

On the origin, development and use of conditional clauses.

The case of *falls*-clauses in German

Introduction. In Present-day German (1900 -) conditional clauses can be introduced in two different ways: (i) moving the finite verb to the first position in the clause (= verb first conditionals; cf. Axel & Wöllstein 2009 and Reis & Wöllstein 2010), (ii) using the complementizer *wenn* (cf. Hinterwimmer 2008) or *falls* (both: 'if'). Not much is known, however, about how *falls*-conditionals emerged and to what extent they differ from the other two patterns. The aim of this talk is twofold. First, I will reanalyze the origin and outline the development of *falls*-clauses. Second, I shall highlight their main usage properties at the syntax-semantics interface, show to what extent they differ from *wenn*-conditionals as well as account for where these differences come from.

Synchronic analysis. Syntactically, it has been assumed that adverbial clauses can occupy different positions within the host clause and that these positions correlate not only with interpretative differences, but also with differences as to the choice of the complementizer. Accordingly, the received wisdom has it that adverbial clauses can be divided into three main groups: (i) central adverbial clauses (= CACs), (ii) peripheral adverbial clauses (= PACs), and (iii) non-integrated adverbial clauses (= NACs) (cf. e.g. Hageman 2006, 2010 for English and Frey 2011, 2012 for German). Whereas CACs are taken to be merged with the IP- or VP-domain of the associated matrix clause and thus depend on its illocutionary force, PACs seem to possess their own illocutionary potential and be merged with the associated matrix CP. NACs, in turn, are deemed to be independent speech acts connected with the matrix clause in a pragmatic way. Keeping this division in mind, I assume German *falls*-clauses to be PACs:

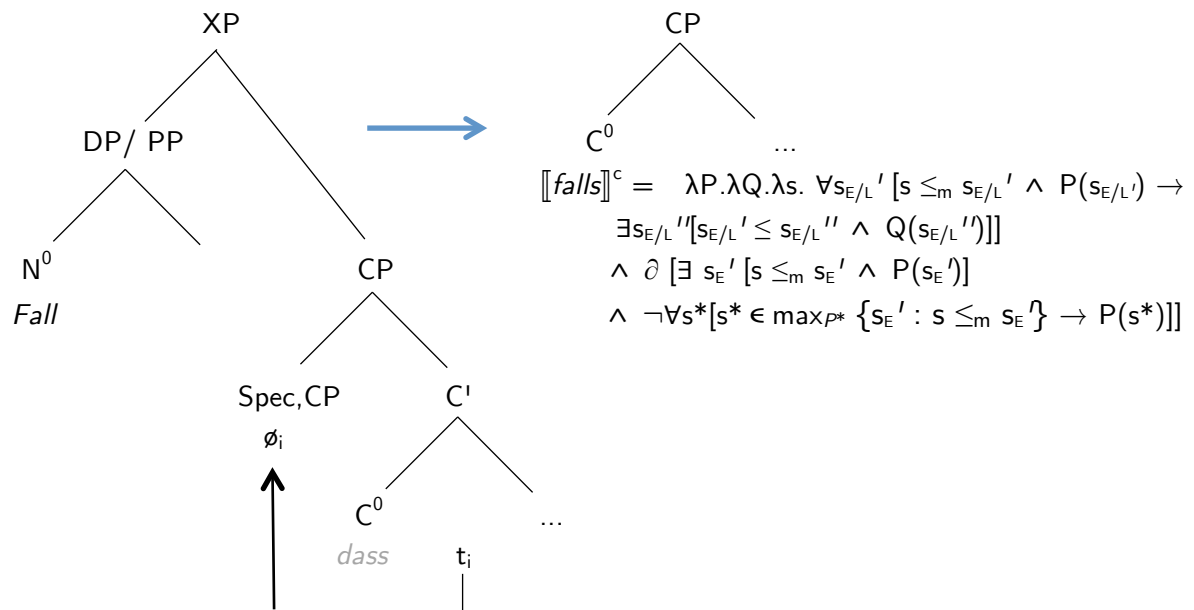
- (1) *Falls dann doch mal ein Kunde nicht ganz zufrieden ist,*
if then MP MP a customer NEG really satisfied is
kann er sich problemlos an den Chef wenden.
can he REFL problem-free to the boss address.INF

'If a customer is not satisfied, he can contact the boss without any problems.'

(DeReKo, *Hamburger Morgenpost*, 23/1/2008)

Arguments provided for this analysis come from various syntactic tests. First, CACs and PACs - contrary to NACs - can occupy the prefield position of the matrix clause, meaning that a NAC analysis for (1) must be ruled out. Second, the example given in (1) simultaneously illustrates that *falls*-clauses can host modal particles (*doch* and *mal* in 1). As modal particles are prohibited in CACs, it straightforwardly follows that *falls*-clauses ought to be analyzed as PACs. Other arguments supporting this view involve: a) accessibility to matrix negation, b) matrix focus particle scope, (iii) interrogative operator scope, (iv) intonational integration, (v) ellipsis of the matrix clause, and (vi) association with a correlative element within the matrix clause. Semantically, I argue that every *falls*-clause can be replaced by a *wenn*-clause, but not the other way round. This restriction follows from the compositional meaning of both complementizers. Following Hinterwimmer (2013), I argue that *falls* is a universal quantifier over possible worlds presupposing two restrictions related to the epistemic state of the speaker. First, *falls* requires the presence of at least some situations being compatible with the speaker's knowledge where the antecedent proposition is true. Second, *falls* does not allow the antecedent proposition to be true in all of the best situations that are compatible with the speaker's knowledge where the antecedent proposition is true. As it will be shown, these restrictions account for why *falls* is unacceptable in, for instance, factual conditionals (cf. Iatridou 1991).

Diachronic analysis. Mainly, I will show that *falls* grammaticalized into a complementizer in Early New High German (1350 - 1650):



Based on the reanalysis depicted above, I claim that *falls* grammaticalized from the lexical noun head *Fall* 'case' being modified by an attributive clause that, in turn, is headed by the relative particle *dass* 'that'. As the example given in (3) illustrates, the relative particle could be realized covertly, as well, triggering the verb last position in the adverbial clause:

(2) $[[DP/PP [N^0 \textit{Fall}(es)]] + [C^0 \textit{overt dass}]] \rightarrow [[DP/PP [N^0 \textit{Fall}(es)]] + [C^0 \textit{covert dass}]] \rightarrow [C^0 \textit{falls}]$

(3) *Jm fall sie aber solches nicht in der g^eute thun wolten/*
 in.the case they but such NEG in the good do.INF want.3PL.PST
solten sie bald darzu gezwungen werden.
 should.3PL.PST they soon to.that force.PTCP PASS.AUX.INF

'But in the case they wouldn't want to do such a thing in a good intention, they should be forced soon to do it.' (BfK, Sigmund von Birken, *Spiegel*, Nürnberg, 1668, p. 64, lines 4-7)

Two assumptions follow from the approach taken here. First, an adverbial clause develops out of an attributive clause by an N^0 into C^0 incorporation. Such a morphological incorporation entails the semantic restrictions imposed on the *falls*-clause (see the semantic analysis above), which were originally specified in the attributive clause modifying the N-head *Fall* 'case'. Second, there is no need to postulate a radical language change process, according to which the N-head *Fall* 'case' would develop directly into the C-head *falls* 'if'. An attributive clause headed by a (c)overt particle *dass* 'that' is proposed to build a diachronic intermediate stage (see also Axel-Tober 2016 and Meyer 2016 for a similar reanalysis of complement clauses).

Conclusion. As it turns out, German *falls*-clauses provide new insights into how adverbial clauses can emerge in general and how their emergence circumstances determine their use nowadays.

Selected references. W. Frey (2011): Peripheral adverbial clauses, their licensing and the prefield in German, in: *Zur Interaktion von Form, Bedeutung und Diskursfunktion* ed. by E. Breindl, G. Ferraresi & A. Volodina, 41-77. Berlin: de Gruyter. L. Haegeman (2010): The internal syntax of adverbial clauses, in: *Lingua* 120: 628-648. S. Hinterwimmer (2013): A comparison of the conditional complementizers *if* and *falls*. Talk and handout delivered at ZAS, June 24. S. Iatridou (1991): *Topics in Conditionals*. PhD thesis, MIT. M. Reis & A. Wöllstein (2010): Zur Grammatik (vor allem) konditionaler V1-Gefüge im Deutschen, in: *Zeitschrift für Sprachwissenschaft* 29: 111-179.