

English Imperatives as a Discourse-Configurational Language

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The goals of this paper are threefold: (i) To reinterpret English imperatives (EIs) as a discourse-configurational language (DC-language, limiting discussion to subject omission; Miyagawa 2010), but not as an agreement-based language (A-language); (ii) To refine *Agree* in A- & DC-grammars; & (iii) To redefine some discourse (D)-related resources to describe EIs. (See Miyagawa (2010) for dichotomy between A- (English) & DC-languages (Japanese) in terms of ϕ -features & topic-/focus-features (respectively) inherited by T from phase head C (Chomsky 2008) for the purpose of triggering A-movement at T.) Consider the following, with evidence pointing to EIs being a DC-language:

- (1) a. Somebody **open** the window. (no agreement on the verb)
 (cf. 'Somebody opens *the window*': a declarative, agreement on the verb)
 b. **Don't** be noisy. (*do*-support, without V-to-T movement of the *be*-verb)
 (cf. 'John isn't /is not *noisy*': a declarative, V-to-T movement of the *be*-verb, without *do*-support)

The EIs in (1a,b) point to there being *no ϕ -feature agreement between subject & verb* (a defining characteristic of DC-languages), & lack of ϕ -feature agreement on T makes it impossible for the *be*-verb to raise to T ((1b)). Unvalued ϕ - & topic-/focus-features detect DPs (*pro* for (1b)) with unvalued Case-features. Case-valuation is implemented roughly in the same way in both types (*upon Agree in ϕ -features & upon Agree in topic-/focus-features* for A- & DC-languages, respectively; Saito 2007 for a different view of Case in East Asian (EA) languages & his attempt to equate EA argument-ellipsis & radical pro-drop (RPD)). I take an overt & a *pro* EI subject (somebody & *pro* in (1a,b)) to be a focus & a topic DP, respectively. Further, *pro* in EIs receives nominative Case, valued by T(ense)_{<Imp>} (based on such Modern English data as *Go and do **thou** likewise (Luke x.37) (The Holy Bible: 394)*, an imperative with the nominative pronoun *thou* as subject, & on the Japanese imperative, *Omae-ga ik-e* ('you-NOM go-IMP'; 'You go'), which contains an overt nominative subject). Let me propose some D-related resources to describe EIs, as follows:

- (2) a. Go away. b. You go away.

Following Grohmann's (2003) tripartite clausal structure (i.e., the *theta-domain* (TH-domain), the *Case/agreement-domain* (C/A-domain; for A-languages; the *Case/topic/focus-domain* (for DC-languages)), & the *discourse-domain* (D-domain)), we obtain the following NS-structures for the TH-domains of (2a,b): '[_{VP} *pro* go away]' & '[_{VP} you go away],' respectively. The subjects receive a theta-role of 'goer.' We then

have the NS-structures for their C/A-domains: ‘[C_{<IMP, topic>} [TP T_{<Imp>} [vP *pro* go away]]’ & ‘[C_{<IMP, focus>} [TP T_{<Imp>} [vP *you* go away]],’ respectively. Inheritance of topic-/focus-features from C by T takes place. Valuation of *pro*’s & *you*’s unvalued Case-features takes place, the imperative Tenses $T_{\langle Imp, topic/focus \rangle}$ assigning nominative Case to *pro* & *you* with a topic- & a focus-feature, respectively, *under Agree*. The topic-/focus-features have been assigned to *pro* & *you*, respectively, from the “pragmatics” module at the strong v phasal TRANSFER via the “invasive” approach to the NS-interfaces connection (López 2003). Finally we get the NS-structures for their D-domains: ‘[CP<IMP> [TP T_{<Imp>} [vP *pro*_{topic} go away]]’ & ‘[CP<IMP> [TP *you*_{focus} T_{<Imp>} [vP (*you*_{focus}) go away]],’ respectively. The feature <IMP> in C functions to mark its sister TP as imperative, with the “performative” meaning of “command.” What remains for the purposes of interpretation of (2a,b) is identification of the subjects. As for “subject interpretation” in EIs, LF copying operates (Saito 2007), providing imperative subjects with *you*, the sole LF object available to English for imperative purposes (Saito 2007 for the view that ‘LF copying is an available option universally’). The D-domain of imperatives includes the notion of “YOU,” which denotes the “addressee” & counts as the (sole) value of the “semantic role” of *Addressee*. The *pro*_{topic} & *you*_{focus} subjects of imperatives covertly raise to [Spec,C], where they receive the semantic role of *Addressee* from the *Speaker*, whose “linguistic” domain is the D-domain (my forthcoming work for the ‘generalized’ theta-Criterion requiring an argument to bear a theta- or a semantic-role). T(ense)_{<Speaker>}, which resides in the D-domain & corresponds to the “*Speaker*’s” *Absolute Present Tense* (Hornstein 1990 for a Reichenbachian theory of tense), values “vocative Case” (Case-visibility requirement on theta-assignment, according to which such ‘vocative’ expressions as *John!* may receive a semantic-role of *Addressee* only if its Case-feature is valued as vocative; the generalized theta-Criterion). T_{<Imp>} used to raise overtly to the imperative C (*Go and do **thou** likewise*, with the verb in C), but it does not any more. The subjects of (2a,b) receive both a theta-role of *goer* & a semantic-role of *addressee*. Referring to the “addressee” makes an imperative subject *topicalized* or *focused*, depending on whether it is covert or overt, respectively. EIs capitalize on the DC-language strategy in assigning a topic or focus status to [Spec,T]. This situation points to EIs being (partly) a DC-language. [792words]

References:
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