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## POSITIVE SYNERGY BETWEEN LEARNING SYNTAX AND LEARNING DOMAIN-SPECIFIC LSP CONTENT

### Abstract

The main aim of this paper is to test the widely held assumption that there is a strong correlation between learners' exposure to a wide diversity of source materials exemplifying the use of a syntactic structure and the likelihood of learners' successful learning and understanding of the structure's formal, semantic and pragmatic aspects. The authors scrutinise the adequacy of this hypothesis through an attempt to teach all types of English conditionals (zero, first, second, third, mixed) within the boundaries of the comparatively restricted conceptual domain: *Martin Luther King and his legacy*. Authentic *if*-clauses, mainly extracted from MLK's speeches, were used to provide thematically coherent contextualisation. The clarity and exactness of the chronological framework of the African American Civil Rights Movement and MLK's biography were expected to enhance the students' understanding of time relations between the conditions (expressed within various protases) and consequences (expressed by the corresponding apodoses). In order to validate this presumption, the authors conducted a student perception survey with a hundred first-year undergraduate students of Political Science and Journalism at the University of Zagreb upon the completion of the teaching process. The survey findings largely corroborated the authors' initial presumption about a positive synergy effect of simultaneous teaching of conditional sentences and restricted domain content.

**Keywords:** conditionals, Martin Luther King, political science, journalism, synergy, syntax

## 1 Introduction

Hypothesizing is an inherent feature of human behaviour as it allows people to predict either a potential or an inevitable outcome of a real or imagined situation as well as to mentally probe various solutions to various problems imposed by various conditions. It is inherent in much social interaction which, since based on interpersonal communication, relies heavily on language use. Consequently, if a more specific perspective is taken, politics and media communication can be viewed as the domains of social life (and therefore the areas of corresponding language use) in which a speaker's capability of accurate encoding and decoding conditional sentences invariably proves to be of utmost importance to effective communication – hence the necessity to place great emphasis on teaching conditional sentences to Political Science and Journalism students. Little research has been devoted specifically to the topic of conditional sentences in political and media contexts, yet the studies that have been conducted in this field corroborate the foregoing, *i.e.*, the significance of conditional sentences in conveying a political message (*e.g.*, Cheng, 2002; Bujak, 2014). Due to this fact, we intend with this paper to contribute to LSP teaching specifically in the field of political science, and indirectly to all other LSP areas, primarily those pertaining to social sciences and humanities. This contribution lies in the content-based instruction model we are proposing, implemented in class with first-year students of Political Science and Journalism at the University of Zagreb, Croatia. In addition to presenting the reasons why the whole content of the learning unit on English conditional sentences should be anchored in a well-defined chronological history framework, the results of our survey on students' perception of this approach go some way towards empirically validating its plausibility.

## 2 Formal, semantic and pragmatic features of conditional sentences

The intriguing nature of conditional sentences, *i.e.*, *if*-clauses, as subject matter not only of teaching Language for Specific Purposes (LSP) but also teaching second/foreign languages in general, stems from the fact that the syntactic structure in question proves to be essentially multifaceted – both from the formal and functional viewpoints. The difficulty that foreign language teachers invariably encounter when they embark upon teaching them derives from the wide variety of verbal forms that can or cannot be employed purposefully to encode various degrees of hypotheticality. What is more, when speakers attempt to formulate their hypothetical reasoning in a single compound sentence, they come across a vast array of verbal forms from which to select if they want to adequately encode a specific shade of hypothetical meaning – either within the protasis (the subordinate clause expressing the condition of the conditional sentence) or the apodosis (the main clause expressing its consequence). In LSP teaching in the field of politics and media communication, these nuances of meaning assume even greater importance insofar as they can implicitly reveal the speaker's political attitude towards the condition-consequence relationship that is being encoded by means of a conditional sentence.

On the other hand, in terms of teaching/learning conditional sentences, their formal complexity, which undoubtedly poses serious obstacles to the process of foreign speakers' acquisition of this syntactic structure, is offset by the conceptual transparency of the majority

of functional aspects of their use. This transparency concerns cross-linguistic conceptual equivalencies that are evident at the semantic and pragmatic levels of contrastive analysis. The cross-linguistic universality of the concepts involved in the semantics of conditional sentences, such as conditionality, hypotheticality and counterfactuality are easily identifiable in grammatical descriptions and semantic studies of the equivalent syntactic structures in various languages (e.g., in Croatian: Silić & Pranjković, 2005; Šarić, 1997; in German: Helbig & Buscha, 1991; Dancygier & Sweetser, 2005; in Italian: Serianni, 1989; Mazzoneli, 1994). Furthermore, as Wierzbicka (1997) argues, the concept of 'IF' is likely to be a conceptual primitive in natural language, which is compliant with the foregoing observation. In general terms, it is noticeable that cognitive linguistic theory is most markedly in line with the conception of conditional sentences as language-specific complex syntactic forms whose underlying conceptual structure is nonetheless cross-linguistically analogous. Some cognitive linguists, notably Dancygier and Sweetser (2005), focused their research specifically on conditional sentences. Through their thorough investigation of various types, use of diverse markers (mainly conjunctions) and verbal forms (employed in order to produce specific configurations of conditional sentences), the two authors reached the conclusion that these syntactic structures set up certain mental space structures:

"Conditional spaces are used not only to plan future actions, but for a range of other purposes limited only by the speaker's and the hearer's abilities to set up imagined spaces, make connections between spaces, and map useful inferences from one space to another. Tracking epistemic status, as well as time reference and other parameters, lets us note such status at the time of establishment of a new space and allows us to cue mental space locations of particular participants and events in extant spaces." (Dancygier & Sweetser, 2005, p. 276)

The above citation suggests that all conditional sentences, both from the point of view of their encoding and their decoding, heavily rely on the speaker's and the hearer's extralinguistic knowledge, that is, on pragmatic factors that stem from the language users' prior knowledge of the world as well as the ensuing views and attitudes that they have (subjectively) formed on the basis of this epistemic and extralinguistic background. Therefore, if we take into account the view that the meaning of conditional sentences is construed through the process of blending mental spaces (of the condition and the consequence), it can be concluded that these sentences ought to be viewed as language-specific complex manifestations of universal human conceptual structures that are compositional in nature. We believe that this compositionality has a beneficial effect on non-native learners' understanding of conditional constructions in the target language. It facilitates the process of identifying the differences between the corresponding syntactic structures in the target language with those in the learner's native language. In our view, although taking recourse to the learner's native language can be very efficient in the process of teaching, it often occurs automatically, that is, this process is carried out spontaneously by learners themselves. In addition, there are authors who subscribe to this view, such as Imre (2017, p. 166) who claims that "(...) a thorough understanding of English conditionals should stem from a native language perspective". Ultimately, learning in context is a mainstay of our approach, while parallelism with students' native language can occasionally be used as an additional device to help them understand the meaning of the sentence they come across in an authentic text.

### **3 English conditional sentences as LSP teaching subject matter**

As far as conditional sentences are concerned, the development of the ability to match the constituent language-specific forms and their universal meanings turns out to be the ultimate goal of teaching conditional sentences. This matching needs to be triggered by the intentional communicative goal of a participant in an illocutionary act to convey the desired explicit and, if possible, implicit messages. Reciprocally, the same kind of form/meaning matching within an *if*-clause amounts to the capability of correct interpretation of messages encoded as *if*-clauses by other speakers. In our opinion, it is primarily extralinguistic context that allows learners to discern the link between conceptual spaces involved in a conditional sentence and their corresponding forms. In harmony with our observation, contemporary research in the field of pragmatics, namely by Elder (2019), corroborates the validity of the thesis that the process of encoding/decoding of conditional utterances highly depends on extralinguistic contextual knowledge, thus attributing a conceptual and pragmatic character to the category of conditional.

#### **3.1 Providing a firm chronological and content-specific context**

Given that conditional sentences can be regarded as a pragmatic category, we claim that the conception of a learning unit dedicated to English *if*-clauses within an LSP course in Political Science and Journalism should provide a history-based and content-specific context, thus anchoring various types of authentic conditional utterances in an objective timeline and within a clear socio-political context (based on attested historical facts). For this reason, the context of the African American Civil Rights Movement that took place (mainly) in the 1950s and 1960s is selected as a convenient chronological framework to facilitate the understanding of time references conveyed by authentic utterances of *if*-clauses. Another important reason for this choice is the fact that Martin Luther King Jr. (MLK) has gone down in history as one of the most effective speakers of all time. The greatest virtue of his oratory is reflected in its practical ability to effectively garner audience support, as was confirmed by a constantly increasing number of followers of the movement throughout the 1950s and the 1960s. In our view, MLK's extraordinary oratory skills are reflected in his ability to make two important aspects of his public communication compatible: (i) relating to potential grassroots followers, who were prevailing, but not exclusively, members of the oppressed African American community, and (ii) launching determined and unambiguous messages to the political elite and the structures of power – always in a peaceful and open-minded fashion. From the point of view of linguistic analysis, MLK's use of sophisticated standard English, rich in biblical, literary and historical references, yet skilfully contextualized and rhetorically elaborated – and thus easily intelligible – makes the transcripts of his speeches extremely valuable authentic source materials in LSP teaching not only in the field of politics and the media, but also potentially suitable for a number of other fields of social sciences and humanities. Without relinquishing whatsoever our previously expressed belief that LSP subject matter, *e.g.*, its specific terminology (Bjelobaba & Landsman Vinković, 2012) or discipline-relevant syntactic structures (Landsman Vinković & Bjelobaba, 2014), should be preferably taught through a wide variety of authentic source materials, in the case of English conditional sentences, we advocate the use of a restricted content domain in order to enhance students' immersion in the extralinguistic

context, thus facilitating their conceptualization of meaning that individual constituent forms of the protases and apodoses convey in a given context.

### 3.2 Learning unit: *If*-clauses / MLK and his legacy

The learning unit presented here focuses primarily on English conditional sentences. Its organisational structure therefore revolves around the target syntactic structure, which means that it is articulated into five distinct segments, each of them related to a specific type of English *if*-clauses. Due to its deliberate restrictedness of domain-specific content, namely *MLK and his legacy*, it can be labelled as an implementation of the theme-specific instruction model of Content-Based Instruction (CBI) (Brinton & Snow, 2017). It is worth emphasising at this point that the structure of the learning unit is not intended to be syntax-centric as the amount of class time employed (approximately six sessions, 90 minutes each) is uniformly filled with the activities related to teaching syntax and tackling domain-specific content. Accordingly, the implementation of our idea of ‘shrouding a syntactic structure in an LSP cloak’ (Landsman Vinković & Bjelobaba, 2014) is even more evident here due to the fact that students are expected to engage more intensively with the domain-specific content under scrutiny than is the case in the more common theme-fragmented and multitopic LSP approaches to teaching grammar.

In light of the foregoing discussion, the question arises regarding the typology of English conditional sentences to be used in this kind of context-based instruction. A considerable amount of research has pointed to the deviation of authentic conditional utterances (as used by native speakers) from the classical rules prescribed by most textbooks as well as to the vastness of pragmatic features that exceeds those attributed to English conditional constructions in most grammatical descriptions (e.g., Ford, 1997; Ishihara, 2003; Al Ahmad & Hussein, 2020).<sup>1</sup> In spite of this diversity attested through corpus-based and conversational analyses, for the sake of pedagogy, we still adhere to our previously discussed principle of teaching syntax through a set of simplified rules (Landsman Vinković & Bjelobaba, 2014). Therefore, our identification of distinct subcategories of English *if*-clauses to be presented to students is based on formal criteria, *i.e.*, on their morphosyntactic properties. The typology we opted for is congruent with the classification proposed by Norris (2003) in terms of the identity of the *if*-clause types included. On the other hand, in terms of simplicity of presentation, our typology is similar to the one used by Swan (2005). The metalanguage we use to refer to distinct types of *if*-clauses is numerical, which is a well-entrenched manner of labelling different types of conditionals in most textbooks of English. Specifically, in terms of the verb tenses used, the English conditional core sentences include the following patterns: (i) ‘zero’ conditionals: *if* + subject + present (protasis); subject + present (apodosis); (ii) ‘first’ conditionals: *if* + subject + present (protasis); subject + a future tense / imperative (apodosis); (iii) ‘second’ conditionals: *if* + subject + past (protasis); subject + *would* + infinitive (apodosis); (iv) ‘third’ conditionals: *if* + subject + past perfect (protasis); subject + *would have* + past participle (apodosis); and (v) ‘mixed’ conditionals: a combination of (iii) and (iv) apodoses and protases. When it comes to ‘*I wish / If only*’ constructions, they are explained as patterns pertaining to the protases of (iii), (iv) of (v), autonomously used without a corresponding apodosis to express wishful thinking

1 It is worth noting that there are examples of reference books and manuals that do not neglect non-standard, yet usage-attested forms of *if*-clauses, as in the case of the section entitled *if* (7): *other structures found in spoken English* (Swan, 2005, p. 262).

referred to either the present or the past. The learning unit structure thus relies on this rather simplified formal typology. The domain-specific content (*MLK and his legacy*) is extracted from authentic sources with the purpose of providing example utterances for each of the types of *if*-clauses and employed at specific stages of the learning unit.

The learning unit opens with a brainstorming activity in which students' prior knowledge of MLK's life and activity is checked and basic information on his biography is provided. This warm-up activity is conducted as a guided conversation in which the teacher asks questions and elicits the answers that are successively presented on an animated PowerPoint slide (Appendix A: Introduction). This activity prepares the ground for the first encounter with *if*-clauses in the domain-specific context, *i.e.*, the authentic 'zero' conditional utterances.

In broad terms, our approach can be likened to a combination of task supported instruction and consciousness raising tasks as proposed by Dolgova Jacobsen (2018). Throughout this learning unit, we adhere to the principle of an inductive approach to grammar which is accompanied by explicit instruction and then reinforced by a series of gap-fill exercises and oral eliciting of students' production of conditional sentences. Accordingly, the zero conditional is presented through a series of authentic utterances that exemplify this conditional construction (Appendix A: Zero conditional). Among these examples, the utterance *If the Negro Wins, Labour Wins* can be taken as emblematic of the use of this construction to express the inextricable link between the condition and the consequence.<sup>2</sup> The zero conditional is primarily used to express the relation of entailment, *i.e.*, implicature, between the cause and the consequence. It is typical of scientific writing because of its suitability for describing laws of nature and general truths. This generic use is metonymically extended to MLK's idea of the relation between labour and social solidarity. The interests of the African American minority and labourers are closely intertwined in order to resemble the inevitability of a natural phenomenon (*e.g.*, blue litmus paper becomes red) by another that has caused it (*e.g.*, blue litmus paper is dipped in an acid).<sup>3</sup> This factual use of an *if*-clause is subsequently analysed on the basis of other examples and eventually extended to factual uses in other tenses, such as in the following syntactic pattern *if* + *subject* + past (protasis); *subject* + past (apodosis).

Subsequently, the above type of implicative conditionals is applied to MLK's rhetoric, namely to the specific utterances in which he expressed his view of a high level of certainty of a consequence in case a future condition occurs (Appendix A: First conditional). In our view, despite their formal and functional similarity, the meanings of zero and first conditionals ought to be clearly distinguished, as the latter type of conditional conveys less generic meaning. The fact that the verb in the imperative is sometimes used to refer to the consequence is explained to students through reasoning that all commands or requests are unavoidably projected into the future, as their (potential) fulfilment can occur only after the order or request is made, hence the pragmatic link between all future tenses and the imperative. Specifically, MLK's use of the quote from the Bible *If you can't fly then run, if you can't run then walk, if you can't walk then crawl* lends itself to a will-future paraphrase *If you can't fly then you will run, if you can't run then you will walk, if you can't walk then you will crawl*. It is worth noting that this kind of

2 *If the Negro Wins, Labour Wins* is the title that is usually given to MLK's 1962 speech delivered in front of the American Federation of Labor and Congress Industrial Organization.

3 See Zietlow (2020) for a detailed account of the important links between racial equality and workers' rights in Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s activism.



transformation does not significantly alter the pragmatics of the original sentence that MLK used to encourage African Americans to be perseverant in their struggle, notwithstanding their limitations.

The use of the counterfactual second conditional is largely presented through a set of conditional sentences containing the protasis *If MLK was/were alive today*. The same protasis utterance can be used with various apodoses which can be built out of various content. Therefore, students' awareness of the compositional nature both at the conceptual and formal level of this structure is raised. One and the same protasis is used in class to elicit a great diversity of possible apodoses related to specific contemporary political and ideological issues, which enhances the development of students' productive skills, either in speaking or writing. The political and media employment of the second conditional in its counterfactual use is illustrated through a listening activity based on the political commentator David Sirota's analysis of the Pentagon's manipulation with MLK's legacy (Appendix B: Second conditional). This propaganda activity is, in Sirota's view, carried out with the purpose of putting spin on the contemporary U.S.A. military action and weapon procurement (Sirota, 2013). The counterfactual uses of the second conditional, which can be regarded as prototypical for this type of conditionals (1a), are later applied to essentially non-counterfactual, yet merely speculative uses of the same syntactic pattern (1b).

- (1a) It seems that every year right around this time between Martin Luther King Day and the beginning of Black History Month you always hear about people trying to insist that Martin Luther King would be one thing or would be another thing (APODOSIS) if he was alive today (PROTASIS), oftentimes forgetting the actual words of Martin Luther King. (Sirota, 2013) (glossed by SB and MLV)
- (1b) And yet we came into 1966 with the terrible realization that only 5.2 percent of the Negro students of the South had been placed in integrated schools, which meant in substance that we haven't made 1 percent progress a year. And if it continued at that pace (PROTASIS) it would take another ninety-six years to integrate the public schools of the South (APODOSIS). (Luther King, 1966) (glossed by SB and MLV)

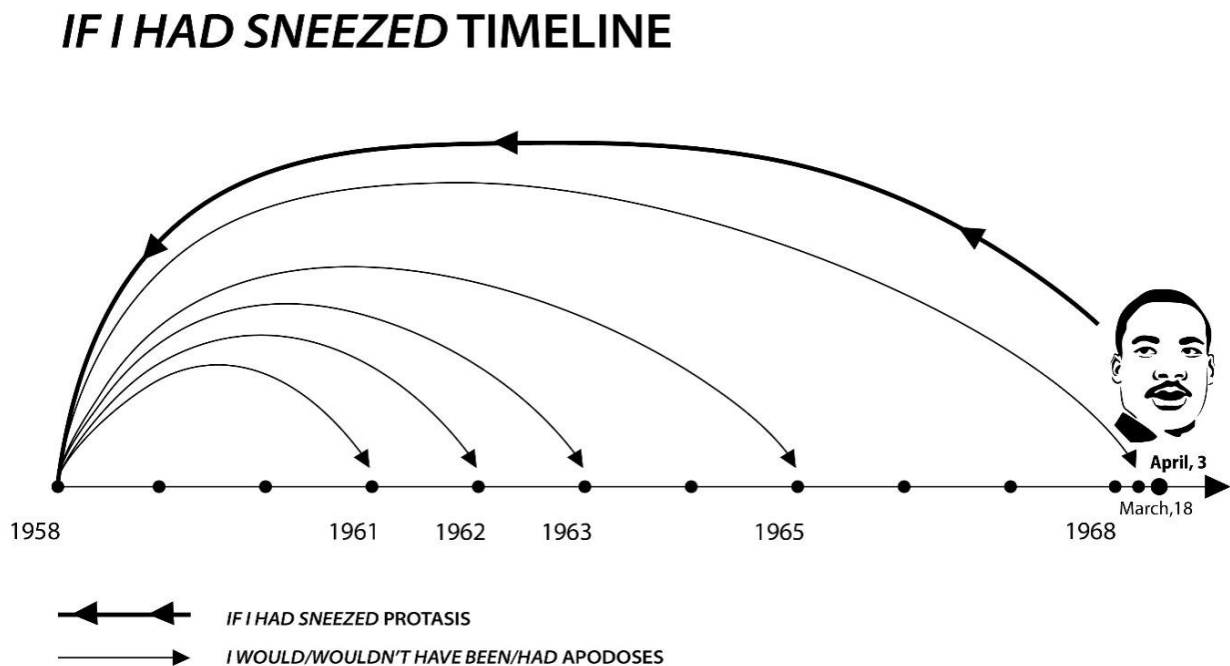
It is the use exemplified by (1b) that allows a speaker to launch an implicit message of their attitude towards an issue, *i.e.*, the likelihood of its completion. Students' attention is therefore drawn to the formal similarity and pragmatic difference between sentences hinged upon the unreal condition of MLK's being alive in the present (1a) and those that are, although entirely possible, viewed as highly unlikely by the speaker (1b). In fact, what can be inferred from (1b) is MLK's optimism regarding the fact that the process of integration of public schools would not take as long as 92 years. We firmly believe that by addressing such different instances of the polysemous *if*-clause pattern '*if* + subject + past (protasis); subject + *would* + infinitive' students may build awareness of the pragmatic subtleties this syntactic construction may convey.

However, the importance of providing a context with a firm chronological framework (Section 3.1) for students' understanding of time references is nowhere more evident than in the case of the fourth stage of the learning unit. Specifically, the original utterance around which the entire stage of the learning unit dedicated to the third conditional revolves is the protasis *If I had sneezed*. This chunk was used seven times in a row by MLK in the last speech he delivered in Memphis, on 3 April 1968, on the eve of his assassination (Appendix B: Third conditional).

By means of this lengthy anaphora, the speaker managed to give an outline of the achievements of the Civil Rights Movement in a very effective way.

**Figure 1**

The graphical representation of the time references in the third conditional sentences constituting the *If I had sneezed* anaphora



The above graphical representation shows that MLK's temporal vantage point was 3 April 1968. The mental space he evoked on that occasion were the moments that followed an attempt to assassinate him in 1958 in a bookstore in New York, when a mentally deranged woman stabbed him with a letter-opener while he was autographing his book. The tip of the blade of the letter-opener nearly reached his aorta, so he was subsequently informed by the doctors that if he had sneezed, he would have died. As he did not sneeze, this condition is clearly counterfactual and consequently a whole series of events took place. These events would not have occurred if MLK had sneezed immediately after being stabbed and before undergoing surgery. The factuality of the events that followed is based on historical evidence: the 1961 sit-in movement at lunch counters in the South; the 1961-1962 Albany Movement, the 1963 Birmingham campaign; the 1963 *I Have a Dream Speech* by MLK; the 1965 Selma to Montgomery marches and the 1963 Memphis Sanitation Worker Strike that MLK attended on 18 March 1963.<sup>4</sup> MLK referred to all of them chronologically through his counterfactual apodoses, that is, by creating an imaginary mental space in which he would not have had a chance either to take part in the above listed 1961-1968 events or to witness them, and by combining each of them with the *If I had sneezed* protasis, on which the entire homonymous anaphora hinged. As a result, the final overview of the emblematic points on the Civil Rights Movement timeline were intertwined with emotions related to MLK's personal dramatic experience of escaping death in 1958. In other words, the orator's conceptual play

4 For more details of the African American Civil Rights Movement chronology see Carson (2020).



with counterfactuality (both as a single condition and a series of consequences) was the basis for an effective rhetorical device for setting forth the facts. The anaphorically couched series of third conditional sentences thus served as a counterfactual background to the items of factual knowledge shared by the speaker and his listeners, truthfulness of which needed no corroboration as individual items of this knowledge were historically close to the moment of speaking and relevant to all immediate participants in the communication act of the 3 April 1989 *I Have Been to the Mountaintop* speech. Reasoning on its pragmatic aspects helps students raise their consciousness of the semantic potential of this syntactic structure. Their understanding of it is checked through written and oral activities of creating similar sentences with altered yet content-related protases (e.g., *If MLK had not been assassinated in 1968*) and various apodoses that highly depend on students' reasoning and imagination (e.g., *he would have run for President in the 1980 presidential election*).

Mixed conditionals are presented in a similar way, through authentic examples from MLK's speeches, consciousness-raising tasks and creative activities of application of these syntactic patterns to hypothesize about various real-world issues in the socio-political context of the U.S.A., Croatia and international politics and media (Appendix A: Mixed conditional). Taken the compositional character of *if*-clauses, in a similar fashion, students' production of *I wish* constructions referred either to the present or the past is elicited.

## 4 Student perception survey

Although the actual students' competence in using and understanding English *if*-clauses is worth checking by means of appropriate pre- and post-teaching surveys, we opted for conducting a student perception survey as our focus was on a potential synergy of learning syntax and learning domain-specific LSP content. This choice is determined by our assumption that students' attitude towards the knowledge they gain in class is highly correlated with the probability that these items of knowledge have been actually acquired, thus being available for use in real-life situations. It may be worth noting that students' capability of using this syntactic structure was assessed through three exercises in their written final exam that was held upon the completion of the learning unit. Although the examination results are not part of this research, they can be viewed as a supplementary corroboration of the effectiveness of the teaching approach proposed.

### 4.1 Research sample

The survey was conducted in January 2020 at the University of Zagreb – Faculty of Political Science. All the respondents were first-year students of either Political Science or Journalism at the very end of their first term of undergraduate studies. The sample comprised a total of a hundred respondents (N = 100): students of Journalism (N = 29) and students of Political Science (N = 71). Apart from the study programme they attend, their gender (65 female students and 35 male students) and the number of years of learning English (the average: 12.2 years), no other personal data were gathered through the questionnaire. Due to the fact that the only formal prerequisite to enrol in the courses of English for Political Science 1 and English for Journalism 1 is level B2 of English language proficiency, students' linguistic competence

was not additionally checked through a placement test. This level of competence in English was further attested by the fact that all students enrolled in these undergraduate study programmes were required to have passed a higher-level examination in a foreign language (B2+) as a part of their high school exit exams organised and held at the national level in Croatia (Cro. *državna matura*).

## 4.2 Research objectives and methodology

Our intention was to find out how students subjectively related to the body of knowledge that was presented to them through the learning unit *If clauses / MLK and his legacy*. On the basis of our professional experience of ESP teaching in the fields of Political Science and Journalism, we put forward the hypotheses that the approach to teaching English conditional sentences as described in section 3.2. would be beneficial for students' motivation to learn grammar and that merging of syntax learning into a restricted domain-specific content presentation would result in a two-fold outcome: (i) students' positive perception of their enhanced understanding of the syntactic structure in question, and (ii) their general perception of having gained new items of knowledge relative to the domain-specific content presented.

We therefore conducted a questionnaire-based perception survey with a view to inquiring about students' opinions of whether this dual attainment of knowledge was successful and to obtaining feedback about their impressions of the effectiveness of the teaching approach applied in class. The anonymous survey was conducted immediately before the beginning of the final exam, which guaranteed a high turnout as well as a high level of uniformity in terms of students' preparation and readiness to relate to their own attainment of knowledge.

The questionnaire consisted of a total of nine items. The first eight questions were based on a five-point Likert scale. Specifically, each of them contained an attitude statement and the answer options ranged from 1 – *Strongly Disagree*, 2 – *Disagree*, 3 – *Neither Agree nor Disagree*, 4 – *Agree*, to 5 – *Strongly Agree*. At the end of the questionnaire, there was one binary choice question in which respondents were supposed to state whether they believed that the learning unit had increased or had not increased their motivation to learn grammar. This final question was accompanied by an open-ended question which allowed students to explain their answer, that is, to set forth the reasons why this approach to teaching grammar had managed to increase their motivation or failed to do so. With a view to facilitating its completion, the questionnaire was in Croatian, which is the students' native language. Its English version is available in Appendix C.

The results are expressed in percentages and are presented in graphic form in Figures 2-6, while mean (M) and standard deviation (SD) for each questionnaire item are provided in Table 1. The interpretation of the numerical results was supported by a qualitative analysis of students' answers to the only open-end question employed in the questionnaire.

## 4.3 Results

Due to the fact that the respondents covered by this survey constitute one single sample, the values of standard deviation (SD) and mean (M) can be regarded as relevant only in terms of

evaluating the dispersion of the respondents' answers with regard to the five options of the Likert scale, *i.e.*, the extent of the spread of values from the mean option 3 – *Neither Agree nor Disagree*.

**Table 1**

Mean (M) and standard deviation (SD) values per questionnaire item

Items	M	SD
1. Grammar is an important part in the process of learning a foreign language for specific purposes.	4.41	1.19
2. Grammar learning is interesting.	2.64	0.55
3. Grammar learning is difficult.	2.74	0.52
4. I can recall a grammar form with a greater ease if I recall the situation or the sentence where I heard it.	4.25	1.06
5. This type of learning increased my motivation for learning grammar.	3.23	0.46
6. Through the learning unit I learnt a lot about <i>if</i> -clauses.	3.62	0,78
7. Through the learning unit I learnt a lot about MLK and his legacy.	4.31	1.07
8. The listening comprehension texts were not difficult, so I could not focus on grammar ( <i>if</i> -clauses).*	3.65	0.7

\* Reverse scoring applied to this item.

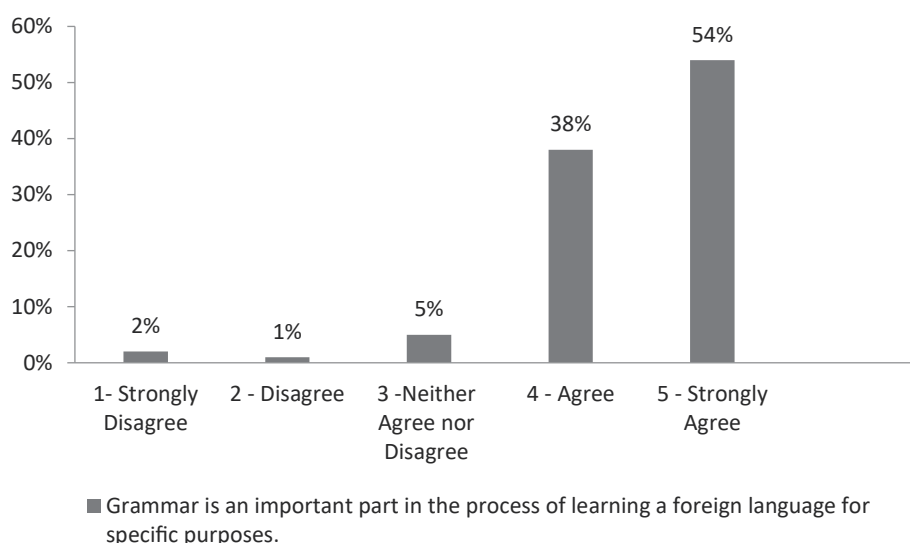
In our analysis, the mean results between 3.1 and 5.0 are viewed as positive (supporting the idea), those between 2.0 and 3.0 as neutral (indefinite attitude) and those ranging between 1 and 1.9 as negative (rejecting the idea). It is evident that the respondents replied very positively to item 1 (M = 4.41), to item 4 (M = 4.25) as well as to item 7 (M = 4.31). These three values are conspicuously higher than other mean scores presented in Table 1.

Overall, all mean scores and standard deviation values they entail are in compliance with the results presented in Figures 2-6, thus providing further corroboration of our analysis, which was predominantly based on the numerical values expressed in percentages.

The question of how much class time ought to be dedicated to teaching grammar and what kind of importance should be attributed to grammar within an LSP course may raise a doubt for LSP teachers. There is a scarcity of research specifically relating to LSP students' perception of the importance of learning grammar. Yet, some authors who addressed this issue (Ismail, 2010; Hotak, 2021) identified the prevalence of LSP students' positive attitudes towards learning grammar. The students' view of grammar learning as an essential aspect of foreign language acquisition is congruent with Chen's (2016) statement that only insufficient grammar knowledge makes learning LSP complicated. Furthermore, a positive correlation between the level of grammar knowledge and the development of diverse language skills has been established, notably reading comprehension (Chen, 2016) and formal communication (Ismail, 2010). Therefore, the first attitude statement in our questionnaire was targeted at inquiring students' overall opinion in this regard and at the same time verifying the previous findings.

**Figure 2**

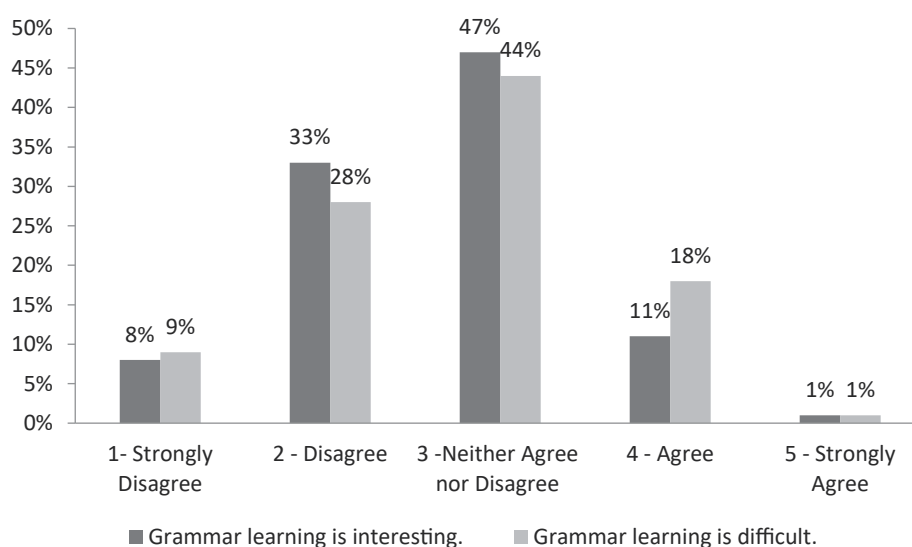
Students' attitude towards learning grammar within an LSP module at a tertiary education institution



Somewhat contrary to our expectations, albeit in accordance with the findings of previous research (Chen, 2016; Ismail, 2010; Hotak, 2021), the students prevalingly expressed their belief that grammar is an important part of an LSP course (92%). This result can be interpreted as their awareness of the fact that grammar is an important building block in one's linguistic competence, which does not necessarily entail their intrinsic motivation to get into grips with acquiring this kind of knowledge. On the other hand, this high result may be a consequence of students' prior experience of language learning that may have been marked by explicit grammar teaching and assessing rather than by sufficient integration with non-grammar content.

**Figure 3**

Students' attitude towards the learning grammar in general



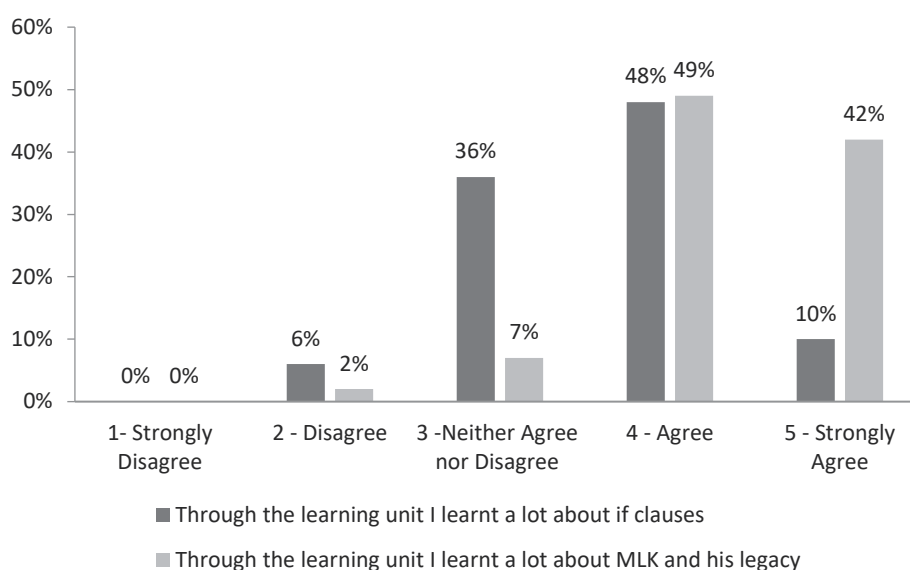
The separateness of students' consciousness from their personal attitudes towards grammar in general can be inferred from their answers to questions 2 and 3 (Figure 3). These two questionnaire items were aimed at establishing what students' general attitudes towards learning grammar are, that is, whether they consider it to be interesting and whether they value this aspect of learning a foreign language difficult.

In this case, the overwhelming majority of respondents who attributed a great importance to grammar in LSP was not reflected in the result relative to a more general inquiry about students' attitude towards grammar as learning subject matter. Their attitudes regarding both the appeal and difficulty of learning grammar turned out to be rather neutral and insufficiently defined. In other words, students proved to lack a strong opinion regarding this issue. It is worth noting that the mean scores for items 2 ( $M = 2.64$ ) and 3 ( $M = 2.74$ ) display very low standard deviation values ( $SD = 0.55$  and  $SD = 0.52$  respectively).

Due to the fact that the confrontation of the results presented in Figure 1 with the results presented in Figure 2 indicates a discrepancy between students' attitudes towards the importance of LSP grammar and their attitudes towards grammar in general, it is students' perception of their own successful acquirement of the two aspects of the learning unit that is worth our special attention in this analysis. As it is evident from Figure 4, almost half of the respondents believe they have learnt a lot about both *if*-clauses and MLK and his legacy. On the other hand, while 42% claim to have learnt a lot about MLK, only 10% show the same level of certainty when it comes to their acquirement of the syntactic structure at hand. This difference can be interpreted in two ways: (i) students' judgement can be taken as a signal that they had gained a satisfactory level of knowledge of *if*-clauses during their primary and secondary education, or that (ii) the very syntactic structure was overshadowed by domain-specific content, thus blurring students' discernment of grammar from the topic of MLK and the African American Civil Rights Movement that permeated the whole learning unit.

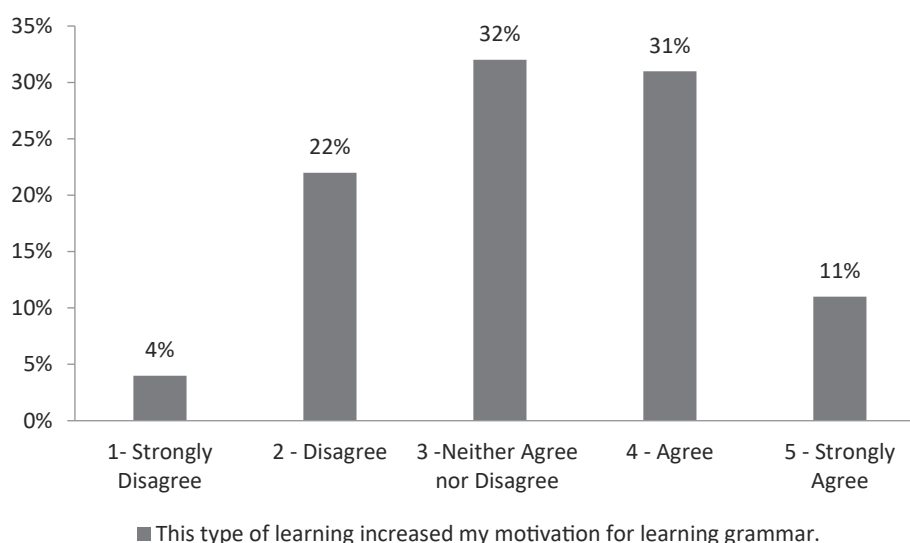
**Figure 4**

Students' perception of their attainment of the learning outcomes



**Figure 5**

Students' judgements on the impact of the learning unit on their motivation for learning grammar



The issue of a potential increase in students' motivation to learn grammar as a consequence of our teaching approach is extremely intriguing, especially if we take into account students' attitudes towards learning grammar in general (Figure 3). As we are aware that motivation is a highly subjective category and that judging it may be liable to distortions caused by the very form of the questionnaire item used (five-point Likert scale type or a binary answer), we intentionally addressed this issue twice in our survey.

As it is shown in Figure 4, when students were offered five choices, they tended to give comparatively moderate and indecisive answers that are compatible with their attitudes towards learning grammar in general. Nevertheless, when they were faced with only two alternatives (*increased / did not increase*), a significant majority gave an affirmative answer (70%), while only one fourth of all the respondents opted for the negative answer (25%). Only a negligible number of students (5%) abstained from answering this question.

This deviation, or apparent lack of consistency can be attributed to the fact that the latter answer was supposed to be accompanied by a descriptive explanation, which made it possible for them to be more approximate in qualifying their current motivation for learning grammar. Most students stressed the virtues of our approach and showed a high level of awareness of the real didactic purpose of the learning unit.

"When something uninteresting, such as grammar is taught through something interesting, such as M. L. King's speeches, that grammar automatically becomes easier and somewhat more interesting." (S4m)

"It was due to interesting and interactive content that I learned more about grammar without being aware of it. I like this fact as I am trying to use English as grammatically accurately as possible." (S21m)

"I think these texts were a full hit for learning conditional sentences, especially for zero conditional and mixed conditionals." (S48f)



"It increased my motivation because interesting content managed to pull through something that is less interesting in a very subtle way." (S62m)

In spite of the prevalence of this category of opinions, there were explanations that accounted for their response that this teaching approach did not increase their motivation for learning grammar. This category of answers can be further classified into two subcategories, namely those motivated either by: (i) students' intuition that they 'learn grammar by ear' or (ii) their lack of interest in grammar in general. Among these answers, very few were explicit about the reasons why they did not find this approach beneficial. In some of these cases, domain-specific texts can be interpreted as a possible negative motivational factor.

"Generally, I don't like grammar and I am not good at it. When I study it, I use less complicated sentences. I find these sentences a little difficult and new to me, so they obstructed me when I was thinking about grammar." (S24f)

"I think that the texts were full of incomprehensible and complicated phrases. If clauses are not too difficult, but when combined with certain words they become difficult to comprehend." (S85f)

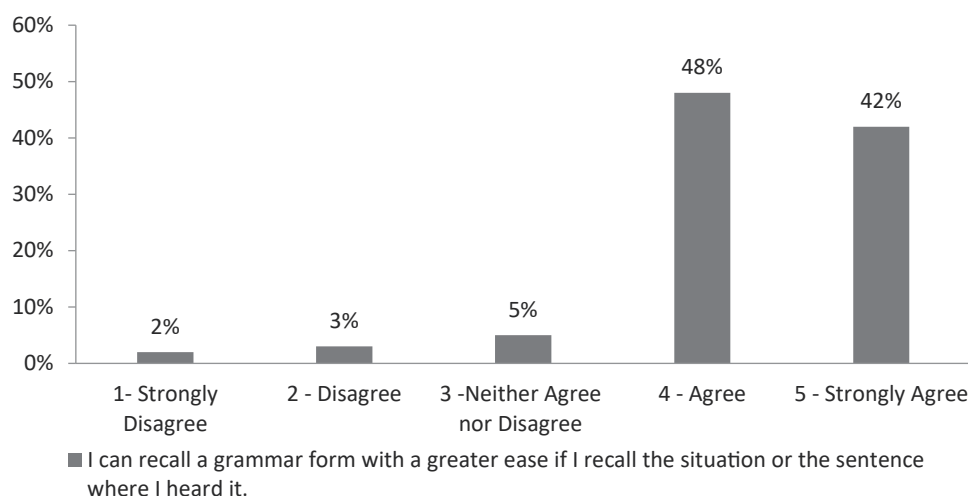
In these rare cases, the students' negative attitude can be attributed to the fact that respondents were not at a level of English language competence that allowed them to meaningfully deal with the authentic materials and/or the syntactic structure at hand although they formally possessed the certificate of level B2 in English. For the sake of accuracy, it is worth pointing out that our analysis of the answers to questionnaire item 8 established that only 14% of the respondents considered the listening comprehension texts to be as difficult as to be an obstruction to their focus on grammar, compared to 63% of those who (strongly) claimed the opposite ( $M = 3.65$ ;  $SD = 0.7$ ).

On the whole, we are inclined to infer from students' answers to the open-end question that the concept of 'grammar' varies from student to student. Students who conceptualise 'grammar' as a set of rules to be learnt were likelier to label it as boring. These students were often adamant that they will never change their attitude towards grammar. In reality, our teaching approach did not exclude explicit grammar teaching, which implied the use of grammatical metalanguage, albeit in an inductive-learning fashion. Nevertheless, in most cases, students acknowledged the value of firm contextualisation of *if*-clauses and appreciated the fact that this approach facilitated their understanding of the semantic and pragmatic potential of these structures. In this sense, the following results are particularly indicative:

A total of 90% of students (strongly) agree with the assertion that there is a positive correlation between learning a morphosyntactic structure and the capability of recalling the situation or the sentence where they heard it. This extremely high percentage corroborates the plausibility of our context-based approach to teaching English conditional sentences. It is worth noting that during the teaching/learning process, students were encouraged to learn by heart the most emblematic authentic sentences as exemplary for each of the types of *if*-clauses and use them as mnemonic patterns for producing new sentences as well as for decoding the conditional sentences produced by others, always bearing in mind the level of hypotheticality of the relation between the condition and the consequence and/or speaker's communicative intentions. It can be assumed that the probability that learners will memorise

**Figure 6**

Students' judgements on the importance of context for learning grammar



such a sentence is higher if they find their semantic content striking in some respects. In our judgement, the salience of an authentic utterance can derive from various factors and/or their combinations, *e.g.*, the metaphorical value and exhortative power of the zero-conditional utterance "(...) a man can't ride your back unless it is bent." (Luther King, 1968), the controversy of the second-conditional utterance "(...) Martin Luther King, if he was alive today, he would support more defense spending, more weapons procurement and more militarism in general." (Sirota, 2013), or strikingness and emotional impact exerted by the model sentence for the third-conditional "If I had sneezed, I would have died." (Luther King, 1968). The syntactic model of the utterance that students remember and understand due to the authenticity of its original linguistic and extralinguistic context helps them apply the syntactic rule without recourse to grammatical metalanguage.

## 5 Conclusion

In this paper we gave an account of a dual character of conditional sentences in general, and English *if*-clauses in particular: their language-specific formal complexity and their crosslinguistic functional universality which stems from the fact that hypothesizing is a common feature of human communication and life. In our view, learners can reach a full understanding and acquirement of these structures in a more efficient way if the teaching process relies on the latter feature, that is, by raising learners' consciousness of the crosslinguistic equivalence of the corresponding underlying conceptual structures. Therefore, instead of providing an explicit metalinguistic instruction at the beginning, we proposed an inductive, context-based approach to syntax that would enable learners to infer the grammatical rules and principles of use in an empirical manner. Subsequently, the process of crosslinguistic identification of semantic and pragmatic features and a language-specific analysis of forms was supported by explicit instruction provided by the teacher. In case of teaching conditional sentences where time references and speakers' attitudes towards the condition-consequence relation were

relevant (particularly in the realm of politics and journalism), we proposed a theme-specific approach as it implied using a firm contextual framework. Specifically, we designed a learning unit based exclusively on authentic materials from a rather restricted content-specific domain: *Martin Luther King and his legacy*.

As our student perception survey shows, most learners do not underestimate the importance of learning grammar within an LSP module, yet their attitudes are sometimes affected by preconceptions of what grammar is (a set of rules to be imposed on a learner rather than real language phenomena to be recognised in context). This conclusion is based on the fact that most of the students who expressed their negative attitudes regarding both the appeal and difficulty of learning grammar, responded affirmatively to the question whether their being able to recall the situation or the sentence in which they were exposed to the use of a particular type of *if*-clause could facilitate their learning of this syntactic structure. Therefore, it is this kind of content-based instruction that allows a high level of implementation of our principle of 'shrouding a syntactic structure in an LSP cloak' (Landsman Vinković & Bjelobaba, 2014). In this way, the apparent intractability of conditional sentences in the process of LSP teaching can be mitigated, and, as the results of our survey suggest, often entirely dissolved due to the fact that the syntactic structure is shrouded in content that students find more appealing and important for their professional development. Furthermore, our analysis of both quantitative and qualitative survey results gives rise to the surmise that this kind of integrated approach is likely to prove even more beneficial if extensively applied at all levels of education, not only within LSP modules at the tertiary level. The model we propose specifically for teaching conditionals can be labelled as 'content-based chronological framework approach'. It may be adapted for the purpose of teaching various time-conditioned items of grammar in other languages and across LSP areas. Nevertheless, the actual applicability of the model lends itself to be subject matter of future research in the realm of LSP and beyond. It is worth noting that the actual correlation between our restricted-domain approach and actual progress in students' syntactic competence needs yet to be confirmed by specific pre-instruction and post-instruction research, which also leaves room for future work. However, even at this point, we can assert that our student perception survey findings unequivocally demonstrate that there can be a positive synergy between domain-specific learning and learning syntax.

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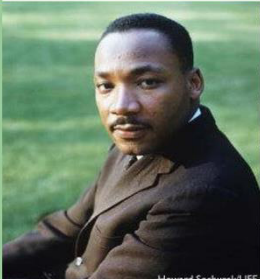
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## Appendix A. Class materials (1).

### If-clauses / MLK and his legacy PowerPoint slides

#### The stage of the learning unit: Introduction

**Who is the person in the picture?**



- Martin Luther King (1929 – 1968)
- clergyman, activist
- African American Civil Rights Movement
- SCLC
- Southern Christian Leadership Conference
- 1964 Nobel Peace Prize laureate

Howard Sochurek/LIFE

Sochurek, H. (1968). *The Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.* (January 15, 1929-April 4, 1968) [Photograph]. *LIFE Magazine*. Retrieved from <https://stjla.org/2019/01/18/remembering-martin-luther-king-jr/>

#### The stage of the learning unit: Zero conditional

**ZERO CONDITIONAL - IMPLICATION**

- **If the Negro wins, Labor wins.**  
(MLK, 1962: the speech given before the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations)
- There are those who still feel that if the Negro is to rise out of poverty, if the Negro is to rise out of the slum conditions, if he is to rise out of discrimination and segregation, he must do it all by himself. And so they say the Negro must lift himself by his own bootstraps.  
(MLK, 1968: *Remaining Awake Through a Great Revolution*)
- Because **if you hate your enemies, you have no way to redeem and to transform your enemies.**  
(MLK, 1967: *Loving Your Enemies*)
- But **if a man doesn't have a job or an income, he has neither life nor liberty nor the possibility for the pursuit of happiness. He merely exists.**  
(MLK, 1968: *Remaining Awake Through a Great Revolution*)

**ZERO CONDITIONAL - implication**

And **WHENEVER** men and women straighten their backs up, they are going somewhere, because **a man can't ride your back unless it is bent.**  
(MLK, 1968: *"I've Been to the Mountaintop"*)

→ **a man can't ride your back IF it is NOT bent.**



## The stage of the learning unit: First conditional

### FIRST CONDITIONAL – concerns a hypothetical (but entirely possible) future event

This is where we are. "Mankind must put an end to war or war will put an end to mankind," and the best way to start is to put an end to war in Vietnam, because **if it continues, we will inevitably come to the point of confronting China which could lead the whole world to nuclear annihilation**.

(MLK, 1968: *Remaining Awake Through a Great Revolution*)

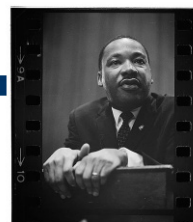
**If I stop to help this man in need, what will happen to me?** (MLK, 1968: "I've Been to the Mountaintop")

### FIRST CONDITIONAL

**If you can't fly then run,  
if you can't run then walk,  
if you can't walk then crawl,**

but whatever you do you have to keep moving forward.

(The exact origin of this phrase is not known, though it is reported that it appeared in the book of *Isaiah* for the first time, but later Martin Luther King used it in his famous speech at a Spelman college rally in Sisters Chapel in 1960).



Trikosko, M. S., (1964). *Martin Luther King, Jr.*, [Photograph]. Retrieved from <https://imagespublicdomain.wordpress.com/2011/01/16/dr-martin-luther-king-jr/>

## The stage of the learning unit: Second conditional

### SECOND CONDITIONAL—counterfactual or speculative

- A SITUATION DEPENDENT ON A CONDITION THAT IS KNOWN TO BE FALSE:

**If Martin Luther King Were Alive Today, He Would Be Disgusted At How Difficult It Has Become For Public Figures To Quietly Cheat On Their Wives**  
(Commentary – Opinion – ISSUE 49-36, Sep 2, 2013 By Jacob Marshall)

- A SITUATION DEPENDENT ON A CONDITION THAT IS PRESENTED AS UNLIKELY:

**It would be hypocritical indeed if I allowed modesty to forbid my saying that SCLC stood at the forefront of all of the watershed movements that brought these monumental changes in the South.** (MLK, 1967: *Where do we go from here?*)

### Put the verbs into the correct form:

- It \_\_\_\_\_ (BE) **fortunate if the people in power had sense enough to go on and give up.**
- It would be fortunate if the people in power had sense enough to go on and give up

We've got to keep on keeping on in order to gain freedom. It never comes like that. **It would be fortunate if the people in power had sense enough to go on and give up,** but they don't do it like that. (MLK, 1954: *The Birth of a New Nation*)

## The stage of the learning unit: Third conditional

### THIRD CONDITIONAL – used to refer to hypothetical, counterfactual (or believed likely to be counterfactual) situations in the past

**If Abraham Lincoln had hated Stanton, if Abraham Lincoln had answered everything Stanton said, Abraham Lincoln would have not transformed and redeemed Stanton.** Stanton would have gone to his grave hating Lincoln, and Lincoln would have gone to his grave hating Stanton.  
(MLK, 1957: *Loving Your Enemies*)

### THIRD CONDITIONAL

– sometimes formed using inversion without any conjunction

**"Had President Kennedy lived, I would probably have endorsed him in 1964."**  
(from MLK's autobiography)

→ **IF President Kennedy HAD lived, I would probably have endorsed him in 1964."**

## The stage of the learning unit: Mixed conditional

### MIXED CONDITIONAL

counterfactual conditional – (either the condition or the consequence, but not both, has a past time reference)

If there had not been abolitionists in America, both Negro and white, we might still stand today in the dungeons of slavery. (MLK, 1954: *The Birth of a New Nation*)

CONDITION – PAST TIME REFERENCE

CONSEQUENCE – PRESENT TIME REFERENCE

### MIXED CONDITIONAL –

counterfactual conditional – (either the condition or the consequence, but not both, has a past time reference)

If I had any idea that the state troopers would use the kind of brutality they did, I would have felt compelled to give up my church duties altogether to lead the line.

(MLK, 1965: after "Bloody Sunday")

CONDITION – PRESENT TIME REFERENCE

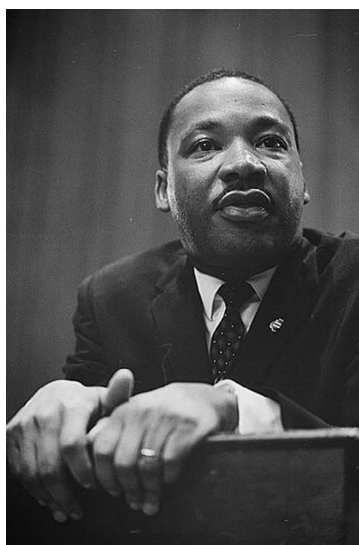
CONSEQUENCE – PAST TIME REFERENCE

## Appendix B. Class materials (2)

### If-clauses / MLK and his legacy handouts

#### The stage of the learning unit: Second conditional

- A. Reconstruct the transcript of the following political commentary broadcast by TYT in January 2013 by putting the verbs in brackets into the appropriate form.



Trikosko, M. S., (1964). *Martin Luther King, Jr.*, [Image]. Retrieved from <https://imagespublicdomain.wordpress.com/2011/01/16/dr-martin-luther-king-jr/>

### Then listen and check:

It seems that every year right around this time between Martin Luther King Day and the beginning of Black History Month you always hear about people trying to insist that Martin Luther King would be (BE) one thing or would be another thing if he was (BE) alive today, oftentimes forgetting the actual words of Martin Luther King. Some years we hear that Martin Luther King            supposedly            (BE) part of the neo-confederate Republican Party of today if he            (BE) alive. Other years it's crimes of omission: you hear Martin Luther King's 1963 "I Have a Dream" speech but you don't hear on TV or in the media, you don't hear mention what he said in his 1967 Riverside Church speech. Well, the Pentagon as it always often does is topping everybody: the biggest of big government departments is now claiming that Martin Luther King, if he            (BE) alive today, he would support (SUPPORT) more defense spending, more weapons procurement and more militarism in general. If you            (THINK) that I'm making this up, think again. To celebrate Martin Luther King Day the Air Force on its website put up an essay arguing that it was paying tribute to Martin Luther King and arguing in that supposed tribute that Martin Luther King            (SUPPORT), again, more militarism and more defense spending. Here's what happened: the Air Force's website for its Global Strike team put up an essay on Martin Luther King Day saying this, quote: "Dr. King            (BE) proud to see our Global Strike team insuring the most powerful weapons in the United States arsenal remain the credible bedrock of our national defense. Maintaining our commitment to our Global Strike team, our families and our nation is a fitting tribute to Dr. King as we celebrate his legacy." That was the Air Force. The Marines followed that up with a post on its twitter feed, quoting a Martin Luther King quote in a not-so-subtle effort to claim that the civil rights leader and the most famous ... proponent of non-violence, claiming that he            probably            (SUPPORT) the Marines in their war-making operations. They put up on their twitter feed a quote, in which he said, quote: "A man who won't die for something is not fit to live". Dr King did say that, but he didn't say that as a way to support the missions of the United States Marines.

The Young Turks. (2013, February 2). *Martin Luther King Jr Santa Claus-ified?* [Videofile]. YouTube. Retrieved from [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=01\\_qWCPEscs&t=103s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=01_qWCPEscs&t=103s)

### The stage of the learning unit: Third conditional

- B. Complete this excerpt from Martin Luther King's "I've Been to the Mountaintop" speech, delivered in Memphis, Tennessee, on 3 April 1968 (i.e., on the eve of his assassination):

It came out in the New York Times the next morning, that if I had merely sneezed (SNEEZE), I would have died (DIE). Well, about four days later, they allowed me, after the operation, after my chest had been opened, and the blade had been taken out, to move around in the wheelchair in the hospital. They allowed me to read some of the mail that came in, and from all over the states and the world, kind letters came in. I read a few, but one of them I will never forget. I had received one from the President and the Vice-President. I've forgotten what those telegrams said. I'd received a visit and a letter from the Governor of New York, but I've forgotten what that letter said. But there was another letter that came

from a little girl, a young girl who was a student at the White Plains High School. And I looked at that letter, and I'll never forget it. It said simply, *Dear Dr. King, I am a ninth-grade student at the White Plains High School. And she said: While it should not matter, I would like to mention that I'm a white girl. I read in the paper of your misfortune, and of your suffering. And I read that if you [ ] (SNEEZE), you would have died. And I'm simply writing you to say that I'm so happy that you [ ] (NOT SNEEZE).*

And I want to say tonight -- I want to say tonight that I too am happy that I didn't sneeze. Because if I had sneezed, I wouldn't have been (BE) around here in 1960, when students all over the South started sitting-in at lunch counters. And I knew that as they were sitting in, they were really standing up for the best in the American dream, and taking the whole nation back to those great wells of democracy which were dug deep by the Founding Fathers in the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution.

If I [ ] (SNEEZE), I wouldn't have been around here in 1961, when we decided to take a ride for freedom and ended segregation in inter-state travel.

If I had sneezed, I [ ] (NOT BE) around here in 1962, when Negroes in Albany, Georgia, decided to straighten their backs up. And whenever men and women straighten their backs up, they are going somewhere, because a man can't ride your back unless it [ ] (BE) bent.

If I had sneezed -- If I had sneezed I wouldn't have been here in 1963, when the black people of Birmingham, Alabama, aroused the conscience of this nation, and brought into being the Civil Rights Bill.

If I had sneezed, I [ ] (NOT HAVE) a chance later that year, in August, to try to tell America about a dream that I had had.

If I had sneezed (SNEEZE), I wouldn't have been down in Selma, Alabama, to see the great Movement there.

If I [ ] (SNEEZE), I wouldn't have been in Memphis to see a community rally around those brothers and sisters who are suffering.

I'm so happy that I [ ] (NOT SNEEZE).

Luther King, M. (1968, April 3). *I've Been to the Mountaintop*. [Speech audio recording]. American Rhetoric. Retrieved from: <https://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/mlkivebeentothemountaintop.htm>.

## Appendix C. Questionnaire (translated from Croatian into English)

Study programme: Journalism / Political Science (*circle*)

Gender: M / F (*circle*)

Number of years of learning English: \_\_\_\_\_ (*write*)

### Questionnaire

This questionnaire is intended to check your attitude towards learning grammar within the module of English for Specific Purposes at the University of Zagreb – Faculty of Political Science. We would like to find out to what extent our contextual approach to learning and teaching foreign languages helps you learn English grammar. The results of the research will serve as a starting point for improving foreign language teaching at higher education institutions in Croatia. The questionnaire is entirely anonymous. Please, read carefully all the assertions below and respond to them sincerely and spontaneously.

- 1. Grammar is an important part of learning a foreign language for specific purposes (specifically: English for Political science / English for Journalism).**

1 – Strongly Disagree    2 – Disagree    3 – Neither Agree nor Disagree  
4 – Agree    5 – Strongly Agree

- 2. Learning grammar is interesting.**

1 – Strongly Disagree    2 – Disagree    3 – Neither Agree nor Disagree  
4 – Agree    5 – Strongly Agree

- 3. Learning grammar is difficult.**

1 – Strongly Disagree    2 – Disagree    3 – Neither Agree nor Disagree  
4 – Agree    5 – Strongly Agree

- 4. I can recall a grammar form if I recall the situation or the sentence where I heard it.**

1 – Strongly Disagree    2 – Disagree    3 – Neither Agree nor Disagree  
4 – Agree    5 – Strongly Agree

5. **Learning English conditional sentences (*if*-clauses) through texts about Martin Luther King and quotations from his speeches increased my motivation for learning grammar.**

1 – Strongly Disagree    2 – Disagree    3 – Neither Agree nor Disagree  
4 – Agree    5 – Strongly Agree

6. **Through the learning unit *If*-clauses / MLK and his Legacy, I learnt a lot about forms and uses of English conditional sentences (*if*-clauses).**

1 – Strongly Disagree    2 – Disagree    3 – Neither Agree nor Disagree  
4 – Agree    5 – Strongly Agree

7. **Through the learning unit *If*-clauses / MLK and his Legacy, I learnt a lot about MLK, his activism and achievements.**

1 – Strongly Disagree    2 – Disagree    3 – Neither Agree nor Disagree  
4 – Agree    5 – Strongly Agree

8. **The listening comprehension texts (David Sirota: *Santa Claus-ifying Martin Luther King Jr* and the *If I Had Sneezed* section of Martin Luther King's 1968 *I Have Been to the Mountaintop* speech) were too difficult, so I could not focus on grammar (*if*-clauses).**

1 – Strongly Disagree    2 – Disagree    3 – Neither Agree nor Disagree  
4 – Agree    5 – Strongly Agree



**Explain briefly why teaching English conditional sentences (*if*-clauses) through texts about Martin Luther King and quotations from his speeches**

increased / did not increase (*circle the answer of your choosing*)

**your motivation to learn grammar.**

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Thank you for your cooperation!