

## *If + Will Revisited\**

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### 1. Facts on *If + Will*

In this discussion, I will deal with the problem of '*if + pure future (epistemic) will*' construction. It is well known that conditional sentences referring to the future can use the future tense (*will*) in the head clause, but not normally in the *if*-clause. Observe (1a) below:

- (1) a. *If he arrives/ \* will arrive*, the band will play the National Anthem.
- b. *If you'll help us*, we can finish early.
- c. *If drugs will cure him*, this drug should do the job. (Quirk *et al.* (1985) )

*Will* in (1b-c) does not express pure future, but non-epistemic use. In (1b), *will* roughly equals *be willing to* and in (1c), *will* expresses timeless and habitual prediction.

Though relatively infrequent, exceptions to the rule that pure future *will* does not appear in the *if*-clause are possible. These exceptions (pure future *will* in *if*-clauses) are discussed by many linguists, including Jespersen (1931), Palmer (1974), Quirk *et al.* (1985), Tregidgo (1974), Wekker (1976), Close (1980), Declerck (1984, 1991), Jacobsson (1984), and Tanaka (1988). Typical examples of exceptions are:

- (2) a. *If it'll make you feel any better*, I'll take it back. (Tregidgo (1974) )
- b. *If the water will rise above this level*, then we must warn everybody in the neighbourhood. (Quirk *et al.* (1985) )

(2a-b) represent two major types which will be considered in this paper. (2a) is an example of what Palmer (1974) and Tregidgo (1974) call 'after-

future,' where the event in the *if*-clause is seen as subsequent to, or not prior to, the event mentioned in the main clause. So, in (2a), the reversal of time relations is observed, and the use of *will* is 'a shade politer' than the simple present tense (Jespersen 1931: 400). In (2a), the normal relation of cause and effect (condition and consequence) is reversed and effect (consequence) precedes cause (condition). However, Wekker (1976: 72) rejects the explanations offered by Palmer, Tregidgo and others. Wekker says that 'it is logically impossible for a consequence to be earlier in time than the condition which leads to it (see 3 below).' (2b) is a type of 'closed condition' (Declerck 1984, 1991), where the speaker confidently predicts the occurrence of the event in the *if*-clause.

Most of the examples cited below are of the two types shown in (2a-b), though the implications of *will* vary from strong to weak probability or certainty (see 2 below).

## 2. Declerck (1984, 1991)

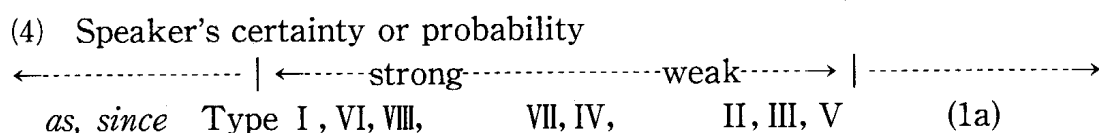
Declerck (1984, 1991) collects many examples from various sources and divides them into nine types:

- (3) a. Type I: *If the lava will come down as far as this, we must evacuate these houses immediately.* (Close (1980) )
- b. Type II: *If it'll make you feel any better, we know now that it wasn't your fault.* (Declerck (1984, 1991) )
- c. Type III: *If it'll make you feel any better, I'll take it back.*(= 2a)
- d. Type IV: Try to find out whether or not John will attend the meeting. *If he will attend it, we must warn Mary as soon as possible.* (Declerck (1984, 1991) )
- e. Type V: I'll come down to your office after one o'clock, *if it will suit you.* (*ibid.*)
- f. Type VI: I'd like-tonight-to drop in and see you. At ten ? *If you will be alone.* (Jacobsson (1984) )
- g. Type VII: I'll ring you up *if I'm going to* be late for dinner. (*ibid.*)
- h. Type VIII: Hang it all ! *If that idiot won't be there as well ! Who the hell sent him an invitation ?* (Declerck (1991) )
- i. Type IX: *If there will be trouble if we attend the meeting, we'd better stay at home.* (*ibid.*)

I will not discuss in detail the nine types mentioned above (see Tanaka

(1988) and Declerck(1991: 198ff) ). Instead, I consider the probability or certainty of *will* in each case.

The diagram below shows the degree or gradience of *will*:



Except for type IX, the degree or gradience of *will* from type I (strong) to type V (weak) is like an “ordinary” *will* in the main clause alone, implying that there is no difference between *will* in the *if* and main clause. The point to emphasize in (4) is that Declerck’s ‘closed condition’ alone is insufficient. We must seek some other principle which permits *will* to appear in the *if*-clause. (His terminology is confusing because he uses ‘open condition’ for II and III.) We may note, in passing, that the dotted line to the right of ‘weak’ indicates the speaker’s noncommitment to the occurrence of *p* in the *if*-clause. In the domain of *as* and *since*, the speaker’s confidence is complete and he fully accepts the proposition of *as* and *since* clauses. Thus, the meaning of type I comes very close to that of *as* or *since*.

### 3. A Proposal

Most of Declerck’s examples are of the type ‘after-future,’ and we can view (2b) as another ‘after-future,’ in which the speaker shows strong confidence in the *if*-clause. ‘After-future’ covers most of the examples in this paper, and so the question arises as to why effects precede their causes.

- (5) We have been speaking of an ideal educator, a truth-seeker. But a propagandist has different purpose. He wants a certain kind of action. He hopes to influence people to think as he wants them to think, and to act as he wants them to act. He prefers that they should not think for themselves. *If* the knowledge of certain facts *will* produce/\* *produces* doubts in his hearer’s mind, he will conceal or ignore these facts. (Lionel Ruby, *The Art of Making Sense*, pp. 50-51)

(5) is of Declerck’s type IV, where “*p* or not *p*” is given in the preceding context (i.e., before the *if*-clause), *if p, then q* is uttered, and “*q*” precedes “*p*”. In other words, in (5), the preceding context is that the hearer will accept the propagandist’s words readily or doubt his words. It indicates that

he will be in trouble if doubts are produced in the hearer's mind, so he will conceal or ignore them beforehand. We must distinguish 'time of event (henceforth  $E(p)$  and  $E(q)$ ),' (the future (or present) time of the occurrence of  $p$  and  $q$ ) from 'time of logical prediction (judgement) (henceforth  $L(p)$  and  $L(q)$ ),' (the time when speaker predicts, judges or decides the future occurrence of  $p$  and  $q$ ). In most cases both  $L(p)$  and  $L(q)$  are uttered in the present time. (5) can be represented diagrammatically:

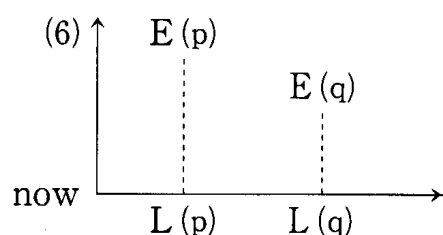


Diagram (6) shows that  $E(q)$  is earlier than  $E(p)$ , ('after-future,')—a restriction which does not hold for standard conditionals like (1a), and  $L(p)$  is earlier than  $L(q)$ —a restriction which does hold for standard conditionals. So Wekker's conclusions can be dismissed. But 'time of utterance (henceforth  $U(p)$  and  $U(q)$ )' can be reversed, unlike  $L(p)$  and  $L(q)$ . For example, in (3e),  $U(p)$  is later than  $U(q)$  because  $p$  is uttered later than  $q$ , but the relation of  $L(p)$  and  $L(q)$  is always the same as other subordinate conjunctions like *since*, *as*, and *when*.

Another example is:

- (7) Maybe we'll do better on the same team, *if* your brand of socialism *will* allow you to act for an unabashed capitalist. (Jeffrey Archer, *Kane and Abel*, p. 425)

(7) does not contain "p or not p" in the preceding context of the quotation. However, the fact that the interlocutor was a socialist a long time before (in the speaker's university days) and the fact that the speaker was and is an unabashed capitalist are contextually established in this novel. Objective proof is given that the interlocutor was once a good socialist match for the speaker in the university's debate convention. Now that the interlocutor comes to the speaker as a lawyer, the speaker can easily predict that the interlocutor will work for him. They will do better on the same team.

(7) is a special kind of echoic utterance. Echoic utterance is not only a term for mere repetition of preceding utterance, but also stands for the contextually given idea. Mere repetition does not state the speaker's belief or modality, (which I will call 'Strong Echo'). Contextually given idea does permit the speaker to state his belief, as in the speaker's prediction ('Weak or Near-zero Echo') in (7). Lyons (1977: 797ff) provides a theoretical foundation for the notion of echoic utterance, when he suggests that epistemic modals can be divided into two types: subjective and objective. Lyons proposes that the higher the degree of speaker's judgement or proof (evidence) is, the more objective it is. The lower, the more subjective.

Only objective modals can be inserted into the *if*-clause:

(8) *If it may be raining, you should take your umbrella.*

Although Lyons says that *If it is possible that it will rain* or *If there is a possibility of rain* is much better than *may*, objective epistemic *may* can be used in the *if*-clause. Here 'objective' means that there must be some sort of echoic element in the preceding context, whether strong or weak (near-zero). To return to *will* in the *if*-clause, most important of all, pure future *will* alone implies that the event will occur spontaneously, or the future event will **result from** or **depend on the fulfillment of certain future conditions** which may or may not be specified. The most typical case is type IX in (3i).

#### 4. Conclusion

In summary, we need to distinguish E (p) and E (q) from L (p) and L (q) (see (6)). And this *will* expresses objective prediction, which results from the echoic utterance in the preceding context.

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