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# Conditional *if*-clauses in Late Middle English prose texts

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## Abstract

In this thesis, I am going to conduct a corpus-based analysis of *if*-clauses in fifteenth-century texts. The fifteenth century has generally been considered a crucial period for the evolution of this construction: a turning-point where the subjunctive starts to lose ground, being replaced by substitutional expressions such as the indicative and modal auxiliaries. The aim of this thesis is to provide a detailed description of *if*-clauses in the fifteenth century from both form-based and semantic viewpoints. In the form-based approach, by classifying examples into three categories, subjunctive, indicative and modals, two points will be examined: variation across genres and sociolects. The present study will consider the effect of genres on the distributional tendency of the three verb types. *The Paston Letters* will be examined for the discussion of sociolects to see if the use of the subjunctive and its substitutes differs among individual authors of the letters. From the perspective of semantics, the present study will treat the relationship between form and function. Using the classification method suggested by Mitchell (1985), it will be discussed whether any type of conditionals associate with certain verb forms. This thesis will suggest three points: 1) Genres affect the ratio of the subjunctive in *if*-clauses in a complex way; 2) The occurrence of the subjunctive in letters is influenced by social backgrounds, especially genders; 3) The indicative, modals and the present subjunctive enable the speaker/writer to express various degrees of certainty.

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# Introduction

The present study will conduct a corpus-based analysis of *if*-clauses in fifteenth-century texts. The fifteenth century has generally been considered a crucial period for the evolution of this construction: a turning-point where the subjunctive starts to lose ground, being replaced by substitutional expressions such as the indicative and modal auxiliaries. The aim of this thesis is to provide a detailed description of *if*-clauses in the fifteenth century from both form-based and semantic viewpoints. In the form-based approach, by classifying examples into three categories, subjunctive, indicative and modals, two points will be examined: variation across genres and sociolects. The present study will consider the effect of genres on the distributional tendency of the three verb types. *The Paston Letters* will be examined for the discussion of sociolects to see if the use of the subjunctive and its substitutes differs among individual authors of the letters. From the perspective of semantics, the present study will treat the relationship between form and function. Using the classification method suggested by Mitchell (1985), it will be discussed whether any type of conditionals associate with certain verb forms. This thesis will suggest three points: 1) Genres affect the ratio of the subjunctive in *if*-clauses in a complex way; 2) The occurrence of the subjunctive in letters is influenced by social backgrounds, especially genders; 3) The indicative, modals and the present subjunctive enable the speaker/writer to express various degrees of certainty.

## 0.1 The subjunctive in Indo-European languages

The notion of the subjunctive goes back to the period of Indo-European language. Indo-European distinguished four moods in the verb system: indicative, imperative, subjunctive and optative. Prokosch (1939: 207) defines the indicative as that which “states facts objectively” and the imperative as that which “expresses command”. As moods that have rather subjective functions, Prokosch discusses the subjunctive and the optative. The



most common type of the subjunctive had a long vowel, either  $\bar{e}/\bar{o}$  or  $\bar{a}$ , between root and ending: “L. *am-ē-mus am-ē-tis*”, “*leg-ā-mus leg-ā-tis*” (Cited Prokosch 1939: 208). Optative forms contained  $-\bar{i}-$ , with a variation  $i\bar{e}$ , before the ending: “L. *sīmus, sītis*” (archaic “sg. *siem, siēs, siet*”) (Cited Prokosch 1939: 208). The function of the subjunctive and that of the optative are closely connected with each other: the subjunctive expresses “expectation, hope, admonition, probability”; the optative represents “wish, unreal condition, statement contrary to fact” (Prokosch 1939: 208). These two moods tended to be used interchangeably, so in later periods, as Prokosch (1939: 208) says, in most of the Indo-European languages the subjunctive and the optative were merged into one form that functions as both modes. In Germanic, the Indo-European subjunctive disappeared and the optative took its place: an optative of the present stem came to play the role of the present subjunctive and an optative of the aorist stem functioned as the preterit subjunctive, for example, “Go. *steigai* ‘er steige’, *nimai* ‘er nehme’ < \**steigh-o-ī-t, nem-o-ī-t*, as against *stigi* ‘er stiege’, *nēmi* ‘er nähme’ < \**stigh-ī-t, nēm-ī-t*”<sup>1</sup> (Cited Prokosch 1939: 208). English is also one such language.

## 0.2 The subjunctive in English

### 0.2.1 The subjunctive in Old English

Old English therefore distinguished indicative, subjunctive and imperative moods. The indicative and the subjunctive occurred both in principal and subordinate clauses. Mitchell (1985: § 876) states that while the mood in principal clauses generally depends on the “nature of the clause” expressing wishes, commands, and so on, the choice of moods in subordinate clauses may be affected by various factors, such as “the type of clause, the attitude of the speaker, and the mood of the principal clause”. Mitchell (1985: § 876)

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<sup>1</sup> A German verb *steigen* means ‘to climb’: *Er steige* is a present subjunctive form (the quotative) and *er stiege* is a past subjunctive form expressing doubt or unreality. Also: *Er nehme* (present subjunctive), *er nähme* (past subjunctive) < *nehmen* ‘to take’.

provides a general view on the distinction in use of the indicative and the subjunctive, though he says such views should be treated carefully: the indicative presents something as “a fact, as certain, as true, or as a result which has followed or will follow”; the subjunctive implies some “mental attitude” to what is said, such as “condition, desire, obligation, supposition, perplexity, doubt, uncertainty, or unreality”. The existence of counter-instances on the appearance of the subjunctive is also pointed out by Traugott (1992: 184): for example, in reported speech (as in (0.9)) where it is not clear whether the speaker truly has a doubt.

The following exemplifies the subjunctive in Old English principal clauses:

(0.1) *Ne yldan we na from dæge to dæge* ‘Let us not delay from day to day’ (*HomU* 37 (Nap 46)) (Italics mine) (Cited Traugott 1992: 185)

(0.2) *God us gerihtlæce* ‘May God correct us’ (*ÆCHom* II, 36.1 271.104) (Italics mine) (Cited Traugott 1992: 185)

In subordinate clauses, the subjunctive occurs in adverbial and complement clauses. Adverbial clauses where the subjunctive can be used include temporal clauses (as in (0.3)), clauses of comparison (as in (0.4)), final clauses (as in (0.5)), concessive clauses (as in (0.6)) and conditional clauses (as in (0.7)).

(0.3) ...þ ðu min ætsæcst þriwa todæg ær se hana *crawe* ‘You will disown me three times today before the cock crows’ (*Luke (WSCp)* 22.61) (Italics and translation mine) (Cited Mitchell 1985: §2732)

(0.4) *Hu, ne bið he ðonne swelce he sie* (PRES SUBJ) *his slaga, ðonne he hine mæg gehælan & nyle?* ‘What, isn’t he as if he were his slayer, if he can heal him and does not wish to?’ (*CP* 38.275.9) (Cited Traugott 1992: 263)

(0.5) *Þæt ic wille eac gescadwislecor gesecgean, þæt hit*

mon geornor ongietan mæge (SUBJ) ‘I will also say it more carefully, so that it may be better understood’ (*Or* 1.60.8) (Cited Traugott 1992: 251)

(0.6) þeah nu God *anfeald* sie 7 *untodæled*, swa swa he is, se mennisca gedwola hine todæleð on mænig mid heora unnyttum wordum ‘Though now God is single and undivided as he is, human error divides him into many with their useless words’<sup>2</sup> (*Bo* 76.12) (Italics mine) (Cited Mitchell 1985: §3527)

(0.7) Fed (IMP) ðonne min sceap, gif ðu me lufige (SUBJ) ‘Then feed my sheep if you love me’ (*CP* 43.4) (Cited Traugott 1992: 257)

According to Traugott (1992: 239), in complement clauses in Old English, the subjunctive can be found when the main clause has a negative, or when the governing verb expresses wish or doubt (so called ‘mandative subjunctive’) as illustrated by (0.8) below:

(0.8) Forðy ic wolde ðætte hie ealneg æt ðære stowe wæren (SUBJ) ‘Therefore I wanted them always to be there’ (*CPLetWærf* 73) (Cited Traugott 1992: 239)

Traugott (1992: 240) points out that the subjunctive occurs frequently in reported speech, which used to depend on the modality of the speaker (e.g. wishes to cast doubt on it). However, Traugott says that by the time of Old English the use of the subjunctive had been conventionalized, even when there is no telling whether the speaker is casting doubt on the truth of the narrator or not. The following example is unique as it includes both conventional subjunctive and the indicative:

(0.9) Wulfstan sæde þæt he gefore (SUBJ) of Hæðum, þæt he wære (SUBJ) on Truso on syfan dagum & nihtum, ðæt þæt scip wæs (INDIC) ealne weg yrnende under segle ‘Wulfstan said that he left from Hedeby, that he reached Druzno in seven

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<sup>2</sup> The translation was cited from Godden and Irvine (2009: 49).

days and nights, and that the ship was running under full sail all the way' (*Or* 1.19.32) (Cited Traugott 1992: 240)

### 0.2.2 The subjunctive in Middle English

The subjunctive is also found both in principal and subordinate clauses in Middle English. In principal clauses, the present subjunctive expresses a “realizable wish” (as in (0.10)) or “an exhortation” (as in (0.11)):

(0.10) God *shilde* that he deyde sodeynly! (*CT* I.3427 [1: 3421]) (Italics original)  
(Cited Fischer 1992: 248)

(0.11) Þatt mann þatt wile follghenn me/ & winnenn eche blisse,/ He *take* hiss rode, &  
*bere* itt rihht, (*Orm.* 5606-8) (Italics original) (Cited Fischer 1992: 248)

The past subjunctive in principal clauses expresses an “unrealisable wish” (as in (0.12)) or a hypothetical situation (as in (0.13)):

(0.12) Allas, for wo! Why *nere* I deed? (*Troilus* II 409) (Italics original) (Cited Fischer 1992: 248)

(0.13) For though I *write* or *tolde* yow everemo/ Of his knyghthod, it myghte nat  
suffise. (*CT* VII. 2653-4 [10: 2653-4]) (Italics original) (Cited Fischer 1992: 248)

As for subordinate clauses, the subjunctive occurs in adverbial and complement clauses. Adverbial clauses where the subjunctive can be used include temporal clauses (as in (0.14)), clauses of comparison (as in (0.15)), final clauses (as in (0.16)), concessive clauses (as in (0.17)) and conditional clauses (as in (0.18)). Examples include:

- (0.14) ‘Rys up’, quod he, ‘and faste hye,/ Til thou at my lady *be*,’ (*HF* 1592-3) (Italics mine) (Cited Fischer 1992: 356)
- (0.15) ...it is ȝit all broylly [= charred] as þough it *were* half brent, (*Mandev.* (Tit) 72.3-4) (Italics mine) (Cited Fischer 1992: 358)
- (0.16) And whan ony man dyeth in the contree þei brennen his body in name of penance to þat entent þat he *suffere* no payne in erthe to ben eten of wormes. (*Mandev.* (Tit) 114.3-5) (Italics mine) (Cited Fischer 1992: 344)
- (0.17) For though a man *be* falle in jalous rage,/ Lat maken with this water his potage,/ And nevere shal he moore his wyf mystriste,... (*CT* VI.367-9 [9: 365-7]) (Italics mine) (Cited Fischer 1992: 348)
- (0.18) ...if it *be* a foul thyng a man to waste his catel on wommen, yet is it a fouler thyng whan that, ..., wommen dispenden upon men hir catel and substaunce. (*CT* X.849 [12.849]) (Italics mine) (Cited Fischer 1992: 348)

Fischer (1992: 314) points out that the subjunctive (so called ‘mandative subjunctive’) occurs to express “modal colouring” regularly in complement clauses that are the objects of the verbal predicate. Such verbs include those which express “a wish, a command or exhortation, where the subclause denotes a prospective event” (as in (0.19)) and those which express “mental activity” (as in (0.20)) (Fischer 1992: 314).

- (0.19) ichulle þt ȝe *speken* selde, (*Ancr.* (Nero) 31.19) (Italics mine) (Cited Fischer 1992: 313)
- (0.20) Hi wenep þat þu *segge* soþ. (*Owl&N* (Clg) 844) (Italics mine) (Cited Fischer 1992: 314)

### 0.3 The subjunctive in conditional clauses

Conditional clauses, which are the principal concern of this thesis, express

“[s]omething that must exist or be present if something else is to be or take place” (*OED* s.v. *condition* I. 4 and 6), introduced by conjunctions such as *if*, *unless*, *except*, and so on. In *if*-clauses, three verb forms have been used: subjunctive, indicative and modal auxiliaries. The distribution of the three varies among texts of different genres and periods. According to the scholarly literature, verb forms in *if*-clauses display a unique development in the history of the English language. In Old English, conditional clauses are introduced mainly by *gif* ‘if’ and *þær* ‘if’, and it depends on the context whether the verb takes the subjunctive or the indicative (Traugott 1992: 256-258). In (0.21) below, it is regarded to be true that ‘we’ want to receive Christ’s body:

(0.21) And we sceolon (INDIC)... ure mod geclænsian, gif we willað (INDIC) Cristes lichaman ðicgan ‘and we must...cleanse our spirit if we want to receive Christ’s body’ (*ÆCHom* II, 15 158.270) (Cited Traugott 1992: 256)

The present subjunctive often appears in conditional clauses when the principal clauses contain imperatives or exhortation as illustrated by (0.22) and (0.23) (Traugott 1992: 256).

(0.22) Fed (IMP) ðonne min scep, gif ðu me lufige (SUBJ) ‘Then feed my sheep if you love me’ (*CP* 43.4) (Cited Traugott 1992: 257)

(0.23) ...Gif hwa ðenige (SUBJ), ðenige (EXHORT) he suelce he hit of Godes mægene ðenige ‘If someone is to serve, he should serve as if he served through God’s might’ (*CP* 44.323.3) (Cited Traugott 1992: 257)

The past subjunctive in conditional clauses expresses imaginary and unreal conditions. In this case, both principal and subordinate clauses contain the subjunctive, though the mood has to be judged from the context.

(0.24) ...& ðær freceŋlice gewundod wearð, & eac ofslagen wære (PAST SUBJ), gif his sunu his ne gehulpe (PAST SUBJ) ‘...and was dangerously wounded there, and would even have been killed, had his son not helped him’ (*Or* 4 8.186.22) (Cited Traugott 1992: 257)

The Middle English period, however, sees the subjunctive take the place of the indicative. Mustanoja (1960: 469) points out that the subjunctive comes to be used in conditional clauses from the thirteenth century onwards when the main clauses express “volition (wish, exhortation, command, and the like)”, as exemplified by (0.25) below:

(0.25) I may not love þe so lyghtly. . .bot if þi *wil* be conformed enterely to Goddes wil, 102 (*Italics mine*) (Cited Mustanoja 1960: 469)

In (0.25), according to Mustanoja’s explanation, because the speaker’s volition that he/she cannot love is expressed by the principal clause, the conditional clause has the subjunctive form *wil* with the second person singular subject *þi*. Fischer (1992: 349-350) argues further that the subjunctive is almost the rule in late Middle English. Both Mustanoja and Fischer mention the random use of subjunctive and indicative expressions side by side even in the same sentence. Examples provided by Fischer (1992: 350) include:

(0.26) eke if he *apparailleth* (ind.) his mete moore deliciously than need is, or *ete* (subj.) it to hastily by likerousnesse; (*CT* X. 376 [12:376]) (*Italics original*)

Although both verbs *apparailleth* and *ete* are placed in the same clause with the conjunction *or*, the former one is the indicative form and the latter one takes the form of the subjunctive. There seems to be no reason for this distinction. According to Barber (1997: 173), the subjunctive is particularly frequent in *if*-clauses (as illustrated by (0.27))

and also common in clauses introduced by *though*, *unless*, *except*, *whether* and *till* in the early Modern English period:

(0.27) If any one *take* the like Offence at the Entrance of this Treatise, I shall desire him to read it through (Locke, *Essay*) (Italics original) (Cited Barber 1997: 173)

However, Barber notes that the subjunctive is not used invariably but that it is the meaning (doubt, hypothesis, or incredulity) which leads to its usage. In late Modern English, however, Denison (1998: 298) states, “Nowhere is the present subjunctive obligatory”, displaying some examples such as:

(0.28) Is it a counter protest? Tell me very frankly if it is---if it is likely even to be taken so. *If it be* I will have nothing to do with it, much as I love and reverence the man. (1861 Green, *Letters* 80 (May)) (Italics original) (Cited Denison 1998: 297)

The case (0.28) shows that the present subjunctive is not obligatory any more as Denison says and that the subjunctive and the indicative are used side by side even in the late Modern English period. Denison (1998: 297) draws attention to the “alternatives” of the subjunctive, i.e. the present indicative (as illustrated by (0.28) above) and modals, exemplifying *should* and *may/might* as the possible modal alternative (see (0.31)). As for the conditionals in Present-Day English, Quirk *et al.* (1985: 1093) indicate that the present subjunctive in *if*-clauses is “confined to very formal, legal, or quasi-legal contexts”, providing an example as displayed below:

(0.29) If any vehicle *be* found parked on these premises without written permission, it shall be towed away at the expense of the vehicle’s owner. (Italics original)



In non-legal cases, Quirk *et al.* (1985: 1093) point out two ways of expressing “future hypothetical conditions” as illustrated by (0.30) and (0.31):

(0.30) If it *was/were to* rain, the ropes would snap. They’re far too tight. (Italics original)

(0.31) If a serious crisis *should* arise, the public would have to be informed of its full implications. (Italics original)

In (0.30), *were* is the past subjunctive form of *be*. *Was* is also available, but Quirk *et al.* (1985: 1094) says *were* is preferred in formal contexts. Thus, the development of the subjunctive in *if*-clauses is not straightforward: its use increases in Middle English, but decreases in later periods. As can be seen from the remarks by Denison (1998) and Quirk *et al.* (1985) discussed so far, the present subjunctive in *if*-clauses has become archaic and is only preserved in highly formal contexts.

#### **0.4 The aim of this thesis**

In the present study, I am going to conduct a corpus-based analysis of *if*-clauses in fifteenth-century texts. Judging from the scholarly literature discussed so far, the fifteenth century has generally been considered a crucial period for the evolution of this construction. According to Mustanoja (1960: 469) and Fischer (1992: 349-350), the subjunctive in *if*-clauses increased in use in late Middle English but declined in early Modern English. Therefore, it could be said that the turning-point in the development of the construction dates from the fifteenth century. The questions to be addressed are: Does the formal subjunctive still predominate? Or has it already started to lose ground? If so, in what kind of situation does this development happen? By what type of substitutional expressions is the subjunctive replaced? For this study, corpus-based analysis plays an

important role, an approach not pursued either by Mustanoja or Fischer. Investigating corpora enables us to deal with a large amount of texts of various genres. As Kretzschmar (2009: 152) says, the use of computer technology, both storage and processing, provides us with a great ability to examine large quantities of language data, which is indispensable to discuss in this study “what is *usual* or *normal*” in fifteenth-century English.

The aim of this thesis is to provide a detailed description of *if*-clauses in the fifteenth century from both form-based and semantic viewpoints. In the form-based approach, by classifying examples into three categories, subjunctive, indicative and modals, two points will be explored: variation across genres and sociolects. The present study will examine whether genres affect the distributional tendency of the three verb types. *The Paston Letters* will be considered for the discussion of sociolects to see if the use of the subjunctive and its substitutes differs among individual authors of the letters. From the viewpoint of semantics, the present study will deal with the relationship between form and function. Using the classification method by Mitchell (1985), it will be explored whether any type of conditionals associate with certain verb forms such as the subjunctive or modals. This thesis will suggest three points: 1) Genres influence the ratio of the subjunctive in *if*-clauses but in a complex way (e.g. the difference between written works and speech-based works); 2) The occurrence of the subjunctive in letters is affected by social backgrounds, especially genders; 3) The indicative, modals and the present subjunctive enable the speaker/writer to express various degrees of certainty.

## 0.5 Texts under consideration

For the present study, eight Middle English texts whose manuscripts were written in the fifteenth century will be considered: *Middle English Translation of Macer Floribus de Viribus Herbarum* (henceforth *Herbarum*), *Lantern of Light* (*Lantlit*), *Liber de Diversis Medicinis* (*Liber*), *Lollard Sermons* (*Lollard*), *The Paston Letters* (*Paston-4&5*, only vols. 4 and 5), *Pe Pater Noster of Richard Ermyte* (*Pater*), *Richard Rolle and the Holy Book*

*Gratia Dei (Rollebok)* and *The Tretyse of Loue (Tretlove)*, all of which are drawn from the Prose Corpus of ICAMET (*Innsbruck Computer Archive of Machine-Readable English Texts*). According to its web page<sup>3</sup>, this corpus is a compilation of 129 works (in 159 files) of Middle English prose, digitised from extant editions. Its size amounts to some six million words. The reason for using this corpus is that it covers a wide range of texts, over 30 different genres, with detailed information of each text. It can be used not only for linguistic analysis, but also literary, historical and topical analyses of various types and even studies of cultural history, since the Prose Corpus is a full-text database. As for language analysis, it is also possible to investigate style, rhetoric or narrative technique with this corpus. Also, the Prose Corpus is made of plain texts, which make the handling easy. I have selected two medical texts, one text of letters, and five religious works (one sermon and four short treatises) on the hypothesis that the subjunctive is preserved more in formal and written type of texts, rather than informal and speech-based materials. *Herbarum* and *Liber* are medical texts that explain what kind of medicine should be taken for various symptoms. *Paston* is a compilation of correspondences of the Pastons. The other texts are religious works of different kinds: *Lollard* is a collection of sermons, thus rather for oral presentations, while the other four texts, *Lantlit*, *Pater*, *Rollebok* and *Tretlove* are treatises, formal written works.

### **0.5.1 Middle English Translation of Macer Floribus de Viribus Herbarum**

*Herbarum* is a Middle English translation of the Latin work, *Macer Floridus De Viribus Herbarum*, an Old Latin poem written in hexameters that deals with 77 medical plants. The original Latin text is supposed to have been written sometime between A.D. 849 and 1112 (Frisk 1949: 13). The history of medical botany goes back to the Greek era. Hippocrates (c. 460-c. 370 B.C.), the “Father of Medicine” studied plants for medical use based on the doctrine of “four humours”, which argues that bodies of humans are made of

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<sup>3</sup> The web page of the Prose Corpus of ICAMET: <<http://www.uibk.ac.at/anglistik/projects/icamet/>>

four humours, blood, phlegm, yellow bile and black bile (Frisk 1949: 9). It was by the balance of these four things that the plants suitable for the patient were decided. Medical botany was developed in later periods by scholars like Aristotle and Galen and remained a standard of medicine for a long time. *Herbarum* is based on the manuscript MS X91 that is kept at The Royal Library, Stockholm. Frisk (1949:19) from a phonological and grammatical point of view estimates that the text was written about 1400 in South East Midland dialect, most probably the Oxford dialect. As Frisk (1949: 19) points out, *Herbarum* is composed as a “free translation” in prose of the Latin version, so certain parts do not agree with the counterpart of the Latin version: for example, in addition to the 77 plants mentioned in the Latin version, 27 other plants are described in the English translation. *Herbarum* consists of the collection of recipes of medicine, ointment and powder for specific diseases using healing plants and herbs. First, the name of the herb is introduced, usually accompanied with etymologies. Then follow the description of the herb according to the Hippocrates’s doctrine of four humours. Lastly, the recipes are given, though Frisk (1949: 14) says they are quite vague and not reliable from today’s viewpoint. The source book of *Herbarum*, *Macer Floridus De Viribus Herbarum* was quite popular in the Middle Ages judging from the mass of manuscripts remaining and translations into various languages: French, German, Hebrew and Danish (Frisk 1949: 15).

### **0.5.2 *Liber de Diversis Medicinis***

The text of *Liber* under consideration is derived from the Thornton manuscript (MS Lincoln Cathedral A.5.2) by a mid-fifteenth-century scribe whose name is Robert Thornton (Ogden 1938: viii-xi). The contents of *Liber* are mainly about the remedies for various diseases in the form of recipes or prescriptions, whose length vary from a simple sentence to a longer paragraph. These recipes are drawn from those of Latin based on the Hippocratic theory of humors (Ogden 1938: xviii). Ogden (1938: xxvi) points out that the language of *Liber* strongly shows Northern dialectal features, namely “East and West

Ridings of Yorkshire”. Ogden (1938: xxvi-xxvii), therefore, attributes the large number of Scandinavian loan words to this regional factor.

### **0.5.3 *The Paston Letters***

*Paston* is a collection of letters preserved by the Pastons, a Norfolk family, written between c. 1420 and 1504, ranging from personal to business correspondences. For about three hundred years, the Pastons were one of the leading gentry families of Norfolk, whose estates were bought and sold. Male family members include lawyers, courtiers, soldiers or sailors and all of them ran their estates and went to court to keep or increase their holdings, resulting that business affairs are mentioned largely in their letters (Virgoe 1986: ‘Introduction’). Their letters reflect not only a variety of friendly relations to neighbours but also the hardship of the period: troubles and conflicts.

The manuscripts of *Paston* were possessed by many people, being lost for a while. Now, they are stored at the British Museum, Bodleian Library and Pierpont Morgan Library. The handwriting of the manuscript varies, because members of the Paston family often had their letters written by professional clerks (especially, official letters). There is a difference between the letters by men and those by women: the former ones are autographs (though not always); the latter ones are the hand of the others. While John I seems to have hired clerks to write his letters quite often, his sons John II and John III wrote letters by themselves (Davis 1971: xxxvi). Women in the Pastons, on the other hand, are supposed not to have been, or not completely, literate. In the 104 letters sent by Margaret Paston, for instance, 29 different hands can be identified (Davis 1971: xxxvii). Davis (1971: xxxviii) argues that as for non-autographic letters, it is seldom possible to know whether the letter was composed at a precise dictation of the author or written rather freely according to the instructions given by the author.

It is indispensable to know about the authors to understand *Paston* rightly as it reflects the life of the Pastons. The following is a brief summary of the life of the main

authors of *Paston* provided by Davis (1971: liv-lxi): John Paston I, his wife Margaret Paston, their two sons John Paston II and John Paston III.

John Paston I was born in 1421, educated at Trinity Hall and Peterhouse, Cambridge and the Inner Temple. He was a lawyer and J.P. and M.P. for Norfolk. He spent most of his time in London, leaving his wife to take care of his business in Norfolk. The life of John I was full of troubles concerned with the possession of lands, being imprisoned three times. He died in London in 1466.

Margaret married to John I about 1440. She used to manage the property in John I's absence. Thus, many of her letters are to her husband. Margaret was active in family's affairs, disapproving her daughter Margery's marriage, forwarding John III's marriage to Margery Brews, and so on. Margaret died in 1484.

John Paston II, the eldest son of John I and Margaret, was born in 1442. After finishing the education, he was active in the society: he was at the court of King Edward IV and also became M.P. for Norfolk 1467-8. Like his father, John II struggled over Paston's estates' problem. He died in 1479.

John III was born in 1444. Unlike his elder brother, he mostly stayed at home as his mother's secretary, helping his mother with the management of the estates. In 1477, he married to Margery Brews. From 1485 to 1486, he became M.P. for Norwich and sheriff of Norfolk and Suffolk. He was knighted in 1487 and died 1504.

According to Davis (1971: xxiv ff.), *Paston* was first published by Sir John Fenn of East Dreham in Norfolk in 1787, in two volumes containing 155 letters and documents. Fenn published two more volumes in 1789. The last volume was published by Fenn's nephew in 1823 after his death. The edition in the Prose Corpus of ICAMET considered in the present study is the one by James Gaidner published in 1904, the texts of letters in four out of five volumes of Fenn's edition. Gaidner's edition is almost exactly the same as those printed by Fenn in 1787 and 1789 (Davis 1971: xxxiii). In the corpus, Gaidner's edition is divided into six parts, from *Paston-1* to *Paston-6*. In the present study, only *Paston-4* and

*Paston-5* were examined because these two cover the period when family correspondences mainly by John Paston I and his sons were the most frequent.

#### **0.5.4 *Lollard Sermons***

*Lollard* was written in South Central Midland dialect in the first half of the fifteenth century (Smith 1983: xxxviii). The text under consideration is based on three manuscripts: British Library, Additional MS 41321 (A); John Rylands Library, MS Eng 412 (M); Bodleian Library, MS Rawlinson C.751 (R). *Lollard* consists of 18 texts: sermons 1 to 16; 11A (an expansion of sermon 11); sermon of Dead Men. They are mainly gospel lections “corresponding to those in the Sarum Missal for fifteen days in the liturgical calendar” (Cigman 1989: xliii). The style shows “two-fold relationship” between preachers and their audience addressed as *pou* or *zou* (Cigman 1989: xliv). With complex argument and instruction on morals, *Lollard* was “intended as the dramatic crescendo of an oral performance” as well as a “guidance of the preacher himself” (Cigman 1989: xlv-xlvi). The language of *Lollard* displays the features of South Central Midland dialect, with French influence on the vocabulary (Smith 1983: xxxviii-xxxix). More specifically, the language of *Lollard* can be categorised as “Central Midlands Standard”, typical style for religious texts in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries (Smith 1983: xli).

#### **0.5.5 *Lantern of Light***

According to Swinburn (1917 : vii), *Lantlit* is a Lollard tract, written in the early fifteenth century. It contains expositions supported by Bible and various writings such as those of the Fathers and of medieval theologians and the principle doctrines of the followers of Wyclif. Swinburn (1917 : vii) points out that *Lantlit* is a kind of books of which there were many in circulation during the early fifteenth century. The text under consideration is based on the manuscript that is the one catalogued as No. 2324 in the Harleian collection in the British Museum. Swinburn (1917 : xvi) by the phonology and

grammatical forms of the text assumes that it is written in East Midland Dialect with some Northern features such as the use of the preposition *til* as *to* in Present-Day English. Swinburn (1917 : xvii) argues that the text was written in the latter half of the fifteenth century, judging from the fact that final *-e* in the adjective is frequently disregarded in the text.

#### **0.5.6 *Pe Pater Noster of Richard Ermyte***

*Pater* is a religious treatise written for nuns in the fifteenth century. The text under consideration is based on the manuscript called Westminster School Library MS. 3, which is supposed to have been written in the first half of the fifteenth century in East Midland dialect (Aarts 1967: lxxx). The anonymous author of this work, which was regarded by the Church in Middle Ages as one of the important parts of its instructional programme, is assumed to have been a priest or “a member of a religious organization” (Aarts 1967: lxxxii). According to Aarts (1967: lxxxii ff.), the significant features of this work are: 1) many quotations from the Bible (both the Old and the New Testaments) and from the patristic texts, 2) the connection with other medieval works such as *The Mirror of St. Edmund*, the *Ancrene Riwle* and several religious tracts in *Yorkshire Writers*.

#### **0.5.7 *Richard Rolle and the Holy Book Gratia Dei***

*Rollebok*, written in the early fifteenth century, is famous for some segments in it: ‘Grace’, ‘Prayer’, ‘Our Daily Work’ and ‘A Meditation on the Passion and of Three Arrows on Doomsday’. The complete copy of this treatise does not exist in one manuscript, but it is divided into three manuscripts: Thornton, Lincoln Cathedral Library A. 1. 17; Huntington 148; British Museum Arundel 507 (Arntz 1981: vi). Arntz (1981: xxx) argues that the language of these manuscripts mainly shows the feature of Northern dialect (e.g. the ending *-es* for the present indicative) with some characteristics of Northeast Midland dialect (*scho* or *she* as the feminine pronoun). The author/compiler of *Rollebok* used quite



a number of classical works, integrating them to create his own treatise. As pointed out by Arnz (1981: xlv-xlv), the source books of *Rollebok* are generally supposed to be: 1) other Middle English works such as *Ancrene Riwe*; 2) works of the Fathers and Doctors like St. Bernard and Cistercian Documents; 3) Latin works such as Hugo of Strassburg.

### 0.5.8 *The Tretyse of Loue*

*Tretlove* is an English translation of a French work first printed between 1491 and 1494 under the name of Wynkyn de Worde (Fisher 1951: ix). The text in the corpus is retrieved from the Pierpont Morgan Library copy written in London dialect. *Tretlove* is made up of ten devotional tracts, the first three of which account for the large part of the work. According to Fisher (1951: x), those three parts are based largely on *Ancrene Riwe*, a work of devotional advice written for three sisters by a chaplain in about 1230, one of the greatest prose work of the early Middle English period.

### 0.5.9 Summary of the textual information of this study

The table below is a brief summary of the textual information drawn from ICAMET:

Table 0.1: Textual information of the eight texts examined

	genre	written	printed	dialect
<i>Herbarum</i>	handbook, medicine	?	1450+	East Midland
<i>Liber</i>	handbook, medicine	?	1400+	North (Yorkshire)
<i>Paston</i>	letters	1400+	1400+	East Midland
<i>Lollard</i>	sermon	?	15c?	South Central Midland
<i>Lantlit</i>	religious treatise	1400+	1400+	East Midland
<i>Pater</i>	religious treatise	1400+	1400+	East Midland
<i>Rollebok</i>	religious treatise	1300+	1400+	Unknown
<i>Tretlove</i>	religious treatise	?	1450+	London

## 0.6 Corpus-based study

With electronic corpora, it has become possible to investigate various types of topics such as text types and collocations, examining large amount of sources. Kretzschmar (2009: 151-152) points out some advantages of corpus linguistics. Firstly, since it is possible to preserve electronically the entire text of data, we can refer back to the original situation of use and check the context of examples much more freely and easily than we do by a traditional way of research with papers and notes. Secondly, digitised texts enable us to change the units of analysis freely. That is, we don't have to stick to one topic. It is possible to examine the data at different levels, if necessary: words, collocations, grammar labels, etc. Thirdly, it is rather easy to calculate the figures, such as the number of occurrences of specific examples or their frequencies. Lastly, Kretzschmar (2009: 152) argues that computer technology has contributed to a quantitative aspect, expanding the potential of linguistics:

(0.32) the use of computer technology, both storage and processing, leads to a much greater ability to inspect large quantities of language evidence, so that analysis are no longer restricted to talking about what is *possible* within a language on the basis of a few observations, and instead arguments can be made much more convincingly about what is *usual* or *normal* in any number of situations of use.  
(Italics original) (Kretzschmar 2009: 152)

Thus, corpus-based analysis is indispensable for the present study, since it aims to describe *if*-clauses at different levels and to clarify the general tendency of *if*-clauses in fifteenth-century English, which requires large amount of texts to be considered.

## Chapter 1: Previous studies

In the scholarly literature, the subjunctive has been investigated in various ways: chronologically or on specific periods from viewpoints such as genres, gender, dialects, and so on. However, those previous studies are biased in some ways: despite the large amount of studies, the Middle English period is somewhat neglected perhaps due to the shortage of electronic materials; most of the papers only focus on formally distinctive subjunctives and it is seldom that the semantic aspect is treated, probably because of the difficulty of observing examples from an objective viewpoint. However, since the subjunctive expresses the “mental attitude” of the speaker (Mitchell 1985: § 876), leaving semantic aspects, the modality of the speaker, could be a huge loss for the discussion of the subjunctive.

### 1.1 ‘Pre’ corpus-based studies

There are two ‘classical’ studies to be mentioned concerned with the present thesis. The first one is Harsh (1968), which discusses the subjunctive and other modal expressions chronologically. Harsh by examining 44 texts (biblical, secular and drama texts) from Old English to Present-Day English periods illustrates the decline of the inflectional subjunctive and the increasing use of various subjunctive substitutes. Considering his data of biblical translations from various periods, Harsh (1968: 40) argues that there was “uninterrupted decline” of the subjunctive. Later, however, this view is partly modified by Moessner (2005: 219), who reviewed the data of Harsh (1968) and found out that the inflectional subjunctive remarkably increased in late Middle English only in the case of conditional clauses. Something similar happens with regard to dialectal variation. While Harsh (1968: 70) concludes that there is no clear difference in the usage of the inflectional subjunctive among the English dialects, as for conditional clauses, Moessner (2005: 218) again discovered from the data of Harsh that West Midland and Northern dialects preserve

the subjunctive much more than the other dialects do. Harsh (1968: 160-161) investigated all types of the subjunctive by examining Middle English texts and categorised his data into five groups by the dialect: Northern, East Midland, West Midland, Southeastern and Southwestern. From Harsh's data, Moessner (2005: 218-219) selected the data of conditional clauses and found that there is a significant difference among the dialects: while Northern texts display 13 examples of the subjunctive and West Midland texts provide 21, the texts of the other districts, Southeastern, Southwestern and East Midland yield 2 cases, 5 examples, 6 instances, respectively. Moessner (2005: 218-219) thus revealed that West Midland and Northern dialects preserve the subjunctive about three times as much as the other dialects do. The study of Harsh (1968) is dedicated to the subjunctive in general. His wide-ranging research sometimes makes it difficult for Harsh to point out the change that happened in specific syntactic structures, such as adverbial clauses or complement clauses. Nevertheless, the work of Harsh (1968) provides significant data for the study of the subjunctive.

Kihlbom (1939), which is the second traditional study to be referred to, provides an overview of historical changes that happened in the use of the present subjunctive in conditional clauses from Old English to Present-Day English, both with regard to frequency and semantic aspects. Although she does not give any data or figures, Kihlbom argues that the present subjunctive increased in late Middle English. What deserves attention in Kihlbom's remarks is her statement that the present subjunctive was a general rule in "colloquial languages" (Kihlbom 1939: 262). Here, the term "colloquial languages" mainly represents the language of letters. By examining various letters including *The Paston Letters*, Kihlbom (1939: 263) points out that the present subjunctive was used in correspondences to express an open condition referring to present or future time.

## 1.2 Corpus-based studies

Corpus-based studies of recent years have made it possible to analyse the

subjunctive from various viewpoints: genres, dialects and sociolects.

### **1.2.1 Outline of the studies of the subjunctive with corpus-based approaches**

Most of the major works on the subjunctive in Middle English have been undertaken by Moessner. Moessner (2005) explored the choice between the realisation possibilities in Middle English conditional clauses. The period of her data is from 1150 to 1500, retrieved from the *Helsinki Corpus of English Texts* (HC), the *Helsinki Corpus of Older Scots* (HCOS) and the *Corpus of Early English Correspondence Sampler* (CEECS). Moessner examined her data from the viewpoints of finite verb form (*be*-verbs and lexical verbs), date of composition, regional dialect and textual genre. Moessner's 2007 study discusses mandative subjunctive (see p. 3) in Middle English, analysing the data of HC. Moessner (2007) sketches how the mandative subjunctive declined and was replaced by modal auxiliaries, considering the factors such as date of composition, text category and verb types.

As for the subjunctive in early Modern English, Moessner (2006) discusses adverbial clauses in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, analysing relevant parts of HC, HCOS and CEECS. Moessner (2006: 253ff.) explores the change that happened to the distribution of the verb types (subjunctive, indicative and modals) by dividing 200 years into three shorter periods: E1 (1500-1570), E2 (1570-1640) and E3 (1640-1710). As a general view, Moessner (2006: 252-253) from her data concludes that the subjunctive substitute in adverbial clauses is the indicative rather than the modals, supporting the view of González-Álvarez (2003: 307) as mentioned in the next paragraph. Moessner (2006) also presents several points of interest on specific type of clauses. As for temporal clauses, Moessner shows that the ratio of the subjunctive is 22.58% in E1, then raises up to 24.47% but that in E3 falls down to 13.97%. Similar tendency was found for the case of final clauses: the percentage of the subjunctive is 33.33% in E1, 50.00% in E2, and then decreases to 10.71%. Thus, Moessner reveals that interestingly the subjunctive in

temporal and final clauses increased from the latter part of the sixteenth century to the first half of the seventeenth century then decreased afterwards<sup>4</sup>. As for conditional and concessive clauses, Moessner (2006: 254) suggests that the subjunctive was the preferred form throughout the early Modern English period.

González-Álvarez (2003) focuses on the difference between the conditional clauses in the seventeenth century and those in the nineteenth century by analysing the CEECS and the *Corpus of Late Modern English Prose*. González-Álvarez (2003: 305, 307) argues that the subjunctive in the nineteenth century still remained a productive means of expression, although she observes a sharp decline since the late seventeenth century. González-Álvarez (2003: 307) also claims from her data that from the late seventeenth century the subjunctive was replaced by the indicative<sup>5</sup>, which challenges the general agreement that subjunctive forms were replaced by modal auxiliaries (c.f. James 1986: 100; Traugott 1972: 149, etc.).

Grund and Walker (2006) examine the adverbial clauses in the nineteenth-century English, using CONCE (=A *Corpus of Nineteenth-century English*) on the variation across genre, gender and verb types.

### 1.2.2 Variation across genre, gender and dialects

The studies mentioned in Section 1.2.1 explore the subjunctive and its substitutes from various viewpoints: genre, gender and dialects.

On variation across genres, Moessner (2005: 225-226) shows that in instructional texts (especially religious treatises), law texts and letters, the ratio of the subjunctive in conditional clauses in Middle English is above the average for her entire data, though she concludes that such correlation is not clear. Meanwhile, Moessner (2007: 218) reveals a

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<sup>4</sup> The total number of the examples of temporal clauses in Moessner's data is 372, while that of final clauses is only 74. Therefore, I think there is room for discussion as for the significance of the change that happened to final clauses.

<sup>5</sup> González-Álvarez (2003: 306) attributes the result to the redundant nature of the subjunctive in conditional clauses. Also, see Visser (1966: §836).

more evident tendency in the decline of the mandative subjunctive in Middle English: the increase of modals first starts in narrative texts, followed by letters and documents, and religious texts are the last category for modals to be frequent. Moessner (2006: 254-257) also examines genre variation of adverbial clauses in early Modern English under the hypothesis that formal texts and written texts preserve more subjunctives than the other texts do. Her assumption is partly verified by the fact that texts of the genre-types handbook, educational treatise and science yield higher frequency of the subjunctive than the average of her data. However, contrary to Moessner's hypothesis, sermon, trial, private correspondence also display higher ratio of the subjunctive than the average, in spite of the oral or informal feature of those genres. Moessner (2007: 257) concludes that "the subjunctive became a marker of formal style only after the EModE period".

Grund and Walker (2006: 94-95) discuss the variation across genre on nineteenth-century adverbial clauses. According to their data, the subjunctive occurs more in science, fiction, history and debates than in trials, dramas and letters. Grund and Walker (2006: 95) mention that this division may reflect a difference in usage between speech-related and non speech-related genres.

Although it is not proved sufficiently, unique tendency on variation across gender has been pointed out by González-Álvarez (2003) and Grund and Walker (2006). González-Álvarez (2003: 310), on the use of the subjunctive in conditional clauses, reveals a gap between the data of the seventeenth century and those of the nineteenth century: in the seventeenth century, while men prefer the subjunctive and modals, women use the indicative more often than men do; in the nineteenth century, it is women who employ the subjunctive more frequently, while men come to prefer the indicative. The study of Grund and Walker (2006) coincides with that of González-Álvarez (2003). Grund and Walker (2006: 97-98) by their data argue that though men employ the subjunctive in adverbial clauses more than women on the whole, in the latter half of the nineteenth century the ratio of the subjunctive used by women rises and exceeds that of men. Thus, there seems to be

an interesting correlation between the frequency of the subjunctive and gender.

As mentioned in Section 1.1, Moessner (2005: 218) by reanalysing the data of Harsh argues that West Midland and Northern dialects preserve the subjunctive in conditional clauses much more than the other dialects do. Moessner (2006) discusses the regional variation further by comparing the data of HC with those of HCOS. Moessner (2006: 258-260) has revealed that from the end of the sixteenth century to the beginning of the seventeenth century Older Scots shows a drastic increase of the subjunctive especially in conditional clauses. Moessner attributes this change to the resistance to the anglicisation process, which occurred when England and Scotland had a politically intimate relationship in those days.

### **1.3 What has not been discussed?**

Thus, the subjunctive has been discussed with various approaches: genre, gender and dialects. However, corpus-based studies of recent years as mentioned above only deal with distinctive inflectional subjunctives, abandoning quite a few number of examples with ambiguous verb forms. Also, these studies solely focus on quantitative aspects and qualitative issues, namely the semantic factors, are neglected. Therefore, my thesis will attempt to treat not only distinctive subjunctives but also formally ambiguous data, exploring semantic aspects as well as genre variation and sociolects. The necessity of studying semantics lies in the function of the subjunctive and the reason why it decreased in the history of the English language. The subjunctive is a form used typically to express the modality of speakers: i.e. “mental attitude” (Mitchell 1985: § 876), “contingency and supposition” (Fischer 1992: 246), or “doubt, hypothesis, or incredulity” (Barber 1997: 173). Thus, the subjunctive has a strong relationship with the meaning of the sentence. And it was because of the incapability of the subjunctive to express this semantic aspect that the subjunctive declined historically: owing to the loss of the distinctive endings, the subjunctive lost its function to express modality clearly, causing modals to take its place



(see for example, Fischer 1992: 347; Denison 1998: 160). Therefore, observing semantic aspects of *if*-clauses will be of significant help in discussing the subjunctive and its substitutes to explore in what kind of situation the subjunctive/modals/the indicative is more likely to appear.

## Chapter 2: Data and methodology

The present study will take two approaches: form-based (i.e. categorisation by distinctive verb forms) and semantic analysis. In the first approach, the data will be classified into three types: the formal subjunctive (see 2.1.1); the indicative; modal auxiliaries (see 2.1.2). It will be examined whether textual genres affect the distributional tendency of the three verb types. Also, sociolects will be considered as a part of form-based analysis by focusing on individual writers in *Paston-4&5*. The second approach deals with semantic aspects: the data will be sorted by Mitchell and Robinson's (2007: 97) semantic classification of conditionals to explore whether there is any relationship between verb forms and their function. For this research, a computer program KWIC<sup>6</sup> is used to search for the *if*-clauses in e-texts.

### 2.1 Form-based analysis

#### 2.1.1 Distinctive subjunctive in late Middle English

The verb system in late Middle English is, as Lass (1992: 138) indicates, very like that of Modern English because of the instability of the ending *-e*. According to Lass (1992: 137-138, 140-141), distinctive subjunctives in late Middle English include: 1) the second<sup>7</sup> and the third person singular of the present tense without the ending *-(e)st* and *-(e)th* (as illustrated by (2.1) and (2.2) below), 2) the second person singular of the past tense without the ending *-(e)st*, 3) the verb *be* with singular subjects<sup>8</sup> (as exemplified by (2.3) below), 4) the verb *were* with singular subjects (as illustrated by (2.4) below). In this paper, the other verb types are labeled as 'ambiguous'.

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<sup>6</sup> 'KWIC concordance for Windows' is a computational package constructed by Satoru Tsukamoto at Nihon University.

<sup>7</sup> In the following discussion, 'the second person singular' refers only to the case of *thou*.

<sup>8</sup> To avoid the risk of ambiguity, instances of the verb *be* with plural subjects are omitted from the data, because in late Middle English the indicative form *are* is not sufficiently in use yet (Lass 1992: 141).

- (2.1) 'and if ani man *seie* ani tyng to 3ou, seiet tat te Lord hat werk to tese' (*Lollard*)<sup>9</sup>
- (2.2) If tou *haue* te colde feuere or tan te disease come vpon te, drinke te iuys of sotherenwode (*Herbarum*)
- (2.3) If my modre *be* at Caster, as ther schall be no dowt for the kepyng of the place whyl the Kynge is in that contre, that I may have the most parte at Caster (*Paston-5*)
- (2.4) wha were to blame if te house *were* myrke? (*Rollebok*)

### 2.1.2 Modal auxiliaries

Fischer (1992: 263) states that “central” modal auxiliaries are *shal*, *wil*, *may*, *mot* and *can*. In this paper, the term ‘modal(s)’ refers only to these modal auxiliaries<sup>10</sup> defined by Fischer, and to their preterite forms.

### 2.1.3 Method of form-based analysis

In this analysis, data will be categorised as belonging to three types (i.e. subjunctive, indicative and modals), and both the exact number and the percentage of them will be displayed. Instances for this examination will be limited to those having verbs of the second and the third person singular present tense, which are always possible to specify by mood (i.e. subjunctive/ indicative). This restriction is for a fair comparison, as the ratio of subject types differs among texts. In Chapter 3, after reviewing the overall frequencies of each verb forms, the difference of distributional tendencies by textual genres will be discussed. In Chapter 4, the data of *Paston-4&5* will be considered from the viewpoint of sociolects.

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<sup>9</sup> In examples cited from the eight texts under consideration for this study, all the italics and underlines are mine.

<sup>10</sup> In case of ‘modal verbs’, Palmer (2001: 100) also includes *ought*, *dare* (*dare*, *durst*) and *need* in addition to the modal auxiliaries mentioned in this section.

## 2.2 Semantic analysis

### 2.2.1 Semantic classification of *if*-clauses

In the literature, English conditional clauses are classified in various ways as summarised below by Mitchell (1985: §§ 3541-3544). The approach using Latin grammar is the most traditional, and distinguishes three types: A, the logical; B, the ideal; C, the unreal. This ‘ABC style’ used to be so popular that scholars such as Onions and Mitchell tried to apply it to English, though Mitchell later abandoned it (Mitchell 1985: § 3544). Onions (1904: 57-62) adopted the ABC style in a different way: ‘open condition’ as class A, groups ‘ideal’ and ‘unreal’ into class B and ‘contemplated’ or ‘in prospect’ condition to class C. However, to echo Mitchell, classes A and C in Onions’s typology seem to represent the same thing. Onions’s categorisation, therefore, has its limits.

Mitchell (1985: §§ 3542, 3544) argues that the Latin way of ABC division is not suitable for English conditional clauses, presenting the case of Mather (1893) as an example of that which attempts to get away from ABC style but only half successful. Mather (1893: 24) adopts a five-fold classification: 1) logical condition with the indicative in both protasis and apodosis, 2) condition with subjunctive in protasis and mandatory apodosis, 3) ideal, 4) unfulfilled or unreal, 5) exceptive. The problem of Mather’s categorisation is that it is based on two scales, thus too complicated to be of use: for example, types three and four are distinguished by function, but types one and two by the formal difference (i.e. subjunctive and indicative). Furthermore, it is assumed that there are many examples that belong to more than one type. It is difficult, for instance, to differentiate precisely between types three and four. Examples of such cases from my data include:

(2.5) a precious juel which, if it *were* wel kepte, he my3t be auunsid foreuer,

(*Lollard*)

(2.6) For if tere *were* any hope of remedy, ten were tere ioy, (*Lollard*)

In (2.5) and (2.6), the conditionals can be interpreted both as ‘ideal’ or ‘unfulfilled’. Looking at Mather’s remarks, despite his effort to be different from the ABC division, I have an impression that Mather seems not to be free from the Latin grammar. For example, although both Types three and four in his study represent imaginary or unreal conditions, the motivation for Mather to distinguish these two types seems to be that type four is “precisely like that in the Latin unreal condition” (Mather 1893: 39). Apart from reasons given by Mitchell, there is another reason why Mather’s way is not suitable for the present study: it is purely based on Old English. Type five, for example, is separated from the others only by the type of conjunction such as *buton*, *nefne* and *nymde* in the various senses of ‘unless’, ‘except’ and ‘if not’ (Mather 1893: 41). Since the present research considers late Middle English, Mather’s classification, which is based on Old English as influenced by Latin, is not appropriate.

Looking at the confusion in Mather (1893), I think the sorting of conditionals should be simple and flexible, based on one scale, so that it can be applied to many examples, which have various degrees of ‘uncertainty’ or ‘reality’. From the point of view of simplicity and flexibility, the classification adopted by Wood (1960: 355-6) seems to be the best. Wood’s uniqueness lies in suggesting a type of condition that is not an “open condition” nor a “rejected or imaginary condition”: a third kind of condition in which “the fact stated in the conditional clause is conceded in advance”. Examples that Wood (1960: 355) provides are:

(2.7) She is fifty if she’s a day.

(2.8) You say your father would object? If that is the case I will not press the matter.

Wood argues that the conditions in (2.7) and (2.8) are accepted as “being fulfilled and as applying to the matter in question”. There is no doubt that ‘she’ in (2.7) is a day old. In

(2.8) the possibility for the ‘father’ not to object is denied by the preceding sentence. Thus, Wood’s idea is based on one scale, ‘the degree of certainty’:

(2.9) We have, then, three stages of condition, ranging from doubt or uncertainty on the one hand, to certainty in one direction or another on the other hand, [...]; Even with open condition there are different degrees of doubt, extending from probability to near improbability. (Wood 1960: 356)

Mitchell’s grouping of conditionals is the same as that by Wood, but with clearer names for each kind. Mitchell (1985: §3544; see also Mitchell and Robinson 2007: 97) distinguishes three types: 1) conceded and denied conditions, 2) open conditions, 3) unfulfilled or rejected or imaginary conditions. Type 1 is the condition which “is accepted as being fulfilled” or “as not being fulfilled”. The condition of Type 2 is the one “where it is not stated whether the condition is or is not fulfilled and where neither possibility is therefore excluded”. Type 3 represents the examples “where a condition is stated which does not or cannot exist”. Examples include:

(2.10)

Type 1: (a) Conceded and (b) denied conditions

(a) If you think that [and you have said that you do], you are wrong.

(b) Seek if you dare [but you do not].

Type 2: Open conditions

If you think that [and I do not know whether you do or not], you are wrong.

If you thought that [and you might], you would be wrong.

Seek if you dare [and you may or may not].

Type 3: Unfulfilled or rejected or imaginary conditions

If you believed this [but you do not], you would be wrong.

If you had believed this [but you did not], you would have been wrong

If [=Imagine that] you saw a mouse ruling over men, you would think it strange.

(Cited Mitchell and Robinson 2007: 97)

Instances of each category from my data are illustrated below:

### Type 1

(2.11) and *if ye have do the contrare*, as I have be enformed ye have do, ye dede nouthur concyensly nor to the plesure of godde, withoute ye dede it for feere, and for the tyme to please suche as were at that tyme a boutte you; and *if ye so dede it for this service* it was a resonable cause, consederyng the grete and importable callyng upon that ye hadde, (*Paston-5*)

### Type 2

(2.12) I send you a letter be a man of Yarmoth; send me word *if ye have it*, for I marveyll ye sent me non answer ther of be Juddy. (*Paston-5*)

(2.13) I have non very knowleche of your ensuraunce [engage\_ment], but *if ye be ensured* I pray God send you joy and wurchep to geder, and so I trost ye shull have, *if it be as it is reported of her*; (*Paston-5*)

### Type 3

(2.14) and *if I wer a grette lady* he shuld understand that he shuld far the better for me, (*Paston-5*)

The case (2.11) can be judged to contain conceded conditionals (shown in italics) because the speaker declares that he knows the fact, saying, “as I have be enformed ye have do”. In examples (2.12) and (2.13), on the other hand, the speakers are not sure about their knowledge, which is evidenced by the underlined parts. The instance (2.14) can be sorted as Type 3 because it can be interpreted that the speaker is showing her modesty by using

rejected condition with the past subjunctive form *wer*.

For the present study, I adopt Mitchell's classification. However, it should be noted that his way is not without problems. To label an example as Type 1 is extremely difficult, because it is sometimes hard to judge from the context whether the condition at issue is truly a 'conceded' one or not. Nevertheless, from the viewpoint of coherence and simplicity, Mitchell's categorisation seems to be the most suitable for this research.

### **2.2.2 Method of semantic analysis**

Semantic analysis, which will be treated in Chapter 5, aims to categorise the data as Types 1-3. The purpose of this examination is to explore whether there is any relationship between form and function, i.e. whether any of the three types of conditionals associate with certain verb forms such as the subjunctive or modals. This time, since I am focusing on the semantic aspect, formally ambiguous data will also be considered.



## Chapter 3: Influence of textual genres

### 3.1 Overviews

Let us now look at the entire data of *if*-clauses discussed in the present study. The examples retrieved from each text are roughly divided into ‘subjunctive’, ‘indicative’, ‘modal’ and ‘ambiguous’ as displayed below:

Table 3.1: Distribution of verb types in *if*-clauses by texts (%)

	Subjunctive	Indicative	Modal	Ambiguous	Total
<i>Herbarum</i>	218 (85.8)	0 (0)	9 (3.5)	27 (10.6)	254 (99.9)
<i>Liber</i>	102 (83.6)	1 (0.8)	15 (12.3)	4 (3.3)	122 (100)
<i>Paston-4&amp;5</i>	328 (36.8)	5 (0.6)	245 (27.5)	313 (35.1)	891 (100)
<i>Lollard</i>	113 (44.5)	14(5.5)	40 (15.7)	87 (34.3)	254 (100)
<i>Lantlit</i>	32 (39.0)	0 (0)	21 (25.6)	29 (35.4)	82 (100)
<i>Pater</i>	40 (40.4)	3 (3.0)	24 (24.2)	32 (32.3)	99 (99.9)
<i>Rollebok</i>	75 (50.7)	2 (1.4)	28 (18.9)	43 (29.1)	148 (100.1)
<i>Tretlove</i>	24 (19.4)	6 (4.8)	26 (21.0)	68 (54.8)	124 (100)
<b>Total</b>	<b>932 (47.2)</b>	<b>31 (1.6)</b>	<b>408 (20.7)</b>	<b>603 (30.5)</b>	<b>1974 (100)</b>

On the whole, it can be said that the subjunctive is predominant, with modals in the second place, and that the indicative is rare. In terms of the subjunctive, two medical texts *Herbarum* and *Liber* are distinct with the high ratio of the subjunctive. The frequency of the subjunctive in the other texts varies roughly from 40 % to 50%, while that of *Tretlove* is much lower. As for the indicative, *Lollard*, *Pater* and *Tretlove* provide significant percentages of the indicative, while in the other texts the indicative is largely limited. From the viewpoint of the distribution of verb types, *Paston-4&5*, *Lantlit* and *Pater* are similar in the ratio of the subjunctive and modals. The data of *Tretlove* are difficult to discuss owing to the large amount of ambiguous examples.

## 3.2 Influence of textual genres

### 3.2.1 Ambiguous data

As can be seen from Table 3.1, ambiguous instances account for as much as 30.5% of the whole data. Therefore, it is worth unpacking these ambiguous examples in detail. This time, the data are analysed from two viewpoints, the subject type and verb tense as shown by Tables 3.2-3.4:

Table 3.2: Distribution of ambiguous data (*Lollard*)

	present	past	pluperfect	Total
1sg	6	0	0	6
1pl	11	0	0	11
<i>thou</i>	N/A	2	0	2
<i>ye</i>	1	1	0	2
3sg	N/A	16	0	16
3pl	41	6	3	50
Total	59	25	3	87

Table 3.3: Distribution of ambiguous data (*Paston-5*)

	present	past	pluperfect	Total
1sg	24	3	15	42
1pl	3	1	0	4
<i>thou</i>	N/A	0	0	0
<i>ye</i>	67	7	3	77
3sg	N/A	22	13	35
3pl	36	10	1	47
Total	130	43	32	205

Table 3.4: Distribution of ambiguous data (*Lantlit, Pater, Rollebook* and *Tretlove*)

	persent	past	pluperfect	Total
1sg	15	2	0	17
1pl	30	7	1	38
<i>thou</i>	N/A	2	0	2
<i>ye</i>	28	3	0	31
3sg	N/A	15	8	23
3pl	44	12	3	59
Total	117	41	12	170

The common feature of Tables 3.2-3.4 is that the verbs in the present tense are predominant. The major type of subject, on the other hand, differs among the three tables. In Table 3.2, the third person plural is the most frequent, while in Table 3.3 it is the second person *ye* which is predominant. In Table 3.4, the data of the four religious treatises, there is no outstanding type of subject: the first person plural, the second person *ye* and the third person plural are the majority. As can be seen from Tables 3.2-3.4, distributional tendencies of the subject types differ among the texts, affected by the characteristics of each work: for example, sermons are written to be recited in front of the audience, while letters are used as a means for correspondence between (mostly) two persons.

### 3.2.2 ‘Fair’ comparison: *thou* and the third person singular present tense

As proved by Tables 3.2-3.4, the ratio of subject types differs among the texts. This fact is crucial because the frequency of the subjunctive is influenced by subject types, which problematise the identification of verbal moods. In this section, therefore, the eight texts are examined under the same condition: only the examples with the second (*thou*) and the third person singular present tense are selected as shown in Table 3.5:

Table 3.5: Distribution of verb types (*thou* and the third person singular present tense)

	Subjunctive	Indicative	Modal	Total
<i>Herbarum</i>	218 (96.5)	0 (0)	8 (3.5)	226 (100)
<i>Liber</i>	102 (86.4)	1 (0.8)	15 (12.7)	118 (99.9)
<i>Paston-4&amp;5</i>	294 (73.3)	4 (0.1)	101 (25.3)	399 (99.1)
<i>Lollard</i>	95 (68.3)	14 (10.1)	30 (21.6)	139 (100)
<i>Lantlit</i>	30 (83.3)	0 (0)	6 (16.6)	36 (99.9)
<i>Pater</i>	37 (69.8)	3 (5.7)	13 (24.5)	53 (100)
<i>Rollebok</i>	69 (72.6)	2 (2.1)	24 (25.3)	95 (100)
<i>Tretlove</i>	18 (58.1)	6 (19.4)	7 (22.6)	31 (100.1)

As already shown by Table 3.1, the two medical texts *Herbarum* and *Liber* display high ratios of the subjunctive, though the two texts have a different distributional tendency of verb types: the subjunctive is almost the norm in *Herbarum*, while in *Liber* modals are a possible option. The high percentage of the subjunctive in medical texts has also been pointed out also by Moessner (2006: 254-257), who by her study of early Modern English revealed that science texts in the *Helsinki Corpus* yield higher ratio of the subjunctive than the average of her entire study. Grund and Walker (2006: 94-95), though briefly, indicate that science texts in the nineteenth century preserve more subjunctive expressions than their contemporary works, such as dramas and trials. The fact that *Paston-4&5* shows rather high ratio of the subjunctive may coincide with Kihlbom's (1939: 263) remark that the present subjunctive is a general rule in correspondences in late Middle English. Moessner (2006: 254-257) also observed a similar tendency in her early Modern English data, supporting the view of Kihlbom (1939). In the nineteenth century, on the other hand, Grund and Walker (2006: 94-95) argue that their data of correspondences provides rather lower ratio of the subjunctive than other genres they considered in their study do. Further research is needed, but it might be the case that the status of the genre 'letters' has changed over the periods. The frequency of the subjunctive in the five religious texts widely ranges

from 83.3 % to 58.1 %. What deserves attention the most would be the outstanding features of *Lollard* and *Tretlove*: Both of the texts yield significant ratio of the indicative, while the number of the subjunctive is relatively small. A possible reason for *Lollard* would be the literary genre, speech-related sermon. This result is not in line with the study of Moessner (2006: 254-257), which shows (to her surprise) that the ratio of the subjunctive in sermons in the *Helsinki Corpus* is above average of her whole data. It requires further investigation on other texts of sermons to see if sermons in general tend to yield less subjunctive expressions than the other type of religious texts do, or if *Lollard* is merely an exceptional case of a sermon. As for the case of *Tretlove*, being a translation of French work might have something to do with the low frequency of the subjunctive, but I cannot say for certain.

### 3.2.3 *Lest*-clauses in fifteenth-century texts from the prose corpus of ICAMET

The result shown by Table 3.5 is interesting compared to my previous study on *lest*-clauses in late Middle English. In Kikusawa (2009), I examined *lest*-clauses in the ICAMET corpus to see if genres affect the distribution of the subjunctive and modals. The Prose Corpus provides 31 options of text types.<sup>11</sup> In Kikusawa (2009), however, similar genres were brought together to form larger groups. This approach enabled us to observe clearly the influence of genres on the distribution of subjunctive and modal expressions. The texts were divided into 12 types, as follows: biography of saints; courtesy books; documents; fiction; handbook; history; religion (including Bible, homily, sermon, religious treatise and religious mysticism); romance; letters; philosophy; preface; rules. The ratios between the subjunctive and modals in each text category are displayed below in Table 3.6.

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<sup>11</sup> Options: Bible; biography of saints; courtesy books; documents/wills/statutes; dream books; educational fiction; handbook, astronomy; handbook, cooking; handbook, craft of dressing; handbook, craft of dying; handbook, craft of hunting; handbook, language; handbook, medicine; handbook, visiting of the sick; handbook, other; history; law; letters private/official; pamphlets; philosophy; political allegory; preface/prologue/epilogue; religious, mysticism; religious, treatise; romance; rules; science, medicine; science, other; sermon (= homily); travelogue; varia (petition, proclamation).

Table 3.6: Distributions of subjunctive and modal expressions in *lest*-clauses by text categories (Kikusawa 2009)

text category	subjunctive	modal	total
biography of saints	4 (36.4%)	7 (63.6%)	11 (100%)
courtesy books	1 (25.0%)	3 (75.0%)	4 (100%)
documents	4 (44.4%)	5 (55.5%)	9 (99.9%)
fiction	8 (72.7%)	3 (27.3%)	11 (100%)
handbook	4 (66.6%)	2 (33.3%)	6 (99.9%)
history	1 (9.0%)	10 (91.0%)	11 (100%)
letters	6 (46.2%)	7 (53.8%)	13 (100%)
religion	79 (72.5%)	30 (27.5%)	109 (100%)
romance	12 (21.8%)	43 (78.2%)	55 (100%)
philosophy	1 (100%)	0 (0%)	1 (100%)
preface	1 (100%)	0 (0%)	1 (100%)
rules	5 (100%)	0 (0%)	5 (100%)

In Kikusawa (2009) text types that have fewer than 10 examples of *lest*-clauses were omitted because of the difficulty of describing their tendencies. Therefore, the genres ‘biography of saints’, ‘fiction’, ‘history’, ‘letters’, ‘religion’ and ‘romance’ were considered. Looking at the data of these six categories, they can be classified into three kinds: that in which modals appear more frequently than the subjunctive does (= Type 1); that in which subjunctives and modals occur almost equally (= Type 2); and that in which subjunctive expressions outnumber those of modals (= Type 3).

### Type 1

The text categories ‘biography of saints’, ‘history’ and ‘romance’ belong to Type 1, in which modals are predominant in *lest*-clauses as illustrated by (3.1)-(3.2) below:

- (3.1) And te Quene Emme, tat duelled to at Wynchestre, hade grete drede of her ij  
sones, [. . .], leste tai *shulde* ben defoulede & misdon trou3 tis werre (*Brut1*)
- (3.2) that he was a-fore / and therefore lest god *wolde* take vengeance on hym  
(*Threekin*)

Although there is no counterpart in the present study, it would be worth examining these genres on the verbal distribution.

## Type 2

In the text group ‘letters’, which includes both official and private letters, subjunctive and modal expressions occur almost equally in *lest*-clauses. Twelve out of 13 cases are provided by *Paston*. Although the number of instances is small, it might be possible to say that in ‘letters’, unlike the texts of Type 1, the subjunctive is still optional. Examples include:

- (3.3) and lest that the full noble vertue of justice, that of God ys so greetly recom  
maunded, *be* extinct or quenched (*Paston-2*)
- (3.4) I drede me lest owther the barley *wyll* ete the sparrow (*Paston-5*)

As for the genre ‘letters’, there seems to be a difference between *lest*-clauses and *if*-clauses: while the distribution of the subjunctive and modals in *lest*-clauses is not conservative (yet not as progressive as ‘history’ and ‘romance’ in Type 1), *if*-clauses in *Paston* preserve a high ratio of the subjunctive, presenting a highly conservative tendency just like the religious texts do.

### Type 3

‘Fiction’ and ‘religion’ are grouped into Type 3, text genres in which the subjunctive has a strong presence in *lest*-clauses. Kikusawa (2009) has found that ‘religion’ preserves the most subjunctive expressions among all the text categories under consideration. This conservatism of religious texts coincides with the remark by Moessner (2007: 219) that religious texts were the last genre for modal expressions to spread into among the text categories in her research. Texts of ‘fiction’ in this study are mostly ‘educational’ works having a more formal tone than we might now associate with the word ‘fiction’. The following are some of the examples of Type 3 *lest*-clauses:

(3.5) Loke tat tou cleue not to hem, lest tou *be* take wit hem & *perisshe* (*Imita*)

(3.6) but I dare not be stille / leste peraenture tat sentence *falle* on me (*Lantlit*)

This conservatism of *lest*-clauses in religious texts, however, does not coincide perfectly with the state of *if*-clauses revealed by the present study: in the case of *if*-clauses, the frequency of the subjunctive differs drastically among individual texts.<sup>12</sup>

Thus, comparing the present study with my former study Kikusawa (2009), some interesting differences have been shown on the genres ‘letters’ and ‘religion’: while the genre ‘letters’ is rather progressive as for *lest*-clauses, *if*-clauses in ‘letters’ display a conservative tendency like the religious texts; although religious texts shows conservatism both on *lest*-clauses and *if*-clauses, as for *if*-clauses the situation varies among texts.

Another interesting point in Kikusawa (2009) concerned with the present thesis is the contrast between written and spoken<sup>13</sup> religious materials as displayed in Table 3.7:<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Unfortunately, Kikusawa (2009) did not consider *lest*-clauses on an individual text basis because it would have blurred the tendency owing to the small number of examples.

<sup>13</sup> To make division between written and spoken texts, I followed the ‘header’ of the Prose Corpus.

<sup>14</sup> In the Prose Corpus, there are some texts which cannot be categorised either to written or spoken texts. Among the data of ‘religion’, there are 21 such uncertain examples.



Table 3.7: Distribution of subjunctive and modal expressions in *lest*-clauses by the types of religious texts (Kikusawa 2009)

	subjunctive	modal
written	50 (80.6%)	12 (19.4%)
spoken	8 (32.0%)	17 (68.0%)

The oral texts consist of sermons and contemplative religious treatises as illustrated by (3.7) below:

(3.7) sey te trute tat he my3t, lest men *my3t* haue supposid tat he had do so more to  
venge his iniurie (*Lollard*)

The data of spoken materials in Table 3.7 is surprising considering the high frequency of the subjunctive yielded by the entire religious texts considered in Kikusawa (2009) as shown in Table 3.6. Although the instances provided by spoken works are limited, it is quite possible to assume that there is a certain difference between written and spoken materials. This result corresponds with the data of *if*-clauses in *Lollard*, which displays rather a low frequency of the subjunctive compared to the other religious texts. I suppose that the reason for this contrast is the emphatic feature of modal auxiliaries. In fact, it is generally agreed that the gradual erosion of verbal inflections has caused the subjunctive to become less distinctive, and therefore less capable to express modality.<sup>15</sup> Fischer (1992: 262) argues that the early use of modals may be due to a desire to be more emphatic and to be more specific than is possible with the subjunctive form. The only way for speech to convey its information is sound. Written works, on the other hand, could be read over and over again with or without sound. Therefore, it is quite possible that spoken materials in late Middle English (or in any other period) required the power of modals, much more than

<sup>15</sup> See for example, Fischer (1992: 262) and Denison (1998: 160).

written texts did, to send messages to the audience.

## Chapter 4: *The Paston Letters*: a sociolinguistic approach

### 4.1 *The Paston Letters* as material for sociolinguistics

This chapter explores *Paston-4* and *Paston-5* in detail from the viewpoint of sociolects to see if sociolinguistic backgrounds, namely the type of correspondences (official use/private use) and characteristics of individual authors (literacy and gender), have an effect on the distributional tendency of verb forms in *if*-clauses. *Paston* is a collection of letters, including both business and personal correspondences written by the Paston family in Norfolk and many others who had a connection with them (see Section 0.5.3 for details). As revealed in Chapter 3, *Paston-4* and *Paston-5* preserve rather high ratio of the subjunctive, supporting the argument of Khilbom (1939: 262) that the present subjunctive in conditional clauses is a general rule in correspondences. With the wide-ranging variety of letters and various types of people (both men and women) with different background, *Paston* is suitable for considering sociolects in the fifteenth century. Bergs (2005), for instance, explores the linguistic features of the Pastons such as the use of personal pronouns, relative clauses and light verb construction from the perspective of social network analysis. Interestingly, the data of the present study contradicts some of the points suggested by Berg (2005).

### 4.2 Sociolinguistic approaches

The present thesis will examine two points. The first one is to compare private letters with official (or non-private) letters on the distributional tendency of verb forms in *if*-clauses. In this study, the data will be divided into two groups: correspondences among the members of the Pastons including their relatives; letters whose sender or recipient is not the member of the Pastons (mainly business letters). Considering the formality of each type of letters, one could assume that family letters are more casual, where the ratio of the subjunctive is smaller than that in official letters. The second point is whether the data of

letters written by different authors display any significant variation in the use of verb forms in *if*-clauses. The present study will focus on three persons from the Paston family whose letters account for the large part of *Paston-4* and *Paston-5*: John Paston II, John Paston III and their mother Margaret Paston. The difference between Margaret and her two sons is the level of education (literacy): while John II and John III received a considerable education and wrote most of their letters by themselves, Margaret is supposed not to have been literate, having others write her letters in her place (see Section 0.5.3 for detail). It is highly probable that this contrast could be reflected to the use of the subjunctive and its substitutes in *if*-clauses.

#### 4.2.1 Private letters and official letters

Firstly, it will be examined whether there is any dissimilarity between the correspondences among the members of the Pastons (as illustrated by (4.1)-(4.3)) and those which include people outside the Paston family (as exemplified by (4.4)-(4.6)).

(4.1) If my modre *be* at Caster, as ther schall be no dowt for the kepyng of the place  
whyl the Kynge is in that contre, that I may have the most parte at Caster;  
(*Paston-5*: 1469, June: Sir John Paston to John Paston)

(4.2) I desired hym to favour them, if any man *shuld* come to them fro me or you,  
(*Paston-5*: 1469, Aug. 31: Margaret Paston to Sir John Paston)

(4.3) And sche seyde to me if sche *kowd* inquier of any other that sche thinght xuld  
have knowleche of any seche, sche xuld wetyn of hem, and letyn me have  
know\_liche [sic] therof; (*Paston-4*: 1463, Margaret Paston to John Paston I)

(4.4) [...], and if he *be* to sell, to send me word of hys pris, largenesse, and colour.  
(*Paston-5*: 1477, John Pympe to Sir John Paston)

(4.5) Wherfor I beseke youre maistirshipp that if my seid Lord *have* the seid office,  
that it lyke you to desyre the nomynacion of on of the officez, eythyr of the

countroller or serchorship of Jernemuth, (*Paston-4*: 1462, John Russe to John Paston I)

(4.6) [...] if it *may* please your good lordshepe to accept my poore woord with thers, I wyll depose largely for that. (*Paston-5*: 1476, March 2: John Paston to Lord Hastings)

The data of the letters among the Pastons and that of the correspondences with the others (= ‘Others’) are shown in Table 4.1:

Table 4.1: The distribution of the verb types in *if*-clauses of *Paston-4&5* sorted by the type of relationship (%)

	Family&relatives	Others
Subjunctive	223 (74.3)	67 (71.3)
Indicative	4 (1.3)	0 (0)
Modal	73 (24.3)	27 (28.7)
Total	300 (99.9)	94 (100)

Table 4.1 does not make evident the contrast between letters of ‘Family&relatives’ and those of ‘Others’. It might be partly because the examples of ‘Others’ are too limited to identify their characteristics. However, one thing that might be of interest is that all the four instances of the indicative are yielded by ‘Family&relatives’ letters (as exemplified by (4.7)-(4.10)). Further research is needed, of course, but this fact might be implying that the development of the indicative in *if*-clauses started from the informal uses.

(4.7) Also it is told me that my Lady of Su ffolk [sic] hath promised you here good will, if your bargayn of the mariage *holdyth*, to do as largely as she shall be disired, (*Paston-5*: 1469, March 12: Margaret Paston to Sir John Paston)

- (4.8) [...] that woll and schall do my Lorde servyse the rather for my sake and Master Rossys, and the rather if my Lorde *semyth* nat moche thyng to Heydon guydyng.  
(*Paston-5*: 1470, Nov. 15: Sir John Paston to John Paston)
- (4.9) [...] for on Sonday at nyght, or on Monday, it shall be put in, and [if i]t *is* put in, ther is no remedy. (*Paston-5*: 1472, Nov. 19: Margaret Paston to John Paston)
- (4.10) [...], and he wol no mor pay but yf [unless] he *hath* delyveraunc of my plegges,  
(*Paston-5*: ?: Margaret Paston to Sir John Paston)

#### 4.2.2 Individual authors

Secondly, individual authors of *Paston-4&5* will be focused on: John Paston II, John Paston III (his brother) and Margaret Paston (their mother). *Paston-4&5* particularly include their letters. It will be examined whether there is any difference in the use of the subjunctive and its substitutes in *if*-clauses among these three writers.

Table 4.2: The distribution of the verb types in *if*-clauses of *Paston-4* and *Paston-5* sorted by the individual author (%)

	John Paston II	John Paston III	Margaret Paston
Subjunctive	87 (82.1)	36 (78.3)	62 (62.0)
Indicative	1 (0.9)	0 (0)	3 (3.0)
Modal	18 (17.0)	10 (21.7)	35 (35.0)
Total	106 (100)	46 (100)	100 (100)

Table 4.2 displays a significant contrast between the data of John II and John III and that of Margaret. While John II and John III employ the subjunctive frequently, Margaret uses the subjunctive less often and modals appear much more frequently in her letters than in the writings of John II and John III. Examples of modals in Margaret's letters include:

(4.11) Yf it *myght* be, I wold som men of wyrshop myght be send from the Kyng to see how it ys both ther and at thelogge, or than any snowys com, (*Paston-4*: 1465, Margaert Paston to John Paston I)

(4.12) I can not wete how it cowde be brought a bouthe withoute helpe of other but if there *schuld* growe gret inconvenyence of it. (*Paston-4*: 1465, Margaret Paston to John Paston I)

(4.13) It ys thoght here that yf my Lord of Norffolk *wolld* take uppon hym for you, and that he mayhave [sic] a comyssyon for to enquer of such ryotts and robberyesas hath be don to you and other in thys contray, that then allthe contray wyll a wayte uppon hym, and serve your entent; (*Paston-4*: 1465, Margaret Paston to John Paston I)

Margaret uses a variety of modals as illustrated by (4.11)-(4.13) above, all of which could be paraphrased with the present subjunctive like: Yf it *be*, if there *grow*, yf my Lord of Norffolk *take*. Though the examples are limited, Table 4.2 also reveals that interestingly the letters written by Margaret provide three of the four instances of the indicative in the data of *Paston-4&5* (as illustrated by (4.7), (4.9) and (4.10) above). Thus, the present study has shown that, as far as the use of the indicative is concerned, Margaret is a progressive type of person from the viewpoint of sociolects, though it has been pointed out by Berg (2005) that Margaret Paston is not always so innovative in every linguistic behavior. Berg (2005: 247ff.) in his “scale of advancement” categorises Margaret as a “conservative” and “heterogeneous” person who prefers traditional way of writing in the choice of personal pronouns: for example, while John II only uses *them* and *their* for the third person plural, Margaret employs both old style and new style, *hem*, *them*, *here* and *their* randomly.

From Tables 4.1 and 4.2, two points could be assumed. The first one is that the occurrence of the indicative in *if*-clauses is affected by the sociolinguistic background: it appears more often in informal occasions rather than formal ones. The second one is that

the distributional tendency of verb forms in *if*-clauses could be influenced by the gender: the indicative and modals occur more in women's writings rather than those of highly educated men. On the second point, it is highly probable that the difference between genders comes from the level of education. According to Davis (1971 : xxxvi), while John II and John III received a considerable education and were able to write letters themselves, Margaret is supposed to have been illiterate and asked secretaries to dictate her message because women in middle ages did not have a opportunity for educations. Moreover, there supposed to be various factors concerned with the difference between Margaret and her sons: not only the level of education, but also to whom the letters is written and whether the letter is by autograph or dictation. As for the case of John II and John III, their letters are mostly business letters written to their clerk or their superiors, which, together with the high education, might have made their letters rather conservative. On the other hand, the letters by Margaret are mostly for domestic use, mainly directed to her husband. Also, it deserves attention that Margaret had her words dictated by her clerks. Therefore, it is possible that her way of speech affected the writing style of her letters, making it rather casual and colloquial. This assumption reminds us of the case of *Lollard*. *Lollard*, which is said to have been for oral presentation, exhibited a progressive tendency, displaying higher ratios of the indicative and modals than the other religious texts (see Section 3.2.2 for details).

Variation across gender on the distribution of verb forms in adverbial clauses in late Modern English has been pointed out by González-Álvarez (2003) and Grund and Walker (2006). González-Álvarez (2003: 310), on the use of the subjunctive in conditional clauses, argues a gap between the data of the seventeenth century and those of the nineteenth century: in the seventeenth century, while men prefer the subjunctive and modals, women tend to employ the indicative more often than men do; in the nineteenth century, it is women who use the subjunctive more frequently, while men come to prefer the indicative. Grund and Walker (2006: 97-98) by their data of the nineteenth century indicate something



similar as González-Álvarez (2003) argues: though men employ the subjunctive in adverbial clauses more than women on the whole, in the latter half of the nineteenth century the ratio of the subjunctive used by women rises and exceeds that of men. Thus, though my research is preliminary, my data relating to Margaret and her two sons might be implying that there was already a sign of variation across gender on the use of the subjunctive even in late Middle English.

## Chapter 5: Semantic analysis

In this chapter, using the method discussed in Chapter 2, which is to categorise the data into Type 1, conceded conditions, Type 2, open conditions, Type 3, rejected conditions, it will be explored whether there is any relationship between form and function, i.e. whether any of the three types of conditionals associate with certain verb forms such as the subjunctive or modals. This time, the first 200 examples from *Paston-5* and the first 120 instances of *Lollard* were examined. The distributions of verb forms sorted by the semantic type of conditionals are displayed by Tables 5.1 and 5.2:

Table 5.1: Form-semantic distribution of the examples from *Paston-5* (200 cases)

	Indicative	Modals	Pres. subj.	Were -subj.	Ambiguous	Total
Type 1 (conceded)	1				3	4
Type 2 (open)	2	47	62		60	171
Type 3 (rejected)		2		9	14	25

Table 5.2: Form-semantic distribution of the examples from *Lollard* (120 cases)

	Indicative	Modals	Pres. subj.	Were -subj.	Ambiguous	Total
Type 1 (conceded)	1					1
Type 2 (open)	7	16	56		25	104
Type 3 (rejected)		1		4	10	15

On the whole, it is obvious that Type 2 is predominant, which examples are divided into Indicative, Modals, Present subjunctive, and Ambiguous. Now, let us have a close look at each category from Type 1 to Type 3. This time, I focus mainly on the indicative, modals and ambiguous forms.

## 5.1 Type 1

### 5.1.1 Type 1 with indicative forms

As mentioned in Chapter 2, because it is difficult to decide from the context whether a condition is conceded or not, naturally the number of instances of this type (as illustrated by (5.1) and (5.2)) is limited. Only two examples of this case were observed. The condition expressed by (5.1) can be regarded as a conceded one, judging from the underlined part: ‘it shall be put in’. In (5.2), we can also tell by the underlined part that the speaker regards that ‘te world *hatet* 3ou’ as a fact.

(5.1) Sonday at nyght, or on Monday, it shall be put in, and [if i]t *is* put in, ther is no remedy. (*Paston-5*)

(5.2) '3if te world *hatet* 3ou, wite 3e and knowet tat te world hadde me in hate tofore 3ou. If 3e hadde be of te world, te world wolde haue louede tat hadde be his; but, for 3he bet no3t of te world, I haue chosen 3ou fro te world, terfore te world *hatet* 3ou.' (*Lollard*)

### 5.1.2 Type 1 with ambiguous forms

The case (5.3), containing two conditionals with ambiguous forms (‘if you have do the contrare’ and ‘if ye so dede’), is within the same context as (2.11) discussed in Chapter 2. Though these two verb forms are indistinctive, it is understandable from the underlined part that the speaker knows what his wife (‘ye’) did.

(5.3) ...and if ye *have* do the contrare, as I have be enformed ye have do, ye dede nouthur concyenslynor to the plesure of godde, withoute ye dede it for feere, and for the tyme to please suche as were at that tyme a boutte you; and if ye so *dede* it for this service it was a resonable cause, consederyng the grete and importable callyng upon that yehadde, and many an on trewe tale was made to you of me,

weche God knowt I was never gylty of. (*Paston-5*)

## 5.2 Type 2

### 5.2.1 Type 2 with indicative forms

Two examples of this type from *Paston-5* and seven cases from *Lollard* were found. It deserves attention that indicative forms do not always convey conceded conditions. The degree of certainty, though, seems higher than the other conditionals with different verb forms such as modals or the subjunctive. In (5.4) from *Paston-5*, for instance, the speaker is confident that her son's marriage will last long. As for the phrase 'if my Lorde *semyth*...' in (5.5), it could be judged both from the context and the underlined part 'that woll and schall do' that the speaker regards the condition as a highly probable one. Although examples of the indicative in *Paston-5* are too limited to identify any tendency, those in *Lollard* look more distinct: the indicative occurs quite often even in cases (as illustrated by (5.6) and (5.7)) where the present subjunctive is more likely to appear in other religious texts. Though the example (5.6) is a part of a parable, both principal and subordinate clauses include indicative forms, which might have an effect to involve the audience, letting them feel the parable as a reality. The same might be true to the case (5.7) with the indicative form *comet*, though it is actually not clear whether the 'scornynge' would truly come or not.

(5.4) that my Lady of Su ffolk [sic] hath promysed you here good will, if your  
bargayn of the mariage *holdyth*, to do as largely as she shall be desired  
(*Paston-5*)

(5.5) that woll and schall do my Lorde servyse the rather for my sake and Master  
Rossys, and the rather if my Lorde *semyth* nat moche thyng to Heydon guydyng.  
(*Paston-5*)

(5.6) and if he *diet* oute of charitee (R[omaynes] 6 chapitre), anon he is dampnyd to te

fire of helle. (*Lollard*)

(5.7) First, te bihouet to suffre scornynge if it *comet*, bote in word and dede, and take ensample of oure Maister, Jesus Crist, and suffre mekeli for his loue as he suffride for ti loue. (*Lollard*)

### 5.2.2 Type 2 with modals

The 63 examples of this type derived from *Paston-5* include various modal auxiliaries: *can/could* (9 cases), *may/might* (23), *shall/should* (4), and *will/would* (11). The data from *Lollard* provides: *may/might* (4), *shall/should* (8), and *will/would* (4). The instances of special interest would be those with *may*, *will* and *should*, which have varieties of semantic aspects.

According to *OED* (s.v. *may* v.1), the central sense of the auxiliary *may* in Old English is “ability or power” or “objective possibility or opportunity” and it is in Middle English that “epistemic” and “deontic” uses are established. In (5.8) and (5.11), *may* has a meaning of ‘possibility’, which reflects the modality of the speaker. *May* in (5.9) and (5.10), on the other hand, looks rather modally colourless as *may* in this case could be replaced by Present-Day English *can*.

(5.8) And that it plese you, if it *may* be, that at that day ye be here in propre persone;  
(*Paston-5*)

(5.9) for thei may not pay you but if [unless] thei *may* occupie there landis (*Paston-5*)

(5.10) Also, if prechyng of Goddes word *mi3te* not vnbynde men of here synne, tanne hadde tis word 'vnbyndet' in veyn be seid to teapostlis (*Lollard*)

(5.11) 3ef ani tyme tei *my3ten* heere of te birte of te eyr bi whiche tei hopiden to be restored a3en to her rewme, alle suche wolden make ful gret ioie. (*Lollard*)

*OED* (s.v. *will* v.1 14) points out some cases where the auxiliary *will* expresses

“mere futuality” with second or third person subjects. Fischer (1992: 264) also mentions the usage of *will* “without any modal colouring” in Middle English. In this research, quite a few instances of this type were observed. Some illustrations follow:

(5.12) and if they *woll* in no wise agree therto, [. . .], I beseche Godde it may lye upon them and not upon us. (*Paston-5*)

(5.13) wher as he may do yow harme and [if] he *wyll* and then, to late wyse.  
(*Paston-5*)

(5.14) Spare not this to be don in hast, if ye *wull* have ther lyves, and be sett by in Norffolk, (*Paston-5*)

The characteristic of these three examples is that they express conditions which are quite close to Type 1, conceded conditions. In (5.12), for instance, the phrase ‘in no wise’ indicates that the possibility that ‘they’ will not agree is strong. Also in (5.13), the speaker thinks it is quite likely that ‘he’ will do harm, because the speaker says, ‘as he may do yow harme’. As for (5.15), the underlined part implies that the speaker is quite sure that ‘ye’ would ‘have ther lyves’ (i.e. get married).

Conditionals with *should*, though the examples are limited, seem to express wide range of certainty. Judging from the underlined part, it seems improbable in (5.15) that the speaker would sell his wood. In (5.16), on the other hand, it is more likely that ‘ze’ would sell the wood.

(5.15) if I *shuld* selle them now, ther wull noman gewe so myche for them be ner an C. marc as they be worth, be cause ther be so many wood sales in Norfolke at thys tyme. (*Paston-5*)

(5.16) And if ze *shuld* selle all this wode togedyr for redy sylver never lesse in the summa paste v. marc, if ze *woll* sell the wode . . . he lawnde within the dykes

and the standardis thoo I shall wryte after in this bille for to stande in any wyse  
less (*Paston-5*)

### 5.2.3 Type 2 with the present subjunctive

All the examples of the present subjunctive observed in the present study belong to Type 2. Unlike the indicative and modals, the semantic function of the present subjunctive seems to be quite clear. In *Paston-5*, quite a few instances having a fixed phrase ‘if so be that’ (as in (5.18)) were observed. In *Lollard*, the present subjunctive is often used in parables giving lessons to the audience as illustrated by (5.19) and (5.20).

(5.17) if it *nede*, brother, ye may seale any suche thyng as well as I. (*Paston-5*)

(5.18) ye shall com, if so *be* that the terme be do by that tym that she com in to this  
contre. (*Paston-5*)

(5.19) Ri3t as a fadire dyng, 3if he *see* his chyldren of goode maneris and parfite in  
al wysdome, sikerli diet, dredynge no tynge afterward, so John wolde see his  
disciples parfite in Crist, tat he my3te te more ioyefulli die. (*Lollard*)

(5.20) Ri3t so, 3ef a man *be* gostli sike in synne, [. . .], he is 3et myche confortid and  
releued of his sikenesse (*Lollard*)

### 5.2.4 Type 2 with ambiguous forms

Examples of this category can be roughly divided into two by the tense of verbs: present or past. In *Paston-5*, 50 cases with the present tense verbs (as in (5.21)) and 10 instances with the past tense verbs (as illustrated by (5.22)) were observed. *Lollard* yielded 21 examples with the present tense verbs (as in (5.23)) and 4 cases with the past tense verbs (as in (5.24)). It is totally up to the context to which type a case at issue belongs: as for (5.21) and (5.23), Type 1 or Type 2; as for (5.22) and (5.24), Type 2 or Type 3. The example (5.21) can be categorised to Type 2 because the speaker clearly says that he/she is

not sure if ‘ye’ have got the letter, which is shown by the underlined part. The case (5.22) is not perfectly clear, but judging from the underlined part, it is probable that ‘they’ wrote letters, thus not belonging to Type 3. Sometimes, it is needed to look at the whole paragraph (or more) to specify the type of conditionals like the example (5.24), which implies that ‘tei’ have started the journey so ‘3ef he *came*’ is not a rejected condition.

(5.21) I send you a letter be a man of Yarmoth; send me word if ye *have* it, for I marveyll ye sent me non answer ther of be Juddy. (*Paston-5*)

(5.22) and if they *wrot* to hym as they have don ij. tymes, I trow it wolde nat advayle; (*Paston-5*)

(5.23) '3e been my freendes, 3if 3e *doo* tat I bidde 3ou.' (*Lollard*)

(5.24) Tat after te offryng of tese kynges te angel of God warned hem in her slepe tat tei schulden not turne a3en to Heroudes, [. . .]. Tat is: 3ef he *came* bi Heroudes (tat is, te fend) bi pride, turne anoter wei bi mekenesse. (*Lollard*)

## 5.3 Type 3

### 5.3.1 Type 3 with modals

Two examples of rejected conditionals with *might* were observed as illustrated by (5.25) and (5.26). In (5.25), the speaker implies that she actually did not have any choice. In (5.26), judging from the context, it seems impossible for ‘Doctor Aleyns wyffe’ to walk to the place of John Paston. The example (5.27) with *would*, by the context especially shown by the underlined part, could be identified as Type 3, because the speaker implies that the one who cannot find the glory did not search for it.

(5.25) and at this tyme it compellith me to breke uphowshold and to sogeorn; which I am right loth to have to do if I *myght* otherwyse *have chosyn*; (*Paston-5*)

(5.26) letyng you wete that Doctor Aleyns wyffe hath be with me and desired me to



write to you [. . .], for she tellith me that her trost is full in you, and if she *myght have walked* she shuld have come to have spoke with you or than ye departed;  
(*Paston-5*)

(5.27) T[at it] perteyne to her glorie tat fynden it, for tei desireden it, and sou3ten and founden it; into her dampnacion tat fynden it not, for tei neter desireden it, ne sou3ten, ne founden. Neter vnknowynge of te trute mai be to hem excusacion of her dampnacion, for tei my3ten haue founde if tei *wolden haue sou3te*.' (*Lollard*)

### 5.3.2 Type 3 with *were*-subjunctives

All the 13 instances with *were*-subjunctive observed in the present study express rejected conditions, unreality of the present. Examples include:

(5.28) And so I thynk that my lady wyll send for yow; and if it *wer* your ease to be here, I wold be ryght glad that ye myght be here (*Paston-5*)

(5.29) 3ef te trute of Goddes lawe *were* knowen to te peple, tei schulden lacke miche of her worldely worschepe and of her lucre bote. (*Lollard*)

### 5.3.3 Type 3 with ambiguous forms

Among the nine examples retrieved from *Paston-5*, there are eight cases with past tense verbs as in (5.30) and five instances with the type 'had + p.p.' as shown in (5.31). It could be assumed that the case (5.30) represents a denied condition concerning the present issue, while (5.31) the rejected condition of the past. In (5.30), the speaker means he does not have any 'nede', and in (5.31) the speaker indicates that he did not have any other 'stronge place' at a specific moment of the past. Ten instances from *Lollard* consist of six cases with past tense verbs and four examples with the type 'had + p.p.', which are illustrated by (5.32) and (5.33) respectively. Both cases are the parts of parables.

(5.30) if I *had* nede to be qwyk\_ynyd with a letter in thys nede, I wer of my selfe to slawe [too slow] a felaw; but, moodre, I ensur yow that I have herde x. tymes werse tydyngs syn the assege by gan than any letter that ye wrot to me, and somtyme I have herde ryght goode tydyngs both. (*Paston-5* 1764)

(5.31) I scholde nat kome hom without that I kome stronke. But if I *had hadd* on other stronge place in Norfolke to have comen to, thowe I have browt ryght fewe with me, Ischolde, with Godds grace, have rescued it by thys tyme, (*Paston-5* 1802)

(5.32) tenne if suchon *axide* hou tis may be tat tus synful peple as tese weren benpassid tus to heuen, Hooli Writt and treue prechouris answeren to tis question (*Lollard*)

(5.33) If 3e *hadde be* of te world, te world wolde haue louede tat hadde be his (*Lollard*)

#### 5.4 A unique case in *Lollard*

As pointed out by Mustanoja (1960: 469) and Fischer (1992: 349-350), while the subjunctive was quite frequent in late Middle English conditional clauses, it was often the case that the subjunctive and indicative expressions appear randomly side by side even in the same sentence. *Lollard* yields a typical example of such case. In this research, one evident instance was observed. It occurs (as illustrated by (5.34)) in the part where the speaker is talking about the joy to hear the word of God, providing examples of possible situations where one might hear the word of God:

(5.34) Many wordeli riche men han ioie and delite to heere te word of God, and ben in greet wille to performe myche terof; [. . .]. But, for Crist seit: Nemo potest duobus dominis seruire 'no man mai serue two loordes at oones' (tat is:

God and false riches), terfore riches ofte tyme han te rule aboue.

If a riche man *heret* in te gospel hou3 men schullen rikene at te Dai of Dome of te visitynge of hire breteren tat lyuen here at meschef, sike or in prisoun, he is sore adrad terof and hat wille to performe it, [. . .].

If he *here* in anoter place Goddis word, hou3 it techet: Facite vobis amicos de mammona iniquitatis, 'Make 3e to 3ou frendes of tis wordli muk' (*Lollard*)

In the first paragraph in (5.34), the author says that many rich people love to hear the word of God, though implying doubt by quoting the word of Christ. In the second paragraph, the author gives the first example in what kind of situation a rich man might hear the word of God, which is in the gospel. Here, the indicative form *heret* is used in the *if*-caluse. However, in the third paragraph, which depicts the second situation for a rich man (= 'he') to hear the word of God, the subjunctive *here* is employed. No doubt these two descriptions of hearing God's word are placed in parataxis. There supposed to be no need of changing the mood of the verb.

## 5.5 Summary

With such a small amount of data at this stage, only a bare general sketch can be given of the semantic aspect of conditional clauses. Nevertheless, this primary research has revealed that the use of modal auxiliaries enables the speaker/writer to express varied senses and various degrees of certainty. Also, as for Type 2, it might be of interest to compare examples with the indicative (though the number is limited) with those with present subjunctive and to discuss if there is any significant difference between them or they are just used randomly.

## Conclusion

I have hitherto discussed the conditional *if*-clauses in late Middle English texts from both form-based and semantic viewpoints, considering eight texts of different genres derived from the Prose Corpus of ICAMET.

Chapter 3 treated the influence of textual genre on the distributional tendency of verb types in *if*-clauses. On the whole, as displayed by Table 3.1, the subjunctive is predominant, with modals in the second place. The occurrences of the indicative are rare. The difference among genres is not clear-cut. Two religious materials, *Lantlit* and *Rollebok* display a high frequency of the subjunctive. However, *Lollard* and *Tretlove* are distinct: both of them provide significant ratios of the indicative, while the proportion of the subjunctive is relatively small. Features of each genre could be the reason: *Lollard* is a speech-based sermon and *Tretlove* is a translation of the French work. *Paston-4&5* shows fairly high percentage of the subjunctive, which coincides with the remark by Kihlbom (1939) that the present subjunctive in conditional clauses was the rule in correspondences in late Middle English. Comparing the present study with Kikusawa (2009) on *lest*-clauses in fifteenth-century English, some interesting differences were observed on the text types ‘letters’ and ‘religion’. While the texts of ‘letters’ is rather progressive concerned with *lest*-clauses, *if*-clauses in ‘letters’ show a conservative feature like that of the religious texts examined in this study. As for religious texts, although they show conservatism both on *lest*-clauses and *if*-clauses, the ratio of the subjunctive in *if*-clauses significantly varies among the religious texts examined in this study.

In Chapter 4, the data of *Paston-4&5* was analysed in terms of sociolect. Although the data are limited, it was suggested that the occurrence of the indicative in *if*-clauses is affected by the social background. The indicative in *if*-clauses was observed more often in informal occasions (letters among family members or relatives of the Pastons) rather than formal ones (business letters). Another interesting point on the occurrence of the indicative

is that it was found more in women's writings (letters by Margaret Paston) rather than those relating to men (letters by John Paston II and John Paston III). It is probable that this difference is caused not only by the level of education but also to whom the letters are written and whether the letter is by autograph or dictation.

There is room for further investigation on Chapter 5, which dealt with the semantic analysis of *if*-clauses according to the classification of Mitchell (1985). Two hundred cases from *Paston-5* and 120 examples from *Lollard* were considered. The present study was not able to give a clear view on this topic, but the variation of verb types in *if*-clauses expressing open conditions deserves attention. The present study revealed that the indicative, modals and the present subjunctive can be used to express open conditions and that each verb forms represent different degrees of certainty, making a semantic gradation of open conditionals. Also, a case was found which shows that forms do not always coincide with the function they have: an example of *Lollard*, where the indicative and the subjunctive appear side by side, verified the view of Fischer (1992: 349-350) and Mustanoja (1960: 469) that these two forms were used randomly regardless of the meaning. Thus, it might be worth exploring in my future study the use of modal auxiliaries and the semantic difference between the indicative and the present subjunctive expressing open conditions.

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