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conditional sentences

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Dedication

We would like to dedicate this work to our dear parents

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We , also would like to our family for providing the needed advice and encouragement.

There are several structures in English that are called "Conditionals." Condition means "situation or circumstance." When we think about conditionals we normally refer to the sentences in which we are saying that the occurrence of one event depends on the other event. Although the various Conditional forms might seem quite abstract at first, they are actually some of the most useful structures in English and are commonly included in daily conversation. People sometimes call conditionals "IF" structures or sentences because there is usually the word "if" in a conditional. There are also differences when trying to describe the different types of conditional sentences.

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1. Introduction

Conditional sentences are sentences expressing factual implications, or hypothetical situations and their consequences. They are so called because the validity of the main clause of the sentence is conditional on the existence of certain circumstances, which may be expressed in a dependent clause or may be understood from the context (Mead,1996:5).

A full conditional sentence (one which expresses the condition as well as its consequences) therefore contains two clauses: the dependent clause expressing the condition, called the protasis; and the main clause expressing the consequence, called the apodosis (Ibid.).

An example of such a sentence (in English) is the following:

If it rains, the picnic will be cancelled.

In order to arrive at a thorough understanding of the somewhat heterogeneous group of sub-clauses commonly termed conditional clauses, it seems to be necessary to establish some kind of classification incorporating all recorded combinations of conditional structures. As soon as this need for a classification is felt the problem arises whether to apply semantic or formal criteria as the basis for the classification (Ibid:9).

Conditional sentences are formed by a main clause containing a proposition and a subordinate clause (the *if-clause*) specifying the condition on which the main proposition is true. The if-clause generally comes first and it is often separated from the rest of the sentence by a comma but the order of the two parts can be

reversed.

The numbers of formal patterns of conditionals are limited but their applications involving interaction with speakers' intention become multitudinous. On one hand, learning the three main types of conditionals is supposed to be an easy job, but the subtle distinctions with regard to semantics and pragmatics bring in great difficulties, on the other hand. Though there is a call for drawing attention to these complicatedly structured sentences, research into studying conditionals recently has been mainly concentrated on logic or philosophy (Crouch, 1993; among many others) but scarcely conducted in terms of linguistics.

Gordon (1985:85) states that "the past is used to represent improbability in the present or future, and the past perfect is used to refer to impossible events that didn't happen in the past." In addition, the present is used to refer to the future in the 'if' clause of future predictive conditionals.

2. Types of Conditional sentences

There are various ways of classifying conditional sentences. One distinction is between those that state an implication between facts, and those that set up and refer to a hypothetical situation. There is also the distinction between conditionals that are considered factual or predictive, and those that are considered counterfactual or speculative (referring to a situation that did not or does not really exist). (Dancygier, 1998:43).

2.1 Implicative and predictive

A conditional sentence expressing an implication (also called a factual conditional sentence) essentially states that if one fact holds, then so does another. (If the sentence is not a declarative sentence, then the consequence may be expressed as an order or a question rather than a statement.) The facts are usually stated in whatever grammatical tense is appropriate to them; there are not normally special tense or mood patterns for this type of conditional sentence. Such sentences may be used to express a certainty, a universal statement, a law of science, etc. (in these cases if may often be replaced by when) (Alexander,1988:38).

If you heat water to 100 degrees (°C) , it boils.

If the sea is stormy, the waves are high.

They can also be used for logical deductions about particular circumstances (which can be in various mixtures of past, present and future):

If it's raining here now, then it was raining on the West Coast this morning.

If it's raining now, then your laundry is getting wet.

If it's raining now, there will be mushrooms to be picked next week.

If he locked the door, then Kitty is trapped inside.

A predictive conditional sentence concerns a situation dependent on a hypothetical (but entirely possible) future event. The consequence is normally also a statement about the future, although it may also be a consequent statement about present or past time (or a question or order) (Dancygier ,1998:65).

If I become President, I'll lower taxes.

If it rains this afternoon, everybody will stay home.

If it rains this afternoon, then yesterday's weather forecast was wrong.

If it rains this afternoon, your garden party is doomed.

What will you do if he invites you?

If you see them, shoot!

2.2 Counterfactual conditional

In a counterfactual or speculative conditional sentence, a situation is described as dependent on a condition that is known to be false, or presented as unlikely. The time frame of the hypothetical situation may be past, present or future, and the time frame of the condition does not always correspond to that of the consequence. (Traugott et al., 1986:4).

For example:

If I were king, I could have you thrown in the dungeon.

If I won the lottery, I would buy a car.

If he said that to me, I would run away.

If you had called me, I would have come.

If you had done your job properly, we wouldn't be in this mess now.

The difference in meaning between a "counterfactual" conditional with a future time frame, and a "predictive" conditional, may be slight. For example, there is no great practical difference in meaning between "If it rained tomorrow, I would cancel the match" and "If it rains tomorrow, I will cancel the match". It is in the

counterfactual type of conditional sentence that the grammatical form called the conditional mood (meaning something like the English "would ...") is most often found. For the uses of particular verb forms and grammatical structures in the various types and parts of conditional sentences in certain languages (Ibid.).

2.3 Zero Conditional

"Zero conditional" refers to conditional sentences that express a simple implication (see above section), particularly when both clauses are in the present tense (Alexander,1988:51).

If you don't eat for a long time, you become hungry.

Zero Conditional: Used to express a general or habitual fact. In this case, the present simple tense is used in both clauses.

General fact: If I *touch* an ice cube, it *feels* cold.

Habitual fact: Whenever I *touch* an ice cube, it *feels* cold.

This form of the conditional expresses the idea that a universally known fact is being described:

If you touch a flame, you burn yourself.

The act of burning oneself only happens on the condition of the first clause being completed. However such sentences can be formulated with a variety of tenses (and moods), as appropriate to the situation (Ibid.).

2.4 First Conditional

"First conditional" refers to predictive conditional sentences; here, normally, the condition is expressed using the present tense and the consequence using the future (Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman, 1999:134).

If you make a mistake, someone will let you know.

if + present tense + future tense

It is used to make predictions about the future or to express future intentions or possibilities. In this case, the verb in the subordinate clause is in the present tense, and the main verb in the independent clause is preceded by "will" or another modal verb (might, should, may, etc.) (Ibid.).

Intention: If I win the lottery, I will go to Paris.

Possibility: If I win the lottery, I might go to Paris.

2.5 Second Conditional

"Second conditional" refers to the pattern where the condition clause is in the past tense, and the consequence in conditional mood (using would or, in the first person and rarely, should). This is used for hypothetical, counterfactual situations in a present or future time frame (where the condition expressed is known to be false or is presented as unlikely) (Ibid:137).

If + past tense + would + 1st form of verb

If I liked parties, I would attend more of them.

If it were to rain tomorrow, I would dance in the street.

The past tense used in the condition clause is historically the past subjunctive; however in modern English this is identical to the past indicative except in certain dialects in the case of the verb *be* (first and third person singular), where the indicative is *was* and the subjunctive *were*. In this case either form may be used (*was* is more colloquial, and *were* less so, although the phrase *if I were you* is common in colloquial language too) (Corder, 1981:79).

If I (he, she, it) *was/were* rich, there would be plenty of money available for this project.

The Past Subjunctive can also be used to speculate about the future result of a condition that is not true in the present. In this case, the simple past-tense verb “*were*” is used in the subordinate clause, and the main verb in the independent clause is preceded by the modal *would, could, or might* (Ibid).

Speculation: If I *were* Prime Minister, I *would* do a great job.

Speculation: If I *were* going to Paris, I *would* bring my passport.

2.6 Third Conditional

"Third conditional" is the pattern where the condition clause is in the past perfect, and the consequence is expressed using the conditional perfect. This is used to refer to hypothetical, counterfactual (or believed likely to be counterfactual) situations in the

past (Schueler ,2008:274).

if + had + would have + 3rd form of verb

If you had called me, I would have come.

2.7 Mixed Conditionals

"Mixed conditional" usually refers to a mixture of the second and third conditionals (the counterfactual patterns). Here either the condition or the consequence, but not both, has a past time reference (Ibid.).

If you had done your job properly, we wouldn't be in this mess now.

If we were soldiers, we wouldn't have done it like that.

3. Overview of English If-conditional Sentences

A typical English if-conditional sentence is "*If p, then q*". The if-clause (If-C) is the antecedent, in which the speaker states the condition of reasoning, and the then-clause (result-C) is the consequent in which the speaker states the outcome of inferences (Traugott et al., 1986:5).

English conditional sentences can be divided into sentences of real conditions and sentences of unreal conditions. The real conditionals can be further divided into those that express some type of factual relationship and those that present a predictive relationship. The unreal conditionals are used to express extremely unlikely or hypothetical situations and situations that are assumed to be contrary to known facts or counterfactual (Zhang, 2005:10-11).

As varied as the types of conditional sentences are, the English conditionals are further complicated by the use of backshifting of tense. Comrie (1986:94) defines the back shifting of tense as “the use of a morphologically past tense with present (or future) time reference and of pluperfect with past time reference.” For example, the present tense is used to refer to the future in the if-clause of future real conditional sentences (e.g. If I *have* time, I *will study* English.); the past tense is used in the hypothetical conditional to represent improbability in the present or future (e.g. If I *had* time, I *would study* English.); and the past perfect tense is used in the counterfactual conditional to refer to impossible events that didn’t happen in the past (e.g. If I *had had* time, I *would have studied* English.) .

4. Conditional Sentence in Surface Strategy Taxonomy

Grammar is theory of a language, of how language is put together and how it works. Having known the definition of grammar, it is not hard for us to understand why grammar is useful and important. Without knowing the grammar of a language, one cannot be said to have learned the language (Traugott et al., 1986:21).

Comrie (1986:125) say that conditional sentence has two parts are “if” clause and main clause. They also state that conditional sentence has three kinds or types; in which each kind contains a different pair of tenses in some variations.

According to Azzar (1999) A conditional sentence consists of “if” clause (which present condition) and a result clause. In conditional sentences “if” clause is put before main clause in order a sentence as a question's sentence. There are three types of conditional sentences. Real conditional is commonly called type I. It

describes about imagination according to the fact. Unreal conditional / type II describes just imagination or impossible happen. Conditional type III describes.

Dulay et al. (1982:150) defines surface strategy taxonomy as a classification of language errors based on how the surface structures are altered. This taxonomy includes the following error types, they are Omission are characterized by the absence of an item that must appear in a well-formed utterance. Addition errors are the opposite of omission; they are characterized by the presence of an item which must not appear in a well formed utterance. Misformation errors are characterized by the use of the wrong form of a morpheme or structure. While in omission errors the item is not supplied at all, in misformation errors the learner supplies something. Misordering refers to the incorrect placement of a morpheme or group of morphemes in an utterance.

Error analysis serves two functions: *theoretical* and *practical*. In theoretical function, error analysis is to describe the learner's knowledge of the target language at any particular moment in his learning career in order to relate this knowledge to the teaching to which he has been exposed. The theoretical aspect of error analysis is part of methodology of investigating the language learning process (Corder, 1981:45).

Conclusion

Conditional sentences are made of two clauses namely "if-case" and "main clause". Conditionals have been noted by scholars and grammarians as a difficult area of English for both teachers and learners. The two clauses of conditional sentences and their form, tense and meaning could be considered the main

difficulty of conditional sentences. English conditionals are considered complex, both cognitively and linguistically, and they can have a lot of different meanings that are conveyed using different forms.

One of the important patterns in English language is ‘conditional sentence’. It has been used to refer to a number of sentence types. Sometimes it is used as an assumption concept that encompasses all instances of delaying a sentence. Sometimes it is used interchangeably with a particular kind of sentence deferment.

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