CONCESSIVE CONDITIONALS
FROM A TYPOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

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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.

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Haseplathom & 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

concessive conditionals: ‘if \{p_1, p_2, \ldots p_x\}, then $q$’
- protasis contains set of antecedents
- this set is contextually exhaustive

König (1986)  
Zaefferer (1991)
CONCESSIVE CONDITIONALS

ACCs: *Whether it rains (= p₁) or not (= p₂), we will go outside.*

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

- If the weather is A → we will go outside.
- If the weather is B → we will go outside.
- If the weather is C → we will go outside.
- If the weather is ... → we will go outside.
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 → consequent
➢ apodosis gets factive reading
   typically, at least one unexpected value $p_n$
➢ ‘If $p_n$, then normally not q’

conditional > concessive conditional > concessive (e.g. German ob) König (1994)
differential marking vs. identical marking:

Godoberi (Hasepmath & König 1998: 628)

SCC

[cai r-a-2-alara-la], iLe išqa-ru ma-n-ilibu-da.
[rain PLINT-come-COND-also] we:ABS home-ELAT PLH-go-FUT,PART-COP

‘Even if it rains, we’ll go outside.’

ACC

[cai r-a-2-alara-la, mili b-ax-alara-la],
[rain PLINT-come-COND-also sun N-fall-COND-also]
ile išqa-ru ma-n-ilibu-da.
we:ABS home-ELAT PLH-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 PLH-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:

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

“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)
two strategies for encoding subordinate clauses

• 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

“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)
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.’

(4) Tamil (Lehmann 1993: 282)
[maḻai pey-taal-um] naaṅkaḷ veḻiyee vilaiyaatu-v-oom
[rain fall-COND-ADD] we outside play-FUT-1PL
‘Even if it rains, we will play outside.’

(5) Vietnamese (Bystrov & Stankevich 2012: 330)
[Dầu ngày mai có xách bì 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
‘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)ťaal-um V-(n)ťaal-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 ... háishi ...* ‘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 *miŋa-miŋa* ‘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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>SCC</th>
<th>ACC</th>
<th>UCC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>German</strong></td>
<td><em>auch wenn</em></td>
<td><em>ob ... oder ...</em></td>
<td><em>WH immer/auch</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Yucatec Maya</strong></td>
<td><em>kex wáa</em></td>
<td><em>V-nak wa V-nak</em></td>
<td><em>je’en WH</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Veracruz Huasteca Nahuatl</strong></td>
<td><em>yonke</em></td>
<td><em>tlan ... tlan ...</em></td>
<td><em>zan WH</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

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

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<th>ACC:</th>
<th>UCC:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>V-COND-even</td>
<td>V-COND V-COND-even</td>
<td>WH-even V-COND</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


... but with different word order
TWO NEW GROUPS (2)

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mandarin Chinese</th>
<th>Kanuri</th>
<th>Vietnamese</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SCC: jǐshǐ / jiùshi</td>
<td>SCC: V ãyé</td>
<td>SCC: dù</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACC: bùlùn ... háíshi ...</td>
<td>ACC: V ãyé V ãyé</td>
<td>ACC: dù ... dù ...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UCC: bùlùn WH</td>
<td>UCC: WH V ãyé</td>
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• This indicates ‘deranked $\rightarrow$ identical’ rather than ‘deranked $\leftrightarrow$ 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
• 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


