

EXPRESSING IMPERATIVE SENTENCES IN ENGLISH AT DIFFERENT LEVELS

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ANNOTATION

This article explores the multi-faceted nature of imperative sentences in the English language, moving beyond simple grammatical structures to analyze their pragmatic functions across different social levels. The study investigates how imperatives are softened or intensified based on the relationship between the speaker and the listener, the urgency of the situation, and the social hierarchy. By examining direct commands, polite requests, and suggestive imperatives, the research highlights the importance of "face-saving" acts in English communication. The methodology includes a qualitative analysis of linguistic markers and a comparative study of formal versus informal discourse.

Keywords: Imperative mood, pragmatics, politeness strategies, directive speech acts, social hierarchy, linguistic softening, English grammar.

ВЫРАЖЕНИЕ ПОВЕЛИТЕЛЬНЫХ ПРЕДЛОЖЕНИЙ В АНГЛИЙСКОМ ЯЗЫКЕ НА РАЗНЫХ УРОВНЯХ

АННОТАЦИЯ

В данной статье исследуется многогранная природа повелительных предложений в английском языке, выходя за рамки простых грамматических структур и анализируя их прагматические функции на разных социальных

уровнях. Исследование изучает, как повелительные предложения смягчаются или усиливаются в зависимости от отношений между говорящим и слушателем, срочности ситуации и социальной иерархии. Изучая прямые команды, вежливые просьбы и подразумеваемые повелительные предложения, исследование подчеркивает важность «сохраняющих лицо» действий в английском общении. Методология включает качественный анализ лингвистических маркеров и сравнительное исследование формального и неформального дискурса.

Ключевые слова: Повелительное наклонение, прагматика, стратегии вежливости, директивные речевые акты, социальная иерархия, лингвистическое смягчение, английская грамматика.

INGLIZ TILIDA BUYRUQ UNDOVINI TURLI SATXLARDA IFODALANISHI

ANNOTATSIYA

Ushbu maqola ingliz tilidagi imperativ jumlalarning ko'p qirrali tabiatini o'rganadi, ularning pragmatik funktsiyalarini turli ijtimoiy darajalarda tahlil qilish uchun oddiy grammatik tuzilmalardan tashqariga chiqadi. Tadqiqot so'zlovchi va tinglovchi o'rtasidagi munosabatlar, vaziyatning dolzarbliji va ijtimoiy ierarxiya asosida imperativlarning qanday yumshatilgani yoki kuchayganligini o'rganadi. To'g'ridan-to'g'ri buyruqlar, muloyim so'rovlar va taklif qiluvchi imperativlarni o'rganish orqali tadqiqot ingliz tilidagi muloqotda "yuzni saqlash" harakatlarining muhimligini ta'kidlaydi. Metodologiya lingvistik belgilarning sifatli tahlilini va rasmiy va norasmiy nutqni qiyosiy o'rganishni o'z ichiga oladi.

Kalit so'zlar: Imperativ kayfiyat, pragmatika, xushmuomalalik strategiyalari, direktiv nutq aktlari, ijtimoiy ierarxiya, lingvistik yumshatish, ingliz grammatikasi.

INTRODUCTION

The imperative sentence is one of the most fundamental structures in English grammar, primarily used to issue commands, provide instructions, or make requests.

However, the raw grammatical form of the imperative—often characterized by the omission of the subject "you" and the use of the base form of the verb—can be perceived as socially abrasive if not modulated correctly. In English-speaking cultures, the choice of how to express an imperative is heavily influenced by "Politeness Theory," as developed by Brown and Levinson. A speaker must navigate the thin line between clarity and courtesy. Whether one is in a professional environment, a casual social gathering, or a high-stakes emergency, the level of directness used in an imperative sentence conveys significant information about the speaker's intent and their perception of the power dynamics at play. This article aims to categorize these levels and provide a structured understanding of how English speakers adapt their "directives" to suit diverse communicative needs.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND METHODOLOGY

The study of imperatives has evolved from a purely syntactic analysis to a pragmatic one. Scholars such as Austin¹ classified imperatives under "directives," which are speech acts intended to get the listener to do something. Further research by Leech² introduced the "Politeness Principle," suggesting that the more effort a speaker puts into "indirectness," the more polite the imperative becomes.

The methodology employed in this research is a descriptive-comparative analysis. We analyzed a corpus of 100 imperative-based interactions across three distinct settings: professional (workplace), casual (family/friends), and instructional (manuals/signs). The study focuses on "internal modification" (e.g., adding "please") and "external modification" (e.g., providing a reason for the command) to determine how these levels of imperativity are perceived.

¹ Austin, J. L. — How to Do Things with Words — Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962. – pp. 12-25.

² Leech, G. N. — Principles of Pragmatics — London: Longman, 1983. – pp. 104-110.

DISCUSSION AND RESULTS

Our findings indicate that the "bare imperative" is rarely used in isolation unless there is a significant power imbalance or a situation of extreme urgency. Instead, English speakers utilize "hedging," "modal verbs," and "interrogative tags" to adjust the level of the command.

The following tables illustrate the distribution and the structural variations of imperatives based on the level of formality and the relationship between participants.

Table 1:

Levels of Imperative Directness and Their Pragmatic Functions

Level	Grammatical Structure	Pragmatic Function	Example
Level 1: Direct	Base Verb + Object	High urgency / High authority	"Open the door now!"
Level 2: Modified	Please + Imperative	Standard Politeness	"Please open the door."
Level 3: Indirect	Modal + Interrogative	Softened Request	"Could you open the door?"
Level 4: Suggestive	Let's / Why don't we	Collaborative Directive	"Let's open the door."

Table 2:

Frequency of Imperative Types in Different Contexts (Sample Analysis %)

Context	Bare Imperatives	Softened (Modal/Please)	Indirect/Hints
Emergency	85%	10%	5%
Professional	15%	60%	25%
Casual Social	30%	40%	30%

The data shows that in professional settings, indirect imperatives (Level 3) are preferred to maintain workplace harmony, whereas bare imperatives (Level 1) are almost exclusively reserved for instructions (e.g., "Click the link") or emergencies.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the expression of imperative sentences in English is far more complex than the mere application of a grammatical rule. It is a sophisticated social tool that requires the speaker to balance the need for action with the need for social etiquette. Through our analysis, it has become evident that the level of "imperativeness" is inversely proportional to the social distance between the speakers; as the need for politeness increases, the directness of the imperative decreases. We have observed that the use of "please," while common, is often insufficient in professional hierarchies, where modal verbs like "could" or "would" are required to transform a command into a socially acceptable request.

Furthermore, the research highlights that English learners must be taught not just the form of the imperative, but also the pragmatic weight it carries. Using a Level 1 direct imperative in a Level 3 situation can lead to communication breakdowns, perceived rudeness, and damaged social relationships. Future linguistic studies should continue to explore how tone of voice and non-verbal cues further modify these imperative levels, as the written form only captures a portion of the speaker's intent. Ultimately, mastering English imperatives involves a deep understanding of the cultural values of autonomy and respect that are embedded within the language's structure.

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