

A close-up photograph of a person's hand in a dark suit jacket, carefully balancing a single wooden block on top of a tall, slightly wobbly stack of Jenga blocks. The background is a bright, out-of-focus indoor setting with windows.

Subjunctive

Native mistakes & Slang

Structure

Key Differences

Appreciating the differences

Avoiding Spanglish

How to avoid Spanglish mistakes caused by translation

Emphatic Subjunctive

The subjunctive that is used to emphasise

Native Mistakes

Typical mistakes native speakers make

Hypothetical Subjunctive

The subjunctive that is used with the conditionals and wish

Colloquial expressions

Using slang in business

Key Differences



English

Used for emphasis & hypothesis

No new verb conjugation

Spanish

Used for desires, wishes, emotions, doubts, possibilities,...

Many new verb conjugations:

The Subjunctive

Understanding the basics

- In English, the subjunctive is used to talk about hypothetical situations, things that are contrary to fact, and things that are uncertain or unlikely.
- The subjunctive is formed from other verb tenses, and there are some verbs and expressions that require the subjunctive.
- The subjunctive can be tricky because it is not used as frequently as other verb tenses, and the rules for using it can be complex.

Changing the verb to the infinitive is the only thing that changes. It comes after certain verbs and adjectives and the emphatic subjunctive normally takes the form:

Verb + (that) + subject + infinitive + extras

e.g. I suggest (that) she **contact** them tomorrow.

Specifically, what makes the subjunctive different is the infinitive verb form that comes after the subject. Note that in the example above, the verb would normally be **contacts**

Emphatic subjunctive

The basics

Verbs that are followed by the subjunctive



Examples

1. Ask
We asked that he drive carefully.
2. Demand
He demands that she pay attention.
3. Insist
I insist you be on time for the meeting.
4. Propose
They propose she go shopping at the market.
5. Recommend
I recommend that he come early tonight.
6. Request
They requested I stay the night.
7. Suggest
I suggest you try the other restaurant.

Expressions that are followed by the subjunctive



Examples

1. It's best
It's best you submit the document asap.
2. It's crucial
It's crucial that you be there.
3. It's essential
It's essential that
4. It's important
It's important that she attend the meeting
5. It's necessary
It's necessary that they sit down please.
6. It's urgent
It's urgent that the letter
7. It's vital
It's vital that we take a bottle of water on our
hike to the bottom of the Grand Canyon

Subjunctive negations

The subjunctive also has a negative form.

Verb + (that) + subject + not + infinitive + ...

*“They asked that he **not fall** asleep during meetings”*



“

“I wish I were on vaction right now”



Hypothetical Subjunctive

- In conditionals
- With “wish”
- With the expression “it’s time”

do not use it with verbs like
want or *would like*

Unreal

The subjunctive is used to talk about something unreal or imagined. In these cases

Formation: To form the hypothetical subjunctive, use the base form of the verb with "were" instead of "was" in all persons. For example: "If I were you, I would take that job."



- The hypothetical subjunctive is used to describe situations that are hypothetical or imaginary, especially those that are unlikely to occur.

"If I were a bird, I would fly to the moon."

If I were you...

If only...

Suppose (that)...

I wish (that)...

It's time (that)...

I would suggest (that)...

Usage:

Hypothetical subjunctive

Hypothetical Subjunctive

The past

We use the hypothetical structure + past perfect*

If **I had known** that ...

I wish **you had told** me ...

If only **I had studied** ...



Subjunctive



Translations

Sally asked me to tell you about the meeting.

Sally me pidió que te dijera lo de la reunión.

He will want us to go by the office after the visit.

Querrá que pasemos por la oficina después de la visita. (él)

The agent recommended that we not leave the tourist area.

El agente nos recomendó que no saliéramos de la zona turística.

As soon as they know about the offer, the price will go up.

En cuanto sepan lo de la oferta, subirá el precio.

What would you do if you won the lottery tomorrow?

¿Qué harías si te tocara la lotería mañana?

I wish she weren't so busy all the time!

¡Ojalá no estuviera tan ocupada todo el tiempo!

It's time he learned how to drive.

Ya es hora de que aprenda a conducir.

It's almost summer. It's time I did a bit more exercise.

Ya casi es verano. Es hora de que haga un poco más de ejercicio.

Exceptions

It's important to note that some English speakers use the indicative mood (e.g., "If I was you...") instead of the hypothetical subjunctive, particularly in informal or colloquial speech. However, in formal writing or in certain situations, using the hypothetical subjunctive is preferred..

Native mistakes

The risk of sounding native



Native speakers often make mistakes but that doesn't mean that you should!

1. Misusing pronouns
2. Misusing adjectives and adverbs
3. Confusing who and whom
4. Using wrong the wrong verb tense
5. Using 'like' instead of 'as'

Native mistakes

Common errors

Subject vs object



Like vs As



like

Similar to

~~“She runs like a cheetah”~~

as

Literal

She runs as fast as a Cheetah

Colloquial English

How to sound more native by using expressions



Colloquial expressions

Dough

Money



A buck/quid

A dollar/
A pound

Colloquial expressions

Be in the loop

To be part of the circle of knowledge

A ballpark figure

An approximate number

To knock it out of the park

To be more successful than expected

Colloquial expressions

Low-hanging fruit

An easy opportunity or quick win that can be pursued without much effort.

Out of pocket

Refers to expenses that are not covered or reimbursed by an employer or client.

Blue-sky thinking

Refers to creative or imaginative ideas that are not constrained by current realities.

Colloquial expressions

Cash cow

Refers to a product or service that generates significant profits for a company

Elephant in the room

Refers to an obvious problem that is not being addressed.

Unicorn

Refers to a startup company that has achieved a valuation of 1 billion dollars

Thanks!

Does anyone have any questions?