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# English Revisited:

## Tips, Tidbits & Tutorials

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### Glossary

gobsmacked by  
 (informal, British)  
 very surprised by

take: stance, attitude

yet: up to now

fallout:  
 negative consequences

glance at: take a quick look  
 at

installment: *Fortsetzung*

dicey (informal) : risky

## Editorial

I think it is fair to say that not only Britons but also many people across the world were gobsmacked by the result of the Brexit referendum in June. Whatever your take on the issue, there is general agreement that Britain and the EU will be facing their greatest challenges yet.

In our newsletter we will explore some of the vocabulary associated with the referendum and its fallout, especially some particularly British expressions.

In this issue we will also glance in our last installment on conditionals at mixed conditionals, those sentences that combine 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> conditionals. While not used that often, they are important to know if you are an advanced speaker of English.

Finally, in our last article, *Ph Do and Ph Don't*, we will deal with the dicey issue of using the title *Doktor* for individuals who have completed a PhD outside of Europe. We will also explore briefly the cultural differences surrounding the use of academic titles in daily life.

### Upcoming Issues :

- academic writing
- gerunds
- Amish English

John Nixon



Comments

Do you have any ideas for future issues?  
 Please contact us.

Subscription



## Currently on Offer

If you are interested in any of the following, please **contact us**.

### Workshops from September to December:

**Expert English for Academic Staff:** September 13 and 14 (8:30 to 16:30)

**Conference English/Academic Presentations in English:**

September 27 and 28 (8:30 to 16:30)

**Academic Writing in English for Science and Engineering: (free)**

October 7, 14 and 21 (9:00 to 12:15)

**Speaking English on the Job for Academics, Researchers and Scientists :**

in November (date to be announced)

**Writing Research Proposals in English: (free)** November 18 (9:00 to 12:15)

**Socializing and Networking in Academic Settings:** in Dec. (date to be announced)

**Academic Writing in English for the Humanities and Social Sciences: (free)**

December 5, 12 and 19 (9:00 to 12:15)

- **Editing Service and Coaching:** Do you have a paper, abstract or other document that needs to be looked over by a native English speaker before it is published? If so, we can help

## Grammar

### Mixed Conditionals

#### Mixed Conditionals

In our previous two newsletters we took a look at if-clauses (conditional sentences). As our readers will remember, there are four types of if-clauses:

#### zero conditional (expressing a general truth)

*If you don't get enough sleep at night, you can't concentrate well in the morning.*

#### 1<sup>st</sup> conditional (referring to something that may happen in the future)

*If you play your cards well, you will get a pay raise next year.*

#### 2<sup>nd</sup> conditional (referring to something that is unlikely to happen in the future)

*If she published more in English, she would reach a wider audience.*

#### 3<sup>rd</sup> conditional (wondering about what could have happened in the past, but did not)

*If we had saved more when we were younger, we would have had a bigger down payment for our house.*

There are, of course, sentences that can combine the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> conditional forms. These are called mixed conditionals. One example of a mixed conditional refers to a future (unreal) possibility based on a past event that did not happen. It is called an unreal conditional because the condition in the past was not fulfilled.

#### Structure: if + past perfect + would + infinitive

*If we had conducted a double-blind experiment (3<sup>rd</sup> conditional: past event that did not happen), we would be able to have our article published next year in a renowned journal (2<sup>nd</sup> conditional: future event that is no longer possible).*

*Had they spent more money on the project (3<sup>rd</sup> conditional), they wouldn't necessarily have a better product today (2<sup>nd</sup> conditional).*

Remember: with "had" we can drop the "if" and reverse the order of the subject ("they") and the verb ("had").

Another example of a mixed conditional reflects on what might have happened if a current condition were true, but is not in reality.

*If the semester were shorter (2<sup>nd</sup> conditional referring to a current situation that is not true), we wouldn't have been able to complete all of the chapters in the reader (3<sup>rd</sup> conditional referring to the past and what could have happened).*

*Were the lecture hall smaller (2<sup>nd</sup> conditional), we wouldn't have been able to accommodate all of the attendees at the graduation ceremony (3<sup>rd</sup> conditional).*

Remember: with "were" we can drop the "if" and reverse the order of the subject ("the lecture hall") and the verb ("were").

For more practice on all types of conditionals, try these exercises.



#### Exercises

#### Glossary

*play your cards well (figurative):*  
do something correctly

*double-blind experiment:*  
*Doppelblindversuch*

*renowned:*  
famous; with a great reputation

*reader: Skript*

*attendees:*  
people in attendance

#### Famous Quotation with a Mixed Conditional

*If I had no sense of humour, I would long ago have committed suicide.*  
*Mahatma Gandhi*

John Nixon

## Intercultural Communication

### Ph Do and Ph Don't

In 2008, the Washington Post reported that several American scientists working at the Max Planck Institute were questioned by the police and threatened with prosecution for allegedly using the title 'Dr.' without authorization.<sup>1</sup> An antiquated and seldom-enforced law mandated that only those who earned their titles from German universities were permitted to call themselves 'Dr.' After the researchers at the Max Planck Institute were accused, German universities and scientific research institutions loudly objected, arguing that it would undoubtedly discourage top scholars from relocating to Germany.

As a result of the controversy, the law was changed soon thereafter, declaring that all those who had earned doctorates in the United States from research institutions included in the Carnegie List were entitled to the use of the title 'Doktor'.<sup>2</sup> European doctorate holders had already benefited from a similar change in 2001, which specified that anyone with a European Ph.D. was permitted to use the title 'Dr.' in Germany.<sup>3</sup> Individuals not covered by this agreement must still apply for permission before using the title in Germany. In the meantime, the common practice is to list your name, then the degree, institute and year, such as Mary Smith, Ph.D. (America College, 2001).

Although American scholars are now allowed to use their titles in Germany, some important practical distinctions remain. In Germany, the title of 'Dr.' becomes integrated into your name. This means that it often appears in your passport and other official documents. In my case, a German banker meticulously went back through all of our account documents and changed my name from *Frau* to *Frau Doktor* after he discovered that I had a doctorate. In the U.S., these distinctions are usually not considered that important.

In fact, someone with a Ph.D. insisting on others calling him or her doctor outside of an academic or formal setting would be considered rather pretentious.<sup>4</sup>

Another important distinction is that it is common in the U.S. to use the title 'Professor' for most faculty members of a university, regardless of whether they have official professor status, or even a Ph.D. In contrast, the title of 'Professor' is its own additional academic distinction in Germany and must be earned through further academic work after the Ph.D.

Scholars often joke that when the flight attendant on an airplane asks "Is there a doctor on board?" they are most likely not looking for someone to analyze a poem or lecture them on ancient history. This is probably why one of the most popular gifts for someone that has just completed a Ph.D. in the U.S. is a t-shirt that reads "Not *that* kind of doctor."

The German system disambiguates doctorate-level qualifications by awarding the title of Dr. med. for physicians, Dr.dent. for dentists, and so forth. Since it is so easy to confuse the title of doctor (PhD) with doctor (physician), many scholars in the U.S. opt to put Ph.D. after their name, while medical doctors put M.D. In Germany, either Dr. or Ph.D. would be acceptable, but Dr. Smith, Ph.D. would not be appropriate, unless you hold two separate degrees. While Americans tend to only go by their highest degree as part of their title, Germans pile them up at the beginning of their names, resulting in extensive titles, such as *Herr Prof. Dr.-Ing. Beck*. That said, one famous exception in the United States is the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Lucy Blaney-Laible, Ph.D

#### Glossary

*prosecution:*  
legal action

*object:*  
*protest*

*meticulously:*  
very carefully;  
paying attention  
to details

*disambiguate:*  
make a  
distinction clear

<sup>1</sup>"Non-European PhDs in Germany find use of 'Doktor' Verboten." *Washington Post Foreign Service*. March 14, 2008. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/03/13/AR2008031304353.html>

<sup>2</sup>"US-amerikanische Ph.D.-Titel von Universitäten der sogenannten Carnegie-Liste dürfen in Deutschland ebenfalls als "Dr." ohne fachlichen Zusatz oder Herkunftsbezeichnung geführt werden." <http://www.e-fellows.net/Studium/Studiengaenge/Promotion/Wissenswertes-zur-Promotion/Doktor-versus-PhD>

<sup>3</sup>For more on degree classifications under the Carnegie List and the Bologna Classification, links can be found here: <http://www.nsf.gov/statistics/seind12/c2/c2s.htm> and <http://www.eie-surveyor.org/cd-complements/Bologna/2.pdf>

<sup>4</sup>Of course, there are exceptions to this. One Washington Post opinions writer insisted that Vice President Joe Biden's wife should not be introduced as Dr. Jill Biden because her qualifications were academic rather than medical. The backlash was swift and severe, as she has the right to be called Dr. and was being introduced in a formal setting. <http://scienceblogs.com/bioephemeral/2009/02/03/no-im-not-that-kind-of-doctor/>

## Vocabulary

### Brexiting Britain

#### What is happening in Great Britain?

Following the Brexit referendum on 23rd June, intended by David Cameron to quash support for the right-wing British Independence Party, UKIP, and infighting in his own Conservative Party, 52 % of the electorate voted, against expectation, to leave the EU.

Since that vote, often described as bringing 'change of a seismic nature', it has become evident that far from crushing dissent, the referendum has only succeeded in opening a veritable Pandora's box of it. The UK is now showing itself in a very different light to that of the tolerant, fun-loving British cast by traditional stereotyping. The division and fallout have been huge throughout the nation. England and Wales voted to leave the EU, whereas Scotland and Northern Ireland voted to remain. Young people (18-24 year olds) wanted to remain, pensioners to leave; the City voted to remain and those North of the Watford gap to leave.

#### Why did the majority vote to leave?

For most leave voters, a vote to leave the EU represented a vote for change. Most UK citizens have been witnessing a decline in their overall spending power, larger classroom sizes in schools, huge waiting times for NHS services as well as a decline in other public services for many years.

The leave contingent, campaigning on the slogan of 'take back control', promised to change all this, putting back the EU money into the NHS and freeing the country from EU immigration, claimed by the Leavers to be the main cause for economic deterioration.

While the "leavers" were (initially) ecstatic at the result, those in favour of remain were gutted.

#### What has been happening since?

The City groaned as the pound plummeted to \$1.32 in the small hours of 24<sup>th</sup> June. The pound has since rallied, but experts are warning to beware of the dead cat bounce. Having gone out on a limb to embrace Brexit, David Cameron announced his resignation, clearly feeling that he could not constantly swim against the Conservative Party tide as party leader. This created a 'vacuum of power.' Initially it was thought that Cameron's old school friend, former Etonian and former Mayor of London, Boris Johnson, would step up to the plate. This was not to be the case. As the politics in Westminster played out, Theresa May, formerly Home Secretary, has become the UK's Prime Minister with the daunting task of negotiating the Brexit.

#### Bremain!

Regardless of the politicians, the "remainers" have not yet given up hope. Simply put, it turns out that the Brexit referendum is not legally binding under UK law. Before the UK can leave the EU, article 50 of the Lisbon Treaty must be invoked. The majority of MPs voted to remain in the EU. The government may be morally obliged to act, but it is not legally obliged to do so on the Brexit vote.

Over the border in Scotland, where the majority of Scots wanted to remain in the EU, a second referendum may be in the offing.

Cheryl Stenzel



#### Glossary

**quash:**  
to stop something

**seismic:**  
very strong,  
widespread impact

**dissent:**  
public disagreement

**North of Watford:**  
North of London

**NHS:** National Health System under which all citizens receive free medical care

**gutted:**  
bitterly disappointed

**plummet:** to fall steeply

**rally:** recover

**dead cat bounce:**  
temporary financial recovery

**go out on a limb:**  
to take a risk, go against the majority  
(*sich weit aus dem Fenster lehnen*)

**swim against the tide:**  
act against main opinion

**Etonian:**  
a pupil at Eton, famous private school

**step up to the plate:**  
take action

**in the offing:** could likely happen soon