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# The Common Outline of The Subjunctive Mood in English

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**Abstract:** This article is considered the difficulties of using the subjunctive mood and its equivalences in Modern English. I will try to point out difference between The Subjunctive Mood and Modality. The primary aim of this article is to express accurate descriptions of the synthetic and analytical forms of The Subjunctive mood in simple and compound sentences.

**Key words:** the subjunctive mood, synthetic form, analytical form, modality, mandative, formulaic, homonymous, heterogeneous.

## 1. Introduction

In this article I will try to present the usage of the subjunctive mood and its common views in grammatical structure. One of the aims of this article is to lay emphasis on the factors which led to the decline of the inflectional subjunctive. The subjunctive mood has been attested that the use of the subjunctive in Old English period and Middle English period was inflectional, though changes had started to take place during the Middle English Period. In this case, learners have some difficulties to understand how to use the subjunctive forms. Nowadays, English language is world language, so many people from variously country try to learn it as a source language. In addition, to the similarities in languages, we also encounter diversity. This is exactly the problem that arises in the language being studied. The main reason for this is that each language belongs to separate language family. I will try to point out differences and similarities between modality and subjunctive mood in contextual meaning.

## 2. The forms of subjunctive mood in modern English.

The literature dealing with the acquisition of subjunctive mood the acquisition process is deeply affected by semantic and functional classification of the moods. Mood is a grammatical category which indicates the attitude of the speaker towards the action expressed by the verb form the point of view of its reality. Mood is major grammatical category which evokes certain feelings or vibes in speakers through words and descriptions. There are three moods in English language. They are indicative, imperative and subjunctive mood. The subjunctive mood is a bit difficult to use and understand. The subjunctive mood shows that the action or state expressed by the verb is presented as a non-fact, as something imaginary or desired. The subjunctive mood is also used to express an emotional attitude of the speaker to real fact. [1] There are several ways to express desire in English. In modern English the subjunctive mood has synthetic and analytical forms.

The synthetic form of the subjunctive mood can be traced to the old English period when the subjunctive mood was chiefly expressed by syntactical forms. If we look at old English period, we will find mandative and the formulaic term. Using the traditional terms of the present subjunctive and the past subjunctive may be misleading, since the difference between the two forms is not primarily one of tense but of mood. In this case some of foreign learners can't catch the meaning of the mood. In course of time most of inflections were lost and the difference between the forms of the subjunctive and those of the indicative has almost disappeared. However, in modern English there a few synthetic forms of the subjunctive which have survived. They are as follows present subjunctive of all the verbs and past subjunctive only of the verb to be.

### The present subjunctive

#### Table 1

To be	To have, to love, to read
<b>I be</b>	<b>I have, love, read</b>
<b>He\she\it be</b>	<b>He\she\it have, love, read</b>
<b>We be</b>	<b>We have, love, read</b>
<b>You be</b>	<b>You have, love, read</b>
<b>They be</b>	<b>They have, love, read</b>

**Table 2**

**The past subjunctive**

To be	To have, to love, to read
<b>I were</b>	
<b>He\she\it were</b>	
<b>We were</b>	-
<b>You were</b>	
<b>They were</b>	

The Present Subjunctive denotes an action referring to the present or future. This form is seldom used in modern English. It may be found in poetry and in elevated prose and scientific language.

Wretched is the infant's lot,

Born within the straw-roof'd cot

**Be** he generous, wise or brave,

He must only be a slave. (Southey)

The Present Subjunctive also occurs in some set expressions.

**Be** it so!

**Suffice** it to say that he soon came back.

God **forbid**!

Far **be** it from me to contradict you.

In American English the present subjunctive is used not only in the above mentioned cases but also in colloquial language.

The past subjunctive is widely used in Modern English. This form is more active than present subjunctive. The term "past subjunctive" is not expressed past action therefore it denotes an unreal condition referring to the present or future. In the past subjunctive the verb to be has the form "were" for all persons, singular and plural.

If I **were** ill, I should like to be nursed by you. (Bennet)

The next form of the subjunctive mood is analytical form. This form consists of the mood auxiliaries should, would, may (might) or shall (which is seldom used). Mood auxiliaries have developed from modal verbs, which have lost their modal meaning. In old English period modal verbs are used to present emotional attitude to real fact. Still there are cases when mood auxiliaries retain a shade of modality.

**3. The usage of The Subjunctive Mood.**

3.1 In simple sentences

The synthetic forms of The Subjunctive are more frequent than the analytical form in simple

sentences

- a) To express wish Success **attend** you!
- b) To express an unreal wish If only he **were** free!
- c) In oaths and imprecation Manners **be hanged**!
- d) In some expressions **Be** it so!

### 3.2 In complex sentences

The Subjunctive Mood is used in conditional sentences unreal to express an unreal condition and an unreal consequence. The past subjunctive of the verb to be is used subordinate clause, with other verbs the same meaning is expressed by the Past Indefinite of the Indicative Mood. In some grammar literatures this structure is explained homonymous function. We can find The Subjunctive Mood in many types of conditional sentences. I will try to draw clearly table which you can understand easily.

**Table 3**

<b>Types of sentences</b>	<b>Examples</b>	<b>Conjunctions</b>
Adverbial clauses of purpose.	She opens the window that she <b>might</b> get a breath of fresh air.	That, so that, in order that
Adverbial clauses of concession.	Though he <b>may be tired</b> , he will go to the concert.	Though, although, however, no matter, whatever, whoever
Adverbial clauses of time.	Whenever you <b>may come</b> , you are welcome.	Whenever, wherever
Adverbial clauses of comparison.	She speaks about him as if she <b>knew</b> him well.	As if, as though
Predicative clauses.	I the house looked as though it <b>were</b> destroyed.	As if, as though(to be, to feel, to look, to seem... in principal clauses)
Subject clauses.	It was necessary that the child's history <b>should be known</b> to none.	It is important, it is necessary, it is right, it is obligatory...
Object clauses.	I wish I <b>were</b> girl again.	He orders that, he demanded that...(in principal clauses)
Attributive appositive clauses.	His wish that everybody <b>should take part</b> in the work reasonable.	Wish, suggestion, aim, idea, etc.

All sentences in this table are according to present or future but most of them are presented by past form of the verbs. It is precisely this aspect that gives difference between the corresponding form of indicative and imperative moods. But in some sentences we can't catch the meaning of the subjunctive mood, in sentences past subjunctive was expressed by other notional verbs. In past subjunctive we use "were" for all persons singular and plural. In some grammars these forms are considered to be the forms of The Subjunctive Mood homonymous with the forms of the Indicative mood.

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#### **4 The connection of Modality and The Subjunctive Mood.**

Mood is a grammatical notion, whereas modality is a semantic notion relating to such concepts as possibility, necessity, obligation, etc. The word “modal” is, in origin, connected with the mode, manner, or fashion of doing something, rather than the substance. But from the 16 century onwards, it was used in logic and philosophy to refer to propositions involving the affirmation of possibility and impossibility, existence and non-existence, contingency and necessity, and this is the meaning that has been taken into grammar.

Mood as used in grammar, is also derived from “mode”, but at some stage the vowel changed by association with the completely different word “mood”, meaning a state of mind. The category of mood is often seen as the category of the verb expressing relations between the situation and reality from the point of view of the speaker. The category of mood in the present day English verb has generated many discussions. It has been treated in many different ways and is considered the most controversial category of the verb. (Ilyish, 1971, 100) Mood is the morphological of expressing modality. There are different approaches to the system of moods in modern English, the most reasonable one seems the system proposed by Professor Barkhudarov. According to L.S.Barkhudarov there are two moods in Modern English the indicative and the imperative. The opposition lies in the sphere of the non-past only. Past tense forms and different combinations of modal verbs with the infinitive are used as morphological, lexical and syntactic means of expressing modality, different from the category of the mood. We can meet such kind of minds in grammatical recourses and they give some difficulties to foreign learners [2]. In this case all learners should pay attention the structure of The Subjunctive mood to express an unreal attitude to real situation. We can give the same sentence in several structures without any change in meaning.

**It was necessary that the child’s history should be known to none. (Trollope)**

**It was necessary that the child’s history be known to none.**

**The child’s history mustn’t be known to anyone.**

I will try to give three sentences which have the same meaning all of them. All of sentences denote an action referring to the future. The first structure of sentences is given by analytical form and in the second is used synthetic form of The Subjunctive Mood. In both of sentences The Subjunctive Mood is used in subject clauses after a principal clause of the type “It is necessary”, the synthetic subjunctive with the mood auxiliary “should” for all persons and the synthetic subjunctive is used. The third sentence is given by modal verb with “must”. The expression “It was necessary” and “must” modal verb give the same meaning here. Though every sentence has different structure, they will express the same meaning and translation, without difference. The subjunctive mood shows actions as non-facts, but the range of meaning proposed includes those which are not modal (unreal condition, unlikely condition, consequence of unreal condition, wish purpose and the like). Moreover, their means of expressions are heterogeneous (synthetic, analytical as well as homonymous), which seems suspects.

#### **5 Conclusion.**

In conclusion, the subjunctive mood in English is used to form sentences that express wished-for, tentatively assumed or hypothetical states of affairs, rather than things the speaker intends to represent as true and factual. These include statements that express opinion, belief, purpose, intention or desire. In grammar we can use modality as the same meaning. In old English period modality was more active way to add extra meaning such as opinion, belief, purpose or desire to the main verb. Past tense forms and different combinations of modal verbs with the infinitive are used as morphological, lexical and syntactic means of expressing modality, different from the category of mood. And we can add, mood auxiliaries have developed from modal verbs, which have lost their modality and serve to form the analytical subjunctive. It can be said that modality and mood are two different concepts and several connections can be observed

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between them. In Old English itself, the number of auxiliaries had increased to the point where writers had the option of using a subjunctive inflectional form or a modal auxiliary. It is the modal auxiliaries and the indicative which seem to have taken over some of the functions of the subjunctive in English today. [3] In this case, the analytical form is more active than synthetic form of the subjunctive mood in modern English.

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[1] Kaushanskaya 2008,168

[2] Bakhudarov L.S The grammar of English Language

[3]Lamberts (1972: 235)