

Topics in Conditional Conjunctions

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Many languages (including cases from at least the Germanic, Romance, Slavic, Semitic, and Kartvelian families) have been observed to allow for conditional readings of what appear to be conjunctions of clauses (cf. (1a)), or, in some cases, of a clause and an NP (cf. (1b)), which both can be interpreted like a regular hypothetical conditional (e.g. (1c)).

- (1) a. You sing one more song and I'm out of here.
b. One more song and I'm out of here.
c. If you sing one more song, I'm out of here.

Such constructions pose a series of questions, including the lack of entailment of either conjunct and the nature of the particular conditional connection expressed. Additional problems arise with further variants involving imperatives (cf. (2a)) or sufficiency modal constructions (cf. (2b), von Fintel & Iatridou 2007) in the first conjunct. In both cases, the imperative- or modal-specific layer of meaning does not enter the perceived antecedent ('if you sing...'), in contrast to cases with regular modals as in (2c) ('if you must sing...').

- (2) a. Sing one more song and I'm out of here.
b. You only have to sing one more song and I'm out of here.
c. #You must sing one more song and I'm out of here.

I will briefly survey the most recent body of work on the topic, which emphasizes the particular prosodic countour (Keshet 2013), the topical status of the first conjunct (Keshet 2013, Starr t.a.), and the similarities to dynamic conjunction (Klinedinst & Rothschild 2015, Starr t.a.).

To offer a unified account for the different form types of conditional conjunctions, I will argue for an analysis that combines virtues of existing approaches by letting the first conjunct introduce an aboutness topic (as argued by Ebert, Endriss, Hinterwimmer 2014 for regular hypothetical conditionals, Starr t.a. for conditional conjunctions). This process, however, is driven not by a particular variant of natural language conjunction, but by the prosodic properties of the first conjunct (key in Keshet 2013, Keshet & Medeiros t.a.). Differences between declarative, imperative, and sufficiency modal variants fall out from differences in saliency rankings of topics introduced and differences in non-ad issue meaning. The conjunction plays a role only by constraining the particular type of conditional relation involved (Txurruka 2003).

I will conclude by surveying the behavior of suppletive imperatives (von Fintel & Iatridou 2017, Oikonomou 2016), and of closely related constructions in English and Japanese, which I take to provide tentative evidence for the division of labor proposed.

References: Ebert, Endriss & Hinterwimmer (2014) A unified analysis of conditionals as topics. *L&P* 37. von Fintel & Iatridou (2007). Anatomy of a modal construction. *LI* 38. von Fintel & Iatridou (2017). A modest proposal for the meaning of imperatives. In Arregui & al. (Eds.). Keshet (2013). Focus on conditional conjunction. *JoS* 30. Keshet & Medeiros (t.a.). Imperatives under coordination. *NLLT*. Klinedinst & Rothschild (2015). Connectives without truth-tables. *NALS* 20. Oikonomou (2016). *Covert modals in root contexts*. Ph. D. thesis, MIT. Starr (t.a.) Conjoined Imperatives and Declaratives. In *Proceedings from Sinn und Bedeutung* 21. Txurruka (2003). The natural language conjunction *and*. *L&P*26.