REVIEW ARTICLE

The English imperative. By EIRLYS DAVIES. (Croom Helm linguistic series.) London: Croom Helm, 1986. Pp. xii, 275.

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1. The imperative in English has some peculiarities which distinguish it markedly from other sentence types (the declarative, the interrogative and the exclamative, in particular). The imperative sentence differs from other types of sentence in that:

- (i) its subject is optional and there are some restrictions on what subjects are possible;
- (ii) its verb lacks tense distinction and does not co-occur with modal auxiliaries;
- (iii) it requires *do* in negation or emphasis even when it contains *be* or auxiliary *have*.

In addition to these major characteristics, imperatives have certain restrictions on the kinds of elements which can be used in them. Certain adverbials are incompatible with imperatives (e.g. **Almost finish your work./ *Usually drive your car./ *Unfortunately pay your rent now./ *Certainly come back./ *Come yesterday.*). So-called stative verbs fail to occur in imperatives (e.g. **Understand the answer./ *Want more money./ *Hope it rains.*). Passive imperatives are generally ungrammatical (e.g. **Be allowed to leave. / ?Be flattered by what he will say. / *Be elected chairman.*). With these peculiar syntactic properties and restrictions (which no other sentence types have), the imperative in English has been regarded by most grammarians as a rather exceptional and idiosyncratic construction which defies useful generalizations. This is true of transformational grammarians as well. To account for the above-mentioned characteristics of imperatives, transformational grammarians have had to postulate special phrase structure rules and (constraints on) transformations which seem to be rather ad hoc (e.g. a PS rule which introduces an imperative morpheme which is specially postulated for the generation of an imperative sentence, a transformation which deletes the subject *you* optionally, and a constraint on the application of *Do*-replacement, a transformation postulated to prevent the co-occurrence of *do* and *be* or auxiliary *have* in declaratives and interrogatives).

This book, however, attempts to demonstrate that there are many

interesting regularities in imperatives which can be accounted for and that useful generalizations can be made which hold both for imperatives and for other constructions. However, Davies says in the Preface of this book that she has 'deliberately tried to avoid as much as possible discussion which is dependent on a specific theoretical framework', because her concern 'has been, not so much with the theoretical respectability of a particular description, as with the generalizations it makes and the assumptions about the imperative which underlie it'. D, therefore, makes it the aim of her book 'simply to shed some light on the syntax, semantics and pragmatics of the English imperative, and to draw attention to certain facts which should be accounted for in any adequate description of English' (from the Preface).

2. At the outset D characterizes the nature of the imperative in English that she wants to discuss in this book. D considers the imperative to be a separate sentence type, not a verbal category, and regards imperatives as instances of a type of sentence contrasting with declaratives and interrogatives. D claims that the above-mentioned three properties (i)–(iii) are the defining characteristics of the imperative as a distinct sentence type. Given this definition, 'interrogative imperatives' or 'whimperatives' like those in 1 fall outside the class of imperatives and therefore are not taken up for discussion in this book.

(1) a. Can you pass me the salt?

b. Why don't you be quiet?

Other characteristics—the nonoccurrence of certain adverbials, of stative verbs, of passive forms, etc.; the co-occurrence with *please*, vocative *someone*, and tags like *won't you*—are discussed, but are argued to be matters of pragmatic acceptability rather than grammaticality.

After this introductory discussion of the syntactic properties of the imperative in chapter 1 ('A syntactic characterization of the imperative'), D considers the semantics of imperatives in chapter 2 ('Meaning and use'). In order to account for a wide range of illocutionary forces that the utterance of one type of sentence may express in different contexts, D claims that it is necessary to distinguish the meaning of a sentence type and the illocutionary force that it has when it is uttered, and proposes to assign a particular meaning to each type of sentence. D characterizes the meaning of the declarative as ASSERTIVE and that of the imperative as PRESENTATIVE, because 'While a declarative can be said to assert a proposition which may or may not be true, an imperative can best be

described as presenting a proposition which may or may not become true' (48). Thus the meaning of an imperative sentence is specified as the presentation of a proposition (*p*) representing a possible state of affairs. D further assumes that there are some conventions which serve to link the meaning of a sentence and the way it is used to communicate. D suggests that 'there is a convention governing the utterance of imperatives, which is as essential to the way imperatives are used and understood as the convention of truthfulness is to the use of declaratives' (50-51). Thus, 'the speaker who utters an imperative which presents a proposition *p* is conventionally assumed to accept *p*'s being made true' (51). D goes so far as to say that 'the essential point of an imperative utterance may be, not to get the addressee to realize the possibility referred to, but merely to convey to him that the speaker does accept its being realized' (54).

According to D's proposal, the 'utterance meaning' of an imperative sentence (i.e. the interpretation that the utterance of an imperative sentence gets in a particular context) consists of three components: illocutionary force, conventional meaning, and sentence meaning. The kind of illocutionary force that an imperative utterance has in a given context is, D suggests, determined on the basis of the relevant convention and the sentence meaning of the imperative, with the help of contextual information. Under the proposed analysis, the conventional meaning of an imperative utterance is specified as the speaker's acceptance of the possibility of *p*'s becoming true and the sentence meaning of an imperative as the presentation of that possibility; therefore, the context-independent basic meaning of imperatives is something like 'I accept the possibility of *p*'s becoming true'.

3. As D argues, this analysis is very effective in accounting for the wide variety of illocutionary acts which imperatives can be used to perform. If imperative sentences were regarded as semantically specified for some specific kind of directive meaning as they are in most previous analyses, it would be very difficult to account for the fact that their utterances are understood to convey directives of many different kinds as shown below.

(2) a.	Make your bed at once.	⟨Order⟩
b.	Don't touch.	⟨Prohibition⟩
c.	Pass the salt, please.	⟨Request⟩
d.	Take an aspirin for your headache.	⟨Advice⟩

e.	Help yourself.	⟨Permission⟩
f.	Be careful!	⟨Warning⟩
g.	Try it again next week.	⟨Suggestion⟩
h.	Take the first street on the left.	⟨Instruction⟩

However, given the analysis of the imperative as the mere presentation of a possibility and the convention that in using an imperative the speaker expresses his acceptance of this possibility's being realized, the great variety of illocutionary forces indicated by the imperative is easily accounted for, because in this analysis the diversity of illocutionary forces of the imperative as seen in 2 can be regarded as pragmatic (contextual) variations of its basic meaning 'I accept the possibility of *p*'s becoming true'.

Although D's analysis is thus effective in explaining the great variety of the uses of imperatives, it does not seem flawless. The idea that the utterance meaning of a sentence can be analyzed into a tripartite structure is not new, and D's tripartite analysis of the utterance meaning of the imperative seems to owe its idea to the same type of analysis proposed in Lyons 1977. Recent studies in speech acts such as Searle 1979, Bach and Harnish 1979, Fraser 1983, and Allen 1986 also present similar analyses. The idea that the illocutionary force of an utterance is contextually determined on the basis of the propositional content, the propositional (sentence) type meaning, and background information of various kinds, too, is proposed in theoretical studies in speech acts such as Bach and Harnish 1979 and Allen 1986. One of the problems with D's analysis is her characterization of the basic meaning of the imperative (henceforth, abbreviated to BMI). The 'speaker's acceptance' portion of the BMI corresponds to what is described as 'the speaker's attitude' toward the proposition in speech act theories. In the case of the directive type of illocutions, the speaker's attitude toward *p* (e.g. his desire that *p* be realized) constitutes the motivation that actuates the speaker to perform a directive of one sort or another. Therefore, this attitude is sometimes called a 'motivational attitude' in contrast to the corresponding attitudes assumed for other types of illocutions (cf. Motsch 1980). This motivational attitude varies in content from one type of directive to another. Thus, the speaker's desire for *p*'s being realized may be said to be a good motivation for the act of ordering, demanding or requesting, and his acceptance of *p*'s being realized a good one for the act of advising or permitting, but neither the speaker's desire nor his acceptance can be said to be a reasonable motivation for the act of suggesting, proposing, in-

structing or challenging.

(3) a. A: What shall I do tonight?

B: Go to the shops and have a meal out. <Proposal>

b. Catch me if you can! <Challenge>

D explains that in the case of these acts the 'speaker's acceptance' part of the BMI is suppressed and the speaker indicates only the possibility of *p*'s becoming true. But this explanation is not convincing. Why is it possible that part of the BMI, which ought to be expressed in all uses of the imperative by definition, is not expressed in some cases, while it is in other cases? Besides, it is doubtful whether the BMI should be specified as D proposes at all.

If the BMI is to refer to what all the uses of the imperative have in common, the 'speaker's acceptance' portion could not be said to be included in the BMI, because, as stated above, it is not expressed in cases like those in 3. On the other hand, notice that a subjunctive or infinitival clause, too, can be used to present or indicate the possibility of a proposition's becoming true.

(4) a. I suggest *that you try it again next week.*

b. I want *you to pass the salt.*

It seems clear that imperatives do more than just present a possibility in whatever use they may be used. By uttering an imperative, regardless of its use, the speaker (S) PROPOSES to the addressee (A) that A realize *p* and TRIES TO INDUCE A to do so. This inducing effect that S exercises on A by proposing that A do something seems to me to be the most important property that all the imperative uses share, but that no other types of sentence and expression have. Suppose that the imperative only presents the possibility of *p*'s becoming true, as D suggests, and there is no difference between the imperative and the subjunctive clause in their basic meaning. It would not be easy to give an adequate account of the difference in grammaticality between 5a and 5b.

(5) a. I demand/suggest *that it be done immediately.*

b. *It be done immediately.

In contrast, if the imperative and the subjunctive are regarded as different in their basic meaning and the restriction on the possible imperative subject exemplified in 5b is explained in connection with the above-mentioned semantic property peculiar to the imperative, the difference in question can be accounted for much more plausibly.

4. In chapter 3 ('Negation and emphasis'), D deals with negative and

emphatic imperatives on the basis of the semantic analysis of the imperative proposed in chapter 2. D provides ingenious accounts for complex and apparently irregular facts about negative and emphatic imperatives, making use of the two scope possibilities that she assumes to exist in the BMI. Negation and emphasis are assumed to have scope ambiguity depending on which of the two components (i.e. the 'speaker's acceptance' component or the propositional component) of the BMI they include in their scope. Negative imperatives usually express the speaker's order, plea, request, etc. that the addressee refrain from doing something.

- (6) a. Don't move.
 b. Please don't cause any trouble.
 c. Don't go away.

D explains that these interpretations derive when negation includes in its scope (i.e. negates) the 'speaker's acceptance' component of the BMI. D represents this type of negation as 'I do not accept (I reject) the possibility of p's becoming true' (72). On the other hand, there are cases where negative imperatives do not express the speaker's rejection of, but his acceptance of, the possibility expressed, as in:

- (7) A: I don't think I'll go to the party.
 B: All right, don't go then, if you don't want to.

D claims that the negative imperative here expresses, not the speaker(S)'s rejection of the addressee(A)'s going, but S's acceptance of A's *not* going and therefore what is in the scope of negation here is the propositional component (you-go). This is represented as 'I accept the possibility of not-p's becoming true' (72).

D's account of the semantic ambiguity of negative imperatives in terms of the scope possibilities of negation is indeed very illuminating, but there is something about it which is not entirely convincing. Consider, for instance, the examples in 8 which convey a piece of advice.

- (8) a. Don't worry.
 b. Don't work too hard.

In the case of the act of advice, it does not seem correct either to say that S accepts A's *not* doing something, or to say that S rejects A's doing something. For whether or not A worries (works too hard) is not a matter that S can accept or reject. Then, how is it possible to analyze the basic meaning of negative imperatives like those in 8, so far as we follow D's analysis? Consider also the following pair.

- (9) a. Please don't go.
 b. Please stay.

D would have to describe the basic meanings of 9a and 9b as 10a and 10b respectively.

- (10) a. I reject the possibility of your going.
- b. I accept the possibility of your staying.

However, 'not go' and 'stay' can be regarded as synonymous to the same degree that 'not accept' and 'reject' are. Therefore, if the proposition 'you-go' is represented as p , the proposition 'you-stay' can be represented as not- p , and vice versa. To use this representation, 10a and 10b may be rephrased as:

- (11) a. I reject the possibility of p 's becoming true.
- b. I accept the possibility of not- p 's becoming true.

Since 9a and 9b are semantically equivalent to the extent that 'not go' and 'stay' are synonymous, we must conclude that 11a and 11b, which ought to be semantically differentiated because of negative scope distinction in D's analysis, are semantically equivalent as far as examples like those in 9 are concerned. Moreover, the representations proposed by D such as those shown in 11 seem to fail to capture the similarity between a negative and an affirmative imperative exemplified in 9. They both express plea as well as S's proposal to A that A (not) do something. In D's analysis, all this similarity would have to be accounted for by means of some pragmatic mechanism, of which she does not provide a very clear idea in this book. However, I doubt whether the inducing effect that S exercises on A, which is, as I said above, the most important property shared by all imperatives, should be treated as a pragmatic meaning determined solely on the basis of contextual factors.

5. There are two distinct uses of emphatic imperatives which are illustrated by the following examples.

- (12) Do give it to them.
- (13) A: I know you don't want me to invite him. But he'll be offended if I don't.

B: Oh, very well. Do invite him then, if you must.

Since the *do* in 12 expresses the speaker's persuasive or insistent attitude, D refers to the emphatic use of the imperative in 12 as the 'persuasive' use. On the other hand, the *do* in 13 is used to emphasize an affirmative in order to contrast this with a corresponding negative. D calls this use of the emphatic imperative the 'contrastive' use. D makes effective use of her analysis of the BMI in accounting for these two different uses of emphatic imperatives. D explains that the persuasive use derives when

do emphasizes the 'speaker's acceptance' component of the BMI, while the contrastive use does when *do* stresses the propositional component. As stated above, the 'speaker's acceptance' part of the BMI is that component of it which indicates the speaker's attitude toward the proposition expressed. Persuasiveness or insistence is an attitude that the speaker adopts when he has a strong desire that the addressee do something. Therefore, D's account of the persuasive use of the emphatic imperative by associating emphatic *do* with the attitudinal component of the BMI is on the right track. However, strictly speaking, it is not correct to say that the speaker's persuasive or insistent attitude derives from an emphasized 'speaker's acceptance' of a possibility as D suggests. Rather, such an attitude of the speaker's is normally motivated by his strong desire for something to be done, as stated above. Here again, I doubt the validity of D's specification of the attitudinal component of the BMI (namely, 'I accept ...').

The difference between the persuasive and the contrastive use is argued to arise from which of the two components (attitudinal or propositional) of the BMI the emphasis expressed by *do* is associated with. But there seem to be cases where this difference cannot be clearly recognized. Consider the following example.

(14) A: I'm wondering whether I should invite your friend Bill to our party or not.

B: Oh, do invite him, please. He'll be terribly disappointed if you don't.

Here emphatic *do* seems not only to express the speaker's persuasive attitude, but also to emphasize the affirmative nature of the proposition presented. Does this mean that the emphasis expressed by *do* should be regarded as associated with both the attitudinal and the propositional component of the BMI in this example? Examples like that in 14 cast doubt on the existence of the proposed distinction between the persuasive and the contrastive use of emphatic imperatives. This doubt also arises from the fact that all emphatic imperatives share an important semantic property regardless of whether they are employed in the persuasive or the contrastive use. If the imperative is to be characterized as an expression indicating S's proposal to A that A realize the proposition expressed, as argued above, we can say that emphatic *do* invariably stresses the force of S's proposal to A that A realize the proposition presented. (This emphasis may be represented as 'Do realize the proposition presented'.) Notice that the emphatic imperatives in 12-14 all

express S's strong appeal to A to do the act indicated in the proposition. Couldn't we think, then, that the speaker's persuasiveness, insistence and willing consent expressed in 12–14 are all his psychological attitudes that motivate him to make such a strong appeal to the addressee and that these attitudes of the speaker's are the very elements whose interpretations are to be contextually (pragmatically) determined?

6. D's strategy for dealing with the syntactic properties of imperatives in chapters 3–5 is to treat their apparent idiosyncratic characteristics as explicable in terms of the BMI, the inherent meanings and syntactic properties of the items involved, and pragmatic inference. She gives convincing accounts of the restrictions on the positions which the subject can take in negative and emphatic imperatives—for instance, the oddness of 15a in contrast to the acceptable 15b and 15c—and of the differences in the interpretation of imperative subjects as opposed to vocatives and indicative subjects.

- (15) a. ?Do you go out tonight.
- b. Don't you go out tonight.
- c. Do everybody go out tonight.

And D claims that 'it is possible for imperative subjects either to precede or to follow *do* and *don't*, but that imperatives where the subject precedes one of these are not merely optional alternatives to those where it follows' (98). In her view, when the subject precedes *do* or *don't*, as in 16, it is not contrasted, whereas, when it follows *do* or *don't*, as in 17, it is contrasted with another subject.

- (16) a. Those with cars do bring them along.
- b. You lot be the spokesmen, the others don't say a word.
- (17) a. I know the cyclists might not be able to make it, but do those with cars turn up.
- b. Don't you lot go, the others go.

In chapter 4 ('The imperative verb phrase'), D proposes to characterize the syntactic properties of imperative verb phrases as against those of indicative, subjunctive and infinitive verb phrases, by means of the syntactic features [$\pm$ Tense] and [$\pm$ Aux]. It is argued that imperatives share with subjunctives and infinitives the syntactic feature [–Tense] indicating the absence of tense marking, while they share with indicatives the feature [+Aux] which signifies that an auxiliary is required in negation and emphasis. While imperatives are thus marked as [–Tense], [+Aux], indicatives are specified as [+Tense], [+Aux], and subjunctives

and infinitives as [–Tense], [–Aux].

These feature specifications work nicely in capturing the major syntactic similarities and differences among imperatives, indicatives, subjunctives and infinitives. For instance, one of the major differences between imperatives and indicatives is that imperatives allow the co-occurrence of *do* and *be/auxiliary have* but disallow the occurrence of modals, while indicatives disallow the co-occurrence of *do* and *be/auxiliary have* but allow modals to occur in them. Given that imperatives lack Tense (i.e. are marked as [–Tense]), while indicatives include Tense (i.e. are marked as [+Tense]), in order to explain the difference concerning the co-occurrence of *do* and *be/have*, 'it is simply necessary to postulate that *be* and *have* can function as auxiliaries in carrying negation and emphasis only when they are associated with Tense' (126). And the assumption that imperatives are tenseless provides a straightforward explanation for the fact that modals never occur in imperatives, because modals have no tenseless forms.

The feature specification [–Tense], [+Aux] given to imperatives is, no doubt, effective in capturing their syntactic properties, but it leaves unexplained why *do* is required in negative and emphatic imperatives. D claims that *do* can occur in imperatives because, unlike modals, it can be tenseless, as is seen in the following examples.

(18) a. He asked me to tell her and I will do.

b. He turned up late again, as he was expected to do.

But these *do*'s are 'pro-verbs', somewhat different in nature from auxiliary *do*. In fact, as 18 shows, these *do*'s can occur in infinitives, while auxiliary *do* cannot. The question is why auxiliary *do* can occur in tenseless imperatives, while it cannot in equally tenseless infinitives. The feature specification contrast [+Aux] vs. [–Aux] merely indicates the existence of this fact, and does not explain why it exists.

In transformational grammar (TG), auxiliary *do* is treated as an element which acts as a host to which a Tense (or Mood) affix is attached just in those contexts in which the affix has no other verbal element to combine with. Negation and emphasis typically constitute contexts of this kind, and therefore it is easy to explain in TG why auxiliary *do* is required in negation and emphasis. In the standard TG treatment of imperatives, an abstract imperative morpheme (IMP) is postulated for the generation of imperative sentences. This morpheme is considered to have no phonetic form, but to serve as an (empty) affix in the same way as the Tense morpheme does in the course of derivation. Accordingly,

under the TG analysis, negation and emphasis create in imperative sentences those contexts where IMP is left unattached and requires the help of auxiliary *do*, just as they create similar contexts in indicative sentences. Thus, it can be seen that in present-day English auxiliary *do* functions as a host to which otherwise 'hostless' affixes are attached. This is one of the important generalizations that TG has gained in the long history of its study of English auxiliaries, and ought to be taken into consideration in any serious account of problems connected with auxiliary *do*. It is strange that although frequent mention is made of TG studies in her book, D pays no attention to this generalization while she takes the view that 'the *do* which occurs in imperatives is to be identified as an instance of the same auxiliary *do* which occurs in indicatives, and is not to be dismissed as some entirely separate particle or introductory marker' (126).

In chapter 5 ('Imperative subjects'), D discusses various problems concerning the imperative subject such as its optionality, the range of the possible subjects, and the syntactic and semantic differences between imperative subjects and vocatives. In the discussion of the differences between imperative subjects and vocatives, D reveals various interesting facts, among which is a striking contrast between the ranges of noun phrases which can function as an imperative subject and a vocative, as is seen in:

- (19) a. Someone answer the phone. [Imperative]
b. ?Someone, answer the phone. [Vocative]
- (20) a. ?Mary bring the glass in, will you? [Imperative]
b. Mary, bring the glass in, will you? [Vocative]
- (21) a. *You fool/Idiot take a look at this. [Imperative]
b. Take a look at this, you fool/idiot. [Vocative]
- (22) a. Nobody make a noise. [Imperative]
b. *Make a noise, nobody. [Vocative]

Although it is generally taken for granted that the subject of an imperative must refer to the speaker's addressee(s), D points out that this is not quite true, citing examples like the following where the subject refers only to third persons, and not to the addressee at all.

- (23) a. You go for help and *the children* stay here with me.
b. *Your men* guard the front while we creep round to the back.

However, D does not make clear whether there is any limit of acceptability on third person imperative subjects. So it is left unexplained in this

study why 24a is allowed as an imperative in present-day English, while 24b is not.

- (24) a. Somebody open the window.
- b. *The window be opened.

7. In the remaining chapters D treats what she calls 'imperative-like' constructions. She discusses imperative-like conditionals (ILC) in chapter 6 ('The imperative in some co-ordinate constructions'), imperative-like ultimatums (ILU) and imperative-like concessives in chapter 7 ('Some other imperative-like constructions'), and *let*-constructions in chapter 8 ('The *let*-construction').

Opposing to some transformational grammarians who assume that ILCs and ILUs, examples of which are given in 25 and 26 respectively, are derived from underlying *if*-constructions, D claims that they are constructions containing imperatives.

- (25) a. Ask him a question and you get no answer.
- b. Buy from that shop and you'll regret it.
- (26) a. Be quiet or I'll send you to bed.
- b. Use the hand brake or we'll run into the wall.

She argues that ILCs and ILUs are to be regarded as co-ordinate constructions whose first conjuncts are imperatives, demonstrating that all the properties of these imperative conjuncts can be accounted for in terms of the syntactic and semantic characteristics of imperatives indicated in this study, and that these co-ordinate constructions are under the restrictions on co-ordination of sentences in general which 'relate to a general pragmatic requirement that any co-ordination must be felt to have a certain justification or relevance' (161).

Concessive constructions of the types illustrated in 27 and *let*-constructions such as those in 28 are also regarded as instances of the imperative, as opposed to similar imperative-like constructions like those in 29, which D proves to be different from typical imperatives in several important points.

- (27) a. Say what you like, he won't be persuaded.
- b. Offer me a thousand for it, I still won't sell.
- c. Try as you will, he won't be impressed.
- (28) a. Let's have a drink together.
- b. Don't let there be any more noise.
- (29) a. Try though you may, you won't convince them.
- b. Be that as it may, the problem still remains.

8. In this book, much is clarified about the English imperative through D's careful investigation of an extensive range of relevant data and through her consistent approach to the syntax and semantics of the imperative made on the assumption that it is not a verbal category, but a sentence type distinct from the declarative and the interrogative and that it has as a sentence type a unique meaning which can be identified as the presentation of a proposition as a possibility. Given that the imperative is defined as a sentence type with specific syntactic properties, imperative-like constructions such as ILCs, ILUs and *let*-constructions, which have sometimes been distinguished from (real) imperatives, can now be regarded as instances of the imperative, and certain hitherto unnoticed important relationships between these and ordinary imperatives come to be identified systematically. For example, the unacceptability of *don't let* as compared with the acceptable *let ... not* in the following context can be explained in terms of the negative scope possibilities which are generally recognized in the interpretation of negative imperatives.

(30) A: Henry says he won't speak to you any more unless you apologise to him.

B: Well, { let him not speak to me. } It doesn't matter
 { ?don't let him speak to me. }
 to me at all.

Just as in 7 above, what is negated (i.e. in the scope of negation) in this context must be the proposition expressed, not the speaker's acceptance of the realization of that proposition. The *let ... not* form allows the propositional negation interpretation, but the *don't let* form does not (this expresses only the attitudinal negation).

On the other hand, since in D's treatment the class of imperatives is considered to be so extensive as to include various types of imperative-like constructions, the basic meaning of the imperative (BMI), which D assumes to be shared by all members of this large class, cannot but be so much less specific. The BMI is, as stated above, defined as 'the presentation of a proposition as a possibility', but is this meaning really peculiar to the imperative? It seems that this meaning can be expressed by using an expression like 31 as well.

(31) You can be quiet.

But this expression cannot be used in an ILC in the way that the imperative *Be quiet* can be.

- (32) a. Be quiet and no one will notice you.
 b. ?You can be quiet and no one will notice you.

Then, what is the difference between imperatives and expressions like 31? I conjecture that the imperative *Be quiet* differs from 31 in that by uttering the former the speaker does not merely present the proposition (you-be-quiet) as a possibility, but PROPOSES to the addressee that the latter be quiet, as I argued above, whereas by uttering 31 he only presents the proposition as a potentiality. Therefore, the specification 'the presentation ...' does not seem to be a proper characterization of the basic meaning of the imperative.

However, despite this and other problems pointed out earlier, this book has much to admire. Its observations and suggestions as well as the rich data that it presents will have to be taken into account or utilized by anyone who seeks to make a serious study of the English imperative.

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