

Modal aspect in conditionals

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Lewis (1973) proposed an analysis of counterfactual conditionals (e.g. (i)) which was not meant to apply to all so-called 'subjunctive' conditionals. He noted that 'subjunctive' examples like (ii) seemed to have the truth-conditions of an indicative conditional instead of a counterfactual:

- (i) If kangaroos had not tails, they would topple over.
- (ii) If our ground troops entered Laos next year, there would be trouble.

In this presentation I would like to revisit Lewis's conclusion that a unified analysis is not possible. Building on Arregui (2007), I will argue that aspect plays an important modal role in the interpretation of *would*-conditionals. Drawing on data from English and Spanish, I will argue that aspect in this environment is not *fake*. It introduces a modal dimension that results in epistemic effects. The upshot is that in examples like (ii), the overall interpretation of the conditional is relevantly similar to that of an indicative, in spite of a unified analysis for the modal.