A COGNITIVE LINGUISTICS APPROACH TO ENGLISH CONDITIONAL CONSTRUCTIONS

By

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ABBREVIATIONS

EFL= English as a Foreign Language
CL= Cognitive Linguistics
CG= Cognitive Grammar
CIT= Conceptual Integration Theory
L2= Second Language
CECs= Course of Events Conditionals
HCs= Hypothetical Conditionals
PCs= Pragmatic Conditionals
BNC= British National Corpus
COCA= Corpus of Contemporary American English
CLT= Communicative Language Teaching
TBLT= Task-Based Language Teaching
TPR= Total Physical Response
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ABSTRACT

The aim of the present dissertation is twofold. Initially, it is intended to investigate the cognitive principles underlying the various types of conditional constructions in English, and determine how conditional constructions are viewed and conceptualized within the Cognitive Linguistics framework. The second objective of the study is to propose a new pedagogical approach to teaching English conditionals based on the principles of Cognitive Grammar. The main argument motivating the present study is that conditional constructions are polysemous and convey a variety of different meanings (predictive, counterfactual, epistemic, speech-act conditionals and others). For the purposes of the study, we employ the framework of Mental Spaces Theory (Fauconnier, 1985, 1994) and Conceptual Integration Theory (or Blending Theory) (Fauconnier and Turner 1996, 1998, 2002). More specifically, it is claimed that in construing a conditional construction, speakers are engaged in a mental space building process. Conditional constructions set up alternative mental spaces, namely pairs of mental spaces that cannot temporally and spatially overlap. The meanings of the two alternative spaces are integrated into a separate space known as the blend (or blended space). It is through this blending process that meaning elaborations of conditional constructions are motivated. I eventually provide teaching suggestions which will be incorporated in the teaching of English conditionals and facilitate their learning and acquisition.
Grammar constitutes a crucial aspect of English as a foreign language (EFL) learning. Teachers of English as a second or foreign language constantly attempt to find and implement in their language classrooms innovative and efficient methods to enhance their grammar instruction and facilitate learners’ grammatical acquisition. Grammar teaching is a challenging and daunting task for both learners and teachers. In particular, certain grammatical constructions such as conditional constructions pose great difficulties to EFL learners, due to their inherent conceptual and semantic complexity, as well as their ability to convey multiple meanings and serve various communicative purposes. For these reasons, even advanced learners of English fail to fully master conditional constructions.

Descriptive grammars of English and pedagogical grammars used in EFL contexts have invariably treated conditionals in a rather linear way. Traditional grammars of English tend to provide a rule-based approach to grammar. They lack a cognitive perspective, undermining the cognitive foundations of grammatical constructions. The impetus for the present study stems from the fact that learners of English are confronted with a number of meaningless grammatical rules and theoretical insights which by no means help them reach their ultimate goal, namely gaining communicative competence and becoming fluent in the foreign language. This dissertation primarily attempts to fill in this lacuna observed in pedagogical English grammars used in EFL contexts by providing a new approach to English conditionals which will be based upon the principles of Cognitive Linguistics.

Within the Cognitive Linguistics framework, grammar is regarded as usage-based and motivated, and its primary function is to convey meaning. In the present study, a semantic analysis of conditionals will be attempted in order to unveil the deeper cognitive needs that motivate speakers to employ conditional constructions. The investigation of conditional constructions will enable us to delve deeper into the cognitive processes underlying the conceptualization, reasoning and interpretation of conditionals as well as to elucidate how people deploy and use conditional constructions to articulate their thoughts and satisfy various communicative needs. In addition, conditional constructions constitute a vast grammatical area. They encompass a wide
range of grounding devices, including tenses and modality. Hence, gaining a better insight into conditional constructions also allows us to gain a global view of grammar in general.

Therefore, the aim of the present dissertation is twofold. Initially, I intend to investigate the cognitive principles underlying the various types of conditional constructions in English and determine how conditional constructions are viewed and conceptualized within the Cognitive Linguistics framework. The second objective of the study is to propose a new pedagogical approach to teaching English conditionals based on the principles of Cognitive Grammar. The approach is informed by current linguistic theory and provides a usage-based presentation of conditionals. In this context, I provide pedagogical implications and practical suggestions aimed at different levels of EFL learners. Eventually, I propose a variety of activities and teaching practices which will serve as a guide for English language teachers and will hopefully facilitate the learning and acquisition of English conditional constructions.

The dissertation is organized as follows. Chapter 1 introduces the Cognitive Linguistics framework and presents the main tenets of Cognitive Grammar and Construction Grammar. Chapter 2 provides a comprehensive overview of previous studies focusing on CL-oriented studies and semantic accounts of conditional constructions. Chapters 3 and 4 describe the aims and the methodology of the present dissertation. Chapter 5 explores and discusses in detail the cognitive and semantic motivations behind English conditional constructions. The analysis is based on authentic data retrieved from corpora and other sources. Chapter 6 concludes with recommendations and pedagogical implications which could assist teachers in teaching English conditionals using the CL framework.
1.1 The Cognitive Grammar Framework

Cognitive Linguistics (CL) consists of various strands such as Cognitive Grammar, Construction Grammar, Mental Spaces Theory, Conceptual Integration Theory, and Conceptual Metaphor Theory. Within Cognitive Linguistics, language is not an independent faculty of the mind. It is part of human cognition and therefore interacts with the other cognitive processes such as attention, perception and memory. From a cognitive linguistics perspective, linguistic meaning has four main tenets. It is perspectival, dynamic and flexible, encyclopedic and non-autonomous, as well as usage-based and experientially grounded (Geeraerts, 2006). Meaning reflects our conceptualization and experience of the world and provides the tools that enable us to construe situations in alternate ways adopting different viewpoints. Yet, the world around us is constantly changing and as a result we are engaged in different experiences each time. These different situations that we experience along with our everyday knowledge of the world motivate the use of certain constructions and determine our linguistic choices.

Cognitive Grammar (CG) constitutes a key aspect of Cognitive Linguistics. Its basic premise is that grammar is meaningful and conveys meaning in the same way that lexical items convey meaning (Langacker, 1987). Linguistic meaning reflects the way humans conceptualize and experience the world around them. Grammar is not built up out of grammatical rules and a lexicon. Rather, it consists of symbolic units, namely “pairings of semantic structures and symbolizing phonological structures which evoke each other” (Langacker, 2013: 5). Grammatical constructions are usage-based and are grounded in human experience and sociocultural practices, providing speakers with ample linguistic tools which enable them to construe meaning and articulate their thoughts and experiences (Radden & Dirven, 2007). In speaking, speakers make certain choices regarding the constructions they employ in order to perform a communicative act. These cognitive decisions that speakers make when construing linguistic meaning give rise to the cognitive nature of language.

1.2 Principles of Construction Grammar

In the present dissertation, conditionals are treated as constructions, and therefore a constructionist approach is adopted for their investigation. Construction
Grammar developed concurrently with Cognitive Grammar, and consequently shares a lot of its basic ideas with it. Unlike formalist theories of grammar, Construction Grammar views constructions, namely pairings of form and meaning, as the basic units of language (Fillmore & Kay, 1993). Constructions are defined as “learned pairings of form with semantic or discourse function” (Goldberg, 2006: 5). They include morphemes (e.g. -ing), words (e.g. ring), idioms (e.g. spill the beans) and even sentence patterns (e.g. She baked her a cake). One of the key features of constructions is that they are non-compositional, in the sense that their meaning is not strictly inferred from the meaning of their constituent parts. Rather, their meaning arises from the construction itself. To illustrate this, Goldberg (1995, 2006) provides an example of the verb slice in five different constructions, as well as an instantiation of the verb bake in two different constructions.

(1) a. He sliced the bread. (transitive)
   b. Pat sliced the carrots into the salad. (caused motion)
   c. Pat sliced Chris a piece of pie. (ditransitive)
   d. Emeril sliced and diced his way to stardom. (way construction)
   e. Pat sliced the box open. (resultative)

(Goldberg, 2006: 7)

(2) a. Sally baked her sister a cake. (ditransitive)
   b. Sally baked a cake to her sister.

(Goldberg, 1995: 141)

In all these instances, the verb slice refers to the act of cutting with a sharp instrument. However, the meanings of someone causing something else to move (1b), someone intending to cause someone to receive something (1c), or someone causing something to change state (1e) are attributed to the whole argument structure constructions and not merely to the verb (Goldberg, 2006). A constructionist approach suggests that the interaction between the meaning of the verb and the meaning of the construction can account for the overall meaning of the syntactic configuration. It is not the verb alone that determines the form and the semantic properties of a sentence pattern. Of course, each verb has its own valency and requires specific thematic roles. However, many verbs can take different arguments and be involved in different
argument structure constructions. In this way, the same main verb can appear in different constructions and convey multiple meanings highlighting each time different aspects of interpretation. Ditransitive constructions, for example, constitute a representative case of constructional polysemy. Prototypically, they take an agent, a recipient and a theme. In both sentences of (2), Sally baked a cake in order to give it to her sister. The difference between (2a) and (2b) is that sentence (2a) does not imply any actual transfer of the cake to a recipient, whereas (2b) involves an act of giving. The verb bake does not intrinsically entail the meaning of actual giving to a recipient. The meanings of the words and the meaning of the Ditransitive Construction are blended and a new meaning emerges. The new meaning of ‘X intends to cause Y to receive Z by baking’ is attributed to the construction of (2a). On the contrary, (2b) profiles the actual giving of the cake to a recipient (Goldberg, 1995).

Grammatical constructions are meaningful and their differing meanings can be mapped metaphorically onto other domains (Goldberg, 1995; Dancygier & Sweetser, 2014). The Caused-Motion construction is metaphorically used to prompt the meaning of caused changes of state. Sentences such as We laughed Joe out of his depression and Cindy coaxed Kim through the admission process are instantiations of the conceptual metaphor CAUSED CHANGE IS CAUSED MOTION (Dancygier & Sweetser, 2014: 128). The verbs laugh and coax do not intrinsically refer to the meaning of causing someone or something to move or change. Their meaning extensions emerge as a result of metaphorical mappings.
CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

Conditional constructions have drawn the interest of linguists, philosophers and psychologists and various cross-disciplinary accounts have been developed throughout the years. Each work makes its own contribution and lays the groundwork for the study of conditionals. Philosophers view conditionals as mere reflections of human reasoning. Descriptive grammars pay special attention to the role of the different verb tenses used in conditional sentences, while most contemporary linguistic accounts offer a semantic and/or pragmatic analysis of conditionals. A common denominator of previous studies is that they more or less downplay the significant role of the interaction between form and meaning in conditional constructions.

In English, conditionals take the form of If A, (then) B and consist of two parts, an if-clause and a main clause. The if-clause is known as the protasis or the antecedent, whereas the main clause is the apodosis or the consequent. Other conjunctions including unless, on condition that, supposing, assuming, providing can also introduce conditional constructions. A comprehensive overview of the most prominent theoretical accounts emerged through these studies is necessary and will serve as a basis for the further exploration of conditional constructions.

2.1 Course of Events, Hypothetical and Pragmatic Conditionals

One of the most prominent accounts of conditionals is the one provided by Athanasiadou and Dirven (1996, 1997a, 2000). They propose a typology, according to which, conditionals can be classified into three main types: Course-of-events conditionals (CECs), Hypothetical conditionals (HCs) and Pragmatic conditionals (PCs). The three types are exemplified by sentences (3), (4) and (5) respectively.

(3) If there is a drought like this year, the eggs remain dormant.
    (Athanasiadou and Dirven, 1997: 61)

(4) If the weather is fine, we’ll go for a swim.
    (Athanasiadou and Dirven, 1997: 61)
(5) If anyone wants me, I am downstairs.

(Athanasiadou and Dirven, 1996: 641)

Course of events conditionals (CECs), refer to two co-occurring or consecutive events. The two events are linked with a relation of dependence, in the sense that when the first event is realized, the second event also occurs. Yet, there is no causal relationship involved, as the event expressed in the protasis (if-clause) does not intrinsically trigger the event in the apodosis (main clause). Course of events constructions have a factual character and the notions of generality and reality are inherent in them. Speakers employ them to talk about two really co-occurring events. Their experience that two events regularly co-occur allows them to associate the two events in their mind, establish generalizations and construe them as such. Course of events conditionals are further subdivided into descriptive, inferencing and instructive conditionals.

Descriptive conditionals, like (3) If there is a drought like this year, the eggs remain dormant, are employed to describe or simply refer to two really co-occurring events. A key tenet of descriptive conditionals is that the description of the two events is based on observation. This does not hold, though, for inferencing and instructive CECs. Inferencing conditionals refer to an event which is inferred from the protasis rather than to an observed event. For instance, (6) consists of three consecutive if-clauses, all of which describe certain symptoms which allude to a particular illness. Based on these symptoms, one can draw inferences on the illness associated with them. Instructive conditionals are used to provide advice on what should be done when the situation expressed in the if-clause emerges. The main clause denotes an instruction that someone should follow in order to deal with the situation of the if-clause. In (7), since calling the doctor is one of the possible steps parents naturally take when their child has fever or feels sick, the speaker chooses to provide the hearers with this piece of advice.

(6) If a child has a fever with a skin infection, or if there are red streaks running up his arm or leg, or if he has tender lymph glands in his armpit or groin, the infection is spreading seriously and should be considered a real emergency.

(Athanasiadou and Dirven, 1996: 623)
You should call a doctor to diagnose and treat your child if there is a rash, certainly if there is a fever or the child feels sick.

(Athanasiadou and Dirven, 1996: 627)

As opposed to Course of events conditionals, in Hypothetical conditionals the realization of the event expressed in the consequent is fully dependent on the fulfillment of the event in the antecedent. The hypothetical nature of these constructions concerns the occurrence of the two events, not the relationship between them. Using a hypothetical conditional, the speaker is allowed to take a certain distance from the actual occurrence of the two events. A crucial characteristic of hypothetical constructions is that they can express different aspects of hypotheticality including prediction, supposition and condition.

The main function of HCs is to make predictions about the possible consequences of the event in the if-clause. In most cases, they denote predictions with a future time reference. For example, in the sentence (8a), the speaker, based on his/her background everyday knowledge that the lack of water leads to the overheating of the engines, makes a prediction about a future event that is possible to occur as an immediate consequence of the event denoted in the if-clause. In (8b) and (8c), the speaker chooses to take a further distance from reality using past tenses, since past tenses usually position events at lower degrees of likelihood. The construction in (8b) denotes events that are less likely to happen, while the latter refers to unreal events that are impossible to occur (8c).

(8)  a. If there is no water in your radiator, your engine will overheat immediately.
    b. If there was/were no water in your radiator, your engine would overheat immediately.
    c. If there had been no water in your radiator, the engine would have overheated immediately.

(Athanasiadou and Dirven, 1996: 628-630)

In hypothetical conditionals, the relationship of dependence that exists between the antecedent and the consequent can take various forms. As it was previously shown and exemplified by (8), the causal relationship may be so strong that the event of the antecedent naturally triggers the consequent. In a different case, the consequent may not be automatically caused by the antecedent which can only have an impact on the
realization of the consequent. For example, in (9), a widow who can be eligible for both the allowance and the pension will be eventually granted the allowance on condition that it is higher than the retirement pension. The final decision on what type of funding she will actually get depends on whether the allowance is greater than the retirement pension. In the same way, becoming bald does not naturally lead to someone’s shooting. Sentence (10) may refer to a possible exaggerating reaction one can have in case he goes bald. The speakers’ intention is to demonstrate how badly he would feel if the supposition denoted in the protasis (going bald) was actually realized.

(9) If the allowance is more favourable to a widow than the retirement pension, she will be paid that allowance.

(10) If I go bald I’ll shoot myself.

(Athanasiadou and Dirven, 1997: 66)

A key question that arose from the study of conditionals concerns which type of conditionals is the most prototypical instance of conditionality. An innate characteristic of conditionals is the mutual relation of dependency that is developed between the protasis and the apodosis. However, each type represents a different kind of relation between the protasis and the apodosis. In course of events conditionals, the two events merely co-occur. In hypothetical conditionals, there is a cause-effect relationship between them. The fulfillment of the condition expressed in the antecedent can readily predict the realization of the consequent. In pragmatic conditionals, the antecedent specifies the circumstances under which the speech-act of the consequent is relevant and can be realized.

Comrie (1986) suggests that the cause-effect relationship conveyed by hypothetical conditionals is the most prototypical one and therefore hypothetical conditionals are considered to be the most central type of conditionals. On the contrary, Athanasiadou and Dirven (1997) maintain that HCs can convey multiple meanings such as condition and supposition which do not entail a direct cause-effect relationship. Upon examination of the aforementioned examples, they conclude that hypothetical conditionals are the most prototypical type of conditionals compared with course-of-events and pragmatic conditionals. Furthermore, they show that the third subtype of hypothetical conditionals, which expresses supposition, constitutes the least prototypical case among hypothetical conditionals. The next place in the prototypicality scale is
taken by course-of-events conditionals, whereby a real event is presented as hypothetical. The last position in the prototypicality scale is occupied by pragmatic conditionals.

The third category of conditionals consists of Pragmatic conditionals. Pragmatic conditionals include two basic-level categories, namely logical and conversational conditionals. Logical conditionals focus on the analytic reasoning operations the speaker undergoes to reach a conclusion. Their principal role is to unfold a line of argument and they include the subcategories of identifying and inferencing conditionals. Conversational conditionals generally refer to actual speech acts uttered in a discourse context. There are two subcategories of conversational conditionals, namely discourse and metacommunicative conditionals. The common denominator of all four types of pragmatic conditionals is that they all reinforce the communicative speech-acts in various ways, as it is illustrated below. The role of the antecedent in a pragmatic conditional is to provide the basis for the occurrence of the speech-act expressed in the consequent.

Identifying pragmatic conditionals present the highest levels of dependency between the antecedent and the consequent compared with the other three subcategories of pragmatic conditionals. As shown in (11), the identification and naming of the entity mentioned in the consequent is based on the proper description provided in the antecedent. Yet, the antecedent and the consequent are not causally interlinked. Identifying conditionals are not only used to reveal someone’s identity, as in (11). They can also have an emphatic function, as in (12), wherein the speaker wants to stress the impact of financial difficulties on a marriage.

(11) If there’s one human species that ought to be put out to pasture, it’s Presidents and Prime Ministers.  
(Athanasiadou and Dirven, 2000: 7)

(12) If there’s trouble in a home, it isn’t always in the bedroom—it’s quite often in the budget.  
(Athanasiadou and Dirven, 2000: 9)

In inferencing pragmatic conditionals, the mental process that the speaker is undergoing in order to draw an inference is profiled. The adverb then in the consequent, albeit optional, functions as a logical operator marking the reasoning process that leads to a certain conclusion. Sentence (13) is an instantiation of inferencing pragmatic
conditional. The antecedent is not based on an observed situation, but it is construed as a logical conclusion which naturally stems from the speaker’s pragmatic knowledge. The addition of the marker *then*, reveals the process of reasoning that takes place in the speaker’s mind. The epistemic nature of inferencing pragmatic constructions is also evinced in the use of modal auxiliaries such as *must, should, have to, may*, as in (14), or expressions, like *it is possible, it seems likely, it follows that, it stands to reason, there may be some reason* and others.

(13)  
He looked at his watch; if the soldier was coming, then it was nearly time.  

(Athanasiadou and Dirven, 2000: 10)

(14)  
On the other hand, if there have been no signs of active infection for some time, the murmur may be due to old scars left over from a previous attack.  

(Athanasiadou and Dirven, 2000: 11)

Discourse conditionals set up the background for the speech-act to become realized. When a speaker employs a discourse conditional, he/she performs a speech-act of providing information. In particular, he/she presents the possible conditions under which the event of the main clause may be of any interest to the addressee. The act of giving information and the reason for giving this information constitute the linkage between the antecedent and the consequent (Dirven and Athanasiadou, 2005). Thus, the emphasis is given on the deliberateness of providing this kind of information. For example, in (5) *If anyone wants me, I’m downstairs*, the consequent matters only in case that the antecedent occurs. Depending on the context in which it occurs, this instance of pragmatic conditionals can have a dual interpretation. The speaker may assign to the hearer the task of informing other people that in case they ask for him, they can find him downstairs. Alternatively, he may not want to be disturbed and warns the hearer not to allow anyone to visit him downstairs. In another example (15), the speaker informs the hearer that there is food in the fridge. The existence of food in the fridge is not dependent on the hearer’s desire to eat. There is food anyway, but the speech act is relevant only if the hearer is looking for something to eat. The use of present tenses highlights the discourse nature of such constructions, while the use of imperative in the consequent of constructions such as (16) is also possible.
(15) *If you’re hungry, there’s food in the fridge.*

(Athanasiadou and Dirven, 2000: 14)

(16) *Prove it if you can.*

(Athanasiadou and Dirven, 2000: 16)

The last subcategory of pragmatic conditionals is called metacommunicative conditionals. The primary function of metacommunicative conditionals is to specify in which cases the speech act of the main clause is relevant. The speaker resorts to a metacommunicative conditional mainly when s/he wants to make a comment on his/her linguistic choices. Another reason for employing such a construction is to add a shade of irony. Metacommunicative conditionals are commonly introduced with expressions such as *if I may say so, if that’s the right word*, and serve as comments on the speech-act performed in the main clause. By means of metacommunicative conditionals, the speaker can distance himself/herself from what is expressed in the consequent. In this context, (17) could be interpreted as an ironic comment on the addressee’s achievements.

(17) *I’ve come to offer my congratulations, if that’s the right word.*

(Athanasiadou and Dirven, 2000: 19)

2.2 Content, Epistemic and Speech-act Conditionals

Another seminal work on conditionals, which brought about a tripartite distinction of conditionals was that conducted by Sweetser (1990). Her main argument is that conditionality can be manifested in three distinct domains, namely the content (real-world) domain, the epistemic domain and the speech-act domain.

In the content (real-world) domain, conditional constructions invoke a cause-effect relationship between the protasis and the apodosis. The occurrence of the event expressed in the antecedent constitutes a sufficient presupposition for the occurrence of the event expressed in the consequent. In (18), *Mary’s going* is a determinant factor for
the realization of another event, namely John’s going. In other words, John’s decision to go is presented as partially or fully dependent upon Mary’s going.

(18) *If Mary goes, John will go.*  
(Sweetser, 1990: 114)

Epistemic conditionals concern the logical operation that is required for an assumption to be made. As Sweetser (1990) points out, based on the truthfulness of the protasis, one can infer that what is stated in the apodosis is also true. Epistemic conditionals reflect the reasoning process that the speaker is undergoing when trying to reach a conclusion. In (19), it is the speaker’s knowledge of the world and how society works that motivates him/her to conclude that the referent has been married. According to the societal norms, a divorce marks the end of a marriage and thus a marriage can only precede a divorce. Having been informed that someone is currently divorced, one can logically conclude that this person was married in the past.

(19) *If she’s divorced, (then) she’s been married.*  
(Sweetser, 1990: 116)

Sweetser (1990) also distinguishes a third type of conditionals which belong to the speech-act domain. Speech-act conditionals consist of two parts, the apodosis which contains the speech-act and the protasis, wherein the condition upon which the speech-act will be performed is described. For example, in (20), the speaker expresses his/her intention to address a question to the hearer, but s/he will only do so on condition that the question does not seem rude to the addressee. Thus, prior to asking the question, the speaker employs a conditional construction in order to make clear that s/he has no intention of being rude asking indiscrete questions.

(20) *If it’s not rude to ask, what made you decide to leave IBM?*  
(Sweetser, 1990: 118)

The primary function of speech-act conditionals is to enhance the interaction process and set the basis for the speech-act performed in the apodosis. Sentence (21), for example, is representative of this function. The biscuits are stored in the sideboard irrespective of whether the hearer wants to eat them or not. The existence of the biscuits
at a particular place in the house is not determined by the hearer’s desire to eat them. Rather, the sentence could be interpreted as ‘In case you want to eat some biscuits, I inform you that you can find them in the sideboard’. The provided information will only matter if the hearer expresses a desire to eat some biscuits.

(21) There are biscuits in the sideboard if you want them.

(Austin, 1961: 158)

2.3 Predictive and Non-predictive Conditionals

The works analyzed in the previous sections offer a primarily semantic analysis of conditional constructions. Athanasiadou and Dirven (1997, 2000) provide comments on the use of different verb forms without, however, trying to draw correspondences between form and meaning. On the contrary, Dancygier (1998) underscores the importance of the interaction between form and meaning. In accordance with Fillmore (1990), she suggests that the choice of particular verb forms in both the protasis and the apodosis is governed by the meaning of the construction. Within this framework, verb forms contribute to the expression of various aspects of meaning including time reference and epistemic stance (Dancygier, 1998: 25).

Dancygier (1998) views prediction as a key semantic feature of conditionality and distinguishes conditionals into predictive and non-predictive. Accordingly, the three traditional types of conditionals belong to the content domain and have a predictive nature. In her typology, she acknowledges three types of non-predictive conditionals, namely, epistemic, speech act (as in Sweetser, 1990) and metatextual conditionals.

Predictive conditionals, as illustrated in (22), have some attributes which are unique to their category and make them prototypical. First of all, contrary to non-predictive conditionals, they follow regular patterns of verb forms. For example, tense backshifting applies only to predictive conditionals. In addition, predictions are grounded in speakers’ background knowledge and experience of the real world. They are “like factual beliefs in that the speaker making a prediction is taken to have grounds on making it” (Dancygier, 1998: 45). In (22a), the speaker may or may not have some evidence that it will rain and the protasis merely serves as a background for a future prediction. The events in the protasis and the apodosis are linked with a causal relation and are usually presented with an iconic sequence which reflects the actual order of
their occurrence. They are characterized by non-assertiveness, in the sense that they do not make any assertions regarding the fulfillment of the condition. Rather, what is asserted is the predictive association of the protasis and the apodosis. On the other hand, the use of hypothetical backshift in sentences like (22b) and (22c), distances the speaker from the content of the protasis. In these examples, the content of the protasis is in contrast with the actual knowledge of the speaker. The speaker knows that it did not actually rain and the match was not canceled.

(22)  
   a. If it rains, the match will be canceled.  
   b. If it rained, the match would be canceled. 
   c. If it had rained, the match would have been canceled. 
   
   (Dancygier, 1998: 25)

As regards non-predictive conditionals, they do not have regular patterns of verb forms and each verb form reflects the time of the event. In epistemic conditionals, the protasis represents a premise and the apodosis represents the conclusion inferred from that premise. Yet, the two events are not causally related. The knowledge of p is interpreted as causing the conclusion in q. In these sentences, q temporally precedes p. The assumption is acquired by the speaker indirectly, since the protasis is construed as already mentioned before. In (23), it seems that another participant in the discussion informed the speaker that Mary is late and the speaker, based on this piece of information, makes an assumption on the reason of her delay.

(23)  If Mary is late, she went to the dentist.  
   
   (Dancygier, 1998: 86)

In speech act conditionals, such as (24), the state in the protasis can be seen as causing or enabling the speech act in the apodosis. The protasis is a sufficient condition for the speech act in the apodosis. In metatextual conditionals, the if-clauses offer justifications for the metaphor used in the apodosis. In (25), Paris is metaphorically construed as a human being with a heart and a soul. Conceptualizing Paris as a human being enables speakers to conceptualize different parts of the city as different body parts.

(24)  If it rains, the match will be canceled.  
   b. If it rained, the match would be canceled.  
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(24) *I’ll help you with the dishes, if it’s all right with you.*
(Dancygier, 1998: 89)

(25) *If the Cité is the heart of Paris, the Latin Quarter is its soul.*
(Dancygier, 1998: 108)

### 2.4 A Comparison between the Two Typologies

The accounts provided by Athanasiadou and Dirven (1996, 1997, 2000), Sweetser (1990) and Dancygier (1998) on conditionals offer a detailed description of all the types of conditionals. These works provide a comprehensive account of conditional constructions and make a significant contribution to their examination. In their analysis, they primarily focus on the semantic and pragmatic functions of conditional constructions. Both classifications reveal the whole spectrum of the basic communicative functions served by conditionals. Using conditionals, speakers perform a variety of speech-acts. They can make conditional predictions, draw inferences based on certain clues, comment on their linguistic choices and evaluate the felicitousness of their speech-acts.

However, the two typologies present some differences in the way they classify conditional constructions. Athanasiadou and Dirven (1996, 1997, 2000) make a distinction between Course of Events, Hypothetical and Pragmatic Conditionals. Dancygier and Sweetser also offer a tripartite distinction, according to which, conditionals can belong to one of the three types, namely, Content, Epistemic and Speech-act Conditionals. The first difference between the two accounts lies in the fact that Athanasiadou and Dirven propose a separate category for real, factual events which are construed as hypothetical. They label these constructions as Course-of-Events conditionals (CECs). Course of Events Conditionals express two actually and repeatedly occurring events whose association is experientially based. For example, sentence (3) *If there is a drought like this year, the eggs remain dormant,* conveys that whenever there is drought, the eggs remain dormant. This category does not exist in any other account of conditionals. In a later work, Dancygier and Sweetser (2005) refer to a similar category of conditional constructions which they name generic conditionals. However, they subsume generic conditionals as a case of content (predictive) conditionals, and they by no means suggest that in this type a real event is hypothetically construed.
Another difference observed between the two typologies is that Athanasiadou and Dirven subsume inferencing conditionals under the category of Pragmatic Conditionals. The use of inferencing conditionals is to unfold the line of argument and reveal the process of reasoning someone undergoes in order to draw a conclusion. Therefore, in their account, inferencing conditionals are viewed as part of the pragmatic uses of language, while the processes of inferencing, reasoning and making deductions are considered to be key operations in everyday communication and interaction. On the other hand, Dancygier and Sweetser provide a distinct category for epistemic conditionals, assuming that the epistemic domain is distinct from the pragmatic domain, and therefore reasoning processes should also be separated from pragmatic operations.

2.5 Mental Spaces in Conditional Constructions

Conditional constructions involve setting up mental spaces (Fauconnier, 1985, 1994; Sweetser, 1996; Dancygier and Sweetser, 2005). The conjunction if functions as a space-builder and evokes mental-space set-ups. In particular, the protasis evokes a hypothetical space wherein the content of the apodosis is placed.

In their everyday life, people need to make decisions on a variety of issues. In order to reach a decision, they usually engage themselves in making predictions which are based on conditional cases and scenarios. One of the primary functions of conditionals is to express alternative-based predictions. Predictive conditionals enable speakers to make predictions on the basis of two alternative cases. Thus, when uttering a predictive conditional, the speaker construes two alternative mental spaces which represent two alternative possibilities. The conditional sentence (4) *If the weather is fine, we’ll go for a swim*, (Athanasiadou and Dirven, 1996), for instance, entails two alternative mental space set-ups. The first one consists of the if-space, wherein the weather is fine and its extension space in which we go for a swim, while the second one consists of an alternative space wherein the weather is bad, and as a result we do not go for a swim. Based upon the knowledge of an event, the speaker can make a conditional prediction for the realization of another event. This is possible because of the intrinsic causal relation that links the two events. In (4), the fine weather is a sufficient precondition for our going for a swim. The correlation between the two events taps into our everyday knowledge and experience of the world which allows us to know that a fine weather sets the ideal conditions for outdoor activities such as swimming.
Another important characteristic of predictive conditionals is that they can take an *iff* (if and only if) interpretation. This means that the realization of the event or state of affairs in the protasis is sufficient for the realization of the event expressed in the apodosis. By isolating any other possible factors that may affect the event in the main clause, the speaker chooses to focus on only one of the factors which may bring about the event of the apodosis.

Conditional constructions enable speakers to adopt a certain attitude towards the content of the protasis. According to Fillmore (1990), speakers take an epistemic stance which allows them either to identify with the content of the protasis, keep a certain distance from it, or question its truthfulness. The mental spaces built in conditional constructions bear some kind of epistemic stance with them. The use of particular linguistic cues including conjunctions and verb tense forms determines the direction of the epistemic stance that the speaker chooses to take in each case. Sentences (26), (27) and (28) show instances of positive, neutral and negative epistemic stance respectively. In (26), the speaker identifies with what is stated in the protasis. The conjunction *since* along with the present tense, mark his/her mental engagement with the assumption of the protasis. In (27), the speaker seems uncertain and chooses not to express a particular attitude towards the content of the protasis, whereas in (28) she/he conveys a distant epistemic stance.

(26)  *If/Since heʾs (so) hungry (as you say he is), heʾll want a second helping.*
(27)  *(I donʾt know, but) if heʾs hungry, heʾll want a second helping.*
(28)  *If he were/was hungry, heʾd want a second helping.*

(Fillmore, 1990)

A crucial component in the analysis of English conditionals is the use of different tenses. Verb forms contribute to the meaning of conditional constructions by marking both the temporal relations between the protasis and the apodosis and the epistemic stance adopted by the speaker (Fillmore, 1990). In (29a), the use of the past perfect tense form *had gone* marks a negative epistemic stance towards a past event. The past form *went* can either denote negative epistemic stance with present or future time reference (29b), or positive/neutral stance with reference to the past (29c). In contrast, the present form *goes* in (29d) represents a present or future event and functions as an indicator of positive or neutral stance.
(29)  
   a. If she had gone to his party yesterday, he would’ve ignored her.
   b. If she went to Joe’s party tomorrow, he’d just ignore her.
   c. If she went to Joe’s party yesterday, he ignored her.
   d. If she goes to Joe’s party tomorrow, he’ll just ignore her.

   (Fillmore, 1990)

A key feature of English predictive conditionals is the use of tense backshifting, namely the use of a simple present tense form in the protasis to express future time reference (Dancygier, 1993). The protasis is not involved in prediction-making. It only sets the background for the prediction made in the apodosis. For instance, in (4) *If the weather is fine, we’ll go for a swim*, we do not predict that the weather will be fine. Our prediction is about our going for a swim and it is based on the weather conditions.

Generic conditionals are also predictive in nature. Our knowledge that the event in the *if*-clause holds in any mental space enables us to predict that the apodosis also holds in this space. The two events are associated with a causal and temporal relation. As shown in (30), the water boils when it is heated to 100 degrees. Otherwise, it does not boil. The present tense forms in both the protasis and the apodosis along with the use of the generic *you* contribute to the generic interpretation of (31). Sentence (30) does not refer to a particular, observed case of boiling water. Again, two mental space set-ups are built: the first one is a generic space wherein water is heated to 100 degrees and boils, while the other is its alternative space in which water is not heated to 100 degrees, or it is not heated at all, and therefore it does not boil.

(30)  *If you heat water to 100 degrees, it boils.*

   (Dancygier and Sweetser, 2005: 96)

Conditional constructions may also be involved in setting up counterfactual spaces. Counterfactuality is not an innate property of conditionals, but it is context-dependent. Dancygier and Sweetser (2005) claim that counterfactual conditionals do not encode a negative epistemic stance with respect to the content of the protasis. The *if*-clause sets up a space which is not only hypothetical, but also in contrast with reality. At the same time, a reality space is also evoked. In (31), the speaker states that he wouldn’t put himself at risk if he’d known that the suspect was armed. However, in reality, he was the one who put his life at risk and dealt with the suspect.
If I'd seen the machete, I'd have handled it differently.

(Dancygier and Sweetser, 2005: 57)

Furthermore, the If I were you clauses set up a counterfactual space in which the thoughts, feelings, opinions of the I in the real space are mapped onto those of you in the counterfactual space (Lakoff, 1996). In such constructions, a distinction between Subject/Self is made. The Subject encompasses emotionality, judgment and will, whereas the Self is composed of physical properties and social roles. Examples (32a) and (32b) both represent two counterfactual mental spaces, yet they convey different meanings. In (32a), the speaker admits that s/he has done something really bad to the hearer. In this case, the inner world of I in the real space is mapped onto you in the hypothetical space. This means that the hypothetical space has now all the properties of me, and therefore the hearer takes a negative attitude towards me. On the contrary, in (32b), the speaker is a mean person in reality and his properties are transferred onto him/her in the hypothetical space. So, in this space the speaker would feel remorse for what s/he has done and would be angry at himself/herself.

(32) 

a. If I were you, I'd hate me.

b. If I were you, I'd hate myself.

(Lakoff, 1996: 91)

Speech-act conditionals are not engaged in building alternative mental spaces. The protasis sets the background for the speech-act to occur, but the link between the protasis and the apodosis is not of causal character. In (33), the speaker provides the addressee with her name so that the addressee can ask for her help. The sentence does not simultaneously evoke another alternative space in which the hearer does not need any help and the speaker's name is not Ann. In addition, speech act conditionals encourage the hearer to draw implicit inferences. Within this context, sentence (34) could be readily interpreted as: I inform you that John speaks German and could be a suitable candidate in case you need an interpreter.

(33) If you need any help, my name is Ann.

(Dancygier and Sweetser, 2005: 110)
In another type of conditionals, epistemic conditionals, knowing that what is said in the protasis is valid constitutes a sufficient condition for us to infer that what is expressed in the apodosis is also true (Sweetser, 1990). In other words, if A is true, then B must also be true. The events in the protasis are not linked naturally with the events of the apodosis and the one is not the cause of the other. Their dependency is based upon the conceptual frames which are evoked by the two events (Dirven and Athanasiadou, 2005). For example, in the sentence *If she’s divorced, (then) she’s been married* (Sweetser, 1990: 116), the conceptual frame of “being divorced” presupposes the frame of “marriage”. The fact that someone is divorced is an adequate condition for us to conclude that he/she has been married at some time in the past. The use of the logical-inference marker *then* leads to a mental space whereby the event of the consequent can be accessed. In another example, retrieved from Dancygier and Sweetser (1997: 123), *If Mary bakes a cake, then she gives a party*, the “baking a cake” frame and the “party” frame are closely related only because of our knowledge that Mary is usually engaged with baking cakes when she organizes a party and not on any other occasion.

In epistemic conditionals, the speaker is unfolding his/her line of argument that led him/her to a particular conclusion and provides the hearer with the background on which this conclusion was made. The role of the protasis is to set the premises for the conclusion to be made. In (35), the knowledge that he typed her thesis is a precondition for concluding that he loves her. Typing her thesis is perceived as an indicator of his love and the reasoning process follows the effect-cause rather than the reversed order. The conclusion is presented as conditional rather than as a final conclusion being made.

(35)  *If he typed her thesis, he loves her.*

(Sweetser, 1996: 328)

In discourse, speakers usually resort to the use of metalinguistic conditionals as a means to judge their vocabulary appropriateness, or even as an apologetic comment for the use of particular linguistic choices. A metalinguistic space consists of two parts, a content space and a linguistic space. Sentence (36) is used to illustrate how these spaces work together. There is a base space which involves an English-speaking context. In the speaker’s English dialect, the word *cousin* is used to refer to the father’s...
cousins as well, replacing the word *uncle* which is used in Standard English. The speaker also builds a hypothetical space which operates in a Spanish-speaking context. In this space, the Spanish equivalent to *uncle* is used to refer to the cousins of someone’s father. Based on this, the speaker assumes that in Spanish the word *uncle* would be the right word to describe this particular kinship relationship.

(36) *If we were speaking Spanish, he would be your uncle.*  

(Dancygier and Sweetser, 2005: 127)

Alternative spaces can also be built between the metaphoric construals of a domain. Meta-metaphorical conditionals constitute an instance of such a process. Meta-metaphorical conditionals are characterized by a rather complicated system of metaphoric mappings. In this type of conditionals, there are two mappings, one in the *if-* clause and the other in the main clause (Sullivan, 2013: 156). The target-domain elements in each clause belong to the same target domain and the source-domain elements belong to the same source domain. In meta-metaphorical conditionals, two mappings from the source domain are profiled. The mappings maintain the frame elements of the source domain in a way that is commensurate with the internal structure of the target domain. In practice, in a sentence like (37), the target domain BRIDGES is evoked by the Golden Gate, which is metaphorically construed as a thoroughbred horse. The source domain is frame-metonymically evoked by the reference to thoroughbred and workhorse which are mapped onto the Golden Gate and the Bay Bridge respectively. Both mappings evoke the conceptual metaphor BRIDGES ARE HORSES.

(37) *If the beautiful Golden Gate is the thoroughbred of bridges, the Bay Bridge is the workhorse*  

(Dancygier and Sweetser, 2014: 150)

2.6 The Contribution of Declerck and Reed (2001)

One of the most contemporary typologies of conditionals is the one proposed by Declerck and Reed (2001). Their main intention is to offer a new insight into the existent literature on conditionals. They suggest that a comprehensive typology of
conditionals should be based on various kinds of criteria which concern both the form and the meaning of the constructions.

First of all, they introduce the new term ‘actualization conditionals’, which refers to conditionals in which the realization of the protasis is a condition for the realization of the apodosis. In such conditionals, the temporal relation between the protasis and the apodosis can be of three types: the protasis can precede the apodosis, as in (38a), the protasis can temporally overlap with the apodosis (38b), or the apodosis can precede the protasis (38c). In the third instance, what the apodosis actually precedes is the expectation of the realization of the protasis and not the protasis itself.

(38)  a. If you touch her, I’ll break your neck.
      b. If it rains, we’ll stay at home.
      c. As a rule I help Kelly if she does me a favor in return.

      (Declerck and Reed, 2001: 40)

Another important parameter for the classification of conditionals is the inferential connection that may exist between the protasis and the apodosis. In this case, we are talking about inferential conditionals in which the direction of the logical inferencing further divides them into direct and indirect inferential conditionals. In direct inferential conditionals (39a), the protasis serves as a premise for the inference of the apodosis. The opposite direction holds in indirect inferential conditionals, as exemplified by (39b). In (39b), the falsity of the apodosis leads us to infer the falsity of the protasis. Based on the fact that the speaker is not Shakespeare, we can infer that the person s/he refers to is not a general manager.

(39)  a. If he has not arrived yet, he has had/ may have had/ must have had an accident.
      b. If he is the general manager, I am Shakespeare.

      (Declerck and Reed, 2001: 43-44)

Both actualization and inferential conditionals are subsumed under the broad category of implicative conditionals. Case-specifying-P conditionals entail actualization conditionals (38), direct inferential conditionals (39a) and those conditionals which cannot be subsumed under one of the aforementioned categories (40). In Case-
specifying-P conditionals, the protasis determines the conditions under which the apodosis holds.

(40) [We teach our pupils some theoretical concepts.] This is quite useful to them if they later specialize in linguistics rather than literature.

(Declerck and Reed, 2001: 48)

Declerck and Reed (2001) also suggest that the possible world in which the conditional is interpreted is an important parameter for its classification. According to this criterion, there is a distinction between factual P-clauses, as illustrated by (42) and theoretical (nonfactual) P–clauses, as exemplified by (41). The first type involves those cases which belong to the actual world, whereas the second type involves cases which can only be situated in the speaker’s mind. A theoretical protasis can convey either a neutral or a non-neutral condition. It is neutral when it does not specify whether it belongs to the actual or the imaginary world. On the other hand, non-neutral P-clauses can be further subdivided into open, closed, tentative and counterfactual, as exemplified in (42a), (42b), (42c) and (42d) respectively. In open P-clauses, the speaker leaves open the possibility of the protasis to occur. In Closed P-clauses, the speaker accepts that the protasis is true. The protasis is characterized as tentative when the speaker views the supposition as an unlikely possibility, or as counterfactual when the speaker views it as false in the actual world.

(41) In your place I would have been happy if I had got a first.

(42) a. I will be happy if we find a solution.
   b. If, as you say, John will come here himself tomorrow, we’d better not dispatch this letter to him but invite him to have a talk with us.
   c. I would be happy if we found a solution.
   d. If he were he, he would stop you from doing that.

(Declerck and Reed, 2001: 52-54)

The category of rhetorical conditionals is the last one discussed by Declerck and Reed (2001). This category alludes to what Sweetser refers to as speech act conditionals.
and Athanasiadou and Dirven as pragmatic conditionals. There are five types of rhetorical conditionals: utterance, comparing, commenting-P, pseudo-implicative and pleonastic conditionals. In utterance conditionals (43), the protasis encodes the conditions under which the apodosis is possible, meaningful or relevant. Comparing conditionals (44) are only used to make comparisons between the protasis and the apodosis. In commenting-P conditionals (45), the protasis denotes the speaker’s comment which may concern either what is expressed in the apodosis or the conditions under which the protasis can be uttered. The fourth type, pseudo-implicative conditionals such as (46) have the same interpretation as inferential conditionals, yet they are used ironically, even with the aim to convey the opposite meaning. Finally, in pleonastic conditionals (47), the apodosis repeats the protasis for emphatic reasons.

(43)  *I am not coward, if that is what you think.*  
(44)  *If your sister is clever, so is mine.*  
(45)  *She’s one of the best student, if not the best, we’ve ever had.*  
(46)  *If you spit on the floor in your own house, you may do it here.*  
(47)  *So if you want to snivel away, snivel away.*  

(Declerck and Reed, 2001: 319-359)

2.7 The Contribution of Tsangalidis (2012)

The last part of the literature review is concerned with the typology provided by Tsangalidis (2012). His typology is pedagogically-oriented and serves as a basis for the teaching of Greek conditionals in Greek as a second or foreign language settings. Tsangalidis (2012) underscores the need to give emphasis on the formal characteristics of conditionals without, however, downplaying their semantic features. Under this premise, a typology which will be based on formal characteristics is required. In his typology, he includes the three canonical patterns of predictive conditionals used in grammar teaching to the contexts of teaching Greek as a second/foreign language, but he also adds inferential and rhetorical conditionals as well.
The first type refers to a future prediction which is dependent on the realization of another future event. It takes the form: \( An \ (if) + \text{perfective non-past}, \theta a + \text{perfective non-past} \), as shown in (48). The fulfillment of the protasis is a sufficient presupposition for the realization of the apodosis and the protasis always precedes the apodosis. As a result, the apodosis will be fulfilled only if the protasis is realized. First type conditionals cannot be interpreted neither as epistemic nor as rhetorical conditionals.

(48) \( Αν \ διαβάσεις, \ θα \ περάσεις \). \[If you study, you will pass\]

(Tsangalidis, 2012: 249)

The second type can express the same meaning as the first, but the realization of the two events is construed as less likely. It takes the form of indirect speech: \( An \ [if] + \text{paratatikos} \ [\text{Past Continuous}], \ \theta a + \text{paratatikos} \ [\text{Past Continuous}] \). The event of the apodosis would be realized only if the event of the protasis was fulfilled. The choice of the particular verb form may encode the speaker’s unwillingness to assume responsibility for what he says.

(49) \( Αν \ διάβαζες, \ θα \ περνούσες \). \[If you studied, you would pass\]

(Tsangalidis, 2012: 249)

The third type encompasses the implication that neither the protasis nor the apodosis had been fulfilled in the past. The form \( An + \text{ypersyntelikos} \ [\text{pluperfect/Past Perfect}], \ \theta a + \text{ypersyntelikos} \ [\text{pluperfect/Past Perfect}] \), expresses that the realization of the apodosis would result in the fulfillment of the apodosis, but the two events did not finally occur.

(50) \( Αν \ είχες διαβάσει, \ θα \ είχες περάσει. \) \[If you had studied, you would have passed.\]

(Tsangalidis, 2012: 249)

On the other hand, non-predictive conditionals allow various verb form combinations. One of the distinctive features of non-predictive conditionals is the use of Past Simple (aoristos) in the protasis. The use of Past Simple in the apodosis calls for an
epistemic interpretation of the sentence. As shown in (51), in inferential conditionals, the protasis functions as a premise for concluding the apodosis. Rhetorical conditionals such as (52) serve as a justification for the utterance of the speech act expressed in the apodosis.

(51) Αν έρθουν, θα έβρεξε. [If they come, it rained.]
(52) Αν ήρθε, ας φύγουμε. [If he came, let’s go.]
CHAPTER 3
AIMS

The present dissertation aims to shed more light on the cognitive processes underlying conditional constructions. Conditional constructions are polysemous and they are employed for multiple communicative purposes. For the purposes of the study, Mental Spaces Theory will be employed, since mental spaces provide a rich framework for the examination of conditionals. Conditional constructions set up alternative mental spaces. It will be argued that the meanings of the alternative spaces built by conditional constructions are blended into a separate space known as the blend. This blending process, which highly contributes to the construal of conditionality, can account for the meaning elaborations of conditional constructions.

More specifically, the following issues will be thoroughly addressed and discussed: a) What is it that speakers of English have in mind when they produce a conditional sentence? and b) How can grammatical forms (verb tenses, conjunctions, syntactic configurations) contribute to the construction of conditionality meaning?

The principal aims motivating the present study are the following:

A) To explore how the meanings of conditional constructions emerge as a result of conceptual blending processes.

And

B) To suggest a new pedagogical approach that will serve as a basis for the teaching of English conditionals.

My main objective is to develop a pedagogical approach that will help English language teachers to teach conditional constructions through a cognitive linguistics approach. The approach integrates the principles of both Cognitive Grammar and Construction Grammar. I eventually provide teaching suggestions which will be incorporated in the teaching of English conditionals and facilitate their learning and acquisition.
CHAPTER 4
METHODOLOGY

In the present dissertation, I intend to bring together insights from Cognitive Grammar with those of Construction Grammar. The analysis of the data is based on the work of Dancygier and Sweetser (2005) on conditionals. Drawing on the work of Fauconnier (1985, 1994) on Mental Spaces Theory, Dancygier and Sweetser (2005) suggest that when speakers employ conditional constructions, they are automatically engaged in a mental-space building process. Within the framework of Mental Spaces Theory, language motivates conceptualization with the aid of cognitive mental spaces and frames which are grounded in human experience (Dancygier and Sweetser, 2014).

In Fauconnier’s terms, Mental Spaces can be defined as “constructs distinct from linguistic structures, but built up in any discourse according to guidelines provided by the linguistic expressions” (Fauconnier, 1994: 16). Every mental space consists of its own elements and relations between these elements. These elements and relations are organized into packages of shared knowledge known as conceptual frames1 (Fauconnier and Turner, 2002: 102). A mental space can be organized by either specific or generic frames with each frame containing its own elements (vital relations, image-schemas, cause-effect etc.).

Certain linguistic expressions function as space-builders and establish relations among the various elements of the spaces. For example, in the sentence, In this painting, the girl with the brown eyes has green eyes (Fauconnier, 1994: 12), in this painting constitutes a space-builder which prompts the building of the painting mental space. The painting mental space (P) is distinct from the reality space (R). In the reality space, the girl has brown eyes, while in the picture, the same girl is depicted with green eyes. The two different descriptions refer to the same person who is envisaged within two different spaces.

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1 The term ’frame’ refers to “any system of concepts related in such a way that to understand any one of them you have to understand the whole structure in which it fits” (Fillmore, 1982: 111). When an element belonging to a frame arises in a communicative context, it automatically activates all other elements of the same frame. The frame structures the meanings of a word, and accordingly, a word evokes the whole frame (Fillmore, 1982: 117). For example, in the ‘commercial event frame’ the following elements and semantic roles are involved: a seller, a buyer, goods and money. The lexical item sell profiles the action that is directed from the seller to the goods. There are also some other verbs involved in the frame such as buy, charge, spend and cost. The meanings of these verbs are understood through the access into the particular frame in which they belong.
Another indispensable tool deployed for the analysis of conditional constructions is the Conceptual Integration Theory (or Blending Theory). Blending Theory is a development of Mental Spaces Theory (Fauconnier and Turner, 1996, 1998, 2002). Conceptual integration refers to a basic cognitive operation through which one domain is reconstructed. Blending is regarded as a powerful meaning-emergence process. In conceptual blending, structure from two input spaces (a target domain and a source domain) is selectively projected onto a separate space, known as the blend. The selected structure of the two input spaces forms a generic space which contains their shared elements and guides the mappings between the source and the target. From this process, a new structure, namely the blend (or blended space) arises. The blend does not only consist of the shared structure between the input spaces. Rather, it has its own unique structure which cannot be found in any of the input spaces.

To elucidate how blending works in practice, we examine the example of the debate between a contemporary philosopher and Kant (Fauconnier and Turner, 2002: 59-61). A contemporary philosopher is giving a public lecture on reasoning. At some point of his speech, the speaker utters the following:

“*I claim that reason is a self-developing capacity. Kant disagrees with me on this point. He says it's innate, but I answer that that's begging the question, to which he counters, in Critique of Pure Reason, that only innate ideas have power. But I say to that, What about neuronal group selection? And he gives no answer*”.

(Fauconnier and Turner, 2002: 59-60)

One could promptly wonder how it is possible for the speaker to have a debate with a philosopher who had lived centuries ago. The speaker actually constructs a blend in which he is having a debate with Kant and disagrees with him. The blend has two input spaces. The first space includes the contemporary philosopher and his own view on the

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2 In blending, some elements of the input spaces are fused into the new space, while some others do not. An example that clearly illustrates selective projection is the Conduit Metaphor COMMUNICATION IS OBJECT EXCHANGE (Reddy, 1979; Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). This conceptual metaphor entails the mappings involved in IDEAS ARE OBJECTS and its submappings THEORIES ARE BUILDINGS and IDEAS ARE FOOD. The metaphorical expressions *give an idea, get your thoughts across* etc. are instantiations of this metaphor. Communication is metaphorically understood as exchange of objects and linguistic markers as containers full of ideas. In object exchange, when we give an object to someone else, we do not own it anymore. The same does not hold, though, when we exchange ideas. This is an aspect of object exchange that is not mapped onto the metaphoric construal of communication as object exchange.
subject of reasoning, whereas the second space entails Kant and his point of view on the same subject. The blended space entails both philosophers having a debate. The debate frame is not part of any of the input spaces. It is a unique feature of the blended space.

Conceptual blending is also present in the emergence of figurative meaning. For instance, the metaphoric construal of Anger as Heat or Pressure of a Liquid emerges as a result of a blending process (Dancygier & Sweetser, 2014: 74-75). In the conceptual metaphor ANGER IS HEAT/PRESSURE OF LIQUID, anger is metaphorically understood as heat or pressure. The increase or decrease of a liquid when heated is mapped onto the degree of anger. It is part of everyday experience that the high levels of heat and pressure of a liquid can lead to the explosion of a container. This can be mapped onto the high levels of anger which may cause aggressive behaviour. These mappings prompt the emergence of metaphoric expressions such as blow her top, explode, simmering person, boiling with anger and others.

Grammatical constructions give rise to conceptual blending processes and are motivated by them (Fauconnier and Turner, 1996). For instance, Panther and Thornburg (2009) demonstrate the metaphoric basis of the Narrative Present Tense, suggesting that it is based on the conceptual metaphor PAST IS PRESENT. The source domain (Present) is metaphorically mapped onto the target domain (Past). From this blending process, Narrative Present is used to present past events as occurring at a present time. In addition, the figurative processes of metaphor and metonymy may also have some impact on grammatical constructions. The sentence Jack sneezed the napkin off the table contains the integration of two events, namely sneezing and throwing the napkin off the table (Goldberg, 1995; Fauconnier and Turner, 1998). Neither the physical motion meaning nor the object-taking meaning are parts of the frame semantics of the verb sneeze. Both the new meaning and the transitive character derive from a blending process that is motivated by this particular construction.

Conditional constructions are also engaged in building mental spaces. They commonly set up a relationship between a conditional mental space and a proposition whose role is to establish relations between elements in the conditional mental space. Negation and conditional constructions set up alternative mental spaces, namely “pairs of mental spaces which cannot coexist in the same space/time slot” (Dancygier and Sweetser, 2014: 148). In conditional sentences, which are introduced by if, the conjunction if functions as a space-builder and motivates the set-up of a conditional mental space. The protasis (if-clause) of a conditional construction builds mental spaces which provide the conditions under which the apodosis is construed (Dancygier and
Sweetser, 2005). Space-building in conditional constructions serves multiple communicative purposes, but in all cases, it provides the background which enables us to make predictions, draw logical inferences and perform different kinds of speech acts (Sweetser, 1990, 1996; Dancygier and Sweetser, 2005).

Overall, Mental Spaces Theory and Conceptual Integration Theory (CIT) will enable us to delve deeper into the cognitive processes underlying conditional meaning and gain a better insight into the semantic and pragmatic properties of conditional constructions. Conceptual integration is a ubiquitous mental process which can be applied to both figurative and non-figurative meanings. Blending processes are taking place as our thinking unfolds and guide our conceptualization. As a key meaning-emergence process, blending has the potential to account for even the most complex aspects of meaning that many constructions have. Within the context of the present study, it will be shown that the various meanings conveyed by conditional constructions (predictive, epistemic, counterfactual, pragmatic) are all attributed to blending processes.

For the purposes of the present study, the data were retrieved from a variety of sources including corpora such as the BNC (British National Corpus), the COCA Corpus (Corpus of Contemporary American English), the Collins Corpus (Collins WordBanks English), as well as from online dictionaries (e.g Oxford Dictionary), English grammars and EFL coursebooks. This choice has been made so as to represent various contexts in which English conditionals can occur.
CHAPTER 5
DISCUSSION OF CONDITIONAL CONSTRUCTIONS

Conditional constructions are polysemous and serve a variety of communicative purposes. The meanings they convey may extend from purely hypothetical meanings to meanings which are closer to reality. In construing a conditional construction, speakers are engaged in a mental space building process. More specifically, conditional constructions set up alternative mental spaces, namely pairs of mental spaces that cannot temporally and spatially overlap. The meanings of the two alternative spaces are integrated into a blended space. It is through this blending process that meaning elaborations of conditional constructions are motivated.

5.1 Predictive Conditionals

One of the most crucial functions of conditional constructions is to formulate predictions which are conditionally based on a potential event. In predictive conditionals, a potentially real event is presented in the form of a hypothetical event. Knowledge about the event expressed in the if-clause enables the speaker to make a conditional prediction about the event in the main clause. This prediction is made feasible, since the two events are associated with a cause and effect relation. Predictive conditionals set up two alternative mental spaces which are incompatible with each other. More specifically, the if-clause evokes two mental space set-ups: one which is the background for the construal of the apodosis and another alternative space. Without the conceptualization of an alternative space, it would be impossible to reflect upon the consequences that a conditional event may have on our lives.

(53)  *Paul won’t win if he doesn’t train much.*

(Mastermind Use of English: 106)

For example, (53) is an instance of predictive conditional. The speaker, based on Paul’s lack of training, predicts his defeat in the race. Training and winning are causally related and the more someone trains, the more chances s/he has to win. It is this correlation between training and winning that allows the speaker to make a conditional prediction. In the speaker’s mind, there are two alternative scenarios. In the first case,
the speaker constructs a space in which Paul does not train much and he does not win. In the second case, the speaker builds an alternative space wherein Paul trains much and he finally wins. The ‘no-training’ space and the ‘training’ space cannot coincide in reality. The speaker chooses to profile the ‘no-training’ space, since his/her main intention is to put emphasis on the consequences that the insufficient training may have on an athlete’s performance. There are many possible factors including stress, physical condition and nutrition, which may affect an athlete’s performance on a race. However, in (53), the speaker considers the amount and even the quality of training as a determinant factor for Paul’s winning. The event in the protasis (Paul’s lack of training) is construed as a present situation and this is also encoded in the use of a present tense form (doesn’t train). It is as if the speaker is aware of Paul’s lack of training, and based on this, he proceeds to deduce the result of this event, but he does not want to present it as a real or even a potentially real event. For this reason, he chooses to construe it as a hypothetical scenario.

Figure 1: Blending Configuration of the conditional construction (53) Paul won’t win if he doesn’t train much.

One of the most pivotal features of predictive conditionals is that they are characterized by a tense backshifting. They take a Simple Present tense form in the if-clause to express future reference. The if-clause is not engaged in making a prediction for a future event. Its role is to evoke a mental space set-up which will provide the background for the prediction-making taking place in the main clause. In addition, it
reflects the speaker’s present baseline. The apodosis is formed with future-*will*, denoting a prediction for the future. In (53), it is not Paul’s lack of training that is predicted by the speaker. Rather, construing a mental space wherein Paul does not train hard and another alternative space in which he trains much, the speaker considers the destructive effects of the first scenario. In Langacker’s terms, the subordinate clause functions as the ground of the main clause which stands as the figure. The figure and ground are connected with a causal relationship. The ground extends from the present time of speaking to the future moment when the event of the apodosis occurs, while the figure is represented as the future-oriented consequence of the ground. The present-for-future use is motivated by the present moment of speaking when the ground event is established by the speaker.

In a predictive conditional with a future reference such as (53), the conjunction *if* assigns a neutral epistemic stance to the conditional prediction. It is as if the speaker expresses uncertainty and hesitates to adopt a particular attitude towards the occurrence or non-occurrence of the event in the protasis. Predictive conditionals are viewed as hypothetical. We conceptualize and construe a hypothetical space and based upon this we make a prediction for a future event.

(54) *If we arrive early, we can have lunch.*

(Mastermind Use of English: 106)

Sentence (54) constitutes another instantiation of predictive conditional with future reference and follows the same pattern of mental space building. Again, two alternative spaces are constructed; a hypothetical space in which we arrive early and we take lunch, and an alternative space whereby we arrive later than we have expected, and as a result we do not have time for lunch. The fulfillment of the protasis (our early arrival) is treated as a sufficient precondition for the fulfillment of the apodosis (having lunch). The apodosis expresses a conditional prediction for an event which is expected to be realized in the future. The question that arises is what motivates the speaker of (54) to use the modal *can* in the apodosis setting up a potentiality space. As we have seen, the events in (53) were causally related, in the sense that Paul’s lack of training might result in his ensuing defeat. On the contrary, in (54), there is a dependency relation between the protasis and the apodosis, but it is not a causal relation. Rather, the modal *can* assigns a sense of enablement. Our early arrival to our destination allows us time to have lunch, but it is up to us to decide what we will do upon our arrival.
Potentiality is further encoded with the modal *can* which is used in the apodosis and a potentially real event is construed as hypothetical.

Conditional constructions are also used to encode predictions about more general events and situations. In this type of constructions, both the *if*-clause and the main clause are formed with the use of a Simple Present tense form, as illustrated in (55) and (56). Again, two mental spaces are constructed, a factual space and an alternative space. The factual space expresses an event or state of affairs which always holds under specific circumstances. The alternative space refers to a scenario wherein the conditions of the factual space are not met. In such constructions, a factual event is conceptualized and construed as conditional. The conjunction *if* implies the repeated occurrence of an event, but at the same time it assigns no commitment to the actual occurrence of this event.

(55) *If you drink excessive quantities of tea or coffee, you subject your system to a permanent state of tension and nervous arousal, which is the perfect breeding ground for a panic attack.*

(Collins WordBanks Online Corpus)

(56) *If I go out, she gets nasty.*

(Oxford Online Dictionary)

Our knowledge that the event in the protasis holds in the factual space allows us to predict the event expressed in the apodosis, since the two events are closely related and the one follows the other, as in (56), or it is triggered by it, as in (55). This knowledge may be based upon human experience of the world (side effects of caffeine), as in (55), or on a more personal experience of the everyday life (a child’s reaction to an adult’s action), as the one described in (56). The factual space in (55) involves drinking excessive quantities of drinks such as tea and coffee which contain caffeine, and the immediate effects of excessive caffeine consumption in the nervous system, namely tension and nervous arousal. On the other hand, the alternative space entails limited or no consumption of caffeine drinks, and therefore no problems are caused in the nervous system.

As in previously analyzed predictive conditionals, in these constructions, the use of the Present tense in the protasis sets the baseline for the prediction made in the
apodosis. The difference is that the Present tense is used in the future-reference apodosis as well. The two events are associated with both a causal and a temporal relation. The excessive consumption of caffeine drinks, such as coffee and tea, causes problems to the human nervous system. The speaker employs his/her experiential viewpoint to establish the background for his/her prediction. The events in both the protasis and the apodosis are not situated at a particular time of occurrence. Thus, the sentence could be readily interpreted as 'When you drink a lot of caffeine, you subject your system to tension and nervous arousal'. The conditional sentence (55) could be plausibly used by a specialist, maybe a doctor who intends to warn a patient on the negative effects of caffeine in his/her nervous system, or it may simply be articulated as a friendly advice to an addressee who consumes a lot of caffeine.

Figure 2: Mental Space Configuration of the construction (55) If you drink excessive quantities of tea or coffee, you subject your system to a permanent state of tension and nervous arousal, which is the perfect breeding ground for a panic attack.
In (56) *If I go out, she gets nasty*, it is a little girl’s usual reaction to her mother’s leaving that forms the basis of the conditional and motivates the use of present tense forms in both the protasis and the apodosis. The child’s behaviour is specific and it is repeated every time the speaker goes out without her. This enables the speaker to make an overgeneralization of the child’s behaviour and explain what triggers this kind of behaviour. The protasis works as a ground for the fulfillment of the apodosis which is the figure and profiles this particular behaviour. This sentence, which is close to reality, corresponds to what Athanasiadou and Dirven (1996, 1997) have named Course of events conditionals. CECs refer to two repeatedly occurring events that take place consecutively, and usually the event in the protasis precedes the event in the apodosis. Sentence (56) could also take the form of ‘*If I go out, she will get nasty*’. Yet, in this case, the speaker would refer to a particular future point in time and the repeated nature of the event is only implied.

**Figure 3**: Blending configuration of the sentence (56) *If I go out, she gets nasty*. 
5.2 Counterfactual Conditionals

So far, I have examined predictive conditionals with a neutral epistemic stance towards a future eventuality. However, conditional constructions can also be used to convey a negative epistemic stance. This is achieved by building counterfactual mental spaces. Conditional sentences, such as those from (57) to (60) evoke two spaces, namely a reality space and a counterfactual space which negates the knowledge of the reality space.

(57) *If my career finished tomorrow, I would have to find something else.*
     (Collins WordBanks Online Corpus)

(58) *If I had this information, I would not report it.*
     (COCA)

(59) *If I had his email address, I would write to him.*
     (New Trends Coursebook: 160)

(60) *If I were you, I wouldn’t go spreading accusations like that around.*
     (British National Corpus)

In (57), the past tense verb form *finished* in the protasis is employed for an event with a future reference which is viewed by the speaker with a dissociated epistemic stance. As regards the apodosis, it is formed with *would+infinitive*. The speaker, a young football player who has just started his career, considers the end of his career as an unlikely scenario. Based on his young age, he adopts a negative epistemic stance for the content of the protasis, according to which he would quit his career. This could not hold, though, if the speaker was an older football player who was ready to retire. In such a case, the speaker would not choose to build a counterfactual space. Sentence (57) involves two mental-space set-ups. In the first mental space set-up, the young player’s career finishes and he has to find another occupation, whereas in the second space his career does not finish and he continues to do what he does. Both spaces represent possible future scenarios for the player’s career. The difference lies in the fact that in uttering (57), the speaker commits himself to a negative epistemic stance towards the possible eventual end of his career, while he implicitly takes a positive stance towards the alternative space that he builds.
Figure 4: Mental Space configuration of the example (57) *If my career finished tomorrow, I would have to find something else.*

Sentences (58) and (59) are also examples of distanced future reference conditionals. The speakers in both examples conceptualize a hypothetical situation which is in contrast with their reality space. In (58) *If I had this information, I would not report it*, the speaker puts himself/herself in a hypothetical, counterfactual space where s/he has a very important piece of information at his/her disposal and decides not to report it. At the same time, s/he automatically builds a reality space wherein s/he doesn’t hold this information. It is possible that someone else owns this piece of information and the speaker advises the owner to keep this information for himself/herself until the right occasion arises, or it is the case that the speaker tries to prevent the hearer from revealing what s/he knows.

Likewise, in (59) *If I had his email address, I would write to him*, the speaker predicts what s/he would do in case s/he had the email of a particular person. In the hypothetical space, the speaker has the email address and writes an email to this person, whereas in the reality space s/he does not actually have the email address and therefore
cannot send the email. Depending on the context in which it occurs, (59) could serve multiple communicative intents. For instance, it could be used as a means to make an indirect request to the addressee for a third person’s email, or even simply explain the reasons for not sending emails to someone.

Sentence (60) *If I were you, I wouldn’t go spreading accusations like that around* follows the same *Simple Past, would* pattern. In sentences such as (60) there are two input spaces, a distanced, counterfactual space wherein the speaker envisages his opinion as being transferred to another person and a reality space in which the speaker presents his/her own perspective. Of course, the speaker cannot know with certainty the hearer’s actual beliefs and opinions. The speaker’s personal view of the reality space merges with the imagined perspective from the distanced space. His/her own perspective is projected onto a distinct space and gives rise to the construction. The speaker employs (60) either to advise the addressee and deter him from revealing something, or to demonstrate his/her disagreement for what the addressee intends to do, yet without imposing his/her own opinion on the addressee.

![Mental Space configuration of the example (60) *If I were you, I wouldn’t go spreading accusations like that around.*](image)

**Figure 5:** Mental Space configuration of the example (60) *If I were you, I wouldn’t go spreading accusations like that around.*
Counterfactual thinking is a crucial aspect of human reasoning. It enables us to reason about scenarios which are totally different from reality, and at the same time reflect upon the consequences that such an alternative scenario could have. Furthermore, we can think of a past situation that was not fulfilled and realize how this could affect our lives. For this reason, we construe a hypothetical counterfactual space which entails an event that is in contrast with our reality. In such counterfactual conditional constructions, the Past Perfect tense is used as a means to signal past situations viewed from a past viewpoint. In this type of conditional constructions, the speaker is more interested in the consequences of the counterfactual event and as a result s/he chooses to foreground the counterfactual rather than the real situation. For instance, (61) builds a counterfactual space wherein the speaker had not been standing at the entrance and no meeting between him/her and another person was involved. On the contrary, in the reality space, the speaker was standing there and the meeting eventually took place. In a similar way, in (62), the if-clause builds a counterfactual space, according to which the children had done their homework and the teacher did not punish them. This is in stark contrast with the reality space, since in reality the children haven’t done their homework, and as a result they were punished.

(61)  *If I hadn’t been standing at the entrance, I’d never have seen you.*

(New Trends Coursebook: 160)

(62)  *The students wouldn’t have been punished yesterday, if they had done their homework.*

(Update for pre-FCE Student’s Book)
5.3 Speech-act Conditionals

Speech-act conditionals are used to establish a contextual background for the performance of the speech-act expressed in the apodosis. The *if*-clause builds a speech-act mental space which specifies the context in which the speech-act is made. No predictive function is involved and two alternative spaces are prompted. However, in this case, the alternative space does not refer to a space where the speech act is not realized, nor does it refer to the content of the speech act. The speech act will occur anyway and its content would not be different in an alternative space.

(63) *If you ask me, he’s in love.*

(Oxford English Dictionary Online)

For instance, in (63), the speaker intends to inform the addressee that a third person (the referent) is in love. This could be interpreted as ’In case you are interested, I
inform you that he is in love’. This person is in love either you want to ask about it or not. The alternative space prompted by the hypothetical construction only refers to the case that the hearer is not really interested in the information provided by the speaker. The speaker’s intention to provide information is merged with the hearer’s willingness to receive the information provided by the speaker. This motivates the reconstrual of the speech-act as hypothetical.

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{The hearer is interested in the speech act.} \\
\text{The speech act occurs} \\
\text{If you ask me, he’s in love}
\end{align*}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{The hearer is not interested in the speech act} \\
\text{The speech act occurs}
\end{align*}
\]

**Figure 7:** Mental Space configuration of the sentence (63) *If you ask me, he’s in love.*

In a similar way, in (64), the speaker urges the addressee to wait for a third person’s coming. It is possible that this person will show up later in the day, either the addressee waits for him or not. The addressee’s willingness to wait for this person’s coming does not affect the referent’s coming. In both examples, the act of providing information is presented as conditional on its relevance and usefulness for the hearer. The speakers set the context in which the speech-acts expressed in the apodosis seem felicitous and relevant to the communicative process.

\[
(64) \quad \text{If you care to wait, he may show up later today.}
\]

(Collins WordBanks Corpus)
5.4 Epistemic Conditionals

Epistemic conditional constructions reflect the reasoning process that the speaker follows when making a deduction. The speaker starts his reasoning from an effect that he/she is familiar with and tries to reach a conclusion with respect to a possible cause for the state of affairs described in the antecedent. The protasis builds up a mental space which serves as a background for the reasoning operation, as exemplified in (65).

(65) *If she stirs things counter-clockwise, she is left-handed.*

(English Web 2013 Corpus)

The if-clause in (65) metonymically evokes the 'being left-handed frame'. According to our experientially-based knowledge, people who are left-handed tend to do things, like stirring, counter-clockwise, while right-handed people follow the reversed direction when they are engaged in such activities. This knowledge functions as the basis for our reasoning. In particular, seeing someone stirring things counter-clockwise is a sufficient indication for the speaker to draw the inference that this person is left-handed. The frame of 'doing things counter-clockwise' metonymically evokes the 'being left-handed' frame, providing the precondition for the truthfulness of the apodosis.

In a sentence like (65), the speaker expresses the reasoning operation s/he has followed in order to make the inference that someone is left-handed. Based on both the observation that someone stirs things counter-clockwise and on the general knowledge that left-handed people are doing things in this way, the speaker reaches his/her final conclusion. The reasoning operation has taken place and the conclusion has been made. However, the speaker deliberately chooses to employ an epistemic conditional as a means to present his final conclusion. In this way, the speaker provides the hearer with the cues which helped him make the assumption. In this example, the target domain INERENCE blends with the source domain CONDITION. The source meaning of conditionality is mapped onto the target meaning of the final conclusion. The meaning elaboration from a final conclusion to a conditional assumption is motivated by the metaphor INERENCE IS CONDITION. The speaker’s aim is not to impose his/her own point of view, but he/she merely intends to provide the addressee with the
preconditions on which his/her conclusion is based, allowing him/her to make his/her own assumptions.

The same pattern is followed by (66) and (67) below, which are additional examples of epistemic conditionals:

(66) If she has older brothers and sisters, then the idea of sharing is less of a shock for her.  
(BNC)

(67) If she still lives in her apartment, (then) she’s got some money.  
(English Web 2013 Corpus)

In sentence (66), the protasis and the apodosis do not have an intrinsic relation. Their dependency is only achieved through the following frame evocation process. Having the knowledge that someone has siblings is sufficient for us to infer that she is also a person who is willing to share things with other people. The if-clause evokes an epistemic space which sets the background of the logical reasoning process, while the logical-inference marker then leads us to this mental space whereby the event of the main clause can be accessed. The protasis invokes all the elements required for the addressee to conclude that someone is so generous to share his/her belongings with others. In the speaker’s mind, the following metonymy is evoked: HAVING SIBLINGS FOR BEING WILLING TO SHARE.

The basis for this assumption is that usually people who have brothers and sisters learn from a very early age to share everything with them. The younger children of a family may use their older brothers and sisters’ clothes, while some siblings share the same room during their childhood. On this basis, the space of ‘having siblings’, which evokes the source domain is mapped onto the target domain of ‘being generous’. In this way, a final assumption is presented as a conditional assumption of the type: if we know that the if-clause is true, then the main-clause must also be true, with must receiving an epistemic interpretation here. The correlational basis provided by the aforementioned metonymy serves as a foundation for the metaphor emerged: INERENCE IS CONDITION. The speaker does not explicitly state that the person he/she refers to is a person who has brothers and sisters and at the same time he/she seems willing to share things with other people. By utilizing a conditional construction, he/she highlights the reasoning process he/she has undergone, giving to the addressee the information he/she needs to reach the same conclusion. In this way, the speaker avoids becoming assertive.
Sentence (67) can be encountered in a situation in which we were informed that someone has quitted his/her job and still lives in a large apartment. It is common knowledge that one can live in a spacious, luxurious apartment only if s/he can financially afford to buy and maintain it. In our mind, the 'luxurious apartment' frame metonymically evokes the 'being rich' frame. The metonymy that operates here is: HAVING A LUXURIOUS RESIDENCE FOR BEING RICH. Based on our experience of the world and the society we live in, it is sufficient for us to know that someone owns a large apartment to infer that s/he must be rich.

Figure 8: Blending configuration of sentence (67) If she still lives in her apartment, then she’s got some money.

Once again, the speaker’s choice to shift the addressee’s perspective from his/her final conclusion to a conditional conclusion becomes evident in (67). The speaker’s point of view is not clearly expressed. Instead, the speaker has made a final conclusion, but decides to present it as a precondition, providing the addressee with a sufficient background to draw his/her own inference. In this case, metonymy licenses a conceptual mapping between inference and conditionality and evokes the conceptual metaphor: INFERENCE IS CONDITION. Having at his disposal the line of reasoning that the speaker supplied, the addressee is free to form his/her own personal opinion.
Taking into account the background set by the conditional construction, he/she is eventually led to evoke the conceptual metaphor: OWNING EXPENSIVE COMMODITIES IS BEING RICH.

We have maintained that one of the main advantages Conceptual Integration Theory (CIT) offers is that it can account for both literal and figurative cases. The aforementioned examples of epistemic conditionals are all instances of constructions which are grounded in figurative processes. All of them instantiate the metaphor INFRINGEMENT IS CONDITION. Through this metaphor, an inference is presented in the form of a conditional construction.

5.5 Metalinguistic Conditionals

In everyday interaction, speakers employ metalinguistic conditionals as a means to comment on their linguistic choices and/or even apologize for certain linguistic choices they make. In (68), the speaker justifies and explains why s/he has made this particular linguistic choice. The apodosis is not dependent on the protasis, neither is it caused by it. Rather, it sets up a content space which involves the context within which this particular linguistic choice is made by the speaker. The protasis sets up a metalinguistic space whose aim is not to provide new information, but judge the appropriateness of linguistic choices having a rather apologetic tone. The speaker also builds another alternative space in which s/he leaves open the possibility of not making correct vocabulary choices. This may have been done purposefully on the part of the speaker as a means to make an ironic comment, as it is the case in (68).

(68) For she has never appeared in a movie or been a star herself; her claim to fame, if that's the right word for it, is to be the best-known estate agent in the movie business.

(Collins Wordbanks Corpus)
Figure 9: Blending configuration of sentence (68) For she has never appeared in a movie or been a star herself; her claim to fame, if that’s the right word for it, is to be the best-known estate agent in the movie business.

5.6 Meta-metaphorical Conditionals

Meta-metaphorical conditionals examined in our study take the form If Target1 is Source1, then Target2 is Source2 and involve two mappings. The first mapping takes place in the protasis, whereas the second one occurs in the apodosis. In each clause, the target-domain items are parts of the same target domain, while the source-domain items belong to the same source-domain. Metaphorically construing one domain as another domain allows speakers to map various features from the source domain onto the target domain and make comparisons.

For instance, in (69), the famous French footballer, Eric Cantona, especially in the mind of football fans, metonymically evokes the domain of football players, while King metonymically stands for someone who is powerful and enjoys people’s respect and submission. With the aid of frame metonymy, these metonymic connections between the two frames enable us to build the metaphoric mappings between FOOTBALL PLAYERS and RESPECTABLE BEINGS, evoking the conceptual metaphor FOOTBALL PLAYERS ARE RESPECTABLE BEINGS.

(69) If Cantona is the King of Manchester, then Zlatan is the God.  
(BBC Sport)
By employing a conditional construction, a metaphorical mapping between FOOTBALL PLAYERS and RESPECTABLE BEINGS is set up. Based on the truthfulness of the protasis, the speaker predicts that the apodosis is also true. If we accept that Cantona is the King of Manchester, then we are given permission to conceptualize and talk about Zlatan Ibraimovic, who is another famous footballer, as if he is the God of Manchester. Throughout his football career, Cantona used to be one of the best and highest-paid football players of his generation. He is known for his representative football movements and had a lot of fans. These mappings supply the inference that the subject of the apodosis, namely Zlatan Ibraimovic, is metaphorically construed as the God of Manchester. The features mapped onto him are these of a highly-acclaimed footballer usually signing the most lucrative contracts. Of course, we know that neither Cantona is a king nor Zlatan is God. However, it is the metaphoric mapping established in the protasis that invites us to predict the apodosis. Football fans and sports commentators can ironically employ this metaphorical mapping in order to talk about the arrogance that the two players sometimes express and also compare their popularity.

![Blending configuration of the sentence (69) If Cantona is the King of Manchester, then Zlatan is the God.](image)

**Figure 10:** Blending configuration of the sentence (69) *If Cantona is the King of Manchester, then Zlatan is the God.*
Furthermore, meta-metaphorical conditionals set up alternative relationships between metaphoric construals of a domain. Sentence (70), establishes a metaphoric relationship between the two domains of COLOURS and EMOTIONS. In both clauses, the target domain of EMOTIONS is evoked by the lexical items anger and mild irritation respectively, whereas the source domain COLOURS is evoked by red and orange. The red colour is a bright, intense colour. In addition, when we experience a feeling of anger, we sometimes become red in our faces. These features are mapped onto the target domain of anger, via the conceptual metaphor EMOTIONS ARE COLOURS. From the first mapping expressed in the protasis, namely, that red is an intense colour and usually stands for passion and love, we are allowed to think and talk about orange as a less intense colour. Given that orange emerges when red is mixed with yellow, and therefore it is not one of the basic colours, we think of it as a less intense colour.

(70) If red is anger, orange is mild irritation.

(English Web 2013 Corpus)

The role of meta-metaphorical conditionals is to establish a metaphorical relation between two distinct domains. The above sentences entail comparisons which are not expected. For example, we do not tend to conceptualize footballers as kings and gods, or emotions as colours. However, in everyday language use, we employ such metaphoric mappings for a variety of communicative purposes.

5.7 Hypothetical Conditionals without if

This section focuses on hypothetical conditionals which are introduced with conjunctions other than if, such as on condition that, provided, supposing and assuming. Employing these constructions, speakers are also involved in setting up alternative mental spaces on which they base their prediction-making. In prerequisite conditional constructions, which are introduced by on condition that, provided and providing, the protasis sets up a hypothetical space in which the event of the protasis can be fulfilled. In suppositional constructions, which are introduced by suppose, supposing and assuming, the protasis constructs a scenario and invites the hearer to contemplate upon the possible consequences of this scenario.
5.7.1 Provided, Providing, On condition that

In many cases, speakers are engaged in making promises and agreements. In these contexts, they need to set the conditions which stand as a prerequisite for the fulfillment of the promises and/or agreements. Prerequisite conditionals are expressed by the participles *provided* and *providing* and the prepositional phrase *on condition that*. They set up two alternative spaces; one in which the condition is fulfilled and the situation in the main clause is realized, and another space wherein the condition is not met. *Provided* adds a more neutral, impersonal tone to the condition, whereas *providing* focuses on the consent given on the part of the addressee. In (71), *provided* sets the government’s propitious policy as a prerequisite for the thriving of private power operators. Furthermore, in (72), *providing* is more personal, giving emphasis on the addressee’s commitment to the promise. Her recovery is a precondition for her participation and even winning in the race. On the other hand, *on condition that* profiles the speaker’s involvement in the agreement. The woman in (73) promises to give her son a specific amount of money, but she will only do so if her son allows her to stay with him. Otherwise, she will not give him the money. However, in our example, the woman had already sold her house and gave him the money. Both the sale and the money transfer were conditional upon her son’s promise rather than upon his actions. The aforementioned examples could definitely be introduced by *if*, but in this case, the focus would be on the speaker. The conjunction *if* can be used to mark the conditions under which a situation can be realized. However, *if* cannot reveal the full potential of the other conjunctions.

(71) *Provided* governments created an atmosphere conducive to investment and good maintenance by private companies, or guaranteed it by legislation *if necessary*, private power operators could do the job well and enjoy steady profits.

(Collins Wordbanks Corpus)

(72) Petria looks fit and, *providing* she’s overcome her shoulder problems, should go on and win an individual gold medal *at her last Games*.

(Collins Wordbanks Corpus)
(73) A woman had sold her home and handed over to her son the £4000 proceeds, on condition that she could live with him in the house he bought with the money.

(BNC)

Conditional Prediction

If he buys a house with the money she gave him, she will live with him.

Figure 11: Blending configuration of sentence (73) A woman had sold her home and handed over to her son the £4000 proceeds, on condition that she could live with him in the house he bought with the money.
5.7.2 Suppose, Supposing, Assuming

Suppositional conditionals set up a hypothetical space and invite the addressee to imagine what would happen in that space. The focus is put on the antecedent and the consequences it may have. Suppositional conditionals introduced with *suppose/supposing* open a hypothetical space and encourage the hearer to reflect upon the possible consequences of this hypothetical situation. For example, sentence (74) could be addressed to a person who is working for the wedding industry, maybe a wedding organizer or a florist. The speaker invites the hearer to consider the possible consequences that the disappearance of weddings would have for his business. This is achieved in the form of a question. The use of both past tense and *would* highlight the hypothetical character of the situation. The difference between the two conjunctions is that *suppose* can also stand on its own without being accompanied by a consequent. *Assuming*, on the other hand, is used to make an assumption for a hypothetical situation. The speaker provides the hearer with the possible consequences of a hypothetical situation and motivates him to reflect upon it. As it can be illustrated by (75), using *assuming*, the speaker’s main intention is to draw the addressee’s attention to a particular possible effect of the situation expressed in the antecedent and also encourage him to take some action. In particular, his intention is to underscore the fact that an economic growth of only 5% or 6% a year will not positively affect the national debt.

(74)  *Supposing/Suppose weddings disappeared, would that affect your business?*  
(BNC)

(75)  *Assuming the economy grows at between 5 and 6 per cent a year for the next five years, the national debt, as a proportion of Gross Domestic Product, will remain static.*  
(Collins Wordbanks Online)
6.1 Conditionals in English Grammars and EFL Textbooks

Traditional pedagogical English grammars and EFL textbooks present conditionals in a rather linear way. Most of them primarily focus on the formal aspects of conditionals. Their main concern is to present the verb form differences observed in each type, and specific verb form combinations are presented as the only instances of grammatically correct use. Semantic and pragmatic features of conditional constructions are only partially addressed. Conditional constructions are not always presented in meaningful contexts, and if they are, these contexts do not represent the whole spectrum of their uses. In addition, learners are invited to memorize a couple of grammar rules and make generalizations which in no way help them increase their communicative ability. This section aims to provide a brief outline of how conditionals are presented in EFL teaching materials and trace the pitfalls this kind of presentation may entail.

Typically, conditional constructions consist of a conditional main clause and a subordinate clause which is usually introduced by the conjunction if. Teaching materials consistently offer a tripartite distinction of conditionals, according to which conditionals are distinguished into First, Second and Third Conditional. Some grammars also include a fourth type which is known as Zero Conditional. The First conditional is used to refer to predictions for the present or future. The Second type is used for events which are unlikely to occur in the present or future. As illustrated in the examples below, the difference between the first and the second type lies in the fact that the first type expresses a possible situation, whereas the second one expresses an unlikely situation. The Third type is used for unreal events situated in the past. As regards the Zero conditional, most teaching materials refer to it as a way to express real facts and general truths. A brief representation of English conditionals as presented in grammars and EFL materials is provided in Table 1.

(76)  a. If it gets colder tonight, I’ll turn on the heating
       b. If it got colder tonight, I’d turn on the heating.

[Grammar for English Language Teachers: 275]
Another distinction evinced mainly in reference grammar books is between open (real) and hypothetical (closed/unreal) conditionals. Open conditionals, such as (77a), do not specify whether the condition of the if-clause will be fulfilled or not, while hypothetical conditionals like (77b) express the speaker's belief that the condition has not been fulfilled (for past conditions), is not fulfilled (for present conditions), or it is unlikely to be fulfilled (for future conditions).

(77)  

a. You are going to have huge trouble, if you had infected me.

b. I’d be far more upset if somebody say scratched one of my records than tore one of my books.


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>if clause</th>
<th>main clause</th>
<th>Use</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Zero Conditional</td>
<td>If+Present tense/Modal</td>
<td>Present Simple/modal</td>
<td>facts, general truths, habitual actions</td>
<td>If you heat water, it boils. (BBC English-Grammar)</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>If it gets colder tonight, I’ll turn on the heating. (Grammar for English Language Teachers: 273)</td>
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<td>If she keeps calm, she’ll pass the test. (Mastemind: 106)</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>If you go to the supermarket, bring back a carton of milk please. (Grammar for English Language Teachers: 273)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Conditional</td>
<td>If+Present Simple</td>
<td>Future (will+infinitive)</td>
<td>real situations with possible outcomes in present and future</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>(possible in the present or future)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Imperative</td>
<td>advice, instructions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Second Conditional**  
(unlikely or improbable in the present or future) | **If+Past Simple** | would/could/might | a. Hypothetical or unreal situations | *If I were taller, I would become a model.*  
(Mastermind: 106)  
*If I were rich, I would have a yacht.*  
(English Grammar in Use: 78)  
*If I were a princess, I’d live in a palace.*  
(New Headway: 94)  
*If I were you, I would make an appointment to see the doctor.*  
(Grammar for English Language Teachers: 275) |
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>b. regrets</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>c. advice</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **Third Conditional**  
(impossible in the past) | **If+Past Perfect Simple** | would/could/might have+ past participle | unfulfilled condition in the past | *If I had tried a bit harder, I would have passed that exam.*  
(Collins Cobuild English Grammar: 658) |
|---|---|---|---|---|

**Table 1.** A concise representation of English Conditionals in EFL textbooks and English grammars.

The focus on form is also evident in grammar books which present conditionals as mere instances of different tenses. For example, the Second conditional is presented as one of the secondary uses of Simple Past. More specifically, it is mentioned that Simple Past is used in closed conditionals as a means to express a counterfactual event with a present time reference (Downing and Locke, 2006: 358). In one of the most influential grammatical descriptions of English (Quirk, Greenbaum, Leech and Svartvik, 1985), the first conditional is presented as a case wherein Future *will* occurs. In addition, it provides a rather marginal case where *will* is used in the *if*-clause. For instance, in *If you’ll help us, we can finish early, will* has a volitional interpretation.
(Quirk et al., 1985: 1009). The presentation continues with a reference to the hypothetical past and past perfective. In hypothetical conditional clauses, the verbs are backshifted. This means that the past tense is used to refer to the present or future and the past perfective is used to refer to the past. The difference between the two verb forms is illustrated in (78). The first example (78a) implies that the speaker does not expect her to try harder, without however, excluding the possibility of her trying harder. The second example (78b) implies that he did not receive an invitation for the conference and this is why he did not attend it.

(78)  
   a. If she tried harder next time, she would pass the examination.  
   b. If they had invited him to the conference, he would have attended. 

   [A Comprehensive Grammar of English: 1010]

In general terms, such a classification fails to cover the whole spectrum of conditional uses and provide learners with a deep understanding of how conditional constructions function in discourse. However, except for this simplified presentation, teaching materials tend to omit important aspects of conditional constructions. For instance, an analysis of the so-called pragmatic conditionals is absent from most language learning materials. Pragmatic conditionals such as (79), which express an indirect condition that is related to the speech act expressed in the apodosis, are totally underrepresented in English grammars and EFL textbooks.

(79) I did need to have a need to say that I was doing something because otherwise I wouldn’t be anybody, if you see what I mean. 


At more advanced levels, learners become familiar with conditional constructions which are introduced with conjunctions other than if, including on condition that, provided, supposing, as long as, unless and others. Again, learners are confronted with an oversimplified rule-based presentation. They are instructed that if they want to say that one situation is necessary for another to occur, they should use provided, providing, as long as, so long as, or only if. Regarding the conjunction unless, it is presented as equivalent to if not without any further explanations provided.
(80) Where will you go, supposing you manage to have a holiday?

[Grammar for English Language Teachers: 277]

(81) Ordering is quick and easy provided you have access to the Internet.

[Collins Cobuild English Grammar]

Materials addressed to more advanced learners also introduce mixed conditionals. Mixed conditionals refer to combinations of second and third conditionals. They can use Past Simple or Past Continuous in the if-clause and would have + past participle in the main clause in order to talk about a present situation with a past consequence. Alternatively, they can use Past Perfect in the if-clause and would/could/might + infinitive in the main clause in order to talk about a past action with a present consequence. The representation of mixed conditionals in EFL grammars and textbooks is presented in Table 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>If+Past Simple</th>
<th>would/could have</th>
<th>hypothetical present connected with hypothetical past result</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>If Jane were slightly taller, the model agency would have accepted her.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(Mastermind Use of English: 106)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>If I weren’t so busy, I could have taken off a few days last week.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(Grammar for English Language Teachers: 280)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If+Past Perfect</td>
<td>would/could/might</td>
<td>hypothetical past with hypothetical present result</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>If the patient hadn’t been vaccinated as a child, his life would be in danger now.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(Mastermind Use of English: 106)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>If you hadn’t wasted so much money, we’d be able to afford a better holiday.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(Grammar for English Language Teachers: 280)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. Mixed Conditionals
6.2 Teaching Conditionals in the Framework of Cognitive Linguistics

Over the last years, there has been a growing interest in the applications of Cognitive Linguistics to second or foreign language teaching and learning. As a result, a considerable amount of research has been conducted, giving rise to a new branch of CL, labeled as Applied Cognitive Linguistics (Pütz et al., 2001; Archard and Niemeier, 2004; Robinson and Ellis, 2008; Littlemore, 2009; Tabakowska, Choiński and Wiraszka, 2010; Tyler, 2012; Tyler, Huang and Jan, 2018). Cognitive Linguistics is a usage-based model of language. The main position of usage-based models and their proponents is that “language structure emerges from language use” (Tomasello, 2003: 5). The continuous exposure to language input allows learners to internalize the new linguistic structures and make generalizations.

Prior studies on the applications of the CL framework on teaching foreign languages focus on both vocabulary (Boers and Lindstromberg, 2008) and grammar teaching. Several grammatical areas including tense and aspect (Niemeier and Reif, 2008; Kermer, 2016), phrasal verbs (Dirven, 2001), prepositions (Tyler, Mueller and Ho, 2010), temporal connectors (Athanasiadou, 2004), conditionals (Dolgova-Jacobsen, 2016, 2018) and modal verbs (Tyler, 2012) were investigated among others. However, there is a lack of empirical research on the effectiveness of CL in learners’ L2 acquisition.

Regarding conditional constructions, Jacobsen (2016, 2018) carried out an empirical study in order to investigate the effectiveness of integrating CL and blending theory in teaching English conditionals to advanced EAP (English for Academic Purposes) learners. Three groups participated in the study. The first group (cognitive group) received a combination of CL-based instruction of conditionals and task-supported learning. The second group exclusively received task-based learning (task-supported group), while the third group did not receive any instruction at all (control group). Three Power Point (PPT) presentations were presented to the cognitive group. The first PPT presentation aimed to familiarize learners with basic concepts of the blending theory and explicate the usage-based aspect of language. Learners were also introduced to the main functions of conditionals. Then, they watched an excerpt from the movie “Alice in Wonderland” and were asked to think of “What would have happened if Alice hadn’t seen the rabbit? ”. After explaining the compound structure of conditionals, the teacher provided learners with pictures and asked them to reflect on possible effects of the actions depicted.
Using a second PPT, the teacher drew learners’ attention to the different tense combinations used in conditionals and their relation to speakers’ viewpoint. To illustrate the way in which speakers choose different tense configurations according to the degree of possibility they assign to the events, the teacher chose to show learners an excerpt from a science-fiction movie and asked them how they view the reality presented in the film. Through the third PPT, learners were able to understand how the context and the speaker’s background knowledge can affect the use of tenses. The CL-based presentation was accompanied by a cognitive chart. After the pedagogical intervention, Jacobsen administered a post-test. Overall, she found a positive effect of the CL-based intervention on the acquisition of conditionals. According to her findings, the cognitive group exhibited a significantly greater performance on the post-test in comparison with both the task-supported and the control group.

The main objective of this section is to provide a pedagogically-oriented and at the same time cognitive linguistics-based approach to teaching English conditionals. The suggested approach is informed by current insights in foreign language teaching and learning, and attempts to combine the principles of CL and Task-based Language Teaching (TBLT). Task-based Language Teaching is a meaning-based approach to language teaching. Within TBLT, tasks can be defined as “activities where the target language is used by the learner for a communicative purpose” (Willis, 1996: 23). The primary focus of TBLT is communication, while the role of grammar instruction in TBLT is not clearly defined. According to Nunan (1998), grammar develops naturally during communication and interaction in the target language. On the other hand, Willis (1996), Ellis (1993) and Robinson (2011) maintain that grammar should be included in TBLT, but only with the aim to facilitate communication.

We primarily draw upon the work of Niemeier (2017) on how Cognitive Linguistics and task-based teaching can be combined in grammar teaching. Niemeier (2017) proposes an adaptation of Willis’ task cycle (1996) which comprises three steps: the pre-task, the task-phase and the language focus. In the first step (pre-task), the teacher introduces the communicative topic and provides learners with instructions on how to complete the task. At this stage, the teacher uses the new grammatical structure as much as possible so that learners can get a first idea of how the new structure is used in context. At this point, learners do not have to produce the new grammatical structure.

The Task-phase includes three steps (the task, the planning of the task reports and the reports). For the purposes of the task, learners are divided into pairs or groups. During the task, the learners are encouraged to use the new structure as a means which
will help them to achieve their goal. The teacher may provide learners with worksheets containing additional examples of the new structure. Learners interact with each other and make decisions on the linguistic choices they will make for the preparation of the reports. When they finish with this step, they are invited to present their work in front of the whole class.

Upon completion of the task-phase, the teacher proceeds to the language focus phase. The language focus phase consists of the analysis and practice of the new structure. The analysis of the new structure is carried out within the same communicative topic and the examples used come from the sentences produced by the learners throughout the task-phase. Guided by the teacher, the learners try to discover by themselves the form and meaning of the construction. At the final stage, learners are given the opportunity to practice the new structure within the context of a new communicative topic.

Although the order of the aforementioned stages proposed by Niemeier (2017) is generally followed, we enrich the task-phase, providing a variety of activities and tasks which will enable EFL learners to internalize and effectively use conditionals. The present section consists of two subsections. The first subsection offers tasks and activities which can be used with very young learners (aged 8-9) and young learners (aged 9-12) respectively, while the second one is addressed to more advanced EFL learners.

6.2.1 Tasks and Activities for Teaching Conditionals to Young Learners

Prior to designing a lesson addressed to young learners, teachers should take into consideration young learners’ individual differences. Individual differences such as language aptitude, motivation, working memory, learning styles, cognitive styles and learning strategies exert a strong influence on L2 learning, and thus they can serve as good predictors for foreign language success (Dörnyei, 2005). At these early ages, learning a foreign language should be an enjoyable and entertaining experience. Young learners should play with the language and discover by themselves new structures and words. Within this framework, explicit, rule-based grammar instruction has no place, since it is not in line with neither the age nor the cognitive skills of young learners (Cameron, 2001; Mattheoudaki and Alexiou, 2014). In this subsection, I propose a
variety of tasks and activities which can be used with very young learners of English (aged 8-9 years old) and older learners (aged 9-12).

Conditional constructions are usually introduced when learners reach an intermediate level of English. However, we suggest that conditionals should be accommodated in language teaching earlier on so that learners can comprehend simple conditional constructions and gain more fluency in oral communication. Of course, at these early ages, grammar teaching should be implicit and grammatical structures should be introduced in a playful and entertaining way through songs, storytelling and games.

The integration of storytelling in young learners’ EFL classrooms is a common practice. Storytelling is considered to be a useful pedagogic tool which allows learners to attain communicative competence in English. Stories and fairytales present vocabulary and grammatical structures in meaningful contexts enabling learners to retain the new structures in a much more easier way. At this stage, adopting a Lexical Approach is considered to be the most appropriate way for the presentation of grammatical structures to young learners (Alexiou and Mattheoudakis, 2015). Grammatical constructions are treated as lexical chunks and are introduced as such. The acquisition of lexical chunks facilitates the acquisition of grammatical structures and allows learners to become more fluent attaining a native-like, error-free speech (Lewis, 1993, 2002).

The first suggestion provided for the introduction of conditionals to very young learners concerns the use of short stories and fairytales. For example, teachers can use the story “If you Give a Mouse a Cookie” (Numeroff, 1985). The teacher reads aloud the story to young learners. Storytelling should be enhanced with visual cues, gestures and use of appropriate intonation patterns. While reading the story, the teacher should show the illustrations of the book to the learners in order to help them compensate for any unknown words and understand the story. If possible, storytelling can take place in the storytelling corner of the classroom which is specially designed for that purpose so that young learners feel comfortable and relaxed. After reading the story, the teacher tries to engage learners in the story by asking questions about the characters and the plot and elicits the answers from the children by providing them with the necessary visual cues which will help them remember the story. Repetition allows learners to recycle the vocabulary and grammatical structures used in the story and familiarize with them. It also motivates learners to participate in the storytelling process and gain confidence.
The learners should be exposed to the story many times so that they can understand its meaning. They can also watch a video with the story or listen to its accompanying CD.

Then, the teacher can organize a memory game to help learners recall the story. The popular game “Chinese whispers” can be ideally used in the classroom for this purpose. The children sit next to each other and form a circle. The teacher gives the first child one sentence of the story e.g “If you give a mouse a cookie, he’s going to ask for a glass of milk”, and the child has to whisper this sentence to the next child. This process goes on until the last child in the circle is reached. The last child should say the sentence aloud. In order to make the game more challenging, the teacher should encourage learners to add one more sentence every time. For instance, the first child whispers “If you give a mouse a cookie, he’s going to ask for a glass of milk” to the second child. The second child will whisper “If you give a mouse a cookie, he’s going to ask for a glass of milk. If you give him the milk, he’ll probably ask you for a straw” to the second child and so on. At this version of the game, the children unfold the story little by little.

Retelling the story is an ideal follow-up activity for storytelling. Learners have the chance to draw on their previous knowledge, but also use the new language structures in context. The teacher can provide learners with masks depicting the characters, or ask learners to colour some cut-out figures. These materials can be used by learners when they retell or act out the story. Alternatively, the teacher may assign roles to learners and encourage them to become involved in a role play.

Another activity that is appropriate with very young learners is the use of songs. In particular, the song “If you are happy and you know it” can be used for the implicit introduction of conditional if-clauses. This song favours Total Physical Response (TPR) activities in the classroom. It has been suggested that TPR activities enhance learners’ retention of new structures and help them develop their memory strategies (Oxford, 1990). The children listen to the song and the teacher encourages them to sing along and do the actions. Learners are not expected to produce any language at all. They are only expected to understand the song and respond to the commands of the song through the use of physical activity. In this way, learners implicitly become familiarized with the concept of alternative spaces underlying conditional constructions, since they understand that they should respond to the commands only if the condition expressed in the if-clause holds for them.

At these very early stages of foreign language learning, the ultimate aim of language learning is the comprehension of the overall meaning and the development of learners’ ability to use the new structures at a basic level of communication. Both
storytelling and the use of songs in the EFL classroom are conducive to maintaining young learners’ motivation and developing a positive attitude towards foreign language learning. At the same time, they promote the incidental learning of constructions, since they present linguistic structures in meaningful contexts and encourage repetition and recycling.

As young learners grow up, they develop both linguistically and cognitively, and therefore they need more challenging and engaging tasks which will be compatible with both their cognitive skills and their English language proficiency level. Grammar teaching at those levels should take place through meaningful tasks which will raise learners’ awareness on the new grammatical structures and at the same time help them to increase their communicative skills in the English language. Below, I provide several ideas for task-based instruction of conditional constructions addressed to learners aged from 9 to 11 years old (fourth, fifth and sixth graders of primary school).

The first stage in the process has the aim to prepare the learners for the task that will follow. The teacher introduces the new communicative topic. S/he can start by telling the students that they will talk about what they will do if they find themselves in a particular situation. The teacher says “Today we will talk about what we can do if certain things happen to us. For example, s/he uses sentences such as “I am walking to school and suddenly, I see a wallet in the street. What can I do now? [the teacher pretends that s/he is thinking about it, and then s/he says] “If I find a wallet in the street, I will go to the police station to hand it in”. The teacher continues to provide input using sentences such as “If I feel sick, I will call the doctor”, “If I feel hungry, I will prepare something to eat” and others. Then, s/he distributes a worksheet containing different scenarios, divides learners into groups of three or four and explains the task. The learners have to complete the worksheet in groups. The worksheet consists of a couple of conditional sentences that learners have to complete. All the conditional sentences are related to the learners’ everyday life. Each group can provide up to three different answers for each sentence. When all groups have completed the worksheets, the game starts. One player stands in front of the class and another player, from another team, asks him/her one of the questions. The first student writes down his/her answer and asks the other groups to predict his/her answer. The students make their predictions and the player reveals his/her answer. The answer should be provided in the form: “If I feel sick, I will visit the doctor”. The learner who predicts correctly wins one point for his/her team. The first team scoring six points will win the game. This task is an adaptation of a game proposed in Obee (1999: 74).
After having introduced the new structure in an implicit way, the teacher now raises learners’ awareness on the new grammatical structure. S/he writes on the board some of the sentences produced by the learners throughout the task. For instance, s/he writes *If I find a wallet in the street, I will go to the police*. The verb *find* is written with a red colour, while *will go* is written with a green colour. Then, s/he asks learners “*Did I find a wallet in the street?”*, and expects the answer “No/No you didn’t”. “That’s right. Now, imagine that at this moment I am walking in the street and I find a wallet. I have to think what I will do, what my next action will be”. The following dialogue may follow.

**Teacher:** What do you think I will do?

**Learner:** You will go to the police.

**Teacher:** Right. I’ll go to the police station to hand it in.

This process helps learners realize that the first event is possible to happen in the future. They have to think that the event occurs now, at the moment of speaking. So, they have to think of possible future steps. They need to reflect on possible actions and decide what they will finally do. In this way, they understand that the first event is viewed as a present situation in which they are involved and decisions for future action need to be taken. For this reason, the present situation is marked by a present tense (usually simple present tense form), while the second event will take place in the future and therefore it is encoded with a future *will+infinitive* form. This is not explicitly stated by the teacher. Rather, the teacher, following the process described above, elicits this explanation from the learners.

Another suggestion for the teaching of English conditionals at this level is to ask learners to talk about what they can do and see if they travel abroad. Teachers can provide learners with visual cues as a means to prompt their answers. For example, they can show them some pictures of London and encourage them to say what they will do if they go there. They can also provide recommendations to their classmates. With the aid of the pictures, the learners produce sentences such as “If I go to London, I will see the Buckingham Palace”, “If I go to London, I will try fish and chips”, “If I go to London, I will walk to the Trafalgar Square”, “If you go to London, you will see the Big Ben” and so on. The same procedure can be repeated for other cities and/or countries as well.

At this level, learners are able to give advice and solve problems which are closely related to their everyday life. Teachers can introduce “*If I were you*
constructions” by telling students that they can use it when they need to give advice. The teacher should explain that learners need to think what they would do if they found themselves in such positions. In other words, learners need to deal with other people’s problems as if they were their own problems and come up with solutions. For instance, a friend or classmate tells them “I lost my dog” and another learner advises him/her using a sentence such as “If I were you, I would search for him in the garden, or in the neighbourhood”. Another learner complains “I am not good at speaking English” and his/her classmate responds “If I were you, I would practice more”. This activity was adapted from Tsangalidis (2012: 264) so as to reflect young learners’ everyday life and become more age-appropriate.

Regarding the exploration of counterfactuality, teachers can give learners some counterfactual scenarios and ask them how they could be avoided. The teacher clarifies that all these situations actually happened in the past. The following scenarios could be provided.

a) The boys were playing football in the living room and broke the vase.

b) Mary didn’t pass the test. (she didn’t study)

c) John had a toothache. (he didn’t go to the dentist)

The learners are expected to respond in the following way “If Mary had studied, she would have passed the test”. This activity was also adapted from Tsangalidis (2012: 264).

6.2.2 Tasks and Activities for Teaching Conditionals to Advanced EFL Learners

Advanced EFL learners have attained a very high level of English language proficiency. They have acquired a rich vocabulary in a great amount of topics and hopefully they have developed a native-like level of grammatical competence. Therefore, they need to apply their linguistic knowledge in practice. Teachers teaching advanced EFL learners should provide them with ample opportunities for practicing English in meaningful communicative contexts. At more advanced EFL learners, explicit grammar instruction should be implemented in order to elucidate any aspects of grammar that have been either neglected or they merely need further clarification. However, we need to clarify at this point that explicit instruction refers to a more elaborate semantic analysis of conditionals rather than to rule-based instruction.
Debates, discussions on particular topics and problem-solving tasks are deemed to be ideal activities for these levels. Learners are encouraged to explore real-world topics and participate actively in a variety of discussions. The teacher may initiate a discussion on a particular topic. For example, s/he may ask learners to have a debate on how to protect the environment. Learners are assigned the role of members of the European Parliament and they have to decide on taking specific measures for the protection of the environment. The learners are divided into two groups, each group supporting different ideas. The first team starts by telling “If we invest in renewable sources of energy, air pollution levels will decrease and the quality of life in the cities will be improved”. The second team defends the opposing arguments. At the end of the debate, the teacher allows time for overview and discussion. The assessment is based on the effectiveness of their solutions. Other topics which are suitable for either debates or discussions are obesity and healthy eating habits, peace in the world, changes in the educational system of their country and others.

At this level explicit instruction is required in order to help learners understand the semantic interpretations of conditional constructions. The explicit instruction should be based on the analysis of conditional constructions provided in Chapter 5. Special emphasis should also be given on the pragmatic uses of conditionals, which are usually underrepresented in EFL teaching materials. Learners should become familiarized with all the meanings of conditional constructions, discover their full semantic potential and use them accurately in appropriate contexts.
CHAPTER 7
DISCUSSION

The present dissertation aimed to investigate how English conditional constructions are viewed and conceptualized within the Cognitive Linguistics framework, and unveil the deeper cognitive needs motivating their use. The main claim motivating the present study was that conditional constructions convey multiple meanings and these meanings emerge as a result of conceptual blending processes. More specifically, conditional constructions set up alternative mental spaces. The meanings of these alternative spaces are blended into a separate space known as the blend.

Regarding predictive conditionals, it was revealed that they evoke two alternative hypothetical spaces; the first one builds a hypothetical scenario and conditional predictions based on this scenario, whereas the second one is an alternative space. The fulfillment of the protasis is treated as a sufficient precondition for the fulfillment of the apodosis, while the protasis and the apodosis are linked with a cause and effect relation. Using predictive conditionals, we conceptualize and construe a hypothetical space and based upon this we make a prediction for a future event. The event in the protasis is construed as a present situation reflecting the speaker’s speech time.

In many cases, though, speakers choose to construe a factual event as conditional. These conditional constructions are closer to reality and correspond to what Athanasiadou and Dirven (1996, 1997) have named Course of events conditionals. However, no commitment to the actual occurrence of the events is assigned to the constructions. Two mental spaces are set up. The first one is a factual space which expresses an event that always holds under specific circumstances, whereas the second one is an alternative space wherein the conditions expressed in the protasis are not met. The repeated occurrence of the events expressed in such constructions is only implied.

Another category of conditional constructions examined in the study were counterfactual conditionals. Speakers set up a reality space and a counterfactual space. The blending of these two spaces gives rise to constructions introduced by If I were you. In these constructions, the speaker’s personal viewpoint of the reality space merges with the viewpoint of the addressee and is presented as such.
Conditional constructions are not only used for making predictions for future or past situations. Speech act, epistemic, metalinguistic and meta-metaphorical conditional constructions are not employed for purposes of prediction-making. However, they are also involved in setting up alternative mental spaces. Speech act conditionals are used as a background for the performance of the speech act expressed in the apodosis. They are used as a means to express the conditions under which the speech act may occur. The alternative space does not refer to the content of the speech act. Rather, it refers to the usefulness and felicitousness of the speech act.

Epistemic conditionals unfold the reasoning process that the speaker follows in order to make an inference. The reasoning operation has taken place and the conclusion has been drawn. Yet, the speaker construes it in the form of a conditional construction, so as not to impose his/her personal view on the addressees. Epistemic conditionals are prompted by figurative processes and instantiate the conceptual metaphor INFERENCE IS CONDITION. Metalinguistic conditionals are employed by speakers as a means to make comments on their linguistic choices and serve multiple purposes including apologizing or adding irony. Meta-metaphorical conditionals establish a metaphorical relation between two distinct domains. This relation enables us to construe and understand one domain in terms of another.

We have also investigated hypothetical conditionals which are introduced with conjunctions other than if. Prerequisite conditionals introduced by on condition that, provided and providing, set the conditions under which the fulfillment of the apodosis can occur. On the other hand, suppositional conditionals, which are introduced by suppose, supposing and assuming, set a hypothetical scenario and invite the hearers to reflect upon the possible consequences of this scenario.

The impetus for the present study stems from a general lack of systematic organization and usage-based representation of English conditionals in EFL teaching materials. Therefore, we attempted to provide a semantic, cognitive linguistic-based analysis of English conditional constructions which is intended to serve as an effective tool for their teaching. Drawing on the principles of Cognitive Linguistics, we propose a pedagogically-oriented, cognitive linguistics-based approach to teaching English conditionals at different levels of EFL learners. Cognitive Linguistics is a usage-based, meaning-focused model of language. Thus, it enables learners to become aware of form-meaning correspondences and understand how the form is motivated by meaning.
In general, it is claimed that integrating Cognitive Linguistics insights into the EFL classroom promotes the acquisition of grammatical constructions. However, an important limitation of the present study is that the effectiveness of the suggested approach was not empirically tested. Therefore, the present study will be further extended to examine whether and to what extent the practical suggestions we provided facilitate the acquisition of English conditional constructions at different levels. The pedagogical applications we suggest will be applied to different levels and their effectiveness will be investigated through the administration of a pretest and a post test.
CHAPTER 8
CONCLUSION

Overall, the present dissertation aimed to provide a Cognitive Linguistics-based analysis of English conditional constructions, which will hopefully be employed as an effective tool for their teaching. Drawing on Mental Spaces Theory and Conceptual Integration Theory, we probe into the deeper cognitive needs underlying conditional constructions and shed more light on their semantic motivations. The analysis of conditional constructions provided in the study enables us to realize that form is motivated by meaning.

I firmly believe that applying the insights of Cognitive Linguistics to EFL pedagogy in general, and to the instruction of English grammatical constructions, in particular, significantly reinforces the process of teaching conditional constructions and opens new avenues to the teaching of English grammar. Therefore, I will proceed to test the effectiveness of our suggested approach to teaching English conditionals to both young learners and advanced learners so as to provide empirical results for the benefits of integrating the Cognitive Linguistics framework into the teaching of English conditional constructions. Another suggestion for further study is to examine how close conditionality is with modality. The extension of the present analysis to conditional constructions which are introduced by unless and even if, as well as the investigation of mixed conditionals and conjunctionless conditional constructions would also be particularly useful, since it could allow us to gain a better insight into the whole spectrum of this vast grammatical area.
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ELECTRONIC SOURCES

BBC Sport
https://www.bbc.com/sport

https://corpus.byu.edu/bnc/

British Council Grammar-Conditionals

Collins WordBanks Online Corpus
https://wordbanks.harpercollins.co.uk/ca/login/

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English Web Corpus 2013 (enTenTen13), accessed through Sketch Engine

Oxford English Dictionary Online
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