

Comparison between Modality and Mood: The Subjunctive Mood in the Present Day English

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to show many issues regarding modality/mood, particularly at the subjunctive in complement clauses. It's important to show the distinction between *modality* and *mood* in English, as no talk about *mood* can occur without discussing *modality*. Diachronically, many significant changes have undergone, mood inflections were lost, and modal verbs used instead, the fact that contemporary English belongs to '*modal systems*' languages and not to '*mood systems*' when it comes to grammatical means of encoding *modality*, also types of modality are mentioned and their manifestations in English. In addition to that, this research sheds the light on the English subjunctive in the present day and number of issues were discussed related to its forms, marking, triggers, temporal references, for the *present/be subjunctive* which has the formulaic and mandative as subtypes, the *were-past* subjunctive which appears with volitive/ bouletic triggers, and the perfective subjunctive.

Keywords: Modality, mood, modal& mood system, the subjunctive, present *be* subjunctive, past *were* subjunctive, perfective subjunctive.

مقارنة بين الاسلوب و الصيغة : الصيغة الشرطية في اللغة الانكليزية المعاصرة

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المخلص

يهدف هذا البحث للإشارة الى العديد من الامور المتعلقة بالاسلوب و الصيغة في اللغة الانكليزية لاسيما الصيغة الشرطية في الجمل التكميلية. من المهم الإشارة الى الاختلاف بين الاسلوب و الصيغة ، حيث لايمكن الحديث عن الصيغة من دون الإشارة الى الاسلوب. حدثت العديد من التغيرات حيث بدأت الصيغة الشرطية بالاختفاء ليحل محلها الافعال الناقصة و حقيقة ان اللغة الانكليزية المعاصرة تنتمي الى نظام الاسلوب وليس الى نظام الصيغة، حيث تم ذكر جميع انواع صيغ الاسلوب و مظاهرها في اللغة. بالإضافة الى ذلك يسلط هذا البحث الضوء على الصيغة الشرطية في اللغة بالوقت المعاصروتم مناقشة العديد من الامور المتعلقة بالمصطلحات و العلامات و مراجعها الزمنية حيث صيغة المضارع التي تحتوي على صيغة الالتزام بفرعيه formulaic & mandative و صيغة الماضي التي تحتوي على bouletic/volitive وصيغة الشرط التام.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الاسلوب، الصيغة، نظام الاسلوب و الصيغة، الصيغة الشرطية، صيغة الشرط المضارعة ، صيغة الشرط الماضية ، صيغة الشرط التام.

1. Introduction

Basically, many distinctions have been referred between modality and mood, the fact that present-day English belongs to modal systems languages (Palmer, 2001), and not to mood systems. All kinds of modality are mentioned in this paper. The category of *Modality* is defined as a semantic notion which shows the correlation of an utterance to the reality-unreality expressed by the speaker and it may cover notions, such as necessity, possibility, certainty, and probability (Joan Bybee & Fleischman, 1995). Modality is marked by modal verbs, and it may also be marked by non-modal element, such as: adjectives, adverbs, and nouns. *Modality* can be classified into: epistemic, deontic and dynamic modality.

Mood is known as a grammatical unit of verb. Mainly, two ways in which languages concern grammatically with the term of *modality* and these can be classified as *modal system* and *mood system* (Palmer, 2001).

The English subjunctive is interesting to look at for several reasons, firstly, diachronically; it has undergone significant changes as English shifted from a rich inflectional language (Old English) to a poor inflectional language. Subjunctive inflections have been lost, modal verbs are used instead (English belongs to modal system) (Palmer, 2001), which has led to the present-day system where verb morphology is highly impoverished.

Secondly, this raises the question of whether, in present-day English, we can still talk about mood as such, or merely about notional mood, i.e., modality. Given the loss of inflection, most grammars and grammarians agree that modality in English is chiefly expressed via modal verbs and not by verbal inflections. On the other hand, they do acknowledge that there are three main moods in English: the indicative, the Subjunctive and the Imperative (Qnirk, Greenbaum, Leech, & Svartvik, 1985).

Thirdly, an interesting characteristic of the English subjunctive is that while it is finite (it has overt Nominative subjects and the “that” complementizer), it is non-deictic, being confined to contexts of subordination (it cannot appear on its own in independent declarative sentences). This means that when it comes to time reference, the temporal specification of a subjunctive (complement) clause is always oriented towards the tense of the matrix predicate, therefore, terms such as “present” and “past. As for the “past” subjunctive, it is generally taken to refer to those forms which bear the past tense *-ed* morpheme while not being deictic pasts, i.e., not referring to a reference time is prior to speech time, but actually, to a tentative or more remote wish, factual or modal remoteness (Rodney Huddleston, 1984; Rodney Huddleston & Pullum, 2005).

In spite of the fact, that there are no specific morphological means to signal the subjunctive or irrealis modality, the question still remains if we

can nonetheless identify cases when we are undoubtedly in the presence of a subjunctive form (whether it be a *present/be-* or a *past/were-*subjunctive). Following irrealis contexts are clearly characterized by the lack of the “*third person -s*” (which actually indicates 3rd person singular, simple present tense, active, and indicative). This *lack of -s* becomes a means for subjunctive irrealis marking when combined with 3rd person singular subjects, such as is the case with *formulaic* and *mandative* subjunctives (Rothstein & Thieroff, 2010).

2. Distinction between Modality and Mood

English language belongs to those languages which recognized as having modal system with no inflectional mood differentiation (Rodnry Huddleston & Pullum, 2005), because no grammatical exponent of this function left, therefore, most current English grammars don't indicate that mood as a grammatical category. In modern English, modality is expressed via modal verbs and other lexical operators that show various degrees of speaker commitment to a certain proposition. Modality is known as a salient semantic category and it expresses possibility and necessity. It refers to “language whose meaning depends on alternate possible worlds” (Porter & it have a Historical, 2005). Modal verbs are the fundamental means of expressing modality, such as: will, can, may, must, should, ought to, would, could, might, etc... which are frequently used.

According to (J Bybee, 1985; Chung, 1985; Palmer, 2014) claim that modality can be expressed via lexical and grammatical means and that it's a synonym for illocutionary force, which is connected to pragmatics knowledge. Modality doesn't only express by modal verbs, but also express by other grammatical categories, including adverbs, adjectives, nouns and verbs. Yet, modal verbs are typically regarded as the main means of indicating modality. The category of *modality* is defined as “the

speaker's cognitive, emotive, or volitive attitude toward a state of affairs" (Magni, 2010). *Modality* can be expressed in various ways morphological, syntactic and lexical, and even via intonation. Meaning, *Modality* is also expressed by functional items such as specific mood inflection (morphological) or modal auxiliaries (syntactic) or by other lexical elements "verbs, adverbs, adjective, nouns, even intonation, etc...". Modality differs from aspect and tense that tense is concerned with time of the event while aspect is associated with the nature of the event (Comrie, 1983).

In the concept of modality the speaker's attitude may be marked grammatically or by modal verbs; it may be also marked by non-verbal elements (adjectives, adverbs, nouns). A difference is highly observed between the following pairs of sentences, the first two expressing an evaluation by the speaker of the event expressed by the VP and in (2 a,b) permission and obligation are indicated:

- 1) a. Mary may be at school now > may [Mary be at school now].
b. Mary must be at school now > must [Mary be at school now].
- 2) a. Mary may come in now > Mary was allowed to come in.
b. Mary must come in now > Mary was obliged to

The discrepancy is frequently made in terms of *epistemic* and *deontic* modality, with use of paraphrasing to show the distinction:

- 1)' a' the speaker can ascertain, It is possible the case that [Mary is at school now].
b' The speaker can ascertain, It is necessarily the case that [Mary is at school now].
- 2)' a' It is possible for Mary to come in now = Mary is allowed to come school in.
b' It is necessarily for Mary to come in now = Mary is obliged to come school in.

This illustrates that in (1'a',b') is epistemic modality (speaker's judgment towards the proposition of the world) while in (2'a',b') is deontic modality (agent-oriented) focuses on conditions on the agent (Mary).

Propositional modality (epistemic) modality deals with speaker's attitude to/judgment of the factual status of the proposition (*in view of what the speaker knows*) while event modality (deontic, dynamic + circumstantial) deals with conditions on the subject with respect to potential/ future event. Event modality is divided into two categories: dynamic and deontic modality (Palmer, 2001). Regarding the deontic modality is known as deontic context of evaluation (in view of what the norm is), it's not necessarily agent/subject oriented meaning the subject need not always be the 'obligee' or 'permisee' (these may be established pragmatically, may be salient entity in the discourse situation), whereas with *dynamic* modality is subject-oriented; refers to the abilities of the subject with respect to the event (expresses ability or willingness).

Here are some examples which illustrate the *deontic* and *dynamic* modality:

- (3) a. Bob can/may sit here. (*permission*). >> (*Deontic*)
- b. Bob must attend the lecture. (*obligation*) >> (*Deontic*)
- c. Bob can drive well. (*ability*). >> (*Dynamic*)
- d. Bob will help you (*willingness*) >> (*Dynamic*)

Palmer defines *dynamic* modality as subject-oriented, since it refers to *ability* or *will* of the subject, rather than the opinions "*epistemic*" or attitudes "*deontic*" of the speaker and the addressee (Palmer, 2014). In spite of the fact, that *deontic* modality is derived from an external authority such as legislation or rules, the authority can also be the speaker who grants permission or imposes a responsibility on the addressee.

One of the categories of dynamic modality is ability, which must be defined more broadly than in terms of subject's physical and mental abilities to encompass conditions that directly affect them; not only dynamic modality reflects subject-oriented ability, but it can also represent possibility/potentiality in a broad (= neutral) way:

- (4) a. She can leave now >> (Deontic: I give permission).
 b. She can run fast >> (Dynamic: she has the ability).
 c. She can run away >> (Dynamic/*circumstantial*: the door is not closed).

Now the category of *mood* is well known as a *grammatical* unit, it can be also defined as inflectional morphological category of the verb, and it's one of the means to express modality via grammatical means (Ivanova, 1981; Jespersen, 2013; Palmer, 2001; Smirnitsky, 1959), mood is also defined as a *morphosyntactic* unit due to its features of finite forms only. It's important to realize that different approaches to the mood system in modern English were suggested by linguists which consist of 16 to no moods at all. It's clear that (Deutschbein, 1917) suggested the system of 16 moods which is the consequence of semantic approach, and the main issue with that it concentrates on meaning only and the form is neglected. According to H. Whitehall (Khomutova, 2014; Palmer, 2001; Whitehall, 1958), that in modern English, the category of mood has vanished. There are many points of view in between these extremes, for instance, (Smirnitsky, 1959), who suggested a six-mood system, as shown below:

- *Indicative*: The sun rises in the East.
- *Imperative*: Read the letter!
- *Subjunctive I*: (*be* for all persons) I suggest that he be so.
- *Subjunctive II*: (*were* for all persons, and forms knew, had known homonymous with forms of Past Tense, Perfect and Non-Perfect Phase) I wish I were present. If I knew... If I had known...;

- *Suppositional*: (analytical forms should/would + infinitive) Should you meet him, tell him to come. I suggest that he/you should go there;
- *Conditional*: (analytical forms should/would + infinitive in the main clause of unreal condition sentences) What would you answer if you were asked?

2.1 Mood system and Modal system

Basically, there are two ways in which languages deal grammatically with overall category of modality is expressed via functional means, cross-linguistically; Palmer distinguishes these two systems (Palmer, 2001). These are to be distinguished in terms of mood system and modal system. This distinction can be explained as follows: mood system is the characteristic of those languages which have defined mood distinction special inflectional paradigm for the indicative versus subjunctive, for example, Romance languages French, Italian, Spanish and Portuguese. Moreover; languages which have specific grammatical markers or particles for what is considered to be labeled (conceptually) as realis or irrealis, for example in some Papuan languages, however, there are remarkable distinctions concerning the realis or irrealis markers or suffixes that are attached to verbs forms or constructions, the present, past tense forms are identified as realis, while future forms, negative, interrogative, conditional are marked as irrealis (Palmer, 2001).

According to Palmer the choice between the term indicative–subjunctive and realis–irrealis is mainly due to descriptive tradition; it's not a difference in meaning or function (Palmer, 2001). Regarding the modal system is the description of those languages which have functional verbs which encode modal notions and behave as auxiliaries (modal verbs/modal auxiliaries which are known as a distinct class of auxiliaries in English), for example Germanic languages: English, Swedish and German. In modal system, the (conceptual) realis/irrealis distinction can

be captured by the opposition between modalized versus un modalized proposition (i.e. sentences without any modal verb/modal verb marking, i.e., assertive and sentences which contain a modal verb).

3. Modality in English: The Subjunctive Mood

Subjunctive mood is defined as grammatical mood or grammatical category. The subjunctive mood generally signals that the action or state specified by the verb is the object of a wish, a hope or a fear, a command or request, a belief or hypothesis or is for some other reason unreal (McGillivray, 2010).

The subjunctive form has completely vanished from the modern English paradigm so most grammars of English don't reserve much space for its discussion. For Huddleston & Pullum take the subjunctive as a clause construction of "a clause that is finite but tenseless, containing the plain form of the verb," not as verb inflection (Rodnry Huddleston & Pullum, 2005). However, the subjunctive is also interpreted as inflectional category that is traditionally subdivided into: *the present subjunctive* and *the past subjunctive*. The term *past* and the *present* hint at the form which is employed in their construction not at their time reference (Depraetere & Salkie, 2015).

3.1. A bit diachrony

Contacting with different languages has had a significance impact on English throughout its history. A significant syncretism of the formerly different inflections is one of the most fundamental reasons that led to a considerable phonological reductions and mergers. In comparison to other Indo-European languages, English has a poor morphological paradigm, which means that there is no adjectival agreement and no grammatical gender, and it has nearly lost all inflectional case markers. In English language verbs are identified by their grammatical role in context (Betty & Martha, 2010; Rodnry Huddleston & Pullum, 2005). English verbs are classified as a lexical or auxiliary (including modal

verbs). The Germanic verb pattern is shared by English lexical verb. Strong verb with an ablaut change and weak verbs with a dental suffix (such as -ed in English) in the preterite, but strong verbs have vanished and weak verbs are more productive. According to Huddleston and Pullum that English language belongs to those languages which are known by using modal system without any inflectional mood differentiation, therefore, mood doesn't mention as a grammatical category in modern English grammars while modality is. Modality in modern English is expressed via modal verbs and other lexical elements that denote epistemic, deontic, dynamic or counterfactual modality meaning various degree of speaker's commitment towards the reality of the world (Rodnry Huddleston & Pullum, 2005).

3.1.1 In Old English

The subjunctive is frequently used in old English. The verbs *stele*, (steal), *trymme*, (strengthen), and *luafie*, (love) are examples of the rich inflectional system of Old English, which means that verbs were inflected not only for number, person, and tense but also for mood. Tables one and two below (Hogg & Blake, 1992) illustrate this paradigm for early West Saxon (c. 800 CE).

Regular, Strong Verbs Stele 'steal'			
Present	Indicative	Subjunctive	Imperative
1sg	stel-e	stel-e	
2sg	stel-st	stel-e	stel!
3sg	stelth	stel-e	
Plural	stel-ath	stel-en	stel-ath!
	Indicative	Subjunctive	

Past			
1sg	stael	stael –e	
2sg	stael–e	steal –e	
3sg	stael	steal–e	
Plural	stael–on	stael–on	

Table (1) Mood in Old English in Strong Verbs

Weak Verbs						
	Class I				Class II	
	Trymme ‘strengthen’				lufie ‘love’	
Pre	IND	SBJV	IMP	IND	SBJV	IMP
1sg	<i>trymm–e</i>	<i>trymm–e</i>		<i>lufi–e</i>	<i>lufi–e</i>	
2sg	<i>trym–est</i>	<i>trymm–e</i>	<i>tryme</i>	<i>luf–ast</i>	<i>lufie</i>	<i>lufa!</i>
3sg	<i>trym–eth</i>	<i>trymm–e</i>		<i>luf–ath</i>	<i>lufie</i>	
Pl	<i>trymm–ath</i>	<i>trymm–en</i>	<i>trymm–ath</i>	<i>luf–ath</i>	<i>luf–en</i>	<i>lufiath</i>
Past	IND	SBJV		IND	SBJV	
1sg	<i>trym–ede</i>	<i>trym–ede</i>		<i>luf–ode</i>	<i>luf–ode</i>	
2sg	<i>trym–edest</i>	<i>trym–ede</i>		<i>luf–odest</i>	<i>luf–ode</i>	
3sg	<i>trym–ede</i>	<i>trym–ede</i>		<i>luf–ode</i>	<i>luf–ode</i>	
Pl	<i>trym–edon</i>	<i>trym–eden</i>		<i>luf–odon</i>	<i>luf–oden</i>	

Table (2) Mood in Old English in Weak Verbs

The first chart (strong verbs) includes some unique forms that distinguish the indicative from the subjunctive; however, in many instances of syncretism, (1) the plural imperative has the same ending as the indicative, but the imperative singular is distinguished by a lack of inflectional ending (stel!), (2) it has been noticed that all the subjunctive forms have the marker (e) in the present singular, although indicates the 1st singular form for the indicative as well, (3) in preterit (past), the subjunctive is indicated by the inflectional marker (e) which was observed in the 2nd person singular past indicative as well, all the singular subjunctive past forms are identical (stale–e), and the plural

forms (for both indicative and subjunctive) are identical(Hogg & Blake, 1992).

It's still evident, the second chart illustrates weak verbs for singular forms the subjunctive is marked by (e), and for plural is marked by (en), and for singular past subjunctive is marked by (e/o) [de], and for plural past subjunctive is indicated by (e/o) [den]. At this point, all singular and plural subjunctive forms are syncretized. Subjunctive forms in the past and present, using the form (en) for plural present forms and (e) for single present forms. It is possible to see a syncretism between the two moods because subjunctive inflection and morphology demonstrate enough syncretism when compared to indicative forms. For example, the present singular subjunctive form for all three persons (i.e., the inflectional marker – e) is the same as the first person singular present indicative form(Hogg & Blake, 1992).

3.1.2 In Middle English

Middle English (i.e., cca 1100–1500 CE) is the period when the considerable loss of grammatical marking in general occurs: by around 1300 the subjunctive in primary dialects was marked by variable (–e) in singular and variable (–en) in plural (Lass, 1992). There is a gradual disappearance of inflectional indicators for mood differences as the preterite subjunctive likewise totally integrated with the preterite indicative form (together with the loss of markers for the preterite plural). English dealt with the loss in mood morphology in this scenario.

As already mentioned, the two systems (the inflection /mood system vs. the analytical means /modal system) appear to function in a complimentary distribution: Old English contains a system of morphologically defined mood, but no modal auxiliaries. The lack of inflectional mood marking is considered to be the main reason of the growth of modal auxiliaries in Middle English.

4. Mood in English: the Subjunctive's terminology, labels, uses

The present-day English has only three different grammatical moods which are commonly recognized as: indicative, subjunctive and imperative (Depraetere & Salkie, 2015; Rodney Huddleston & Pullum, 2005; Quirk et al., 1985). The distinction between the indicative, the subjunctive and the imperative is illustrated by Jespersen who defines the indicative as a fact-mood, the subjunctive as a thought-mood and the imperative as a will-mood (Jespersen, 1924).

4.1 A word in terminology

The literature about the English subjunctive has a vast number of terms such as "*present subjunctive*", "*past subjunctive*" can also be known as "*were subjunctive*", "*irrealis were*" "*forms of subjunctive*", etc. What these terms denote is not always uniform, and labels can vary from one study to another.

For Quirk et al, for example, talk about a "subjunctive construction" and discuss the subjunctive as a marked mood, versus the "unmarked" indicative (Quirk et al., 1985). For Huddleston, "In Modern English there is no mood inflectional system", (Rodney Huddleston, 1984). In Huddleston & Pullum, the term "subjunctive construction" appears (Rodney Huddleston & Pullum, 2005) and Baas Aarts, refers to "subjunctive clauses", in which the "plain form" appears (to talk about what others have termed "the present subjunctive") (Aarts, 2012). Generally, when linguists talk about the subjunctive in English, they refer to the underlined forms in the examples below:

(5) I demanded/suggested/ordered that he stay one more night.

(6) If John were here, we would ask him.

(7) If Bob came tomorrow, what would you tell him?

It is observed that in (5), there is no subject-verb agreement (*the verb is uninflected for -s*), this denotes that is a descendent of the present subjunctive from previous periods of English, and the forms in (6) and

(7) show descendants of the old past subjunctive. However, while the preterite form “were” was labeled as the “*were*-subjunctive” is used to describe verb forms such as *came*, i.e., which is considered to be as “modal preterite, hypothetical subjunctive, or past subjunctive” (Waller, 2017).

However, terms such as “present” or “past” may be misleading for a form that is considered non-deictic, so more neutral terms such as the *be*-subjunctive or *were*-subjunctive may be more appropriate. Importantly, one case for not utilizing the *past subjunctive* and the *present subjunctive* “ is that these forms do not contrast in tense, but in their degree of “remoteness” (in the present).

Moreover, they are confined to specific environments: they each appear with their specific triggers: the *be/present* subjunctive with mandative triggers and the *past/were* subjunctive with bouletic triggers.

4.1.1 The Present/ *be*- Subjunctive

The *present subjunctive* is held to be identical to the base form of regular verbs, while the *past subjunctive* is identical to past tense with *be* a special case. However, linguists have been preoccupied with the question of whether there are instances where we can observe typical *subjunctive* manifestation via the use of verbal forms different from the indicative or from the analytical marking. Huddleston & Pullum discuss the forms in (8) below take the subjunctive not as verb inflection, but *a structure that contains a plain verb*, (Rodnry Huddleston & Pullum, 2005) :

(8) They ordered/ requested/ commanded [that *he leave* immediately].

Besides these users, they do acknowledge that the *subjunctive* is known as finite form but tenseless, and it's divided into: the *present be*-subjunctive and the *past were*- subjunctive with forms are identical to indicative ones. The expression of *present* and *past* refer to the form

that is used in their structure not at their reference time. Huddleston & Pullum point out that both are concerned with present time, but indicate different degree of remoteness, (Rodnry Huddleston & Pullum, 2005), as shown below:

- (9) a. If she likes [prs] him she will come back. vs. a'. She likes him.
 b. If she liked [pret] him she would come back. vs. b'. She liked him so much (in here youth).

In contrast to the time referring examples in (9a'), (9b') which employ the same verb forms the preterite in used in a modal meaning in (9b): the contrast in (9a) and (9b) is not one of time, but in (9b) refers to somewhat more remote possibility than (6a).

According to Quirk et al. the *present be subjunctive* in English is divided into two kinds: the *mandative subjunctive* and the *formulaic subjunctive*, the *formulaic* commonly appears in *independent clauses*, (Qnirk et al., 1985). as shown below:

(10) Devil take you.

(11) Heaven forbid that!

Quirk et al. represent the *mandative subjunctive* as the most common type *which* appears in *subordinate that- clauses*. *That- clause* expresses *demand, suggestion, intention* etc. The *mandative* and the *formulaic* subjunctives are featured by *bare* (Qnirk et al., 1985) or *base* (Rodnry Huddleston & Pullum, 2005) forms. There is no difference between the indicative and the subjunctive, but the contrast is clear in the *3rd person singular*, especially with the present subjunctive there is no subject- verb agreement as shown below:

- (12) a. God *save* the Queen (*formulaic*) vs. a'.
 John*save/saves/saved Mary. (*indicative*)
 b. They requested [that he *leave* early] (*mandative*) vs. b'. He
 *leave/leaves/left/will leave early. (*Indicative*)

(13) a. Grammar *be* hanged! (*formulaic*) vs. a'. Prisoners are hanged by the neck. (*indicative*)

b. The management requested [that John *be* there at dawn]. (*mandative*)

For Quirk et al the forms of subjunctive are taken to be “*known . . . by the basic form of verb*”, except the 3rd person singular, the imperative, the bare infinitive and the *to*-infinitive their framework also exist in the present tense (Quirk et al., 1985), and for Huddleston does not use the term “present subjunctive” instead claiming that such forms represent “*a syntactic application of the base form*” because he does not recognize an inflectionally unique subjunctive form (Rodney Huddleston, 1984). The author distinguishes clause kinds, including a “jussive clause type” that includes the mandative subjunctive clauses, and for Huddleston & Pullum also highlight the “*plain form*”, which appears in imperative and bare structures in their framework (Rodney Huddleston & Pullum, 2005).

There are certain identifiers for the *present/be*-subjunctives (Waller, 2017), as follows:

- There is no *subject –verb agreement* especially with singular subjects (*lack of –s*).
- The use of the form “*be*” with all pronouns.
- There is no back shifting after a matrix verb in the past tense.
- “*Do insertion*” can’t be used with negation and negation occurs with *not*.

4.1.2 The Past/ were– Subjunctive

As the only remaining distinct verbal form, the *past subjunctive* may only be observed in the so-called *were subjunctive*. Rarely, specific verb forms, such as *were* used for the past subjunctive in the first and second person instead of regular preterite *was* (Rothstein & Thieroff, 2010).

In sentence (14), the past subjunctive refers to a hypothetical or a counterfactual situation which may presence in the present, the past or the future, as shown in:

(14) Jimmie wishes/wished/will wish his girlfriend were with him. (Depraetere & Salkie, 2015).

Although the verb's form is identical to the form of the past tense, it doesn't make reference to the past. The problem of terminology occurs and several proposals have been suggested in literature.

According to Aarts these forms are 'used to talk about modal situation, for example situations which are hypothetical or non-factual' (Aarts, 2012), for Huddleston referred to them as 'factual remoteness' versus 'modal remoteness' (Rodney Huddleston, 1984), (Qnirk et al., 1985) referred to 'hypothetical past', and for Huddleston & Pullum referred as 'modal preterite (Rodnry Huddleston & Pullum, 2005). The verb "*be*" is an exception because it features the form *were* in all persons which distinct from the past form, even with singular subjects (different from its regular past tense use). The past subjunctive is conventionally called the *were subjunctive*, since it survives as a distinguished form only in the past tense of the verb *be* (Qnirk et al., 1985). For Huddleston & Pullum make a distinction between 'preterite was' and 'irrealis were', so the former is more used than the latter in informal style, the *were-subjunctive* is a 'relic of an earlier system' and conveys 'varying degree of remoteness from factuality' (Rodnry Huddleston & Pullum, 2005).

5. Synthetic versus Analytic Forms: old and new subjunctive forms

One reason due to which the subjunctive is difficult to learn and even tougher to teach is that it does not exhibit more than two tenses/ forms, it can have more types. The best known distinction is that between what grammarians call the *synthetic subjunctive* and the *analytic subjunctive*.

The *synthetic* can be split into two subtypes the so – called: (*old*) subjunctive and the (*new*) subjunctive which is the most frequently used one, as shown below:

CONTEXTS FOR THE SYNTHETIC SUBJUNCTIVE	
Old	New
<p><i>In independent sentences:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Long <u>live</u> the Queen. - Grammar <u>be</u> hanged 	<p><i>Independent sentences:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Oh, had I wings! - If only I had known!
<p><i>In subordinate clauses:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>after would rather</i> (the same subject for main and subordinate clauses) - I'd <i>rather</i> tell you about it./I'd <i>rather</i> have told you about it. 	<p><i>In Subordinate clauses:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • after if **and any other item containing 'if' (if only, suppose, supposing, what if, as if/though, even if/though, say, as long as, unless): - If Bill <u>got</u> married, he would be miserable.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>after had better</i> - You'd better tell her about it./ You'd better have told her about it*. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>after wish/ it's time/would rather</i> - I would rather <i>you</i> <u>went</u> there/ I would rather <i>you</i> <u>had gone</u> there. (The subject isn't the same in both sentences)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>after verbs of command, wish:</i> - It is important that he behave himself. 	
<p><i>The star (*) indicates that the perfect form is infrequently used in English.</i></p>	

**** All these elements can also be followed by Present simple (but with a different shade of meaning):**

E.g. If you go there, I will be very disappointed. / He behaves as if he loves her.

The old subjunctive and the new subjunctive (Vişan and Vişan 2006, 2013)

CONTEXTS FOR THE ANALYTIC SUBJUNCTIVE	
Independent sentences	Subordinate clauses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - May you live long and have a beautiful life. - May he be happy for as long as he lives. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>after verbs of command, wish:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dan insisted that she <u>should date</u> him. • <i>after copula + evaluative adjectives:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - It is advisable/ important/good that he <u>should meet</u> his teacher soon. • <i>after purpose/sequence introductory items: so that, so... that, in order that, lest*, for fear that, in case</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - I hid the secret from him for fear/in case he <u>might want</u> to use it against her. • <i>after concessive introductory items**:</i> no matter, how/whatever, as etc.: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No matter how much he might know about her, she still won't listen to him.
* this introductory item is obsolete, no longer used	
** all these items can also be followed by an indicative form, with a slightly different meaning (the speaker assumes that the action of the subordinate is accomplished)	

Compare: Smart as she is, They still don't like here. vs. Smart as she may be, They still don't like her. (In the first case, I assume she is indeed smart).

The analytic subjunctive contexts (Vişan and Vişan 2006, 2013)

6. A look at synthetic subjunctive forms and temporal reference

a – The present/ be– subjunctive

It's well known as a finite verb that is identical to base form of the verb. It highly resembles the present indicative tense except for the 3rd person singular which lacks –s and the form *be* is used throughout for all persons. The Present subjunctive has "no concord with subject" (Johansson & Norheim, 1988). According to Huddleston & Pullum the *present be–subjunctive* can occur in four main areas (Rodnry Huddleston & Pullum, 2005):

– Mandative clauses

– Types of clauses, licensed by items *lest, if, on condition that* and *though*.

– Exhaustive conditional clauses.

– Formulaic phrases or frames > 'formulaic subjunctive'

The *present subjunctive* can be used to refer to both the *present* and the *past* and it's used in different ways: The *mandative subjunctive* can be used in *subordinate clauses* following an expression of: *possibility, proposal, request, command, suggestion, resolution and intention*, as shown below:

(15) I recommended he *study* harder to pass the exam.

The *present subjunctive* is also used in *subordinate clauses* of *concession* and *condition*, but not with *past reference*, as shown below:

(16) If that *be* the situation, there is nothing we can do.

(17) If that *be* official point of view, it can't be taken for granted.

The *formulaic or optative subjunctive* can be used in *independent clauses*, basically, in set of *exclamation* or *expressions* to indicate a hope or wish very often including supernatural powers, as shown below:

(18) Curse this cat!

(19) God bless you!

b – The past/were– subjunctive

It's also known as *were* subjunctive. This form of the verb such as *were* *is* used for all persons, instead of the regular preterite *was*. It resembles the past indicative, it's related with buletic modal operators, and it expresses unreality, or hypothetical cases i.e., modal remoteness rather than past time. When the *past subjunctive* is used to refer to a hypothetical or to unreal situation, this will create a situation which may be in the present, past and future time, the past subjunctive form of the verb is identical to the past tense form, but the past time isn't indicated (Rothstein & Thieroff, 2010).

Aarts proposes discussing modal situations, such as unreal or hypothetical situations. Aarts suggests the following: “ a clause containing a subjunctive verb can't be compared to a clause having a verb with its past form”. (Aarts, 2012).

According to Quirk et al. the *past subjunctive* is more properly known as the-*were* subjunctive, because it can only be found as a distinct form in the past tense of the verb *be* (Quirk et al., 1985). For Huddleston & Pullum in variation with modal preterites in including modals, the past subjunctive can occur in remote *conditionals (type2)*, in complement to *wish*, *would rather/sooner*, and after it's (*about/high*) time (Rodnry Huddleston & Pullum, 2005), as shown below:

(20) I *wish* I *were* in Venice.

(21) I would be happy if you *were* there.

(22) I would rather you *arrived* earlier.

c– The perfect subjunctive

The aspectual marked form of (the *present/be subjunctive* and the *past/were subjunctive*), it's also available for analytic forms where

perfectivity is marked on the infinitival form following the modal ‘*should*’:

(23) I wish I *had told* them the truth.

(24) I would rather you *had arrived* earlier/I would rather you *have stayed* home.

(25) It’s vital that they (should) have prepared everything before the ceremony starts.

7. Are there specific modally marked subjunctive forms in present-day English?

In spite of the lack of morphological markers for subjunctive in English, we can still identify specific uses of specific verb forms which are clearly meant to signal the modal meanings that associated with the subjunctive. The *present subjunctive* appears to be identical to the plain form of the verb with all persons in modern English. The *present subjunctive* differs from the present indicative only in case of the *3rd person* singular form which lacks the suffix *–s* in subjunctive. The *mandative* subjunctive which is characterized by Quirk et al. (Quirk et al., 1985) as the most common use of the subjunctive today this kind can be found in subordinate *that-clause* which needs to be introduced “by an expression of *demand, recommendation, proposal resolution, intention, etc..*” (Quirk et al., 1985), as shown in:

(26) I insist (that) he/she go now.

When the verb *be* or a predicate involves the *copula be* which is used in the subordinate clause; it is not conjugated, i.e., it remains in its bare/plain form *be*, as shown below:

(27) They demanded that (I/we/you/he/she/they) *be* there now.

While the *past subjunctive* form exists as a distinguishable form which has the form *were* (with volitional/buletic trigger) used throughout for all persons. The *past subjunctive* indicates the *form* of the verb rather than its *meaning*, i.e., it does not refer to past time. The past-*were*

subjunctive, is known as *irreals, hypothetical and counterfactual*, as shown below:

(28) John wished that he *were* richer.

(29) I wish I *were* here at the seaside.

As it has been mentioned above, the perfect subjunctive is not a real type which marks the anteriority to the reference time of the main verb, as shown below:

(30) I would rather *have stayed* home last night.

8. Conclusion

In this paper, many problems have been mentioned concerning modality in English, more precisely, mood that is the subjunctive mood, and many important general distinctions have been discussed, such as those between modality (or notional mood) and mood (as grammatical category of the verb), as well as mood and modality systems. It's essential to make a distinction between mood and modality. Modality expresses the attitude of the speaker towards the reality of world, modality is an area of language where the speaker can choose between *describing, evaluating or imposing* a situation. Mood is well known as a grammatical category which can express modality, mood is to modality is what tense to time: *mood and tense* are grammatical forms, whereas *modality and time* are meaning categories. In addition to that, it focused on the English subjunctive and how the terminology used to label its forms varies according to authors' perspectives' analysis.

Then the terminology has been mentioned, which refers to *present, past and perfect*, we can use them to refer to *morphological form* and *temporal reference*, so the terms such as: *formulaic, mandative and volitive* subjunctive point to context of specific triggers. English has present, past and perfect subjunctive. The present/*be*-subjunctive is divided into: *formulaic*, and *mandative* subjunctive The past subjunctive can be seen in *were* subjunctive and the perfect subjunctive is

considered to be an aspectual marked form which signals anteriority to the reference time of the main verb. The present or *be-subjunctive* has been analyzed as consisting of two types: *formulaic* and *mandative*. The *formulaic subjunctive*, marked by the base form of the verb, occurs in the independent clauses (exclamative sentences) which signal the optative mood. When it is signaled by synthetic (old) subjunctive form, the *formulaic subjunctive* is expressed by the base form of the verb (infinitive) and in the analytic marking the formulaic subjunctive is expressed by modal verbs such as *may*, such as *grammar be hanged!*, *may you live long and have beautiful life!*, and *may you die in hell!*.

The temporal reference of the *formulaic subjunctive* is always simultaneous with reference time of the speaker. The *mandative subjunctive* occurs in subordinate clauses with deontic triggers. In the context of synthetic (old) subjunctive form, the *mandative subjunctive* is expressed by the base form of the verb and in the context of analytic forms, the mandative subjunctive is expressed by *should+V*. The temporal references of the *mandative subjunctive* can be due to the semantic of the main clause with respect of the tense of main verb. Concerning the *volitive subjunctive* occurs in subordinate clauses with buletic, volitional triggers. It's used with both the old synthetic subjunctive the infinitive form, and new synthetic subjunctive the (*-ed*) form, and it also occurs with analytic subjunctive with (*should/could/would + V*), such as, *I wish I were there*, and *I wish I could be there*. The temporal references of the *volitive subjunctive* can be simultaneous and anterior with respect tense in main clause.

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