**Conditional Clauses Theory**

**Introduction**

- **Rule 1**
  - If-sentences are also called conditional clauses (Bedingungssätze). They consist of two parts: a condition (Bedingung) and a consequence (Folge). With regard to word order there are two possibilities:
  1. start with if and use a comma
    - Condition: if you ask me,
    - Consequence: I will help you.
  2. put if in between and use no comma
    - Consequence: I will help you
    - Condition: if you ask me.

- We can use unless or except if to mean if ... not.

- Example: You can't come in unless you have a ticket. (= You can't come in if you don't have a ticket.)
- Example: If I'm very tired, I go to bed about midnight. (= If I'm not very tired, I go to bed about midnight.)

- A person who says when is sure that something will happen (case of reality). A person who says if is unsure whether it will happen or not.

- Example: If it snows tomorrow, we'll go skiing.
- Example: When it snows, I go skiing.

**Case of Reality (Fall der Wirklichkeit)**

- **Rule 2**
  - With facts, natural laws (Natursatze), repetitions and requests (Bitte, Aufforderung) we use for the condition if + present and for the consequence the present. In this case if and when can be used.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Condition (if + present)</th>
<th>Consequence (if + present)</th>
<th>Consequence (if + present)</th>
<th>Condition (if + present)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>If you heat snow, When Tom is sad, If you leave,</td>
<td>it melts. he always listens to music. please shut the windows!</td>
<td>Snow melts. Tom always listens to music. Please shut the windows!</td>
<td>if you heat it. when he is sad. if you leave!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Case of Possibility (Fall der Möglichkeit)**

- **Rule 3**
  - If the condition can be possibly met (möglichweise erfüllbar), we use for the condition if + present and for the consequence will / can etc + base form.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Condition (if + present)</th>
<th>Consequence (will + base form)</th>
<th>Consequence (will + base form)</th>
<th>Condition (if + present)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>If you ask me, If I find my glasses,</td>
<td>I will help you. I can read the paper.</td>
<td>I will help you. I can read the paper</td>
<td>if you ask me. if I find my glasses.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Case of Improbability (Fall der Unwahrscheinlichkeit)**

- **Rule 4**
  - If the condition can be improbably met (unwahrscheinlich erfüllbar), we use for the condition if + past tense and for the consequence would / could etc + base form (= conditional I). Use were for all persons (also with I, he, she and it) instead of was.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Condition (if + past)</th>
<th>Consequence (would + base form)</th>
<th>Consequence (would + base form)</th>
<th>Condition (if + past)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>If Roger went away, If I were you,</td>
<td>she would cry. I would stop smoking.</td>
<td>She would cry I would stop smoking</td>
<td>if Roger went away. if I were you.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Case of Impossibility (Fall der Unmöglichkeit)**

- **Rule 5**
  - If the condition can be impossibly met (unerfüllbar) as it was in the past, we use for the condition if + past perfect and for the consequence would / could have etc + past participle (= conditional II).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Condition (if + past perfect)</th>
<th>Consequence (would have + past participle)</th>
<th>Consequence (would have + past participle)</th>
<th>Condition (if + past perfect)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>If I had seen her, If we had saved.</td>
<td>I would have asked her. we could have bought it.</td>
<td>I would have asked her. We could have bought it</td>
<td>if I had seen her. if we had saved.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Two consequences are sometimes possible, either a case of improbability (now) or a case of impossibility (past) consequence.

- Example: If I had won in the lottery, I would be rich now. If it hadn't been invented, it couldn't be used now.