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On the Acquisition of the Subjunctive and Authentic Processing Instruction: A Response to Farley

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Abstract: Farley (2001) raises concerns about the validity and generalizability of Collentine's 1998 study examining the efficacy of processing instruction—an input-oriented psycholinguistic approach to grammar instruction (Lee 2000; VanPatten 1996, 1997, 2000)—with the Spanish subjunctive. In response, Farley (2001) presents the results of his own experiment, claiming to provide Spanish educators with an example of “authentic” subjunctive processing instruction. This article responds to Farley's concerns about my 1998 experiment. First, I refute Farley's principal criticism, specifying the principles with which I designed the processing-instruction materials in Collentine (1998). The ultimate result of this discussion is a more fine-tuned definition of “communicative value” than presented to date (cf. VanPatten 2000). Second, I examine the morphosyntactic properties of the input with which both Collentine (1998) and Farley (2001) foster subjunctive acquisition, showing that Collentine's (1998) processing-instruction materials have greater ecological validity. Finally, I respond to significant factual errors contained in Farley (2001).

Key Words: communicative value, indicative, language learning, morphology, processing instruction, subjunctive, syntax

Introduction

Farley (2001) presents the results of a study that assesses the efficacy of two methodologies for fostering the acquisition of knowledge of the subjunctive by foreign-language learners of Spanish. One methodology involved *processing instruction*, an input-oriented methodology with two primary goals: (i) it seeks to help learners make form-meaning connections—with respect to a targeted grammatical phenomenon and the semantic properties it encodes—that they might not normally make; (ii) it seeks to train learners to make form-meaning connections by fostering psycholinguistic strategies that alter how learners (normally) process grammatical input and which ultimately enhance that they will continue to acquire relevant grammatical knowledge (Lee 2000; VanPatten 1996, 1997, 2000). The other methodology fostered subjunctive knowledge with output-oriented techniques. Farley (2001) acknowledges that Collentine (1998) also conducted a study testing the efficacy of Processing Instruction and output-oriented techniques for fostering subjunctive abilities. Yet, Farley encourages Spanish educators to reject the contribution of Collentine (1998), and Farley promises to present the first “authentic” study of the effects of Processing Instruction on subjunctive acquisition. Farley surmises that the Processing Instruction treatment in Collentine (1998) does not actually consider how learners will process subjunctive forms in input. Farley attempts to further distinguish his study by providing evidence that contradicts Collentine's (ostensive) conclusion that Processing Instruction is not compatible with subjunctive instruction.

In the following I respond to Farley's assessment of my experiment, showing that my experimental materials were indeed informed by the processing principles underlying Processing Instruction. First, to clarify how Collentine (1998) considered learners' processing strategies, I outline the material-design principles that underlie my 1998 experiment. In doing so, I provide Spanish educators with principles with which to design Processing Instruction tasks that target so-called “meaningless” morphology (VanPatten 2000). Second, I examine the morphosyntactic

properties of the input with which both Collentine (1998) and Farley (2001) foster subjunctive acquisition, demonstrating that Collentine's (1998) Processing Instruction materials have greater ecological validity than those of Farley (2001). Finally, I respond to significant factual errors contained in Farley (2001). The discussion reveals that Farley misrepresents the conclusions drawn by Collentine (1998), where I unequivocally assert that subjunctive Processing Instruction will be beneficial to learners. It also reveals that Farley exaggerates the depth of his analysis of my experimental materials.

The ultimate result of the following discussion is a more fine-tuned definition of "communicative value" than presented to date (cf. VanPatten 2000). Specifically, this discussion reveals how educators, materials designers, and future researchers can create tasks elevating the communicative value of even so-called "meaningless" morphology (cf. VanPatten 2000).

1. The core of Farley's concern about the generalizability of Collentine (1998) follows: "A close look at the processing group's treatment reveals that Collentine did not follow one of the most basic guidelines in designing processing instruction materials: keep the learner's processing strategies in mind" (Farley 2001, 290). To appreciate why this criticism is untenable, I describe the following: (i) the psycholinguistic principles that underlie the aforementioned "processing strategies"; (ii) the *materials design* principles that I extrapolated from these *psycholinguistic* principles to create subjunctive processing instruction activities; (iii) sample activities employed in Collentine (1998).

Psycholinguistic principles of input processing

Four principles of how learners process input predict the types of strategies learners will use when processing input (VanPatten 1996, 1997, 2000). The first three principles relate to the interaction between grammar and communicative value. Principle 1 acknowledges that learners process input for meaning before processing it for form, predicting that students place a premium on content words, and lexical items in general, over grammatical features when they must understand a sentence's propositional value; when they do process grammatical features, they place a premium on those that are most meaningful. Principle 2 stipulates that, for learners to process meaningless grammatical features, they must be able to process informational and communicative content at almost no expense to attentional resources (which are finite). Principle 3 acknowledges that learners tend to assign the role of agent to the first noun of an utterance.

According to VanPatten (2000), Principles 1 and 2 predict that some grammatical items have a low "communicative value" (46). VanPatten (2000) defines a grammatical phenomenon's communicative value with two features. Those items that have the most communicative value are [+semantic value and -redundancy]; forms that are [-semantic value] have no communicative value regardless of their redundancy (VanPatten 2000, 46). Are both of these features constant regardless of the context in which a grammatical item occurs? The answer is no: "One should note, however, that redundancy is not absolute; the preterit (or any other tense marker) does not always co-occur with a temporal expression in an utterance" (VanPatten 2000, 47).

The fourth and final principle relates to grammar instruction and acoustic salience (VanPatten 1997). Principle 4 acknowledges that learners process elements in sentence or utterance initial position with the greatest ease and in medial positions with the most difficulty.

With these principles in mind, processing instruction employs *structured-input tasks*, which are sequences of carefully-crafted input sentences that, coupled with a given task demand (i.e., the information that learners must extrapolate from that input), elevate a grammatical structure's semantic value so that learners can make form-meaning connections. These tasks help learners make form-meaning connections by raising either the communicative value or the acoustic salience of a targeted structure. Processing Instruction's ultimate goal is "to *train* the nonnative ear to perceive and utilize the target forms during on-line processing" (Lee 2000, 36; emphasis mine). That is, structured-input tasks should prepare learners to notice more readily the semantic/

pragmatic information that a grammatical phenomenon provides (however abstract) when reading or listening to authentic input *after* working with the tasks.

Farley's (2001) structured input tasks aim to raise the acoustic salience of the subjunctive. I will postpone a discussion of how he accomplished this until point 2 below, since a comparison of the Collentine (1998) and Farley (2001) materials suggests that the Collentine (1998) materials are much more compatible with Processing Instruction's ultimate goal of training learners to make form-meaning connections when processing authentic input. Collentine's (1998) activities, on the other hand, seek to raise the subjunctive's communicative value: "Three types of structured-input activities purported to elevate the subjunctive's communicative value, thus encouraging intake" (Collentine 1998, 581).

Material design principles for raising the subjunctive's communicative value: linguistic context and task demand

To raise the subjunctive's communicative value, Collentine (1998) employed structured-input tasks in which the subjunctive was [+ semantic value and -redundancy]. A careful consideration of the *linguistic context* in which subjunctive forms are presented to learners in input can help the materials designer to identify non-redundant uses of this morpheme. Specifically, Collentine (1998) fosters subjunctive acquisition in adjectival clauses (e.g., *Busco un coche que no use mucha gasolina*), where this morpheme serves as an important semantic disambiguator. To help learners to perceive the subjunctive's semantic import in these sentences, one must carefully design the *task demand* that motivates a learner to extrapolate meaning from such utterances.

Regarding linguistic context, a core distinction within the field of semantics is that between denotation and connotation (Waugh 1976). Admittedly, the subjunctive's inherent, *denotative* semantic value is abstract and ultimately leads to vague definitions. Givón (1994) defines the subjunctive from a logical perspective and argues that the Spanish subjunctive's denotation is [+irrealis]. Hooper (1975), Klein (1975), and Mejías-Bikandi (1994) take a pragmatic perspective, submitting that the subjunctive denotes that someone is not willing to assert a proposition's truth value. These well-known theoretical characterizations are precisely those that are "meaningless" to learners (cf. VanPatten 2000) because they lack specification.

Yet, the subjunctive's *connotative* semantic value can vary widely according to its linguistic context. Indeed, it can often relate arguably concrete information, such as who should do something or when an event or state occurs.¹ Solé and Solé (1977, 160–201) provide Spanish pedagogues with the most complete modern account of the subjunctive's various connotations. Solé and Solé reveal that, in some noun clauses and many adjective and adverbial clauses, the subjunctive's presence is crucial for interpreting utterances whose *lexical* composition (i.e., what would remain of a sentence if it were stripped of, say, its inflectional morphemes) is ambiguous.

Regarding noun clauses, note that the subjunctive often disambiguates sentences entailing matrix verbs of communication (Solé and Solé 1997, 165): (1) *Le voy a decir que se va/vaya*. Other uses of the subjunctive in noun clauses (e.g., in instances of coercion, doubt, denial, probability, evaluations, reactions) are largely [+redundancy]. It is in these contexts in which the subjunctive adds little to the propositional content of a sentence because the modality connoted by the subjunctive mood is also manifested in the matrix-clause verb's lexical features (e.g., *Quiero/Dudo/Niego/Es normal que lo hagan así*). Yet, in adverbial and adjectival clauses, the subjunctive may not be as [+redundancy] as one might suspect.²

Concerning adverbial clauses, the following examples illustrate the subjunctive's semantic import when coupled with certain common temporal subordinating conjunctions.

(2) *Comemos en cuanto llegan/lleguen.*

(3) *Su perro fiel puede quedarse ahí hasta que ella vuelve/vuelva.*

(4) *Podemos descansar un rato cuando estamos/estemos en casa.*

In adjective clauses, the referential status of an antecedent (i.e., whether it refers to some person/thing in particular or some hypothetical person/thing) would frequently remain ambiguous were it not for the fact that the subjunctive connotes that the antecedent is indefinite.

- (5) *Busco un restaurante que sirve/sirva comida china.*
 (6) *Voy a hablar con alguien que sabe/sepa algo de la gramática.*

Indeed, Terrell and Salgués (1979, 182) are careful to point out to Spanish educators that the subjunctive is an important indicator of an antecedent's referential value, noting that this value is just as likely to be determined by the linguistic "context" as it is by lexical cues.³ Thus, outside of most noun clauses (with the possible exception of matrices of communication), the subjunctive is regularly non-redundant. Furthermore, the connotations of such non-redundant uses can be quite concrete and meaningful.

Concerning task demands, the extent to which a listener or reader will need to attend to these basic connotations depends on the type of information that he or she must extrapolate from the sentence. Sentences involving the subjunctive are, for the most part, *multi-propositional* since they normally entail two clauses and intertwine two propositions in a number of relationships (Collentine 1997a). Thus, a task might ask a student to focus on any number of elements within such sentences. As an example, let us consider two different task demands for the sentences in (7)–(9):

- (7) *Comemos en cuanto llegan.*
 (8) *Su perro fiel puede quedarse ahí hasta que ella vuelva.*
 (9) *Podemos descansar un rato antes de que te vayas.*

If the task demand were that a student should indicate the order in which the main-clause event and the subordinate-clause event occurred, the learner would need only to concentrate on the meaning of each sentence's subordinating conjunction. Here, the subjunctive would have [-semantic value]. It is, nevertheless, possible to use these same sentences in an activity *whose task demand alone* renders the subjunctive [+semantic value]. If a student needed to indicate which sentences constituted comments about "how someone's life works" and which statements describe "some future eventuality," the learner would need to consider the subordinate-clause mood.

A closer look at the structured input tasks in Collentine (1998)

How did Collentine (1998) raise the communicative value of the subjunctive? In the treatment involving Processing Instruction, to train the learners to consider the semantic value of the mood that adjective-clause verb forms inflect, an explanation paralleling that of Cadierno (1995, 183) preceded the activities. The explanation compared various restrictive clauses and informed the learners of the contextual meanings conveyed by the indicative and the subjunctive in adjectival clauses. Students were also explicitly encouraged to examine the mood of a restrictive-clause verb to determine whether the clause's antecedent was definite or indefinite. The participants were informed that nouns in complex sentences often have a specific referent (e.g., *Vamos a viajar a un pueblo que tiene playa*). Additionally, they were told that such nouns may not have a definite referent, such as in sentences that make inquiries (e.g., *¿Hay por aquí un lugar que tenga playa?*), negate (e.g., *No hay por aquí ningún lugar que tenga playa*), or leave unspecified the noun's referent (e.g., *Vamos a viajar a un lugar que tenga playa*). The bulk of the items in the Processing Instruction treatment contained either a lexically ambiguous specified antecedent or a lexically-ambiguous, unspecified antecedent.⁴

The appendix contains detailed descriptions of the treatment's materials that, for reasons of space, were not included in Collentine (1998) but that did form part of the experiment's treatment. In all of the tasks, the vast majority of the input sentences lacked lexical redundancies that might reveal an antecedent's referential status. Such items prompted students to determine an antecede-

dent's referential status (specified or unspecified) in three types of sentences: (i) sentences involving unmodified antecedents (e.g., *Compramos zapatos que son/sean negros*); (ii) sentences with antecedents modified by an indefinite determiners (e.g., *Buscamos un restaurante que sirve/sirva comida china*); (iii) sentences entailing antecedents that were animate complements in a prepositional phrase (e.g., *Deseo hablar con alguien que va/vaya a estar aquí esta noche*). Notice that, in either case, neither the main-clause verbs nor the modifiers reveal whether the antecedent is referential. One might object to this assertion by suggesting that the subjunctive will always be needed in a restrictive clause when an antecedent is modified by an indefinite article (e.g., *un, una*). However, the reader is reminded that the above discussion on mood in adjectival clauses as well as footnote 3 clearly reveal that antecedent modifiers are poor predictors of the referential status of an antecedent.

One type of task demanded that students match an input sentence to one of two situations, which they could only accomplish by attending to the mood of a restrictive clause. Each situation was defined by a drawing and was accompanied by a dialogue. One situation implied that the antecedent was referential and the other implied non-referentiality (see Appendix, Activity Type 1). For instance, one input sentence was *Graciela quiere hablar con alguien que sepa hablar francés*. Each situation involved two women speaking on the phone, Graciela and Ana. In situation A, Graciela asks Ana, *En tu casa, ¿habla alguien francés?* In situation B, she asks *¿Está Toni en casa? Habla francés y necesito su ayuda*. Thus the match for the input sentence is situation A. (Note that, if the input sentence had been *Graciela quiere hablar con alguien que sabe hablar francés*, situation B would have been correct.) As the appendix reveals, the remaining activities all required that the learner determine the referentiality of an antecedent based solely on the mood of a restrictive-clause verb.

2. Both Collentine (1998) and Farley (2001) presented learners with structured-input tasks that elevate the subjunctive's semantic value. As discussed in the previous point, Collentine (1998) provided learners with structured-input activities that raised the subjunctive's communicative value. Here I discuss how Farley (2001) raised the subjunctive's acoustic salience. This reveals that the Farley (2001) materials ultimately fall short of meeting Processing Instruction's objective of preparing learners to notice the subjunctive's semantic import in authentic input whereas the Collentine (1998) materials do meet this objective.

Recall that the subjunctive's distribution is largely limited to subordinate clauses (Collentine 1995), and so it is reasonable to assume that one must know where to find this morpheme to continue to learn the semantic information that this morpheme encodes. To be sure, Collentine (in press) provides a comprehensive review of the psycholinguistic factors that interact with the acquisition of the subjunctive and complex syntax, revealing that syntactic knowledge interacts significantly with the development of mood-selection knowledge. Furthermore, Collentine et al. (in press) presents the results of study indicating that subjunctive acquisition is enhanced when coupled with instruction about complex syntax. Farley's (2001) tasks, however, effectively eliminate the need for learners to parse complex syntax when making (morphological) form-meaning connections whereas Collentine (1998) does.

The following is an item from the referential activity that Farley (2001, 297) reports. First, the instructor reads aloud: *coma en casa*. The student must then indicate which of two matrix clauses best represents an opinion towards this clause. ___ *Sé que*, ___ *No creo que*, etc. Farley's affective activity also fragmented the main and subordinate clauses of sentences with a matrix-clause verb involving doubt/denial and a nominal clause. For example, students might read *No creo que la revista Enquirer*, after which they were to choose between segments such as ___ *haga buenas investigaciones*, ___ *cueste mucho dinero*, etc. to create a personal opinion (cf. Farley 2001, 297).

By placing subjunctive forms in utterance-initial positions, these tasks raise the subjunctive's acoustic salience so that learners can more readily associate the notions of doubt and denial with this morpheme. However, in authentic language use, if learners do hear the subjunctive in

authentic input in an utterance-initial position, it more than likely connotes coercion (e.g., *baile toda la noche, coma el desayuno*). Indeed, the type of input with which learners will find the subjunctive associated in authentic input is better represented in sentences such as (1)–(9) above, where it is in utterance medial and final position.⁵ And, as described above in point 1, Collentine (1998) only provided the subjunctive in utterance medial or final positions. Thus, Collentine's (1998) tasks are more compatible with the goals of structured-input tasks since they train learners to make form-meaning connections under the syntactic conditions in which they will find the subjunctive in authentic language use.

Of course, it is possible to retort that fostering subjunctive processing strategies that relate to both its connotations and its syntactic properties violates the stipulation that Processing Instruction teach only one thing at a time (VanPatten 2000). To be sure, Farley (2001) asserts that a shortcoming of Collentine (1998) is that the experiment's tasks required learners to process complex discourse; yet, this thesis ignores that (nor attempts to explain why) the Processing Instruction group of Collentine (1998) showed significant treatment gains. Given that the subjunctive is a morphosyntactically complex construct, one could conceivably divide subjunctive instruction according to a multitude of features *ad ridiculum*. In light of the time constraints that curriculum designers face, the feasibility of such subdividing is questionable and apparently unnecessary.

3. Unfortunately, Farley (2001) contains some errors that require clarification. As a consequence of these inaccuracies, Farley (2001) provides distorted summaries of the Collentine (1998) experiment and misrepresents Collentine's conclusions.

Farley (2001) partially bases the unique contribution of his work on the following claim: "Contrary to the conclusions drawn in Collentine (1998), who stated that most uses of the subjunctive do not lend themselves to Processing Instruction, this study has shown that input can be structured in such a way that the subjunctive is more easily processed by the learner" (Farley 2001, 297). A review of my bibliography reveals that Collentine (1998) contains the only statement I have made about the compatibility of processing instruction and the subjunctive: "...in its current form, Processing Instruction may not be effective with the subjunctive in noun clauses...since is not possible to strip most sentences containing instances of the subjunctive in noun clauses of their redundant markers of modality..." (Collentine 1998, 579).

This statement qualifies my reservations about the compatibility of Processing Instruction and the subjunctive *to noun clauses*. Collentine (1998) does not express such doubts about Processing Instruction with the subjunctive in adjective and adverbial clauses, which represent two-thirds of its use. Collentine (1998), in fact, concludes that Processing Instruction is a viable input-oriented strategy for promoting subjunctive acquisition in adjective clauses: "...the results of the study are encouraging, as they indicate that teachers and materials designers could incorporate processing-instruction tasks into subjunctive instruction and be confident that students will benefit from such activities" (Collentine 1998, 584).

Farley's second distortion of Collentine (1998) relates to his criticism of the experimental design of Collentine (1998). Farley promises to provide a "closer look at [Collentine's] processing group's treatment" (290). Summarizing the Collentine (1998) materials, Farley surmises: "In the Collentine (1998) instructional materials for the processing instruction group, the affective activities did not encourage the learner to pay attention to the verb form in order to answer each item. Instead the lexical items often revealed which answer was most logical" (Farley 2001, 290). Yet, Farley (2001) only presents this blanket dismissal of the Collentine (1998) materials; he provides no supporting argumentation or even a superficial dissection of the materials. In truth, his assessment is indefensible. Collentine (1998) contains only a brief description of the treatment materials, which is accompanied by three sample items. Furthermore, space limitations did not allow the inclusion of an appendix with additional example and I have never, to date, received a request (formal or informal) to share the materials from any scholar. Finally, a consideration of the above discussion of how Collentine (1998) raised the subjunctive's communicative value in the processing instruction treatment coupled with a description of the

input sentences in those materials and how they related to the task demands argues that, no matter the type of activity, learners needed to process the mood encoded into restrictive-clause verbs to meet task demands.

4. Conclusion

To conclude, clearly, both Farley (2001) and Collentine (1998) provide Spanish educators with information that addresses one of the most pressing conundrums of the Spanish curriculum, namely, How can we foster subjunctive acquisition in meaningful tasks? These studies show that one could design a variety of input-oriented tasks that promote linguistic development while, crucially, considering the input processing tendencies and biases that learners bring to the acquisition process. This should be extremely encouraging news to Spanish pedagogues, as these studies reveal that one of the most psycholinguistically complex grammatical phenomenon is teachable in ways that are compatible with current psycholinguistic SLA theory.

APPENDIX

Supplementary Examples of the Collentine (1998) Materials⁶

Activity Type 1

Task demand: Students were to determine whether the input sentence *best* depicts situation A or situation B.

Graphic:	Situation A	Situation B	Input sentence	Correct response
Two women speaking on the phone, one glossed <i>Graciela</i> , the other <i>Ana</i> .	Graciela asks: “Ana, En tu casa, ¿habla alguien francés?”	Graciela asks: “¿Está Toni en casa? Él habla francés y necesito su ayuda.”	Graciela quiere hablar con alguien que sepa hablar francés.	Situation A
A man, glossed as <i>Eduardo</i> , in a hotel who has just opened a door. At the door is a porter with some flowers.	Eduardo says: “¡Rosas! Muy buena idea, mozo. A mi esposa le encantan las flores.”	Eduardo says: “¡Ay no!, mozo. Esas flores no. Quería las flores que están en la tienda del hotel.”	Para su esposa, Eduardo desea un regalo que sea especial.	Situation A
A group of five students, two females and three males. One female is glossed as <i>Angela</i> ; two of the males are glossed, one as <i>Eduardo</i> and the other <i>Roberto</i> . Eduardo is studying intently.	Angela says: “Roberto o Eduardo ... no importa cuál.”	Angela says: “Roberto no ... Eduardo sí.”	Ana quiere salir con un muchacho que estudia mucho.	Situation B

Activity Type 2

Task demand/instructions: This was a “Read my mind” activity. Each student had a map of a beachside town in which various places were glossed with a name (e.g., *Comida Mandarina*, *Restaurante Guadalajara*); additionally, some places contained a graphic cue to clarify their

function (e.g., shoes on racks in each of the town's shoe stores). Students listened as the instructor described aurally a "situation." Then, based on the "input sentence," the learners were to indicate *in a variety of ways* (e.g., by asking a question, by guessing, by indicating a) whether (i) the instructor had one place in mind or (ii) whether s/he was open to suggestions. The learners were told that illogical responses (e.g., a response with a statement indicating a particular referent when the subordinate clause verb was in the subjunctive) would simply meet with a repetition of the input sentence.

Situation	Input sentence	Appropriate type of response
Tengo un traje elegante pero estos zapatos son viejos. El problema es que mañana voy a un baile formal.	Voy de compras a una tienda que venda zapatos.	Any response that indicated that the instructor had no particular referent in mind (e.g., " <i>Puedes ir a la Zapatería Gómez o a Zapatos Somos Nosotros.</i> ")
Me encanta el mar. Las brisas ... los pájaros. Desafortunadamente mi casa está lejos del mar	Esta noche alquilo una habitación que esté en la playa.	Any response that indicated that the instructor had no particular referent in mind (e.g., " <i>Vas a quedarte en el Las Toninas o en el Hotel Las Gaviotas.</i> ")
Este pueblo del mar es maravilloso. La variedad de restaurantes es impresionante también	Esta noche como en un restaurante que sirve comida china.	Any response that indicated that the instructor had a particular referent in mind (e.g., " <i>¿Es el restaurante de la Calle 6?</i> ")

Activity Type 3

Task demand/instructions: The students were presented with a graphic to which the instructor provided an aural contextualizer. The students were then to indicate on paper whether the input sentence was appropriate/logical. Answers followed the completion of each item.⁷

Graphic	Aural contextualizer	Input sentence	Correct response
A picture of a young man carrying a number of books.	Mi consejero <i>tiene que</i> encontrarme otra clase con menos lecturas y tareas.	Necesita una clase que requiera menos trabajo.	The input sentence is logical.
A couple who are in a neighborhood with a number of houses.	La mujer dice: "Todas estas casas son aceptables. Todas tienen un solo piso."	Quieren vivir en una casa que tenga un solo piso.	The input sentence is logical.
A young lady who is in a shop looking at various brands of computers that are on sale.	La joven dice: "Cada una de estas computadoras es adecuada para mis necesidades."	Quiere comprar una marca que es de buena calidad.	The input sentence is illogical.

NOTES

⁷While various theoretical treatments exist defining the opposition of *concrete* versus *abstract* (see Heine, Claudi, and Hünemeyer 1991, 41–45), Sapir's (1921) well-known treatment will suffice for the present purposes. Abstract semantic values are relational, and so they are defined with respect to some other abstract phenomenon or concept. Many

Spanish textbooks define the subjunctive as having a subjective denotation. (Interestingly, subjectivity is most meaningful in relation to the notion of objectivity, which is an equally abstract notion.) Concrete semantic values, however, are basic, since they denote actions, objects and qualities. Note, then, for instance, the subjunctive's connotation in sentences such as *Quiero que me traigas agua* and *Es una lástima que no lo puedas hacer*, with the former connoting the imposition of will so as to affect some action (one of the most basic of the human experiences) and the latter an emotional quality (another elementary human experience).

²Recent discussion on the compatibility of Processing Instruction with various grammatical structures gives researchers the impression that the subjunctive's connotation will almost always be available to the learner via some (redundant) lexical marker: "One should note...that redundancy is not absolute; the preterit (or any other tense marker) does not always co-occur with a temporal expression in an utterance. In the input one might also hear utterances such as '¿Dónde estudiaste?' (Where did you study) in which no lexical item provides clues to tense (or to person/number). However, one rarely hears the subjunctive without a main clause that triggers it and one rarely hears copula verbs without a predicate of some kind. In short, some forms are more redundant than others" (VanPatten 2000, 47; emphasis mine). While such may be the case for the subjunctive in noun clauses, the following discussion reveals that the subjunctive has a great deal of communicative value in adverbial and adjective clauses.

³That the subjunctive is regularly non-redundant in adjective clauses is reasonable if two assumptions can be verified: (1) subjunctive forms are infrequently found in sentences questioning (e.g., *¿Hay algo que te guste?*) and negating (e.g., *No hay nada que me guste*) the referentiality of an antecedent; (2) subjunctive forms are the principal disambiguators of an antecedent's referentiality, as in (5)–(6). The second assumption implies that modifiers (e.g., articles) of non-referential antecedents are as likely to be definite as they are to be indefinite, and so they are poor predictors of referentiality. No empirical support currently exists to buttress these assumptions. A pilot corpus analysis queried the 825,251 word *Corpus Oral de Referencia del Español Contemporáneo* ([ftp://lola.llf.uam.es/pub/corpus](http://lola.llf.uam.es/pub/corpus)) for all instances of the following strings: *que caiga(n)*, *que diga(n)*, *que duerma(n)*, *que hable(n)*, *que haga(n)*, *que ponga(n)*, *que pueda(n)*, *que sepa(n)*, *que tenga(n)*, and *que vaya(n)*. The query produced a modest 150 tokens, of which 54 of these strings constituted relative clauses. This is not surprising given that the subjunctive is rare in speech (See Terrell and Salgués, 1979). Two important observations emerge from this analysis. First, questioned and negated antecedents are rarities in informal and formal speech (N=4; 6%). Second, subjunctive antecedents are as likely to occur with definite articles/determiners (N=28; 52%) as they are with indefinite ones (N=20; 37%) [Chi Square(1 df) = 1.3; p = .248], and so these modifiers reveal little about an antecedent's referential status.

⁴For the purposes of teaching students that the subjunctive also connotes non-referential antecedents and to reinforce that the indicative connotes definite referents, a small proportion of the items in the materials contained main-clause determiners and functors that redundantly marked for the definiteness (e.g., *Queremos la casa que tiene dos pisos, Buscamos al muchacho que habla alemán*) or the indefiniteness (e.g., *No hay ninguna clase que sea fácil*) of an antecedent. Nonetheless, all of the experiment's assessment materials involved plural (bare) antecedents, antecedents with indefinite determiners, or animate prepositional complements.

⁵Another pilot query of the *Corpus Oral de Referencia del Español Contemporáneo* supports this assumption. The query produced 1014 contextualized tokens from a search of ten high-count verbs in their unmarked, present-subjunctive forms: *caiga*, *diga*, *duerma*, *hable*, *haga*, *ponga*, *pueda*, *sepa*, *tenga*, and *vaya*. These forms overwhelmingly appear in utterance medial positions; and, when they do appear in utterance initial position, they rarely connote any modality but coercion. Of the 1014 tokens, 911 (90%) resided in utterance medial position and only 103 (10%) were utterance initial [Chi Square(1 df) = 643.9; p = .000]. A total of 55 utterance initial tokens were interjections or formulaics (53% of the 103) and 48 (47% of 103) were imperatives.

⁶Following VanPatten (1997) and Cadierno (1995), the Collentine (1998) experiment also entailed structured-input tasks that asked learners to process the subjunctive at the discourse level, or where the task demand requires students to process the mood of an adjectival clause while considering information both in the sentence at hand and in previous sentences. This type of activity required students to provide original questions based on the input sentence and the discourse. I do not outline that type of activity here because it is sufficiently described in Collentine (1998, 581). Interestingly, Farley criticizes this particular activity for the following reason: "...the [Collentine] affective activities did not encourage the learner to pay attention to the verb form in order to answer each item. Instead, lexical items often revealed which answer was most logical" (Farley 2001, 290). Farley may be misinformed about the role of mood in the following two sentences cited in Collentine (1998). Prefaced with the contextualizer *Tu amigo te ha llamado porque quiere salir contigo.Quieres hacerle preguntas antes de aceptar su invitación*, students were to respond to: *Voy a una fiesta que está cerca de la residencia* and *¿Por que no vamos a una discoteca que esté cerca de la residencia?* The fact that both of these sentences could properly undergo a subordinate-clause mood change (e.g., *Voy a una fiesta que esté cerca de la residencia* [Read: I'll go to any old party as long as it's close to the dorms]; *¿Por qué no vamos a una discoteca que está cerca de la residencia?* [Read: I have a disco in mind, I just haven't told you yet which one it is]) shows clearly that no lexical redundancies could have cued learners to the referential status of the antecedents *fiesta* and *discoteca*.

⁷Some input sentences with the subjunctive (in the subordinate clause) were logical and others illogical, as was the case with indicative sentences.

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