Second conditional

SCENE: Repetition theory of the second conditional

DATE: 19-05-2023

FORM

- Subordinate clause: if/unless + PAST form
- Main clause: would / could / might + INFINITIVE
 - Short form: 'd / wouldn't / couldn't

E.g.:

- They would be grateful if you helped them out.
- o If I didn't trust you, I wouldn't lend you this amount of money.
- o I would never give money to a person, unless I trusted them completely.

MEANING

FIRST POSSIBILITY

To express that something might be possible in the present or the future.

SECOND POSSIBILITY

To express that something is or will be impossible.

MEANING: examples

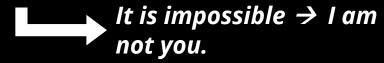
FIRST POSSIBILITY

If we knew that the money was well spent, we would be willing to pay taxes more willingly.

SECOND POSSIBILITY



I would practise some sport, if I were you.



NOTES

01 FIRST NOTE

DO NOT USE WOULD IN THE IF-CLAUSE UNLESS TO EXPRESS MODALITY.

02 SECOND NOTE

DO NOT USE SHOULD IN THE MAIN CLAUSE UNLESS TO EXPRESS MODALITY.



MODALITY:

If I **would** lend me some money, you would help me a lot.

The prisoners would be tortured if they **wouldn't** speak. (= if they refused to speak)

If anything went wrong, we **should** react immediately.

PURE CONDITION:

If I ever **won** some money in the lottery, I would travel around the world.

→ NOT: If I ever would win...

NOTES

03 THIRD NOTE

Were is normally used instead of **was** to express that the condition is not fulfilled.

E.g.: If I were the Prime Minister, I would do something about the unemployment figures.

04 FOURTH NOTE

Formal English: **should** can be used in the conditional clause or replace if. \rightarrow expresses an unlikely condition.

E.g.: If anything should see us here, we might be in big trouble. E.g.: **Should** anything unusual **happen**, we would have to inform the manager.