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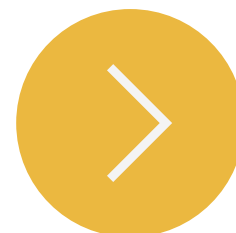
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SENT. STRUCTURE L 9.4 – CONDITIONAL CLAUSES (WENN, FALLS)

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WHAT ARE CONDITIONAL CLAUSES?

A conditional clause specifies a condition or circumstance that must be fulfilled for an action to take place.

The question words are: "Wann?", "Unter welcher Bedingung?"

Conditional clauses can be introduced by "wenn", "falls", and "sofern".

- „**Wann** kommst du nach Hause?“
„Ich **komme** nach Hause, **wenn** ich mit der Arbeit fertig **bin**.“

Conditional clauses are subordinate clauses (SC), so the verb needs to be at the end. The subordinate clause states the conditions that are necessary for the main clause (MC) to occur.

- „**Wenn** das Wetter schön **ist**, **gehe** ich morgen spazieren.“

Condition (SC)

Main Clause

→ If the weather is bad, I won't go for a walk.

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN "WENN", "FALLS" AND "SOFERN"

The difference between "wenn", "falls" and "sofern" lies in the probabilities.

For "falls" and "sofern", the probability for the condition to be fulfilled is relatively small.

- „**Falls/Sofern** ich keine Zeit **habe**, **gebe** ich dir Bescheid!“
→ I probably have time.
- „**Wenn** ich keine Zeit **habe**, ...“ (= neuter)

IN THE PAST

When talking about the past, it is not possible to fulfill the conditions yet.

Therefore, we must use "Konjunktiv 2" to express the unreal things.

- „**Wenn** ich mehr gelernt **hätte**, **hätte** ich die Prüfung **bestanden**.“

I already failed the exam. Therefore, the conditions are unreal because it is impossible to fulfill them. → Konjunktiv 2

WORD ORDER

When the main clause comes before the subordinate clause, everything remains the same:

- „Ich **helfe** dir, **wenn** du für mich das Geschirr **abwäschst**.“

BUT: Normally, the subordinate clause comes first because the conditions are the most important information in the sentence.

- „**Wenn** du für mich das Geschirr **abwäschst**, **helfe** ich dir.“

When the subordinate clause comes before the main clause, you can omit "wenn". The conjugated verb then moves to position 1.

- „**Wenn** du zu spät **kommst**, **gibt** es Ärger.“
= „**Kommst** du zu spät, **gibt** es Ärger.“
- „**Wenn** du mich **anlügst**, **bekommst** du eine Woche Hausarrest!“
= „**Lügst** du mich **an**, **bekommst** du eine Woche Hausarrest!“



Warning

If you omit "wenn", it sounds more like a warning or a threat.

SUMMARY

- Conditional clauses are a type of subordinate clause.
- They state a condition that has to be fulfilled for the other action to take place.
- When talking about the past, this only works with the Konjunktiv 2.
- Typically, the subordinate clause comes before the main clause. However, in this case, it is possible to omit "wenn". Therefore, the conjugate verb moves to position 1.

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