

OXFORD  
LINGUISTICS

Aikhenvald and Dixon  
Commands

This book focuses on the form and the function of commands—directive speech acts such as pleas, entreaties, and orders—from a typological perspective. A team of internationally-renowned experts in the field examine the interrelationship of these speech acts with cultural stereotypes and practices, as well as their origins and development, especially in the light of language contact.

The volume begins with an introduction outlining the marking and the meaning of imperatives and other ways of expressing commands and directives. Each of the chapters that follow offers an in-depth analysis of commands in a particular language. These analyses are cast in terms of ‘basic linguistic theory’—a cumulative typological functional framework—and the chapters are arranged and structured in a way that allows useful comparison between them. The languages investigated include Quechua, Japanese, Lao, Aguaruna and Ashaninka Satipo (both from Peru), Dyirbal (from Australia), Zenzontepec Chatino (from Mexico), Nungon, Tayatuk, and Karawari (from Papua New Guinea), Korowai (from West Papua), Wolaitta (from Ethiopia), and Northern Paiute (a native language of the United States).

**Alexandra Y. Aikhenvald** is Distinguished Professor, Australian Laureate Fellow, and Director of the Language and Culture Research Centre at James Cook University.

**R. M. W. Dixon** is Adjunct Professor and Deputy Director of the Language and Culture Research Centre at James Cook University.

# Commands

*A Cross-Linguistic Typology*

EDITED BY

Alexandra Y. Aikhenvald  
and R. M. W. Dixon

*Explorations in Linguistic Typology*

OXFORD  
UNIVERSITY PRESS

www.oup.com

ISBN 978-0-19-885250-6



9 780198 852506

OXFORD

## Commands

---

## EXPLORATIONS IN LINGUISTIC TYPOLOGY

GENERAL EDITORS: Alexandra Y. Aikhenvald and R. M. W. Dixon  
Language and Cultural Research Centre, James Cook University

This series focuses on aspects of language that are of current theoretical interest and for which there has not previously or recently been any full-scale cross-linguistic study. Its books are for typologists, fieldworkers, and theory developers, and designed for use in advanced seminars and courses.

### PUBLISHED

- 1 Adjective Classes  
*edited by* R. M. W. Dixon and Alexandra Y. Aikhenvald
- 2 Serial Verb Constructions  
*edited by* Alexandra Y. Aikhenvald and R. M. W. Dixon
- 3 Complementation  
*edited by* R. M. W. Dixon and Alexandra Y. Aikhenvald
- 4 Grammars in Contact  
*edited by* Alexandra Y. Aikhenvald and R. M. W. Dixon
- 5 The Semantics of Clause Linking  
*edited by* R. M. W. Dixon and Alexandra Y. Aikhenvald
- 6 Possession and Ownership  
*edited by* Alexandra Y. Aikhenvald and R. M. W. Dixon
- 7 The Grammar of Knowledge  
*edited by* Alexandra Y. Aikhenvald and R. M. W. Dixon
- 8 Commands  
*edited by* Alexandra Y. Aikhenvald and R. M. W. Dixon

### PUBLISHED IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE SERIES

- Areal Diffusion and Genetic Inheritance  
Problems in Comparative Linguistics  
*edited by* Alexandra Y. Aikhenvald and R. M. W. Dixon

# Commands

---

*A Cross-Linguistic Typology*

Edited by

ALEXANDRA Y. AIKHENVALD and

R. M. W. DIXON

Language and Culture Research Centre

James Cook University

**OXFORD**  
UNIVERSITY PRESS

**OXFORD**  
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Great Clarendon Street, Oxford, OX2 6DP,  
United Kingdom

Oxford University Press is a department of the University of Oxford.  
It furthers the University's objective of excellence in research, scholarship,  
and education by publishing worldwide. Oxford is a registered trade mark of  
Oxford University Press in the UK and in certain other countries

© editorial matter and organization Alexandra Y. Aikhenvald and R. M. W. Dixon 2017  
© the chapters their several authors 2017

The moral rights of the authors have been asserted

First Edition published in 2017

Impression: 1

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in  
a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, without the  
prior permission in writing of Oxford University Press, or as expressly permitted  
by law, by licence or under terms agreed with the appropriate reprographics  
rights organization. Enquiries concerning reproduction outside the scope of the  
above should be sent to the Rights Department, Oxford University Press, at the  
address above

You must not circulate this work in any other form  
and you must impose this same condition on any acquirer

Published in the United States of America by Oxford University Press  
198 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10016, United States of America

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data  
Data available

Library of Congress Control Number: 2016960644

ISBN 978-0-19-880322-5

Printed and bound by CPI Group (UK) Ltd,  
Croydon, CR0 4YY

Links to third party websites are provided by Oxford in good faith and  
for information only. Oxford disclaims any responsibility for the materials  
contained in any third party website referenced in this work.

# Contents

<i>Preface</i>	x
<i>Notes on the contributors</i>	xii
<i>Abbreviations</i>	xvii
1 Imperatives and commands: a cross-linguistic view	1
<i>Alexandra Y. Aikhenvald</i>	
1 Preamble	1
2 Imperatives and commands	2
3 Canonical and non-canonical imperatives	5
4 Non-imperative forms in lieu of imperatives	8
5 Imperatives, their grammar, and meanings	11
6 Negating an imperative	18
7 The limits of imperatives	20
8 Imperatives which do not ‘command’	23
9 Command strategies	24
10 Imperatives in language history	30
11 Understanding imperatives	33
12 About this volume	37
References	40
2 Imperatives and commands in Quechua	46
<i>Willem F. H. Adelaar</i>	
1 Preliminary information on Quechua	46
2 Nature of the sources	50
3 Expression of imperatives	50
4 Imperative and Future tense	51
5 Negative commands	53
6 Prohibitive adverb <i>ama</i>	53
7 The copula construction in an imperative environment	54
8 Grammatical categories of imperatives	55
9 Politeness	56
10 Pre-imperatives	56
11 Special imperatives	57
12 Postverbal clitics	57
13 Imperative in quotations	58

vi *Contents*

---

- 14 Vocatives 58
- 15 Imperative strategies 58
- 16 A final word 59
  - References 59
- 3 The grammatical representation of commands and prohibitions in Aguaruna 61
  - Simon E. Overall*
    - 1 Introduction 61
    - 2 Typological profile 62
    - 3 Formal marking of directives 67
    - 4 Commands in grammar 76
    - 5 Commands in interaction 79
    - 6 Final comments 82
    - References 82
- 4 Imperatives in Ashaninka Satipo (Kampa Arawak) of Peru 83
  - Elena Mihás*
    - 1 Community background 83
    - 2 The language 84
    - 3 The canonical imperative construction 88
    - 4 First person cohortative construction 89
    - 5 Third person jussive construction 90
    - 6 Summary of the imperative paradigm 91
    - 7 Restrictions on the formation of imperative 91
    - 8 Prohibitives and preventives 94
    - 9 Specification of the action's temporal, spatial, and phasal parameters 95
    - 10 Adjusting the force of commands 96
    - 11 Command strategies 98
    - 12 Responses to commands 100
    - 13 Mock-up commands 101
    - 14 Calling people and other spiritual entities 102
    - 15 Commands given to pets and domesticated animals 102
    - 16 Conclusions 103
    - References 105
- 5 Commands in Zenzontepec Chatino (Otomanguean) 106
  - Eric W. Campbell*
    - 1 Introduction 106
    - 2 Basic information about Zenzontepec Chatino and the data in this study 107
    - 3 Grammatical sketch 108

- 
- 4 Canonical imperatives: the Imperative Mood 112
  - 5 Prohibitives and non-canonical imperatives 118
  - 6 Other addressee-directed command strategies 121
  - 7 Conclusion 124
  - References 125
  
  - 6 What Dyirbal uses instead of commands 127
  - R. M. W. Dixon*
  - 1 Preface 127
  - 2 Introduction 127
  - 3 Background 130
  - 4 Verbal structure 133
  - 5 Potentiality inflection 137
  - 6 Caution inflection 142
  - 7 Conclusion 144
  - References 145
  
  - 7 On the heterogeneity of Northern Paiute directives 146
  - Tim Thornes*
  - 1 Introduction 146
  - 2 Exploring directive speech 146
  - 3 The language and its speakers 147
  - 4 Preliminaries: Northern Paiute grammatical properties 148
  - 5 Note on sources 151
  - 6 Commands in Northern Paiute 151
  - 7 Command strategies 153
  - 8 The prohibitive construction 157
  - 9 Development of the prohibitive construction 158
  - 10 Non-canonical directive: first person (ex)hortative 159
  - 11 Non-canonical directive: third person optative 161
  - 12 Historical considerations 162
  - 13 Summary and conclusion 165
  - References 166
  
  - 8 Imperatives and commands in Japanese 169
  - Nerida Jarkey*
  - 1 Preliminary information 169
  - 2 Cultural parameters, commands, and discourse 171
  - 3 Expression of imperatives and prohibitives 173
  - 4 Semantics of imperatives 176
  - 5 Grammatical categories of imperatives 178
  - 6 Non-command meanings of imperatives 179



viii *Contents*

---

- 7 Command strategies 181
- 8 Conclusion 187
  - Sources 188
  - References 188
- 9 Linguistic expression of commands in Lao 189
  - N. J. Enfield*
  - 1 Preliminary information 189
  - 2 Expression of imperatives 191
  - 3 Negative imperatives 196
  - 4 Semantic distinctions in commands 197
  - 5 Social hierarchy and commands 202
  - 6 Conclusion 204
    - References 205
- 10 Imperatives and command strategies in Tayatuk (Morobe, PNG) 206
  - Valérie Guérin*
  - 1 The language 206
  - 2 Canonical imperatives 209
  - 3 Non-canonical imperatives 211
  - 4 Negative imperatives 213
  - 5 Commands strategies 214
  - 6 Concluding notes 218
    - References 222
- 11 Imperatives and commands in Nungon 224
  - Hannah S. Sarvasy*
  - 1 Introduction to Nungon 224
  - 2 Imperatives overview 227
  - 3 Imperative forms in other clause types 238
  - 4 Imperative strategies 242
  - 5 Origin of imperative forms 246
  - 6 Acquisition of imperatives 247
  - 7 Dog commands 248
    - References 248
- 12 The imperative paradigm of Korowai, a Greater Awyu language of West Papua 250
  - Lourens de Vries*
  - 1 Introduction 250
  - 2 Introduction to the Korowai verb system 250

---

3	Korowai imperatives	252
4	Summary and discussion	263
	References	264
13	Commands as a form of intimacy among the Karawari of Papua New Guinea	266
	<i>Borut Telban</i>	
1	Introduction	266
2	The use of commands in Ambonwari	268
3	Short non-verbal commands	269
4	Canonical verbal imperatives marked with the suffix <i>-ra</i> or <i>-nda</i>	270
5	Verbal imperatives/hortatives marked with the suffix <i>-n</i>	276
6	Potential form used in mild commands	278
7	A note on non-canonical commands	279
8	Conclusion	280
	References	281
14	Commands in Wolaitta	283
	<i>Azeb Amha</i>	
1	Introduction	283
2	Sentence-type distinction	285
3	Imperative	287
4	On the use and meanings of imperatives	297
5	Concluding remarks	298
	References	300
15	Veiled commands: anthropological perspectives on directives	301
	<i>Rosita Henry</i>	
1	A question of command	301
2	Directives in an intersubjective world	302
3	Speech acts in the Western Highlands, Papua New Guinea	305
4	Veiled words materialized	307
5	Your wish is (not) my command	309
6	Conclusion: veiled commands, egalitarian values, and language materiality	311
	References	312
	<i>Index of authors</i>	315
	<i>Index of languages, peoples, language families and areas</i>	318
	<i>Index of subjects</i>	322

## Preface

Every language has numerous means for getting someone to do something. These cover orders, pleas, entreaties, and other directives. They correlate with social conventions, existing hierarchies, and even kinship systems. This volume focuses on the form and the function of commands (or directive speech acts), their interrelationship with cultural stereotypes and practices, and their origins and development, especially in the light of language contact under different circumstances.

The volume starts with a typological introduction outlining the marking, and the meaning, of imperatives and other ways of expressing commands and directives, together with their cultural and social aspects and historical developments. It is followed by revised versions of fourteen presentations from the International Workshop ‘Commands’, held at the Language and Culture Research Centre, James Cook University, 28 September–3 October 2015. An earlier version of Chapter 1 had been circulated to the contributors, with a list of points to be addressed, so as to ensure that their detailed studies of individual languages were cast in terms of a common set of typological parameters. (This is the eighth monograph in the series *Explorations in Linguistic Typology*, devoted to volumes from International Workshops organized by the co-editors.)

The week of the workshop was intellectually stimulating and exciting, full of discussions and cross-fertilization of ideas. Each author has undertaken intensive fieldwork, in addition to experience of working on linguistic typology, historical comparative issues, and problems of areal diffusion. The analysis is cast in terms of basic linguistic theory—the cumulative typological functional framework in terms of which almost all descriptive grammars are cast—and avoids formalisms (which provide reinterpretations rather than explanations, and come and go with such frequency that any statement made in terms of them is likely soon to become inaccessible).

It is our hope that this volume will provide a consolidated conceptual and analytic framework. We aim at covering the major parameters of variation in the expression of commands and a plethora of directive speech acts in general across languages of the world.

We are grateful to all the participants in the Workshops and colleagues who took part in the discussion and provided feedback on presentations at various stages, particularly Grant Aiton, Yongxian Luo, Cassy Nancarrow, Colleen Oates, Howard Oates, Ryan Pennington, Nick Piper, and Kasia Wojtylak. We are grateful to the Honourable Jan McLucas, Labor Senator for Queensland, for her official opening of the Workshop and support. We owe a special debt of gratitude to Amanda Parsonage

and Brigitta Flick, for helping us organize the Workshop in a most efficient manner. Brigitta Flick's and Jolene Overall's support and editorial assistance were invaluable.

The Workshop was made possible partly through the Australian Research Council Discovery Project 'How languages differ and why'. We gratefully acknowledge financial assistance from the College of Arts, Education and Social Sciences, the Cairns Institute and the Division of Research and Innovation at James Cook University.