



A Syntactic Study Of Indicative Mood In Relation To Subjunctive Mood In English

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Abstract

The objective of the study is to investigate the differences between two moods in English: indicative and subjunctive Mood expresses the intention of the speaker or the writer. It determines if the sentence is a fact, order, suggestion or hypothetical. The linguistic model adopted is *A University of English Grammar* proposed by Randolph Quirk (1973). The paper shows the types of mood in English language and gives a full description of each type. It is also a try to answer the question: how does the indicative mood differ from the subjunctive mood? The findings inferred from this study are concerned with the indicative and subjunctive moods in terms of their difference in construction as each mood has specific verbs.

Keywords: Mood, Subjunctive, Indicative, Construction

1. Introduction

The importance of language in the lives of peoples and nations cannot be denied.

Najm (2012:2) denotes that communication is best done through language which states that information is transmitted from the speaker / writer to the listener / reader.

Moods in English adopted by Randolph Quirk (1973) consist of three moods: indicative, imperative and subjunctive. In this research, we will deal with the issue of indicative and subjunctive and we will try to find out how the indicative mood is different from the subjunctive mood. The data are collected from the adopted model Quirk (1973) and other different sources provided with various examples.

Finch (2000:127) defines mood as "the grammatical category which expresses the degree or kind of reality attached to an utterance". Words and constructions are mostly used to express mood distinctions. In this way, different degrees of certainty or reality within conditions can be determined:

Certainty :

(1) I hear that Susie studies medicine

Reality within condition:

(2) If Susie studies medicine, then...

If Susie studies medicine, then... is involved with an open condition (may be she studies medicine). It is different from *If Susie studied medicine, then...* which is involved with a counterfactual condition (she does not study medicine)

Greenbaum (1996:80) asserts that for English, there are three distinct moods: indicative, imperative, and subjunctive. The majority of verbs used in declaratives, as well as those employed in interrogatives and exclamatives, fall under the indicative mood. The uninflected form of a verb is the identical for imperatives and present subjunctives, while the past subjunctive is only used for were. Examples of the three moods are as follows:

Indicative

- (3) a. Envy is a bad habit
b. Could that be true?
c. How effective the poem seemed!

Imperative

(4) Call me next time.

Subjunctive

- (5) a. God help us
b. So be it!
c. If I were you, I would come.
d. We insisted that she be a teacher.
e. It is important that he sign the petition



Moods in English

Baugh (2005:24-5) denotes that verbs can be employed to convey variations in the speaker's or writer's intention or mood. English has three moods: subjunctive, imperative, and indicative. Each serves a certain purpose.

The Indicative Mood

Indicative mood is one of the three main grammatical moods that is involved with a fact or making a request:

- (6) a. I enjoy playing tennis
b. What did he study?

Jasem and Najm (2013:2) stress that an English *wh*-question like the one in: *What did he study?* views a structure in which one type of dependency is obviously marked; this is the relation between the *wh*-phrase *what* and the complement position following the verb *study*, the position in which the object of the verb normally takes place.

Herring (2016:611) say that when we talk or write, we are usually inquiring or debating what is true, actual, or taking place. We call this the indicative mood such as in:

- (7) a. She had lunch at two o'clock
b. We are playing tennis this afternoon
c. Is she travelling today?

When making declarative assertions in grammar that you believe to be factually accurate, like when you pose a question as a statement or express an opinion as fact, you are using the indicative mood of the verb. Indicative mood, imperative mood, and subjunctive mood are all members of the grammatical mood group in modern English grammar. The way a speaker employs the primary verb (one of the elements of speech) in a sentence to provide context for the sentence's object is expressed by the grammatical mood. Since indicative mood is the only "realis mood," it represents things that are true or real, such as factual comments about the subject. As a result, the presence of an indicative mood verb in a sentence depends on whether or not the sentence contains declarations of fact. In declarative or interrogative phrase forms, indicative verbs can be used in any verb tense. The most prevalent mood type in the English language is indicative mood. <http://www.masterclass.com>

The Imperative Mood

Herring (2016:621) says that the imperative mood is used to create imperative sentences when we give someone clear instructions. The verb is in the base or bare infinitive form, and there is no explicit subject-it is implied:

- (8) a. Shut down that door
b. please read the book

The Subjunctive Mood

Quirk (1973:50-51) suggest that there are three distinct subjunctive categories:

(a) *The mandative subjunctive* in that -clauses has the base (V) as the only form. So, The third person singular present lacks orderly indicative agreement between the subject and the verb, and the present and past tenses cannot be recognized. When there is an expression of recommendation, resolution, demand in the independent clause, any verb in dependent that-clauses can be used with this subjunctive. The use of this subjunctive is mainly used in formal style where in less formal contexts one prefer to use other devices, like *to*-infinitive or *should* + infinitive:

- (9) a. It is necessary that every student study hard for the exam
 b. It is necessary that every student should study hard for the exam
 c. It is necessary for every student to study hard for the exam

(b) *The formulaic subjunctive* that is composed of the base verb but is just used in clauses in a specific group of utterances:

- (10) a. b. God save the Queen!
 b. Suffice it to say that ...

(c) *The subjunctive "were"* which is employed in subordinate clauses after optative verbs like wish as well as conditional and concessive clauses is hypothetical . It happens because of the matching between the verb be in the first and third person singular past tense and the indicative was, which is more prevalent in informal language:

- (11) a. If she was/were to do something like that,...
 b. Linda treated him as if he was/were a child
 c. I wish I was/were rich

Discussion

Greenbaum and Nelson (2009:80-1) assure that three moods for finite verb phrases can be recognized: 1. indicative 2. imperative 3. Subjunctive. In declarative, interrogative, and exclamative sentences, the indicative mood is typically used. The subjunctive comes in two varieties: the *were* subjunctive and the mandative subjunctive. The base form is found in the mandative subjunctive. It is applied in:

1. *that-clauses following "request" or "demand"*:

- (12) a. They demand that she take the medicine
 b. They demand that they take the medicine
 c. They demand that they/she not take the medicine

(13) I agree with your recommendation that my boss come late

(14) My friend insists that I be on time.

(15) I propose that the meeting be delayed

The base form, which contrasts with the indicative form ending in -s, is the only unique form of the mandative subjunctive in verbs other than *be*. This form is only present in the third person singular. The base form is the same as the present tense form when used in plural and other singular forms. Contrast (22. a) and (22. b), there is no need for operator for all persons in the negative sentences as in (22. c). We frequently use *should* followed by the base form in place of the subjunctive in the contexts shown in (22)–(25). When the verb is not *be*, the indicative is an additional option: *They demand that she takes the medicine.*

2. Specific set expressions

Specific set expressions such as *Long live the king! Be that as it may,... So be it. Come what may,...*

The verb *were* is always used in the *were* subjunctive, which is why it gets its name. It is mostly used to describe a hypothetical or unreal situation:

- (16) a. I would be very happy if he were promoted.
 b. I would quit right away if he was promoted
 c. They would get in touch with us if they were in the city.
 d. I wish you were with us .
 e. I wish I were in a warmer place right now.
 f. I wish I was in a warmer place right now.

Therefore, *were* only appears as a distinct form in (26. a) and (26. e) as the subjunctive. Indeed, in the first and third person singular, indicative *was* is frequently employed instead of *were* subjunctive, with the exception of formal style: (26. b) and (26. f)

Downing and Locke (2006:196) claim that mood in English is not determined by verb inflection, but rather by phrase kinds. Since this is a verb form rather than a clause type, it leaves the subjunctive fairly isolated. The subjunctive has also lost ground when it comes to expressing non-factual meaning. The subjunctive can indicate a wish in independent clauses, but mainly in antiquated, stereotypical phrases like *Well therefore, praise be to God!* A plainly distinguishable present subjunctive is only seen in the uninflected verb group appearing with the subject of the third-person singular in *that*-clause complements of specific verbs and adjectives, such as in the sentence:

- (17) It is appropriate that this place deliberate that matter.

Nowadays, many speakers employ the indicative or *should* + infinitive in less formal circumstances: *We advise that he obtains or ought to obtain a visa.* One can recognize a past subjunctive just in subordinate clauses of condition and concession, where it is still quite existed, in the first and third person singular of *be*. The majority of non-factual ideas, including doubt and hypothesis, are expressed in English by various grammatical constructions, mainly any and its compounds, as well as the modals such as *should*, *could* and *may*. An example of an indicative–subjunctive contrast is used with a specific kind of the conditional *if*, such as in: *If she was at school, I didn't meet her. (indicative)* and *If she were at school, I*

would surely meet her. (*subjunctive*). The true conditionality is found in the second *if* clause. The first, which means *if it is true that she was at the hospital* is a rhetorical condition as it does not preclude that I saw her because she was at the hospital.

Baugh (24-5) claims that to indicate matters of urgency, formality, possibility, or speculation, the subjunctive mood employs a separate form of the past and present.

Urgency:

(18) I demanded that he come early.

The form *comes* or *can come* would be used with the indicative mood:

(19) I am eager to know if he can come early.

Formality:

(20) They recommended that the white door be closed.

with the indicative mood, *is closed* would be used

Possibility:

(21) If he *were* to dust the room, I would go out

The phrase *If he were to dust the room* refers to future. Though *were* is a past tense form, there is no indication to the past.

Speculation:

(22) If she *were* an engineer, she would design large buildings and bridges.

While the subjunctive mood denotes something that is unreal, the indicative mood refers to something that is true:

(23) If she *was* an engineer, she would have a lot of knowledge about designs

Crystal (2008:462) denotes that in the grammatical categorization of sentence forms, the word "subjunctive" is used to describe a mood that is usually contrasted with indicative, imperative, etc. It describes the verb tenses or sentence/clause structures that are employed to communicate various subordinate clause types, representing a variety of attitudes such as tentativeness, vagueness, and uncertainty. The closest examples of the subjunctive in current English can be found in "hypothetical" formulations such as *if she were going (if she was going)*, in specific formulas (e.g. So be it!).

Indicative vs. subjunctive

Greenbaum (1996:119) claims that the base form-type has the following uses: Present tense, except for the third person singular, imperative and present subjunctive. The only way to differentiate the present subjunctive for verbs other than be is to look for the -s form in the third person singular of

the present tense indicative. Therefore, we advise that they return the entire sum, and there is no clear subjunctive form in this sentence. In the third person singular, the subjunctive form can be used as follows:

(24) We advise that he reimburse the entire sum.

reimburses would be the present tense form in this case. The present subjunctive is rarely used in British English, with the exception of the verb *be*

Herring (2016:266-9) denotes that it is only in the third person singular that the present subjunctive of verbs apart from *be* differs from the present indicative, which has the -s form. The subjunctive in *The student insists that he get high marks* is indicated through the verb *get* since the indicative would be *gets*. The past subjunctive is indicated through hypothetical subjunctive. It can only be used in the first and third person singular, where the indicative is *was* (I was, she was), and it differs from the past indicative of the primary verb *be* solely in those cases: In hypothetical conditional clauses (cf. 6.14), as well as in a few other hypothetical formulations, the past subjunctive *were* is employed:

(25) if I were you, I would not accept these conditions

In non-formal circumstances, the past indicative is more frequently used than the subjunctive. The fixed expression *as it were* is excepted. The present indicative is a substitute for the subjunctive *were* in subordinate sentences that pertain to the present and are introduced with *as if* or *as though*.

Quirk (1973:310) suggest that finite clauses as complementation probably contain (a) indicative verb: *They are certain that she is at home* (b) putative should: *He was glad that she should meet them* (c) subjunctive verb: *Angela was angry that she be one of the losers*.

Finite clauses can be complemented with the following: (a) an indicative verb *I'm positive he's at home* (b) a putative should *Mary was upset that he should ignoring them*. (c) Subjunctive verb: *I demanded that he be made official*.

that – clause is usually related to the finite clause while *wh*-clauses is associated with factual adjectives:

(26) I'm not certain why Tom laughed.

Whether/if clauses are employed with factual adjectives when the adjective is negative or has a negative meaning:

(27) I'm not sure *whether/if* they are at school yet

Carter and McCarthy (2006:606) suggest that present references to unfulfilled actions or events can appear in the subjunctive mood in formal and literary styles following verbs like demand, insist, recommend, require, and stipulate. For all verb tenses (i.e., no final -s on third person singular), the subjunctive mood employs the base form of the verb:

(28) The Dean of the College has demanded that his assistant come.

I insist that Mr. Harry travel to Paris.

It is recommended that the students do their exam within two weeks

5. Conclusions

Three primary grammatical moods in English can be recognized: indicative, imperative and subjunctive. The first one is involved with a fact, making a request, the second is associated with order and the third is involved with hypothetical situations. When an adjective has a "factual" meaning that addresses the truth value of complementation, an indicative verb is employed. If the adjective is "emotive" that is, associated with situation, then an indicative verb or putative *should* is employed. In cases where the adjective is "volitional," meaning it indirectly expresses a command, a subjunctive verb or *should* is employed (occasionally hypothetical, but typically obligatory). In the first and third person singular (I was, he was), *were* is also the past indicative form, so the subjunctive and indicative are the same except in those instances where *was* is needed as a past indicative. Determining the differentiation between present indicative and present subjunctive is difficult concerning the first and second person, so we must depend on the point of the statement if it is stating a fact, or a hypothetical situation.

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