

TILTM 2022

Topical Issues of Linguistics and Teaching Methods in Business and Professional Communication

**THE MOOD ALTERNATION AS A MEANS OF IMPLEMENTING
THE SPEAKER'S COMMUNICATIVE INTENTIONS**

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Abstract

The paper discusses the linguo-pragmatic analysis of the use of moods in subordinate clauses that depend on the negative form of the verbs of thought *penser* and *croire*. The objective of this study is to reveal communicatively conditioned factors that influence the speaker's use of either the indicative or the subjunctive. Different conceptions of the subjunctive as a mood are examined. General provisions on the use of moods in subordinate clauses that depend on the verbs of thought *penser* and *croire* in the negative form are also given. The key methods of the study are linguistic analysis based on a broad semantic and pragmatic context and the method of a linguistic experiment. The sources of practical material are publications of the French media made within the last 5 years. The total number of the studied words is 130,000. 200 studied structures are found within the corpus. The analysis has shown that there are two global factors that influence the speaker's choice between the indicative and the subjunctive in the examined position: the speaker's wish to clearly differentiate the localization of the action in time and agreement/disagreement of the speaker with another person's point of view. It appears that a combination of factors influences the choice in some cases.

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Keywords: Alternation of moods, communicative intention, illocutionary meaning, language of newspapers, linguistic pragmatics

1. Introduction

The alternation of the subjunctive and the indicative after the verbs of thought in the negative form is one of the controversial and complex issues of the French grammar because there is no strict rule concerning the choice of the mood. As mood being a grammatical category connects the relation of the verbal action to reality with the speaker's position, it has a distinct pragmatic potential (Arutiunova & Paducheva, 1985). That is why studying possible reasons for discrepancies between the norm and the usage of moods is of interest from the perspective of both the traditional theory of moods and linguistic pragmatics considering speaker's probable pragmatic attitudes.

While carrying out such linguo-pragmatical analysis of the use of moods in subordinate clauses we relied on functional and semantic differences between the studied moods. We were guided by semantic characteristics of the subjunctive as a normative mood in the studied position.

1.1. A critical review of the main conceptions of the subjunctive

The indicative mood and the subjunctive mood have been distinguished in the system of the French moods since XVII century. Researchers are almost unanimous in grammatical meaning of the indicative that represents the action as real and relates it to a particular time when this action takes place. However, the role of the subjunctive in French is still under discussion in the academic world.

In our study we do not agree with the point of view that the subjunctive is an obsolete mood or a semantically excessive form which is used in relevant positions conventionally (Bally, 1950).

We join those linguists who approve the vitality, wide use and complexity of the subjunctive (Gak, 2004; Sabaneeva, 1984). It can be confirmed by the fact that in some cases the subjunctive not only keeps up with the indicative but also tends to be used more widely displacing the latter in subordinate clauses after the conjunction *après que* (Gadet, 2021).

While comparing and analyzing linguistic examples we relied on the theory of modality/non-modality of the subjunctive and the theory of actualization.

According to the first group of theories, the subjunctive is non-modal, i.e. it does not have constant fixed modality and in most cases, it is not connected with the speaker's position when used in a subordinate clause (Sabaneeva, 1984). Depending on the context the subjunctive can convey different modal meanings - doubt, willingness, wish, etc. Thus, the action expressed by the verb in the subjunctive is represented via the speaker's subjective relation. In case of the alternation with the indicative the use of the subjunctive shows that the speaker does not express their relation to reality of the action. It allowed Damourette and Pichon (1936) call the subjunctive *«le mode de non-jugement»* (p. 482). Generally, one can say that the opposition subjunctive/indicative reflects the juxtaposition of *possibility* and *reality*.

The theory of **actualization** goes back to G. Guillaume's ideas which have been used and developed by his followers so far. According to Guillaume, verb forms reflect a picture of the action developing in time in the speaker's mind. The subjunctive connects the subject with the action describing it more clearly than non-finite forms of the verb. However, the subjunctive does not link the action to the particular time in contrast to the indicative. Thus, if the indicative presents an action as a real and

actualized one, the subjunctive expresses a certain virtuality of the action in its development (Ćosić, 2021).

1.2. Problematics of the subjunctive in contemporary studies

Although the subjunctive has been studied for a long time and there have been a great deal of scientific works, linguists' interest in it, as some researchers say, is not weakening but growing even more (Tyshkevich, 2021). Contemporary specialized studies devoted to the subjunctive are of applied nature, as a rule. The controversial cases of variations in the usage of moods including the alternation of the subjunctive and indicative in object clauses are examined in these works (Nikitina, 2014; Sentchenkova, 2020). There are now works in which functioning of the subjunctive is studied from the perspective of rapidly developing directions of linguistics, in particular, the communicative significance of its use (Epifantseva, 2020; Oleinikova, 2018).

The novelty of this study is the following: the analysis is aimed at only one type of context (object clauses after the verbs of thought in the negative form); the analysis involves data of linguistic and extralinguistic situations for the correct definition of the illocutionary meaning of the statement¹; the most up-to-date linguistic material from newspapers and magazines of the last five years is used.

2. Problem Statement

The alternation of moods in object clauses that depend on the negative form of the verbs *penser* and *croire* (hereinafter the verbs of thought) is an example of discrepancy between the norm and the usage of moods.

Some normative and practical grammar books that are used to teach French require that the subjunctive is used in object clauses after *ne pas penser que* and *ne pas croire que* (Grégoire & Kostucki, 2012; Steinberg, 1972).

However, a quick overview of the examples shows that in these clauses not only the subjunctive is used but also the indicative and sometimes the conditional mood. The possibility of such alternation under the influence of different factors is reflected in many reference books, theoretical and practical grammar books of advanced level. Table 1 represents the factors which were mentioned in those works and can make the speaker choose the indicative in the clause.

Table 1. Factors determining the use of the indicative in a subordinate clause

Grammar reference books	Factors determining the use of the indicative
Le Bon Usage, 14-me édition	To emphasize the reality of the action or to express time connotations that are absent in the subjunctive.
Grammaire Larousse du XXe siècle	If the utterance is a statement of the fact that is opposite to the meaning of the clause.
Grammaire méthodique du français	If the speaker represents the action as more probable or proves its reality contrary to the third person's opinion.

¹ Following E.V. Paducheva (2010), we consider the illocutionary meaning (“function”) to be “a communicative intention of the speaker” (p. 3).

Thus, it is obvious that deviations from the normative use of the subjunctive in this position are not spontaneous. Such deviations are determined by the interaction of the norm, usage and pragmatic attitudes of the speaker and connected with a complex of diverse factors that are necessary to define.

3. Research Questions

Based on the studied works we suggested a hypothesis that the use of moods in the considered clauses depend not so much on formal conditions but the speaker's intentions. The choice of the mood is defined by a range of intra- and extralinguistic factors. To check our hypothesis the following questions should be answered during this study.

- Which of the factors mentioned in the works above really influence the speaker's choice of the indicative?
- Are there factors supporting the normative use of the subjunctive?
- Is the alternation of moods in the studied position connected with the specific illocutionary meaning of the statement?
- Which particular speaker's intentions can be conveyed by the alternation of moods and how do they influence the choice between the indicative and subjunctive in the given position?

4. Purpose of the Study

The objective of the study is to analyze in detail the use of moods in object clauses after the negative form of the verbs of thought (*penser* and *croire*) and to determine communicative intentions that can be conveyed by these moods in this position.

5. Research Methods

While studying examples with different moods **the method of contextual analysis** involving extralinguistic data about the communicative situation, its participants and their knowledge was mostly used. In some cases **the method of a linguistic experiment** was also used: possible changes in pragmatic potential of the statement when one mood is replaced with the other were examined.

We used publications of the French press made over the last 5 years as practical material. The social and discursive component of the language of press includes intentions and strategies of speakers (journalists and respondents) (Marty, 2020), and an influence on the recipient is one of the media's key functions. That is why we think that this type of discourse is the most favourable environment for the communicatively oriented component of the semantics of mood. What is more, the language of newspapers differs from other types of normative written speech in its openness to some tendencies of contemporary everyday French.

Data from French publications and websites that represent the standard variant of the French language were used to form the examined corpus (*le français standard, le français de référence*).

- National newspapers - Le Monde, Le Figaro, Libération;
- Regional newspapers - Le Parisien, Ouest-France, Sud Ouest, La Voix du Nord, La Nouvelle République, L'Est républicain, Midi Libre;
- Daily news outlets - Les Échos, La Croix, 20 Minutes;
- News magazines - L'Express, Le Point, L'Obs, Marianne;
- Websites of radio stations - France Info, France Inter, France Culture, RTL;
- Websites of TV channels - France 24, BFMTV.

Linguistic examples chosen for the analysis contain statements made by French politicians, scientists, journalists, writers, business people, athletes and, in smaller numbers, by ordinary French citizens, which allows to meet the studied structures in different pragmatic contexts.

196 text documents that contain a total of 130,000 words were chosen from the above mentioned sources. 200 uses of the verbs *penser* and *croire* in the negative form as part of examined structures were met within the studied corpus.

6. Findings

Among 200 examples in the studied corpus moods were distributed as follows: the indicative is used in 55% of cases (110 examples), the subjunctive in 41% (82 examples), the conditional in 4% (8 examples), as seen in Figure 1 below,

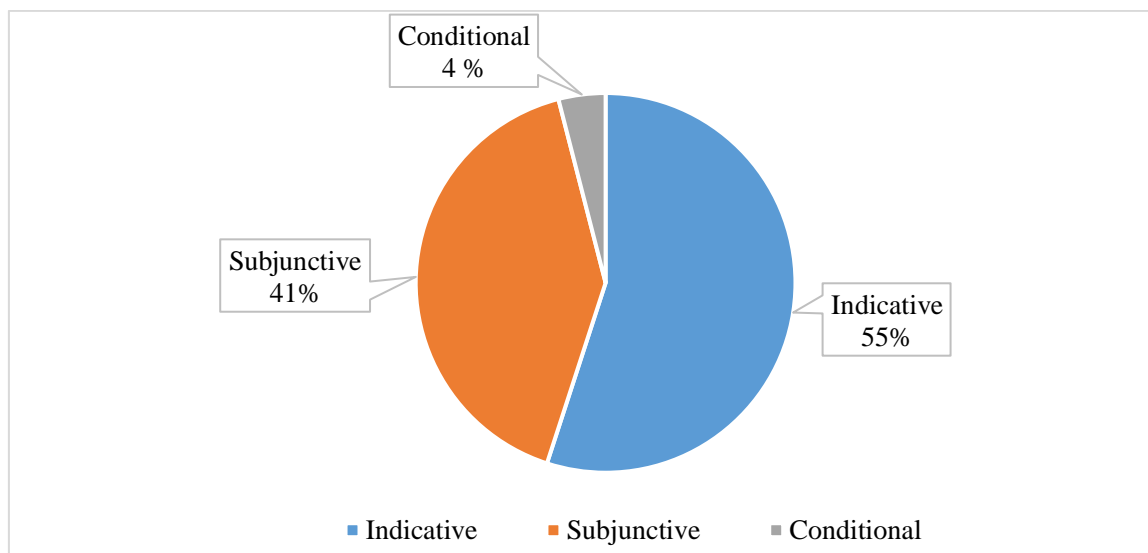


Figure 1. Distribution of moods in the studied corpus

Among the chosen linguistic examples 4 standard structures of the main clause with the verbs of thought in the negative form were identified: first person of the present and imperfect tenses and third person of the present and imperfect tenses. All the identified structures are represented in Table 2.

Table 2. Standard structures of the main clause with verbs of thought in the negative form

Person	First person	Third person
Present tense	je ne pense pas que/ je ne crois pas que...	il (elle) ne pense pas que/ il (elle) ne croit pas que... ils (elles) ne pensent pas que/ ils (elles) ne croient pas que...
Imperfect	je ne pensais pas que/ je ne croyais pas que...	il (elle) ne pensait pas que/ il (elle) ne croyait pas que... ils (elles) ne pensaient pas que/ ils (elles) ne croyaient pas que...

Correlation of examples with the indicative and subjunctive for each structure is represented in

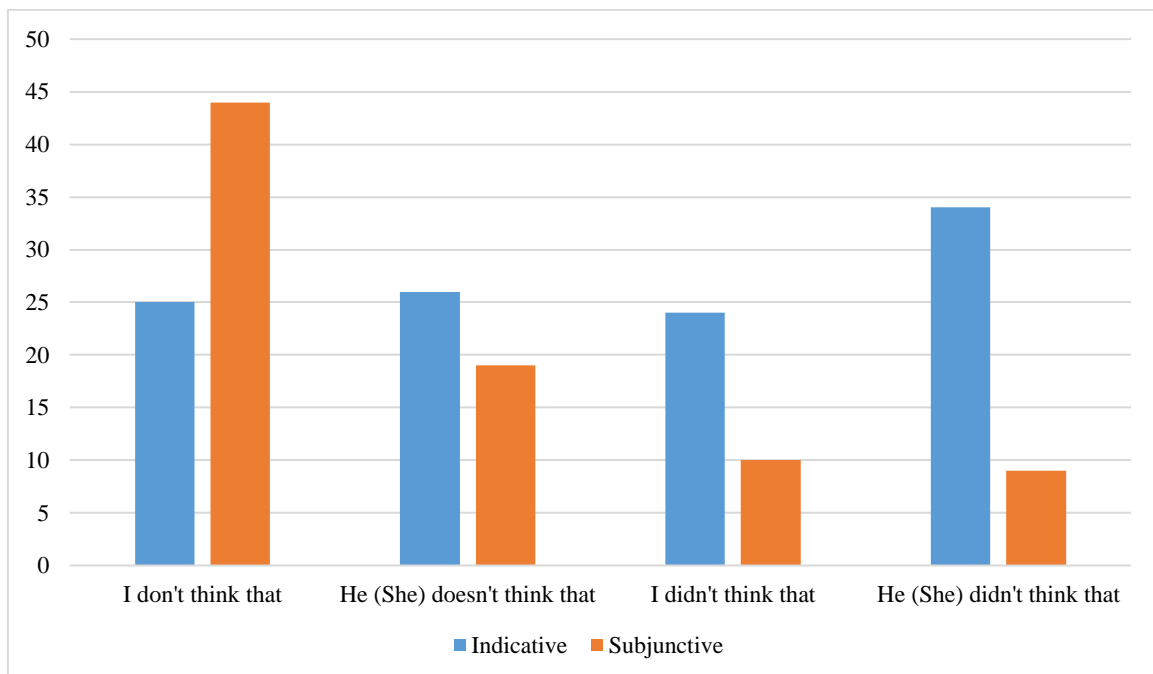


Figure 2. Correlation of the indicative/subjunctive for each structure

Thus, in more than half of cases the indicative is used, which contradicts rules of normative grammar. Few cases of the conditional were not the object of our further examination within the framework of this study.

The analysis revealed two main pragmatic factors that influence the speaker's choice between the indicative and subjunctive in the subordinate clause. The studied data show that these factors work in two directions: they either make the speaker deviate from the norm in favour of the indicative or support the normative use of the subjunctive.

6.1. Localization of the action on the time axis

The first factor follows from the very system of the subjunctive tenses. Presenting an action in its development (according to Guillaume) the subjunctive does not always allow to localize the action on the time axis. It is connected with the inseparability of present and future in the system of the subjunctive tenses (Joly, 2018).

That is why, if it is important to the speaker to show the reference of the action to the future but not the present, the indicative tenses *Futur simple* and *Futur immédiat*, which do not have equivalents in the system of the subjunctive, are chosen. Our observations show that it is characteristic of those cases when the speaker expects a situation to develop, i.e they get to the future in their mind. For example:

On verra ce qui sort des élections locales. Y aura-t-il un raz de marée en faveur des opposants à Pékin ou vont-elles donner l'occasion à une majorité silencieuse effrayée par les violences commises par les jeunes de s'exprimer ? Mystère. Mais je ne pense pas que le résultat des élections sera décisif (Lemaître, 2019).

This is a quote by Frederic Lemaître, a journalist for *Le Monde*, who wrote about a student strike in the Hong Kong Polytechnic University in 2019. He thinks that the restoration of calm seems unlikely in the near future and the results of upcoming elections can hardly change the situation. In this statement the reference to the future is not marked at all, that is why only the use of *Futur simple* in the subordinate clause shows that the situation is in future but not in present. The normative use of *Présent du subjonctif* could be ambiguous (*je ne pense pas que le résultat des élections soit décisif* – the influence of election results on the situation could be related by the speaker to the present moment).

We estimated that *Futur simple* and *Futur immédiat* are used in subordinate clauses that depend on the verbs of thought in the present tense (*je ne pense pas que, il ne pense pas que*) in 78% of examples with the indicative. That means a considerable number of deviations from the norm in these structures are somehow connected with the inability of the subjunctive to explicitly express the reference of the action to the future.

However, when the action in the subordinate clause takes place in present or is not linked to any time, the speaker does not need to deviate from the grammatical norm as the subjunctive tenses are enough to fully express the idea. For example:

"Je ne pense pas qu'aujourd'hui la société française soit dans un moment de grande tension. " C'est ce qu'a notamment déclaré Emmanuel Macron jeudi soir à la fin d'une conférence de presse à l'Elysée (Boutin, 2021).

Elle accuse le gouvernement d'avoir "accompagné ce processus de communautarisation", et de proposer "une vision mortelle pour la République, car elle est antirépublicaine". "Je crois qu'il y a des discriminations sociales (...) Je ne crois pas qu'il y ait des discriminations raciales dans notre pays", a ainsi assuré Marine Le Pen (Ventura, 2020).

Examples with the subjunctive are often speaker's generalized statements about the condition of society, economics or what should be done in politics at present, etc. The speaker can adequately express their idea by means of the subjunctive.

The specified factor also works in the past: the action succeeding the protagonist's act of thought in time can be definitely expressed by *Futur dans le passé* or *Futur immédiat dans le passé*:

Dans un long tweet rédigé, nous précise-t-il, "après deux whiskys", Freund, nommé professeur à 38 ans seulement, expliquait pourquoi **il ne croyait pas qu'une seconde vague déferlerait** sur une population déjà frappée (Bloch-Lainé, 2020).

This article was written in summer 2020 when French people were awaiting with fear the second coronavirus wave. The speaker who is an emergency doctor and a part-time lecturer at Sorbonne University explains why some regions should not be afraid of the second epidemic wave. The indicative expresses sequence in the past, "a view from the past into the future", which cannot be explicitly expressed by means of the subjunctive.

6.2. Correlation between the speaker's and protagonist's points of view

The second factor can be defined as "correlation between the speaker's and protagonist's points of view". The verb of thought in the main clause connects the statement with the personality of the subject of thought (the protagonist) that may differ from the subject of speech (the speaker). The subjunctive in a subordinate clause is considered not to express the speaker's position concerning the reality of the action. For example, the phrase *Pierre ne croit pas que tu viennes* conveys the protagonist's (Pierre's) opinion while the speaker's position remains unclear and is assumed to be equal to the protagonist's position. On the contrary, in the example *Pierre ne croit pas que tu viendras* the speaker's mere knowledge of objective reality (*mais moi, je sais que tu viendras*) is opposed to the protagonist's opinion. Thus, the use of the indicative allows the speaker to emphasize the reality of the action in the subordinate clause and hence to express disagreement with the protagonist who denies this fact. Let us turn to examples:

" *Au début, on ne me croyait pas quand je disais que je travaillais là. Les gens **ne pensent pas** qu'il y a des bureaux dans l'Arche ! " sourit Adrien, depuis huit ans au ministère de la Transition écologique et solidaire, dans la paroi sud (Terrier, 2019).*

This article deals with *La Grande Arche de la Défense* that not only represents a famous landmark located on the outskirts of Paris but also houses many business offices. The respondent, an officer from the Ministry of Ecology, says that for many people the very possibility of working in such a building seems incredible. The speaker considers this fact as real, therefore he uses *Présent de l'indicatif* in the subordinate clause and rejects the collective protagonist's opinion basing on the mere knowledge of reality. It may explain the deviation from the grammatical norm.

The subjunctive, on the contrary, allows the speaker to neutrally convey the third person's opinion without expressing their own position. It may be necessary in some delicate situations. Let us look at the following example:

" *Edouard Philippe **ne croit pas** qu'il y ait de solution sans demander aux Français de travailler plus longtemps " , poursuit l'entourage du Premier ministre (Cometti, 2020).*

The article that contains this example is devoted to the project of the pension reform that caused much debate in French society. The forthcoming meeting of representatives of trade unions and the government as well as the supposition that the government will hardly reject proposed measures are discussed in the article. The people close to Prime Minister Édouard Philippe confirm the supposition. There are no prerequisites to deviate from the grammatical norm in the example: *Présent du subjonctif* allows the respondents to convey the Prime Minister's opinion diplomatically without expressing their

own opinion on this sensitive issue. That means that in some situations the subjunctive allows to obscure your own opinion.

It is noteworthy that the protagonist can also be the first person in the past, i.e. with the help of the indicative in the considered position the speaker can refute their own erroneous idea made before. Thus, there is a juxtaposition of the speaker's knowledge ("I" at the moment of speech) and the protagonist's opinion ("I" in the past). Such correlation between the speaker's and protagonist's positions are met in the examples with the verbs of thought in the first person, Imperfect: *je ne pensais pas que/je ne croyais pas que*.

Outre cette volonté de Karine Le Marchand de voir ses invitées lui ouvrir les portes de leur quotidien, l'animatrice estime qu'Une ambition intime est devenue une émission militante au fil du tournage. " Elle est militante en ce sens où je crois qu'on comprend bien que c'est compliqué, indique-t-elle. Je ne pensais pas qu'on empêchait à ce point les femmes d'avancer en politique. " (Rodriguez, 2021).

These words belong to Karine le Marchand, a French television host, who is speaking about the second season of her *Une ambition intime* show. It is a series of interviews given by famous women politicians, for example, Marine Le Pen, Anne Hidalgo, Valerie Pécresse. The host confesses that before the show she did not realize how difficult it is for a woman to achieve success in politics (it's the protagonist's opinion, i.e. "I" in the past). However, at the moment of speaking the reality of this fact is obvious to the speaker, which is conveyed by the indicative in the subordinate clause.

6.3. Combined influence of two factors

It appears that in some cases both mentioned above factors work. They reflect speaker's two important communicative intentions: on the one hand to definitely localize the action on the time axis, on the other to reject the third person's or personal opinion in the past.

" Mes concurrents ne pensent pas que je vais gagner. Mais moi, j'ai construit un appareil militant, je n'ai pas besoin d'une autre structure comme certains », lâche-t-il [Gaspard Gantzer] en référence à Pierre-Yves Bournazel, l'autre candidat qui se dit « hors parti " (Gairaud, 2019).

That was said by Gaspard Gantzer who was planning to participate in the election of the Paris mayor in 2020. In the interview the speaker kind of indirectly argues with his competitors and shows confidence in future victory. Thanks to the indicative in the subordinate clause the statement sounds as if his competitors do not believe the objective fact that cannot but happen. Thus, there is both the rejection of the third person's opinion and the explicitly expressed relation of the action to the future.

A similar combination of two factors is also possible in the past:

"Dans trois jours, personne n'en parlera plus", a-t-il déclaré, regrettant toutefois le "timing". "Je ne pensais pas que ma démission provoquerait ce choc-là. L'annonce de ma démission a été faite trop tôt à mon goût" (Le Gall, 2018).

The excerpt above is from the article which deals with Gérard Collomb's resignation as Minister of the Interior and his intention to run for the Lyon mayor. Many of his colleagues did not expect this decision that brought about disorder in the supreme authorities: President Emmanuel Macron signed the letter of resignation only the second time and Prime Minister Édouard Philippe had to postpone his

business trip and temporarily assume the responsibilities of Minister of the Interior. Gérard Collomb confesses that at the moment of decision making he did not expect such difficulties connected with his resignation, but at the moment of speaking all these unpleasant consequences are a *fait accompli*. Thus, the speaker represents the action that was not foreseen by the protagonist (“I” in the past), but took place later, which is said by the speaker at the moment of speaking. Firstly, the future in the past (*Futur dans le passé*) emphasizes the reality of the happened action and, secondly, expresses a sequence in the past.

In the examples with the indicative in subordinate clauses and the verbs of thought in imperfect (*je ne pensais pas que* and *il ne pensait pas que*) the percentage of *Futur dans le passé* and *Futur immédiat dans le passé* is 62%. It seems to be the most typical situation for conveying the illocutionary meaning of rejecting personal opinion in the past: the specified action takes place between the protagonist’s act of thought and the moment of speaking. Thus, by the moment of speaking “the course of life” has proved itself the reality of the action which the protagonist could only assume in the past.

7. Conclusion

The linguo-pragmatic analysis of the use of moods after the negative form of the verbs of thought confirmed our hypothesis that the choice between the subjunctive and the indicative is influenced by a number of factors. These factors are modal characteristics of the considered moods, structural features of their functions in French, the speaker’s pragmatic attitudes, the interaction between a literal and illocutionary meaning of the statement.

The narrower types of communicative intentions have been defined within the two standard structures influencing the speaker’s choice of the mood. To convey these intentions the speaker uses the normative subjunctive or deviate from the grammatical norm in favour of the indicative:

- The speaker neutrally expresses the third person’s opinion to show that his/her position is the same as the stated opinion.
- The speaker neutrally expresses the third person’s opinion to conceal intentionally his/her own position (for ethical reasons).
- The speaker rejects the third person’s opinion basing on the mere knowledge of objective reality.
- The speaker rejects the third person’s opinion and seeks to represent the rejected fact as inevitable.
- The speaker rejects their personal erroneous opinion in the past basing on the mere knowledge of objective reality at the moment of speaking.

The use of the subjunctive contributes to the creation of the first two types of illocutionary meanings. Three remaining meanings are expressed with the help of the indicative in the subordinate clause. To correctly decode communicatively important deviations from the norm it is necessary to know the broad context and the extralinguistic situation. Based on what was said it seems reasonable to consider the alternation of moods one of the speech influence strategies. Functions of moods in structures of the described type can be considered a sphere of interaction of grammar, semantics and pragmatics.

The results of this study can be used in works on the theory of grammar, in the analysis of semantic characteristics of moods or while teaching French. The ability to correctly interpret and

adequately use different speech strategies that are also connected with the realisation of pragmatic potential of moods ensures successful communication and contributes to illocutionary competences while studying a foreign language. This study can be continued further on the basis of alternative types of discourse and other texts that allow the alternation of moods.

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