Imperative-and-Declarative "Pseudo-Imperatives" are Real Imperatives

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Overview

- New data shows **Imperative-and-Declarative (IaD)** conjunctions do convey directive force, like simple imperatives.

- In comparison, **Declarative-and-Declarative (DaD)** conjunctions have no such constraints, like simple declaratives.

- Thus, contrary to existing analyses, we argue that IaDs are imperatives, with directive force, just at the matrix level.

- We analyze all imperatives as answers to decision problems.

No Directive Force in IaDs?

- Some conditional IaDs feature imperative-marked clauses that would go against the speaker's wishes if uttered alone (Jespersen 1909):

  (1) Spoken by a <u>bankrobber</u>:
    a. Take another step and I'll shoot.
    b. # Take another step!

  (2) Spoken by a <u>concerned professor</u>:
    a. Ignore your homework and you'll fail the class.
    b. # Ignore your homework!

- Previous work assumes that such IaDs lack the directive force of normal imperatives (Bolinger 1967, Clark 1993, Han 2000, Russell 2007, Kaufmann 2012, von Fintel & Iatridou 2015, among others).

- Thus, existing theories predict such IaDs to be synonymous with corresponding DaDs, and licensed in the same environments:

  (3) a. You take another step, and I'll shoot. [cf. (1a)]
      b. You ignore your HW, and you'll fail the class. [cf. (2a)]

Experiment: IaDs vs DaDs

- Design: 2 Contexts (**Present**, **Future**) × 2 Types (**IaD**, **DaD**)
  - 73 Amazon MTurk subjects rated (4 excluded for random responses)
  - materials: 8 test sets with 4 sentences per set
  - subjects rated one item from each set (8 items) plus 12 fillers
  - 5-point Likert scale ranging from *not at all natural* to *completely natural*

- The **Future** Contexts were designed to be interpreted as directions, but the **Present** Contexts prevent being interpreted as directions.

- Predictions, if directive force constrains IaDs but not DaDs:
  i) **IaDs** should sound better in the **Future** than in the **Present** Contexts.
  ii) **DaDs** should sound the same in **Future** and **Present** Contexts.
  iii) **DaDs** should sound better than **IaDs** in the **Present** Context.

Sample Materials

(4) **Present:** *A mother out to dinner with her husband calls her teenaged son at home. The son was watching TV when they left, and she wants to make sure he has stopped. She says:*
   IaD: # Still be watching TV right now and you're grounded.
   DaD: You're still watching TV right now and you're grounded.

(5) **Future:** *A mother is going out to dinner with her husband, leaving their teenaged son at home. The son is watching TV as they leave, and the mother wants to make sure he stops soon. She says:*
   IaD: Still be watching TV when we get back and you're grounded.
   DaD: You're still watching TV when we get back and you're grounded.
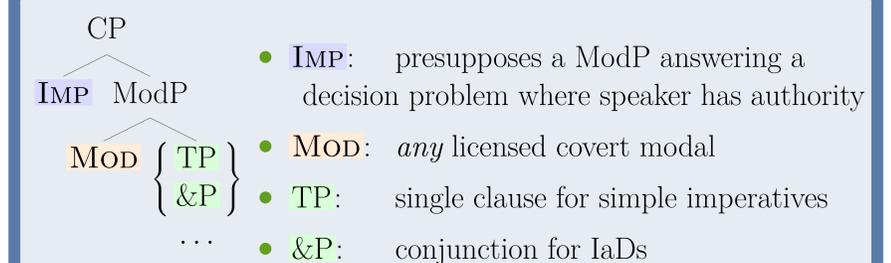
Results

- **IaDs** rated higher in **Future** than in **Present** Contexts.
  ✓ As predicted in (i)

- **DaDs** rated higher than **IaDs** in the **Present** Context
  ✓ As predicted in (iii)

- **DaDs** only *trended* higher in **Present** than in **Future**.
  ¯_(ツ)_/¯ Kinda as predicted in (ii)

- Highly significant interaction between **Present** vs. **Future** and **IaD** vs. **DaD**.
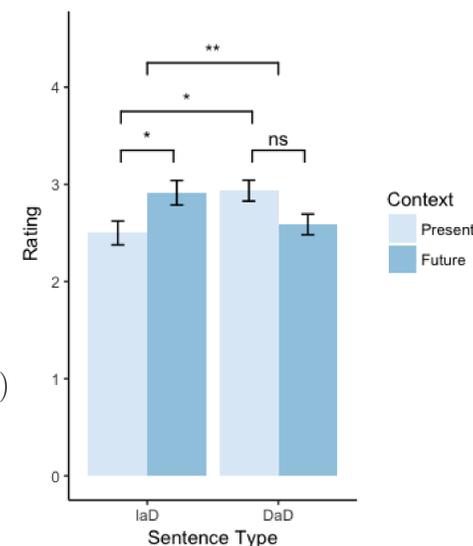
An Imperative at the Conjunction Level

- Claim 1: An IaD as a whole must convey some direction.

- Explains IaDs with <u>directions only</u> in their *declarative* clauses:

  (6) See anything suspicious, and <u>you should inform us ASAP</u>.

  (7) Know anyone involved, and <u>you must recuse yourself</u>.

- Claim 2: An imperative head scopes over IaD conjunctions

- Explains <u>imperative morphology</u> in related **IaIs** and **DaIs**:

  (8) Be even a minute late and <u>be</u> fired.

  (9) I make even one mistake in this proof and somebody please <u>correct</u> me right away.

Analysis

- IMP: presupposes a ModP answering a decision problem where speaker has authority

- MOD: *any* licensed covert modal

- TP: single clause for simple imperatives

- &P: conjunction for IaDs

Notes and a Puzzle

- Directive Force is derived pragmatically from speaker authority.

- Imperatives are usually direct answers to the decision problem, but some (including conditional IaDs) require indirect reasoning:

  (10) Decision Problem: *When should I be into work today?*
       Simple: Be in at 9! [Direct] vs. Don't get fired! [Indirect]
       IaD: Be in after 9 and you'll be fired. [Indirect]

- Puzzling Case: *Be fired if you're late!

Answer: No Unlicensed Covert Modals

- Covert modals don't just pop up anywhere:

  (11) *You're the champion.* ≠ *You <u>should</u>/<u>will</u> be the champ.*

- All conditionals, including some IaDs, license simple future modals.

  (12) *Eat this hot dog and you're the champion!*
       = *You <u>will</u> be the champion if you eat this hot dog.*

- But simple imperatives *only* license priority modals (like *should*).

  (13) *Eat this hot dog! = You <u>should</u> (#<u>will</u>) eat this hot dog.*

- Explains puzzle above, since *Be fired!* ≠ *You <u>will</u> be fired.*

Selected Refs. & Full Paper (tinyurl.com/IaDs2017)

Bolinger, D. (1967). The imperative in English, *To Honor Roman Jakobson* 1, 335-362. **Clark, B.** (1993). Relevance and 'pseudo-imperatives,' *Linguistics and Philosophy* 16(1), 79-121. **von Fintel, K. & Iatridou, S.** (2015). A modest proposal for the meaning of imperatives. Manuscript, MIT. **Han, C.** (2000). *The Structure and Interpretation of Imperatives: Mood and Force in Universal Grammar,* Routledge. **Jesperson, O.** (1909). *A Modern English Grammar on Historical Principles, V: Syntax* (Fourth Volume), London. **Kaufmann, M.** (2012). *Interpreting Imperatives,* Springer. **Portner, P.** (2004). The Semantics of Imperatives within a Theory of Clause Types, *SALT 14.* **Roberts, C.** (2012). Information Structure: Towards an Integrated Formal Theory of Pragmatics, *Semantics & Pragmatics,* 5(6), 1-69.

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