Should a conditional marker arise ... 
The diachronic development of conditional sollte in German

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Abstract  Like other Germanic languages, German has a modal verb that, when used in the protasis of a conditional, does not have one of the modal meanings it has in other contexts, but only seems to underline the conditional meaning. The current paper looks at the diachronic development of conditional sollen, and shows how the past (subjunctive) form sollte, particularly in V1-protases, is in the process of developing into a pure conditional marker. Following Breitbarth (2015) and Breitbarth et al. (2016), this development is analysed in a framework combining Roberts & Roussou’s (2003) Minimalist approach to grammaticalization with a cartographic analysis of modality and conditionals based on Cinque (1999) and Haegeman (2010b).

Keywords: conditional clauses, modal verbs, grammaticalization, upward reanalysis, sollte, German

1 Introduction

1.1 Background

All West Germanic (and some Romance) languages have “conditional” uses of certain modal verbs, in which the modal verb does not express a modal (root or epistemic) meaning, but acts more like a conditionality marker

Cf. French devoir, Italian dovere ‘must’, e.g. Je ne pense pas qu’elle sera élue mais si elle devait l’être, on fera la fête ‘I don’t think she will be elected, but should she be elected, we will have a party’ (example from Liliane Haegeman, p.c.).
In German, this modal verb is *sollen*, or rather, its past (subjunctive) form *sollte*.

Interestingly, while V1-conditionals cannot be substituted for a *wenn* ‘if’-conditional in all syntactic and semantic contexts, V1-conditionals with *sollte* ‘should’ seem to be much less sensitive to this distinction (e.g. Reis & Wöllstein 2010). They are allowed in contexts where V1-conditionals with other verbs are excluded, such as relevance conditionals like (1) (Reis & Wöllstein 2010: 137), which Reis & Wöllstein attribute to the fact that the idiosyncratic meaning of “conditional” *sollte*, highlighting the hypothetical character of the antecedent proposition (Welke 1965: 99; Glas 1984: 86) and focussing its potential character, serves as overt marking of conditionality, and can therefore override the restrictions of V1-protases.

(1)

a. Wenn Peter anruft — ich bin im Café Einstein.
   *If Peter calls, I’m at Café Einstein.*

b. Sollte Peter anrufen — ich bin im Café Einstein.
   *Should Peter call, I’m at Café Einstein.*

c. *Ruft Peter an — ich bin im Café Einstein.
   *Calls Peter, I am at Café Einstein*

*Sollte* is not restricted to V1-protases, but also occurs in combination with *wenn* ‘if’ (or *falls* ‘in case’), with seemingly no or little difference in distribution. Reis & Wöllstein (2010: 137) call German *sollte*-V1-conditionals a *Sonderfall* (‘special case’) and state that

Die Analyse von konditionalem *sollte* muss sicher viel weiter getrieben werden, sowohl was das Verhältnis zum Modalverb *sollen* bzw. dessen epistemischen und futurischen Abarten angeht, als auch die Verbindung des *sollte* zugeschriebenen stärker hypothetischen Charakters mit der ihm gleichfalls zugeschriebenen Fokussierung möglicher Erfüllbarkeit.  

They add in a footnote

2 ‘The analysis of conditional *sollte* certainly needs to be advanced much more, both concerning the relationship with the modal verb *sollen* and its epistemic and futuric variants, and the connection between the stronger hypothetical character attributed to *sollte* and the focussing on potential realizability also attributed to it.’ [AB]
Synchronously, Breitbarth et al. (2016) give such a comparison between the distribution and the different degrees of grammaticalization of English should and German sollte, together with (Netherlands and Standard) Dutch mocht and (Belgian Colloquial) Dutch moest, while Breitbarth (2015) proposed a formal account for the diachronic development of conditional should in English. The question of how German sollte, originally a modal verb expressing obligation, could come to express a potential or conditional meaning, and how sollte- conditionals acquired their special distribution, has not yet been discussed in detail in the literature. Building on Breitbarth (2015) and Breitbarth et al. (2016), the current paper therefore sets out to describe the diachronic development of conditional sollte, and analyses it in a framework using insights from Roberts & Roussou’s (2003) Minimalist approach to grammaticalization in a cartographic analysis of modality and conditionals based on Cinque (1999) and Haegeman (2010a).

1.2 Methods

The diachronic case study presented in this paper is based on a Middle High German (MHG; 1050-1350) and a New High German (NHG) corpus. The MHG data come (a) from the Middle High German Conceptual Database (MHDBDB; 185,632 tokens in 595 texts) and (b) from the newly available Referenzkorpus Mittelhochdeutsch (ReM; 2.5 million tokens in 395 texts), Klein & Dipper (2016). The NHG data are drawn from the written archive

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3 ‘To this belongs a comparative investigation of English should-conditionals, which, at least at first sight, seem to be entirely parallel to the German sollte-conditionals.’ [AB]

4 http://www.mhdbdb.sbg.ac.at, queries: ($ob +) @suln (finding clauses with a form of suln ‘shall’, with or without conditional complementizer ob ‘if’). Examples from this corpus are cited with the orthography, capitalization, and punctuation as found in the corpus.

5 https://www.linguistics.rub.de/annis/annis3/REM/, queries: (ia) for clauses beginning with suln and (ib) for clauses ending with suln.

(i) a. tok anno = ",." &
   tok anno = /sol.*/ &
   #1. #2
b. tok anno = /sol.*/ &
   punc = ",E" &
   #1. #2
of the German Reference Corpus (DeReKo; ca. 7.3 billion words in total), which contains texts from Germany, Austria and Switzerland, and were subdivided into two periods, (i) historical texts from 1741-1915 (older NHG) and (ii) selected sources from the archive of written language between 1985-2012 (Present-Day German, PDG).

Any conditional clauses with the modal verb *suln*/sollen were extracted, both syndetic and asyndetic, regardless of the modal meaning of the verb. The results of these queries were manually checked, and false hits (i.e. cases that were not conditional clauses with *suln*/sollen) removed. In the end, 428 clauses were obtained for MHG (362 from the MHDBDB and 66 from ReM). From the older NHG and the PDG subcorpora of the DeReKo, a random first selection of 200 clauses each was made, which after deselection of false hits resulted in 186 and 195 clauses, respectively. These were coded for (i) the meaning of the modal verb (e.g. circumstantial, or conditional), (ii) whether or not they are syndetic, (iii) the semantic linkage level (content/event, inferential or illocutionary), (iv) the degree of probability for content-level protases, (v) the tense of the verb (*suln*/sollen) in the protasis, and (vi) the tense of the verb in the apodosis.

### 1.3 Overview

Section 2 presents the results of the diachronic corpus study. Section 2.1 reports on the diachronic changes in the distribution of the modal meanings of *suln*/sollen in conditional protases, 2.2 shows how the semantic integration of *sollte*-conditionals developed over time, 2.3 looks at how *sollte* became increasingly restricted to the past (subjunctive) form, regardless of the degree of probability expressed by the conditional, or the tense of the verb in the apodosis, and 2.4 briefly turns to the competition between "mugen"

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Examples from this corpus are cited with the orthography, capitalization, and punctuation as found in the corpus.

6 [http://www.idsmannheim.de/cosmas2/](http://www.idsmannheim.de/cosmas2/), queries: (ia) for clauses beginning with a form of *sollen* and (ib) for clauses with conditional complementizer *wenn* and a form of *sollen* within the same sentence.

(i) a. soll*:sa  
    b. wenn + 0s soll*

7 The tense distinction in fact correlates with a mood distinction in conditional protases: if the verb is in present tense, it is also indicative. In past tense, both indicative and subjunctive are possible in principle. However, already in MHG, past indicative and past subjunctive forms of *suln*/sollte are syncretic. Therefore, mood was not marked separately.
Conditional *sollte* in German

and *suln* as conditional modals in MLG. Section 3 proposes an analysis of the syntax and semantics of conditional *sollte*. The diachronic development of conditional *sollte* is given a formal account in Section 4, and Section 5 concludes.

## 2 Results of the corpus study

### 2.1 Sollen/suln in conditional protases

As variously observed in the literature (Welke 1965; Glas 1984; Reis & Wöllstein 2010; Breitbarth et al. 2016), *sollte* mostly seems to be an expression of hypotheticality or potentiality in conditional protases. The data in the corpus were coded for two main uses, modal (modifying the lexical verb), and conditional (‘in case’). Any use in which a form of *suln/sollen* could be interpreted as e.g. deontic or circumstantial (‘X has to / is supposed to / expected to happen, X is necessary/possible’) or buletic (‘it is/would be preferable for X to / Y wants X to happen’) were coded as modal. (2) illustrates this with examples from the three periods.

(2)  

a. *Middle High German* (Der Trojanische Krieg, l.3246 - 3247; 1230-1275)  
    in dûhte ein swaere bürde, ob er sîn âne *solle*  
    him seemed a heavy burden if he his.gen without should  
    be  
    ‘It seemed a heavy burden to him, if he had to be without him.’

b. *Older New High German* (HK3/A83.00003; 1799)  
    Wenn mir das Bedeutende Spaß machen soll, so kann ich  
    if me the important fun make shall so can I  
    wohl leiden, daß jemand das Bedeutende ernsthaft aufführt.  
    well bear that someone the important seriously performs  
    ‘If the important is supposed to entertain me, I can bear someone performing the important seriously.’

c. *Present-Day German* (A97/OKT.28020; 1997)  
    Wenn es im Februar blühen soll, müssen die Blumenzwiebeln  
    wenn it in.the February blossom shall must the flower.bulbs
If it is supposed to blossom in February, the flower bulbs must be planted into the ground now.'

The conditional meaning (roughly, ‘in case’) is illustrated for the three periods in (3).

(3)  
a. *Middle High German* (Pfaffe Konrad, *Rolandslied* (P); 1172)
*ſcolde* ich die wale han. so ne irchunte ich nie should I the choice have so NEG recognised I never dehein man no man
‘If I had the choice, I would never recognise any man.’

b. *Older New High German* (meg/GAJ.00491; 1843)
*Sollten* Sie mir daher in dieser Angelegenheit Rath und should you me therefore in this affair advice and Aufschlüsse geben wollen, so werde ich sehr dankbar sein. information give want so will I very grateful be
‘Should you want to give me advice and information in this affair, I would be very grateful.’

*Sollten* wir tausend werden, stellen wir Forderungen. should we thousand become pose we requests
‘If we become a thousand, we will make requests.’

The conditional meaning is already prominently present in MHG, as Table 1 shows. In PDG, it is the dominant meaning. Throughout all three stages, the conditional meaning is c. 20% more frequently attested in asyndetic protases than in syndetic ones.

Also the tense and mood of *suln/sollen* interact differently with the conditional meaning in conditional protases: present indicative becomes increasingly restricted to the modal meaning(s), while past (subjunctive) becomes more tightly associated with the conditional meaning. In MHG, and very marginally still in older NHG, the conditional meaning could also be expressed by *suln/sollen* in the present indicative, (4). In PDG, while the conditional meaning can only be expressed using the past (subjunctive) form

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8 (4b) may potentially also be construed as evidential, that is, ‘If someone says that / if it turns out that one witness is not enough ...’.
Table 1: Modal meaning of *sollte* in syndetic and asyndetic protases.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>syndetic</th>
<th></th>
<th>total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>modal</td>
<td>conditional</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MHG</td>
<td>21 (45.7%)</td>
<td>25 (54.3%)</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>older NHG</td>
<td>54 (56.7%)</td>
<td>35 (39.3%)</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PDG</td>
<td>28 (29.2%)</td>
<td>68 (70.8%)</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>asyndetic</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>modal</td>
<td>conditional</td>
<td>total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MHG</td>
<td>96 (25.1%)</td>
<td>286 (74.9%)</td>
<td>382</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>older NHG</td>
<td>45 (46.4%)</td>
<td>52 (53.6%)</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PDG</td>
<td>6 (6.1%)</td>
<td>93 (93.9%)</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*sollte(n)*, the modal meaning is still expressed by the past (subjunctive) in about a quarter of all cases, illustrated by (5).

(4)  

a. *Middle High German* (Pfaff Konrad, *Rolandslied* (P); 1172)

*scol* er da werden erflagen. er *ßturbe* doch da haime shall he there be slain he die. SBJV yet there home

‘(Even) if he is slain there, he shall still be buried at home.’

b. *Older New High German* (meg/GAJ.00491; 1843)

*Soll* an diesen Zeugen nicht genug sein, so weiss ich nicht, shall with this witness NEG enough be so know I NEG

wenn überhaupt deren genug sein werden when at.all them. GEN enough be will be

‘In case this witness is not enough, I don’t know when there will ever be enough of them.’

(5)  

a. *Middle High German* (Kaiserchronik A (V) 12; c. 1140-50)

*Solten* wir fine wönder elliv fagen. so mû = fen wir di wile should we his miracles all say so must we the time haben

have

‘If we **had to** enumerate all his miracles, we would need a lot of time.’

b. *Older New High German* (mew/WAD.03185; 1848)

Nach dem Provinzialgesetz wäre allerdings notwendig, according to the provincial law were however necessary

daß die Majorität 2/3 sein müßte, wenn sie beschlußfähig that the majority 2.3 be must if it quorate
sein **sollte**.
be should
‘According to the provincial law, it would however be necessary that there was a 2/3 majority, if it was **intended/supposed** to constitute a quorum.’

c. **Present-Day German** (A10/MAR.01716; 2010)

**Sollten** die Blumen jedoch an junge Hühner verfüttert should the flowers however to young chickens fed werden, so durften sie auf keinen Fall abgebrochen be so must they under no circumstance broken worden sein.
been be
‘If the flowers were **intended/supposed** to be fed to young chickens, under no circumstances could they have been broken off.’

**Table 2**: Interaction between tense and mood, and meaning of *suln/sollen* in conditional protases.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>pres. ind.</th>
<th>modal</th>
<th>past subj.</th>
<th>total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MHG</td>
<td>34 (36.2%)</td>
<td>61 (63.8%)</td>
<td>95</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>older NHG</td>
<td>91 (91.9%)</td>
<td>8 (8.1%)</td>
<td>99</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PDG</td>
<td>26 (74.3%)</td>
<td>9 (25.7%)</td>
<td>35</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>pres. ind.</th>
<th>past subj.</th>
<th>total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MHG</td>
<td>89 (30.3%)</td>
<td>200 (69.7%)</td>
<td>289</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>older NHG</td>
<td>3 (3.4%)</td>
<td>84 (96.6%)</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PDG</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>159 (100%)</td>
<td>159</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the following subsections, we restrict the discussion to *suln/sollen* in the conditional meaning. We return to the analysis of the conditional meaning of *sollte* and its diachronic development from modal to conditional in Sections 3 and 4.

### 2.2 **Linkage levels**

The semantic relationship between the protasis and the apodosis in a conditional may be situated on (i) the content (or predictive) level, (ii) the epistemic (or inferential) level, or (iii) the speech-act (or illocutionary) level
Conditional *sollte* in German

(Sweetser 1990; Dancygier & Sweetser 2005). In a predictive conditional, the content of the proposition in the protasis forms the prerequisite for the truth of the apodosis proposition in the real world, (6). In an epistemic conditional, the protasis forms the epistemic basis for an inference as to the truth of the apodosis proposition, (7). In a speech-act (or relevance) conditional, the protasis expresses a circumstance under which the apodosis provides relevant information, (8).

(6)  
**a. Middle High German** *(Buch der Könige* (D1); 1274/75–1282)
---
sold ich die in minem alter brechen so sollt mich got should I this in my age break so should me God verdämen
damn
‘If I should break it in my (old) age, God should damn me.’

**b. Present-Day German** *(HMP12/MAI.02111; 2012)*
---
Wenn das gelingen sollte, werden wir viel Spaß haben.
if that succeed should, will we much fun have
‘If that should succeed, we will have a lot of fun.’

(7)  
**a. Middle High German** *(Barlaam und Josaphat, l.11021–11022; 1200–1250)*
---
sold=er bî den dînen wesen, sô waere er leides ungenesen.
shoud=he with the your be so were he suffering unsaved
‘Should be be with your [group], he would not be saved of suffering.’

**b. Present-Day German** *(K97/OKT.76696; 1997)*
---
Sollte es Raub gewesen sein, dürfte die Beute gering
should it robbery been be would the loot marginal
ausgefallen sein, sagen die Ermittler.
turn.out be say the investigators
‘In case it was robbery, the loot would have been marginal, according to the investigators.’

(8)  
**a. Middle High German** *(Burkart von Hohenfels, song 6, stanza 4, l.9–11; 1200-1250)*
---
solt si liebe gen dir lêren: tuo'r niht wê, si ist should she love against you teach do=her NEG pain she is
doch guot.
yet good
‘Should she teach love against you, don’t hurt her, she is still good.’
b.  **Present-Day German** (M06/FEB.13877; 2006)

Sollte die Vogelseuche noch andernorts ausbrechen, wären die meisten Kreise und Kommunen dennoch gut vorbereitet. ‘Should avian flu break out in other places as well, most districts and communities would still be well prepared.’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>content</th>
<th>epistemic</th>
<th>illocutionary</th>
<th>total</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MHG</td>
<td>187 (64.5%)</td>
<td>70 (24.1%)</td>
<td>33 (11.4%)</td>
<td>289</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>older NHG</td>
<td>55 (63.2%)</td>
<td>12 (13.8%)</td>
<td>20 (23%)</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PDG</td>
<td>142 (88.8%)</td>
<td>16 (10%)</td>
<td>2 (1.2%)</td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Content-level linkage is the most frequent type in all three subcorpora, but there are clear differences between them. In MHG, nearly a quarter of all conditionals with conditional *süln* are epistemically linked, while in older NHG, the share of conditionals linked at the speech-act level is much larger with 23%. PDG has the highest share of predictive conditionals, ca. 25% more than in MHG and older NHG.

### 2.3 Tense-mood patterns

Predictive conditionals can express three degrees of probability: realis, potentialis, and irrealis/counterfactual (Quirk et al. 1985; Leech 2004). The distinction is normally marked by specific tense/mood patterns (*consecutio temporum* / sequence of tenses), illustrated for *süln/sollen*-conditionals with examples from the corpus in (9a)–(9c). As variously noted in the literature on German and English (Welke 1965; Van Den Nest 2010: 117–118, 123; Breitbarth 2015), protases with conditional *sollte* and *should* often diverge from these patterns, leading to a tense mismatch between protasis and apodosis. (9d) is a realis conditional, but the tense of *sollen* is formally past (subjunctive).

(9)  

a.  **Pattern A** (realis)

**Middle High German** (*Weltchronik*, l.25085–25086; 13th c.)

*süllen diu lant niht mit frid wesen,* sô läz ich nieman shall the(se) lands NEG with peace be so let I no.one
niht genesen.
not be.saved
‘Should (lit. shall) those lands not receive peace, I will not allow anyone to be saved.’

b. Pattern B (hypothetical)

Present-Day German (BRZ06/MAI.09095; 2006)
Sollte der VfL den 35-Jährigen nicht mehr haben wollen, should the VfL the 35-year-old NEG anymore have want müsse er ihn abfinden. should it him indemnify
‘Should the VfL no longer want the 35-year-old, it would have to indemnify him.’

c. Pattern C (counterfactual)

Middle High German (Prosa-Lancelot (part 1), p.63, l.14–15; 13th c.)
Soltestu han gelebet all din rechten leptag, du hittest should = you have lived all your rightful life you had der burden so vil off yn geworffen das er darunter the.GEN burden so many on him thrown that he thereunder must sin gevallen, er wolt oder en = wolt. must be fallen he wanted or NEG = wanted
‘Should you have lived all your rightful life, you would have thrown too many of your burdens on him that he must have had fallen underneath, whether he wanted or not.’

d. Mixed / tense mismatch

Present-Day German (HMP12/MAI.02111; 2012)
Wenn das gelingen sollte, werden wir viel Spaß haben. if that succeed should, will we much fun have
‘If that should succeed, we will have a lot of fun.’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>mixed</th>
<th>total</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MHG</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>older NHG</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PDG</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4: Tense/mood patterns in content-level sulln/sollte-conditionals.

Table 4 shows that MHG still adhered to the classical consecutio temporum. In NHG, counterfactual conditionals are no longer possible with conditional sollen, which is probably due to its meaning, which Reis & Wöllstein (2010:
circumscribe as hypothetical, but focussing the potential realisation of the event, hence excluding counterfactual construal. While older NHG still has a small share of conditional sollen in present tense, (10), leading to pattern A (10) (see also Section 2.1), the only possibilities in PDG are pattern B (9b), or the mixed pattern (9d).

(10)  **Older New High German** (HK3/C74.00001; 1803-1805)

Soll sich der Staatsmann [...] seiner erinnern, so muß ihn shall REFL the statesman GEN remember so must him die Ungnade des Fürsten während der Arbeit überfallen. the disfavour the GEN prince during the work over.come ‘Should the statesman remember him, the disfavour of the prince will certainly come over him during his work.’

The share of tense mismatches has increased from c. 13% in MHG to nearly 62% in older NHG, and to nearly 70% in PDG, making it the neutral pattern in the language today.

### 2.4 Competition between suln and mugen in MHG

As observed by Van Den Nest (2010) and Breitbarth et al. (2016: 302), suln is not the only modal verb able to express a conditional meaning in MHG, mugen ‘may’ is attested with this meaning as well\(^9\), besides a number of modal meanings, (11), which show a certain correlation with the position of the finite verb in the protasis, but are altogether more frequent than the conditional meaning, as Table 5 shows.

(11)  a. Ability

(Kaiserechronik A ms. V; ca. 1140/50)

maht = er iz gefûgen . er wolte unfer frôde gerne getrôben
may = he it realise he would our joy gladly diminish ‘If he were able to make it happen, he would gladly diminish our joy.’

b. Possibility/permission

(*Der Schwanritter*, 1.951; 1230-1275)

\(^9\) As discussed in more detail in Breitbarth (2015), this is another parallel with the development of conditional *should* in English, which in Middle English also competed with *mouen* ‘may’. This is interesting from a comparative perspective, as the ‘may’-modal is the conditional modal in (Netherlands and Standard) Dutch (Breitbarth et al. 2016). See also Section 4.1 below.
Conditional sollen in German

daz wil ich rechen ob ich mac
that will I avenge if I may
‘If I can/may, I will avenge it.’

c. Volition
(Kaiserchronik, l.2640–2641; 12th c.)
mehtes dû arbeiten, verlêh dir got ganze hende
might you work granted you God whole hands
‘If you wanted to work, God would grant you whole hands.’

d. Conditional
(Rennewart, l.25758–25759; 1245)
moehte ich von leide han erkorn | den tot, ich waer
might I of suffering have chosen the death I was
long dead
‘If I had chosen death as my way of suffering, I would long be dead.’

Table 5: Modal meaning of mugen in syndetic and asyndetic protases in MHG.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>modal</th>
<th>conditional</th>
<th>total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>syndetic</td>
<td>142 (87.7%)</td>
<td>20 (12.3%)</td>
<td>162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>asyndetic</td>
<td>242 (55.5%)</td>
<td>194 (44.5%)</td>
<td>436</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Like conditional suln in MHG, conditional mugen still seems to obey the rules of the consecutio temporum, (12). Tense mismatches between protasis and apodosis are not attested in the corpora used.

(12) a. Pattern A (realis)
(Liet von Troye, l.7875–7876; 1190-1200)
Mac ez geschehen also | So sin wirs alle vil fro
may it happen thus so are we=it all much happy
‘Should it happen this way, we are all very happy.’

b. Pattern B (hypothetical)
(Frau Ava, Leben Jesu; before 1127)
Mohte er iemer frum wefn | so wær er fælbe genefen
might he ever more pious be | so were he self saved
‘Should he be pious from now on, he would be saved himself.’

c. Pattern C (counterfactual)
(Steirische Reimchronik, l.7336–7338; 1301-1319)
In older NHG and PDG, conditional uses of mögen ‘may’ are no longer attested.

### 2.5 Summary

The diachronic corpus study has shown that conditional protases with suln/sollen increasingly occur in predictive conditionals, and increasingly with (formally) past (subjunctive) of the modal (sollte), regardless of the degree of probability expressed. The initial competition for the conditional meaning between MHG suln and another modal verb, mugen ‘may’, was early on overcome, and is no longer attested in the older NHG and PDG corpora. It can be concluded that from MHG to PDG, suln > sollte becomes increasingly restricted in its paradigmatic and syntagmatic variability, which following e.g. Lehmann’s (1995) parameters points to a higher degree of grammaticalization. In what follows, we first look at the syntax and semantics of conditional sollte from a synchronic point of view before proposing an account for its grammaticalization that led to the current state of affairs.

### 3 Semantics and syntax of conditional sollte

Before the empirical observations discussed in Section 2 can be analysed syntactically, the nature of the conditional meaning of sollte must be clarified. Reis & Wöllstein (2010: 137) allude to this meaning as hypothetical, but focussing the potential realisation of the event, excluding counterfactual construal. More explicitly, Nishiwaki (2013: 232) identifies the meaning of conditional sollte as irrealis mood. In conditional protases, sollte expresses this meaning whether or not a conditional complementizer wenn is present, (13).

---

Conditional *sollte* in German

(13)  

a. (http://www.dw.de/dw/article/0,,15985179,00.html; 31/05/2012)  
*Sollte* Griechenland den Euro verlassen, könnte dies zu einem should Greece the Euro leave could this to a Zusammenbruch der Währungsgemeinschaft führen. break-up of the monetary union lead ‘Should Greece leave the Euro, this could lead to a break-up of the monetary union.’

b. Wenn Griechenland den Euro verlassen sollte, könnte dies zu if Greece the Euro leave should could this to einem Zusammenbruch der Währungsgemeinschaft führen. a break-up of the monetary union lead ‘If Greece should leave the Euro, this could lead to a break-up of the monetary union.’

*Sollen*, etymologically deriving from the preterite present *sclulan* ‘to owe’, expresses deontic necessity, with the speaker or a third party expressing a requirement (Diewald 1999), or a bouletic ordering source, as it expresses an evaluation of the proposition it modifies in view of what is desired or desirable (by the speaker or an external entity) (Glas 1984; Kratzer 1991; Ehrich 2001). Besides, *sollen* is known to have a higher modal meaning, which is often called epistemic, in the literature, but is more specifically evidential, as the source of information is a third party (Kratzer 1991; Diewald 1999). In these uses, *sollen* usually appears in the (present) indicative, (14a). Only past subjunctive (‘Konjunktiv II’ in German) *sollte* can (rarely) have a purely epistemic reading, exemplified in (14b), with the speaker being the source of information/evaluating the proposition, not a third party, as under the evidential reading (Glas 1984; Fritz 1997b; Nishiwaki 2013). This meaning is related to the dubitative interpretation (14c), equally in the past subjunctive. A further use of past subjunctive *sollte* is “future in the past”, or “epic reference”, (14d).

(14)  

a. Nishiwaki (2013: 225)  
Er soll die Klausur bestanden haben.  
he shall the written exam passed have  
‘He is reported to have passed the written exam’

b. Nishiwaki (2013: 235)  
Als bekennender Kommunist [sic] sollte Ihnen doch eine as avowed communist should you DAT MP a
gewisse Form von Etatismus sympathisch sein.
certain form of etatism likeable be

‘As an avowed communist, you should take to a certain form of etatism.’

Sollte sie wirklich krank sein?
should she really ill be

‘Could she really be ill?’

d. **Nishiwaki (2013: 232)**
Es enthält bereits Ansätze jenes Sounds und jener Motive, für die Keruac später mit On The Road berühmt wurde. It already contains beginnings of those sounds and those motives for which Keruac later with On The Road famous become should

‘It already contains beginnings of those sounds and those motives for which Keruac would later become famous with On The Road.’

As variously noted in the literature, the exact interpretation of sollen very much depends on the context – (in)definiteness of the subject (definite subjects invite an epistemic/evidential interpretation), Aktionsart of the main verb (telic verbs invite a deontic reading), and, not least, the mood of the modal (indicative vs. subjunctive) (Abraham 1989; Heine 1995; Diewald 1999; Mortelmans 2003; Leiss 2008; Nishiwaki 2013). It is therefore not so clear at first sight whether the conditional meaning of sollen that is relevant for the present article is not at least partially due to the fact that the verb occurs inside a conditional protasis. I return to this in Section 4.1.

Under a cartographic approach such as taken by Cinque (1999), modal expressions are hierarchically ordered in the functional clause structure, and interact with other functional material in this hierarchy. A partial hierarchy showing only the mood, modality and tense heads is given in (15).

\[(15) \quad \text{Mood}_{\text{evidential}} > \text{Mod}_{\text{epistemic}} > \text{Tense}_{\text{past}} > \text{Tense}_{\text{future}} > \text{Mood}_{\text{irrealis}} > \text{Mod}_{\text{alethic necessity}} > \text{Mod}_{\text{alethic possibility}} > \text{Mod}_{\text{volitional}} > \text{Mod}_{\text{obligation}} > \text{Mod}_{\text{ability/permission}} \]

In order to determine which of the functional heads in (15) conditional sollte realises, its stackability with other modal expressions can be tested. First, it can co-occur with and takes scope over the dynamic and deontic meaning of können ‘can’ (16), but not its epistemic meaning. It should be noted, how-
ever, that epistemic modals are independently unavailable in conditional clauses (Leirbukt 1997; Haegeman 2010b), which is also demonstrated by the ungrammatical translation in (16).\footnote{Copley (2006) argues for English epistemic \textit{should} that it asserts that the proposition expressed is true in the most plausible epistemically accessible world, but that a more informative epistemic state is possible. Conditional \textit{should}, and arguably also conditional \textit{sollte}, which is diachronically and synchronically very similar (Breitbarth 2015; Breitbarth et al. 2016), makes no such assertion. Instead of referring to epistemic states (of the speaker), it refers to states of the world.} This also entails that while \textit{sollte} can be used epistemically, as shown by (14b), conditional \textit{sollte} cannot be epistemic itself.

\begin{equation}
\text{Sollte er um 6 schon zu Hause sein können, ...}
\end{equation}  
\textit{ability:} ‘should he be able to be home at 6, ...’  
\textit{permission:} ‘should he be allowed to be home at 6, ...’  
\textit{*epistemic:} ‘should it be a possible/plausible assumption that he is home at 6, ...’

This points to it being merged in a position above the positions where root modality is encoded, following the logic based on which such functional hierarchies are established, though the exact ordering with respect to $\text{Mod}_{\text{epistemic}}$ is not yet clear. Like epistemic modals, conditional \textit{sollen} can only be finite. The example in (17a) from Holl (2001) shows the unavailability of non-finite forms of epistemic \textit{müssen} (here, a present participle). It was seen above that conditional \textit{sollen} is only available in the past subjunctive in PDG. But even though in general, an analytic past subjunctive can be formed from any verb with the help of the auxiliary \textit{würde} ‘would’, this option is excluded for conditional \textit{sollen}, showing that, like epistemic modals, it cannot be non-finite, (17b).

\begin{equation}
*\text{non-finite epistemic modal} / *\text{non-finite conditional modal}
\end{equation}  
\begin{enumerate}
\item (after Holl 2001: 230)
\begin{itemize}
\item \textit{der sich jetzt sicher ärgern müssende Erwin}
\item \textit{the REFL now certainly annoy must Erwin}
\item ‘the certainly annoyed with himself must-be(ing) Erwin’
\end{itemize}
\item \textit{Wenn Griechenland den Euro verlassen sollen würde, könnte dies zu einem Zusammenbruch der Währungsgemeinschaft}
\item \textit{if Greece the Euro leave shall.INF would could this to a break-up of the monetary.union}
\end{enumerate}
führen.
lead
‘If Greece would/should leave the Euro, this could lead to a break-up of the monetary union.’

Recall that Nishiwaki (2013) takes the meaning of conditional sollte to be irrealis mood. Haegeman (2010b) proposes to analyse the conditional modals in Dutch and Flemish (mocht ‘may.PAST.SUBJN’ and moest ‘must.PAST.SUBJN’, respectively) as realising Cinque’s Mood$_{irrealis}$ head, which under her movement analysis of conditional clauses (cf. also Bhatt & Pancheva 2006) is also the launch site of the conditional operator. In case of asyndetic protases, Haegeman assumes that the modal moves to C along with the operator (which moves to SpecCP).

(18) $[CP \ OP_w [C \ [TP \ [Mood_{irrealis} \ t_w \ moest]]]]$

I therefore tentatively apply Haegeman’s analysis to German and propose to analyse conditional sollen as the realisation of a Mood$_{irrealis}$ head, and provide more arguments from a diachronic perspective in Section 4 below.

4 Analysing the diachronic development

The question arising now is how conditional sollen got to be in Mood$_{irrealis}$, historically, and whether it has undergone further changes that can explain the diachronic developments discussed in Section 2. It has variously been argued that modal meanings are stages of a grammaticalization cline; epistemic meanings appear historically later than root meanings (Diewald 1999 for German, Roméro 2005 for English), while on the other hand, original lexical meanings (‘know’ for can or ‘owe’ for shall) are lost. In order to account for the development of conditional sollte, Roberts & Roussou’s (2003) approach to grammaticalization will be adopted. The general pattern of change is an ‘upwards reanalysis’ of an element as the exponent of a higher functional head, to which it originally moved from a lower position.

In other words, the lexical item that formerly realized a lower head has now become the realization of a higher functional head. This can be schematically represented as [...]:

$[XP \ Y + X [YP \ ... \ t_Y \ ... ]] > [XP \ Y = X [YP \ ... \ Y ...]]$. (Roberts & Roussou 2003: 198)
This type of reanalysis is so common because by assumption, there are economy constraints operative in natural language, and the reanalysed structure is more economical in certain respects. Roberts & Roussou adopt Longobardi’s (2001) simplicity metric (19):

(19) A structural representation R for a substring of input text S is simpler than an alternative representation R’ iff R contains fewer formal feature syncretisms than R’.

(Roberts & Roussou 2003: 201)

Essentially, in a structure with movement, the moving element is merged with two features, one allowing it to merge in the lower position and one triggering it to move to the higher position. After reanalysis, the formerly moving element has only the feature triggering merge in the higher position.

Although Roberts & Roussou (2003) assume a more simplified functional hierarchy, their account is in principle able to handle the rise of different modal and postmodal meanings if coupled with a more fine-grained hierarchy, as also acknowledged by Roberts (2010; 2012). Roberts mentions the diachronic meaning development of the English premodal motan/must (cf. Solo 1977; Traugott and Dasher 2002: 122f) as a potential case demonstrating a change from Modability/permission to Modobligation and then to Modepistemic on Cinque’s (1999) hierarchy.

Combining Cinque’s functional hierarchy with the grammaticalization approach of Roberts & Roussou (2003) has the advantage of allowing to capture two properties often connected to grammaticalization, viz. synchronic gradience of grammatical categories and diachronic gradualness of category changes. Although Roberts (2010: 47; note 3) is careful to hedge that the correlation between the two is not straightforward, Roberts & Roussou’s (2003: 36) statement that “much of the allegedly continuous or cline-like nature of grammaticalization is due to multiple ‘lexical splits’; [whereby] the different readings attributed to a single lexical item correspond to different positions in which it may be merged in the clause structure” covers both synchronic gradience and diachronic gradualness. Multiple lexical splits lead to the association of a certain element with different functional heads, giving rise to gradience. Further, new, more grammaticalised, meanings of lexical items associated with “higher” functional heads appear to always arise historically later than such associated with lower heads. This leads to the often observed grammaticalization clines. An older association between a lexical item and a given functional head does not automatically disappear
as soon as a new one becomes possible (“divergence” in grammaticalization; Hopper 1991: 24f).

4.1 The grammaticalization of conditional solle

I propose that the conditional use of solle developed out of lower modal meanings by upward reanalysis (Roberts & Roussou 2003) through the functional hierarchy. The question now is in which steps this development proceeded. In the literature, three options are sketched: First, according to van der Auwera & Plungian (1998), who discuss the grammaticalization paths of modal meanings more generally, “postmodal” meanings such as conditional develop out of epistemic necessity or possibility. Second, for the development of solle more specifically, Van Den Nest (2010) surmises a deontic input meaning. Finally, according to Fritz (1997a), the conditional meaning of solle arises from a combination of the futurity solle could express in older stages of the language up to ENHG and the uncertainty of the past subjunctive.12

The problem with a development from epistemic necessity or possibility to conditional as envisaged by van der Auwera & Plungian is the unavailability of epistemic modals in conditional protases. Also in terms of Cinque’s hierarchy, epistemic modality, expressing a speaker’s belief about a proposition, is hierarchically higher than the modification of a proposition as achieved by expressions of modality.

In favour of the hypothesis that the temporal (future) use of suln was the input to the grammaticalization of the conditional use, suln was the most frequent periphrastic future marker in MHG (Diewald 1999: 321), and was only in the 14th through 16th centuries replaced by the periphrastic expression with werden (Ebert et al. 1993: 391f). A problem with assuming upwards reanalysis from Tensefuture to Moodirrealis is that Moodirrealis is below Tensefuture in Cinque’s hierarchy. While it is possible that the hierarchy needs a revision13, there are two arguments that make a development out

---

12 “Wir finden also durchweg den charakteristischen Zukunftssbezug von sollen, wobei der Konjunktiv das Element der Unsicherheit signalisiert” [thus we consistently find the characteristic future reference of sollen, with the subjunctive indicating the element uncertainty] (Fritz 1997a: 291).

13 Cinque does not give direct evidence for his proposed order Tensefuture > Moodirrealis > Modalethic(necessity/possibility), only indirect evidence coupled with the assumption that transitivity holds. Even though he provides evidence for a distinction between “epistemic” and “alethic” modality (Cinque 1999: 78f), he does not give direct evidence for Modalethic > Tensefuture or Modalethic > Mod(necessity/possibility). His evidence for Tensefuture > Moodirrealis is furthermore weak: “Evidence for this order is apparently provided by the
of a future use less likely. First, the future meaning of *suln* was never fully
developed. As argued by Zeman (2013), the temporal and modal meanings of *suln* in MHG were highly context-dependent, making it difficult to
speak of a clearly grammaticalised future periphrasis, which could be captured as merger of *suln* in Tense\_future under Roberts & Roussou’s analysis.\(^{14}\)
Given the persistence of modal overtones even in the future use of *suln* (cf. also Diewald & Habermann 2005), it is more likely that *suln* was originally
merged low, e.g. in Mod\_volitional (because of its bouletic meaning) or perhaps Mod\_obligation, and moved to Tense\_future (in temporal use) or Mood\_irrealis (in conditional use). Second, the conditional use of *suln* is already very well
established in MHG. Furthermore, *sculan* already had a special role in conditions in OHG. In Notker’s Boethius-translation, the present indicative
(though not the past subjunctive) of sol ‘shall’ is used always against the
Latin original, and replaces the Latin potential mood (~ ‘in case ’...’), while
other modal verbs (*mag, uuile* ‘may, want’) used in conditionals largely fol-
low the Latin original (Furrer 1971: 56–7). We can take this to indicate
that the conditional use of *suln/sollen* is quite old, and had been established /
grammaticalized earlier that the future use, though both may have arisen
at similar times.

There is a fourth possibility that has not yet been discussed in the lit-
erature. Given the early availability of OHG *sculan* as translation of Latin
potentialis in conditionals, and given the common bouletic use of *sollte*,\(^{15}\)
an intermediate step in the reanalysis from root modality to conditional (de-
ontic, as surmised by Van Den Nest) may be volitional modality and alethic
possibility, which lie between them on Cinque’s (1999) hierarchy, (20).

\[
\text{Mood\_irrealis} \leftarrow \text{Mod\_volitional} \leftarrow \text{Mod\_obligation}
\]

---

\(^{14}\) For instance, by assuming that the movement to Tense\_future was triggered by a formal fea-
ture such as a categorial [v] feature (Roberts 2012: 359; note 5), requiring lexicalisation
of Tense\_future by a verbal head.

\(^{15}\) E.g. (i).

(i) \textit{Ehrich (2001: 165)}
Du sollst jetzt endlich den Rasen mähen. Ich habe es dir schon
you shall now finally the lawn mow I have it you already
hundertmal gesagt.
a.hundred.times said
‘I demand you finally mow the lawn. I have already told you a hundred times.’
According to von Fintel (2006: 21-22), “bouletic modality […] concerns what is possible or necessary given a person’s desires”; “it has a circumstantial modal base and an ordering source based on a relevant person’s desires”. This would justify locating it in Cinque’s Mod\textsubscript{volitional}. The semantics associated with the conditional protasis as a whole could then give rise to the interpretation of solte as expressing (alethic) possibility, the meaning also seen in (14c). Both bouletic (21a) and (alethic) possibility uses (21b) are in fact attested in MHG.

(21) a. *Middle High German* (Rennewart; after 1243)

Siner sorgen der wart wette Da er gemaches solte
his sorrow he was relieved when he bedroom should
pflegen
remain in
‘He was relieved of his sorrows when he was requested to stay
in the bedroom.’

b. *Middle High German* (Kaiserchronik; 1140/50)

alle clageten si den rat daz man durch sulhe getat
all bemoaned they the advice that one through such act
· di fröen solte uerliefen
the lady should lose
‘All bemoaned the advice that one should lose the lady through
such an act.’

An additional argument in favour of the assumption that conditional solte arose via Mod\textsubscript{volitional} and Mod\textsubscript{(alethic) possibility} is the fact that conditional suln in MHG competed in its conditional use with mügen ‘may’, as shown in Section 2.4 above. Like MHG suln, mugen had (and still has) volitional and possibility uses as well, as seen in (11) in Section 2.4 above.

That is, conditional suln/sollen started out as an exponent of Mood\textsubscript{volitional} and Mod\textsubscript{(alethic) possibility} in conditional protases, and over time came to merge directly in Mood\textsubscript{irrealis}, after the earlier movement from these heads was lost due to upwards reanalysis.\footnote{A potential problem for this proposal might be that this reanalysis affects only one lexical item, not a whole class (here, the modal verbs) as required under Roberts & Roussou’s account. However, this seems to be typical of the developments affecting modal verbs. For instance, not all modals have undergone a change from Mod\textsubscript{ability}/permission to Mod\textsubscript{obligation}, as must is argued to have in its history (Roberts 2010; 2012).} The fact that MHG conditionally used suln still largely obeys the sequence of tenses and allows present tense in conditional protases (cf. Table 4) indicates that it was still merged in a modal projection, and that upward reanalysis had not yet taken place. That the conditional
Conditional *sollte* in German

meaning is not always easy to disentangle from a “modal” meaning, cf. (22a) vs. (22b), is expected under the current analysis: “modal” meanings are possible still today, and under Roberts & Roussou’s (2003) approach, the preservation of the old meaning is a case of a lexical split, or divergence characteristic of grammaticalization.

(22) a. *Middle High German* (Alexander (R. v. E.), l.14407–14408; 13th c.)
    
    soldich mich an dich ergeben, só möhtich ungerne lebn!
    should = I myself to you give.up so would = I unwillingly live

    root/bouletic: ‘If I had to give myself up to you / if it were desirable to someone for me to give myself up to you, I would be loathe to live.’

    conditional: ‘In case I give myself up to you, I would be loathe to live.’

b. *Middle High German* (Kaiserchronik, l.6–8; 12th c.)
    
    die tumben duchet iz arebeit, sculn si iemer iht
    the foolish think it work shall they ever anything
gelernen od ir wîstuom gemêren.
    learn or their wisdom enhance

    root: ‘The foolish consider it work if they ever have to learn anything, or enhance their wisdom.’

While offering an account for the rise of the conditional use of *suln/sollte*, this proposed upwards reanalysis in (20) still fails to account for the diachronic changes in the distribution of conditional *sollte* and of *sollte*-protases, viz. the increasing restriction to past subjunctive, the rise of the “mixed” tense-mood pattern, the increasing restriction to content-level conditionals, and for the special behaviour of *sollte*-V1-conditionals compared to other V1-conditionals. Such an account will be attempted in the next Subsection.

### 4.2 Sollte as an emerging conditional marker

As noted above, the connectedness with contextual factors, especially for older stages of the language, makes the exact analysis of modal meaning difficult (e.g. Zeman 2013). Note, however, that the conditional meaning is already attested in MHG, and very frequently so, too. As far as a distinction between circumstantial and conditional uses is possible (cf. ambiguities such as exemplified in (22a)), there is a striking correlation in the corpus used for the present study, which is diachronically becoming more
pronounced, between the tense and mood of the modal and its interpretation: the circumstantial use becomes restricted to present tense, while the conditional use becomes restricted to the past tense (see Table 2 in Section 2.1).

That is, the past subjunctive is increasingly associated with the hypothetical conditional, irrealis mood, meaning of conditional sollen. In asyndetic conditionals, sollen can now only have the conditional meaning, while in syndetic ones, where there is a conditional complementizer wenn ‘if’, it is still free to be interpreted as deontic. This observation points at a syntagmatic fixation of conditional sollen that is expected if it is undergoing a grammaticalization process (Lehmann 1995).

Besides the loss of competing modals expressing the conditional meaning, viz. MHG mugen, and hence of paradigmatic variability, there are other syntagmatic restrictions building up, too, and hence, there is further grammaticalization according to Lehmann’s (1995) parameters. As seen in Section 3, example (17b), conditional sollen can only be finite. This finiteness restriction points at it being interpreted above Tense (Erb 2001). The fact that it, like epistemic modals, does not express temporal information is also witnessed by its (historically increasingly) frequent combination with present tense apodoses (cf. Table 4), despite it invariably being past subjunctive in PDG (Table 2) suggests that it is interpreted above Tensepast. Given the (partial) hierarchy in (15), this indicates that conditional sollen is in the process of a further upward reanalysis.

Recall that under Haegeman’s (2010b) analysis, the conditional modal verb in Moodirrealis fronts to left periphery together with conditional operator in verb-initial conditionals, (23a). Reis & Wöllstein’s (2010: 137) intuition that sollen in V1-conditionals seems to be functionally equivalent to a conditional complementizer like falls can now be interpreted as conditional sollen being in the process of becoming an exponent of conditional C by upward reanalysis, (23b). As shown by Van Den Nest (2010), verb-first clauses could already early on in the history of German be used as conditional protases. Therefore, the development of sollen as a pure conditional marker could piggy-back off this generally available option.17

For ease of exposition, irrelevant intermediate projections and possible specifiers are omitted, and right-headed projections below CP are assumed to account for sentence-final placement of sollen in syndetic conditionals, with wenn ‘if’ merged in C, (i).

\[
(i) \quad \left[ CP, OP, [C, \text{wenn}], \left[ TP_{\text{past}}, \left[ TP_{\text{future}}, \left[ \text{Mood}_{\text{irrealis}}, t_w, \left[ \text{Mood}_{\text{irrealis}}, \ldots, \left[ \text{Mood}_{\text{irrealis}}, \text{sollen} \right] \right] \right] \right] \right] \right]
\]
Such a(n ongoing) reanalysis can at once account for the loss of temporal distinctions in conditional protases with *sollte*. In particular, conditional *sollte* is no longer associated with past tense (despite being morphologically past subjunctive), but just expresses conditionality. This accounts for the increased frequency of predictive conditionals in PDG compared to MHG. This sets it apart from the deontic modal which still enjoys full paradigmatic variability, demonstrating the divergence, or lexical split characteristic of grammaticalization (Hopper 1991: 24f). It can also help account for the higher incidence of conditional *sollte* in V1-protases, which in PDG is ca. 23% higher than in syndetic protases (see Table 1).

There are a number of potential counterarguments to conditional *sollte* being on its way to becoming a C-element. First, if *sollte* were a complementizer like *falls* ‘in case’, one would expect (24b) to be equally acceptable as (24a). However, the difference in acceptability with a V1-conditional without *sollte* (24c) is suggestive of the contribution of *sollte*. Generally, V1-protases cannot follow the matrix clause (Reis & Wöllstein 2010). The fact that a *sollte*-V1-protasis is more acceptable in this position therefore seems to suggest that there is in fact a difference between *sollte*-V1-protases and V1-protases without *sollte*.19

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18 I thank three anonymous reviewers for their comments.

19 I thank an anonymous reviewer for the examples. There are further differences between regular and *sollte*-V1-conditionals. While regular V1-conditionals have been argued by to be unintegrated syntactically into their matrix clauses (Axel & Wöllstein 2009), V1 conditionals with *sollte* show to a much lesser degree the signs of lack of syntactic integration. For instance, variable binding into the protasis (i), question-answer pairs in elliptical constructions (ii), and the availability of low construal of the protasis (iii) seem to point to a greater degree of integration than V1 conditionals normally allow (cf. Axel & Wöllstein 2009). The examples in (i) and (ii) are based on Axel & Wöllstein’s examples (5) and (8), respectively. The processing study by von Wietersheim (2016) confirms the relevance of variable binding (as in (i)) for the question of whether an adverbial clause is syntactically embedded in the atrix clause. The example in (iii) is based on tests for the syntactic integration of left-peripheral frame-setting adverbials devised by Haegeman & Greco (2018).

(i) a. Sollte sein, Sohn etwas ausgefressen haben, wäre jeder Vater, should his son something done.wrong have would.be every father worried
a. Wir sagen die Party ab, **falls** die Maria krank ist.
   'We call off the party in case Maria is ill.'

b. ??Wir sagen die Party ab, **sollte** die Maria krank sein.
   'We call off the party should Maria be ill.'

c. *Wir sagen die Party ab, ist die Maria krank.
   (intended) 'We call off the party, if Maria is ill.'

'Should his son have done something wrong, every father would be concerned.'

b. Hat sein, Sohn etwas ausgefressen, ist jeder Vater, besorgt.
   has his son something done, wrong is every father worried

c. Hätte sein, Sohn etwas ausgefressen, wäre jeder Vater, besorgt.
   had his son something done would be every father worried

Under welchen Umständen würden Sie einen Bentley kaufen?
under which circumstances would you buy a Bentley

'a. (?)– Sollte ich im Lotto gewinnen.
   should I in the lottery win
   'In case I win the lottery.'

b. *– Gewinne ich im Lotto.
   win.SBJV I in the lottery

In the current paper, however, I have chosen not to consider whether **sollte**-protases (asyn-}
detic or not) are syntactically integrated into their matrix clauses, given the subtlety of the}
judgments, and the impossibility of finding relevant examples and counterexamples in a}
(diachronic) corpus.
Second, one might object that conditional *sollte* has the same interpretation in conditional protases without movement of *sollte* to C. However, I only claim here that *sollte* is in the process of becoming a conditional marker, with the potential of later becoming a C-element, but that it has not yet completed this development. The fact that the conditional interpretation (roughly, ‘in case’) has developed early, in both asyndetic and syndetic protases, but that the use in asyndetic protases becomes more frequent in PDG, is an argument in favor of such an ongoing reanalysis.

Third, a potential counterargument is the fact that a complementizer *sollte* would take a bare infinitive as its complement, and that there are no comparable C-elements in German: There are either complementizers (like *dass* ‘that’, *wenn* ‘if’, *falls* ‘in case’, ...) taking a finite verb, or complementizers taking a *zu* ‘to’-infinitive (like *um* ‘in order to’ or *anstatt* ‘instead of’). Given the semantic, and partially distributional, similarity to *falls* (Reis & Wöllstein 2010), however, it is not expected that a complementizer-*sollte* would compete with non-finite complementizers. Rather, one may expect the lexical verb eventually to become finite. A transitional period with a bare infinitive would not be so unusual. There are relevant parallels in other languages where formerly finite auxiliaries undergo grammaticalization. Estonian for instance expresses negation by an invariable negative auxiliary that has historically lost all its finiteness features (unlike other Uralic languages, such as Finnish or North Sámi, where the negative auxiliary still inflects for person and number), followed by the infinitive of the main verb. That is, the loss of finiteness features on the grammaticalising auxiliary has not (yet) led to the expression of person and number on the lexical verb in Estonian. Under the cartographic approach, finiteness is represented high, in the lowest head of the C-domain (Rizzi 1997). This is above the domain of mood and modality. It is therefore theoretically not impossible for a head being reanalysed from Mood$_{irrealis}$ to a head in the C-domain to continue to express finiteness information. Eventually, an emerging complementizer *sollte* would cease to carry the finiteness features of the clause. These would then be realised on the verb that was originally selected by the modal.

Interestingly, it is not hard to find typos or performance errors that could be interpreted as *sollte* having been reanalysed as a (conditional) complementizer, as there is a second finite verb, like *wird* in (25).\(^\text{20}\)

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\(^{20}\) Trousdale (2012: 173) reports finding sufficient examples of this type (e.g., *Should Hillary wins the nomination fairly she will be a very good president*) to be sure that the finite inflection on the main verb is not a typo. According to Trousdale, English *should* has, at least informally and potentially still not very commonly, turned into an unambiguous conditional
Such apparent performance errors are a further indication that a reanalysis of \textit{sollte} as a conditional complementizer is already underway in German.

5 Conclusion

The current paper undertook to describe and analyse the diachronic development of conditional \textit{sollte} in German. The corpus study looked at the diachronic development of both syndetic and asyndetic \textit{sollte}-conditionals and found that the paradigmatic and syntagmatic variability of the modal verb is increasingly restricted over time, pointing at an ongoing grammaticalization process. Even though the conditional use of modal verbs, in particular \textit{sculan/suln/sollen} seems to be very old, perhaps going back to OHG, the original sequence of tenses holding in predictive conditionals is lost when the modal becomes restricted to the past subjunctive, regardless of the degree of probability expressed. An earlier competitor for the modal function, \textit{mugen} ‘may’ is pushed aside by \textit{suln/sollte}.

The present paper argued to account for these developments as a grammaticalization of \textit{sollte} in terms of upwards reanalysis (Roberts & Roussou 2003) through the functional hierarchy (Cinque 1999). Originally merged in a circumstantial modal head (\textit{Mod}_{obligation} or \textit{Mod}_{volition}), it moves to \textit{Mod}_{(a)lethic} possibility and from there to \textit{Mood}_{irrealis} in conditional protases, the latter of which is the head of the projection “launching” the conditional operator (Haegeman 2010b)). This movement is lost when \textit{sollte} is reanalysed as the new exponent of \textit{Mood}_{irrealis}. As proposed by Haegeman (2010b), the exponent of \textit{Mood}_{irrealis} moves along with OP\textsubscript{w} to the left periphery in complementizer, possibly helped along by analogy with say (Say Hillary wins the next US elections ... (Trousdale 2012: 172).
V1 conditionals. The present paper argued that it is in the process of being reanalysed as a new exponent of conditional C. This can account for the dominance of the V1-pattern, but at the same time the similarities in distribution with syndetic conditionals (without conditional *sollte*) as observed by Reis & Wöllstein (2010). In syndetic *sollte*-conditionals, *sollte* retains the possibility to be merged in Mod\textsubscript{obligation} or Mod\textsubscript{volition}, besides Mood\textsubscript{irrealis}, for much longer, accounting for the greater variability in syndetic protases.

**Abbreviations**

ACC = accusative, ENHG = Early New High German, DAT = dative, GEN = genitive, INF = infinitive, MHG = Middle High German, MP = modal particle, NEG = negation, NOM = nominative, NHG = New High German, OHG = Old High German, PST = past tense, PRS = present tense PDG = Present-Day German, PL = plural, PRT = particle, REFL = reflexive, SG = singular, SBJV = subjunctive

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Conditional _sollte_ in German


Conditional *sollte* in German


