

THE CONDITIONAL MOOD IN GHOMÁLÁ'

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This paper sets out to examine the conditional mood in Ghomálá', a Grassfields Bantu language spoken in the Western Region of Cameroon. This article shows that the elements used to build conditionals can play other roles in the language; they can play the role of focus particle, relativizer and even copula. Two main conditional markers are used in Ghomálá' and are found at clause initial position. Contrary to other languages where the future and present tenses express unreal conditionals and past tenses express reality conditionals, Ghomálá' uses past tenses for unreality conditionals and present and future tenses for reality conditionals. Conditionals in Ghomálá' have many pragmatic uses and their use must be judicious due to the numerous functions they assume.

Keywords: conditional, Ghomálá', Grassfields Bantu

0. Introduction

Ghomálá' [bbj] is a Grassfields Bantu language spoken in the western region of Cameroon and made up of four groups of dialects (Lewis, Simons & Fennig 2016). Ghomálá' is an SVO language and nouns in this language are mainly monosyllabic due to the grammaticalization processes undergone by its prefixes.¹ Verbs on their own are classified following three criteria: *the structural criterion* (syllable patterns and syllable types); *the morphological criterion* where the verb has two forms (the bare form and the alternative form), and the *tonal criterion* where two types of verbs are identified, namely high tone verbs and low tone verbs.² Tones in the language can play grammatical and lexical functions as well as they are relevant in analyzing morphosyntactic structures. The conditional mood in Ghomálá' has its own peculiarities. Data used in this article are provided by one of the authors who is a native speaker of Ghomálá' and were cross-checked by other native speakers of the language. The data show that the elements used to build conditionals can also play other roles in the language; they can play the role of focus particle, relativizer and even copula. To present those facts, the first section of the article will provide the structural identification and the properties of conditionals in Ghomálá'. The second and the third sections of the article deal respectively with the classification of conditional sentences and the isomorphy of the conditional elements. The functions of the conditionals are the concern the fourth section.

¹ See Nissim (1972), Mba (1991), and Moguo (2015) among others.

² See Mba (1997).

1. Structural identification of properties of conditionals in Ghómálá'

1.1. Structural identification of conditionals. The conditional mood expresses a hypothetical condition under which a claim is made. It is the archetypal mood of uncertainty since in hypothetical sentences, the conditional expresses an action that cannot happen prior to the achievement of a condition. In Ghómálá', conditionals can be expressed either through conditional markers or tones especially the floating low tone. Generally the conditional sentence is made up of two clauses, one expressing the condition and the other the consequence clause. They are also called the protasis and the apodosis respectively for the condition and the consequence clause. The apodosis clause can either follow or precede the protasis. Thus, two morphemes are used to mark the conditional depending on whether the sentence begins with the protasis or the apodosis. When the sentence begins with the apodosis, the morpheme *bájā* in its short form *bê* is used. When the sentence begins with the protasis, the morpheme *bā* is used. These morphemes are found at clause-initial position.

We observe that the use of the morpheme *bájā/bê* requires the presence of the morpheme *á*³ at the end of the sentence, which is the regular definitizer in the language. The presence of this morpheme is indispensable for the grammaticality of the sentence (1b). Its absence renders the sentence ungrammatical (see 1d). The example in (1c) is presented in order to show that the use of either forms (*bájā* or *bê*) is acceptable in the language as there is no change in syntactic structure and meaning of the conditional sentence.

- (1) a. [Tálásôk m-kê]_P [**bā** é gōtí ʏs sākū]_Q
 Tala wash 4-plate COND he FUT2 go school
 'If Tala washes the plates, he will go to school.'
- b. [Tálágōtí ʏs sākū]_Q [**bájā** é sôk m-kê áá]_P
 Tala FUT2 go School COND he wash 4-platesDEF
 'Tala will go to school if he washes the plates.'
- c. [tálá gōtí ʏs sākū]_Q [**bê** é sôk m-kê áá]_P
 Tala FUT2 go school COND he wash 4-platesDEF
 'Tala will go to school if he washes the plates.'
- d. *[tálá gōtí ʏs sākū]_Q [**bê** é sôk m-kê]_P
 Tala FUT2 go school COND he wash 4-plates

From these examples, we clearly see that the use of one morpheme rather than the other is exclusively determined by the position occupied by the protasis and the apodosis.

Examples (2a) and (2b) illustrate conditional sentences in which only the apodosis is negated, and example (3) illustrates a conditional sentence in which both the protasis and the apodosis are negated.

³ When the definitizer is found at sentence final position, it is lengthened.

- (2) a. [ō pí mǒk nǒ bě]_P [bā jwâtsǔ tá gō kxá pá]_Q
 you quench fire on pot COND food NEG FUT0 burn NEG
 'If you quench the fire on the pot, the food will not burn.'
- b. [bē ō pí mǒk nǒ bē áá]_P [bā jwâtsǔ tá gō kxá pá]_Q
 COND you quench fire on pot DEF then food NEG FUT0 burn NEG
 'If you quench fire on the pot, then the food will not burn.'
- (3) [bāŋ pā tá lú]_P [bā é tā gō tú' ʃʃā pá]_Q
 rain COP NEG fall COND he NEG FUT0 carry water NEG
 'If rain does not fall, he will not carry water.'

As mentioned above, conditionals can also be expressed through the floating low tone placed on the verb of the protasis, as in the following examples:⁴

- (4) a. [ō jô nók]_P [ō ʒwá é]_Q
 you see snake you kill it
 'If you see the snake, you should kill it.'
- b. [Mū jâm]_P [ō k^hím é]_Q
 Child wake up youfeed him
 'If the child wakes up, you should feed it.'
- c. [Mō lâ' nwê mlū]_P [ē nwá ʃʃá]_Q
 Person ASP drink wine he drink water
 'If one drinks wine, he should also drink water.'
- d. ó jô' nók ó zhwá é
 [ō jô nók]_P [ō zhwá é]_Q
 you see snake youkill it
 'If you see the snake, you should kill it.'

In the examples (4a-c), it is clear that the tone is used to mark the conditional but if and only if the following are achieved:

- The verb in both clauses have to be in the present tense;
- If the verb in the declarative sentence is a high tone verb, the resulting verb in the protasis will bear a high-low tone;
- If the verb in the declarative sentence is a low tone verb, the resulting verb in the protasis bears a strengthened low tone.

⁴ We are grateful to Michel Kenmogne for suggesting the examples in (4).

Considering these conditions, example (4a) will have (4d) as its representation. Note here that unlike the conditionals using markers, in the conditionals using the floating low tone, the protasis and the apodosis cannot be exchanged.

1.2 Properties of conditionals. Concerning the properties of conditionals, they can either be genuine as identified by Lycan (2001:185-6) where the protasis is a condition of the apodosis; or weak where the clauses can be contraposed or negated with the same meaning. Let us consider the following sentences.

- (5) a. [b $\bar{\text{a}}$ ŋ lú]_P [b $\bar{\text{b}}$ g $\bar{\text{a}}$ tú' ʃj $\bar{\text{a}}$]_Q
 rain fall COND I draw water
 'If it rains, I will draw water.'
- b. [b $\bar{\text{e}}$ b $\bar{\text{a}}$ ŋ lú áá]_Q [b $\bar{\text{b}}$ g $\bar{\text{a}}$ g $\bar{\text{o}}$ tú' ʃj $\bar{\text{a}}$]_P
 COND rain fall def cond I fut0 draw water
 'If it rains, then I will draw water.'
- c. [d $\bar{\text{a}}$ ' b $\bar{\text{e}}$ b $\bar{\text{a}}$ ŋ lú áá]_Q [t $\bar{\text{e}}$ g $\bar{\text{a}}$ g $\bar{\text{o}}$ tu' ʃj $\bar{\text{a}}$]_P
 only COND rain fall DEF then I FUT0 draw water
 'Only if rain falls will I draw water.'
- d. [b $\bar{\text{a}}$ ŋ p $\bar{\text{e}}$ t $\bar{\text{a}}$ lú]_P [b $\bar{\text{b}}$ é t $\bar{\text{a}}$ g $\bar{\text{o}}$ tú ʃj $\bar{\text{a}}$ p $\bar{\text{e}}$]_Q
 rain COP NEG fall COND he NEG FUT0 draw water NEG
 'If it does not rain, he will not draw water.'
- e. [é t $\bar{\text{a}}$ g $\bar{\text{o}}$ tú' ʃj $\bar{\text{a}}$ p $\bar{\text{e}}$]_Q [b $\bar{\text{e}}$ b $\bar{\text{a}}$ ŋp $\bar{\text{e}}$ t $\bar{\text{a}}$ lú áá]_P
 he NEG FUT0 draw water NEG COND rain COP NEGfall DEF
 'He will not draw water if it does not rain.'
- f. [b $\bar{\text{a}}$ ŋ l $\bar{\text{a}}$ p $\bar{\text{e}}$ ' dú,]_P [b $\bar{\text{b}}$ é l $\bar{\text{a}}$ tú' ʃj $\bar{\text{a}}$]_Q
 rain PST3 COND fall COND he PST3 draw water
 'If rain had fallen, I would have drawn water'

Genuine conditionals in Ghómálá' are conditionals using the marker *b $\bar{\text{b}}$* discussed above, as in example (5a). However, when two conditional markers, *b $\bar{\text{e}}$* and *b $\bar{\text{b}}$* , are used (5b), where the first marker (*b $\bar{\text{e}}$*) introduces the protasis and the second marker (*b $\bar{\text{b}}$*) introduces the apodosis, the apodosis is understood as a conclusion rather than as a prediction. In (5c), the *only ... if* interpretation is generated by the use of *d $\bar{\text{a}}$ ' b $\bar{\text{e}}$* in the protasis, but unlike (5b), a conditional marker only appears in the protasis, and the apodosis contains *t $\bar{\text{e}}$* 'then' rather than the conditional marker *b $\bar{\text{b}}$* . Example (5d) gives us a situation of contraposition where both the protasis and the apodosis are negated and could also be reversed without any change in meaning (see Lycan 2001) but with some structural change imposed by the position of the protasis and the apodosis as we saw before. This is a case of weak conditional because the reversing of the conditional clauses does not cause a change in meaning. In this case the marker *b $\bar{\text{e}}$* will be used instead of *b $\bar{\text{b}}$* . Example

(5e) is the reversed sentence of (5d). Example (5f) presents past conditionals used to express regrets and both clauses can be reversed without any change in the interpretation of the sentence.

2. Classification of conditional sentences in Ghómálá'

Relying on the typology of conditionals established by Nicolle (this volume) based on works done by linguists such as Comrie (1986) and Thompson, Longacre & Hwang (2007), it can be said that conditionals can be divided into two groups, namely, reality conditionals and unreality conditionals. If the structure of *p* and *q* are relevant to determine the class of the conditional, tenses can also be said to play a crucial role identifying whether a conditional is real or unreal.

In Ghómálá', reality conditionals, as will be presented below, make use of present and future tenses whereas unreality conditionals make use of past tenses. Unlike some other African languages such as Chagga and Haya (cf. Salone 1977 cited in Thompson et al. 2007), tenses in the apodosis are not used the same way: the past tenses express unreality conditionals whereas the present tense expresses real conditionals. The following examples illustrate what has been said before. The apodosis in the examples below are all in future tenses whereas the protasis are in present, and these sentences express reality conditionals.

- (6) a. [tájñē yā ŋkáp]_P [bā é gōtí jó mōtwā]_Q
 Tagne have money COND he FUT2 buy car
 'If Tagne has money, he will buy a car.'
- b. [tálá gōtí Yā]_Q [bē gá sō' áá]_P
 Tala FUT2 go COND I come DEF
 'Tala will go if I come.'
- c. [tálá sōk m-ké]_P [bā é gōtjwá yā tʃōsi]_Q
 Tala wash 4-plates COND he FUT3 go church
 'If Tala washes the plates, he will go to church'
- d. [tálá gōtí lāmtō j̄jō]_Q [bē mōk yōm áá]_P
 Tala FUT1 warm water COND 3-fire catch DEF
 'Tala will warm water if fire catches.'

The examples in (6a) and (6b) illustrate the use of the two conditional markers with the position of *p* and *q* exchanged. In the last two examples, that is examples (6c) and (6d), the sentences are conjugated using the FUT3 and the FUT1 tenses.

In negative constructions, two negative markers *kā* and *tō ...pá/á* are used respectively in *q* and *p*. Both markers immediately precede the verb but the second particle of the second negation marker is optional, it expresses total negation. Let us consider the negative form of the previous examples.

- (7) a. [tájñē pā tá yā ŋkáp pá/á]_P [bā é tá gōtí jó mōtwā pá]_Q
 Tagne COP NEG have money NEG COND he NEG FUT2 buy car NEG
 'If Tagne does not have money, he will not buy a car.'

- b. [tálá tǎ gǔtí γǔ pǎ]Q [bê ō kā sǔ' áá]P
 Tala NEG FUT2 go NEG COND you NEG come DEF
 'Tala will not go if you don't come.'
- c. [tálá pǎ tǎ sǔk mké pǎ/á]P [bǎ é tǎ gǔtǔwǎ γǔ tǔsì pǎ]Q
 Tala COP NEG wash plates NEG COND he NEG FUT3 go church NEG
 'If Tala does not wash the plates, he will not go to church.'
- d. [tálá tǎ gǔtǔwǎ lǎmtǎ ʃǎ pǎ/á]P [bê mǔk kā γǎm áá]Q
 Tala NEG FUT1 warm water NEG COND fire NEG catch DEF
 'Tala will not warm water if fire does not catches.'

From these examples, we observe that, when the conditional sentence begins with the protasis, the discontinuous negation marker is used in both clauses and the presence of a copula is indispensable in the conditional clause (see examples 7a and 7c). When the conditional sentence begins with the apodosis, the discontinuous negation marker is used in the apodosis while the negation marker *kā* is used for in the protasis (see examples 7b and 7d). In this case, the copula is not required.

It is also possible that the present tense be used in both apodosis and protasis. In this case, the conditional sentence describes a relation in which, if the proposition in *p* holds, the one in *q* also holds. In this case, both markers are used: one in the condition clause (*bǎjǎ/bê*) and the other in the consequence clause (*bǎ*) and the definitizer surfaces at the end of the condition clause. These markers are found in clause initial position. Following are some examples of conditional sentences in the present tense. In these conditional sentences, unlike predictive conditionals, the position of the clauses cannot be permuted as the ungrammaticality of (8c) and (8d) suggests.

- (8) a. [bǎjǎ/bê Símō kūŋ msê áá]P [bǎ bǎ Tǎŋǎ kūŋ]Q
 COND Simo love corn fufu DEF COND also Tagne love
 'If Simo likes corn fufu, then Tagne also does.'
- b. [bê tá ó kūŋ pǎdʒwí áá]P [bǎ bǎ wú kūŋ]Q
 COND father 2-POSS love women DEF COND also you love
 'If your father likes women, then you also do.'
- c. * [bǎ bǎ Tǎŋǎ kūŋ]Q [bǎjǎ/bê Símō kūŋ msê áá]P
 COND also Tagne love COND Simo love corn fufu DEF
- d. * [bǎ bǎ wú kūŋ]Q [bǎjǎ/bê tá ó kūŋ pǎdʒwí áá]P
 COND also you love COND father 2-POSS love women DEF

In the negative conjugation, the negative marker *kā* is used in both *p* and *q* clauses and its position is immediately before the verb. Following are some conditional sentences in their negative form.

- (9) a. [bê Simō kā kūŋ msê áá]_P [b̄ bā Tâp̄ō kā kūŋ]_Q
 COND Simo NEG love corn fufu DEF COND also Tagne NEG love
 'If Simo does not like corn fufu, then Tagne also does not.'
- b. [bê tá ó kā kūŋ p̄d̄ʒwí áá]_P [b̄ bā wú kā kūŋ]_Q
 COND father 2-POSS NEG love women DEF COND also you NEG love
 'If your father does not like women, then you also do not.'

It is also possible to use the discontinuous negation marker *t̄...p̄á*, in which case the sentence undergoes some modifications. Consider the following examples:

- (10) a. [Simo p̄ t̄ kūŋ msê]_P [b̄ bā Tâp̄ō t̄ kūŋ p̄á]_Q
 Simo COP NEG love corn fufu COND also Tagne NEG love NEG
 'If Simo does not like corn fufu, then Tagne also does not.'
- b. [tá ó p̄ t̄ kùŋ p̄d̄ʒwí]_P [b̄ bā wú t̄ kūŋ p̄á]_Q
 father 1.POSS COP NEG love women COND also you NEG love NEG
 'If your father does not like women, then you also do not.'

The first observation to make here is that when the negative conditional uses the discontinuous negation marker, the first conditional marker of the first clause no longer surfaces thereby triggering the disappearance of the definitizer. Secondly, the second part of the negation marker appears only at the end of the second clause.

Unreality conditionals express two actions where *p* does not hold and thus *q* does not either. This type of conditional has different characteristics and constraints. Following are its characteristics:

- it uses only *b̄* as conditional marker and the morpheme appears exclusively within *q*;
- a new conditional marker surfaces in *p*: *p̄*';
- verbs here must be in the past and the past tenses allowed in this case are P2 and P3;
- the verbs of *p* and *q* end with a final vowel when the verb is found at clause final position in affirmative sentences.

Talking about the constraints, we have the following:

- there must be tense concordance in the two clauses;
- there is a morphological and a tonal change on the tense markers used for this conditional type. The P2 *k̄* becomes *ká* and the P3 *l̄* becomes *l̄á*;
- the modified tense markers occur only in *p*.

Following are some examples of unreal conditional sentences and their negative forms. These examples show how tenses are modified due to conditionality. These tenses will receive indices PST2' and PST3' in order to distinguish them from regular PST2 and PST3 tense markers.

(11) a. [mâ jáp ká pē' né jwótsû]_P [bā pāxǔ kō pfá á]_Q
 mother 4.POSS PST2' COND cook food COND children PST2 eat FV
 'If their mother had cooked food, the children would have eaten.'

b. [pāxǔ lā pē' nēŋ ā]_P [bā pú lā há bījé bí pú]_Q
 children PST3' COND dance FV COND they PST3 give groundnuts to them
 'If the children had danced, they would have given them groundnuts.'

To negate this conditional type, the morpheme *tā...pā*. The second particle of the morpheme is optional. Note here that it is not possible to negate only one of the clauses.

(12) a. [mâ jáp ká pē' bā tā né jwótsû]_P [bā pāxǔ
 mother 4.POSS PST2' COND COP NEG cook food COND children
 kē tā pfā (pā)]_Q
 PST2 NEG eat NEG
 'If their mother had not cooked food, the children would not have eaten.'

b. [pāxǔ lā pē' bā tā nēŋ]_P [bē pú lā tā há bījé bí pú]_Q
 children PST3' COND COPNEGdance COND they PST3 NEGgive groundnuts to them
 'If the children had not danced, they would not have given them groundnuts.'

3. Isomorphy

Like many other morphemes in the language, the markers used to identify conditional sentence are identical in form to other markers with different functions. In Ghómálá', conditional markers are isomorphic with markers of focus and with the copula. The marker *bā* used to mark conditional sentences can also be used to focalize sentences and also acts as a copula, just as in languages such as Banda Linda (for focalization) and Polci (for the copula) (see Caron 2006). As we mentioned earlier, the position of the protasis and the apodosis in the sentence determines which conditional marker has to be used. Ghómálá' makes use of two conditional markers, but in terms of isomorphy with other markers, *bā* is the only marker which functions either as a conditional, a copula or as an element of focalization.

The morpheme used for the copula in Ghómálá' has the same form as the conditional marker *bā*. Let us consider the following examples:

(13) jōŋ bā pā' jók
 1-DEM COP house 1.POSS
 'This is our house.'

(14) m-kālūŋ bā jwótsû m-gyōtsó
 4-plantain COP food 4-elders
 'Plantains are elders' food.'

Here *bā* is an existential verb and behaves as other verbs in the language exhibiting the ability to take tense or aspect, which affects the form of the verb as it does with all verbs in the language⁵. Following are some examples. (In example (17) the copula undergoes consonant alternation changing from *bā* to *pā*.)

(15) Tāmō bā wá dʒwópé
Tamo COP PROG sing.FV
'Tamo is dancing.'

(16) Tāmō lā bā gělá'tā jók
Tamo PST3 COP teacher 1.POSS
'Tamo was our teacher.'

(17) Tāmō pā mû fō bā é gō sū tʃō' pāpē
Tamo COP child chief COND he FUT0 wear cap red
'If Tamo is the chief's child, he will wear a red cap.'

There is also isomorphy between conditionals and focus markers. Here, the conditional marker *bā* is also the regular focus marker. This morpheme appears in the cleft construction to mark the focus of the sentence. In this case, the protasis of the conditional sentence functions like a focus clause. In fact, this morpheme is part of the *á bā* 'it is' phrase which is a cleft construction use to mark focus.

(18) á bā bījé jā Símō kâ né bí pāŋkxǔ
FOC groundnuts thatSimo PST3 cook to children
'It is groundnuts that Simo cooked for the children.'

(19) á bā mētṵwā jā é wá tʃǒŋ ná jō áá
FOC car that he PROG want INF buyDEF
'It is the car that he wants to buy.'

Concerning the other conditional marker *bájā* in its short form *bē*, it can also be analysed as being isomorphic to the relative marker. In fact, this conditional marker is made up of two morphemes: *bá* and *jā*. The first morpheme roughly translates as 'if' while second has the same morphology as the relative pronoun; these two morphemes combine to form the conditional marker. Let us consider the following sentences illustrating the relative marker.

(20) a. jǎŋ bā tʃō' jā Tāŋē lā sū áá
1-thisCOP cap RELP Tagne PST3 wear DEF
'This is the cap that Tagne wore.'

⁵ Ghómálá' verbs have two forms and undergo consonant alternation depending on whether they are used with the perfective or imperfective aspect.

- b. gâ j́ mō j̄ ē vūsí áá
 I see person RELP RESP fall DEF
 ‘I saw the person who fell.’

As we can observe in these sentences, the relative marker in the language causes the presence of a definitizer, as is also the case with conditional sentences using the conditional marker *bájā* (even when used in its contracted form). Due to this fact, we assume that the second part of the conditional marker *bájā* is isomorphic to the relative pronoun in form and in syntactic co-occurrences of elements but not in function. Following are examples of conditional sentences using the marker *bájā*. (21c) illustrates the ungrammaticality of using *bájā* without an accompanying definitizer.

- (21) a. [bájā gāfā kwj́ áá]_P [gâgō t̄fwā]_Q
 COND corn grow DEF I FUT0 harvest
 ‘If the corn has grown, I will harvest it.’
- b. [é gō nāptā kwō’]_Q [bájā á pó’ áá]_P
 he FUT0 arrange chair COND it break DEF
 ‘He will arrange the chair if it breaks.’
- c. *[é gō nāptā kwō’]_Q [bájā á pó’]_P
 he FUT0 arrange chair COND it break
 ‘He will arrange the chair if it breaks.’

Similarly, the same marker is used in constructions expressing relative time, as in many African languages, including Koorete (Höft 2014), Konso (Mous & Oda 2009) and Hausa (Caron 2006).

- (22) t̄fwājā ō gō kākā á bā pú né jwótsū tā mí
 when yougo visit DEFCOND then we cook food till finish
 ‘The time you spent erring, we would have cooked all the food.’

4. Functions of conditionals

As noted by Nicolle (this volume), there is an inherent conceptual link between conditionals and the notion of framing, according to which the protasis – whether hypothetical, factual or counterfactual – introduces a situation in which the apodosis applies. In the following sentences we exemplify each of these situations. The conditional sentence in (23) introduces a situation of uncertainty where the apodosis will not be achieved if the protasis does not hold. The factual conditional sentence (24) on the contrary expresses certainty as far as the achievement of the apodosis is concerned. In (25), the conditional clause expresses regrets about a situation where the apodosis expresses the regrets and the protasis expresses the cause of the regrets.

(23) Hypothetical

[Símō Ḃā māt]šēī,]p [bā é gō sū mǎk]Q
 Simo have matches COND he FUT0 light fire
 'If Simo has matches, he will light fire.'

(24) Factual

[é nê msě bí pāŋkxǔ]p [bā bā wú gō nē]Q
 he cook corn fufu to children COND also you FUT0 cook
 'If he is cooking corn fufu for the children then you should also cook'

(25) Counterfactual

[mā á lā tō pē' bí mǎk]p [bā bē lā tō kxó]Q
 mother 3-POSS PST3 NEG COND quench fire COND pot PST3 NEG burn
 'If my mother had not quenched the fire, the pot would not have burnt.'

The pragmatic uses of conditional expression in Ghomálá' are the following: argumentational conditionals, speech act conditionals, qualified denials, pseudo factive conditionals, factive concessives, and potential conditionals.

4.1. Argumentational conditionals. In argumentational conditionals, the protasis is admitted because of the argument raised in the apodosis. The following conditional sentence raises a certain argument on the part of speaker where the apodosis reveals the availability on the part of the speaker to dance if someone sings. The sentence can further be interpreted as 'I am ready to dance whenever someone decides to sing'.

(26) [bájō pō ʒwōp áá]p [bā gā nōŋ]Q
 COND you sing DEF COND I dance
 'If you sing then I will dance.'

4.2. Speech act conditionals. speech act conditionals occur in two phases: the assertion phase (protasis) and the request phase (apodosis). During the assertion phase, the speaker asserts a proposition and during the request phase he invites the hearer to act on that information. (Austin 1961: 158; cited in Lycan 2001: 184) also refers to speech act conditionals as 'biscuit conditionals'.

(27) gā né msě bájō ó kūŋ nō tsú jwé áá
 I cook corn fufu COND you like INF eat food DEF
 'I cooked corn fufu if you want to eat.'

4.3. Qualified denials. In a situation where a conditional sentence is interpreted as a qualified denial, it is nearly sure that the protasis is not true.

(28) bájō fó dō á ō lām dʒú'
 CONDchief cry DEF younever hear
 'If the chief has ever cried, you have never heard.'

As we observe in the sentence above, it is not the regular negative marker that is used but instead the morpheme *lām* ‘never’ that is used to mark denial. This word is usually used to mark total denial where no alternatives are envisaged.

4.4 Pseudo-factive conditionals. In pseudo factive conditionals, there is a doubt about the truth of *p* and there is the presence of a pronoun which is coreferential with the protasis:

- (29) é ká pē’ dʒó bāp bā á lē zúm à
 he PST2 COND buy meat COND it PST3 amaze me
 ‘If he had bought meat, it would have amazed me.’

4.5. Factive concessives. In a factive concessive, two facts are presented: the presupposition and the assertion. Here, the speaker presupposes *p* and asserts *q*.

- (30) Jwêtsû mâ á gō lāmpā bájā é tʃēŋtē gwó’ tsā ná’
 Food mother 1-my FUT0 tasty COND she well grind ingredients soup
 ‘My mother’s food will be tasty, if she grinds the ingredients well.’

4.6 Potential conditionals. In this usage of conditional, the sentence receives either a potential or a temporal interpretation depending on the context, and the potential marker *fīŋ* occurs in the apodosis.

- (31) ō ʋō tʃwālē dʒū gēnōm bā pú fīŋ ná ʋām wók
 you go now steal pig COND they can INF catch us
 ‘If you go now and steal the pig then we can be caught.’

- (32) pǰā mīŋ ná tsū jwé bā pǰā fīŋ ná nēŋ
 We finish INF eat food COND we POT INF dance
 ‘If we finish eating, we can dance.’

5. Conclusion

The preceding presentation of conditionals in Ghomálá’ is the first in-depth account of conditionals in this language. Two conditional markers are used in Ghomálá’ and they are found in clause initial position. These markers are isomorphic to other morphemes in the language namely the copula, the focus marker and the relative marker. Real and unreal conditionals are distinguished by the tense used in conditional sentences: past tenses for unreality conditionals and present and future tenses for reality conditionals. Conditionals in Ghomálá’ have many pragmatic uses, including argumentational, speech act, qualified denials, pseudo factive, factive concessive, and potential conditional functions. However, more studies have to be carried out especially in the domain of historical linguistics in order to come out with the real nature of conditional markers and the grammaticalization processes they may have undergone, specifically addressing the origin and role of the floating low tone.

Abbreviations

ASP	aspect
COND	conditional marker
COP	copula
DEF	definitizer
DEM	demonstrative
FOC	focus
FUT	future
FV	final vowel
INF	infinitive marker
POSS	possessive
POT	potential
PST	past
PROG	progressive marker
REL	relative pronoun
RESP	resumptive pronoun

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Submitted: 26 August 2015
Accepted: 11 March 2016
Revisions received: 18 April 2016