



Conditional imperatives in Latin Comedy

Imperativos condicionais na comédia latina

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ABSTRACT: Traditionally, conditional imperatives are imperative verbs that can be glossed as subordinate conditional clauses. This procedure, however, can be misleading, since the possibility of substitution doesn't guarantee that functional traits will be preserved. Subordinate conditional clauses and their main clauses present some semantic and pragmatic features that can be found in sets of independent clauses: although syntactically independent and conveying different speech acts, two independent clauses can be semantically dependent and part of a larger interactional unit that hierarchizes the speech acts as main and subsidiary acts. Using this procedure of functional equivalence, instances of conditional imperatives in Latin Comedy are analysed, with the conclusion that not all cases reported in the literature should be considered conditional imperatives, since they are not functionally equivalent to subordinate conditional clauses, and there are more economical ways to describe them.

Keywords: Conditional imperatives; Latin; Plautus; Terence.

RESUMO: Tradicionalmente, imperativos condicionais são verbos no imperativo que podem ser glosados como orações subordinadas condicionais. Esse procedimento, no entanto, pode ser enganador, uma vez que a possibilidade de substituição não garante que traços funcionais sejam preservados. Orações subordinadas condicionais e suas orações principais apresentam algumas características semânticas e pragmáticas que podem ser encontradas em conjuntos de orações independentes: embora sintaticamente independentes e expressando atos de fala diferentes, duas orações independentes podem ser semanticamente dependentes e parte de uma unidade interacional maior que hierarquiza os atos de fala em atos principais e subsidiários. Usando esse procedimento de equivalência funcional, exemplos de imperativos condicionais na comédia latina são analisados, com a conclusão de que nem todos os casos apresentados pela bibliografia deveriam ser considerados imperativos condicionais, por não serem funcionalmente equivalentes a orações condicionais subordinadas e por haver modos mais econômicos de os descrever.



Palavras-chave: Imperativos condicionais; latim; Plauto; Terêncio.

Introduction¹

Although particularly appropriate to express directives, due to its non-past meaning oriented to the second person, imperative verb forms in Latin are used to express a variety of other functions. Among them is the so-called conditional use, in which the imperative is usually glossed as the protasis of a subordinate conditional construction. Such use is not restricted to Latin, but is attested also in English, Spanish, German, French, Irish, Czech, and other languages (Jary; Kissine, 2014, p. 111). General observations about the construction in Latin have been made by Bolkestein (1980, p. 44-45) and Risselada (1993, p. 120-122), but to the best of my knowledge there is no deep discussion in the literature about this structure in Latin.

My purpose in this paper is to analyse in detail instances considered by the literature as cases of conditional imperatives in Latin Comedy. But before doing that, I shall come up with semantic and pragmatic criteria to establish whether these imperatives and conditional clauses, two syntactically different constructions, can be considered functionally equivalent: if they are indeed equivalent, we should expect that they can perform similar functions.

1 Semantic and pragmatic features of conditional clauses

Subordinate conditional clauses present a State of Affairs (SoA) that is an assumption or a condition to the existence of the SoA presented in the main clause. They can have past counterfactual meaning, present counterfactual meaning (both called *irrealis* in Latin linguistics), or future non-factual meaning (called *potentialis* in Latin linguistics). Since imperatives always have a non-past unrealized reference, only the last type will interest our discussion.

(1) If John comes, Sara will leave.

¹ I would like to thank Luís Firmino for reading a previous version of this paper and to the anonymous referees for their valuable suggestions.



In (1), the SoA of the main clause will only exist if the SoA of the subordinate clause happens to come true. However, there is nothing in the subordinate clause indicating that the condition it contains will come to existence. Thus, the subordinate conditional clause contains a general idea of doubt about a yet unrealized SoA.

The sentence type of (1) is declarative, with an assertive illocutionary force, i.e. it is a speech act about facts in which the speaker takes responsibility for the description of a SoA. The subordinate clause has no illocutionary force of its own, but is subsidiary to the information being communicated in the main clause, as showed by two assertiveness tests (Cristofaro, 2005, p. 32): sentence negation (example (2)), and changes in the illocutionary force of the sentence, with sentential questioning (example (3)), and tag-questions (example (4)).

(2) It is not the case that, if John comes, Sara will leave.

(3) Is it the case that, if John comes, Sara will leave?

(4) If John comes, Sara will leave, won't she?

In examples (2), (3), and (4), the subordinate SoA is not affected by changes in sentence polarity or illocutionary force, while the main one is. This means that, when someone communicates using a conditional subordinate construction, the main communicative intention of this person, an assertion in the case of (1), is expressed by the main clause. The subordinate SoA has a semantic relation to the main SoA and is semantically and pragmatically subsidiary to it.

To sum up, we have dealt with two features of conditional subordinate constructions: (i) the idea of doubt expressed in the conditional clause and (ii) the fact that the communicative intention (illocutionary force) of the sentence is expressed by the main clause. Both of these features will be later recalled and compared to conditional imperative constructions.

2 The coding of main and subsidiary speech acts: the interactional move

In her study about directive expressions in Latin, Risselada (1993, p. 37) proposes a typology of speech acts, but states that the analysis of some of them depends on higher interactional structures. In this sense, some speech acts have a characteristic position in the ongoing discourse and are particularly dependent on the surrounding speech acts. For example,



the granting of permission occurs after an initiative of the addressee requesting the consent of the speaker.

An exchange would consist of an initiating move by one speaker and a reactive move by the interlocutor. A move in turn may consist of a single speech act, but it can be made up of more, being “usually build up around one central ‘main’ act, whose illocutionary function determines the interactional function of the move as a whole”, and which is “accompanied by one or more ‘subsidiary’ acts” (Risselada, 1993, p. 54). These subsidiary acts can fulfil several functions, such as present “a justification or a motivation for the main act” (Risselada, 1993, p. 54). According to this approach, (i) the communicative intention of the speaker in a move is expressed by the main speech act, even though the subsidiary acts have illocutionary forces of their own, and that (ii) the subsidiary acts maintain semantic or pragmatic relations with this main act.

We can assume that these semantic relations established between main and subsidiary speech acts in a move may also indirectly establish the same relations between the SoAs referred to in those speech acts. However, similar semantic relations between SoAs may also be expressed with different coding, for example, subordinate clauses. These ideas will be now further explored with a case study: the speech act of an offer.

An offer may be characterized as a commissive speech act in which the speaker commits him-/herself to a future action, that will only be executed provided that the addressee gives his/her consent. In this sense, an offer is a speech act that exists in a larger interactional unit, in which the speaker makes an initial move with the offer, and the addressee reacts in a move giving or not the consent for the first speaker to execute the act. The consent is therefore some kind of *condition* for the execution of the act proposed by the speaker.

(5) Do you want me to do that? # Yes. / No.

In (5), the offer is expressed in an interrogative sentence, by means of a subordinate structure. The construction carries the main features of the speech act *offer* just described: the main verb *want* enquires about the desire of the addressee and therefore about his/her consent, the subordinate verb *to do* expresses the SoA to be carried out by the speaker, and the interrogative sentence type provides an open description of this SoA, a feature of doubt that



points to the optionality given to the addressee. The same thing could be expressed with a different coding.

(6) If you wash the dishes, I will give you a kiss.

In (6) we still have an offer: the main clause *I will give you a kiss* presents a SoA to be executed by the speaker, but the condition to its fulfilment is presented in a conditional subordinate clause and concerns not a verbal consent but a consent in the form of an act to be performed by the addressee. The addressee has the option to perform or not the subordinate SoA, and this optionality can be inferred by the idea of doubt that conditional clauses convey, already discussed in the previous section. Also, it is the main clause that convey the speech act of the utterance, a commissive act, slightly modified by the interactional condition to an offer.² The same relations can be coded by means of independent sentences:

(7) Wash the dishes and I will give you a kiss.

In (7), the first verb requires an action from the addressee, which could be characterized as a directive speech act, and the second verb expresses a commissive act. However, a conditional semantic relation between both SoAs can be inferred: the speaker will not give a kiss if the addressee doesn't wash the dishes. The addressee has the option to comply or not with it (the element of doubt typical of conditional sentences we discussed), and the commissive act will only occur provided that the addressee gives his/her consent, not with words, but with an act. The characterization of this act is harmonic to an imperative form, since imperatives are specialized in expressing non-past unrealized SoAs referring to the addressee.

The previous description of (7) is exactly that of an offer. Although an action of the addressee is required by the first speech act,³ it is only subsidiary, as a *condition* to the main act expressed, a promise. In this sense (7) is characterized as being one move, with two speech acts:

² Assertiveness tests can be applied. Sentential negation: 'It is not the case that I will give you a kiss, if you wash the dishes.' (negation only affects the main clause). Change of illocutionary force: 'Is it the case that I will kiss you, if you wash the dishes?' (the element of doubt of a question only applies to the main clause).

³ This is recognized in the typology of Jary and Kissine (2014) by the label 'Directive imperative-like conditional'.



the commissive act conveying the main communicative intention of the speaker, and the directive as a subsidiary act in a conditional semantic relation to the main act. To make it clear, there is semantic subordination between both sentences (conditionality), but instead of using syntactic subordination to express it a coordinate construction is employed.⁴

Considering the discussion above, a conditional imperative should not express the main communicative intention of the speaker, but rather a subsidiary act (a condition) to the main act. This can only be interpreted considering the whole communicative situation, which can lead to more subjective analyses. It should also have a feature of optionality regarding a non-realized SoA, related to the doubt typical of conditional clauses. With this, an imperative has more chances of being functionally equivalent to a conditional construction.

3 Conditional imperatives in Latin Comedy

In this section, I will analyse all tokens of present imperatives in Early Latin classified as *protasis* by Bennett (1910, p. 353), which are not exhaustive. Since there are only 12 tokens that are mentioned (from Plautus and Terence), all of them will be briefly discussed.⁵ The analyses, as the previous sections may have made it clear, are heavily context-dependent, which always carries some subjectivity. Therefore, divergent readings from other scholars are naturally expected. I hope that the criteria discussed above and applied in what follows can provide somewhat more objective instruments of analysis.

(8) *Amph.* 286

SOS *credo edepol equidem dormire Solem atque appotum probe;*

mira sunt nisi inuitauit sese in cena plusculum.

MER *ain uero, uerbero? deos esse tui similis putas?*

ego pol te istis tuis pro dictis et male factis, furcifer,

⁴ Cf. Culicover and Jackendoff (1997). A huge difference between their study and this one is that their examples have no context and the conditional meaning is always presupposed when tests are applied: 'The judgement that conditionals with *if* are an appropriate paraphrase is of course intuitive.' (p. 197, footnote 4). In our case, the conditional meaning cannot be taken for granted but must be somehow understood from the communicative situation presented in the texts. This paper, therefore, tries to come up with somewhat more objective features that would lie behind intuition.

⁵ The text and English translations of Plautus and Terence are taken respectively from the recent Loeb editions by Wolfgang de Melo (2011-2013) and John Barsby (2001).



accipiam; modo sis ueni huc: inuenies infortunium.

‘SOS I think Sol is asleep, after some heavy drinking. It would be strange if he hasn’t drunk his own health a bit much at dinner. MER (*aside*) Do you really say so, you thug? Do you think the gods are similar to you? Well, for those words and for that bad behavior of yours I’ll give you a reception, you criminal. **Just come here, will you, and you’ll meet trouble.**’ (*Amph.* 282-286).

Mercurius has not been seen by Sosia so far, so this is an aside, an unconventional communicative situation, which poses significant interpretation difficulties. He is reproaching the assumption made by Sosia about Sol, and is angry. If the excerpt in bold is equivalent to a conditional construction, the main speech act should be the threat expressed by *inuenies infortunium* and the imperative should be a subsidiary act, with an optional character.

A first possibility is to consider that the use of *modo sis*⁶ indicates that the imperative is being used in its full illocutionary force as a directive, meaning that Mercurius indeed wants Sosia to come so that he can beat him, since he is angry; no optionality would be at stake. The sentence *inuenies infortunium* would then be an assertive subsidiary act, indicating the consequences of him coming.

Alternatively, we could understand that the main act is actually *inuenies infortunium*, so that a threat is being made to a virtual interlocutor, and that the directive is weak in force, exactly because the addressee is virtual.

Although I tend to prefer the first reading because *modo sis* seems to be meaningful, it is safer to consider this example ambiguous, since the communicative situation is unconventional and it doesn’t have, therefore, a straightforward interpretation.

(9) *Asin.* 350

LEO *quoniam ille elocutus haec sic* — LIB *quid tum?* LEO ***ausculta ergo, scies.***

‘LEO When he’d said this — LIB (interrupting) What then? LEO **Well, listen and you’ll know.**’ (*Asin.* 350).

⁶ Adams (1984, p. 67): ‘*Sis* is urgent rather than polite in Plautus. It must once have been intended to soften an order [...], but it took on the tone of the orders with which it was commonly associated.’



Leonida is telling some facts, and Libanus anxiously interrupts him. After uttering the excerpt in bold, Leonida continues the story. It is quite clear that the real intention of Leonida is to make Libanus stop interrupting, *i.e.* to be quiet, paying attention. In this sense, it seems that the main illocutionary force is of a directive. The sentence *scies* would be subsidiary to indicate the (positive) consequences of being quiet listening, and somehow answering to the question of Libanus: a question is a request for information, but to obtain it, Libanus doesn't need to ask, just be quiet. We could paraphrase the whole excerpt as 'Be quiet and listen, if you want to know', or as attested in *Persa* 701 *ausculta ergo, ut scias*. 'Then listen so that you may know'.

One could counterargument that a sentence like *si auscultabis, scies* would be equivalent to what Leonida actually said. The context, nevertheless, would force us to interpret it as an attempt to make Libanus quiet, so that this conditional construction would not express an assertive speech act (as implied at the first sight by the main verb *scies*), but actually an *indirect* directive. It seems therefore less economical to suppose that a direct speech act, such as expressed by *ausculta* would be better glossed as a construction that would require a contextual interpretation as an indirect speech act.

(10) *Asin.* 723

LEO *opta id quod ut contingat tibi uis*. ARG *quid si optaro?* LEO *eueniet*.

ARG *opto annum hunc perpetuom mihi huius operas*. LEO *impetrasti*.

ARG *ain uero?* LEO *certe inquam*. LIB *ad me adi uicissim atque experire*.

exopta id quod uis maxume tibi euenire: fiet.

'LEO (*approaching Argyrippus*) Wish for what you want to happen to you. ARG What if I do?

LEO It'll come true. ARG I wish that throughout this entire year I have this girl's attentions.

LEO You've achieved it. ARG Do you really say so? LEO Certainly, I'm telling you. LIB Now

it's your turn to come to me and try. **Wish for what you want to happen to you most: it'll take place.**' (*Asin.* 720-723).

The slaves Leonida and Libanus are in possession of the money that will allow the young man Argyrippus to be with his girlfriend for a year. After humiliating the two, the slaves are preparing the ground to finally give the money to the young man. So both Leonida in v. 720 *eueniet* and Libanus in v. 723 *fiet* are making a promise to fulfil the young man's wishes,



provided he asks for it. What is particularly interesting in this example is that vv. 720 and 723 are functionally equivalent: they are used to settle the terms of the promise. In v. 720 the first utterance, a directive, doesn't make Leonida's communicative intentions clear, so that Argyrippus need to ask what would happen if he complies with the directive. Leonida then makes a promise, a commissive act, the main act. What is particularly interesting is that the conditional nature of the promise is made explicit by Argyrippus' utterance *quid si optaro?*. Libanus in turn avoids these extra steps relating the condition *exopta* (the subsidiary act) to the promise *fiet* (the main act) right away. Therefore, the conditional nature of the imperative *exopta* is beyond doubt especially due to the functional equivalence between vv. 720 and 723.

(11) *Asin.* 876

ART *is etiam corruptus porro suum corrumpit filium.*

PAR *sequere hac me modo, iam faxo ipsum hominem manifesto opprimas.*

ART *nihil ecastor est quod facere mauelim.*

'ART And this corrupt person then corrupts his son. HAN **Just follow me this way, I'll make sure that you'll catch the chap himself in flagrante in a moment.** ART Yes, there's nothing I'd prefer to do.' (*Asin.* 875-877).

Artemona, the wife of the old man Demaenetus, was informed by a hanger-on that her husband was in a brothel, and is now raging against him. In the text in bold, the hanger-on offers her a chance to bust her husband in the act. His utterance is composed by the subsidiary directive speech act *sequere hac me modo*, and the main act *iam faxo ipsum hominem manifesto opprimas*, which is characterized by the main verb *faxo*, meaning 'I'll make sure', 'I warrant', *i.e.* a promise. The previous and following contexts strongly indicates that this is the proper analysis. Before the utterance of the hanger-on, the wife is raging, suggesting, as a typical Roman *matrona* in comedy, that she wants to bust and scold her husband. After it, her answer makes reference to her desire anaphorically (*quod*): the reference cannot be just to follow, but to catch the husband in the act. We can then assume that, given those contexts, the communicative intention of the hanger-on is mainly to offer her the opportunity to catch the husband, which is only possible if she follows him, so the imperative should be conditional.



(12) *Bacch.* 1023

CHRY *estne istuc istic scriptum?* NIC *em specta, tum scies.*

CHRY *ut qui deliquit supplex est ultro omnibus!*

‘CHRY Is that written there? NIC (*showing him the letter*) **There, look, then you’ll know.**

CHRY How the delinquent is willing to fawn on everyone!’ (*Bacch.* 1023-1024).

The old man Nicobulus is reading out loud to the slave Chrysalus a letter sent by his son Mnesilochus, but originally dictated by Chrysalus himself. After copious compliments to the slave are read, they engage in the dialogue above. The case is similar to that in example (9) *Asin.* 350, previously discussed: the main act is the directive expressed by *specta*, and *tum scies* is subsidiary. Two facts seem to favour this reading: (i) given Chrysalus’ reaction in verse 1024, he seems to have in fact read the letter himself, complying with the directive *specta*; and (ii) the interjection *em* is originally the imperative of *eme* grammaticalized as such, indicating the movement of giving the slave the letter so he can see it himself, meaning that *specta* expresses Nicobulus main communicative intention.

(13) *Miles* 520

SCE *ita est ista huius similis nostrai tua,*

siquidem non eadem est. PER *uise ad me intro, iam scies.*

SCE *licetne?* PER *quin te iubeo; et placide noscita.*

SCE *ita facere certum est.*

‘SCE that guest of yours is so similar to this girl of ours, if indeed it isn’t the same person. PER **Go look inside at my place, you’ll know it at once.** SCE May I? PER Yes; what’s more, I order you to do it; and discover the truth in your own time. SCE I’m resolved to do so.’ (*Miles* 519-522).

The slave Sceledrus is surprised by the fact that there would be a girl in the house of the old man Periplectomenus, their neighbour, that is allegedly identical to the one that should be inside his master’s house. The old man then invites the slave to visit and check it with his own eyes. The directive communicative intention of the old man’s utterance is beyond doubt, because of Sceledrus’ request for permission *licetne?*, and especially Periplectomenus’ performative *te iubeo*. Again, a case similar to example (9) *Asin.* 350.



(14) *Pseud.* 49

CALI *recita modo: ex tabellis iam faxo scies
quam subito argento mi usus inuento siet.*

‘Just read it out; I’ll make sure that in a second you’ll know from the tablets how immediately I need to find money.’ (*Pseud.* 49-50).

Just before these verses, the slave Pseudolus had started reading to the young man Calidorus a letter sent by his lover asking for help. After a comic digression about the nature of this help, Calidorus wants Pseudolus to resume reading (*recita modo*). In line 51, this is what Pseudolus does, so we can assume that the young man’s communicative intention has a directive nature, and that the sentence of *faxo scies* offers a justification why Pseudolus should just keep reading.

(15) *Rud.* 386

TRA *sed duce me ad illam ubi est. AMP i sane in Veneris fanum huc intro,
sedentem flentemque opprimes.*

‘TRA But take me where she is. AMP **Do go in here into the temple of Venus and you’ll find her sitting and crying.**’ (*Rud.* 386-387).

The slave Trachalio is looking for the girl Palaestra, but before that he meets Ampelisca, her companion. In the excerpt above, the slave commands Ampelisca to take him to Palaestra (*duce*). With the speech act he performs, he expects his addressee to execute some kind of action. Instead of complying with this order and answering with an act, Ampelisca answers with information, with which he can find Palaestra. She is not particularly interested in him going or not, so the imperative *i* doesn’t seem to express her main intention. Therefore, the main act is the assertion expressed by *opprimes*, which agrees with the reading above: instead of acting, she answered with information, facts. A paraphrase with a conditional structure would maintain the same communicative intention, an assertion.

(16) *Rud.* 1007 and 1010

TRA *uerbum etiam adde unum, iam in cerebro colaphos apstrudam tuo;
iam ego te hic, itidem quasi peniculus novos exurgeri solet,*



ni hunc amittis, exurgebo quicquid umoris tibi est.

GRI *tange: affligam ad terram te itidem ut piscem soleo polypum.*

‘Just add one word and I’ll bury my fists in your brains. If you don’t let go of it, I’ll squeeze you out here, whatever liquid you have in you, just as a new sponge is normally squeezed out.

Touch me: I’ll knock you to the ground just as I normally do with an octopus. Do you want to fight?’ (*Rud.* 1007-1010).

In contrast to example (8) *Amph.* 286 discussed before, which have an unconventional communicative situation, this excerpt is part of a direct interaction between the slave Trachalio and the fisherman Gripus, so it is clear that we are dealing with threats. The imperative *adde* in *Rud.* 1007 is not a directive, since Trachalio does not want Gripus to comply with it, but is actually the condition which, once fulfilled, will make the commissive act expressed by the sentence of *apstrudam* become true. Since the outcome of this commissive act is not beneficial to the addressee, it is not a promise, but a threat. Therefore, here a conditional paraphrase would fit well, without the need for an indirect interpretation. This is further proved by the fact that a threat with such a structure actually occurs in the following verses (1008-1009).

Gripus in turn answers with another threat in line 1010: he is not ordering Trachalio to touch him (*tange*), but announcing the condition under which the SoA expressed by *affligam* will come true.

(17) *Rud.* 1088

GRI *nihil hercle ego sum isti daturus.* TRA *nil peto nisi cistulam*

et crepundia. GRI *quid si ea sunt aurea?* TRA *quid istuc tua?*

aurum auro expendetur, argentum argento exaequabitur.

GRI *fac sis aurum ut uideam, post ego faciam ut uideas cistulam.*

DAE *caue malo ac tace tu. tu perge ut occepisti dicere.*

‘GRI I won’t give her anything. TRA I’m not demanding anything except for the box and the tokens. GRI What if they’re made of gold? TRA What does that matter to you? Gold will be compensated for with the same weight of gold, silver will be counterbalanced with silver. GRI **Let me see the gold, then I’ll let you see the box.** DAE (*to Gripus*) You, watch out for trouble and be quiet. (*to Trachalio*) You, continue to speak as you’ve begun.’ (*Rud.* 1085-1089).



The slave Trachalio and the old man Daemones are trying to convince the fisherman Gripus to give them some items that are said to be inside a trunk he found. The fisherman is afraid that the items are valuable. He is offered gold and silver, but he is reluctant and doesn't seem to believe the promise. So when he utters the imperative *fac*, although he would like his addressee to comply with it, he is uncertain of this possibility. It is different from when someone shows the money and the other says *give it to me*. This uncertainty is akin to a conditional meaning, as we discussed previously. Besides, the second SoA expressed by the verb *faciam*, will only be true provided that the first comes to exist. If we analyse the interaction, the information in this second sentence is the most important: it is there that the fisherman makes some kind of promise about the topic that most interest his addressees, whether or not he will give them the desired items. For these reasons, it seems to be the main act, and the imperative *fac* a subsidiary act. A conditional paraphrase would have the same function.

(18) *Phorm.* 561

GET *iam feres.*

sed opus est mihi Phormionem ad hanc rem adiutorem dari.

PHAE *praestost. audacissime oneris quiduis impone et feret.*

solus est homo amico amicus.

'GET You shall have them now. But I need to have Phormio to help me in this. PHAE He's at your service. **You can confidently lay on him any burden you like and he'll be equal to it.** He's a friend to his friends, if anybody is.' (*Phorm.* 559-562).

In this excerpt, the young man Phaedria warrants that the hanger-on Phormio will help the slave Geta, after the latter requested it. The main act in Phaedria's utterance is expressed in the first sentence *praestost*, by which he agrees with Geta's request. The other sentences are explanations (assertions) to assure that the promise will be fulfilled: Phormio works hard and is a good friend. Because of this, the imperative *imponere* is not a directive, but refers to a hypothetical situation, unrealized. This is further evidenced by *quiduis*, which expresses optionality. These facts make the imperative akin to a conditional structure.



Conclusions

In the first section, I tried to come up with features that could indicate that an imperative was functionally equivalent to a conditional construction, and in the last section to apply those criteria to twelve tokens of Latin Comedy considered by Bennett as examples of conditional imperatives.

The following seven examples proved to contain an imperative functionally equivalent to a conditional construction: (10) *Asin.* 723, (11) *Asin.* 876, (15) *Rud.* 386, (16) *Rud.* 1007 and *Rud.* 1010, (17) *Rud.* 1088, (18) *Phorm.* 561. All the imperatives conveyed speech acts that were subsidiary to a main act, some presented clear signs of optionality, and in some cases the speaker didn't even want the addressee to execute the unrealized SoA, an indication that the imperative was devoid of directive force. One token – example (8) *Amph.* 286 – had to be considered ambiguous, owing to its unconventional communicative situation, that left us without enough elements to reach a solid conclusion about the communicative intentions of the speaker.

The remaining four imperatives – examples (9) *Asin.* 350, (12) *Bacch.* 1023, (13) *Miles* 520, (14) *Pseud.* 49 – seemed to maintain its directive force and express the main communicative intention of the utterance, because the following utterances had clear evidences that the desired act was executed. In all cases, a paraphrase with a conditional construction was possible, but it forcibly had to be interpreted as an *indirect* directive, so that it would not be functionally equivalent to a conditional construction. Therefore, this further step makes the conditional paraphrase a less economical description than just maintaining the imperative with its full force. Curiously, all four tokens had as second element a verb of knowledge in the future (*scies*), which indicated the consequence expected if the addressee complied with the act expressed by the imperative.

All in all, it is not because a paraphrase with a different syntactic structure is viable that both the original and the new structure should automatically be considered equivalent: semantic and pragmatic traits may not be preserved, and in this case, if we want to preserve them, further interpretive steps may be needed, making the description less economical than it can be.



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