UDC 801.5   *English Grammar*

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FACT, HYPOTHESIS AND NEUTRALITY IN CONVERSATIONAL ENGLISH

In conversational English when expressing our thoughts, ideas and emotions, it is very important to understand the meaning of the idea expressed, whether it is factual, hypothetical or neutral.Fact, which is sometimes used synonymously with truth or reality, is usually expressed by a finite verb, by –ing clause and by the indicative mood. Situations where neither the truth nor falsehood are assumed are called neutrality. Most yes\no questions are neutral, infinitive clauses, putative 'should' and the subjunctive mood also have neutral meaning. Hypothesis may have the meaning of supposition, proposition and is usually expressed by the past tense in dependent clauses, by 'would'+ infinitive in the main clause, in conditionals and by means of the subjunctive mood.

Key words: fact, hypothesis, neutrality, conversational, express, information, sentence, finite verb, main clause, subordinate clause, subjunctive mood, tenses, conditionals, questions, meaning

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ФАКТ, ГИПОТЕЗА И НЕЙТРАЛЬНОСТЬ В РАЗГОВОРНОМ АНГЛИЙСКОМ

Выражая свои мысли, идеи, эмоции, очень важно понять значение сказанного и определить, является ли данная фраза фактом, гипотезой или нейтральностью. 'Факт' в значении 'правда, реальность' в разговорном английском может выражаться при помощи личных форм глаголов, в придаточных предложениях и через изъявительное наклонение. Под нейтральностью подразумевается ситуация, когда не передается ни правда, и ни ложь. Нейтральность может передаваться в разговорном английском через «yes/no» вопросы, через «should»в значении «в случае если» и через сослагательное наклонение. Гипотеза может иметь смысл предположения, предложения и выражаться в речи при помощи глаголов в прошедшем времени в придаточном предложении, при помощи глагола «would» в главном предложении, в условных предложениях и при помощи сослагательного наклонения.

Ключевые слова: факт, гипотеза, нейтральность, разговорный, информация, выражать, предложение, личные глаголы, главное предложение, придаточное предложение, сослагательное наклонение, времена, вопросы, условные, значение

Ֆլորա Այվազովա,
ԱրՊՀ

ՓԱՍՏԸ, ՎԱՐԿԱԾԸ և ՉԵԶՈՔՈՒԹՅՈՒՆԸ ԽՈՍԱԿՑԱԿԱՆ ԱՆԳԼԵՐԵՆՈՒՄ

*Մտքերի, գաղափարների, զգացմունքների արտահայտման ժամանակ կարևոր է հասկանալ ասվածի նշանակությունը և որոշել, թե տվյալ արտահայտությունը փաստէ, հիպոթեզ, թե չեզորություն: **Փաստ** բառը «ճշմարտություն, իրողություն» իմաստով խոսակցական անգլերենում կարող է արտահայտվել բայի դիմավոր ձևերով, ստորադասական նախադասություններում և սահմանական եղանակով: Չեզորություն ասելով նկատի է առնվում այն իրադրությունը, երբ ոչ ճշմարտություն, ոչ էլ սուտ չի հաղորդվում: Չեզորությունը խոսակցական անգլերենում կարող է հաղորդվել «այո»/«ոչ» պատասխանների, "should" բառի «այն դեպքում, եթե» իմաստի և ենթադրական եղանակի միջոցով: Հիպոթեզը կարող է ունենալ ենթադրության իմաստ և արտահայտվել ստորադաս նախադասություններում բայի անցյալ ժամանակով, **լինել** բայի ապառնի ժամանակով` գլխավոր նախադասության մեջ, պայմանական նախադասություններում` ենթադրական եղանակով:*

Բանալի բառեր: Փաստ, հիպոթեզ, չեզորություն, խոսակցական, ինֆորմացիա (տեղեկատվություն), արտահայտել, նախադասություն, դիմավոր բայեր, գլխավոր նախադասություն, ստորադաս նախադասություն, ենթադրական եղանակ, ժամանակներ, հարցեր, պայմանական, նշանակություն:

Learning one's mother tongue is a natural process, which has been going on ever since mankind came into being. Things are quite different with mastering a foreign language: when learning it one compares it to his or her mother tongue. The most important reason to use language is that we wish to give someone some piece of information which we think he doesn't know about. In conversational English, when expressing our thoughts, ideas and emotions, it is very important to understand the meaning of the idea expressed, whether it is factual, hypothetical or neutral.

According to G.Barry the word *fact* derives from the Latin '*factum*', and was first used in English with the same meaning: 'a thing done or performed'.[1] The common usage of 'something that has really occurred or is the case' dates from the middle of the sixteenth century. Fact is sometimes used synonymously with truth or reality.

In addition to fact there is another type of situation, in which the speaker assumes neither the truth nor falsehood of a statement. Such situation is called *neutrality*. Being neutral means: being mutually acceptable to both sides, being disinterested, having no personal interest. It is important to note that neutrality has many and varied meanings and that several different understandings of neutrality are typically employed in the context of mediation. Each side is given a chance to talk about their position and concerns, and then these issues are reframed in a more neutral way so that parties are more likely to listen to and understand the other side's viewpoint.

According to E.Lehmann the *word 'hypothesis'* has the following definitions: a supposition; a proposition or principle which is supposed or taken for granted, in order to draw a conclusion or inference for proof of the point in question. A hypothesis is sometimes described as an educated guest.[2] Usually, a hypothesis can be supported or refuted through experimentation or more observation. It is considered that hypothesis is a tentative statement that proposes a possible explanation to some phenomenon or event. A useful hypothesis is a testable statement which may include a prediction. A hypothesis should not be confused with a theory. Theories are general explanations based on a large amount of data. When someone formulates a hypothesis he or she does so with the intention of testing it, and he or she does not know the outcome of potential tests before the hypothesis is made.

Now we'll speak about the grammatical forms expressing Fact, Hypothesis and Neutrality. *Fact* is considered as the issue of truth. Facts are often contrasted with opinions and beliefs. Fact is usually expressed by a finite verb clause, by –ing clause and by the indicative mood.

According to Jesperson verbs carry the idea of being or action in the sentence, they are classified in many ways. First, some verbs require an object to complete their meaning: *He wrote-? Wrote what? He wrote a letter to his mother.* Such verbs are called *transitive*. Verbs that are *intransitive* do not require objects: *The man came.*

Verbs are also classified as either *finite* or *non-finite*. A finite verb makes an assertion or expresses a state of being and can stand by itself as the main verb of a sentence: *The dog bit a boy. The day was cold and windy.* Non-finite verbs cannot, by themselves, be main verbs: *the written letter… , t*he *barking dog… .*

The basic difference between the two categories in English is that finite verbs can function on their own as the core of an independent sentence, whereas nonfinite verbs cannot. Rather, nonfinite verbs must ordinarily combine with a *modal,* an *auxiliary verb*, or infinitival particle *to*.

Finite verb: *She put a book on the table. She always puts books on the table.*

Nonfinite verb: *She is putting a book on the table. She has put a book on the table. She can put the book on the table.*

A *clause* is a part of a sentence. Some sentences have two or more clauses.

He returned to the hut, bringing in his arms a new-born lamb. (Hardy)

Bringing in his arms a new-born lamb is an -ing clause*, he returned to the hut*– main clause

When two things happen at the same time, we can use–*ing* for one of the verbs. The main clause usually comes first:

She walked on without turning her head. (Hardy)

If one short action follows another short action the simple –*ing* form can be used for the first action.

Seizing ink and writing paper, she began to write. (Galsworthy)

As we know non-finite –*ing* clauses also function as complements to express factual meaning. Syntactically they function as direct objects.

I like making people happy. (Shaw)

You must excuse my not answering you before. (Collins)

The indicative mood is the basic mood of the verb. Morphologically it is the most developed system including all the categories of the verb. It serves to present an action as a fact of reality.

The category of tense is a system of three-member opposemes such as *go-went-will go, is going-was going-will be going* showing the relation of the time of the action denoted by the verb to the moment of speech. The time of action or event can be expressed lexically with the help of such words and combinations as *yesterday, next year, now, two months ago, at a quarter past five, on the second of April, in 2010,* etc. It can also be shown grammatically by means of the category of tense.

A *hypothesis* is usually expressed by the past tense in dependent clauses (as in … *I wish I were a gipsy (*Galsworthy*)* and by *would + infinitive* in the main clauses (*I wish you would come oftener to see us (*Dreiser*)*. These two constructions can be seen respectively in the conditional sub clause and in the main clause of hypothetical conditions.[3]

*If I were to offer my home ..., my station ..., my affections ... to any one among the young women engaged in my calling, they would probably be accepted. Even readily accepted. (*Dickens)

It should be noted that *were* and *would* here have nothing with past time, reference is given to present or future time. Past time when combined with hypothesis is expressed by the perfective construction *have+ ed participle.*

If I could have offered a settlement everything would have been easy. (Gr. Greene).

A hypothesis in English can also be expressed in conditional sentences and by means of the subjunctive mood.

According to A.Downing and Ph.Locke conditional sentences are sentences discussing factual implications or hypothetical situations and their consequences. Full conditional sentences contain two clauses: the condition or protasis, and the consequence or apodosis.[4]

*If Catherine disobeys us (*condition), *we shall disinherit her* (consequence). *(Eliot)*

[1]Barry G., *Scientific Method: A Historical and Philosophical Introduction.* Publisher: Routledge 1996
[2]Lehman E.L. *Testing Statistical Hypothesis.* Cambridge: Springer; 3rd edition, 2005
[3]Leech G. Jan Svartvik. *A Communicative Grammar of English.*Prosvesheniye: 1983
[4]Downing A. and Locke Ph., *A University Course in English Grammar.* N.Y. Prentice Hall, 2002

Syntactically, the condition is the subordinate clause, and the consequence is the main clause. In English conditional sentences can be divided into the two broad classes of factual\predictive and hypothetical\counterfactual, depending on the form of the verb in the condition (protasis). The terms "factual" and "counterfactual" broadly correspond to the linguistic modalities called realis and irrealis. In these constructions the condition clause expresses a condition the truth of which is unverified.

In colloquial English, the imperative is sometimes used to form a conditional sentence: "*Call him and he will explain everything*" which means that "if you call him, he will explain everything".

The subjunctive in Modern English is distinguished in a great variety of contexts where the sense is past tense, but the form of the subjunctive verb is present. The terms *present subjunctive* and *past subjunctive* describe rather *forms* than *meaning*.

The people demand that the resignation be accepted. (Heym)

If I were ill I should like to be nursed by you. (Benett)

In the first sentence '*be accepted*' is a present subjunctive but it has no present-tense sense. In the second sentence 'were' is a past subjunctive which has no past-tense sense and instead describes a counterfactual condition. When used in such counterfactual sentences with 'if', the past subjunctive form is usually called the 'present subjunctive'.

Thus the past tense is known as the *past perfect subjunctive* or *pluperfect subjunctive* and is formed by using *had* plus the verb's past participle.

If I had consulted my own interests, I should never have come here. (Galsworthy)

To express a hypothesis the past subjunctive is used after the conjunction *if* in a contrary-to-fact and contrary-to-possibility protasis.

I should kill myself today If I didn't believe that tyranny and injustice must end. (Galsworthy)

In the same vein, the past subjunctive is used following the conjunctions *as if* and *as though* to express a contrary-to-fact situation that reality is supposed to resemble:

*He speaks as if he knew you! (*Collins)

She flushes as though he had struck her. (Shaw)

The past subjunctive is also used to express hypothetical situations : *I am tired; if I were to go to bed, I would fail the exam, but if I were to go on working, I might oversleep and miss the exam*. It can also be used to express a purpose. The conjunction *lest*, indicating a negative purpose, generally introduces a subjunctive clause: *I dreaded lest any stranger should notice me and speak to me,* (Ellot)

In conversation, both statements and questions often provoke a response. For questions, the most natural response is an answer to the question, giving the speaker the information he needs. Most *yes-no* questions are neutral as between positive and negative replies, and have words like *any, ever, yet,* etc.

Are you ready?- Yes, we are already here.

–No, we are nor ready yet.

We can use forms like *some, always, already,* etc as well, and this indicates that a positive answer to the question is expected:

*Has someone read the letter? (*Is it true that someone has read the letter?)

*Has anyone read the letter? (*neutral)

*Have you done the work already? (*Is it true that you have already done the work?)

Have you done the work yet? (neutral)

Infinitive clauses often express neutrality; *wh*-clauses, which sometimes contrast with *that*-clauses also express neutrality.

*Have you heard that David got married? (*David got married)

Have you heard weather David got married? (Please let me know)

I was told that he had returned to town.

I was told whether he had returned to town.

To the second sentence the reply would be: *Well, and did he return?*

Doubt is another verb that can be followed by either a *that*-clause or a *wh*-clause. *Not+ doubt* expresses certainty, and so takes a *that*-clause:

I doubt whether Nick will come to the meeting.

I doubt that Nick will come to the meeting.

It was mentioned above that *should* expresses a tentative condition in *if*-clauses. This is true not only for hypothetical conditions, but for open conditions as well:

Should he come this way, I will speak to him. (Ch.Bronte)

Open conditions are, in fact, another case of construction which is neutral with regard to truth and falsehood. We don't know from the last example whether or not he will come.

In other dependent clauses *should* is used neutrally, to represent something as a neutral 'idea' rather than as a 'fact'. The use of the word *should,* particularly in a subordinate clause, is used to refer tentatively to a possible situation rather than to assert the situation as fact. It is also called *emotional should*. The term is particularly applied to the use of *should* in subordinate noun clauses where *should* does not express obligation, but emphasizes reaction to a possible or presumed fact: *it's a pity, it is said… .*

The fact is that the situation will be improved.

The idea is that that the situation should be improved.

But whether the situation will be improved or not is not known.

In conversational English the subjunctive mood has neutral meaning as well. It can be used:

-In some *that*-clause, where the clause expresses intention: *... she insisted that they open a bottle of wine and toast his success. (Stone)*

-In some conditional and contrast clauses*: Whatever be the reason for it, they must leave the meeting.*

-In certain idioms, usually in main clauses: *Heaven forbid! Be it so! Far be it from me!*

We see that most *yes-no* questions are neutral; infinitive clauses and putative *should* also express neutrality; subjunctive mood also has neutral meaning.

It is clear that the most important reason to use language is to give someone some piece of information. In this article the ways in which information is given and received have been discussed, and people's attitudes to information and the reality it deals with i.e. truth, hypothesis, belief, probability, etc. have been considered. Summing all up we can say that Fact, Hypothesis and Neutrality are vital in conversation in English and are used to make the speech more emotive and flowery.

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