

CONDITIONAL SENTENCES IN GĪKŪYŪ (KIKUYU, E51)¹

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This paper presents a morphosyntactic characterisation and a semantic classification of Gīkūyū conditional sentences. A morphosyntactic characterisation of Gīkūyū conditional constructions shows the following types of conditional sentences: a) a conditional situative, which is a type of conditional sentence without an overt conditional marker; b) conditional clauses that are lexically expressed by *kōrwō*, *ōkōrwō*, *angekōrwō*, and morphologically by *-nge-*. The different meanings and usages of these conditional markers contribute to the typology of semantic classification of Gīkūyū conditional clauses. Semantically, these can be classified under two categories: realis and irrealis conditionals. The realis category constitutes the conditional situatives and factual conditionals, while the irrealis category subsumes the other types of conditionals: a) the predictive conditionals realised by conditional situatives, *ōkōrwō*, *-nge-* and *angekōrwō*, b) the hypothetical conditionals and the counterfactual conditionals marked by *kōrwō* and *-nge-*. Exceptionally, the morphological conditional marker *-nge-* occurs in all other conditional types except conditional situatives.

Keywords: factual conditionals, Kikuyu, conditional situative, predictive, hypothetical, counterfactual, realis, irrealis

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List of abbreviations

Arabic numbers stand for noun classes

AM -assertive marker

APPL- applicative

COND-conditional marker

COP-copula

DA-discontinuous affix

DEM-demonstrative

FUT-future

FV-final vowel

IMPFT imperfect

NEG-negation

PART-particle

PFT-perfect

PROG-progressive

PRON-pronoun

PRS- present

PST-past

RCP-reciprocal

SM-subject marker

HAB-habitual

MOD-modal

OM-object marker

PASS-passive

1. INTRODUCTION

This paper is a morphosyntactic and semantic classification of conditional sentences in Gĩkũyũ (also called Kikuyu), a Bantu language spoken in central Kenya, classified as (E51) by Guthrie (1967). Few studies exist of conditional sentences in African languages, including Bantu languages. Some non-negligible literature exists already on conditionals in African and Bantu languages e.g. Saloné (1979) on Kihaya, Parker (1991) on Mundani, and Lepota (2002) on Northern Sotho. Nicolle (2017) acknowledged the rarity of studies on conditionals in the following way: “Conditional constructions constitute a complex area of enquiry that is under-represented in the literature on African languages” (Nicolle 2017: 12). The *Studies in African Languages* special issue on conditionals in African languages edited by Nicolle contains analyses of conditionals constructions of Chadic, Eastern Nilotic, Kumuz, Mande, Atlantic, Kwa, and Grassfields Bantu, and narrow Bantu languages. Bantu languages are represented by an article on Kiswahili conditionals by Mwamzandi (2017).

Regarding the specific case of Gĩkũyũ, extant Gĩkũyũ grammars, for example. Gecaga (1955), Barlow (1960), Leakey (1978), and Bennett et al. (1985) describe aspects of conditional clauses. It is worth mentioning that the grammars were meant for foreign learners of Gĩkũyũ. In relation to this, Gecaga (1955: 67) admits the difficulty of describing Gĩkũyũ conditional clauses by noting that “This part of the grammar [conditional clauses] [is] the most difficult part to explain [...]” as caution to learners of Gĩkũyũ. On his part, Leakey (1978) downplays the advice given to learners of Gĩkũyũ by some Gĩkũyũ grammars to learn several conditional tenses by heart, claiming that this is unnecessary, arguing that “The only thing that must be learned is that conditional meaning is made by putting the infix *-ngĩ-* between the pronoun and the verb stem [...]”, e.g. *a-ngĩ-rug-a* ‘if he cooks’ (Leakey 1978: 35; my emphasis, through boldface). This statement suggests that Leakey does not acknowledge the existence of other types of conditional markers in Gĩkũyũ. For their part, Bennett et al. (1985: 248) state that proper conditionals in Gĩkũyũ are introduced by *korwo*, *aakorwo* and *angikorwo*, all of which mean ‘if’. Clearly, Bennett et al. do not include *-nge-* among the markers of conditional sentences in Gĩkũyũ. That seems to be because the authors did not take into account all the syntactic features of some Gĩkũyũ conditional sentences. Barlow

(1960) offers a detailed description of conditional sentences, but does not classify them syntactically or semantically. However, the grammar remains the most comprehensive as far as the description of Gĩkũyũ conditionals is concerned.

It transpires from the preceding paragraph that existing literature in conditional sentences in Gĩkũyũ lacks a comprehensive and unified description of them; that is, a description that covers both morphosyntactic aspects and semantic ones. That is what this paper attempts to offer.

2. THE MORPHOSYNTACTIC CLASSIFICATION OF GĨKŪYŪ CONDITIONAL SENTENCES

According to Kroeger (2019: 346), “a conditional sentence is a bi-clausal structure of the form *if p (then) q*”. Accordingly, a conditional sentence has an antecedent clause (the *if p* clause) or the protasis, and a consequence clause (the *then q* clause) or the apodosis. Languages indicate conditionality lexically by free morphemes, by morphological inflections or by “purely syntactic means”, whereby the conditional sense is not lexically or inflectionally indicated (Bhatt & Pancheva 2006: 642).

Gĩkũyũ uses the verbal inflectional infix *-nge-* to mark conditional mood. The language has the word *ɔkɔrwɔ* (and its variant forms ‘*a-korũo*’, ‘*o-korũo*’, ‘*o-ngorũo*’, ‘*a-nge-korũo*’, and ‘*a-ngorũo*’.²

The conditional sentences to be discussed are the following: conditional situatives, the *-nge-* conditionals, the *kɔrwɔ* conditionals, *ɔkɔrwɔ* conditionals, *angekɔrwɔ* conditionals and finally the concessive conditional introduced by *ɔna*.

2.1 The conditional situatives

There are different types of situatives: counterexpectation situative, durative situative, perfective situative, and conditional situative.³ Situatives are subordinate temporal clauses that indicate a state of affairs in relation to the event

² They are pronounced as indicated between slashes here: *akorũo* /akɔrɔɔ/, *okorũo* /ɔkɔrɔɔ/, *ongorũo* /ɔngɔrɔɔ/ and *angorũo* /angɔrɔɔ/. The variant forms are dialectal. Gĩkũyũ speakers from Nyeri (in the north of the central province) only use *akɔrwɔ*, while those from Kiambu (in the south) use *ɔkɔrwɔ* and (*a-*) *ɔngɔrwɔ*.

³ For more on situatives in other Bantu languages, see van der Wal (2009, 2012), Guérois (2017), Petzell (2008), Devos (2008) for discussion of situatives in different Bantu languages.

in the main clause. A conditional situative is a type of conditional sentence in which a situation that it refers in underspecified whose interpretation is that of a temporal or logical condition ('if/when X does Y') (van der Wal 2012: 240). This ambiguous interpretation means that there is not dedicated morpheme that indicates conditionality.

As mentioned in the introduction, Gĩkũyũ indicates conditionality lexically with *kɔrwɔ*, *ɔkɔrwɔ*, *angekɔrwɔ*, and *ɔna*, and morphologically with *-nge-*. However, the language also marks conditionality without dedicated morphemes, but in purely syntactic means, described as the "bare conditionals" (Bhatt & Pancheva 2006: 679) or "non-canonical conditionals" (Liu 2019: 1-2) since they lack overt conditional markers, although they have a conditional. The sentence in (1) is an example of a bare Gĩkũyũ conditional.

(1)

| | | |
|----------------------|--------------|------------------------|
| <i>Mw-a-cɛmani-a</i> | <i>na-kɛ</i> | <i>mo-mo-geithi-ɛ.</i> |
| 2SM-FUT-meet-FV | with-him | 2SM-1OM-greet-FV |

'If/when you meet him, greet him.'

Conditional situatives are future-oriented. Example (1) has a conditional meaning, thanks to the future tense prefix *-a-*, which is reserved for some conditional and temporal clauses (Barlow 1960: 55). When used in sentences such as (1), the tense marker does not co-occur with a morpheme meaning 'if' or 'when', but the interpretation is either temporal or conditional.

Thompson et al. (2007) argued that *if-when* conditionals are predictive conditionals. Since the conditional situative in (1) exclusively uses the future tense, and it predicts a future possibility, it qualifies for a predictive conditional based on Thompson and co-authors' thinking.

Sentence (2a) has a temporal and conditional adverbial interpretation. A type of conditional situative in Gĩkũyũ uses particle '*wɔna*' which means both 'when' and 'if' in (2b). As with other adverbial clauses, conditional situatives allow inversion of the apodosis (the main clause in a conditional sentence) and the protasis (the clause containing the conditional (*if*) clause), as in (2c) from (2a):

(2)

a) *Tw-a-kiny-a* *tɛnɛ* *ne* *to-ko-hor-a* *thimo.*
 2SM-FUT-arrive-FV early AM 2SM-FUT-beat-FV 9.phone
 ‘If/When we arrive early, we will call.’

b) *Wɔna tw-a-kiny-a* *tɛnɛ* *ne to-ko-hor-a* *thimo.*
 PART 2SM-FUT-arrive-FV early AM 2SM-FUT-beat-FV 9.phone
 ‘If/When we arrive early, we will call.’

c) *Ne to-ko-hor-a* *thimo* *tw-a-kiny-a* *tɛnɛ*
 AM 2SM-FUT-beat-FV 9.phone 2SM-FUT-arrive-FV early
 ‘We will call, if /when we arrive early.’

Conditional situatives express negation either by a negative verb *-aga-* ‘fail’ (3a), or by the subordinate negative morpheme *-ta-* in the protasis (3b-c). When negation is marked in the apodosis, negation *-ti-*, the matrix clause negation, is used as in (3c).

(3)

a) *Kw-ag-a* *ku-ur-a* *ne* *to-go-thi-e* *mo-gonda.*
 17-fail-FV 15-rain-FV AM 2SM-FUT-go-FV 3-farm
 ‘If it does not rain (if it fails to rain), we will go to the farm.’

b) *Go-ta-ngi-ur-a* *ne* *to-go-thi-e* *mo-gonda.*
 17-NEG-MOD-rain-FV AM 2SM-FUT-go-FV 3-farm
 ‘If it does not rain, we will go to the farm.’

c) *Mo-ta-cɛmani-a* *na-kɛ* *mo-ti-mo-gɛithi-a.*
 2SM-NEG-meet-FV with-him 2SM-NEG-2OM-greet-FV
 ‘If you don’t meet him, you will not greet him.’ / ‘Unless you meet him you will not greet him.’

2.2 The *-nge-* conditionals

Gĩkũyũ indicates also conditionality by an inflectional conditional verbal infix *-ngĩ-* [-ŋe-], in what I call ‘*-nge-* conditional’. The infix is isomorphic with modal prefix *-nge-* ‘could/would’ in (4). The conditional *-nge-* is compatible with present, past, future tense forms. The tense marker is replicated in the protasis and the apodosis, e.g. PST *-a-* in (4).

(4)

I-nge-a-mu- ɔn-a *ne* *i-nge-a-mo-er-a.*
 1SM-COND-PST-1OM-see-FV AM 1SM-MOD-PST-1OM-tell-FV
 ‘If I had seen him, I would have told him.’ (Barlow 1960: 152)

The *-nge-* conditional allows negation both in the protasis and the apodosis: in the protasis negation is expressed by *-ta-*, while in the apodosis it is expressed by *-ti-*.

(5)

Ma-ta-nge-et-wɔ *ko-ndo* *ma-ti-thi-ag-a.*
 2SM-NEG-COND-call-PASS 17-place 2SM-NEG-go-HAB-FV
 ‘If they are not invited somewhere, they do not go.’

2.3 The *kɔrwɔ* conditionals⁴

Another type of conditional sentence in Gĩkũyũ is introduced by the conditional particle *kɔrwɔ*, as in (6). *kɔrwɔ* may occur initially (6a-b), or medially as part of inflection (6c).

⁴ Other than expressing conditionality, the particle *kɔrwɔ* has the aspectual function meaning ‘already/just’, as in:

(i) *Tw-a-kɔrwɔ tw-a-re-a.*
 2SM-PST-COP 2SM-PST-eat-FV
 ‘We have just eaten.’

This kind of conditional-copula isomorphy is not unique to Gĩkũyũ. Biloa & Fotso (2017) report an isomorphic conditional and copula in Ghɔmálá’ (a Grassfields Bantu language, Cameroon), while Traugott (1985: 290-292) demonstrated that lexical conditional markers could develop from modals, copulas, interrogatives, and time words such as *when*.

(6)

- a) *Kɔrwɔ mw-a-cɛmania na-kɛ mw-a-mo-gɛithi-a.*
 COND 2SM-FUT-meet with-him 2SM-FUT-10M-greet-FV
 ‘If you met him, you would greet him.’
- b) *Kɔrwɔ mw-a-cɛmania na-kɛ ne mo-nge-a-mo-gɛith-a.*
 COND 2SM-PST-meet-FV with-him AM 2SM-MOD-PST-10M-greet-FV
 ‘If you had met him, you would have greeted him.’
- c) *Mw-a-kɔrwɔ ne mo-go-thi-e ndonyo mo-nj-er-ɛ.*
 2SM-FUT-COND AM 2SM-FUT-go-FV 9.market 2SM-10M-tell-FV
 ‘If you will go to the market, inform me.’

The conditional marker *kɔrwɔ* co-occurs with *naare*, a particle that contains a nuance of a wish. According to Benson (1964: 278), *naare* indicates doubt, uncertainty (that is the idea of ‘perhaps’), and also possibility, which makes it more of a modal marker. When *kɔrwɔ* and *naare* are used together, they express a desire or wish that remains unmet or unrealised, as in (7), where the speaker was neither aware that someone was going somewhere, nor that he had sent someone.

(7)

- Naare kɔrwɔ ne n-go-mɛny-ag-a ne a-ra-thi-e nde-mo-tom-ɛ.*
 PART COP AM 1SM-PST-know-PROG-FV AM 1SM-PRS-go-FV 1SM-10M-send-FV
 ‘I wish I had known he was going out, I would send him.’

When it comes to negation, the *Kɔrwɔ* conditional only takes the main clause negation affix *-ti-*; it never takes the subordinate negation *-ta-*, which is the affix for relative and adverbial clauses. The NEG particle can be indicated in both the protasis and apodosis, if negation is intended in both, as in (8).

(8)

- Kɔrwɔ to-ti-na-rem-a to-ti-nge-a-reh-wɔ.*
 COND 2SM-NEG-PST-dig-FV 2SM-NEG-MOD-PST-pay-PASS
 ‘If they are not invited somewhere, they do not go.’

2.4 The *ɔkɔrwɔ* conditionals

Another lexically expressed conditional is the *ɔkɔrwɔ*-conditional.⁵ The examples in (9) show that the *ɔkɔrwɔ*-conditional presents a possible actuality of the events in the apodoses; such events have the potential to happen. This type of conditional occurs with all possible Gĩkũyũ tenses. However, when negation is introduced in the apodosis, an additional future marker *-ka-* is also added (9b).

(9)

- a) *ɔkɔrwɔ ne mo-go-cɛmania na-ke mo-mo-geithi-ε.*
 COND AM 2SM-FUT-meet with-him 2SM-10M-greet-FV
 ‘If you meet him, greet him.’
- b) *ɔkɔrwɔ ne mo-go-cɛmania na-ke mo-ti-ka-mo-geithi-ε.*
 COND AM 2SM-FUT-meet with-him 2SM-NEG-FUT-10M-greet-FV
 ‘If you meet him, do not greet him.’
- c) *ɔkɔrwɔ ne ma-gɔ-ɔk-a ne to-ka-ma-tom-a na i-heɔ ci-ito.*
 COND AM 2SM-FUT-come-FV AM 2SM-FUT-2OM-send-FV COM 7-gift 7-our
 ‘If they come, we will send them with our gifts.’

2.5 The *angekɔrwɔ* conditionals

Morphologically, *angekɔrwɔ* is a compound conditional marker combining two other conditional markers mentioned above, namely *-nge-* and *-kɔrwɔ*. Unlike the other conditional markers, *angekɔrwɔ*, optionally allows person-marking to attach to it. For instance, (10a) does not indicate a subject prefix, but (10b) contains the plural 2nd person subject prefix *mo-*.

(10)

- a) *Angekɔrwɔ w-ee nyomba ne to-ko-he-tok-er-a ha-u.*

⁵ This conditional marker has other variant, dialectal forms: *angɔrwɔ*, *ɔngɔrwɔ* and *akɔrwɔ*. These variants are mostly used by speakers of the varieties spoken in the Nyeri and Murang’a regions of Central Kenya. The *ɔkɔrwɔ* form is prevalent in the Kiambu (Kikabete) dialect, which is that of the present author.

COND 1SM.COP 9.house AM 2SM-FUT-pass-APPL-FV 16-there
 ‘If you are in the house, we will pass there/pass by.’

- b) *Mo-nge-kɔrwɔ m-we nyomba ne to-ko-he-tok-er-a ha-u.*
 2SM-COND-COP 2SM-COP 9.house AM 2SM-FUT-pass-APPL-FV 16- there
 ‘If you are in the house, we will pass there/pass by.’

In relation to negation, the *angedkɔrwɔ* conditional takes NEG *-ti-* in both the protasis and the apodosis clauses (11a). Example (11b) contains subordinate NEG *-ta-*, which results in an *unless*-conditional clause. In (11b), the subordinate negation morpheme *-ta-* follows the plural person marker *ma-* ‘they’. Note that the lower clause contains *-ti-*, the main clause negation marker.

(11)

- a) *Angekɔrwɔ mo-ti-r-ɛnd-a mo-ti-ka-gor-ɛ.*
 COND 2SM-NEG-PRS-want-FV 2SM-NEG-FUT-buy-FV
 ‘If you don’t want, (then) don’t buy.’
- b) *Ma-ta-angedkɔrwɔ ne ma-a-r-ut-a wera to-ti-nge-igu-an-a.*
 2SM-NEG-COND AM 2SM-PRS-work-FV 9.work 2SM-NEG-MOD-hear-RCP-FV
 ‘Unless they are working, we cannot be at peace.’

2.6. The *ɔna* conditionals

Concessive conditionals are the types of conditionals that indicate a concession, “against which the proposition in the main clause is contrasted” (Thompson et al. 2007: 262). Thompson et al. distinguish between definite and indefinite concessives. On the one hand, definite concessives are marked by a concessive clause subordinator. On the other, indefinite concessives bear a “no matter what or ‘whatever’” meaning, and are usually accompanied by an “indefinite pronoun or question word” (Thompson et al. 2007: 262). Gikūyū concessive conditionals belong

to the definite type, and they are marked by *ɔna* ('even if').⁶ These conditionals are the most liberal of all Gīkūyū conditionals, since particle *ɔna* 'even if' occurs with all the other conditional types discussed above: conditional situative (12a), *ɔkɔrwɔ* (12b), *angekɔrwɔ* (12c), *kɔrwɔ* (12d), and *-nge*-conditional (12e).

(12)

- a) *ɔna m-ɔ-ɔk-a to-ti-ko-ma-ar-er-i-a.*
 even 2SM-FUT-come-FV 2SM-NEG-FUT-2OM-talk-APPL-DA-FV
 'Even if/when they come, we will not talk to them.'
- b) *ɔna ɔkɔrwɔ ne m-ɔ-ɔk-a to-ti-ko-ma-ar-er-i-a.*
 even COND AM 2SM-PST-come-FV 2SM-NEG-FUT-2OM-talk-APPL-DA-FV
 'Even if they have come, we will not talk to them.'
- c) *ɔna angekɔrwɔ ne m-ɔ-ɔk-a to-ti-ko-ma-ar-er-i-a.*
 even COND AM 2SM-PST-come-FV 2SM-NEG-FUT-2OM-talk-APPL-DA-FV
 'Even if they have come, we will not talk to them.'
- d) *ɔna kɔrwɔ ne m-ɔ-ɔk-a to-ti-nge-a-ma-ar-er-i-a.*
 even COND AM 2SM-PST-come-FV 2SM-NEG-MOD-FUT-2OM-talk-APPL-DA-FV
 'Even if they had come, we would not have talked to them.'
- e) *ɔna ma-nge-ɔk-ir-ε to-ti-nge-a-ma-ar-er-i-a.*
 even 2SM-COND-come-PFT-FV 2SM-NEG-MOD-FUT-2OM-talk-APPL-DA-FV
 'Even if they came, we would not have talked to them.'

Concessive conditionals such those in (12) are considered unreal conditionals by Thompson et al. (2007: 262), because they express unreal (predictive or hypothetical) situations. The examples in (12) are predictive and hypotheticals, since none of the events in main clauses are realised, which agrees with Thompson et al. (2007). However, such an analysis is difficult to claim for all concessive conditional clauses in (12), considering that the concessive subordinator freely occurs with all the types of conditional markers. More so, the meaning of example (12b) is not hypothetical, because the conditional event ('coming') has happened,

⁶ This marker contains *ɔ* and *na*. In Gīkūyū, *ɔ-* refers to pronouns 'they/them', the adverbs 'just' and 'still', while the *na* is a conjunction 'and' and comitative 'with'. When combined *ɔ* and *na* mean 'also', 'although' and 'even if'. The concern here is with its 'even if' meaning.

and it is the future event ('greeting) that has not happened. Nevertheless, Thompson et al.'s claim is plausible for the other examples.

Other than these event-based conditionals discussed so far, there are other conditionals that are considered 'marginal', because "there is no relationship between two extralinguistic events [...] there is no conditional relationship between them" (Athanasiadou & Dirven 1996: 614). In marginal conditionals, unlike an event-based conditional, the protases do not set the condition for the events in the apodoses. Therefore, they are not conditional clauses in the strictest sense of the word. The examples in (13) are types of marginal conditionals in Gĩkũyũ.

Marginal conditionals take the forms of what are commonly referred to as 'relevant conditionals' or 'biscuit conditionals' or 'speech act conditionals' (Kroeger 2019: 366-367). Biscuit conditionals are offers more than they are conditionals. For instance (13a) is an offer and (13b) is a speech act conditional that couches a threat cum warning. Conditionals do express speech acts such as warnings, threats, advice, extortions, negotiations, offers, proposals, etc. (Wunderlich 1977), and (13) illustrates this in Gĩkũyũ.

(13)

a) ɔkɔrwɔ w-e mo-hot-u h-ε-na iriɔ nyongo.

COND 1SM-COP 1-hungry-FV 16-COP-have 5.food 9.pot

'If you are hungry, there is food in the pot.'

b) ɔkɔrwɔ ne nie n-gor-ag-a iriɔ mo-ti-go-itaang-a.

COND AM 1.PRON 1SM-buy-PROG-FV 5.food 2SM-NEG-PRS-waste-FV

'If I am the one who buys food, you will not waste it.'

Example (13a) is an offer for food to someone who might be in need, and (13b) is a kind of a warning cum threat against wasting food. What is evident in the examples is that there is no the 'if p (then) q' biclausal pattern that characterises conditional sentences as laid out by Kroeger (2019: 346). It is worth noting that only *ɔkɔrwɔ* and *angekɔrwɔ* can express these types of conditionals.

The morphosyntax of the Gĩkũyũ conditional sentences has a bearing on their semantic classification, since the different conditional markers determine the meaning of the sentences in which they occur.

3. THE SEMANTIC CLASSIFICATION OF GĨKŪYŪ CONDITIONAL SENTENCES

On the semantic classification of conditionals, Tynan & Lavin (1997: 115) write that a speaker's choice of a conditional marker indicates their assumptions about the truth of the protasis. However, the semantic classification of all conditionals cannot be solely determined by their morphosyntax. For instance, Saloné (1979) wonders whether Swahili and Chagga predictive conditionals are real or unreal conditionals based on their morphosyntax. Thus, it is generally accepted that a single morphosyntactic form of a conditional clause may express different semantic conditional types.

Of course, the variant syntactic and semantic nature of conditional sentences makes it difficult for a straightforward semantic classification. Taylor (1997: 289) notes the kind of 'fuzziness' encountered when characterising conditional clauses. Declerck and Reed (2001: 18) observed that the criteria and the types and subtypes of conditionals are large, such that it is almost impossible to have "a genuine common denominator". Nevertheless, a cross-linguistic semantic classification of conditionals is possible, and it has been done for many languages.

Thompson et al. (2007) suggest a two-way classification of conditionals: reality conditionals (subsuming present, habitual/generic, and past) and unreality (imaginative) conditionals (subsuming hypothetical, counterfactual and predictive). Yule (1998: 124-126) distinguishes between real and unreal conditionals. Real conditionals express a factual relationship (factual conditionals), and predictive conditionals that predict. Unreal conditionals present unlikely events (hypothetical conditionals) and counterfactual conditionals, which are contrary to known facts. Yule's factual conditionals subsume the present, habitual/generic, past conditionals (classified as real conditionals by Thompson et al. (2007)). Thompson et al. (2007) classify predictive conditionals as unreal conditional, while Yule (1998) places them under real conditionals. However, the defining properties of predictive conditionals are similar for both authors. They both acknowledge that predictive conditionals, though semantically unreal, may be syntactically "real" or "unreal" in some languages (Thompson et al. 2007: 258). Yule himself acknowledges that the "possibility" associated with predictive may be

strong or weak. The semantic classification in this paper borrows from both Yule (1998) and Thompson et al. (2007).

Gīkūyū conditional sentences can be classified into four semantic categories: a) factual, b) predictive, c) hypothetical, and d) counterfactual conditionals. The following paragraphs discuss each category separately.

3.1 Factual conditionals

Factual conditionals “express relationship between two events as generally happening or normally being true in the circumstances described” (Yule 1998: 124). Factual conditionals kind of present facts about situations, and these facts are ‘real’ in the sense that they are provable. For example, in (14) below, it is a known fact that the consequence (*it will melt*) will happen, if the condition (*If you put ice on fire*) is realised.

(14) *If you put ice on fire, it will melt.*

According to Thompson et al. (2007: 255), factual conditionals are ‘real conditionals because they refer to “‘real’ present, habitual/generic or past situations”. They assume an implication that is contained in the protasis, which is then realised in the apodosis. Factual conditionals may be in the present tense (15a), the habitual/generic (aspect) tense in (15b) and by the past tense in a situative conditional in (15c). Lexically, factual conditionals may be rendered by *ɔkɔrwɔ* as in (15a), and morphologically by *-nge-* in (15b), which is also applicable in (15c).

(15)

a) *ɔkɔrwɔ ne ko-ra-ur-a hama ne njigo.*

COND AM 17-PRS-rain-FV 9.tent COP 9.wet

‘If it is raining, the tent is wet.’

b) *O-nge-tɛm-a mo-te me-ri ne o-om-ag-a.*

1SM-COND-cut-FV 3-tree 4-root AM 3SM-dry-HAB-FV

‘If you cut the roots of a tree, it dries up.’

c) *Tɛnɛ mo-ndo a-a-iy-a ne a-a-reh-ag-i-ɔ ne ke-ama.*

early 1-person 1SM-PST-steal-FV AM 1SM-PST-pay-HAB-CAUS-PASS
by 7-council

‘In the past if /when a person stole, he was fined by the council of
elders.’

(Barlow 1960: 163)

3.2 Predictive conditionals

An event in predictive conditionals are presented as a possibility in future, and whose possibility depends on the prior occurrence of the event in the protasis (Yule 1998: 124). They are semantically unreal because they predict a situation that is yet to happen (Thompson et al. 2007: 258). The examples in (16) predict that the hearers will pass the examination, if they study well. Except for *kōrwō* conditional, all the other Gīkūyū conditional forms discussed in section 2 are used in predictive conditionals. The future tense *-ka-* in the apodosis is a common denominator in predictive conditionals. The protases in (16), except for (16c), have future tense marker. (16a) is a conditional situative that expresses a predictive conditional. This type of conditional is the only one that contains the present tense, which has futuristic interpretation.

(16)

a) *Mw-a-thōm-a wēga ne mo-ka-hetok-a ke-gēriō.*
2SM-PRS-read-FV well AM 2SM-FUT-pass-FV 7-exam
‘If you study well, you will pass the exam.’

b) *Ōkōrwō ne mo-go-thōm-a wēga ne mo-ka-hetuk-a ke-gēriō.*
COND AM 2SM-FUT-read-FV well AM 2SM-FUT-pass-FV 7-exam
‘If you study well, you will pass the exam.’

c) *Mo-nge-thōm-a wēga ne mo-ka-hetok-a ke-gēriō.*
2SM-COND-read-FV well AM 2SM-FUT-pass-FV 7-exam
‘If you study well, you will pass the exam.’

- d) *Angekōrwō ne mo-go-thōm-a wēga ne mo-ka-hetuk-a ke-gēriō.*
 COND AM 2SM-FUT-read-FV well AM 2SM-FUT-pass-FV 7-exam

Although the protases of *angekōrwō* and *ōkōrwō* conditionals are compatible with most of the tense forms, their apodoses must be in future tense as seen in (16b) and (16c). For its part, *-nge-* is only compatible with the future in the protasis, since changing it to a past tense e.g. (*-a-*), as in *Mo-nge-a thōm-irē wēga ...* ('If you had studied well ...'), would require the modal *-nge-*, as in *ne mo-nge-ka-hetoka ke-gēriō* 'you would pass the exam'. The conditionals *angekōrwō* and *kōrwō* would be unacceptable. Thus, it would be unacceptable to say **angekōrwō / *kōrwō mw-a-thōm-a wēga ne mo-ka-hetok-a ke-gēriō*: 'If you study well, you will pass the exam'. Note that *kōrwō* is acceptable, as in *Kōrwō mw-a-thōm-a wēga mw-a-hetok-a ke-gēriō*: 'If you studied well, you would pass the exam.'

3.3 Hypothetical conditionals

Hypothetical conditionals belong to the unreal imaginative semantic type in Thompson et al.'s (2007) typology that denote a 'what-might-be' scenario (Thompson et al. 2007: 256). Salomé (1979: 66) explains that a hypothetical protasis introduces an imaginary proposition that is unrealized at the time of utterance, although "it is not assumed to be false". In other words, hypotheticals pattern thus: "if X happened, Y **would** happen" (Wierzbicka 1997: 26, my emphasis, through boldface).

(17)

- a) *I-nge-ōn-a nyōka nd-a-me-or-ag-a.*
 1SM-COND-see-FV 9.snake 1SM-MOD-9OM-kill-IMPFT-FV
 'If I saw a snake, I would kill it.'
- b) *To-nge-ōn-a mbēca tw-a-gor-a mo-gonda.*
 2SM-COND-see-FV 9.money 2SM-PRS-buy-FV 3-farm
 'If we got money, we would buy a farm.'
- c) *Kōrwō tu-ōn-a mbēca tw-a-gor-a mo-gonda.*

COND 2SM-see-FV 9.money 2SM-PRS-buy-FV 3-farm

‘If we found money, we would buy a farm.’

d) *l-nge-ɔn-a* *Ngai* *nd-a-mo-gɛithi-a.*

1SM-COND-see-FV 1.God 1SM-PRS-fly-FV

‘If I saw God, I would greet Him.’

Other than answering the question “*what would happen if ...?*” hypothetical conditionals also express wishes and desires (Yule 1998: 128). Examples (18b) and (18c) are wishes realised by *-nge-* and *kɔrwɔ*. Although the events in the protases’ events are unrealised, they are not impossible. Hypotheticality is a matter of degree (Comrie 1986). The lower the hypotheticality, the greater the possibility such as in (17a); and the higher the hypotheticality, the lower the possibility such as in (17d). Note that conditionals *angedkɔrwɔ* and *ɔkɔrwɔ* do not express hypothetical conditionals, because they do not express imaginative situations, an indication that they are not hypotheticals.

The examples in (18) resonate with idea of hypotheticality as a continuum by Comrie (1986). To Comrie, “hypotheticality” means ‘the degree of probability of realization of the situations referred to in the conditional’. In other words, “greater hypotheticality” means “lower probability” and “lower hypotheticality” means “greater probability” (Comrie 1986: 88). Thus, (17a) has lower hypotheticality compared to (17d), which has a greater hypotheticality, hence lower possibility. Thus, a factually possible sentence would represent the lowest degree of hypotheticality, while a hypothetical or counterfactual clause would represent the highest degree.

3.4 Counterfactual conditionals

Counterfactual conditionals express “situations that *didn’t* happen or *couldn’t* happen”; they denote a “what might have been” scenario (Thompson et al. 2007: 256). Thus, the protasis in a counterfactual conditional is assumed to be false (Saloné 1979: 66), or presupposed to be false (Barwise 1986: 88), cited in Wierzbicka (1997: 28), as depicted in (18), where the event in the protasis did not happen, hence the event in the apodosis could not and did not happen.

(18) *If you had come earlier, you would have met him.*

Ordinarily, counterfactual conditionals are imaginary, as in (19a), where it is imagined that a human being can become an angel in order to fly, hence the subjunctive form in the English translation. The antecedents in (19b-c), although possible and likely events (i.e. that someone can plough and plant), are presupposed to false, since the events in them are presumed not to have happened. Hence, the consequent events in the sentences are equally assumed not to have happened.

(19)

- a) *To-nge-re/Kɔrwɔ to-re a-raika tu-ɔmbok-a.*
 2SM-COND-COP/ COND 2SM-COP 2-angel 2SM-fly-FV
 ‘If we were angels, we would fly.’
- b) *Kɔrwɔ ne a-ra-rem-et-ε ne to-nge-ra-hand-ir-ε*
 COND AM 2SM-PST-plough-PFT-FV AM 2SM-MOD-PST-plant-PFT-FV
 ‘If s/he had ploughed, we would have planted.’
- c) *A-nge-ra-rem-et-ε ne to-nge-ra-hand-ir-ε.*
 1SM-COND-PST-plough-PFT-FV AM 2SM-MOD-PST-plant-PFT-FV
 ‘If s/he had ploughed, we would have planted.’

Gīkūyū counterfactual conditionals are exclusively indicated by *kɔrwɔ* and *-nge-*, and they can be used interchangeably, albeit with some morphosyntactic alterations, in the sentences in (19).

As the examples above show, the distinction between Gīkūyū hypothetical and counterfactual conditionals is very thin. First, syntactically they are indicated by identical morphemes: *-nge-* and *kɔrwɔ*. Second, temporal aspects are the same in the two semantic types. This is not unique to Gīkūyū, though: Thompson et al. (2007: 260) report that hypothetical and counterfactual conditionals in two North American languages: Isthmus Zapotec (an Oto-Manguean language) and Luseño (a Uto-Aztecan language) are not morphologically distinguishable.

To end this section, below is a table summarising the semantic classification of the Gĩkũyũ conditional constructions and the lexical and morphological forms that mark them.

Table 1: Semantic classification of Gĩkũyũ conditional constructions

| Factual | Predictive | Hypothetical | Counterfactual |
|---------------|-----------------------------------|--------------|----------------|
| <i>-nge-</i> | <i>-nge-</i> | <i>-nge-</i> | <i>-nge-</i> |
| <i>ɔkɔrwɔ</i> | <i>ɔkɔrwɔ</i> <i>angekɔrwɔ</i> | <i>kɔrwɔ</i> | <i>kɔrwɔ</i> |

All the Gĩkũyũ conditional markers (except the concessive marker) discussed in this paper have a temporal origin. For example, the conditional morpheme *-nge-* has an isomorphic modality marker *-nge-* ‘can/would’. Traugott (1985: 293) asserts that conditional markers emanating from modals are easy to explain because “Conditionals are about conceivable possibilities, whether ‘real’, ‘imagined’, or ‘counterfactual’, may directly motivate the use of epistemic modals in the choice of a marker to signal a conditional clause”. This observation may be used to explain the prevalence of the morphological conditional *-nge-* across all types of Gĩkũyũ conditionals.

The other conditional marker that has temporal origins is the conditional root *-kɔrwɔ*, which has a copula verb function and is also an aspectual marker expressing the recent perfect, or the idea that something has just happened or it has just been completed, see example (i) in footnote (6), while in (7) and in (10b), *kɔrwɔ* functions as a copula ‘be’. The difference between the copula/aspectual usage and the conditional usage does not depend on the position of *kɔrwɔ* in a sentence, but on the fact that when it is used as an auxiliary it accepts aspectual markers such as *-ir-*, *-et-* and *-ag-* as well as well the passive *-wɔ*. However, the conditional does not take aspectual suffixes, and the passive suffix *-wɔ* is lexicalised on the conditional marker. In addition, the conditional version of *kɔrwɔ* can be in clause initial or medial positions. However, *ɔkɔrwɔ* conditional marker, including its dialectal variants *akɔrwɔ* *ɔngɔrwɔ* and *angɔrwɔ*, exclusively occurs clause-initially because it has prefix *ɔ*. It may be because the prefix has pronominal features. The related

conditional, *angekərwə*, is a compound conditional marker composed of pronominal prefix *a-* (which can be replaced by other pronominal prefixes), morphological conditional *-nge-*, and *-kərwə*. Similar to *əkərwə*, *angekərwə* occurs clause initially. As for its semantics, *angekərwə* is limited to predictive conditionals.

Finally, the temporal/conditional particle *wəna* 'when/if' associated with situative conditionals such as (2b) also has a verbal and temporal origin. Although conditionals also originate from copulas, the temporal source of lexical conditional is the most common (Traugott 1985: 291-292). A cognitive semantic map for conditional markers in Gīkūyū should show the (inter) relationship between the described conditional markers and modality, copula and auxiliary verbs, and tense and aspect in Gīkūyū. Although worthy, such an undertaking is relegated to the future.

4. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

This paper set out to discuss the morphosyntactic and semantic classification of Gīkūyū conditional sentences. The discussion revealed that Gīkūyū has the so-called conditional situatives. These conditionals have both a temporal and conditional interpretation, but lack a dedicated conditional marker. The language has other conditional clauses lexically marked by *kərwə*, *əkərwə*, *angekərwə*, and by a morphological inflection *-nge-*. Further, it has concessive conditionals indicated by *əna*. All the other types of conditionals can become concessive conditionals with the addition of *əna*.

The different conditional markers are semantically distinct: first, Gīkūyū has factual conditionals indicated by *əkərwə* and *-nge-*; they are associated with real facts of present, habitual or generic events and past events, and, thus, belong to the realis type of conditionals in Thompson et al.'s (2007) typology. Second, it has situative conditionals, which express factual conditionals. Third, it has predictive conditionals, which predict a situation that is yet to happen, and, thus, belong to the irrealis semantic type. Fourth, Gīkūyū has hypothetical conditionals, which are unreal conditionals. Fifth, it has counterfactual conditionals, which express

situations that did not happen. Both the hypothetical and counterfactual conditionals are *kɔrwɔ* and *-nge-*.

Since the morphological conditional marker *-nge-* is found across all the semantic conditional types, this fact may be a pointer that it could be the original primary conditional marker in the language. Such a supposition invites research in the future. The present paper set out to give a unified morphosyntactic and semantic classification of Gĩkũyũ conditional clauses. It did not discuss discourse-pragmatic aspects of conditional clauses. Consequently, I suggest that in future, it is worth investigating information structuring in Gĩkũyũ conditional clauses especially the effects of the main clause phenomena.

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