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# Mere-desire and action-oriented bouletics in French

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This is the first draft of work in progress.  
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## Abstract

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The paper explores a variety of bouletic attitudes in French (and Italian), which it envisions in the light of the distinction between mere-desire and action-oriented volition. It shows that *avoir envie* (and *avere voglia*) are not rational and not action oriented, while *espérer* and *vouloir* are rational with only *vouloir* being action oriented. It substantiates these notions by providing several semantic tests, which include consideration of the temporal orientation of the attitudes. The analysis is cast in framework that distinguishes between *experiential* and *actionable* spaces for bouletic attitudes and derives the facts from the properties of the modal spaces that are lexically triggered. For *vouloir*, it proposes a default action-orientation interpretation that can be manipulated by the conditional and adverbs like *tellement*. The analysis allows the conditional and the adverbs to manipulate the actionable modal base accommodated by default. By setting three different types of modal bases for bouletic attitudes, the paper paves the way for a cross-linguistic systematization that hinge on three different conceptualizations of the attitude holder, as a sentient being, a rational agent or an actor.

**Keywords:** bouletic attitudes, experience, action, pathos, rationality

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## 1 Introduction

Like most Romance languages, French has a series of attitude predicates to express volition and desire: *vouloir* (*want*), *espérer* (*hope*), *avoir envie*, with no direct English equiv-

alent for the last one (with *feel like* being the best approximate). This paper addresses the question of the meaning of these expressions and attempts to account for the systematic polysemy that cuts across these items.

Building on insights from the philosophical literature (see most notably Davis (1984) and Hare (1971)), linguists (see Condoravdi and Lauer (2016), Grano (2017), and Levinson (2003) a.o.) have observed that *want* can be used to describe both a mere-desire and an action-oriented preference. The emergence of one reading or the other depends on the context. In the example below, waiter triggers an action-oriented interpretation of *want* akin to ‘want to add sugar’ in this specific case ; diabetes triggers a mere-desire interpretation whereby the addressee is in a state of ‘need of sugar’.

- (1) After Hare (1971): If you want sugar in your soup,
  - a. You must ask the waiter.
  - b. You must have diabetes.

As we will show, French *vouloir* does not behave like English *want*, and it is by default action-oriented : as Ruwet (1984, p. 92) writes, “the object of wanting, is first and foremost the action [. . .]; when I say *Je veux P* I convey that I am willing to do whatever it takes to make *p* true.” However the distinction between mere-desire and action-oriented volition is relevant to understand the structure of the notional bouletic domain and its lexicalization in French (and Italian). To this aim, we will primarily focus on the distinction between *avoir envie* and *vouloir*, showing that each expression is born as more mere-desire-oriented or more action-oriented. Our empirical investigation shows that this default can be manipulated, but that this manipulation comes at a cost, and most prominently requires adding material such as the conditional mood (see von Stechow and Iatridou (2020)), or dedicated adverbs such as the intensity modifier *tellement* (*so much*) or the concessive *bien* (litt. *good / well*).

- (2) a. #Je veux que ce week-end dure pour toujours.  
 I want that this week-end lasts for ever  
 I want.IND.1SG this week-end to last forever
- b. Je voudrais que ce week-end dure pour toujours.  
 I want.COND.1SG that this week-end lasts for ever  
 I would like this week-end to last forever.
- c. Je veux bien aller à Rome ce weekend, mais mon compte bancaire est vide.  
 I want.IND.1SG *bien* go to Rome this weekend but my bank account is empty.  
 I want / would like to go to Rome this weekend, but my bank account is empty.
- d. Je sais pas ce qu’il y a dans la boîte, mais je veux tellement que ce soit un I-Pad !  
 I know.IND.1SG not what that-it there have.ind.3sg in the box, but I want.IND.1SG so much that it be.SUB.3SG a I-Pad !  
 I don’t know what is in the box, but I want it so much to be an I-Pad !

The paper submits the idea that that all bouletics (more mere-desire-oriented attitudes and volitional action-oriented attitudes) feature two modal bases and that the common feature of all bouletics is a preferential modal base, in line with the long tradition on the study of mood and bouletic attitudes as featuring a preferential semantics (Anand and Hacquard (2013), Farkas (1992), Giannakidou (1999), Giannakidou and Mari (2021), Portner (2018), and Villalta (2008) among several others). Differences in meaning across the variety of lexicalizations of volition arise depending on the primary modal bases of the attitudes which range from mere experiential to an actionable space. These modal bases can be manipulated to an extent that our empirical investigation will determine thus generating the variety of interpretations observed.

The paper is structured as follows. In section 2 we present the data. In section 3 we discuss previous accounts. Our analysis is developed in section 4 together with its predictions. Section 5 concludes.

## 2 Data

Volitional predicates have often been considered as constituting a rather homogeneous class, mainly built around the opposition between HOPE and WANT. For example, in the recent literature concerning mood selection in Romance (Giannakidou and Mari, 2021; Portner and Rubinstein, 2012, 2020; Silk, 2018), the rationality of HOPE is summoned to explain its use of indicative in French, whereas the constant selection of subjunctive by equivalents of *want* across languages is perceived as a consequence of its more ‘*unrealistic*’ semantics.

However, the data discussed in this section tend to show that Romance desiderative predicates are more diverse. Italian and French counterparts of *want* (*volere* and *vouloir*, respectively) seem to exclusively target desire that are suitable for action. On the other hand, *avoir envie* and *avere voglia* (the Italian counterpart of *avoir envie*) do not have such a link with action *per se*; the mental state they describe might certainly constitute, in certain contexts, a motivation for action, but this is not encoded in their lexical meaning. A series of tests will help us making emerge the semantic profile of bouletics.

### 2.1 Desire reports and ascription

It is a well-known fact that Italian and French differ with respect to mood choice with doxastic predicates (see Giorgi and Pianesi (1997), Mari (2016b), Mari and Portner (2021), and Schlenker (2005) a.o.).

Importantly, volitional or preferential predicates (in contrast to representational in Bolinger (1968)) pattern similarly in both languages. In Romance languages (and well-beyond Giannakidou and Mari (2021) for a recent overview), the notional category of desire is firmly associated with subjunctive: Italian selects subjunctive with all desire predicates, and so does French, with the notable exception of *espérer* (Anand and Hacquard, 2008; Portner, 1997; Schlenker, 2005).

This relative homogeneity with respect to mood selection tends to orient the analysis of desire reports towards an unified core semantics. However, it hides profound contrasts between predicates which seem to appeal to commitment to act and those that do not. As a first approximation, we can observe that the utterance of act, with *vouloir*, conveys the

idea that the attitude holder will act to bring about the prejacent; this inference is absent, or at least not systematic, in ninf with *espérer* or *avoir envie*.

- (3) a. Je veux que Marie soit fière de moi.  
 I want.IND.1SG that Marie be.SUBJ.3SG proud of me  
 I want Maria to be proud of me.  
 ~> I will act in order to bring about the fact that Maria is proud of me.
- b. J'espère que Maria est / sera fière de moi.  
 I hope.IND.1SG that Maria be.IND.3SG / be.IND.FUT.3SG proud of me  
 I want Maria to be proud of me.  
 ~> I will act in order to bring about the fact that Maria is proud of me.
- c. Ho voglia che Maria sia orgogliosa di me.  
 have.IND.1SG desire that Maria be.SUBJ.3SG proud of me  
 I want Maria to be proud of me.  
 ~> I will act in order to bring about the fact that Maria is proud of me.
- d. Je crois que Maria est / sera fière de moi.  
 I believe.IND.1SG that Maria be.IND.3SG / be.IND.FUT.3SG proud of me  
 I believe that Maria is proud of me.  
 ~> I will act in order to bring about the fact that Maria is proud of me.

This tendency to relate to action is to be correlated with a series of semantic properties to which we now turn. French is the main focus of the paper, but we will propose a systematic comparison with Italian.

## 2.2 The semantic profile of bouletic attitudes in French (and beyond)

### 2.2.1 Rationality

The compatibility of bouletic attitudes with propositions that describe a state of affairs that cannot be realized in the actual world (for short impossible propositions') is a recurring matter in both the linguistic and the philosophical tradition. Anscombe, 1957, who championed a so-called dispositional conception of *wanting* the is largely debated since Heim (1992), who famously discussed the following example (heim) , and noted that *want* seems at ease with highly implausible propositions, like those describing never-ending weekends (see Portner (2018) and references therein).

- (4) I want this weekend to last forever.

This, however, is not the case for all bouletic predicates. *Hope*, and its counterparts in many, if not most, languages is not felicitous with propositions that are known or described as impossible. This is also the case with intention reports, that have common properties with both desiderative and epistemic predicates, as shown by Grano (2017).

- (5) a. #I hope that this weekend will last forever.  
 b. #I intend this weekend to last forever.

The incompatibility of some attitude reports with impossible prejacent is the consequence of an intrinsic property that can be called **rationality**. Prototypical rational

predicates are epistemics and doxastics, like *believe* or *know* that cannot be paired with propositions that are outside the doxastic space (unless the attitude holder entertains irrational beliefs).

One should note that rational predicates are not concerned with metaphysical impossibility *per se*: the blocking mechanism comes from a subjective epistemic impossibility for the attitude holder.

(6) Adapted from Heim (1992):

- a. Sam is under the misconception that he has a violin, and he intends to sell his violin.
- b. Sam is persuaded that square can be round, and he intends to draw a round square.

A good test to identify a rational predicate (see Condoravdi and Lauer (2016), Grano (2017), and Portner and Rubinstein (2020), ...) is to first assert the subjective impossibility of a prejacent for an individual (the speaker, in the following example), followed by the assertion that the same individual has a certain attitude toward the same proposition. If the result is infelicitous, the predicate conveying the attitude can be said rational.

Applying the test to French attitudes allow us to observe the trans-categorical aspect of rationality: it is, as expected, a property of the doxastic *croire* ('believe'), but also *espérer* and the intention report *avoir l'intention* ('intend', which patterns similarly). More surprisingly, the volitive predicate *vouloir* shows a parallel behavior.

(7) Je sais                    que c'est                    impossible, ...  
 I know.IND.1SG that this be.IND.3SG impossible  
 I know it is impossible, ...

- a. #mais je crois                    que je vais aller sur la lune.  
 but I believe.IND.1SG that I will go on the moon  
 but I believe I'll go on the the moon.
- b. #mais j'espère                    que je vais aller sur la lune.  
 but I hope.IND.1SG that I will go on the moon  
 but I hope to go on the moon.
- c. (#)mais je veux                    aller sur la lune.  
 but I want.IND.1SG go on the moon  
 but I want to go on the moon.

As we recalled, in English, *want* is often described as a predicate that is not necessarily rational. However, its French counterpart seems a lot more stable with respect to this property: in the present indicative *vouloir* is very marginally compatible with impossible prejacent. To be rescued, the force of the utterance must be exclamative (a fact that we do not explain here, but seems to be related to the accommodation of a subjective modal base in a way parallel to what is proposed for *tellement* cf. *infra*). This contrast is even more salient if we compare it to its conditional counterparts, or with the desiderative predicate *avoir envie*.

(8) Je sais                    que c'est                    impossible, ...  
 I know.IND.1SG that this be.IND.3SG impossible  
 I know it is impossible, ...

Rational predicates	Non-Rational predicates
<i>croire</i> <i>vouloir</i> <i>avoir l'intention</i> <i>espérer</i>	<i>avoir envie</i> <i>vouloir.COND</i>

Figure 1: Classification of French predicates with respect to the presence or absence of the rationality trait

- a. mais je voudrais aller sur la lune.  
but I want.COND.1SG go on the moon  
but I would want to go on the moon.
- b. mais j'ai envie d'aller sur la lune.  
but I have.IND.1SG desire to go on the moon  
but I want to go on the moon.

The same pattern is observable in Italian, which confirms that the phenomena is not purely idiosyncratic (see Laurenti and Mari, 2023 for extended discussion of the Italian data).

- (9) So che è impossibile, ...  
Know.IND.1SG that be.IND.3SG impossible  
I know it is impossible, ...
  - a. (#)ma voglio andare sulla luna.  
but want.IND.1SG go on-the moon  
but I want to go on the moon.
  - b. ma vorrei andare sulla luna.  
but want.COND.1SG go on-the moon  
but I would want to go on the moon.
  - c. ma ho voglia di andare sulla luna.  
but have.IND.1SG desire to go on-the moon  
but I want to go on the moon.

Rationality constraints thus seem to affect both action-oriented predicates (*vouloir*) and (*espérer*) – which is immune from plannability and actionability<sup>1</sup>.

### 2.2.2 Conjunction introduction

Rationality is observable with an inferential scheme like the introduction of the conjunction, which is verified if and only if the fact that an agent is independently in relation with two distinct propositions  $p, q$  entails that she is in relation with their conjunction  $p \& q$ .

*Croire, espérer* and *vouloir* – which are all rational in the sense defined above – instantiate this inferential scheme. Note that these properties are also observable in relation with other action-oriented predicates, like intention reports (ibid.), directives, and, arguably, some but not all interpretations of *want*-sentences in English (see Condoravdi and

<sup>1</sup>See Grano (2017) for a discussion on the proximity of intention reports and doxastic attitudes on the basis of the same properties discussed here.

Lauer (2016), Crnić (2011), and Levinson (2003), a.o). It seems, once again, that rationality is a necessary condition for action-oriented predicates, but not a sufficient one to distinguish them. (We omit the glosses here for readability).

- (10) a. Jean croit qu'il va visiter New York cet été, et il croit  
 Jean believes that-he will visit New York this summer, and he believes  
 aussi qu'il va visiter Dublin cet été. #Mais il ne croit pas  
 also that-he will visit Dublin this summer. But he *neg* believes not  
 qu'il visitera et New York et Dublin cet été.  
 that-he visit.FUT and New York and Dublin this summer.  
 Jean believes that he will visit New York this summer, and he believes also  
 believes that he will visit Dublin this summer. But he does not believes that  
 he will visit both New York and Dublin this summer.
- b. Jean a l'intention de visiter New York cet été, et il a aussi  
 Jean has the-intention to visit New York this summer, and he has also  
 l'intention de visiter Dublin cet été. #Mais il n'a pas  
 the-intention to visit Dublin this summer. But he *neg*-has not  
 l'intention de visiter et New York et Dublin cet été.  
 the-intention to visit and New York and Dublin this summer.  
 Jean intends to visit New York this summer, and he also intends to visit Dublin  
 this summer. But he does not intend to visit both New York and Dublin this  
 summer.
- c. Jean veut visiter New York cet été, et il veut aussi visiter Dublin  
 Jean wants visit New York this summer, and he wants also visit Dublin  
 cet été. ???Mais il ne veut pas visiter et New York et Dublin cet  
 this summer. But he *neg* want pas visit and New York and Dublin this  
 été.  
 summer.  
 Jean wants to visit New York this summer, and he also wants to visit Dublin  
 this summer. But he wants to visit both New York and Dublin this summer.
- d. Jean a envie de visiter New York cet été, et il a aussi envie de  
 Jean has desire to visit New York this summer, and he has also desire to  
 visiter Dublin cet été. Mais il n'a pas envie de visiter et New  
 visit Dublin this summer. But he *neg*-has not desire to visit and New  
 York et Dublin cet été.  
 York and Dublin this summer.  
 Jean wants to visit New York this summer, and he also wants to visit Dublin  
 this summer. But he does not want to visit both New York and Dublin this  
 summer.

Rationality and inferential schemes like conjunction introduction are thus properties that allow to distinguish volitional predicates like *vouloir* ('want') in the present tense from some other desire predicates – its conditional counterpart and *avoir envie* ('have desire'), for example. – It is nonetheless not a sufficient criterion to identify link to action. Attitudes that are not action-oriented (e.g. *hope*, doxastic attitudes, ...) also support conjunction introduction. The temporal patterns discussed in the next section will allow us to sharpen the distinctions within the volitional class.



### 2.2.3 Temporal orientation

Temporal constraints on the prejacents of attitude verbs are an important feature which is ground in their semantics (Laca, 2012; Mari, 2015)<sup>2</sup>: the notional categories of will and desire are tightly linked to future orientation (see Giannakidou and Mari (2021)).

However, it is well-known that HOPE is quite flexible (e.g. Anand and Hacquard (2013)): it supports present, past and future orientation (see Giannakidou and Mari (2021)). Such configurations are possible both in Italian *spe* and in French *esp*.<sup>3</sup>

(11) *Sperare* present perspective with past, present, future orientation:

- a. Spero                                    che ieri                    abbia                                    dormito  
 Hope.IND.PRES.1SG that yesterday have.SUBJ.PRES.3SG sleep.PART.PAST  
 da sua madre.  
 at her mother  
 I hope she slept at her mother's place yesterday.
- b. Spero                                    che ora                    stia                                    dormendo                    /  
 Hope.IND.PRES.1SG that now be.SUBJ.PRES.3SG sleep.PART.PRES /  
 dorma                                    da sua madre.  
 sleep.SUBJ.PRES.3SG at her mother  
 I hope she is sleeping / sleeps at her mother's place right now.
- c. Spero                                    che domani                    dormirà                                    / dorma                    da  
 Hope.IND.PRES.1SG that tomorrow sleep.IND.FUT.3SG / sleep.SUBJ.3SG at  
 sua madre.  
 her mother  
 I hope she will sleep / sleeps at her mother's place tomorrow.

(12) *Espérer* present perspective and past, present, future orientation:

- a. J'espère                                    qu'elle a                                    dormi                                    chez  
 I.hope.IND.PRES.3SG that.she have.IND.PRES.3SG sleep.PART.PAST at  
 sa mère hier.  
 her mother yesterday  
 I hope she slept at her mother's place yesterday
- b. J'espère                                    qu'elle est                                    en train de dormir                    /  
 I-hope.IND.PRES.1SG that-she be.IND.PRES.3SG in course of sleep.INF /  
 dort                                    chez sa mère maintenant.  
 sleep.IND.PRES.3SG. at her mother now  
 I hope she is sleeping / sleeps at her mother's place right now.
- c. J'espère                                    qu'elle dormira                                    chez sa mère  
 I-hope.IND.PRES.3SG that-she sleep.IND.FUT.3SG at her mother  
 demain.  
 tomorrow  
 I hope she will sleep at her mother's place tomorrow.

<sup>2</sup>See also Condoravdi (2001) for a detailed analysis on the temporal orientation of modals implemented in a branching-time framework.

<sup>3</sup>We use 'temporal perspective' to refer to the time at which the attitude holds and 'temporal orientation' to refer to the time at which the prejacent is evaluated with respect to the temporal perspective.

Equivalents of *want* in Romance are stricter. French *vouloir* and Italian *volere* are not compatible with past preajacent. (ibid.).

- (13) Italian: *Volere* present perspective and future orientation only:
- a. #Voglio                    che ieri            abbia                    dormito  
 Want.IND.PRES.1SG that yesterday have.SUBJ.PRES.3SG sleep.PART.PAST  
 da sua madre.  
 at her mother  
 I want here to have slept at her mother's place yesterday.
  - b. #Voglio                    che ora    stia                    dormendo            /  
 Want.IND.PRES.1SG that now be.SUBJ.PRES.3SG sleep.PART.PRES /  
 dorma                    da sua madre.  
 sleep.SUBJ.PRES.3SG at her mother  
 I want her to be sleeping / sleeps at her mother's place right now.
  - c. Voglio                    che dorma                    da sua madre domani.  
 want.IND.PRES.1SG that sleep.SUBJ.3SG at her mother tomorrow  
 I want her to sleep at her mother's place tomorrow.
- (14) French: *Vouloir* present perspective and future orientation only:
- a. #Je veux                    qu'elle ait                    dormi  
 I want.IND.PRES.3SG that.she have.SUBJ.PRES.3SG sleep.PART.PAST  
 chez sa mère hier.  
 at her mother yesterday  
 I want her to have slept at her mother's place yesterday
  - b. #Je veux                    qu'elle soit                    en train de dormir /  
 I want.IND.PRES.1SG that-she be.IND.PRES.3SG in course of sleep.INF /  
 dorme                    chez sa mère maintenant.  
 sleep.SUBJ.PRES.3SG at her mother now  
 I want her to be sleeping / sleeps at her mother's place right now.
  - c. Je veux                    qu'elle dorme                    chez sa mère  
 I want.IND.PRES.3SG that-she sleep.SUBJ.PRES.3SG at her mother  
 demain.  
 tomorrow  
 I want her to sleep at her mother's place tomorrow.

The most litigious point pertains to simultaneity: it is frequently argued that equivalents of *want* in Romance have a non-past orientation (e.g. Portner and Rubinstein (2020) *a.o.*). However, *simvol* and *simvoul* are impossible in Italian and French, respectively, most notably in comparison with their conditional version, which is much more acceptable.

- (15) Italian
- a. #Voglio                    che ora    stia                    dormendo            /  
 Want.IND.PRES.1SG that now be.SUBJ.PRES.3SG sleep.PART.PRES /  
 dorma                    da sua madre.  
 sleep.SUBJ.PRES.3SG at her mother  
 I want her to be sleeping / sleeps at her mother's place right now.

- b. Vorrei che ora stesse dormendo da sua madre.  
 Want.COND.1SG that now be.SUBJ.IMPERF.3SG sleep.GER at her mother  
 I want her to be sleeping at her mother's place right now.

(16) *French*

- a. #Je veux qu'elle soit en train de dormir  
 I want.SUBJ.PRES.1SG that.she be.IND.PRES.3SG in course of sleep.INF  
 / dorme chez sa mère maintenant.  
 / sleep.SUBJ.PRES.3SG at her mother now  
 I want her to be sleeping / sleeps at her mother's place right now.
- b. Je voudrais qu'elle soit en train de dormir /  
 I want.COND.1SG that.she be.SUBJ.PRES.3SG in course of sleep.INF /  
 dorme chez sa mère maintenant.  
 sleep.SUBJ.PRES.3SG at her mother now  
 I would like for her to be sleeping / sleeps at her mother's place right now.

It thus seems reasonable to argue that the prejacents has a strict future interpretation (see Giannakidou and Mari (2021)), that is non simultaneous to the time of evaluation of the attitude. In contrast, *avoir envie* and *avere voglia* seem to be slightly more at ease with present temporal orientation<sup>4</sup>, but are still incompatible with past prejacents. Future prejacents, on the other hand, are easily interpreted.

(17) *Avere voglia*: present perspective and present and future orientation:

- a. #Ho voglia che ieri abbia dormito da sua  
 Have.IND.1SG desire that yesterday have.SUBJ.3SG sleep.PART.PAST of her  
 madre.  
 mother  
 I would like her to have slept at her mother's place yesterday.
- b. Ho voglia che ora ??stia dormendo /  
 Have.IND.1SG desire that now be.SUBJ.3SG sleep.PART.PRES /  
 dorma da sua madre.  
 sleep.SUBJ.3SG of her mother  
 I would like her to be sleeping at her mother's place right now.
- c. Ho voglia che dorma da sua madre domani.  
 Have.IND.1SG desire that sleep.SUBJ.3SG of her mother tomorrow  
 I would like her to sleep at her mother's place tomorrow.

(18) *Avoir envie* present tense: present perspective and present and future orientation:

- a. #J'ai envie qu'elle ait dormi chez sa  
 I-Have.IND.1SG desire that-she have.SUBJ.3SG sleep.PART.PAST at her  
 mère hier.  
 mother yesterday  
 I would like her to have sleep at her mother's place yesterday

<sup>4</sup>Some speakers are reluctant with the association of *avere voglia* and a simultaneously interpreted pre-jacent with the gerunds, but with the present subjunctive any unacceptability is far less strong as with *volere*. The same holds for *avoir envie*.

- b. ?J'ai envie qu'elle soit en train de  
 I-have.SUBJ.PRE.1SG desire that.she be.IND.PRES.3SG in course of  
 dormir / dorme chez sa mère maintenant.  
 sleep.INF / sleep.SUBJ.PRES.3SG at her mother now.  
 I want her to be sleeping / sleeps at her mother's place right now.
- c. J'ai envie qu'elle dorme chez sa mère demain.  
 I-have.IND.1SG desire that-she sleep.SUBJ.3SG at her mother tomorrow  
 I would like her to sleep at her mother's place tomorrow.

The difficulty of *volere* and *vouloir* to go along simultaneous prejacent distinguish them further from *avoir envie* and *avere voglia*. But it also draws a line between *espérer* and *vouloir*, which pattern together with respect to other properties such as rationality.

We can make sense of this contrast by going back to our original observation: it is expected that a predicate that semantically refers to action cannot go along a situation which is already true or false at the time at which the intention/request is evaluated.

- (19) a. #I intend for this grade to be good.  
 b. #I request / demand this grade to be good.

#### 2.2.4 Action

The temporal features of bouletic verbs in Romance are important for our main point here, the relation between volition and action. We mentioned earlier that *sperare/espérer* and *volere/vouloir* are not felicitous in contexts where the prejacent is presented as impossible (the conditional would be needed). We argue that plausibility follows from the more fundamental property of actionability: a prejacent is actionable if and only if a relevant individual in the context of utterance can do something in order to bring it about.

Introducing a finer distinction we see that certain situations are possible, satisfying an hypothetical rationality constraint, but not actionable: no action accessible to a salient individual in the context of utterance can bring them about. With such prejacent, *sperare* and *espérer* are perfectly acceptable, but not *volere* and *vouloir*; here, again, there conditional flexion is favored.

- (20) Maria must go to the beach with her family this weekend. She wants everything to be perfect, and says:
- a. (#)Voglio che il tempo sia bello. (Acceptable under  
 Want.IND.1SG that the weather be.SUBJ.3SG beautiful  
 EXCL)  
 I want the weather to be beautiful.
- b. Vorrei che il tempo sia bello.  
 Want.COND.1SG that the weather be.SUBJ.3SG beautiful  
 I would like the weather to be beautiful.
- c. Spero che il tempo sia bello.  
 Hope.IND.1SG that the weather be.SUBJ.3SG beautiful  
 I hope the weather will be beautiful.

- d. Ho voglia che il tempo sia bello.  
 Have.IND.1SG desire that the weather be.SUBJ.3SG beautiful  
 I would like the weather to be beautiful.

Symmetrically, if the realization of the prejacent seems to depend solely on the attitude holder actions, *sperare/espérer* (HOPE) is not felicitous, while *volere/vouloir* (HOPE) and *avoir envie/avere voglia* are.

- (21) Samia just checked the fridge, and saw that everything is there to do here favorite breakfast (scrambled eggs and orange juice). She says:
- a. #Spero di avere un bicchiere di succo d’arancia con uova strapazzate.  
 hope.IND.1SG of have a glass of juice of-orange with eggs  
 scrambled.  
 I hope to have a glass of orange juice with scrambled eggs.
- b. Voglio / vorrei un bicchiere di succo d’arancia con uova strapazzate.  
 want.IND.1SG / want.COND.1SG a glass of juice of-orange with eggs  
 scrambled  
 I want / would like to have a glass of orange juice with scrambled eggs.
- c. Ho voglia di un bicchiere di succo d’arancia con uova strapazzate.  
 have.IND.1SG desire of a glass of juice of-orange with eggs  
 scrambled  
 I would like to have a glass of orange juice with scrambled eggs.
- d. J’espère (avoir/prendre) un verre de jus d’orange avec des œufs brouillés.  
 I-hope.IND.1SG (have/take) a glass of juice of-orange with some eggs  
 scrambled.  
 I hope to have a glass of orange juice with scrambled eggs.
- e. Je veux / voudrais (avoir/prendre) un verre de jus d’orange avec des œufs brouillés.  
 I want.IND.1SG / want.COND.1SG (have/take) a glass of juice  
 of-orange with some eggs scrambled  
 I want / would like to have a glass of orange juice with scrambled eggs.
- f. J’ai envie d’ (avoir/prendre) un verre de jus d’orange avec des œufs brouillés.  
 I-have.IND.1SG desire of (have/take) a glass of juice of-orange with  
 some eggs scrambled  
 I would like to have a glass of orange juice with scrambled eggs.

It is important to note that this notion of actionability is purely subjective: it is not evaluated given any kind of metaphysical ability<sup>5</sup>, but a subjective one. Indicating that the attitude holder is under the misconception that she has a grasp on outcomes that are,

<sup>5</sup>See Mandelkern, Schultheis, and Boylan (2017) for a recent analysis on the matter.

in fact, independent of her action is sufficient to have non-conditional morphology in the matrix clause.

- (22) Teresa is under the misconception that she can control the weather / knows someone who can control the weather, and says:
- a. Voglio                      che il tempo sia                      bello.  
Want.IND.1SG.PRES that the weather be.SUBJ.3SG beautiful.  
I want the weather to be beautiful.
  - b. Je veux                      qu'il fasse                      beau.  
I want.IND.1SG.PRES that.it dp.SUBJ.3SG beautiful.  
I want the weather to be beautiful.

The following table summarizes the main observations pertaining to temporal orientation and actionability.<sup>6</sup>

	Temporal constraint	Actionability
<i>espérer</i>	None	Independent of the attitude holder
<i>vouloir</i>	Future	Dependent of somebody's action
<i>avoir envie</i>	(Non-Past) Future	None
<i>vouloir.COND</i>	None	None

### 3 Previous analyses

To the best of our knowledge, there is no work on the market that studies the French bouletic attitudes in the light of the distinction between mere-desire, action-oriented volition. A great deal of attention has been paid to the phenomenon of obviation on the one hand and on mood selection on the other (both these bodies of literature are very vast, see Portner (2018) for references). None of the existing works on French has nonetheless leveled the question of the distinction that we are focusing on here as a problem in itself, and *avoir envie* has remained a largely overlooked predicate.<sup>7</sup> The attention paid to the mere-desire / action-oriented distinction is also recent in the linguistic literature that resorts to possible worlds and that Hintikka had initiated and which we endorse here.

In his pioneering work, Hintikka (1969) develops a simple and elegant semantics for attitude reports. Focusing on epistemic attitudes, he proposes that an individual's beliefs might be described as a set of worlds compatible with that individual's beliefs. Informally, Hintikka states that a sentence which has the form of *bel* is true if and only if, in the context of utterance, the prejacent *p* – is true in every world of the doxastic mental space of *S*.

- (23) a. *S* believes that *p*  
b. Maria believes that the Colonel Mustard is the murderer.

<sup>6</sup>Our analysis does not distinguish between non-past and future orientation. See Giannakidou and Mari (2018) for finer distinctions. Since non-past is only marginally acceptable even with *avoir envie* and *avere voglia*, we do not consider here its precise contribution.

<sup>7</sup>With the exception of Ruwet (1984), which we recalled in section 1.

If Hintikka is primarily concerned with the semantics of epistemics, he explicitly states that he doesn't see reasons for not extending his analysis to other kind of attitudes, including desires (Hintikka (1969, p. 92)) : his semantics is thought as uniformly applicable to all propositional attitudes, which would differ only with respect to their lexical choices of different domains of quantification.

- (24) a. *S* wants that *p*  
 b. Maria wants the Colonel Mustard to face a tribunal.

Commenting the hintikkian perspective, Stalnaker (1984, p. 89) identifies serious flaws, among which the one of overgenerating true desires.

*Suppose I am sick. I want to get well. But getting well entails having been sick, and I do not want to have been sick. Suppose there was a murder. I want to know who committed the murder. But my knowing who committed the murder entails that the murder was committed, and I never wanted the murder to have been committed.*

There are many propositions that are not desired but are homogeneously present in the doxastic space – among them, the necessary conditions for effectively desired propositions.

- (25) a. Maria wants the murder to have happen.  
 b. Maria wants to find the murderer.  
 (26) a. Sam wants to be cured.  
 b. Sam wants to have been sick.

The problem is that the domain of quantification cannot be solely bouletic, because all the situations that are homogeneously present in the mental space of desire are not effectively desired: it is not because Sam wants to be cured that he wants to be sick sam.

Heim (1992), who is primarily concerned with the behavior of presuppositions with attitude verbs, observes that the presuppositions of the prejacent (here, '*Paul has a violin*') is projected on the doxastic space when embedded by a desire predicate.

- (27) After Heim (ibid.):  
 (Paul is under the misconception that he has a violin, and Paul wants to sell his violin.  
 ↗ Paul believes he has a violin.  
 ↗ Paul wants to have a violin (to sell).

The mental space of desire reports and ascription thus appears to be doxastic: it corresponds to the beliefs of the attitude holder, not solely their desire.

Heim's analysis is essentially the formalization of an idea originally formulated by Stalnaker (1984, p. 89), who states that *wanting something is preferring it to certain relevant alternatives, the relevant alternatives being those possibilities that the agent believes will be realized if he does not get what he wants.*

This view invites to consider desire reports as a kind of hidden counterfactual conditionals, somehow relativized to the beliefs of the attitude holder: to say that Hercule Poiereau wants to catch the murderer is similar to saying that Hercule Poiereau thinks that if he catches the murderer, he would be in a more desirable state than if he didn't.

Heim's understanding of desire reports is based on a comparison operator  $<$ , that will oppose the prejacent and its negation: the former will be favored in comparison to the latter in the doxastic space. This analysis has been amended by Villalta (2008) who considers that the preference is not only between a proposition and its negation, but a class of relevant alternatives. Also revisiting the heimian initial proposal, Rubinstein (2017) extends the mental space to impossible propositions.<sup>8</sup> None of these proposals is primarily concerned with actions.

A conceptual distinction between two types of desires reports is instead often made in a parallel philosophical literature which has been recently adopted by linguists. Numerous labels have been proposed in order to name this distinction: on the philosophical side, Davis (1984) opposes *volitive* and *appetive* desires, and Locke (1982) use the term *formal* and *genuine*; in the linguistic literature, Levinson (2003) uses the terms *motivational* and *partial*, Condoravdi and Lauer (2016) *mere-desire* and *effective preference*.

Levinson (2003), elaborating on an example from Davis (1984), insists that a semantics for *want* must be able to account for cases like *contr*, where two opposite answers to the same question do not seem to contradict each other. Choosing to assert one answer or the other does not imply any difference with respect to my wanting to share a drink with my classmates: it's appealing, but I can't.

(28) Adaptation from Davis (ibid.):

Q: Do you want to grab a beer after class ?

- a. Oh yes, I really want to, but I have to finish a paper.
- b. No (I don't want to), I have to finish a paper.

We will not develop Levinson's analysis here, which is probabilistic and utility-driven. It's sufficient to note that the contrast at stake is the one in focus in our paper, namely the distinction between mere-desire and action-oriented volition.

On the same line, Condoravdi and Lauer (2016) argues that *want* is underspecified between two readings, which correspond to the two possible answers to *contr*, but also to the two different interpretations of the conditionals in *soup3*, repeated below.

(29) After Hare (1971):

If you want sugar in your soup,

- a. You must ask the waiter. ACTION-ORIENTED interpretation of *want*.  
 $\leadsto$  Asking the waiter is a mean to have sugar in your soup.
- b. You must have diabetes. MERE-DESIRE interpretation of *want*.  
 $\leadsto$  Having diabetes is a mean to have sugar in your soup.

The conditional in *anan1* has a very special interpretation, dubbed *anankastic* in the literature, which present the consequent as a mean to (optimally) obtain the antecedent – note that the desire reports is not present in the paraphrase. *anan2*, on the other hand, does not have this teleological interpretation. It might be paraphrased as “*Because you feel like having sugar in your soup, you must have diabetes*”, with an explicit reference to the desire expressed in the antecedent.

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<sup>8</sup>A kratzerian semantics for desire reports has been spelled out by von Stechow (1999). Under many circumstances, these analyses make similar predictions. See Crnič (2011) for a detailed comparison.



Anankastic conditionals are a long-standing puzzle in the semantics literature (See Iatridou and Fintel (2005) and Sæbø (2001), a.o.) that we will not consider here. Interesting for us is the answer that Condoravdi and Lauer provide<sup>9</sup>, which relies on the observation that an anankastic reading emerges in some structure with a particular reading of *want*, namely the action-oriented one (29a).

They formalize their analysis by injecting preference structures in the model. In every situation of utterance, agents are associated with a set of such structures, each corresponding to their commitments, defined by pairs  $\langle P, < \rangle$ , where  $P$  is the set of propositions and  $<$  a strict partial order on  $P$  – as they write, “a preference structure can be thought of as an ordering source [from kratzerian semantics] plus an ‘importance’ ranking” (Condoravdi and Lauer, 2016). The truth of a desire reports depends solely on the top-ranking of the proposition denoted by the prejacent in the preference structure.

If it is said effective, a preference structure is consistent and realistic with respect to an information state<sup>10</sup>, i.e. the mental space of the relevant individual. These features are designed as minimal requirements to describe action-relative preference structures: consistency ensures that an agent ranks conflicting propositions; realism just rules out propositions that are believed not to lead to action.

According to the authors, the anankastic reading emerges if and only if the predicate in the antecedent targets an effective preference structure. They argue that *want* is underspecified with respect to the quality of its preference structures: if the context feeds it with a structure that has the qualities to be effective, it will have some special properties, including anankastic readings with conditionals and conjunction introduction.

Grano (2017) spells out a semantics for intention reports that relies on hardwired requirement for effective preference structures and RESP-onsibility relation<sup>11</sup> between the prejacent and the attitude holder. Moreover, it echoes other observation on distinct structures, like the imperative discussed by Roberts (2015).

Our account also resorts to preferences. However, as we have noted, the underspecification of *vouloir* is of a different nature than the one of English *want*. *Vouloir* is by default action-oriented. The lexical distinctions between *avoir envie* as a mere-desire predicate and *vouloir* as a by default action-oriented predicate are hardwired in their lexical semantics. A special mechanism is envisioned for *vouloir*, which can turn mere-desire oriented when combined with the conditional and *tellement*.

## 4 Analysis

Recent works on subjunctive have been revolving around two main ideas: (i) the subjunctive articulates two modal backgrounds (Mari and Portner (2021) and Portner and Rubinstein (2012)) and (ii) subjunctive is triggered by non-homogeneity in one conversational background (Farkas (2003), Giannakidou (1999), and Giannakidou and Mari (2015, 2021), a.o.). As bouletic predicates are subjunctive selectors (with the partial exception

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<sup>9</sup>See Phillips-Brown (2020) for a recent critique.

<sup>10</sup>Condoravdi and Lauer insist on the fact that realism and consistence are necessary conditions for a preference structure to be effective.

<sup>11</sup>This relation is originally found in Farkas (1988) and might be understood as some kind of (very) special thematic role.

of *espérer*, which we do not discuss here, see Anand and Hacquard (2013) in particular), our analysis builds on these two ingredients.

Our proposal is that all bouletic attitudes feature a preferential modal background, but that the flavors and the constraints that we have observed are due to the primary modal base on which the preferences act upon.

We will follow Anand and Hacquard (ibid.) in assuming that *espérer* is specified, in its lexical semantics, for a doxastic and a preferential modal backgrounds, and we will not discuss further the meaning of this attitude here. We newly propose that *avoir envie* is lexically specified for a preferential modal background and an experiential one (which is *pathos*, cf. *infra*). We also propose that *vouloir* is lexically specified for preference. Unlike *avoir envie* and *espérer*, the primary modal background of *vouloir* is either accommodated or lexically triggered by extra morphology (the ‘conditionnel’) or overt lexical items (such as *tellement*). The default with *vouloir* (and *volere*) is an actionable modal space. When specific lexical or grammatical information is added, the default is overwritten by an experiential modal background.

In our analysis, the differences among bouletic predicates result from a difference in lexical specifications. As *vouloir* introduces a more substantial amount of underspecification (by leaving unspecified one modal background), it allows manipulations that are not observed with the other bouletic predicates.

## 4.1 Modal backgrounds

We first define a preferential modal background  $\mathcal{P}$ .  $\mathcal{P}$  are mere preferences of the attitude holder.

- (30) Preferences  
 $\mathcal{P} = \{ \pi \mid \pi \text{ is an option preferred by } i \text{ over an alternative } \neg\pi \text{ given a lexically or contextually determined modal base} \}$

We then define three other types of modal spaces which will intersect the preferential modal background. The first one is the **experiential** modal space. We consider experience as the anti-rational modal space, that merely encompasses content based on sensory evidence and upon which no rational reasoning applies.  $w_0$  is the actual world and  $c$  the context of utterance.

- (31) Experiential modal space  
 $\mathcal{E}(i, w_0, c) = \{ \epsilon \mid \epsilon \text{ is an experience that } i \text{ undergoes in } w_0 \text{ in } c \}$

The **rational** modal space is akin to what is generally referred to as Epist or Dox in the literature on modality and mood (Giannakidou and Mari (2021), Hintikka (1969), and Portner (2009)), and importantly includes *rational* information. Note that sometimes Dox has been used to refer to credence and pure subjective evaluations, including irrational one (Ippolito and Farkas (2021) and Mari (2010)) and Epist for knowledge that relies on factual information (Mari (2016b)). This is not what  $\mathcal{R}$  is.  $\mathcal{R}$  is a rational space, no matter whether knowledge or belief is considered.

- (32) Rational modal space  
 $\mathcal{R} = \{ \rho \mid \rho \text{ is a piece of knowledge or belief of } i \text{ which does not rely on credence or irrationality} \}$

Here we are using the terms ‘experience’, ‘piece of knowledge’ for readability. We consider  $\mathcal{E}$ ,  $\mathcal{R}$  as modal backgrounds, i.e. sets of sets of propositions.

Our definition of an **actionable**<sup>12</sup> space resorts to branching structures in line with Belnap (1992), Kaufmann (2005), and Mari (2016a). A three-place relation  $\simeq$  on  $T \times W \times W$  is defined such that (i) for all  $t \in T$ ,  $\simeq_t$  is an equivalence relation; (ii) for any  $w, w' \in W$  and  $t, t' \in T$ , if  $w' \simeq_{t'} w$  and  $t$  precedes  $t'$ , then  $w' \simeq_t w$ . In words,  $w$  and  $w'$  are historical alternatives at least up to  $t'$  and thus differ only, if at all, in what is future to  $t'$ . For any given time, a world belongs to an equivalence class comprising worlds with identical pasts but possibly different futures. Let  $w_0$  be the actual world.

For any time  $t \in T$ , we define the set of actionable alternatives as the set of worlds that are identical to the actual world  $w_0$  at least up to and including  $t$  (Thomason, 1984). The actionable modal space contains the worlds in which the set of actions that the subject  $i$  can possibly undertake are realized. For any time  $t$ :

- (33) Actionable modal space  
 $\mathcal{A}(i, t) := \{w \mid w \simeq_t w_0 \text{ and such that the actions that an individual } i \text{ can undertake, take place there}\}$

We do not refine the granularity of the modal base here, but assume that incompatible actions do not take place in the same worlds.

We impose that the actionable space be diverse in the sense of Condoravdi (2001) or non-veridical in the sense Giannakidou and Mari (2018), that is to say, it contains both  $p$  and  $\neg p$  worlds. In other terms there are worlds in which a certain action  $\alpha$  (described by  $p$ ) takes place and others in which it does not Belnap (1992).

According to Belnap (ibid.), nodes of a branching time framework represent choice points at which a certain actor chooses to perform a certain action  $\alpha$ .

With these modal backgrounds in place, we can now turn to the lexical semantics of bouletic predicates in French.

## 4.2 Avoir envie

*Avoir envie* specifies a subtype of experiential modal background, as *pathos*. *Pathos* is a type of uncontrollable experience, which, in the case of desire, could be further specified into *spanis* (an experience of ‘lacking of something’) akin to thirsty, being hungry, being tired, a fact to which we return here below.

- (34) Experiential-*pathos*  
 $\mathcal{E}(i, w_0, c) = \{\theta \mid \theta \text{ is a pathos that } i \text{ undergoes in } w_0 \text{ in } c\}$

We assume that the experiential-*pathos* modal background contains both desire and non-desire worlds and it is thus non-homogeneous with respect to desirability. Desirability results from a double restriction between the experiential-*pathos* modal base and preferences.

Our analysis of *avoir envie* is in `avoirenvieanalysis2`.

- (35)  $[[\alpha \text{ avoir envie } p]]^{\mathcal{P}, \mathcal{E}, i} = 1$  iff  
 $\forall w' \in \mathcal{P}(\mathcal{E}(i, w_0, c)) p(w')$

<sup>12</sup>We borrow this term from the NLP literature (Kozłowski et al. (2020) and references therein)

All worlds in the experiential-*pathos* modal base of the judge which also complain with their preferences,  $p$  is true.

The analysis accounts for the facts that we enumerated in section 2 and which we recall here.

(i) *avoir envie* supports irrationality, a fact that we explain by resorting to *pathos*.

- (36) Je sais que c'est impossible, mais j'ai envie  
 I know.IND.1SG that this be.IND.3SG impossible but I have.IND.1SG desire  
 d'aller sur la lune.  
 to go on the moon  
 I know it is impossible but I want to go on the moon.

(ii) *avoir envie* has a preference for future orientation. This is explained by the fact *pathos* (as *spanis*) needs fulfillment, a fulfillment, that, unlike the rational one with *espérer*, is experiential in nature. In order to be fulfilled, the experiential *pathos* requires that a change be made in the world of the attitude holder for them to be satisfied thus predicting future orientation.

(37) *Avoir envie* present tense: present perspective and present and future orientation:

- a. #J'ai envie qu'elle ait dormi chez sa mère hier.  
 I-Have.IND.1SG desire that-she have.SUBJ.3SG sleep.PART.PAST at her mother yesterday  
 I would like her to have sleep at her mother's place yesterday
- b. J'ai envie qu'elle dorme chez sa mère demain.  
 I-have.IND.1SG desire that-she sleep.SUBJ.3SG at her mother tomorrow  
 I would like her to sleep at her mother's place tomorrow.

(iii) Our analysis relying on an experiential modal base sheds a new light on *avoir envie* as belonging to the class of other experiential predicates such as *avoir faim* (*be hungry*), *avoir soif* (*be thirsty*). Note that that they also share the same internal structure with an auxiliary and a bare noun.<sup>13</sup>

(iv) The lexical encoding of the positive (desirable) experience emerges in the weakness-of-will test, whereby we see that, with negative prejacent, if the action is finally performed (contrary to the initial desire), the interpretation 'being forced' emerges (Goncharov, 2021).

- (38) Je n'avais pas envie de partir, mais je suis partie quand même.  
 I did not want to leave, but I left nonetheless.

The analysis for the first conjunct in weaknessofwill

- (39)  $[[\alpha \text{ avoir envie } p]]^{\mathcal{P}, \mathcal{E}, i} = 1$  iff  
 $\forall w' \in \mathcal{P}(\mathcal{E}(i, w_0, c)) \neg p(w')$   
 All the worlds in the experiential-*pathos* modal base of the judge which also complain with their preferences,  $p$  is false.

<sup>13</sup>Interestingly, and as side note, the best approximate of the French *avoir envie* is feel like that makes visible the two components experiential-*pathos* (*feel*) and appetite (*like*).

Assuming the low interpretation of the negation, the inference arises that, if  $p$  becomes true, this was against the initial desire. Note that the semantics does not state that  $\neg p$  worlds are never desirable, it only state that all  $p$  worlds are. However, this is an inference that persists as the weakness-of-will test highlights.

### 4.3 Vouloir

Turning now to *vouloir*, we propose that, in French, it features an underspecified primary modal base, thus accounting for the fact that its meaning can range from mere-desire (when combined with adverbs such as *tellement*) to orientation toward action and formation of intention (Condoravdi and Lauer, 2016; Farkas, 1992; Grano, 2017).

- (40) Je sais bien qu’il y a la morale, la vertu, mais je  
 I know.IND.1SG well that-it there have.IND.3SG the moral, the virtue, but I  
 peux toujours avoir cela. Je veux tellement autre chose.  
 can.IND.1SG always have that. I want.IND.1SG so much else something  
 I know that there is moral, virtue, but I still can have all that. I want so much  
 something else.

We thus assume that, by default, and in absence of contrary grammatical (e.g. conditional) or lexical (e.g. *tellement*) information, a modal base describing an actionable space is accommodated. The resulting analysis is as follows. We assume for simplicity that *vouloir* is in the present tense and that the temporal argument can be manipulated by tense. Let  $t_0$  be the utterance time.

- (41) Default interpretation of *vouloir*.  
 $[[\alpha \text{ veut } p]]^{\mathcal{P}, \mathcal{A}, i} = 1$  iff  
 $\forall w' \in \mathcal{P}(\mathcal{A}(i, t_0)) p(w')$   
 All worlds in the actionable modal base of the judge determined at the utterance time which also complain with their preferences,  $p$  is true.

This analysis make two immediate predictions.

(i) *vouloir* has mandatory future orientation. An actionable space at a given time  $t$  is necessarily future-oriented. A prejacent whose time of interpretation is anterior or simultaneous to the time of interpretation of the attitude predicate is not felicitous with the bare predicate, that has to be modified by conditional morphology or an adverb of intensity in order to be loose its strict future orientation.

- (42) a. #Je veux qu’elle soit en train de dormir /  
 I want.PRES.1SG that-she be.IND.PRES.3SG in course of sleep.INF /  
 dorme chez sa mère maintenant.  
 sleep.SUBJ.PRES.3SG at her mother now  
 I want for her to be sleeping / sleep at her mother’s place now.
- b. Je veux qu’elle dorme chez sa mère ce  
 I want.SPRES.1SG that-she sleep.SUBJ.PRES.3SG at her mother this  
 soir.  
 night  
 I want for her to sleep at her mother’s place tonight.

(ii) *vouloir* is rational both in the sense that its object cannot be something outside of the realm of the reachable beliefs, but also in the sense that two contradictory actions cannot be carried out simultaneously. This would indeed be contradictory with how the world can evolve, and specifically with the fact that two incompatible actions cannot be carried out in the actual world to be.

- (43) a. (Même si je sais que c'est impossible,) je veux aller sur la lune.  
Even if I know that it-is impossible I want go on the moon.  
Even if I know this is impossible, I want to go on the moon.
- b. #Je veux emménager avec Sam et je veux rester dans ma chambre  
I want move with Sam and I want stay in my room  
d'enfant.  
of-child.  
I want to move in with Sam and I want to stay in my children bedroom.
- c. Cet été, je veux aller à Rome et je veux aller à Dublin. #Mais je  
This summer, I want go to Rome and I want go to Dublin. But I  
ne veux pas aller et à Rome et à Dublin.  
*neg* want not go and to Rome and to Dublin.  
This summer, I want to go to Rome and I want to go to Dublin. But I do not  
want to go to both Rome and Dublin.

As we said, however, this is a default that can be leveled and in line with von Fintel and Iatridou (2020) we assume that grammar and the lexicon provide means to level the rationality requirement. We propose that *tellement* ('so much') in *tellement*, like other adverbs of intensity, introduces the modal base over which preferences operate, and specifically they introduce an experiential-*pathos* modal base. In this case, the interpretation of *vouloir* becomes similar to the one of *avoir envie*.

- (44)  $[[\alpha \text{ vouloir tellement } p]]^{\mathcal{P}, \mathcal{E}, i} = 1$  iff  
 $\forall w' \in \mathcal{P}(\mathcal{E}(i, w_0, c)) \neg p(w')$   
All the worlds in the experiential-*pathos* modal base of the judge which also complain with her preferences, *p* is false.

As already pointed by von Fintel and Iatridou (*ibid.*), the conditional (COND) is one grammatical device that also levels the rationality constraint of *vouloir*, making it compatible with impossible state of affairs, simultaneous events, and everything that *avoir envie* allows.

- (45) Je sais que c'est impossible, mais je #veux / voudrais aller sur  
I know that it-is impossible, but I want.IND.1SG / want.COND.1SG go on  
la lune.  
the moon.  
I know this is impossible, but I want to go on the moon.
- (46) Je #veux / voudrais qu'elle soit en train de dormir / dorme  
I want.IND.1SG / want.COND.1SG that-she be in course of sleep / sleep  
chez sa mère maintenant.  
at her mother now.  
I want / would want for her to be sleeping / sleeps at her mother's place right now.

In our framework, COND has a counterfactual contribution that extends the modal base to worlds in which actions cannot be carried out by  $i$ . The mechanism that we envision is reminiscent of the modal base  $Dox+$  used by Heim (1992), Mari and Portner (2021), and Portner and Rubinstein (2020).  $Dox+$  is formed from a  $DOX$ , plus irrational worlds. Let  $\mathcal{A}+$  a non-rational actionable space, which contains actions that cannot be carried out by the attitude holder.

$$(47) \quad \llbracket [\alpha \text{ vouloir.COND } p] \rrbracket^{\mathcal{P}, \mathcal{A}+, \mathcal{A}, i} = 1 \text{ iff} \\ \forall w' \in \mathcal{P}(\mathcal{A}+(i, t) / \mathcal{A}(i, t)) p(w') \\ \text{All worlds in the non-rational actionable modal base of the judge } i \text{ at a time } t \\ \text{which also complain with their preferences, } p \text{ is true.}$$

## 5 Conclusion

This paper has characterized the landscape of bouletic attitudes in French from the perspective of the distinction between mere-desire attitudes and action-oriented bouletic attitudes. The picture that has emerged distinguishes between mere-desire attitudes *avoir envie/avere voglia* as featuring an experiential modal base, *espérer/sperare* that appeal to a rational doxastic base and *want* equivalents *vouloir/volere* that are underspecified but have a default preference for an actionable modal base. All bouletic attitudes rank the worlds of these modal bases according to preferences.

One open question is what are the cognitive underpinnings of these semantic distinctions. We submit, without further justifying the hypothesis, that the modal bases correspond to three different conceptualizations of the individuals as sentient beings, rational agents and actors according to the following systematization.

Representation of the individuals	Modal bases	Lexicalization
Sentient being	Experiential + Preferential	<i>avoir envie</i> <i>vouloir</i> + conditional
Thinking agent	Doxastic + Preferential	<i>espérer</i>
Agent	Actionable+Preferential	<i>vouloir</i> <i>avoir l'intention</i>

Figure 2: Lexicalizations of volition in French

The paper has shown that these distinctions are ground in the lexical semantics of bouletic attitudes and has provided several tests for (ir)rationality and actionability (and lack thereof). Our discussion seems to point to the fact that there is a consistent amount of homogeneity across French and Italian. How languages beyond these two Romance ones organize their own landscape across these conceptual categories is a question that we leave for future research.

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