

Rumor Has It: The Press Conditional in French and Spanish

By

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Abstract

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In journalistic texts in both French and Spanish, the conditional may be used to report an unconfirmed fact, akin to the use of *allegedy* in English, as in (1) and (2):

- (1) La justice pénale américaine **enquêterait** sur General Motors
'*The Justice Department [would be investigating] General Motors*'
- (2) Según los datos en poder de este periódico, un informe de Hacienda **acreditaría** muchos de los obsequios y **confirmaría** los datos del ex gerente
'*According to information in possession of this newspaper, a source from the Treasury [would substantiate] many of the gifts and [would confirm] the former director's information*'

In French, this use of the conditional has accumulated many names, one of which is the *conditionnel de presse*. In Spanish, it is most often referred to as the *condicional del rumor*. I refer to both as the press conditional given the construction's association with journalistic language in both French and Spanish. While this use of the conditional has been extensively studied in French, its Spanish counterpart has only recently begun to receive closer attention from scholars, much of it in the shadow of prior work undertaken on French. This dissertation addresses this gap by proposing a study that allows for a more thorough treatment of the construction in each language using an extensive news corpus. Not only does this study provide new data for Spanish, it provides a comprehensive examination of the press conditional in newswriting in each language, which, until now, was lacking in both French and Spanish.

In Chapter 1, I present an overview of the uses of the conditional in French and Spanish. I then focus on the press conditional, its history and its prescriptive status in each language. I also review previous theoretical models of the press conditional and previous work on the construction in journalistic texts. In Chapter 2, I present my methodology. I describe my bilingual corpus consisting of a constructed week's worth of editions of two French and two Spanish newspapers: *Le Monde*, *Libération*, *El Mundo* and *El Periódico de Catalunya*. I then demonstrate the paraphrases I use to extract tokens of the press conditional from the corpus. These combine the appropriate indicative tense with adverbial markers *paraît-il* 'it seems' in

French and *por lo visto* ‘apparently’ in Spanish. I then outline the analytic framework through which I examine the data. I approach the press conditional from the perspective of register, examining its use in journalistic texts in the light of their communicative aims. Since the primary aim of journalistic texts is to represent the truth, I understand the choice to use the press conditional as one made with consideration for precise writing and accurate reporting, which are the means by which journalists establish credibility.

In Chapter 3, I first examine the forms and frequency of the press conditional in French. I find that the data here bears out prior claims in the literature: the present conditional is most frequent with a present reading, while the past conditional is used for past events. I confirm that the present conditional with a prospective reading is rare, as it is not present in the corpus. I then analyze how the press conditional is used within the newspapers. I find that article type is not explanatory with respect to the use of the press conditional in French. Rather, I draw a distinction between conditionals serving to report information (reporting conditionals) and those that serve to reprise discourse (discursive conditionals). This distinction is shown here to correlate with article type, when a high-level split between news and commentary is made. Reporting and discursive conditionals are found at relatively similar rates in news articles, while reporting conditionals are rare in commentary, unlike discursive conditionals. The press conditional also frequently accompanies quantification in reportative contexts in journalistic texts. Discursive conditionals prove interesting because of their rarity in commentary in *Libération* and their relatively higher frequency in *Le Monde*. I find that *Le Monde*’s more extensive use of the discursive conditional in its commentary articles serves to signal a consistently journalistic style while also demonstrating that the press conditional appears to be a stereotypical feature of journalistic writing in French. Finally, I argue that, as used in journalistic texts, the press conditional can be seen as a marker of *non-prise-en-charge*.

In Chapter 4, I begin by providing the forms and frequency of the press conditional in Spanish. I note that the press conditional in fact encompasses the press conditional to mark both inferences and reported information. I provide a tabulation of the frequency of each use as well as an overview of their functions within the Spanish corpus. I then examine the temporality of each. I find that the present conditional may refer to present and past states, as well as future events and states. Notably, I confirm that present conditionals marking reported information do not require a future time marker to trigger a prospective reading (as is the case in French) in Peninsular Spanish. I then account for the use of the press conditional in Spanish as a function of article type. I find that in the case of polls and scientific articles the presence of the conditional may actually reflect the presence of scientific discourse within the pages of a newspaper. Conversely, I argue that in the case of articles on official misconduct and criminal activity, the press conditional’s efficiency in marking uncertainty in sensitive contexts may override prescriptive discouragement of the press conditional. I end by arguing that more diachronic and synchronic studies across journalistic, scientific and legal text types may better clarify the reported and inferential uses of the conditional in the Spanish press and also more generally.

In Chapter 5, I compare the forms, frequencies and temporalities of the present and past conditional in French and Spanish. I then examine the use of the press conditional in its capacities to convey reported information and/or inference. To the extent that it is a marker of reported information, I argue that it constitutes a special kind of reported speech in journalistic writing. I find that in its speech reporting function, the French press conditional implies an element of subjectivity not seen in its Spanish counterpart. On the basis of the common use of the press conditional to mark inference in Spanish, I examine tokens in French that appeared to

convey inference. I argue that this function, while numerically marginal, requires further study. I then compare the press conditional at the level of the article, at the level of the newspaper and at the level of the language itself. I recall that while article type can be used to explain the use of the press conditional in Spanish, its use is more generalized in French. With respect to newspapers, I show that the press conditional reflects little of *Libération* and *El Periódico*'s journalistic practices. The press conditional has what one might call a performative function in *Le Monde* and is a pragmatic outgrowth of *El Mundo*'s investigative reporting. This points to the varying capacity the press conditional has in helping shape a newspaper's journalistic identity. Finally, I conclude with a reflection on the fact that the press conditional is not only a stereotypical feature of French journalistic language, it is also on its way to becoming such a feature in Spanish. Thought of this way, it is not just a register feature but potentially a stylistic one as well.

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And, now, finally, to Little Michel and Amy, as they traipsed along the way to the East Davis Dairy Queen. It was a clear day, and you did not think to look far. Certainly not as far as they would one day find that I had gone. *Pas mal, hein?*

1 BACKGROUND AND REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

1.1 Rumor and Romance: The Conditional for Unconfirmed Reports in the News

In the Romance speaking world, it is possible on any given day to open a newspaper and find the conditional tense used as it is in the examples in (1-6):

- (1) **Spanish:**
En cuanto al caso Lava Jato, según el periodista Fernando Rodrigues, **habría** no menos de 57 personas vinculadas con el caso a las que se ha detectado alrededor de 200 offshores previamente desconocidas.
‘With respect to the Lavo Jato case, according to the journalist Fernando Rodrigues, there [would be] no less than 57 people connected to the case who have been linked to some 200 previously unknown offshore companies.’
— *El País*, April 5, 2016
- (2) **Italian:**
Secondo il quotidiano olandese «Trouw», infatti, Seedorf **avrebbe concluso** un accordo di sponsorizzazione nel 2005 con un gioielliere italiano per la sua squadra corse il «Team Seedorf Racing»
‘According to Dutch newspaper «Trouw», Seedorf [would have made] a sponsorship agreement in 2005 with the Italian jeweler for his racing team «Team Seedorf Racing»’
— *Il Corriere della Sera*, April 5, 2016
- (3) **Brazilian Portuguese:**
Segundo os “Panama Papers” — o vazamento de 11,5 milhões de documentos que implicam 140 personalidades que **teriam** offshores em paraísos fiscais —, várias pessoas próximas a Putin **teriam desviado** quase dois bilhões de dólares com a ajuda de bancos e empresas de fachada.
‘According to the “Panama Papers” — the leak of 11.5 million documents implicating 140 people who [would have] offshore companies in tax havens —, various people close to Putin [would have diverted] almost two billion dollars with the help of banks and front companies.’
— *O Globo*, April 4, 2016
- (4) **Catalan:**
Segons el diari, Crivillé **hauria cobrat** els drets d'imatge després del seu títol mundial de 1999 a través d'una empresa 'offshore' situada en un paradís fiscal.
‘According to the newspaper, Crivillé [would have collected] the image royalties from his 1999 world title through an offshore company located in a tax haven.’
— *El Periódico de Catalunya*, April 5, 2016

- (5) **Romanian:**
 Aproiați ai președintelui rus Vladimir Putin **ar fi ascuns** în paradisuri fiscale aproximativ 2 miliarde de dolari prin intermediul unor societăți paravan deschise de Mossack Fonseca.
‘Relatives of Russian President Vladimir Putin [would have hid] about \$ 2 billion in tax havens through companies set up by Mossack Fonseca.’
 — *Adevărul.ro*, April 5, 2016
- (6) **French:**
 C’est aussi le cas du meilleur ami du président, le violoncelliste Sergueï Roldouquine, qui **aurait servi** de prête-nom pour le compte de M. Poutine pour détourner de l’argent des entreprises publiques.
‘It is also the case for the president’s best friend, cellist Sergueï Roldouquine, who [would have served] as the nominee for M. Putin’s account in order to divert the money from state companies.’
 — *Le Monde*, April 3, 2016

(1-6) are taken from around the time of the leak of documents revealing the international elite’s extensive offshore holdings for purposes of tax evasion that has become known as the Panama Papers. Although any of the conditionals used in (1-6) could be replaced by an appropriate present or past indicative tense, the conditional is used to mark the fact that the newspaper is hesitant to say that the information reported is certain. English journalists might mark such information by adding the adverb *allegedly* in such cases, although it is not an exact equivalent. The conditional has a pragmatic effect of signaling that the speaker (in these cases, journalist) does not have direct knowledge of the information that they relay. This is reflected by the use of the cognate prepositions *según*, *secondo*, *segundo*, *segons* (all meaning ‘according to’) in the Spanish, Italian, Portuguese and Catalan examples in (1-4), thereby making the source of information clear. However, the conditional may appear without a source. In the French and Romanian examples in (5) and (6), the information is given without attribution. In French, this use of the conditional has become so tightly associated with journalistic language that it has been designated, among other things, the *conditionnel de presse* or press conditional.¹

Although the examples cited above suggest that the press conditional is a Pan-Romance construction, its recognition and acceptance varies from language to language. Such is the portrait painted by Squartini (2001) who compares the structure across Romance in a study that includes French, Spanish, Portuguese, Italian and Catalan (but excludes Romanian). While Squartini (2001: 324-26) only comments on the development of this use of the conditional in Italian, the lack of comment about its origins in French and Portuguese leave one to assume it is also native to those languages. Conversely, Squartini (2001: 318) describes the press conditional in Spanish as an “unstable” French borrowing that is limited to journalistic language and unlikely to be further integrated into the language. In fact, one of his sources, Romero Gualda (1994: 35-36), suggests that the use of the press conditional in Spanish is in decline.² Squartini (2001: 320-21) claims—on the basis of his sources—that Catalan also lacks a press conditional and suggests that if it can be found, it is a French borrowing.

¹ Dendale (1993: 165) provides a list of names. Several more have been added since.

² This assertion is based on examples given by grammarians and an oral corpus from Fontanillo and Riesco (1994).

Subsequent research has painted a slightly different picture than the one depicted by Squartini (2001). Martines (2015: 80-82) shows that this use of the conditional was present historically in Catalan. Oliveira (2015a) has studied divergences with respect to the use of the press conditional in European and Brazilian Portuguese. While one might speak of a “press conditional” in Brazilian Portuguese (as one does in French), in European Portuguese, one would need to speak of a “press future” as well as a “press conditional,” since both tenses are used to convey uncertain information in journalistic texts. With regards to Spanish, the press conditional has not proven “unstable” and has even received prescriptive sanction from the Real Academia Española (RAE) in 2009 (RAE 2009: §23.15m). Kronning (2016: 128) finds that it is found regularly in online news headlines in both Latin-America and Spain, although with greater frequency in Latin-America. Furthermore, Romanists should not ignore a similar construction found in Romanian. Popescu (2011: 234) notes that the press conditional is attested as early as the 17th century and found in literary and scientific discourse as well as the oral code.

There does appear to exist a correlation between belief that the press conditional is a native construction and its recognition by grammarians (and even linguists). Martines (2015: 81) finds that although the press conditional appears to be native to Catalan, it has been condemned in the language’s grammatical tradition as a French borrowing. In Spanish, the RAE’s (2009: §23.15m) reference grammar does not describe the press conditional as a borrowing in origin, but other grammars (such as Butt and Benjamin 1994: 220) as well as scholarly works continue to describe it as a borrowing (Sarrazin 2010: 101). No one has yet carried out more extensive diachronic work testing the contact hypothesis.

This alleged foreign origin has led to prescriptive discouragement of the press conditional in Spanish, particularly in newspapers. *El País*, whose prestigious style guide has set the tone for others across the Spanish-speaking world (Sarrazin 2010: 103), objects to the press conditional on two grounds:

La posibilidad en el pasado no es, sin embargo, un hecho dudoso, no garantizado, ni un rumor. **Este uso del condicional de indicativo es francés...El uso del condicional en ese tipo de frases queda terminantemente prohibido en el periódico. Además de incorrecto gramaticalmente, resta credibilidad a la información** (El País 2014: §13.28). (bolding mine)

The fact that in Spanish the press conditional is considered an ungrammatical borrowing violates what Cotter (2010: 136-37) calls the “rhetorical goals” of journalism. Journalists must use good grammar in their writing to establish credibility (Cotter 2010: 191). The perception that the press conditional would report unverified rumors further violates what Cotter (2010: 136-37) calls journalism’s “content goals,” which insist on “accuracy.” However, the notion that the press conditional might signify bad journalism is not restricted to Spanish. In French, the conditional is acceptable but only within reason. *Le Monde*, France’s prestigious newspaper of record, mentions the conditional specifically when laying out the newspaper’s commitment to accuracy:

Le Monde est précis. Les rédacteurs sourcent leurs informations. Ils utilisent les mots justes, renoncent aux tournures vides et alambiquées. **L’usage du conditionnel est restreint.** (Le Monde 2002: 48) (bolding mine)

In French, the conditional (whose status as a native form has never been in dispute) is acceptable as long as it does not undermine the newspaper's content goals. However, the construction itself is not ungrammatical in French and its use does not violate the newspaper's requirement for good grammar.³

Portuguese provides a useful point of comparison that helps explain why *El País*'s double objection is remarkable. In Portuguese, the press conditional is also a point of concern as it may undermine journalistic accuracy, as seen in the style guide of Portuguese newspaper *Público*:

Condicional — É um tempo verbal a usar com parcimónia, pois foge à precisão desejável num texto jornalístico. Eis um mau exemplo: *De acordo com uma informação divulgada na Rádio Macau, **teria sido** o Governo de Lisboa que **teria montado** uma manobra de informação para divulgar as acusações de que Carlos Melancia **teria recebido** 50 mil contos. (...) [Carlos Melancia] negou a autenticidade da carta, cuja assinatura seria falsa, e também que ela tivesse dado entrada (...).*⁴ (bolding mine)

As in French, the style guide of the Portuguese newspaper *Público* claims that the conditional evades accuracy. It gives a “bad example” of the use of the conditional, wherein the construction is used three times in one sentence. It appears that, like in French, the press conditional in Portuguese may represent a content violation rather than a rhetorical violation. There is no mention of the fact that the press conditional may be ungrammatical in Portuguese. It is clearly the belief that the press conditional in Spanish is an ungrammatical foreign borrowing that increases prescriptive pressure in that language relative to others.

In order to gain more insight into the press conditional, it is therefore necessary to understand it doubly as a linguistic construction but also as a feature of a particular kind of discourse whose particular aims condition its use. The Spanish case is especially compelling because news discourse disfavors borrowing due to the importance it places on prescriptive usage. In her work on borrowing through translation between English and French, McLaughlin (2011) describes prescription in the journalistic context as a sufficient obstacle to borrowing:

If the nature and structure of the global news industry means that news translation has the potential to be a cross-linguistic cause of change, it is also useful to consider what the linguistic outcomes of such influence would be. The findings presented here indicate very clearly that news translation is unlikely to lead directly either to global borrowing or to selective borrowing of the formal type. This restriction can also be attributed to the nature of the news industry in general because it results from the requirement that non-standard usage be avoided (110).

McLaughlin (2011) cites Cotter's (2010: 187) observation that news language tends to conform to prescriptive guidelines, which may in many instances prevent borrowing from occurring in the news genre. However, Cotter (2010: 211) also notes that prescription exists in tension with

³ Although the description used in French is *précis*, the best translation appears to be *accuracy* here, rather than *precision*. In English, Cotter (2010: 137) distinguishes between both *precision* and *accuracy*: language is precise while facts are accurate. However, she describes *accuracy* as a professional goal in journalism while precision is a more general term. Furthermore, per Cotter (2010: 195), “precision safeguards accuracy.” The language in the *Le Monde* regarding the word “*précis*” would appear to encompass both.

⁴ Publico, ed. 1998. “Verbos.” *Público: Livro Do Estilo*. 1998. http://static.publico.pt/nos/livro_estilo/index.html.

communicative need in news language, or what she calls a competition between the “prescriptive imperative” and the “pragmatic alternative.” Prescriptive rules may sometimes be overridden to suit the journalist’s needs. This would suggest that the press conditional has been—be it borrowed or not—useful to Spanish-speaking journalists in practice.

For these reasons, the press conditional should prove ripe for a comparative investigation between Spanish and French. Not only is French the potential donor of the press conditional in Spanish, the recognition and acceptance of the press conditional in French is nearly the diametric opposite of what is seen in Spanish. Furthermore, the study does not have to be limited to linguistic comparisons (as in Kronning (2016), Vatrican (2010), Fouilloux (2006), Azzopardi (2011)). Rather, I would argue it is worth investigating the press conditional from the perspective of its press context in order to develop a deeper understanding of the construction as a linguistic resource in journalism and how it violates (or does not violate) the journalistic ideal of accuracy. Such an investigation should allow for an understanding of how the press conditional has proven itself useful to Spanish journalism and give insight into the ways in which the press conditional’s use diverges and converges across French and Spanish.

1.2 Form and Values of the Conditional in French and Spanish

The conditional forms of French and Spanish, as well as other Romance languages are derived from a Latin verbal periphrasis combining an infinitive with the auxiliary verb HABERE ‘to have’ conjugated in the imperfect (Maiden 2011: 264-65). It was by this same process that the Romance synthetic future forms were generated from HABERE conjugated in the present tense (Maiden 2011: 264-65), which explains the formal similarity between the two tenses in their eventual Romance outcomes. Maiden (2011: 265) illustrates this evolution using the verbs VENIRE ‘to come’ and VALERE ‘to be worth,’ which yielded Fr. *venir* and *valoir* and Sp. *venir* and *valer*. His examples are replicated in (7):

(7)

				Spanish	French
INF	ualere ‘be worth’	>	*va'lere	<i>valer</i>	<i>valoir</i>
FUT	ualere + habet	>	*vale'ra	<i>valdrá</i>	<i>vaudra</i>
COND	ualere + habebat	>	*vale'reþa	<i>valdría</i>	<i>vaudrait</i>
INF	uenire ‘to come’	>	*ve'nire	<i>venir</i>	<i>venir</i>
FUT	uenire + habet	>	*veni'ra	<i>vendrá</i>	<i>viendra</i>
COND	uenire + habebat	>	*veni'reþa	<i>vendría</i>	<i>viendrait</i>

Although it is not clearly illustrated by the verbs chosen by Maiden (2011), the infinitive form often mirrors the future and conditional stem, and more often than not can be used to predict the stem of the future and conditional tenses.

Although the tense is called the conditional, it was originally—and still is—a future-in-the-past form. Its name derives from the fact that this new Romance form would eventually largely supplant the Latin subjunctive in conditional phrases (Harris 1986).⁵ At one point in time,

⁵ “The name ‘conditional’ is apt only insofar as it describes one common use of the form, viz. the expression of the idea that an event is dependent on some other factor...” (Butt and Benjamin 1994: 219)

the conditional was so associated with its hypothetical uses that it was often classified as a separate mood alongside the indicative and subjunctive. The classification appears incorrect, and it is generally considered a tense with modal uses today (Vatrican 2014: 247). Abouda (1997) provides a syntactic argument for the conditional's categorization within the indicative paradigm, on the basis that it is semantics and pragmatics, not syntax, that determine the use of the conditional over other forms of the indicative. A choice between the conditional and another indicative tense is, at its core, no different than the choice between a past and present tense. Conversely, the subjunctive and indicative are not in syntactic free variation. Abouda (1997) observes:

Or, comme l'on a vu tout au long de cet inventaire, nulle part le conditionnel n'est syntaxiquement obligatoire ; il est simplement toujours possible. Sachant, d'autre part, qu'il s'emploie dans les mêmes structures syntaxiques que l'indicatif, l'on dira que le conditionnel n'est pas un mode : il s'agirait d'un temps de l'indicatif... (194).

Therefore, despite the conditional's name and immediate associations, it is a tense like the future or present tenses. The press conditional constitutes one of its modal uses.

1.2.1 The Forms of the Conditional in French and Spanish

In standard French and Spanish, the conditional tense has two forms: the present conditional and the past conditional.⁶ In each language, the past forms consist of a combination of an auxiliary and past participle. The names *conditionnel présent* 'present conditional' and *conditionnel passé* 'past conditional' are usual in French, while in Spanish, the present and past conditional forms are often called the *condicional simple* 'simple conditional' and the *condicional compuesto* 'compound conditional.' I will employ the terms present conditional and past conditional as does Foullioux (2006) to refer to the two forms of the conditional in both languages. I will introduce the forms of the French conditional in §1.2.1.1 and §1.2.1.2 and those of Spanish in §1.2.1.3 and §1.2.1.4.

1.2.1.1 The Present Conditional in French

Morphologically, the present conditional in French is composed of three parts: a stem, the morpheme *-r-*, and final person markers (Riegel, Pellat and Rioul 1994: 445). The stem of the conditional is always the same as that of the future. The person markers are syncretic with those of the imperfect indicative. Forms of the present conditional are shown in Table 1.1, using regular verb *parler* 'to speak' and irregular verbs *être* 'to be' and *avoir* 'to have':

⁶ A third conditional form, constructed with two auxiliaries, is not unknown in French: *il aurait eu chanté* 'he [would have had sung]'. This conditional is called the *conditionnel surcomposé* and is one of the 7 double-compound forms attested in the history of French. These forms are sufficiently infrequent that they might not be recognized by speakers (Riegel, Pellat and Rioul 1994: 252).

TABLE 1.1 FORMS OF THE FRENCH PRESENT CONDITIONAL

parler ‘to speak’			
GRAPHIC	MORPHOLOGICAL	PHONOLOGICAL	ENGLISH GLOSS
je parlerais	je parle-r-ais	paʁ.lə'ʁɛ	‘I would speak’
tu parlerais	tu parle-r-ais	paʁ.lə'ʁɛ	‘You would speak’
on parlerait	on parle-r-ait	paʁ.lə'ʁɛ	‘One would speak’
nous parlerions	nous parle-r-ions	paʁ.lə'ʁjɔ̃	‘We would speak’
vous parleriez	vous parle-r-iez	paʁ.lə'ʁje	‘You would speak’
ils parleraient	ils parle-r-aient	paʁ.lə'ʁɛ	‘They would speak’
avoir ‘to have’			
GRAPHIC	MORPHOLOGICAL	PHONOLOGICAL	ENGLISH GLOSS
j’aurais	je au-r-ais	ɔ'ʁɛ	‘I would have’
tu aurais	tu au-r-ais	ɔ'ʁɛ	‘You would have’
on aurait	on au-r-ait	ɔ'ʁɛ	‘One would have’
nous aurions	nous au-r-ions	ɔ'ʁjɔ̃	‘We would have’
vous auriez	vous au-r-iez	ɔ'ʁje	‘You would have’
ils auraient	ils au-r-aient	ɔ'ʁɛ	‘They would have’
être ‘to be’			
GRAPHIC	MORPHOLOGICAL	PHONOLOGICAL	ENGLISH GLOSS
je serais	je se-r-ais	sə'ʁɛ	‘I would be’
tu serais	tu se-r-ais	sə'ʁɛ	‘You would be’
on serait	on se-r-ait	sə'ʁɛ	‘One would be’
nous serions	nous se-r-ions	sə'ʁjɔ̃	‘We would be’
vous seriez	vous se-r-iez	sə'ʁje	‘You would be’
ils seraient	ils se-r-aient	sə'ʁɛ	‘They would be’

The regular verb *parler* ‘to speak’ in Table 1.1 illustrates the identical nature of the infinitive and stem of the conditional. Irregular verbs *avoir* ‘to have’ and *être* ‘to be’ show conditional forms with irregular stems, which in this case for *être* is *ser-* and for *avoir* is *aur-*. The person markers are identical for all verbs.

1.2.1.2 The Past Conditional in French

The past conditional is one of the seven compound French tenses, consisting of one of the auxiliary verbs *avoir* or *être* conjugated in the conditional (whose forms are outlined in Table 1.1) and a past participle. Per the rules of French auxiliary selection, *avoir* is used for most verbs, while *être* is used obligatorily with all reflexive verbs and certain number of intransitive verbs. A few intransitives may take either auxiliary (Riegel, Pellat and Rioul 1994: 252). These possibilities are shown in (8), (9), (10) and (11):

- (8) **parler** ‘to speak’ (*avoir w/ transitives*)
 Vous **auriez parlé**
 ‘You would have spoken’

- (9) **se préparer** ‘to prepare’ (*aux. être w/ reflexives*)
 Vous **vous seriez préparé(e)(s)**
 ‘You would have prepared each other’
- (10) **arriver** ‘to arrive’ (*aux. être obligatory w/ certain intransitives*)
 Vous **seriez arrivé(e)(s)**
 ‘You would have arrived’
- (11) **disparaître** ‘to disappear’ (*avoir or être possible w/ certain intransitives*)
 Vous **auriez disparu** // Vous **seriez disparu(e)(s)**
 ‘You would have disappeared’

Since the French past participle must agree with a preceding direct object, all possible combinations of gender and number agreement can be seen in (9), depending on whether *vous* ‘you’ is used in the singular or plural and to address a male or female addressee. When *être* is the auxiliary agreement with the subject is obligatory as in (10) and in the alternate conjugation of *disparaître* using *être* in (11).

1.2.1.3 The Present Conditional in Spanish

The *Manual de la nueva gramática* (RAE 2010: 50) describes the Spanish verb as composed of four morphological segments: its root, its thematic vowel (-a-, -i-, -e- or Ø), a temporal marker, and the appropriate person ending. The present conditional is marked by the temporal marker -ría- (RAE 2010: 52). The conditional form of the regular verbs *amar*, *partir*, *temer* and the irregular auxiliary verb *haber*, which loses its thematic vowel, are shown in Table 1.2:

TABLE 1.2 FORMS OF THE FRENCH PRESENT CONDITIONAL⁷

amar ‘to love’			
GRAPHIC	MORPHOLOGICAL	PHONOLOGICAL	ENGLISH GLOSS
amaría	am-a-ría-Ø	a.ma'ri.a	‘I would love’
amarías	am-a-ría-s	a.ma'rias	‘You would love’
amaría	am-a-ría-Ø	a.ma'ria	‘S•he would love’
amaríamos	am-a-ría-mos	a.ma'riamos	‘We would love’
amaríais	am-a-ría-is	a.ma'ri.ajs	‘You would love’
amarían	am-a-ría-n	a.ma'ri.an	‘They would love’
salir ‘to leave’			
GRAPHIC	MORPHOLOGICAL	PHONOLOGICAL	ENGLISH GLOSS
saldría	sald-Ø-ría-Ø	sal'dri.a	‘I would leave’
saldrían	sald-Ø-ría-s	sal'dri.as	‘You would leave’
saldría	sald-Ø-ría-Ø	sal'dri.a	‘S•he would leave’
saldríamos	sald-Ø-ría-mos	sal'dri.a.mos	‘We would leave’
saldríais	sald-Ø-ría-is	sal'dri.ajs	‘You would leave’
saldrían	sald-Ø-ría-n	sal'dri.an	‘They would leave’

⁷ The use of null morphemes has been controversial, but current consensus accepts their use (RAE 2010: 50).

TABLE 1.2: (continued)

hacer ‘to do’			
GRAPHIC	MORPHOLOGICAL	PHONOLOGICAL	ENGLISH GLOSS
haría	ha-Ø-ría-Ø	a'ri.a	<i>‘I would do’</i>
harías	ha-Ø-ría-s	a'ri.as	<i>‘You would do’</i>
haría	ha-Ø-ría-Ø	a'ri.a	<i>‘S•he would do’</i>
haríamos	ha-Ø-ría-mos	a'ri.a.mos	<i>‘We would do’</i>
haríais	ha-Ø-ría-is	a'ri.ajs	<i>‘You would do’</i>
harían	ha-Ø-ría-n	a'ri.an	<i>‘They would do’</i>
haber ‘have’ - AUX			
GRAPHIC	MORPHOLOGICAL	PHONOLOGICAL	ENGLISH GLOSS
habría	hab-Ø-ría-Ø	a'bri.a	<i>‘I would have...’</i>
habrías	hab-Ø-ría-s	a'bri.as	<i>‘You would have...’</i>
habría	hab-Ø-ría-Ø	a'bri.a	<i>‘S•he would have...’</i>
habríamos	hab-Ø-ría-mos	a'bri.a.mos	<i>‘We would have...’</i>
habríais	hab-Ø-ría-is	a'bri.ajs	<i>‘You would have...’</i>
habrían	hab-Ø-ría-n	a'bri.an	<i>‘They would have...’</i>

As in French, the infinitive is often a reliable guide to the formation of the conditional of regular verbs in Spanish. Irregular verbs, as in the case of *haber*, may lose their thematic vowel (*querer* ‘to want’ > *querría* ‘I would want’). Some may lose the thematic vowel and undergo the insertion of an epenthetic ‘d’ (*salir* > *saldría*) or have irregular stems (*hacer* ‘to do’ > *haría* ‘I would do’) (RAE 2010: 63).

1.2.1.4 The Past Conditional in Spanish

Unlike in French, which has maintained auxiliary selection between *avoir* ‘HAVE’ and *être* ‘BE’ in its compound tenses, the Spanish past conditional is formed invariably by combining the auxiliary *haber* ‘HAVE’ (whose forms are outline in Table 1.2) in the present conditional with a past participle. The verbs *amar*, *salir* and *hacer* from Table 1.2 are illustrated in (12), (13) and (14):

(12) **amar** ‘to love’
habrían amado
‘They would have loved’

(13) **salir** ‘to leave’
habrían salido
‘They would have loved’

(14) **hacer** ‘to do’
habrían hecho
‘They would have done’

The Spanish past participle remains invariable in Spanish, having lost the feature after the medieval period (Arias and Quaglia 2002: 518).

1.2.2 Values of the Conditional in French and Spanish

Fouilloux (2006) undertakes a comparative study of the uses of the French and Spanish conditional. She identifies four uses common to the two languages: the temporal conditional, the hypothetical conditional, the attenuating conditional and the press conditional. She also notes that Spanish has a conjectural use of the conditional that is not found in French and requires translation by the French modal verb *devoir* ‘must’ (Fouilloux 2006: 65). In the latter case, the conditional covers what Cornillie (2009: 50) labels as circumstantial inferentials or conjectures, the latter involving some direct visual evidence and the former pure reasoning on the part of the speaker. However, scholars have identified an inferential use of the French conditional found in interrogative forms.⁸ Furthermore, it appears that many descriptions of Spanish omit an inferential use of the conditional that appears to be a feature of scientific texts and that differs from the conjectural use routinely inventoried in reference grammars and the academic literature.

1.2.2.1 The Temporal Conditional in French and Spanish

The temporal conditional in French represents the use of the conditional to mark the future-in-the-past, meaning that the event will take place in the future relative to a moment in the past. Riegel, Pellat and Rioul (1994: 317) provide the examples seen in (15) and (16):

- (15) Virginie pensait que Paul **viendrait**
‘*Virginie thought that Paul would come*’
- (16) Elle affirmait qu’elle **serait rentrée** à midi.
‘*She affirmed that she would have returned home at noon.*’

The difference between the present and past conditional in the context of (15) and (16) is aspectual. The action in (16) is seen as having been completed after the moment of *elle affirmait* but before noon. In (15), Paul’s coming is in the future with respect to Virginie’s thoughts concerning this event.

As in French, the conditional in Spanish also has a future-in-the-past function. Both the present and past conditional have this function, as seen in (17) and (18):

- (17) Me dijo que **vendría**
‘*S•he told me that s•he would come*’
(RAE 2010: 451)
- (18) Afirmaron que cuando llegara el invierno **habrían recogido** la cosecha’
‘*They affirmed that when winter came they would have gathered the harvest*’
(RAE 2010: 453)

⁸ See Dendale (2010) for a thorough description.

As in French, there is an aspectual difference between the two conditional forms. The action in (18) is viewed as completed by a certain reference point situated in the future, whereas the example in (17) is simply said to occur at a time after the locutor produced the utterance.

1.2.2.2 The Hypothetical Conditional in French and Spanish

The conditional is used in French to represent the hypothetical result of a condition. This is the usage from which the tense derives its name. Prototypical hypothetical utterances featuring the conditional in French are marked by the word *si* ‘if’ in a subordinate clause and a present or past conditional in the main clause as seen in (19). Other constructions also exist to mark the necessary conditionals in such utterances, as in the example seen in (20), whose subordinate clause begins with *quand* ‘when,’ which has a meaning akin to ‘even if’ in this context:

- (19) Ah! Si vous vouliez devenir mon élève, je vous **ferais arriver** à tout
 ‘Ah! *If you wanted to become my student, I would put all within your grasp.*’
 (Riegel, Pellat and Rioul 1994: 318)
- (20) Quand tous mes rêves se seraient tournés en réalités, ils ne m’**auraient pas suffi**
 j’**aurais imaginé, rêvé, désiré** encore
 ‘*Even if all my dreams had come true, they would not have been enough: I would have imagined, dreamed and desired still*’
 (Riegel, Pellat and Rioul 1994: 319)

Temporally speaking, the present conditional is used to make present or future hypotheses, while the past conditional is used for hypotheses about the past. If the condition is set in the present or future, the imperfect indicative is used after *si* as in *vouliez* in (19). If the condition is set in the past, French uses the pluperfect indicative after *si* as in (20), which could be recast as *si tous mes rêves s’étaient tournés en réalités* ‘if my dreams had come true.’ It is possible to replace the pluperfect and past conditional forms of French *si*-phrases with the pluperfect subjunctive, allowing for (20) to be reformulated as *Si mes rêves se fussent tournés..., ils ne m’eussent pas suffi...* This is found, however, only in historical or formal—usually written—language (Riegel, Pellat and Rioul 1994: 329).

In Spanish, the conditional is used after subordinate clauses introduced by *si* ‘if’ which contain the imperfect or pluperfect subjunctive. Examples are shown in (21) and (22):

- (21) Esto quiere decir que si usted realizase seis viajes con estas 15.000 ptas **ahorraría**
 mas de 4.000 ptas
 ‘*This means that if you made six journeys with these 15,000 ptas, you would save more than 4,000 ptas*’
 (Butt and Benjamin 1994: 337)
- (22) Si él hubiera tenido dinero, **habría saldado** la cuenta
 ‘*If he had had money, he would have settled the bill*’
 (Butt and Benjamin 1994: 337)

As in French, the present conditional implies a present or future outcome if the condition were to be met, as in (21), while the past conditional situates the outcome the past as in (22). In Spanish, as in French, the pluperfect subjunctive in *-ra* may replace the past conditional in examples like (22), yielding *Si él hubiera/hubiese tenido, hubiera saldado la cuenta*.⁹ Unlike in French, such usage is not confined to formal language (Butt and Benjamin 1994: 294). The two appear to be in free variation (RAE 2010: 453).

1.2.2.3 The Attenuating Conditional in French and Spanish

The conditional can be used to soften a request in French. Examples can be seen in (23) and (24):

- (23) Je **voudrais raconter** le président
'I would like to meet the president'
 (Riegel, Pellat and Rioul 1994: 319)
- (24) **J'aurais voulu rencontrer** le président
'I would like to meet the president'
'I [would like to have met] the president'
 (Riegel, Pellat and Rioul 1994: 319)

Unlike the hypothetical and temporal conditionals, the example in (24) does not have a direct translation in English and its linguistic gloss is in brackets. The only difference between (23) and (24), other than their form, is their level of politeness. By rhetorically situating the request in the 'past,' the requester is creating further distance between them and the demand made, thereby increasing politeness (Riegel, Pellat and Rioul 1994: 319).

The conditional is also used for courteous requests in Spanish. Examples are given in (25) and (26):

- (25) **Convendría salir** pronto.
'It would be good to leave soon'
 (RAE 2010: 452)
- (26) **Habría querido hablar** con usted un momentito
'I would like to speak with you for a moment'
'I [would like to have spoken] with you for a moment'
 (RAE 2010: 453)

⁹ The imperfect subjunctive, and, reflexively, the pluperfect subjunctive, have two forms in Spanish, one set ending in *-se* descended from the Latin imperfect subjunctive and one set ending in *-ra* descended from the Latin pluperfect. In cases where a proper subjunctive is called for, the two forms are interchangeable. Prescription holds that in "good Spanish," only the *-ra* form can replace indicative forms (i.e., the past conditional and—infrequently—the pluperfect indicative) (Butt and Benjamin 1994: 294).

The *RAE* (2010: 453) notes that the example in (26) is more common in Latin-American Spanish than in Spain and that (as in French) the use of the past conditional does not make for a temporal difference in instances of request. Again, the effect is one of greater distance and politeness.

1.2.2.4 The Press Conditional in French

Riegel, Pellat and Rioul (1994: 320) call the press conditional *le conditionnel de l'information incertaine* 'the conditional of uncertain information'. It is used to report information that is not verified or whose content the speaker cannot vouch for (Riegel, Pellat and Rioul 1994:320). The present conditional can describe the present or future, while the past conditional situates an event in the past (Riegel, Pellat and Rioul 1994: 320). Examples are given in (27), (28) and (29):

- (27) Une navette spatiale **partirait** bientôt pour Mars
'[Allegedly] a space rocket **will leave** soon for Mars'
'A space rocket [**would leave**] soon for Mars'
(Riegel, Pellat and Rioul 1994: 320)
- (28) D'après un article qui vient de paraître dans la revue "Postgraduate Medical Journal" la nicotine **serait** le meilleur agent protecteur contre la colite
'According to an article that recently appeared in the journal "Postgraduate Medical Journal" nicotine **is** [allegedly] the best protective agent against colitis'
'According to an article that recently appeared in the journal "Postgraduate Medical Journal" nicotine [**would be**] the best protective agent against colitis'
(Haillet 2002: 81)
- (29) Un chercheur français **aurait découvert** un traitement miracle du cancer
'[Allegedly] a French researcher **has discovered** a miracle cure for cancer'
'A French researcher [**would have discovered**] a miracle cure for cancer'
(Riegel, Pellat and Rioul 1994: 320)

This use of the conditional cannot be directly translated into English and requires some other marker such as *allegedly* to approximate its pragmatic effect. Direct glosses are given in the second gloss in (28) and (29). It also should be made clear that in French the present conditional by default yields a present reading (i.e., is simultaneous to the moment of enunciation) and can only refer to the future if a temporal marker is present (Fouilloux 2006: 73). The adverb *bientôt* 'soon' is, therefore, necessary to achieve the prospective reading of the example in (27).

1.2.2.5 The Press Conditional in Spanish

In Spanish, the press conditional is most frequently referred to as *el condicional de rumor* 'the conditional of rumor.' The *RAE* (2010: 450) treats it as a variant of the conjectural conditional. The temporal extension of the present conditional form is greater than that seen in French. In Spanish, the present conditional can refer to present or past states. The past conditional refers to events in the past. Examples are given in (30), (31) and (32):

- (30) La nota daba a entender que el presidente **estaría dispuesto** a negociar
 ‘The note led one to understand that the president [allegedly] was open to negotiating’
 ‘*The note implied that the president [would be] open to negotiating*’
 (RAE 2010: 450)
- (31) La desaparición de los etarras **estaría motivada** por cuestiones de seguridad
 ‘The disappearance of the ETA members is [allegedly] motivated for reasons of security’
 ‘*The disappearance of the ETA members [would be] motivated for reasons of security*’
 (Butt and Benjamin 1994: 220)
- (32) Un periódico daba cuenta ayer de una operación en la que **habrían muerto**
 ‘A newspaper was reporting on an operation in which they [allegedly] died’
 ‘*A newspaper was reporting on an operation in which they [would have died]*’
 (RAE 2010: 453)

The use of the present conditional to refer to the past is not possible in French (Gosselin 2001: 62-63). However, in Brazilian Portuguese, the present conditional can be used with a temporality like that of the imperfect (Oliveira 2015a: 216). This shows that instances where the Spanish press conditional differs from French are not necessarily exceptional, at least in this instance.

The present conditional in Spanish may refer to future events whether accompanied by a temporal marker or not, a potential instance of innovation first noted by Sarrazin (2010). Examples are given in (33) and (34):

- (33) Según la agencia EFE, el presidente **saldría mañana** para Londres
 ‘According to the EFE news agency, the president [allegedly] will leave tomorrow for London’
 ‘*According to news agency EFE, the president [would leave] tomorrow for London*’
 (Sarrazin 2010: 109)
- (34) Villa Parque San Miguel **sería** parte del ejido municipal de Carlos Paz
 ‘Villa Parque San Miguel [allegedly] will be part of the municipal lands of Carlos Paz’
 ‘*Villa Parque San Miguel [would be] part of the municipal lands of Carlos Paz*’
 (Sarrazin 2010: 110)

If the Spanish press conditional is indeed a calque from French, then the example in (34) represents an innovation that has occurred within Spanish, as a future time marker would be required for the conditional to be used this way in French. While (33) could be translated directly by *sortirait demain* ‘would leave tomorrow’ due to the presence of future time marker, (34)

requires a formulation such as *pourrait faire partie* ‘could be part’ or *devrait faire partie* ‘should be part’ (Sarrazin 2010: 110).

1.2.2.6 Inferential Uses of the Conditional in French

The inferential uses of the conditional in French and Spanish merit separate discussions due to their more extensive differences. French is often thought not to have a conjectural use of the conditional, but one has been identified by Tasmowski (2001).¹⁰ However, this use of the conditional occurs only in the interrogative, while the press conditional is found only in assertions (Dendale and Bourova 2013: 188; Rossari 2009: 77). Examples of this conjectural use of the conditional in French are provided in (35) and (36):

- (35) Ta femme **serait**-elle absente?
‘Is your wife gone?’
‘[Would] your wife [be] gone?’
(Dendale 2010: 299)
- (36) **Aurait**-il **oublié** le rendez-vous?
‘Did he forget the appointment?’
‘[Would] he [have forgotten] the appointment?’
(Dendale 2010: 299)

In both (35) and (36), an answer is not sought by the speaker. Dendale (2010: 299) notes that in each case, if one did respond to the question, an appropriate response would be something like *c’est possible* ‘it’s possible’ rather than *oui* ‘yes’ or *non* ‘no.’ Dendale (2010: 296) describes the hypotheses presented in this conditional as derived through inference.

As was said above, it is not thought that an inference can be marked by the conditional in an assertion in French. However, Guentchéva (1994: 17-18) raises the possibility. She provides the example seen in (37):

- (37) Les résultats des examens réalisés, notamment à l'hôpital neuro-cardiologique de Lyon, par le docteur T., neuro-cardiologue, et par le professeur V., toxicologue, font état de la présence dans le sang, où le taux d'alcoolémie atteignait 1,8 gramme, d'opiacés, de la morphine en particulier. La cause de la mort **serait** ainsi une crise cardiaque déclenchée dans un contexte de prise d'opiacés par voie buccale qui ne semble pas devoir être assimilée à une « surdose ». Ces constatations des experts donnent heure à l'ouverture d'une instruction pour infraction à la législation sur les stupéfiants qui va tenter de retrouver le fournisseur d'éventuels produits prohibés.
‘The results of the examinations carried out, notably at the neuro-cardiological hospital of Lyons, by Doctor T., neuro-cardiologist, et by Professor V., toxicologist, confirms the presence of opiates, [and] of morphine in particular in the blood, where the rate of blood alcohol reaches 1.8 grams. The cause of death [would be] therefore a heart attack triggered in the context of oral opioid

¹⁰ Previously, scholars had treated it as equivalent to the press conditional (Dendale and Bourova 2013: 186-88).

consumption which appears not to necessarily reach the level of an “overdose.” These expert findings provide the justification for the opening of an investigation for violation of the law regarding narcotics which will attempt to find the ultimate provider of banned substances.’

If this conditional is indeed inferential in nature, it is the journalist who is drawing a connection between the toxicology report and earlier reports that the man had died of a heart attack.

1.2.2.7 Inferential Uses of the Conditional in Spanish

The Spanish conditional can mark inferences in two ways. The first is routinely described in grammars and is known as *el condicional de conjetura* ‘the conjectural conditional.’ This use of the conditional marks inferences about the past. In such cases, the present conditional can be glossed by imperfect indicative and the past conditional by the pluperfect indicative and an adverb like *probablemente* ‘probably’ (RAE 2010: 450). Examples are given in (38) and (39):

- (38) **Serían** las diez
*‘It **was** probably 10 o’clock’*
*‘It [**would be**] 10 o’clock’*
(RAE 2010: 450)

- (39) Ojalá Lucrecia no fallara al otro día, pensó, **habría tenido** algún contratiempo
*‘If only Lucrecia had come through the other day, she **must have had** some mishap’*
*‘If only Lucrecia had come through the other day, she [**would have had**] some mishap’*
(RAE 2010: 453)

As is seen in (38), the present conditional refers to a moment prior to the moment of enunciation, while in (39) the conditional refers to a past action prior to another moment in the past.

The second inferential use of the conditional in Spanish can be found in scientific articles wherein the conditional reflects inferences based on evidence and reasoning. Examples of this use of the conditional can be seen in (40), (41) and (42):

- (40) Como los dientes aquí descritos no presentan diferencias morfológicas significativas con los dientes del Aucasaurus, esto **sugeriría** que los restos de titanosaurios **podrían haber sufrido** alguna forma de acción atrófica por parte de un terópodo abelisaurio u otro terópodo con una morfología dental convergente con estos.
*‘As the teeth here described do not present any significant morphological differences with the teeth of Aucasaurus, this [**would suggest**] that the remains of the titanosaurus [**could have suffered**] some form of atrophic action on the part of the abelisaur theropod or another theropod with a dental morphology convergent with those.’*
(Ferrari 2009: 13)

- (41) Por otro lado, se observa una escasa participación de los trabajadores informáticos en redes virtuales e institucionales, siendo que este tipo de vinculaciones **podría generar** competencias que complementarían las calificaciones obtenidas en el sistema de educación formal.
‘On the other hand, one observes a low participation of software workers in virtual and institutional networks, despite the fact that these connections [could generate] new skills that would supplement the qualifications obtained in the formal education system.’
 (Stagnaro 2015: 77)
- (42) En consecuencia, el régimen de movilidad predominante, de exclusión, **habría limitado** la difusión de conocimientos derivada de las migraciones de los trabajadores en el tejido productivo
‘Consequently, the predominating mobility type, by exclusion, [would have limited] the diffusion of knowledge derived from migrations of the workers in the productive fabric’
 (Stagnaro 2015: 83)

In (40) and (41), the present conditional has both present and prospective readings. The past conditional in (42) situates the deduction prior to the moment of enunciation.

Furthermore, the moment of the access to the information underlying the inferences in (38) and (39) differs from that of (40), (41) and (42). The conditional represented in (38) and (39) is an inference about the past on the basis of evidence that was priorly directly accessible to the speaker. In (40), (41) and (42), the inference is based in reasoning and indirect evidence available in the present moment. Although most Spanish grammars discuss only the use of the conditional for the kinds of inferences seen in (38) and (39), (40), (41) and (42) show that there is a second type that is readily found in scientific discourse. One can also see that the two are distinguished by their temporality, as illustrated by their glosses. The indicative equivalent for *serían* in (38) is *eran* (‘was’ - imperfect) and *habían tenido* (‘had had’ – pluperfect) for *habría tenido* in (39). Both forms of the conjectural conditional bear on the past. However, the present conditional *sugeriría* in (40) should be glossed with *‘sugiere’* (‘suggests’ – present indicative) and the past conditional *habría limitado* in (42) should be glossed by *limitó* (‘limited’ – preterite). With respect to their temporality, (40), (41) and (42) are identical to the press conditional.

On its surface, the inferential conditional is, therefore, indistinguishable from the press conditional. García Negroni (2016: 10) presents an example of the two conditionals alongside each other. The conditional in the headline represents an inference while the lede paragraph shows one press conditional that marks reported information. These are shown in (43):

- (43) 1. HEADLINE: Nisman **habría pensado** en pedir la detención de Cristina
‘Nisman [would have considered] ordering Cristina’s detention.’
2. LEDE PARAGRAPH: La denuncia del fiscal por encubrimiento a favor de los iraníes. En el tacho de basura de su departamento **se habría encontrado** una versión original que contiene esa medida. La final tiene tachaduras.

‘The prosecution’s allegation of a cover-up on behalf of the Iranians. In the trash bin of his apartment an original version [would have been found] that includes this measure. The final one contains mark-up.’

3. BODY: En las declaraciones que hizo a los medios para explicar el contenido y el alcance de su acusación contra el Poder Ejecutivo, Nisman no hizo alusión a un pedido de desafuero y de detención contra la Presidenta y el canciller. Pero en su casa se encontraron pruebas que indican que pensó hacerlo, tanto que lo escribió. *‘In the declarations he made to the media to explain the content and reach of the accusations against the Executive, Nisman made no reference to a request for impeachment and detention against the President and the minister. But evidence was found in his house that indicates he considered doing so, insofar as he drafted it.’*
(García Negroni 2016: 10)

García Negroni (2016: 10) demonstrates that the conditional of the headline seen in (43-1) is inferential in nature, on the indication of evidence found in Nisman’s apartment, while the conditional in (43-2) reports information the journalist has learned through another source: the fact that a version of a penal report was found. García Negroni’s (2016) example makes it clear that co-text and context are necessary to distinguish between a press or inferential conditional in Spanish.¹¹ This would appear to be the case in French as well, if Guentchéva (1994: 17-18) is correct in suggesting that the press conditional in French might be, in certain instances, inferential.

1.2.3 Conclusion

As has been outlined in §1.2.2, the French and Spanish conditional are equivalent in their temporal, hypothetical and attenuating uses. While their conditionals can also both be used to report uncertain information, the temporal values of the present conditional differ, with the Spanish present conditional showing a greater temporal scope. The conditional can also be used in the two languages with an inferential meaning, although this is thought to be limited to interrogative utterances in French. In Spanish, it is further necessary to distinguish between two types of inferences that may be marked by the conditional. These two inferential uses of the conditional are distinguished by the temporality of the present and past conditional forms. In the case of inferences made on presently available evidence, the inferential conditional is identical in

¹¹ While it appears difficult to find sources that distinguish the inferential and press conditional seen in (43), the UN’s Spanish translation website also remarks on the ambiguity of the conditional:

“Un agregado nuestro: conviene releer la traducción y asegurarse de que el contexto (no el original) deje claro que el condicional es de rumor y no un condicional “propiamente dicho. Si digo: “La limitación de esta libertad **impediría...**” en un informe, **no se sabe si estoy especulando con esa posibilidad o si me hago eco de los rumores de que lo que temo ya está ocurriendo.**”

—United Nations. n.d. “Condicional de rumor: gramaticalmente aceptable (RAE, Departamento de ‘Español al día’).” *Servicio de traducción al español* (blog). <https://onutraduccion.wordpress.com/pref/entradas/>

form to the press conditional. It is, therefore, necessary to use context and co-text in order to distinguish between them.

1.3 The Press Conditional in French and Spanish

The conditional as a marker of potentially untrue information is sufficiently engrained in French such that one way of saying that information is uncertain is to say it is *au conditionnel* ‘in the conditional,’ even if the speaker has not actually used the conditional. Riegel, Pellat and Rioul (1994: 320) even cite this phrase in their description of the press conditional, indicating the high-level of awareness that French speakers have of the construction. Despite the close association with the press, they also note that the press conditional is found in the oral code. The press conditional, while associated with journalistic language, can be found outside it as well. Conversely, the press conditional is often treated as a marginal feature of Spanish, found only in journalistic writing. Butt and Benjamin (1994: 220) describe the conditional as restricted to “some styles, especially journalism” and as being more frequent in Latin-American varieties. Although those authors do not indicate what those other styles are, (Kronning 2016: 122-24) observes that the press conditional is also a feature of Spanish scientific and historical discourse, as it is in French and Italian.

Among linguists, the French press conditional is well studied. The watershed moment in the academic literature appears to have been Dendale’s (1993) article that argued that the press conditional was defined by its marking of reported information, meaning it had a fundamentally evidential nature. At the time, the application of evidentiality to French was novel, and it appears that Dendale’s (1993) theorizing helped spur in French what has become a long, ongoing debate over the nature of the press conditional.¹² As of 2015, the press conditional was the most widely studied of the French conditional’s uses (Van de Weerd and Dendale 2017: 94). I would argue that the construction’s uniqueness combined with speaker awareness has helped it achieve this status, alongside the fact that the press conditional lends itself to study under various theoretical perspectives (e.g., evidentiality, epistemic modality, enunciation theory, etc.).

In Spanish, the press conditional has received less attention from linguists, likely reflecting the impression that it is an infrequent feature of journalistic language and of foreign provenance. Earlier studies, such as Fouilloux (2006) and Vatrican (2010) treat the Spanish press conditional as entirely equivalent to its French counterpart and build on Haillet’s (2002) work on the conditional in French. Similarly, in a comparative study of the French, Spanish and Italian press conditional, Kronning (2016) treats the Spanish conditional as equivalent to its other Romance counterparts. The conditional in Spanish may, in fact, require more careful attention. Recently, Bermúdez (2016) has distinguished between two conditionals in Spanish that mark information attributed to an external source. One is the press conditional, which Bermúdez (2016: 48-50) calls the *condicional periodístico* ‘journalistic conditional,’ which marks thirdhand information in Spanish and is—in his view—possibly borrowed from French. The other, which he calls the *condicional científico* ‘scientific conditional,’ marks a kind of inferred elaboration on secondhand information (Bermúdez 2016: 57). According to Bermúdez (2016: 57-60), this second conditional developed internally from the hypothetical conditional in Spanish and is related to the conditional used for inferences (seen in (40 – 42). This distinction has not been addressed in other Romance languages.

¹² Dendale (1994: 6) described studies of evidentiality in French at the time as “*peu nombreuses*.”

In short, the story of the press conditional in French and Spanish is asymmetric both in its range of use, its acceptability, its level of speaker awareness, as well as in the attention it has received from scholars. In fact, much of the attention that the Spanish press conditional has received (outside of prescriptive condemnation) has come from French scholars who have used French as a point of comparison. As I enter into an overview of the earlier literature on the press conditional in the two languages in §1.3.1 and §1.3.2, it should be remembered that this asymmetry will unavoidably be reflected here as well. This investigation hopes to help rectify this issue.

1.3.1 Previous Literature on the Press Conditional in French

To the extent that descriptive grammars may reflect speakers' awareness of a language's grammatical features, Dendale and Coltier (2012) describe the recognition of the press conditional in French as "slow."¹³ Prior to the 19th century, Dendale and Coltier (2012: 637) find only one mention of what we would call the press conditional in a French grammar. This example comes from Maupas' 1607 grammar and is replicated in (44):

- (44) Le demandeur dit et remostre qu'il **auroit** plusieurs fois **demandé** audit deffendeur payement de ses peines & vacations, dont il **n'auroit tenu compte**, & n'ayant sçeu en tirer raison, **auroit esté contraint** le faire conuenir pardeuant vous, où **auroit esté** tant procedé que, &c.
'The plaintiff says and demonstrates that he [would have asked] several times for payment from the defendant for his pains and legal fees, which he [would not have accounted for], and not having been able to seek amends, [would have been forced] to make him appear before you, where so much [would have been] adjudicated that, etc....'
 (Dendale and Coltier 2012: 637)

Maupas recognizes that this conditional is equivalent to the *passé composé* and is associated with the language of legal proceedings (Dendale and Coltier 2012: 637). After this one example from the cusp of Middle and Classical French, Dendale and Coltier (2012: 642) find no mention of the press conditional in any French grammar until the 19th century. They cite an example they describe as "modern" in a grammar from 1882 (45):

- (45) D'après les dernières nouvelles, l'insurrection **serait étouffée**
'According to the latest news, the insurrection [would be quashed]'
 (Dendale and Coltier 2012: 642)

I would agree that (45) is indistinguishable from any example of the press conditional that might be found in a newspaper today. It seems, however, that the explicit link between journalism and the press conditional does not come until the mid-20th century, as observed by Bres (2012):

¹³ The title of Dendale and Coltier's (2012) study is "La **lente** reconnaissance du 'conditionnel de reprise' par les grammaires du français" or "*The **slow** recognition of the conditional of reprise in French grammars.*"

À partir des années soixante, les grammaires mentionneront quasi systématiquement cet usage, le plus souvent parmi les valeurs modales du cond., en l’illustrant régulièrement par des exemples journalistiques (16).

In fact, in textbooks destined for foreign learners of French, the press conditional is often presented as a feature of journalistic discourse, although it is not limited to that domain.¹⁴

Although grammars were late to recognize the press conditional, the construction has had a very long history. Its first attested uses occur in legal texts, the earliest of which predates Maupas’ example by 100 years. Van de Weerd (2018: 80) has identified the earliest known attestation of the press conditional—barring any further discoveries—in a text dated February 26, 1507. The attestation is replicated in (46):

- (46) Et le samedi XVII jour d’octobre derrenier passé, ledit Mathry Chasles **auroit baillez et transportez** par échange lesdits maison et jardin audit Pierre Heulin...
‘On the Saturday 28th day of the last past October, Mathry Chasles [would have leased] and [transferred] through exchange the house and yard in question to Pierre Heulin...’
(Van de Weerd 2018: 80)

Van de Weerd (2018: 80) notes that the conditional is used to record the testimony of contractual parties or, in other instances, to reprise discourse taken from other official texts. This suggests that the conditional was already linked to the discourse of external sources. Van de Weerd (2018) observes, however, that these earlier uses of the conditional depart from their modern counterparts in one very crucial way: they do not communicate uncertainty. Van de Weerd (2018: 85) notes that in juridical documents the conditional refers to external discourse but does not raise the question of that discourse’s truth.

The first attested instance of the press conditional in a journalistic context has been documented by Bourova and Dendale (2013: 191) who find an example in the *Gazette*, in an edition dated June 5, 1631 (47):

- (47) Au lieu de s'en plaindre chacun l'interprete à son avantage. Les nostres sont tous resiouïs du succez de Tilly & de son approche vers nous : mesme des dernieres novuelles, quoy qu'incertaines, qu'il **auroit défait** des troupes & **pris** deux canons au Duc de Vimar, **venu** au secours d'une ville par luy assiegée : mais sur tout d'avoir évité le peril dont le Prince d'Orange les menaçoit
‘Instead of complaining, each person interprets it to their advantage. Ours are gladdened by the success of Tilly and by his approach towards us: even by the latest news, although uncertain, that he [would have defeated] troops and [taken] two cannons from the Duc of Vimar, come to the aid of a city sieged by him : but above all by having avoided the danger with which the Prince of Orange was threatening them’
(Dendale and Bourova 2013: 191)

¹⁴ “Dans le style des journaux et de la radio, le conditionnel marque un fait douteux, annonce une nouvelle dont on n’est pas encore sûr” – *En bonne forme* (Dietiker and Van Hoof 2001: 326).

The example in (47) looks familiar enough to modern speakers. Dendale and Bourova (2013: 191) note that the information reported in the newspaper is described as *incertaine* ‘uncertain.’ This, combined with its appearance in a reportative context, makes it not really different from examples found in French newspapers today. Its appearance in the Gazette may suggest a longer history for this use of the conditional in French news language. McLaughlin (2020: chap. 2) argues that the homogeneity of the language of early French periodicals suggests that their style had been established by their manuscript and pre-periodical forerunners. It would, therefore, be likely that the press conditional was already in use in a news reporting context. Although no one has drawn a clear genealogical line between the use of the conditional in legal documents in (46) and the one used in the press seen in (47), it is possible that context, rather than the presence or absence of a given trait, condition how the conditional was understood in each kind of text. It may be that the nature of legal documents foregrounds what Dendale (1993) would call the evidential trait of the conditional while journalistic texts exploit both the conditional’s marking of reported information as well as uncertainty. Whatever the case may be, the conditional’s double function of uncertainty and sourcing in the press has existed at least since the early 17th century, long before such an association became systematic in the 1960’s. In fact, it is the relative importance of the traits of uncertainty and source of information—already apparent in the press conditional in (47)—around which modern scholarly debates will revolve, beginning with Dendale (1993).

Dendale (1993) argues that the press conditional, which he calls the *conditionnel épistémique* ‘epistemic conditional,’ is primarily evidential in nature. Dendale (1993: 165-66) outlines three traits coded by the conditional when used to relay information: i) uncertainty of the information (the modal trait), ii) the reported nature of the information (the evidential trait) and iii) the speaker’s lack of commitment to the veracity of the information (the alethic trait). To illustrate the simultaneous presence of all three, he cites the example given in (48):

- (48) Six appareils argentins **auraient été abattus**
 ‘Six Argentinian aircraft [**would have been downed**]
 (Dendale 1993: 165)

Under Dendale’s (1993) model, the speaker of the utterance in (48) marks that they do not know for sure if six planes were downed, which represents the modal trait. Furthermore, the speaker refuses to commit to whether or not the statement is true when they relate this information. This is the alethic trait, which Dendale (1993: 166) equates with the notion of *non-prise-en-charge*.¹⁵ Finally, and most crucially for Dendale (1993), the speaker knows the information in (48) through an intermediary utterance. It is important to note that Gosselin (2001: 46) would add a fourth trait to Dendale’s (1993) original three; specifically, he observes that information in the conditional has the pragmatic effect of calling for the information’s eventual confirmation. This makes it different from other means of marking uncertainty such as the adverb *peut-être* ‘maybe,’ which does not necessarily call for or expect future confirmation of the information it accompanies.

¹⁵ While the alethic trait and modal trait can seem difficult to distinguish, it is possible to commit to the truth of uncertain information. In the case of Dendale’s (1993: 169) example in (48), in an inferential utterance such as *Six appareils argentins ont dû être abattus* ‘six Argentine aircraft **must have been downed**,’ the speaker is committing to the truth of that information. However, since this information is only inferred (as marked by the use of *devoir* ‘must’), the information itself remains uncertain.

What is crucial for Dendale (1993: 174-75) is that the alethic and modal traits derive from the evidential one, as reported information is naturally subject to doubt. He argues that while the evidential trait is always present in the press conditional, the other two traits are not, as (Dendale 1993: 170) describes them, “stable.” An example of the alethic trait’s reduced importance can be seen when the conditional appears to commit to the falsity of the information, as in (49):

- (49) Je réfute fermement sa suggestion selon laquelle l'action gouvernementale **serait** influencée par des considérations électorales
‘I firmly refute his suggestion according to which the government’s action [would be] influenced by electoral concerns’
 (Dendale 1993: 171)

In (49), it is clear that the speaker rejects what has been said about the government’s action, and therefore, is saying that the information coded in the conditional is false. The modal trait can also be diminished, as illustrated in (50):

- (50) Selon la radio argentine, l’ “Invincible” **aurait été touché** hier après-midi par un Exocet, *ce qui est fort douteux/fort peu probable* si on sait comment le porte-avions est protégé de ses escorteurs
‘According to Argentine radio, the “Invincible” [would have been hit] yesterday afternoon by an Exocet, which is highly doubtful/highly unlikely if one knows how the aircraft carrier is protected by its escorts’
 (Dendale 1993: 172)

In (50), Dendale (1993: 172) notes that uncertainty is reduced since the question of whether or not the event occurred is pushed towards ‘unlikely,’ as shown by the commentary on the Argentine radio reports. Conversely, Dendale (1993: 170) views the evidential trait of the press conditional is a constant. For example, although the source of information is indeterminate in (48), the conditional indicates a previous utterance there as much as it does in (49) and (50), where the source is clearly indicated. On this basis, Dendale (1993) concludes:

Le conditionnel épistémique est avant tout un marqueur *évidentiel* parce que sa valeur de base - c'est-à-dire la valeur qui est toujours présente, qui n'est pas soumise à des variations et qui en plus détermine ou explique les autres valeurs - est la valeur *évidentielle* d'emprunt (175).

Given its evidential nature, Dendale (1993: 175) suggests that names like *le conditionnel de la rumeur* ‘the conditional of rumor’ or *le conditionnel de l’information empruntée* ‘the conditional of secondhand information’¹⁶ would be the construction’s most accurate designations. In delineating three traits proper to the conditional, Dendale (1993) establishes what will become the main points of contention among French linguists regarding the press conditional: the importance of the secondhand source of information versus its marking of uncertainty and *non-prise-en-charge*.

¹⁶ Literally translated, *information empruntée* is ‘borrowed information.’ *Un emprunt* in French is used for borrowing between languages but also is used to indicate information from another source.

Abouda (2001: 278-79) directly refutes Dendale's (1993) model and argues that it is *non-prise-en-charge* (equivalent to Dendale's (1993) alethic trait) that is definitional of what he calls the *conditionnel journalistique* 'journalistic conditional.' Per Abouda's (2001) account, the press conditional resembles the attenuating conditional and encompasses the *conditionnel polémique*, a use of the press conditional used to reprise information one believes to be patently false, illustrated in (40). Abouda (2001: 278) works in enunciation theory and his model describes two levels of locutory activity: the *Locuteur* and the abstract *Énonciateur*.¹⁷ In Abouda (2001: 283), the *Locuteur* represents the person producing an utterance and the *Énonciateur* as the abstract source of the utterance's propositional content. In instances where the *Locuteur* does not identify themselves with the *Énonciateur* an *Autre Énonciateur* is generated, resulting in the effect of *non-prise-en-charge*. This is most easily illustrated with the attenuating use of the conditional. One can compare the present indicative in (51) and the attenuating use of the conditional in (52):

(51) Je **veux** une baguette
 'I **want** a baguette'
 Locuteur: je = Énonciateur: je

(52) Je **voudrais** une baguette
 'I **would like** a baguette'
 Locuteur: je ≠ Autre Énonciateur: je

At the base of each utterance in (51) and (52) is an *Énonciateur*, who desires a baguette. In (51), the *Locuteur* and the *Énonciateur* are presented as the same entity because the present indicative inherently marks the *Locuteur's* *prise-en-charge* of (or identification with) the *Énonciateur's* point of view. In other words, the *Locuteur* assumes the truth and responsibility for the *Énonciateur's* wish for a baguette. In instances of polite requests like (52), Abouda (2001: 286-89) argues that the *Locuteur* and the *Énonciateur* are rhetorically distanced from each other since the *Locuteur* does not take responsibility for the *Énonciateur's* desire for a baguette. It is the conditional's marking of *non-prise-en-charge* that constructs this decoupling.

By viewing this use of the conditional as marked by *non-prise-en-charge*, Abouda (2001) can give a unitary explanation between the attenuating conditional of (52) and the press conditional of (53):

(53) Le pape **serait** malade
 'The pope [**would be**] sick'
 Locuteur ≠ Autre Énonciateur
 (Abouda 2001: 282)

In (53), the *Locuteur* uses the conditional to mark the fact that they find the reports emanating from the undetermined *Énonciateur* as neither true nor false. For Abouda (2001: 282), the conditional's traits are not unstable, as Dendale (1993) argues. Rather, the conditional is strictly a marker of *non-prise-en-charge* while the other two traits are contextually determined. Abouda (2001: 282) notes that one can add different sources marking the *Locuteur's* evaluation of the

¹⁷Abouda's (2001) terms derive from Enunciation Theory, which examines the levels of subjectivities present in utterances. I will leave Abouda's (2001) terms untranslated since terms like *locuteur*, *énonciateur* and their English equivalents (speaker, locutor, enunciator) show some variation from author to author.

veracity of the information, such as *selon un témoignage mensonger/digne de foi/non encore vérifié* ‘according to a false/reliable/unverified account.’ This would mean that context and co-text are necessary to determine the status of these traits in a given utterance. For Dendale (1993), traits of uncertainty and *non-prise-en-charge* are the natural consequence of reporting what one has learned from an external source, which is by nature more doubtful than what is directly experienced or inferred. Conversely, Abouda (2001: 283) argues that when a *Locuteur* refuses *prise-en-charge* for an utterance, an *Autre Énonciateur* is consequently generated. For Abouda (2001), this leads to the impression that the information comes from others’ discourse.

Kronning (2002: 563) proposes a model that puts the uncertainty of the press conditional on equal footing with its evidential quality and calls it a “mixed marker.” Kronning (2002) addresses Dendale (1993) and Abouda (2001) directly:

L’hypothèse principale que nous aimerions défendre ici est la suivante : le conditionnel épistémique (« journalistique ») est un marqueur grammatical mixte, médiatif et modal. Cette hypothèse se distingue aussi bien de la position de Dendale (1993), pour qui le COND épistémique est essentiellement médiatif (« évidentiel »)¹⁸ que de celle d’Abouda (2001), pour qui ce type de COND est fondamentalement l’expression de la « non-prise en charge » (563-64).

Kronning (2002: 566) argues that there are three possible ways of quantifying epistemic modality: *modalisation simple* ‘simple modalization’, *modalisation complexe* ‘complex modalization’ and *modalisation zéro* ‘zero modalization’. The conditional codes *modalisation zéro*, or the refusal to present information as either true or false. This model is explained with the propositional content *il être malade* ‘he be sick’ in (54):

(54) **Propositional content:** il être malade

<i>modalisation simple</i>	Il est malade ‘ <i>He is sick</i> ’	VRAI
<i>modalisation complexe</i>	Il est probablement malade ‘ <i>He is probably sick</i> ’	PROB VRAI
<i>modalisation zéro</i>	Il serait malade ‘ <i>He [would be] sick</i> ’	ZÉRO

(Kronning 2002: 567)

Kronning (2002: 568-70) argues that the modalization of the conditional combines with a polyphonic structure, wherein at least three layers of locutionary activity are present. This is theorized as *l₀* (*locuteur en tant que tel*, the person who produces the utterance), the LOC (*locuteur metteur en scène*), and the LS1 (*locuteur source 1*). The LOC can be thought of the

¹⁸ The word *évidence* in French is a false cognate with English *evidence*, whose real equivalent is *preuve* ‘proof.’ *Une évidence* in French is something that is obvious. On this basis, some scholars objected to the term *évidentialité* as a translation of the English *evidentiality*. The word *médiativité* was proposed. *Évidentialité* appears to be the favored term nowadays while *médiativité* represents a different domain of study. Dendale and Tasmowski (2001: 340-341) outline the history of the two terms.

subject that borrows the utterance from LS1, and l_0 as the speaker who reports but does not take responsibility for the information learned from LS1. Kronning (2002: 568) says that the conditional can be used even in instances where LS1 has learned information from other sources (LS2 > LS3, etc.). This is what Kronning (2002: 570) calls *un emprunt indirect* ‘an indirect borrowing.’ By this observation, Kronning (2002) argues that the conditional in French relays secondhand information, while not excluding the possibility that that information may have come from earlier and more distant sources.

These three theories represent the dominant theories found in the French literature on the press conditional.¹⁹ A fourth scholar’s work worth mentioning is Haillet (2002). His model of what he calls the *conditionnel d’altérité énonciative* is essentially identical to Abouda’s (2001) and involves the generation of a second speaker through the marking of *non-prise-en-charge*. What makes Haillet (2002) significant for the purposes of this investigation is his development of paraphrases for the purpose of distinguishing between different values of the conditional, as illustrated in (55) and (56), to identify the temporal and press conditionals:

- (55) Ils me disaient que la fête **aurait lieu** dans le parc municipal
 ‘They told me that the party **would take place** in the municipal park’
 = **allait avoir lieu**
 ≠ a lieu, paraît-il
 (Haillet 2002: 10)

- (56) La Drac **aurait antidaté** un document administrative
 ‘The Drac [**would have predated**] an administrative document’
 ≠ allait avoir antidaté
 ≠ eût antidaté
 = **a antidaté, paraît-il**
 (Haillet 2002: 15)

In (55), the conditional is equivalent to the periphrastic future-in-the-past *allait + infinitive*, demonstrating that this is a temporal use of the conditional. Similarly, the conditional in (56) can be reformulated with the *passé composé* by adding the particle *paraît-il* ‘it seems.’ Although Haillet (2002) uses a polyphonic model for his analysis of the press conditional, his paraphrases allow one to identify the press conditional without committing to any one theoretical framework.

In sum, work on French has tended to understand the press conditional as marking a source, marking *non-prise-en-charge*, or both. Other models, such as Haillet (2002), can also generally be thought of in these terms. Work in Spanish has principally relied on work by Haillet (2002) and Kronning (2002) in order to frame their investigations of the press conditional. Therefore, one should keep these previous discussions of French theorists in mind during the overview of the work carried out on the press conditional in Spanish in §1.3.2, as no alternate theoretical model of the press conditional in that language has been proposed.

¹⁹ It is worth noting that Rossari (2009: 95-96) makes a radical departure from other scholars in French and rejects notions of *prise-en-charge* or evidentiality as ways of defining the press conditional. She argues instead that the press conditional is simply a rhetorically specialized form of the hypothetical conditional, entailing an implicit *si mes informations sont bonnes* ‘if my information is good.’ While her outline of the conditional’s emergence in diachrony is of interest, the analysis does not appear to capture the real complexities of the press conditional as evidenced in usage.

1.3.2 Previous Literature on the Press Conditional in Spanish

As was shown by the *El País* style guide, the press conditional in Spanish is thought to have come into the language through news translation from French.²⁰ The hypothesis is supported by the recurring observation that this conditional, unlike its French counterpart, is not found in the oral code and is restricted to journalistic language (Squartini 2001: 317-18). If the contact hypothesis is accurate, exactly when this conditional came into Spanish is unknown. Sarrazin (2010: 101-02) dates the entry of the conditional into Peninsular Spanish news language to the first half of the 20th century and provides the news dispatch examples seen in (57) and (58):

- (57) Varsovia, 13-04 (Havas). Se anuncia que el presidente de la república **habría aceptado** la dimisión colectiva del gabinete.
– *El Diario*, April 15, 1929
FRENCH: *Varsovie, 13.04. (Havas). On annonce que le Président de la République aurait accepté la démission collective du cabinet.*
‘Warsaw, 13.04 (Havas) It is announced that the President of the Republic [would have accepted] the collective resignation of the cabinet.’
(Sarrazin 2010: 101-02)
- (58) *Le Matin* dice que el acuerdo entre la Gran Bretaña, Francia y la U.R.S.S. **sería** la constitución de un frente único contra cualquier eventual agresión en Europa.
(*Nueva Rioja*, 19/05/1939)
FRENCH: *Le Matin affirme que l’accord entre la France, La France et l’URSS serait la constitution d’un front unique contre toute agression éventuelle en Europe.*
‘Le Matin affirms that the agreement between Great Britain, France and the USSR [would be] the constitution of a united front against any potential aggression in Europe.’
(Sarrazin 2010: 101-02)

However, earlier examples can be found. Kronning (2016: 130) provides an example from a Spanish text from 1857 (59):

- (59) El oso común que, según Zimmermann, **estaría difundido** por todo el globo, no existe en América, y parece no haber dejado la Europa y el Norte de Asia.
‘The common bear, which, according to Zimmerman [would be spread] throughout the globe, does not exist in America and appears not to have left Europe and the North of Asia.’

²⁰ It would be interesting to design a study for the comparison of linguistic features of news translations in Spanish from French and from English.

The example in (59) may constitute what Bermúdez (2016) calls the scientific conditional, which he argues is a native construction in Spanish, wherein the conditional is used for secondhand information accessed cognitively. His claims are discussed below.

It is unclear when awareness of the press conditional in Spanish arose, although it appears to have been proscribed by the publication of the first edition of the EFE news agency manual in 1976 (Sarrazin 2010: 102). Gili Gaya (1980) comments on the construction in a footnote of the 13th edition of his book, *Curso superior de sintaxis española*:

En el siglo actual, aparecen con alguna frecuencia en los periódicos de todos 105 países hispánicos noticias redactadas de este modo: *Según informes oficiales, el Ministro estaría dispuesto a modificar la ley*, en vez de *está dispuesto*; o con la forma compuesta: *Viajeros procedentes de la frontera aseguran que las tropas chinas **habrían desencadenado una ofensiva**, por han desencadenado*. Evidentemente se trata de telegramas traducidos del inglés o del francés. En las lenguas de origen, y también en su calco español, se quiere significar que el redactor del telegrama o de la noticia no asegura su veracidad; esta reserva establece una condición implícita. A pesar de su origen exótico, tales construcciones no violentan demasiado, a nuestro juicio, los valores de la forma en *-ría*. Si *cantaría* o *habría cantado* expresan normalmente la posibilidad o probabilidad referidas al pasado o al futuro, nada parece oponerse a que éstas puedan extenderse al presente. **Hay que consignar, sin embargo, que se trata de un uso reciente y muy limitado** (Gili Gaya 1980: 168). (bolding mine)²¹

The last line of the footnote captures the sentiment that the construction is not native to Spanish, and, strangely enough, Gili Gaya (1980) is the only person who has ever suggested that the press conditional may have come from English. The idea is all the more strange given that English lacks such a use of the conditional. He finds that it is a feature found across the Spanish speaking world, suggesting that the borrowing has had multiple points of entry or has been quickly diffused across varieties of Spanish. What is remarkable is that Gili Gaya (1980) finds this use of the conditional inoffensive and compatible with native uses of the conditional, although it is, according to him, limited to journalism.

It was not a foregone conclusion that the press conditional would become normatively unacceptable in Spanish journalism. Sarrazin (2010: 102) notes that in *El País* between 1976 and 1977, the first two years following its founding, that the press conditional “abonde dans les articles” but drastically declines when the newspaper decides to use EFE’s style guide as a model for its own. The grammatical section of EFE’s style guide had been edited by academician Lázaro Carreter, who fervently opposed what he perceived to be an invasive borrowing (Sarrazin 2010: 102). Sarrazin (2010: 103) explains that as *El País*’s style guide came to be the model of Spanish-language journalistic norms, the proscription spread within and beyond Spain.

Given his indirect influence on the *El País* style guide, Lázaro Carreter’s role in the campaign against the Spanish press conditional appears to be key to the success of its proscription. In an essay appearing in his column “El dardo de la palabra,” Lázaro Carreter rails against the entry of the press conditional into Spanish (along with other foreign borrowings) in 1986:

²¹ Gili Gaya’s *Curso superior de sintaxis española* was originally published in 1943. While I could not locate every edition, I did not find it mentioned in the editions published in 1943, 1948, 1951 or 1960. Bermúdez (2016: 41) cites the 1962 edition as referencing the press conditional.

Y sólo a ella pertenece también, cada vez más arraigado, el que podemos llamar condicional de la presunción o del rumor, el que aparece, por ejemplo, en frases como «Israel *dispondría* de la bomba atómica»; o «El detenido *habría sido torturado*». Lleva decenios este obstinado galicismo empujando la puerta del idioma, sin mayores consecuencias; pero en las últimas semanas ha podido verse en numerosos titulares de Prensa. Y es puro francés: «X *rencontrerait* X prochainement.»

Pero el idioma cuenta, para advertir que algo no está comprobado, con propios y acreditados recursos; «Se dice...», «Parece ser que...»; «Aseguran...»; «Es probable o posible que...»: ¡tantas fórmulas que se extienden de los Pirineos a los Andes! Pero muchos de nuestros informadores prefieren, para hacerse llamativos...y ahora, el condicional del rumor, liberado por fin, al parecer, de las formalidades impuestas por la ley de extranjería. (bolding mine)²²

Lázaro Carreter's language, at the end, invokes that of immigration law and pleads the case for the numerous native Spanish formulas that would make for more fitting substitutes for the press conditional. Where Gili Gaya (1980) had seen a natural extension of the conditional's usual meanings in Spanish, Lázaro Carreter saw a foreign invasion.

The construction would not receive any kind of official sanction until the publication of the RAE's *Nueva gramática de la lengua española* in 2009. That grammar states:

Se ha llamado CONDICIONAL DE RUMOR a la variante del condicional de conjetura que se usa a menudo en el lenguaje periodístico para presentar las informaciones de forma cautelosa o dar noticias no suficientemente contrastadas. En estos casos se obtienen también paráfrasis con presentes o con imperfectos...

Algunos diarios hispanohablantes han optado por excluir este uso particular del condicional de conjetura en sus libros de estilo. No lo hacen, sin embargo, porque exista incorrección gramatical en dicha construcción, sino porque el rumor no debe ser presentado como noticia (RAE 2009: 23.15m). (bolding mine)

In line with Gili Gaya's description of the press conditional, the RAE views this use of the conditional as an offshoot of the conditional's native use as a marker of conjecture. It is curious that the RAE makes no mention of a potential French origin, which had long been a justification for the construction's exclusion from normative Spanish. It does, however, acknowledge that the conditional's marking of unverified information may be counter to journalistic values, similar to what is seen in French.

As has been said before, much of the literature on the Spanish press conditional builds on the French literature (and has often been undertaken by French linguists). For example, Azzopardi's (2011: 251-278) comparison of the press conditional relies on French theorists. Fouilloux (2006) adapts Haillet's (2002) paraphrases to Spanish, while Vatrican (2010) applies Kronning's (2002) model, presenting the Spanish press conditional as a mixed marker of epistemic modality and evidentiality. Work in Spanish has primarily sought to align the press

²² Lázaro-Carreter, Fernando. 1986. "El dardo en la palabra: Israel dispondría de la bomba atómica." *ABC*, September 11, 1986.

conditional with its (hypothesized) French source. However, some work, to be discussed here, has brought some differences to light.

The fact that the Spanish press conditional may have a prospective reading without a future time marker was addressed in §1.2.2.5. The observation was first made by Sarrazin (2010), who understands the press conditional in Spanish to be a borrowing resulting from translation. According to Sarrazin (2010: 112), this is no longer the case in Spanish and an innovation has occurred since the construction was borrowed. Beyond the descriptive insight she provides, she proposes that the innovation arose out of the particular nature of news headlines. She gives the examples seen in (60-1) and (60-2), where the press conditional is used without a time marker in a headline and with a time marker in the article body:

(60) 1. HEADLINE:

Villa Parque San Miguel **sería parte** del ejido municipal de Carlos Paz
'*Villa Parque San Miguel [would be part] of the municipal land holdings of Carlos Paz*'

2. BODY:

Los vecinos del paraje Villa Parque San Miguel, que limita con Villa Carlos Paz y que **-próximamente- sería anexado** al ejido municipal de esa ciudad, **serían recibidos la próxima semana** por los integrantes del Consejo de Planificación Urbano Ambiental

'*The residents of the Villa Parque San Miguel site, which borders Villa Carlos Paz and that, **shortly**, [would be annexed] to the municipal land holdings of that city, [would be received] **next week** by members of the Urban Environmental Planning Council*'

(Sarrazin 2010: 110)

In French, it is not possible to translate the *sería parte* of (60-1) by its literal equivalent *ferait partie* since there is not an accompanying future time marker. *Ferait partie* by itself would suggest that Villa Parque San Miguel already belongs to Carlos Paz at the time of the article's publication. In its place, Sarrazin (2010: 110-11) offers *devrait/pourrait faire partie* 'may be a part' as possible translations. In (60-2), it is made clear that the annexation of land has not yet occurred, and two conditionals are used to describe the plans for the process. Sarrazin (2010: 115) argues that in a headline, the conditional serves to "hook" the reader by suggesting a potentially present reality before the reader learns from reading the article that the event is yet to happen. It is, therefore, this need to entice the reader's attention that has given rise to this innovative use. In fact, Sarrazin (2010: 113-14) observes this phenomenon only in headlines. Sarrazin (2010: 116) argues that this innovation is an adaptation of the press conditional meant to doubly fulfill journalistic needs while respecting good language use: since future events are inherently unconfirmed, the reporter can mark uncertain information with the conditional without violating journalistic concerns for accuracy.

Bermúdez (2016) presents one of the more Spanish-specific studies of the press conditional. He distinguishes between two uses of the conditional that attribute information to an external source. One is used in journalistic discourse marking thirdhand information with no claim to veracity, which he calls *el condicional periodístico* 'the journalistic conditional.' The other is linked to scientific discourse marking secondhand information obtained through

“cognitive access,” a use which he calls *el condicional científico* ‘the scientific conditional’ (Bermúdez 2016: 60). Examples of these two conditionals are given in (61) and (62):

- (61) Nols **estaría considerando**, según el propio Le Pen, la creación en Bélgica de un Frente Nacional de extrema derecha, similar al francés.
‘Nols [would be considering], according to Le Pen himself, the creation of a far-right National Front in Belgium, similar to the French one’
(Bermúdez 2016: 48)
- (62) Robert Nisbet examina breve y rigurosamente los temas centrales del conservadurismo—historia, tradición, propiedad, autoridad, libertad y religión— y dirige sus críticas tanto al colectivismo como al individualismo radical. Finalmente, aborda la crisis del conservadurismo, que **estaría causada** en buena medida por su adopción en la escena política de principios del liberalismo económico y del Estado del bienestar.
‘Nisbet examines briefly and rigorously the central themes of conservatism history, tradition, property, authority, liberty and religion—and directs his criticism as much towards collectivism as towards radical individualism. Finally, he addresses the crisis of conservatism, which [would be caused] in large measure by its adoption of economic liberalism and the Welfare State’
(Bermúdez 2016: 57)

The example in (61) is a case of the *condicional periodístico*, which Bermúdez (2016: 48) argues marks thirdhand information: the information about Nols comes to the journalist via Le Pen. However, in (62), Nisbet himself is the source of the writer’s information, and the writer has had to reconstruct this information from their own understanding of Nisbet’s argument.²³ Bermúdez (2016: 58) calls this a cognitive elaboration on secondhand information rather than a simple citation.²⁴ In other words, Spanish has two conditionals that attribute information to an external source that may have distinct diachronic origins.

Bermúdez (2016: 60) acknowledges that French theorists would view these as the same use of the conditional but argues that they are not. First, he claims that the journalistic conditional of (62) marks only the repetition of an utterance while the scientific conditional presents more “complexity” (Bermúdez 2016: 60). Although the use of the scientific conditional discharges the speaker’s *prise-en-charge* of the utterance, at the same time, it asserts what the speaker has learned from that original source utterance (Bermúdez 2016: 60). That is to say, the

²³ In (61), the information is thirdhand because the speaker’s source of information is Le Pen, whose own source is a person from whom he has learned of Nols’s plans. In fact, that person could have been Nols himself, who would know this information directly. Recapitulated in a chain of reported speech, one could imagine a formulation along these lines: *I, the speaker, say that Le Pen has said that Nols said that he is considering the creation of a National Front*. In (62), Nisbet is the source of information reported by the journalist: it is Nisbet’s analysis that Nisbet undertook himself. Recapitulated in a chain of reported speech, one could imagine glossing (62) along these lines: *I, the speaker, say that Nisbet has said that conservatism is in crisis*.

²⁴ “Si analizamos en detalle el enunciado de (25) veremos que el hablante no solo está diciendo que esta información proviene de Nisbet, sino también que la información expresada (que la crisis del conservadurismo en gran medida está ocasionada por la adopción de los principios del liberalismo y el Estado de bienestar) no es meramente una cita, sino más bien es una interpretación, una elaboración cognitiva de las palabras originales de Nisbet” (Bermúdez 2016: 58).

speaker played an active role in deriving that information. Bermúdez (2016: 59) characterizes this as a form of deduction: “el autor no solo asigna esas afirmaciones a una fuente externa, sino que en realidad propone que esas afirmaciones *se deducen* de los dichos de esa fuente.” In this sense, the conditional is related to the inferential uses of the conditional seen in scientific discourse (Bermúdez 2016: 58). Such conditionals were illustrated here in (40), (41) and (42). Furthermore, Bermúdez (2016) posits two different diachronic origins for the two conditionals. The journalistic conditional is a prestige borrowing from French, while the scientific conditional is a native construction that grew out of the hypothetical use of the conditional (Bermúdez 2016: 62). However, it is worth noting that like the inferential conditionals of (40), (41) and (42), the two conditionals identified by Bermúdez (2016) are identical on the surface. It could be the case that the deeper distinction (and separate diachronic origin) may not be entirely pertinent in a context where this conditional co-exists with the journalistic conditional. That is to say, although the two conditionals have different origins, their primary function in a journalistic text may be to cite information while relieving the journalist of responsibility for the information relayed. Bermúdez (2016: 51-52) notes that if one were to replace *estaría* with *está* ‘is’ in (62), the speaker “affirms” Nisbet’s viewpoint.

Finally, Azzopardi (2011: 314) notes that she was unable to find an equivalent in Spanish to the French *conditionnel polémique* in the course of her investigation, an example of which was seen in (49). While it has been occasionally treated as a use separate from the press conditional, both Abouda (2001) and Dendale (1993) treat this as a press conditional. For Abouda (2001), the conditional only marks the speaker’s *non-prise-en-charge* and the ‘polemical’ effect would derive from context, while for Dendale (1993) the pertinence of the alethic trait would simply be diminished. Azzopardi (2011: 314) suggests that her lack of success in finding any examples of this in Spanish may be due to the more limited corpus in Spanish and what she says is the relative rareness of the construction in French. She notes that examples in French came from others’ studies, such as Abouda (2001) and Haillet (2007). An extensive study of the press conditional in journalistic texts may provide greater clarity as to whether the Spanish press conditional has a use such as that seen in (49).

1.3.3 Studies of the Press Conditional in Journalistic Texts

Most studies of the press conditional do not feature a systematic treatment of the nature of the texts from which their tokens have been extracted. The nature of journalistic discourse is usually a secondary consideration. A good example is Sullet-Nylander’s (2006) study of the press conditional in *Le Monde* headlines. While the press context is treated as important and crucial to analyzing her data, the study intends to answer the question of whether the press conditional marks reported information or *non-prise-en-charge*. Similarly, Sarrazin (2010) appeals to journalistic values and the need to ‘hook’ readers with a headline in order to explain the development of the present conditional with future readings absent a future time marker in headlines; however, her study is as much a study of a linguistic structure as of one conditioned by its text type. Similarly, Bermúdez (2016) uses genre to distinguish and think through the differences between the *condicional periodístico* and the *condicional científico* but is more interested in arriving at a linguistic understanding of the two constructions.

In French, the conditional within the press has received attention from Marnette (2005), in the context of her wider study of discourse representation in the language. While more traditional forms of discourse representation (e.g., direct discourse, indirect discourse, etc.) are

her focus, she includes the press conditional as a possible alternative form of discourse representation (Marnette 2005: 25). Marnette (2005: 301) observes that in the interest of accuracy, the ideal form of discourse reporting in the press is direct discourse (which replicates the exact words of others), but that, due to real space and time constraints, other forms (among them, the press conditional) must be used. In a relatively limited corpus of newspapers, she finds that prestigious French national newspaper *Le Monde* and Belgian newspaper *Le Soir* have higher rates of the press conditional than French national newspapers *Libération* and *Le Figaro*:

Both *Le Soir* and *Le Monde* use more ‘press’ conditionals than the two other newspapers, thus insisting more on the uncertainty of some facts (i.e., indicating that the piece of information originates from a discourse other than the journalist’s or that the journalist does not take responsibility for the utterance (Marnette 2005: 305).

Essentially, the press conditional can serve in French as an extra means to highlight a newspaper’s practice and fulfillment of journalism’s discursive aims. It is worth noting that Marnette (2005)—for practical purposes given the breadth of her study— does not examine entire editions of these newspapers. Rather, she focuses on a limited set of articles in each newspaper, specifically those focusing on a security law proposed in 2002 by future president Nicolas Sarkozy, who was then France’s ministry of the interior. The variation among newspapers observed in Marnette’s (2005: 305) data, however, points to the fact that a study examining whole editions would be of interest.

In contrast to French, where Marnette (2005) situates the use of the journalistic conditional within the aims of journalistic practice, studies of the press conditional in Spanish have analyzed its use through the lens of prescriptivism. Kronning (2016: 127-28) examines a month’s worth of headlines of combinations of ‘to be’ (Fr. *serait*, Sp. *estaría*, It. *sarebbe*) and ‘to have’ (Fr. *aurait*, Sp. *habría*, It. *avrebbe*) with a past participle in Google online news for French, Italian, and Latin-American and Peninsular Spanish. Kronning (2016: 128) finds that the press conditional is more common in Latin-American headlines (87% of conditionals found in headlines) compared to Peninsular Spanish (37% of conditionals), while French had the second highest frequency at 66% and Italian at 34%. The study must be considered in the light of its limitations, given the fact that the survey did not search outside headlines, the fact that headlines may favor the press conditional over other uses of the conditional in general, and that online news may include breaking news whose facts are not yet confirmed. That said, Kronning (2016: 128) also observes quite a degree of variation among newspapers in Spain, which he attributes to their individual compliance with prescriptive norms. He says:

Or, le discours journalistique péninsulaire est régi par des normes diaphasiques conflictuelles. Ainsi dans un journal comme *El País*, soumis à une norme prescriptive puriste (et prétendument déontologique) les occurrences du CEE sont rares mais non inexistantes (1 occ.), alors que dans d’autres journaux, comme *ABC* sont (8 occ.), non soumis à – ou, ce qui revient au même, non-respectant—cette norme – le taux des CEE est nettement plus élevé (Kronning 2016: 128).

Kronning (2016: 129-30) also dismisses earlier claims that this conditional is non-existent in Spanish before the first half of the twentieth century, citing a 19th century scientific text

originally in Spanish. The example was given in (59). That example may reflect, in fact, what Bermúdez (2016) would call the scientific conditional.²⁵

Brunetti (2016) is exceptional because she situates the press conditional in the context of libel laws (or their equivalents) in the Argentine press. The conditional is sufficient to ward off charges of *injuria* and *calumnia* in Argentina.²⁶ However, Brunetti (2016: 111-13) notes that the conditional appears to be instrumentalized by the media who use the conditional to ward off the legal consequences of what are truly suggestive and libelous stories. This occurs most notably in the national newspaper *Clarín*, whose politics make it hostile to the Argentine leaders, Néstor and Cristina Kirchner. In one instance, *Clarín*'s use of the conditional to report the end of certain government subsidies appears to be an attack on the Kirchner administration, since the end of the subsidies had yet to be finalized and the reporting displaced more important or positive news (Brunetti 2016: 113). While some of the concerns put forth by Brunetti (2016) may be perennial issues in any language regarding partiality in the media, the study does point to the fact that, at least in one corner of the Spanish-speaking world, the conditional has clearly taken root. Furthermore, Brunetti's (2016) study is an excellent illustration of how a marker like the press conditional can be seen to operate dynamically in a culturally-specific journalistic context.

1.4 Research Aims

In the light of the work undertaken thus far on French and Spanish, the purpose of this investigation is twofold. My primary aim is to take an approach that inverts the relationship between the press and the press conditional that has been the hallmark of previous studies of the construction. Rather than using examples of the press conditional extracted from the press to arrive at a linguistic definition, I aim to understand the function of the press conditional within the journalistic context itself. This will mean understanding how linguistic features of the press conditional serve the communicative aims of journalistic texts in French and Spanish. By performing individual analyses with the aim of comparing them, I will touch on the difference not only at the level of languages but at the smaller level of individual newspapers, which Marnette (2005) and Kronning (2016) have demonstrated to be variable in their use of the press conditional. It may be the case that the press conditional's use is as specific as enabling information warfare (as Brunetti (2016) would have it for *Clarín* in Argentina) or much broader in nature, as Marnette (2005) observes in *Le Monde* and *Le Soir*. However, it is also my aim to use a set of data collected from the press (and systematically analyzed through the lens of that context) that will hope to contribute to longstanding debates surrounding the press conditional in both French and Spanish. In the way that Bermúdez (2016) has claimed that not all instances of *según X + conditional* in Spanish can be seen as derived from an original French calque, I hope that a contextually-sensitive investigation will provide more detailed insights into the relationship between the press conditional in French and the one in Spanish.

In the next chapter, I outline the methodology used in this investigation. In Chapters 3 and 4, the data for each individual language is examined. Specifically, I provide data for the

²⁵ In fact, the conditional is used to relay information that is presented as false, which would align it with the polemical use of the conditional in French seen in (49). This, as well as the lack of other systematic diachronic work in Spanish, points to the need for further study.

²⁶ *Injuria* and *calumnia* are forms of defamation. *Injuria* is an attack on the character, while to commit *calumnia* is to implicate someone in a crime.

form—present or past—of the press conditional, its frequency, as well as its function. I also examine the data for how the press conditional's use is (or is not) conditioned by the communicative aims of journalistic texts. In Chapter 5, I provide a comparative analysis of the data along these same lines, with final consideration of how its use in journalistic texts in each language might be characterized according to the data collected.

2 METHODOLOGY

2.1 The Corpus

In order to study the press conditional as it is used in newswriting, I designed a corpus composed of a constructed week of two French and two Spanish newspapers. A constructed week involves the selection of one newspaper from one day of the week over a period of consecutive weeks (one week's Monday, the next week's Tuesday, and so forth). I have chosen this particular configuration because it has been demonstrated that the constructed week approximately reflects newspaper content over the course of at least six months and controls for news and advertising cycles (Riffe, Aust and Lacy 1993: 139). By studying two newspapers per language, I will be able to speak to variation in the use of the press conditional across newspapers within the same language, as has been observed by Marnette (2005) in French and Kronning (2016) in Peninsular Spanish.

2.1.1 The French Corpus

The French portion of the corpus will include a constructed week of two national French dailies: *Le Monde* and *Libération*. I selected these two newspapers for the French corpus on the basis of the prior work carried out by Marnette (2005: 300-10) on discourse representation in French newspapers. Due to the difficulty of accessing past issues of *Le Monde* from the United States, I had to use editions as they are available on Proquest International Newsstream. This service makes newspaper editions available to researchers and students in text format. *Libération*'s website, however, provides access to PDF archives of full editions dating back to 2009. Before briefly detailing the history of *Libération* and *Le Monde*, their place in the landscape of French newspapers should be properly qualified. For the period 2018-2019, among the national dailies, *Le Figaro* (323,635 copies) is the most widely read, followed by *Le Monde* (320,344 copies). With significantly lower readership, *Libération* (71,391 copies) stands as the seventh most-circulated national daily, trailing well behind the other two. It is worth noting that France has a vibrant regional press, and *Le Figaro* and *Le Monde* rank second and third behind the regional newspaper *Ouest-France* (640,647 copies), while *Libération* falls quite below a number of regional presses.²⁷

As Marnette (2005: 310) observes, *Le Monde*'s style can be described as "traditional" while *Libération* has a "familiar" style that is "youth-oriented."²⁸ Furthermore, *Le Monde* claims to be a neutral source for news and, given this stance, is likely to be considered to lean to the

²⁷ All figures come from the website of the *Alliance pour les chiffres des la presse et des médias* (ACPM): <http://www.acpm.fr/Chiffres/Diffusion/La-Press-Payante/Presse-Quotidienne-Nationale> and <http://www.acpm.fr/Chiffres/Diffusion/La-Press-Payante/Presse-Quotidienne-Regionale>, accessed February 11, 2020

²⁸ Marnette (2005) comments: "Indeed, this trend towards 'familiarity' can be explained by the left-wing stance of that newspaper. The language used within quotation marks and in the rest of the article purports to be that of everyday people and not that of a conservative elite. This language can be seen as trendy (inspired by the youth culture) and even often humorous, thus progressive and evolving with the Society, as opposed to the stuffiness of more conventional newspapers, such as *Le Figaro* and *Le Monde*" (310).

right or to the left depending on the political orientation of the reader (Marnette 2005: 316). Despite its more casual tone, *Libération* is a respected national newspaper. Charon (2007: 101) classifies it, along with other national newspapers *Le Monde* and *Le Figaro*, as “*journaux ‘haut-de-gamme’*.”²⁹ This contrast in style—but similarity in prestige and scope of coverage—appears favorable to an investigation of this type since their content should overlap while their language may differ. Marnette (2005: 305) has already noted that the two vary with respect to how often they use the press conditional and with respect to their use of reported discourse. By comparing a larger set of data taken from each newspaper, I will be able to build on Marnette’s (2005) earlier work.

2.1.1.1 *Le Monde*

Le Monde was founded at the end of 1944, replacing the earlier *Le Soir*, which had closed during World War II (*Le Monde* 2002: 21). It was envisioned by General de Gaulle to be the new French national newspaper of reference (*Le Monde* 2002: 21). The newspaper set out to (in its own words): “Devenir un quotidien de référence. Se tenir le plus possible à distance des querelles partisans et idéologiques... Tenter de se hisser au-dessus de la mêlée pour dégager les grandes lignes de compréhension du monde contemporain.”³⁰ *Le Monde* remains a newspaper of reference to this day.

Le Monde’s publication and distribution schedule is a remnant of an era of morning and evening newspapers. It is published in the afternoon and is distributed to news kiosks in the Paris region by 1:00 PM. It appears in kiosks outside of Paris the following day.³¹ The date on the masthead of each edition reflects the date of its appearance in kiosks outside of Paris, meaning it is dated for the day following the date of its actual availability in the capital region. *Le Monde* publishes six issues a week beginning on Tuesday, and Sunday’s edition is dated for Sunday and Monday. However, the dating of the Proquest editions coincides with the date of the newspaper’s publication and appearance in Paris and not with that of *Le Monde*’s masthead. Since *Le Monde*’s publication week begins on at Tuesday, that is the starting date for all the newspapers in the corpus, in the interest of maximizing possibilities for comparison.

2.1.1.2 *Libération*

In its founding manifesto published in 1973, *Libération* declared itself a leftist (specifically, Maoist) newspaper, which sought to return to the people the control and

²⁹ Charon (2007) defines such newspapers as marked by “...un traitement de l’information particulièrement développé, qu’il s’agisse de la diversité des domaines traités ou de l’approfondissement de chaque sujet. L’international occupe une place traditionnellement plus forte qu’ailleurs. La politique, l’économie et la culture font partie des autres points forts, même si, au fil des décennies, les sciences, la santé, les loisirs, les sports, la consommation sont venus s’ajouter et ont connu des développements particuliers pouvant donner lieu à des suppléments ou des cahiers spécialisés. À l’inverse, les faits divers sont moins présents” (35).

³⁰ *Le Monde*. 2009. “Le Portrait d’un quotidien.” http://www.lemonde.fr/qui-sommes-nous/article/2002/02/05/le-monde_261404_3386.html accessed February 8, 2016.

³¹ *ibid.*

transmission of information.³² It declared itself “une embuscade dans la jungle de l’information.”³³ Among its founders figured leading Existentialist philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre. The newspaper still lays claim to these values. In 2014, in reaction to a change in financial backers, the staff of *Libération* asserted their commitment to the newspaper’s founding ideals of leftist politics and to its role as an alternative voice in the journalistic landscape, the basis for *Libération*’s unique style:

Quarante ans plus tard, au temps de l’infobésité, de l’info instantanée qui émiette et dissout, de l’infotainment, de la communication, du marketing partout et tout le temps, nous devons plus que jamais être une embuscade : l’étonnant, le détonnant, l’aiguillon, le piquant, l’ironique, le moqueur, l’empêcheur de tourner en rond, le grain de sable qui grippe la machine médiatique.³⁴

It can be said that not only does *Libération* represent a unique voice among French newspapers, that voice, in fact, defines itself against the voice of the traditional newspapers who represent, in its eyes, the “Establishment.”

Libération is published Monday through Saturday with its last edition of the week dated for both Saturday and Sunday. The newspaper also maintains a look distinct from its other national counterparts. Marnette (2005: 311) links the newspaper’s tabloid format, use of color, and focus on pictures to its nontraditional approach to news telling. This style differs from *Le Monde*, which uses a more traditional Berliner format (as does *Le Figaro*). It is worth noting, however, that this marks a general trend seen in modern newspapers, many of which have transitioned from the broadsheet format to the more compact tabloid format, with a greater emphasis on pictures over text (Franklin 2008: 313-314). To the extent that *Le Monde* has retained its Berliner format and a greater text to image ratio (at least in comparison with *Libération*), its formatting and news presentation can be read as more traditional, while *Libération*’s has clearly departed from that older model.

2.1.2 The Spanish Corpus

In forming the Spanish corpus, I was faced with a more limited press landscape. Spain has four national newspapers: *El País*, *El Mundo*, *La Razón* and *ABC*. While these newspapers have ideological differences, there was no iconoclast member of the group equivalent to *Libération* in France. The four national newspapers circulate alongside six regional newspapers: *La Vanguardia*, *El Periódico de Catalunya*, *El Correo Espanol*, *La Voz de Galicia* and *El Diario Vasco*. Together, they form the top ten circulated newspapers in Spain (Cabello 2007: 136). As of 2018, *El País* was Spain’s most read newspaper (137,552 copies), followed by Catalanian regional newspaper *La Vanguardia* (96,345), then by *El Mundo* (89,580), *ABC* (74,271), *La*

³²“Manifeste de *Libération*.” 1973. Reproduced at <http://www.discordance.fr/le-manifeste-de-liberation-23707>, accessed October 3, 2016.

³³ *ibid*.

³⁴ “Nous sommes un manifeste.” 2014. http://www.liberation.fr/ecrans/2014/05/06/nous-sommes-un-manifeste_1011945, accessed October 3, 2016

Razón (65,135) an *El Periódico de Catalunya* (60,870), another Catalanian regional newspaper.³⁵

Outside of Kronning's (2016) survey of press conditionals found in headlines, I am unaware of a study that extensively examines newspaper "style" the way Marnette (2005) has in French.³⁶ Rather than differentiating two newspapers on the basis of what Marnette (2005: 310) calls "style," I have chosen to select one national newspaper and one regional newspaper as the distinguishing variable for the Spanish segment of the corpus.³⁷ Furthermore, for the purpose of using full editions of newspapers, it was necessary that editions of newspapers be accessible from the United States. While there would be advantages to studying *El País*, I selected *El Mundo* as the national newspaper, since *El País*'s stance towards the press conditional, as well as its scarce use of it, has already been remarked upon (Sarrazin 2010; Kronning 2016). It seemed desirable to use a respected newspaper whose style guide had not set the standard for the Spanish-speaking world, given that greater variation in the frequency of the press conditional is observed outside of *El País* (Kronning 2016: 128), suggesting that the press conditional as used in other newspapers might make for more tokens and more insightful study. Full editions of *El Mundo*'s Madrid edition were constructed from its newspaper's digital format, available through Orbyt.com. For the regional newspaper, I selected *El Periódico de Catalunya*, whose website makes the entirety of its archive available in PDF format.

2.1.2.1 El Mundo

El Mundo is a national Spanish newspaper headquartered in Madrid. It was founded on October 23, 1989. It filled the ideological vacuum left by *El País*'s leftward shift towards support of the Socialist party (Cabello 2007: 140). *El Mundo*'s politics are *liberal* in the sense of *liberalism*: a pro-democracy newspaper with open views towards social issues and support of a free market economy (Cabello 2007: 140). Although it is a national newspaper, it has various 'local' editions, which are the national edition combined with a local insert. It is published seven days a week.

While *El País* has been Spain's leading newspaper, *El Mundo* has developed a reputation for itself as Spain's investigative newspaper (Cabello 2007: 140). In 2003, Diaz-Guell (2003: 58) notes that of all the major Spanish newspapers, only *El Mundo* had a dedicated investigative journalism department. The newspaper itself celebrates its dedication to investigative journalism in an editorial published on October 23, 2009:

³⁵ Cano, Fernando. 2019. "OJD: los diarios impresos pierden 77.000 ejemplares de difusión en 2018." El Español. January 28, 2019. https://www.elespanol.com/invertia/medios/20190128/ojd-grandes-diarios-impresos-pierden-ejemplares-difusion/371963257_0.html, last accessed February 11, 2020.

³⁶In fact, Casado Velarde and Lucas (2013) examine the verbs used to report speech in *El País* and *ABC* in a study that is, in spirit, not dissimilar to Marnette's (2005: 300-10) study. The study is much more limited in scope, and the differences they do identify do not indicate a difference between *ABC* and *El País* that replicates the difference Marnette (2005: 305) observes between *Le Monde* and *Libération*.

³⁷ Both *El Mundo* and *El Periódico de Catalunya* were founded after Spain's transition to democracy in 1976. Much of the current configuration of the press in Spain is tied to the country's transition to democracy. Of the four national newspapers in Spain, only *ABC* existed prior to the transition. *El País* was founded in 1976. *El Mundo* was founded relatively late, in 1989, and *La Razón* in 1998. *ABC*, founded in 1903, is a conservative, pro-monarchist newspaper that had been hostile to political change (Gunther, Montero and Wert 2000: 44), and *La Razón* was founded by one of its former directors and competes with that newspaper (Cabello 2007: 140-41).

A lo largo de estos 20 años, nuestro periódico ha pasado a ser referencia en las escuelas de negocios, en los manuales de comunicación y en las facultades de Periodismo. ¿Cuál es la clave de este éxito? La respuesta es simple: hemos cumplido el compromiso de anteponer la información a cualquier otra consideración, fueran cuales fueran las consecuencias que ello nos acarrease. EL MUNDO siempre ha estado al servicio de la verdad con una clara vocación de aportar a los ciudadanos elementos de juicio frente a los abusos del poder, viajando incluso a las zonas más sombrías del Estado para denunciar la guerra sucia contra ETA.³⁸

Given the anti-separatist ideology of *El Mundo*, the last line of the editorial is particularly telling: while *El Mundo* has no sympathy for the Basque nationalist group, it is willing to investigate what it calls the Spanish government's 'dirty war' against the group in spite of their stance due to its commitment to uncovering any and all governmental "abuses of power." *El Mundo* can be said to take very seriously its role as a member of the Fourth Estate.³⁹

2.1.2.2 El Periódico de Catalunya

El Periódico de Catalunya is a regional Catalan morning newspaper published seven days a week. It was founded on October 26, 1978, shortly following Spain's transition to democracy. Its headquarters are in Barcelona. It has produced a Catalan clone edition since 1997. The Catalan version is achieved through machine translation.⁴⁰ At the time of its 35th anniversary in 2013, *El Periódico* celebrated itself as a progressive newspaper with a specifically Catalanian perspective:

...en 1978, nació en Barcelona EL PERIÓDICO con una clara vocación de ser un diario global, de aportar una mirada distinta sobre la realidad no solo cercana, sino española e internacional, desde una perspectiva catalana y desde un punto de vista progresista.

While this editorial commemorates *El Periódico*'s journalism, it is different from more traditional newspapers like *El País* or *El Mundo*. *El Periódico* can be thought of as the equivalent to *USA Today* with its emphasis on color and graphics (Alberdi Ezpeleta et al. 2003: 278-79). Alberdi Ezpeleta et al. (2003) describe *El Periódico*'s journalism as "service journalism" which is oriented to the consumer's well-being:

³⁸El Mundo. 2009. "España habría sido distinta sin *El Mundo*." *El Mundo*, October 23, 2009. <https://www.elmundo.es/elmundo/2009/10/23/opinion/19874281.html>.

³⁹ The idea of the press as a kind of estate of the realm dates back to Edmund Burke, who used the term to allude to the press gallery in Parliament (Hampton 2010: 3). Hampton (2010: 4) observes that one role of journalism in its capacity as a member of the Fourth Estate is to be representative of the interests of its readers, who are also constituents under a representative form of government: "More specifically, by publicizing corruption, scandal in high places, or the government's simple inattention to the needs of the people, the press could ensure that a nominally democratic government met its obligations to its constituents."

⁴⁰ Cano, Fernando. 2018. "El catalán ya es residual en la prensa: *El Periódico* despide a 22 traductores." *El Español*. March 12, 2018. https://www.elespanol.com/invertia/medios/20180312/catalan-residual-prensa-periodico-despide-traductores/291471213_0.html, last accessed February 11, 2020.

El diario de servicio viene a llenar ese hueco donde el periódico, aún manteniendo su función originaria, seduce al lector a través de su diseño, de la pedagogía de sus imágenes, de las informaciones que buscan la “verdad” y su bienestar (277).

In this way, while *El Periódico* is meant for a regional audience, it also represents a journalism that has a direct focus on reader’s not only as constituents of a democracy, but also as people living in the day to day world. Beyond reporting on political and economic issues, service journalism concerns itself with reports on how readers might fill their free time, how readers might get to the nearest pharmacy, how medical advances might directly affect their health, and how infrastructure problems might affect their commute to work (Alberdi Ezpeleta et al.: 277). As Alberdi Ezpeleta et al. (2003: 281) cleverly put it: a newspaper like *El Periódico* does report on issues of public interest but it is also concerned with the interests of the public.

2.1.3 The Corpus: Summary and Coding

In total the corpus under investigation here consists of four newspapers: two French national newspapers, one Spanish regional newspaper, and one Spanish national newspaper. It is necessary to acknowledge the asymmetry across the French and Spanish segments of the corpus and some of the limitations that arise from it. *El Periódico*’s scope would appear to differ the most from the three other newspapers, although, in a similar vein, *Libération* appears to be an outlier in terms of journalistic style. Ideally, two of the newspapers would be ‘deviant’ in the same fashion. However, the corpus does reflect some crucial factors bearing on each country’s journalistic reality. *Le Monde*’s aim for neutrality does not necessarily reflect French journalistic tradition. Albert (2004: 50) claims that “le journalisme français a toujours été plus un journalisme d’expression que d’observation,” a tradition which would align more with *Libération*’s insistence on expressing its ideals in its reporting. Spain’s regional newspapers circulate in numbers that compete with national newspapers. Cabello (2007: 135) remarks that the regionalization of daily newspapers has been one of the hallmarks of the evolution in the genre in Spain since the late 19th century. The selection of *El Mundo* and *El Periódico* reflect this reality.

Once all newspapers had been selected, it was necessary to find a time of year from which construct the corpus. It appeared desirable to avoid summer and winter when governments are closed. I selected mid-April as the starting point for the corpus. As was stated above, the constructed week starts on a Tuesday due to *Le Monde*’s publication schedule. Choosing dates that coincide as closely as possible will maximize potential overlap in news coverage, which could prove useful for comparison. Therefore, the corpus begins on Tuesday, April 14, 2015 and extends to Monday, May 25 for French and to Monday, June 1 for Spanish, since the Spanish newspapers are published seven times a week instead of six. Editions are coded by Roman numerals. The coding of individual editions is illustrated in Tables 2.1 and 2.2:

TABLE 2.1 CODING OF THE SPANISH CORPUS

Date (2015)	<i>El Mundo</i>	<i>El Periódico de Catalunya</i>
April 14	MUNDOI	PERIODI
April 22	MUNDOII	PERIODII
April 30	MUNDOIII	PERIODIII
May 8	MUNDOIV	PERIODIV
May 16	MUNDOV	PERIODV
May 24	MUNDOVI	PERIODVI
June 1	MUNDOVII	PERIODVII

TABLE 2.2 CODING OF THE FRENCH CORPUS

Date (2015)	<i>Le Monde</i>	Date (2015)	<i>Libération</i>
April 14	MONDEI	April 14	LIBEI
April 22	MONDEII	April 22	LIBEII
April 30	MONDEIII	April 30	LIBEIII
May 8	MONDEIV	May 8	LIBEIV
May 16	MONDEV	May 16/17	LIBEV
May 24/25	MONDEVI	May 25	LIBEVI

Articles are coded by the page number on which the article starts (or, in the case of *Le Monde*, by the number of the document in the compiled edition from Proquest) along with a readily identifiable keyword from the headline. Examples are given in Table 2.3 with articles taken from each newspapers' edition from the 30th of April:

TABLE 2.3 CODING OF ARTICLES

Newspaper	Headline	Page/Document Number	Code
<i>Le Monde</i>	"L'horloger de l'histoire"	8	HORLOGER8, MONDEIII
<i>Libération</i>	"Un Français sur deux regrette la guillotine"	5	GUILLOTINE5, LIBEIII
<i>El Mundo</i>	"Catalá abre la puerta a multar a los medios"	7	CATALA7, MUNDOIII
<i>El Periódico de Catalunya</i>	"Los huidizos candidatos británicos"	12	HUIDIZOS12, PERIODIII

When tokens are presented as examples within this study, I will reference their edition and article in the format seen in Table 2.3. In theory, a press conditional could come from any part of the newspaper, and I did not restrict my search to any sub-genre (such as news or commentary) or, for example, purposely exclude advertisements or obituaries. While one expects the press conditional to be restricted to news articles, its use in unexpected places would be, theoretically speaking, insightful.

2.2 Identifying the Press Conditional

As was discussed previously in §1.3.1, Haillet (1995, 2002) proposes a series of paraphrases that allow one to identify each of the individual uses of the conditional. These paraphrases allow one to identify uses of the conditional without making a theoretical commitment. Fouilloux (2006) applies these same series of tests to Spanish. I will be using these tests in order to extract tokens from the corpus. I will also be expanding on these tests to in certain gaps found in these earlier works. These gaps include the lack of an explicit test for the attenuating conditional in Haillet (2002) and a discussion of how to test for the two different inferential uses of the conditional in Spanish (described in §1.2.2.7). By not taking a theoretical stance prior to my investigation, I will be able to make a data-driven contribution to our understanding of the press conditional in each language.

2.2.1 Identifying the Press Conditional in French

In his study of the French conditional, Haillet (2002) uses paraphrases and glosses to identify three different types of conditional in French: the temporal conditional, the hypothetical conditional, and the conditional he terms *le conditionnel d'altérité énonciative* (here, the press conditional). The appropriate paraphrase is established by the co-text and context surrounding the conditional. I illustrate his tests with the example in (1), which is taken from Dendale (1993: 171):

- (1) Ce matin la flotte britannique **aurait quitté** le port de Portsmouth. Le gouvernement britannique a déclenché ainsi le compte à rebours pour la guerre des Malouines.
'This morning, the British fleet [**would have left**] the port of Portsmouth. Thus, the British government has started the countdown for the Falklands war.'
≠ elle allait avoir quitté
≠ eût quitté
≠ je dirais qu'il quitte
= **elle a quitté, paraît-il**

In (1), the co-text describing the government as having begun the countdown to war in the Falklands indicates that the conditional is reporting past information, which excludes the future-in-the-past, hypothetical and attenuating uses of the conditional. This same information can be restated with the *passé composé* combined with the particle *paraît-il* without a change in meaning. The example in (1), therefore, is a press conditional. Each of the tests for the individual uses of the conditional in French are outlined in §2.2.1.1 — §2.2.1.4.

2.2.1.1 The Temporal Conditional

The temporal conditional serves to mark a future action in the past. From the perspective of the surrounding co-text, the event described has yet to occur. In order to eliminate tokens of

the temporal conditional, the token extracted should not permit paraphrases with *allait* + *infinitive*, in the case of the present conditional, or *allait* + *past infinitive*, in the case of the past conditional. These tests are demonstrated in (2) and (3):

- (2) Ils me disaient que la fête **aurait lieu** dans le parc municipal
 ‘*They told me that the party **would take place** in the municipal park*’
 (Haillet (2002: 10)
 = **elle allait avoir lieu**
 ≠ je dirais qu’elle a lieu
 ≠ elle a lieu, paraît-il
- (3) Je me disais que j’**aurais fini** ce travail avant la fin de la semaine
 ‘*I told myself that I **would have finished** this work before the end of the week*’
 (Haillet (2002: 11)
 = j’**allais avoir fini**
 ≠ j’eûs fini
 ≠ je dirais qu’il finit
 ≠ j’ai fini, paraît-il

Both conditionals describe an event to take place later with respect to a moment in the past, indicated in both (2) and (3) by the *verba dicendi* in the imperfect indicative. The difference between the past and present conditional is that the past conditional sees this future-in-the-past action as complete in (3).

By modifying the example in (1) with temporal markers that anchor the phrase as future-in-the-past, it is possible to yield the sentence (4), compatible with *allait* + *past infinitive*:

- (4) [Le commandant affirmait] que la flotte britannique **aurait quitté** le port de Portsmouth [dès la semaine prochaine]
 ‘*[The commander was confirming] that the British fleet **would have left** the port of Portsmouth [by next week]*’
 = elle **allait avoir quitté le port**
 ≠ elle eût quitté le port
 ≠ elle a quitté le port, paraît-il
 ≠ je dirais qu’elle quitte

By framing the utterance as indirect discourse (whose time of enunciation is in the past), the present conditional of (1) becomes the temporal conditional of (4). It points to a complete, projected future action with respect to the time of enunciation.

2.2.1.2 The Attenuating Conditional

Haillet (2002) does not provide an explicit means to test for the attenuating use of the conditional. However, Abouda (2001: 289) offers the following means of paraphrasing the attenuating conditional: “*je dirais p.*,” where *p* represents the propositional content of the original phrase restated in the present indicative. Examples of this test are seen in (5) and (6):

- (5) Je **voudrais** une baguette
 ‘*I would like a baguette*’
 (Abouda 2001: 289)
 ≠ j’allais vouloir une baguette
 = **je dirais que je veux** une baguette
 ≠ je veux une baguette, paraît-il
- (6) J’**aurais voulu** une baguette
 ‘I would like a baguette’
 ‘*I [would have liked] a baguette*’
 (Abouda 2001: 289)
 ≠ j’allais avoir voulu une baguette
 ≠ j’eusse voulu une baguette
 = **je dirais que je veux** une baguette
 ≠ je veux une baguette, paraît-il

When the conditional is used to attenuate a request, the difference between the present and past conditional forms is not one of aspect but rather of distance and politeness. By using the past conditional in (6), the speaker creates more distance and further softens their request. Abouda (2001: 286) notes that the attenuating use of the conditional is limited to the first person of a certain set of verbs like *aimer* ‘to like’ or *dire* ‘to say’ in the first person, although a conditional with an impersonal verb like *convenir* ‘to be fitting’ in *il conviendrait* ‘it would be fitting’ can also be considered to be of the attenuating type, despite the verb being in the third-person. A verb like *quitter* ‘to leave’ as used in (1) is, therefore, impossible to ‘transform’ into an attenuating conditional, and no reformulation will be provided here.

2.2.1.3 The Hypothetical Conditional

For the present conditional, there is no equivalent paraphrase possible in French; the conditional is the only means for communicating a hypothesis in these cases. Therefore, present conditionals will lack a specific test for the hypothetical form, as seen in (7):

- (7) Bill Clinton a de la chance...Mais son bonheur **serait** complet si l’héritage laisse par les républicains n’était pas si lourd à porter
 ‘*Bill Clinton is lucky...But his happiness **would be** complete if the legacy left by Republicans did not weigh so heavily on him*’
 (Haillet 2002: 12)
 ≠ allait être
 ≠ je dirais que son bonheur est complet
 ≠ son bonheur est complet, paraît-il

However, the past perfect subjunctive is still used in written French, and Haillet (2002) uses this to gloss the hypothetical use of the past conditional, as seen in (8):

- (8) S'il n'était pas intervenu, nous **n'aurions pas obtenu** satisfaction
 'If he hadn't intervened, we **wouldn't have gotten** any satisfaction'
 (Haillet 2002: 12)
 ≠ nous n'allions pas avoir obtenu satisfaction
 = nous **n'eussions pas obtenu**
 ≠ je dirais que nous obtenons
 ≠ n'avons pas obtenu, paraît-il

The underlined *si*-clauses in (7) and (8) represent the conditions that would need to be met for the clauses in the conditional to be true. To the extent that the pluperfect subjunctive is a rare and learned form, it is not as robust a test as the others.

By adding a *si*-clause to (1), the phrase becomes a hypothetical conditional as in (9):

- (9) [Si le typhon n'avait pas atteint la côte,] la flotte britannique **aurait quitté** le port de Portsmouth
 '[If the typhon hadn't reached the coast,] the British fleet **would have left** the port of Portsmouth'
 ≠ allait avoir quitté le port
 = **eût quitté** le port
 ≠ je dirais qu'il quitte le port
 ≠ a quitté le port, paraît-il

In Standard French, the *si*-clause can be in the imperfect, as in (7), or in the pluperfect indicative as in (8) and (9). The imperfect indicative speculates on present and future conditions that would need to be met for the hypothesis to hold true, while the pluperfect indicative speculates on the necessary past conditions that would need to have been satisfied.

2.2.1.4 The Press Conditional

Tokens representative of the press conditional should permit a paraphrase including the particle *paraît-il* 'it seems' with the conditional's verb in the present, past or future tense. This has been illustrated in our primary example of the press conditional in (1), where the past conditional is reformulated by the *passé composé* in combination with *paraît-il*. The present conditional may be glossed by either the present indicative or the future tense, as in (10) and (11):

- (10) La mafia des hormones **serait** florissante en Espagne
 'The hormone mafia [**would be**] flourishing in Spain'
 (Haillet 2002: 15)
 ≠ elle allait être florissante
 ≠ je dirais que elle est florissante
 = **est florissante, paraît-il**
- (11) Les impôts **seraient simplifiés** plutôt que réformés en 1998
 'Taxes [**would be**] simplified rather than reformed in 1998'

(Haillet 2002: 15)

- ≠ allaient être simplifiés
- ≠ je dirais que les impôts sont simplifiés
- = **seront réformés, paraît-il**

Gosselin (2001: 62) remarks that in French a future temporal marker is necessary to achieve a future reading. In (11), which comes from a newspaper printed in 1997, *en 1998* forces the prospective reading.

2.2.2 Identifying the Press Conditional in Spanish

Fouilloux's (2006) Spanish adaptations of Haillet's (2002) tests were used in order to identify and extract tokens of the press conditional in Spanish. One additional use of the conditional needs to be considered that was not considered by Fouilloux (2006): that of the conditional marking a generic inference, which tends to be overlooked, as far as I know, outside articles on scientific discourse. As with French, each test will be outlined and an example of the press conditional, shown in (12), will be transformed to further illustrate each possible reading:

- (12) Según la prensa, el atentado **no habría causado** víctimas
'According to the press, the attack [**would not have caused**] any casualties'
(Fouilloux 2006: 65)
- ≠ no iba a haber causado víctimas
 - ≠ no hubiera causado víctimas
 - ≠ diría que no causa víctimas
 - ≠ todo me indica que no había causado víctimas
 - = **no ha causado/causó, por lo visto**

The prepositional phrase *según la prensa* 'according to the press' corroborates the test showing (12) is a press conditional. As before, the past conditional form is used for illustration since it shows the maximal number of tests that will be used.

2.2.2.1 The Temporal Conditional

The temporal conditional is used to mark a past action that is envisioned as occurring subsequent to another past action. Fouilloux (2006: 66) establishes that this use of the conditional is equivalent to the periphrastic future-in-the-past *iba a + infinitive*, with the verb *ir* 'to go' in the imperfect. An example is shown in (13):

- (13) En 1950, tras el desastre, Julio **volvería** a su pueblo
'In 1950, after the disaster, Julio **would return** to his village'
(Fouilloux 2006: 65)
- = Julio **iba a volver** a su pueblo
 - ≠ diría que Julio vuelvo
 - ≠ todo me indica que volvió/volvía
 - ≠ Julio volvía / vuelve / volverá, por lo visto,

In (13) the action is anchored in a time prior to Julio returning to his village in a moment subsequent to the disaster that befell it. When a prospective action is viewed as completed, the past conditional is used. Foullioux (2006: 67) equates this to the paraphrase *iba a + past infinitive*, shown in (14):

- (14) Afirmaron que cuando llegara el invierno **habrían recogido** la cosecha
 ‘They affirmed that by the time winter came they **would have gathered** the harvest’
 (RAE 2010: 453)
 = **iban a haber recogido** la cosecha
 ≠ diría que recogen la cosecha
 ≠ hubieran recogido la cosecha
 ≠ todo me indica que había recogido la cosecha
 ≠ han recogido/recogió la cosecha, por lo visto

In (14), the action of harvesting is seen as completed from the perspective of the affirmation because it occurs prior to the arrival of winter.

By adding the appropriate temporal frame to the utterance in (12), a temporal past conditional can be achieved, as in (15):

- (15) [Prometieron] que el atentado no **habría causado** víctimas [antes de que llegaran los medios]
 ‘[They promised that the attack] **would not have caused** any casualties [before the media arrived]’
 (Fouillioux 2006: 65)
 = **no iba a haber causado** víctimas
 ≠ no hubiera causado víctimas
 ≠ diría que no causa víctimas
 ≠ todo me indica que no había causado víctimas
 ≠ no ha causado/causó víctimas, por lo visto

There are two temporal reference points in (15): *prometieron* ‘they promised’ (the moment of not knowing) and *antes de que llegaran los medios* ‘before the media arrived.’ The conditional marks that the action is seen as yet to occur from the perspective of *prometieron*, while the past conditional marks that the action is complete before the arrival of the media.

2.2.2.2 The Hypothetical Conditional

As in French, there is no direct way to rephrase the present conditional in its hypothetical use.⁴¹ However, as in French, the past perfect subjunctive may be used to gloss the past conditional when its meaning is hypothetical. Examples are given in (16) and (17):

⁴¹ Historically, the hypothetical present conditional could be replaced by the *-ra* verb forms (much as auxiliary *hubiera* productively replaces *habría* to this day). Such usage is now considered regional or excessively literary.

- (16) Si no hubiese coches, Madrid **sería** un paraíso
 ‘*If there were no cars, Madrid would be a paradise*’
 (Fouilloux 2006: 68)
 ≠ iba a ser un paraíso
 ≠ diría que es un paraíso
 ≠ todo me indica que era un paraíso
 ≠ es/era/será un paraíso, por lo visto

- (17) Si hubiese venido, no te **habrías echado a llorar**
 ‘*If he had come, you wouldn’t have started crying*’
 (Fouilloux 2006: 68)
 ≠ ibas a haberte echado a llorar
 = **te hubieras echado a llorar**
 ≠ diría que te echas a llorar
 ≠ todo me indica que te había echado a llorar
 ≠ te has echado/te echaste a llorar, por lo visto

The *si*-clauses mark the conditions necessary for each hypothesis to be true. In the standard language, Spanish *si*-clauses require the imperfect subjunctive as in (16) and the pluperfect subjunctive as in (17). Unlike in French, the pluperfect subjunctive for the past conditional in Spanish is usual in everyday language.

By adding a condition marked by a pluperfect subjunctive in a *si*-clause to the example in (12), one arrives at the hypothetical conditional seen in (18):

- (18) [Si el hombre hubiera/hubiese seguido el plan de evacuación], el atentado no **habría causado** víctimas
 ‘*[If the man had followed the evacuation plan,] the attack would not have caused any casualties*’
 (Fouilloux 2006: 65)
 ≠ no iba a haber causado víctimas
 = **no hubiera causado víctimas**
 ≠ diría que no causa víctimas
 ≠ todo me indica que no había causado víctimas
 ≠ no ha causado/causó víctimas, por lo visto

Since the pluperfect subjunctive can replace in the past conditional, it is possible to restate (17) and (18) with the pluperfect subjunctive used in both clauses. However, the *El País* style guide recommends not using the pluperfect subjunctive as a substitute for the past conditional with a hypothetical meaning (El País 2014: Diccionario, Palabras A-Z, H). The reasons for this are unclear, but one supposes that employing a different verb form in each clause contributes to clarity.

However, it does still occur with the verbs *poder* ‘can,’ *querer* ‘to want,’ *deber* ‘must’ and *parecer* ‘to seem’ (RAE 2010: §24.1.2b).

2.2.2.3 The Attenuating Conditional

Fouilloux (2006: 73-75) describes the attenuating conditional in Spanish as expressing an underlying point of view that is in the present indicative in order to make a request. This is essentially the same formulation used by Abouda (2001), who proposes *je dirais que p* in French. I will adopt this same formula into Spanish. Examples of this test are given in (19) and (20):

- (19) Buenos días, **querría** una barra de pan
'Hello, I **would like** a baguette'
(Fouilloux 2006: 73)
≠ iba a querer una barra de pan
= **diría que quiero una barra de pan**
≠ toda me indica que quería una barra de pan
≠ quiero/quería/querré una barra de pan, por lo visto
- (20) **Habría querido hablar** con usted un momentito
'I [**would have liked**] to speak with you a moment'
(RAE 2010: 453)
≠ iba a haber querido hablar
= **diría que quiero hablar**
≠ toda me indica que había querido hablar
≠ he querido/quise hablar, por lo visto

I will not be providing a reformulation of (12) for illustration in this case since the same limitations on the attenuating conditional with respect to verbs and grammatical person apply in Spanish as do in French (see §2.2.1.2).

2.2.2.4 The Conjectural Conditional

The conjectural conditional refers to the use of the conditional to mark inferences about the past. In these cases, the basis is a state of affairs set in the past (see §1.2.2.7). Fouilloux (2006: 76) uses the phrase *todo me indica...* 'everything indicates to me...', which can combine with the imperfect, preterite or pluperfect of the verb in the conditional. Examples are given in (21), (22) and (23):

- (21) Juan **tendría** entonces 40 años
'Juan [**would be**] 40 years old'
(Vatrican 2014: 259)
≠ iba a tener 40 años
≠ diría que tiene
= **todo me indica que tenía** entonces 40 años
≠ tenía 40 años, por lo visto
- (22) Pedro **llegaría** entonces tarde
'Pedro [**would arrive**] late'

(Vatrican 2014: 259)
≠ iba a llegar entonces tarder
≠ diría que llega
= **todo me indica que llegó** tarde.
≠ llegó entonces tarde, por lo visto

(23) **Habría estado de viaje**
'S•he [**would have been**] on vacation'
(Vatrican 2014: 259)
≠ iba a haber estado de viaje
≠ diría que ha estado
= **todo me indica que había estado** de viaje.
≠ había estado de viaje, por lo visto

In (21) and (22), the present conditional describes complete or incomplete actions, yielding equivalent paraphrases in either the imperfect or preterit indicative. In (23), the past conditional indicates an action prior to the moment of access to the circumstances that give rise to the conjecture.

By adding co-text that suggests the basis for an inference on the part of the speaker, the conditional of (12) can take on a conjectural meaning, based on the speaker's access to circumstances, shown in (24):

(24) [Era calma en el hospital]; el atentado no **habría causado** víctimas
'[It was calm in the hospital]. The attack [**would not have caused**] any casualties'
≠ no iba a haber causado víctimas
≠ no hubiera causado víctimas
≠ diría que no causa víctimas
= **todo me indica que no había causado víctimas**
≠ no ha causado/causó víctimas, por lo visto

In (24), the speaker has direct access to the circumstances on which the conjecture is based. The past conditional indicates that the occurrence of the attack would have been prior to the moment at which the speaker notices the sense of calm in the hospital. It should be remembered that the French conditional cannot be used in this way (Rossari 2009: 77-78).

2.2.2.5 The Inferential and Press Conditionals

It is necessary to treat the inferential and press conditional in Spanish together. García Negroni (2016: 10) demonstrates that they are distinguishable only through context and co-text, and Fouilloux (2006) does not distinguish between them. With respect to the press conditional, Fouilloux (2006: 71) demonstrates that the phrase *por lo visto* 'it seems' combined with the future indicative, present indicative can paraphrase the present press conditional while the past perfect indicative and/or preterit, combined with *por lo visto*, can paraphrase the past press conditional in Spanish. The RAE (2010: 1782) also notes that the present conditional can be

glossed by the imperfect. Examples with the present conditional glossed by the present, imperfect and future are shown in (25) and (26):

- (25) Se trata, en suma, de evitar que haya partidos que vean en la aprobación de las propuestas autonómicas de CiU el precio que el Gobierno **estaría pagando** a cambio del apoyo de los nacionalistas
'It is a matter of avoiding that there be parties who see in the approval of the regional budgets of CiU the price that the government [**would be paying**] in exchange for nationalist support'
(RAE 2009: 1782)
≠ iba a estar pagando
≠ diría que está pagando
≠ todo me indica que estaba pagando
= **estaba/está pagando, por lo visto**
- (26) Según la agencia EFE, el presidente **saldría** mañana para Londres
'According to the EFE news agency, the president [**would leave**] tomorrow for London'
(Fouilloux 2006: 73)
≠ iba a salir para Londres
≠ diría que sale
≠ todo me indica que salía/salió
= **saldrá, por lo visto**

The RAE (2009) glosses the example in (25) with both the present and imperfect.⁴² In (26), the adverb *mañana* 'tomorrow' makes it clear that the conditional has a future reading. It should be recalled that Sarrazin (2010) has found prospective readings of the press conditional in utterances without markers of future time as well, suggesting co-text and context must be used to properly identify the temporal reference of the present press conditional.

It would appear that the same test can be extended to inferential instances of the conditional. Ramos (2005: 544) observes that *por lo visto* also serves to mark inference, and Negroni (2016) demonstrates that the inferential and press conditionals can only be distinguished through context. I give her example in (27):

- (27) 1. HEADLINE: Nisman **habría pensado** en pedir la detención de Cristina
'Nisman [**would have considered**] ordering Cristina's detention.'
2. LEDE PARAGRAPH: La denuncia del fiscal por encubrimiento a favor de los iraníes. En el tacho de basura de su departamento **se habría encontrado** una versión original que contiene esa medida. La final tiene tachaduras.
'The prosecution alleging a cover-up on behalf of the Iranians. In the trash bin of his apartment an original version [**would be found**] that includes this measure. The final one contains mark-up.'

⁴² I have not been able to locate a reference example that is unambiguous.

3. BODY: En las declaraciones que hizo a los medios para explicar el contenido y el alcance de su acusación contra el Poder Ejecutivo, Nisman no hizo alusión a un pedido de desafuero y de detención contra la Presidenta y el canciller. Pero en su casa se encontraron pruebas que indican que pensó hacerlo, tanto que lo escribió. *‘In the declarations he made to the media to explain the content and reach of the accusation against the Executive, Nisman made no reference to a request for impeachment and detention against the President and the minister. But evidence was found in his house that indicates he considered doing so, insofar as he drafted it.’*
 (Negroni 2016: 10)

On the basis of the co-text in (27-3), Negroni (2016: 10) demonstrates that the conditional of the headline in (27-1) is inferential. No one has direct knowledge of the prosecutor’s intent, but one can draw conclusions about his intent from the earlier drafts of his legal filings. The conditional in (27-2) cites an earlier utterance: the draft is said to be found in the trash bin of his residence. On the surface, the two are identical. This also suggests that *por lo visto* is an appropriate test to identify either of these conditionals and that a subsequent determination must be made case-by-case.

Therefore, when it comes to the paraphrase test, (27-1) and (27-2) will be identical, as shown below in (28) and (29):

(28) Nisman **habría pensado** en pedir la detención de Cristina
 ≠ iba a haber pensado en pedir
 ≠ hubiera pensado en pedir
 ≠ diría que piensa
 ≠ todo me indica que pensaba/pensó
 = **ha pensado/pensó, por lo visto**

(29) En el tacho de basura de su departamento **se habría encontrado** una versión original que contiene esa medida
 ≠ iba a haberse encontrado
 ≠ se hubiera encontrado
 ≠ diría que encuentra
 ≠ todo me indica que se había encontrado
 = **se ha encontrado/se encontró, por lo visto**

For these reasons, the test with *por lo visto* is used to extract instances of both the press conditional and the inferential conditional. In order to distinguish between the two, co-text and context is necessary. More detail on how these uses are distinguished in the Spanish segment of the corpus are given in 4.1.1.

The benefits of the use of paraphrases is well illustrated in this instance. First, it may allow for a better understanding of the use of the conditional in the press since mention of the conditional as a marker of inference appears to be rare in discussions of the press conditional in Spanish. It could be that inference is crucial to understanding the use of the conditional in journalistic texts. Furthermore, Bermúdez (2016) has argued that instances of the conditional marking a secondhand source in Spanish, at least in scientific discourse, have a separate origin

from the press conditional, which marks thirdhand information (and, per the contact hypothesis, came to Spanish from French).⁴³ We can compare his two examples below in (30) and (31) and apply our tests:

- (30) Robert Nisbet examina breve y rigurosamente los temas centrales del conservadurismo –historia, tradición, propiedad, autoridad, libertad y religión– y dirige sus críticas tanto al colectivismo como al individualismo radical. Finalmente, aborda la crisis del conservadurismo, que **estaría causada** en buena medida por su adopción en la escena política de principios del liberalismo económico y del Estado del bienestar
‘Robert Nisbet examines briefly and rigorously the central themes of conservatism—history, traditional, property, authority, liberty and religion—and directs his criticism as much to collectivism as to radical individualism. Finally, he addresses the crisis of conservatism, which [would be caused] in large measure by its adoption of economic liberalism and the Welfare State’
 ≠ iba a estar causada
 ≠ diría que está causada
 ≠ todo me indica que estaba causado
 = **está causada, por lo visto**
- (31) Nols **estaría considerando**, según el propio Le Pen, la creación en Bélgica de un Frente Nacional de extrema derecha, similar al francés
‘Nols [would be considering], according to Le Pen himself, the creation of a far-right National Front in Belgium, similar to the French one’
 ≠ iba a estar considerando
 ≠ diría que está considerando
 ≠ todo me indica que estaba considerando
 = **está considerando, por lo visto**

Bermúdez (2016: 57) argues that the scientific conditional, seen in (30) serves to assign information to a source and mark the speaker’s *non-prise-en-charge* of its content. However, conditionals such as those in (30) have a certain element of inference since the speaker has accessed that information cognitively (Bermúdez 2016: 59). It would appear that the scientific conditional straddles the line between inference and reported information. Since the test does not require that we assign one value or the other to a token, tokens such as those in (30) do not require a prior commitment to whether they primarily serve to mark an inference as in (27-1) or to mark uncertain, reported information as in (31).

To rephrase the example in (12) such that it appears to be an inference, one might add co-text indicating the evidence on which the inference is based, as in (32):

⁴³ In secondhand information, *Speaker learns information through what Z has said*. Thirdhand information refers to information that has come to the speaker via a source who knows that information secondhand: *Speaker learns information through Y who learned that same information through Z*. Z in this case is thirdhand information. Examples (30) and (31) are explained directly in footnote 23 in §1.3.1.

- (32) [El grupo terrorista ha reivindicado un atentado en un puesto militar. Sin embargo, éste había sido evacuado una hora antes.] El atentado **no habría causado** víctimas.
 ‘[The terrorist group has claimed credit for an attack on a military post. However, it had been evacuated an hour earlier.] The attack [**would not have caused**] any casualties.’
 ≠ no iban a haber causado víctimas
 ≠ no hubiera causado víctimas
 ≠ diría que no causa víctimas
 ≠ todo me indica que no había causado
 = **no ha causado/causó víctimas, por lo visto**

By adding co-text that suggests it is a deduction from evidence that has led to the conclusion that there were no casualties in the attack, the example in (12) becomes inferential as in (32).

2.2.3 Identifying the Press Conditional Summary

Table 2.4 below provides a summary of the tests used to identify the various uses of the conditional:

TABLE 2.4 SUMMARY OF TESTS

Conditional Use	French	Spanish
Temporal		
COND – Pres	<i>allait</i> + infinitive	<i>iba a</i> + inf.
COND – Past	<i>allait</i> + past infinitive	<i>Iba a</i> + past infinitive
Hypothetical		
COND – Pres	n/a	n/a
COND – Past	SUBJ – pluperfect	SUBJ – pluperfect
Attenuating		
COND – Pres	<i>je dirais que.</i> + pres.	<i>diría que p.</i> + IND – pres.
COND – Past	<i>je dirais que.</i> + pres.	<i>diría que p.</i> + IND – pres.
Conjectural		
COND – Pres	n/a	<i>Todo me indica que</i> + imp., pret.
COND – Past	n/a	<i>Todo me indica que</i> + pluperfect
Press		
COND – Pres	pres./fut. + <i>paraît-il</i>	imp./pres./fut. + <i>por lo visto</i>
COND – Past	passé composé + <i>paraît-il</i>	pres. perf. / preterit + <i>por lo visto</i>

TABLE 2.4 (continued)

Inferential		
COND – Pres	n/a	imp./pres./fut. + <i>por lo visto</i>
COND – Past	n/a	pres. perf. / preterit + <i>por lo visto</i>

As Table 2.4 shows, the tests proposed are largely identical across the two languages. It should be recalled that Guentchéva (1994) has suggested the possibility that the press conditional in French could, in some instances, mark inference. However, since this is usually considered impossible, I will not be specifying a separate test for any possible cases of the conditional being used in an inferential manner. However, in the light of Guentchéva’s (1994: 30) analysis of a press conditional token appearing to mark inference, I will be attentive to tokens whose context and co-texts suggest an inferential nature, along the same lines as García Negroni (2016: 10) has done for the examples seen in (27). In (27), the indication that the prosecutor thought to seek Kirchner’s arrest is known not directly but rather from a deduction made from drafts of his legal suit, which included that measure. In the case of French, if any press conditional appears in contexts which suggest that an inference has been made (as the text in (27-3) does), these tokens will be noted and analyzed for that possibility.

2.3 Analytical Framework

Different varieties of texts are associated with different linguistic features (Biber and Conrad: 2019: 1-2). The words and grammatical constructions common in one text type may very well be rare or not found in another. As is evidenced by its name, the press conditional is associated tightly with the press in both French and Spanish, and it can be thought of as a register or stylistic feature of journalistic language. These concepts will be defined in section §2.3.1. To the extent that the press conditional can be defined as a register feature, and therefore useful to journalists, it is necessary to establish a working understanding of the aims of journalistic discourse and how the press conditional’s meaning and form might be useful to journalists. I will lay out these concepts in §2.3.2.

2.3.1 Register and Style

It is not controversial to say that the press conditional is a linguistic feature of journalism. One merely need to open a newspaper to see that newspapers in French and Spanish make use of it. However, it is necessary to understand what its status is as a linguistic feature in the journalistic text type. Biber and Conrad (2019: 1-2) define three ways to understand the linguistic features of texts. If a feature represents a conventional element of a text, it is reflective of the text’s *genre*. These include features such as the headlines of newspapers and the opening and closing of letters; they are needed to establish the text type itself. To the extent that the presence of a linguistic element serves the text’s achieving of its communicative aims, its presence can be understood as a function of *register*. Biber and Conrad (2019: 18) give the example of reported speech and passive forms in newspaper stories. News articles do not use

passive voice because it identifies them as news stories, it is rather the case that the passive voice is useful in newswriting. From the register perspective, a linguistic feature in a text may be more frequent if its meaning or form is especially adept at serving the needs of a text. If a feature is used for its perceived aesthetic value, it is a *stylistic* feature.

Despite its close link to the press, the press conditional cannot be said to be a genre feature since the press conditional, despite its name and frequency in newspapers, is not a conventionalized or necessary feature of journalistic texts, as would be bylines, headlines, or mastheads. Even if newspapers must generally mark when a fact is unconfirmed, there are other means to mark uncertainty in both French and Spanish. If we theorize that the press conditional is an especially efficient way of marking uncertainty through verbal syntax, without the need for extra wording, we have described the press conditional through the perspective of register.

Insofar as the press conditional competes with alternate markers of uncertainty in the press (such as Sp. *al parecer* ‘it seems’), the use of the press conditional could have stylistic implications under Biber and Conrad’s (2019: 2) definition of the term. However, when using that term, I would rather not make an appeal to aesthetic preferences without a more rigorous framework in which to understand the concept of aesthetics. There is no evidence that its use is an aesthetic choice. Rather, I will use a broader understanding of style as proposed by Enkvist (1978). He defines style as an “impression arrived at through comparison” (Enkvist 1978: 174). He explains that, in order to arrive at an idea of a text’s style, “a text is compared with a network of other texts or text types which are regarded as significantly related to the original text, and therefore worth the comparison” (Enkvist 1978: 174-75). This is akin to Marnette’s (2005: 305) description of the press conditional’s use when she observes that the construction is more frequent in *Le Monde* than in other newspapers. Rather than understanding style as an aesthetic preference, she argues that it serves *Le Monde*’s use of more extensive measures to mark uncertainty, leading to its greater frequency. If we adopt Enkvist’s (1978) definition of style, the press conditional can be seen as either a stylistic feature, a register feature (under Biber and Conrad’s (2019) definition), or both.

Since the data collected in this investigation will bear on the frequency of the conditional in various contexts, a stylistic preference, in the context of this investigation, should be understood as a greater or lesser relative frequency of the press conditional in the comparison of two similar contexts (i.e., across news articles, across newspapers, etc.). Although it would be interesting to evaluate the aesthetic value of the press conditional, that is an altogether different study.

2.3.2 Defining the Aims of Journalistic Language

Broadly speaking, the press aims to inform people about the world around them, explain and comment on the information it provides, as well as to entertain and to promote social cohesion (Albert 2007: 34-35). In a democratic and pluralistic society, it is a channel for political expression and shapes political life (Albert 2007: 36). In a market economy, the press is also an object of consumption and is shaped to promote and further economic interests (Albert 2007: 37). In short, the press does not just transmit information but intersects with multiple aspects of life in the day-to-day world. While the news the press reports is meant to represent the “real world,” as the constructivist model of news points out, news is simply whatever is reported as news (Derville 1999: 152). The choice of what is news lies with professional newsmakers and

what they view as newsworthy and relevant to their audience (Cotter 2010: 112).⁴⁴ In essence, news is a construct and one with a certain intentionality behind it.

This study, however, is not designed to reveal the construct but to understand how the press conditional participates in this construct and how the needs of this discourse condition its use. Primarily, journalists and readers alike understand news discourse to be true. It is this claim to truth that separates journalism from other kinds of discourse. Broersma (2010: 25) states:

Journalism's claim to truth is the main feature of the journalism discourse. It is its *raison d'être*, distinguishing journalism from entertainment as well as from political opinion. This claim to truth legitimizes journalism's special position as Fourth Estate. As a trustee of the public, it professionally reports and critically investigates social reality. For the common good, it distinguishes facts from fiction, lies and biased comments. As such, this promise of truthfulness is the basis for the social code by journalists and their reading audience (25).

This claim to truth is ensured by what Charaudeau (2006: para. 5) calls the *contrat de communication* (communicative contract). He observes that the journalist acts as an objective and external narrator who responsibly consults sources and demonstrates evidence for the facts they are reporting (Charaudeau 2006: para.16).⁴⁵ This also includes acknowledging instances where the journalist may not have evidence for their report, which recalls precisely what appears to be the *prima facie* function (and lay understanding) of the press conditional: the journalist is marking, as is their duty, that the information that they report may not be true.

The *contrat de communication* is not ensured, however, simply by a journalist's assurances that they are objectively relaying the truth. Journalists must also demonstrate and maintain credibility (Cotter 2010: 42). Credibility derives from the accuracy of journalists' reporting and writing (Cotter 2010: 36) Cotter (2010: 38) defines *reporting* specifically as "the gathering of facts" and *writing* as the skillful communication of those facts through the written word.⁴⁶ Errors of fact suggest inadequate and inaccurate reporting (Cotter 2010: 42). This, in turn, undermines credibility. However, it is not enough to gather the correct facts; one must also correctly convey them. In this sense, writing is also implicated in a journalist's credibility. As writers, journalists must heed journalism's *prescriptive imperative* or rules of language usage (Cotter 2010: 40-41). Failure to heed the prescriptive imperative also undermines accuracy of writing and, consequently, credibility (Cotter 2010: 42). One can link this value of credibility to the claim to truth identified by Broersma (2010). A journalist's claim to truth is as good as their

⁴⁴ "Irrespective of journalistic communicative goals, the news media select information and topics to present based on the same principles used by interlocutors in conversation: communication, persuasion, connection, and articulation of identity. As with a conversation, the 'news interlocutors' make assessments about shared or prior knowledge, what might be of interest, what would be offensive or proper, what information is wanted or needed" Cotter (2010: 112).

⁴⁵ "Ensuite, l'événement ayant été sélectionné (selon des critères de saillance), il s'agit pour le journaliste de rapporter les faits de la façon la plus précise possible, avec, comme on le dit en narratologie, un point de vue de narrateur externe qui tenterait de décrire fidèlement la succession des faits, et de mettre en évidence (ou à suggérer quand il n'en a pas la preuve) la logique d'enchaînements entre ceux-ci. Il en est de même pour l'activité qui consiste à rapporter des paroles, des déclarations, des discours et les réactions qui s'ensuivent" (Charaudeau 2006: para. 16).

⁴⁶ Cotter's (2010: 36-43) terms *writing* and *reporting* have more specific meanings here than they do in everyday usage. In her explanation, Cotter (2010: 41) emphasizes that these are separate skills, explaining that it is possible to be a "good reporter" which does not imply necessarily that one is a good writer.

credibility, which is as good as their accuracy in the domains of reporting and writing. If the press conditional marks that a reporter is uncertain about a fact, it may imply that their reporting is not accurate. If a journalist violates the prescriptive injunction against the press conditional, the journalist has not heeded the prescriptive imperative, thus making for inaccurate writing. In both cases, the undermining of accuracy should result in the undermining of credibility.

In the light of journalism's reliance on language use to sustain its claim to truth, the fact that the conditional is addressed in style guides in French and Spanish is, therefore, significant. Cotter (2010: 192) claims that "reporters, no matter their nationality, have easy access to style guides and in-house style manuals and are expected to consult them daily." This should suggest that mentions of the press conditional in French and Spanish style guides implies that the use of the conditional is a part of journalistic consciousness in both languages and that journalists and editors alike are aware of the consequences of its misuse as regards accuracy and credibility. *El País's* injunction against the press conditional as both bad grammar and bad journalism is a perfect illustration of concern for these discursive aims playing out in the pages of a newspaper style guide.

This said, news language does change in response to other journalistic needs that may conflict with the prescriptive imperative. Cotter (2003) outlines the emergence of conjunctions *and* and *but* in English in sentence-initial position. Such connectors had long been proscribed from use (Cotter 2003: 52-53). However, in the latter decades of the 20th century, sentence-initial *and* and *but* had become accepted practice (Cotter 2003: 66). Cotter (2003: 66, 69) frames this as a shift from a "text-oriented to an audience-oriented mode of discourse" and as a "response to changing requirements of journalistic practice such as providing quotes, and to clarify narrative relations within the journalistic text." Essentially, journalists were seeking a more spoken style at the same time as they were placing more emphasis on the number of sources and quotes included in their reports. Communicative needs were seen to outweigh prescriptive concerns. In her book, Cotter (2010: 211) calls this the choice between the *prescriptive imperative* and the *pragmatic alternative*. Since both French and Spanish style guides make it clear that improper use of the press conditional risks transgressing the prescriptive imperative, its use could be tied to the efficiency with which it codes uncertainty.

2.4 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have outlined an in-depth study of the press conditional in the journalistic context in French and Spanish. I have described a corpus consisting of two French newspapers and two Spanish newspapers that will allow me to investigate variation between newspapers as well as to better quantify the actual frequency of the press conditional. I have outlined the paraphrases in French and Spanish that will be used to extract tokens of the press conditional from the corpus. I have established an analytical framework in order to understand the press conditional as register and stylistic feature of journalistic texts that considers the greater aims of journalistic discourse and its claim to truth. In Chapter 3, I will present my findings for French. In Chapter 4, I will present my findings for Spanish. In Chapter 5, I will present comparative findings between the two languages.

3 THE PRESS CONDITIONAL IN FRENCH

3.1 Form and Frequency of the Press Conditional

In this chapter, I first examine the forms and frequency of the press conditional in French. I find that the data here bears out prior claims in the literature: the present conditional is most frequent with a present reading, while the past conditional is used for past events. I confirm that the present conditional with a prospective reading is rare, as it is not present in the corpus. I then analyze how the press conditional is used within the newspapers. I find that article type is not explanatory with respect to the use of the press conditional in French. Rather, I draw a distinction between conditionals serving to report information (reporting conditionals) and those that serve to reprise discourse (discursive conditionals). This distinction is shown here to correlate with article type, when a high-level split between news and commentary is made. Reporting and discursive conditionals are found at relatively similar rates in news articles, while reporting conditionals are rare in commentary, unlike discursive conditionals. The press conditional also frequently accompanies quantification in reportative contexts in journalistic texts. Discursive conditionals prove interesting because of their rarity in commentary in *Libération* and their relatively higher frequency in *Le Monde*. I find that *Le Monde*'s more extensive use of the discursive conditional in its commentary articles serves to signal a consistently journalistic style while also demonstrating that the press conditional appears to be a stereotypical feature of journalistic writing in French. Finally, I argue that, as used in journalistic texts, the press conditional can be seen as a marker of *non-prise-en-charge*, as proposed by Abouda (2001).

In the first sorting of the data, press conditionals in each newspaper were extracted and tabulated. This yielded a total of 230 tokens across the French corpus. Tokens were sorted by form: present, past or compound past conditional. Because the corpus yielded no tokens of the compound past conditional, it will not be further treated here.⁴⁷ In §3.1.1, I discuss the frequency of the press conditional in the French corpus and in its constituent newspapers. In §3.1.2, I examine the forms of the press conditional and their temporal reference as observed in this corpus.

3.1.1 Frequency of the French Press Conditional

The frequencies of the press conditional across the corpus and for each newspaper are laid out in Tables 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3:

⁴⁷ This is unsurprising. Haillet (2002), who works with an extensive data set of 4,000 tokens in order to examine all uses of the French conditional tense, does not mention finding the *conditionnel surcomposé* in that study or in his previous studies (see Haillet (1993, 1998)).

TABLE 3.1 FREQUENCY OF THE PRESS CONDITIONAL IN THE FRENCH CORPUS

Form	n	%	Freq. per 1000 words	
Present	136	59.1%	.27	/1000w
Past	94	40.9%	.18	/1000w
Total	230	100%	.45	/1000w

TABLE 3.2 FREQUENCY OF THE PRESS CONDITIONAL IN *LE MONDE*

Form	n	%	Freq. per 1000 words	
Present	110	67.5%	.35	/1000w
Past	53	32.5%	.17	/1000w
Total	163	100%	.52	/1000w

TABLE 3.3 FREQUENCY OF THE PRESS CONDITIONAL IN *LIBÉRATION*

Form	n	%	Freq. per 1000 words	
Present	26	38.8%	.13	/1000w
Past	41	61.2%	.21	/1000w
Total	67	100%	.34	/1000w

Of the 230 tokens collected in this study, the majority come from *Le Monde*, with 163 tokens compared to *Libération*'s 67 tokens. The data here confirm Marnette's (2005: 305) finding that the frequency of the press conditional is higher in *Le Monde*. In my own corpus, *Le Monde* featured the press conditional at rate of .52 occurrences for every 1000 words, while *Libération* featured the press conditional at a rate of .34 occurrences for every 1000 words. Previously, Marnette (2005: 305) had found that *Le Figaro* had the least frequent occurrence of the press conditional among *Le Figaro*, *Le Monde*, *Libération* and Belgian *Le Soir*.⁴⁸ In *Le Figaro*, it appeared at a rate of 0.2 occurrences per 1000 words. For purposes of discussion, if *Le Figaro*'s use of the press conditional could be thought to be "infrequent," then one might characterize the press conditional as rather frequent in *Le Monde* and somewhat frequent in *Libération*. However, more studies of the press conditional's rates of frequency in other newspapers are needed to

⁴⁸ Marnette (2005: 305) found that *Le Monde* had a rate of 2 occurrences of the press conditional for every 1000 words, *Le Soir* a rate of 2.6 per 1000 words, *Libération* a rate of 0.5 per 1000 words, and *Le Figaro* a rate of .2 per 1000 words. Her newspaper corpus was more limited than my own and focused only on sets of articles related to a particular topic (see §1.3.3).

establish more precise descriptions of what constitutes “frequent” and “infrequent” rates of use of the press conditional.

At the whole-corpus level, the present conditional is more common than the past conditional (59.1% of tokens versus 40.1%). However, the present conditional is relatively more common in *Le Monde*, which features 110 tokens (67.5%) of the present conditional compared to 53 (32.5%) tokens of the past conditional. Conversely, *Libération* uses the past conditional more frequently, yielding 41 tokens of the past conditional (61.2% of its tokens) and only 26 tokens (38.8%) of the present conditional. Previous literature has generally claimed that the past conditional should be more frequent in newspapers (Vatrican 2010: 86). In her study of reportative uses of the future and conditional tenses in European Portuguese, Oliveira (2015b) argues:

Focusing again on the question of the relative frequency mentioned by Duarte (2009a), we have noticed that in news reports the synthetic future is indeed less recurring than the compound form. This fact cannot be seen apart from the characteristics of the genre: news is meant primarily to report facts and events. For this reason, the compound future is more common in these texts, in that it refers always to non- stative situations (113 – 14).

In European Portuguese, the compound future is used to report unconfirmed past events and is equivalent to the French past conditional, while the synthetic future is used for unconfirmed ongoing states and is equivalent to the French present conditional.⁴⁹ Since the compound future is more common in her corpus, Oliveira (2015b) argues that this must be due to the fact that news is oriented towards the past. This argument would suggest that *Le Monde* is an anomalous case when it uses the present conditional more frequently than the past conditional and that *Libération* should be understood as the more ‘typical’ newspaper.

However, there are reasons to believe that the temporality of news is not universally oriented towards the past. Neiger (2007: 311) argues that despite naïve perceptions that the news media chronicle only what has happened, what will happen has an important place in news.⁵⁰ This means that the French data here do not necessarily conflict with what Oliveira (2015b: 113-14) calls the “characteristics of the news genre.” The temporality of the news has shifted over time. Neiger (2007) observes that in the age of the Internet, “newness,” which dictates newsworthiness, now covers only a relatively short period of time:

⁴⁹ In European Portuguese, the compound future (or future perfect) is used like the past conditional in French. Thus, *O sujeito terá fugido a pé* ‘The individual [will have fled] on foot’ is equivalent to *L’individu aurait fui à pied* ‘The individual [would have fled] on foot.’ The synthetic (or simple) future is used where French uses the present conditional. Thus, *A prensa americana diz que serão originários da Rússia* ‘The American press says that they [will be] from Russia’ is equivalent to French *La presse américaine dit qu’ils seraient originaires de Russie* ‘The American press says that they [would be] from Russia.’ In European Portuguese, the reportative synthetic and compound future forms serve the functions of the past and present press conditional in French (examples taken from Oliveira (2015b: 102, 111).

⁵⁰ “Here, contrary to the perception of journalists as chroniclers of their epoch, recorders of annals, and thus distinct from poets (according to Aristotle’s classical distinction in Chapter 9 of the ‘Poetics’), we meet journalists in their full might as creators of texts of ‘reality’ that has not yet occurred and may never come to be. That is, this ‘reality’ – which journalists report – happens only on the pages of the newspaper or on the air: from meetings that never take place, through strikes called off at the last moment, to chemical missiles that never leave their launching pad” (Neiger 2007: 311).

Therefore, to stay relevant any news vehicle in the saturated arena has to be able to say something new about the event, and when new information on the event itself is no longer available, only its future outcomes can be deemed new (319).

While Neiger's (2007) commentary bears on the reporting of future events, a domain in which the French press conditional may play little part, the idea that a newspaper like *Le Monde*, whose evening newspaper publication schedule means that it is delayed vis-à-vis morning newspapers like *Libération*, may not always be oriented towards the recent past but towards the currently ongoing and the yet-to-be. In fact, its ability to provide new content while maintaining its publication schedule represents a real point of concern for *Le Monde*:

La fonction première du Monde est d'informer. Son information doit être originale : cette originalité, qui se traduit par la volonté d'exclusivité dans la recherche des nouvelles et le souci de la pertinence dans leur traitement, n'est pas seulement pour *Le Monde* une manière de se distinguer de ses concurrents, **elle est aussi le seul moyen de les devancer pour ne pas être handicapé le lendemain en province face à des quotidiens plus frais** (*Le Monde* 2002: 6). (bolding mine)

Therefore, unlike *Libération*, *Le Monde*'s more frequent use of the present conditional may arise from an orientation of its reporting towards the present and future. While the temporal orientation of news has changed over time, *Le Monde*'s publication schedule has not, and the newspaper must avail of itself of novel forms of newsworthy "newness" found in the present and future.⁵¹ It is worth noting however that McLaughlin (2020: §4.3.1) finds that news oriented towards the future is common in the historical press and that a future of orientation of the press might not be a modern phenomenon.

3.1.2 Forms of the Press Conditional

The forms of the French press conditional generally mirror the temporal readings of the indicative tenses which they replace. The present press conditional may be used for events and states that are simultaneous with the moment of enunciation or posterior to it, similar to the simple present indicative; the past conditional describes events prior to the moment of enunciation, as does the *passé composé* (Guentchéva 1994: 14). However, while neither form requires a temporal marker to receive present and past readings, future events reported in the present conditional require a future time marker (Gosselin 2001: 61-62). The usage of the present conditional for future events is considered rare (Haillet 2002: 76). The French corpus's insights into these claims are examined in sections §3.1.2.1 and §3.1.2.2.

3.1.2.1 The Present Conditional

Gosselin (2001: 61-62) describes the press conditional in French as having the same temporality as the present indicative: the present conditional can refer to the present or future,

⁵¹ It is worth noting however that McLaughlin (2020: §4.3.1) finds that news oriented towards the future is common in the historical press. The future of orientation of the press might not be a modern phenomenon.

while excluding a past reading. I did not find any data suggesting otherwise. Examples of the present conditional to convey states simultaneous to the moment of enunciation are presented in (1) and (2):

- (1) TMC, quant à elle, **s'intéresserait** à "Une famille en or".
 'TMC [**would be interested**] in "Une famille en or"
 MONDEI, 19 FOLIE
 ≠ allait s'intéressait, paraît-il
 ≠ je dirais qu'il s'intéresse
 = **s'intéresse, paraît-il**
- (2) Y **rôderait** même le fantôme de l'acrobate Louis Borsalino, qui avait chuté en 1935 sur cette scène, où une douche de lumière éclaire soudain un piano à queue
 'There [**would roam**] the phantom of the acrobat Louis Borsalino, who had fallen down onto the stage in 1935, in the place where a shower of light suddenly illuminates a grand piano.'
 LIBEII, 26CHATELET
 ≠ allait rôder
 ≠ je dirais qu'il y rode
 = **y rôde, paraît-il**

In the cases of (1) and (2), the information relayed by the present press conditional is valid for the time of enunciation, which in this context is grounded in the newspaper's date of publication. In (1), the phantom roams the theater, and in (2), the channel TMC is currently interested in the show *Une famille en or*. As stated above, without a future time marker, such present-moment readings are the only reading possible for this form.

Haillet (2002: 76) remarks that the present conditional can have future reference if there is a future time marker to induce a prospective reading. I present the example given by Gosselin (2001: 62) in (3):

- (3) Selon ce journaliste, le Président **partirait** mardi
 'According to this journalist, the President [**would leave**] Tuesday'
 ≠ allait partir mardi
 ≠ je dirais qu'il part mardi
 = **partira mardi, paraît-il**

In (3), the adverb *mardi* accompanied by a present conditional forces a prospective reading of the utterance, as it would if the utterance were in the present indicative: *le président part mardi* 'the president leaves Tuesday.' Otherwise, the reader assumes that the president is leaving 'today' (the date the newspaper is published). None of the tokens of the present conditional in my corpus matched the example in (3). This would confirm Haillet's (2002: 76) observation that this usage is very rare in French. In his own corpus of 4,000 tokens of the conditional, only five had a prospective reading like that seen in (3) (Haillet 2002: 76).⁵² Since a corpus of a constructed

⁵² It is not clear how many of these 4,000 tokens that Haillet (2002) refers to are specifically of the press type since that study is not quantitative in nature.

week of newspaper editions is supposed to be statistically equivalent to six months' content, the corpus here would confirm that the construction is extremely uncommon.

3.1.2.2 The Past Conditional

The data confirms that the past conditional always marks events prior to the time of enunciation. Examples from each newspaper are given in (4) and (5):

- (4) Selon des sources du secteur, le groupe Ibosa **aurait fait** une offre de 77 millions d'euros pour le terrain.
'According to sources from the sector, the Ibosa group [would have made] an offer of 77 million euros for the land.'
MONDEVI, 42MADRID
- (5) 15 - C'est le nombre de dignitaires du régime nord-coréen qu'**aurait fait exécuter** le dirigeant Kim Jong-un depuis le début de l'année, selon un rapport des renseignements sud-coréens publié mercredi.
'15 – The number of dignitaries of the North Korean regime that Kim Jong-un [would have had executed] since the beginning of the year, according to a South Korean intelligence report published Wednesday.'
LIBEIII, 9#15
≠ allait avoir fait exécuter
≠ je dirais qu'il fait exécuter
≠ eût fait exécuter
= **a fait exécuter, paraît-il**

In (4), property developer Ibosa's final offer has been made, while in (5) Kim's executions have been carried out, both prior to the newspaper's publication. As completed events in the past, they can only be represented by the press conditional. The corpus did not yield any tokens that deviated from prior descriptions in the literature.

3.1.3 Conclusion: Form and Frequency

In §3.1, I have determined the frequency of the press conditional in a corpus of two national French newspapers: *Le Monde* and *Libération*. With respect to variations in the frequency of the press conditional across newspapers, these findings confirmed earlier work on newspapers in French undertaken by Marnette (2005). However, the data did suggest that the assumption that the past press conditional should be more frequent than the present was not entirely correct and may be rooted in incorrect conceptions of the temporality of news. *Le Monde* featured many more present press conditionals, perhaps due to both its publication schedule and, more generally, modern print news's orientation towards the future. As observed in this corpus, the present conditional and the past conditional conformed to descriptions found in prior studies that have modeled their temporal meaning (Gosselin 2005; Guentchéva 1994). The present conditional routinely coincided with the moment of enunciation, while the past conditional routinely described events prior to the moment of enunciation. It has also been observed that the present conditional may have future reference if the phrase includes a time marker that refers to a

point in the future (Gosselin 2001: 61-62). None of the press conditionals in this corpus referred to future events, confirming Haillet's (2002) finding that use of the present conditional for a future event is exceedingly rare.

3.2 The Function of the Press Conditional in French Newspaper Writing

In order to understand the press conditional as it is used in the French press, it is necessary to understand its embedding within a newspaper and the motivations for its use. While it is established that the conditional reports unconfirmed facts, it is worth examining whether the unconfirmed facts of particular situations trigger the press conditional more often than others. For example, the press conditional can be used to mitigate legal responsibility in French in cases of libel (Le Bohec 2010: 147). From this perspective, it could be useful to examine whether the press conditional is frequent in contexts wherein the journalist might risk libel. However, there may be other explanations. It has already been observed in the literature that there is a link between the reporting of figures and statistics and the use of the press conditional in French journalism (Haillet 2002: 82-83). The objective of this section is to identify in this section a comprehensive description of the press conditional's functions.

3.2.1 The Press Conditional, Article Type and Genre

Since studies of the press conditional tend to examine tokens separately from their press context, there are not many models of how to determine its function in newspapers. In one study that does examine the embedding of reportative tense uses within a newspaper corpus, Oliveira (2015b) uses what Cotter (2010: 143) would call article "types." Oliveira (2015b) claims:

The future is mostly used: with a reportative value in a context of crime reports (cf. Boston corpus); with a temporal value in general news reports; and with both modal and inferential values in opinion texts. The conditional, apart from crime reports, has a predominantly modal meaning. It is mostly used: with a reportative value in a context of crime reports; with a modal value in opinion texts; with both temporal and inferential values in general news reports (118).

Oliveira's (2015b) conception of article types is fairly broad, distinguishing only between "crime reports" and "general news." More categories certainly exist. Alongside crime, article types include court reports, meeting reports, speeches/press conferences, obituaries, sports, business, community, lifestyle, education, government, religion, food, and medicine (Cotter 2010: 142). It is logical to consider that the frequency of the press conditional could be a function of article type. The type of article has consequences for an article's language, structure and content as Cotter (2010: 144) explains: "Each type has different conventions of reporting and writing (*crime stories* require 'more facts' and attributed detail and *speech stories* require 'good quotes' and witnessed detail, for example)." One way of analyzing the French data is, therefore, to understand the press conditional's use and frequency in terms of article type.

Cotter's (2010:144) typology, however, applies more easily to a local newspaper rather than a national newspaper like *Le Monde* or *Libération*, which makes it difficult to apply to this

corpus.⁵³ She acknowledges that sections like local and international news articles vary in terms of type and are organized on the basis of their geographical orientation rather than story type (Cotter 2010: 144). *Le Monde*'s outlining of its articles in *Le Style du Monde* is a mix of types (such as *compte-rendu d'audience* 'court report') and of what Cotter (2010: 143) calls genre types such as *récit* 'feature' or *témoignage* 'witness account.' Some appear specific to *Le Monde* itself such as the *kiosque* article type, which reviews how a news story is being reported in other press sources (Le Monde 2002: 61). Further complicating the picture is the fact that a particular story type can figure in various genre types. For example, if there were a natural disaster, reporting could come in the form of a *récit* or a *témoignage*. Another complicating factor is that it appears that the nature of the individual newspaper, to a certain extent, may lead to the creation of article types particular to that newspaper, such as the case of the *kiosque* articles in *Le Monde*.

To test the possibility that there might be a relationship between article type (and/or genre type) and the frequency of the press conditional, I examined articles that featured the most press conditionals in each newspaper. I started with the articles featuring the most tokens and then added articles until I had a sample representing approximately 30% of tokens in each newspaper. This would identify the top third of articles with the highest token counts in each newspaper. I applied Cotter's (2010) article types while using each newspapers' section headings to further aid classification. The results are outlined in Table 3.4:

TABLE 3.4 THE PRESS CONDITIONAL AND ARTICLE TYPE IN *LE MONDE*

LE MONDE					
Article	No. of Tokens	Section	Type	Genre	Summary
MONDEIV, 112EPIDEMIE	13	Planète	Medicine	News/Feature	Projections on the rates of obesity in Europe
MONDEI, 84SEWOL	6	Enquête	International	News/Feature	Relates reconstruction of events of the sinking of the Sewol ferry
MONDEIV, 88ALLEMAGNE	4	International & Europe	International (Politics)	News/Feature	Reports on political fallout of German government spying on corporations and politicians on behalf of the United States
MUNDOV, 4TAKATA	4	Économie & Entreprise	Business	News/Feature	Major recall of defective airbags manufactured by Takata

⁵³ Cotter (2010: 7) says explicitly that she "take[s] care to avoid the usual fronting of more internationally known papers, or of what counts as the US's prestige media." Although this does not serve me here, it provides for a more wholistic account of newspapers in the United States.

TABLE 3.4 (continued)

MUNDOV, 4TAKATA	4	Économie & Entreprise	Business	News/Feature	Major recall of defective airbags manufactured by Takata
MONDEII, 65DEUTSCHELAND	4	Économie & Entreprise	Business	News/Feature	Selling of Postbank
MONDEIV, 3NOUS	4	Débats	Opinion	Opinion	Editorial post-Charlie Hebdo calling for the French people
MONDEI, 3BOLIVIE	3	Planète	International	News/Feature	Facts related to opium trade in Bolivia
MONDEII, 13POLITICO	3	Plein Cadre	International (Journalism)	News/Feature	Politico's arrival in the EU press corps
MONDEII, 11CHAMPION	3	Science et Médecine	Medecine	News/Feature	Scientific facts related to benefits of daily exercise
MONDEIII, 94DEAL	3	Idées	Opinion	Opinion	Editorial on Greek debt crisis
MONDEIV, 51STRATEGIE	3	International	International (Politics)	News/Feature	Discusses possible reasons for Kim Jong Un's absence in Moscow for Victory Day
Total Tokens	50 of 163 (31%)				
LIBERATION					
Article	No. of Tokens	Section	Type	Genre	Summary
LIBEI, 6RAPT	6	Monde	International	News/Feature	Boko Haram kidnappings in Nigeria
LIBEIII, 9BANGUI	6	Monde	International	News/Feature	Reports on cases of sexual abuse committed by French soldiers in Africa
LIBEVI, 12KAMIKAZE	6	France	National	News/Feature	Biography of a French-born jihadist

TABLE 3.4 (continued)

LIBEV, 10RIEN	3	Monde	International	News/Feature	Reports on state of Burundi after return of president following a coup d'état
LIBEVI, 10FINANCE	3	France	National	News/Feature	Assessment of President François Hollande's politics with respect to the finance industry
Total Tokens	24 of 67 (36.0%)				

As shown in Table 3.4, this sampling of the corpus yielded 11 articles with *Le Monde*. The article with the highest count of tokens featured 13 uses of the press conditional, while other articles featured 6, 4 or 3 tokens. This came to 50 tokens in all, providing a sample that represented 31% of the corpus. For *Libération*, this sampling yielded 5 articles, three of which featured 6 tokens of the press conditional and two of which featured 2 tokens. At 24 tokens in all, this sampling represented around 36% of *Libération's* tokens. As this sampling of articles with the highest frequencies of the press conditional shows, there are clear difficulties in associating the press conditional in French with specific article types. With respect to what Cotter (2010) calls genre, it is clear that the press conditional is featured most frequently in articles of the news/feature genre, which is what Oliveira (2015b: 118) found for the reportative future and conditional in European Portuguese.⁵⁴ *Le Monde*, however, features the press conditional in opinion articles as well.

The data does not bear out the idea that a particular article type favors the press conditional. In *Le Monde*, the press conditional is featured in articles covering finance and medicine. In fact, the article with the highest token count reports on projections regarding future obesity rates in Europe. With respect to anything that resembles crime or misconduct, the press conditional is used to relate the events of the Sewol Ferry Disaster and the discovery of German cooperation with American surveillance. In these articles, the press conditional is used for the articles' boilerplates, giving background information to larger, ongoing stories.⁵⁵ In the case of the Sewol Ferry, the events leading up to the ship's sinking are known only through reconstruction, and the press conditional appears to reflect the fact that the exact events leading up to the disaster are not certain. The account of the German whistleblower's discovery of the collaboration between German and US surveillance powers is also unsourced and may represent a story that has circulated but never been confirmed.

In *Libération*, the most clear-cut case of the press conditional with respect to criminal allegations is seen in the article on allegations of sexual misconduct made against French troops in the Central African Republic. The case appears not have been fully adjudicated at the time of

⁵⁴ News articles and feature articles are difficult to separate at times. Per Cotter (2010: 144), news is fact-oriented while features have a "human interest" or "quirky dimension" to them. Features might also lack the "timeliness" of news. *Le Monde* distinguishes between the *récit* 'news stories' and the *récit-événement* 'feature' where the latter permits a "livelier" style. However, they are both labelled *récit* (Le Monde 2002: 63). Given their similarities and the fact that Cotter (2010: 144-45) distinguishes *news* and *features* from *opinion*, I use categorize them together.

⁵⁵ Boilerplates represent unattributed information that provides the background for stories that run across multiple days or which have not been covered in some time (Cotter 2010: 175).

which documents relating to the investigation were leaked. Also criminal in nature are the Boko Haram kidnappings as well as (perhaps) the article on the life of a young French jihadist who has died in Syria. In the former, written around the anniversary of the kidnappings, the status of the abducted girls remains unclear. The press conditional is used with figures pertinent to the story (the number of girls kidnapped, the number that have not returned to school, the number that have been kidnapped subsequently, etc.). It is worth noting that in these cases quantification (as well as uncertainty) likely motivates the press conditional, as the press conditional is often used to report figures (Haillet 2002: 82-83). Details of the Frenchman's life in Syria are reported in the press conditional; this likely reflects the fact that he was living in the Islamic State and that details of this segment of his life were more difficult to obtain. The article makes clear that what is known about his life is known only through the jihadist's social media contacts.

Elsewhere, the press conditional appears to capture uncertainty in a very broad sense: the state of affairs in Burundi following a coup, the benefits of exercise, Politico's arrival in Europe or President Hollande's dubious success in achieving greater fiscal regulation in France. To adapt Oliveira's (2015b) phrasing, it appears that the French press conditional is a feature of news reports in general. It is also found, at least in *Le Monde*, to a certain degree in opinion articles. This is an interesting result, as Oliveira (2015b: 117-118) found that reportative uses of the future and conditional were rare in opinion articles in European Portuguese, which is, according to her argument, a consequence of opinion articles not being a reportative context.

The difference between news/feature and opinion also demonstrates a difference that is not accounted for by the idea of article type or genre alone. For example, when one compares a press conditional from an opinion article and one from a news/feature article, the element of uncertainty in each may not be of the same nature. Compare the news/feature token from (6) and the one appearing in an editorial in (7):

- (6) L'amende dépasse déjà le million de dollars. Takata **ne l'aurait pas** encore réglée.
'The fine already exceeds a million dollars. Takata [would not have settled] it yet.'
 4TAKATA, MUNDOV
- (7) Enfin, quatrième imposture: la définition donnée de la gauche. Une définition qui reflète la tentation populiste en vogue, qui voit dans les « élites » un groupe fondamentalement méprisant, « mondialiste », dont la seule motivation **serait** de trahir le peuple.
'Finally, a fourth falsehood: the definition given of the Left. A definition which reflects the populist tendency in vogue, which sees in the "elites" a fundamentally contemptuous group — "globalists" — whose only motivation [would be] to betray the people.'
 3NOUS, MONDEIV

In the case of (6), the press conditional serves to relate an uncertain fact: it seems (but it is not certain) that Takata has not yet paid the fine it owes. For whatever reason, the journalist does not feel that that fact is sufficiently substantiated. In (7), we see what has been called the polemical use of the press conditional: the editorialist is reprising discourse that they wish to refute. Uncertainty in that case derives from disbelief or skepticism of another's claim. This is not

“news” insofar as what is an appropriate characterization of the French Left, in an opinion context, is a question of interpretation and argument rather than a truthful representation of reality.

Overall, it is difficult in French to associate the press conditional with clear “types” of news. One could say that it is associated with the news/feature genre, but that is not especially insightful. The use of the conditional in (7) shows that the press conditional has uses that are not readily linked to uncertain facts in the way the one in (6) might be. In fact, the press conditional in (6) very much appears to be a unique form of speech reporting since it serves precisely to reprise discourse while divorcing that discourse’s claims from actually representing fact.⁵⁶ It is necessary therefore to find explanations that can account for the broad use of the press conditional and its embedding within newspapers while also accounting for the difference in function observed in (6) and (7).

3.2.2 The Press Conditional: Uncertainty and Confirmability

As has been stated above, the concept of uncertainty can arise for different reasons. In certain instances, the use of the press conditional leaves open the possibility that an event reported may not have taken place. Such an example can be seen in (8):

- (8) ‘Je me fous de l’innovation, **aurait** un jour **expliqué** M. Pincus à ses employés. Vous n’êtes pas plus intelligents que nos concurrents. Copiez juste ce qu’ils font.’
“*I don’t care about innovation,*” [would have explained] *M. Pincus to his employees one day. “You are not more intelligent than our competitors. Just copy what they do.”*
MONDEI, 50MARK

The article from which (8) is taken relates the history of the rise and fall of ambitious Silicon Valley entrepreneur Mark Pincus. If true, the anecdote would lend proof to the allegations that Pincus built his career on copying (or stealing from) his competitors. This is clearly a fairly loaded charge, and the press conditional mitigates the reporter’s responsibility for relaying this illustrative anecdote, since it is not presented as necessarily true. The source may be one of the employees who heard Pincus make this remark, but it is impossible to know because there is no explicit attribution. However, it is theoretically possible that the anecdote could be confirmed.

Conversely, there are conditionals that appear to be neither as sensitive nor uncertain as (8). For example, in (9), a reviewer uses the conditional to present a fact taken from chef Massimo Bottura’s memoir:

- (9) D’après Bottura, l’Américaine a joué un rôle fondamental dans l’évolution de sa cuisine – elle lui **aurait appris** à prendre de la distance, à faire preuve de pédagogie –, au même titre que les grands chez qui il a fait ses classes...
‘*According to Bottura, the American played a fundamental role in the evolution of his cooking — she [would have taught] him to take distance, to demonstrate his pedagogical competence – much as had the greats with whom he took his classes...*’

⁵⁶ The link between the press conditional and speech reporting has been made by Rosier (1999: 100) who places it on the borders of reported discourse.

The conditional clearly marks that the information has come to the reviewer secondhand (from reading the memoir). However, the extent to which the fact it reports can be said to be uncertain means that our understanding of what motivates the marking of a fact as uncertain must be different than that in (8). In (8), we can understand that providing anecdotal evidence that an entrepreneur has stolen from his competitors is more sensitive than what we read in (9). In (9), a chef simply claims that his wife has been influential in his career. As the person who lives his life, Bottura himself is as sure a source as there could be.

Another type of ‘uncertainty’ can be seen in (10), wherein *Le Monde* cites a report in the *Wall Street Journal*:

- (10) L'américain Uber **serait en train de négocier** avec plusieurs établissements l'octroi d'une ligne de crédit d'un milliard de dollars, soit 918 millions d'euros, affirmait vendredi 22 mai le Wall Street Journal.
'The American Uber [would be in the process of negotiating] with multiple establishments a loan grant of a billion dollars, or 918 million euros, the Wall Street Journal reported on May 22.'
MONDEVI, 99EMPRUNT

The original *Wall Street Journal* report does not present the negotiations as particularly uncertain: “Uber Technologies Inc. is seeking a \$1 billion credit line from banks, people familiar with the matter said, a move that could signal an eventual initial public offering.”⁵⁷ Uncertainty in this instance appears to relate not quite to the nature of the fact itself, but the fact that the journalist is relying on *The Wall Street Journal*'s reporting. The journalist may present this fact as uncertain since they have not done the reporting necessary, but *The Wall Street Journal* has. This may help explain the token in (9): the journalist is assigning responsibility for Bottura's claim about his wife to Bottura. As in (8), the facts, despite being presented as uncertain, can be confirmed. In fact, the nature of the source as well as its inclusion in the conditional's co-text, directs the reader to where such confirmation might be found.

However, as was seen in (7), uncertainty can arise from disbelief or skepticism. That example was taken from an editorial and served to aid the editorialist's argumentation. However, similar examples were found in news articles as well. (11) is taken from a news article:

- (11) À lire le Daily Express ou le Daily Mail, Bruxelles **menacerait** les bouilloires, grille-pain, tondeuses à gazon et autres attributs constitutifs de l'identité britannique.
'To read the Daily Express or the Daily Mail, Brussels [would threaten] the electric kettles, toasters, lawnmowers and other constitutive elements of British identity.'
MONDEIV, 134BRUXELLES

⁵⁷ Tan, Dana Mattioli, Telis Demos and Gillian. 2015. “Uber in Talks for \$1 Billion Credit Facility With Banks.” *Wall Street Journal*, May 22, 2015, sec. Tech. <https://www.wsj.com/articles/uber-in-talks-for-1-billion-credit-facility-with-banks-1432265901>.

In (11), the use of the press conditional allows the journalist to characterize the anti-European discourse of the British tabloids. The article is dedicated to explaining the consequences of the UK General Election on May 7 for the upcoming 2016 referendum regarding Britain's membership in the European Union. As in (7)—but unlike in (8), (9) or (10)—the token in (11) reports discourse but—in context—evacuates that token's claim to truth. To the extent that the example in (11) can be thought of as a kind of quotation, it serves to illustrate an element of the story.⁵⁸ However, the press conditional, in this instance, would appear to mark that that claim is essentially not true, underlining the viewpoint that anti-EU rhetoric in British tabloids verges on the hysteric.

In the context of journalism, which purports to relay the truth, one can say that some press conditionals add to the inventory of news of the day (as in (6), (8) and (9)) or serve as a specialized form of speech reporting (as in (7) and (11)). It is necessary to remark that these do not form discrete categories: examples like (9) and (10) clearly blend speech reporting and uncertainty. However, in a discourse that makes a claim to truth, the question of truth in (8) is distinct from the one in (11). In (8), there remains the question whether the event reported is true. (11) is purely discursive: it reprises discourse, but it is clear that that discourse is presented as not necessarily making a claim to truth.

In the interests of analysis, one way of formalizing the distinction seen in tokens like (8) and (11) (and of imposing discrete categories on their gradient nature) would be to think through their difference in terms of the pragmatic effect of the press conditional, which Gosselin (2001: 46-47) described as the press conditional's call for further confirmation of the information reported. He illustrates this trait by comparing the press conditional in (12) with the adverbs *peut-être* 'maybe' and *sans doute* 'without a doubt' in (13):

- (12) Au vu des premiers résultats, Monsieur X **serait réélu**
'In the light of the first results, Monsieur X [would be reelected]'
 (Gosselin 2001: 46-47)
- (13) Au vu des premiers résultats, Monsieur X est peut-être/sans doute réélu
'In the light of the first results, Monsieur X is maybe/without a doubt reelected'
 (Gosselin 2001: 46-47)

In (12), the press conditional not only suggests the possibility that Monsieur X has been reelected, it calls for the reader to await further confirmation. Gosselin (2001: 47) notes that the pragmatic effect is such that the journalist is indicating that the conclusion is not satisfactory without confirmation. In other words, the assertion is viewed as provisional. In (13), the journalist relays the possibility that Monsieur X has been reelected but makes no call for further confirmation. Although uncertain, the information is satisfactory enough. (12) clearly resembles examples seen in (6), (8) and (9), whose contents could be, theoretically, definitively confirmed or refuted: one could track down the source of the Pincus anecdote, one could read Bottura's memoir, or one could consult *The Wall Street Journal's* report on Uber's loan. To one degree or another, they represent a potential factual state of affairs. However, in (7) and (11), the context and co-text establish that the speaker views the content of those tokens as false (or so sufficiently doubtful as to be false) that the call for confirmation is essentially moot. In this light, it is

⁵⁸ Cotter (2010: 148) notes that quotes in news articles serve to either summarize the story or illustrate an element of it.

possible to say that not all press conditionals—in journalistic texts—make the same attenuated claim to truth.

3.2.2.1 Two Conditional Types: The Reporting Conditional (RC) and the Discursive Conditional (DC)

On the basis of the considerations above, we can determine two main types of press conditional on the basis of their call for confirmation. This call can be determined through context and co-text. This is illustrated with the tokens in (8) and (11), which have been expanded to include pertinent co-text in (14) and (15):

- (14) La société de San Francisco est d'abord accusée de copier systématiquement ses rivaux. Dès qu'un jeu fonctionne, elle en développe un clone en quelques semaines. ‘Je me fous de l'innovation, **aurait** un jour **expliqué** M. Pincus à ses employés. Vous n'êtes pas plus intelligents que nos concurrents. Copiez juste ce qu'ils font.’
‘From the outset, the San Franciscan company is accused of systematically copying its rivals. Once a game functions, it develops a clone of it within a few weeks. “I don’t care about innovation,” [would have explained] M. Pincus to his employees one day. “You are not more intelligent than our competitors. Just copy what they do.”’
MONDEI, 50MARK

= à confirmer

- (15) Souvent au mépris des faits, mais sans jamais être contredits, les tabloïds font leurs choux gras de la frénésie régulatrice de l'UE. À lire le Daily Express ou le Daily Mail, Bruxelles **menacerait** les bouilloires, grille-pain, tondeuses à gazon et autres attributs constitutifs de l'identité britannique.
‘Often with no concern for facts, but never contradicted, the tabloids thrive on exploiting the regulatory mania of the EU. To read the Daily Express or the Daily Mail, Brussels [would threaten] the electric kettles, toasters, lawnmowers and other constitutive elements of British identity.’
MONDEIV, 134BRUXELLES

≠ à confirmer

Whereas the co-text in (14) suggests that Pincus may have told his employees to plagiarize the work of rival companies, the preceding co-text in (15) explicitly states that the claims of the British tabloids ignore facts in favor of demonizing the EU: the conditional is used to serve the journalist’s disavowal of their inaccurate claims.

I consider instances where the press conditional reprises discourse that the journalist does not necessarily endorse (but does not refute) to be also of this second type. Such cases can be seen in (16) and (17):

- (16) Son agnosticisme devient scientifique: il ne croit pas aux idéologies, aux notions générales et aux grandes forces qui **feraient** l'histoire.

‘His agnosticism becomes scientific: he does not believe in ideologies, in general notions, or in the grand forces that [would make] history.’

MONDEIII, 8HORLOGER

≠ à confirmer

- (17) “Elles sont instables et, de ce fait, il est difficile de marcher dessus,” explique M. A. Il rappelle les carreleurs, qui refusent de refaire le travail, en imputant la responsabilité des malfaçons à Porcelanosa : sa colle et ses carreaux **seraient** de mauvaise qualité.

“They are unstable, and, therefore, it is difficult to walk on them,” explains Mr. A. He calls back the tile layers, who refuse to redo the work, putting the responsibility for the defects on Porcelanosa: its glue and tiles [would be] of bad quality.’

MONDEV, 49MALFAÇONS

≠ à confirmer

In (16), the press conditional echoes the widely shared notion that great forces are at work in the shaping of history, a belief not shared by the human subject of the article. While we do not know what the journalist thinks of this commonly held notion, the press conditional creates a certain rhetorical distance that parallels the subject’s “agnosticism.” In (17), the press conditional comes from a personal column warning readers of the pitfalls of housing renovations, and it is part of the back and forth over who is responsible for a failed tiling job. The press conditional is not meant to be confirmed, as the overall story is not meant to designate a responsible party between the tile manufacturer and the tile layer, but rather to illustrate one homeowner’s ongoing difficulties. In context, the press conditional can be said to be out of the realm of the confirmable since the question of who is responsible is not one to be solved. Rather, it is a means to capture contentious discourse while not privileging one side or the other.

Having established two conditional types, I designate those who pattern like (14) to be *reporting conditionals* (RC), since these are meant to not only report speech but to add the event reported in that speech as potentially part of the greater body of current events being reported. Those that pattern like the example in (15) will be called *discursive conditionals* (DC), which serve to reprise discourse while presenting that discourse as not making a claim to truth. I will admit that these names may not be ideal, however, any scholar working on the press conditional (especially in French) is faced with a proliferation of terminology. While adding two more does not solve that problem, this analysis will hopefully address others.

3.2.2.2 Quantifying Conditionals (QC): A Sub-Type

To the two types of conditional, I will add a quantifying sub-type. These are conditionals that appear with figures. Haillet (2002: 82 – 83) claims that this usage of the press conditional is “frequent” as do Dendale and Andrei (2015: 1), who describe it as “*très régulier*.” It was clear even from a cursory glance at the data that the press conditional frequently accompanied quantification. Since the goal of this study is to investigate the use of the press conditional in context, it would be useful to evaluate the frequency of the press conditional accompanying quantification. Examples of the reporting type and of the discursive type with quantification are shown in (18) and (19), respectively:

- (18) Ce mois-ci, Pirelli a choisi sa foulée de 250 mètres pour figurer la légèreté et l’endurance de ses pneumatiques. Le contrat **porterait** sur 5,5 millions de francs, chiffre que l’agent de miss Pérec, Annick Avierinos, refuse de confirmer.
‘This month, Pirelli has chosen her 250 meter stride to illustrate the lightness and endurance of its tires. The contract [would come to] 5,5 million francs, a number Miss Pérec’s agent refuses to confirm.’
 (Haillet 2002 : 82)
 = à confirmer
- (19) La croyance populaire selon laquelle il **faudrait boire de six à huit verres d’eau** par jour n’a aucun fondement scientifique, prévient la Dre Margaret McCartney dans un texte du British Medical Journal.⁵⁹
‘The popular belief which holds that it [would be necessary to drink] six to eight glasses of water a day has no scientific basis, warns Dr. Margaret McCartney in an article in the British Medical Journal.’
 ≠ à confirmer

In (18), the figure for Pirelli’s advertising contract with Pérec remains to be confirmed. In (19), the press conditional repeats the long-standing myth that one needs to drink around eight glasses of water a day for good health: the co-text makes clear that the claim is false. The conditional merely allows the notion to be reprised while being disavowed. Cases such as (18) qualify as quantifying reporting conditionals (Q-RC), while cases in (19) qualify as quantifying discursive conditionals (Q-DC).

3.2.2.3 The Embedding of the Press Conditional Types

In order to study the embedding of the press conditional types in news discourse, I will use a high-level news/commentary split. This split is suggested by the difference in the nature of the press conditional in the tokens found when I attempted to find a correlation between article type and genre. As shown in Table 3.4, two articles of *Le Monde* stood out because they were opinion rather than news (MONDEIII, 94DEAL and MONDEIV, 3NOUS). In both of these articles, all conditionals are of the discursive type. This suggested that in opinion articles, reprising others’ discourse for the purposes of argumentation (rather than relaying an unconfirmed fact) might be favored. This hypothesis is further bolstered by the fact that Oliveira (2015b: 117) had found that the reportative use of the future and conditional in European Portuguese was rare in opinion articles. If they are found in a non-reportative context in French, as seems to be the case in *Le Monde*, it is necessary to investigate why.

While there remains some debate about whether certain articles constitute news or commentary, I adapt Grosse’s (2001: 12) categorization as given in Table 3.5:

⁵⁹ Forget, Dominique. 2011. “Verres d’eau : le mythe déboulonné.” *L’Actualité*, August 22, 2011.
<https://lactualite.com/sante-et-science/verres-deau-le-mythe-deboulonne>

TABLE 3.5 CLASSIFICATION OF ARTICLES TYPES AS NEWS AND COMMENTARY

News	Commentary
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Hard news” // “Soft news” • News story • Feature • Report • Obituary • Informative articles • Analysis • Interview/Portrait 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statement • Commentary <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Editorial ○ Opinion • Humor column • Caricature • Reviews • Reader mail

For the purposes of this analysis, Grosse (2001) proves more useful than Cotter (2010) since he classifies articles along a news-commentary divide. He also includes more difficultly classified types, such as interviews. On the basis of this categorization, both conditional types as well their quantifying subtype will be marked for whether they appear in an article falling under the news or commentary category. As Cotter (2010: 101) notes, opinion must be labelled as such in newspapers. Articles were checked for any labelling and also read for content in order to be properly classified.

It should be acknowledged that the distinction between commentary articles and news articles can be somewhat subjective. Adam (1997: 10-11) notes that journalism manuals do not always agree on what types of articles count as which. Interviews, for example might be categorized by one book as news and as commentary by another. Grosse (2001: 12) designates the interview and analysis as “transitional” forms between the two but classifies them both as news. For the purposes of this study, these transitional forms will be considered ‘news’ and only ‘unambiguous’ forms of opinion will count as commentary. Cotter (2010: 60) describes news analysis as news stories with justified “editorializing”. Le Bohec (2010: 38) distinguishes analyses from editorials and says they are meant to clarify news events. On this basis, one can understand that analyses are an extension of informing.⁶⁰

⁶⁰ Per Jennifer McGuire, Editor in Chief of Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, on the difference between analysis and opinion:

“The challenge for all of us at CBC News is defining the line between analysis and opinion, and who gets to express those views.

Our hosts and reporters don't have free rein to say what they want about the issues of the day. Our Journalistic Policy Guide makes it clear that we're guided by the principle of impartiality, and that CBC journalists don't express their own personal opinion because it affects the perception of impartiality and could affect an open and honest exploration of an issue.

The key word here is "personal". An observation based on the facts of the issue, and years of experience covering a beat, which I would describe as analysis, isn't the same as a view that comes out of left field without supporting arguments, or in other words, opinion.”

—McGuire, Jennifer. 2013. “Opinion vs. Analysis.” *CBC News*, June 5, 2013, sec. Editor’s Blog. <https://www.cbc.ca/newsblogs/community/editorsblog/2013/06/opinion-vs-analysis.html>.

3.2.2.4 Results of the Classification of Tokens by Type

The results of the classification of the press conditional by type for the French corpus are presented in Table 3.6:

TABLE 3.6 DISTRIBUTION OF THE PRESS CONDITIONAL: CORPUS

Conditional Type	News n, %	Commentary n, %	Total n, %
RC	101, 43.9%	4, 1.7%	106, 45.7%
Present	34, 14.8%	0, 0.0%	35, 14.8%
Past	67, 29.1%	4, 1.7%	71, 30.9%
DC	37, 16.1%	22, 9.6%	59, 25.7%
Present	27, 11.7%	22, 9.6%	49, 21.3%
Past	10, 4.3%	0, 0.0%	10, 4.3%
Q-RC	66, 28.7%	0, 0.0%	66, 28.7%
Present	53, 23.0%	0, 0.0%	53, 23.0%
Past	13, 5.7%	0, 0.0%	13, 5.7%
Q-DC	0, 0.0%	0, 0.0%	0, 0.0%
	0, 0.0%	0, 0.0%	0, 0.0%
	0, 0.0%	0, 0.0%	0, 0.0%
Total	204, 88.7%	26, 11.3%	230, 100%
Present	114, 49.6%	22, 9.6%	136, 59.1%
Past	90, 39.1%	4, 1.7%	94, 40.9%

As shown in Table 3.6, no quantifying conditionals of the discursive type, as seen in (19), were found. All quantifying conditionals were of the reporting type. However, press conditionals appearing with a quantity constituted 28.3% of all tokens, confirming the association observed by Dendale and Andrei (2015: 1) and Haillet (2002: 82-83). Reporting and discursive conditionals were featured in news articles at rates of 44.3% and 16.1% of all tokens found in those articles. Reporting conditionals were infrequent in commentary (1.7%) of tokens, while 9.6% of press conditionals were found in opinion.

Tables 3.7 and 3.8 show the results of the classification for the individual newspapers:

TABLE 3.7 DISTRIBUTION OF THE PRESS CONDITIONAL IN *LIBÉRATION*

Conditional Type	News n, %	Commentary n, %	Total n, %
RC	32, 47.8%	1, 1.5%	33, 49.3%
Present	4, 6.0%	0, 0.0%	4, 6.0%
Past	28, 41.8%	1, 1.5%	29, 43.3%
DC	13, 19.4%	2, 3.0%	15, 22.4%
Present	10, 14.9%	2, 3.0%	12, 17.9%
Past	3, 4.5%	0, 0.0%	3, 4.5%
Q-RC	19, 28.4%	0, 0.0%	18, 28.4%
Present	10, 14.9%	0, 0.0%	10, 14.9%
Past	9, 13.4%	0, 0.0%	9, 13.4%
Q-DC	0, 0.0%	0, 0.0%	0, 0.0%
	0, 0.0%	0, 0.0%	0, 0.0%
	0, 0.0%	0, 0.0%	0, 0.0%
Total	64, 95.5%	3, 4.5%	67, 100%
Present	24, 35.8%	2, 3.0%	26, 38.8%
Past	40, 59.7%	1, 1.5%	41, 61.2%

TABLE 3.8 DISTRIBUTION OF THE PRESS CONDITIONAL IN *LE MONDE*

Conditional Type	News n, %	Commentary n, %	Total n, %
RC	69, 42.3%	3, 1.8%	72, 44.2%
Present	30, 18.4%	0, 0.0%	30, 18.4%
Past	39, 23.9%	3, 1.8%	42, 25.8%
DC	24, 14.7%	20, 12.3%	44, 27.0%
Present	17, 10.4%	20, 12.3%	37, 22.7%
Past	7, 4.3%	0, 0.0%	7, 4.3%

Table 3.8 (continued)

Q-RC	47, 28.8%	0, 0.0%	47, 28.8%
Present	43, 26.4%	0, 0.0%	43, 26.4%
Past	4, 2.5%	0, 0.0%	4, 2.5%
Q-DC	0, 0.0%	0, 0.0%	0, 0.0%
	0, 0.0%	0, 0.0%	0, 0.0%
	0, 0.0%	0, 0.0%	0, 0.0%
Total	140, 85.9%	23, 14.1%	163, 100%
Present	90, 55.2%	20, 12.3%	110, 67.5%
Past	50, 30.7%	3, 1.8%	53, 32.5%

As seen in Tables 3.7 and 3.8, the two newspapers are more similar than they are different. The quantifying conditional appeared only in news articles and constituted 28.8% of tokens in *Le Monde* and 28.4% in *Libération*. Discursive conditionals in news articles were also fairly similar, making up 19.4% of tokens in *Libération* and 14.7% of tokens in *Le Monde*. Reporting conditionals were rare in opinion, aligning with the observation made by Oliveira (2015b: 117). However, whereas discursive conditionals were rare in opinion in *Libération* (4.5% of tokens), they made up 12.3% of tokens in *Le Monde*. *Libération* also used the reporting conditional more often than *Le Monde* in news articles (42.3% versus 47.8%). However, this seems best explained by the fact that since *Le Monde* has a higher rate of press conditionals in its commentary, the ratio of its press conditionals in news to commentary is smaller than *Libération*'s.

As has been said, only the reporting type of conditional accompanied quantification, and this was found only in news articles. Examples are given in (20) and (21):

- (20) Au total, plus de trente mille courriers **seraient sortis** de sa plume.
 ‘In total, more than thirty thousand letters [**would have come**] from his pen.’
 MONDEIV, 27HUGO
- (21) En tout cas, plus de 60 000 internautes **auraient participé** à ce tchat, en posant des questions à l’ancien chef d’Etat.
 ‘In any case, more than 60,000 internet users [**would have participated**] in the chat by posing questions to the former head of state.’
 LIBEV, 15SARKOZY

The rarity of discursive conditionals with quantification is difficult to explain without recourse to speculation. It may be the case, as it was in (19), that such conditionals would generally refute false statistics, and that, when reported elsewhere, numbers are intended to be truthful. While it is conceivable that numbers would appear to support an argument in an opinion column, quantifying conditionals of either kind were entirely absent from opinion articles.

In both newspapers, the reporting conditional is all but absent from commentary (3 tokens in *Le Monde* and 1 in *Libération*). These are restricted to biographical facts provided in book and film reviews, as was seen in example (9) from *Libération*. Another such example comes from *Le Monde* (22):

- (22) Ce dernier était un ami de l'un des possibles auteurs du film, Henri Storck, le “père” du documentaire belge, qui **se serait rendu** à Londres pour placer la copie en lieu sûr et éviter qu'elle enflamme les esprits...
‘The latter was a friend of one of the possible makers of the film, Henri Storck, the father of Belgian documentary filmmaking, who [would have gone] to London to put a copy of the film in a safe place and avoid it stirring up the public.’
MONDEIII, 54MUR

The examples in (9) and (22) are slightly different in that (9) appears to use the press conditional in order to refer the reader to the book to confirm the author’s statement, while (22) reports a genuinely uncertain fact regarding the mysterious history of a documentary that had been recently screened for the first time in Belgium. The use of the press conditional in commentary for reporting facts differs little from its use in news reports, whether it is to report the unconfirmed, as in (22), or as a kind of alternate form of speech reporting, as in (9).

The use of the discursive conditional in news articles appears to serve the same purpose as that of other quotations in news stories: to illustrate an element of a story or to provide a basis for the story itself (Cotter 2010: 148). The press conditional appears to further distance the reporter from the content of the quotation or from the perspective it provides. This is seen in (23), (24) and (25):

- (23) Il expliquait que c’était devenu nécessaire, parce que la marque UMP **aurait été trop abîmée** après son départ.
‘He explained that this had become necessary because the name UMP [would have been] too [damaged] after his departure.’
LIBEII, 14REPUBLICAIN
- (24) À les entendre, des musulmans **tenteraient** d’épouser de jeunes hindoues pour leur faire abandonner leur religion, et les chrétiens **évangéliseraient** l’Inde tout entière.
‘To hear them tell it, Muslims [would be trying] to marry young Hindu girls to get them to abandon their religion, and Christians [would be evangelizing] all of India.’
MONDEI, 4INDE
- (25) Un “couac” **aurait contribué** à enflammer les investisseurs, de Paris à Francfort en passant par Madrid.
‘An “offkey note” [would have contributed] to aggravating investors, from Paris to Frankfort, by way of Madrid.’
MONDEVI, 25BANQUE

These examples show that the conditional is often used to allow the journalist to relate discourse in a neutral fashion or to give a light commentary on discourse. In (23), the conditional is a restatement of the interviewee's claim about the renaming of right-wing political party *l'Union pour un mouvement populaire* (UMP) to *Les Républicains*. While attribution is sufficient to demonstrate that the journalist themselves is not making any claims regarding the motivations for the name change, the press conditional serves to generate further distance between the reporter and the claims made. In (23), the journalist reprises the grievances of Hindu nationalists, only to dismiss them as exaggerations. The press conditional serves the journalist's aim to not lend any credence to their nationalist views. In (24), the *couac* refers to the rather serious incident of the president of the European Central Bank releasing information to London City investors 12 hours before that information was available in Europe. The ECB downplayed the incident—which would later undergo formal investigation—as reflected by the litotes of the word in quotes. The press conditional allows the journalist to reprise the Central Bank's deemphasizing of the seriousness of its actions while reporting on the magnitude of its consequences for financial markets in the same sentence.

The most significant differences between the two newspapers concerned the use of the reporting conditional in news and the use of the discursive conditional in commentary. As shown in Tables 3.7 and 3.8, reporting conditionals in news articles constituted 42.3% of *Le Monde*'s tokens, while they constituted 47.8% of conditionals in *Libération*. These figures do not appear to reflect a significant difference in *how* or *why* the reporting conditional is used in news articles. The more interesting question appears to be why *Le Monde* uses the press conditional regularly in its commentary (12.3% of tokens), while *Libération* made scarce use of it (3 tokens, representing only 4.5% of all tokens). This was also seen in Table 3.4: two opinion articles in *Le Monde* featured 3 or 4 press conditionals, while no opinion article in *Libération* featured more than one. Given the otherwise great similarities found across *Le Monde* and *Libération*, it is worth investigating the reason for this difference in their use of the press conditional.

3.2.2.5 Discursive Conditionals in Commentary and Journalistic Style

While *Le Monde*'s opinion articles featured 19 tokens of the discursive conditional in French, *Libération*'s featured only two (see Table 3.4). Representative tokens taken from *Le Monde* are shown in (26) and (27) and the two tokens representing the entirety of discursive conditionals in commentary from *Libération* are shown in (28) and (29):

- (26) Ainsi, sous la forme d'un zombie, le catholicisme **imprégnerait** " l'islamophobie " d'une France blanche et inégalitaire, celle qui manifesta en masse le 11 janvier. 'Thus, in the form of a zombie, Catholicism [would permeate] the 'Islamophobia' of a white and inegalitarian France, the one which publicly demonstrated in mass on the 11th of January.'
MONDEIV, 69GAUCHE
- (27) Et cette idée que le latin et le grec **seraient** élitistes !
'And this idea that Latin and Greek [would be] elitist!'
MONDEVI, 17GAUCHE

- (28) On a dit aussi, par une sorte de retournement paradoxal, que la valeur de l'apprentissage de ces langues **consisterait** en leur apparente inutilité dans un monde obsédé par l'efficacité économique à court terme.
'One has also said that by a sort of paradoxical reversal that the value of learning these languages [would consist] in their apparent inutility in a world obsessed with economic return in the short term.'
 LIBEIII, 33GREC
- (29) C'est ce que fait Jean-François Pradeau, qui, chez les cyniques grecs, les stoïciens, Platon ou saint Augustin, montre le lien entre politique et cosmologie ou le sens d'une «citoyenneté mondiale» – en s'éloignant considérablement de l'«opinion malheureusement répandue aujourd'hui» que la pensée antique ne **serait** qu'un «mode de vie» ou une sorte de «sagesse vulgaire» sans visée «mondialiste».
'This is what Jean-François Pradeau, who, among the Greek Cynics, the Stoics, Plato or St. Augustin, shows the link between politics and cosmology or the sense of a world citizenship, departing considerably from the opinion "unfortunately widespread today" that ancient thought [would be] only a way of life or a kind of vulgar wisdom without a globalizing aim.'
 LIBEIII, 20PHILO

The discursive conditionals in (28) and (29) fulfill similar functions to those of (26) and (27). Co-text makes clear the various degrees of disavowal the writer of the opinion piece demonstrates towards others' claims: disbelief in (26), incredulity in (27) (the exclamation mark playing a key rhetorical role), skepticism in (28), and disagreement in (29). In (28), the press conditional resembles the example in (16), where it does not necessarily indicate that the author of the editorial itself agrees or disagrees with the author: the author uses the conditional to convey Jean-François Pradeau's opinion of modern conceptions of ancient thought. That is to say, the basis for the conditional is not the fact that the reviewer is taking a stance. Instead, the reviewer is using the conditional to properly frame Pradeau's stance. Since it is Pradeau who contests the idea that ancient thought did not have globalizing aims, it is Pradeau's contestation of that idea that is reflected in the press conditional.

One article that draws attention is an editorial written by then Greek Finance Minister Yanis Varoufakis, wherein he contests the European Union's plans for solving the Greek debt crisis. The editorial was not originally published in *Le Monde* but rather for *Project Syndicate* and published on April 23, 2015. The article was written in English and translated into French.⁶¹ The original English and the French translation are shown in (30):

- (30) **ORIGINAL ENGLISH:** Our partners believe that, given time, this agenda will work. If wages fall further, employment will rise. The way to cure an ailing

⁶¹ *Project Syndicate* publishes articles in English and provides translations in order to maximize distribution. Per their website: "Indeed, because our highest priority is to disseminate authors' commentaries as widely as possible, we provide translations free of charge, enabling editors worldwide to publish them simultaneously. We currently translate authors' commentaries from English into 13 languages (Arabic, Bahasa-Indonesia, Czech, Dutch, French, German, Hindi, Italian, Kazakh, Mandarin, Portuguese, Russian, and Spanish)." – Project Syndicate. "About Project Syndicate." n.d. <https://www.project-syndicate.org/about>.

pension system is to cut pensions. And privatizations should aim at higher sale prices to pay off debt that many (privately) agree is unsustainable.

FRENCH TRANSLATION: Selon nos partenaires, il **s'agirait de laisser** du temps au temps, pour que ce programme fonctionne. En contrepartie d'une nouvelle baisse des salaires, il **faudrait s'attendre** à ce que l'emploi augmente. Enfin, il **serait** nécessaire que les privatisations se fassent à de meilleurs prix, afin de rembourser une dette dont beaucoup conviennent (en aparté) qu'elle est absolument intenable.

'According to our partners, it [would be a matter of letting] time take its course for this program to function. Instead of a new lowering of salaries, it [would be necessary to wait] for employment to grow. Finally, it [would be] necessary that privatizations be made at the best prices, in order to reimburse a debt that many agree (in private) to be unsustainable.'

MONDEIII, 94DEAL

What is remarkable about the extract in (30) is the three consecutive conditionals used to cite the European Union's agenda for Greece. By choosing to use the conditional systematically for these three points of disagreement, the French translator has chosen to eschew a more literal translation (e.g., *nos partenaires croient que*). This effect does not exist in the original English and would not be possible through tense selection in that language. This means that the conditional arises from what McLaughlin (2008: 62) describes as the translator's "active role in the authorship of the text." This choice by the translator allows for a reconfiguration of voice in the editorial. By using the conditional, the editorialist's voice becomes the underlying voice throughout the text and ceases to alternate with the opposing viewpoint. The consequence of this change can be seen in the subsequent paragraph which does not need to mark a shift back to Varoufakis's opinion:

ORIGINAL ENGLISH: By contrast, our government believes that this programme has failed, leaving the population weary of reform. The best evidence of this failure is that, despite a drop in wages and costs, export growth has been flat (the elimination of the current-account deficit being due exclusively to the collapse of imports).

FRENCH TRANSLATION: Ce programme a échoué et alimenté la méfiance des Grecs à l'égard des réformes: malgré la baisse considérable des salaires et des prix, les exportations continuent de stagner, l'élimination du déficit de la balance courante ne s'expliquant que par l'effondrement des importations.

The French version has omitted any translation of '*By contrast, our government believes*' It would appear that by having earlier framed the opinions of the European Union with the press conditional, the shift in voice marked in English by the move from '*our partners believe*' to '*by contrast, our government believes*' is no longer necessary. It is through that voice (and its marking of *non-prise-en-charge*) that the viewpoints of the European Union are given.

As said above, the article in question does not originate in *Le Monde* but in the online commentary site *Project Syndicate*. The site specializes in providing commentary to publications that would individually not otherwise have the resources to access such high-level commentary:

Project Syndicate produces and delivers original, high-quality commentaries to a global audience. Featuring exclusive contributions by prominent political leaders, policymakers, scholars, business leaders, and civic activists from around the world, we provide news media and their readers cutting-edge analysis and insight, *regardless of ability to pay*. Our membership includes over 500 media outlets – more than half of which receive our commentaries for free or at subsidized rates – in more than 156 countries.⁶²

I make this point to highlight the fact that, in the context of an outlet specializing in commentary (and translations of that commentary), this article could be read as an outlier in *Le Monde*. However, this article does support the notion that the press conditional is a marker of a journalistic style. The translator chose to systematically convey the notions not held by the editorial's author in the conditional at the expense of a more literal translation, adding both a pragmatic effect not present in the original, as well as a structure associated *a priori* with the journalistic writing. McLaughlin (2008: 61) notes in her study of dislocation in texts originally written in French and texts in French translation that “the syntax of translation is characterized by hypercorrection towards the target norm through an increased use of stereotypical features.” The press conditional would appear to be, broadly speaking, the mark of a journalistic style. Following the pattern observed by McLaughlin (2008), the translator resorts to this construction and does so, as we can see, at the expense of fidelity to the original text. This suggests that there may be something more ‘journalistic’ in coding opinion through the conditional rather than the equally viable — and more faithful — *croire que* or other similar formulations.

The possibility that the press conditional may make for a more journalistic style makes the lack of press conditionals in *Libération*'s commentary all the more interesting. Its stated journalistic aims are, perhaps, explanatory in this regard. When *Le Monde* outlines its role as a *journal de commentaire*, it lays out explicit stylistic guidelines:

Le Monde est aussi un journal d'opinion... Ces articles doivent être solidement argumentés. Ils doivent éviter, d'une manière générale, la polémique, le sarcasme, les attaques personnelles. Ils doivent se garder d'un ton péremptoire ou donneur de leçons et **conserver un style journalistique, c'est à dire distinct de celui des experts économistes, politiques, diplomates, hauts fonctionnaires, etc. qui sont souvent à la source des informations** (Le Monde 2002: 7). (bolding mine)

The guidelines from *Le Monde* recognize that journalistic style is unique from others, and that in providing commentary, it is this style that should prevail. While the editorial page may move away from the objectivity purported to rule over *Le Monde*'s news reporting, the voice of the editorial page remains journalistic in nature. This differs significantly from *Libération*, which does not seem to lay out any such requirement. In fact, *Libération* revels in its resistance to journalistic norms: “*Libération* ne fixe d'autres bornes à sa liberté que celles qu'il s'impose dans le respect des valeurs démocratiques. **Cette liberté l'incite à toutes formes de création journalistique et préside l'ensemble de ses choix et traitements de l'information.**” Whereas *Le Monde* uses a consistent journalistic style to negotiate its movement away from objectivity and towards engagement, *Libération* views itself as an engaged newspaper, whose treatment of

⁶² *ibid.*

news is subordinate to this engagement. Stylistic signaling of its objectivity is, perhaps, not a priority for *Libération*, and even less so when it moves into the more subjective realm of opinion.

If the press conditional is a marker of journalistic style, then its more frequent use in *Le Monde*'s commentary reflects the objective style this newspaper wishes to convey. *Libération*, not constrained by these concerns, does not appear to fear featuring too much subjectivity. In an editorial featured in *Libération* on the rupture between far-right politician Jean-Marie Le Pen and daughter Marine, the author's contempt is palpable:

Ah, que j'aimerais serrer sur mon cœur ce brave Jean-Marie Le Pen ! Je savais que je pouvais compter sur lui pour dévaster la petite boutique familiale patiemment replâtrée et banalisée par Marine, la benjamine. Dans l'immédiat, je ne sais pas à qui profitera le carnage psychanalytique qu'il a initié. Mais je veux espérer qu'il s'emploiera à ce qu'il ne reste que ruines fumantes de la maison FN. Si le diable lui prête vie, je suis assez confiant en ses talents de Néron incendiaire. Pour un dévoreur d'entrailles aussi carnassier, massacrer la chair de sa chair devrait n'être qu'une bagatelle. Le chef de la horde primitive ne peut laisser impuni l'outrage irréparable accompli par l'une de ces femelles qui oublient trop facilement qui les a faites reines et quel sang coule dans leurs veines.

—*Libération*, April 14, 2015

Such writing would clearly violate *Le Monde*'s interdiction against “la polémique, le sarcasme [et] les attaques personnelles” by calling Le Pen's father a filicidal flesh-eater and the author's saying he would like to hold the man against his heart for being so. Furthermore, the style is markedly literary in nature (flowery language, epithets, metaphor), and the editorial has very little aim other than to revel in the possible obstacle Le Pen presents for his daughter, who has been doggedly seeking to bring the far-right Front National party into the mainstream.

Le Monde's embrace of the press conditional in commentary (and *Libération*'s lesser need for it) establishes that the press conditional is a feature not just of unconfirmed news reports but a feature of journalistic texts that encompasses their aims to both report and comment. It is clear that the speech reporting capacity of the press conditional makes it useful in commentary, but, in the case of *Le Monde*, the press conditional's association with journalism might motivate the press conditional's use as much as its communicative capacities. Since opinion delivered in a sober, journalistic style is not a primary aim of *Libération*, maintaining journalistic features in commentary appears to be less of an imperative for that newspaper.

3.2.3 Conclusion: The Press Conditional as a Distinguishing Feature of Style

In her study of discourse representation in French newspapers, Marnette (2005: 308-11) argued that *Libération*'s greater use of direct discourse contributed to the newspaper's “vivid” and “oralising” style, which was distinct from more traditional newspapers such as *Le Monde* and *Le Figaro*. This effect is due both to the nature of direct discourse (it gives the reader a “direct experience” of that discourse) and the frequency with which that discourse type was found. Certainly, it is possible to use the frequency of the press conditional to distinguish *Le Monde* and *Libération*. Marnette (2005: 305) attributes the greater use of the press conditional in *Le Monde* to its taking extra care to mark uncertainty. In other words, *Le Monde* uses the press conditional to insist on its especially careful attention to journalistic practice that is already

required of it insofar as it wishes to maintain its status as a quality newspaper. Thought of this way, the heightened attention to journalistic practice that *Le Monde* demonstrates through increased use of the press conditional is *Le Monde*'s way of highlighting its seriousness and credibility as a newspaper. Nevertheless, the press conditional is not required to establish seriousness. Marnette (2005: 305) finds that the equally serious *Le Figaro* used the press conditional at a rate 10 times lower than that of *Le Monde*. The frequency of the press conditional in *Le Monde* across news and commentary suggests that *Le Monde* desires to construct a style that is attentively—and perhaps, performatively—journalistic at all moments and across all of its pages. This extends to its commentary pages, where the use of the conditional to relay discourse for purposes of argumentation is much more frequent than in *Libération*. In articles of opinion, *Libération* permits itself a deviation from a 'journalizing' style that *Le Monde* insists on sustaining.

However, when one examines the exact functions of the press conditional as defined here, one finds more similarities than differences between *Le Monde* and *Libération*. That is to say, its use is not a strongly distinguishing feature in the way direct discourse was for *Libération* according to Marnette (2005: 308-09). The rate of the use of the conditional for quantification was nearly equal in both newspapers. Both newspapers made nearly equal frequent use of the press conditional to relay suspect discourse in news articles (i.e., discursive conditionals in news reports). The reporting conditional was rare in commentary in *Libération* and *Le Monde*. The only true distinguishing feature was the use of the press conditional in commentary. It would seem that the press conditional's frequency is conditioned, to some degree, as a broad marker of uncertainty, that it is common with quantification, and to reprise discourse to certain rhetorical ends. On the basis of the data in *Le Monde*, one can even say that it is also a marker of journalistic style that can be used to give a more 'journalistic' feel to journalistic texts. This is very different from the kind of conditioning observed by Oliveira (2015b: 118) who observed a link between the reportative uses of the future and conditional in European Portuguese and an article type as specific as crime reports. In that case, the press conditional could be said to be conditioned by the nature of the story itself. In French, the press conditional's width of application can be thought of as rather broad.

3.3 Theoretical Considerations

It can be said that the previous literature tends to recognize two general traits proper to the press conditional: *non-prise-en-charge* and evidential marking of secondhand information (Dendale 1993; Abouda 2001; Kronning 2002). As a reminder, *prise-en-charge* is the speaker's presentation of a statement as true (Abouda 2001: 279); *non-prise-en-charge* removes this assertion of a statement's being held to be true. Evidentiality is the area of grammar marking the source of information. In French, the press conditional is said to mark information known through another's assertion. For some scholars, it is a question of whether the lack of *prise-en-charge* or evidential marking of reported information that is the definitional trait of the press conditional. One does not exclude the other. Dendale (1993) holds that *non-prise-en-charge* is entailed while the construction is, by definition, evidential. Conversely, Abouda (2001) argues that the construction's primary function of marking *non-prise-en-charge* generates the effect of a second enunciator. Kronning (2002) appears to split the difference and argues that the press conditional is a mixed marker of evidentiality and modality. I argue that the press conditional,

understood to be the use of the conditional to report uncertain information in the journalistic genre, is a marker of *non-prise-en-charge*.

If we take Dendale's (1993) definition that favors an evidential definition of the press conditional, then the press conditional should be implicated in marking a journalist's sources. However, the first problem posed by this model in the journalistic context is that a journalist relies frequently on others' discourse. Marnette (2005) observes:

More than other publications, newspapers and 'hard news' magazines describe and in some cases analyse specific news events. A lot of these events are discursive in nature, e.g. political speeches, declarations by a particular person (accusation, confession, question, etc.). Other events, while not discursive per se (e.g. crime, accident, war, etc.), are unlikely to be based on the journalist's own experience of them but rather on others' discourses about them, i.e. witness accounts, press agencies reports, written reports of all kinds, press conferences, spokespersons speaking in the name of specific authorities, etc. **In that sense, most of the material is actually 'processed reported discourse', i.e. although its sources are discourses others than the journalist's, they are not acknowledged as such but exposed as a series of simple facts. There is thus an alternation between events presented as discourses and discourses presented as events** (300). (bolding mine)

If one of the primary bases of news discourse is reported information, it follows that the press conditional is not unique (in this sense) from other types of discourse reporting in journalism. That is to say that pointing to a source can be achieved through other methods in journalism, such as quote attribution. Attribution and quoting alone is generally sufficient to establish distance between the journalist and their source (Cotter 2010: 146). Furthermore, even parts of the journalist's own discourse can be presumed to possibly have their origin in reported information. What is key about the press conditional is that it marks information as potentially untrue or even not true at all. This can be seen in (31):

- (31) Les organisations ultra-conservatrices, qui **seraient financées** par le NIS, les services secrets proches du pouvoir, manifestent régulièrement contre la présence du camp de Gwanghwamu.
'Ultraconservative organizations, which [would be financed] by the NIS, the secret service close to the government, manifest regularly against the presence of the Gwanghwamu camp.'
MONDEI, 84SEWOL

In (31), no source is given, and the source does not seem particularly relevant. Uncited information in a newspaper is usually considered to constitute common knowledge (Cotter 2010: 147). In contrast, if the reporter had written *qui sont financées* 'that are financed...' the shift is not one of how the journalist knows this information—which could still be common knowledge—but rather the information's status: the information becomes true because it is fully integrated into information for which the journalist takes responsibility. In the journalistic context, this constitutes a claim to truth. With respect to the use of the press conditional in journalism, it is a question of not how the journalist has obtained their information but rather how they treat that information.

This can be seen in instances where the press conditional is purely discursive in nature, as in (32):

- (32) Parce qu'elle éveille des angoisses ancestrales, celles que suscite toute évocation du sacrifice humain, la légende selon laquelle les juifs **enlèveraient** des enfants chrétiens pour leur prendre leur sang recèle, en Pologne, une efficacité meurtrière, capable de survivre à tous les démentis à travers les siècles.
'Because it evokes ancestral anxieties, those that any evocation of human sacrifice arouses, the legend according to which Jewish people [would kidnap] Christian children to take their blood harbors a deadly persuasiveness, capable of surviving every attempt to counter it across the centuries.'
MONDEIV, 82FOND

In (32), had the reporter written, *la légende selon laquelle les juifs enlèvent des enfants...* the word "legend" is sufficient, in an informational sense, to signal that the claim is mythic in nature. The press conditional, however, serves to further disassociate that discourse from other discourse the journalist produces and reports. While I cannot say if the press conditional is journalistically necessary in a context where the word *légende* precedes it, the use of the press conditional does make it clear that the journalist is not treating what that discourse says as even potentially true. In this sense, the journalist is refusing responsibility for that discourse and is actively demonstrating a critical evaluation of the discourse being relayed.

If one has an understanding of the press conditional as evidential in nature, it is not possible to truly understand the ways in which it might function in newspapers because much of the information in a newspaper is sourced outside the journalist's direct experience (if not all). However, what unites facts in a newspaper and gives them basis for belief is the journalist's role as an objective narrator and the duties implied by that role. This is what Charaudeau (2006) calls the *contrat de communication* 'communication contract':

Ensuite, l'événement ayant été sélectionné (selon des critères de saillance), il s'agit pour le journaliste de rapporter les faits de la façon la plus précise possible, avec, comme on le dit en narratologie, un point de vue de narrateur externe qui tenterait de décrire fidèlement la succession des faits, et de mettre en évidence (ou à suggérer quand il n'en a pas la preuve) la logique d'enchaînements entre ceux-ci. Il en est de même pour l'activité qui consiste à rapporter des paroles, des déclarations, des discours et les réactions qui s'ensuivent (para. 16).

Seen in this light, the journalist becomes a narrator *super omnia*. It is their choice to choose which discourses to cite, which discourses to narrate as fact, all under the presumption that they are responsibly evaluating these facts and discourses. As seen in (31) and (32), the press conditional is one of many means through which a journalist can attenuate or deny factuality.

For Dendale (1993: 174-75), the elements of uncertainty and *non-prise-en-charge* (his modal and alethic traits) derive from the nature of reported information. Per his argument, reported information is inherently more suspect than that which one directly perceives. Therefore, these two traits are entailments. However, as has already been said, journalists must often rely on reported information. Uncertainty in a journalistic text "results" from a journalist's

decision to mark information as uncertain.⁶³ The question is not, therefore, how information has been obtained but how its reliability has been evaluated. One reporter notes this explicitly in her article on the aftermath of a failed coup in Burundi:

Le conditionnel s'impose : les forces fidèles à Nkurunziza ayant en priorité ciblé les médias indépendants dès lors réduits au silence, seuls les médias officiels, et les rumeurs, fonctionnent désormais à Bujumbura. Ce qui dans l'immédiat, dessert le camp des vaincus.

LIBEV, 10RIEN

There exist several possible discourses from which the journalist could construct her news story, but it is her evaluation of these discourses and the necessity of evaluating these discourses that drive her to use the conditional. This decision can be linked to the operating *contrat de communication* (Charaudeau 2006: para. 16), which requires that the journalist report events with precision but also mark places where proof is insufficient. In the case of the press conditional, uncertainty is the consequence of the journalist's choice to not take responsibility for reported information or discourse.

Furthermore, journalists do not merely evaluate the reliability of sources, they must also evaluate their own ability to present information as truth. In (33), the German press serves as a source of information for *Le Monde*:

- (33) Quel que soit le scénario retenu, il semble que le sort de la Postbank soit scellé. L'option de l'intégration complète de la banque postale allemande, en discussion il y a quelques semaines, **aurait été écartée** définitivement, rapporte la presse allemande. La Postbank **serait** donc vendue, ce qui **impliquerait** une fermeture de succursales et donc des suppressions d'emplois. Les salariés de l'ancienne banque publique, qui réclament depuis des mois des garanties sur l'emploi, ont entamé une grève illimitée.

'Whatever the case may be, it appears that the fate of the Postbank is sealed. The option of complete integration of the German postal bank, still under discussion some weeks ago, [would have been discarded] definitively, reports the German press. The Postbank [would be] therefore sold, which [would imply] branch closures and, therefore, layoffs. Employees of the former public bank, who have been calling for a guarantee of employment, have begun an unlimited strike.'

MONDEII, 65DEUTSCHE

An example like the one in (33) is interesting because it straddles the line between the marking of reported information and *non-prise-en-charge*. The information in (33) clearly comes from the German press and is therefore reported information from a presumably reliable source. However, it is not the case that reporters have to treat reported information separately from their direct experience. It is the case that they must mark uncertain information differently from certain information. To the extent that the *contrat de communication* effaces the distance between journalists and their sources, the press conditional serves to mark instances where some distance remains. In the case of (33), the journalist is relying, it appears, entirely on the German press for

⁶³ I mean this broadly. It is obvious that questions of libel, nature of the source, nature of the information all contribute to a journalist's decision to mark information as uncertain.

their information. In substituting another journalist's reporting for their own in unsure circumstances, the journalist discharges their ability to vouch for the truth of the information that that reporting has revealed. In (33), it is not the case that the evidence for the information reported is not good; it is rather the case that the journalist's capacity to treat that information as truth is diminished. In this sense, *non-prise-en-charge* as a marker of uncertainty in the press works in two ways: either the journalist can evaluate the evidence available as reliable or unreliable, or the journalist can evaluate themselves as reliable or unreliable with respect to their ability to evaluate the evidence available to them.

Abouda (2001) argues that the press conditional is primarily a marker of *non-prise-en-charge*. As was shown in (31), (32) and (33), what motivates the journalist's use of the press conditional is not how they sourced information, but rather how they evaluated that information and whether it could responsibly be presented as true under the journalist's authority as a truth teller. While all the information a reporter has available to them might be known only through others' utterances, only some of that information is relayed in the conditional. If no source is present, as in (31), an indeterminate *on dit que* 'they say that' may be implied, but that effect is achieved through the marking of *non-prise-en-charge*. This mirrors Abouda's (2001: 282-83) claim that the marking of *non-prise-en-charge* implies an *Autre Énonciateur*. (as it does when the conditional is used to attenuate a request). Furthermore, as Abouda (2001: 282) notes, the press conditional is compatible with reliable sources, as in (33) as well as unreliable ones as in (32). By marking *non-prise-en-charge*, the journalist marks information as potentially untrue, and thereby fulfills their end of the *contrat de communication*. As a register feature of journalism, it is the press conditional's marking of *non-prise-en-charge* as an instruction to delay belief that appears to give it utility in the journalistic genre.

Although this investigation restricts itself to the press context, I would like to briefly turn to literature to show how the evidential trait argued for by Dendale (1993) might be more salient in other contexts. In Ahmadou Kourouma's *Les soleils des indépendances*, the story of the last days of a fallen Malinke prince, uses the press conditional, in free indirect discourse, to capture village murmurings regarding the fate of his wife's first husband (34):

- (34) ...Des méchantes paroles, des maudites, lancées contre Salimata pendant et après les rites du veuvage. Baffi **ne serait pas mort** par la grosse hernie étranglée, mais assassiné par le génie malfaisant et jaloux qui hantait Salimata; elle en était responsable.
 '...Vicious words, cursed ones, [were] tossed at Salimata during and after the rites of widowhood. Baffi [**would not have died**] because of a strangulated hernia but killed by the jealous and evil spirit that haunted Salimata. She was responsible [for his death].'
 (Kourouma 1970: 143)

The use of *ne serait pas mort* in (34), meant to echo local gossip, would appear not to play on the lack of *prise-en-charge* of the statement. As Charaudeau (2006: para. 16) claims for journalism, the narrator of the novel is an external one. However, insofar as the narrator of fiction is not expected to have filtered through pre-existing discourses and arbitrate a precise and truthful narrative, the narrator here is simply relaying the dialogue of the villagers. It does not appear to serve the function of allowing the narrator to establish a stance vis-à-vis these words, since the reader knows what has become of Salimata's first husband because the omniscient narrator has

already narrated that event. The use of the press conditional adds a stylistic flourish of *bruit qui court*, proper to gossip, relying entirely on the press conditional's evidential trait. In such cases, a formulation aligned with Dendale's (1993) would appear more appropriate.

3.4 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have examined the forms of the press conditional appearing in *Le Monde* and *Libération*. The press conditional was more frequent in *Le Monde*. In order to better understand the factors that motivate the press conditional, two uses of the conditional were established based on the relevance of the trait of confirmation in a news context. Those whose confirmation was relevant were deemed reporting conditionals (RC). Those whose confirmation was irrelevant were deemed discursive conditionals (DC). In order to investigate earlier claims that the press conditional is often used to cite figures, a quantifying subtype of each category was created. This analysis showed that motivations to use the press conditional were largely similar across the two newspapers. However, *Le Monde* made a regular use of the press conditional in commentary while *Libération* did not. This finding was explained in terms of style. *Le Monde* requires a journalistic style in its editorials and favored the press conditional in that context. *Libération* appears to eschew some of the stylistic constraints of neutral reporting, and its commentary articles yielded only two tokens of the discursive conditional in commentary. It appears that the press conditional in French may be a general marker of journalistic style, and *Le Monde*'s more frequent use of it serves to underline its attention to journalistic practice.

Finally, it was argued that, as a register feature of the press, the press conditional is defined by its marking of journalist's *non-prise-en-charge* of the information or discourse reported. Such a definition aligns with Abouda's (2001) model of the press conditional. An evidential understanding of the press conditional in a news context fails to account for the nature of news discourse, how information is obtained by reporters, and how information and discourse in the press conditional differ from other information reported in a journalistic text. In this context, the press conditional marks an evaluation made by a reporter who is operating with the understanding that the facts and discourse that they relate make claims to truth. The press conditional is useful because it disrupts this claim. I concluded this investigation by arguing that such a model is not necessarily true across discursive situations and further investigation is necessary.

4 THE PRESS CONDITIONAL IN SPANISH

4.1 Forms and Frequency of the Press Conditional in Spanish

In this chapter, I begin by providing the forms and frequency of the press conditional in Spanish. I note that the press conditional in fact encompasses the press conditional to mark both inferences and reported information. I provide a tabulation of the frequency of each use as well as an overview of their functions within the Spanish corpus. I then examine the temporality of each. I find that the present conditional may refer to present and past states, as well as future events and states. Notably, I confirm that present conditionals marking reported information do not require a future time marker to trigger a prospective reading (as is the case in French) in Peninsular Spanish. Sarrazin (2010) was first to observe this use of the present conditional in Latin-American Spanish. I also find that such a use of the present conditionals is featured in the body of articles and not restricted to headlines, as she had observed in her own corpus (Sarrazin 2010: 113-14). I then account for the use of the press conditional in Spanish as a function of article type. I find that in the case of polls and scientific articles the presence of the conditional may actually reflect the presence of scientific discourse within the pages of a newspaper. Conversely, I argue that in the case of articles on official misconduct and criminal activity, the press conditional's efficiency in marking uncertainty in sensitive contexts may override prescriptive discouragement of the press conditional. I end by arguing that more diachronic and synchronic studies across journalistic, scientific and legal text types may better clarify the reported and inferential uses of the conditional in the Spanish press and also more generally.

In this section, I treat the frequency and forms of the press conditional in the Spanish corpus. In the Spanish corpus, a search for tokens of the present or past conditional that could be glossed by combining *por lo visto* with the present, future, imperfect or past indicative yielded a total of 278 tokens. The frequency of the press conditional is presented in Tables 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3:

TABLE 4.1 FREQUENCY OF THE PRESS CONDITIONAL IN THE SPANISH CORPUS

Form	n	%	Freq. per 1000 words	
Present	234	84.2%	.22	/1000w
Past	44	15.8%	.04	/1000w
Total	278	100%	.26	/1000w

TABLE 4.2 FREQUENCY OF THE PRESS CONDITIONAL IN *EL MUNDO*

Form	n	%	Freq. per 1000 words	
Present	160	84.2%	.35	/1000w
Past	30	15.8%	.07	/1000w
Total	190	100.0%	.42	/1000w

TABLE 4.3 FREQUENCY OF THE PRESS CONDITIONAL IN *EL PERIÓDICO*

Form	n	%	Freq. per 1000 words	
Present	74	84.1%	.12	/1000w
Past	14	15.9%	.02	/1000w
Total	88	100%	.14	/1000w

As seen in Table 4.1, the overall frequency of the press conditional is relatively low in Spanish at .26 occurrences per 1000 words, which is around half that of the French corpus (see Table 3.1).⁶⁴ However, the press conditional is not sufficiently infrequent so as to call into question its status as an established feature of Spanish journalistic language. The data here point to the fact that prescriptive pressure (whose role in the light of this data will be discussed later in §4.2) has not succeeded in eliminating the construction from Spanish newswriting. With respect to form, the corpus is surprisingly consistent. The present conditional is by far the more frequent form (84.2% of all tokens compared to the past conditional at 15.8%). This replicates the exact distribution of the two forms in *El Mundo* and *El Periódico* (the .1% difference being negligible).

Despite the relatively lower frequency of the press conditional observed in the corpus, the frequency of the construction in *El Mundo*, which reaches .42 occurrences per 1000 words, is nearly three times as great as that in *El Periódico*, which comes to .14 occurrences per 1000 words. At this rate, *El Mundo* exceeds the frequency observed in *Libération*, meaning that the frequency of the press conditional in *El Mundo* rivals that of a French newspaper. However, *El Periódico* uses the press conditional less than what Marnette (2005: 305) observed in *Le Figaro* (.2 conditionals per 1000 words). This data demonstrates that assumptions about the rarity of the press conditional in Spanish need to be reconsidered. Furthermore, the data here also confirm Kronning's (2016: 128) observation that there can be great variation between newspapers in Spanish.

In order to properly examine the press conditional in Spanish, it is necessary to distinguish between the conditional as a marker of inference and the conditional as a marker of reported information. Much of the literature on the function of the press conditional in Spanish has relied on work done on French (Fouilloux 2006; Vatrican 2010; Sarrazin 2010) or on studies that consider the construction in a wider Romance context (Kronning 2016). The consequence is

⁶⁴ Although this chapter is not intended to be comparative, data from the French corpus is used here as a reference point for illustrative purposes.

that the press conditional as a marker of inference has not been systematically considered in any extensive comparative study. In Spanish, studies of scientific articles have described the conditional as both inferential or reportative (see §1.2.2.7). However, the distinction appears to be absent from much of the previous literature on the press conditional in Spanish. As was outlined in §2.2.2.5, classification will be made on the basis of context and co-text. It is also necessary to establish how to classify Bermudez's (2016) *condicional científico*, which appears to straddle the line between the two functions.

4.1.1 Identifying Reportative and Inferential Conditionals

Since there is no distinguishing formal feature between conditionals used for inference or for reported information, it is necessary to use co-text and context. At its most explicit, inference can be marked by a verb like *deducir* 'deduce,' as is seen in (1):

- (1) La alcaldesa de Valencia no aparece en ninguna de estas conversaciones, pero se deduce que **estaría** al corriente de todo: «Ahí puedes venderle a la jefa: 'Mira, le he dado todo a tu sobrino'», aconsejó Benavent a la ex edil Alcón, quien ayer fue apartada del PP.
'*The mayor of Valencia does not appear in any of the conversations, but one deduces that she [would be aware] of everything. «Here's how you can sell it to the boss: 'Look, I gave it all to your nephew'», advised Benavent to the ex-official Alcón, who was expelled yesterday from the PP.*'
MUNDOIV, 14AUDIOS

In (1), the journalist has access to a recording of Valencian city officials discussing the (corrupt) distribution of contracts. The mayor is not present in the conversation, but the manner in which those present discuss her involvement leads to the inference that she is in the know. Conversely, one must rely entirely on co-text to identify the conditional as inferential in (2):

- (2) «El escaso número de supervivientes **podría depender** del hecho de que muchos inmigrantes, entre ellos mujeres y niños, habían sido encerrados en las bodegas», añadió.
'*«The low number of survivors [could depend] on the fact that many immigrants, among them women and children, had been locked in the hold», he added*'
PERIODII, 12CARCEL

In (2), an inference has been made by the Italian prosecution, connecting witness reports that migrants had been locked in the ship's hold to the rather low number of survivors found after a collision. The nature of the link between the conditional *podría depender* and *el escaso número de supervivientes* represents an inference derived from the information that people had been locked in the hold.

Conditionals were considered to have a reportative function if there was an explicit marker of a source utterance or if the information reported in the conditional appeared to be knowable only through another's utterance (i.e., there appeared to be nothing to draw an inference from). In (3), we can see the first type with an explicit marker and in (4), this second type without a marked source of information:

- (3) Según otros testimonios presenciales, tampoco **habrían actuado** socorristas pues se emplean diariamente en la temporada de baño, a partir de junio.
‘According to other witnesses present, neither [would] any lifeguards [have intervened] since they are employed daily during the swimming season, from June onwards.’
 MUNDOI, 51MAESTRO
- (4) En las próximas horas será llamado a las oficinas del club para ser informado, salvo sorpresa, de la ruptura de su contrato. Su agente ya **habría sido informado** del veredicto.
‘In the next few hours he will be called into the club offices to be informed, barring any surprises, of the termination of his contract. His agent [would] already [have been informed] of the verdict.’
 MUNDOVI, 63ADIOS

In (3), the *según otros testimonios presenciales* marks the source of the utterance on which the journalist bases their report. In (4), the nature of the report—that the sports player’s agent has been informed of the termination of his contract—does not suggest inference, and, given that one of the primary tasks of journalists is to talk to sources (Cotter 2010: 26), it is virtually certain that the journalist heard this information and did not infer it.

Ambiguous cases arise when an earlier utterance and inference both seem equally likely to explain a statement. For example, in (5), where a clear reportative conditional is followed by another conditional, it remains unclear if the interviewed party is citing studies or making an inference from those studies. I have bolded the token featuring reported information while bolding and underlining the ambiguous token in (5):

- (5) El impacto del baby boom egipcio en la vida diaria resulta aún más dramático. «Para dar respuesta a ese crecimiento, algunos estudios indican que **harían falta** 90.000 profesores adicionales en primaria y **habría que aplicar** requerimientos similares en otros sectores de la política pública como la sanidad, la vivienda o las infraestructuras», detalla Jaime Nadal, representante de la ONU en Egipto.
‘The impact of the Egyptian baby boom in daily life appears to be even more dramatic. «In order to respond to this increase, some studies indicate that 90,000 additional professors [would be needed] in primary schools, and it [would be necessary] to apply similar demands in other sectors of public policy such as health, housing and infrastructure», details Jaime Nadal, representative of the UN in Egypt.’
 MUNDOV, 54BOOM

The conditional in the first part of the UN representative’s statement clearly comes from reported information. It cites studies that indicate Egypt is experiencing a teacher shortage. In the second half of the phrase, it is unclear if these studies have concluded that other sectors are in similar predicaments or if the UN representative himself is the source of this interpretation. The token was classified as ambiguous.

Finally, there is the question of what Bermúdez (2016) calls the *condicional científico*. Bermúdez (2016: 58-59) notes its similarity to the inferential conditional in scientific texts. I will argue, however, that its function in a journalistic context is primarily to report information obtained from a source, making its function reportative. Bermúdez (2016: 51-52) compares the use of the conditional and the present indicative in the examples replicated in (6) and (7):

- (6) Robert Nisbet examina breve y rigurosamente los temas centrales del conservadurismo –historia, tradición, propiedad, autoridad, libertad y religión– y dirige sus críticas tanto al colectivismo como al individualismo radical. Finalmente, aborda la crisis del conservadurismo, que **estaría causada** en buena medida por su adopción en la escena política de principios del liberalismo económico y del Estado del bienestar.
‘Nisbet examines briefly and rigorously the central themes of conservatism— history, tradition, property, authority, liberty and religion—and directs his criticism as much towards collectivism as towards radical individualism. Finally, he addresses the crisis of conservatism, which [would be caused] in large measure by its adoption of economic liberalism and the Welfare State’
- (7) Robert Nisbet examina breve y rigurosamente los temas centrales del conservadurismo –historia, tradición, propiedad, autoridad, libertad y religión– y dirige sus críticas tanto al colectivismo como al individualismo radical. Finalmente, aborda la crisis del conservadurismo, que **está causada** en buena medida por su adopción en la escena política de principios del liberalismo económico y del Estado del bienestar.
*Nisbet examines briefly and rigorously the central themes of conservatism— history, tradition, property, authority, liberty and religion—and directs his criticism as much towards collectivism as towards radical individualism. Finally, he addresses the crisis of conservatism, which **is caused** in large measure by its adoption of economic liberalism and the Welfare State’*

Unlike the case of inference in (1), the conditional in (6) does not provide new information. This is demonstrated by the fact that in (7), the use of the present *está causada* ‘is caused’ has the effect of asserting Nisbet’s claims about the origins of the crisis in modern conservatism, while the token in (6) marks the writer’s *non-prise-en-charge* of Nisbet’s position (Bermúdez 2016: 52). Although the scientific conditional may mark a different kind of relationship between the speaker and the cited material than in what Bermúdez (2016) calls the *condicional periodístico*, the effect is similar to the token in (3): the author is indicating that the source of information is Nisbet. While I would argue that cases like (6) deserve greater study in Spanish (and across Romance languages with similar uses of the conditional), for the purposes of this investigation, I will treat what Bermúdez (2016) would call the scientific conditional as serving to mark reported information.⁶⁵

⁶⁵ The grey area between inference and reported information has not been greatly explored in French. Translated into French as *serait causé*, the conditional in (6) would be considered by most to be reportative. However, Rossari (2009: 79-80) argues that there is nothing reportative about a journalist consulting a graph and then producing the utterance: *Le chômage serait en légère baisse* ‘Unemployment [would be] slightly down’ (Rossari (2009) argues that all press conditionals represent a rhetorical use of the hypothetical conditional with an entailed *si mes*

The results of this classification are shown in Table 4.4:

TABLE 4.4 FREQUENCY OF THE INFERENTIAL AND REPORTATIVE CONDITIONALS

Information Type	<i>El Mundo</i> n, %	<i>El Periódico</i> n, %	Corpus n, %
Reportative	135, 71.1%	73, 83.0%	208, 74.8%
Inferential	54, 28.4%	15, 17.0%	69, 24.8%
Ambiguous	1, 0.5%	0	1, 0.4%
Total	190, 100%	88, 100%	278, 100%

As Table 4.4 shows, both the reportative and inferential conditional are present in the Spanish corpus. The reportative use is by far the most common, consisting of 71.1% of all tokens in *El Mundo* and 83.0% of tokens in *El Periódico*. This difference in frequency appears to reflect the reality that journalists learn their information through others' utterances (Cotter 2010: 54, Marnette 2005: 300).⁶⁶ However, the inferential conditional is by no means a negligible presence in the Spanish press and constitutes 28.4% of tokens in *El Mundo* and 17.0% of tokens in *El Periódico*, although there is a noticeably more frequent use of it in *El Mundo*. In §4.1.2, I treat the temporality of the inferential and reportative conditionals.

4.1.2 Forms of the Reportative and Inferential Conditional

In order to describe the temporality of the reportative and inferential conditional, it is necessary to gather together various observations found in the previous literature on the Spanish conditional used for reported information and inference. Bermúdez (2016: 43, 51) observes that the reportative conditional in the present tense can refer to a present or future action. He affirms that the inferential conditional in the present conditional also marks a present action (Bermúdez 2016: 51). The inferential conditional can also be used for inferences regarding future events (Stagnaro 2015: 7). In the past conditional form, the reportative and inferential conditionals refer to events prior to the moment of enunciation (Sarrazin 2010: 108-09, Foullioux 2006: 72-73, Vatrican 2014: 263; Ferrari 2009: 8).

However, the corpus revealed a few tokens where a present conditional appeared to have past reference. This possibility is not mentioned in the academic literature but is mentioned in the *Nueva Gramática de la lengua Española* (RAE 2009: 1782). Furthermore, Sarrazin (2010) has

informations sont bonnes 'if my information is good'). While I am not convinced by her argument, in the light of Bermúdez's (2016) argument, such an example would appear to fit his description of the scientific conditional: a cognitive elaboration of a secondhand source. Bermúdez (2016: 61-62) suggests that the scientific conditional may have grown out of the hypothetical conditional, a possibility which does echo Rossari's (2009) argument. More insight into what this grey area means for our understanding of the conditional as an evidential strategy in Romance might lie in comparison of similar constructions across the Romance languages from the diachronic and synchronic perspective.

⁶⁶ Cotter (2010: 54) describes the initial stages of the news process as first receiving a tip and then interviewing sources.

observed that a future reading of the reportative conditional is possible without a future time marker. She specifically argues that this is an innovation that occurred within Spanish after the press conditional was borrowed (Sarrazin 2010: 113). This would make it unlike the press conditional in French, which requires a future temporal marker to induce a prospective reading of the present conditional. There is no indication in the literature that the present conditional used for inferences about the future requires a time marker.

Frequencies of the conditional with respect to their reportative or inferential function as well as their temporality are given in Table 4.5:

TABLE 4.5 FORM AND TEMPORALITY OF THE PRESS CONDITIONAL IN THE SPANISH CORPUS

	<i>El Mundo</i> n, %	<i>El Periódico</i> n, %	Corpus n, %
PRES - pres.	121, 63.7%	63, 71.6%	184, 66.2%
Reportative	100, 52.6%	57, 64.8%	157, 56.5%
Inferential	20, 10.5%	6, 6.8%	26, 9.4%
Ambiguous	1, 0.5%	0, 0.0%	1, 0.4%
PRES – imp.	3, 1.6%	0, 0.0%	3, 1.1%
Reportative	3, 1.6%	0, 0.0%	3, 1.1%
Inferential	0, 0.0%	0, 0.0%	0, 0.0%
Ambiguous	0, 0.0%	0, 0.0%	0, 0.0%
PRES – fut.	36, 18.9%	11, 12.5%	47, 16.9%
Rep. w/ marker	2, 1.0%	0, 0.0%	2, 0.7%
Rep. w/o marker	5, 2.6%	2, 2.3%	7, 2.5%
Inferential	29, 15.3%	9, 10.2%	38, 13.7%
Ambiguous	0, 0.0%	0, 0.0%	0, 0.0%
PAST - past	30, 15.8%	14, 15.9%	44, 15.8%
Reportative	27, 14.2%	14, 15.9%	41, 14.7%
Inferential	3, 1.6%	0, 0.0%	3, 1.1%
Ambiguous	0, 0.0%	0, 0.0%	0, 0.0%

As seen in Table 4.5, the most common use of the conditional is the present conditional with a present reading (63.7% for *El Mundo*, 71.6% for *El Periódico*, or 66.2% of all tokens in the corpus). The conditional was used with near equal frequency to refer to the future (16.9% of all tokens) as well as to the past (15.8% of all tokens).

The present conditional in Spanish could be used to refer to the present, future or past. With respect to the nature of information, the use of the present conditional was largely reportative with 56.5% of tokens conveying reported information and 9.4% marking an inference. Inferences about the present were more frequent in *El Mundo* than in *El Periódico* (10.5% versus 6.8%). Instances in which the conditional could be glossed by the imperfect indicative were infrequent. In *El Mundo*, they accounted for 1.6% of all tokens and were used for reported information while no such use of the conditional was found in *El Periódico*. To the extent that the present conditional is a reportative substitute for the present or imperfect partly aligns the Spanish reportative conditional with that of Brazilian Portuguese, in which the present conditional also has these two values (Oliveira 2015a: 214).

The data here presents two significant findings for the use of the present conditional to refer to the future in cases where the conditional conveys reported information. Seven tokens of the reportative conditional referred to the future and lacked an accompanying future time marker. If the reportative conditional were indeed a borrowing, this would constitute an innovation. The use of the present conditional without a time marker was first observed by Sarrazin (2010), but her study had only described this as a feature of Latin-American Spanish (Sarrazin 2010: 117). While such conditionals constitute only 2.5% of the corpus, their presence here confirms the fact that the innovation described by Sarrazin (2010) is indeed found in Peninsular Spanish. In fact, they were more frequent than conditionals accompanied by a future time marker (0.7% of all tokens). Secondly, Sarrazin (2010: 113-14) described tokens of this type as a distinct feature of headlines, but in this corpus all examples came from article bodies. The data here suggests that this would be an area worthy of further investigation.

Overall, the Spanish corpus does not support the idea that the journalistic context favors the past conditional (Oliveira 2015b: 113-14). Not only is the past conditional form used significantly less than the present, the majority of the corpus focuses on *what is* and *what will be*. *El Mundo* and *El Periódico* use the past conditional at nearly equal rates (15.8% and 15.9%, respectively), and only *El Mundo* featured any past conditionals that were inferential in nature. Again, as was the case in French, it is necessary to appeal to the fact that notions of news as an account of past events are incorrect (Neiger 2007: 311). This is very much illustrated by the amount of data that came from electoral polls prior to the regional and local elections of 2015. In the case of reporting on the future (to the extent it can be divined from polls), the use of the present conditional for inferences about the future appears to be usual in Spanish newswriting. In each newspaper, this use of the conditional to talk about the future was the most frequent (13.7% of all tokens). This was somewhat more frequent in *El Mundo* (15.3%) than in *El Periódico* (10.2%). These frequencies were surely influenced by the fact that the corpus fell around the time of a Spanish election since the majority of these tokens came from opinion polls. Since Spain has proportional representation in government and governing blocks can be formed through governing pacts, journalists use polling data to predict what kinds of governments might emerge post-election. In these instances, the inferential conditional appears quite useful when a reporter must make a reasoned guess.

Having given an overview of the different conditional types as well as their temporality, I will move into a discussion of the two forms of the press conditional. In §4.1.2.1, I describe the past conditional for events prior to the moment of enunciation. In §4.1.2.2, §4.1.2.3 and §4.1.2.4, I describe the present conditional with present, past and future readings. All of these uses have been described in the previous literature, although the use of the present conditional for past

states is not established in the linguistic literature even if it is mentioned in the RAE's (2009: 1782) reference grammar.

4.1.2.1 The Past Conditional

The past conditional in Spanish relates events prior to the moment of enunciation, equivalent to either the Spanish preterit or present perfect with the evidential marker *por lo visto*. In newswriting, as shown in Table 4.5, the past conditional for reported information is its usual form in journalism, and the inferential form in the past conditional was rare in *El Mundo* and non-existent in *El Periódico*. It may be the case that information about the past most often comes in the form of what sources say rather than what evidence implies. Examples of the reportative conditional from each newspaper are given in (8) and (9):

- (8) Según lo que **habría relatado** a sus padres y a la policía, un hombre la cogió del brazo y le pidió que subiera con él a un coche mientras le contaba que sus padres habían sufrido un accidente.

'According to what she [would have told] her parents and the police, a man grabbed her by the arm and asked her to get in a car with him while telling her that her parents had been in an accident.'

PERIODV, 38GIRONA

≠ iba a haber relatado

≠ diría que relata

≠ hubiera relatado

≠ todo me indica que había relatado

= **ha relatado (relató), por lo visto**

- (9) Según la información que maneja, Albert Rivera **habría transmitido** a sus aspirantes a presidentes autonómicos y alcaldes que eviten pronunciarse sobre el programa electoral y debatir sobre iniciativas concretas.

'According to the information available, Albert Rivera [would have told] his candidates for presidents in autonomous communities and mayors to avoid saying anything about their electoral agenda or debating concrete initiatives.'

MUNDOV, 10PP

≠ iba a haber transmitido

≠ diría que relata

≠ hubiera transmitido

≠ todo me indica que había transmitido

= **ha transmitido (transmitió), por lo visto**

As said above, the examples in (8) and (9) both precede the moment of enunciation: the girl told her parents that a man attempted to abduct her, and Albert Rivera has sent down campaign instructions to his party's candidates. The reportative conditional in the past form demonstrated nothing unexpected in the corpus.

El Mundo provided the only three examples of the inferential conditional in the past conditional. Two came from an article on the results of the UK General Election of May 2015. These are shown in (10) and (11):

- (10) Los conservadores **se habrían beneficiado** a última hora de la fuga de votos del Partido Liberal-Demócrata y del Ukip.
‘Conservatives [would have benefitted] at the last minute from the flight of votes from the Liberal-Democrats and UKIP.’
 MUNDOIV, 26CAMERON
 ≠ iban a haber beneficiado
 ≠ diría que beneficia
 ≠ hubiera beneficiado
 ≠ todo me indica que se había beneficiado
 = **se han beneficiado (se benefició), por lo visto**
- (11) Los laboristas **habrían logrado captar** el voto anti SNP en Escocia, así como el voto marginal del Partido Verde en varios distritos.
‘Labour [would have managed to capture] the anti-SNP vote in Scotland, as well as the marginal vote of the Green Party in various districts.’
 MUNDOIV, 26CAMERON
 ≠ iban a haber logrado captar
 ≠ diría que logra captar
 ≠ hubiera logrado captar
 ≠ todo me indica que había logrado captar
 = **han logrado (logró) captar, por lo visto**

The conclusions in (10) and (11) are drawn from UK exit polls. While polls are usually future-oriented in this corpus, exit polls provide an area where a reporter’s inferences bear on the past, although it appears that most past reports in the press conditional represent information learned through others’ statements. This may be due to the fact that most of what has happened in the past comes to the reporter through sources’ statements. However, in scientific writing bearing on the past, such as paleontology, the inferential past conditional may not be uncommon (cf. Ferrari 2009: 8).

4.1.2.2 The Present Conditional: Present Reference

The reportative conditional most often appeared in the present. The simple present indicative readily glosses the examples in (12) and (13) when combined with *por lo visto*:

- (12) Parte de la solución a este problema **estaría incluida** en la reforma de la Ley de Enjuiciamiento Criminal, actualmente en tramitación, que contempla que las sentencias de las Audiencias Provinciales sean revisadas en segunda instancia por los Tribunales Superiores de Justicia, tal y como ya había exigido la ONU a España en varias ocasiones.
‘Part of the solution to this problem [would be included] in the reform of the Law of Criminal Indictment, currently under debate, that provides for the sentences of the Provincial Courts to be revised in a second instance by the Superior Courts of Justice, as the UN had demanded of Spain on various occasions.’

MUNDOVII, 3ERROR

- ≠ iba a estar incluida
- ≠ diría que está incluido
- ≠ todo me indica que estaba/estuvo incluido
- = **está incluido por lo visto**

- (13) En medio de elucubraciones sobre el posible descabezamiento del Estado Islámico (EI)–su líder, Abubakar al Bagdadi, **estaría** gravemente **herido**...
‘In the middle of speculations surrounding the possible loss of leadership in the Islamic State (IS) – its leader, Abubakar al Bagdadi, [would be] seriously [injured]...’
- ≠ iba a estar herido
 - ≠ diría que está herido
 - ≠ todo me indica que estaba/estuvo herido
 - = **está herido, por lo visto**

In both examples, the conditional refers to an ongoing event at the time of the newspaper’s publication. In (12), a proposed law is moving through the legislature and should address needed reforms in the Spanish judicial process. In (13), it is rumored that the leader of the Islamic State is in bad health.

The inferential conditional was present in both newspapers, although to a larger extent in *El Mundo*. This appeared to be due to its more extensive analysis of polling data as well as its investigative reporting. Examples from each newspaper are given in (14) and (15):

- (14) Del interrogatorio se deduce también que los investigadores creen que tras de los pagos **podría estar** el dimitido consejero de Presidencia Salvador Victoria, a su vez un supuesto beneficiado por las campañas de imagen.
‘One deduces from the examination that the investigators believe that behind the payments [could be] the [now-]resigned counselor of the Presidency Salvador Victoria, himself a supposed beneficiary of the image campaign.’

MUNDOIII, IVINDRA

- ≠ iba a poder estar
- ≠ diría que puede estar
- ≠ todo me indica que podía/pudo
- = **puede estar, por lo visto**

- (15) Ese «PIVE de salida» **supondría** una solución salomónica ante la disyuntiva de acabar de forma brusca las ayudas, como había sugerido algún alto cargo gubernamental, o bien mantenerlas como hasta ahora, como pedían los directivos del sector hasta hace unas semanas.
‘This “exit PIVE” [would suppose] a Solomonic solution before the dilemma of abruptly ending the subsidies, as had suggested a high-ranking public official, or maintaining them as they have been up until now, as were demanding the leaders of the sector a few weeks ago.’

PERIODI, 25PIVE

- ≠ iba a suponer

- ≠ diría que supone
- ≠ todo me indica que suponía/supuso
- = **supone por lo visto**

(14) marks an inference made from the court interrogation of a party connected to an illicit enrichment scheme. (15) explains the nature of the recent decision to lower government subsidies for the purchase of fuel-efficient vehicles— in the light of proposals to end or continue them — and infers that a compromise between the two extremes has been sought by politicians. Unlike inferential past conditionals, it appears that the present conditional is occasionally useful in the analysis of current events, which likely contributes to its more frequent appearance in Spanish newswriting.

4.1.2.3 The Present Conditional: Past Reference

The literature has stated that the Spanish present conditional can mark a present or future action. This applies to the conditional as a marker of inference and as a marker of reported information. The academic literature does not appear to claim that the present conditional with a press value can ever refer to a moment prior to the time of enunciation. Nevertheless, the *Nueva gramática de la lengua española* suggests that this is possible:

Se ha llamado CONDICIONAL DE RUMOR a la variante del condicional de conjetura que se usa a menudo en el lenguaje periodístico para presentar las informaciones de forma cautelosa o dar noticias no suficientemente contrastadas. **En estos casos se obtienen también paráfrasis con presentes o con imperfectos:**

Se trata, en suma, de evitar que haya partidos que vean en la aprobación de las propuestas autonómicas de CiU el precio que el Gobierno *estaría* [= ‘*probablemente está o estaba*’] pagando a cambio del apoyo de los nacionalistas (*Vanguardia* [Esp.] 21/4/1994) ... (1782). (bolding mine)

This is not necessarily strange when other Romance languages (other than French) are taken into account. As was noted before, Brazilian Portuguese’s present conditional can be glossed by the imperfect (Oliveira 2015a: 215-16). Three tokens of the press conditional in the present tense did appear to take glosses with the imperfect. All of these tokens come from *El Mundo*, and all of them mark reported information. These tokens are shown in (16), (17) and (18):

- (16) Según los investigadores de la red, Martín Morales **sería** la persona encargada de controlar al entonces alcalde de la localidad, Arturo González Panero, por el presunto jefe de la trama, Francisco Correa.
 ‘According to those investigating the network, Martin Morales [**would be**] the person charged with controlling the then mayor of the locality, Arturo González Panero, by the presumed chief of the operation, Francisco Correa.’
 MUNDO1, 34MADRID
- ≠ Martín Morales iba a ser
 - ≠ Diría que es Martín Morales
 - ≠ Todo me indica que Martín Morales era

≠ Martín Morales es la persona encargada, por lo visto
= **Martín Morales era la persona encargada, por lo visto**

- (17) El grupo de excursionistas **sería** de unas diez personas, sobre las que estaban encargados dos monitores.

'The group of excursionists [would be] some 10 people, assigned to two monitors.'

MUNDO I, 51 MAESTRO

≠ El grupo de excursionistas iba a ser de unas diez personas
≠ Diría que es de unas diez personas
≠ Todo me indica que era de unas diez personas
≠ El grupo de excursionistas es de unas diez personas, por lo visto
= **El grupo de excursionistas era de unas diez personas, por lo visto**

- (18) Thematica **sabría** que «está el sobrino», dice Benavent, quien se compromete a trasladarle que debe presentarse para perder para que no digan que siempre se presenta para ganar.

'Thematica [would know] that 'there is the nephew' says Benavent, who promises to tell him that he ought to bid just to lose so they do not say that he always bids and wins.'

≠ Thematica iba a saber
≠ Diría que sabe
≠ Todo me indica que sabía
= **Thematica sabía, por lo visto**

These examples show that a present conditional can, in some cases, be glossed by the imperfect, and that such a use does feature in Peninsular newswriting. Other than *ser/estar* 'to be,' the only other token that appeared to fall into this category was an example with *saber* 'to know.' Given that these are all high-frequency stative verbs and constitute only a few tokens of the corpus, the phenomenon seems somewhat marginal.

Similarly, the *El País* style guide also gives an example of a present conditional that references a moment prior to the time of enunciation with the verb *haber* 'there is/are' (*El País* 2014: 176-77). The example given (replicated here in (19)) would appear to allow for an *imperfect + por lo visto* gloss (19):

- (19) Para indicar un cálculo aproximado: '**Habría** 2.000 personas en la manifestación.' En este caso, se da un dato probable (2.000) dentro de un hecho cierto (la manifestación). Es decir, no se trata de la conjetura sobre si ocurrió o no algo, sino sobre un aspecto numérico relacionado con ello y que se somete a la apreciación personal. (*El País* 2014: 176-77)

'To indicate an approximate calculation: 'There [would be] 2,000 people at the demonstration.' In this case, one gives an approximate fact (2,000) under a certain fact (the demonstration). That is to say that it is not a question of conjecture whether something happened or not, but rather a numerical aspect related to it and subject to individual evaluation.'

≠ iba a haber

≠ diría que hay
 ≠ toda me indica que había
 = **había 2.000 personas, por lo visto**

A past reading is made clear, since *El País* discusses the example in terms of the whether something happened or not (*'si ocurrió o no algo'*).

4.1.2.4 The Present Conditional: Future Reference

Sarrazin (2010) describes what she calls the innovative use of the press conditional to mark future events in Spanish newspapers. This “new usage” that she identifies is the absence of a temporal marker to force a prospective reading of the conditional, which is obligatory to obtain such readings in French (Sarrazin 2010: 109). She claims that such a use circumvents the conditional’s proscription since future events, by their very nature, are unconfirmed, and the journalist does not risk reporting bad information (Sarrazin 2010: 116). Two such tokens, taken from Sarrazin (2010) are provided in (20) and (21):

- (20) Según la agencia EFE, el presidente **saldría** mañana para Londres
'According to the EFE news agency, the president [would leave] tomorrow for London.'

(Sarrazin 2010: 109)

≠ iba a salir mañana
 ≠ diría que sale mañana
 ≠ todo me indica que salió mañana
 = **saldrá mañana, por lo visto**

- (21) **HEADLINE:** ONU: El Talibán **obtendría** 500 millones de dólares de narcotráfico.
'UN: The Taliban [would obtain] 500 million dollars in narcotrafficking.'

(Sarrazin 2010: 109)

≠ iba a obtener
 ≠ diría que obtiene
 ≠ todo me indica que obtuvo
 = **obtendrá, por lo visto**

(20) represents what could be called the ‘expected’ use of the conditional to refer to the future and contains a temporal marker. In (21), the future marker is absent. Sarrazin (2010: 113-14), who finds examples like (21) only in headlines, argues that the lack of future time marker creates a hook by creating an unexpected incongruity by enticing the reader with a claim that turns out to be slightly different when the article is read. Per her argument, this innovation would have emerged due to the specific nature of headlines.

Only *El Mundo* presented reportative conditional tokens with future time markers. These are shown in (22) and (23):

- (22) Las subidas salariales para 2017 **se negociarían** en los primeros tres meses de ese año.

'The salary raises for 2017 [would be negotiated] in the first three months of that year.'

MUNDO I, 28 SINDICATOS

≠ se iban a negociar

≠ diría que se negocia

≠ todo me indica que se negoció

= **se negociará, por lo visto**

- (23) De ahí que Mercedes haya esperado a esta muestra para presentar el prototipo del GLC Coupé, que **llegaría** al mercado en la primera mitad de 2016 llenando el hueco entre el GLE y el GLA.

'For this reason, Mercedes has waited for this demonstration to present the prototype of the GLC coupe, which [would arrive] on the market in the first half of 2016, filling the gap between the GLE and the GLA.'

MUNDO II, 22 CHINA

≠ iba a llegar

≠ diría que llega

≠ todo me indica que llegó

= **llegará, por lo visto**

The tokens found in (22) and (23) require little comment: they are conditionals with temporal markers indicating that the events will take place in 2016 and 2017, a year and two years later than the editions' publication year of 2015.

This corpus confirms that the innovation described by Sarrazin (2010) occurs in Peninsular Spanish journalistic writing. In fact, the pattern of (21) is more frequent than the one in (20). A total of seven tokens in the corpus followed her description of an event taking place in the future with no time marker. These tokens are shown in (24 – 29):

- (24) Similar es el Honda Concept D, un todocamino con aspiraciones premium y dimensiones superiores a las del CR-V. Coches que **se encontrarían** en el mercado con el Citroën Aircross.

'Similar [to it] is the Honda Concept D, an all-terrain vehicle with premium aspirations and superior dimensions to the CR-V. Cars that [would be found] on the market with the Citroën Aircross.'

MUNDO II, 22 CHINA

≠ se iban a encontrar

≠ diría que se encuentran

≠ toda me indica que se encontraron

= **se encontrarán, por lo visto**

- (25) La plataforma, de tipo modular, y otros elementos mecánicos los **pondría** Volvo.
'The platform, modular in type, and other mechanical elements [will be installed] by Volvo.'

MUNDO II, 22 GEELY

≠ iba a poner

≠ diría que pone

≠ todo me indica que puso
= **pondrá, por lo visto**

- (26) **Sería** el último de estos planes por lo que, a modo de inicio de transición a un mercado sin ayudas, estas **se rebajarían** de 1.000 a 750 euros por parte del Gobierno, y otro tanto, por parte de las marcas.
'It [would be] the last of these plans which is the reason for which, in the interest of a transition to a market without subsidies, that they [would be lowered] from 1,000 to 750 euros, paid out equally by both the government and car makers.'
MUNDOIV, 32PIVE8
≠ se iban a rebajar
≠ diría que se rebajan
≠ todo me indica que se rebajaron
= **se rebajarán, por lo visto**
- (27) Todo parece indicar que anunciará la aprobación del Pive8 que, como adelantó EL MUNDO, **tendría** una dotación de 225 millones para extenderse hasta fin de año.
'Everything appears to indicate that it will announce the approval of the Pive8, which, as El Mundo reported, [will have] a provision of 225 million to continue until the end of the year.'
MUNDOIV, 32PIVE8
≠ iba a tener
≠ diría que tiene
≠ todo me indica que tuvo
= **tendrá, por lo visto**
- (28) Al prestar este dinero al Estado, los intereses **se situarían** entre el 2,5% y el 2,7%.
'Upon lending this money to the State, the interest [would be set] somewhere between 2.5% and 2.7%.'
PERIODII, 14MUNICIPIOS
≠ se iban a situar
≠ diría que se sitúan
≠ todo me indica que se situó
= **se situará, por lo visto**
- (29) Con esta operación, a un plazo de dos meses, las arcas públicas **obtendrían** entre 2.000 y 2.500 millones de euros.
'Under this plan, in the course of two months, the public coffers [would obtain] between 2,000 and 2.5 billion euros.'
PERIODII, 14MUNICIPIOS
≠ iban a obtener
≠ diría que obtienen
≠ todo me indico que obtuvieron
= **obtendrán, por lo visto**

There is not sufficient data to explain what might favor a reportative conditional reporting a future event in Peninsular Spanish. What is striking is the fact that most of these examples in *El Mundo* come from its automotive section. On the basis of bylines, this use of the conditional might reflect one journalist's particular style: Sergio Piccione is on the byline of both articles (as author and co-author) from which the examples in (24), (25), (26) and (27) come. Piccione is Spanish with a long career in Spanish sports and automotive journalism, so it is presumable that it reflects a natural enough use of the press conditional in Peninsular newswriting.⁶⁷ In any case, the data from the corpus demonstrates that the innovation first observed by Sarrazin (2010) in American Spanish is also present in Peninsular Spanish. This use could come to Peninsular Spanish through internal borrowing from Latin-American newswriting, although more data is needed.

Conversely, the present conditional can mark an inferred future event (Stagnaro 2015: 77). Stagnaro (2015: 77) provides the example seen in (30):

- (30) Por otro lado, se observa una escasa participación de los trabajadores informáticos en redes virtuales e institucionales, siendo que este tipo de vinculaciones **podría generar** competencias que complementarían las calificaciones obtenidas en el sistema de educación formal.

‘On the other hand, one observes a limited participation of software workers in virtual and institutional networks, despite the fact that these connections [could generate] new skills that would supplement the qualifications obtained in the formal education system.’

≠ iba a poder generar

≠ diría que puede obtener

≠ todo me indica que pudo obtener

= **podrá generar, por lo visto**

As with other uses of the conditional to mark inference in Spanish, there is no suggestion that this has been borrowed from another language. The use of the conditional in (30) does not require the same kind of consideration of its diachronic and synchronic status that the reportative conditionals in (24 – 29) do.

As shown in Table 4.5, the inferential conditional for future events was the most common form of the conditional to refer to the future. This function was usually tied to predictions for government formations on the basis of polling data.⁶⁸ Examples are given in (31) and (32):

- (31) La llave de la estabilidad la **tendría** en ambos consistorios Ciudadanos, que irrumpe con fuerza aunque parece haberse estancado ya en su techo electoral, inferior al 15%.

⁶⁷ El Mundo. 2017. “Sergio Piccione dirigirá *Marca Motor*.” *El Mundo*, September 21, 2017, Online edition, sec Television. <https://www.elmundo.es/television/2017/09/21/59c2aed0268e3ee9058b45b6.html>, accessed Oct. 8, 2019.

⁶⁸ *El Mundo* had one token of this type that was not tied to polls, wherein it explained the implications of foreign production companies purchasing Spanish TV show formats: “*Algo que celebrar*, con Norma Ruiz y Alejo Sauras en el reparto, vende al extranjero su formato; es decir, la serie **se emitiría** en EEUU e Italia elaborada por equipos técnicos y artísticos de esos países.” (‘*Algo que celebrar, with Norma Ruiz and Alejo Sauras in the cast, is selling its format abroad; that is to say, the series [would be] broadcast in the United States and Italy produced by artists and production teams in those countries.*’)

‘The key to stability in both municipalities [would be in the hands of] Ciudadanos, which comes out in force although it appears to have hit its electoral ceiling, at under 15%.’

MUNDOV, 3AYUNTAMIENTO

≠ iba a tener

≠ diría que tiene

≠ todo me indica que tuvo

= **tendrá, por lo visto**

- (32) La única mayoría posible **sería** una gran coalición PP-PSOE (a la alemana), muy difícil en España porque falta cultura de coalición (en Madrid no ha habido gobiernos de este tipo desde la restauración de la democracia) y porque el antagonismo entre los dos grandes es mucho más fuerte que el alemán, el inglés, o incluso el francés.

‘The only majority possible [would be] a grand coalition of the PP-PSOE (in the German style), very difficult to achieve in Spain because of the lack of a culture of coalitions (in Madrid there has not been a government of this type since the restoration of democracy) and because the antagonism between the two major parties is much fiercer than that in Germany, Britain or France.’

PERIODVI, 10HACIA

≠ iba a ser

≠ diría que es

≠ todo me indica que fue

= **será, por lo visto**

These tokens are an excellent reflection of Neiger’s (2007: 311) claim that modern news content often extends into the future. In Spain, if no party receives an absolute majority, pacts must be made to form governments. While polling data can help predict what those pacts might look like, they are predictions and must be inferred from the data available and the journalist’s own understanding of electoral dynamics.

4.1.3 Uses of the Reportative and Inferential Conditional in Spanish

Having investigated the forms of the reportative and inferential conditional, in §4.1.1 and §4.1.2, I will briefly explore the general functions of each conditional type as observed in each newspaper. This will be done from a broad perspective, meaning that I will be focusing on how each conditional is used without special attention to article type or newspaper. In §4.1.3.3, I will also explore the use of the conditional with quantification, which, while it has not been explicitly linked to quantification (as far as I know), in journalistic writing, did accompany the press conditional frequently.⁶⁹

⁶⁹ There is the sanction of the conditional with numbers in *El País*’s style guide (El País 2014:176-77) shown in (19). However, it does not give any insight into the frequency with which the conditional appears with quantities.

4.1.3.1 Uses of the Inferential Conditional in the Spanish Corpus

The inferential conditional served multiple functions. Broadly speaking it sometimes served as a means to explain or elaborate on an event, and it sometimes served to provide an inferred fact. In (33), we can observe the use of the inferential conditional to clarify the legal approach of the Spanish prosecution towards the Basque militant group ETA and its members:

- (33) **1.** La Fiscalía ve en los delitos perpetrados por los miembros de las distintas cúpulas de ETA un «plus» al de mero terrorismo, dado que «constituyen un ataque con unos concretos fines políticos». **2.** «Como puede fácilmente observarse, los hechos a investigar van más allá (...); el delito de terrorismo **se encontraría** así en relación concursal con el de lesa humanidad, es decir, dentro de la categoría general de crímenes contra la humanidad, a pesar de tener unos tipos penales propios», asegura el escrito.
- ‘1. The Justice Department sees a «bigger [crime]» than mere terrorism in the crimes committed by the members of the distinct leaderships of ETA, given that «they constitute an attack with concrete political aims». 2. «As can be easily seen, the facts to be investigated go further...; the crime of terrorism [would fall under] the scope of lèse-humanity, that is within the general category of crimes against humanity, despite having some of its own penal types», confirms the document.*
- 3.** A lo que la Fiscalía se opone frontalmente es a la apertura de una «especie de causa general». **4.** Por ese motivo, ha pedido a la Policía y la Guardia Civil que informen sobre si existen causas abiertas contra los jefes etarras señalados en la querrela. **5.** Además, ha pedido a los juzgados centrales de Instrucción que informen del estado de cada uno de los hechos delictivos atribuidos a ETA. **6.** Y en especial, dado que es el origen de caso, se ha interesado por las diligencias sobre el asesinato de Luis María Uriarte, reclamando con urgencia que el juzgado de Durango los remita a la Audiencia Nacional.
- ‘3. That which the Justice Department opposes up front is the opening of ‘any kind of «causa general». 4. For this reason, it has asked the Police and the Civil Guard to inform them if there exist any open cases against the ETA leaders mentioned in the suit. 5. Furthermore, it has asked the investigating authorities that they inform them of the status of each one of the criminal acts attributed to ETA. 6. And, especially, given the origin of the case, the court is interested in proceedings regarding the murder of Luis María Uriarte and urgently calling for the court of Durango to submit this information to the National High Court.’*
- 7. Se trataría** tanto de individualizar responsabilidades penales como de poder sustentar la tesis de que se trató de una persecución política concertada y sistemática, tal como exige el delito de lesa humanidad.
- ‘7. It [would be a matter of] individualizing criminal liability as much as being able to sustain the thesis that it was a case of concerted and systematic political persecution, as is required for a crime of lèse-humanity.’*
- MUNDOVI, 12FISCALÍA

(33-1) and (33-2) provide the Justice Department's opinion that the nature of ETA's acts constitute more than just terrorism. In their view, the group's collective actions may also constitute a crime against humanity. However, in order to avoid a disorderly and possibly legally unsound *causa general* the Spanish prosecution is being strategic in its approach.⁷⁰ In (33-6), the article details various measures that the Justice Department has taken in order not to lose sight of the individual, demonstrable crimes committed by ETA leaders. The token in (33-7) interprets the motivations for this double approach such as it is deduced from the statements and actions of the Spanish prosecution. Given the legal complexities, the example in (33-7) appears to serve as a means to explain what readers might find to be opaque in the prosecution's behavior.

The interpretation of data from polls is also a recurrent feature, given Spain's representational system, as seen in (34) and (35):

- (34) Ciudadanos **podría ser** el único sostén del PP, pero también puede lanzarse a gobernar en el Ayuntamiento de Valencia.
'Ciudadanos [could be] the PP's only support, but it may also try to govern in the City Council of Valencia.'
MUNDOV, 5VALENCIA
- (35) Por lo que respecta a Catalunya, el CIS solo ha sondeado sobre el Ayuntamiento de Barcelona, pero los resultados que avanza significan un vuelco que no solo **tendría** consecuencias en la capital catalana, sino también en el proceso soberanista.
'With respect to Catalonia, the CIS only polled for the City Council of Barcelona, but the results it puts forth signal an upset that [would have] consequences not only in the Catalanian capital but also for the sovereignty process.'
PERIODIV, 18CIS

(34) considers the possibility of unity between Spain's traditional conservative party and the emergent center-right Ciudadanos in the light of polling data from Valencia. The polls suggest that the Partido Popular will have to rely on the new party if it wants to govern, however, Ciudadanos may still move to govern itself. In (35), the journalist observes that the upset predicted by the polls for the city of Barcelona will have consequences for the ongoing Catalanian independence movement. None of these are directly predicted by the polls but come from the journalist's analysis of their data.

Elsewhere, inference is found not in the discourse of the journalist but in the words of those cited by the journalist. These are often from legal sources, explaining conclusions made from evidence available (36):

- (36) Ya con los fondos en poder de la tapadera londinense, abunda la Udef, Jordi Pujol Ferrusola, que se encuentra imputado por la Audiencia Nacional por blanqueo de capitales y delito fiscal, "**manejaría** los capitales fuera del país a su antojo, incluso introduciéndolos a veces en nuestro país para satisfacer sus necesidades

⁷⁰ A reference to the broad and politically motivated investigation initiated under Francisco Franco into the alleged crimes of Spanish Republicans.

puntuales de liquidez en negocios lícitos, pero financiados con esos fondos de procedencia espuria."

'Already with the funds under control of the London front, elaborates the Udef, Jordi Pujol Ferrusola, who finds himself accused of money laundering and tax evasion by the National Court, [would be moving] funds out of the country at will, while also bringing them back to our country to satisfy his occasional needs for cash in ventures [that are] legal but financed with those funds of spurious origin.'

MUNDOVII, 4PUJOL

In (36), the report explaining allegations against Jordi Pujol Ferrusola draws inferences from the nature of the transactions between a Spanish construction company and a London shell company. Since the transactions appear suspect and not of a business nature, these unusually numbered payments suggest a means of moving funds at a time when Pujol Ferrusola was implicated in multiple illicit financial schemes.

This use of the conditional is not strictly limited to legal sources but can be seen in other cases of inference, such as when an expert is consulted. An example is seen in (37):

- (37) «El agotamiento de la agenda reformista del Gobierno, el crecimiento con el viento a favor por la caída de los precios del petróleo, la política expansiva del BCE, etc... **estarían contribuyendo** a generar expectativas favorables al mantenimiento de nuestro statu quo económico».
- “The slowing of the government’s reformist agenda, growth with winds in favor of a fall in oil prices, the expansive policy of the BCE, etc.... [would be contributing] to creating expectations favorable to the maintenance of our economic status quo”.*

MUNDOIII, 28AUSENCIA

In (37), the economist consulted is basing his argument on a variety of factors that could be influencing Spain’s economy in a time of governmental instability. The conditional, as it would in a scientific text, appears to provide a “hedge” to the economist’s hypothesis (see Ferrari 2009: 8).

It is evident from this data that the inferential conditional is used by journalistic writing in the interests of achieving its aims. Cotter (2010: 31) distinguishes between the gathering of facts, which she calls “reporting” (acting as a reporter) and the written production of the article, which she calls “writing.” In this light, the inferential conditional appears to be useful to Spanish journalists for both reporting and writing. Inferences are a natural consequence of the gathering of facts, such as listening to an audio recording that is part of a legal case, as in (1). In an example like (33-7) we can think of the conditional as part of the writing process, wherein the conditional serves to clarify the facts that have been gathered. In cases like (34) and (35), the inferential conditional allows for speculation on the future, which, as Neiger (2007: 318) argues, has an important place in modern news. The inferential conditional can clearly serve either function, and I would argue it should therefore be considered as part of what constitutes the *press conditional* in Spanish. This is a more complex picture of the press conditional in Spanish journalistic texts than the one that has been often depicted by commentators and in the scholarly literature thus far. My argument here should be read in the light of Bermúdez’s (2016) work

distinguishing two conditionals of attribution in Spanish, as well as García Negroni's (2016: 10) description of the conditional as inferential in a journalistic context. If those studies point to the growing awareness of the press conditional's complexity in Spanish, then I hope that this investigation helps to further that awareness.

4.1.3.2 Uses of the Reportative Conditional in the Spanish Corpus

The reportative conditional could be thought of—as it has been in the French literature—as a form of speech reporting (Rosier 1999: 100). Reportative conditionals conform, in some ways, to the role that other forms of speech representation play in news, as described by Cotter (2010):

The discursive purpose of attributing a source from the news community's point of view is to render the reporter's voice neutral, to position the reporter as a conduit, or an objective party that is not taking a stance about the topic being covered but is merely conveying a range of views. Thus attribution and quotes themselves, whether direct or indirect, are important to front the speaker or source and his or her stance and to take the opinion of the reporter out of the equation (146).

When Cotter (2010) says that the attribution of a quote serves to keep the journalist “neutral,” we can infer that quoted voices are presumed not to be neutral. These non-neutral elements of news reporting have, according to Cotter (2010: 147), one of two functions: illustration or summary. Illustration supports a particular point of a news story, while summary serves to capture the entirety of the story.

The press conditional appears to be able to serve both these functions. In an example seen earlier in (16), the press conditional serves to summarize the point of the article: investigators have expanded a corruption case to include a new party implicated in the matter. Here, the conditional provides the main story. Notably, because the journalist is not in a position to assess the new party's guilt or innocence, the press conditional serves to underline this neutral position through the journalist's refusal to take responsibility for the truth of that allegation. Similarly, in the example in (38), the press conditional serves to illustrate and add information to the story. In this case, a member of the Venezuelan opposition has come to Spain to bring attention to a Spanish politician's involvement in Venezuelan politics:

- (38) Según Montoya, Monedero **habría hecho** esta labor de asesoramiento en materia de comunicación a través de la fundación CEPS.
'According to Montoya, Monedero [**would have performed**] *this advising work in the form of communications through the CEPS foundation.*'
PERIODII, 19VENEZUELA

In the case of (38), the conditional reports a single detail related to a wider examination of a Spanish politician's collaboration with Venezuela's Maduro administration. The detail helps explain why the Venezuelan official has made this visit to speak before Congress in Spain. In both the cases of (16) and (39), the conditional acts as a form of quotation meant to maintain the reporter's neutrality vis-à-vis other's claims. The conditional adds a clear marker that the reporter does not know whether the accusations reported are necessarily true.

When the reportative conditional is used outside of serious allegations, it simply appears to report a fact the journalist cannot confirm or an opinion the journalist wishes to attribute to another party. This is seen in (39) and (40):

- (39) Tal como explicó el ministro, **se trataría** de «resucitar» y arbitrar una nueva Corte, distinta a la de La Haya, cuya jurisdicción no es reconocida por Israel, Estados Unidos y China.
‘As the minister explained, it [would be a question] of reviving and arbitrating a new court, separate from the one in the Hague, whose jurisdiction is not recognized by Israel, the United States or China.’
MUNDOI, 4YIHADISTA

- (40) Decía la Capmany que cuando Barcelona arroja la precaución por la borda es capaz de hacer cosas extraordinarias. Los Juegos del 92 **serían** un ejemplo.
‘Capmany used to say that when Barcelona throws caution overboard, it is capable of doing extraordinary things. The ’92 Olympic Games [would be] an example.’
PERIODVI, 13PRUDENCIA

In each of these cases, the conditional serves to relay an opinion or perspective and marks a certain distance between the reporter and what has been expressed. It is noticeable that this distancing does not appear to draw any special attention to the fact that the opinion may be false, merely that the journalist is not responsible for that opinion. In fact, no tokens in the Spanish corpus were found that conformed to the use of the conditional in French to mark discourse that one wishes to present as false or suspect. This suggests that the conditional might not be used this way in Spanish, as was originally proposed by Azzopardi (2011: 314). In the case of (39), the reporter’s stance appears neutral, while in (40) the writer appears to lean towards an endorsement of the opinion. This will make for a necessary point of comparison between the two languages in the comparative analysis in Chapter 5.

In some cases, the press conditional can be seen not as quotation, but rather as something more akin to the journalist’s own discourse. Such is the case in an article run in *El Mundo*, where a legal document (using the inferential conditional) makes (tentative) conclusions about the nature of suspicious bank transfers between Spanish construction company FCC and a shell company headquartered in London (41), (42) and (43):

- (41) Este gran salto en la numeración "**supondría**", abunda el informe, que "si Brantridge Holdings siguiera el sistema normal de facturación, sólo habría emitido hasta finales de julio nueve facturas por sus servicios en el año 2006". Y, "sin embargo, pasado menos de un mes y medio, **habría expedido** un total de 4.446 facturas a terceros".
“‘This great leap in the numbering [would suppose],” continues the report, “that if Brantridge Holdings were following the usual system of billing it would have only sent out new bills up to late July for its services in 2006.” And, however, less than a month and a half later, it [would have sent] a total of 4,446 bills to third parties.’
MUNDOVII, 4PUJOL

- (42) En resumen, FCC **habría falseado** los conceptos de los pagos a Brantridge para ocultar que se trataba de comisiones.
'In short, FCC [would have falsified] the memos of payments to Brantridge in order to conceal that these were commissions.'
 MUNDOVII, 4PUJOL
- (43) En un segundo estadio, Pujol Ferrusola **habría hecho lo propio** librando facturas a Brantridge para recibir el dinero de manos de su testaferro, camuflando de nuevo el objeto real de los pagos.
'In a second step, Pujol Ferrusola [would have done his part] by sending bills to Brantridge in order to receive the money from his front man, camouflaging once again the real reason for the payments.'
 MUNDOVII, 4PUJOL

The conditionals in (41) come from the direct quotes of a legal document that outline alleged money laundering. These conditionals reflect the inferences made by investigators based on financial records available to them. In (42) and (43), the reporter summarizes the allegations at the article's end, once the various documents and sources have been quoted and properly attributed. In this summarizing context, it is the uncertainty of the press conditional, rather than its marking of reported information, that is foregrounded. Examples like (42) and (43) show instances where the conditional less resembles speech reporting and more resembles an efficient means to mark uncertainty through coding of that uncertainty directly on the verb.

4.1.3.3 The Conditional and Quantification

The conditional in Spanish is used frequently alongside a quantity. Using the conditional with quantities is, in fact, one that is permitted in style guides, as was seen in (19). Since this use of the conditional does not appear to be subject to prescriptive pressure and is conditioned by the nature of the information at the level of the individual utterance, I am examining it alongside the broader uses of the conditional to mark inference or reported information. Examples of quantification are shown in (44) and (45):

- (44) A falta aún de concretar el plan, el valor mínimo estimado por el 49% de la empresa **estaría** en 190 millones de euros.
'While the plan remains to be finalized, the minimum estimated value for the 49% of the company [would be] in the region of 1.9 billion euros.'
 MUNDOIII, 30RENFE
- (45) Desde el mes de enero **habrían perecido** 1.750 personas.
'Since the month of January, 1,750 people [would have died].'
 PERIODII, 12DESPLIEGUE

The *El País* (2014: 176-77) style guide says the conditional marks the “*apreciación personal*” ‘personal assessment’ of a number. The press conditional is licensed since an element of the event, rather than whether or not the event took place, is what is in question.

Tokens in which the conditional accompanied a quantification were tallied and are shown in Table 4.6:

TABLE 4.6 THE CONDITIONAL ACCOMPANYING QUANTIFICATION

	El Mundo n, %	El Periodico n, %	Corpus n, %
Quantification	75, 39.5%	41, 46.6%	116, 41.7%
Reportative	66, 34.7%	37, 42.0%	103, 37.1%
Inferential	8, 4.2%	4, 4.5%	12, 4.3%
Ambiguous	1, 0.5%	0, 0.0%	1, 0.4%
Other	115, 60.5%	47, 53.4%	162, 58.3%
Reportative	69, 36.3%	36, 40.9%	105, 37.8%
Inferential	46, 24.2%	11, 12.5%	57, 20.5%
Ambiguous	0, 0.0%	0, 0.0%	0, 0.0%
Total	190, 100%	88, 100%	278, 100%

As Table 4.6 shows, conditionals occurring with quantification account for a significant portion of the tokens found in the corpus, making up 39.5% and 46.6% of tokens in *El Mundo* and *El Periódico*, respectively, and 41.7% of the Spanish corpus in total.

The inferential conditional is fairly infrequent with quantification. This aligns with the lower frequency of inferential conditionals observed in the corpus (see Table 4.4) and with the fact that reported information is the basis for most of a journalist’s information (Cotter 2010: 54; Marnette 2005: 300). This accounted for only twelve tokens in the entire corpus. Examples are given in (46) and (47):

- (46) Esta cantidad **situaría** la demanda en los mismos niveles de 2009-2010, años en que se cruzaron las líneas de tendencia de las compras de viviendas nuevas y la entrega de las mismas.
‘This quantity [**would situate**] the demand at the same level of 2009 and 2010, the years in which the trendlines of buying and selling new homes intersected.’
MUNDOVII, 32VIVIENDA
- (47) Así **serían** ya cinco los grupos de la oposición.
‘Thus the opposition groups [**would be**] already at 5.’
PERIODV, 17ALBIOL

In (46) and (47), quantities are calculated by the journalist. In (46), the editorialist assesses recent debate about the need for new housing in Madrid. (47) speculates as to the future make-up of the opposition in the City Council of Baldoña. Although the *El País* example in (19) suggests an estimation on the part of a journalist, it is clear that, more often than not, journalists draw their figures from their sources rather than from their own inference or estimation.

Quantification is common in reports on opinion polls, as seen in (48) and (49):

- (48) En las generales, el PP y el PSOE **estarían** en empate técnico (25,6% y 24,3%); Podemos, a la baja (16,5%) y sube Ciudadanos (13,8%)

'In the general elections, the PP and the PSOE [would be] in a technical tie (25.6% and 24.3%); Podemos, now down (16.5%) and Ciudadanos goes up (13.8%).'

MUNDOIV, 1CIUDADANOS

- (49) El partido de Albert Rivera **se llevaría** el 13,8% de los apoyos frente al 3,1% que le daba el anterior sondeo.

'The party of Albert Rivera [would receive] 13.8% of the backing against the 3.1% that the previous poll was giving it.'

PERIODIV, 4PSOE

Examples like (48) and (49) are frequent in the corpus. In fact, the use of the conditional in connection to electoral polls is so common that the case deserves treatment apart from other forms of quantification. This will be addressed in §4.2.2 under the consideration that data-based articles use more scientific discourse than other kinds of articles. Nevertheless, the corpus establishes that the press conditional accompanying quantification, which appears to be a sanctioned and broad category of use of the press conditional, is a usual feature of Spanish newswriting.

4.1.4 Conclusion

Up to this point, my examination of the Spanish corpus has demonstrated that the conditional is used to relay reported information and inferences in Spanish journalistic texts. It appears that if the term *press conditional* is meant refer to the conditional used for uncertain information in journalistic language, both the inferential and reportative uses of the conditional constitute a press conditional in Spanish that is not limited to the reportative function alone. Future studies of the conditional in journalistic texts should take both types of conditional into account. This study notes the same variation in frequency in the use of the press conditional observed in news sources by Kronning (2016: 126). In *El Mundo*, the press conditional is fairly frequent, at .42 occurrences per 1000 words, a level similar to those found in some French newspapers, where the construction is not proscribed. *El Periódico de Catalunya* featured a much lower use of the press conditional at a rate of .14 occurrences per 1000 words. This variation will be addressed in §4.2.

Both the reportative conditional and the inferential conditional appeared in the present and past. The Spanish past conditional could be glossed with a preterit or present perfect whether it was inferential or reportative. Much more complex was the present conditional form, which provided present, future and past readings. For example, three tokens of the present conditional

able to be glossed by the imperfect were found for the reportative conditional, confirming descriptions in reference works usually not discussed in the academic literature. Elsewhere, the present conditional had prospective and present readings for both the inferential conditional and the reportative conditional. While the use of the reportative conditional for future events remains infrequent, this study confirmed that reportative conditionals with prospective readings did appear without temporal markers in Peninsular Spanish and were not confined to headlines, as Sarrazin (2010: 113-114) had found. If it were the case that the reportative use of the conditional is a borrowing in Spanish, this would, indeed, represent an innovation and could suggest that the innovation has expanded its context of use.

Finally, the uses of the inferential conditional and reportative conditional were surveyed. Both proved to have utility in journalism and, together, can be thought to constitute the Spanish press conditional. It is also clear that the press conditional is used frequently in quantifying information. At this juncture, it is necessary to examine the press conditional in greater depth. In §4.2, I will examine how the press conditional is embedded in the Spanish corpus, and I will account for variation observed not only across the two newspapers but across different article types.

4.2 The Press Conditional in *El Mundo* and *El Periódico de Catalunya*

After a broad examination of the use of the conditional to mark inference and reported information, it is clear that prescriptive discouragement of the press conditional has not achieved its (purported) aim to eliminate the press conditional from Spanish newswriting. Historically, the proscription against the press conditional has been based on what Cotter (2010: 136-37) would call the “content goals” and “rhetorical goals” of journalism, which work in tandem to create credible journalistic practice. In Spanish style guides, the press conditional appears to undermine each of these goals. With respect to content, the press conditional is perceived to report rumor, which is undesirable in good journalism, while the press conditional’s alleged ungrammaticality would constitute bad writing. These are the objections laid out in the *El País* style guide and that of Canal Sur:

La posibilidad en el pasado no es, sin embargo, un hecho dudoso, no garantizado, ni un rumor. **Este uso del condicional de indicativo es francés.** Se incurre, pues, en galicismo cuando se escriben frases como éstas: ‘el ministro de Agricultura podría estar dispuesto...’; ‘el obispo habría establecido...’;

El uso del condicional en ese tipo de frases queda terminantemente prohibido en el periódico. **Además de incorrecto gramaticalmente, resta credibilidad a la información** (El País 2014: §13.28).

No debemos utilizar el condicional para indicar conjetura o suposición. **Aparte de que gramaticalmente este uso roza la incorrección y de qué esta fórmula no se utiliza fuera del ámbito periodístico,** con ella el informador da la impresión de no tener seguridad o pleno conocimiento de lo que cuenta... *es mucho más profesional, aparte de ser más natural y claro, afirmar con el verbo y remitir la responsabilidad de la noticia a la fuente que nos proporciona.* De esta manera, el periodista deja patente que está

obrando con cautela y que son las propias fuentes las que manifiestan dudas (RTVA 2004: 211).

Conversely, *El Mundo* primarily focuses only on the ungrammaticality of the construction:

El uso del condicional, que en castellano no puede utilizarse, a diferencia del francés, en el sentido de duda o de posibilidad: no se puede escribir «la reacción alemana estaría relacionada con las presiones de grupos ecologistas» si lo que se desea expresar es «la reacción alemana puede tener relación con las presiones de grupos ecologistas» (o «la reacción alemana está probablemente relacionada con las presiones de grupos ecologistas») (El Mundo 2002: 53)

In 2009, the Real Academia Española gave the press conditional official grammatical sanction but acknowledged that newspapers might object to its use on content grounds:

Se ha llamado CONDICIONAL DE RUMOR a la variante del condicional de conjetura que se usa a menudo en el lenguaje periodístico para presentar las informaciones de forma cautelosa o dar noticias no suficientemente contrastadas. En estos casos se obtienen también paráfrasis con presentes o con imperfectos...

Algunos diarios hispanohablantes han optado por excluir este uso particular del condicional de conjetura en sus libros de estilo. No lo hacen, sin embargo, porque exista incorrección gramatical en dicha construcción, sino porque el rumor no debe ser presentado como noticia (RAE 2009: 1782).

Unlike in French, where the overuse of the press conditional appears to be a question of imprecise content (as well as potentially imprecise writing if it is overused), the press conditional is subject to two grounds of objection.

Prescriptivism has certainly played a role in keeping the press conditional out of *El País*. Sarrazin (2010: 102) demonstrates that the press conditional, a feature of *El País*'s newswriting in its first two years, dropped significantly after a rewrite of its style guide on the model of that of Spanish news agency EFE. The idea that prescription acts as a regulating force is frequently used to account for the rates of use of the press conditional in other newspapers. Kronning (2016) describes the difference between *El País* and *ABC* in terms of their stylistic compliance:

Or, le journalisme péninsulaire est régi par des normes diaphasiques conflictuelles. Ainsi, dans un journal comme *El País*, soumis à une norme prescriptiviste (et prétendument déontologique), les occurrences du CEE sont rares mais non inexistantes (1 occ.) alors que dans d'autres journaux, comme *ABC* (8 occ.), non soumis à — ou ce qui revient au même, non respectant — cette norme, le taux des CEE est nettement plus élevé (128).

Such a conclusion, were it applied to the data here, would suggest that *El Mundo* does not follow prescriptive norms and that *El Periódico* is a more prescriptively conforming newspaper. I would argue that the situation is more complex.

Cotter (2010: 187) describes news language as “conservative” but subject to change due to “communicative needs.” The linguistic literature on the press conditional does not often delve

deeply into this tension. One cannot understand prescriptivism as a regulating force in newspapers until one considers the pragmatic motivations that counter it. In earlier work, Cotter (2003) traces the emergence of connectors ‘and’ and ‘but’ in sentence-initial position despite their use at the start of sentences being proscribed in good English writing. Cotter (2003: 70 – 71) explains the increase in the use of ‘and’ and ‘but’ to start sentences in English journalism as both a means to engage the reader (a function of more casual language) and a practical adaptation to modern journalist’s need for a greater number of quoted sources than in earlier periods of journalism (‘and’ and ‘but’ allow for quicker transitions between speakers). This is a clear example of pragmatism trumping prescription. This is what Cotter (2010: 211) calls the tension between the prescriptive imperative and the pragmatic alternative.

In fact, it would appear that prescriptivists and linguists alike fail to take into account the status of the conditional across genres. Bermúdez (2016: 61) observes that the inferential conditional, with its history in scientific texts, has not produced the prescriptive reaction that the conditional in journalism has. In fact, Ferrari (2009) studies various manifestations of epistemic modality and evidential strategies in the conclusions of scientific articles and finds that the conditional is a regular feature of that genre (Ferrari 2009: 13). She makes no mention of any prescriptive rules bearing on the conditional in scientific articles. In fact, the conditional appears to be so routine as to be stereotypical of the scientific and legal genres:

Los científicos corremos con desventaja. **La tradición nos obliga a presentar nuestros resultados como los abogados redactan un contrato, en una maraña de condicionales y subjuntivos que dejan una puerta abierta para desdecirnos en el futuro.**

- Martínez, E. and Pregliasco, R. (2001) as cited by Ciapuscio and Otañi (2002: 1)
(bolding mine)

This rumination on the requirement to use the conditional in scientific and legal texts points to the fact that the conditional must serve the communicative needs of these domains. Similarly, I have already demonstrated that both the inferential and reportative conditionals serve clear journalistic functions (see §4.1.3.1 and §4.1.3.2) within a newspaper. Furthermore, different kinds of stories do require “slightly different conventions of reporting and writing” (Cotter 2010: 144). This could lead to the press conditional being associated with one kind of news story more than another. For example, Oliveira (2015b: 118) finds that the reportative future and conditional in European Portuguese were most common in crime reports. Even if the press conditional is not a ‘requirement’ per se, it may serve a useful purpose in a given genre. That is to say that pragmatic needs are not always conditioned by general communicative needs of the journalist but also more specific ones depending on the story in question.

If one applies Oliveira’s (2015b) approach to Spanish, one can see that the press conditional is associated with certain story types in each newspaper: electoral polls, criminal activity, and science news. This is shown in Table 4.7:

TABLE 4.7 FREQUENCY OF THE PRESS CONDITIONAL ACCORDING TO ARTICLE TYPE

Article Type	<i>El Mundo</i> n, %	<i>El Periódico</i> n, %	Corpus n, %
Polls	94, 49.5%	47, 53.4%	141, 50.7%
Criminal Activity	52, 27.4%	13, 14.8%	65, 23.4%
Science	0, 0.0%	12, 13.6%	12, 4.3%
Other	44, 23.2%	16, 18.2%	60, 21.6%
Total	190, 100%	88, 100%	278, 100%

Both newspapers coincided in the fact that press conditionals appeared most frequently in relation to electoral opinion polls. These constituted half of the tokens in the corpus (50.7%). This made for a majority in *El Periódico* (53.4%) and a near-majority in *El Mundo* (49.5%). While reporting on criminal activity in *El Periódico* accounted for 14.8% of press conditional tokens, this was noticeably higher in *El Mundo*, whose reports on criminal activity constituted 27.4% of all tokens. While the science article in *El Mundo*—for reasons beyond me to posit—did not give rise to any use of the press conditional, it accounted for 13.6% of tokens in *El Periódico*.⁷¹

In the next sections, I will treat the use of the press conditional in relation to the story types and examine what this relationship tells us about the motivations for its use. In §4.2.1, I examine the use of the press conditional as it relates to electoral polls. In §4.2.2, I examine the press conditional in articles on recent scientific discoveries in *El Periódico*. In these instances, I hypothesize that the press conditional represents the presence of scientific discourse appearing within the pages of a newspaper. Finally, in §4.2.3, I examine the use of the press conditional in crime reports and official misconduct, a use which I explain using the tension Cotter (2010: 211) identifies between journalistic prescriptivism and pragmatism.

4.2.1 The Press Conditional and Electoral Polls

⁷¹ It is worth noting that the press conditional, be it inferential or reportative, appeared almost entirely in news articles. Of the 19 tokens (10.0%) in *El Mundo* that were found in opinion texts, 14 of those were related to polling and one related to criminal activity discussed in a review of a documentary. Four tokens in *El Periódico* (4.5%) came from opinion, three of which related to official misconduct. This indicates that the Spanish reportative conditional is more like its equivalents in European Portuguese, which Oliveira found to feature rarely in opinion (Oliveira 2015b: 117). Overall, the theme of the story commented on appears to determine whether or not the press conditional extended into opinion articles.

One reason to study the conditional in the context of polling data separately from quantification in general is both because of the sheer number of press conditionals that this context yielded in this corpus but also because polls appear to represent one of the most frequent and basic incursions of a more scientific discourse in news reporting (Dader García and Gómez Fernández 1993: 102). Thought of in this light, their conditionals represent not just quantification but perhaps a link to scientific discourse, in which the conditional is a stereotypical feature. Press conditionals related to polling comprise a majority of the Spanish data collected. The data is laid out in Table 4.8:

TABLE 4.8 PRESS CONDITIONALS FOR POLLS IN THE SPANISH CORPUS

Article Type	El Mundo n, %	El Periódico n, %	Corpus n, %
Polls	94, 49.5%	47, 53.4%	141, 50.7%
Reportative	64, 33.7%	37, 42.0%	101, 36.3%
Inferential	30, 15.8%	10, 11.4%	40, 14.4%
Amb.	0, 0.0%	0, 0.0%	0, 0.0%
Other	96, 50.5%	41, 46.6%	137, 49.3%
Reportative	71, 37.4%	36, 40.9%	107, 38.5%
Inferential	24, 12.6%	5, 5.7%	29, 10.4%
Amb.	1, 0.5%	0, 0.0%	1, 0.4%
Total	190, 100%	88, 100%	278, 100%

As Table 4.8 shows, press conditionals related to polls constitute 50.7% of all tokens collected from the corpus. Press conditionals related to electoral polling make up 49.5% of *El Mundo*'s tokens and 53.4% of *El Periódico*'s token count. The data suggest that while individual newspapers may use the press conditional to varying degrees, as Kronning (2016: 128) has found (and was found here as well), polls appear to be a news type that might favor consistent use of the press conditional across newspapers. It should be noted that the design of this corpus included dates surrounding the Spanish local and regional elections on May 24, 2015. Although this corpus might reflect a higher than usual number of press conditionals than one would otherwise see outside of election cycles, the data proves invaluable in demonstrating the tight relationship between the press conditional and the reporting of electoral polls in Spanish newswriting.

In the context of reporting on electoral polls, the reportative conditional usually provides figures given by published reports. Journalists then used the inferential conditional to speculate as to the consequences of these results for the composition of governments that would form following the election. This relationship is illustrated in (50) and (51):

- (50) El PP **sería** la fuerza más votada con un 25,6% de los sufragios y pegado a él **se situaría** el PSOE con el 24,3%. Ninguna de las dos **estaría** en condiciones de formar Gobierno sin ayuda.

‘The PP [would be] the most voted-for party, with 25.6% of the vote and just behind it [would be] the PSOE with 24.3%. Neither of the two [would be] in condition to form a government without help.’

MUNDOIV, 6IMPRESINDIBLES

- (51) No menos trascendentes son los pronósticos en las elecciones autonómicas, ya que el PP solo **mantendría** la mayoría absoluta en Castilla y León y **perdería** la hegemonía en Madrid, Valencia, Castilla-La Mancha, Baleares, Murcia, Cantabria y La Rioja, lo que **podría propiciar** gobiernos alternativos.

‘No less significant are the prognostics in the autonomous community elections, since the PP only [would maintain] an absolute majority in Castile and Leon and [would lose] its hegemony in Madrid, Valencia, Castilla-La Mancha, Balears, Murcia Cantabria and La Rioja, which [could bring about] alternative governments.’

PERIODIV, 18CIS

(50) and (51) also illustrate a rather close similarity between *El Mundo* and *El Periódico* in their poll reporting. However, there was a difference in the extent to which they used either the reportative or inferential conditional. This is shown in Table 4.9:

TABLE 4.9 INFERENCE AND REPORTATIVE TOKENS WITHIN POLLS

Information Type	El Mundo	El Periódico	Corpus
	n, %	n, %	n, %
Reportative	64, 68.1%	37, 78.7%	101, 71.6%
Inferential	30, 31.9%	10, 21.3%	40, 28.4%
Total	94, 100%	47, 100%	0.0, 100%

The difference worth remarking is the frequency of inferences made from polling data, which is higher in *El Mundo* (31.9% of tokens) than in *El Periódico* (21.3% of tokens). This, combined with the fact that in *El Mundo* 19 tokens came from opinion articles that used polling data to comment on the election (see footnote 70), suggests that *El Mundo* may provide more analysis in this respect than does *El Periódico*. Although the consistency and frequency of polling data in each newspaper evokes the universal interest in electoral polls that one may assume to be natural in a democracy, the fact that *El Mundo* provides more analysis seems to fit with a characterization of that newspaper as especially politically oriented. This is also seen in its assumed role of government watchdog, which will be discussed in §4.2.3.1.

The reporting of electoral polls in newspapers represents a more data-driven form of reporting. Data-driven reporting is known as precision journalism and relies on the importation of methods of the social sciences into journalistic practice. Dader García and Gómez Fernández (1993) define such journalism thus:

Se entiende por «periodismo de precisión» la información periodística que aplica o analiza sistemáticamente métodos empíricos de investigación científica, de carácter numérico o no numérico, sobre cualquier asunto de trascendencia social, con especial inclinación al campo de las ciencias sociales (102).

Dader García and Gómez Fernández (1993: 102, 109) describe opinion polls as one of the more basic forms of precision journalism and remark that journalists do not often truly understand the statistical data that they report. Furthermore, they also note that opinion polls have become routine in the West. In fact, Dader (1993) describes the reporting on polls in Spain as a media “bombardment”:

Otro capítulo, cuando menos claroscuro en la reciente historia del periodismo de precisión en España, lo constituye el tratamiento de las encuestas electorales. A pesar del constante bombardeo de datos y comentarios sobre sondeos de opinión que la prensa española viene desplegando en los últimos quince años, como mínimo, puede decirse que, en general, los periodistas españoles suelen ser receptores pasivos de un material sociológico que les fascina pero que en absoluto son capaces de interpretar y juzgar técnicamente. **Hoy en día no hay medio que se precie que no encargue una o varias encuestas electorales en época de elecciones** (4). (bolding mine)

Although opinion poll reporting might not represent the height of scientific rigor, it is apparent that opinion polls are treated as scientific data. As has already been established, there is a link between the conditional and scientific texts. It may be the case that the use of the press conditional in polls is motivated by several factors: 1) the nature of the data is quantitative, 2) the nature of the data is uncertain, 3) the information reported is attributed to the poll report or inferred by the journalist, and 4) the conditional helps mark the language of the article as scientific. It would be useful to examine whether the press conditional has been always a feature of opinion polls in Spain or if it has joined in on the “bombardment” more recently.

4.2.2 The Press Conditional in Science Articles in *El Periódico de Catalunya*

The idea that there is a connection between the press conditional and scientific discourse is further bolstered by the fact that science articles are a consistent source of press conditionals in *El Periódico*, a newspaper that, outside of polls and to some extent crime reports, did not use the press conditional frequently. Press conditionals in scientific articles accounted for 13.6% of tokens in that newspaper (see Table 4.7). Two examples of the tokens found in *El Periódico* are given in (52) and (53):

- (52) Por ello, los autores creen también que si se ha encontrado salmuera en una zona donde las temperaturas favorecen la sequedad, también **podría existir** en el resto de la superficie.

‘Because of this, the authors believe that if brine has been found in a zone where the temperatures favor aridity, it [could exist] elsewhere on the surface.’
PERIODVII, 28CURIOSIDAD

- (53) «El efecto de la expansión es parecido a estirar la colina a medida que la pelota escala por ella: cuando vuelve a bajar, la colina está más baja que en la subida, y la pelota recupera toda la energía inicial», explica el científico. En otras palabras, la mancha fría no **sería** nada más que un testigo de la expansión del Universo, que estira el supervacío.
‘«The effect of the expansion is similar to stretching the hill as the goes up; when it goes back down again, the hill is lower than during the ascent, and the ball gains back all its initial energy», explains the scientist. In other words, the cold spot [would be] nothing more than a witness to the expansion of the Universe, which stretches the supervoid.’
PERIODVII, 32BURBUJA

The example in (52) cites scientists’ findings regarding the possible presence of life on Mars and is an example of the reportative conditional. (53) is an example of the inferential conditional, as the journalist reformulates the scientist’s explanation given in the preceding direct discourse. (53) represented the only inferential conditional in the 12 tokens.

One readily finds parallel examples in scientific articles. An example of a reportative conditional and an inferential conditional taken from two scientific examples are show in (54) and (55):

- (54) Esta escritura de naturaleza muy primitiva **estaría**, según nuestro autor, **emparentada** con las pictografías de los Pieles Rojas, de los indios Cunas de Panamá.
‘This primitive nature writing [would be], according to our author, [related] with the pictographs of the Pieles Rojas, of the indigenous Cunas de Panamá.’
(Kronning 2016: 123)
- (55) La expansión creciente del cultivo de soja en Argentina en las últimas dos décadas, así como el desarrollo de los medios para el transporte, almacenamiento, procesamiento y comercialización del grano, ha determinado un incremento del número de individuos expuestos a los antígenos derivados de la misma. Esta mayor exposición **implicaría** un riesgo aumentado de sensibilización y desencadenamiento de síntomas respiratorios en aquellos individuos que poseen una carga genética atópica.
‘The growing expansion of soybean cultivation in Argentina in the last two decades, as well as the development of means of transport, storage, processing and commercialization of the seed, has led to an increase in the number of individuals exposed to antigens derived from it. This greater exposure [would imply] an increased risk in the sensitization and unleashing of respiratory symptoms in those individuals that have a genetic predisposition to atopy.’
(Ferrari 2009: 8)

In (54), an author's findings are cited, and in (55), an inference is drawn between the increased exposure to soybean and the potential health consequences for certain individuals in the population. A combination of reportative and inferential conditionals appears to be a feature of scientific discourse. A study of the linguistic features of science journalism, scientific writing itself, and the question of stylistic importation from one domain into the other — like those in which (52) and (52) — feature would further clarify how to characterize the tokens seen in *El Periódico*.

4.2.3 The Press Conditional and Reports on Crime and Official Misconduct

The most immediate explanation for why the press conditional would be used to report criminal activity is to mitigate a newspaper's legal responsibility. In general, if a newspaper prints false information that proves damaging to someone's reputation or suggests that they are guilty of a crime, that newspaper can be held legally responsible. In Spain, the relevant offenses are *calumnia* and *injuria*, covered in the Spanish Código Penal under Title XI, Articles 205-216, which are grouped under *delitos contra el honor* 'crimes against one's honor.' *Calumnia* refers to the act of implicating someone knowingly or without respect for the truth in a crime that they have not committed (Article 205). *Injuria* consists of defaming another's character (Article 208). In the case of written or broadcast journalism, such offenses would be considered *calumnia* or *injuria con publicidad* 'with publicity,' per Article 211. Articles describing and linking persons to illicit activity are, therefore, especially sensitive.

Spanish law becomes especially interesting when it comes to reporting on the misconduct of government officials, since it places a higher burden on a defendant in such cases. Journalists would be required to prove not only that they acted with respect for the truth, they must also show that the allegations made against the official are, in fact, true. From the Spanish penal code:

El acusado de injuria quedará exento de responsabilidad probando la verdad de las imputaciones cuando éstas se dirijan contra funcionarios públicos sobre hechos concernientes al ejercicio de sus cargos o referidos a la comisión de faltas penales o infracciones administrativas.

'The defendant in slander will be exempt of liability by proving the truth of the accusation when these are directed against public officials regarding facts concerning the exercise of their duties or referred to the commission of penal offenses or administrative infractions.' (translation mine)

Código Penal y legislación complementaria, Título XI, artículo 210⁷²

This requirement that any reported allegation prove true would appear to create even higher stakes for Spanish newspapers concerned with instances of wrongdoing within the government's ranks. While I have been unable to find any legal defenses that cite a journalist's use of the conditional, the frequent appearance of the conditional alongside reports on official misconduct suggest that it could serve this purpose.

⁷² Código Penal y legislación complementaria, https://www.boe.es/biblioteca_juridica/codigos/codigo.php?id=038_Codigo_Penal_y_legislacion_complementaria&tipo=C&modo=2, accessed May 8, 2019.

On the basis of the Spanish legal code, tokens related to criminal activity were sorted for whether or not they implicated a public official. The results are given in Table 4.10:

TABLE 4.10 FREQUENCY OF THE PRESS CONDITIONAL FOR CRIME AND OFFICIAL MISCONDUCT

	El Mundo n, %	El Periódico n, %	Corpus n, %
Gov.	28, 14.7%	5, 5.7%	33, 11.9%
Reportative	20, 10.5%	4, 4.5%	24, 8.6%
Inference	8, 4.2%	1, 1.1%	9, 3.2%
Ambiguous	0, 0.0%	0, 0.0%	0, 0.0%
Pub.	24, 12.6%	8, 9.1%	32, 11.5%
Reportative	17, 8.9%	7, 8.0%	24, 8.6%
Inference	7, 3.7%	1, 1.1%	8, 2.9%
Ambiguous	0, 0.0%	0, 0.0%	0, 0.0%
Other	138, 72.6%	75, 85.2%	213, 76.6%
Reportative	98, 51.6%	62, 70.5%	160, 57.6%
Inference	39, 20.5%	13, 14.8%	52, 18.7%
Ambiguous	1, 0.5%	0, 0.0%	1, 0.4%

The data in Table 4.10 shows the frequency of the inferential and reportative conditional in articles related to criminal activity linked to government officials and members of the public compared against all other tokens. *El Mundo* focused on government scandal (14.7% of its tokens) and private criminal activity (12.6% of tokens) to an extent not seen in *El Periódico*, who reported on these to an extent of 5.7% and 9.1%, respectively. Inference plays a notable role in *El Mundo*'s reporting on illegal activity, yielding eight tokens related to official misconduct and seven to other crime. Conditionals representing inferences in criminal reports are nearly non-existent in *El Periódico*, accounting for only one token in either category.

This difference is not surprising. *El Periódico* is a paper designed for a popular readership and intends as much to inform its readers as well as to attend to the betterment of their daily lives as consumers, while *El Mundo* is renowned for its investigative reporting (see §2.1.2.1 and §2.1.2.2).⁷³ Acting as a government watchdog has been one of the signature functions of *El Mundo*'s reporting since its foundation in 1989 (Baumgartner and Bonafant 2015: 269). In 2003, Díaz-Guella (2003: 58) notes that of all the major Spanish newspapers, only *El Mundo* had a dedicated investigative journalism department. In celebration of the 30th

⁷³ Investigative reporting involves original reporting and involves the revealing of something that has been kept secret (Díaz-Guella 2003: 12). Cotter (2010: 144) says that it is meant to “investigate the power realms of society.”

anniversary of its founding in 2019, *El Mundo*'s director was still affirming the newspaper's commitment to investigative journalism.⁷⁴

4.2.3.1 The Press Conditional and Official Misconduct

El Periódico used the press conditional only five times in relation to misconduct by government officials. These tokens include (39) while the rest are given here in (56 – 59):

- (56) Dando por hecho que ni los «ascendientes» ni los «descendientes» de Camacho podrían estar detrás de este maquiavélico episodio de espionaje político, los diputados de la comisión se apresuraron a atar cabos con la declaración de Álvarez y pensaron que Marco **podría haber incluido** a Zaragoza en el «entorno más personal» de la líder popular, por aquello de los «ratitos de ocio relajado» que, según la ex de Pujol Ferrusola, compartió con el exdirigente socialista y que, dijo, sirvieron para concebir el Camargate.
'Given the fact that neither the «ascendants» nor the «descendants» of Camacho could be behind this Machiavellian episode of political espionage, the members of the commission rushed to put two and two together with Álvarez's declaration and thought that Marco [could have included] Zaragoza in the «most inner circle» of the Popular [Party] leader, on the basis of moments of leisure that, according to the ex of Pujol Ferrusola, she shared with the former socialist leader and that, she said, served to conceive of Camargate.'
PERIODI, 16CAMARGO
- (57) Resulta que los Mossos denuncian ante la Audiencia Nacional que inspectores del Cuerpo Nacional de Policía (CNP) **habrían alertado** a miembros de la célula yihadista desarticulada en abril en Catalunya de que estaban siendo vigilados por la policía autonómica.
'The result is that the Mossos are alleging before the National Court that inspectors from the Cuerpo Nacional de Policía (CNP) [would have alerted] members of the jihadi cell disbanded in April in Catalonia that they were being monitored by regional police.'
PERIODV, 6TERRORISMO
- (58) El hecho no solo **habría puesto** en peligro la operación –según informábamos ayer– sino la vida de un agente infiltrado, como ratificó el conseller de Interior, Ramon Espadaler.
'This [would have put] not only the operation in danger—as we were reporting yesterday—but also the life of an undercover agent, as the councilor of the Interior, Ramon Espadaler, confirmed.'
PERIODV, 6TERRORISMO

⁷⁴ El Mundo. 2019. “Intervención del director de EL MUNDO durante el XXX aniversario del diario.” <https://youtu.be/2njY908HVSM>, last accessed January 12, 2020.

- (59) Como mínimo sabemos que 715 personas, de las 30.000 que se acogieron a la amnistía fiscal, están en una lista de personas expuestas públicamente (PEP) – políticos, jueces, altos cargos de la Administración o funcionarios– y **serían susceptibles** de haber cometido delitos conexos.
‘At minimum, we know that 715 people, of the 30,000 that accepted the fiscal amnesty offer, are on a list of publicly exposed persons—politicians, judges, higher ups in the Administration or civil servants—and [would be suspect] of having committed related offenses.’
 PERIODII, 6QUEREMOS

(56) comes from a news article and reports how investigators came to identify a Spanish politician who had ordered a secret recording of a conversation between a right-wing politician and the daughter of a pro-Catalonian independence leader. The examples in (57), (58) and (59) originate in editorials. (57) and (58) come from an editorial on the interference of the national Spanish police in a Catalonian operation which may have endangered agents’ lives. In (59), an inferential conditional claims that it is possible that politicians who took advantage of a fiscal amnesty policy in 2010 committed offenses that merit investigation. In these examples, the press conditional serves a very basic function of marking an allegation as possibly untrue. In the light of the Spanish legal code, such marking may also stem from a wish to avoid legal trouble on the part of *El Periódico*.

El Mundo certainly features isolated examples of the press conditional related to crime, as seen in examples (56 – 59) above, and they are readily explained the same way as they are in *El Periódico*.⁷⁵ However, what makes *El Mundo*’s reporting interesting is its investigative nature. The frequency with which such articles appear in *El Mundo* contrasts greatly with their absence in *El Periódico*. While I cannot say that *El Periódico* never engages in investigative reporting, *El Mundo* appears to do so routinely. In these cases, *El Mundo* goes directly to the evidence or legal documents available related to an emerging or ongoing corruption case,

A good example of *El Mundo*’s investigative reporting is seen in an article published on May 8, 2015. In this edition, *El Mundo* dedicates an entire article to the contents of an audio recording that the newspaper has obtained from a legal filing against the Valencian municipal branch of the Partido Popular. The recording implicates not only officials but the long-serving mayor Ritá Barberá. The recording is only one piece of evidence in a much larger corruption case, but *El Mundo* has sought out materials filed in the suit, suggesting that *El Mundo* wishes to go further in reporting on this case.⁷⁶ One token from this article has been presented in (1). The rest are given in (60), (61), (62), (63) and (64):

- (60) Las conversaciones que han hecho florecer la trama de la Diputación de Valencia que todavía preside Alfonso Rus no sólo **acreditarían** supuestas gestiones políticas para favorecer a empresas vinculadas al sobrino de Rita Barberá, Quique Sospedra Barberá, sino que **indicarían** que la propia alcaldesa pidió a los

⁷⁵ Such an example is seen in (16), where, in a relatively short article, *El Mundo*’s journalist notes the expansion of a corruption investigation to include a new suspect.

⁷⁶ “EL MUNDO ha tenido acceso a una nueva grabación que Esquerra Unida (EUPV) incluyó en su denuncia ante la Fiscalía Anticorrupción, que fue elevada al juzgado a finales de marzo.” (*EL MUNDO has gained access to a new recording that Esquerra Unida (EUPV) included in its complaint before the Anticorruption Prosecutor, which went to court in March*) – MUNDOIV14, AUDIOS

colaboradores de Marcos Benavent –el hombre fuerte de Alfonso Rus que continúa en paradero desconocido– que determinados servicios de la Mostra de Valencia tenían que ser prestados por el familiar de la dirigente.

‘The conversations that have sparked the furor over the corruption scheme of the Valencian City Council, over which Alfonso Rus still presides, [would confirm] not only supposed political dealings to favor businesses linked to Rita Barberá’s nephew, Quique Sospedra Barberá, but also [would indicate] that the mayor herself insisted to associates of Marcos Benavent — Alfonso Rus’s strongman whose whereabouts remain unknown — that certain services of the Mostra de Valencia needed to be provided by the mayor’s family member.’

MUNDOIV, 14AUDIOS

- (61) La jefa, como a ella se referían, **habría dicho** que las azafatas tenían que dárselas a Quique.

‘The boss, as she was referred to, [would have said] that Quique needed to be given the hostesses.’

MUNDOIV, 14AUDIOS

- (62) Un negocio redondo que lo **habrían obtenido** pervirtiendo adjudicaciones de la Mostra de Valencia y Cinema del Mediterrani, uno de los eventos de la ciudad que más sospechas acumula y que ya no se celebra por las dificultades presupuestarias.

‘A lucrative business that they [would have obtained] by diverting allocations for the Mostra de Valencia y Cinema del Mediterrani, a city event that raises more and more suspicion and that is no longer held due to budgetary difficulties.’

MUNDOIV, 14AUDIOS

- (63) Una de las empresas que se interesó **habría sido** Thematica, la firma que facturaba unos 500.000 euros en cada Gran Premio de Europa de Fórmula 1 de Valencia y que Benavent **habría utilizado** para que el dinero supuestamente saqueado retornara a sus cuentas.

‘One of the businesses interested [would have been] Thematica, the firm that billed some 500,000 euros for each Gran Premio de Europa Fórmula 1 in Valencia and that Benavent [would have used] so that the allegedly plundered money would find its way back to his pockets.’

MUNDOIV, 14AUDIOS

- (64) Entre el año 2005 y 2006, fecha en la que se produce esta conversación, **se habrían repartido** miles de euros en comisiones, según desveló EUPV en una rueda de prensa.

‘Between the years 2005 and 2006, the date in which this conversation occurs, thousands of euros in commissions [would have been divvied up], as revealed by the EUPV in a press conference.’

MUNDOIV, 14AUDIOS

It is first remarkable that a single article contains a total of nine press conditionals, which is more than the entirety of press conditionals found to report on official misconduct in all of *El Periódico*. As a marker of uncertainty, the conditional accompanies other markers of the alleged nature of the report, such as money described as *supuestamente saqueado* ‘allegedly plundered’ in (63). (61), (62), (63) and (64) all report information learned from information made available as the investigation proceeds or from the recording itself, while the examples in (1) and (60) demonstrate inferences made by the journalist. (60) is the lede of the article, summing up the entirety of what the journalist has taken away from their examination of the recording, while properly hedging the journalist’s conclusions. In (1), the journalist reports on the kind of statements found in the recording that suggest the mayor’s involvement; in this case, inference establishes an unconfirmed fact of the case. Here, we have a clear illustration of the complementarity of the inferential and reportative conditionals that appears to emerge from the nature of investigative reporting, as the journalist adds their own inferences to the reported facts of the case.

Overall, it would appear that crime reports (official or otherwise) do favor the press conditional, likely reflecting a certain efficiency in marking unconfirmed information directly on the verb. Given that *El Mundo* defines itself as a government monitor (and acts as one), the press conditional appears to become a routine resource for their more investigative reporting in a news context where public officials have greater legal protection from *injuria*. While the data here suggest that *El Periódico* does not have the same level of interest in bringing government scandal to the public’s attention as does *El Mundo*, it also shows that journalistic considerations can outweigh prescriptive considerations, as was observed by Cotter (2003: 70-71).

4.2.3.2 The Press Conditional and Crime Reports

The nature of the reporting on criminal allegations in each newspaper largely replicates the data discussed in §4.2.3.1. *El Mundo*’s investigative reporting led to more press conditionals, while *El Periódico* featured isolated tokens in a handful of articles reporting on criminal activity. While the legal stakes appear to be not quite as high as in the case of public officials, *El Mundo*’s practices in this respect look much like its reporting on official misconduct. In one investigative article, it focused on the business practices of Jordi Pujol Ferrusola (son of Jordi Pujol, a leader of the Catalan independence movement and convicted tax evader). Tokens from this article have been given in (36) and (41 – 43). *El Periódico*, despite being a Catalan newspaper, did not feature any investigation with respect to that subject, although a press review available on the Catalan version of its website commends the newspaper for carrying out its campaign against “the corruption of the Pujols.”⁷⁷ The article could be ‘politically’ motivated. *El Mundo* appears to be almost as much against Catalanian independence as it is against corruption, and the Pujol family doubly appears to symbolize both in the eyes of *El Mundo*.

The differences between the two newspapers becomes very apparent when one compares their respective articles on the illicit business practices of Spanish construction company Obrascón Huarte Lain’s (OHL) Mexican branch. The company had been contracted to construct

⁷⁷ “*El Mundo*, per exemple, no destaca en la seva primera pàgina cap reacció sobre el fet i, en canvi, treu un nou episodi del seu lloable combat contra la corrupció dels Pujol...” — *El Periódico de Catalunya*. 2015. “Xiulets i Pujol, Que Més o Menys És El Mateix.” *El Periódico de Catalunya*, June 1, 2015, sec. Política. <https://www.elperiodico.cat/ca/politica/20150601/xiulets-i-pujol-que-mes-o-menys-es-el-mateix-4236167>.

a freeway, and it was alleged that it had raised a toll fee its contract did not permit, had added fake costs to the contract and was attempting to bribe politicians. The article appearing in *El Mundo* on May 8, 2015 opens with the following headline and sub-heading:

HEADLINE: Vacaciones a cargo de OHL
‘Vacations paid for by OHL’

SUB-HEADING: La constructora investiga si su filial mexicana infló concesiones públicas e invitó a políticos a su ‘resort’ de Riviera Maya
‘The construction company is investigating if its Mexican branch inflated public contracts and invited politicians to its resort on the Mayan Riviera’

Sometime around May 2015, conversations involving OHL executives overtly discussing illegal enrichment schemes were leaked on the Internet. The article opens with a lede regarding the stock market tumble OHL took in wake of the leaks and then turns to the alleged fraud. In a similar vein to its investigation into the Valencian City Council (§4.2.3.1), *El Mundo*’s journalist consults the leaked recordings and reports on the conversation. The conditional appears four times in the article and are given in (65), (66) and (67):

- (65) El presunto escándalo también **saltaría** a Madrid cuando el presidente de la filial mexicana, José Andrés de Oteyza, supuestamente llega a vincular al consejero delegado del negocio de Concesiones de OHL, Juan Osuna Gómez, con los sobrecostes que **se habrían cargado** a la concesión.
‘The alleged scandal also [would leap] to Madrid when the president of the Mexican branch, José Andrés de Oteyza, apparently manages to implicate the delegated consultant of the business Concesiones de OHL, Juan Osuna Gómez, in the surcharges that were added to the contract.’
MUNDOIV, 38VACACIONES
- (66) ‘...Esto es un fraude, vamos a meter los gastos de una fase que nunca vamos a construir,’ **argumentaría** de Oteyza en la supuesta conversación.
‘...This is a fraud, we are going to add the costs for a phase that we are never going to build,’ [would argue] de Oteyza in the alleged conversation.
MUNDOIV, 38VACACIONES
- (67) La invitación **constaría** de ‘estancia y todos sus gastos fundamentales,’ según le comenta el mayordomo al político mexicano en otra de las presuntas conversaciones interceptadas.
‘The invitation [would consist] of ‘a stay with all your necessary expenses’ according to what the butler says to the Mexican politician in another of the alleged conversations.’
MUNDOIV, 38VACACIONES

Along with the conditional, language that marks the alleged nature of OHL’s unlawful activities abounds in the article: *supuestamente* ‘allegedly’ in (65), *supuesta* ‘alleged’ in (66), and *presuntas* ‘alleged’ in (67). These additional markers of uncertainty work in concert with the

conditional to establish that the journalist is reporting with proper caution. Furthermore, more than one conversation and form of corruption is investigated, demonstrating *El Mundo*'s thorough approach. In (66), the reporter quotes the recording supporting fraud, but (67) cites a recording from another leaked conversation. Most interesting is the inferential *saltaría* in (65), which claims that the scope of the fraud extends back to headquarters in Madrid when the name of a Spanish executive is evoked in the recordings. This inference, which suggests that the incident crosses borders, creates a more direct link to Spain, whose populace constitutes the "community of coverage" in whose interest *El Mundo* reports.⁷⁸

El Periódico presents the story rather differently. The story's headline and sub-heading focus on the fall of OHL's stock price, which is not presented until the lede in *El Mundo*:

HEADLINE: OHL cae el 9,10% en bolsa por el efecto de su filial Mexicana (*OHL falls 9.10% on the stock exchange due to its Mexican branch*)

SUB-HEADING: La empresa es acusada de malas prácticas en aquel país (*The company is being accused of illicit practices in that country*)

One notes immediately that the reporting in *El Periódico* is less specific than in *El Mundo*. After discussing the leaked conversations' consequences for OHL's stocks, the article addresses the recordings themselves:

El periodista Mauricio Flores publica en la edición digital del diario mexicano *La Razón* una información titulada «De Oteyza: Esto es fraude», en la que afirma que existe grabaciones de llamadas telefónicas entre ejecutivos de OHL que muestran «presuntas trampas» con las que la filial de la empresa española «elevó tarifas del Viaducto Elevado Bicentenario y engañó al Gobierno». Esas grabaciones, prosigue el periodista, han incluso escandalizado al presidente de la compañía en México, José Andrés Oteyza, quien pidió «no ser involucrado en lo que él cataloga de fraude», refiriéndose a las presuntas actividades ilícitas de OHL.

'The journalist Mauricio Flores publishes in the digital edition of the Mexican newspaper La Razón a report entitled: «De Oteyza: This is fraud», in which he affirms that there exists recordings of telephone calls between OHL executives that show «alleged cheating» in which the Mexican branch of the Spanish company 'raised tariffs on the Bicentennial Elevated Highway and cheated the government.' Those recordings, the journalist continues, have scandalized even the president of the company in Mexico, José Andrés Oteyza, who asked 'not to be implicated in what he considers fraud; referring to the alleged illicit activities of OHL.'

Rather than directly consulting the leaked conversations, *El Periódico* simply summarizes a report taken from the Mexican press. There is no investigation and unlike the example in (62), wherein *El Mundo* draws the conclusion that even OHL's Spanish headquarters may be involved, there is no such inference drawn here. If *El Mundo* finds local relevance in the story, *El Periódico*'s reporting is such that it leaves a certain distance between Spain and the reports,

⁷⁸ Cotter (2010: 25) notes that news is shaped by what is relevant to its audience or what she calls its "community of coverage."

presenting the fraud as seemingly relegated to the Spanish company's foreign branch. The one press conditional comes in the following paragraph (68):

- (68) El presunto fraude consiste en que OHL México **habría incrementado** de forma unilateral un 30% el peaje por transitar ese viaducto al elevar de 51,41 a 66,8 pesos el coste del peaje, algo que el contrato de concesión solo permite para la segunda etapa de construcción del proyecto, en la que los 22 kilómetros del viaducto contarán con cuatro carriles en lugar de los dos actuales.
'The alleged fraud consists of the fact that OHL México [**would have**] unilaterally [**increased**] by 30% a toll for transiting the highway by raising the cost of the toll from 51.41 to 66.80 pesos, something which the contract permits only in the second phase of the project's construction, in which 22 kilometers of the highway will have four lanes in place of the current two.'
PERIODIV, 30OHL

(68) lays out the nature of OHL's fraud, and, given the article's framing, appears to be providing detail rather than the basis of the story. Its press conditional is an isolated one, serving only to create a coherent marking of uncertainty between *el presunto fraude* and the clause following *consiste en que*. Overall, *El Periódico*'s reporting here is less investigative and engaged. The journalist consults none of the other leaked conversations, and its coverage of the matter appears less thorough in comparison to *El Mundo*'s. Unlike in *El Mundo*, where the press conditional serves the inferential work of investigative reporting (along with marking uncertainty), the press conditional in (68) reflects the more general need in journalism to mark uncertainty clearly.

As was the case in the reporting of official misconduct, the articles examined here illustrate how the nature of reporting, as well as the nature of the story, bear on the frequency of the press conditional. Again, the frequent use of the press conditional in *El Mundo* suggests that pragmatic means of marking uncertainty—and demonstrating that the journalist is reporting with appropriate respect for the truth—overrides prescriptive considerations that may discourage the use of the press conditional. Diachronic studies would be useful to understand if the embracing of the press conditional in the context of investigative reports concerning illicit activity reflect a change over time (reflecting a loosening of the prescriptive in the face of necessity) as was observed for connectors in American news by Cotter (2003) or has been a constant throughout news reporting since Spain's transition to democracy.⁷⁹

4.2.4 The Press Conditional: A Pragmatic Alternative

In the light of the evidence discussed for electoral polls in §4.2.1, for scientific articles in §4.2.2, and criminal activity in §4.2.3, it is necessary to recognize that the prescriptive pressure on the press conditional is clearly countered by other forces operating in certain journalistic contexts. The press conditional represents a feature of scientific writing and criminal reports that serves the greater objectives of accuracy and credibility. In the case of criminal reporting, this aligns with Cotter's (2010: 211) description of the tension between the prescriptive imperative and the pragmatic alternative. In their pursuit of accurate reporting, as well as their desire to minimize legal liability, the press conditional becomes an efficient form of marking uncertainty

⁷⁹ Investigative journalism begins in Spain in 1975, after the death of Francisco Franco (Díaz-Guell 2003: 58).

in particularly sensitive reporting contexts. In this sense, descriptions of the Spanish press conditional that focus on its characterization in style guides alone (as in Kronning (2016: 128)) should account for the contexts of reporting in which it is found. This is clearly illustrated by *El Mundo*'s investigative reporting, wherein the conditional serves not only the need to mark uncertainty but also speaks to the role of inference and attribution in that reporting style.

4.3 Discussion and Conclusion

In my examination of the Spanish data, I have demonstrated that the press conditional in Spanish—defined as the conditional that serves the communicative aims of journalistic texts—reveals greater complexity than much of the previous literature describes. I have argued that the press conditional encompasses both the inferential and reportative values of the Spanish conditional. While the reportative value of the conditional represented the more frequent use, the inferential conditional proved useful to both newspapers' writing and reporting in Spanish. Whatever the origin of these two conditionals, it is clear that the press conditional is not a mere replica of its French equivalent.

Within the journalistic context, the press conditional in Spanish is a clear illustration of what Cotter (2010: 211) calls the competition between the prescriptive imperative that makes for good writing in journalism and the pragmatic alternative that allows journalists to more easily achieve their communicative aims. This can range from the use of a press conditional for the efficient marking of the uncertainty of a fact to *El Mundo*'s more extensive use of the conditional in its investigative reporting, all of which demonstrates that as reporting gains dynamism and complexity, so does the press conditional. The importance of understanding the dynamics of a reporting context is all the more evident when the press conditional appears in scientific articles. As I argue in §4.2.4, the use of the press conditional in scientific reporting in *El Periódico* is one indicator of a greater accommodation of journalistic discourse (and its notion of truth) to that of science. Although this is quite different from the weaponized use of the press conditional that Brunetti (2016: 111-13) sees in Argentina's *Clarín*, the point is the same: the press conditional in Spanish is sufficiently entrenched in journalistic language that it must be understood through its use in reporting and not through its treatment in style guides alone.

More than anything, however, I have found in the course of this investigation that a true understanding of the press conditional cannot be considered without greater work across the journalistic and scientific genres within Spanish, preferably with the two considered together. The presence of the press conditional in legal news sources also suggests that that genre would also help illuminate the conditional's use in journalistic texts. More studies are needed in Spanish to understand how conditionals became established in the legal, scientific and journalistic genres and what are the historical and discursive connections between these discourses before better conclusions can be drawn.

5 THE PRESS CONDITIONAL IN COMPARISON

5.1 Form and Frequency of the Press Conditional in the Combined Corpus

In this chapter, I compare the forms, frequencies and temporalities of the present and past conditional in French and Spanish. I then examine the use of the press conditional in its capacities to convey reported information and/or inference. To the extent that it is a marker of reported information, I argue that it constitutes a special kind of reported speech in journalistic writing. I find that in its speech reporting function, the French press conditional implies an element of subjectivity not seen in its Spanish counterpart. On the basis of the common use of the press conditional to mark inference in Spanish, I examine tokens in French that appeared to convey inference. I argue that this function, while numerically marginal, requires further study. I then compare the press conditional at the level of the article, at the level of the newspaper and at the level of the language itself. I recall that while article type can be used to explain the use of the press conditional in Spanish, its use is more generalized in French. With respect to newspapers, I show that the press conditional reflects little of *Libération* and *El Periódico*'s journalistic practices. The press conditional has what one might call a performative function in *Le Monde* and is a pragmatic outgrowth of *El Mundo*'s investigative reporting. This points to the varying capacity the press conditional has in helping shape a newspaper's journalistic identity. Finally, I conclude with a reflection on the fact that the press conditional is not only a stereotypical feature of French journalistic language, it is also on its way to becoming such a feature in Spanish.

The combined corpus of one constructed week of the two French and the two Spanish newspapers contained roughly 1.6 million words and yielded 508 tokens of the press conditional. Figures are shown in Table 5.1:

TABLE 5.1 FREQUENCY OF THE PRESS CONDITIONAL IN THE COMBINED CORPUS

	No. of Tokens n, %	Freq. per 1000 words
French ~510,000 w	230, 45.3%	.45 /1000 w
<i>Le Monde</i> ~310,000 w	163, 32.1%	.52 / 1000 w
<i>Libération</i> ~ 200,000 w	67, 13.2%	.34 / 1000 w

TABLE 5.1 (continued)

Spanish		
~1,085,000 w	278, 54.7%	.26 / 1000 w
<i>El Mundo</i>	190, 37.4%	.42 / 1000 w
~460,000 w		
<i>El Periódico</i>	88, 17.3%	.14 / 1000 w
~ 625,000 w		
Corpus	508, 100%	.32 / 1000 w
~1,595,000 w		

As seen in Table 5.1, the Spanish corpus featured more press conditionals (278 tokens or 54.7% of all tokens collected) than did the French corpus (230 tokens or 45.3% of tokens collected). Although Spanish yielded more press conditionals overall, Spanish newspapers were much longer than their French counterparts, and the frequency per 1000 words in French was higher at .45 occurrences of the press conditional per 1000 words versus Spanish's rate of .26 occurrences per 1000 words. Each individual newspaper demonstrated rather different frequencies of the press conditional. *Le Monde* had the highest frequency at .52 occurrences per 1000 words, while *El Periódico* had the lowest at .14 occurrences per 1000 words. *El Mundo*, however, used the press conditional more frequently than *Libération*, at a rate of .42 occurrences per 1000 words compared to the latter's .34 occurrences per 1000 words. On the basis of the data seen in Table 5.1, it is clear that the press conditional's frequency may be sometimes better characterized as a function of the individual newspaper rather than of the language.

The present conditional and the past conditional both featured in the corpus. Unlike French, Spanish does not have a third conditional form, and the French *conditionnel surcomposé* was not observed. The frequencies of the two forms are given in Table 5.2:

TABLE 5.2 FREQUENCY OF THE PAST AND PRESENT CONDITIONAL FORMS IN THE COMBINED CORPUS

	PRESENT n, %	PAST n, %	TOTAL n, %
FRENCH	136, 26.8%	94, 18.5%	230, 45.3%
<i>Le Monde</i>	110, 21.7%	53, 10.4%	163, 32.1%
<i>Libération</i>	26, 5.1%	41, 8.1%	67, 13.2%
SPANISH	234, 46.1%	44, 8.7%	278, 54.7%
<i>El Mundo</i>	160, 31.5%	30, 5.9%	190, 37.4%
<i>El Periódico</i>	74, 14.6%	14, 2.8%	88, 17.3%
CORPUS	370, 72.8%	138, 27.2%	508, 100%

As is seen in Table 5.2, the present conditional proved more frequent than the past conditional, accounting for 72.8% of tokens gathered, while the past conditional occurred only in 27.2% of

all tokens. This data contradicts claims in the literature that the past conditional should be more common. This is the assertion made by Vatrican (2010: 86) for French. Similarly, Oliveira (2015b: 114) had found that the compound future (European Portuguese’s reportative equivalent to the French and Spanish past conditionals) was more common in her news corpus than the simple future (which would be the equivalent to the French and Spanish present conditionals) and suggested that this was due to the nature of news, which serves “primarily to report facts and events.” The past conditional is only more frequent in *Libération*, while the present conditional is more common in *Le Monde*, *El Mundo*, and *El Periódico*.

The previous literature suggests that the temporality of the present conditional and the past conditional are identical in French and Spanish (Foullioux 2006: 71). However, the data here suggested that there are some differences between the two languages in the temporality of the present conditional. The present conditional in French had only present temporality, although it is able to refer to a future event when used with an accompanying future time marker. Such a usage was not observed in this corpus. The Spanish present conditional was found to have future, present and even past temporality, a use which could be glossed by the imperfect indicative combined with *por lo visto*. The past conditional forms, however, did not show any differences between the two languages. The frequency of form in relation to its temporal reference is laid out in Table 5.3:

TABLE 5.3 FREQUENCIES OF FORM AND TEMPORAL REFERENCE OF THE FRENCH AND SPANISH PRESS CONDITIONAL

	PRES C – Future n, %	PRES C – Present n, %	PRES C – Past n, %	PAST C- Past n, %	TOTAL n, %
FRENCH	0, 0.0%	136, 26.8%	0, 0.0%	94, 18.5%	230, 45.3%
<i>Le Monde</i>	0, 0.0%	110, 21.7%	0, 0.0%	53, 10.4%	163, 32.1%
<i>Libération</i>	0 0.0%	26 5.1%	0 0.0%	41 8.1%	67, 13.2%
SPANISH	47, 9.3%	184, 36.2%	3, 0.6%	44, 8.7%	278, 54.7%
<i>El Mundo</i>	36, 7.1%	121, 23.8%	3, 0.6%	30, 5.9%	190, 37.4%
<i>El Periódico</i>	11, 2.2%	63, 12.4%	0, 0.0%	14, 2.8%	88, 17.3%
TOTAL	47 9.3%	320 63.0%	3 0.6%	138 27.2%	508 100.0%

As can be seen in Table 5.3, the use of the conditional to refer to future events was more frequent in Spanish than in French (9.3% versus 0.0% of tokens). The past conditional was less frequent in Spanish than in French (8.5% versus 18.5%), while the present conditional with present reference was more common in Spanish (36.2% versus 26.8%). Future studies on the press conditional may want to account for the wider temporal range of the present conditional form in Spanish.

This corpus does suggest that expectations that the past conditional should be the more frequent form on the basis of the nature of news is incorrect. The notion that news is primarily oriented towards the past may be a holdover from an earlier time.⁸⁰ Neiger (2007) has observed that future events and speculation about the future are an important element of news reporting. He states that as force for societal reflection "...the press offers us not only an investigative vision of the past (in order to define the present) but mainly invites us to ask: What will happen next? Where do we go from here, in the short, medium and long term? What are our hopes? What do we fear most?" (Neiger 2007: 319). The case of polls and the press conditional in both Spanish newspapers would illustrate this point. The Spanish segment of the corpus coincided with the time leading up to the Spanish regional and local elections in 2015, and the opinion polls prior to the event were reported largely using the present conditional form for the purpose of identifying election outcomes and potential governing pacts. The 2015 election had seen the rise of two new parties in Spain, and, while I would not suggest there was more poll reporting than usual, elections at that time spoke very much to the societal concerns Neiger (2007) identifies. In French, while the press conditional may not have a very clear link to the future, the data support the idea that it is largely oriented towards the present in *Le Monde*. *Libération* did, however, appear to follow the pattern described in the previous literature. One may attribute this to the newspapers' differing publication schedules. *Le Monde* is an evening newspaper and is published in the afternoon, meaning it arrives to kiosks outside of Paris the following day. This means its publication schedule is delayed by one day with respect to morning newspapers like *Libération*. This delay requires that *Le Monde* conceive of "newness" as a question of story content and treatment and not only a question of recency (Le Monde 2002: 6).

5.1.1 The Present Conditional

The previous literature on the French press conditional has claimed that the present conditional usually presents a reading simultaneous to the moment of enunciation (Guentchéva 1994: 16-17). When combined with a future time marker, the press conditional may have a future reading, although this is exceedingly rare (Haillet 2002: 76). No French present conditional in the corpus had a future reading, and the present conditional consistently described states simultaneous to the moment of enunciation, as seen in (1):

- (1) TMC, quant à elle, **s'intéresserait** à 'Une famille en or'.
 'TMC [**would be interested**] in "Une famille en or"
 MONDEI, 19 FOLIE
 ≠ allait s'intéressait, paraît-il
 ≠ je dirais qu'il s'intéresse

⁸⁰ McLaughlin (2020: §4.3.1) finds that news regarding the future is an important element of the historical French press, suggesting that even this assumption may be incorrect.

= s'intéresse, paraît-il

The data collected in this corpus conform with what has been described in the previous literature. The lack of conditionals with future readings was unsurprising, and Haillet (2002: 76-77) suggests that this is due to the inherently uncertain nature of future events and the availability of the formulation *devrait* 'MUST-cond.' + infinitive, wherein *devrait* (from the modal verb *devoir* 'must') marks probability. These arguments will be discussed alongside the tokens in (5) and (6) which show the reportative conditional with prospective readings in Spanish.

Spanish presents a slightly more complicated situation, given the coexistence of its reportative conditional and inferential conditional. In the present conditional, both of these conditionals may refer to the future or present (Bermúdez 2016: 50, Stagnaro 2015: 77). Present conditionals with present reference can be seen in (2), which represents a reportative conditional, and (3), which is an inferential conditional:

- (2) En medio de elucubraciones sobre el posible descabezamiento del Estado Islámico (EI), su líder, Abubakar al Bagdadi, **estaría** gravemente **herido**...
'*In the middle of speculations surrounding the possible loss of leadership in the Islamic State (IS) – its leader, Abubakar al Bagdadi, [would be] seriously [injured]...*'
≠ iba a estar herido
≠ diría que está herido
≠ todo me indica que estuvo herido
= **está herido, por lo visto**
- (3) Esta cantidad **situaría** la demanda en los mismos niveles de 2009-2010, años en que se cruzaron las líneas de tendencia de las compras de viviendas nuevas y la entrega de las mismas.
'*This quantity [would situate] demand at the same levels as in 2009 and 2010, the years in which the trendlines of buying and selling new homes crossed.*'
MUNDOVII, 32VIVIENDA
≠ iba a situar
≠ diría que sitúa
≠ todo me indica que situó
= **sitúa por lo visto**

As has been seen in Table 4.4, the reportative conditional in the present form accounted for 55.4% of tokens found in the Spanish corpus, making tokens like (2) the most common form of the conditional in Spanish. The present conditional marking a present inference was much less frequent and made up 11.9% of the tokens in the Spanish corpus (seen in Table 4.5).

Due to the fact that the reportative conditional in Spanish may be of French origin and given that the French press conditional that allegedly served as its source can only refer to the future if a future time marker is present, the Spanish inferential and reportative conditionals with future temporality require separate treatment. The inferential conditional, which appears to be a native Spanish construction (Bermúdez 2016: 62), may have a future reading without a time marker. This is seen in (4):

- (4) Por lo que respecta a Catalunya, el CIS solo ha sondeado sobre el Ayuntamiento de Barcelona, pero los resultados que avanza significan un vuelco que no solo **tendría** consecuencias en la capital catalana, sino también en el proceso soberanista.
‘With respect to Catalonia, the CIS only polled for the City Council of Barcelona, but the results it puts forth signal an upset that [would have] consequences not only for the Catalanian capital but also for the sovereignty process.’

PERIODIV, 18CIS

- ≠ iba a tener
- ≠ diría que tiene
- ≠ todo me indica que tuvo
- = **tendrá, por lo visto**

The inferential conditional in the present form with a prospective reading accounted for 13.7% of tokens found in Spanish, most often in the context of speculations on potential governing pacts in the context of electoral polling data (see Table 4.5).

Conversely, the reportative conditional may have undergone a change since its entry into Spanish (if it is, in fact, a borrowing). Firstly, the use of the reportative conditional for future events is much more common in Spanish than in French. This usage accounted for 10 tokens (3.6%) in the Spanish corpus (see Table 4.5). Sarrazin (2010) has observed that the reportative conditional in Spanish can be used to convey a future event with or without a time marker, suggesting an innovation in its usage has occurred. In the Spanish segment of the corpus, two present conditional tokens (1.0% of Spanish tokens) with future reference included a time marker and 5 tokens (1.6%) did not (see Table 4.5). An example of a present conditional with a future reading can be seen in (5), while a conditional with a prospective reading but no time marker can be seen in (6):

- (5) Las subidas salariales para 2017 **se negociarían** en los primeros tres meses de ese año.

‘The salary raises for 2017 [would be negotiated] in the first three months of that year.’

MUNDOI, 28SINDICATOS

- ≠ se iban a negociar
- ≠ diría que se negocia
- ≠ todo me indica que se negoció
- = **se negociará en los primeros tres meses de ese año, por lo visto**

- (6) La plataforma, de tipo modular, y otros elementos mecánicos los **pondría** Volvo.
‘Volvo [would install] the platform, of the modular type, and other mechanical elements.’

MUNDOII, 22GEELY

- ≠ iba a poner
- ≠ diría que pone
- ≠ todo me indica que puso
- = **pondrá, por lo visto**

(5) could be translated into French while maintaining the conditional: *Les hausses salariales pour 2017 se négocieraient dans les trois premiers mois de l'année.* (6) would require another construction, due to the lack of a future time marker: *Volvo devrait installer/pourrait installer la plate-forme, de type modulaire, et autres éléments mécaniques.* While Sarrazin (2010) identifies this change in Latin-American Spanish headlines (or as a feature that was innovated in headlines), I can affirm on the basis of the data collected here that the change is present in Peninsular Spanish as well. Furthermore, it is not restricted to headlines and can be found in the body of articles. The lack of conditionals with a future reading is not surprising, as their rarity has already been observed by Haillet (2002: 76). Haillet (2002: 76) attributes this rarity to the fact that future projections do not often require recourse to the press conditional since they do not require the same “responsibility” on the part of the speaker as do present and past facts. However, the fact that the use of the present conditional to report on the future is not uncommon in Spanish indicates that this argument might not be entirely correct or require more nuance. Haillet (2002: 77) also notes that a more uncertain future events can be reported using modal verb *devrait* ‘must’ + infinitive in its probabilistic sense. This is seen in utterances like *François Mitterrand devrait se rendre dans les pays Baltes à la mi-mai* ‘François Mitterrand [**MUST-cond. go**] to the Baltic countries in mid-May.’ (Haillet (2002: 76).

The two languages differ in the ability of the present conditional to refer to the past. The French present conditional excludes a past reading and no such tokens were found here. In Spanish, however, in three instances the reportative conditional in the present conditional form yielded a past reading, as seen in (7), (8) and (9):

- (7) Según los investigadores de la red, Martín Morales **sería** la persona encargada de controlar al entonces alcalde de la localidad, Arturo González Panero, por el presunto jefe de la trama, Francisco Correa.
‘According to those investigating the network, Martin Morales [would be] the person charged with controlling the then mayor of the locality, Arturo González Panero, by the presumed chief of the operation, Francisco Correa.’
 MUNDOI, 34MADRID
 ≠ Martín Morales iba a ser
 ≠ Diría que es Martín Morales
 ≠ Todo me indica que Martín Morales era
 ≠ Martín Morales es la persona encargada, por lo visto
 = **Martín Morales era la persona encargada, por lo visto**
- (8) El grupo de excursionistas **sería** de unas diez personas, sobre las que estaban encargados dos monitores.
‘The group of excursionists [would be] some 10 people, of which two monitors were in charge.’
 MUNDOI, 51MAESTRO
 ≠ El grupo de excursionistas iba a ser de unas diez personas
 ≠ Diría que es de unas diez personas
 ≠ Todo me indica que era de unas diez personas
 ≠ El grupo de excursionistas es de unas diez personas, por lo visto
 = **El grupo de excursionistas era de unas diez personas, por lo visto**

- (9) Thematica **sabría** que «está el sobrino», dice Benavent, quien se compromete a trasladarle que debe presentarse para perder para que no digan que siempre se presenta para ganar.
‘Thematica [would know] that ‘there is the nephew’ says Benavent, who promises to tell him that he ought to bid in order to lose so they do not say that he always bids and wins.’
 MUNDOIV, 14AUDIOS
 ≠ Thematica iba a saber
 ≠ Diría que sabe
 ≠ Todo me indica que sabía
 = **Thematica sabía, por lo visto**

In this corpus, verbs that could be glossed by the imperfect were frequent stative verbs that are often used in the imperfect, such as *haber*, *saber* and *ser*. This suggests that lexical aspect and frequency seemed to play a part in motivating this rarer use of the present conditional.

Overall, the reportative conditional was more frequent in the Spanish corpus than the inferential conditional. The lower frequency of the inferential conditional might be explained by the nature of news reporting: the journalist is intended to “gather” facts (Cotter 2010: 31), which suggests that facts exist outside the journalist, who will report them objectively. In making an inference, a journalist is “generating” a fact. While it is clear that inference plays a role in news reporting, it would appear that the default model in journalism is one in which the journalist acts as if they are intervening as little as possible between the facts of “reality” and their report. Sourced information is better, in this sense, than inferences.

5.1.2 The Past Conditional

For any event prior to the moment of enunciation, the press conditional appears in the conditional’s past form in French as well as in Spanish (Guentchéva 1994: 14, 17; Foullioux 2006: 71; Ferrari: 2009: 13). The examples seen in (10) and (11) can be thought of as equivalent in French and Spanish, where (11) represents a reportative conditional in Spanish:

- (10) “Je me fous de l’innovation, **aurait** un jour **expliqué** M. Pincus à ses employés. Vous n’êtes pas plus intelligents que nos concurrents. Copiez juste ce qu’ils font.”
‘I don’t care about innovation, [would have said] M. Pincus to his employees one day. You’re not more intelligent than our competitors. Just copy what they do.’
 MONDEI, 50MARK
 ≠ allait avoir expliqué
 ≠ je dirais qu’il explique
 ≠ eût expliqué
 = **a expliqué, paraît-il**
- (11) Según la información que maneja, Albert Rivera **habría transmitido** a sus aspirantes a presidentes autonómicos y alcaldes que eviten pronunciarse sobre el programa electoral y debatir sobre iniciativas concretas.
‘According to the information available, Albert Rivera [would have told] his candidates for presidencies in autonomous communities and for mayor in cities to

avoid saying anything about their electoral agenda and debating concrete initiatives.’

MUNDOV, 10PP

- ≠ iba a haber transmitido
- ≠ diría que relata
- ≠ hubiera transmitido
- ≠ todo me indica que había transmitido
- = **ha transmitido (transmitió), por lo visto**

Tokens such as those seen in (10) constituted 40.9% of tokens in the French corpus (see Table 3.1), while in the Spanish corpus, tokens such as (11) constituted only 14.7% of the tokens collected in Spanish (see Table 4.5). The lower frequency in Spanish might have more than one explanation. Neiger’s (2007) appeal to the fact that past events might not always constitute that which is “new” in news might be helpful to explain the data seen here.⁸¹ It may be the case that a more future-oriented journalism accounts for the data here.

In Spanish, the past conditional to mark inference was fairly limited, accounting for only three examples in the corpus, two of which are shown in (12) and (13):

- (12) Los conservadores **se habrían beneficiado** a última hora de la fuga de votos del Partido Liberal-Demócrata y del Ukip.
‘*Conservatives [would have benefited] at the last minute from the flight of votes from the Liberal-Democrats and UKIP.*’

MUNDOIV, 26CAMERON

- ≠ iban a haber beneficiado
- ≠ diría que beneficia
- ≠ hubiera beneficiado
- ≠ todo me indica que se había beneficiado
- = **se han beneficiado (se benefició), por lo visto**

- (13) Este gran salto en la numeración "**supondría**", abunda el informe, que "si Brantridge Holdings siguiera el sistema normal de facturación, sólo habría emitido hasta finales de julio nueve fracturas por sus servicios en el año 2006". Y, "sin embargo, pasado menos de un mes y medio, **habría expedido** un total de 4.446 fracturas a terceros".

“‘*This great leap in the numbering [would suppose],” continues the report, “that if Brantridge Holdings were following the usual system of billing, it would have only sent out new bills up to late July for its services in 2006.” And, however, less than a month and a half later, it [would have sent] a total of 4,446 bills to third parties.*”

MUNDOVII, 4PUJOL

- ≠ iba a haber expedido
- ≠ diría que expido
- ≠ hubiera expedido

⁸¹ This may also be due to the fact that the data here come from print news. Weinblatt and Neiger (2015: 1057-58) have found that recent past events have become the domain of online news while newspapers have oriented themselves towards the future.

≠ toda me indica que había expedido
= **ha expedido (expidió), por lo visto**

(12) represent an inference drawn from UK exit polls on the night of the 2015 general election (the *El Mundo* edition was available the following morning). The journalist elaborates not just on the numbers available but attempts to explain the election outcome, making them the retrospective complement to the present conditional used to speculate on the future consequences of elections that was seen in (4). In (13), a quoted legal document's notes the discrepancy that suggests that illicit money transfers are being disguised as payments, as the numbering of billing invoices is irregular and makes a sudden leap over the course of a month and a half. From this evidence alone, investigators must deduce a past state of affairs.

5.2 The Press Conditional as an Evidential Strategy in Journalism

In the French literature, there has been much debate as to whether the primary semantic trait of the press conditional is its marking of *non-prise-en-charge* or its marking of secondhand information (Dendale 1993; Abouda 2001; Kronning 2002; Sullet-Nylander 2006). In Spanish, the same question has not been raised, and authors appear to apply the model they see fit without entering into a debate. Bermúdez (2016), for example, applies Kronning's (2002) model, which views the reportative conditional as a mixed marker combining epistemic and evidential features.⁸² On the basis of what I observed in French (and, for the same reasons, would argue apply to Spanish), I repeat that I agree with Abouda (2001) and understand the press conditional as a marker of *non-prise-en-charge* that in French extends to reported information and in Spanish extends to reported and inferred information. I would also say that, in the press context, *non-prise-en-charge* translates into uncertainty because where no mitigation of a claim to truth is made, the journalist's discourse is understood to reflect reality. If a reporter marks that they are not responsible for a fact, that fact's claim to truth is attenuated. Therefore, uncertainty derives from the press conditional's marking of *non-prise-en-charge* that usually results from the journalist's own evaluation of information as uncertain.

In this study, I understand the press conditional as a register feature of journalism. This means that the use of the press conditional can be understood as a function of news writing's specific aims. One can say that the press conditional in journalism can be thought of in relation to journalistic concerns for precision. This is how the press conditional is characterized in the style guide of *Le Monde* and it is the basis for *El País*'s objections to it. According to Cotter (2010: 195) precision derives from both accuracy and good writing. Insofar as the press conditional marks information as possibly untrue, it preserves accuracy by marking that which might not be accurate. Insofar as too great a use of the conditional is a sign of "bad writing" — since such use would violate prescriptive guidelines to moderate or avoid the construction's use — the press conditional also encompasses accuracy in the sense of the journalist's compliance

⁸² As we progress with a consideration of how the evidential traits of the press conditional serve the aims of journalistic texts, it is worth recalling the status of evidentiality in French and Spanish. Aikhenvald (2004: 5-6) chides linguists studying European languages for finding evidentiality where it does not exist, pointing out that means of evaluating information (such as marking secondhand information as uncertain) does not evidentiality make. Rather, she calls constructions that evaluate information appearing to have an evidential trait, "evidential strategies" (Aikhenvald 2004: 105).

with what Cotter (2010: 40) calls journalism's *prescriptive imperative*. In this section, I will primarily be speaking to the press conditional's role in achieving accuracy.

Part of ensuring accuracy would be acknowledging potential instances of inaccuracy. Charaudeau (2006: para. 16) notes that journalists must show their evidence for their information as well as indicate where evidence is lacking, and the press conditional appears apt for this task, especially so because it can mark uncertainty directly on the verb, unlike— for example — an adverb like *allegedly*. This can be seen in French when a reporter comments on the lack of reliable sources available to her in the disorder resulting from a failed coup in Burundi:

Le conditionnel s'impose : les forces fidèles à Nkurunziza ayant en priorité ciblé les médias indépendants dès lors réduits au silence, seuls les médias officiels, et les rumeurs, fonctionnent désormais à Bujumbura. (bolding mine)
LIBEV, 10RIEN

Libération finds the failure of the coup to unseat Burundi's president to be newsworthy, but the information available to the journalist comes from sources that are either clearly partial towards the regime or untrustworthy. Therefore, it is her responsibility in the interest of good journalistic practice to mark these limitations in her report. This gives rise to conditionals in the article like the one seen in (14):

- (14) Peu après, on apprenait que les chefs des mutins arrêtés **auraient été conduits** à «la Documentation», le très redouté siège des services secrets.
'*Not much later, it was reported that the leaders of the arrested mutineers [would have been taken] to "la Documentation," the much-feared seat of the secret service.*'
LIBEV, 10RIEN

With respect to the reportative conditional, the Spanish case is no different from that of French, as seen in (15):

- (15) El presunto fraude consiste en que OHL México **habría incrementado** de forma unilateral un 30% el peaje por transitar ese viaducto al elevar de 51,41 a 66,8 pesos el coste del peaje, algo que el contrato de concesión solo permite para la segunda etapa de construcción del proyecto, en la que los 22 kilómetros del viaducto contarán con cuatro carriles en lugar de los dos actuales.
'*The alleged fraud consists of [the fact that] OHL México unilaterally [would have increased] the toll for transiting the highway by 30% by raising the cost of the toll from 51.41 to 66.80 pesos, something which the contract permits only in the second phase of construction, in which 22 kilometers of the highway will have four lanes in the place of the current two.*'
PERIODIV, 30OHL

In (15), a reporter relays claims that the Mexican branch of a Spanish construction firm increased bridge tolls for the purposes of illicit enrichment. The source of the charges is a recording that has been leaked to the Internet, and that leak must be treated as potentially suspect. The conditional reflects the necessary precautions taken to maintain journalistic accuracy, extending

to the verb the same mitigation of the allegations' certainty provided when the fraud itself is described as *presunto* 'alleged'.

This need to mark uncertainty for purposes of ensuring accuracy also appears to motivate the use of the conditional in Spanish when a journalist makes an inference from available information. This is the case seen in speculations on potential electoral pacts with data taken from electoral polls as in (16):

- (16) Ciudadanos **podría ser** el único sostén del PP, pero también puede lanzarse a gobernar en el Ayuntamiento de Valencia.
'Ciudadanos [**could be**] the PP's only support, but it may also make a push to govern in the City Council of Valencia.'
MUNDOV, 5VALENCIA

In (16), the journalist has available to them only the polling data gathered and their knowledge of Ciudadanos' political alignment and aims. Here, the conditional reflects the journalist's reasoned speculation regarding their conclusion of what might be the outcome if the poll is indeed accurate. Similarly, in (17), an *El Mundo* journalist's examination of a recording – the same recording referenced in (15), in fact – suggests that the scandal in Mexico may extend to the firm's headquarters in Spain:

- (17) El presunto escándalo también **saltaría** a Madrid cuando el presidente de la filial mexicana, José Andrés de Oteyza, supuestamente llega a vincular al consejero delegado del negocio de Concesiones de OHL, Juan Osuna Gómez, con los sobrecostes que **se habrían cargado** a la concesión.
'The alleged scandal also [**would leap**] to Madrid when the president of the Mexican branch, José Andrés de Oteyza, allegedly manages to implicate the delegated consultant of the business Concesiones de OHL, Juan Osuna Gómez, in the surcharges that [**would have been added**] to the contract.'
MUNDOIV, 38VACACIONES

Saltaría in (17) reflects the same concern for accuracy seen in (14), (15) and (16) when the reporter infers that the scandal may reach back to Madrid. The inference reflects as much the potentially suspect nature of the journalist's source (a leaked tape) as well as the uncertainty of the conclusion drawn regarding Spanish executives' potential involvement in the fraud. It is also not simply uncertainty that is being marked. The conditional in (17) may reflect real legal concerns of litigation should the journalist's supposition prove false.

However, the importance of certainty in the sense of a fact being true or untrue might not always be the primary function of a reportative conditional found in the press. For example, the tokens seen in (18) and (19) more resemble speech reporting:

- (18) D'après Bottura, l'Américaine a joué un rôle fondamental dans l'évolution de sa cuisine – elle lui **aurait appris** à prendre de la distance, à faire preuve de pédagogie –, au même titre que les grands chez qui il a fait ses classes...
'According to Bottura, the American played a fundamental role in the evolution of his cooking — she [**would have taught**] him to take distance, to demonstrate his pedagogical competence – much as had the greats with whom he took his classes'

- (19) ‘La vanguardia de la zona euro, por su parte, debe dirigirse a más solidaridad e integración, con un presupuesto común, una capacidad de endeudamiento común y una con convergencia fiscal,’ explica. Para Macron, la eurozona **tendría** incluso **que armonizar** los regímenes sociales, con un dispositivo común para los subsidios por desempleo.
‘The leaders of the eurozone, for their part, must turn towards greater solidarity and integration, with a common budget, a means for shared debt, and fiscal convergence, he explains. For Macron, the eurozone [would] even [need to harmonize] its social welfare regimes, with a common mechanism for unemployment subsidies.’
PERIODVII, 17FRANCIA

In an example like (18), there is no practical reason to doubt the chef’s claim regarding the role his wife played in his professional development. In (19), the conditional serves only to relay Macron’s vision for the future of the EU. In tokens such as (18) and (19), the press conditional serves as a speech reporting device.

In the light of these considerations, I will dedicate §5.2.1 and §5.2.2 to a discussion of the use of the press conditional as a means to report speech and to make inferences. Qualitatively speaking, it appeared that in certain instances, the press conditional could be exploited to certain discursive ends in French in a way that it could not be in Spanish. Furthermore, given the established role of the inferential conditional in Spanish, I will explore examples of the press conditional in French that appear inferential and may resemble this use of the conditional in Spanish.

5.2.1 The Press Conditional and Speech Reporting

When used with a reportative value, the press conditional overlaps to a degree with other forms of discourse representation found in the press. It is different from speech reporting forms like direct discourse since it also provides a mark of uncertainty. However, in certain contexts, one or the other function may appear to be more foregrounded. In some instances, like (14) and (15), the speech reporting function seems reduced, especially since no source for the information is provided. In cases like (18) and (19), the press conditional seems more akin to speech reporting than to other markers of uncertainty. However, the two languages vary with respect to the rhetorical ends to which the press conditional can be exploited. As was discussed in §3.2.2, the press conditional often served to reprise discourse for the means of refuting others’ claims. Azzopardi (2011: 314) did not find any such use of the conditional in the tokens collected for this study. In this section, I demonstrate that the press conditional as a speech reporting device in French is more complex than it is in Spanish. This complexity derives from the French press conditional’s implication not only of uncertainty but also subjectivity. This subjective element is absent in Spanish. In order to understand the press conditional from the perspective of speech reporting, it is necessary to situate it relative to more canonical forms of discourse reporting, which include direct discourse and indirect discourse. I will use Marnette (2005: 19-33) to characterize the function of the press conditional as a means to report speech as her model helps

think through the notion of subjectivity as it relates to the French press conditional when thought of as a speech reporting device.

Marnette (2005: 25) describes instances of reported speech as having three layers of locutory activity: the speaking subject (the physical producer of the utterance), the locutor (the 'I' responsible for the utterance) and the enunciator (the underlying points of view expressed in the utterance). These separate entities present in an enunciation are most clearly distinguished in direct discourse, as in (20):

- (20) Alors, Paul m'a regardé et il m'a dit: "Je ne veux pas y aller. Et toi?"
'So Paul looked at me and he said to me: "I don't want to go. How about you?"'
Speaking subject: I 'je'
Locutor: Paul
Enunciator: Paul

In the token of reported speech, which is underlined in (20), Paul is both the locutor (the 'I' of the reported speech) and the enunciator. In other words, it is Paul's point of view that is expressed within the material quoted. The speaking subject is the producer of the entirety of the utterance (starting with *Alors, Paul m'a regardé*) and is a different 'I' from the 'I' in the utterance made by Paul.

In indirect discourse, the identity of the locutor-enunciator is clear (i.e., the person ultimately responsible for the utterance produced as well as their viewpoint). In the press conditional, the identity of who constitutes locutor-enunciator is unclear. This is shown in (21) and (22):

- (21) Alors, Paul m'a regardé. Il m'a dit qu'il ne voulait pas y aller
'Then, Paul looked at me. He said that he didn't want to go'
(Marnette 2005: 23)
Locutor-Enunciator: I
Enunciator 2: Paul
- (22) Le président **serait** malade.
'The president [**would be**] sick.'
Locutor: (?)
Enunciator 1: Journalist
Enunciator 2: Source

(21) is an example of indirect discourse, and Paul and 'I' are clearly distinct in that utterance. It is clear that the 'I' of the utterance is 'I' and that 'I' is responsible for the utterance. In (22), imagined here as a journalistic example, it is unclear who is responsible for the utterance. However, despite this confusion, one could say for (22) that one of the enunciator's is the source of the information and the other is the journalist, who has reason to suspect the information. This is similar to Kronning's (2002: 568-70) modeling of the press conditional, which distinguishes between a *locuteur source* and a *locuteur modalisant* (see §1.3.1).

Although indirect discourse and the press conditional each contain two enunciators, the relationship between their two enunciators is distinct. Merle's (2004) reflections on the nature of the press conditional are useful for describing this difference. He notes that the difference

between the press conditional and indirect discourse may be thought of as one of reported content versus reported speech (Merle 2004: 230). He also argues that the press conditional introduces an element of subjectivity in the form of the dissonance between the utterance's information and the speaker's evaluation of it:

On peut considérer qu'il s'agit là d'une manifestation de subjectivité, qui s'opère systématiquement sur le mode de la discordance entre la voix énonciative et le contenu de discours rapporté : le conditionnel signale une appropriation du discours rapporté, assortie d'une répudiation immédiate, en vertu de son signifié : virtualité et toncalité (Merle 2004: 248).⁸³

In other words, unlike indirect discourse, the press conditional marks the speaker's subjective evaluation of information learned through another speaker. This is distinct from indirect discourse which does not carry the implication of a subjective evaluation on the part of the speaker. Thought of in Marnette's (2005) three layers of locutory activity, there are two enunciators in both (21) and (22). In (21), no evaluation on the part of the speaker is implied by the fact that the speaker uses indirect discourse to convey Paul's words. In (22), the speaker reports information learned through another speaker, but the choice to use the press conditional marks that speaker has made a choice to simultaneously mark their evaluation of that information. The use of the press conditional in (22) evidences an evaluation on the part of the speaker that the indirect discourse of (21) does not.

Introducing a subjective evaluation when reporting what others say deviates from the usual purpose of quotation in journalism. Normally, quotation in journalism is used to establish neutrality. As Cotter (2010) states:

The discursive purpose of attributing a source from the news community's point of view is to render the reporter's voice neutral, to position the reporter as a conduit, or an objective party that is not taking a stance about the topic being covered but is merely conveying a range of views. Thus attribution and quotes themselves, whether direct or indirect, are important to front the speaker or source and his or her stance and to take the opinion of the reporter out of the equation (146).

When choosing to use the press conditional, the journalist provides not necessarily a personal opinion vis-à-vis the reported material but rather an evaluation of the reported material that would be absent if an indicative tense had been used. In this sense, it suggests an intervention on the part of the journalist with respect to the content reported, unlike direct and indirect discourse. The evaluation is usually intended to ensure accuracy and precision: by transparently marking uncertain information as such, the journalist is ensuring that they are reporting news content accurately, and they thereby ensure precision. However, in choosing this means to mark uncertainty, a trace of subjectivity is added to the utterance.

⁸³ Merle (2004: 240) borrows the notion of *toncalité* and *noncalité* from Damourette and Pichon (1911-1936). The terms derive from Latin *tunc* 'there' and *nunc* 'now.' Tenses marking *toncalité*, such as the conditional, mark a rupture between the utterance and the speaker's immediate reality (i.e., the context in which the utterance is produced).

We can model this relationship using Marnette's (2005) proposed structure for the press conditional and indirect discourse while adding a means to mark the subjective evaluation that Merle (2004) describes as proper to the press conditional (23):

- (23) Un rapport de l'ONU avance que des hommes de «Sangaris» **auraient abusé** d'enfants.
'A UN report claims that men of the "Sangaris" [would have abused] children'
 LIBEIII, 9BANGUI
 Enunciator 1: UN report ≈ Enunciator 2: Journalist

In (23), the first enunciator's assertion (the UN report), that children were abused by French soldiers stationed in the Central African Republic, is marked as uncertain by the second enunciator (the journalist).⁸⁴ This relationship is expressed by the ≈ 'almost equals' sign. I have used this sign to capture the relationship on the basis of the press conditional's "call for confirmation" (Gosselin 2001: 46): if the reporter felt that there were sufficient substantiation of the fact, they could report the discourse without the marking of uncertainty added by the press conditional. It is this evaluation that is the basis for the subjective element introduced by the press conditional. Such an element disappears if we rewrite (23) as ID using the *passé composé*, as shown in (24):

- (24) Un rapport de l'ONU avance que des hommes de «Sangaris» **ont abusé** d'enfants.
*'A UN report alleges that men of the Sangaris **abused** children.'*
 Enunciator 1: UN Report
 Enunciator 2: Journalist

In (24), the journalist does not specify a particular viewpoint vis-à-vis the reported content. No engaged subjectivity on the part of the second enunciator (here, the journalist) is implied.⁸⁵

In a case like (23), this evocation of what we call an engaged subjectivity appears to be a byproduct of using the press conditional as a means to mark information as potentially untrue. This element of subjectivity does not appear to be especially salient in instances like (23). However, in French, it appears that this subjective element can be exploited as a means of constructing a greater stance towards the utterance's content when the conditional is combined with more 'subjective' co-text.⁸⁶ This is most clear in cases of what has been called the *conditionnel polémique*, an example of which is given in (25):

- (25) Et cette idée que le latin et le grec **seraient** élitistes!
'And this idea that Latin and Greek [would be] elitist.'
 MONDEVI, 17GAUCHE
 Enunciator 1: Critics of school reforms ≠ Enunciator 2: Editorialist

⁸⁴ The numbering is largely meaningless since both enunciators are invoked simultaneously. I have labeled the 'source' as Enunciator 1 and the journalist as Enunciator 2 since the source utterance precedes that of the journalist.

⁸⁵ I say engaged subjectivity since presumably the presence of a subjectivity suggests that subjectivity has been activated. 'Engaged' is intended to capture the interest one enunciator has in evaluating the other's point of view.

⁸⁶ Haillet (2002: 80-88) also notes this function in French and inventories various kinds of "attitudes" – from "reserve" to "contestation" – that can be achieved.

Although the conditional itself does not capture the writer's stance in (25), the co-text resolves any ambiguity as to their feeling. In other words, the co-text would seem to resolve the ambiguity that Marnette (2005: 25) notes is otherwise characteristic of the press conditional. The utterance in (25) does not represent a simple case of doubt; it is quite clear that the editorialist does not find the study of Latin and Greek to be elitist. For this reason, it is possible to replace the almost equals sign by the does not equal sign when the co-text is taken into consideration. One might say that the conditional buttresses the subjective evaluation that begins with *et cette idée que* by making the utterance not just a reprise but an evaluation. One could say *et cette idée que le latin et le grec sont élitistes!* but the indicative form *sont* cannot participate in sustaining the sense of subjective evaluation the way *seraient* does.

The example in (25) comes from an editorial, and it is evident in that example that the press conditional can be used to express a lively opinion. Within news articles, the same speech reporting function of the press conditional can also be useful to journalists who wish to replicate speech while not giving it unwarranted legitimacy. The effect is a more neutral use than that seen in (25). An example from *Le Monde* is shown in (26):

- (26) À Washington, les républicains ne vont pas se laisser aisément convaincre, eux qui n'ont jamais cessé de considérer la politique d'ouverture comme une manifestation de faiblesse et l'accord-cadre avec l'Iran comme l'expression suprême de l'esprit de " capitulation " qui régnerait à la Maison Blanche.
'In Washington, Republicans are not going to let themselves be easily convinced, they who have never ceased to consider the policy of opening up [to Cuba] as a manifestation of weakness and the Iran deal as the supreme form of express of the spirit of "capitulation" that [would reign] in the White House.'
 MONDEI, 58CUBA

(26) represents a use of the press conditional that would appear to serve the reporter's neutrality (even if the press conditional marks an evaluation on their part). This makes (26) more like the example in (24) than the example in (25). In the context of an article on the Obama administration's foreign policy, the effect is that of a largely objective report. The reporter wishes to properly characterize the nature of the Obama administration's foreign policy and relevant to that is the reaction it has generated among the opposition. (26) allows the journalist to express that viewpoint while not endorsing it.

While the token in (26) may be more objective, the conditional can be used in instances in news articles where it participates in more subjective evaluations. For example, *Le Monde's* journalist uses the press conditional to dismiss fears expressed by European journalists regarding the arrival of American news outlet Politico in Brussels. This is shown in (27):

- (27) D'autres fantasment sur l'arrivée d'un média partisan, un faux nez de l'administration Obama ou des néoconservateurs américains. La preuve, disent-ils, la fête à l'Autoworld est sponsorisée par... Google ! Politico **débarquerait** pour défendre le géant américain du Web contre une administration communautaire tatillonne, pour pousser les avantages américains dans les négociations sur le traité de libre-échange avec les États-Unis...
'Others fantasize about the arrival of a partisan outlet, of a sock puppet of the Obama administration or American neocons. The proof, they say, [is that] the

launch party at Autoworld is sponsored by... Google! Politico [would be coming] to defend the American Web giant against a fussy administration of a common market, for the purpose of advancing American interests in free trade negotiations with the United States...'
 MONDEII, POLITICO13

Politico Europe's launch party had been sponsored by Google, fueling the fears expressed in (27). *Le Monde's* journalist clearly finds them ungrounded, as is evidenced by the co-text. In fact, the co-text preceding and following the conditional gives the passage a mocking tone. The conditional does not only signal that the European reporters' sense of threat may be baseless, it also helps to sustain the journalist's attitude towards their fears that is introduced by *D'autres fantasmes...* In accessing the journalists' discourse through the press conditional, rather than direct or indirect discourse, one could say that we hear the discourse through a subjective lens.

In the cases of (25), (26) and (27), uncertainty plays a role in motivating the press conditional despite the foregrounded role of speech reporting in those tokens: at some point, the speaker disbelieves or finds reason to possibly disbelieve the utterance's claim. Although very scant in number, there were a few tokens, such as (18), where the reason for uncertainty was not evident. In (18), the book reviewer uses the conditional to cite a fact from chef Massimo Bottura's memoir. Given the source, it is unclear how uncertainty could be said to play a role when Bottura himself is the best possible source for facts about his life, and most certainly the best person to describe the impact his wife has had on his career.

The token in (18) recalled the use of the press conditional in a report on the then-emerging refugee crisis. In this report, a *Le Monde* journalist recounts hearing a young boy's story of his family's trials over the course of their journey to Europe, shown in (28):

- (28) Ahmat Sakim, un petit garçon de 8 ans, s'approche alors, très sûr de lui, pour nous demander en anglais de l'eau et des vêtements. Il est à moitié nu. Il nous raconte comment, passé de la Turquie en Bulgarie, lui et sa famille **se seraient fait battre** par la police bulgare qui les **aurait** ensuite **refoulés** en Grèce sans leurs habits. Avec force et dignité, il nous propose de nous retrouver à la lisière du bois le lendemain afin que nous apportions des médicaments pour sa petite sœur malade. *'Ahmat Sakim, a little boy of 8, then approaches, very sure of himself, to ask us in English for water and clothes. He is half-naked. He tells us how, coming out of Turkey into Bulgaria, he and his family [would have been beaten] by the Bulgarian police, who then [would have driven] them into Greece without their clothes. With strength and dignity, he asks us to meet in the clearing of the woods the next day so that we might bring medicine for his sick baby sister.'*
 MONDEV, 6EUROPE

In (28), there is nothing in the co-text to suggest that the young boy's story is suspect, in the usual sense, nor does the co-text suggest a stance taken by the journalist. The effect created is one of distance between the journalist and the boy, which appears to serve, in this instance, to strengthen the presence of the boy's voice even when his narration must be condensed to a few sentences. By highlighting their own subjectivity in the form of an evaluation of the boy's narrative as uncertain, the journalist is actually able to highlight the boy's own subjectivity as well. If we recast the conditionals in the more usual *passé composé*, this effect is lost (29):

- (29) Il nous raconte comment, passé de la Turquie en Bulgarie, lui et sa famille **se sont fait battre** par la police bulgare qui les **a ensuite refoulés** en Grèce sans leurs habits.
He tells us how, coming out of Turkey into Bulgaria, he and his family were beaten by the Bulgarian police, who then drove them into Greece without their clothes.

In (29), no ‘evaluation’ of the boy’s story is introduced and, consequently, no second voice is highlighted. Rather than portraying one subjectivity encountering another, the journalist merely relays what the boy has said. In the case of the French press conditional, it would appear that to the extent our subjective evaluations of what others say allow us to determine that which is uncertain, marking uncertainty can be recruited as a means to highlight subjectivity. In this light, the token in (18) appears to be a milder version of this same phenomenon. The conditional does not point to any real doubt about the claim Bottura makes about his wife. Rather, it appears to reflect the subjective nature of Bottura’s own reflections on his experience, as provided in the memoir, and thereby draw out Bottura (the subjective, living entity), however briefly, as a presence.

The reportative conditional in Spanish did not appear to have this capacity to engage others’ subjectivity. Uncertainty appeared to signify uncertainty alone, and not an accompanying subjective element. Equivalents to the more extreme examples of this in French, such as the token in (25), were not found in the Spanish corpus. This may lend weight to the possibility that such a use of the conditional is not possible in Spanish, as was first suggested by Azzopardi (2011: 314). At most, it appears that when the press conditional is used in instances that primarily relate speech, it can have a mild distancing effect without any real accompanying attitude or stance being taken. This is illustrated in (30):

- (30) Decía la Capmany que cuando Barcelona arroja la precaución por la borda es capaz de hacer cosas extraordinarias. Los Juegos del 92 **serían** un ejemplo.
‘Campany used to say that when Barcelona threw caution to the wind, it is capable of doing extraordinary things. The Games of 92 [would be] an example.
 PERIODVI, 13PRUDENCIA

In (30), the editorialist recalls an author’s words regarding the city of Barcelona and its ability to rise to the challenges of ambitious projects, such as the 1992 Olympic Games. The conditional does create a certain distance between the editorialist and the claim made by the author. Nevertheless, the co-text appears to virtually endorse Capmany’s words. However, that distance appears to be not significantly greater than it would have been had the writer used indirect discourse; the distance simply appears to be more marked. To draw a very fine line, in French, the press conditional can signal that one is reprising another’s discourse and that one may also have a particular attitude towards that discourse; in Spanish, the press conditional implies merely that one is echoing others’ discourse and that one does not wish to take responsibility for the utterance.

In one instance, it was tempting to read a tone of irony in a token appearing in *El Mundo*. In an article on a ruling that decreed that flags symbolizing the Catalan independence

movement (the Estelada) should be removed from polling places and public buildings, *El Mundo* cites a pro-independence political party's statement regarding the judgment (31):

- (31) CiU **entendería** que se retirasen los «símbolos partidistas» en los colegios electorales el día de las elecciones, pero concluye que la decisión que tomó la JEC el miércoles «excede de sus competencias».
'CiU [would understand] that partisan symbols are removed from polling places on election days, but it concludes that the decision made by the JEC on Wednesday "exceeds its powers.'
MUNDOV, 16CIU

By using the conditional, the journalist avoids endorsing CiU's claims that it believes the Estelada should be removed from polling stations. While it was tempting to read (31) through the lens of *El Mundo*'s fierce opposition to Catalan independence, there is nothing in the co-text of the article itself to suggest that the conditional is necessarily motivated by a greater ideological subtext or ironizing tone. More likely, the more basic choice to report on the ruling is reflective of *El Mundo*'s ideological line: a politically engaged newspaper for a united Spain. The conditional may simply draw attention to the fact that what CiU concedes is fair is rather small: that the flag should be taken down only on election days and only from polling stations, a stance which casts doubt on whether it actually believes they need to be taken down at all. In its statement, the party also points out that the flags had been flying for months and many had been hanging during the 2014 election. The journalist may simply be highlighting what they feel to be a disconnect in CiU's stance.

In an example faintly similar to *Le Monde*'s mockery of European journalists in (27), *El Periódico* uses the conditional to relay the discourse of conservative media fearful of a Labour victory in the 2015 UK General Election (32):

- (32) La posibilidad, cada vez más firme, de que los laboristas terminen gobernando con apoyo del SNP ha dominado la campaña y ha desatado la histeria de la derecha. Según medios afines, el país **quedaría** al borde del colapso. Miliband está siendo caricaturizado como una marioneta en manos de la pérfida Sturgeon. La líder escocesa ha sido bautizada como «la mujer más peligrosa del país» y Cameron ruega a los votantes que le ayuden a «salvar la Unión» y de paso, su futuro político, cada vez más precario.
'The possibility, each day more likely, that Labour will end up governing with support of the SNP has dominated the campaign and unleashed hysteria on the right. According to allied media, the country [would be] on the verge of collapse. Miliband is being caricaturized as a puppet in the hands of the perfidious Sturgeon. The Scottish leader has been baptized as "the most dangerous woman in the world" and Cameron begs voters that they help him "save the Union" and at the same time, his political career, each day more precarious.'
PERIODIII, 13NADIE

Given that article does not endorse the claims of British conservative media, (32) almost reads like the example in (27). If this were the case, it would be an example where the press conditional in Spanish relays information that the speaker finds to be false. However, in (32), the

journalist does not present a “stance” much stronger than that of “the claims being made by conservative media are extreme.” It is difficult to detect anything beyond “reserve” as the attitude that the conditional helps establish. At most, the article might appear to take a critical view of such rhetoric, but it lacks the mocking tone of (27). The fact that the journalist uses direct quotes from conservative leaders and media to illustrate their point lends a far more “objective” feeling both to the journalist’s stance but also to the article overall. It is this lack of subjective co-text that prevents (32) from being a ‘polemical conditional’ (cf. (27)). When thought of through the lens of discourse reporting and its functions, one might say that the Spanish press conditional is more like indirect discourse with a mark of reserve rather than the more complex entity found in French, which implicates speech, uncertainty and subjectivity.

Beyond these observations, it also appears that the Spanish press conditional is more “limited” than its French counterpart in the kinds of sources it may draw from, at least to the extent that it is seen in journalistic texts. Certain examples in French appeared to reflect what might count as “folklore” (a distinction used by Willett (1988: 57) for information from sources of oral literature). Examples include local legends as in (33), old myths as in (34), historical anecdotes as in (35):

- (33) Y **rôderait** même le fantôme de l’acrobate Louis Borsalino, qui avait chuté en 1935 sur cette scène, où une douche de lumière éclaire soudain un piano à queue
‘There [would walk] the ghost of acrobat Louis Borsalino, who had fallen down onto the stage in 1935, where a shower of light suddenly illuminates a grand piano.’
 LIBEII, 26CHATELET
- (34) Parce qu’elle éveille des angoisses ancestrales, celles que suscite toute évocation du sacrifice humain, la légende selon laquelle les juifs **enlèveraient** des enfants chrétiens pour leur prendre leur sang recèle, en Pologne, une efficacité meurtrière, capable de survivre à tous les démentis à travers les siècles.
‘Because it evokes ancestral anxieties, those that any evocation of human sacrifice arouses, the legend according to which Jewish people [would kidnap] Christian children to take their blood harbors a fatal efficacy, capable of surviving every attempt to dismantle it across the centuries.’
 MONDEIV, 82FOND
- (35) Churchill dira drôlement après la guerre qu’il en existe un seul exemplaire portant les deux signatures mais qu’elles sont toutes deux de la main de Roosevelt, qui **aurait rajouté** lui-même celle de Churchill.
‘Churchill would say humorously after the war that there exists only a single copy carrying the two signatures, but that they are both in the handwriting of Roosevelt, who [would have added] Churchill’s himself.’
 LIBEIV, 30KEYNES

While “folklore” might be a strong term for (33) and (35), they do represent stories circulating more widely than any one specific source or even a broad entity like “paranoid journalists” or “Republicans.” (34), however, comes from oral transmission. In Spanish, the closest example to any that might be considered folklore comes from a review of a biography of former French

president François Mitterrand. The biography features an account from Mazarine Pingeot, the president's longtime mistress. In that account, she claims that it was she who made the phone call to the doctor who is said to have given the former French president the lethal injection that brought his life to an end (36):

- (36) Ese «después» que empieza el 8 de enero de 1996, el día de la muerte del presidente en su apartamento de la avenida Frédéric-Le-Play, donde ella vivía y donde puede que se le practicara al enfermo de cáncer de próstata la eutanasia que el mismo le **habría pedido** a su médico.
'This 'afterwards' that began the 8th of January 1996, the day of the president's death in his apartment on the avenue Frédéric-Le-Play, where she lived and where it may be that the prostate cancer patient was given the eutanasia he himself [would have requested] from his doctor.'
PERIODVII, 58MITTERRAND

The rumor that Mitterrand asked to be euthanized predates Pingeot's memoir and was reported as early as 2012 in the book *Le dernier tabou: la santé des présidents*. However, the journalists that authored that book claim only one person knows what really happened, and, in the light of the 2015 revelations, the source appears to have been Pingeot.⁸⁷ It is unclear if the press conditional derives from the earlier report that had entered circulation or if it simply reflects the claim Pingeot makes in her account. The lack of other examples similar to the ones in (33 – 36) suggests the latter.

5.2.2 The Conditional as an Inferential Strategy

In Spanish, the inferential conditional had three primary uses: prediction and inferring facts (as seen in (16) and (17)) and in recasting what others had said, as in (37):

- (37) En otras palabras, la mancha fría **no sería** nada más que un testigo de la expansión del Universo, que estira el supervacío.
'In other words, the cold spot [would not be] anything more than witness to the Universe's expansion, which is stretching the supervoid.'
PERIODVII, 32BURBUJA

Instances such as (37) appear to be a more strongly inferential form of what Bermúdez (2016) calls the scientific conditional and are not unlike the example in (30). In (30), the journalist relays an author's claim but in (37), the journalist goes so far as to reformulate the cited material, as indicated by *en otras palabras*. While the dividing line appears to be a fine one, instances such as (30), in which the journalist appears to make less of an intervention, were treated as reportative since relaying earlier discourse without modification appears to be their function, while tokens like (37) were treated as inferential since the utterance is meant to represent the journalist's own words.

⁸⁷ AFP. "François Mitterrand aurait demandé l'euthanasie," *Tribune de Genève*, April 10, 2012. Accessed February 20, 2020. <https://www.tdg.ch/monde/europe/calvaire-francois-mitterrand-abrege-injection/story/23111245>.

In declarative utterances, using the conditional to mark an inference is generally considered to be impossible in French (Rossari 2009: 77-78). Use of the conditional to mark inference in French is generally described as limited to the interrogative form. Dendale (2010: 291) contrasts the following examples shown in (38) and (39):

- (38) Paul n'est pas là! **Serait-il** à Paris ?
'Paul is not there. [Would] he [be] in Paris?'
- (39) Paul ne viendra pas. Il **serait** à Paris en ce moment.
'Paul will not come. He [would be] in Paris at the moment.'

In (38), the conditional marks inference and in (39), the conditional marks reported information. In (38), the inference arises from the speaker's knowledge of the world, and despite its interrogative form, is, in fact, an assertion, as it is not appropriate to respond *oui* 'yes' or *non* 'no.' (Dendale 2010: 296-97). Rossari (2009: 77) notes that the conditional cannot be used in a declarative sentence to make an inference when a speaker has direct access to a given state of affairs. She gives the following examples in (40) and (41) of the conditional's ungrammaticality as maker of inference in such cases:

- (40) *Le père de Paul a les yeux bleus, sa mère a les yeux bleus, Paul a les yeux bleus, son petit frère **aurait** les yeux bleus.
**'Paul's father has blue eyes, his mother has blue eyes, Paul has blue eyes, his little brother [would have] blue eyes.'*
 (Rossari 2009: 77)
- (41) Le père de Paul a les yeux bleus, sa mère a les yeux bleus, Paul a les yeux bleus, son petit frère **doit avoir** les yeux bleus.
'Paul's father has blue eyes, his mother has blue eyes, Paul has blue eyes, his little brother [must have] blue eyes.'
 (Rossari 2009: 77)

The conditional in (40) is judged to be ungrammatical. Typically, as seen in (41), the modal verb *devoir* must be used in such cases.

However, Guentchéva (1994: 17-18) suggests that the press conditional in French may occasionally extend to inference and gives the example in (42):

- (42) Les résultats des examens réalisés, notamment à l'hôpital neuro-cardiologique de Lyon, par le docteur T., neuro-cardiologue, et par le professeur V., toxicologue, font état de la présence dans le sang, où le taux d'alcoolémie atteignait 1,8 gramme, d'opiacés, de la morphine en particulier. La cause de la mort **serait** ainsi une crise cardiaque déclenchée dans un contexte de prise d'opiacés par voie buccale qui ne semble pas devoir être assimilée à une « surdose ». Ces constatations des experts donnent heure à l'ouverture d'une instruction pour infraction à la législation sur les stupéfiants qui va tenter de retrouver le fournisseur d'éventuels produits prohibés.

‘The results of the examinations carried out, notably at the neuro-cardiological hospital of Lyons, by Doctor T., neuro-cardiologist, et by Professor V., toxicologist, confirms the presence of opiates, [and] of morphine in particular in the blood, where the rate of blood alcohol reaches 1.8 grams. The cause of death [would be] therefore a heart attack triggered in the context of oral opioid consumption which appears not to necessarily reach the level of an “overdose.” These expert findings provide the justification for the opening of an investigation for violation of the law regarding narcotics which will attempt to find the ultimate provider of banned substances.’
(Guentchéva 1994: 17-18)

Per Guentchéva (1994: 18), the journalist is filling the link between the toxicology report and earlier reports that the deceased had suffered a heart attack, meaning that the conditional is a hypothesis based on reasoning. This would make (42) not dissimilar to the Spanish examples in (16) and (17).

Four tokens in the corpus appear to resemble Guentchéva’s (1994) example in (42). One such example is (43), wherein the journalist speculates about the nature of Marion-Maréchal Le Pen’s candidacy:

- (43) La jeune femme devient ainsi la clé d’un règlement pacifique de la crise qui secoue le FN depuis la semaine passée. Sa candidature **permettrait** à Jean-Marie Le Pen de sauver la face, ayant désigné lui-même une remplaçante, réputée proche de lui personnellement et politiquement.
‘The young woman thus becomes the key to a peaceful solution to the crisis that has been rattling the FN over the last week. Her candidacy [would permit] Jean-Marie Le Pen to save face, with himself having designated a replacement, said to be close to him personally and politically.
LIBEL, 10FN

At the time of Marion-Maréchal’s nomination, there had been a rupture between her grandfather, Jean-Marie Le Pen, who had founded France’s far-right national party, and his daughter Marine. Marine had forced her father to step down in her ongoing mission to make the party more palatable to mainstream voters. Marion-Maréchal’s nomination is favorable to both Le Pens: Jean-Marie can present her candidature as his choice, and Marine will not risk embarrassment from her estranged father’s running for election. The conditional *permettrait* allows the journalist to move beyond the surface facts presented to the public. By having his granddaughter run, Jean-Marie avoids embarrassment and appears to be still relevant to the party he founded. In a statement to the press, Jean-Marie Le Pen says if he is not the candidate, his granddaughter should be: “‘*Si je n’étais pas candidat, je ne vois que Marion. Il n’y a aucune autre personnalité qui ait autant de notoriété et de particularité au sein du Front national pour cette région*’, dit-il au JDD.”⁸⁸ *Permettrait* is, therefore, not truly reportative. The journalist appears to draw an inference based on the circumstances (and discourse) surrounding the young Le Pen’s candidacy.

A book review appearing in *Le Monde* also contains what appears to be an inferential use of the press conditional in French. The book reviewed is *Les Fusillés*, a bibliographic dictionary

⁸⁸ If I were not the candidate, I only see Marion. There is no other personality who has as much prominence and distinction within the FN for that region,’ he tells the JDD.

of the French killed at the hands of the Nazi occupying forces during World War II. The interaction of evidence and inference is evident in the article's concluding paragraph, when the reviewers imagine what might have happened to a victim whose identity remains a mystery (44):

- (44) Faire parler les archives et rassembler l'information recueillie par les associations et par les musées se révèle ainsi fort utile pour faire revivre des gens souvent oubliés en dépit de leur courage. Olga Bancic n'est pas tout à fait une inconnue, fort heureusement. Mais que dire de Ric, fusillé le 28 mars 1944, selon les registres tenus par les Allemands, sans que l'on sache rien de plus sur lui? Une hypothèse s'impose pour expliquer le peu d'informations dont nous disposons à son sujet : il **aurait refusé** de parler sous la torture, voire de décliner son identité, s'enfermant dans un mutisme héroïque pour ne pas trahir ses compagnons d'armes.
'*Making the archives speak and gathering the information collected by organizations and museums proves rather useful for bringing back to life people often forgotten despite their courage. Olga Bancic is not entirely a stranger, quite fortunately. But what to say of Ric, shot on the 28th of March 1944, held by the Germans according to the registers, without anything else known about him? A hypothesis emerges to explain the little information we have about him: he [would have refused] to speak under torture, or to even reveal his identity, locking himself in a heroic silence so as not betray his brothers-in-arms.*'
MONDEV, 17FUSILLES

Faced with a lack of information about Ric in his entry, the reviewers make a hypothesis about the nature of this death. It is possible to compare their hypothesis with the information available in the dictionary, which shows that the claim about Ric's death is certainly not to be found in *Les Fusillés* itself:

RIC

Date et lieu de naissance inconnus, fusillé le 28 mars 1944 au fort de Bondues (Nord).

Un certain Ric est mentionné sur la Grabliste du fort de Bondues, sans que l'on ne dispose d'aucune information à son sujet. S'agit-il d'un pseudonyme de résistant ? Seule certitude, il fut condamné à mort, puis fusillé le 28 mars 1944.

SOURCE : Musée de la Résistance de Bondues, *Ils étaient 68*, 2010.⁸⁹

In comparing the source with the text in the book review, we can see that the *il aurait refusé* cannot be reportative in nature. All the information known about Ric is the name Ric and the

⁸⁹ RIC

Date and year of birth unknown, shot on the 28th of March 1944 at the fort of Bondue (North).

A certain Ric is mentioned in the Grabliste of the fort of Bondues, without any information given about him. Is it the pseudonym of a resistance fighter? The only certainty, he was condemned to death then executed on the 28th of March 1944.

SOURCE: Musée de la Résistance de Bondues, *Ils étaient 68*, 2010

— Lucchini, Julien. 2015. "Ric." In *Les fusillés, 1940-1944: dictionnaire biographique des fusillés et exécutés par condamnation et comme otages et guillotins en France pendant l'Occupation*, edited by Claude Pennetier and André Balent. Ivry-sur-Seine: Éditions de l'Atelier.

date of his execution. The dictionary itself wonders if Ric was a Resistance fighter. The hypothesis advanced by the reviewers suggests that Ric was tortured and refused to give names of other resistance fighters, a conclusion drawn from their own reasonings about the nature of someone about whom no information exists.

One conditional appears to be at once a citation and a kind of inference in a *Libération* article on high household morale in France, a situation in direct contradiction with the poor state of the French economy. An expert is consulted to explain the paradox. He discusses multiple factors explaining the relative happiness of French households, among them low gas prices.⁹⁰ The example appears in (45):

- (45) Mais alors, d'où vient cet élan de confiance? « De facteurs extérieurs qui poussent l'économie française vers la reprise, comme la baisse de l'euro et les taux d'intérêt faibles, mais surtout la baisse des prix du pétrole », répond l'expert. Le moral des ménages serait même essentiellement indexé sur...les prix du brut. En effet, la chute des prix du pétrole confère du pouvoir d'achat aux ménages, gonflant du même coup la demande.
'But, then, where does this burst of confidence come from? 'External factors which push the French economy towards recovery, like a falling euro, low interest rates, but above all, the drop in the cost of gas' responds the expert. Household morale [would be] even essentially pegged to...the price of crude oil. Indeed, the fall of gas prices confers purchasing power on households, while increasing demand at the same time.'
LIBEIII, 12MORAL

The adjacency of the actual words of the expert interviewed and the press conditional (complete with an ellipsis in the phrase) make for a token that straddles the line between inference and citation. The example in (45) could be a form of citation since it is a direct uptake of what the expert has just said in the preceding direct discourse. However, there are two reasons to see the intervention of a second voice that is “thinking through” what the expert has said. The conditional appears intended to emphasize the fact that crude oil prices have a bearing on household morale with the added subtlety that household morale is *même essentiellement indexé sur les prix du brut*. This presence of a nuance suggests that the conditional in (45) may be inferential in nature. Furthermore, the ellipsis, which appears to imitate or evoke the mental process that is stumbling onto an unexpected realization suggests that the information is being ‘processed’; the realization may be unexpected and rest only on the slightest nuancing of the original enunciation, but it appears to be a new realization nonetheless. This example very much resembles tokens in Spanish such as (30) and (37) that tread the line between repeating and reformulating what others have said.

An interesting set of tokens comes from the April 22 edition of *Le Monde* in an article describing the plans for the selling of the German Postbank by Deutsche Bank. Although at one point it had appeared that Deutsche Bank was considering the possibility of absorbing the Postbank, it had since been reported that the Deutsche Bank would be seeking its sale. This report on the evolving state of affairs is given in (46):

⁹⁰ The expert appears correct. The Gilet Jaune protest movement was sparked by a new gas tax in 2018.

- (46) Quel que soit le scénario retenu, il semble que le sort de la Postbank soit scellé. L'option de l'intégration complète de la banque postale allemande, en discussion il y a quelques semaines, **aurait été écartée** définitivement, rapporte la presse allemande. La Postbank **serait** donc vendue, ce qui **impliquerait** une fermeture de succursales et donc des suppressions d'emplois. Les salariés de l'ancienne banque publique, qui réclament depuis des mois des garanties sur l'emploi, ont entamé une grève illimitée.
- 'Whatever the case may be, it appears that the fate of the Postbank is sealed. The option of complete integration of the German postal bank, still under discussion some weeks ago, [would have been discarded] definitively, reports the German press. The Postbank [would be] therefore sold, which [would imply] branch closures and, therefore, layoffs. Employees of the former public bank, who have been calling for a guarantee of employment, have begun an unlimited strike.'*
- MONDEII, 65DEUTSCHE

It is clear in (46) that *aurait été écartée* is a stereotypical token of the press conditional, as it appears with a clear source: the German press. However, it is the *serait* and *impliquerait* that would appear to provide deductions on the consequences of the fact that Deutsche Bank has decided against the integration of the Postbank. These would appear to represent instances of an inferential use of the press conditional. In this case, the inference is built on what the German press has reported.

It is difficult to determine from four tokens under which circumstances the conditional might come to mark inference in French. The data suggest that the conditional may be used to mark inference when an inference is drawn on top of reported information. That is to say that the conditional can, perhaps, serve as an inference when the evidence itself is indirect (in this case, reported). This appears to be the case for the deductions in (46) or the reflection on the expert's insight in (45). One interesting (if seemingly unrelated) study is Mushin's (2001) discussion of Japanese oral storytelling and the relationship between reported information and inferences from reported information. Mushin (2001: 1373-74) argues that the particle *rashii*, which marks information known from an external source, can imply that a narrator has made an inference on the basis of reported information, unlike the particle *tte* which is a strict marker of reported information. In essence, *rashii*'s more indeterminate nature allows for contexts where traces of inference become coded. Mushin (2001) observes:

Inferences are a natural part of the verbal reconstruction of information that are typically left uncoded. The explicit marking of information with forms like *rashii* draws the hearers' attention to the fact that retold narrative information may not be a verbatim repetition of what the previous teller said, although it is reconstructed from information in that previous telling (1374).

While such an analysis is more fit for forms of narration other than journalism, I believe it provides insight into how the French press conditional works in the examples discussed above: although journalists are to report facts, there are instances of gaps that must be filled in, whether it is the machinations of the National Front (43) or the history of an all-but-forgotten resistance fighter (44). To the extent that the press conditional might fill in the gaps of reported information, the data here suggest that it may take on an inferential meaning. Although the

corpus yielded only four tokens that might be inferential in nature, this is more than the number of tokens found of the present conditional used to report on the future, which is considered an established, if numerically marginal, use. An inferential extension of the press conditional in French would appear to merit further study.

5.3 The Press Conditional and Journalism in French and Spanish

The corpus data suggested that the press conditional needs to be considered at each of the multiple levels at which it is embedded.⁹¹ Article types were important for understanding the Spanish data, while in French, the higher-level news/commentary divide proved a more useful means to understanding the data obtained in that language. It is also necessary to address the variation in frequency of use of the press conditional between the four newspapers (see Table 5.1). This section will examine the press conditional as it relates to articles in §5.3.1 and then as it relates to individual newspapers in §5.3.2. Final reflections will be made on the status of the press conditional in the two languages in §5.3.3.

5.3.1 The Press Conditional and the Article

There are many ways to categorize news articles. One might think of a high-level split between news and opinion, a divide which is not merely generic but also explicitly marked within a newspaper (Cotter 2010: 101). Another division might be thematic in nature, concerning whether the article covers business, sports or politics (Cotter 2010: 143). Finally, there are genre types such as ‘features’ or ‘briefs’ (Cotter 2010: 143). Broadly speaking, it could be said that the French press conditional was used to mark uncertainty and to report speech in news articles but usually only had the latter function in commentary. In Spanish, the press conditional was strongly tied to the type of story reported.

In French, the press conditional was sorted into two sub-types: one that reported uncertain information and one whose purpose was to report discourse. In order to formalize this distinction, it was asked if the press conditional’s call for confirmation (as identified by Gosselin (2001: 46)) appeared relevant to its use in the context in which it appeared. Examples of the reporting and discursive press conditional types are given in (47) and (48):

(47) **REPORTING CONDITIONAL**

L’argent a servi à acheter des terrains agricoles qui, requalifiés en terrains constructibles, **auraient permis** une généreuse plus-value.

‘The money served to buy agricultural land which, rezoned for construction, [would have allowed] for a generous increase in value’

LIBEII, 9CHILI

= à confirmer

⁹¹ The corpus had only three tokens of the press conditional in paratext (a headline and two sub-headlines), none of which appeared to require special attention. Sullet-Nylander (2006: 125) notes that while a unique context, the press conditional in headlines is rare in French. Kronning (2016: 128) notes that the press conditional is associated with paratext in Latin-American Spanish. This does not seem to be the case in Peninsular print news.

(48) **DISCURSIVE CONDITIONAL**

On a dit aussi, par une sorte de retournement paradoxal, que la valeur de l'apprentissage de ces langues **consisterait** en leur apparente inutilité dans un monde obsédé par l'efficacité économique à court terme.

'It has also been said, in a sort of paradoxical about-face, that the value of learning these languages [would consist] in their apparent uselessness in a world obsessed with short term economic efficiency.'

LIBEI, 33GREC

≠ à confirmer

(47) comes from a news report in *Libération* on Michelle Bachelet's—then president of Chile—struggle with increasing unpopularity, a situation which had been exacerbated by recent allegations that she had unduly used her influence to secure a loan for her daughter and son-in-law, who were subsequently enriched when the land that they purchased with that loan was rezoned. This conditional makes an attenuated claim to truth and serves the primary function of news reporting: to inform readers of events in the world. The press conditional signals that before it is fully integrated into the body of true events, the information needs to be confirmed. In (48), the editorialist is parroting arguments that the learning of Greek or Latin has value in a capitalist world due to their lack of utility. The use of the press conditional, given its context, demonstrates that the editorialist finds that argument, at best, dubious. In this case, the press conditional reports discourse but does not put forth that discourse with the expectation that it requires confirmation. In other words, the press conditional in (48), separate from much of the discourse of news reporting, is not intended to make a claim to truth nor even an attenuated one.

When this distinction was applied to articles that had been sorted into opinion and news, the picture that emerged showed that reporting conditionals were very rare in editorials. They were mostly limited to biographical facts found in book and film reviews, such as the one seen in (49):

(49) Ce dernier était un ami de l'un des possibles auteurs du film, Henri Storck, le “père” du documentaire belge, qui **se serait rendu** à Londres pour placer la copie en lieu sûr et éviter qu'elle enflamme les esprits...

'The latter was a friend of one of the possible makers of the film, Henri Storck, the father of Belgian documentary filmmaking, who [would have gone] to London to place a copy of the film in a safe place and avoid it stirring up the public.'

MONDEIII, 54MUR

In other words, the reporting conditional was rarely needed because opinion articles primarily express opinions rather than report facts. News articles, however, made use of both types of conditional because each of the two types proved useful in that context because both facts and discourse surrounding facts are essential to news reporting. For example, in (50), understanding the rise of Hindu nationalists in India requires understanding the beliefs feeding their ideology:

(50) À les entendre, des musulmans **tenteraient** d'épouser de jeunes hindoues pour leur faire abandonner leur religion, et les chrétiens **évangéliseraient** l'Inde tout entière.

‘To hear them tell it, Muslims [would be trying] to marry young Hindu girls to get them to abandon their religion, and Christians [would be evangelizing] all of India.’

MONDEI, 4INDE

The purpose of the conditional in (50) is to capture the discourse of Hindu nationalists in India without the reporter appearing to endorse any part of their ideology. At no point is the reader intended to take away from the article that Hindu society is under a double siege. This is different from (47), which tells the reader that the president of Chile may have actually used her influence in an undue manner.

Although some differences were found with respect to how the conditional was used in French according to whether the article supplied news or commentary, it does not appear that any article type or genre favors or disfavors the press conditional (encompassing both sub-types) since the press conditional can be used to mark reserve and to report speech in a variety of ways that are far more varied than what is seen in Spanish. Furthermore, it can exploit either of these functions to a greater or lesser degree. This said, examples like (45) appears to be the most frequent use of the press conditional, as reporting conditionals in news articles represented the most frequent function seen in both *Le Monde* and *Libération*. The press conditional was much less frequent in editorials, where, when it was used, it appeared to primarily have a speech reporting function for purposes of refutation, as in (48).⁹²

Conversely, the press conditional in Spanish was sensitive to the subject of the article. The press conditional proved common in polling, scientific articles, as well as in reports on official misconduct and legally actionable activity.⁹³ Examples can be seen in (51), (52), (53) and (54):

(51) **POLLS**

El PP **sería** la fuerza más votada con un 25,6% de los sufragios y pegado a él **se situaría** el PSOE con el 24,3%. Ninguna de las dos **estaría** en condiciones de formar Gobierno sin ayuda.

‘The PP [would be] the most voted force, with 25.6% of the vote and close behind it [would be] the PSOE with 24.3%. Neither of the two [would be] in condition to form a government without help.’

MUNDOIV, 6IMPRESINDIBLES

(52) **SCIENCE NEWS**

Según él, el punto frío **sería** algo más que una especie de «efecto óptico»: **podría ser** el testigo de un defecto cósmico aparecido poco después del Big Bang, que solo una nueva teoría física podría explicar.

‘According to him, the cold spot [would be] something greater than an ‘optical effect.’ It [could be] evidence of a cosmic defect appearing not long after the Big Bang, which only a new physics theory could explain.’

PERIODVII, 32BURBUJA

⁹² See Table 3.6.

⁹³ See Table 4.7.

(53) **OFFICIAL MISCONDUCT**

Serafin Castellano **habría disfrutado** durante años de un buen ritmo de vida a costa de las empresas a la que regaba con millones de euros en contratos públicos. *‘Serafin Castellano [would have enjoyed] a fine lifestyle at the expense of the businesses that he showered in millions of euros with public contracts.’*
MUNDOVII, 5VISA

(54) **CRIMINAL REPORTS**

Pero ayer, algunos testigos apuntaron también a que el capitán **podría haber hecho colisionar** el barco con el mercante portugués King Jacob, cuya tripulación ya tenía experiencia previa en el rescate de personas en coordinación con la Guardia Costera italiana. *‘But yesterday, some witnesses also indicated that the captain [could have made] the boat [collide] with the Portuguese merchant ship King Jacob, whose crew already had previous experience in rescuing people in coordination with the Italian Coast Guard.’*
PERIODII, 12CARCEL

In the case of official misconduct and criminal activity, the motivation for the press conditional appeared to be legalistic. In the case of government officials, journalists must not only prove that they have acted with appropriate respect for truth, any allegations made must, in fact, be demonstrated to be true.⁹⁴ For criminal activity outside the realm of government, the Spanish penal code makes legally actionable any reports damaging to the reputation made without sufficient concern for truth.⁹⁵ In the case of polls and scientific articles, the use of the conditional was linked to the scientific nature of the topic, and, in the case of polls, to their quantitative nature as well. The press conditional serves accuracy in scientific articles in a much broader sense, however, than the conditional used in criminal reports. In allowing scientific discourse to feature in its pages, a newspaper may contravene the prescriptive rules that govern usage in journalism. However, to the extent that this leads to more accurate science reporting, the greater journalistic aims of accuracy and credibility are served.

The press conditional could be found in all of the same cases in French; however, the data of the corpus did not suggest that the press conditional would necessarily increase in usage in any one of these situations. For example, the press conditional also appears in French in the reporting of scientific findings, as seen in (55) and (56):

(55) Leurs expériences suggèrent que l'ocytocine **pourrait faciliter** l'apprentissage de la signification de ces appels de détresse. *‘Their experiments suggest the oxytocin [could facilitate] the learning of the meanings of these distress calls.’*
MONDEII, 75OCYTOCINE

(56) Pour l'obésité, la Moldavie (28 %) arrive actuellement en tête, suivie de près par la Russie et la Turquie (27 %), mais elles **seraient détrônées** vingt ans plus tard

⁹⁴Spain, Código Penal, Título XI, artículo 210.

⁹⁵Spain, Código Penal, Título XI, artículos 205-216.

par l'Irlande, où la proportion chez les femmes **progresserait** spectaculairement de 23 % à 57 %.

'With respect to obesity, Moldavia ranks first, followed closely by Russia and Turkey (27%), but they [would be topped] 20 years later by Ireland, where the proportion [of obesity] among women [would progress] spectacularly from 23% to 57%.'

MONDEIV, 112ÉPIDÉMIE

The press conditional appears thirteen times in the article containing (56). However, the data reported in that article is quantitative, and the press conditional is closely linked to quantification regardless of subject matter in both languages.⁹⁶ Otherwise, the press conditional did not cluster in scientific articles the way it appeared to do in Spanish.⁹⁷

The French data could not speak to the relationship between the press conditional and polls. Only two such tokens were found in the corpus, seen in (57) and (58):

- (57) Les projections réalisées à partir des scores des départementales (*Le Monde* du 24 mars) montrent que le PS **serait** en mesure de conserver au moins quatre régions (Bretagne, Aquitaine-Limousin-Poitou-Charentes, Languedoc-Roussillon-Midi-Pyrénées et Corse).

'The projections made from the departmental elections (from Le Monde March 24) show that the PS [would be] in the position to keep at least three regions (Bretagne, Aquitaine-Limousin-Poitou-Charentes, Languedoc-Roussillon-Midi-Pyrénées and Corsica).

MONDEI, 78DROITE

- (58) Selon certains sondages, il **pourrait créer** la surprise et talonner suffisamment le président sortant pour obliger ce dernier à former un gouvernement de grande coalition.

'According to certain polls, he [could create] a surprise and trail the outgoing president to force the latter to form a grand coalition government.'

MONDEVI, 102SURINAME

At most, I can say that the press conditional is not unusual in reporting polls, but I cannot speak to it having any particular frequency in French. Kronning (2012: 92) suggests that it may occasionally be used as a greater marker of “uncertainty” when used in contrast with the present indicative. It is likely that a corpus constructed around the time of a French election, as was the case in the Spanish corpus, would be more clarifying as to the frequency with which the press conditional is used in the context of polling data.⁹⁸

With respect to crime reports, the press conditional in Spanish could reflect inferences made by either a journalist’s legal source (59) or the journalist himself (60):

⁹⁶ See Tables 3.6 and 4.6.

⁹⁷ This was specifically a feature of *El Periódico*’s science reporting.

⁹⁸ Spain may also have a passion for polls that leads to their being a greater feature of its journalism. It should be recalled that Dader (1993: 4) describes the use of polls in Spanish journalism since its transition to democracy as a “bombardment.”

- (59) Ya con los fondos en poder de la tapadera londinense, abunda la Udef, Jordi Pujol Ferrusola, que se encuentra imputado por la Audiencia Nacional por blanqueo de capitales y delito fiscal, “**manejaría** los capitales fuera del país a su antojo, incluso introduciéndolos a veces en nuestro país para satisfacer sus necesidades puntuales de liquidez en negocios lícitos, pero financiados con esos fondos de procedencia espuria.”
‘Already with the funds under control of the London front, elaborates the Udef, Jordi Pujol Ferrusola, who finds himself accused by the National Court for money laundering and tax evasion, ‘[would be maneuvering] money out of the country at will, including bringing them back to our country to satisfy his occasional needs for cash for legal ventures, but financed with these funds of spurious origin.’
MUNDOVII, 4PUJOL

- (60) La alcaldesa de Valencia no aparece en ninguna de estas conversaciones, pero se deduce que **estaría** al corriente de todo: «Ahí puedes venderle a la jefa: ‘Mira, le he dado todo a tu sobrino’», aconsejó Benavent a la ex edil Alcón, quien ayer fue apartada del PP.
‘The mayor of Valencia does not appear in any of the conversations, but one deduces that she [would be] aware of everything. ‘Here’s how you can sell it to the boss: ‘Look, I gave it all to your nephew,’ advised Benavent to the ex-official Alcón, who was expelled yesterday from the PP.’
MUNDOIV, 14AUDIOS

In (59), the journalist directly quotes a legal document in order to source their reporting on the financial misdeeds of Jordi Pujol Ferrusola. In (60), the journalist draws their own conclusion regarding the mayor of Valencia’s knowledge of (and participation in) the corrupt abuse of public contracts. In Spanish, the use of the conditional in criminal reports may not reflect only legal stakes but the actual language of legal documents, especially when that language is directly cited, as in (59).

In French, the press conditional could also be found in reports of illicit activity, as seen in (61) and (62):

- (61) MM. Sarkozy et Herzog **pourraient avoir bénéficié** au cours de la journée du 25 février d'une indiscretion leur ayant permis d'apprendre que leurs portables supposés “secrets” étaient aussi sous surveillance.
‘Messieurs Sarkozy and Herzog [could have benefitted] over the course of the day on February 25th of February from an indiscretion which enabled them to learn that their “supposedly” secret cellphones were also under surveillance.’
MONDEIV, 12ESSENTIEL
- (62) L’ancien chargé de la com à l’Élysée **aurait eu connaissance** des fausses factures pendant la campagne.
‘The former press secretary in the Elysée [would have had knowledge] of the fraudulent invoices during the campaign.’
LIBEIV, 11AFFAIRES

The fact that the press conditional in French does not seem to be more associated with criminal activity than with less legally consequential activities might be best explained by its prescriptive status. Since the conditional is generally acceptable within certain limits, it does not take high stakes for it to be deployed. In Spanish, the fact that the press conditional tends to become more frequent in articles on criminal activity despite being proscribed in journalistic usage points to the conditional's efficiency in achieving the communicative (and legal) needs of the journalist.

It appears that the difference seen in reporting criminal activity reflects the more general difference between the two languages. In French, the press conditional is acceptable if used carefully. However, in Spanish, there appears to be competition between the press conditional's communicative efficiency and the guidelines that proscribe its use entirely. Cotter (2010: 211) observes that this is a perennial tension in newswriting, which she frames as the conflict between journalism's "prescriptive imperative" and linguistic "pragmatic alternatives" that violate prescriptive norms. Despite the prescriptive imperative, the efficiency of the press conditional is clearly sufficient to induce journalists to make use of it in Spanish. Furthermore, given the conditional's established place in legal and scientific discourse in that language, the conditional may reflect, at times, an incursion of other discourses in the pages of a newspaper. In the case of scientific discourse, inclusion of this discourse in newspapers serves accuracy in journalism to the extent that writing in the sciences reflects the nature of knowledge and the notion of truth in that domain (see §4.2.4 for discussion). This allows for the newspaper to report on "scientific truth," which is relative and subject to revision, in a context that purports to reflect absolute truth. The presence of the press conditional in such articles reflects this discursive accommodation. Conversely, if scientific discourse appears in a French newspaper, the press conditional itself would not index that discourse, as the conditional is quite generalized in French newswriting.

5.3.2 The Press Conditional and Newspapers

Before entering into a comparison of the four newspapers, I must again acknowledge certain caveats. In French, I compared two national newspapers, *Le Monde*, France's traditional newspaper of reference, and *Libération*, the iconoclast newspaper founded by Maoist intellectuals in 1974. Both are considered newspapers that are "haut-de-gamme" (Charon 2007: 101). Broadly speaking, it is *Libération*'s rejection of traditional journalistic language and its progressive political advocacy that distinguishes it from *Le Monde*, not its prestige nor its perceived 'seriousness' as a newspaper. As a leading national newspaper with an established history of investigative journalism, *El Mundo* most resembles *Le Monde* and would fit Charon's (2007: 35) definition of an *haut-de-gamme* newspaper. With respect to scope, *El Periódico* differs most from the other newspapers that constitute this corpus. Not only is it a regional newspaper, its journalism is also less oriented along what might be said to be traditional journalistic concerns and has a more consumerist-oriented model of journalistic practice, known as service journalism.

Le Monde and *El Mundo* use the press conditional more frequently overall than *Libération* and *El Periódico*. As was demonstrated in §4.2.3, investigative reporting was a major feature of *El Mundo*. For that newspaper, communicative need appeared to outweigh prescriptive concern, if prescriptive concern was a reason it was associated less with other articles. The press conditional is generally infrequent in *El Periódico*. This lower frequency could be due to

prescription but also to the fact that it may not have any pressing communicative need that outweighs the prescriptive imperative that weighs on both it and *El Mundo*. It may be the fact that the quality of *El Mundo*'s reporting (in the sense of the "gathering of facts") is such that the press conditional becomes permissible through practice. It is a well-reputed newspaper in Spain and its frequent use of the press conditional in certain justifiable instances might allow for an overall greater use of the press conditional across its pages. Conversely, *El Periódico*'s departure from a traditional, informative news style for a popular one may require that it heed the prescriptive imperative more carefully so as not to appear lax in its standards.

It should be recalled that the definition of "style" used in this investigation is the one given by Enkvist (1978). Per this definition, style is an "impression arrived at through comparison" between similar texts (Enkvist 1978: 174-75). To the extent that each newspaper had a different absolute frequency of the press conditional, as shown in Table 5.1, it might be said that each newspaper has a "different" style. At best, however, absolute frequency tells us how often a press conditional is used, but as has been shown, the press conditional's function and motivations can vary greatly. I would argue that absolute frequency is less telling of how a newspaper uses the press conditional than the particular contexts and purposes with which the press conditional is used. In this sense, it is more useful to compare the use of the press conditional in news and opinion articles in French, while in Spanish it is more useful to compare the article types with which the press conditional was associated, as was done in the preceding section.

For French, Marnette (2005: 305) claims that *Le Monde* uses the press conditional more than other newspapers in order to mark uncertainty and to mark that discourse originates from a source that is not the journalist. However, marking discourse as uncertain or as not belonging to the journalist are frequent journalistic tasks. Charaudeau (2006: para. 16) notes that the journalist must indicate what they have evidence for and what they do not, and attribution is essential to journalists establishing their credibility and objectivity (Cotter 2010: 180). Conveniently, the press conditional happens to be capable of doing both, notably at the same time. In using the press conditional to achieve these ends, one might say that *Le Monde* presents itself as a newspaper that gives extra rigorous attention to what Cotter (2010: 23) calls journalism's "discourse requirements." This essentially echoes what Marnette (2005: 305) means when she claims that the frequency of the press conditional in *Le Monde* reflects its "heightened attention" to uncertainty (Marnette 2005: 305). This is likely part of *Le Monde*'s self-construction as a newspaper of prestige, as a "serious newspaper of reference."⁹⁹ *Libération*, as Marnette (2005: 310) and its founding manifesto note, is not a traditional newspaper. It views itself as anti-establishment, putting the pursuit of social justice and speaking truth to power before all other interests. Its prestige and legitimacy come as much from its purported dedication to "democratic" and "progressive" values as to its reporting practices. In other words, while I would not say that *Libération* gives less attention to its journalistic practice than does a newspaper like *Le Monde*, I do believe its political engagement is its equivalent to *Le Monde*'s signaling of its careful journalistic practice. The press conditional, therefore, has less of a role to play in constructing *Libération*'s journalistic identity because, as a register feature, the press conditional can serve *Libération*'s general journalistic aims but not its specific political ones (which are the domain of story selection, editorial, its use of direct discourse and oralizing style etc.).

All in all, it can be said that the press conditional is not of great importance to understanding newspapers like *Libération* and *El Periódico*. The use of the press conditional in

⁹⁹ *Le Style du Monde* (Le Monde 2002: 21)

science articles suggests that it would be worth investigating how scientific discourse might be adopted in science reporting. In other areas of news, places where the press conditional peaks in frequency in *El Periódico* also show peaks in other newspapers (like *El Mundo*). In *El Mundo*, the press conditional appears to serve its higher goal of keeping watch over governmental and corporate wrongdoing in Spain, which makes the newspaper vulnerable to potential legal consequences should its reporting not be carried out with appropriate care. Among these newspapers, *Le Monde* stands out, as does its frequent use of the press conditional. In the light of comparison with three other newspapers, this especially frequent use points to an almost performative function intended to index *Le Monde*'s attention to the accuracy of its reporting and attribution of its facts, as Marnette (2005: 305) had first noted.

5.3.3 The Press Conditional in French and Spanish

In the light of what I have found over the course of this investigation, it appears that the press conditional in French can be thought of as the conditional that marks reported content as uncertain through its marking of *non-prise-en-charge*. It can be exploited by journalists who can foreground or background its marking of uncertainty or its marking of reported speech. Often, however, these two functions operate together. It does appear that the French press conditional may occasionally extend to inferred information as well. In Spanish, the press conditional appears to be primarily a marker of uncertainty. It can extend to both reported information as well as inferences. I have demonstrated that inferences make up a not insignificant part of Spanish news language. Further studies should take this inferential use of the conditional into consideration. In the case of reported information, the press conditional's speech reporting function is not as widely developed as its French counterpart and is not used to create more "subjective" discourse, as was the case in French.

However, perhaps the most apt example to show how integral the press conditional is to French journalistic language is a humorous example found in *Libération*. To mark the closing of the 2015 Cannes Film Festival, *Libération* announces the untimely death of its fictional Cannes correspondent, Fritz-Lang von Püt (63):

- (63) Tandis que les premières ballerines gravissent le tapis rouge, nous avons le regret d'apprendre la disparition de notre chroniqueur Fritz-Lang von Püt qui, après douze jours à jeter à la face du Festival toutes les vérités crues tues par les autres lambins de la dream team Libé, **aurait perdu** la vie dans le crash tragique d'un VTC à rotor, abîmé dans la Méditerranée, alors qu'il regagnait sa résidence de Bahia via son Munich natal.

'As the first ballerinas ascend the red carpet, we have the regret of learning of the death of our columnist Fritz-Lang von Püt, who, after twelve days of spitting unpleasant truths at the Festival left unspoken by the other dullards of the Libé dream team, [would have lost] his life in a tragic crash of a rotor VTC, perished in the Mediterranean, while he was returning to his residence in Bahia via his native Munich.'

LIBEVI, 23GROSSES

The use of the press conditional in (63) would appear to reflect not only *Libération*'s humorous and ironizing approach to reporting, it would give the report of the fictional death a distinctly

journalistic feel. Although the use of the press conditional in this manner is likely not often found in France's other leading, serious newspapers, it remains to be seen if the press conditional has reached a point where it is featured in parodies of news language in Spanish. One day, this might very well be the case.

Or that day may have already arrived. On December 2, 2016, a post on the Facebook feed of *El País* contained the following status above the article link (64):

- (64) STATUS: Si los niños redactaran titulares dirían que ‘Donald Trump está en drogas’ o que ‘Justin Bieber **habría muerto.**’
PREVIEW HEADLINE: ‘Trump está en drogas y otros titulares que escribiría un niño’

HEADLINE: *If children wrote newspaper headlines, they would write that ‘Donald Trump is on drugs’ or that ‘Justin Bieber [would have died].’*

PREVIEW HEADLINE: *‘Trump is on drugs and other headlines a child would write’*

The article reports on a workshop hosted by *El País* in Mexico for the *Feria Internacional del Libro* in Guadalajara. While it is clear from the article and accompanying video that multiple children did write headlines announcing the singer's death, it is unclear if any of the children actually used the press conditional. However, the fact that the manager of *El País*'s Facebook account thought to use the press conditional to capture the make-believe headlines of the children suggests that the press conditional has come to stay.

The parodic examples of the press conditional in (63) and (64) point to choices made to render an utterance more “journalistic-sounding.” This recalls the stylistic choices authors make in the interests of aesthetics, a definition of style that was not used in this investigation but is worth revisiting as it reaches its conclusion. In the context of fictional texts, Biber and Conrad (2019: 139) describe stylistic features as a matter of authorial preference:

Their use not associated with the real-life situational context of the writer and reader, but with the authors' preferences for how they want to tell their stories. The linguistic features do have functions, as illustrated in the text samples, but the variation concerns style, rather than register (139).

The examples in (63) and (64) — divorced from any necessary journalistic function — show that the press conditional can serve not only the necessity of marking certainty but the choice to make a text sound journalistic. Although the press conditional cannot be entirely divorced from function when it features in real news, function alone may not be the only explanation. As journalists one marker of certainty over another, the press conditional might lend a phrase a fitting journalistic air, even in Spanish. Language and style, unlike good news reports, are subject to revision.

6 AFTERWORD

In §2.3.2, I outlined the aims of journalistic texts, which I presented as texts whose defining feature is their claim to truth. As I would explain to friends and colleagues, the shorthand for the journalistic considerations of my investigation was: “How does the press conditional, which marks that something might not be true, work in a discourse meant to represent the truth?” Although I focused on journalism and expected to find in Spanish a relatively diminished cousin of a robust French conditional, I discovered that the conditional not only is the conditional eking out a fine life in newspapers, it enjoys robust parallel lives in science and legal writing. It is not a revelation to say the press conditional is implicated in the Gricean maxim of quality (which leads us to be truthful), it eventually struck me that the press conditional is very much implicated in the diachrony and synchrony of the discourses of truth-seeking domains: law, science and journalism.

The conditional is a unique Romance construction, having not existed in Latin. Smith (2006) describes the conditional in French as outcompeting the subjunctive, which French had inherited from Latin:

The imperfect and pluperfect subjunctives have disappeared from all but the most formal written registers of the language. A ‘future in the past’ (*ferais, aurais fait*), used in reported speech, doubles as a conditional mood, found in the apodosis of irrealis conditional sentences. This form also conveys attenuative values, such as politeness and evidentiality, and is coming to rival the subjunctive as an exponent of non-assertive modality (631).

Although I cannot say that this description can be applied as is to Spanish, the use of the conditional in law and science in that language, as well as journalism, points to the development and integration of these uses of the conditional as a non-assertive modality. From this perspective, Bermúdez’s (2016: 62-63) identification of the native scientific conditional and the borrowed journalistic conditional — divided along the lines of genre but also those of domain — asks us to the question: how much of the conditional’s development as a marker of non-assertive modality in Spanish parallels the evolution that we see in French? To what extent is this an internal development? To what extent is intrafamilial influence a factor? To what extent do the other Romance languages participate in this evolution? This makes the contact hypothesis more than an explanation for the existence (and proscription) of the press conditional in Spanish. It is part of a wider question about the evolution of the Romance languages and their elaboration in and across various domains of knowledge. Although this study was not designed to address the contact hypothesis of the press conditional’s origins in Spanish, it would be remiss to not consider the question and any insight that this study might have in that regard. Furthermore, given the similarities and the Pan-Romance use of the conditional to mark uncertain information, I would argue that the data here further point to the need for extensive comparative, diachronic work across the Romance languages.

The Contact Hypothesis

The idea that French has contributed not only to the Spanish lexicon but also to its syntax is an old idea, one which makes appeal to the broad cultural influence France has held over European culture generally. While French influence on Spanish in prestige settings can be traced to the 13th century (Penny 2002: 58), Lapesa (1981) dates what one might call the modern period of influence of French on Spanish to the 17th century:

Cuando toda Europa tenía a gala seguir las modas de la corte de Versalles, era imposible frenar el auge del galicismo, considerado como rasgo de buen tono; y otro tanto siguió ocurriendo luego, como consecuencia del influjo francés en los más diversos órdenes de la vida (454).

Lapesa (1981: 454-56) goes on to describe mostly French lexical borrowings but notes that there also exists what he calls “pernicious” syntactic borrowings. He lists among them the use of the gerundive to modify a noun (*una caja conteniendo libros*, presumably on the basis of *une boîte contenant des livres*), the use of the preposition *a* before an infinitive (*táctica a seguir*, presumably on the basis of *tactique à suivre*) and the use of the definite article before countries (*ha recorrido la Italia* on the basis of *Il a parcouru l’Italie*) (Lapesa 1981: 456). The *Manual de español urgente*, in fact, proscribes the press conditional and the use of the preposition *a* + infinitive (on the very same page) due to their French origin (EFE 1985: 53). The use of the gerund in cases such as *una caja conteniendo* is also proscribed but not described as a Gallicism (EFE 1985: 48-52). It is unclear the extent to which this last is seen as a borrowing or simply “bad” Spanish.¹⁰⁰

McLaughlin (2013: 445) observes that commentators’ discussions of syntactic borrowing—like those above—are not founded in research but “tend to be impressionistic and rarely include anything more than anecdotal examples.” It would appear in the cases above, that the constructions, whatever their origin, are sufficiently integrated into the Spanish language such that examples of their use are not anecdotal. However, the stories surrounding their origins remain so. McLaughlin (2013: 445) further notes that “time and again the literature shows that rather than formulating their own hypotheses based on linguistic data, commentators simply repeat previous assumptions, with or without acknowledging their source.” The question of the press conditional’s emergence in Spanish appears to fall into this same trap: while there is certainly evidence that suggests the possibility of the contact hypothesis, this hypothesis has never been, to this day, sufficiently interrogated.

There exists (that I know of) in the literature three historical examples of the press conditional used to date its appearance in Spanish. These are given in (1), (2) and (3):

- (1) El oso común que, según Zimmermann, **estaría difundido** por todo el globo, no existe en América, y parece no haber dejado la Europa y el Norte de Asia. (Kronning 2016: 130)

¹⁰⁰ Butt and Benjamin (1994: 298-99) compare this ‘bad’ use of the gerund in Spanish to similar usage in French and English, although they do not necessarily attribute its use to those languages’ influence. Such a use is found in official documents and in informal speech. Similarly, Butt and Benjamin (1994: 39-40) note that the definite article before country toponyms varies in Spanish between the written and spoken registers as well as from country to country. They do not raise the possibility of French influence in those instances. However, they do describe the press conditional and the use of *a* + infinitive as Gallicisms (Butt and Benjamin 1994: 220, 290-91).

- (2) Varsovia, 13-04 (Havas). Se anuncia que el presidente de la república **habría aceptado** la dimisión colectiva del gabinete. (El Diario, 15/04/1929 [CORDE]). Varsovie, 13.04. (Havas). On annonce que le Président de la République **aurait accepté** la démission collective du cabinet. (Sarrazin 2010: 101)
- (3) Le Matin dice que el acuerdo entre la Gran Bretaña, Francia y la U.R.S.S. **sería** la constitución de un frente único contra cualquier eventual agresión en Europa. (Nueva Rioja, 19/05/1939 [CORDE]). Le Matin affirme que l'accord entre la Grande-Bretagne, La France et l'URSS **serait** la constitution d'un front unique contre toute agression éventuelle en Europe. (Sarrazin 2010: 101-02)

The example in (1) comes from an original Spanish text from 1857, while the examples in (2) and (3) come from 1929 and 1939 translations of French news dispatches. While it would be difficult to argue that the press conditionals in (2) and (3) are anything but direct translations of an original French text, the example in (1) draws attention for two reasons: the date of attestation as well as the use of the conditional to convey reported information which is held to be false by the speaker (rather than neither true or untrue). While this use of the press conditional is expected in French, neither Azzopardi (2011: 314) nor I could identify a single instance where the conditional was used in this way in our Spanish corpora. The token in (1) demonstrates a trait absent thus far in tokens gathered from modern sources. This would suggest that the press conditional (or its antecedent) featured a complexity the modern construction does not. If a borrowing, (1) would represent a more complete replica of its French model. If native, the modern data suggests it has lost this trait over time. In either case, a mapping of its evolutionary path would be desirable.

The example in (1) points to the fact that the press conditional—or at least its antecedents—may have already been established in scientific texts in Spanish. In fact, it may be the case that the use of the conditional to mark uncertain or reported information does not have its origins in the press in Spanish.¹⁰¹ This possibility is suggested by Bermúdez (2016), who argues for two attributive conditionals in Spanish of potentially separate origins: one that marks information learned at least thirdhand and one for secondhand information accessed cognitively, shown in (4) and (5) respectively:

- (4) Nols **estaría considerando**, según el propio Le Pen, la creación en Bélgica de un Frente Nacional de extrema derecha, similar al francés. (Bermúdez 2016: 48)
- (5) Robert Nisbet examina breve y rigurosamente los temas centrales del conservadurismo—historia, tradición, propiedad, autoridad, libertad y religión— y dirige sus críticas tanto al colectivismo como al individualismo radical. Finalmente, aborda la crisis del conservadurismo, que **estaría causada** en buena medida por su adopción en la escena política de principios del liberalismo económico y del Estado del bienestar.

¹⁰¹ Nor even in French or Romance. It should be recalled that the earliest attested examples of the press conditional in French are found in juridical texts (see Weerd (2018) for discussion).

(Bermúdez 2016: 57)

Bermúdez (2016: 60-62) argues that the example in (4) represents a use of the conditional that may have been borrowed from French via the translation of journalistic texts, while the example in (5) is, in fact, a native Spanish construction that emerged in scientific discourse as an outgrowth of the hypothetical conditional. The example in (1) from 1857 would appear to constitute an example of Bermúdez's (2016) scientific conditional seen in (5) (although with the caveat that the information is held to be untrue). It is necessary to consider alongside these examples the use of the conditional for inferred information (6):

- (6) Este gran salto en la numeración "**supondría**", abunda el informe, que "si Brantridge Holdings siguiera el sistema normal de facturación, sólo habría emitido hasta finales de julio nueve facturas por sus servicios en el año 2006". Y, "sin embargo, pasado menos de un mes y medio, **habría expedido** un total de 4.446 facturas a terceros."
MUNDOVII, 4PUJOL

The two conditionals in (6), taken from legal documents, are inferential in that their information comes from logical reasonings made from financial records: the numbering of the billings suggests inconsistencies, and, by extension, fraudulent financial practices. It is also worth noting that between the examples in (1 – 6), we have touched on the domains of science, journalism and law.

While the conditionals in (6) and (4) have clearly distinct sources of information (reported information and inference), it is the scientific conditional in (5) that appears to have elements of both. Given that (5) appears to be a logical bridging context to arrive at the meanings seen in (4) and (6), this use of the conditional appears to be of interest for understanding the diachronic origins of the press conditional not only in Spanish but, perhaps, in the Romance languages in general. If (5) is a historically Spanish construction, and if (5) also has equivalent uses in French (which it does) then, at the very least, the story of a wholesale adoption of a conditional marking uncertain information requires significant revision.

Bermúdez (2016: 61) suggests that the scientific conditional has its origins in the hypothetical use of the conditional. He demonstrates the proximity of the two constructions with the examples replicated in (7), (8) and (9):

- (7) Según Margulis, sólo **podrían ser** jóvenes los pertenecientes a sectores sociales relativamente acomodados. Los otros **carecerían** de juventud.
(Bermúdez 2016: 61)
- (8) Desde esta perspectiva, solo **podrían ser** jóvenes los pertenecientes a sectores sociales relativamente acomodados. Los otros carecerían de juventud.
(Bermúdez 2016: 61)
- (9) Si se definiera juventud como moratoria social, sólo **podrían ser** jóvenes los pertenecientes a sectores sociales relativamente acomodados. Los otros **carecerían** de juventud.
(Bermúdez 2016: 61)

In (7), Margulis's definition of "youth" is cited with the preposition *según*, while in (8), a less specific citing of a given perspective is used. In (9), the *si* clause positing a potential definition of youth as a social moratorium on development forces a hypothetical reading of the conditional. In (7) and (8), to the extent that adopting a perspective or point of view represents a condition for the following statement to be true. While Bermúdez (2016) does not explicitly outline how the example in (7) leads to the one in (6), we can easily imagine that if the conditional was seen to attenuate the certainty of the speaker's deductions (of the success of their cognitive access), leading to a conditional that is used to mark inference rather than reported information.

Bermúdez's (2016: 60-62) argument echoes that of Rossari (2009) for French, who argues that the press conditional signals neither *non-prise-en-charge* nor reported information. Rossari (2009) argues specifically that the press conditional is merely a rhetorically specialized hypothetical conditional:

On pourrait donc voir derrière l'emploi de ce type de conditionnel une indication de précaution d'usage, plus ou moins fortement convoquée suivant le contexte, conditionnant la vérité de l'état de choses. Cette précaution serait inscrite dans la valeur même du conditionnel CE qui, dans n'importe quel emploi, ferait appel à une protase en *si* lui servant de cadre épistémique, prenant par exemple la forme de *si je ne m'abuse* dans les emplois où le CE exprime une réserve ou de surprise...de *si X dit juste*, dans les emplois du CE avec cadratif...ou encore de *si l'on croit X* dans des emplois où il est combiné avec des expressions épistémiques comme *à l'en croire...*(82).

For Rossari (2009), the press conditional in French is merely a specialized form of its hypothetical use, wherein the necessary condition lies with the truthfulness or accuracy of the source or perspective cited or adopted. She illustrates this with two press conditionals and their reformulation in (10):

- (10) Selon la police, il **aurait** en se débattant dans le car, **blessé** un fonctionnaire...
Mais selon des témoins, ce sont au contraire les policiers qui l'**auraient** très
brutalement **interpellé**.

Si la police dit juste, il a en se débattant dans le car, blessé un fonctionnaire...
Mais si les témoins disent juste, ce sont au contraire les policiers qui l'ont très
brutalement interpellé.
(Rossari 2009: 82)

In (10), wherein two accounts of an arrest are given in the conditional (presumably marking that the journalist endorses neither), the conditionals are readily rephrased by adding a *si* clause bearing on the accuracy of the accounts. In much the same way that Bermúdez's (2016) examples in (6) and (7) are similar restatements of the hypothetical conditional in (8), one could see how a hypothetical use of the conditional can be adapted to code reported information.

Rossari (2009: 88-92) posits a similar diachronic trajectory for the press conditional in French as the one suggested by Bermúdez (2016: 61) in (6), (7) and (8) in Spanish. Rossari (2009: 88-92) argues that the initial use of the press conditional with *selon* in the 17th and 18th centuries served the purpose of rhetorically adopting the point of view of a third party (11):

- (11) Mais elle **serait** péché véniel selon Escobar. (Pascal, 1657)
*Mais elle **serait** péché véniel, si l'on suivait les vues de Escobar.*
 (Rossari 2009: 88)

The gloss provided by Rossari (2009) for (11) echoes the use of the conditional seen in Spanish in (10), while the token itself mirrors that of (8). On this basis, the adopting of a perspective, or rather the addition of a locutory condition for the phrase to be true, bridges the hypothetical conditional and an external source of information. Over time, this rhetorical frame ceases to merely frame the adopted perspective of an utterance but instead comes to bear on the accuracy of the source of the information (12) or the accuracy of the information itself (13):

- (12) Un après-midi que je suivais le métayer, un de ces vers blancs dont les livres parlent à notre étonnement et notre inquiétude, selon eux ils **auraient** deux têtes ou deux anus. (Berger, 1962)
?? si l'on suivait leur vues, ils auraient deux têtes ou deux anus.
S'ils disent juste, ils auraient / ils ont deux têtes ou deux anus.
 (Rossari 2009: 91)
- (13) Son actuel propriétaire, le joaillier Harry Winston, troublé peut-être par le maléfice attaché à ce joyau unique, **aurait décidé** de l'offrir au Smithsonian Institute de Washington. (Metta, 1960)
*Si mes informations sont bonnes, son actuel propriétaire, le joaillier Harry Winston, troublé peut-être par le maléfice attaché à ce joyau unique, **aurait décidé** de l'offrir au Smithsonian Institute de Washington.*

(11) would seem to recall Bermúdez's (2016) scientific conditional. In fact, it conforms to both traits of the scientific conditional: the information is secondhand and accessed cognitively (that is to say represents the speaker's interpretation of that information). Rossari (2009: 91) points to the fact that the examples in (12) and (13) "ne peu[vent] plus être paraphrasé[s] au moyen d'une paraphrase fondée sur la transposition d'un point de vue." The modern press conditional has been formed.

Rossari (2009: 79) also notes that there are instances where the press conditional in French does not seem to refer to an earlier utterance. She cites an example of a journalist consulting a graph (14):

- (14) En outre, il est difficile de dire que la proposition doit avoir été assertée et attribuée à une instance source (même non spécifiée). *On peut envisager des emplois où un journaliste, après avoir consulté les graphiques des sondages, écrit:*

Le chômage **serait** en légère baisse. (italics mine)

The example in (14) conforms to Bermúdez's (2016) scientific conditional: attributed information that is accessed cognitively when the chart's information is consulted and absorbed

by the journalist. This is not dissimilar to tokens of the press conditional related to poll reporting in Spanish (15):

- (15) En Sevilla, el desplome del PP también es muy importante: **sería** primera fuerza pero **perdería** casi la mitad de sus concejales.
MUNDOIV, 6IMPRESCEINDIBLES

In the case of (15), the poll reports give numbers (and such tokens were treated as reported information), although it is clear that the journalist, in the act of describing poll numbers, is making a slight intervention of their own, similar to the one seen in (14). To the extent that examples like (14) and (15) show a more tenuous relation to a prior utterance and examples like (10) and (7) demonstrate a reprise of others' discourse, it is clear that the conditional can act as a more indeterminate marker that allows for an interpretation of its source of information as either reported or inferred. Bermúdez's (2016) scientific conditional may be the bridging context between a use of the conditional more closely akin to the hypothetical conditional and its more developed use for inference and reported information.

With this in mind, the data here also point to the fact that the use of the conditional for reported information in Spanish cannot be thought of separately from its use to mark an inference. It may be the case that in Spanish an emergent native use of the conditional went on to mark inference rather than reported information as the construction highlighted the speaker's own reasoning rather than their source of information. As was shown in Chapter 5, the French conditional does appear, in certain instances, to also mark an inference (although usually one made on the basis of an earlier utterance). To the extent that the conditional may be a more indeterminate marker of information known through an external source (whose veracity is in question), then a more thorough accounting of its origins should also consider instances where the construction appears more ambiguous. Furthermore, it should be recalled that the synchronic reality of the press conditional's association with journalistic language may not reflect the conditions of its diachronic genesis, and future corpora should reflect this reality by including other text types.

Substantiating Rumor: Romance, Diachrony and the Press Conditional

The considerations above, however, would appear to require a better understanding of how the conditional gained its evidential extensions across Romance in the first place. The presence of the conditional in all the major Romance languages points to the fact that this use of the conditional is no mere outlier. To date, there has yet to be a synthesized account of its internal genesis. For now, we have Martines's (2015) account of how the press conditional (which he calls the Reprise Epistemic Conditional (REC)) might have emerged in Old Catalan. His theorization (and call for further research) is the most detailed and theoretically grounded explanation for the emergence of the press conditional as a marker of reported information to date.¹⁰² More studies like his are needed in the future to account for not only French and Spanish but the Romance languages more generally. I will give a brief sketch of this evolution here as I find his analysis a worthy model for future studies.

¹⁰² Squartini (2001: 324-26) sketches a possible trajectory for the evolution of the conditional's evidential uses in Italian, although not in the detail Martines (2015) gives for Catalan.

Martines (2015: 82, 88) describes the development of the epistemic uses of the conditional as a process of the bleaching of its temporal marking of anteriority and strengthening of modal and evidential traits through a process of subjectification and subsequent intersubjectification. In an initial stage, the temporal anteriority of the conditional's future-in-the-past comes to refer not to a real, posterior moment in time, but to the later verification of a mystery in a state of affairs otherwise real and known to the speaker (16):

- (16) *él perpensà a vetlar, per so que sabés qui seria aquel qui a la sua freytura avia acorregut (Vides, 13th C.b, ii, p. 41)*
 [he [the neighbor] thought to keep vigil in order to discover who it **would be** ('had to be') who had helped him in his hour of need]
 (Martines 2015: 94)

In (16), the conditional points to the ultimate verification of an unknown identity, rather than a later moment in time. As the conditional undergoes further subjectification, it no longer is linked to a real state of affairs, but rather to one imagined by the speaker (17):

- (17) *quan nós entram per la ost [...], En Guillem de Muntcada e N Ramon de Muntcada [...] exiren-nos a recollir. E nós descavalcam e anam envés éls a peu; En Guillem de Muntcada somris-se, e nós fom alegres, que haviem paor que no ns dixés mal; e pensam-nos que no seria tan mal con nós cuydàvem. (Jaume I, Fets, 13th C.b, 36v)*
*'when we joined the host [...] G. M. and R. M. [...] came out to greet us. We unmounted and them; G. M. smiled at us, and we were merry, because we were afraid he would give us bad news; and we thought to ourselves it **would not be** ['mustn't be'] as bad as we were thinking'*
 (Martines 2015: 99)

In (17), the conditional marks the speaker's speculation regarding a situation prior to knowing its outcome: the King feared that there would be bad news due to the brutality of the war, but, in fact, there was not. Martines (2015: 99) argues that "the evidential source that has been accepted as possible (and later doubted) is not a report (that is inferred to be positive), but the SP/W's direct perception, as well as the assumptions that he makes based upon it." With subjectification complete, a process of intersubjectification begins. The source of knowledge—no longer the speaker himself—can now shift outside the speaker. All that is required is an interactional context that links the state of affairs communicated by the conditional to an external source. Such a context appears in a legal text, replicated in (18):

- (18) *E [dix lo dit frare Bernat que] si les dites bèsties hó cabana de la senyora reyna [...] près alcun dampnatge [...] no seria feyt en colpa d'ell ne dels frares del Temple (Pergamins e processos, 1298, 231)*
*'And [the aforementioned Friar Bernat said that] if the aforementioned beasts or livestock belonging to Her Majesty the Queen [...] suffered any harm [...] it **would not have been done** through himself or the friars of the Temple'*
 (Martines 2015: 104-05)

Locuteur-énonciateur: Court scrivener

Addressee/Reader: Judge, litigating parties
Locuteur-source: Friar Bernat
e: words of Friar Bernat

In (18), the court scrivener uses the conditional to mark the speculative nature of the friar's claim that they caused no harm to the Queen's livestock in utterance (*e*). This attenuated claim to truth represents the long shift away from the conditional's initial use as a future-in-the-past. As the link to true anteriority is lost, the conditional's anteriority takes on a predictive nature (Martines 2015: 97): it *will (would) turn out* not to be the friars who are responsible for the damage (and this appears to be how the friar uses it). Nevertheless, the context remains unclear. Per Martines (2015: 105), it is this combination of interactional factors that lead the Addressee/Reader to read the *Locuteur-Enunciateur*'s representation of *e* in the conditional "as an opinion, as an epistemic formulation, as a possibility that has been borrowed from the [locuteur-source]" rather than a prediction on the part of the friar. This parallels a similar ambiguity seen in use of the conditional with secondhand sources in (1) and (10), wherein it is unclear whether the conditional marks the source of information or how that source was accessed.¹⁰³

It is through a combination of theoretical treatments and diachronic studies that we might achieve a clearer understanding of how the press conditional emerged not only in French and Spanish but in other Romance languages as well. Even if the contact hypothesis is the correct one, an external explanation for the origin of the press conditional in Spanish can only be as good as our theorization of how it emerged internally elsewhere. In the light of these considerations, I would argue that corpus-based studies similar to those modeled by Martines (2015) be brought to other Romance languages, as well as French and Spanish. These studies should involve a broad swathe of text types, including those from the legal and scientific domains. The irony that one of our best discussions on how the press conditional arose comes from a language in which it was long thought not to exist cannot be overly emphasized. As I end this work, I can only say that there is clearly more work to be done.

¹⁰³ Martines's (2015: 105) analysis also makes clear how the press conditional could have emerged in juridical contexts before it appeared in journalistic ones (or their forebears). Otherwise, seen from the perspective of news and the question of the certainty of facts, the press conditional as useful in juridical contexts might appear opaque to modern speakers. Sornicola's (2010) compelling discussion of the importance of not reading diachrony through synchrony is well taken here.

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Ten years from now they'll have forgotten even the very best of you.
 -Kermit the Frog