

## Conditional coding in ‘even (if)’ concessive conditionals: Bantu and beyond [GS]

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The present contribution is concerned with scalar concessive conditionals (SCCs), e.g. *Even if it rains, I will go outside*. Many languages form SCCs by combining an additive marker with a conditional clause (Haspelmath & König 1998: 584–589). Additive markers used in SCCs may be inherently scalar-additive (e.g. English *even* in *even if*) or they may be underspecified additives which may have scalar-additive or simple additive readings depending on the context they occur in (cf. German *auch* in *auch wenn*).

According to König (2017: 40), additives are cross-linguistically recurrent components of SCCs, but concessive conditionality is never expressed by additives alone, always requiring the compositional effect of an additive and a conditional marker. Certain Bantu languages, however, seem to have optional conditional coding in SCCs, meaning that the conditional marker may be omitted, e.g. Mbosi (C25) *sì (wáá)* ‘even (if)’ (Bossuyt & Kouarata 2024: 12). In other Bantu languages, SCCs seem to lack overt conditional coding altogether, e.g. Gyeli (A81) in (1).

The present contribution will give a preliminary survey of coding strategies used to form SCCs based on data from 9 Bantu languages (Chuwabu, Digo, Eton, Gyeli, Herero, Luvale, Mbosi, Mbukushu, and Swahili), with a special focus on the presence, optionality, or absence of overt conditional coding in these structures. Another point of attention will be how SCCs are formally distinguished from prototypical conditionals on the one hand and from concessives proper (‘although *p*, *q*’) on the other hand.

The Bantu data will then be compared to data from 30 non-Bantu languages spoken in Africa, revealing broader cross-linguistic tendencies. Initial results suggest that conditional coding may be optional or absent only if the additive marker is inherently scalar, e.g. Mbosi *sì* ‘even’ or Gyeli *tò* ‘even’. By contrast, languages that use underspecified additives in SCCs, e.g. Amharic *-mm* ‘also/even’ in (3), tend to have obligatory conditional coding. König’s (2017: 40) above generalization thus holds for underspecified additives, but not for scalar ones.

- (1) Gyeli (Niger-Congo > Bantu A81; Grimm 2021: 543)  
*tò wèé kwálé-lé nyê wé yàné nyê bé-gyé-mò*  
even 2SG.PRS.NEG like-NEG 1.OBJ 2SG.PRS must see OBJ.8-good\_manner  
‘Even if you don’t like him, you must still be polite.’ (lit. ‘... see good manners.’)
- (3) Amharic (Afro-Asiatic > Semitic; Leslau 1995: 718)  
*bi-Ø-zānb-ə-mm ə-hed-allä-<sup>wh</sup>*  
COND-3SG.M.SBJ-rain.IPFV-EP-ADD 1SG-go.IPFV-AUX-1SG.SBJ  
‘I will go even if it rains.’

## References

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