

CONDITIONALS IN GĪKŪYŪ (KIKUYU) (E51)¹

Abstract

This paper presents a morphosyntactic characterisation and semantic classification of Gĩkũyũ conditionals. Based on their morphosyntax, it demonstrates several types of conditional clauses in the language. There are conditional situatives, which do not have any overt conditional marker but they have a conditional interpretation. Gĩkũyũ lexically indicates conditionality with *kɔrwɔ*, *ɔkɔrwɔ*, *angekɔrwɔ* and morphologically by *-nge-*, all meaning ‘if’. Although these markers look similar, they differ semantically. Semantically, Gĩkũyũ conditionals can be classified as real conditionals, subsuming situative, factive and predictive conditionals realised by *ɔkɔrwɔ*, *angekɔrwɔ* and unreal conditionals, subsuming hypothetical and counterfactual, indicated by *kɔrwɔ* and *-nge-*. Gĩkũyũ conditional clauses are discourse topics (à la Haiman 1978) that set the frame for consequent discourse. It is also shown that main clause phenomena such as argument and predicate fronting apply in Gĩkũyũ conditional clauses.

1. Introduction

Studies of conditional clauses in African languages including Bantu languages are few or even non-existent for some languages. Nicolle (2017) acknowledged the scarcity of studies on conditional clauses in African languages. He wrote, “Conditional constructions constitute a complex area of enquiry that is under-represented in the literature on African languages” (p. 12). The special issue Nicolle edited contains analyses of Chadic, Eastern Nilotic, Kumuz, Mande, Atlantic, Kwa, and Grassfields and narrow Bantu languages. Bantu languages are represented by an article on Kiswahili conditionals by Mwamzandi (2017). There are notable studies on conditional clause in Bantu languages e.g. Saloné (1979) on Kihaya; Parker (1991) on Mundani; Lepota (2002) on Northern Sotho.

Gĩkũyũ (also Kikuyu) is a Bantu language spoken in central Kenya by about eight million people. Gĩkũyũ was classified as E51 by Guthrie (1967). Aspects of conditional clauses are described in extant Gĩkũyũ grammars: Barlow (1960), Bennett et al. (1985), and Gecaga (1955) describe Gĩkũyũ conditionals, albeit in varying detail. These grammars lack a comprehensive and unified description of Gĩkũyũ conditional clauses e.g. they do not have a classification of conditional clauses. Barlow (1960) presented a detailed description of conditional clauses especially their interaction with tense. According to Bennett et al. (1985:248), proper conditionals in Gĩkũyũ are introduced by *korwo*, *aakorwo* and *angikorwo*, meaning ‘if’. This claim ignores the fact that *-nge-* is also a conditional marker in the language. Leakey (1978) writes that learners of Gĩkũyũ are advised to learn by heart several conditional tenses by some Gĩkũyũ grammars, which according to him is unnecessary. “The only thing that must be learned is that conditional meaning is made by putting the infix *-ngĩ* [-nge-] between the pronoun and the verb stem ...” (Leakey 1978:35). Evidently, Leakey does not acknowledge the existence of lexical conditional linkers in Gĩkũyũ, just like Bennett et al. misses out on the morphological *-nge-* conditional.

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Gecaga (1955:67) admits the difficulty of describing Gĩkũyũ conditional clauses crosslinguistically. He wrote, “This part of the grammar [conditional clauses] [is] the most difficult part to explain...” Gecaga’s admission indicates the complexity of Gĩkũyũ conditional clauses. There is need for a comparable crosslinguistic description and analyses of Gĩkũyũ conditional clauses in comparable crosslinguistic terms. As a contribution to this and the study of conditional clauses in Bantu languages, this article describes the morphosyntax of Gĩkũyũ conditional clauses in (§2), provides a syntacto-semantic classification of Gĩkũyũ conditional (§3), and describes some aspects of information structure in Gĩkũyũ conditional clauses (§4), §5 is the conclusion.

2. Morphosyntax of Gĩkũyũ conditional sentences

As previously noted, there are different views on what passes for a conditional clause in Gĩkũyũ. This paper attempts to harmonize and unify the syntactic description of Gĩkũyũ conditionals. According to Kroeger (2019:346), “a conditional sentence is a bi-clausal structure of the form *if p (then) q*”. A conditional sentence has an antecedent clause (the *if p* clause), otherwise called 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 conditional sense is not lexically or inflectionally indicated (Bhatt & Pancheva 2006: 642).

Gĩkũyũ uses the verbal inflectional prefix *-nge-* to mark conditional mood. The language has words *‘korũo’*² (in its variant forms: *‘akorũo’*, *‘okorũo’*, *ongorũo*² and *angorũo*.² Other than lexical and morphological marking, Gĩkũyũ encodes conditional meaning using the so called ‘purely syntactic’ means. According to Bhatt & Pancheva (2006) such conditionals are ‘bare conditionals’; they lack overt conditional inflections or lexical markers, yet they have a conditional interpretation. They are also called non-canonical conditionals by Liu (2019). The examples in (1) bare conditionals in Gĩkũyũ. They are conditional clauses since even without any lexical or morphological indication, they have a conditional meaning.

- (1) **Mw-a-cemani-a na-ke mo-mo-gĩithi-ε.**
 2-FUT-meet-FV with-him 2-2OM-greet-FV
 ‘If you meet (with) him, greet him.’

Example (1) has a purely conditional meaning, thanks to the future tense *-a-*. Prefix *-a-* is reserved for some conditional and temporal clauses (Barlow 1960:55). When used in sentences e.g. (1), it cannot co-occur with ‘if’ or ‘when’. The analogy between temporal and conditional clauses is crosslinguistically common (Thompson et al. 2007). Most Bantu languages make the *if-when*-distinction (Petzell 2008). Examples like (1) are called ‘situatives’ in Bantu studies. See Bennett et al. (1985), van der Wal (2009, 2014), Guérois (2017), *a.o.* To distinguish a situative that is conditional from other types of situatives e.g. participial, the term ‘conditional situative’ (Guérois 2017:196) is preferred here.

Conditional situatives are like ‘open conditionals’ in that they are future-oriented. The difference between ‘when’ and ‘if’ clauses is “in the degree of certainty that the event will be realized” (Lichtenberk 1991:494). Thompson et al. (2007) claimed that *if-when* conditionals

² The Gĩkũyũ orthography of the conditionals *akorũo* /akɔrɔɔ/, *okorũo* /ɔkɔrɔɔ/, *ongorũo* /ɔngɔrɔɔ/ and *angorũo* /angɔrɔɔ/. Here they are written as *kɔrɔɔ* and *ɔkɔrɔɔ*; *ɔngɔrɔɔ* and *angɔrɔɔ* are phonological variants (a) (ɔ) *kɔrɔɔ*, not distinct conditional markers. Gĩkũyũ vowels *i ũ o*, & *e* are written in IPA notation: e, o, ɔ & ε, respectively. The variant forms are dialectal. Speakers from Nyeri only use *ɔkɔrɔɔ* compared to *ɔkɔrɔɔ*; (a-) *ɔngɔrɔɔ* used by Kiambu speakers. The latter are more liberal as they use all the variant markers. This paper uses the Kiambu variety.

are predictive conditionals. Following Thompson et al., since the conditional situative in (1) exclusively uses the future tense, and it predicts a future possibility, it qualifies as a predictive conditional.

Additional examples in (2) help expound the on Gĩkũyũ conditional situatives. Example (2a) is purely temporal but (2b) has a conditional interpretation. In regards to (2a) a native Gĩkũyũ speaker says that it is odd to doubt whether one would make it to a destination. Hence the temporal interpretation is favoured. It is ‘culturally uncomfortable’. The conditionality in (2b) is not pegged on the protasis’ event; but on the adverb *tene* ‘early’.

- (2) a. **Tw-a-kiny-a** **ne to-ko-hor-a** **thimo.**
 2-TNS-arrive-FV AM 2-FUT-beat-FV 9.phone
 ‘When we arrive, we will call.’
- b. **Tw-a-kiny-a** **tene** **ne to-ko-hor-a** **thimo.**
 2-TNS-arrive-FV early AM 2-FUT-beat-FV 9.phone
 ‘When we arrive, we will call.’

As for negation, conditional situatives mark it either by a negative verb *-aga-* ‘fail’ (3a) or by a subordinate negative *-ta-* in the protasis (3b-c). The apodosis takes *-ti-* the matrix clause negation prefix (3c). As with other adverbial clauses, conditional situatives allow inversion of apodoses and protases.

- (3) a. **Kw-ag-a** **ku-ur-a** **ne** **to-go-thi-e** **mo-gonda.**
 17-fail-FV 15-rain-FV AM 1PL-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 1PL-FUT-go-FV 3-farm
 ‘If it does not rain, we will go to the farm.’
- c. **Mo-ta-cemani-a** **na-ke** **mo-ti-mo-gēithi-a.**
 2-NEG-meet with-him 2-NEG-2OM-greet-FV
 ‘If you don’t meet (with) him, you will not greet him.’/
 ‘Unless you meet him you will not greet him.’

Next is a conditional indicated by an inflectional conditional verbal affix *-ngĩ-* here called ‘*-nge-* conditional’. Prefix *-nge-* is isomorphic with modal prefix *-nge-* could/‘would’ see (4). Conditional *-nge-* is compatible with present, past, future tense forms. The tense marker is replicated in the protasis and the apodosis, e.g. PRS *-a-* in (4).

(Barlow 1960: 152)

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

The *nge*- conditional allows negation in the protasis and the apodosis; either in one, apodosis in (5a) or in both (5b). Since the protasis is subordinate, it takes NEG *-ta-* (5b), and the apodosis takes the main clause NEG *-ti-*.

- (5) a. **A-nge-et-wə ko-ndo n-da- a-thi-ag-a.**
 1-COND-call-PASS 17-somewhere 1-NEG-go-PROG-FV
 ‘If he is invited somewhere, he does not go.’
- b. **A-ta-nge-et-wə ko-ndo n-da- a-thi-ag-a/ n-da-nge-thi-e**
 1-NEG-COND-call-PASS 17-somewhere 1-NEG-go-PROG-FV/1-NEG-MOD-go-FV
 ‘Unless he is invited somewhere, he does not go.’/‘If he is not invited somewhere, he does not go/he can’t go.’

Another type of conditional sentence is introduced by *kərwə*, hence *kərwə*-conditionals (6). The conditional particle can occur initially (6a) & (6b) or medially as part of inflection (6c).

- (6) a. **Kərwə mw-a-ɕəmania na-kɛ mw-a-mo-gɛithi-a.**
 COND 2-FUT-meet with-him 2-FUT-2OM-greet-FV
 ‘If you met with him, you would greet him.’
- b. **Kərwə ne mo-a-ɕəman-ir-i-ɛ na-kɛ ne mo-nge-a-mo-gɛith-iri-ɛ.**
 COND AM 2-PST-meet-PFT-DC-FV with-him AM 2-MOD-PST-2OM-greet-ASP-FV
 ‘If you had met with him, you would have greeted him.’
- c. **Mw-a-kərwə ne mo-go-thi-e ndonyo mo-nj-er- ɛ.**
 2-FUT-COND AM 2-FUT-go-FV 9.market 2-1OM-tell-FV
 ‘If you will go to the market, inform me.’

Other than identifying conditionals, particle *kərwə* has other grammatical functions in Gikūyū. It is aspectual in (7a), a copula in future conditionals where copula *-re* ‘be’ becomes *kərwə* (7b). The conditional- copula isomorphy is not unique to Gikūyū. Biloa & Fotso (2017) report an isomorphic conditional and copula in Ghɔmálá’ (Cameroon). Indeed, Traugott (1985: 290-292) argues that lexical conditional markers may develop from modals, copulas, interrogatives, and time words e.g. ‘when’.

- (7) a. **Tw-a-kərwə tw-a-re-a.**
 2-PST-be 2-PST-eat-FV
 ‘We have just eaten.’
- b. **O-nge-re haha... vs. O-nge-ga- kərwə haha...**
 1-COND-be 16-here 1-COND-FUT-be 16-here
 ‘if you are here...’ ‘if you will be here...’

Kərwə conditional interacts with present (8a), and past tenses (8b) but not the future (8c).

- (8) a. **Kərwə wee ha-ha w-a-re-a nyama.**
 COND you.COP 16-here you-PRS-eat-FV 9.meat
 ‘If you were/are here, you would/can eat meat.’

b. **Kərɔ́ o-ra-re haha ne o-nge-ra-re-ir-ε nyama.**
 COND you-PST-be here AM you-MOD-PST-eat-PFT-FV 9.meat
 ‘If you were here you would have eaten meat.’

c. ***Kərɔ́ (*ne) o-ga-kərɔ́ haha ne o-ka-re-a nyama.**
 COND you-FUT-be 16- here AM you-FUT-eat-FV 9.meat
 ‘If you will be here you will eat meat.’

Kərɔ́ also co-occurs with *naare*, an imaginative particle that also indicate a desire or wish that remains unrealised (9). Particle *naare* means ‘at least’ or ‘even if’ or ‘perhaps’; it indicates doubt, uncertainty, possibility (Benson 1964: 278).

(9). **Naare kərɔ́ ne n-go-mɛny-ag-a ne a-ra-thi-e nde-mo-tom-ε.**
 PART COND AM 1-PST-know-PROG-FV AM 1-PRS-go-FV 1-1OM-send-FV
 ‘I wish I had known he was going, I send him.’

Kərɔ́ conditional takes negation *-ti-* e.g. (10) and NEG may be in both the protasis and apodosis. However, subordinate negation *-ta-* is incompatible with *kərɔ́* conditional.

(10) **Kərɔ́ to-ti-na-rem-a to-ti-nge- a-reh-wɔ́.**
 COND 2-NEG-PST-dig-FV 2-NEG-MOD-PST-pay-PASS
 ‘If we had not ploughed, we would not have been paid.’

Another lexically indicated conditional is that marked by *ɔkərɔ́*, here ‘*ɔkərɔ́*-conditional’ e.g. (11). The examples in (11) show that *ɔkərɔ́*-conditional presents a possible actuality of the event in the apodosis; such events have the potential to happen. As for tense, *ɔkərɔ́*-conditional occurs with all possible Gĩkũyũ tenses. However when negation is introduced in the apodosis, an additional future marker *-ka-* is also added (11b).

- (11) a. **Ɔkərɔ́ ne mo-go-cɛmania na-kɛ mo-mo-gɛithi-ε.**
 COND AM 2-FUT-meet with-him 2-2OM-greet-FV
 ‘If you will meet with him, greet him.’
- b. **Ɔkərɔ́ ne mo-go-cɛmania na-kɛ, mo-ti-ka-mo-gɛithi-ε.**
 COND AM 2-FUT-meet with-him 2-NEG-FUT-2OM-greet-FV
 ‘If you will meet with him, don’t greet him.’
- c. **Ɔkərɔ́ ne ma-g-ɔk-a ne to-ka-ma-tom-a na i-hɛɔ ci-ito.**
 COND AM 2-FUT-come-FV AM 2-FUT-2OM-send-FV with 7-gift 7-our
 ‘If they will come we will send them with our gifts.’

Another type of conditional sentence is one that uses *angekərɔ́*. Morphologically *angekərɔ́* is a combination of *-nge-* and *-kərɔ́*. The prefix *a-*, 3rd person, can be replaced by other person markers, see (12b).

(12) a. **Angekərɔ́ w-e nyomba ne to-ko-he-tok-er-a ha-u.**
 COND you. COP 9.house AM 2-FUT-pass-APPL-FV 16-there
 ‘If you are in the house, we will pass there/pass by.’

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

As for negation, *angekərɔ*-conditional takes NEG *-ti-* in both the antecedent and consequent clauses (13a). Example (13b) contains subordinate NEG *-ta-* which results to *unless*-conditional clause.

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

The last type of conditional discussed here is *ɔ na* ‘even if’³ conditional, commonly called concessive conditional. (14a). Gikūyū concessive conditionals are compatible with all other conditional types: conditional situative (14a); *kərɔ* (14b); *angekərɔ* (14c), *ɔkərɔ* (14d); and *-nge*-conditional (14e). Thompson et al. (2007:262) puts concessive conditionals in unreal conditionals, since they may have an unreal event which is predictive or hypothetical. Such a conclusion is difficult to claim for Gikūyū considering it occurs freely with all the types.

- (14) a. **ɔna m-ɔ-ɔk-a to-ti-ko-ma-ar-er-i-a.**
 even 2-FUT-come-FV 2-NEG-FUT-2OM-talk-APPL-DC-FV
 ‘Even if they come, we will not talk to them.’
 b. **ɔna m-ɔ-ɔk-a to-ti-ko-ma-ar-er-i-a.**
 even 2-FUT-come-FV 2-NEG-FUT-2OM-talk-APPL-DC-FV
 ‘Even if they come, we will not talk to them.’
 c. **ɔna akərɔ ne m-ɔ-ɔk-a to-ti-ko-ma-ar-er-i-a.**
 even COND AM 2PL-PRS-come-FV 2PL-NEG-FUT-2OM-talk-APPL-DC-FV
 ‘Even if they had come, we would not have talked to them.’
 d. **ɔna angekərɔ ne m-ɔ-ɔk-a to-ti-ko-ma-ar-er-i-a.**
 even COND AM 2PL-PRS-come-FV 2PL-NEG-FUT-2OM-talk-APPL-DC-FV
 ‘Even if they have come, we will not talk to them.’
 e. **ɔna kərɔ ne m-ɔ-ɔk-a to-ti-ko-ma-ar-er-i-a.**
 Even COND AM 2PL-PRS-come-FV 2PL-NEG-FUT-2OM-talk-APPL-DC-FV
 ‘Even if they have we will not talk to them.’

³ This marker contains *ɔ* and *na*. The former also refers to pronouns ‘they/them’ and adverb ‘just’ and the latter is also conjunction ‘and’ and comitative ‘with’. Together, the two morphemes mean ‘also’, ‘although’ and ‘even if’. The concern here is with the last meaning. They are here singly written since there is no distinct boundary.

- f. **Ꮚna ma-nge-ɔk-ir-ε to-ti-nge-a-ma-ar-e-ir-i-ε.**
 even 2PL-COND-come-PFT-FV 2PL-NEG-MOD-PST- 2OM-talk-APPL-PFT-DC-FV
 ‘Even if they had come, we would not have talked to them.’

So far, it is shown that Gĩkũyũ conditional clauses are lexically marked by *kɔrwɔ*, *ɔkɔrwɔ*, and *angekɔrwɔ* and morphologically by *-nge-*, while concessive conditionals are indicated by *ɔ na*. Other than these event based conditionals, 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). 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. Examples in (15) are marginal conditionals.

- (15) a. **Ꮚkɔrwɔ w-ee mo-hot-u hε-na irio nyongo.**
 COND 1-be 1-hungry-FV 16.there-is 5.food 9.pot
 ‘If you are hungry, there is food in the pot.’
 b. **Ꮚkɔrwɔ ne nie n-gor-ag-a irio mo-ti-go-itaang-a.**
 COND AM 1.me 1-buy-PROG-FV 5.food 2-NEG-PRS-waste-FV
 ‘If I am the one who buys food you will not waste it.’

The examples in (15a) are commonly called relevant or biscuit conditionals or “speech act conditionals” (Kroeger 2019:366-367). For instance (15a) is an offer and (15b) a threat cum warning. Conditionals realize speech acts such as warnings, threats, advice, extortions, negotiations, offers, proposals, etc. (Wunderlich 1977), and (15) illustrates this in Gĩkũyũ.

3. Semantic classification of Gĩkũyũ conditional clauses

Gĩkũyũ conditional clauses have variant meanings based on their morphosyntax. The conditional marker determines the meaning of the conditional clause. According to Tynan & Lavin (1997:115), a speaker’s choice of a conditional marker is an indicator of his/hers assumptions about the truth of the protasis. However, morphosyntax may not be conclusive in the semantic classification of conditionals. For instance, Saloné (1979), using Swahili and Chagga data, questions whether predictive conditionals are real or unreal conditionals, when their syntax is considered. Nevertheless, there are conditional meanings that are indicated by more than one syntactic form as is evident in Gĩkũyũ.

Variant syntactic and semantic nature of conditional clauses makes it difficult for straightforward classification. Taylor (1997:289) noted the ‘fuzziness’ in characterizing conditional clauses. Declerck & Reed (2001) stated that the criteria and the types and subtypes of conditionals is large, such that it is almost impossible to have “a genuine common denominator” (p.18). In spite of challenges, semantic classification of conditional is possible.

Borrowing from Schachter (1971), 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 present, habitual/generic, past conditionals (real conditionals in Thompson et al. (2007)). Although Thompson et al. (2007) classify predictive conditionals as unreal and Yule

(1998) as real conditionals, the properties of predictive conditionals are the same. In any case, predictive conditionals, though semantically unreal, may be syntactically ‘real’ or ‘unreal’ in some languages (Thompson et al. 2007:258) and Yule himself acknowledges that the ‘possibility’ associated with predictive may be strong or weak. The classification here borrows from both Yule (1998) and Thompson et al. (2007).

3.1. *Factual conditionals*

Factive conditionals “express relationship between two events as generally happening or normally being true in the circumstances described” (Yule 1998:124). These conditionals assume an implication set in the protasis and realised in the apodosis. Factuals use the present (16a), the habitual/generic in (16b) and the past (16c). Note that (16a) and (16b) use *ɔkɔrwɔ* and *-nge-* respectively, while (16c) is a conditional situative.

- (16) a. **ɔkɔrwɔ ne ko-ra-ur-a to-ti-ko-ambor-a hama.**
COND AM 17-PRS-rain-FV 2-NEG-PRS-unpitch-FV 9.tent
‘If it is raining we will not unpitch the tent.’

- b. **O-nge-hand-a mbembɛ na rioa ne ci-om-ag-a.**
1-COND-plant-FV 9.maize with 9.sun AM 9-dry-HAB-FV
‘If you plant maize during the dry season, they dry up.’

(Barlow 1960:163)

- c. **Tɛnɛ mo-ndo a-a-iy-a ne a-a-reh-agi-ɔ ne ke-ama.**
early 1-person 1-PST-steal-FV AM 1-PST-pay-ASP-PASS by 7.council
‘In the past if /when a person stole he was fined by the council of elders.’

3.2. *Predictive conditionals*

Predictive conditionals are presented as a possibility in future, whose possibility depends on the event in the protasis (Yule 1998). Thompson et al. (2007):258 think that predictive conditionals are semantically unreal because they are imagined. All the examples in (17) predict that the hearers will pass the examination if they study or it well. Except *kɔrwɔ* all other conditional forms are used in predictive conditionals. As with predictive conditionals, future tense *-ka-* in the apodosis as a common denominator. All the protases have future tense marker except (17c), which does not mark it but has a present tense interpretation.

- (17) a. **Mw-a-thɔm-a wɛga ne mo-ka-hetok-a ke-gɛriɔ.**
2PL-PRS-read-a well AM 2-FUT-pass-FV 7-exam
‘If you study well, you will pass the exam.’
- b. **ɔkɔrwɔ ne mo-go-thɔm-a wɛga ne mo-ka-hetuka ke-gɛriɔ.**
COND AM 2PL-FUT-read-FV well AM 2-FUT-pas-FV 7-exam
‘If you study well, you will pass the exam.’
- c. **Mo-nge-thɔm-a wɛga ne mo-ka-hetok-a ke-gɛriɔ.**
2PL-COND –read-FV well AM 2PL-FUT-pass-FV 7-exam
‘If you study well, you will pass the exam.’

d. **Angekərwə ne mo-go-thəm-a wəga ne mo-ka-hetok-a ke-geriə.**
 COND AM 2PL-FUT-read-FV well AM 2PL-FUT-pass-FV 7-exam
 ‘If you will study well, you will pass the exam’.

Although *angekərwə* and *əkərwə* takes all tenses, the apodosis must be in future tense. However, *-nge-* is only compatible with the future in the protasis, since changing it to any past tense e.g. *(-a-)* e.g. **Mo-nge-a thəm-irə wəga.** ‘If you had studied well, requires modal *-nge-* e.g.: **Ne mo-nge-ka-hetuka ke-geriə** ‘you could pass the exam’. Particles *angekərwə* and *əkərwə* are unacceptable in (17b) & (17c) e.g. **angekərwə / *əkərwə mw-a-thəm-a wəga ne mo-ka-hetuk-a ke-geriə.* ‘If you study well, you will pass the exam.’, but *əkərwə* is okay e.g. **Ƙərwə mw-a-thəm-a wəga mw-a-hetuk-a ke-geriə.** ‘If you would study well, you would pass the exam.’ Unlike (17d), this example lacks *ne* the assertive marker, or future tense in the apodosis. Notice they both have *-a-*, which has a consecutive (consequence *then*) sense in the apodosis.

3.3. Hypothetical conditionals

A hypothetical protasis introduces an imaginary proposition that is unrealized at the time of utterance, although it is not impossible to happen (Saloné 1979). Wierzbicka (1997: 26) describes hypotheticals as ‘if X happened, Y would happen’.

(18)a. **I-nge-ən-a nyɔka nd-a-me-or-ag-a.**
 1-COND-see-FV 9.snake 1-MOD-9OM-kill-ASP-FV
 ‘If I saw a snake I would kill it.’

b. **To-nge- ən-a mbəca tw-a-gor-a mo-gonda.**
 2-COND-see-FV 9.money 2-PRS-buy-FV 3-farm
 ‘If we found money, we would buy a farm.’

c. **Ƙərwə tu-ən-a mbəca tw-a-gor-a mo-gonda.**
 COND 2PL-see-FV 9.money 2-PRS-buy-FV 3-farm
 ‘If we found money, we would buy a farm.’

d. **I-nge-ən-a Ngai nd-a-mo-geithi-a.**
 1-COND-see-FV 1.God 1-PRS-1OM-greet-FV
 ‘If I saw God, I would greet him.’

Conditionality is morphologically indicated by *-nge-* in (18a). The speaker imagines in the protasis seeing a snake and what would happen after that, i.e. ‘X happens, then Y follows’, where X is sighting the snake and Y is killing it. Hypothetical conditionals, other than answering the question “*what would happen if...?*” also express wishes and desires (Yule 1998:128). Examples (18b) and (18c) are wishes realised by *-nge-* and *əkərwə*. Although the protases’ events are unrealised, they are not impossible. It is assumed that the events in the apodoses would hold, if the ones in the protases happened. Conditional markers *angekərwə* and *əkərwə* do not suffice in hypothetical conditionals. Comparatively, (18a) has a lower hypotheticality hence greater probability, (considering that one is more likely to see a snake in places where snakes are common) when compared to (18d) which has greater hypotheticality hence lower probability, since it is unimaginable to meet and greet God. As for (18b) and (18c), although the antecedent propositions are not realised at the time of the utterance, they

are not humanly impossible. Note that the present tense *-a-* , serves as the English modal ‘would’.

These examples resonate with idea of hypotheticality by Comrie (1986), who describes hypothetically as a continuum. To him, 'hypotheticality' means “the degree of probability of realization of the situations referred to in the conditional, e.g. 'greater hypotheticality' means 'lower probability' and 'lower hypotheticality' means 'greater probability'. Thus a factual sentence would represent the lowest degree of hypotheticality, while a counterfactual clause would represent the highest degree.”(p.88).

3.4. Counterfactual conditionals

Counterfactual conditionals express what could not happen or did not happen (Thompson et al. 2007); hence the antecedent in a counterfactual conditional is assumed to be false (Saloné 1979:66); presupposed to be false (Barwise 1986:88) cited in Wierzbicka (1997: 28). Counterfactual conditionals are imaginary, an obvious example is (19a). It is impossible for a human being to become an angel, but it is possible and likely for someone to plough or plant (19b-c). Counterfactual conditionals are exclusively indicated by *kɔrwɔ* and *-nge-* . Events that *didn't* happen or *couldn't* happen are counterfactual (Thompson et al 2007:256, original emphasis). Thus, because, ploughing was not done and ‘becoming an angel cannot happen, these example qualify for counterfactuals.

(19) a. **Kɔrwɔ to-re a-raika tu-ɔmbok-a**

COND 2-be 2-angel 2-fly-FV

‘If we were angels, we would fly.’

b. **Kɔrwɔ ne a-ra-rem-et-ɛ ne to-nge-ra-hand-ir-ɛ.**

COND AM 1-PST-plough-PFT-FV AM 2-MOD-PST-plant-PFT-FV

‘If he had ploughed we would have planted.’

c. **A-nge-ra-rem-et-ɛ ne to-nge-ra-hand-ir-ɛ.**

1-COND-PST-plough-PFT-FV AM 2-MOD-PST-plant-PFV-FV

‘If he had ploughed we would have planted.’

Another counterfactual conditional uses *nɔ* ‘only’ (*ne + ɔ*) and *kɔrwɔ*. As an unreal conditional, it expresses a contrary situation to the expected event; (20) illustrates an impossible imagination, because God does not literally respond when called, and if He did, then he would do it many times considering the many times He is called.

(20) **Nɔ kɔrwɔ Ngai ne ɛ-tek-ag-a ɛ- ɛt-wɔ, a-nge-etek-ag-a ma-ingɛ.**

only COND 1.God AM 1-reply-PROG-FV 1-call-PASS 1-MOD-reply-PROG-FV often

‘If only God responds whenever He is called, He would be responding many times’.

From the examples, the distinction between Gĩkũyũ hypothetical and counterfactual conditionals is very thin. First, syntactically they are indicated by identical morphemes: *-nge-* and *kɔrwɔ*. Second temporal aspects are not variant in the two semantic types. This is not unique to Gĩkũyũ, Thompson et al. (2007:260) reports that hypothetical and counterfactual conditionals Isthmus Zapotec and Luseño are not morphologically distinguished. Even in English, Davies (1979) cited in Wierzbicka (1997:31) concludes that speakers of English, “without some special contrast”, interpret a sentence with the structure: "If X had happened, Y would have happened" as a counter-factual”.

4. Information structure in conditional clauses

Issues of information structuring in adverbial clauses, e.g. English conditional clauses, have received considerable attention, e.g. Haegeman (2006, 2007), Danckaert & Haegeman (2012), Haiman (1978), Yule (1998), and others. From an African perspective, Caron (2006) contradicts Haiman's (1978) position that conditionals clauses are topics. Caron argued that conditional clauses are focal than topical in some Chadic languages.

The main clause phenomena (MCP) as articulated by Hooper & Thompson (1973), Emonds (1976), (Haegeman (2002, 2012), include argument fronting, locative inversion, VP preposing, negative inversion, etc. Not all adverbial clauses in English allow MCP and English conditional clauses are an example. See Haegeman (2002, 2012), Danckaert & Haegeman (2012), Endo & Haegeman (2019), Frey (2012). As part of information structuring in conditional clauses, this section briefly looks at the applicability of some argument and VP fronting MCP features in Gĩkũyũ conditionals clauses as aspects of information structuring.

4.1. Conditional clauses are topics

Haiman (1978) claims that conditional clauses are topics, and he is supported by Ford & Thompson (1986), Givón (2001), Thompson et al. (2007), and others. Although Van der Wal (2014) acknowledges that conditional clauses are topics in Haiman's sense; she notes their topicality is as a result of their position and not their inherent composition. Support for topicality of adverbial clauses derives from their position and use of topic markers on such clauses. Other than positioning Gĩkũyũ also marks topics morphologically.

General characteristics of topics include : they appear at the beginning of a sentence, they are discourse dependent , they need not be arguments in the discourse they appear, they are definite, they are the 'framework' on which main predication happens (Chafe 1976:50).

There are clausal and discourse topics (Reinhart 1981, Vermeulen 2012). Simply put a clausal topic is analogous to a subject in a sentence, while a discourse topic is "a topic of larger units" (Reinhart 1981:54). To illustrate consider (21).

- (21) a. **Mw-arimo=re ne a-a-tham-e-ir-ε Nairobi.**
 1-teacher=TM AM 1-PST-move-APPL-PFT-FV Nairobi
 'The teacher/ as for the teacher, he moved to Nairobi.'
- b. **O-nge-hakor-a thenge=re ne e-nɔr-ag-a.**
 1-COND-castrate-FV 9.hegoat=TM AM 9-fat-PROG-FV
 'If you castrate a he-goat, it gets fat.'
- c. **Thenge=re o-nge-me-hakor-a=re ne e-nɔr-ag-a.**
 9. he-goat=TM 1-COND-9OM-castrate-FV=TM AM 9-fat-PROG-FV
 'A he-goat, if you castrate it, it gets fat.'

In (21a) the argument *mwarimo* 'teacher' is attached to enclitic =re, a topic maker (TM) (Kihara 2017, 2019). Because of the ubiquity of =re in Gĩkũyũ conversations, Barlow (1960:13) says Gĩkũyũ speakers are 'addicted' to it. Armstrong (1967:293) says =re is an intensifier, it "heralds the communication of something very important or exciting ..." This is evidence that it has some information structuring function of some sort. Whenever =re attaches to a constituent, it creates a prosodic boundary between that constituent and the following

constituents. When it attaches to *mw-arimo* in (21a), the subject, because of the prosodic break, it is converted to a detached (dislocated) constituent. A test that shows that it is a detached unit, and therefore clause external, is the fact that it cannot accommodate the focus marker *ne* e.g. **ne mw-arimo=re*, which is possible without the TM.. Prosodic phrasing is a feature for identifying detached (dislocated) constituents (Van Valin & LaPolla (1997). The protasis attached to *=re* in (21b) is prosodically separated from the apodosis. Note that the protasis has two TMs; one on the former object RP *thenge* ‘he goat’, and another on the predicate of the protasis. Additionally the predicate also carries a resumptive pronoun that is in co-reference with the detached object RP *thenge* ‘he goat’. Since the protasis is *=re*-marked it is detached and therefore a discourse topic; recall that topics need not be arguments.

Topics are about ‘aboutness’ (Chafe (1976); Reinhart (1981); and Frey (2004, and others)). Following Haiman (1978:583) the nominal in (21a) and the conditional clauses in (21b-c) are “a part of the shared of the knowledge by the speaker and his listener”... they therefore “constitute the framework which has been selected for the following discourse”. Being initial units in (21b-c), the marked noun and conditional clause are already shared information between the speaker and the hearer. The enclitic creates ‘expectancy’ in the hearer, that is, the hearer expects the speaker to add more information about the *=re*-marked constituent after mentioning it; which is done in the matrix clause for conditional clauses. It is plausible to say that whatever else comes after the *=re*-marked constituent is about that constituent. In other words, the main clause predicates over the *=re*-marked unit, and because the information that follows the marked unit enriches the hearer’s knowledge about it, it qualifies for a topic. Simply put, the marked unit is a topic and the information that follows it is the comment. This conclusion is supported by the topic definition by Lambrecht.

A constituent is a topic expression if the proposition expressed by the clause with which it is associated is pragmatically construed as being about the referent of this constituent (Lambrecht 1994:131).

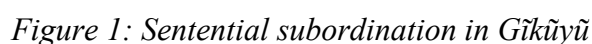
Analysing English conditional clauses as topics, Ford & Thompson (1986, p. 355) defined a topic “as constituting an agreement on the unchallengeability of the information they are conveying”. They add, “It is this property that allows them to serve as a ‘framework’ for the subsequent discourse”... [they] “create backgrounds for subsequent propositions” (p. 369). Elsewhere is argued that adverbial clauses, including conditionals, are topics that set the frame on which consequent information is interpreted (Krifka 2008, Marchese 1977). Frame setting is subsumed under the aboutness topic by Chafe (1976) and Jacobs (2001).

It is worth noting that although the protasis can be extra-posed with the apodosis in ordinary circumstances, this is disallowed for *=re*-marked conditional clauses, which further strengthens the fact that it is a topic, rather than an antitopic. In any case, pre-posed adverbial clauses are “guideposts to information flow” that guide the hearer or reader “temporally, conditionally, causally ...to the information in the main clause...” (Chafe 1984:448). Put differently, an adverbial clause is a topic, especially when such an adverbial clause serves to maintain cohesion in the discourse it appears in (Thompson et al. 2007:291).

As of the type of topics, conditional clauses are like the Chinese-style topics (Chafe 1976)⁴. Chinese-style topics, like discourse (detached) topics, are not attached to any resumptive pronoun; they take the forms of pre-clausal units that have no semantic argument function nor are they adjuncts (adverbs) of the clause; however, they are relevant since they contribute to the interpretation of the matrix clause.

⁴ Matić et al. (2016) present a four-way typology of left detached (LD) units: integrated, non- integrated, loosely integrated and non-integrated bound LD. The loosely integrated LD is not clause integrated unit but is not analyzable ‘orphaned’. Gĩkũyũ conditional clauses appear to be of this loosely integrated type.

On the figure, note that the clitic arguments (*-me-* and *a-*) are indicated as pronominal anaphors (PA), since they are not pronouns, although they are in co-reference with overt reference phrases (RP) (*thenge*). This kind of cross-referencing is a feature of head-marking in Bantu (see Kihara 2019).



Main clause phenomena (MCP) or root phenomena are well investigated in English e.g. Hooper & Thompson (1973) and Emonds (1976). MCP exists in main clauses and select complement clauses (Haegeman (2012), Heycock (2017) and references therein). Danckaert & Haegeman (2012) explore two aspects of MCP (argument fronting and speaker –oriented adverbials) in English conditionals. They highlight the incompatibility of these root phenomena in English conditionals. Although there is need to investigate the root phenomena in Bantu more extensively and deeply, this section focuses only on argument fronting and VP preposing in Gĩkũyũ conditionals. Danckaert & Haegeman’s (2012:133), example (1a) is adapted here as (22a) to explain argument fronting in Gĩkũyũ conditional clauses.

(22) a. *If these exams you don't pass, you won't get the degree.

⁵ In head-marking languages e.g. Gĩkũyũ, an overt nominal subject occupies the extra core slot (ECS) position, a clause internal position. See Kihara (2019) for a description of the LSC in Bantu.

Whereas (22a) is ungrammatical in English, the equivalent Gĩkũyũ sentence is grammatical (22b), where the object is fronted from the canonical object position to an intermediate position before the conditional marker without any prosodic break or resumptive argument.

Example (23b) shows verb preposing by way of verb doubling or duplication, a common form of indicating predicate centred focus in Bantu (see Güldemann et al. 2015).

- (23) a. **Ɔkɔrwɔ ne mo-ko-hand-a me-te haha ne e-go-kor-a.**
 COND AM 2-FUT-plant-FV 3-trees here AM 3-FUT-grow-FV
 ‘If you will plant the trees here, they will grow.’
- b. **Ɔkɔrwɔ ne ko-hand-a mo-ko-hand-a me-te haha ne e-go-kor-a.**
 COND AM 15-plant-FV 2-FUT-plant-FV 3-trees here AM 3-FUT-grow-FV
 ‘If it is planting trees that you will plant here, they will grow.’
- c. **?Me-te mo-nge-hand-a haha ne e-go-kor-a.**
 3-trees 2-COND-plant-FV here AM 3-FUT-grow-FV
 ‘Trees if you plant them here, they will grow.’

Not all Gĩkũyũ conditional clauses allow all forms of constituent fronting. For instance *–nge–*, allows borderline argument fronting (23c), one which some speakers insist on adding a resumptive argument to become a detached constituent. Predicate fronting is impossible * *ko-hand-a mo-nge-hand-a me-te haha ne e-go-kor-a*. ‘If it is planting trees that you will plant here, they will grow.’ Therefore (23c) is not fully compliant with root phenomena. There are a few other differences e.g. only except *–nge–* conditionals that disallows the assertive marker *ne*. Furthermore, only *–nge–* conditional that takes subordinate negation marker *–ta–*; all others take the main clause negation *–ti–*. These differences point out that *nge*-conditionals are non-asserted and subordinate. Such facts may be evidence that the root phenomena is a reserves of asserted clauses (Hooper & Thompson (1973), Krifka (2001), Haegeman (2012), but see Heycock (2017) and references therein for contrary explanation).

The discussion of MCP in Gĩkũyũ conditionals in this section is not anywhere near exhaustive or comprehensive; it is just meant to provoke investigation of MCP in Bantu languages in the future.

5. Conclusion

This paper set out to discuss the morphosyntax and semantic classification of Gĩkũyũ conditional clauses. The discussion revealed that Gĩkũyũ has bare conditionals, here called conditional situatives. These conditionals lack a dedicated conditional marker and they may have a temporal and conditional interpretation. The language has conditional clauses lexically marked by *kɔrwɔ*, *ɔkɔrwɔ*, *angekɔrwɔ*. Gĩkũyũ also has a conditional clause that is indicated by morphological inflection using *–nge–*. Lastly, *ɔ na* is used to indicate concessive conditionals.

The different conditional markers are semantically distinct, and this difference explicates the different semantic types of conditionals in Gĩkũyũ. Unreal conditionals (hypothetical and counterfactual) are indicated exclusively by *kɔrwɔ* and *–nge–* while real conditionals (factive and predictive) are indicated by *ɔkɔrwɔ*, *angekɔrwɔ* and the situative.

The paper also looked at some aspects information structuring in Gĩkũyũ conditionals. It is shown that conditional clauses qualify for topics, positionally and even morphological marking. Topical conditional clauses function as framesetters of consequent discourse. It is also shown that Gĩkũyũ conditional clauses allow some MCP such as argument and predicate fronting.

In sum, the article has presented a unified discussion of the morphosyntax and semantic classification of Gĩkũyũ conditional clauses. Comprehensive studies of the root phenomena in Bantu languages is suggested.

Abbreviations: Arabic numbers stand for noun classes, APPL: applicative, DC: discontinuous causative; COND: conditional marker, AM: assertive marker : PRS: present , FUT:future, PST: past , PFT: perfect PROG:progressive, FV: final vowel, MOD: modal, OM: object marker, DEM: demonstrative; NEG:negation, PASS:passive, PART-particle , HAB:habitual,TM:topic marker, ARG:argument, PA: pronominal anaphor, NUC: nucleus ,PRED:predicate, Pro:pronoun, RP: reference phrase.

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