

# A corpus-based exploration of conditional markers in Afrikaans

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## Abstract

Truth-conditionals content of linguistic constructions have been explored by a range of scholars from diverse perspectives, including psychology, cognitive linguistics, semantics, and pragmatics. These constructions are characterised by their "polyfunctional discourse-pragmatic nature" (Rothchild, 2015). Despite extensive research on conditional constructions, there remains a notable gap in studies on conditionals and pragmatic functions based on corpora (Mwamzandi, 2017; Lastres-Lopez, 2020; Gabrielatos, 2021; Reuneker, 2023). Furthermore, the majority of research has focused on conditional constructions in English or European languages, with minimal attention given to other languages (Nicolle, 2017: 1). Some research has been conducted on conditionals in Bantu-languages (Lepota, 2002; Taljard & Louwrens, 2003; Saloné, 1979; 1983; Nicolle, 2017; Kawalya, De Schryver & Bostoen, 2018). However, apart from Messerschmidt and Messerschmidt's study on the *indien*-construction in academic writing (2011, 2012), there has been a lack of recent work on the versatile uses of conditionals in Afrikaans. The aim of this paper is therefore to provide a corpus-based description of conditional constructions in conversational Afrikaans, starting from the typical lexical markers of condition, namely *as* and *indien*. Data are sampled from a web commentary corpus. At the linguistic level, we take modality and polarity marking accompanying the conditional into account. A comprehensive exploration of conditional constructions in Afrikaans could enhance our understanding of the relationship between form and function. Moreover, this research might have practical implications for pedagogical and forensic purposes, aligning with the growing body of research on threats as a linguistic phenomenon (Chiluwa, 2017; Vladimirou & House, 2018; Terkourafi et al., 2018).

**Keywords:** corpus-based, conditional constructions, discourse function, interpersonal metafunction, modality, polarity, systemic functional linguistics.

## Opsomming

*'n Korpusgebaseerde ondersoek na voorwaardemerkers in Afrikaans: as en indien*

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Die waarheidsvoorwaardelike inhoud van taalkonstruksies is deur 'n verskeidenheid navorsers vanuit uiteenlopende perspektiewe verken, insluitend sielkunde, kognitiewe taalkunde, semantiek en pragmatiek. Hierdie konstruksies word gekenmerk deur hul 'polifunksionele diskoers-pragmatiese aard' (Rothchild, 2015). Ten spyte van omvangryke navorsing oor voorwaardelike konstruksies, is daar 'n merkbare leemte in studies oor voorwaardelike en pragmatiese funksies wat op korpora gebaseer is (Mwamzandi, 2017; Lastres-Lopez, 2020; Gabrielatos, 2021; Reuneker, 2023). Verder het die meeste van die navorsing gefokus op voorwaardelike konstruksies in Engels of Europese tale, met min aandag aan ander tale (Nicolle, 2017: 1). Daar is wel enkele studies oor voorwaardelike konstruksies in Bantoetale (Lepota, 2002; Taljard & Louwrens, 2003; Saloné, 1979; 1983; Nicolle, 2017; Kawalya, De Schryver & Bostoen 2018). Behalwe vir Messerschmidt en Messerschmidt se studie oor die indien-konstruksie in akademiese skryfwerk (2011, 2012), is daar 'n gebrek aan onlangse werk oor die veelsydige gebruik van voorwaardelike konstruksies in Afrikaans. Die doel van hierdie artikel is dus om 'n korpus-gebaseerde beskrywing van voorwaardelike konstruksies in Gespreksafrikaans te gee, beginnende met die kenmerkende leksikale merkers van voorwaarde, naamlik *as* en *indien*. Data is ingesamel uit 'n webkommentaar-korpus. Op die linguistiese vlak neem ons modaliteit en polariteitsmerking wat die voorwaardelike konstruksie vergesel, in ag. 'n Omvattende verkenning van voorwaardelike konstruksies in Afrikaans kan ons begrip van die verhouding tussen vorm en funksie versterk. Verder kan hierdie navorsing praktiese implikasies hê vir pedagogiese en forensiese doeleindes, wat ooreenstem met die groeiende hoeveelheid navorsing oor bedreigings as 'n linguistiese verskynsel (Chiluwa, 2017; Vladimirou & House, 2018; Terkourafi et al., 2018).

Sleutelwoorde: korpusgebaseerd; sistemies funksionele grammatika; metafunksie; modaliteit; polariteit; voorwaardelikheid; voorwaarde

## 1 Introduction

The truth-conditional content of linguistic forms have been explored by a range of scholars from diverse perspectives, including psychology, cognitive linguistics, semantics, and pragmatics (Bennett, 2003; Von Fintel, 2011; Lycan, 2019; Evans & Over, 2004; Girotto & Johnson-Laird, 2004; Dancygier & Sweetser, 2005; Kratzer, 1991; Thomason et al., 2012; Schulz et al., 2015; Bonnefon & Politze, 2012; Elder & Jaszczolt, 2016; Egge & Rott, 2021). Many of these studies explored the canonical conditional constructions formulated as *If A, (then) B* and emphasise their "polyfunctional discourse-pragmatic nature" (Rothchild, 2015). Authors characterise conditional constructions as constructions that convey nuanced meanings across different contexts. Conditionals serve various functions, such as softening potentially face-threatening statements in interpersonal communication (Barron, 2017; Njuki & Ileri, 2021). Additionally, they can express threats which create urgency by presenting the recipient with two undesirable options: the condition and the consequence of not meeting it (Limberg, 2009). As such, they present an interesting and challenging exploration of the interaction between form, meaning, and context (Lastres-Lopez, 2020: 70; Dancygier, 1998:2).

Despite extensive research on conditional constructions, there is a notable gap in studies on conditionals based on corpora (Lastres-Lopez, 2020; Gabrielatos, 2021; Reuneker, 2023). Furthermore, the majority of research has focused on conditional constructions in English or

European languages, with minimal attention given to other languages (Nicolle, 2017: 1). As far as African languages are concerned, some research has been published on conditional constructions in Northern Sotho (Lepota, 2002; Taljard and Louwrens, 2003); Haya (Saloné, 1979) and Swahili (Saloné, 1983). More recently, a special issue on conditional constructions in African languages (Nicolle, 2017) included a collection of work on Ndendeule by Ngonyani (2017); on Cuwabo by Guérois (2017) and Swahili by Mwamzandi (2017), amongst others. Mwamzandi (2017)'s research is based on the annotated Helsinki Corpus of Swahili. Furthermore, Kawalya et al. (2018) explored the prefix *-andi-* in Luganda, based on a corpus of 4 million tokens. However, apart from Messerschmidt and Messerschmidt's study on the *indien*-construction in academic writing (2011, 2012), there has been a lack of recent work on the versatile uses of conditionals and their forms in Afrikaans. A comprehensive exploration of conditional constructions in Afrikaans based on corpora could significantly enhance our understanding of the relationship between the forms of conditionals and functions. Moreover, this research can have practical implications for pedagogical and forensic purposes, aligning with the growing body of research on threats as a linguistic phenomenon (Chiluwa, 2017; Vladimirov & House, 2018; Terkourafi et al., 2018).

To address this research gap, we are examining how Afrikaans speakers express conditional meanings in everyday conversation, considering factors such as polarity, modality, and register along with the pragmatic functions of these constructions. In this article, we focus specifically on the preferred lexical indicators *as* and *indien* in connection with polarity and modality marking. We utilise data from a website commentary corpus that ensures informality and unedited conversational language in all comments. Our main contribution lies in providing a corpus-based description of conditional constructions in Afrikaans, with a focus on the lexical markers *as* and *indien*. Subsequent research will delve deeper into the pragmatic functions of these constructions, recognising the potential value of understanding various pragmatic uses of conditional constructions in Afrikaans for forensic and educational contexts.

The subsequent sections of this paper include a brief consideration of the theoretical framework, followed by a description of the corpus, the methodology, and a discussion of the results. In the discussion, we primarily compare the use of *as* and *indien* conditionals in terms of polarity and modality, with a specific focus on interpersonal conditionals. Finally, we conclude the presentation with recommendations for future research, considering the findings and limitations of this exploration.

## 2 On Conditionality

Various definitions, typologies and classifications have been suggested to explain the different types and meanings of conditionals, e.g. by: Leech and Svartvik (1975), Harris (1986a, b); Wierzbicka (1997); and Biber, Johansson, Leech, Conrad and Finegan (1999). Haeseryn, Romijn, De Rooij, and Van den Toorn (1997) say that conditions involve presupposition. Conditional constructions assume a hypothetical situation which may or may not actualise. We limit the scope of this publication to focus on *If...then...* conditional constructions that are lexically marked by *as* and *indien* only.

Scholars like Dancygier (1998), Dancygier & Sweetster (2005), and Gabrielatos (2010) describe conditionals as a two-part structure that acts as a single meaningful unit. Truth-conditionals typically have an antecedent (P) and a consequent (Q), where P is the subordinate clause (marked by "if" in English), and Q is the main clause expressing the outcome (marked by "then" in English) (Dancygier, 1993; Guérois, 2017:193). This is illustrated in Example (1) provided by Mittwoch, Huddleston, and Collins (2002:738), who use the terms protasis and apodosis for P and Q respectively:

1 *If you touch that wire, you will get an electric shock.*

The word *if* indicates a conditional situation but is not part of the protasis (P). In this example, P is "you touch that wire," and the apodosis (Q) is "you will get an electric shock." If P is true, Q is also true, implying that if you touch the wire, you will get a shock (Mittwoch, Huddleston & Collins, 2002:748).

Not all languages use the *if...then...* structure (Levinson, 2000:125), but express conditionality through various means like modal verbs, imperatives, adverbials, and hypothetical statements. Therefore, studying conditional forms across languages can help us understand how conditions are conveyed (Von Stechow, 2009:2-3; see Saloné, 1979; König & Van der Auwera, 1988; Schulz, 2015; Allison, 2017; Harley, 2017). We briefly demonstrate some forms of expressing conditional functions in Afrikaans below. While the *if...then...* sequence in Example (2) is a typical way of conveying conditional meaning, the chosen structure depends on the context and the hypothetical nature, certainty, or likelihood of the condition.

2 *Als Berlusconi geen brokken maakt, dan doen zijn kabinetsleden en politiek bondgenotes het wel.* (WR-P-P-G-0000106263) (Reuneker, 2020:120)  
if Berlusconi no broken make then to do his cabinet members and political allies have good  
'If Berlusconi does not ruin it, then his cabinet members and political allies surely will'

Examples (3) and (4) illustrate alternative ways to express conditions (without the use of a conjunction) in English

3 *You come closer and/or I will kiss you.* (Liu 2019)

4 *Had I gone, I would have called.* (Weisser 2019:22)

Liu (2019) notes that, although the construction in (3) is not very common in English, it occurs frequently in Mandarin. Both constructions in (3) and (4) are also possible in Afrikaans as exemplified in (5) and (6).

5 *Kom jy nader en/of ek sal jou soen.* (Liu 2019)  
come you closer and/or I will you kiss  
'Come any closer and/or I will kiss you'. (Liu 2019)

6 *Het ek gegaan, sou ek gebel het.*  
had I gone, would I phoned have  
'Had I gone, I would have called.' (Wiesser 2019:22)

In the canonical form, the conditionals in (5) and (6) could respectively also be formulated in Afrikaans as in (7) and (8) below:

7 *As ek gegaan het, (dan) sou ek gebel het.*  
if I gone have, (then) would I phoned have  
'If I had gone, (then) I would have phoned.'

8 *Indien ek gegaan het, sou ek gebel het*  
if I gone have, would I phoned have  
'If I had gone, I would have phoned.'

In Dutch, *als* is the most frequently used conditional conjunction, while *indien* is reserved for formal contexts (Haesryn et al., 1997). The equivalent Afrikaans conditional subordinators are *as* and *indien*, with *as* occurring more frequently as will be shown in later when the corpus findings are discussed.

In addition, a distinguishing can made between strict and weak conditions.<sup>1</sup> In Afrikaans, like in Dutch, a condition is regarded as strong if it can be reformulated with *mits*, or *op voorwaarde dat* ('on condition that') (Haesryn et al., 1997). It is useful to regard this distinction as a cline from weakest to strongest, rather than as two clear-cut categories. In this study we did not distinguish between weak and strong conditions, but counted any uses of the conjunctions *as* and *indien* that initiated a protasis as a conditional usage.

### 3 Theoretical Considerations

To guide our examination of conditional constructions in Afrikaans, we adopt Systemic Functional Linguistics as a theoretical framework (Halliday and Matthiesen, 2014). This approach helps us consider the connection between language form and function, and allows us to view conditional constructions from the perspective of each of the three metafunctions of language, namely the ideational, interpersonal, and textual. In this study we take the interpersonal perspective which focuses on the "interactive and personal" elements of language (cf. Ceban, 2009) and considers how language is used in interaction with others, primarily to establish and manage relationships (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2014: 30; Thompson, 2014: 30). Reunker (2020) provides a demonstration of the suitability of such an application of metafunction, offering "fine-grained distinctions, especially in conversational discourse" (2020:69). Being part of the Mood of the clause, polarity and modality markers are realisations of the interpersonal metafunction of language. In this study we focus on polarity marking in conditional constructions with *as* and *indien* as realisations of the interpersonal metafunction.

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<sup>1</sup> What Dancygier (1993: 406,141) calls predictive conditionals (see Comrie, 1986; Kawalya et al., 2018).

### 3.1 Mood and modality

Ceban (2009) notes that grammatical (Mood) structures associated with speech functional categories, like declarative clauses for statements, interrogative clauses for questions, and imperative clauses for commands, play a crucial role in understanding speech functions. The apodosis can be an interrogative or imperative clause, although in conditional constructions, the speech functions of commands and questions are typically realised by declarative clauses. Modality markers (including modal auxiliary verbs) convey the speaker's stance (how opinions are expressed) and engagement (how others are involved).

Since we are concerned with interpersonal communication, we counted the presence of modal auxiliary verbs in either the protasis or apodosis. We also annotated apodoses in the form of interrogative and imperative clauses in our data, but we did not take speech function (statements, commands, questions) into account.

### 3.2 Polarity

Polarity concerns the truth condition of the construction. Positive conditionals suggest situations more likely to be true, while negative conditionals communicate events or situations unlikely to occur or that are false. Positive polarity suggests reality, while negative conditionals indicate improbability or falsehood. In English, negation (*not*, *-n't*) can be used to deny the condition or the consequent. Mood adjuncts like *never* also play a role in indicating polarity and negation (Taylor, 1997). In Afrikaans, the negative pole is normally marked (using items such as *nie* and *nooit*) and negation may apply to either the protasis or apodosis, or to both (depending on the intended interpersonal function). Negative conditionals often involve the past tense in the protasis, followed by a modal verb in the apodosis.

## 4 Methodology

We extracted concordances for the words *indien* and *as* from the 2020 to 2022 section of an Afrikaans corpus of comments on online news articles (Kommentaarkorpus 2.2., ViVA Korpusportaal), comprising over eleven million words.

We decided to control for register and genre in this analysis by choosing a single-register corpus. As online commentary to popular news articles the corpus represents an informal, colloquial register. While in written mode, the language usage in the data displays many characteristics of informal spoken language, specifically conversation. For instance, commentators use vocatives to address other commentators or the article writer, and there are many interrogative and imperative clauses as evidence of the interactive nature of the discourse (see Biber et al., 1999 regarding the grammatical features of conversation). This corpus allows us to start our description of conditionals from the most informal end of the register scale.

In order to allow for context windows wide enough to see the whole protasis and apodosis of the conditional constructions, we obtained an offline version of the corpus and concordances were drawn using Wordsmith 8.0 (Scott, 2020).

We randomly sampled concordance lines for functional disambiguation between conditional and non-conditional uses of the search tokens *as* and *indien*. Due to the high frequency of *as* (n = 85,092) with different word class uses, two random samples of 500 were taken and scanned to eliminate prepositional uses and distinguish between non-conditional and conditional uses. This resulted in 215 and 273 conditional uses of *as*. For *indien* (n = 4,230), only one sample of 500 concordance lines was selected, with 454 identified as clear conditional constructions.

Then, we classified the 488 conditional uses of *as* and the 454 conditional uses of *indien* based on modality, polarity, and mood (clause type) marking.

We randomly sampled concordance lines to arrive at a sample concordance that was manageable to firstly disambiguate functionally between the conditional and non-conditional uses of the search token, and then to further analyse the conditional uses in relation to polarity, modality and mood (clause type) marking.

Due to the high frequency of the search token *as* (n = 852092) in the corpus, and its different word class uses (*as* subordinator meaning 'if' and *as* preposition meaning 'as') in Afrikaans, two random samples of 500 hundred were taken from its original corpus concordance. Then, we scanned each sample to eliminate prepositional uses of *as*, as well as to disambiguate between non-conditional and conditional uses of the word when it was used to introduce subordinate clauses functioning as Adjunct. We ended up with 215 and 273 conditional uses of *as* in the two samples respectively. Since we aimed to take into account even very weak conditions, and since it is difficult to distinguish between weak conditional uses and other circumstance adjunct uses, we are satisfied with a difference of less than 12% between the two samplings in the functional disambiguation step.

The search token *indien* occurs far less frequently in the corpus (n = 4230). Apart from being a subordinator meaning 'if', the token *indien* may also function as verb meaning 'submit'. These two uses are easily distinguishable in the concordance. For these reasons, only one sample of 500 concordance lines were randomly selected for disambiguation. Of these, 455 are clear conditional constructions.

The 488 conditional uses of *as*, and the 455 conditional uses of *indien* were then classified according to modality and polarity marking. The percentages below refer to these totals respectively.

With regard to polarity, the negative is seen as the marked pole, while positive polarity is generally unmarked. In Afrikaans negative polarity is typically marked with *nie* but can also be marked by words such as *nooit* and *geen* which are mostly used together with *nie*. We coded and counted negative polarity marking in the protasis and apodosis separately. The so-called double negative of Afrikaans sometimes resulted in the second *nie* occurring in the

other part of the construction, and we took care not to count this as a polarity marker of that part of the clause.

In accounting for modality marking, we coded the data for the presence of modal auxiliary verbs in the protasis and apodosis respectively.

With regard to mood, we coded the presence of the imperative and interrogative mood in the apodosis, since the protasis is regarded as hypotactic to the apodosis. We coded imperatives and interrogatives, because they are the marked clause types, and also because it is structurally difficult to distinguish between the subjunctive and the declarative mood in Afrikaans without arduous semantic analyses. Apodoses not marked as imperative or interrogative were coded as unmarked. It is worth mentioning that our coding of mood is based on the structural clause type, and not on the pragmatic functions of commands and questions.

Since this exploratory paper aims to arrive at a preliminary description of the co-occurrence of polarity and modality markers in the protasis and apodosis parts of conditionals respectively by using concordance samples from two typical conditional subordinators (*as* and *indien*) only, we report frequencies and percentages (frequencies relativised by the number of conditional constructions in the sample) without the need for statistical measures. These percentages are easily compared visually by way of stack column charts. Modal choices in modalised protasis or apodosis are indicated, specifying the percentage marked by a specific modal auxiliary like "sou".

## 5 Results

As mentioned, both *as* and *indien* translate to 'if' when used in conditional constructions. Based purely on their similarity in meaning, it could be expected that their conditional constructions would have similar distributions of polarity, modality and mood marking. However, since the *as*-conditional is far more frequent in the corpus than *indien*, it stands to reason that there may also be differences in polarity, modality and mood marking in these conditional constructions.

Although the focus will be on the marked instances, it goes without saying that the unmarked instances (referred to as "none" in Figures 1 and 2, and as "other" in Figure 5) outweigh the marked instances. Examples 9 to 11 below illustrate conditional constructions with neither negative polarity markers, nor modal auxiliary verbs. In example 9 the plain present forms of the verbs are used to express the possibility of an undesirable consequence more strongly than would be the case if modal auxiliaries were used. A non-modal apodosis suggests a higher degree of confidence that the potential situation will actualise, while the use of a modal verb to refer to a future time sphere suggests less certainty (Mittwoch, Huddleston & Collins, 2002: 744). In many cases where there is no polarity marking or modal verbs in the conditional construction, the apodosis is in the imperative mood (as in 10), or in the form of a non-clausal pro-form (*wel* in Afrikaans; *so* in English) with an interrogative antecedent, as in (11).



- 9 *Indien ek my kommer daaroor uitspreek word ek deur my ANC hoof en [beheerliggaam] voorsitter geviktimiseer.*  
 if I my concern about it express am being I by my ANC headmaster and  
 governing body chairperson victimised  
 'If I express my concern about it, I am victimised by my ANC headmaster and governing body chairperson.'
- 10 *Indien jy die geleentheid kry om ingeënt te word, maak seker hul die spuit entstof in, en sit nie die naald en trek hom uit nie.*  
 if you the opportunity get to vaccinated PTCL.INF become, make sure they  
 the inject vaccine in, and place not the needle and pull him out PTCL.NEG  
 'If you get the opportunity to be vaccinated, make sure they inject the vaccine, and do not (merely) put the needle in place and pull it out.'
- 11 *Is eff die enigste party nou in die land, want indien wel is die skrif aan die muur.*  
 is EFF the only party now in the country, because if so is the writing  
 on the wall.  
 'Is EFF the only party in the country now, because if so, the writing is on the wall.'

As can be seen in Figure 1, *indien*-conditionals have slightly more negative polarity marking than *as*-conditionals in our data. It is in the protasis specifically where *indien*-conditionals have more negative polarity marking than *as*-conditionals.

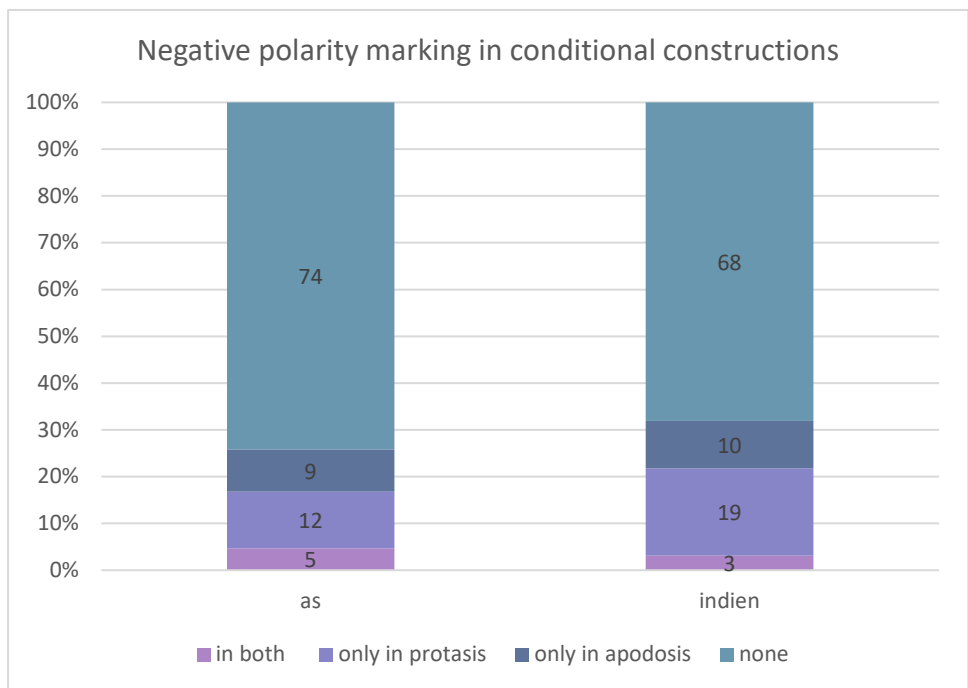


Figure 1 Negative polarity marking in AS- and INDIEN-conditional constructions

Examples (12) and (13) illustrate negative polarity in *indien*-constructions, while (14) and (15) show negative marking in *as*-conditionals.

- 12 Volgens die maatskappye is dit heeltemal "vrywilliglik", maar indien jy  
according (to) the companies is it completely voluntary, but if you  
nie instem nie kan jy jou werk verloor.  
not agree PTCL.NEG can you your job lose  
'According to the companies it is completely voluntary, but if you do not agree, you could lose your job.'
- 13 Indien die beleid nie nagekom was nie sal die skool of koshuis nie 'n voet hê om  
if the policy not adhered to was not will the school or hostel not a foot have to  
op te staan nie.  
on to stand PTCL.NEG  
'If the policy had not been adhered to, the school or hostel will not have a foot to stand on.'
- 14 As die plaaslike apteker van die begin af ondersteun was, dan sou hierdie  
if the local pharmacist from the beginning supported was, then would this  
Situasie nooit gebeur het nie.  
situation not happened have PTCL.NEG  
'If the local pharmacist had been supported from the beginning, then this situation would never have occurred.'
- 15 As sy hand op die blaas buddy hom nie gesplit het omdat hy kwaad is vir hom  
if his hand on the bladder friend him not ratted out had because he angry is at him  
nie, dan sou geen haan gekraai het nie.  
not, then would no rooster crowed have PTCL.NEG  
'If his hand close friend had not ratted him out because he is cross with him, then no one would have suspected anything.'

The similarities in frequency of occurrence between *as* and *indien* with modal auxiliary verbs are remarkable, as can be seen in Figure 2, where *indien* only has marginally more modalisation than *as*.

Whereas the bulk of the negative modality marking occurs in the protasis (see Figures 1 and 3), by far the majority of modality marking by modal auxiliary verbs can be found in the apodosis (see Figures 2 and 4).



Figure 2 Modal verbs in the apodosis and protasis of AS- and INDIEN-conditionals

This is to be expected since the apodosis typically reflects a potential situation that is contingent on the condition in the protasis being met, as illustrated in (16).

16 *Indien jy te vinnig ry gaan jy moeilikheid hê om te stop.*  
 if you too fast drive going to you trouble have to PTCL.INF stop  
 'If you drive too fast you will have trouble stopping.'

Table 1 Most frequent modal verbs in protasis and apodosis

	Modalisation in protasis				Modalisation in apodosis			
	as (n = 40)		indien (n = 52)		as (n = 204)		indien (n = 194)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
gaan	6	15	7	13	27	13	24	12
sal	1	3	4	8	50	25	49	25
sou	5	13	17	33	41	20	33	17
kan	8	20	12	23	33	16	32	16
kon	3	8	2	4	4	2	5	3
moet	7	18	5	10	32	16	36	19
moes	4	10	1	2	1	<1	2	1

The most frequently used modal auxiliary in the apodosis of both *indien*- and *as*-conditional constructions is *sal* (which translates to English *will*). In Table 1, we report the raw frequencies of the frequently occurring modals in conditional constructions, together with their proportions (indicated under %) of modalised protases and apodoses. As can be seen in Table 1 the modal *sal* accounts for one quarter of the modalisations in the apodoses of *as*- and *indien*-conditionals. The modal auxiliary verb *sal* along with *gaan* (equivalent to the *BE going*

to construction in English) is used to indicate events that take place in a future time (see examples below).

It is interesting to note that, when modalisation is used to indicate a future time, the *gaan*-futures construction is preferred in the protasis, while the *sal*-futures is preferred in the apodosis of the conditional constructions. This is illustrated in (17) below, where *gaan* is in the protasis, and *sal* in the apodosis.

17 *As mense meer gaan betaal sal ek verseker eerder begin mors met krag om meer waarde vir my geld te kry.*  
 if people more going to pay will I definitely rather (to) begin waste with  
 electricity to more value for my money PTCL.INF get  
 'If people are going to pay more, I will definitely rather start wasting electricity to get more value for my money.'

The preterite form of *sal*, namely *sou* (equivalent to English *would*) is used to express irrealis, or a possibility that is weaker than that expressed by *sal*. This is illustrated in (18) and (19) below.

18 *As jou werk in gedrang was met die verbod op alkohol en tabak sou jy 'n ander deuntjie gesing het.*  
 if your job in danger was with the prohibition on alcohol and tobacco would you a  
 different tune sung have  
 'If your job was on the line due to the prohibition of alcohol and tobacco, you would have sung a different tune.'

19 *As ek geld gehad het vir 'n vakansie daar rond sou ek beslis wou gaan.*  
 if I money had have for a holiday there abouts would I definitely wanted to go  
 'If I had money for a holiday there abouts I would definitely have wanted to go.'

20 *INDIEN sy ooit in die tronk sou beland, sal dit nie 'n lang verblyf wees nie.*  
 if she ever in the jail would land, will it not a long stay  
 be PTCL.NEG  
 'If she ever should land in jail, it will not be a long stay.'

In example (19), the apodosis contains two modal verbs, with *sou* expressing an irrealis futurate and *wou* expressing a desiderative meaning (which in contemporary English is expressed by the lexical verb *want*.) The improbability of the protasis being actualised is emphasised by contrast between the epistemic adverb *beslis* (meaning definite, i.e., indicating strong probability) which modifies the desiderative modal *wou*. and the subjunctive *sou*. The remoteness of the chance that the protasis of (20) will be actualised is likewise emphasised by the adverb *ooit* (meaning ever) occurring with the modal *sou* in the protasis.

Figures 3 and 4 represent the same data as Figures 1 and 2. However, whereas Figures 1 and 2 presented the findings from the perspective of negative polarity marking and the presence of modals, respectively, Figures 3 and 4 represent polarity marking and modalisation according to the part of the conditional construction in which they occur, while at the same time comparing the two conditional subordinators, *as* and *indien*.

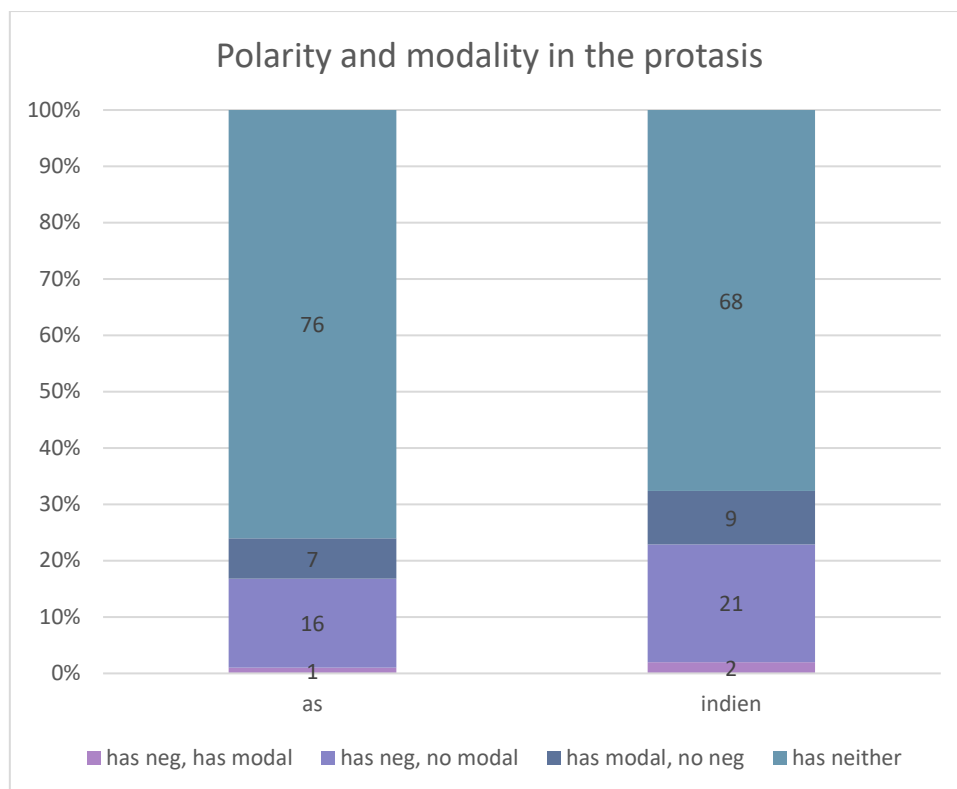


Figure 3 Negative polarity and modality marking in the protasis.

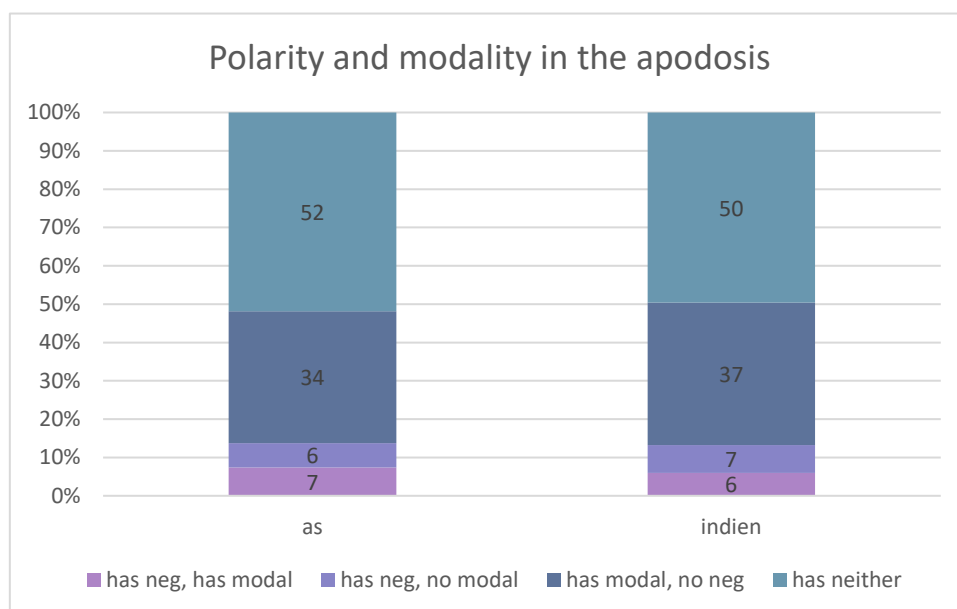


Figure 4 Negative polarity and modality marking in the apodosis

In Figure 3 we can see that the protasis of *indien*-conditionals have more negative polarity marking and modalisation than *as*-conditionals. The modal verb *sou* is the most frequently occurring modal verb in the protasis of *indien*-conditionals (see Table 1). With regard to the

apodosis, *as*- and *indien*-conditionals display nearly identical distributions of negation and modalisation.

As mentioned earlier, the mood type in the apodosis is mostly declarative. This is also in line with the typical conditional shown in (1). Examples (9) and (12) to (20) above show apodosis with declarative mood structure.

In Figure 5, the mood types of the apodosis in *as*- and *indien*-conditionals are compared. The *indien*-conditionals have proportionally slightly more imperative and interrogative mood structures compared to *as*-conditionals.

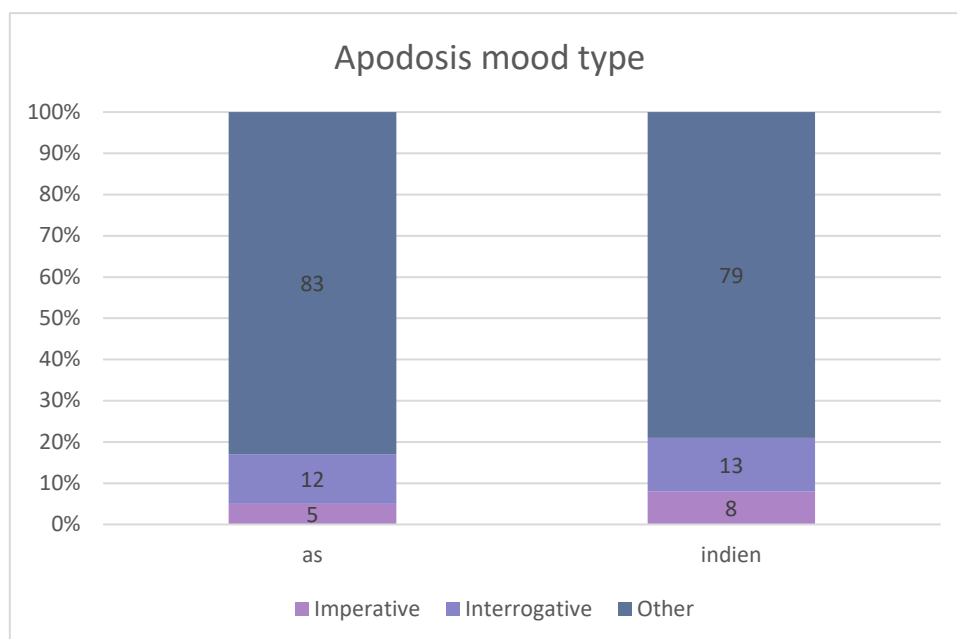


Figure 5 Interrogative and imperative mood in the apodosis of conditional constructions

If the condition in the protasis is true, the implication is sometimes that an obligation is placed on the someone. The obligations are mostly expressed by the modal *moet* or *moes* (meaning 'must') in a declarative apodosis as in (21). However, there are also many instances where these commissive discourse functions are expressed by an imperative mood structure as in (10) and (22).

21 *As jy bestuur moet jy rondkyk vir kapers.*  
 if you drive must you look around for hijackers  
 'If you drive, you must look out for hijackers.'

22 *Enigste raad vir verkragting .. as jy skuldig bevind word ... sny af.*  
 only advice for rape if you guilty find (be) cut off  
 'Only advice against rape ... if you are found guilty ... cut off.'

If the protasis is true, it sometimes gives rise to a question, rather than a consequence, and these questions can be expressed in a direct manner by using an interrogative mood structure in the apodosis, as illustrated in

23 *As ons Soltech kan bou hoekom nie 'n Solmed nie?*  
 if we Soltech can build why not a Solmed not?  
 'If we can build Soltech, why not a Solmed?'

24 *Weet iemand wat sal die nagevolge wees indien ek NIE die tweede shot vat nie?*  
to knowsomeone what will the consequences be if I not the second shot take  
PTCL.NEG?  
'Does anyone know what the consequences will be if I do NOT take the second shot?'

In summary, conditionals are versatile linguistic forms, serving various functions across the three metafunctions. Comparison between the *as*- and *indien*-constructions revealed that the choice of conjunction has minimal impact on polarity and modality marking. A more insightful analysis emerged when examining polarity marking and modalisation by comparing the protasis and apodosis. We have seen that *as*- and *indien*-conditionals are very similar with regard to negative polarity marking and the use of modal verbs, with the only notable difference being the relatively high incidence of *sou* in the protasis of *indien*-constructions (n=17). The protasis ('cause' or 'condition') is more frequently marked for polarity, while the apodosis ('consequence,' 'effect,' or 'implication') carries more modality marking.

## 6 Areas for further research

As a pilot corpus study of conditional constructions in Afrikaans, the scope of this paper is deliberately narrow, and limited to consideration of polarity and modality marking and mood type in conditional constructions initiated by the subordinators *as* and *indien*. We considered only the canonical conditional adjunct clauses, namely those with a subordinator meaning 'if'. We did not consider clauses where the auxiliary verb itself (e.g. *het* or *sou*) rather than a subordinating conjunction marks the construction as conditional.

Polarity and modality, as well as mood type, are considerations in the realisation of the interpersonal metafunction of language in the structure of the clause. Voice, i.e. passivation in the conditional construction and tense marking are other aspects of the interpersonal metafunction that can be explored, along with the occurrence of stance adverbs.

Participant types and process types relate to the realisation of the ideational metafunction of language in the structure of the clause. With regard to conditionals, the lexical verb of the protasis and apodosis respectively can be classified according to process type. Similarly, the participants (noun phrases) in the processes denoted by the verbs in the protasis and apodosis can be classified. Making use of more conditional conjunctions, and large enough concordances, such a classification of process types (or participants) may be conducive to a collexeme analysis.

With regard to the textual metafunction, the thematic structure of conditionals can be examined by coding the concordance data for whether the protasis or apodosis is in thematic (main clause initial) position. Correlations between the thematic part of the conditional and voice, polarity or modality marking can also be explored.

Any of the above grammatical features of Afrikaans conditional constructions, can also be compared to other related languages, such as Dutch and English. Register may also influence these grammatical choices, and therefore data from other registers should also be taken into account.

In addition, the discourse functions of conditional constructions, for instance in the ameliorisation of face-threatening requests, or in the issuing of warnings or threats can be explored, and in this case a contrastive comparison of conditionals in languages used in the same context, such as Afrikaans and South African varieties of English, is envisaged.

## 7 Conclusion

Conditionals are particularly versatile linguistic forms that can serve different functions in each of the three metafunctions distinguished by Halliday and Matthiesen (2014). We explored the use of interpersonal conditionals in a corpus comprising casual conversational Afrikaans with a focus on polarity and modality marking, and mood type. In comparing corpus concordances of *as* and *indien*, we saw that the choice of conditional conjunction had little effect on the presence of polarity and modality markers, and that it was more fruitful to compare the protasis to the apodosis in terms of polarity marking and modalisation. Being the 'cause' or 'condition', the protasis had more polarity marking compared to the apodosis. Conversely being the 'consequence', 'effect' or 'implication' of the condition being met, the apodosis had more modality marking.

Subsequent research will delve deeper into the pragmatic functions of these constructions, recognizing the potential value of understanding various pragmatic uses of conditional constructions in Afrikaans for forensic and educational contexts.

## 8 Acknowledgements

ChatGPT was used for editorial purposes only on an early draft of this publication which the authors had produced. Specifically, it was employed to format the bibliography in the prescribed style. Apart from the bibliographical entries, no selection of the final text was copied and pasted directly from the ChatGPT generator. No additional AI resources were used to finalise this paper in its current form.



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