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THE HISTORY OF ABBREVIATED *IF*-STRUCTURES
- A DIACHRONIC CORPUS STUDY BETWEEN 1500 AND 1990 -

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List of Abbreviations

OED	the Oxford English Dictionary
MED	the Middle English Dictionary
OE	Old English
ME	Middle English
PdE	Present-day English
OFris	Old Frisian
OS	Old Saxon
OHG	Old High German
MLG	Middle Low German
MHG	Middle High German
MDu	Middle Dutch
Ger	German
Du	Dutch
ON	Old North
Goth	Gothic
S	subject
V(P)	verb (phrase)
Adv(P)	adverb (phrase)
Adj(P)	adjective (phrase)
D(P)	determiner (phrase)
C	complement
SC	scalar comment
PM	pragmatic marker
HC	The Helsinki Corpus of English Texts
PPCEME	The Penn-Helsinki Corpus of Early Modern English
ARCHER	A Representative Corpus of Historical English Registers

“As long as you know what it is you desire, then by simply affirming that it is yours -- firmly and positively, with no **ifs**, buts, or maybes -- over and over again, from the minute you arise in the morning until the time you go to sleep at night, and as many times during the day as your work or activities permit, you will be drawn to those people, places, and events that will bring your desires to you.” (Scott Reed.)

0. Introduction

0.1 Preliminaries

Dealing with topics in syntax and semantics from diachronic point of view has been popular amongst linguists, especially since the advent of computerised corpora. When first meeting the notion “abbreviated *if*-structures”, one might well assume that such structures are instances of subordinate and conditional clauses. Scholars have evinced continuous interest in the study of such clauses. Despite the rich literature on the topic and the works from various angles so far, there is still scope for further research into some unexplored areas, such as the development of “abbreviated *if*-structures”.

The present research originates from my pilot-study focusing on the diachronic analysis of reduced adverbial clauses introduced by the subordinators *albeit*, *(al)though*, *if*, *unless*, *when*, *where*, *whether*. This study showed that in addition to the full subordinate clauses, all the subordinators can introduce elliptical clauses as well where they lack at least the finite verb. Omitting certain constituents from a sentence is not completely unknown before the Early Modern English period either. Already in the earliest times clause-reduction was possible, for instance in relative clauses (cf. Traugott 1972: 158-159). Since then, various ways of grammatical omission (ellipsis; cf. Quirk et al. 1985: §12) have been discussed.

There is one conjunction in the above-mentioned list, *if*, which occurs not only in elliptical but in some other phrase-like structures as well. Hence, the focus is restricted to *if* and abbreviated *if*-structures in order to examine to what extent abbreviated *if*-structures can be treated as instances of ellipsis, and in which other ways it is possible to deal with the abbreviated quality of *if*-structures. Accordingly, the dissertation sets out to examine the diachronic development of different abbreviated *if*-structures, as in for example *if not* in example (0.1) and *if any* in example (0.2), over the five centuries from 1500 to 1990.

- (0.1) so I truste that he wyll delyver me here owt of all my troubles, yf he so see yt good. **Yf not**, hys wyl be done!
(date of origin: 1555; emphasis mine)
<PPCEME: MOWNTAYNE-E1-H,204.130>
- (0.2) Many antipyretic drugs were used, as we have already stated, but with little **if any** effect.
(date of origin: 1905; emphasis mine)
<ARCHER: 1905furt.m7b>

Abbreviated *if*-structures can be described as combinations of the conjunction *if* and an adverb (example (0.1)), a determiner (example (0.2)), or any other word class (an adjective, a noun, a pronoun, preposition or numeral, excluding the verb) or phrases with them. Example (0.1) is one of the earliest examples of abbreviated *if*-structures in the corpora examined (the *Penn-Helsinki Parsed Corpus of Early Modern English*) and is one with conditional meaning. Later, from the late 16th century onwards, an increase in the functions (cf. Nevalainen 2006: 29) of abbreviated *if*-structures can be observed: besides the conditional one, also non-conditional interpretations (like the one in example (0.2)) start to spread. The conditional and non-conditional interpretations of abbreviated *if*-structures persist in the course of time and are still evident at the present day.

The intriguing question as to how and why these possible interpretations developed was at the root of the detailed and comprehensive research of abbreviated *if*-structures documented in the following chapters. Thus, the study aims to reveal hitherto unknown aspects of abbreviated *if*-structures by means of an overall analysis which considers syntactic and semantic issues. The theoretical framework of the dissertation draws on diachronic typology, corpus linguistics and grammaticalisation.

The research is a ‘corpus-driven’ approach (Gast 2006: 114, also 115; cf. Tognini-Bonelli 2001, Storjohann 2005) based on corpus evidence obtained from the *Penn-Helsinki Parsed Corpus of Early Modern English* (PPCEME) and *A Representative Corpus of Historical English Registers* (ARCHER). These two corpora provide the necessary diachronic continuity as well as further possible aspects for the analysis of abbreviated *if*-structures.

0.2 Previous findings and problems

0.2.1 Studies on ‘abbreviated *if*-structures’

The existing studies on *if*-clauses can be grouped into two main categories: one pertaining to the semantics of full *if*-clauses (i.e. such *if*-clauses that have a subject and a finite verb), the other one to abbreviated *if*-structures (i.e. *if*-structures lacking at least a finite verb). Research on the first group varies considerably in the scope. For instance, Comrie (1986) tries to identify the significant parameters in the cross-linguistic description of *if*-clauses. He claims that although clauses may look like typical conditional clauses, they can be interpreted differently, even without conditional connotation. Restricting her view to Early Modern English exclusively, Claridge (2007) discusses the possible interpretations of full¹ *if*-clauses. She claims that *if*-clauses, besides their (true) conditional interpretation, might have so-called ‘hedging’ and metalinguistic functions as well. Furthermore, she also propounds a potential relationship between positioning of *if*-clauses in the sentence (initial, parenthetical or final) and their functions (conditional or metalinguistic), for instance. Horn (1989), Sweetser (1991) and Dancygier (1998) also point out that *if*-clauses are more complex than first expected: *if* can be interpreted both descriptively and metalinguistically. “Conditionality ‘means’ different things in different domains, and the degree of convergence between conditionality and topicality needs to be understood against the background of the basic content / epistemic / speech-act ambiguity” (Sweetser 1991: 126). It seems that a dividing line should be drawn between conditionals with a truth function and conditionals with some other functions. To explore what domains can be applied to abbreviated *if*-structures is one of the aims of the present study.

When considering abbreviated *if*-structures, it should be noted that they have not been dealt with in full detail, still certain characteristics have already been highlighted. Of these, König (1986) only considers the phenomenon as such, but without much detail. While discussing conditionals, concessives and concessive-conditionals, he makes the remark of using *if* with a clear concessive meaning in the form of a parenthetical adjectival construction, as in example (0.3):

¹ Her analysis includes *if*-clauses only with clausal function.

(0.3) This is an interesting, *if complicated*, solution.

(König 1986: 239; emphasis mine)

This is already an indication that the conjunction *if* can introduce not only conditional but also concessive (as non-conditional) clauses, even when the structure is abbreviated, “*if complicated*”. Dancygier (1998) also examines the phenomenon, and admits that the above-mentioned structure is concessive. Nonetheless, she maintains that not all of such abbreviated *if*-structures (e.g. *if* + adjective) should be considered as instances of the concessive; instead she suggests their analysis from the metatextual point of view (cf. Dancygier 1998: 103-107). Her argument is based on a sentence like the one in example (0.4), also containing an [*if* + adjective] combination, but with the addition of the negative particle *not*².

(0.4) The Queen of England is happy, *if not ecstatic*.

(Dancygier 1998: 104, 107)

She asserts that while the *if*-structure in example (0.3) has a concessive interpretation, the *if*-structure in example (0.4) (which resembles example (0.3)) has some commenting function on the previous word, without any concessive implication. It means that in example (0.4) *happy* (the weaker term) is not rejected, just questioned, and *ecstatic* (the stronger term) can be considered as an alternative to *happy*, maybe a potential repair (cf. Dancygier 1998: 107).

Although Dancygier (1998) describes conditionals of all kinds, including the above-mentioned metatextual conditionals extensively, she examines only Present-day English material, without any corpus evidence. Consequently, she provides no information concerning the possible development of the above-mentioned *if*-structures with either the concessive or the metatextual interpretation.

Schwarz (1998, 2000) also realises that full and what he calls ‘reduced conditionals’ might be semantically different. His research focuses on full as against reduced conditionals in German; however, what he means by reduction in the combination of an antecedent and a consequent is when the *consequent* is not full, i.e. *it does not form a complete main clause on its own*, for instance in example (0.5):

²See also Horn’s metalinguistic negation (1985), and section 3.3.2.2.

(0.5) Wenn ich heim fahre, *dann mit dem Zug*.

‘If I go home, then it’s by train’

The full clause would look like as follows:

(0.6) Wenn ich heim fahre, *dann fahre ich mit dem Zug heim*.

‘If I go home, then I go home by train’

(Schwarz 2000: 13, emphasis mine)

In such a case, the verb and some other sentence constituents are omitted. Although the phenomenon discussed by Schwarz is slightly different from the abbreviated *if*-structures considered in the present study since it is not the *if*-clause that is abbreviated, his observation concerning the semantic differences³ is still worth considering.

In sum, it has been noted that different domains in semantics can be realised when full *if*-clauses are taken into consideration. Previous studies have also shown that this distribution of domains applies to abbreviated *if*-structures as well, but without paying attention to the ‘abbreviatedness’ as such.

0.2.2 Abbreviated *if*-structures in four dictionaries

In the previous section the focus was restricted to previous studies which had some relevance to the topic of abbreviated *if*-structures. However, none of them considered the origin or the possible development of such structures. Consequently, I now wish to consult some dictionaries in addition, and see in what way they describe abbreviated *if*-structures, with special emphasis on the possible first occurrences.

Both present-day and historical dictionaries consider *if* from a general viewpoint: the entries are built up around the possible meanings and supported with relevant examples without, however, paying any particular attention to the structure itself. It is nevertheless true that the dictionaries present separate sub-entries for some already abbreviated *if*-structures⁴ with their independent implications. In the following, I restrict myself to those entries in four dictionaries (two present-day and two historical) which at

³ Schwarz (2000: 13) asserts that a full conditional and a reduced conditional “differ in truth conditions, presuppositions, or grammaticality”.

⁴ ‘Abbreviated *if*-structure:’ according to my terminology; see section 2.1.

least list *if*-structures appearing in an abbreviated form. With the present-day dictionaries, I show the existence and use of abbreviated *if*-structures even today, and I would like to take the historical dictionaries as the basis for establishing the possible first occurrences and development of abbreviated *if*-structures.

The *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English*⁵, for instance, has 13 entries under *if* conj., and already under *s.v.* conj. 1, it lists a number of elliptical conditionals, like *if necessary*, *if possible*, *if so*, and *if not* with the meaning “something that might happen or be true, or might have happened”. Under *s.v.* conj., 6, however, a completely different implication is noted, namely “adding that something may be even more, less, better, worse etc than you have just said” as in *if ever* and *if at all*. Interestingly, *if anything* has a separate entry (*if* conj. 8.), and it is “used when adding a remark that changes what you have just said or makes it stronger”.

The *Macmillan Dictionary*⁶, on the other hand, has 10 entries and a section on phrases with *if*. In the first entry (*if* conj. 1.), where the interpretation is a “possible or imagined situation”, the same collocations as in *Longman s.v.* conj. 1 are listed. The implication “possibly more, or possibly less used for suggesting that something may possibly be more or less, better or worse etc than you have stated” as in *thousands, if not millions* and *seldom, if ever* is mentioned only under *if* conj. 9. *If anything* has a separate entry as a phrase, and so does *if ever* (*if* conj. PHRASES).

The *Oxford English Dictionary*⁷ (*OED*) entry for *if* lists two major groups: the conditional conjunction (*s.v.* conj. A) and the situation when the conjunction used often in the tautological collocations (*s.v.* conj. B), like *ifs and ands*. The first group, i.e. the conditional conjunction, is further divided into two groups, the first with eight and the second with two sub-groups. According to this description, the primary function of *if* is to introduce a clause of condition or supposition (the protasis of a conditional sentence) with the sense ‘*on condition that; given or granted that; in (the) case that; supposing that; on the supposition that*’ (*s.v.* conj. A. I), as already mentioned at the beginning of the present chapter. Its other function is to introduce a noun-clause depending on the verbs *see, ask, learn, doubt, know*, or the like, in the sense of *whether* (*s.v.* conj. A. II. 9). Furthermore, it may also occur in ‘combination *if*-clauses’, such as *if-shot, if-stroke* (*s.v.* conj. A. II. 10), that is, a clause of condition or supposition introduced by *if*.

⁵ Definitions are taken from the online version of the dictionary: <http://www.ldoceonline.com>

⁶ Definitions are taken from the online version of the dictionary: <http://www.macmillandictionary.com>

⁷ All the definitions, examples and charts are taken from *OED* online, <http://dictionary.oed.com/entrance.dtl>

Altogether eight sub-groups are mentioned where the conditional meaning and uses of *if* are described. In fact, the entry refers to the potential ellipsis⁸ of a conditional clause relatively late, only in the sixth sub-group, quoted below:

if, conj. 6. The conditional clause is often elliptical, and may dwindle down to *if* and a word or phrase sufficient to suggest the complete sense; so *if not* (= if a thing is, be, or were not), formerly sometimes = ‘unless, except’; *if any* (see ANY a. 2); *if anything*, *if in any degree*, perhaps even; *if not*, why not (see WHY adv. 4b).

(emphasis mine)

The *OED* dates the first occurrence of the elliptical *if*-clause to 1320, in example (0.7). This instance, however, does contain an auxiliary, and only the rest of the clause is ellipted (the supposed full sentence is illustrated in example (0.7b)):

(0.7) **c1320** *Sir Tristr.* 725 Knowe it **ȝiue ȝe can.**

(0.7b) *Know it if you can know it/ that.*

The *OED* dates the origin of the first elliptical *if*-conditional that does not include a finite verb back to 1560, and this is reproduced in example (0.8):

(0.8) **1560** BIBLE (Genev.) *Dan.* iii. 18 Our God..wil deliuer vs.. But **if not**, be it knowen to thee, o King, y^t we wil not serue thy gods.

In example (0.8) the elliptical conditional is in the form of the conditional subordinator *if* and the negative particle *not*. *If not* stands for the whole conditional clause ***If our God will not deliver us, ...***, and its purpose is to avoid repeating what has already been stated.

According to dictionary evidence, the realisation of a conditional without a finite verb continues to be used in later centuries as well, as shown by examples (0.9) and (0.10):

(0.9) **1665** SIR T. HERBERT *Trav.* (1677) 173 Frogs are of great vertue, **if physically used.**

⁸ ‘Ellipsis’: according to the dictionary definition.

(0.10) **1873** LYTTON *Kenelm Chillingly* II. IV. vi. 257 Shall I ever be in love? and **if not**, why not?

Example (0.10) resembles very much example (0.08) above, nevertheless, example (0.09) is slightly different. In this instance only the subject and the main verb are ellipsed (*frogs [they] are*), and only the past participle form is given (*used*). Hence, according to the dictionary, the first instance of a non-finite conditional clause appears in the 17th century, while a completely verbless clause in the 16th century⁹.

In all the examples so far (0.07) – (0.10) it was feasible to interpolate the omitted elements in the flow of the sentence and thus have a full clause. However, there seem to be such sentences where there is no means to have a full clause counterpart¹⁰ at all; such instances are also mentioned in the *OED* both of which originate from the 19th century. One instance is like example (0.11):

(0.11) **1895** R. H. SHERARD in *Bookman* Oct. 16/2 [He] labours hard over his proofs of the book, though little, **if at all**, over the newspaper proofs.

This *if at all* can be considered as the same as in Longman *if* conj. 6. *if at all* (see above).

The following diagram shows the timeline of occurrence of elliptical *if*-clauses in general in the *OED*.

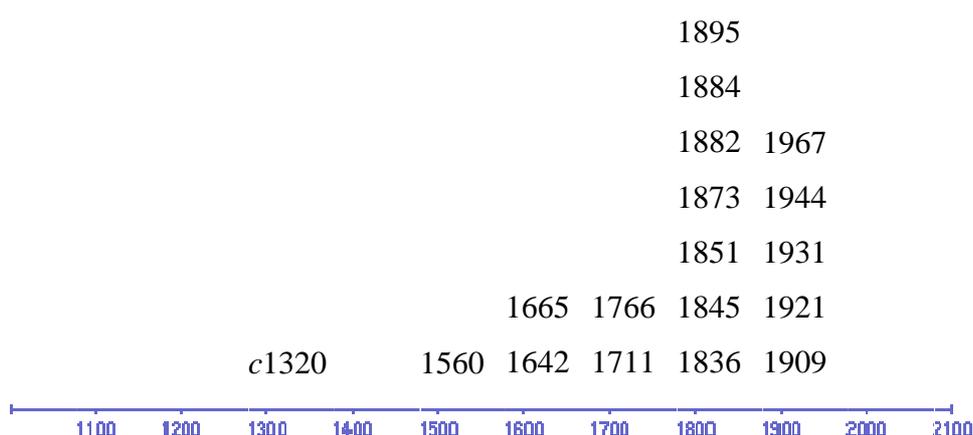


Figure 0.1

Diachronic distribution of elliptical *if*-clauses in the *OED*

⁹ In section 2.3 I will introduce the notions of *complete* as against *partial* ellipsis.

¹⁰ The phenomenon was discussed in sections 2.1, 2.5, and 3.1.

The *OED* treats all kinds of elliptical *if*-clauses as one group, but, in fact, they can be further divided according to structure, meaning and also function, as shown in chapter 2 as well as in the present introduction. So, from Figure 0.1 only the following dates should be highlighted: 1560 (for complete ellipsis), 1665 (for partial ellipsis) and 1895 (for phrasal interpretation, i.e. *if at all*).

The description of the subordinator *if* provided by the *Middle English Dictionary* (*MED*) is slightly different from that in the *OED*. On the one hand, there is a difference in the organisation (structuring) of the meanings, and on the other hand, in addition to the general meanings and uses shared by both dictionaries, new ways of interpreting *if*-clauses are also offered. Although the *MED* lists seven headings under the entry *if*, I shall focus on only two of them (*s.v.* conj. 3 and 4), since these are the ones that consider parenthetical and elliptical *if*-clauses, respectively. First, I shall take a look at elliptical *if*-clauses and then consider the parenthetical ones.

The first verbless instance dates back to a1400 (a1325), and is shown in example (0.12). This date is more than a century earlier than the date which the *OED* considered as the first occurrence of a verbless conditional clause.

(0.12) a1400 (a1325) Cursor (Vsp A.3) 584: Tua thinges halds man to-
gider, þe saul, o gastli thing to tell; **If bodili**, his fless and fell.
'there are two things that hold a man together: it is the soul
spiritually; and if bodily, then it is his flesh and skin'

In example (0.12) there are two things mentioned which hold a person together: the soul and the body. If the body itself is concerned ("If bodily"), then it is the flesh and the skin that makes the body as a whole.

Unlike the *OED*, the *MED* entry includes a section on 'introducing a parenthetical clause, in which the condition is an empty expression of politeness or deference' (*MED s.v. if* (conj.) 1.c.) which is in accord with the first hypothesis of the origin of *if* in the *OED* if politeness or deference is expressed with hesitation/doubt/reservation. The first occurrence of such a non-conditional, polite *if*-clause is, according to the *MED*, in 1175, (shown in example (0.13)). It cannot be considered as an unusual phenomenon, since this politeness implication was still in use in later periods, for instance, already in the 14th-15th centuries, as shown in examples (0.14) and (0.15):

- (0.13) c1175(?OE) Bod.Hom.(Bod 343) 118/15: Drihten, god is us
 þæt we her beon, **3yf þu wult**, þæt we her wurchen þreo
 leafselæs.
 ‘ ... if you wish, ... ’
- (0.14) a1325 Heil beo þou Marie Mylde (StJ-C S.30) 49: Ladi..3if
 þat þi wille were..Ðou help me out of sinne.
 ‘ ... if that were your wish/will, ... ’
- (0.15) (a1470) Malory Wks. (Win-C) 792/25: Sir, **if hit please you**,
 woll ye go wyth me hereby into a chapel?
 ‘ Sir, if it pleases you, you’ll go with me to the chapel ’

All the three examples above (0.13) – (0.15), however, are full *if*-clauses, with a finite verb. Still, it is noteworthy that *if*-clauses started to acquire a meaning other than the original conditional sense¹¹ at such an early period.

0.3 Research questions and aims

According to my pilot study of abbreviated *if*-structures based on the *Helsinki Corpus*¹², the first occurrence of an abbreviated *if*-structure dates back to Early Modern English. Following these preliminary analyses and earlier research discussed in 0.2.1, I argue that a differentiation could and should be made between conditional and non-conditional abbreviated *if*-structures. The main goal is to follow the diachronic development of those abbreviated *if*-structures and by so doing to discuss the following questions:

- Starting out from the overall picture concerning *if*-clauses in general, I wish to find out the ratio of the abbreviated *if*-structures to full *if*-clauses, and whether they both show the same tendency in their use throughout the examined time period (Chapter 2).
- What kind of variation can be detected at the level of syntax? That is, what is meant by ‘abbreviated *if*-structures’, and what kind of differences are there

¹¹ See 3.1 for more details.

¹² The pilot study considered Old, Middle and Early Modern English. The *Helsinki Corpus* is not discussed in the present study.

between seemingly similar structures? How are these structures realised? It is hypothesised that there is a difference between the abbreviated *if*-structures: some should be analysed as clauses and others as phrases. (Chapter 2)

- What interpretations can be associated with the individual abbreviated *if*-structures, starting out from the dual conditional – non-conditional division and continuing with the establishment of further categories within those groups? How have the possible meanings developed in the long diachrony, especially compared to each other? (Chapter 3)
- Are the abbreviated *if*-structures position-sensitive? Is there a direct connection between the positioning of the abbreviated *if*-structures and their functions in the sentence? (Chapters 2 and 4)
- Are intra- or extra-linguistic factors determinants in the development of the different categories, or is it rather a combination of both? (Chapter 2)
- Are the abbreviated *if*-structures text type-sensitive? (Chapter 4)
- How could grammaticalisation – pragmaticalisation – lexicalisation theories explain the spread of the abbreviated *if*-structures, especially knowing that not only words and phrases but also clauses can be sources of pragmaticalisation and thus of pragmatic markers (Brinton 2008: 27, Fischer 1992: 347)? (Chapter 5)

The extensiveness of the above-mentioned approaches, including diachrony and corpus linguistics puts me in a good position to pinpoint differences or perhaps discrepancies between various sources, such as corpora and dictionaries. The present study is based on the analysis of two diachronic corpora, the *PPCEME* and the *ARCHER*, with the help of which I attempt to prove first that a structure is very much context-dependent¹³. In other words, not all the abbreviated *if*-structures are instances of subordination, but sometimes they should be analysed as phrases and not as clauses, and they are not necessarily to be analysed as conditionals. Furthermore, I shall also show that during the five centuries (1500-1990) the change that took place can be attributed to grammaticalisation, for instance. To discuss the questions and also to argue for the validity of my hypotheses, I will provide a two-level analysis comprising syntax and semantics.

¹³ By (surrounding) context I mean the preceding and following clause(s) / sentence(s), which help to determine the type of the abbreviated *if*-structure. “Context” will be used through the whole dissertation.

This dissertation is a descriptive study with the aim of opening up new areas of research into *if*-clauses and conditionals. The observations on the abbreviated *if*-structures might induce further studies with the addition of other corpora. A wider range of sources would allow for refinements on the hypotheses offered in the present work. Another research initiative could be to investigate this material from a cross-linguistic point of view. Language teaching could also benefit from this study by examining different ways of interpreting abbreviated *if*-structures.

0.4 Outline of the dissertation

The dissertation comprises of five chapters: in chapter 1 I discuss the methods and materials applied in the present study. Chapter 2 is devoted to syntactic questions: I start out from *if*-structures in general and arrive at the discussion of abbreviated *if*-structures. I discuss the question of non-finite or verbless structures, the notion of ellipsis and then the problem of subordination in the area of abbreviated *if*-structures. Besides, I also try to detect regularities in the positioning of abbreviated *if*-structures. In Chapter 3 I discuss the conditional and non-conditional ways of classifying abbreviated *if*-structures. I start out from full *if*-clauses and then arrive at the different interpretations of abbreviated *if*-structures (conditionals as against non-conditionals, i.e. concessive structures, scalar comments and pragmatic markers). In chapter 4 I combine the form with the function of abbreviated *if*-structures with considering also their variation in the different text types. In chapter 5 I consider the possibility of grammaticalisation, lexicalisation and pragmaticalisation in the development of the abbreviated *if*-structures. Finally, chapter 6 is devoted to the overall conclusion of the dissertation.

1. Materials and Methods

The present chapter sets out to introduce the materials as well as the method utilised in the present research. Besides, the importance of corpus linguistics is also touched upon. The aim of this part is to let the reader become acquainted with the background of the study.

1.1 The research background

Since “[l]anguage is a human activity, not an epiphenomenon of a static capacity” (Brinton & Traugott 2005: 3, cf. Lehmann 1993: 320), linguistic changes can only be detected in the course of time. Therefore, the analysis of *historical* documents is considered as means of accessing empirical evidence (cf. Fischer 2004: 730). Without empirical evidence, theories would remain simple theories without appropriate support. Electronic historical corpora are a source of historical documents facilitating the investigation of linguistic variation (cf. Biber & Jones 2009: 1291).

There are two ways in which linguistic data can be approached: the intuitive approach and the non-intuitive approach. The main difference between the two is that while the former is subjective and unverifiable, the latter provides authentic data, that is, what is actually used in real life. Aarts (2002) illustrates the two in the following way:

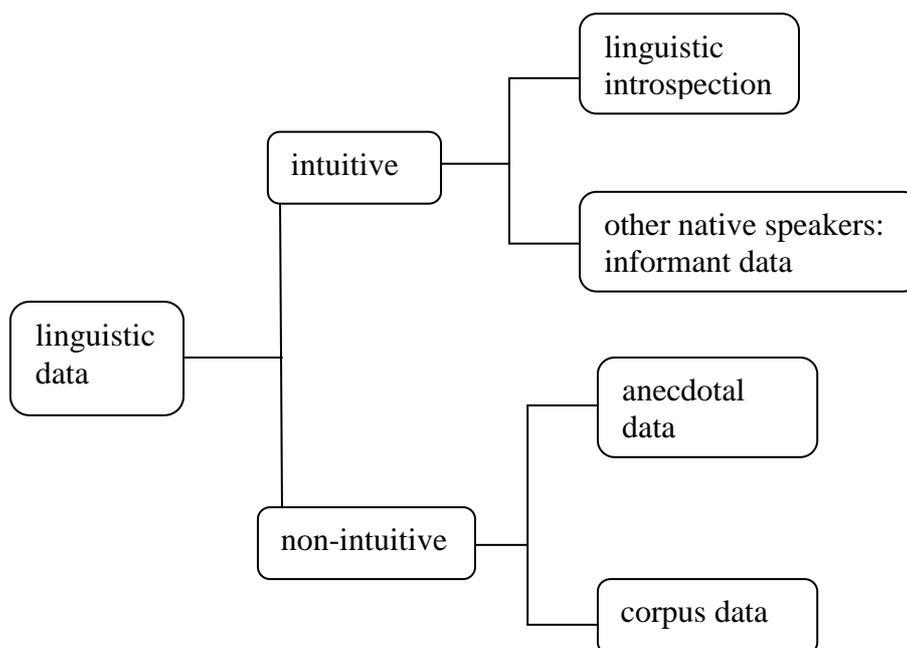


Figure 1.1.
Types of linguistic data
(Aarts 2002: 4)

Since the present study aims at discovering how abbreviated *if*-structures were changing and developing in the everyday language in the course of time, corpus linguistics, more precisely, the combination of historical and corpus linguistics¹⁴ seems to be the most appropriate way to achieve that goal.

Computerised corpora have contributed to a remarkable change and growth in the field of historical linguistics. Corpora “give easy access to info about linguistic contexts for change, frequency, and other factors ...” (Brinton & Traugott 2005: 8), and it also “allows the researcher to observe numerous tokens of the linguistic feature in natural contexts” (Biber & Jones 2009: 1291). Thus, a diachronic analysis can be well supported by corpus findings “in that it provides an empirical methodology for investigation processes of language change in progress” (Nevalainen 2004: 2). This is possible since structured electronic corpora provide improved possibilities for a many-

¹⁴ Corpus linguistics is considered to have begun when the Brown Corpus* was computerised in the 1960s. Since then there have been disputes and contrast between traditional ‘armchair’ linguistics and corpus linguistics, however, the latter is gradually attracting more and more followers.

* *Brown Corpus*: The Brown Corpus was the first computer-readable general corpus of texts prepared for linguistic research on modern English. It was compiled by W. Nelson Francis and Henry Kučera at Brown University in the 1960s and contains over 1 million words (500 samples of 2000+ words each) of running text of edited English prose printed in the United States during the calendar year 1961. There are six versions of the corpus available. (Information accessed at: <http://www.helsinki.fi/varieng/CoRD/corpora/BROWN/index.html> in November 2010.

sided analysis. Within the framework of the present study, they allow a reassessment and a comprehensive study of the abbreviated *if*-structures, from the diachronic¹⁵, the regional¹⁶ and the text type aspects (cf. Biber et al. 1999¹⁷: 137, Nevalainen 2004: 13-14).

However, the data obtained from the corpora should not be treated as a ‘real’ picture of a language. Thus, only *tendencies* can be seen from which linguists might be able to set up various hypotheses, and the corpus data “can be used as evidence for claims about the properties of the language system or speaker competence” (Hiltunen 2010: 92; see also Evert 2006: 178). As a result, additional subject matters might also be induced, also with the requirement of further, maybe even more thorough analyses.

The researcher might often face the problem of not having enough material in a given corpus, or even the period in question may not be well-represented in general; for instance, according to the data provided by the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the 17th and 19th centuries are better documented than the 18th (cf. Mair 2004: 124). This is a problem that is impossible to overcome. Of course, it is always possible to search for some other corpora that might contain more material of a similar kind (more details on this follow in section 1.2). Nevertheless, the use of more corpora might easily lead to difficulties resulting from the possible differences inherent in the included material, such as different text types (this problem is to be discussed in more detail in section 1.3.4). Ultimately, “the scholar’s aim is to become aware of the possibilities and limitations of the data, its projections of the real world, and the implications of the analysis itself” (Laitinen 2007: 74).

1.2 Material: Reasons for choosing the *PPCEME* and the *ARCHER* corpora

Since one of the aims of the present dissertation is to give a *general* overview of the development and the variation of the abbreviated *if*-structures in the *long diachrony*, the corpora were chosen accordingly. The original idea was that the development of the abbreviated *if*-structures should be followed from their earliest occurrence until the

¹⁵ The two corpora cover a relatively extended time span 1500-1990 (*PPCEME*: 1500-1710, *ARCHER*: 1650-1990).

¹⁶ Regional analysis is carried out in the *ARCHER* (British and American).

¹⁷ Biber et al. (1999: 137) use *register*.

present day, and so two corpora were chosen: the *PPCEME*¹⁸ from 1500 until the early 1700s and the *ARCHER* corpus from the late 1600 until 1990, see Table 1.1.

Corpus	Sub-periods	Date	Word Count
<i>PPCEME</i>		<i>1500-1710</i>	<i>1,794,010</i>
	E1	1500-1569	576,195
	E2	1570-1639	652,799
	E3	1640-1710	565,016
<i>ARCHER</i>		<i>1650-1990</i>	<i>1,789,309</i>
	I.	1650-1699	180,189
	II.	1700-1799	536,669
	III.	1800-1899	538,526
	IV.	1900-1990	533,925

Table 1.1.
Period and word count information
regarding the *PPCEME* and the *ARCHER* corpora

Although the *PPCEME* and the *ARCHER* provide a continuous historical record, it can often happen that neither corpus contains sufficient amount of material for a particular analysis (cf. Mair 2004: 125). Although, both corpora contain plenty of material (almost 1.8 million words each), this does not necessarily mean that the material provides sufficient examples of abbreviated *if*-structures.

Besides following a diachronic line, using two corpora also makes it possible to carry out analyses based on text types. Since the *ARCHER* is considered to be the continuation of the *PPCEME*, the “basic sameness of a text type in the course of the centuries” can be expected (Kohnen 2001: 198), and thus the text types can be compared. The reason behind a general text type analysis is finding out whether the use of abbreviated *if*-structures can be considered to be text type specific. Such an observation could initiate further searches in specialised corpora which could either support or refute the claims made in the present study.

The *ARCHER* corpus also facilitates regional searches in its British and American parts. As a result, tendencies in the productivity of abbreviated *if*-structures can be ascertained separately in British and in American English from 1650 to 1990.

¹⁸ The analysis started out from the *Helsinki Corpus*. However, due to the small number of instances in the Early Modern English part, I continued the analysis with the *PPCEME* with the perspective of obtaining more data.

Such regional analyses become of vital importance for the period beginning in the 17th century: this is the time when there was a spread of the English language concomitant to the growth of the British Empire. This spread resulted in the development of regional varieties of English besides British English, such as American, Canadian and Australian, to mention a few (cf. Traugott 1972: 162). In her study, Traugott (1972: 173-186) also underlines certain differences between British and American English which can be found when considering the productivity of certain constructions. Thus it was important for this study to have the possibilities afforded by the *ARCHER* corpus to contrast two varieties of English, namely, British and American.

In the following, I provide an overall outlook of the two corpora chosen for the research, namely the *PPCEME* and the *ARCHER*, in sections 1.2.1 and 1.2.2 respectively. I take a look at their division according to time, text types and parts of the corpora, as well as the word count of each.

1.2.1. *PPCEME*

The *Penn-Helsinki Parsed Corpus of Early Modern English* resembles very much the *Helsinki Corpus*. It is also divided into three sub-periods: E1: 1500-1569, E2: 1570-1639, E3: 1640-1710, but those contain more material than the sub-periods of the *HC* (cf. Table 1.2). As opposed to the *HC*, the *PPCEME* is further divided into three sections, which contain material from different sources; the Helsinki section has the material from the *HC*, the Penn 1 section mainly contains text samples by the same authors as in the Helsinki section, and the Penn 2 section contains new material by different authors than in the Helsinki or Penn 1 sections. Although the texts are all available in parsed as well as POS-tagged¹⁹ forms, my analysis required only the non-annotated form (more details on this come in section 1.3.1). Table 1.2 presents the word counts in the sub-periods and in the sub-parts of the corpus.

¹⁹ POS-tagged means ‘tagged for Parts of Speech’

	<i>Helsinki</i>	<i>Penn 1</i>	<i>Penn 2</i>	Total
E1 (1500-1569)	196,754	194,018	185,423	576,195
E2 (1570-1639)	196,742	223,064	232,993	652,799
E3 (1640-1710)	179,477	197,908	187,631	565,016
Total	<i>572,973</i>	<i>614,990</i>	<i>606,047</i>	1,794,010

Table 1.2.
Word counts in the sub-corpora of *PPCEME*

Table 1.3 below shows all 18 text types appearing in the *PPCEME* with their word counts as well as percentages of the ratio how they are distributed in the corpus. The *Bible* that is best and the *biographies* and medical texts that are least represented text types in the corpus; furthermore, there is a substantial variation in the representativeness of individual text types.

Text types	Number of words	Percentage
Bible	134,275	7.7 %
Travelogue	125,337	7.2 %
Diary, private	123,106	7.0 %
Drama, comedy	120,428	6.9 %
Letters, private	116,915	6.7 %
Fiction	116,494	6.7 %
Law	115,863	6.6 %
Educational treatise	113,032	6.5 %
Handbook, other	112,419	6.4 %
History	108,706	6.2 %
Proceedings, trials	105,090	6.0 %
Sermon	97,400	5.6 %
Philosophy	85,107	4.9 %
Science, other	79,050	4.5 %
Letters, non-private	59,868	3.4 %
Biography, other	52,755	3.0 %
Science, medicine	41,786	2.4 %
Biography, autobiography	41,379	2.4 %
Total	1,749,010	100.0 %

Table 1.3.
Text types and their word count distribution in the *PPCEME*

1.2.2 ARCHER

In the similar way as the *PPCEME, A Representative Corpus of Historical English Registers (ARCHER)* provides a distribution according to time (century-by-century) as well as text type. Besides, it offers an additional categorisation not present in the *PPCEME*: the division between British and American texts. The *ARCHER* corpus thus provides material for manifold analyses and conclusions. The corpus has the timeline from the 15th to the 20th century, divided between four sub-periods: I.: 1650-1699, II.: 1700-1799, III.: 1800-1899, and IV.: 1900- 1990. Concerning the text type distribution, altogether nine text types are available, namely, *drama, fiction, sermon, journal/diaries, medicine, news, science, letters* and *legal text*²⁰. Table 1.4 and 1.5 show the word counts according to the different text types in both the British and the American parts. According to the figures, each sub-period is evenly represented in both parts (total number in the tables), the text types, however, show deviation in their representation, e.g. *fiction* has a word count of over 40,000, *sermon* has only around 10,000 words in both parts (British and American) in each sub-period. Otherwise, all the other text types have a similar representation in the corpus with about 12% each.

British	drama	fiction	sermon	journal / diaries	medicine	news	science	letters	Total
1650-99	26,648	41,512	11,146	21,374	23,117	22,292	21,441	12,659	180,189
1700-49	25,177	44,021	10,664	21,443	21,936	21,612	20,780	12,093	177,726
1750-99	23,962	45,056	11,068	21,843	21,003	23,087	20,565	12,091	178,675
1800-49	26,267	44,946	11,089	21,740	20,278	22,903	20,994	12,576	180,793
1850-99	26,469	43,289	10,953	22,686	22,143	23,066	21,715	10,705	181,026
1900-49	23,048	45,274	10,569	22,066	20,204	21,975	21,337	12,434	176,907
1950-90	24,450	45,095	10,190	22,225	20,794	22,920	21,308	11,259	178,241
Total	176,021 14%	309,193 24%	75,679 6%	153,377 12%	149,475 12%	157,855 13%	148,140 12%	83,817 7%	1,253,557 100%

Table 1.4.
Text types in the *ARCHER* – British part

²⁰ From the point of view of the present research, apart from the legal texts, all the other text types provide relevant examples of abbreviated *if*-structures.

American	drama	fiction	sermon	journal/ diaries	medicine	news	science	letters	Total
1750-99	27,331	42,417	10,987	22,109	23,433	22,271	20,664	11,056	180,268
1850-99	24,214	44,224	10,740	22,534	20,424	21,992	21,326	11,253	176,707
1950-90	23,810	44,214	10,123	22,131	22,473	23,072	21,343	11,611	178,777
Total	75,355 14%	130,855 25%	31,850 6%	66,774 12%	66,330 12%	67,335 13%	63,333 12%	33,920 6%	535,752 100%

Table 1.5
Text types in the *ARCHER* – American part

1.3 Search criteria and methods

1.3.1 Retrieving data from the corpora

In order to retrieve data from the corpora, the *Word Smith* search engine was used. With the help of this tool, there is no need to read through the whole text samples, only the relevant parts are highlighted by the system and can then be put under scrutiny. In order to acquire all the possible instances of *if*, all its spelling variants were looked for (cf. chapter 3 fn3). Even though a part of the analysis is built on an already parsed and tagged corpus (*PPCEME*, see section 1.2.1), the search was carried out in the non-annotated version.

Since the present study is a bottom-up inductive approach, the abbreviated *if*-structure forms the basis of all further analysis, both on the level syntax and semantics. Therefore, it seemed to be more expedient to go through all the *if*-instances²¹ appearing in the corpora and thus avoid the risk of missing any abbreviated *if*-structure. This was only possible by searching for *if* or any of its spelling variant. This, however, resulted in not only abbreviated *if*-structures but also full *if*-clauses. After excluding²² all full *if*-clauses, which outnumbered the instances of abbreviated *if*-structures in both corpora, only the abbreviated *if*-structures remained for classification.

²¹ There was no reason to carry out cluster analysis, since there is only a limited number of recurring structures, e.g. *if possible*, *if not*, *if so*, *if at all*, and *if ever*.

²² Although full *if*-clauses were excluded from further analysis, they were considered in determining the ratio between full and abbreviated *if*-structures. See sections 2.3 and 2.4.

1.3.2 Classification of abbreviated *if*-structures

The classification began with the syntactic analysis of abbreviated *if*-structures. First, the structure itself was examined, that is, what exactly follows²³ *if*. If it was followed by a present or past participle²⁴ or a *to*-infinitive, then the structure was categorised as a non-finite *if*-structure, as the example in (1.1):

- (1.1) {=f LANDLADY} Well Sir, you have no reason to complain of my eyes, nor my tongue neither, **if rightly understood**.
<(Weeps)>
<ARCHER: 1686behn.d2b>

If the conjunction was followed by a noun, an *Adjective Phrase*, an *Adverb Phrase*, etc., then the structure was considered to be an instance of a verbless²⁵ *if*-structure, as in example (1.2):

- (1.2) Often, perhaps too often, we have lately, felt called upon to state our impressions with regard to the vote by ballot, and once more we are bound to declare the continued bias of our judgment against that plausible, but inefficient and disgraceful, and **if not inefficient**, most dangerous and immoral measure.
<ARCHER: 1833tim1.n5b>

In addition, the syntactic positions of the abbreviated *if*-structures were also taken into account; that is, whether the abbreviated *if*-structure occurs sentence initially (also including those instances where the *if*-structure follows a conjunction, like *and* or *or*), medially, or finally, as in examples (1.3), (1.4) and (1.5) respectively:

- (1.3) Substances which are gross and heavy, as those consisting chiefly of Saline and earthly Particles, such as Tartar, Manna, and the like, if they are reduced smaller by Triture, or repeated Solutions, operate more gently, but **if actuated by Acids**, or any management which exposeth their Angles more sensibly to the Membranes, they are rougher, and take Place sooner.
<ARCHER: 1720cote.s3b>

²³ Modifiers were discarded from the analysis. See classification in section 2.5: A-G.

²⁴ See classification in section 2.5: H-I, and section 2.6.2.1.

²⁵ See section 2.6.2.2.

- (1.4) It is no secret that he considers these measures as conditions precedent to the success, **if not the existence**, of an effective French protectorate over Tunis.
<ARCHER: 1883tim2.n6b>
- (1.5) I would howr. myself propose that it shd. be paid in the course of the ensuing year in two equal portions or moieties, **if not disagreeable to you**.
<ARCHER: 1834disr.x5b>

Apart from the syntactic analysis, semantic analysis was also performed. Its purpose was to determine the differences in the implication of the abbreviated *if*-structures and thus be able to classify them. Since there is a close relationship between conditionals and questions²⁶ (cf. Akatsuka 1986: 342), the classification would also include those instances where the conjunction *if* stands for the polar interrogative *whether* which is not infrequent in reported questions (that is, '*if* = *whether*'), as in example (1.6), rewritten in (1.6a):

- (1.6) I think you have done well to give Mr Woodshaw directions to make the house ready against our going up, pray give him order to put that little closett which my Lady Mary Sheldon took out of my chamber (as thinking it to long) into it againe, for I shall not have that exception to it. *I should be glad to know if my brother H. Finch doth hear from my brother John*. If he doth I suppose he gives him some account of the time he designes to spend in Padua.
<ARCHER: 1664acon.x2b> (emphasis mine)
- (1.6a) I should be glad to know **whether** my brother H. Finch doth hear from my brother John.

However, none of the abbreviated *if*-structures did qualify as an instance of an indirect question, and thus I do not consider the issue any further. Consequently, the remaining task was to examine all the structures yielded by the search according to conditionality and differentiate between conditional and non-conditional *if*-structures (cf. sections 3.1-3.3). An abbreviated *if*-structure would count as conditional if it follows the *if p, then q*

²⁶ The analysis considers the *if*-instances only although it is possible for *when* to replace *if*, as König (1986: 230) also detects in German with the conjunctions *wenn* '*if/when*' in clauses like:

Wenn ich Paul sehe, werde ich es ihm sagen.
'If / when I see Paul, I will tell him'.

sequence²⁷ – subject to position change, though – and *if* the ‘reason-consequence’ (cf. Funk 1985: 368) or “cause-effect” (Vallauri 2010: 62) relationship can be clearly detected, as in example (1.7):

- (1.7) Whereupon was concluded that, if the Scottis will agree it, the ground shall be divided; **if not**, then shal the Scottis wast their debatablers {COM:sic}, and we ours, commaunding them by proclamacion to depart.
<PPCEME: EDWARD-E1-P1,390.335>

In example (1.7) there are two conditional sequences to pay attention to: first, “if the Scottis will agree it”, what consequence(s) should be count on, i.e. “the ground shall be divided”. Then another possibility is mentioned with a negative outcome, i.e. “if not” (=when the Scots will *not* agree with it), then what effect should be estimated. It should be remarked that while in the first sentence there is no *then* present, in the case of the second one there is. Even though the use of *then* is optional, its existence in the sentence is a helpful way of testing conditionality, as it is a potential indicator of the cause-effect relationship. Due to its optionality, its absence does not induce any disturbance or even ungrammaticality in the sentence, as was seen above in example (1.7). However, if *then* is not present and the implication of the *if*-structure would be disturbed by the insertion of *then*, then the *if*-structure in question is most probably not a conditional one. Consider example (1.8):

- (1.8) At last I concluded Cleomidon was sick, **if not dead**; but I wrote to him three or four times, but no answer would he return;
<ARCHER: 1702anon.f3b>

*(1.8a) **if not dead**, *then* Cleomidon was sick,

In example (1.8) *if not dead* is a non-conditional instance which means that the attempt to make a cause-effect sequence including *then*, as shown in example *(1.8a), would lead to an ungrammatical result.

²⁷ Although the sequence is given with the *if*-clause occupying the sentence initial position, I also consider other *if*-clauses standing sentence-medially or –finally as conditionals if the cause-effect relationship is there.

Furthermore, the cause-effect relationship would be endangered in the case of conditionals if the abbreviated *if*-structure were removed from the sentence, as in example (1.9), with the indication of ungrammaticality in example *(1.9a):

(1.9) She abhorred flattery and dissimulation, and never used it towards her superiors; but, **if obliged to speak**, would give 'em her thoughts very freely.
<ARCHER:173xfret.j3b>

*(1.9a) She abhorred flattery and dissimulation, and never used it towards her superiors; but, ... , would give 'em her thoughts very freely.

Nevertheless, non-conditionals have no such a cause-effect relationship, the removal of the *if*-structure would not affect the overall understanding of a structure, as for instance in examples (1.10) and (1.10a), where the *if*-structure is omitted:

(1.10) and yet to be thought a good Daughter, she must have such Notions as will probably, **if not necessarily**, render her a very bad Wife.
<ARCHER: 1740camp.f3b>

(1.10a) and yet to be thought a good Daughter, she must have such Notions as will probably, ..., render her a very bad Wife.

It stands to reason that, additionally to these tests, the context should be paid attention to as well (cf. section 3.3), in order to determine the conditionality of the abbreviated *if*-structure. It might happen that the abbreviated *if*-structure is in a parenthetical position and thus it could be left out, still the cause-effect relationship can be detected; in such a case, the instance would be analysed as conditional, as in example (1.11):

(1.11) {=m CONSTANT.} **If possible**, I'll marry the Woman to Night.
<ARCHER: 1709cent.d3b >

Although it is possible to remove *if possible* in example (1.11), still the proposition would not have the same implication without it, since *if possible* refers to the actual possibility whether the marriage can take place, that is:

(1.11a) **If it is possible** (if it is manageable, feasible), *then* I will marry her.

However, when it is not possible to detect such a relationship between the abbreviated *if*-structure and the main clause, then the *if possible* is considered to be a pragmatic marker, as in example (1.12):

(1.12) WHEN it became more generally known that there would be a Transit of Venus in 1769, and the advantages which were like to accrue to Astro< >omy, and consequently to Navigation and Chronology, from proper observations of it, Mr. JOSEPH BROWN, a very respectable merchant of Providence, being very desirous, **if possible**, to obtain an observation of it, was pleased to advise with me, concerning an apparatus suitable for such an observation, and to know if we should be able to observe the transit with the necessary precision for answering the important design?
<ARCHER: 1769west.s4a>

In example (1.12) *if possible* functions as a mitigator of ‘desirous’, and does not express any real possibility. It does not form an integral part of the sentence structure, rather, it stands on the periphery and is thus cancellable (cf. section 3.1). Consequently, its removal would not cause any change in the meaning of the proposition. Consider example (1.12a):

(1.12a) [...] Mr. JOSEPH BROWN, a very respectable merchant of Providence, being very desirous, [...] to obtain an observation of it, was pleased to advise with me, [...]

An abbreviated *if*-structure receives a concessive interpretation if the meaning of the *if*-structure is the opposite of what stands (in most cases) after it, and is directly followed by either *at least* or *yet*, as in examples (1.13) and (1.14) respectively:

(1.13) The Plays, I must confess, have some small Charms, and wou'd have more, wou'd they restrain that loose obscene encouragement to Vice, which shocks, **if not the Virtue of some Women**, at least the Modesty of all.
<PPCEME: VANBR-E3-H,32.19>

(1.14) Adultery there, if it bee prooued, is punished with death, as the losse of both the parties heads, if they bee both married, or **if not both**, yet the married party must dye for it, and the other must

endure some easier punishment, eyther-1 by the purse or carkasse;
which in the end proues little better then halfe a hanging.
<PPCEME: JOTAYLOR-E2-P1,3,81.C2.13>

Finally, scalar comments are recognised by being next to what they are actually commenting, by saying something more (in example (1.15)) or less (in example (1.16)), than what is stated before:

(1.15) If it be said Crab-stocks ready grown may be made use of instead of cuttings; there 's this Answer ready, They must grow two **if not three** years after they are set before they are fit to graff, and in respect of their large growth will not be fit for Dwarfs.
<PPCEME: LANGF-E3-P2,71.272>

(1.16) The former is composed of sporules, empty tubes (the mycelium), and tubes filled with sporules; the latter is characterized by the presence of spores, with very few **if any** tubes.
<ARCHER: 1864begb.m6b>

In both instances it is possible to cancel the abbreviated *if*-structures; consider examples (1.15a) and (1.16a):

(1.15a) [...] They must grow two [...] years after they are set before they are fit to graff, [...]

(1.16a) [...] and tubes filled with sporules; the latter is characterized by the presence of spores, with very few [...] tubes.

1.3.3 Analysis of frequency

As the Tables 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, and 1.5 above have shown, the number of words is unevenly distributed from corpus to corpus, from text type to text type and from sub-period to sub-period. Thus, simply looking at and comparing the raw numbers of the occurring abbreviated *if*-structures of the corpora might lead to misconceptions. This is because in a highly represented text type the probability for an abbreviated *if*-structure to occur is much higher than in a rarely represented text type. In such a case, it would seem that the given structure is more frequent in the former than in the latter. Consequently, the

frequencies were normalised²⁸ to a common base. Generally, normalised frequency is counted per 1,000, 10,000, 100,000 or 1,000,000 words – depending on the size of the corpus or sub-corpus. In the present study the normalisation was done per 10,000 words as regarding the word count of the text types in the sub-corpora is in line with this (cf. McEnery et al. 2006: 53). This way both intra- and inter-corpus conclusions can be drawn.

Although the frequency of a linguistic feature can be measured in different ways²⁹, I utilised a “Type C design” where the aim is “to compute rates of occurrence of linguistic features in each subcorpus” (Biber & Jones 2009: 1290 and 1301). According to this design, the corpus or sub-corpus is treated as one single unit. Having this in mind, two options are possible in the frequency analysis:

- (a) when the frequency count applies to the whole (sub-) corpus
- or
- (b) when the frequency count applies to one text type only within the (sub-) corpus.

In case of (a) the following formula was used:

$$\frac{\sum \text{number of instances of abbreviated } if\text{-structures}}{\sum \text{total word count of the } (sub\text{-})\text{corpus}} \times 10,000$$

For instance, in E1 (the first sub-period of the *PPCEME*) there are 7 abbreviated *if*-structures and the word count is 576,195. This means that the normalised frequency should be calculated as follows:

$$\frac{7}{576,195} \times 10,000 = 0.12$$

The result shows that the number of abbreviated *if*-structures in 10,000 words is 0.12.

²⁸ “‘Normalization’ is a way to convert raw counts into rates of occurrence, so that the scores from texts of different lengths can be compared” (Biber & Jones 2009: 1299).

²⁹ The ways to measure frequency are:

Type A: focuses on the variants of a given linguistics feature.

Type B: considers each text as a separate unit for analysis.

Type C: considers each (sub-) corpus as a separate unit for analysis. (Biber & Jones 2009: 1289-1291, also 1301)

And in case of (b) the analysis was based on the following formula:

$$\frac{\sum \text{number of instances of abbreviated } if\text{-structures}}{\sum \text{total word count of the } text\ type} \times 10,000$$

The two above-mentioned formulae were applied in the calculation of the frequency of

- all the *if*-structures appearing in the corpora (both full and abbreviated),
- full *if*-clauses,
- abbreviated *if*-structures,
- conditional abbreviated *if*-structures,
- non-conditional abbreviated *if*-structures,
- each type of non-conditional abbreviated *if*-structures.

1.3.4 The problems of text types

There has always been a terminological uncertainty³⁰ concerning the choice between *genre* and *text type*, sometimes these words are even used interchangeably (cf. Taavitsainen 1993: 172, 2001: 139-141, Moessner 2001). On the one hand, the use of *genre* would be more literature-specific according to Steger (1998), and Biber (1988: 68) uses the term when the classification is based on extralinguistic grounds. On the other hand, the term *text type* (*Textsorte*, *Texttypus*, *Textart*, *Textklasse*, etc. Steger 1998: 286) is the characteristic of non-literary texts, so the classification is based on linguistic features (cf. Biber 1988: 70, Biber & Finegan 1986). In the present analysis I use the term *text type* since neither of the corpora provides any ‘sub-genres’ to take into consideration (i.e. ‘sub-genres’ in *journals*, for instance, could be *cultural*, *political*, etc. *journals*).

The analysis evoked another problem, namely how the text types are represented in the corpora. Table 1.6 below shows an overview of the text types occurring in the two corpora.

³⁰ Görlach even asserts that “the study of text types is a comparatively new discipline and there are still far too few labourers in the vineyard” (2004: 7).

Synoptic table of the text types in the <i>PPCEME</i> and <i>ARCHER</i>		
Text type	<i>PPCEME</i>	<i>ARCHER</i>
Bible	+	-
Biography, autobiography	+	-
Biography, other	+	-
Diary /Journal	+	+
Drama, comedy	+	+
Educational treatise	+	-
Fiction	+	+
Handbook, other	+	-
History	+	-
Law	+	-
Letters, non-private	+	+
Letters, private	+	+
News	-	+
Philosophy	+	-
Proceedings, trials	+	-
(Science) medicine	+	+
Science (other)	+	+
Sermon	+	+
Travelogue	+	-

Table 1.6.
Text types in *PPCEME* and *ARCHER*

Some of the text types (*diary/journal; drama, comedy; fiction; letters (private, non-private); news; science (medicine, other); sermon*) are to be found in both corpora, the others only in one of them. There are various ways of categorising different text types (cf. e.g. Biber et al. 1999, Culpeper & Kytö 2010), such as according to orality or formality, for instance. The question here arises how the results in different sources could be compared. The answer lies in a grouping that “can probably be correlated with specific functions and recurring linguistic features as well as writers’ intentions and

readers' expectations" (Görlach 2004: 8). The most obvious and convenient possibility for such a general grouping might be to have a spoken-written dimensional analysis. However, there are a number of discrepancies that urges for reconsideration. First and foremost, Görlach (2004) introduces a third party in this dual dimension, namely *written texts to be spoken*, such as *sermons*, which form an "intermediate position between the poles of orality and literacy" (Claridge & Walker 2001: 33). Biber (1988) also draws attention to those text types which are spoken, but still can be classified as written in many respects (e.g. *academic lectures*, in his data) and to those text types which are written, but still show oral characteristics (e.g. *personal letters*, in his data). Furthermore, Biber & Finegan (1989) attribute more oral characteristics to seventeenth-century letters than to the eighteenth-century material. Along the same lines, Nevalainen & Raumolin-Brunberg (1993) discover the tendency in personal letters to become more and more oral throughout the period of Early Modern English.

In spite of such proviso, the aim of the text type analysis in the present study is to ascertain when and in which text types abbreviated *if*-structures occur more frequently. Only this type of analysis would make it possible to determine what specialised corpora would be needed for further research (cf. section 1.2). Thus I offer the analysis of the two corpora according to text types, and then the comparison of the results only for those text types which are shared by both corpora.

2. Form

The present chapter is devoted to the discussion of the form and syntax of abbreviated *if*-structures. After a brief explanation of what is meant by full *if*-clauses and abbreviated *if*-structures, I address the question as to whether the existence of abbreviated *if*-structures is due to external factors, such as contact influence (in section 2.2), or internal ones (sections 2.3-2.7). This is followed by diachronic surveys: the development and ratio of all the *if*-structures are examined in section 2.3, and in section 2.4 the occurrence of full *if*-clauses and abbreviated *if*-structures between 1500 and 1990 is compared. Following this corpus overview, the main focus of this chapter shifts towards abbreviated *if*-structures. Sections 2.4.1 and 2.4.2 depict the distribution of abbreviated *if*-structures in the sub-corpora of the *PPCEME* and the *ARCHER*. The actual analysis of the abbreviated *if*-structures follows in section 2.5; on the basis of the corpus data I list all possible structural variations of abbreviated *if*-structures. Then section 2.6 considers the questions of ellipsis and subordination. Section 2.7 argues for making a contrast between ellipsis (complete and partial) and truncation, resulting in different abbreviated *if*-structures. The discussion continues in section 2.8 with considering the possible positions (initial, medial and final), which abbreviated *if*-structures can occupy.

2.1 Introduction

Traditionally, when *if*-clauses are discussed, full *if*-clauses are understood and dealt with in the first place. Thus, my discussion also derives from full *if*-clauses, which belong to the group of adverbial subordinate clauses; a clause being subordinate implies that it is dependent on its main clause. In the case of *if*-clauses, it is the subordinate (i.e. the *if*-clause) and the main clause together that build up a conditional statement³¹, normally in the form of *if p, then q*³² sequence. In this sequence, the *if*-clause is also referred to as the protasis and the main clause as apodosis. In a full *if*-clause, the conjunction *if* can be followed by a verb in the present tense or in the past tense /

³¹ The discussion on the functions of *if*-clauses and abbreviated *if*-structures follows in chapter 3.

³² Here I follow the traditional way of phrasing a conditional statement.

subjunctive form, depending on the desired implication and outcome of the whole proposition. Consider example (2.1):

- (2.1) and **if** Capt. Howett *came* not by that time (having lost him chasing in the night) we *would*, God permitting, *steer away* for the Terceiras.
<PPCEME: 1650penn.j2b>

Example (2.1) is an instance of a full *if*-clause, exactly following the above-mentioned *if p, then q* sequence. In the protasis *if* is followed by a proper noun, *Capt. Howett*, which functions as the subject of the *if*-clause, and the verb *came not* (the verb *come* in its past tense form and the negative particle *not*) and the adverbial *by that time*. This is how the protasis (the *p*) is built up. The apodosis (the *q*) consists of the subject *we*, the verb *would steer away* (the past tense form of *will*, building up a *Verb Phrase* (VP) with *steer away*) and the adverbial *for the Terceiras*. According to my definition, an *if*-clause with a noun functioning as the subject of the clause and a finite verb functioning as the verb of the clause, counts as a full *if*-clause, hence the *if*-clause in example (2.1) is a full clause.

However, there are cases when this regular pattern of the *if*-clause is not followed and there is no finite verb present which results in an abbreviated structure. Here I would like to introduce the term ‘abbreviated *if*-structure’, which would be used as a cover term for all the non-full *if*-structures I discuss in the study. These abbreviated *if*-structures are special in the sense that the minimum of a *finite verb* functioning as the verb and a *noun* functioning as the subject are missing.

- (2.2) His greate powere delyveryd me ones owte of the lyones deen as he dyd hys holy prophet Danyell; so I truste that he wyll delyver me here owt of all my troubles, *yf he so see yt good*. **Yf not**, hys wyl be done!
<PPCEME: MOWNTAYNE-E1-H,204.130>

In example (2.2), for instance, the above-mentioned criterion is fulfilled: *if* is followed only by the negative particle *not*; otherwise, this abbreviated *yf*-clause resembles very much a full *if*-clause: *yf not* has its antecedent in the previous clause, *yf he so see yt good*. In order to avoid any unnecessary repetition, most of the sentence constituents, viz. *he so see yt good*, are omitted and thus only *yf not* remains.

Example (2.2) above is an early example from the early 16th century which could indeed raise the question of origin, the first occurrence and the development of the abbreviated *if*-structures. It is worth examining whether these are due to some external (e.g. contact influence) or some internal (e.g. ellipsis) factors. In section 2.2 the possibility of contact influence is considered. Subsequently, after investigating the tendencies in the development of abbreviated *if*-structures, the question of ellipsis is also discussed (see section 2.6).

2.2 The possibility of contact influence in the development of abbreviated *if*-structures

As mentioned above, the first occurrence of abbreviated *if*-structures can be dated back to the 16th century. Prior to pondering about the internal factors in their development, it might be advantageous to consider whether ‘abbreviatedness’ is due to a decisive influence of some other language(s), such as Latin and French. However, it is rather difficult to ascertain whether the given abbreviated structure is a “Latinate” construction, or simply a native development, as a characteristic of some author or some fashionable style (cf. Kohnen 2001: 171). For a start, those factors are taken into consideration that could support the idea of Latin influence in the emergence of abbreviated *if*-structures.

In fact, Latin had a remarkable impact not only on the lexis but on semantics and syntax as well from the 700s: “...various types of dependent clauses and participial constructions were imitated from Latin and became permanent in the history of English syntax” (Görlach 1997: 146). In the later periods of Old English, the syntax gradually became more independent of Latin. In the Middle English period three languages were in use: *French*³³, *Latin*³⁴, and *English*³⁵ (cf. Blake 1992: 5-6), from which, as Leith suggests “Latin was a developed, omnifunctional, autonomous, urbanised, standardised language [...] that could provide a model for other languages” (1986: 13), and made a remarkable impact on prose structures, which is the most visible during the Renaissance period.

³³ French was used in both spoken and written language; was mostly used in literary works, documents and religious writings; Anglo-French was the administrative language.

³⁴ Latin was the language of religion and administration.

³⁵ English was used only for specific religious purposes; it appears only on the spoken level, with the exception of court. First it was sporadic in writing, but increasingly supplants French and then Latin.

In Latin sentence structure either the ellipsis or the complete omission (in the case of a nominal clause) of the copula was not infrequent at all. Especially in subordinate clauses (time, concessive clauses) the ellipsis of the copula *esse* ‘be’ was prevalent. Besides the full clauses, there are elliptical *if*-clauses (with the combination of the adjective *possibile* ‘possible’ resulting in *si possibile* ‘if possible’) to be found already from the late 5th and early 6th centuries, shown in examples (2.3) and (2.4), and some in the later periods as well, as in examples (2.5) and (2.6):

- (2.3) *Si possibile, quomodo ad sinistram suam uel ad dexteram inperitendae apostolic sedis non habuit potestatem, qui omnia fecit esse, quae non errant?*
 (Ambrosius Mediolanensis - De fide libri V (ad Gratianum Augustum) Cl. 0150, lib. : 5, cap. : 6, linea : 3 [*])
- (2.4) *Nam si C de D, D autem de E, et C de E ex necessitate; et si possibile utrumque, et conclusion erit possibilis.*
 (Aristoteles sec. translationem quam fecit Boethius - Analytica priora (recensio Florentina = recensio B) Cl. 0882 a, lib. : 1, cap. : 015, pag. : 31, linea : 25)
- (2.5) *Hoc autem est impossibile, quod si possibile, sequeretur D fore per triangulum uiridem in ipso C, et I sciret defectum in C D; et K non diligeret in C bonitatem, magnitudinem, potestatem, sapientiam, perfectionem, in quantum ipsis N O H et etiam maioritati contradicerent, et cum minoritate | concordarent, et in ipso D essent ad inuicem aduersantes. Hoc autem constat esse impossibile, qua impossibilitate est Filii Dei incarnatio manifesta.*
 (Raimundus Lullus - Liber principiorum theologiae (op. 12) pars: 1, distinctio: 4, pag.: 52, linea: 1133)
- (2.6) *Praemunio autem vos a bestiis anthropomorphis, quos non solum oportet vos non recipere, sed si possibile neque eis obviare, solum autem orare pro ipsis, si quomodo paeniteant, quod difficile. Huius autem habet potestatem Iesus Christus, verum nostrum vivere.*
 (Epistularium Ignatii Antiocheni - Epistulae vii genuinae quas e cod. graeco nunc deperdito Robertus Grosseteste ut uidetur transtulit (uersio anglo-latina) (ad Smyrnenses), cap.: 4, par.: 1, pag.: 271, linea: 18)

On the one hand, it seems a plausible hypothesis that under the pervasive influence of Latin on vernaculars in the Middle Ages reduced Latin clauses of this type could have served as a model for similar English clauses. On the other hand, this

hypothesis could be definitely refuted by studying the Latin corpus³⁶. Admittedly, in the corpus only the above-mentioned examples could be found, which does not seem to be thoroughly convincing. Most probably, Sørensen (1957: 133) could provide an apt explanation for the whole question:

[T]o practically all supposed Latinisms in English (with the possible exception of the Old English absolute dative) there corresponded a set of similar native constructions, which were in existence – if only in embryo – before the influence from Latin set in, and which might have developed in the way they did without any foreign influence. Most English Latinisms, then, are Latinisms only in the sense that Latin has contributed – slightly or materially – to increasing their frequency or to extending their syntactical domains.

It might well have been the case that verbless *if*-clauses were actually in use in earlier periods as well (even before the 1400s as offered by the *MED*), since conditional ellipsis in general can be dated back to the 1100s, according to the *MED*. Just because the earlier centuries in the history of English are not so well-documented, making it impossible to arrive at reliable conclusions, none of the above-mentioned alternatives should be discarded.

As far as French influence³⁷ is concerned, it can most probably be ruled out in this case since the first occurrence of abbreviated *si*-clauses in French can be dated back approximately only to the 17th century, and then they are based on English influence (cf. Grevisse 2008: 1131/2°, and also 1993).

³⁶ **Library of Latin Texts CLCLT-5:** <http://clt.brepolis.net/clt/start.asp?sOwner=menu> (accessed in November 2010).

³⁷ The possibility of French influence should be taken into consideration, since as Traugott suggests, lexical items were borrowed from French together with “their characteristic syntactic structures” (1972: 158).

2.3 *If*-structures in general: a diachronic survey

As mentioned in section 1.2.1, the *PPCEME* covers the time period between 1500 and 1710, and is sufficient in size for the research to be valid, with a nearly evenly distributed number of words within the sub-corpora. The corpus provides 5,610 *if*-structures in 551,000 words, which means altogether 32.27 *if*-structures in 10,000 words³⁸. This figure incorporates both the full and the abbreviated instances. The *ARCHER* corpus, as pointed out earlier, covers four centuries, between 1650 and 1990. However, the two sub-corpora, the British and the American, do not include the same amount of material; that is, the American part covers only 150 years, with the data originating from the latter half of the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries. The total number of words in the whole *ARCHER* corpus is 1,789,309, from which 4545 are different types of *if*-instances; this means approximately 25.4 instances of *if*-structures per 10,000 words which frequency is lower than it is in the *PPCEME*. This could mean that *if*-structures in general are becoming less frequent towards the 20th century. Although no further analysis has been made so far on the topic, still it can be hypothesised that this frequency-decrease could be due to the existence (and also maybe the development) of other ways to form an ‘*if*-clause’, such as, the use of inversion, or replacing *if* with *when* or *provided*, for instance.

Table 2.1 shows the data from the three sub-corpora of the *PPCEME* in the three sub-periods and the two sub-corpora of the *ARCHER* in the four sub-periods, including the absolute and the relative number of instances of all the *if*-structures.

³⁸ For the method of calculation see section 1.3.3.

All (full+abbreviated) <i>if</i> -structures (absolute numbers)	PPCEME - sub-corpora -			Total	Relative frequency / 10,000 words
	Helsinki	Penn 1	Penn 2		
E1 (1500-1569)	558	578	525	1661	28.83
E2 (1570-1639)	678	742	695	2115	32.40
E3 (1640-1710)	581	654	599	1834	32.46
Total	1817	1974	1819	5610	31.27
Relative frequency / 10,000 words	31.71	32.10	30.01	31.27	
	ARCHER - sub-corpora -				
	British	American			
I. 1650-1699	515 (28.58)	-		515	28.58
II. 1700-1799	935 (26.24)	417 (22.41)		1352	25.19
III. 1800-1899	947 (26.17)	470 (26.88)		1417	26.31
IV. 1900-1990	838 (23.6)	423 (22.54)		1261	23.62
Total	3235	1310		4545	25.4
Relative frequency / 10,000 words	25.81	24.45		25.4	

Table 2.1.

All *if*-structures (full and abbreviated)
in the *PPCEME* and in the *ARCHER*
(absolute numbers and relative frequency / 10,000 words)

It can be maintained that the *PPCEME* is a carefully structured corpus, since the frequency of all the *if*-structures in the three sub-corpora are almost the same, around 30 instances / 10,000 words. There is not much variation to be detected between the three sub-periods either: in E1 the frequency is 28.83 instances per 10,000 words which increases to 32.4 instances per 10,000 words in E2. It almost stays the same in E3 when the frequency is 32.46 instances per 10,000 words.

Although there is a slightly increasing tendency in the use of *if*-structures in general from E1 to E3 in the *PPCEME*, a decreasing tendency can be seen throughout the centuries covered by the *ARCHER*. Already in its first sub-period (which overlaps with the last sub-period of *PPCEME*) the frequency of the *if*-structures in general is lower than in any sub-period of the *PPCEME*, that is, 28.58 instances per 10,000 words. Albeit there is a minor increase from the 18th to the 19th century, a decline characterises

the use of *if*-structures in general. As far as the sub-corpora are concerned in the *ARCHER*, not much variation can be observed between the British and the American parts either when the frequency of *if*-structures in general is considered. It is important to mention that although there is more difference in the absolute numbers, the relative numbers should be taken into consideration (cf. the section on normalisation in section 1.3.3). It is noteworthy that the lowest figure of the British part (23.06 per 10,000 words) is still higher than the lowest frequency in the American part (22.41 per 10,000 words). The data also suggest that in the British part the frequency of *if*-structures in general is the highest in the 17th century, whereas in the American part it is in the 19th century.

Generally speaking, it can be concluded that although there is very little variation in the frequency of *if*-structures in general, a slightly decreasing tendency can be observed from the first sub-period of the *PPCEME* to the last sub-period of the *ARCHER*, from 28.83 to 23.62 instances per 10,000 words. Of course, these numbers include both the full and the abbreviated *if*-structures. In the next section these are contrasted with each other and from section 2.5 the abbreviated *if*-structures are discussed in more detail.

2.4 Full versus abbreviated *if*-structures: a diachronic survey

In the current section the analysis will be twofold: the *if*-structures that were introduced in the previous section are divided into two main types, namely, full *if*-clauses and abbreviated *if*-structures. It has to be emphasised that in the present study no thorough analysis (incorporating the syntactic as well as the semantic analyses) is made concerning the full *if*-clauses. Nevertheless, the purpose of taking the full *if*-clauses into consideration at all is, on the one hand, to be able to judge the frequency of the abbreviated *if*-structures as opposed to the full ones, and, on the other hand, to be able to follow and measure the development and intensity of the abbreviated *if*-structures compared to the full *if*-clauses in the long diachrony. Table 2.2 and Figure 2.1 provide the overall picture of the numbers of two types of *if*-structures according to their diachronic distribution from the first (1500-1569) to the last (1640-1710) sub-period of the corpus.

<i>If</i> -type / sub-period	Abbreviated <i>if</i> -structures	Full <i>if</i> -clauses	Total
E1 (1500-1569)	7 (0.12)	1654 (28.71)	1661 (28.83)
E2 (1570-1639)	26 (0.4)	2089 (32)	2115 (32.4)
E3 (1640-1710)	63 (1.12)	1771 (31.34)	1834 (32.46)
PPCEME Total	96 (0.54)	5514 (30.74)	5610 (31.27)
	2%	98%	100%
<i>1650-1699</i>	24 (1.33)	491 (27.25)	515
<i>1700-1799</i>	83 (1.55)	1269 (23.65)	1352
<i>1800-1899</i>	82 (1.52)	1335 (24.79)	1417
<i>1900-1990</i>	51 (0.96)	1210 (22.66)	1261
ARCHER Total	240 (1.34)	4305 (24.06)	4545 (25.4)
	5 %	95 %	100%
Total	336	9819	10155

Table 2.2

Abbreviated *if*-structures and full *if*-clauses
in the *PPCEME* and in the *ARCHER*
(absolute numbers / relative frequency/10,000 words)

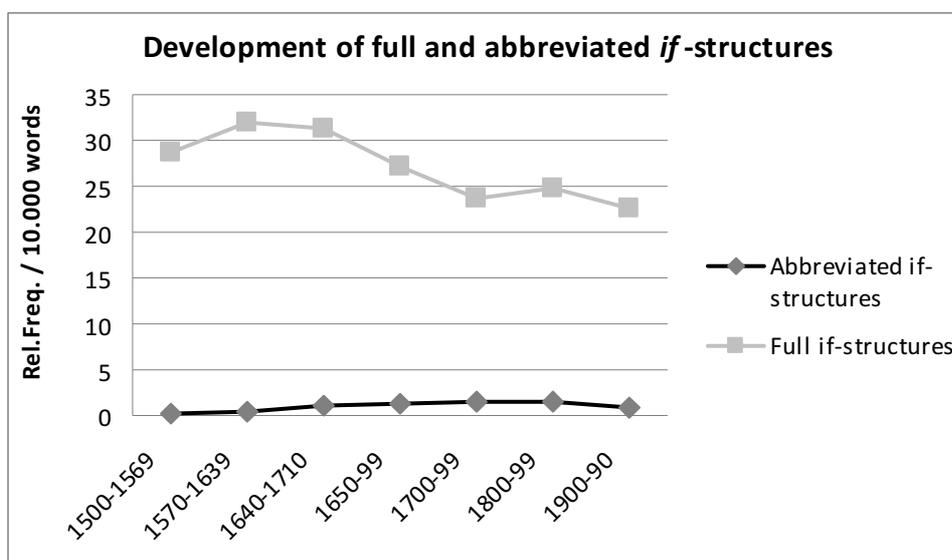


Figure 2.1

The development of full and abbreviated *if*-structures
from 1500 to 1990
(relative frequency / 10,000 words)

In the almost 1,8 million-word *PPCEME* there are 5,610 *if*-structures altogether, out of which exactly 96 (2%) are abbreviated and the rest is full; in the *ARCHER* corpus, which also consists of almost 1,8 million words, counts 4545 *if*-structures altogether,

out of which exactly 240 (5.28%) are abbreviated and the rest is full. It is noteworthy that while the frequency of full *if*-clauses falls from the 14th to the 20th century, that of abbreviated *if*-structures rises.

The difference in the variation between full *if*-clauses and the abbreviated *if*-structures is remarkable: whereas there is a steady rise in the frequency of the abbreviated *if*-structures over the period, there is first an increase and then a decrease in full *if*-clauses. To further elaborate upon the figures, it should be noted that in E1, the number of instances of the abbreviated *if*-structures is relatively small, especially compared to the results of full clauses. However, in E2 their frequency is four times higher than in E1, and from E2 to E3 the relative frequency / 10,000 words of the abbreviated *if*-structures almost tripled. The picture of abbreviated *if*-structures in the *ARCHER* corpus is more balanced: first, there is an increase from the 17th to the 18th century, which is followed by a decline starting from the 19th century.

As stated earlier, the tendency of full *if*-clauses is different from that of the abbreviated *if*-structures. In the first place, there is very little variation, almost stable in frequency. From the first sub-period to the second, an increasing tendency can also be seen, although the growth is not as remarkable as with the abbreviated *if*-structures. Nevertheless, the rise in the frequency not only discontinues, but starts to fall. Still, the results for full *if*-clauses in E3 exceed the number in E1. In the case of full *if*-structures in the *ARCHER* corpus, there is a decrease from the 17th to the 18th, which is followed by a moderate rise in the 19th century. However, a decline comes again in the 20th century.

In sum, there is a steady decline considering full *if*-structures from 28.71 to 22.66 instances per 10,000 words. At the same time, in the case of abbreviated *if*-structures there is rise to be detected from the beginning of the 16th century to the end of the 20th century (from E1 to IV.), from 0.12 to 0.96 instances per 10,000 words. It should be noted, however, that the variation is minor and by no means can be considered as significant in either corpus.

2.4.1 Abbreviated *if*-structures in the sub-corpora of the *PPCEME*

As was pointed out in 2.4, the relative number of abbreviated *if*-structures per 10,000 words became approximately four times higher in the last sub-period of the *PPCEME*

than it was in the first sub-period. It could be an interesting addition to look at the distribution of the abbreviated *if*-structures in the three sub-corpora of the *PPCEME*. Table 2.3 and figure 2.2 show the distribution of the abbreviated *if*-structures in the three sub-corpora of the *PPCEME*, Helsinki, Penn1 and Penn2.

<i>If</i> -type / sub-period	PENN 1	PENN 2	HELSINKI	Total
E1 (1500-1569)	3 (0.16)	2 (0.11)	2 (0.10)	7 (0.12)
E2 (1570-1639)	6 (0.27)	9 (0.39)	11 (0.56)	26 (0.4)
E3 (1640-1710)	17 (0.86)	21 (1.12)	25 (1.39)	63 (1.12)
Total	26 (0.42)	32 (0.53)	38 (0.66)	96 (0.54)

Table 2.3

The distribution of abbreviated *if*-structures in the three sub-corpora of *PPCEME* in the three sub-periods (absolute numbers and relative frequency / 10,000 words)

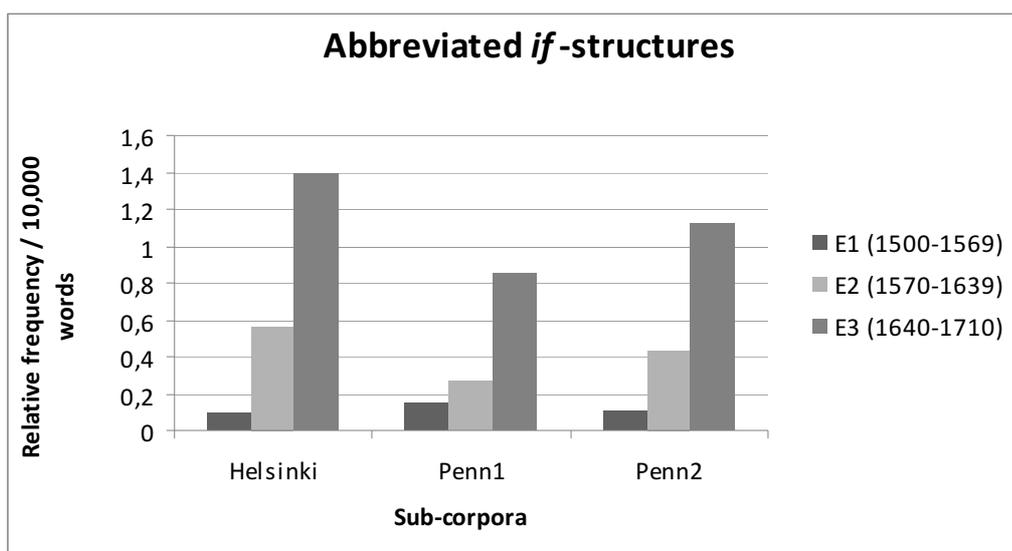


Figure 2.2

Diachronic distribution abbreviated *if*-structures in the three sub-corpora (relative frequency / 10,000 words)

The figures here also manifest the increasing frequency of the abbreviated *if*-structures from E1 to E3; however, the use of abbreviated *if*-structures varies in each sub-corpus. It has turned out that the abbreviated *if*-structures are the most frequent in all the sub-periods in the Helsinki part, while the least frequent are to be found in Penn1. This is not surprising, since Penn1 and Penn2 are the additional parts to the Helsinki part. Hence, kind of sub-corpus division does not considerably contribute to the main results as such; it is just interesting to observe that the frequency of abbreviated *if*-structures is

not evenly distributed between the three parts. Nonetheless, the increase in the use of abbreviated *if*-structures is valid both from the diachronic (from 1500 to 1710) as well as the sub-corpus point of view.

Generally speaking, the number of abbreviated *if*-structures became 12 times higher in E3 than it was in E1. In the sub-corpora the tendency is the following: Penn1: seven times higher, Penn2 10 times higher and in the Helsinki part it is eleven times higher in the last sub-period than it was in the first one.

2.4.2 Abbreviated *if*-structures in the sub-corpora of the *ARCHER*

The sub-corpora analysis is possible in the *ARCHER* as well. I carry out the analysis in the British and American parts separately, since there might be differences in the use of abbreviated *if*-structures in both parts.

<i>Period / Sub-corpus</i>	<i>Abbreviated - British</i>	<i>Abbreviated - American</i>	<i>Total</i>
I. 1650-1699	24 (1.33)	-	24 (1.33)
II. 1700-1799	50 (1.4)	33 (1.83)	83 (1.55)
III. 1800-1899	61 (1.69)	21 (1.19)	82 (1.52)
IV. 1900-1990	35 (0.99)	16 (0.9)	51 (0.96)
Total	170 (1.36)	70 (1.31)	240 (1.34)

Table 2.4

Diachronic distribution of abbreviated *if*-structures in the American and the British parts of the corpus (absolute number and relative frequency / 10,000 words)

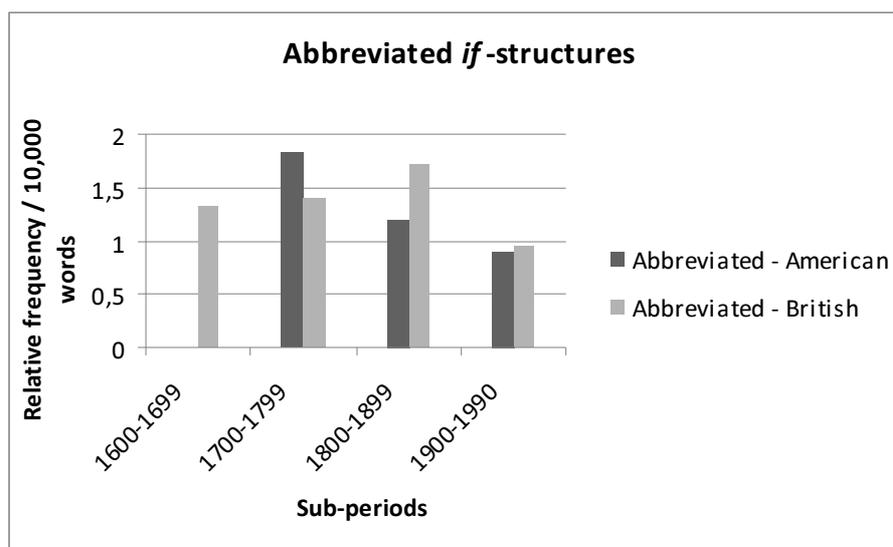


Figure 2.3

Diachronic distribution abbreviated *if*-structures in the two sub-corpora (relative frequency / 10,000 words)

Looking at the data provided by Table 2.4 and Figure 2.3, it would seem evident that only the British part has instances in all the sub-periods covered by the *ARCHER*. However, this is only partially true, since the American part contains texts only from the second sub-period (18th century). The second difference is that while in the British part there is a continuous rise from period I to period III and only then a decline, in the American part there is a steady decrease from period II to period IV, as can be seen from the figures in Table 2.4. It is true, however, that although there is less data available in the American part, its frequency / 10,000 words does not considerably differ from that of the British part.

The representativeness of the American part is not surprising at all. The 1700s was the time when with the growth of the British Empire the language started spreading as well. This resulted in the different varieties, such as the British and the American, and many others (cf. Traugott 1972: 162). The little, but continuous increase in the British part could be explained by the spread of English after the ‘rule’ of Latin and French in Old and Middle English. Furthermore, [f]ixing a standard was not of concern because it seemed more important to make the language vigorous, mature, and flexible” (Traugott 1972: 165).

Table 2.5 below present a more detailed distribution: the time period of the *ARCHER* is divided into 50-year periods.

Abbreviated <i>if</i> -structures	British (absolute)	British (relative frequency / 10,000)	American (absolute)	American (relative frequency / 10,000)
1650-1699	24	1.33	n.a.	n.a.
1700-1749	29	1.63	n.a.	n.a.
1750-1799	21	1.18	33	1.83
1800-1849	29	1.6	n.a.	n.a.
1850-1899	32	1.77	21	1.19
1900-1949	19	1.07	n.a.	n.a.
1950-1990	16	0.9	16	0.89
<i>Total</i>	<i>170</i>	<i>1.36</i>	<i>70</i>	<i>1.31</i>

Table 2.5

Diachronic distribution of abbreviated *if*-structures in the British and the American parts of the *ARCHER*

The differences are more visible when considering the figures from the British part; the picture is not that stable as presented in Table 2.5, but more deviating: there is a

continuous rise and fall, although those are not substantial (between 1 and 2 / 10,000 words). However, there is a definite decline in the frequency from 1800 to 1950 and then a little growth again. It is worth noting that while in the late 18th century the American part has its peak, the British part has the second lowest frequency, compared to the other sub-periods. Besides, the late 18th century is also the time when the frequency of the abbreviated *if*-structures in the American part exceeds that of the British part; otherwise, the British part has a patent leading position throughout the whole corpus. In the late 20th century the difference between the two parts becomes less. From a general point of view it very much seems that according to the *ARCHER* results, abbreviated *if*-structures are becoming less popular towards the end of the 20th century. It would be intriguing to see what happens afterwards, whether this increasing tendency continues, and whether the American part gradually loses the structure, or the tendency has a turnover.

After having a look at the general tendency of the development of abbreviated *if*-structures, the focus is shifted to the structure itself, that is, how abbreviated *if*-structures are built up, what characteristics they have and how they varied during the centuries.

2.5 Structural variation

The aim of the present section is to examine the structural make-up of the abbreviated *if*-structures, their development as well as variation from the 16th to the 20th century. The first questions could be what and how much of the *if*-clause is omitted. Consider examples (2.7) and (2.8):

(2.7) She said, she is come in among a parcell of beggars: **and if so**, 't is but a thiefe and a beggar come unhappily among beggars for her mother was maintained here by public almes.
<PPCEME: JOPINNEY-E3-H,58.4>

(2.7b) She said, she is come in among a parcell of beggars: **and if she is come in among a parcell of beggars**, 't is but a thiefe and a beggar come unhappily among beggars for her mother was maintained here by public almes.

- (2.8) Anne. I meane, M. Slender what wold you with me? Slen. Truely, for mine owne part, I would little or nothing with you: your father and my vncler hath made motions: if it be my lucke, so; **if not**, happy man bee his dole, they can tell you how things go, better then I can:
<PPCEME: SHAKESP-E2-P2,52.C1.376>

- (2.8b) Anne. I meane, M. Slender what wold you with me? Slen. Truely, for mine owne part, I would little or nothing with you: your father and my vncler hath made motions: if it be my lucke, so; **if it be not my lucke**, happy man bee his dole, they can tell you how things go, better then I can:

In examples (2.7) and (2.8) the pro-form *so* and the negative particle *not* are used instead of repeating what has been said previously, referring back to the clause before. The pro-forms clearly stand for the whole clause uttered beforehand, and they are used to save time if the conversation takes place orally, or to save writing extra words if the events have to be written down (and thus also fulfilling Grice's maxim of quantity and Ducrot's law of exhaustivity; see also section 3.3.2.2). Thus following the story-line is essential in order to understand what is meant by these *if*-clauses; this means that what is omitted from the clause has its antecedent in the preceding clause/sentence which is entirely recoverable. Complete recoverability makes these instances examples of complete clausal ellipsis (cf. section 2.7.1).

Example (2.9) is slightly different from examples (2.7) and (2.8) in that only a part of the clause is omitted and not the whole: in both cases it is the finite verb that is missing, and in example (2.9) also a noun functioning as the subject of the clause is omitted.

- (2.9) But now my mynde is a little of these thinges to dispute For this hitherto we haue don , that thou mightest knowe the vnworthy powre of euill men is none at all. Euin such as thou complaynedst were voyde of punishment, that thou mightest see they neuer want the payne of their wickednes, And that the liberty which thou wisshest should be ended, thou mightest learne not to be long, And so much more vnhappy, **if longer**, most vnlucky, **yf eternall**.
<PPCEME: BOETHEL-E2-H,87.287>

A potential full clause counterpart of example (2.9) would look like as shown in example (2.9b).

(2.9b) And so much more vnhappy, **if thou learne longer**, most vnlucky,
yf thou learne eternall.

Example (2.9) is similar to examples (2.7) and (2.8) in that the *if*-clause clearly refers back to the previous part of the whole utterance; however, as stated earlier, not the whole clause is omitted. Here we can talk about partial ellipsis (see section 2.7.2), where new and various pieces of information (the possibilities of being either “longer” or “eternal”) are given. These should be unequivocally stated, otherwise the utterance would lose its intelligibility.

Besides, another question is how far the *if* can be from its antecedent. Hence, the question of antecedency might well arise at this point. It can be hypothesised that the abbreviated *if*-structure does have an antecedent somewhere in the (preceding) text to which it is linked in the previous clause. The ideal case would be when it is the previous clause, even better the preceding word. In examples (2.7) and (2.8) the antecedent is the previous sentence, that is, “she is come in among a parcell of beggars” and “if it be my lucke”, respectively. However, while in the first case it is the actual preceding clause that is the antecedent of *if so*, in the second case it is the second preceding clause. Why is it so? The explanation is straightforward: in *if not* there is a negation. This implies, also by the fact that the *if*-clause itself is abbreviated, that a complete sentence including an *if*-clause should precede *if not*. Still, in general, it can be suggested that when an abbreviated *if*-structure occurs in the text in the form of either *if so* or *if not*, there is always an antecedent to be found in the previous sentence (which is the preceding clause in case of the former one).

After discussing the omission and the antecedency of the abbreviated *if*-structure, it is important to study its distribution, that is, how it is built up. Since the realisation of abbreviated *if*-structures is not exclusively either *if so* or *if not*, the distribution of an abbreviated *if*-structure should be taken into consideration as well besides the question of antecedency. In the following I provide a detailed picture of all the possible abbreviated *if*-structures that appear in the two analysed corpora.

Albeit it is not possible to provide a concise list of the group of words that can follow *if*, still some generalisations can be offered. Hence, *if* in an abbreviated *if*-structure can stand with, besides the two pro-forms *if so* or *if not*, an *Adjective Phrase (AdjP)*, an *Adverb Phrase (AdvP)*, a *Prepositional Phrase (PP)*, a *Noun Phrase (NP)*, a *Determiner Phrase (DP)*, a *negative intensifier*, a *past-participle* and a *to-infinitive*.

What follows here is the detailed description of these types (form A to H) with appropriate examples.

A. *Adjective Phrase*

The combination of *if* + *Adjective Phrase* can be considered as the most popular type amongst all the abbreviated *if*-structures; that is, the majority of the abbreviated *if*-structures in the two examined corpora is a combination of *if* and an adjective.

It is possible to differentiate between two main types within this group: there are instances where the abbreviated *if*-structure itself is the continuation of something mentioned in the previous clause/sentence. This implies that there is an adjective earlier in the utterance (i.e. in the previous sentence or clause) and the purpose of the adjective in the abbreviated *if*-structure is to widen the scope of the original utterance by offering one more possibility, which is in contrast to what has been said earlier. Consider example (2.10):

- (2.10) thus if in the heart it grow so large as to force a Diastole beyond the due tension of the Fibres, it produces a mortal Syncope; **if smaller** and not exceeding the confines of the Ventricles, a strong and irregular pulse succeeds, and there must be a palpitation of the Heart to maintain life; if it send branches into the larger pulmonary vessels, the motion of the blood is retarded, and the breast and lungs labour under their load in an Asthma: or if it reaches the Capillaries, a Peripneumony, an Ulcer, and at last a Consumption is at hand; [...] Again, when these bodies are in the Sinus of the Brain, **if small**, the vessels will only be a little distended, and so a <1 word illegible> in the head may suffice, but **if larger**, the obstruction increases, the blood and spirits are cast into an hurry, the brain is inflam'd, the senses presently are disorder'd in the apprehension of their objects and so a Frenzy seizes the man;
<ARCHER: 1684wgmb.m2b>

In example (2.10) (*if*) *smaller* is the opposite of (*so*) *large* in the preceding sentence. Later on in the same text, there are two abbreviated *if*-structures: one, *if small* is the antecedent of the other one *if larger*. In example (2.11) below the antecedent *very low* immediately precedes the abbreviated *if*-structure *if high*.

- (2.11) all that can be done to prevent it, is to Graff these very low, or **if high**, to give the Stock more liberty to thicken, by slitting the Bark of it with a Knife.
<PPCEME: LANGF-E3-P1,45.300>

In example (2.12) one difference can be immediately observed:

- (2.12) He will be settled there this weeke, and all accommodation as good there, **if not better**, then at Ashford;
<PPCEME: DERING-E2-P2,129.79>

Here the negative particle *not* is put between *if* and the adjective *better*. Otherwise, the structure can (and will) be still grouped to the *if* + adjective type of abbreviated *if*-structure.

Nevertheless, there is another type when the abbreviated *if*-structure can stand 'alone', without an overt adjective reference or antecedent. Take example (2.13):

- (2.13) Telegram to Mr. Barrymore, to be delivered into his own hand. **If absent**, please return wire to Sir Henry Baskerville, Northumberland Hotel.'
<ARCHER: 18xxlidd.h6b>

In example (2.13) the abbreviated *if*-structure *if absent* has no overt adjective antecedent in the preceding sentence as opposed to examples (2.10) - (2.12) where there is an overt adjective antecedent in each case. However, it can be hypothesised that *if absent* has a covert antecedent, the presence of Mr. Barrymore. Hence, example (2.13) could be rewritten as presented in (2.13b) below.

- (2.13b) Telegram to Mr. Barrymore, to be delivered into his own hand if present. **If absent**, please return wire to Sir Henry Baskerville, Northumberland Hotel.'

This way, example (2.13b) would look like as example (2.10) - (2.12). However, there are instances which should be treated differently, such as in example (2.14):

- (2.14) Pray Dear Doctour continue your friendship towards one who loves and esteems you, **if possible**, as much as you deserve.
<ARCHER: 1710adds.x3b>

Although example (2.14) resembles very much example (2.13) in that there is no overt adjective antecedent of the *if* + adjective combination, it seems to be still different. There does not seem to be a way to place an adjective to the preceding sentence-part with the opposite meaning. (More details follow in section 3.3.2.1)

B. *Adverb Phrase*

The abbreviated *if*-structure consisting of the *if* + *Adverb Phrase* combination looks very much like that of the first type of the *if* + *Adjective Phrase* combination: the abbreviated *if*-structure has an overt adverb antecedent in the preceding utterance which might be either in the previous sentence/clause (as in examples (2.15) and (2.16)) or the previous word itself (as in examples (2.17) and (2.18)).

(2.15) After dinner we called a council and made our rendezvous upon all occasions, if the wind came westerly, Torbay or St Helen's; **if easterly**, to lie between the Lizard and Scilly, to stay for them that were astern.

<ARCHER: 1666alli.j2b>

(2.16) Iesus answered him, If I haue spoken euill, beare witnessse of the euill: but **if well**, why smitest thou me?

<PPCEME: AUTHNEW-E2-P1,XVIII,20J.708>

(2.17) I need not observe how forcibly the impropriety of wrapping themselves in such security must have struck them in the cool moments of reflection, and I had been taught, by dear-bought experience in the vast number of expeditions I had been on at various times in America, that those people seldom, **if ever**, would make the attack unless they were infinitely superior in number, or could reap advantage from the disorder or ill-conduct of their enemy;

<ARCHER: 1781jame.j4b>

(2.18) I do hope wee shall have imployment this springe for Swede, **if not else where**.

<PPCEME : JBARRING-E2-P2,122.8>

Besides, it is also noteworthy that while in examples (2.15) and (2.16) the adverbs have different, more precisely opposite meanings, in examples (2.17) and (2.18) no such

opposites can be detected. (A more detailed explanation of meaning and function follows in chapter 3.)

C. *Prepositional Phrase* (PP)

The combination of *if* + *Prepositional Phrase* is not as common type of abbreviated *if*-structures as the *if* + *Adjective Phrase* or *Adverb Phrase*. A *PP* is made up of a preposition and a noun phrase. These *PPs* function as some kind of adverbials, mostly *place* adverbials (cf. Quirk et al. 1985: 657-§9.1 and 685-§9.2, Leech & Svartvik 1993: 273-§739, 274-§743), as in example (2.19):

- (2.19) If he preache before a kyng, let hys matter be concernynge the offyce of a kinge, **if before a byshoppe**, then lette hym treate of byshoplye duties and orders , and so forthe in other matters , as time and audience shal require .
<PPCEME: LATIMER-E1-P2,25L.16>

In example (2.19), for instance, the act of preaching comes into question: where exactly it takes, or could take place. There are two options listed in the quotation: on the one hand, the subject (he) could preach *before a king* or *before a bishop*, on the other. Here *If he preache before a kyng* is the full *if*-clause which is also the antecedent of the abbreviated *if*-structure *if before a byshoppe*. In this instance it is the *head* of the NP that differs, namely the *knyg* and the *byshoppe*. Since all the necessary information is given in the full *if*-clause, there is no need for repeating the same parts of the sentence again, and thus providing another full *if*-clause *if he preache before a byshoppe*. The importance of this connection between the full and the abbreviated *if*-structures lies in the understandability of the whole utterance: the abbreviated *if*-structure on its own, i.e. without the full *if*-clause antecedent is not completely understandable/comprehensible. This implies that *if only* the abbreviated *if*-structure is given without its antecedent, the information the abbreviated *if*-structure provides is insufficient, since the reader does not know what exactly happens, or might happen before a bishop. Now consider example (2.20):

- (2.20) Any carelesnesse is to be borne with in them that carys not with it the marks of ill nature, but that when it appears in any action is to be corrected by the ways above mentioned, and what else remains

like clownishnesse or want of perfect good manners time and observation as they grow up will of its self cure if they are bread in good company, **but if in ill** all the rules in the world, all the correction imaginable will not be able to polish them.

<PPCEME: LOCKE-E3-P2,66.14>

In example (2.20) the situation is slightly different in that it is the *premodifier* of the NP that is different in the full and in the abbreviated *if*-structure: that is in good company in the full versus in ill (company) in the abbreviated. Here the antecedent (i.e. the full *if*-clause) is immediately before the abbreviated *if*-structure, and they represent opposing ideas (*good* versus *ill*). Now take example (2.21):

(2.21) And although the nature of the mystical body of the Church be such , that it suffereth no distinction in the invisible members, but whether it be Paul or Apollos, Prince or Prophet, hee that is taught, or he that teacheth, all are equally Christs, & Christ is equally theirs: yet in the externall administration of the Church of God, because God is not the author of confusion but of peace, it is necessary that in every Congregation there be a distinction, **if not of inward dignitie**, yet of outward degree: so that all are Saints, or seeme to be Saints, and should bee as they seeme .

<PPCEME: HOOKER-B-E2-P2,51.20>

Example (2.21) differs from example (2.20) in that the abbreviated *if*-structure precedes its counterpart. Furthermore, no such structure as *if X, then Y* (as seen in the previous examples), can be detected. In fact, *inward dignitie* can be contrasted to the *outward degree*. (More on the actual interpretation and meaning of such a structure will be discussed in section 3.3.2.) Example (2.22) below resembles example (2.21) to a certain extent.

(2.22) God bless you all. Don't worry about me. When I find myself very much worse, I'll still keep strength enough to come to New York **if only for a few weeks**.

<ARCHER: 1880hart.x6a>

In example (2.22) *If only for a few weeks* does not have an antecedent, and the abbreviated *if*-structure does not follow structure as *if X, then Y* either.

D. Noun Phrase

An abbreviated *if*-structure can also consist of *if* and a *Noun Phrase* (NP) following it. The NP itself can vary: it can contain the head noun only, as in example (2.23), *minutes*, the head noun with a determiner, as in example (2.24), *a benefactor*.

(2.23) But if it be nigher to Libra, then take his distance from the first point of Libra, which distance must not excede degrees, and seeke that distaunce amongst the Arkes in the front of the Tables if they be degrees, **if minutes**, you shall finde them in the first collum on the left hand,
<PPCEME: BLUNDEV-E2-P1,54R.80>

(2.24) Nothing so powerfully calls home the mind as distress: the tense fibre then relaxes, the soul retires to itself, sits pensive and susceptible of right impressions: if we have a friend, 'tis then we think of him; **if a benefactor**, at that moment all his kindnesses press upon our mind.
<ARCHER: 17xxster.h4b>

In some cases also the negative particle *not* comes in between *if* and the NP, as in example (2.25) *if not the existence*.

(2.25) It is no secret that he considers these measures as conditions precedent to the success, **if not the existence**, of an effective French protectorate over Tunis.
<ARCHER: 1883tim2.n6b>

In examples (2.23) and (2.25) the abbreviated *if*-structures refer back to the preceding words, *degrees*, *if minutes* and *success*, *if not the existence*, respectively. In example (2.24) the antecedent is in the previous sentence. Out of these three instances it is only examples (2.23) and (2.24) in which the abbreviated *if*-structures can be rewritten as full *if*-clauses, following the *if p, then q* structure. This is, however, not possible in example (2.25).

A small minority of abbreviated *if*-structures within the group of NPs is realised as the combination of *if* + pronoun.

- (2.26) But whatever Ravages a merciless Distemper may commit, I dare promise her boldly what few (**if any**) of her Makers of Visits & Complements, dare to do; she shall have one man as much her Admirer as ever.
<ARCHER: 1714pope.x3b>

In example (2.26) the quantifier *if any* stands next to where it is linked, to the other quantifier *few*. Although they belong together, i.e. *if any* refers back to *few*, they are not part of an *if X, then Y* structure. Furthermore, that *if any* stands in brackets³⁹ might suggest that the abbreviated *if*-structure is not a compulsory (or needed) part in the sentence.

F. Determiner phrase

A *Determiner Phrase* (DP) is similar to a *Noun Phrase*, but without a noun; it is only the determiner that is present in the abbreviated *if*-structure. Hence, it is important that the abbreviated *if*-structure should stand as close to its antecedent as possible, preferable immediately next to it.

- (2.27) If it be said Crab-stocks ready grown may be made use of instead of cuttings; there's this Answer ready, They must grow two if not three years after they are set before they are fit to graff, and in respect of their large growth will not be fit for Dwarfs.
<PPCEME: LANGF-E3-P2,71.272>
- (2.28) Of the former, three if not four species belonging to as many genera are known to occur, viz. the crocodile, megalosaurus, plesiosuarus, and the iguanod.
<ARCHER: 1825pond.s5b>

Examples (2.27) and (2.28) share one feature: the abbreviated *if*-structure is in between the determiner and the noun, and it is in direct connection with the determiner. The abbreviated *if*-structures in these instances modify the original phrase by the addition of extra information *if not three* and *if not four*, respectively. It should be noted, however, that these two abbreviated *if*-structures again behave differently from what one would

³⁹ This statement is only a hypothesis, since the punctuation system of the time, i.e. the beginning of the 18th century, was not yet fixed and thus it cannot be considered as completely reliable.

expect: there is not *if X, then Y* structure, not even in the sentences preceding and following the abbreviated *if*-structure itself.

- (2.29) Apparently this can occur even without the worm penetrating the lung. Aside from this eventuality however, the chance of which is increased in proportion to the number of worms present, small numbers of spargana exert little influence **if any** upon longevity.
<ARCHER: 1965muel.s8a>

The *if any* in example (2.29) is different from the one in example (2.22) in that in the former it is a determiner in *any influence*, while a pronoun in the latter, as shown above. In example (2.29) the abbreviated *if*-structure does not stand within the original DP, but it comes immediately after it and thus modifying it. Consequently, its modifying purpose is the same. Otherwise, *if any* in example (2.29) resembles very much *if not three* and *if not four* in examples (2.27) and (2.28) above in the sense that there is no *if X, then Y* structure to be found in the utterance, and that the reason behind the presence of the abbreviated *if*-structure is modification of the preceding NP.

G. Negative intensifier

The abbreviated *if*-structure *if at all* is referred to as a *negative intensifier*⁴⁰ with the implication of giving some extra emphasis, some intensification to the word preceding the structure itself with an implied negative meaning. Consider example (2.30):

- (2.30) and from its Rays of very different Magnitudes continu'd to ascend without any Uniformity as to time and place, till 48 or 49 minutes past seven, when a third Corona, very little, **if at all**, inferior to the preceding ones, either in the Variety of its Colours, or in the quantity of Light it emitted, was form'd in the Zenith.
<ARCHER: 1721lang.s3b>

- (2.31) For the Attrition having caus'd an intestine commotion in the parts of the Concrete, the heat or warmth that is thereby excited ought not to cease, as soon as ever the rubbing is over, but to continue capable of emitting <P_13E> Effluvia for some time afterwards, which will be longer or shorter according to the goodness of the Electric, and the degree of the Antecedent

⁴⁰ *At all* is also referred to as “non-assertive expression of extent” by Quirk et al. 1985: 785-§10.62.

commotion: which joyn'd together may sometimes make the effect considerable, insomuch that in a warm day, about noon, I did with a certain body, not much, **if at all**, bigger than a Pea, but very vigorously attractive, move to and fro a Steel Needle freely poysed, about three minutes <paren> or the twentieth part of an hour </paren> after I had left off rubbing the Attrahent.
<PPCEME : BOYLE-E3-H,13E.26>

In examples (2.30) and (2.31) *little* and *not much (bigger)* are already something negative and the *if at all* provides even more stress to it. The negative intensifier stays always immediately next to the adjective it intends to modify.

H. Past participle

Another way to form an abbreviated *if*-structure is when the *if* is followed by a past participle (-*ed* participle Quirk et al. 1985 §3.6, for instance), and the possibility of the negative particle *not* being present is also there. Consider example (2.32):

(2.32) I have endeavour'd to direct the Reader by true Rules, which **if observed**, he would not fall into those vulgar Errors which are frequent in practice;
<PPCEME : LANGF-E3-H,119.231>

Example (2.32) is slightly different from what was presented from A to F in that there is no other option listed before (or sometimes after) the abbreviated *if*-structure; there is only one *if*-clause followed or preceded by its main clause. In this example the abbreviated *if*-structure is embedded in a relative clause, which is followed by the main clause. In example (2.33) below, however, again the abbreviated *if*-structure *if admitted at all* rather serves as a way of modification of the immediately preceding word *admitted*.

(2.33) And, to speak not the best, but the fair and common truth, this book, the offspring of the Divine mind, and the perfection of heavenly wisdom, is permitted to lie from day to day, perhaps from week to week, unheeded and unperused, never welcome to our happy, healthy, and energetic moods; admitted, **if admitted at all**, in seasons of sickness, feeble-mindedness, and disabling sorrow.
<ARCHER: 18xxirvi.h5b>

I. To-infinitive

Last but not least, it is also possible that the *if* is followed by a *to*-infinitive. In examples (2.34) and (2.35) also the negative particle *not* comes in between.

(2.34) The objections you was pleased to propose against it, gave me full proof you had condescended to read and consider it carefully; and at the same time gave me an opportunity, **if not to obviate them entirely**, at least to render the scheme somewhat less exceptionable.

<ARCHER: 1735mart.m3b>

(2.35) Both, we may hardly doubt, have been with us in spirit during the rejoicings of this day. To both, as we may believe, has it been given to feel, if not to behold, the fulfilment of their hopes.

<ARCHER: 1910clif.h7b.>

These two examples, however, are slightly different from each other. In example (2.34) first the abbreviated *if*-structure comes and then follows what it modifies. It is also noteworthy that the abbreviated *if*-structure itself does not consist of only the *if* followed by the negative particle *not* and the *to*-infinitive, but also an indirect object *them* and a manner adverb *entirely*. Although this structure is longer than the other abbreviated *if*-structures discussed above, still it meets the criterion of being an abbreviated *if*-structure (no subject and verb). The abbreviated *if*-structure in example (2.35) is much shorter and it stands immediately after the word it modifies, *to feel* – this is the way how the majority of abbreviated *if*-structures are placed within the sentence.

From the characterisation presented above from A to H it can be concluded that there are various possibilities how an abbreviated *if*-structures can be built up. Nevertheless, it is possible to make some generalisations on the basis of the groups above. Hence, abbreviated *if*-structures can be treated either *verbless* (AdjP, AdvP, PP, NP, DP, and negative intensifier, groups A-G, respectively) or *non-finite* (*to*-infinitive or past participle, groups H and I, respectively). In the following it will be discussed what is actually meant by a structure being either verbless or non-finite. Then will be examined when these realisations of the abbreviated *if*-structures first occurred in the *PPCEME* and in the *ARCHER* corpora, how frequent they were and how their frequency changed over the time.

2.6 The question of ellipsis and subordination in the case of abbreviated *if*-structures

In the previous sections it was pointed out that in some cases in order to avoid unnecessary repetitions, some sentence constituents, at least the subject and the verb, are omitted. Hence the remaining *if*-structure can be realised as either *verbless* or *non-finite*. The absence of the finite verb (or any other constituents, in general) might be considered as an instance of ellipsis, provided that the two sentences, i.e. the “syntactically complete” and the “syntactically incomplete” (Schwarz 2000: 1) ones are semantically equivalent and only differ in length. However, not every instance of abbreviated *if*-structures can be regarded as being the result of ellipsis, and not all the instances are connected with (and thus dependent on) their matrix. This might also induce semantic non-equivalence. It can be hypothesised so since it is not always possible to derive a full clause counterpart from an abbreviated *if*-structure by simply repeating parts of the antecedent in the consequent (cf. Schwarz 2000: 16), as was seen in examples (2.26) – (2.31), to mention a few. Consequently, my claim is that two types of abbreviated *if*-structures should be differentiated. In the following I shall discuss what is generally meant by ellipsis, and then how it can be applied to abbreviated *if*-structures.

2.6.1 Ellipsis – a general overview

‘Grammatical omission’ refers to the omission (*nonexpression*, McShane 2005: 1) of some constituents in a sentence (cf. Quirk et al. 1985: 883), where those ellipped elements are nevertheless expected to occupy a place in the syntactic structure of the sentence (McShane 2005: 1). This phenomenon is also known as (syntactic) ellipsis, and it can take place only when the *original meaning can be retained* and the “understanding can be achieved without word repetition” (Quirk et al. 1985: 862). In such cases the omitted element(s) can be recovered from the (wider) context around (that is, the preceding clause or sentence). Furthermore, the ellipped elements also have a “syntactic structure at some level of representation, but the grammar contains a means of blocking its pronunciation in the surface form” (Kennedy 2003: 29). There is also a set of criteria listed by Quirk et al. (1985: 884-888), applied to ellipsis:

- (1) the ellipled words are precisely recoverable
- (2) the elliptical construction is grammatically ‘defective’ (where the elliptical structure does not completely fulfil the requirement of (1))
- (3) the insertion of the missing words results in a grammatical sentence (with the same meaning as the original sentence)
- (4) the missing word(s) are textually recoverable
- (5) the missing word(s) are present in the text in exactly the same form dependent on (4).

Thus, in the case of ellipsis, recoverability plays a vital role. Elliptical clauses in general can be categorised according to the following three types (see Figure 2.4 below):

- a. *recoverability type*
- b. *formal type*
- c. *functional type*

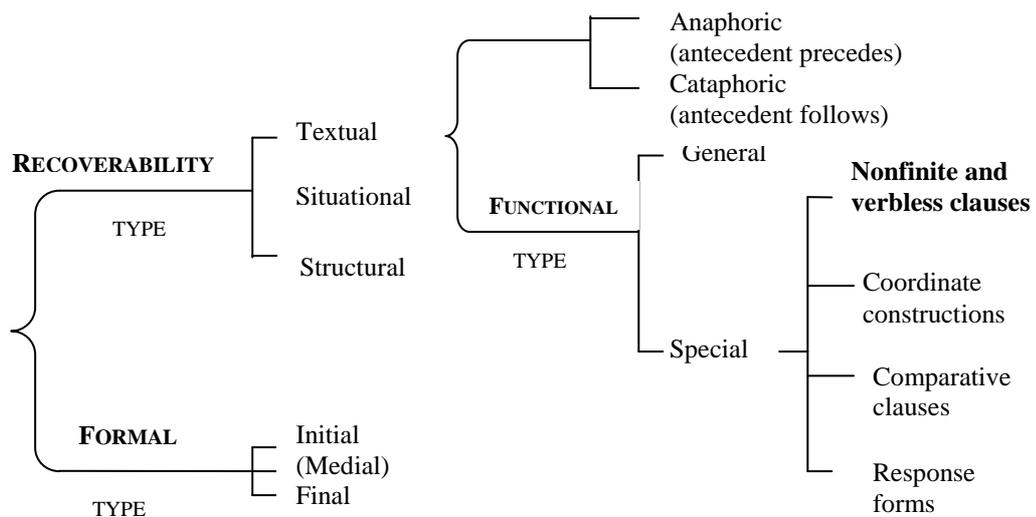


Figure 2.4
Main categories of ellipsis
(Quirk et al. 1985: 894)

As can be seen from Figure 2.4, the recoverability and the formal types can be considered as the two main ones. Functional type, however, is a subtype within recoverability type, and furthermore, it is only valid in case of textual recoverability. In the following I discuss each type in brief until I get to non-finite and verbless clauses.

a. Recoverability type

There are three sub-types within this category (cf. Quirk et al. 1985: 861 §12.6):

- *Situational* recoverability
- *Structural* recoverability
- *Textual* recoverability

Situational recoverability implies the recoverability of the full form from the extralinguistic situation such as from the shared knowledge of the hearer and the speaker, as in *Is he still in Paris?*, where both parties know what he refers to and also that he happens to be in Paris. *Structural* recoverability is the type where the full form is recoverable from the grammatical structure (e.g. *It's funny (that) you mention this issue*). *Textual* recoverability is the most common type of recoverability, in which case the full form can be recovered from the context. Such clauses carry the same meaning as their full clause counterparts. Ellipsis of sentence elements allied to anaphoric reference is a feature that can be seen in (2.36):

(2.36) Frogs are of great virtue, *if physically used*.
1665 Sir T. Herbert Trav. (OED s.v. *if* 6.)

In example (2.36), *they [frogs] are* is the ellipted part between the conjunction *if* and the adverbial *physically*, and the anaphoric reference can be clearly seen. This quotation originates from the 17th century which propounds the possibility of ellipsis taking place in early texts as well. Thus, it is not surprising that elliptical *if*-structures are found in the historical corpus data as well. In the *PPCEME*, for example, there are instances like (2.37) and (2.38), where the missing elements are recoverable from the surrounding context, and thus they would qualify as instances of *textual recoverability*.

(2.37) nevertheles the lord Maxwell did upon malice to the English debatables overrun them. Whereupon was concluded that, if the Scottis will agree it, the ground shall be divided; **if not**, then shal the Scottis wast their debatablers, and we ours, commaunding them by proclamacion to depart.
<PPCEME: EDWARD-E1-P1,390.335>

- (2.37b) Whereupon was concluded that, if the Scottis will agree it, the ground shall be divided; **if the Scottis will not agree it**, then shall the Scottis wast their debatablers, and we ours, commaunding them by proclamacion to depart.

In example (2.37) the conditional subordinator *if* is followed by the negative particle *not*⁴¹ as a pro-form used instead of repeating the whole clause mentioned before. This means that the *if*-clause lacks not only the subject and the verb but all the other sentence constituents present in the previous clause. The *if not* part can be considered as the continuation of the previous utterance, a reflection to it. The negation, however, while having an anaphoric reference, suggests another contrasting possibility for the outcome of the main proposition stated in the antecedent (the previous *if*-clause). Since the missing parts are recoverable, it is feasible to make a full *if*-clause out of *if not* in (2.37), and thus arrive at example (2.37b)⁴². Now consider example (2.38):

- (2.38) If he preache before a kyng, let hys matter be concernynge the offyce of a kinge, **if before a byshoppe**, then lette hym treat of byshoplye dutyes and orders, and so forthe in other matters, as time and audience shal require.
<PPCEME: LATIMER-E1-P2,25L.15>

- (2.38b) If he preache before a kyng, let hys matter be concernynge the offyce of a kinge, **if he preache before a byshoppe**, then lette hym treat of byshoplye dutyes and orders, and so forthe in other matters, as time and audience shal require.

In example (2.38)⁴³ not the whole clause is omitted but only some of the constituents, namely the subject (*he*) and the verb (*preache*). Both elements are recoverable from the previous conditional utterance and the anaphoric reference can be seen. Thus it is again possible to make a full *if*-clause out of the abbreviated one by simply replacing the missing parts in the ellipted *if*-clause, as shown in (2.38b). The actual structure of the elliptical *if*-clause is highly dependent on what can be considered as the topic. This is what determines what is repeated and what is left out in the abbreviated *if*-structure. In

⁴¹ In both corpora there is a considerable number of instances with the negative particle *not*, even with different interpretations, which will be discussed later on, in chapter 3.

⁴² I provide the same quote as in (2.37) after inserting the sentence constituents that are not present in the abbreviated *if*-structure in the original example (2.37).

⁴³ This example is repeated from example (2.19).

example (2.38) the topic is “(If he preche) *before a kyng*”; the elliptical *if*-clause suggests an alternative to this, namely “*before a byshoppe*”.

Briefly, in all the above-mentioned examples, it is true that the ellipited constituents do have referents with various grammatical and real-world sources which are syntactically accessible (cf. McShane: 2005: 8).

b. Formal type

Formal type refers to the sentence position from where the given constituent(s) is/are ellipited. In this type, we can differentiate between initial, medial and final types of ellipsis.

(2.39) He will come later, if (he comes) at all.

(2.40) I have eaten more than you (have eaten).

(2.41) [One girl has written a poem], and [the other Δ a short story].

(Quirk et al. 1985: 893, 974)

In the case of initial ellipsis, the subject and the operator are ellipited, as shown in example (2.39), and in final ellipsis, it is the predication that is omitted from the clause, as in example (2.40) (Quirk et al. 1985: 893 §12.44). Medial ellipsis can be observed in the subsequent conjoin of a complex coordination in example (2.41) which phenomenon is also known as *gapping* (Quirk et al. 1985: 974 §13.92). Since the abbreviated *if*-structures that are discussed in the present the dissertation resemble the one in example (2.39), the other two types of ellipsis could be discarded from further discussion.

c. Functional type

This type that can only be considered in the case of textual recoverability, as indicated above. It includes two main categories: general and special ellipsis. In case of *general* ellipsis, “the functional relation between the elliptical and antecedent constructions is not important” (Quirk et al. 1985: 892, §12.43), while in *special* ellipsis, “the possibilities of omission are closely determined by the relation (*eg* a coordinative or comparative relation) between these two constructions” (Quirk et al. 1985: 892, §12.43). In general ellipsis Quirk et al. (1985) provide three sub-categories, including

elliptical noun phrases, elliptical clauses, and other elliptical constructions. In special ellipsis they mention four sub-types, of which *nonfinite and verbless clauses* (Quirk et al. 1985: 894) is one category, which I refer to as abbreviated *if*-structures, and discuss them in section 2.6.2.

2.6.2 Types of abbreviated *if*-structures

In section 2.6.1 I introduced the question of ellipsis and recoverability. From the corpus results it has become evident that the abbreviated *if*-structures analysed as elliptical structures are all instances of *textual* recoverability. In those cases, recovering the full form from the context is possible. According to the formal type, all the elliptical instances are initial; according to the functional type, all the abbreviated *if*-structures structures are either non-finite or verbless. (The types are based on Quirk et al. 1985: 861 §12.6, and see also section 2.1). From the above-discussed examples (2.36) - (2.38), example (2.36) and H and I are referred to as non-finite abbreviated *if*-structures, and examples (2.37) and (2.38), and A-G as verbless abbreviated *if*-structures. It was also pointed out and shown in Figure 2.4 in the previous section that non-finite and verbless *clauses* belong to the special type of ellipsis in Quirk et al.'s (1985) classification of the fundamental types of ellipsis. The most important characteristic of such clauses is that the minimum of a finite verb is missing. Albeit Quirk et al. (1985: 992) suggest that both non-finite and verbless clauses can be treated as clauses because their structure can be analysed in the same way as the structure of finite clauses, a distinction should still be made between non-finite and verbless structures, since they are not always instances of ellipsis, as I argue in sections 2.6.2.1 and 2.6.2.2 below. Besides, the diachronic variation is also taken into consideration.

2.6.2.1 Non-finite clauses and structures

The type of non-finite clause, often introduced by a subordinator, is entirely in accord with the form of the verb that occurs in the non-finite clause. It is possible to differentiate between the following types (Quirk et al. 1985: 993 §14.6⁴⁴):

⁴⁴ The same categories are established by Huddleston & Pullum 2002: 65, Greenbaum 1996: 328.

- to-infinitival⁴⁵
- bare infinitival
- past-participial
- gerund-participial

A *to*-infinitival can be introduced by *as if*, *as though*, *for in order*, *so as*, *whether...* (*or*), *with*, and *without* (Quirk et al. 1985: 1004). Here the subordinator *if* is only listed in the combination *as if* and not on its own. This is supported by a present-day example in (2.42):

- (2.42) Beckworth shook his head *as if* to say 'Don't trust her'.
(*Longman online dictionary s.v. as* 9.)

Nevertheless, corpus data proves that *if only* can also be followed by a *to*-infinitival structure, as is shown by example (2.43), which is a historical one, taken from the *ARCHER* corpus.

- (2.43) Both, we may hardly doubt, have been with us in spirit during the rejoicings of this day. To both, as we may believe, has it been given to feel, **if not to behold**, the fulfilment of their hopes.
<*ARCHER: 1910clif.h7b*>

The *if*-structure in example (2.43) behaves differently from the elliptical *if*-clauses in examples (2.36) - (2.38), since it is not possible to have a full-clause counterpart and retain the same meaning. Furthermore, the non-finite *if*-structure in (2.39) does not have an antecedent in the preceding text on which it would be dependent, as was the case in examples (2.36) - (2.38). It is more like a structure that modifies the previous constituent, rather than a regular *if*-clause subordinated to the main clause; it can be thus suggested that an instance like (2.43) should be analysed differently from dependent abbreviated *if*-structures.

A bare infinitival cannot be introduced by *if*; only by *rather / sooner than* (Quirk et al. 1985: 1003-1004), as in example (2.44):

⁴⁵ Quirk et al. (1985: 993) says that these examples can occur with/without subject; in my corpus data they always occur without a subject. The same applies to bare infinitival, gerund-participial and past-participial as well.

- (2.44) She contacted her lawyer immediately *rather than* ask for advice from her family.

The fact that *if* does not introduce a bare infinitival is also supported by the data deriving from the two corpora analysed.

A gerund-participial can be introduced by *although, as if, as though, even if, if, once, though, unless until, when(ever), whether .. or, while, whilst* (Quirk et al. 1985: 1005-1006). Nevertheless, this is not supported by the two corpora. Hence example (2.41) is a present-day example:

- (2.45) *If going away*, I should remember my ID.

A past-participial can be introduced by *although, as, as if, as soon as, as though, even if, if, once, though, unless, until, when(ver), where(ver), whether ... or* (conditional-concessive), *while*, and *whilst* (Quirk et al. 1985: 1004-1005). This is true for present-day (e.g. example (2.46)) and historical data (e.g. examples (2.47) and (2.48)) as well:

- (2.46) **If taken seriously**, he'd be able to do that.

- (2.47) And their first Fits most fatal, **if delay'd**. What fills the World with Madmen?
<ARCHER: 1686fane.d2b>

- (2.48) Thus at the first view, without knowing the Charistericks so nicely as Botanists do, but only exactly observing the <Facies externa> of the Plant, when the Virtues of one Species is known, the Virtues of all the Congeners may be guess'd at, **if not fully determin'd**.
<ARCHER: 1720perc.s3b>

In examples (2.46) - (2.48) there is a salient difference: examples (2.46) and (2.47) look alike, but, example (2.48) very much resembles example (2.43) in structure. In example (2.48), like in example (2.43), the purpose is not to avoid repetition of preceding sentence elements; besides, the structure itself does not seem to depend on the main clause either.

In sum, the historical data provided by the *ARCHER* corpus with abbreviated *if*-structures are almost completely in accord with what Quirk et al. (1985: 1003-1005) put forth in the four types of non-finite clauses. In the corpora, the vast majority of the non-finite instances contain an *if* + past-participial sequence. There is no *if* + bare infinitival combination either in the corpora or in Quirk et al. (1985). Although *if* + gerund-participial is a possible combination according to Quirk et al. (1985), there are no instances found in the examined corpora. Nevertheless, in the case of the *to*-infinitival structures, instances were found in the corpus data, but there is no instance provided by Quirk et al. (1985). Consequently, there are two main types of non-finite structures that appear in the *PPCEME* and the *ARCHER*: past-participial and *to*-infinitive *if*-structures. Hence, the discussion will disregard the other two types.

As far as the frequency of non-finite *if*-structures is concerned, it can be stated that on the basis of corpus evidence, the number of *to*-infinitive structures is very small. Thus it can be suggested that the predominant non-finite structure is the past participle one. Table 2.6 below compares the two ways of constructing non-finite abbreviated *if*-structures, either with a *to*-infinitive or a past participle.

Non-finite type / Sub-period	1500-1569	1570 - 1639	1640 - 1710	1650-1699	1700-1799	1800-1899	1900-1990
<i>to</i> -infinitive	0	0	0	0	1 (0.02)	0	1 (0.02)
past-participle	1 (0.02)	2 (0.03)	14 (0.25)	7 (0.39)	21 (0.39)	14 (0.26)	11 (0.21)
TOTAL	1 (0.02)	2 (0.03)	14 (0.25)	7 (0.39)	22 (0.41)	14 (0.26)	12 (0.23)

Table 2.6
Diachronic distribution of non-finite *if*-structures
(absolute number and relative frequency / 10,000 words)

As Table 2.6 shows, at the beginning of the 16th century the corpora do not have any instance of non-finite *if*-structures. Then during the late 16th century the first past-participle *if*-structures occur; the first *to*-infinitive structure occurs only in the 18th century. Since there are only two instances of *to*-infinitive *if*-structures, it is not possible to determine any variation in its use. Nonetheless, in the case of past-participle *if*-structures a continuous rise can be observed towards the 18th century and a moderate fall after that. Altogether, non-finite *if*-structures are not very productive; in the next section verbless *if*-structures, which occur more in number, are put under scrutiny.

2.6.2.2 Verbless clauses and structures

According to Quirk et al.'s interpretation (1985: 992), a verbless clause is "a clause that does not have a verb element, but is nevertheless capable of being analysed into clause elements". Like non-finite clauses, verbless clauses, besides the verbal elements, often lack subjects as well. The missing elements, however, are recoverable from the surrounding context, as is the case in non-finite clauses (cf. section 2.6.2.1). In certain cases verbless clauses can be interpreted as being further reductions of already reduced non-finite clauses, such as in example (2.49):

(2.49) *Too nervous to reply*, he stared at the floor. = *Being* too nervous to reply, ...
(Quirk et al. 1985: 996)

Verbless clauses can be also introduced by subordinators, such as *although*, *as*, *as if*, *as soon as*, *as though*, *even if*, *if*, *once*, *though*, *unless*, *when(ver)*, *where(ever)*, *whether ... or* (conditional-concessive), *while*, *whilst* (Quirk et al. 1985: 1004-1005), and they have limited realisations as they can occur only in two clause-types, namely S(V)C⁴⁶ and S(V)A⁴⁷, by definition (Quirk et al. 1985: 996). Basically both types can be introduced by a subordinator, or they can occur without any conjunction. Examples for the two types come in (2.50) and (2.51) below (Quirk et al. 1985: 996):

(2.50) S(V)C: We can meet again tomorrow, *if necessary*.

(2.51) (SV)A: *While at college*, he was a prominent member of the dramatic society.

As mentioned above, and as the name implies, verbless clauses lack the verbal element; instead, they can have adjectives (as in example (2.52)), a negative element (as in example (2.53)), and adverbs (as in example (2.54)), to mention just a few possibilities (cf. section 2.5 above). The following illustrations are taken from the *ARCHER* corpus.

(2.52) **If possible**, I'll marry the Woman to Night.
<ARCHER: 1709cent.d3b>

⁴⁶ Subject-Verb-Complement

⁴⁷ Subject-Verb-Adverbial

In example (2.52) *if possible* is the reduced form of the clause *if it is possible*, and the structure is the same as the one in example (2.51) above.

(2.53) Did ever any such thing as this pass between God and your soul?
If not, for Jesus Christ's sake, do not call yourselves Christians;
you may speak peace to your hearts, but there is no peace.
<ARCHER: 17xxwhit.h4b>

In example (2.53) the negative particle *not* is used instead of repeating what has already been mentioned in the previous sentence; *if not* is used instead of saying *if it did not pass...*

(2.54) and yet to be thought a good Daughter, she must have such Notions
as will probably, **if not necessarily**, render her a very bad Wife.
<ARCHER: 1740camp.f3b>

In example (2.54), in order to retain the meaning of the *if*-structure, it is not possible to have a full *if*-clause counterpart of *if not necessarily*, since the negative particle does not literally negate *necessarily*, but seems to belong to *if* which results in a more phrase-like element, rather than a dependent clause. From this perspective, example (2.54) is similar to examples (2.43) and (2.48).

Taking the frequency of verbless *if*-structures into consideration, the data suggest that there are more instances and there is much more variation in the case of verbless *if*-structures than in the case of non-finite *if*-structures. Verbless *if*-structures in the *PPCEME* and the *ARCHER* corpora look as follows: as discussed in 2.5, *if* can be followed by a pro-form, an *Adjective Phrase*, an *Adverb Phrase*, a *Prepositional Phrase*, a *Noun Phrase*, a *Determiner Phrase* or a negative intensifier. Table 2.7 is a collection of the absolute numbers and relative frequency / 10,000 words of such verbless structures in a diachronic distribution, from 1500 to 1990.

Verbless type / Sub-period	1500-1569	1570 - 1639	1640 - 1710	1650-99	1700-99	1800-99	1900-90	TOTAL
Pro-form	4 (0.07)	9 (0.14)	9 (0.16)	1 (0.06)	11 (0.2)	8 (0.15)	8 (0.15)	51
Adjective Phrase	0	5 (0.08)	21 (0.37)	9 (0.5)	31 (0.58)	36 (0.67)	19 (0.36)	122
Adverb Phrase	0	3 (0.05)	4 (0.07)	2 (0.11)	4 (0.08)	4 (0.07)	1 (0.02)	18
Prepositional Phrase	2 (0.04)	4 (0.06)	6 (0.11)	2 (0.11)	4 (0.08)	9 (0.17)	4 (0.08)	31
Noun Phrase	0	3 (0.05)	6 (0.11)	3 (0.17)	9 (0.17)	6 (0.11)	1 (0.02)	28
Determiner Phrase	0	0	0	0	0	3 (0.06)	5 (0.09)	8
Negative intensifier	0	0	3 (0.05)	0	2 (0.04)	0	1 (0.02)	6
TOTAL	6 (0.1)	24 (0.38)	49 (0.87)	17 (0.94)	61 (1.14)	66 (1.23)	39 (0.73)	264

Table 2.7

Diachronic distribution of verbless *if*-structures
(absolute number and relative frequency / 10,000 words)

As the data show in Table 2.7, 78% of all the abbreviated *if*-structures are verbless. The absolute majority of these verbless structures is the combination of *if* and an *Adjective Phrase*, but an *if* followed by a pro-form is also common. Although there are some repeated structures, such as *if so*, *if not*, *if not...*, *if possible*, *if ever*, *if at all*, still it can be suggested that besides these there is no fixed structure, rather a grammatical construction with restricted variability, depending on the actual context. The fixed structures, however, apply only to verbless abbreviated *if*-structures, but not to the non-finite ones.

In sum, I wanted to show in section 2.6.2 that while Quirk et al. (1985) treat non-finite and verbless clauses as clauses that can have full clause counterparts, in the corpus data there are other non-finite and verbless structures which should be treated differently. The main aim of the following section is to illuminate the differences between these structures and draw a dividing line between them. As a result, in section 2.7 I will be proposing two new terms *ellipsis* and *truncation* to refer exclusively to abbreviated *if*-structures.

2.7 Ellipsis versus truncation

In sections 2.6.2.1 and 2.6.2.2 the focus was on discussing the notions of the non-finite and the verbless, which, according to Quirk et al. (1985) *a priori* count as instances of

subordination. However, as seen above, there is a structural difference between examples (2.43), (2.48), (2.54) and the other examples: it was suggested that while the latter group should be analysed on the clausal level, the former group at the phrasal level, since in examples (2.43), (2.48) and (2.54) the *if*-structures are not dependent on another clause and thus they cannot be considered as subordinate to it. Consequently, there are two ways of looking at the abbreviated *if*-structures: one is to describe them as elliptical *if*-structures (clauses) that are subordinate to their matrix clause; in this case, the omission of a sentence-fragment is possible if there is an identical one in the preceding text⁴⁸ (cf. Radford 1988: 66; also see examples 2.7-2.11, 2.13, 2.15, 2.16, 2.19-20, 2.23, 2.24, 2.32). With the help of the antecedent in the preceding text it is possible to make a full clause out of the elliptical structure. The abbreviated *if*-structure is thus part of the information flow, i.e. they convey old information (see Figure 2.7 and 2.8 in section 2.8.3.1). Elliptical *if*-structures can be further analysed to complete (section 2.7.1), and partial (section 2.7.2) ellipses.

The other way to describe abbreviated *if*-structures is to treat them as structures, which are not dependent on any other sentence constituent in the preceding text. Moreover, since they are not part of the information flow, they stand on the periphery (see also section 3.1). Hence, they are not syntactically, but logically connected to the (parts of) preceding text.

This two-way division between abbreviated *if*-structures can be made regardless whether those are non-finite or verbless. Thus, elliptical and truncated *if*-structures could be described as follows:

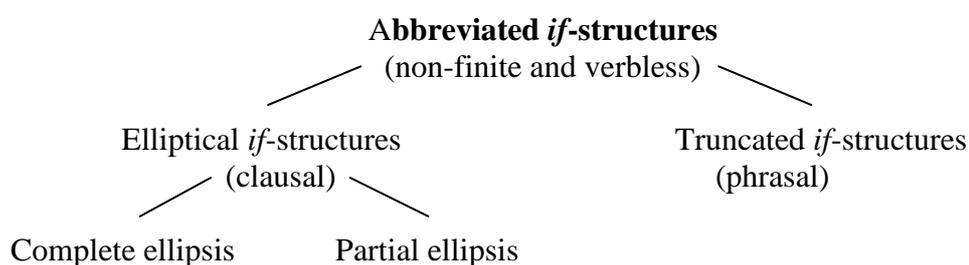


Figure 2.5
The types of abbreviated *if*-structures

⁴⁸ There are instances where this is not fulfilled, however (see examples 2.12, 2.14, 2.17-18, 2.25-2.31, 2.33, 2.35 and also 2.21-22 and 2.34).

It can be claimed that abbreviated *if*-structures have two main types: elliptical and truncated *if*-structures. The former group can be further divided into complete and partial ellipses. In the following, I argue for the implementation of this categorisation.

2.7.1. Complete ellipsis

Complete ellipsis implies that a whole clause is omitted, which is possible if the abbreviated *if*-structure has an antecedent in the preceding text.

(2.55) Madam, believe me, I like you, I have 600 l. a year, and if you will I'll Marry you, if you'll take me so, **if not**, I must seek out those that will.

<ARCHER: 1693powe.d2b>

(2.55b) Madam, believe me, I like you, I have 600 l. a year, and if you will I'll Marry you, if you'll take me so, **if you will not take me so**, I must seek out those that will.

In example (2.55) the antecedent (the full *if*-clause *if you'll take me so*) to which the abbreviated *if*-structure *if not* is bound (cf. Spender 2001: 162) can be found in the previous sentence. Hence, the full *if*-clause would look like as presented in example (2.55b). The same happens in example (2.56) as well:

(2.56) No shilling-shallying, or beating about the bush, but, 'I say, is your daughter ripe for marriage? **If so**, here is a fine young fellow quite ready.'

<ARCHER: 1868stan.j6b>

(2.56b) No shilling-shallying, or beating about the bush, but, 'I say, is your daughter ripe for marriage? **If it is so that your daughter is ripe for marriage**, here is a fine young fellow quite ready.'

In the case of complete ellipsis, the *if* is always followed by a pro-form (either the adverb *so* or the negative particle *not*) only. These abbreviated *if*-structures have anaphoric reference, and the pro-form is used instead of repeating the antecedent (the adverb *so* when the previous discourse is or needs to be confirmed; the negative particle *not* when something else is offered which is contradictory to the previous discourse).

The instances of *if so* and *if not* are treated as verbless structures in the analysis. It is possible to make a full clause from the abbreviated *if*-structure with which it would be semantically equivalent.

2.7.2. Partial ellipsis

A further differentiation can also be made according to what is being omitted. From this point of view it is feasible to distinguish *complete* ellipsis from *partial* ellipsis. Whilst in the former a *whole clause* is omitted (e.g. in example (2.55) above), in the case of partial ellipsis, only the subject and the verb are omitted (as in example (2.57)), and the rest of the clause is given. However, they still “can be related to the corresponding unreduced conditional by supplying material from the antecedent” (Bhatt & Pancheva 2005: 677).

(2.57) May dew, from the dew of August; the keen winds of March, from winds of the same keenness in January, &c. so one would be apt to think, the Increase or Decrease of the Moon, the Perigee or the Apogee, and perhaps the Libratures, lately discovered, as the Aspects of other Planets, and those Constellations to which all the Old Georgical Writers do attribute so much, may have their peculiar effects, **if duly and luckily examined.**
<ARCHER: 1675ray-.s2b>

(2.57b) May dew, from the dew of August; the keen winds of March, from winds of the same keenness in January, &c. so one would be apt to think, the Increase or Decrease of the Moon, the Perigee or the Apogee, and perhaps the Libratures, lately discovered, as the Aspects of other Planets, and those Constellations to which all the Old Georgical Writers do attribute so much, may have their peculiar effects, **if the Aspects of other Planets, and Constellations are duly and luckily examined.**

(2.58) The visible rays have, **if powerful enough**, a heating effect, which may be sufficient to burn and produce the inflammatory effects of heat.
<ARCHER: 1925angu.s7b>

(2.58b) The visible rays have, **if the visible rays are powerful enough**, a heating effect, which may be sufficient to burn and produce the inflammatory effects of heat.

These clauses can be either non-finite (example (2.57)) or verbless (example (2.58)), they also have anaphoric reference with their antecedents in the previous discourse. To make a full clause from a partial ellipsis is possible, with retaining the meaning (see examples (2.57b) and (2.58b)).

2.7.3 Truncated *if*-structures

The term ‘truncated conditional’ was used by Ford & Thompson (1986: 356) when discussing *if possible*, *if necessary*, and *if so*. Truncation refers to ‘shorter than expected’, which definition does not directly imply ellipsis. The differences in the implications (see next paragraph) warrant using another term; with the introduction of the term ‘truncation’, I suggest drawing a borderline not only between the implications but also between the naming.

Truncated *if*-structures do not have a fundamental role in the sentence structure since they do not form an internal part of the main proposition, they stand on the periphery (cf. Haegeman 1984a in section 3.1), and thus they can easily be left out. As a result, it is not valid to speak about subordination, since the structures are not subordinated to or dependent on the main clause. Furthermore, as opposed to ellipsis, they cannot be considered as a part of the *if p, then q* sequence. Even if it were possible to make a full clause counterpart, it could not happen without altering the meaning. Such structures belong to the group of verbless structures, such as examples (2.59) and (2.60).

(2.59) Nevertheless it seemed to me desirable, **if possible**, to bring this structure to view by reagents which I think cannot be charged with producing artificial appearances.
<ARCHER: 1894holb.s6a>

(2.60) The employment of the ligature, the use of the blister, and of the other modes of treatment which I recommended in the local stage, it is obvious to remark, will be of very little, **if any**, benefit here.
<ARCHER: 1793smit.m4a>

Since a structure should be analysed and treated as a phrasal structure unless “it is describable in terms of clausal” structure (Quirk et al. 1985: 992 §14.5n) and thus can

be recognised as a clause, I will treat instances like examples (2.59) and (2.60) as phrases (for functions see also sections 3.3). The *if possible* in example (2.59) has the noteworthy feature of itself being a fixed phrase (cf. OED *s.v.* *possible* A.1.e.; more on its various functions comes in 3.3.2.1).

In sum, abbreviated *if*-structures can be grouped into two main categories: there are elliptical *if*-structures which should be analysed as clauses, because it is possible to have a full clause counterpart maintaining the semantic equivalence. The other possibility is when the abbreviated *if*-structure counts as a truncated *if*-structure (where no ellipsis takes place in the strict sense) which should be analysed as a phrase. Because of the different analyses, i.e. phrasal and clausal, I refer to the abbreviated *if*-structures as structures, rather than clauses or phrases.

2.8 Positioning of abbreviated *if*-structures and full *if*-clauses

After taking a closer look at the ways how abbreviated *if*-structures can be realised (either non-finite or verbless, or being elliptical or truncated) and how they developed between the period 1500 and 1990, I shall provide some background for the possible positions of *if*-clauses first and then positions of abbreviated *if*-structures. In discussing the previous literature on positioning I will consider only full *if*-clauses, since no study on the position of abbreviated *if*-structures has been made so far to my present knowledge.

As pointed out above, the *if p, then q* structure is made up of two clauses, that is the protasis (*if*-clause) and the apodosis (main clause). In general, the protasis and the apodosis follow a linear order, that is, they follow the flow of ideas. Thus, three positions in the sentence can be occupied by the protasis, namely

- initial position: *If you want, we can go to the cinema.*
- final position: *We can go to the cinema if you want.*
- medial position: *We can, if you want, go to the cinema.*

(based on Quirk et al. 1985: 1037 §14.38)

In the last case, where the *if*-clause occupies the sentence-medial position, the linear sequence of the whole sentence is interrupted by the assertion of the *if*-clause⁴⁹.

2.8.1 Previous statistics about positions of *if*-clauses

Some statistics on the positions of the protasis and the apodosis are available. These, however, do not specify what the statistics are actually based on; in the case of Ford & Thompson (1986), however, the statistics are based on text-based empirical evidence. In Dancygier's opinion (1998) it is feasible to set up the following list of possible orders: *if p, q; q if p; q, if p*⁵⁰. But these orders seem to be applicable mostly for predictive conditionals, where "the default order is with an initial *p*" (ibid.: 149). According to Linde (1976), for instance, the protasis preceding the apodosis (*if p, q*) covers 80% of *if*-conditionals. Ford (1993) uses absolute numbers when she states that there are 26 initial *if*-clauses and 18 final ones in her data consisting of 44 conditional *if*-clauses. Ford & Thompson's (1986: 354) analysis shows a ratio of 3:1 in favour of *if p, q*. Claridge (2007) concluded after the analysis of the *Lampeter Corpus of Early Modern English Tracts* (Politics and science) that 67% of the *if*-clauses occupy initial position, 23% final, and only 10% medial. Again, these figures only show the tendency of full *if*-clauses, without diachronic development. In the following, I will benefit from the data the corpora provide to examine which position can be considered characteristic of abbreviated *if*-structures, and whether there is a variation in their positioning in the long diachrony.

2.8.2 Positional variation of abbreviated *if*-structures from 1500 to 1990

The present section is devoted to the three-fold analysis of the abbreviated *if*-structures according to the position they occupy in the sentence. Table 2.8 presents an overall picture of the possible positioning of the abbreviated *if*-structures. After discussing the context of the abbreviated *if*-structures, I devote the present section to their positional analyses. In the following, I consider the general outlook of positioning the abbreviated

⁴⁹ This is often referred to as *internal bracketing*, or *nesting* (cf. Halliday 2004).

⁵⁰ Dancygier (1998: 146) differentiates between *q if p* with a "continuing" intonation, and *q, if p* where "q receives a sentence-final contour".

if-structures (initial, medial and final positions) in the centuries covered by the *PPCEME* and the *ARCHER* (see Table 2.8).

Sub-period / Position	<i>Initial</i>	<i>Medial</i>	<i>Final</i>	Total
E1	6 (0.1)	0	1 (0.02)	7 (0.12)
E2	15 (0.23)	4 (0.06)	7 (0.11)	26 (0.40)
E3	17 (0.30)	33 (0.58)	13 (0.23)	63 (1.12)
Total PPCEME	38 (0.21)	37 (0.21)	21 (0.12)	96 (0.54)
	39.6%	38.5%	21.9%	100%
I.	7 (0.39)	8 (0.44)	9 (0.5)	24 (1.33)
II.	21 (0.39)	43 (0.8)	19 (0.35)	83 (1.55)
III.	24 (0.45)	38 (0.71)	20 (0.37)	82 (1.52)
IV.	12 (0.22)	23 (0.43)	16 (0.3)	51 (0.96)
Total ARCHER	64 (0.36)	112 (0.63)	64 (0.36)	240 (1.34)
	27%	47%	27%	100%
Total	102	149	85	336
	30.4%	44.4%	25,3%	100%

Table 2.8.

Positional variation of the abbreviated *if*-structures
(absolute number and relative frequency / 10,000 words)

As pointed out in section 2.8 there are three possibilities to position *if*-full clauses, and so is the situation with the abbreviated *if*-structures. The general impression, according to the figures shown in Table 2.8, is that the most frequent place for abbreviated *if*-structures is sentence-medial, and then comes sentence-initial and sentence-final. The most conspicuous change happens from E2 to E3 in final and especially in medial positions, which goes along with the overall growth in the number of the abbreviated *if*-structures.

In the *ARCHER*, the position where the abbreviated *if*-structures occur the most is sentence-medial position (cf. Table 2.8); this observation is in accord with the results of the *PPCEME*, and is in contrast with the hypothesis proposed in section 2.8.1 (based on previous statistics), according to which the sentence-initial position is the position

where *if*-clauses most probably occur. The leading sentence-medial position for the *if*-structures in the corpus is apparently maintained throughout all the centuries. Initial position is the second most frequent position, and the position where the abbreviated *if*-structures occur least frequently is the final. However, the actual number of instances is more or less evenly distributed between the three positions.

As mentioned in section 2.8.1, different studies have arrived at various results in the question of the sentence positioning of full *if*-clauses, according to which an *if*-clause can occupy sentence-initial, -medial and -final positions. The predominant view is that *if*-clauses are pre-posed in the majority of cases since they “are both cognitively more ‘natural’ and interactionally more advantageous than post-positioned ones” (Auer 2000: 188). This way they are “more tightly integrated into the syntactic structure of the following main clauses: they occupy the so-called front field (*Vorfeld*) of the sentence” (Auer 2000: 174). In contradiction to this general view on full *if*-clauses, there is a new way to assess the positions of abbreviated *if*-structures which is presented in Figure 2.6 below. In the figure, the sub-periods follow that of the two corpora; this kind of division disregards the slight overlap between the last sub-periods of the *PPCEME* and the first sub-period of the *ARCHER*.

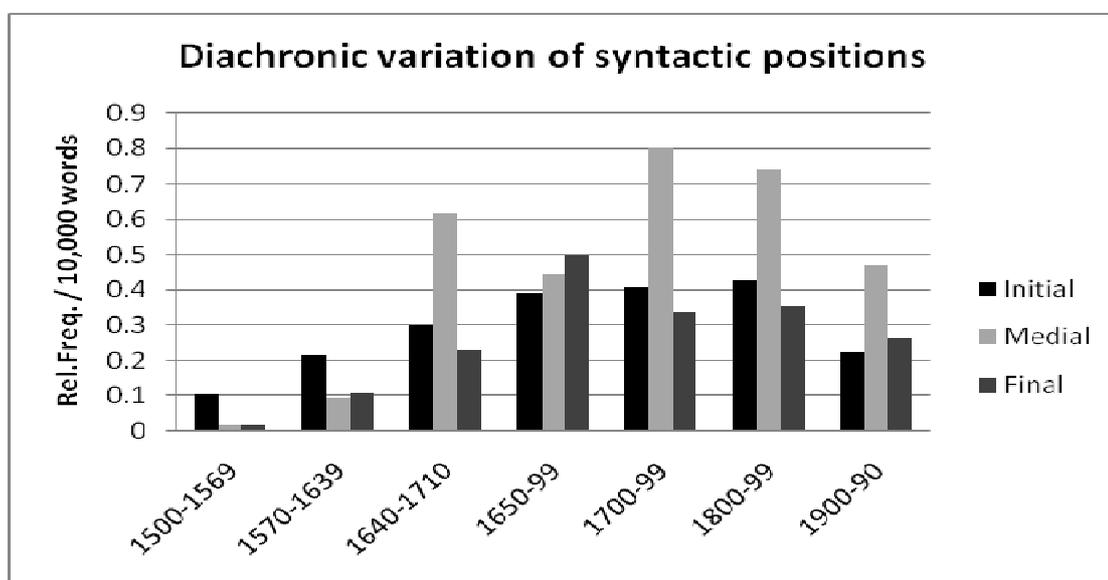


Figure 2.6
Diachronic variation in the positioning
of abbreviated *if*-structures from 1500 to 1990

The picture that Figure 2.6 presents about the syntactic positions of abbreviated *if*-structures is different from what would be expected on the basis of the positioning of

full *if*-clauses. First of all, it is only between 1500 and 1639 when the abbreviated *if*-structures occur predominantly in sentence-initial positions. Nevertheless, with the development of the new, non-conditional interpretations positioning of the abbreviated *if*-structures starts to alter: already in the period between 1640 and 1710 the medial position takes over the prevalent place for abbreviated *if*-structures, and this remains the situation all through the following sub-periods as well (except for the first sub-period in *ARCHER*, between 1650 and 1699 where final position is slightly more frequent than medial). Thus it seems that during these years there is an increasing tendency for the speakers / writers to interrupt the flow of the utterance with an abbreviated *if*-structure, simply by placing it in the middle of the sentence. This way the abbreviated *if*-structure clearly has a parenthetical role.

In sum, the present section aimed at looking at all the possible positions of abbreviated *if*-structures, and also to examine how they were varying in the five centuries provided by the two corpora. Nevertheless, the question of the actual purpose behind their positioning has not been raised. In the following section the three positions (initial, medial and final) are discussed in detail.

2.8.3 The purpose of positioning: from initial via final to medial

After looking at the tendency how the abbreviated *if*-structures are positioned in the long diachrony, it is worth considering the purpose reason behind the choice of their actual positions in the sentence. In section 2.8.3.1 the initial position, in section 2.8.3.2 the final position and in section 2.8.3.2 the medial position are considered.

2.8.3.1 Initial position

Many earlier studies (cf. below) consider the initial position as the primary one for *if*-clauses which is in accord with Greenberg's 14th universal on word order in (full) conditional clauses:

In conditional statements, the conditional clause precedes the conclusion as the normal order in all languages.

(Greenberg 1963: 84-85)

This means that “the order of elements in language parallels that in physical experience or the order of knowledge” (Greenberg 1966: 103). In this interpretation, it is the *if*-clause that comes first and the consequent follows. The *if*-clause stands in initial position and sets up the condition for the act / event taking place in the apodosis. This implies that conditional clauses are most often “left-dislocated constituents [...] Like contrastive topics, they are contrastive because they are selected, on the basis of the same principle of relevance, from a list of possible conditions” (Haiman 1978: 572). The idea that conditionals can be considered as *topics*⁵¹ (can be also termed as *givens*, *presuppositions*) originates from Haiman (1978). This conveys the idea that the piece of information in the protasis is already shared by both the speaker and hearer, because it has been previously mentioned; it is a given fact that could be considered as a set framework or starting point for the following discourse (cf. Haiman 1978, 1986, Claridge 2007), that is, for the new information (things which the speaker/writer expects their hearer/reader might not already know). Carter-Thomas & Rowley-Jolivet (2008: 199) also consider that “in real time processing it is important for the speakers to first provide the background for the assertion in Q ⁵², by specifying under which condition it holds, in order to avoid misinterpretation and back-processing by listeners”. In Akatsuka’s (1986) and Ford & Thompson’s interpretation (1986: 361), the *p* in *if p then q* sequence simply stands for (quasi repeat) what the other participant of the conversation said previously. Ford & Thompson (1986: 361) also assert that the *if*-clause offers a contrast to an earlier assumption, provides exemplification of an earlier generalisation, and explores options made available by earlier procedural logical steps. Thus *p* is the contextually given constituent of the utterance, while *q* would be the newly provided information. This ‘thematic progression’ could be sketched as follows in an abbreviated *if*-structure:

⁵¹ There are, however, differences in the interpretation of what *topic* means:

- *topic* is what the speaker is talking about, and the *comment* is what he says about it (Halliday 1967: 212, Brekle 1970: 72, Hornby 1971: 1976, Kuno 1972: 272 fn, Sgall 1974, Dahl 1974: 48, Wierzbicka 1975, Hajičová & Sgall 1975: 16).
- *topic* is the given or old information in the sentence, and the *comment* (or *focus*, e.g. Foley 1996: 201) is the new information (Firbas 1964, Paul 1966: 283, Halliday 1967: 8, Chafe 1972, 1976; Dressler 1974: 88).

⁵² *P* and *Q* equals with *p* and *q*.

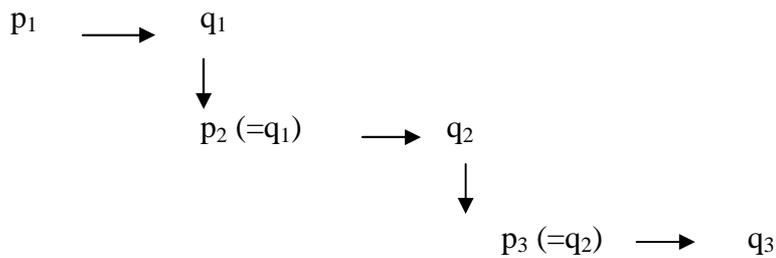


Figure 2.7.
Thematic progression of the protasis and the apodosis
(based on Komagata 2001: 54; see also Daneš 1974)

In Figure 2.7 p_i stands for the protasis (also the theme, topic, given) and q_i stands for the apodosis (also the rheme, the new information), as in example (2.61), for instance:

(2.61) If I retrieve you, I shall be thankful – *If not*, you are and must be still my lord.
<ARCHER: 1778hami.f>

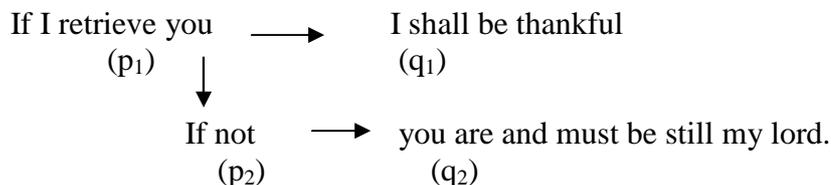


Figure 2.8.
Thematic progression of example (2.61)
(adapted from Komagata 2001: 54)

Figure 2.8 is the representation of the information structure in a conditional sentence like the one in example (2.61) looks like, where the conditional “subordinate clause presents information as if it is presupposed as given” and then the new piece of information is asserted. (Komagata 2001: 61, based on Quirk et al. 1985: 919). In p_2 there is no need to repeat what has been already said in the previous sentence; it can count as ‘given’ and the new information (the outcome of the new protasis) comes afterwards in q_2 .

2.8.1.2 Final position

What happens if the clause-order is reversed so that the protasis stands sentence-finally? As suggested by Comrie (1986), the parties involved in the conversation have to face a reverse reading, that is, the danger of misreading and misinterpretation. He compares the same protasis and the apodosis but in different orders, as in example (2.62) and (2.63):

(2.62) *If you translate this for me, I'll give you \$100.*

(2.63) *I'll give you \$100 if you translate this for me.*

(Comrie 1986: 84)

There are two ways of interpreting the sentences in examples (2.62) and (2.63) above. Example (2.62) sets the logical order of the two actions: first you do the translation job for me and then I will give you your reward. In example (2.63), however, there is a potential peril that either the hearer stops paying attention to whatever is said after hearing that he/she can get \$100, or the order of the actions is as stated, but, again, the speaker then takes the risk of not getting the translation although he/she has paid for it. This difference can be generalised as follows:

- ***if p, q*** (i.e. initial position): the *if*-clause has a grounding function, it presents options or explores their implications, but most importantly it organizes discourse in relation to the preceding context;
- ***q if p*** (i.e. final position): the *if*-clause does not contribute to the structure of discourse; rather, it completes the meaning of a particular sentence (Dancygier 1998: 146) as background information “for the sake of sincerity, precision, etc.” (Claridge 2007:252). In this case, first the new information is given, not what is already shared by the speaker and the hearer.

Ford & Thompson (1986) list some possible motivations for placing *if*-clauses in final position. According to these, *if*-clauses

- provide a particular case of an abstract idea under discussion
- can introduce the situation of the following clause, as their background
- may represent a step subsequent to a situation established in the preceding discourse, a step which involves one or more possible options whose consequences are to be considered.

(ibid.: 364)

The motivation for disrupting the ‘protasis followed by the apodosis’ conditional order, by allowing the protasis to migrate to final position is length, according to Ford & Thompson (1986: 360). Although these authors admit that length is not a decisive factor in all instances where the protasis appears at the end of the sentence, they still claim that it seems to be the primary factor in deciding the position of the clauses within the sentence. Length cannot be the motivation for positioning in the case of the abbreviated *if*-structures because they are shorter by definition. Although Claridge (2007) does not deal with abbreviated *if*-structures, her data supports the idea of the interrelation between length and position as only a minority (20%) of the full conditional clauses was positioned according to their length. Ford & Thompson (1986) propose another reason for placing the *if*-clause in final position: it happens “when a conditional clause occurs within a nominalization, an infinitive, or a relative clause” (359). Consequently, length does not seem to play such an important role in the positioning of the protasis within the sentence.

2.8.1.3 Medial position

Besides the initial and final positions, *if*-clauses can occupy a sentence-medial or parenthetical position (Bhatt & Pancheva 2005: 645, Claridge 2007: 245). An *if*-clause in medial position interrupts the sentence structure. Usually it is interpolated between the verb and the complement, and is separated by either brackets or commas, or even without any marker of division (in speech, at least, they must be set off by parenthetical intonation). They count as a kind of afterthought without the implication of being unimportant or redundant though (cf. Claridge 2007: 245 and Carter-Thomas & Rowley-Jolivet 2008: 199). Carter-Thomas & Rowley-Jolivet (2008: 199) also claim that the mid-position use is not a frequent phenomenon in written texts (there are no

details concerning the frequency in spoken material). Claridge (2007) also maintains that although *if*-clauses can occupy all positions (initial, medial, and final), the most prominent is still the initial position with 67%. All these observations, again, are based on studies on full *if*-clauses. Tendencies in placing abbreviated *if*-structures, apart from two sub-periods, show that the medial position is the most prominent one. Of course, it should not be forgotten that abbreviated *if*-structures are short – simply by being abbreviated. Hence, the likelihood that they occur in sentence-medial position is higher, since the shorter the structure, the easier it is to interrupt the flow of information with it without causing any problem in the comprehension.

2.9 Summary

Chapter 2 aimed at giving an overview of the syntax of abbreviated *if*-structures illustrated with appropriate corpus data and (invented) examples found in earlier literature. I pondered about the possible contact influence by Latin and French. Then I also examined the role of ellipsis and subordination in the case of abbreviated *if*-structures. As a result, I introduced the categories of elliptical (complete and partial) and truncated *if*-structures whilst illuminating the main difference between them. While elliptical *if*-structures behave more like full *if*-clauses, truncated *if*-structures should be treated as phrases instead. I also emphasised that a non-finite or a verbless structure are not necessarily subordinated to anything, rather, they are more like phrases. Finally, sentence positioning was investigated: previous studies on full *if*-clauses have shown that the most frequent position for an *if*-clause is the sentence-initial position. At the same time, in the case of abbreviated *if*-structures it is the sentence-medial position which is the most prevalent.

3. Function

The original purpose of *if*, according to the *Oxford English Dictionary (OED)*, is to introduce a clause of condition or supposition. A conditional sentence comprises a protasis, which is the *if*-clause, and an apodosis, which is the main (matrix) clause. The primary meanings of *if* are *on condition that, given or granted that, in (the) case that; supposing that, and on the supposition that*. The subordinator *if* is normally followed by a verb either in the indicative or the subjunctive⁵³ mood. The former implies that the speaker expresses no adverse opinion as to the truth of the statement in the clause; that is, the speaker accepts the statement as it is. The subjunctive, on the other hand, implies that the speaker guards himself from endorsing the truth or realisation of the statement; that is, the speaker doubts the statement to be true or valid.

This is, however, a very general and broad description. Especially when the origin⁵⁴ of the conjunction *if* is considered, it emerges that the categorisation or understanding of *if* might still entail some uncertainty or even controversy. There are two hypotheses mentioned in the *OED*: according to one, the conjunction is derived from an OHG noun form, which allegedly has nothing, or very little to do with conditionality. So the OE *ǣif* would have corresponding forms in OHG *iba* ‘condition, stipulation, doubt’, in ON *if, ef* ‘doubt, hesitation’, in Sw. *jäf* ‘exception, challenge’. According to the other supposition (presuming conditionality), the OE. *ǣif* has corresponding forms in OFris. *ief, gef, ef (jof, of)*, OS *ef (of)* (MLG *jof*, MDu *jof, of*, Du *of*) ‘if’, OHG *ibu (oba, ubi)*, MHG *obe, ob*, Ger *ob* ‘whether, if’, ON *ef* ‘if’, Goth *ibai* ‘whether, lest’, *jabai* ‘if, even if, although’. Consequently, the conjunction *if*⁵⁵ in itself might carry characteristics from both the *conditional* sense and the sense of expressing

⁵³ A thorough discussion on using indicative and subjunctive moods is to be found in, for instance, Visser (1972: §880). I am not going into the details here since it is out of the scope of the dissertation, which aims at discussing abbreviated *if*-structures.

⁵⁴ Based exclusively on the *OED* online, <http://dictionary.oed.com/entrance.dtl>

⁵⁵ There are various spelling variants of *if* (following the marking offered by the *OED*): in the 11th century there were **ȝif, ȝyf, ȝef, ȝife, ȝib**, from the 12th to the 15th century **ȝif, ȝef**, in addition, the 13th century also had **ȝief, ȝeif, ȝuf, ȝiff**, between the 13th and 15th centuries **ȝyf, yef**, and also **ȝiue, yif(f), yhef** in the 14th century, between the 14th and the 15th centuries **ȝeue, yeue**, only in the 15th century **ȝife, ȝyfe, yiffe, yeffe, ȝeff**; possibly from the 13th or 14th centuries there is the today’s spelling variant **if**, still with some modification in the 14th century **ef**, between 14th -16th century **yf**, in the 15th century **yff**, from the 15th to the 16th century **iffe**, and between the 15th and the 17th centuries **iff**. The relevant spelling variants, that is, the ones in use between the 16th and the 20th centuries, were taken into consideration during the corpus analyses.

hesitation, doubt which would be a typical instance of an overlap of semantic roles (Quirk et al. 1985: 1087 §15.32). Funk (1985: 365), for instance, also suggests that *if* should not be restricted to *always* having a conditional implication. With this perspective in mind I will analyse the abbreviated *if*-structures;

[t]his is because conditionals have an imposing variety of forms, and a still more overwhelming variety of interpretations. They are an area of language use where the interaction of form, meaning, and context is exceptionally complex and fascinating.

(Dancygier 1998: 2)

The framework Dancygier follows is ‘form-meaning correlation’ where, for instance, “verb forms signal important aspects of the interpretation” (ibid.: 5). Of course, in the present study it is impossible to talk about form-meaning correlation in terms of the verb, since there is no finite verb in an abbreviated *if*-structure. Nevertheless, from another perspective the ‘form-meaning correlation’ can be applied to the abbreviated *if*-structures as well, since they agree in form⁵⁶, but they might differ in meaning and implication. To find out how much the abbreviated *if*-structures in example (3.1) and (3.2), for instance, are different in their interpretation is the purpose of the present chapter.

(3.1) **If nominated**, I will run. **If elected**, I will serve. Thanks.
<ARCHER: 1960vidl.d8a>

(3.2) The breath was either no ways offensive, or had only that kind of smell which is occasioned by worms; and the swallowing was very little, **if at all**, impeded.
<ARCHER: 1769bard.m4a>

The chapter is built up as follows: in section 3.1 I pose the question of conditionality in general⁵⁷. Here I introduce two different meanings for *if*-clauses: *semantic* and *pragmatic* meanings, which I explain in more detail in sections 3.1.1 and 3.1.2. In section 3.1.3 I list a number of terminologies offered by different studies for basically the same concept, finally arrive at the decision to use the two main terms

⁵⁶ They all share the feature of being abbreviated.

⁵⁷ It is important to emphasise that the background literature only on full *if*-clauses are available.

“conditional” and “non-conditional” for discussing conditionality. Along these conditional-non-conditional lines, in section 3.2 I turn the focus to abbreviated *if*-structures: how these interpretations varied during the five centuries examined. In section 3.3 I start the more specific discussion of the conditionality of abbreviated *if*-structures and also show how much the actual interpretation is context-dependent. Then section 3.3.1 covers the conditional and section 3.3.2 the non-conditional abbreviated *if*-structures, including *if possible*⁵⁸ as a pragmatic marker in section 3.3.2.1, and scalar comments in section 3.3.2.2, where concessivity is also taken into consideration. Finally, in section 3.4 I contrast dictionary evidence with my corpus results. The ultimate aim of this chapter is to show and discuss the semantic multifunctionality of abbreviated *if*-structures and how these interpretations developed and varied between 1500 and 1990.

3.1 The question of conditionality in general

The present section aims at presenting some previous literature on the question of conditionality⁵⁹. I also gather evidence relating to the contrast of the two possible implications (conditional vs. non-conditional) of full *if*-clauses.

According to Ibanez (1976), linguistic constraints can be divided into two classes: those that are independent of a particular communicative situation and those that are governed by the language specific situation. The first class is referred to as grammatically-governed restrictions and the second one as pragmatic conditions (cf. Ibanez 1976: 224⁶⁰). Schwenter (1999) also shares this view and along these lines he introduces two types of meanings for *if*-clauses: the *semantic* (which would be Ibanez’ grammatically-governed restrictions) and the *pragmatic* (which would be Ibanez’ pragmatic conditions) meanings, as illustrated in Figure 3.1 below.

⁵⁸ After the examination of the corpus data it has turned out that there is one abbreviated *if*-structure (*if possible*) which could also function as a pragmatic marker.

⁵⁹ Since no study has been made so far concerning abbreviated *if*-structures, I can take only full *if*-clauses into consideration.

⁶⁰ The original text:

Sprachliche Gesetzmässigkeiten lassen sich in zwei Klassen einteilen: diejenigen, die von einer partikulären kommunikativen Situation unabhängig sind, und diejenigen, die von der Sprechsituation bedingt werden. Die ersten werden grammatische Wohlgeformtheitsrestriktionen, die zweiten pragmatischen Bedingungen genannt.

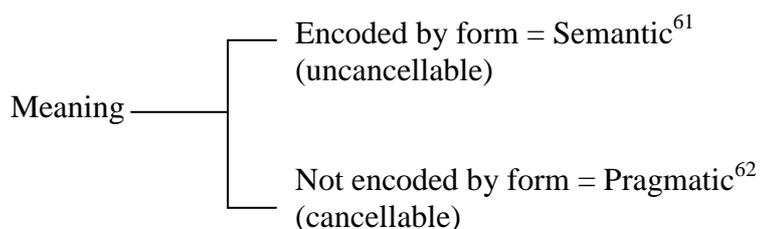


Figure 3.1.
Two types of conditional meaning
(Schwenter 1999: 23-24)

Schwenter (1999) argues that an *if*-clause with semantic meaning (i.e. truth-conditional, content-based meaning) forms an integral part of the whole sentence, it has a central role (cf. Haegeman 1984a), and thus it is uncancellable; whereas an *if*-clause with pragmatic meaning forms only a peripheric part of the sentence and is thus cancellable (this peripheral role is best represented with dashes or commas in writing) (cf. Haegeman 1984a). In other words, in the former what happens in the antecedent determines what happens in the consequent (that is, if *p* then *q*, and if not *p* then not *q*). In the latter, on the other hand, the *if*-structure does not have a direct link with the main clause and is by definition situated outside the main proposition. This means that even if *if*-structure were left out, the meaning of the main proposition would not be altered. From this perspective, the abbreviated *if*-structures with pragmatic meaning could be considered as peripheral constituents without forming an integral part in the sentence. Furthermore, there is a correlation between the constituent being on the periphery and its lack of ‘reason-consequence’ (cf. Funk 1985: 368) relationship with the main clause. Consider examples (3.3) and (3.4), where instances of the two types are shown.

(3.3) Nothing so powerfully calls home the mind as distress: the tense fibre then relaxes, the soul retires to itself, sits pensive and susceptible of right impressions: if we have a friend, 'tis then we think of him; **if a benefactor**, at that moment all his kindnesses press upon our mind.
<ARCHER: 17xxster.h4b>

*(3.3b) Nothing so powerfully calls home the mind as distress: the tense fibre then relaxes, the soul retires to itself, sits pensive and susceptible of right impressions: if we have a friend, 'tis then we think of him; [...], at that moment all his kindnesses press upon our mind.

⁶¹ More on it in section 3.1.1.

⁶² More on it in section 3.1.2.

- (3.4) Pray Dear Doctour continue your friendship towards one who loves and esteems you, **if possible**, as much as you deserve.
 <ARCHER: 1710adds.x3b>
- (3.4b) Pray Dear Doctour continue your friendship towards one who loves and esteems you, [...], as much as you deserve.

Whereas in example (3.3) it is not possible to cancel the *if*-structure (see example *(3.3b)), in example (3.4) it is possible (see example (3.5b)).

The peripheral status of pragmatically related *if*-structures can be seen from Haegeman's model (Haegeman 1984a: 490-491), in Figure 3.2:

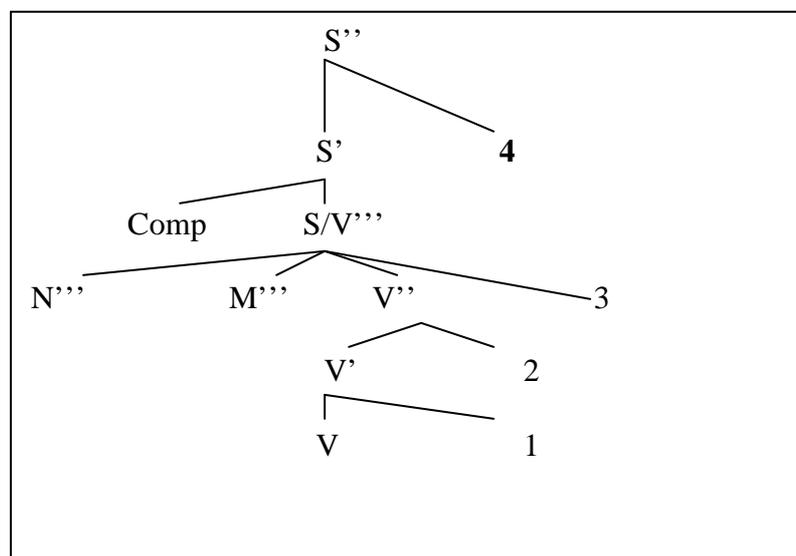


Figure 3.2
 Haegeman's tree-diagram

The meanings behind the numbers in Figure 3.2⁶³:

- 1 contains subcategorized phrases and clauses: *I told you [that he would come back.]*
- 2 contains VP-adverbials such as manner and purpose clauses: *I did it [like she told me.]*
- 3 contains sentence-modifiers such as time-adverbials, place-adverbials and occurrence ('central') conditional clauses: *John will help you [when he returns] [if you ask him nicely.]*

⁶³ Figure 3.2 also implies the degree of embedding (see Haegeman 2003: 319).

In traditional grammars, they are considered to be adjuncts or bound clauses.

4 contains utterance-conditionals or speech-act conditionals which modify S'', rather than S: *John helped him [if that's the word.]*

In traditional grammars, they are considered to be disjuncts/conjuncts or free clauses. A sub-type of such conditionals is called 'politeness'-conditionals.

(Haegeman 1984a: 490-491)

Thus, while the constituents indicated by numbers 1, 2, and 3 are essential parts of the sentence (that is, without them the utterance would be unintelligible), number 4, as Haegeman says, is a peripheral constituent. It can easily be omitted while the intelligibility of the proposition is maintained. The idea of cancellability also supports the idea that a division should be made between *if*-clauses: the type with pragmatic interpretation does not set any condition under which the whole proposition is true (does not add anything to the truth of the whole proposition), and it is not part of the 'reason-consequence' relationship.

Besides taking cancellability into consideration, conditionals can also be evaluated according to their meaning/logical conditions (cf. Johnson-Laird 1986: 57). The traditional view is that a conditional sentence is made up of an *if*-clause (the protasis, the logical antecedent) and the main clause (the apodosis, the logical consequent) (cf. Funk 1985: 366), between which there is a 'reason-consequence' (cf. Funk 1985: 368) or "cause-effect" (Vallauri 2010: 62) relationship in an *if p, then q* sequence – corresponding to Schwenter's *semantic* meaning. However, this 'reason-consequence' relationship does not always exist: "[i]nstead of establishing some sort of consequential relation, it [the conditional form of the protasis] provides the basis for some comment to follow" (Funk 1985: 369), and thus also crossing the boundaries of the semantic properties of conditionality – arriving at Schwenter's *pragmatic* meaning. As a result, it can be suggested that the forms (i.e. the form of *if*-clause/structure) are "morphologically similar" (Haiman 1986: 220; see also form-meaning correlation above), but the meaning is by no means the same. Thus, it would seem consistent to adopt different approaches to sentences like examples (3.5) and (3.6), since although they seem to be similar *if*-clauses in form, they have different implications.

- (3.5) but Ursula, who had seen him in the same state once before, knew that his illness was only caused by the heat and exertions of the preceding day, and was not therefore likely to terminate fatally **if properly treated**.
<ARCHER: 1848kava.f5b>
- (3.6) Further, there are those who have seen in the very survival of the Jewish people an empirical argument against the final value of mere force, and there is no doubt that in this survival Judaism has been a determining, **if not the decisive**, factor.
<ARCHER: 1951brod.h8b>

Instances like the one in example (3.5) are discussed in more detail in section 3.3.1 and in example (3.6) in section 3.3.2.

3.1.1 Semantic meaning

An *if*-clause, like the one in example (3.5), sets up a condition under which the proposition is true. In a conditional statement, the truth of the consequent depends on the truth of the antecedent (de Rose & Grandy 1999, Quirk et al. 1985), or, in other words, the *if*-clause “expresses an event which will lead to the main clause event” (Haegeman 2003: 318). In example (3.5), it is the proper treatment (the cause) on which our future state, that is, our actual health (the consequent), depends.

It is also possible to explain further refinements in conditionality. The *if*-clause in example (3.5) does not contain a finite verb; it is nevertheless possible to make a full *if*-clause out of it by inserting a one. Depending on the tense used, the quality of fulfilment alters. For instance, if the verb *is* is used in its past tense form (... *if he was properly treated*), the condition might or might not be fulfilled. If it is used in its past participle form (... *if he had been treated*), the condition is not fulfilled. It is thus possible to distinguish between *reality* (‘open’, ‘factual’, and ‘neutral’) conditionals and *unreality* (‘hypothetical’ ‘closed’, rejected’ and ‘non- or counterfactual’) conditionals⁶⁴. While the former “leave[s] unresolved the question of the fulfilment or non-fulfilment of the condition, and hence also the truth of the proposition expressed by the matrix clause”, the latter “convey[s] the speaker’s belief that the condition will not be fulfilled

⁶⁴ Additional adjustments within reality and unreality conditionals are made by, for instance, Thompson & Longacre (1985), Harris 1986) by offering *real* (*realis*), *potential* (*irrealis*) and *unreal* (*counterfactual*) conditionals, or by Taylor (1997), using other terminologies, *factual*, *hypothetical* and *counterfactual* conditionals.

(for future conditions), is not fulfilled (for present conditions), or was not fulfilled (for past conditions), and hence the probable or certain falsity of the proposition expressed by the matrix clause” (Quirk et al. 1985: 1091 §15.35).

Reality conditionals

Present

If it's raining out there, my car is getting wet.

Habitual/generic

If you step on the brake, the car slows down.

Past

If you were at the party, then you know about Sue and Fred.

Unreality conditionals

Imaginative:

-hypothetical

If I saw David, I'd speak Bari with him (what might be)

-counterfactual

If you had been at the concert, you would have seen Ravi Shankar. (what might have been)

Predictive:

If he gets the job, we'll all celebrate.

Figure 3.3.

Differences between reality and unreality conditionals
(taken from Thompson & Longacre 1985: 190-191)

In full conditional clauses, drawing this kind of distinction (deducing the implied meaning) is feasible, since the verb used provides enough information on what the *if*-clause conveys: the truth of the conditionality means that the outcome of the apodosis is highly dependent upon the (non-) fulfilment of the protasis. Nevertheless, this kind of categorisation cannot be completely applied to abbreviated *if*-structures, since there is no finite verb present. It is true, however, that modality could be estimated by the time reference (verb form) used in the main clause (*will*, *would*, *would have* + past participle), as in example (3.7), with a possible full-clause counterpart in (3.7b):

(3.7) that Naples was on the brink of revolution; that **if successful** it would go the length of Italy; and that the Pontifical Government would be surprised, and that by the beginning of next month we might have trouble
<ARCHER: 1847mann.j5b>

(3.7b) ... that if *it was/were* successful, it would go ...

3.1.2 Pragmatic meaning

The fact that clauses can be introduced by *if* does not necessarily imply that they are all *content-based* conditionals, rather some should be considered as *discourse-based*. Dancygier (1998: 92) propounds that discourse-based *if*-clauses should be interpreted as “I believe *p* and I communicate *q* on this ground. I admit that I am not certain if you believe *p*”. Consequently, this type of *if*-clause “conditionally modifies not the content of the main clause but the speech act performed by it” (Nikifoidou & Caoullou 2010: 92). The *if*-clause “expresses a premise leading to the question raised in the matrix clause” (Haegeman 2003: 318) rather than a cause and its potential effect – albeit without necessarily accepting the premise by the speaker (cf. Edgington 2003: 393).

The discourse-based *if*-clauses are also known as ‘Austin conditionals’ after Austin’s 1961 work⁶⁵ (cf. Horn 1985, 1989) or “biscuit conditionals” (for instance, Ebert et al. 2008: 132), after the sentence⁶⁶

(3.8) If you’re hungry, there are some biscuits on the table.

Clearly, in example (3.8) the *if*-clause does not set any condition on the existence of biscuits on the table; the biscuits are there whether or not the person spoken to is hungry. This means that “the hearer’s hunger is not a sufficient condition for the presence” of biscuits on the table (Noh 1996: 3). Thus, the actual meaning behind this utterance might sound like this: ‘If you’re hungry, then you will be interested to hear that there are some biscuits on the table, and you are welcome to eat some of them’; in fact “if you’re hungry” is almost a supposition (that the hearer is hungry), otherwise the speaker would not say this. Thus it seems that “[t]hey [the *if*-clause], are not contextualized in the same way [as they are with regular conditionals], as they do not refer to the previous utterance, and they do not contain parts identifiable as “echo” and “explanation” (Dancygier 1998: 104). It can thus be concluded that the *if*-clause in a sentence like example (3.8) above:

⁶⁵ In spite of Austin’s early work beginning in 1961, it was only Haimann’s study ‘Conditionals as Topics’ (1978) that finally drew a border between the traditional views (i.e. conditionals with truth value) and a new way of interpreting *if*-clauses (i.e. taking pragmatics into consideration). Following Haimann’s ideology, several studies (Akatsuka 1986, Van der Auwera 1986, Ford & Thompson 1986, Veltman 1986, Lowe 1992, Ebert et al. 2008 and many others) have since dealt with this differentiation.

⁶⁶ Here the implication is the same as it was in example (3.6).

- is irrelevant to the real condition, but it is relevant to the discourse in which the proposition takes place (cf. Bhatt & Pancheva 2005: 671),
- “provides a condition under which the consequent will be interesting” Veltman (1986: 163) or where “the consequent is relevant” (Ebert et al. 2008: 133),
- is an instance where “the antecedent is not a premise but [it] stipulates the conditions in which the truth of the conditional is likely to be of relevance to the addressee” (Johnson-Laird 1986: 61, cf. Austin 1961),
- is an example where the truth of the antecedent is the sufficient condition for the consequent (cf. *Sufficiency hypothesis*, Van der Auwera 1985: 189-202, 1986: 200, Noh 1996: 22, 2000: 177, Sweetser 1991: 126-127).

Accordingly, it seems that a dividing line should be drawn between conditional *if*-clauses with a truth value and those without a truth value.

3.1.3 The choice of terminologies

In sections 3.1.1 and 3.1.2 I discussed the interpretations of full *if*-clauses. As it turned out, there is a basic conceptual difference: there is either a cause-effect relationship between the protasis and the apodosis (conditional in the strict sense) or there is not (not conditional in the strict sense). It also became evident that the typology of conditionals has been widely discussed; however, opinions differ as to how different *if*-clauses should be classified; thus, the proliferation of different terms is not surprising (cf. Haegeman 2003: 319). Table 3.1 (based on Haegeman 2003: 319-320 and complemented by myself) provides a remarkable variety of terminologies for different types of conditionals. Nevertheless, it very much seems that these terminologies cover two basic ideas: a clause can be considered as either *conditional* (implication with truth function) or *non-conditional* (implication without truth function). Notwithstanding this dual division, the terms might have different implications. For instance, the difference between Horn’s (1985, 1989) speech-act / metalinguistic conditional and Dancygier’s (1998) metatextual conditional is that metatextual conditionals do not comment on the whole main clause, as speech-act conditionals do, but they comment on one single word in the main clause to which they should stand the nearest. This contrast can be seen in examples (3.9) and (3.10):

- (3.9) metatextual conditional:
He trapped two mongeese, if “mongeese” is the right form.
(Dancygier 1998: 104)
- (3.10) speech-act conditional:
If I may say so, you’re looking particularly lovely tonight.
(Dancygier 1998: 103, see also Horn 1985, 1989).

	<i>Implication with truth function - event structure -</i>	<i>Implication without truth function - discourse structure -</i>
Barwise (1986: 24)	<i>general</i> (general statement/truth related) and <i>truth</i> (“under what conditions a sentence can be used to convey information”) conditional	specific (specific situation related) conditions
Bhatt & Pancheva (2005: 640)	hypothetical – and also factual ⁶⁷ conditional	relevance conditional
Carter-Thomas & Rowley-Jolivet (2008: 198)	factual conditional	conditionals with “discourse management function”
Claridge (2007: 246)	conditional	metalinguistic, ‘hedging’ conditional
Dancygier & Mioduscewska (1984)	consequential	non-consequential
Dancygier (1998: 1, 104)	conditional	metatextual conditional
de Rose & Grandy (1999)	content conditional	pragmatic conditional
Ebert <i>et al.</i> (2008: 132)	normal indicative conditional	relevance conditional
Edington (2003: 393)	event conditional	premise conditional
Haegeman (1984a)	occurrence conditional	utterance / speech-act/pragmatic conditional
Haegeman (1984a,b,c; 1991)	central	peripheral
Haegeman (2003)	event-conditional	premise-conditional
Haiman (1986: 216, 222)	conditional	pseudoconditional
Horn (1989)	truth-functionality of conditionals	metalinguistic conditional
I-wen Su (2005: 657-660)	content conditional	epistemic and speech act conditionals
Nikiforidou & Torres Cacoulios (2010: 91-92)	realis conditional	speech act conditional
Quirk <i>et al.</i> (1985)	direct condition	indirect condition
Sweetser (1984)	content conditional	epistemic conditional
Sweetser (1991)	content conditional	Two types: epistemic and speech-act conditionals
Vallauri (2010: 62)	condition based on cause-effect relation	<i>if</i> -clauses with metadiscursive function
Van der Auwera (1986)	speech act about conditional	conditional speech act

Table 3.1.
Different terminologies for conditionality
(Based on Haegeman 2003: 319-320)

⁶⁷ *Factual* conditional: the *if*-clause “is presupposed to be true”, and thus it is difficult to distinguish from hypothetical conditionals (Bhatt & Pancheva 2005: 640).

It is hypothesised that the dual division between implications with and without truth functions presented in Table 3.1 can be seen in the case of abbreviated *if*-structures as well. Hence, some abbreviated *if*-structures, which resemble conditional *if*-clauses with a ‘reason-consequence’ relationship between the protasis and the apodosis, are treated as *conditionals*, with the implication with truth function. There are some abbreviated *if*-structures which have implications without truth function and thus they all fall into the category of *non-conditionals*. *Non-conditionals* seems to be a good cover term, since fitting these non-conditional abbreviated *if*-structures into one single category mentioned in Table 3.1 is not possible. Furthermore, the implication of abbreviated *if*-structures might be different from that of full *if*-clauses.

In the following, the *PPCEME* and the *ARCHER* corpora will be analysed according to these two categories⁶⁸.

3.2 The variation of conditional and non-conditional abbreviated *if*-structures in the *PPCEME* and the *ARCHER* corpora

The purpose of taking semantic analysis into consideration was to be able to differentiate and thus support the idea that not all *if*-structures are conditionals by default. As discussed in sections 3.1.1 and 3.1.2, there is a general way to group abbreviated *if*-structures: those structures can either be conditional or non-conditional. This is the division I wish to apply in the analysis of abbreviated *if*-structures in the *PPCEME* and in the *ARCHER*. Examples (3.11) and (3.12) are instances from the *PPCEME* and examples (3.13) and (3.14) are from the *ARCHER*.

(3.11) Howe you have contriv'd the Journy I knowe not, but I thought it fit to send yor men to wayte on you, if you have such an intention. **If not**, you may send them me againe. Yet I showld Joy to see thee.
<*PPCEME*: KNYVETT-1630-E2-P2,93.250>

(3.12) The occasion of the falling out betweene the Lady and her daughter was because shee went into her daughter Marie's company, contrary to her commands and indeed contrary to mine allso; surely

⁶⁸ It should be noted that in the process of the analysis, first the conditional *if*-structures were selected and then the rest was treated as non-conditional. Further categories and specifications were made later (cf. section 3.3)

shee growes too too headstrong and hath neede enough of such a one as the Lady to breake her **if possible** of her willfull courses.

<PPCEME: HOXINDEN-1650-E3-P2,172.86>

- (3.13) There seems no doubt that the NLF is the stronger and reports that the two may be about to merge could indicate that FLOSY is hedging its bets. **If so**, the chances would be improved of Britain lifting the ban on the NLF in return for a suspension of terrorism.

<ARCHER: 1967stm2.n8b.>

- (3.14) {=f JELLA.} <(unfolds the papers and reads)> "Donamar's cursed "cowardice has ruined me; I will be revenged; enclosed you have an "accusation against him, for various crimes perpetrated in the "Austrian and other parts of Germany; forward this, **if possible**, to "Vienna, and the counterpart of it to the authorities of Lubeck;

<ARCHER: 1819miln.d5b>

Whereas examples (3.11) and (3.13) belong to the group of conditionals⁶⁹, examples (3.12) and (3.14) should be interpreted in a different way, which is non-conditional⁷⁰.

On this conditional-non-conditional basis, the results shown in Table 3.2 and Figure 3.4 have been achieved after the analysis of the two corpora.

⁶⁹ These abbreviated *if*-structures are elliptical *if*-conditionals with the pro-form *so* or the negative particle *not*, setting a condition for the proposition: "If the two may be about to merge could indicate that FLOSY is hedging its bets, then ..." and "If you do not have such an intention, then...", respectively.

⁷⁰ *If possible* in these two instances is more like a sign of mitigation in a request, without setting any condition for the proposition in question. The detailed discussion of the non-conditional abbreviated *if*-structures comes in section 3.3. Here I wanted to provide only the basic differentiation between conditionals and non-conditionals and their diachronic variation.

<i>Sub-period / Conditionality</i>	<i>Conditional</i>	<i>Non-conditional</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>PPCEME</i>			
E1 1500-1570	6 (0.10)	1 (0.02)	7 (0.12)
E2 1570-1640	18 (0.28)	8 (0.12)	26 (0.40)
E3 1640-1710	35 (0.62)	28 (0.50)	63 (1.12)
Total	59 (0.33)	37 (0.21)	96 (0.54)
	61%	39%	100%
<i>ARCHER</i>			
I. 1650-1699	17 (0.94)	7 (0.39)	24 (1.33)
II. 1700-1799	55 (1.03)	28 (0.52)	83 (1.53)
III. 1800-1899	49 (0.91)	33 (0.61)	82 (1.52)
IV. 1900-1990	29 (0.54)	22 (0.41)	51 (0.96)
Total	150 (0.84)	90 (0.50)	240 (1.34)
	62%	38%	100%
CORPORA TOTAL	209 62%	127 38%	336 100%

Table 3.2.

Diachronic variation of conditional and non-conditional abbreviated *if*-structures (absolute numbers / relative frequency)

As it was already referred to, it is only the period between 1500 and 1569, when the structure itself starts developing, albeit with very low frequency, and yet with only conditional interpretation. In the *PPCEME* the ratio between the conditional and the non-conditional abbreviated *if*-structures is 61% to 39%, and in the *ARCHER* corpus it is 62% to 38%, and the average ratio in the two corpora taken together is 62% to 38%. These figures already propound a slight increase in the usage of abbreviated *if*-structures with non-conditional interpretation (from 0% to 38%, especially knowing that non-conditional abbreviated *if*-structures were non-existent before the Early Modern English period, according to the data of the *Helsinki Corpus*). However, it is also noteworthy that the ratio in both corpora is almost the same, which suggests certain stability in the distribution between conditional and non-conditional abbreviated *if*-structures. Figure 3.4 demonstrates how the two main categories of abbreviated *if*-structures develop in the long diachrony, that is, from 1500 to 1990.

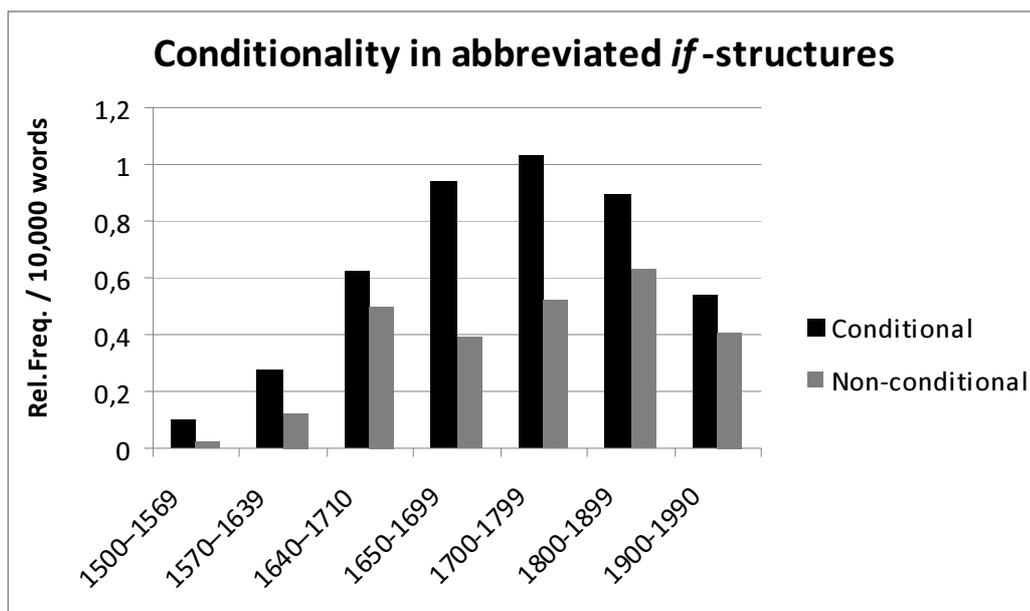


Figure 3.4.
Diachronic development of
conditional and non-conditional abbreviated *if*-structures

In general, as already mentioned, the abbreviated *if*-structures cannot be considered as a frequent phenomenon (only 2% of all the *if*-structures in the *PPCEME* and 5.28% in the *ARCHER*). However, their continuously increasing frequency merits attention, especially the non-conditional reading whose use in the whole corpus does not substantially fall behind the conditional interpretation (the average conditional – non-conditional ratio in the two corpora is 62% - 38%).

When the first and the last sub-periods (i.e. E1 in the *PPCEME* and IV. in the *ARCHER*) are compared to each other, a definite increase describes the frequency of both conditional and non-conditional abbreviated *if*-structures (generally from 7 (0.12) to 51 (0.96), conditional from 6 (0.1) to 29 (0.54) and non-conditional from 1 (0.02) to 22 (0.41); these data suggest that the change from the very first to the very last sub-period is statistically significant⁷¹, which means that it is unlikely these conditional and non-conditional structures occurred by chance).

But what kind of variation can be detected between each sub-period? In the first sub-period of the *PPCEME* there are only conditional abbreviated *if*-structures with a low frequency. Owing to this, E1 can be considered as an introductory stage⁷² in the use

⁷¹ For the calculation the chi-square test was applied:
<http://www.graphpad.com/quickcalcs/contingency2.cfm>.

⁷² After the analysis of the Old and Middle English parts of the *Helsinki Corpus*, it was concluded that there were no instances of the abbreviated *if*-structures before the Early Modern period.

of such structures. Then in E2 together with the overall rise, a non-conditional interpretation also comes to existence. This new reading of the abbreviated *if*-structures started spreading, resulting in a five times higher frequency in the last sub-period of the corpus. At the same time, genuine conditionals only doubled their frequency which was also the case from E2 to E3. As can be seen from the data, non-conditionals undergo a much more remarkable change: from E2 to E3 their number is quadrupled. In the *ARCHER* it is remarkable that while the frequency of conditionals is increasing from the 17th to the 18th century and then it shows a continuous decline, the frequency of non-conditionals shows a growing tendency throughout the first three centuries of the *ARCHER* and it is only towards the last century when it starts decreasing. Furthermore, the frequency of conditionals in the 17th century is higher (almost double) than in the 20th, the frequency of non-conditionals is still slightly higher in the 20th century than in the 17th. When the general tendency of abbreviated *if*-structures is taken into consideration, however, the tendency in the frequency resembles that of the conditionals’.

In the *ARCHER* it is also possible to have another, more specific way of considering the results: that is, to look at the British and the American parts separately. Table 3.3 shows the results of the British and Table 3.4 those of the American part.

BRITISH	1650-1699	1700-1799	1800-1899	1900-1990	Total	
Conditional	17 (0.94)	31 (0.87)	39 (1.08)	19 (0.54)	106 (0.85)	62%
Non-conditional	7 (0.39)	19 (0.53)	22 (0.61)	16 (0.45)	64 (0.51)	38%
Total	24 (1.33)	50 (1.4)	61 (1.69)	35 (0.99)	170 (1.36)	100%

Table 3.3.

Diachronic distribution of conditional and non-conditional abbreviated *if*-structures in the British part of the corpus (absolute number and relative frequency / 10,000 words)

The majority of the abbreviated *if*-structures can be found in the British part which means almost 71% of all the instances. As Table 3.3 shows, the frequency of non-conditionals has the same tendency as abbreviated *if*-structures in general: there is a steady rise from the 17th towards the 19th century and then a fall. The frequency of conditionals follows this picture as well: there is continuous rise towards the third period and then a decrease follows towards the last century.

AMERICAN	1700-1799	1800-1899	1900-1990	Total	
Conditional	24 (1.33)	9 (0.51)	10 (0.56)	43 (0.8)	61%
Non-conditional	9 (0.5)	12 (0.68)	6 (0.34)	27 (0.5)	39%
Total	33 (1.83)	21 (1.19)	16 (0.9)	70 (1.31)	100%

Table 3.4.

Diachronic distribution of conditional and non-conditional abbreviated *if*-structures in the American part of the corpus (absolute number and relative frequency / 10,000 words)

The American part of the corpus shows a slightly different picture in the frequency of abbreviated *if*-structures (cf. Table 3.4): when all instances are examined, then it shows an intensive decline from the 18th to the 20th century. This decreasing tendency can be detected in the case of conditionals as well, with a minor increase in the last century, though. Nonetheless, when the frequency of non-conditionals are examined, it turns out that first there is an increasing tendency from the 18th to the 19th century and it is followed by a sharp decrease towards the 20th century. Furthermore, as opposed to the figures provided by the British part, the frequency of abbreviated *if*-structures in the last period (20th century) covered by the American part of the corpus is much lower than in the first period (18th century).

After the general observation of the distribution and the frequency variation of the conditional and non-conditional abbreviated *if*-structures from the 16th to the 20th century, a more detailed analysis of the specific interpretations is given in the following section.

3.3 The question of conditionality in abbreviated *if*-structures

As already pointed out in sections 2.6 and 2.7, abbreviated *if*-structures, such as full *if*-clauses, should be analysed differently even though they are similar in form. Besides, they might also receive different interpretations. For instance, the similarity in the examples (3.15) – (3.17) is that the abbreviated *if*-structure in each instance is ‘*if not ...*’. Nevertheless, the context needs to be considered in order to be able to determine whether ‘*if not ...*’ is a conditional or a non-conditional abbreviated *if*-structure.

- (3.15) Madam, believe me, I like you, I have 600 l. a year, and if you will I'll Marry you, if you'll take me so, **if not**, I must seek out those that will.
<ARCHER: 1693powe.d2b>
- (3.16) Her own appearance and that of her daughters was always neat, always respectable; and their countenances ever serene, **if not cheerful**.
<ARCHER: 1798rows.f4a>
- (3.17) and from the dissections it appears, that an inflammation of the lungs, **if not the cause**, may at least be the consequence of the distemper, one would imagine that V.S. and evacuations were not totally to be forbid;
<ARCHER: 1769bard.m4a>

As a result, *if not* in example (3.15) is a conditional abbreviated *if*-structure, whereas in examples (3.16) and (3.17) it is a non-conditional one. The purpose of *if not* in example (3.15) is to avoid unnecessary repetition of those sentence constituents which have been mentioned in the previous sentence; the purpose of *if not* in examples (3.16) and (3.17) is, however, not to avoid repetition of any other sentence constituents. In the following, I shall discuss the possible ways of categorisation⁷³ of abbreviated *if*-structures according to conditionality.

Examples (3.16) and (3.17) are appropriate and useful illustrations of what an important role context plays in the analysis of abbreviated *if*-structures or any word or phrase. It can thus be suggested that besides looking at the abbreviated *if*-structures on their own, without any context (that is, without the sentences that precede and follow the abbreviated *if*-structure), it is also possible, and even more potent, to include the context in the analysis in which the given abbreviated *if*-structure appears. Hence more aspects could be taken into consideration and more precise conclusions could be drawn. While discussing the question Akatsuka (1986: 349) puts forth that “[c]onditionals are discourse-bound because they do not make sense without their discourse contexts”, thus it is not satisfactory to examine sentences (or parts of sentences) separated from their context. Examples (3.15)-(3.17), for instance, intend to show that without context *if not*

⁷³ The discussions in Huddleston and Pullum (2002), Quirk et al. (1985), Haegeman (1984a), Bhatt & Pancheva (2005), Dancygier (1998), Sweetser (1991), and Thompson & Longacre (1985) on full *if*-clauses are considered here as the starting point, but the final interpretations of the abbreviated *if*-structures are based on the corpus findings.

does not have any specific implication (or rather, it is the conditional implication by default), with context, however, *if not* has three different meanings in the three given examples.

Ford & Thompson (1986: 353) point out that the majority of the studies discussing conditionals, no matter how many languages are put under scrutiny, considers only individual sentences. As they suggest, the proper and correct interpretation of *if*-conditionals is very much context-dependent. And if the context plays a vital role in the understanding, it simply means, as Akatsuka (1986: 335) suggests, that the connection between *p* and *q* in the *if p then q* sequence should be described on the basis of pragmatic and not (only) grammatical grounds (see also Quine 1950, Stalnaker 1968, 1976, Grice 1975, Lewis 1976, Geis & Zwicky 1971, Kempson 1975, Haiman 1978, Gazdar 1979, Karttunen & Peters 1979, McCawley 1981 and Smith 1983).

It is a potential problem that if the example sentences are isolated and taken out of their context, perhaps even randomly, the analysis itself cannot provide any information concerning their frequency and the context in which they can occur; it is worth considering examples (3.15) - (3.17) again, since without any context, it would be impossible to determine what implication the abbreviated *if*-structures might have. Thus, I also share the opinion of Ford & Thompson who emphasise the importance of corpora in the process of the whole analysis, since “what is lacking is a perspective on how conditionals are used in authentic, naturally occurring texts” (1986: 354). Traugott is in favour of including discourse in the analysis when saying that “the speech-act meaning is a metalinguistic one that at a minimum refers to the discourse situation as a described situation, and in some cases (those called performative uses) is actually constitutive of the discourse situation” (1989: 44).

3.3.1 Conditional abbreviated *if*-structures

As suggested in sections 2.7.1 and 2.7.2, *if*-clauses can be ‘abbreviated’ in two ways as a result of ellipsis complete and partial. One way of doing so is when the elliptical *if*-clause comprises only the subordinator *if* and the pro-forms either *so* or *not*. In such instances the whole clause is ellipted, but it is completely recoverable from the context, as shown in examples (3.18) and (3.18b).

- (3.18a) She said, she is come in among a parcell of beggars: and **if so**, 't is but a thiefe and a beggar come unhappily among beggars for her mother was maintained here by public almes.

<PPCEME: JOPINNEY-E3-H,58.4>

- (3.18b) said, she is come in among a parcell of beggars: and *if she is come in among a parcell of beggars*, 't is but a thiefe and a beggar come unhappily among beggars for her mother was maintained here by public almes.

The other way to arrive at an ellipsis is to omit certain constituents from the protasis; here, too, the constituents are recoverable from the surrounding context. By replacing the ellipted parts we can arrive at a full clause, as shown by examples (3.19), (3.19b) and (3.19c).

- (3.19) These reasoners are ignorant, that the largeness of a room, **if tight**, is in this case of small importance, since it cannot part with a chimney full of its air without occasioning so much vacuum; which it requires a great force to effect, and could not be borne **if effected**.

<ARCHER: 1785fran.s4a>

- (3.19b) If the room be/is/was (were) tight, ...

- (3.19c) If it be/is/was (were) effected, ...

Examples (3.18) and (3.19) are the original corpus instances and (3.18b) and (3.19 b, c) are the possible full-clause variants of them. It can generally be concluded that since the elliptical *if*-clauses resemble very much full *if*-clauses with conditional meaning, those can be perceived in the same way as far as their semantics is concerned. Consequently, similarly to full *if*-clauses, such abbreviated *if*-structures mentioned above (i.e. elliptical *if*-clauses) are content-based, and, furthermore, the 'reason-consequence' relationship can be definitely detected.

3.3.2 Non-conditional abbreviated *if*-structures

Non-conditional abbreviated *if*-structures are discourse-based (rather than content-based), and resemble comment clauses (1985: 1113-1114, §15.54), inasmuch as they do not serve an integral part of the main proposition. This means that they stand rather on

the periphery, and with their deletion there is no crucial change in the meaning of the main proposition (cf. section 3.1 as well as Figure 3.2). They express “the speaker’s evaluation, comment, or attitude towards the content of the proposition” (Corum 1975: 133). They are also referred to as parenthetical disjuncts⁷⁴ (Quirk et al. 1985: 1112, §15.53), and can be either content disjuncts (speaker’s comment on the matrix clause) or style disjuncts (the speaker’s view on the way he/she is speaking). The categories are not a closed class, but there is “some freedom to coin new expressions” (Quirk et al. 1985: 1113, §15.53). Comment clauses, according to Quirk et al. (1985: 1113-1114, §15.54), resemble main clauses in that they have a subject, a verb and are not introduced by a subordinator. From this perspective, abbreviated *if*-structures are in direct contradiction to Quirk et al.’s definition, since such structures do not have a subject and a verb, and are introduced by *if*. The semantic functions of comment clauses are the following:

-hedging (expressing the speaker’s tentativeness over the truth value of the matrix clause), e.g. *I believe / think / expect / feel*, etc.

-expressing the speaker’s (un)certainty, e.g. *I know / see / remember / admit*, etc.

-expressing the speaker’s emotional attitude towards the content of the matrix clause, e.g. *I’m pleased / glad / happy to say / I fear / regret / hope*, etc.

-claiming the hearer’s attention, e.g. *you know / see / realise*, etc.

(Quirk et al. 1985: 1113-1114, §15.54)

When these functions are considered, the similarities between comment clauses and non-conditional abbreviated *if*-structures manifest themselves. In the case of the abbreviated *if*-structures, the hedging function and the expression of the speaker’s uncertainty are the most apparent ones. These structures do not comment on the speaker’s emotional attitude towards the content of the matrix clause. However, it is relatively plausible that the speaker can get the hearer’s attention simply by inserting the abbreviated *if*-structure (and thus making a break) into the flow of the utterance. Thus, the speaker’s attitude is conveyed.

⁷⁴ Disjunct: has a superior role as compared with the sentence elements; they are syntactically more detached and in some respects ‘superordinate’, in that they seem to have a scope that extends over the sentence as a whole (Quirk et al. (1985: 613 §8.121). Disjuncts are easily moveable from/to Initial / Medial / Final positions leaving the grammatical relations unchanged. (cf. Quirk et al. (1985: 612 §8.121)

Concerning non-conditional abbreviated *if*-structures, it should be emphasised that they do not have exactly the same implications. For instance, two options should be differentiated according to the way of commenting: they can either be related to the proposition as a whole (example (3.20)), or they can comment on words/phrases (immediately) preceding the abbreviated *if*-structure (examples (3.21) and (3.22)).

(3.20) Nevertheless it seemed to me desirable, **if possible**, to bring this structure to view by reagents which I think cannot be charged with producing artificial appearances.
<ARCHER: 1894holb.s6a>

(3.21) Her own appearance and that of her daughters was always neat, always respectable; and their countenances ever serene, **if not cheerful**.
<ARCHER: 1798rows.f4a>

(3.22) The employment of the ligature, the use of the blister, and of the other modes of treatment which I recommended in the local stage, it is obvious to remark, will be of very little, **if any**, benefit here.
<ARCHER: 1793smit.m4a>

In the first case we can talk about mitigation and in the latter case the purpose of the abbreviated *if*-structure can be considered either as self-correction or as intensification. In the following I will refer to the first case as pragmatic marker (*PM*, as in section 3.3.2.1) and to the latter as scalar comment (*SC*, as in section 3.3.2.2).

3.3.2.1 *If possible* as a pragmatic marker

In section 3.2.2, I suggested the establishing of further sub-categories within the group of non-conditionals, since, as shown by examples (3.20), (3.21) and (3.22), not all pragmatically related abbreviated *if*-structures are exactly the same. The present section deals with examples like (3.20) and section 3.2.3 with instances like (3.21) and (3.22). The aim in both cases is to support the validity of the underlying assumption that these different sub-categories should be established.

Following the analysis of the examples in both corpora, it has turned out that in the corpora there is one abbreviated *if*-structure that would not always qualify as an instance of conditional, but in certain cases as a non-conditional. The structure *if*

possible in example (3.20) seems to operate on its own, as a fixed phrase commenting on the actual utterance as a whole, not the individual parts within it, or as Erman (2001: 1339) suggests, such structures might also “function as comments, not on the propositional content of the message, but on the implications of it and on the speaker’s intended effect with it”. It “is not syntactically connected to the rest of the clause (i.e., is parenthetical), and has little or no referential meaning but serves pragmatic or procedural purposes” (Brinton 2008: 1). Hence, depending on the discourse, it is possible to distinguish between conditional and non-conditional *if possible*; I claim that the following interpretations of *if possible* should be differentiated:

- | | | |
|------------------------------|---|------------------------|
| (a) <i>conditional</i> | | |
| (b-c) <i>non-conditional</i> | } | (b) <i>deontic</i> |
| | } | (c) <i>non-deontic</i> |

Consider the following example:

(3.23) {=m CONSTANT.} **If possible**, I'll marry the Woman to Night.
 <ARCHER: 1709cent.d3b>

In example (3.23) *if possible* would count as an elliptical *if*-conditional, where the truth of the consequent (the actual marriage) depends on the truth of the antecedent (the possibility of the marriage at all, that all circumstances are provided so that the speaker will be able to marry the woman).

Besides the conditional interpretation it is possible to differentiate between two types of non-conditional interpretations, (b) deontic and (c) non-deontic, where there is no cause-effect relation, as it was in (a). It should be emphasised though, that it is not the *if possible* that gets deontic interpretation; rather, *if possible* functions as a mitigator in a sentence where there is deontic modality in the form of obligation, volition or permission, expressed mostly by modal auxiliaries, such as *must*, *should*, *have/have got to*, for instance, as in (3.24):

- (3.24) {=m FREDERIC} The traitor is on the point of betraying us. -- I must if possible prevent his seeing the Dey.
<ARCHER: 1794rows.d4a>

In example (3.24) it is the modal auxiliary *must* that *if possible* mitigates, softens and makes the whole utterance less coercive. Here the force is directed to the speaker him/herself. Now consider example (3.25):

- (3.25) Nevertheless it seemed to me desirable, if possible, to bring this structure to view by reagents which I think cannot be charged with producing artificial appearances.
<ARCHER: 1894holb.s6a>

There is a different ‘type’ of force in example (3.25) from that in example (3.24): instead of the modal auxiliary *must*, ‘desire’ (“desirable”) is used. “Desirable” can already be considered as a softened alternative of the modal auxiliary; *if possible*, however, has an additional softening, mitigating effect on it.

- (3.26), {=f JELLA.} <(unfolds the papers and reads)>
"Donamar's cursed "cowardice has ruined me; I will be revenged; enclosed you have an "accusation against him, for various crimes perpetrated in the "Austrian and other parts of Germany; forward this, **if possible**, to "Vienna, and the counterpart of it to the authorities of Lubeck;
<ARCHER: 1819miln.d5b>

In example (3.26) an order is given (and hence the imperative ‘forward’) which is followed by *if possible*. Here this *if possible* seems to be part of an entreaty functioning as a mitigator by which the order would become perhaps less severe, less peremptory and even more polite. With *determined* in example (3.27) below volition is expressed, ‘the will, the plan, the intention to ruin me’. Also in this example *if possible* makes this strong will slightly softer.

- (3.27) [God reward you, Sir,] said Edmund, ["for all your goodness to me! I see they are determined to ruin me **if possible**: I shall be compelled to leave the Castle;
<ARCHER:1778reev.f4b.>

The purpose of *if possible* in the above cases is to mitigate a problematic situation (cf. Brown & Levinson 1978: 67, 75 and 77), here an order, which is an underlying motivation for politeness. “Linguistic politeness [...] is typically embedded in interactional discourse, particularly in the context of face-threatening speech acts (e.g. requests, apologies)” (LoCastro 1997: 251). It can be suggested that *if possible* is an instance of negative politeness⁷⁵ (showing respect). The *if*-structure thus can be considered as a means of redirecting “the audience in a polite way” (Carter-Thomas & Rowley-Jolivet 2008: 199) when such a request is made. This way *if possible* “does not relate to the force of the speech itself” (Sweetser 1991: 141), but can also be understood as “a comment on a conversational or politeness maxim [which] functions as a politeness or opting out device” towards the hearer (Van der Auwera 1986: 199). Since politeness markers are often associated with “requests⁷⁶, apologies⁷⁷, agreement/disagreement, compliments⁷⁸, corrections and giving embarrassing information⁷⁹” (LoCastro 1997: 242; see also Beebe and Takahashi 1989) and also “to soften the utterance force” (LoCastro 1997: 242; see also Takahashi & Beebe 1993), I would suggest that *if possible* in instances like (3.20) should be treated as a politeness marker (cf. Traugott & Dasher 2002: 153).

Besides the conditional and deontic interpretations, there is also a (c) non-deontic, but still non-conditional interpretation resembles the scalar structures⁸⁰ to a certain extent.

- (3.28) The prince return'd to court with quite another humour than before; and though he did not speak much of the fair `` Imoinda `` , he had the pleasure to hear all his followers speak of nothing but the charms of that maid, insomuch that, even in the presence of the old king, they were extolling her, and heightning, **if possible**, the beauties they had found in her: so that nothing else

⁷⁵ Politeness, according to Brown & Levinson (1978), can have two interpretations: it is possible to differentiate between positive (showing solidarity) and negative (showing respect) politeness. The purpose of the former is to reduce the distance between the speaker and the hearer (cf. Brown & Levinson 1978: 67, 75).

⁷⁶ As in example (3.26), for instance.

⁷⁷ For instance in:

I write you in some hurry, as I set out to day for the Duke of Bedford's. I shall, **if possible**, pay my Respects to you in my way North. `<ARCHER: 1766hume.x4b>`

⁷⁸ As in example (3.28), for instance.

⁷⁹ For instance in:

This interference with study is, **if possible**, still more injurious in the third year, -- that most important of the whole, when the student, having gone through the elementary departments, enters upon the practical subjects of his profession. `<ARCHER: 1864syme.m6b>`

⁸⁰ For scalar structures see section 3.3.2.2.

was talk'd of, no other sound was heard in every corner where there were whisperers, but Imoinda! Imoinda!
<PPCEME: BEHN-E3-H,156>

In an example like (3.28) *if possible* neither sets any condition nor functions as a mitigator of some obligation or volition, but as a way of augmenting what is expressed by the proposition: ‘it is very difficult to extol the lady any more, but maybe *even* her special beauties could be mentioned’.

It can be proposed that the *if possible* implicitly anchors the act of communication to the speaker’s attitudes towards aspects of the on-going interaction (Östman 1981: 5, 1982: 152) while also maintaining the continuity of discourse (Crystal & Davy 1975: 88, 91). *If possible* as a *PM* can also be considered as a device for the speaker to take his distance from the actual text, since the phrase occurs in the middle of the utterance, breaking up its flow. In fact, this break in the flow of the utterance could easily be avoided if the phrase *if possible* were taken out of the sentence. By doing so, the actual optionality in the use of *if possible* can be noticed since its absence “does not render a sentence ungrammatical and/or unintelligible” (Fraser 1988: 22), and the discourse is grammatically still acceptable (cf. Brinton 1996). And since this implies that *if possible* is actually only loosely attached to the syntactic structure, its role can be described as parenthetical (Dancygier 1998: 105; see also *epistemic parentheticals* Traugott & Dasher 2002: 153, *peripheral conditional* Haegeman 1984a, b, c; 1991; also section 3.1.3), and thus is cancellable. In sum, such structures

correspond to the different types of potential direct messages a sentence may convey. These pragmatic markers, taken to be separate and distinct from the propositional content of the sentence, are the linguistically encoded clues which signal the speaker’s potential communicative intentions. [...] They are separate and distinct. [...] When an expression functions as one type of pragmatic marker, it does not function as a part of the propositional content; and vice versa.

(Fraser 1996: 2, 4; about *PMs*)

By taking all the above-mentioned aspects into consideration, I would suggest that the abbreviated *if*-structure *if possible* should be referred to as a *pragmatic marker (PM)* (also based on Brinton 2008: 16, Lewis 2006: 48-52, also cf. Jucker 2002, Bazzanella 2006) iff its function is not conditional. The general view on *PMs* is that they often

serve as fillers to express politeness and perhaps some hesitation as well (cf. Brinton 1996), functioning on a textual level as well as on an interpersonal level (Zhang 2006: 67). Their principal function is to negotiate the meaning and management of discourse and to ensure that the channel is open between the interlocutors. It is undeniable, however, that traces of the *if*'s original conditional meaning still linger, since “pragmatic markers are understood as deriving from full lexemes with semantic content⁸¹” (Brinton 2008: 16, cf. Mosegaard Hansen 1998: 89, also 69, Traugott & Dasher 2002: 153. See also sections 4.3 and 4.4). The development of *if possible* as a pragmatic marker will be discussed in more detail in section 3.3.2.4.

3.3.2.2 Scalar comments

There are instances of non-conditional abbreviated *if*-structures which contain another way of commenting. An abbreviated *if*-structure can comment not only on the whole proposition, but on a single word or phrase within it. This has the special feature of saying something more or less than what has been previously stated which is why we must introduce the concept of scalarity here. Scalarity implies that the proposition contains “polarity sensitive items” (Duffley & Larrivéé 2010: 1), which stand at a certain position in a hypothetical scale. When the abbreviated *if*-structure is inserted as a comment after the proposition’s polarity sensitive item, it will be an addition on the scale as well – going either upwards or downwards. As Duffley & Larrivéé suggest, the notion of polarity sensitivity emerges from Grice’s maxim of quantity⁸² and Ducrot’s law of exhaustivity⁸³. These stipulate that “a speaker will convey all the information at his disposal that is necessary for the purposes of the conversational exchange” (Duffley & Larrivéé 2010: 3). Normally, scalarity postulates the use of focus particles⁸⁴, such as *even*, *at least*, *still*, and *only* in English, which are defined as “particles that relate the value of the focused expression to a set of alternatives” (König 1991: 32). In the abbreviated *if*-structures no such focus particle appears; nevertheless, the implication of

⁸¹ See also Chapter 5, especially section 5.6.

⁸² The maxim says that the speaker should be as informative as required and should give as much information as needed, and not more.

⁸³ Speakers are expected to provide the strongest piece of information they have that is relevant to the topic they are talking about and likely to be of interest to the addressee.

⁸⁴ Scalar focus particles are dealt with by, for instance, Fillmore, Kay & O’Connor 1988; Halliday 1966; Horn 1989; Jackendoff 1972; Jacob 1983; König 1991; Kay 1997; Michaelis 1996; Rooth 1985 and Traugott 1998.

the abbreviated *if*-structures seems to be the same as if there were a focus particle present (more details on this remark below).

In the corpus examples there are two possibilities: firstly, the speaker's or writer's original purpose of using such a structure (that is, a statement + an abbreviated *if*-structure) is to give special or additional emphasis to what is being uttered (cf. Israel 1998). The other possibility is that the abbreviated *if*-structure functions (maybe additionally) towards emphasis, as a way of self-correction, when the speaker or writer thinks that the meaning or intention of what has been said is not convincing enough, hence fulfilling Grice's maxim of quantity and Ducrot's law of exhaustivity (cf. Duffley & Larrivé 2010: 3). Kempen observes that so called self-repairs can occur where "‘appropriateness’ is at stake", that is, either in the middle or at the end of the sentence" (2009: 659). In such case, the speaker modifies "the communicative intention underlying the current utterance in such a way that at least part of the utterance needs to be *updated*" (ibid). Kempen offers two types of self-repairs:

-*retracing repair* (based on Levelt 1983, 1989: 485-489): when the speaker interrupts the ongoing speech, [...] retraces to an earlier point in the utterance and reformulates it from there. Such a repair consists of a reparandum (the original text containing an error), and editing term (... *I mean ...*, ... *or rather ...*) and a repair text (Kempen 2009: 655);

-*substitution repair* (based on Van Wijk & Kempen 1987): one or more potentially non-adjacent major constituents of the original clause, not including the head verb, are replaced (Kempen 2009: 657).

The scalar abbreviated *if*-structures all seem to be instances of *retracing repair*, without the editing item, though. Consider example (3.29):

(3.29) He will be settled there this weeke, and all accommodation as good there, **if not better**, then at Ashford;
<PPCEME: DERING-E2-P2,129.79>

In an instance like example (3.29), first there is a statement 'good (there)', after which the speaker interrupts and corrects it with 'better', and then continues the utterance. This kind of repair, or at least 'giving emphasis' can be considered as the implication of abbreviated (non-conditional) scalar comments in both corpora (*PPCEME* and *ARCHER*). The actual realisation of those scalar comments can be described in two

ways: when the *SC* occurs *without* obligatory negation and when it occurs *with* obligatory negation (based on Dancygier 1998: 143-145). These two types are discussed now in more detail.

(a) Scalar comments *without* obligatory negation

The word *if* is followed by *any*, *ever*, *at all*, *anything*, and the like (cf. Dancygier 1998: 145). As it has turned out from my corpus searches, the earliest *SC* in the corpus (*PPCEME*) contains *if any*, as in example (3.30) below. *Any* itself is defined as “[w]ith a specially quantitative force = A quantity or number however great or small. In a structure where scalarity is envisaged, it definitely refers to something less than what has been previously stated” (*OED s.v. any* 2.a). In Duffley & Larrivéé’s (2010) interpretation the meaning of *any* already implies some kind of comparison with and maybe even a contrast to the previous word / phrase. Consider example (3.30):

- (3.30) As for the use of Scriveners in the common schooles, it would be this **if any**; either to make every scholler his book of copies, to use after the manner prescribed, untill such printed ones can be had: or else to set all the schollers in a good way of writing, for right framing their letters, and the like. To do it only at such times as the Master shall appoint; that it may be without any great hinderance to the schollers for their learning, and warily preventing all the former inconveniences.
<*PPCEME*: BRINSLEY-E2-P2,38.200>

Here there is first a statement, “As for the use of Scriveners in the common schooles, *it would be this*”, and then a doubt follows: whether there is a use or not. *Any* is considered to be a scalar item (Duffley & Larrivéé 2010: 4, and see also Lee & Horn 1995, Horn 2000, 2005), which downgrades what has been previously stated. Later on in the corpus, however, other realisations appear in the form of *if at all*, *if anybody*, etc. These all function in the same way, namely, they point in a negative direction. It means that whatever is stated first, with such a *SC* the speaker / writer downgrades his/her previous words (thus *any* is also referred to as “down-scaling any” by Duffley & Larrivéé 2010: 6). These phrases can be considered as fixed phrases carrying the same implication: to show / add something less (maybe less important or less effective). In

such cases the *if*-part in the imaginary scale points in a negative direction, hence the implication is one of negative scalarity (see example (3.22)).

(b) Scalar comments with obligatory negation

Exactly the opposite happens if the *SC* points in a positive direction. However, in such cases it is not possible to talk about fixed phrases, but a fixed structure [*if not* + ...]. The word (phrase) that follows “if” is highly dependent on what precedes it. Thus, if the preceding word is an adjective, then the word that follows *if* will be an adjective as well, but with stronger or ‘more’ meaning, for instance, *good, if not better* (see also example (3.29) above).

In the fixed structure *if* is always directly followed by the negative particle *not*. Here, the negative particle does not actually negate the word (e.g. adjective) following it, rather it is obligatorily bound to *if*, thus resulting in [*if not* + ...], which might be replaced by *even* (cf. *scalar focus particles* above) if the abbreviated *if*-structure has the purpose of giving special and extra emphasis to what has been said. In example (3.29) above, for instance, one could replace *good, if not better* with *good, even better*. So it is true to say that the second part adds something to the original idea. However, it cannot be suggested that the form with “even” occurred first and then, as a kind of alternative way to express the same idea the abbreviated *if*-structure came along. When *even* is discussed in the *OED*, it turns out that it started to be used later than when the first instance of *SC* theoretically occurred, in the corpus of the present study. Again, besides intensification, there might be an implication of self-correction or repair: the speaker changes his / her mind because the first assertion might not fulfil the original intention or purpose and thus he / she wants to find a more appropriate word/phrase. It should be also pointed out that without the negative particle these structures are hardly interpretable (cf. Dancygier 1998: 143).

(3.31) The Queen of England is happy, *if not ecstatic*.

(Dancygier 1998: 143)

The meaning of example (3.31), for instance, is not that *the Queen of England is not ecstatic*, but on the contrary: she is happy, but most probably *happy* is not the best adjective to describe her state, and thus *ecstatic* might be a better choice. Furthermore,

ecstatic has the implication of being happier than simply saying *happy*; this instance, then, in an imaginative scale would point in a positive direction, since *ecstatic* implies more than *happy*. The same is true of example (3.32) (taken from the *ARCHER* corpus):

- (3.32) Her own appearance and that of her daughters was always neat, always respectable; and their countenances ever serene, **if not cheerful**.
<ARCHER: 1798rows.f4a>

In example (3.32) the ‘positive direction’ has the sense of something more, something better or more positive than what has been already said. Very often the adjective in the scalar structure is a near-synonym of the adjective of the main clause, but with a more intense meaning.

In both examples (3.31) and (3.32), the “negation focuses on the term related to a lower position on the scale (*happy*; *serene*), and in the latter on the one having a higher position (*ecstatic*; *cheerful*)” (Dancygier 1998: 107, with my corpus examples). The latter is also a means of potential repair, self-correction and “is used for purely rhetorical reasons” (Veltman 1986: 163).

This structure very much resembles Horn’s (1985) metalinguistic negation, where the adjective in the [*if* + Adjective] combination could have two possible interpretations. Consider example (3.33):

- (3.33) Good, *if not excellent*.

In the sentence in example (3.33) *good* can be considered as a superordinate term for the category containing *excellent* which can be called *hyponymy* which I follow (Horn 1985: 156, see also Lehrer & Lehrer 1982, cf. Horn 1972, 1973, Gazdar 1979a, b).

Nevertheless, similarly to the question of conditionality, with the idea of scalar comments there has not been any consensus as to what terminology would best describe it. For instance, Dancygier (1998) names such structures “metatextual comment with scalar implicature” (while admitting that there are certain *MCSIs* that might allow concessive reading), and Sweetser (1991) calls them “abbreviated concessive speech-act conditional(s)”. According to some other propositions, such structures should be deemed concessives König 1986, Haiman 1986, also Quirk et al. 1985, Huddleston & Pullum 2002). Here, I propound that what I call scalar comments and concessives

should be treated differently. Nonetheless, judging solely by the form it is not necessarily straightforward to decide which implication should be accepted. See example (3.34):

(3.34) This is an interesting, *if complicated*, solution.

Example (3.34) has a concessive reading, since, according to Quirk et al. (1985: 1098-99 §15.40), the situation in the matrix is contrary to what is expected from the concessive *if*-clause⁸⁵. The sentence thus could be read as follows: *Although the solution might be complicated, still it is an interesting one.*

When the corpus examples are taken into consideration, something similar can be detected, as in example (3.35):

(3.35) So fortune was nothing ashamde, **if not of thaccused innocency**, yet of thaccusers baseness.
<PPCEME: BOETHEL-E2-P1,10.40>

This example could be read as “... maybe not of the accused innocency, but at least the accusers’ basenes” where the adjective in the *if*-structure and the adjective in the matrix are opposites, and the negation refers to “thaccused innocency”.

Furthermore, it is also suggested that such an *if*-structure does not form an integral part of the main proposition, it is an additional feature; hence König’s interpretation (1986: 239) that such structures can be considered as parenthetical adjectival constructions in the concessive use, or, according to Haiman, as parenthetical conditionals within concessive conditionals (1986: 216, 222). The concessive interpretation is suggested by Quirk et al. (1985) and Huddleston & Pullum (2002).

Although it is true that neither *SCs* nor concessives seem to form an integral part of the main proposition⁸⁶, there are a number of details in which they are different from each other. Table 3.5 provides an overview of the possible differences between concessives and *SCs*, based on the instances found in the *PPCEME* and *ARCHER*.

⁸⁵ Concessive clauses may be introduced by *if* by itself, and are frequently realised in abbreviated verbless clauses.

⁸⁶ To what extent an abbreviated *if*-structure forms an integral part of the main proposition was discussed in section 3.1.

Differences	
<i>Concessive</i>	<i>SC</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · rather long (not necessarily just one or two words) · first comes the <i>if</i>-structure then what it comments (antecedent -> consequent) · antecedent and consequent are in an adversative relation to each other · not cancellable · can be paraphrased by <i>(al)though, even though</i> · [if] [not X] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · rather short (only one –two words) · first comes what it is commented, then the <i>if</i>-structure · the <i>if</i>- and the main parts are each other's complements: the <i>if</i>- part comments by either adding or subtracting something · positive and negative · cancellable · can be paraphrased by <i>even, maybe, perhaps</i> · [if not] X · not possible to have a full-clause counterpart with exactly the same meaning (Sweetser 1991)⁸⁷

Table 3.5
Differences between *if*-structures with concessive interpretation
and the ones functioning as scalar comments

Besides considering the positive and negative scales, Kjällmer (1975: 144) draws attention to the possible alternatives in two different dimensions in the case of the abbreviated *if*-structures discussed above. He differentiates between homo- and heterodimensional alternatives:

-homodimensional alternative: He is quite well-to-do, if not a millionaire.

-heterodimensional alternative: The man was tall if not one-legged.

In the first case the two alternative adjectives occur in the same dimension, that is, *millionaire* is a kind of synonym of *well-to-do*, it means more *wealthy* than *well-to-do* and is probably more precise in saying how much money the man possesses. In the second case, however, someone being *one-legged* has nothing to do with that person's being tall; thus these two adjectives are heterodimensional. Considering the corpus examples discussed above, example (3.29) (*good there, if not better*) would count as homodimensional and example (3.32) (*serene, if not cheerful*) as heterodimensional, since *cheerful* and *serene* are not really on the same scale.

⁸⁷ Sweetser, when discussing conditionals, makes a definite distinction between *full* content, *full* speech-act and *abbreviated* concessive speech-act conditionals (1991: 138).

After discussing what specific interpretations non-conditional abbreviated *if*-structures might have, in the following section I turn to the discussion of their development from 1500 to 1990.

3.3.2.3 The variation of non-conditional abbreviated *if*-structures from 1500 to 1990

In section 3.3 the purpose was to differentiate between conditional and non-conditional abbreviated *if*-structures. One ultimate difference is that whereas the conditional abbreviated *if*-structures cannot be further categorised the non-conditional ones can. Concerning conditional abbreviated *if*-structures, it can be hypothesised that all conditional abbreviated *if*-structures look like as (or similar to) the *if*-structure in example (3.36).

- (3.36) Now if this demonstration be good, there needs no further examination of the thing; **if not good**, the fault of it is to be shewn: for the only way to examine a demonstrated proposition is, to examine the demonstration.
<ARCHER: 1676newt.s2b.>

The overall impression of such structures is that in all cases the linguistic context should be taken into consideration since because of the lack of certain sentence constituents the conditional utterance alone is not intelligible. The knowledge of the topic is expected from both the interlocutors and the readers.

At the same time, those abbreviated *if*-structures that are considered as non-conditionals can be categorised in the way presented in sections 3.3.2.1 and 3.3.2.2. Here I provide a brief summary of the categories with appropriate examples in order to demonstrate the basis of the analysis:

- 1) *pragmatic markers (PM)*, which express mitigation; they can also be understood as a way of hedging according to Claridge's (2007) definition, who says that such instances "explicitly comment on the degree of certainty by the

author or somebody else” (247) (examples (3.37) (deontic) – and (3.38) (non-deontic) and (3.39)⁸⁸);

(3.37) The occasion of the falling out betweene the Lady and her daughter was because shee went into her daughter Marie's company, contrary to her commands and indeed contrary to mine allso; surely shee growes too too headstrong and hath neede enough of such a one as the Lady to breake her **if possible** of her willfull courses. My cozin Master is come to Towne
<PPCEME: HOXINDEN-1650-E3-P2,172.86>

(3.38) The prince return'd to court with quite another humour than before; and though he did not speak much of the fair Imoinda , he had the pleasure to hear all his followers speak of nothing but the charms of that maid, insomuch that, even in the presence of the old king, they were extolling her, and heightning, **if possible**, the beauties they had found in her: so that nothing else was talk'd of, no other sound was heard in every corner where there were whisperers, but Imoinda! Imoinda!
<PPCEME: BEHN-E3-H,156>

(3.39) DURING my sojourn in Malta (1861 to 1864) I made many experiments in repolishing my four-foot mirrors, with a view to the obtaining, **if possible**, further excellence in figure and polish.
<ARCHER: 1874lass.s6b>

2) *scalar comments (SC)*, which “discuss the adequacy of some linguistic choice” (Claridge’s 2007: 247), by saying something “more” (positive scalarity) or “less” (negative scalarity) than what has been said/stated previously; this might be interpreted as a means of self-repair, including some extra emphasis on the new element (examples (3.40) and (3.41) (positive) and (3.42) and (3.43) (negative));

(3.40) Tom. How kind wouldst thou be? Ione. Ah master, so kind as my mistris us'd to be to you, **if not kinder**, you may remember Sir that in her days I us'e to lye in the Truckle bed;
<PPCEME: PENNY-E3-H,267.507>

⁸⁸ The first example(s) are (is) from the *PPCEME* and the other one from the *ARCHER*; the purpose of including examples from both corpora is to show and maintain the continuity in the use of the different interpretations of the non-conditional abbreviated *if*-structures.

(3.41) And if his Angle was not exactly measured, but the round number of 60 degrees set down by guess or by a less accurate measure (as I suspect by the conjectural measure of the refraction of his Prism by the ratio of the signs 2 to 3, set down at the same time, instead of an Experimental one,) then might it be two or three degrees less than 60, **if not still less**: and all this, if it should be so, would take away the greatest part of the difference between us.
<ARCHER: 1676newt.s2b.>

(3.42) On the Side, over against the Door, sate one Superintendent, to whom the Brachmin went with us, paid great Reverence, not speaking of him without a token of worship; whom we called Jougy, or the Holy Man; under this the way being made into handsome Marble Steps, are the King's Stables, not different from the Fashion of our Noblemens Stables, only at the head of every Stall seems to be a Dormitory, or Place for Devotion, with Images, which gave occasion to doubt **if ever** for that End; or rather made for an Heathen Seminary of Devotes,
<PPCEME: FRYER-E3-H,I,187.55>

(3.43) and from its Rays of very different Magnitudes continu'd to ascend without any Uniformity as to time and place, till 48 or 49 minutes past seven, when a third Corona, very little, **if at all**, inferior to the preceding ones, either in the Variety of its Colours, or in the quantity of Light it emitted, was form'd in the Zenith.
<ARCHER: 1721lang.s3b>

3) *concessives*, which indicate “that the situation in the matrix clause is contrary to expectation in the light of what is said in the concessive” structure (Quirk et al. 1985: 1098, §15.40) (example (3.44 and 3.45)).

(3.44) Have my many irksome Labours and Enquiries after Wisdom deliver'd this? or because my Condemnation was before determined, shall it qualify these Men to be my Accusers? Is not Fortune ashamed; **if not of the Accusation of injur'd Innocence**, at least of the Baseness and Infamy of its Accusers?
<PPCEME: BOETHPR-E3-P1,22.46>

(3.45) The objections you was pleased to propose against it, gave me full proof you had condescended to read and consider it carefully; and at the same time gave me an opportunity, **if not to obviate them entirely**, at least to render the scheme somewhat less exceptionable.
<ARCHER: 1735mart.m3b>

How the frequency of these three main types of non-conditional structures are divided between the sub-periods is presented in Table 3.6.

Period / Category	Scalar comment		Concessive	Pragmatic Marker	Total
	positive	negative			
PPCEME					
E1	-	-	1 (0.02)	-	1 (0.02)
E2	4 (0.06)	1 (0.02)	3 (0.05)	-	8 (0.11)
E3	15 (0.27)	4 (0.07)	7 (0.12)	2 (0.04)	28 (0.5)
Total	19 (0.11)	5 (0.03)	11 (0.06)	2 (0.01)	37 (0.21)
ARCHER					
I.	4 (0.22)	0	2 (0.11)	1 (0.06)	7 (0.39)
II.	8 (0.15)	7 (0.13)	5 (0.09)	8 (0.15)	28 (0.52)
III.	17 (0.32)	6 (0.11)	5 (0.09)	5 (0.09)	33 (0.61)
IV.	4 (0.08)	11 (0.21)	7 (0.13)	0	22 (0.41)
Total	33 (0.18)	24 (0.13)	19 (0.11)	14 (0.08)	90 (0.5)
TOTAL	52	29	30	16	127

Table 3.6.

Diachronic distribution of the three main types of non-conditional abbreviated *if*-structures (absolute number and relative frequency / 10,000 words)

As it was pointed out earlier, there is only one non-conditional abbreviated *if*-structure (a concessive) to be found in the first sub-period. In E2, however, both types of scalar comments besides the concessives start to be used. E3 is the sub-period when the first pragmatic marker occurs, and when the frequency of all the three types starts to expand. (Again, the structures are, strictly speaking, relatively infrequent, but the growth in their use should be noted, especially knowing that according to the corpus data these structures did not exist in the previous centuries). The tendency in the distribution of non-conditional abbreviated *if*-structures from 1650 (in the *ARCHER*) shows a different picture from the earlier periods. The most salient difference is that all the types are represented in all sub-periods, except the 20th century when no pragmatic marker occurs. In the following, I discuss how the picture in the use of each of the non-conditional type changes.

The abbreviated *if*-structures functioning as a *PM* in the form of *if possible* do not seem to be a frequent phenomenon: in the whole *ARCHER* corpus it is only 0.08

instances / 10,000 words, which is 17% of the non-conditional *if*-structures. When the century distribution concerning its use is examined, it turns out that the number of *PMs* is increasing for two centuries and then there is a declining tendency until the 20th century, when there is no instance to be found at all in the corpus. *Scalar comments* are more frequent than *PMs* in the corpus; their number is increasing towards the 19th century like the number of *PMs*. However, the tendency within the two types of *SCs* differs: the instances of positive *SCs* outnumber that of negative *SCs* until the 20th century. In the 17th century, for instance, no negative *SC* is to be found; from the 18th century onwards, the number of instances of negative *SCs* is increasing. On the other hand, positive *SCs* can be found in all the periods covered by the corpus, but the growth in the number of instances can be seen only until the 19th century, after which a decline comes. The rate of occurrence of the *concessive if*-structures in the corpus resembles that of the *PMs*. The structure appears in every sub-period, with a varying frequency: in the first sub-period the relative frequency per 10,000 words falls between the frequencies of the other two non-conditionals. In the second sub-period there is a little increase, but the frequency is the lowest of all non-conditional types. Then, in the third sub-period, the frequency stagnates; however, the most remarkable rise is to be detected towards the last sub-period when concessives become the second most frequent non-conditional type.

In sum, abbreviated *if*-structures with concessive interpretation are the least frequent structures compared to the other two non-conditional types; this must be due to the other ways to express concessive relationship. *SCs*, from a general point of view, have more instances than the other two non-conditional structures. Within the group of *SC*, however, it is possible to distinguish between *SC* positive and *SC* negative within which there is some variation to be detected: positive *SCs* are double or even three times more frequent than negative *SCs* between 1570 and 1900. In the 20th century, however, this ratio changes, so that the number of negative *SCs* exceeds that of positive *SCs*. This kind of variation suggests that the structure of positive *SC*, that is, *if* [*not* + ...], became known from the early stages of abbreviated *if*-structures, and started to be widely used throughout the centuries. Nevertheless, the use of negative *SCs* (like *if any*, *if at all*, *if ever*, etc.) continuously increased, and so did that of *PMs* (*if possible*). This corresponds to the lexicalisation hypothesis (cf. sections 4.4 and 4.6), according to which the originally clausal element becomes a phrase / construction on its own, and finally enters the lexicon.

The increasing tendency in the use of non-conditional abbreviated *if*-structures throughout the centuries until the 19th century is worth paying attention to. However, before arriving at an ultimate conclusion concerning the use of non-conditional abbreviated *if*-structures, the analysis of more material of the 20th century would be required in order to see whether there is really a decline in their use.

3.3.2.4 The development of *if possible* as a pragmatic marker

As was pointed out earlier (cf. section 3.3.2.1) in the case of the abbreviated *if*-structure *if possible*, it is possible to differentiate between conditional and non-conditional (including deontic and non-deontic) interpretations. In this section I shall compare the results of the two corpora, where *if possible* can be the protasis of a conditional sentence, it can also function as a mitigator or as a scalar-like abbreviated *if*-structure with empathetic implication.

There are altogether 29 *if possible* instances in the two corpora: six in the *PPCEME* and 23 in the *ARCHER*. After taking a look at the examples, I suggested the differentiation between *conditional*, *deontic*, and *non-deontic* interpretations, like in examples (3.46), (3.47) and (3.48) respectively.

- (3.46) They are wholly **if possible** to be kept from such conversation.
<PPCEME: LOCKE-E3-P2,66.25>

There are two ways of expressing conditionality with *if possible*: it either sets the condition for a whole clause (the apodosis), or it is connected to one part of the apodosis only, such as in example (3.46) *if possible* is connected to *wholly* (i.e. not partially, for instance).

- (3.47) [God reward you, Sir,] said Edmund, ["for all your goodness to me! I see they are determined to ruin me **if possible**: I shall be compelled to leave the Castle;
<ARCHER: 1778reev.f4b.>

With *determined* in example (3.47) volition is expressed, ‘the will, the plan, the intention to ruin me’. Also in this example *if possible* has a mitigating effect which it makes this strong will slightly softer.

(3.48) DURING my sojourn in Malta (1861 to 1864) I made many experiments in repolishing my four-foot mirrors, with a view to the obtaining, **if possible**, further excellence in figure and polish.
<ARCHER:1874lass.s6b>

The *if possible* in example (3.48) has non-deontic implication whose purpose is to augment in a way what is expressed by the proposition: ‘as a result of the experiments in repolishing the mirrors, I can expect *even* further excellence in figure and polish’.

These specific types of *if possible* show some variation throughout the examined time period which is presented in Table 3.7.

Conditionality / period			1500-1569	1570-1639	1640-1710	1650-99	1700-99	1800-99	1900-90	Total
Conditional			0	1 (0.02)	3 (0.05)	1 (0.06)	3 (0.06)	3 (0.06)	2 (0.04)	13 (0.04)
Non-Conditional	Deontic	Order	0	0	1 (0.02)	1 (0.06)	1 (0.02)	2 (0.04)	0	5 (0.01)
		Desire / Intention	0	0	0	0	5 (0.09)	2 (0.04)	0	7 (0.02)
	Non-deontic	Scalar-like structure	0	0	1 (0.02)	0	1 (0.02)	2 (0.04)	0	4 (0.01)
Total			0	1 (0.02)	5 (0.09)	2 (0.11)	10 (0.19)	9 (0.15)	2 (0.04)	29 (0.08)

Table 3.7.

Diachronic development
of the different interpretations of *if possible*

From Table 3.7 it can be concluded that the structure *if possible* does not seem to be a frequent abbreviated *if*-structure: its relative frequency in the two corpora is only 0.1 / 10,000 words. However, when compared to all the abbreviated *if*-structures in the corpora, the number of the *if possible* structures adds up to approximately 10%. It should also be emphasised that the non-conditional interpretations do not occur in all the sub-periods (in the period 1570-1640 and in the 20th century there are only conditional instances of *if possible*). When conditionality is considered, it becomes evident that non-conditional *if possible* is twice more frequent than the conditional one

(0.06 as against 0.03 / 10,000 words), and even in some sub-periods the non-conditional interpretations slightly outnumber the conditionals. This implies that *if possible* behaves more like a set phrase without conditional implication; nevertheless, the conditional *if possible* suggests that the original conditionality deduced from the meaning of *if* still holds true (cf. *persistence* in section 5.2).

Within the group of non-conditional *if possible* structures, deontic is the most usual implication. As suggested above, deontic implication can be realised in the form of orders (with the use of imperative) and volition, with almost the same frequency. Non-deontic ‘scalar-like’ *if possible* falls behind the deontic ones which might be due to the more extensive use of other (‘real’) scalar structures, that is, *scalar comments*. Based on the analysis of *if possible* it can be suggested that (a) conditionality is expressed more specifically, that is, with specific references to the antecedent of the protasis, (b) deontic is the most common non-conditional interpretation, amongst which the implication of obligation and volition are the most frequent ones.

Since after such a continuous rise in the use of *if possible* it did not seem to be likely that it disappears⁸⁹ so abruptly, a test search was carried out in the *Corpus of Historical American English (COHA)*. The search focused on *if possible*, without paying attention to conditionality, though.

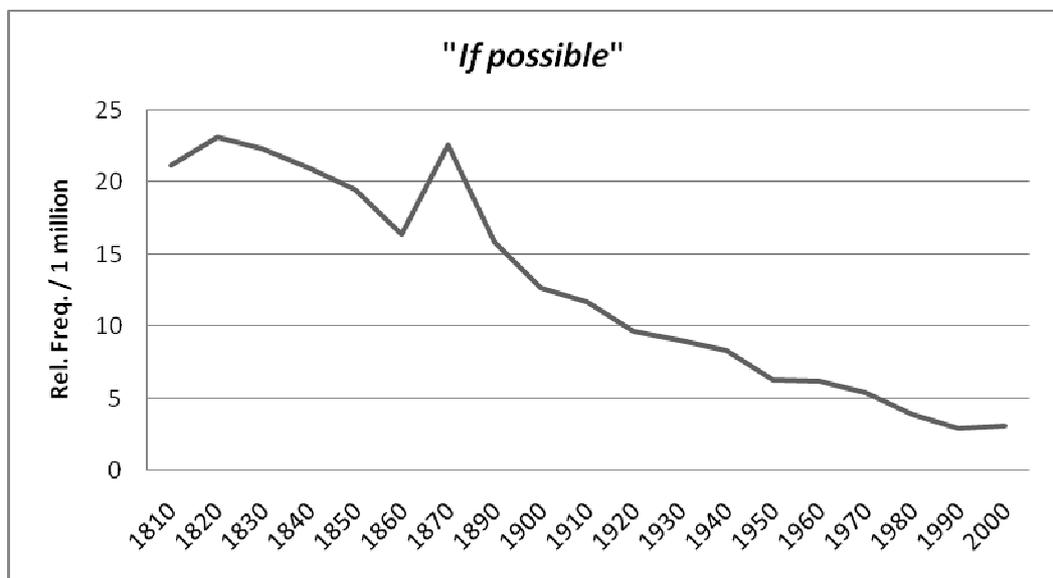


Figure 3.5.
The decline of *if possible* in the COHA

⁸⁹ Not the structure itself disappears, but the non-conditional interpretation, according to the corpus data.

As shown by Figure 3.5, there is a continuous decrease in the occurrence of *if possible* from 1870s towards the 2000s. Although the data include both the conditional and the non-conditional interpretations of *if possible*, the declining tendency resembles very much the declining tendency of *if possible* as discussed above. Hence, the decrease in the occurrence of abbreviated *if*-structures is supported not only by the *PPCEME* and by the *ARCHER*, but also by *COHA*.

3.4 Corpus versus dictionary data: the comparison of the corpus and dictionary findings on abbreviated *if*-structures

In the introductory chapter I discussed the dictionary data in detail, and in the previous sections the corpus findings were presented. The present section is devoted to the comparison of the results found in two historical dictionaries (the *OED* and the *MED*) and in the two corpora (the *PPCEME* and the *ARCHER*). The findings are presented in Table 3.7, which compares three types (viz. elliptical conditional, *SC* and *PM*; concessives are not discussed here, since dictionaries do not cover the concessive *if* in an abbreviated form) in terms of the source as well as the approximate time of their first occurrences.

<i>Source / Types</i>	<i>PPCEME</i>	<i>ARCHER</i>	<i>OED</i>	<i>MED</i>
<i>(Elliptical) Conditional</i>	1570-1640	1600-1699	1560	1400
<i>SC</i>	1640-1710	1600-1699	1884/95?	n.a.
<i>PM</i>	1640-1710	1600-1699	n.a.	?1175 / n.a.

Table 3.8.

The earliest occurrences of the different types of abbreviated *if*-structures in the *PPCEME*, *ARCHER*, *OED* and *MED*

Taking the corpora into consideration first, it very much seems that the data from the *ARCHER* support the findings from the *PPCEME* as all the three types occur around the

same time in both sources (around the 1600s). Although there is a slight overlap in time (the last sub-period in the *PPCEME* and the first sub-period in the *ARCHER*), these corpora are excellent complements to each other, thus providing a comprehensive diachronic picture (1570-1990) of the different types of abbreviated *if*-structures and their development.

The two dictionaries, on the other hand, differ in the date of the first occurrence of *elliptical conditionals*: while the *PPCEME* shows the same result as the *OED* (1500s), the *MED* provides with a much earlier occurrence, from 1400. By the same token, the result for *SC* in the *OED* tallies with the corpus data in realising that it is a later development; the *OED*, however, finds a later date, 1800s, for its first occurrence which is two centuries later than either in the *PPCEME* or *ARCHER*. In the *MED*, *SC* is not mentioned at all, which supports the Early Modern development of *SCs*. Last but not least, the *OED* does not consider the possibility of a parenthetical *if*-structure, with pragmatic interpretation at all. At the same time, although the *MED* does list instances with pragmatic interpretation from the early stages of the Middle English period, those are full clauses. Furthermore, the *MED* does not consider the possibility of elliptical *if*-clauses as sources for non-conditional interpretation. This, again, seems to prove my hypothesis (based on corpus evidence exclusively) according to which non-conditional abbreviated *if*-structures are non-existent before the Early Modern English period.

In sum, after the application of a comparative research of historical dictionaries and corpora, it can be suggested that we cannot entirely rely on either dictionaries or corpora exclusively, since they might not provide the complete data on the phenomenon in question. Thus it is always appropriate to make further searches, possibly in different corpora, so that in the end we can obtain a more precise and reliable result.

3.5 Summary

In the present chapter the aim was to categorise abbreviated *if*-structures according to their functions. I started out from two main meanings “conditional” and “non-conditional”, on the basis of *semantic* and *pragmatic* meanings (Schwenter 1999: 23-24). I started out the analysis of how full *if*-clauses are interpreted, but the interpretation of abbreviated *if*-structures was based exclusively on the *PPCEME* and the *ARCHER*.

On the basis of the two corpora, I pointed out that conditional abbreviated *if*-structures cannot be further categorised. Nonetheless, non-conditional abbreviated *if*-structures can be interpreted in a number of different ways, depending on the context; I claimed that it is possible to differentiate between *if possible* as a pragmatic marker, scalar comments (positive and negative) as well as concessive structures. A major difference between the implications of the first two types is that while a *PM* can be understood as a way to “modify or modalize the content of a whole (main or other) clause” (Claridge 2007: 247), a *SC* is a way to “refer to a single word / item, or to a single phrase within (their) host clause” (ibid.). In the end, I emphasised the similarities as well as differences between the corpus results and dictionary evidence. I also managed to show the development of the different interpretations of abbreviated *if*-structures between 1500 and 1990.

4. Form meets Function

Chapters 2 and 3 discussed the form and the function of abbreviated *if*-structures separately. There are, however, still two important questions that should be touched upon. One of them is finding out the peculiarities of the correlation between form and function, that is, whether there are some tendencies and regularities to be discovered when the syntactic characteristics of abbreviated *if*-structures are combined with their functions. The other question is concerning text types in the distribution of abbreviated *if*-structures, that is, whether there is a certain text type (or text types) where abbreviated *if*-structures occur predominantly. Of course, since it is a diachronic study, the long-term variation is taken into consideration as well. Chapters 2 and 3 form the basis for the present chapter.

The chapter is structured as follows: in Section 4.1 I combine the structural variation of abbreviated *if*-structures with conditionality with the purpose of finding out whether there are some structures which are more characteristic to conditional or non-conditional abbreviated *if*-structures. Section 4.2 discusses the positioning of abbreviated *if*-structures according to conditionality: Section 4.2.1 considers the two types (complete and partial ellipsis) of conditional abbreviated *if*-structures, and Section 4.2.2 the non-conditional ones (scalar comments, pragmatic marker and concessive). Section 4.3 is devoted to the discussion of how abbreviated *if*-structures in the text types of the *PPCEME* and the *ARCHER* corpora are represented.

4.1 Conditionality of abbreviated *if*-structures according their structural variation

The discussion in Section 2.5 concerning the structural variation of abbreviated *if*-structures showed that abbreviated *if*-structures can be either non-finite (past participle or to-infinitive) or verbless (*if* can be followed an *Adjective Phrase*, an *Adverbial Phrase*, a *Noun Phrase*, a *Prepositional Phrase*, a *Determiner Phrase*, a *negative intensifier* or a *pro-form*). However, after carrying out some further examination, a more specific conclusion can be drawn in the variation of the different realisations of conditional and non-conditional abbreviated *if*-structures. First, a general outlook is given (see table 4.1 below), and the specific details follow in Sections 4.2.1 and 4.2.2.

<i>if</i> + ...	Conditionality	<i>(PPCEME)</i>			<i>(ARCHER)</i>				Total
		1500-1569	1570-1639	1640-1710	1650-1699	1700-1799	1800-1899	1900-1990	
Adjective Phrase	conditional	0	3 (0.05)	11 (0.2)	6 (0.33)	19 (0.35)	23 (0.43)	7 (0.13)	69
	non-conditional	0	2 (0.03)	10 (0.18)	3 (0.17)	12 (0.22)	13 (0.24)	12 (0.22)	52
Adverbial Phrase	conditional	0	3 (0.05)	1 (0.02)	2 (0.11)	0	0	0	6
	non-conditional	0	1 (0.02)	4 (0.07)	0	4 (0.08)	4 (0.07)	1 (0.02)	14
Prepositional Phrase	conditional	2 (0.04)	2 (0.03)	1 (0.02)	0	1 (0.02)	4 (0.07)	3 (0.06)	13
	non-conditional	0	2 (0.03)	5 (0.09)	2 (0.11)	3 (0.06)	5 (0.09)	3 (0.06)	20
Noun Phrase	conditional	0	1 (0.02)	0	1 (0.06)	3 (0.06)	0	1 (0.02)	6
	non-conditional	0	2 (0.03)	5 (0.09)	2 (0.11)	6 (0.11)	6 (0.11)	0	19
Determiner Phrase	conditional	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	non-conditional	0	0	1 (0.02)	0	0	3 (0.06)	5 (0.09)	9
Negative intensifier	conditional	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	non-conditional	0	0	3 (0.05)	0	2 (0.04)	0	1 (0.02)	6
Pro-form	conditional	4 (0.07)	9 (0.14)	9 (0.16)	1 (0.06)	11 (0.21)	8 (0.15)	8 (0.15)	50
	non-conditional	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Table 4.1.

Structural variation of the abbreviated *if*-structures - regarding conditionality - (absolute numbers and relative frequency / 10,000 words)

Table 4.1 compares the frequency of the different structures according to conditionality, thus enabling hypotheses to be put forward regarding the structural realisation and the use of the abbreviated *if*-structures. The data suggest that the [*if* + *Adjective Phrase*] combination is the most frequent of all the possibilities, in the case of both conditionals and non-conditionals. It is noteworthy, though, that the [*if* + *Adjective Phrase*] combination is not present in all sub-periods; the first sub-period of *PPCEME* is the only part where it does not occur. This, again, supports the lack of the direct influence of the Latin ‘*si possibile*’ structure on the first occurrence of the English abbreviated *if*-structures (cf. Section 2.2). The second most frequent type, although it occurs in conditionals exclusively, is the [*if* + *pro-form*] combination. Since this is the only combination which occurs predominantly in the early 1500s and is represented in all the

sub-periods of the two corpora, it can be hypothesised that [*if* + *pro-form*] combination serves as a kind of model for the abbreviated *if*-structures in English.

It is plausible that the only constraints on the structure are the parts of speech, that is, it seems to be nearly determined which parts of speech can be combined with *if* in the case of conditionals and non-conditionals. For instance, pro-forms are restricted to conditional usage and negative intensifiers to non-conditional usage, and it is impossible to have combinations the other way around. The use of [*if* + *Determiner Phrase*] is clearly a combination that seems to be more characteristic for non-conditionals in the two corpora; however, one needs to be careful when analysing texts, since the interpretation of a given abbreviated *if*-structure is very much context dependent, as was highlighted in the case of [*if* + *not*] and [*if* + *possible*] in Sections 3.3 and 3.3.2.4, for instance.

According to the data, the [*if* + *Adverb Phrase*], [*if* + *Prepositional Phrase*] and [*if* + *Noun Phrase*] are almost equally productive in both conditional and non-conditional interpretations. It is remarkable, though, that in each combination the non-conditional interpretation is more frequent than the conditional. It should be also noted that none of these three types of abbreviated *if*-structures occur in all the sub-periods. For instance, the [*if* + *Adverb Phrase*] structure is productive in conditionals only between 1570 and 1710, whereas its non-conditional interpretation is feasible from 1570 onwards.

As was suggested in Section 2.7, besides the build-up of abbreviated *if*-structures, it can be also determined whether they are elliptical or truncated. Moreover, function can pertain to ellipsis or truncation as well. This way the following observations can be made on the basis of the corpus data:

- all the truncated structures are non-conditional, but not all the non-conditional abbreviated *if*-structures are truncated,
- all the conditional structures are instances of ellipsis, but not all the elliptical abbreviated *if*-structures are conditional.

In other words, scalar comments and the pragmatic marker *if possible* can be considered as instances of truncated structures, and conditionals and concessives as instances of elliptical structures.

4.2 Conditionality and positions of abbreviated *if*-structures

As was put forward in Section 2.8, abbreviated *if*-structures behave differently from full *if*-clauses as concerns positioning. There it was shown that, according to the corpus data, abbreviated *if*-structures occur sentence-medially the most frequently. It can be suggested that the *if*-structure simply by being abbreviated might entail a rise in sentence-medial position. How much sentence-positioning is conditionality-dependent is discussed in the present Section with the help of table 4.2 below which compares the diachronic variation of the three possible positions of both conditional and non-conditional abbreviated *if*-structures.

	Position / Sub-period	E1	E2	E3	I.	II.	III.	IV.	Total
Type									
	<i>Initial</i>	6 (0.1)	14 (0.22)	16 (0.28)	7 (0.39)	21 (0.39)	22 (0.41)	12 (0.23)	98
Conditional	<i>Medial</i>	0	1 (0.02)	14 (0.25)	5 (0.28)	19 (0.35)	13 (0.24)	8 (0.15)	60
	<i>Final</i>	0	3 (0.05)	5 (0.09)	5 (0.28)	15 (0.28)	14 (0.26)	9 (0.17)	51
Conditional Total		6 (0.1)	18 (0.28)	35 (0.62)	17 (0.94)	55 (1.03)	49 (0.91)	29 (0.54)	209
	<i>Initial</i>	0	1 (0.02)	0	0	0	1 (0.02)	0	2
Non-conditional	<i>Medial</i>	0	3 (0.05)	20 (0.35)	3 (0.17)	24 (0.45)	25 (0.46)	15 (0.28)	90
	<i>Final</i>	1 (0.02)	4 (0.06)	8 (0.14)	4 (0.22)	4 (0.08)	7 (0.13)	7 (0.13)	35
Non-conditional Total		1 (0.02)	8 (0.12)	28 (0.5)	7 (0.39)	28 (0.52)	33 (0.61)	22 (0.41)	127
Total		7 (0.12)	26 (0.4)	63 (1.12)	24 (1.33)	83 (1.55)	82 (1.52)	51 (0.96)	336

Table 4.2.

Positions of conditional and non-conditional abbreviated *if*-structures
(absolute numbers and relative frequency / 10,000 words)

When taking positioning according to conditionality into consideration, it has turned out, as is shown in table 4.2, that although all positions are possible for both types, the

most typical position for conditionals is the sentence-initial and for non-conditionals the sentence-medial. This is in accordance with what was observed in Sections 2.8.3.1 and 2.8.3.3 respectively.

In the following, abbreviated *if*-structures will be separated according to conditionality: first the positioning of the *if*-conditionals (both complete and partial ellipses) will be discussed with the help of Figure 4.1 and then that of the non-conditionals with the help of Figure 4.2 below. The aim is to see if there is a plausible connection between the type of abbreviated *if*-structure and their sentence-positioning.

4.2.1 The positions of conditional abbreviated *if*-structures

As mentioned in Section 2.7, there are two ways of ellipsis: it can be complete or partial. This kind of distribution of the conditionals might be also worth taking into consideration when discussing the positioning of abbreviated *if*-structures. Table 4.3 comprises the absolute numbers and the relative frequency per 10,000 words of the complete and partial elliptical conditional *if*-structures according to their positions in the sentence.

Type of conditional	Position / Period	E1	E2	E3	I.	II.	III.	IV.	Total
<i>Complete</i> Elliptical Conditional	Initial	4 (0.07)	9 (0.14)	9 (0.16)	1 (0.06)	11 (0.21)	8 (0.15)	8 (0.15)	50
	Medial	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Final	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<i>Partial</i> Elliptical Conditional	Initial	2 (0.04)	5 (0.08)	7 (0.12)	6 (0.33)	10 (0.19)	14 (0.26)	4 (0.08)	48
	Medial	0	1 (0.02)	14 (0.25)	5 (0.28)	19 (0.35)	13 (0.24)	8 (0.15)	60
	Final	0	3 (0.05)	5 (0.09)	5 (0.28)	15 (0.28)	14 (0.26)	9 (0.17)	51
Total		6 (0.10)	18 (0.28)	35 (0.62)	17 (0.94)	55 (1.03)	49 (0.91)	29 (0.54)	209

Table 4.3.

Positions of *complete* and *partial* elliptical conditional *if*-structures
(absolute numbers and relative frequency / 10,000 words)

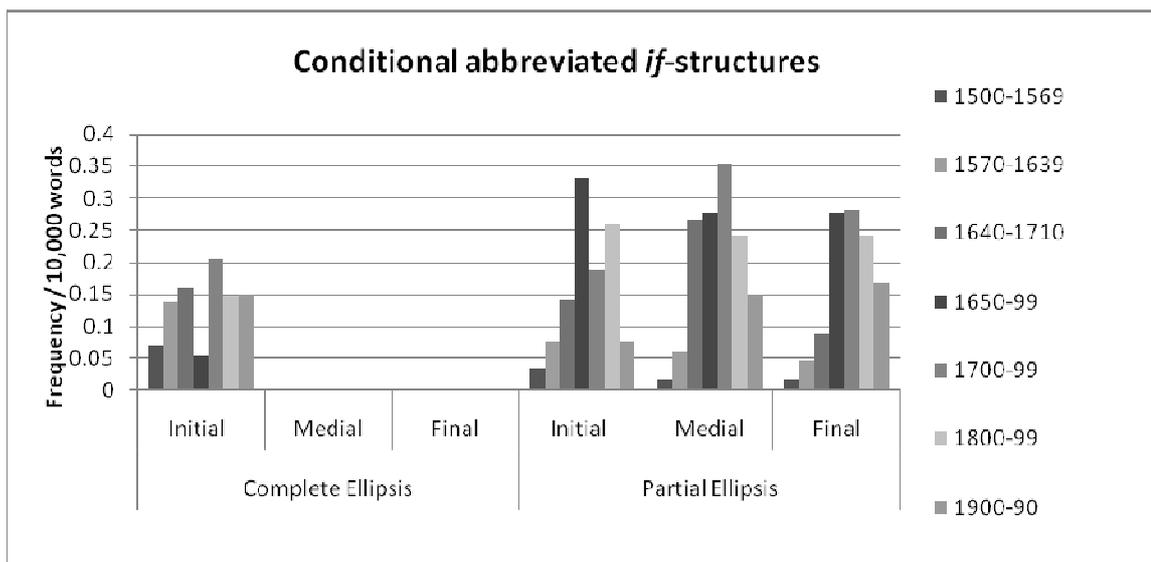


Figure 4.1
Positional variation of conditional *if*-structures according to ellipsis: complete and partial

From the data in table 4.3 and figure 4.1, it can be concluded that complete elliptical conditionals (as in example (4.1)) occur exclusively in initial position from the beginning of 1500s until the end of the 1900s.

- (4.1) There seems no doubt that the NLF is the stronger and reports that the two may be about to merge could indicate that FLOS Y is hedging its bets. **If so**, the chances would be improved of Britain lifting the ban on the NLF in return for a suspension of terrorism.
<ARCHER: 1967stm2.n8b>

It was hypothesised earlier that abbreviated *if*-structures when analysed as complete elliptical conditionals do have an antecedent which they are referring and reflecting to (cf. Akatsuka 1986, Ford & Thompson 1986); thus to ensure the understanding of the whole utterance as well as to maintain the flow of information, the best position for an abbreviated *if*-structure is to occupy the closest position possible to what it refers to. This could be the explanation for the positioning of elliptical conditionals sentence-initially.

Partial elliptical conditional *if*-structures, however, can occupy all the three sentence positions, still the most frequent ones are the medial and final positions. Consider the medial position in example (4.2):

- (4.2) and Yet they who used it only out of spite, and mixed Lyes with Truth, sparing nothing that might adorn their Poems, or gratifie their Revenge, could not excuse that way of Reproach, by which the Innocent often suffer: since the most malicious things, **if wittily expressed**, might stick to and blemish the best men in the World, and the malice of a Libel could hardly consist with the Charity of an Admonition.
<PPCEME: BURNETROC-E3-H,26.117>

In example (4.2) the medial position is in accord with what was stated in Section 2.8.1.3 only to a certain extent: it definitely interrupts the original flow of the sentence since it could be treated as a kind of afterthought. They nonetheless should be treated as unimportant or redundant (cf. Claridge 2007: 245 and Carter-Thomas & Rowley-Jolivet 2008: 199). However, while it was offered that full *if*-clauses in sentence-medial position are interpolated between the verb and the complement, abbreviated *if*-structures come between the subject and the verb, such as in example (4.2).

Besides the initial and medial positions, mostly conditional abbreviated *if*-structures might also occupy sentence-final position, as in example (4.3), for instance.

- (4.3) I say once again and be sure you remember this last Article of our agreement you must destroy, kill, and slay them all, **if possible**. Ioan. **If possible** as you say Master I will, but i fear they have inhabited and dwelt with you so long, that now they will be sturdy and begin to plead custome, but hoever I 'll do my honest endeavour
<PPCEME: PENNY-E3-H,269.538>

This is the first abbreviated *if*-structure occurring in final position and it serves as a background for the following clause (see Ford & Thompson 1986: 364). It is noteworthy that *if possible* comes twice in example (4.3): first in final position, and the following in initial position which refers back (see above).

Also, there are some remarkable points in the data provided by table 4.2 and figure 4.1: between 1500 and 1639 (the first and the second sub-period of *PPCEME*), it is the initial position in which abbreviated *if*-structures occur the most frequently. This tendency changes between 1640 and 1710 (the third sub-period of *PPCEME*), when medial position becomes the primary position for abbreviated *if*-structures. This state continues in the 18th and 19th centuries (second and third sub-periods of the *ARCHER*). Interestingly, in the 17th century (first sub-period of the *ARCHER*), initial is again the most frequent position, and in the 20th century (the last sub-period) the final position is

the most frequent. These results indicate that, at least in the case of abbreviated *if*-structures, the presumably most favoured position for an *if*-conditional is overturned: hence, instead of initial position, medial position becomes more frequent, especially in the 18th century. This, most probably, has to do with the change in the position of elliptical *if*-conditionals in general: instead of following the regular *if p then q* pattern, the *if*-part becomes more and more often embedded in the sentence. The original purpose of setting a condition is complemented with the function of being additional information in the utterance, but without being redundant. This assumption is supported by the use, or rather the lack of *then*⁹⁰ in the *if p then q* sequence. Dancygier (1998: 178) refers to the phenomenon when raising the question whether *then* is a resumptive pronoun or a marker of sequentiality. *Then* is arbitrarily put in the flow of the *if p then q* sequence, although it is definitely understood in the case of full conditionals. According to my analysis of the two corpora, there is not a single instance within the abbreviated *if*-structures where an *if p then q* sequence would be followed, that is, when *then* would follow the abbreviated *if*-structures. Consequently, it is not only the reduction in the protasis that makes the difference between a regular conditional clause and an abbreviated one, but the omission of the *then* between the protasis and the apodosis and this is demonstrated conclusively in the tendency for sentence-medial instead of initial position. It is true, however, that conditional abbreviated *if*-structures occur most often in sentence-initial position, but the majority of them belong to the group of complete elliptical conditionals. Concerning partial elliptical conditionals it is the medial position which is the most frequent, but initial position is not infrequent either.

4.2.2 The positions of non-conditional abbreviated *if*-structures

After putting conditional abbreviated *if*-structures under scrutiny, now the scope is turned to the non-conditional abbreviated *if*-structures, to the *SCs*, concessives and *PMs*; in the case of *SCs* the dual division (positive and negative) introduced in Section 3.3.2.2 is followed here as well. The results in terms of the different categories in the given time-periods are presented in table 4.4 and figure 4.2:

⁹⁰ It is remarkable that, according to Schwarz (2000: 16 fn3), *dann* ‘then’ is obligatory in German reduced conditional sentences, but not in full ones.

Non-conditional type	Sub-period / Position	E1	E2	E3	I.	II.	III.	IV.	Total
SC	Initial	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Medial	0	1 (0.02)	13 (0.23)	0	12 (0.22)	18 (0.33)	10 (0.19)	54
	Final	0	4 (0.04)	6 (0.11)	4 (0.22)	3 (0.06)	5 (0.09)	5 (0.09)	27
PM	Initial	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Medial	0	0	2 (0.04)	1 (0.06)	7 (0.13)	5 (0.09)	0	15
	Final	0	0	0	0	1 (0.02)	0	0	1
Concessive	Initial	0	1 (0.02)	0	0	0	1 (0.02)	0	2
	Medial	0	2 (0.03)	5 (0.09)	2 (0.11)	5 (0.09)	2 (0.04)	5 (0.09)	21
	Final	1 (0.02)	0	2 (0.04)	0	0	2 (0.04)	2 (0.04)	7
Total		1 (0.02)	8 (0.12)	28 (0.5)	7 (0.39)	28 (0.52)	33 (0.61)	22 (0.41)	127

Table 4.4
Positional variation of non-conditional abbreviated *if*-structures

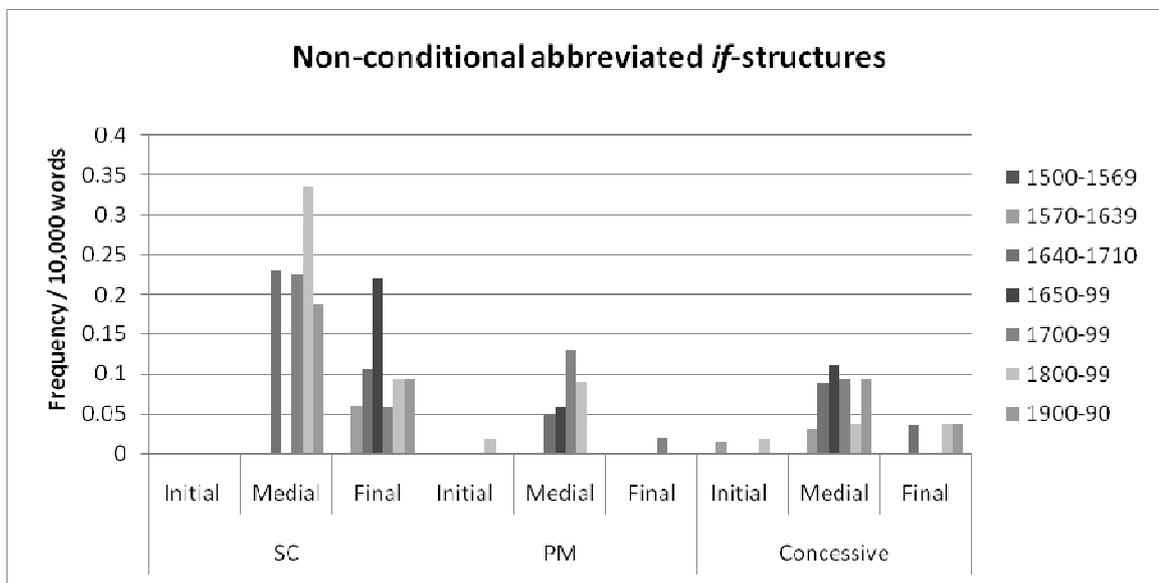


Figure 4.2
Positional variation of non-conditional abbreviated *if*-structures

As can be seen in Table 4.4 and Figure 4.2, apart from the concessive implication, neither of the non-conditional *if*-structures exists before 1570 (E2 in *PPCEME*).

However, from that time onwards, there is a rise in their frequency, especially when taking *SCs* into consideration.

As far as the positions are concerned, it can be ascertained that non-conditional abbreviated *if*-structures do not appear in initial sentence-positions, except for the two concessive structures (one in the *PPCEME* and one in the *ARCHER*). Getting to more specific details, according to the data listed in Table 4.4 and figure 4.2, it should also be noted that the most typical sentence position for the *SCs* (in case of both *SC* positive and *SC* negative⁹¹) is the medial, and only then the final position. From 1570 onwards, however, *SC* is becoming the most frequent non-conditional type. It occurs more frequently in final than in medial positions. The situation already changes in the next sub-period when medial position is three times more frequent than the final one. This tendency remains in the period between 1700 and 1990. Surprisingly, in the late 1600s, abbreviated *if*-structures occur sentence-finally twice more often than sentence-medially.

As far as the *PM if possible* is concerned, its most prevalent position is the medial one. This is the tendency in the whole *PPCEME*, however, in the late 19th and 20th centuries there is one instance in each when the *PM if possible* stands in either in initial or in final positions. It is remarkable, though, that, according to the *ARCHER* results, there is no abbreviated *if*-structure (*if possible*) functioning as a *PM* in the 1900s. Furthermore, in the test search of the *BNC*, it turned out that *if possible* as a *PM* occurs mainly in initial position. Of course, here more data would be needed in order to conclude that the *PMs* from the originally medial position came to be placed in initial position.

Concessive *if*-structures occur primarily in medial position in all centuries, but the other two positions (sentence-initial and medial) are not completely impossible either. It has turned out that such structures most frequently occupy medial position and then final. There are two centuries (1500-1569; 1800-1899), however, when the frequency of final position exceeds that of the medial position. Initial position is also possible, but rare.

Briefly, the position of abbreviated *if*-structures varies a lot, especially in the case of conditionals. Elliptical *if*-conditionals can occupy all sentence positions, but it can be suggested that the position is dependent on the actual context. The corpus results

⁹¹ The majority of the *SCs* show positive scalarity and only a few points towards the negative direction. Because of the low representation of the types in general, no further division is made.

related to the abbreviated *if*-structures with non-conditional interpretation have provided partial evidence for the assumptions made by Dancygier (1998; sentence final position) and Claridge (2007: 251; sentence medial position): *SCs* can appear either sentence-medially or finally (but the majority of instances occupy medial positions), and *PMs* occur in medial position in the majority of cases, but there is an instance sentence-initially and -finally. For concessives the prevalent position is medial, similarly to all the other non-conditional types, but it is possible to occupy initial position as well.

It is noteworthy that when mid-positions are taken into consideration, according to Claridge's data analysis, out of all the parenthetical *if*-clauses over 60% can be classified as content-conditionals, whereas the remaining part has "discourse-related, 'hedging' and metalinguistic functions" (2007: 246). Opposing this result, *PPCEME* texts in sentence-medial position (altogether 41%) contain conditionals in 18% and non-conditionals in 24% (when only the medial position is considered, the distribution between conditionals and non-conditionals is 40% - 60%). In the *ARCHER* corpus altogether 47% of the abbreviated *if*-structures occur in sentence-medial position; the ratio between conditionals and non-conditionals is 19% for 28% (when only the medial position is considered, the distribution between conditionals and non-conditionals is also 40% - 60%). This suggests that non-conditional abbreviated *if*-structures occur predominantly in medial position.

In sum, there are various ways how an abbreviated *if*-structure might be constructed, but some of them are not as productive as the others. *Adjectives Phrases* follow *if* in the majority of the instances both in the conditional and the non-conditional meanings. The [*if* + *pro-form*] combination is typical for the conditional usage exclusively, and the [*if* + *negative intensifier*] combination for the non-conditional one. Otherwise, it can be maintained that the choice of the actual structure is very much context dependent. This way the abbreviated *if*-structure clearly has a parenthetical role, with either conditional or non-conditional interpretation. In the case of conditionals, the abbreviated *if*-structure, although being the protasis in a conditional sentence, can be considered as additional information in the flow of the utterance, an afterthought by placing it in medial position. Otherwise, all sentence positions are possible in the case of conditionals. It is also worth emphasising that only complete elliptical conditionals can occur exclusively sentence-initially.

In the case of non-conditionals, on the other hand, it can be hypothesised that the abbreviated *if*-structure makes comments on the surrounding text (*PM*) or on the

preceding word/phrase (*SC*). As already pointed out, this commenting function raises the *if*-structure from its original conditional sense to a non-conditional one, a sense that is more related to pragmatics. Dancygier (1998: 152) is of the opinion that “[m]etatextual *if*-clauses [...] frequently take a position as close as possible to the “text” commented on – which may mean a position within the main clause rather than preceding or following it”, thus, a *scalar comment* (*metatextual comment* in Dancygier’s terminology) must echo the text in question or refer to it anaphorically. In Dancygier’s (1998) view the most frequent position for an *if*-structure with such an interpretation is the sentence-final one, whereas the sentence-medial position is not impossible but rather uncommon. This stance is not wholly supported by Claridge (2007: 251) when she asserts that metalinguistic conditionals favour the parenthetical position (sentence-medial). Corpus data have also shown that although it is possible for abbreviated *if*-structures to occupy sentence-final positions, they occur there the least frequently. It should be emphasised, though, that abbreviated *if*-structures can occur in medial and final positions regardless their conditionality. It is true, however, that medial position is the prevailing position for non-conditional abbreviated *if*-structures.

It has become evident that syntactic positioning of abbreviated *if*-structures (as shown by Figures 4.1 and 4.2) can validate the hypothesis according to which to a certain extent there seems to be a direct connection between the type of the abbreviated *if*-structures and their positions in the sentence. Continuing the line in the discussion of the characteristics of abbreviated *if*-structures, the next section provides a brief discussion of abbreviated *if*-structures in the text types of the *PPCEME* and the *ARCHER*.

4.3 Abbreviated *if*-structures in the text types

In addition to the comparative picture of form and function of abbreviated *if*-structures provided by the overall diachronic analysis in the previous section, some other results can be achieved by looking at their occurrences in the text types presented in the two corpora. As both the *PPCEME* and the *ARCHER* are multigenre corpora, it is possible to carry out comparative diachronic text type analyses. Nevertheless, as discussed in Section 1.3.4, the two corpora are not in complete accord with each other regarding text types. As suggested, instead of creating macro-level categories and grouping the text

types accordingly, the method should be to compare and discuss those text types that are shared in the two corpora, namely, *drama, fiction, sermon, science (other, medicine), and letter (private, non-private)*. The ultimate goal would be to provide an overall picture of the aforementioned text types throughout the five centuries covered by the corpora, and thus to provide input for further, more specialised analyses.

While examining abbreviated *if*-structures in the different text types it turned out that although some fluctuation can be detected in their frequency as well as occurrence, it is not possible to highlight one or two specific text type(s), which would be characteristic in the use of abbreviated *if*-structures.

In the detailed analysis of the *PPCEME*, it became evident that abbreviated *if*-structure can occur in all kinds of texts. It is *private letter* where most instances of the abbreviated *if*-structures can be detected. This would suggest that this kind of syntactic compression could be the characteristic of informal texts; without taking the authors into consideration, however, no exact conclusion should be drawn. Nevertheless, *proclamations, trials* produce the same amount of abbreviated *if*-structures which, as being formal texts, is in contradiction with the former supposition that abbreviated *if*-structures occur particularly in informal texts. Philosophical texts should be mentioned as well when collecting the text types where abbreviated *if*-structures were in use ‘most frequently’. Although it is true that philosophical texts are also considered to be formal texts, there should be some kind of similarity between and thus reasoning behind the above mentioned three text types, since these are the ones where the majority of abbreviated *if*-structures are to be found. The answer might lie in their ‘interactiveness’ (cf. *Helsinki Corpus* information: interactive). As far as the *if*-types are concerned, it has turned out that besides the elliptical *if*-conditionals (first occurring in the first part of the 1500s), the three other types, namely the concessives, the *SC* and the *PM*, started emerging as well. Amongst these three non-conditional types it is the *SC* which clearly showed an increasing tendency in use almost from the beginnings. The most remarkable variety in the use of the abbreviated *if*-structures in different text types can be found between 1640 and 1710.

Turning to the analysis of the *ARCHER*, the development of abbreviated *if*-structures in the period between 1800 and 1900 demonstrates some intriguing phenomena. There is a steady variety in the occurrence of the *if*-structures in the available text types. The most frequent is still the conditional interpretation of the abbreviated *if*-structures in all text types. In all British texts there are generally two or

three types of abbreviated *if*-structures: most often it is the conditional and the *SC* (positive in most cases). American texts do not contain many instances of abbreviated *if*-structures: most instances occur in *science other* and in *fiction*. The least represented text types are *medicine* in the British and *sermon* and *drama* in the American part. In those cases, either there is no instance at all (American), or only a few number of instances.

After the summary of the representation of abbreviated *if*-structures in the two corpora separately, in Figure 4.3 below I show the average frequency of abbreviated *if*-structures in the six text types shared by the two corpora between 1500 and 1990.

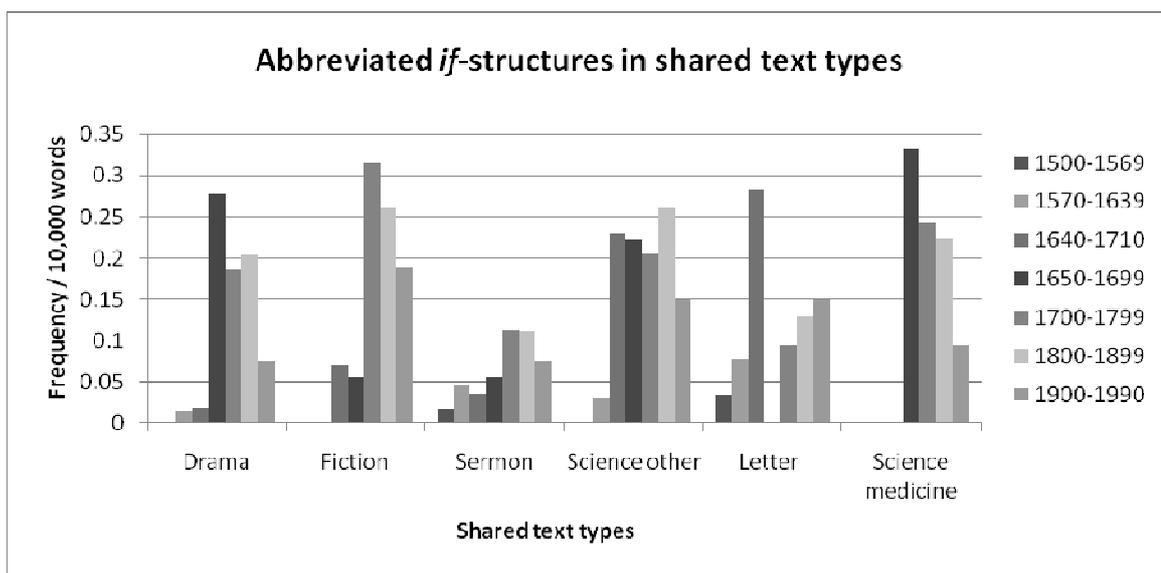


Figure 4.3.
Diachronic development of the abbreviated *if*-structures
in the text types shared by both corpora

As it can be observed from Figure 4.3, the frequency of the abbreviated *if*-structures is around 0.1 / 10,000 words which means that the shared text types are presented nearly evenly, if scantily. Abbreviated *if*-structures occur most often in *science other* (and it is even so if *science medicine* is counted here as well), then in *fiction*, and least often in *sermon*. Two hypotheses can be deduced from this observation: first, the scanty representation of the abbreviated *if*-structures in the shared text types is not surprising, since the general frequency of the abbreviated *if*-structures is low as well. Second, the almost even representation of abbreviated *if*-structures in the shared text types suggests that although the structure itself is not well-represented, it exists in various text types. Moreover, logical conclusions cannot be drawn when tackling the question of orality or

formality, since no real difference can be detected between oral and written or formal and informal text types (e.g. abbreviated *if*-structures in *letter* and *science other* are nearly equally frequent). Nevertheless, some overlaps still seem to be plausible. For instance, in the first sub-period of the *PPCEME* (that is, between 1500 and 1570) the occurrence of abbreviated *if*-structures is restricted to *law*, *private diary*, *private letter*, *sermon* and *auto biography*. Some of them can be considered as formal and some others as informal. However, if the authors of the given texts are taken into consideration, it transpires that a text designated informal is written by somebody with a high rank; for instance, the *private diary* in E1 is written by Edward VI, and the *private letter* by Sir Thomas More. It can be hypothesised that people with a high rank used a more formal language in their private lives, in their ‘private writings’ than somebody with a lower rank would do, since that is the language they are used to. Thus, what we would consider as informal is formal in reality. This is a plausible way to explain the discrepancy in the occurrence of abbreviated *if*-structures both in formal and informal text types.

The closer look at the text extracts definitely surpassed the expectation in the development of the abbreviated *if*-structures. First and foremost, it is impossible to arrive at generalisations concerning text type and/or author as against *if*-types: that is, using one of the abbreviated *if*-structures cannot be considered as text type and/or author specific. It is possible that one author uses different abbreviated *if*-structures interchangeably. Thus, at least in these corpora, the hypothesis concerning the one-to-one relation between text type and/or author and the abbreviated *if*-structures should be discarded. Second, some diversity also within the types of abbreviated *if*-structures can be discovered. The conditionals (either being instances of complete or partial ellipses) might occur sentence initially, finally or even medially. This kind of alteration or even break in the sentence structure seems to give some emphasis to the whole proposition. The sentence-medial position also seems to contribute to a much simpler sentence-structure, with no repetition of the unnecessary sentence-elements. This is supposed to be the characteristic of the written style, since it is the interest of the writer (and probably of the publisher) to express something with the least number of words. This is in contrast with the oral style where the utterance could be expansive and include as much repetition as required.

4.4 Summary

The present chapter aimed at finding out the possible correlation between the form and the function of abbreviated *if*-structures as well as their typical occurrences in the text types of the *PPCEME* and the *ARCHER*. Amongst the possible combinations (*if* + *Adjective Phrase*), *if* + *Adverb Phrase*), *if* + *Prepositional Phrase*), *if* + *Noun Phrase*), *if* + *Determiner Phrase*), *if* + *pro-form*) and *if* + *negative intensifier*), it is the *if* + *Adjective Phrase*) which occurs in most of the cases with both conditional and non-conditional interpretations. It was also argued that *if* + *pro-form*) is characteristics of complete conditionals and *if* + *negative intensifier*) is of non-conditionals. Otherwise, the other combinations can function as conditional or non-conditional, depending on the actual context. Besides, the data also propounded that it is possible to detect a direct connection between the type of the abbreviated *if*-structures and their positions in the utterance: complete conditionals occupy exclusively sentence-initial, scalar structures mostly and pragmatic markers almost exclusively sentence-medial positions. In general, it can be put forth that the medial position is the most typical place to be occupied by abbreviated *if*-structures, with different purposes, though. The analysis did not strengthen the hypothesis, since it is not possible to name one text type or possibly two where abbreviated *if*-structures are habitually used. In fact, abbreviated *if*-structures are approximately evenly represented, and additionally, all the conditional and non-conditional categories can be found in each text type.

5. Grammaticalisation, lexicalisation and pragmaticalisation in the development of abbreviated *if*-structures

As was pointed out in chapters 2 and 3, a contrast should be made between different abbreviated *if*-structures both from the syntactic and the semantic point of view. It was also suggested that it is necessary to look at the surrounding context as well in order to be able to distinguish between two main types in both cases: elliptical as against truncated *if*-structures (syntax) and conditional as against non-conditional *if*-structures (semantics). The evidence discussed in chapter 3 manifested that the non-conditional *if*-structures can be pragmatically driven. This implies that such clauses are important from the speaker's point of view and not from that of the proposition.

This puts forward the idea of drawing a borderline between syntax (what is given) and discourse (what is implied). This difference is implied in two theories, namely, the generative and the grammaticalisation theories. Whilst the former “sees syntax as a basic schema of sentence formation, an ‘already given’”, the latter “is primarily interested in how syntax arises out of the use of language (discourse) in communicative settings” (Fischer 2007: 211). Syntax and discourse are interconnected through transitional stages. It ought to be possible to identify these stages, since if grammaticalisation is involved in the change, the process “itself must have left visible marks on the language output” (Fischer 2007: 212). It can thus be assumed that the grammaticalisation of the abbreviated *if*-structures has left manifest changes. I argue that those changes include:

- from syntax via semantics to pragmatics,
- from conditional to non-conditional,
- from clause to phrase.

In the following, commencing from the basic theories of grammaticalisation, I gather and enumerate the arguments which help decide whether it is grammaticalisation or something else that fits the development of abbreviated *if*-structures the best. The chapter is built up as follows: in section 5.1 I briefly introduce what is meant by grammaticalisation. In section 5.2 I consider grammaticalisation in the light of corpus linguistics. In section 5.3 I discuss Hopper's (1991: 22) five principles of

grammaticalisation and in section 5.4 the possibility of lexicalisation regarding the development of abbreviated *if*-structures. Section 5.5 briefly covers of unidirectionality and clines. Finally, in section 5.6 the question of grammaticalisation, lexicalisation as well as pragmatization is posed when considering the development of abbreviated *if*-structures.

5.1 What is grammaticalisation?

The term grammaticalisation was first used by Meillet (1912) to describe “the development of the Modern Greek future tense marker *a* ultimately from an earlier collocation of a full verb of volition and a subordinating element *élo (hi)na*” (Joseph 2001: 163), where he defined grammaticalisation “as the evolution of grammatical forms (function words, affixes, etc.) out of earlier lexical forms” and “the passage of an autonomous word into the role of grammatical element” (Meillet 1912: 2, 131). The term grammaticalisation (also known as *grammaticalization*, *grammatization*, or *grammaticization*) has been used ever since and is considered to be very important in syntactic and morphological changes (cf. Haspelmath 2003). A recent definition is offered by Brinton & Traugott:

Grammaticalization⁹² is the change whereby in certain linguistic contexts speakers use parts of a construction with a grammatical function. Over time the resulting grammatical item⁹³ may become more grammatical by acquiring more grammatical functions and expanding its host-classes. [...] Grammaticalization is gradual in the sense that it is non-instantaneous and proceeds by very small and typically overlapping, intermediate, and sometimes indeterminate, steps.

(Brinton & Traugott 2005: 99-100)

Although grammaticalisation implies that there is a change taking place in the course of time (in practice, most studies are based on either a typological or a historical

⁹² See also: Kuryłowicz 1965, Givón 1979, Lehmann 1985, Traugott & König 1991: 189, Hopper & Traugott 1993, Brinton 1996, and Nevalainen 2004.

⁹³ The item might be a single lexical item or a whole construction formed by the syntagmatic relations of the element in question (cf. Lehmann 1992: 406, Rissanen 2004: 151, Brinton & Traugott 2005: 24, Lehmann 1993, Traugott 2003)

background), the process could still be viewed both synchronically and diachronically⁹⁴. The present work intends to contribute to the studies from the diachronic perspective, since it covers five centuries from the 16th to the 20th century. It is thus possible to detect changes in the development of abbreviated *if*-structures which have taken place during this extended period of time.

5.2 Grammaticalisation in the light of corpus analysis

Since the dissertation is corpus-driven, I find it also important to discuss why the use of computerised diachronic corpora is essential to illustrate the long-term semantic-pragmatic development of a structure (lexical or grammatical) in English. Corpus linguistics is a means of observing grammaticalisation in that it provides an empirical methodology for investigating processes of language change in progress. Nevalainen (2004) as well as Mair (2011) emphasise that a considerable number of studies on grammaticalisation theory lack empirical evidence provided by corpus linguistics (e.g. Heine, Claudi & Hünnemeyer 1991, Traugott and Heine 1991). Hopper & Traugott's work is a good illustration of the problem and how it could be solved, since in the 1993 version they did not even consider the possibility of combining grammaticalisation and corpus linguistics, but later, in the revised, 2nd edition (2003) there is already a separate section devoted to acknowledging the impetus given by corpus linguistics to research on grammaticalisation. From this instance the positive tendency that could characterise the relationship between corpus linguistics and grammaticalisation manifests itself (other examples: Rissanen, et al. 1997, Krug 2000, Lindquist & Mair 2004, Gries & Stefanowitsch 2004, Hoffmann 2005, Hilpert 2006, and Lenker & Meurman-Solin 2007). Mair (2004: 121, 2011) summarises the advantages of using corpus data in combination with the research of grammaticalisation in three points:

⁹⁴ In the case of *synchrony*, it “is primarily a morpho-syntactic, discourse pragmatic phenomenon, to be studied from the point of view of fluid, dynamic patterns of language use at the moment in time” (Brinton & Traugott 2005: 22), whereas from the *diachronic* perspective it shows “how grammatical items develop new grammatical functions [and what is] the subset of cross-linguistically recurring correlations across time among semantic-pragmatic, morphosyntactic, and (sometimes) phonological changes” (Hopper & Traugott 2003: 1-2).

- convenience:* both approaches agree that transitions between grammatical categories are gradient rather than abrupt and that grammatical form and meaning are interdependent rather than constituting separate and autonomous domains;
- context:* both approaches give priority to the study of utterances in their original syntactic and discourse contexts rather than abstract systems of underlying rules;
- quantification:* both approaches emphasise the importance of frequency data and statistics.

Nevalainen (2004: 13-14) is of the opinion that with the use of multigenre diachronic corpora the possibilities of defining particular language phenomena, like origin, development, genre, etc. have become much easier and faster. However, as grammaticalisation proceeds over a long period of time, even with the help of corpus analysis certain difficulties might occur when trying to define the beginning and end of the process. This idea is shared by Mair (2004: 131), and Compes, Kutscher & Rudolf (1993: 20) who say:

Die früheste Phase der Grammatikalisierung – also die Entstehung von Formeln und einfachen ‘pattern’ – aktuell zu verfolgen, ist phänomenologisch unmöglich. Ungeheure Massen und Diskursen mit einem potentiell grammatikalisierenden Kandidaten müssten aufgezeichnet und, vor allem ausgewertet, werden, doch nach welchen Kriterien? Und welche sind die Kandidaten?

‘To observe the earliest phase of grammaticalisation – that is, the emergence of formulae and simple ‘patterns’ – while it is developing is phenomenologically impossible. Immense amounts of utterances of a potential candidate which might be undergoing the grammaticalisation process would have to be recorded and, above all, evaluated, but according to what criteria? And what are the candidates?’
(translation mine)

Nevertheless, carefully chosen corpora help us determine tendencies and to investigate the development of a structure in a given corpus/corpora.

In the analysis presented in chapters 2 and 3, with the help of the two corpora (*PPCEME*, *ARCHER*), the main aim was to follow the development of the abbreviated *if*-structures, and also to prove that “[t]ypically [...] the initial stage is already one of variation, and the final exemplified stage may still be in variation. *Such quantitative*

studies highlight the gradualness of the spread of changes” (Hopper & Traugott 1993: 60; italics mine). In the following, I shall consider whether the the development of abbreviated *if*-structures can count as grammaticalisation or not.

5.3 Can the development of abbreviated *if*-structures count as grammaticalisation?

Hopper (1991: 22) defines five principles of grammaticalisation with which the process can be identified. In the following, I offer evidence as to how the development of abbreviated *if*-structures can be attributed to grammaticalisation.

Principle I: Layering

“Within a broad functional domain, new layers are continually emerging. As this happens, the older layers are not necessarily discarded, but many remain to coexist with and interact with the newer layers.”

In the two examined corpora different implications of abbreviated *if*-structures occur throughout the centuries and with different frequencies. In the first place, conditional abbreviated *if*-structures should be distinguished from non-conditional abbreviated *if*-structures, since their existence in the sentence serves different purposes. The first abbreviated *if*-structures occur at the beginning of the 1500s with conditional implication (example (5.1)); non-conditional (e.g. example (5.2), with concessive interpretation) implications of abbreviated *if*-structures do not start to develop until from the period between 1570 and 1640.

(5.1) nevertheles the lord Maxwell did upon malice to the English debatables overrun them. Whereupon was concluded that, if the Scottis will agree it , the ground shall be divided; **if not**, then shal the Scottis wast their debatablers {COM:sic}, and we ours, commaunding them by proclamacion to depart.
<PPCEME: EDWARD-E1-P1,390.335>

(5.2) Adultery there , if it bee prooued, is punished with death , as the losse of both the parties heads, if they bee both married, or **if not both**, yet the married party must dye for it, and the other must endure some easier punishment, eyther-1 by the purse or carkasse; which in the end proues little better then halfe a hanging.
<PPCEME: JOTAYLOR-E2-P1,3,81.C2.131>

Although the number of non-conditional abbreviated *if*-structures is relatively low, in the course of time it gradually increases. Hence it can be suggested that grammaticalisation does not necessarily replace the old sense with the new one, but creates layered senses for constructions (Moore 2007: 120). The above-mentioned functions (i.e. conditional and non-conditional⁹⁵) of abbreviated *if*-structures emerging over time can be considered as instances of *layering*. The continuous occurrence of each function proves that the layers can coexist and neither should be discarded.

Principle II: Divergence

“When a lexical form undergoes grammaticization to a clitic or affix, the original lexical form may remain as an autonomous element and undergo the same changes as ordinary lexical items.”

Divergence in the strict sense does not occur in my data.

Principle III: Specialization

“Within a functional domain, at one stage a variety of forms with different semantic nuances may be possible; as grammaticization takes place, this variety of formal choices narrows and the smaller number of forms selected assume more general grammatical meanings.”

From the period between 1570 and 1640, the functions of abbreviated *if*-structures in the discourse started to expand, and it can be argued that *specialisation* takes place. Hence, besides the concessive interpretation⁹⁶, the first scalar comment, like the one in example (5.3) below, appears during this period.

(5.3) He will be settled there this weeke , and all accommodation as good there, **if not better**, then at Ashford;
<PPCEME: DERING-E2-P2,129.79>

The first pragmatic marker however, does not occur until the period between 1640 and 1710 (*if possible* (example (5.4))).

⁹⁵ Further specifications of non-conditional interpretations will be dealt with in Principle III.

⁹⁶ In the present study I consider concessives as non-conditionals, despite that the non-conditional structures (including *PMs* and *SCs*) do not have anything else in common but simply not being conditionals.

- (5.4) The occasion of the falling out between the Lady and her daughter was because shee went into her daughter Marie's company, contrary to her commands and indeed contrary to mine also; surely shee growes too too headstrong and hath neede enough of such a one as the Lady to breake her **if possible** of her willfull courses. My cozin Master is come to Towne,
<PPCEME: HOXINDEN-1650-E3-P2,172.86>

Further implications arise from both *SCs* and *PMs*: *SCs* can be either positive (as the one in example (5.3) above) or negative, as in example (5.5):

- (5.5) Many antipyretic drugs were used, as we have already stated, but with little **if any** effect.
<ARCHER: 1905furt.m7b>

Besides, *PMs* can carry both deontic (as the one in example (5.6)) and non-deontic implications (as the one in example (5.7)) (cf. section 3.3.2):

- (5.6) {=m FREDERIC} The traitor is on the point of betraying us. -- I must **if possible** prevent his seeing the Dey.
<ARCHER: 1794rows.d4a>
- (5.7) This interference with study is, **if possible**, still more injurious in the third year, -- that most important of the whole, when the student, having gone through the elementary departments, enters upon the practical subjects of his profession.
<ARCHER: 1864syme.m6b>

Principle IV: Persistence

“When a form undergoes grammaticization from a lexical to a grammatical function, so long as it is grammatically viable some traces of its original lexical meanings tend to adhere to it, and details of its lexical history may be reflected in constraints on its grammatical distribution.”

Most probably because of the co-existence of the conditional and non-conditional meanings, in the non-conditional abbreviated *if*-structures the traces of the original conditional meaning might be still discovered. This might be due to the form itself which might still remind us of the conditional interpretation, especially when the abbreviated *if*-structure is without context. For instance, *if possible* without any context could be referred to as a simple conditional structure. However, besides the conditional

(as in example (5.8)) also non-conditional implication (as in example (5.6) and (5.7) above) is possible, as discussed earlier (cf. 3.3.2.1).

(5.8) {=m CONSTANT.} **If possible**, I'll marry the Woman to Night.
<ARCHER: 1709cent.d3b>

Principle V: Decategorialisation

“Forms undergoing grammaticization tend to lose or neutralize the morphological markers and syntactic privileges characteristic of the full categories Noun and Verb, and to assume attributes characteristic of secondary categories such as Adjective, Participle, Preposition, etc.”

Decategorialisation does not take place in my data.

5.4 Lexicalisation

There are some abbreviated *if*-structures which seem to behave as one single unit whose meaning is not necessarily predictable from its parts (cf. Brinton & Traugott 2005: 7, Biber et al. 1999: 58-59). Since these are the characteristics of *lexicalisation*, it should not be left out from the discussion either. *Lexicalisation* is the process whereby a grammatical item becomes a lexical one (Nevalainen 2004: 6). This can be considered as the reverse process of grammaticalisation. Lexicalisation, however, has not yet been studied as systematically as grammaticalisation (cf. Brinton & Traugott 2005: 2). Nevertheless, it can still be defined both synchronically and diachronically. Thus, according to the *synchronic* interpretation “it has been used for the coding of conceptual categories”, whereas in the *diachronic* interpretation, it is the “‘adoption into the lexicon’ or ‘falling outside the productive rules of grammar’” (Brinton & Traugott 2005: 18). That is, the idea of lexicalisation is that “[w]henever a linguistic form falls outside the productive rules of grammar” (Anttila 1989 [1972]: 151), a new word enters the lexicon, or gains a new meaning which becomes conventionalised (cf. Bussmann 1996: s.v. lexicalization, Blank 2001: 1603) and thus lexicalised. Lexicalisation is a gradual change in the sense that it is non-instantaneous, and proceeds by very small and typically overlapping, intermediate, and sometimes indeterminate, steps (Brinton & Traugott 2005: 97). Lexicalisation also “implies that its [the item undergoing

lexicalisation] meaning is not compositional [...] therefore it is stored in the lexicon under a single entry” (Bordería 2008: 1429).

As the result of the lexicalisation process it is often the case that the new, lexicalised unit is written as one word, obtaining an entirely new meaning, from which the meaning of the original construction can or might no longer be deducted; Kastovsky (1982) also suggests that

die Eingliederung eines Wortbildungs- oder syntaktischen Syntagmas in das Lexikon mit semantischen und/oder formalen Eigenschaften, die nicht vollständig aus den Konstituenten oder dem Bildungsmuster ableitbar sind. ‘the integration of a word formation or syntactic construction into the lexicon with semantic and/or formal properties which are not completely derivable or predictable from the constituents or the pattern of formation’.

(quote and translation taken from Brinton & Traugott 2005: 56)

This kind of fusion (or at least sign of univerbation) takes place in the case of some abbreviated *if*-structures as well, when they start to behave as a single lexical unit. When examining non-conditionals⁹⁷ in more detail, it can be suggested that positive scalar comments are lexicalised *set constructions*⁹⁸ (i.e. [*if not* +...], depending on the previous word/phrase), while negative scalar comments as well as the pragmatic marker *if possible* are lexicalised *set phrases* (cf. *OED s.v. possible*, *A. e. elliptical phrases; Longman, Macmillan s.v. if*). This would also support Lehmann’s (2002: 13) assertion according to which only complex units can be lexicalised. These units are either attached to a particular phrase within the sentence (scalar comments) or to the entire sentence (pragmatic marker) (cf. Hopper & Traugott 1993: 133, for phrasal and sentential clitics). Continuing the idea of lexicalisation of the *PM if possible*, it might sound a bit far-fetched to hypothesise that there will be a future stage where *if possible* expressing mitigation or politeness will be written as one word, e.g. ‘*ifpossible*’.

⁹⁷ Since the change that takes place during the lexicalisation process can be equated with semantic change in general (Brinton & Traugott 2005: 21, Blank 2001: 1603-1604), alongside lexicalisation, Hopper & Traugott (2003: 235, n2 to Chapter 4) offer a new term “semanticization”- Lexicalisation, especially with Hopper & Traugott’s (2003) term “semanticization” becomes a valid notion in the change of the abbreviated *if*-structures. since a distinction is made between the conditional and the non-conditional interpretations of abbreviated *if*-structures.

⁹⁸ Here probably “constructionalisation” would be the best terminology.

Nonetheless, it is not an entirely unlikely development, especially with the evidence of similar tendencies in the past⁹⁹.

5.5 Unidirectionality and clines

5.5.1 Unidirectionality

The contention that grammaticalisation is a *unidirectional* phenomenon (see e.g. Lehmann 1982: 19, Haspelmath 1989: 302, 2003: 21, Hopper & Traugott 2000: 94, Traugott 2001) was maintained for a long time. The term means that this one-way direction can be seen when the abbreviated *if*-structures change from having a conditional to a non-conditional implication. This also implies that the input¹⁰⁰ can be a combination of the conditional *if* and an Adjective Phrase, for instance, and the output will be a non-conditional item; however, the reverse process is not possible. Traugott observes that there is a “tendency to recruit lexical (propositional) material for purposes of creating text and indicating attitudes in discourse situations” (1995: 47). In some cases, it is even possible that a clause becomes one single item at the end of the process. How does it look in reality? Hopper & Traugott give an example for unidirectionality with the emergence in Present-day English of “evidential parentheticals” (2000: 201). In this process a main clause construction becomes a sentential adverb via a shift from multi-clause to single-clause structure. They describe the process as follows:

The lexical items that become grammaticalized must first be semantically general and serve commonly needed discourse functions. They then become syntactically fixed (they become constructions), and may eventually amalgamate morphologically, say, as stem and affix. The basic assumption is that there is a relationship between two stages A and B, such that A occurs before B, but not vice versa. This is what is meant by unidirectionality

(cf. Hopper & Traugott 2003: 100, 2000: 95).

⁹⁹ Some of those, for instance: *by his side* > *beside(s)* (Rissanen: 2004), *all be it* > *albeit* (Sorva: 2006), *me thinks* > *methinks* (Palander-Collin 1999, Wischer 2000).

¹⁰⁰ The input can be a single lexical item or even a group of words, larger phrases, or even clauses (c.f. Hopper & Traugott 2000, Brinton 1996).

After a time when the belief in grammaticalisation as a unidirectional change was predominant, in the 1990s a tendency arose that queried the unidirectional nature of the process (see e.g. Traugott & Heine 1991, Hopper & Traugott 1993, Lightfoot 1999, Janda 1995, 2001, Joseph 2001, Campbell 2001b). As Newmeyer (1998: 275) puts it, “unidirectionality is *almost* true” (italics original). Yap et al. (2003), for instance, examine non-Indo-European languages to ascertain whether the changes in process are examples of unidirectionality or of counterdirectionality, and point out that the directionality of the process is not identical in all examined cases; for instance, the grammaticalisation of the Mandarin *de* shows reverse directionality. Van der Auwera (2002: 22) and Norde (2002: 58) start by questioning the autocratic nature of unidirectionality and then talk about *counterdirectionality* or *degrammaticalisation*. Degrammaticalisation is in other words the reverse process of grammaticalisation where the result is a less grammatical form than at the outset. The two processes, i.e. grammaticalisation and degrammaticalisation, according to Ramat (1992, 2001) and Van der Auwera (2002), could be described as follows:

grammaticalisation: *lexical* > *less grammatical* > *more grammatical* status

degrammaticalisation: *more grammatical* > *less grammatical* > *lexical* status

In this interpretation, lexicalisation can be interpreted as degrammaticalisation since “degrammaticalization processes may lead to new lexemes” as well. (Ramat 1992: 550; cf. Kuryłowicz 1975 [1965]: 52, Brinton & Traugott 2005). However, lexicalisation is not the mirror image of grammaticalisation (Lehmann 2002: 1). Regardless of whether the process is grammaticalisation or lexicalisation, the change is continuous, unidirectional and follows a cline (possible clines are considered in section 5.4.2 below).

5.4.2 Clines

Language change in the diachrony represents a continuum, rather than sudden jumps from one category to another (cf. Hopper & Traugott 1993: 95, Bybee et al. 1994: 5, Lehmann 1995: 12, Palander-Collin 1999: 49). A grammaticalisation cline is considered to be a pathway along which the lexical becomes grammatical or the grammatical

becomes even more grammatical. According to Fischer (2007: 217), the kind of reduction (in form, in meaning, and in scope) undergone by linguistic elements is considered be characteristics of all clines. A cline is not ‘fixed’, it varies and also depends on the given item undergoing the grammaticalisation process. A number of clines have so far been established, such as the *cline of grammaticality*¹⁰¹ (Hopper & Traugott 1993: 6), *nominal cline*¹⁰², *verbal cline*¹⁰³ (Traugott 1997), cline following the grammaticalisation of an adverbial to a discourse particle¹⁰⁴ (Traugott 1997 and Onodera¹⁰⁵ 1993, 1995), to mention but a few. On the basis of the already existing clines, it can be hypothesised that the process that characterises abbreviated *if*-structures belongs to the group where clauses become phrases with non-conditional (also including pragmatic) functions, resulting in the following cline:

Conditional *if*-clause > Non-conditional *if*-structure

Nevertheless, as pointed out earlier, it is more likely that the newly acquired non-conditional meaning exists side-by-side with the original meaning for a certain length of time. This can happen, since the early stages of grammaticalisation involve only a shift *in* and not a loss *of* meaning. Furthermore, as the change is a long-term process, the original meaning cannot be suddenly lost.

5.6 Grammaticalisation or lexicalisation of the abbreviated *if*-structures?

In sections 5.3 and 5.4 I discussed grammaticalisation and lexicalisation separately, but the question still remains: of which process are the abbreviated *if*-structures the result? In fact, it is often difficult to decide whether the change concerning a certain phenomenon can be described as grammaticalisation, lexicalisation or even both. In fact, these terms cannot be completely separated and are very frequently linked in one way or another. Jakobson (1971 [1959]), however, tried to differentiate between the two. He considers grammaticalisation as *obligatory*, whereas lexicalisation is *optional*.

¹⁰¹ content item > grammatical word > clitic > inflectional affix

¹⁰² nominal adposition > case

¹⁰³ main verb > tense, aspect, mood marker

¹⁰⁴ Clause-internal adverbial > Sentence adverbial > Discourse particle

¹⁰⁵ clause-final subordinators > main clause initial discourse-marking elements (“discourse particles”) > discourse particle used to claim floor and change sub-topic.

According to Wischer (2000: 364-365), in the case of grammaticalisation the item becomes more grammatical when “specific semantic components get lost and an implied categorical or operational meaning is foregrounded”, (e.g. *be going to*, *in front of*). During the process of lexicalisation, on the other hand, the item becomes more lexical when “a specific semantic component is added” (e.g. *mother-in-law*) (cf. section 5.3 above). There is an important point included in the discussion of the two processes:

[G]rammaticalization (or indeed lexicalization) are subtypes of language change subject to general constraints on language use and acquisition. Lexicalization involves processes that combine or modify existing forms to serve as members of a major class, while grammaticalization involves decategorialization of forms from major to minor word class and/or from independent to bound element to serve as functional forms. Both changes may involve a decrease in formal or semantic compositionality and an increase in fusion. [...] Lexicalization and grammaticalization occur only if the form is accepted by speakers (institutionalized); nonce formation is excluded.

Brinton & Traugott (2005: 101)

In order to be able to draw a parallel between *lexicalisation* and *grammaticalisation* Brinton & Traugott (2005) set up a number of parameters (see Table 5.1 below) which they claim are characteristic of grammaticalisation and lexicalisation respectively. In Table 5.1, besides lexicalisation and grammaticalisation, the abbreviated *if*-structures are also considered.

	Lexicalisation	Grammaticalisation	Abbreviated <i>if</i> -structures
Bonding	+	+	-
Coalescence	+	+	-
Idiomatization	+	+	-
Unidirectionality ¹⁰⁶	+	+	+
Gradualness	+	+	+
Functional shift	-	+	+
Decategorialization	-	+	-
Type frequency/ productivity	-	+	-
Token frequency	-	+	-
Typological generality	-	+	?

Table 5.1.

Lexicalisation as against grammaticalisation

- with an outlook on abbreviated *if*-structures

(based on Brinton & Traugott 2005: 110; +/- indicate tendencies, not diagnostics)

The process that characterises abbreviated *if*-structures is briefly indicated in Table 5.1, and in the following it will be discussed in more detail. An overall picture considering the development of abbreviated *if*-structures can be hypothesised in the following three stages:

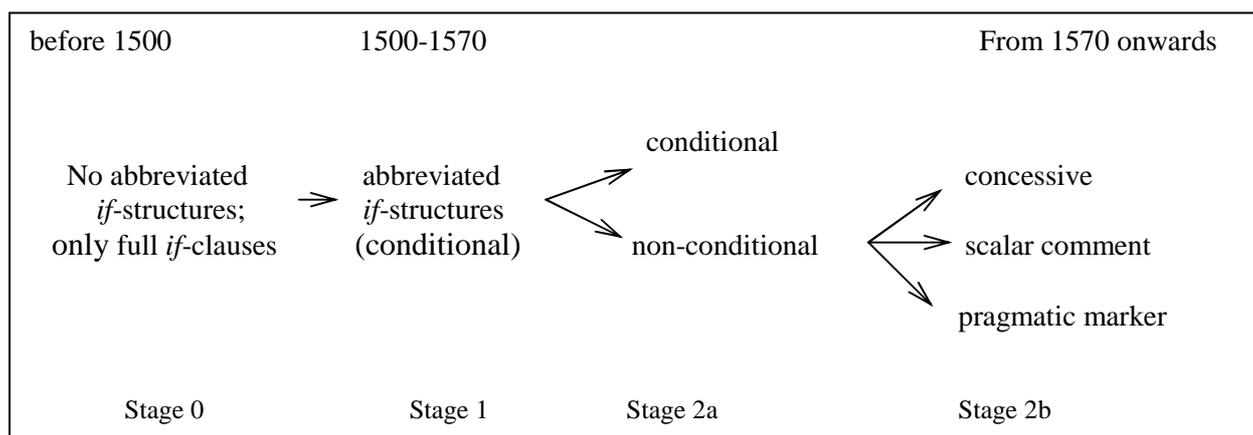


Figure 5.1.

The grammaticalisation process
of abbreviated *if*-structures

¹⁰⁶ Concerning lexicalisation there is no unequivocal standpoint: scholars have different views on the question whether lexicalisation is unidirectional or not. For instance, Lehmann (2002) finds lexicalisation partially unidirectional and Himmelmann (2004) considers only grammaticalisation to be unidirectional.

Figure 5.1 provides an illustration of the evidence for what has been mentioned in Table 5.1 concerning abbreviated *if*-structures. The three stages illustrated in Figure 5.1 can be described as follows:

<u>Before 1500:</u>	
(Stage 0 :	no abbreviated <i>if</i> -structures)
<u>1500 – 1570:</u>	
Stage 1 – change in form:	first occurrence of abbreviated <i>if</i> -structures;
Stage 2a – change in meaning 1:	where conditional is getting separated from non-conditional meaning;
<u>1570 – onwards:</u>	
Stage 2b – change in meaning 2 – Functional specifications:	different functions within non-conditional <i>if</i> -structures start to occur: besides concessive implication, scalar comment is distinguished from pragmatic marker, <i>if possible</i> (more details on ‘if possible’ as a pragmatic marker in the following section).

As also shown in Figure 5.1., before the Early Modern English period there was no instance of abbreviated *if*-structures according to the corpus results. Thus I refer to that stage as ‘Stage 0’, since it is not part of the whole process. The transition from ‘Stage 0’ to ‘Stage 1’ requires time, and to arrive at ‘Stage 2’ does not happen abruptly, either. This indicates the *gradualness* of the whole process. Based on the data provided so far, the process seems to be *unidirectional*, the abbreviated *if*-structures first appearing in the Early Modern English period and gradually receiving more and more functions.

At ‘Stage 1’, from the beginning of the Early Modern English period, the first abbreviated *if*-structures occur (according to the corpus results: *HC*, *PPCEME*). This implies that a new form of *if*-clause is coming into existence due to ellipsis. At this

stage all the abbreviated *if*-structures have conditional interpretation. This fact also supports the hypothesis that the grammaticalisation process started out from ellipsis, that is, the formal reduction of a full *if*-clause retaining the original meaning (also see section 4.1, the remark on [*if* + *pro-form*]). At ‘Stage 2a’ (the second sub-period of the *PPCEME*, i.e. 1570-1640) the abbreviated *if*-structures begin to be open to a non-conditional as well as a conditional interpretation. In the case of abbreviated *if*-structures, as mentioned in section 5.2 above, it is not possible to talk about *decategorialisation* (even if it is referred to as *transcategorialisation*, c.f. Ramat 2001). Functional shift can be detected both when distinguishing conditionals from non-conditionals, and also when considering the different interpretations of non-conditional abbreviated *if*-structures.

Furthermore, at ‘Stage 2b’, besides the concessive interpretation, two different pragmatic functions can be distinguished from one another: the pragmatic marker (*PM*) *if possible*¹⁰⁷ and the scalar comments (*SC*). In both cases further categorisation helps to distinguish between specific functions: the *PM* can receive either deontic or non-deontic interpretation, the *SC* can be either positive or negative (*specialisation*, cf. section 5.3). The transition from one stage to the next happens gradually. From the period between 1570 and 1640 until the 19th century all these interpretations exist side-by-side (cf. *layering*, section 5.2; see also Moore 2007: 120) but with a different frequency. As far as the role of *frequency* in the grammaticalisation process is concerned, the general assumption is that increasing frequency is involved in the process of grammaticalisation. Whereas Mair (2004) envisages that there is no obvious correlation between frequency and grammaticalisation, Heine & Kuteva (2005: 46, Table 2.1) argue that items with low frequency are only weakly grammaticalised and restricted to certain contexts. According to Brinton & Traugott (2005: 110, also cf. Table 5.1), low frequency is characteristic of lexicalisation and not of grammaticalisation. It is also worth mentioning that *if*-structures appear with a frequency that increases until the 19th century. This increasing tendency tallies well with the idea that there is a rise in frequency in the case of grammaticalisation, lexicalisation as well as pragmaticalisation (see also Brinton 1996: 64-65). Nevertheless, as it has become evident from sections 2.5.3, 2.8.2 and 3.2, 3.3.2.3, 3.3.2.4, abbreviated *if*-structures become less frequently

¹⁰⁷ The earliest occurrence of *if possible* as a *PM* can be dated back to the period between 1640 and 1710.

used towards the 20th century. This decline is also confirmed by a test-search¹⁰⁸ in *COHA*, as is shown by Figure 5.2.

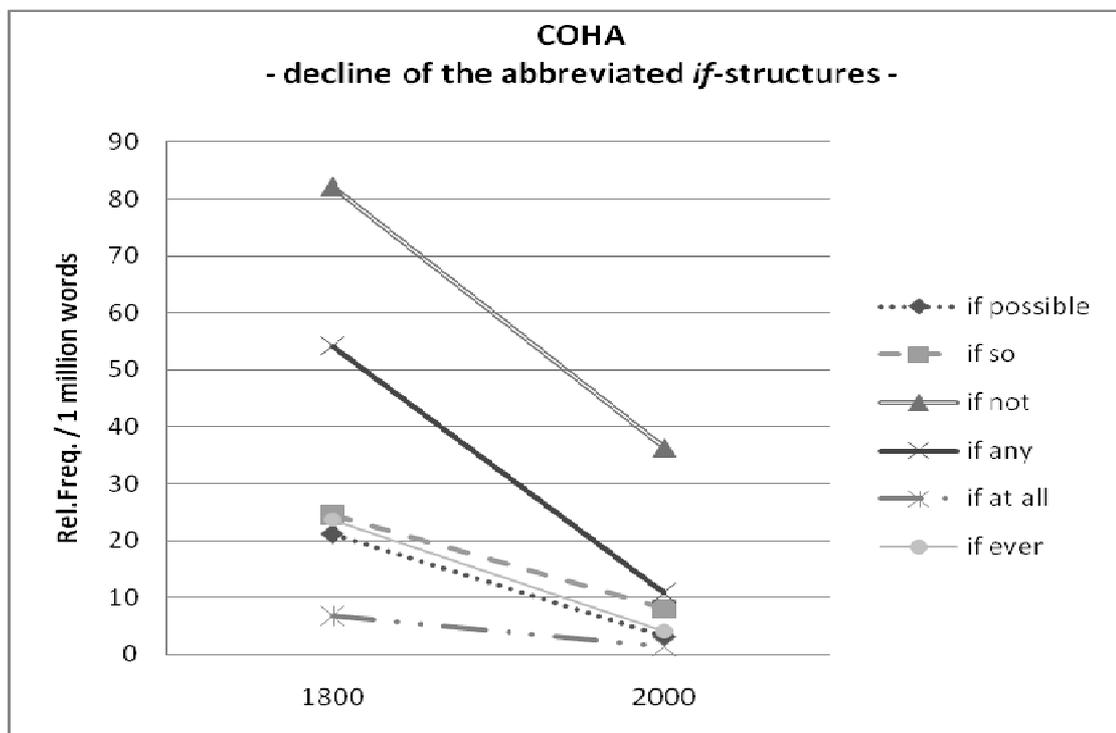


Figure 5.2
The decline of some abbreviated *if*-structures in the *COHA*

It can be seen from figure 5.2 that although the search was directed to certain abbreviated *if*-structures, all the figures show the same tendency: the frequency halved from 1800 to 2000.

Albeit it is not considered in Table 5.1, it is worth mentioning that Lehmann (2002) and Himmelmann (2004) are of the opinion that one should restrict the use of the term “lexicalisation” only to forms that undergo *univerbation*¹⁰⁹. This has to do with reanalysis¹¹⁰, which is important in both grammaticalisation and lexicalisation. Considering abbreviated *if*-structures, some graphemic features anticipating univerbation can already be seen. Hence, it can be proposed that the structure *if possible*

¹⁰⁸ In the search I was looking for only certain abbreviated *if*-structures (*if possible, if so, if not, if any, if at all and if ever*), since these were the recurring types in the *PPCEME* and the *ARCHER*.

¹⁰⁹ Univerbation: the telescoping of syntactic phrases into one-word grammatical expressions (Nevalainen 2004: 10), as in *gonna, wanna, innit*, for instance.

¹¹⁰ Reanalysis is a “change in the structure of an expression or class of expressions that does not involve any immediate or intrinsic modification of its surface manifestation” (Langacker 1977: 58). According to this assumption, reanalysis involves (a) a change in constituency, or what goes with what (e.g. [a] *napron* > [an] *apron*), (b) a change in category labels (e.g. main verb > auxiliary), or (c) boundary loss (e.g. *be going to* > *gonna*) (Brinton & Traugott 2005: 7).

is undergoing reanalysis from a <conjunction + adjective> combination into a single unit, functioning as a pragmatic marker in the sentence. This process also supports the lexicalisation hypothesis. Finally, the typological generality is marked with a question mark in Table 5.1, since no evidence has been searched for in the present study; this, however, provides ground for further studies on the topic.

Besides the general way of describing the grammaticalisation / lexicalisation process of the abbreviated *if*-structures, it is possible to consider each non-conditional type separately.

Regarding concessives, Hopper & Traugott (1993) argue that temporals could serve as sources for conditionals, and conditionals could be sources for concessives¹¹¹. This process may only take place only in this direction. In their interpretation, the unidirectionality of this process would support the grammaticalisation hypothesis (cf. Hopper & Traugott 1993: 180). The cline would look like as follows:

SPACE > TIME, CONDITIONAL > CONCESSIVE¹¹²

(Hopper & Traugott 1993: 180)

The present study supports the latter part of the cline, from a conditional abbreviated *if*-structure to a concessive one. There is, however, a notable difference between what is suggested by Hopper & Traugott (1993: 180) and my own deduction: as shown in Figure 5.1, there is an intermediate stage, ‘non-conditional’, between ‘conditional’ and ‘concessive’. This is because concessives are categorised as non-conditionals together with two other sub-categories, *PMs* and *SCs*. And since conditionals and non-conditionals coexist (i.e. conditionals did not become extinct because of the appearance of non-conditionals), there is a separate stage where the two categories split.

Furthermore, within the non-conditional abbreviated *if*-structures there are certain elements that may undergo one of two changes: lexicalisation and structuralisation. The similarity between these two changes is that both serve as an input for pragmaticalisation (cf. Brinton 1996) resulting in a pragmatically related structure which is either a *PM* (*if possible*, cf. *OED s.v. possible*) or a *SC* (*if ever, if any, if at all*;

¹¹¹ Concessive clauses are also said to be grammaticalised forms of conditionals (Hopper & Traugott 1993).

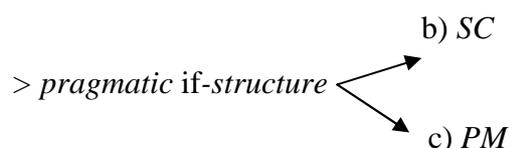
¹¹² This is the way it happens in the development of *þa hwile þe* ‘at the time that’ into *while*, the temporal connective. First the “textual meaning is strengthened and pragmatic functions pertaining to metalinguistic text-building are added” (Traugott & König 1991: 191) and then *while* gains concessive interpretation in the sense ‘although’.

structuralisation: [*if not* + ...], cf. *OED* s.v. *if* conj. and *ever*). Accordingly, the cline suggested in section 5.4.2

conditional if-structure > *non-conditional if-structure*

can be further specified as

conditional if-structure > *non-conditional if-structure* >



This operates only in the above-given direction and not the other way around. As a result, the process is proved to be unidirectional. The discussion of *if possible* as a *PM* being a result of pragmaticalisation follows in 5.6.1 below.

5.6.1 Pragmaticalisation of *if possible* to a pragmatic marker

The question of pragmaticalisation (that is, grammaticalisation of a lexical item to a pragmatic marker cf. Aijmer 1997: 2) has emerged from the previous sections when *if possible* was constantly referred to as a pragmatic marker. To my present knowledge there is no study either focusing exclusively on abbreviated *if*-structures or discussing the possible pragmaticalisation process which turns the original conditional structure into a pragmatic marker. Nevertheless, some studies deal with a similar phenomenon to which the pragmaticalisation of *if possible* could be compared. For instance, there are some works dealing with a single lexical item becoming a pragmatic marker, such as the Spanish verb *verás* being transformed into the discourse marker *verás*¹¹³ (Chodorowska-Pilch 2008), or when the Spanish adjective *claro* evolves into discourse particle¹¹⁴ (Ocampo 2006). Other studies focus on the change from a grammatical clause to a pragmatic marker, such as when *I'm afraid* (Akimoto 2002), or comment clauses, like *it*

¹¹³ Chodorowska-Pilch calls the whole process ‘the grammaticalisation of politeness’ where a “deverbal construction [is] grammaticalised into an interpersonal discourse marker of the speaker’s polite attitude towards the hearer” (2008: 1369).

¹¹⁴ Ocampo (2006: 317) claims that the process cannot be seen as an instance of grammaticalisation but of ‘discoursivization’ (the diachronic process that ends in discourse).

seems, I think, are the result of lexicalisation (cf. Aimer 1996; Schriffrin 1987: 319). According to Wischer (2000: 364), however, *I think*¹¹⁵ is not lexicalised but pragmaticalised.

It is true that pragmatic markers can be poly- or even multifunctional (cf. Lenk 1996, 2007, Foolen 1996, 2007, and Zheng 2006) and this applies to *if possible* as well. Apart from their pragmatic meaning, pragmatic markers can have a “non-pragmatic (i.e. a propositional) meaning in other conversational contexts” (Lenk 1996, 2007); consequently, it is possible to differentiate between conditional and non-conditional (including deontic and non-deontic) interpretations of *if possible* (c.f. section 3.3.2.4). It can be also hypothesised on the basis of Brown & Levinson (1978: 276-278), that the deontic and non-deontic *if possible* examples derive from their original literal meaning, originating “from lexical material within the ‘real world’” (Heine, Claudi & Hünnemeyer 1991: 187). Furthermore, in the process of pragmaticalisation, *if possible* acquires individual syntactic and semantic features, but remnants of its original ‘lexical’ meaning can still be discovered (cf. Brinton 1996: 276; cf. *layering* and *persistence* above). Due to the ‘remnants’ of the original conditional meaning and also the probability of analysing *if possible* without context, also an intermediary stage might be suggested:

- dependent clause (full conditional *if*-clause -- > elliptical conditional *if*-clause);

- dependent structure / parenthetical structure (abbreviated *if*-structure with both conditional and non-conditional implication);

¹¹⁵ Brinton & Traugott claim that during the process of grammaticalisation the phrase *I think* has undergone decategorialisation from the *Verb+Noun* combination to a “kind of unitary particle” (2005: 23), with the function of a parenthetical disjunct.

- pragmatic marker (abbreviated *if*-structure with non-conditional, pragmatic implication).

(based on¹¹⁶ Brinton 2008: 38)

5.7 Summary

In this chapter I discussed the question of grammaticalisation, lexicalisation and pragmaticalisation in the case of abbreviated *if*-structures. Since the present study is based on corpus evidence, it was a rational approach to discuss grammaticalisation in the light of corpus analysis as well. It can be put forth that although there are signs of grammaticalisation (only three of Hopper's (1991: 22) five principles are true for abbreviated *if*-structures), the development of abbreviated *if*-structures could be regarded as being only partially due to the grammaticalisation process. Hence I suggested that abbreviated *if*-structures are weakly grammaticalised (Heine & Kuteva 2005: 46). Nevertheless, besides this general, some specific observations can also be made: positive scalar comments can be treated as lexicalised *set constructions* (i.e. [*if not +...*]), and negative scalar comments as well as the pragmatic marker *if possible* as lexicalised *set phrases*. Furthermore, the output of lexicalisation can mean the input for pragmaticalisation, as is the case with *if possible*. I propose that grammaticalisation and lexicalisation – and hence pragmaticalisation – can happen simultaneously (Haas's 2007).

¹¹⁶ Also consider: Brinton (1996: 56):

Stage I: in addition to its core sense A, an additional sense B is acquired in a specific context, resulting in ambiguity.

Stage II: because of the existence of sense B, the form can be used in contexts incompatible with sense A.

Stage III: the sense B is conventionalized, and A and B may eventually develop into homophones.

and also Traugott (1997) and Traugott & Dasher (2002):

Stage 0: full lexical Noun;

Stage 1: Adverbial Phrase;

Stage 2: sentence adverb;

Stage 3: discourse marker.

6. Conclusion

In the present dissertation I attempted to assess the structure as well as different interpretations of abbreviated *if*-structures by looking at two diachronic corpora, the *PPCEME* and the *ARCHER*, covering a time period between 1500 and 1990. This extended time frame allows the reader to get an insight into a small part of the changes going on then.

When comparing abbreviated *if*-structures and full *if*-clauses in the *PPCEME* and in the *ARCHER* corpora, it can be generally concluded that their developments in the long diachrony differ. As shown by Table 6.1 and Figure 6.1, the frequency of full *if*-clauses can be characterised by a declining tendency in most of the sub-periods. At the same time, the frequency of abbreviated *if*-structures in the two corpora slowly but continuously increases until the 18th century, and it starts to decrease towards the 20th century. The variation in the frequencies, however, is rather minimal. Nevertheless, the increase in the frequency of abbreviated *if*-structures in some periods might be attributed to the declining use of full *if*-structures. The question whether abbreviated *if*-structures really take over the place of full *if*-clauses in certain cases might be answered with thorough the semantic analysis of full *if*-clauses as well.

Relative frequency	Abbreviated <i>if</i> -structures	Full <i>if</i> -structures
1500-1569	0.12	28.69
1570-1639	0.40	31.97
1640-1710	1.12	31.31
1650-1699	1.33	27.25
1700-1799	1.55	23.65
1800-1899	1.52	24.79
1900-1990	0.96	22.66

Table 6.1

Diachronic development of full and abbreviated *if*-structures from 1500 to 1990 (relative frequency / 10,000 words)

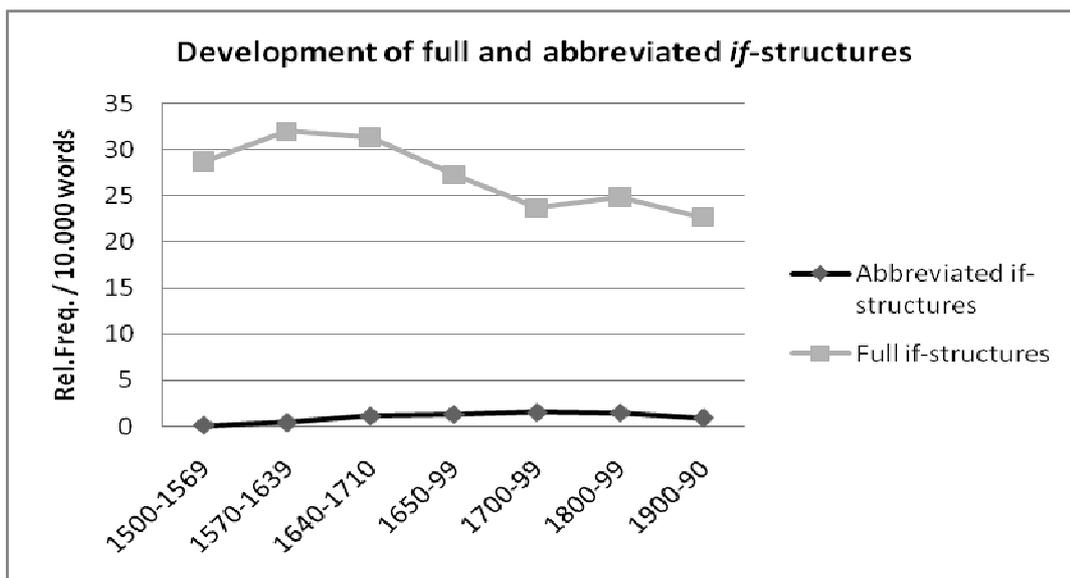


Figure 6.1
Diachronic development of full and abbreviated *if*-structures from 1500 to 1990

In the examination of abbreviated *if*-structures first the question of how they became abbreviated was raised. First, I pondered upon the possibility of contact influence (Latin, French) concerning the structure being abbreviated, but due to the lack of evidence, this was ruled out. Second, the notion of ellipsis seemed to be a straightforward answer for the question; nevertheless, after the examination of the *if*-structures with context, it turned out that there are different ways to approach the syntax of abbreviated *if*-structures. It was ascertained that these structures can be either non-finite or verbless, with the latter option being the more prominent one. In the case of non-finite structures the [*if* + *past participle*] combination is the most frequent, while in the case of verbless structures it is the [*if* + *Adjective Phrase*] combination.

Although abbreviated *if*-structures look similar to each other in form (i.e. being either non-finite or verbless), it does not necessarily imply that they should be treated in the same way. Against the generally accepted idea that a structure being non-finite or verbless is an instance of ellipsis and is subordinate to its matrix by definition (cf. section 2.6, Quirk et al. 1985: 992), I suggested two ways to differentiate between the structures:

- (a) There are abbreviated *if*-structures which are more like full *if*-clauses in an abbreviated form, i.e. lacking at least a finite verb. These structures are

definitely instances of ellipsis and they should be treated as dependent clauses. They do have an antecedent to which they are syntactically connected, and with the help of which it is possible to make a full clause out of the elliptical structure. They are part of the information flow and they have their specific position in the information structure.

- (b) There are abbreviated *if*-structures which cannot be considered as instances of ellipsis, since they do not have an antecedent in the preceding text on which they would be dependent; rather, they stand on the periphery and they do not form a part of the information flow. Moreover, they are not syntactically, but logically connected to the (parts of) preceding text.

Thence, in order to differentiate between these two types of structures, I introduced two terms: (a) elliptical and (b) truncated *if*-structures. Within ellipsis two further groups were established, namely complete and partial ellipses. In the first case, the whole clause is ellipled, in the second case, only part of it is, but definitely the finite verb. These elliptical *if*-structures behave like their full clause counterparts both syntactically and semantically, hence they are interpreted as full conditional clauses. However, the non-dependent nature of truncated *if*-structures can be seen in their interpretation as well: they do not set any kind of conditionality, that is, they cannot be considered as causes or reasons for what is mentioned in the main clause. Consequently, based on the evidence provided by the two corpora, the development of abbreviated *if*-structures seems to be more context-dependent (intra-linguistic) rather than dependent on the influence of other languages (extra-linguistic).

To determine the possible factors in influencing the development of the possible functions of abbreviated *if*-structures, first I considered the origin of the conjunction *if*. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, two sources are plausible for the origin of *if*: it can be understood either as a marker of conditionality or of *doubt, hesitation* (cf. section 1.1.1, *OED s.v. conj.*).

Continuing with the semantic analysis of the abbreviated *if*-structures in the *PPCEME* and the *ARCHER*, conditional and non-conditional interpretations were differentiated in the first place. It was pointed out that by examining exclusively the abbreviated *if*-structures, no further types within the category of conditionals was

established. However, the non-conditional structures were categorised into three main sub-types:

- *if*-structures with concessive interpretation
- *if possible* as a pragmatic marker
- *if*-structures as scalar comments.

It is possible to set up further sub-categories in the case of scalar comments (positive and negative) and the pragmatic marker (deontic and non-deontic).

The distribution of conditional and non-conditional abbreviated *if*-structures in the *PPCEME* and *ARCHER* corpora is 62% as against 38%, as shown in Figure 6.2.

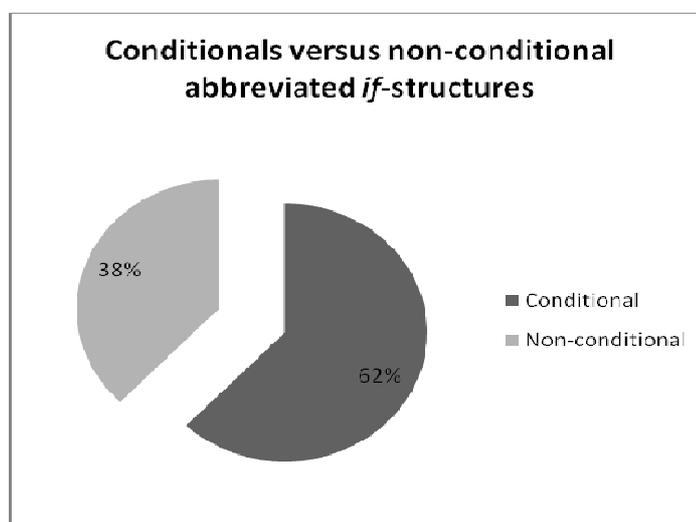


Figure 6.2
The distribution of conditional and non-conditional abbreviated *if*-structures from 1500 to 1990

Within the non-conditional abbreviated *if*-structures it is the scalar comment which is most prominent, but the pragmatic marker *if possible* started spreading too (the instances with pragmatic interpretation outnumber the conditional interpretation of *if possible*).

Different interpretations abbreviated *if*-structures seem to be position-sensitive to a certain extent:

- complete elliptical *if*-structures occur exclusively in sentence initial position,
- partial elliptical *if*-structures can occur in sentence initial, medial and final positions; most frequent position is the sentence-medial,

- *if*-structures with concessive interpretation stand sentence-medially or –finally, however, initial position is also possible,
- *if possible* as a pragmatic marker occupies medial position in the majority of cases; there is, however, one instance in final and one instance in initial position. (In the test search of the *BNC*, however, the initial position seemed to be the most decisive),
- *if*-structures as scalar comments stand mostly in medial position, but final position is also possible.

Further connections between form and function were also highlighted: elliptical structures can be either conditional or concessive, and truncated structures can be either scalar comments (both positive and negative) or the pragmatic marker *if possible*.

An initial hypothesis was the possibility that abbreviated *if*-structures might be text-type (or even author) sensitive, which was then refuted by corpus results. It has turned out that abbreviated *if*-structures occur in all the different text types covered by the two corpora, albeit with varying frequency. From a general point of view, conditional abbreviated *if*-structures outnumber the non-conditional ones in all the text types, but only with a minor margin. When the conditional and non-conditional abbreviated *if*-structures are compared to each other in the text types shared by the *PPCEME* and the *ARCHER*, it becomes evident that it is the text type *science other* where both types of abbreviated *if*-structures occur the most frequently (cf. Figure 6.3).

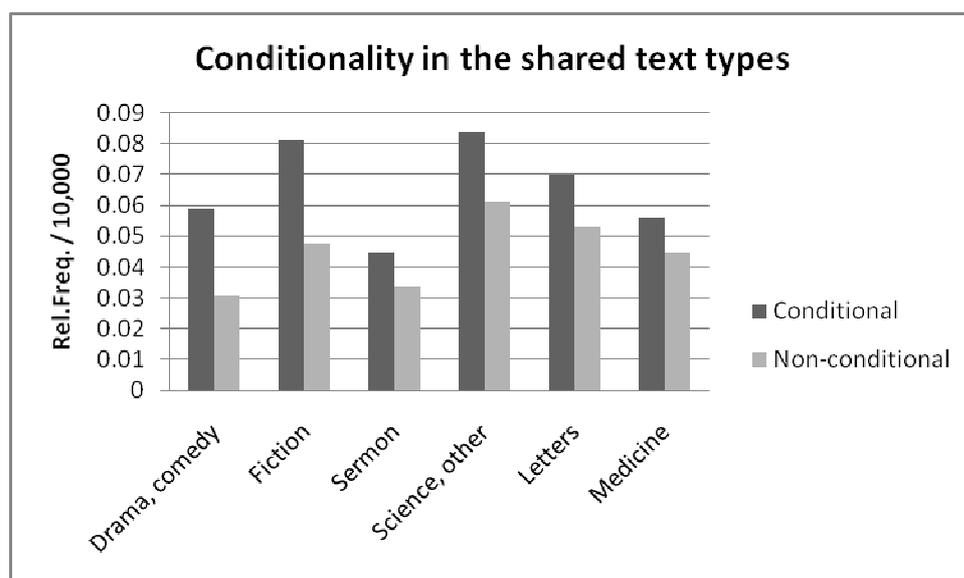


Figure 6.3
The distribution of conditionality in the shared text types

The assumption that the abbreviated *if*-structures are instances of grammaticalisation has been partially validated, and thus the abbreviated *if*-structures are considered to be only weakly grammaticalised. It is hypothesised that some elliptical structures have since developed into set phrases. Thence the changes in certain abbreviated *if*-structures can also be attributed to lexicalisation: negative scalar comments (e.g. *if any*, *if at all*, *if ever*) and the pragmatic marker *if possible* are lexicalised *set phrases*, and positive scalar comments (i.e. [*if not* +...]) can be treated as lexicalised *set constructions*. It was also put forth that pragmaticalisation takes place in the case of *if possible*; however, besides the pragmatic implication, also the conditional interpretations of *if possible* can be found.

Perspectives

The results presented in the study can be seen as remarkable tendencies as opposed to definite or categorical rules, and these could be either supported or refuted if more materials were taken into consideration (i.e. including more corpora from various time periods, specialised corpora). However, the various queries raised in the work offer interesting prospects for follow-up research, not only related to the English language, but also to cross-linguistic studies (cf. Section 2.5, for instance, and other languages like German, Italian). Besides, it also might be beneficial to have a semantic analysis of full *if*-clauses as well as to compare the different realisations of conditionals (apart from *if*-conditionals). Furthermore, in order to obtain an overall picture of abbreviated structures, it might be worth considering other conjunctions as well.

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