24. GRAMMATICA : gebruik van de *subjonctif*

You've already learned how to form the subjunctive. Now we're going to take a look at how to use it – a very difficult topic!
To properly understand the explanation that follows, we first need to refresh a bit of terminology. In languages like English and French, we have the option of using simple and compound sentences. So far, you've mainly worked with simple sentences: these are sentences that contain only one verb (whether it includes a participle or an infinitive or not). However, compound sentences are much more complex: they consist of multiple clauses that are linked together using small words (conjunctions), and in this way, they can convey more complex ideas.

Below are two pairs of simple (a) and compound (b) sentences in French:

(a) *Ma grand-mère est tombée dans l'escalier.*
Marie n'aime pas le chocolat chaud à cause d'une allergie au lait.

(b) *Ma grand-mère est tombée dans l'escalier* ***quand*** *elle parlait avec son mari.*

Marie n'aime pas le chocolat chaud ***parce qu****'elle souffre d'une allergie …*

Marie pense ***que*** *le cambrioleur a dû entrer par le balcon du premier étage*

Je m'oppose ***à ce que*** *vous partiez si tôt.* [ik verzet me **ertegen dat…**]

In most cases, we can build complex sentences through the use of conjunctions; these conjunctions can create logical or other types of connections between multiple clauses (simultaneity, precedence, cause-effect, etc.), as in examples 1 and 2 of (b).

However, there is also a category of conjunctions that introduce an object clause and use a "fixed" conjunction for this purpose. You can see this in examples (b3) and (b4) above: In sentence (b3), the verb *penser* [basic structure = *penser quelque chose* (penser + direct object)] takes an entire sentence as its direct object, and for that it uses the conjunction "que".The verb *s'opposer,* however, has the basic structure *s'opposer à quelque chose* [do you see the difference with *penser?*], and therefore it doesn't use "que" like *penser,* but rather "à ce que".
If you know that in French one says *se réjouir de quelque chose,* can you already guess which conjunction *se réjouir* will use to attach a clause to itself? Indeed – the conjunction "de ce que."

Below is a schematic overview of the conjunctions that introduce an object clause:

Basic structure of the verb	Verb with object clause	Notes
- penser quelque chose$_{COD}$	- > Elle pense **que** Luc partira	-Almost all object (an subject) clauses begin with 'que'.
- s'opposer **à** quelque chose$_{complément\ «\ à\ »}$	- > Elle s'oppose **à ce que** Luc parte.	- Object clauses with 'à ce que' are rare.
-se réjouir **de** quelque chose$_{complément\ «\ de\ »}$	- > Elle se réjouit **de ce que** Luc part.[1]	- Object clauses with 'de ce que' are rare.

1 Of : Elle se réjouit **que** Luc parte.

With this terminology in mind, we can finally map out the use of the subjunctive. (drum roll…)

***The use of the subjunctive after the conjunctions that express the following relationships:**

- > *Le but* (a goal, purpose) : *pour que* (so that, in order that), *afin que* (so that, in order that)

  - *J'ai déjà préparé le repas **pour qu'** on puisse partir à temps.*

- > la condition (condition) : *à condition que* (provided that), *pourvu que* (if only), *à moins que* (unless) :

  - *Je t'aiderai **à condition que** tu me prêtes ta voiture.*

  - ***Pourvu que** vous ne fassiez pas de bruit, vous pouvez jouer ici.*

- > La restriction (limitation) ou la concession (admission): *sans que* (without), *bien que* (although), *quoi que* (whatever), *qui...que* (whoever) :

  - *Essaie de t'approcher **sans qu'**on te voie.*

  - ***Bien qu'**il soit malade, il est allé à son travail.*

  - ***Quoi que** tu dises, elle ne te croira pas.*

  - ***Qui que** tu sois, je ne peux pas te laisser partir.*

- > le temps (time) : *avant que* (before…), *après que*(after…)

  - *Acceptez vite **avant qu'**il ne se ravise.*

*** The use of the subjunctive in object and subject clauses (sometimes also called complement clauses) that depend on a verb expressing the following:**

La volonté (will) ou la nécessité (necessity) :

- *vouloir que (to want):* ***Elle <u>veut que</u> je me <u>fasse</u> couper les cheveux.***
- *aimer que (j'aimerais que… : I would like...):* ***j'<u>aimerais que</u> tu me <u>dises</u> ...***
- *désirer que (to desire, to wish (for))*
- *exiger que (to demand)*
- *ordonner que (to order)*
- *préférer que (to prefer)*
- *demander que (to ask)*
- *attendre que (to wait (for))*
- *souhaiter que (to wish (for))*
- *il faut que (it is necessary that),…*
- ...

Impersonal expressions :

- *il est nécessaire que (it is necessary that)*
- *il convient que (it is fitting that)*
- *il vaut mieux que (it is better that)*
- *il est préférable que …*
- *il est souhaitable que…*

...

Une appréciation (positive ou négative) (a positive or negative assessment) **:**

- *trouver + « adjectif » + que :*
  je trouve bon/bizarre/bête/… que vous soyez venu.
- *il est <u>juste/normal/nécessaire/urgent/utile/…</u> que vous veniez.*

Le doute (doubt) / l'incertitude (uncertainty)/ la possibilité (possibility) / l'impossibilité (impossibility):

- *douter que (to doubt that...)*

- *il est douteux que (it is doubtful that...)*

- *il est improbable que (it is unlikely that...)*

- *il semble que (it seems that...)*

- *je **ne** suis **pas** sûr/certain/convaincu*[1]*… que...*

- *je **ne** crois / pense / estime*[2] ***pas*** *que…*

- *il est possible que / il est impossible que / il se peut que…*

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1 Be careful, because these expressions are only followed by the subjunctive when they appear with a negation! The inverted question (*inversion*) also requires the subjunctive: *Est-il certain qu'il soit en prison ?*

2 The verbs *penser, estimer, croire, avoir l'impression que* are only followed by the subjunctive when there is a negation. The inverted question (inversion) also requires the subjunctive: *Penses-tu qu'il soit capable de gagner le concours ?*

Les verbes de sentiment (verbs that express a feeling) :

- *je suis heureux / content / triste / surpris … que (vous soyez venu).*

- *j'ai peur que / je crains que / je regrette que / je me réjouis que (tu viennes ce soir)*

- *Il est (**it** is...) curieux que / il est dommage que / il est étonnant que (elle soit malade)*

We recommend that readers look up and study example sentences in *Lexogoth* to develop some familiarity with the subjunctive. In a later chapter, we will go into this in more detail; for now, it is sufficient that you know the two main situations in which the subjunctive is used (certain conjunctions and certain object clauses).