

The Romance subjunctive is a morphological system inherited from Latin whose main function according to traditional accounts is to encode irrealis and non-declarative utterances. A closer analysis of speech data, however, reveals that the subjunctive usually alternates with the indicative and other mood forms in speech. The present book investigates different aspects of the mood variability in Italian. First, it addresses the question of how it is perceived and conceptualized by the speech community. It dwells on the instances in which the occurrence of other mood forms in lieu of a subjunctive are sanctioned by the speech community presenting different types of "morphological errors" and the metalinguistic discourse that they generate.

The analysis is meant to supplement corpus studies by giving an understanding of the social dimensions that impact mood variation. Additionally, the dissertation adopts a historical perspective by reviewing the functions and distribution of the subjunctive in Classical Latin, in Vulgar Latin and in Common Romance. Comparisons with the domains of application of the subjunctive in Italian are conducted in order to gather indirect clues to the diachronic evolution of the mood. Finally, the productivity of subjunctive forms is investigated by means of a corpus study and an oral production task. The experimental study investigates how frequency of use impacts the productivity and generalization of morphological patterns and critically evaluates theories of morphological learning.

Die Publikationsreihe NIHIN - New Ideas in Human Interaction - entstand 2010 und ist ein Kooperationsprojekt zwischen der Hermann Paul School of Linguistics (HPSL) und der Universitätsbibliothek Freiburg (UB).

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Perception, Usage and Productivity



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Perception, Usage and Productivity of Variable Morphological Rules

Investigations on the Italian Subjunctive

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