Conditionals without *if* – tracking conditional meaning across languages
Part 3: Nepali conditionals and absolutes
Magdalena Kaufmann (University of Connecticut) [-- joint work with Kavya Krishnan, UConn]

Hindi conditionals have gained popularity in the formal semantic literature for two points:

(i) employing an obligatory apodosis marker "to":

    (1) [(*agar/yadi*) p] [*to* q]]   `if p, then q'

(ii) `fake habituality' to mark counterfactuality/modal remoteness (Bhatt 1997, Iatridou 2009, von Fintel and Iatridou 2020).

- Sharma (2010) points out that *to* remains behind if the consequent is fronted, with the initial marking becoming obligatory (other speakers need to drop *to* for fronting, Pravaal Yadav, p.c.).
- Sharma (t.a.) shows that `habitual' *taa* is not necessarily habitual, but imperfective aspect and can express progressive e.g. in relative clauses - `the boy who *was crying*'

Another Indo-Aryan language, Nepali appears to behave very differently from the standard take on Hindi.

- To mark hypothetical conditionals, Nepali obligatorily employs one of three **antecedent final markings**, either:
    - the **-e participle** (one of two perfective participles) of the lexical predicate
    - one of two conditional markers **bya(y)e or bhane** following a finite, tensed form of the lexical predicate:
      These are perfective participle2 *-e* and imperfective participle *ne* of *huunu* `to be'
      (not *bhannu* `to say', pace Abulky 1974, who glosses *bhan-e* as say-if)

    (2) (*yedhi) chod-nu   par-e   chodim-la
        (yedhi) leave.INF must-e leave.1Sg-FUT
    (3) (yedhi) chod-nu   par-yo   bhane chodim-la.
        (yedhi) leave.INF must-PAST bhane leave.1Sg-FUT
        `If I must leave, I will leave.'   (ok following: *I don't know if I have to leave, but…*)

- **Only with *bhane*: antecedent initial *yed(h)i* can appear in addition**

  Yed(h)i also appears as an interrogative complementizer (e.g. under `don't know if'), not found in literature; *yedhi* seems similar to Hindi *agar*; Pravaal Yadar (p.c.): *yed(h)i* exists in Hindi as a more formal version of *agar* but not interrogative complementizer, Sharma t.a. also mentions *yadi*)

- Consequent marking is optional; with *bhaye* or *bhane*, "ta" `then' can appear consequent-initial

- Possible combinations seem to be:

    - [(yedhi) p bhane] q
    - [(*yedhi) p bhaye] q
    - [(*yedhi) p bhaye bhane] q
    - [(*yedhi) p] ta q
    - [(yedhi) p bhane] ta q
    - [p bhaye] ta q

Consequent-antecedent inversion (data from Jayaraj 1990): *bhane* appears in the antecedent:

(4) a. uniharu gae   bhane ma pani jan-chu
       they   go-PAST.3Pl bhane I   also go-NPAST
       `If they go, I'll also go.'
    b. Ma pani ja-nchu,   uniharu gae   bhane
       I   also go-NPAST they   go-PAST.3Pl bhane
      `I'll also go if they go.'

- Different degrees of remoteness from the actual situation are signaled by different verbal forms in combination with a change from *bhane* to *bhaye*
- Participles in other contexts:
- The perfective participle -eko (glossed PP) and the imperfective participle *-ne* (glossed IP) are in partial paradigmatic alternation, in that they are both used in the formation of relative clauses. Both morphemes are also found forming morphologically complex tense/aspect distinctions.

   From Genetti (1994)

   (24) hijo aa-eko maanche
   yesterday come-PP man
   The man who came yesterday
   (25) bholi aaw-ne maanche
   tomorrow come-IP man
   The man who will come tomorrow.

   (27) hijo aaw-ne / aa-eko maanche mero bhaay ho
   yesterday come-IP come-PP man lsGEN y.brother be1.3smL
   The man who came yesterday is my brother.

   (29) DaakTar hu-ne aasaa gar-chu
   doctor bel-IP hope do-ls.PR
   I hope to be a doctor.
   I have a hope that I will become a doctor.

2. The verbal paradigm

The verbal inflectional paradigm is relatively complex and we have not found a consistent agreed upon description (we draw on Abdulky 1974, Bhattrai 1999, Genetti 1994, Crain 1990)

- Person: 1, 2, 3
- Gender: Masculine, Feminine (all inanimate: Masculine)
- Number: Singular/Plural
- Politeness: three levels of politeness (we exclusively focus on Middle for social equals)
- Polarity: positive/negative

- Infinitive -*nu*
- Imperative (Middle: -*a*)
- Nominalizer -*na*
- Participles/aspectual markers
    o -*i* (auxiliary linker, Genetti 1994/absolutive)
    o **-*ne* (imperfective participle,** Genetti 1994/future participle)
    o **-*eko* (perfective participle)**
    o **-*e* (2 perfective participle,** Genetti 1994/conditional)
    o -*era* (clause chaining; `and`)
    o -*ndai* (progressive, T.N.Sharma 1980)

- Finite forms, exemplified for (Middle.)3SgM *khanu* `to eat'
    o Past: -*yo*   kha-yo
    o NonPast: -*ne* + BE   khane cha > khancha
    o [Future –laa; used mostly for epistemic modality]
    o Perfect: -eko + BE   kha-eko cha
    o Past habitual: khanthyo `he used to eat' [khandathyo]
    o **Unrealized past** [IRR.PAST]: khane thiyo > khanthyo `he would eat'
Habitual present: use regular non-past; past habitual reading lost with non-contracted form:

(5) ((Hami school ma hune bela) rahul mero party haru ma { aau-n-thiyo/ * aau-ne thiyo }. `(When we were in highschool) Rahul used to come to my parties.'

"Unrealized past" appears also in speech reports:

(6) Us-le   bhaniyo u   { kha-nthiyo / khane thiyo }
     he-ERG say-PAST3sg   eat-IRR.PAST.3Sg
     `He said that he would eat.' (reporting: `He said: `I will eat.')

Three different paradigms of *huunu* "to be": predicational (aka existence), identificational (or predication of inherent/characterizing properties), general or universal truth.

Forms of "to be" appear as auxiliaries in complex tenses, some of which have "clipped" forms (fused with participle/infinitival); T. Sharma (1980)

3. Hypothetical conditionals in terms of remoteness

Three layers of remoteness for present, past, future antecedents.

- Realis: indicative: antecedent constitutes realistic possibility but is not known to be true by the speaker
- Potentialis: remote/ `outlandish' possibility

- Counterfactual: antecedent describes a course of events that could have but did not get realized

3.1. Realis conditionals

- Epistemic conditional about the past with stative antecedent

  (4)   (Yedhi) Ram Nepal ma thiyo   bhane us-le   Rani bhetiyo
         (yedhi) Ram Nepal in is.PAST3SgM bhane he-AGENT Rani met-PAST3gM
         `If Ram was in Nepal last week, he met Rani.'   [*epistemic, non-predictive*]

- Conditionals with stative antecedents about the present or the future use the present tense preceding *bhane*:

  (5)   (Yedhi) u ahile   karyalaya ma cha   bhane   bati balira cha.
         Yedhi   he right.now office   in   is.3SgNonPast BHANE lights on be.3SgNonPast
         `If he is in his office right now, then the lights are on.'

  (6)   (Yedhi) u bholi   afno office   ma cha   bhane   ma gadi lag-chu
         Yedhi he tomorrow   office in is.3SgNonPast BHANE I   car take-3SgNonPast
         `If he's in his office tomorrow, I'll take the car.'

  (8)   [said by someone not at party speculating about whether or not the party is fun right now]
         Rahul ahile party   ma   cha   bhane party ramailo cha.
         Rahul right.now party at   be.PRES BHANE party fun be.3SgNonPast
         `If Rahul is at the party right now, the party is fun.' [completely ignorant if he's there]

  Finding: Stative antecedent, realis: tense does its usual thing.

- Conditionals with **<u>non-stative antecedents</u>** use the **past tense** and ***bhane* or *-e* of the lexical predicate** without a detectable difference in reading:

  (9)   a. Pani pari-yo   bhane   ma bahira jaadina
            water fall-PAST.3Sg BHANE   I   outside go-NEG.1SG.NPST
         b. Pani par-e ma bahira jaadina
            water fall-E I   outside go-NEG.1SG.NPST
         `If it rains I won't go out.'   (from Hutt & Subedi 1999)

  (10)   A: Does it matter if Rahul comes to the party tomorrow? (Shall I work on him.)
         B: If Rahul comes to the party, it will be fun, but if he doesn't come, it will still be fun.
         Rahul bholi party ma aa-yo   bhane   ramailo hun-cha,
         Rahul tomorrow party to come-PAST.3SgM BHANE fun   is-NPST3SgM
         tara aa-yena   bhane pani ramailo hun-cha
         but come-PAST.NEG.3SgM BHANE still fun   is-NPST3SgM

         Open: this one we cannot transform into a <u>realis</u> *-e* conditional:

         Rahul bholi party ma aa-e ramailo {* hun-cha / hun-thiyo }.
         `If he were to come to the party tomorrow it would be fun.'

3.2 Three degrees of remoteness with eventive antecedents:

Realis. [.. past bhane] [… non-past]

Potentialis. [… unrealized past [PAST.IRR] bhane][…. Present/Unrealized past [IRR.PAST]]

Counterf. [-eko [perfect participle] bha(y)e [= be-E [perfect part.2]] [… unrealized past [IRR.PAST]]

    Uu party ma khai-yo bhane hamile pakau-nu parde-na
    He party there eat-PAST.Sg BHANE we   cook-INF have.to-NEG
    If he eats at the party we don't have to cook.

    Uu party ma   khan-ne thiyo   bhane   hamile pakau-nu parde-na
    He party there be.IRR.PAST.3Sg BHANE we   cook-INF have.to-NEG
    `If he were to eat at the party, we don't have to cook.'

    Uu party ma   kha-eko { bhaye / *bhane } hamile pakau-nu pardena thiyo.
    He party there eat-EKO bhaye /* BHANE we   cook-INF have.to AUX.PAST3PM
    `If he had eaten at the party, we wouldn't have to cook.'

  (11) Rahul ahile party ma hu-nthiyo   bhane party ramailo hu-nthiyo.
    Raji; right.now party at be- IRR.PAST.3SgM BHANE party fun   be-IRR.PAST.3SgM
    `If Rahul were at the party right now, the party would be fun. So I don't think he is
    there.'   [`in my head he is not here']

    **Note: this looked like fake habituality. But: it can be replaced with the expanded form in all
    these cases -nthiyo < -ne thiyo. Unrealized past, not past habitual.**

    (Yedhi) Rahul bholi ko party ma aayedi-yo   { bhane / *bhaye } ramailo hun-thyo.
    YEDHI Rahul tomorrow party to come-PROG.PAST BHANE /*BHAYE fun be- IRR.PAST 3Sg
    `If he were coming to the party tomorrow, the party would be fun.'

    (Yedhi) Rahul bholi ko party ma aa-yed-eko   { bhaye / *bhane} ramailo hun-thyo
    Yedhi   Rahul tomorrow party to come-PART.PFV BHAYE / *BHANE fun be- IRR.PAST 3Sg

- Note: Countermathematicals look like counterfactuals, countermetaphysicals look like potentialis:

  (11) (Yedhi) 9 pramukh sankhaya **bha(ye)ko bhaye**, 3 le bhaga hudaina thiyo.
    (Yedhi) 9 pramukh sankhaya **bhay-e**, 3 le bhaga hudaina thiyo.

  (11b)   (yedhi) ma timi thi-yo   bhane ma aajai suthi.
          be.Past.3SgM I you be-PAST1Sg bhane ….
          `If I were you I would sleep more.'

Conditionals formed with participles of `to be' look reminiscent of English absolutes (from Stump 1985, his (1)):

    Free adjunct construction:
    Walking home, he found a dollar.
    Nominative absolute construction:
    His father being a sailor, John knows all about boats.
    Augmented absolute construction:
    With the children asleep, Mary watched TV.

With stage-level predicates, absolutes can restrict temporal or modal operators in the main-clause:
                          Test frames like: *I see X* _____ (from Carlson 1977)

(Stump's 4) *Transposed to a trumpet or saxophone, her creations would probably herald a new school.*

No conditional readings in the absence of modals, though:

(Zobel's 30b*) As an administrator, Peter has his office on the third floor.*

Zobel (2008) argues: restricted to non-epistemic conditionals:

[her 32, simplified] *As a participant, Peter might annoy the other passengers.*
      ok: if Peter were to become a participant, Peter might annoy…   [future oriented might]
      not: If Peter is a participant, he might annoy the other passengers.

As a blonde, Jane might look like Mary.
      only: If Jane were blonde, she might look like Mary.
      not: If Jane is blonde, she might look like Mary.

Indicative epistemic modal after all?

(Stump 3a)   *Taken in the prescribed dosage, it must be very effective.*
             If it is taken in the prescribed dosage, it must be very effective.

Epistemic *must* outscoping generic conditional-?

4. Some take home notes

- Bhane requires fake past marking (or perfective?) for non-stative antecedents – reminiscent of the certainty condition associated with English Simple Present
- Remoteness is marked by `unrealized past' (future in the past'), not fake habituality, even though the short form of unrealized past collapses with past habituality
- Indicative vs. strong counterfactuality is marked by antecedent marker (bhane – imperfective/future participle of `to be' vs. bha(y)e – a perfect participle of `to be')
- Reminiscent of English absolute constructions (Stump 1985, Zobel 2008, see day 1), but unconstrained in modal flavor.

References

Abdulky, Vicki (1974) A formational approach to the semantic structure of Nepali. PhD Dissertation, Cornell University.
Bhatt, R. (1997). Counterfactuality in Indo-Aryan. Notes assembled for Sabine Iatridou's Counterfactuals Project. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania. https://people.umass.edu/bhatt/papers/sjv.pdf
Bhattrai, Anju (1999) A contrastive analysis of the English and Nepali past tenses and a contrastive analysis of Nepali learner's use of the English past tenses. PhD Dissertation, Ball State University, Muncie, Indiana.
Crain, Laura Diane (1992) Clause chaining in Nepali discourse. PhD Dissertation, University of California, LA.
Genetti, Carol (Ed.,1994) Aspects of Nepali Grammar. Santa Barbara Working Papers in Linguistics, Vol. 6. [Introduction (with a sketch of Nepali), pp. 1-40.
Iatridou, S. 2009. (Collaborative thoughts) about the imperfective in counterfactuals. Handout of a talk given at the Imperfective Workshop at Yale University.
Sharma, Ghanshyam (2010) On Hindi conditionals. In Sharma, G. and S. Rajendra, editors, Annual Review of South Asian Languages and Linguistics. Mouton de Gruyter.
Sharma, Ghanshyam (t.a.) Towards a unified linguistic approach to conditionals – Some empirical evidence. In: S. Kaufmann & D. Over & G. Sharma (eds.)
Sharma, Tara Nath (1980) The auxiliary in Nepali. PhD Dissertation, University of Wisconsin, Madison.