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Summary

THE PRAGMATICS OF THE PAST: A NOVEL TYPOLOGY OF CONDITIONALS WITH PAST TENSES IN ANCIENT GREEK

This article argues for a typology of conditionals in Ancient Greek based on pragmatic rather than formal (e.g., mood) or semantic (e.g., temporal reference) criteria. It does so by proposing a novel pragmatic typology of conditionals with past tenses for Archaic and Classical Greek based on a corpus analysis of 973 conditionals. This article distinguishes 6 different

pragmatic usages which generalise over mood and temporal variations: predictive, direct inferential, indirect inferential, illocutionary, metalinguistic and generic. They are distinguished by the pragmatic relationship between conditional and matrix clause and its direction, the illocutionary force of the matrix clause (e.g., declarative vs. assertoric/rhetorical question: wh-, yes-no, open) and types of implicature (e.g., contradictory vs. counterfactual). Despite some correlations with the pragmatic types such as order of p and q , pragmatic types cover multiple possible world distinctions based on formal marking such as mood or temporal reference; for example past tenses are used counterfactually but have different pragmatic usages, e.g., predictive, direct and indirect inferential or illocutionary, and temporal references, e.g., past and present. The diachrony of these conditionals also cuts across the pragmatic types, since direct inferential conditionals are a starting point for the replacement of the counterfactual optative by the counterfactual indicative, and generic conditionals with a past tense start to replace the so-called “iterative” optative in Classical Greek and replace it in Postclassical Greek (both of which have been discussed in preceding publications of the author). The article concludes with suggestions for applying this typology to conditionals in Ancient Greek in general.

Keywords: Ancient Greek; conditionals; counterfactuality; implicature; pragmatics

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