# From Perfectivity to Performativity in Conditionals

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### Aspect in hypothetical conditionals

- $\triangleright$  When p and  $\neg p$  (the antecedent proposition) are equally plausible future events, there are two possible ways of marking the antecedent of conditionals in Farsi.
- (1) Agar jarime  $\{\mathbf{be}-\mathbf{\check{s}}-\mathbf{i}/\mathbf{\check{s}}\}$ **šod**-i}, fine **impf**-become. $\emptyset$ -2sg/ become.**perf**. $\emptyset$ -2sg bayad pool-esh ro be-d-i should money-its RA IMPF-give. Ø-2SG If you get a ticket, you must pay it.
- ► The antecedent in both conditionals is in zero tense. They only differ in the aspect of their antecedent's verb.
- ► Perfective in the antecedent forces a 'performative' interpretation in the consequent.
- ► It seems reasonable to think that they are conditional statements with ordinary truth conditions in both cases. Following [4, 5], and [6] a.o., I take a truth conditional approach to performative utterances.
- ► My aim is to derive the pragmatic differences between the two conditionals from their sole linguistic difference: the semantic properties of aspectual heads, and general principles of pragmatic reasoning.
- **►** Main claims:
  - ► The contribution of perfective aspect is to semantically encode the factual independence of antecedent and consequent.
  - ► Performativity inferences are derived from pragmatic reasoning to maintain relevance in face of factual independence. (à la Biezma & Goebel's account of biscuit conditionals)

## Conditional Imperatives

- Conditional imperatives in Farsi are only grammatical with perfective aspect in the antecedent.
- (2) Agar farda {\*be-ay-i/ amad-i}, tomorrow impf-come. $\emptyset$ -2SG/ come.perf. $\emptyset$ -2SG keik be-ar cake IMPER-say If you come tomorrow, bring a cake.

### Acknowledgment

▶ I am grateful to Ana Arregui, Maria Biezma, Rajesh Bhatt, Seth Cable, Ethan Poole, Paul Portner, and Yael Sharvit for all their helpful feedback, comments, and encouragement.

#### References

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- Speaker Authority
- ▶ Perfective in the antecedent invokes an inference that the conditional statement is an authoritative claim by the speaker.
- agar zan-an-e afghan eteraz {be-kon-and/ kar-d-and}, koš-te woman-PL Afghan protest impf-do- $\emptyset$ -3PL/ do-perf. $\emptyset$ -3PL kill-PP mi-šav-and IMPF-become-3PL. If Afghan women protest, they will get killed.
- ► A human right activist → X perfective / ✓ imperfective
- ightharpoonup A Talib threatening Afghan women  $\rightarrow$   $\checkmark$  perfective/ $\checkmark$  imperfective
- (4) agar gorosne {**be-sh**-i/ **shod**-i}, ghaza hast. if hungry **impf**-become- $\emptyset$ -2sG/ become.**perf**. $\emptyset$ -2sG food is If you get hungry, there's food (in the fridge).
  - ► A host offering food → ✓ perfective / ✗ imperfective
  - ▶ Another guest  $\rightarrow$  Xperfective/ ✓ imperfective (... "but ask the host first.")

### Factual Independence

- ▶ Perfective is infelicitous if the consequent's truth naturally follows from the truth of antecedent.
- $\{baš-ad/ \#bud\},\$ agar farda šanbe pas-farda jome ast. tomorrow Saturday be. $\emptyset.3sg/$  be.**perf**. $\emptyset.3sg$  after-tomorrow Saturday is If tomorrow is Friday, the day after is Saturday.
- Perfective conditionals are not felicitous in question and answer pairs like following:
  - A: why (not) p?

- B: Because if p, q.
- (6) A: Why don't you tell her the truth? agar haghighat ra beh-esh {be-guy-am/ #**gof-t**-am $\}$ , narahat RA to-her impf-tell- $\emptyset$ -1SG/ tell-perf- $\emptyset$ -1SG, upset truth mi-šav-∅-ad. IMPF-become-PRES-3SG If I tell her the truth, she'll get upset.

## (Un)embeddability

- ► Perfective conditionals cannot be embedded under attitude predicates.
- Ali thinks that...
  - agar baran {be-ay-ad/ xis mi-šav-∅-i #amad $\}$ , rain IMPF-do.PRES-3SG/ come.perf. $\emptyset$ .3SG wet NEG-become. $\emptyset$ -2SG if it rains, you will get wet.
- ► Imperfective conditionals cannot be embedded under imperatives.
- Bring an umbrella so that ...
  - agar baran {#be-ay-ad/ amad }, xis na-šav-i rain IMPF-do.PRES-3SG/ come.perf. $\emptyset$ .3SG, wet NEG-become. $\emptyset$ -2SG if it rains, you don't get wet.

Events are exemplifying situations [8]. I adopt a situation

Aspect in Situation Semantics

- semantics without explicit quantification over events [3].
- ► Perfective aspect denotes the property of quantizated minimal situations (no proper part).
- $[\mathbf{Perfective}]^{c,g} = \lambda P_{\langle s,t \rangle}.\lambda s.P(s) = 1 \& \forall s'[s' \leq s \rightarrow s' \notin P]$
- ► Imperfective aspect denotes the property of a homogeneous set of situations.
- (10) [Imperfective] $^{c,g} = \lambda P_{\langle s,t \rangle}$ .  $\lambda s$ .  $\forall s'[s' \leq s \& t]$ there exists a contextually salient relation R such that (Adopted from [3, 1]) R(s)(s') o P(s') = 1]
- ► As the zero tense does not introduce a topic situation, the antecedent of Farsi hypothetical conditionals denote a property of exemplifying situations.

## Driving Independence from minimality

- ► The minimality encoded in the denotation of perfective aspect results in the factual independence of antecedent and consequent
- ► Factual dependencies are tracked on the basis of lumping relations between propositions. A proposition lumps another proposition in a world w in virtue of certain part-whole relationships holding between situations of w.
- (11) For all propositions p and  $q \in \mathbf{P}(S)$  and all  $w \in W : p$  is **factually independent** of q in w iff  $w \in p$  and  $\exists s : s \leq w$ and  $s \in p$ , and  $s \notin q$  (i.e. there exists a situation that makes p true, but does not contain any part that makes q true).
- Minimal situations are poor lumpers:
  - ► They do not contain any sub-situations irrelevant to the truth of the proposition they exemplify.
  - ► They do not contain any proper sub-situation that makes the proposition they exemplify true.

## Deriving Authority from Independence

- ► Semantically encoded factual independence cannot be given up. Uttering the conditional conveys that the antecedent and consequent propositions will not be informationally independent (learning the antecedent will lead to learning the consequent).
- ► A speaker who uses a perfective conditional *lets shine through* that the antecedent and the consequent are factually independent, and yet claims that they are dependent. This is obviously contradictory and uncooperative if taken literally.
- ► Knowing that the addressee will not drop the Cooperative Principle in interpreting what they hear, the speaker uses this 'bald-faced' contradiction [7] to signal that the conditional utterance is actually an indirect speech act, and to produce the pragmatic effect of speaker authority