

Variably future-marked conditionals in Greek

Integrating discourse and grammar*

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It has been proposed that future-marked conditionals have discourse-pragmatic functions other than future temporal reference (Comrie 1982, Fillmore 1990, Dancygier & Sweetser 2005). Through a corpus-based multivariate analysis we show that future-marked conditionals in Greek are associated with speech-act conditional uses and correlate systematically with formal contextual features of polarity and subject-person and form. We argue that some of these associations are entrenched enough to warrant constructional status and that the data support the emergence of specific conditional constructions, on a continuum between fixed formulas and schematic or more productive constructions, defined by particular tense-aspect combinations, preferred lexical fillers, and specialized functions, which are really of a discursal nature. We suggest that construction grammar provides an appropriate framework for integrating discourse-pragmatic conventions, not merely semantics, into grammatical theory; we further propose some attributes and values that may be used for this purpose.

Keywords: conditionals, construction grammar, bi-clausal constructions, discourse frames, politeness, topics, speech-act conditionals, Greek, multivariate analysis

1. Introduction

Future-marked conditionals are not mentioned among possible conditional types in traditional grammars of Modern Greek (e.g. Tzartzanos 1964, Tsobanakis

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From a typological perspective, in languages in which future marking is eschewed in conditional clauses (for future temporal reference), future-marked conditionals are expectedly associated with particular semantic and discourse-pragmatic functions. In English, for instance, future-marked protases have been said to express contextually given propositions, typically uttered in the immediately preceding discourse (Comrie 1982, Akatsuka 1986), e.g. (2) (Comrie 1982, example 18):³

- (2) If he won't arrive before nine, there's no point in ordering for him. (in a context where a group of people in a restaurant have been discussing the possibility that the remaining member of the party will be late) (Comrie 1982: 148)

A *will* protasis further has also been claimed to express a special pragmatic meaning, namely the speaker's "positive interest" toward the content of the *if*-clause (Fillmore 1990, Dancygier & Sweetser 2005), e.g. (3):

- (3) We'll double your fee if you'll make this a priority. (Dancygier & Sweetser 2005: 84)

In this study, by identifying patterns of variation in speakers' choice of a future-marked protasis over a non-future-marked alternative in Greek, we show that the special pragmatics of future-marked protases is SPEECH-ACT conditionals uses. Speech-act conditionals, the pervasiveness and systematicity of which were first noted in Sweetser 1990, are conditionals where the *if* clause conditionally modifies not the content of the main clause but the speech act performed by it, e.g. in (4) an offer:

- (4) If you're hungry, there are biscuits on the sideboard. (Dancygier & Sweetser 2005: 113)

We find that the formal contextual features that correlate systematically with future-marked protases include preferred features of polarity and of form and person in the subject. The identification of such features is only possible through a corpus-based multivariate analysis (Section 3), which provides firm empirical support to the proposed analysis of Greek future-marked *if* clauses as speech-act conditionals (Section 4.1). We further identify more specific patterns of AN @A conditionals, each defined by particular tense-aspect combinations and particular verbs (Sections 4.2, 4.3).

3. According to Comrie (1982), English Future (*will*) marking may also have a 'modal' (desiderative) interpretation (*If you WILL insist on annoying people, they won't want to be friends with you*) or may serve to establish a causal link between apodosis and protasis such that the apodosis presents a reason for the protasis (*If it WILL amuse you, I'll tell you a joke*); cf. also the discussion ahead on speech-act conditionals, which clearly include at least some of Comrie's examples.

The discourse-pragmatic functions correlating with these features are to a large extent motivated given the meaning(s) of the ΘA tense forms outside a conditional context and of the preferred lexical fillers for the verbal slot in the *if* clause. However, the final interpretation and discourse-formulaic character of these conditional patterns are not fully predictable from their components and neither is the entrenched presence of certain verbs (in particular tense-aspect-person combinations). In this respect, particular patterns emerging from the data can be described as constructions pairing formal with meaning properties (Fillmore, Kay & O'Connor 1988, Goldberg 1995, Kay & Fillmore 1999, Fried & Östman 2004).

Along with much of the constructionally oriented literature (e.g. Bybee 2006, Goldberg 2006), we recognize that entrenchment is sufficient to ensure constructional status of a pattern (i.e. its storing as a unit) and that compositionality and analyzability are a matter of degree. Though constructions need not necessarily involve some non-predictable aspects of meaning, we nevertheless show that the patterns at hand have indeed acquired special discourse-pragmatic properties which emerge only in the context of the conditional as a whole. Thus, while we do not forward any claims as to the existence of a single conditional construction identified exclusively by the ΘA marker in the protasis, we provide evidence for more particular *AN* ΘA constructions defined by lexico-grammatical features and evoking particular discourse-pragmatic functions.

In short, refuting free variation, the quantitative analyses allow us to identify clusters of formal (lexical and grammatical) features with particular functions, which are really of a discursal nature. We shall argue that some of these associations are entrenched enough to warrant constructional status. We shall also suggest that construction grammar provides an appropriate framework for integrating such (discursal) functions, and propose, albeit tentatively, constructional formalizations of the patterns at hand.

2. Corpus and data extraction

Data were extracted from the Greek Web as Corpus (GkWaC) available on Sketch Engine (www.sketchengine.co.uk), which is comprised of Internet texts — mostly blogs, but also business, organization, and government websites — downloaded in 2007. Additional data from newspapers printed in the 1990s and early 2000s were extracted from the Hellenic National Corpus (HNC) (www.ilsp.gr). Both were searched in 2008–2009 using the corresponding concordance program.

The frequency of future-marked relative to non-future-marked conditionals is very low in these data (1–2%).⁴ Therefore, in the GkWaC, for each *AN* ΘA token, the first preceding and following *AN* conditional from the same text was extracted, where possible. In the HNC, we took as many *AN* ΘA conditionals as we could find and then a random sample of the same number of *AN* conditionals.⁵

We included in our data conditionals with non-clausal apodoses, as in (5a), together with cases of ellipsis, as in (5b):

- (5) a. ena vlameno sistima piθarxias, me metra, AN ΘA
 one stupid system discipline-GEN with measures if FUT
 apusiazes
 be absent-P-IPFV-2SG
 “a stupid disciplinary system, with measures, if you were (going to be)
 absent” (GkWaC, 2855)
- (5) b. to sernume arya pros ti masitiki epifania (i tin koptiki,
 it pull-PR-1PL slowly toward the chewing surface (or the cutting,
 AN kaθarizume brostina δondia)
 if clean-PR-1PL front teeth)
 “We pull it slowly toward the chewing surface (or the cutting surface, if
 we are cleaning front teeth)” (GkWaC, 6086)

Excluded were *AN* protases with perfective past (aorist) since there is no variation in this context, that is, *AN* ΘA is not an option. We also excluded invariable formulas such as *an thes* ‘if you like’, *an katalaba kala* ‘if I understood correctly’, *an den apatome* ‘if I’m not mistaken’. Finally, we excluded material from songs and poems since rhyming considerations may be involved.

These protocols yielded 761 tokens of which 331 were *AN* ΘA , that is, a frequency for *AN* ΘA relative to *AN* of 46% (331/761). While considering only a sample of the much more frequent plain *AN* conditionals results in an artificial overall distribution, this allows us to propose a multivariate quantitative model of speaker choices between the two variants.

4. A SketchEngine (GkWaC) sample of 37 pages (each listing 20 tokens) of the concordance results for *AN* yielded 478 *AN* conditionals (after manually subtracting *AN* complements and relatives (e.g. *opou kai an* ‘wherever’) as well as material from songs and invariable expressions) and only two *AN* ΘA conditionals, for a relative frequency of under 1%. Concordance results for all tokens, including complement as well as conditional constructions, yield 17,488 pages of *AN* and 346 pages of *AN* ΘA , which indicates a relative frequency of approximately 2%.

5. After exclusions, 72% (551/761) of the data are from the SketchEngine GkWaC.

3. Coding: Operationalizing hypotheses as factors for multivariate analysis

In this study we empirically test the factors constraining speakers' choice between a future-marked protasis and a non-marked alternative. In contrast with much of the literature on conditionals, we do not assume meaning differences based on unverifiable intuitions nor do we ascribe speaker motivations based on example-by-example interpretations, since speaker intent cannot be directly ascertained in a replicable manner. We therefore test hypotheses about meaning or function indirectly, by relying on clues in the linguistic context (Sankoff 1988a: 154). The variationist method allows us to discover patterns of usage in the relative frequency of co-occurrence of variant forms and contextual elements (e.g., Labov 1969, 1972, 2004, Sankoff 1988a, Poplack & Tagliamonte 2001). Linguistic structure is thus manifested in the LINGUISTIC CONDITIONING of forms, that is, probabilistic statements about linguistic sub-contexts that differ significantly in the relative frequencies of the variant forms.

We proceed as follows. By coding each token for features of the linguistic-discourse context, we first operationalize hypotheses about meaning and other differences between the variant forms (cf. Poplack & Tagliamonte 1999:321). We then apply quantitative techniques to ascertain the influences of contextual factors on speakers' choice of form. Thus, for given linguistic environments, or contextual features (factors), we predict an increase (favoring effect) or decrease (disfavoring effect) in the relative frequency of *AN* Θ *A* compared to its overall rate relative to plain *AN* protases.

The factor groups (independent variables) we coded are: protasis and apodosis tense, polarity, grammatical person and form of the subject, position of apodosis relative to protasis, and type of conditional. As we have said, each factor group operationalizes a hypothesis by considering co-occurring contextual features. For example, we propose to investigate the hypothesis that future-marked conditionals express shared, or given, ideas as claimed for English *if + will* (cf. Comrie 1982). The problem is that the presumption of shared background or even previous mention is not always available to the analyst (cf. Du Bois 1987:811–12). However, coding for the form of the subject — unexpressed, pronominal, or full NP (lexical) — provides a test of this hypothesis. The prediction is that future marked protases should be favored in the context of a co-occurring unexpressed (6a) or pronominal subject (6b) as opposed to a full NP subject (6c), since the referents of unexpressed and pronominal subjects are more 'topical' (that is, previously and subsequently mentioned) than those of full NPs, which are the form in which new-information mentions are typically introduced (Bentivoglio 1993, Dumont 2006:289).

- (6) a. ektimun pos mia epanodos tora den tha prosdosi
 estimate-PR-3PL that one return now NEG FUT afford-NP-PFV-3SG
 kapio ofelos sto koma ke AN ΘA iparki afto tha
 some benefit to-the party and if FUT occur-NP-PFV-3SG this FUT
 jini paramones ekloyon
 happen-NP-PFV-3SG before election-GEN
 “They consider that a return now will not afford a benefit to the party
 and if (indeed) there is one (Ø in the original), this will happen on the
 eve of the elections” (HNC, Eleftherotipia Newspaper 15/6/99)
- (6) b. tin gela emis tin kaname stin premiera me ti Slovenia, AN
 the bounce we it do-P-1PL in-the opening with the Slovenia if
 ΘA jini ali ston omilo as tin kanun
 FUT happen-NP-PFV-3SG another in-the league let it do-NP-3PL
 i norviji
 the Norwegians
 “The bounce (match) we did it in the opening match with Slovenia, if
 (indeed) there will be another one in the league, let the Norwegians do
 it” (HNC, Eleftherotipia Newspaper 30/03/99)
- c. i xrisimopiisi dierminea tha apotelesi episis neo
 the use interpreter-GEN FUT constitute-NP-PFV-3SG also new
 stixio ja ta kinovuleftika dedomena, idika malista AN ΘA
 element for the parliamentary realities especially if FUT
 jinete ke paralili metafrasi me akustika
 happen-NP-IPFV-3SG and parallel translation with headphones
 “The use of an interpreter will also constitute a new element for
 parliamentary realities, especially if parallel translation with headphones
 is also used” (HNC, Eleftherotipia Newspaper 27/06/99)

Most of the coding was straightforward. In some cases we had to make decisions that we then attempted to apply consistently. Thus, in coding apodosis verb tense we generally considered the tense of the verb in the main clause, although we recognize that some expressions function more as epistemic adverbial phrases than as main-clause propositions (cf. Thompson 2002). For example in (7a) we noted the apodosis verb as *nomizo* ‘I think’ rather than *eksasθeni* ‘weakens’. However, we coded the verb in the subordinate clause in cases in which the entire conditional “sentence” is subordinated; for example in (7b) we considered the apodosis verb to be *tha exane* ‘he would lose’ rather than *iksere* ‘he knew’.

- (7) a. o erotas iparxi eki pu den ton psaxnis, eki ton
 the love exist-PR-3SG there where NEG it look for-PR-2SG there it
 vriskis siniθos, AN sinexos milas j afton,
 find-PR-2SG usually if all-the-time talk-PR-2SG for it
nomizo oti eksasθeni
 think-PR-1SG that weaken-PR-3SG
 “Love exists where you’re not looking for it, there you find it usually, if
 you constantly talk about it, I think that it weakens” (GkWaC, 41191)
- b. ime siyuros oti o Enoeda iksero oti AN ΘA
 be-PR-1SG sure that the Enoeda know-P-IPFV-3SG that if FUT
 epeze opos ke tin proiyumeni xronia θa exane,
 play-P-IPFV-3SG like and the last year FUT lose-P-IPFV-3SG
 etsi alakse stratijiki
 so change-P-PFV-3SG strategy
 “I’m sure that Enoeda knew that if he played as in the previous year, he
would lose, so he changed strategies” (GkWaC, 38252)

We also coded directly for the kind of conditional, distinguishing speech-act from predictive conditionals. As already noted, speech-act conditionals are conditionals where the *if* clause conditionally modifies the speech act performed by the main clause, e.g. the offer in example (4) above (*If you’re hungry, there are biscuits on the sideboard*). An example from the present data is (8) below, where the speech act performed is a suggestion:

- (8) AN ΘA piasis Peugeot protino to 407 SE 2.0,
 if FUT get-NP-PFV-2SG Peugeot suggest-PR-1SG the 407 SE 2.0
 en aristorjima
 be-PR-3SG masterpiece
 “If you’re going to get a Peugeot, I recommend the 407 SE 2.0, it’s a
 masterpiece” (GkWaC, 1741)

On the other hand, predictive conditionals, as in (9), are conditionals in which the content of the main clause hinges on the future realization of the condition in the *if* clause, while at the same time evoking an alternative set up in which the condition is not realized, and hence the outcome (in (9), Miss Minchin hearing her) will be different (Dancygier & Sweetser 2005:29).

- (9) If she doesn’t stop, Miss Minchin will hear her. (Dancygier & Sweetser 2005:44)

Note that, in contrast, speech-act conditionals are characterized by the absence of alternate scenarios: the speech act in examples (4) and (8) above is performed

anyway (once uttered it is irrevocably performed), and the protasis does not evoke any alternatives but simply serves as the background against which the apodosis makes sense.

The adoption of alternativity as the distinctive feature for the class of predictive conditionals represents a departure from the logical analysis of conditionality in terms of unidirectional implication. This departure can be captured as a biconditional (*iff*) implicature (cf. Geis & Zwicky 1971) or an alternative structure of mental spaces in a mental space set-up (Dancygier & Sweetser 2005, ch. 2). The point we want to stress here is that the obvious relatedness of predictives to logical conditionals, the universality of the function of prediction, and the possibility of motivating other conditional functions from the predictive one do not necessarily amount to a claim of priority for predictives over other types, nor, crucially, of a marked status for the latter. In terms of frequency, for example, Savova & Sweetser (1990) have found that speech-act and epistemic conditionals are more frequent than predictive ones in English and Bulgarian literary texts.

In our data, the ratio of speech-act to predictive conditionals in the GkWaC, which comprises mostly casual/informal “blog” language, is higher than in the HNC, which includes several journalistic and literary texts (49%, 268/543 vs. 39%, 81/206). While our corpus is too small and rather restricted in terms of genres to draw any definitive conclusions, this suggests that frequency may not be assessed independently of specific genres or registers. We agree in fact with the arguments in Geeraerts (2005) to the effect that any usage-based analysis should accommodate “lectal” (i.e. dialect, register, etc.) variation. To substantiate, however, a claim for register effects would require consideration of entire texts (rather than the limited context provided by the concordance program for the corpora at our disposal) and classification of those texts into registers in some principled way in order to show (independently of *AN* Θ *A*) that some registers are more likely than others to contain speech-act uses. Nevertheless, we may state that one-third of non-future-marked (plain) *AN* conditionals were coded as speech-act, which indicates that speech-act conditionals are not a rare discourse function relative to predictive conditionals.

In our coding, the predictive class includes negative epistemic stance conditionals (14%, 107/749, of the data coded for conditional type), as in (10a) and (10b).⁶ On the other hand, counted with speech-act conditionals are a handful of cases of metalinguistic conditionals (2%, 17/749 of the data), as in (11a). Also included in the count of speech-act conditionals are cases that seem compatible with both a speech-act and a predictive interpretation (7%, 54/749 of the data), as

6. Negative epistemic stance (Fillmore 1990) indicates the speaker’s dissociation from the content of the protasis — see also 4.3.

in (11b–c). While (11b), for instance, superficially allows for the evocation of an alternative scenario — ‘if you don’t want to see this kata executed properly, do not see ...’ — the *if* clause primarily serves to set the ground for the imperative suggestion in the main.

- (10) a. AN δ en to zusa pandos δ en θ a to pisteva
 if NEG it live-P-IPFV-1SG anyway NEG FUT it believe-P-IPFV-1SG
 “Well, if I hadn’t experienced it myself, I wouldn’t believe it” (GkWaC, 8084)
- b. AN Θ A boruse na katanoi θ i i
 if FUT can-P-IPFV-3SG SUBJ understand-NP-PFV-3SG-PASSIVE the
 usia tu θ a katerxotan sto epipedo ton
 essence his FUT descend-P-IPFV-3SG to-the level of-the
 δ imiurjimatou tu
 creations his
 “If His essence could be understood, He would descend to the level of his creations” (GkWaC, 14437)
- (11) a. itan mia poli af θ ormiti (AN Θ A borusa
 be-P-3SG one very spontaneous (if FUT can-P-IPFV-1SG
 na xrisimopiiso afti ti leksi) parastasi
 SUBJ use-NP-PFV this the word) performance
 “It was a very ‘spontaneous’ (if I could use that word) performance”
 (GkWaC, 8084)
- b. AN θ elete na δ ite afto to kata na
 if want-PR-2PL SUBJ see-NP-PFV-2PL this the kata SUBJ
 ektelite sosta δ ite tin
 execute-NP-IPFV-3SG-PASSIVE correctly see-IMPERATIVE-2PL the
 ektelesi tu Enoeda
 execution of-the Enoeda
 “If you want to see this “kata” executed properly, see the way Enoeda does it” (GkWaC, 38252)
- c. afto δ ior θ o θ iike, opote AN Θ A θ elate na δ ite
 this fix-P-PFV-3SG so if FUT want-P-IPFV-2PL SUBJ see-NP-PFV-2PL
 ena apo afta ta proqramata tora borite
 one of these the programs now can-PR-2PL
 “This [problem] was fixed, so if you would like to see one of these programs, now you can” (GkWaC, 5557)

We illustrate our coding for the token in (11c). With respect to the (dependent) variable, it was coded as future-marked AN Θ A. With respect to the factor groups

(independent variables), it was coded as follows: protasis tense: imperfective past; apodosis tense: present; polarity: positive; grammatical person and form of the subject: second person plural unexpressed; position of apodosis relative to protasis: postposed; conditional type: ‘both’ speech-act and predictive. We also noted the lexical type of the protasis verb, in this case, *thelo* ‘want’.

4. Analysis: Linguistic patterns of AN (ΘA) variability

The factor groups were considered in Variable-rule analysis using GoldVarb X (Sankoff, Tagliamonte & Smith 2005), a kind of multivariate (logistic regression) analysis, the goal of which is to discover the set of factor groups which jointly account for the largest amount of variation in a statistically significant way (Sankoff 1988b, Paolillo 2002, Tagliamonte 2006: 132–133). While in experimental studies goodness of fit is measured by the amount of variance accounted for by the statistical model, natural spoken data are not distributed evenly across cells, and factors are often not completely independent of each other. For this reason, Variable-rule analysis uses maximum likelihood as a measurement of goodness of fit.

As shown in Table 1, contributing significantly to choice of AN ΘA are four of the five factor groups included in the analysis: tense, conditional type, polarity, and subject person and form. We will be focusing our discussion on the probabilities, or factor weights, shown in the first column. These indicate the direction of effect: the closer to 0, the less likely that AN ΘA will be chosen in the given environment (as defined by the factor) while the closer to 1, the more likely that it will be.⁷ The second column shows the rate or proportion of tokens with AN ΘA , and the third column shows the total number of tokens in each factor.⁸

7. In this study we focus on the direction of effect, that is, the ordering of factors within each factor group from most to least favorable to choice of AN ΘA . With respect to magnitude of effect, the factor groups in Table 1 are listed by order of inclusion by the stepwise regression on the step-up phase, but no general rule is justified in taking either the order of selection or the range (the difference between the largest and smallest weights within a factor group) as indicators of effect size. Grondelaers et al.’s 2009 study on the introduction of new discourse entities in Dutch exemplifies a stepwise forward logistic regression model with factor Odds Ratios indicating relative impact on the variation.

8. Note that totals within each factor group may not add up to the total number of tokens in the entire analysis. Uncodable tokens or tokens which could not be included in any of the listed factors were excluded.

Table 1. Factors contributing to the choice of future-marked *AN ΘA* (vs. non-marked *AN*) conditionals in Greek (Total N: 761).

Input:	.403 (44%)		
	Probability	%	N
Tense			
Past (Ipfv) Protasis + (FUT Past Apodosis)	.67	62	211
Non-Past Protasis + FUT Non-past Apodosis	.67	53	165
Non-Past Protasis + Present Apodosis	.23	21	218
Conditional type			
Speech-act	.67	58	349
Predictive	.36	31	400
Polarity			
Affirmative	.56	47	688
Negative	.11	7	73
Grammatical Person and Form of Subject			
1st person	.61	56	147
2nd or 3rd person unexpressed or pronominal	.54	45	337
3rd person, full NP	.36	25	204

Factors not selected as significant: Position of apodosis relative to protasis.

4.1 Speech-act conditionals, negative polarity, and unexpressed subjects

Beginning with the conditional type factor group, it is clear that, overall, *AN ΘA* conditionals are favored in speech-act conditional uses (with a factor weight of .67), as illustrated in (12a)–(12b) (also (8), (11a,b) above), and disfavored with predictive interpretations (factor weight of .36), as in (13). In fact, speech-act uses make up close to two-thirds (62%, 202/324) of all *AN ΘA* conditional tokens.

- (12) a. *prosopika leo sto γrama, AN ΘA to sindaksume, na*
 personally say-PR-1SG in-the letter if FUT it write-NP-PFV-1PL SUBJ
siberilavume ti prepi na
 include-NP-PFV-1PL what must-impersonal SUBJ
proseksun (tono sto jota, bla) afu vevea
 pay attention-NP-PFV-3PL (accent mark on-the iota, etc.) after of course
to zitisume evjenika
 it ask-NP-PFV-1PL politely

“Personally I think in the letter, if we are going to write it, we should include what they should pay attention to (accent mark on iota, etc.), after of course we ask for it politely” (GkWaC, 3246)

- (12) b. o Stallman ine proqramatistis o idios ke AN ΘA
 the Stallman be-PR-3SG programmer the himself and if FUT
 θelame na tu prosapsume kati siyura afto
 want-P-IPFV-1PL SUBJ him blame-NP-PFV-1PL something surely this
 den θa itan i asinepeia
 NEG FUT be-P-3SG the irresponsibility
 “Stallman is himself a programmer and if we wanted to reproach him
 with something, it surely wouldn’t be irresponsibility” (GkWaC, 6456)

- (13) ...opote an exis-γrpasi s ena onoma 2–3 tilefona, emails,
 so if write-PERFECT-2SG to one name 2–3 telephones emails
 diefθinsis klp, ksexna ta. AN ΘA ta perasis
 addresses etc. forget-IMPERATIVE-2SG them if FUT them pass-NP-PFV-2SG
 sti SIM θa xaθun ola
 to-the SIM FUT lose-NP-PFV-3PL-PASSIVE all
 “...so if you have written under one name 2–3 telephone numbers, e-mails,
 addresses etc., forget them. If you copy them onto the SIM, they will all get
 lost” (GkWaC, 26057)

As discussed previously, typical of examples like (12a) and (12b) is that the protasis does not express a precondition for the result or outcome in the main clause nor does it evoke an alternative scenario in which the outcome would be different (as is the case in (13)); the relationship of direct causation, enablement, etc. that holds between the contents of the protasis and the apodosis and the simultaneous evocation of the alternative, both characteristic of a predictive conditional like (13), are absent from speech-act conditionals such as (12a) and (12b), which are precisely *not* about alternatives; for instance, in a world where “we are not going to write the letter” (12a), the issue of stating the content of the apodosis simply does not arise.

The speech-act conditional function is consonant with and may help motivate two overarching features characterizing AN ΘA conditional clauses, namely the virtual absence of negation and the disfavoring effect of full NP subjects. These, in turn, can be taken as independent evidence for the use of AN ΘA to express an evoked and shared background — or one that is presented as such — which is precisely the function of the protasis in a speech-act conditional.

As shown in Table 1, AN ΘA is very strongly disfavored (.11) under negative polarity, though we find the occasional occurrence, e.g. (14):

- (14) AN $\delta\epsilon\eta$ ΘA lamvanete ta minimata sas ja perisoteres apo 24
 if NEG FUT take-NP-IPFV-2PL the messages your for more than 24
 ores xrisimopiiste tin aftomati apandisi 'ektos yrafiou'
 hours use-IMPERATIVE-2PL the automatic reply 'out-of office'
 [in a text on email use] "If you will not receive your messages for over 24
 hours, use the automated reply 'out of office'" (GkWaC, 41344)

The effect of negation may be interpreted in view of the alternativity feature of predictive as opposed to speech-act conditionals. As proposed in the earlier literature on negation (e.g. Ducrot 1973, Givon 1978, Horn 1985) instances of negation may be viewed as a way to deny the truth of a statement that was previously uttered or implied. In this respect, negative assertions are marked when compared to the corresponding affirmative, and they often "presuppose a context in which the affirmative proposition has been asserted or at least entertained" (Horn 1985:143). To the extent this is true, the alternative scenarios evoked by a predictive conditional are, so to speak, even more readily set up by a negated clause; we would expect, therefore, negation to favor plain AN protases. Conversely, negative polarity disfavors future-marked AN ΘA conditionals, which are precisely not about alternate backgrounded scenarios, but rather set up the floor for the main clause. While the absence of negation has not been noted as a general feature of speech-act conditionals (and in principle, an example like *if you're not hungry, let's go straight to the movies* is possible),⁹ it is interesting to note that none of the corpus-derived speech-act conditionals in Dancygier & Sweetser 2005 actually has a negated *if* clause.¹⁰

The subject person and form effect, we suggest, is also consonant with the speech-act conditional function. Table 1 shows that AN ΘA is disfavored by full NP subjects (.36). That this disfavoring effect is one of form rather than person is shown by separate results for third person, in which the relative frequency of AN ΘA is nearly twice as high with unexpressed or pronominal subjects as with full NP (lexical) subjects (46%, 82/178 vs. 25%, 51/204). Since full NPs are the form in which new-information mentions are typically introduced (Bentivoglio 1993, Dumont 2006: 289) this disfavoring effect provides evidence for the association of AN ΘA with ideas which are discourse active (or semi active) as opposed to new ideas. In information flow terms, discourse active NPs refer to ideas that are currently in

9. Notice that this example allows also a predictive/causal reading that evokes an alternative scenario (*If you are hungry, let's not go straight to the movies*), which is precisely not possible in typical speech-act conditionals.

10. An alternative interpretation of the disfavoring effect of negative polarity contexts, which may be conservative (Givón 1979: 122, Pappas 2001: 83), is that the extension of the future marker ΘA to conditional protases is a recent or incipient change.

a hearer's focus of consciousness, as opposed to the referents of new NPs, which have to be "newly activated at this point in the conversation" (Chafe 1994:72; cf. Lambrecht 1994, 2004).

Furthermore, cross tabulations show that the disfavoring effect of full NP subjects applies especially to speech-act conditionals (Table 2). Note, first, that full NP subjects are in fact associated with predictive rather than speech-act uses: over two-thirds of full NP subjects occur in predictive conditionals (72%, 147/203), whereas only half of unexpressed/pronominal subjects do (48%, 228/475, combining 1st and 2nd-3rd person), and over one-third of predictive conditionals have a full NP subject (39%, 147/375), whereas fewer than one-fifth of speech-act conditionals do (18%, 56/303). Second, as shown in Table 2, while full NP subjects consistently disfavor *AN* Θ A, rate differences are sharper for speech-act conditionals.

Table 2. Future-marked (*AN* Θ A) conditional rate by subject and conditional type

	1st person	2nd — 3rd, Unexpr/Pronom	3rd, Full NP	Totals*
Speech-act	78% (59/76)	53% (91/171)	30% (17/56)	55% (167/303)
Predictive	33% (23/70)	34% (54/158)	23% (34/147)	30% (111/375)
Totals	56% (82/146)	44% (145/329)	25% (51/203)	41% (278/678)

*Excluded from subject form coding are invariable contexts such as relative clause subject pronouns.

As also shown in Table 2, the first person effect applies only to speech-act conditionals: the rate of *AN* Θ A is highest in speech-act conditionals with first person subjects (78%, 59/76), while for predictive conditionals the person effect (comparing the first and second-third person unexpressed/pronominal columns) is neutralized. Independent multivariate analyses confirm that subject person and form is significant for speech-act but not predictive cases.¹¹ Thus, our interpretation of the polarity and subject results is not that *AN* Θ A (tends to) indicate "contextually given propositions" (as claimed by Comrie 1982:147 for English *if* + *will*). Rather, *AN* Θ A may EVOKE an idea as shared, which lays the groundwork for the ensuing speech act. Consistent with this interpretation is the interaction of subject person with conditional type.

11. In independent analyses of speech-act and predictive conditional cases, we find the same direction of effect for polarity and tense, but subject person and form is not significant for predictive conditionals. For speech-act conditionals, N=249, Input = .65 (proportion *AN* Θ A cases is 68%): Tense-Non-past protasis + FUT Non-past apodosis .77, Past protasis .70, Non-past protasis + Present apodosis .23; Subject person and form-1st .69, 2nd-3rd unexpressed/pronominal .50, full NP .25; Polarity: affirmative .54, negative .11. For predictive conditionals, N=400, Input = .26 (proportion *AN* Θ A cases is 31%): Polarity: affirmative .57, negative .11; Tense-Past protasis .64, Non-past protasis + FUT Non-past apodosis .63, Non-past protasis + Present apodosis .28.

First person (especially singular) exhibits linguistic subjectivity since, as all deictics, its meaning is grounded in the speaker's point of view (Traugott & Dasher 2002: 22 and references therein).¹² We suggest that the speaker is more "entitled" (hence likely) to present as shared an eventuality in which s/he is/will be taking part. Presenting an idea as shared provides a background that the hearer can take for granted and against which the speaker can proceed to present their point of view (cf. Schwenter 1999). First singular subjects are illustrated in examples (15a)–(15b) (also (12a) and (12b) with first person plural subjects):

- (15) a. AN Θ A eleya kati θ a itan ja ti sxesi
 if FUT say-P-IPFV-1SG something FUT be-P-3SG for the relation
 mnimion ke es θ itikis ton xoron diaske δ asis
 monuments-GEN and esthetics of-the places-GEN entertainment-GEN
 "If I were to say something, it would be about the relationship between
 the monuments and esthetics of the entertainment places" (GkWaC,
 1237)
- b. AN Θ A mino, pu θ a mino, θ elo
 if FUT stay-NP-PFV-1SG which FUT stay-NP-PFV-1SG want-PR-1SG
 titlus ja tin AEK
 titles for the AEK
 "If I [will] stay, which I'm going to do, I want distinctions with AEK" [a
 professional soccer team] (HNC, Eleftherotipia Newspaper 25/06/99)

The difference, for example, between (15a) and the corresponding version without Θ A (which would express simply the speaker's epistemic distance from the content) is that only the former is compatible with the understanding that the eventuality/possibility of the speaker's saying something (on the issue at hand) is in response to some previous mention, or invitation to comment, or that the speaker pretends that it is. Similarly the conditional clause in (15b) conveys that the player's staying in the team is discursively active.

The first-person effect we have identified provides support for the topic-like character of conditional clauses, which has been noted in the earlier literature (Haiman 1978, Dirven & Athanasiadou 1996) even though it has proved hard to substantiate empirically. What we suggest is that AN Θ A conditionals grammaticalize topicality (in the sense of discourse activeness) and hence evoke a content as shared independently of context (i.e. independently of actual previous mention).

12. Marginal results prior to combining separate subject person and form factors for the analysis shown in Table 1 suggest that the rate of AN Θ A may be highest in first person singular subjects (63% (44/70), compared with 49% (39/80) in the next most favorable person-number context, first person plural).

It is this aspect which motivates the more formulaic uses we identify in the following sections.

In summary, refuting free variation, we have shown the linguistic conditioning of future-marked conditionals, identifying tense, polarity, type of conditional, and grammatical person and form of the subject as significant constraints. Now, although the data indicate a strong general association of *AN* Θ *A* with speech-act interpretations, we do not wish to claim constructional status for this form-function pairing at a level of generality where the only formal specification would be the conditional marker (*AN*) followed by the future marker (Θ *A*). Our reason lies in the fact that this association represents a trend, albeit clearly discernible, rather than a conventional overarching semantics-pragmatics for *AN* Θ *A* conditionals, which, as shown, include also predictive conditionals (and conditionals of negative epistemic stance — see footnote 6). In view of the polarity and form-person morpho-syntactic correlations outlined above, failing to identify the concomitant speech-act trend would be certainly shortsighted. However, as we show below, there are more specific *AN* Θ *A* combinations with particular tenses and verbs and these combinations display specialized discourse-pragmatic uses. In the following sections, we identify in fact two such patterns, which we analyze as constructions with compositionally motivated but also idiosyncratic meaning.

4.2 The tense effect: structural parallelism and the non-past reconditionalizing function

The multivariate analysis in Table 1 shows that together with conditional type, polarity, and subject person-form, also contributing to speakers' choice of *AN* Θ *A* is tense. The three most frequent configurations are (imperfective) past protasis and present or, more frequently, future-marked past apodosis; non-past protasis and future-marked non-past apodosis; and non-past protasis and present apodosis. We note that tense does not overlap with conditional type, as the speech-act cases are spread over these three configurations: 42% (101/238) have a past protasis, 19% (46/238) involve a non-past protasis and a future-marked non-past apodosis, and 38% (91/238) are a non-past and present bi-clausal combination.

As shown in Table 1, *AN* Θ *A* is more likely (.67) to occur with a past protasis verb. *AN* Θ *A* is similarly favored (.67) in the biclausal combination of a non-past protasis and a future-marked non-past apodosis. Here, future-marked imperfective and perfective non-past apodoses were collapsed into a single factor (FUT non-past apodosis), even though the rate of *AN* Θ *A* protases is higher with imperfective than with the more frequent perfective non-past apodoses (73%, 46/63 vs. 43%, 48/112), since most imperfective cases (40/63) involve three frequent stative verbs lacking the imperfective vs. perfective distinction, *exo* 'have', *eimai* 'be', and

prepei 'should'; the latter two show an *AN* Θ *A* protasis rate of 88% (15/17 and 14/16, respectively).¹³

AN Θ *A* is less likely (.23) in the bi-clausal combination of a non-past protasis with a present tense apodosis. Let us examine this strong disfavoring effect of a present apodosis. Table 3 presents *AN* Θ *A* rates by the verb tense of the protasis (columns) and the apodosis (rows). An imperfective past verb in the protasis consistently favors *AN* Θ *A*, both when the apodosis is in the future-marked imperfective past (the majority of cases) and when it is in the present tense. However, non-past protasis verbs, both perfective and imperfective, have an inconsistent effect, favoring in combination with a future-marked apodosis verb, but disfavoring with a present in the apodosis. Independent multivariate analyses confirm that the disfavoring effect of present tense apodoses applies only to non-past protases: while the direction of effect for all factor groups is the same, apodosis tense is not significant for past protases but, for non-past protases, the tense effect is in fact greater than that of conditional type.¹⁴

In other words, a future-marked (*AN* Θ *A*) non-past protasis is more likely in combination with a future-marked apodosis. Widely reported in sociolinguistic as well as psycholinguistic research are parallel structure or priming effects, whereby the use of a certain structure in one utterance functions as a prime on a subsequent utterance, such that that same structure is repeated (Poplack 1980, Weiner &

13. For example,

- a. (ap oti ema θ a den exun jini akoma jenikes sinelefsis tmimaton)
 ki *AN* Θ *A* jinun θ a ine tin paraskevi
 and if FUT happen-NP-PFV-3PL FUT be-PR-3SG the Friday
 "(from what I heard general assemblies in each department haven't yet been held) and if they will happen it will be on Friday" (GkWaC, 6943)
- b. metayrafi ja para δ iyma tu Vakirtzi i kapiou alu *AN* Θ *A* jini θ a
 transfer for example of-the Vakirtzis or someone else if FUT happen-NP-PFV-3SG FUT
 prepi xronika na tin topo θ etisume meta tis 20,25 iuliu
 must-NP-IMPERSONAL in-time SUBJ it place-NP-PFV-1PL after the 20 25 July-GEN
 "A transfer for instance of Vakirtzis or some other (player), if it will happen, we will have to anticipate it after July 20th, 25th" (HNC, Eleftherotipia Newspaper 12/7/97)

14. For past protases, N=259, Input = .62 (proportion *AN* Θ *A* cases is 62%) significant factor groups in order of magnitude are: Subject person and form-1st .73, 2nd-3rd unexpressed/pronominal .54, full NP .19; Conditional type: speech-act .72, predictive .28; Polarity: affirmative .57, negative .04. For non-past protases, N=482, Input = .32 (proportion *AN* Θ *A* cases is 35%): Apodosis tense: FUT + non-past .72, present .32; Polarity: affirmative .55, negative .15; Conditional type: speech-act .65, predictive .37. The precedence of apodosis tense over conditional type for non-past protases is such that speech-act uses with a present verb in the apodosis do not show a higher *AN* Θ *A* rate than predictive conditionals with a future-marked verb in the apodosis (31%, 28/91 vs. 39%, 48/122).

Table 3. Future-marked (*AN* Θ *A*) conditional rate by protasis and apodosis verb tense*

Protasis:	Ipfv Past	Pfv Non-Past	Ipfv Non-Past	Totals
Apodosis:				
FUT+ Ipv Past	58% (104/179)	55% (109/197)		
FUT+ Pfv (or Ipv) Non-Past	53% (70/131)	50% (17/34)	54% (94/175)	
Present (i.e. Ipv Non-Past)	81% (26/32)	24% (29/120)	16% (16/98)	28% (71/256)
Totals	62% (160/259)	43% (126/296)	22% (41/186)	44% (331/761)

* Blank cells are those with 9 tokens or fewer. Less frequent tense categories omitted are: in the protasis, perfect forms (20 tokens); in the apodosis, imperatives (33), subordinator *na* forms (33), and non-clausal cases (34) (see examples in (4)). Totals include omitted categories.

Labov 1983, Bock 1986, Labov 1994: 547–568, Scherre, Pereira & Naro 1991, inter alia). Note that while for the multivariate analysis tense is technically treated as an independent variable influencing choice of *AN* Θ *A* as the dependent variable, we may interpret the future-marking co-occurrence pattern (*AN* Θ *A* protasis and Θ *A* apodosis) as a unitary schema (cf. Kapatsinski 2009). This is depicted in (16a).

(16) a. $[[AN \Theta A + PFV/IPFV \text{ Non-past}]_{Protasis} + [\Theta A \dots]_{Apodosis}]$

More particularly, as also indicated in Table 3, a future-marked (*AN* Θ *A*) perfective non-past protasis is more likely in combination with a future-marked perfective (or imperfective) non-past apodosis. Over half (53%, 70/131) of all perfective non-past + FUT non-past biclausal conditional combinations are of this form (i.e., also have Θ *A* in the protasis) (Table 3, middle column and row). Indeed, fully one-fifth (21%, 70/331) of all *AN* Θ *A* tokens are of this form (i.e., have a perfective non-past in the protasis and a future-marked non-past in the apodosis). The data support, therefore, the identification of a special subpattern, as depicted in (16b) and illustrated in (17) (repeated from (1a)).

(16) b. $[[AN \Theta A + PFV \text{ Non-past}]_{Protasis} + [\Theta A + PFV (/IPFV) \text{ Non-past}]_{Apodosis}]$
 i. 53% of all $[[AN + PFV \text{ Non-past}] + [\Theta A + \text{Non-past}]]$ tokens
 ii. 21% of all *AN* Θ *A* tokens

(17) *AN* Θ *A* fiji *afto* Θ *A* jini *mono ja omaða*
 if FUT leave-NP-PFV-3SG this FUT happen-NP-PFV-3SG only for team
 tu eksoteriku
 of-the abroad
 ‘‘If he leaves, that will happen only for a foreign team’’ (HNC, Eleftherotipia
 Newspaper 10/9/97)

Beyond a mechanical structural parallelism effect, this schema appears to be associated with special pragmatics, that of (re)conditionalizing. This may be motivated

at least in part by the compositional semantics of the conditional marker in combination with a future-marked non-past protasis; the predictable effect here is that the speaker's epistemic distance from the proposition (already inherent in the future tense) increases. However, consonant with the overall function of *AN ΘA* conditionals to be interpreted as topics (i.e. shared backgrounds), the pattern in (16b) may serve the function of (re)conditionalizing *an assertion* (or cancelling a presupposition associated with an assertion), giving rise to implicatures of doubt or questioning the validity of the content of the protasis: 'if indeed P, then speaker predicts/asserts Q'. In (18), for example, the function of the *AN ΘA* clause is precisely to conditionalize the presupposition that they will agree that is triggered by the WH- element in the preceding clause. In (17) above, the understanding is not only that the eventuality of the player's leaving the team is seen as doubtful by the speaker (also supported by the preceding context), but also that the assertion that he may leave is discursively available ("or on the table") (see also examples (6a–c) above). In this respect, the pattern at hand qualifies as an intersubjective construction in the sense of Verhagen (2005).

- (18) se pio simio θa simfonisun, AN ΘA simfonisun, θa
 on which point FUT agree-NP-PFV-3PL if FUT agree-NP-PFV-3PL FUT
 prepi θa eleya na min viastume na
 must-impersonal FUT say-P-IPFV-1SG SUBJ NEG hurry-NP-PFV-1PL SUBJ
 perimenum na δume ean apo tin plevra tu Denktas
 wait-NP-1PL SUBJ see-NP-PFV-1PL if from the side of-the Denktas
 iparxi praymati apofasi...
 exist-PR-3SG indeed decision
 "On which point they will agree, if they agree, we should I would say not be
 in a hurry to expect to see whether on the part of Denktash in fact a decision
 has been made..." (HNC, 'Other' 18/9/97)

Separate analysis of these [perfective non-past + FUT non-past] biclausal conditional cases (N = 131) may provide some support for the proposed reconditionalizing function, in the subject form effect. We find that in this configuration the highest rate of *AN ΘA* is with third-person unexpressed or pronominal subjects, at 77% (24/31), whereas first and second person as well as third-person full NP subjects show rates of 46–48% (compare the subject form-person general results in Table 2). Unexpressed or pronominal subjects are compatible with a discursively available assertion, as we have said, and we further reason that the expression of doubt may be more likely about third-person situations rather than ones involving the interlocutors. We submit therefore that the pattern in (16b) represents a distinct conditional construction, defined by the parallel future-marked non-past tenses in the two clauses and a reconditionalizing function.

4.3 The imperfective past template as a politeness formula

We return here to imperfective past protases, which as already mentioned, highly favor *AN* ΘA .¹⁵ Furthermore, most imperfective past protases (over two thirds, 69%, 179/259) also have a future-marked imperfective past apodosis (see Table 3, above (top row, leftmost column)). An identifiable cluster emerges; this is defined at the formal level by a) ΘA and an imperfective past in the protasis and b) ΘA and imperfective past in the apodosis. This favoring tense-aspect template and the proportion of the data it comprises is shown in (19): over half, 58% (104/179), of all imperfective past + FUT imperfective past biclausal conditional combinations are of this form (i.e., have ΘA in the protasis), while close to one-third, 31% (104/331), of all *AN* ΘA tokens are of this form (i.e., have an imperfective past in both the protasis and the apodosis). Examples (20)–(21) illustrate this pattern of future-marked imperfective past structural parallelism.

- (19) [[*AN* ΘA + IPFV Past]_{Protasis} + [ΘA + IPFV Past]_{Apodosis}]
 i. 58% of all [*AN* + IPFV Past] + [ΘA + IPFV Past] tokens
 ii. 31% of all *AN* ΘA tokens

- (20) *AN* ΘA borusa na miliso sximatika θa
 if FUT can-P-IPFV-1SG SUBJ talk-NP-PFV-1SG schematically FUT
 eleya oti eyo tin enerjia ke tis ebnefsis mu tis
 say-P-IPFV-1SG that I the energy and the inspirations my them
 perno apo an θ ropus san ton $\Theta o\delta$ oro Angelopulo
 take-PR-1SG from people like the Thodoros Angelopoulos
 “If I could speak schematically, I would say that I get my energy and
 inspirations from people like Thodoros Angelopoulos” (HNC, Eleftherotipia
 newspaper, 9/2/98)

- (21) *AN* ΘA eprepe na xaraktiriso to ri θ mo
 if FUT must-P-impersonal SUBJ characterize-NP-PFV-1SG the rhythm
 tis zois mu ekino ton kero θa eleya xoris anasa
 of-the life my that the time FUT say-P-IPFV-1SG without breath

15. (Ipfv) Past protases are evenly distributed over conditional types (49%, 101/208 are speech-act), while less than one third (28%, 46/163) of non-past (protasis) + FUT non-past (apodosis) biclausal combinations are speech-act conditionals, a distribution difference that results in a lower *AN* ΘA rate (53% vs. 62%, see second column in Table 1). However, *AN* ΘA rates are similar in these two tense configurations when controlling for conditional type (speech-act: past 81%, 82/101 vs. non-past + FUT non-past 85%, 39/46; predictive: past 43%, 46/107 vs. non-past + FUT non-past 40%, 47/117), which is reflected in the identical factor weight given by the Variable-rule analysis (.67, see first column in Table 1). As mentioned, non-past (protasis) + present (apodosis) consistently disfavors *AN* ΘA (speech-act: 31%, 28/91; predictive 13%, 16/125).

“If I had to characterize the rhythm of my life back then, I would say ‘breathless’” (HNC, Eleftherotipia newspaper, 20/3/1996)

Furthermore, this parallel future-marked imperfective past bi-clausal conditional pattern is associated with specific verbs, namely *prepei* ‘must, should’, *boro* ‘can’, and *thelo* ‘want’. Evidence for this association are the skewed distributions involving these three lexical types:

- i. These verbs make up close to one-third (29%, 97/331) of all AN Θ A tokens (but under one-tenth (9%, 40/430) of plain AN cases);
- ii. the rate of AN Θ A protases is highest with these three lexical types: 92% (33/36) of *prepei* ‘must, should’, 68% (34/50) of *boro* ‘can’, and 59% (30/51) of *thelo* ‘want’ protasis tokens have AN Θ A (whereas the overall rate of AN Θ A in these data is 44%, see Section 2);
- iii. these verbs are overwhelmingly (97%, 94/97) imperfective past;
- iv. and, in terms of the protasis-apodosis relationship, they are frequently used as speech-act conditionals (77%, 103/134) (whereas the data overall are about evenly split between speech-act and predictive conditionals, see Section 3).

The three lexical types make up half (50/104) of the occurrences of the $[[AN \Theta A + \text{Ipfv Past}]_{\text{Protasis}} + [\Theta A + \text{Ipfv Past}]_{\text{Apodosis}}]$ pattern depicted in (19). We propose that in addition to the general speech-act function, these biclausal patterns are characterized by a more specific discourse-pragmatic interpretation — as politeness formulas — which relates both to the tense-aspect forms in the protasis and the apodosis, as well as the semantics and (non-conditional) uses of the three verbs.

Thus, emerging from the data is a “formal” construction, with the verbal slot in the protasis partially fixed (Fillmore, Kay & O’Connor 1988, Croft & Cruse 2004: 233–34), as in (22):

(22) $[[AN \Theta A + \text{prepei/boro/thelo}]_{\text{Ipfv Past}}]_{\text{Protasis}} + [\Theta A + \text{IPFV Past}]_{\text{Apodosis}}]$

The substantive — formal (schematic) distinction originates in Fillmore, Kay & O’Connor’s (1988) classification of idiomatic expressions, as the two end points of a continuum of lexically-filled vs. lexically open expressions.¹⁶ The latter category comprises idioms part of which can be filled by the usual range of expressions that are syntactically and semantically appropriate for a given slot; these are grammatical constructions par excellence, whose regular, productive components argue against simply listing them in the lexicon, while their idiosyncratic, fixed ones must be directly associated with the construction.

16. The term “schematic” is due to Langacker (1991:46–50) and corresponds to Fillmore et al.’s (1988) “formal”.

Here the fixed (substantive) part of the construction consists in the presence of the three modal verbs in the conditional clause.¹⁷ While *prepei* is an impersonal verb, occurring only in the third-person singular form, *boro* and *thelo* attest the full morphological paradigm; in this respect, the grammatical fixedness of the pattern is restricted to the tense-aspect requirement (imperfective past) while the person is flexible; nevertheless, as shown before, first person strongly favors AN OA speech-act conditionals, which is in turn consonant with the discourse-pragmatic function we outline below.¹⁸

The three modal verbs appear in the conditional clause with their regular meaning; *prepei* expresses (both internally and externally imposed) obligation or need, *thelo* denotes willingness and desire, and *boro* can express both permission ('be allowed') and ability. In fact, all of the examples with *boro* are vague in this respect, easily admitting either interpretation, which, we suggest, is again consonant with the specialized pragmatics of the construction (cf. (20) and (23) below).

- (23) AN OA borusa me titlus na apotiposo tis
 if FUT CAN-P-IPFV-1SG with titles SUBJ express-NP-PFV-1SG the
 protereotites aftes, tha eleya oti ine o sxediasmos me
 priorities these FUT say-P-IPFV-1SG that be-PR-3PL the planning with
 taftoxroni ilopiisi draseon metaforas texnologias
 simultaneous materialization actions-GEN transfer-GEN technology-GEN
 stis elinikes epixirisis
 to-the Greek businesses
 "If I could/were allowed to express these priorities with titles, I would
 say that it is planning with simultaneous materialization of transfers of
 technology to Greek businesses" (HNC, Eleftherotipia newspaper, 23/4/99)

In line with the cross-linguistic tendency for distanced verb forms to be the polite forms, the imperfective past is conventionally associated in Greek with mediating the speech-act force of an utterance. In the House & Kasper (1981) typology of politeness expressions, the (imperfective) past would be a "play-down", i.e. one of the syntactic devices which 'tone down the perlocutionary effect an utterance is likely to have on the addressee'.¹⁹ The imperfective past of *thelo*, for instance, can by itself express a polite request or a hedged wish (e.g. (24a)), and that of *prepei*

17. Modal verbs *prepei/boro/thelo* are followed by a *na* clausal complement (Kleris & Babiniotis 2004).

18. The preference for first person extends to the subject of the *na* complement of (impersonal) *prepei* (50%, 18/36, are first person).

19. In the House & Kasper (1981) typology, which is based on English and German, the use of the progressive aspect with the past is listed as another play-down. Although the English

or *boro* a hedged, polite suggestion, e.g. (24b)–(24c) (Tzartanos 1964, Kleris & Babiniotis 2004):

- (24) a. *iθela* *ki eγo na pao* *ðiakopes*
 want-P-IPFV-1SG and I SUBJ go-NP-PFV-1SG vacation
 “I too would like to go on vacation”
- b. *epepe* *isos na fijis* *tora*
 must-P-impersonal maybe SUBJ leave-NP-PFV-2SG now
 “You should perhaps leave now”
- c. *borusame* *tote na pame* *stin Kerkira, ine* *konda*
 can-P-IPFV-1PL then SUBJ go-NP-PFV-1PL to-the Corfu be-PR-3SG close
 “We could then go to Corfu, it is close” (D. A. Kokinou, *Ilingos*)

The addition of ΘA to these forms adds yet another marker of distance. As mentioned before (footnote 1), when followed by a non-past verb form, ΘA is the standard way of expressing the future in Greek. With a past verb (as in the examples here), it is used to express a variety of modal meanings relating to possibility and probability; further, “such forms are widely used as polite to the extent that we might say that ΘA , in addition to being the marker of future and a marker of modality, is also a marker of politeness in combination always with the imperfective past” (Kleris & Babiniotis 2004:492).²⁰

- (25) a. ΘA *iθela* *ki eγo na pao* *ðiakopes*
 FUT want-P-IPFV-1SG and I SUBJ go-NP-PFV-1SG vacation
 “I too would like to go on vacation”
- b. ΘA *epepe* *isos na fijis* *tora*
 FUT must-P-impersonal maybe SUBJ leave-NP-PFV-2SG now
 “You should perhaps leave now”
- c. ΘA *borusame* *tote na pame* *stin Kerkira,*
 FUT can-P-IPFV-1PL then SUBJ go-NP-PFV-1PL to-the Corfu
ine *konda*
 be-PR-3SG close
 “We could then go to Corfu, it is close”

Embedding such forms in an *if*-clause adds yet a third layer of distance. No matter how we choose to analyze them, conditional clauses are distanced constructions par excellence, either because they set up a hypothetical mental space (Fauconnier 1997, Dancygier & Sweetser 2005) or, more generally, because they are taken as

progressive and the Greek imperfective are certainly not co-extensive, they do have overlapping uses, which in turn suggests another cross-linguistic tendency for polite forms.

20. The translation is ours.

indicators of ontological distance and hence of social distance (Hodge & Kress 1995: 126). The effect of an AN Θ A conditional is therefore a piling up of distancing grammatical constructions; a non-imposing wish, a distanced polite request or suggestion, such as in (25a-25c), are further removed to a hypothetical space — they become conditional. In short, the conditional clause in this case is a repository of negative politeness strategies. It is generally accepted in the politeness literature that “the greater the number of compatible outputs [...] the speaker utilizes, the more he may be judged as trying to at least appear polite. So, some simple compounding of hedges and indirectness, particles and so on, increases the relative politeness of expressions” (Brown & Levinson 1989: 143).

In the context of the future-marked imperfective past bi-clausal construction in (19), the “wishes”, “requests” or “suggestions” in such conditional clauses are trivialized, since in uttering the apodosis (i.e. in performing the corresponding speech act) the speaker has already realized their content; the speech act performed by such conditional clauses is actually an assertion (“we do wish”, “we do suggest”, etc.). Hence, the formulaic character of these protases which end up serving as a discursal opening or introductory statement to the content of the main clause. The rate of future marking (AN Θ A) is in fact overwhelming (91%, 29/32) in cases of *prepei/boro/thelo* protases in which there is explicit lexical parallelism (e.g. ‘should’- ‘should’ in (27)) or at least semantic consonance between the verb in the conditional and that in the main clause (‘speak’ — ‘say’ in (20), ‘advise’- ‘say’ in (26), etc.).²¹ Such examples are (20), (21), (23) above, and (26)–(27):

- (26) AN Θ A *iθela* *na sas simvulefso* *θα sas*
 if FUT want-P-IPFV-1SG SUBJ you advise-NP-PFV-1SG FUT you
eleya *pos enies,* *opos ine* *i filia,* *i ayapi ke*
 say-P-IPFV-1SG that concepts like be-PR-3PL the friendship the love and
o sevasmos den ine *θema ja na jini* *dimosia*
 the respect NEG be-PR-3PL topic for SUBJ occur-NP-PFV-3SG public
sizitisi sta mesa mazikis enimerosis
 debate in-the media mass information
 “If I wanted to advise you, I would tell you that concepts such as friendship,
 love, and respect are not a subject for public debate in the mass media”
 (HNC, Eleftherotipia newspaper, 31/1/97)

21. These are cases of *boro*, *thelo*, *prepei* + *na* clause protases with an apodosis that has either a verb that is the same lexical type or the same semantic class (mostly verbs of speech, as in (26)) as that of the *na* clause, or has a pro-verb-like construction with a pronominal ‘this/that’ and *einai*/ Θ A *itan* ‘is/would be’ or *jinei* ‘happen’ (as in 27).

- (27) ke proseðese oti AN ΘA eprepe na
 and add-P-PFV-3SG that if FUT must-P-impersonal SUBJ
 alaksun ta andikimenika kritiria afto θa eprepe
 change-NP-PFV-3PL the objective criteria this FUT must-P-impersonal
 na jini pros to afstirotero
 SUBJ OCCUR-NP-PFV-3SG to the stricter
 “And he added that if the objective criteria should change, this should be
 toward becoming more strict” (HNC, To Vima newspaper, 26/3/95)

The preference for first person is now explained by the formulaic use of these conditionals and the concomitant trivializing of the speech act in the conditional clause; it is certainly easier to achieve this interpretation, and interpret the conditional as rhetorical, when the modal (or its complement in the case of impersonal *prepei*) is in first person and the speaker appears to question or conditionalize his/her own ability or willingness (cf. (20), (21), (23), (26)). This interpretation can be also said to underlie the neutralization of the ability vs. the permission meaning of *boro* in the conditional clause (e.g. (20)–(23)); the conditionalized speech act is readily recognized by the hearer as vacuous, and it therefore makes no difference if the modal sets the ground by appealing to the speaker’s ability or his/her pretense of requesting permission.

The future-marked imperfective past verbal form in the apodosis of this pattern is the standard form for various conditionals of negative epistemic stance in Greek. As Fillmore (1990) suggests, epistemic stance is a parameter figuring in the analysis of several constructions, and centrally of conditionals. In conditionals, epistemic stance refers to the speaker’s association with or dissociation from the content or the world of the protasis (i.e. varying degrees of speaker commitment or certainty — cf. footnote 6). Negative epistemic stance thus refers to a dissociated stance on the part of the speaker, and includes both straight counterfactual conditionals, e.g. (28), and conditionals that simply express some dissociation or epistemic distance from the content of the protasis, e.g. (29):

- (28) endexomenos an ixē-kerðisi tis eklojes to PASOK, θa
 probably if win-Pluperfect-3SG the elections the PASOK FUT
 ixame tin andistixi eksejersi sindikaliston tis PASKE
 have-P-1PL the corresponding rebellion syndicate-GEN of-the PASKE
 “It’s likely that if PASOK had won the elections, we would have had a similar
 rebellion from the members of the PASKE syndicate” (HNC, Kathimerini
 newspaper, 16/1/2005)
- (29) an prospaθusan me opiodipote alo tropo na ayorasun i
 if try-P-IPFV-3PL with any other way SUBJ buy-NP-PFV-3PL the

kseni i na ðiikun tis elinikes eteries tha
 foreigners or SUBJ manage-NP-IPFV-3PL the Greek companies FUT
 ksesikonomaste oli
 rebel-P-IPFV-1PL all

“If foreigners tried in any other way to buy or manage the Greek companies, we would all object” (GkWaC, 34)

Thus, the main clause in the conditional $[[AN \Theta A + \text{prepei/boro/thelo}_{\text{IPFV Past}}]_{\text{Protasis}} + [\Theta A + \text{Ipfv Past}]_{\text{Apodosis}}]$ construction we investigate would conventionally be associated with the expression of distancing.

However, special to our construction is that the speaker, while affecting this distancing (by use of the appropriate verb forms), is at the same time performing the speech act in the main clause, i.e. saying what s/he has in mind anyway after the formulaic introduction of the topic by the conditional clause. This, we submit, is the constructional meaning, which must be directly associated with the biclausal pattern. The motivation provided by the tense forms in the protasis and the apodosis notwithstanding, the salient lexical and grammatical features of the conditional clause and the interpretation which is only triggered in the biclausal context support the existence of a *prepei/boro/thelo* conditional construction (22) with very specific pragmatic properties.

5. Conclusions

Countering putative free variation, we have revealed the linguistic conditioning of future-marked protases in Greek by examining natural speech production data. In showing the patterns of variability in future marking of *if*-clauses, we have illustrated how the variationist method can be profitably employed for the study of discourse-pragmatics. In particular, by relying on features of the linguistic environment to operationalize hypotheses as factors in multivariate analysis, we have exemplified how the study of the discourse-pragmatics of conditionals may be placed on a firm empirical basis.

Rather than serving primarily a tense function, *AN* ΘA protases have a conventional association with a class of conditionals: multivariate analysis shows that a future-marked conditional is more likely to be chosen over a plain *AN* conditional to express a speech-act rather than a predictive conditional and distributional analysis shows that speech-act uses make up close to two-thirds of *AN* ΘA tokens. Two other significant effects in the variation, the disfavoring effect of negative polarity and full NP subjects, are compatible with *AN* ΘA conditionals being topics, i.e. evoking an idea as shared background to the speech act performed by

the speaker (Section 4.1). Furthermore, particular constructions emerge from the data, most prominently the $[[AN \Theta A + Pfv \text{ Non-past}]_{Protasis} + [\Theta A + Pfv (/Ipfv) \text{ Non-past}]_{Apodosis}]$ and the $[[AN \Theta A + Ipfv \text{ Past}]_{Protasis} + [\Theta A + Ipfv \text{ Past}]_{Apodosis}]$, and the even more lexically particular $[[AN \Theta A + \text{prepei/boro/thelo}_{Ipfv \text{ Past}}]_{Protasis} + [\Theta A + Ipfv \text{ Past}]_{Apodosis}]$ construction. The association of these formal patterns with specialized pragmatic functions, as outlined in Sections 4.2 and 4.3, identifies them as constructions.

Construction grammar can comfortably accommodate discourse-pragmatic specifications, like other types of grammatically relevant information, as attribute-value pairs which may be organized into sets, the “attribute-value matrices” (Fried & Östman 2004: 29). Although the formalism is not uniform across the different constructional approaches, especially so in the representation of the pragmatic component, enough work has been done (see especially Michaelis and Lambrecht 1996, Östman 2004, Fried & Östman 2005, Fried 2009) to allow us a tentative formalization of the conditional patterns under investigation (Figures 1 and 2). Naturally, our interest lies mostly in representing the discourse-pragmatic properties of these constructions and in demonstrating that constructional frameworks can integrate this type of conventional knowledge into a theory of grammar. The relevant discursal property in this case is represented by the value “dialogic”, which simply reflects the fact that both of these conditional constructions conventionally code the acknowledgement of an addressee/audience (cf. Linell’s 1998:14 “mutual other-orientation” as a central feature of the dialogic mode); one by (re-)conditionalizing some previous assertion (Figure 1, corresponding to (16b)), the other by accommodating the discourse of politeness (Figure 2, corresponding to (22)).

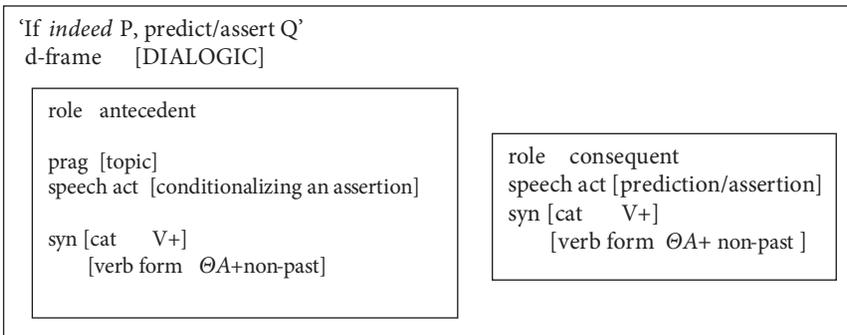


Figure 1²²

22. The sem (semantic) attribute is missing from both Figures. As said, the interesting thing about these constructions is their discourse-pragmatic properties, while their semantics is restricted to one clause being antecedent and the other consequent. We have adopted Fillmore’s (1990) marking this with the ‘role’ feature, but we could just as well have used ‘sem’. Similarly, in

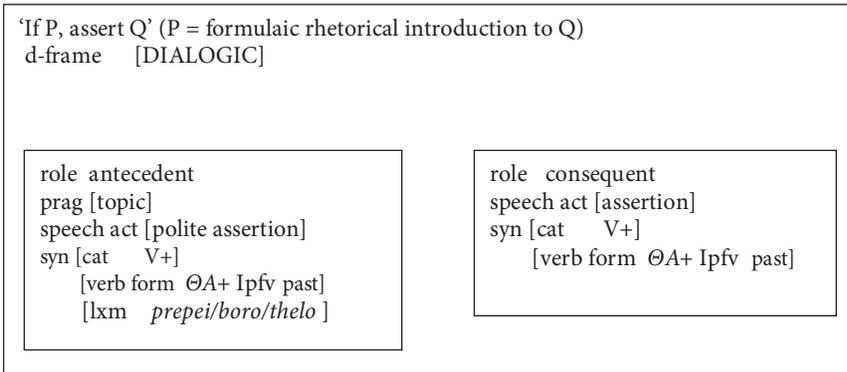


Figure 2

We have thus added to a growing body of literature (Lambrecht 1994, 2004, Östman 2005, Fried & Östman 2005, Fried 2009, Torres Cacoullos and Schwenter 2008, Antonopoulou & Nikiforidou 2009) focusing on constructions defined not so much as conventional associations of form with (more or less predictable) semantics but as bearers of pragmatic or discourse functions. The interest in such cases lies precisely in the discourse-pragmatic currency of these patterns and it is this aspect which is readily evoked by their use and recognized by speakers and hearers as their *raison d'être*. While it is commonly accepted in the constructional literature that information about the pragmatic/discoursal/textual/register characteristics associated with a particular form can be represented in the meaning pole of the corresponding construction alongside purely semantic information (Goldberg 1995:7, Fried & Östman 2004), few constructions have been analyzed whose conventional make up is by nature pragmatic or discoursal (cf. Fillmore, Kay & O'Connor's 1988 category of "idioms with a pragmatic point"). In the constructions at hand, conditionalizing a discoursally active assertion or piling up politeness strategies, as functions of the conditional protases, recall a dialogic setting or discourse context and conventionally acknowledge an addressee or an audience. Our analysis suggested that construction grammar can provide an all-encompassing framework for accommodating such grammatically relevant parameters (see also Nikiforidou 2009), and in this sense integrates naturally the findings of discourse analysis or sociolinguistics — often viewed as extraneous to grammar — with grammatical theory.

assigning 'topic' as the value to the attribute 'prag(matic)' we have followed Lambrecht (2004) (who argues that 'prag' has only two possible values, 'topic' and 'focus'). Fried (2009) and Fried & Östman (2005), on the other hand, consider 'prag' an overarching attribute, subsuming d(iscourse)-frames, speech acts, etc. We have chosen to represent d-frames as an independent parameter, simply to stress that these constructional properties are really discoursal. The [cat V+] pair signifies that these are clausal constituents.

In stating the $[[AN \Theta A + \text{prepei/boro/thelo}_{\text{Ipfv Past}}] + [\Theta A + \text{Ipfv Past}]_{\text{Apodosis}}]$ construction we included the three prominent lexical fillers (see Section 4.3). This reflects the assumption, well-supported by the corpus, that some instances of the construction are more conventional than others (highly conventional in our case) and, that this is somehow part of speakers' knowledge and must be therefore represented. To the extent that frequency determines the prototype, these instances may be even considered prototypical. Although these verbs account for one-half of the instances of the parallel future-marked imperfective past bi-clausal conditional construction (19), the pattern occurs with other verbs as well, e.g. (30), which however have overlapping meaning components with the primed ones (cf. Bybee 2006: 726–728). In (30), the verb *epeðioke* ‘attempted/tried’ presupposes willingness/desire.

- (30) AN ΘA epeðioke kapios na xaraktirisi to
 if FUT attempt-P-IPFV-3SG someone SUBJ characterize-NP-IPFV-3SG the
 Tigra me ðio leksis, i pio efstoxes tha itan “sxediastiki meleti”
 Tigra with two words the most appropriate FUT be-P-3SG designing study
 “If someone attempted to characterize the Tigra in two words, the most
 appropriate ones would be ‘study in design’” (HNC, To Vima newspaper,
 19/3/95)

A more general statement of the construction could therefore be as in (31), entailing that some amount of information is represented redundantly:

- (31) $[[AN \Theta A + \text{Verb [necessity/obligation/ability/permission/willingness/desire]}_{\text{IPFV Past}}] + [\Theta A + \text{IPFV Past}]_{\text{Apodosis}}]$ (compare (19) and (22))

While not all versions of construction grammar would allow for this, we believe that allowing for redundant representation accounts better for the present data and is more consistent with the results of a usage-based analysis. We have thus contributed evidence from the study of variation to the evidence from language learning (e.g. Goldberg 2006: 49–58) and language change (e.g. Hilpert 2008, Bybee & Torres Cacoullous 2009) that high frequency instances of a construction motivate particular paths of learning and grammaticalization, supporting that these may be represented redundantly alongside the more general constructional schema.

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