Categories used in the database

The database of conditional sentences in the New Testament provides various types of information about each conditional sentence. Not all of this information will be equally relevant to all users of the database. For example, if in your language you do not use conditional constructions to talk about situations that are known to be true, the *Probability* category will be very relevant; when the probability is labelled as 'Factual' you should consider using a non-conditional construction to translate this.

Formal categories

The first two categories summarize the formal features of each conditional sentence. *Class* shows whether the Greek conditional construction is first class (1), second class (2) or third class (3). (See Conditionals in Greek for a description of these forms.) An 'x' in the *Inv.* column indicates that the usual *p q* order has been inverted, and the protasis follows the apodosis; e.g. Jhn 15:14 [You are my friends]$_Q$ [if you do what I command you.]$_P$

Functional categories

The *Probability*, *Time Orientation*, and *Illocutionary Force* categories are concerned with the meaning and function of the conditional sentences. These will be described in detail below, but first we will explain why these categories have been used.

Various classifications of conditionals have been proposed over the years. Most divide conditional sentences into two or three categories based on the probability of the protasis being true or known, and then one or more of these categories are further subdivided.[1] One problem with such classifications is that they tend to conflate probability and time orientation. Consider Thompson, Longacre & Hwang's category of "reality" conditionals, which they define as "those which refer to 'real' present, 'habitual/generic', or past situations." (2007: 255)

(1)   [If it's raining out there,]$_P$ [my car is getting wet.]$_Q$ (present)
(2)   [If you step on the brake,]$_P$ [the car slows down.]$_Q$ (habitual/generic)
(3)   [If you were at the party,]$_P$ [then you know about Sue and Fred.]$_Q$ (past)

The category is defined in terms of the time orientation of the protasis, but note that (1) could be appropriately spoken either by a person who has just looked out of the window and seen that it is raining, or by a person who does not know whether or not it is raining. For the first person, "my car is getting wet" is a firm conclusion based on evidence; for the second person, "my car is getting wet" is a statement of possibility.

Now consider Thompson, Longacre & Hwang's category of "unreality" conditionals (ibid 256):

(4)   [If I saw David,]$_P$ [I'd speak Barai with him.]$_Q$ (what might be – *hypothetical*)

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1   An exception is Comrie (1986), who proposes a continuum of hypotheticality, with factual conditionals at one end and counterfactual conditionals at the other. See Nicolle (2017) for a discussion of different classifications.

(5) [If you had been at the concert,]$_P$ [you would have seen Ravi Shankar.]$_Q$ (what might have been – *counterfactual*)

(6) [If he gets the job,]$_P$ [we'll all celebrate.]$_Q$ (what will be – *predictive*)

Example (5) is classified as counterfactual because the protasis describes an imagined situation that might have occurred but did not. This conflates counterfactuality and past time reference. However, counterfactual conditionals can also refer to present situations that can be imagined but are not actual; consider Jhn 15:19:

> [If you were of the world,]$_P$ [the world would love you as its own;]$_Q$[2] but because you are not of the world…

Here the protasis "If you were of the world" does not describe a situation that might have been true in the past, but a situation that is not true at the moment of speech.

Similarly, the reason that example (6) is predictive is not because the event described in the protasis is in the future; it is predictive because of the speaker's lack of knowledge of that event. In a situation in which the subject ('he') has already had a job interview but the speaker doesn't yet know whether this person got the job or not, it is possible to say (6'), where the protasis uses the past tense and has past time reference, but the conditional sentence as a whole is still predictive:

(6') [If he got the job,]$_P$ [we'll all celebrate.]$_Q$

Because of these difficulties, we have separated *Probability* and *Time Orientation* in the database.

Probability

By *Probability*, we mean the probability of the protasis as it is presented by the speaker/writer at the time of speech/writing. (Note, for example Matthew 27:43 where the speakers do not believe that God delights in Jesus, though we know that he did, in fact.) *Probability* is described using the following scale:

- **Factual** – the protasis is believed to be true. In Jhn 11:12 the disciples say *[If he [Lazarus] has fallen asleep,]Q [he will recover.]P* Although Jesus (and we) know that Lazarus had died, and that 'fallen asleep' was meant metaphorically, the disciples at the time believed that Lazarus had actually died. Because of this, Jhn 11:12 is classified as a factual conditional to indicate that the speakers (the disciples) believed the protasis to be true.

- **Very Likely** – Luk 19:31 *[If anyone asks you, "Why are you untying it?"]P [you shall say...]Q* Jesus has just instructed two of his disciples to go into a village and untie a colt that doesn't belong to them. It is very likely that someone will ask them what they are doing, and in fact this is what happens (see v.33).

- **Likely** – Jhn 20:15 *Sir, [if you have carried him away,]P [tell me where you have laid him...]Q* While the narrative makes it clear that the protasis is, in fact, untrue, from Mary's perspective as

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2 In Greek, this is a second class conditional.

she made this request, she thought it was the most likely explanation for Jesus' body not being in the tomb.

- **Neutral** – the probability is either unknown or unspecified. Often this is because it is not important, as in Jhn 21:22 where Jesus says to Peter, *[If it is my will that he remain until I come,]P [what is that to you?]Q*

- **Unlikely** – Luk 12:38 *[If he comes in the second watch, or in the third, and finds them awake,]P [blessed are those servants!]Q* The second and third watches refer to the middle of the night and the period just before dawn, both of which are unlikely times for the master to arrive. The Greek conditional marker here is κἂν which indicates that this is a concessive conditional (often translated as 'even if' in English).

- **Very Unlikely** – In Jhn 20:25, Timothy states, *[Unless I see in his hands the mark of the nails, and place my finger into the mark of the nails, and place my hand into his side,]P [I will never believe.]Q* 'Unless' translates the Greek Ἐὰν μὴ which often describes a very unlikely situation.

- **Non-factual** – In Jhn 11:21 Martha said to Jesus, *Lord, [if you had been here,]P [my brother would not have died.]Q* Jesus was not there and her brother did die, so this conditional describes an event that did not happen.

While it is commonly thought that the Greek conditional classes correspond directly to their probability, this is an oversimplification. Class 1 is used for the widest range of probability categories: anything from Non-factual (Matt 12:27) to Neutral (Rom 11:18) to Factual. Class 2 is the most restricted, being used almost exclusively for Non-factual conditionals (the most notable probable exception is Luke 17:6 which is "likely", however, this has features of both class 1 and class 2). Class 3 is most often used for mid-ranging probability, anywhere from Very Unlikely to Very Likely, but there are some occurrences of it being used for Factual and Non-factual propositions (for example John 5:31; Acts 9:27; 1 Cor 9:16).

Time

The time orientation of a conditional is based on when the situation in the ***protasis*** occurred or is expected to occur, rather than on the time of occurrence of the apodosis. The protasis and the apodosis can have the same time orientation but are often different. All time orientation is based on the viewpoint of the speaker.

We hope this will be helpful for translators who are not native speakers of English, as in English the tense in the protasis is often 'backshifted'; for example, in Luke 19:31 the time reference is future but the tense of *asks* is present: *If anyone asks you, 'why are you untying it?' you shall say this: 'The Lord has need of it.'*

- **Past** – The protasis has already been fulfilled or the moment where it could have been fulfilled has passed. For this reason, these conditionals will nearly always be 'factual' or 'non-factual' since the speaker usually knows what actually happened, as in Jhn 11:21 above. In Jhn 11:21, the apodosis is also in the past as it describes what Martha believed would have happened, but

this is not always the case. In Rom 11:24 Paul's audience know that they have already been 'grafted in' (metaphorically), but the apodosis describes the future grafting in of the Jews: *for [if you were cut from what is by nature a wild olive tree, and grafted, contrary to nature, into a cultivated olive tree,]P [how much more will these, the natural branches, be grafted back into their own olive tree.]Q* Because the time is based on the protasis rather than the apodosis, Rom 11:24 is classified as past.

- **Present** – These conditionals describe a current situation in the protasis: Act 5:38-39 *[if this plan or this undertaking is of man,]P1 [it will fail,]Q1 [but if it is of God,]P2 [you will not be able to overthrow them.]Q2* In P1 and P2, the Pharisee Gamaliel describes current situations in which Peter and other apostles' teaching is from God or from man. Both apodoses reference the future; what will happen depending on who their plan is from. Similarly, in Phm 17 the protasis addresses the current relationship between Paul and Philemon, and the apodosis contains an imperative verb describing a future event that Paul hopes will happen: *[so if you consider me your partner,]P [receive him as you would receive me.]Q*

- **Future** – The protasis has not yet occurred. These often function as predictions or prophecy, or as promises, as in Jhn 16:7 *[if I do not go away,]P1 [the Helper will not come to you.]Q1 [But if I go,]P2 [I will send him to you.]Q2* Other future conditionals simply describe potential events, as in Col 4:10 *[if he comes to you,]P [welcome him.]Q* Paul writes concerning whether or not Mark will visit the Colossian church. Mark has not yet visited, so the protasis would take place in the future

- **Gnomic** – This refers to conditionals that are relevant regardless of time. Gnomic time orientation is also referred to as 'timeless truths'. In English, these conditionals often use the present tense, and it is not always easy to decide if a conditional is gnomic or present. An example is Mat 5:29 *[if your right eye causes you to sin,]P [tear it out and throw it away.]Q* Jesus' teaching here is not restricted to a particular time. People have sinned in the past, sin in the present, and will sin in the future. This instruction is important for all people and is not directed at a specific group of people in a specific time.

Illocutionary Force

Whilst *Probability* and *Time Orientation* are concerned primarily with the protasis, the *Illocutionary Force* category is concerned with the relation between the protasis and the apodosis. In this category, we have tried to identify the main illocutionary force associated with each conditional sentence, whilst recognizing that, as Fong (2014: 32) notes, utterances may have more than one illocutionary force.

Illocutionary force refers to what the speaker hopes to communicate through the words that they say. Sometimes the strict meaning of the words spoken does not align with the actual purpose of the speaker. This is why it is important to look at, not just the words, but the context, and therefore the reason the words were said. By definition there must be an audience for there to be an illocutionary force. Communication requires both a speaker and a hearer. For this reason, not everything will have an illocutionary force. Take Mrk 5:28 for example: *[If I touch even his garments]P [I will be made well.]Q*

Mark is describing this woman's thoughts as if she were speaking. But in fact she is not speaking to anyone except herself. So, since she is not communicating with anyone, she cannot have an illocutionary force for her speech. It can be argued that Mark is communicating with his readers and therefore an illocutionary force could still be present. In this case, Mark is simply informing us of the woman's thoughts.

We must be aware, especially in narrative genres, that in reported speech the illocutionary force of an utterance is directed towards the people who are listening, rather than to us. The following categories have been used to describe illocutionary force:

- **Argue** – Used to convince someone or debating a topic. It does not indicate anger or fighting between the two parties. Consider Rom 11:6 *[but if it is grace,]P [it is no longer on the basis of works.]Q* In the protasis Paul presents a premise which he and his audience agree is true (that salvation is by grace), and in the apodosis he presents a conclusion (that salvation can not also be through works). In some cases, the protasis is "presumed to be true for the sake of the argument" even though it is false. This can be used to demonstrate the opposite of the conclusion. An example is Rom 4:2 *[if Abraham was justified by works]P [he has something to boast about.]Q* Paul goes on the show that Abraham was justified by faith, not by works, and so the actual conclusion is that he has nothing to boast about.

- **Assert** – In contrast to argumentation, the protasis and the apodosis do not need to be logically related. The speaker is simply stating something which he believes to be true. Unlike arguments, assertions are not "presumed to be true for the sake of the argument". They can, however, be used to provide evidence for an argument, as in Mrk 12:19 where the Sadducees state, *[if a man's brother dies and leaves a wife, but leaves no child,]P [the man must take the widow and raise up offspring for his brother.]Q* The purpose of this conditional is not to convince people that this is the right thing to do. This commandment was from the Old Testament and all the people listening were already aware of it. This conditional lays the groundwork for the question the Sadducees are about to ask.

- **Command** – There is a force behind these words and an expectation that the hearer will do as the speaker has asked. While what is in the protasis varies, the apodosis always includes the command. Often the verb will be in the imperative form, as in Php 4:8 *[if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise,]P [think about these things.]Q*

- **Encourage** – Used to inspire the hearer, or give them courage, often in times of fear or doubt. The protasis usually introduces a situation and the apodosis gives the encouragement, as in Col 2:5 *[for though I am absent in body,]P [yet I am with you in spirit.]Q* Paul was unable to be with the Colossians in person at this time. He is reminding them that he is still thinking about them and praying for them even though he is far away.

- **Exhort** – Used to urge the listener to behave in a particular way (to advise and instruct rathger than command). The exhortation can usually be found in the apodosis, as in 1Jn 4:11 *[if God so loved us,]P [we also ought to love one another.]Q* However, the exhortation can also occur in

the protasis, as in 1Co 7:8 *[But I say to the unmarried and to widows that it is good for them]Q [if they remain even as I am.]Q*

- **Mock** – Used to humiliate or insult. The speaker knows that the hearer believes the protasis to be true. The speaker, however, disagrees. The apodosis is an outcome that the speaker believes is impossible. Thus, when the apodosis does not happen, it 'proves' that the protasis was false. This, in turn, mocks the hearer for believing it in the first place.[3] Luk 23:35 *[let him save himself,]Q [if he is the Christ of God, his chosen one.]P* The speakers knew who Jesus claimed to be. So, they set him this challenge which they believed he would not be able to do. This, in their minds, proved that he was not the Christ. Their purpose was to insult and humiliate Jesus.

- **Promise** – Used to convey assurance to the hearer that a particular action by the speaker will be done. In these conditionals the apodosis is not actually dependent on the protasis in a cause and effect way. It is a statement about the future where the apodosis is dependent on the speaker's own actions. Whenever the protasis is fulfilled, the speaker is required to act in a certain way, because they have guaranteed it. The time orientation for all these conditionals will be 'future'. Rev 3:20 *[if anyone hears my voice and opens the door]P [I will come in to him and eat with him, and him with me.]Q* Not every promise is fulfilled; in Mrk 14:31 Peter makes the promise that no matter what happens, he will not deny Jesus: *[if I must die with you]P [I will not deny you.]Q* Later, Peter becomes afraid, and he denies Jesus three times, thus breaking the promise.

- **Rebuke** – Used to communicate disapproval of the hearer's actions or beliefs. Often done in a way where the desired action or belief is expressed. There is not a consistent form that conditionals make with this illocutionary force. In Jhn 5:46 Jesus uses the conditional to connect believing Moses with believing him. Since the hearers do not believe him, he has now claimed that they do not believe Moses, something which they thought they were doing: *[if you believed Moses]P [you would believe me.]Q*

- **Request** – Asking the hearer to do something. Whereas with the 'Command' and 'Exhort' categories the speaker has authority over the hearer, in the 'Request' category the speaker has less authority than the hearer. The speaker hopes that the hearer will be willing to fulfill the request. The request is usually found in the apodosis. Mrk 9:22 *[if you can do anything]P [have compassion on us and help us.]Q*

- **Warn** – Used to indicate danger or describe a negative consequence, usually as the result of a bad action or behaviour. The protasis usually describes the bad action and the apodosis provides the negative consequence. This illocutionary force can sometimes be seen as the opposite of exhortation; where exhortation promotes right action through positive encouragement, warning promotes right action through negative consequences. In Mat 6:15 the protasis introduces the bad action, unforgiveness. And the apodosis describes the negative consequence of this: *[if you do not forgive others their trespasses]P [neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.]Q*

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3 There are only four examples of this illocutionary force: Mat 27:40, 43, Luk 23:35, and Jhn 7:4.

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