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Imperatives and Commands

Alexandra Y. Aikhenvald

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*For Yobate, Ropate, Nyaywi, and Serewhali,
the inspiration behind this work*

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Plea

This book is not the last word on imperatives or on commands. I welcome reactions, counterexamples, new facts, new ideas, to further develop, refine, and perhaps redefine the hypotheses and generalizations put forward here. Please send them to me at the Cairns Institute, James Cook University, Cairns, North Queensland, 4870, Australia, or, in a quicker way, to Alexandra. Aikhenvald@jcu.edu.au or nyamamayratak@gmail.com.

Preface and acknowledgements

My first encounter with dauntingly complex imperatives was through fieldwork on Tariana, an Arawak language in the Vaupés River Basin in Brazil, and the neighbouring East Tucanoan languages. When I ran across several prohibitives in Manambu, my field language in the Papuan area, with only one positive imperative, I was astounded. As a way of coming to grips with these new facts, I decided to undertake a typological study of imperatives and command.

In January 2003, I wrote a 100-page typological essay, 'Imperatives and other commands', accompanied by a list of suggestions for fieldworkers on how to describe commands. The text, based on data collected from about 300 languages, was a 'position paper' for a Local Workshop on 'Imperatives and Other Commands' which ran throughout 2003 at the old Research Centre for Linguistic Typology in Melbourne. The workshop featured presentations on forty languages, spanning Europe, Asia, Africa, the Americas, Oceania, and Australia. The position paper remained available on the website for two years, and was viewed by over 300 visitors. That preliminary draft manuscript—which was not intended for reference or quoting—came to be a precursor of this book.

I am indebted to many people, of different continents and backgrounds.

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The stimulating atmosphere and warm support of colleagues and friends at James Cook University is what finally made it all possible.

Abbreviations

=	clitic boundary
-	morpheme boundary
1, 2, 3	1st, 2nd, 3rd person
A	transitive subject
ABL	ablative
ABS	absolutive
ACC	accusative
ACT.FOC	action focus
ADD.HON	addressee honorific
ADV	adverbializer
AFF	affix
ALL	allative
Anp	anaphoric pronoun
ANT	anticipatory
AOR	aorist
APPR	apprehensive
ART	article
ASP	aspect
ATTR	attributive
AUX	auxiliary
BAS.NP	basic non-past
BAS.VT	basic versatile tense
BEN	benefactive
CAN	canonical imperative
CAUS	causative
CESS_MOD	cessative modal
CL	classifier
COMIT	comitative
COMPL	completive
CON.IMPV	conative imperative 'try and do'
COND	conditional
CONJ	conjunction
CONT.IMPV	continuous imperative
CONV	converb
COP	copula
COREF	coreferential
CTEMP	cotemporaneous

DAT	dative
DECL	declarative
DEF	definite
DEM.F	demonstrative feminine
DEM:LOC	demonstrative locative
DEP	dependent
DEP.INTRANS	dependent intransitive
DESID	desiderative
DIM	diminutive
DIR	directional
DS	different subject
du, DU	dual
DUB	dubitative
EMPH	emphatic
ERG	ergative
excl	exclusive
F	factative tense/aspect/modality
fem, FEM	feminine
FOC	focus
FUT	future
GEN	genitive
GO.TEMP	go temporally
HON	honorific
HORT	hortative
HPL	plural of animate class
IM	imperative sentence-type suffix in Korean
IMM	immediate
IMPF	imperfective
IMPV	imperative
INC	inceptive
INCH	inchoative
incl	inclusive
IND	indicative
INDEF	indefinite
INDIV	individuation particle
INF	infinitive
INSTR	instrumental
INTENS	intensifier
INTER	interrogative
INTR, intr	intransitive
IRR	irrealis
JUSS	jussive
LIG	ligature

LIM	limiter
LK	linker
LOC	locative
MALEF	malefactive
MASC, masc	masculine
min	minimal-augmented
MOT	motion
n	neuter
NCL	noun class
NEG	negative
nf	nonfeminine
NFEM	nonfeminine
NFUT	non-future
NOM	nominative
NOMZ	nominalizer
NONACC	non-accomplished
NONCAN	non-canonical
NONDECL	non-declarative
NON.PROX	non-proximate
NPS	nonpast
nsg, NSG	nonsingular
O	object of a transitive verb
OBJ	object
OBL	oblique
OBLIG	obligation; obligative
OM	object marker
OPT	optative
P	person
PART	particle
PASS	passive
PAUS	pausal
PERF	perfect, perfective
PERI	peripheral
PERM	permissive
pl, PL	plural
PN	personal name
POL	polite speech level suffix or particle
POSS, poss	possessive
POT	potential
PRED	predicate marker
PREP	preposition
PRES	present
PRES.REP	present reported

PRF	perfective
PRIV	privative
PROH	prohibitive
PROH.GEN	prohibitive general
PROPOS	propositive
PROX	proximate
PURP	purposive
Q	question
QUOT	quotative
REC.PAST	recent past
REC.P.VIS	recent past visual
REFL	reflexive
RETR	reiterative
REL	relator
REP	reported
REQUEST	requestive
S	intransitive subject
SEC.IMPV	secondhand imperative
SEQ	sequential
sg, SG	singular
SH	subject honorific suffix
SJ	subjunctive
SS	same subject
ST.PAT.IRR	stative patient irrealis
SUB	subordinator
SUBJ	subject
SUBJ.HON	subject honorific
SUBJUNC	subjunctive
SUP.LAT	superlative 'on top'
TAM	tense, aspect, mood
TEMP	temporal
THEM	thematic
T.LNK	temporal link
TOP	topic
TOP.NON.A/S	topical non-subject
TR	transitive form
TRANS	transitivizer
UNCERT	uncertainty
VIS	visual
VOC	vocative
VOLUNT.POT	voluntative potential

Tables, diagram, figures, and schemes

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