

Miss this talk and you might be sorry:
Imperatives and non-imperatives in conditional conjunction

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ABSTRACT:

Certain sentences coordinated with 'and' and 'or' receive a conditional interpretation; e.g.,

Everyone drink another can of beer and we'll set a record.
John drinks one more can of beer and he'll be too drunk to drive home.
Drink slowly or you'll have to leave early.

This talk provides evidence for an ambiguity of bare VPs in the English conditional conjunction construction. This ambiguity, undetected by previous researchers, provides a key to the development of a compositional semantic analysis of conditional conjunction with imperative first conjuncts. The analysis combines existing semantic theories of imperatives, the future tense, modal subordination, and speech act conjunction to yield the correct semantics without further stipulation.