

# CONCESSIVE CONDITIONALS FROM A TYPOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

Tom Bossuyt

16<sup>th</sup> Conference on Typology and Grammar for Young Scholars  
ILS RAS, Saint Petersburg  
21/11/2019



# CONCESSIVE CONDITIONALS

3 subtypes:

- scalar concessive conditionals (**SCCs**)
  - *Even if it rains, we will go outside.*
- alternative concessive conditionals (**ACCs**)
  - *Whether it rains or not, we will go outside.*
- universal concessive conditionals (**UCCs**)
  - *Whatever the weather is like, we will go outside.*
  - *No matter how much it rains, we will go outside.*

Haspelmath & König (1998)

# CONCESSIVE *CONDITIONALS*

prototypical conditionals: ‘if  $p$ , then  $q$ ’

- *If it rains, (then) we’ll go to the movies.*

SYN: protasis

SEM: antecedent

SYN: apodosis

SEM: consequent

Zaefferer (1991)

concessive conditionals: ‘if  $\{p_1, p_2, \dots p_x\}$ , then  $q$ ’

- protasis contains set of antecedents
- this set is contextually exhaustive

König (1986)

# CONCESSIVE *CONDITIONALS*

ACCs: **Whether** it rains ( $= p_1$ ) **or** not ( $= p_2$ ), we will go outside.

UCCs: **Whatever** ( $= p_x$ ) the weather is like, we will go outside.

- If the weather is A  $\rightarrow$  we will go outside.
- If the weather is B  $\rightarrow$  we will go outside.
- If the weather is C  $\rightarrow$  we will go outside.
- If the weather is ...  $\rightarrow$  we will go outside.

# CONCESSIVE *CONDITIONALS*

SCCs: *Even if it rains (=  $p_n$ ), we will go outside.*

exhaustiveness through conventional implicature evoked by even:

- *If it rains, we will go outside.*
- *If it drizzles, we will go outside.*
- *If it's cloudy, we will go outside.*
- *If it's sunny, we will go outside.*

# *CONCESSIVE* CONDITIONALS

prototypical concessive: ‘although  $p$ , (still)  $q$ ’

CCs: exhaustive set of antecedents  $\rightarrow$  consequent

➤ apodosis gets factive reading

typically, at least one **unexpected** value  $p_n$

➤ ‘If  $p_n$ , then normally not  $q$ ’

König (1988)

conditional  $>$  concessive conditional  $>$  concessive (e.g. German *ob*) König (1994)

# HASPELMATH & KÖNIG (1998)

## differential marking vs. **identical** marking:

Godoberi (Haspelmath & König 1998: 628)

### SCC

[*cāi r-α<sup>?</sup>-alara-la*],      *ile*    *išqa-ru*    *ma-n-iLibu-da*.  
 [rain    PL:NT-come-COND-also]      we:ABS    home-ELAT      PL:H-go-FUT.PART-COP

‘Even if it rains, we’ll go outside.’

### ACC

[*cāi r-α<sup>?</sup>-alara-la*,      *miti*    *b-ax-alara-la*],  
 [rain    PL:NT-come-COND-also    sun      N-fall-COND-also]

*ile*      *išqa-ru*      *ma-n-iLibu-da*.  
 we:ABS      home-ELAT      PL:H-go-FUT.PART-COP

‘Whether it rains or not, we’ll go outside.’

### UCC

[*inL'asū*    *nawab*    *u-k'-alara-la*],      *ile*      *išqa-ru*      *ma-n-iLibu-da*.  
 [which      weather      NT-be-COND-also]      we:ABS      home-ELAT      PL:H-go-FUT.PART-COP

‘Whatever the weather will be, we’ll go outside.’

“finite vs. non-finite  
subordination”

finite ↔ differential  
non-finite ↔ identical

# LANGUAGE SAMPLING

## 15-language sample:

Africa	Eurasia
Sheko (Afro-Asiatic)	German (Indo-European)
Kanuri (Nilo-Saharan)	Japanese (Japonic)
Australia-New Guinea	Tamil (Dravidian)
Paakantyi (Pama-Nyungan)	Turkish (Turkic)
Mauwake (Trans-New Guinea)	North America
Southeast Asia & Oceania	Veracruz Huasteca Nahuatl (Uto-Aztecan)
Mandarin Chinese (Sino-Tibetan)	West-Greenlandic (Eskimo-Aleut)
Rapanui (Austronesian)	Yucatec Maya (Mayan)
Vietnamese (Austro-Asiatic)	South America
	Huallaga Quechua (Quechuan)

“The particular choice of topics is to a large extent arbitrary, reflecting my own interests, but if this choice is no better than some others, I would argue that it is also no worse.”

Comrie (1981)



# COMPARATIVE CONCEPT: BALANCED/DERANKED

“This distinction [i.e. finite vs. nonfinite], which is based on morphosyntactic criteria and refers primarily to the verbal systems of European languages, turns out to be of limited cross-linguistic applicability.” (Cristofaro 2003: 53)

## two strategies for encoding subordinate clauses

Stassen (1985)  
Cristofaro (2003)

- **balanced:**

verbs and participants in subclause structurally **identical** to those in independent declarative main clause

- **deranked:**

verbs and/or participants in subclause structurally **different** from those in independent declarative main clause

# COMPARATIVE CONCEPT: BALANCED/DERANKED

- (3) German (Bossuyt 2016: 54)

Doch [**was immer** er **auch** tut], es reicht nicht.  
 But [what ever he also does] it suffices not  
 ‘But whatever he does, it is not enough.’

**BALANCED**

- (4) Tamil (Lehmann 1993: 282)

[maʒai pey-**t-aal-um**] naaŋka! veļiyee viļaiyaatu-v-oom  
 [rain fall-COND-ADD] we outside play-FUT-1 PL  
 ‘Even if it rains, we will play outside.’

**DERANKED**

- (5) Vietnamese (Bystrov & Stankevich 2012: 330)

[**Đã** ngày mai có xách bị đi ăn]  
 [even.if day tomorrow have carry bag go eat]  
 thì hôm nay vẫn phải có đầy tớ  
 then day this all.the.same must have servant

**BALANCED**

‘Even if tomorrow I have to beg for a living, I must have a servant today.’

# SCALAR CONCESSIVE CONDITIONALS

four construction types:

1. identical to conditional, e.g. Mauwake *V=na* ‘V=TOP’
2. conditional clause + focus particle (‘also/even’)
  - subordinator with balanced clause, e.g. Yucatec Maya *kex wáa* ‘even if’
  - conditional verb in deranked clause, e.g. Japanese *V-te mo* ‘V-COND also’
3. specialized subordinator, e.g. Veracruz Huasteca Nahuatl *yonke* ‘even.if’
4. subordinator also used in concessives, e.g. Vietnamese: *dù* ‘even.if/though’

# ALTERNATIVE CONCESSIVE CONDITIONALS

## five construction types:

1. based on conditionals
  - subordinator with balanced clause, e.g. Rapanui: *ka ... ka ...* ‘if ... if ...’
  - conditional verb in deranked clause, e.g. Tamil *V-(n)t·aal-um V-(n)t·aal-um* ‘V-COND-even V-COND-even’
2. based on (embedded) interrogatives, e.g. German *ob ... oder ...* ‘whether ... or ...’
3. marked by subjunctive/optative, e.g. Yucatec Maya *V-nak wa V-nak* ‘V-SBJV or V-SBJV’
4. marked by ‘(you) want’, e.g. Turkish *ister V-IMP ister V-IMP* ‘want V-IMP want V-IMP’
5. expression of irrelevance, e.g. Mandarin Chinese *bùlùn ... háiishi ...* ‘no.matter ... or ...’

# UNIVERSAL CONCESSIVE CONDITIONALS

six construction types:

1. particle affixed to verb, e.g. Huallaga Quechua *WH V-r-pis* ‘WH V-COND-even’
2. particle following WH, e.g. West Greenlandic *WH=luunniit* ‘WH-even’
3. particle preceding WH, e.g. Veracruz Huasteca Nahuatl *zan WH* ‘only WH’
4. reduplication, e.g. Paakantyi *miṅa-miṅa* ‘what-what [= whatever]’
5. subjunctive/optative, e.g. Turkish: *[WH V-sA] V-eyim* ‘[WH V-COND] V-SBJV’
6. expression of irrelevance, e.g. Mandarin Chinese: *bùlùn WH* ‘no.matter WH’

# TWO KNOWN GROUPS (1)

- **balanced** languages with **different** coding strategies for different subtypes

## German

- SCC: *auch wenn*
- ACC: *ob ... oder ...*
- UCC: *WH immer/auch*

## Yucatec Maya

- SCC: *kex wáa*
- ACC: *V-nak wa V-nak*
- UCC: *je'en WH*

## Veracruz Huasteca Nahuatl

- SCC: *yonke*
- ACC: *tlan ... tlan ...*
- UCC: *zan WH*

cf. “finite ↔ differential”  
in Haspelmath & König (1998)

## TWO KNOWN GROUPS (2)

- **deranked** languages with one **identical** strategy for all subtypes

- Huallaga Quechua
- Japanese
- Tamil
- Turkish

surprisingly uniform:

- SCC: V-COND-even
- ACC: V-COND-(even) V-COND-even
- UCC: WH V-COND-even

cf. “non-finite ↔ identical”  
in Haspelmath & König (1998)

## TWO NEW GROUPS (1)

- **deranked** languages with one **identical** strategy for all subtypes, but with ‘WH-even’ rather than ‘V-COND-even’

- Sheko
- West Greenlandic

- SCC: V-COND-even
- ACC: V-COND V-COND-even
- UCC: WH-even V-COND

- general preference? **possible** in Turkish and Quechua

cf. “non-finite ↔ identical”  
in Haspelmath & König (1998)  
... but with different word order



## TWO NEW GROUPS (2)

- **balanced**, but with **identical** marking on some subtypes

### Mandarin Chinese

- SCC: *jíshǐ / jiùshi*
- ACC: *bùlùn ... háishi ...*
- UCC: *bùlùn* WH

### Kanuri

- SCC: V *yàyé*
- ACC: V *yàyé* V *yàyé*
- UCC: WH V *yàyé*

### Vietnamese

- SCC: *dù*
- ACC: *dù ... dù ...*
- UCC: *dù* WH

- This indicates ‘deranked → identical’  
rather than ‘deranked ↔ identical’

*contra* Haspelmath & König (1998)

# ANALYSIS & DISCUSSION

- balanced/deranked seems important, but ...
- possible other relevant factors
  - word order (OV vs. VO)
  - WH-fronting vs. WH *in situ*
  - ...
- explanations, esp. for uniformity in deranked languages?
  - purely “historical accident”?
  - functional-adaptive motivations?



Collins (2019)

Haspelmath (2019)

# MORE DATA NEEDED: GRAMMARS?

- disadvantages of descriptive grammars/articles
  - **descriptive bias:** concessive conditionals often not included in grammars
    - conditionals > concessives > SCCs > UCCs > ACCs
  - **areal bias:** some regions better described than others
    - problems finding data for Australia-New Guinea and the Americas
  - **type bias:** identical marking more likely to be noticed
    - danger of pragmatic sampling method
    - if representative in future → stricter sampling rules
- combination of grammars/articles and questionnaire

# SUMMARY

- three subtypes: SCCs, ACCs, and UCCs
- functional (and formal) similarities to conditionals and concessives
  - conditional > concessive conditional > concessive
- ‘finite ↔ differential’ and ‘non-finite ↔ identical’  
→ perhaps ‘deranked → identical’?
- future steps
  - include more languages
  - look at more factors
  - questionnaire data

# REFERENCES — GENERAL

- Collins**, Jeremy (2019): Some language universals are historical accidents. In Karsten Schmidtke-Bode, Natalia Levshina, Susanne Maria Michaelis & Ilja A. Seržant (eds.): *Explanation in typology: Diachronic sources, functional motivations and the nature of the evidence*, 47–61. Berlin: Language Science Press.
- Comrie**, Bernard (1981): *Language universals and linguistic typology*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Cristofaro**, Sonia (2003): *Subordination*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Haspelmath**, Martin (2019): Can cross-linguistic regularities be explained by constraints on language? In Karsten Schmidtke-Bode, Natalia Levshina, Susanne Maria Michaelis & Ilja A. Seržant (eds.): *Explanation in typology: Diachronic sources, functional motivations and the nature of the evidence*, 1–23. Berlin: Language Science Press.
- Haspelmath**, Martin & Ekkehard **König** (1998): Concessive conditionals in the languages of Europe. In Johan van der Auwera (ed.): *Adverbial constructions in the languages of Europe*, 563–640. Berlin: de Gruyter.
- König**, Ekkehard (1986): Conditionals, concessive conditionals and concessives: Areas of contrast, overlap and neutralization. In Elizabeth Closs Traugott, Alice ter Meulen, Judy Snitzer Reilly & Charles A. Ferguson (eds.): *On conditionals*, 229–246. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- König**, Ekkehard (1988): Concessive connectives and concessive sentences: Cross-linguistic regularities and pragmatic principles. In John Hawkins (ed.): *Explaining language universals*, 145–166. Oxford: Blackwell.
- König**, Ekkehard (1994): Konzessive Konditionalsätze im Deutschen und anderen germanischen Sprachen. *Nordlyd: Tromsø University Working Papers on Language and Linguistics* 22, 85–101.
- Stassen**, Leon (1985): *Comparison and universal grammar*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Zaefferer**, Dietmar (1991): *Semantic universals and universal semantics*, 210–236. Berlin: Floris.

# REFERENCES — DATA FOR LANGUAGES

- AnderBois**, Scott (2014): Unconditionals in Yucatec Maya. *Proceedings of Form and Analysis in Mayan Linguistics* 2, 1–20.
- Berghäll**, Liisa (2015): *A grammar of Mauwake*. Berlin: Language Science Press.
- Bisang**, Walter (1998): Adverbiality: The view from the Far East. In Johan van der Auwera (ed.): *Adverbial constructions in the languages of Europe*, 641–812. Berlin: de Gruyter.
- Bossuyt**, Tom (2016): Zur Distribution von Irrelevanzpartikeln in was *immer/auch*-Konstruktionen: Positionelle und kombinatorische Varianz in Deutschen Referenzkorpus. *Germanistische Mitteilungen* 42.1, 45–70.
- Bystrov**, Igor S. & **Stankevich**, Nonna V. (2012): Concessive constructions in Vietnamese. In Xrakovskij Victor S. (ed.): *Typology of concessive constructions*. Munich: Lincom Europa, 330–343.
- Fortescue**, Michael (1984): *West Greenlandic*. London: Croom Helm.
- Fujii**, Seiko Y. (1994): A family of constructions: Japanese *TEMO* and other concessive conditionals. *Berkeley Linguistics Society* 20, 194–207.
- Hellenthal**, Anneke C. (2010): *A grammar of Sheko*. Doctoral dissertation, University of Leiden.
- Hercus**, Luise A. (1982): *The Bagandji language*. Canberra: Australian National University.
- Hutchison**, John P. (1981): *The Kanuri language: A reference grammar*. Madison: University of Wisconsin.
- Kieviet**, Paulus (2017): *A grammar of Rapa Nui*. Berlin: Language Science Press.
- Lehmann**, Thomas (1993): *A grammar of modern Tamil*. Pondicherry: PILC.
- Menz**, Astrid (2016): Concessive conditionals in Turkish. *Turkic languages* 20.1, 90–103.
- Olguín Martínez**, Jesús Francisco (2016): *Adverbial clauses in Veracruz Huasteca Nahuatl from a functional-typological approach*. M.A. thesis, University of Sonora.
- Weber**, David John (1989): *A grammar of Huallaga (Huánuco) Quechua*. Berkeley: University of California Press.