# Conditional Sentences in the Ogba

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**Abstract**

This paper analyses the conditional sentences in the Ogba language with the use of the conditional conjunction 'Odika'(if) and 'Obula' (if).' Where 'Odika' represents sentences whose verbs are in their present tenses, and 'Obula' represents sentences whose verbs are in their past tenses. To carry out this study, the researcher adopted the descriptive research design with a population of 14 native speakers to elicit data in a face-face interview situation. Findings of this paper reveal that Ogba conditional sentences can be semantically classified into real conditionals, factual or predictive conditionals and unreal conditionals, hypothetical/or counterfactual conditionals. This paper also established that syntactically,conditional sentences can be classified into zero conditionals, first conditionals (Conditional I), second conditionals (Conditional II), and third conditionals (Conditional III).

## 1. Introduction

Language can be seen as a system of rules and principles. This system has a structure as well as meaning which is inbuilt and therefore can be used for communication. Having established the fact that language is used for communication, it is necessary to point out that not only is it used for communication but it is an essential tool for communication. As communication is the transfer of information from one person to another, any kind of information (facts, details, thoughts, feelings etc) can be transferred as well as received through diverse ways of expression, such as through the use of idioms, proverbs,

figurative expressions, conditional sentences, imperatives as well as declarative sentences all embedded in one language.

For the sake of this research, the researcher will be dealing on the use of conditional sentences in Ogba language. According to Dancygier (1998:1), conditional sentence refers to a complex sentence composed of the main clause (called apodosis or symbolized as 'q') and a subordinate clause (called protasis or symbolized 'P'). The protasis is introduced by a conjunction which is 'if' in English language'.

This research, therefore, aims at examining conditional sentences in Ogba language with a closer look at determining syntactically their internal structure, principles, parameters, formation as well as the meaning which they convey. This paper examines conditional sentences but will pay attention to the protasis which is a conditional sentence introduced by *odika* 'if' in Ogba.

This paper is organized as follows: section 1 is the introduction while section 2 is the objectives of the work and section 3 is significance of the study. Section 4 is the methodology and section 5 is the literature review. Section 6 discusses the classifications of conditional sentences in Ogba. Section 5 is the summary and conclusion.

**2. Objectives of the study**

The objectives of this paper are:

I. to identify the conditional sentences in Ogba language
ii. to find out words which are used to represent the word 'if' in the Ogba language which show conditions
Iii. to identify the semantic classification of conditional sentences in Ogba language
Iv. to identify the syntactic classification of conditional sentences in Ogba language

**3. Significance of the study**

As regards to the Ogba language, little or no work has been done, especially in conditional sentences. Therefore, this study is meant to bring to light the conditional sentences as used in the Ogba language as well as the semantic and syntactic classifications of these conditional sentences. This study will also help language scholars and researchers in their investigation of such sentences in related languages.

4. **Methodology**

The researcher employed descriptive survey method to carry out this research as well as to elicit data from the native speakers. Face-to-face interview was used by the researcher

in asking the native speakers questions. Therefore, the research was qualitative in nature. The population of the study is the native speakers of the Ogba language. Bunce and Johnson (2006) recommend that a qualitative study requires a minimum sample size of at least 12 respondents. Therefore, to reach data saturation, the researcher used 14 adult native speakers to execute this research. The respondents were professionally selected and interviewed. Interview was conducted and the responses of the respondents were recorded and then properly analyzed.

**5. Literature Review**

The word conditional sentence can also be referred to as 'conditionals'. Various definitions of conditionals have been put forth in the body of the literature by various scholars.

According to Bennett (2003), conditional sentence is a sentence that contains two clauses; main clause and the subordinate clause. And in such cases, the subordinate clause is introduced by a conditional conjunction. Crystal (2008) also defines conditionals as sentence containing clauses whose semantic role is to express hypothesis or conditionals. Bhatt and Pancheva (2007), commenting on conditionals states that conditional structures are usually interpreted in general terms having an antecedent clause specifying the circumstance in which the proposition conveyed in the main clause is true. According to Dancygier (1998) and Bennett (2003), conditionals refer to sentences that are introduced by conditional conjunctions. They gave the following examples:

1. If it rains, the match will be cancelled.
2. If it rained the match would be cancelled.
3. If it had rained, the match would have been cancelled.
4.

Furthermore, Bhatt and Pancheva (2007) states that there are certain conditionals which are not introduced by a conditional conjunction.

5. Examples: (a) Kiss my dog and you will get fleas
   (b) For you to do that, it would be nice.
   (c) Skip your meal and you will have ulcer.

In sentence (a), it is similar to saying 'if you kiss my dog, you will get fleas', as well as 'if you do that, it would be nice' including 'if you skip your meal, you will have ulcer'. This therefore shows a causal relationship between two clauses even without the presence of a conditional conjunction. Bhatt and Pancheva (2007) are of the opinion that this kind of conditionals may be wide spread in other languages not only in the English language.

**Classifications of Conditionals**

Some scholars have classified conditionals into semantic and syntactic categories.

**Semantic Classification of Conditionals**

Several researchers have attempted to semantically classify conditional sentences. Dancygier (1998) notes that there are two types of conditional sentences in literature. These types are: open conditional sentences which can also be called real, neutral or factual conditional sentences, and the second one being hypothetical conditional sentences which can also be called non-factual, unreal, counter-factual or rejected conditional sentences. In stating the difference between the two types of conditional sentences, Dancygier (1998:30) went further to state that upon conditional sentences do not make any prediction about the fulfillment or non-fulfillment of the condition. While he stated that hypothetical conditional sentences express the speaker's negative belief to the fulfillment of that condition.

According to Dancygier (1998), it is safe to say that open conditional sentences are neutral that is they do not give a standpoint on the fulfillment or non- fulfillment of the conditional being made in the sentence whereas hypothetical conditional sentences portrays in them a contrary belief or assumption to the condition being made in the sentences. Furthermore, Dancygier (1998) points out that conditional sentences can be predictive or non- predictive. He therefore, defines predictive conditional sentence as a conditional sentence which stands for predictive reasoning and is therefore marked with if-backshift in the subordinate clause and have a predictive modal in their main clauses. From the above therefore, according to Dancygier (1998) backshift refers to the cases in a language where a verb refers to a time later than a time it marked in the sentences. For example:

6. (a) If she comes, the meeting will be held.
   (b) If she came, the meeting would be held.
   (c) If she had come, the meeting would have been held.

In the sentences above, the verbs 'come', 'came', 'had come' are examples of backshift because the verb come in sentence (5a) marked in the present tense, but refers to the future came in sentence (5b), is marked in the past tense but it refers to the future and 'had come' in sentence (5c), is marked for past perfect tense but refers to the past. From the foregoing, it can be deduced that the sentences above are the examples of predictive conditional sentences. On the other hand, he gave the definition of non-predictive conditional sentences as conditional sentences in which verb forms contained in them are marked for the time they refer to. What this means is that, the verbs are not back-shifted. They are used in conditional sentences the same way as they are used in regular sentences. Also, there is

no constraint between the subordinate clause (protasis) and the main clause (apodosis) in terms of sequence. That is, unlike the predictive conditional clause where the event in the subordinate clause have to occur before the event in the main clause. In the non-predictive conditional clause, the events in the main clause may occur before the event in the subordinate clause. Dancygier (1998:62) gives the following examples to illustrate non-predictive conditional sentences.

7. (a) If he will not arrive before time, there is no point in ordering for him.
   (b) If she is in the lobby, the plane arrived early

From the explanations above of conditional sentences, Kautman (2001) also agrees with Dancygier (1998) in stating that conditional sentences can be grouped into two semantic types: real and unreal conditionals. Kautman (2001) states that in the difference between real and unreal conditional sentences is that in a real conditional sentences, there are no backshift as well as the speaker has no idea about the fulfillment of the condition stated in the sentence whereas in unreal conditional sentence, the speaker has a negative belief towards the accomplishment of the condition as well as the involvement of a backshift.
From Dancygier (1998) and Kautman (2001) findings therefore, we can say that hypothetical conditional sentences are predictive whereas open conditional sentences are non-predictive.

**Syntactic Classification of Conditionals**
Dancygier (1998) observes that the English subordinate clause can be called the conditional clause. It is commonly introduced by the conjunction 'if' or other conjunctions or expressions such as when, provided that, unless, etc. Dancygier (1998) notes that syntactically, conditionals are classified into four:

I. Zero conditionals,
ii. First conditionals or conditional 1,
iii. Second conditionals or conditional II and
iv. Third conditionals or conditional III.

Each type of conditional sentence uses different tenses to show the difference in their implications.

**Zero Conditionals**: This refers to conditions in which a simple implication is being expressed. That is conditional sentences are sentences which are used to express truth. That

is, things which always happen provided certain conditions takes place. In this case, both clauses (apodosis, protasis) are in present tense.

| If clause + Present Simple | Main Clause |
|---|---|
| If you heat the water to 100 degrees, | it boils |
| If you heat iron | it expands |
| If you freeze water to zero degrees, | it turns to ice |

From the examples above, the ideas expressed are universal and generally accepted to be true or known facts. Therefore, zero conditional is a real conditional.

**First Conditional or Conditional 1**:
This is a conditional sentence in which possibilities in the future are expressed. In this case, future events are determined based on the consequence of what will happen. The first conditional sentences use the present tense and the future tense. Where the condition is expressed in the present and the consequence is expressed in the future tense. Therefore, first conditionals are predictive conditionals.

| Examples: | Subordinate Clause | Main Clause |
|---|---|---|
| | If + present finite | Future (will) + infinite notion it |
| | If it rains | we will have to cancel |
| | If you study hard | You will pass the text |
| | If I travel, | I will get something nice for you. |
| | If they stop talking, | we will finish our lesson |
| | If you take the dog for a walk, | I will give you some money etc |

**Second Conditionals or conditional II**: This is a conditional sentence which is used for expressing unreal situations or events in the present or in the future. Therefore, it is a hypothetical conditional sentence such that unreal situations in the present or future time frame are expressed with false or unlikely to happen. That is to say that second conditionals are used to express improbable future events or imaginary present situations.

| Example: | if clause | main clause |
|---|---|---|
| | If I had a million dollars | I would stop working |
| | If I won the lottery | I would buy a penthouse. |

**Third Conditionals or conditionals III:** Third conditionals are conditional sentences in which unreal situations in the past is being expressed. What this means is, things that did

not happen in the past is being expressed. This is also a hypothetical conditional. This conditional sentence always expresses regret or criticism.

Examples: Subordinate Clause Main Clause
If I had studied harder, life would have been easy
If you had stopped talking, we would have been through with our lectures.
If I had known that you were coming, I would have met you in the park.

**Role of Conditional Conjunction**

According to Dancygier (1998), conjunctions used in a conditional sentence can have two roles. The first role is to mark non-assertiveness. This it does by positioning in front of an assumption thereby showing that these are reasons for presenting such assumption which now makes it in-assertive. The second role it plays is that, it introduces the conditional clauses which creates a link between the conditional and result clause in the sentence. Tynan and Lavin (1997) asserts that the main role of the conditional conjunction in a conditional sentence is to portray the assumptions of the speaker concerning the connection between the two clauses in the sentence. That is, they state the conditional sentence to mean that if the conditional clause is true, the result clause will be true without the speaker stating that the conditional clause is true.

**6. Conditional Sentences in Ogba**

Conditional sentences in Ogba refer to complex sentences which are composed of the main clause and a subordinate clause usually introduced by a conjunction. In Ogba, conditional sentences are formed by the use of the conditional conjunction *odika* 'if' and *obula* 'if' which also stands for 'if'. The sentences below show samples of the if-conditional sentences in Ogba. Conditional sentences are illustrated in the following sentences.

8. **Odikà** e nòdi odùn l'elu èkwà ò mè bawàga
If 2sg stay sit pp up egg it will break
'If you sit on the egg, the egg cracks'.

9. **Odikà** e wèrèrì ǹkklama kù là ùso èwù ulò ò mè bawàga
If 2sg take out bottle knock pp corner body house it will break
'If you smash the bottle on the wall, it breaks'.

10. **Odikà** Ada **wèrè** rì abampìsì **wèrè kù** Ugo, Ugo **mè kwa** ekwa
If Ada take out cane collect flog Ugo Ugo will cry

Cry.
'If Ada flogs Ugo with cane, Ugo will cry'.

11. **Odika** wo rì wori l'ùtù, egurùn adȉwonbri eguwò wò
If 3sg eat something to eat pp morning hungry is not there to hungry 3pl l'ènyànsì
Pp night
'If they eat this morning, they will not feel hungry in the night'.

12. **Obula** awùrù' m egò ozo abià zulam ewu
If (pst) I own poss money another I would bought goat.
'If I had more money, I would buy a goat'.

13. **Obula** e règà'm wòri abià ewòm agò ayayà
If (pst) I sell poss food I would have money plenty.
'If I used to sell food, I would have more money'.

14. **Obula** e rìrèm wòri e wùrù'm agò ayayà
I (pst) I sell (present) food I have poss money plenty
'If I sold food, I have more money'.

15. **Obula** e règà'm wòri abià ewòm agò ayayà
If (pst) I sell poss food I would have money plenty.
'If I have sold food, I would have more money'.

16. **Odika** minì ozòn kùsì(rì) nyè mè je eketezi
If water fall finish we will go outside
'If rain stops falling, we can go outside'.

17. **Odika** i chùrò iri irin, i mè je ahia
If you want eat food you will go market
'If you want to eat food, you should/must go to the market'.

18. **Obula** e rìgàm wòri ayayàe mè bià bù ìbù
If I eat poss food plenty I will now fat big
'If I had eating much food, I will be fat'.

19. Odika mmu rù kòmà orun m jà ru è mè zu rà
If I work finish work I am working I will sleep sleep
'If I have finished doing my work, I will sleep'.

20. **Obula** àwùrù m egò òzò àbià zulam ewu
If (pst) I-own poss money another I-would bought goat.
'If I had more money, I would buy a goat'.

21. **Obula** awùrùm egò ayayà, àbià zu ewu
If I-own money plenty I-would have bought goat
'If I had had more money, I would have bought a goat'.

22. **Obula** mmu nìgrà ekwà kra òni òbià re ègwandè
If (pst) me (poss) give cloth more than this he cone sell some
'If I had given him more cloths, he would have sold some.'

The examples (7-21) show conditional conjunction odikà 'if' and *obula* 'if' as used to express both real and unreal, factual and non- factual conditions. The conditional conjunction 'ódikà and obula' occur at the initial position of the subordinate clause.

**Relationship between the conditional conjunction 'odika' and the conjunction 'obula' of conditional sentences in Ogba.**

The relationship between the conditional conjunctions- 'odikà'and 'obula' in conditional sentences is determined by the tense or verb form which is contained in the conditional sentence. What this means is that, the appearance of 'odikà' or 'obula' in a conditional sentence is dependent on the tense of the verb used in the sentence.
Examples:

22. Odikà e **rìrèm** wòri è**wùru** m egō ayayà
If (present) I sell food I have poss money plenty
'If I have to sell food, I have more money'.

23. Obula e **règà** m wōri **àbià** **wò** m egō ayaya
If (pst) I sell poss food I would have have money plenty
If I have to sell food, I would have had more money.

From the observation in (22-23), it is seen that the conditional conjunction 'odikà' and 'obula' differs in terms of the kind of tenses used in the sentences.

*Odikà* 'if' is used for sentences whose verbs are in their present or present perfect form while 'obula' 'if' is used in sentences whose verbs are in their past or past perfect tenses.

24. Odikà i nòdi odùn l'elu èkwà ò mè bawàga
If 2sg stay sit pp egg it will break
'If you sit on egg, it breaks'.

25. Obula i **nòdi** odùn l'elu èkwà ò **bià** **bawàga**
If (pst perf) 2sg stay sit pp egg it would have broken
'If you had sat on egg, it would have broken''.

From the foregoing in (24-25), it is noticed that the conditional conjunction 'odikà' is used in present and present perfect tense whereas the conjunction 'obula' is used for past and past perfect tenses. It is worthy to note also that wherever the conditional conjunction 'obula' appears, it would follow the word 'abia' which means 'would have'. This, therefore, depicts the perfect tense.

Examples:

26. Obula àwùrù' m egò òzò **àbià** **zula** m ewu.
If (pst) I own poss money another I would bought I goat.
'If I had more money, I would buy a goat'.

27. Obula e **règà**'m wōri **abià** **ewò** m agō ayayā
If (pst) I sell (poss) food I would have I money plenty.
'If I used to sell food, I would have more money'.

28. Obula e rìgàm wōri ayayà e mè bià bù ìbu
If I eat poss food penty I will fat big
'If I had eating much food, I will be fat'.

29 Obula e wùrùm egò ayayā, àbià zu ewu
If I own moneyplenty I would have bought goat
'If I had had more money, I would have bought a goat .

From the sentences (26-29) above, it is observed that the word 'abia' which stands for 'would have' can be seen in all of them which is not so in the conditional conjunctions containing 'odika'.

**The syntactic and semantic classification of conditional sentences.**

Following Dancygier (1998), conditional sentences in Ogba can be classified syntactically into various classes

Zero conditionals.
First conditionals (Conditional I)
Second conditionals (Conditional II)
Third conditionals (Conditional III)

These conditionals occur based on the tenses involved with differences in the protasis and apodosis except in zero conditional sentences.

While semantically, conditional sentences in Ogba can be divided into various classes:

Real conditionals: factual/ predictive conditionals.
Unreal conditionals: hypothetical/ counterfactual conditionals.

**Zero conditional sentences:** Zero conditionals are real or factual conditional sentences. In Ogba, we have zero conditionals carrying in them the simple present form of verbs. These conditionals express the idea of truth (that is, they express things that always occur under certain conditions). These things are also universally considered and accepted as true or factual. They are also referred to as real conditionals or factual conditionals.

Examples:

30. Odikà i **nòdi** odùn l'elu èkwà ò **mè bawàga**
If 2sg stay sit pp up egg it will break
'If you sit on the egg, the egg cracks'.

31 Odikà e **wèrèrì** ǹkklama kù là ùso èwù ulò ò **mè bawàga**
If 2sg take out bottle knock pp corner body house it will break
'If you smash the bottle on the wall, it breaks'

From the examples in (30-31) above, it can be deduced that all the expressions here are truthful. That is, the expressions have truth values in them which cannot be disputed across cultural bounds. This is the concept which the zero conditionals express. As stated earlier that zero conditionals are expressed in the present tenses, it can also be seen from

the examples above that both the if-clause and the main clauses are expressed in their simple present form.

**First Conditional (conditional I)**

In this type of conditional sentence, unlike the zero conditionals, the *Odika-clause* 'if-clause' and the main clause do not have same verb forms. Although they can also be called real conditionals, they do not have the present tenses in both clauses. The first clause which is the if-clause is expressed in the simple present tense while the second clause which is the main clause is expressed in the future tense.
Example:

32. Odika Ada **wèrè rì** abampìsì wèrè kù Ugo, Ugo **mè kwa** ekwa
If Ada t**ake-PST** out cane take-PST flog Ugo Ugo **will cry** cry.
'If Ada flogs Ugo with a cane, Ugo will cry'.

The example in (32) above shows that the tense in the if-clause is different from the tense in the main clause. That is, the if-clause contains a verb in the present form while the main clause contains a verb in the future form. It can also be observed that the first conditional sentence takes the form of condition and result clause. This is why the first conditionals apart from being called real conditionals, can also be called 'predictive conditional sentences'. That is, the result can be predicted from the condition stated in the *Odika-clause* 'if-clause'. Examples in 33-34 further illustrates this.

33. Odikà minì ozòn kùsì (rì) nyè **mè je** eketezi
If water fall finish we will go outside
If rain stops falling, we can go outside.

34. Odikà i **chùrò** iri irin, i **mè je** ahia
If you want eat food you will go market
'If you want to eat food, you should/must go to the market'.

It is also possible to have other verb tenses occurring in the conditional or if-clause. For example, the if-clause can also have other aspects of the present tense in it not just the simple present tense. It can also have the perfective as well as the progressive aspect in it.
Example:

35. Obula e **rìgà**m wōri ayayā e **mè bià** bù ìbu
If I eat poss food plenty I will now fat big
'If I had eating much food, I will be fat'.

36. Odika mmu rù **kòmà** orun m jà ru è **mè zu** rà
If I work finish work I am working I will sleep sleep
'If I have finished doing my work, I will sleep'.

**Second Conditional (conditional II)**

These conditional sentences can also be called the unreal or hypothetical conditional sentences. Just like the name goes, the values or situations expressed in these sentences are unreal or hypothetical. It shows the willingness of the speaker in main clause which according to cf Essien (1990:78, 88), uses the verb 'would' to depict it.

Example:

37. Obula **àwùrù**' m egò òzò à**bia** **zulam** ewu.
If (pst) I own poss money another I would bought goat.
'If I had more money, I would buy a goat'.

It is observed that the if-clause is expressed in the past tense while the main clause is expressed using the personal wish (would) of the speaker. It is also pertinent to note that the if-clause hasn't been fulfilled which gives the reason for the name (unreal or hypothetical condition) according to cf, Zhang (2005).

**Third Conditional (conditional III)**

The third conditional sentences can also be called the unreal or counterfactual conditional sentences. They are called these because of the verb forms they exhibit.

Examples:

38. Obula e **wùrù**m egò ayayā, à**bià** **zu** ewu
If I own money plenty I would have bought goat
'If I had had more money, I would have bought a goat'.

39. Obula mmu **nǐgrà** ekwà kra òni ò **bià** **re** ègwandè
If (pst) me (poss) give cloth more than this he would sell some
'If I had given him more cloths, he would have sold some'.

From the examples in (38-39) above, it is evident that the if-clause and the main clause use different verb tenses just as Udoeyo and Inyang (2018) states that, ''the protases and the apodoses in the third conditionals take on different verb forms''. They went further to state that the if-clauses are expressed in the past-verb/perfect viewpoint marked while the main clauses use past participle verb form. Cf Essien (1990: 89) also states that the conditionals express impossible conditions which has not taken place yet and can never occur.

**Summary and Conclusion**

In this paper, we have examined conditional sentences in Ogba and have classified them syntactically into zero conditionals, first conditionals (Conditional I), second conditionals (Conditional II), third conditionals (Conditional III). We noted that zero conditionals in Ogba are said to be sentences carrying in them the simple present form of verbs and they express the idea of truth, while first conditionals in Ogba are unlike the zero conditionals in the sense that the if-clause and the main clause of the first conditionals do not have same verb forms in both clauses. We also observed that the second conditionals express values or situations which are unreal or hypothetical. Its if-clause is expressed in the past tense while the main clause is expressed using the personal wish (would) of the speaker. For the third conditionals, this established that the if-clause and the main clause use different verb tenses. The if- clauses are expressed in the past-verb/ perfect form while the main clause uses the past participle verb form. Third conditionals also express impossible conditions which has not taken place yet and can never occur.

Semantically, conditional sentences in Ogba can also be divided into real conditionals (factual/ predictive conditionals) and Unreal conditionals (hypothetical/ counterfactual conditionals). It was ascertained that the class that a conditional sentence semantically belongs to, can be evenly distributed according to their syntactic classifications. Where zero conditionals belong to the real-factual class, conditional I or first conditional belongs to the real-predictive class, conditional II or second conditional belongs to the unreal-hypothetical class and conditional III or third conditional belongs to the unreal-counterfactual class.

We further observed that conditionals in Ogba are expressed through the 'if' words 'ódikà' and 'obula', odikà being used to represent if-conditional sentences in the present tense while 'obula' is used to represent if-conditional sentences in the past tense.

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