Is there any cross-linguistic difference in conditionality?

A study of Chinese conditionals in political discourse

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July 2015
Abstract

This study investigates conditionals in Chinese within the framework of English conditional construction, developed by Sweetser and others. Its central concern is to find out in what ways the Chinese conditional construction differs from the English one.

The study is situated in a Chinese diplomatic discourse. Based on a qualitative analysis, it is found that four main forms of Chinese conditionals occur in the corpus in a way that might be influenced by the strategic way of delivering information in the discourse. Meanwhile, the contrast between Chinese conditionals and English conditionals has been concluded, regarding syntactic differences.

This study sheds light on the cross-culture use of conditionals and offers valuable suggestions for further research into this domain.
Chapter 6 Discussion

6.1. The existence and non-existence of Chinese conditionals
   6.1.1 The existence of ruguo construction
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References
1.1 Background considerations

As introduced by Traugott et al (1986:3); “conditional (if-then) constructions directly reflect the characteristically human ability to reason about alternative situations, to make inferences based on incomplete information, to imagine possible correlations between situations and to understand how the world would change if certain correlations were different”.

When it comes to the definition of what a conditional construction is, answers may vary between different fields of studies. From a linguistic point of view, a conditional sentence is a two-clause sentence with protasis as the dependent clause, expressing the condition, and the apodosis as the main clause, expressing the consequence. However, in unmarked examples sometimes the protasis states hypothesis and the apodosis shows the consequence, (Elliot, 1981), as in ‘if $p$, then $q$’, the order can be reversed as ‘$q$, if $p$’, where $q$ is always the apodosis. There are a wide variety of definitions by various scholars, which not only proves that it is not easy to select one precise description, but also shows that there may be difficulties and distinctions in different types of sentences, and in figuring out the relationship between protasis and apodosis. For convenience, this study is going to use protasis ($p$) and apodosis ($q$) as the terminology to represent condition and consequence respectively in a conditional sentence.

Conditionals have been viewed from different perspectives and studied in various research fields. From a cognitive point of view, Dancygier and Sweetser (2005) emphasized the importance of mental space. For example, they claim that the important thing about conditionality is that it should be regarded within the space set up by conditional clauses. Johnson-Laird Byrne (2002) studied conditionality from a psychological perspective, for example, why conditionals could be misunderstood sometimes, and how knowledge, semantics and pragmatics work to modulate meaning. Although if as a marker of conditionality in English has been studied widely
and there are existing researches on studying Chinese conditionals (see Chierchia 2000; Eifring 1995; Wang 2012), when it comes to cross-linguistic studies in this field, a majority focuses on language acquisition, for example how Chinese speakers learn English conditionals (see Cheng 2005; Norris 2003), and few researches have drawn attention situated in a specific discourse of Chinese politics.

Fairclough (1995) terms political discourse using the phrase “ideologies reside in texts”, where the texts are open to various interpretations. In the struggle for power and delivery of ideology, language plays an essential role, preparing the political action and influencing it. As politics is a quite broad topic, this study will restrict the corpus within diplomatic discourse, which is a sub-genre of political discourse. Van Dijk (2011:313) defines that political discourses have varies status—foreign policy and diplomacy) can be regarded as the “inner-state discourse” of political discourse. Meanwhile, despite the fact that there is difference between diplomatic discourse and political discourse, there are similarities, e.g. they both can leave many things unsaid (Chilton, 2004) and deliver attitude in a tactical manner.

1.2 The topic of this study

As mentioned above, although there are already various researches on conditional constructions in different contexts, only a few of these are concerned with cross-linguistic difference, especially situated in a political discourse. Therefore the first and foremost goal in this study is to identify whether there is any difference between English and Chinese in form and function of meaning construction through conditionals within a specific political discourse. Chinese, as an isolating language that is quite different from Germanic languages, is a “heterogeneous mixture of the classical tradition” that is a combination of written literature before the 20th century and now-a-day modern colloquial Mandarin speech (Li & Thompson, 1981). It is also due to the distinguished nature of Chinese language itself that it can never be clearly illustrated only restricted to grammatical factors. Meanwhile, as conditionality is extensively investigated by scholars and has proven to be complex and heterogeneous,
this study limits its scope to the use of conditionals in Chinese political texts, from various perspectives. Especially regarding the cross-linguistic studies in this field, as a majority of them focus on language acquisition, for example, how Chinese speakers learn English conditionals (see Cheng 2005; Norris 2003), and few researches have yet drawn attention situated in a specific discourse of Chinese politics.

1.3 Research questions

The research questions are structured as follows:

**Research question:** How are conditionals used in Chinese political context from a lexical to pragmatic level to deliver information strategically?

(1) What types of conditional clauses are used in a written Chinese diplomatic discourse?

(2) Which types of conditionals are typical and strategic (e.g. being vague/being persuasive) in delivering messages in the chosen political discourse?

(3) Is there any specific existence of conditionality in the Chinese context, which English does not have or vice versa?

Given these goals and research questions, linguistic theories of conditionality will be applied in a Chinese political context for the purpose of comparison with English. To be more specific, in chapter two I will revisit some existing literature concerning conditional construction in the two languages, as well as making a general introduction on Chinese conditionals. In chapter 3, I will briefly introduce the corpus and methodology. Following this, the results and analysis will be provided in chapter 4. In chapter 5, the findings for each research question will be concluded, along with an overview for the study. In the end, in chapter 6, these results will be discussed and indications for future studies will be suggested.
Chapter 2 Theoretical Background

The main goal of this chapter is to review the literature on conditionals both in English and in Mandarin Chinese, providing insight for the theoretical framework I am going to use. This chapter is based on the relevance of the theories on conditionality for my own study. In the first part, I will review related main issues on conditional construction in English. Then I will find examples of how Chinese conditionals are constructed and classified. Counterfactuality, as a widely discussed topic in this field, will also be presented here, especially regarding the situation of counterfactuality in Chinese. The reason of focusing on counterfactuality in Chinese conditionals is not just because it is a widely discussed theme, but also because that counterfactuality may act as a strategic information delivery way (corresponding to research question 2), for it may contain implicature under various circumstances. In the end, an overview on semantic and pragmatic perspectives of conditionality and an overview of other pragmatic theories related to the chosen discourse are provided, as basis for the analysis of this research.

2.1. Generalization on English conditional construction

2.1.1 An overview

Traditionally, grammarians consider conditional constructions as combinations of constitutive sentences or clauses (Gudmundur, 2000), which means that different from a conditional clause, a conditional construction refers to a class of sentences where there is a conditional clause (protasis) and a consequence (apodosis), for example if a clause can be regarded as the adverbial clause (the conditional clause/protasis) of the entire conditional construction. There are several factors that can help determine the meaning of conditionals: verb tense, time relation, mood (whether it is indicative or subjunctive) and modality, as well as the connectives involved. Syntactically, focusing on verb phrases in conditional constructions plays
an important role in understanding the meaning of conditionals.

(1) If you go out without umbrella, you will get wet (Comrie, 1986).
(2) If you went out without umbrella, you would get wet.
(3) If you had gone out without umbrella, you would have gotten wet.

From the example (1)-(3) above, we can see the three most common verb patterns in conditional construction. In (1), the verb form in the protasis (p) is in present tense, while in the apodosis (q) it is a bare infinitive, presenting the situation as a general rule or prediction. The p in (2) has a past tense verb and the q has a bare infinitive, which indicates to some extent the unlikelihood of going out without an umbrella. In (3), it is a combination of past perfect tense in p and a modal verb +past participle in the q, focusing on the counterfactual nature of the situation.

For English conditional construction, time relation can manifest the relationship between protasis and apodosis. However, it is crucial to note that time reference in conditionals is not always overtly manifested. For example, sometimes present-indicative can be used as future reference of time (Comrie, 1986). There may be mismatches between form and function, as the examples below show:

(4) If it rains, I will leave.
(5) If it does not work, you didn’t wait long enough.

As manifested in (4), the present simple tense does not refer to present conditionality, but indicate the possibility of a certain event that might happen in the future. While in (5), the verb form in the protasis also represents something that might happen later, which is indicative. Thus the causal relation it carries also relates past to the future.

So far, there has been an increasing amount of debate on conditional constructions, ranging from basic descriptions to more theoretical approaches. While traditional grammarians insist that their analysis should focus on syntax, more
specifically, verb forms, there are other people that have already started deploying other approaches to study the meaning of conditionals. According to Carter-Thomas and Rowley-Jolivet (2014), regarding verb forms in conditional sentences, there often appear to be three types of “canonical forms” that contribute to the increase of hypotheticality: present+future; past+condition; past perfect+ condition. While grammarians often keep their considerations within these three forms that are to a larger extent for educational purposes, Carter-Thomas and Rowley-Jolivet (2014) also mention that the three “canonical” sequences cannot give a full picture of how conditionals are used in an actual discourse, when examining conditionals from a syntactic perspective. Therefore, besides the three most common verb sequences, they also investigate other verb sequences in protasis and apodosis. For example, it is found that the truncated form, as an economical way of style, can add to the argumentative discussion, as in” If clinically indicated, additional imagining studies were obtained” (Carter-Thomas and Rowley-Jolivet 2014:69). The ellipsis in the protasis can be partially or complete, but does not lose any meaning expressed by the sentence. This ellipsis may contribute to other functions, such as pragmatic functions in reducing possible responsibility, as required by specific context.

Modals, as another syntactic perspective, can have various roles in different situations. First, they may be used freely, as in (4): the will can be replaced into could/might/may/should as well. However it is the degree of hedging that should be taken into account when measuring the modal values. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), hedging is an instance of keeping negative politeness, in terms of their politeness theory, which is going to be elaborated further in 2.3.2. Through hedging, people can show ways of “avoidance”, that is, to avoid expressions that could possibly make others feel imposed. Second, modals can contribute to speech act as well, to express comment, request, threat or advice (Alexander, 2007). When examining a conditional sentence, looking at the use of modality can also reflect the degree of hypotheticality, e.g. can tends to have a lower certainty than will (Palmer 2014). Meanwhile by measuring modal values, according to Hoye (2004), it also affects the sentence meaning on a semantic level; for example, modals can sometimes
formulate politeness and mitigation, or show reinforcement and emphasis.

(6) Put that down or I will kill you.

In the example above, there is no overt if-marker, but an imperative clause in the protasis, while a conjunction is used in between, to make the sentence grammatical. The meaning expressed as a threat can also be paraphrased in this way: *if you do not put that down, I will kill you.* Without any conditional marker, or here contributes to constructing the conditional sentence, which adds negative meaning to indicate a reverse consequence if the condition cannot be met.

At the same time, apart from verb forms, there are other elements to help make sure the utterances express conditionality. Sanford (1989:1) states that a representative and typical conditional clause contains a main clause and no less than one if-clause, while at the same time it is common for a conditional sentence to have several if-clauses. Thus *if* may be considered as a typical mark of a conditional sentence. Despite the fact that English can also express conditionality without overt markers, e.g. inversion of subject and verb (Comrie, 1986), in formal discourse, as has widely been examined, it is still necessary to have conjunctions to introduce the protasis or apodosis. Related expressions include: *if, in case, provided that, suppose that, given,* etc. and some will be discussed later. Specifically, when dealing with *if,* there are a group of expressions that function differently.

(7) I will give you money only if you finish cleaning the room.

(8) I will consider your suggestion *if and only if* you win me.

(9) *Even if* you are my uncle, you have no right to interrupt me.

Above are three examples of different *if*-involved expressions that have their own logical pattern and meanings. In (7) we may want to say that the protasis acts as a necessity for the apodosis to be true, that “finishing cleaning the room” sounds like a necessary condition for “give you money”. However in (8) *if and only if* occurs
introducing a necessary condition. Compared to the two markers, even if in (9) seems less complicated, as the protasis it introduces holds true whatever the apodosis is, and vice versa.

Moreover, according to Swan (1997), if also possesses the meaning similar to although, which is found to be frequently used in formal situations.

In short, this section has introduced how conditional sentences are often formed, and the relation between the protasis and the apodosis. The markers of conditionality have been provided with examples and will be further categorized in the following section.

2.1.2. Classification

Various perspectives should be taken into consideration when talking about the classification of conditionals in English. For example, it is important to see whether the conditionals are hypothetical or factual, open or closed as well as what their speech acts are, etc. (Declerck& Reed, 2001). As concluded by Li and Thompson (1981), there are three major types of information that conditional sentences aim to express: reality, imaginative, and counterfactual. In this section, I am going to start by looking at the influential and relevant frameworks for the classification of English conditionals.

Sweetser’s framework

One of the typologies proposed on conditional structures is by Sweetser(1990) on conceptual domains. She proposed a tripartite division of conditionals—content, epistemic and speech-act.

For a content conditional, it is a causal relation between the protasis and apodosis. As explained by Warchal (2010), it is the acceptance of truth of the proposition in the protasis that results in the affirmation of the proposition later in the apodosis. According to their Mental Space Theory, Dancygier and Sweetser (2005) termed what
the speaker is first engaged in as “a space of mental content”. The example was given (2005:16) as, “If I tie my handkerchief around it it’ll stick”. It is a content conditional with a predicative function.

For epistemic conditionals, Sweetser (1990) suggests that what is expressed in the protasis (hypothetical) should be sufficient in bringing truth to the proposition in the apodosis. Therefore there would be an inferential relation. Sweetser (1994) made a distinction between content conditionals and what she termed as epistemic conditionals, which “follow the speaker’s reasoning process in a conditional manner and set up an epistemic space” (Dancygier and Sweetser 2005; 17). One example mentioned by Dancigier and Sweetser (2005:17) is “if the lights are on, they must be at home”. In this example, the relationship between the two clauses does not have the causal contingency, as the lights will not influence the their being at home in a causal way. In this case, it is the relationship between the beliefs of the speaker and the conclusion he/she might draw. Examples of epistemic conditionals can also found in “If he loves her, he’ll type her thesis”(Dancigier and Sweetser 2005:117). This type of conditional sentence is quite often used in reasoning (see Verbrugge and Smessaert 2011).

Unlike content and epistemic conditionals, the process of reasoning may operate from known facts or possibilities. When the speaker sets up a discourse context, it is termed as the speech-act space (Dancygier and Sweetser 2005:16), where there is a “appropriacy” relation between the protasis and apodosis. The speech act in the consequence is based on what is stated in the protasis.

There are metalinguistic examples that are further categorized as speech-act conditionals or epistemic conditionals. An example of such a speech-act conditional is (10).

(10) If you need any help, my name is Ann. (2005:110)

In (10), it is speech-act conditional without any predicative or causative function. Dancygier and Sweetser (2005:113) define that speech act conditionals occur where
if-clauses do not modify the content of the protasis anymore, but the speech act, which the main clause indicate. In this case, Ann as someone’s name does not change whether people need help or not. Thus the protasis is contextualized.

There are also predicative epistemic conditionals depending on the context, as in “if people go to this beach, there must be a way” (Dancygier and Sweetser 2005:125). In this utterance, the conditional is structured by prediction, and then a hypothetical space is built (ibid).

In summary, the reason why Dancygier and Sweetser’s classification of conditionals will be adopted in this study is two-fold. First, they made a distinction between semantic and pragmatic ways of classifying conditional sentences. Different from the usual approaches that analyze either forms or functions of conditional construction, they prefer analyzing both the form and the functions, and from a dichotomized point of view, they categorize conditional construction from perspectives of semantics and pragmatics. Second, regarding semantics, Dancygier and Sweetser (2005) especially show how verb tense, order of the clause, prediction, causality as well as mental space work to contribute to the meaning of the construction. Their categorization is to a large extent based on different kinds of mental spaces. Therefore for answering the research questions, this tripartite division of conditionals can provide an insight into how semantics and pragmatics function in understanding conditionals.

Other classifications

There are various typologies from scholars of different fields, e.g. philosophers, linguists and grammarians (see Comrie 1986; Kitis 2004).

Declerk and Reed (2001) list a possible-world typology of conditionals. They divide conditionals mainly into factual-P conditionals and Theoretical-world conditionals. Generally speaking, protasis is claimed to create what they call a “suppositional world” (Declerk and Reed 2001: 67), where the apodosis is situated. For factual-P conditionals, it is in a world that is true or partly true, where repetitive habits are involved, as in
(11) If I had a problem, I always went to my grandmother (2001:67).

Moreover, for Theoretical-P conditionals, the “supposition world” of P is further subdivided into several types. There are neutral conditionals and non-neutral conditionals. Neutral conditionals refer to those with no supposition associated with a world created by the protasis, more specifically, there is no assumption that the P-clause refers to true, possibly true, false or unlikely-to-become true things in the real word (Declerk and Reed 2001: 67). Meanwhile non-neutral conditionals have four sub-types:

a) Closed-P conditionals: P-clauses imply the factual world.
“‘If the work will be done anyhow, I might as well have a lie down.’ (2001:81)

b) Open-P conditionals: P-clauses often refer to possibilities, involving future conditionals.
“‘If the train is late, we will miss our connection in London.’ (2001:91)

c) Tentative-P conditionals: the possibility of P-world corresponding with the actual world is unlikely
“‘If he took the syrup he would get better.’ (2001:94)

d) Counterfactual-P conditionals: P-world is a contradiction to the real world.
“‘If I were you, I wouldn’t go there.’ (2001:99)

To summarize, this study will involve both Dancygier and Sweetser’s classification and Declerk and Reed’s, as they focus on different aspects of conditionals and provide a more detailed framework for analyzing Chinese conditionals. For Sweetser and Dancygier, they elaborate on the tripartite typology of conditional classification and also concern themselves with processing. Meanwhile, Declerk and Reed propose another typology, which is proposed to fill many of the existing gaps in conditional theories, and bring together all the typologies that have been used so far. Both of the two typologies fit the main research question of
examining Chinese conditionals from syntax to semantics and pragmatics, as both of them reflect not merely syntactic structures within a conditional construction, but also the nature of conditional interpretations that could go beyond syntax and semantics.

2.2 Conditional sentences in Chinese

2.2.1 An overview

Similarly in Chinese, the conditionals can be divided into the three categories mentioned above: reality, imaginative hypotheticality and counterfactuality, but are presented in different forms. Comrie (1986) states that sometimes a conditional construction can be interpreted even without any explicit indication of conditionality, but not for all languages. Chinese is one of the examples, which can contain both implicit markers and explicit indications in different situations (Comrie 1986).

Generally, Chinese conditional sentences are divided into two broad categories (Chao 1968). This is different from the way English conditionals are usually divided into categories.

a) Sufficient conditional sentence

b) Necessary conditional sentence

Sufficient conditionals refer to those sentences consisting of the connectives zhiyao;

(11) 只要有钱，就可以去。

Zhiyao youqian, jiu keyi qu.

If have money, then can go.

If you have money, you can go.

The subordinate clause (protasis) acts as the sufficient condition of the main clause (apodosis). When the condition stated by the subordinate clause is true, the results proposed in the main clause ought to be true. In other words, the protasis presents the minimum requirement for the apodosis being true. If the minimum
requirement cannot be met, the apodosis does not necessarily have to be true.

Necessary conditional sentences are often marked by zhiyou (only if) and chufei (unless), where \( p \) is considered as the exclusive condition for \( q \) being true:

(12) 只有获得签证，你才能去美国。

Zhiyou huode qianzheng, ni caineng qu meiguo.

Only if get visa, you only can go the US.

Only if you get the visa, can you go to the US.

In necessary conditional sentences, the protasis acts as the necessary condition for the apodosis being true. Without this necessary condition, the proposition in the apodosis cannot be true. Therefore a necessary conditional sentence represents a compulsory condition. In this way this type of conditional sentence set its condition as a necessary and must-fulfilled task, and if there is no condition, there is no result. The necessary condition in the protasis affects the hypothetical (mental) space, which is opened up by the apodosis, by restricting its realization to only those situations in which the condition is fulfilled.

Meanwhile, apart from the two-way classification, there is another important point in using connectives to express conditionality in Chinese. Connectives include conjunctions (ruguo/zhiyao/zhiyou/chufei) and conjunctions (cai/dou/jiu) that show conditional relation. Connectives in Chinese conditionals mainly function in three ways. First, their basic function is to link sentences. Second, they play a vital role in marking conditionals—they occur where there is a conditional sentence. Xin (2001) mentions that these markers can display, choose, and emphasize a conditional relation. Only when a conditional marker is understood and comprehended, can the type of conditional sentences be fully revealed. Lastly, a third function of these connective markers is their metaphoric influence, which is necessary in revealing a certain attitude and ideology.

The specification of different forms of Chinese conditionals will be presented in the next section.
2.2.2 Forms of Chinese conditionals

English conditionals have been studied extensively. Classifications such as Declerk and Reed (2005) show many forms and functions of conditionals. This has, however, not been done for Chinese conditionals. This paragraph therefore introduces the most common ways of expressing conditionality in Chinese.

**Ruguo (if)**

While English conditionality is very often examined through *if-*markers, the corresponding Chinese conditional marker that is frequently used is 如果 ruguo (if). As a conjunction, it can be used independently in the conditional clause, and most of the time it shows different degrees of hypotheticality. As sufficient conditionals, it sometimes is interchangeable with zhiyao-jiu, therefore the zhiyao-jiu expression will not be further explained in this section.

(13) 如果出太阳，我们就去野餐。

Ruguo chu taiyang, women jiu qu yecan.

If out sun, we then go to picnic.

If it is sunny, we will go picnic.

It should also be noted that here the protasis is marked by 如果 ruguo(if), which is forward linking and represents that the protasis is dependent on the apodosis. 就 jiu (then) in the apodosis is a marker equivalent to *then* in English, which also helps to refer anaphorically. As concluded by Li and Thompson (1981), it belongs to the type of forward-linking construction of conditionals.

*Ruguo* sometimes occurs together with 的话 de hua. In this combination, *if* acts as the adverbial connector, while dehua can be regarded as a supplement. Moreover *dehua* here can also be seen as a marker for conditionality, as it further turns the
ruguo sentences into a hypothetical sentence.

There are many situations in Chinese where this combination is used. In my opinion, de hua is more related to conditionality, while ruguo functions as a conditional marker and to some extent reflects hypotheticality.

(14) 如果你再不写作业的话
ruguo ni zai buxie zuoye de hua
if you again no write homework
If you keep on not doing homework

The meaning will stay the same if either ruguo or de hua occurs. Therefore de hua may be related to conditioning as well.

Chufei
Another word that correspond to the English unless is 除非 chufei. Similar to ruguo, it is also dependent, meaning that it generally cannot form sentences on its own. However sometimes, when an interrogative is used in the position of a conditional clause, chufei makes an independent sentence (Eifring, 1995).

(15) 别想涨工资。除非你三天之内写完报告。
biexiang zhang gongzi, chufei ni santi zheni xie wan baogao.
Do not think raise salary. Unless you three day within write finish report.
Don’t think about getting your salary raised unless you finish the report in three days.

Verbless conditionals
Conditionality in Chinese can sometimes be expressed without a linking verb.

(16) 你们不做工，我们不付钱。
nimen buzuo gong, women bu fuqian.
You not work, we not pay.
If you don’t work, we will not pay.

Although it is true that English often has similar expressions like “no work, no pay” that lacks a conditional marker as well, in written discourse this kind of expression does not occur as frequently as in Chinese conditionals. Even in a formal situation, it is common to refer to conditionality without any explicit markers in Chinese. Moreover, this example also manifests that verb tense may play an important role in conditionals.

The above-mentioned examples are frequently used Chinese expressions of conditionality. However, unlike English conditionals that are syntactic-conditioned most of the time, it is hard to distinguish whether a Chinese conditional construction is talking about reality, imaginative hypotheticality or counterfactuality.

(17) 如果你听我的，就不会出事。
Ruguoni ting wo de, jiu buhui chushi.
If you listen mine, then no accident.
If you listen to me, you will not be in trouble.

When this utterance is interpreted as the example demonstrates, it is talking about the reality, as the tense indicates. However it can also be interpreted using different tenses: “if you listened to me, you would not be in trouble” indicating hypotheticality; “if you had listened to me, you wouldn’t have been in trouble” indicating counterfactuality. Therefore, this example may be a manifestation of the fact that context plays a vital part in understanding conditionals.

Although morphologically speaking, Chinese is not an inflectional language, there are instances that can change the meaning of conditionals by simply adding a verbal aspect marker 了 le.
如果不是他去美国(了)，我会找他谈谈。

Ruguo bushi ta qu meiguo, wo hui zhao ta tantan.
If not he go USA, I will find him talk.
If he does not go to USA, I will talk to him.

When adding the aspect marker (as shown in the brackets), the sentence meaning will become “if he didn’t/hadn’t go to USA, I will talk/would have talked to him, changing a factual statement into hypothetical or counterfactual expression, for which contextual factors are required to differentiate.

(19) 只有好好学习，你才能考及格。

Zhiyou haohao xuexi, ni cai neng kaojige.
Only good study, you then can exam pass
Only if you study hard, can you pass the exam.

This is a typical example of necessary conditionals. 只有 cai here is an adverb that has a fixed position. Although here in the example, the statements in both the two clauses are positive, they can also be negative in regards to expressing a necessary condition.

Syntactically, 只有 can also be put in the postposition, as in yao…zhiyou. The positions for 只有 and the subject is interchangeable, as in ni zhiyou (you only if) or zhiyouni (only if you).

A typical syntactic structure of the necessary conditional sentence marked by chufei is shown as follow

(20) 除非下雨，不然我们不会迟到。

Chufei xiayu, buran women buhui chidao.
Unless fall rain, or we will not late
Unless it rains, we will not be late.
The apodosis is linked with negative-meaning conjunction buran (not). *Chufei* can also be postposed, e.g. q, chufei p, which is similar to *unless* in English. Still using the example above to illustrate, the conjunction buran is no more needed, and the sentence becomes as in (21):

(21) 我们不会迟到，除非下雨  
    womenbuhuichidao, chufeixiayu  
    We will not late, unless rains.  
    We will not be late, unless it rains

2.2.3 Counterfactuals in Chinese conditionals

According to Goodman (2005)’s division, counterfactuality requires both protasis and apodosis being false. Declerk and Reed (2001) define that counterfactual is when a speaker presupposed that it is false in the real world. They give two examples:

(22) a. I would have been happy if we had found a solution.  
    b. If he were here, he would stop you from doing that.

Hypotheticality, as stated by Comrie (1986), deals with the probability of realization of something, especially in the main clause. Conventionally, a factual sentence holds the lowest degree of hypotheticality, while a counterfactual clause might present the highest degree of hypotheticality. While hypotheticality as a term is used in many different senses both in linguistics and in philosophical literature, in conditional construction this term often marks predicative conditionals, (Dancygier and Sweetser 2005: 59), different degrees of which carry different epistemic stances. With past tense in the apodosis or pluperfect in protasis plus conditional perfect in the apodosis, it is claimed by Comrie (1986) that English does not have a separate class of counterfactual conditionals. Sometimes the interpretation actually depends on
context and presupposition.

While Bloom (1981)’s claim that there is no consistent linguistic form in expressing counterfactuality in Chinese, there are actually varying opinions about this. Neins (2002) finds it different in grammars of other languages, such as Mandarin, Hebrew, Slovenian, where they choose a complementizer to express counterfactuality. Moreover, unlike English, the expressed falsity of a certain proposition in the counterfactuality conditionals cannot be cancelled, as it is not only an implicature (Anderson 1951; Comrie 1987). There are some lexical and syntactic marks relating to counterfactual expression, e.g. 真的 (really), 要不是 (had it not been the case), 的话 (in that case), etc.

(23) 要是我真的中了彩票，我就马上辞职。
Yaoshi wo zhende zhongle caipiao, wo jiu mashang cizhi.
Be the case I really win the lottery, I will soon quit the job.
If I won the lottery, I would soon resign.

As an adverb here, 真的 does not hold its literal meaning ‘it is true’ any more. It appears with counterfactual meaning, while it does not carry any counterfactual predictions. Thus it is then grammaticalized. In a non-conditional sentence, it simply means admitting something is true, as the following example shows:

(24) 我真的不知道这事。
Wo zhende buzhidao zheshi.
I really no know this thing.
I really don’t know this.

Therefore in conditionality 真的 zhende tells something that might be out of our expectation of the real world and that is distant from real life, which often corresponds with the context it is situated in, and marks counterfactuality.
Counterfactual meaning can also be achieved through negation, e.g. 要不是 (had it not been the case), and its synonyms such as 不是 (not the case), 若非 (if not), etc.

(25) 要不是你的帮助，我便成了废人。
Yaobushini de bang zhu, wo bian chengle feiren.
Without your help, I will become useless man.
If it were not for your help, I would have become a disabled man.

The counterfactual marker—negation, usually indicates to something that does not happen in the past, which naturally refers to a counterfactual interpretation, as in (25).

2.3. Semantic and Pragmatic considerations

2.3.1. On conditionals

What I have mentioned so far mainly concerns a traditional typological view of conditionality, which focuses on syntax and grammar, e.g. tense and mood. However this is not enough for understanding conditionals in a specified communicative context anymore, for the meaning of a conditional sentence cannot be determined without context.

As an early breakthrough of studies in conditionality, Haiman (1978) investigates conditionals centered in structuring discourse and participants’ interactions. Young (1989) insists that the speaker’s intent, the context, as well as linguistic forms should all be included when understanding the meaning of an utterance. When examining in a linguistic context of Greek, he suggests that the simplistic view of semantics cannot recognize the full range, and lexical forms could have many meanings just like grammatical constructions.

Tailor (1997) also mentions this problem, and finds the traditional typological
view controversial, such as the “identically-worded” *if* can be interpreted differently based on the contextual factors.

(26) a. If he said that (and I heard him), then he’s a liar. (factual)
   b. If he said that (I don’t know if he did), then he’s a liar. (hypothetical)
   c. If he said that (I know he never would), then he would be a liar (counterfactual)

(Schwenter, 2013)

Schwenter (2013) illustrates with the *if* examples that the semantic content of the identically worded *if*-clauses are not always inherently “hypothetical”, and sometimes may arouse ambiguity.

This is also true in Chinese. For example, even the protasis marker can carry ambitious meaning that can be factual, hypothetical or counterfactual. An example of this can be found in (12), where several possible interpretations are possible, as Chinese does not always specify the time reference explicitly through verb tense (in fact, time relation usually is not marked by tense). Thus contextual factors are decisive in determining the conditionality. In this way, pragmatics are taken into consideration as well.

Syntax alone cannot be the whole picture, as it doesn’t explain the need for contextual clues. We therefore need to take pragmatics into account.

Sweetser (1990) states that the processes of our logic and thought should be based the knowledge of the physical and social world, thus linguistic expressions are not only descriptions of the physical world, but also are as actions and epistemic entities. She further makes a three-layer classification of conditionals: content, epistemic and speech act. For speech act, he illustrates that it is the protasis that makes the speech act in apodosis relevant. Similarly, Young (1989) proposes a new approach combining implicature (proposed by Grice in 1967) and speech act theory. Beaugrande and Dressler (1981) that words and utterances can be clues but not the final picture of the meaning. Therefore pragmatic considerations in conditional
construction are vital as well, as meanings delivered by the clauses involve both linguistic activities and various contextual factors. Young (1989) suggests that in the process of analyzing conditional sentences, the speech act theory will provide the model that the conditional clauses can be seen as “implicit performatives” that may go beyond signaling conditionals, e.g. to make assertions, to persuade, to manipulate, e.t.c. An example of analyzing if-conditionals can be found in Cheng (2002)’s work, who examines how if-clauses function in situational context and how pragmatic theories function in understanding conditionals.

Overall, we now have an account by various scholars (Sweetser 1990; Young 1989; Dressler 1981) that enables us to explain syntactically identical, but semantically different conditional utterances.

2.3.2 Other related pragmatic theories

Apart from the theories on conditional construction, other pragmatic theories are also necessary for analyzing data from a pragmatic level. For the rest of this chapter I will briefly introduce Conversational Implicature, politeness theory and pragmatic vagueness, matters that are vital in comprehending conditional construction.

*Grice’s Conversational Implicature*

Grice’s Cooperative Principle suggests that people should make a contribution in their verbal exchange when interacting with each other. He describes it as a general principle to “make your conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged” (1975: 45). This principle is not only applicable for conversation and verbal interactions, but also for written texts. The principle is further extended into four types of conversational maxims (Grice 1975), shown as follow:

(a) The Maxim of Quality: true contributions, avoiding statements that lack
evidence.
(b) The Maxim of Quantity: informative and sufficient.
(c) The Maxim of Relevance: being relevant.
(d) The Maxim of Manner: avoiding ambiguity.

As claimed by Grice (1975), the foremost goal of pragmatic communication is to cast light upon how conversational implicature could be potentially inferred. He takes the Cooperative Principle as the outcome of the conversation inferences. The Cooperative Principle emphasizes the interaction among people, and requires that interlocutors should contribute to their engaging talk exchange with a certain purpose. Moreover it illustrates the normal behavior of people’s interaction and how effective language is used.

As illustrated by the four conversational maxims, the interlocutors are anticipated to achieve those maxims for an effective and efficient communication. Moreover, the violation of these maxims may also carry a certain indication. Thus sometimes what is unsaid also conveys information that should not be neglected. Therefore it brings what is called “conversational implicature” (Grice 1975), which is an expressing technique indicating what is unsaid may also become clear with inference. This is vital in comprehending conditionals in political context as well.

*Politeness theory*

Politeness is also assumed to be a tactical strategy of delivering information in political discourse, especially in diplomatic discourse, and it is assumed to be important in demonstrating the pragmatic function of conditional sentences as well. One of the well-known linguistic theories on politeness was proposed by Brown and Levinson (1987). They stated that everyone has a *face* (which is incidentally also proposed by Goffman) defining it as “the public self-image”. In diplomatic discourse, there may be cases where positive politeness or negative politeness is applied. Especially for counterfactual conditionals, the possible vagueness that it carries might also contribute to protecting people’s negative face. This also leads to the notion of
pragmatic vagueness, which is closely related to how conditionals function in diplomatic discourse.

Pragmatic vagueness

Diplomatic discourse, as a particular category of political discourse, may have its distinctive language features, such as circumlocution, vagueness, implication, etc. Scott (2001:153) emphasizes the importance of vagueness and ambiguity in diplomatic texts, and that “precision” and “sought-for ambiguity” both are fundamental in diplomatic cases.

The features of diplomatic language are possibly influenced by various situational factors. Therefore in different diplomatic occasions, there may be different types of features.

One of the most expected features of diplomatic discourse may be vagueness, as in diplomatic discourse, there may be skillful politicians who are good at avoiding being offensive and keeping a seemingly neutral stance.

When tracing the term ‘vagueness’ back to its origins, what is found is that it has both a mathematical and physical origin and is derived first from the term ‘fuzziness’ (Zadeh 1971). Zadeh holds the view that most of the properties in the real world are slightly or markedly fuzzy. Later on linguists applied the term to the study of meaning (Lakoff 1972; McCawley 1981).

Pragmatic vagueness, on the other hand, is defined in different ways by a variety of scholars. For example, Ullmann (1962:118) terms it as “words with blurred edges”. Moreover, due to the indistinctive feature of the so called ‘fuzzy word’, the speaker is able to deliver information in a tactical way, without indicating any personal viewpoints or comments. What is uncertain may also be pivotal in understanding meanings, especially in diplomatic discourse, and it leaves room for the audience to understand information from different angles. In this way, strategies such as euphemisms, ambiguous or unclear expressions may further be applied. It is related to conditionals, concerning the pragmatic function. For example, as mentioned earlier, counterfactual conditionals can be a manifestation of vagueness, as
the truth or falseness of a conditional utterance cannot be fully revealed. Apart from counterfactual conditionals, pragmatic vagueness probably is true for all other conditionals, due to their non-assertive nature.

Therefore, in order to reach a balance between form and function, semantic and pragmatic factors will be included in the analysis part as well, to see how conditional clauses are formed in Chinese and in what way meaning is delivered.
In this chapter I sketch the procedure of data selection and the plan of how the analysis will be carried out.

3.1. Data collection

3.1.1. Diplomatic discourse as the context

In order to answer the research questions, the data is going to be selected from political speeches in Mandarin Chinese. In the field of analyzing political discourse, many scholars have examined this critically with different approaches (see van Dijk 1998).

To answer the question of what political discourse is, van Dijk (1998) defines political discourse as “a class of genres defined by a social domain, namely that of politics”. Many sub-genres of political discourse have been examined linguistically, e.g. speeches, interviews, election campaigns, etc. From a pragmatic point of view, political discourse has been classified as institutional, taking place in certain settings and being limited to contextual factors. For example, its topics may be selected from the limited institutional domain, and there may be a preference of certain discursive types (Fetzer 2013:3).

In addition to the general descriptions of political discourse, for this study, the reasons of choosing political media discourse for the analysis are threefold. First, although political speeches are spoken text, they have the feature of formal written text as well. The political speeches used consist of transcriptions of spoken speeches. Therefore it may be the most representative of modern Mandarin Chinese, ruling out most of the dialectal difference or western influence on the linguistic expression (as dialects such as Cantonese is written differently from Mandarin Chinese and spoken language may be more casual and flexible and even influenced by English (See Chinese Pidgin English (Hall 1944)). Second, although Haiman (1978) has already pointed out that ‘conditionals are topics’, and that topics and conditionals are always
related regarding their function, he does not specify the importance of discourse in conditional construction. However Ford and Thompson (1986) consider conditionals and topics both in written and spoken discourses, where they further classify conditionals according to their relatedness to the discourse. As Akatsuka (1986) argues, conditionals do not only belong to mathematical logic anymore, but also dynamically meet the requirement of the discourse, where speaker’s attitude and context should be taken into consideration. Thirdly, political discourse, as a specific genre, has been studied by various researches from different fields (rhetoric, psychology, linguistics, etc). Thus for studying conditional construction in a specific discourse, political discourse, more specifically diplomatic discourse is chosen, due to the fact that it may be representative, as a sub-genre of political discourse, and is expected to have strategic uses of constructions, this study will be limited to the relationships between political discourse and conditional construction in Chinese context, to see how the communication is carried out and how the information is delivered.

3.1.2. Diplomatic speeches as the corpus

The corpus will be built specifically from the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China (www.fmprc.gov.cn), an official website of the Chinese government’s diplomatic affairs. The online media is chosen for its authority and accessibility. This may also be another reason for why political discourse from media is so popular today, as Fitzer (2003) claims, that diplomatic discourse is presented through media discourse. It provides a platform for everyone to get to know and participate in politics and diplomatic matters.

The website is presented in six languages, but only the Chinese texts will be included, as this is the object of the study. This website mainly contains seven contents: about the ministry, policies and activities, press and media service, countries and regions, about China, institutions abroad and materials. Under the subcategories of the materials section, there is a collection of important speeches from
a variety of government officials on various issues, including the talks from the president and the prime minister, etc. regarding diplomatic affairs.

There are a total number of 27 pages of speeches, averagely around 1,300,000 words (calculated by multiplying the estimated number of words in each article and the total number of articles). It is hard to transfer Chinese texts into the existing corpus tools (e.g. Wordsmith), for their lack of the Chinese orthographic systems, but the online search engine provided by the website can be used for keyword searching and concordance analyzing. Through searching keywords, the conditional sentences with explicit markers, e.g. 如果 ruguo (if) can be picked up. However there might be implicit conditional sentences and a manual process is also needed to remove those word forms that are identical to conditionals but are not conditional in nature as described in the previous chapter. Moreover there may also be possibilities of anaphoric expressions or truncated form e.g. 如果如此 (if so), which requires looking back at previous parts of the text.

3.2. Method

Overall, the method of the data analysis will be qualitative, in order to investigate how conditionals function in Chinese political context. Here a qualitative method can investigate precisely into detail, for example, how a conditional sentence is constructed syntactically, semantically and pragmatically. However in order to be concise, the conclusion might be limited due to the size of the corpus.

In order to answer the research question of how many types of conditional constructions are used in the chosen Chinese political context, searches for the main conditional markers classified in the previous chapter will be conducted, to see whether they all exist in the corpus or not. They will then be categorized into different groups, according to their syntactic structure and semantic functions. For example, there may be syntactically similar constructions involving 除非 chufe (unless), which have the same form but function differently. They may then be sub-divided according to the typologies introduced in the previous chapter (see Dancygier and
Sweetser 2005; Declerk and Reed 2001). As for implicitly expressed conditionals, a manual-picking process will be involved. As discussed before, ellipsis or truncated form may occur in formal Chinese text as well, to leave something unsaid or provide the implicature that may leave room from different angles.

To see how conditionals function strategically in delivering information in the political discourse, a contextualized analysis will be involved. For example, for the same form 如果 ruguo (if), they may have different functions due to their contexts, and even their different distributions in the text, e.g. they may occur at the beginning or in the end, which plays different roles as well. To answer the question of how many types of conditional constructions are used in Chinese political discourse, data will be collected and divided into categories, according to the classification introduced previously, in both syntactic and semantic ways, including similar structures (e.g. 如果 ruguo (if)). For comparing whether there is any feature that only specifically occurs in Chinese conditionals but not in English, or vice versa, both syntactic and pragmatic consideration will be taken into consideration on examining Chinese conditionals in the corpus (the lack of investigating English conditionals in a similar context will be stated furthermore as limitation in 6.3). Syntactically, comparison may focus on the structure of conditional sentences and how the meanings differentiate due to different combinations, e.g. how the same marker carries different meanings with different tenses. Pragmatically, how meaning of a conditional is expressed with implicature and explicature will be explored. It is expected that there are several points on syntax, the structure of constructing a conditional, where English does not have the corresponding feature. For example, for Chinese, the protasis can occur independently, while it is not grammatical in formal English context:

(27) 如果你希望如此。
Ruguo ni xiwang ruci.
If you hope like this.
If you hope so.
In Chinese even an independent sentence like this can appear in a formal context while in English formal context it seems quite inappropriate. Thus the dependent sentences (the protasis) can be considered independent from a syntactic point of view.

However Ford and Thompson (1986) excluded truncated English conditionals in their text-based study. Also it is found that the number of conditionals in the initial position exceeds those in the final position. This may provide clues that Chinese written conditionals can also work differently, in both form and function.

Overall, the study will be carried out starting with categorizing existing Chinese conditionals in the selected corpus. Then analysis will follow the research questions set previously, to investigate the feature of Chinese conditionals and their differences compared with English ones. The table below summarizes how the study is carried out.

Table 1. The plan of this study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspects</th>
<th>How to analyze…</th>
<th>Corresponding to research questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>syntax</td>
<td>• Various forms &amp; verb tenses</td>
<td>• RQ1: on types of conditionals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Typologies by Declerk &amp; Reed; Dancygier &amp; Sweetser;</td>
<td>• RQ2: on strategic information delivering of different conditionals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Pragmatic theories</td>
<td>• RQ 3 In comparison with English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>semantics</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pragmatics</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 4 Results and Analysis

In this chapter I further compare Chinese conditionals with English ones from a syntactic perspective and also with regards to semantics and pragmatics, as stated previously, on the meaning of conditional sentences and their pragmatic functions regarding conversation implicature and vagueness. In this chapter I first make a summary of how many types of Chinese conditionals are actually found in the corpus. Then I start to illustrate their different sentence structure, as well as how meaning might be delivered in a strategic way.

4.1 Inventory and frequency of forms

As reviewed previously, Chinese conditionals are basically composed of conditional markers such as ruguo (if) (and a group of its synonyms) and –chufei (unless). In this study, it is also find that ruguo, zhiyao and zhiyou appear very frequently, along with various conjunctions (e.g. 才 cai, 就 jiu) so that a series of different conditional sentences are formed. Table 2 below demonstrates the distribution of Chinese conditionals found in the corpus. While table 3 offers a more concise data on the frequencies of the four forms of Chinese conditionals, with ruguo conditional the most frequent and chufei conditional the least frequent.

Table 2. Number of Chinese conditionals in the corpus.
Table 3. The frequency of each form of Chinese conditional.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Forms</th>
<th>ruguo</th>
<th>chufei</th>
<th>zhiyao</th>
<th>zhiyou</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of occurrence</td>
<td>1003</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>835</td>
<td>702</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2652</td>
<td>2652</td>
<td>2652</td>
<td>2652</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequencies</td>
<td>37.8%</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
<td>31.5%</td>
<td>26.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.2 Analysis of different forms

In this section, analysis of each form of Chinese conditional will be carried out based on syntax, semantics and pragmatics, according to the research questions. Therefore for the remaining part of this chapter, there will be an analysis of different forms of Chinese conditionals based on Chinese syntax first, and then pragmatic analysis will be carried out.

4.2.1 ruguo (if)

First, it is found that –ruguo appears in various ways, demonstrating different kinds of conditionality in the selected political discourse. For example verb sequences and time relations may result in different types of conditionality—Closed-P conditionals, Open-P conditionals (e.g. 25a), Tentative-P conditionals or Counterfactual-P conditionals (e.g. 25b) (Declerk and Reed 2001).

(28)a. 如果你让我用一句话来描述中国，我会说：中国是一个从不停止自我完善的国家。
Ruguo ni rangwo yong yijuhua lai miaoshu zhongguo, wo hui shuo, zhongguo shiyige congbu tingzhi ziwo wanshan de guojia.
If you let me use one sentence to describe China, I will say: China is a never
stop self improving country
If you ask me to describe China in one sentence, I will say that it is a country that never stops self-improving.

b. 如果这些岛礁设施连自卫的能力都没有，如何为他方提供服务？
Ruguo zhexie daojiang sheshi lian ziwei de nengli dou meiyou, ruhe weitafang tigong fuwu
If these island reef facilities even self defence ability all not, how for other offer service
If these reef facilities are not able even to defend themselves, how can they serve others?

c. 如果和平共处五项原则在所有国家相互关系中获得认可，那么世界就几乎不会有任何冲突和战争。
Ruguo heping gongchu wuxiang yuanze zai suoyou guojia xianghuguanxi zhong huode renke, name shijie jiujiu buhui you renhe chongtu he zhan zheng
If peace coexist five items principles in all countries mutual relationships gained accept, then world then hardly no have any conflicts and wars
If the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence can be accepted among the mutual relationships of all countries, the world will then hardly have any conflicts or wars.

Notice above that all ruguo sentences appear at the very beginning, which is one feature found throughout the whole corpus. This may be a manifestation of the clause order of Chinese political discourse being highly likely to have the sequence of p preceding q, while in a casual spoken discourse this order can be quite flexible (Zhao 1968).

When it comes to a syntactic perspective of analyzing conditionals, verb sequences or tense relationships are often taken into consideration (see
Carter-Thommas and Rowley-Jolivet 2014). However it is found peculiar for Chinese to have exactly explicit expressions of canonical sequences, as the examples show. (28a) is translated into present+ future verb forms, which may prove the indicative nature of this conditional sentence. In this way, it can be considered as an Open-P conditional, as the apodosis refers to possibilities in the future. Although (28b) is translated with present verb tenses, it is in fact quite ambiguous whether the protasis is factual, hypothetical or counterfactual. It is likely that the meaning of this sentence will change as the tense in translation changes. The sentence becomes Counterfactual-P conditional if translated into ‘if these reef facilities were not able even to defend themselves…’ However provided with the current present tense, it is still hard to distinguish between factual and hypothetical statement, which is related to the comprehension of the apodosis as well, as in example (28c).

Nevertheless, lacking tense markers does not necessarily mean there is no way to indicate tenses in a syntactic way. Although Chinese is regarded as an “isolating language” (Li & Thompshon 1986) that lacks morphological processes, it is still common to add 了 – le as a particle to indicate the past tense.

(29) 如果他真希望如此，那绝对是选错了地方。
Ruguo ta zhenxiwang ruci, na jueduishixuancuo le difang
If he really hope this, then absolutely is choosing wrong place
If he really hopes so, then it must be that he chose the wrong place.

(29) is an example with present+ past canonical sequences marked by the particle le. Despite that the protasis is grammatical with subject, verb and complement, the apodosis seems incomplete without any overt subject, as showed in the English translation. This may be a reflection of the differences between Chinese and English grammar, as ellipsis can appear almost everywhere in an independent sentence in Chinese. This may further bring ambiguity to deciding the meaning that the conditional sentence carries. With the adverb juedui (absolutely), this apodosis consolidates the high certainty of choosing the wrong place that the possibility in the
P world in unlikely. Thus (29) can be considered as a Tentative-P conditional.

Meanwhile, there are other markers e.g. conjunctions, that can contribute to modal information. *Hui* in (28a) and *Jiang* in (30) are conjunctions, but here act as modal verbs equivalent to English *will*, however without explicitly indicating any tense.

(30) 如果能得到切实落实，将极大地缓解中国企业来哈签证和劳务许可难的问题
ruguo neng dedao qieshi luoshi, jiang jidade huan jie zhongguo qiye lai ha qianzheng he laowu xuke nan de wenti
if can get real practice, will extremely remit Chinese enterprises come Ha visa and work permission difficult of problem.
If it can be implemented well, it will greatly ease the tension of visa and working permit problems of Chinese enterprises.

The *jiang* in (30) as well as the *hui* in (28a) can both contribute to the modal information, but do not indicate any tenses, meaning that it does not suggest any counterfactuality the way that the English *would* does (*would have done* can indicate counterfactual information). These all suggests the peculiarity of Chinese conditionals’ lack of tense marking.

4.2.2 zhiyao (if)

Another type of conditional sentence that is similar but has a relative smaller domain as *ruguo* is the *只要…就 zhiyao...jiu* expression, which is quite often used, as shown in this example:

(31)a.只要中美合作，世界就会变得更好，否则只会面临更多问题。
Zhiyao zhongmei hezuo, shijie jiu hui de geng hao, fou ze zhi hui mian lin
geng duo wenti.
If China US cooperate, world will become better, or only will face more problems
If China and US cooperate, the world will be better. Otherwise it will face more problems.

b. 只要诚心来，我们都欢迎。
Zhiyao chengxin lai, women dou huanying.
If sincerely come, we all welcome.
If you come with sincerity, you are all welcomed.

In the above examples, (31a) can be classified as an Open-P conditional, as indicated by the tense, while (31b) can be classified as a Close-P conditional, as the P clause implies the factual world.

(31a) contains three clauses, of which the zhiyao ...jiu combination always occurs together. As a sufficient conditional clause, it sometimes can be interchangeable with ruguo sentences but not always, as it does not carry various types of conditionality as ruguo does. As mentioned in Chapter 2, zhiyao…jiu is restricted to sufficient clauses, where the p is a sufficient conditional for q being true. In this case, zhiyao-jiu sentences are indicative, which is more restricted, compared to the English if, while if is to a more extent similar to ruguo. Although changing the clause order is allowed in Chinese syntax in the formal texts it always occurs at the beginning of the sentence. 就 jiu as an adjunct, has a fixed position. However although zhiyao’s position is changeable, it is found here that it always precedes the subject, which may have some semantic and pragmatic indications that will be discussed in the later section.

Moreover, zhiyao and jiu often appear together but not always, as the conditional marker zhiyao can occur with other connectives such as dou, as in (31b).
4.2.3 zhiyou (only if)

Another frequently used conditionality is marked by 只有 zhiyou...才 cai (only if...then), corresponding to the English conditional marker only if. A majority of the cases in the diplomatic texts occur in pairs, with their almost fixed connectives, such as 只有 zhiyou (only) and 才 cai (then). Moreover all the examples are Open-P conditionals, as this form of conditional always indicates possibilities and futurity.

From a syntactic perspective, zhiyou A, then B is a stereotypical example of the case where only if A is true, B is true (This is a marker for necessity). In the corpus, this structure has been used as well. As the following examples show:

(32)a. 只有实现和平，促进发展才能真正根除冲突中性暴力行为。
Zhiyou shixian hepin, cujin fazhan caineng zhenzheng genchu chongtu zhong xingbaoli xingwei
Only realize peace, boost development then can really eradicate conflict in sexual violence behavior.
Only if peace is realized and development has been made, can the sexual violence in conflicts be really eradicated.

b. 机遇只有抓住才能成为现实。
Jiyu zhiyou zhuazhu caineng chengwei xianshi
Opportunities only seize then can become reality
Only if opportunities are seized, can it become reality.

c. 只有防止安全形势恶化，才能从根本上避免儿童遭受武装冲突伤害。
Zhiyou fangzhi anquan xingshi hehua, caineng conggenbenshang bimian ertong zaoshou wuzhuang chongtu shanghai.
Only if prevent safe situation deteriorate, then can from radically avoid children suffer armed forces conflict harm.
Only if security situation is prevented from deteriorating, can children suffer no more harm from the armed forces.

(32a) is the most typical example of this type of conditional, with *zhìyòu* at the initial position of the sentence, followed by verbs and complements. *cāi* as a connecting adverb, has its fixed position: Subject+cāi+predicate, where it always appears after the subject of the sentence and before the predicate of its embedded clause.

However for the position of the conditional marker *zhìyòu*, it is quite flexible, either before the subject or after the subject. (There may be pragmatic differences, which are going to be elaborate in 6.2 on clause order). Notice in (32b), *zhìyòu* follows its subject and precedes the predicate.

According to the syntax of Chinese complex sentences reviewed in the previous chapter, the protasis initiating with *zhìyòu* can be reordered into a postposition in principle. However it is found very rarely in the selected political texts and in most cases it follows the structure *zhìyòu* + *cāi*. This may due to some practical reasons that might be determined by the communicative nature that will be further elaborated on later.

In this form of conditional construction, *cāi* is an indispensable element, omitting it may result in insufficient expression of conditionality. This situation may be unique compared to the relationship between other conditional markers and their connectives that sometimes are used dependently. However, the connective *cāi* can be used with another connective followed for more complex sentence structure and meanings, which is not allowed in English syntax. For example, the use of two connectives together, forming a complete and grammatical sentence as the following example demonstrates:

(33) 只有相互合作，才能发展好经济，否则情况只能越变越差。

*zhìyòu xianghu hezuo, cāineng fazhan hao jingji, fouze qingkuang zhineng yuebianyuecha.*
Only mutual cooperation then can develop economy, or situation only can grow worse.

Only if there is mutual cooperation can the economy grow better. Otherwise, the situation will grow worse.

Here the connective cai acts as a conjunction, which links the protasis and apodosis. Fouze introduces another clause that gives a counter-example. As the translation shows, English grammar does not allow the co-existence of two conjunctions, thus the last clause has to stand out as an independent sentence. In other words, Chinese syntax allows a tripartite construction: p->q->q (last one being not q). (as e.g. (33) demonstrates).

Additionally, the complexity of the sentence structure for zhiyou…caicreation can also be manifested with two clauses equally introduced by cai.

(34) 只有在尊重对方核心利益和关切的基础上，两国才能妥善处理分歧，才能推动双边关系向前发展。
Zhiyou zai zunzhong duifang hexin liyi he guanqie de jichushang, liangguo caineng tuoshan chuli fenqi, caineng tuidong shuangbianguanxi xiangqian fazhan.

Only on respecting other people’s core benefit and care basis, two countries then can well handle disagreement, then can boost bilateral ties forward develop.

Only if it is based on respecting each other’s core benefit and caring, can the two countries well handle their disagreement. Then the bilateral relationship can be boosted.

In English, the last clause introduced by the then can be regarded as a consequence of the previous two clauses that form a conditional. However, in Chinese
conditional sentences, the two clauses both can be seen as apodosis, and the protasis is the only necessary condition for the two propositions in the apodoses being true.

4.2.4 chufei (unless)

Despite the fact that *chufei* sometimes functions the same as *zhiyou...cai* in indicating only necessary preconditions, *chufei* sometimes represents the same meaning as the English *unless* does, even though there are classifications of different meanings of Chufei (see Lu 1999; Zhao and Liu 2006).

In the selected corpus, it is found that *chufei* functions as the meaning of unless most of the time. Declerk and Reed (2001:21) define the meaning of *unless* that “for the moment it may suffice to say that the basic meaning of Q unless P in a case other than P”.

(35) a. 除非事先取得被请求方和该人的同意，也不得要求…

Unless before get requester and this person agreement, and cannot demand…

Unless there is agreement between the requester and the person, it’s not allowed to demand…

b. 除非双方另有协议，请求方对于被请求方提供的证据材料应予保密，

Unless both sides separately have agreement, requester to the requested provide evidence material should keep private.

Unless there is a double-side agreement, the requester should keep the material of the requested private.

As the above examples presents, the construction schema of *chufei* here can be generally represented as ‘chufei p, ~q’ (This means that unless there is agreement, it is not allowed). The apodosis is either a negative clause or with negative meaning. In
both of the examples, P refers to possibilities; therefore both of the sentences are Open-P conditionals.

4.3 The interaction between forms and functions

As investigated previously, it is assumed that the syntactic difference of Chinese conditionals may be triggered by semantic and pragmatic reasons. Especially in political discourse, it is often the speakers’ attitude that influences their ways of expression while the form also reflects their attitudes. In order to further explore functions brought by those different forms of Chinese conditionals, this section will present the analysis of how pragmatic factors influence the information delivery. Generally, it is found that it is interaction between form and function that makes Chinese conditionals quite different from English ones, on both syntactic and pragmatic levels, which will be specified in this section and 4.4. This section will first present the findings on how meanings are delivered pragmatically with different types of conditional sentences strategically in the diplomatic discourse. The analysis will be based on Sweetser (1990)’s approach of dividing conditionals according to the content, epistemic and speech act.

4.3.1 Objectivity and neutrality

The conditionals in the diplomatic discourse reflect the basic feature of reporting objectivity and being neutral. It has been examined in the former section that although zhiyao...jiu and zhiyou...cai refer to Open-P conditionals, they are of low hypotheticality. On the contrary, ruguo sentences are more complex, and the meanings usually cannot be certain without sufficient pragmatic information. Therefore it can be hypothesized that ruguo can therefore be used for hedging and retaining vagueness.

When being interviewed by Bremen Daily on the question “Can slowing down
the economic development do good to China’s environment, facing such severe environmental problems nowadays?” (Translated from Chinese.), the Chinese ambassador in Germany answered:

(36)“如果为保护环境大量关闭工厂，很多人就会失业，我们又得想办法让这些人重新就业”

ruguo wei baohu huanjing daliang guanbi gongchang, henduoren jiuhui shiye, women you dei xiang banfa rang zhexie ren chongxin jiu ye
If for protecting environment widely close factories, many people will lose jobs, we again have to think solutions let these people regain job
If large amount of factories is closed for environmental protection, many people will lose their jobs. We then have to think of other ways for them to get reemployed.

In this situation, it was known by both the interviewer and the Chinese Ambassador that the decision had been made not to close the factories. It has already been mentioned by the interviewer that the environmental problem is severe and the interviewee is expected to state their solutions. However, the Chinese ambassador did not state a solution, but instead used a ruguo conditional that can be classified as an Open-P conditional, suggesting that slowing down the economy is not an appropriate solution to environmental pollution. He first makes a prediction that people may lose jobs due to the slowdown of the economy, and postulates a possible shortcoming, as introduced by the last clause that the slowdown may bring the problem into a vicious circle. In other words, he uses a conditional to refrain from providing a subjective view on the matter and he instead describes the general conditional relation between closing a factory (p) and people losing jobs (q) as a neutral or objective scenario.

Another possible way of interpreting this is considering it as a counterfactual conditional. In this case, the sentence could be translated as “if large amount of factories were closed for environmental protection, many people would have lost their
jobs”, where the counterfactuality can prove the importance of not closing the specific factories and slowing down the economy. In this case the sentence is considered a Counterfactual-P conditionals, and as it relates to the immediate context of closing down the factories it is less neutral.

Therefore in this way, the *ruguo* conditional is used instead of others, e.g. *yaobushi*. As reviewed previously, *yaobushi* most of the time introduces counterfactual sentences. With the use of *ruguo* conditionals, the speaker can stay vague and leave many things unsaid, to keep a seemingly neutral stance, without being two sharp and extreme.

Considering what is said and what is left unsaid, it necessary to take Grice’s Cooperative Principle into consideration, to examine whether this example delivers information efficiently. Overall, the Maxim of Quality is exploited, in order not to take responsibility for possible counterfactual readings—to avoid being accountable for a concrete solution. The Maxim of Relevance is met, as the reason for not adopting the suggested measure is stated clearly and it makes the answer sufficient. It also meets the Maxim of Manner as what the consequence would be if the economy is slowed down is also elaborated, which can to some extent avoid possible ambiguity as well. Since the interpretations of this example are either hypothetical or counterfactual, the answer does not provide enough information to decide between hypothetical and counterfactual interpretation, which means a violation of the Maxim of Quantity. By using a conditional instead of a concrete solution and introducing this vagueness between interpretations, he avoids answering the question.

The epistemic conditional together with the consequence introduced by a contrast sentence displays high certainty. This can be a manifestation of a foremost feature of diplomatic discourse in the media —keeping a seemingly neutral stance. In this way, the speaker can deliver information efficiently without being offensive, thus it can also be a manifestation of negative politeness in communication.

When the Chinese ambassador Shi Hu in Nepal made a speech at a Spring Festival Conference in Nepal, he said:
如果没有各位和你们带领的团队的辛勤和付出，中尼关系不会有今天这样好的局面。

ruguo meiyou gewei he nimen dailing de tuandui dexinqi he fuchu, zhongniguanxi buhui you jintian zheyanghao de jumian.
If no everyone and your leading team’s hard work and pay, China and Nepal relationship not have today’s such good prospect
If there were no hardwork from you and your team, Sino-Nepalese relationship will not have such a good prospect.

This is a counterfactual sentence where the speaker makes a counterfactual postulation that no hard work was done. As an epistemic conditional, it asserts that for such a good Sino-Nepalese relationship, it is necessary to have the hard work from all the attendees and their teams.

Then the inference is made that such a good prospect would be impossible given the abduction in the protasis. With the declarative in the apodosis, the speaker presents the opposite meaning and he takes the stance that the only and necessary condition for such a good relationship between the two countries results from all the attendee’s hard work. Thus this is an expressive speech-act conditional, indicating the speaker’s thanks to the hearers.

In this example, the Counterfactual-P conditional is not overtly relevant, as it is not a true statement by nature. However the attendees can use the maxim of relevance to reach a conclusion—that they are thanked for their hard work, which is the opposite meaning of this conditional sentence. Thus this example demonstrates that counterfactuality can act as a mechanism for reaching the desired cooperative principles/maxims. This would not differ from English much, as an English counterfactual can create vagueness as well (as the translation demonstrates).
4.3.2 Political vagueness

(38)如果说日方战机像你所说的没有进入有关空域，那它到底在干什么？

Ruguo shuo rifang zhanji xiang nisuoshuo de meiyou jinru youguan kongyu, na ta daodi zai ganshenme

If say Japanese warcraft like you said not entering relevant airspace, then it on earth is doing what

If what you said it true that the Japanese warcraft did not enter the relevant airspace, what on earth was it doing?

The spokesman from China’s Foreign Ministry answered questions on Japan’s Self-Defense Forces denying that their warcraft’s entered China’s airspace. This ruguo conditional is counterfactual with the protasis postulating an impossible situation followed by a marked question, which can either be interpreted as an inquiry or an rhetorical question. It can be seen as a rhetoric question based on the widely accepted fact that the Japanese warcraft did enter China’s airspace in the apodosis. The speaker’s attitude and stance is clear that it was not China but Japan that provoked this event. However without directly pointing out that it was Japan’s fault, the spokesman reported the interviewer’s question and used a counterfactual conditional. Within the conditional sentences, presuming “what you said is true” also successfully saved the interviewer’s positive face without saying he was wrong in a straight way. This can also be a reason of why there is the possibility for the apodosis to be an inquiry. In a polite way, China’s spokesman may just be trying to ask for the facts, based on an assumption that what Japanese side said was true. Meanwhile, it shows another feature of using conditionals in diplomatic discourse, avoiding crisis and showing patience. However the possibility of the apodosis being a rhetorical question seems larger than it being an inquiry, due to the phrase” what on earth” that carries a strong and firm attitude. Regarding vagueness, we can also look back at example (30).
(30) 如果能得到切实落实, 将极大地缓解中国企业来哈签证和劳务许可难的问题
ruguonengdedao qieshi luoshi, jiang jidade huanjie zhongguo qiye lai ha qianzheng he laowu xuke nan de wenti
if can get real practice, will extremely remit Chinese enterprises come Ha visa and work permission difficult of problem.
If it can be implemented well, it will greatly ease the tension of visa and working permit problems of Chinese enterprises.

The use of modality can also suggest a speaker’s attitude by showing hedges, as in example (30), with the use of 会 hui (will). Although modality in Chinese does not suggest tense relations straightforwardly, it can still show a hedging process that expresses the speaker’s anticipation as well as uncertainty. In “If it can be implemented well, it will greatly ease the tension of visa and working permit problems of Chinese enterprises.” the translated meaning of the modality “will” introduces the apodosis that the problem might be solved in the near feature. However the conditional is given with “can” as well, which adds hypotheticality to the conditional sentence, although both of them are future references and indicate hypotheticality. The difference is in the strength with which they express certainty about this hypothetical situation. In this way, the speaker creates anticipation about the benefits that might be brought by taking the measure, and also adds some uncertainty about the measure that may or may not be implemented.

4.3.3 Strategic information delivery

（39）警方一般不会干涉（除非例行的安全检查）。
Jingfang yiban buhui ganshe(chufei lixing de anquan jiancha
Police normally will not intervene, (unless routine security check)
The police normally will not intervene, unless there is routine security check.

Here the protasis that is assertive forms an independent sentence itself, with the *unless* apodosis in parentheses. This may be because it is within a formal written text. While its committed that police will not intervene, exceptions have to be made in order to meet the requirement of accuracy. However being put in parentheses also proves that the attitude of the speaker is quite positive—showing in an independent and obvious position that there will not be intervention.

In a written interview in an Indian newspaper, the Chinese ambassador in India said the following conditional sentence after talking about the increasing number of Chinese tourists visiting India.

（40）如果印对中国游客申请签证提供更多的便利，相信来印中国游客将会成倍增加.
Ruguo yin dui zhongguo youke shenqing qianzheng gengduo de bianli, xiangxin lai yin zhongguo youke jianghui chengbei zengjia
If India to Chinese tourists applying visa provide more convenience, believe come India Chinese tourists will double increasing.
If India provides more convenience for Chinese tourists applying for VISA, I believe the number of Chinese tourists will be doubled.

It can be inferred from the context that here the speaker adopts a simple present tense in the conditional clause and simple future tense in the main clause to postulate some possible results that a convenient VISA application procedure can possibly bring. In terms of speech-act theory, it can be regarded as an indirect speech act, as the speaker is trying to convince the hearer (the Indian government) to take some action to ease the Visa application procedure. By using the verb phrase *I believe*, the speaker shows his confidence in measure and therefore euphemistically suggests the Indian government to take this action.
We believe if we can achieve mutual benefit and honestly treat each other, we will sure to make “true friends”.

As it is true that metaphors can occur everywhere in discourse, so they can be expected to occur in conditionals as well. The use of metaphor, sometimes, can also help to deliver information in a tactical way. Here, a metaphor is used in the apodosis, in the conditional sentence used by a Chinese ambassador introducing the British president visiting China in Barbuda. It is an assertive condition committing that two countries should make an effort to benefit each other and treat each other honestly. As this is the context where China’s relationships with two countries are involved: US and Barbuda. The metaphor used in the apodosis thus may point at them both, indicating that China has always been wishing to make “true” friends with other countries, and President Brown’s visiting China can be one of the examples. With the use of metaphor, the speaker makes his suggestion of a mutually beneficial relationship euphemistically, leaving others to figure out the connotation and denotation of “true friends” on their own.

4.4 Chinese and English conditionals compared

Provided with the illustrations above, several features can be re-considered, concerning their syntactic forms, when compared with English conditionals. In terms of the similarities of English and Chinese conditionals, they both have flexible clause orders, which may, depending on language, introduce different pragmatic functions.
However in this study, it is found that in formal Chinese context, it is more likely that Chinese conditional sentences follow the order of the protasis preceding apodosis in the diplomatic texts examined, compared to English, based on the previously reviewed literature regarding English conditionals in general.

But there are obvious differences that make Chinese conditionals sometimes out of touch from English ones. For example, the position of the subject in Chinese conditional sentences is more flexible—it can either start a conditional sentence or follow the conditional markers. For example, in 5(b) (Unless there is a double-side agreement) it is never grammatical to say “there unless is” (the position of the subject and verb is never changeable. However for Chinese, Chufei shuangfang and shuangfang chufei are both applicable. Therefore for conditionals specifically the conditional structure in English is more restricted by syntax compared with Chinese. This may shed light on the significance of the pragmatic functions that influence the comparatively casual Chinese syntax of conditional construction.

As introduced in the theoretical overview, English has canonicalls differences, where verb forms can be restricted, which demonstrate various types of conditionals. While the most common combinations of canonical sequences are present+future, past+ “conditional” and past perfect+”conditional” perfect, time relations of Chinese conditionals do not necessarily follow this order. (2) has shown that it has a present+ past relationship, which uniquely demonstrates a hypothetical conditional. In addition, with regards to modality use, in English different tenses of modality, e.g. would, will, may indicate the hypotheticality or counterfactuality in English, while Chinese modality has no indication of tense and hypotheticality. More importantly is the fact that Chinese lacks morphological processes, especially for the inflectional process, which means that there are no explicit markers of tenses at all. This general feature of the two languages also influences the Chinese conditional construction. Sometimes tense relations play a decisive role in determining the types and meanings of conditionals. Lacking tense markers may result in difficulties in understanding Chinese conditionals, which then may require more contextual information. This clearly presents the difference between Chinese conditionals and English ones. The
lack of inflectional process means that the meaning of the Chinese conditional is pragmatic (context-based), however other linguistic features, for example, conjunctions, complements and modals can contribute to resolving the ambiguity as well.

When it comes to ellipsis, although it is true that both English and Chinese has ellipsis, they actually work in different ways. For Chinese, subjects can be omitted. For example in (40), the protasis consists of the conditional marker ruguo and the complement, without any subjects, but it is still grammatical here. Although there might be other cases outside of conditional construction that also lack subjects, the ellipsis in Chinese conditional sentences are unique. There might be some underlying pragmatic strategies, e.g. omitting the subject to present vagueness. Although English conditional sentences may as well have unstated subjects, such as 'If necessary', under many circumstances subjects cannot be omitted in English grammar and in formal texts.

There can be free interchanges between the connective and subject, shown in 5(b), where the conditional marker can either appear initially or after the subject. Therefore the syntactic structure can either be SVO or VSO, and the position of conditional marker and the subject is switchable as well. Contrarily, the typical English language structure is SVO. For example it is never accepted to say 'you even if don’t say' where the subject should not precede the conditional marker even if.

The meaning of Chinese conditionals may to a large extent be determined by the connectives embedded in the apodosis, as the above analysis shows, while English adverb such as ‘then’ holds a simpler function.
Chapter 5 Conclusion

This thesis concerns the cross-linguistic differences in conditional constructions between English and Chinese conditionals with a focus on investigating Chinese conditionals in detail. Based on a generally accepted viewpoint that Chinese is a “lonely language” and lacks morphological processes, its conditional constructions are expected to be quite different from English ones. From 5.1-5.3, I will present the conclusion according to the three research questions, to see to what extent they are answered by means of this study.

5.1 Types of conditionals used in Chinese diplomatic discourse

RQ1- What types of conditional clauses are used in a written Chinese diplomatic discourse?

Four different forms of Chinese conditionals were found, which are marked by ruguo, chufei, zhiyao, zhiyou. Zhiyao often marks sufficient clauses, which is similar to content conditionals, and zhiyou and chufei often mark necessary conditions, where the proposition in the protasis is the only necessary condition for the apodosis being true.

5.2 Types of conditionals that are typical and strategic

RQ2-Which types of conditionals are typical and strategic in delivering messages in the chosen diplomatic discourse?

It is found that each type of conditional has different strategies in delivering information situated in the diplomatic discourse. For example, regarding Maxim of manner, counterfactual conditional usually violates this principle, as it deliver relatively vague information for a certain communicative purpose.
5.3 Differences between Chinese and English conditionals

RQ3-Is there any specific existence of conditionality in the Chinese context while English does not have or vice versa?

When comparing English and Chinese conditionals from a syntactic perspective, it is found that the position of the subject in a Chinese conditional is more flexible, has a lack of canonical sequences, and has a different ellipsis pattern.

5.4 An overall conclusion

With the aim of examining how conditionals are used in Chinese political contexts, on both a lexical and pragmatic level, in delivering information strategically. The research questions have been answered with a corpus-based analysis from a Chinese diplomatic discourse.

In the first two chapters, an overview and background on both English and Chinese conditional constructions is provided. Although several approaches of classifying English conditionals are mentioned, this study mainly follows Sweetser (1990) (see also Dancygier and Sweetser 2005)’s approaches of classifying conditionals and Declerk and Reed (2001)’s typology, both of which pay attention to semantic and pragmatic ways of categorizing conditional sentences. Moreover, Sweetser (1990)’s tripartite typology divides conditionals into content, epistemic and speech-act conditionals, which is vital for answering research questions for this study.

In chapter 3, the design of the thesis is carried out, for the purposes of answering the main research question and three sub research questions. As the study focuses on a specific type of political discourse—the diplomatic discourse, the data for analysis is chosen from an official website from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China, where many diplomatic affairs are reported.

To identify the types of Chinese conditionals, forms of Chinese conditionals with different markers are searched for using the searching engine provided by the website. Results were re-organized and first analyzed from a syntactic perspective for further
analysis on a pragmatic level about how these conditional constructions function in strategically delivering information. When comparing Chinese and English conditionals, perspectives on syntax, and pragmatics are taken into account. Conclusions were drawn after analyzing examples from the selected corpus.

After that, Chapter 6 offered a further discussion from a wider aspect concerning some points that were not mentioned in the previous chapter e.g. why the frequencies of the four forms of conditionals differ, and the possible reasons behind this. For future research, it is suggested that both marked and unmarked cases should be taken into consideration and a wide range of corpora would provide more evidence.
Chapter 6 Discussion

In this chapter, I am going to further discuss some other findings that seem to form a mismatch with what has been covered in the theoretical background, or that go beyond the literature on Chinese conditionals. First, there will be a discussion on what types of conditionals do not exist in the corpus, and why this would be the case. Second, some possible reasons of why some conditionals appear much more frequently than others will be discussed. Then the importance of discourse influence will be mentioned again, to see its determining role in deciding the meaning of conditionals. The discussion consists of three main sections, which all relate to the research questions and can be regarded as complementary for what has not been covered in the previous chapter.

6.1. The existence and non-existence of Chinese conditionals

As illustrated in the previous chapter, conditional markers including ruguo, zhiyou, zhiyao, and chufei exist in the corpus with different frequencies. From the table we can get a sketch that not all conditionals exist in the selected corpus, and the different frequencies and different forms may lie in various syntactic and pragmatic reasons. Here I try to explain the potential reasons for why the yaobushi construction does not exist in the corpus.

6.1.1 The existence of ruguo construction

Ruguo sentences appear very often in the corpus, probably because of its complexity in function. Different from other forms of conditionals that have only one or two possible types of conditions, ruguo can carry factual, hypothetical, et cetera, with a variety of syntactic structures. The frequent occurrence may also be due to people’s preferences, especially in formal written context, where it seems relatively simple and neutral. This can also be manifested in the previous analysis that rueuo itself does not carry any stance directly,
which is quite different from the *yaobushi* construction.

In this way, the meaning of the condition, and whether it is counterfactual or hypothetical largely depends on time relation. This relation is not indicated directly but via syntactic markers such as a particle *le* as in the sentence.

Pragmatically, it can add to politeness, as the vague meaning delivered by it often indicates hedging in the context.

### 6.1.2 The non-existence of *yaobushi* construction

While there are counterfactual meanings in *ruguo* sentences found in the corpus, there is no existence of *yaobushi*. However as reviewed previously, *yaobushi* sometimes can have a more emphatic content, and is even more appropriate in carrying counterfactual meanings compared with *ruguo* conditionals.

The reason may lie in the context where formal expressions are required. Generally speaking, in political discourse, especially in this context of diplomatic discourse, speech usually contains formal expressions. *Yaobushi* conditionals often occur in a more colloquial way then *ruguo meiyou* (*if without*). However it may not only be discourse that results in a negative *ruguo* conditional being used instead of a *yaobushi* conditional, and the reason could also be traced back to syntactic origins.

*Ruguo meiyou* + NP  
*Yaobushi* + Subject + Verb + Object

In Chinese syntax, *ruguo meiyou* (*if without*) is often followed by noun phrases, such as *ruguo meiyou nimen de nu li* (*without your effort*), while *yaobushi* is often followed by a complete subject-object structure.

Verb tense may be applied for different purposes. (Wang 2010) found that in political speeches simple present tense is most frequently used. The reason may be because skillful politicians may use present and future tenses for delivering ideology
while past tense is used merely for introducing some background or reference. It can also be proved here with the use of ruguo (meiyou), instead of yaobushi. As manifested above, the yaobushi conditional may be more inclined to indicate past tense in counterfactual sentences, as the complete sentence structure followed has a greater possibility of indicating tense.

For instance, in e.g. (37) “If there were no hardwork from you and your team, Sino-Nepalese relationship will not have such a good prospect”, it seems that the counterfactual conditional can also be represented with yaobushi as the conditional marker with a slight change—“If there were no hardwork from you and your team, “ Besides the points mentioned earlier regarding preferences of politicians, and syntactic preferences, the use of ruguo meiyou could also better emphasize the noun phrase followed, which presents the core idea of the conditional—in this case, the effort people made is highlighted.

6.2 Clause order

The influence of clause order on meaning comprehension and information delivery is not merely targeting a separate conditional marker, but the order of the sentences in a broader sense can reflect the strategic information delivery as well as other rhetoric purposes.

Similar to English conditional sentences, the clause orders of Chinese conditional sentences are quite flexible regardless of the contextual effect. However it is found that in the corpus, most of the conditional sentences follow the order of the protasis preceding apodosis. Ford and Thompson (1986) state that English conditionals tend to appear initially in a sentence. It is similar in Chinese as well (Wang 2006), although for English conditionals, there is subtle pragmatic difference between ‘if you mow the lawn, you will get 5 dollar’. In Chinese, the clause order can sometimes be a manifestation of the level of emphasis, as people tend to initiate p or q, whichever they want to emphasize.
This order may be required by the formal context of the selected diplomatic discourse, as Ford and Thompson (1986) argue that the proposed conditionals may deliver decisive information during the communicative interaction, and provide background information in a direct and explicit way. While for the postposed conditionals that do not occur in the formal diplomatic discourse, the reason may be because they are often deployed for completing information or elaborating on certain issues. An example of chufei construction is discussed focusing on clause order.

**Chufei construction**

Although conditionals with the chufei marker do exist, only the mode of chufei p, ¬q (a positive protasis followed by a negative apodosis) was found. There are various other combinations such as chufei p, cai/fouze/buran q, with different contrastive connectives in the apodosis, but none of them exist in the diplomatic discourse. However, among the major four forms of conditionals (ruguo/chufei/zhiyou/zhiyou) analyzed in this study, chufei conditionals appear to be less frequently used. This may result from the nature of the diplomatic discourse. Chufei conditionals usually express request, showing something that is excluded or negated, as shown in example (5).

Moreover Craig (2006) argues that clause order appears to be strategic as well, in attaching a “personal touch” to the utterances.

An example of this can be found in (42):

(42) 除非事先取得被请求方和该人的同意，也不得要求…

Chufei shixian quake beiqingqiuang he gaiyuan de tongyi, ye bude yaoqiu…

Unless in advance get requester and the person agreement, still not demand…

Unless there is agreement between the requester and the person in advance, it’s not allowed to demand…

This chufei p,¬q structure emphasizes the necessity of obtaining agreement from the requester and the person, which also expresses a firm attitude of the speaker.
Therefore, this case illustrates that clause order—stressing either the protasis (unless p, q) or stressing the apodosis (q, unless p) plays an essential role in understanding the meaning of Chinese conditionals. If replaced by a reverse order, the emphasis on getting an agreement is not as strong as in the normal order. In this way, it could not highlight the necessity of the protasis as much as the normal sequence does. In diplomatic discourse, people will avoid delivering information in this way, which may leave many people anticipating a high possibility of not getting an agreement in the apodosis.

6.3 Discourse function

In diplomatic discourse, it is of high necessity to use conditional sentences as an efficient way of information delivering. This is because diplomatic discourse plays a vital role in expressing certain ideology and attitude in a tactic manner, due to its distinguished nature. This can already be observed from the findings of this study. Sometimes it is discourse that can determine what types of conditional exactly a conditional sentence belongs to.

Apart from conditional sentences, other components, sentences, and words also contribute to revealing the feature of diplomatic discourse, where discourse coherence is manifested too. Therefore the importance of discourse coherence as well as strategic information delivery should not be neglected.

In the Chinese conditional sentences explored so far, it can be manifested that it contributes to discourse coherence in various ways. Generally speaking, the preceding clauses (the protasis), often make statements based on some shared and already known fact, therefore it can contribute to the coherence of the text. Halliday and Hasan (1976) conclude various aspects in achieving cohesion in discourse, e.g. Ellipsis, references etc. For example in:

(43) 如果他真希望如此
    ruguo ta zhen xiwang ruci
If he really hope like this
If he really hope so.

Regardless of whether the apodosis is preceding or following this protasis, the protasis can add coherence to the text, as the uses of pronoun he and Ellipsis so.

Moreover, conditionals situated in the diplomatic discourse demonstrate politeness theory and pragmatic vagueness, which contribute to the discourse function as well.

**6.4 Limitations and suggestions for future research**

As chapter 5 has shown, this study has provided insight into Chinese conditionals by analyzing them using classification by Declerk and Reed (2001) and Dancygier and Sweetser (2005) on English conditionals. In this paragraph, two limitations of this study are discussed and suggestions for further research are provided.

The first limitation of this study is that not all forms of conditionals in Chinese were analyzed, because some Chinese conditionals are non-marked and had to be manually selected from the corpus. A clear example of this are ‘no work, no pay’ kind of conditionals. The qualitative analysis of diplomatic texts indicated these non-marked cases to be rare and further research with a multi-genre corpus is needed to investigate this issue.

Considering that there might also be marked cases that have not been identified, a more thorough exploration is need as there are many synonyms in Chinese. For example, ruguo constructions can often be replaced by other markers depending on both the discourse and the specific type of conditional relation expressed (see Chapter 4).

The second limitation concerns the comparison between English and Chinese. The corpus for Chinese conditionals is strongly influenced by the diplomatic discourse and there is no corresponding analysis on the discourse level for the English language.
Since syntactic structures are greatly influenced by the type of discourse, the comparison between English and Chinese conditional constructions is also restricted as the focus is on Chinese conditional constructions. Considering only Chinese diplomatic texts, the distribution of types of conditionals, such as the low frequency of the *chufei* construction, was possibly influenced by user habit and discourse function. Moreover considerations may also be taken on other factors that might determine the use of conditionals, e.g. mental space.

Overall, this study provides an overview, to a larger extent, of some distinct features of Chinese conditionals in a specific discourse. Therefore, for future researches a more thorough exploration is suggested which can include more marked and non-marked cases for Chinese conditional construction. A deep exploration on the comparison between the two languages may need to be conducted on different levels including a wide range of corpora.
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