



Conditional Constructions in the Kenyang Language

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Abstract: Conditional sentences are statements discussing known factors or hypothetical situations and their consequences. Complete conditionals sentences contain a conditional clause (often referred to as the if-clause) and the consequence. In this article we have discussed the conditional constructions in the kenyang language. Kenyang belong to the Bantu languages in which tense distinctions are made. Automatically every grammatical sentence in Kenyang is marked for tense. This is contrary to some African languages including some other Bantu languages in which aspectual distinctions are made in some sentences where no over tense makers are present. This paper is therefore out to present conditional construction in the kenyang language. It also serves as an introduction to the special issues of structures in African linguistics devoted to conditional constructions in Kenyang. We have first of all presented generalities of conditional constructions, noting the various kinds of conditionals, meanings and types of adverbial conditional clauses in the language under study. We also discussed the relationship between conditionality and causation.

Keywords: conditional construction, kenyang language, counter-facts, irrealis.

INTRODUCTION

Conditional sentences are sentences expressing factual implications or hypothetical situations. This is a well established grammatical construction used cross linguistically. Kenyang like many other languages make use of these constructions. Nicole, (2017) presents the contrastive ways in which some linguist look at conditional constructions. He says that the extensive literature on conditionals, in English and other major European languages, Lycan, (2001) and Von Fintel (2011) looks at conditionals from a philosophical perspective, Dancygier&Sweetner(2005) from a cognitive linguistic perspective, and Evans & over(2004) and Girottoand Johnson –Laid (2004) from a psychological perspective). Nicole, (2017) also argues that So far, less work has been done on conditional constructions in other languages especially African languages. On the same line, he believes that although morphological and syntactic descriptions of conditional constructions exit for many languages, there are sometimes incomplete, and information about the distribution and functions of conditionals is often lacking. Dryers & Haspelmath(2013) say Even the excellent “World Atlas” of linguistic structure has no chapter’s features dealing specifically with functions of conditional constructions. Nicole, (2017) also say that in a conditional sentence, a typical subordinate clause, the protasis states some conditions, the truth of which is not asserted, under which another main clause (the apodosis) holds. Given the cross linguistic variation concerning which type of conditionals are overtly expressed , Comrie (1986:88-93), rejects attempts to distinguish discrete category of conditionals preferring instead to view different conditional sentences as falling along a continuum of hypothetical conditionals with reality conditional at a higher end and counte-facts conditionals at the extreme lower end. Which particular distinctions within continuum, if any are expressed linguistically varies from language to language. There is evident that the



Kenyang language distinguishes different degree of hypothetiality in ways that crosses out the distinctions between and within reality and unreality conditionals.

Eve Sweetser (1990) addresses the nature of the relationship between the two parts of the conditional construction. Sweetser distinguishes conditionals in 'content', 'epistemic' and 'speech act' domains. In the content domain conditional, the relationship between two states of affairs takes place in a socio-physical world and is essentially causal (If Mary goes, John will go). In the epistemic domain the construction links premises and conclusions in a world of reasoning (if she's divorced, (then) she's been married). He continues by saying that in the speech act domain, the *if*-clause justifies or explains the relevance of the speech act performed in the main clause (if I may say so, that's a crazy idea). We found practically no occurrences of the epistemic domain conditionals, the ones closest in usage to the formal logical *if*-then structure.

The Factual category broadly corresponds to what have often been called course of event, generic or habitual conditionals in other functional approaches (Athanasiadou & Dirven (1997); Ferguson (2001) and to the category of real conditions (present or past) often referred to in pedagogical grammars and manuals. However, the term 'Factual' seems particularly relevant to scientific discourse, where the facts of its statements about the natural world is established by observing regularities and correlations, and by carefully defining the conditions under which the facts hold. This paper is thus to give a more comprehensive description and analysis of conditional constructions , both in scope and depth of analysis in kenyang, a Bantu language spoken in the South west region of Cameroon. The Kenyang language has the SVO structure. We are going to achieve this by dividing our work into five parts. Part one deals with the introduction and generalities on conditional constructions as presented by different linguists. Part two dwells on collection. Part three deals with Conditionality and the types of Conditionals in Kenyang. Here we have presented the types of conditionals that exist in the language in question, and the relationship between conditionals and causation. Part four focuses on the adverbial conditional clauses. While part five which is the last part is the conclusion.

Data Collection

This research has been carried out on two dimensional bases: a research into universal grammar and a research into language grammar. The data for this paper was collected from relevant literature of the language and from discussions with the native speakers in addition to being one myself. Kenyang is a Niger-Congo language of the nyang group, spoken in Manyu division of the South West region of Cameroon. The data was first taken in the kenyang language , then a word for word translation was given to enable the understanding of the various components of the sentence , and finally a literal translation was given in the English language to enable nonnative speakers understand the meaning of the construction. The (IPA) International Phonetic Alphabet was used as the bases for transcription.



Conditionality and Types of conditionals in Kenyang Conditionality

The simplest sort of conditionality encountered in languages is hypotheticality, the “unweighted if relation”. Thus the examples below:

37a) mbaèkaà yī à è t^wòè máè tΣóèñ róèñ
Cond he s.m come I fut go
“if he comes, I will go”

b) mbaèkaà yī a´ Bìùklò róèñ mEΞ pu´ ró´η nõkwó
Cond he sm Neg go I neg go too
“if he dos’nt go, I won’t go either”

From the above sentences, we realize that there is nothing implied as to the outcome of the situation. In the first sentence the person may or may not go. All that is stated is that “my going is conditioned on his coming”.

Sentences which involve a universal quantifier in the first base are a base type conditional. Here we have sentences such as the example below.

c) yèntlìk mPoèk wòè ró´nó má tΣóèñ kaònsiì wòè
Where time you go I fut think you
“where ever you go, I will be thinking of you”

The universal quantifier may go on any element in the first base, so we can have sentences such as the one below.

a) yènttìuk mò-muè sá toÀ mbuè a nEM
Every man we sent past sm lost
“who ever we sent got lost”

Furthermore, another type of conditionality involves a temporal reference such as

e) wòè βóèñ βá tΣáè ñòkα p káà wóà tΣweùj
You have to give money before you enter
“you have to pay before you get in”

This can be called contingency

Conditionality and Causation

Causation differs from conditionality in that in causation there is a given which is the antecedent event. Coupled with the given and its consequence: something else is implied by the antecedent and that something else took place. Thus in the sentence below, we have.

37a) Anyiì à è róèp mbuè à è nyoàp nõdaòVàaò yī à è tΣaàj
Anyiù s.m stay past house because she s.m fear
“Anyiù stayed at home because she was afraid”

In the above sentence it is given that Anyi was afraid, and it is further attested that fear resulted in her staying home. A further variety of causation is circumstance. This is a relation which means “in the circumstance that.” Many languages distinguish circumstance from cause in their surface structure. The Kenyang language does not have this distinction.



Types of Conditionals in the Kenyang language

The Zero Conditional in Kenyang

Conditional Sentences in the Kenyang language like in the English language expresses general truth or situations in which one thing always causes another when you use a zero conditional, you are talking about a general truth rather than a specific instance of something. Consider the following

Mbaðkaà wòd ßiàkià soð mwáòt wòd nàòm
If you neg bath body you smell
“When you don’t bath you smell”

There are a couple of things to take note of in the above Sentences in which the zero Conditional is used. First, when using the Zero Conditional, the correct tense to use in both clauses is the Simple present tense. Note should also be taken that the present tense in Kenyang like in most African languages is the low tone. When we use the future tense the sentence become ungrammatical. Consider the example below

*Mbaðkaà wòd ßiàkià soð mwáòt wòd tsóñ-ó nàòm
If you neg bath body you fut s.m smell
“when you don’t bath you will smell”

Secondly notice that the “if and when” can be used interchangeably in these Zero conditional sentences. This is because the outcome will always be the same. So it does not matter if and when it happened.

First Conditional in Kenyang

First Conditional sentences are used to expressed situations in which the outcome is likely (but not guaranteed) to happen in the future. Look at the example below

Mbaðkaà wòd nyuò baßlà tsóñ wòd baàk árìòrìò
If you will drink medicine fut you be fine
“if you drink medicine ,you will be fine”

N/B We use the simple present tense in the if-clause and simple future tense in the if-clause and the Simple future tense in the main clause, that is, the clause that expresses the likely outcome. This is how we indicate that under a certain condition, (as expressed in the if-clause above) , a specific result will likely happen in the future. Examine some of the mistakes people make using the first conditional structure in the language under study

*Mbaðkaà tsóñ wòd nyuò baßlà tsóñ wòd baàk árìòrìò
if fut you drink medicine fut you be fine
“if you will drink medicines you will be fine”

Second conditional sentences in the Kenyang language are also useful for expressing out comes that are completely unrealistic or will not likely to happen in the future. Note should be taken that in this case the word /mbòd / is more appropriate Consider the examples bellow

Mbòd má mbòañ mbuà ñkaàp, mbu má stóðñ kuà àà chwìd
If I get past money past I fut +buy car
“If I had money I would buy a car”



Note should be taken that when applying the second conditional use the simple past tense in the if-clause

Second Conditioner in Kenyang

The second conditioner is used to refer to a time that is now or any time and a situation that is unreal. These sentences are not based on facts. These type two conditional is used to refer to a hypothetical condition and its probable results. In this type of conditional, the sentence the "if clause" uses the simple past and the main clause uses the present conditional. Let's look at the examples below

Mbòd wó ßurá kánòd àà yak mbuà wó ñámá ayaàk
If you sleep sleep s.m quik past you wake quik
"If you went to bed early you would get up early"

Mbòd manyáp a kwáná mbuà wòd nádràd
If rain s.m fall past you wet
"If it rained you would get wet"

The Third conditional in Kenyang

The third conditional sentences in the Kenyang are used to explain that present circumstances would be difficult if something different had happen in the past, look at the following examples

mbòd wòd @aàtià nya@aà mád áðßád wòd-ó yañ a rón mbuà mád twòd aàyaàk
if you tell past I that you want go past I come eaelly
"if you had told me that you wanted to go , I would have come earlier"

This sentence expresses a conditional that was likely enough, but did not actually happened in the past. The speaker in the sentence was capable of leaving early but did not. This is condition that was likely but regrettably did not happen. Note that when using the third conditional we use the past perfect or distant past that is, /nya@aà /In the if-clause. The modal auxiliary (would, could, should etc plus past participle in the main clause expresses the theoretical situation that could have happened. Note should be taken that this degree of conditional sentences, don't use a modal auxiliary verb in the if-clause. In the next section, we are going to discuss conditionality, and then conditionality.

Conditional Adverbial clauses

Conditional Adv-clauses are divided into two main types

- a- Irrealis conditionals and
- b- Counter-fact conditionals

Counter-fact conditionals

Unlike the IRR-conditionals, whose truth value is pending, the truth value of counter-fact conditional is firm-and negative. This conditional type involves states or events that could have or would have been true-if other states or events were true. But since those other states or events are in fact not true, then the conditional proposition is also not true. As illustration, consider the examples below.



mbó yí' a' rǐ' ñǐ' - mǔ' a' na' ña', a' kǐ' yó'
 If he S.m know s.m past S.m do it
 "If she had known, she would have done it".
 mbóò mè na' ña' - tèmèrí yí mbó mbú nè peme naô ne wúpsí
 if I past meet him like past life s.m is change
 "If I had met her, then, my life would have changed".
 mbóò Besong a à na' ña' ríñá yà mbó mbú nè peme niô ne wúpsí
 Con Beson sm past know sm past life s.m change
 "if Besong had known him his lie would have changed"

Counter-fact propositions need to be associated with conditional ADV-clauses. Thus consider

mbó mbú wɔ̀-ó' aɔ̀aati mè bè yìò á t'ɔ̀ mbu òfaj mbú ñ-kɔ̀ ñ bè ɔ̀ò yí'
 should past you tell I that you sm come past here+past like to see him
 "If you had told me that he was here ; I would have loved to see him"

mbó mbú eyong aɔ̀aati Ako bè ádtaah yìò á t'ɔ̀ mbu yà aò ñ-kɔ̀ ñ mbú bè ɔ̀ò
 if past eyong s.m tell Ako that father his s.m come past his s.m like past that see
 yí'
 him
 "If Eyong had told Ako that his father had come he would have loved to see him"

The specified function of counter-fact making combinations may vary from language to language depending on the available inflectional categories. Thus for example, Kenyang counter-fact conditionals employ the past-subjunctive as in

mbóì a' chí' mwèdɛ̀ wa' mbu' ñ chí' máɔ̀ák
 if 3rdp S.m is friend my past s.m is happy
 "If he were my friend, I would have been happy".
 mbóì a' yà aà chí' maà yaò mbu' ñ chí' máɔ̀ák
 con s.m he s.m mother+my past s.m is happy
 "If she was my mother I would have been happy"

Kenyang combine counter-fact conditionals, and also combine the past of "bèò" with the habitual/imperfective as in

mbóÀ yí á kǐ mbú ɔ̀...
 If he S.m do past it
 "If he had done it..."
 mbóÀ yí á nyàò mbú ɔ̀...
 con he s.m eat past it...
 "if he had eaten it ..."

Counter-factuality, like causality, also involves a given. Let us look at the sentence below.

mbo | yìù aè twòè mbuè, mbuà máè t'wòè ñk'wòè



Cond she s.m come past would I come too

“If he had come ; I would have come also”

mbo | yìù àè rón mbuè, mbuà màè ndón ñk^wòè

cond he s.m go past+past I go too

“ If he had gone , I would have gone also.”

The sentence above takes as its given “he didn’t come”. and “he didn’t go” It further expresses an implication, namely “my (possible) coming or going was conditioned on his coming or going”. With these two, we would have the meaning of causality rather than counter factuality. The distinctive feature of counter factuality is its double implication. Something further is implied in the above sentence, namely, “he didn’t come and because he didn’t come I didn’t come either.

Counter-factuality, like causality also involves a given. Let us look at the sentence below.

mbo | yìù àè twòè mbuè, mbuà màè t^wòè ñk^wòè

Cond she s.m come past would I come too

“If he had come ; I would have come also”

From the above sentences, we realize that there is nothing implied as to the outcome of the situation. In the first sentence the person may or may not go. All that is stated is that “my going is conditioned on his coming”.

IRREALIS Conditionals

Irrealis conditional clauses fall under the scope of the non-fact modality. Much like other Irrealis clauses, they have no “truth value”. Rather, their truth depends on the truth of their associated main clause which is typically Irrealis conditional clauses. Typically Irrealis conditional clauses have no implied futurity with the main clause itself-marked by either future or modal or some other Irrealis operator.

As illustrations consider the examples below

Modal

mba'⊗a wɔ̀-`òd náŋá ndu' mpók ó' sóÈt ènè

If you sm finish on time sm take this

“If you finish on time, you can have this”.

Agbor aà naàñaà nduà mpók a' sóÈt ènè

Agbor s.m finish on time s.m take this

“If Agbor finishes on time he can take this”

Future

mba'⊗a a' t^wɔ̀` tSɔ̀`ŋ wòd ñ-gɔ̀` yĩ'

if he come fut you see him



"If he comes you will see him"
 mba'⊗a máð t^w tS^h wóð ñ-g^h máð
 cond I come fut you see me
 " If I come you will see me"

Imperative 4.2.3

ó ηγό yī' ó' ñga'tī' yīð εβεδ γί að twóÈ
 sm see him s.m tell him that he sm come
 "If you see him, tell him that he should come".
 ó ηγό Bessem ó' ñga'tī' yīð εβεδ γί að dóàk
 cond Bessem s.m tell her that she s.m go
 " If you see Bessem, tell her that she should go"

Direct request

Mbá'⊗á yī' á t^w tS^h ñð- ñkóðñ be -rìòηlò
 If he s.m come fut I like to know
 "If he comes I will like to know"

Mbá'⊗á yī' á chĩa faà tS^h máð ñkóðñ be -rìòηlò
 Cond he s.m is here fut I like to know
 "If he is here I will to know"

In many languages, Irrealis conditionals are marked identically as irrealis, so that the slight difference between them is inferred from the context. Such an over lap is also possible in Kenyang as in the example below.

`naŋa ó t^w nè γ^h tS^h ñð- tS^è w^h ηkáp
 When sm come with it Fut I sm give you money
 "When you bring it, I will give you money".
 ó naŋá óð nyáð áðnáðñ tS^h ñð- tS^è w^h áchaàk
 when s.m eat this fut s.m give you another
 "When you eat this I will give you another"

Under a conditional interpretation of the example above, the speaker has a lower epistemic expectation concerning the eventual truth of the conditional clause. Under a temporal interpretation, the speaker presumably has a higher expectation. What the two interpretations share is the general logical structure of Irrealis conditions, one that stands at some variance from the deceptively similar logical connector. That is, the conditional involves a bi-conditional relation. These two are seen below.

Temporal

36) mpo'ko' ó t^w nè γ^h tS^h ñð tS^è wó ηkáp
 when sm come with it Fut I give you money
 "When you bring it, I will give you money"
 37) t^è w^h ó t^w nè γ^ó ñð pu' tS^è w^h ηkáp



until you sm come with it I neg give you money
 “Until you bring it, I will not give you money”

Conditional

mbáká wɔ̄ tʷɔ̄ nɛ yó' tSɔ̄ŋ ñò tS ɛÈ wó È nka'p
 If you come with it Fut I give you money
 “If you bring it, I will pay you”

mbáká wɔ̄ βl̄'kl̄' tʷɔ̄ n ɛ̄ yɔ̄ ñò pu' tS ɛÈ wóÈ nka'p
 if yo u neg come with it I neg pay you money
 “If you don't bring it, I won't pay you”

That is both the Irrealis “If” and “When” behave like bi-conditional connections allowing the interference.

Finally, it has been suggested (Haiman, 1978) that conditional clauses are topical, that is pragmatically presupposed in spite of having no truth value. The argument is probably applicable only to pre-posed conditionals.

CONCLUSION

We set out to discuss and analyze conditional constructions in the Kenyang language and we came out with the conclusion that there exist both the irrealis and the counter-fact conditionals. We presented detail maps of conditional constructions by discussing position of the if clause in a conditional construction. Under a conditional interpretation, the speaker has a lower epistemic expectation concerning the eventual truth, and under the temporal interpretation, the speaker presumably has a higher expectation. It is also important to note that irrealis conditionals have no true value and no implied futurity as far as the Kenyang languages is concern. On the other hand, counter-fact conditionals has its distinctive feature which is its double implication .We also looked at the relationship between conditionality and causation.

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