

# What is it to be a 1sg Imperative?

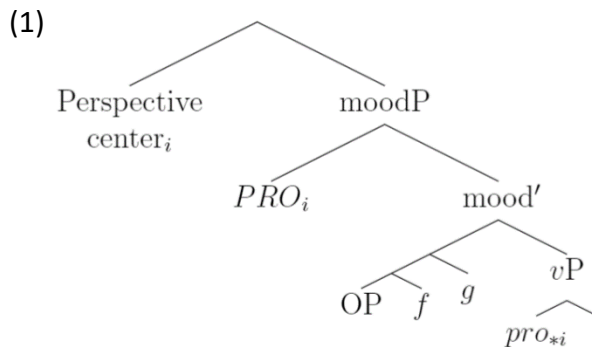
## Some observations on the syntax and semantics of the *m(ə)*- form in Chukchi

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### 1. Setting the stage

#### 1.1 Stegovec's (2016) proposal

- Stegovec (2016) focuses on the reported speech constructions in Slovenian.
- Cross-linguistically, both imperative and subjunctive clauses show ban on the coreference between the subject of IMP/SUBJ and the *director*<sup>1</sup>—the matrix subject in embedded contexts or the actual speaker in root contexts. He calls this phenomenon the “Generalized Subject Obviation” (SOB) effect.
- This restriction is a type of Condition B effect. Imperatives and Subjunctives involve a special kind of modal operator that requires a type *e* element (the “perspectival” *PRO*) that is bound by the matrix subject or the speaker in non-interrogatives, and the addressee in interrogatives.



Embedded clauses (*PRO* is bound by the matrix subject):

(2) \*He<sub>i</sub> said [that [*PRO*<sub>i</sub> OP<sub>f(i),g(i)</sub> [*pro*<sub>i</sub> GO.IMP/SUBJ]]].  
 ≈ Intend.: He said that he must go.

Unembedded non-interrogative clauses (*PRO* is bound by the speaker):

(3) \*[SPEAKER<sub>i</sub> [*PRO*<sub>i</sub> OP<sub>f(i),g(i)</sub> [*pro*<sub>i</sub> GO.IMP/SUBJ!]]].  
 ≈ Intend.: I must go!

Unembedded interrogative clauses (*PRO* is bound by the addressee):

(4) \*[ADDRESSEE<sub>i</sub> [*PRO*<sub>i</sub> OP<sub>f(i),g(i)</sub> [[*pro*<sub>i</sub> GO.IMP/SUBJ?]]]].  
 ≈ Intend.: Must you go?!

- This operator combines with “centered” conversational backgrounds:

(5) ||OP||<sup>c</sup> = λ*f*.λ*g*.λ*p*.λ*x*.λ*w* (∀*w'* ∈ O(*f*<sub>*x*</sub>, *g*<sub>*x*</sub>, *w*))[*p*(*w'*)]

a. *f*<sub>*x*</sub> is the body of information available to *x* in *w*.

b. *g*<sub>*x*</sub> are criteria to decide between worlds compliant with *f*<sub>*x*</sub> endorsed by *x*.

<sup>1</sup> I will be using the term “perspective center” instead.

- This analysis predicts a ban on exclusive first-person directives in non-interrogatives (3) and accounts for the “*speaker distancing ban*” (6) (see Kaufmann 2012; Condoravdi & Lauer 2012; Stegovec & Kaufmann 2015).

(6) Go away! #But I don’t want you to.

### 1.2 Hacquard’s (2006, 2010) proposal

- Hacquard (2006, 2010) claims that modals are event-relative. She modifies the Kratzerian approach by relativizing the modal base not to a world variable but to an event variable represented in syntax.

Epistemic (a) and circumstantial (b) modal:

(7) a.  $f_{\text{epis}}(e) = \lambda w'. w'$  is compatible with the 'content' of  $e$ .

b.  $f_{\text{circ}}(e) = \lambda w'. w'$  is compatible with the circumstances of  $e$ .

- The event variable of the modal can be anchored to three kinds of events: the *speech event*, the *attitude event*, and the *VP event*.
- The position of the modal in the syntactic structure determines the event to which the modal is relative and the character of conversational backgrounds it takes. For example, *high modals* tend to be anchored to the top-most event and receive a *doxastic/epistemic* modal base.

**We end up with the following generalization:**

Covert modals in Imperatives and Subjunctives are claimed to take the null individual-type pronoun (*PRO*) that refers to the perspective center of the clause. Overt modals, in turn, are claimed to take the null event pronoun that is anchored to the most local event.

## 2. Chukchi data

### 2.1 Imperative paradigm

- Chukchi possesses a fully-fledged morphological paradigm of the Imperative.

Table №1. Chukchi Imperative paradigm

Person	SG	PL
1	<i>m(ə)-</i>	<i>mən-</i>
2	<i>q(ə)-</i>	<i>q(ə)-</i>
3	<i>n(ə)-</i>	<i>n(ə)-</i>

- Traditionally, imperative prefixes are considered as cumulative morphemes combining mood with person (see, e.g., Nedjalkov 1994; Dunn 1999). We are interested in the form in the grey box. Here, I will call it the “first-person singular Imperative”.

- 1sg imperative forms are found very rarely across languages. In languages that have such forms they happen to be relatively weak being used in questions about permission or obligation (Kuzmenkov 2001 for Mongolian; Malchukov 2001 for Even; Aikhenvald 2010: 73-74 for Manumbu; a.o.).

## 2.2 The distribution of the *m(ə)*- form

- In Chukchi the *m(ə)*- form, as other 1sg imperative forms in other languages, can be used in questions (8) (see Naumov & Kozlov 2017 for more data and analysis).

(8) *m-uswitku-γ?e-k?*

1SG.S/A.IMP-chop-TH-1SG.S

‘Should I chop the wood?’

- What is more important for the present discussion is that this form is also very productive in non-interrogatives. Nedjalkov (1994) claims that “it is the principal means of expressing the future action of the speaker”. In this function it competes with the Future form and yields the inference that the denoted action will take place immediately (cf. (9a) and. (9b)).

(9) a. *tə-r-ajmə-γ?a*

1SG.S/A-FUT-go.for.water-TH

‘I will go for water.’

b. *m-ajmə-γ?a-k*

1SG.S/A.IMP-go.for.water-TH-1SG.S

‘I will go for water (immediately)!’

### 2.2.1 1sg Imperative vs. 1sg Future

- There are, however, clear differences between these forms with respect to possible environments in which they can be used. The first-person singular Imperative is banned in factive clauses—under the matrix epistemic predicate *ʔəyi* ‘know’ (10), and in reason clauses (11).

(10) *ənan ʔəyi inqun erylak \*mə-ʔqət-γ?e-k /*

OH.INS know COMP tomorrow 1SG.IMP-go-TH-1SG.S

<sup>OK</sup>*t-re-ʔqət-γ?e nəmnəm-etə*

1SG.S/A-FUT-go-TH village-DAT

‘He knows that I will go to the village tomorrow’.

(11) *erylak qərəm mə-miysiretə-k qeʔuk*

tomorrow NEG.FUT 1SG.IMP-work-1SG.S because

*\*m-ekwet-γ?e-k / <sup>OK</sup>t-r-ekwet-γ?e eʔya-qanjaw-etə*

1SG.IMP-leave-1SG.S 1SG.S/A-FUT-leave-TH white-canyon-DAT

‘I will not be able to work tomorrow, because I will leave for the White Canyon’.

- The second difference between the first-person singular Imperative and the Future lies in the possibility of being used in “scheduled” contexts (12).

(12) *eʃyǝ-qanjaw-etǝ*      *awtobus-a*      <sup>?</sup>*m-ekwet-yʔe*      /  
white-canyon-DATABTOBYC-INS      1SG.IMP-leave-TH  
<sup>OK</sup>*t-r-ekwet-yʔe*      *biʃetǝ*      *enmes*      *tǝ-piri-net*  
1SG.S/A-FUT-leave-TH      tickets      already      1SG.S/A-buy-3SG.O-PL  
‘I am going to the White Canyon by bus. I have already bought the tickets’.

- The first-person singular Imperative is used as an answer to a directive speech act with the second-person Imperative, while the corresponding form of the Future is worse in such context (13).

(13) A: *qǝ-qametwa-y-e*  
2SG.IMP-eat-IRR-2/3SG  
‘Eat!’.  
B: *ii*      <sup>OK</sup>*mǝ-qametwa-yʔa-k*      /      <sup>?</sup>*t-ra-qametwa-yʔa*  
yes      1SG.S/A.IMP-eat-TH-1SG.S      1SG.S/A-FUT-eat-TH

### 2.2.2 Embedded uses

- In addition, imperative forms in Chukchi, including the first-person singular, can appear embedded in many environments. These are, among others, *argument clauses of desire predicates* (14), and (!) *dependent clauses of purposive constructions* (15).

(14) *ǝʃǝyǝ-n*      *∅-teyʔjenǝ-rkǝn*      *inqun*  
father-NOM.SG      2/3.S/A-want-IPFV      COMP  
<sup>OK</sup>*mǝ-tejkǝ-yʔe-n*      /      *\*nǝ-tejkǝ-nin*      *orwoor*  
1SG.S/A.IMP-fix-TH-3SG.O      3.S/A.IMP-fix-3SG.O      sledge.NOM  
‘The father wants that I should fix the sledge’.

(15) *nota-ytǝ*      *tǝ-ʃqǝtǝ-k*      *inqun*      *m-ǝʃʔa-re-rkǝn*  
land-DAT      1SG.S/A-leave-1SG.S      COMP      1SG.S/A.IMP-mother-seek-IPFV  
‘I went to the tundra in order to seek for the mother’.

- Crucially, when the Imperative is embedded under a desire predicate, like in (14), we observe subject obviation. The subject of the Imperative cannot co-refer with the matrix subject. In contrast, there is no subject obviation in (15). The matrix subject is co-referent with the embedded subject.
- Moreover, after uttering a clause containing the *m(ǝ)*- form, the speaker can distance herself from the speech act by adding that she does not want the realization of the proposition (16).

(16) *mǝ-waŋe-yʔa-k*      *ǝtrʔes*      *tǝ-ʔenqe-rkǝn*  
1SG.S/A.IMP-sew-TH-1SG.S      but      1SG.S/A-not.want-IPFV  
‘I will sew, though, I don’t want to!’



► While imperative clauses indeed tend to be tied to directive uses, this is not always the case. Imperatives are functionally inhomogeneous and have a variety of forces: advices, curses, wishes etc. That is, they are not necessarily associated with causative semantics.

► The second problem emerges when we carefully look at the contexts where the *m(ə)*-form can appear. Namely, it can be used when there is no addressee present (either actual or imaginable) (19).

[Context: A man who has just woken up at home alone sees through the window that his people are already working]

(19) *n-iw-iyəm*                      *mə-sejwə-tku-γʔe-k*  
 ST-think-NP.1SG                      1SG.S/A.IMP-go-ITER-TH-1SG.S  
*kitaqun=a*                              *m-om-aw-γʔa-k*  
 now.then=PTCL                      1SG.S/A.IMP-warm-CS-TH-1SG.S  
 'I think I'll go! Now I'll warm up!'

**CONCLUSION:** We need an analysis that will not be based on the notion of causation.

## 4. Proposal

### 4.1 The nature of the modal operator

- I adopt a *modal* approach to imperative semantics (Schwager 2006/Kaufmann 2012; Oikonomou 2016). To be more specific, I assume that imperatives contain a covert modal operator<sup>2</sup> sitting at one of the highest levels of the syntactic structure.

Go! ≈ You must go!

- I assume, following Kratzer (2006, 2013) and Moulton (2009), that modal meaning of attitude predicates comes from covert modal operators located in the left periphery of the embedded clause.
- The imperative modal is a suitable candidate for this role!
- Modals in embedded clauses of desire predicates establish a **doxastic modal base** and a **bouletic ordering source**. Modals in dependent clauses of purposive constructions are analyzed as having a **circumstantial modal base** and a **teleological ordering source** (Nissenbaum 2005; Grosz 2014).
- As was shown in Section 2, the Imperative in Chukchi can be used in clausal complement of desire predicates (8) and in dependent clauses of purposive constructions (9). From these facts, I conclude that in Chukchi the modal operator of the Imperative **can take different conversational backgrounds**. In the former, but not in the latter, we observe the Subject Obviation effect.
- I share the insights of Stegovec (2016, 2017) and Hacquard (2006, 2010) but take a somewhat middle position and claim that in Chukchi the null argument of the modal operator in imperative clauses can have **either a nominal antecedent or an event**

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<sup>2</sup> Here, I remain agnostic as to whether this operator is universal or existential. It seems that nothing special in what follows hinges on one or the other assumption.

**antecedent**<sup>3</sup>. This variation depends on the type of conversational backgrounds the modal takes:

- a.  $f_{\text{dox}} \rightarrow Op(x)$
- b.  $f_{\text{circ}} \rightarrow Op(e)$

- The imperative modal operator has been treated as invariably having a doxastic modal base and a bouletic ordering source (Condoravdi & Lauer 2012; Oikonomou 2016). I argue, in contrast, that the modal operator in imperative clauses, just like other modals, can have, in principle, various conversational backgrounds.
- In complement clauses of desire predicates its null argument refers **to the matrix subject**, while in dependent clauses of purposive construction it refers **to the whole event**.
- The lexical entry for this operator is given in (20).

$$(20) \llbracket OP \rrbracket^c = \lambda f. \lambda g. \lambda p. \lambda \varepsilon. \lambda w (\forall w' \in \text{MAX}_{g(\varepsilon)}(f(\varepsilon), w)) [p(w')]$$

where  $\varepsilon$  is the variable of a special underspecified semantic type, which can range over eventualities and individuals.

- The availability of the first-person Imperative form in root non-interrogative contexts and the absence of the Subject Obviation effect is due to the fact that the null pronoun of the modal refers to the whole event (namely, the speech act event) and, thereby, does not provoke subject obviation. Thus, the first-person singular Imperative expresses what is best to perform for a speaker according to his goals in utterance time.

#### 4.2 The pragmatic function of the $m(\mathfrak{a})$ -form

- If the first-person Imperative does not have any causative semantics and does not constitute a “directive” speech act, what is it used for?
- To answer this question, I build on the recent modal theory for the semantics of imperatives developed in Kaufmann (2016)<sup>4</sup>. Utterances with Imperatives presuppose that the context is *non-descriptive*. There are two types of non-descriptive contexts: *practical* and *expressive*.

(21) A context  $c$  is practical for an agent  $\alpha$  (written  $\alpha$ -Practical( $c$ )), iff

- a.  $c$  is a *decision problem* for  $\alpha$ , written  $\Gamma_{\alpha}^{\Delta}$ , and
- b.  $g_c$  represents a set of rules, preferences, or goals.
- c. The salient modality in  $c$  is *decisive*, that is, CS entails that  $f_c, g_c$  characterize the modality relevant to resolve  $\Gamma_{\alpha}^{\Delta}$ .

<sup>3</sup> Note that Hacquard herself takes a radical position and claims that modals are *always* event-relative. More specifically, she argues that in attitude reports embedded modals are anchored to an event variable introduced by the embedding attitude predicate. The assumption that attitude predicates always have the Davidsonian argument has been recently challenged (see Hegarty 2016). However, the analysis developed here is seems to be virtually independent of whether attitudes are predicates of eventualities or not.

<sup>4</sup> For the sake of simplicity, I deliberately leave aside some details of her theory that are irrelevant for my purposes.

(22) A *decision problem* for an agent  $\alpha$  is a set of non-overlapping propositions where each cell represents a future course of events that is choosable for  $\alpha$ .

- I claim that when a speaker utters a non-embedded non-interrogative clause containing the first-person Imperative form, he gives an answer to his own decision problem, thereby *publicly committing* to the realization of the prejacent. The decision problem can be stated explicitly (23).

(23) A: *qə-reqə-γ-i?*

2.S/A.IMP-what.to.do-IRR-2/3SG.S

'What should you do?'

B: *mə-kefi-tku-γ?e-k*

1SG.S/A.IMP-write-ITER-1SG.S

'I'll study!'

- An utterance of a clause containing a second-person Imperative form, apart from answering the addressee's decision problem, also makes true a subsequent declarative statement with an overt modal (cf. 24). That is, this utterance updates the common ground by adding the corresponding modalized proposition to it.

(24) a. John to Sam: Stop smoking!

b. Sam should stop smoking.

**QUESTION:** What kind of statement, if there is any, does an utterance of a clause containing the *m(ə)*- form make true?

#### 4.3 The first-person Imperative and the semantics of intention

- Nedjalkov (1994: 324) states that the *m(ə)*- form is used to express a speaker's **intention** to perform an action. Indeed, it turns out that an utterance of a clause with the *m(ə)*- form makes true a modal statement with the verb *tenmawək* 'intend' (25).

(25) a. Ilya: *eγə-qanjaw-etə*      *m-ekwet-γ?e*

white-canyon-DAT      1SG.S/A.IMP-leave-TH

'I will go to the white canyon!'

b. Ilya *∅-tenmawə-rkən*      *ekwetək*      *eγə-qanjaw-etə*

I.      2/3.S/A-intend-IPFV      leave-INF      white-canyon-DAT

'Ilya intends to go to the white canyon'.

- Grano (2017) claims that *intend*, just like *want*, targets an agent's *preferences*. Namely, it encodes *effective* preferences and imposes an additional requirement that the agent stays in the RESPONSIBILITY relation to the embedded proposition.

(26)  $[[a \text{ intends } p]]^w = 1$  iff  $\text{RESP}(a,p) \in \max[\text{Effective-Preference}(a,w)]$ .

- Effective preferences are diverse. They, as Condoravdi & Lauer (2012: 45) propose, can be: "desires, inclinations, personal moral codes, and obligations, to name but a few". While *want* is generally assumed to quantify over desires, things are less clear in the case of *intend*.



- As the modality expressed by the ***m(a)***- form **can only be teleological** and as a clause with this form entails a subsequent declarative with the attitude predicate *tenmawək* ‘intend’, we have a piece of evidence that **intention reports target effective preferences made up of goals**.
- In fact, intention is not always desire-dependent:
 

(27) I intend to visit Moscow next week, though I don’t want to.
- However, it seems that they are obligatorily goal-dependent:
 

(28) I intend to visit Moscow next week, #though that’s not my goal.

#### 4.4 1sg Imperative and the semantics of promise

- In Zanuttini et al. (2012) and other works of this research group, a theory aiming at explaining the restrictions on the interpretation of three sentence-final particles in Korean is developed. The authors claim that these particles encode different clause types—promissives, imperatives and exhortatives, which they label under the general term *jussives*. These clause types are associated with one core function—updating someone’s “To-do List”.
- The promissive particle *-ma*, having the speaker’s coordinates as the semantic value of their subjects, is used to update the speaker’s To-do List by committing him to the realization of the proposition. Their analysis presupposes that on the speech-act level promissives can be treated as 1sg Imperatives.
- While I agree that 1sg imperative clauses can constitute a commissive speech act, I do not share the view that they always do so.
- Some uses of the ***m(a)***- seem to have the force of promising (or, possibly, offering):

[Context: The fox, who is the main antagonist of Chukchi tales, falls into the water and asks the crow, who is the main protagonist, to rescue him]

(29) *jetʔoj iwke=ʔm q-ena-γto-γ-e...*  
 brother-VOC PTCL=EMPH 2.S/A.SUBJ-INV-pull.out-IRR-2/3SG.S  
 ...*teŋ-uwʔeʔe-ŋeʔwəʔ-∅ mə-jəʔ-γət*  
 GOOD-black-herd-NOM.SG 1SG.S/A.IMP-give-2SG.O  
 ‘Brother, please, pull me out! I’ll give you a totally black [reindeer] herd!’

- While others can hardly be treated as promises:

(30) *otsoj nə-miysiret-iyəm*  
 long ST-work-NP.1SG  
*wətku iyət mə-saj-o-γʔa-k*  
 only now 1SG.S/A.IMP-tea-EAT-TH-1SG.S  
 ‘I’ve been working so long. Only now I’ll drink tea!’

- Moreover, as it was shown above (recall 19) the ***m(a)***- form can be used in the absence of any addressee, to whom a potential promise can be directed.

## 5. Conclusion and open ends

- Imperative clauses in Chukchi allow their subjects to be co-referent with the matrix subject/perspective center. Therefore, the form of the 1sg Imperative is licensed in root non-interrogative environments.
- I have argued that the absence of subject obviation is due to the fact that the null argument of the modal operator in imperative clauses can have an event antecedent.
- The relativity of the modal depends on the type of conversational backgrounds it takes. In non-embedded non-interrogative clauses containing the 1sg Imperative the modal operator takes a circumstantial modal base and a teleological ordering source.
- Chukchi provides empirical evidence suggesting that covert imperative modals can take various conversational backgrounds (contra Condoravdi & Lauer 2012; Oikonomou 2016) and can have event-type arguments. In these two respects, covert imperative modals do not differ from their overt counterparts.
- I hypothesize that for a given language the availability of the first-person singular imperative/subjunctive forms in non-interrogative contexts will be directly related to the possibility of imperative/subjunctive to be used in dependent clauses of purposive constructions.
- The question that I leave for future research is the following:  
Do we really need a strict grammatical mechanism of control? The possibility of having various antecedents is noticed for PRO in rationale clauses in English. J. J. Green and A. Williams (Williams & Green 2017) have recently proposed that the referent of PRO is determined by purely pragmatic principles.

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