

Experiencers, negation and polarity mood

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This investigation focuses on mood selection in complement clauses which typically trigger subjunctive under negation –*polarity subjunctive* (Stowell 1993). We show that, contrary to expectations and claims in the literature, indicative can appear under negated Spanish *parecer* ‘seem’.

- (1) *el matrimonio no me parece que debe ser un fin*
the marriage not DAT.1SG seem that must-PRS.IND.3SG be an end
‘It doesn’t seem to me that marriage should be an end’ (Habla Culta: Madrid: M4)

We report on an extensive corpus study on mood selection under *parecer* interacting with negation and the presence/absence of an experiencer (Corpus del Español, Davis 2002), which uncovered a significant association between presence of an experiencer and indicative selection ($\chi^2 = 18.0592$, p -value: .000021) (descriptive data in Table 1).

	Indicative	Subjunctive	Totals
-experiencer	31 (28%)	78 (72%)	109
+experiencer	55 (58%)	40 (42%)	95
	86	118	204

Table 1: Number of indicative and subjunctive dependents following matrix *no parecer que* classified according to experiencer expression.

We propose this *polarity indicative* acts as a shifter from the epistemic world of the experiencer of modal *parecer* back to the actual world: the embedded indicative proposition p is asserted, generating a marked meaning of ‘ p but/although it doesn’t seem to me that p ’. Our account is based on the idea that in contrast to polarity subjunctive clauses—deemed to be defective (Gallego & Uriagereka 2007)—the indicative embedded clause is a full CP. As such, following Hornstein & Uriagereka 2002, the interpretation could obtain if the clause is reprojected higher up in the left periphery, outside the scope of negation.

The interaction between the experiencer and the structure of the embedded CP informs the debate on the nature of *parecer* and its complements (Ausín & Depiante 2000, Cuervo 2003, Gallego 2009) and supports proposals on the syntactic properties of embedded clauses (Torrego & Uriagereka 1997), as well as proposals on model shift following other non-assertive matrices that allow for mood alternation in dependent clauses (Quer 1998; Giannakidou 1997, Harrington & Pérez-Leroux 2016).

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