9

On future in commands

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9.1 HOW FUTURE IS SPECIAL

In many languages of the world, the status of 'future' is different from that of present and of past. Past events can be conceived as known through observation, inference, assumption, or report. Statements about the future may involve speculation, prediction, guesses, and so on. In some languages future refers to the location of an event in time, and can be considered a grammatical tense, on a par with past (and also present). In others, future time can be expressed through a plethora of modalities (including intentional and potential forms) and irrealis (see Dixon 2012: 22–8). The expression of future tense and of future time may interact with other categories in grammar, along the lines of dependencies between grammatical systems as outlined in Aikhenvald and Dixon (1998).

Some grammatical distinctions can be expressed in clauses with non-future reference, but not in those referring to future. Evidentiality—a grammatical category whose central meaning is coding information source—is a case in point (see Aikhenvald 2004: 261–3). In many languages, evidentiality distinctions are confined just to the past tenses. This is the case in Jarawara, an Arawá language from Brazil (Dixon 2004), Matses, a Panoan language from Peru (Fleck 2007), and numerous languages from Uralic, Turkic, and Indo-European families (see Johanson and Utas 2000). An evidential may develop additional epistemic overtones when used with a future tense marker. Shipibo-Konibo, a Panoan language from Peru, has five evidentials: -ra 'information acquired through vision, auditory or olfactory perception', -bira 'information acquired through inference based on reasoning or observable evidence', -mein 'information acquired through speculation', and two reported evidentials, -ki and -ronki. Example (1) illustrates -ra 'direct evidential' referring to something the speaker can smell and hear but may not be able to see (Valenzuela 2003: 35–7).
(1) Shee a-rá-kan-ai yapa
onomat: frying do:tr-dir.ev-pl:inchoat fish:abs
Fish is being fried’ (I smell it and hear it, but cannot see it)

The evidential -ra can combine with a future marker. It then indicates certainty rather than information source, as shown in (2).¹

(2) Jatibi-tian-ra i-nox iki chini bake-bo ja-ská
all-temporal-dir.ev do:intr-fut fut last child-pl:abs that-compar
ja-skát-i
that-compar-intr
‘From now on, your children will live just like that’

In these instances, the same morphemes have different meanings depending on the time reference, future versus non-future.

Some person values may have more future forms than others. In Tariana, an Arawak language from north-western Amazonia (Brazil)—and a number of East Tucanoan languages in the same area—the first person subject can be used with the certain and with the less certain future. For other persons, only the latter option is available. We return to this in Section 9.3.

The expression of future time, and future tense, can correlate with sentence types. As predicted by Lyons (1977: 746–7), the most frequently attested grammaticalized time reference in imperatives is that of immediate versus delayed—or future—imperative. This contrasts with a wider range of possibilities for future meanings grammaticalized in declarative clauses. The expression of future projection in the context of directive speech acts correlates with a number of imperative-specific categories. We survey these in Section 9.2. In Section 9.3, we turn to the meanings of declarative future forms used in directive speech acts.

9.2 IMPERATIVES AND TIME: FUTURE IN COMMANDS

An imperative is a dedicated grammatical form used in directive speech acts (see the general survey in Aikhenvald 2010). For some linguists, this automatically presupposes that imperatives always refer to future time. As Jespersen (1940: 24.1) put it, ‘the imperative always refers to the future, often the immediate future.’ In Bolinger’s words (1967: 348), ‘the present and the past cannot be acted on. The future can.’

¹ Other evidentials do not appear to combine with future. Similar epistemic extensions of evidential markers in future contexts have been described by Zhang (forthcoming), for Erhu, a Tibeto-Burman language from South-west China. Further examples are in Aikhenvald (2004: 262).
In English, imperatives typically refer to 'a situation in the immediate or more remote future and are therefore incompatible with time adverbials that refer to a time period in the past or that have habitual reference: "Come yesterday, *Usually drive your car" (Quirk et al. 1985: 828).² Many languages have no grammaticalized tense distinctions in imperatives: this is the case, for example, in Ndu languages from New Guinea; Romanian, a Romance language; and Sm'álgyax, a Tsimshianic language. The time reference of a command is inferred from the context, or specified with time words.

This is how Lyons (1977) summarizes possible interactions between future and directive speech acts:

'We cannot rationally command or request to carry out some course of action in the past: the only tense distinctions that we might expect to find grammaticalized in the imperative, therefore, are distinctions of more immediate and more remote futurity.' (Lyons 1977: 746–7)²

If a time distinction is grammaticalized in imperatives, it is most frequently that of immediate versus delayed, or future, as predicted by Lyons.

9.2.1 'DELAYED' IMPERATIVES: A SNAPSHOT

The grammatical distinction of immediate and delayed, or future, imperative was first identified for Takelma, an isolate from Oregon, by Sapir (1922: 157–61). In Takelma, 'present imperative' implies a 'more or less immediate fulfilment', while the 'command expressed by the future imperative is not carried out until some stated or implied point of time definitely removed from the immediate present'. Declaratives have just one type of future.

A future versus non-future distinction in imperatives may not exist in declarative clauses at all. Haida, an isolate spoken in British Columbia (Canada), distinguishes 'neutral' and 'non-immediate' imperatives. Neutral imperatives order 'a familiar addressee to immediately perform a certain action (or be in a certain state)' (Enrico 2003: 121):

(3) gyaaax-hl@³
    stand-IMP
    'Stand up!'

A non-immediate imperative in Haida refers to a situation whereby 'an action or state is ordered to occur at some time later than the commanding speech act' (Enrico 2003: 123). The marker of non-immediate imperative is accompanied by that of the 'neutral' imperative:

² Davies (1986: 124–30) opts for considering imperatives in English as inherently 'tenseless'.
³ @ is a symbol which corresponds to a central E.
O till riilgii-twa-an-hl@
3RD.PERSON INSTR be.finished-PL-NOM.NOM-IMPV-IMPV
'Finish it (later)'

Just as in Takelma, declarative clauses in Haida do not distinguish between immediate and delayed future; there are no grammaticalized future markers in the language.  

Alternatively, the semantic types of future can be different in imperatives and in declaratives. Nishnaabemwin (or Ojibwe, an Algonquian language: Valentine 2001: 991–3) distinguishes immediate and delayed imperatives (the latter allowing for the issue of a command to be carried out at a later time: Valentine 2001: 993). There are two future preverbs in non-imperative clauses: one implying volition, and the other one used in contexts of consequence or obligation (2001: 772–82).

Fine-grained divisions of the future found in declaratives are occasionally attested in imperatives. Tariana and the neighboring East Tucanoan languages—including Tucano, Tuyuca, Macuna, and Barasano—distinguish 'certain' future (employed with first person only) and 'uncertain' future (employed with any person). There are no such distinctions in the imperative. Tucano does distinguish a simple imperative requiring that the action be performed immediately and a delayed imperative, urging the addressee to do something later (West 1980: 48, 51; Aikhenvald 2008: 203):

(5) bah-ya  
eat-IMPV  
'eat!'  

(6) bah-apa  
eat-FUTURE.IMPV  
'eat (later)'

A simple 'root' imperative in Koasati, a Muskogean language from Louisiana, has the force of an immediate command (Kimball 1991: 263):

(7) lakawwi-ø-DEL  
LIFT-3SG.IMPV-PHRASE.TERMINAL.MARKER  
'lift it!'

Koasati is unusual in having two delayed imperatives: one marked with -v7h meaning 'do later on' (8), and the other one with -v7hah meaning 'do much later on' (9). The markers are suffixed to the simple imperative form:

(8) am-awiç-i-ø-v7h  
1SG.DAT-HELP-2SG.IMPV-DELAY  
'Help me later!'  

(9) am-awiç-i-ø-v7hah  
1SG.DAT-HELP-2SG.IMPV-DELAY  
'Help me much later!'

(9) am-hoponi-\text{\textquoteleft\textquoteright}nah
    1sgdat-\text{\textquoteleft\textquoteright}cook\textquoteleft\textquoteright}\text{-}\text{IMPV-LONG\text{.}DELAY}
  \textquoteleft Cook it for me a lot later!\textquoteleft

Koasati has numerous modal markers referring to actions hoped for by the speaker including intent, and immediate intent (Kimball 1991: 180–3). The two future meanings in imperatives are semantically similar to the meanings of intentional markers. Immediate imperatives are often less formally marked than delayed ones—as is the case in Haida (examples (3)–(4)), Koasati (\text{\textquoteleft\textquoteright}(7)–(9))), and Jarawara (\text{\textquoteleft\textquoteright}(16)–(17))). This is consistent with the principle of iconic motivation (Haiman 1985): the formal brevity of an imperative requiring immediate reaction correlates with the expected brevity of reaction itself (also see Aikhenvald 2010: 44–7).

The immediate and the delayed imperatives are equally marked in Tucano (examples (5)–(6) above), and in many other East Tucanoan languages (e.g. Tuyuca: Barnes 1979 and Macuna: Smothermon et al. 1995: 62–3). Further languages in which the immediate and the delayed imperatives are equally formally marked include Papuan languages Hua (Haiman 1980: 61–3), Yele (Henderson 1995: 35–9) and Kewa (Franklin 1971: 39), and Tungusic languages Evenki (Nedjalkov 1997: 262–3), and Nanaj (Avrorin 1961: 135–7).

The delayed and immediate imperatives may differ from each other in further ways. In Takelma (Sapir 1922: 162), the number of the addressee is distinguished only in the immediate imperative, but not in the ‘future’, or delayed imperative. In Tubatulabal, a Uto-Aztecan language, they require different marking of grammatical relations. Only the non-future imperative takes an object without accusative marking (this is a feature of imperatives in many Uto-Aztecan languages: see the summary in Aikhenvald 2010: 145–6). A non-future imperative in (10) takes an object without the accusative marker. In contrast, (11) which contains a future imperative, takes an accusative-marked object (Langacker 1977: 56):

(10) pagina-h taatwa-l
    hit-\text{IMPV} \quad \text{man-ABS}
  \textquoteleft Hit the man\textquoteleft

(11) pagina-hai \quad taatwa-l-a
    hit-\text{FUT.IMPV} \quad \text{man-ABS-ACC}
  \textquoteleft Hit the man after a while\textquoteleft

Some languages with tense distinctions in second person do not have a delayed imperative for first and third person imperatives (this is the case in Tucano). Others do. Yele, from the Papuan area (Henderson 1995: 35–6), distinguishes a first-person plural delayed imperative (marked with \textit{paa}), and second- and third-person (marked with \textit{dpi}). In agreement with the principle of iconic motivation (Haiman 1985; Aikhenvald 2010: 44–7), immediate imperatives are formally unmarked; they can have all
the person values. Uma, also Papuan (Louwense 1988: 36–7), has a full person paradigm for four tense and one aspect distinctions in the imperative: immediate, near deferred, regular deferred, remote deferred, and continuous. Takelma has a first person immediate imperative; but no such form for the future imperative in any of the verbal paradigms. Just in one instance, in transitive verbs, the first person future imperative is 'probably expressed by simple future' (Sapir 1922: 171).

9.2.2 BEYOND FUTURE: DELAYED IMPERATIVES AND POLITENESS

Politeness, or the 'strength' of a command, is a feature often encoded in imperative systems (see the survey in Aikhenvald 2010: 202–12, and references there; some aspects are mentioned in König and Siemund 2007). A delayed imperative may have additional overtones of politeness, transforming a brusque command into a request, or an entreaty.

In Epena Pedcc, a Chocoan language from Colombia, an immediate imperative demands 'an immediate completion or cessation of an action'. It can thus 'be very forceful, to the point and, at times, even rude or scolding', as in (12):

(12) hu-to-pi-pa-rí-hi

chupón

k'áyára

breast-drink-CAUS-HABIT-PRESENT-IMPV

baby:breast

' Breast feed your child, rather than (using) a baby bottle!'

Another imperative form indicates that the action should be completed some time in the future. This imperative 'reveals the speaker's desire, can be used to give advice or instruction', and has polite overtones (Harms 1994: 129–30):

(13) tʰipi[pʰua-pʰéda

ahi

firewood

blow-IMPV.POLITE

say-PAST

'He said: "You will have to fan the fire"'

Following a similar principle, the future imperative in Macushi, a Carib language from northern Amazonia in Brazil, is more polite and less forceful than the immediate imperative (Abbott 1991: 50–1). An immediate imperative form is marked with a suffix:

(14) apo-erama-ta

fire

get-IMPV.IMMEDIATE.MOTION.AWAY

'Go get firewood'

A future imperative form marked with a combination of a prefix and a suffix refers to an action to be done later, and may also express an invitation or a request:

(15) miriri yei ma-alti

ta-pi-ya

rei pi

that
tree

FUT.IMPV-CUT-IMPV.SG

say-PAST-3-ERG

king

"Cut down that tree", he said to the king"
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In Nambiquara, from Southern Amazonia in Brazil, the immediate imperative implies an urgent command (and is called a ‘strong’ imperative), while the delayed imperative does not have any overtones of urgency (and is called ‘weak’) (Kroeber 2001: 30–2). Along similar lines, in Yup’ik an immediate imperative is not a polite way of, say, inviting a guest, while a delayed imperative is (Mithun 1999: 154).

9.2.3 FROM TIME TO SPACE: DISTAL AND DELAYED IMPERATIVES

Not infrequently, an essentially temporal distinction—that between an ‘immediate’ and a ‘delayed’ imperative—has additional meanings relating to spatial distance. A distant imperative in Jarawara, an Arawá language from southern Amazonia, Brazil, may refer to a distant time or place, as in (16) (Dixon 2004: 397):

(16) otera noki ti-jahi
     1EXC.O wait 2SG.A-DISTAL.POS.IMPV.FEM
     ‘You (sg) wait for us (in some distant time or place)’

The immediate imperative refers to ‘here and now’, as in (17):

(17) otera noki ti-na-hi
     1EXC.O wait 2SG.A-AUX-IMM.POS.IMPV.FEM
     ‘You (sg) wait for us (here and now)’

This polysemy, characteristic of imperatives but not found in any other clause type, is attested in a number of languages, many from South America. In Tuyuca, an East Tucanoan language spoken in Colombia and adjacent areas of north-western Brazil, the delayed imperative marked with -wa describes an action to be performed later on or in a different location (Barnes 1979):

(18) basa-wa
     sing-DELAYED/DISTAL.IMPV
     ‘Sing (later on, or in a different location)’

The delayed imperative in Tariana (north-western Amazonia), can also refer to distance either in space or in time (or both). If a clause contains a time word, the reading of a delayed imperative is temporal, as in (19):

(19) desu alia-kada ya:pa pi-fiha-wa
     tomorrow exist-CLASSIFIER:DAY pacú.fish 2SG-eat-DELAYED.IMPV
     ‘Eat the pacú fish the day after tomorrow!’

3 Information on Tariana comes from my original fieldwork (commenced in 1991); the system of imperatives in Tariana was described in Aikhenvald (2003); also see Aikhenvald (2008) for an overview of imperatives in East Tucanoan languages in contact with Tariana.
If there is a locational term, the reading is ambiguous between distance in space and in time:

(20) hane-se ya:pa pi-ñha-wa

that-LOC pacú.fish 2SG-eat-DELAYED.IMPV
‘Eat the pacú fish there (far away and later)’

Example (21) contains no temporal or locational specification. This is ambiguous between ‘eat later’ and ‘eat far away’; however, this ambiguity is usually resolved by context:

(21) ya:pa pi-ñha-wa

pacú.fish 2SG-eat-DELAYED.IMPV
‘Eat the pacú fish there’ (later and/or far away)

In addition, imperatives in Tariana distinguish two degrees of spatial distance. Proximal imperative (‘you, do it here’ or ‘you here, do it’) is marked with a suffix -si:

(22) pi-ñha-si

2SG-eat-PROXIMAL.IMPV
‘Eat here’ (close to the speaker)

Distal imperative (‘you, do it there; or ‘you there, do it’) is marked with the suffix -kada:

(23) pi-ñha-kada

2SG-eat-DISTAL.IMPV
‘Eat over there’ (away from where the speaker is; can be addressed to people outside the house or in a different part of the house)

Unlike the delayed imperative, the distal imperative in Tariana does not have any temporal overtones. The delayed imperative marker -wa in Tariana (shown in (20)) is cognate with a future marker attested in related languages (we return to this in the following section).

Note that future tense in non-imperative clauses normally does not have any reference to distance in space. Spatial distance as a verbal category is specific for imperatives (see Aikhenvald 2010, for further imperative-specific features).

9.3 FUTURE FORMS AS DIRECTIVES

Imperative forms are often not the only way of phrasing a command, a request, or an invitation. An imperative may sound too embarrassingly imperious and imposing. An essentially non-imperative form is then co-opted, in order to ‘save face’ or avoid direct confrontation, to comply with existing hierarchies, social relationships, and etiquette, or to provide a more nuanced way of conveying a plethora of directive speech acts.
Such 'command strategies' can be viewed as filling a gap—that is, expressing a meaning that a straightforward imperative may lack (a further analysis of imperative strategies can be found in Aikhenvald 2010: 256–95, Aikhenvald forthcoming).

The form of the verb in a clause often contributes to a directive interpretation of a statement. Future forms often have a directive force. Sentence (24), from English, is a stern directive with overtones of an obligation (Huddleston 2002: 941):

(24) You will apologise.

Along similar lines, in Cavineña, a Tacana language from Bolivia, a statement marked with imperfective in its future meaning can imply a very strong order which cannot be disobeyed (Guillaume 2008: 185). The future suffix in Cheheuevi, a Uto-Aztecan language, can impart a directive meaning to a clause, with an overtone of obligation, 'you are to VERB'. This is similar to Navajo, an Athabaskan language, where an obligation is rendered by the future tense forms (Young and Morgan 1969: 53–4).

However, in some languages a directive cast as a future statement has the opposite effect. In Jarawara, 'a mild command may use future modality' (Dixon 2005: 395–6). In (25), a Branco wants a favour from Okomobi, his Indian companion. In the narrative (told by Okomobi to R. M. W. Dixon) he uses the future form, rather than imperative: imperative is 'pragmatically direct', and the future less so:

(25) kobati o-tenehe kijo ti-na-habana ti-ke
Friend 1SG-scrotum:MASC rub 2SG-AUX-FUT.FEM 2SG-DECL.FEM
'Friend, could you rub it (the medicinal plant) on my balls? (lit. you'll rub it (on) my balls (where they were bitten by an ant))'

Or a speaker could use intention modality to express a mild command. When the village football team asked Dixon to take their photograph, the intention suffix was used:

(26) Jobeto! otara tira ti-na-habone ti-ke [tika
name 1EXC.O take 2SG-AUX-INT.FEM 2SG-DECL.FEM 2SG.POSS
makina jaa]
machine PERI
'Jobeto! will you take us (i.e. our photo) (lit. you should take us) with your machine (camera)?'

In Huallaga Quechua, a Quechuan language from Peru, future tense can be used as a polite way to give a command (Webber 1989: 102, 440):

(27) Paala-yki-ta mana-ku-shayki
shovel-2PRS-OBJECT ask-REFL-1>2FUT
'Could I borrow your shovel? (lit. I will ask you for your shovel)'

Pres (1979: 80–1). Other languages where future can be used as a strong command include Romanian (Mallinson 1986: 21), Evenki (Nedjalkov 1997: 21) and Nishnaabemwin (or Ojibwe: Valentine 2001: 995).
Along similar lines, in Nyangumarta, an Australian language, an imperative is perceived as ‘a very direct way of speaking, and often a more respectful way of issuing a command is to use the future tense’ (Sharp 2004: 185). Dench (2009) remarks that speakers of now extinct Martuthunira, also Australian, rejected the imperative inflection as ‘impolite’, using future instead. In Modern Hebrew, a future form is employed in lieu of a regular imperative which is considered too harsh; future forms are considered a politer option (see Sadock and Zwicky 1985: 176; Malygina 2001; Coffin and Bolozky 2005: 73). In Tatar, future indefinite forms can denote polite commands (Nasilov et al. 2001: 209). In Mekens (Tupari branch of Tupé: Galúcio 2001) future is used to express an indirect command. In Nishnaabemwin (Valentine 2001: 994) a future preverb wii can be used in directives as a means of ‘adding politeness.’

In Arapaho, an Algonquian language, future forms in commands have very different connotations from those of commands cast in future in English:

Whereas in English use of the future tense as an imperative tends to constitute a very strong and peremptory command, emphasizing the authority of the speaker (‘you will go to school today, young man!’), in Arapaho the use of the future often makes the utterance not really a command at all, but instead a recognition of the strong authority of the other person, who cannot be commanded, or prevented from acting, but only deferred to (Cowell 2007: 57).

The meaning of the future as a directive may correlate with the immediacy of a required action. In Motuna, the definite future with second person expresses an urgent command, which must be fulfilled by the addressee definitely and immediately. This is consistent with its general meaning, expressing ‘that an event or the inception of a state will take place immediately after the speech moment’. In contrast, the corresponding imperative expresses a general command which must be fulfilled by the addressee some time in the future (Onishi 1996: 49, 1994: 459–60).

It may be that only one of several future markers in a language can be used as a command. Piapoco, a North Arawak language from Colombia (Klumpp 1990: 170–1), has two future markers. A general future clitic -wa can be used in any future statement, as in (28), and to express purpose, as in (29).

(28) Táwicha pi-émia-wa-ni
    tomorrow 2sg-hear-FUTURE-him
    ‘Tomorrow you will hear him’

(29) Na-â na-wênda-wa amàca
    3pl-go 3pl-sell-FUTURE hammock
    ‘They will go to sell hammocks’

It can also be used to signal a polite directive:

(30) Pi-fbâïda ca-châini-iri iyû câi-cûê pi-íma-ca i-ri-wa
    2-work ATTR-power-masc instr thus-incl 2-say-decl 3sg-to-future
    ‘You all shall say to him, “Work hard!”’
The distant future clitic -piná indicates action 'to take place in a more remote future', and has not been attested as a command strategy. The general future marker -wa is cognate to the Tariana delayed imperative marker (in (19) and (20) above). The same morpheme also occurs as an intentional marker on verbs, and as a marker of the nominal future in closely related Baniwa of Íçana-Kurrupako.

As mentioned in Section 9.1 above, Tariana has two future declarative forms. The clitic -de is used exclusively with first person subjects, and indicates that the subject is certain of the action they will undertake.

(31) ikasu-nuku pi-na kalisi nu-kalite-de
    now-TOP.NON.A/S 2SG-OBJECT story 1SG-tell-FUT.CERT
    'I will now tell you a story'

The other marker, -mha(de), can be used with any person. Its use with a third person subject is illustrated in (32).

(32) Wa-we-ri di-kale matsuia-mha(de)
    1PL-younger.sibling-MASC 3SG-heart good-FUT
    di-nuku di-ka-ka
    3SGNF-3SON-TOP.NON.A/S 3SGNF-see-SEQ
    'Our younger brother will be happy (lit. our younger brother his heart will be
good) when he sees his son'

When used with the first person, the clitic -mha(de) indicates a less certain prediction, something that might happen, especially if accompanied by a parenthetical expression, literally, 'maybe me doing', with an epistemic meaning of 'maybe, possibly':

(33) desu nu-a-mha(de) pi-dalipa-se pape nu-ni-ka
    tomorrow 1SG-go-FUT:UNCERT 2SG-towards-LOC maybe 1SG-do-SEQ
    'I might go to your place tomorrow, maybe'

It can also have a deontic meaning, 'ought to':

(34) Wa-phe-ru-ne nu-sape-mha(de)
    1PL-elder.sibling-FEM-COM 1SG-speak-FUT:UNCERT
    'I ought to speak to our elder sister'

When used with second person, the marker -mha(de) may refer to a future action, as in (35).

(35) Desu pi-dia pi-mu-mha(de) phia
    tomorrow 2SG-return 2SGNF-come-FUT you
    'You will come back tomorrow'

Alternatively, it may have overtones of obligation and be used as a stern command. An evil spirit disguised as a woman says to a man she encounters in the jungle:
(36) Nu-ine pi-dia-mhade phia
     1SG-with 2SG-stay-FUT you
     'You will stay with me, you must stay with me'

The intention of the speaker is expressed through intentional modality marked with
the suffix -kasú. Its meaning is the same for any person value:

(37) hinipuku-se nu-a-kasú
     garden-LOC 1SG-go-INTENTIONAL
     'I intend to go to the garden'

Forms containing the marker -mhade are negated depending on whether they have
a future or a deontic meaning. Table 9.1 shows correlations between the future markers
in their various meanings and their correlates under negation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marking in positive clauses</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Marking in negative clauses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-de</td>
<td>definite future (1st person)</td>
<td>ma-...-kásu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-mhade</td>
<td>uncertain future (1st person); any future (non-1st person)</td>
<td>ma-...-kásu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>deontic meaning (1st and 2nd person)</td>
<td>mhäida + Verb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-kasú</td>
<td>intentional (any person)</td>
<td>ma-...-kásu</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The negative counterpart of (35) will thus be (38), with a future meaning (of a prediction):

(38) Desu ma-dia-kásu pi-nu phia
tomorrow NEG-return-NEG.FUT 2SG-go-come you
     'You won't come tomorrow'

And the negative counterpart of (36) is (39), with a deontic meaning:

(39) Nu-ine mhäida-mhade pi-dia phia
     1SG-with PROH-FUT 2SG-stay-FUT you
     'You must not stay with me'

The deontic future is negated using the prohibitive marker mhäida which is the one
employed in any prohibition:

(40) mhäida pi-a
     PROH 2SG-go
     'Don't go!'
Table 9.1 shows that the distinctions (i) between certain and uncertain future, and (ii) between future and intentional modality are neutralized under negation (a full description of Tariana negation is in Aikhenvald 2003: 400–10). That fewer categories are expressed in negative structures than in their positive counterparts follows the dependencies outlined in Aikhenvald and Dixon (1998).

Table 9.1 also shows that, in its deontic usage within commands and instructions, the future in Tariana has more distinctions under negation than in positive clauses. It is indeed the case that in a number of languages there may be more options for expressing prohibitions than there are for positive commands (see Aikhenvald 2010: 189–92). The ultimate explanation for this may have to do with a special cultural importance of imposing constraints and prohibitions, that is, more importance placed on what one should not do than on what has to be done. This, however, is just a speculation.

The use of the future as a deontic strategy in Tariana is, in all likelihood, determined by cultural conventions. One is expected to be precise in stating one’s information source, and one’s intentions. According to my consultants, one only talks about what people other than oneself will do in the future if one is certain about their actions. Being certain about someone (or something) may involve imposing the speaker’s will upon them; hence the deontic meaning ‘must’, or ‘ought to’ as a natural extension of a future marker.

Tariana has numerous forms for dedicated commands—including immediate, delayed, distal, proximal, and polite forms (Aikhenvald 2008). There is no special command form in the language with the meaning of just obligation. The deontic use of the future as a command strategy fills this gap. Alternatively, since the deontic future is negated using the prohibitive marker (unlike the declarative future not used in commands), it may be treated as a special subtype of an imperative.

In many languages of the world, command strategies give rise to dedicated command forms, or new imperative paradigms. For instance, one of the innovations of Modern Colloquial Hebrew is the development of a new, truncated imperative based on the future as an imperative strategy. In the colloquial language, the second person future form is often used in lieu of the imperative: a command cast in future sounds ‘more polite’ and less urgent and insistent: imperative forms ‘sound too aggressive’ (Bolozy 1979: 18, 2009). Speech etiquette is what may have determined the development of a new set of command forms.

9.4 TO CONCLUDE

We have now seen that future, or delayed, imperatives can acquire imperative-specific overtones of politeness and of distance in space. That an imperative which refers to a command not to be performed straight away should have polite, or mild, overtones of
an entreaty, a request or an invitation is intuitively plausible. Such a form would lack the brusqueness and urgency of an immediate imperative.

A delayed imperative may also imply that an action is to be performed further away, thus linking distance in space with distance in time. An intrinsic connection between time and space is reflected in many other domains in the world’s languages. This correlation is akin to a well-documented semantic extension from spatial to temporal notions in the domain of adverbs, and also case markers (Hausel 1997; Heine and Kuteva 2002: 40–1, 179–80, 183). This is supported by recent psychological experiments, confirming that an intrinsic link exists between spatial and temporal expressions and representations (cf. Gentner et al. 2002: 557; Boroditsky 2000: 25–6 for experimental results to this effect).

Future declarative forms can be used as command strategies with a wide range of overtones, from a stern command, an obligation, to a mild and polite request. The exact meaning of a future as a command strategy is, in all likelihood, determined by the cultural conventions associated with talking about the future. This is an area which deserves further attention.

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