THE CONDITIONAL MOOD
Twenty-third lesson – Vingt-troisième leçon
CONTENTS

1. Definition
2. Uses
3. Forms
1. Definition

- The conditional is a linguistic **mood**, a categorization that indicates the purpose of a phrase.

- The imperative mood, for example, expresses a command.
1. Definition

- The conditional can be found across various tenses.

- This lesson summarises the uses of the conditional in the present tense.
2. USES.

2.1 The conditional mood is generally used to express three values:

- i) A conditional desire, the French conditional of **courtesy**:
  - *Je voudrais un café, s’il vous plaît.*
  - *I would like a coffee, please.*
2. USES

ii) An obligation or duty:

- Nous *devoir*ons travailler plus.
  - We should work more.
2. USES

iii) An event that would happen if something else were possible (if clauses): it depends on a condition:

- *Si tu aimais la lecture, je t’offrirais tous mes livres.*
- *If you liked reading, I would offer you all my books.*
2. USES

2.2 Certain verbs are commonly used in the conditional mood, sometimes more often than in the indicative mood.

- *Ex.: Vouloir* (to want)
- *Je voudrais* (I would like) rather than
- *Je veux* (I want).
2. USES

- These are modal verbs, used to diminish the strength of a command or request.
2. USES

- **Je pourrais**
  - *Je pourrais* avoir votre autographe?
  - *Could I have your autograph?*

- **Je devrais**
  - *Vous devriez* arriver à l’heure!
  - *You should arrive on time!*

- **Je voudrais**
  - *Je voudrais* un café, s’il-vous-plaît.
  - *I would like a coffee please.*
2. USES

2.3 The verb aimer

i) The verb aimer is used to express a desire, sometimes one that cannot be fulfilled

- J’aimerais rencontrer Barack Obama.
  - I would like to meet Barack Obama.
2. USES

- *Nous aimerions visiter la Pyramide du Louvre.*

- *We would like to visit the Louvre’s Pyramid.*
2. USES

ii) With an adverb of emphasis when we wish to intensify the idea/desire

- Nous aimerions bien/vraiment/tant visiter la Pyramide du Louvre!
- We would [really] like/love to visit the Louvre’s Pyramid [so much].
iii) To express a polite request

- *J’aimerais parler au directeur.*
  - *I would like to speak with the director.*
3. FORMS

- The conditional mood is formed by adding the appropriate subject ending to the infinitive form of the verb.

- Verbs from the -re group drop the final -e; -er and -ir verbs don’t change.
## 3. FORMS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Person</th>
<th>Subject pronoun</th>
<th>Subject ending</th>
<th>translations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; sg.</td>
<td>Je</td>
<td>-ais</td>
<td><em>I should/would/could</em>…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt; sg.</td>
<td>Tu</td>
<td>-ais</td>
<td><em>You should/would/could</em>…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3&lt;sup&gt;rd&lt;/sup&gt; sg.</td>
<td>Il/elle/on</td>
<td>-ait</td>
<td><em>He/she should/would/could</em>…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; pl.</td>
<td>Nous</td>
<td>-ions</td>
<td><em>We should/would/could</em>…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt; pl.</td>
<td>Vous</td>
<td>-iez</td>
<td><em>You should/would/could</em>…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3&lt;sup&gt;rd&lt;/sup&gt; pl.</td>
<td>Ils/elles</td>
<td>-aient</td>
<td><em>They should/would/could</em>…</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 3. Forms: Overview

To illustrate, see the examples of **donner** (*to give*), **réussir** (*to succeed*), and **attendre** (*to wait*):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Donner (to give)</th>
<th>Réussir (to succeed)</th>
<th>Attendre (to wait)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Je</strong></td>
<td>donner<strong>ais</strong></td>
<td>réussir<strong>ais</strong></td>
<td>attendr<strong>ais</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tu</strong></td>
<td>donner<strong>ais</strong></td>
<td>réussir<strong>ais</strong></td>
<td>attendr<strong>ais</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Il/elle/on</strong></td>
<td>donner<strong>ait</strong></td>
<td>réussir<strong>ait</strong></td>
<td>attendr<strong>ait</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Nous</strong></td>
<td>donner<strong>ions</strong></td>
<td>réussir<strong>ions</strong></td>
<td>attendr<strong>ions</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Vous</strong></td>
<td>donner<strong>iez</strong></td>
<td>réussir<strong>iez</strong></td>
<td>attendr<strong>iez</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ils/elles</strong></td>
<td>donner<strong>aient</strong></td>
<td>réussir<strong>aient</strong></td>
<td>attendr<strong>aient</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. FORMS

- There are a number of irregular verbs in the conditional, most of which share their irregular stems with the simple future tense.

- Note also that the simple future and the conditional have similar forms.
3. FORMS

**Different forms of aller:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Present</th>
<th>Simple future</th>
<th>conditional</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Je/j’</strong></td>
<td>vais</td>
<td>irai</td>
<td>irais</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tu</strong></td>
<td>vas</td>
<td>iras</td>
<td>irais</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Il/elle/on</strong></td>
<td>va</td>
<td>ira</td>
<td>irait</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Nous</strong></td>
<td>allons</td>
<td>irons</td>
<td>irions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Vous</strong></td>
<td>allez</td>
<td>irez</td>
<td>iriez</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ils/Elles</strong></td>
<td>vont</td>
<td>iront</td>
<td>iraient</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
C’est tout pour aujourd’hui!

Au revoir!

Merci!