

# CONDITIONALITY AS A FUNCTIONAL-SEMANTIC CATEGORY OF THE RUSSIAN LANGUAGE

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## Abstract

This article analyzes the means of expressing conditionality in modern Russian. It examines grammatical, lexical-semantic, and syntactic methods of expressing conditional relations, including conjunctive constructions and adverbial forms, and clarifies the role of structural models in complex sentences.

**Keywords:** Conditionality, conditional relations, means of expression, conjunctive constructions, semantics, syntax, Russian language.

## Introduction

The study of the category of condition in linguistics aims to establish connections between objective phenomena, where the connection itself takes the form of means of expressing conditionality – these means possess a symbolic nature, are structured according to grammatical laws, and constitute a material representation of complex judgments. Manifesting itself in sentences with a conditional meaning, this connection reflects syntactic relations between events and situations, where one expresses the conditioning factor and the other – the dependent, conditioned element. In this regard, sentences in which conditional relations are realized belong to sentences with a conditional meaning [1, p. 263], but the connection itself has the character of direct conditionality, since conditionality presupposes the presence of a predetermining and a predetermined component.

The primary form of expressing conditional meaning at the level of a simple sentence is the prepositional-case form of a noun and a phrase comprising two components between which a relationship of direct conditionality is established. At the level of a simple compound sentence, the signal for conditional meaning is a detached clause element that enters into a relationship of direct conditionality with a component from the main clause. At the level of a complex sentence, conditional relationships are realized between the predicative parts of a polypredicative construction.

A complex sentence is the syntactic unit of the functional-semantic field of condition, where the nature of conditional relationships is most clearly manifested. The functional-semantic field is a term from functional grammar that refers to groupings of linguistic elements at various levels of language that interact based on the commonality of their semantic, morphological, and syntactic functions [1, pp. 18-191]. Like any field, it has a center and a periphery. Peripheral elements include prepositional-case forms of nouns with a conditional meaning and semi-



predicates with conditional semantics. The center of the field consists of complex sentences with conditional relationships between predicative parts, namely: subordinate clauses with a conditional clause, compound sentences with conditional relationships, and coordinate complex sentences with conditional relationships.

In a complex sentence, the conditional clause indicates the condition upon which the fulfillment of what is stated in the main clause depends. There are two types of situations: the subordinate clause expresses a real-potential condition, and the subordinate clause expresses an unreal condition [4, p. 26]. Conditional clauses are attached to the main clause using conjunctions and conjunction combinations: *if, if only, in the event that, in the case that, in the event that, in the event that, provided that, provided that, provided that, provided that, when, if, if only, if only, if only, if only, as soon as*. The subordinate clause generally answers the question “under what condition?” In conditional clauses, the second part may be “that”, “so”, “here”, or “then”, but it is optional. It adds stylistic and other nuances to the sentence: “that” is neutral; “then” is temporal; “so” and “here” are colloquial and informal. The order of the clauses in a complex sentence with a conditional subordinate clause is in most cases flexible; however, if the main clause uses demonstrative pronouns that form a pair with the conjunction “if” (*if..., then; if..., so; if..., then*), the subordinate clause is placed at the beginning of the sentence. For example: “And if they tell stories and sing, you know, those stories about cunning men and soldiers, with their endless praise of trickery ...” [2, p. 15].

In some sentences, the conditional meaning may be weakened or lost entirely. At the same time, additional meanings often emerge. A causal meaning arises when the emphasis is placed on the reality of what is happening. In such cases, the combinations “if only” or “if at all”, as well as the conjunction “since”, are frequently used. In the subordinate clause of sentences with the conjunctions “if” and “since”, the words “therefore”, “apparently”, “means”, as well as colloquial expressions such as “it follows”, “it stands to reason”, “it must be”, “obviously”, and “it means” may be used. Here, a basis sufficient for the conclusion in the main clause is stated, which identifies the actual cause of what is reported in the subordinate clause. For example: “He’ll come”, the sailor replied calmly, “since they told you that, it must be true” [2, p. 17]. In sentences with a subordinate clause containing the conjunctions *if, since, and that*, introductory words or phrases may be used to emphasize the subjective nature of the conclusion in the main clause (obviously, probably, apparently, presumably, must be), or the high degree of probability of what is being asserted (truly, without a doubt).

There are sentences in which the first part states a factual truth that serves as the basis for a subsequent judgment about it in the second part. In such sentences, the first part is introduced by the conjunction *if*, and the subsequent part is introduced by causal conjunctions (*because, since, due to the fact that, as, in view of the fact that, as a result of the fact that, in connection with the fact that, by virtue of the fact that, for, since*). In sentences that take the form of a rhetorical question, the main clause takes the form of a polemical negation, while the subordinate clause serves as an argument, a reason, or states a fact whose veracity is beyond doubt. In such sentences, the conjunctions *if, when, once, and while* are used.

In some sentences, two versions of the truth value of a fact are contrasted: if the main clause, formulated as a question, contains affirmative information about actual facts and casts doubt



on the truth of the information contained in the subordinate clause using the conjunctions “*if*” and “*since*”. According to the first version, as stated in the subordinate clause, the information conveyed is true. According to the other version, held by the speaker, the reliability of this information can be disputed on the grounds of inconsistency with the situation. In sentences where the main clause contains a consequence that contradicts what is expected based on the subordinate conditional clause, an additional meaning of concession arises. Such sentences are often complicated by the particle *even*, which is placed before or after the conjunction *if*, which is placed before the predicate of the subordinate clause. If the subordinate clause of such sentences precedes the main clause, then the second clause may use expressions such as *all the same*, *all the same*, *all the same*, and *then*, and *that*, which emphasize the meaning of a consequence that contradicts the condition.

Conditional relationships are similar to concessive and causal relationships. When constructing sentences with conditional relations, one should proceed from the premise that, in the syntactic opposition between condition and consequent – where the condition gives rise to the consequent – the defining feature of conditional relations is direct causality: the presence or absence of a certain event necessarily entails the presence or absence of another event. Conditional relations are based on supposition: the connection between the condition and the consequent is conceived as hypothetical. A potential condition is a possible event whose occurrence is doubtful but not ruled out. A possible event, expressed in the prepositional case, gives rise to another possible event named in the main clause. A causal relationship may also be established between two possible events. The difference between conditional and causal relationships lies in the semantics of the connection between the two phenomena: a condition implies a choice between two possible phenomena; a condition implies an alternative, whereas the cause of such an alternative does not.

The conditional prepositional-case form with the preposition “*if*” presents two potentially possible events. An unreal condition is an event that has not occurred and cannot occur. An unreal condition gives rise to an impossible event – one that is contingent and contrary to what is already known as a real fact. While in sentences with a potential condition the alternative is based on a choice between two possible situations, in sentences with an unreal condition the alternative is fundamentally different: one side of the alternative is presented as an unreal event, while the other side is a real situation known to the speaker. An unreal condition is expressed in sentences with a predicate verb in the subjunctive mood. Sentences with the subjunctive mood express conditional relations proper. Sentences in which the conditional meaning is not complicated by nuances of other grammatical meanings constitute the core of sentences with conditional relations. It is widely believed in linguistic literature that a condition characterizes only an action. Conditional relationships are indeed most often observed in verb-based sentences. However, a condition can refer to an event in which not only an action but also a state is possible.

The category of condition is manifested in a set of syntactic units that serve to express the meaning of condition. Such units include various syntactic constructions: prepositional and case forms of nouns, noun phrases, simple sentences with a conditional clause, complex



sentences with a conditional subordinate clause, and compound and coordinate complex sentences, between whose predicative parts direct conditional relationships are established.

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