The linguistics of desire (7)

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Today

- Terminology: Xs and Os
- X-marking in conditionals
- Lessons from "transparent *ought*"

1. Xs and Os

The morphology used to produce counterfactual conditionals:

(1)   If Rose had scored, we would have won.

Sometimes called "counterfactual", sometimes "subjunctive".

Neither is correct.

Not always subjunctive:

(1)   If Rose had scored, we would have won.

English has no subjunctive

Not always counterfactual:

(2) a. If he had taken arsenic, he would be showing exactly these symptoms. Anderson 1951

     b. If she brought pie, we would eat it rightaway.

future less vivid (FLV)

We need neutral terminology.

O-marking: ordinary, open, "indicative" conditionals

X-marking: the extra marking on counterfactuals, FLVs, etc.

The family business:

- von Fintel 1998: the meaning of "subjunctive" conditionals

  (⤳ Leahy 2017)

- Iatridou 2000: "counterfactual" = fake past + …

  (⤳ Ippolito 2013, Schulz 2014, Romero 2014, a.o.)

- von Fintel & Iatridou 2008: "counterfactual" marking weakens necessity modals (must + X = ought)

- tomorrow: want + X = wish

- What meaning does X-marking contribute?
- How does it achieve the meaning it contributes?

Three core uses of X-marking

- X-marked conditionals (counterfactuals, Anderson, FLVs)

- X-marked necessity (transparent *ought*)

- X-marked desires (transparent *wish*)

BTW: How to identify X-marking

Heuristically, we have asked for a given language how it conveys certain kinds of conditionals: those with an unlikely antecedent in the future ("future less vivid"), those with a past or present antecedent known to be false. Then, we explore what other uses the marking is put to. In particular, we check the other two core cases that we have been interested in (unattainable wishes, modal weakening).

2. X-marking in conditionals

The strategy

"I am going to assume that we can identify at least paradigm cases of the contrasting categories of conditionals independently of any contentious theoretical assumptions about the grammatical marks by which we are identifying them, and then ask what work are those grammatical marks, whatever they are, doing? That is, what is the functional difference between a so-called subjunctive and a so-called indicative conditional?" (Stalnaker 2014: pp.175f)

Not counterfactual

(2) a. If he had taken arsenic, he would be showing exactly these symptoms.   Anderson 1951

    b. If she brought pie, we would eat it rightaway.

                                                   future less vivid (FLV)

(3)   The murderer used an ice-pick. But, if the butler
        had done it, he wouldn't have used an ice-pick. So
        the murderer must have been someone else.

<div align="right">Stalnaker 1975</div>

Iatridou 2000: X-marked conditionals quantify over a domain of worlds that excludes the actual world.

But Mackay 2015:

(4)   a.   If Jones had taken arsenic, things wouldn't be quite as they actually are.

        b.   If Jones had taken arsenic, everything would be exactly as it actually is.

Modus ponens (or almost)

(5) A: If Heather had left before 9am, she would have made it to the meeting.

    B: Well, you're wrong. She did leave before 9 and still didn't make it.

    B': ? Well, you're wrong. She did leave before 9 am, but there was an earthquake and she didn't make it.

For all conditionals: the domain of quantification must include antecedent worlds.

The meaning of O-marking:

- The domain of quantification is entirely within the epistemically accessible worlds.

The meaning of X-marking:

- The domain of quantification is not entirely within the epistemically accessible worlds.

NB: context set, epistemic set, doxastic set

The literature is often a bit sloppy making these distinctions. Mackay 2018 rightly insists on care.

Stalnaker's way of putting the idea

"I take it that the subjunctive mood in English and some other languages is a conventional device for indicating that presuppositions are being suspended"

About Anderson cases

"In this case, it is clear that the presupposition that is being suspended in the derived context is the presupposition that she is showing these particular symptoms—the ones she is in fact showing. The point of the claim is to say something like this: were we in a situation in which we did not know her symptoms, and then supposed that she took arsenic, we would be in a position to predict that she would show these symptoms." *(Stalnaker 2014: p.185)*

About modus tollens

*"*There were no muddy footprints in the parlor, but if the gardener had done it, there would have been muddy footprints in the parlor, so the gardener must not have done it. *Here, the subjunctive conditional cannot be counterfactual, in the sense defined, since one is arguing that the gardener did not do it, and one cannot presuppose something one is arguing for. That is, the argument is appropriate only in a context in which it is initially an open question whether the gardener did it."*

"In this case, the presupposition that is suspended is the proposition, made explicit in the first premise of the argument, that there are no muddy footprints in the parlor. The idea behind the conditional claim is something like this: suppose we didn't know that there were muddy footprints in the parlor, and in that context supposed that the gardener did it. That would give us reason to predict muddy footprints, and so to conclude that if we don't find them, he didn't do it." (Stalnaker 2014: p.185)

- von Fintel 1998: X-marking triggers non-inclusion presupposition

- Leahy 2017: X-marking has no meaning, triggers counterfactuality implicature when in competition with O-marking

How do O/X-marking have the meaning they do?

As Iatridou 2000 showed, X-marking is complex:

- an extra layer of past, not obviously temporal
- often a future morpheme (in the consequent)
- often a "fake" aspect, not obviously temporal
- often subjunctive mood

We don't understand much yet how these interact.

Most work has been done on the role of past tense.

Past-as-modal The past tense morpheme is interpreted in the modal dimension. Given what we said earlier, it signals that the modal domain is not entirely included in the epistemic set.

Past-as-past The past tense is a past tense with scope over the relevant modal operator. It moves the time of accessibility into the past, thereby widening the domain beyond the epistemic set.

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Past-as-past would appear to be the null hypothesis.

Past-as-past	Past-as-modal
Dudman (1984 …)	Iatridou 2000
Ippolito 2003, 2007, 2013	Schulz 2014
Arregui 2007, 2009	Mackay 2018
Romero 2014	Schulz 2018
Khoo 2015	

Making Past-as-modal plausible

What is the common core of Past meaning?

- not exclusion
- Schulz, Mackay: ordered away from center
- why not just: different from default?

3. Lessons from "transparent *ought*"

(von Fintel & Iatridou 2008)

Weak necessity *ought*:

(6) a. You ought to do the dishes but you don't have to.

    b. #You have to do the dishes but you don't have to.

    c. #You must do the dishes but you don't have to.

Weak necessity modals differ from strong necessity modals in drawing on a secondary ordering source:

- what you must/have to do is necessitated by the primary ordering source

- what you ought to is required by the primary and secondary ordering sources together

Greek transparent *ought*:

(7)   *Tha eprepe   na plinis ta   piata   ala dhen*
      FUT must+Past NA wash the dishes but NEG

       ise ipexreomenos na to kanis
       are obliged   NA it do

      'You ought to do the dishes but you are not obliged to do it'

French transparent *ought*:

(8) *Tu   devrais   faire la   vaisselle, mais tu*
     you   must/COND   do   the   dishes   but   you

    n'es   pas obligé
    not+are   not obliged

    'you ought to do the dishes but you are not obliged
    to do them'

And several others, including non-IE languages.

English is an outlier in having a lexical item for the weak necessity modal (though historically one can detect X-marking on *ought*).

X-marking on strong necessity modals is ambiguous:

- weak necessity in the actual world

- strong necessity in another (counterfactual) world

A weak necessity modal in the actual world:

(9) *tha eprepe na pari aftin tin varka*
     must+X   take this   the boat

     'he ought to take the boat'

A strong necessity modal in a "counterfactual" world:

(10) *An o Fred ithele na pai sto nisi,*
If the Fred wanted to go to-the island,

tha eprepe na pari aftin tin varka
must+X take this the boat

'If Fred wanted to go to the island, he would have to use the boat'

The counterfactual strong necessity meaning is not much of a mystery but what's happening in the transparent "ought" meaning? How does X-marking bring in the secondary ordering?

Our 2008 proposal (1/3)

In the transparent OUGHT cases, we are not moving to counterfactual worlds that differ from the actual world at the ground level of empirical facts: there are no different circumstances there, no different goals, primary or secondary, no different evidence, reliable or shaky. Instead, a parameter of evaluation is changed. We move from one context where a secondary ordering source is invisible to a strong necessity modal to a new context where that secondary ordering source is promoted in such a way as to become visible to the strong necessity modal.

Perhaps, then, the counterfactual marking is co-opted here in a somewhat metalinguistic kind of way: "if we were in a context in which the secondary ordering source was promoted, then it would be a strong necessity that …". This would explain why even though there is CF-morphology, the modal claim is made firmly about the actual world; all that the morphology marks is a change in evaluation parameters.

Our 2008 proposal (3/3)

It is probably not an accident that counterfactual marking brings with it an element of tentativeness: the speaker is not saying that the secondary ordering source is something that has to be obeyed. The choice of whether to really promote the secondary ordering source is left open.

Rubinstein 2012 on primary and secondary ordering sources:

- "two kinds of priorities: ones that are presupposed to be collectively committed to, and ones that are presupposed not to be collectively committed to"

- "weak necessity modals are sensitive to priorities of both kinds, while strong necessity modals are sensitive only to priorities of the first kind"

Rubinstein 2014:

- "strong necessities are necessities relative to non-negotiable priorities"

- "weak necessities (expressed by predicates like *should*, *better*, and *preferable*) are necessities relative to negotiable priorities — raised and promoted by an opinionated individual"

X-marking:

1. on conditional modal: domain (modal base) is not a subset of the epistemic set

2. on priority modal: ordering source is not a subset of the non-negotiable priorities

X-marking marks departure from default context

Two important considerations:

1. weak necessity/transparent *ought* talks about actual & current priorities

2. moving to a past evaluation point does not deliver a wider set of priorities

Past-as-past theory of X-marking does not obviously extend to transparent *ought*.

Tomorrow

X-marking on desires