

Article

The Use of the Future Subjunctive in Colonial Spanish Texts: Evidence of Vitality or Demise?

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Abstract: This article examines the use of the future subjunctive in two corpora of colonial Mexican texts. The first corpus consists of 255 documents dated 1561–1646 pertaining primarily to the historical area of New Galicia and dealing with matters of the Real Audiencia of Guadalajara. The second consists of 191 documents dated 1681–1816 written in the *altiplano central* of Mexico, which covers a large geographical area from Mexico City to Zacatecas. After describing the syntactic distribution of the future subjunctive in Medieval Spanish, we examine the evidence of its patterns of usage in Peninsular Spanish in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. From there, we analyze the quantitative and qualitative data related to the 428 tokens of *-re* forms found in our corpora and the syntactic structures in which they appear. The data support findings that the future subjunctive first fell out of use in temporal adverbial clauses, while exhibiting the most apparent productivity in relative clauses. However, the corpora examined provide no evidence that the paradigm survived longer in Latin American Spanish than in Peninsular Spanish, as has been argued. Rather, this study suggests that by the eighteenth century, the future subjunctive was a highly stylized marker of formality or politeness in written Spanish.



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1. Introduction

The Spanish verbal system consists of two principal moods, the indicative and the subjunctive. While the former is used to describe objective reality from the point of view of the speaker, the latter, appearing for the most part in subordinate clauses, allows the speaker to attach subjective values or attitudes to the propositions contained in those clauses (cf. Alarcos Llorach 1994, p. 154; Penny 2002, p. 170). Leaving aside the question of aspect, Modern Spanish contrasts non-past with past time-reference in the subjunctive via the present (*cante* 'I sing PRES. SUBJ.') and imperfect (*cantara/cantase* 'I sing PAST SUBJ.') tenses. Old Spanish, however, had two tenses for non-past time-reference in the subjunctive, the present (*cante*) and the future (*cantare*), the latter being used in certain syntactic structures. This article concerns the fate of the future subjunctive, which has ceased to be productive in Modern Spanish.¹

Until relatively recently, however, the future subjunctive was described in normative grammars as a fully functioning paradigm of the Spanish verbal system. The generally accepted view is that there was a decline in the frequency of usage of the future subjunctive in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and that after the eighteenth, it was limited to specialized uses, e.g., in literary (1a) and legal texts (1b), and to set phrases such as the ones found in (1c) and (1d):

1.
 - a. Dejó a la perezosa fantasía vagar a su antojo, llevando el pensamiento por donde ella **fuere**. (Leopoldo Alas, Treinta relatos, apud Alarcos Llorach 1994, p. 160)
'I let the lazy fantasy wander to its liking, taking my thoughts wherever it may go'
 - b. Si alguien **infringiere** esta disposición, será obligado a pagar la indemnización a que **hubiere** lugar (apud Alarcos Llorach 1994, p. 160)
'If anyone contravenes this order, he will be obligated to pay any damages that may be sustained'
 - c. sea lo que **fuere**
'whatever it may be'
 - d. venga lo que **viniere**
'come what may'

Nevertheless, several scholars have questioned this accepted wisdom, contending that the future subjunctive survived for a longer period of time, specifically in Latin American Spanish varieties. The possible preservation of *-re* forms in Latin American Spanish needs to be studied more thoroughly (cf. Veiga 2006, p. 137). This work begins to fill that void by examining the use of the future subjunctive in two corpora of colonial Mexican texts that date from the middle of the sixteenth through the early nineteenth centuries. Before describing our materials and methods, it would be beneficial to review the origins of Old Spanish future subjunctive and its patterns of usage in Medieval and Early Modern Spanish, as well as the current state of research in this topic.

Old Spanish future subjunctive had no equivalent in Classical Latin. Rather, it developed from either the Latin future perfect indicative *CANTĀVERŌ*, the perfect subjunctive *CANTĀVERIM*, or the merger of the two paradigms, the latter being the current consensus view (Baranowski 2008, p. 495). Unlike its predecessors, Castilian *cantaro/cantare* (later only *cantare*) did not have a perfect value, but rather a simple future or a present-future one (p. 496). Syntactically, the use of the future subjunctive was limited to certain types of subordinate clauses oriented toward the future or present-future (Penny 2002, p. 216). It appeared principally in relative clauses with an indefinite antecedent, both adjectival (2a) and adverbial (2b), as well as in other subordinate clauses traditionally considered adverbials: the protasis of conditional sentences (2c) and temporal clauses (2d); it also appeared in adverbial clauses expressing manner or quantity (2e) (Veiga 1989, pp. 285–86; cf. Camús Bergareche 1990; Folgar and Ramos 1992):²

2.
 - a. A los que **fueren** ricos añadiré riqueza (*Libro de Alexandre*)
'To those who may be rich, I will add wealth'
 - b. por do Dios te **guiare** cuídate de andar (*La vida de santo Domingo de Silos*)
'wherever God may guide you, be sure to walk'
 - c. ¡si Dios non me **valiere** tengo que só perdida! (*Libro de Apolonio*)
'If God does not help me, I understand that I am lost!'
 - d. mientras homnes **hoviere** non caerá en olvido (*Libro de Alexandre*)
'as long as there are human beings, he will not be forgotten'
 - e. ayudar vos an quanto mas **pudieren** (*Otas de Roma*)
'they will help you as much as they can'

In contrast to the present subjunctive, the future subjunctive could not appear in independent clauses nor in subordinate noun clauses. In adverbial clauses, its use was logically restricted from temporal clauses denoting anteriority, and it therefore never appeared after *antes que* and very sporadically after *hasta que*. It was likewise rejected in clauses of purpose, e.g., after Old Spanish *porque* 'so that' (modern *para que*). On the other hand, the present subjunctive was restricted from appearing in the protasis of conditional sentences from the beginning period of the language. Thus, in early Old Spanish, present and future subjunctive could be seen to be in complementary distribution, each appearing in clauses from which the other was restricted. This was possible from a functional standpoint since both shared non-past temporal values, as well as the modal value of *no irreal* ('not unreal').³ Nevertheless, the fact that the future subjunctive was the more restricted variant in this distributional situation, i.e., a systemic "luxury," led to its eventual

demise (Veiga 1989, p. 315; López Rivera 1992, p. 590). It was replaced by the present indicative in the protasis of conditional sentences of the present-future time frame,⁴ and by the present subjunctive in the remaining syntactic structures.

The loss of the future subjunctive did not affect all syntactic structures at the same time. Among its principal functions, it appears to have first fallen out of use in temporal clauses. Eberenz (1990) finds variation between present and future subjunctive after time conjunctions like *cuando* and *después que* as early as the thirteenth century, with a trend of declining use of the future subjunctive in those contexts in the sixteenth century and continuing into the seventeenth. Structurally, this makes sense since the present subjunctive was already used after time conjunctions denoting anteriority like *antes que* and *hasta que*. Substituting *cante* for *cantare* after *cuando*, *después que*, *mientras*, etc., would thus eliminate a superfluous functional distinction (Veiga 1989, p. 315).

The future subjunctive appears to have survived longer in conditional sentences. While variation is found between the future subjunctive and the present indicative in those contexts in the medieval period, it is less prevalent than the variation between the future and present subjunctive in temporal clauses. Baranowski (2008, p. 504) finds that the future subjunctive “dominated” over present indicative after *si* in the Alfonsine corpus he studied. By the sixteenth century, there is an overwhelming preference for the present indicative after *si* (Keniston 1937, p. 408; Eberenz 1990, p. 401). Specifically, Keniston cites a rate of 34% use of the future subjunctive in the protasis of open conditional sentences in the first half of the sixteenth century; this is reduced to 19% in the second half.⁵

The use of the future subjunctive persisted the longest in relative clauses, remaining intact in learned registers at least until the eighteenth century. Indeed, it can still be found to this day in legal texts where it is used to convey hypothetical future situations (Penny 2002, p. 216). It is fitting that the most common surviving uses of the future subjunctive, albeit in fossilized expressions, are those in relative clauses like *sea lo que fuere* and *venga lo que viniere*, although even those are increasingly expressed as *sea lo que sea* and *venga lo que venga* in Modern Spanish. The use of the future subjunctive only enters in crisis in relative clauses due to the diminishing usage of the paradigm in its other roles (Eberenz 1990). Baranowski (2008, p. 507) credits the loss of the future subjunctive in *si* clauses as the key to the paradigm’s eventual demise, since it was the context in which the future subjunctive most distinguished itself from the present subjunctive.

Overall, then, we can see that the tendency to eliminate the future subjunctive from the Spanish verbal system dates to the sixteenth century (Luquet 1988). Although the paradigm was commonly used in literary texts of the Golden Age, since that time it entered into a rapid decline, which was felt especially acutely in the eighteenth century, notwithstanding the fact that it was maintained in written Spanish until the nineteenth century (Wright 1931). In spoken registers, it is believed to have been lost at the beginning of the sixteenth, at least among the lowest socioeconomic groups (de Granda 1968; Luquet 1988). Luquet (1988) arrives at that conclusion by examining the speech production of characters in three sixteenth-century plays written by Torres Naharro, finding that those from humble origins did not use the future subjunctive. This would suggest that the playwright perceived the future subjunctive as marked and denoting the speech of the upper classes. For comparison purposes, Luquet found that in *Lazarillo de Tormes*, the title character did not use the future subjunctive either, except on one occasion, after he had reached his highest social standing.

In contrast to the picture painted above for the future subjunctive in Medieval and Early Modern Spanish, several scholars claim that the future subjunctive persisted longer in Latin American Spanish, exhibiting vitality even in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and beyond (see Kany 1951; de Granda 1968; Lapesa 1981; Eberenz 1990; Fontanella de Weinberg 1992; Ramírez Luengo 2001, 2002, 2008). Though not explicitly expressed as such, this theory seems to stem from the general notion that certain forms that are ousted from the normative language of the metropole survive longer in modalities of the periphery, such as colonial varieties (cf. the use of *vos* for second-person-singular

address).⁶ These studies will be discussed more thoroughly below, after presenting the results of our work, whose principal aim is to gain a better understanding of the use of the future subjunctive in Colonial Spanish through the analysis of colonial Mexican texts. We will thus be able to sketch a tentative answer to the question of whether the future subjunctive survived longer in Latin American Spanish than in Peninsular Spanish. As we shall see, the corpora examined provide no evidence that the future subjunctive survived longer in Colonial Spanish. As a secondary result, our data support the premise that the future subjunctive first fell out of use in temporal adverbial clauses, while exhibiting the most apparent productivity in relative clauses.

2. Materials and Methods

To shed light on the use of the future subjunctive in colonial Latin American Spanish, we examined the use of the paradigm in two corpora of texts written in Mexico from the middle of the sixteenth through the early nineteenth century. The first corpus (Corpus 1, or New Galicia Corpus) is taken from Kania (1999), which consists of electronic transcriptions of 255 documents grouped in 22 *legajos*, or bundles, dated 1561–1647.⁷ The texts pertain primarily to the historical area of New Galicia and deal with matters under the jurisdiction of the Real Audiencia with its seat at Guadalajara. Most are of a legal nature, although some personal correspondence is also included. To complement the evidence found in Corpus 1, a second set of documents was selected from Company Company (1994) (a collection of transcriptions in print form), specifically those that postdate the texts from Corpus 1. Corpus 2 (Altiplano Corpus) consists of 191 documents dated 1681–1816 written in the *altiplano central* of Mexico, a large geographical area extending from Mexico City and its environs to Zacatecas.⁸ The texts themselves are of various types, both public and private. The two corpora of documents are of roughly similar size and text type. Together, they offer a temporal breadth spanning most of the colonial period and cover a comprehensive territory that was tied politically during that time.

The following methods were employed in the analysis of the texts. For Corpus 1, the concordances of each of the 22 *legajos* from (Kania 1999) were examined to isolate forms of the future subjunctive. Next, the transcriptions were consulted to identify the passages in which the forms occurred. The texts were then reviewed in their entirety to ensure that the maximum number of forms were found. For Corpus 2, the print transcriptions were carefully read and analyzed. Forms of the future subjunctive were identified, along with the passages in which they appeared. For both corpora, relevant passages were extracted for further analysis. All passages were analyzed vis-à-vis their syntactic structure and grouped according to the following types:

1. Relative clause introduced by a relative pronoun, either adjectival (e.g., *que*, *quien*, *el que*, *lo que*) or adverbial (e.g., *donde*),
2. Conditional clause introduced by conjunction *si*,
3. Temporal clause introduced by a conjunction like *cuando*, *después que*, and
4. Other adverbial clause (e.g., manner, quantity) introduced by an adverb like *como*, *cuanto*.

Data related to tokens of each syntactic type were grouped by corpus (Corpus 1, Corpus 2). To detect possible diachronic patterns of usage, data for each corpus were further subdivided into 50-year periods, i.e., Corpus 1: second half of sixteenth century and first half of the seventeenth century; Corpus 2: second half of seventeenth century, first half of the eighteenth century, second half of eighteenth century, and first half of the nineteenth century. Note that in this preliminary analysis the full envelope of variation was not examined, e.g., we did not systematically examine each syntactic structure in which the future subjunctive could have occurred. However, we are able to provide snapshots of the range of variation through sampling of portions of our corpora. The results of the analysis are discussed below.

3. Results and Discussion

Our findings regarding the use of the future subjunctive in Corpus 1 and Corpus 2 will be presented as follows: (1) an overview of the data reflecting the total occurrences of the paradigm, highlighting the syntactic structures in which it is used, (2) information gleaned from the corpora regarding variation between the use of the future subjunctive and of other paradigms, and (3) information gleaned from the corpora indicating the registers and contexts in which the future subjunctive is used. After presenting our findings, we will address the question of the vitality of the future subjunctive in Latin American Spanish vis-à-vis the Peninsular macro-variety.

3.1. Overview of Data and Syntactic Structures

The analysis of the two corpora of colonial Mexican documents yielded a total of 428 occurrences of the future subjunctive: 261 in Corpus 1 (New Galicia) and 167 in Corpus 2 (Altiplano). Of the 261 occurrences in the New Galicia Corpus (see Table 1), 196 (75.1%) appear in relative clauses, 48 (18.4%) in *si* clauses, 13 (5.0%) in adverbial clauses of time, and 4 in other adverbial clauses (1.5%). An example of the chronologically latest attestation of each type is provided in (3):

3.
 - a. y el tiempo que *vuestra merced estubiere* ocupado en esta dilijencia tengale dentro de su casa (Corpus 1, L19, 1633)
'and while your grace is occupied in this matter, keep it in your house'
 - b. pido y suplico a *vuestra merced*, se sirua de que aya esta declaracion en lo que se me **despachare** (Corpus 1, L21, 1643)
'I ask and beseech your grace that you see fit to consider this statement in what you send me'
 - c. en todo Proueera *Vuestra señoría* Como **fuere** seruido (Corpus 1, L22, 1646)
'in everything your lordship will rule as you see fit'
 - d. si **tuuieren** *que* decir lo hagan dentro de terçero dia (Corpus 1, L22, 1646)
'if they have something to declare, they shall do it by the third day'
 - e. si passado el termino no **vuieren replicado** o hecho contradición podra *vuestra señoría* hazerle la *merced que* pide (Corpus 1, L22, 1646)
'if by the end of the period they have not replied or made a challenge, your lordship may grant him the reward that he requests'

Table 1. Future subjunctive in Corpus 1 by structure and time period.

Scheme.	Time Period	Number of Tokens	Pct of Total per Period
Relative clause	Overall	196	75.1%
	2nd half of 16th	81	67.5
	1st half of 17th	115	81.5
Conditional with <i>si</i>	Overall	48	18.4%
	2nd half of 16th	29	24.2
	1st half of 17th	19	13.5
Temporal clause	Overall	13	5.0%
	2nd half of 16th	7	5.8
	1st half of 17th	6	4.3
Other adverbial (manner, quantity)	Overall	4	1.5%
	2nd half of 16th	3	2.5
	1st half of 17th	1	0.7
Totals	Overall	261	100%
	2nd half of 16th	120	100
	1st half of 17th	141	100

The data for Corpus 1 are provided below in Table 1, where they are also broken down by half century.

As can be appreciated by the data, the future subjunctive appears much more frequently in the documents of Corpus 1 in relative clauses (75.1% of total number of occurrences). The overall numbers are quite dramatic, and even more so when comparing data from the second half of the sixteenth century, a period in which this syntactic structure accounts for 67.5% of total number of uses, and the first half of the seventeenth, during which time the rate increases to 81.5%. The future subjunctive is used most frequently in Legajo 13, a bundle that contains documents of a highly stylized nature—pledges and guarantees for the use and administration of the office of treasurer of the Caja Real of Zacatecas. Even eliminating the 37 occurrences of the future subjunctive in that *legajo* (all in adjective clauses introduced by *que* or *lo que*), 75.0% of all instances of the future subjunctive from the first half of the seventeenth century in Corpus 1 still appear in relative clauses.

A caveat to the above findings is that relative clauses account for a larger portion of the syntactic contexts in which the future subjunctive is used. Even so, data derived from random sampling of the background frequencies of all syntactic structures in which the future subjunctive could appear suggest that the percentage rate for the future subjunctive in relative clauses exceeds its background frequency. To conduct the random sampling, we selected various *legajos* from Corpus 1 and examined all structures in which the use of the future subjunctive was theoretically possible. This analysis yielded 123 total examples. Of these, 80 were relative clauses, 30 were *si* clauses, and 13 were other adverbial clauses (temporal and modal). Thus, the estimated background frequency of each clause type is 64.0% for relative clauses, 24.4% for *si* clauses, and 10.6% for other adverbial clauses. When we compare these to the percentages of occurrence of the future subjunctive according to syntactic structure, we see that the rate for relative clauses exceeds the background frequency (75.1 vs. 64), while the rates for *si* clauses (18.4 vs. 24.4) and other adverbial clauses (6.5 vs. 10.6) fall short of the background frequencies.

The infrequent use of the future subjunctive in temporal clauses denoting futurity in Corpus 1 supports Eberenz's (1990) findings that the future subjunctive first ceased to be productive in that capacity, in comparison with its other main uses (in relative clauses and conditionals with *si*). In the 13 temporal clauses in which the future subjunctive appears, the conjunctions used include *cada que* (1 time), *cuando* (1 time), *después que* (1 time), and *luego que* (1 time); the most frequent conjunction involves the phrase *el tiempo que*, usually preceded by a preposition (*a*, *de*, *durante*, *por*), which appears 9 times. It is to be noted that in only four instances is the future subjunctive used after an adverbial time conjunction in the strictest sense (i.e., after *cada que*, *cuando*, *después que*, *luego que*). In the remaining instances, while the phrase is temporal in meaning, e.g., roughly equivalent to *cuando* or *mientras*, it is structurally equivalent to an adjectival relative clause. In the New Galician corpus as a whole, the future subjunctive appears after temporal conjunctions such as *luego que* and *cuando* in only these four instances. In the remaining instances, the present subjunctive is used. Some examples are provided in (4):

4.

a. os mando a vos mi justtizia de Ttalttenango que pasareis luego que os **sea** presenttada esta mi Real probision al pueblo de Guaxuca (Corpus 1, L4, 1571)

'I order you my representative of Tlaltenango that after this my royal appointment is presented to you, you go to the village of Huejúcar'

b. guardara la orden e ynstruções y ordenan[ç]as que estan ffechas y adelante se le **dieren** e dara cuenta con pago leal çierta e verdadera de todo lo que **fuere** a su cargo de la rreal hazienda cada vez e quando que se le **pida** (Corpus 1, L13, 1611)

'he will defend the order and instructions and ordinances that have been made and may be given to him in the future, and he will give a loyal, accurate, and truthful account of everything related to the royal treasury that may be under his charge whenever it is asked of him'

Passage 4b may represent the prevailing practice of the early seventeenth century, i.e., the preservation of the future subjunctive in relative clauses and the expanding use of the present subjunctive in temporal ones (cf. Eberenz 1990, p. 398).

The future subjunctive is also well attested in the second corpus of our study with documents dating from 1681–1816. The data for Corpus 2 (Altiplano) are provided in Table 2, which also includes the breakdown by half century.

Table 2. Future subjunctive in Corpus 2 by structure and time period.

Scheme.	Time Period	Number of Tokens	Pct of Total Per Period
Relative clause	Overall	137	82.0%
	2nd half of 17th	36	80.0
	1st half of 18th	44	88.0
	2nd half of 18th	33	78.6
	1st half of 19th	24	80.0
Conditional with <i>si</i>	Overall	19	11.4%
	2nd half of 17th	6	13.33
	1st half of 18th	4	8.0
	2nd half of 18th	4	9.5
	1st half of 19th	5	16.7
Temporal clause	Overall	4	2.4%
	2nd half of 17th	2	4.44
	1st half of 18th	1	2.0
	2nd half of 18th	1	2.4
	1st half of 19th	0	0.0
Other adverbial (manner, quantity)	Overall	2	1.2%
	2nd half of 17th	1	2.22
	1st half of 18th	1	2.0
	2nd half of 18th	0	0.0
	1st half of 19th	0	0.0
Hypercorrection/Error	Overall	5	3.0%
	2nd half of 17th	0	0.0
	1st half of 18th	0	0.0
	2nd half of 18th	4	9.5
	1st half of 19th	1	3.3
Totals	Overall	167	100%
	2nd half of 17th	45	100
	1st half of 18th	50	100
	2nd half of 18th	42	100
	1st half of 19th	30	100

Of the 167 occurrences in the Altiplano Corpus, 137 (82.0%) appear in relative clauses, 19 (11.4%) in *si* clauses, 4 (2.4%) in adverbial clauses of time, and 2 in other adverbial clauses (1.2%). We have also identified 5 examples in which the future subjunctive is used in contexts in which it is not expected.⁹ The parallels between the frequency of occurrence of the various syntactic structures in the first half of the seventeenth century in Corpus 1 and the overall totals for Corpus 2 are quite striking. In comparing the two corpora overall, we see that relative clauses account for an even higher percentage of occurrences of the future subjunctive in Corpus 2 than in Corpus 1 (82.0% vs. 75.1%). The paucity of examples of the future subjunctive in temporal clauses is also intensified in Corpus 2 in comparison with Corpus 1 (2.4% vs. 5.0%). For *si* clauses, the trend that is most noticeable is the significant decrease in the rates of incidence from the second half of the sixteenth century (24.2%) to the first half of the seventeenth century (13.5%), and in Corpus 2 overall (11.4%).

3.2. Future Subjunctive: Variation with Other Paradigms

Regarding the use of the future subjunctive in Latin American Spanish, Fontanella de Weinberg (1992, pp. 75–76) comments upon the vitality of the paradigm,

especially in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. She documents the prevalent use of both simple and perfect forms in all Latin American varieties she studies and finds examples dating from as late as the first half of the eighteenth century in Buenos Aires. Her findings coincide with our documentation of the prevalent use of the future subjunctive in colonial Mexican texts. Although she provides no data regarding the syntactic structures in which the verb forms appear, an analysis of the (random?) examples she provides show similar ratios: of the 17 future subjunctive forms, 10 appear in relative clauses, 5 in *si* clauses, and 2 in temporal clauses after the phrase *por el tiempo que*.

While it is true that the documents of our corpora attest to the maintenance of the future subjunctive in relative clauses and conditional sentences through the nineteenth century, they also show evidence of the variation of its usage with other tenses that eventually replaced it. This is to be expected, given that variation between the future subjunctive and its syntactic successors is already evident in the medieval period. Fontanella de Weinberg (1992, p. 76) finds “marked” variation of the future subjunctive with the present and imperfect subjunctive in similar constructions by the second half of the eighteenth century.¹⁰ We find instances of the future subjunctive alternating with the present subjunctive or the present indicative in similar constructions in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Some examples are presented in (5):

5.
 - a. si **qujere** que sea allcayde de la carçel para que tenga a cargo los presos que le ponga e se le entreguen [...] e las prisiones (Corpus 1, L1, 1563)
 ‘if he wants him to be magistrate of the prison so that he is in charge of the prisoners, let him install him and hand over the [...] and the shackles to him’
 - b. si Francisco Velasco de Merodio **qujsiere** testimonjo se le de (Corpus 1, L1, 1563)
 ‘if Francisco Velasco de Merodio wants a transcript, give it to him’
 - c. j asi quedo aguardando con el primer mensajero çierto que desas minas **benga** lo que vuestra merced por la suja firmada de su nonbre que tengo en mi poder prometio (Corpus 1, L12, 1610)
 ‘and thus I remain waiting with the first trustworthy messenger that comes from those mines what your grace promised through your [letter] signed with your name, which I have in my possession’
 - d. y asi me haga merced vuestra merced de despacharme este dinero con el primer mensajero que de alla **biniere** (Corpus 1, L12, 1610)
 ‘and so please do me the favor, your grace, of sending me this money with the first messenger that should come from there’
 - e. si a ellos o a sus sementeras les **biene** algun daño o perjuyzio lo hagan que les oyra y hara justicia (Corpus 1, L18, 1631)
 ‘if any harm or damage comes to them or their crop fields, they should so state, for they will be heard and justice will be done’
 - f. si alguna persona les **biniere** algun daño o perjuyzio de hazerle esta merzed a Miguel Sanchez lo diga y contradiga que le oyra (Corpus 1, L18, 1631)
 ‘if any harm or damage comes to anyone through the granting of this reward to Miguel Sánchez, he should so state and oppose it for he will be heard’

Variation between the future subjunctive and the present subjunctive in relative clauses is seen sporadically from the earliest texts of the New Galician corpus; illustrative examples are provided in 5c–5d. Variation between future subjunctive and present indicative in *si* clauses is characteristic of the corpus as a whole as can be seen in examples 5a–5b and 5e–5f. It is to be recalled that Eberenz (1990, p. 401) and Keniston (1937, p. 408) find a preference for the present indicative in these types of sentences by the early sixteenth century.

As noted above (see Section 2), our data analysis did not include the full envelope of variation, hence our findings are more qualitative than quantitative in nature. However, through a more detailed analysis of a sample of texts, we are able to obtain a more definitive picture. To do so, we selected the chronologically latest *legajos* of Corpus 1, L18 to L22, whose documents date from 1631 to 1647. In these *legajos*, there are 64 clauses in which the future subjunctive could be used. It was found in 34 of the 64 clauses (53.1%). The syntactic breakdown of the clauses is as follows: 35 relative clauses, 17 *si* clauses, and

12 other adverbial clauses. The future subjunctive was used in 62.9% of the relative clauses (22/35), in 58.8% of the *si* clauses (10/17), and in 16.7% of the other adverbial clauses (2/12). The present subjunctive was used in the remaining relative clauses (13/35), the present indicative in the remaining *si* clauses (7/17), and the present subjunctive in the bulk of the other adverbial clauses (10/12).¹¹

3.3. Future Subjunctive: Registers and Contexts

For the analysis of the registers and contexts in which the future subjunctive is used, we relied primarily on our data from Corpus 2 (Altiplano Corpus). While legal documents may not be the most appropriate for this task, they nevertheless give us some insight as to the styles or registers in which speakers employed the paradigm. Fortunately, the Altiplano Corpus includes many texts that consist of notes and correspondence between individuals, thus allowing for the documentation of more informal registers with elements of orality (cf. Oesterreicher 1994). More informal language is also sometimes documented in witnesses' statements. The future subjunctive is attested in these more informal contexts as late as the last decade of the eighteenth century. Examples are provided in (6):

6.
 - a. embiame bara y tersia de puntas de Lorena, las maiores **que huviere** el tendero (Corpus 2, Doc. 135, ca. 1684)
'send me one and a third yards of Lorraine lace, the biggest (best?) that the shopkeeper has'
 - b. Y los papeles **que tubieres** mios, **que** los quemes (Corpus 2, Doc. 144, 1689)¹²
'And any papers that you may have of mine, burn them'
 - c. Que Dios Nuestro Señor me deparará alguien **que** me traega los trasteçitos **que estubieren** por allá (Corpus 2, Doc 160, 1691)
'May God Our Lord provide me with someone to bring me the house goods that may be there'
 - d. "pues vamos, pero no has de dezir lo **que vieres**" (Corpus 2, Doc 203, 1739)
'well, that is fine, but you should not state what you may see'
 - e. Si **fueres** tú, me la pagaras todita, y si **fuere** Lita hare paciencia (Corpus 2, Doc 258, 1790–1800)
'If it is you, you will pay me everything, and if it is Lita, I will be patient'

Despite the fact that the future subjunctive is employed in seemingly natural styles as late as the second half of the eighteenth century, the documents of Corpus 2 point to an increasingly fossilized and/or archaic use of the paradigm. To illustrate this point, we provide data on the attestations of the most frequent of these fossilized expressions—the swearing in of witnesses. The first and last attestations of this phrase in Corpus 2 appear in (7):

7.
 - a. prometio de decir verdad y guardar secreto en todo lo **dixere** (sic) y **fuere** preguntado (Corpus 2, Doc. 130, 1681)
'he promised to tell the truth and maintain secrecy in everything that he may declare and may be asked'
 - b. iso juramento . . . de decir verdad y guardar secreto en quanto **supiere** y **fuere** preguntada (Corpus 2, Doc. 318, 1815)
'she swore an oath to tell the truth and to maintain secrecy in what she may know and may be asked'

The phrase is attested a total of 95 times in Corpus 2 as a whole and presents very little variation. However, what does vary is its rate of occurrence. In the second half of the seventeenth century, the phrase occurs a total of 13 times and accounts for 36% of relative clauses with future subjunctive. In the first half of the eighteenth century, it occurs 31 times and accounts for 70% of relative clauses with future subjunctive. In the second half of the eighteenth century, it occurs 30 times and accounts for 88% of relative clauses

with future subjunctive. Finally, in the first half of the nineteenth century (which actually only covers the period through 1816), the phrase occurs 21 times and accounts for 83% of relative clauses with future subjunctive.

Although Corpus 2 may contain documents in which this phrase is overrepresented, further support for the increasingly limited use of the future subjunctive can be found in the analysis of the pronouns used to introduce the relative clauses in which these verb forms appear. We examined evidence from both corpora. In Corpus 1, eight different pronouns are used to introduce relative clauses with future subjunctive: *el cual*, *cuanto*, *cuyo*, *donde*, *el que*, *lo que*, *que*, and *quien*. While all eight are attested in the second half of the seventeenth century (see rate of occurrence in Table 3), only five are employed in the first half of the seventeenth. Moreover, for that period *lo que* and *que* alone account for 94.8% of occurrences, vs. 74.1% in the previous one.

Table 3. Relative pronouns in Corpus 1 by time period.

Relative Pronoun	Number of Tokens		Percent of Total	
	2nd half of 16th	1st half of 17th	2nd half of 16th	1st half of 17th
el cual	1	0	1.23	0
cuanto	6	1	7.4	0.9
cuyo	1	0	1.23	0
donde	1	0	1.23	0
el que	3	2	3.7	1.7
lo que	24	47	29.6	40.9
que	36	62	44.44	53.9
quien	9	3	11.1	2.6
Totals	81	115	100%	100%

In Corpus 2 only six different pronouns are used overall: *cuanto*, *donde*, *el que*, *lo que*, *que*, and *quien* (see rate of occurrence in Table 4). Of these, five are employed in the second half of the seventeenth century, three in the first half of the eighteenth, four in the second half, and two in the first half of the nineteenth. These data partially coincide with the increased incidence of phrases related to the swearing in of witnesses, but overall they point to the ever decreasing productivity of the future subjunctive, where its use is becoming restricted to a reduced number of contexts, seeming to be triggered in particular after the relative pronoun *lo que*.

Table 4. Relative pronouns in Corpus 2 by time period.

Relative Pronoun	Number of Tokens				Percent of Total			
	17th-2	18th-1	18th-2	19th-1	17th-2	18th-1	18th-2	19th-1
cuanto	1	3	2	2	2.8	6.8	6.1	8.3
donde	0	0	1	0	0	0	3.0	0
el que	2	0	0	0	5.5	0	0	0
lo que	19	39	28	22	52.8	88.6	84.8	91.7
que	10	2	2	0	27.8	4.5	6.1	0
quien	4	0	0	0	11.1	0	0	0
Totals	36	44	33	24	100%	100%	100%	100%

Another highly stylized context in which the future subjunctive appears with some frequency in Corpus 2 is in expressions of courtesy and in polite requests. These phrases occur above all in epistolary documents. Some examples from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries are provided in (8):

8.
 - a. a cuio servizio sacrifico la que me assiste para quanto **fuere** de su maior osequio (Corpus 2, Doc. 195, 1736)
'to whose service I sacrifice the one who assists me for whatever may be to your utmost benefit'
 - b. Y si v. m. **quisiere**, por *señor* san Joseph enbiarme el libro de medisina y unos calsones blancos que compré, que estan en la petaca. (Corpus 2, Doc. 213, 1743)
'And if your grace wishes, send me via Mister San Joseph the medicine book and some white breeches that I bought, which are in the chest.'
 - c. para *que* la materia se diga como más **conviniere** al servicio de *Nuestro Señor* (Corpus 2, Doc. 218, 1744)
'so that the matter is declared as may best be suited to the service of Our Lord'
 - d. Y mande a su afecto servidor lo *que* por vien **tuviere** (Corpus 2, Doc. 255, 1787)
'And send to your humble servant whatever you consider proper'
 - e. cirvace v. imponer al *señor* comicario para *que* tenga a bien, si **fuere** de su superior agrado, comisionar a aquel cura (Corpus 2, Doc. 306, 1808)
'consider, your grace, imposing on the lord commissioner so that he considers it proper, if it is to his utmost liking, to commission that priest'

Structurally, most examples of the future subjunctive in these types of phrases occur in relative clauses, as would be expected. However, some variety is found, including *si* clauses (8b, 8g) and even an adverbial clause of manner (8c).

In sum, the picture painted above of the use of the future subjunctive in the colonial Mexican texts analyzed suggests a paradigm that is increasingly relegated to domains that require maximum formality, legal phrases, and highly stylized expressions of courtesy. Structurally, the future subjunctive is used nearly exclusively in relative clauses. Its survival in other types of clauses, such as *si* clauses, undoubtedly stems from the fact that these too often appear in these same formulaic expressions, in both legal registers and in polite written requests (see for example 1b and 8e). Finally, the incidence of the hypercorrect or aberrant use of the future subjunctive beginning in the second half of the eighteenth century points to a paradigm on the decline.

3.4. Future Subjunctive: Vitality or Demise?

Here we address the question of whether the future subjunctive persisted longer in Latin American Spanish than in Peninsular Spanish. Eberenz (1990), for one, cites the high incidence of future subjunctive forms in letters written by Diego de Ordaz in Mexico circa 1529–1530 and in the writings of the colonial author Concolorcorvo circa 1773 as support for this theory. As we saw above (Section 3.2), Fontanella de Weinberg (1992) reports an overall “vitality” of the future subjunctive in Latin American Spanish through at least the early eighteenth century, a sentiment that is supported by Ramírez Luengo (2002, 2008). Likewise, Kany (1951, pp. 185–86) finds a number of future subjunctive forms in Spanish American prose in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, a time in which the paradigm was purportedly avoided by Peninsular authors, and thus argues that there is a comparatively more robust use of the form in the Americas. For his part, de Granda (1968) reports the survival of future subjunctive forms, even in spoken registers, in Caribbean Spanish of the twentieth century.

However, the validity of the evidence used in some of these cases is questionable. De Granda’s findings have yet to be corroborated and have been partially refuted by several scholars (see Veiga 2006, pp. 136–37).¹³ Eberenz’s (1990) citing of Diego de Ordaz does not seem conclusive since the latter was born in the Peninsula and did not emigrate to the Americas until he was twenty-two (cf. Lope Blanch 1985, p. 9). Fontanella de Fontanella de Weinberg’s (1992) findings are impressionistic and lack data related to syntactic structure and diachronic patterns.

Similarly inconclusive is the study by Ramírez Luengo (2002). He supports the idea of the longer survival of the future subjunctive in Latin American Spanish based on a study of eighteenth-century documents from Montevideo. He places great emphasis on the fact that the paradigm is used in an “informal” register in personal letters. However, of the total 56 forms of the future subjunctive that are found in his study, only three are found in personal letters. Moreover, all three attestations occur in relative clauses, the longest surviving use as described by Eberenz (1990, p. 403), documented in the Peninsula as late as the nineteenth century, albeit in highly stylized writing. Ramírez Luengo’s (2002, p. 312) examples are provided in (9):

9.

- a. Quisiera que siendo buestra boluntad pasase àmi compañía el sobrino Jph Manuel Landaberea en la primera ocasiòn que se **presentare** (Montevideo 1795)
'I would like, provided that it is your wish, that my nephew Joseph Manuel Landaberea goes to my company on the first occasion that should arise'
- b. Necesito que incontinenti, me mandes (. . .) facultad amplia, para hacer sobre el asunto de nuestras cuentas pend.tes con la Administraz.on quanto **hallare** por conveniente (Montevideo 1799)
'I need you to send me broad authorization right away to execute whatever I find appropriate regarding the matter of our pending accounts with the administration'
- c. Sugetando el todo aparte de su importe liquido en nuestro favor, al pago de los gastos que se **hicieren**, judiciales o extrajudiciales (Montevideo 1799)
'Holding everything except for its liquid value in our favor, upon payment of the expenses that may occur, both judicial and extrajudicial'

A closer inspection of these three “informal” occurrences reveals a rather formal register appropriate to the topic at hand (administration and the settling of bills), which contains formulaic language and highly stylized expressions of courtesy. Thus, the use of the future subjunctive in these instances is not significantly different from its use in notarial documents or in other formal texts on both sides of the Atlantic, nor from the examples we have seen in our corpora in the early nineteenth century.¹⁴

The evidence provided by Kany (1951) also deserves further attention. The author provides 21 examples. Of these, four are of the (*sea*) *lo que fuere* variety; one appears as part of an expression of courtesy; one appears to be a set phrase; and finally, at least four examples show uses of the future subjunctive in contexts in which is not expected, three of which involve the presence of *-re* forms where one would expect imperfect subjunctive forms in *-ra* or *-se*.¹⁵ Indeed, the same could be said for the first example presented in this study (1a), in which the nineteenth-century Peninsular author Leopoldo Alas “Clarín” uses *fuere* when sequence of tense rules would dictate *fuese*. This lends credence to the idea that by the nineteenth century, the future subjunctive is increasingly used in an erroneous and artificial fashion (Veiga 2006, p. 159), notwithstanding contemporary comments by grammarians, who describe the future subjunctive as an integrated part of the Spanish linguistic system. Their comments, nevertheless, do provide additional evidence of a qualitative nature that the demise of the future subjunctive took place on parallel and similar tracks on both sides of the Atlantic.

Bello [1847] (Bello [1847] 1988) for example, explains that the future subjunctive, which he calls the *subjuntivo hipotético*, is used in the protasis of conditional sentences and in relative clauses, although he notes that the present indicative can be used instead in the first instance and the present subjunctive (*subjuntivo común*) in the second. In his own writing in the prologue to his work, Bello shows a preference for the modern paradigms, using the future subjunctive in only four instances (Veiga 2006, pp. 136–37, n. 27). In the Real Academia Española’s (RAE) grammar of 1883 (p. 257), the use of the future subjunctive is described as in Bello [1847] (Bello [1847] 1988), i.e., in the protasis of conditional sentences and in relative clauses, which can optionally be expressed with the modern verbal equivalents. The RAE itself uses the future subjunctive in explaining grammar points, although variation is found (10a). In examples depicting usages, the modern paradigms occur more frequently (10b), except when explicitly discussing the uses of the future subjunctive (10c).

10.

- a. Respecto del pronombre, conviene advertir que en las oraciones de verbo activo usado como reflexivo, en las cuales al pronombre se **sig**a otro también personal, que **fuere** término de la acción ó complemento directo, se ha de emplear éste en acusativo. (RAE 1883, pp. 251–52)
'Regarding the pronoun, it should be noted that in sentences with an active verb used as a reflexive, in which the pronoun is followed by another personal pronoun, which may be the recipient of the action or the direct object, the latter [pronoun] should be used in the accusative'
- b. daré lo que **den** los demás (RAE 1883, p. 64)
'I will give what everyone else gives'
- c. quien tal **afirmare**, no dice verdad (RAE 1883, p. 257)
'whoever states as such does not tell the truth'

Thus, at least among the most erudite arbiters of the language, no appreciable differences can be found in the use of the future subjunctive in nineteenth-century Latin American and Peninsular Spanish.¹⁶

While it still may be true that the future subjunctive survived longer in Latin American Spanish, it is necessary to investigate this aspect more thoroughly, comparing corpora of contemporaneous Peninsular and Latin American texts of similar style and register, and not with isolated examples. One context in which the paradigm may have survived longer in the Americas is in expressions of courtesy and in polite requests, as suggested by the following:

11.

Si así **fuere**, yo le provere con un formulario que usted tendra que llenar y regresar a Dr. Antoinette Sol.
(Student email, 13 April 2010)

‘If it happens to be so, I will provide you with a form that you will have to fill out and return to Dr. Antoinette Sol.’

4. Conclusions

The aim of this study was to contribute to the discussion of the demise of the future subjunctive, a paradigm that has ceased to be productive in Modern Spanish. In particular we sought to shed light on the use of the paradigm in Colonial Spanish, thus providing evidence that would allow us to sketch a tentative answer to whether the future subjunctive survived longer in Latin American Spanish than in Peninsular varieties. Our analysis of the 428 forms of the future subjunctive documented in two corpora of colonial Mexican texts yielded quantitative data that support findings that the future subjunctive first fell out of use in temporal adverbial clauses and exhibited higher levels of productivity in relative clauses. The results of the qualitative analysis of our data suggest that by the eighteenth century, the paradigm was increasingly relegated to domains of maximum formality: legal phrases and highly stylized expressions of courtesy.

In comparing our findings with those of other scholars, we have not been able to support the notion that the future subjunctive survived longer in Latin American Spanish. A promising avenue of future research to further investigate this possibility would be to assemble two corpora of texts, one Peninsular and one Latin American, and conduct a linguistic analysis using some of the same methods employed here but ensuring that the full range of variation is taken into account. This would go a long way toward building on the knowledge provided here of the demise of this paradigm in Modern Spanish on both sides of the Atlantic.

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Notes

¹ This discussion of the future subjunctive is equally valid for the future perfect subjunctive (*hubiere cantado*).

² Examples are taken from Veiga (2006, pp. 146–48).

³ See Veiga (1989, 2006), whose framework regarding temporal and modal values of the future subjunctive we follow. For the discussion of other theories, see Veiga, as well as López Rivera (1992) and Baranowski (2008).

⁴ Some scholars consider the imperfect subjunctive to be the historical successor of the future subjunctive in this context. This view is deftly rebutted by Veiga (1989, 1992), who shows that the contrast between the indicative and the subjunctive is neutralized in the protasis of conditional sentences and that the substitution of a non-past paradigm with a past paradigm is theoretically and empirically untenable.

- 5 Cf. [Herrero Ruiz de Lozaiga \(1992, p. 506\)](#), who finds an even lower rate of 10%, albeit with a smaller corpus consisting of three early sixteenth-century plays.
- 6 This concept has been formally developed by [Trudgill \(1999, 2010\)](#) as ‘colonial lag’ in his studies of varieties of Colonial English.
- 7 The linguistic analysis of these New Galician texts was initially undertaken in [Kania \(2000, 2010\)](#). [Kania \(2000, pp. 722–26\)](#); ([Kania 2010, pp. 127–32](#)) contains a brief overview of the use of the future subjunctive in these documents. The study presented here is based on previously unpublished data and findings; observations from [Kania \(2000, 2010\)](#) have been revised and expanded.
- 8 Most of the documents of these two corpora are now available on CORDIAM ([Academia Mexicana de la Lengua n.d.](#)). The data for this study were extracted before the texts were incorporated into the online corpus.
- 9 For the sake of brevity, we provide only one example here: “Le tenia mandado *que para* dormir lo **hiciera** abrazada con un niño Jesus *que* tiene de marfil,...” (Corpus 2, Doc. 261, 1791), ‘He had told her that to sleep, she should do so hugging a baby Jesus made of ivory that she has,...’. The example shows the use of the future subjunctive in a subordinate noun clause, a context in which its use was historically prescribed.
- 10 We also find alternation between the future subjunctive and the imperfect subjunctive in similar constructions due to the flexibility in the sequence of tenses in the time period, e.g. “prometio de dezir uerdad en lo que se le **preguntare**” vs. “prometio de dezir uerdad de lo que se le **preguntase**” (Corpus 1, L18, 1631), ‘he promised to tell the truth of what he may be/might be asked’. This variation does not support the notion that the imperfect subjunctive inherited syntactic roles of the future subjunctive. See [Veiga \(1989, 1992\)](#).
- 11 These data can form a baseline comparison with Peninsular usages through the analysis of a similar corpus (size, text type, time period). Avenues of future research are discussed in Section 4.
- 12 This passage pertains to one of the seven love letters written by Agustín Cortés, a baker, to Mariana de Tamariz, a lay sister in the Convent of San Miguel in Mexico City. See [Company Company \(1992\)](#); cf. [Pountain \(2001\)](#).
- 13 The [Real Academia Española \(2009, pp. 1812–1813\)](#) appears to subscribe to de Granda’s description of the survival of the future subjunctive in spoken varieties of Caribbean Spanish.
- 14 Similarly, in [Ramírez Luengo \(2008\)](#), the author studies the use of the future subjunctive in texts from Central America, documenting the prevalent use of the paradigm through the first half of the eighteenth century. Despite finding that the future subjunctive is used almost exclusively in relative clauses (92% rate of incidence) and in highly routinized contexts, he argues for the “vitality” of the paradigm.
- 15 See [Veiga \(2006, pp. 136–37, note 27\)](#) for discussion of this phenomenon.
- 16 Indeed, the RAE’s 1931 edition ([RAE 1931](#)) appears to go further in describing the future subjunctive as a functioning paradigm by including its appearance in temporal clauses as one of its uses (p. 275ff). In the 1973 edition ([RAE 1973, pp. 481–482](#)), the paradigm is more accurately described as having fallen in disuse and only surviving in literary registers and in colloquial phrases (cf. [Zuluaga 1980](#), who provides a more nuanced contemporaneous view). In RAE 2009 (pp. 1811–1815), in addition to the historical overview of the paradigm, its survival in legal, scientific, journalistic language, as well as in deliberately archaizing language and in ritualistic formulas, is described.

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