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Connecting conditionals: a corpus-based approach to conditional constructions in Dutch

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Stellingen

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Connecting Conditionals

A Corpus-Based Approach to Conditional Constructions in Dutch

Alex Reunecker

1. Combining truth-conditional and non-truth-conditional analyses of conditional constructions uncovers meaning aspects beyond what these approaches can reveal in isolation (this dissertation).
2. Conditionals in natural language deviate in at least two clearly identifiable ways from material implication: they express that neither of the individual propositions is asserted, and they present these individual propositions as connected (this dissertation).
3. Several grammatical features of Dutch conditional constructions do not conform to what is commonly viewed as their ‘default’ use. Inspection of actual language use can reveal such an insight (this dissertation).
4. It is theoretically insightful to define general categories of conditionals, but it is as insightful to test such cognitive constructs on empirical grounds. Reflection on the results suggests that the fundamentals of categorising conditionals need revision (this dissertation).
5. Linguistic analysis is not a Procrustean bed – utterances regularly resist clear-cut classification or ‘tidy pigeonholing’ (cf. Hempel, 1965, p. 151). Such utterances should not be dismissed as aberrations, but should be discussed explicitly.
6. Annotation of natural language data should be done in collaboration, and with sufficient room for discussion.
7. Despite ample quantitative evaluations, linguists and other researchers should always conduct qualitative analyses of results.
8. The algorithmic approaches to data that have entered linguistics and other academic disciplines are often described as ‘objective’. Given the influence researchers have on their parameters, this view is misleading and has serious scientific and societal consequences.
9. Seeking and finding are not two sides of the same coin: ‘What could I say to you that would be of value, except that perhaps you seek too much, that as a result of your seeking you cannot find’ (Hermann Hesse, *Siddharta*, 1922, p. 113).
10. Writing a dissertation and preparing for a marathon are both exhausting and daunting tasks. That is where the analogy should end.