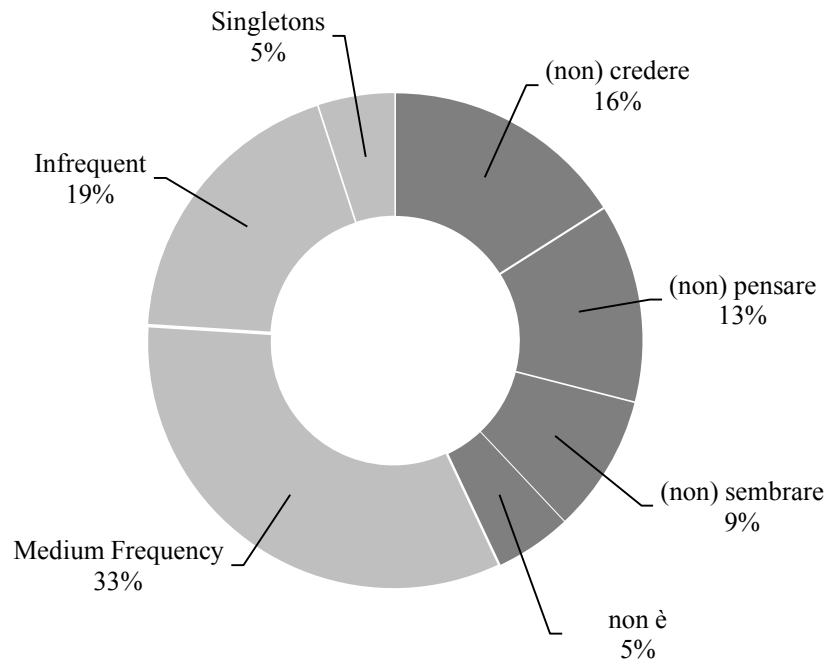


Figure 5.1: Distribution of the lexical governors according to the proportion of subjunctive morphology they account for. Dark grey shading depicts the four highly frequent governors.

Each governor demonstrably has the potential to trigger the subjunctive, but this option largely seems to fall under the purview of only three lexical governors, though we are far from the dramatic, near-categorical lexical constraint observed in French (either Canadian or Parisian). These results suggest that frequency is *not* an explanatory factor for variability in and of itself. As a matter of fact, only two of the governors display both high frequency and high rates of subjunctive (*credere* and *sembrare*).

### 5.3.1.2 Tests of semantic/pragmatic hypotheses

One of the most important motivations for subjunctive selection reported in the literature, which has to a certain degree been tested in previous quantitative research, concerns the supposed

semantic conditioning of subjunctive variability. Recall that the variable context is determined corpus-internally, independently of any meanings supposedly conveyed by the subjunctive. In order to determine whether the subjunctive is used with underlying semantic intent in discourse, we must ascertain to what extent semantic contributions that are hypothesized to motivate variant choice are actually operative in speech, if at all. However, as reported in Chapters 2 and 3, operationalizing semantic claims is a crucial but often difficult task for the analyst. This is due on the one hand to the lack of consensus across studies on exactly which semantic categories, meanings, and governors the analyst should take into consideration for a study of the subjunctive in speech, and on the other hand, to the manner in which the meanings proposed in previous studies stem from analyst introspection into the supposed beliefs, feelings, and wishes of the speakers. This is problematic because, as reported by Poplack (2013: 162), there is often no objective way to reconstruct speaker intent or underlying meaning from discourse, let alone to operationalize and test it. In the present study, I follow the method implemented by Poplack (1992, 2013) which circumvents this issue to some extent, in order to empirically test the contribution of semantic factors to subjunctive selection.

The following sections illustrate the operationalization of hypotheses, the coding protocol (with examples from the dataset), the predictions, and the results, with regards to the factor groups of semantic class of the governors, sentence type, and other indicators of non-factual modality.

#### **5.3.1.2.1 Semantic class of the governor**

This first factor group was proposed by Poplack (1992; 2013) to test the semantic hypothesis using the semantic class of the governor. The logic behind testing the contribution of semantic class of the governor relies on the assumption, common since 19<sup>th</sup> century grammars,

that the meaning of the matrix verb (the governor) is responsible for the selection of the ‘appropriate’ embedded mood. However, the task of classifying each governor into a specific semantic class presents some complications. An exhaustive agreed-upon list of verbs for each semantic class is not available; instead, a few lexical governors are usually taken as representative of a given semantic class, e.g. *credere* ‘to believe’, *pensare* ‘to think’, and *ritenere* ‘to consider’ are usually classed as ‘opinion verbs’. Although formal accounts of subjunctive selection tend nowadays to move away from this traditional classification, utterances are still interpreted according to wishes, desires, or beliefs of the speaker (Giannakidou & Mari 2015; Portner & Rubinstein 2013; von Stechow 2006). Despite the dramatic lack of inter-analyst agreement, prescriptive and descriptive accounts of the subjunctive have mainly stressed the fact that some semantic classes select subjunctive categorically while others do so variably. Categoricity is mainly ascribed to volitive, necessity, and emotive verbs, whereas variability is (sometimes) acknowledged with opinion verbs, considered either as the category where subjunctive/indicative alternation simply conveys a different meaning (Giannakidou & Mari 2015), or the one that has suffered losses of the subjunctive from the incursion of the indicative in informal speech (Bonomi 1993; Serianni 2006).

This study adopts the semantic classification suggested by Poplack (1993, 2013), which is similar to the basic classification but adds the class of ‘communicative’ verbs, as follows: opinion, volition, necessity, emotion, evaluative, and communicative. Additionally, these semantic classes correspond to the broad categories tested by previous quantitative studies (see Bonomi 1993; Lombardi Vallauri 2003) and are also reported in the most popular contemporary grammars (see Dardano & Trifone 1995; Serianni 2006). Where a governor was found in my corpus but not listed elsewhere, I categorized it according to its synonymy with other governors already accounted for. My coding for this factor group is therefore far more exhaustive than in previous

work on Italian, since the semantic classes provided in previous quantitative research were only represented by a handful of main verbs chosen a priori whereas each and every governor that was used in my corpora was coded for semantic class.<sup>34</sup>

SEMANTIC CLASS	EXAMPLE
Opinion	Eh invece <b>penso</b> ora tu c' <i>abbia</i> <sub>SUBJ</sub> parecchia esperienza. (COR.5.110) 'Eh but I think now you have lots of experience.'
Evaluative	<b>Avevo calcolato</b> che il Metaponto che è a quaranta chilometri <i>avesse</i> <sub>SUBJ</sub> un bel mare. (COR.067.176) 'I calculated that Metaponto, which is forty kilometers away, had a nice sea.'
Necessity	Se gli compro un completino intimo <b>bisogna</b> che [ <i>io</i> ] <sub>SUBJ</sub> gliene <i>compri</i> <sub>SUBJ</sub> di marca. (COR.205.100) 'If I buy him underwear, I need to get a brand name.'
Volitive	Ma po' mi comprava i' pesce. <b>Voleva</b> che lo <i>cucinassi</i> <sub>SUBJ</sub> . (COR.001.398) 'But then he would buy me fish. He wanted me to cook it.'
Communicative	Non si può <b>dire</b> che nel terzo mondo <i>siano</i> <sub>SUBJ</sub> cattivi. (LIP.412.140) 'You cannot say that in the third world they're all mean.'
Emotion	<b>Sono orgoglioso</b> che lei <i>voglia</i> <sub>SUBJ</sub> partecipare ai lavori di questo congresso. (LIP.311.357) 'I am proud that you want to take part in the work of this congress.'

Table 5.5: Semantic classes included in the current study, based on Poplack (1992).

According to the hypothesis that semantics *is* at play, results should indicate that the subjunctive occurs categorically with verbs of emotion, volition, and necessity, which are classes usually indicating a modal interpretation related to permission, obligation, necessity, or desire. On the other hand, the subjunctive should occur variably with evaluative and opinion verbs and should be very rare with communicative verbs. Moreover, if semantics regulates subjunctive variability, the effect of a given class must be consistent amongst the members of the class, i.e. no one member of any given semantic class can determine the effect for the entire class. Table 5.6 shows that some semantic classes favour the subjunctive more than others.

Semantic Class	% Subj	N
Emotive	93%	43/46
Volition	89%	201/225
Necessity	81%	76/94
Evaluative	71%	17/24

<sup>34</sup> Results presented in the following pages will also present an exhaustive list of the governors identified for each of the semantic classes tested here.

Opinion	66%	786/1190
Communication	19%	16/84
<b>Overall</b>	<b>68%</b>	<b>1139/1663</b>

Table 5.6: Subjunctive selection according to semantic class of the governor. Shading indicates a favouring effect.

A first observation is that despite the categoricity that has been reported in several prescriptive and theoretical accounts of the subjunctive (Giorgi 2006; Mari 2016; Dardano & Trifone 1995; Serianni 2006) variability characterizes *every* semantic class to different degrees. As shown in Table 5.6, emotive verbs (73) select the subjunctive the vast majority of the time (93%), and along with verbs of volition (74) and necessity (75), forms the set of semantic classes that favour the subjunctive.

(73) **Ho** un pochino **paura** che *sia*<sub>SUBJ</sub> tanto. (COR.002.27)

‘I’m a little bit afraid that it will be a lot.’

(74) Senti, **vuoi** che *compri*<sub>SUBJ</sub> i popcorn e la Coca-Cola? (LIP.412.96)

‘Listen, do you want me to buy popcorn and coke?’

(75) Premetto una cosa che un buon artigiano **bisogna** che *sappia*<sub>SUBJ</sub> tante cose. (COR.322.194)

‘Let me say first that a good craftsman needs to know lots of things.’

It is important to acknowledge that the above-mentioned high rates of the subjunctive with the semantic classes of volition, necessity, and emotive verbs are in line with theoretical and prescriptive assumptions. This first result suggests that the subjunctive in Italian is in fact favoured with stronger modal determination, i.e. the expression of obligation, necessity, and desire. However, these semantic classes are supposed to select the subjunctive *categorically* (according to prescriptive dictate), but they actually *variably* select the indicative in speech, shown here with the prototypical verb of volition, *volere* (76 and 77).

(76) Io non **voglio** che lei *conosce*<sub>IND</sub> Greta. (COR.225.57)

‘I don’t want her to meet Greta.’

(77) Io non **voglio** però che a quel punto la gente *stia*<sub>SUBJ</sub> nei corridoi o roba del genere. (LIP.53.121)

‘But I don’t want, at that point, people to stay in the hallway or things like that.’

The two semantic classes of verbs of opinion and evaluative verbs show substantially weaker effects. In particular, verbs of opinion have been targeted by quantitative studies as the context in which the subjunctive is considered to have lost ground. If the subjunctive *has* indeed lost ground in this context we will be able to determine it with diachronic analysis of this feature, discussed in the next chapter. As it stands, results of the contribution of opinion verbs to the selection of the subjunctive appear to neither favour nor disfavour the subjunctive (66% N=787/1192). However, the disproportions we noticed with respect to the role of the lexical identity of the governors observed in the previous section are mirrored here. For example, 80 verbs were coded as verbs of opinion but 64% of the data within this semantic category is represented by only four verbs (Figure 5.2), and of these four most frequent verbs, only *non è* shows a strong disfavoured effect while the others show much weaker effects overall, in the opposite direction. The observation that not all ‘opinion’ governors share the same direction of effect (some favour the subjunctive, e.g. *ritenere*, some disfavour it, e.g. *può darsi*, and some have no apparent effect, e.g. *parere*) is repeated throughout this one category. There are 77 different lexical types displaying rates of the subjunctive ranging from 14% to 100% (27 of these governors are singletons). This means that where there is a modest amount of data to analyse we do not observe any consistent direction of effect, and there are many governors with a very low or singleton token count, which precludes drawing any substantial conclusion for those verbs.

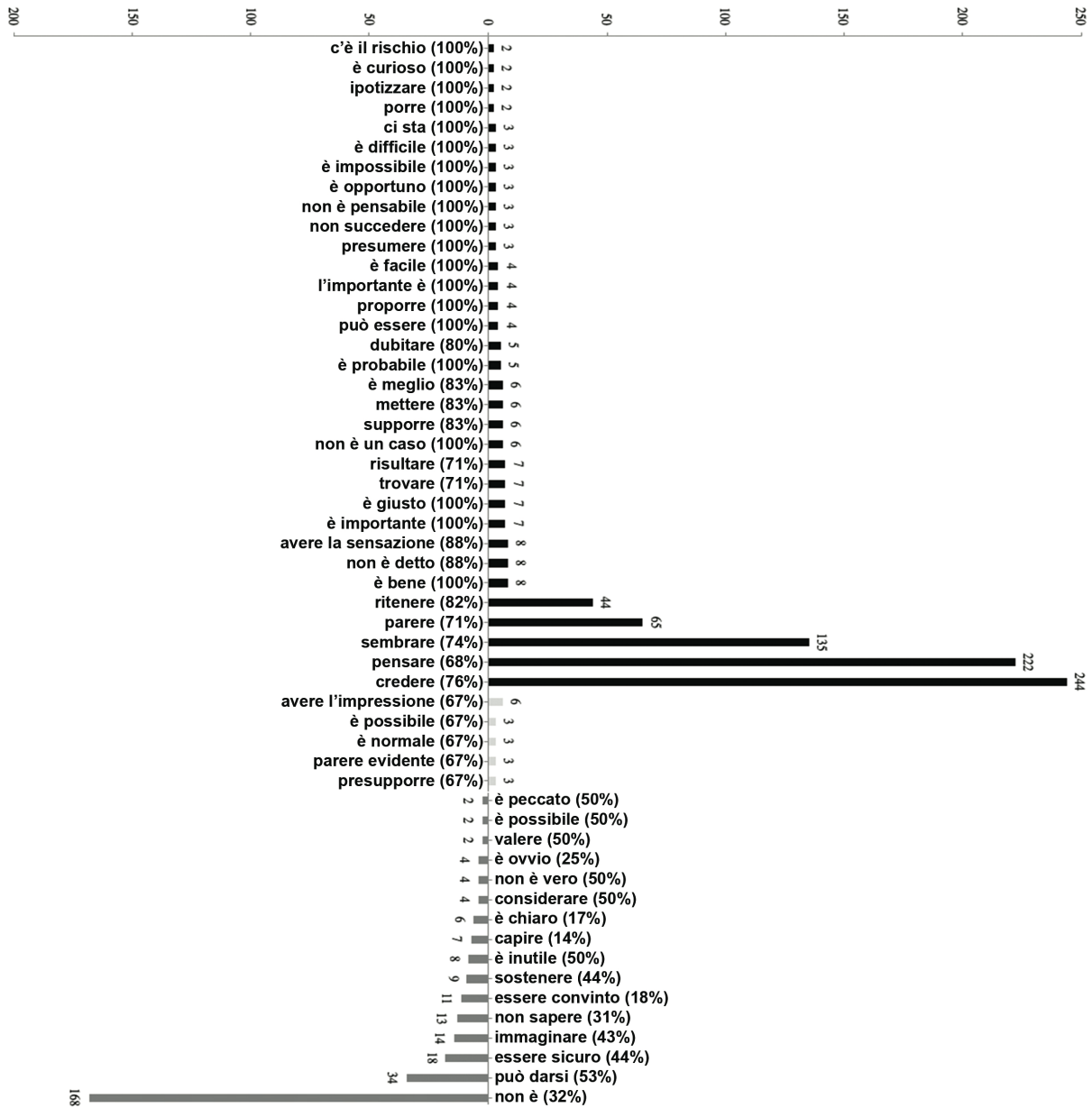


Figure 5.2: Breakdown of subjunctive selection according to governors within the semantic class of opinion verbs. Singletons excluded.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>35</sup> Black bars indicate that the rate of subjunctive is higher than the overall rate (>66%) of the semantic class, i.e. a favouring effect, light grey indicates no effect (=67%), while dark grey bars indicates a disfavouring effect (<66%). The y axis shows the number of tokens. The figure does not include 27 other governors that are singletons, (1 token): *sospettare, sembrare di capire, reputare, non è umano, non avere senso, non avere il dubbio, l'improbabile è, il problema è, fare possibile, essere consapevole, escludere, è utile, è una vergogna, è strano, è raro, è ragionevole, è logico, è inevitabile, è giusto e corretto, è fondamentale, è buono, è bello, dedurre, capitare, avere l'idea, avere il dubbio, affermare.*

On the other hand, volitive and emotive verbs show a more consistent pattern overall since nearly all the governors belonging to these two semantic categories display high or categorical rates of subjunctive selection, which lends support to the semantic hypothesis (Table 5.7).

VOLITIVE VERBS			EMOTIVE VERBS		
	%Subj	N		%Subj	N
<i>volere</i>	92%	59/64	<i>augurare</i>	100%	10/10
<i>sperare</i>	88%	53/60	<i>avere paura</i>	83%	5/6
<i>fare sì</i>	86%	19/22	<i>essere contento</i>	100%	3/3
<i>chiedere</i>	100%	18/18	<i>dispiacersi</i>	50%	1/2
<i>aspettare</i>	62%	8/13	<i>essere preoccupato</i>	100%	2/2
<i>fare in modo</i>	86%	6/7	<i>fare piacere</i>	100%	2/2
<i>richiedere</i>	71%	5/7	<i>garantire</i>	100%	2/2
<i>lasciare</i>	100%	6/6	<i>non preoccuparsi</i>	50%	1/2
<i>evitare</i>	100%	5/5	<i>assicurarsi</i>	100%	1/1
<i>preferire</i>	100%	5/5	<i>avere fiducia</i>	100%	1/1
<i>pretendere</i>	100%	4/4	<i>avere piacere</i>	100%	1/1
<i>esigere</i>	100%	3/3	<i>compiacere</i>	100%	1/1
<i>fare in maniera</i>	50%	1/2	<i>congratularsi</i>	100%	1/1
<i>impedire</i>	100%	2/2	<i>è assurdo</i>	100%	1/1
<i>permettere</i>	100%	2/2	<i>essere contrariato</i>	100%	1/1
<i>cercare</i>	100%	1/1	<i>essere orgoglioso</i>	100%	1/1
<i>fare conto</i>	100%	1/1	<i>l'augurio è</i>	100%	1/1
<i>identificare</i>	100%	1/1	<i>l'auspicio è</i>	100%	1/1
<i>imporre</i>	100%	1/1	<i>meravigliarsi</i>	100%	1/1
<i>non consentire</i>	100%	1/1	<i>non essere felice</i>	100%	1/1
<b>Total</b>	<b>89%</b>	<b>201/225</b>	<i>piacere</i>	100%	1/1
			<i>rammaricarsi</i>	100%	1/1
			<i>rischiare</i>	100%	1/1
			<i>sentire il timore</i>	100%	1/1
			<i>sorprendere</i>	100%	1/1
			<b>Total</b>	<b>93%</b>	<b>43/46</b>

Table 5.7: Subjunctive selection according to volitive and emotive verbs.

Nonetheless, we should bear in mind that both volitive and emotive semantic classes display a fair number of singletons and other highly infrequent governors, weakening the observed overall effect, i.e. high overall rates may be affected by the presence of a few governors with a small number of tokens rather than due to a genuine effect of semantics.

The category of evaluative verbs contains very little data dispersed across several governors and no consistent effect is observed. In contrast, the category of verbs of necessity appears to show a lexical effect: *bisognare* alone accounts for 64% of the data in this semantic class (N=60/96) and, at 92%, it strongly favours the subjunctive. The behaviour of this governor differs from that of the other verbs within this class, in particular that of *bastare* ‘to suffice; ≈ as long as’, the only other verb in the class of moderate frequency, which disfavours the subjunctive. Excluding *bisognare* has the effect of nullifying the apparently favouring effect of this semantic class: the overall rate drops to 62% (Table 5.8). Given the dominance of a single verb and its dissimilarity from the patterns attested for other verbs within this semantic class, this is clearly more of a lexical effect than a genuine effect of semantic intent.

EVALUATIVE VERBS			NECESSITY VERBS		
	%Subj	N		%Subj	N
<i>ammettere</i>	67%	4/6	<i>bisognare</i>	92%	55/60
<i>stabilire</i>	75%	3/4	<i>bastare</i>	54%	14/26
<i>controllare</i>	100%	4/4	<i>occorrere</i>	100%	3/3
<i>verificare</i>	67%	2/3	<i>c'è il bisogno</i>	50%	1/2
<i>prevedere</i>	50%	1/2	<i>servire</i>	100%	1/1
<i>calcolare</i>	50%	1/2	<i>la condizione è</i>	100%	1/1
<i>reputare</i>	100%	1/1	<i>è obbligatorio</i>	100%	1/1
<b>Total</b>	<b>73%</b>	<b>16/22</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>81%</b>	<b>76/94</b>
			<b>Total (without <i>bisognare</i>)</b>	<b>62%</b>	<b>21/34</b>

Table 5.8: Subjunctive selection according to evaluative and necessity verbs.

The last semantic class – verbs of communication – shows a clear lexical effect as well since is composed of only two lexical types: *dire* and the construction *non è da dire*. The former accounts for 99% of the data and highly disfavours the subjunctive (18%, N=15/83) and the latter is a singleton.

Summarizing, we observe variable selection of the subjunctive to different degrees depending on semantic class overall, as well as the specific verbs contained within each, despite the widespread assumption and/or explicit prescription that some classes of verbs categorically

select the subjunctive (Giannakidou & Mari 2015), including volitive verbs (Romani di Casalmaggiore 1826; Zaccaro 1855; among others), verbs of necessity (Parato 1981), emotive verbs (Nelli 1774), as well as verbs of opinion (Romani di Casalmaggiore 1826; Trifone & Palermo 2007). We did find some quantitative support for this assertion within a few categories (emotive and volitive verbs) but not for others (necessity and opinion). However, although the classes of volitive and necessity verbs seem to be consistent with a semantic effect, they altogether represent only a small proportion of the data: 16% of the entire dataset (N=271/1663) and are constituted of a considerable number of infrequent and singleton governors, preventing strong confirmation of the semantic hypothesis. Moreover, this apparent semantic effect seems to go in the opposite direction of the results for the other semantic classes, which have idiosyncratic lexical effects and within-category inconsistencies, indicating that the far-reaching ‘semantic intent’ motivation for subjunctive selection cannot be entirely accurate. As expected, the same type of disproportions we noticed with respect to the role of the lexical identity of the governors are echoed in the factor group of semantic classification of the main verbs, casting doubt on any consistent semantic motivation for choice of the subjunctive. The assumption that semantics genuinely contribute to subjunctive selection *only* with verbs of volition and emotion will be left open at this stage and discussed in light of the results of the diachronic analysis presented in the next chapter.

#### 5.3.1.2.2 Sentence type

Poplack (2013) also operationalized an approximate test of assertion vis-à-vis the predication. This was done independently of the semantics supposedly conveyed by the governor and through identifications of elements in the discourse objectively indicating a more or less assertive predication. Negative (Acquaviva 1996; Manzini 2000; Costantini 2011; Giannakidou

1995; Brugger and D’Angelo 1994; Giorgi and Pianesi 1997; Loengarov 2006; Veland 1991) and interrogative sentences (Loengarov 2006; Manzini 2000; Mari 2015; 2017; Veland 1991) are considered less assertive than their affirmative counterparts. In my study (as in Poplack’s), each token was coded according to whether the variant occurred in the context of an affirmative main clause or in the context of a negative or interrogative clause, as shown in the following coding protocol table (Table 5.9).

SENTENCE TYPE	EXAMPLE
Affirmative	Fra l’altro, a quell’epoca, <b>credo</b> che la <i>sia</i> <sub>SUBJ</sub> stata la meglio ditta di tutta l’Italia. (COR.322.151) ‘Also, at that time, I believe that it was the best firm in all of Italy.’
Negative	In diciotto nella macchina, la strada <b>non è</b> che <i>migliorasse</i> <sub>SUBJ</sub> ! (COR.067.200) ‘Eighteen people in the car, it’s not that the road would get better!’
Interrogative	Quanto tempo <b>pensi</b> <i>richiedano</i> <sub>SUBJ</sub> queste tue ricerche? (COR.024.75) ‘How long do you think your research takes?’

Table 5.9: Sentence types coded in the current study.

If the subjunctive is associated with a less assertive reading, negative and interrogative sentences would be expected to favour its selection, whereas the more assertive context of affirmative clauses should disfavour it. However, results shown in Table 5.10 do not support this hypothesis.

Sentence type	%	N
Affirmative	72%	949/1310
Interrogative	68%	34/50
Negative	51%	156/303
<b>Total</b>	<b>68%</b>	<b>1139/1663</b>

Table 5.10: Rate of subjunctive according to sentence type.

On the contrary, the assertive affirmative sentence type slightly favours the subjunctive, the non-assertive interrogative basically has no effect, while the non-assertive negative sentence type has a disfavouring effect. Cross-tabulation of sentence type and lexical identity of the governor shows some interesting findings as well. Since interrogative clauses were found in only 50 tokens overall, the dispersion of the data amongst dozens of different governors resulted in either empty cells or dramatically low token counts, thus not allowing for any definitive

conclusions as to the influence of interrogative clauses on mood choice. This context was therefore excluded from the cross-tabulation shown below and the following analysis relies on the binary division between affirmative vs. negative clauses. Several interesting results for this cross-tabulation can be observed in Table 5.11.

No effect	Affirmative		Negative		$\chi^2$ p < .01
	%Subj	N	%Subj	N	
<i>pensare</i>	67%	131/195	69%	9/13	n.s.
<i>credere</i>	76%	159/209	73%	22/30	n.s.
<i>volere</i>	94%	44/47	91%	10/11	n.s.
Other	77%	346/450	78%	49/63	n.s.
<b>Data available for one factor only</b>					
<i>bisognare</i>	92%	54/59	N/A		
<i>sperare</i>	88%	53/60	N/A		
<i>può darsi</i>	55%	18/33	N/A		
<i>non è</i>	N/A		32%	53/168	
<b>Total</b>	<b>72%</b>	<b>949/1310</b>	<b>51%</b>	<b>156/303</b>	

Table 5.11: Subjunctive selection according to sentence type and governor (affirmative vs. negative sentence types only).

Recall that a true effect of sentence type should apply regardless of governor. This was not the case here. Where cells are populated with data, we observe no effect of negation. Take *pensare*, *credere*, *volere*, and the category of other governors: there is almost no difference in rates whether the clause is affirmative or negative; results of chi-square tests confirm that there is no significant difference between the two sentence types. Some governors (*bisognare*, *sperare* and *può darsi*) have no data in negative sentence types, whereas *non è* necessarily occurs only in negative clauses. It is in fact the latter governor, *non è*, that is responsible for the overall disfavoured effect of negation since it accounts for 55% of the negative contexts overall (N=168/303). However, the disfavoured effect attributed to *non è* cannot be due to its negation per se since where we have data to verify this, negative clauses do not differ statistically from positive clauses for subjunctive selection. Thus, the evidence in my data suggests that the less-

assertive hypothesis does not hold true in speech. Some previous quantitative studies (Schneider 1999; Veland 1991; among others), citing this hypothesis of assertion, have excluded negative and interrogative clauses a priori since these were thought to exert a modal attraction and therefore trigger, supposedly categorically, the subjunctive. My results clearly show that this is not the case and furthermore, that excluding these contexts violates the principle of accountability (cf. Section 5.3.1.2.2).

It might still be argued that sentence type could be expected to behave differently according to the semantic class of the governor: since in theory, the polarity of the main clause does not affect the truth of the embedded proposition (cf. Section 4.1), semantic classes such as emotive, volitive, or necessity verbs, should not be affected by polarity. The cross-tabulation of semantic class and sentence type reveals some interesting patterns.

	Affirmative		Negative	
	%	N	%	N
emotive	95%	38/40	83%	5/6
volitive	90%	130/144	86%	18/21
necessity	61%	20/33	100%	1/1
evaluative	71%	17/24	—	0/0
opinion	72%	609/845	74%	106/143
<i>dire</i>	14%	10/72	50%	6/12
<b>Total</b>	<b>71%</b>	<b>824/1158</b>	<b>74%</b>	<b>136/183</b>

Table 5.12: Subjunctive selection according to semantic class and sentence type (affirmative vs. negative clauses only).

Emotive and volitive verbs display a slight effect of sentence type but in the opposite direction as expected (affirmative favours more than negative). There is no substantial effect of sentence type for verbs of opinion, contra the semantic hypothesis. The only verb consistent with the semantic hypothesis is *dire*, since there is a substantial difference in the rate of subjunctive selection between the two contexts. This confirms what was reported in the CSGI corpus. However, *dire* represents only a minuscule portion of the data. The results for the majority of the data (95%, N=1579/1663), coupled with the fact that the above-mentioned semantic classes do

not behave as bona fide semantic classes but rather are epiphenomenal (cf. Section 5.3.1.2.1), suggest that the contribution of sentence type is not semantic in nature but rather structural.

### 5.3.1.2.3 Other indicators of non-factual modality

A third semantic test, following Poplack (2013), assesses the role of other indicators in the utterance of a non-factual reading of the proposition, beyond whatever is supposedly embodied by the subjunctive morphology. I identified these contexts by the presence of *explicit* cues in running discourse indicating an uncertain or less assertive predication, i.e. *forse* ‘maybe’, *probabilmente* ‘probably’, expressions such as *se non mi sbaglio* ‘if I’m not wrong’, or the presence of a modal such as *può darsi* ‘it might be’, all of which help to objectively establish a doubtful interpretation of the proposition. Other indicators of non-factual modality are when the main governor is conjugated in a tense/mood said to mark a detachment from reality or to promote modal attraction, such as the conditional, the future, the imperative, or the subjunctive<sup>36</sup>, or when the proposition is embedded under a conditional operator, such as *se* ‘if’.

Recall that these factors are also invoked in the literature as licensing the subjunctive since they denote uncertain/less-certain predication (Gatta 2002; Loengarov 2006; Manzini 2000; Hooper 1975; Klein 1975; Santulli 2009; Veland 1991; Wandruska 1991; among others) and are generally considered as categorical contexts for subjunctive selection, to the point where they are sometimes referred to as *subjunctivisors* or *subjunctive triggers*. Other factors invoked in the literature could have been included in the current factor group, such as sentence type or presence of the embedded modal *potere*. However, sentence type was considered as its own factor group, and the presence of embedded *potere* is included in the factor group for lexical identity of the

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<sup>36</sup> Very few governors appeared in the subjunctive mood. These were governors embedded under another governor.

embedded verb (see Section 5.2.1.3.1). As previously specified in Chapter 3 (Section 3.3.2), variationist analysis relies on the assumption that the factor groups are orthogonal (Guy 1998: 126), which precludes the inclusion of negatives, interrogatives, and presence of embedded *potere* from the factor group of other indicators of non-factual modality since their contribution is already measured elsewhere. Table 5.13 shows the coding protocol for this factor group.

OTHER INDICATORS OF NON-FACTUAL MODALITY	EXAMPLE
Mood of the matrix clause (subjunctive, imperative, conditional)	Ecco, a me <u>piacerebbe</u> che 'un <i>ci fosse</i> <sub>SUBJ</sub> questa- questo comportamento schizofrenico. (COR.430.241) 'So, I would like it not to be this- this schizophrenic behaviour.'
Lexical (adverbs/constructions indicating doubt)	<u>Magari</u> <b>ci poteva stare</b> che io <i>andassi</i> <sub>SUBJ</sub> a cambiarli. (COR.224.61) 'Maybe it made sense that I could go to exchange them.'
Auxiliary used modally	Uno <u>potrebbe</u> <b>pensare</b> che architettura e struttura <i>sono</i> <sub>IND</sub> la stessa cosa. (COR.451.25) 'One could think that architecture and structure are the same thing.'
Conditional sentence ( <i>se</i> +governor)	Vediamo un poco <u>se è possibile</u> che <i>ci sia</i> <sub>SUBJ</sub> un impegno. (LIP.4422.254) 'Let's see if it is possible that it will be an engagement.'
Absence of indicator	Voglio stare bene con lui e <b>spero</b> che <i>sia</i> <sub>SUBJ</sub> per tutta la vita. (COR.511.159) 'I want to be happy with him and I hope that it will be for a lifetime.'

Table 5.13: Other indicators of non-factual modality coded in the current study. The indicators are underlined in the examples.

We would expect that any meaning associated with the subjunctive would be echoed by the presence of other elements of the context that contribute to a non-factual reading. Therefore, we should observe a favouring effect of the subjunctive in the presence of these other indicators.

Indicators of Non-Factual Modality	%	N
Combination of factors	100%	3/3
Auxiliary used modally	92%	23/25
Tense/mood of the matrix clause	79%	81/102
Lexical indicator	68%	62/91
Absence of indicators	67%	956/1424
Conditional <i>se</i> +governor	61%	11/18
<b>Total</b>	<b>68%</b>	<b>1139/1663</b>

Table 5.14: Subjunctive selection according to various indicators of non-factual modality.

A first observation is that indicators of non-factual modality are rare in running discourse. In fact, 86% of the data displays no overt indicators (N=1424/1663) and this category shows no effect on subjunctive selection (67%, N=956/1424). Thus, only 14% of the data allows us to determine whether presence of other indicators of non-factual modality has any effect. Results show that not all the indicators behave the same way: when a governor is embedded under a conditional operator (*se* ‘if’), the subjunctive is slightly disfavoured; the presence of lexical indicators (adverbs/constructions indicating uncertainty) has no effect; tense or mood of the matrix clause, presence of the auxiliary used modally, and the combination of multiple factors all favour the subjunctive, though the latter has only three tokens so we cannot draw any strong conclusion as to its effect. Unpacking these factor groups even further reveals even more inconsistencies. When *tense/mood of the governor* is unpacked, the effect does not seem consistent across the members within this category (Table 5.15).

<b>Tense/Mood of the Governor</b>	<b>% Subj</b>	<b>N</b>
Subjunctive	100%	5/5
Future	88%	7/8
Conditional	73%	38/52
Imperative	68%	13/19
<b>Total</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>63/84</b>

Table 5.15: Subjunctive selection according to tense and mood of the governor coded as indicators of non-factual modality.

More consistent is the overall effect across the category of *auxiliary used modally* (Table 5.16), although the total numbers are extremely low, which casts doubt on the validity of this effect.

<b>Auxiliary used modally</b>	<b>%Subj</b>	<b>N</b>
<i>dovere</i>	100%	8/8
<i>potere</i>	91%	10/11
<i>volere</i>	80%	4/5
<b>Total</b>	<b>92%</b>	<b>22/24</b>

Table 5.16: Subjunctive selection according to type of auxiliaries used modally coded as indicators of non-factual modality.

Lexical indicators of non-factual modality were located in the data, but a number of them only occurred once or a few times. The breakdown for those that occurred more than four times (Table 5.17) shows that these do not co-occur with the subjunctive at similar rates; instead, subjunctive rates range from 0% to 100%. Even if we compare indicators that could be considered synonyms, they do not show similar rates: *forse* ‘maybe’ (100%) vs. *magari* ‘maybe’ (75%); *metti che* ‘suppose’ (50%) vs. *mettiamo che* ‘let’s suppose’ (100%, N=3/3; not listed in the table below since the total token count is lower than four).

Type of Lexical Indicator	%	N
<i>può darsi</i>	53%	18/34
<i>magari</i>	75%	9/12
<i>forse</i>	100%	5/5
<i>non (lo) so</i>	75%	3/4
<i>metti che</i>	50%	2/4
<i>non so se mi sbaglio</i>	0%	0/4
Other	86%	24/28
<b>Total</b>	<b>67%</b>	<b>61/91</b>

Table 5.17: Subjunctive selection according to types of lexical indicators of non-factual modality with 4+ tokens.

Summarizing, factors that are designed to capture a non-factual or doubtful reading through the presence of explicit cues in discourse do not have consistent effects on subjunctive selection, contra the hypothesis of semantic contribution. If anything, the only context where the effect is consistent is with cases of auxiliaries used modally – though low token counts preclude me from drawing a firm conclusion. These findings corroborate our observations for other semantics-based factor groups. If semantics were genuinely an explanatory factor of subjunctive variability, we should have not observed such inconsistencies both across and within the factor groups tested. Of the three factor groups tested, each failed to account for a semantic contribution with the solitary exception of a small portion of the data belonging to emotive and volitive verbs, on which we suspend our judgement until the diachronic analysis in Chapter 6.

### 5.3.1.3 Morphosyntactic tests

In addition to lexical and semantic tests, I operationalized a series of hypotheses to test whether the conditioning of subjunctive selection is morphosyntactic or structural. If so, this would support previous hypotheses according to which the subjunctive is devoid of any special meaning and functions instead as a subordinating element (Harris 1978). The factor groups analyzed in this section are a) lexical identity and b) morphology of the embedded verb, c) presence of the complementizer *che*, d) presence of intervening material between the governor and the embedded verb, and e) grammatical person and tense of the governor, operationalized here to ascertain whether the subjunctive is favoured more with some subject-verb collocations such as *credo che*+subjunctive, which has been reported elsewhere (e.g. Gatta 2002). As for the semantic tests illustrated above, each following section deals with one morphosyntactic factor group including the hypothesis, the prediction, the coding protocol with relative examples, and the results.

#### 5.3.1.3.1 Lexical identity of the embedded verb

Previous variationist research on the subjunctive in French demonstrated the restriction of the subjunctive to a handful of embedded lexical verbs (Poplack 1992; Poplack et al. 2013). In contrast, productive use of the subjunctive should result in the presence of a relatively large number of embedded lexical verbs co-occurring with subjunctive morphology since, after all, every verb in the language is theoretically *eligible* to carry subjunctive morphology. In this data, the effects of lexical identity of the embedded verb are quite dramatic.

Within the most frequently-occurring verbs, results show that only *three* verbs favour the subjunctive, albeit minimally (Table 5.18): *essere* ‘to be’ (73%), *andare* ‘to go’ (71%), and *sapere* ‘to know’ (81%). As was the case for the governors (cf. Section 5.3.1.1), there is no

observable frequency effect here. *Essere*, *andare* and *sapere* all favour the subjunctive more than other lexical types even though each of them displays different frequency rates (%Data in Table 5.18 below). Other highly frequent embedded verbs in discourse, such as *avere* ‘to have’, do not favour the subjunctive. Moreover, of the 232 different embedded verbs, a single verb, *essere* ‘to be’, accounts for 40% of the pool of embedded verbs (%Data) and 42% of all subjunctive morphology (%Subj Morpho). A chi-square test of *essere* vs. other embedded verbs shows that there is a significant difference in their selection of the subjunctive ( $p$ -value .000228, significant at  $p < .01$ ).

Embedded Verb	%Subj	N	%Subj Morpho	%Data
<i>Essere</i>	73%	481/659	42%	40%
<i>Avere</i>	65%	98/150	9%	9%
<i>Potere</i>	67%	61/91	5%	5%
<i>Fare</i>	67%	48/72	4%	4%
<i>Dovere</i>	63%	35/56	3%	3%
<i>Andare</i>	71%	34/48	3%	3%
<i>Venire</i>	56%	25/45	2%	3%
<i>Stare</i>	53%	21/40	2%	2%
<i>Dire</i>	52%	11/21	1%	1%
<i>Volere</i>	47%	8/17	1%	1%
<i>Sapere</i>	81%	13/16	1%	1%
<i>Mettere</i>	58%	7/12	1%	1%
Others	67%	297/436	26%	27%
<b>Total</b>	<b>68%</b>	<b>1139/1663</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 5.18: Subjunctive selection according to lexical identity of the embedded verb.

Seven more verbs (*avere* ‘to have’, *potere* ‘to will’, *fare* ‘to do’, *dovere* ‘to have to’, *andare* ‘to go’, *venire* ‘to come’, and *stare* ‘to be/stay’) account for another 28% of subjunctive use, which together with *essere* makes up 71% of all the subjunctive in this data. This is a particularly interesting finding: when we took into consideration the contribution of the governors to subjunctive selection, we could ascertain that the subjunctive is productive to a certain degree since it is triggered by a relatively large number of verbs. However, the actual *marking* of the subjunctive is done on the embedded verb, and here we observe a restriction of

embedded verbs that take subjunctive morphology. This is an argument in favour of lexicalization of the subjunctive despite the relatively high overall rate, and suggests that the apparent productivity of the subjunctive is in fact due to some structural pattern that happens to be favourable to subjunctive selection. In fact, even though the use of the subjunctive is overall not constrained by semantic factors, it may still be productive as a structural feature, such as a marker of subordination. These results confirm that we cannot rely on the overall rate of the subjunctive as an exclusive measure of productivity. Evidence stemming from the structural conditioning, including type of embedded morphology, presence or absence of the complementizer, etc., allows us to ascertain whether the high number of governors is actually due to a productive structural pattern.

### 5.3.1.3.2 Morphology of the embedded verb

Tokens were also coded according to the morphological form the subjunctive assumes in the embedded clause. Some scholars observe that speakers might be losing the subjunctive in speech since, in regular forms, very often the difference between indicative and subjunctive morphology is a single vowel, e.g. *io metto*<sub>IND</sub> vs. *che io metta*<sub>SUBJ</sub> (Sgroi 2013; among others). This minimal distinction between the two morphologies might create confusion. On the one hand, given the complexity of verb endings in Italian, speakers may prefer more transparent and frequently-occurring indicative morphology (Santulli 2009; Sgroi 2013) rather than dealing with the subjunctive, defined by Stewart as a “linguistic colossus” (2002: 106), i.e. difficult to master.

On the other hand, more irregular/suppletive morphology differs maximally from its indicative counterpart, possibly making the subjunctive in irregular verbs more salient. For instance, Poplack et al. (2013) found that irregular/suppletive morphology was more likely to trigger subjunctive forms in Canadian French. This would suggest that the subjunctive is

maintained because of these salient forms and therefore strengthen the conclusion that the subjunctive is not semantically-motivated, but instead showing that it might be lexicalized. Moreover, if the subjunctive is becoming fixed as a sort of ‘discourse formula’ (Bonomi 1993; Gatta 2000; Schneider 1999), it follows that it would be favoured with more frequent and irregular forms, since these forms resist change and are more amenable to entrenchment (Bybee 1985; 2007; Bybee & Thompson 1997). Tokens were coded according to whether their morphological form was *regular*, *irregular*, or *suppletive*. Table 5.19 shows the coding protocol adopted for this factor group.

MORPHOLOGY OF THE EMBEDDED VERB	EXAMPLE
Suppletive	Comunque io penso che il grigio ghiaccio <i>sia</i> <sub>SUBJ</sub> (vs. <i>è</i> <sub>IND</sub> ) bellino. (COR.6.215) ‘Anyway I think that the light gray is also cute.’
Irregular	Se una persona non ha niente da fare, è bene pure che si <i>distragga</i> <sub>SUBJ</sub> . (vs. <i>distra</i> <sub>IND</sub> ) (COR.505.265) ‘If someone has nothing to do, it is also good that he be distracted.’
Regular	Ma è inevitabile che uno <i>metta</i> <sub>SUBJ</sub> (vs. <i>mette</i> <sub>IND</sub> ) un po’ di se stes- anzi molto di se stesso. (COR.202.195) ‘But it’s inevitable that one gives a bit of themselves- on the contrary gives it their all.’

Table 5.19: Types of morphology of the embedded verb.

I hypothesize that the more irregular the morphology (regular > irregular > suppletive), the more subjunctive should be selected.

Embedded Morphological Form	%	N
Suppletive	75%	515/691
Regular	65%	368/568
Irregular	63%	256/404
<b>Total</b>	<b>68%</b>	<b>1139/1663</b>

Table 5.20: Subjunctive selection according to morphological form of the embedded verb.

Table 5.21 shows that the subjunctive is favoured with suppletive forms while both regular and irregular forms display the same slightly disfavoured effect. However, the lexical identity of the embedded verb appears to override the effect of morphological form, as shown in

the following cross-tabulation, which reveals the central role of the verb *essere* and its suppletive forms.

	Suppletive		Regular		Irregular		Total	
	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N
<i>essere</i>	77%	431/560	0%	0/2	52%	50/97	73%	481/659
<i>avere</i>	66%	77/117	70%	21/30	0%	0/3	65%	98/150
<i>potere</i>	—	—	56%	18/32	73%	43/59	67%	61/91
<i>fare</i>	—	—	70%	21/30	64%	27/42	67%	48/72
<i>dovere</i>	—	—	50%	3/6	64%	32/50	63%	35/56
<i>andare</i>	14%	1/7	78%	7/9	81%	26/32	71%	34/48
<i>venire</i>	—	—	53%	9/17	57%	16/28	56%	25/45
<i>stare</i>	100%	1/1	0%	0/11	71%	20/28	53%	21/40
<i>dire</i>	—	—	56%	9/16	40%	2/5	52%	11/21
<i>volere</i>	—	—	50%	6/12	40%	2/5	47%	8/17
<i>sapere</i>	100%	5/5	67%	2/3	75%	6/8	81%	13/16
<i>mettere</i>	—	—	58%	7/12	—	—	58%	7/12
Others	0%	0/1	68%	265/388	68%	206/307	68%	297/436
<b>Total</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>515/691</b>	<b>65%</b>	<b>368/568</b>	<b>63%</b>	<b>256/404</b>	<b>68%</b>	<b>1139/1663</b>

Table 5.21: Cross-tabulation of embedded verb (*essere* vs. others) and morphological form. Dashes indicate that no data was available.

Based on the results in Table 5.21, we can see that the vast majority of suppletive forms (81%, N=560/691) belong to one lexical type, *essere*, whereas 87% of other verbs have regular and irregular morphology. With regards to the effect of these other verbs, we observe some lexical types favouring the subjunctive more with regular morphology (see *avere*, *fare*, *dire*, and *volere*), whereas others display the opposite effect (see *potere*, *dovere*, *stare* and *sapere*). Also, the supposed entrenchment of subjunctive with embedded *potere* (Santulli 2009) is not supported here since it reveals no substantial effect (67%), but instead shows an effect for type of morphology (irregular 73% vs. regular 56%). Overall, these findings do not fully confirm the saliency hypothesis, according to which the subjunctive would be more likely to be triggered with more irregular forms. However, the effect of *essere* in its suppletive form is undeniable, indicating the possibility of restriction and routinized use of the subjunctive.

With regards to any effect of fixed collocations, cross-tabulation of embedded morphology with lexical identity of the governor shows a higher rate of the subjunctive for almost all of the most frequent governors (with 50+ tokens), with the rate of occurrence skyrocketing in the cases of *pensare* (+24%), *non è* (+23%), *credere* (+22%) and *parere* (+20%). *Volere* and *bisognare*, which already show high rates of subjunctive selection, jump to 100% when the embedded morphology belongs to *essere*-suppletive forms. On the other hand, *dire* and the group of other governors do not show any substantial differences.

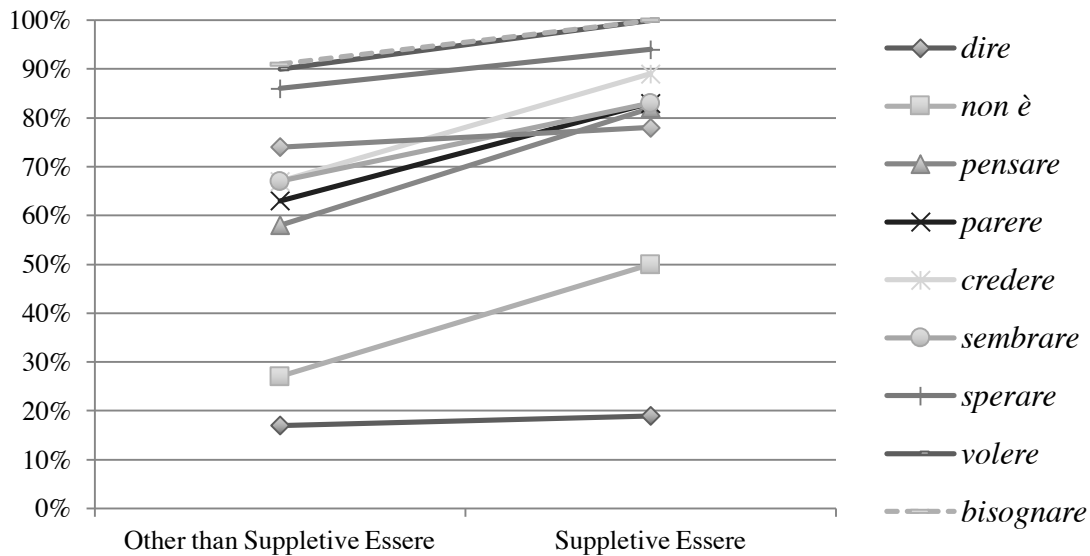


Figure 5.3: Subjunctive selection by governor according to lexical identity and morphology of the embedded verb.

This shows that governors are overall more likely to trigger the subjunctive with the very salient suppletive forms of *essere*. Even more telling, when we break down the 431 tokens of embedded *essere*, the vast majority of the data is of one form: *sia*.

Form	%	N
<i>sia</i>	77%	330
<i>fosse</i>	14%	62
Other forms	9%	39
<b>Total</b>		<b>431</b>

Table 5.22: Distribution of the forms carrying suppletive *essere* morphology.

All these results detract from the idea that the subjunctive has a semantic function; instead, they show its very routinized use in discourse. Moreover, while the subjunctive does seem productive if we consider only the contribution of the governors, this productivity is clearly not extendable to the embedded verbs. As suggested above, this contrast requires further investigation in order to establish whether the productivity of subjunctive morphology is also due to the contribution of other factors, as discussed in the ensuing sections.

### 5.3.1.3.3 Complementizer deletion

Before the modern linguistics period (1950s to present), the subjunctive was mainly seen as a morpho-syntactic device marking subordination (see Chapter 2; Harris 1974; 1978; Magni 2009). Our meta-linguistic analysis of the prescriptive approach to the subjunctive supports this assumption as well, at least until the 19<sup>th</sup> century. To further investigate whether subjunctive selection is promoted by syntactic factors, I investigated the presence/absence of the complementizer *che*, which is an explicit “universal, unmarked subordinator” in discourse (Lehmann 1988: 212). The presence/absence of the complementizer has also been operationalized in previous variationist research on French (Kastronic 2016; Poplack 1992; Poplack et al. 2013): results showed that the presence of the French complementizer *que* has a significant favouring effect on the selection of the subjunctive, providing evidence of the structural properties that underlie variability in subjunctive selection.

With regard to Italian, although the role of the complementizer has not been suggested as a factor strictly conditioning variability, it has been observed that the absence of *che* should be possible only with the subjunctive since it is the only mood explicitly marking subordination (Wandruska 1991). Also, the subjunctive favoured in the absence of *che* has been claimed to be a feature of Italian spoken in Florence (Cresti & Moneglia 2005; De Mauro 2017), though this

observation has not been tested empirically. The prescriptive take on the subjunctive also allows the subjunctive to be selected in the absence of the complementizer (Serianni 2006; among others), but this is attributed to a stylistic function rather than a linguistic one (Fulci 1855): when the subjunctive is used without *che*, it is thought to be a more elegant choice, mirroring the style of prestigious authors such as Boccaccio or Dante (Del Buono 1838; De Stefano 1842).

It follows that we can predict that omission of the complementizer should be more associated with the subjunctive than the indicative. Therefore, each token was coded according to the presence or absence of the complementizer *che*, as shown in Table 5.23.

COMPLEMENTIZER	EXAMPLE
Presence	Premetto una cosa <i>che</i> un buon artigiano <b>bisogna</b> <u><i>che</i></u> <i>sappia</i> <sub>SUBJ</sub> tante cose. Gl'è un'enciclopedia, un artigiano. (COR.322.194) 'Let me say first that a good craftsman needs to know lots of things. He's an encyclopedia, a craftsman.'
Absence	Perché un bon artigiano, un bon artigiano <b>bisogna</b> <u>Ø</u> <i>sappia</i> <sub>SUBJ</sub> i' disegno, per lo meno i tre disegni basilari. (COR.322.108) 'Because a good craftsman, a good craftsman needs to know the pattern, at least the three basic patterns.'

Table 5.23: Presence or absence of complementizer.

Results in Table 5.24 show that the absence of the complementizer favours the selection of the subjunctive, whereas the presence of the complementizer has no effect.

Complementizer	%	N
Absence	79%	192/242
Presence	67%	947/1421
<b>Total</b>	<b>68%</b>	<b>1139/1663</b>

Table 5.24: Subjunctive selection according to presence and absence of the complementizer *che*.

This finding supports *prima facie* the idea that the subjunctive embodies the function of a subordinating marker. However, it also goes in the opposite direction of what Poplack and her associates (1992; 2013) and Kastronic (2016) reported for French, where the presence of *que* significantly promotes the choice of the subjunctive.

The favouring effect of the absence of *che* in Italian implies that the subjunctive could be considered a structural marker of subordination that is sufficient to mark the embedded clause on its own. My results appear to support this structural hypothesis of the subjunctive being used to mark subordination with no necessity for a complementizer. However, only 16% of the data (242 tokens out of a total of 1663) occurred without *che*, indicating that this is not a very productive context overall. Therefore, this result is not sufficient in and of itself to confidently claim that the subjunctive is used as a mark of subordination. The 83% of subjunctive tokens that did occur with *che* requires further investigation in order to establish whether the effect of *che* is genuine. Table 5.25 shows that there is no consistent pattern when we analyze the rate of subjunctive according to complementizer deletion and lexical identity of the governor.

	Ø		CHE		TOTAL	
	%	N	%	N	%	N
<i>bisognare</i>	100	28/28	84	27/32	92	55/60
<i>sostenere</i>	100	1/1	38	3/8	44	4/9
<i>bastare</i>	100	5/5	43	9/21	54	14/26
<i>ritenere</i>	100	6/6	79	30/38	82	36/44
<i>non sapere</i>	100	1/1	25	3/12	31	4/13
<i>fare sì</i>	100	3/3	84	16/19	86	19/22
<i>è inutile</i>	100	1/1	43	3/7	50	4/8
<i>richiedere</i>	100	1/1	67	4/6	71	5/7
<i>volere</i>	100	4/4	92	55/60	92	59/64
<i>prevedere</i>	100	1/1	50	1/2	67	2/3
<i>fare in modo</i>	100	1/1	83	5/6	86	6/7
<i>preferire</i>	100	1/1	100	4/4	100	5/5
<i>l'importante è</i>	100	1/1	100	3/3	100	4/4
<i>chiedere</i>	100	1/1	100	17/17	100	18/18
<i>è facile</i>	100	1/1	100	3/3	100	4/4
<i>può essere</i>	100	3/3	100	1/1	100	4/4
<i>proporre</i>	100	1/1	100	3/3	100	4/4
<i>è probabile</i>	100	1/1	100	4/4	100	5/5
<i>lasciare</i>	100	1/1	100	5/5	100	6/6
<i>evitare</i>	100	1/1	100	4/4	100	5/5
<i>è giusto</i>	100	1/1	100	6/6	100	7/7
<i>augurare</i>	100	1/1	100	9/9	100	10/10
<i>è impossibile</i>	100	1/1	100	2/2	100	3/3
<i>pensare</i>	92	48/52	61	103/170	68	151/222
<i>sperare</i>	91	10/11	88	43/49	88	53/60
<i>parere</i>	78	7/9	70	39/56	71	46/65
<i>credere</i>	73	38/52	77	147/192	76	185/244
<i>sembrare</i>	72	18/25	75	82/110	74	100/135
<i>può darsi</i>	44	4/9	56	14/25	53	18/34
<i>immaginare</i>	50	1/2	42	5/12	43	6/14
<i>dire</i>	0	0/7	20	15/76	18	15/83
<i>ammettere</i>	0	0/1	80	4/5	67	4/6
<i>aspettare</i>	0	0/2	73	8/11	62	8/13
<i>essere convinto</i>	0	0/1	20	2/10	18	2/11
<i>è ovvio</i>	0	0/1	33	1/3	25	1/4
<i>avere l'impressione</i>	0	0/1	80	4/5	67	4/6
<i>non è</i>	0	0/1	32	53/167	32	53/168
<i>è chiaro</i>	0	0/1	20	1/5	17	1/6
<i>mettere</i>	0	0/1	100	5/5	83	5/6
<b>Total</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>192/242</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>743/1173</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>935/1415</b>

Table 5.25: Subjunctive selection by governors according to the presence and absence of *che*.

Only 28% (N=39/141) of governors omitted the complementizer at least once, whereas many of them select the subjunctive categorically regardless of presence of *che* (see *può essere*, *è*

*facile*, among others), though often these are singletons. A few governors show no substantial effect of complementizer presence (see *sembrare*). Also, only five governors make up 69% (N=168/242) of the tokens occurring *without* the complementizer: *pensare*, *sperare* and *bisognare* favour the subjunctive, *credere* disfavours the subjunctive, and *sembrare* has no substantial effect. If the effect of complementizer deletion were genuine, it should have applied across all governors with no restrictions or discrepancies such as those observed and illustrated here.

#### 5.3.1.3.4 Intervening material

The distance between the governor and the embedded clause was tested in previous variationist research in order to ascertain whether the presence of intervening material would impede the selection of the subjunctive (Kastronic 2016; Poplack et al. 2013; Poplack et al. 2017), under the assumption that the longer the distance between the clauses, the less likely it is that the speaker will remember the mood that the governor was supposed to trigger (see also Rohlf's 1969: 71). This hypothesis has never been investigated empirically with respect to Italian.

While previous quantitative studies reported that the subjunctive is promoted with adjacency of the main and the embedded clause, the required degree of adjacency fluctuates amongst researchers: Bonomi (1993), Gatta (2000) and Santulli (2009) reported cases of fixed chunks when there was no intervening material at all, whereas Schneider (1999) considered the main and embedded clauses to be adjacent even with a clitic or the adverb of negation *non* situated in between them. Rather than make ad hoc determinations of what *should* be considered as possible intervening material between the two clauses, I let my data suggest *what* actually intervenes between the two clauses. Each token was coded according to the presence or absence of intervening material according to a very detailed initial protocol whereby any type of

intervening element was noted. For instance, given that my data showed cases of pro-drop, I considered the presence of the personal pronoun of the embedded proposition to be an intervening element.

For quantitative purposes, all single syntactic elements, including embedded pronouns, negation markers, clitics, adverbs, and noun phrases were combined into one factor (syntactic element). Material longer than a single syntactic element, including parentheticals, pauses, and conjoined clauses, was combined into one factor as well (parentheticals). The combination of multiple elements was coded as a separate category. Tokens were also coded for absence of any intervening material. The condensed and final protocol is illustrated in Table 5.26.

INTERVENING MATERIAL	EXAMPLE
Syntactic	Eh invece <b>penso ora</b> tu c' <i>abbia</i> <sub>SUBJ</sub> parecchia esperienza. (COR.209.23) 'Huh instead I think now you have a lot of experience.'
Parenthetical	<b>Aevamo chiesto, com' era normale che fosse,</b> che l'amministrazione comunale prima <i>variassse</i> il regolamento e poi <i>facesse</i> <sub>SUBJ</sub> un'ordinanza. (COR.430.222) 'We asked, as we should have done, that the city council first change the regulation and then make an ordinance.'
Combination of the above factors or conjoined clauses	<b>Bisognava</b> l'accettassi, e a un certo punto, anche le <i>condividessi</i> <sub>SUBJ</sub> . (COR.315.34) 'I had to accept them and at a certain point I also had to share them.'
None	Premetto una cosa che un buon artigiano <b>bisogna</b> che <i>sappia</i> <sub>SUBJ</sub> tante cose. Gl'è un'enciclopedia, un artigiano. (COR.322.194) 'Let me say first that a good craftsman needs to know lots of things. He's an encyclopedia, a craftsman.'

Table 5.26: Types of intervening material considered in this study.

The prediction is that if there is no intervening material, the subjunctive has a greater chance of being selected, whereas any material intervening between the two clauses makes it less likely that the subjunctive should be selected. However, results displayed in Table 5.27 do not fully support this hypothesis.

<b>Intervening material</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>N</b>
Combination of factors	75%	33/44
Absence of element	71%	441/625
Syntactic element	67%	331/494
Parenthetical	67%	334/500
<b>Total</b>	<b>68%</b>	<b>1139/1663</b>

Table 5.27: Subjunctive selection according to presence of intervening material between the governor and the embedded clause.

We can observe that there is no substantial effect for any factor, with the exception of ‘combination of factors’ (75%), which patterns in an unexpected way if we consider the higher complexity in terms of intervening elements due to the combination of parentheticals, syntactic elements and pauses. While we expected that more intervening material would trigger less subjunctive, the results show that neither presence of a single syntactic element, nor presence of more material have any effect on selection of the subjunctive; in fact, no quantitative differences surface between these two factors at all (both 67%). Absence of any intervening material, at 71%, seems to favour the subjunctive more than the presence of syntactic elements or parentheticals (67%), though with such minor difference between rates we cannot draw any substantial conclusion on the effect. Summarizing, the evidence does not support the assumption that presence or absence of intervening material has any impact on the choice of the subjunctive, which leads me to also discard the hypothesis that its selection is a matter of ‘remembering’ the appropriate mood to select.

### 5.3.1.3.5 Grammatical person and tense of the governor

Another test to establish whether the subjunctive is getting entrenched as a specific discourse formula requires the operationalization of grammatical person as well as tense of the governor. Usage of the subjunctive with fewer grammatical persons or tenses would constitute a restriction of its usage, which therefore bolsters the idea that its use in discourse is fixed as

opposed to productive. Each token was coded according to grammatical person and tense of the governor, the most frequent of which are shown in the table below.

GRAMM. PERSON TENSE	EXAMPLE
1 <sup>st</sup> person singular Present Indicative	Eh invece <b>penso</b> ora tu c' <i>abbia</i> <sub>SUBJ</sub> parecchia esperienza. (COR.209.23) 'Huh instead I think now you have a lot of experience.'
2 <sup>nd</sup> person singular Present Indicative	Quanto tempo <b>pensi</b> <i>richiedano</i> <sub>SUBJ</sub> queste tue ricerche? (COR.024.75) 'How long do you think your research will take?'
3 <sup>rd</sup> person singular Imperfect Indicative	Lei <b>pensava</b> che <i>potesse</i> <sub>SUBJ</sub> essere interessante eh. (LIP.13.300) 'She thought that it could have been interesting eh.'
1 <sup>st</sup> person plural Past perfect progressive	<b>Avevamo chiesto</b> , com' era normale che fosse, che l'amministrazione comunale prima <i>variasse</i> <sub>SUBJ</sub> il regolamento e poi <i>facesse</i> <sub>SUBJ</sub> un'ordinanza. (COR.430.222) 'We asked, as we should have done, that the city council first change the regulation and then make an order.'
2 <sup>nd</sup> person plural Present indicative	Si comprano i voti questi partiti - come <b>volete</b> che <i>cambi</i> <sub>SUBJ</sub> ! (LIP.014.5343) 'Those parties would buy votes - how do you want it to change!'
3 <sup>rd</sup> person plural Past perfect progressive	Si però <b>avevano paura</b> che <i>diventasse</i> <sub>SUBJ</sub> proprio completamente cieca. (COR.002.566) 'Yes but they were afraid that she would really become completely blind.'

Table 5.28: Some examples of grammatical person and tense of the governor.

Thus, we analyze the cross-tabulation of grammatical person with lexical identity of the governor. This will enable us to ascertain whether the subjunctive is strongly favoured with the 1<sup>st</sup>-person singular, particularly with the governors that are reported in the literature to be susceptible to such an effect, i.e. *credere* and *pensare*.

	1 <sup>st</sup> Person Singular		Other		TOTAL	
	%	N	%	N	%	N
<i>credere</i>	78%	169/217	59%	16/27	76%	185/244
<i>pensare</i>	69%	116/167	64%	35/55	68%	151/222
<i>sperare</i>	83%	29/35	96%	24/25	88%	53/60
<i>non è</i>	—	—	32%	53/168	32%	53/168
<i>sembrare</i>	—	—	74%	100/135	74%	100/135
<i>parere</i>	—	—	71%	46/65	71%	46/65
<i>bisognare</i>	—	—	92%	55/60	92%	55/60
<i>volere</i>	93%	27/29	91%	32/35	92%	59/64
<i>dire</i>	18%	4/22	18%	11/61	18%	15/83
Other	71%	86/121	76%	336/441	75%	433/562
<b>Total</b>	<b>73%</b>	<b>431/591</b>	<b>66%</b>	<b>708/1072</b>	<b>68%</b>	<b>1139/1663</b>

Table 5.29: Subjunctive selection according to cross-tabulation of lexical identity of the governor and grammatical person.

Results displayed in Table 5.29 show that half of the governors (N=254/428) are made up of impersonal verbal forms, such as *sembrare*, *parere*, *bisognare* and the construction *non è*. These never occur in grammatical persons other than 3<sup>rd</sup>. Some personal verbs, such as *volere* and *dire*, show no effect. On the other hand, two highly frequent governors, *credere* ‘to believe’ and *pensare* ‘to think’, occur mainly with the 1<sup>st</sup>-person singular (*io* ‘I’). While the former shows an effect of grammatical person (78% with 1<sup>st</sup>-person singular vs. 59% other), the latter shows no substantial difference in rates of subjunctive selection (69% with 1<sup>st</sup>-person singular vs. 64% other). Both governors submitted to chi-square tests display no significant difference with regards to grammatical person ( $p < .01$ ). This is a surprising finding nonetheless. If we consider that *credere* mainly occurs in discourse with 1<sup>st</sup>-person singular and that this governor is the most frequent in discourse, we have further evidence of a lexicalized use of subjunctive in Italian. Contexts of grammatical persons other than 1<sup>st</sup>-person singular are rare overall and the tokens belonging to other grammatical persons are distributed across the five other linguistic contexts, resulting in low or singleton token counts for each of the grammatical persons.

Although the rationale behind the operationalization of grammatical person here is to ascertain the supposed fixed use of the subjunctive in discourse, we can also correlate grammatical person to a more semantic dimension: subjectivity/objectivity with regards to the uttered proposition. If we assume that the 1<sup>st</sup>-person singular is more subjective than other grammatical persons, i.e. since there is a higher degree of commitment by the speaker with respect to the truth of the embedded proposition, this would function as independent evidence of a semantic motivation underlying the variability observed in speech. Therefore, if the alternation between the subjunctive and the indicative are signaling a weaker and greater degree of speaker commitment, respectively, we should observe 1<sup>st</sup>-person singular favouring the indicative over

the subjunctive. However, the results reported above disconfirm this hypothesis: the situation described above makes it clear that the subjunctive conveys neither subjectivity nor objectivity.

Given the hypothesis that the subjunctive is becoming relegated to fixed subject-verb collocations, I turn now to an examination of highly-frequent combinations of grammatical person and tense, i.e. *credo*, *penso* and *sembra* (all present indicative forms, as reported by Schenider 1999). I compare the rate of subjunctive selection when these governors appear in these specific forms vs. when they appear in other collocations. If the subjunctive were favoured in quasi-fixed expressions, it should be favoured with *credo*, *penso* (both 1<sup>st</sup> person singular, present indicative), and *sembra* (3<sup>rd</sup> person singular, present indicative). However, results do not support this hypothesis. The subjunctive rate with *credo* ‘I believe’ and *penso* ‘I think’ are quite similar as the rate for these same governors in other collocations, and for *sembra* ‘it seems’, the rate of subjunctive selection is higher when the governor is *not* in the present indicative tense (Table 5.30).

<i>credo</i> (1PS, PRES.IND)		Other than <i>credo</i>		Total	
%	N	%	N	%	N
78%	128/165	72%	57/79	76%	185/244
<i>penso</i> (1PS, PRES.IND)		Other than <i>penso</i>		Total	
%	N	%	N	%	N
67%	90/134	69%	61/88	68%	151/222
<i>sembra</i> (1PS, PRES.IND)		Other than <i>sembra</i>		Total	
%	N	%	N	%	N
70%	71/102	88%	29/33	74%	100/135

Table 5.30: Comparison of the subjunctive rate of *credo*, *penso*, *sembra* (present indicative) vs. other tenses/grammatical persons.

These observations suggest that the use of the subjunctive in speech cannot be explained by its supposed entrenchment in any fixed expressions, as previously suggested. The role of the governor is certainly crucial and some governors are certainly highly frequent in discourse, but

the evidence at our disposal does not support the notion of formulaic use of the subjunctive with *credo*, *penso*, and *sembra*. In addition, if it were truly the case that the subjunctive was *mainly* used with these governors in discourse, we should have observed such a restriction in the tripartite analysis presented in Section 5.3.1.1. In other words, these three governors should have accounted for a large proportion of the subjunctive morphology used in discourse (i.e. similarly to *falloir*, *aimer* and *vouloir* in French, cf. Poplack et. al [2013]), which was not the case.

#### 5.3.1.4 Multivariate analysis

We make use of multivariate analysis to establish the statistical significance and the relative magnitude of effect for the above-mentioned factor groups when considered simultaneously. So far, each of the factor groups has been analyzed in turn, but the quantitative analysis using cross-tabulations showed many interactions and overlaps, leading to the conclusion that some effects are not independent. Prior to multivariate analysis, we first need to rectify the non-orthogonality revealed by the distributional results. The multivariate analysis assumes that each factor group has an *independent* effect, therefore has no interaction or overlap with other factor groups. In order to obtain the best analysis of variation, some factor groups were excluded from the analysis and others were reorganized to rectify the interactions and the overlaps described above.

First, *bisognare* was removed from the group of *necessity* verbs due to its apparent lexical effect and instead considered as a distinct factor within the factor group of semantic class of the governor. Lexical identity and morphology of the embedded verbs were both recoded and combined in one factor group, since they were interdependent and the effect of suppletive morphology was mainly related to the presence of suppletive-*essere* forms. In order to further confirm whether the effect is due to suppletive-*essere* forms and not the lexical identity of this

highly frequent embedded verb, the factor group is reorganized into three categories: suppletive *essere* forms, irregular *essere* forms and other morphological forms. With regards to sentence type, tokens of *non è* were excluded from the factor group of sentence type since the overall effect captured the contribution of the single governor rather than of sentence type. Presence of the complementizer *che* was also recoded: governors that categorically surfaced with *che* were excluded from this factor group. Finally, in order to avoid subdividing the data into too many cells, sentence type as well as presence of other indicators of non-factual modality and intervening material were all recoded into binary factor groups. The first resulted in affirmative vs. non-affirmative sentences and the last two in presence vs. absence of intervening material. The recoding schema is summarized in Table 5.31.

Factor Group	Factors
Semantic class of the governor	Emotive <i>Bisognare</i> Volitive Evaluative Opinion Necessity Communication = <i>Dire</i>
Morphology of the embedded verb	Suppletive <i>essere</i> Irregular <i>essere</i> Other
Presence of the complementizer	Presence Absence
Sentence type	Affirmative Non-Affirmative
Intervening material	Presence Absence
Indicators of non-factual modality	Presence Absence

Table 5.31: Summary of the recoded factor groups that were subjected to multivariate analysis.

Before diving into the results of the multivariate analysis (*GoldVarb*: Sankoff et al. 2015), some technical notions need to be clarified first. The *corrected mean* on top of Table 5.32

indicates the overall tendency for the subjunctive to be selected. The factor groups included in the table are those that were selected by the stepwise multiple regression procedure incorporated in GoldVarb as statistically *significant* contributors to variant choice. Each statistically significant factor is attributed a *factor weight* indicating the probability that the subjunctive will be selected in that specific context. The weight can vary from 0 to 1. The closer to 1, the more favourable that context to the selection of the subjunctive, and inversely. Factor weights are presented in descending order. Results also indicate the relative *magnitude of effect*, instantiated by the *range*, i.e. the difference between the highest and the lowest factor weight within the factor group. The higher the range, the greater the magnitude of that factor group's contribution to subjunctive selection.

<i>Corrected mean:</i>	0.746		
Total N	68% (1139/1663)		
	<b>p</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>N</b>
<b>“Semantic” class of the governor</b>			
Emotive	.84	93%	43/46
<i>Bisognare</i>	.81	92%	55/60
Volitive ( <i>≈volere, sperare, fare</i> )	.77	89%	201/225
Evaluative	.51	73%	16/22
Opinion ( <i>≈credere, pensare, sembrare, parere</i> )	.45	66%	787/1192
Necessity	.40	62%	21/34
Communication = <i>Dire</i>	.07	19%	16/84
<i>Range</i>	77		
<b>Morphology of embedded verb</b>			
Suppletive <i>essere</i>	.63	77%	431/560
Other irregular	.47	66%	290/438
Other regular	.42	65%	368/568
Irregular <i>essere</i>	.35	52%	50/97
<i>Range</i>	28		
<b>Presence of the complementizer</b>			
Absent	.59	79%	183/231
Present	.47	69%	613/892
<i>Range</i>	12		
<b>Sentence type</b>			
Non-affirmative	.57	74%	136/183
Affirmative	.49	72%	950/1312
<i>Range</i>	8		
<b>Intervening Material</b>			
Absent	[.51] <sup>37</sup>	71%	441/625
Present	[.49]	67%	698/1038
<b>Indicators of non-factual modality</b>			
Present	[.56]	75%	180/239
Absent	[.49]	67%	959/1424

Table 5.32: Multivariate analysis of the contribution of internal factors to subjunctive selection.

First of all, the subjunctive has a rather high overall likelihood of selection in speech, as shown by the relatively high *corrected mean* (.746) in Table 5.32 – this is unsurprising given its overall rate of 68%. Out of six factor groups submitted to GoldVarb, four of them demonstrate

<sup>37</sup> Results between brackets indicate that the factor group was not selected as significant.

statistically significant effects on variant choice: semantic class of the governor, morphology of embedded verb, sentence type, and presence of the complementizer *che*. The factor groups of intervening material and indicators of non-factual modality were not selected as significant.

With a range of 77, semantic class of the governor is by far the factor group with the most influence on variant choice, confirming the trend observed in the distributional analysis. The class of emotive verbs shows the highest probability (.84), followed by *bisognare* (.81) and volitive verbs (.77). Evaluative (.51), opinion (.45) and necessity verbs (.40) all lack any strong effect on subjunctive selection, while communicative verbs (=dire) disfavour it quasi-categorically (.07). The morphology of the embedded verb is the second most important factor group contributing a significant effect to subjunctive selection: suppletive *essere* forms (.63) favour the subjunctive more than other types of forms, whether these are irregular (.47), regular (.42) or irregular *essere* forms (.35), thus confirming the effect related to the highly salient forms of *essere* (mainly *sia*) in discourse. Presence of the complementizer *che* has only a range of 12; the absence of *che* favours the selection of the subjunctive (.59) more than presence of *che* does (.47). Finally, sentence type is the factor group with the lowest range (8), and therefore has the smallest effect on variant choice. Results show that non-affirmative contexts (.57) favour the subjunctive more than affirmative ones do (.49).

What does this all mean? Even though both semantic and structural factor groups were included in the statistical analysis, every factor group selected as significant to subjunctive selection in my dataset is mainly lexical and/or syntactic in nature. The factor groups that capture any semantic effect are either not significant (e.g. indicators of non-factual modality) or when they are, they capture the inherent lexical and syntactic nature of our linguistic variable (e.g. for most of the factors of semantic class of the governor).

An important observation surfacing from the statistical analysis is the primacy of governor semantic class of the governors. Despite its qualification as ‘semantic’, this factor group does not always genuinely capture a *semantic* effect, but rather a combination of both lexical and semantic effects. Thus, any apparent semantic motivation for subjunctive selection is shown to be an epiphenomenon of the lexical disproportions of the governors and their non-consistent effects across semantic categories such as opinion, evaluative and necessity verbs, or of the clear lexical effects for individual governors (i.e. *bisognare* for the class of necessity verbs; *dire* for the class of verbs of communication). Emotive and volitive verbs both are amongst the strongest predictors of variant choice and they both favour subjunctive selection. More importantly, as assessed in the distributional analysis (cf. Table 5.7), these are the only semantic categories that display a consistent effect from governor to governor within each category (i.e. all governors show consistently high or categorical rates of subjunctive selection), but it is important to remember that the emotive class is mainly made of highly infrequent and singleton governors, while the volitive class data is mainly concentrated under a few governors, i.e. *volere*, *sperare* and *fare*, which weakens the idea that this is a genuine semantic effect. Also, the extremely high range for the factor group of semantic class of the governor is due to the strong lexical effect of *dire* with verbs of communication, which quasi-categorically disfavours the subjunctive and can therefore be considered responsible for such high range.

Further weakening the case for the semantic nature of the subjunctive, the factor group of indicators of non-factual modality was not selected as significant. Summarizing, despite the label adopted in this study (i.e. semantic class of the governor) and the fact that this factor group is the strongest predictor of subjunctive, there is little quantitative and statistical evidence to support the hypothesis that the choice of the subjunctive as opposed to the indicative is mainly semantically-based; the only exception is the fact that two semantic classes, emotive and volitive verbs, do

seem to strongly favour the subjunctive. Although it is difficult to fully support the idea that only a small and specific portion of the data only contributing a handful of governors to the lexical pool would be affected by semantic conditions, this effect cannot be entirely ruled out at this stage. Nevertheless, this result suggests that the choice of the subjunctive cannot be considered a truly productive semantic effect but rather lexical. We could hypothesise that subjunctive use in Italian is undergoing desemanticization, and therefore that the restricted semantic effect observed in contemporary data could result from the weakening of a semantic motivation that was supposedly more productive in the past. I address this question empirically using diachronic data in the next chapter. In any event, in contrast to prescriptive and theoretical treatments of the subjunctive, which generally mandate unwavering categoricity of the subjunctive in these semantic contexts, here we observe variability. Results are strikingly different from the standard treatment of verbs marking necessity, for example, which ‘should’ take the subjunctive categorically: in my data, not only does this context show variation, it actually *disfavours* the subjunctive (.40).

The statistical results indicate that type of embedded form plays an especially important role in the variable system, particularly as concerns the suppletive forms of *essere*, which points to the possibility that the subjunctive has become lexicalized. The subjunctive is used mainly with this highly salient form and this form is far more frequent than other morphological forms. However, this result also contrasts with the idea that the subjunctive is truly productive since a productive use of the subjunctive should not have yielded such large statistical differences between suppletive *essere* forms and all other morphological forms.

Other results in support of the syntactic nature of the subjunctive include the effect of the complementizer and that of sentence type, albeit much smaller, since both these factor groups emphasize the preference for certain structural conditions such as absence of the complementizer

*che* and non-affirmative contexts. However, these two factor groups display the smallest ranges, indicating weaker effects overall, and presence or absence of intervening material – another structural factor – was not selected as significant at all. I interpret this in relation to my previous observations that the subjunctive is essentially promoted by mainly lexical factors, and to a lesser extent, syntactic: having intervening material between the clauses, even longer elements such as parentheticals, does not impede or deflect speakers from selecting a subjunctive.

The primary effect of the governor coupled with the use of the subjunctive with the especially salient forms of *essere* are above all the major predictors for subjunctive selection: a few governors account for most of the variation in discourse and much of the morphology itself consists of lexicalized suppletive forms of *essere*.<sup>38</sup> While the effect of suppletive *essere* forms suggests lexicalization and therefore a less productive use of the subjunctive morphology in speech, in contrast the rich set of governors seems to suggest fairly productivity. As a matter of fact, a high number of governors triggered the subjunctive in our data. However, as reported I report in the next section on the external factors, the high number of governors mainly stem from a more careful speech and highly educated speakers, suggesting that the subjunctive is *also* a device to convey linguistic prestige.

### 5.3.2 External factors

Mainstream formal linguistics tends to either discard variability altogether, or to associate use of the indicative in lieu of the subjunctive as a feature of sub-standard and/or regional Italian. Prescriptive treatments of the subjunctive occasionally depict the decline of this feature as a characteristic of central-southern speech, as well as of less educated and informal speech. Beyond the geographical differences, the subjunctive is also said to be a mark of careful speech (Bonomi

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<sup>38</sup> Though recall the high number of embedded verbs that surfaced in the variable context.

1993; Gatta 2000; Santulli 2009; Schneider 1999; Veland 1991) and recognized to be the *standard* choice (Giorgi & Pianesi 2004; Schmitt Jensen 1070; González de Sande 2004). Theoretical, descriptive, and prescriptive accounts of subjunctive variability lack systematic comparison and a quantitative corpus-based approach, often instead solely relying on casual observation and looking to the *standard* as the benchmark. Likewise, many quantitative studies lack systematic comparison of the underlying conditioning between casual vs. careful speech as well as across geographically-distinct datasets (Lombardi Vallauri 2003; Schneider 1999), instead using overall rates of the subjunctive to draw conclusions. Relying on rates in this way is inadvisable; the underlying conditioning of variability is far more stable and less subject to random fluctuation than rates, thus making it the better measure to compare datasets. The following sections present results according to five factors: geographical origin of the speakers, sex, age, level of education, and speech style (register).

### 5.3.2.1 Geographical origin of the speakers

The first external factor under analysis is the geographical origin of the speakers, where possible. Each token was coded according to whether the speaker originated from Milan, Florence, Rome, or Naples, which was indicated in both corpora. Whereas LIP is divided into four subsets corresponding to the above-mentioned cities, the informal subset of C-ORAL was recorded with speakers from Tuscany, while the formal subset amalgamated speakers from multiple regions. Where regional information was available in the formal subset of C-ORAL, tokens were coded according to this specific information, but this was rare. Therefore, a number of tokens remained not coded and not accounted for with respect to some of the external factors under study here (N=348). These were excluded from the analysis. Overall, 72% of the entire dataset was coded. More than half of the data in this portion of the study (59%) comes from the

Florence subset of the LIP corpus, while the remaining data (41%) is evenly distributed across the other three geographic subsets.

Recall that speakers from Rome and Naples are generally seen as being the most divergent from the ‘standard’ norm, and thus their use of the indicative over the subjunctive should be more advanced, in comparison with the subsets representing the northern varieties of Italian. In other words, speakers from Milan and Florence should use the subjunctive more frequently than those from Rome and Naples. Table 5.33 confirms this quantitatively: speakers from the southern regions use less subjunctive overall than the northern speakers. Naples further distinguishes itself from Rome, the other southern region, since speakers in that region select the subjunctive only half the time (53%).

City	%	N
Florence	75%	485/646
Milan	71%	162/228
Rome	60%	137/227
Naples	53%	114/214
<b>Total</b>	<b>68%</b>	<b>898/1315</b>

Table 5.33: Subjunctive selection for speakers originating from Florence, Milan, Rome, and Naples (Florence data from both C-ORAL and LIP; Milan, Rome, and Naples data exclusively from LIP).

But since overall rates of occurrence can be misleading for a number of different reasons, this study adopts the Comparative Variationist Method (Poplack & Tagliamonte 2001) and compares the underlying conditioning of subjunctive variability in each subset to that of the others. In order to establish whether the subjunctive is used differently in each region, there must be observable statistical differences in the constraint hierarchies for each subset. Such comparison enables us to ascertain whether subjunctive use has the *same patterns* across the four communities, and not simply whether it is used at the *same rate*.

Once the datasets are divided into geographical subsets, there is a considerably lower number of tokens per linguistic context, since the aggregate data is spread over four times as

many cells. This calls for caution when interpreting the results. I first report on the distributional pattern of the lexical governors across cities, and subsequently proceed with the multivariate analysis.

	<b>Florence</b>		<b>Milan</b>		<b>Rome</b>		<b>Naples</b>	
	75% 485/646		71% 162/228		60% 137/227		53% 114/214	
<b>Governor</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>N</b>
<i>volere</i>	97%	35/36	83%	10/12	83%	5/6	—	—
<i>bisognare</i>	96%	50/52	50%	2/4	—	—	100%	1/1
<i>sperare</i>	88%	22/25	78%	7/9	100%	5/5	100%	5/5
<i>credere</i>	83%	63/76	77%	20/26	73%	30/41	63%	31/49
other	77%	176/228	78%	80/102	68%	65/95	62%	49/79
<i>sembrare</i>	74%	42/57	86%	19/22	71%	12/17	50%	5/10
<i>pensare</i>	73%	57/78	81%	21/26	56%	14/25	47%	16/34
<i>non è</i>	52%	34/65	18%	3/17	14%	4/29	19%	6/31
<i>dire</i>	21%	6/29	14%	2/14	22%	2/9	20%	1/5

Table 5.34: Four parallel distributional analyses of the contribution of lexical governors to subjunctive selection in Florence, Milan, Rome, and Naples.

Despite differences in the overall rates for the selection of the subjunctive, results show largely the same constraint hierarchies in each of the four regions, although there are some peculiarities with respect to the distribution of lexical governors. Many differences arise due to the presence of little data (i.e. *sperare* across the four cities) or absence of a given governor in a given city (i.e. *volere* is not available in the Naples dataset). The most important finding concerns the role of *bisognare*. In the overall distribution (Table 5.4), it appears to be of middling frequency and selects the subjunctive almost categorically. When the data is divided according to the cities, 91% (N=52/57) of *bisognare* (78) belongs to the Florence subset. Likewise, almost half of the tokens for *pensare* (79) (44%, N=78/179) belong to the Florence subset as well.<sup>39</sup>

(78) Io, dice, bisogna l'abbia<sub>SUBJ</sub> a portata d'occhio.

<sup>39</sup> Tables of the distribution of the variants according to lexical identity of the governors divided by geographic subset can be found in Appendix D.

‘Me, he says, I need to have it in front of me.’

(79) Io penso veng<sub>SUBJ</sub> trecencinquanta euro.

‘I think it will cost three-hundred euros.’

The four parallel multivariate analyses shown in Table 5.36 support our results and confirm that overall the same linguistic conditioning is applied across geographic origins, rejecting the hypothesis of the supposed divergent linguistic behaviour of central/southern speakers. Although the overall probability for the subjunctive to be selected is greater for Florence and Milan than for Rome and Naples (*corrected mean* in Table 5.35), we notice for each region that the semantic class of the governor, as well as the morphology/lexical identity of the embedded verb and sentence type are all selected as significant.

	<b>Florence</b>			<b>Milan</b>			<b>Rome</b>			<b>Naples</b>		
<i>Corrected mean:</i>	<b>0.803</b>			<b>0.783</b>			<b>0.673</b>			<b>0.562</b>		
Total N	75% 485/646			71% 162/228			60% 137/227			53% 114/214		
	<b>p</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>p</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>p</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>p</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>N</b>
<b>“Semantic” class of the governor</b>												
<i>Bisognare</i>	.87	96%	50/52									
Emotive	.81	93%	15/16	K/O	100%	5/5	.62	78%	7/9	K/O	100%	5/5
Volitive	.74	90%	95/105	.69	86%	36/42	.86	91%	20/22	K/O	100%	13/13
Opinion	.42	66%	308/426	.52	70%	103/147	.47	59%	106/179	.51	49%	90/183
Necessity	.34	64%	7/11	.60	75%	12/16	.19	33%	2/6	.48	50%	2/4
Evaluative	.23	50%	3/6	K/O	100%	4/4	K/O	0%	0/2	.60	75%	3/4
Communication = <i>Dire</i>	.07	23%	7/30	.03	14%	2/14	.11	22%	2/9	.24	20%	1/5
<i>Range</i>	80			66			75			36		
<b>Morphology of embedded verb</b>												
Suppletive <i>essere</i>	.63	82%	163/199	.70	80%	67/84	.68	76%	57/75	.70	74%	53/72
Other	.44	72%	322/447	.38	66%	95/144	.41	53%	80/152	.39	43%	61/142
<i>Range</i>	19			32			27			31		
<b>Sentence type</b>												
Non-affirmative	.58	74%	49/63	.57	78%	25/32	.58	75%	12/16	.47	52%	12/23
Affirmative	.49	72%	402/518	.48	75%	134/179	.49	66%	121/182	.50	60%	96/160
<i>Range</i>	9			9			9			3		
<b>Presence of complementizer</b>												
Absent	.57	87%	123/142	[.46]	71%	15/21	[.46]	69%	9/13	[.33]	40%	6/15
Present	.49	72%	362/504	[.50]	71%	147/207	[.51]	72%	39/54	[.53]	59%	46/78
<i>Range</i>	8											
<b>Indicators of non-factual modality</b>												
Present	[.56]	78%	83/106	[.48]	69%	31/45	[.68]	78%	21/27	[.55]	63%	15/24
Absent	[.49]	74%	402/540	[.50]	72%	131/183	[.47]	58%	116/200	[.49]	52%	99/190
<b>Intervening material</b>												
Absent	[.63]	79%	201/254	[.43]	67%	56/83	[.52]	63%	52/83	[.53]	57%	52/91
Present	[.46]	72%	284/392	[.54]	73%	106/145	[.49]	59%	85/144	[.48]	50%	62/123

Table 5.35: Four parallel multivariate analyses of the contribution of internal factors to subjunctive selection in Florence, Milan, Rome, and Naples.

Shading indicates a shared effect.

The role of “semantic” class of the governor is the strongest predictor of mood choice across the board for all of the geographic subsets. The overall shared trend sees emotive and volitive matrices favouring the subjunctive more than other classes. Likewise, the subsets all share the same lack of effect with verbs of opinion, though in the case of Florence the effect is more disavouring than truly neutral. The verb of communication *dire* ranks as the least favourable governor for all geographic subsets. Nonetheless, despite fluctuations likely due to low token counts, the constraint hierarchy is virtually identical across the board.

The morphology of the embedded verb is the second most important factor group for each geographic subset, and within this factor group, the constraint hierarchy has the same ordering in each subset, i.e. suppletive forms of *essere* favour the subjunctive more than other forms. However, although morphology of the embedded verb ranks in second position in the constraint hierarchy for all subsets, the difference between the magnitude (range) of the first factor group and the second is far greater in Florence than in the other three subsets, suggesting that the lexicalization of the subjunctive with the highly salient forms of *essere* may be more advanced for non-Florentine speakers. However, this difference in the Florence data stems from the much greater importance of semantic class of the governor, which in turn is caused by the presence of *bisognare*.

Of much lesser importance for all cohorts is sentence type, though here we see a slight deviation in the within-group direction of effect for the Naples subset. Whereas the subsets of Florence, Milan, and Rome all favour the subjunctive in non-affirmative contexts rather than in affirmative ones, this effect in Naples is essentially nonexistent (see range=3 in Table 5.35). Nonetheless, there is a clear-cut difference in terms of importance of the factor groups amongst

all the cities: the governors and the embedded morphology exert the greatest effects on variant choice, whereas all other significant factor groups contribute very little to variant selection.

The effect of the complementizer *che* is significant only for Florence. With regards to the constraint hierarchy, in Milan, Rome, and Naples, the subjunctive is favoured with the presence of *che*, whereas the favouring effect of the absence of *che* is specific to Florence. Setting aside the significance of this factor group for the moment, the shared hierarchy suggests that the subjunctive in completive clauses is generally favoured with the marker of subordination *che*, whereas the counterintuitive pattern that we observe for the absence of *che* must be a regional feature of Florence.

The last two factor groups, intervening material and indicators of non-factual modality, are not significant contributors across the board but incidentally, the within-group constraint hierarchies are parallel for Florence, Rome and Naples: the subjunctive is favoured more in the absence of intervening elements between the main and the embedded clause as well as in the presence of an indicator of non-factual modality.

In summary, despite differences in overall rates of selection and corrected means, *prima facie* suggesting a substantial difference in terms of subjunctive use, speakers do largely follow the same linguistic conditioning overall. This effectively debunks the common assumption that the linguistic behaviour of Rome and Naples is *maximally* different from other regions. As previously reported in the multivariate analysis of internal factors (Section 5.3.1.4), variability is constrained by lexical and syntactic factors across the board. Once again, the only effect that could be taken as empirical proof of semantically motivated subjunctive choice is with regards to volitive and emotive verbs, which both display a consistent effect amongst the governors that make up these two semantic categories: with the exception of the class of emotive verbs in Rome,

these verbs consistently trigger categorical or quasi-categorical rates of the subjunctive regardless of region. As discussed at length above, one may ask whether this effect should then be considered a genuine, though restricted, semantic effect and whether the contemporary data shows desemanticization. We address these issues later through diachronic analysis of Italian and VL, in addition to discussing these results as regards the historical evolution of semantic classes.

### 5.3.2.2 Age

Using the apparent time method, we can ascertain whether linguistic change may have occurred using the differences in patterns between age groups (Chambers & Trudgill 2004: 149; also Labov 1966; Bailey et al. 1991; Sankoff 2006). This method relies on the assumption that linguistic patterns remain stable across the lifespan, and in the absence of a real-time comparison (the same speech community in two different points in time), we can assess change based on the *critical period hypothesis* (Lenneberg 1967; see also Sankoff & Blondeau 2007). Under this hypothesis, older generations provide a window into the grammar as it would have been at the time they acquired it, whereas younger generations reflect a more recent state of the grammar, including any changes it may have undergone. If the subjunctive is undergoing loss, we can predict that younger speakers would use fewer subjunctives than older speakers.

As indicated in Chapter 2, the LIP corpus does not provide any socio-demographic information about the participants other than the geographic origin, therefore it was not possible to code our tokens according to the age of the speaker when these belonged to LIP. On the other hand, C-ORAL does provide socio-demographic information about the participants. The corpus does not indicate the exact age of the speaker but instead amalgamates them into four pre-determined age groups: 18-25, 25-40, 40-50, and 60+. However, 11% of the data of C-ORAL remains silent as to age. Moreover, most of the data coded for socio-demographic information

belongs to the Florence subset. Therefore, the following results are taken exclusively from the speech community of Florence.

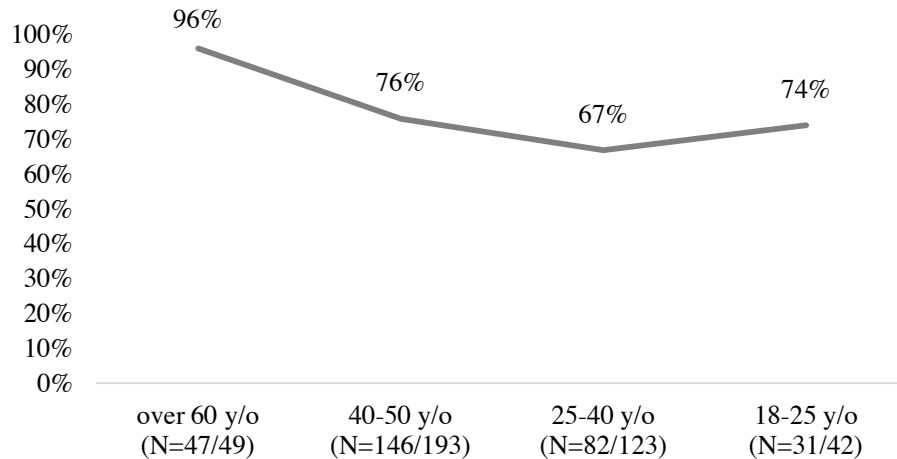


Figure 5.4: Subjunctive selection according to age groups available in C-ORAL (Florence subset).

We can observe from Figure 5.4 that older speakers (60+) favour the subjunctive more than younger speakers, which *prima facie* would suggest a change in progress. The data were submitted to a chi-square test and results show that no significant differences (at  $p < .01$ ) are found with regards to the three younger age groups (18-25, 25-40, and 40-50), whereas a significant difference is found with regards to the group of speakers aged 60+. However, this could be explained by the unbalanced distribution of two lexical types, which has the effect of inflating the overall rate of subjunctive for the 60+ age group:

- (a) *Bisognare* accounts alone for 40% of all these tokens and displays a categorical rate of subjunctive selection (100% N=20/20);
- (b) *Non è* only occurs only six times in this age group and, contra to what has been observed above, it displays a categorical rate of subjunctive (N=6/6).

Summarizing, the only significant difference between age groups sets the oldest age group apart from all the others, but the low number of tokens and consequent inflation of overall rates does not allow for any important conclusions to be drawn as far as a supposed change.

### 5.3.2.3 Sex

Another indicator of a change in progress often used in sociolinguistic research is sex. Since women generally lead change from below (Labov 2001), we would expect them to favour the more innovative but non-standard form, i.e. the indicative. However, women also lead change from above in cases where a given form is imbued with linguistic prestige. Therefore, given that the subjunctive may have become a sociolinguistic stereotype of prestige, women might instead use the subjunctive at higher rates than men (2001: 274).

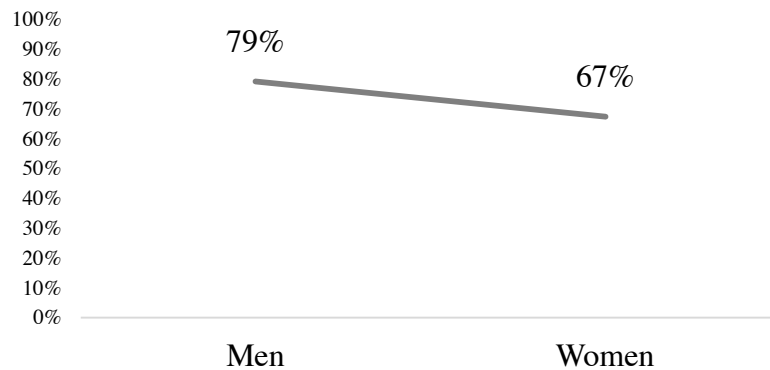


Figure 5.5: Subjunctive selection according to sex in C-ORAL, Florence subset.<sup>40</sup>

A first look at the results (Figure 5.5) shows that women use the subjunctive *e* at a lower rate than men. In fact, if we consider age and sex simultaneously, we observe that there is no change in subjunctive selection according to age+sex (Figure 5.6).

<sup>40</sup> The overall rate of the subjunctive is 75% (N=316/422).

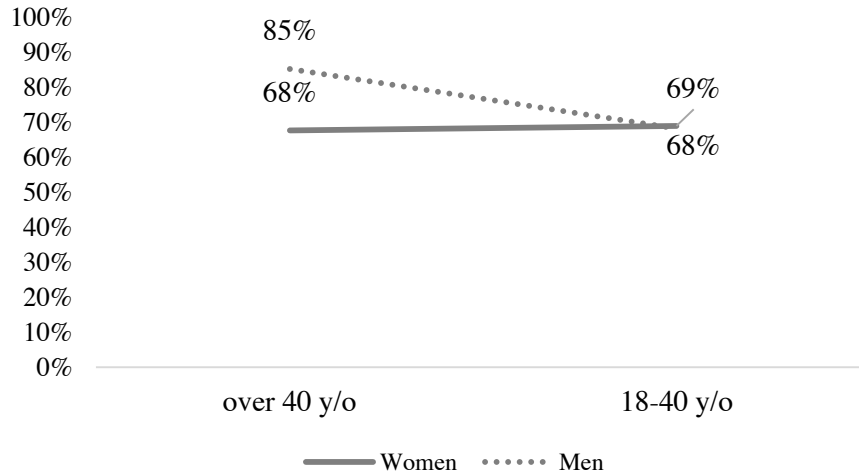


Figure 5.6: Rate of subjunctive selection according to sex and age (divided into <40 and >40) in C-ORAL (Florence subset).<sup>41</sup>

In other words, women have completely stable rates of subjunctive selection regardless of age, whereas men seem to be subject to an effect of age: older men seem to favour the subjunctive more than younger men. However, this may be due to the situation reported in Section 5.3.2.2 above: the categorical subjunctive selection by *bisognare* and *non è* might be inflating the results for men, whereas no such effect occurs in the data for women.

In conclusion, sex and age do not seem to reveal any clear change in progress. According to the apparent-time measure, the subjunctive seems to be a stable variable, at least in the speech community of Florence – the only speech community for which the relevant socio-demographic information was available. Whether a change in real time has occurred is investigated in Chapter 6.

<sup>41</sup> In order to avoid scattering the data amongst too many contexts, I collapsed the age categories into a binary factor group, above and below 40 years old.

### 5.3.2.4 Level of education

The subjunctive is a feature associated with standard Italian and, even when grammar books recognize variability with the indicative, the subjunctive is seen as the more elegant and educated choice (Serianni 2006). As reported in Chapter 1, failing to select the subjunctive can invite mockery and ridicule. Therefore, we would expect that speakers with a higher level of education would adhere to the ‘norm’ and show higher rates of the subjunctive than those with little or no level of formal education. Recall that the corpus used in this study (C-ORAL) is mainly populated by speakers with higher level of education (80% of the tokens of this factor group belong to the highest subset on the education scale); consequently, the results for this factor group should be taken with a grain of salt. I expect speakers with a higher level of education to use *substantially* more subjunctive than speakers with little or no education.

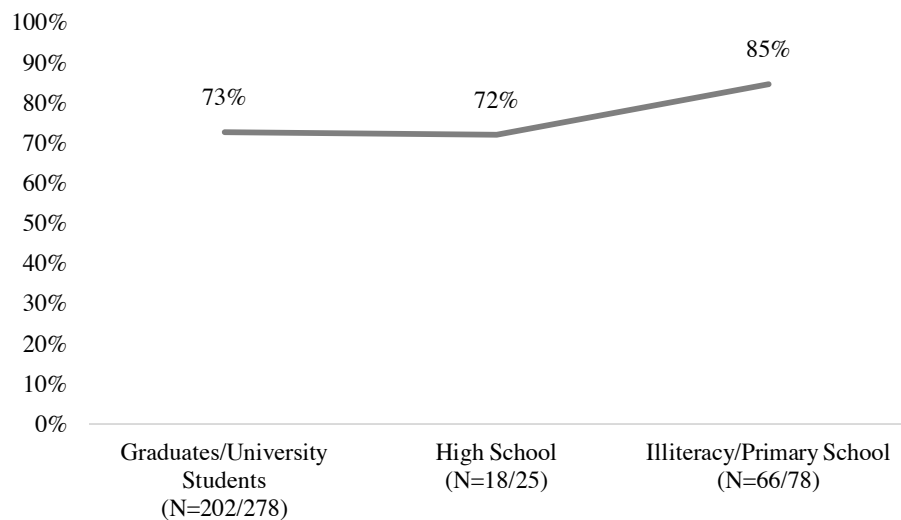


Figure 5.7: Subjunctive selection according to level of education in C-ORAL (Florence subset).

Based on the overall results in Figure 5.7, my hypothesis is not confirmed. On the contrary, level of education seems to affect variant choice in a counter-intuitive way: the group that uses more subjunctive than the others is the one of speakers with little or no formal

education. I defer discussion of this issue until Section 5.3.3, when I report on the productivity of the subjunctive in speech and the correlation between the governors and level of education.

### 5.3.2.5 Speech style

The assumption that the use of the subjunctive in Italian is associated with more careful speech is frequently reiterated in the literature, although this is based on casual observation rather than supported by comparative systematic analysis. In contrast, the data in both LIP and C-ORAL offers us the opportunity to test this hypothesis empirically using the different stylistic subsets available in each corpus: the casual speech data comes from the LIP type A section (informal face-to-face conversation) and the C-ORAL informal/familiar section; careful speech data comes from the formal sections of both LIP and C-ORAL. A first observation of the overall results shown in Figure 5.8 is that the hypothesis according to which the subjunctive is preferred in more formal contexts is not fully supported, since informal and formal subsets differ only minimally, albeit in the right direction.

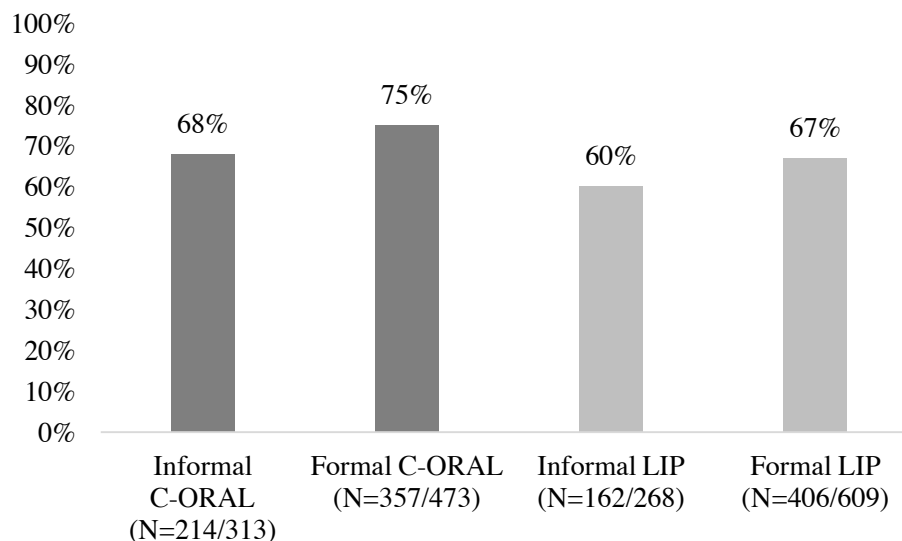


Figure 5.8: Subjunctive selection according to speech style (informal/formal) in C-ORAL and LIP.

As observed with level of education, speech style does not seem to make a great contribution at first glance, at least to the extent expected for a salient feature that is apparently imbued with linguistic prestige. However, a look at the contribution of the governors shows some interesting results. First, we look at the distribution of the subjunctive by governors according to speech style (Table 5.36).

	Casual Speech		Careful Speech		Total	
	%	N	%	N	%	N
<i>credere</i>	78%	43/55	75%	142/189	76%	185/244
<i>pensare</i>	75%	57/76	64%	94/146	68%	151/222
<i>non è</i>	33%	34/103	29%	19/65	32%	53/168
<i>sembrare</i>	77%	44/57	72%	56/78	74%	100/135
<i>dire</i>	20%	2/25	17%	10/58	18%	15/83
<i>parere</i>	58%	15/26	79%	31/39	71%	46/65
<i>volere</i>	82%	14/17	96%	45/47	92%	59/64
<i>bisognare</i>	95%	40/42	83%	15/18	92%	55/60
<i>sperare</i>	92%	12/13	87%	41/47	88%	53/60
<i>ritenere</i>	100%	3/3	80%	33/41	82%	36/44
<i>può darsi</i>	59%	10/17	47%	8/17	53%	18/34
<i>bastare</i>	50%	6/12	57%	8/14	54%	14/26
<i>fare sì</i>	75%	3/4	89%	16/18	86%	19/22
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>63%</b>	<b>286/450</b>	<b>66%</b>	<b>518/777</b>	<b>65%</b>	<b>803/1227</b>
Infrequent	65%	75/116	78%	207/267	74%	283/383
	(48 Infrequent governors)		(69 Infrequent governors)		(76 Infrequent governors)	
Singletons	100%	15/15	100%	38/38	100%	53/53
<b>Total</b>	<b>65%</b>	<b>376/581</b>	<b>71%</b>	<b>763/1082</b>	<b>68%</b>	<b>1139/1663</b>

Table 5.36: Subjunctive selection according to style and lexical identity of the governor.

Based on the results in Table 5.36, tokens of casual speech show greater lexical restriction compared to the data of more careful speech: 50% of the casual speech data is accounted for by only four lexical governors. This situation mirrors the one described in the main general analysis of the subjunctive with respect to the disproportions of the data across governors in the entire dataset. Not only do *credere*, *pensare*, *sembrare*, and *bisognare* favour the subjunctive, but they also account for 32% of the casual speech data (N=184/581) and almost half of the subjunctive used in informal situations (49%, N=184/376, cf. total subjunctives in

casual speech in Table 5.36). This is an important result for the question of productivity since it shows a less productive use of the subjunctive in casual speech. Also, the governor *non è* takes up a large portion of the casual speech dataset and since it highly disfavours the subjunctive (34%, N=35/104), it lowers the overall rate of subjunctive selection for this dataset. Likewise, *bisognare* reveals itself to be a feature of casual speech (although only in Florence data), whereas it is scarcely observed in careful speech. *Crede* and *pensare* favour more subjunctive in casual speech while the opposite is true for *sembrare* and *parere*.

Despite these fluctuations of the effect of style by governors, chi-square tests indicate that no statistically significant difference (at  $p < .01$ ) is observed, whether the lexical types listed in Table 5.37 are used in casual or careful speech.<sup>42</sup> If we calculate rates of subjunctive selection by excluding infrequent governors and singletons (see sub-total in Table 5.36), we end up with almost no difference between the two speech styles ( $p$ -value=.269166, not significant at  $p < .01$ ).

On the other hand, there is a substantial difference between the categories of infrequent governors and singletons according to speech style. We observe a greater number of singleton governors in careful speech. Likewise, we notice that the overall rate of the subjunctive for the infrequent governors is considerably higher in more careful speech, and this difference in rates is significant at  $p < .01$  ( $p$ -value=.008612). If we consider these infrequent governors, not only is the overall rate of subjunctive selection greater in careful speech but the amount of subjunctives is almost three times bigger in the least ‘natural’ way of speaking (cf. Table 5.36). This seems to suggest that speakers may be more sensitive to the overt prestige that subjunctive has acquired in contemporary Italian and therefore triggering it *more* than in casual conversations. If we consider that most of the variation in speech is accounted for by governors of high and medium frequency

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<sup>42</sup> Except for *ritenere*, which shows a categorical rate of occurrence and cannot be tested.

(displayed in Table 5.36), it is clear that the apparent productivity is attributed to highly infrequent governors and singletons surfacing more frequently in careful speech.

### 5.3.3 A window into productivity

With such a large pool of governors (N=141 lexical types), the Italian subjunctive could be deemed productive overall, but the larger proportion of different governors in careful speech (120 governors, vs 76 in casual speech; cf. Table 5.36) might be because careful speech calls for a richer or possibly more esoteric vocabulary. This might also suggest that lexical diversity is more sensitive to speech context, since our [+formal] data subsets were recorded in a relatively wide variety of contexts, ranging from political debates, oral university exams, television interviews, etc., with each focusing on a different topic, though all are characterized by more careful speech production and possibly more complex and florid argumentation. Nonetheless, as displayed above, the majority of variation is not accounted for by a stylistic difference. Results showed that 74% (N=1227/1663) of the data belongs to the 13 governors displayed in Table 5.36 above and, more importantly, there were no substantial differences regardless of whether they were used in casual or careful speech. How can we explain such contrasts?

An interesting result surfaces from the cross-tabulation of speech style and level of education of the speakers.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> This sub-analysis was possible only for the corpus C-ORAL (2005).

		Level of Education			Total
		High	Medium	Low	
Casual Speech	%Subj	66%	61%	79%	70%
	N	(117/176)	(19/31)	(68/86)	(204/293)
	N_Govs	<b>44</b>	15	20	51
Careful Speech	%Subj	74%	100%	—	74%
	N	(264/357)	(7/7)	0	(271/364)
	N_Govs	<b>64</b>	5	0	64
Total	%Subj	71%	68%	79%	72%
	N	(381/533)	(26/38)	(68/86)	(475/657)
	N_Govs	<b>83</b>	17	20	87

Table 5.37: Number of governors and rate of subjunctive according to speakers' level of education.

Table 5.37 shows that highly educated speakers are contributing extensively to the pool of governors with a rich set of lexical types, most of which are infrequent governors or singletons, i.e. lexical types where the apparent productivity was observed. This result is consistent with the observation that the subjunctive is a linguistic stereotype in contemporary Italian society. If there is one segment of the population that would be very sensitive to this highly normative and salient feature, we would expect it to be the one of speakers with a higher level of education.

If the subjunctive were truly productive, we should have observed more of it in the vernacular of the speakers regardless of their level of education. On the contrary, we notice that the speakers with little or no formal education do not use the subjunctive in casual conversation to the extent that highly educated speakers do. More importantly, Table 5.37 shows a substantial difference in terms of the governor pool for each subset: highly educated speakers are almost single-handedly providing the rich set of governors observed in our quantitative analysis. Although we notice a general preference for the subjunctive in more careful speech, speakers with a higher level of formal education contribute a greater number of governors even in their casual speech. This link between productivity and level of education suggests that speakers make

the effort to use the subjunctive, and thereby to convey the linguistic prestige that the subjunctive has gained in contemporary Italian society.

Further evidence for this hypothesis is provided by the speakers that *never* used a subjunctive in their discourse. In addition to the 204 speakers from C-ORAL that I reported on, another 143 speakers never used a subjunctive in their speech, and consequently had to be excluded from this study (Table 5.38). However, if we examine the tendency to use any subjunctive at all relative to level of education (where this information was available), we observe that almost half of lower-education speakers never used a subjunctive (49%, N=35/72, in Table 5.38), but only one-third of speakers with a higher level of education avoided the subjunctive categorically (33%, N=33/183, in Table 5.38).

	Level of Education						Total N of Speakers
	Lower		Higher		Unknown		
	%	N	%	N	%	N	
Used a subjunctive	51%	37	67%	122	49%	45	204
Never used a subjunctive	49%	35	33%	61	51%	47	143
<b>Total</b>		<b>72</b>		<b>183</b>		<b>92</b>	<b>347</b>

Table 5.38: Distribution of subjunctive usage patterns according to level of education.

As stated above, the apparent productivity of the subjunctive that has been observed in this data mainly surfaces from infrequent governors and singletons, and these types are mainly used by higher-educated speakers. When we look at the rate of the subjunctive according to governor frequency categories (Table 5.39), we notice that the category of infrequent governors favours the subjunctive at higher rates than high- and mid-frequency categories. Moreover, these categories appear to have no effect on subjunctive selection at all (the former 64%, the latter 67%). These results bolster our observation that the apparent higher productivity entirely stems from the least frequent contexts.

<b>Frequency category</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>N</b>
High frequency	64%	489/769
Mid-frequency	67%	371/555
Infrequent	79%	226/286
Singletons	100%	53/53
<b>Total</b>	<b>68%</b>	<b>1139/1663</b>

Table 5.39: Subjunctive selection according to frequency categories of the governors.

Although singletons do not enable us to look at variability, when we analyze how the subjunctive is distributed across certain linguistic factors, some interesting results surface nonetheless. First, when singleton governors are contrasted with non-singleton governors, we can see that there is a difference between the two with suppletive-*essere* forms (Table 5.40).

<b>Morphology</b>	<b>Singletons</b>		<b>Non-Singletons</b>	
	<b>%</b>	<b>N Tokens</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>N Tokens</b>
Suppletive <i>essere</i>	41%	22/53	33%	538/1610
Irregular <i>essere</i>	2%	1/53	6%	96/1610
Other suppletive	—	—	8%	131/1610
Irregular	21%	11/53	18%	296/1610
Regular	36%	19/53	34%	549/1610

Table 5.40: Distribution of embedded morphology according to singletons and non-singletons.

Secondly, singletons never omit the complementizer, hinting at a stronger syntactic link where the canonical context for the selection of subjunctive (with the formal marker of subordination *che*) is entirely respected. We also observe a greater use of *che* with infrequent governors as well (Table 5.41).

	<b>Complementizer <i>che</i></b>	
	<b>%</b>	<b>N Tokens</b>
High frequency	60%	385/639
Mid-frequency	65%	300/465
Infrequent	79%	209/264
Singletons	100%	53/53
<b>Total</b>	<b>66%</b>	<b>947/1421</b>

Table 5.41: Rates of complementizer *che* according to the frequency categories of the governors.

This means that the lexical and syntactic patterns for the contribution of the governor, of the high salient suppletive forms of *essere*, and of the presence of *che*, is strengthened in highly

infrequent contexts, and by extension in highly educated speakers. The evidence at our disposal confirms that the productivity of the subjunctive stems from its use as a subordination marker, to a greater degree for highly educated speakers wanting to convey the linguistic prestige associated with it.

#### **5.4 Conclusions**

By making use of an accountable methodology, the analysis of the subjunctive in spoken contemporary Italian has revealed some interesting trends and enabled us to address some major research questions. First, the widespread contemporary assumption that semantic conditioning is responsible for subjunctive selection was not fully supported: objective and independent tests showed a highly structured pattern of variability, largely supporting a lexical and syntactic conditioning. The quantitative examination of the factor groups, some of which were designed to directly test the semantic/pragmatic hypotheses, showed that overall rates were mainly affected by the presence of numerous governors within each semantic category and most of the time showed an inconsistent effect, e.g. fluctuation in subjunctive rates. This casts doubt on the supposed influence of such factors on the selection of subjunctive. Only two semantic labels (emotive and volitive verbs) showed a consistent effect, though the authenticity of this effect is challenged by the relatively small number of tokens to which this purported semantic effect applies (N=271/1663, 16% of the entire dataset). Also, as reported in Section 5.3.1.2, most of the governors belonging to these two semantic categories are either very infrequent or singletons, which further precludes me from drawing any strong conclusions with regards to this effect. I leave the door open for further discussion once we review the results of the diachronic analysis.

Not only have the semantic factors tested in this study been perpetuated in the prescriptive literature since the 19<sup>th</sup> century, but they continue, in one guise or another, to inform

current treatments of subjunctive variability. When the reader is confronted with theoretical models of mood variation, the widespread tendency is either to discard variability *in toto* or to acknowledge only a few cases by ascribing a semantic shift to usage of one variant or the other, interspersed with rare cases where variation is “sometimes marginally accepted” (Giorgi & Pianesi 1997: 218). Previous quantitative research also based their contexts of study entirely on what the speaker is *supposed* to do, per prescriptive literature. However, the chaotic state of grammatical prescription for the subjunctive, highlighted in Chapter 2, suggests that it is virtually impossible to rely on normative expectations in order to select the appropriate set of *governors* and *meanings* to consider as part of the variable context. Even semantic classes that are generally considered as categorical contexts for the selection of the subjunctive, operationalized here as *emotive*, *necessity*, and *volitive* verbs, provided some surprises in naturalistic data: despite relatively high rates of the subjunctive, variability characterizes these categories as well. Even *necessity*, a wellspring of subjunctive use, showed a clear lexical effect due to the presence of *bisognare*, reinforcing the importance of the lexical identity of the governors rather than some semantic aspect underlying each governor.

With quantitative results in hand, we can conclude that the pattern conditioning subjunctive variability in Italian is in fact largely lexical and syntactic. Although we are far from the dramatic situation observed in French completive clauses, Italian does show, to some degree, lexically routinized use of the subjunctive in discourse, with a handful of governors accounting for most of the variation and the subjunctive marked to a great extent on a single embedded form, i.e. suppletive *essere*. Moreover, sentence type (i.e. non-affirmative contexts) and complementizer (i.e. presence of *che*, except for Tuscan speakers) both contribute to variant choice as well – though to a lesser extent. These results are supported by both distributional and

statistical evidence, and they bolster previous observations according to which the Italian subjunctive is strongly constrained by syntactic and lexical factors (Poplack et al. 2018).

	<i>Meaningful variation</i>	<i>Meaningless variation</i>
Semantic Class of the Governor	Possibly with <i>emotive</i> and <i>volitive</i> verbs	✓
Lexical Identity of the Governor	Possibly with <i>emotive</i> and <i>volitive</i> verbs	✓
Sentence Type	✗	✓
Lexical Identity of the Embedded Verb	✗	✓
Morphology of the Embedded Verb	✗	
Presence of the Complementizer	✗	✓

Table 5.42: Summary of the results.

Notwithstanding limitations imposed by the data itself, the analysis of the parallel conditioning on variability across four geographical subsets demonstrated that a virtually identical pattern characterizes the selection of the subjunctive across the four regions, contra the widespread assumption that central/southern Italian would differ *maximally* from northern varieties of Italian. While overall rates of occurrence showed that the subjunctive *is* less frequent among Roman and Neapolitan speakers, aside from a small number of peculiarities or ‘regionalisms’, the underlying conditioning for all regions is very similar. The role of *bisognare* qualifies as a regionalism since it characterizes the cohort of Florentine speakers, whereas it is virtually absent elsewhere. Moreover, the Florentine speakers display a favouring effect of absence of the complementizer, while for all other three cities this trend is inversed. Despite these few differences, the governors and the embedded suppletive-*essere* forms play a distinct role in all subsets. When these two factor groups are compared to other significant factor groups,

we can confirm that they contribute the greatest effects, displaying the highest ranges across the board. With the possible exception of emotive and volitive matrices, in general, the underlying conditioning emphasizes the lexicalization of the subjunctive and its role as a subordinator in discourse across cities (the subjunctive is in fact selected independently of any intervening material between the main and the embedded clauses as well as of semantic motivations).

Apparently mitigating this lexicalization is the fact that the subjunctive looks very productive on the surface: it has a high rate of occurrence (68%) and a large number of governors (N=141) triggering it in discourse. By means of systematic comparisons, we were able to pinpoint the nature of this apparent productivity: the prestigious connotations of the subjunctive in contemporary Italian speech. In fact, other than its syntactic and lexicalized aspects, the subjunctive performs a mostly social function. Its high saliency is reflected in the strong tendency of highly educated speakers to employ this morphology in subordinating contexts, not only in careful speech but in casual speech as well. This might perhaps be explained by the massive effort of the modern prescriptive enterprise to make the subjunctive a hallmark of *bon usage*. This effort is clear in the CSGI compendium as well, where contemporary grammars displayed categorical saliency of the subjunctive morphology (Chapter 2). On the other hand, the great contrast observed between highly educated speakers and those with little or no formal education confirmed that the productivity is due to the level of education rather than a genuine internal linguistic productivity that one would expect to arise independently of education: if the subjunctive were actually productive in contemporary Italian, speakers would not need formal education to learn it.

## 6 Back to the roots: A sociohistorical analysis

“Cred’io<sub>IND</sub>, ch’ei credette<sub>IND</sub>, ch’i’ credesse<sub>SUBJ...</sub>”  
‘I think that he was thinking that I thought...’

— Dante, poet  
from La Divina Commedia  
Inferno, Canto XIII-25

“The subjunctive is a complex and sophisticated verbal mood, of an elusive identity, with a several thousand-year-old history during which it shed its skin and functions countless times.”

— Bracchi, Prandi & Schena, linguists  
[translated from Bracchi et al. 2012: 4]

### 6.1 Earlier state of affairs

We are now in a position to address the questions related to the supposed change that the subjunctive has undergone in the past, in particular whether the lexical and syntactic pattern observed in Chapter 5 is the result of loss of semantically-based variation. In the current chapter, I examine the question of subjunctive variation and change *over time* and determine whether, how, and to what extent its patterning has changed. The patterns provided by the underlying conditioning (Poplack & Tagliamonte 2001) will inform the direct comparison in *real time*, an assessment which remains to date a “major desideratum of Italian historical linguistics” (Maiden 1995: 219). Notwithstanding some studies that investigated subjunctive use in earlier Italian – as reported in the coming pages – the lack of an exhaustive and empirical corpus-based study of the subjunctive in a variationist perspective prevents us from evaluating the contemporary pattern

unveiled in Chapter 5 against the earlier conditioning of variability, and therefore from ascertaining whether and to what extent the use of the Italian subjunctive has changed over time. I propose to fill this lacuna with a socio-historical analysis of language change and transmission as they pertain to subjunctive patterns. My primary aims are to answer the following questions:

- Has any change to the internal conditioning of the subjunctive occurred over time, i.e. is the subjunctive losing ground overall in contexts where it was previously attested, and if so, to what extent?
- Was there any semantic contribution to subjunctive selection in the early stages of Italian that has since been lost in contemporary speech?

In order to ascertain whether the use of the Italian subjunctive still retains a conditioning inherited from its ancestor language, VL (i.e. Vulgar Latin), in particular the supposed semantic motivation, rather than display innovative trends (e.g. lexicalization), I aim to answer the following question:

- How can we situate Italian vis-à-vis its genetically-related mother language, VL (i.e. Vulgar Latin), as far as the inheritance of patterns for mood selection in completive clauses and the supposed meaning associated with this selection?

There exists a widespread assumption that the Italian language remained *stable* and *immutable* throughout the centuries, but that certain changes would have occurred quite abruptly after the political unification of 1861 (cf. Section 1.2), one of which is the attrition of the subjunctive. Are any of the patterns that we observed in the previous chapter, such as the relative unimportance of semantic factors to subjunctive selection, a result of this supposed change? A plausible working hypothesis is that it may be very unlikely that near-complete semantic loss could have occurred in the span of one or two generations (beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century to present day), when it supposedly remained stable for around six or seven centuries. By

replicating the method adopted for the analysis of the subjunctive in contemporary speech data, we can address the above-mentioned questions in a diachronic perspective in order to apprehend subjunctive variation and change across time.

The first part of the current diachronic analysis focuses on subjunctive variability in earlier stages of Italian (i.e. before the political unification of the country in 1861), while the second part addresses subjunctive use in VL. In order to confirm the question of whether “the subjunctive is significantly more or less commonly used in modern Italian than at earlier stages in the history of the language” (Maiden 1995: 220), we must find evidence of restructuring in the underlying conditioning of the subjunctive using comparative analysis from different diachronic stages of Italian.

As such, we should observe subjunctive selection being increasingly favoured by morphosyntactic and lexical constraints rather than semantic ones over time, but we should also be able to clearly pinpoint whether desemanticization (i.e. the loss of the semantic contribution of the subjunctive) occurred and when. With regards to the latter, since any semantic contribution in contemporary Italian is confined to a small portion of the data, i.e. volitive and emotive governors, this might be evidence of desemanticization if we find that more semantic factors had a greater influence on subjunctive selection in Latin or early Italian.

Several scholars have reported on subjunctive morphology and its contexts of use in early stages of Italian, and have noticed that “in the entire history of Italian, we can observe several fluctuations between the indicative and the subjunctive” (translation mine, Durante [1981: 272-73]), though the motivation for this so-called fluctuation (i.e. *variability*) remains debatable just as it does for contemporary treatments of subjunctive selection. Despite the few studies providing some quantitative insight (Rati 2004, 2016; Stefinlongo 1977; Vegnaduzzo 2000), the same methodological and analytical concerns that apply to contemporary accounts of subjunctive

selection are encountered here: the issue of circumscribing the variable context; the use of analyst intuition to interpret quantitative or qualitative results alike; results based on raw numbers of subjunctive tokens; or the use of non-speech-like, written historical benchmark data, which can be highly affected by the norm and presumably avoid non-standard features. This is even more important when there is a complete lack of actual spoken data, as in any benchmark data from an era that precedes modern sound recording. Older written data that better reflects spontaneous speech, such as dialogue in stage plays, helps us to circumvent the “lack of access to the complete range of data that may be necessary to confirm or disprove a particular analysis” (Joseph 1990: 2), as reported in Chapter 3.

With regards to how the subjunctive works in early as opposed to contemporary Italian, a lot of attention has been devoted to phonological changes (e.g. thematic vowels transferred from Latin to Italian<sup>44</sup>) that may have affected the early Italian subjunctive paradigm (D’Achille [2001: 98]; see also Bruni [1984]; Manni [1979]; Salvi & Renzi [2010]; Rohlfs [1966]; Harris & Vincent [1997]), but assumptions on the diachronic conditions operating on mood selection in completive clauses have rarely been tested empirically on a diachronic benchmark.

The idea that the contemporary subjunctive has lost ground in certain semantic contexts, such as verbs of opinion, is recurrent in the literature (Bonomi 1993; Serianni 2006). However, some scholars report that, in the past, the subjunctive was *already* disfavoured in these semantic contexts, i.e. with governors marking beliefs or opinions (Dardano 2012: 123; Sorrento 1951), which necessarily contradicts the idea that subjunctive conditioning may have *changed*. On the other hand, whether this is an instantiation of language change or not, there seems to be agreement amongst linguists as to the effect of the semantics of the governor on variant choice:

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<sup>44</sup> For instance, 3<sup>rd</sup>-person singular of the present subjunctive of first-group verbs originated from Latin *-em*, AMET<sub>[PRES.SUBJ.3SG]</sub> and underwent a paradigmatic vowel change in Italian: ame<sub>[PRES.SUBJ.3SG]</sub> → ami<sub>[PRES.SUBJ.3SG]</sub>.

volitive, emotive, and necessity governors are the contexts of use of the subjunctive in complete clauses *par excellence*. In fact, the few quantitative studies on subjunctive selection in Italian all reported that the main factor conditioning mood selection is the semantics of the governor, albeit lacking statistical evidence: verbs of volition, affectation, and fear trigger the subjunctive, while ‘saying’ verbs mainly trigger the indicative<sup>45</sup> (Stefinlongo 1977: 257; see also Vegnaduzzo 2000). They argue that this conditioning has been maintained in contemporary speech since changes to the lexical identities of the governors (e.g. *bisogna*, which “in modern language is preferred to the archaic forms *fa d’uopo* or *fa mestieri*” [translation mine, Bourciez 1967: 541-42]) have apparently not affected the association of the subjunctive with a specific semantic meaning. The evidence from my data, shown in Chapter 5 (Section 5.3.1.2.1), refutes the hypothesis according to which the meaning of necessity *still* predicts the selection of the subjunctive in contemporary Italian, despite changes in the lexical identities of the governors expressing necessity. In fact, the analysis provided in the previous chapter showed a clear lexical effect with verbs of necessity due to *bisognare*, though it remains to be seen whether this was also true for earlier stages of Italian (and/or VL) or whether desemanticization has occurred.

In addition to the semantics of the governor, other factors have been evoked in previous research as conditioning subjunctive selection, specifically for earlier stages of Italian. For instance, the presence of negation in the main clause favours the subjunctive in previous stages of the language. This is said to have survived in contemporary Italian (Salvi 2011: 375; also, Dardano 2012; Stefinlongo 1977; Vegnaduzzo 2000), which was confirmed in our contemporary synchronic analysis (Chapter 5). Also, more certain predication is said to disfavour the

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<sup>45</sup> The categories of ‘affectation’ and ‘fear’ are both operationalized in the current study as emotive verbs, while verbs of ‘saying’ are called verbs of communication.

subjunctive in early Italian, as Stefinlongo observed with the presence of adverbs objectively indicating a less doubtful nature of the proposition (1977: 256).

Stylistic factors are also hypothesized to affect subjunctive selection, with the subjunctive being avoided in less prestigious types of literature – even with the semantic classes that, under both a prescriptive and descriptive view, are supposed to select a subjunctive categorically (Dardano 2012; Rati 2016). For instance, according to Rati, a stylistic effect can actually override lexico-semantic effects and cause a verb of volition to select the indicative (2016: 128-129).

In general, the same explanations proffered for contemporary accounts of the subjunctive are also used in previous stages of the Italian subjunctive, which seems to counter the idea of abrupt change and may imply a certain stability over time.

However, some differences between the two stages seem to exist. Stefinlongo's (1977) and Vegnaduzzo's (2000) quantitative analyses of 13<sup>th</sup>- and 14<sup>th</sup>-century Italian both find a difference in the number of governors that triggered the subjunctive as opposed to the indicative. Although both studies did not report the exact numbers of governors or rates of subjunctive selection, the general observation is that in early Italian the number of verbs governing the subjunctive is larger than the number of those governing the indicative (Stefinlongo 1977: 256). Furthermore, they claim that a major difference between early and contemporary Italian subjunctive is that the distribution of the subjunctive in completive clauses was more semantically restricted in early Italian. In other words, the number of governors selecting a subjunctive was lower in the past and the subjunctive was mainly found with volitive and emotive verbs and never found with governors where we would expect it nowadays (Vegnaduzzo 2000: 694), such as with *meravigliarsi* 'to be surprised' (as also reported by Salvi & Renzi [2010: 805] and Wandruska [1991: 475]), as well as *dispiacersi* 'to be sorry' and *essere sorpreso/felice* 'to be surprised/happy'. Vegnaduzzo motivates his findings as being an internal evolution of

subjunctive morphology in completive clauses, i.e. a shift from a semantically-motivated construction in early Italian with the expression of volition and emotion to one that functions primarily as a marker of subordination in more contemporary variety (2000: 695). This is supported by the evidence that the subjunctive permeated contexts that are not historically associated with the use of the subjunctive, such as opinion verbs. These observations seem to corroborate my findings of the subjunctive being selected by a great number of governors in contemporary speech, rather than being exclusively associated with verbs of strong modal determination.

Summarizing, previous findings seem to pinpoint to a fairly stable internal conditioning, although previous studies seem to suggest a shift across time from [+semantics/-subordination] function in early stages of the Italian subjunctive grammar to the contemporary [-semantics/+subordination] function.

In order to ascertain the nature of variability across time and linguistic change, the conditioning unveiled in Chapter 5 will be tested on several historical benchmarks using the same factor groups: semantic class of the governor, morphology and lexical identity of the embedded verb, proximity between main and subordinate clauses, presence of *che*, sentence type, and indicators of non-factual modality, to enhance comparability. As with the contemporary analysis, results for subjunctive selection according to lexical identity of the governor will allow us to determine whether the subjunctive is lexically-restricted, as well as whether the subjunctive is productive in early Italian – in contrast to the contemporary patterns shown in Chapter 5, where the subjunctive is concentrated with relatively few governors and with suppletive-*essere* morphology.

I first compare overall rates across time, then turn to the conditioning on variant choice, with particular attention to the constraint hierarchies (range, direction of effect, significance) as

outlined in Chapter 3 (cf. Section 3.2.4), in order to establish whether the contemporary patterns are the result of a change.

## 6.2 Extraction of the subjunctive in diachronic data

One might ask which governors should be eligible for this diachronic study of subjunctive variability: should we limit our analysis to only those that surfaced in contemporary speech, in order to ascertain whether a change has taken place within the factor group of lexical identity of the governor? If we extract only the governors identified in the contemporary data, we risk excluding those governors that may have been operative in the past but subsequently exited the system, and therefore we would not provide a comprehensive account of the variation over time. Indeed, we would expect that some governors might have disappeared altogether or are associated less and less with subjunctive morphology, given the longstanding assumption that subjunctive use has become more restricted.

Keeping these issues in mind, the first step is to perform a systematic search of the entire diachronic dataset (the *Corpus of Historical Italian*, COHI; Section 3.1.2.1) to identify the set of governors that triggered the subjunctive at least once – exactly as I did for the contemporary dataset in Chapter 5. It may be that a governor selected the subjunctive in one period but only the indicative in another one. Tokens belonging to those governors that selected only indicative in a given period were included in the analysis since they are essential to understanding the trajectory of each governor across time. In cases where a governor was found in the historical data but was not included in the governor pool of the contemporary data, the contemporary benchmark was then re-examined to determine whether the governor in question only took the indicative (or another competing variant) or whether it did not occur in the contemporary data at all. The same method was adopted in the other direction as well, to locate governors found in contemporary

speech that did not surface with the subjunctive in the historical benchmark. By adopting this method, we are ensuring that the *principle of accountability* is respected (Labov 1972) and that we trace the status of subjunctive use for all available governors over time.

In order to establish whether a change has occurred between these two points in time, I first compare the propensity of each governor to select the subjunctive across the four time periods with data from speech surrogates of the 16<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup>, and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries (cf. Section 3.1.2.1) as well as the actual speech data, dating from the late 20<sup>th</sup> to early 21<sup>st</sup> century – recall that a corpus of contemporary plays was included in order to avoid a direct comparison between older written Italian and contemporary *speech*. There are four different possible outcomes for any given governor in these datasets: each governor may occur a) in all four time periods, b) in at least two or c) three periods, or d) in a single period. An index of *persistence* was assigned to each governor, ranging from 1 to 4, which enables us to establish stability and change with respect to the governors when these are coupled with their relative rates of occurrence, frequency within the variable context, as well as proportion of subjunctive morphology that each governor accounts for.

### 6.3 Overall results

If the subjunctive has undergone change to such a degree as is reported in the literature and by the media, we should expect much higher overall rates of the subjunctive in the early benchmark data. A comparison of the overall rates of the subjunctive across the four time periods (Figure 6.1) seems to support the hypothesis that a change took place, more specifically between the 18<sup>th</sup> and the 20<sup>th</sup> century. While no substantial difference is observed between 16<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century rates of the subjunctive, there is a decreasing rate of subjunctive selection after the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Nonetheless, while statistically the overall differences in COHI data between 16<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup>,

and 20<sup>th</sup> century plays are not significant, a significant difference at  $p < .01$  is observed between written data and actual speech data. This difference could be due to the nature of the data: it is possible that the playwrights could have been more sensitive to the idealised standard use of the subjunctive. However, prior to direct comparison of the underlying conditioning we cannot draw hasty conclusions.

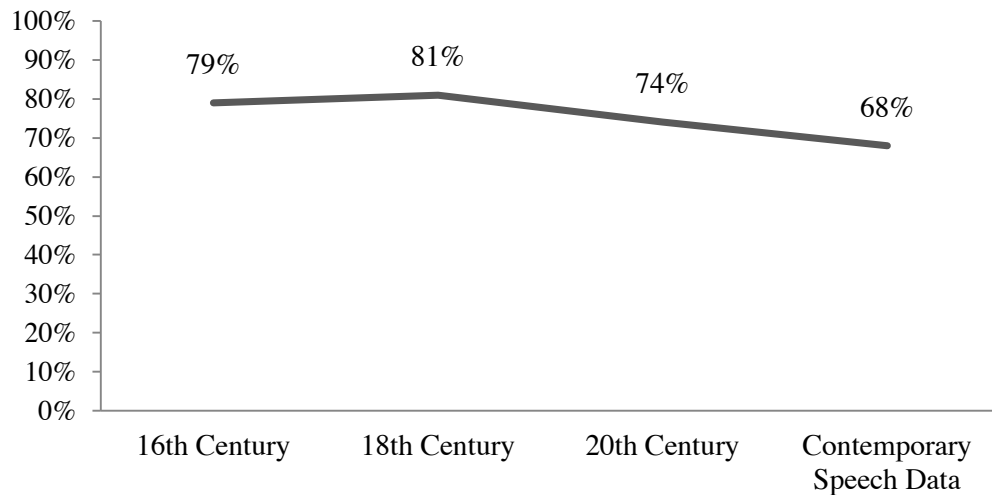


Figure 6.1: Overall rates of subjunctive over time.

Another important result is that, although the subjunctive has higher overall rates in the past, it is far from categorical. Change, loss, and/or death of the subjunctive is not apparent from these results – neither diachronically nor synchronically – suggesting that the popular assumption concerning change or loss of the subjunctive is mainly based on its differences relative to some *idealized* benchmark rather than on actual speech (or speech surrogate) data.

As observed in the previous chapter, more data at our disposal does not necessarily entail a corresponding increase in tokens of the subjunctive. The fact that there is no correlation between the amount of data analyzed ( $n$  words in Table 6.1) and the number of subjunctives ( $n$  Subj in Table 6.1) is an important observation since it emphasizes that subjunctive use depends

on the favouring conditions for its selection that are encountered in discourse, including on the governors present in the data.

	COHI			SPEECH
	16 <sup>th</sup> Century	18 <sup>th</sup> Century	20 <sup>th</sup> Century	20 <sup>th</sup> /21 <sup>st</sup> Century
%Subj	79%	81%	74%	68%
<i>n</i> Subj	299/379	408/505	207/279	1139/1663
<i>n</i> words	19,621	37,264	40,565	607,847
<i>n</i> governors	81	88	60	141

Table 6.1: Overall rate of subjunctive selection (%Subj), number of subjunctives (*n* Subj), number of governors that occurred with a subjunctive (*n* governors), and total number of words (*n* words) for each time period.

Despite the fact that the corpora increase in size over time, the overall rate of the subjunctive is actually lowest in the largest dataset. If we compare 16<sup>th</sup>- and 18<sup>th</sup>-century data, there is no change in the overall rates despite the latter subset being twice the size (see ‘*n* words’ in Table 6.1). In a similar vein, the 18<sup>th</sup>- and 20<sup>th</sup>-century COHI datasets are very similar in size, but the latter shows a lower rate of subjunctive (18<sup>th</sup> century=81% vs. 20<sup>th</sup> century=74%). Another surprising finding is what we observe in terms of number of governors: the lowest overall rate of subjunctive does not necessarily entail the lower number of governors. For instance, in 20<sup>th</sup>-century speech data, the number of governors is by far the highest (N=141), whereas the rate of subjunctive selection in this time period is the lowest, confirming previous observations (Stefinlongo 1977; Vegnaduzzo 2000).

## 6.4 The trajectory of the governors

### 6.4.1 Frequency across time

Given that the highest number of governors was found in 20<sup>th</sup>-century speech data, this already suggests that not all governors persist in all time periods. Before we analyze the persistence of the governors and their propensity to select the subjunctive, it is worth outlining some of the parallels in the overall discrepancies and disproportions with regards to the governors.

In fact, despite relatively high overall rates, subjunctive selection is highly variable amongst the governors, ranging from low rates with certain lexical governors (17% of subjunctive selection in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, 13% in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, 14% in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, both in COHI and in actual speech data), to 100% with others, suggesting that the same lexically-based discrepancies are observed in the past as well<sup>46</sup>. A total of 258 distinct governors surfaced across five centuries, but only 11 of these (4%) could be labelled *frequent*.<sup>47</sup> However, as shown in Table 6.2 below, high frequency does not necessarily entail a favouring effect, and discrepancies in subjunctive selection cannot be entirely due to lexical frequency either, since even within the category of *frequent* governors, some governors highly disfavour the subjunctive, others highly favour it, and still others show no substantial effect (see Appendix E).

	COHI			SPEECH
	16 <sup>th</sup> C	18 <sup>th</sup> C	20 <sup>th</sup> C	20 <sup>th</sup> /21 <sup>st</sup> C
<i>credere</i>	H	H	H	H
<i>pensare</i>	H		H	H
<i>dire</i>	H	H	H	
<i>parere</i>	H	H	H	
<i>volere</i>	H	H	H	
<i>bisognare</i>		H		
<i>non è vero</i>	H	H		
<i>fare</i>	H		–	–
<i>capire</i>	–	–	H	
<i>sembrare</i>	–	–		H
<i>non è</i>		–	–	H

H<sup>3</sup> indicates ‘highly frequent’. Frequency was determined corpus-internally according to the frequency of each governor vis-à-vis the others in a given time period; shading indicates a favouring effect; empty cells indicate that the governor is not frequent in the corresponding time period; a dash indicates that the governor is not attested in that specific time period.

Table 6.2: List of all the frequent governors in each time period.

As a matter of fact, Table 6.2 shows that while a single governor can be frequent across all time periods, such as *credere*, it does not necessarily consistently favour the subjunctive:

<sup>46</sup> See Appendix E for a detailed distribution of governors and the relative rates of subjunctive in each time period.

<sup>47</sup> By replicating the method adopted in Chapter 5, frequency was determined corpus-internally, in other words according to the relative frequency of each governor in the variable context (cf. Sections 5.1.2 and 5.3.1.1).

*credere* favours the subjunctive in only three periods out of four. On the other hand, governors can consistently favour the subjunctive across time but not necessarily be frequent governors (see *parere, volere, and bisognare*). Since more frequent forms are generally considered to be more resistant to change and amenable to entrenchment (Bybee & Thompson 1997), so far these observations seem to indicate that the relative frequency of the governors does *not* contribute to the entrenchment of the subjunctive in speech.

Another interesting parallel amongst the four time periods is the correlation between the number of governors and how much subjunctive morphology each governor accounts for. Results in Figure 6.2 show that only a handful of governors (between four and six governors) account for (almost) half of all the subjunctive morphology in each period.

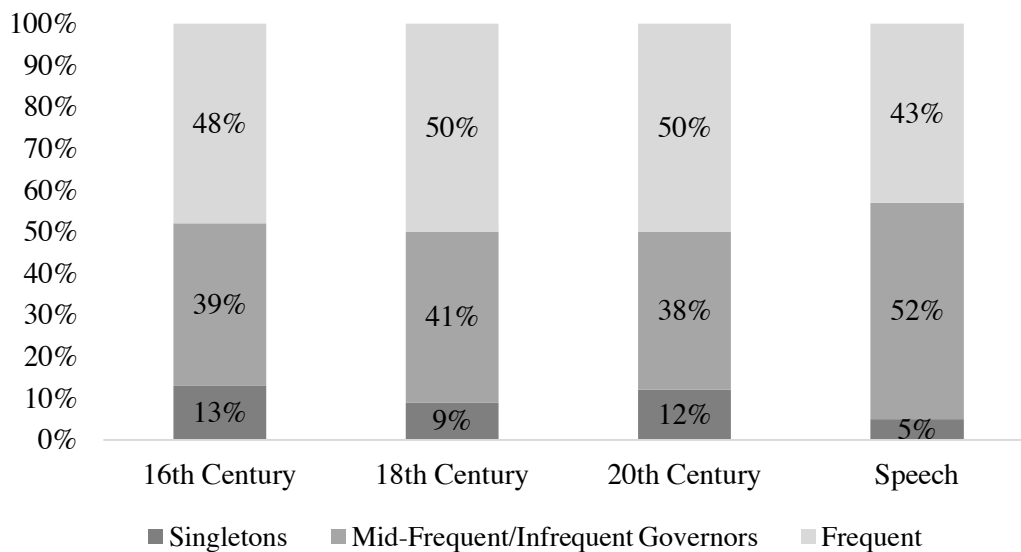


Figure 6.2: Proportion of governors accounting for subjunctive morphology across time.

Additionally, we notice that singletons accounted for much more subjunctive morphology in the past than in contemporary speech, whereas contemporary data has over half of its subjunctive with infrequent lexical governors, hinting at decreasing productivity of this construction in contemporary Italian. One may ask whether the same governors are consistently

accounting for half subjunctive morphology in each time period and whether these select the subjunctive at the same rate across time. Only by unpacking the above-mentioned category of frequency are we in a position to observe whether the subjunctive is mainly concentrated with the *same* verbal governors across time, therefore hinting at stability and suggesting a lexicalization already operative in the past, contra the widespread assumption of an abrupt change in contemporary Italian.

#### 6.4.2 Persistence of governors

As previously reported, a persistence index (from 1-4) was associated to each governor according to the number of periods they surfaced in. By looking at the persistence index of the 258 distinct governors that surfaced over the past five centuries, both from COHI and actual speech data (C-ORAL and LIP), we can ascertain whether each governor consistently co-occurs with the subjunctive across time (Table 6.3).

<b>Persistence</b>	<b>N Governors</b>	<b>% Governors</b>
4 (adjacent) periods	20	8%
3 adjacent periods	15	6%
2 adjacent periods	30	12%
2-3 non-adjacent periods	28	11%
1 period	165	64%
<b>Total</b>	<b>258</b>	

Table 6.3: Number and proportion of governors according to persistence.

Surprisingly, only 8% (N=20) of the governors persisted through each of the four periods studied here. This is a remarkable result given the high number of contexts overall where the subjunctive could have potentially surfaced (N=258 lexical types). Another small proportion of the pool (6%, N=15/258) persists through three adjacent periods, while 12% (N=30/258) surfaced in two adjacent periods or inconsistently in two or three non-adjacent periods (11%, N=28/258). About two thirds of the governors surfaced in one single time period (64%; N=165/258). More importantly, further inspection of the single-period governors shows that almost half of them

(47%, N=78/165) come from the contemporary speech data, while the other half is dispersed across the three time periods targeted by the COHI, as displayed in Table 6.4.

<b>N Governors appearing in a single period</b>		
<b>Period</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
16 <sup>th</sup> Century	35	21%
18 <sup>th</sup> Century	35	21%
20 <sup>th</sup> Century	17	10%
Speech	78	47%
<b>Total</b>	<b>165</b>	

Table 6.4: Number and proportion of governors appearing in a single period.

As reported in Chapter 5, 141 distinct governors were found in contemporary speech (the highest number of governors found in a single time period). This information, coupled with the high concentration of single-period governors surfacing in contemporary speech data, confirms the apparent high productivity of the subjunctive in the contemporary period. As a matter of fact, this productivity is only *apparent* since it is mainly due to the high number of governors triggered in careful speech and by highly educated speakers. True productivity of the subjunctive should occur in vernacular speech as well, rather than be confined to the highly salient social function performed by the subjunctive in contemporary speech.

The overall situation observed from the detailed tables in Appendix E shows that the majority of the governors have an extremely low token count or are singletons.<sup>48</sup> Since singletons and governors with a low token count prevent us from drawing any conclusions on the supposed changes to the subjunctive over time, I limit the analysis of persistence to only those governors that displayed a minimum of eight tokens in each of a minimum of two time periods, and the a minimum of eight tokens in one period for governors that surfaced in only two periods.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> I refer the reader to Appendix E for detailed distribution of the subjunctive according to the lexical identity of the governors in each distinct time period.

<sup>49</sup> See Appendix F for a detailed list and distribution of the governors to which a persistence index of 1 was assigned.

Governor	16th Century		18th Century		20th Century		Speech	
	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N
<b>4 adjacent periods</b>								
<i>credere</i>	83	39/47	98	42/43	69	22/32	76	185/244
<i>pensare</i>	73	11/15	63	5/8	22	2/9	68	151/222
<i>dire</i>	35	18/51	43	33/77	25	8/32	18	15/83
<i>volere</i>	100	36/36	100	73/73	100	52/52	92	59/64
<i>parere</i>	95	21/22	100	26/26	100	21/21	71	46/65
<i>bisognare</i>	100	1/1	100	29/29	100	9/9	92	55/60
<i>vedere</i>	50	2/4	0	0/21	0	0/19	0	0/98
<i>ricordare</i>	38	3/8	0	0/3	0	0/6	0	0/42
<b>3 adjacent periods</b>								
<i>sperare</i>	—	—	38	3/8	50	1/2	88	53/60
<b>2 adjacent periods</b>								
<i>sembrare</i>	—	—	—	—	100	4/4	74	100/135
<i>immaginare</i>	—	—	—	—	80	4/5	43	6/14
<i>essere convinto</i>	—	—	—	—	50	1/2	18	2/11
<i>è inutile</i>	—	—	—	—	100	3/3	50	4/8
<i>dimostrare</i>	—	—	—	—	25	1/4	0	0/10
<i>fare</i>	100	16/16	100	7/7	—	—	—	—
<i>pregare</i>	100	8/8	100	3/3	—	—	—	—
<b>Non-adjacent periods</b>								
<i>non è</i>	100	1/1	—	—	—	—	32	53/168
<i>fare sì</i>	100	1/1	—	—	—	—	86	19/22
<i>chiedere</i>	—	—	100	1/1	—	—	100	18/18
<i>è giusto</i>	100	3/3	—	—	—	—	100	7/7

Table 6.5: Rate of subjunctive according to governors displaying a minimum of eight tokens in each of a minimum of two time periods, and the same token count within one period for governors that surfaced in only two periods.

The governors in Table 6.5 above are grouped according to their score on the persistence index. Results show that almost all the governors follow the same overall trend: a decreasing rate of subjunctive selection over time. Of the governors that persisted across all four periods, *credere*, *pensare*, *dire*, and *parere* all display a lower rate of subjunctive selection in contemporary data than they did at some point in the past, whereas *volere* and *bisognare* display slightly monotonic decreases over time. *Vedere* and *ricordare* have relatively low rates of subjunctive selection in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, and by the next time period (the 18<sup>th</sup> century), they avoid it entirely.

With respect to the governors that persisted across fewer time periods, we observe the same trend as for the most persistent governors: *sembrare*, *immaginare*, *essere convinto*, *è inutile*, *dimostrare*, *fare sì*, and *non è* all select less subjunctive in the contemporary period than they did in a past time period. *Fare* and *pregare* display categorical subjunctive selection for the first two time periods, but they were not found in the contemporary benchmark at all. On the other hand, the governor *sperare* apparently bucks the dominant trend: although it only appears from the 18<sup>th</sup> century on and contains little data in COHI (N=2 tokens), it selects the subjunctive at increasingly higher rates over time. The situation observed in Table 6.5 suggests that the subjunctive is in fact undergoing a change since it seems to be selected less and less over time, regardless of specific governor. This observation is corroborated by the decreasing overall rates observed above in Figure 6.1. Nonetheless, low token counts enabled the examination of persistence across time for only a small number of governors. In fact, only 8% (N=20/258) of the entire governor pool was included in the analysis of persistence in Table 6.5 – out of necessity, since the vast majority of governors have very few tokens and many do not persist over time. In fact, it is clear that lexical governors in general are not very ‘persistent’, since only a small portion of the governor pool persisted through all four periods. Instead, more than half the governors appeared in only one time period, and of these single-period governors, the majority occurred in the contemporary period. This seems to go against the idea that the subjunctive is losing ground, despite the fact that the rate of the subjunctive decreases across time, though sometimes non-monotonically. Most of the governors shown in Table 6.5 are highly frequent in the data in *at least* one time period. When we look them individually, we notice that these account for more than half of the subjunctive morphology used in each time period (Table 6.6).

Governor	16th Century		18th Century		20th Century		Speech	
	%Subj	N	%Subj	N	%Subj	N	%Subj	N
<i>può essere</i>	100	5/5	100	15/15	—	—	100	4/4
<i>bisognare</i>	100	1/1	100	29/29	100	9/9)	92	55/60
<i>volere</i>	100	36/36	100	73/73	100	52/52)	92	59/64
<i>fare</i>	100	16/16	100	7/7	—	—	—	—
<i>sperare</i>	—	—	38	3/8	50	1/2)	88	53/60
<i>credere</i>	83	39/47	98	42/43	69	22/32)	76	185/244
<i>sembrare</i>	—	—	—	—	100	4/4)	74	100/135
<i>parere</i>	95	21/22	100	26/26	100	21/21)	71	46/65
<i>pensare</i>	73	11/15	63	5/8	22	2/9)	68	151/222
<i>non è vero</i>	40	6/15	45	5/11	50	1/2)	50	2/4
<i>non è</i>	100	1/1	—	—	—	—	32	53/168
<i>dire</i>	35	18/51	43	33/77	25	8/32)	18	15/83
<b>Sub-Total</b>	74	154/209	80	238/297	74	120/163	65	723/1109
All other governors	85	145/170	82	170/208	75	87/116	75	416/554
<b>Total</b>	79	299/379	81	408/505	74	207/279	68	1139/1663

**Proportion of subjunctive morphology the frequent governors account for**

↓	↓	↓	↓
51% (154/299)	58% (238/408)	58% (120/207)	63% (723/1139)

Table 6.6: Subjunctive selection according the most frequent lexical governors across time (frequency is relative to each time period) and how much subjunctive morphology they account for.

What is clear is that the individual lexical types that account for most of the variation in speech are surprisingly stable across time despite some differences in the overall rates of subjunctive selection. These results corroborate our earlier observation that the apparent productivity of the subjunctive is due to the great number of infrequent governors and singletons in discourse, whereas half of the subjunctive is accounted by essentially the same governors across time. This is an interesting result because, on one hand, the subjunctive seems to be used more productively, but on the other hand there is a decreasing overall rate of subjunctive selection, with contemporary speech data displaying the lowest overall rate (68%). In light of the results reported in the previous chapter (cf. Section 5.3.1.1), we know that the governor *non è* is solely responsible for lowering the overall rate of the subjunctive in contemporary speech, but this governor is virtually absent in COHI – only one token in 16<sup>th</sup> century data – which acts to accentuate the difference in the overall rates between 20<sup>th</sup>-century plays and 20<sup>th</sup>-century speech data. In fact, excluding *non è* and then recalculating the trajectory of the subjunctive over time,

the overall rate in contemporary speech data aligns exactly with 20<sup>th</sup> century stage play data, with no significant differences at  $p < .01$ , i.e. no change, between the time periods illustrated in Figure 6.3.

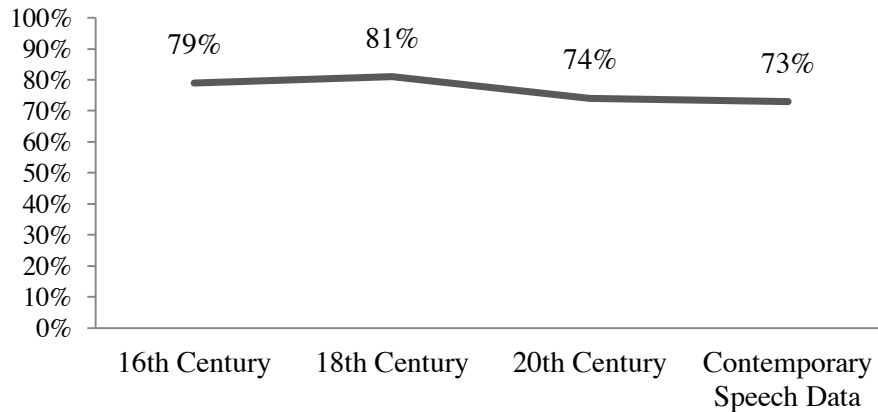


Figure 6.3: The trajectory of subjunctive selection over time, with omission of *non è* tokens.

The overall rates shown in Figure 6.3 do not corroborate the claims of dramatic change to the subjunctive that are frequently reported elsewhere. On the contrary, so far, our results show that the preference for the subjunctive by a select few governors was already operative in the past, despite some gradual changes to the overall rate of subjunctive selection for the set of frequent lexical types (*credere*, *pensare*, *parere*, *dire*, *volere*, *bisognare*, and *sperare*).

### 6.5 Semantic classes in diachronic perspective

According to the parameters outlined in Chapter 5, semantic conditioning cannot be at play if lexical restrictions account for all or most of the variability. Up to now, we have seen that more than half of the subjunctive used in Italian is associated with only a handful of governors more or less consistently across time, which seems to rule out an exclusively semantic motivation for variant selection. However, there did appear to be a possible genuine effect of the semantic class of volitive and emotive verbs in the contemporary data, which requires further empirical investigation. Thus, I analyzed the governors in terms of their semantic class *diachronically* to

establish whether the subjunctive was semantically constrained in this manner in previous stages of Italian. The purpose of this is to see whether this property was once more widespread in the past but has largely been lost in contemporary Italian, with the exception of verbs of volition and emotion. This notion is often repeated in the literature, but for many scholars, the semantic class of *opinion* verbs is considered to be the class that would have suffered the most loss as a result of supposed linguistic change, although this lacks empirical diachronic confirmation. So far, the diachronic data shows significant similarities with the contemporary data as far as individual lexical preferences for subjunctive selection, and we now investigate whether the trend for semantic class was already established in the early stages of the language or whether it is an innovation of the contemporary subjunctive grammar.

Semantic Class	COHI						LIP/C-ORAL	
	16 <sup>th</sup> C		18 <sup>th</sup> C		20 <sup>th</sup> C		20 <sup>th</sup> /21 <sup>st</sup> Speech	
	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N
Volitive	100%	92/92	98%	124/126	97%	68/70	89%	201/225
Emotive	97%	35/36	92%	59/64	100%	8/8	96%	43/45
Necessity	86%	6/7	98%	46/47	100%	15/15	81%	76/94
Opinion	80%	129/162	77%	140/182	70%	99/141	66%	786/1191
Evaluative	61%	19/31	67%	6/9	69%	9/13	71%	17/24
Communication	35%	18/51	43%	33/77	25%	8/32	19%	16/84
<b>Total</b>	<b>79%</b>	<b>299/379</b>	<b>81%</b>	<b>408/505</b>	<b>74%</b>	<b>207/279</b>	<b>68%</b>	<b>1163/1663</b>

Table 6.7: Subjunctive selection according to the semantic class of the governor over time.

Table 6.7 shows that the subjunctive rate is actually decreasing for several semantic classes: volitive (100% > 89%), opinion (from 80% > 66%), and communicative=*dire* (35% > 19%). Verbs of necessity have fluctuating rates over time, but from the first period to the last, the rate of subjunctive selection is also decreasing (86% > 98% > 100% > 81%).<sup>50</sup> Evaluative verbs have the opposite tendency: the rate of subjunctive selection increases over time, to the extent that there is a reversal of the hierarchy between this class and opinion verbs in contemporary

<sup>50</sup> This does not take into consideration the lexical effect of *bisognare* observed in actual speech data.

speech. However, recall that the overall rate for opinion verbs in contemporary data is depressed due to the presence of idiosyncratic *non è*. Excluding *non è* from the contemporary data raises the overall rate for the class of opinion verbs from 66% (N=786/1191) to 72% (N=733/1023), thus displaying the same constraint hierarchy as previous time periods and more importantly a less dramatic overall change. Emotive verbs are the only semantic class that appears stable over time. While my results for verbs of opinion corroborate previous observations for this semantic class (i.e. that it is less and less favourable to subjunctive selection, cf. Serianni 2006, among others), overall this is not the only class with decreasing overall rates. My data turned up another novel finding as far as semantic class: the proportion of opinion verbs in the data seems, on the other hand, to be increasing over time (Figure 6.4).

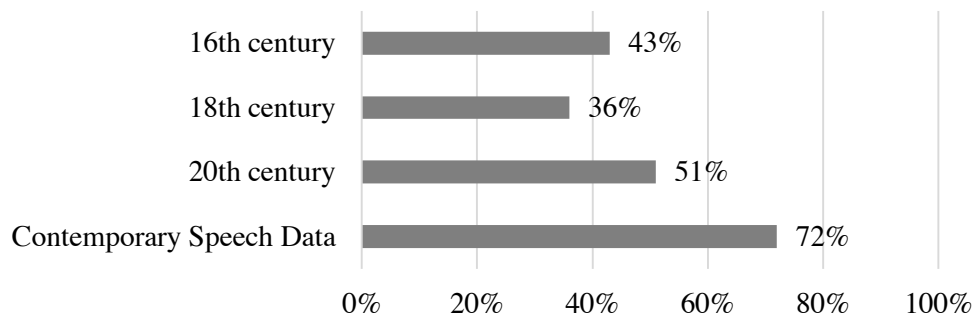


Figure 6.4: Proportion of the data accounted for by the semantic class of opinion verbs across time.

These results seem to suggest that there is a considerable expansion (i.e. frequency) of the subjunctive with governors coded as opinion verbs. If we consider that most of the data belonging to this “semantic” class is essentially concentrated with a few governors, such as *credere*, *pensare*, *parere* and more recently *sembrare*, we can assume that these few governors are increasingly being used in the variable context, suggesting an increasing lexicalization of the subjunctive in discourse. This result would also explain the decreasing rates of subjunctive selection across time, despite the expansion of the morphology with opinion verbs. The contexts

that used to select the subjunctive at higher or categorical rates in the past (e.g. volitive and emotive verbs) have lost ground across time. If the semantic effect of both volitive and emotive governors is a genuine effect, this result would also suggest that the use of the subjunctive in discourse is increasingly less motivated by the semantic characteristics of the governor: subjunctive morphology is losing ground in contexts of stronger modal determination while at the same time being extended to other types of governors, though for lexical and morphosyntactic motivations rather than semantic ones.

As with the contemporary data reported in Chapter 5, the diachronic data displays a very similar situation in terms of disproportions, consistent or non-consistent effects amongst the members of a given semantic category, as well as lexical effects when unpacking all the verb classes. The semantic class of volitive verbs displays quasi- or categorical overall rates of subjunctive selection.

VOLITIVE VERBS								
16 <sup>th</sup> Century			18 <sup>th</sup> Century			20 <sup>th</sup> Century		
Governor	%Subj	N	Governor	%Subj	N	Governor	%Subj	N
volere	100	36/36	volere	100	73/73	volere	100	52/52
intendere	100	4/4	lasciare	100	8/8	lasciare	100	1/1
fare	100	16/16	sperare	38	3/8	impedire	100	1/1
supplicare	100	4/4	cercare	100	1/1	permettere	100	2/2
domandare	100	1/1	guardare	100	3/3	desiderare	100	1/1
commettere	100	1/1	pregare	100	3/3	sperare	50	1/2
lasciare	100	4/4	non negare	75	3/4	ciò non toglie	100	2/2
cercare	100	4/4	concedere	100	3/3	tollerare	100	4/4
guardare	100	3/3	impedire	100	1/1	garantire	88	1/1
aspettare	100	3/3	aspettare	88	7/8	pretendere	100	6/6
vietare	100	2/2	permettere	100	6/6	avere interesse	100	1/1
pregare	100	8/8	comandare	100	1/1	fare conto	33	1/3
fare sì	100	1/1	pretendere	100	2/2			
guardarsi	100	1/1	fare	100	7/7			
tenersi	100	1/1	scongiurare	100	2/2			
provvedere	100	3/3	contendere	100	1/1			
			desiderare	100	1/1			
			chiedere	100	1/1			
			tenere	100	1/1			
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>92/92</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>124/126</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>68/71</b>

Table 6.8: Subjunctive selection according to volitive verbs across time in COHI.

As also noticed in contemporary speech (cf. Section 5.3.1.2.1), for each time period there are only a few governors accounting for most of the volitive verbs (Table 6.8): *volere, fare*, and *pregare* account for 65% (N=60/92) of the subjunctive in 16<sup>th</sup> century data; *volere, fare, lasciare*, and *aspettare* account for 75% (N=96/126) in 18<sup>th</sup> century data; and *volere* alone accounts for 76% of 20<sup>th</sup> century volitive verbs.

As observed with actual speech data, emotive verbs show the same trend: this semantic category is essentially made of governors with a very low token count or singletons. Nonetheless, the effect is consistent amongst the members of emotive verbs and it is apparently very stable across time (Table 6.9).

EMOTIVE VERBS								
16 <sup>th</sup> Century			18 <sup>th</sup> Century			20 <sup>th</sup> Century		
Governor	%Subj	N	Governor	%Subj	N	Governor	%Subj	N
tenere per certo	100	1/1	meritare	100	4/4	essere contento	100	1/1
curarsi	100	1/1	temere	100	2/2	piacere	100	1/1
patire	100	2/2	meravigliarsi	100	4/4	avere paura	100	1/1
riprendere	100	1/1	non vi è pericolo	100	3/3	fa meraviglia	100	2/2
essere a cuore	100	1/1	avere paura	100	7/7	non soffrire	100	2/2
stimare	100	2/2	stare bene	100	2/2	essere stupefatto	100	1/1
rimproverare	100	3/3	avere caro	100	2/2			
meritare	100	3/3	badare	80	4/5			
non c'è meraviglia	100	1/1	paventare	88	1/1			
essere contento	100	2/2	dar fastidio	100	2/2			
s'avvisarsi	100	4/4	avere piacere	100	5/5			
è un miracolo	100	1/1	avere timore	100	3/3			
temere	75	3/4	assicurare	33	2/6			
non essere sciocco	100	1/1	soffrire	100	1/1			
consigliare	100	1/1	avere per male	100	1/1			
tenere occhio	100	1/1	è da ridere	100	1/1			
piacere	100	1/1	contentarsi	100	4/4			
tollerare	100	3/3	avere dispiacere	100	1/1			
confortare	100	1/1	fare conto	100	2/2			
meravigliarsi	100	1/1	premere	100	3/3			
stare in timore	100	1/1	dare noja	100	1/1			
			avere gelosia	100	1/1			
			rallegrarsi	100	1/1			
			è bella	100	2/2			
<b>Total</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>35/36</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>59/64</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>8/8</b>

Table 6.9: Subjunctive selection according to emotive verbs across time in COHI.

While the semantic class of necessity verbs displayed a lexical effect in actual speech data due to the presence of *bisognare*, we cannot say the same for the COHI data. Results displayed in Table 6.10 show a category that is fairly stable across time in terms of overall rates of subjunctive

selection and direction of effect for each of the governors. As for the two semantic classes shown above (volitive and emotive verbs), we cannot discard a semantic effect even though *bisognare* and *bastare* account for most or all the data for necessity verbs since every necessity verb consistently displayed high or categorical rates of subjunctive selection. However, it is worth mentioning that both 18<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century data for necessity is mainly accounted for by only two governors, i.e. *bastare* and *bisognare*, while all the other lexical types are highly infrequent and singletons. With regards to 16<sup>th</sup> century necessity data, the extremely low number of both governors and tokens prevents us to draw any substantial conclusion.

NECESSITY VERBS								
16 <sup>th</sup> Century			18 <sup>th</sup> Century			20 <sup>th</sup> Century		
Governor	%Subj	N	Governor	%Subj	N	Governor	%Subj	N
è necessario	100	1/1	è necessario	100	1/1	bisognare	100	9/9
è ora	100	1/1	bisognare	100	29/29	bastare	100	6/6
bisognare	100	1/1	bastare	100	6/7			
bastare	100	3/4	importare	100	2/2			
			non servire	100	1/1			
			è d'obbligo	100	1/1			
			convenire	80	2/2			
			conviene dire	88	1/1			
			occorrere	100	1/1			
			c'è bisogno	100	2/2			
<b>Total</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>6/7</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>46/47</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>15/15</b>

Table 6.10: Subjunctive selection according to necessity verbs across time in COHI.

Given the evidence shown above with volitive, emotive and, to a lesser extent, necessity governors, results point mainly to stability rather than to desemanticization.

Another parallel with actual speech data is found with regards to the evaluative verb class across time: this category is mainly made up of low token count and singleton governors, though these do not necessarily share the same direction of effect, e.g. *mostrare* (17%) vs. *fare intendere* (57%) vs. *convenire* (100%) in 16<sup>th</sup> century data (Table 6.11), i.e. the subjunctive is not selected on the basis of an evaluative meaning conveyed by the matrix verb.

EVALUATIVE VERBS								
16 <sup>th</sup> Century			18 <sup>th</sup> Century			20 <sup>th</sup> Century		
Governor	%Subj	N	Governor	%Subj	N	Governor	%Subj	N
mostrare	17	1/5	scoprire	100	1/1	avvenire	100	1/1
conchiudere	100	1/1	accordare	100	1/1	provare	100	2/2
fare intendere	57	4/7	rispondere	50	1/2	ammettere	50	1/2
insegnare	100	1/1	avvenire	100	1/1	non mancarci	100	2/2
attendere	100	2/2	intendere	50	2/4	dimostrare	25	1/4
convenire	100	2/2				dare a intendere	100	1/1
dare ad intendere	100	2/2				aspettare	100	1/1
porre	100	1/1				accettare	100	1/1
ricercare	100	1/1						
vedere	50	2/4						
avvenire	50	2/4						
<b>Total</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>19/31</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>6/9</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>10/14</b>

Table 6.11: Subjunctive selection to according evaluative verbs across time in COHI.

The same trend observed with the class of communicative verbs in actual speech data is confirmed to be a stable pattern at least since the 16<sup>th</sup> century, i.e. the lexical effect of *dire*, consistently appearing as a highly disfavoured context for the selection of the subjunctive (Table 6.12).

COMMUNICATIVE VERBS								
16 <sup>th</sup> Century			18 <sup>th</sup> Century			20 <sup>th</sup> Century		
Governor	%Subj	N	Governor	%Subj	N	Governor	%Subj	N
dire	35	18/51	dire	43	33/77	dire	25	8/32
<b>Total</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>18/51</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>33/77</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>8/32</b>

Table 6.12: Subjunctive selection according to communicative verbs across time in COHI.

Finally, the group of opinion verbs shows remarkable parallels across time from the 16<sup>th</sup> century to contemporary Italian.

OPINION VERBS								
16 <sup>th</sup> Century			18 <sup>th</sup> Century			20 <sup>th</sup> Century		
Governor	%Subj	N	Governor	%Subj	N	Governor	%Subj	N
credere	83	39/47	credere	98	42/43	credere	69	22/32
parere	95	21/22	parere	100	26/26	parere	100	21/21
pensare	73	11/15	può essere	100	15/15	capire	25	4/16
è vero	40	6/15	essere sicuro	15	2/13	pensare	22	2/9
ricordare	38	3/8	è vero	45	5/11	essere sicuro	14	1/7
è meglio	100	6/6	sapere	78	7/9	è possibile	100	5/5
è certo	33	2/6	pensare	63	5/8	immaginare	80	4/5
può essere	100	5/5	sentir dire	13	1/8	sembrare	100	4/4
è bene	100	4/4	sentire	17	1/6	è meglio	75	3/4
è forza	100	3/3	è meglio	100	5/5	è inutile	100	3/3
è giusto	100	3/3	supporre	100	4/4	dubitare	67	2/3
non avere								
il dubbio	100	3/3	dubitare	75	3/4	è bene	100	2/2
è difficile	100	3/3	è possibile	100	3/3	supporre	100	2/2
accorgersi	33	1/3	può darsi	100	2/2	c'è il rischio	100	2/2
è buon(o)	100	2/2	è mò	100	2/2	sospettare	100	2/2
è ben convenevole	100	2/2	sostenere	50	1/2	mettere	100	2/2
						avere		
15 singletons	100	15/15	13 singletons	100	13/13	l'impressione	100	2/2
						può darsi	50	1/2
						non è vero	50	1/2
						essere convinto	50	1/2
						12 singletons	100	12/12
<b>Total</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>129/162</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>140/182</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>98/139</b>

Table 6.13: Subjunctive selection according to opinion verbs across time in COHI.

For each time period, we can observe that the governors do not behave the same way, thus suggesting that the overall effect observed with the class of opinion verbs is not genuine in itself but rather epiphenomenon of the lexical identities of the verbs making up this category, e.g. *credere* (98%) vs. *sapere* (78%) vs. *sostenere* (50%) in 18<sup>th</sup> century opinion verb data. Moreover, as reported above (cf. Figure 6.4), this category contains at least half of all the subjunctive data in each time period and this trend is increasing despite the fact that we observe a decreasing rate of the subjunctive with the opinion class.

Summarizing, some interesting findings stem from the comparative analysis of both lexical identity and “semantic” class of the governors in speech surrogates and actual speech data. Overall, despite the fact that the subjunctive displays decreasing rates of occurrence, the underlying pattern of the governors and how they affect each of the semantic classes across time

is relatively stable, rejecting the assumption that the use of the contemporary Italian subjunctive is a result of a desemanticization. Both volitive and emotive verbs show stability across time and, despite the presence of only a few lexical types, individual governors display a consistent effect overall. Other than emotive, volitive, and necessity governors, all other lexical types did not show any consistent effect under the umbrella of their associated semantic categories. In fact, governors belonging to evaluative and opinion categories did not behave in the same way. Nonetheless, the quantitative analysis showed that the category of opinion verbs in particular accounts for more and more subjunctive morphology. Furthermore, if we consider that this semantic class is mainly accounted by a few governors, such as *credere*, *parere*, and *pensare*, we have further evidence of the lexicalization of the subjunctive in discourse. More importantly, this lexicalization is not a recent innovation, but rather a continuation of a process already operative from the 16<sup>th</sup> century, at least in the data I analyzed, thus refuting the widespread assumption in contemporary Italian linguistics that the subjunctive has undergone major changes in contemporary speech.

## 6.6 Comparison of MVAs

A key element of the Comparative Variationist Method is comparison of the underlying conditioning of variant selection (Poplack & Tagliamonte 2001: 95). As with the contemporary analysis, I submitted to GoldVarb the factor groups of “semantic” class of the governor, morphology of the embedded verb, sentence type, presence of the complementizer *che*, presence of indicators of non-factual modality, and intervening material, which for analytical purposes was collapsed into *presence* vs. *absence* of elements between the governor and the embedded verb.

	16th Century			18th Century			20th Century			Contemporary Speech		
<i>Corrected mean:</i>	<b>0.825</b>			<b>0.939</b>			<b>0.789</b>			<b>0.746</b>		
Total N	79% 299/379			81% 408/505			74% 207/279			68% 1139/1663		
	P	%	N	p	%	N	p	%	N	p	%	N
<b>“Semantic” class of the governor</b>												
Emotive	.93	97%	35/36	.66	92%	59/64	K/O	100%	8/8	.84	93%	43/46
<i>Bisognare</i>										.81	92%	55/60
Volitive ( <i>≈volere, sperare, fare</i> )	K/O	100%	92/92	.86	98%	124/126	.87	96%	68/71	.77	89%	201/225
Evaluative	.33	61%	19/31	.17	67%	6/9	.41	71%	10/14	.51	73%	16/22
Opinion ( <i>≈credere, parere, pensare, sembrare</i> )	.51	80%	129/162	.29	77%	140/182	.41	70%	98/139	.45	66%	787/1192
Necessity ( <i>≈bisognare</i> in COHI data)	.59	86%	6/7	.84	98%	46/47	K/O	100%	15/15	.40	62%	21/34
Communicative = <i>Dire</i>	.16	35%	18/51	.09	43%	33/77	.09	25%	8/32	.07	19%	16/84
<i>Range</i>	76			77			78			77		
<b>Morphology of the embedded verb</b>												
Suppletive <i>essere</i>	.64	85%	67/79	[.34]	70%	88/126	[.51]	75%	47/63	.63	77%	431/560
Other regular	.51	80%	149/186	[.63]	89%	199/224	[.58]	76%	89/117	.42	65%	368/568
Other irregular	.39	74%	78/106	[.44]	78%	115/147	[.47]	74%	64/87	.47	66%	290/438
Irregular <i>essere</i>	.36	56%	5/9	[.41]	75%	6/8	[.26]	58%	7/12	.35	52%	50/97
<i>Range</i>	27									28		
<b>Presence of the complementizer</b>												
Absent	[.63]	82%	31/38	.15	62%	13/21	.18	40%	2/5	.59	79%	183/231
Present	[.48]	74%	161/218	.54	93%	186/199	.51	75%	205/274	.47	69%	613/892
<i>Range</i>				39			33			12		
<b>Sentence type</b>												
Non-Affirmative	.78	96%	72/75	.79	95%	138/146	[.51]	81%	79/98	.57	74%	136/183
Affirmative	.42	75%	227/304	.37	75%	270/359	[.50]	71%	128/181	.49	72%	950/1312
<i>Range</i>	36			42						8		
<b>Indicators of non-factual modality</b>												
Present	.69	91%	126/138	[.58]	83%	154/186	[.57]	76%	51/67	[.56]	75%	180/239
Absent	.39	72%	173/241	[.45]	80%	254/319	[.48]	74%	156/212	[.49]	67%	959/1424
<i>Range</i>	30											
<b>Intervening material</b>												
Absent	[.59]	86%	43/50	[.41]	74%	77/104	[.58]	79%	58/73	[.51]	71%	441/625
Present	[.48]	78%	256/329	[.52]	83%	331/401	[.47]	72%	149/206	[.49]	67%	698/1038

Table 6.14: Four parallel multivariate analyses of the contribution of internal factors to subjunctive selection across time. Shading indicates a parallel constraint hierarchy between at least two time-periods for all factor groups but semantic class of the governor, in which it indicates in contrast a favouring effect.

Table 6.14 shows four parallel multivariate analyses of the factor groups contributing to subjunctive selection over time. Some interesting results stand out from these comparative statistical analyses. First of all, the overall probability of subjunctive selection decreases over time, echoing what was found for the overall rate for each time period. The effect of “semantic” class of the governor is found to be consistently significant in each of the time periods, confirming our observations reported above. Furthermore, this factor group consistently ranks as the most important contributor to variant selection across all time periods. In terms of constraint hierarchies, we find a fairly stable conditioning in all four datasets with both emotive and volitive categories, displaying a favouring effect for subjunctive selection. On the other hand, necessity verbs do not favour the subjunctive anymore (cf. Table 5.8, *bisognare* classifies as a lexical effect in speech data), though in COHI data *bisognare* accounts for more than half of the necessity data – 16<sup>th</sup> century data excluded due to the extremely low frequency of necessity verbs preventing us from drawing any conclusions. As for verbs of opinion, generally considered as the place where the subjunctive has lost ground, we find on the other hand that the “semantic” category of opinion verbs has never had any great probability of triggering the subjunctive in each time period, countering the supposed dramatic loss of subjunctive with opinion verbs that is said to have occurred after 1861. Nonetheless, we should bear in mind that a) the contemporary opinion data is affected by the great presence of *non è*, a highly frequent and highly disavouring context for subjunctive selection, therefore affecting the overall rate and the relative probability of opinion verbs to select the subjunctive, b) as shown above (cf. Figure 6.4), this category accounts for more and more data across time, c) a handful of governors, such as *credere*, *pensare*, *parere*, and *sembrare*, represents about half of the data of opinion verbs for each time period (cf. Table 6.13), suggesting a stable lexical pattern across time.

Aside from “semantic” class of the governor, not all the other factor groups tested are consistently selected as significant across all four time periods. With regards to the morphology of the embedded verb, we notice that the factor group is only significant in the first (16<sup>th</sup> century) and the last (20<sup>th</sup> century) time periods, with suppletive-*essere* forms favouring the subjunctive over other forms. This result suggests that the strong association of the subjunctive with suppletive forms of *essere* was already operative in the past, bolstering our previous observation that a lexicalization was already in progress in earlier stages of Italian. Further evidence of the lexicalization can be noticed from Table 6.14: despite some fluctuations, these very salient forms of *essere* account for more and more data across time – more specifically 21% of all the data in the 16<sup>th</sup> century (N=79/379), 25% in the 18<sup>th</sup> century (N=126/505), 23% in 20<sup>th</sup> century plays (N=63/279), and 34% in actual speech data (N=560/1663).

Two other factor groups, presence of the complementizer and sentence type, both show an increasingly weaker effect (cf. the range). The presence of the complementizer became significant from the 18<sup>th</sup> century onward, and the favouring effect of the absence of *che* strengthens over time, though the relative importance of this factor group in the overall hierarchy diminishes in the 20<sup>th</sup>-century data. Nonetheless, other than the lexical constraints, the syntactic nature of this factor group bolsters to some extent the finding that the subjunctive is also affected by structural factors, further weakening the assumption that it is or was a semantically based selection.

The factor group of sentence type was selected as significant for all but 19<sup>th</sup>-century plays. However, two interesting results can be observed. First, the constraint hierarchy remains stable across time, with non-affirmative contexts favouring the subjunctive more than affirmative ones. Secondly, this effect is dwindling over time since the relative importance of sentence type has

decreased substantially to the point where there is not much difference between the two linguistic contexts of affirmative and non-affirmative sentence types in present-day speech.

Overall, the conditioning of variability shows the primacy of the “semantic” class of the governor which, despite a few internal changes in terms of constraint hierarchies, is by far the greatest contributor to the selection of the subjunctive. Nonetheless, as previously reported, a genuine semantic effect could potentially be ascribed only to a portion of the data (i.e. volitive and emotive verbs across time, as well as necessity verbs in COHI data), while results for the other semantic umbrella categories are not *de facto* due to semantics, but are instead lexical. Other than volitive, emotive and necessity matrices reported above, indicators of non-factual modality ceased to be significant after the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the only time period where the presence of explicit cues of non-factual reading has a significant favouring effect on the subjunctive.

Nonetheless, the lexical routinization of the subjunctive seems to always have been operative at least since the 16<sup>th</sup> century, in the corpora I analyzed, thereby countering the assumption that the subjunctive was used for semantic reasons in the past. Moreover, while the underlying grammar shows that all other factor groups are consistently losing importance in the underlying system, both “semantic” class of the governor and lexical identity/morphology of the embedded verb remained fairly stable, displaying relatively high ranges.

We observed in Section 5.1.2 that the higher the degree of lexicalization, the less productive the subjunctive may be said to be. Although we observed a counterintuitive apparent increase in productivity of the subjunctive in contemporary speech according to the increased number of governors, we nonetheless established that this apparent productivity actually stems from speakers with a high level of education using this feature to mark prestige. With the support of quantitative and statistical evidence, we know that the bulk of variation is accounted for by a

handful of governors and that this situation has remained fairly stable in the data I analyzed at least since the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Moreover, these governors – e.g. *credere*, *pensare*, *parere* and *sembrare*, among others – are taking more and more space within the variable context, by accounting for an increasing portion of the subjunctive morphology, which suggests an increasing lexicalization in discourse.

### **6.7 Subiunctivus modus: a case study in Vulgar Latin**

Now that we have determined that there are highly-structured patterns operating in the selection of the subjunctive in Italian suggesting that the subjunctive is slowly progressing on the path of the lexicalization, and that these were already operative since at least the 16<sup>th</sup> century, we are left with the question of whether the conditioning of subjunctive can be considered a case of inheritance and transmission from Latin as opposed to being a recent innovation. The goal here is to establish whether any semantic conditioning on the subjunctive was operative in the ancestral language. If so, we would have empirical evidence to suggest that we are dealing with semantic reduction in (all stages of) Italian, and possibly elucidating the consistent pattern observed with both volitive and emotive matrices in Italian and necessity verbs in historical Italian (COHI).

The question of whether subjunctive use and its alternation with the indicative is semantically based or not has not only characterized studies of the subjunctive in Romance languages, but has also long been scrutinized in Latin. This “hereditary feature” that is the subjunctive (translation mine, Cressot 1947: 139) would have also inherited the set of meanings ascribed to it in the Latin era, such as dubitative and hypothetical (Cressot 1947), or uncertain and irrealis (Leone [1949: 13]; see also Mellet [1994]; Perotti [1996]). Italian is also acknowledged as the Romance language that would have “retained from Latin [subjunctive] not only clear formal marking, but also substantial semantic motivation” (Harris & Vincent 1997:

303). Going back to the source, however, will allow me to determine whether the use of the Latin subjunctive should be viewed as a meaningful or as a mere marker of subordination.

Where did this opposition meaningful vs. meaningless morphology arise in Latin, what exactly does the semantic motivation consist of, and was this inherited by Italian? The answer lies in the use of the subjunctive in a variety of syntactic environments, in which the selection of the subjunctive is either viewed as constrained by semantic motivations or not. Despite its use in the contexts of main clauses, which is far more extensive in Latin compared to the current linguistic situation in Romance languages (cf. Harris 1978)<sup>51</sup>, the subjunctive is undeniably the typical mood of subordination (Magni 2009: 244; also Noonan 2007; Jespersen 1924; Palmer 2001). While traditionally “most analyses of the subjunctive mood in Latin have taken it to be self-evident that the opposition indicative:subjunctive is a meaningful one” (Harris 1974: 169), it is widely argued that Latin subjunctive was already *meaningless* (*ibid.* 171) during the Vulgar Latin era, instead functioning as a “formal marker required by convention and/or as a stylistic variant in certain contexts” (Harris 1974: 169). This suggests that “the attraction [of the embedded mood] has become almost entirely formal and mechanical” (Handford [1947: 149]; citing Bennett [1910]).

It is commonly accepted that subordinate clauses originated from the supposed shift<sup>52</sup> from paratactic to hypotactic syntactic solutions (Palmer 2001; Haudry 1973; Murphy 2008). In other words, independent clauses are reorganized into a more complex syntax with dependency relations, causing the shift illustrated in Table 6.15.

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<sup>51</sup> See Woodcock (1959: 84) for the description of its independent jussive, optative, and potential uses.

<sup>52</sup> In terms of grammaticalization, this is what Lehmann (1985) referred to as *downgrading*, meaning that at the end of the pole of parataxis “there is a clear hierarchical relation between them, the subordinate clause being downgraded to a particular well-defined constituent within the main clause” (*ibid.* 156).

PARATAXIS	>	HYPOTAXIS
volo; veniat <sub>SUBJ</sub> <i>'I wish it; let him come'</i>		volo ut veniat <sub>SUBJ</sub> <i>'I want him to come'</i>

Table 6.15: Shift from parataxis (with subjunctive used in the main clause) to hypotaxis (with subjunctive used in the subordinate clause) in Latin. Adapted from Harris (1978: 168).

It has been argued that the hypotactic solution views the use of the subjunctive as linked to the most common subordinating conjunction in Latin, *ut* (Harris 1978), which can be characterized as a case of grammaticalization. In other words, the subjunctive became generalized after the most common conjunction (Harris 1974: 172).

The subjunctive in subordinate clauses is said to reflect the mood of an independent clause (Palmer 2001), by mirroring the “original optative value of the subjunctive form in the earlier paratactic structure” (Harris 1978: 168), and therefore making subjunctive morphology meaningful. Its use is considered *harmonic* when governed by main clause verbs indicating volition/order (Magni 2009: 245), as well as when it is governed by “verbs of hindering and preventing, which can be considered negative counterparts to ordering” (*ibid.* [2009]; also, Bybee et al. [1994]). Moreover, subjunctive subordinate clauses are considered to have been generated not only from paratactic volitive main clauses, but also from more dubitative/potential main clause uses, which are then transferred into the hypotactic syntactic structures that are linked to governors such as *accidit* ‘it occurs’, *contingit* ‘it turns out’, or *non dubito* ‘I don’t doubt’. This syntactic reorganization, and the recognition of subjunctive morphology as a marker of subordination, would have led to the gradual permeation of the subjunctive into other syntactic environments that were traditionally associated with the indicative. This would have *already* occurred during the Latin period, in particular in “all indirect questions, a change which was completed by about 200 BCE” as well as in adverbial sentences (Magni 2009: 247-250), which are syntactically considered non-harmonic with the original main clause meaning. In the

case of indirect questions in particular, the extension of the use of the subjunctive to these contexts can be traced back to the independent use of the subjunctive with the meanings of asking, advising, expressing helplessness, deliberation, etc., (*ibid.* 247), which also originated the reanalysis of the subjunctive as being considered the mood of “non-assertive complement clauses” (Bybee et al. 1994: 222). However, the extension of the subjunctive to non-harmonic contexts, and its increasingly common interpretation as a subordination marker, would have had a consequence on its original semantics: “the semantic contribution of the subjunctive mood becomes less important, and it is interpreted as an obligatory concomitant of subordination of a certain type. From this point, the subjunctive spreads to other subordinate clause types, where it is less semantically appropriate and makes little or no semantic contribution” (Magni 2009: 260), which is also in line with what Harris (1978) previously proposed. This would imply that the loss of meaning is associated with morphosyntactic developments in Latin, as opposed to being a recent innovation, further suggesting that the lack of semantic motivation behind mood selection was *already* a characteristic of Latin.

A second important aspect of Latin syntax, which has been linked to the use of subjunctive in subordinate clauses as well as to its transfer into Romance languages, is the well-attested typological shift from OV to VO word order. Murphy (2008) argued that the typological shift from left- to right-branching structures has “led to an increase in subordinating conjunctions in Latin” (*ibid.* 98). In her analysis, the two distinct branching techniques included a different outcome for subjunctive use in subordinate clauses (*ibid.* 101):

- Left-branching subordination included a) infinitival constructions, b) participial constructions, and c) subjunctive mood with no additional marker of subordination;

- Right-branching subordination included overt pre-posed subordinating conjunctions, i.e. subordination is marked pre-verbally.<sup>53</sup>

Although the word-order question is beyond the scope of the present dissertation, it is important to keep in mind that this change would have encouraged a high degree of branching congruency and an increasing use in frequency of explicit subordinating conjunctions, strengthening the (hypotactic) syntactic subordinating role of the subjunctive in the grammar, and countering claims that subjunctive selection is semantically-based. Additionally, the shift assumes that a regression of the *Accusativus cum Infinitivo* (AcI)<sup>54</sup> and non-finite complementation both occur in favour of explicit finite complementation, therefore stimulating an increasingly generalized use of the subjunctive in right-branching subordination. Generally, word-order is considered as a major syntactic change that occurred between Late Latin and Romance languages. In contrast, some scholars assume that in earlier periods “the normal word order in colloquial Latin was [already] SVO” (Pinkster 1990: 188). In light of this observation, one may assume that right-branching subordination was already favoured in colloquial/informal VL data, and therefore that the subjunctive would already have been a general concomitant of subordination.

Another element pertaining to the degree of grammaticalization of the subjunctive is the synthesis of the complementizer from Latin to Romance languages, understood as the reduction from a variety of Latin complementizers into a general one for all Romance languages: *que*. In fact, the widely shared *che/que* complementizer emerged as a generalized subordinator in

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<sup>53</sup> A similar observation was previously made by Herman (1989), with supporting quantitative evidence, showing that in Late Latin, finite and non-finite (*Accusativus cum Infinitivo*) complements were competing syntactic alternatives, although “before the verb, AcI is practically the only possibility, whereas after the verb, the binary choice between AcI and QUOD/QUIA clauses becomes possible” (*ibid.* 133).

<sup>54</sup> The *Accusativus cum Infinitivo* (AcI) is a Latin infinitival construction where the subordinate verb is infinitive and the subordinate subject is the form of an accusative, as in *dixi<sub>say</sub>.PFCT.IND.1SG mustellam<sub>3SG.ACC</sub> comesse<sub>INF</sub>* (VLC<sub>Co</sub>.XLVI.448) ‘I said that a weasel ate (them)’.

Romance, taking over other Latin subordinating conjunctions (i.e. *quoniam*, *quia*, *quod* > *que/che*; Murphy [2008]; see also Herman [1989]; Vincent & Harris [1997: 66]). This would have resulted from a two-fold generalization of the conjunctions in which (Stage-1) they express a relatively wide range of meanings but subsequently (Stage-2) undergo a semantic bleaching, causing overlap between competing forms (Murphy 2008: 149)<sup>55</sup>.

These are relevant aspects to consider, since the increasing frequency of the subordinating strategy and conjunctions, coupled with the generalized use with *ut* in Latin<sup>56</sup> that would have been caused by the shift reported above (Murphy 2008), suggests that the subjunctive would have been *generalized as the mood of subordination* in the Latin era and therefore would have made little or no semantic contribution. How does this relate to grammaticalization and the transfer of this mood into Romance languages, and more specifically, to the question of inheritance of the underlying conditioning from Latin to Italian? The comparative diachronic analysis of subjunctive variability in Italian showed that the factors that measure semantic contribution are either lost entirely (i.e. presence of indicators of non-factual modality) or are weakening over time (i.e. emotive, volitive and necessity verbs), whereas its lexicalized use is getting stronger. The nature of this pattern is internal and contradicts the assumption of a dramatic change that would have occurred due to external factors, such as informal style, (mainly southern) geographic origin of the speaker and low level of education (Bonzi 1977; Fochi 1856; Iacobini & Masini 2009; Lepschy & Lepschy 1977; Simone 1993).

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<sup>55</sup> Ledgeway (2012) makes a similar observation with regards to southern Italian dialects that maintained two distinct complementizers to formally mark realis/irrealis modal distinction, but which largely fell into disuse, suggesting that possibly “the relevant grammars have come to mark the distinction by some other means” (Ledgeway & Lombardi 2014: 26; see also Ledgeway 2012: 298), which would emphasize the lack of semantic contribution to mood alternation in southern vernaculars.

<sup>56</sup> Clackson reports that “the most striking divergences from Classical norms are observed in indirect questions, result clauses, purpose clauses and fear clauses” (2011: 137) with a change in the complementizer – in other words *quod* replaces *ut*.

Now the question is: to what extent can we trace this pattern back to Latin? In other words, was use of the subjunctive semantically motivated in the ancestor language and only subsequently lost or extensively reduced in Italian, instead becoming increasingly productive as a concomitant of subordination? Although it is widely accepted that there is a continuation of the Latin system of subordination and of the subjunctive mood in Italian (Disterheft & Viti 2010: 244), we should bear in mind that the syntactic differences reported above in terms of word order and complementation, namely the finite vs. non-finite complements, could result in divergent patterns for the selection of the subjunctive. One output could be that Latin might make extensive use of non-finite complementation, thus avoiding embedded subjunctive clauses, while Italian might display a number of characteristics of a widespread subordinating strategy for subjunctive use in embedded clauses. In fact, as reported above with regards to Latin word order, complementation, and the supposed extensive use of non-finite/AcI complements, we may expect considerably fewer subjunctives in the syntactic environment targeted here, contrary to what we observe in Italian, since some contexts may primarily or exclusively take non-finite complements.

Several factors are reported elsewhere as conditioning the selection of the subjunctive in completive clauses, including cases where supposedly the subjunctive may not have occurred at all given the more frequent use of non-finite complementation. These conditions are identified in the literature in relation to the type of the main predicate (Clackson 2011; Harris & Vincent 1997; Magni 2009) and some semantic classes are said to favour non-finite complements in Latin as opposed to Italian, thus avoiding mood selection entirely. It is indeed widely accepted that some types of main predicates select a specific mood in Latin and another in Italian, and this

contrast would be observable mainly with communicative/propositional attitude predicates. For instance:

Saying and thinking predicates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Saying verbs (such as <i>dico</i> ‘say’) as well as thinking verbs (such as <i>puto</i> ‘think’) generally take a finite complement clause in Romance languages, while their Latin counterparts involve “the classical ‘accusative and infinitive’ with verbs of saying and thinking” (Harris &amp; Vincent 1988: 67).<sup>57</sup></li> <li>- However, when a finite complement clause is selected, Latin presumably selects the indicative categorically, while Romance languages, including Italian, admit or tend to use the subjunctive instead (see Disterheft &amp; Viti 2010: 248).</li> </ul>
Volition, necessity and emotive predicates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Verbs of ordering, persuading, and fearing require the subjunctive with its relative conjunction <i>ut/ne</i>, (Clackson 2011: 137; Racioppi 1871). Therefore, Italian parallels Latin.</li> <li>- However, verbs of wishing and hoping (falling within the volitional category in this study) more frequently trigger a non-finite complement in Latin<sup>58</sup> (Magni 2009; Palmer 2001), while these are considered subjunctive triggers in Italian.</li> </ul>

The expected outcome in relation to the type of main predicate can be schematized in the following way:

<sup>57</sup> The choice of a non-finite complement “came to be replaced by the emergent pattern of finite complementation with QUID/QUOD+*embedded sentence*” (Harris & Vincent 1997: 27).

<sup>58</sup> This hypothesis is essentially semantic in nature since the choice of a different syntactic outcome, thus avoiding finite subjunctive complementation, “may reflect the fact that hopes are more likely to be realized than wishes – and so less likely to be marked as *Irrealis*” (Palmer 2001: 192).

Saying/Thinking verbs		Volitive verbs		Necessity/Emotive verbs	
<i>Latin</i>	<i>Italian</i>	<i>Latin</i>	<i>Italian</i>	<i>Latin</i>	<i>Italian</i>
IND	IND/ SUBJ	SUBJ	SUBJ	SUBJ	SUBJ
Non-Finite	Finite	Non-Finite	Finite	Finite	Finite

Figure 6.5: Prediction of mood selection according to the type of main predicate, in Latin and Italian, based on what is generally reported in the literature.

As also illustrated in Figure 6.5, the main contrast lies with verbs of thinking (which we have operationalized as verbs of *opinion*) and saying (operationalized as verbs of *communication*) which trigger the indicative in Latin supposedly categorically, but where the subjunctive has subsequently permeated these contexts in Italian, which is so far confirmed by our empirical analysis. On the other hand, necessity, emotive, and volitive verbs do not contrast in terms of mood selection between Latin and Italian, but opinion, communicative, and volitive verbs are said to quasi-categorically select non-finite constructions in Latin (Figure 6.5). But the danger of using casual observations to inform hypotheses applies to Latin as well, and the general divergence between Italian and Latin in terms of complementation with verbs of thinking and saying has been contested: Marx (cited in Vincent [2016]) found in early Latin writers the complementizer *QUOD* + finite complement clause with these types of governors, as opposed to the expected *AcI/Infinitive*. Despite the generalization of the subjunctive with *ut* and the co-existence of these two elements reported as a general trend of Latin, Pinkster cites cases of *rogo* ‘to ask’, but also of *oportet* ‘it is necessary’, *moneo* ‘to warn’, and *impetro* ‘to obtain’ with the

subjunctive instead of the complementizer *ut* as cases of *colloquial* features (2010: 198-99).<sup>59</sup> As cited in Pinkster (2010), Halla-aho (2009) suggests that “variation between *rogo* (etc.) + subjunctive and *rogo* (etc.) *ut* + subjunctive depends not on register but on syntactic contexts” with the former favoured “where the subordinate verb was close to the governing verb” (2009: 82-5). A similar observation was made by Leiwo (2010) who further suggests that, in doing so, Petronius was mirroring non-standard speech (2010: 286). One last observation that is worth mentioning is that the subjunctive was already considered in the Latin era to be a ‘better’ linguistic choice (Ferri & Probert 2010: 31), thus revealing its apparent linguistic prestige. In fact, as also reported by Ferri and Probert, the roman grammarian Diomedes “does not condemn the use of indicative for the use of subjunctive as *non Latinum*, but recommends the other construction as *eruditus*” (2010: 31), adding that, in particular, Petronius illustrates such stylistic variation by opting for the indicative to mark uneducated speech. Although the stylistic aspect seems tied mainly to the abandon of the subjunctive in indirect questions, it is important to acknowledge that such morphology was already the object of normative injunction, related to the accepted norm and to more careful speech, which in and of itself contradicts the supposed semantic meaning and instead supports of the fact that “*per se non exprimat sensum*” (‘by itself it does not express meaning,’ Diomedes, Latin grammarian; Keil *ed.* [1857: 340]). Given Petronius’ intent in reproducing the speech of the lower class (cf. Brown [1956: 13], “the language and style constantly change to indicate differences in class and culture”), we can expect a relatively important use of the indicative in lieu of the subjunctive in the approximation to vernacular data studied here – if the hypothesis of primarily stylistic conditioning holds true.

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<sup>59</sup> Pinkster made use of a corpus of 15 letters from Marcus Caelius Rufus to Cicero and 8 letters from Cicero to Rufus, totaling 5,272 and 2,011 words respectively (2010: 186).

The results reported in the limited quantitative studies and studies based on (sometimes divergent) casual observations suggest that a) systematic analysis is required in order to ascertain mood selection in Latin – hypotheses and observations are operationalized and tested in a variationist methodology – and b) particular attention needs to be paid to the benchmark upon which the analyst bases his/her research. All the aforementioned features of Latin, some of which are apparently shared between Latin and Italian and others contrasting the two, can inform us on the conditioning of the subjunctive in completive clauses, as well as what may have been left behind or transferred through time to Romance languages. This is an important aspect of the current research: given the way that the variable context for subjunctive has been defined, differences in syntactic complementation may have an impact on the results. To begin with, I extracted the subjunctive completive clauses from the Latin data by replicating the method for the Italian subjunctive.<sup>60</sup>

Performing this step ensures a first degree of comparability between the two datasets. In order to establish the persistence of the governors across languages and time, every single governor found in VL was also searched in the Italian data where these did not appear in the Italian governor pool, and vice versa. This method enables us to establish to what extent the governors were transmitted from Latin to Italian, in addition to their persistence and relative association with the subjunctive, and also allows us to address the question of what conditioning is transmitted. However, we are still left with the issue of the supposed divergent syntactic

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<sup>60</sup> Homophony between the subjunctive and the indicative is found in Latin for a wide variety of forms, mainly belonging to the active voice and overlapping between future indicative and perfect subjunctive. For instance, 1<sup>st</sup> conjugation verbs (e.g. *amo* ‘I love’) between future perfect indicative and perfect subjunctive: 2SG (*amaveris*), 3SG (*amaverit*), 1PL (*amaverimus*); 2PL (*amaveritis*), 3PL (*amaverint*); 2<sup>nd</sup> conjugation verbs (e.g. *moneo* ‘I warn’): 2PL (*monueritis*) and 3PL (*monuerint*); 3<sup>rd</sup> (e.g. *dico* ‘I say’) and 4<sup>th</sup> conjugation verbs (e.g. *audio* ‘I hear’): 1SG future indicative and present subjunctive (*ducam*) at the active voice as well as at the passive voice (*ducar*); a few forms of the future perfect indicative and perfect subjunctive such as 2SG (*duxeris*), 3SG (*duxerit*), 1PL (*duxerimus*), 2PL (*duxeritis*), 3PL (*duxerint*); as well as 2SG, 3SG, 1PL, 2PL, 3PL between perfect future indicative and perfect subjunctive of almost all irregular verbs such as *sum*, *possum*, *eo*, *volo*, *nolo*, *malo*, *fero* and *do*.

strategy characterizing Latin that could affect our results. One or both of the following situations may apply: a) some governors may never surface in the variable context because they never had the chance to select a finite complement clause, and therefore a subjunctive; b) some governors present in our governor pool may select only a few subjunctives because they favour non-finite complementation (cf. Figure 6.5). In order to gain a better understanding of whether a preference for non-finite complementation in VL could have affected the possibility of triggering the subjunctive or the indicative mood in a completive clause, I extended the variable context for VL by searching for every governor that appeared in Petronius data (*Cena Trimalchionis*, cf. Section 3.1.2.2) as well as those that appeared in Italian but did not surface in VL, regardless of how many times these selected a non-finite complement instead. Although non-finite complementation is beyond the scope of the current study, this at least allows us to draw more reliable conclusions on the use of the subjunctive in completive clauses in VL, and to reach a better understanding of the persistence of governors across languages and time.

In the following section, I first report on the extraction of the subjunctive in VL according to the variable context stated in Chapter 3, i.e. every tensed matrix verb that governed a subjunctive at least once.

### **6.7.1 The overall trajectory of the subjunctive**

In the VL data, I identified 20 distinct governors and a near-categorical overall rate of subjunctive selection: 97% (71/73).

<b>Governor</b>	<b>Translation</b>	<b>%Subj</b>	<b>N</b>
<i>rogo</i>	to ask	100%	22/22
<i>curo</i>	to ensure	89%	8/9
<i>suadeo</i>	to recommend	100%	6/6
<i>timeo</i>	to fear	100%	5/5
<i>oportet</i>	it is necessary	100%	5/5
<i>caveo</i>	to beware	100%	3/3
<i>licet</i>	it is permitted	100%	3/3
<i>persuadeo</i>	to persuade	100%	3/3
<i>nolo</i>	not to want	100%	2/2
<i>non est</i>	it is not	100%	2/2
<i>spero</i>	to hope	50%	1/2
<i>dubito</i>	to doubt	100%	2/2
<i>video</i>	to understand	100%	2/2
<i>miror</i>	to be astonished	100%	1/1
<i>experior</i>	to find out	100%	1/1
<i>expecto</i>	to expect	100%	1/1
<i>volo</i>	to want	100%	1/1
<i>veto</i>	to forbid	100%	1/1
<i>indignatus est</i>	to be resented	100%	1/1
<i>efficio</i>	to make	100%	1/1
<b>Total</b>		<b>97%</b>	<b>71/73</b>

Table 6.16: Subjunctive selection with verbal governors in Vulgar Latin ('Cena Trimalchionis' from the *Satyricon* by Petronius). Governors are sorted by total number of tokens.

The indicative only appears in two tokens, one with the governor *spero* 'I hope' (80) and one with *curo* 'to care' (81).

(80) **Spero** tamen iam veterem pudorem sibi *imponit*<sub>IND.</sub> (VLC<sub>o</sub>.XLVII.492)

'I hope at least that my stomach imposes some decencies on itself.'

(81) Nam quod strabonus *est*<sub>IND</sub> **non curo** (VLC<sub>o</sub>.XLVII.492)

'For instance, that he be crossed-eyed, I don't care.'

This first result shows almost no room for variability and the low number of governors contrasts with what has been found diachronically in Italian. Governors have been increasing in Italian: by the first time period targeted by this research (16<sup>th</sup> century) there were already 81. Nonetheless, the overall situation of the governors in VL parallels our previous findings with regards to the role of the governor to the selection of subjunctive rather than the amount of data at our disposal. A total of 12,576 words make up the data from the *Cena Trimalchionis*, and

despite having roughly a similar number of words as the corpus of 16<sup>th</sup>-century Italian data used in this study (N words: 19,621; N governors: 81), there are significantly fewer governors (N=20) in Latin and few tokens for almost all of them (for a total of only 73!), suggesting that complement clauses governed by a verb were not a highly productive context for the subjunctive in VL, as opposed to the overall tendency observed in Italian.

Let us now turn to the question of persistence of the governors across time, analysed using the same index of persistence as before. If governors are shared between VL and Italian, this is a first indication that a given lexical context has been transmitted. The overall rates of subjunctive selection show the propensity for a given governor to trigger the subjunctive over time. Results reported in Table 6.17 show that almost *all* the governors in Latin were also found in Italian (N=19/20)<sup>61</sup>, which a priori suggests persistence. This is a small number, however, compared to the other 239 lexical types attested in Italian over the centuries. What to make of this? A search of the Latin data for these Italian governors revealed that only one governor was used in the Latin text, but without the subjunctive: *credo* ‘I believe’ (0% subj., N=0/6).<sup>62</sup> This result is a first indication that the overall scarcity of governors in VL may be due to the fact that the governors were not subjunctive selecting contexts in the ancestor language, since they do not appear in the variable context at all. With the exception of *indignatus est*, all the other 19 governors found in the *Cena Trimalchionis* were transferred to Italian and shared across one or more time periods, with a third of them (35%, N=7/20) surviving consistently throughout the five periods: *expecto* ‘I expect’, *dubito* ‘I doubt’, *volo* ‘I want’, *nolo* ‘I do not want’, *oportet* ‘it

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<sup>61</sup> *Indignatus est* ‘to be resented’ is the only governor that was not shared nor found in Italian.

<sup>62</sup> It is worth mentioning that a few cases of this verb were also excluded since *credo* governing an embedded indicative could potentially be interpreted as parenthetical rather than indicative, as in the following example: Servus qui ad pedes Habinnae sedebat iussus credo a domino suo *proclamavit*<sub>IND</sub> subito canora voce. (VLCO.LXVIII.994), ‘A slave, who was sitting at the feet of Habinnas, upon being ordered [by his master], I believe, suddenly declaimed in a sing-song voice.’

is necessary’, and *credo* ‘I believe’, although the latter was an exclusively indicative-selecting context in the VL corpus (Table 6.17).

	Vulgar Latin		16 <sup>th</sup> Century		18 <sup>th</sup> Century		20 <sup>th</sup> Century		Actual Speech	
	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N
<b>Sharedness = 5</b>										
<i>nolo</i> ( $\approx$ <i>non volere</i> )	100	2/2	100	5/5	100	26/26	100	3/3	91	10/11
<i>volo</i> ( $\approx$ <i>volere</i> )	100	1/1	100	22/22	100	47/47	100	49/49	92	49/53
<i>oportet</i> ( $\approx$ <i>bisognare</i> )	100	5/5	100	1/1	100	29/29	100	9/9	92	55/60
<i>dubito</i> ( $\approx$ <i>dubitare</i> )	100	1/1	100	1/1	75	3/4	67	2/3	80	4/5
<i>exspecto</i> ( $\approx$ <i>aspettare</i> )	100	1/1	100	3/3	88	7/8	100	1/1	62	8/13
<i>credo</i> ( $\approx$ <i>credere</i> )	0	0/6	83	39/47	98	42/43	69	22/32	76	185/244
<b>Sharedness = 3</b>										
<i>rogo</i> ( $\approx$ <i>pregare</i> )	100	16/16	100	8/8	100	3/3				
<i>video</i> ( $\approx$ <i>guardare</i> )	100	1/1	100	3/3	100	3/3				
<i>suadeo</i> ( $\approx$ <i>consigliare</i> )	100	6/6	100	1/1	100	1/1				
<b>Sharedness = 2</b>										
<i>exspecto</i> ( $\approx$ <i>attendere</i> )	100	1/1	100	1/1						
<b>Sharedness = 3</b>										
<i>non est</i> ( $\approx$ <i>non è</i> )	100	2/2	100	1/1					32	53/168
<i>esperior</i> ( $\approx$ <i>scoprire</i> )	100	1/1			100	1/1			0	0/2
<i>caveo</i> ( $\approx$ <i>badare</i> )	100	3/3			80	4/5	0	0/1		
<i>rogo</i> ( $\approx$ <i>chiedere</i> )	100	16/16			100	1/4			100	18/18
<i>efficio</i> ( $\approx$ <i>fare</i> )	100	1/1	100	16/16	100	7/7				
<b>Sharedness = 4</b>										
<i>miror</i> ( $\approx$ <i>meravigliarsi</i> )	100	1/1	100	1/1	100	4/4			100	1/1
<i>timeo</i> ( $\approx$ <i>consigliare</i> )	100	5/5	75	3/4	100	2/2			0	0/1
<i>curo</i> ( $\approx$ <i>assicurare</i> )	100	7/7			33	2/2	0	0/6	0	0/3
<i>timeo</i> ( $\approx$ <i>avere paura</i> )	100	5/5			100	7/7	100	1/1	83	5/6
<i>licet</i> ( $\approx$ <i>permettere</i> )	100	3/3			100	6/6	100	2/2	100	2/2
<i>spero</i> ( $\approx$ <i>sperare</i> )	50	1/2			38	3/8	50	1/2	88	53/60
<b>Sharedness = 2</b>										
<i>exspecto</i> ( $\approx$ <i>attendere</i> )	100	1/1	100	1/1						
<i>veto</i> ( $\approx$ <i>vietare</i> )	100	1/1			100	1/1				

Table 6.17: Persistence of governors across time periods (from 2 to 5) and rate of subjunctive selection.<sup>63</sup>

<sup>63</sup> Governors are paired according to roughly the same meaning.

We still need to explain the differences between the two languages as far as a) the number of governors and b) the low number of tokens in VL. Given what was reported above in terms of the supposed syntactic differences in complementation, it raises the question of whether syntactic differences between the two languages could be the reason for the overall discrepancies. That is, is the supposed widespread use of infinitival clauses, including those with an accusative subject (*Accusativus cum Infinitivo*, Bodelot 2003; Bolkestein 1989) the reason why there were few finite complement clauses in VL and so little subjunctive data overall? In order to establish whether the overall situation observed with the verbal governors in Latin is due mainly to deep syntactic differences, each Latin governor was also analyzed for type of complement clause. As we mentioned above (Figure 6.5), Latin is said to trigger a non-finite complement more frequently compared to Romance (Magni 2009; among others). Although my sociohistorical analysis on Italian subjunctive, presented earlier in this chapter, lacks this type of measurement, we would still expect that if Latin was undergoing a major change from OV to VO structures and infinitival constructions were still preferred, results should show a considerable difference from the type of strategy employed by Italian (traditionally considered an SVO language). If a preference for non-finite complementation impedes the subjunctive from surfacing in VL, we would be able to explain such a low degree of productivity in the ancestor language and would have direct evidence of this major difference between VL and Italian.

Type of Complement:		FINITE						NON-FINITE		TOTAL	
		SUBJS		IND		AMBIGUOUS					
		%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N
GOVERNOR											
<i>rogo</i>	to ask	100%	22	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0	22
<i>curo</i>	to ensure	89%	8	11%	1	0%	0	0%	0	0	9
<i>suadeo</i>	to recommend	100%	6	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0	6
<i>timeo</i>	to fear	100%	5	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0	5
<i>oportet</i>	it is necessary	56%	5	0%	0	0%	0	44%	4	15	9
<i>caveo</i>	to beware	75%	3	0%	0	25%	1	0%	0	0	4
<i>licet</i>	it is permitted	43%	3	0%	0	57%	4	0%	0	0	7
<i>persuadeo</i>	to persuade	43%	3	0%	0	57%	4	0%	0	0	7
<i>nolo</i>	not to want	33%	2	0%	0	0%	0	67%	4	15	6
<i>non est</i>	it is not	100%	2	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0	2
<i>dubito</i>	to doubt	100%	2	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0	2
<i>video</i>	to understand	25%	2	0%	0	0%	0	75%	6	23	8
<i>spero</i>	to hope	33%	1	33%	1	0%	0	33%	1	4	3
<i>miror</i>	to be astonished	100%	1	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0	1
<i>efficio</i>	to make	100%	1	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0	1
<i>indignatus est</i>	to be resented	100%	1	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0	1
<i>experior</i>	to find out	100%	1	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1
<i>exspecto</i>	to expect	100%	1	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0	1
<i>volo</i>	to want	8%	1	0%	0	0%	0	92%	11	42	12
<i>veto</i>	to forbid	100%	1	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0	1
<i>credo</i>	to believe	0%	0	86%	6	14%	1	0%	0	0	7
<b>Total</b>		<b>62%</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>115</b>	

Table 6.18: Number of tokens (N) and proportion of finite vs. non-finite complementation (%) for each verbal governor in Vulgar Latin data. Governors are sorted by total number of tokens with subjunctive morphology.

Results in Table 6.18 show that only a quarter of the governors (N=5/21) avoided finite subordinate clauses by selecting an infinitival clause. Even though they each do so to different degrees, *oportet*, *nolo*, *volo*, *spero*, and *video* favour non-finite over finite complements. Almost half of these contexts belong to a single governor *volo* (N=11/26, 42% of all non-finite complements) and the rate increases if we consider its negative lexical counterpart, *nolo*: both of these together account for 58% of the contexts that avoided subjunctive complements. Other than these five governors, the majority of the governor pool (N=16/21 in Table 6.18) did not select non-finite complements altogether. Given the high degree of morphological homophony between the subjunctive and the indicative in Latin (cf. end of Section 6.7 above), our results had a relatively greater likelihood to be affected by such cases, thereby preventing us from

distinguishing the embedded mood and generating the apparent non-productivity observed here. These issues notwithstanding, even when we adduce cases of ambiguous morphology between the two moods, these are found to not be the reason for the restricted set of verbal governors in VL: only three governors out of the 20 subjunctive-selecting contexts identified in our dataset, *caveo*, *licet*, and *persuadeo*, were found with ambiguous embedded morphology.

To sum up, if Latin did make extensive use of infinitival complement clauses, we would have expected a higher number of governors selecting a non-finite complement. Instead, based on our results for type of complement selected by the subjunctive triggers, this does not seem to be an explanatory factor of the underlying differences observed between VL and Italian, i.e. given categorical rates of subjunctive selection and restriction under a very few governors in the former, and variable rates and huge expansion of the subjunctive-selecting governor pool – leaving little room for a semantic explanation. Moreover, by adding the non-finite complements to our tallies, we end up with 89 cases of finite complement clauses overall (cf. Table 6.18; sum of subjunctive, indicative, and ambiguous embedded forms) and 26 non-finite clauses, suggesting that at least for the governors identified here, the major strategy *is* finite complementation. Further investigation is certainly required in order to establish whether the subjunctive was already generalized as the mood of finite complementation in VL and the extent to which this syntactic strategy overrides the use of non-finite complementation, possibly by undertaking a comprehensive variationist study of Latin complementation beyond the subjunctive itself. The contrast between Latin and Italian in terms of choice of finite/non-finite complement, schematized in Figure 6.5 above, is said to occur in correlation with specific main-verb semantic types, specifically saying/thinking verbs (labelled as opinion and communicative verbs here) which favour non-finite complements in Latin. Therefore, if the bulk of the small

governor pool was *not* verbs of opinion or communication, we would have an explanation of the quantitative differences observed here, which are discussed in more detail in the next section.

### 6.8 From Latin to Italian: The lexicalization path

Summarizing, despite the low number of tokens in VL, some interesting trends were uncovered with regards to subjunctive use in completive clauses governed by verbs in VL and Italian. First of all, we did find some superficial evidence of linguistic change. As a matter of fact, the overall rate of subjunctive selection decreases from a quasi-categorical 97% in VL to 68% in contemporary Italian speech, with a slight reversal in 18<sup>th</sup>-century data (81%) (Figure 6.6).

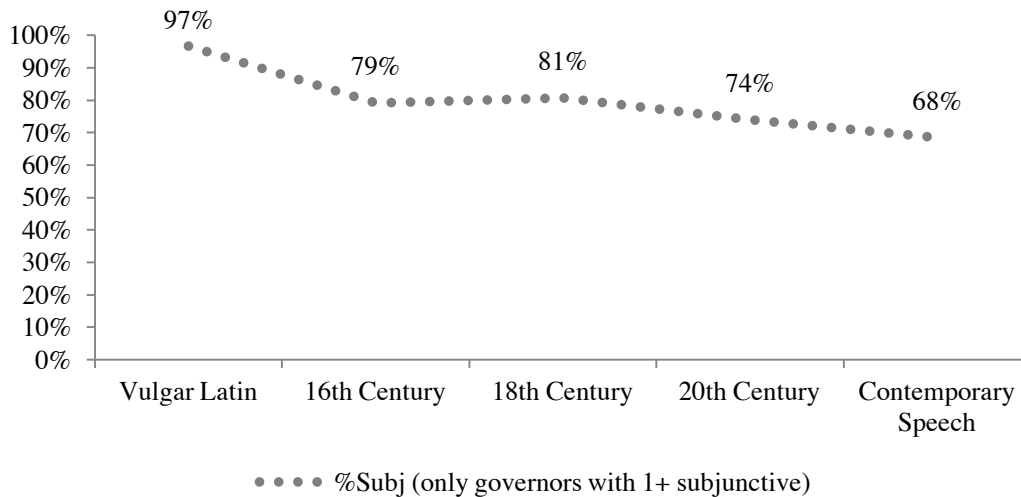


Figure 6.6: The trajectory of subjunctive selection across time from Vulgar Latin to 20<sup>th</sup>/21<sup>st</sup> century Italian.

Furthermore, we observed a striking difference in terms of the size of the governor pool, emphasizing the lack of productivity in Latin compared to Italian, particularly in contemporary speech. This was further bolstered by our observation that despite a corpus size equivalent to the 16<sup>th</sup>-century Italian dataset, the pool of VL governors is far smaller than that of 16<sup>th</sup>-century Italian, which is made up of only 20 verbs (Table 6.19).

	VL	COHI			SPEECH
	Late 1 <sup>th</sup> Century	16 <sup>th</sup> Century	18 <sup>th</sup> Century	20 <sup>th</sup> Century	20 <sup>th</sup> /21 <sup>st</sup> Century
Overall Rate Subj	97%	79%	81%	74%	68%
N Subj	71/73	295/373	408/505	207/279	1139/1663
N words	<b>12,576</b>	19,621	37,264	40,565	465,327
N governors	<b>20</b>	81	88	60	141 (76) <sup>64</sup>

Table 6.19: Subjunctive selection with regards to the number of words and governors, in Vulgar Latin, historical Italian data (COHI) and contemporary Italian speech datasets.

VL therefore contrasts with all stages Italian in this respect, since we observe a far richer set of governors in the daughter language.

Given our results, both synchronically and diachronically, how can we position this research in terms of linguistic change? Why is there such a difference in the number of governors in each language?

When we take into consideration all types of completive clauses, regardless of governor, we can observe *where* subjunctive morphology is used and how it is distributed. In fact, one possible answer to the above question can be traced back to the distribution of the morphology. I extracted and coded every token of subjunctive morphology from VL and Italian data according to the syntactic environment in which it surfaced. Once the results were compiled (Figure 6.7), we observe a split between Latin and Italian, with subjunctive morphology being used more and more with *verbs* in the latter, and with *non-verbal* governors, in other words, conjunctions, in the former, as shown with *ut* ‘so that’ in Latin (82) and *in modo che* ‘so that’ in Italian (83).

(82) Ego gloriosus volo efferri **ut** totus mihi populus bene *imprecetur*<sub>SUBJ</sub>.

(VLCo.LXXVIII.1251)

‘I want to be carried out in splendour, so that the whole crowd calls down blessings on me.’

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<sup>64</sup> If we consider only casual conversations, the total number of governors surfaced in actual speech data is

- (83) Deve eh bollire tanto [...] tre ore, piano piano, in questa broda, girala, **in modo che** non si *attacchi*<sub>SUBJ</sub>. (COR.52.26)

‘It needs ehm to boil a lot [...] three hours, very slowly, in this broth, stir, so that it won’t stick.’

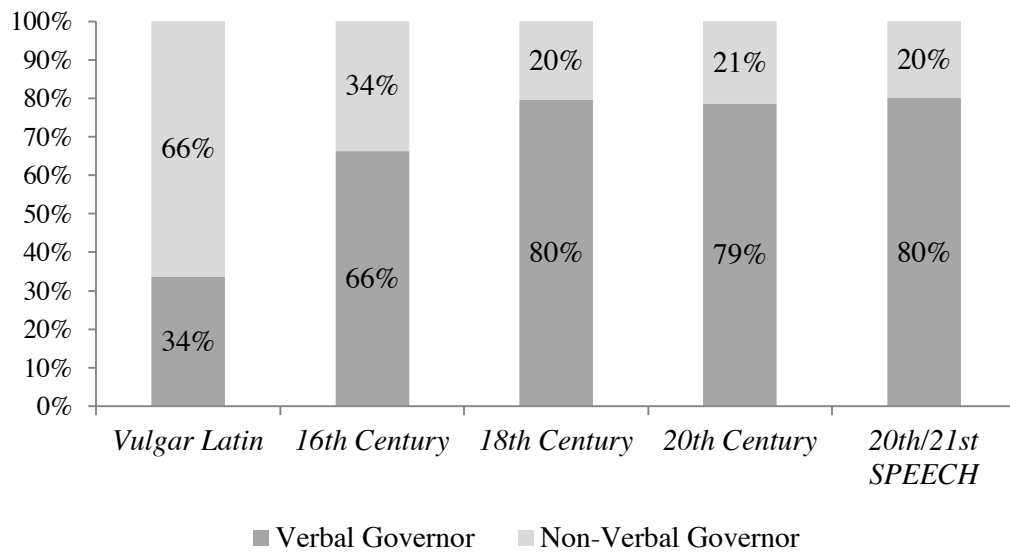


Figure 6.7: Distribution of subjunctive morphology in the context of completive clauses across time (from Vulgar Latin to contemporary Italian speech) when governed by either a verbal governor (object of study of the current research) or by a non-verbal governor.

It is clear that the type of governor is a major difference between the contexts where the subjunctive surfaces. Whereas the Latin subjunctive was mainly used with conjunctions, which would support the theory of its being generalized to conjunctions due to the shift from OV to VO syntax, thus promoting mainly finite complementation (Murphy 2008), the situation in Italian is reversed, i.e. the subjunctive is more frequently used with a verbal governor as opposed to a conjunction. The reversal of the Latin pattern can already be noticed in 16<sup>th</sup>-century data (66% verbal governors), which stabilizes by the 18<sup>th</sup> century, with 80% of the subjunctive morphology distributed over contexts of completive clauses governed by verbs. When we compare the

distribution of subjunctive morphology across all the linguistic contexts where it is and was used, we observe that a change is taking place over time with regards to *where* it occurs (Figure 6.8).

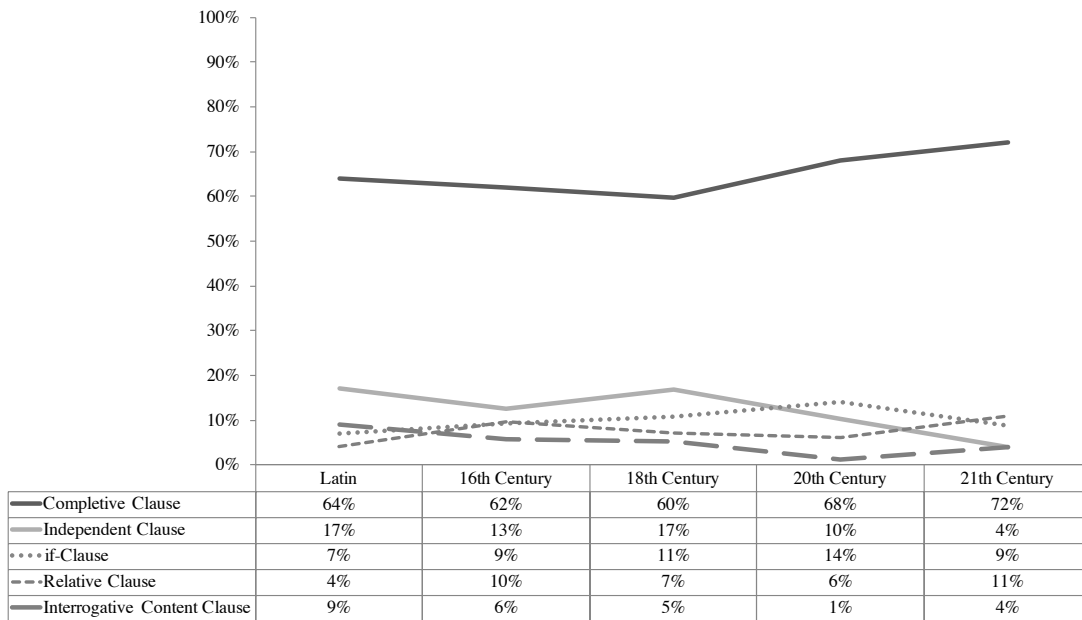


Figure 6.8: Distribution of subjunctive morphology across syntactic environments, from Vulgar Latin to contemporary Italian speech.

As previously reported (Harris 1978; Noonan 2007), subjunctive morphology *was* already the legitimate marker of subordination in VL, since its use was mainly relegated to subordination, particularly in completive clauses. Results for the distribution of the morphology show that it was used only 16% of the time in independent clauses (84), and this context sees less and less subjunctive morphology across time since its rate of occurrence drops from 17% to 4%. Within the category of subordinate clauses, the subjunctive is slowly disappearing from contexts other than completive and relative clauses. In fact, we can observe that while it accounts for 9% of interrogative content clauses in VL (regardless of the question of variability), the rate of subjunctive morphology in this context decreases in Italian (85). Despite some fluctuation, *if*-clauses remain fairly stable (86), while an increasing trend is observed with relative clauses (87).

(84) Independent clause: Il cielo me ne *liberi*<sub>SUBJ</sub>. Non voglio donne.

(COHI.18C.001.630)

‘May the heavens save me. I don’t want women.’

(85) Interrogative content clause: Però non mi ricordo quale *fosse*<sub>SUBJ</sub>.

(COR.216.038)

‘But I don’t remember which one it was.’

(86) If-clause: Se non *fossi*<sub>SUBJ</sub> certo di quello che dico, non l’avrei mai detto.

(COR.422.244)

‘If I weren’t sure of what I was saying, I would have never said it.’

(87) Relative clause: Ho cercato di fare un corso che non *fosse*<sub>SUBJ</sub> tanto un corso di fotografia come solitamente si può incontrare nelle scuole.

(COR.316.009)

‘I tried to take a class that wouldn’t be just one of those classes that you usually find in school.’

Subjunctive morphology is distributed more among completive clauses both in Latin and Italian, showing that this syntactic context has remained the major repository of subjunctive use over time. Moreover, this trend has increased: from 64% in Vulgar Latin to 72% in contemporary speech data.

Given the historical aspect of the subjunctive and its grammaticalization path, the subjunctive is assumed to have a) evolved from a paratactic to a hypotactic syntax, b) it has been interpreted as a formal marker of subordination, also triggering its spreading out to other syntactic subordinating environments such as interrogative content clauses in Latin, and c) its subordinating function has been transmitted into Italian. Recall that in fact some scholars pointed

out that “the subjunctive developed into a formal means to mark subordinate clauses as such; in other words, it was a morphosyntactic rather than a morpho-semantic means” (Pinkster 1990: 210), suggesting that the Latin subjunctive had *already* lost its original semantic meaning in its subordinating use, whereas it would have kept a distinct meaning from the indicative when used in independent clauses (see also Harris 1974).

Figure 6.8 clearly shows that the subjunctive had *already* spread out in VL to other subordinating contexts, such as relative clauses, indirect question clauses, etc. (as pointed out by Harris 1974, 1978; Magni 2009; Haudry 1973), which supports the notion that a *generalization* had already occurred by that time. Its extended use in subordinate syntactic position can be taken as evidence of the subjunctive being interpreted as a *subordinate marker* and a shift from a stronger to a weaker hypotactic link between the clauses (Magni 2009). When we compare this overall trend observed in Latin with what we have discussed for historical and contemporary Italian, it is clear that the generalized subordinating function has been transmitted to Italian along with the governors, even though Italian has considerably expanded this original pool of governors. Finally, we must explain the nature of the weak and often-non-significant semantic conditioning observed in Italian. When we look at how these semantic categories are represented in our corpus of VL in terms of transmission, verbs of volition, necessity, and emotion are all extremely stable over time, showing quasi-categorical rates of the subjunctive from VL to contemporary Italian. Indeed, the semantic classes with the richest lexical inventories are those of verbs marking volition or emotion, as shown in Table 6.20.

<b>Semantic Class</b>	<b>Governor</b>	<b>Translation</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>N</b>
VOLITIVE	<i>rogo</i>	to ask	100%	22/22
	<i>caveo</i>	to beware	100%	3/3
	<i>licet</i>	it is permitted	100%	3/3
	<i>nolo</i>	not to want	100%	2/2
	<i>spero</i>	to hope	50%	1/2
	<i>exspecto</i>	to expect	100%	1/1
	<i>volo</i>	to want	100%	1/1
	<i>veto</i>	to forbid	100%	1/1
	<i>efficio</i>	to make	100%	1/1
	<i>persuadeo</i>	to persuade	100%	3/3
	<b>Sub-Total</b>		<b>97%</b>	<b>38/39</b>
EMOTIVE	<i>curo</i>	to ensure	89%	8/9
	<i>suadeo</i>	to recommend	100%	6/6
	<i>timeo</i>	to fear	100%	5/5
	<i>indignatus est</i>	to be resented	100%	1/1
	<i>miror</i>	to be astonished	100%	1/1
	<b>Sub-Total</b>		<b>95%</b>	<b>21/22</b>
NECESSITY	<i>oportet</i>	it is necessary	100%	5/5
	<b>Sub-Total</b>		<b>100%</b>	<b>5/5</b>
OPINION	<i>experior</i>	to find out	100%	1/1
	<i>non est</i>	it is not	100%	2/2
	<i>dubito</i>	to doubt	100%	2/2
	<i>video</i>	to understand	100%	2/2
	<b>Sub-Total</b>		<b>100%</b>	<b>7/7</b>
	<b>Total</b>		<b>97%</b>	<b>71/73</b>

Table 6.20: Governors and their rates of subjunctive selection according to semantic class.

It is clear that subjunctive morphology was mainly restricted to emotive and volitive contexts in Latin. This is an important finding since it confirms previous observations that the embedded subjunctive is in fact governed mainly by volitive and emotive verbs, which are generally considered harmonic contexts for with the original paratactic use. Our evidence seems to suggest that the Latin harmonic hypotactic contractions have been transmitted into Italian and retained across centuries, which we can be classified as a case of transmission and inheritance of the history of the language (Labov 1989). If we assume that the contemporary Italian subjunctive kept the semantic motivation in these contexts, we nonetheless need to acknowledge the fact that it is *also* found in other non-harmonic contexts such as those with other types of governors, e.g. *experior* ‘to find out’, albeit to a lesser extent, and is also used in other embedded complements,

such as interrogative-content clauses (cf. Figure 6.8 above). Therefore, there are two major aspects characterising the subjunctive in the ancestral language: one is semantic, i.e. the subjunctive retains the meanings of the old paratactic solutions, and the other is syntactic and lexical, but these results shed light on what we observed in Italian across time nonetheless. On the one hand, there is an isolated effect of a few semantic categories, such as volition, emotion, and necessity; on the other hand, there is a syntactic subordinating function performed by the subjunctive. In light of these results, we can assume that both dimensions have been transmitted into Italian. One explanation might be that, although it had already generalized as a marker of subordination and spread out to a variety of embedded contexts, the Latin subjunctive was mainly used with volitive and emotive verbs within *that*-clauses (Figure 6.9).

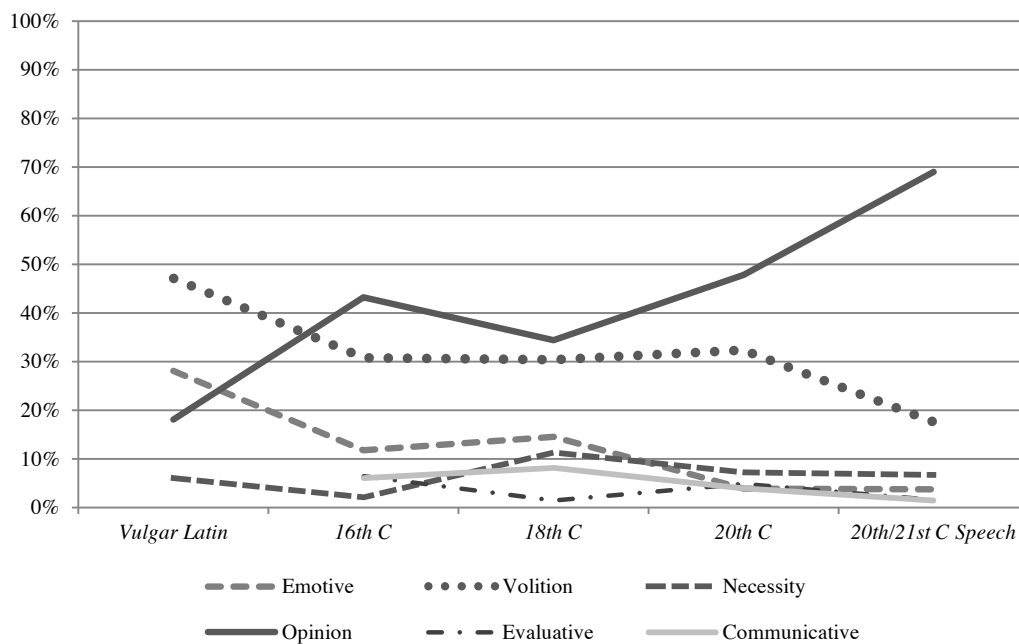


Figure 6.9: Distribution of subjunctive morphology across semantic classes in Vulgar Latin, historical, and contemporary Italian data.

There is agreement on the fact that both communicative and opinion verbs are said to trigger non-finite complement clauses in VL, as opposed to the trend observed in Italian. In fact,

both these classes are either underrepresented or absent from the VL benchmark. The fact that these types of matrix verbs were not considered subjunctive-selecting contexts in VL would explain the important discrepancy observed with respect to the Italian situation, i.e. increased number of governors, even though only a few of them account for more and more of the variation in discourse, such as *credere*, *pensare*, *parere*, and *sembrare*. On the other hand, the strong association of the subjunctive with the above-mentioned semantic classes can be considered a pattern transferred from Latin into Italian, and one which is remarkably stable across centuries. We do observe an innovative trend nonetheless: subjunctive morphology is gaining ground in other contexts that are non-harmonic with the original Latin's, operationalized here as opinion, communicative, and evaluative verbs (Figure 6.9), which provides additional support for the assumption that subjunctive use has a “relative stability so often found in Romance [...] but ha[s] ceased to have any semantic import” (Harris 1974: 175).

Although we are far from the advanced lexicalization observed in other Romance languages such as French (Poplack et al. 2018), we do observe that the Italian subjunctive is proceeding on the unidirectional path of lexicalization. We observe a weakening effect and a substantial reduction of the distribution of the subjunctive with verbs of volition, emotion, and necessity. Moreover, through systematic empirical analyses, we can confirm that the latter category has lost its effect in contemporary speech. Italian seems so far to maintain a “semantic” effect of volitive and emotive verbs on subjunctive selection, while also expanding its subordinating function that was already productive by the 16<sup>th</sup> century by adding more governors and that acquired only in recent years a high degree of social prestige.

## 7 General Discussion

In the preceding chapters, I presented my study of mood selection in completive clauses, with a particular focus on the factors promoting the selection of the subjunctive in contemporary Italian, both synchronically (using two corpora of actual speech data [C-ORAL-ROM 2005; LIP 1993]) and diachronically (using a database of 16<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> century Italian stage plays [COHI] compiled for this dissertation). The same variationist method was replicated on a corpus of Vulgar Latin (VL), the linguistic ancestor of Italian, in order to discern its variability and apprehend to what extent the conditioning has been transmitted to the daughter language. The corpus of VL was extracted from the core chapters of the *Satyricon* by Petronius. Despite the limitations of these corpora – the contemporary datasets of actual speech were not built according to variationist procedures, though they still feature unmonitored, spontaneous speech, both in more casual and careful settings and recorded in different cities (cf. Section 3.1.1) as well as the issue of the representativeness of speech in the historical data (cf. Section 3.1.2) –, they enabled me to answer some central questions about the mechanisms operating on subjunctive variability in Italian. The originality of the current study stems from the systematic and empirical examination of the subjunctive across time to elucidate processes involved in its selection. Specifically, this research was couched within the framework of Variation Theory (Labov 1969; 1972; among others) and by drawing from both prescriptive and theoretical/descriptive approaches, as well as from the limited corpus-based research available on this topic in Italian, claims on subjunctive conditioning were operationalized and tested systematically to determine whether and to what extent they account for variability. As the first study to address the issue of

the subjunctive in Italian and VL from a variationist perspective, the present research constitutes a new way of analyzing this phenomenon in Italian as well as in Latin, and provides new insights into this feature of great interest.

My results only became apparent through the systematic and exhaustive analysis of subjunctive use in this corpus-based perspective, focussing on actual speech or close facsimiles of speech (i.e. dialogue written for stage plays). As alluded to above, although the limitations imposed by the data and the fact that these datasets are fairly heterogeneous, the underlying conditioning shows remarkable parallels and clear effects across both languages and time, as summarized below.

The subjunctive is by far the majority variant used in completive clauses for both contemporary (68%) and historical Italian (79% in the 16<sup>th</sup> century; 81% in the 18<sup>th</sup> century; 74% in the 20<sup>th</sup> century). Overall, these findings show that the subjunctive seems quite productive on the surface. Over the centuries, the subjunctive has been triggered by a great number of governors, and despite the decreasing overall rate of subjunctive selection in contemporary speech data, we observed an increasing number of governors that are recruited to trigger the subjunctive in discourse (N=141). However, when we turned to the underlying conditions on variant choice in contemporary Italian, which surfaced from both quantitative and statistical analyses, we observed two important findings: first, its usage in discourse was lexicalized, as evidenced by the fact that the bulk of its usage is largely accounted for by only a small set of governors (cf. Section 5.3.1.1); second, the apparent productivity is largely due to external factors and stems from the conjunction of high level of education and formal (monitored) speech style, thereby corroborating the idea that the linguistic feature of subjunctive is above the level of consciousness and mainly employed to display linguistic prestige.

In addition to the key role of this small set of governors, lexicalization is also suggested by the strong propensity for the subjunctive to appear with specific *embedded* verbs; in particular, the very salient suppletive forms of *essere*. These findings were confirmed by the multivariate analysis as well. Firstly, the statistical analysis showed that the governors, as captured by the effect of the “semantic” class, are by far the strongest predictor of variant choice. Likewise, the second most important factor group is the embedded morphology, i.e. the subjunctive is more likely to appear with a suppletive form of *essere* (mainly *sia*) rather than with other types of morphologies. It is also important to recall that the effect of the “semantic” class of the governor appeared to be an epiphenomenon of the lexical effects observed quantitatively, e.g. of the 77 lexical types that appeared within the class of opinion, four of them (*credere, pensare, sembrare* and *parere*) make up 64% of the entire class (cf. Section 5.3.1.2.1). When these governors are coupled with embedded suppletive forms of *essere* (cf. Figure 5.3), the likelihood that we will observe a subjunctive in discourse is considerably higher than when they are coupled with other types of embedded morphologies.

In addition to the governors and the embedded morphology, two other factor groups play a significant role in the selection of the subjunctive: my results showed that the subjunctive is also favoured in absence of the complementizer and, to a lesser extent, with negative sentences. Although the factor group of sentence type was operationalized to test the contribution of the expression of assertion, by cross-tabulating both the lexical identity and the semantic class of the governors with sentence type, I showed that the effect cannot be explained as a mechanism related to the expression of *non*-assertion (cf. Section 5.3.1.2.2), but can rather be interpreted as an inherent syntactic constraint.

The uncovering of the general lexical and structural pattern enabled us to test another main research question as well, i.e. the supposed maximally divergent linguistic behaviour of southern and northern speakers of Italian. Overall, our results displayed lower rates of subjunctive use in the southern cities of Rome (60%) and Naples (53%), as opposed to the northern cities of Florence (75%) and Milan (71%). Also, I did uncover some community-specific strategies, such as the important lexical preference for *bisognare* in Florence, which in turn selects the subjunctive quasi-categorically. Moreover, Florence also shows a preference for the subjunctive *without* the complementizer (supporting previous observations, e.g. Cresti & Moneglia [2005]; De Mauro [2017]), which is in clear contrast to the other three cities, which all favour the subjunctive *with* the complementizer, although this factor group is significant only for Florence. On the other hand, the general pattern of subjunctive selection being largely determined by the lexical governors seems quite stable across the four cities, with the possible exception of Naples, where the magnitude of effect for the factor group of “semantic” class of the governor (as instantiated by the *range*) was especially low. However, the low range is due to the fact that speakers from Naples also select the subjunctive *categorically* in both emotive and volitive semantic classes, while these select the subjunctive variably in Florence, Milan and Rome datasets. These categorical factors had to be excluded from the calculation of the range, thus causing the apparently weaker effect of the factor group of the semantic class of the governors for the Naples data. Another result that is parallel between the cities is the strong favouring effect of the embedded suppletive *essere* forms; this is the second most important factor group across the board and has the same direction of the effect for all cities, suggesting that all four urban centres display the same common process of lexicalization. In sum, for each city analyzed, the conditioning mainly points to the lexicalized nature of variability.

Overall, the fact that the results support a lexically and syntactically constrained selection of the subjunctive in discourse counters the assumption of a semantically based selection, which enabled me to answer another central research question, i.e. whether the use of the subjunctive is triggered by semantic motivations. Although it is commonly assumed in both prescriptive and descriptive/theoretical treatments of the subjunctive that subjunctive morphology embodies one or more meanings that differ from those embodied in the indicative and therefore that choice of one over the other is entirely governed by the speaker's semantic intent, I observed robust variation between the two in the same semantic contexts (objectively defined by the analyst as, e.g. uncertain, among others; see Section 5.3.1.2), thereby demonstrating that speakers can opt for either morphology in discourse to express the same meaning. This effectively refutes the idea of form-function symmetry in subjunctive selection in Italian. Instead, the subjunctive and the indicative *alternate* in contexts expressing uncertainty, volition, opinion, etc. Instead of categoricity or meaning-based alternation, I found variability at every level: amongst semantic classes, governors, and other contexts such as sentence type.

The fact that the subjunctive is mainly constrained by lexical factors is in and of itself an indicator of a lack of semantic motivation behind variant choice. In general, the factor groups designed to test the contribution of a semantic motivation behind the choice of the subjunctive failed to account for a semantically-based selection. Nonetheless, a portion of the data could objectively be considered in line with the semantic hypothesis: the one belonging to the classes of emotion and volition. Although it seems contradictory that only these two factors (i.e. *volitive* and *emotive*) could show a genuine semantic effect – all the members of these two categories displayed a consistent pattern – though some governors show categorical rates while others do show variation to some extent –, while other “semantic” classes clearly displayed a high degree

of variation, as well as lexical effects or the presence of just a few governors accounting for most of a given “semantic” class – I turned to the diachronic analysis in order to determine whether this could have been a result of a desemanticization in progress. Surprisingly, this was not the case. The diachronic analysis of Italian (cf. Chapter 6) echoed the very similar findings reported for contemporary Italian subjunctive. In other words, already centuries ago, there was a propensity for the subjunctive to surface in discourse under a few matrix verbs and each “semantic” class either displayed the same type of lexical effects or was affected by the presence of highly infrequent or singleton governors. This was the case for both volitive and emotive matrices as well: they consistently favoured the subjunctive more than other categories and showed either highly or categorical rates of subjunctive selection.

In addition to the key role of the governors, the strong propensity for the subjunctive to appear with suppletive forms of *essere* was also operative in 16<sup>th</sup> century data. In other words, lexicalization is not a recent development but rather a continuation of a pattern already operative in the past, disconfirming the hypothesis that the subjunctive is or was once solely selected under meaning-based constraints.

Given the stability observed with both volitive and emotive governors, there are at least two possible interpretations for the facts reported in this study, which reflect the two main hypotheses stemming from prescriptive and descriptive research. The first one is that the Italian subjunctive contributes something to the semantics of a clause, only in the contexts of the expression of volition and emotion and, as shown in Chapter 6, that this pattern was inherited from VL and persisted across time. The other interpretation is that the subjunctive in completive clauses has no semantic value at all, that these contexts of volition and emotion are still the retention of a pattern inherited from VL, but in which one may assume that subjunctive usage in

completive clauses was already devoid of any semantic value in the ancestor language. This would suggest that lexicalization has always characterized the use of the subjunctive in completive clauses. In other words, we may assume that there was *already* a strong association between the subjunctive and some lexical contexts during the Latin era and that this has been inherited by the daughter language and possibly persisted across the centuries. I report on these two avenues in the following section and explain my interpretation that what we observed may not in fact be a genuine semantic effect but may rather be ascribed to the lexicalized use of the subjunctive.

### 7.1 The semantic vs. lexical nature of the subjunctive

One explanation for the results presented in the preceding section is that there is a semantic motivation underlying the choice of the subjunctive in speech. After all, almost every single governor falling under the semantic categories of volition and emotion has consistently high rates of subjunctive selection. Is this reasonable evidence to claim that semantics *does* motivate subjunctive selection, but perhaps *only* for these two semantic categories? My findings showed that, taken together, these two semantic classes represent only a small portion of the data, and that they are predominantly made up of a handful of governors<sup>65</sup>, with many of these often occurring only once in the data (especially for emotive verbs). Even though this might be insufficient evidence to ascertain whether this is a genuine effect, by looking back through time, I determined whether the situation observed in contemporary speech was possibly a result of a centuries-long desemanticization process. Surprisingly, the diachronic analysis showed that the effect of volitive, emotive as well as of necessity verb classes is quite stable across time, i.e.

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<sup>65</sup> As shown in Section 6.4.2: *volere* and *fare* account for half or most of the “semantic” class: 56% in 16<sup>th</sup> century, 58% in 18<sup>th</sup> century, 73% in 20<sup>th</sup> century COHI data and, with the addition of *sperare*, 65% in actual speech data.

these verb classes consistently appear to promote subjunctive selection over the centuries more than other “semantic” categories (with the possible exception of necessity verbs, which do not exert such an effect in contemporary Italian). More importantly, these two categories of volition and emotion are consistently, over time, comprised of a few (mainly) infrequent governors and singletons. In particular, within the category of volitive verbs, we consistently found more than half of the data of this category was accounted for by only two governors, *volere* and *fare*. This seems to stress the importance of the lexical identity of the governors, i.e. lexicalization, rather than the expression of volition.

Likewise, since the diachronic results for Italian data displayed stability with regards to these two “semantic” classes, I searched for an answer to the supposed semantic contribution in the Vulgar Latin benchmark. It appears that the subjunctive in the VL data is quasi-exclusively used with these “semantic” contexts: emotive, volitive, and to a lesser extent necessity verbs account altogether for 90% of the all subjunctive morphology used in *that*-completive clauses; supporting previous findings from other studies (Harris 1973; Magni 2009). As reported in the preceding chapter, the prototypical use of the subjunctive in *that*-completive clauses is ‘harmonic’ with the pre-existing paratactic constructions of Latin, but there is a controversial aspect of this: is the previous paratactic (independent clause) *meaning* of the subjunctive still retained in the new hypotactic constructions, or is it just a syntactic mechanism devoid of any meaning and therefore reflects the grammaticalization of the subjunctive as a subordinating marker? The case study of the Latin subjunctive revealed quasi-categoricity of subjunctive selection under few governors, leaving no room to any test of the semantic hypotheses such as those operationalized for Italian. Therefore, I cannot draw definitive conclusions in this matter, but I instead acknowledge two possible explanations. The first is that the Latin subjunctive was semantically

motivated in VL, and given the transmission of its contexts of use to Italian (volitive and emotive verbs), we could consequently assume that these contexts still retain the semantics of volitive and emotive meanings. The other explanation does away with the semantic hypothesis completely; it proposes that the Latin subjunctive was already a morphosyntactic rather than a morphosemantic device, and that these morphosyntactic characteristics had been transferred into Italian. Only further investigation of the subjunctive at the source, i.e. in VL, could enable us to clarify this matter. Nonetheless, results at our disposal clearly suggest a lack of lexical productivity in these so-called “semantic” contexts. Therefore, the stronger evidence of a pattern pointing to a lexicalized nature of the use of the subjunctive in discourse, and the surprising continuity of the Latin pattern in Italian over the centuries, weakens the semantic hypothesis due to the fact that these categories are both sparsely populated with governors, and infrequent in the data overall. Moreover, we can assume that the use of the subjunctive in VL was already “automatic”, as previously suggested by Harris (1973), as evidenced by the categorical association of the subjunctive with a small set of verbal governors (e.g. *rogo* ‘to ask/to want’, *oportet* ‘it is necessary’, among others). Under this view, the lexicalized use of the subjunctive already operative in VL enables us to explain the solitary ‘semantic’ effect that was noticed in Italian both diachronically and synchronically in contemporary speech, since almost every Latin subjunctive governor belonged to the volitive or emotive categories.

In support of the choice of ruling out the question of the semantic role of both volitive and emotive governors, there is also evidence that the overwhelming majority of the variation observed in Italian – both historically and in contemporary data – can be accounted for by the clear lexicalization of the subjunctive in discourse (cf. Section 6.6, comparative multivariate analyses and Sections 6.4 & 6.5 on the trajectory of governors and “semantic” classes across

time). As reported above, this stems from the fact that most of the variation in discourse is accounted by a handful of governors and by suppletive forms of *essere*. Moreover, with the exception of the volitive/emotive results reported above, all other semantic factors that could potentially contribute independent effects to the selection of the subjunctive failed to be selected as significant (e.g. indicators of non-factual modality) or showed some lexical effects (e.g. necessity: *bisognare*). Both distributional and statistical evidence strongly points to an internal conditioning that is lexical and morphosyntactic. Other than the “semantic” class of governors and the embedded morphology, the subjunctive is also promoted, to a lesser extent, by the complementizer *che* and non-affirmative sentence types, both of which are structural in nature.<sup>66</sup> The statistically-significant contribution of structural factor groups bolsters our proposal that subjunctive use cannot be explained in terms of a meaning-based alternation in discourse and that the lexicalized use of the subjunctive in discourse cannot be ascribed to a recent change as a result of a desemanticization.

## 7.2 Lexicalization across time

Another major research question concerns the supposed decline of the subjunctive in contemporary Italian that purportedly occurred after the political unification of Italy. The reported motivation for this loss or severe decrease in the use of the subjunctive has alternately been ascribed to both internal (semantic) and external (geographic and stylistic) considerations. My results actually suggest a third possibility as well. While the decreasing overall rates of the subjunctive observed over time do support the idea of a change (though gradual, considering the centuries-long timespan of the data), the subjunctive remains the dominant variant, selected at

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<sup>66</sup> Even the effect of sentence type, which is considered by some scholars to be semantic in nature (e.g. Costantini 2011; Giannakidou 1995; Giorgi and Pianesi 1997), did not appear to be due to the ‘non-assertiveness’ associated with non-affirmative sentence (cf. Table 5.12; see Section 5.3.1.2.2).

least two-thirds of the time. More importantly, the conditioning is relatively stable across time, thus countering the idea that a structural change has occurred in modern Italian. If anything, the pattern observed in contemporary speech data is a continuation of the pattern operating since at least the 16<sup>th</sup> century. We did observe a change in terms of increasing lexicalization of the subjunctive in discourse: if we consider a) that the subjunctive morphology is getting distributed more and more with completive clauses governed by verbs (cf. Figure 6.8, b) that the category of “opinion verbs” account for more and more of the variation in discourse (from 43% of the data in 16<sup>th</sup> century to 72% of the data in contemporary late 20<sup>th</sup>/early 21<sup>st</sup> century) but c) that within this category we observed the subjunctive highly concentrated amongst a handful of governors; e.g. *credere*, *pensare*, *sembrare* and *parere* (cf. Section 6.4.2). Moreover, the comparison of multiple multivariate analyses (cf. Table 6.14) showed that all other factor groups that contributed statistically significant effects to variant choice either ceased to be significant (e.g. presence of indicators of non-factual modality) or displayed a considerably decreasing range over time (e.g. sentence type, resulting in weak effects in contemporary data).

As alluded to earlier, the lexical identity of a few governors, along with concomitant factors (particularly the embedded suppletive *essere* morphology), always exert the strongest effect and the constraints on subjunctive selection observed in contemporary Italian are not an innovative trend, nor can they be ascribed to desemanticization.

However, contemporary Italian appears to be innovative in that it extends subjunctive usage to a much wider pool of governors – well beyond the small lexical pool in VL. The number of governors selecting a subjunctive in discourse increases steadily over time, peaking in contemporary Italian.<sup>67</sup> Given this large governor pool, the subjunctive appears to be quite

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<sup>67</sup> This echoes the similar but much stronger finding was reported for French (Poplack et al. 2013).

productive in contemporary Italian. This is particularly surprising since the overall rate of subjunctive is decreasing over time, but all the while, the subjunctive is somehow gaining in productivity and extending to a broader pool of governors. How can we explain this counterintuitive finding? One explanation is that, given the structural nature of the subjunctive as a marker of subordination, its use possibly expanded over time alongside the increase of finite-complementation in Italian. The goal of the current study was not to extensively address the question of complementation, but these results seem to emphasize a finding that is widely reported in the literature, i.e. that in modern Italian “the accusative and infinitive structure has largely retreated in favour of the structure comprising complementizer *che* + FINITE VERB” (Maiden [1995: 206]; also, Zamboni [1996: 104], citing Ineichen [1993]). If we assume that Italian makes greater use of finite complements and that the subjunctive embodies the characteristics of a subordinating marker, we can therefore hypothesize that this could be the reason that the number of governors increases over time: increasing *that*-complementation entails increased use of the subjunctive, if this mood performs the function of a subordinating marker.<sup>68</sup> This could also explain the somewhat chaotic findings for persistence of the governors across time, observed in Section 6.4.2. While only a few governors persisted across all time periods, the majority of them surfaced on and off or were used in one single period. This is equally strengthened by the fact that the factor group of intervening material is never selected as significant in any multivariate analyses, since the degree of distance between the main and the embedded clause does not ultimately matter. Moreover, the relative productivity developed in Italian (found already in 16<sup>th</sup> century data) could be related to the increasing use of finite

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<sup>68</sup> In a pilot study I conducted in 2015 at the University of Ottawa on complementizer deletion (Digesto 2015), from a sample of C-ORAL data (extracted from both informal and formal subsets), I took into consideration every *that*-clause found in discourse, independently of the embedded mood selected. Results showed that the subjunctive has a greater effect (.56) than the indicative (.35).

complementation developed in the daughter language, i.e. a major favourable syntactic context for its selection, as opposed to the situation generally reported for Latin.

### 7.3 The inherent social prestige of the subjunctive

While the linguistic conditioning of the Italian subjunctive has been operative since at least the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the extra-linguistic conditioning offers some interesting insight as well. In addition to fueling debate in contemporary linguistic research, the ‘correct’ usage of the subjunctive in Italian completive clauses has been increasingly at the center of the prescriptive enterprise, particularly in more contemporary times. In fact, it is now considered a normative linguistic stereotype *par excellence*, to which speakers should pay particular attention if they want speak ‘properly’. My results seem to confirm the social prestige attached to subjunctive morphology, as summarized below.

There are higher overall rates of the subjunctive in careful speech (71%) compared to casual speech (65%), but overall rates only partially answer the question. As a matter of fact, when I analyzed the set of governors that were shared across the two speech styles (cf. Table 5.36), the relative rates of subjunctive selection showed no significant differences according to speech style. Where I observed a difference was in the presence of a great number of highly infrequent governors and singletons, bringing more subjunctive to careful speech in particular. Despite the imbalance in the speaker samples of my various corpora, which contain a disproportionate number of educated speakers and thus contrasts with the actual socio-demographic characteristics of 20<sup>th</sup>/21<sup>st</sup> century Italy, where I *could* test the contribution of speech style and level of education, I observed some interesting results. The apparent effect of speech style was actually due to the particular linguistic behaviour of highly educated speakers (cf. Section 5.3.3). These speakers use a high number of different governors, both in casual and

careful speech, and therefore are responsible for the *apparent* productivity of the subjunctive overall. Although the larger pool of governors in careful speech could possibly be explained by a larger diversity of conversational settings and topics to a degree, highly educated speakers also use a high number of infrequent governors and singletons in casual speech as well (44 governors in casual speech; 64 governors in careful speech). This contrasts with the less educated speakers (medium level of education: 15 governors; low/no level of education: 20 governors). This evidence is consistent with the assumption that the subjunctive has in fact become a sociolinguistic stereotype but also means that most of subjunctive use, in other words its degree of productivity, comes from highly-educated speakers who in addition to the robust patterns shared by all speakers, also use the subjunctive *sporadically*, as suggested by the great number of highly infrequent and singleton governors, to display linguistic prestige. In other words, the productivity of the subjunctive is conditioned more by social factors rather than purely linguistic ones. The substantial differences in subjunctive usage across level of education as well as style indicate that the subjunctive tends to be used in this way in the most monitored way of speaking, i.e. in careful speech. In other words, speakers seem to use it for a specific purpose: to evoke linguistic prestige.

The productivity displayed by highly educated speakers is achievable not only because of enhanced exposure to it in the school setting, but also because the widespread use of a highly productive subordinating schema. Since Italian has developed and productively used finite complements, as opposed to VL which makes extensive use of non-finite complements, the subjunctive has indeed a greater likelihood to be triggered in discourse in these productive finite complements. Therefore, with the increasing use of finite complementation, i.e. *that*-complements, speakers have potentially more structural conditions favourable to the subjunctive,

and it seems that highly educated speakers are more likely to make use of these to select a subjunctive and convey linguistic prestige, although this requires further empirical investigation. As for the subjunctive grammar, the factors constraining variability are essentially lexical and morphosyntactic. Moreover, highly infrequent governors and singletons showed that they are considerably more sensitive to the lexical aspect of the subjunctive (cf. Section 5.3.3): the more infrequent the contexts, the more suppletive *essere* forms are favoured, emphasizing the importance of the salience of the subjunctive when used with *essere*. This finding highlights the lexicalized nature of the subjunctive in discourse: it surfaces mainly with the very salient forms of *essere* when used with the highly infrequent and singleton governors, which in turn we have assessed as mainly produced by highly educated speakers *and* in more careful speech. The subjunctive is thus used sporadically, i.e. not productively, and in the least natural way of speaking. At any rate, these observations mainly suggest that educated speakers choose the subjunctive instead of the indicative to convey prestige rather than a given *meaning*.

#### **7.4 Future research and conclusion**

Some additional observations emerging from this research warrant discussion. I first stress that the facts reported above were only available from the accountable variationist methodology employed here: the structure of variation is invisible to any but systematic and exhaustive quantitative analysis. Without this systematic quantitative analysis, we would have been unable to distinguish the sporadic/idiosyncratic uses from the overwhelming pattern that constitutes the bulk of subjunctive usage in speech. Moreover, the subjunctive and its competing forms were systematically and exhaustively extracted from corpora representing actual usage in speech, independently of any intuition-based theoretical or prescriptive assumptions. Even though it is usually difficult to operationalize such theoretical constructs into objectively codable

and testable categories, by following the method implemented by Poplack (1992), I was able first to circumvent some of these issues, and then to answer and test a number of hypotheses related to the supposed semantic motivation of the subjunctive. Neither the prescriptive nor the theoretical literature identified any of the patterns uncovered here: a) the robust variability characterizing each of the semantic contexts, b) the inconsistent effect of lexical governor within most of the semantic classes, c) the relative strength of the lexical and syntactic conditions on subjunctive selection, and finally d) the degree of retention and innovation vis-à-vis the ancestor language, Latin.

This study also offers new evidence-based insights into the larger context of Romance languages. The subjunctive is one of those linguistic features used as a measure to ascertain how close the Romance languages are between them and vis-à-vis their common source, Latin (Harris 1978; Lindschouw 2011; Loengarov 2006; Posner 1996), which Portner refers to as “degrees of Romanceness” (Portner 1996: 38). This study provides additional evidence to position Italian on the *grammaticalization path*<sup>69</sup> of Romance languages that has been outlined in other publications (Poplack et al. 2018). French is the most innovative Romance language on this path, and Italian appears to be positioned behind French. Nonetheless, grammaticalization is generally understood as a result from a semantically based to a lexically constrained subjunctive selection, thus going through desemanticization. Therefore, if further empirical investigation confirm my observations that, in the context of *that*-complement clauses, the subjunctive was already lexicalized in the ancestor language and continued to be in the daughter language, what we observe here would be movement along a *lexicalization path*.

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<sup>69</sup> The grammaticalization path (or cline) is understood as a continuum on which we can position genetically related languages vis-à-vis their ancestor, Latin. Their positioning is established according to whether these languages display more innovative trends as opposed retaining some uses and meanings that could be traced back to Latin.

This study also repeatedly emphasized the importance of actual usage data over intuition or assumption. Since this type of data is crucially important to the empirical investigation of underlying grammar, and this data is as yet largely unavailable for Italian, a next step will be to compile a corpus of stratified variationist sociolinguistic interviews. Research on Italian would greatly benefit from building corpora more representative of the socio-demographics of Italy – paying particular attention to the speech community in a variationist sense (see Poplack 1989) – in order to achieve a better understanding of Italian the way it is actually used. This is of prime importance if we want to apprehend the impact of external factors, such as style, prescription/formal education, and whether differences arise between geographically distinct regions, which are all central questions in Italian sociolinguistics. Through replication of the objective methodology provided by the variationist framework that was used in this study, we can reach a better understanding of the true nature of the differences between northern and southern Italian, including whether the variability between cities observed in this study is one community pattern that diverges from the idealized standard benchmark/norm to different degrees, rather than a true geographic difference in underlying patterns.

Another important aspect of subjunctive variability is the question of complementation *beyond* the role of the subjunctive, in both Italian and Latin. Investigating complementation is key to understanding how the shift in word order that supposedly had an impact on the subordinating strategy in the ancestor language eventually led to grammaticalization of subjunctive mood as a canonical marker of subordination (Harris 1973, 1978; Haudry 1973; Magni 2009). An empirical investigation of Italian and Latin complementation – by extending the corpora from which to conduct further studies – may confirm the observation that the

subjunctive spread in Italian *alongside* the spread of finite complementation and may confirm our proposal that the subjunctive was already lexicalized in Vulgar Latin.

Other than the subjunctive, there has been very little variationist investigation in Italian. Only by extending the variationist method to the study of additional linguistic variables at every linguistic level, using a fully representative sample of actual vernacular speech data, can we scientifically address questions of language variation comparatively across both time and space and thereby debunk some well-established myths on language variation and change.

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## APPENDIX A

List of governors and types of verbs prescribed that were extracted from the CSGI  
(*Collezione Storica di Grammatiche Italiane*) compendium.

<i>addolorare</i>	<i>è (una) cosa dolorosa</i>	<i>l'avvertenza</i>
<i>affermare</i>	<i>è (una) cosa incresciosa</i>	<i>l'avvertimento</i>
<i>aggiungere</i>	<i>è (una) cosa noiosa</i>	<i>l'avviso</i>
<i>annoiare</i>	<i>è (una) cosa spiacevole</i>	<i>l'esortazione</i>
<i>approvare</i>	<i>è (una) cosa strana</i>	<i>l'eventualità</i>
<i>arguire</i>	<i>è (una) cosa/fatto piacevole</i>	<i>l'idea</i>
<i>astenersi</i>	<i>è auspicabile</i>	<i>l'immaginazione</i>
<i>auspicare</i>	<i>è capitale</i>	<i>l'impedimento</i>
<i>avere (il) timore</i>	<i>è certo</i>	<i>l'imposizione</i>
<i>avere caro</i>	<i>è chiaro</i>	<i>l'impressione</i>
<i>avere dispiacere</i>	<i>è comprensibile</i>	<i>l'incertezza</i>
<i>avere il presentimento</i>	<i>è concepibile</i>	<i>l'indignazione</i>
<i>avere il rimpianto</i>	<i>è consiglio</i>	<i>l'informazione</i>
<i>avere in mente</i>	<i>è conveniente</i>	<i>l'intesa</i>
<i>avere l'impressione</i>	<i>è credibile</i>	<i>l'invito</i>
<i>avere l'idea</i>	<i>è da desiderarsi</i>	<i>l'irritazione</i>
<i>avere l'illusione</i>	<i>è degno</i>	<i>l'opinione</i>
<i>avere l'impressione</i>	<i>è desiderabile</i>	<i>l'ordine</i>
<i>avere l'ipotesi</i>	<i>è doveroso</i>	<i>la brama</i>
<i>avere l'opinione</i>	<i>è essenziale</i>	<i>la certezza</i>
<i>avere la certezza</i>	<i>è il colmo</i>	<i>la chiacchiera</i>
<i>avere la credenza</i>	<i>è il momento</i>	<i>la chiarezza</i>
<i>avere la sicurezza</i>	<i>è incomprensibile</i>	<i>la concessione</i>
<i>avere la speranza</i>	<i>è inconcepibile</i>	<i>la congettura</i>
<i>avere piacere</i>	<i>è incredibile</i>	<i>la considerazione</i>
<i>avere rincrescimento</i>	<i>è indubbio</i>	<i>la convinzione</i>
<i>avvertire</i>	<i>è inopportuno</i>	<i>la diceria</i>
<i>avvisare</i>	<i>è insolito</i>	<i>la dichiarazione</i>
<i>c'è il bisogno</i>	<i>è insufficiente</i>	<i>la disperazione</i>
<i>calcolare</i>	<i>è logico</i>	<i>la domanda</i>
<i>capire</i>	<i>è noto</i>	<i>la garanzia</i>
<i>compiacersi</i>	<i>è ordine</i>	<i>la gioia</i>
<i>complimentarsi</i>	<i>è peccato</i>	<i>la lagnanza</i>

<i>comprendere</i>	<i>è pensabile</i>	<i>la meraviglia</i>
<i>concepire</i>	<i>è preferibile</i>	<i>la necessità</i>
<i>condannare</i>	<i>è regola</i>	<i>la paura</i>
<i>congratularsi</i>	<i>è sconveniente</i>	<i>la persuasione</i>
<i>controllare</i>	<i>è sorprendente</i>	<i>la possibilità</i>
<i>convincersi</i>	<i>è sufficiente</i>	<i>la precisazione</i>
<i>dare disturbo</i>	<i>è svantaggioso</i>	<i>la preferenza</i>
<i>dare esasperazione</i>	<i>è un peccato</i>	<i>la preghiera</i>
<i>dare fastidio</i>	<i>è un'idea</i>	<i>la preoccupazione</i>
<i>dare inquietudine</i>	<i>è una bugia</i>	<i>la pretesa</i>
<i>dare l'illusione</i>	<i>è una fortuna</i>	<i>la probabilità</i>
<i>dare noia</i>	<i>è una frottola</i>	<i>la proibizione</i>
<i>dare stupore</i>	<i>è una ingiustizia</i>	<i>la rabbia</i>
<i>dare turbamento</i>	<i>è una necessità</i>	<i>la raccomandazione</i>
<i>darsi il caso</i>	<i>è una sfortuna</i>	<i>la richiesta</i>
<i>dedurre</i>	<i>è una storia</i>	<i>la risposta</i>
<i>deplorare</i>	<i>è una vergogna</i>	<i>la scommessa</i>
<i>dichiarare</i>	<i>è una voce</i>	<i>la sensazione</i>
<i>dimandare</i>	<i>è utile</i>	<i>la sicurezza</i>
<i>discernere</i>	<i>è vantaggioso</i>	<i>la soddisfazione</i>
<i>disperare</i>	<i>è venuta l'ora</i>	<i>la sollecitazione</i>
<i>disturbare</i>	<i>è verosimile</i>	<i>la sorpresa</i>
<i>è voglia</i>	<i>fa pena</i>	<i>la supposizione</i>
<i>esasperare</i>	<i>far sì</i>	<i>la vergogna</i>
<i>esserci il caso</i>	<i>fare a meno</i>	<i>la voce</i>
<i>essere addolorato</i>	<i>fare attenzione</i>	<i>lagnarsi</i>
<i>essere allarmato</i>	<i>fare dispetto</i>	<i>lamentarsi</i>
<i>essere allegro</i>	<i>fare in modo</i>	<i>lo stupore</i>
<i>essere annoiato</i>	<i>fare meraviglia</i>	<i>lodare</i>
<i>essere arrabbiato</i>	<i>fare rabbia</i>	<i>meno male</i>
<i>essere avvisato</i>	<i>fare senso</i>	<i>mettersi in testa</i>
<i>essere bramoso</i>	<i>fare specie</i>	<i>mostrare</i>
<i>essere capace</i>	<i>felicitarsi</i>	<i>narrare</i>
<i>essere compiaciuto</i>	<i>figurarsi</i>	<i>non c'è da meravigliarsi</i>
<i>essere curioso</i>	<i>guardarsi</i>	<i>non è</i>
<i>essere d'avviso</i>	<i>ignorare</i>	<i>non è certo</i>
<i>essere dell'opinione</i>	<i>il desiderio</i>	<i>non è escluso</i>
<i>essere deluso</i>	<i>il divieto</i>	<i>non essere sicuro</i>
<i>essere desideroso</i>	<i>il dolore</i>	<i>non mancare</i>
<i>essere desolato</i>	<i>il fastidio</i>	<i>nutrire il desiderio</i>

<i>essere disperato</i>	<i>il giudizio</i>	<i>nutrire l'illusione</i>
<i>essere dispiaciuto</i>	<i>il peccato</i>	<i>nutrire la speranza</i>
<i>essere dolente</i>	<i>il pericolo</i>	<i>obbligare</i>
<i>essere dubbioso</i>	<i>il permesso</i>	<i>opporsi</i>
<i>essere fiero</i>	<i>il pettegolezzo</i>	<i>paura</i>
<i>essere generoso</i>	<i>il presentimento</i>	<i>paventare</i>
<i>essere grato</i>	<i>il rimpianto</i>	<i>pericolo</i>
<i>essere illuso</i>	<i>il rincrescimento</i>	<i>porre</i>
<i>essere impaziente</i>	<i>il rischio</i>	<i>prendere sospetto</i>
<i>essere impossibile</i>	<i>il senso</i>	<i>presentire</i>
<i>essere improbabile</i>	<i>il sogno</i>	<i>prevedere</i>
<i>essere in ansia</i>	<i>implorare</i>	<i>proporre</i>
<i>essere in/nell'attesa</i>	<i>imporre</i>	<i>provvedere</i>
<i>essere informato</i>	<i>indispettire</i>	<i>rammaricarsi</i>
<i>essere inorgogliato</i>	<i>indurre</i>	<i>richiedere</i>
<i>essere irritato</i>	<i>infastidire</i>	<i>rimpiangere</i>
<i>essere pensieroso</i>	<i>inquietare</i>	<i>rincrescere</i>
<i>essere pensoso</i>	<i>insistere</i>	<i>rischiare</i>
<i>essere preoccupato</i>	<i>insoddisfatto</i>	<i>rispondere</i>
<i>essere probabile</i>	<i>intuire</i>	<i>risulta</i>
<i>essere rattristato</i>	<i>invitare</i>	<i>scongiurare</i>
<i>essere riconoscente</i>	<i>irritare</i>	<i>sconsigliare</i>
<i>essere sorpreso</i>	<i>l'attesa</i>	<i>sdegnato</i>
<i>essere sospettoso</i>	<i>l'esigenza</i>	<i>sembra un peccato</i>
<i>essere spaventato</i>	<i>l'accordo</i>	<i>sembra una vergogna</i>
<i>essere speranzoso</i>	<i>l'ammonimento</i>	<i>servire</i>
<i>essere strano</i>	<i>l'aspettazione</i>	<i>smentire</i>
<i>essere stupefatto</i>	<i>l'attesa</i>	<i>smentire</i>
<i>essere stupito</i>	<i>l'augurio</i>	<i>sognarsi</i>
<i>essere triste</i>	<i>l'auspicio</i>	<i>sollecitare</i>
<i>sono contento</i>	<i>incaricare</i>	<i>domandare</i>
<i>sostenere</i>	<i>l'ammissione</i>	<i>proibire</i>
<i>star lontano</i>	<i>l'assicurazione</i>	<i>vietare</i>
<i>stare attento</i>	<i>l'illusione</i>	<i>accettare</i>
<i>supplicare</i>	<i>la presunzione</i>	<i>bastare</i>
<i>suspicare</i>	<i>la previsione</i>	<i>è bene/buono</i>
<i>togliere</i>	<i>mancare poco</i>	<i>è giusto</i>
<i>tollerare</i>	<i>mentire</i>	<i>è meglio</i>
<i>tralasciare</i>	<i>mettere</i>	<i>è possibile</i>
<i>tremare</i>	<i>ottenere</i>	<i>esigere</i>

<i>turbare</i>	<i>premere</i>	<i>essere contento</i>
<i>vantarsi</i>	<i>presumere</i>	<i>fingere</i>
<i>vedere</i>	<i>promettere</i>	<i>rallegrarsi</i>
<i>vergognarsi di dire</i>	<i>può darsi</i>	<i>sapere</i>
<i>accadere</i>	<i>sdegnarsi</i>	<i>supporre</i>
<i>amare</i>	<i>soffrire</i>	<i>attendere</i>
<i>ammonire</i>	<i>sognare</i>	<i>dolere/dolarsi</i>
<i>apparire</i>	<i>sopportare</i>	<i>sospettare</i>
<i>avere (la) paura</i>	<i>spiacersi</i>	<i>è necessario</i>
<i>avere il desiderio</i>	<i>succedere</i>	<i>immaginare</i>
<i>avere il sospetto</i>	<i>suggestire</i>	<i>lasciare</i>
<i>avere la convinzione</i>	<i>vergognarsi</i>	<i>meravigliarsi</i>
<i>avere paura</i>	<i>ammettere</i>	<i>pensare</i>
<i>avvenire</i>	<i>avere il dubbio</i>	<i>preferire</i>
<i>badare</i>	<i>bramare</i>	<i>raccomandare</i>
<i>capitare</i>	<i>commettere</i>	<i>ritenere</i>
<i>consentire</i>	<i>concedere</i>	<i>sembrare</i>
<i>contestare</i>	<i>contare</i>	<i>augurare</i>
<i>curare</i>	<i>decidere</i>	<i>convenire</i>
<i>disapprovare</i>	<i>è facile</i>	<i>dispiacere/si</i>
<i>è bello</i>	<i>è importante</i>	<i>fare</i>
<i>è difficile</i>	<i>è impossibile</i>	<i>negare</i>
<i>è improbabile</i>	<i>è inutile</i>	<i>occorrere</i>
<i>è indispensabile</i>	<i>è male</i>	<i>ordinare</i>
<i>è ingiusto</i>	<i>è ora</i>	<i>chiedere</i>
<i>è naturale</i>	<i>è tempo</i>	<i>comandare</i>
<i>è normale</i>	<i>essere convinto</i>	<i>dubitare</i>
<i>è opportuno</i>	<i>essere orgoglioso</i>	<i>aspettare</i>
<i>è ovvio</i>	<i>essere soddisfatto</i>	<i>permettere</i>
<i>è peggio</i>	<i>essere/fare d'uopo</i>	<i>piacere</i>
<i>è probabile</i>	<i>evitare</i>	<i>dire</i>
<i>è strano</i>	<i>far conto</i>	<i>bisognare</i>
<i>escludere</i>	<i>godere</i>	<i>sperare</i>
<i>essere ansioso</i>	<i>il timore</i>	<i>parere</i>
<i>essere attento</i>	<i>intendere</i>	<i>desiderare</i>
<i>essere avvertito</i>	<i>la speranza</i>	<i>pregare</i>
<i>essere certo</i>	<i>non vedere l'ora</i>	<i>credere</i>
<i>essere degno</i>	<i>persuadere</i>	<i>temere</i>
<i>essere incerto</i>	<i>preoccuparsi</i>	<i>volere</i>
<i>essere lieto</i>	<i>può essere</i>	<i>verbi di possibilità</i>

*essere persuaso*  
*essere possibile*  
*essere sicuro*  
*essere timoroso*  
*fa paura*  
*fa rabbia*  
*far finta*  
*fare piacere*  
*giudicare*  
*il dubbio*  
*il fatto*  
*il pensiero*  
*il sospetto*  
*impedire*  
*consigliare*

*raccontare*  
*sorprendere/si*  
*stimare*  
*valere la pena*  
*assicurare*  
*esortare*  
*essere felice*  
*essere scontento*  
*illudersi*  
*importare*  
*l'ipotesi*  
*pretendere*  
*seccare*  
*stupire*  
*disporre*

*verbi di giudizio*  
*verbi di persuasione*  
*verbi di immaginazione*  
*verbi dubitativi*  
*verbi di apparenza*  
*verbi di necessità*  
*verbi di convenienza*  
*verbi affettivi/sentimenti*  
*verbi di desiderio*  
*verbi di aspettativa/speranza*  
*verbi di timore*  
*verbi di credenza/opinione*  
*verbi di richiesta/preghiera*  
*verbi di volizione*

## APPENDIX B

List of the 82 meanings and functions attached to the subjunctive morphology in the SGSI (*Collezione Storica di Grammatiche Italiane*) compendium.

- |                                     |                               |                                      |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. <i>accenno</i>                   | 29. <i>emotività</i>          | 57. <i>opinione</i>                  |
| 2. <i>accettazione</i>              | 30. <i>esortazione</i>        | 58. <i>ordine</i>                    |
| 3. <i>affetto (dell'animo)</i>      | 31. <i>eventualità</i>        | 59. <i>partecipazione affettiva</i>  |
| 4. <i>ammirazione</i>               | 32. <i>felicità</i>           | 60. <i>passione</i>                  |
| 5. <i>apparenza</i>                 | 33. <i>gioia</i>              | 61. <i>paura</i>                     |
| 6. <i>apprensione</i>               | 34. <i>giudizio personale</i> | 62. <i>perplexità</i>                |
| 7. <i>aspettativa</i>               | 35. <i>ignoranza</i>          | 63. <i>possibilità</i>               |
| 8. <i>atteggiamento psicologico</i> | 36. <i>immaginazione</i>      | 64. <i>preghiera</i>                 |
| 9. <i>attesa</i>                    | 37. <i>impossibilità</i>      | 65. <i>premura</i>                   |
| 10. <i>atto della mente</i>         | 38. <i>impotenza</i>          | 66. <i>probabilità</i>               |
| 11. <i>augurio</i>                  | 39. <i>imprecazione</i>       | 67. <i>ragione</i>                   |
| 12. <i>avviso</i>                   | 40. <i>incertezza</i>         | 68. <i>rassegnazione</i>             |
| 13. <i>azione virtuale</i>          | 41. <i>indefinito</i>         | 69. <i>richiesta</i>                 |
| 14. <i>cognizione probabile</i>     | 42. <i>intelletto</i>         | 70. <i>rimpianto</i>                 |
| 15. <i>comando</i>                  | 43. <i>intenzione</i>         | 71. <i>sensibilità psicologica</i>   |
| 16. <i>compiacimento</i>            | 44. <i>interrogazione</i>     | 72. <i>sentimento</i>                |
| 17. <i>concessione</i>              | 45. <i>ipotesi</i>            | 73. <i>soggettività</i>              |
| 18. <i>considerazione</i>           | 46. <i>irrealtà</i>           | 74. <i>sorpresa</i>                  |
| 19. <i>consiglio</i>                | 47. <i>irrisoluzione</i>      | 75. <i>speranza</i>                  |
| 20. <i>convenienza</i>              | 48. <i>maniera rispettosa</i> | 76. <i>stupore</i>                   |
| 21. <i>convinzione</i>              | 49. <i>maniera sommessa</i>   | 77. <i>subordinazione/dipendenza</i> |
| 22. <i>credenza</i>                 | 50. <i>meraviglia</i>         | 78. <i>supposizione</i>              |
| 23. <i>desiderio</i>                | 51. <i>necessità</i>          | 79. <i>timore</i>                    |
| 24. <i>difficoltà</i>               | 52. <i>negligenza</i>         | 80. <i>tristezza</i>                 |
| 25. <i>divieto</i>                  | 53. <i>non convinzione</i>    | 81. <i>volere</i>                    |
| 26. <i>dolore</i>                   | 54. <i>non curanza</i>        | 82. <i>volontà</i>                   |
| 27. <i>dubbio/dubitazione</i>       | 55. <i>non positività</i>     |                                      |
| 28. <i>eccitamento</i>              | 56. <i>nostalgia</i>          |                                      |

## APPENDIX C

Distribution of the subjunctive under verbal governors in spoken contemporary Italian according to Poplack's tripartite analysis (2013: 2018). Governors are sorted by total number of tokens. Horizontal lines in the table indicate frequency divisions suggested by the data.

Governor	%Subj	N	%Data	%S_Morpho
<b>Total</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>1139/1663</b>		
<i>Highly frequent governors follow</i>				
<i>credere</i>	76	185/244	15	16
<i>pensare</i>	68	151/222	13	13
<i>non è</i>	32	53/168	10	5
<i>sembrare</i>	74	100/135	8	9
<i>Medium frequency governors follow</i>				
<i>dire</i>	18	15/83	5	1
<i>parere</i>	71	46/65	4	4
<i>volere</i>	92	59/64	4	5
<i>sperare</i>	88	53/60	4	5
<i>bisognare</i>	92	55/60	4	5
<i>ritenere</i>	82	36/44	3	3
<i>può darsi</i>	53	18/34	2	2
<i>bastare</i>	54	14/26	2	1
<i>fare sì</i>	86	19/22	1	2
<i>chiedere</i>	100	18/18	1	2
<i>essere sicuro</i>	44	8/18	1	1
<i>immaginare</i>	43	6/14	1	1
<i>aspettare</i>	62	8/13	1	1
<i>non sapere</i>	31	4/13	1	0
<i>essere convinto</i>	18	2/11	1	0
<i>augurare</i>	100	10/10	1	1
<i>sostenere</i>	44	4/9	1	0
<i>Infrequent governors follow</i>				
<i>è bene</i>	100	8/8	0	1
<i>avere la sensazione</i>	88	7/8	0	1
<i>è inutile</i>	50	4/8	0	0
<i>è importante</i>	100	7/7	0	1

<i>è giusto</i>	100	7/7	0	1
<i>non è detto</i>	88	7/8	0	1
<i>fare in modo</i>	86	6/7	0	1
<i>risultare</i>	71	5/7	0	0
<i>trovare</i>	71	5/7	0	0
<i>richiedere</i>	71	5/7	0	0
<i>capire</i>	14	1/7	0	0
<i>non è un caso</i>	100	6/6	0	1
<i>lasciare</i>	100	6/6	0	1
<i>mettere</i>	83	5/6	0	0
<i>è meglio</i>	83	5/6	0	0
<i>supporre</i>	83	5/6	0	0
<i>avere l'impressione</i>	67	4/6	0	0
<i>ammettere</i>	67	4/6	0	0
<i>è chiaro</i>	17	1/6	0	0
<i>preferire</i>	100	5/5	0	0
<i>è probabile</i>	100	5/5	0	0
<i>avere paura</i>	83	5/6	0	0
<i>evitare</i>	100	5/5	0	0
<i>dubitare</i>	80	4/5	0	0
<i>pretendere</i>	100	4/4	0	0
<i>proporre</i>	100	4/4	0	0
<i>l'importante è</i>	100	4/4	0	0
<i>è facile</i>	100	4/4	0	0
<i>può essere</i>	100	4/4	0	0
<i>controllare</i>	100	4/4	0	0
<i>stabilire</i>	75	3/4	0	0
<i>non è vero</i>	50	2/4	0	0
<i>considerare</i>	50	2/4	0	0
<i>è ovvio</i>	25	1/4	0	0
<i>essere contento</i>	100	3/3	0	0
<i>ci sta</i>	100	3/3	0	0
<i>è difficile</i>	100	3/3	0	0
<i>non è pensabile</i>	100	3/3	0	0
<i>è impossibile</i>	100	3/3	0	0
<i>esigere</i>	100	3/3	0	0
<i>presumere</i>	100	3/3	0	0
<i>non succedere</i>	100	3/3	0	0
<i>è opportuno</i>	100	3/3	0	0
<i>occorrere</i>	100	3/3	0	0
<i>è normale</i>	67	2/3	0	0
<i>è possibile</i>	67	2/3	0	0
<i>prevedere</i>	67	2/3	0	0

<i>verificare</i>	67	2/3	0	0
<i>presupporre</i>	67	2/3	0	0
<i>parere evidente</i>	67	2/3	0	0
<i>essere preoccupato</i>	100	2/2	0	0
<i>ipotizzare</i>	100	2/2	0	0
<i>c'è il rischio</i>	100	2/2	0	0
<i>fare piacere</i>	100	2/2	0	0
<i>garantire</i>	100	2/2	0	0
<i>permettere</i>	100	2/2	0	0
<i>è curioso</i>	100	2/2	0	0
<i>impedire</i>	100	2/2	0	0
<i>porre</i>	100	2/2	0	0
<i>calcolare</i>	50	1/2	0	0
<i>è peccato</i>	50	1/2	0	0
<i>fare in maniera</i>	50	1/2	0	0
<i>non preoccuparsi</i>	50	1/2	0	0
<i>dispiacersi</i>	50	1/2	0	0
<i>c'è il bisogno</i>	50	1/2	0	0
<i>è possibile</i>	50	1/2	0	0
<i>valere</i>	50	1/2	0	0
<i>Singletons follow (1 token)</i>				
<i>essere consapevole</i>	100	1/1	0	0
<i>l'improbabile è</i>	100	1/1	0	0
<i>sorprendere</i>	100	1/1	0	0
<i>piacere</i>	100	1/1	0	0
<i>cercare</i>	100	1/1	0	0
<i>è inevitabile</i>	100	1/1	0	0
<i>l'augurio è</i>	100	1/1	0	0
<i>il problema è</i>	100	1/1	0	0
<i>è giusto e corretto</i>	100	1/1	0	0
<i>è raro</i>	100	1/1	0	0
<i>l'auspicio è</i>	100	1/1	0	0
<i>è strano</i>	100	1/1	0	0
<i>avere fiducia</i>	100	1/1	0	0
<i>dedurre</i>	100	1/1	0	0
<i>assicurarsi</i>	100	1/1	0	0
<i>reputare</i>	100	1/1	0	0
<i>sospettare</i>	100	1/1	0	0
<i>è una vergogna</i>	100	1/1	0	0
<i>è ragionevole</i>	100	1/1	0	0
<i>non essere felice</i>	100	1/1	0	0
<i>non è da dire</i>	100	1/1	0	0
<i>non è umano</i>	100	1/1	0	0

<i>non avere il dubbio</i>	100	1/1	0	0
<i>è bello</i>	100	1/1	0	0
<i>avere il dubbio</i>	100	1/1	0	0
<i>essere orgoglioso</i>	100	1/1	0	0
<i>servire</i>	100	1/1	0	0
<i>sentire il timore</i>	100	1/1	0	0
<i>rischiare</i>	100	1/1	0	0
<i>non avere senso</i>	100	1/1	0	0
<i>fare possibile</i>	100	1/1	0	0
<i>è buono</i>	100	1/1	0	0
<i>compiacere</i>	100	1/1	0	0
<i>rammaricarsi</i>	100	1/1	0	0
<i>sembrare di capire</i>	100	1/1	0	0
<i>meravigliarsi</i>	100	1/1	0	0
<i>è obbligatorio</i>	100	1/1	0	0
<i>è assurdo</i>	100	1/1	0	0
<i>non consentire</i>	100	1/1	0	0
<i>avere piacere</i>	100	1/1	0	0
<i>essere contrariato</i>	100	1/1	0	0
<i>è utile</i>	100	1/1	0	0
<i>avere l'idea</i>	100	1/1	0	0
<i>è logico</i>	100	1/1	0	0
<i>è fondamentale</i>	100	1/1	0	0
<i>identificare</i>	100	1/1	0	0
<i>congratularsi</i>	100	1/1	0	0
<i>capitare</i>	100	1/1	0	0
<i>escludere</i>	100	1/1	0	0
<i>affermare</i>	100	1/1	0	0
<i>la condizione è</i>	100	1/1	0	0
<i>fare conto</i>	100	1/1	0	0
<i>imporre</i>	100	1/1	0	0

## APPENDIX D

Distribution of the subjunctive according to the lexical identity of the governor according to the tripartite measures for each distinct geographical subset: Florence, Milan, Rome and Naples. Tables are displayed by Total N.

### a) Florence subset

<b>Governor</b>	<b>% of Subj Morph</b>	<b>% Data</b>	<b>Rate subj</b>	<b>N subj</b>	<b>Total N</b>	<b>Non-Apps</b>
<i>pensare</i>	12%	12%	73%	57	78	21
<i>credere</i>	13%	12%	83%	63	76	13
<i>non è</i>	7%	10%	52%	34	65	31
<i>sembrare</i>	9%	9%	74%	42	57	15
<i>bisognare</i>	10%	8%	96%	50	52	2
<i>volere</i>	7%	6%	97%	35	36	1
<i>dire</i>	1%	5%	21%	6	29	23
<i>sperare</i>	5%	4%	88%	22	25	3
<i>può darsi</i>	2%	3%	69%	11	16	5
<i>parere</i>	2%	2%	57%	8	14	6
<i>bastare</i>	1%	2%	60%	6	10	4
<i>ritenere</i>	2%	1%	100%	9	9	0
<i>essere sicuro</i>	1%	1%	50%	4	8	4
<i>è bene</i>	1%	1%	100%	6	6	0
<i>fare sì</i>	1%	1%	83%	5	6	1
<i>richiedere</i>	1%	1%	67%	4	6	2
<i>sostenere</i>	1%	1%	50%	3	6	3
<i>non è un caso</i>	1%	1%	100%	5	5	0
<i>lasciare</i>	1%	1%	100%	5	5	0
<i>non è detto</i>	1%	1%	80%	4	5	1
<i>mettere</i>	1%	1%	80%	4	5	1
<i>avere paura</i>	1%	1%	80%	4	5	1
<i>immaginare</i>	1%	1%	60%	3	5	2
<i>aspettare</i>	1%	1%	60%	3	5	2
<i>capire</i>	0%	1%	20%	1	5	4
<i>chiedere</i>	1%	1%	100%	4	4	0

<i>è probabile</i>	1%	1%	100%	4	4	0
<i>è inutile</i>	1%	0%	100%	3	3	0
<i>è giusto</i>	1%	0%	100%	3	3	0
<i>è meglio</i>	1%	0%	100%	3	3	0
<i>preferire</i>	1%	0%	100%	3	3	0
<i>evitare</i>	1%	0%	100%	3	3	0
<i>pretendere</i>	1%	0%	100%	3	3	0
<i>è difficile</i>	1%	0%	100%	3	3	0
<i>esigere</i>	1%	0%	100%	3	3	0
<i>dubitare</i>	0%	0%	67%	2	3	1
<i>avere la sensazione</i>	0%	0%	100%	2	2	0
<i>è importante</i>	0%	0%	100%	2	2	0
<i>fare in modo</i>	0%	0%	100%	2	2	0
<i>è facile</i>	0%	0%	100%	2	2	0
<i>può essere</i>	0%	0%	100%	2	2	0
<i>ci sta</i>	0%	0%	100%	2	2	0
<i>presumere</i>	0%	0%	100%	2	2	0
<i>è normale</i>	0%	0%	100%	2	2	0
<i>essere convinto</i>	0%	0%	50%	1	2	1
<i>trovare</i>	0%	0%	50%	1	2	1
<i>non è vero</i>	0%	0%	50%	1	2	1
<i>presupporre</i>	0%	0%	50%	1	2	1
<i>calcolare</i>	0%	0%	50%	1	2	1
<i>fare in maniera</i>	0%	0%	50%	1	2	1
<i>risultare</i>	0%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>supporre</i>	0%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>avere l'impressione</i>	0%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>proporre</i>	0%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>controllare</i>	0%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>non è pensabile</i>	0%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>prevedere</i>	0%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>c'è il rischio</i>	0%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>fare piacere</i>	0%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>è peccato</i>	0%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>non preoccuparsi</i>	0%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>dispiacersi</i>	0%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>valere</i>	0%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>l'improbabile è</i>	0%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>sorprendere</i>	0%	0%	100%	1	1	0

<i>piacere</i>	0%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>l'augurio è</i>	0%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>il problema è</i>	0%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>l'auspicio è</i>	0%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>dedurre</i>	0%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>assicurarsi</i>	0%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>reputare</i>	0%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>non è da dire</i>	0%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>non è umano</i>	0%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>fare possibile</i>	0%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>è obbligatorio</i>	0%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>avere piacere</i>	0%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>essere contrariato</i>	0%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>avere l'idea</i>	0%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>è logico</i>	0%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>è fondamentale</i>	0%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>identificare</i>	0%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>congratularsi</i>	0%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>capitare</i>	0%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>imporre</i>	0%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>76%</b>	<b>485</b>	<b>637</b>	<b>152</b>

b) Milan subset

<b>Governor</b>	<b>% of subj morph</b>	<b>% data</b>	<b>Rate subj</b>	<b>N subj</b>	<b>Total N</b>	<b>Non-Apps</b>
<i>credere</i>	12%	12%	77%	20	26	6
<i>pensare</i>	13%	12%	81%	21	26	5
<i>sembrare</i>	12%	10%	86%	19	22	3
<i>non è</i>	2%	8%	18%	3	17	14
<i>dire</i>	1%	6%	14%	2	14	12
<i>volere</i>	6%	5%	83%	10	12	2
<i>sperare</i>	4%	4%	78%	7	9	2
<i>parere</i>	4%	4%	75%	6	8	2
<i>ritenere</i>	2%	3%	43%	3	7	4
<i>bastare</i>	3%	3%	83%	5	6	1
<i>chiedere</i>	4%	3%	100%	6	6	0
<i>può darsi</i>	1%	2%	40%	2	5	3
<i>fare sì</i>	3%	2%	100%	5	5	0
<i>bisognare</i>	1%	2%	50%	2	4	2
<i>fare in modo</i>	2%	2%	75%	3	4	1
<i>essere sicuro</i>	1%	1%	33%	1	3	2
<i>controllare</i>	2%	1%	100%	3	3	0
<i>occorrere</i>	2%	1%	100%	3	3	0
<i>non sapere</i>	1%	1%	50%	1	2	1
<i>è inutile</i>	1%	1%	50%	1	2	1
<i>augurare</i>	1%	1%	100%	2	2	0
<i>è meglio</i>	1%	1%	100%	2	2	0
<i>avere l'impressione</i>	1%	1%	100%	2	2	0
<i>porre</i>	1%	1%	100%	2	2	0
<i>essere convinto</i>	1%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>avere la sensazione</i>	1%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>è importante</i>	1%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>è giusto</i>	1%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>risultare</i>	1%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>trovare</i>	1%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>non è un caso</i>	1%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>supporre</i>	1%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>preferire</i>	1%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>avere paura</i>	1%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>evitare</i>	1%	0%	100%	1	1	0

<i>l'importante è</i>	1%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>è facile</i>	1%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>non è vero</i>	1%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>considerare</i>	1%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>è ovvio</i>	1%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>non è pensabile</i>	1%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>è impossibile</i>	1%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>non succedere</i>	1%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>è opportuno</i>	1%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>verificare</i>	1%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>c'è il rischio</i>	1%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>permettere</i>	1%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>è curioso</i>	1%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>impedire</i>	1%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>servire</i>	1%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>è buono</i>	1%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>compiacere</i>	1%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>è assurdo</i>	1%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>la condizione è</i>	1%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>fare conto</i>	1%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>73%</b>	<b>162</b>	<b>223</b>	<b>61</b>

c) Rome subset

<b>Governor</b>	<b>% of subj morph</b>	<b>% data</b>	<b>Rate subj</b>	<b>N subj</b>	<b>Total N</b>	<b>Non-Apps</b>
<i>credere</i>	22%	19%	73%	30	41	11
<i>non è</i>	3%	13%	14%	4	29	25
<i>pensare</i>	10%	12%	56%	14	25	11
<i>sembrare</i>	9%	8%	71%	12	17	5
<i>parere</i>	9%	7%	75%	12	16	4
<i>dire</i>	1%	4%	22%	2	9	7
<i>ritenere</i>	4%	4%	67%	6	9	3
<i>volere</i>	4%	3%	83%	5	6	1
<i>bastare</i>	1%	2%	20%	1	5	4
<i>può darsi</i>	2%	2%	60%	3	5	2
<i>sperare</i>	4%	2%	100%	5	5	0
<i>immaginare</i>	1%	2%	25%	1	4	3
<i>fare sì</i>	1%	1%	67%	2	3	1
<i>parere evidente</i>	1%	1%	67%	2	3	1
<i>aspettare</i>	2%	1%	100%	3	3	0
<i>supporre</i>	2%	1%	100%	3	3	0
<i>è chiaro</i>	1%	1%	50%	1	2	1
<i>augurare</i>	1%	1%	100%	2	2	0
<i>avere la sensazione</i>	1%	1%	100%	2	2	0
<i>è importante</i>	1%	1%	100%	2	2	0
<i>chiedere</i>	1%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>è bene</i>	1%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>è giusto</i>	1%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>non è detto</i>	1%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>evitare</i>	1%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>è facile</i>	1%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>può essere</i>	1%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>presumere</i>	1%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>è opportuno</i>	1%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>ipotizzare</i>	1%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>fare piacere</i>	1%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>garantire</i>	1%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>permettere</i>	1%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>è curioso</i>	1%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>impedire</i>	1%	0%	100%	1	1	0

<i>c'è il bisogno</i>	1%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>avere il dubbio</i>	1%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>sentire il timore</i>	1%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>rischiare</i>	1%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>non avere senso</i>	1%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>rammaricarsi</i>	1%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>sembrare di capire</i>	1%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>non consentire</i>	1%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>è utile</i>	1%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>affermare</i>	1%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>63%</b>	<b>137</b>	<b>216</b>	<b>79</b>

## d) Naples subset

<b>Governor</b>	<b>% of subj morph</b>	<b>% data</b>	<b>Rate subj</b>	<b>N subj</b>	<b>Total N</b>	<b>Non-Apps</b>
<i>credere</i>	27%	25%	63%	31	49	18
<i>pensare</i>	14%	17%	47%	16	34	18
<i>non è</i>	5%	16%	19%	6	31	25
<i>parere</i>	8%	8%	56%	9	16	7
<i>sembrare</i>	4%	5%	50%	5	10	5
<i>ritenere</i>	4%	3%	83%	5	6	1
<i>dire</i>	1%	3%	20%	1	5	4
<i>sperare</i>	4%	3%	100%	5	5	0
<i>bastare</i>	1%	2%	33%	1	3	2
<i>fare sì</i>	3%	2%	100%	3	3	0
<i>chiedere</i>	3%	2%	100%	3	3	0
<i>prevedere</i>	1%	1%	50%	1	2	1
<i>augurare</i>	2%	1%	100%	2	2	0
<i>è importante</i>	2%	1%	100%	2	2	0
<i>è giusto</i>	2%	1%	100%	2	2	0
<i>risultare</i>	2%	1%	100%	2	2	0
<i>non succedere</i>	2%	1%	100%	2	2	0
<i>bisognare</i>	1%	1%	100%	1	1	0
<i>immaginare</i>	1%	1%	100%	1	1	0
<i>sostenere</i>	1%	1%	100%	1	1	0
<i>non è detto</i>	1%	1%	100%	1	1	0
<i>richiedere</i>	1%	1%	100%	1	1	0
<i>mettere</i>	1%	1%	100%	1	1	0
<i>preferire</i>	1%	1%	100%	1	1	0
<i>può essere</i>	1%	1%	100%	1	1	0
<i>considerare</i>	1%	1%	100%	1	1	0
<i>è opportuno</i>	1%	1%	100%	1	1	0
<i>verificare</i>	1%	1%	100%	1	1	0
<i>presupporre</i>	1%	1%	100%	1	1	0
<i>garantire</i>	1%	1%	100%	1	1	0
<i>è possibile</i>	1%	1%	100%	1	1	0
<i>è bello</i>	1%	1%	100%	1	1	0
<i>essere orgoglioso</i>	1%	1%	100%	1	1	0
<i>meravigliarsi</i>	1%	1%	100%	1	1	0
<i>escludere</i>	1%	1%	100%	1	1	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>58%</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>195</b>	<b>81</b>

## APPENDIX E

Distribution of the subjunctive according to the lexical identity of the governor according to the tripartite measures for each distinct time periods of COHI (*Corpus of Historical Italian*), from 16<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> century plays. Results are displayed by Total N.

### a) 16<sup>th</sup> Century Plays

<b>Governor</b>	<b>% of subj morph</b>	<b>% data</b>	<b>Rate subj</b>	<b>N subj</b>	<b>Total N</b>	<b>Non-Apps</b>
<i>dire</i>	6%	14%	35%	18	51	33
<i>credere</i>	13%	13%	83%	39	47	8
<i>volere</i>	12%	10%	100%	36	36	0
<i>parere</i>	7%	6%	95%	21	22	1
<i>fare</i>	5%	4%	100%	16	16	0
<i>è vero</i>	2%	4%	40%	6	15	9
<i>pensare</i>	4%	4%	73%	11	15	4
<i>pregare</i>	3%	2%	100%	8	8	0
<i>ricordare</i>	1%	2%	38%	3	8	5
<i>fare intendere</i>	1%	2%	57%	4	7	3
<i>è certo</i>	1%	2%	33%	2	6	4
<i>mostrare</i>	0%	2%	17%	1	6	5
<i>è meglio</i>	2%	2%	100%	6	6	0
<i>può essere</i>	2%	1%	100%	5	5	0
<i>vedere</i>	1%	1%	50%	2	4	2
<i>intendere</i>	1%	1%	100%	4	4	0
<i>supplicare</i>	1%	1%	100%	4	4	0
<i>lasciare</i>	1%	1%	100%	4	4	0
<i>cercare</i>	1%	1%	100%	4	4	0
<i>s'avvisarsi</i>	1%	1%	100%	4	4	0
<i>temere</i>	1%	1%	75%	3	4	1
<i>è bene</i>	1%	1%	100%	4	4	0
<i>bastare</i>	1%	1%	75%	3	4	1
<i>rimproverare</i>	1%	1%	100%	3	3	0

<i>aspettare</i>	1%	1%	100%	3	3	0
<i>è forza</i>	1%	1%	100%	3	3	0
<i>accorgersi</i>	0%	1%	33%	1	3	2
<i>meritare</i>	1%	1%	100%	3	3	0
<i>guardare</i>	1%	1%	100%	3	3	0
<i>è giusto</i>	1%	1%	100%	3	3	0
<i>non avere il dubbio</i>	1%	1%	100%	3	3	0
<i>è difficile</i>	1%	1%	100%	3	3	0
<i>tollerare</i>	1%	1%	100%	3	3	0
<i>provvedere</i>	1%	1%	100%	3	3	0
<i>patire</i>	1%	1%	100%	2	2	0
<i>stimare</i>	1%	1%	100%	2	2	0
<i>è buon(o)</i>	1%	1%	100%	2	2	0
<i>essere contento</i>	1%	1%	100%	2	2	0
<i>è ben convenevole</i>	1%	1%	100%	2	2	0
<i>vietare</i>	1%	1%	100%	2	2	0
<i>attendere</i>	1%	1%	100%	2	2	0
<i>convenire</i>	1%	1%	100%	2	2	0
<i>dare ad intendere</i>	1%	1%	100%	2	2	0
<i>tenere per certo</i>	0%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>curarsi</i>	0%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>reputare</i>	0%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>riprendere</i>	0%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>giudicare</i>	0%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>essere a cuore</i>	0%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>avere fantasia</i>	0%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>domandare</i>	0%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>non stare</i>	0%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>commettere</i>	0%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>conchiudere</i>	0%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>non c'è meraviglia</i>	0%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>insegnare</i>	0%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>è necessario</i>	0%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>non è</i>	0%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>è un miracolo</i>	0%	0%	100%	1	1	0

<i>è ora</i>	0%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>bisognare</i>	0%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>non essere sciocco</i>	0%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>fare sì</i>	0%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>consigliare</i>	0%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>sapere</i>	0%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>tenere occhio</i>	0%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>è cosa salutare</i>	0%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>piacere</i>	0%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>porre</i>	0%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>ricercare</i>	0%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>guardarsi</i>	0%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>è avventura</i>	0%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>non dubitare</i>	0%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>tenersi</i>	0%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>essere certo</i>	0%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>essere sicuro</i>	0%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>confortare</i>	0%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>meravigliarsi</i>	0%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>c'è il dubbio</i>	0%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>fare meglio</i>	0%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>trovare sciocco</i>	0%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>79%</b>	<b>295</b>	<b>373</b>	<b>78</b>

b) 18<sup>th</sup> Century Plays

<b>Governor</b>	<b>% of subj morph</b>	<b>% data</b>	<b>Rate subj</b>	<b>N subj</b>	<b>Total N</b>	<b>Non-Apps</b>
<i>dire</i>	8%	15%	43%	33	77	44
<i>volere</i>	18%	14%	100%	73	73	0
<i>credere</i>	10%	9%	98%	42	43	1
<i>bisognare</i>	7%	6%	100%	29	29	0
<i>parere</i>	6%	5%	100%	26	26	0
<i>può essere</i>	4%	3%	100%	15	15	0
<i>essere sicuro</i>	0%	3%	15%	2	13	11
<i>è vero</i>	1%	2%	45%	5	11	6
<i>sapere</i>	2%	2%	78%	7	9	2
<i>pensare</i>	1%	2%	63%	5	8	3
<i>aspettare</i>	2%	2%	88%	7	8	1
<i>lasciare</i>	2%	2%	100%	8	8	0
<i>sperare</i>	1%	2%	38%	3	8	5
<i>sentir dire</i>	0%	2%	13%	1	8	7
<i>avere paura</i>	2%	1%	100%	7	7	0
<i>bastare</i>	1%	1%	86%	6	7	1
<i>fare</i>	2%	1%	100%	7	7	0
<i>assicurare</i>	0%	1%	33%	2	6	4
<i>sentire</i>	0%	1%	17%	1	6	5
<i>permettere</i>	1%	1%	100%	6	6	0
<i>avere piacere</i>	1%	1%	100%	5	5	0
<i>badare</i>	1%	1%	80%	4	5	1
<i>è meglio</i>	1%	1%	100%	5	5	0
<i>rispondere</i>	0%	0%	50%	1	2	1
<i>contentarsi</i>	1%	1%	100%	4	4	0
<i>dubitare</i>	1%	1%	75%	3	4	1
<i>intendere</i>	0%	1%	50%	2	4	2
<i>meravigliarsi</i>	1%	1%	100%	4	4	0
<i>meritare</i>	1%	1%	100%	4	4	0
<i>non negare</i>	1%	1%	75%	3	4	1
<i>supporre</i>	1%	1%	100%	4	4	0
<i>avere timore</i>	1%	1%	100%	3	3	0
<i>concedere</i>	1%	1%	100%	3	3	0
<i>è possibile</i>	1%	1%	100%	3	3	0
<i>guardare</i>	1%	1%	100%	3	3	0
<i>non vi è pericolo</i>	1%	1%	100%	3	3	0
<i>pregare</i>	1%	1%	100%	3	3	0
<i>premere</i>	1%	1%	100%	3	3	0
<i>avere caro</i>	0%	0%	100%	2	2	0
<i>stare bene</i>	0%	0%	100%	2	2	0

<i>c'è bisogno</i>	0%	0%	100%	2	2	0
<i>convenire</i>	0%	0%	100%	2	2	0
<i>dar fastidio</i>	0%	0%	100%	2	2	0
<i>è bella</i>	0%	0%	100%	2	2	0
<i>è mò</i>	0%	0%	100%	2	2	0
<i>fare conto</i>	0%	0%	100%	2	2	0
<i>importare</i>	0%	0%	100%	2	2	0
<i>pretendere</i>	0%	0%	100%	2	2	0
<i>può darsi</i>	0%	0%	100%	2	2	0
<i>scongiurare</i>	0%	0%	100%	2	2	0
<i>sostenere</i>	0%	0%	50%	1	2	1
<i>temere</i>	0%	0%	100%	2	2	0
<i>(è) buon</i>	0%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>accordare</i>	0%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>avere dispiacere</i>	0%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>avere gelosia</i>	0%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>avere per male</i>	0%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>avvenire</i>	0%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>chiedere</i>	0%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>comandare</i>	0%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>concludere</i>	0%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>consigliare</i>	0%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>contendere</i>	0%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>conviene dire</i>	0%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>costumare</i>	0%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>dare noja</i>	0%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>desiderare</i>	0%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>è capitale</i>	0%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>è d'obbligo</i>	0%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>è da ridere</i>	0%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>è dimoito</i>	0%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>è necessario</i>	0%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>è peccato</i>	0%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>è superfluo</i>	0%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>è troppo</i>	0%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>essere incapace</i>	0%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>impedire</i>	0%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>lusingarsi</i>	0%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>non è poco</i>	0%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>non servire</i>	0%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>occorrere</i>	0%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>parere impossibile</i>	0%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>paventare</i>	0%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>rallegrarsi</i>	0%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>scoprire</i>	0%	0%	100%	1	1	0

<i>soffrire</i>	0%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>cercare</i>	0%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<i>tenere</i>	0%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>81%</b>	<b>408</b>	<b>505</b>	<b>97</b>

c) 20<sup>th</sup> Century Plays

Governor	% of subj morph	% data	Rate subj	N subj	Total N	Non-Apps
volere	25%	19%	100%	52	52	0
credere	11%	12%	69%	22	32	10
dire	4%	12%	25%	8	32	24
parere	10%	8%	100%	21	21	0
capire	2%	6%	25%	4	16	12
pensare	1%	3%	22%	2	9	7
bisognare	4%	3%	100%	9	9	0
essere sicuro	0%	3%	14%	1	7	6
bastare	3%	2%	100%	6	6	0
è possibile	2%	2%	100%	5	5	0
immaginare	2%	2%	80%	4	5	1
sembrare	2%	1%	100%	4	4	0
dimostrare	0%	1%	25%	1	4	3
è meglio	1%	1%	75%	3	4	1
tollerare	2%	1%	100%	4	4	0
dubitare	1%	1%	67%	2	3	1
è inutile	1%	1%	100%	3	3	0
fare conto	0%	1%	33%	1	3	2
avere l'impressione	1%	1%	100%	2	2	0
ammettere	0%	1%	50%	1	2	1
c'è il rischio	1%	1%	100%	2	2	0
ciò non toglie	1%	1%	100%	2	2	0
è bene	1%	1%	100%	2	2	0
non è vero	0%	1%	50%	1	2	1
essere convinto	0%	1%	50%	1	2	1
fa meraviglia	1%	1%	100%	2	2	0
non mancarci	1%	1%	100%	2	2	0
mettere	1%	1%	100%	2	2	0
permettere	1%	1%	100%	2	2	0
provare	1%	1%	100%	2	2	0
può darsi	0%	1%	50%	1	2	1
sospettare	1%	1%	100%	2	2	0
sperare	0%	1%	50%	1	2	1
supporre	1%	1%	100%	2	2	0
non soffrire	1%	1%	100%	2	2	0
accettare	0%	0%	100%	1	1	0
aspettare	0%	0%	100%	1	1	0
avere interesse	0%	0%	100%	1	1	0
avere paura	0%	0%	100%	1	1	0
avvenire	0%	0%	100%	1	1	0
dare a intendere	0%	0%	100%	1	1	0
desiderare	0%	0%	100%	1	1	0
è mia cura	0%	0%	100%	1	1	0

è prudente	0%	0%	100%	1	1	0
è strano	0%	0%	100%	1	1	0
è una gran cosa	0%	0%	100%	1	1	0
essere contento	0%	0%	100%	1	1	0
essere d'avviso	0%	0%	100%	1	1	0
essere stupefatto	0%	0%	100%	1	1	0
figurarsi	0%	0%	100%	1	1	0
garantire	0%	0%	100%	1	1	0
impedire	0%	0%	100%	1	1	0
parere impossibile	0%	0%	100%	1	1	0
piacere	0%	0%	100%	1	1	0
non porre in mente	0%	0%	100%	1	1	0
non pretendere	0%	0%	100%	1	1	0
sembra inutile	0%	0%	100%	1	1	0
non sembrare possibile	0%	0%	100%	1	1	0
sorgere il dubbio	0%	0%	100%	1	1	0
parere giusto	0%	0%	100%	1	1	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>74%</b>	<b>206</b>	<b>278</b>	<b>72</b>

## APPENDIX F

List of governors in the corpora to which it was assigned a persistence index of 1. Tables are divided by century and results ordered by Total N.

a) Governors only appeared in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century (COHI)

<b>Governor</b>	<b>RateSubj</b>	<b>N</b>
<i>dispiacersi</i>	57%	4/7
<i>c'è il bisogno</i>	38%	3/8
<i>è possibile</i>	33%	2/6
<i>valere</i>	17%	1/6
<i>essere consapevole</i>	50%	2/4
<i>l'improbabile è</i>	100%	1/1
<i>sorprendere</i>	100%	4/4
<i>piacere</i>	100%	3/3
<i>cercare</i>	100%	4/4
<i>è inevitabile</i>	100%	3/3
<i>l'augurio è</i>	33%	1/3
<i>il problema è</i>	100%	3/3
<i>è giusto e corretto</i>	100%	2/2
<i>è raro</i>	100%	2/2
<i>l'auspicio è</i>	100%	2/2
<i>è strano</i>	100%	2/2
<i>avere fiducia</i>	100%	2/2
<i>dedurre</i>	100%	1/1
<i>assicurarsi</i>	100%	1/1
<i>reputare</i>	100%	1/1
<i>sospettare</i>	100%	1/1
<i>è una vergogna</i>	100%	1/1
<i>è ragionevole</i>	100%	1/1
<i>non essere felice</i>	100%	1/1
<i>non è da dire</i>	100%	1/1
<i>non è umano</i>	100%	1/1
<i>non avere il dubbio</i>	100%	1/1
<i>avere il dubbio</i>	100%	1/1
<i>è bello</i>	100%	1/1

<i>essere orgoglioso</i>	100%	1/1
<i>servire</i>	100%	1/1
<i>sentire il timore</i>	100%	1/1
<i>rischiare</i>	100%	1/1
<i>non avere senso</i>	100%	1/1
<i>fare possibile</i>	100%	1/1
<i>è buono</i>	100%	1/1
<i>compiacere</i>	100%	1/1
<i>rammaricarsi</i>	100%	1/1
<i>sembrare di capire</i>	100%	1/1
<i>meravigliarsi</i>	100%	1/1
<i>è obbligatorio</i>	100%	1/1
<i>è assurdo</i>	100%	1/1

b) Governors only appeared in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century (COHI)

<b>Governor</b>	<b>RateSubj</b>	<b>N</b>
<i>non consentire</i>	13%	1/8
<i>avere piacere</i>	33%	2/6
<i>essere contrariato</i>	17%	1/6
<i>è utile</i>	80%	4/5
<i>avere l'idea</i>	50%	1/2
<i>è logico</i>	100%	4/4
<i>è fondamentale</i>	75%	3/4
<i>identificare</i>	100%	3/3
<i>congratularsi</i>	100%	3/3
<i>capitare</i>	100%	3/3
<i>escludere</i>	100%	3/3
<i>affermare</i>	100%	2/2
<i>la condizione è</i>	100%	2/2
<i>fare conto</i>	100%	2/2
<i>imporre</i>	100%	2/2
<i>fare intendere</i>	100%	2/2
<i>pregare</i>	100%	2/2
<i>ricordare</i>	100%	2/2
<i>è certo</i>	100%	1/1
<i>mostrare</i>	100%	1/1
<i>vedere</i>	100%	1/1

<i>trovare sciocco</i>	100%	1/1
<i>intendere</i>	100%	1/1
<i>supplicare</i>	100%	1/1
<i>rimproverare</i>	100%	1/1
<i>s'avvisarsi</i>	100%	1/1
<i>temere</i>	100%	1/1
<i>è forza</i>	100%	1/1
<i>accorgersi</i>	100%	1/1
<i>meritare</i>	100%	1/1
<i>guardare</i>	100%	1/1
<i>tollerare</i>	100%	1/1
<i>provvedere</i>	100%	1/1
<i>patire</i>	100%	1/1
<i>stimare</i>	100%	1/1
<i>è ben convenevole</i>	100%	1/1
<i>vietare</i>	100%	1/1
<i>attendere</i>	100%	1/1
<i>convenire</i>	100%	1/1
<i>dare a(d) intendere</i>	100%	1/1
<i>tenere per certo</i>	100%	1/1

c) Governors only appeared in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century (COHI)

<b>Governor</b>	<b>RateSubj</b>	<b>N</b>
<i>curarsi</i>	25%	1/4
<i>riprendere</i>	100%	2/2
<i>giudicare</i>	100%	2/2
<i>essere a cuore</i>	100%	2/2
<i>avere fantasia</i>	100%	2/2
<i>domandare</i>	100%	1/1
<i>non stare</i>	100%	1/1
<i>commettere</i>	100%	1/1
<i>conchiudere</i>	100%	1/1
<i>non c'è meraviglia</i>	100%	1/1
<i>insegnare</i>	100%	1/1
<i>è necessario</i>	100%	1/1
<i>è un miracolo</i>	100%	1/1
<i>è ora</i>	100%	1/1

<i>non essere sciocco</i>	100%	1/1
<i>consigliare</i>	100%	1/1
<i>tenere occhio</i>	100%	1/1
<i>è cosa salutare</i>	100%	1/1

d) Governors only appeared in the contemporary speech data 20<sup>th</sup>/21<sup>st</sup> century

<b>Governor</b>	<b>RateSubj</b>	<b>N</b>
<i>ritenere</i>	82%	36/44
<i>augurare</i>	100%	10/10
<i>avere la sensazione</i>	88%	7/8
<i>non è detto</i>	88%	7/8
<i>risultare</i>	71%	5/7
<i>trovare</i>	71%	5/7
<i>richiedere</i>	71%	5/7
<i>fare in modo</i>	86%	6/7
<i>è importante</i>	100%	7/7
<i>preferire</i>	100%	5/5
<i>è probabile</i>	100%	5/5
<i>evitare</i>	100%	5/5
<i>è ovvio</i>	25%	1/4
<i>stabilire</i>	75%	3/4
<i>proporre</i>	100%	4/4
<i>l'importante è</i>	100%	4/4
<i>è facile</i>	100%	4/4
<i>controllare</i>	100%	4/4
<i>è normale</i>	67%	2/3
<i>verificare</i>	67%	2/3
<i>presupporre</i>	67%	2/3
<i>ci sta</i>	100%	3/3
<i>non è pensabile</i>	100%	3/3
<i>è impossibile</i>	100%	3/3
<i>esigere</i>	100%	3/3
<i>presumere</i>	100%	3/3
<i>non succedere</i>	100%	3/3
<i>è opportuno</i>	100%	3/3
<i>è possibile</i>	50%	1/2
<i>calcolare</i>	50%	1/2
<i>non preoccuparsi</i>	50%	1/2

<i>c'è il bisogno</i>	50%	1/2
<i>valere</i>	50%	1/2
<i>essere preoccupato</i>	100%	2/2
<i>ipotizzare</i>	100%	2/2
<i>fare piacere</i>	100%	2/2
<i>è curioso</i>	100%	2/2
<i>avere il dubbio</i>	100%	1/1
<i>essere consapevole</i>	100%	1/1
<i>l'improbabile è</i>	100%	1/1
<i>sorprendere</i>	100%	1/1
<i>è inevitabile</i>	100%	1/1
<i>l'augurio è</i>	100%	1/1
<i>il problema è</i>	100%	1/1
<i>è giusto e corretto</i>	100%	1/1
<i>è raro</i>	100%	1/1
<i>l'auspicio è</i>	100%	1/1
<i>avere fiducia</i>	100%	1/1
<i>dedurre</i>	100%	1/1
<i>assicurarsi</i>	100%	1/1
<i>è una vergogna</i>	100%	1/1
<i>è ragionevole</i>	100%	1/1
<i>non essere felice</i>	100%	1/1
<i>non è da dire</i>	100%	1/1
<i>non è umano</i>	100%	1/1
<i>essere orgoglioso</i>	100%	1/1
<i>sentire il timore</i>	100%	1/1
<i>rischiare</i>	100%	1/1
<i>non avere senso</i>	100%	1/1
<i>fare possibile</i>	100%	1/1
<i>compiacere</i>	100%	1/1
<i>rammaricarsi</i>	100%	1/1
<i>sembrare di capire</i>	100%	1/1
<i>è obbligatorio</i>	100%	1/1
<i>è assurdo</i>	100%	1/1
<i>non consentire</i>	100%	1/1
<i>essere contrariato</i>	100%	1/1
<i>è utile</i>	100%	1/1
<i>avere l'idea</i>	100%	1/1
<i>è logico</i>	100%	1/1

<i>è fondamentale</i>	100%	1/1
<i>identificare</i>	100%	1/1
<i>congratularsi</i>	100%	1/1
<i>capitare</i>	100%	1/1
<i>escludere</i>	100%	1/1
<i>affermare</i>	100%	1/1
<i>la condizione è</i>	100%	1/1