

الاقترانات الشرطية المعترف بها بشكل عملي... لبنى زهير
الاقترانات الشرطية المعترف بها بشكل عملي من قبل اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية لدى
طلبة الماجستير

Conditional Conjunctions Recognized Pragmatically by EFL

Master Students

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الملخص

تبحث هذه الدراسة امكانية طلبة الماجستير الذين يدرسون اللغة الانكليزية بوصفها لغة اجنبية في قسم اللغة الانكليزية - كلية التربية الاساسية - جامعة الموصل للعام الدراسي ٢٠٢١ - ٢٠٢٢ ان يميزوا الاستخدام التداولي لأدوات العطف الشرطية في الانكليزية. تضم عينة الدراسة اثنا عشر طالبا". تتضمن الدراسة محورين: النظري والعملي. يتناول المحور النظري اعطاء نظرة موجزة عن ادوات العطف بصورة عامة و تفاصيل دقيقة عن ادوات العطف الشرطية بصورة خاصة. كما تناولت الدراسة ادوات العطف الشرطية من منظور التداولية ، وغيرها من المحتويات في محاولة لتغطية الجانب النظري. ويتضمن الجانب العملي استبيان من تأليف الباحث والذي يحتوي على عشر شرطية جمل وزعت على الطلبة، والمطلوب استخدام اداة العطف الشرطي المعطى بين قوسين امام كل جملة. اظهرت نتائج الدراسة ان من المهام الصعبة لطلبة الدراسات العليا ان يميزوا ادوات العطف الشرطية في اللغة الانكليزية.

Abstract

This study investigates how students of Master degree at the Department of English - College of Basic Education – University of Mosul, for the academic year 2021-2022, recognize conditional conjunctions pragmatically. Samples of the study are 12 MA students who study English as a foreign language. This study contains two main parts: theoretical part and practical part. The theoretical part includes a short introduction on conjunctions in general, and conditional conjunctions in particular. In this part, conditional conjunctions from the perspective of pragmatics are tackled. The practical part includes a self - administered questionnaire. The questionnaire consists of 10 questions in the form of conditional sentences and it requires the use of a given conditional conjunction between parentheses in front of each sentence. The results show that it is a difficult task for the MA students considered in this study to recognize the conditional conjunctions pragmatically.

1. Introduction

As it is well known that conditional sentences are made of two main entities; "if-clause" which is called an antecedent p and " main-clause" which is called a consequent (Dancygier and Mioduszezwska, 1984:122). Conditional sentences in their roles involve terms and contents which show case of conditionality. Conditional conjunctions are used to express conditionality. In the last few decades, linguists and grammarians have broadly debated their they are used to describe hypothetical situations . (Traugott, et al. 1986; Carston,R..1994:3). The difficulty of recognizing and expressing conditional conjunctions lies in the in the fact that the interpretation of such expressions depends mainly on the social context in which they are used. The pragmatic implication of each conditional conjunction is hard to understand.

2. Aims of the study

The research aims at:

- 1- Explaining the structure and use of conditional conjunctions
- 2- Investigating students' pragmatic use of conditional conjunctions.

3. Hypotheses of the study:

The current study hypothesizes that:

- 1- If misunderstanding of conditional sentence semantically occurs, unacceptable results will be the result.
- 2- Pragmatic use of conditional conjunctions is difficult for students.

4. Background of Conditional Conjunctions in English

Conditional conjunctions are regarded complex, both cognitively and linguistically .Complexity of conditional conjunctions is due to the reliance of one situation on the fulfillment of another. In addition , there is a big obstacle and difficulty in acquiring conditionals by learners of English as a foreign language since it is hard to specify the conditional meaning of the sentence . Norris, et al., 2003:39-50 and

Ramires, et al.,2005:192-230 state that the main conditional subordinators are the following:

A- if (if - clause could either positive or negative condition)

B- unless (unless – clause which is always negative condition especially in clauses which starts with it, the stress on the excluding positive option, and occupation of assertive forms.

Leech and Svartvik (1994:108), Unubi (2019:206) state that there are additional conditional conjunctions; they are either simple or compound in form . They are approximately synonymous with "provided that". They are: long as, so long as, on condition that, provided that.

There are three kinds of if - clauses in English (Quirk et al,2004:325) .They are summarized as follows:

A: Type one, it is used to denote possibility . The condition is very likely to be fulfilled in future with 80%. The following example participates in approaching the proposed percentage,

1- If Johnson studies, he will pass the exam.

The main structure of type 1 is: if - clause is + the simple present tense, will(modal) + infinitive.

B: Type two, it is called 'the unreal event' .It is used to express" wish" (Eastwood,1994:335).The possibility of fulfilling the condition is 58%.

The form of this type is: if - clause + simple past tense, would + infinitive.

2- If Johnson studied, he would pass the exam.

C: Type three, it is called " the imaginary event". The possibility of fulfilling the condition is 1%. It refers to the disability of the condition to be happened.(Eastwood:ibid)

The form is: if - clause +past perfect tense, would + have + past participle, for example:

3- If Johnson had studied, he would have passed the exam.

It is worth mentioning that "zero conditional" (Cause and Effect) is used to express scientific facts, rules, and certainties.

The form of zero conditional is (If – clause+ present , present) (Nekoueizadeh and Bahrani et al.,2013;253-267),as in:

4- If water boils, bacteria dye.

5- If they make a promise, they keep it.

4.1.Theoretical Account on Additional Conditional Conjunctions

Grammarians such as Leech and Svartvik (1994) and Unubi (2019) state that there are additional conditional conjunctions. They vary in their forms ; some of them consist of one word, others consist of two words (compound). The forthcoming represents summarized account on all these additional conditional conjunctions.

A: Unless

This conjunction has two cases; the first one is unless + affirmative .It equals in meaning to " if + negative". The second one is not always can be used when an unreal condition comes before the main clause, and there is possibility to use " unless "after the main clause,(Leech and Svartvik, 1994:108), as in:

6- Rose and children are going to have a picnic, unless Johnson has a meeting. (if Johnson doesn't have a meeting).

7- The player fell. If she had not fallen, she would have won the race.

Not unless she had fallen, she would have won. (negative + negative)

" Unless' may be used after the main clause, as an afterthought.

8-The player won easily. No one could have overtaken him, unless he had fallen.

B: In case

According to Leech and Svartvik(ibid), this conditional conjunction is called "a future condition" .It is used to prepare the listener for possible future events:

9- Call emergency, in case you feel ill at the home.

10- "I had to watch where I put my feet in case I fell" (ibid)

C: On condition that

This conjunction is used to impose limits on a situation or a person's agreement, for example:

11- Johnson agreed to lend you one million on condition that you return it within one year.(Leech and Svartvik,1994:108)

D: Provided that

The conditional conjunction (provided that) is used to impose "strength" in expressing a strong conditionality, as in:

12- Provided that they had plenty to eat and drink, the crew happy.

13- Johnson can stay here, provided that he leaves no mess.

E: so / as long as

It is used to emphasize the condition which surrounds the action:

14- Johnson 'll go as long as the weather is good.

Confusion often occurs with "conjunctions of concession" which are "Even if" and "Only if". They are without any doubt among the class of conjunctions which express concession (Quirk, 1985:446). They are not classified within tools of conditional conjunctions.

5. Conditional Conjunctions from Pragmatic Perspective

This section is devoted to shed light on how conditional conjunctions are interpreted from the perspective of pragmatics(what is called a pragmatic category of conditional conjunctions). More precisely, it focuses on how speakers express and use conditional conjunctions in discourse. It is an attempt to combine the notion of conditionality to what is acceptable and unacceptable in a certain society. In other words, conditional conjunctions pragmatically is the notion which shows combination between conditionality and the property to expresses thoughts. Simultaneously, pragmatics has a role

in determining whatever information is relevant and accounts for the linguistic properties and criteria of what is rational and acceptable in utterance of the speaker and in the way he / she said (Bach and Harris, 1979) .

It is axiomatic that the conditional meaning in discourse (pragmatic perspective) includes the constant truth: " if Q then P " in the light of thoughts and behavior which are acceptable and permitted socially. Conditionality will be constrained by a truth – conditioned treatment (Jimaima, 2014:88). Speakers use conditionality to affect their listeners beliefs and thoughts. They impose their hypothetical thinking on their listeners . Conditionals in such a sense are used as a device of persuasion and dissuasion. For example, the possibilities resulted in using the conditional "if" may shape the listener's thinking on possible future consequences .

5.1. A Pragmatic Classification of Conditional Relation:

This sections illustrates how conditional relation can be classified pragmatically. Angeliki et al., 1996:99 presents a classification of conditional relations in the form of four categorizations:

A- Identifying B- Inferencing C- Performative D- Meta – communicative

There is no doubt that each kind has its functional and meaningful function. All of them work together to achieve coherent, cohesive content. The following example can participate in clarifying these kinds:

15- If Tom and William wait some minutes, they will get the result.

In the above sentence, if any condition or kind is missed, the pragmatic condition will be unacceptable and wrong. However, linguists focus on the condition of meta communicative act which is done by commenting on the main sentence (ibid: 106). In other words, the pragmatic classification of conditional relation means the

interpretation of the communicative purposes that a speaker produces through his speech or writing. Hence, many problems could occur pragmatically because understating communication is a complex task.

Murcia and Freeman, 1999:558-559 point out that a sentence which expresses a conditional attitude has three pragmatic functions or types. These types are the following:

A- Type of polite courtesy.

B-Type of ironic and sarcastic.

C- Repetition of the same part of a compound sentence to perform the same function .

To illustrate what has been mentioned above, the following examples are useful:

16- If you think quietly, you will find the solution. (type of polite courtesy)

17- "If he is intelligent, then I am Albert Einstein" (type of ironic and sarcastic)

18- If they are not travelling, they are not travelling. (repetition)

The above examples show clearly the role of "Speaker's intention" in adding different interpretation to conditional sentences.

6. The Pragmatic Functions of Conditional Conjunctions

Green et al,1989:106 state that different uses of an expression are best explained by one piece of linguistic information combined with extra linguistic information .The explanation is restricted to those aspects of use that are directly related to acts of communication including perlocutionary acts as argued by Bach and Harnish, 1979: 123. Here, pragmatic information is concerned with the facts in speaker's utterance of a sentence. The hearer thus seeks to identify the speaker's intention in making the utterance. In other words, the hearer seeks to explain the fact of what speaker said, the way he said it.

Because the intention is communicative, the hearer's task of identifying is driven partly by the assumption that the speaker intends him to do this. The speaker succeeds in communicating if the hearer identifies his intention in this way, for communicative intentions are intentions whose fulfillment consists in their recognition (Ibid:150).

Young (1989) classifies conditionality in general from the viewpoint of the speech Act theory. He combines between speaker's intention and the circumstances in which the utterance is made in his analysis of the utterances. Levinson (1983) supports Young's classification, he suggests that the principle of pragmatic modulation concerns the effects on interpretation of the linguistic context of an utterance, its social and physical situation, background knowledge, and conventions of discourse (cited in Fintel et al, 2012:466 - 477). Again speaker's intention and criteria of society appear in explaining pragmatically what can be uttered or produced by a speaker or writer.

6. Methodology

In order to achieve the practical part of this study, the researcher used a self-administered questionnaire to collect data for the purpose of this study. The questionnaire was designed to study whether MA students who study English as a foreign language in the academic year 2021-2022 are able to recognize conditional conjunctions or not. 12 postgraduates at the Department of English / college of Basic Education /University of Mosul participated in this study. The time given to answer the questions was one hour.

6.1 Questionnaire Structure

The questionnaire consists of 10 general conditional sentences. It has been distributed to participants to answer after explaining what is a required. The conditional sentences were designed carefully and deliberately related to the purpose of the research . The required questions mainly focuses on using a number of conditional

conjunctions given between parentheses without changing the semantic meaning of the sentences. The instructions have been put as: Rewrite the following sentences using the given conditional conjunctions between parentheses in front of each, keeping the same meaning of each sentence before using conditional conjunctions(see Appendix)

6.2 Results and Discussion

This section shows the finding and discussion of data obtained by a questionnaire. It contains two tables; the first one shows the percentages of correct and incorrect answers, while the second one shows mistakes committed by the subjects and clarifies the reasons. Discussion and interpretation of the results has been presented in detail.

Table (1)

The Percentage of Correct and Incorrect answers of the Test

No. of Item	The Percentage of Correct Answers	The Percentage of Incorrect Answers
1	8%	92%
2	17%	83%
3	8%	92%
4	33%	67%
5	0%	100%
6	8%	92%
7	8%	92%
8	0%	100%
9	8%	92%
10	0%	100%

It is clear from Table 1 above that participants who are 12 MA students diverse in answering the questions. However, the majority of the participants failed in giving the right answer to sentences 1, 3, 6, 7, and 9, only one student from the sample answered correctly. The situation is not different concerning sentence 2, where the possibility of correct answer was so limited. Also one student from the sample managed to answer correctly. Concerning sentences 5, 8 and 10, unfortunately there was not any correct answer to them. On the contrary, the highest correct answer appears in sentence 4, where four students of the sample succeeded in answering it correctly. The following reading organizes and summarizes how to read the results according to the percentages of the results from zero to the highest score:

Sentence 5	zero answer
Sentence 8	zero answer
Sentence 10	zero answer

Sentence 1	1 correct answer
Sentence 3	1 correct answer
Sentence 6	1 correct answer
Sentence 7	1 correct answer
Sentence 9	1 correct answer

Sentence 2	2 correct answer
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Sentence 4	4 correct answer
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In general, as it has already mentioned above and in the light of given percentages in Table 1, all students did not manage to answer a questionnaire completely, and at the same time the highest percentage of correct answer occurs noticeably in sentence 4. This shows the

weakness of all students in understating "conditional conjunctions" in English and the pragmatic use of them. Although their pragmatic use depends on a constant truth like a rule in mathematics, students failed in getting the correct situation.

Table (2)

The mistakes committed by EFL Master Students and their interpretation

No. of Item	Mistakes
1	Information error + Because they don't know the structure of using (as long as)
2	Disordering error + Because they don't know the correct place of (in case)
3	Omission error + Because they don't omit the negator (not) in the sentence
4	Adding error + Because they add negation to if - clause.
5	Omission error + Because they don't omit the negator(not) the sentence
6	disordering error + Because they don't know the correct place of the conditional conjunction

No. of Item	Mistakes
7	disordering error + Because they don't know the correct place of the conditional conjunction.
8	Information error + Because they don't know what is required.
9	Omission error + Because they don't omit the negator(not)in the sentence.
10	Information error + Because they don't know the structure of using as long as

Table 2 also contains the (+) mark beside each interpretation which represents that there are additional reasons of committing mistakes. For example :

In the first sentence "If Natalya doesn't eat good quality food, she will get losing some minerals. (as long as)", the data analysis shows that only one student succeeded in answering what was required correctly. He/she produced a rational pragmatic sentence in using the conditional condition (as long as). Most of students ignore how to use the conditional conjunction (as long as) in a correct order syntactically and pragmatically. Their mistakes occur in breaking the right pattern of the sentence when they used (as long as) .

Concerning the second sentence "William and Kath agreed to return what they stole if the court and jurisdiction grant them innocent.

(in the case)", six students out of ten put the conditional conjunction (in the case) at the beginning of the main clause, two students added (not) to the conditional conjunction, while one of them omitted the conditional "if ". Students produced a clumsy achievement which is pragmatically refused.

The third sentence "The charming doctor said she will not operate a surgery if patient's family don't sign on documents. (provided that)", seven students omitted the negation in main clause. On the contrary, four students omitted the negation in if- clause .Ten students produced formally unacceptable sentences.

Sentence No. 4, "The contractor will give you a higher wage if you work four extra hours a day".(on the condition that),has been answered differently. Four students out of twelve managed to do what is required correctly which is the highest percentage among all sentences in the questionnaire. The majority of mistakes appear in putting the negator (not) after the verb " work " in if – clause. The remaining students committed a mistake in putting (if) at the beginning of the sentence and putting (not) after (that) in conditional conjunction (on the condition that).

Concerning the fifth sentence, "The economy of the institution will go down if the last project doesn't carry on land. (unless)". All students failed in using the conditional conjunction correctly. They wrongly keep (not) in if – clause "the last project doesn't carry on land". Furthermore, the students use (if) and (unless) together in the main clause. Pragmatically, the students completely misunderstood the acceptable convention and rational expression before and after using the conditional conjunction (unless).

The sixth sentence "Judith could spend 170\$ every hour if she likes". How much does she spend in a year? (suppose that / supposing

that)". One student succeeded in answering the question correctly. However, seven students put the conditional conjunction in question in the right position. Four students misunderstood the requirements of the question.

The seventh sentence "If I had studied harder, I could have passed the exam. (on condition that)". Only one student managed to produce a pragmatically correct sentence by using the given conditional conjunction (on condition that). The pragmatic interpretation of the sentence could be one of the following:

- 1- Failure is expected because questions are difficult,
- 2- Failure is resulted despite the student's punctuality.
- 3- Continuous studying does not mean success at the exam

Some of the students put the conditional condition at the end of the sentence, others simply don't change anything in the sentence.

Concerning the eighth sentence "The team agree to play if all expenses are paid. (provided that)". Four students added (not) before the main clause, three of them used the conditional conjunction (provided that) within (if) clause, others used the conditional conjunctions with negation word (not) in both clauses; if- clause and the main clause.

The ninth sentence "Tressa's daughter doesn't speak to anyone if she isn't asked to. (unless)". One student succeeded in using 'unless' correctly. The sentence is conceived pragmatically as "the politeness of Tressa's daughter ,her respect to the restrictions of conversation and to accepted behavior . The majority of the participants did not omit (not) in conditional clause. Some students changed the tense of the sentence to the past, others put the conditional conjunction (unless) within "if clause".

The tenth sentence "They would travel abroad if the living conditions were available there. (as long as)". All students failed to use the

conditional conjunction correctly . Five of the them put (as long as) after the subject (they) in the main clause. Pragmatically, the sentence is interpreted as the following:

- 1- an opportunity to live abroad where conditions of high life are available
- 2- a chance to improve life of family by travelling abroad.

The results show considerable weakness in students 'recognition of conditional conjunctions pragmatically due to the cultural differences between English and Arabic languages .The leaner of English should conceive the concept of "conditionality' in which the participants show lack of knowledge. Furthermore, the students should be aware of the pragmatic functions of conditional conjunctions ,i.e. each conditional has a pragmatic role that governs its use in the sentence .

7- Conclusions

The conclusions have been drawn in analyzing the data:

1- Most of the students fail in using conditional conjunctions correctly. They are obviously encountering problems in cognitive sentences syntactically and semantically. As a result, they are unable to answer and re - write sentences in the light of what have been required.

2-The majority of the students produce meaningless sentences. Mistakes diverse between syntactic errors and semantics errors. Syntactic errors appear in omitting the subject of the main clause, or adding the negation word (not) to some words or verbs or conditional conjunctions in the sentences .Pragmatically, sentences containing conditional conjunctions could be hardly perceived by the students which is probably due to the communicative nature of such conjunctions. In addition, they are unable to predict the meaning of these conjunctions from the meaning of the context of the sentence as a whole.

3- This study confirms what has been known about the relationship between syntax, semantics and pragmatics. This relation is clear through handling the results and analyzing them. Interpretation and discussion of ability of students to use conditional conjunctions cannot be done in absence one of branches of linguistics: syntactic, semantics, pragmatics.

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Appendix

Rewrite the Following Sentences using the given conditional conjunctions between parentheses in front of each, keeping the same meaning of each sentence before using the conditional conjunction:

1. If Natalya doesn't eat good quality food, she will get losing some minerals.(as long as)
2. William and Kath agreed to return what they stole if the court and jurisdiction grant them innocent.(in the case)
3. The charming doctor said she would not operate a surgery if patient's family don't sign on documents. (provided that)
4. The contractor will give you a higher wage if you work four extra hours a day.(on the condition that)
5. The economy of the institution will go down if the last project doesn't carry on land.(unless)
6. Judith could spend 170\$ every hour if she likes. How much does she spend in a year? .(suppose/supposing that)
7. The questions of the exam were hard .If I had studied harder ,I could have passed the exam.(on condition that)
8. The team agree to play if all expenses are paid.(provided that)
9. Tressa's daughter doesn't speak to anyone if she isn't asked to.(unless)
- 10.They would travel abroad if the living conditions were available.(as long as).