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REVIEW ARTICLE

Classifying conditionals: form and function

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Renaat Declerck and Susan Reed, *Conditionals: a comprehensive empirical analysis*. Topics in English Linguistics 37. Berlin and New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 2001. Pp. xviii + 565. Hardback €98.00/sFr169/$108, ISBN 3 11 017144 9.

Conditional sentences have a special place in the tradition of linguistic analysis. They are used to express an imposing variety of meanings and they reveal important facts about human reasoning and logic. They have thus been studied by numerous analysts interested in philosophy of language, logic, meaning, usage, and, last but not least, language teaching and learning. In spite of the imposing volume of work on conditionals, however, there are still gaps to be filled and questions to be answered.

The new book by Declerck and Reed (henceforth D&R) offers an analysis of English conditionals which promises to fill many of the existing gaps. The authors propose a new typology of conditionals, which intends to refine, bring together, clarify, and enhance all the typologies used so far. To ensure descriptive adequacy, the work is based on data gathered from a variety of corpora, supplemented with examples brought up in earlier publications or proposed by the authors themselves. Even though not all of the examples discussed are in fact attested data, the distinctions proposed originate in actual usage, as represented in the corpora. It is thus an empirical analysis, and, in as much as language corpora are representative of the range of usage of a given form, it is also comprehensive.

The authors promise a typology which uses a number of different criteria and the organization of the book clearly reflects the set of parameters they have chosen. Each chapter is a presentation of the categories, often very numerous ones, yielded by a specific aspect of conditional meaning or form. The resulting overall number of categories, as well as the number of terms to distinguish them, is somewhat overwhelming, which the authors try to remedy by offering an extensive glossary of all the terms used. The reader can thus consult the glossary if a particular term has escaped her memory, rather than have to search for definitions and explanations throughout the text. In fact, as D&R suggest, the text is organized in such a way that individual chapters can be read independently of the rest of the text and may thus serve as a resource for further research. The book as a whole can thus be used as a kind of reference material, not only as a general analysis.

The first three chapters gradually introduce the reader into the framework used and outline the general goals and assumptions of the project. In chapter 1 D&R define

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the scope of their work and establish some necessary terminological and symbolic conventions. Among others, they define 'a conditional' (p. 9) as a structure consisting of two clauses (P and Q), in which one of the clauses (P) is introduced by *if* (or another word or phrase with a similar meaning). Then, they devote the whole of chapter 2 to an overview of sentences using conjunctions other than *if*, and interpreted conditionally. The review is highly informative and useful, especially since it goes beyond the range of conjunctions typically mentioned as carrying conditional meanings (such as *provided that*, *supposing*, or *unless*).

However, it also raises a question of the most adequate definition of a conditional. D&R start out with the most standard approach, whereby a conditional requires an *if* or an equivalent conjunction. It seems to be a rather formal definition, which does not make any assumptions about the meaning, but in fact there is enough semantic variety within the *if P*, *Q* pattern to allow one to discuss the nature of conditional interpretation. Still, it has been noted a number of times that other syntactic structures (to mention only coordinate sentences with *and* or *or*, especially if one of the conjuncts is an imperative) express meanings very much like those of conditionals. In fact, some researchers call such constructions 'conditionals' based on their meanings (cf. Haiman's paratactic conditionals (1983)). D&R, however, seem to avoid taking a clear stand on whether conditionals should be defined in terms of form or in terms of meaning. They start out with form, and most of the book discusses the semantics of sentences with *if*, but the material in chapter 2 expands the scope of their enquiry (further expanded in chapter 11). For example, in section 2.10 they introduce 'comparative conditionals', such as *The more we hurry, the sooner we'll get there*. Such sentences, described by Fillmore, Kay & O'Connor (1988) as 'the Xer, the Yer constructions', often, though not always, express a conditional relationship. The term D&R introduce to represent the relationship between nonconditional sentences with conditional meanings is 'conditional connotation'. In the remaining sections of chapter 2 the term is used to document conditional interpretations of other adverbial clauses (with *when*, *before*, *after*, *until*, and other temporal conjunctions), but also relative clauses, coordinate structures, etc.

It is not clear that the term 'connotation' is explanatory enough here. It was originally coined as a negative term, referring to the aspects of meaning which cannot be analyzed within the basic area of 'denotation'. There was never enough rigor or structure in the concept to explain nondenotational aspects of meaning, and it fell out of use when more specific categories appeared (to mention only presupposition and implicature). Given that the term 'connotation' is reintroduced here without any specific description, the reader has to conclude that 'conditional connotation' is conditional meaning without conditional form. But D&R do not attempt to say anything about where the 'connotation' comes from or how conditional meanings arise, in conditionals and outside them. It is surely not enough to assume that we can accept *if P*, *Q* as a template and then label sentences as 'conditional', by connotation or otherwise, because they can be paraphrased with *if* sentences.

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One way to deal with the problem is to try and identify the parameters of conditional meaning and conditional form (rather than assume that conditionality is a kind of semantic primitive) and search for the source of conditionality in sentences without *if* by searching for individual parameters. Some work in that direction has already been done (cf. Fillmore, 1986, 1990a; Dancygier, 1993, 1998), and the results seem helpful. For example, if D&R had checked Fillmore, Kay & O'Connor's analysis of 'the Xer, the Yer' (1988) or Dancygier's (1998) study of conditionals, they would have found suggestions concerning form–meaning correlations which relate the comparative construction to conditionals. The verb forms of *The more we hurry, the sooner we'll get there* match those of a large number of conditional sentences (Present Tense in the P clause, *will* in the Q clause), the time of P precedes that of Q, P is easily construed as representing the cause of Q, etc. One could also note that the 'the Xer, the Yer' construction is based on the concept of paired scales, which can be replicated in some conditionals (defined in Dancygier, 1993, 1998 as 'predictive'), but not in all. These are features of both ordinary and 'comparative' conditionals which seem to be responsible for their partly shared meaning, but there isn't a single, general category which could be subsumed under the term 'connotation' and claimed to exist in both constructions. On the contrary, the only effective way to explain the similarity is to show how the meanings shared arise compositionally from individual aspects of meaning, whether linked to individual forms (such as tense forms), or expressed at the level of the construction (such as the sequence of, and relationship between, the clauses). However, such facts can consistently contribute to our analysis if we actually accept the search for form–meaning correlations as an analytic tool and investigate the ways in which various forms compositionally contribute to the overall meaning. D&R base their analysis on meanings only, and postulate their categories based on the aspects of interpretation. This does not seem to be satisfactory, hence vague new terms such as 'connotation'.

Chapter 3 outlines some preliminary dimensions of D&R's typology. This introductory review prepares the reader for the analysis to be presented in the rest of the book and introduces some basic terminology. Since D&R advocate a typology which does not build on any earlier knowledge the reader might have, the chapter is really helpful in clarifying the framework to be used.

One of the new categories used in the classification is the concept of 'actualization', which apparently substitutes a rather unwieldy list of descriptions of situations such as 'event', 'state of affairs', etc. In sentences which D&R will describe as 'actualization conditionals' the situation described in P conditions the Q situation in ways that are specified in later chapters. In chapter 3, D&R describe just one aspect of such sentences, namely, the temporal relation between P and Q. They list three possibilities. First, when P situation precedes that of Q, which is a rather standard case when conditional relations among situations (not thoughts) are involved; second, P may be simultaneous with Q or overlap with it. The third option, however, renders the idea of actualization rather unclear, as it postulates a Q preceding P (which is like saying that the result precedes

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the cause). In a sentence such as *As a rule I help Kelly if she does me a favour in return*, helping Kelly (Q) actually precedes a favor (P). D&R still consider the sentence to be representative of actualization, although it is a prospect of the actualization of P that precedes Q, not P itself.

I have a problem still seeing this example as similar to the first two cases. A 'prospect' of actualization is not the same as actualization. Also, I do not see a shared level of understanding of the relation between P and Q in the three cases: actual situations and expectations of actual situations are clearly not the same, because they belong to two different domains: the one of situations (events, states of affairs, etc.) and the one of thoughts. Furthermore, the sentence could be interpreted just as effectively by saying that the speaker's *agreeing* to help follows Kelly's *promise* of a favor. In such a case the two speech acts appear in an appropriate order (P-promise first, Q-agreement next), and the sequence is thus normal, but it is not a sequence of 'actualizations'. Since D&R have decided (in my opinion, mistakenly), to represent a prospect as an actualization, there is no limit to further confusion of the levels of analysis. The problem is not so much the actual sentence about Kelly and where it would be classified. Rather, it seems that the classification criteria are not specific and accurate enough – and yet they are all the reader has, because no supporting tests or formal correlations are offered.

Chapter 4 presents a possible-world typology of conditionals, which is said to apply primarily to sentences in which Ps represent actualizations, premises, and circumstances, while Qs describe the resulting situations or conclusions (in D&R's terms, these are case-specifying conditionals). D&R do not really argue for this distinction, but limiting the possible-world categorizations to such sentences is surely justified, because in those, and not in other cases, there is an actual dependence between the content of P and the content of Q. For comparison, no such dependence can be postulated for *If you ask me, he's Italian*, where the man's nationality is in no way a part of the same situation in which you are asking me a question.

At the same time, the 'possible-world' typology goes beyond what possible worlds were originally postulated to describe. The now classic work of Lewis (1976, 1979) is mainly addressing the issue of imagined worlds which are different from the real world, while D&R seem to suggest that any conditional included in the typology refers to a possible world, even if it happens to be the real world. Also, the typology subsumes the criteria most commonly used in analyses of conditionals, that is, the speaker's expectations about the possible fulfillment of the condition. Although the terms are used in the way specific to D&R's framework and there are many more types in the classification, the chapter covers the data elsewhere discussed as open, unreal, hypothetical, counterfactual, etc. The added dimension is that, apart from expected fulfillment or truth of the condition, the sentences are now also evaluated in terms of the speaker's knowledge and degree of givenness of P (somewhat along the lines similar to Akatsuka, 1986; Comrie, 1986; Van der Auwera, 1986; Dancygier, 1998), commitment, presupposed beliefs, etc.

Even with the revised understanding of possible worlds, some parts of the classification are somewhat controversial, for example, the class of factual-P conditionals.

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Factual-P conditionals are defined as committing the speaker to the truth of P in the real world. This, as D&R admit, is a rare case, because the reason to use a conditional is primarily to present P as a kind of supposition. Rather strong arguments against factuality in conditionals have been raised in Dancygier (1998) and Dancygier & Sweetser (2000), but they are not addressed in the text.

D&R find factuality in several cases. First, conditionals describing past habits (as in *If I had a problem, I always went to my grandmother*) have factual Ps, because they take it for granted that there were past actualizations of the situation. They probably presuppose this indeed, but that is not what they communicate. One may argue that a generic statement could not be logically true without at least one actual occurrence of the behavior described as repetitive being true, but it is not what generic statements are about. Even more surprisingly, according to D&R's analysis, past habits expressed conditionally are factual, but present habits (*If I have a problem, I always go to my grandmother*) are not. But don't they also presuppose at least one actual occurrence of the behavioral pattern in question?

The second factual type refers to 'performative' *if*-clauses, such as the one in *[And thirty-four witnesses could testify to that.] Thirty-five, if you included the driver*. The *if*-clause here, say D&R, is performative, so it constitutes a factual statement (the driver is now included?). Such an interpretation seems questionable for two reasons. First, the term 'performative' was originally introduced (Austin, 1983) to distinguish the class of utterances which perform certain acts, and do *not* make assertions about the world which could then be evaluated as true or false (and D&R define factuals as committing the speaker to the truth of P). So perhaps the definition of factuals requires some revision, or it has to be clear what D&R mean by 'performative'. Secondly, it is not at all clear how *if you included the driver* is interpreted as a factual statement. In my interpretation, the example presents the speaker as correcting the count 'on the fly', explaining the *reasons* for the correction, rather than making statements. In fact, the correction does not leave the count at thirty-five, because the hearer may choose not to include the driver (for whatever reasons).

The remaining factual-P conditionals represent facts by interacting in different ways with contrary-to-fact meanings (to give just one example, *If Oswald didn't kill Kennedy, I'm Shakespeare* is interpreted to mean that Oswald killed Kennedy). In this case, as in the ones above, factuality, if it is there at all, is in no clear way connected with the possible world described by P (the clauses do not in any predictable way communicate that *I had a problem, someone included the driver*, or *Oswald killed Kennedy*). Are D&R suggesting that the clause *Oswald didn't kill Kennedy* belongs to a factual world in which *Oswald killed Kennedy* is true? Given that they talk about a factual P clause, one might indeed conclude that. I understand, of course, that the conditional as a whole implies the speaker's belief that Oswald was the killer, but the communication of that belief is not the function of P alone, so how can factuality be attributed to P alone, and at what level? It is possible and necessary, of course, to discuss various layers of interpretation (conditionals give almost infinite opportunities for this), but if we are looking for typological criteria, they have to be clearly established and consistent

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across different examples. The problem, again, is proposing the same categorization for a rather divergent group of sentences, without establishing any tests or formal criteria which would support the distinctions made.

There is also the question of 'echoic' Ps often found in inferential conditionals, such as *If, as you say, it's past midnight, we can't call your mother now*, in which P presents a premise picked up from the context and Q gives a conclusion drawn from it. In earlier literature (Comrie, 1986; Van der Auwera, 1986) the *if*-clauses of such sentences were labeled factual, because there seemed no reason to suggest that the speaker is expressing any doubts about the time being so late. D&R disagree with that, and treat such Ps as representing a 'closed' P, in which the speaker assumes the truth of P, but does not commit herself to the truth of P. I agree that such Ps are indeed not factual (I argued the point extensively in Dancygier, 1998), but the issue is not whether D&R are right or wrong, but what the reader is being offered by way of an argument. When D&R discuss *If Oswald didn't kill Kennedy, I'm Shakespeare*, they claim that its P represents 'Oswald killed Kennedy' as *known* to be true in the actual world (has some new evidence come up or have I missed something?). For comparison, when they discuss the sentence *If two and two make four, there's a mistake in this bill*, its P is 'true (factual) in isolation, but only "treated as true" (=closed) as the P-proposition of a conditional' (p. 71).

This is likely to be confusing. A P-clause which communicates a highly disputed statement is said to represent its negation (also highly disputed) as a known fact, while a P which communicates a statement known to be true by most 6-year-olds is said to be only 'treated as true'. Explanations offered later, in chapter 9, concerning the difference in the inferential processes represented by the two sentences, do not alter the fact that the factuality and closedness have been defined independently of those reasoning processes, while in fact they are a crucial factor there. It is misleading to talk about a proposition belonging to the actual world when all we are really talking about is the speaker's belief, or worse, what the speaker is presenting as her belief, when it is a part of a reasoning process which communicates that belief. It is equally misleading to talk about an obviously true statement as 'treated as true', without saying why it is included in the reasoning at all. After all, one could simply announce that *There's a mistake in this bill* (while *I'm Shakespeare* would not have the same effect regardless of whether its P is factual or closed) and the hearer would most likely be satisfied that it is not a groundless accusation. The allusion to basic arithmetic does not just spell out the premise from which a conclusion will be drawn, it also suggests that the mistake in the bill is obvious and gross. But the suggestion is part of the interpretation *because*, not *in spite of*, the fact that *two and two make four* is a shared background which is known to be true (consider the effect of *If 7,238 times 56,269 is 407,275,022, there is a mistake in this bill*). What is more, there is no reason why the sentence could not in fact be read just like the Oswald sentence, even though it would not be intended that way. A picky hearer with a calculator can check the bill and say *Sorry, the bill is OK, so I guess two and two no longer make four*.

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There are several issues here. One is that D&R are trying to live up to their promise that chapters can be read independently and that typologies offered in each chapter can stand on their own. Unfortunately, conditionals are so deeply involved in our reasoning processes that very little can sensibly be said without referring to those processes. And more specifically, issues as subtle as the speaker's beliefs (not facts!) and what functions as a belief, premise, evocation, background knowledge, etc. in conditional reasonings cannot be dealt with in terms of the concept of some idealized 'actual' world alone. What is more, as Schwenter (1999) has shown, factual interpretations, which as a rule cannot be traced back to any language forms, cannot be treated as 'semantic' in the proper sense of the term. In interpreting factuality, it is thus necessary to rely on contextual and constructional clues of various kinds.

Another issue is how categories like factuality are entering the interpretation. The reader gets the impression that the possible-world typology is intended as a semantic parameter, and concepts such as the 'truth-commitment' of factuals seem to support that. But the way in which factuality is claimed to characterize Ps is different in every case and relies on the context, on functional categories, or on the type of reasoning. At the same time, the reader will later (chapter 8) be told specifically that counterfactual meanings (which in chapter 4 are characterized in terms of possible worlds) enter the interpretation via implicature. Definitions of other worlds (neutral and open) rely to a large degree on the concept of presupposition. Overall, it would have been helpful if D&R had been more specific about their understanding of semantic and/or pragmatic meaning. I am not suggesting that any clear-cut divisions are necessary (e.g., Schwenter (1999) argues that most of what needs to be said about conditionals belongs to pragmatics), but an explicit statement of D&R's position would have been helpful.

The next chapter discusses the use of tenses in possible-world conditionals. The description follows the framework advocated by Declerck in his earlier work, so a full introduction of his model is included at the beginning. The chapter is indeed an excellent document of all possible tense combinations in Ps and Qs, clearly presented within a uniform framework. Further, because the catalogue of tense combinations is presented along with D&R's possible-world typology, the reader is given another opportunity to review and better understand all the possible-world types. The inclusion of two criteria in the analysis also yielded some generalizations about correlations between verb forms used and the possible world described, which is highly welcome in a work that generally does not look for consistent form–meaning mappings. Also, the observations about verb forms most appropriate for a description of a given type (e.g. past tense forms and conditional *would* for 'tentative' conditionals) have created an opportunity for acknowledging all the mixed types (combining verb forms and meanings from different worlds), which have been badly under-represented so far.

The generalizations offered are for the most part not new, but they have been formulated afresh within the terms advocated in the book and Declerck's tense model, so it is in fact difficult to compare them accurately with existing descriptions. Still, it would

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have been more than appropriate for the authors to mention that what they describe as 'an intensional domain which is treated as a past temporal domain' describes much of the same data that has earlier been described with concepts such as 'temporal distance' (Fleischman, 1989), 'epistemic stance' (Fillmore, 1986), or 'distance/distanced verb forms' (Dancygier, 1998; Dancygier & Sweetser, 1997). Similarly, the restrictions on the use of *will* in conditional P-clauses has been noticed and interpreted before (Close, 1980; Dancygier, 1993, 1998), and the freedom of verb choice in what D&R call 'closed' P conditionals is also not hot news. I understand that in a work of such immense proportions it was not possible, and perhaps not useful, to refer extensively to earlier work, but a brief mention would have perhaps helped the readers who were interested in conditionals before they reached for D&R's book.

Chapter 6 documents the use of modals in the clauses of conditional sentences. There are a lot of interesting data in the chapter, but two areas of usage are not covered, which the reader should be prepared for, given that the book offers individual chapters as exhaustive presentations of conditionals from a certain perspective. First, *will* in conditional protases of standard futurate conditionals (such as *If John does well in the interview, he will be hired*) is not considered a modal, but an expression of future tense, so it appears in the earlier review of tense forms, but does not appear here. Secondly, *would + Verb* and *would + have + Verb* in conditional Qs of sentences expressing tentativeness, unlikelihood, or counterfactuality are referred to as 'conditional tenses', so they are also beyond the scope of chapter 6. What is left is the use of modals in conditionals which do not follow any verb-form restrictions (so the modals appear according to the rules holding outside conditionals) or several uses which are specific to conditionals (e.g. *should*, as *If this appliance should fail to work, we will replace it with another*, or *were to/was to*, as in *If this ship were/was to sink, only half the passengers would be able to find a place in the lifeboats*). The section on 'special' modals is particularly interesting, since it identifies a number of thus far undocumented uses of the modals in question. The only inclusion which might seem unusual is the discussion of *be going to* as a modal which is specific to conditionals, as the usage does not seem widely different from the one in ordinary sentences.

The next chapter attempts to complete the issue of verb forms in conditionals by referring to one of the most common descriptive tools: the three patterns. The tense patterns are exemplified as follows:

Pattern 1: If she comes I will tell her everything.
Pattern 2: If she came I would tell her everything.
Pattern 3: If she had come I would have told her everything.

D&R seem intent on proving that the patterns are not useful. Let me quote their introductory comments here in full:

> [T]here is a certain correlation between these formal patterns and the possible-world categories 'open-P', 'tentative-P' and 'counterfactual-P', respectively. However, this correlation is less perfect than much of the linguistic literature would have us believe.

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> For example, we have already pointed out that pattern 2 conditionals are sometimes counterfactual-P rather than tentative-P. In this chapter we will explore various meanings which conditionals of the three patterns can have. In doing so we will use the labels 'pattern 1/2/3' as indications of the *forms* of the conditionals only. (p. 231)

Let me address the issues raised here one by one. First, there may be a limited amount of correlation between the patterns and D&R's possible worlds, but there is a convincingly consistent correlation between the patterns and the semantic/pragmatic categories used by studies in construction grammar, which specifically looked for form–meaning correlations (Fillmore, 1986, 1990a; Dancygier, 1993, 1998). I will happily agree that a great deal that has been said about the patterns and their correlation with time (present, past, or future) was an oversimplification (though not a dramatically misleading one), but most of what has been said about the patterns and the speaker's attitude to the fulfillment of the condition made a lot of sense, regardless of what pet terminologies were used. Secondly, the texts I have studied, whether pedagogical, descriptive, or linguistic, never said anything about a perfect match, in fact most of them acknowledged all kinds of varieties. Perhaps more importantly, I cannot think of an analysis (even when addressed to the learners of English as a second or foreign language) which would fail to notice that a sentence like *If I were you, I would quit* (which is pattern 2) expresses a contrary-to-fact meaning in its P clause. I cannot be sure that such analyses do not exist, so perhaps some references should have been offered here to let the reader see the magnitude of the problem. Thirdly, and perhaps most importantly, the patterns were never meant to be used as *forms* only, but as form–meaning packages (that's why they were, and still are, a pedagogical favorite).

It seems that by treating the patterns as forms D&R are attacking a straw man here. They give examples of sentences which fit the patterns formally and then announce that they are not in fact representative of the patterns because they have a different meaning. I admit that many of the grammar books are not sophisticated enough (perhaps rightly so) to warn readers against misleading look-alikes, but then they do consider the meaning as well. To give an example, D&R use sentences such as *If they [the waves] catch a boat sideways, they'll flip it like a pancake* or *If he collects stamps, he'll be a quiet sort of man* to argue that they are not pattern 1 sentences. The first one, they argue, is 'neutral' instead of 'open' and gnomic instead of future, while the second one is 'closed'. In the former case, I don't see why it should not be treated as pattern 1, given that the difference between 'open' and 'neutral' would not be valid in what the pattern refers to (any future scenario which is not unlikely) and that being gnomic is not the only interpretation of the sentence. In the second case, nobody would count it as pattern 1, because P does not refer to the future and the content of Q does not follow causally from the content of P (it would usually be analyzed as 'epistemic' (Sweetser, 1990), or 'inferential'). This is confirmed by the awkwardness of shifting the sentence into pattern 2 or 3 (??? *If he had collected stamps, he would have been a quiet man*). So one of them could be a pattern 1 sentence, while the other one wouldn't, but then nobody would claim it would.

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To sum up, the problem is the attitude towards generalization. I agree that the patterns are far from perfect and cannot be treated as the one crucial aspect of the description of conditionals. But they do capture some useful generalizations, and when analyzed as 'constructions', they yield a lot of useful core information about conditionality and leave plenty of room for the discussion of constructional variants. When we say that the patterns are not descriptive to any useful degree because the framework we use aims at listing every formal possibility without seeking meaningful commonalities among them, we fail to represent those useful generalizations. This is, unfortunately, what D&R often seem to do. They describe all possible aspects of form, but they fail to link them to meanings in any regular way, especially if it requires looking beyond the categories under discussion. To be clear, I'm not an advocate of the patterns as a satisfactory descriptive tool (which I have shown clearly in my own work on conditionals), but I don't think it is helpful to throw the 'form–meaning correlations' baby away along with the 'patterns' bathwater, especially by pretending that the baby wasn't there in the first place.

Chapter 8 is a final discussion of the possible-world framework. The types of worlds introduced earlier in the text are presented from the point of view of their relation to the actual world. The most important part of the chapter is the argument that all worlds other than the factual-P ones (which represent the actual world) are linked to the actual world via implicature. More specifically, the unmarked interpretation of all theoretical-P sentences is that their Q is true in the relevant P-world and is not true in any other world. At the same time, Q-clauses are not interpreted as directly saying anything about the truth value of Q in the actual world. The result is that counterfactual sentences implicate, but do not assert, the falsity of Q in the real world, and that, as an implicature, such a proposition can be canceled. Finally, the chapter contains some discussion of communicative functions of counterfactuals (such as expressing dispositions or offering advice), as well as a brief analysis of Qs which have the form of questions rather than statements.

Chapter 9 broadens the classification of a large group of conditionals introduced earlier, termed 'case-specifying' (where P specifies the case in which Q is valid). There are three major groups under discussion here: actualization conditionals, inferential conditionals, and purely case-specifying conditionals (each type is then subdivided into numerous subtypes). Actualization conditionals are defined in terms of 'situations' (as described above), so that a P-situation may trigger, license, or preclude the Q-situation. To a reader familiar with some literature on conditionals, the category may appear somewhat similar to Sweetser's (1990) 'content' conditionals, because the underlying concepts seem to be linked with situations such as facts or states of affairs, and the relationships underlying the actualization are very close to the concepts of causality and enablement as described by Sweetser.

The second category, of inferential conditionals, relies on the idea of inferential reasoning (again, somewhat along the lines suggested by Sweetser's epistemic conditionals (1990) and the inferentials discussed in Dancygier, 1998). The discussion distinguishes a number of types and subtypes, depending on the actual variety of the

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reasoning process and inclusion or exclusion of different kinds of assumptions and general reasoning patterns. The review offered certainly adds new categories to our understanding of inferential reasoning in conditionals.

The third category is that of purely case-specifying conditionals, in which P specifies the case(s) in which Q actualizes or is true. They are a very difficult group to define or get an intuitive grasp of, because individual cases vary a lot. Often, as D&R show, *if* can readily be substituted by *when*, as *When/If you come to think of it, there's a lot of truth in what he says*. Also, there are few restrictions on the form of Q, so declaratives and imperatives are equally possible (consider *If you listen carefully, the cello comes in just behind the rest of the orchestra* or a hospital regulation which says *If you're wearing your own nightie, wear a short-sleeved one*). One might note that the actualization or truth of Q are perhaps not the only cases when purely case-specifying Ps can be used. In some sentences at least, such Ps seem to specify the condition under which the speech act in Q (including a speech act of asserting) is felicitously addressed to the hearer. The possibility of wearing your own sleepwear is not only a case in which a short-sleeved nightie should be chosen, it is also a condition which makes instructing a patient a valid speech act. Similarly, asserting that there's a lot of truth in what the man says is valid in the context of giving it enough thought first (at a first glance, the hearer may have disagreed). In such cases, the speaker is hedging the speech act in Q with the condition described in P (in fact, an expression such as *if you come to think of it* is an almost idiomatic way of introducing an assertion which seems questionable initially). To sum up, the category of purely case-specifying Ps is an interesting new addition to our understanding of conditionals and should certainly be studied in more detail, with more reference to functional categories.

Chapter 10 completes the typology of conditionals offered in the book by adding a group called 'rhetorical conditionals'. It is a varied group (with five major categories and twenty subcategories), distinguished by the fact that none of the case-specifying meanings seems to apply and, additionally, there is a rhetorical role that the P-clause plays with respect to the Q-clause. Much of the data discussed here has appeared in various earlier analyses under names such as 'indirect conditionals' (Quirk *et al.*, 1985), 'relevance conditionals' (Haegeman, 1984), 'speech act conditionals' (Van der Auwera, 1986, Sweetser, 1990), 'conversational conditionals' (Dancygier, 1998), etc. but D&R's review is without a doubt the widest in scope.

Perhaps as a result of its focus on categorizing rhetorical conditionals down to the finest difference, D&R have given us a classification which does not really define their rhetorical conditionals in any specific way, except for saying that they do not fit any of the categories discussed earlier in the book. As regards the individual subcategories, some are entirely convincing (e.g. comparing conditionals), while others seem much less clear. For example, few readers will probably be convinced that we really need a category of 'reminding-P' conditionals (*If I may remind you, you've got an appointment in half an hour*). They might ask if conditionals with reminders in their Ps are not sufficiently characterized as relevance conditionals, such as *If anybody wants to see me, I'll be in the office*, where P expresses a condition which makes it relevant for the

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speaker to communicate Q. Similarly, a reader might ask why a Q of a conditional like *If he ever says that again, I think I will slap his face* is termed 'metalinguistic-Q', when the function of *I think* in its Q is to soften and hedge a threat, rather than form 'part of the language we use to speak about language' (p. 327).

In chapter 11 the reader is offered a review of possible varieties of syntactic form in conditionals. The authors discuss the degrees of syntactic integration of the P clause with the Q clause, pronominal and nominal links between the clauses, the cases where a conditional is syntactically a part of another conditional, as well as a variety of situations where one of the clauses is missing or appears to be syntactically incomplete. Later in the chapter they also present a more extensive discussion of paratactic conditionals and introduce a new category of specificational (or focusing) conditionals, in which a selected constituent receives additional focus (cf. *If anybody needs the publicity, it's him, not us*). The categories discussed here will be most useful to researchers interested in the Construction Grammar approach. The chapter provides a wealth of information on the fine formal differences among various conditional sentences and an in-depth analysis of the ways in which those differences influence interpretations would be most interesting. It would be especially useful to look at the sources of conditional interpretation in the cases where conditionality is, as D&R describe it, implicit or implied. D&R suggest, for example, that the infinitive clause in *I'd be glad to thwart him* or the gerund clause in *Doing it with one's own hands would be more satisfactory* are in fact implicit conditions. The sources of the conditional interpretation in such cases should certainly be subject to further analysis.

The next chapter refers to the concepts often discussed in the philosophical literature, those of sufficient and necessary conditions. The reader should be aware, though, that the concepts are not used here with reference to logic (and, therefore, necessity or sufficiency are not used in reference to truth of logical propositions). The main body of the chapter discusses the ways in which the actualization of P, the truth of P, or the speaker's belief in the truth of P may appear sufficient or necessary for the actualization, truth, or relevance of uttering Q. The necessity and sufficiency are thus discussed in relation to actual situations and beliefs, but also as concepts relying on the pragmatic level of interpretation, such as implicature or presupposition. For example, as D&R argue, a sentence such as *If it rains, we'll stay inside* presents the actualization of its P as sufficient, and at the same time also necessary, condition for the actualization of Q. The discussion of the sources of these aspects of interpretation focuses on the 'conditional perfection' implicature (cf. Geis & Zwicky, 1971), and on the Gricean Maxims of cooperative conversation. Additionally, the chapter discusses the sentences in which the concepts of sufficiency and necessity refer to form. Namely, in such cases the presence of P is necessary or sufficient for the interpretability or syntactic completeness of Q.

The final two chapters give the reader an account of *unless* and *even if* , respectively. The basic meaning of *unless* is described as 'in a case other than P' or 'except if P' (*Unless/Except if you pay me now, I will sue you*); also, it is shown in which cases *unless* can be interpreted as equivalent to *if not*. The most important part here is the

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discussion of *unless* in irrealis conditionals, which are divided into counterfactual and imaginary ones. In the irrealis imaginary sentences (such as *In your place I wouldn't have been happy unless I had got a first*), *unless* can be replaced with *except if*, but not with *if not*; in the irrealis counterfactual ones (*But unless I'd gone along with you, you'd have told my husband, I bet*) *unless* is interpreted as *if it hadn't been the case that*, and is interchangeable with *if not*, but not with *except if*. The chapter presents a somewhat abbreviated version of the discussion of *unless* in Declerck & Reed (2000) (see also the discussion in Dancygier, 2002).

The short last chapter on *even if* summarizes the analysis in Declerck & Reed (2001). *Even if* is analyzed as evoking the meaning of 'expected incompatibility', which may involve two meanings: that of expectation and that of nonpreclusiveness (*Even if he loves her, he won't marry her* expresses an assumption about an expectation of marriage, but it also suggests that the marriage won't happen). Also, the analysis supports the claims made in earlier literature about *even if* evoking a scale of improbability, but the values on the scale, according to D&R, are conditionals, not conditions, because the meaning of nonpreclusiveness has earlier been defined as characterizing whole conditionals, not just clauses. Finally, D&R review the functioning of *even if* in several types of conditionals.

Overall, the book fulfills some of its promises, but not all. It certainly relies on attested data more consistently than any analysis offered thus far, and is thus very useful as an exhaustive representation of the material under analysis. It can, as the authors announce, be used as reference and starting point for further research (even though some types of conditionals, such as Sweetser's 'meta-metaphoricals', are overlooked, presumably because they never appeared in their data). What the book does not offer is a general theory of conditionals which would explain the semantic and formal aspects of conditionality and account for the ubiquitous presence of conditional meanings in sentences without a conditional conjunction like *if, provided*, or *unless*. The numerous categories proposed remain independent throughout the text, and the fact that different criteria have been applied does not help in fully representing conditionals, because they are not brought together into a coherent understanding that the reader could apply to naturally occurring conditionals.

Another problem is the authors' representation of the views expressed in literature. Their list of references is rich and representative, and it will certainly be helpful to a reader wanting to get acquainted with the relevant work. The treatment of those references in the text, however, is much less helpful. I appreciate that D&R's analysis was meant to turn over a new, empirical, leaf in the work on conditionality and that their intention was to analyze the data in the way that seemed best suited to the observable facts, without any preconceived notions. But that did not have to result in *a priori* rejection of most of what had been said before and failure to acknowledge that anything of use could be learned from pre-existing analyses. If D&R quote other work, it is usually to suggest that they did not find much of value there. They consistently refer to some authors' early research in this manner, while ignoring more recent work, where different views were expressed (often more pertinent to D&R's project). The selection

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of claims to be put under discusssion is in many cases biased and misrepresents the quoted author's main point. This will not help a reader less familiar with the literature to understand the place of D&R's analysis and put it in perspective.

To sum up, D&R's book is a valuable contribution to the study of conditionals, and it will be useful as a resource to those who will want to investigate more specific areas of conditional usage, or those who will try to use the fine-grained classification proposed by D&R to start building a more general theory, possibly with crosslinguistic applications. But it is not a 'definitive' book on conditionals, in spite of its wide scope and multiple categorizations, because it leaves the reader with a rather vague understanding of what conditionality is, what its formal indicators are, and what is central to conditional interpretation. The trees have been described in all their plenitude and variety, but the forest has been overlooked.

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