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Conditionality as a functional-semantic relationship underlying a system of complex sentences

Traditionally, complex sentences with the subordinate clauses of cause (reason), result (consequence), condition, purpose and concession have been considered by grammarians as separate structural types. However, the functional-semantic approach consisting in establishing the inner functional-semantic relationships underlying syntactical structures makes it possible to look at these sentence types as a system of mutually correlated constituents.

The basis of this system is formed by the functional-semantic relationship of conditionality. This core relationship should be understood broadly, meaning that the action (situation) expressed in one clause conditions (either directly or indirectly, actually or hypothetically) the occurrence of the action (situation) expressed in the other clause. Paradigmatically, the system can be viewed as a set of functional-semantic variants of the invariable relationship of conditionality, which find their expression in the corresponding structural types of complex sentences. It is important to bear in mind that the differentiation of the core relationship of conditionality has the objective, ontological nature, which is inevitably reflected in the language. The causal-consecutive relationship in its broad meaning ontologically is superior to the more specific relationships of condition, purpose and concession proper and encompasses them [1: 20].

We distinguish between the following four functional-semantic variants of the invariable relationship of conditionality:

1. Causative-consecutive relationship proper. It is observed when the action (situation) expressed in one of the clauses actually leads to the action (situation) expressed in the other clause. Depending on the speaker's emphasis either on the cause (reason) or the result (consequence), this relationship finds its expression in two structural types of complex sentences, those with a clause of cause (reason) or

result (consequence). On the inner functional-semantic level, the traditional differentiation between these structural types seems rather conventional. It seems more appropriate to view them as correlates of a single structural-semantic type of complex sentences [3: 149]. At the same time, the functional load the speaker inputs into these two structural types is different. It is obvious that the formal difference reflects the difference in communicating information, when either cause (reason) or result (consequence) are correspondingly emphasized on the surface level.

2. Relationship of modal conditionality. In objective reality, on the one hand, a condition can serve as a cause of following actions, on the other hand, a cause always functions as a certain condition [2: 5-6]. The difference between the causative-consecutive relationship proper and the relationship of modal conditionality lies in the modus of the functional-semantic relationship between the actions of the main and subordinate clauses (actual nature of conditionality in the first case versus hypothetical conditionality in the second case). This relationship finds its expression in the complex sentences with a clause of condition. In these sentences conditionality reveals itself as the relation of a certain condition and its hypothetical consequence.

3. Relationship of subjective intentional conditionality. This functional-semantic relationship is revealed in complex sentences with a clause of purpose. In these sentences the purpose expressed in the subordinate clause serves an ideal motivation for performing the action expressed in the principal clause, at the same time being the prospective consequence of this action as viewed by the speaker. The nature of the semantic relationship between the clauses is primarily determined by the active role of the subject of the action or situation, his/her intention.

4. Relationship of counter-conditionality. This relationship is observed in complex sentences with a clause of concession. In these sentences the core relationship of conditionality seems to be reversed or altogether distorted. Yet, a deeper analysis of the semantic relationship existing between the clauses reveals its inner conditioned nature. The mechanism of conditionality here can be regarded as interference of some objective causative-consecutive relationship of the second order, which, though not explicitly expressed in the sentence, leads to violation of the

logical connection between the content of the principal and the subordinate clauses and thus prevents realization of the potential relationship between the clauses [1: 27-28]. Another argument supporting the inner conditioned nature of this type of complex sentences is given by van Dijk, who argues that the content of the clause of concession may under normal conditions serve a sufficient precondition (cause) for the failure of the proposition (consequence) expressed in the main clause, but in the specific case expressed by the complex sentence with a clause of concession this causal-consecutive relationship is not working [4: 81].

Summing up, the analysis of the functional-semantic relationships underlying the complex sentences with clauses of cause (reason), result (consequence), condition, purpose and concession shows their common inherent nature which makes it possible to regard them as members of the functional-semantic system of complex sentences of conditionality (figure 1).

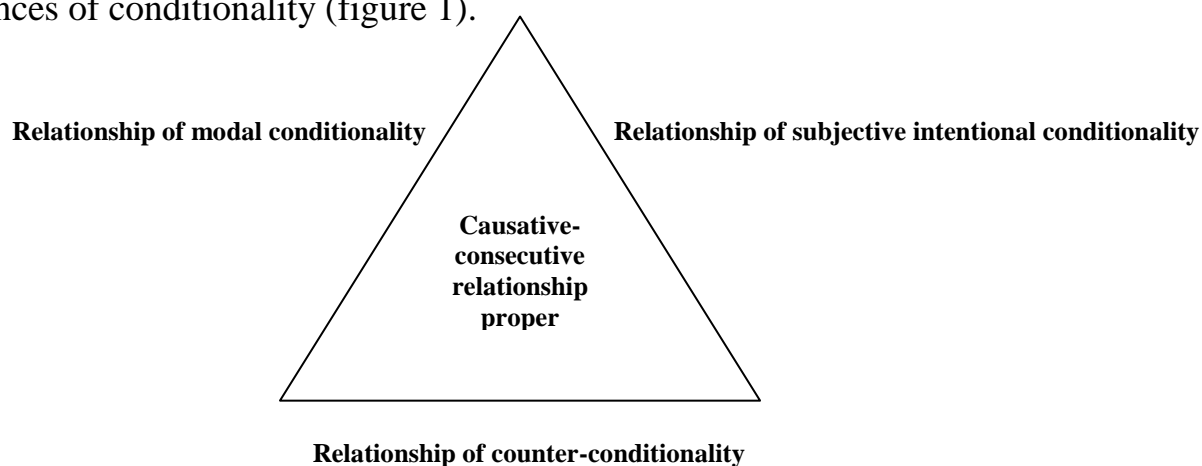


Figure 1. Functional-semantic system of complex sentences of conditionality.

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