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(НЕ)РЕАЛЬНОСТЬ СОСЛАГАТЕЛЬНОГО НАКЛОНЕНИЯ В ПРОГРАММАХ ОБУЧЕНИЯ СТУДЕНТОВ И АСПИРАНТОВ АНГЛИЙСКОМУ ЯЗЫКУ

Аннотация. *В статье рассматривается проблема понимания сути сослагательного наклонения в английском языке и необходимость приведения учебных программ к некоторому терминологическому и теоретическому единству. Для выполнения поставленной цели проводится изучение англоязычных корпусов. Основным предметом исследования являются придаточные предложения после ряда прилагательных, требующих использования сослагательного наклонения.*

Ключевые слова: *сослагательное наклонение, комплемент, корпус, предикат.*

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(IR)REALITY OF THE SUBJUNCTIVE MOOD IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE CURRICULUM FOR GRADUATE AND UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS

Abstract. *The paper deals with the problem of understanding the Subjunctive mood in English and the necessity of changing English language curricula in accordance with modern data and unifying terminology and theoretical background. To solve the problem, we have conducted an extensive study of various English corpora. Our subject matter is complement clauses following a number of adjectival predicates that specifically select for the Subjunctive Mood.*

Keywords: *subjunctive, complement clause, corpus, predicate.*

In different English language curricula designed for students of foreign language departments and PhD students, there are fairly messy units on the Subjunctive. Thus, In the textbook for training

future English teachers [Шевцова и др. 1984: pp. 106, 108, 110] the auxiliaries *would, could, might* with simple and perfect infinitives alongside with the past tense forms of verbs and the formal Subjunctive forms are all listed under the rubric *The Subjunctive Mood.* The textbook for PhD students [Рубцова 1989: p. 208], the unit on the Subjunctive mood opens with the following passage:

Unlike the Indicative mood expressing actual events and therefore Tense, the Subjunctive mood expresses hypothetic, possible, desirable events and therefore has no Tense markers. …In English, the Subjunctive mood is formed with some auxiliaries and the infinitive of the lexical verb without *to*:

1. *should/ would/ /could/ might* + bare Infinitive

Likewise, in another textbook for PhD students [Успенская & Михельсон 1989, p. 140], we read that "the Subjunctive mood expresses an event that the speaker treats as hypothetic or desirable. The Subjunctive mood is used when we deal with: doubt, uncertainty, order, advice, demand, the feeling of joy or regret".

True, we can treat the Subjunctive from different perspectives, one being notional, based on the semantics of irrealis. This view was mentioned by Jespersen as long ago as in 1924. However, Jespersen himself points out that "categories divorced from any association with form are unlikely to be an appropriate topic of linguistic study" (cited in [Portner 2011:1263]). In most textbooks above, there is no explanation behind their choice of forms ascribed to the rubric of the Subjunctive. Speaking of form, [Блох 2000] believes there is no Subjunctive form whatsoever.

We stick to the views held in extensive modern literature on the Subjunctive: English does have some morphological remnants of this mood represented in the so-called Present Subjunctive coinciding with the bare infinitive and Past Subjunctive, the non-agreeing form *were* [Depretaere & Reed 2006]. We refuse to blur the picture by adding so-called "fake" past forms to the picture.

Distribution-wise, we only look into the Subjunctive in complement clauses, though this form is claimed to also occur in main clauses, for instance, in formulaic expressions.

One interesting consequence of analyzing the Subjunctive in complement clauses is connected to the characteristics of those predicates that tend to take such clauses. Cross-linguistically, we find

some variation in this respect. Though desiderative, directive, and modal predicates take subjunctives in most languages, *hope* in French and English selects for Indicative; the verb of mental judgement *believe* takes Subjunctive in Italian, but Indicative in many other languages, emotive factives like *regret* or *be sad* vary from language to language. All this indicates that the semantic properties of the matrix predicate do not play the main role in choosing the mood in its complement clause. What's more, even in one language we can come across free variation after subjunctive-selecting predicates:

It is essential that every applicant complete the form in triplicate.

It is essential that every applicant should complete the form in triplicate.

It is essential that every applicant completes the form in triplicate.

It is essential for every applicant to complete the form in triplicate.

[Foley & Hall 2012: p. 174]

Before discussing our sample selection, it is necessary to mention that observation of language can be of two types: 1) relying on native speaker's intuitions, and 2) describing the existing data. The first option is available to a linguist who is a native speaker of a particular language. Reflecting on their mother tongue, they can make theoretical claims concerning that language based on the reflection process. However, we do not have the native speaker's intuition; consequently, our choice was corpus examination of naturally occurring linguistic data in conjunction with introspection based on our knowledge of English grammar. Today, such analysis is mainly performed through the electronic corpus medium. It goes without saying, there are arguments both for and against corpus analysis and its reliability. Here we can cite N. Chomsky's criticism of corpora. He believed that naturally occurring data presented in corpora were of 'degenerate quality' [McEnery & Wilson 2001:15] as they could not include *all* natural language sentences, their number being potentially infinite. Thus, any – even the biggest – corpus is finite, i. e. incomplete; it cannot give the full picture of the language under study. Nevertheless, today's corpora are different;

they are not comparable to the text collections of the past, for instance, the concordancing of the Bible in the 13th c. [Huang & Yao 2015]. In the course of time, the practical limitations of the early text collections have been removed. At present, corpus work is not time-consuming, expensive, and prone to error. Modern electronic corpora do provide quantitative linguistic data beyond compare.

Our sample was extracted from two corpora created by Mark Davies at Brigham Young University (BYU, USA). We analysed concordance lines from the academic sub-corpus of the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA, 81 million words obtained from 100 different peer-reviewed journals; 1990–2019) and the US and GB sub-corpora of the corpus of Global Web-based English (GloWbE, each sub-corpus amounts to about 386 million words obtained from web pages; 2012–2013). Detailed guidelines for working with BYU corpora are given in [Davies & Fuchs, 2015]. We created a continuous sample searching for the string *matrix adjective that* (such as *vital that, urgent that, essential that,* and others). Each concordance line was checked manually to identify its syntactic relevance and make sure all contexts under analysis were created within the last 50 years (present-day English). We included a) formal subjunctives, b) *should* constructions, c) Present Simple forms, d) Past Simple forms in the sample expressing the irrealis semantics. The forms were colour-coded:

a) I think it's very, very **vital that** President Obama understand that he has not scraped his way to victory here (GloWbE, US).

b) In the hearing, Hamburg was found making one thing clear that it has become **vital that** the roles of FDA should again be clarified as well as re-enforced (GloWbE, US).

c) To really excel in the space, it is **vital that** data is utilised in the best way for your business… (GloWbE, US).

d) We have 108 MLAs because it was **vital that** every section of society was represented (GloWbE, GB).

To date, we have thoroughly analyzed the continuous samples for the search strings with *advisable, anxious, desirable, eager, essential, imperative, obligatory, urgent, vital* (372 and 95 A4 pages of the text for the GloWbE and COCA corpora respectively).

Despite obvious advantages of using corpora for language analysis, we have faced several challenges while working with COCA and GloWbE.

a) technical issues (text fragments can only be copied and pasted manually; some concordance lines come in segments and often lack the predicate);

b) corpus size (since many searches yielded immense data, analysis is time-consuming);

c) discrepancies in the GloWbE corpus (the specified and actual number of concordance lines often differs, concordance lines are repeated, sometimes materials were created elsewhere but not in GB or the USA).

d) misunderstanding (some fragments appeared difficult to interpret since the context was incomplete; in the first place, this holds true for the search string *important that*);

e.g.: In this case, it is **important that** the reader is able to first survey the entire page and then zoom in (COCA).

It is worth mentioning the fact that the adjective *important* can be used in two constructions: extraposed and non-extraposed:

a) It is important that he is here, with us.

b) It is important that he be here, with us.

In the first sentence, we probably deal with the so-called extraposition: the subject clause is moved to the end (*That he is here, with us, is important*). The second sentence cannot be described in the same way. First, the use of the subjunctive must be licensed by the matrix predicate; second, there are special tests for showing if extraposition has taken place: *??That he be here, with us, is important.*

Thus, we believe that the adjectives we have looked at (*anxious, eager, desirable, advisable, important, essential, imperative, necessary, recommended, urgent, vital)* take complement clauses like verbs.

So, what characteristics of predicates influence the choice of mood in the complement clause? In [Grisot et al. 2022], it is proposed that three factors play the crucial role in the preference of the predicate for the subjunctive, the indicative or free variation: the distributive patterns, the tense, and the grammatical aspect of the matrix verb. In [Giannakidou 2011], it is the notion of [non-

]veridicality. In much literature (c.f. [Noonan 2007]), it is claimed that realis/irrealis distinction underlies the choice of mood. However, veridicality/non-veridicality and realis/irrealis distinctions have not been found satisfactory for the explanation of mood in several languages. [Baunaz & Puskas 2014, 2022] discard this basis in favour of the split between emotive and cognitive verbs (when the verb *understand* in French is used with a touch of compassion, a subjunctive form follows it). [Dobrushina 2012] observes that in Russian we have some cases where the events denoted by the matrix and embedded predicates are real, but we select for Subjunctive mood.

From the information above, we can see that so far, no universal basis for the mood selection has been found. Those verbs that [Giannakidou 2011] and [Portner 2011] list next to Indicative complements, are more or less universal across languages. However, when one gets to the Subjunctive or variation in the complement clause, the same features in the matrix predicates seem to be responsible for the selection of different moods in different languages, so we have to define what these features are for English.

Since this is the work in progress, we are not sure where to look for and what results our study will yield.

We can analyse our finding along the following lines of reasoning:

1. The distinction between the semantics of the adjectives. Thus, [Baunaz & Puskas 2014] and [Baunaz & Puskas 2022] offer the following classification (we mention only those means that are relevant to our study): emotive factives (*anxious*), modals (*be necessary, (?)important, essential*), future-referring (*eager, desirable, advisable*), directives (*imperative, urgent*). We can probably choose or create another relevant classification.

2. The argument structure of the studied adjectives. According to [Cinque 1990, Baker 2004, Ramchand … etc.], adjectives are subdivided into ergative and non-ergative. Ergative adjectives take one argument, which is a proposition (*essential, important, advisable* etc.). Non-ergative adjectives in addition to proposition can take another argument, for example, the experiencer (*anxious, eager*). Possibly, there is some correlation between the

argument structure of predicative adjectives and the mood patterns in their complements.

3. The degree of modality we find in each case (they are different) (see *modal base* in [Kratzer 2012].

For reasons of space, we have chosen the largest analysed sub-samples (*essential that, imperative that, vital that*). Table 1 present the results obtained.

	***Should* construc-tion**	**Formal Subjunc-tive**	**Present Simple**	**Past Simple**
*Imperative that*_COCA 461suitable contexts	7	168	52	4
*Imperative that*_GLOWBE_US 544 suitable contexts	6	143	67	6
*Imperative that*_GLOWBE_GB 629 suitable contexts	13	75	206	24
*Essential that*_COCA 407 suitable contexts	11	148	57	3
*Essential that*_GLOWBE_US 502 suitable contexts	12	143	65	2
*Essential that*_GLOWBE_GB 1327 suitable contexts	55	92	449	30
*Vital that*_COCA 134 suitable contexts	4	38	30	1
*Vital that*_GLOWBE_US 276 suitable contexts	3	29	48	1

*Vital that*_GLOWBE_GB 1306 suitable contexts	22	45	326	24

To date, we have identified the following implications:

1) The frequency of matrix adjectives differs. In this stage of our analysis, certain adjectives appear to be more common in BrE than in AmE (*advisable, anxious, essential, obligatory, vital*).

2) Across two varieties of English (AmE, BrE) and language registers (general, academic), the *should* construction is falling (or even has fallen) into disuse. Many concordance lines with *should* were obtained from religious texts, literature dating back to 16–18th centuries, translations from other languages. We did not consider them in this study.

3) Variation across language registers and varieties is quite obvious. The formal Subjunctive is common in both academic and general AmE, though it is of more frequent occurrence in the former register. As for the Simple Present Indicative, it is the predominant form of expressing irrealis in BrE. Nevertheless, the true subjunctive form (formal subjunctive) is quite viable as well. It is also worth noting that the Simple Past is more common in BrE (with *essential, imperative, vital*).

CONCLUSIONS

1) The first important conclusion is that the English Subjunctive is still used (although not as much as in some other languages)

2) However, it is used to different extents / its use varies? after different predicates

3) The study of English predicates taking Subjunctive complements is lagging behind similar studies of French, Greek, Spanish, Italian. The gap has to be narrowed. For our purposes, it will show which predicates are more Subjunctive-prone than others and how free the variation in different genres of text is.

4) The study of adjectival predicates is especially crucial since English seems to have an equal number or verbs and adjectives taking subjunctive complements.

5) We have to find correlations of different patterns distributions

6) On the basis of what we have found, we have to identify the features that affect the choice of mood in complement clauses specifically in English

7) We can give recommendations to teachers and students with respect to frequency of patterns after certain predicates and the necessity to keep them in the curriculum

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