

Conditional Clauses and *Will*

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1. Introduction

It is well known that the simple present tense in conditional clauses refers to a future time when the main clauses have a *will* in them. In regard to the usage, Jespersen (1933: 239–40) says, "In clauses after conjunctions of time this use of the Present tense is the rule, because futurity is sufficiently indicated in the main verb...We have the same use of the Present tense in conditional clauses."

According to Jespersen, the reason for the choice of the present simple tense in the conditional clause is that there is no need to mark futurity again in the clause because the future reference is already expressed in the main clause. Let us consider (1):

- (1) Will you come for a walk in the afternoon if it *does* not rain? I don't know if it will rain, but if it *does*, I shall stay at home.

There are three *if* clauses in (1). The first and the third *if* clause are adverbials while the second one is a nominal. The rule does not apply to

the nominal *if* clause. The second *if* clause, which is the object of the verb *know*, qualifies for *will* in it. With the first and third *if* clauses, the present simple tense (*does*) is chosen to avoid the repetition of *will* in the conditional clause.

The tense simplification is supported by Swan (1995).¹⁾ The supporter s²⁾ of Jespersen's view seem to believe that the repetition of another *will* in conditional clauses would create redundancy. So what they call the omission of *will* in an *if* clause is an attempt to remove redundancy. They think that the principle of economy or least effort works in those cases.

As opposed to the traditional view, Biber *et al.* provides us with an important clue (1999: 457). It says:

Modals are used to express a speaker's or writer's stance, expressing either the degree of (un)certainly of the proposition, or meanings such as permission, obligation, or necessity. Without a modal verb, most verb phrases include only a marking of time orientation and not an overt expression of stance. However, in a sense the absence of a modal verb (or other stance marker) can itself be interpreted a choice of stance, with the addressor attributing unquestioned validity to the proposition.³⁾

This research agrees with the viewpoint of Biber *et al.*, even though what the stance is is not specifically identified there. It means that the

1) Swan (1995: 583) says, "If the main verb of a sentence makes it clear what kind of time the speaker is talking about, it is not always necessary for the same time to be indicated again in the subordinate clauses."

2) The list of the supporters includes Huddleston & Pullum (2002: 132), Eastwood (1994: 100), Quirk & Greebaum (1973: 49), and Leech & Svartvik (1994: 77).

3) For mood and modality, see Depraetere and Reed (2006). For the details on irrealis conditionals, see Givón (1990: 829–33).

absence itself of a modal implies an important role. This article is going to claim that the absence of *will* in a conditional clause has its own motivation, and that the use of a *will* in a conditional clause would create a difference in meaning. The absence of *will* is motivated by something else than the tense simplification. The motivation is going to be explored here.

Another suggestion here is that we need to distinguish between prediction and assumption in order to deal with the issue properly. In addition, another main issue here is how to deal with the seemingly exceptional occurrence of a predictional *will* in the protasis of a conditional. We are going to discuss the issue too.

2. Assumption and Prediction

2.1 Two Types of *Will*

Prior to a discussion of the issue between *will* and a conditional clause, we need to identify two types of *will*. As with other words, the word *will* also has many different uses in terms of meaning. In connection with conditional clauses, we need to make a distinction between an intrinsic and extrinsic use of *will*.

Quirk *et al* (1985: 219) says, "One important observation about the modals is that each one of them has both intrinsic and extrinsic uses:...*will* has the meaning of volition (intrinsic) and the meaning of prediction (extrinsic)."

The two main categories of modals are intrinsic and extrinsic.⁴⁾ *Will* is

4) However, the intrinsic and extrinsic use are not always clear-cut. Sometimes, there are areas of overlap between the two uses. For example, the meanings of

a member of the modals. The intrinsic use of *will* is human control over events, such as intention while its extrinsic use is a judgement how likely an event will happen. Let us consider (2):

- (2) a. He *will* do it however difficult it is.
b. It will rain tomorrow.

The *will* in (2a) indicates volition or intention, which is an intrinsic use. The intrinsic *will* is concerned with the subject of the sentence (*He*). That is why the intrinsic use of a modal is subject-oriented.⁵⁾ However, the *will* in (2b) has nothing to do with a human volition. It is not reasonable to say that the inanimate subject (*it*) has volition. It involves a judgement or prediction on the part of the speaker. The *will* is not concerned with the subject at all. Instead, it has to do with the speaker's prediction about weather. It is the speaker's stance or view toward the event. The speaker is predicting tomorrow's weather condition. The extrinsic use is speaker-oriented.

The intrinsic use of *will* is often found in a conditional clause. Let us have a look at the example below:

- (3) Paige pulled away from him. "No!"
"Are you sure you know what you're doing?"
She took a deep breath. "Yes. Now if you'll excuse me..."
And she walked away. (Sheldon 1994: 371)

The *will* of the *if* clause in the third line of (3) is intrinsic. It means *if*

volition and prediction are fused in the sentence of *I'll see you tomorrow then*. See Quirk et al (1985: 219) for more details.

5) The term *intrinsic* is so used because a subject is an element inside a sentence. And the term *extrinsic* is so called because the speaker is outside of the sentence.

you are willing to excuse me. The *will* is like a full verb. It has no function of prediction. In this case, there is no restriction to the use of *will* in the conditional clause.⁶⁾ It is confirmed in Palmer (1988: 138). It says, "The distinction (the *will* of volition from the *will* of futurity) is, moreover, much clearer if *will* is accented or negated (*won't*) where there is a meaning of insistence or refusal."

(4) is another example of the intrinsic use of *will*:

(4) If you *will* play with fire, you'll get burnt.

The sentence above has two *wills*. The first one is intrinsic, which means insistence (it is equal to *if you insist on playing with fire*) while the second one is extrinsic, which has a function of prediction (= *I am sure that you will get burnt*). The speaker is predicting the consequence.

We have seen in (3, 4) that the intrinsic use of *will* is free to appear in conditional clauses. However, the extrinsic use of *will* does not have as much freedom to be used in conditional clauses as the intrinsic use even if it is not completely excluded. When an *if* clause has an extrinsic *will* in it, it creates a difference in meaning. Besides, it is involved with distinction between prediction and assumption. We are going to discuss the special issue fully in 3.2.

2.2 Prediction and Assumption

We need to understand the characteristics of prediction and assumption before we examine the compatibility of *will* with conditional clauses. We

6) Here is another example of *will* in an *if* clause for the intrinsic use:
 "If you'll just sign here, we'll take care of all the necessary paperwork."
 Paige looked up, "I...I don't know what to say. I...he had a family." (Sheldon 1994: 369)

can find an important clue from truth-conditional semantics.

Truth-conditional semantics is an approach to define the meaning of a proposition with truth values. A proposition is a statement which is either true or false. Conditionals⁷⁾ consist of two propositions. One proposition carried in the *if* clause is called a protasis. The other proposition is an apodosis. Each conditional is made up of a protasis and an apodosis.

The conditional (if P, then Q) is symbolized as $P \rightarrow Q$. The truth values of $P \rightarrow Q$ are determined by both of the truth values of P and Q. It is well established that there are four possible sets of values:

- (i) If P is true and if Q is true, then $P \rightarrow Q$ is true.
- (ii) If P is true and if Q is false, then $P \rightarrow Q$ is false.
- (iii) If P is false and if Q is true, then $P \rightarrow Q$ is true.
- (iv) If P is false and if Q is false, then $P \rightarrow Q$ is true.

When we give a close look at the truth values of $P \rightarrow Q$, we notice that the value of $P \rightarrow Q$ is false only if P is true and Q is false, which is case (ii). Otherwise, $P \rightarrow Q$ is always true. The value of $P \rightarrow Q$ is true without an exception as long as P is false, which is case (iii and iv). In this case, it does not matter in the least whether Q is true or false. If a protasis is false, its apodosis does not affect the whole value of $P \rightarrow Q$ at all.

The implication is that the first requirement is that P must be true in the first place. When the first requirement is met, then the value of Q determines the value of $P \rightarrow Q$. When the first requirement is not met, the truth or falsity of Q does not affect the value of $P \rightarrow Q$ at all. It demonstrates that the first priority is that the value of a protasis is required to be true.

7) The terms *conditional* and *conditional clause* need to be distinguished. A conditional means a statement including a protasis and an apodosis, while a conditional clause indicates an *if* clause here.

In this connection, Kwon (2004: 8–9)⁸⁾ discusses differences between prediction and assumption. There is a big difference between the two concepts. When we make a prediction, it is about what is not known yet. Most of the case, it is about the future. Of course, we sometimes predict about the past too, as long as we do not have enough information on a particular fact which happened in the past. If it were already known to us, we would not need to predict.

As to the future, we are not sure 100 per cent what will happen in the future. That is why we just 'predict' about what future events will turn out like. Even if we predict something, there is no guarantee that our prediction will come true. It is only our guess. It means that when we make a prediction, it presupposes that there are two opposite possibilities alive. One possibility is that our prediction will come true. The other possibility is that our prediction will not come true. These two possibilities are always open when a prediction is made. As is well known, among many different ways of indicating a prediction is the use of *will* in English.

However, assumption is different from prediction. Prediction has two opposite possibilities at the same time. However, when we make an assumption, it is to accept only one of two possibilities as a truth. In this sense, assumption is not open to two opposite possibilities. One of the two is completely closed or 'dead'. Assumption, in a sense, is similar to past events which are already known. For example, let us consider the proposition *He visited my office yesterday*. If it is an actual fact and true, the other opposite proposition '*he did not visit my office yesterday*' is automatically false. The actual past event is 'fixed' in the sense that it does not have two oppositions at the same time.

8) The research was more focused on distinction between prediction and assumption. Based on the difference in the two concepts, this new research aims at explaining how predictational *will*s are allowed in *if*-clauses. The issue will be fully discussed in the section 5.3.

When we assume only one possibility about a future event, it is not a prediction, because the other possibility is already excluded. The one fixed possibility is an assumption. When we make an assumption about a future, we have only one possibility in mind with the other opposite possibility 'forgotten'.

As seen earlier in the truth-conditional semantics, the truth value of Q (apodosis) does not affect the value of $P \rightarrow Q$ if P is false in the first place. Only if P is true, the value of Q determines the total value of $P \rightarrow Q$. It means that it is assumed that P is true. In this case, we assume that P is true. We do not predict that P is true. It is not a prediction, because the possibility that P is false is totally out of our consideration. Then only one possibility remains. It is an assumption if only one possibility is accepted as a truth and the other possibility is discarded.

3. Conditionals

3.1 Intrinsic *Will* and Assumption

We have seen the two types of *will*: intrinsic (volition) and extrinsic (prediction). We do not see that there is any reason for the use of a predictional *will* when we make an assumption, simply because assumption considers only one possibility. When we consider only one possibility and we discard the other opposite possibility, we are faced with only one remaining possibility. So there is no need for prediction. Then we do not need a predictional *will* there.

Now let us consider how the intrinsic *will* is freely allowed in an *if* clause.

(5) If you *will* get drunk every night, you *will* feel ill.

(5) consists of a protasis and an apodosis. The *if* clause is a protasis. The result clause is an apodosis. There are two occurrences of *will* in (5). However, they are not the same type. The *will* in the protasis is a volitional *will* while the *will* in the apodosis is a predictional *will*.

Let us examine the apodosis first. The speaker of the sentence predicts the consequence in the apodosis. That is why *will* of prediction is expressed in the apodosis. The mark of *will* signals that the consequence is not absolutely certain. It is nothing more than one possibility. There are always two opposite possibilities. One is that his prediction will come true. At the same time, there still exists the other possibility that it will not come true. The two possibilities are open.⁹⁾ That is why the apodosis is a prediction. It leads to the use of a predictional *will* in the apodosis.

However, the protasis of (5) is not a prediction, but an assumption. The *will* in (5) is intrinsic. It denotes insistence.¹⁰⁾ (5) can be paraphrased into *If you insist on getting drunk...* The protasis of (5) does not say that the speaker predicts that 'you' will get drunk every night. Instead, the protasis is simply assumed. The assumption is *If it is true that 'you' insist on getting drunk every night*. The speaker does not have in mind the opposite case in which 'you' do not insist on getting drunk.

To make an assumption is like an act of choice. When we predict, we keep the two opposite possibilities in mind at the same time. However,

9) If it is not a prediction, it means that the other possibility is completely closed. Then there is no need of a predictional *will* in the apodosis. One example would be *If I meet her, I am always happy*.

10) Volition has several degrees of intensity. Roughly speaking, they are request, willingness, and insistence (or refusal). They belong to the same type of volition, but the difference is in the different shade. van Ek, Jan A. & Robot, Nico J. (1984: 222) also mentions the volition, in saying, "Note that the occurrence of *will* in a subclause of open condition is only possible when *will* denotes volition."

when we assume, we choose one of the two. The other is thrown away. Once it is thrown away, it is completely out of consideration. We keep the one remaining choice only in mind.¹¹⁾ In that case, we have only one possibility in mind at one time. That is why there is no need for prediction any longer. So in the case of assumption, a predictional *will* is not required. More accurately speaking, a predictional *will* is not allowed there. The *will* in (5) is not a predictional *will*, so it does not infringe on the property of an assumption at all.

3.2 Extrinsic *Will* and Assumption

In the previous section, we have seen the free occurrence of an intrinsic *will* in the protasis. However, extrinsic *wills* are also occasionally allowed in the protasis. Palmer (1988: 157) presents the examples below:

- (6) a. If the play *will* be cancelled, let's not go.
 b. If he'll be left destitute, I'll change my will.

The *will* in (6a) cannot be regarded as a volitional *will*, considering that the inanimate 'play' is not endowed with volition.¹²⁾ Then it is a predictional *will*. It appears to be contradicting our observation up to now.

There are two *wills* in (6b).¹³⁾ The first one in the protasis is not the

11) Concerning the characteristics of an assumption, the remark in Biber *et al.* (1999: 457) deserves to be reminded again: "However, in a sense the absence of a modal verb (or other stance marker) can itself be interpreted a choice of stance, with the addressor attributing unquestioned validity to the proposition." The expression 'unquestioned validity' is nothing more and less than an automatic result since the other possibilities are completely discarded.

12) It does not deny that there are some dramatized and poetic expressions where inanimate things are personified. In such cases, they can have a volition: the engine *won't* start easily.

same as the second one in the apodosis. The second *will* is intrinsic, indicating volition.¹⁴⁾ But the first *will* is not seen as volitional. It is because the person (*he*) does not want to be left destitute. So it is predictional. The *wills* in the protasis of (6a, b) are both a predictional *will*.

Concerning the seemingly contradictory situation, Palmer (1988: 157) says, "The essential characteristic of such sentences is that the events in the protasis are subsequent to those of the apodosis." Swan (1995: 249) also says, "But we use *if ... will* when we are talking about later results rather than conditions." It compares the two sentences below:

- (7) a. I will give you \$100 if you stop smoking.
 b. I'll give you \$100 if it'll help you to go on holiday.

In (7a) *will* does not occur in the protasis while *will* is in the protasis of (7b). The protasis without *will* in (7a) belongs to a typical assumption. The *will* in the protasis of (7b) is not volitional, but predictional because we cannot imagine that 'it' (= \$100) has a volition. They say that the difference between (7a) and (7b) is in the sequence of the events. In (7a), the event in the protasis happens first. And if the condition is met, then the event in the apodosis comes. In contrast, the sequence is reverse in (7b). The gift of money expressed in the apodosis comes before the help. The help is a result here.

13) In fact, there are three kinds of *will* in (6b). The first two *wills* are a modal, but the last one is a noun. The noun is not our concern here.

14) The second *will* can be interpreted as a predictional *will*. That potential is not completely excluded. Nevertheless, considering that the 'I' is the same person as the speaker. It is more probable that the speaker says about his volition rather than he predicts his plan. Whichever it is, the issue is not a main concern of our discussion, because the two *wills* of volition and prediction are accepted in the apodosis.

The descriptions by Palmer and Swan obviously demonstrate that the absence or presence of a predictional *will* in the protasis creates a difference in meaning. Then it clearly follows that the absence of *will* in the protasis is not an instance of avoiding redundancy or simplifying a tense. The absence or presence has its own reason and creates a difference in meaning. If it were just a tense simplification, the reduction should not create a meaning difference.

Then, one critical question remains: if a predictional *will* is used in the protasis, does it mean that the protasis is not an assumption? It looks like a big challenge. However, we claim that it is still an assumption. In this special case, the special type of such a protasis has both an element of prediction and an element of assumption. To put it more accurately, the element of prediction is part of an assumption in this case. The assumption contains an element of prediction in it, but not the other way around.

Let us examine the example below:¹⁵⁾

- (8) I'll give you \$100 if it'll help you to go on holiday.

(8) has one protasis and one apodosis. The two constitute only one conditional. However, that is a superficial analysis. If we analyze the detailed meaning of (8), it turns out that (8) has two conditionals. It can be paraphrased into (9):

- (9) (i) If I give you \$100, it will help you to go on holiday.
 (ii) And if it is true, I will give you \$100.

We can see from (9) that one conditional in (8) actually contains two conditionals in the paraphrase. (8) is a compressed version of (9). When (8) is decompressed back, the original two conditionals come back in (9).

15) (8) is merely a repetition of (7b). It is written again for convenience.

Each of the two conditionals (i and ii) has its own protasis and apodosis. The protasis of the first conditional (i) is *If I give you \$100*. It has no *will* in it. It is a typical assumption. The apodosis of the first conditional (i) is *it will help you to go on holiday*. The *will* here is predictional. The apodosis is a prediction.

When we look at the level of a compressed version, which is (8), the protasis of the conditional looks like a prediction, not an assumption. However, when the version is decompressed back to (9), we can clearly see that the protasis and apodosis of the first conditional (i) are in line with assumption and prediction.

The second conditional (ii) in (9) also follows the same pattern. The protasis of the second conditional (ii) is *if it is true*. *If it is true* does not have a *will* in it. It is a typical assumption. But the assumption contains an element of prediction inside of it, because *it* refers to *it will help you to go on holiday*. However, the whole protasis of the second conditional (ii) is still an assumption in the sense that the speaker is not 'predicting' that *it is true*. If the speaker were predicting, he or she would say, "It will be true." But that is not the case here.

When we consider (8) and (9) together, we can see that a conditional with a predictional *will* in the protasis is actually a compression of two conditionals. When they are decompressed, each of the two conditionals has its own protasis and apodosis. This analysis supports that an assumption in the protasis does not require a predictional *will*.

We can take the same approach to (10a).¹⁶⁾ The *will* in the protasis is a predictional *will*. (10a) has only conditional on the surface level. However, when we look into its detailed meaning, we can see that there are two different conditionals hidden in it. (10a) can be paraphrased into (10b).

16) (6a) is moved here for the sake of convenience.

- (10) a. If the play *will* be cancelled, let's not go.
 b. (i) If we go, the play *will* be cancelled.
 (ii) And if it is true, let's not go.

The one conditional (10a) is a compression of the first conditional (10b (i)) and the second conditional (10b (ii)). When the one conditional is decompressed, the original two conditionals are expressed explicitly in (10b).

The protasis (*the play will be cancelled*) of (10a) has a predictional *will* in it, but it is actually an apodosis of (i) in (10b). The protasis of the first conditional (i) in (10b) is *If we go*. It is a typical assumption. The apodosis of the first conditional (i) in (10b) is a prediction, which has a *will* in it.

The protasis of (10a) has changed to the apodosis of the first conditional (i) in (10b), and then it becomes a protasis (*If it is true*) of the second conditional (ii) in (10b) again. The protasis of the second conditional in (10b) is a typical assumption.

This analysis demonstrates that one conditional with a predictional *will* in the protasis is, in fact, a compression of two different conditionals, and that when it is decompressed, we can clearly see that an assumption is 'alive' in each conditional.

Let us go back to the beginning of our discussion. The absence of *will* in conditional clauses is not a tense simplification, but an indication of assumption.

4. Conclusion

When main clauses have a predictional *will* in them, the present simple

tense is chosen in their conditional clauses. The choice of the present simple tense has long been seen as a tense simplification. This article has suggested an alternative to the traditional view.

It is pointed out in this article that the presence or absence of a predictional *will* in conditional clauses creates a meaning difference. The fact reveals that the choice of the present simple tense in the causes has its own role. It is not to do with a tense simplification.

We have seen here that intrinsic *will* is freely allowed in the protasis of a conditional. It is because intrinsic *will* has nothing to do with a prediction. One of the main issues in this article is the exceptional-looking case where a predictional *will* appears in the protasis of a conditional. It is claimed here that this special type of conditional is a compression of two conditionals in one conditional. When the one conditional is decompressed back, we can see that each of the two conditionals has its own protasis and apodosis. Then each protasis of a conditional clearly proves to be an assumption. This analysis of decompression is in line with the distinction between assumption and prediction.

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Abstract

Conditional Clauses and *Will*

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It is well known that the present simple tense is chosen in a conditional clause even if it has a future reference with *will* in the main clause. The choice of the present simple tense has long been regarded as tense simplification. This article suggests an alternative view to the traditional analysis. This research claims that the choice of the present simple tense is not an omission of *will* in the clauses, but that the absence of *will* has its own reason. To deal with the issue properly, we need to distinguish between assumption and prediction. The absence of *will* in an *if* clause is to indicate that the protasis of a conditional is an assumption, not a prediction. In the special case of a predictional *will* in an *if* clause, such as *If the play will be cancelled, let's not go*, it is claimed in this paper that the one conditional is a compressed version of two conditionals. When it is decompressed back, we can see that each protasis of the two conditionals is an assumption.

Key Words: prediction, assumption, intrinsic, extrinsic, protasis, apodosis
예측, 가정, 내재, 외재, 전제절, 귀결절

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