Imperatives with/without Necessity
Shun Ihara ¹,² and Yuya Noguchi ¹
¹ Osaka University, ² JSPS

This study investigates properties of Morphological Imperatives (MI) and Suppletive Imperatives (SI). In Japanese, dictionary (i.e. end) form imperatives (= SI) can represent ‘directive’ (or ‘command’) speech acts, just like typical imperative form imperatives (= MI), as exemplified in (1). What is the difference between MI and SI? To be more specific, (i) how do they semantically differ from each other? and (ii) what makes the difference between these two imperatives? In the current study, we argue that the difference depends on whether they encode weak necessity modality or not.

We can motivate the weak necessity proposal in terms of (i) the property of weak readings, (ii) embeddability, and (iii) addressee-orientation of a subject. First, it has widely been accepted that English imperatives can pattern with all kinds of ‘weak’ necessity readings (: (2)) unlike must, which induces ‘strong’ necessity readings (: (3)) (Portner 2007, a.o.). Similarly to English imperatives, the Japanese MI have weak readings, while SI do not, as shown in (4) and (5). Second, as shown in (6), MI can be embedded in an indirect quotation (cf. Saito & Haraguchi 2012) whereas SI cannot; the embedded sentence in (6b) cannot be interpreted as an imperative sentence but can only be interpreted as a declarative. Third, in Japanese MI, the subject can be co-indexed not only with the discourse addressee (2nd person), but also with the 3rd person, as shown in (7). On the other hand, in SI, the subject can be co-indexed only with the 2nd person addressee as in (8). Putting it all together, we summarize the differences between MI and SI in Table 1.

For the analysis of imperatives, we adopt the formal model of weak necessity presented in Silk (2013), in line with Medeiros (2013). Silk relates weak necessity to strong necessity (like ‘must’, which is defined as in (9)) in terms of conditional or contingent necessity. Technically, and making use of a selection function \( S \) which selects a set of \( \chi \)-worlds that are closest to \( w \), the weak necessity is defined as in (10). Adopting Silk’s model of necessity, Medeiros claims that imperatives encode weak necessity, and are roughly equivalent to ought or should in their interpretation.

We claim that MI in Japanese encode weak necessity clause-internally, while SI do not; SI only clause-externally represent a directive operator (Kaufmann 2012), which enforces the presuppositions of directive speech acts, and derives the performative effect of directive imperatives. The LF of SI and MI are given in (11) and (12), respectively. Thus, the crucial point in our claim is that the only difference between MI (in directive context) and SI is ‘whether they encode weak necessity or not.’

Given the proposal above, we can now derive the differences in Table 1. First, unlike MI, SI cannot pattern with weak readings because they do not encode the weak necessity modal. Second, since MI contain the weak necessity modal clause-internally, they induce imperative-like meanings even when they are embedded. On the other hand, since SI do not encode any modal operator, they cannot be embedded in an indirect discourse with imperative meanings (note that the directive operator operates at the level of Speech Act Phrase (Speas & Tenny 2003, a.o.) and thus not be embedded). Third, the subject in SI can be co-indexed only with the 2nd person addressee since they must come with a directive operator, which enforces the presupposition of the existence of addressee. In contrast to SI, since the existence of the directive operator is not a necessary condition for a realization of MI, the subject in MI can be co-indexed not only with the addressee, namely the 2nd person, but also with the 3rd person.

The current proposal is theoretically important because it strongly suggests that the difference between non-canonical form imperatives and canonical form imperatives in directive contexts should be explained at the level of semantics, not at the level of pragmatics.

References

(1) a. Hayaku ik-e! ‘Go quickly!’ [Morphological Imperatives (V: Imperative form)]
   b. Hayaku ik-u! ‘Go quickly!’ [Suppletive Imperatives (V: Dictionary form)]

(2) a. Take a train. But there’s also a bus. [advice]
   b. Open the window, if you are hot. [permission]

(3) a. #You must take a train. But there’s also a bus. [advice]
   b. #You must open the window, if you are hot. [permission]

(4) a. Densha-ni nor-e yo. Basu-mo ar-u kedo. ‘Take a train. But there’s also a bus.’
   b. Moshi atsui nara, mado-o ake-ro. ‘Open the window, if you are hot.’

(5) a. #Densha-ni nor-u! Basu-mo ar-u kedo. ‘Take a train. But there’s also a bus.’
   b. #Moshi atsui nara, mado-o ake-ru! ‘Open the window, if you are hot.’

   → ‘Taro told Hanako to help her mother.’

(7) a. (Omae2nd) hayaku ik-e! b. (Aitsu3rd) hayaku denwa-ni de-ro!
   you quickly go-IMP that.man quickly telephone-to pick.up-IMP
   ‘Go quickly!’ ‘Pick up the phone quickly!’

(8) a. (Omae2nd) hayaku ik-u! b. #(Aitsu3rd) hayaku denwa-ni de-ru!
   you quickly go-DIC that.man quickly telephone-to pick.up-DIC
   ‘Go quickly!’ ‘Pick up the phone quickly!’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Morphological IMP (MI)</th>
<th>weak readings</th>
<th>embeddability</th>
<th>addressee-orientation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>2nd/3rd</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Suppletive IMP (SI) | ✓ | * | 2nd |

Table 1. Properties of MI and SI in Japanese

‘must(\phi)’ is true at w iff \( \cap P_w \subseteq [\phi] \) (Silk 2013)

(i.e.: the truth of ‘must(\phi)’ is checked by comparing whether the conditions in the evaluation world w are such that the premise set \( P_w \) verifies the necessity of \( \phi \).)

‘ought(\phi)’ is true at w iff ‘must(\phi)’ is true at all worlds w’ \( \in S(w, \chi) \) iff \( \forall w’ \in S(w, \chi): \cap P_{w’} \subseteq [\phi] \) (ibid.)

(i.e.: ‘ought(\phi)’ makes a claim about the necessity of \( \phi \) at all closest (and relevant) \( \chi \)-worlds, for some contextually supplied condition \( \chi \).)

(11) LF of Morphological Imperatives (in directive context):

\[
[speech\text{ActP}\ dir [TP(for ModaIP) \ box\ em [ p: […] v_{imp} \ldots \]]]
\]

(12) LF of Suppletive Imperatives:

\[
[speech\text{ActP}\ dir [TP p: […] v_{dicl/pres} \ldots \]]
\]

References (selected):