

Anemona Niculescu

Anemona Niculescu

Grammar Is Our Friend
Explanations and Practical Applications

‘IF’ Clauses

Course support



Editura UNIVERSITARIA

Craiova, 2022

Referenți științifici:

Prof.univ.dr. Lavinia Nădrag

Conf.univ.dr. Anca Sîrbu

Copyright © 2022 Editura Universitaria

Toate drepturile sunt rezervate Editurii Universitaria

Descrierea CIP a Bibliotecii Naționale a României

NICULESCU, ANEMONA

**Grammar Is Our Friend Explanations and Practical Applications 'IF'
Clauses course support / Anemona Niculescu. - Craiova : Universitaria,
2022**

Conține bibliografie

ISBN 978-606-14-1894-7

811.111

© 2022 by Editura Universitaria

Această carte este protejată prin copyright. Reproducerea integrală sau parțială, multiplicarea prin orice mijloace și sub orice formă, cum ar fi xeroxarea, scanarea, transpunerea în format electronic sau audio, punerea la dispoziția publică, inclusiv prin internet sau prin rețelele de calculatoare, stocarea permanentă sau temporară pe dispozitive sau sisteme cu posibilitatea recuperării informațiilor, cu scop comercial sau gratuit, precum și alte fapte similare săvârșite fără permisiunea scrisă a deținătorului copyrightului reprezintă o încălcare a legislației cu privire la protecția proprietății intelectuale și se pedepsesc penal și/sau civil în conformitate cu legile în vigoare.

Acest suport de curs are scopul de a-i ajuta pe studenți să realizeze că, oricât de multe cuvinte ai ști într-o limbă anume, asta nu te poate ajuta să te exprimi corect în limba respectivă, în scris, sau să te faci pe deplin înțeles, în comunicare. Gramatica e cheia comunicării corecte, în orice limbă.

Introduction

When teaching a foreign language, a teacher has to compare that specific language with the students' mother tongue so that he/she can make sure that every single explanation is understood correctly and completely by them.

Teaching English to Romanian students requires not only comparisons between the two languages but also lots of examples, applications and translations.

We think that the most difficult part of the English grammar for the Romanian students is the one that makes reference to the subordinate clauses.

If the Romanian students who want to learn English do not get accustomed to thinking directly in English and choose to translate into English their Romanian phrases, sentences, ideas or thoughts this will certainly lead to unacceptable grammatical errors.

We thought of helping our students understand the use of the sequence of tenses in English complex clauses so that they can make themselves understood correctly by everybody when they are using the English language.

The subordinate clause we have chosen to explain to our students in this course is IF-Clause:

1. 'If' Clause Type I
2. 'If' Clause Type II
3. 'If' Clause Type III
4. Expressions specific to the conditional clause
5. Exceptions to the rule

In this course, we decided to use as many examples as we think there are necessary for a common student to understand completely this part of the English grammar so that they may use it accurately both in speaking and in the oral communication.

The most difficult subordinate clause to learn seems to be the Conditional one for the Romanian students so we have decided to start with it. If they have understood it, they will understand any other English subordinate clause.

It is difficult to cover all the information about a subordinate clause, especially about if-clause, so we have decided to focus only on the most

important things, absolutely necessary for a better understanding of this grammatical problem.

We are going to start by writing some general information about the conditional clauses in short, and then we will take every type of conditionals and every specific thing about them in turns, and speak about them thoroughly.

General information about conditionals

If- clauses are usually introduced by the following words: if, even if, if only, unless, as long as, in case, provided (that), suppose, supposing (that).

Unless is used in negative conditions. It means 'if not' but it is used for emphasizing.

e.g.: The student will not be able to meet his new colleagues unless they give him their phone number. ‘ ‘

In conditional clauses inversion may occur when **IF** is omitted.

e.g.: If we had arrived later, we might have missed the train.

Had we arrived later, we might have missed the train.

If they were at university now, we should greet them.

Were they at university now, we should greet them.

'If clauses' can be made more uncertain if we use **SHOULD** + short Infinitive.

Inversion is usually needed in such cases.

e.g.: If it is rainy tomorrow, we will not go to the beach.

Should it be rainy tomorrow, we will not go to the beach.

WILL in the first type of sentences and **WOULD** in the second one are used to express willingness in conditional sentences, but only with the first person in the singular or plural.

WOULD may also be used in the first type of conditional clause to express politeness.

e.g.: If you will/would help me carry my luggage, I will be happy.

Such constructions as: *if it were not for...*, *if it had not been for...*, *but for...* are used to replace the 'if clauses'.

e.g.: But for his deskmate's help, he would repeat this school year.

If it were not for his deskmate's help, he would repeat this school year.

If it had not been for his deskmate's help, he would not have become a winner.

Besides the situations that have already been mentioned, there are also mixed types of conditionals. e.g.:

If they had studied harder, today they would be outstanding specialists.

If he were not so handsome, the director would never have offered him that part in the movie.

REAL CONDITION

- If + Present Simple + Will

If you drink all the cola, you'll get ill!

If + Can / Can't + V

If they cannot solve these issues, they will not be able to go to university.

If you've finished reading the book, I'll take you to the cinema to see the film.

If you're going to borrow that book, I'll help you understand the plot.
If you're going to the park, I'll accompany you!

Could and **might** can be placed in the second clause.

If I can pay for everything, could you sell me all the toys?

If you've finished reading the first two chapters, you can start writing your essay.

If it snows today, we're going to watch a good film on TV.

If you're going to sell your old house, make sure you find a good new one first.

If you're going to the seaside, you'd better put thin clothes in your luggage!

If our team scores now, that could be our chance to go to the semifinals!

Will in if clauses

- **Will** can mean **insist on**, and won't- **refuse to**.

If you will buy that house, of course you will need very much money!

If you won't solve this issue, bigger issues are going to appear.

- If + will/ would to express polite requests.

If you will just listen to her, she will help you at once.

If you would just sign here, I will give you the papers you need.

If + Past simple + would shows imaginary situations with impossible results.

If water did not boil at 100 degrees Celsius and freeze under zero degrees, there would not be any evaporation or ice.

Could/ might = would when there is modality in the sentence.

If we registered for that contest, we could win the race.

If + Past Perfect + Would to express an impossible condition.

Passive forms are usually used.

If the doctors had been more prepared for this kind of situations, more people would have been saved.

If the wind had not been so strong, it would not have destroyed so many houses.

Could have/ might have = would have

If the car had been racing at higher speed, it might have won the race or crashed.

Mixed Conditions

If + Past Perfect + Would have + V3

If she had not had that accident, she would not be in hospital.
If you hadn't woken up in time, you'd probably be late for work!

If + Past Simple + Would + V3

If they weren't so careful, they'd have lost it; their money.
If she was a better singer, she would have won the contest.

REAL CONDITIONALS

If + Present Simple, + Present Simple

If there is an economic issue, the economists solve it fast.

If + Past Simple, + Past Simple

Before schools were opened, if young people wanted to learn, they had to ask an old wise man to help them.

If + Present Simple, + Will + V

If we don't take good care of our pets, they will get ill.

UNREAL CONDITIONALS

If + Past Simple, + Would + V

If they were in another country, they would have less time for themselves.

If + had + V3, Would have + V3

If we had arrived sooner, we would have seen the beginning of the play.

REAL CONDITIONS

Many other patterns can be used in the main clause and in if clause:

If + going to, + will + V

If we are going to help poor people, we will need to ask for the specialists' help.

If + present simple, + might + V

If the government closes the schools, they might prevent young people from learning in an organized environment.

If + present simple, + present continuous

If you think letting children unsupervised, you are not taking into account what they can do.

Will does not usually appear in if-clauses, however, it can appear in certain situations:

- when talking about a result in the main clause:
- when wanting to strongly disapprove of something.

Well, if you will scold a child before listening to what he has to say, him being rude is not surprising!

Unreal conditionals

We can replace would with other modals in the main clause, as we explained earlier in this paper:

If they had studied harder, they might have passed the test.

Would is not usually used in the if-clause:

If we had more money, we would be able to buy that expensive car.

Mixed conditionals

If+ past tense, would have + V3

If he were not so rude, he would have had many friends in school.

if + past perfect, would + V

If their teacher had been more careful, those two children would not have started a fight.

If I were you ... to give advice.

If ... not/unless

In sentences in which the meaning is 'except', if the condition is real, either **unless** or **if... not** can be used.

Unless/if we go to school every day, we do not have to learn on our own at home.

if ... not (not **unless**):

- when an action or event is unexpected, in the main clause:

They will be confused if they do not get the first prize as everybody knows they are the best in the class.

- in questions, generally:

How will doctors be able to diagnose correctly if they do not practise enough before starting working as doctors?

- the meaning is 'because ... not' (not 'except if'):

If universities don't have the money for scholarships, more students will give up applying to them.

- in unreal conditional sentences:

If we didn't have cinemas, most people would never see a film other than on TV.

- We use **unless** (not **if ... not**) when an **afterthought** is present:

We must have info labs if we want children to learn more about computers - unless their families have enough money to buy them one.

Even if and **even though**

even if = whether or not

even though = despite the fact that:

Even if some brilliant children live in poor families, it is not fair to let them in that situation.

Even though they insist that they help poor children, they are still interested in making money out of it.

Other conditional expressions

Many other expressions are used to introduce conditional clauses:

They are all in favour of state schools **provided (that) / providing (that)** most of the children can afford to pay for the study in a private school.

So long as / As long as well trained tennis women win a lot of money, there will always be young girls willing to practise this sport.

They are ready to help you **on condition that** you do not waste time anymore.

In the event of fire, students should leave the university immediately.

Supposing your suggestion is not taken into account, what will you decide?

A gunfire will be heard **in case of** people being attacked in the street.

Pets should be taken good care of, **otherwise** more animals will become extinct.

But for the importance of education, many people would never have become good professionals.

Things to be taken into account

Contrasts:

present + present for what is always true

If I read late at night, my eyes ache.

If the rain is falling, it means the soil gets wet.

past + past for what was always true

We always did our homework if we were asked by the teachers. (if = when)

If the rain was falling, we stayed indoors.

present + will (for real situations)

If she go on driving at high speed, she will get directly to hospital.

past + would (hypothetical situations)

If she knew his address, she would write to him.

(Be = were in all persons)

past perfect + would have + V3

If they had known that you were leaving, they would have seen you off at the railway.

Modals

If you are late, you **should** apologize to the teacher.

If they come home, we **can** solve the issues sooner.

If she had time, she **could** meet them.

If I hadn't met you, I **might have** got lost.

If only (for emphasis and regret)

If only I had enough money!

If only I hadn't slept too much, I wouldn't have missed the film!

Unless (only if not)

Just some of **if** clauses can be **unless** sentences.

If she were not told by her teacher, she could not have found out.

Unless she were told by her teacher, she could not have have found out.

If your brother does not return, he will inform you. (unless is not possible)

IF can be supplanted by **provided, only if, so long as, as long as**.

I will help you provided you do not tell our neighbour about it.

Even if

Even if it does not snow, we will still go to the mountains.

past perfect + would

If our father had not missed the train, he would be present at the meeting.

Other tenses in conditional sentences

1 Going to

Going to = will/ intend to

If you eat too much, you are going to become fatter.

If you are going to steal the vase, they will tell the teacher.

Present perfect (anteriority)

If you have written your project, then you can hand it in to your teacher.

Doubt

They would not be surprised if he missed the plane. (they think he will miss the plane.)

Should (uncertainty)

If you should meet Dan, could you ask him to phone me?

Were to (more uncertain)

If he were to ask you to marry him, would you accept?

Happen to = should happen to

If you happen to go to the library, could you buy a book for me too?

If it were not for

If it were not for his grandfather, he would not know almost anything about the Second World War.

If it hadn't been for

If it had not been for his girl friend, he would have missed the webinar.

Will (for polite forms)

If you will sign in this file, I will give you the certificate at once.

Would (for polite forms)

If you would help me with this luggage, I would open the door for you immediately.

If = suppose/supposing (spoken English)

Suppose you win much money, what would you do with it?

If not = But for (formal English)

If they had not helped you, you would not be a teacher now.

But for their help, you would not be a teacher now.

If + adjectives

If necessary, buy one more loaf of bread.

Otherwise = if not

Write your project faster otherwise you will get a bad mark.

If you do not write your project faster, you will get a bad mark.

if only (to emphasise **if**/ for exclamations)

If only they had helped her!

even if (to emphasise **if**)

Even if his best friend asked him to lend her some money, he would not help her.

'IF' Clauses

Some grammarians separate this conditional from the first type, but it usually appears in the first type conditional, as we can see later in this paper.

Zero Conditional (the general conditional)

Main Clause

Present Simple

Your plants die very quickly if you do not take care of them.

Other present tenses are possible, either Present Perfect Tense or Present Continuous Tense, in the two sentences:

Old meat is dangerous to use if it has not been preserved in a good refrigerator.

If she is singing at a restaurant, she always invites me there.

Modal verbs can also be used, especially **can** and **may**:

Old meat can be very risky to use if it has not been kept in a good refrigerator.

If they can see this, they are on the same road as I am!

Subordinate Clause

Present Simple

If and **when** are interchangeable in this situation:

If / When they drink something very cold, their throat suffers.

The zero conditional also shows actions with the same result:

If one shouts very loudly, it will make them hoarse.

Type I or First Conditional

The condition is real.

Different present tenses can be used in this type of condition:

If they are going on E 15, they will find both toilets and bridges.

If the marks they get in the exams are high, the university is going to accept their applications.

Modal verbs can be used both in the main clause and in the subordinate one, especially **can**, **may** and **should**:

If the government **can** keep the prices low, they **may** win the people's trust.

If the football team goes on playing so well, they **should** win the championship.

Future forms are not used in an **if clause**:

X If the bus will arrive in time tonight, we will catch the plane.

V If the bus arrives in time tonight, we will catch the plane.

When **will** or **will not** express willingness or refusal they can be used in conditional sentences, after **if**.

The government will fine all the drivers if they **won't obey the new rules**.

The first type of conditional can be used to express:

Commands (imperative in the main clause):

If you finish your paper, go and hand it in!

Don't close all the windows if you are not asked to.

Offers: I can help you with the luggage if you cannot raise that suitcase.

Suggestions: Shall we see a movie in the park if it is fine this afternoon?

Warnings: I'll tell your wife if you continue cheating on her!

Omitting IF (formal)

Should you need further information, we will be glad to help you.

Main Clause

Subordinate Clause

Present

Future > _____ > **Present Tense**

Imperative

Present Perfect Tense

- If we have a present time (Present, Future, Imperative) in the main clause, we will use Present Tense or Present Perfect in the subordinate clause.
- Present Time means all the tenses that contain the word Present in their name.
- We will use the Present Perfect Tense only if the action in the subordinate clause happens before the action in the main clause.
- The condition is real and the Conditional Clause of Type I is the only present conditional with a real condition.

Examples:

Vom merge la munte dacă va ninge serios.

We will go to the mountains if it snows heavily.

Dacă nu va ploua, ne vom petrece ziua pe plajă.

If it does not rain, we will spend our day on the beach.

Se întâlnesc în parc dacă va fi soare.

They meet in the park if it is sunny.

Deschide ușa dacă sună cineva!

Open the door if someone rings the doorbell!