From Present Subjunctive to Present Indicative: evidence of transition in writing from Santa Catarina

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Abstract:
This paper is based on a theoretical interface between the theory of variation and change an linguistic functionalism, and revisits Pimpão's (2012) work to examine the variable context of the present subjunctive (PS) and present indicative (PI) tenses in a diachronic sample composed by letters to the editor published in newspapers from de cities of Florianópolis and Lages (SC) between the late 19th and the late 20th century, looking for contextual evidence of transition. A more refined investigation of the data focusing on historical periodization allowed us to identify, in addition to the increase in frequency of PI from de 1960s, the favorable contexts for the expansion of this verbal form (epistemic sub-mode with spreading temporal projection and direct objective substantive sentences with cognitive verbs, notably the lexical item *achar* (think/guess)) and constraint contexts (deontic sub-mode with future projection and sentences with formal triggers, such as *talvez* (perhaps) and concessive conjunctions). The results of these factors that act in an imbricated way co-occurring with PS and PI in each period and over time support the idea that PI is slowly spreading to the functional domain of PS in gradual transition, in Santa Catarina writing.

Keywords:
Present indicative tense. Transition. Writing from Santa Catarina.

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INTRODUCTION

Numerous studies have shown the variable use of verbal forms of present subjunctive (PS) and present indicative (PI) in Portuguese spoken in different regions of Brazil, such as: Costa (1990), Pimpão (1999, 2012), Fagundes (2007) – in the South Region; Botelho Pereira (1974), Wherritt (1977), Rocha (1997), Alves Neta (2000), Gonçalves (2003), Santos (2005), Almeida (2010), Barbosa (2011) – in the Southeast Region; Meira (2006), Carvalho (2007), Vieira (2007), Oliveira (2007), Alves (2009) – in the Northeast Region. Some of these studies also attested variation in writing: Alves Neta (2000), Alves (2009), Almeida (2010) and Pimpão (2012), with only Almeida (2010) and Pimpão (2012) carrying out properly diachronic studies. A detailed panel of these studies can be seen in Pimpão (2012). Although there is no methodological uniformity among these works – in the circumscription of the variation envelope, in the composition of the groups of factors and in the samples examined (sociolinguistic interviews, TV programs, tests, essays, different written texts between the 13th and 20th centuries – legal text, dialogue, editorial, news, play, official, family and personal letter, in the sample of Almeida (2010); and letter to the editor, in the sample of Pimpão (2012) –, some results in terms of general trends can be taken comparatively. We are aware, however, that this absence of methodological symmetry among the researches requires caution in any attempt at comparison, care also required in any search for generalizations about the behavior of the PS in Brazilian Portuguese (cf. PIMPÃO; GÖRSKI, 2010; PIMPÃO, 2012; BRAGANÇA, 2017).

That said, the reflections developed in this paper are based on results obtained by Pimpão (2012) in the analysis of samples of letters to the editor published in Santa Catarina newspapers in the cities of Florianópolis and Lages in the period between the second half of the 19th century and the end of the 20th century, more specifically from the 1880s (date of the first newspaper available in Lages) until the 1990s (corpus PHPB-SC). The reflections were raised from the observation that historical periodization had proved to be a significant extralinguistic factor in the variable use of the verbal forms of PS and PI (factor not explored by the author), which led us to question the extent to which a statistically significant result for periodization could, in itself, be interpreted as evidence of change in real time.

In the study by Pimpão (2012), the focus of the analysis fell predominantly on the independent variables of a linguistic nature, with the author prioritizing the description of the syntactic-semantic-pragmatic contexts in which the variation between PS and PI occurs. Our interest is to revisit some of those results, correlating them to the different controlled temporal periods, in order to outline a path of the variable uses of PS and PI, in search of evidence of transition (LABOV, 1982; WEINREICH; LABOV; HERZOG 2006). Considering the methodological problems pointed out in the opening paragraph, we focus our (re)analysis and discussion on the sample of letters to the editor of newspapers in Santa Catarina, seeking, next, some possible approximation with the diachronic results of Almeida (2010) and with synchronic results of Pimpão (2012) obtained from sociolinguistic interviews carried out in the same cities of PHPB-SC diachronic sample, safeguarding the specificities of each work and/or sample.

In response to the problematization initially raised and considering the transition problem, we believe that, although quantitative results may indicate a gradual increase in the use of one form and a decline in the other, only a finer analysis of the linguistic contexts in which the variable occurs in each time frame will allow to identify the conditions of possible expansion of use of PI in the canonical domain of PS, as well as the contexts of restriction where PS would remain (almost) absolute. Anchored in a functionalist perspective, we start from the general hypothesis that the context allowing the expansion of the use of PI is epistemic and that the context restricting its use is deontic. In addition – based on the literature of the area exposed in the following sections, as well as some results presented in Pimpão (2012) –, we believe that elements traditionally considered as formal triggers for the use of PS also favor the expansion of PI in writing.

The work is situated in an interface approach between the theory of variation and change and the North American linguistic functionalism, considering that these theoretical fields converge in relation to: priority attributed to the language in use, susceptible to variation and change; vision of change as continuous and gradual; prominent role attributed to frequency; importance given to factors of an interactional nature; idea of competing forces; among other aspects (cf. GÖRSKI; TAVARES, 2013; TAVARES; GÖRSKI, 2015).

The article is organized around the following topics: a panoramic view of the subjunctive and indicative mood in grammars and linguistic studies; modality and mood in a functionalist perspective; variation, transition and change; delimitation of the variable phenomenon; analysis and discussion of data; and final considerations.

CONTEXTUALIZING: THE SUBJUNCTIVE AND INDICATIVE MOOD IN A HISTORICAL, NORMATIVE AND DESCRIPTIVE PERSPECTIVE

We begin this section with a brief historical retrospective, passing by Fernão de

Oliveira (1975), João de Barros (1957) and Jerônimo Barboza (1830), in addition to briefly reporting the Greek grammarians Dionysus Thrax and Apollonius Dyscolus, both considered the first to indicate the category of mood in a grammatical way. Next, we contemplate some modern normative grammarians and linguistic or philological scholars who present a descriptive approach.

Dionysus Thrax and Apollonius Dyscolus (cf. Moura Neves's [2005]) review list five verbal moods: indicative, imperative, optative (outactive), subjunctive and infinitive. While Dionysus Thrax only classifies the moods, Apollonius Dyscolus characterizes each of them, based on the conception of mood as disposition of the speaker's soul (it is understood that the term 'speaker' evokes the existence of both enunciator and enunciatee, whether in oral or in written form). The indicative and the subjunctive mood are thus characterized by the Greek grammar: indicative – mood of affirming the fact expressed by the verb; subjunctive – for not being able to form an independent sentence, it would always be subordinated to a conjunction (MOURA NEVES, 2005). This characterization shows an apparent conflict between a semantic conception of mood as an expression of a disposition of the speaker's soul and a syntactic characterization that links the mood to a dependent sentence headed by a conjunction. This ambivalence will persist over time, as we can see below.

In the 16th century, Fernão de Oliveira (1975, p. 122; emphasis in the original) only registers that each conjugation "has its moods, as *falamos*, *falemos*, *falai* and *falar* [we speak]" (referring, for example, to indicative, subjunctive, imperative and infinitive moods, respectively). Barros (1957, in turn, lists the same moods listed by the Greeks and followed by the Latins. The author thus distinguishes among the indicative, the outactive and the subjunctive: the indicative is the way to demonstrate, the outactive is the "desiring" mood (referring to the time to come, therefore future) and the subjunctive is the "aggregator, because, for it, we aggregate an addition to another, in order to give perfect understanding in the mind of the listener" (referring to the present time) (BARROS, 1957, p. 29). This distinction between the outactive and the subjunctive mood is currently neutralized in the subjunctive's present morphology.

In the 19th century, Barboza (1830, p. 200) conceives the mood as "the different ways of enunciating the coexistence of the attribute in the subject of the proposition". The grammarian admits the possibility of other verbal moods, but emphasizes three: the infinitive – characterized by total indeterminacy; the indicative – characterized by its independence; and the subjunctive – characterized by its dependence. According to the author, the subjunctive enunciates "the coexistence of the attribute in the subject of the proposition in an affirmative way, but always precarious and dependent on the affirmation of another verb, in whose meaning the indecision and uncertainty, proper to the subjunctive language, is prepared" (p. 203). Here, the doubly dependent character of the subjunctive stands out: syntactically subordinate to another sentence, and semantically

under the scope of the meaning (of uncertainty) of the verb of the sentence to which it is subordinated. Barboza (1830) considers that grammarians admit the incorporation of the optative mood to the subjunctive mood.

In the 20th century, in general, normative grammars converge when considering that the verbal moods indicates the attitude of the person speaking in relation to the reported fact, characterizing the indicative and the subjunctive basically by the distinction between reality and unreality, respectively. Values of uncertainty, doubt, hypothesis, eventuality, unreality are associated with subjunctive mood; and values of certainty, reality are associated with indicative mood (TÔRRES, 1970; LUFT, 1971; CUNHA; CINTRA, 1985). Regarding the use of the subjunctive, Cunha and Cintra (1985, p. 454) affirm that this mood "denotes that an action, not yet performed, is conceived as dependent on another, expressed or implied", being the mood par excellence of the subordinate sentences; when it is used in independent sentences, "strongly accentuates the expression of the will of the speaker".

At the intersection of prescription and description, Bechara (2015) deals with the mood and tense of the verb in the scope of "units in the statement". According to the author, while the indicative mood shows the speaker's position in reference to facts seen as credible, the subjunctive expresses the speaker's position in reference to uncertain facts. At the syntactic level, according to Bechara, the indicative mood appears not only in independent sentences, but also in dependent ones that contain a fact considered to be real; and the subjunctive mood occurs in the subordinate ones in which the fact is given as uncertain, doubtful, impossible, in addition to independent optative sentences with *talvez* (maybe).

In a descriptive perspective and attentive to the functioning of grammar in the construction of the text, Azeredo (2008) places the verbal mood (together with the modality, the time and the aspect) in the syntactic scope of the predication. According to the author, in the case of mood it is the verbal morphology that expresses the enunciator's attitude (the *modus*) about the object of communication (the *dictum*): attitude of certainty – indicative mood –, or of hypothesis or assumption – subjunctive mood. From a syntactic point of view, the indicative mood is associated with facts of objective existence expressed in simple declarative statements, whereas the subjunctive is associated with facts that are dependent on the point of view of the enunciator, typically appearing in subordinate structures.

From this view, it is observed that the subjunctive mood slides between different levels, being seen in its triple face – semantic-pragmatic (associated with attitudinal values) and syntactic (associated with the relationship of dependence and subordination), both expressed in the morphological face of the mood-tense affix. It is also verified that there is a convergence between the grammarians mentioned in associating subjunctive and subordination, with the reservation that Bechara (2015) implies the idea of variation,

when considering that the indicative mood can appear in subordinate sentences that express a fact as real. The link between the mood and the type of sentence is so strong that Castilho and Elias (2011, p. 178; emphasis in the original) affirm that "[the] *subjunctive* and *subordinate* terms are synonymous [...]. Over time, *subjunctive* specialized as a label of a verbal mood, and *subordinate* as a label of a type of sentence". Such an idea highlights the formal character of the subjunctive.

Due to the syntactic and lexical triggers that require the subjunctive mood in verbal inflection, some linguists consider that verbal morphology, by itself, does not carry a distinction of modality. Such modal emptying is considered by Câmara Jr. (1986, p. 145) as a "grammatical easement". In this sense, Mattos e Silva (2006, p. 119) admits the use of the subjunctive "based on the characteristics of the phrases in which it fits, so it is considered a formal pattern without marking independent semantic values". Perini (1996, p. 257) further accentuates the formal character of the subjunctive, considering that there is a tendency for the indicative/subjunctive opposition in Brazilian Portuguese to become essentially formal, and "the cases in which one can see an imputable semantic effect are exceptional and tend to disappear in the modern language". The gradual loss of mood distinctions is also noted in other languages, as in Silva-Corvalán's (1994) study of Spanish spoken in Los Angeles. The fact that the subjunctive is used in certain types of sentences, however, does not imply an omission by the speaker, according to Câmara Jr. (1974): the attitude remains, but outside the morphic structure.

The interaction between the morphosyntactic and semantic-pragmatic levels is well pointed out by Castilho (2010, p. 438), for whom "a linguistic operation as important as the assessment of what we are talking about, at the same time that we speak, could not be assigned only to the morphology of the verb". The author emphasizes that the moods represent speech acts, presenting, therefore, a discursive property, which takes us "out of the enunciated sentence and into the enunciation situation, showing that the selection of the moods does not have an exclusively syntactic motivation" (p. 438). This view puts the notion of modalization and modality on evidence.

Modalization can be defined as a strategy "through which the speaker expresses attitudes and opinions regarding the propositional content" (AZEREDO, 2008, p. 90). The modality is associated with the *modus*, understood by Azeredo as "the enunciator's attitude or point of view in relation to the object of their communication" (p. 209), among whose grammatical resources of expression are verbal forms in the subjunctive, auxiliary modals and operators as *maybe ('talvez')*, *it is necessary*, among others. Note that the verbal mood is one of the strategies to signal the modality at the morphological level, however it is a context-dependent category.

In this brief panoramic view, we can perceive different approaches of the subjunctive mood, from a formal interpretation with modal emptying in the morphology of the verb, to a functional/discursive interpretation that contemplates the verbal morphology of mood(-tense) as one of the operators of the modality.

MODALITY AND MOOD IN A FUNCTIONALIST PERSPECTIVE

We take Givón's notion of grammar, modality and mood form from the North American functionalist approach, as a theoretical-conceptual basis (GIVÓN, 1995, 2001, 2002, 2005). In this perspective, the language is conceived as a complex adaptive system in constant change and variation, which adjusts to the cognitive and communicative needs of the speakers, and whose categories are gradients. Grammar as a structure articulates the plans of propositional semantics (information about events/states and participating entities) and multipropositional pragmatics (broader communicative context, which encompasses the purposes of the speaker, the speaker-listener interaction and the discursive context), expanding its scope, therefore, beyond the sentence.

Modality is one of the components that integrate the multidimensional functional domain of tense-aspect-modality (TAM), which involves categories that intertwine and, to some extent, overlap (GIVÓN, 2001), covering general or more restricted functional areas, depending on the focus adjustment of the analyst's lens. This multifaceted property of the functional domain gives it a relative character, since a larger domain is often subdivided into subdomains that intersect and interact with each other (GÖRSKI; TAVARES, 2017). It is in this sense that both TAM and the modality can be characterized as functional domains.

The multidimensional character of the notion of functional domain is present in the definition of modality as "a complex functional domain [...] comprising some more semantic and other more pragmatic subdomains" (GIVÓN, 1995, p. 111), the first traditionally associated to the epistemic subcomponent and the latter to the deontic subcomponent. The author, however, in line with the idea that the categories are gradients, postulates that the conceptual independence of these subcomponents occurs only in prototypical terms, since in a cognitive-communicative (functional) approach to grammar, it is illusory to think that epistemic categories are "untainted by the pragmatic mess of deontics" (p. 111-112).

The notion of functional domain is related to the functionalist principle of stratification, according to which new layers (forms) are continually emerging within a domain, without the older layers necessarily disappearing, that is, different layers can coexist and interact within the scope of a functional domain (HOPPER, 1991). This notion is taken up in the section dealing with the delimitation of the variable.

Givón links the subjunctive mood to the irrealis, in turn located within the scope of the modalities. Breaking with the traditional view that treats modality as a property of propositions and that practically circumscribes it to the orational scope as it concerns the speaker's attitude towards the proposition, Givón extends the four main epistemic propositional modalities from the logical tradition to a communicative equivalence, redefining them through a communicative-pragmatic interpretation: i) necessary truth à

presupposition; ii) factual truth à realis assertion; iii) possible truth à irrealis assertion; iv) non-truth à negative assertion. This redefinition highlights the epistemic states and communicative goals of the interlocutors. In this way, the epistemic modality is no longer seen with semantically oriented meaning for the speaker and is seen, as well as the deontic one, with meaning pragmatically negotiated in the interaction, involving the speaker and listener.

The irrealis assertion is defined as follows:

> The proposition is *weakly asserted* to be either possible, likely or uncertain (epistemic sub-modes), or necessary, desired or undesired (valuative-deontic sub-modes). But the speaker is *not* ready to back up the assertion with evidence or other strong grounds; and challenge from the hearer is readily entertained, expected or even solicited (GIVÓN, 2001, p. 302).

Note that irrealis assertion involves both epistemic and deontic values. Thus, the link between subjunctive and irrealis established by Givón contemplates the idea that the subjunctive mood is distributed between these different values, reason why, to understand the place of the subjunctive mood, it is necessary, first, to understand the place of the irrealis modality, as defined above.

In the Givonian perspective, the subjunctive is more likely to appear under the deontic scope and, if deontic, then epistemic uncertainty, since the deontic sub-mode, which is strongly associated with future projection, inherently carries an epistemic uncertainty value. Epistemic uncertainty is, in these terms, the common feature of the epistemic and deontic sub-modes of the irrealis modality (GIVÓN, 1995). In this sense, there is a clear relationship among deontic sub-mode, future temporal projection and subjunctive mood – a relationship already, in a way, indicated by Barros (1957), for whom the flexional morphology of the present in the subjunctive mood, as we know it today, expresses the present and the future in the outactive mood, the desire mood. The following example illustrates this correlation and sets the context for the prototypical modality of PS use.

(01) [...] apresso-me a *PEDIR*-vos *QUE* no proximo numero d'O Ideal *PUBLIQUEIS* a corrigenda que ora vos remeto. (FLP, *O Ideal*, 1906) [1]

In (01), the sender expresses the wish for his letter to be published. In the context under analysis, the verb *ask* (pedir) expresses this volitional value at the same time that gives a tone of manipulation, since with the manifestation of his desire, the

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[1] The information in parentheses indicates the city of sample – FLP for Florianópolis and LGS for Lages –, the name of the newspaper and the year of publication of the letter to the editor from which data were extracted.

sender seeks to persuade the newspaper editor to publish the letter. The aim of the desire, the publication of the errata, is under the deontic scope, and may or may not be realized; it is, therefore, projected for the future.

In a communicative perspective, the modality is negotiated in the interaction: "the speaker's attitude is, in turn, never just – not even primarily – about the proposition itself, but rather about the *listener's attitude* toward the proposition as well as toward the speaker" (GIVÓN, 2005, p. 149; emphasis in the original). The modality is configured, therefore, as a complex functional domain marked by more epistemic moments and more deontic moments, depending on the symbiotic process established in the communicative interaction between the participants.

VARIATION, TRANSITION, CHANGE

That language is an inherently heterogeneous and ordered system that contains, in addition to categorical rules, also variable rules, is one of the assumptions that underlie the Theory of Variation and Change (LABOV, 1982, 2008; WEINREICH; LABOV; HERZOG; 2006). Variable rules involve contextual factors that condition the variable use of grammatical phenomena, that is, that condition the use of one or another variant form. Two or more variant forms constitute a linguistic variable – a concept originally developed by Labov, in the 1960s, for the analysis of phonological variability –, which requires that the variant forms refer to the same state of affairs, that is, that convey the same referential or representational meaning, which can be interchangeable in the same context (LABOV, 2006). The extension of the notion of linguistic variable to higher grammatical levels is discussed in the following section.

How is a variation situation resolved? Two (or more) forms can coexist as variants for a long time in a situation of stable variation, or the variation can be resolved by change, which occurs slowly and gradually: one of the forms can have its frequency increased while the other decreases its use, which may disappear; or the forms can coexist, but one of them specializes for use in a certain context while the other continues to perform its original function. In the sociolinguistic perspective, one of the general statements is that not all variation leads to change, but all change presupposes variation (WEINREICH; LABOV; HERZOG, 2006), so that a situation of variation is always a trigger for a change.

Weinreich, Labov and Herzog postulate five empirical problems that should guide sociolinguistic research, summarized as follows: constraints – contemplates the possible conditions for changes to occur; embedding – shows how the changes are embedded in the linguistic and social structure; transition – involves moving a change from one stage to another; evaluation – examines how changes can be evaluated; implementation – responds why a change occurs in one language at one time and not in another language

at another time. Labov (2001, p. 261) points out "the predominance of internal factors in two (the constraints and transition problems)". These are the problems that we are interested in discussing in this paper.

The change from one stage of the language to another can happen by generational transmission, by diffusion from one social group to another, by diffusion from one period of time to another and/or by the expansion of linguistic contexts of use of a variant form. It is on these last two facets of the transition problem that our attention falls. A situation of variation can gradually change as the linguistic contexts of use of one of the forms in relation to the other are expanding and breaking down linguistic barriers. It is possible to capture analytically both the diffusion of a form in new contexts and contexts that work as a restriction, preventing or delaying the form entry. In this sense, we can see that there is an intimate relationship between constraint and transition.

In the case of the variable phenomenon that is our object of investigation, the historical periodization of the sample allows for an analysis of linguistic behavior in real time. What we seek to investigate is the possibility of identifying, in each period of time, which contexts favor the expansion of the use of PI and which contexts constraint this use.

DELIMITATION OF THE VARIABLE PHENOMENON

Since the 1970s, some sociolinguists have proposed to extend the application of the variationist methodology to the analysis of grammatical phenomena above phonology, which implied reviewing the criterion of "same meaning", which started to be interpreted as "functional comparability" (LAVANDERA, 1978, p. 181) or "same communicative function" (MILROY; GORDON, 2003, p. 170). In this sense, the relevant criterion for defining a linguistic variable is no longer semantic equivalence and becomes discursive or functional equivalence (TAGLIAMONTE, 2006). The linguistic phenomenon under analysis in this work involves variation at a higher grammatical level, being crossed by factors of morphosyntactic and semantic-pragmatic nature. How to define and delimit the linguistic variable that presents such property?

As already mentioned in the section about modality and mood, the variable phenomenon in focus is within the scope of the TAM functional domain (tense-aspect-modality), involving categories that, to some extent, intersect and overlap, both in the constitution the variable phenomenon itself as well as in the contextual conditioners that circumscribe it. The notion of "same communicative function" can be equated with "same functional domain", so that the task of delimiting the layers that coexist and compete in the same domain (HOPPER, 1991) can be seen, in certain situations, as equivalent to the task of delimiting the variants of a linguistic variable (GÖRSKI; TAVARES, 2017).

When dealing with the definition of the linguistic variable, it is necessary to consider that the terms "present subjunctive" and "present indicative" refer simultaneously to a form (a grammatical category) and to a function. The PS designates both the verbal form that encodes the tense-mood with its own morphology (morphological component), as well as the present temporal reference function associated prototypically with the irrealis modality (semantic-pragmatic component). Similarly, the PI designates both the verbal form that encodes the tense-mood with its own morphology (morphological component), and the present temporal reference function associated prototypically with the realis modality (semantic-pragmatic component). As this definition of PS and IP is formulated in terms of prototypicity, in the effective use of language it is not uncommon to find these verbal forms in overlapping contexts of realis-irrealis modality, as we will see in the analysis below – a situation that is compatible with the functionalist assertion that the categories are not discrete. With regard to time, although the present is usually defined as simultaneous to the moment of speech, taken as a reference point, its function can cover a temporal gap spread both for the past and for the future. In this sense, the scope of PS, being associated with the irrealis modality, can be more strongly spread to the future than that of PI.

To delimit the linguistic variable, Pimpão (2012) considered the correlation between form/function, but prioritized as a starting point the form to investigate the variable behavior of PS and PI, based on the conditions of employment of PS commonly listed in normative grammars, both in independent sentences with *talvez* (maybe) as in substantive, adjective and adverbial subordinate sentences. Thus, the possibilities of interchangeability of PS and PI in these contexts were tested in the sample, taking into account that such alternation could involve different nuances of modality, which was solved by controlling independent variables. The following occurrences illustrate the variable behavior of PS and PI, respectively, in a syntactic context of adjective sentence.

(02) Como sou proprietario e antigo morador desta cidade, pagando muitos impostos, acho-me no direito de tambem reclamar alguma cousa *QUE* me *INCOMMODE* e *QUE* não *ESTEJA* certa. (LGS, *A Época*, 1927)

(03) Imaginemos uma empresa *QUE* o seu contínuo *SAI* pra os bancos e *FICA* uma, duas horas parado num só banco. (LGS, *Correio Lageano*, 1997)

In both cases, the competing variant form could have been used. Even in (03), the situation presented is hypothetical, signaled by the verb *imagine*, context in which PS is expected, according to normative grammarians (CUNHA; CINTRA, 1985; MENDES DE ALMEIDA, 2005).

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis proposed in this article seeks to answer the problematization raised in the Introduction, translated into the following question: The decline in percentage and probabilistic terms in the use of verbal forms of PS over time is a sure indicator of change in real time, in the sense that the indicative mood would be taking the place of the subjunctive in the expression of the present tense? In general terms, we believe (i) that the context that allows the expansion of the use of PI is that of an epistemic modality with a spreading temporal projection and that the context that restricts its use is a deontic modality with a projection of future; (ii) that elements traditionally seen as formal triggers for the use of PS undermine the expansion of PI in writing.

We begin by presenting the general frequency distribution of PS and PI in letters to the editor of newspapers from Florianópolis and Lages. For the purpose of initial comparison, the two cities were considered together and also separately.

Table 1 – General frequency of **PS** and **PI** in writing

Florianópolis/Lages			Florianópolis			Lages		
PS	PI	Total	PS	PI	Total	PS	PI	Total
427	72		195	35		232	37	
85%	15%	499	84%	16%	230	86%	14%	269

Source: Adapted from Pimpão (2012, p. 296).

The contexts of variation found in 244 letters totaled 499 occurrences in both cities. The frequency result for the use of PS and PI is very close, with a difference of only two percentage points: the PS exhibits an important productivity in the sample of Florianópolis and Lages (84% and 86%, respectively), consequently the PI remains relatively low in productivity, in a similar proportion in both locations (16% and 14%, respectively).

Considering it is a diachronic sample, it was expected that *periodization* was a significant independent variable, which may point to a gradual movement of linguistic change, with a decrease in the use of PS and, therefore, expansion of PI. The periodization was, in fact, selected as statistically relevant by the *Goldvarb* program (ROBINSON; LAWRENCE; TAGLIAMONTE, 2001), both in the round with the cities considered together and in the individual round of Lages. The following linguistic variables were also significant: sub-modes (deontic and epistemic), temporal projection (future and spread) and values of sub-modes (volition, evaluation, manipulation, probability, belief and certainty) – variables associated with the modality; in addition to the syntactic

configuration (with *talvez* (maybe); adverbial, adjective and substantive sentence) (PIMPÃO, 2012).

The results presented below (from Table 2 to Table 4) take as reference variant PS, since the statistical rounds were carried out with a focus on the subjunctive. It is important to note, however, that our interest in discussion here is a possible transition from the use of PS to PI, considered as the innovative form in these contexts.

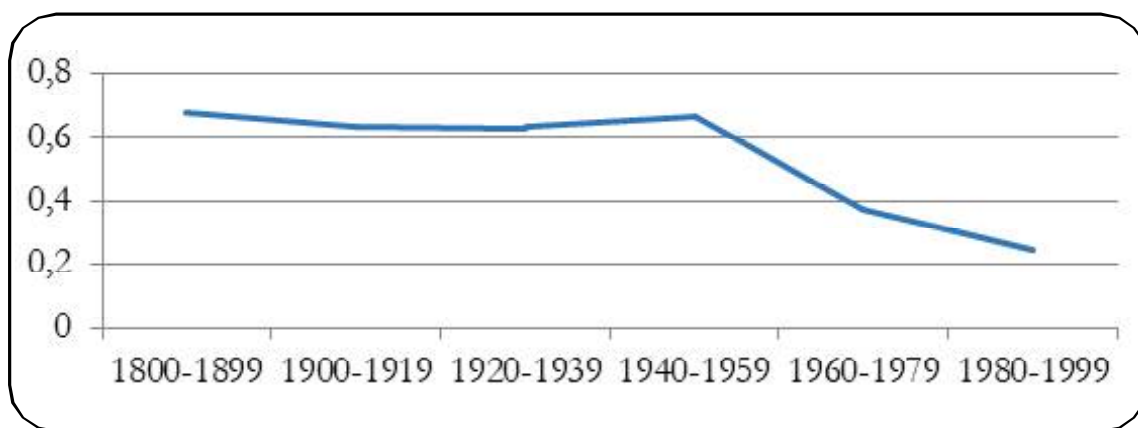**Table 2 –** Correlation between *periodization* and the use of **PS** *vs.* **PI** in writing

City	Florianópolis/Lages			Florianópolis			Lages		
Periods	Apl./T	%	R.W.	Apl./T	%	R.W.[2]	Apl./T	%	R.W.
1880-1899	57/63	90	0,675	26/30	86	(0,563)	31/33	93	0,817
1900-1919	61/71	85	0,632	38/46	82	(0,513)	23/25	92	0,851
1920-1939	89/101	88	0,631	34/39	87	(0,509)	55/62	88	0,634
1940-1959	55/60	91	0,662	28/30	93	(0,743)	27/30	90	0,755
1960-1979	71/85	83	0,371	21/26	80	(0,497)	50/59	84	0,192
1980-1999	94/119	78	0,245	48/59	81	(0,328)	46/60	76	0,220
TOTAL	**427/499**	**85**		**195/230**	**84**		**232/269**	**86**	

Source: Adapted from Pimpão (2012, p. 299).

It is observed, according to Table 2, that the variation is present since the first period considered: in Florianópolis there is 14% of PI and in Lages 7% of this variant between 1880 and 1899. This result will change significantly from 1960, a period in which the percentage of PI rises to 20% in Florianópolis and to 16% in Lages. In the following period, 1980-1999, the rate of PI in Florianópolis practically remains (19%), but continues to rise in Lages (24%), so that the average percentage in the cities gathered reaches 22% of PI, more than double the rate found in the first period.

The relative weights (more than the percentages) evidence a sharp decline in PS and, consequently, an increase in PI since 1960, which continues to grow until the 1990s. This movement is verified both in the two cities taken together and separately, notably in Lages. The graphic below, with results from R.W. for the two locations combined, allows a better visualization of this movement.

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[2] Although periodization did not show statistical significance for Lages, we chose to present the probabilistic results in parentheses, for comparison purposes.

Graphic 1 – *Historical periodization* and the use of **PS** *vs.* **PI** in writing
from Florianópolis and Lages

The results shown in Table 2, and graphically represented in probabilistic terms, lead us, at first, to consider Perini's (1996) prognosis that the subjunctive would tend to be eliminated, especially the present time, a belief that is in line with the idea of other authors who admit the gradual loss of mood distinctions (CÂMARA JR, 1986; SILVA-CORVALÁN, 1994; MATTOS E SILVA, 2006). These results encourage us to seek to identify the contexts of occurrence of the linguistic variable under analysis in each of the periods. However, before examining intersections between periods and types of context, it is important to note the general results of other independent variables concerning modality and syntactic configuration. Table 3 shows the correlation between the *sub-modes* (deontic and epistemic) and the *temporal projection* (future and spread) and the use of PS versus PI.

Table 3 – Correlation between *sub-modes* and *temporal projection* and the use of **PS** *vs.* **PI** in writing

Sub-mode	Florianópolis/Lages			Florianópolis			Lages		
	Apl./T	%	R.W.	Apl./T	%	R.W.	Apl./T	%	R.W.
Deontic	298/308	96	0,772	129/133	96	0,753	169/175	96	0,788
Epistemic	129/191	67	0,122	66/97	68	0,179	63/94	67	0,080
TOTAL	**427/499**	**85**		**195/230**	**84**		**232/269**	**86**	
Temporal projection									
Future projection	286/295	96	0,715	125/131	95	0,653	161/164	98	0,788
Spread projection	141/204	69	0,210	70/99	70	0,302	71/105	67	0,114
TOTAL	**427/499**	**85**		**195/230**	**84**		**232/269**	**86**	

The results for the *sub-modes* are quite significant: the deontic contexts are the ones that strongly favor the use of PS in both locations, with an associated relative weight above 0.75, with the PI only 4% of occurrences in this subcomponent of the modality. On the other hand, in epistemic contexts, the PI rate increases to 33% and the relative weight associated with SP declines sharply to less than 0.20, indicating a polarized result for sub-modes. The deontic context has been pointed out in different studies – conducted with speech data – as an important environment for retaining the subjunctive mood (ALVES NETA, 2000; GONÇALVES, 2003; FAGUNDES, 2007; PIMPÃO, 1999; 2012). The results of the sample of letters to the editor, shown in Table 3, are in line with these studies and with the givonian prediction, as the deontic sub-mode retains the PS, and the epistemic sub-mode constitutes an environment conducive to the PI.

Still within the scope of the modality, the sub-modes have a direct relationship with the *temporal projection of the situation*. The results show the relevance of this independent variable in the use of PS and PI. The PS is favored in contexts of future projection – scope of the irrealis modality – and strongly disfavored in contexts of spread projection – which covers the realis-irrealis interface. These results also converge with those found in other studies (PIMPÃO, 1999; 2012; MEIRA, 2006; CARVALHO, 2007 – for speech data; and ALMEIDA, 2010 – for written data). Thus, the projection spread constitutes the favorable environment for the occurrence of PI, precisely because it encompasses a broader temporal spectrum.

Below, we present data that illustrate the combination of sub-mode and temporal projection. In the occurrence (01), already presented – in which the sender tries to promote a change in the behavior of the newspaper's editor, persuading him to publish the letter, although in a kind way, expressed by the verb *to ask* –, the *deontic sub-mode* and the *future temporal projection* converge. As we saw in the results shown in Table 3, this is the preferred context for the use of PS.

The following occurrence adds *deontic sub-mode* with a *spread temporal projection* – the congratulation occurs at the moment of writing the letter, which is motivated by the quality of the writing of the articles published in the newspaper.

(04) A elevação de vistas e o apurado criterio com que tem sido redigida a *GAZETA*, são motivos *PARA QUE* o *FELICITEMOS* de coração [...] (LGS, *Gazeta de Lages*, 1892)

In contrast, the following data exemplify the *epistemic* sub-mode associated with the *spread temporal projection*, a context more favorable to PI.

(05) *CREIO* mesmo *QUE* os artefatos nucleares é que *SÃO* os responsáveis por esta grande confusão climática. (FLP, *Jornal da Semana*, 1980)

(06) Mas, sr. Dr. uma coisa esse conceituado jornal tem esquecido e *TALVEZ* essa *SEJA* de maior alcance político e social. (FLP, *Diário da Tarde*, 1950)

In (05), the climatic confusion is not questionable, but the uncertainty lies in the possibility of nuclear artifacts being responsible for this confusion, object of opinion, belief, supposition of the sender of the letter. The uncertain situation is spread over time, comprising past, present and future. Although the epistemic sub-mode associated with the spread temporal projection establishes a very favorable environment for the use of PI, there are grammatical triggers that seem to act more strongly inhibiting the indicative mood, as is the case of (06). The sender claims that something has been forgotten by the newspaper and that something forgotten may be of greater scope. In this sense, there is uncertainty regarding the political and social scope of what has been forgotten, a possibility that concerns something that continues to be forgotten by the newspaper, configuring a spread projection.

In occurrence (07), the *epistemic* sub-mode is associated with *future temporal projection*.

(07) Quando forem publicados esses quadros de que fallamos e examinados devidamente, terá então o publico occasião de verificar que não estamos phantasiando, *CASO ENTENDA* que foi com tal objectivo que viemos occupar uma columna deste jornal. (LGS, *Região Serrana*, 1899)

At first, the fragment of the newspaper already indicates a situation yet to be realized – the publication of pictures. Once published, the public will have the chance to understand the context of the situation, even in the eventuality of understanding – to use the verb of the data – the purpose of the newspaper column to have been used. The context as a whole refers to the future, to situations that may – or may not – happen.

Each of the sub-modes has different values. In the deontic spectrum, the volition value was shown to be a categorical environment of PS, followed by the value of manipulation (with 97% of PS) and evaluation (with 85% of PS), as shown, respectively, from (08) to (10).

(08) *ESPERO*, todavia, *QUE* depois a Prefeitura não *RESOLVA* inverter as prioridades. (FLP, *O Estado*, 1980)

(09) Nestas condições, a não ser por ignorancia ou má fé ninguem terá o direito de *AFFIRMAR QUE* a elevação de entrancia de uma comarca *POSSA* concorrer para a elevação de impostos. (LGS, *O Planalto*, 1923)

(10) Não é de *ADMIRAR QUE* o Snr. Ver. se *OPPONHA* ao uso livre da razão, porque a igreja romana sempre se oppoz a esta liberdade humana [...]. (FLP, *Sul-Americano*, 1900)

In the epistemic spectrum, which probabilistically inhibits PS and favors PI, the combined values of probability/belief, as illustrated in (07), associated with low certainty,

are more open to variation (with 59% of PS), followed by the certainty value (with 80% PS), as shown in the data (11). Therefore, epistemic sub-mode of low certainty is what is shown to be the most propitious environment for PI, which reaches about 40% of frequency in this context.

> (11) *EMBORA* o Nordeste brasileiro *FIQUE* a muitos quilômetros de Santa Catarina, alguns fenômenos característicos daquela região podem ser vistos claramente em nosso estado. (FLP, O Estado, 1992)

Considering the effect of the modality, it is surprising, at least at first glance, the high percentage for PS data with certainty value (80%). A close examination of each occurrence that carries this value shows that most of the data with PS is of concessive adverbial sentence, as exemplified in (11). In these cases, it occurs what Câmara Jr. (1986, p. 145) calls "grammatical servitude". They are syntactic triggers that promote the use of PS despite the epistemic certainty established discursively. In terms of Bybee et al. (1994), it is the typical environment of the subordinate way, characterized as the particularity of certain types of sentence to promote the use of the subjunctive. Thus, (11) illustrates how connectors of the concessive adverbial sentence (*as though*, *although*, *even if*, *without*) function as syntactic triggers, regardless of the degree of certainty involved.

In the investigation of the variable use of the subjunctive mood in a diachronic perspective, in diversified samples that comprise the XIII and XX centuries, Almeida (2010) found approximate results for the cases of concessive connectors: (i) categorical use of subjunctive under the scope of the connectors *even that* and *without that* and (ii) practically categorical use under the scope of the connectors *though* and *as much as*.

The last general result to be examined, before resuming the periodization, concerns the syntactic configuration, which involves the contexts with the item *talvez* (maybe) and the three types of subordinate sentence: adverbial, adjective and substantive.

Table 4 – Correlation between *type of syntactic context* and the use of **PS** *vs.* **PI** in writing

Type of context	Florianópolis/Lages			Florianópolis			Lages		
	Apl./T	%	R.W.	Apl./T	%	R.W.	Apl./T	%	R.W.
Talvez (maybe)	11/11	100	–	05/05	100	–	06/06	100	–
Adverbial	118/120	98	0,922	64/64	100	–	54/56	96	0,788
Adjective	65/80	81	0,376	31/38	81	0,738	34/42	80	0,220
Substantive	233/288	80	0,292	95/123	77	0,421	138/165	83	0,469
TOTAL	**427/499**	**85**		**195/230**	**84**		**232/269**	**86**	

Source: Adapted from Pimpão (2012, p. 299).

Despite the reduced number of data, PS is categorically used under the scope of the modalizer *talvez* (maybe) (06). The context of adverbial sentence, which has a much higher number of occurrences, also shows a high frequency of PS (above 95%), being a categorically inhibitory environment of PI in Florianópolis (cf. data (07) and (11)). The contexts that show variation in the frequency of use of verbal forms is that of adjective and substantive sentences, which, in probabilistic terms, contrast Florianópolis and Lages, since the adjectives favor PS in the capital (0.738) and inhibit this form in Lages (0.220), consequently favoring PI (cf. data (02) and (03)). The convergence between cities occurs in substantive sentences, which disadvantage PS and favor PI in both locations (cf. data (01), (04), (05) (08), (09) and (10)). It is interesting to note that, in the result for the cities taken together, the R.W. associated with PS in substantive sentences is the lowest (0.292) in relation to the other syntactic contexts.

Summing up the general results presented in the preceding tables, we have that: (i) there is a drop in the use of PS and a consequent increase in PI since the 1960s; (ii) deontic context and future temporal projection favor PS, while epistemic context and spread temporal projection favor PI; (iii) values of volition and manipulation are strongly associated with SP, whereas values of probability/belief are the most closely linked to PI; (iv) sentences with *talvez* (maybe) and adverbial sentences are practically categorical contexts of PS, while adjective and, mainly, substantive sentences are the most prone to PI.

Once the general results concerning all periods of the samples were presented, we now proceed to focus on specificities of each period in relation to the semantic-pragmatic and syntactic contexts, seeking to find evidence for our hypotheses about periodization.

The general results raise the following question: Does the increase in the frequency of PI since the 1960s occur accompanied by a greater recurrence of contexts of epistemic sub-mode and/or spread projection and substantive sentences in the last decades? To verify the configuration of these contexts in each time period, the first procedure focused on performing two crossings: *periodization* with *sub-mode* and *periodization* with *temporal projection*, as shown in Table 5. The results, from now on, refer to PI *vs*. PS.

The expectation was that the frequency of PI would increase towards the end of the 20th century, both in the contexts of epistemic sub-mode and spread temporal projection. As can be seen in Table 5, from 1880 to 1959, the frequency of PI remains somewhat stable, with percentages between 20% and 26%, for both factors. In the two subsequent periods – and taking as a reference the result for the immediately preceding period –, the use of PI more than doubles for the epistemic sub-mode (46%) and triples in the context of spread projection (60%). In the last period, the use of this variant form slightly increases for the epistemic sub-mode and falls in the spread projection, even though this drop has a percentage value (46%) equivalent to more than double those registered in the previous four periods. In contrast, in the context of future temporal projection, the frequency of PI remains very low throughout the century; the deontic

sub-mode, on the other hand, shows a certain flexibility in the last period, moment in which the use of PI increases slightly in this context.

Table 5 – Cross-tabulation between *periodization* and *sub-mode/temporal projection* and the use of **PI** *vs.* **PS** in writing of Florianópolis and Lages

Period	Epistemic sub-mode		Deontic sub-mode		Spread projection		Future projection	
	Apl./T	%	Apl./T	%	Apl./T	%	Apl./T	%
1880-1899	06/23	26	0/40	0	06/29	21	0/34	0
1900-1919	09/36	25	01/35	03	09/37	24	01/34	03
1920-1939	11/45	24	01/56	02	10/51	20	02/50	04
1940-1959	04/20	20	01/40	02	04/19	21	01/41	02
1960-1979	13/28	46	01/57	02	12/20	60	02/65	03
1980-1999	19/39	49	06/80	08	22/48	46	03/71	04
TOTAL	**62/191**	**32**	**10/308**	**03**	**63/204**	21	**09/295**	**03**

Source: Elaborated by the authors.

Comparing the results presented in tables 2 and 5, we note that the drop in the frequency of PS in the last two periods (Table 2) exactly coincides with the contexts of epistemic sub-mode and spread temporal projection (Table 5), in which the increased use of PI can be observed. Seeking to better understand the contextual motivations for the rupture verified since the 1960s, we proceed to a cross-tabulation between *periodization* and *type of syntactic context*, the result of which is shown in Table 6.

Table 6 – Cross-tabulation between *periodization* and *type of syntactic context* and the use of **PI** *vs.* **PS** in writing of Florianópolis and Lages

Period	Substantive sentence		Adjective sentence		Adverbial sentence		*Talvez* (maybe)	
	Apl./T	%	Apl./T	%	Apl./T	%	Apl./T	%
1880-1899	04/36	11	01/10	10	01/15	07	0/02	0
1900-1919	08/35	23	02/14	14	0/20	0	0/02	0
1920-1939	09/53	17	03/24	12	0/21	0	0/03	0
1940-1959	04/36	11	01/08	12	0/14	0	0/02	0
1960-1979	11/54	20	03/13	23	0/17	0	0/01	0
1980-1999	19/74	26	05/11	45	01/33	03	0/01	0
TOTAL	**55/288**	**19**	**15/80**	**19**	**02/120**	02	**0/11**	**0**

Source: Elaborated by the authors.

Among the four types of syntactic context, the preferred environment of PI is that of substantive and adjective sentences, in which this verbal form reaches 19% of frequency *versus* 81% of PS. Considering the absolute numbers, the context of substantive sentence corresponds to more than half of the sample data (288/499 = 58%) and the great majority of the occurrences of PI are found in such a syntactic context (55/72 = 76%). Observing the periodization, it is noted that, although the indicative verbal form appears in substantive sentences since 1880, its frequency increases in the last two periods, following the increase in occurrences of this syntactic context, particularly in the last period. It is noted that 30 of the 55 PI data in substantive sentences are concentrated from 1960 onwards. Regarding adjectives, 8 of the 15 PI data are also found, with increasing frequency, in the last two periods. As we have seen before, sentences with *talvez* (maybe) categorically restrict the entry of PI, as practically do adverbial sentences.

Further refining the analysis, we seek to ascertain what type of substantive sentence constitutes the preferred environment for the use of PI and whether there is a type of sentence that stands out in the last two periods. The results shown in Table 7 shed light on these issues.

Table 7 – Cross-tabulation between *periodization* and *type of substantive sentence* and the use **PI** *vs.* **PS** in writing of Florianópolis and Lages

Period	Direct Objective		Completive		Subjective		Indirect Objective	
	Apl./T	%	Apl./T	%	Apl./T	%	Apl./T	%
1880-1899	04/23	17	0/02	0	0/08	0	0/03	0
1900-1919	08/22	36	0/0	0	0/08	0	0/05	0
1920-1939	09/36	25	0/07	0	0/08	0	0/02	0
1940-1959	02/23	09	01/05	20	01/05	20	0/03	0
1960-1979	10/33	30	01/13	08	0/05	0	0/03	0
1980-1999	17/46	37	0/07	0	02/10	20	0/11	0
TOTAL	**50/183**	**27**	**02/35**	**06**	**03/44**	07	**0/26**	**0**

Source: Elaborated by the authors.

The first result that calls our attention is the high occurrence of direct objective sentences as an environment more conducive to the realization of the variable under analysis. This syntactic context encompasses 50 of the 72 PI data (70%) in the sample. It was expected that there would be a particularized behavior in the last two periods, which could justify the relative jump in the increase in PI since the 1960s, but what we see is a certain symmetry in the frequency distribution of this verbal form in the direct objective sentences (to the exception of the 1940-1959 period, which has the lowest PI

rate (9%) in this syntactic context). In absolute numbers, following the distribution pattern verified in Table 6, more than half of the PI data in the direct objective sentences are located in the last period.

An examination of these 50 PI data, from a cross-tabulation between *periodization* and the *semantic feature of the verbal item of the matrix sentence*, shows that, in 49 cases, the verb is cognition, according to the results shown in Table 8.

Table 8 – Cross-tabulation between *periodization* and *semantic feature of the verbal* of substantive sentences and the use of **PI** *vs.* **PS** in writing of Florianópolis and Lages

Period	Cognition verbs		Other verbs[3]	
	Apl./T	%	Apl./T	%
1880-1899	04/06	67	0/17	0
1900-1919	07/08	88	1/14	0,7
1920-1939	09/13	69	0/23	0
1940-1959	02/03	67	0/20	0
1960-1979	10/14	71	0/19	0
1980-1999	17/19	89	0/27	0
TOTAL	**49/63**	**78**	**1/120**	**0,8**

Source: Elaborated by the authors.

The 63 cognition verbs in the matrix sentence are distributed as follows for PI/T: *crer* (believe) = 17/23; *achar* (think) = 14/15; *pensar* (think) = 9/8; *supor* (suppose) = 05/05; *acreditar* (believe) = 9/5; and *julgar* (judge) = 0/02. Of these, the lexical items *crer* (believe) e *acreditar* (believe) are the most prone to variation with PS; *supor* (suppose) is categorical and *achar* (think) and *pensar* (think) practically categorical for PI; finally, *julgar* (judge) is categorical for PS. These verbs, as already mentioned, are associated with the epistemic modality, which, in turn, constitutes an environment conducive to the use of PI, as indicated by the results presented in Table 3. Although they appear in the contexts of variation since the first period, such lexical items are more concentrated in the last two periods of the analyzed sample, adding up to 33 occurrences, in 27 of which PI appears, a number that exceeds the total PI of the previous four periods. Thus, not only does the context with the cognitive verb increase towards the end of the 20th century, but the use of this variant form increases. However, it is not possible to ignore the 88% result between the decades of 1900-1919, a percentage very close to that achieved in the last period.

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[3] Other semantic features: biconditional, negative biconditional, conditional, implicative, negative implicative, factive-emotive/evaluative, non-factual non-volitive, non-factual volitive, performative (PIMPÃO, 2012).

The sensitivity of the indicative to contexts of direct objective sentence under the scope of cognition verbs was also found in the diachronic research conducted by Almeida (2010). In the analysis of different texts, the author found very high percentages for the indicative in this syntactic context since the 13th century, namely: the item *achar* (think) was categorical for PI over time until the 19th century (the author mentions that only in the 15th century and 20th found variation, but does not specify the quantity); the items *crer* (believe) and *acreditar* (believe), treated together, were categorical for PI in the 13th and 17th centuries and, in the other centuries, oscillated between 92% and 62% of PI (with the sharp decline in frequency seen in the 20th century); the item *pensar* (think) appears with 100% of PI in the 15th century and, in the other centuries in which this form was found, the frequency oscillates between 77% and 87% for this verbal form. These results are in line with those found in writing at the end of the 19th and 20th centuries in Florianópolis and Lages. In other words, *achar* (think) has been shown, among the cognition verbs, the most prototypical to house PI under its scope.

The verb *achar* (think), in particular, is very productive in speech. Analyzing data from 48 sociolinguistic interviews conducted in the 1990s (Varsul database) in the cities of Florianópolis and Lages (24 in each city), with informants stratified by age (25 to 50 and over 50 years), gender/ sex (male and female) and education (primary, junior high and high school), Pimpão (2012) found 926 potentially predicted contexts (considering all syntactic contexts), in line with the criteria used by the author in the diachronic sample. Of these, 448 occurrences (practically half of the data) presented the verb *achar* (think) in the matrix sentence, being only 06 with PS (in Lages). Computing all the data, including those with *achar* (think), the following frequency distribution in speech was found, including all syntactic contexts: 70% of PI *vs.* 30% of PS. Disregarding the data with this verbal item, the distribution was as follows: 42% PI *vs.* 58% PS.

For the speech sample, excluding the data with *achar* (think) from the quantitative analysis, the following conditioners (among others) were shown to be statistically significant: temporal projection, sub-mode values   and type of syntactic context. In relation to the contexts related to the modality, contexts favoring PI were these: epistemic sub-mode, spread temporal projection and values   associated with degrees of certainty and evaluation. On the other hand, as contexts that provide PS: deontic sub-mode, future projection and values   associated with volition. Regarding the syntactic configuration, PI had the following distribution: 56% in adjective sentences, 43% in adverbials, 37% with *talvez* (maybe) and 32% with substantives. It is evident that the lowest percentage of PI in substantive sentences is due to the removal of data with the verb *achar* (think) in the matrix sentence (practically categorical context of PI in the sample). With the inclusion of data with this lexical item, the percentage of PI with substantives exceeds 80%. On the other hand, it is worth noting the fact that there is a relatively high percentage of PI, in relation to the normative patter, in context with

talvez (maybe) and in adverbial sentences – contexts that present syntactic triggers that require PS.

We are not going to dwell on the synchronic results for speech, just compare them quickly with the diachronic results obtained for writing. It can be seen that the conditioning contexts operate in the same direction regardless of modality and time periods – which is also observed in other studies: Pimpão (1999), Alves Neta (2000), Gonçalves (2003), Meira (2006), Carvalho (2007), Fagundes (2007) and Almeida (2010). The most significant difference concerns the strong spread of PI to other syntactic contexts, in addition to the substantive sentence environment, showing, as expected, that in the oral modality the contextual restrictions verified in the writing are breaking faster.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Aligned to an interface approach between the theory of variation and change and linguistic functionalism, this work treated the present subjunctive and the present indicative as a function and as a grammatical form, defined in prototypical terms, but analyzed in their functioning, considering that modality (complex functional domain that involves PS and PI) is negotiated in the interaction, through the realis-irrealis *continuum*. In this perspective, the variable context of PS and PI was equated with a functional domain consisting of stratified layers in movement, conditioned by factors of a syntactic-semantic-pragmatic nature.

Among the five problems posed by Weinreich, Labov and Herzog (2006 [1968]) that the theory of variation and change must deal with, two of them received special attention in this paper: restriction and transition. The constraint problem requires careful treatment of the conditioning contexts that may indicate both possible conditions and restrictions for change. In this sense, the semantic-pragmatic and syntactic variables that were shown to be significant in the study of Pimpão (2012) about the variation between PS and PI were taken up, re-examined and detailed, considering the characteristic contextual configuration in each time period, resulting from cross-tabulations between variables. The examination of the variable context in each period and over the periods allowed us to verify not only the frequency distribution of the competing forms gradually over time, but also the contextual pattern of realization of each of the variants in each time cut. With the portrait of the variable in each period, it was possible to observe the movement of expansion of the contexts of variation allied to the increase in the frequency of the form of PI, considered innovative in these contexts – double movement that is characteristic of transition.

Thus, revisiting the results of Pimpão's study (2012), this paper sought to ascertain whether the decline, in quantitative terms, in the use of verbal forms of PS over time

would, in itself, be a safe indicator of change in real time. In summary, what was found in writing letters to the editor in Santa Catarina (Florianópolis and Lages) offers an indication: (i) of an increase in the frequency of PI since the 1960s; (ii) that the contexts favorable to this increase in PI are the epistemic sub-mode with spread temporal projection and direct objective substantive sentences with cognition verbs, notably the lexical item *achar* (think) (contexts that are more open to the use of PI since the first period analyzed in the sample); (iii) that the deontic sub-mode with future projection, which constitutes an unreal environment par excellence, is the prototypical context of PS use maintained over time; (iv) that there is a restriction on the entry of PI in contexts with *talvez* (maybe) and adverbial sentences, which present formal triggers that, by the normative patter, require PS. These results of factors that act intertwined, co-occurring with PS and PI in each period and over time, support the hypothesis that guided the work and strengthen the idea that PS and PI are in a phase of gradual transition, in which PI slowly spreads into the functional domain of PS.

The projection we can make from these results is that the frequency of PI will tend to increase in the contexts described in (ii), consequently the contexts described in (iii) should continue to act as a strong restriction to PI; that the contexts described in (iv) gradually give way to the expansion of PI also in these environments; and what factors associated with the modality will continue to act and compete with syntactics, especially with regard to adverbial prayers and perhaps. This interpretation is supported by synchronous speech results (PIMPÃO, 2012). Furthermore, we can attest that, at least in writing, the loss of verbal distinctions expected by authors such as Câmara Jr. (1986), Silva-Corvalán (1994), Perini (1996) and Mattos e Silva (2006), although in progress, is still far from being realized, notably due to the strength of the association between future projection and subjunctive, maintaining the pattern already described by Barros (1957 [1540]) and accentuated by Givón (1995) when linking this verbal mood to the feature of future of the deontic sub-mode.

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