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“Pseudo-imperatives” & Conditionals: a preliminary survey

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1 Introduction

This paper is concerned with a conjunction of an imperative and a declarative clause which receives a conditional interpretation similar to that assigned to *if*-clauses, as illustrated below:

- (1) a Buy a diamond ring and she'll love you forever.
- b Just try it and I'll knock your head off.

I employ the term conditional imperative to refer to this construction throughout the paper, following Bolinger 1977 and Davies 1979. Conditional imperatives have intrigued numerous scholars working both on conditionals and imperatives, presumably due to its peculiar behaviors which are in many ways more akin to *if*-conditionals than ordinary command imperatives. Naturally, attempts have been made to derive conditional imperatives from *if*-clauses in early generative grammar — without much success (cf. Lawler 1975, Clark 1993).

Viewed from the perspective of a conditional, conditional imperatives are restricted in ways in which *if*-clauses are not, as evidenced in the fact that not every *if*-clause affords an imperative paraphrase (cf. Culicover

1971 and Bolinger 1967/1977). Davies (1979), for example, formulated two specific restrictions. First, the conditional imperative must represent a condition on the validity of what is conveyed by the second conjunct, and not merely a condition on its relevance. This explains the infelicity of examples like those in (2) as opposed to the felicity of (3):

- (2) a ?Fancy a shower and the water's hot.
b ?Get any letters from abroad and I'm very interested in foreign stamps. (Davies' exs. 36 and 34)
- (3) a If you fancy a shower, the water's hot.
b If you get any letters from abroad, I'm very interested in foreign stamps.

Second, conditional imperatives may not refer to an actual event or state, i.e. a non-reality restriction, which accounts for the infelicity of the imperative *Like Stilton* in (4a) as opposed to the felicity of the identical clause in (4b) below:

- (4) a Do you like Stilton?
I adore it.
That's good. ??Like Stilton and you'll love my souffle.
- (4) b Do you like Stilton? I don't know, I've never tried it.
Well, wait a minute and I'll get you some to try.
Like Stilton and you'll love my souffle.
(Davies 1979's exx. 84 and 85)

The *if*-conditional would be perfectly acceptable in either context.

Viewed as an imperative, the conditional imperative behaves quite differently from when it occurs independently — both in syntactic and

semantic terms. In fact, some of these behaviors are more suggestive of conditionals than of imperatives. Most notably, the clause may completely lack directive force, referring to a state or a situation not under the control of the addressee, quite unlike the ordinary command imperative:

- (5) a Receive an invitation and you'll have to attend.
b ?Receive an invitation. (Davies (1979)'s ex.7)
- (6) a Feel sick, and they put you in bed.
b ?Feel sick.

In addition, the reference may be to past time:

- (7) a Give him a few dollars, and he was happy.
b *Give him a few dollars yesterday/last year.
- (8) a How was the party?-(?)Turn up yesterday, and you'd have had a real shock.
b *Turn up yesterday.

Moreover, negative polarity items, such as *any* as a counterspecifier of quantity and *a bit*, may appear:

- (9) a Come any closer and I'll scream.
b *Come any closer.
- (10) a Criticize him the slightest bit, and he starts crying.
b *Criticize him the slightest bit.

Facts like those in (5) through (10) have been commonly used as serviceable tests to differentiate “true imperatives” from “pseudo-imperatives”.

None of this data is new. All of these facts have been noticed, but they have not been explained in a unified and predictive way. The paper claims that a general explanation is possible. The aim of this paper is to elucidate a set of principles under which the IMPERATIVE-AND-DECLARATIVE construction may obtain a conditional sense and to offer a unified account for the data enumerated above. In the next section, we will identify a common factor for all conditionals. Section 3 will introduce Dancygier's analyses characterizing conditional imperatives in terms of prototypical (=predictive) conditionals (Dancygier (1993, 1998)). Section 4 will recapitulate Takahashi's analyses of imperative prototypicality (Takahashi (1994, 2000), where the conditional imperative classifies as a non-prototypical use of imperative. Section 6 will present a unified account for the relevant phenomena.

It will be argued that while conditional prototypicality is necessary for felicitous use of conditional imperatives, it is not sufficient. The imperative need be non-prototypical in conception. These characterizations will be shown to account for the majority of data unique to conditional imperatives.

2 Conditionals

To understand exactly what principles govern the felicitous conditional usage of the IMPERATIVE-AND-DECLARATIVE construction, we need to begin by asking the most basic question. What is a common factor for all conditionals? As Comrie 1986 pointed out, the most obvious feature of conditionals resides in the bi-clausal structure. Needless to say, the bi-clausal structure per se is not unique to conditionals alone but common to numerous other kinds of coordinate constructions including those with subordinators *when* and *where*. To obtain an accurate char-

acterization of conditionals, we need to spell out exactly what features differentiate conditional bi-clausal constructions from non-conditional.

First, conditionals are often characterized in terms of mutual dependency (cf. Athanasiadou & Dirven 1997, *inter alia*), ground/figure (cf. Croft 1994, Tabakowska 1997), and space building (cf. Tabakowska *ibid.*, Dancygier 1998, based on Fauconnier 1985). While these notions are extremely useful, they do not seem to uniquely characterize conditionals, but are shared by a number of other bi-clausal sentences:

- (11) a When the T.V. star arrives, there will be a big crowd.
b When you are in trouble, you can call me.
c Where there's smoke, there's fire.
d Once you have made a promise, you should keep it.

Obviously, two clauses in each example sentence in (11) above more or less depend on each other for interpretation. They may also be construed in terms of ground/figure configuration, with the subordinating clause ordinarily as ground and the main clause as figure. In addition, *when*, *where* and *once* clauses can be appropriately analyzed as space builders providing a mental space (or a “search domain”), with respect to which the main clause should be interpreted, although the basic nature of this domain is specifically temporal or locational.

Second, conditionals are often mentioned as being hypothetical (cf. Comrie 1986, Werth 1997, *inter alia*). If hypotheticality is understood in the sense of nonactuality or remoteness from reality, there is certainly a great deal of overlap between the set of clauses that are conditionals and the set of clauses that are (presumed to be) hypothetical. However, there are some exceptions to this correlation:

- (12) a If you like beans, this dish is for you.
b If you study Japanese, this book is for you.
c OK. If you don't have time, you can skip the last chart.

All these sentences here can be felicitously used when the speaker is treating the propositional content of each *if*-clause as factual, which simply means that a clause need not be hypothetical to be a conditional.¹

Third, an *if*-conditional clause is often said to be non-assertive, i.e. a clause which the speaker is not (fully) asserting as being the case (Dancygier 1993, Taylor 1997).² What is crucial here is that non-assertiveness (of assumption) is not what is distinctive about conditional *if*-clauses alone, although it seems inherent to them, since non-assertiveness can be found in numerous other clauses, both independent and subordinate. Quirk et al.(1985), for instance, enumerate several “non-assertive” contexts in English. Included are negations, questions, comparative clauses and some restrictive relative clauses as well as conditionals, in which polarity items like *ever* or *any* readily occur:

- (13) a I don't want to stay here any longer.
b Do you know any of the teachers here?
c Who has ever read the play?
d It's odd that he should ever notice it.
e If anyone ever says that, pretend not to hear.
f I have more stamps than I've yet shown you.
g Students who have any complaints should raise their hands.³

(examples b-g from Quirk et al 1985: 784)

In fact, certain temporal and locational clauses like those in (11) above might be added to this list. To the extent that the speaker is

asserting the propositional content as false in (13a), or is not fully or not at all asserting it as true in (13b-g), the feature non-assertion is not only shared by conditionals alone but by other subordinate clauses and some independent clauses as well.

It seems evident then that the often-cited notions, mutual dependency, ground/figure alignment, space building, non-assertion and hypotheticality fall short of adequately characterizing the very essence of conditionality.

To my knowledge, Taylor 1997 is the only author who has successfully singled out a common denominator for all conditionals, which he labels as polarity assumption. Observing that the conjunctive *if* contains something more general in meaning than *when* or *where*, he characterizes the semantic value of an *if* as raising the question of the polarity of the clause which it heads, and conveying that the polarity of the consequent is dependent on first fixing the polarity of the antecedent (Taylor, 304). He provides two pieces of evidence to substantiate this claim. When an *if*-clause is independently used, it is most felicitous only in response to a polarity (yes-no) question:

(14) a Does your cat scratch? - If somebody teases her.

(14) b Are you going to that conference? - If my paper gets accepted.

(Taylor 1997: 294)

And *if* can head an elliptical polarity clause, whereas temporal, causal or concessive conjunctions cannot:

(15) a Would you like some coffee? *If so*, I'll make some, *if not*, I won't bother.

(15) b *when so/?*when not

*because so/*because not

*although so/*although not

(Taylor 1997: 296-297)

That is, *if* characterizes an assumption in its scope in terms of only two polars of being the case or not being the case. In contrast, *when* or *where* characterize an assumption in terms of time or place, although a conditional sense may implicationally arise from temporal or locational sense.

Taking these examinations into considerations, let us look at Dancygier's analysis of "parameters" for conditionals (1993: 403):

(16) Dancygier's "parameters" for *if*-conditionals

- i) the presence of *if* in the protasis, which signals non-assertiveness of the assumption in its scope.
- ii) the syntactic frame *if p, then q*, which accounts for there being a semantic or pragmatic relation between *p* and *q*, such that *q* cannot be asserted without a prior assumption of *p*.

Although these statements are helpful, a few remarks are in order. For one thing, non-assertiveness is not unique to a conditional *if*-clause alone but to the majority of subordinate clauses, as we have observed above. That is, non-assertiveness is a subordinator feature, both conditional and non-conditional alike.

Next, the statement in (16ii) is not specific enough, since an *if*-clause expresses polarity assumption, not any kind of assumption such as temporal or locational. Furthermore, (16ii) is not general enough either, in that the consequent clause could be not only assertive but non-assertive such as a command or interrogation, as evidenced in *If Jim asks you out, say no* or *What if you find yourself hospitalized with mounting medical bills?*.

By improving Dancygier’s analyses, we come up with the following:

- (17) A Common Factor for the conditional if S_1 , S_2 .
- i) S_1 is non-assertive. (subordinator feature)
 - ii) S_1 and S_2 are mutually dependent in that P expresses polarity assumption (for the utterance of S_2), and S_2 is uttered only under the polarity assumption of S_1 . (conditional feature)

The generalizations here are designed to cover all kinds of conditionals by integrating the important insights of previous references such as Dancygier (1993) as well as overcoming their inadequacies.⁴ The idea is that a conditional clause is a kind of subordinate clause conveying assumption; it need be at least non-assertive, although non-assertiveness does not uniquely characterize conditionals.

We may restate the semantic value of *if* as follows: to signal that the speaker is assuming, not asserting, the polarity of S_1 (Taylor 1997), which is assumed solely for the utterance of S_2 . A sentence is expected to contain the two features in (17i) and (17ii) above when it obtains a conditional sense.

3 Conditional Imperatives are Prototypical Conditionals

Above we looked at conditionals globally. Here we will take a look at conditionals locally. Previous references are in general agreement concerning the following three points:

- a) Conditionals are broken up into two or more than two kinds.
- b) Conditionals involve both prototypical and less prototypical kinds.
- c) Prototypical conditionals can be mainly characterized in terms of the

presence of iconic sequentiality and causality, less prototypical ones in terms of their absence.

It is well established that conditionals are broken down into more than one kind: direct vs. indirect (Quirk et al. 1985), content vs. speech-act/epistemic (Sweetser 1990), or predictive vs. non-predictive (Dancygier 1993, 1998). Direct, content, and predictive conditionals roughly refer to the same kind of conditionals ordinarily dealing with natural course of events (cf. Dancygier 1993, 1998: chap. 7, among others).

In light of the general tendency that meaning is extended from concrete real-world sequential and causal relations to more abstract and speaker-oriented relations such as inferential and speech act ones (cf. Traugott 1982, 1989 and Sweetser 1990), Dancygier concludes (1998: 185) that predictive conditionals such as (18a) stand at a center from which semantic extension occurs to epistemic, speech act, and metatextual domains as in (18b) and (18c).

- (18) a If you get me some coffee, I'll give you a cookie. <predictive>
b If you're interested, here is the ticket.
c If you get divorced, you've been married. <non-predictive>

Predictive and non-predictive conditionals exhibit a set of patterns distinct from each other, most notably, event order iconicity and causality as well as a few others (Dancygier 1993, 1998).⁵ That is, only (18a), predictive, involves a sequential and causal semantic relation between a conditional and a consequent clause; the addressee's act of getting some coffee (S_1) is interpreted as CAUSING the speaker's act of giving the addressee a cookie (S_2). (18b) and (18c), non-predictive, lack causality as well as sequentiality.

The following chart summarizes the observations made in previous references.

(19) the Prototype Elements of Conditionals

	PROTOTYPICAL	NON-PROTOTYPICAL
TYPE	(predictive)	(non-predictive)
SEQUENTIALITY	sequential	non-sequential
CAUSALITY	causal	non-causal
TIME REFERENCE	backshifting	no backshifting
SYNTACTIC ORDER	if S_1 , S_2	S_2 if S_1 ⁶
IRREALIS	nonactual	actual

What is critical here is the fact that only predictive conditionals such as those in (18a) felicitously translate into IMPERATIVE-AND-DECLARATIVE sequences (cf. Dancygier 1993, 1998). To illustrate:

- (20) a Get me some coffee and I'll give you a cookie. <predictive>
 b *Be interested and here is the ticket.
 c *Be divorced, and you've been married.⁷ <non-predictive>

Dancygier maintains that a conditional meaning arises from the imperative construction in (21) below,

- (21) a Open the window and I'll kill you.
 b Open the window and I'll kiss you.

(Examples from Lawler (1975))

because it satisfies her three criterion for prototypical conditionals, i.

e. sequence of event iconicity, “non-assertiveness (=potentiality or hypotheticality), and causality. (1998: chap.7).⁸ Compare:

- (22) a Try some of the cakes I’ve baked and you cannot refuse.
b Wash the dishes, and I want you to take out the garbage.
(examples from Culicover 1972)
c Get on with your homework and I haven’t heard you practise the piano today.
d Don’t eat all the cherries and the ice-cream is meant for dessert.
e Have a lovely day and I expect to hear from you.
(examples from Mittwoch 1975)

While all the examples above contain the IMPERATIVE-AND-DECLARATIVE sequence, none of them involve a sequential and causal relation between the first and second clauses, which accounts for the absence of a conditional sense.

As somewhat expected, the distinction between causality and non-causality is not always clear-cut. For instance, Bolinger (1977: 161-164) cited examples like these as evidence for the necessity of “intrinsic consequence” for felicitous use of an imperative as a conditional:

- (23) a (*)Find any tickets and we’ll go to the movies.
b (*)Write any letters and I’ll mail them for you.
c (*)Like her and I’ll introduce you to her.
d (*)Own this property and I’ll buy it from you.

However, Davies (1979: 1045, 1049) found that all these examples can be rendered more acceptable, if given appropriate contexts. Facts like these suggest that there is no clear-cut divide between causal and non-

causal linkage; the more strongly causal, the better.

Recall that one restriction on conditional imperatives, proposed in Davies 1979 (mentioned in section 1), was “a condition on the validity of what is conveyed by the second conjunct”. At this point, this can be simply restated as a restriction to the prototype (predictive) conditional.⁹

Granted that features of prototypical conditionals are necessary for the occurrence of a conditional meaning from a construction lacking an explicit *if*, they alone do not predict the felicity of conditional imperatives.

Consider:

(24) *Do* come tomorrow, and you’ll see our new house.

Concerning this sentence, Bolinger explains that “the union of the two clauses is forced; the second is an afterthought, and much less like the result clause of a conditional sentence than the one in *Come tomorrow, and you’ll see our new house*, whose first clause may be a command as well as a condition.” (1977: 191). The impact of emphatic *do* is obvious here. But a similar phenomenon may be observed with other attitudinal markers. While one cannot tell whether condition or command is intended in the examples of (25) below,

- (25) a Eat your spinach and you’ll be strong.
b Be our candidate for president and we’ll win.
c Join the Navy and see the world.

“the command is obviously uppermost” in (26) (Bolinger 1977: 164):

(26) a Hand me that hammer, will you, and I’ll nail this down.

b Step this way, please, and the doctor will see you.

(Examples from Bolinger 1977: 164)

The imperative below also read more like a straight command, exactly like (24) and (26) above,

(27) a *Please* stay home, and you'll be safe.

b *For heaven's sake* show up on time, and we can finish our job by noon.

c *YOU* shut up, darling, and she can talk.

d *Just* give me your address and phone number, and I'll be right over.

e You *please* make yourself comfortable and I'll wash the dishes.

(example (e) from Ross (1979))

despite the fact that the sentences here involve every feature characteristic of prototypical conditionals, which are predictive (sequential, and causal) as well as nonactual (=hypothetical).

Recall that *do* favors “true” imperatives (i.e. imperatives with directive force) (cf. Schreiber 1972). In such a case, the poor compatibility of emphatic attitudinals and conditionality may be construed as indicative of the general incompatibility of “true imperatives” with conditionality. In what follows, I will argue that a felicitous conditional imperative contains not only features of PROTOTYPICAL CONDITIONAL but also those of NON-PROTOTYPICAL IMPERATIVE, in the sense defined in Takahashi (1994, 2000).

4 Conditional Imperatives are Non-Prototypical Imperatives

When we try to define the imperative in English, the first thing that comes to mind is presumably the idea of directive force. We might want to define the imperative as a clause containing directive force, with the verb in infinitive form and without an obligatory grammatical subject, as exemplified in (28) below:

- (28) a Go to Chicago on Monday.
b Don't forget to call me tomorrow.
c Clean up this mess right now.

This, however, often does not work, since a number of clauses that seem to belong in the class, imperative, cannot be said to involve directive force. Some contain non-directive force (in conveying permission or suggestion, for instance), while others do not contain any force at all: the sentences in (29) below demonstrate such cases:

- (29) a A: Can I take this chair?
B: *Go ahead.*
b A: Excuse me, how can I get to the Memorial Hospital?
B: *Go straight ahead three blocks and turn right.*
c Regional accents can be another headache. *Put a proper Bostonian on the phone with a Texas oilman* and here comes miscommunication.
d Jim was always hungry in those days. *Give him a few dollars,* and he was happy.

e A: Do you know that Tokyo is a very expensive city?

B: Oh, yeah, *tell me about it*.

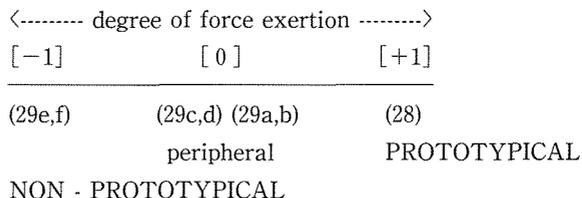
f Spare the rod and spoil the child.

Observing that the category IMPERATIVE has blurry edges and allow degrees of membership, I envisaged that the prototype phenomenon is also to be found in the imperative construction. Specifically, I proposed a finite list of (four) essential properties (cf. Takahashi 1993): a) hypotheticality, b) non-past, with respect to the speaker's temporal viewing position, c) second-person, and d) speaker commitment (=the degree of the speaker's force exertion).

The first three properties can be treated as somewhat dichotomous, i.e. as either satisfied or not. The last feature, speaker commitment, however, is not an all-or-none phenomenon but one of gradience. The imperative centers around this notion, which I defined as the degree of (directive) force that the speaker is exerting toward the addressee's carrying out an action.

To quantify this view, I examined a scalar analysis of speaker commitment (=force exertion) ranging from maximum [+1] through [0] to minimum [-1], as illustrated in figure 1 below.

<Figure 1> Speaker Commitment Continuum



On this continuum, independent command imperatives such as those

in (28) below classify as full-fledged, since they contain (near) [+1] force exertion. Others such as those in (29a) and (29b) are somewhat less of an imperative, conveying permission and mild suggestion. (29c) and (29d) are classed as peripheral, since the clause does not contain any force at all. Conversely, (29e) and (29f) depart from the norm in a different respect in that the imperative clauses contain minus exertion of force, from which sarcasm or a sense of warning seems to arise.

The analysis along this line had the following consequences. (i) The command is not an essential feature, but rather a prototypical feature, of an imperative involving (near) maximum force exertion. (ii) The “pseudo imperative” is just another term for a non-prototypical or peripheral use of imperative involving zero or minus force exertion. Simply put, a clause need not contain directive force at all to be an imperative.

In an attempt to obtain a parameter according to which imperative clauses can be ranked with respect to imperative prototypicality, I came up with the following table.

(30) A List of Parameters for IMPERATIVE PROTOTYPICALITY

(Revised, on Takahashi (1999a and 1999b))

	PROTOTYPICAL	NON-PROTOTYPICAL
A. FORCE		
NATURE	directive	non-directive
DEGREE	(near)[+1]	lower than (near)[+1]
B. SUBJECT		
SEMANTIC ROLE	agentive	non-agentive
IDENTITY	individuated	generic
C. DYNAMICITY	high	low
D. TIME REFERENCE	future	present > past

Each element in this table suggests a scale. Just like other semantic and constructional categories, satisfaction of each element on the list does not necessarily contribute equally to the degree of membership of an individual in the category (cf. Rosch 1978, Coleman and Kay 1981, Lakoff 1987 and Godberg 1995). In this case, the element in A, the degree of force exertion in column A is the most important in constituting the prototype. The “best example” of an imperative is the one in which the directive force is most strongly exerted (at around [+1] point). Conversely, an imperative progressively departs from the norm when its force is mildly exerted, negatively exerted as in (29e) and (29f) or not exerted at all as in (29c) and (29d).

To serve as a conditional, an imperative should not contain strong exertion of force; that is, it should be non-prototypical in conception. When it is prototypical (i.e. command), it does not comfortably behave as a conditional clause. It must be emphasized that force exertion and conditionality do not directly contradict with each other. Only *strong* force exertion and conditionality do contradict. To illustrate, compare:

- (31) a Give her a smile.
 b Give her a smile and she'll feel insulted.
 c Give her a smile and she was happy.
 d Give her a smile and she'll be happy. e *Do/Please/ YOU* give her a smile, and she'll be happy.

The position of each example indicates the degree of force at its preferred reading. The imperative form *Give her a smile* standing alone in (31a) is normally interpreted as involving strong positive force, although the exact degree of force is potentially ambiguous ranging between [+1] and [-1]. The identical clause contains minus (or

In summary, felicitous conditional imperatives are governed by two principles, features of both prototypical conditional and non-prototypical imperative.

5 Analysis

In this final section, we discuss why the conditional IMPERATIVE-AND-DECLARATIVE sequence is governed by two principles, prototypical conditional and non-prototypical imperative (5.1). In section 5.2, we attempt a unified account for the phenomena unique to the construction in question.

5.1 “Imperativeness” and Conditionality

In section 2, we characterized the semantic value of if mainly in terms of non-assertiveness, mutual dependency and polarity assumption. If this is correct, prototypical conditionality (notably, causality) and non-prototypicalness of imperatives (notably, lack of strong force) are expected to be critically relevant to the IMPERATIVE-AND-DECLARATIVE sequence in its conditional usage.

Specifically, the conditional IMPERATIVE-AND-DECLARATIVE construction should contain the following features:

- i) IMPERATIVE (S_1) is non-assertive.
- ii) IMPERATIVE (S_1) and DECLARATIVE (S_2) are mutually dependent in that IMPERATIVE expresses polarity assumption for the utterance of DECLARATIVE, and DECLARATIVE is uttered only under the polarity assumption of IMPERATIVE.¹⁰

First, non-assertiveness automatically comes from all imperative

clauses, independent of whether prototypical or not. Since an imperative presents a potential (Davies 1979; 1986) or a hypothetical situation, the clause invariably provides a non-assertive context (cf. Dancygier 1998).

Second, tight mutual dependency arises from causality between the two clauses connected by *and* (a central feature of prototypical conditionality). As Dancygier convincingly argued, some tight semantic tie must substitute the role of an *if* to express condition.

Third, polarity assumption may be expressed only by a non-prototypical imperative, not prototypical, since prototypical imperatives are only capable of expressing non-assumption such as independent utterances or main messages. It must be recalled that the very nature of assumption resides in its conceptual dependency, since the sole purpose of positing assumption is to provide a conceptual basis (background) against which a main message may be issued. As a subordinate construction, the conditional sentence, being comprised of subordinate and main clauses, relies heavily on asymmetry, typically with the *if*-clause (S₁) as a ground, and the main clause as a figure.

When an imperative contains strong force exertion (the central feature of prototypical imperatives), as in (28), (30), and (31) above, it also obtain focal prominence in the entire sequence, strong correlation may be observed between prototypicality and focal prominence. In light of these observations, let me propose the following as a working hypothesis:

(33) Imperative Prototypicality and Conceptual Dependency

- i) Prototype imperatives tend to either occur alone or profile as a figure in conjoined constructions.
- ii) Non-prototype imperatives tend to occur dependently. Only a non-prototype imperative may convey assumption for another utterance in conjoined constructions.

Since a construction evokes its most standard usage in isolated contexts, the intimate correlation between imperatives standing alone and imperatives full of prototypical features hardly comes as a surprise. Observe:

- (34) Just in case/If Jim asks you out, *say no*.
When you get trapped in the Web, *use the mouse to get out*.
When you're in trouble, *just call me*.

When an imperative clause appear in the main clause, it is prototypical involving strong force and at the same time obtain focal prominence.¹¹ Relatedly, look at the way in which an imperative behaves in conjoined constructions with *or*:

- (35) a *Take your care* or you may fall.
b *Don't touch me* or I'll call the police.
c *Tie your shoestrings* or you'll keep falling.
d *Control your passion* or it will control you.

Culicover remarked that the imperative followed by *or* and a declarative “shares most of characteristics of imperatives, and not conditionals.” (1972: 297). What is relevant here is that the imperative is both given focal prominence and prototypical at the same time.¹² The speaker should not be fully committed to the realization of the propositional content of an imperative to make it serve as a conditional.

In summary, conditional imperatives only occur under the principles of prototypical conditionality and non-prototypical imperative. The two facets combine to compensate for a significant portion of the role performed by an explicit conditional marker.

5.2 Syntactic and Semantic Behaviors

We are in a position to offer an integrated account for examples (5) and (6); reference to a state/a situation not under the control of the addressee, examples (7) and (8), reference to past time; and examples (9) and (10), appearance of negative polarity items, which illustrate behaviors peculiar to conditional imperatives alone, not ordinary command imperatives.

To begin with, elements of non-prototypical imperatives directly explain the phenomena in (5) and (6):

- (5) a Receive an invitation and you'll have to attend.
b ?Receive an invitation. (Davies (1979)'s ex.7)
- (6) a Feel sick, and they put you in bed.
b ?Feel sick.

According to the parameters for Imperative Prototypicality above, an imperative in peripheral use may not contain directive force at all. As an imperative departs from the norm, the degree of (directive) force progressively falls. The force may be only mildly, not strongly, exerted, negatively exerted as in (29b) or not exerted at all as in (29a) and (29c). In one such extreme case, the imperative may not contain any force exertion, the addressee is hardly an agent, and eventually the designated situation is a state or not something controllable on the part of the addressee.

Similarly, reference to a past time is just another instance of peripheral use of imperative, lacking force exertion and expressing straight condition:

- (7) a Give him a few dollars, and he was happy.

- b *Give him a few dollars yesterday/last year.
- (8) a How was the party? - (?)Turn up yesterday, and you'd have had a real shock.
- b *Turn up yesterday.

That is, no directive force is exerted, with the addressee more generic than specific, even though the addressee may be analyzed in terms of agent engaged in a hypothetical action.

Finally, the appearance of negative polarity items only in conditional imperatives needs more elaborate discussion:

- (9) a Come any closer and I'll scream.
- b *Come any closer.
- (10) a Criticize him the slightest bit, and he starts crying.
- b *Criticize him the slightest bit.

The felicity of *any* in non-prototypical imperatives as well as its infelicity in prototypical imperatives seems somewhat mysterious. This is because negative polarity items favor non-assertive contexts on the one hand (cf. (16) in section 2) and an imperative, prototypical and non-prototypical alike, is consistently non-assertive, on the other. If so, all imperatives, both typical or atypical, should tolerate polarity items, which require “non-assertive” contexts. The real question seems to be then not why only “pseudo-imperatives” permit negative polarity items, but rather why prototypical imperatives disallow negative polarity items to occur. To put it differently, why does strong force exertion reject negative polarity items? The answer seems rather straightforward. Strong force exertion makes an imperative function more like an independent or focal clause, not assumptive. Only an imperative lacking (near) maxi-

num force are capable of expressing polarity assumption. We then arrive at the following generalization:

- (36) Negative polarity items are restricted to linguistic clauses which are not only non-assertive but incorporate minus or zero speaker commitment.

The analysis in (36) is in full harmony with the idea of desirability as applied to *if*-conditionals (as well as deontic modals) in Akatsuka and others. Akatsuka contends that the S_1 of the conditional clause *if* S_1 may express a kind of speaker attitude, which she labels as “desirability”, i.e. the speaker’s evaluation of S_1 ’s realizability involving a scale (1986: 635-636). It is argued that the S_1 of the conditional may contain varying degrees of desirability including desirable, undesirable and neutral (Akatsuka 1997).

In our terms, desirability is a manifestation of speaker commitment in the propositional content of a conditional, exactly like force exertion is a manifestation of speaker commitment in the propositional content of an imperative. Whether in the IMPERATIVE-AND-DECLARATIVE construction or in the *IF* S_1 (*THEN*) S construction, the English language permits its speakers to be more or less and positively or negatively committed to the fulfillment of the propositional content of the protasis.

See below that some *if* conditional clauses may stand alone or profile as a figure:

- (37) a If you can sign that for me. Thank you.
b If only somebody would smile.
c If I could just be left alone.
d If only it would stop raining, we could go out.

This is interesting, if we consider that the antecedent is an adverbial clause of the consequent (main clause) in unmarked usage, hence a dependent clause (cf. Akatsuka 1986: 627). This maximum speaker commitment makes a clause less assumptive and less dependent, hence it makes an *if*-clause function far less like a conditional. Similar phenomena may easily be observed in other languages like German and French as well:

(38) a Ach, wenn ich doch das gewusst hatte.

(Oh, if I only that known had.)

b Si nous allions au cinema, ce soir!

(If we (can) go to a cinema this evening!)

In such a case, the *if*-clause invariably incorporates an extremely high degree of desirability, expressing prayer or strong wish. That is, the speaker strongly desires that the propositional content be realized; the clause can be said to contain near maximum speaker commitment.

As expected, such *if*-clauses reject negative polarity items, much the same way prototypical imperatives do:

(39) a *If only you can move *an inch*. Thank you.

b *If only *anybody* would smile.

c *If only you criticize him *the slightest bit*, he starts crying.

d *If only you would *lift a finger*, I'll shoot.

The examples of (39) are all bizarre due to a serious inconsistency in speaker attitude. Different degrees of speaker commitment are imposed on a single clause all at once. The reason for the infelicity of *if*-clauses in (39) above is completely identical with the reason for the infelicity of

the imperatives in (40) below:

- (40) a **Please* come any closer, and I'll call the police.
b **Do* criticize him the slightest bit, and he starts crying.
c **For heaven's sake* lift a finger, and I'll shoot.

Examples (40) can be rendered perfectly acceptable once emphatic attitudinals *please*, *do*, and *for heaven's sake* are removed, since inconsistency in speaker commitment will be removed.

Finally, the present analysis explains the *some/any* contrast in the well-known classic pair of *if*-conditionals. *Any* is unacceptable in (41a) but acceptable in (41b). Conversely, *some* is acceptable in the former but unacceptable in the latter:

- (41) a If you eat **any/some* spinach I'll give you \$10.
(41) b If you eat *any/(*)some* spinach I'll whip you.
(originally from Lakoff, R.(1969), cited in Fillmore 1990)

Imperatives exhibit a parallel behavior:

- (42) a Eat **any/some* spinach and I'll give you \$10.
(42) b Eat *any/(*)some* spinach and I'll whip you.

On the one hand, the whole sequence imposes on the *if*-clause and imperative a mild positive speaker commitment in (41a) and (42a) but minus (or zero) speaker commitment in (41b) and (42b). On the other, *some* require clauses involving positive speaker commitment and *any* clauses with minus speaker commitment or its absence. The following figure might clarify this point.

A conditional meaning felicitously arises from the IMPERATIVE-AND-DECLARATIVE construction when the entire sequence is classed as a prototypical conditional (cf. Dancygier 1993, 1998) and the first conjunct is classed as a non-prototypical imperative. This characterization has been shown to account for two restrictions, a condition on the validity and a non-reality, proposed in Davies (1979, 1986). It also explains why the conditional imperative may refer to a state or a situation not under the control of the addressee, refer to a past time, and permit negative polarity items to occur.

Contrary to the commonly-held view (cf. Quirk et al. 1985), negative polarity items are restricted to clauses which are not only non-assertiveness but also lacks full speaker commitment. Non-assertiveness and absence of full speaker commitment combine to predict the (in)felicity of *some* and *any* in both conditional and imperative clauses.

Footnotes

1 As the table for prototypical conditionality in (19) reveals, hypotheticality is not necessary but typical for conditionals.

2 Here I take the position that non-assertiveness is a matter of the speaker's assessment or a proposition, or “the speaker's epistemic stance” (cf. Fillmore 1990, Sweetser (1990: 131)), rather than objective truth. Two points must be made concerning this term. To begin with, non-assertiveness includes not only negations but also numerous other types of clauses, as the examples in (13) illustrate.

Next, non-assertiveness is a notion quite distinct from truth/falsehood and nonreality (cf. Horn 1985, Taylor 1997). Factual or “given” clauses might be non-assertive as well, since the speaker of,

(i) If (as you say) John left for France last week, we need another interpreter.

may be fully accepting the truth of the protasis (cf. Dancygier (1998: 19). Citing the analyses of marked negation conducted in Horn (1985, 1989), Dancygier defines non-assertion as assumption which is entertained or considered but cannot be asserted felicitously (1998: 19). Similarly, Taylor 1997 states that, while the following *if*-clauses are “uncontroversially factual”,

- (ii) a Well, if (as you say) he had lasagne for lunch, he won't be wanting spaghetti for dinner.
 - (ii) b If (as they just announced) they're looking for an apartment, they're planning a wedding before long. (examples originally from Sweetser 1990: 128-9) they are still non-assertive.
- 3 Interestingly, many of the clauses Fillmore consider as “identifying alternative worlds” (1990: 141) such as,
- (i) Questions:
Do you like it? It's yours.
 - (ii) Commands:
Come here and I'll give you a kiss.
 - (iii) Pseudo-Commands: Criticize him the slightest bit and he starts crying.
 - (iv) Certain Relative-Clause Constructions:
Anyone who does that gets what he deserves.
 - (v) Situation-Creating Adverbials:
With his hat on he would look older.
 - (vi) Anaphoric Devices:
Then/In that case/Otherwise (etc.), I wouldn't be here.
coincide with “non-assertiveness” clauses introduced in Quirk et al (1985).
- 4 Dancygier describes the function of an *if* in terms of space construction, non-assertiveness, and the connection of two assumptions (1998: 23). These functions fit subordinators far better than conditionals alone.
- 5 Contra Dancygier (1998: 187), however, non-assertion not only applies to prototypical conditionals. The notion is also applicable to every conditional and even non-conditional subordinate clauses.
- 6 The *if* S_1 , S_2 order is known to be universally more frequent than S_2 *if* S_1 (cf. Greenberg 1962, Linde 1976, Comrie 1986, inter alia). In addition, the conditional clause (S_1) more often deals with a hypothetical or nonactual situation than actual, as we have observed above.
- 7 Note that we can squeeze an epistemic conditional out if we add “and that means” or “and that will mean”, as in:
- (i) Get divorced, and that means that you've been married.
The version in (i) above reads more like a predictive conditional than epistemic.
- 8 Note that while the *if*-conditional in,
- (i) If you study Japanese history, this book is for you.
could be ambiguous between predictive and non-predictive (=speech-act), the

imperative version,

(ii) Study Japanese history, and this book is for you.

is unambiguously predictive, with causality as well as sequentiality.

The following may appear to be counterexamples to the claim that the conditional imperative only permits predictive conditional:

(iii) Get into any difficulties and there's a phone number you can ring.

(iv) Find yourself at a loose end and there's always the television.

(examples from Davies 1979: 1043)

However, these are CONCEPTUALLY causal. The sentences read as “If you get into any difficulties, then you should remember you can ring...” It must be recalled that existential *there* may function to REintroduce something forgotten as well as introducing something new (Bolinger 1977: 115). Example (iv) then fits one of five “hearer-new” contexts in the sense defined in Ward & Birner (1995: 728), since definite NPs felicitously appear in *there*-sentences. The speaker does not assume the entity in the postverbal NP of a *there* sentence to exist within the hearer's knowledge store.

However, we have no account for the infelicity of,

(v) *Miss the train and there's a waiting-room on platform one.

(Clark 1993: 117)

9 Contra Dancgyier, I exclude non-assertiveness from prototypicality of conditionals. As we have observed above, not only all conditionals are non-assertive but numerous non-conditional subordinate clauses are also classed as non-assertive as well.

10 The first clause S_1 of the conditional S_1 -(AND)- S_2 syntactic frame need not be imperative; S_1 could be declarative. When this construction expresses a condition, it is invariably causal and predictive. To illustrate:

(i) a You want to get in, you pay like everybody else.

b You touch me again, I'll knock your teeth out.

(ii) a You tell him anything and he just looks at you blankly.

b You look a little pale around the gills and they act like it's time to call a priest. (the examples in (i) from Bolinger (1977: 158-9))

The rising intonation explicitly marks the first clause as non-assertive.

Compare examples (iii) below:

(iii) a *You're divorced, you've been married.

b *You're interested, here's the ticket.

c *She is in the lobby, the plane arrived early.

which do not express a condition, lacking causality. Even the rising intonation cannot save conditionality.

Somewhat relatedly, Bolinger mentions that “the process of aphesis explains some conditional ‘imperatives’ without the subject *you*” concerning these examples (1977: 159):

(iv) a ([If] I) buy myself a few pretty clothes, (and) you act like you’d been robbed.

b ([If] they) give themselves the least advantage, (and) the rest of the gang hollers unfair.

c ([If] we) take our medicine (and) we get well. (Bolinger 1977: 159)

What is common concerning (i), (ii) and (iv) above is that the first conjunct (S_1), being in the present tense, is treated as hypothetical, hence non-assertive. In addition, the two clauses S_1 and S_2 are mutually dependent based on causality.

11 Support for the claim in (33ii) comes from the behavior of imperatives in the following conjoined constructions:

(i) a Come to Palm Court and be entertained by Joe Loss and his orchestra!

(Example from Dixon 1994)

b Come to my office, be amazed at the mess I’ve made.

While the preceding imperative is both prototypical and a focal clause in each example above, the second one, which I labeled *ad CONSEQUENT IMPERATIVE* somewhat departs from the norm lacking strong exertion of force and agency.

12 For full comparison between imperative constructions with *and* and *or*, see Takahashi (in preparation). It will be argued that the imperative exhibit complementary distributions on speaker commitment continuum in the two coordinate constructions.

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