The Neo-Aramaic dialects are modern vernacular forms of Aramaic, which has a documented history in the Middle East of over 3,000 years. Due to upheavals in the Middle East over the last one hundred years, thousands of speakers of Neo-Aramaic dialects have been forced to migrate from their homes or have perished in massacres. As a result, the dialects are now highly endangered. The dialects exhibit a remarkable diversity of structures. Moreover, the considerable depth of attestation of Aramaic from earlier periods provides evidence for the pathways of change. For these reasons the research of Neo-Aramaic is of importance for more general fields of linguistics, in particular language typology and historical linguistics. The papers in this volume represent the full range of research that is currently being carried out on Neo-Aramaic dialects. They advance the field in numerous ways. In order to allow linguists who are not specialists in Neo-Aramaic to benefit from the papers, the examples are fully glossed.
A full picture of the conditional subsystem within a grammatical system is hard to come by and the issue is often given very limited space in grammatical descriptions. The case of the Christian dialect of Barwar (Khan 2008) is exceptional, since a relatively large chapter is devoted to conditional constructions (ibid., 1004–25). In this paper I intend to study conditionals in the Jewish dialect of Zakho (henceforth JZ) as well as discuss some general issues that come up during this investigation.

Although not always clearly stated, conditionals belong semantically to the domain of modality. This is sometimes overlooked because conditionals are traditionally classified, in grammatical descriptions, with other clause types such as different adverbial or subordinate clauses. This notwithstanding, they are a syntactic expression of modality, very similar semantically to other expressions which reflect different degrees of certainty, as the particle perhaps.

The objectives of this paper are: first, to explain the place of conditional constructions within epistemic modality; second, to provide a survey of conditional expressions in JZ; third, to discuss the relationships of the conditionals with other clause-types (concessive, temporal, relative); and fourth, to show the effect of the combination of conditional expressions and other epistemic expressions.
1. Modality in General

Although linguistic modality has been defined with respect to several parameters (e.g., subjectivity, or ‘speaker’s attitude’). The following definition summarises the conclusion of a paper that attempts a definition of modality (Narrog 2005), viz. that only the parameter of factuality is actually useful in distinguishing between what is modal and what is not:

> Modality is a linguistic category referring to the factual status of a state of affairs. The expression of a state of affairs is modalized if it is marked for being undetermined with respect to its factual status, i.e. is neither positively nor negatively factual. (ibid., 184)

Modality is subdivided in different ways, but it is enough, in this framework, to keep the old division between deontic and epistemic modality.

1.1. Deontic Modality

Deontic modality is the type of modality covering will and obligation in non-factual utterances. The imperative form is the deontic expression par excellence. It always has this function, expressing different levels of the speaker’s will.

1.2. Epistemic Modality

The definitions for epistemic modality are less complicated and seem to cover the domain quite well. Nuyts (2006, 6, emphasis mine), for example, offers the following definition:

> The core definition of this category is relatively noncontroversial: it concerns an indication of the estimation, typically, but not necessarily, by the speaker, of the chances that the state of affairs expressed in the clause applies in the world. In other words, it expresses the degree of probability of the state of affairs.
1.3. The Epistemic Scale

Ordinary conditionals are constructions that denote epistemic modality. As such, they reflect various points on the epistemic scale, representing different degrees of reality ascribed to the situation or event. As Akatsuka (1985, 636–37) points out:

The two conceptual domains, realis and irrealis, do not stand in clear-cut opposition, but rather are on a continuum, in terms of the speaker’s subjective evaluation of the ontological reality of a given situation. In conditionals, the $S_1$ of if $S_1$ can express the speaker’s attitude at any point within the irrealis division of the scale. In short, this epistemic scale reflects the speaker’s evaluation of $S_1$’s realizability, ranging in value from zero (i.e. counterfactuals) to one (i.e. realis)

The definition is given higher resolution some twenty years later by Nuyts (2006,6):

As in deontic modality, this dimension can be construed as a scale—from absolute certainty via probability to fairly neutral possibility that the state of affairs is real. Moreover, if one assumes that the category also involves polarity, the scale even continues further on to the negative side, via improbability of the state of affairs to absolute certainty that it is not real.

The dimension of polarity (as presented in Taylor 1996) includes anything on the scale between affirmative and negative, namely, it is very similar conceptually.

Conditional expressions are semantically analogous to epistemic particles such as perhaps, or similar epistemic expressions like ‘he must be home now.’ They are all found on that same scale, which stretches between real and unreal, or between affirmative and negative. Dancygier (1998, 72, 82) explains that if marks the protasis clause as unassertable and consequently the apodosis is unassertable as well, both may be regarded as assumptions.¹

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¹ For a similar view, see Palmer (1986, 189): ‘Conditional sentences are unlike all others in that both the subordinate clause (the protasis) and the main clause (the apodosis) are non-factual. Neither indicates that an
In other words, neither the protasis nor the apodosis are a statement of fact. This issue seems important given the generally held view that a conditional protasis is analogous to various adverbial clauses and, accordingly, the conditional apodosis is equivalent to the main clause in these adverbial clauses. Note, however, that, unlike the latter, the apodosis of ordinary conditionals cannot exist without its protasis, otherwise it would not be conditioned.

Illustration 1 of the modal paradigm shows where conditionals are located with regard to other expressions of modality:

![Illustration 1: The modal paradigm (Cohen 2012a, 174)]

The modality conveyed by ordinary conditionals is in fact one type of epistemic modality, and, therefore, fully comparable with other expressions of likelihood—probably, perhaps, surely, etc.

The scale relating to conditional structures, which also has to do with degrees of likelihood, is also represented in Illustration 2, where it is presented as a round scale in which both extremes

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event has occurred (or is occurring or will occur); the sentence merely indicates the dependence of the truth of one proposition upon the truth of another.”
virtually meet. This is because an expression of unreal conditional is very close to a negative factual statement.

Illustration 2: The hypotheticality scale within conditionals (Cohen 2012a, 174)

1.4. Technical Information

The following table serves as a legend for the different verbal forms in JZ:

Table 1: Legend for verbal forms

| Simple verbal forms | + Backshift | Function         |
|---------------------|-------------|-----------------|
| šqol-le             | šqol-wa-le  | plupreterite    |
| qam-šqol-le         | qam-šqol-wa-le | plupreterite   |
| k-šqol              | k-šqol-wa   | past imperfective |
| p-šqol              | p-šqol-wa   | counterfactual  |
| šqol                | šqol-wa     | ‘past’ subjunctive |
The suffix -\(wa\) (glossed B) termed ‘backshift’ moves the predication back—mostly in time (when suffixed to present and past-denoting forms), but occasionally in modality, as happens with future-denoting forms and sometimes with subjunctive forms. The former denote counter-factuality, the latter has subtle functions and occasionally is an agreement to a past-denoting matrix verb.

### 1.5. Relation between Conditionals and other Epistemic Particles and Expressions

The particle \(balki \sim balkin \sim balkot\) meaning ‘maybe/perhaps’ is one of the carriers of epistemic modality. The link between a conditional notion and ‘maybe’ may not seem natural at first glance. Example (1) shows this link:

(1)

a. \(baxta, hakan \ hoyā-wa \ sməxta,\)

woman if SBJV.be.3FS-B pregnant

\(g\-\oz\-i\-wā\-la \ treʾ;\)

PRS-do-3PL-B- DAT.3FS two

\(xaʾ \ ta = brōna \ xaʾ \ ta = brāta;\)

one to = boy one to = girl

b. \(balkin \ hāwē-la \ brōna \ gəbe\)

maybe SBJV.be.3MS- 3FS boy need.3MS

\(hāwe \ ta = brōna \ xaʾ.\)

SBJV.be.3MS to = boy one

c. \(hakan \ hāwē-la \ brāta \ xaʾ \ ta = brāta\)

if SBJV.be.3MS-DAT.3FS girl one to = girl
‘If a woman was pregnant, they used to make her two [chickens for the ritual of *kappara*], one for a boy, one for a girl.

If (lit. *perhaps*) she had a boy, *it was necessary* to have one for a boy.

If she had a girl, (then) one for a girl.’ (SAG 3.)

The initial condition is generic or habitual (see §3). The specifications (whether it is a boy or a girl) are in privative relations and hence similar to a real condition. Note that whereas in the first specification *balkin* ‘maybe’ is used, in the second the particle used is *hakan* ‘if.’ The co-occurrence of conditional and *balki* is further discussed under §4.

2. A survey of Conditional Expressions 
in Jewish Zakho

2.1. Apodosis

Conditional structures are in general complex modal expressions, that is, the likelihood of one state of affairs to take place is contingent upon the realisation chances of the other. They are an expression of likelihood, a point on the epistemic scale and this likelihood relates to the entire structure. The semantic essence of an ordinary condition is illustrated in (2):

(2) xōr-i, ʾāna bə-msafr-ēna əl = xa = bāżer, ʾū = pāre did-i šuttāwe kəs-lox
    friend-1S NOM.1S FUT-travel-1MS to = INDEF = city
    CONN = money POSS-1S SBJV.be.3MS with-2MS
ənkān  dʾər-ri  bə-yāw-āt-tū-li…
if  return.PST-1S  FUT-give-2MS-3PL-DAT.1MS

ū = ʾənkān  la  dʾər-ri  pāre  šuttāwe
CONN = if  NEG  return.PST-1S  money  SBJV.be.3PL

tā-lox
to-2MS

‘My friend, I intend to travel to some city,
so let my money be with you.
If I return, you will give it (back) to me…

but if I do not return, let the money be for you.’ (286)

There are two directive syntagms, i.e., two expressions of will in the example: ‘let my money be with you’ and ‘let the money be for you.’ However, it is easy to see that their semantic status is different. While the former is merely an expression of the speaker’s will, the latter is more of a permissive nature and, in addition, it is conditioned by external circumstances. That is, it depends on whether the speaker returns or not.

2.2. Conditional Forms and Values

There are two types of conditional form: patterns with an introductory particle and paratactic patterns. It is important to state that they are only partially related and the paratactic pattern is probably not derived from the other type.

‘Form’ refers to what the pattern consists of, namely, if one starts with the pattern headed by an introductory particle, one needs to specify the introductory particle as well as the forms occurring in the protasis and in the apodosis.

Several introductory particles occur in free variation, all consisting of the core element kan (< Arab. kān ‘he was’), often
with some addition: ənkan, hakan, (i)zakan, īskan, without any apparent difference.

The forms commonly occurring in the protasis of ordinary conditionals are the subjunctive šāqəl and the preterite forms šqəlle and qam-šāqəlle. There are no temporal differences between the forms:

(3) ənkan yāger xōla yā'-ən
    if sbJV.be.heavy.3MS rope sbJV.know-1MS

baxt-i šāx = ī-la...
wife-1s alive = COP-3FS

ū = ʿənkan la yqər-re xola
CONN = if NEG be.heavy.PST-3MS rope

xō yā'-ən 'ənnu mət-la
then sbJV.know-1MS COMP die.PST-3FS

‘If the rope grows heavy, then I will know my wife is alive...

But if the rope does not grow heavy, then I will know that she died.’ (26)

This is the essential profile of kan protases. The important point is that the forms šqəlle and qam-šāqəlle, although referring to the past in other constructions, do not do so here. In fact, they do not point at any time in particular, because temporal opposition does not exist in the protasis. The majority of conditional cases are predictive and consequently refer to the future (see (2)).

The conditional expression may occur in a subordinate environment, namely, the protasis may be associated with a subordinate apodosis (e.g. (11)).

The relationship of conditional clauses to modality is apparent from several angles. One of these is the relationship obtaining
between a full protasis and a minimal or elliptic negative protasis following a directive or other expressions of obligation such as:

(4) \[ \text{hakān lā hōya } +\text{ḥāzər } b-ās-ət \]
if \text{NEG SBJV.be.3FS ready FUT-come-2MS}
\[əḷ=qəṭḷa \]
to = death

‘If it is not ready, you will be killed.’ (730–31)

(5) \[ \text{ū=g-əbe hōya } \text{mulḥam-ta } ū= +\text{ḥāzər} \]
\text{CONN=PRS-need.3MS SBJV.be.3FS soldered-FS CONN=ready}
\[\text{hakān lā, } b-ās-ən } l=qəṭḷa \]
if \text{NEG FUT-come-1MS to = death}

‘and it (= the king’s ring) must be soldered and ready. If not, I will be killed.’ (729)

The lexical content of the protasis could either be expressed explicitly inside it (example [4], ‘if it is not ready...’) or, alternatively, be expressed outside it, as a command or obligation followed by an ‘empty’ protasis containing merely an indication of the possibility that something may not happen (example [5], the ‘if not’ strategy).

Present forms are rare in the protasis and refer to a persistent state of affairs. The apodosis is basically made up of either future pšaqəl or subjunctive (šud) šaqəl ~ imperative šqōl. That is, the normal opposition between the forms is modal, rather than aspectual or temporal. Rare present-like forms occur here with the present copula (e.g. ile ‘He is’), the predicative possessor (e.g. atle ‘He has’) and the non-verbal expression of ability (ibe ‘He is able’).
2.3. Conditional Types

The predominant conditional type is the ordinary condition, which answers to the definition given above in §2.1.

Another type is the speech-act conditional, where the apodosis is not conditioned, but rather reflects a fact:

(6) \(\text{yā brōn-ī kan } g-əb-ət \text{ qaṭl-ət-ī } čū = sēpa}\)
\(\text{VOC son-1S if PRS-wish-2MS SBJV.kill-2MS-1S no = sword}\)
\(\text{láq-qāṭe}^3 \text{ qzāl-ī } ġēr \text{ sēpa dīd-ī}\)
\(\text{NEG.NPST-cut.3MS neck-1S except sword POSS-1S}\)
\(d = məlʾēl mənn-ī\)
\(\text{NMLS = above from-1S}\)

‘O my son, if you want to kill me, (you should know that) no sword will cut my neck except my sword which (is) above me.’ (417)

The factual apodosis substantially weakens the modality of these examples. The protasis merely serves as the background or explanation of the utterance in the apodosis. In example (6) it is an unconditioned fact that the sword of the giant woman (who is the speaker) is the only sword that would kill her. The protasis merely specifies in what circumstances it is important.

A concessive conditional is yet another type where the apodosis is factual:

(7) \(\text{kan zamr-ət hīl mʾāb-ət}\)
\(\text{if SBJV.sing-2MS till SBJV.die-2MS}\)
\(\text{lag-napq-ən xá-gar xet mən dūk-ī}\)
\(\text{NEG.NPST-exit-1MS one-time another from place-1S}\)
‘(Even) if you sing until you die, I will not come out of my place once more.’ 457

The snake (who is the source of the utterance) is more or less making a vow not to move from his place for the man’s sake. This vow is unconditioned, not being contingent upon the protasis. Despite this difference, concessive conditionals still share a pattern with ordinary conditionals, as is shown below, §2.4.

In inferential conditionals, the protasis is the premise from which the conclusion in the apodosis is drawn, as illustrated in example. The particle \( xō \sim xū \) is used here to signal this inferential relationship.

2.4. Paratactic Conditional or Concessive Conditional Pattern

This pattern is a sequence whose basic functional value is conditional or concessive conditional (see Cohen 2007). Unlike the protasis with \( kan \), this type of protasis only occurs with the subjunctive form \( šāqəl \):\(^2\)

\[
(8) \quad ána \quad lā = mēs-ət-ti \quad xā = sūse,
\]

\[
\text{NOM.1s}\quad \text{NEG = SBJV.bring-2MS-DAT.1s}\quad \text{INDEF-horse}
\]

\[
lāk-ēs-ən \quad bəd = ʾaql-i
\]

\[
\text{NEG.NPST-come-1MS}\quad \text{by = foot-1s}
\]

---

\(^2\) The subjunctive form in the first part occasionally denotes temporality. For instance:

\[
āwa \quad tāwe’ \quad b-ṣabh-ən-ne
\]

\[
\text{NOM.3MS}\quad \text{SBJV.fall.asleep-3MS}\quad \text{FUT-slaughter-1FS-3MS}
\]

‘(when) he falls asleep, I shall slaughter him’ (MA 12.2)
'As for me, **should you not bring me a horse**, I will not go by foot.' (218)

(9) \( b\text{-}ya\text{-}n\text{-}nox^3 \) \( qōl \) \( tlahá \) \( yōme. \) \( hama \)
FUT\-give\-1S\-DAT\-2MS condition three days PTCL

\( la = šār\text{-}ātū\text{-}la \) \( ʾē = sāfīna \) \( mən = go = palgūs \)
NEG = SBJV\-release\-2PL\-3FS DEF = boat from = in = mid

\( bāḥ̥ar, \) \( ʾāna \) \( b\text{-}dār\text{-}ən \) \( sēpa \) \( go = huzāye. \)
sea NOM\-1S FUT\-put\-1MS sword in = Jews

'I give you a respite of three days. **Should you not free this ship from mid-sea**, I will put the Jews to the sword.' (MA 15.5–6)

These examples are representative of the construction in question in form and in content. Example (8)–(9) contain a subjunctive form that cannot be interpreted as a negative imperative (which is a common function of the 2nd person subjunctive). The only way it could be interpreted is as a conditional protasis ‘should you not....’ The negative form \( lak\text{-}șāqəl \) in the apodosis is the negative of both the forms \( k\text{-}șāqəl \) and \( p\text{-}șāqəl \) (and is thus glossed NEG\-NPST).

The relationship with the pattern marked by \( kan \) is exemplified in the following pair of examples. The character is asked by strangers whether he is a believer or a heretic:

(10) \( ʾamr\text{-}ən\text{-}nu \) \( kāfər \)
SBJV\-say\-1MS\-DAT\-3PL infidel

---

3 The full form is \( b\text{-}yāw\text{-}ən\text{-}nox \).
ṣad-li ʾāni amin hāwe ʾā = b-qaṭl-ī-li
fear-1S NOM.3PL believer SBJV.be.3PL CONN = FUT-kill-3PL-1S

‘Should I tell them ‘infidel’,

I fear they may be believers and will kill me.’ 381

(11) kan ʾamr-ən-nu ʾāmin
if SBJV.say-1MS-DAT.3PL infidel

ṣad-li hāwe ʾāni kāfer wu = ham
fear-1S SBJV.be.3PL NOM.3PL infidel CONN = also

b-qaṭl-ī-li
FUT-kill-3PL-1S

‘If I tell them ‘believer’,

I fear they may be infidels and will also kill me.’ 381–82

Recall that the protasis with kan may consist of a preterite form as well, while in the paratactic pattern only the subjunctive form šāqəl is attested. Examples (10) and (11), however, have the same value here. Note that the conditional state of affairs in both examples is expressed by a complement clause of ṣadli ‘I am afraid.’

Whereas the pattern with kan is essentially conditional, the paratactic pattern may be either conditional or concessive-conditional (table 2). The two values are differentiated based upon a particle, which occasionally precedes them: hama. The particle hama is otherwise a focus particle meaning ‘just.’ Here it has an entirely different function—it identifies the pattern #šāqəl—p-šāqəl# as conditional, that is, when hama precedes the pattern (i.e., #hama šāqəl—p-šāqəl), it marks it as a conditional.

On the other hand, when the particle šud precedes šāqəl, the pattern is positively identified as a concessive conditional.
(Otherwise šud identifies the subjunctive form as syntactically independent.) The details of the pattern of the paratactic conditional are as follows:

Table 2: Conditional Patterns

| Conditional          | Protasis     | Apodosis                                      |
|----------------------|--------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| paratactic           | ± subjunctive: šaqəl | ± future: (p-šaqəl~lak-šaqəl) ± subjunctive: šaqəl |
| conditional particle | ± subjunctive: šaqəl | ± future: (p-šaqəl~lak-šaqəl) ± subjunctive: šaqəl; present: k-šaqəl |
|                      | ± preterite: qam-šaqəl-le, šqəlle |                                                                 |

Note that the order protasis—apodosis is strictly kept with the paratactic pattern but not with the construction with the conditional particle. Another point is that in view of the obvious differences between both patterns, the paratactic pattern does not seem to have been derived from the pattern with an explicit conditional marker.

2.5. Counter-factual Conditional Patterns

Counter-factual expressions are located at the far end of the modal scale, very close in fact to the point of negative factuality (see Illustration 2). They cover events (or states) that did (or will) not happen, but which are still not reported as factual but rather through some modal filter:

(12) bale kan yāʾ-ən-wa ʾāhat g-əb-at-ti
    but if SBJV.know-1MS-B NOM.2FS PRS.want-2FS-1S

lāk-ēs-ən-wa gō = bēs-ax d = maxṭ-ən
NEG.NPST-come-1MS-B in = house-2FS CONJ = CAUS.sin-1MS
gyān-i
REFL-1S

‘but if I had known (that) you wanted me,

I would not have come into your house, to lead myself to sin.’ (783)

A virtually similar clause is ‘I didn’t know and therefore I came.’ This latter clause is, however, factual and does not impart the regrets and wishes of the speaker implied in the counterfactual expression in example (12). The opposite order, apodosis—protasis, is also attested:

(13) mani k-i’e má sē-la l = ṭurx-ət
who PRS-know.3MS what come.PST-3FS to = way-CST

dāw = jwanqa dīd-i ū = mā b-asyā-wa
DEF = youngster POSS-1S CONN = what FUT-come.3FS-B

b = rēš-i kan lá-hōy-an-wa tfəq-ta
in = head-1S if NEG-SBJV.be-1FS-B meet.PTCP-FS

bəd = danya = ūlāha
in = DEM = three

‘Who knows what happened to that youth of mine and what would have happened to me if I had not met these three.’ (870)

In (13) two apodoses are conjoined in a complement clause of not-knowing (which is often very similar to the expression of an indirect question). One is factual (‘what happened’) and the other
is a counterfactual conditional (‘what would have happened if...’). The latter conveys an alternative universe.

The pattern of the counterfactual conditional, which is common in NENA, is presented in Table 3:

Table 3: Counterfactual Conditional Pattern

| Protasis                      | Apodosis                      |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| kan ± šaqəl-wa                 | ± p-šaqəl-wa~lak-šaqəl-wa      |
| (backshifted subjunctive)     | (backshifted future)          |

The form $p$-šaqəl-wa is used in general to express counterfactuality, also outside the domain of conditionals—for instance, in circumstantial expressions (see Cohen 2015, 269–70).

Unlike ordinary condition, the protasis of counterfactual conditionals may interchange with a simpler expression:

(14)  
\[
\text{āna lāk-iē-n} \text{ēkā = la gehō hannām.}
\]

nom.1s neg.npst-know-1ms where = cop.3fs hell

\[
xaxwa b-āz-ən-wa \text{āp-āna}
\]

otherwise fut-go-1ms-b foc-nom.1s

\[
mēs-ān-wā-li \text{men = tāma pāre}
\]

sbjv.bring-1ms-b-dat.1s from=there money

‘I do not know where hell is. Otherwise I too would have gone there to bring money.’ (529)

(15)  
\[
p = qōtl-i \text{lāg-b-ān-wa bary-ā-wa}
\]

in = death-1s neg.npst-wish-1ms-b sbjv.happen-3fs-b
mā-d brē-la
what-CST happen.PST-3FS

‘(even in exchange) for my death, I would not have wanted what happened to happen.’ (903)

Such ‘adverbial’ substitutes (underlined) are hinted at by the form of the apodosis. The form p-šaqəl-wa is a rare form outside the counterfactual apodosis. JZ has the following paradigm for the counterfactual protasis:

Table 4: The Counterfactual Protasis Paradigm

| Protasis       | Gloss                  | Apodosis                   |
|----------------|------------------------|-----------------------------|
| kan šaqəl-wa   | ‘if he had taken’      | p-šaqəl-wa ‘he would have taken’ |
| laxwa         | ‘otherwise’            |                             |
| pqəṭli        | ‘(even) for my death’  |                             |

The ultimate significance of this interchangeability is that, unlike the protasis of the ordinary conditional, deemed as sui generis, the counterfactual protasis is comparable with smaller entities (as are, for instance, many subordinate clauses).

More common is the asyndetic counterfactual conditional pattern:

(16) yā ʾīlāha, šxēra uxudēra ū = ʾōha = nāša
VOC God by god’s benevolence CONN = DEF = man

fāḥam-wa šaqəl-wa xā = ṭarpa…
SBJV.understand.3MS-B SBJV.take.3MS-B INDEF = leaf

ū = māwāš-wā-le ū = xarāye dāyāq-wā-le…
CONN = SBJV.dry.3MS-B-3MS CONN = then SBJV.ground.3MS-B-3MS
ū = bāzār-wā-le  ṣl = axon-e
CONN = SBJV.sprinkle.3MS-B-3MS to = brother-3MS

u = ʾaxōn-e  bə-qāyəm-wa
CONN = brother-3MS FUT-stand.up.3MS-B

‘Oh God, by God’s benevolence, had this man understood, taken a leaf ... and dried it, and then ground it... and sprinkled it over his brother, his brother would have stood up.’ (278–79)

The expression šxēra uxudēra does not seem to be part of the construction. Note that it is actually connected by ū to the conditional pattern. The pattern in this case consists of five clauses in the protasis and one in the apodosis.

3. Relationships of the Conditionals with other Clause-Types

In §2.3 above, several types of conditionals were explained and exemplified. In certain cases one finds a structure similar to a conditional pattern, but the function is different. For instance, conditional-like dependencies sometimes occur within a descriptive narrative passage:

(17) baxta,  hakan  hoyā-wa  sməxta,
woman if SBJV.be.3FS-B pregnant

g-oz-i-wā-la  tre’,
PRS-do-3PL-B-DAT.3FS two

‘If a woman was pregnant, they used to make her two [chickens for the ritual of kappara].’ SAG 3.2
Example (17) is a conditional-like structure. It is, however, different. It is clear that the structure shows neither modality, nor counterfactuality, but only an interdependency between two states of affairs, which are in fact two factual, regularly recurring states or events. What makes this clear is the form kšāqəlwa in the apodosis (whereas in the standard counterfactual conditional pattern one would expect a šāqəlwa—pšāqəlwa sequence, as in Table 5, with the backshifted future).

The next example is similar; although it does have the right apodosis form (pšāqəlwa), the so called protasis is introduced by dammət ‘when’:

(18) ...ū=dammət sanq-i-wa l=xá-məndi
CONN = when SBJV.need-3PL-B to = some-thing

b-āz-i-wa xakma mənn-u l=xá = gundəke
FUT-go.3PL-B some of-3PL to = INDEF = village

u=m-mēsē-wa mā-d d-i-lu lāzəm
CONN = FUT-bring.3PL-B what-CST ATTR-COP-3PL⁴ need.3MS

‘..and whenever they would need something, some of them would go to a village and bring whatever was needed.’ (947)

Note that conditionals are not typical of narrative. They are common in dialogue, and possibly also in narratorial comments,

⁴ The form dīlu ‘they are’ (as well as any other copulas which are prefixed by d-, i.e., dīwən vs. wən ‘I am’) are copula forms that occur after any element in the construct state (glossed CST). It is for this reason that they are referred to as attributes (which is the basic function of the second part of a genitive construction) and are glossed accordingly (ATTR). See Cohen (2010, 90–93) and (2012b, 119–21).
but not in the stream of events. Another similar example is worth considering:

(19) ʿōha = šēx … k-iʾē-wa  bəd = šurr-ət  nāše.
DEM = sheikh  PRS-know.3MS-B  IN = secret-CST  people

xa  hāwē-wa  nāṣax,  k-iʾē-wa
INDEF.PRON  SBJV.be.3MS-B  sick  PRS-know.3MS-B

ənkan  māyes  u = ʿənkan  ba-ṭārəš
whether  SBJV.die.3MS  CONN = whether  FUT-recover.3MS

ū = xa = baxta  did  hōyāwa  sməxta
CONN = INDEF = woman  REL  SBJV.be.3FS-B  pregnant

k-iʾē-wa  ʿənkan  brōna = le  u = ʿənkan
PRS-know.3MS-B  whether  boy = COP.3MS  CONN = whether

brāta = la.
girl = COP.3FS

This sheikh …, he used to know the secrets of people. Someone (who) was sick, he would know whether he would die or recover. And a woman who was pregnant, he would know whether it is a boy or a girl.’ (226–27)

All three examples (17)-(19) refer to generic a state of affairs. Note that in these cases conditional, temporal and relative clauses converge and are almost interchangeable in this context.
Table 5: The Structure of Narrative Conditionals

| Example | Protasis | Apodosis | Formal type | Type       |
|---------|----------|----------|-------------|------------|
| (12), (13) | (ha)kan šāqəlwa pšāqəlwa | conditional          | counterfactual       |
| (16)  | šāqəlwa pšāqəlwa | conditional          | patterns           |
|        | hakan šāqəlwa kšāqəlwa | conditional          |          |
|        | dammət šāqəlwa pšāqəlwa | temporal          | generic       |
|        | (dīd) šāqəlwa kšāqəlwa | relative          |          |

Where conditional, temporal and relative forms functionally converge, the result is a non-modal, generic dependency. This genericity goes hand in hand with character description—not an individual occurrence, but rather a permanent feature, as in example (19), describing the sheikh.

4. The Combination of Conditional Expressions and Epistemic Expressions

Lastly, in the following example two similar expressions of possibility—conditional and the expression of epistemic possibility—co-occur:

(19)  

\[ +mōrəm-le \quad ʾō \ = \ +pālavan \quad ʾū = məttū-le \]
\[ \text{lift.pst-3ms} \quad \text{DEF} = \text{athlete} \quad \text{CONN} = \text{put.pst-3ms} \]
\[ \text{xa} = \text{rašōma} \quad ʾl = dō = jwanqa \quad čukun \quad xzē-le \]
\[ \text{indef} = \text{blow} \quad \text{on} = \text{DEF} = \text{youngster} \quad \text{since} \quad \text{see.pst-3ms} \]
\[ d = lēba \quad čū = fayda \quad \text{kan} \quad ʾāwa \]
\[ \text{comp} = \text{neg.exist} \quad \text{no} = \text{use} \quad \text{if} \quad \text{nom.3ms} \]
The athlete lifted (his hand) and delivered a blow on the youngster because he saw that it was no use: If he does not hurt him, perhaps the other one may kill him.’ (768)

The explanation for this is that these expressions do not have the same function. The particle balki has its own function in the example. The conditional particle possibly signals two things: first, that both events or states of affairs are merely possible; and second, the relationship between them:

The only assertion that is made in a conditional construction is about the relation between the protasis and the apodosis (Dancygier 1998, 72, emphasis mine)

This assertion is best felt when its existence is shaken by a modal particle which has the entire construction in its scope or by a question. The modal particle in our case refers specifically to the relation between the protasis and the apodosis, namely, it shakes the dependency between the protasis and the apodosis, expressing doubt about this relationship.

5. Conclusions

This paper provides a description, classification and discussion of the various conditional phenomena in the Jewish Neo-Aramaic dialect of Zakho.

1. The different conditional types are explained and exemplified:

• Ordinary conditionals, which denote different degrees of epistemic modality (these constitute the bulk of the examples);
• Inferential conditionals, where the conclusion in the apodosis is drawn from the premise expressed in the protasis. The inferential relationship is marked by the particle $xō~xū$.

• Speech-act conditionals, which rather than expressions of modality, are in fact a structure where the protasis serves as the background for the utterance in the (non-conditioned) apodosis.

• Concessive-conditionals (‘even if...’), where the protasis expresses epistemic modality, but the apodosis, on the other hand, is not conditioned.

2. Two patterns expressing ordinary conditionals are presented; one with a conditional particle at the head of the protasis, and another where no conditional particle is involved (which we termed paratactic) are presented. Each pattern is formulated based on the forms which appear in the protasis and the apodosis. They are different in their semantic scope—the paratactic pattern can express either a conditional or a concessive conditional.

3. Counterfactual conditional patterns are similarly characterised. In addition, a special trait of this conditional type is discussed, namely the fact that a couple of expressions can take the place of the counterfactual protasis without changing the function of the entire pattern.

4. A special function of similar constructions termed ‘narrative conditionals’ is examined and compared with counterfactuals. Their function is explained vis-à-vis other clause types. It is concluded that they are generic expressions.

5. Finally, the co-occurrence of ordinary conditionals, which express epistemic modality, with seemingly synonymous epistemic particles (e.g., ‘perhaps’) is analysed and the different functions of each are distinguished functionally.
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