

Oxford
LINGUISTICS

Imperatives and Commands

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Oxford Studies in Typology and Linguistic Theory

Appendix

Imperatives and commands—how to know more: a checklist for fieldworkers

This checklist is included here to help linguists know more about imperatives, commands, and other directives in a language they are working on. These points to be addressed can be used by field linguists working on previously undescribed or insufficiently documented languages, and also by those who work on better-known languages, concentrating on subtle details of use which have not been accounted for before. This is by no means a questionnaire. Rather, this is a reminder of what kind of features need to be described, analysed, and illustrated, for an in-depth view of directives in a given language.

1. What to learn first, and the nature of sources

To provide a sensible analysis of imperatives, commands, and directive speech acts in general, one needs to have a pretty good idea of the overall structure of the grammar of the language as a whole. This applies to a study of any grammatical category and any semantic distinction, not just to imperatives. Without knowing what the word classes are and how they differ from each other and what properties distinguish different clause types, a study of imperatives, commands, directives, and so on is bound to be impoverished and biased.

A note on the nature of sources. If your work is based on original fieldwork, the major principle is to avoid too much straight elicitation. Ideally, the sources on the language should be mostly based on participant-observation in the speech community and on natural narratives. To understand how imperatives and commands are used under various circumstances in day-to-day life, one needs to observe the language in its spontaneous use. Gossip, casual remarks, or overheard conversations often provide many more enlightening clues than narrated stories. That is, if a language has a complex system of imperatives and commands and your grammar of it is based only on the analysis of traditional texts, some of the complexities and subtleties of expression may well be missed. The same applies to corpora—even a well-constructed corpus will not cover everything you may want to know. We have no other choice but a closed corpus for those languages which are no longer spoken. However, for a well-spoken language the attitude ‘we do not need your native speakers’ intuition, our corpora are good enough’ constitutes a sure path to lopsided and ultimately primitive results.

Any artificial stimuli—such as video clips, especially in traditional communities—should be employed with great care, if at all. Dixon (2007) and Mithun (2007) offer further suggestions on how to do fieldwork, and to provide scientific documentation of languages. We try to understand the language as it is spoken in its own environment. As Mithun (2007) puts it, ‘documenting the language as it is used for speakers in various settings from everyday conversation to formal oratory’ is the priority. Let the language and the culture talk to you rather than you making them say what you want them to say!

We now turn to the checklist: which points one should not forget to address when analysing and describing imperatives and other ways of phrasing and framing commands.

2. Expressing imperatives

We start with the crucial question: how are imperatives marked? Does the language have a special paradigm for the imperative mood? What are the criteria for recognizing a form or a construction as imperative?

For instance, does the language have a special imperative inflection? If there is an imperative inflection, does it have similarities with other inflections (for instance, future or irrealis)? What morphological system does it belong to? Some languages have a mood system, with choices for interrogative, imperative, and declarative moods, and others may place imperative marking in the same system with tense-aspect and modality markers.

Does the language have special particles which mark imperatives? Are there imperative-specific forms of personal pronouns? Do imperatives differ from other clauses in their intonation? If they do, describe the intonation contours as fully as you can.

If the language does not have a set of imperative forms, which are the forms conventionally used to express commands? These could include future, irrealis, conditional, or declarative, perhaps with a command-specific intonation contour.

Are there any limitations on the subject of an imperative clause? Are second person imperatives—canonical imperatives—marked differently from imperatives with first and third person addressees (if, indeed, these are allowed)? Do all person forms of the addressee have the same meanings, or can person-specific meanings be distinguished? For instance, a command addressed at a first person may have permissive overtones, or be used as a turn-taking device. Does a command addressed to first person plural have to have an inclusive reference (us including you)? Does the generalization formulated in Diagram 2.1 apply to the language?

Does the language have suppletive imperatives? If so, what semantic fields do they cover? Can canonical and non-canonical imperatives have suppletive forms?

What further features make imperatives special in the language? In some languages, special phonological processes may apply to imperatives and to no other forms. In others, imperatives may have their own constituent order—the verb tends to come first. Do some particles or further forms have different meanings in imperatives and in statements or questions?

Chapter 2, 'Imperatives worldwide', and Chapter 3, 'How imperatives are special', provide information from a variety of languages relevant for these issues.

3. Grammatical categories of imperatives

After the major properties of imperative forms and constructions have been identified, the next step is to establish what grammatical categories imperatives have in the language.

How are grammatical categories of number, gender, tense, evidentiality, aspect, and voice expressed in imperatives? In some languages, an imperative inflection forms one system with tense-aspect choices, and so no tense or aspect specification is available in imperatives. In other languages, imperative belongs to a different system, and some aspectual meanings can be expressed, such as punctual and durative. What are the aspectual meanings expressed in imperatives in the language? Can the imperative co-occur with irrealis, future, or past tense? If so, what are the imperative-specific overtones? In some languages, imperfective aspect in imperative constructions sounds politer than perfective. Irrealis may also be a way to express a polite command. A past imperative may have overtones of 'you shouldn't have done it'.

Or perhaps imperative in the language has its own aspect contrasts not found in statements or questions, for instance, 'Keep doing it!' versus 'Do it!'

Is there a way of expressing delayed or future imperative, as opposed to that of immediate imperative? Languages with several futures in statements tend to have just one delayed imperative, but there are exceptions to this. Is the language one of these?

Does the language express distance in space in imperatives ('do here', 'do there', 'do over there')? How does distance in space in imperatives interrelate with distance in space in other categories, for instance, demonstratives?

If the language has grammaticalized expression of information source or evidentiality, it may well express some of the meanings in imperatives. A typical meaning expressed is 'reported', and it usually implies a command by proxy, 'do on someone else's behalf, or order'. Reported evidential in imperative constructions may have specific extensions to do with politeness.

Markers of modality ('maybe', 'possibly', and so on) and of reality status may occur in imperatives, albeit with imperative-specific meanings: to do with making commands sound milder or stronger, or to express politeness. Further markers—including words meaning 'a bit' and diminutives—may acquire imperative-specific extensions. It is important to provide an exhaustive account of these.

How are grammatical relations marked in imperative constructions? In some languages, the object of an imperative is marked differently from that of questions and statements.

Can the imperative be formed on any verb in the language? Does the language have different forms for imperatives of transitive and intransitive verbs? In some languages there are no imperatives of copula verbs, or of stative verbs, or of verbs referring to weather, or of passives. In others, only verbs which express controlled action can form imperatives; so, some languages have no imperative of the verb 'hear' but do have one

of the verb 'listen'. Or a verb which refers to an uncontrolled action in a statement or a question is reinterpreted in a command as referring to something one can control.

How do imperatives correlate with the form of the verb? Do distinctions between verbal conjugations get neutralized in the imperative? Does imperative have scope over one complex predicate, or does every component have to be marked separately?

Can one consider imperative in the language to be more or less complex morphologically than a corresponding declarative form?

Chapter 3, 'How imperatives are special', and Chapter 4, 'Imperatives and other grammatical categories', provide information from a variety of languages relevant for these issues.

4. Negative imperatives or prohibitives

The next question is: how does polarity interact with imperative? How are negative imperatives marked? How does their marking relate to the marking of positive imperatives and that of negative declaratives? Some languages have a special prohibitive negative particle, others employ a declarative negative particle accompanying a special prohibitive form, or a plain imperative form. Can prohibitive be considered a separate clause type? Is there any special 'prohibitive' intonation?

How are categories found in declaratives and in positive imperatives expressed in prohibitives? There can be the same person distinctions as in declaratives and in positive imperatives as in prohibitives. Or the distinctions can be different. How are verbal arguments marked in prohibitives? Are there any correlations between the verb's transitivity and its use in prohibitives?

If the imperative distinguishes aspect, tense, and distance in space, does the prohibitive have the same distinctions? In some languages, such distinctions are neutralized in prohibitives. In others, prohibitives appear to be richer in forms than imperatives.

Can any verb occur in a negative imperative? In many languages—including English—it is more natural to use verbs expressing non-controlled actions in negative imperatives than in positive commands. Is this also the case in your language of study?

Is it possible to say that prohibitive in the language is more or less complex than the corresponding negative declarative? How does the prohibitive compare to positive imperative in terms of complexity?

Chapter 5, "Don't do it": a vista of negative imperatives', provides information from a variety of languages relevant for these issues.

5. Semantics of imperatives

If the language has more than one imperative form, what are the semantic distinctions expressed? For instance, is there any special way of marking permissive, apprehensive ('lest'), or varying degrees of 'strength'?

Is politeness reflected in the imperative, and if so, how? It is always useful to try and explain conditions of the use of each form in terms of intrapersonal relations, age,

social hierarchies and such-like? (This requires a substantial knowledge of the community life and relationships within it.)

Are imperatives used to express wishes, entreaties, requests, pleas, advice, recommendations, warnings, instructions, invitations, permissions, good wishes, and imprecations (see the array of meanings of the English imperatives illustrated in 6.1–11)?

What means other than imperatives are employed in the language to express meanings associated with wishes, entreaties, and the like?

Do prohibitives have the same semantic distinctions as positive imperatives? How is politeness and strength of command expressed in prohibitives (if at all)? If imperatives distinguish honorifics, do prohibitives do so too?

Do the generalizations apply both to canonical and to non-canonical imperatives?

Chapter 6, 'Imperatives and their meanings', provides information from a variety of languages relevant for these issues.

6. Non-command meanings of imperatives

Do any of the imperatives and/or prohibitives have non-command meanings? In many languages, imperatives—negative and positive—have overtones of concessives and conditionals when used in complex sentences. Imperatives of all sorts frequently occur in speech formulae, such as blessings or farewells. Imperatives are often used in imprecations. They may be a feature of a vivid narrative. An imperative may or may not be used as a reply to a question or to a command.

Are there any conventional strategies for replying to an imperative?

Do prohibitives share any non-command meanings of positive imperatives? Do they have additional meanings of their own?

Chapter 7, 'Imperatives which do not command', provides information from a variety of languages relevant for these issues.

7. Imperative strategies: imperatives in disguise

In some languages, plain imperatives sound too abrupt and rude. Non-imperative forms can then be used instead. Can any non-imperative structures be used in commands in the language of your study? What is their function, and what are their semantic and pragmatic overtones? In some languages, a future form may be used as a polite command.

Can questions be used as directives? If so, do these include both content and polar questions? Do negative questions have more or less polite overtones?

Can declarative statements be used as directives? In many languages, statements cast in future, or irrealis, or an epistemic modality ('maybe') can be used as more or less polite commands, depending on the language.

Does the language employ desubordinated clauses in lieu of imperatives, as commands, in the spirit of free *if*-clauses in English? Can nominalizations—converbs, deverbal nouns, and the like—be used as commands? What are their connotations?

Does the language employ the same types of structure for negative as for positive imperatives? What are the similarities and what are the differences?

Chapter 8, 'Imperatives in disguise', provides information from a variety of languages relevant for these issues.

8. Imperatives in real life

How is the imperative used in real-life interaction? Are imperatives more frequent in some genres than in others? Are there types of addressee to whom imperatives are used most frequently? For instance, many grammars note that abrupt, impolite, or familiar imperatives and command strategies can be appropriate when addressing children, but are avoided when addressing elders.

Does the use of imperatives correlate with existing (traditional or contemporary) social hierarchies? What are the social factors governing the use of varied command strategies with different overtones (if any)?

If the society in which the language is spoken has undergone a recent change, it is important to try and find out if the social repercussions have had any effect on the use of imperatives and other command forms. For instance, the loss of traditional hierarchies may result in the loss of some specific honorific registers and imperative structures.

Does the language have any specific imperative words? Some languages have special, interjection-like forms to encourage giving, or for driving specific animals away. How do these correlate semantically with other types of imperative (for instance, they may be more colloquial, or more impolite than other imperatives). Does the language have any additional ways of marking imperatives and commands outside the verb, e.g. with vocative forms of nouns or interjections?

Chapter 9, 'Imperatives we live by', provides information from a variety of languages relevant for these issues.

9. Where do imperatives come from?

Can you say anything about the historical origin of positive and negative imperatives? One expects canonical imperatives to be more archaic than non-canonical ones. Does this apply to your language of study? Are there any instances of grammaticalization of lexical verbs and or reanalysis of non-imperative constructions in the history of the language?

Can you say anything about imperatives and commands in (i) genetically related and/or (ii) geographically contiguous languages in contact? If there are similarities, are they due to shared genetic inheritance, areal diffusion, or independent innovation?

Chapter 10 'Where do imperatives come from?', and Chapter 11, 'Imperatives in contact', provide information from a variety of languages relevant for these issues.

Glossary of terms

This short glossary explicates the ways in which some core linguistic terms are used throughout this book within the context of problems linked to imperatives and commands. The definitions here are based, among other sources, on Matthews (1997), Dixon's glossaries (1980: 510–14; 2010: i. 331–41, ii. 442–32), and glossaries in Aikhenvald (2004: 391–4) and Aikhenvald and Dixon (2006: 333–6). If a term is polysemous, I only include the meaning in which it is used within this book. For instance, 'directive' can refer to (a) a speech act by which speakers direct and order actions by other or (b) to a directional marker. Only meaning (a) is relevant for the present volume.

Where appropriate, I give the number of a section where a particular point is discussed in detail. Complementary terms are marked as Compl. Synonyms are marked as Syn.

A subject of a transitive verb.

ABSOLUTIVE case inflection marking intransitive subject (S) and transitive object (O). Compl. ERGATIVE.

ACCUSATIVE case inflection marking transitive object (O). Compl. NOMINATIVE.

ACTIVE VERB a verb whose subject is agentive and may control the action. Compl. STATIVE VERB.

AGGLUTINATIVE a type of language where words are easily segmentable into a sequence of morphemes, each of which typically conveys one meaning.

AGREEMENT when two words in a syntactic construction (e.g. a noun and modifying adjective within a noun phrase) are marked for the same grammatical category. For instance, gender (an inherent category for the noun and an agreement category for the adjective).

ANALYTIC a type of language where words realize grammatical distinctions marked by bound morphemes in synthetic languages. Compl. SYNTHETIC.

ANTIPASSIVE valency-reducing derivation which puts the underlying A (transitive subject) argument into derived S (intransitive subject) function, and places the underlying O argument in a peripheral function (§4.4.2).

APHASIA loss or impairment of speech as a result of brain disease or physical damage to the brain.

APPLICATIVE valency-increasing derivation which can operate on an intransitive clause, putting the underlying S argument into A function and introducing a new O argument (which may have been in peripheral function—instrumental, comitative,

beneficiary, etc.—in the underlying clause, or on a transitive verb, whereby a new O argument is co-opted from a peripheral argument, and either the underlying O assumes a peripheral function or the verb becomes ditransitive.

APPREHENSIVE clause or a verbal form whose meaning is ‘for fear that, lest (such and such thing should happen)’.

ARGUMENT, CORE an obligatory argument for a specific verb which must be either explicitly stated or recoverable from the context.

ARGUMENT, PERIPHERAL non-core argument, which is optional; typical non-core arguments include instrument, accompaniment, recipient, beneficiary, time, place, manner.

ASPECT verbal category which covers composition of an event (perfective versus imperfective); sometimes also covers boundedness and completion.

ATELIC an event which is unbounded and has no end-point. Compl. **TELIC**.

AUXILIARY verb from a small closed class which accompanies another verb from an open class carrying grammatical specifications. An auxiliary (sometimes also called auxiliary verb) typically inflects for tense or aspect, instead of the verb inflecting for these categories.

AVERSIVE case whose meaning is to refer to something for fear of which the action described by the verb should or should not take place, e.g. ‘Don’t go there for fear of ghosts’.

BORROWING transfer of linguistic features of any kind from one language to another as the result of contact. (Borrowing of forms is also known as direct diffusion, and borrowing of patterns as indirect diffusion: Heath 1978; Aikhenvald 2002.)

BOUND FORM form which cannot occur on its own but must occur attached to another form, e.g. prefix *in-* or suffix *-ing* in English. Compl. **FREE FORM**.

CANONICAL IMPERATIVES imperatives with second person addressee.

CASE a system of nominal inflection marking the syntactic function of a noun phrase in a clause.

CAUSATIVE valency-increasing derivation introducing a causer as an A-argument.

CLASSIFIERS a set of free or bound forms categorizing the referents of the noun in terms of their sex, shape, composition, arrangement, and so on (Aikhenvald 2006d).

CLITIC a morpheme which cannot form a phonological word but may be able to form a grammatical word, with special phonological properties different from those of both an affix and an independent word.

COMPLEMENT CLAUSE a special clause type whose exclusive function is to occupy the argument slot of a main verb.

CONDITIONAL a grammatical form marking a clause expressing condition, or a clause containing a condition.

CONJUNCT/DISJUNCT person-marking on the verb whereby first person subject in statements is expressed in the same way as second person in questions (conjunct), and all other persons are marked in a different way (disjunct). (Also used to describe cross-clausal co-reference). Syn. **LOCUTOR/NON-LOCUTOR** and congruent/noncongruent.

CONSTITUENT a word, a construction or a phrase that fills a slot in syntactic structure.

CONSTITUENT ORDER the order in which phrasal constituents occur in a clause. This is often confused with **WORD ORDER**.

CONTINUOUS an event or a process viewed as continuing over an appreciable period of time. Syn. **DURATIVE**.

CONVERB a non-finite verb form marking adverbial subordination (Haspelmath 1995).

COPULA a form (often a verb) which indicates a relationship between the copula subject and the copula complement, as the verb *be* in English *He is a plagiarist*.

COPULA CLAUSE a clause with a relational meaning between the copula subject and the copula complement.

CORE ARGUMENT an obligatory argument for a specific verb which must be either explicitly stated or recoverable from the context.

CORE MEANING main and default meaning of a category or a lexical item. Syn. main meaning. Compl. **EXTENSION OF MEANING**.

DEBITIVE modality indicating obligation. Syn. **DEONTIC**.

DECLARATIVE a mood used in statements.

DEICTIC category related to **DEIXIS**.

DEIXIS the ways in which the reference of an element is determined with respect to speaker, addressee, or temporal and spatial setting, typically involving pointing.

DELAYED IMPERATIVE a command 'do later'. See also **DISTANCE IN TIME**.

DEONTIC form or category expressing obligation or recommendation.

DEPENDENT CLAUSE a clause constituting a syntactic element within another clause.

DESUBORDINATION a process whereby a subordinate clause acquires the status of a main clause. Syn. **INSUBORDINATION**.

DIFFUSION is the spread of a linguistic feature within a geographical area or between languages. Diffusion can be unilateral (where A affects B) or multilateral (where A affects B in some ways and B affects A in others).

DIRECTIVE speech act by which speakers direct and order actions by others.

DISJUNCT opposite of conjunct; see **CONJUNCT/DISJUNCT**.

DISTANCE IN SPACE an imperative-specific category with the meaning of 'do (something) here (or near the speaker/addressee)' or 'do (something) there (or far from speaker/addressee)'.

DISTANCE IN TIME an imperative-specific category with the meaning of 'do (something) now' or 'do (something) later'. See also **DELAYED IMPERATIVE**; **IMMEDIATE IMPERATIVE**.

DURATIVE an event or a process viewed as continuing over an appreciable period of time. Syn. **CONTINUOUS**.

ENCLITIC clitic attached at the end of a phonological word.

EPISTEMIC (a) as a philosophical term: relating to knowledge or the degree of its validation; (b) as a linguistic term: indicating necessity, probability or possibility. See also **EPISTEMIC MEANINGS**.

EPISTEMIC MEANINGS meanings of (a) possibility or probability of an event or (b) the reliability of information.

EPISTEMIC MODALITY modality associated with epistemic meanings.

ERGATIVE case inflection marking transitive subject (A). Compl. **ABSOLUTIVE**.

EVIDENTIAL, EVIDENTIALITY grammatical marking of information source. Syn. **INFORMATION SOURCE**.

EXCLUSIVE non-singular first person pronoun referring to the speaker and one or more other people who do not include the addressee. Compl. **INCLUSIVE**.

EXTENSION OF MEANING additional meaning of a category or a lexical item realized under particular circumstances. Compl. **CORE MEANING**.

FACE the public 'self-image' that every member of a society wants to claim for themselves, associated with politeness (Brown and Levinson 1987: 61, 70). See also **POSITIVE FACE**; **NEGATIVE FACE**.

FOCUS a grammatical mechanism for marking an element or part of a clause for prominence, or contrast, or as new information.

FORMAL MARKEDNESS a term in a grammatical system which has zero realization—or a zero allomorph—is said to be formally unmarked.

FREE FORM a form which can occur on its own and then constitutes a grammatical word.

FUNCTIONAL MARKEDNESS a term in a grammatical system which is used as a generic cover term or, in underspecified context, is said to be functionally unmarked.

FUSIONAL a type of language whose words consist of morphemes which are 'fused' together and are not segmentable.

GENDER small closed system of agreement classes whose semantics involves sex (masculine, feminine, neuter), animacy, humanness, and rationality. Membership must be marked outside the noun itself (within the noun phrase or on the verb). Syn. **NOUN CLASS**. See Aikhenvald (2006d).

GERUND a nominalized form of a verb, similar to **CONVERB**.

GRAMMATICAL ACCOMMODATION involves a change in meaning of a morphological marker or a syntactic construction based on superficial segmental similarity with a marker or a construction in a different language.

GRAMMATICAL MEANING a meaning which must be expressed in a given language (Boas 1938: 132).

GRAMMATICAL WORD a unit within the hierarchy of grammatical units defined on grammatical criteria. See Dixon and Aikhenvald (2002).

GRAMMATICALIZATION process whereby an item with lexical status changes into an item with grammatical status (§10.2.2; Heine and Kuteva 2002). A typical example of grammaticalization is the verb 'finish' becoming a marker for 'completed' aspect. Grammaticalization necessarily involves reanalysis (see Harris and Campbell 1995: 92).

HEARSAY information known through verbal report. Syn. **REPORTED EVIDENTIAL**; **SECONDHAND**.

HORTATIVE command addressed to first person. Syn. **ADHORTATIVE**; **EXHORTATIVE**.

IMMEDIATE IMPERATIVE a command 'do immediately'. See also **DISTANCE IN TIME**.

IMPERATIVE a mood used in commands.

IMPERATIVE, CANONICAL imperatives with second person addressee.

IMPERATIVE, NON-CANONICAL imperatives with a non-second person addressee.

IMPERATIVE STRATEGY a form other than that of imperative mood employed as a command in lieu of the imperative mood.

IMPERFECT an event which began in the past and is still continuing.

IMPERFECTIVE ASPECT a verbal form used to refer to actions extending over a period of time, or continuously.

INCLUSIVE non-singular first person pronoun referring to the speaker and one or more other people including the addressee. Compl. **EXCLUSIVE**.

INDIRECT SPEECH reporting of what someone else has said by adapting deictic categories (e.g. person) to the viewpoint of the reporter. Compl. **DIRECT SPEECH**.

INTONATION type of prosody realized by pitch, which generally applies to a clause or a sentence.

IRREALIS verbal form referring to hypothetical events and/or something that has not happened. Compl. **REALIS**. See Elliott (2000).

ISOLATING a type of language in which most grammatical words consist of one morpheme.

JUSSIVE command addressed to third person.

LANGUAGE OBSCULESCENCE a process whereby language gradually falls into disuse.

LENITION the replacement of a sound by another sound with the same place of articulation but a weaker manner of articulation (see §11.1.2 for a lenited gerund in Scots Gaelic).

LINGUISTIC AREA a geographically delimited area including languages from two or more language families sharing significant traits (most of which are not found in languages from these families spoken outside the area). Syn. *SPRACHBUND*.

LOCUTOR/NON-LOCUTOR person-marking on the verb whereby first person subject in statements is expressed in the same way as second person in questions (conjunct), and all other persons are marked in a different way (disjunct). (Also used to describe cross-clausal co-reference). Syn. *CONJUNCT/DISJUNCT* and *CONGRUENT/NONCONGRUENT*.

MAXIMS OF CONVERSATION a set of principles of conversation and implicatures advanced by Grice (1989). See §9.5 and §12.7.

MIRATIVE grammatical marking of 'unprepared mind', including unexpected and also surprising information.

MODAL VERB a verb with epistemic or deontic meaning.

MODALITY grammatical category covering the degree of certainty of a statement (*EPISTEMIC*), obligation (*DEONTIC*), and permission. This should not be confused with *MOOD*.

MOOD grammatical category expressing a speech act (e.g. statement: indicative mood; question: interrogative mood; command: imperative mood). Sometimes defined as a category which 'characterizes the actuality of the event' (Chung and Timberlake 1985: 241).

NEGATIVE FACE a type of behaviour associated with 'the basic claim to territories'—'freedom of action and freedom from imposition' (Brown and Levinson 1987: 61). See also *POSITIVE FACE*; *FACE*.

NOMINALIZATION morphological derivation which forms a noun from a verb, an adjective, or a word of another word class.

NOMINATIVE case inflection marking intransitive subject (S) and transitive subject (A). Compl. *ACCUSATIVE*.

NON-CANONICAL IMPERATIVE imperatives with a non-second person addressee.

NON-VISUAL EVIDENTIAL information source involving hearing, smelling, feeling, and sometimes also touching something.

NOUN CLASS closed system of agreement classes whose semantics involves sex (masculine, feminine, neuter), animacy, humanness, shape, etc. Noun class membership must be marked outside the noun itself (within the noun phrase or on the verb). See Aikhenvald (2006d). Syn. *GENDER*.

NOUN PHRASE (NP) a constituent which can fill an argument slot in a clause.

NUMBER grammatical system referring to the quantity of referents, one of whose terms is singular.

OPTATIVE a grammatical form whose main meaning is to express wishes.

PASSIVE valency-reducing derivation which puts underlying O (direct object) argument in derived S (intransitive subject) function and places underlying A (transitive subject) argument in a peripheral function.

PERFECT a verbal form focusing on the results of an action or process, thus relating a past event to the present. An event or a process is then viewed as completed in the past but still relevant for the present.

PERFECTIVE ASPECT a verbal form which specifies that the event is regarded as a whole, without respect for its temporal constituency (even though it may be extended in time). Compl. **IMPERFECTIVE ASPECT**.

PERIPHERAL ARGUMENT non-core argument, which is optional; typical non-core arguments include instrument, accompaniment, recipient, beneficiary, time, place, manner.

PHONOLOGICAL WORD a unit in the hierarchy of phonological units defined on the basis of phonological criteria, typically including stress and tone. See Dixon and Aikhenvald (2002).

POLARITY grammatical system whose terms are negative and positive.

POLYSYNTHETIC a highly synthetic language.

POSITIVE FACE a positive image claimed by interactants (Brown and Levinson 1987: 61, 70). Also see **NEGATIVE FACE**; **FACE**.

POTENTIAL a grammatical form whose main meaning is to express possibility.

PRAGMATICS meanings created by the context of use.

PROCLITIC clitic attached at the beginning of a phonological word.

PROSODY rhythm and intonation in speech; non-segmental features of sounds; also used to refer to a system of phonological contrasts which has scope over a sequence of segments.

PROTOLANGUAGE putative ancestor language for a group of modern languages proved to be genetically related, with each having developed by regular changes from the protolanguage.

PUNCTUAL an action which happens instantaneously. **PUNCTUAL IMPERATIVE** refers to punctual action.

REALIS a category which encompasses real events or states, which have happened or are happening. Compl. **IRREALIS**. See Elliott (2000).

REALITY STATUS a grammatical category covering **REALIS** and **IRREALIS**.

REANALYSIS a historical process by which a morphosyntactic device comes to be assigned a different structure from that which it had, without necessarily changing its surface form and with little change to its semantics. For instance, in Udi a number of verbs—which originally contained noun class agreement markers—were reanalysed

as simple stems, as part of the process of losing the noun class system (see §10.2.2; Harris and Campbell 1995: 66–7).

RECIPROCAL a category referring to an activity in which an A argument acts on the O argument and vice versa.

REDUPLICATION morphological process which involves repeating all or part of the root or stem of a word before, after, or in the middle of it.

REFLEXIVE a category or a clause where underlying A and O arguments have the same reference.

REINTERPRETATION (or extension) is a change in the surface manifestation of a pattern 'which does not involve immediate or intrinsic modification of underlying structure' (Harris and Campbell 1995: 97). Reanalysis most often occurs together with reinterpretation. Examples of reinterpretation without reanalysis involve 'a shift in the categorial status of a linguistic form resulting from its occurrence in ambiguous positions'. For instance, the English noun *fun* has been reinterpreted as an adjective, leading to its use in contexts like *This is a fun game* (§10.2.2; Trask 2000: 274, 280).

REPORTED EVIDENTIAL a marker of information source; that is, an evidential whose main meaning is marking what has been learnt from someone else's verbal report. Syn. **HEARSAY**; **SECONDHAND**.

RESULTATIVE a verbal form referring to the results of an action or a process.

S subject of an intransitive verb.

SCOPE the part of a sentence or clause with which an imperative (or a negation marker) combines in meaning (cf. Matthews 1997: 331).

SECONDHAND (a) based on verbal report from someone who said it (as opposed to **THIRDHAND**); (b) same as **REPORTED**.

SERIAL VERB CONSTRUCTION a single predicate consisting of two or more verbs each of which could be used as a predicate on its own. A serial verb construction refers to one event and has single mood, modality, polarity, and tense/aspect value.

SPEECH ACT an utterance 'conceived as an act by which the speaker does something' (Matthews 1997: 349). If one says *Go away!*, one performs an act of command. If one says *Who is it?*, the act is of asking a question.

STATIVE VERB a verb referring to a state and whose subject is not agentive and does not control the state. Compl. **ACTIVE**.

STRATEGY, IMPERATIVE a form other than that of imperative mood employed as a command in lieu of the imperative mood.

SUBJUNCTIVE a grammatical form, especially in European languages, whose major meaning is 'to mark a clause as expressing something other than a statement of what is certain' (Matthews 1997: 360).

SUBORDINATE CLAUSE Syn. **DEPENDENT CLAUSE**.

SUBORDINATOR overt marker of a subordinate clause.

SUPPLETION a morphological process in which one form replaces another in a given context; for example English *better* is a suppletive form of *good*.

SWITCH-REFERENCE a grammatical system whereby a marker indicates whether the subject of a dependent (medial) clause is identical or not with that of the main (final) clause.

SYNTHETIC a language whose words consist of a large number of grammatical components. Compl. **ANALYTIC**.

TELIC an event which is bounded and has an end-point. Compl. **ATELIC**.

TENSE grammatical category which refers to time.

TOPIC an argument which occurs in a succession of clauses in discourse and binds them together thematically.

VALENCY the number of core arguments required by the verb.

VALENCY-CHANGING derivations which may increase valency (causative, applicative) or decrease it (passive, antipassive, some varieties of reciprocal and reflexive).

VERBLESS CLAUSE similar to a copula clause but with the predicate slot left empty. It indicates a relational meaning between the verbless clause subject and the verbless clause complement.

VISUAL EVIDENTIAL information source involving knowledge obtained through seeing something.

WORD ORDER the order in which words occur in a phrase, or a clause, or a sentence. Distinct from (but often confused with) **CONSTITUENT ORDER**.

ZERO a term with no overt marking is said to have zero realization.

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Note that the genetic affiliation of each language is shown in parentheses after the language name. For example, Estonian (Balto-Finnic, Finno-Ugric, Uralic) indicates that the Estonian language belongs to the Balto-Finnic subgroup of the Finno-Ugric branch of the Uralic family. Only established subgroupings, concerning which there is consensus, are given. Papuan and Australian are given as areal indications, not as genetic families.

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