Comparative Study of Conditional Clauses in Nafsan

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Issue Co-editors: Brenda H. Boerger and Paul Unger
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Abstract

In this paper I offer an analysis of conditional clauses in Nafsan (South Efate) in a comparative Oceanic perspective. By using the data from the corpus of Nafsan (Thieberger 1995–2018), and more recent fieldwork data (Krajinović 2017), I reanalyze and complete certain aspects of the description of conditional clauses in Nafsan by Thieberger (2006). I describe the attested morphosyntactic and semantic types of conditional clauses, by focusing on the conditional and TMA markers, and combinations thereof, available in conditional clauses. I also report on the newly discovered counterfactual marker mer. Conditional clauses in Nafsan can be marked by conditional and potential markers f and fla, or the canonically conditional expression i=f-wel kin (Thieberger 2006). I argue that the former can be analyzed as paratactic conditionals and the latter as subordinate conditionals. Finally, I compare these findings to similar strategies found in other Oceanic languages.

The Conference On Oceanic Linguistics (COOL) is a one week conference held every two to three years. Only one session runs at a time, so people can attend all the presentations. Participants look forward to these times of focused interaction and renewed friendships. July 10–15, 2017, the 10th Conference On Oceanic Linguistics (COOL10), Honiara, Solomon Islands, was co-sponsored by the Solomon Islands National Museum, led by Tony Heorake, Museum Director, and the Solomon Islands Translation Advisory Group (SITAG), led by Karen Ashley, as Conference Coordinator. COOL10 papers are published as a mini-series in SIL LCDD, issue numbers 41–50, as Proceedings of the conference. The co-editors of these issues also have connections to SITAG: Brenda Boerger, as a former member, and Paul Unger, as a current member.
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<thead>
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<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>first person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>second person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>third person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AUX</td>
<td>auxiliary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BEN</td>
<td>benefactive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BI</td>
<td>Bislama loan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CF</td>
<td>counterfactual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMP</td>
<td>complementizer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMPL</td>
<td>completive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COND</td>
<td>Conditional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DP</td>
<td>Direct possession</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DU</td>
<td>Dual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EXCL</td>
<td>Exclusive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INCL</td>
<td>Inclusive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IRR</td>
<td>irrealis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEG1</td>
<td>first marker of discontinuous negation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEG2</td>
<td>second marker of discontinuous negation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OBJ</td>
<td>object</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PL</td>
<td>plural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POSS</td>
<td>possessive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POT</td>
<td>potential</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRF</td>
<td>perfect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRO</td>
<td>proclitic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PROG</td>
<td>progressive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSP</td>
<td>prospective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REAL</td>
<td>realis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REL</td>
<td>relative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SBJ</td>
<td>subject</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SG</td>
<td>singular</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TR</td>
<td>transitive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>epenthetic vowel preceding suffixes of direct possession</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1 Introduction

Nafsan [erk], also known as South Efate, is an Oceanic language of Vanuatu, classified as belonging to the Central Vanuatu linkage by Lynch et al. (2011:112). Nafsan is spoken by 5,000–6,000 people in the outskirts of Port Vila, in the villages of Erakor, Eratap, and Pango (see the map, page 3). The data for my analysis of Nafsan come from its published grammar (Thieberger 2006), the corpus collected by Nick Thieberger in Erakor and Eratap and archived in PARADISEC (see Thieberger 1995–2018), and my fieldwork data collected in Erakor and archived in PARADISEC (Krajinović 2017).

Grammatical systems of Oceanic languages are, among other features, famous for their word-class flexibility (e.g., van Lier 2016), polyfunctionality and optionality of functional words (e.g., Bril 2007; Lichtenberk 2016a), and rich combinatorics of tense, mood, and aspect (TMA) marking (e.g., Palmer 2007; Lynch et al. 2011; Bril 2016). Nafsan also shares many of these features with other Oceanic languages, and conditional clauses are a particularly good example of this. The expression of conditionality can take up many different structural forms and combinations of TMA markers. It can be expressed by simple or more complex structures, and by optional or obligatory markers. This diversity of types of conditional clauses in Nafsan makes it an important case study within a broader Oceanic perspective. In this paper I show that conditional clauses in Nafsan display many characteristics typical for conditional clauses in Oceanic languages. Some of these characteristics are

- several morphosyntactic structures can express conditionals
- optionality of certain markers
- realis and irrealis are both possible in the protasis
- paratactic conditionals
- a discourse marker meaning ‘thus/like’ used for introducing conditional clauses

I wish to thank my supervisors for comments on earlier versions of this paper. This work has been funded by the German Research Foundation DFG (“A corpus-based contrastive study of tense, aspect, modality and polarity (TAMP) in Austronesian languages of Melanesia (MelaTAMP)” with project number 273640553,) and the ARC Centre of Excellence for the Dynamics of Language (Australia).

2 All the examples that have a reference to their item number are from the corpus by Thieberger (2018) and all the examples from my fieldwork (Krajinović 2017) have the recording reference starting by AK1, as it stands in PARADISEC, and the time stamp of the example.
Following the analysis of conditional clauses in Thieberger (2006), I expand on his description of conditional markers \( f \), \( fla \), and \( i=f-wel \). Based on the corpus (Thieberger 1995–2018) and my fieldwork data (Krajinović 2017), I revisit the possible combinations of \( f \) and \( fla \) with TMA markers, and with the counterfactual marker \( mer \) not previously reported by Thieberger (2006). I also argue that the core meaning of \( f \) and \( fla \) is the marking of possibility, which means they structurally form juxtaposed clauses that receive a conditional interpretation pragmatically. In contrast to \( f \) and \( fla \), I analyze the expression \( i=f-wel \) as introducing subordinate conditional clauses.

This paper is organized as follows. In section 2 I describe the basic structural properties of the verbal complex and conditionals in Nafsan. In section 3 I describe the extent of possible TMA combinations in the protases (3.1) and apodoses (3.2) of conditional clauses, including a brief discussion on negation in section 3.2. In section 4 I argue for an analysis of conditionals with \( f \) and \( fla \) as paratactic conditionals (i.e., juxtaposed clauses), and for a subordinate analysis of \( i=f-wel \) conditionals. In section 5 I offer a conclusion.

## 2 Grammatical properties of verbs and conditional clauses

### 2.1 Verbal complex

Grammatical elements with TMA values in Oceanic languages can occupy different morphosyntactic positions, typically preceding the verb. The set of morphosyntactic slots for different verbal markers and the verb itself is frequently referred to as verbal complex in Oceanic languages. The verbal complex usually includes a marker with the person and number reference of the subject and other TMA or polarity markers. The subject markers and/or the TMA markers are often morphosyntactically dependent as either prefixes or proclitics. In Nafsan the subject agreement markers are proclitics, also called subject proclitics, which attach to any following word: a TMA marker, an auxiliary verb, a benefactive phrase, or...
the verb (Thieberger 2006). Table 1 shows the ordering of these elements in the Nafsan predicate. Each category is exemplified with a given functional word in the second row. Subject proclitics (SBJ.PRO in table 1) are portmanteau morphemes that carry TMA values and they are also the only obligatory marking of the verb (Thieberger 2006:149). The position of a given element in the verbal complex is fixed relative to the other elements.

Table 1 differs slightly from the schema of the verbal complex offered in Thieberger (2006:243) in that it gives more detail on the ordering of the TMA markers. While the categories called TMA4 (tense, mood, aspect) and NEG (negation) occupy different slots here, in Thieberger (2006:243) they both occupy the first slot of the verbal complex and AUX (auxiliary) occupies the second slot. However, example (1) shows that the first element ta of the discontinuous negation ta...mau has to follow the aspectual marker fo, thus showing they are in different slots. The postverbal marker su is also labeled completive here instead of “perfective” (Thieberger 2006:243).

Table 1. The verbal complex in Nafsan adapted from Thieberger (2006:243)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SBJ.PRO</th>
<th>TMA</th>
<th>NEG1</th>
<th>AUX</th>
<th>BEN</th>
<th>Verb = OBJ</th>
<th>COMPL</th>
<th>NEG2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>i = (3SG.REAL),...</td>
<td>fo (PSP.IRR),...</td>
<td>ta(p)</td>
<td>to (PROG),...</td>
<td>ga (3SG),...</td>
<td>su</td>
<td>mau</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(1)  p̃a = mai  p̃a = fo  ta  lek  kineu  mau

2SG.IRR = come  2SG.IRR = PSP.IRR  NEG1  see 1SG  NEG2

‘You come, but you won’t see me.’ (079.064)

As shown in table 1, the verbal complex in Nafsan consists of obligatory subject proclitics which are cliticized to the first following element, that is, TMA markers, auxiliary verbs, or the main verb. Thieberger (2006:150) divides the subject proclitics to three paradigms given in table 2. Thieberger (2006:156) also notes that each paradigm of subject proclitics can only combine with certain TMA markers (cf. table 3), while auxiliary verbs, on the other hand, do not seem to pose any restrictions on the choice of subject proclitics. I have also found that, in terms of frequency, the realis proclitics are by far the most frequent in the corpus (84% of the occurrences in the corpus), with irrealis being less frequent (11% occurrences), and perfect-agreeing the least frequent form of subject proclitics (5% occurrences).

Table 2. Subject proclitics in Nafsan based on Thieberger (2006:150)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Realis</th>
<th>Irrealis</th>
<th>Perfect-agreeing5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1SG</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>ka</td>
<td>kai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2SG</td>
<td>ku</td>
<td>p̃a</td>
<td>kui</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3SG</td>
<td>i</td>
<td>ke</td>
<td>ki</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1DU.INCL</td>
<td>ta</td>
<td>tak</td>
<td>takai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1DU.EXCL</td>
<td>ra</td>
<td>rak</td>
<td>rakai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2DU</td>
<td>ra</td>
<td>rak</td>
<td>rakai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3DU</td>
<td>ra</td>
<td>rak</td>
<td>rakai =, rai =</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1PL.INCL</td>
<td>tu</td>
<td>tuk</td>
<td>tu =, tui =, tukoi =</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1PL.EXCL</td>
<td>u</td>
<td>ko</td>
<td>ui =, koi =</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2PL</td>
<td>u</td>
<td>ko</td>
<td>koi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3PL</td>
<td>ru</td>
<td>ruk</td>
<td>rui =, rukui =</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4 Called “aspect” and “conditional/may” in Thieberger (2006).

5 I call this paradigm “perfect-agreeing” subject proclitics (labeled as “perfect” in Thieberger 2006) because they only agree with the perfect marker pe in form, but do not contribute to the perfect semantics (Krajinović 2018a).
As shown in table 3, the perfect marker can combine with perfect-agreeing proclitics and realis, prospective realis and irrealis only with realis and irrealis proclitics respectively, and the conditional marker with realis and irrealis proclitics. In Thieberger (2006:156) the conditional marker was analyzed as combining only with realis, but as I show in section 3.1 the conditional marker can combine with both realis and irrealis proclitics.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TMA marker</th>
<th>Proclitic</th>
<th>Function</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>pe</td>
<td>perfect, realis</td>
<td>perfect-agreeing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>po</td>
<td>realis</td>
<td>prospective realis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fo</td>
<td>irrealis</td>
<td>prospective irrealis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f/fla</td>
<td>realis</td>
<td>conditional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ta</td>
<td>realis, irrealis</td>
<td>still</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thieberger (2006:161) analyzes realis as referring to realized events with a past (2) or present reference (3) and irrealis as referring to unrealized events, such as future (4), imperatives (5) and possibilities, especially in conditional and complement clauses (6).

(2) *Nanom pog, u=mai praktis.*
yesterday night 1PL.EXCL.REAL = come practice.BI
‘Yesterday evening we came to practice.’ (Thieberger 2006:151)

(3) *Mes i=pi nalelewen neu kin i=tefla.*
today 3SG.REAL = be opinion 1SG.POSS REL 3SG.REAL = thus
‘Today it is my opinion that it is like this.’ (Thieberger 2006:167)

(4) *Komam rak=tap fam mau me rak=to.*
1PL.EXCL 1DU.EXCL.IRR = NEG1 eat.IRR NEG2 but 1DU.EXCL.IRR = stay
‘We won’t eat, but we’ll stay.’ (Thieberger 2006:164)

(5) *Pa=fan preg,ptak-ki pano.*
2SG.IRR = go.IRR make.ready-TR panel.BI
‘You go and prepare the panel.’ (Thieberger 2006:164)

(6) *Kineu a=mur na ka=traus tete natrauswen sees.*
1SG 1SG.REAL = want COMP 1SG.IRR = tell some story small
‘I want to tell some short stories.’ (Thieberger 2006:310)

Perfect can have a resultative reading with a past and present reference (7) that indicates that a change of state has occurred, or it can have an anteriority reading in relation to another event (8) (see Thieberger 2006).

---

6 The combination of pe and realis was also not mentioned by Thieberger (2006), but it was confirmed in many examples documented in my fieldwork (see also, Krajinović 2018a).

7 The readings of change of state with perfect are achieved only with states and progressives (Krajinović 2018a).
But my family is now white like you. They [it] didn't get my skin, they are really white.' (Thieberger 2006:168)

Talking to someone who is leaving in a while] 'When you return, I will have written this letter.' (=I will have finished it already at that time) (Thieberger 2012:392, based on Dahl 1985:TMAQ 107)

2.2 Conditional clauses

In this section I present the analysis of conditional clauses by Thieberger (2006) and lay out a basic description of different structures of conditional clauses. Some of the facts presented here will be reanalyzed in sections 3 and 4.

The markers $f$ and $fla$ are glossed by Thieberger (2006) as a conditional and a 'may' particle,$^9$ respectively. While $f$ typically introduces the protasis (= subordinate clause) of a conditional clause, $fla$ expresses conditionals and possibilities (Thieberger 2006:250). Examples (9) and (10)$^{10}$ show markers $f$ and $fla$, respectively, cliticized to the subject proclitic in the protasis of a conditional. Thieberger (2006) also identifies the expression $i=f-wel (kin)$ as a conditional marker. $i=f-wel (kin)$ is glossed as 3SG.REAL=COND-like (COMP) and it can be literally translated as 'it might be like (that)'. In (11) the protasis is introduced by the expression $i=f-wel$, and the verb is also marked by $f$ attached to a subject proclitic. As we can see in (9)–(11), $f$ and $fla$ typically cliticize to reals subject proclitics. The apodosis (= main clause) is most frequently marked by the irrealis proclitic and the prospective irrealis $fo$, as in (9) and (11), but it also allows other markers. For instance, in example (10) the verb in the apodosis is marked with the reals proclitic $i=$ (in bold).

(9) $[Ru=f$ to nigmam traus-i-o], $ko=fo

3PL.REAL=COND PROG 1PL.EXCL.BEN tell-TR-3SG.OBJ 1PL.EXCL.IRR = PSP.IRR
tae, me gar $i=tik.$
know but 3PL 3SG.REAL=not

'If they had told it to us, we would know, but they didn't.' (Thieberger 2006:259)

(10) $[Ko$ ga $i=fla$ mur-i-n na ke=tau tete

3SG 3SG.REAL=POT want-TR-3SG.OBJ COMP 3SG.IRR = leave some
nanromien $i=kano$ trau leg mai tao.
present small 3SG.REAL=unable just straight come leave

'Or if he wanted to leave a small present he couldn't just come and leave it.' (Thieberger 2006:320)

---

$^8$ Literal translation, where 'it' refers to the family.

$^9$ 'May' is glossed here as POT for potential.

$^{10}$ The protases, i.e., the antecedents (typically subordinate clauses) of conditional clauses are indicated by square brackets in all relevant examples.
Although \(i=f\)-wel \(k\in\) can be literally translated as ‘if like \(\text{COMP}\)’ or ‘it might (be) like \(\text{COMP}\)’, it is a fully conventionalized conditional construction. It can only be marked by \(3SG.\text{REAL} \ i=\) and in the form \(i=f\)-wel \(k\in\) it does not appear with meanings other than the conditional. \(i=f\)-wel \(k\in\) can also be reduced to \(f\)-wel \(k\in\), \((i=)f\)-wel, or just \((i=)\)wel \((k\in)\), as exemplified with \(\text{wel} \ k\in\) in (12).

(12) [me \(\text{wel} \ k\in\) \(\text{tm-e-n}\) \(\text{teesa}\) \(\text{nanwei}\) \(i=\text{fla}\) \(\text{pan}\)] me and thus \(\text{COMP}\) \(\text{father-V-3SG.DP}\) \(\text{child}\) \(\text{male}\) \(3SG.\text{REAL}=\text{POT}\) \(\text{go}\) and \(\text{[tm-e-n} \ \text{teesa} \ \text{nmatu} \ i=\text{fla} \ \text{mal}] \ \text{ke}=\text{fo} \ \text{mer} \ \text{ler}\) father-V- \(\text{child}\) \(\text{female}\) \(3SG.\text{REAL}=\text{POT}\) \(\text{not.want}\) \(3SG.\text{IRR}=\text{PSP.IRR}\) again return \(3SG.DP\)

‘But if the boy’s father goes but the girl’s father doesn’t want it, he will go back again.’ (066.018)

Examples (13) and (14) show that, outside of conditional constructions, \(\text{wel}\) can also be used as a discourse marker and a verb meaning ‘thus’ and ‘like’, respectively.

(13) \(\text{wel} \ \text{komam} \ \text{ra}=\text{lak} \ \text{naentin} \ \text{fifti}\)

thus \(1\text{PL.EXCL}\) \(1\text{DU.EXCL.REAL}=\text{marry}\) \(\text{nineteen.BI}\) \(\text{fifty.BI}\)

‘We got married in 1950.’ (081.001)

(14) \(\text{kineu} \ a=\text{weswes} \ \text{ga} \ i=\text{wel} \ \text{kin} \ a=\text{pi} \ \text{haosgel} \ \text{ñas}\)

\(1\text{SG}\) \(1\text{SG.REAL}=\text{work}\) \(3SG\) \(3SG.\text{REAL}=\text{like}\) \(\text{COMP}\) \(1\text{SG.\text{REAL}=\text{be}}\) \(\text{housegirl.BI}\) only

‘I worked only as a housegirl.’ (131.013)

Table 4 shows the structure of two attested types of conditionals, based on the description in Thieberger (2006). Optional elements are in brackets.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Protasis</th>
<th>Apodosis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>((i=)(f) \text{wel (kin)} + \ SBJ.PRO = (f/\text{fla}) + \verb)</td>
<td>(\text{SBJ.PRO} = (f) + \verb)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(\text{SBJ.PRO} = f/\text{fla} + \verb)</td>
<td>(\text{SBJ.PRO} = (f) + \verb)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 3 TMA combinations in conditionals

#### 3.1 Protasis

In this section, I describe the attested combinations of the TMA and conditional marking. Firstly, I focus on the mood of subject proclitics that attach to the marker \(f\). Secondly, I report on the recently discovered counterfactual marker \(\text{mer}\), and finally I discuss the choice of mood in the conditional protasis in general.

According to Thieberger (2006:250), the conditional and ‘may’ particles \(f\) and \(\text{fla}\) can only be used with the realis subject proclitics. While this is the case in examples (9) and (10) in the previous section, there are also many cases of irrealis proclitics attaching to \(f\) and \(\text{fla}\). In the corpus of Nafsan we also find examples like (15) and (16) where \(f\) and \(\text{fla}\) have irrealis subject proclitics.
(15) \( ka = fo \) \( preg \) \( nafsan \) \( sees \)
\[
\begin{align*}
1SG.IRR &= \text{PSP.IRR} \\
\{ i = f \text{-wel} \} &\text{ make story small} \\
3SG.REAL &= \text{COND-like} \\
\{ i = f \text{-wel} \} &\text{ mur-i-n}. \\
\end{align*}
\]
‘I will tell a small story if I want.’ (127.087)

(16) Go \( nafsan \) \( ki = tkal \) \( maarik \) \( naot \) \( ùr \) \( Nmak Kalsaur, \) \( elag \)
\[
\begin{align*}
\text{ntaf} &\quad \text{nag} \quad \{ i = f \text{-wel} \} \quad \text{ke} = \text{fla} \\
\text{hill} &\quad \text{COMP} \quad 3SG.REAL = \text{COND-like} \quad 3SG.IRR = \text{POT} \quad \text{kill giant two TOP} \\
\end{align*}
\]
‘And the message reached Chief Nmak Kalsaur up on the hill if he would kill these two giants.’ (128.012)

In my investigations in the field (cf. recording AK1-117-01, Krajinović 2017), I derived the paradigm for the marker \( f \) as shown in table 5. Depending on the person, the marker \( f \) can be attached to both realis and irrealis subject proclitics. However, it combines with irrealis only in those persons where the irrealis element -\( k \) does not occupy the same slot as \( f \), in all of dual, 1PL.INCL, and 3PL (in bold). The incompatibility of \( f \) with these persons is based on a phonological constraint on the sequence \( kf\# \) as a coda, where \( \# \) indicates a pause (cf. Billington, Thieberger, and Fletcher).

In my fieldwork data, the conditional clauses marked with \( SBJ.PRO.IRR = f \) are attested especially frequently in counterfactual conditionals, that is, conditionals that report on possibilities that could or would have happened if the condition was satisfied, but according to the speaker’s knowledge they did not or will not take place. In other words, the protasis of the conditional is considered false by the speaker (Kroeger 2018:353). In order to elicit these types of clauses in the field I used the storyboard methodology where the speaker is presented with a story told in pictures. The linguist first tells the story in a contact language, Bislama in this case, and then the speaker tells it in the targeted language (Nafsan) by looking at the pictures. Some of the pictures elicit specific structures targeted by the linguist. Table 6 shows all the storyboards I used together with the number of targeted conditionals and their types.
Table 6. Storyboards eliciting conditional clauses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Num. of targeted cond.</th>
<th>Conditional types</th>
<th>Num. of speakers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Festival (von Prince 2017a)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>past and future counterfactual</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Fortune Teller (TFS 2010)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>future possibility, past counterfactual</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Woodchopper (TFS 2011)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>negative past counterfactual</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red Yam (von Prince 2017b)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>present possibility</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Past counterfactuals are distinguished from future counterfactuals temporally, which means that the former report on unaccomplished events in the past and the latter on events considered to be unaccomplished in the future. In other words, future counterfactuals are not considered to be accessible possibilities from the point of view of the current state of affairs (von Prince 2016, 2018). This difference in interpretation can be exemplified by structures from the story Festival (von Prince 2017a) in which two friends are talking about the ongoing competitions taking place in their town. The text in bold in (17) expresses a past counterfactual, and in (18) expresses a future counterfactual. These sentences were targeted by the linguist with the corresponding pictures shown in figures 1 and 2, respectively.

(17)  
A: Did you play soccer yesterday?  
B: No, it rained. If I had played soccer yesterday, I would have gotten wet.

(18)  
A: Did you watch the competition yesterday?  
B: No, it rained. If I had watched the competition yesterday, I would have stayed home.

Figure 1. A frame targeting a past counterfactual conditional, corresponding to example (17).

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11 The future counterfactuals have also been referred to as future less vivid by Iatridou (2000).
A: Will you play volleyball tomorrow?
B: No, I will not play, because I cut my finger.
A: If I played volleyball tomorrow, my finger would bleed again.

The conditionals expressing a future possibility, mentioned in table 6, differ from the counterfactual conditionals in that they express possible futures, which can be regarded as continuations of the actual present. For instance, in the storyboard The Fortune Teller (TFS 2010) a fortune teller gives predictions about the future, considering different conditions, such as ‘marrying John’, as shown in (19).

A: John has asked me to marry him. What will happen if I marry him?
The fortune teller looks into the future and says: If you marry John, you will have many children.

We can see in (19) that the future possibility of having children is a possible outcome of marriage, and it is not considered unlikely to ever happen as was the case in (17) and (18). Example (19) relates to example (25) discussed below.

The counterfactual and future-possibility conditionals can be formally distinguished in Nafsan. The counterfactual conditionals can optionally be marked by mer ‘again/in turn; counterfactual (CF)’, which is not permitted with the meaning of future possibility. Although both types of conditionals can also be expressed by the i=f-wel structure, the counterfactuality can be specified with mer. Thieberger (2006) analyzes mer as an auxiliary verb meaning ‘again/in turn’. Although mer does have the meaning of ‘again/in turn’ in other contexts, in conditionals it is used as a counterfactual marker. The typical counterfactual construction is formed by either a realis (20) or irrealis proclitic (21) attached to f and then followed by mer. Example (20) corresponds to figure 2, and (21) to figure 1. There are also cases of either realis or irrealis proclitic attaching directly to mer (22), which suggests that the reading of counterfactuality is due to the presence of mer.

\[
\begin{array}{l}
[a=f\quad mer\quad mes\quad matool]_{1},
gofag\quad nen\quad kin\quad i=to
\end{array}
\]

\[
\begin{array}{llllllll}
1SG.REAL = COND & CF & play & tomorrow & and & sore & that & REL & 3SG.REAL = stay
\end{array}
\]

\[
\begin{array}{llllllll}
naar-u-k, & taos, & a=tai & nakn-i-k & ke=fo & mer & makot
\end{array}
\]

\[
\begin{array}{llll}
arm-V-1SG.DP & like & 1SG.REAL = cut & finger-V-1SG.DP
\end{array}
\]

\[
\begin{array}{llll}
3SG.IRR = PSP.IRR & again & break
\end{array}
\]

‘If I played tomorrow, then the sore on my hand, that I cut on my finger, would break again.’

(AK1-098, 00:03:39:185-00:03:57.063)

12 These conditionals are also referred to as “hypothetical” in the literature (e.g., Thompson et al. 2007; Kroeger, 2018:353), but here I use a more specific term future-possibility conditionals (see also von Prince 2018).
In examples (23) and (24) we can see that the construction $i=f$-$\text{wel}$ $\text{kin}$ can also be used for past and future counterfactual conditionals, respectively. This shows that $i=f$-$\text{wel}$ ($\text{kin}$) is a default conditional expression that encompasses all types of conditionals. Moreover, this shows that $\text{mer}$ is indeed an optional marker of counterfactuality.

More evidence for the dedicated meaning of $\text{mer}$ constructions is that they are not considered felicitous in future-possibility conditionals (25). All speakers chose $i=$(f)$ \text{wel}$ ($\text{kin}$) for these types of conditionals, and in the follow-up elicitation they also confirmed that a construction with $\text{mer}$ would not be appropriate (cf. recording AK1-075-01, Krajnović 2017). Example (25) shows a conditional clause with the interpretation of future possibility that was produced in the above mentioned context from example (19).

As we have seen in examples 20–25, both realis and irrealis subject proclitics can be used in the protasis of the conditional clause. The verb in the protasis can be marked with either realis or irrealis, even when the temporal reference is future. Thus, the choice of realis or irrealis does not reflect a temporal distinction. Since realis can also be used in future possibilities like (25) and in counterfactuals like (20–24), that means it does not express a modal distinction either. These data seem to suggest that realis in Nafsan is in fact semantically unmarked for mood and that it simply expresses person and number of the subject. Within this analysis, the “realis” paradigm can be analyzed as a default subject marking which is semantically unmarked in comparison to the irrealis paradigm (Krajnović 2018b).
Red Yam. The conditional structure with a present reference in Red Yam allowed only for the structure (i)f wel (kin) + realis (see example 30 in section 3.2).

Table 7. Conditional expressions with future and past reference in my fieldwork data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construction</th>
<th>Number of sentences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>realis + (f) + mer</td>
<td>5 (9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>irrealis + (f) + mer</td>
<td>20 (36%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(i)f wel (kin) + realis</td>
<td>12 (21%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(i)f wel (kin) + irrealis</td>
<td>19 (34%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total num. of sentences</strong></td>
<td><strong>56 (100%)</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One interesting observation is that the marker f was not used in the storyboard data outside of the conventionalized constructions (i = ) (f) wel (kin) and SBJ.PRO = (f) + mer. A conditional construction in which the main verb is marked with f without the intervening mer or wel, as in example (9), are considered to be ‘old’ language, which was produced only when specifically asked for in elicitation.13

The typological validity of the category of realis/irrealis has often been debated (cf. Bybee 1998; Elliott 2000), and, indeed, Oceanic languages offer some evidence for the inconsistent behavior of this category. As we have seen in Nafan, regardless of the conditional type, both realis and irrealis can appear in the protasis. A similar situation is attested in Unua, a language of Central Vanuatu spoken on the Malakula island. As Pearce (2015:243) notes, both realis and irrealis are possible in the protasis of conditionals in Unua, as reflected in examples (26) and (27). In (26) we can see the usage of the morphologically unmarked realis subject markers and in (27) their irrealis forms in the protasis. Both sentences have the interpretation of a past counterfactual conditional.

(26) [Avra no-xa vex Lakatoro nano], b-e-vr-i raes bi-sobon.
if 1SG-go to Lakatoro **yesterday** IRR-1SG-buy-TR rice IRR-some
‘If I had gone to Lakatoro yesterday, I would have bought some rice.’ (Pearce 2015:245)

(27) [Avra b-a-xa ma nano vex Vila], b-e-ke-i
if IRR-1SG-go only yesterday to Vila IRR-1SG-see-TR
ju nabburen so-g.
already friend GEN-1SG
‘If I had gone to Vila yesterday, I would have seen my friend.’ (Pearce 2015:246)

Since realis is typically defined as referring to realized or actual14 events (e.g., Elliott 2000; Lichtenberk 2016b), it would not be expected for the realis to appear in the conditional context referring to possibilities of the non-actual domain. A possible explanation for some Oceanic languages lies in the reanalysis of the realis subject proclitics as subject markers of person and number, which would mean they are unspecified for the mood meanings (see also, Cristofaro 2012). This analysis would be in line with the fact that realis is morphologically and semantically unmarked in Nafsan and in Unua (Krajinović 2018b).

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13 The corpus (Thieberger 1995–2018) started being collected in 1995 and it contains speech records of older generations, and my fieldwork data was collected in 2017 with speakers between 26 and 48 years old. For more on this topic see Krajinović and Thieberger (2018).

14 Elliott (2000) uses the term “actualized”.
3.2 Apodosis and negation

In this section I discuss the TMA marking in the apodosis of conditionals clauses, as well as some strategies of negation.

In all conditionals reported on so far, irrealis marking is obligatory in the apodosis. The irrealis mood appears in the apodosis of all counterfactual and future-possibility conditionals attested in my data, as shown in (28) and (29) respectively.

(28) \[Ka=^f\text{mer mes "volibol" matol, nakn-}i-k\]
    \[1\text{sg.irr=cond cf play volleyball tomorrow finger-v-1sg.dp}\]
    \[ke=^fo mra\]
    \[3\text{sg.irr=psp.irr bleed}\]
    ‘If I play volleyball tomorrow, my finger will bleed.’ (AK1-004-01, 00:03:27.921-00:03:33.286)

(29) \[F-wel \text{kin } \hat{p}a=lak \text{skot } \text{John}, rak=^fo \text{pilak teesa laap.}\]
    \[\text{cond-like comp 2sg.irr=marry with John 2du.irr=psp.irr have children many}\]
    ‘If you marry John, you two will have a lot of children.’ (AK1-018-01, 00:17:43.236-00:17:47.525)

The irrealis subject marking is usually followed by the prospective irrealis marked fo that indicates temporal posteriority of the apodosis in relation to the protasis, as can be seen in (28) and (29). This analysis is confirmed by the conditional structure from the storyboard *Red Yam*. The conditional from *Red Yam* is the only type of conditional in my data where irrealis and prospective fo are not possible in the apodosis. This is so because the event of the apodosis precedes the event described in the protasis. In the story *Red Yam* (von Prince 2017b) two friends are discussing who out of their friends might have stolen and eaten their red yam. They suggest that whoever has red teeth must be the person who did it, as shown in (30).

(30) \[f-wel \text{kin npat-}i-n i=miel, go \text{Yokon } \hat{n}as\]
    \[\text{COND-like. comp teeth-v-3SG.DP 3SG.REAL=red then Yokon only}\]
    \[\text{kin i=paam nawi miel gaag.}\]
    \[\text{REL 3SG.REAL=eat yam red 2SG.POSS}\]
    ‘If her teeth are red, then Yokon is the one who ate your red yam.’ (AK1-060-01, 00:03:48.433-00:04:01.225)

The possibility of having red teeth has a present reference, as expressed in the protasis, and having eaten the red yam has a past reference, as expressed in the apodosis in (30). Since irrealis would lead to a future reference and fo to a posteriority reading, they cannot be used in this example.

The classification of different conditional constructions, including the protasis and apodosis constructions is summarized in table 8.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Protasis</th>
<th>Apodosis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>default</td>
<td>(i=) fo \text{wel (kin) + SBJ.PRO = verb}</td>
<td>SBJ.PRO = (fo) + verb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>counterfactual</td>
<td>SBJ.PRO = (fo) + mer + verb</td>
<td>SBJ.PRO = (fo) + verb</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One of the storyboards containing negation in conditionals is the *Woodchopper* storyboard (TFS, 2011) (cf. table 6). In this story the main character told her husband not to go chop the wood in the dark because he might drop some wood on the way. He did it nevertheless and dropped some wood on the path, which made her trip and fall over into the water. Example (31) shows the sentence subsequently produced by the main character.
We can see that the negative protasis contains the standard way of negating sentences, which uses the discontinuous marking ta(p)...mau. However, in the negative apodosis in (31) kano ‘cannot’ preceded by irrealis and fo was produced by all speakers in this context, instead of ta(p)...mau. Kano has been described by Thieberger (2006) as a negative ability marker, as shown in (32).

(32) \[i=tae \quad sef \quad pelpel \quad me \quad katom \quad i=kano.\]
\[3SG.REAL=can \quad escape \quad quickly \quad and \quad Hermit\_crab \quad 3SG.REAL=cannot\]

‘He can run away quickly, but the hermit crab can’t.’ (036.007)

The functions of kano in (31) and (32) differ significantly. In the conditional clause in (31) kano has a negative possibility reading and not a negative ability reading, which is available in (32). The usage of kano in conditionals as a general negative possibility marker is also being confirmed in my current fieldwork. Example (33) was produced in a story where a wife goes looking for her husband in the garden, since he said he would be there. But when she arrives to the garden he is nowhere to be found, so she calls him on the phone and asks about his whereabouts. He says he is in the garden, and she answers with the sentence in (33), where kano is used in the apodosis. This usage of kano seems to be more wide-spread in counterfactual conditionals, but the full distribution of this construction is still being investigated.

(33) \[i=f-wel \quad ku=to \quad tal\text{"n}at \quad malfane], \quad ka=fo \quad kano \quad skei\]
\[3SG.REAL=COND-like \quad 2SG.REAL=stay \quad garden \quad now \quad 1SG.IRR=PSP.IRR \quad cannot \quad alone\]

‘If you were in the garden right now, I would not be alone in the garden.’ (AK1-146-08, 00:00:09.076-00:00:18.320)

The pattern of receiving new grammatical functions only in conditional clauses and maintaining a different function in main clauses is a characteristic of both kano and the counterfactual mer.

4 Paratactic and subordinate conditionals

In this section I compare conditional constructions marked only by f and fla attested in the corpus from Thieberger (1995–2018) and compare them to the i=f-wel (kin) structures. I argue that f and fla are potential and not subordinate markers, and that they form paratactic conditionals, that is, juxtaposed sentences marked with potential mood, which can pragmatically give rise to conditional meanings. On the other hand, conditionals with i=f-wel (kin) show some dependency relations that can be taken as evidence that i=f-wel (kin) is a subordinate marker. Although in the storyboard data I have not attested conditional clauses marked only by f and fla without the intervening mer or wel, this type of constructions is well-attested in the corpus data (Thieberger 1995–2018), and their properties justify the discussion presented here.

As we have seen in section 2.2, the markers f and fla can introduce conditional clauses (34), and in these cases they could be analyzed as subordinate conditional markers. However, neither f nor fla are necessarily interpreted as conditionals. They can both appear in the apodosis, the main clause of the

---

15 See footnote 13.
conditional structure, as shown in (35) and (36). The clauses 'I could have died in the Solomons' (35) and ‘then (others) could gossip about you' (36) cannot be interpreted as starting a new subordinate conditional clause. They simply express a possible event that would take place, if the condition of the antecedent was satisfied. Thus, the meaning of f and fla in these cases is the expression of possibility.

(34) \( [Ru=f \ to \ nigmam \ traus-i-o], \ ko=fo \)
3PL.REAL = COND PROG 1PL.EXCL.BEN tell-TR-3SG.OBJ 1PL.EXCL.IRR = PSP.IRR
tae, me gar i = tik.
know but 3PL. 3SG.REAL = not
‘If they had told it to us, we would know, but they didn’t.’ (Thieberger 2006:259)

(35) \( [a=f \ mer \ pa] me \ a=fla \ lakor \ wel \)
1SG.REAL = COND CF go but 1SG.REAL = POT maybe like
Jimmy Stevens ko a=f lakor mat Solomon.
Jimmy Stevens or 1SG.REAL = POT maybe die Solomon
‘If I had gone, I could have been like Jimmy Stevens, or I could have died in the Solomons.’ (041.014)

(36) \( [i=f-wel \ kin \ taos \ nametrau \ laap \ ru=fla \ to \ weswes \)
3SG.REAL = COND-like COMP like family many 3PL.REAL = POT PROG work
te-naor welkia ru=laap], ru=f tae tilusus-i-k.
some-place thus 3PL.REAL = many 3PL.REAL = POT can gossip-TR-2SG.OBJ
‘If, like, lots of the family might work someplace, and there are lots of them, then (others) could gossip about you.’ (Thieberger 2006:161)

The marker f can also appear in embedded questions, as in (37). In this case f can be analyzed as a potential marker expressing epistemic uncertainty about the reason for getting sick, but it cannot be interpreted as a conditional.

(37) \( a=tap \ tae \ [nafte \ i=f \ pi \ nlaken \ kin \ i=msak] \ mau \)
1SG.REAL = NEG1 know what 3SG.REAL = POT be because COMP 3SG.REAL = sick NEG2
‘I don’t know what caused his sickness.’ (103.014)

The counterfactual expression SBJ.PRO.IRR = f mer can also be used to express counterfactual wishes that are not followed by an apodosis (38), in contrast to regular conditional clauses. Equally, a similar structure with fla was judged grammatical on its own, without a following apodosis (39). The fact that the sentences in (38) and (39) can stand on their own shows that they are in fact main clauses, and not subordinate conditional clauses.16

(38) \( Ka=f \ mer \ pei \ patlas-i-o. \)
1SG.IRR = POT CF first meet-TR-3SG.OBJ
‘If only I had met him.’ (Elicited, AK1-045-01)

(39) \( A=fla \ mer \ to \ patlas-i-k \ tete \ mal \)
1SG.REAL = POT again PROG meet-TR-2SG.OBJ some time
‘I might see you again some time.’ (Elicited, AK1-045-01)

16 These structures could also be analyzed as cases of insubordination, i.e., a conventionalized main clause use of what looks like a formally subordinate clause (Evans 2007).
The marker *fla* was also used as a potential marker in the storyboards, especially in the contexts of epistemic uncertainty. For example, in the above-mentioned story *Red Yam* (where two friends discuss who ate their red yam), I obtained example (40), where *fla* can only be interpreted as a marker of possibility.

(40) \[ i = fla \to pi \ Yoken \ kin \ i = paam \ nawi \ miel, \]

\[ ko \ \\
3SG.REAL = POT PROG be Yoken REL 3SG.REAL = eat yam red \]

or \[ i = fla \to pi \ Ros. \]

'It might be Yoken who ate your red yam, or it might be Rose.' (AK1-008-01, 00:02:14.895-00:02:24.845)

If *f* and *fla* are only potential markers, then how do they acquire a conditional interpretation in examples like (34)? The best explanation for this is that the conditional interpretation of *f* and *fla* is pragmatically derived as an inference that the first clause is a condition and the second one is the outcome that follows it. The juxtaposed clauses are typically temporally interpreted in the linear order of their appearance (Haiman 1985). Thus, the first clause marked by *f* in (34) is interpreted as an earlier possibility and the second clause marked by irrealis is interpreted as a later possibility. This is followed by the interpretation that the two clauses are in a relationship of cause and effect, which leads to a conditional reading (see Dancygier 1998). These types of juxtaposed clauses with a conditional reading are called *paratactic conditionals* (Haiman 1983).

There is another piece of evidence that supports that this process takes place in Nafsan, namely that we find other juxtaposed clauses that can also derive conditional meanings. Examples (41) and (42) do not have any conditional marking and they still yield a conditional interpretation, which means they are also paratactic conditionals.

(41) \[ natañol \ ̃p̃a = tu-a-∅ \ mal] \[ go \ ga \ i = piaatlak \]

person \[ 2SG.IRR = give-TR-3SG.OBJ time and 3SG \]

educated \[ wi \]

educated:bi \[ good \]

'If you give people time they can have a good education.' (119.025)

(42) \[ Ku = lak-a-∅ \ npat-i-n i = miel], \[ go \ ga \ kin \]

2SG.REAL = look-TR-3SG.OBJ \[ teeth-V-3SG.DP 3SG.REAL = red and 3SG REL \]

\[ i = paam-i-∅ \ nawi \ gaag, \]

3SG.REAL = eat-TR-3SG.OBJ \[ yam 2SG.POSS \]

'If you see her teeth are red, then she is the one who ate your red yam.' (AK1-027-01, 00:12:34.908-00:12:38.680)

The paratactic conditionals are interpreted in such a way that the preceding clause is the antecedent expressing the condition that needs to be fulfilled and the second clause is the consequent expressing the consequence of fulfilling that condition. This mirrors the order of subordinate conditional clauses that typically precede the main clause (Haiman 1978; Bril 2007). However, since iconicity, that is, linear order, of paratactic conditionals plays a role in what is considered to be the condition/cause and what is the consequence/effect (Haiman 1986), we expect that the inversion of the two clauses has effects on that interpretation. Thus, the first clause is always a condition/cause and the second clause is always the consequence/effect. In subordinate clauses this should not be so, because there is a subordinator indicating which clause is the subordinate conditional clause. We can see that in example (35) the inversion of one of the two consequences with the condition would result in an opposite reading. This is because both types of clauses have the same marking and they are not formally distinguished in any other way.
If we look at the \textit{i=f-wel (kin)} clauses, however, we can see that the inversion of the clauses is possible while maintaining the same conditional interpretation. In examples (43) and (44), the protasis initiated with \textit{i=f-wel (kin)} follows the main clause (apodosis) and results in an unambiguous interpretation where the second clause marked with \textit{i=f-wel (kin)} is a condition, and the first clause is a consequence. Previously mentioned example (15) in section 3 also shows an inversion of the two clauses. Another indication of the subordinate character of \textit{i=f-wel (kin)} is the fact that it often contains the complementizer \textit{kin} that has a subordinative function.

(43) \textit{He a=mur-i-n na \ddot{p}a=mai ni Kaltog preg}
\textit{he} \textit{1SG.REAL=want-TR-3SG.OBJ} \textit{COMP} \textit{2SG.IRR=come} \textit{BEN} \textit{Kaltog} \textit{make}
\textit{nalkis} \textit{[i=f-wel} \textit{ku=f} \textit{tae preg-i-o]}
\textit{medicine} \textit{3SG.REAL=COND-like} \textit{2SG.REAL=POT} \textit{can} \textit{make-TR-3SG.OBJ}

‘Hey, I would like you to come and make some medicine for Kaltong, if you can do it.’

(103.012)

(44) \textit{Ke=fo pakot naftuan, [i=f-wel kin naturiai}
\textit{3SG.IRR=PSP.IRR} \textit{buy present} \textit{3SG.REAL=COND-like} \textit{COMP} \textit{young.man}
\textit{ke=wes naul nanom].}
\textit{3SG.IRR=get money yesterday}

‘If the boy had gotten the money (yesterday), he would have bought a present for the girl.’

(AK1-083-01, based on Dahl 1985:TMAQ105, 106)

Paratactic conditionals have been reported as a feature of languages of the Pacific region (see Haiman (1983) for Papuan languages, and Verstraete (2010) for Australia). Oceanic grammars often explicitly mention the availability of paratactic conditionals. Here I offer examples from two Oceanic languages: Tirax (Malakula, Central Vanuatu), and Sivisa Titan (Manus, Admiralty Islands). In examples (45) and (46) we can see two juxtaposed clauses marked only with irrealis subject markers in Tirax and Sivisa Titan, respectively. In both cases the derived interpretation is that of a conditional.

(45) \textit{[ba=leh dede hɔk] ba=maxit ia}
\textit{2SG:IRR=see mother 1SG:POSS 2SG:IRR=be.afraid} \textit{there.BI}

‘If you see my mother you will be frightened of her.’

(Brotchie 2009:227)

(46) \textit{[Ko lai yo manuai], ko ani yo.}
\textit{2SG.IRR take} \textit{1SG osprey} \textit{2SG.IRR eat} \textit{1SG}

‘If you had caught me as an osprey, you would have eaten me.’

(Bowern 2011:86)

Another feature of some Oceanic languages is the usage of a discourse marker meaning ‘like’ or ‘thus’ in conditional-introducing expressions. Besides the conditional usage of \textit{wel} ‘like/thus’ in Nafsan, we find structures of this type in Koro (Admiralty Islands). In (47) the marker \textit{tehene} is used with the meaning ‘(to be) like’ and in (48) it is used as a marker introducing conditional clauses.

(47) \textit{[i k-i ru rangeh]} \textit{e i tehene ke jua kepi e}
\textit{3SG IRR-3SG stay:IRR/SG now COORD 3SG like DAT 1SG only PROX}

‘If she were still here she would be just like me.’

(Cleary-Kemp 2015:52)

(48) \textit{[munuwte tehene lengin] you k-u ru kor}
\textit{previous.day thus rain 1SG IRR-1SG stay:IRR/SG place}

‘If it had rained yesterday, I would have stayed home.’

(Cleary-Kemp 2015:53)

\footnote{17 I have also found paratactic conditionals in grammars of Mavea (Guérin 2011), Maskelynes (Healey, 2013:192), Koro (Cleary-Kemp 2015:27), Toqabaqita (Lichtenberk 2008:1111), Saliba (Margetts 1999:17).}
The existence of morphosyntactically different kinds of conditionals, such as paratactic conditionals and ‘like/thus’ conditional markers is consistent with the attested polyfunctionality of grammatical markers and subordinators in Oceanic languages (cf. Lichtenberk 2016a).

5 Conclusion

In this paper I analyzed the structure of conditional clauses in Nafsan. Starting from the description of the verbal complex and conditional clauses by Thieberger (2006) in section 2, I presented new findings about conditional clauses that were obtained during my fieldwork. The main findings concern the availability of both realsis and irrealis in the protasis of a conditional clause (section 3.1), the usage of the dedicated counterfactual marker mer in conditional clauses (section 3.1), usage of kano ‘cannot’ in the apodosis without the negative ability reading (section 3.2), and the existence of paratactic conditionals (section 4).

The usage of both realsis and irrealis subject proclitics in conditional clauses in Nafsan has important consequences for defining these categories. Since most approaches to realsis/irrealis treat realsis as realized or actual, and irrealis as unrealized or non-actual, this distinction would predict the appearance of only irrealis in counterfactual and future-possibility conditional clauses. However, Nafsan allows for both realsis and irrealis in these contexts. Since this feature has been attested in other Oceanic languages, new approaches to the understanding of interchangeability of realsis and irrealis should take this into account (for previous works see Baker and Travis (1997); Elliott (2000); McGregor and Wagner (2006); Cristofaro (2012); Cleary-Kemp (2014), among others).

The existence of a dedicated counterfactual marker in conditional clauses in Nafsan evidences the relevance of distinguishing between the counterfactuality and future possibility. However, this distinction is optional because all conditionals can be expressed by the default construction i=f-wel kin, and the counterfactual conditionals can optionally be marked by mer. Thus, i=f-wel kin is a semantically default conditional marker, constructed on the basis of the polyfunctional word wel ‘thus/like’. In a similar vein, the markers f, fla, and wel are polyfunctional because they can express meanings other than the conditional marking. I argue that f and fla are markers of potential mood, which are interpreted as paratactic conditionals only when a reading of cause and effect following the linear order of clauses is possible. In contrast to f and fla conditionals, i=f-wel kin conditionals proved to be dependent and subordinate.

The negation in the apodosis features a possibility of using the negative ability marker kano ‘cannot’ instead of the default discontinuous negation ta(p)...mau. Thus, in conditionals, and particularly in counterfactual contexts, kano has a grammatical function of negation and not negative ability. Similarly to mer, kano receives a dedicated grammatical function in conditional clauses, which does not occur in main clauses.

Finally, the asymmetries between the semantically default and specific structures permeate all aspects of conditional clauses in Nafsan. Besides the default i=f-wel kin vs. counterfactual mer opposition, i=f-wel kin is also a specific conditional marking in contrast to f and fla, which express possibility in general and do not necessarily lead to a conditional interpretation. The asymmetries between the default and specific markings, coupled with optionality and polyfunctionality of grammatical markers are all common features of Nafsan and Oceanic languages. The study of these characteristics brings about insights into relationships between different grammatical functions and paradigmatic contrasts in Oceanic grammatical systems.
References


