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Translation Strategies for Conditionals in Kabwa and Simbiti

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Abstract: In the Kabwa and Simbiti New Testaments, the translators[1] have chosen to translate conditional constructions using a combination of various conjunctions, tense-aspect affixes, or both. Although Kabwa and Simbiti are very similar languages, the translation style used by the Simbiti translators often differs significantly from that used by the Kabwa translators, especially when the protasis is factual or non-factual – Simbiti translators preferred to make this interpretation explicit. This paper compares conditionals in Kabwa and Simbiti from a descriptive linguistic perspective, presenting several ways of translating conditionals, including some alternative non-conditional options. Such methods may be helpful for languages where it is not possible or desirable to use a conditional construction.

1 Introduction

Kabwa [cwa] (JE405) and Simbiti [ssc] (JE403) are Bantu languages spoken in the Mara region of Tanzania on the eastern shore of Lake Victoria.[2] They both have a variety of conditional constructions, involving conjunctions or certain verbal tense-aspect affixes. Most of these conjunctions and verbal affixes can also be used in non-conditional constructions, as is common in many African languages (Nicolle 2017:9). The specific forms used in conditional constructions are very similar or sometimes even identical for the two languages. Below are summarised some of the most common forms used in conditional constructions, along with

[1] The primary translators of the Kabwa New Testament were John Masige and John Miriro. The translators of the Simbiti New Testament were Albinus Waynse and Robert Mago.
[2] Maho 2009; Overton and Walker 2016a, 2016b, 2018; Walker and Overton 2018.

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notes on whether they occur in the PROTASIS, or conditional clause (commonly called *p*) or in the APODOSIS, or main clause (commonly called *q*):[3]

Construction	Kabwa	Simbiti	Notes
Conjunction 'if'	*nyoore* (derived from subjunctive form of the verb 'get')	or *o*-TA-*nyoor*-FV[a] e.g., *okaanyöörrë*	Occurs in *p*, followed by various tense-aspects, including Present and Hypothetical in both *p* and *q*.
Conjunction 'when'	*hanú*	*hano*	Occurs in *p*, followed by various tense-aspects, commonly Inceptive or Present.
Conjunction 'if only', 'would that'	*singa*		Occurs in *p* and/or *q*, accompanied by usually either Hypothetical or Past.
Inceptive/ Immediate Future tense-aspect[b]	SM-*raa*-VB-*e*		Can occur in *p* and/or *q*, with or without a conjunction.
Hypothetical tense-aspect	SM-*kaa*-VB-*iri*	SM-*kaa*-VB-*irë*	Can occur in *p* and/or *q*, with or without a conjunction.

[a] These forms are not yet fully analysed linguistically. The root is from the verb 'get' and in conditionals it always occurs with the subject marker *o*-, which looks like 2SG, but this does not make sense literally. It could be a lexicalised form, similar to the use of "and you know..." in colloquial English. In the data presented in this paper, it occurs with the Hypothetical (8), Potential (12), and Inceptive ([16] and [18]) tense-aspect affixes.

[b] The same form can be used as an Inceptive or as an Immediate Future. Hereafter I will simply call it Inceptive.

Although the options available for use in conditional constructions are almost identical for the two languages, the ways that conditionals in the New Testament are translated in the two languages are sometimes very different.

[3] All language data in this paper are written orthographically.

In the process of translation, the translators relied on a front translation in Swahili (the language of wider communication), rather than a Greek source text. They referred to various Swahili translations, including the Swahili Union Version (SUV 1952, 1997) as the Swahili translation which most closely follows the structure of the Greek New Testament.[4] In most examples where a conditional construction is found in both the Greek NT and the Kabwa NT but not in the Simbiti NT, the front translation used by the Simbiti translators had a conditional construction. Thus, we may suppose that a conscious decision was made by the Simbiti translators to use a different construction in certain contexts.

In this paper, I will first give examples of instances where conditionals have been translated into Kabwa and Simbiti in a very similar manner (§2). I will then look at contexts where different strategies have been used in the two languages, including when Simbiti translators have added strength to the probability of *p* being true (§3.1), when in Simbiti a factual interpretation is made explicit by not using a conditional construction (§3.2), and where in Simbiti a non-factual interpretation is made explicit (§3.3).

2 Similar translation strategies

In many contexts, New Testament conditional constructions are translated into Kabwa and Simbiti in a very similar manner, whether that is using *nyoore* (§2.1), the Inceptive tense-aspect marker (§2.2), or the Hypothetical or Potential tense-aspect marker (§2.3).

2.1 *Nyoore* 'if' – *p* is likely, neutral, or unlikely

The conjunction *nyoore* is used in both Kabwa and Simbiti for a present situation when there is some doubt about the veracity of *p*. *Nyoore* is used at the beginning of *p* and in these situations can be followed by several tense-aspect forms, including Present or Present Progressive in *p*, with Present, Present Progressive or Subjunctive in *q*. The following examples (**Luke 22:67a**)[5] show, for both

[4] Barbara Aland, Kurt Aland, Johannes Karavidopoulos, Carlo M. Martini, and Bruce M. Metzger, eds. 2014. *The Greek New Testament*. 5th ed. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft.

[5] All examples are taken from the published New Testaments: *Imuuma Eehya Ku-Kisimbëtë* (*The New Testament in the Simbiti Language*). 2021. Wycliffe Bible Translators, Inc.; *Eriragano Erihya Mukigambo Kwa Ekikabhwa* (*The New Testament in the Kabwa Language*). 2022. Wycliffe Bible Translators, Inc.

languages, *nyoore* with a Present tense copula in *p*, followed by a Subjunctive in *q*.[6]

(1) "*Nyoore uuwe nuuwe Kiristu Omutuurya, otukeerye!*"

[**nyoore**	uuwe	n-uuwe	Kiristu	o-mu-tuury-a]*p*	[o-tu-keery-**e**]*q*
if	2SG.PRO	EMPH.COP-2SG.PRO	Christ	AUG-1-save-FV	2SG-1PL-tell-**SBJV**

"*If you are indeed the Christ Saviour, you should tell us!*" [Kabwa]

(2) "*Nyoore nu-uwe Kiristo, ötötëëbhi.*"

[**nyoore**	n-uuwe	Kiristo]*p*	[o-to-tëëbhi-**e**]*q*
if	EMPH.COP-2SG.PRO	Christ	2SG-1PL-tell-**SBJV**

"*If you are indeed the Christ, you should tell us.*" [Simbiti]

In the next examples (**Luke 11:19**), in both languages *nyoore* appears in *p* followed by a Present or Present Progressive verb form, with the same verb tense-aspect in *q*.[7]

(3) *"Mbe, nyoore m-buheene ega, oni ndakenyia ebhihwi kwa obhutungi bhwa Bherijebhuri, bhoono abheehigira bheenyu bharakenyia kwa obhutungi bhwawi?"*

mbe	[**nyoore**	m-bu-heene	ega	oni	n-**ra**-keny-i-**a**	e-bhi-hwi
well	**if**	COP-11-true	that	1SG.PRO	1SG-**PRS**-run-CAUS-**FV**	AUG-8-demon

kwa	o-bhu-tungi	bhu-a	Bherijebhuri]*p*	[bhoono	a-bha-ihigira
by	AUG-14-authority	14-ASSOC	Beelzebul	now	AUG-2-student

bha-enyu	bha-**ra**-keny-i-**a**	kwa	o-bhu-tungi	bhu-a-wi]*q*
2-2PL.POSS	3PL-**PRS**-run-CAUS-**FV**	by	AUG-14-authority	14-ASSOC-who

"*Well, if it is true that, me I chase out demons by the authority of Beelzebul, now your students they chase out* [*demons*] *by the authority of whom?*" [Kabwa]

[6] In all examples, the first line shows the data written orthographically, while the second shows morpheme breaks. Any hyphens used in the first line are orthographic and not necessarily morphemic. I use brackets in the second line to show the boundaries of the protasis (*p*) and apodosis (*q*). In both the morpheme and gloss lines, bolding has been used to draw attention to the words or morphemes that are the focus of the example.

[7] I am discussing only verse 19 here. For a discussion of verse 20, see examples (19) and (20) in §3.2.

(4) *"Kasi nyoore öni nkwata ndë risambwa ko obhotoro ubhwa Bhërizëbhuri, abheegha abhëënyu bhonswe nkwata bharë amasambwa ko obhotoro ubhwa Bhërizëbhuri?"* [8]

kasi	[**nyoore**	öni	n-**ko**-at-**a**[9]	n-dë	ri-sambwa	ko
but	**if**	1SG.PRO	FOC-**PROG**-chase-**FV**	1SG-COP	5-demon	by

o-bho-toro	o-bho-a	Bhërizëbhuri]*p*	[a-bha-egha	a-bha-ënyu
AUG-14-authority	AUG-14-ASSOC	Beelzebul	AUG-2-student	AUG-2-2PL.POSS

bha-onswe	n-**ko**-at-**a**	bha-rë	a-ma-sambwa	ko	o-bho-toro
2-also	FOC-**PROG**-chase-**FV**	3PL-COP	AUG-6-demon	by	AUG-14-authority

o-bho-a	Bhërizëbhuri]*q*
AUG-14-ASSOC	Beelzebul

"*But if me I chase out a demon by the authority of Beelzebul, your students also chase out demons by the authority of Beelzebul?*" [Simbiti]

2.2 Inceptive – generic situations

For habitual or generic situations, in both Kabwa and Simbiti the Inceptive can be used in *p* followed by the Subjunctive in *q*. This can be seen in **Luke 11:11** where the same pattern is used in Kabwa for both sentences, whereas in Simbiti just a single Inceptive is used, followed by a string of Subjunctives (which continues in verse 12):

(5) "*Niwi kubheenyu bhataata, unú omwana waaye araasabhe omukaate, amuhaane erigina? Kasi araamusabhe enswi, amuhaane enjoka?*"

ni-wi	ku-bheenyu	bha-taata	[u-nú	o-mu-ana	u-aye
COP-who	17.LOC-2PL.PRO	2-father	1-REL.PRO	AUG-1-child	1-3SG.POSS

a-**raa**-sabh-**e**	o-mu-kaate]*p*	[a-mu-haan-**e**	e-ri-gina]*q*	kasi
3SG-**INC**-ask-**FV**	AUG-3-bread	3SG-3SG.OM-give-**SBJV**	AUG-6-rock	or

[a-**raa**-mu-sabh-**e**	e-n-swi]*p*	[a-mu-haan-**e**	e-n-joka]*q*
3SG-**INC**-3SG.OM-ask-**FV**	AUG-9-fish	3SG-3SG.OM-give-**SBJV**	AUG-9-snake

[8] There is no question word present in this example in Simbiti, but a question can be indicated by intonation in speech or by a question mark in writing.

[9] Where possible, underlying forms of morphemes have been given before the effects of vowel harmony and vowel hiatus resolution processes. For details on vowel hiatus resolution in Simbiti, see Overton (2018).

"*Who is there among you fathers, who if his child will ask him for bread, he would give him a rock? Or if he will ask him for a fish, he would give him a snake?*" [Kabwa]

(6) "*M-mwibhöri kë, ono omoona uwaaye araamosabhe omokaate, amohaane reghena? Handë amosabhe inswë amohaane inshoka?*"

m-mo-ibhöri	kë	[o-no	o-mo-ona	o-wa-aye	a-**raa**-mo-sabh-**e**
COP-1-parent	which	1-REL.PRO	AUG-1-child	AUG-1-3SG.POSS	3SG-**INC**-3SG.OM-ask-**FV**

o-mo-kaate]*p*	[a-mo-haan-**e**	re-ghena]*q*	handë
AUG-3-bread	3SG-3SG.OM-give-**SBJV**	6-rock	or

[a-mo-sabh-**e**	i-n-swë]*p*	[a-mo-haan-**e**	i-n-shoka]*q*
3SG-3SG.OM-ask-**SBJV**	AUG-9-fish	3SG-3SG.OM-give-**SBJV**	AUG-9-snake

"*Which parent is there, who if his child will ask for bread, he would give him a rock? Or* [*if*] *he would ask him for a fish, he would give him a snake?*" [Simbiti]

In other conditional constructions of this kind, an Inceptive can occur in *q* as well in both Kabwa and Simbiti.[10]

2.3 Hypothetical or Potential – *p* is unlikely or very unlikely

When the probability of *p* is unlikely or very unlikely, the Hypothetical can be used in both Kabwa and Simbiti. An example of this is in **John 8:39b**, where the Hypothetical is used in *p* and *q* in both Kabwa and Simbiti. In Kabwa also *nyoore* 'if' is used at the beginning of *p*, while in Simbiti a Hypothetical verb form with the root *nyoor* is used:

(7) *Yeesu akabhakeerya ega*, "*Nyoore heene mukaabheeri abheebhurwa bha Abhurahamu, mukaakoreri ganú Abhurahamu yaaringa arakora.*"

Yeesu	a-ka-bha-keery-a	ega	[**nyoore**	heene	mu-**kaa**-bha-**iri**
Jesus	3SG-NAR-3PL.OM-answer-FV	thus	**if**	truly	2PL-**HYP**-COP-**PFV**

a-bha-ibhurwa	bha-a	Abhurahamu]*p*	[mu-**kaa**-kor-**iri**	ga-nú
AUG-2-descendant	2-ASSOC	Abraham	2PL-**HYP**-do-**PFV**	6-REF.PRO

Abhurahamu	ya-a-ri-ng-a	a-ra-kor-a]*q*
Abraham	3SG-PST-COP-HAB-FV	3SG-PRS-do-FV

Jesus answered them thus, "If truly you were descendants of Abraham, you would do [*the things*] *which Abraham was doing.*" [Kabwa]

[10] For Simbiti, an example of this is found in Lk 11:5–8, with *hano* and Inceptive in *p*, and Inceptive and Subjunctive in *q*. However, in Kabwa *nyoore* is used with a Hypothetical in *p*, with Inceptive and Subjunctive in *q*.

(8) *Yëësu akabhatëëbhya igha, "Okaanyöörrë nu-rwebhoro urwa Ibhurahimu mörë, mokaakörrë ghano Ibhurahimu yaakoranga."*

Yëësu	a-ka-bha-tëëbhy-a	igha	[**okaanyöörrë**	n-o-ro-ebhoro
Jesus	3SG-NAR-3PL.OM-answer-FV	thus	**if.it.were**[11]	COP-AUG-11-descendants

o-ro-a	Ibhurahimu	mo-rë]*p*	[mo-**kaa**-kor-**irë**	gha-no
AUG-11-ASSOC	Abraham	2PL-COP	2PL-**HYP**-do-**PFV**	6-REF.PRO

Ibhurahimu	ya-a-kor-ang-a]*q*
Abraham	3SG-PST-do-HAB-FV

Jesus answered them thus, "*If it were that you are descendants of Abraham, you would do* [*the things*] *which Abraham was doing*." [Simbiti]

Another option that both Kabwa and Simbiti translators have sometimes used, although less commonly used than the Hypothetical, is the Potential (SM-*kaa*-VB-*a*). Both the Hypothetical and Potential have the *kaa-* prefix, but the Hypothetical has the *-iri*/*-irë* Perfective suffix while the Potential has an *-a* final vowel. The precise differences in meaning between the Hypothetical and Potential have not yet been fully analysed linguistically. In **Luke 22:67b**, both languages have *kora* 'even' with a Potential in *p*, followed by a Negative Inceptive in *q*.[12] These are concessive conditionals, as indicated by *kora*. Both the Potential and the Hypothetical can be used in concessive conditionals (see example [11]) as well as non-concessive conditionals (see example [13]).

(9) *Yeesu akakyukya ega, "Kora nkaabhakeerya, muteekirirye."*

Yeesu	a-ka-kyuky-a	ega	[kora	n-**kaa**-bha-keery-**a**]*p*	[mu-ta-**V**-ikiriry-**e**]*q*
Jesus	3SG-NAR-answer-FV	thus	even	1SG-**POT**-2PL.OM-tell-**FV**	2PL-NEG-**INC**-believe-**FV**

Jesus answered thus, "*Even if I were to tell you, you would not believe*." [Kabwa]

(10) *Akabhahonshora igha, "Kora nenkaabhatëëbhya timuukumi hë."*

a-ka-bha-honshor-a	igha	[kora	ne-n-**kaa**-bha-tëëbhy-**a**]*p*
3SG-NAR-3PL.OM-answer-FV	thus	even	FOC-1SG-**POT**-2PL.OM-tell-**FV**

[ti-mo-**V**-kumy-**e**	hë]*q*
NEG-2PL-**INC**-believe-**FV**	NEG

He answered them thus, "*Even if I were to tell you, you would not believe*." [Simbiti]

[11] This is a lexicalised form containing the Hypothetical affixes *kaa-* and *-irë*.

[12] In both Kabwa and Simbiti, when negated the Inceptive morpheme surfaces as a lengthened vowel in the pre-root position. However, the lengthened vowel is masked when there are already two adjacent vowels underlyingly.

3 Different translation strategies

When the Kabwa and Simbiti translators opt for different translation strategies, this is almost always in cases where the Simbiti translators desire to make a certain interpretation more explicit. This might be adding more strength to the likelihood of *p* being true (§3.1), making a factual interpretation explicit (§3.2), or making a non-factual interpretation explicit (§3.3).

3.1 *Hano* 'when' – *p* is more likely to be true

When looking from the perspective of English, there is a clear distinction between 'if' and 'when'. However, in Kabwa and Simbiti, the distinction between the various conditional constructions and the conjunction *hano* 'when' is much less clear-cut. They are simply stages on a line of probability, and the choice of word may be based simply on one person's opinion of the probability of *p*, rather than a more objective scale. In many contexts, Simbiti translators prefer to make more explicit the likelihood of *p* being true, whereas Kabwa translators are often content to leave it more uncertain.

This can be seen in **Luke 17:6**, where in both languages the Hypothetical is used in *p* and *q*, and in Simbiti also a Potential with the root *nyoor* is used in the second half of *p*. In Simbiti *hano* 'when' is added, adding strength to the likelihood of *p* being true.

(11) *"Kora mukaabheeri na eimani enke, kya akabhusuro ka eharadari, mukaagukeererye omuti omunene gwa omukuyu ega, 'Ihika hanu, ogende, wihambe munyanja!' gukaabheegwiri."*

[kora	mu-**kaa**-bha-**iri**	na	e-imani	e-n-ke	kya	a-ka-bhusuro	k-a
even	2PL-**HYP**-COP-**PFV**	with	AUG.9-faith	AUG-9-small	like	AUG-12-seed	12-ASSOC
e-haradari]*p*	[mu-**kaa**-gu-keery-**iri**			o-mu-ti	o-mu-nene		gu-a
AUG.9-mustard	2PL-**HYP**-3.OM-tell-**PFV**[13]			AUG-3-tree	AUG-3-big		3-ASSOC
o-mu-kuyu	ega	ihika		ha-nu	o-gend-e	o-i-hamb-e	
AUG-3-fig	thus	uproot.IMP		16-PROX.DEM	2SG-go-SBJV	2SG-REFL-plant-SBJV	

[13] Where possible, the underlying morphemes have been given before the process of imbrication between the Perfective and other suffixes and verb base. For further details see Mészáros 2021.

mu-nyanja	gu-**kaa**-bha-igw-**iri**]*q*
18.LOC-lake	3-**HYP**-2PL.OM-obey-**PFV**

"*Even if you were to have small faith like a small mustard seed, you would tell a big fig tree thus, 'Uproot here, you should go, you should plant yourself in the lake!' it would obey you*." [Kabwa]

(12) "*Hano mokaabhaayë na umukumo omoke igho, nokaanyoora n-kya akatetere akake aka omoharadaari, mokaatëëbhëri ömökö ghono igha*, '*Eheka ughi wëëmibhwi mu-nyansha*,' *nagho ngokaabhaighwërëëyë*."

[**hano**	mo-**kaa**-bha-**irë**	na	o-mo-kumo	o-mo-ke	igho	**nokaanyoora**
when	2PL-**HYP**-COP-**PFV**	with	AUG-3-faith	AUG-3-small	just	**if.it.were**[14]

n-kya	a-ka-tetere	a-ka-ke	a-ka-a	o-mo-haradaari]*p*
COP-like	AUG-12-seed	AUG-12-small	AUG-12-ASSOC	AUG-3-mustard

[mo-**kaa**-tëëbhy-**irë**	o-mo-kö	gho-no	igha	eheka	o-ghy-e
2PL-**HYP**-tell-**PFV**	AUG-3-fig.tree	3-PROX.DEM	thus	uproot.IMP	2SG-go-SBJV

o-em-i-bhw-i	mo-nyansha	na-gho	n-go-**kaa**-bha-ighw-er-er-**irë**]*q*
2SG-plant-CAUS-PASS-SBJV	18.LOC-lake	and-3	FOC-3-**HYP**-2PL.OM-hear-APPL-APPL-**PFV**

"*Whenever you have just small faith*, [*even*] *if it were like a small mustard seed, you would tell this fig tree thus*, *'Uproot, you should go, you should be planted in the lake!' and it would obey you*." [Simbiti]

An example from a different genre is found in **1 Corinthians 4:19**. In Kabwa a Potential is used in *p* with an Inceptive in *q* (similar to example [9] in §2.3), while in Simbiti *p* begins with *hano*, followed by Inceptives in *p* and *q*.[15]

(13) *Nawe, Omukuru Yeesu akaahanja, ndaaje kubheenyu eyo bhwangu hanu.*

nawe	[o-mu-kuru	Yeesu	a-**kaa**-hanj-**a**]*p*	[n-**raa**-Vj-**e**	ku-bheenyu	
but	AUG-1-great	Jesus	3SG-**POT**-desire-**FV**	1SG-**INC**-come-**FV**	17.LOC-2PL.PRO	

e-yo	bho-angu	ha-nu]*q*
23-REF.DEM	14-easy	16-PROX.DEM

But if the Lord Jesus is willing, I will come to you there quickly. [Kabwa]

[14] This is a lexicalised form containing the Potential affixes *kaa-* and *-a*.

[15] It is interesting to note that the Greek NT has *q* then *p*, but both Kabwa and Simbiti translate it as *p* then *q*.

(14) *Kasi hano Omonene araahanshe, m-böngö ndaashe kö-bhëënyu iyö.*

kasi	[**hano**	o-mo-nene	a-**raa**-hansh-**e**]*p*	[m-böngö	n-**raa**-sh-**e**
but	**when**	AUG-1-great	3SG-**INC**-desire-**FV**	COP-quickly	1SG-**INC**-come-**FV**

ko-bhëënyu	i-yö]*q*
17.LOC-2PL.PRO	23-REF.DEM

But when the Lord is willing, I will come quickly to you there. [Simbiti]

In the above example there is some exegetical ambiguity – how likely it is that the Lord would be willing – and the Simbiti translators have chosen to add a little more certainty to the interpretation by using *hano*, perhaps trying to reflect Paul's strong desire to make the visit as soon as possible.

When a conditional construction is gnomic or habitual in meaning, in Simbiti often *hano* 'when' is used with the Inceptive in *p*, usually followed by either the Inceptive or Subjunctive in *q*. In Kabwa meanwhile, often *nyoore* 'if' is still used, leaving the likelihood of *p* as less certain. An example of this occurs in **Luke 11:36**, where in Kabwa *nyoore* is used, followed by a Present in *p* and a Future in *q*, while in Simbiti *hano* is followed by an Inceptive (with the root *nyoor*) and a Present in *p*, with an Inceptive in *q*.

(15) *"Kwa okubha, nyoore omubhiri gwaho gonsego guuna endingaasi bira ekisunte kyokyonse, guring'ara, kya ego ekorobhoi erakumirikira kwa obhurabhu bhwaye."*

kwa okubha	[**nyoore**	o-mu-bhiri	gu-aho	go-onsego	gu-**Vna**
therefore[16]	**if**	AUG-3-body	3-2SG.POSS	3-whole	3-**PRS**.have

e-n-dingaasi	bira	e-ki-sunte	ky-o-ky-onse]*p*	[gu-**ri**-ng'ar-**a**	kya
AUG-9-light	without	AUG-7-darkness	7-any-7-any	3-**FUT3**-shine-**FV**	like

ego	e-korobhoi	e-ra-ko-mirik-ir-a	kwa	o-bhu-rabhu
this.way	AUG.9-lamp	9-PRS-2SG.OM-give.light-APPL-FV	by	AUG-14-brightness

bhu-aye]*q*
14-3SG.POSS

"*Therefore, if your whole body is full of light without any darkness, it will shine just as a lamp gives you light with its brightness*." [Kabwa]

[16] The Kabwa phrase *kwa okubha* is literally 'by INF-be'.

(16) *"Ko bhoora hano oraanyoore ömöbhërë ughwaho ghwonswe igho ghoona obhorabhu, ikisuntë te-keemo hë, noraamaahe bhuuya, kya hano wamorekerwa na etara eno ikwoka."*

ko bhoora	[**hano**	**oraanyoore**	o-mo-bhërë	o-gho-aho	gho-onswe igho
therefore[17]	**when**	**if.it.happens**[18]	AUG-3-body	AUG-3-2SG.POSS	3-whole[19]

gho-**Vna**	o-bho-rabhu	i-ki-suntë	te-kee-mo	hë]*p*
3-**PRS**.have	AUG-14-light	AUG-7-darkness	NEG.COP-7-18.LOC	NEG

[n-o-**raa**-maah-**e**	bhu-Vya	kya	hano	o-a-morek-er-w-a
FOC-2SG-**INC**-see-**FV**	14-well	like	when	2SG-GEN.PRS-give.light-APPLIC-PASS-FV

na	e-tara	e-no	i-ko-ok-a]*q*
by	AUG.9-lamp	9-REF.PRO	9-PROG-be.lit-FV

"*Therefore whenever it happens that your whole body has light, and darkness is not in there, you will see well, like when you are given light by a lamp which is lit.*" [Simbiti]

A similar example is found in **Luke 16:31** where in Simbiti again *hano* is used, and it is interesting that in both languages there are two *p*s with one *q*. In Kabwa *nyoore* is followed by the Negative Present Progressive in *p*1, with a Negative Future in *q*, followed by a Potential in *p*2. In Simbiti there is a slightly different order of clauses with the *q* at the end; similar to in Kabwa there is an Inceptive (with the root *nyoor*) and a Negative Present Progressive in *p*1, followed by a Potential in *p*2, with a Negative Inceptive in *q*.

(17) *"Abhurahamu akamukyukya ega, 'Nyoore abhahiiri bhaaho bhayo, bhatakwigwa ganú gaang'oorwa na Musa na abharooti, bhatarimwigwa omuntu kora akaahyuka okurwa mubhaku.' "*

Abhurahamu	a-ka-mu-kyuky-a	ega	[**nyoore**	a-bha-hiiri	bha-aho
Abraham	3SG-NAR-3SG.OM-answer-FV	thus	**if**	AUG-2-relative	2-2SG.POSS

bha-yo	bha-ta-ko-igw-a	ga-nú	ga-a-ng'oor-w-a	na Musa
2-REF.DEM	3PL-NEG-PROG-listen-FV	6-REL.PRO	6-PST-write-PASS-FV	by Moses

na	a-bha-rooti]*p*1	[bha-ta-ri-mo-igw-a	o-mu-ntu]*q*	[kora
and	AUG-2-prophet	3PL-NEG-FUT3-3SG.OM-listen-FV	AUG-1-person	even

[17] The Simbiti phrase *ko bhoora* is literally 'by 14-DIST.DEM'.

[18] This is a lexicalised form containing the Inceptive affixes *raa-* and *-e*.

[19] The phrase *ghwonswe igho* has the idiomatic meaning 'whole', with the parts literally being '3-also thus'.

a-kaa-hyuk-a	o-ku-rw-a	mu-bha-ku]*p*2
3SG-POT-rise-FV	AUG-INF-come.out-FV	18.LOC-2-dead

"*Abraham answered him thus, 'If these relatives of yours do not listen to* [*the things*] *which were written by Moses and the prophets, they will not listen to a person even if he were to rise from among the dead.'* " [Kabwa]

(18) *"Ibhurahimu akamohonshora igha, 'Hano oraanyoore igha bhamura abhëënyu bhayö, tebhakoghoota amaandeko agha Mosa na agha abharööti, kora ömöntö nakaaryoka mo-bhaku, tebhaikërri hë.' "*

Ibhurahimu	a-ka-mo-honshor-a	igha	[**hano**	**oraanyoore**	igha
Abraham	3SG-NAR-3SG.OM-answer-FV	thus	**when**	**if.it.happens**[20]	thus

bha-mura	a-bhëënyu	bha-yö	te-bha-**ko**-ghoot-**a**	a-ma-andeko
2-relative	AUG-2PL.PRO	2-REL.DEM	NEG-3PL-**PROG**-hold-**FV**	AUG-6-writing

a-gha-a	Mosa	na	a-gha-a	a-bha-röötі]*p*1	[kora	o-mo-ntö
AUG-6-ASSOC	Moses	and	AUG-6-ASSOC	AUG-2-prophet	even	AUG-1-person

n-a-**kaa**-ryok-**a**	mo-bha-ku]*p*2	[te-bha-**V**-ikëry-**e**	hë]*q*
FOC-3SG-**POT**-rise-**FV**	18.LOC-2-dead	NEG-3PL-**INC**-listen-**FV**	NEG

"*Abraham answered him thus, 'Whenever if it happens thus that these relatives of yours do not hold to the writings of Moses and of the prophets, even if a person were to rise from the dead, they will not listen.'* " [Simbiti]

It is interesting to compare the frequency of *nyoore* in the two languages: for Kabwa it occurs 687 times, while for Simbiti only 191 times.[21] This is evidence of how often it is acceptable to the Kabwa translators to leave the interpretation of the probability of *p* slightly ambiguous in Kabwa, while in Simbiti *nyoore* is often rejected by the translators in favour of another type of construction that might make the interpretation of the probability of *p* more explicit.

Whilst *nyoore* is more frequently used in Kabwa than in Simbiti, the reason for this is not clear. One possibility is divergent exegetical conclusions between the two teams, namely differing views of the likelihood of the protasis being true. Another possibility is that the precise meaning of *nyoore* and *hano* are different in the two languages. This could be made clearer by further study of the two

[20] This is a lexicalised form containing the Inceptive affixes *raa-* and *-e*.

[21] The corpus used for these figures is the whole New Testament, plus Genesis and Ruth. These figures do not include the lexicalised forms of the type *oraanyoore* in Simbiti. However, even if such forms were included, the frequency in Simbiti would still be significantly less than in Kabwa.

conjunctions in both translated and natural texts. Another possible reason is a desire to be more literal versus more dynamic in translation style. The use of *nyoore* could be felt to be a more faithful translation of a conditional structure. A future study could explore the extent to which Catholic influence in the Kabwa language area may have influenced the translators to prefer a more literal translation style. When comparing the two languages, it is worth bearing these different possibilities in mind.

3.2 Non-conditional construction – *p* is known to be true

On some occasions, the Simbiti translators diverge quite dramatically from a conditional structure found in their source text, usually in order to make a factual reading completely explicit. An example of this is in **Luke 11:20**. Earlier (§2.1, examples [3] and [4]), it was noted that in verse 19 a similar conditional construction is used in both Kabwa and Simbiti. In the Greek NT, verses 19 and 20 have parallel conditional constructions, and in Kabwa the translators follow this structure by using *nyoore* and a Present in *p*, with a Subjunctive and Perfective in *q*. However, in the second part of the structure (verse 20), the Simbiti translators have made a truth statement, perhaps because they felt that it was so important to make the truth explicit.

(19) *"Nawe, nyoore oni ndakenyia ebhihwi kwa obhuturo bhwa Waryubha, mbe mumanye ega, obhukama bhwa Waryubha bhumariri okubhahikira."*

nawe	[**nyoore**	oni	n-**ra**-keny-i-**a**		e-bhi-hwi	kwa
but	**if**	1SG.PRO	1SG-**PRS**-run-CAUS-**FV**		AUG-8-demon	by
o-bhu-turo	bhu-a	Waryubha]*p*	[mbe	mu-many-**e**	ega	
AUG-14-authority	14-ASSOC	God	well	2PL-know-**SBJV**	thus	
o-bhu-kama	bhu-a	Waryubha	bhu-mar-**iri**	o-ku-bha-hik-ir-a]*q*		
AUG-14-kingdom	14-ASSOC	God	14-finish-**PFV**	AUG-INF-2PL.OM-arrive-APPL-FV		

"*But, if me I am chasing out demons by the authority of God, well you should know that the kingdom of God has already arrived among you*." [Kabwa]

(20) *"Nawe, obhotoro ubhwa Waryobha mbwo bhokoghera ndaata amasambwa, ku bhuyö hayö nkwörökya ërë igha, Obhokama ubhwa Waryobha, bhobhahëkëréëyë."*

nawe	o-bho-toro	o-bho-a	Waryobha	m-bwo	bho-**ko**-gher-**a**
but	AUG-14-authority	AUG-14-ASSOC	God	EMPH.COP-14.PRO	14-**PROG**-cause-**FV**

n-**ra**-at-**a**	a-ma-sambwa	ku bhuyö	ha-yö	n-**ko**-öröky-**a**	e-rë
1SG-**PRS**-chase-**FV**	AUG-6-demon	therefore	16-REF.DEM	FOC-**PROG**-show-**FV**	9-COP

igha	o-bho-kama	o-bho-a	Waryobha	bho-bha-hek-er-er-**irë**
thus	AUG-14-kingdom	AUG-14-ASSOC	God	14-2PL.OM-arrive-APPL-APPL-**PFV**

"*But, the authority of God is indeed what causes me to chase demons, therefore this shows that the kingdom of God has arrived among you.*" [Simbiti]

Another possible reason for the rejection of a conditional structure could be argumentational style; the Simbiti translators might have felt that it was not natural in the course of an argument to leave something "open for debate" by using a conditional.[22]

3.3 *Singa* 'would that' – *p* is known to be untrue

When *p* describes a situation that is known, or thought, not to be true (i.e., *p* has a non-factual interpretation), the Simbiti translators preferred to make this explicit. This is usually done with *singa* 'if only, would that, would have' in *p* (which may optionally be repeated in *q*), followed by a Hypothetical, Past, or occasionally a Present in *p*, and usually a Hypothetical in *q*.

An example is in **Luke 12:39**, where in Kabwa *nyoore* is used, followed by Hypotheticals in *p* and *q* (similar to §2.3, example [7]). In Simbiti *p* begins with *singa*, and like Kabwa there are Hypotheticals in *p* and *q*.

(21) *"Nyoore omwene enyumba akaamanyiri eribhaga rinú omwibhi araaja, akeeseemerye, na omwibhi atakaasoheri munyumba yaaye."*

[**nyoore**	o-mu-ene	e-nyumba	a-**kaa**-many-**iri**	e-ri-bhaga	rinú
if	AUG-1-owner	AUG.9-house	3SG-**HYP**-know-**PFV**	AUG-5-time	5-REL.PRO

o-mu-ibhi	a-ra-Vj-a]*p*	[a-**kaa**-i-seem-y-**iri**	na	o-mu-ibhi
AUG-1-thief	3SG-PRS-come-FV	3SG-**HYP**-REFL-prepare-CAUS-**PFV**	and	AUG-1-thief

a-ta-**kaa**-soh-**iri**	mu-nyumba	i-aye]*q*
3SG-NEG-**HYP**-enter-**PFV**	18.LOC-house	9-3SG.POSS

"*If a house owner would know the time when a thief is coming, he would prepare himself, and the thief would not enter inside his house.*" [Kabwa]

(22) *"Singa mwene inyumba akaamanyirë enkaagha eno umwibhi akaaishirë, nakaaisëëmëri. Takaaraayë, atighe umwibhi atemore inyumba iyaaye."*

[**singa**	mo-ene	i-nyumba	a-**kaa**-many-**irë**	e-n-kaagha	e-no
if.only	1-owner	AUG.9-house	3SG-**HYP**-know-**PFV**	AUG-9-time	9-REL.PRO

[22] Steve Nicolle, personal communication, 28 July 2022.

o-mo-ibhi	a-**kaa**-ish-**irë**]*p*	[n-a-**kaa**-i-seem-i-**irë**		t-a-**kaa**-raar-**irë**	
AUG-1-thief	3SG-**HYP**-come-**PFV**	FOC-3SG-**HYP**-REFL-prepare-CAUS-**PFV**		NEG-3SG-**HYP**-sleep-**PFV**	
a-tigh-e	o-mo-ibhi	a-temor-e	i-nyumba	i-ya-aye]*q*	
3SG-leave-SBJV	AUG-1-thief	3SG-destroy-SBJV	AUG.9-house	AUG-9-3SG.POSS	

"*If only a house owner would know the time at which a thief would come, he would prepare himself. He would not sleep, leaving the thief destroying his house*." [Simbiti]

The use of *singa* in Simbiti makes clear an interpretation that the house owner would not in fact know when a thief might come, and therefore he would not prepare, and the house would be broken into. Whereas in Kabwa it is left more open that there could be a situation when a house owner might know and be prepared.

Another example occurs in **Matthew 11:21** (and **Luke 10:13**), in which *singa* is used also in Kabwa. In Kabwa *p* is begun with *nyoore* and a Hypothetical, followed by *singa* and a Past tense form in *q*. In Simbiti *p* is begun with *singa* and Past tense verbs, and then *singa* is repeated in *q* followed by Hypotheticals.

(23) *"Nyoore ebhika bhinú bhyakoreka kubheenyu hanu, bhikaakorekeri mumigi gya Tiro na Sidoni, singa bhaamara akare okumwihunjurira Waryubha"*

[**nyoore**	e-bhi-ka	bhi-nú	bhi-a-kor-ek-a	ku-bheenyu	ha-nu	
if	AUG-8-miracle	8-REL.PRO	8-PST-do-STAT-FV	17.LOC-2PL.PRO	16-PROX.DEM	
bhi-**kaa**-kor-ek-**iri**	mu-mi-gi	gi-a	Tiro	na	Sidoni]*p*	[**singa**
8-**HYP**-do-STAT-**PFV**	18.LOC-4-town	4-ASSOC	Tyre	and	Sidon	**would.have**
bha-**a**-mar-**a**	akare	o-ku-mu-i-hunjur-ir-a			Waryubha]*q*	
3PL-**PST**-finish-**FV**	long-ago	AUG-INF-3SG.OM-REFL-turn-APPL-FV			God	

"*If the miracles which were done among you here, were done in the towns of Tyre and Sidon, they would have finished long ago turning to God*" [Kabwa]

(24) *"Singa amakono ghano naakora kö-bhëënyu ngo naakora mu-mighi ighya Tiiro na Siidööni, singa abhantö abha Tiiro na Siidööni mbakaatöörrë singibho isya amaghonera ..."*

[**singa**	a-ma-kono	gha-no	n-a-kor-a	ko-bhëënyu	n-go	
if.only	AUG-6-miracle	6-REL.PRO	1SG-PST-do-FV	17.LOC-2PL.PRO	EMPH.COP-6.PRO	
n-**a**-kor-**a**	mo-mi-ghi	i-ghi-a	Tiiro	na	Siidööni]*p*	[**singa**
1SG-**PST**-do-**FV**	18.LOC-towns	AUG-4-ASSOC	Tyre	and	Sidon	**would.have**
a-bha-ntö	a-bha-a	Tiiro	na	Siidööni	m-ba-**kaa**-toor-**irë**	sin-gibho
AUG-2-person	AUG-2-ASSOC	Tyre	and	Sidon	FOC-3PL-**HYP**-wear-**PFV**	10-cloth

i-si-a	a-ma-ghonera]*q*
AUG-10-ASSOC	AUG-6-sackcloth

"*If only the miracles which I did among you here, I did in the towns of Tyre and Sidon, the people of Tyre and Sidon would have worn clothes of sackcloth ...*" [Simbiti]

When *singa* is used, this can reflect the opinion of the speaker in a narrative, rather than the opinion of the original author or the translator. In **Luke 7:39** when a Pharisee is speaking, the Simbiti translators have chosen to use *singa* to reflect the Pharisee's opinion that what he is saying is not true. In Kabwa simply Hypotheticals are used in both *p* and *q*, while in Simbiti a Present copula is used after the *singa* in *p*, followed by a Hypothetical in *q*:

(25) *"Omuntu unu, akaabheeri omurooti, akaamanyiri ega, ..."*

[o-mu-ntu	u-nu	a-**kaa**-bha-**iri**	o-mu-rooti]*p*	[a-**kaa**-many-**iri**	ega]*q*	
AUG-1-person	1-PROX.DEM	3SG-**HYP**-COP-**PFV**	AUG-1-prophet	3SG-**HYP**-know-**PFV**	thus	

"*If this man were a prophet, he would know that ...*" [Kabwa]

(26) *"Singa m-maheene igha Yëësu ono m-mörööti, akaamanyiri ega, ..."*

[**singa**	m-ma-heene	igha	Yëësu	o-no	m-mo-röötiʼ]*p*
if.only	COP-6-true	thus	Jesus	1-PROX.DEM	COP-1-prophet

[a-**kaa**-many-**iri**	ega]*q*
3SG-**HYP**-know-**PFV**	thus

"*If only it were true that this Jesus were a prophet, he would know that...*" [Simbiti]

In fact, what the Pharisee is saying is true, Jesus is a prophet and he does know what sort of woman is touching him, and one would assume that the original writer as well as the translators understand this to be true. However, the use of *singa* conveys the counterfactual nature of the conditional from the perspective of the Pharisee.

It is difficult to find an ideal translation for *singa* in English, since 'if only' or 'would that' give the impression that the speaker wishes for *p* to be true; from the example above in **Luke 7:39** this does not seem to be the case. But the variety of examples shown here makes it clear that *singa* is used when *p* is non-factual (according to the speaker's opinion).

The strong preference of Simbiti translators for making explicit a non-factual interpretation can be clearly seen by comparing the frequency of *singa*: in Simbiti it occurs 54 times, whereas in Kabwa it occurs only 3 times.[23]

4 Conclusion

From the examples shown in this paper, it can be seen that Kabwa and Simbiti are closely related languages, with similar forms available for translating conditionals, both conjunctions and tense-aspects affixes. However, the Simbiti translators have often made a choice to make something more explicit. This might be to interpret the probability of *p* being true as more likely, by using *hano* 'when'. Whether such constructions can still be termed "conditionals" is up for debate since they use an explicit 'when' conjunction. However, the tense-aspect affixes are the same as those used in similar conditional constructions in which *hano* is not used. In cases such as this, it might be more helpful to view such constructions as points on a sliding scale of probability, rather than falling into distinctly separate categories.

Another way that a different translation strategy is sometimes used by the Simbiti translators compared to that adopted by the Kabwa translators, is by avoiding using a conditional altogether when *p* is known to be true. Perhaps this strategy is especially used when translators want to ensure that a reader understands that there is no doubt about a statement's veracity. For someone who is familiar with the Bible, Jesus saying, "*if* I drive out demons by the power of God," does not cause the reader to doubt whether this is the truth. However, for someone who is hearing this for the first time, with very little context or other knowledge of the Bible, the reader could perhaps think that Jesus is genuinely asking whether he uses the power of God.

The Simbiti translators also have made explicit when a conditional should be understood as non-factual. This is done by using *singa*, and, although the Kabwa translators did use *singa* occasionally, the frequency is minimal compared to the occurrences in Simbiti (3 versus 54 times).

All these methods of translating conditional constructions fit with the overall style of Simbiti translation: Simbiti conversation and writing style are often very "wordy", and throughout the translation the translators usually preferred to avoid ambiguity and make something explicit where possible.

[23] The corpus used for these figures is the whole New Testament, plus Genesis and Ruth. *Singa* is used not only in non-factual conditionals, but also in non-conditional constructions that are counter-expectation. For example, in Heb 5:12 ("For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the basic principles of God" ESV), both Kabwa and Simbiti translators used *singa*.

Generally, it seems that the Simbiti translators preferred a more dynamic, meaning-based translation style, while the Kabwa translators preferred a more literal translation style.

This comparison of Kabwa and Simbiti conditionals is an interesting illustration of how translations into similar languages can use different translation strategies. It also demonstrates some alternative strategies for translating New Testament conditionals when a conditional construction is not possible or desired in a particular language.

Although the examples in this paper have shown many different combinations of conjunctions and affixes to translate conditionals, there are yet more possibilities in both Kabwa and Simbiti. An interesting topic for further study would be to carry out a more in-depth categorisation of all the different possibilities, as well as to compare the frequency of the various constructions for both languages. It could be helpful to compare these figures with the conditional constructions found in non-translated texts – this might show how much of the Simbiti translation style is driven by the language itself and how much by the translators' desire to avoid ambiguity. It could also be valuable to survey readers' (or listeners') understanding of certain passages, where the interpretation of a conditional is left ambiguous in Kabwa but is made explicit in Simbiti. The whole New Testament was tested thoroughly in the language communities before publication; however, it could be interesting to compare the understanding of conditional clauses of Kabwa readers with Simbiti readers (or listeners). This might show whether the explicit nature of the Simbiti translation is so necessary for understanding, or if it is just the translators' efforts to avoid possible misunderstandings, or if it is simply a style of writing that makes it sound "more Simbiti". Whatever the reason, whether for understanding or for naturalness, so far, the "wordy" style of translation seems to be fitting, desired, and appreciated by Simbiti speakers.

Abbreviations

APPL	applicative
AUG	augment vowel
CAUS	causative
COP	copula
DEM	demonstrative
EMPH	emphatic
FOC	focus
FUT3	remote future
FV	final vowel
GEN	general
HAB	habitual
HYP	hypothetical
IMP	imperative
INC	inceptive
INF	infinitive
LOC	locative
NAR	narrative
NEG	negative
OM	object marker
p	protasis
PASS	passive
PFV	perfective
PL	plural
POT	potential
PRO	pronoun
PROG	progressive
PROX	proximal
PRS	present
PST	past
q	apodosis
REF	referential
REFL	reflexive
REL	relative
SBJV	subjunctive
SG	singular
SM	subject marker
TA	tense-aspect
V	unspecified vowel
VB	verb base
1, 2, etc.	noun class or person marker

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