Can and should we use Chukchee imperatives in questions?

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Outline

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2. Chukchi data: bare Imperatives and *iwke* Imperatives

3. "Declarative", or simple Imperatives

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Our data come from two fieldtrips to the village of Amguema (Iul'tin district, Chukotka Autonomous Okrug), jointly organized by the Moscow State University and School of Linguistics, Higher School of Economics (Moscow) in 2016–2017

Imperatives: minimal vs. modal approaches

Minimal approach:

- Imperatives are a special clause type;

- they denote not a proposition but a property that is added to Addressee's To-Do-List;

- Their directive force comes from the pragmatics [Portner 2004, 2007].

Modal approach:

- Imperatives include a covert modal operator in its semantics:

- [Kaufmann 2012]: a **universal** (necessity) modal;

- [Grosz 2011]: a modal **ambiguous** between necessity and possibility;

- [Oikonomou 2016]: an **existential** (possibility) modal.

(1) Go home! ≈ 'You must go home!'

Puzzles

1. Both minimal and modal approaches face problems when dealing with the so-called **acquiescence** uses of imperatives [von Fintel, Iatridou 2015]:

A: It's getting warm. Can I open the window?

B: Sure. Go ahead. Open it!

2. Minimal approaches (imperatives are a unique clause type), cannot account for **imperative / subjunctive questions** (2):

(2)   SLOVENIAN

Naj   mu   pomagam?

SUB   3.M.DAT help.1

'Should I help him?' [Stegovec 2017]

Chukchi imperatives: a paradigm

Person	SG	PL
1	m-√-(ɣʔe)-k	mən-√-mək
2	q-√-ɣ-i	q-√-tək
3	n-√-(ɣʔe)-n	n-√-net

- All person-number forms can combine with the particle *iwke,* which derives a special kind of speech acts

Bare Imp's in declaratives

Chukchi imperatives allow both for **strong** (command) and **weak** (possibility) readings:

- Strong reading (command):

(3) *ʔepte   qə-qora-ɣərke-rkən*   *ənqen   q-ine-winretə-rkən*
    DISC   IMP.2-reindeer-collect-PROG.SG   DEM   IMP.2A-INV-help-PROG.SG

   'Arrange the reindeers! Help me!'

- Weak reading (permission/acquiescence)

(4) *ewət ra-raɣtə-ŋ-kə,*   *qə-ɬe-rkən*!   *ɣəm qərəm reqənmikwʔe*
    if   DES-go.home-DES-CVB   IMP.2-go-PROG.2SG

   'If you want to go, go! I will not object.'

iwke + Imp in declaratives: 1sg

- First person: intention vs. "secret prayer"

(5) a. *mə-qametwa-ɣʔa-k*!

     1.IMP-eat-TH-1SG.S

    'I shall eat / Let myself eat!'

  b. ***iwke*** *mə-qametwa-ɣʔa-k*!

    PTCL   1.IMP-eat-TH-1SG.S

    'If only I ate something!'

iwke + Imp in declaratives: 2sg

- Second person: command vs. request

(6) a. *ɣər   qə-nju-ɬqət-ɣ-i*!

     today   2P.IMP-night.duty-GO-2SG.O

     'Go for the night watch!'

   b. **iwke** *iɣər   qə-nju-ɬqət-ɣ-i*!

     PTCL   today   2P.IMP-night.duty-GO-2SG.O

     'Go for the night watch, **please!**'

iwke + Imp in declaratives: 3SG

- Third person: **command** vs. **wish**

(7) a. *ɣəməkə nə-wetɣawjoɬyətko-ɣʔa-n*

     I-DAT   3.IMP-call-TH-3SG.O

     'Let him call me!'

  b. *iwke ɣəməkə nə-wetɣawjoɬyətko-ɣʔa-n*

     PTCL   I-DAT   3.IMP-call-TH-3SG.O

     'If only he called me!'

iwke: generalizations

- *iwke* introduces one of the following two flavours:
  - irreality / "future less vivid" [Iatridou 2000]
  - politeness / helpfulness
- A well-known polysemy pattern with modal verbs:

(8) a. If I **could** do that… / Je **pourrais** le faire…

   b. **Could** I help you? / **Pourrais**-tu m'aider?

- This pattern is attested outside Europe as well
  (Udmurt "polite" imperatives with irrealis particle *val*)

Declaratives: trying to analyse

M. Kaufmann [Kaufmann 2012]: imperatives contain a presupposition that modalizied proposition is *possible*, but not *necessary*.
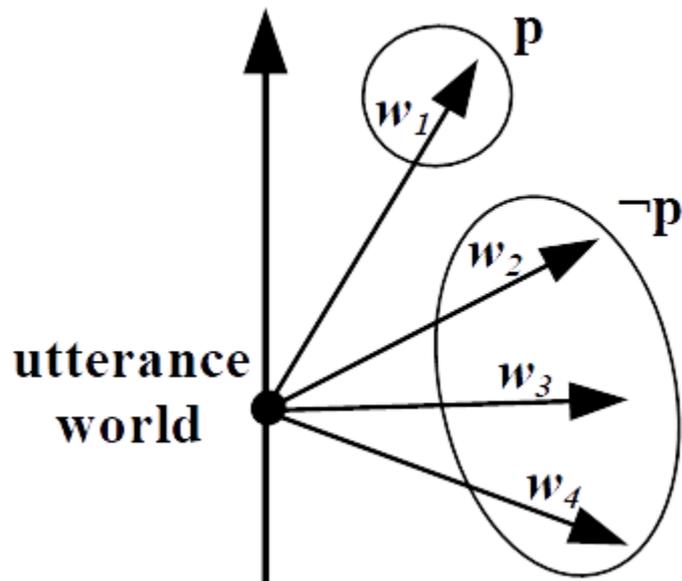
(9) **Epistemic Uncertainty Constraint**:

Issuing an imperative require the speaker to believe that both p and $\sim p$ can take place in the future.
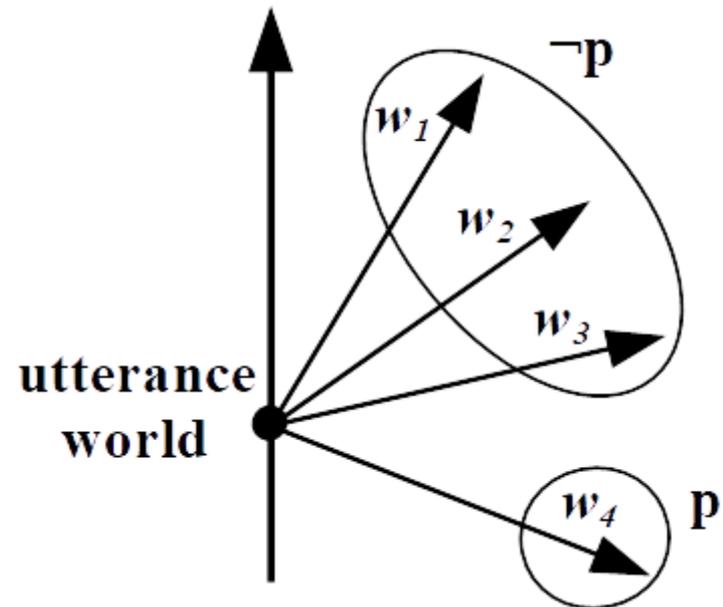
iwke: trying to analyse

Bare Imp's:

Imp's with *iwke*:

more probable

less probable

Deontic questions

1ˢᵗ and 3ʳᵈ person Imperatives can be used in what we call deontic questions (questions about permission or obligation)

- Bare Imp's: obligation queries

(10) *m-uswitku-ɣʔe-k?*

    1.IMP-choop-TH-1SG.S

    'Must I choop the wood?'

(11) *n-ekwet-ɣʔe-n?*

    3SG-leave-TH-3SG.O

    'Must he go away?'

Deontic questions

- *iwke*-imperative questions: asking for permission.

(12)   *iwke   mə-qepɬ-uwiswetə-k*?

  PTCL   1SG.S/A.IMP-мяч-играть-1SG.S

  'May I play the ball?'

(13)   *iwke   nə-sajo-ɣʔa-n*

  PTCL   1SG.S/A.IMP-мяч-играть-1SG.S

  'May he drink the tea?'

Quantificational force(s): towards an analysis

- Imp (declarative clauses): either ◊ or □

- Imp + *iwke:* mostly □

- Imp ?: always □

- Imp + *iwke* ?: only ◊

- Can we derive those reading compositionally?

QF of Imp and focus

Iatridou and von Fintel (2015): "permission" readings of imperatives are in fact "acquiescence" readings: they arise in cases when a quest for permission was already made:

(14) — Can I leave now?

— OK, leave.

Oikonomou (2016), based on usual information structure test as well as on the data about intonation patterns in English and Greek:

- "permission" readings arise only under *verum foci*

- i. e. they can only be answers to general questions ('Can I or can't?') but not special questions ('What may I bring?')

Oikonomou (2016)

- Imperatives are always possibility modals

- Usually, they are strengthened to necessity by **exhaustivity** operator

- Exhaustivity operator (EXH; Fox et al. 2007) is a conventionalized of a scalar implicature:

'I have two cows' → 'I have no more than two cows'

- Roughly, EXH adds a presupposition (15)

(15) The focus alternative is **the only true alternative** (all other alternatives are false)

Imperatives, narrow focus

Utterance: Give me A KNIFE! $\Diamond P(... (x)_{FOC})$

Focus alternatives:

    Give me a fork! $\Diamond P(... (y)_{FOC})$

    Give me a spoon! $\Diamond P(... (z)_{FOC})$

    Give me a stick! $\Diamond P(... (a)_{FOC})$

    ...   ...

Imperatives, narrow focus + EXH

Utterance: Give me A KNIFE! $\lozenge P(\dots (x)_{\text{FOC}}) = 1$

Focus alternatives:

   Give me a fork! $\lozenge P(\dots (y)_{\text{FOC}}) = 0$

   Give me a spoon! $\lozenge P(\dots (z)_{\text{FOC}}) = 0$

   Give me a stick! $\lozenge P(\dots (a)_{\text{FOC}}) = 0$

   ...   ...

- 'You can only give me A KNIFE (not a fork, not a spoon, not a nothing'

→ 'You have to give me A KNIFE' ($\square$)

Modals as quantifiers

- Necessity modals: universal quantifiers over accessible possible worlds:

  must P = 'in all the worlds where the speaker's wishes hold, P'

- Possibility modals: existential quantifiers over accessible possible worlds:

  may P = 'in some of the worlds where the speaker's wishes hold, P'

- $\sim\exists \leftrightarrow \forall\sim$ ('P does not exist' means 'everything is not P')

- Similarly, $\sim\Diamond \leftrightarrow \Box\sim$ ('P is not possible' means 'It is necessary that not P')

Modals as quantifiers

$EXH(\exists x.Px) \rightarrow \forall x.Px$

- If $(\text{mortal})_{FOC}$ philosophers **exist**, …

- and no more sorts of philosophers exist (no immortal, no half-mortal, etc.) …

- then **all** philosophers are mortal.

Imperatives, narrow focus + EXH

Utterance: Give me A KNIFE! $\lozenge P(... (x)_{FOC}) = 1$

Focus alternatives:

Give me a fork! $\lozenge P(... (y)_{FOC}) = 0$

Give me a spoon! $\lozenge P(... (z)_{FOC}) = 0$

Give me a stick! $\lozenge P(... (a)_{FOC}) = 0$

...   ...

- 'You can only give me A KNIFE (not a fork, not a spoon, not a nothing'

→ 'You have to give me a knife' ($\square$)

Imperatives, verum focus

Utterance: [GIve me a knife!]$_{FOC}$ $(\lozenge P)_{FOC}$

Focus alternatives:

~[Give me a fork!]$_{FOC}$ ~$(\lozenge P)$

Imperatives, *verum focus* + EXH

Utterance: [GIve me a knife!]$_{\text{FOC}}$ $(\lozenge P)_{\text{FOC}} = 1$

Focus alternatives:

  ~[Give me a fork!]$_{\text{FOC}}$ ~$(\lozenge P) = 0$

~$(\lozenge P) = 0 \rightarrow \lozenge P = 1$

- No strengthening occurs

- The modal remains existential!

Imp + *iwke* questions

- In *wh*-questions, *iwke* does not change the quantificational force of the modal:

(16) a. ***rʔenut   mə-ret-ɣʔe-n?***

      what   IMP.1SG.A-bring-TH-3SG.O

      'What must I bring?' (□)

  b. ***rʔenut iwke mə-ret-ɣʔe-n?***

      what   PTCL IMP.1SG.A-принести-(TH-)3SG.O

      'What should I bring? {helpfulness flavour}' (still □)

Imp + *iwke* questions

The same pattern is observed with polar questions with narrow foci (marked by a focus particle *ketem* 'exactly, именно'

(17) a. *ketem*   [*mən-ititə-net*]_{FOC}   *ənnə-t?*

      exactly   1PL.S/A.IMP-boil-(TH-)3SG.O fish-PL

      'Do I have TO BOIL the fish?
      {not to roast, not to bury in the ground}'

   b. *iwke ketem* [*mən-ititə-net*]_{FOC}   *ənnə-t?*

      PTCL exactly 1PL.S/A.IMP-boil-TH-3SG.O fish-PL

      'Should I BOIL the fish?
      {helpful flavour; not to roast, not to bury in the ground}'

Puzzle

- *iwke* + Imp questions:
  - narrow focus → necessity flavour
  - broad (in fact *verum* focus) → possibility reading

- Imp questions:
  - always necessity flavour

- How come?

Oikonomou (2016)

- Greek *na*-subjunctives can be used both in declaratives and questions
    - the quantificational force regularly depends on the information
- Chukchi *iwke*+Imp questions (not taking into account its "helpfulness" flavour) behave just the same way as Greek *na*-subjunctives
- Chukchi bare Imperative questions behave differently, keeping necessity all the way

Proposal

- To avoid strengthening by the EXHaustivity operator, the focus of the question should outscope the modal
  - $\lozenge(P \ldots (x)_{FOC}) \rightarrow \square$
  - $(\lozenge)_{FOC}(P) \rightarrow \lozenge$
- Our proposal: *iwke* a phonologically **overt** modal and therefore **can be F-marked** in questions
- The modal operator in bare Imperative clauses is **unpronounced** and therefore **cannot be F-marked** in questions

Proposal

- Imperatives are for some reason resistant to questioning

- The degree of such resistance varies across languages
  - most SAE-languages: no Imperative questions at all
  - Greek, Slovenian (subjunctives): every part of the imperative utterance can be questioned
  - Chukchi: everything but a covert modal operator can be the focus of a polar question

Conclusions

- Yes, we can and even should

- Chukchi data on imperative questions corroborate the modal approach to Imperatives

- If we can question Imperative clauses, they should be designed somehow parallel to regular declarative

- Quantificational forces of *iwke* + Imp deontic questions depend on the information structure in a regular way and can be explained postulating an EXH operator

- Bare Imperative questions do not yield such an explanation

Open ends

- Our hypothesis is that the covert modal operator of Imperatives cannot be F-marked due to its unpronounceability

- Does it hold typologically?

- We are extremely interested in imperative / optative / subjunctive forms that can be used in questions, especially acquiring deontic interpretation

- How necessity and possibility readings are distributed typologically? Will the dependency on information structure still hold?

Спасибо!
Спрашивайте?

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