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# THE PRAGMATICS OF THE PAST: A NOVEL TYPOLOGY OF CONDITIONALS WITH PAST TENSES IN ANCIENT GREEK

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## 1. Towards a pragmatic typology of conditionals in Ancient Greek

Ever since the seminal dissertation by Wakker, our understanding of the pragmatics of conditionals in Ancient Greek has been greatly improved. Previous research typically proposed form-based classifications of the prototypical conditional structures in Ancient Greek and consequently divided them according to their chance of fulfilment, e.g., in terms of mood used.<sup>1</sup> By contrast, Wakker convincingly argued that conditionals should be distinguished on the basis of the type of relation that they specify with regard to their matrix clause:<sup>2</sup>

- (i) *if it rains, I'll take an umbrella* (“predicational”);
- (ii) *if my mother is not mistaken, John is at home* (“propositional”);
- (iii) *if you are thirsty, there is beer in the fridge* (“illocutionary”).<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> WAKKER 1994, 35–42. For an overview of the different theoretical approaches to conditionals, see WAKKER 2013.

<sup>2</sup> I use the term “matrix clause” here, since the matrix clause of a conditional sentence is not always the main clause itself.

<sup>3</sup> See WAKKER 2013 for a compact overview.

In the first type, the realisation of the matrix clause (= apodosis), henceforth called *q*, depends on the realisation of the conditional clause (= protasis), henceforth called *p*.<sup>4</sup> In the second, it is rather the truth of *q* that depends on *p*, instead of the actualisation of *q*. In the third type, the *p* clause formulates a condition of appropriateness or relevance for the utterance in the matrix clause. These three classes largely overlap with Sweetser's influential typology of conditionals into respectively *content*, *epistemic* and *speech act* conditionals.<sup>5</sup>

Ever since these important steps forward, very little research has concerned itself with the pragmatics of conditionals.<sup>6</sup> In fact, when one opens the section on conditionals in the *Cambridge Grammar of Classical Greek*, the classification that is given is one mainly based on the chance of fulfilment.<sup>7</sup> The authors do briefly allude to Wakker's model when they subsequently qualify that some conditional protases rather concern the *truth* or *relevance* of the apodosis,<sup>8</sup> but the classification of conditionals provided subsequently is mainly based on the chance of fulfilment. In addition, every section lists the mood combinations in each type (e.g., optative in conditional and matrix clause with potential conditions) after which a section follows on so-called mixed conditions within their classification.<sup>9</sup> Traditional classifications such as Goodwin's used the notion of temporal reference as a main guide for classification.<sup>10</sup>

In this paper, I argue that an extension of the pragmatic approach advocated by Wakker's work provides a more fruitful and even more economical way of describing conditionals in Ancient Greek. First of all, a focus on the pragmatic functions of conditionals takes into account

<sup>4</sup> For this convention, see WAKKER 1994, 24; DECLERCK – REED 2001, 10.

<sup>5</sup> See SWEETSER 1990, 113–121.

<sup>6</sup> One obvious exception is WAKKER 2006a; WAKKER 2006b.

<sup>7</sup> VAN EMDE BOAS et al. 2019, 550 (my emphasis): “Greek has a complex system of five basic types of conditional clauses: neutral, prospective, potential, counterfactual and habitual conditions. Each type expresses a different attitude of the speaker towards the likelihood of the condition in the protasis being fulfilled. Different moods and tenses are used in each of the different types.”

<sup>8</sup> Ibid. 551.

<sup>9</sup> Similar to the list of mixed constructions list found in GOODWIN 1889, 188–195.

<sup>10</sup> E.g., future-referring conditional or not, *ibid.* 139.

both the linguistic and the non-linguistic context rather than just form or temporal reference. Second, pragmatic types of conditionals cover multiple formal variations which despite the formal variation have a similar pragmatic function. As such, the pragmatic approach provides a more economic descriptive apparatus. Third, the same pragmatic types can have multiple different temporal references, as shown by the overview in Table 1 below. Even Wakker's pragmatic model cannot capture these different pragmatic types. To substantiate these three points, I therefore analyse the pragmatic functions of conditionals with past tenses in the protasis and propose a novel typology. Despite the formally stable past tense in the protasis, these conditionals have different pragmatic functions, different temporal references and different formal variations in the matrix clause even with the same function (e.g., direct inferential of past protasis with a potential optative in the matrix clause).

To find parameters to classify conditionals in Ancient Greek, we should make use of more recent advances on conditionals in general linguistics. First, the role of the order of  $p$  and  $q$  should be taken into account, since a more standard order such as  $p, q$  is open to a wider array of pragmatic usages than  $q, p$ ,<sup>11</sup> which, for example, can be used for so-called "metatextual" conditionals that reflect on what has just been said (e.g., *he trapped two mongeese, if mongeese is the right form*).<sup>12</sup> I use arrows to indicate the *pragmatic* direction of the conditional protasis to apodosis or vice versa, indicating the pragmatic relationship between them, as explained in the sections below. Second, the function of the past tenses in past conditionals (esp. counterfactual) has been re-evaluated. Whereas previous studies in what may be called a conceptualist approach<sup>13</sup> saw the role of the past in counterfactual conditionals as indicating distance from reality, a more pragmatically oriented approach has recently argued the reverse: the reason that the past is typically knowable is why it is used to

<sup>11</sup> DANCYGIER 2006, 145–153.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid. 103–109.

<sup>13</sup> The conceptualist approach (e.g., JAMES 1982; FLEISCHMAN 1987), is used by Cognitive Grammar (see LANGACKER 1995). For this idea applied to counterfactual past tenses in Ancient Greek, see ALLAN 2013, 35.

Table 1: Pragmatic typology of conditionals with past tenses

Conditional type	Pragmatic relationship	Order(s)	Illocution	Temporal range	Formal correlations
Predictive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>causality</li> <li>sequentiality</li> </ul>	$p \rightarrow q$ $q \leftarrow p$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>declarative</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>past, present, future</li> <li>CF past, present, future</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>attitudinal adverbs</li> <li>negation of <math>p</math></li> </ul>
Direct inferential	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>non-causality</li> <li>non-sequentiality</li> </ul>	$p \rightarrow q$ $q \leftarrow p$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>declarative</li> <li>interrogative</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>past, present</li> <li>CF past, present</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>argumentative expressions</li> <li>negation of <math>p</math></li> <li>indicative or (CF) optative mood in <math>q</math></li> </ul>
Indirect inferential	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>non-causality</li> <li>non-sequentiality</li> <li>contradictory or counterfactual implicature</li> </ul>	$p \leftarrow q$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>declarative</li> <li>assertoric wh-question</li> <li>assertoric yes-no question</li> <li>assertoric open question</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>past, present</li> <li>CF past, present</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>negation of <math>q</math></li> <li>contrastive vocabulary</li> <li>indicative or optative mood in <math>q</math></li> </ul>
Illocutionary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>condition of appropriateness or relevance for speech act in <math>q</math></li> </ul>	$p \rightarrow q$ $q \leftarrow p$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>directive</li> <li>performative</li> <li>declarative</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>past, present</li> <li>CF present, future</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>evaluative vocabulary</li> <li>form with directive force</li> <li>performative verb</li> </ul>
Metalinguistic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>comment on how <math>q</math> is said</li> </ul>	$q \leftarrow p$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>declarative</li> <li>interrogative</li> <li>exclamative</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>past</li> <li>CF present</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>negation of <math>p</math></li> <li>πίστε (if ever...)</li> </ul>
Generic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>generic past situations as frame for habitual <math>q</math></li> </ul>	$p \rightarrow q$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>declarative</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>past</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>habitual in <math>q</math> (e.g., past+<math>\acute{\alpha}\nu</math>)</li> </ul>

express counterfactual states of affairs, since the speaker and hearer will realise that the presented past scenario was unrealisable.<sup>14</sup> Thus, the past rather signifies closeness to reality or epistemic proximity. This pragmatic understanding of the past better explains why we find past conditionals being used in various types of inferential conditionals (see section 3) to reason about evidence available to speaker and hearer.<sup>15</sup> Third, I incorporate distinctions from recent more elaborate typologies of conditionals<sup>16</sup> such as types of inferential conditionals, the different implicatures that are generated and the role of the illocutionary force of the *q* clause. In this way we can identify types more accurately in terms of pragmatic criteria which cover formal and functional variation. Of course, we should still aim to maintain a balance between maximalist and minimalist description and not lean towards a too maximalist description,<sup>17</sup> but instead define macro-types based on clear linguistic criteria where sub-types may serve further interpretational purposes.<sup>18</sup> I return to this theoretical matter in the concluding remarks where I suggest how we could apply this typology to conditionals in Ancient Greek more generally.

Now, the typology that I develop in this paper is conceived with a distinct pragmatic angle, meaning that pragmatic value (e.g., function, implicature, illocutionary force) rather than morphosyntactic form (e.g., tense, mood) determines the classification of Ancient Greek conditionals. The most important motivation for this approach is that, as I show, pragmatic usages cut across potential possible world distinctions based on formal marking. This is for example demonstrated by past tenses which are used counterfactually<sup>19</sup> but have different pragmatic usages, e.g., predictive

<sup>14</sup> DAHL 1997; ZIEGLER 2000; VAN LINDEN – VERSTRAETE 2008, 1879.

<sup>15</sup> Of course, the (counterfactual) past is also used for politeness. I return to this matter below.

<sup>16</sup> E.g., DECLERCK – REED 2001.

<sup>17</sup> For example, the elaborate typology by DECLERCK – REED 2001 can be viewed as too maximalist, since they further distinguish many pragmatic subtypes which they also divide according their possible world distinctions.

<sup>18</sup> LA ROI 2021 applies this principle to insubordination in the history of Ancient Greek.

<sup>19</sup> A sentence or clause is generally called contrary-to-fact or counterfactual when it is implied or assumed by the speaker that what is said does not hold in the actual world (cf. DECLERCK – REED 2001, 7; DANCYGIER 2006, 25).

and (direct and indirect) inferential. Thus, conditionals with past tenses are a welcome test-case for a broader pragmatic approach to classifying conditionals. After pragmatic classification, I contrast formal and semantic factors to the pragmatic types such as the order of  $p$  and  $q$ ,<sup>20</sup> temporal reference of the verb, adverbs, mood and negation. In addition, the typology proposed in this paper has a diachronic dimension which, for example, accounts for changes in temporal references of counterfactual past tenses from the past to the non-past. Earlier classifications mention such diachronic differences between Archaic and Classical Greek conditionals only as peculiarities which are filtered out in Classical Greek.<sup>21</sup> By contrast, I analyse these peculiarities from a pragmatic perspective and explain their diachronic relevance to the replacement of counterfactual optatives and the so-called “iterative” optative by the past indicative.<sup>22</sup>

This paper is organised in the following way. Sections 2 to 6 introduce and describe the different pragmatic types of conditionals with past tenses: predictive (2), direct and indirect inferential (3), illocutionary (4), metalinguistic (5), and generic (6). Every section first introduces the pragmatic type by clarifying the label, detailing its distinctive characteristics and offering a qualitative analysis of examples. I also note how these constructions are classified in existing grammars and existing typologies of conditionals such as those by Sweetser, Wakker, Declerck and Reed, and Dancygier.<sup>23</sup> The choice of a label was determined by its transparency in function as well as its representation in existing linguistic literature. Within each section, I repeat the relevant part of Table 1 for purposes of clarity. Section 7 presents concluding remarks and offers future avenues of research.

<sup>20</sup> For discussion of the order of  $p$  and  $q$  and statistics, see WAKKER 1994, 57–103.

<sup>21</sup> E.g., WAKKER 1994, 205–214. LA ROI 2022b provides a diachronic analysis for Archaic and Classical Greek.

<sup>22</sup> Two diachronic aspects which are beyond the scope of this paper are (i) the insubordinate uses of conditional clauses (e.g., previously subordinate conditional clauses as pragmatically independent wish or directive clauses), for which see LA ROI 2021, and (ii) the diachronic distribution of aspect and temporal reference in counterfactuals, for which see now LA ROI 2022b.

<sup>23</sup> SWEETSER 1990; WAKKER 1994; DECLERCK – REED 2001; DANCYGIER 2006.



The typology proposed in this paper is based on a corpus-based analysis of conditionals with past tenses in both Archaic and Classical Greek: 99 from Archaic Greek and 874 from Classical Greek, of which, respectively, 95 and 592 were counterfactual. The examples were collected using the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* (TLG) and are represented as they are found there.<sup>24</sup> The corpus covers Archaic Greek (Homer, Hesiod's *Works and Days* and *Theogony* and the Homeric Hymns) and Classical Greek (the non-fragmentary works by Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides and Aristophanes, the histories of Thucydides, Herodotus and Xenophon, the authentic works of Plato and the orators from which we possess the largest amount of speeches, viz. Lysias, Isocrates, Isaeus and Demosthenes).

## 2. Predictive conditionals with past tenses

Predictive conditionals make a *prediction of actualisation* of the *q* clause, implying that if *p* is realised *q* will be realised,<sup>25</sup> e.g., (i) *if it rains, the match will be cancelled*, (ii) *if it rained, the match would be cancelled*, (iii) *if it had rained, the match would have been cancelled*.<sup>26</sup> In other words, there is a causality between the actualisation of the events expressed in the conditional and the matrix clause, viz. *p* and *q*. This causality is absent for other conditional types such as *inferential* conditionals (i.e., deduce the truth of a state of affairs from another one, e.g., *if my mother is not mistaken*,

<sup>24</sup> See <http://stephanus.tlg.uci.edu/>. In particular, I refer to the specific line numbers as they are given in the editions in the TLG, following customary practice in Ancient Greek linguistics. The data stem from collocation searches within a set distance (i.e., conditional subordinator and past indicative seven words apart) and subsequently sifting through all the cases. Therefore, I cannot claim to be exhaustive for Classical Greek in its entirety. However, due to my large corpus and broad distance parameters it is expected to cover at least the vast majority of the examples in Classical Greek.

<sup>25</sup> DANCYGIER 2006, 25–61.

<sup>26</sup> The reason that I chose the term “predictive” over “predicational” (WAKKER 1994) and “content” (SWEETSER 1990), is that (1) “predictive” is more intuitive in providing the association of causality and sequentiality that predictive conditionals display, and (2) is not closely associated with one linguistic framework as for example “predicational” is with Functional Grammar.

*John is at home or John is at home, if my mother is not mistaken*).<sup>27</sup> In addition, predictive conditionals display temporal sequentiality, meaning that the temporal relationship between  $p$  and  $q$  is presented as *iconic* of the temporal order of events.<sup>28</sup> As a result, the temporal reference<sup>29</sup> of predictive conditionals are broad, since their  $q$  can follow in the past, present or future. Yet, the main internal distinction of predictive conditionals with past tenses, as shown in Table 2 below, is whether they are counterfactual or not, which is why I will first illustrate predictive conditionals that concern the actual world (A) before I turn to counterfactual predictive conditionals (B).

Table 2: Predictive conditionals with past tenses

Pragmatic relationship	Order	Illocution	Temporal range	Formal correlations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• causality</li> <li>• sequentiality</li> </ul>	$p \rightarrow q$ $q \leftarrow p$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• declarative</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• past, present, future</li> <li>• CF past, present, future</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• attitudinal adverbs</li> <li>• negation of <math>p</math></li> </ul>

(A) In the first example, the prediction of actualisation holds between something which happened in the past and what will therefore happen in the future, i.e., Hector predicts that Achilles having left his former hiding place by the ships will lead to his doom (*ἀλγιον ... ἔσσειται*). I use underlining to emphasise the conditional structure in the protasis and apodosis, and italics to highlight relevant contextual elements.

<sup>27</sup> With inferential conditionals one might only speak of causality in an epistemic sense, for example that the knowledge of  $p$  guarantees the knowledge of  $q$  or the reverse. See DANCYGIER 2006, 87.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid. 73.

<sup>29</sup> Following BERTINETTO – DELFITTO 2000, 190–191, I distinguish between tense, aspect and actionality in order not to confuse the layers of interpretation. These domains crucially need to be kept separate to describe counterfactuals, since counterfactuals may be in the past tense with a perfective aspect but refer to the present (cf. the present-referring aorist discussed by WAKKER 1994, 132–133), thus going against expected past temporal reference for the combination of past tense and perfective aspect, LA ROI 2022b.

- (1) εἰ δ' ἔτεόν παρὰ ναῦφιν ἀνέστη δῖος Ἀχιλλεύς,  
 ἄλγιον αἶ κ' ἐθέλησι τῷ ἕσσεται. οὐ μιν ἔγωγε  
 φεύξομαι ἐκ πολέμοιο δυσηχέος, ἀλλὰ μάλ' ἄντην  
 στήσομαι, ἧ κε φέρησι μέγα κράτος, ἧ κε φεροίμην  
 “But if in truth noble Achilles has roused himself to action by the ships,  
 the worse will it be for him, if he is so minded. I certainly will not flee  
 from him out of dolorous war, but face to face will I stand against him,  
 whether he will win great victory, or perhaps I.”  
 (HOMERUS, *Ilias*, XVII,305–309 / transl. Murray & Wyatt)<sup>30</sup>

In my view, ἔτεόν is here inserted by Hector to mark his scepticism about Achilles having left his hiding place. At the same time, he still predicts future doom which underlines his confidence: Hector will cause Achilles' future doom regardless of whether he actually came to action now. After all, as argued by Wakker,<sup>31</sup> such attitudinal adverbs with the indicative highlight the scepticism that conditionals with the indicative can express, since the indicative marks the reality of the state of affairs as indeterminate rather than a type of factuality. Also, conditionals with the indicative are often used in a resumptive way, taking up what the speaker has been told – as in example (1) – without indicating responsibility for its truth. Examples with the same sequential causal relationship but with the reverse order also exist, for which see example (2). Similarly to the first example, Hector here confidently addresses his fellow fighters and predicts victory. I give the preceding sentence in translation as context to make interpretation for the reader easier.

- (2) ἀλλ' οἴω χάσσονται ὑπ' ἔγχεος, εἰ ἔτεόν με  
 ὄρσε θεῶν ὄριστος, ἐρίγδουπος πόσις Ἥρης.  
 “[Not for long will the Achaeans hold me back, though they have  
 arrayed themselves like a wall;] but I think they will give ground before

<sup>30</sup> The Greek texts in this paper are taken from TLG (cf. n. 24 above). The English texts are taken from the Loeb translations, available via <https://www.loebclassics.com/>. I give the names of the translators in brackets following the translation. On the rare occasions where I had to adapt the translation because it was too free, I have added an asterisk after the name of the author to indicate that the original translation has been slightly altered.

<sup>31</sup> WAKKER 1994, 127–128.

my spear if truly the highest of gods has urged me on, the loud-thundering lord of Hera.”

(HOMERUS, *Ilias*, XIII,153–154 / transl. Murray & Wyatt)

(B) The remaining predictive conditionals with past tenses are counterfactual. The counterfactuality of such sentences is typically made explicit by the presence of the modal particle in the apodosis (combined with a counterfactual optative or indicative in Archaic Greek, and indicative in Classical Greek).<sup>32</sup> They are more frequent than the non-counterfactual predictive conditionals with past tenses just discussed: they make up 58% of Classical Greek counterfactual conditionals (344 out of 592). States of affairs are counterfactual when the condition for realisation is deemed unrealisable or false by the speaker for the past, present or future. Counterfactual conditional sentences can refer to the past, present or future, and present an intimate relationship between two unrealisable events, i.e., the states of affairs in the *p* and *q* clause. Although counterfactual state of affairs often concerns events which did not happen (i.e., unrealised past events), they can refer to events which from a logical perspective are realisable in that they follow the moment of speaking, but from the speaker’s perspective counterfactual, e.g., uttered in the morning *I wish she was coming round tonight*. The point of entertaining counterfactual worlds is to stress that they are unrealisable at the moment concerned according to the speaker, e.g., *I wish she were coming round* = this unfortunately cannot be realised now, or *if he had come tomorrow instead of today, he would have found me at home* = this cannot be realised in the future according to the speaker. In other words, counterfactuals entertain lost possibilities,<sup>33</sup>

<sup>32</sup> An exception to this rule is provided by the use of counterfactual modal verbs in the matrix clause, e.g., the following indirect inferential:  $\chi\rho\eta\nu$  σ’, εἴπερ ἦσθα μὴ κακός, πείσαντά με γαμείν γάμον τόνδ’, ἀλλὰ μὴ σιγήῃ φίλων – “if you were not a knave, you ought to have gained my consent before making this marriage, not done it behind your family’s back” (EURIPIDES, *Medea*, 585–586 / transl. Kovacs). Medea is implying that Jason is a knave, since he clearly did not gain consent.

<sup>33</sup> The French term *possibilité perdue* seems particularly apt, cf. WAKKER 1994, 45 and 132 with further references.

even when it is only the speaker who is making it out to be a counterfactual state of affairs.<sup>34</sup>

The source for the counterfactuality of the conditional is often in the common ground,<sup>35</sup> which comprises “the sum of [interlocutors’] mutual, common or joint knowledge beliefs, and suppositions”.<sup>36</sup> With counterfactual conditionals, the source of counterfactuality is prototypically based on either personal linguistic common ground or (less often) communal common ground meaning that the state of affairs in the conditional conflicts with what both speakers acknowledge to be true. This conflict generates the polarity reversal expressed by counterfactual constructions, giving positive sentences a negative force and a negative sentence a positive force – contrast examples (3) and (4). For this reason, contrary-to-fact is somewhat of a misnomer, since counterfactuals concern what is deemed counterfactual rather than what is logically contrary to reality.<sup>37</sup>

In example (3), the peasant utters words about Electra knowing well that he is not that man of standing (ἀξιῶμι ἔχων ἀνήρ) and therefore undeserving of Electra. As a result, there was no punishment for the murder of Agamemnon in the past (τότε), since Electra did not marry a man of standing in the past. The negative implicature from the past-referring counterfactual conditional clause is transferred to the past-referring counterfactual in the main clause.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>34</sup> E.g., an indirect inferential counterfactual: *if I were guilty, they would have charged me now* = “having charged me” is false according to the speaker and therefore “me being guilty” is also false.

<sup>35</sup> Of course, common ground is not only relevant to counterfactual predictive conditionals, as communal common ground codetermines whether a causal relation holds between *p* and *q* in non-counterfactual conditionals or linguistic common ground is often the source for *p* from which inferential conditionals deduce *q*.

<sup>36</sup> CLARK 1996, 96. Earlier applications of common ground to other domains of Ancient Greek such as particles and moods are THIJS 2017; LA ROI 2020a; LA ROI 2022a; ALLAN 2021.

<sup>37</sup> Cf. the useful discussion of this term by VAN EMDE BOAS et al. 2019, 443.

<sup>38</sup> For this implicature transfer, see WAKKER 1994, 301; DECLERCK – REED 2001, 107–108.

- (3) εἰ γάρ νιν ἔσχεν ἀξίωμ' ἔχων ἀνήρ,  
 εὔδοντ' ἄν ἐξήγειρε τὸν Ἀγαμέμνωνος  
 φόνον δίκη τ' ἄν ἦλθεν Αἰγίσθωι τότε.  
 “For if a man of standing had married her, he would have awakened  
 from its slumber the murder of Agamemnon, and punishment might  
have come thereafter to Aegisthus.”  
 (EURIPIDES, *Electra*, 39–41 / transl. Kovacs)

With a negation,<sup>39</sup> such as in example (4), the implication has the reverse effect. With the negated past counterfactual conditional the narrator implies that nightfall did stop the Persians with the result that they left some Magoi alive. Thus, due to the inherent polarity reversal of counterfactuals, negated counterfactual conditionals imply the opposite of the negated affairs that they mark.<sup>40</sup>

- (4) εἰ δὲ μὴ νύξ ἐπελθοῦσα ἔσχε, ἔλιπον ἄν οὐδένα μάγον  
 “and if nightfall had not stayed them [*scil.* the Persians], they would not  
have left one Magus alive”  
 (HERODOTUS, *Historiae*, III,79,11–12 / transl. Godley)

While such past counterfactuals depend on knowledge accepted as true in the common ground, they still display a degree of subjectivity because these conditional structures assign a causal relationship between two state of affairs which either were not realised or could not have taken place. In other words, the supposedly accepted causal link between two counterfactual events can be abused for rhetorical purposes: both events were unrealisable and therefore are, at least to some extent, a source of uncheckable evidence for hearers. To illustrate, in example (4) it could be said that the prediction of causality between nightfall and the Persians' actions is primarily a subjective view of the speaker, i.e., the narrator.

<sup>39</sup> See MUCHNOVÁ 2016 for an overview of Ancient Greek negation.

<sup>40</sup> Cf. DECLERCK – REED 2001, 107–108. In technical terms, counterfactuals display polarity symmetry because positive counterfactuals have a negative and negative counterfactuals have a positive interpretation, see LA ROI forthcoming.

Therefore, the supposed common ground link between the two counterfactual events is abused for the rhetorical purpose of the narrator.<sup>41</sup>

Predictive counterfactual conditionals can also predict something for the present. In the next example the nurse apologises to Phaedra for not having been able to find the right solution for her malady. She then extrapolates that if she would in fact have found a solution in the past (ἔπραξα), she would now be numbered among the wise (ἄν ᾗ). In other words, a counterfactual past is used to project a counterfactual present outcome.

- (5) εἰ δ' εὔ γ' ἔπραξα, κάρτ' ἄν ἐν σοφοῖσιν ᾗ  
 “But if I had had success, I would be numbered among the very wise.”  
 (EURIPIDES, *Hippolytus*, 699-700 / transl. Kovacs\*)

Keen observers will also note that the tense-aspect of the counterfactual past tenses here follows the often heard axiom of aorists being used for past counterfactuals and imperfects for present counterfactuals. However, this is an incorrect generalisation: both counterfactual past and presents occur with the aorist, imperfect and the pluperfect in Classical Greek.<sup>42</sup>

Finally, predictive conditionals can in fact also refer to a counterfactual future, although more rarely. The existence of counterfactual futures is somewhat debated, since some linguists have contended that the fact that the future is inherently unknowable would make it impossible to produce counterfactual predictions for the future.<sup>43</sup> As often in linguistics, such a logical view of language does not do justice to its rich

<sup>41</sup> See for background on narrators in Ancient Greek literature, DE JONG - BOWIE - NÜNLIST 2004.

<sup>42</sup> Cf. WAKKER 1994, 146-150; and now LA ROI 2022b with more corpus data. This incorrect generalization still resurfaces in general linguistic descriptions of the Ancient Greek data, e.g., BECK - MALAMUD - OSADCHA 2012; YONG 2018, 190.

<sup>43</sup> E.g., PATARD 2019, 180. See the discussion by DECLERCK - REED 2001, 179-182. By contrast, WAKKER 1994, 158, n. 72 summarises it concisely: “There may be philosophical objections to equating future time and counterfactuality, since, in an absolute sense, it may be impossible to utter any prediction in the knowledge that it will prove false (counterfactual). But what matters for language (and the particular means of expression selected) is the speaker’s presupposition at the time of utterance.”

possibilities.<sup>44</sup> Speakers can feel confident enough to make predictions for the counterfactual future, for example: *If you had come tomorrow instead of today, you would have found me at home.*<sup>45</sup> As noted by Declerck and Reed, counterfactuals for the future depend on the certainty of a plan or arrangement for the future.<sup>46</sup>

Consequently, future counterfactuals typically need clear contextual anchors which allow a speaker to make a confident counterfactual prediction for something to extend into the future. In general, such examples are very rare in Classical Greek sentences.<sup>47</sup> In conditionals, they are only expressed by using the past future auxiliary μέλλω.<sup>48</sup> In example (6), we find a counterfactual future expressed by ἔμελλον διαγνώσασθαι, “was to make a decision”. The counterfactuality of this phrase is signalled by εἰ ... ἄλλοι τινές, “if another court”, since it is the current court which has the set arrangement to pass judgment. In other words, the conditional expresses a counterfactual future where another court would pass judgment.

- (6) εἰ μὲν οὖν ἄλλοι τινές ἔμελλον περὶ ἐμοῦ διαγνώσασθαι, σφόδρα ἂν ἐφοβούμην τὸν κίνδυνον.  
 “Now if it were any other court that was to make a decision upon me, I should be terrified by the danger.”  
 (LYSIAS, *Orationes*, 3,2,1-2 / transl. Lamb)

<sup>44</sup> The same logical thinking has affected how linguists have dealt with the category of future marking, cf. MARKOPOULOS 2009, 8-10.

<sup>45</sup> DAHL 1997, 106-107; DECLERCK - REED 2001, 99.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid. 181: “That #P may be a present intention, plan, programme, arrangement or agreement about the future or another proposition describing the actual world, like the expression of a permanent habit or other kind of state.”

<sup>47</sup> Cf. the future referring imperfect indicative ἔζων with ἂν which expresses an atelic state of affairs: καὶ γὰρ τ’ ἂν ἔζων καὶ σὺ τὸν λοιπὸν χρόνον - “you and I would live the remainder of our lives together” (EURIPIDES, *Alcestis*, 295 / Kovacs); LA ROI 2022b.

<sup>48</sup> Another example is LYSIAS, *Orationes*, 7,16,2. For the arrangement use of μέλλω in the past tense, cf. ALLAN 2017b, 62, n. 37.



### 3. Direct and indirect inferential conditionals with past tenses

#### 3.1. Classifying inferential conditionals with past tenses

Inferential conditionals<sup>49</sup> distinguish themselves from predictive conditionals in that they express non-sequential and non-causal relations with the *q* clause. They operate on the epistemic plane between *p* and *q*.<sup>50</sup> They can be subdivided into (i) direct and (ii) indirect inferential conditionals, the difference being in their (partially implicit) argumentative structure:

- (i) if *p* true, then *q* must be true = direct inferential  
(e.g., *If my mum is not mistaken, my dad is at home.*)
- (ii) if *p*, then *q*; *q* is true, then *p* must be true = indirect inferential  
(e.g., *If you earned as much as you claim you do, you would not go around in that old car.*)<sup>51</sup>

Thus, direct inferential conditionals use the truth of *p* to prove *q*, whereas indirect inferential conditionals use the truth of *q* to prove *p*. Both types share that they are a means for speakers to specify the evidential source of their information and avoid part of the Gricean maxim of quality, namely to not say things for which they lack adequate evidence.<sup>52</sup>

In contrast to Wakker's model where these types fall under the broader type of propositional conditionals, I distinguish these two main subtypes. I also take into account a number of new factors to identify the different subtypes of inferential conditionals: (1) the role of the illocutionary force of the *q* clause (e.g., declaratives versus various types of rhetorical questions); (2) the type of implicature generated by the *p, q* combination

<sup>49</sup> DECLERCK - REED 2001, 42-44.

<sup>50</sup> SWEETSER 1990 calls these conditionals "epistemic conditionals", whereas WAKKER 1994 calls this type "propositional conditionals". I distinguish new subtypes (direct versus indirect inferential conditionals) and take into account more pragmatic factors (e.g., implicature, illocutionary force) than has been done.

<sup>51</sup> DAHL 1997, 109.

<sup>52</sup> See WAKKER 1994, 229.

(e.g., contradictory versus counterfactual); (3) the variation of order of  $p$  and  $q$ ; (4) the temporal reference range; (5) mood; and (6) negation.

### 3.2. Direct inferential conditionals with past tenses

As for predictive conditionals, the class of direct inferential conditionals with past tenses are (A) non-counterfactual or (B) counterfactual. Most commonly, direct inferential conditionals use evidence from the past to argue for the truth of something in the past - see the non-counterfactual examples (7), (8) and (9). In contrast to indirect inferential conditionals, I found that direct inferential conditionals occur especially with  $q$  clauses that have a declarative illocutionary force and only rarely with a  $q$  with interrogative illocutionary force.<sup>53</sup> Table 3 summarises the features:

Table 3: Direct inferential conditionals with past tenses

Pragmatic relationship	Order	Illocution	Temporal range	Formal correlations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• non-causality</li> <li>• non-sequentiality</li> </ul>	$p \rightarrow q$ $q \leftarrow p$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• declarative</li> <li>• interrogative</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• past, present</li> <li>• CF past, present</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• argumentative expressions</li> <li>• negation of <math>p</math></li> <li>• indicative or (CF) optative mood in <math>q</math></li> </ul>

(A) The argumentative goal of non-counterfactual ones may be signalled explicitly by argumentative expressions in the protasis, e.g., τοίνυν in example (8) or γάρ in example (9), or in the apodosis, e.g., δῆλον ὅτι in example (7) or εἰκόσ ἦν.<sup>54</sup> In example (7), the speaker uses Onetor's own past actions to cast doubt on his sincerity and to imply that it was his plan all along to commit fraud.

<sup>53</sup> Counterfactual of the type *Why would he have done that, if he did not need the money?*, cf. LYSIAS, *Orationes*, 7,16; or HOMERUS, *Ilias*, XXII,202.

<sup>54</sup> Other examples of this type are LYSIAS, *Orationes*, 3,42,8; 8,11,2; 12,57,4; DEMOSTHENES, *Orationes*, 19,42,2; 45,13,4; 57,14,7; PLATO, *Gorgias*, 514c4; or *Respublica*, 408c2.

- (7) καὶ τί ποιεῖ; τοὺς ὄρους ἀπὸ τῆς οἰκίας ἀφαιρεῖ, καὶ τάλαντον μόνον εἶναι τὴν προῖκά φησιν, ἐν ᾧ τὸ χωρίον ἀποτετιμῆσθαι. καίτοι δῆλον ὅτι τοὺς ἐπὶ τῆς οἰκίας ὄρους εἰ δικάως ἔθηκεν καὶ ὄντως ἀληθεῖς, δικάως καὶ τοὺς ἐπὶ τοῦ χωρίου τέθηκεν.  
 “What, then, does he do? He removes the pillars from the house, and declares that the marriage portion was a talent only, which sum was guaranteed by a mortgage on the land. Yet, if the inscription on the house was set up by him in fairness and sincerity, *it is plain that* the one on the land was also set up with fairness.”  
 (DEMOSTHENES, *Orationes*, 31,3,1-5 / transl. Murray\*)

In example (8) Herodotus argues that we can deduce what the Attic nation must have done with its language from its past predecessors.

- (8) εἰ τοίνυν ἦν καὶ πᾶν τοιοῦτο τὸ Πελασγικόν, τὸ Ἄττικόν ἔθνος ἐδὸν Πελασγικὸν ἅμα τῇ μεταβολῇ τῇ ἐς Ἑλληνας καὶ τὴν γλῶσσαν μετέμαθε.  
 “If then all the Pelasgian stock so spoke (*scil.* a language which was not Greek), then the Attic nation, being of Pelasgian blood, must have changed its language too at the time when it became part of the Hellenes.”  
 (HERODOTUS, *Historiae*, I,57,9-12 / transl. Godley)

Such direct inferential conditionals may also be used to refute a competing version of past events, esp. in Classical Greek rhetoric. In example (9), the speaker refutes the claim by Apollodorus that Phormio would have illegitimately obtained an agreement with Apollodorus’ deceased father.

- (9) ὅτε γὰρ τὰ μητρῶα πρὸς μέρος ἠξίους νέμεσθαι, ὄντων παίδων ἐκ τῆς γυναικὸς Φορμίῳνι τουτῶί, τόθ’ ὀμολόγεις κυρίως δόντος τοῦ πατρὸς τοῦ σοῦ κατὰ τοὺς νόμους αὐτὴν γεγαμησθαι. εἰ γὰρ αὐτὴν εἶχε λαβῶν ἀδίκως ὅδε μηδεὸς δόντος, οὐκ ἦσαν οἱ παῖδες κληρονόμοι, τοῖς δὲ μὴ κληρονόμοις οὐκ ἦν μετουσία τῶν ὄντων.  
 “For when you claimed the right to distribute your mother’s estate share by share - and she had left children by the defendant, Phormio - you then acknowledged that your father had given her with full right, and that she had been married in accordance with the laws. For if Phormio had taken her to wife wrongfully, and no one had given her - then the

children were *not* heirs, and if they were not heirs they had *no* right of sharing in the property.”

(DEMOSTHENES, *Orationes*, 36,32,4–10 / transl. Murray)

In addition to direct inferentials situated in the past, we also find direct inferential conditionals that use past evidence as source of evidence for the present.<sup>55</sup> Crucially, the mood of the matrix clause can be both the present indicative and potential optative, cf. examples (10) – ἔστιν being conventionally implicit with δηλον ὅτι – and (11). Note that mood-based classifications could not accommodate such examples in their classification, but a pragmatically oriented classification can. The argumentative function of the past conditional clause is signalled partially by ὀρθῶς, “correctly”, and δηλον ὅτι, “clear that”.<sup>56</sup>

(10) εἰ γὰρ ὀρθῶς ἐλέγομεν ἄρτι, καὶ τῷ ὄντι θεοῖσι μὲν ἄχρηστον ψευδός, ἀνθρώποις δὲ χρήσιμον ὡς ἐν φαρμάκου εἶδει, δηλον ὅτι τό γε τοιοῦτον ἰατροῖς δοτέον, ιδιώταις δὲ οὐχ ἀπτέον.

“If we were right in what we were saying just now and falsehood really is of no use to the gods, although it is to men in the form of medicine, then *it is clear* that as such we should sanction it for doctors, but laymen should not touch it.”

(PLATO, *Respublica*, 389b2–6 / transl. Emlyn-Jones & Freddy\*)

In example (11), Cleon summarises his reasoning on why the Athenians should uphold their previous decisions about the Mytilenians.

<sup>55</sup> Cf. WAKKER 1994, 230, n. 9, who gives some examples of this type. Other examples are THUCYDIDES, *Historiae*, I,86,1; PLATO, *Respublica*, 389b2; LYSIAS, *Orationes*, 20,12,5 or 20,20,1. A variation on this use is where the speaker treats a past situation as counterfactual (with a concessive conditional), but suggests that the evidence from it does not impair a present state of affairs, see ISAEUS, *Orationes*, 6,44,3; 8,31,7; 9,27,3; 11,23,2; or DEMOSTHENES, *Orationes*, 18,95.

<sup>56</sup> Other examples can be found at HOMERUS, *Ilias*, VI,128; ISOCRATES, *Orationes*, 15,75,4; DEMOSTHENES, *Orationes*, 19,32,8; 22,7,3; ISAEUS, *Orationes*, 1,21,4; or PLATO, *Cratylus*, 433c3.

- (11) εἰ γὰρ οὗτοι ὀρθῶς ἀπέστησαν, ὑμεῖς ἂν οὐ χρεῶν ἄρχοιτε.  
 “for if these people had a right to secede, it would follow that you are wrong in exercising dominion.”  
 (THUCYDIDES, *Historiae*, III,40,4,5-6 / transl. Smith)

(B) Furthermore, direct inferential conditionals can occur with a reversed order, but they are counterfactual when they do and refer either to the past or the present. In Archaic Greek, these can be formed with the counterfactual optative or indicative (and the modal particle in the apodosis), whereas in Classical Greek only the counterfactual indicative is used. There are 81 occurrences in Archaic Greek (= 85% of Archaic Greek counterfactual conditionals, 84 in total) vs. 92 in Classical Greek (= 16% of Classical Greek counterfactual conditionals, 173 in total) in my corpus. Such direct inferential conditionals are not temporally iconic and are used for a variety of rhetorical reasons, e.g., steer the expectation of the hearer in example (12), suggest that a counterfactual scenario was on the verge of happening in example (13),<sup>57</sup> or that something cannot happen now that the counterfactual scenario was averted in example (14).

- (12) Ἐνθά κεν ὑψίπυλον Τροίην ἔλον υἷες Ἀχαιῶν,  
 εἰ μὴ Ἀπόλλων Φοῖβος Ἀγήνορα δῖον ἀνήκε  
 φῶτ' Ἀντήνορος υἷον ἀμύμονά τε κρατερόν τε.  
 “Then would the sons of the Achaeans have taken high-gated Troy, if Phoebus Apollo had not roused noble Agenor, Antenor's son, an incomparable warrior and mighty.”  
 (HOMERUS, *Ilias*, XXI,544-546 / transl. Murray & Wyatt)

As discussed by de Jong, Richardson, Lang, and Bouxsein,<sup>58</sup> these if-not counterfactuals are used by the narrator to steer the expectations of the narratees, not only in the narrative portions of Homeric texts but also in character speech. Moreover, this type of counterfactual conditional is also relevant from a diachronic perspective, for the replacement of the

<sup>57</sup> For a cross-linguistic study of means to express such a narrowly averted action, see KUTEVA 1998.

<sup>58</sup> DE JONG 1987; RICHARDSON 1990; LANG 1989; and BOUXSEIN 2020.

counterfactual optative by the counterfactual indicative. Conditionals of this type make use of explicit pragmatic cues (e.g., “if not”, but also “but” or “now”) to contrast the averted scenario with reality.<sup>59</sup> They provide a so-called bridging context in which the counterfactual indicative replaces the counterfactual optative, since it can use pragmatic cues to help signal the counterfactuality of the indicative.<sup>60</sup> A bridging context is a context in which a new target meaning provides a more likely interpretation of the marker than the older source meaning.<sup>61</sup> The reason why we find this bridging context so often is that it is a favourite narratorial strategy of the Homeric narrator to play with the expectations of the audience. Also, we find archaic combinations where the main clause is still in the counterfactual optative such as example (13) and examples such as (12) where the formula has undergone morphological innovation:

- (13) *καὶ νῦν* *κεν* ἔνθ' ἀπόλοιτο ἄναξ ἀνδρῶν Αἰνεΐας,  
 εἰ μὴ ἄρ' ὄξυ νόησε Διὸς θυγάτηρ Ἀφροδίτη  
 μήτηρ, ἣ μιν ὑπ' Ἀγχισίη τέκε βουκολέοντι.  
 “And now would the lord of men, Aeneas, have perished, had not the  
 daughter of Zeus, Aphrodite, been quick to notice, his mother, who  
 conceived him to Anchises as he tended his cattle.”  
 (HOMERUS, *Ilias*, V,311-313 / transl. Murray & Wyatt)

Furthermore, these conditionals are actually also used in non-narrative settings, as in example (14) to state that Ajax’s plan to kill the Argives was only just averted. What Athena says is that she was not negligent and therefore Ajax did not accomplish his plan.

- (14) Odysseus ἦ καὶ τὸ βούλευμ' ὡς ἐπ' Ἀργείοις τόδ' ἦν;  
 Athena κἄν ἐξεπράξατ', εἰ κατημέλησ' ἐγώ.  
 Odysseus “Was his plan aimed against the Argives?”  
 Athena “Yes, and he would have accomplished it, had I been negligent.”  
 (SOPHOCLES, *Ajax*, 44-45 / transl. Lloyd-Jones)

<sup>59</sup> Note that the following disproving *p* can also be expressed by other expressions such as a participle, e.g., PLATO, *Protagoras*, 318d8.

<sup>60</sup> LA ROI 2022b.

<sup>61</sup> HEINE 2002, 83-101.

Similarly to counterfactual predictive conditionals, counterfactual direct inferential conditionals have diachronically been extended to referring to the present.<sup>62</sup> In example (15) Chrysothemis rebukes Electra using a direct inferential conditional. He uses this structure to suggest that Electra does *not* think sensibly and *therefore* does not have an agreeable life.<sup>63</sup>

- (15) Chrys. βίου δὲ τοῦ παρόντος οὐ μνεΐαν ἔχεις;  
 Electra καλὸς γὰρ οὐμὸς βίωτος ὥστε θαυμάσαι.  
 Chrys. ἀλλ' ἦν ἄν, εἰ σὺ γ' εὖ φρονεῖν ἠπίστασο.  
 Chrys. “But do you feel no concern for the kind of life you now enjoy?”  
 Electra “Yes, my life is wonderfully agreeable!”  
 Chrys. “It would be, if you knew how to think sensibly!”  
 (SOPHOCLES, *Electra*, 392–394 / transl. Lloyd-Jones)

### 3.3. Indirect inferential conditionals with past tenses

There is a wider variety of indirect inferential conditionals than has thus far been acknowledged in the literature. Wakker, for example, only discusses a set of “rhetorical” uses of propositional conditionals which would also classify as indirect inferential conditionals (e.g., *If you’re the Pope, I’m the Empress of China*, i.e., I’m not the Empress of China so you are not the Pope)<sup>64</sup> and did not incorporate the relevant factors mentioned above and below.<sup>65</sup>

The indirect inferential type that one finds most often (152 times in my corpus, 26% of Classical Greek counterfactual conditionals) is of the logical structure:  $p$ , CF  $q$ ; now that  $q = \text{CF}$ ,  $p$  must be CF as well. This

<sup>62</sup> LA ROI 2022b.

<sup>63</sup> For a similar example from philosophical dialogue, see PLATO, *Symposium*, 199d5–7, where Socrates implies that Agathon did not want to give the right answer: εἶπες ἂν δήπου μοι, εἰ ἐβούλου καλῶς ἀποκρίνασθαι ὅτι ἐστιν ἕως γε ἢ θυγατρὸς ὁ πατήρ πατήρ-ἦ οὐ; “Surely you would have said, if you wished to give the proper answer, that the father is father of son or of daughter, would you not?” (transl. Emlyn-Jones & Freddy).

<sup>64</sup> Such conditionals are often called *ad absurdum* conditionals, see DAHL 1997, 109; DECLERCK – REED 2001, 296–300.

<sup>65</sup> WAKKER 1994, 231–235.

usage is not found in Archaic Greek yet. The following example from English exemplifies the complex reasoning behind such conditionals:

1. If (as you say) he won the lottery,  
2. he would have shared the money with me as his wife.
2. Why would he not have shared the money with me as his wife?
3. Now that he did not, it must be the case that he has not won the lottery.

This type is found both in (A) declarative or (B) interrogative illocutions, as listed in Table 4:

Table 4: Indirect inferential conditionals with past tenses

Pragmatic relationship	Order	Illocution	Temporal range	Formal correlations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• non-causality</li> <li>• non-sequentiality</li> <li>• contradictory or counterfactual implicature</li> </ul>	$p \leftarrow q$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• declarative</li> <li>• assertoric wh-question</li> <li>• assertoric yes-no question</li> <li>• assertoric open question</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• past, present</li> <li>• CF past, present</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• negation of <math>q</math></li> <li>• contrastive vocabulary</li> <li>• indicative or optative mood in <math>q</math></li> </ul>

(A) both  $p$  and  $q$  refer either to the past, as in example (16) and (17), or to the present, as in example (18). In example (16), Meneclēs' son, who is defending himself and Meneclēs, uses the indirect inferential to refute the idea that Meneclēs was not in his right mind when adopting him but under the influence of the son's sister. After all, then Meneclēs would have adopted one of the boys of the son's sister instead, which he evidently did not because he adopted the son.

- (16) ... ὥστ' εἴ γ' ἐκείνη πεισθεὶς τὸν υἱὸν ἐπολεῖτο, τῶν ἐκείνης παίδων τὸν ἕτερον ἐποιήσατ' ἄν· δύο γάρ εἰσιν αὐτῆι.  
 "... so that, if it had been under her influence that he was adopting his son, he would have adopted one of the other boys; for she has two."  
 (ISAEUS, *Orationes*, 2,19,6-8 / transl. Forster)



It is also possible to signal the counterpresuppositional character of the *q* clause more explicitly by means of negation.<sup>66</sup> On the other hand, the argumentative reasoning is not made explicit at all times, as in example (17) from a dialogue in Aristophanes, and can be more compressed, as in example (18). In example (17), the speaker refutes the presupposition that he actually is a man with financial means as suggested by the accuser. In this example, the argumentative reasoning is made fairly explicit. This can be seen by how the speaker contrasts this counterfactual scenario to what is actually happening: see the clauses introduced by ἀλλ' οὐκ, “but not”, and νυνὶ, “now/in fact”. In example (18), the speaker’s refutation is more implicit.

- (17) εἰ γὰρ ἐκεκτῆμην οὐσίαν, ἐπ’ ἀστράβης ἂν ὠχούμην, ἀλλ’ οὐκ ἐπὶ τοῦς ἄλλοτρίους ἵππους ἀνέβαινον: νυνὶ δ’ ἐπειδὴ τοιοῦτον οὐ δύναμαι κτήσασθαι, τοῖς ἄλλοτρίοις ἵπποις ἀναγκάζομαι χρῆσθαι πολλάκις.  
 “if I were a man of means, I should ride on a saddled mule, and would not mount other men’s horses. But in fact, as I am unable to acquire anything of the sort, I am compelled, now and again, to use other men’s horses.”  
 (LYSIAS, *Orationes*, 24,11,3-7 / transl. Lamb)

- (18) εἰ γὰρ πονηρὸν ἦν, Ὅμηρος οὐδέποτε ἂν ἐποίει τὸν Νέστορ’ ἀγορητὴν ἂν, οὐδὲ τοὺς σοφοὺς ἅπαντας.  
 “If it were something bad, Homer would never have called Nestor, and every other sagacious person, ‘man of the agora’.”  
 (ARISTOPHANES, *Nubes*, 1057-1058 / transl. Henderson)

To sum up, indirect inferential conditionals with a declarative main clause are an effective means to combat presuppositions on the part of the hearer(s) by making them look in the mirror of the factual past or

<sup>66</sup> E.g., δῆλα γὰρ δὴ ὅτι, εἰ μὴ αὐταὶ ἐβούλοντο, οὐκ ἂν ἠρπάζοντο - “For plainly, had they not wanted it themselves, the women would never have been carried away” (HERODOTUS, *Historiae*, I,4,8 / transl. Godley). A similar examples is HERODOTUS, *Historiae*, III,21,11-13.

present (see Table 4 above).<sup>67</sup> In other words, they are another linguistic means of Classical Greek to challenge what is in the common ground.<sup>68</sup>

(B) In interrogative illocutions, indirect inferential conditionals can be distinguished based on the type of rhetorical question they express, whether they generate a contradictory or counterfactual implicature, and their mood and negation usage. Importantly, in questions, indirect inferential conditionals only occur in so-called assertoric questions. So-called assertoric questions such as rhetorical questions present an affirmative message, i.e., they have the illocutionary force of a declarative.<sup>69</sup> These indirect inferentials can be subdivided in (a) *wh*-questions, (b) *yes/no*-questions and (c) open questions.

(a) Indirect inferentials *wh*-questions with a non-counterfactual main clause imply a contradiction between the assumption described in the *p* clause and the second assumption connected to it which together become anomalous, e.g., *If he was working abroad, why would he pay taxes here?*<sup>70</sup> In other words, the assumptions seem irreconcilable. In example (19), I would argue that the translator Godley accurately represents the rhetorical force of the question, because the question is translated as a declarative sentence. The indirect inferential *wh*-question<sup>71</sup> signals the contradiction between the assumption that there was once no land for Egypt and their preoccupation with finding out which language was the earliest.

(19) εἰ τοίνυν σφι χώρα γε μηδεμία ὑπῆρχε, τί περιεργάζοντο δοκέοντες  
πρῶτοι ἀνθρώπων γεγονέναι;

<sup>67</sup> A good example of an indirect inferential conditional which also has relevance on the level of impoliteness is PLATO, *Euthyphro*, 14b8–c1: πολύ μοι διὰ βραχυτέρων, ὃ Εὐθύφρων, εἰ ἐβούλου, εἶπες ἂν τὸ κεφάλαιον ὧν ἠρώτων· ἀλλὰ γὰρ οὐ πρόθυμός με εἶ διδάξαι – δῆλος εἶ. “You might, if you wished, Euthyphro have answered much more briefly the chief part of my question. But it is plain that you do not care to instruct me.” (Lamb)

<sup>68</sup> In addition to, e.g., μήν or ἀλλά, see THIJS 2017 and ALLAN 2017a.

<sup>69</sup> DECLERCK – REED 2001, 41 and 60.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid. 303.

<sup>71</sup> Examples are LYSIAS, *Orationes*, 13,57,1; DEMOSTHENES, *Orationes*, 18,72,5; 18,101,9 or 20,127,3.

“*Then if there was once no country for them, it was but a useless thought that they were the oldest nation on earth.*”

(HERODOTUS, *Historiae*, II,15,13-14 / transl. Godley)

Similarly in example (20), the speaker implies that there was no need for the disagreement, since the child would stand to gain something if there were in fact a deal. Thus, the contradiction between the state of affairs in the condition and the main clause implies the reversal of the polarity of the state of affairs contained in the *wh*-question, i.e., τί ἔδει question = οὐκ ἔδει declarative.

(20) Φησὶ γὰρ ὁμολογήσαί με τοῦ κλήρου τῷ παιδί τὸ ἡμικλήριον μεταδώσειν, εἰ νικήσαιμι τοὺς ἔχοντας αὐτόν. Καίτοι εἰ μὲν τι καὶ αὐτῷ μετῆν κατὰ τὸ γένος, ὡς οὗτος λέγει, τί ἔδει γενέσθαι ταύτην αὐτοῖς παρ’ ἐμοῦ τὴν ὁμολογίαν; Ἦν γὰρ ὁμοίως καὶ τούτοις ἐπίδικον τὸ ἡμικλήριον, εἴ περ ἀληθῆ λέγουσιν.

“He declares that I agreed, if I won my case against the present possessors of the estate, to give the child a half-share of the inheritance. Yet if the child had any right to a share in virtue of his relationship, as my opponent declares, what need was there for this agreement between me and them? For the half of the estate was adjudicable to them just as much as to me, if what they say is true.”

(ISAEUS, *Orationes*, 11,24,3-9 / transl. Forster)

I did not find indirect inferential *wh*-questions<sup>72</sup> with a counterfactual matrix clause (i.e., past indicative with the modal particle). Its absence might be explained by the fact that counterfactual *wh*-questions tend to be rhetorical (i.e., assertoric) anyway, e.g., *Who would have thought/done x?* = nobody would have thought/done *x*.

(b) Indirect inferential *yes/no* questions in a similar way use the seemingly contradictory (but not counterfactual) relation between *p* and *q* to imply that *q* is most likely not the case. In example (21), the contradiction between the lark (a songbird representing the generation of Birds

<sup>72</sup> For a detailed study of Classical Greek *wh*-clauses, see FAURE 2021.

which are the topic of this play) existing *before* the gods but not having the kingship (a presupposition of *q*), implies that they would have the kingship: *if X, Y? = if X, then Y should be the case* (but strangely is not the case).

- (21) Peisetaerus οὐκουν δῆτ', εἰ πρότεροι μὲν γῆς, πρότεροι δὲ θεῶν ἐγένοντο,  
ὡς πρεσβυτάτων ὄντων αὐτῶν ὀρθῶς ἐσθ' ἡ βασιλεία;  
Euelpides νῆ τὸν Ἀπόλλω.  
Peisetaerus “So if they were born before Earth and before the gods,  
doesn't it follow that the kingship is rightfully theirs by  
primogeniture?”  
Euelpides “I swear by Apollo!”  
(ARISTOPHANES, *Aves*, 477-479 / transl. Henderson)

Yet, when an indirect inferential yes/no question is counterfactual, it is indicated that the main clause state of affairs is false and therefore the presupposition contained in the preceding conditional is also false. In example (22), the speaker signals that the presupposition “would he not have thought fit” is counterfactual, because the presupposition that the deposition was real and therefore demanded serious attention refutes the presupposition that he would not have summoned friends to help with this deposition. In other words, the rhetorical question “would he not have” actually means *he surely would have*<sup>73</sup> and through counterfactual implicature suggests that the deposition was not real, i.e., not *p*.<sup>74</sup>

- (22) Εἶτα ἐπὶ ταύτην ἂν τὴν μαρτυρίαν, εἰ ἦν ἀληθής, οὐκ ἂν ἅπαντας τοὺς οἰκείους τοὺς ἑαυτοῦ παρακαλεῖν ἐκεῖνος ἠξίωσε; Ναὶ μὰ Δία, ὡς ἔγωγε ὦμιον, εἰ γε ἦν ἀληθὲς τὸ πρᾶγμα.  
“To attest a deposition like this, if it were really true, would he not have thought fit to summon all his own friends? Most assuredly he would have done so, I should have thought, if the deposition had been genuine.”  
(ISAEUS, *Orationes*, 3,24,6-25,2 / transl. Forster)

<sup>73</sup> Further examples are ISAEUS, *Orationes*, 3,39,1; 7,33,3; DEMOSTHENES, *Orationes*, 27,56,1 or 29,48,1.

<sup>74</sup> WAKKER 1994, 152 makes some pertinent remarks as to the quantity implicature transfer from *p* to *q*. As these contexts show, the implicature can also be transferred in the reverse direction to reverse a presupposition in the *p* clause.

(c) In open rhetorical questions, as in indirect inferential yes/no questions, we find both contradictory and counterfactual usages. In example (23), the rhetorical question implies the reverse polarity of the polarity marked in the question by  $\pi\omega\varsigma$  οὐ(κ) with the present indicative. Demosthenes uses Aeschines' supposed past actions against him. He points out how they contradict the message which Aeschines is trying to pass off now, namely that the measures were bad. Thus, the rhetorical questions with  $\pi\omega\varsigma$  οὐ(κ) use the contradictory relation between the events in  $p$  and  $q$  to strongly imply that the state of affairs in  $q$  must be the case: *How is/was it not the case that?* = it surely must be/have been the case that.<sup>75</sup>

- (23) εἰ μὲν γὰρ παρῆν καὶ μετὰ τῶν ἄλλων ἐξητάζετο, *πῶς οὐ* δεινὰ ποιεῖ, μᾶλλον δ' οὐδ' ὅσια, εἰ ὄν ὡς ἀρίστων αὐτὸς τοὺς θεοὺς ἐποιήσατο μάρτυρας, ταῦθ' ὡς οὐκ ἄριστα νῦν ὑμᾶς ἀξιοῖ ψηφίσασθαι τοὺς ὁμομοκότας τοὺς θεοὺς;  
 “If he was present as one of the throng, *surely* his behavior is scandalous and even sacrilegious, for after calling the gods to witness that certain measures were very good, he now asks a jury to vote that they were very bad – a jury that has sworn by the gods!”  
 (DEMOSTHENES, *Orationes*, 18,217.5–9 / transl. Vince & Vince)

Due to the polarity reversal of rhetorical questions, the indirect inferential open question in example (24) implies the reverse of polarity that the sentence is marked with, meaning that the positive sentence  $\pi\omega\varsigma$  αἰσχρὸν ἦν; (“how was it dishonourable?”) means *it surely was not dishonourable* (to associate with him). After all, he associated with him before.

- (24) χρῆν γὰρ ὑμᾶς ἢ μὴ κακῶς λέγειν ἢ μὴ ξυνεῖναι, καὶ ταῦτα φανερωῶς ἀπειπόντας ὁμιλίαν. εἰ δὲ αἰσχρὸν ἠγεῖσθε τοῦτο, πῶς αἰσχρὸν ἦν ὑμῖν ξυνεῖναι, πρὸς ὃν οὐδὲ ἀπειπεῖν καλὸν ἠγεῖσθε;  
 “You ought to have refrained either from defaming him or from associating with him, and that by an open renunciation of his company. But if you felt that to be dishonourable, how was it dishonourable for

<sup>75</sup> Other examples are ISAEUS, *Orationes*, 2,27,7; 9,36,8; 11,12,8; or LYSIAS, *Orationes*, 24,12,1.

you to associate with a man whom you did not even feel it honourable to renounce?"

(LYSIAS, *Orations*, 8,6,1-4 / transl. Lamb)

Furthermore, we also find this usage with the potential optative to challenge the existence of a possibility much like a negated potential optative in a declarative clause would do.<sup>76</sup> Yet, functionally, this combination expresses the same pragmatic function, underlining the importance of pragmatics over formal marking.

Finally, we find open indirect inferential questions which are counterfactual and thus argue for the counterfactuality of a presupposition contained in the conditional clause. In example (25), Simonides points out the counterfactuality of the presupposition that despots obtain far fewer pleasures than men of modest means, summarised by *εἰ γὰρ οὕτως ταῦτ' εἶχε* "were it so".<sup>77</sup> He points to the counterfactual implication of such a counterfactual scenario which everyone would agree we observe all around, namely that most people desire the position of the king for its expected pleasures.

- (25) ἄπιστα λέγεις, ἔφη ὁ Σιμωνίδης. εἰ γὰρ οὕτως ταῦτ' εἶχε, πῶς ἂν πολλοὶ μὲν ἐπεθύμουν τυραννεῖν, καὶ ταῦτα τῶν δοκούντων ἱκανωτάτων ἀνδρῶν εἶναι; πῶς δὲ πάντες ἐζήλουν ἂν τοὺς τυράννους;  
 "Incredible!" exclaimed Simonides. "Were it so, how should a despot's throne be an object of desire to many, even of those who are reputed to be men of ample means? And how should all the world envy despots?"  
 (XENOPHON, *Hiero*, 1,9/ transl. Marchant & Bowersock)

As a coda to this section we should note that we do not find the reverse order of *q, p* for indirect inferentials with the past tense. Although the reversed order is not impossible (e.g., *But Superman wouldn't be Superman if he let this kind of injustice happen.*),<sup>78</sup> the strong preference for *p, q* can be explained by the fact that indirect inferentials have as their main goal to

<sup>76</sup> E.g., LYSIAS, *Orations*, 25,14,6. Cf. LA ROI 2019, 72.

<sup>77</sup> Another example is ISAEUS, *Orations*, 3,69,3.

<sup>78</sup> DECLERCK – REED 2001, 45.

let the hearer make an inference about  $p$  by virtue of the value of  $q$ . As such,  $p$  would first need to be established before it can be attacked with  $q$ .

#### 4. Illocutionary conditionals

Illocutionary conditionals specify a condition for appropriateness or relevance of the speech act performed in  $q$ ,<sup>79</sup> e.g., *If you're thirsty, there is beer in the fridge*.<sup>80</sup> What distinguishes illocutionary conditionals from predictive or inferential conditionals is the pragmatic relationship with the matrix clause: whereas predictive conditionals express the condition for actualisation and inferential conditionals the condition for the epistemic validity of the matrix clause, illocutionary conditionals specify the circumstances under which the speech act in  $q$  can appropriately (e.g., politely) or relevantly take place. As already highlighted by Wakker, the  $q$  clauses are not limited to declarative illocutions even though they outnumbered interrogative illocutions in her corpus.<sup>81</sup> Illocutionary conditionals with past tenses are of roughly three subtypes: (a) with a directive  $q$ ; (b) preceding a performative main clause; (c) following or preceding an evaluative declarative. Table 5 summarises the different subtypes.

Table 5: Illocutionary conditionals with past tenses

Pragmatic relationship	Order	Illocution	Temporal range	Formal correlations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>condition of appropriateness or relevance for speech act in <math>q</math></li> </ul>	$p \rightarrow q$ $q \leftarrow p$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>directive</li> <li>performative</li> <li>declarative</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>past, present</li> <li>CF present, future</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>evaluative vocabulary</li> <li>form with directive force</li> <li>performative verb</li> </ul>

<sup>79</sup> WAKKER 1994, 236–256; WAKKER 2013.

<sup>80</sup> As noted by WAKKER 1994, 236, n. 18, this type has gone under different headers such as pseudo-conditionals, commentative conditionals, relevance conditionals, speech-act conditionals (cf. COMRIE 1986; SWEETSER 1990; DECLERCK – REED 2001; DANCYGIER 2006).

<sup>81</sup> WAKKER 1994, 237.

(a) When an illocutionary conditional with a past tense is combined with a directive in the matrix clause, it uses a supposed fact to specify the appropriateness for carrying out the directive in the main clause.<sup>82</sup> In example (26), Amphitruon has just told king Theseus what horrible thing Heracles has done and here Theseus politely asks Amphitruon to make Heracles uncover himself. In that way Theseus will be able to comfort him and remind him that friendship such as theirs transcends any type of pollution. Thus, the use of the past illocutionary conditional here specifies the appropriateness of Heracles' uncovering, since Theseus comes to sympathise (*συναλγῶν γ' ἦλθον*) and can be seen as a polite hedge to the directive directed at Amphitruon.

- (26) ἀλλ', εἰ συναλγῶν γ' ἦλθον, ἐκκάλυπτέ νιν  
 but if I came to sympathise, you have to uncover him!  
 (EURIPIDES, *Hercules furens*, 1201 / Kovacs\*)

A comparable use can also already be found in Archaic Greek. In example (27), Eumaeus tries to reproach Melanthius for kicking Odysseus, but does so with a mix of reproach and prayer. In his prayer, he addresses the Nymphs of the fountain with an illocutionary conditional which specifies the appropriateness of them fulfilling his prayer: the fact that Odysseus burned many pieces of meat for them upon their altar pieces. This implicit recognition is underlined by the adverb ποτ' which poses a contrast between the possibility that he "ever" did, inviting the scalar implicature that he did that often.

- (27) Νύμφαι κρηναῖαι, κοῦραι Διός, εἴ ποτ' Ὀδυσσεὺς  
 ὕμῃ' ἐπὶ μηροῖ' ἔκηε, καλύψας πίονι δημῶ,

<sup>82</sup> Note that WAKKER 1994, 255–256 limits her subtype to conditional expressions in the *present* indicative of the type “if you like” with a directive or when accompanying a wish which I do not. For so-called double nature conditionals mixing predictive and inferential or illocutionary qualities and occurring with directives, see *ibid.* 263–266. For further examples of directive illocutionary conditionals with a past tense, see HERODOTUS, *Historiae*, IV,76,24; VI,85,10; THUCIDIDES, *Historiae*, IV,92,2; ISAEUS, *Orationes*, 1,44,3 or 11,26,1.



ἀρνῶν ἢ δ' ἐρίφων, τόδε μοι κρήνηατ' ἐέλωρ,  
 ὡς ἔλθοι μὲν κείνος ἀνήρ, ἀγάγοι δέ ἐ δαίμων.  
 “Nymphs of the fountain, daughters of Zeus, if ever Odysseus burned  
 upon your altars pieces of the thighs of lambs or kids, wrapped in rich  
 fat, fulfil for me this prayer; grant that he, my master, may come back,  
 and that some god may guide him.”  
 (HOMERUS, *Odyssey*, XVII,240-243 / transl. Murray & Dimock)<sup>83</sup>

(b) Very similar in usage is the illocutionary conditional with a past tense when used with a performative main clause, as in example (28).

(28) ἐγὼ δὲ τοσαύτην ὑπερβολὴν ποιούμαι ὥστε, ἂν νῦν ἔχη τις δεῖξαι τι βέλτιον, ἢ ὅλως εἶ τι ἄλλ' ἐνήν πλὴν ὧν ἐγὼ προειλόμην, ἀδικεῖν ὁμολογῶ. εἰ γὰρ ἔσθ' ὃ τι τις νῦν ἐόρακεν, ὃ συνήνεγκεν ἂν τότε πραχθέν, τοῦτ' ἐγὼ φημι δεῖν ἐμὲ μὴ λαθεῖν.  
 “But I will make a large concession. If even now any man can point to a better way, nay, if any policy whatever, save mine, was even practicable, I plead guilty. If anyone has now discerned any course which might have been taken profitably then, I admit that I ought not to have missed it.”  
 (DEMOSTHENES, *Orationes*, 18,190,3-7 / transl. Vince & Vince)

Here Demosthenes uses an illocutionary conditional clause twice (once with a past and once with a present tense) to signal the alleged fact which would appropriately make him plead guilty and admit his own wrongdoing, an allegation which he refutes in the subsequent lines. As will be clear to the audience, however, there was no practicable policy in Demosthenes' eyes (illocutionary conditional 1) nor is there anyone now who could discern a more profitable course (illocutionary conditional 2). As such, his performatives are effectively worthless in reality but *pragmatically* a suitable rhetorical stepping stone in his refutation of the idea that his actions fell short.

<sup>83</sup> As suggested by LA ROI 2021, this example contains an example of ὡς to introduce an insubordinate wish, but the punctuation by the editor (in contrast to the translation here) does not accurately reflect the independence of this usage.

(c) By contrast, example (29) follows an evaluative declarative clause and specifies why the evaluative declaration can be appropriately made.<sup>84</sup> Pelasgus has been guessing who the suppliant Danaids are and where they are from, but now concludes that it would *not* be proper (see the rare counterfactual use of the modal periphrasis δίκαιον ἦν)<sup>85</sup> to make more conjectures. In other words, the fact that there is a person present to explain who they are (see the counterfactual illocutionary conditional) is what makes stating that it would not be proper to make more conjectures (= the counterfactual effect of the main clause) improper. Thus, decoding the counterfactual values of the main and conditional clause helps reveal the illocutionary focus of the conditional, since it signals why the main clause can appropriately be uttered.<sup>86</sup>

- (29) καὶ τᾶλλα πόλλ' ἔτ' εἰκάσαι δίκαιον ἦν,  
 εἰ μὴ παρόντι φθόγγος ἦν ὁ σημανῶν.  
 “About other things, too, it would be proper to make many more conjectures, if there were not a person here with a voice to explain to me.”  
 (AESCHYLUS, *Supplikes*, 244–245 / transl. Sommerstein)

<sup>84</sup> Other examples are DEMOSTHENES, *Orationes*, 23,161,2; PLATO, *Symposium*, 215d6–9; *Leges*, 886e3. Note also that I found an example of what can be called a comparative conditional (HOMERUS, *Ilias*, XV,724–725: ἀλλ' εἰ δὴ ῥα τότε βλάπτε φρένας εὐρύοπα Ζεὺς / ἡμετέρας, νῦν αὐτὸς ἐποτρύνει καὶ ἀνώγει – “But if Zeus, whose voice resounds afar, then dulled our senses, now he himself urges and commands”), which WAKKER 1994, 235 subsumes under propositional conditionals, but I, following DECLERK – REED 2001, 330, consider a type of illocutionary conditional because it is used to signal why the content of the main clause is worthy of mentioning, namely because it contrasts with the situation expressed in the conditional clause.

<sup>85</sup> For the counterfactual use of such evaluative past imperfects, see GOODWIN 1889, 152.

<sup>86</sup> Also, such examples provide the empirical support to Wakker’s suggestion that counterfactual illocutionary conditionals are in theory possible, WAKKER 1994, 120, n. 127.

## 5. Metalinguistic conditionals

Metalinguistic conditionals with past tense belong to a pragmatic category of conditionals which is new to Ancient Greek linguistics<sup>87</sup> but exists in conditional typologies in general linguistics.<sup>88</sup> While they seem similar to illocutionary conditionals to some extent (viz. their concern with the production of the speech act in the *q* clause), what is distinctive about metalinguistic conditionals is that they directly comment on how something is said rather than that something is said/done (i.e., illocutionary conditionals). The metalinguistic comment typically targets an element from the *q* clause. They can be roughly divided into two types: (a) to evaluate a choice of phrasing – example (30) – or (b) to signal disbelief about an element of the main clause – example (31) with a declarative *q*, example (32) with an interrogative *q*, example (33) with an exclamative *q*. Table 6 summarises the features of metalinguistic conditionals in Ancient Greek.

Table 6: Metalinguistic conditionals with past tenses

Pragmatic relationship	Order	Illocution	Temporal range	Formal correlations
• comment on how <i>q</i> is said	$q \leftarrow p$	• declarative • interrogative • exclamative	• past • CF present	• negation of <i>p</i> • <i>πότε</i> (if ever...)

(a) In example 30 we see how the metalinguistic conditional used by Socrates targets only the part in italics and evaluates his strong wording from the matrix clause (i.e., that he did not care for death).<sup>89</sup>

<sup>87</sup> Some examples that I discuss below were also discussed by Wakker. However, she merged these examples with larger categories such as propositional and illocutionary conditionals, e.g., example (30) which WAKKER 1994, 252 discusses as an illocutionary conditional.

<sup>88</sup> DANCYGIER 2006, 103–109 in particular was an advocate of this subtype (which she called “metatextual”).

<sup>89</sup> Another example is PLATO, *Euthydemus*, 283e2.

- (30) τότε μέντοι ἐγὼ οὐ λόγῳ ἀλλ' ἔργῳ αὖ ἐνεδειξάμην ὅτι ἐμοὶ θανάτου  
 μὲν μέλει, εἰ μὴ ἀγροικότερον ἦν εἰπεῖν, οὐδ' ὀτιοῦν.  
 “Then I, however, *showed* again, by action, not in word only, *that I did not care a whit for death if that be not too rude an expression.*”  
 (PLATO, *Apologia*, 32d1-3 / transl. Lamb)

(b) In the other usage the metalinguistic conditional clause expresses disbelief about an element from the main clause (see the italicised elements) uttered by the speaker him/herself, whether the main clause is a (i) declarative, (ii) interrogative or (iii) exclamative illocution. Thus, in examples (31), (32) and (33), the metalinguistic conditional expresses the disbelief of respectively Helen that Agamemnon was ever truly her brother-in-law (31),<sup>90</sup> of Odysseus that he ever had a son (32), and of Oedipus at his fate (33).<sup>91</sup> Note again that, as we have seen before with the illocutionary conditional in example (27), *ποτ'* is used to signal disbelief on the part of the speaker.

- (31) δαῖηρ αὐτ' ἐμὸς ἔσκε κυνώπιδος, εἴ ποτ' ἔην γε.  
 “And he used to be my brother-in-law to shameless me, if ever there was such a one.”  
 (HOMERUS, *Ilias*, III,180 / transl. Murray & Wyatt\*)
- (32) ἀλλ' ἄγε μοι τόδε εἰπὲ καὶ ἀτρεκέως κατάλεξον,  
 πόστον δὴ ἔτος ἐστίν, ὅτε ξείνισσας ἐκείνον  
 σὸν ξεῖνα δύστηνον, ἐμὸν παῖδ', εἴ ποτ' ἔην γε,  
 δύσμορον;  
 “But come, tell me this, and declare it truly. How many years have passed since you entertained that guest, that unfortunate guest, *my son* - if he ever was - my ill-fated son?”  
 (HOMERUS, *Odyssea*, XXIV,287-90 / transl. Murray & Dimock\*)

<sup>90</sup> As explained by KIRK 1985, 290, the phrase expresses nostalgia and regret at how things have changed. He also lists other examples from HOMERUS such as *Ilias*, XI,672; see also *Odyssea*, XV,267.

<sup>91</sup> WAKKER 1994, 234 classifies this example as an obviously realized propositional conditional. As my discussion demonstrates, I do not think that this conditional is used to evaluate the (perhaps obvious) epistemic validity of the *q* clause, but rather, as the previous examples, expresses Oedipus' profound disbelief at his fate.

- (33) ὦ μοῖρ', ἀπ' ἀρχῆς ὡς μ' ἔφρσας ἄθλιον  
καὶ τλήμον', εἴ τις ἄλλος ἀνθρώπων ἔφρ·  
“O destiny! From the beginning, how you have created me wretched  
and unhappy, if any mortal ever was;  
(EURIPIDES, *Phoenissae*, 1595–1596 / transl. Kovacs\*)

## 6. Generic conditionals

The last category of conditionals with past tenses occurs more rarely but is, I argue, relevant from the perspective of the diachrony of the mood system in Ancient Greek. In example (34) we see that the past indicative could already be used in Classical Greek to describe a type of generic past generalisation which here describes the non-specific<sup>92</sup> situation of needing to get something to drink, a situation Philoctetes saw himself faced with in his habitual struggle on the island Lemnos (ταῦτ' ἂν ἐξέρπων τάλας ἐμηχανώμην).<sup>93</sup> I would characterise this conditional as a type of generic condition (as also done in general linguistics).<sup>94</sup> Thus, the conditional clause here generalises over all those situations and therefore cannot simply be called habitual,<sup>95</sup> iterative or iterative-habitual.<sup>96</sup> The reasons for this are that habituals express that something took place in the majority of those different occasions (such as *he used to work from 9 to 5*),<sup>97</sup> and iterative refers to repeated occurrence on the same occasion (such as *search for keys all morning*).<sup>98</sup> Moreover, adopting a critical attitude to such terminology pays off in another way: such terminology often perpetuates ideas from grammars written more than a century ago which were based

<sup>92</sup> PROBERT 2015 has recently argued that such uses found with both relative and conditional clauses are best called an indefinite construction, a term which is particularly strong in Anglo-Saxon grammar descriptions of Ancient Greek. I chose not to use this term, because indefinite has heterogenous descriptive meanings in linguistics (e.g., indefinite article).

<sup>93</sup> Some other examples in my corpus are XENOPHON, *Historia Graeca* VI,5,12,8; VII,4,38,7; and *Anabasis*, V,5,14,4.

<sup>94</sup> DANCYGIER – SWEETSER 2005, 95–102; DANCYGIER 2006, 63–64.

<sup>95</sup> Pace VAN EMDE BOAS et al. 2019, 555.

<sup>96</sup> Pace ALLAN 2019, 31.

<sup>97</sup> DAHL 1985 97; LA ROI 2020b, 141.

<sup>98</sup> BYBEE – PAGLIUCA – PERKINS 1994, 159.

on linguistic frameworks that are not up-to-date anymore.<sup>99</sup> The usual order of *p* and *q* in this conditional type is iconic of the events that it describes. Table 7 summarises the features of generic conditionals.

Table 7: Generic conditionals with past tenses

Pragmatic relationship	Order	Illocution	Temporal range	Formal correlations
• generic past situations as frame for habitual <i>q</i>	$p \rightarrow q$	• declarative	• past	• habitual in <i>q</i> (e.g., past+ἄν)

- (34) πρὸς δὲ τοῦθ', ὃ μοι βάλοι  
 νευροσπαδῆς ἄτρακτος, αὐτὸς ἄν τάλας  
 εἰλυόμεν, δύστηνον ἐξέλκων πόδα,  
 πρὸς τοῦτ' ἄν· εἴ τ' ἔδει τι καὶ ποτὸν λαβεῖν,  
 καί που πάγου χυθέντος, οἷα χεῖματι,  
 ξύλον τι θραῦσαι, ταῦτ' ἄν ἐξέρπων τάλας  
 ἐμηχανώμην· ...

“and up to what the shaft sped by the bowstring shot for me, alone in my misery I would crawl, dragging my wretched foot, right up to that. And if I had to get some drink also, or perhaps to cut some wood, when ice was on the ground, as it is in winter, I would struggle along in misery and manage it; ...”

(SOPHOCLES, *Philoctetes*, 289–295 / transl. Lloyd-Jones)

This innovative use of the past indicative overlaps with the use of the so-called iterative optative to describe generic past situations (cf. βάλοι – ἄν εἰλυόμεν in lines 289–291).<sup>100</sup> This usage of past conditionals is not, however, explicitly discussed in our grammars,<sup>101</sup> but only given as textual example in the discussion of what is called “iterative ἄν” in the main clause.<sup>102</sup> Since this usage of the past indicative is an innovation

<sup>99</sup> Similarly, the past habitual use of ἄν with the past indicative has incorrectly been classified as “iterative” due to terminology from older grammars, cf. GOODWIN 1889, 56; SCHWYZER – DEBRUNNER 1950, 350; WAKKER 1994, 159; or CRESPO et al. 2003, 286.

<sup>100</sup> LA ROI 2022c.

<sup>101</sup> For example not by VAN EMDE BOAS et al. 2019, 555, 639–643.

<sup>102</sup> E.g., KÜHNER – GERTH 1898, 211. An exception is GOODWIN 1889, 171–172.

of Classical Greek, its creation should be understood in the light of the functional reorganisation of the optative mood which had already started before Archaic Greek.<sup>103</sup> The innovative counterfactual indicative has already partially replaced the counterfactual optative in Archaic Greek and fully replaces it in Classical Greek.<sup>104</sup> Since the so-called iterative optative starts to disappear in Post-Classical Greek,<sup>105</sup> I suggest that constructions of the type above are the first signs of the functional limitations on the optative which fully come to the fore in Post-Classical Greek. A parallel development, I think, has taken place in temporal clauses, which in Classical Greek also start to be used innovatively in combination with past habitual main clauses. Similarly, however, such clauses are not discussed explicitly in our standard grammars.<sup>106</sup>

- (35) ἐγὼ γὰρ ὅτε μὲν ἱππικῇ τὸν νοῦν μόνῃ προσεῖχον,  
οὐδ' ἂν τρί' εἰπεῖν ῥήμαθ' οἷός τ' ἦν πρὶν ἐξαμαρτεῖν.  
“Back when I had a one-track mind for horse racing, I couldn't get  
three words out before I stumbled over them.”  
(ARISTOPHANES, *Nubes*, 1401–1402 / transl. Henderson)

In this example, Phidippides describes how he used to have a one-track mind for horse racing and used to not be able to get three words out before stumbling over them.

## 7. Concluding remarks

This paper has put forth a novel pragmatic typology of conditionals with past tenses based on pragmatic rather than formal (e.g., mood) or semantic (e.g., temporal reference) criteria. Importantly, I have argued that the different types of conditionals with past tense can be classified more fruitfully and economically in a pragmatic model, because they generalise over

<sup>103</sup> See LA ROI 2021.

<sup>104</sup> See ALLAN 2013, 40; LA ROI 2022b.

<sup>105</sup> SCHWYZER – DEBRUNNER 1950, 335–336; BLASS – DEBRUNNER 1959, 227.

<sup>106</sup> E.g., VAN EMDE BOAS et al. 2019, 540–542, which only discuss so-called “iterative” optatives in temporal clauses in such contexts.

many different formal (e.g., mood) as well as semantic variations (esp. in terms of temporal reference). Building on the findings of this typology, it has been demonstrated that factors which have been characterised as the basic distinctions between conditionals in Ancient Greek by Wakker need revision (“1. the semantic relation between if-clause and main clause: is the conditional clause a predicational, a propositional or an illocutionary one?; 2. the mood chosen; 3. the type of discourse; 4. the time reference”).<sup>107</sup> As discussed above, temporal reference and mood are not unique in distinguishing conditionals pragmatically nor does Wakker’s typology allow for enough descriptive granularity of conditionals with past tenses.

The key pragmatic criterion to distinguish the types of conditionals is the pragmatic relationship between the conditional and matrix clause. As discussed above, these types allow us to divide the conditionals with past tenses with the largest degree of generalisation possible. Similarly, the syntactic and logical order of *p* and *q* is relevant. As Table 1 and the examples discussed above have shown, the pragmatic relationship (indicated by the arrow) of *p* and *q* can be determined by a logical relation from *p* to *q* (*p* gives a sequential cause for *q* = predictive; *p* gives evidence for truth of *q* = direct inferential; or *p* comments on *q* = metalinguistic) but also from *q* to *p* (*q* provides evidence that *p* is contradictory or counterfactual = indirect inferential). The illocutionary scope of these types is also revealing. Even though declarative is the basic choice of illocution, conditionals that assert that *p* is true, contradictory or counterfactual can use various types of assertoric questions. Conditionals dealing with the appropriateness or relevance of the speech act in *q* may also use different illocutions accordingly.

Pragmatics is also relevant to the diachrony of conditionals, since some types are the instigators of morphosyntactic change: counterfactual direct inferential conditionals in Archaic Greek for the replacement of the counterfactual optative by the indicative,<sup>108</sup> or the generic conditionals in Classical Greek for the replacement of the so-called “iterative” optative.<sup>109</sup> However, the variation in temporal reference does not allow

<sup>107</sup> WAKKER 1994, 117.

<sup>108</sup> See LA ROI 2022b.

<sup>109</sup> See LA ROI 2022c.



us to distinguish the various types due to considerable overlap (esp. in the domain of counterfactual tense usage). This underlines that temporal reference is not a unique characteristic for classification, contrary to classifications by our standard grammars.<sup>110</sup> Similarly, the limited list of formal variations cannot be used as exclusive criterion to distinguish the different types (cf. the mood overlap between indicative and optative). A more unique characteristic might actually be negation, since negation reveals a correlation with pragmatic direction, because *p* tends to be negated when there is a logical relation from *p* to *q* (e.g., predictive, direct inferential, metalinguistic) whereas *q* tends to be negated when there is a logical relation from *q* to *p* (e.g., indirect inferential).

Finally, the pragmatic classification of conditional sentences such as the one presented in this paper could, I would argue, find wider application to Ancient Greek conditionals. In fact, when evaluated retrospectively, Wakker's seminal work has, in my view, already laid the foundations for an extension of the pragmatic approach realised in this paper. First of all, she has shown that there are also indirect inferential conditionals without past tenses, viz. with present or future indicatives, again underlining the primacy of pragmatic function over formal factors.<sup>111</sup> Second, her rich analysis of illocutionary conditionals<sup>112</sup> covers conditionals with a wide range of moods (e.g., present indicative, potential optative, future indicative) but all having an illocutionary function. Just as the typology proposed in this paper, pragmatic function thus covers many formal variations and temporal references. Third and finally, it seems that the choice of mood such as a potential optative may be contextually motivated<sup>113</sup> but still contribute to the same pragmatic function, as is also shown by the use of verbs of volition in different moods to express illocutionary conditionals, e.g., βούλοιο, βούληι or βούλει/εσθε.<sup>114</sup>

<sup>110</sup> Pace Wakker 1994, 117.

<sup>111</sup> See WAKKER 1994, 232–233; e.g., PLATO, *Phaedrus*, 228a5–6; and ARISTOPHANES, *Equites*, 314–315.

<sup>112</sup> WAKKER 1994, 236–257.

<sup>113</sup> Cf. WAKKER 2013 and compare the optionality of the optative mood in the main clause of direct and indirect inferential conditionals.

<sup>114</sup> See WAKKER 1994, 236–267.

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## Summary

### THE PRAGMATICS OF THE PAST: A NOVEL TYPOLOGY OF CONDITIONALS WITH PAST TENSES IN ANCIENT GREEK

This article argues for a typology of conditionals in Ancient Greek based on pragmatic rather than formal (e.g., mood) or semantic (e.g., temporal reference) criteria. It does so by proposing a novel pragmatic typology of conditionals with past tenses for Archaic and Classical Greek based on a corpus analysis of 973 conditionals. This article distinguishes 6 different

pragmatic usages which generalise over mood and temporal variations: predictive, direct inferential, indirect inferential, illocutionary, metalinguistic and generic. They are distinguished by the pragmatic relationship between conditional and matrix clause and its direction, the illocutionary force of the matrix clause (e.g., declarative vs. assertoric/rhetorical question: wh-, yes-no, open) and types of implicature (e.g., contradictory vs. counterfactual). Despite some correlations with the pragmatic types such as order of *p* and *q*, pragmatic types cover multiple possible world distinctions based on formal marking such as mood or temporal reference; for example past tenses are used counterfactually but have different pragmatic usages, e.g., predictive, direct and indirect inferential or illocutionary, and temporal references, e.g., past and present. The diachrony of these conditionals also cuts across the pragmatic types, since direct inferential conditionals are a starting point for the replacement of the counterfactual optative by the counterfactual indicative, and generic conditionals with a past tense start to replace the so-called “iterative” optative in Classical Greek and replace it in Postclassical Greek (both of which have been discussed in preceding publications of the author). The article concludes with suggestions for applying this typology to conditionals in Ancient Greek in general.

Keywords: Ancient Greek; conditionals; counterfactuality; implicature; pragmatics

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