

# **Imperative and Exclamative Clauses**

# **i. IMPERATIVE CLAUSES**

# IMPERATIVE CLAUSES

- Speaker's intention is that the hearer makes the propositional content of the sentence come true; preconditions:
  1. Hearer is able to do the act
  2. Speaker believes in hearer's ability
- Purpose: through directive acts impose authority over the hearer
- **IMPOSITIVE DIRECTIVES** v. **NON-IMPOSITIVE DIRECTIVES**  
(command, order, ...) (advice, wish, instruction, ...)
- **Speaker's choice** depends on: social interaction, desired communicative effect, degree of authority, superiority, ...
- Non-impositive interpretation bound to the effect that the hearer profits from the command

# Translate and decide on the type of directive (non-impositive, impositive)

1. Add water only.
2. Be quiet.
3. Shake before use.
4. Place the dough on a lightly floured smooth surface.
5. Sleep well.
6. Do it now.
7. Drink Coke.
8. Be thinking nice thoughts of me.
9. Don't just stand there, do something.

## DO-IT-ALWAYS vs. DO-IT-NOW

- Distinction to be made between commands:
  - Do-it-now: “now” is not at once but “within a reasonable interval”
    - *Read every book on the shelf!*
    - *Clean the table!*
    - *Be nice to old people.*

## EXPLICITLY WORDED INTENTION

- Speaker’s intention: expressed explicitly; PERFORMATIVE VERBS (order, command, request, ...)
  - *I **order** you to bring me a cup of tea.*
  - *I **command** you to stay here.*
  - *I **request** you to stand aside.*

... instead of implicit: *Bring me the cup of tea. Stay here! Stand aside!*

- **Initiator** of the command: **speaker** or **higher authority** (speaker’s role to be mediator); initiator may introduce himself indirectly as 3<sup>rd</sup> pers.:
  - *The captain requests every passenger to remain seated during turbulence.*

(= I as a captain request)

# DISTRIBUTIONAL vs. NON-DISTRIBUTIONAL

- Imperatives are **not subjectless** – sentence with unexpressed subject
- **2<sup>nd</sup> pers. implied** in English; in Czech it is made **explicit** by ending:
  - *Zůstaň. Zavolej.*
- **2<sup>nd</sup> pers. made overt** in both languages; to specify different activities in the class, to avoid misunderstanding:
  - *You come to the blackboard, you collect the exercise books, ...*  
... distinctive reference, usually coordinated 2 or more commands ...  
*You come to the blackboard **and you** bring me your report book.*
- **NON-DISTRIBUTIONAL**: all possible addressees included
- **DISTRIBUTIONAL**: addressees restricted by specification
  - *Behave **yourself**.* (reflexive pronoun)
  - *Send the letters for me, will **you**?*

- **Inclusion of 2<sup>nd</sup> pers. pronoun** also: reinforces speaker's control over hearer (more emphatic):

- *Don't **you** come near me! Don't **you** dare threaten me!*
- ***You** wait till you see what she reads.*

... often with a gesture

... use of vocative:            *Give us a hand, **Tom**. **Boys**, stop that noise!*

... indirect addressees:    *I command **the officers in this unit** to remain here!*

- **Subject** should **not be used unless needed**; reasoned cases (to identify particular addressee, to serve a persuasive function)

# CONDITIONAL IMPERATIVE

- Syntactic resemblance to an imperative but with conditional interpretation (similar to IF clauses):
  - ***Make a mistake and there'll be trouble!***
  - ***Don't report for duty and you'll get the sack.***
  - ***Get an invitation and you'll have to come.***
- Reference to eventuality (instead of reality); validity of the second part dependent on the fulfillment of the condition.  
... also possible to refer to the past:
  - ***Give him a smile and he **was** your friend for life.***  
(not a proper command; futurity = necessary precondition for a command)



# WHIMPERATIVES

- Intention to issue a softened command:

- *Will/would you pass me the salt?*

- *Can you carry out the garbage?*

... all the operator verbs used for making **WH-questions**

= commanding by questioning (questions with the force of imperative)

>> Way to issue a command in a polite way

- *Can you find your way out?*

... sarcasm (= leave me alone)

*Do that for me, **won't you?***

*Do that for me, **will you?***

... optional negative in the tag (as opposed to: *John will arrive, won't he?*)

## **ii. EXCLAMATIVE CLAUSES**

# EXCLAMATIVES

- exclamative clause - restricted to constructions with an **initial exclamative phrase** containing **WHAT** (as modifier) or **HOW** (as modifier / adjunct adverbial)
- **ILLOCUTIONARY FORCE** >> exclamatory statement / exclamation / exclamative = a statement with overlaid by an **emotive element** (speaker's affective stance/attitude); compare:
  - *What a strong performance she gave!*      vs.      *She gave a strong performance.*
- attitudinal component with **implicature** that the performance is at the **extreme** - i.e., it was greater than any alternatives that one might consider; similar to: *She gave such a strong performance!* (... which, however, could serve as an answer to a question: *How was the concert?* ... which is not the case of exclamatives)

# EXCLAMATIVES

- structural similarity with interrogative clauses
- do ***not only*** surprise/unexpectedness, e.g.:
  - *What a delicious dinner you've made!*  
(implies extreme tastiness, not surprise)
- initial exclamative phrase (What ..., How ...), "true" exclamatives:
  - *What a fool I've been.*
  - *Oh, how stupid you two are!*
- but (sometimes also considered exclamatives):
  - *Is syntax easy* >> *interrogative sentence*
  - *They were so rude!* >> *indicative mood, declarative sentence*
  - *The things he eats!* >> *noun phrase*
  - *If only she were here with me!* >> *past subjunctive*

# EXCLAMATIVES vs. WH-INTERROGATIVES

- structural similarity (wh-phrase fronted; express degree)
- rhetorical / literary flavour:
  - *What a strange land was this country!*
  - *How boring is this life.*
- if punctuation/intonation/prosody absent - **ambiguity** (interrogative or exclamative?):
  - *What evil lurks in the heart of man (?,!)*
  - *How many young men talk of their father with regret or contempt (?,!)*
- **HOW** ... (degree meaning): verbs of 'pleasing', i.e., *please, like, love* and *enjoy*:
  - *How the Americans **love** to debunk!*
  - *How he **hates** spinach!*
- **WHAT** ... (mostly followed by sg. NP):
  - *What **a place** that is.*
  - *What **a fuss** the papers have made about me.*
  - *Oh, Grand-dad, what big words you use.*

# EXCLAMATIVES - examples

- *Who the hell are you?* (exclamatory question)
- *What a lovely car!* (reduced to a phrase)
- *How splendid!*
- *What a neighborhood **do we** see!* (subject-aux inversion)
- *How true **do these words** ring!*
- *How stupid and gross would seem to them **his silly romance!*** (postponed subject)
- Once in a while they said ***what a shame it was.*** (subordinate excl. clause)
- She had not noticed before ***how thin he was now.***

# EXCLAMATIVES - examples

(reinforced by interjection)

- **Wow**, *what a smoothie!*
- **God**, *what a world you people live in.*
- **Oh**, *how she wished she could have stayed the night at her friend's!*

(reversed polarity tag – seeking acknowledgement)

- *What a strong performance she gave, **didn't she!***

# ELLIPTICAL EXCLAMATIVES

- i.e., where there is an **exclamative NP or AdjP** only:
  - Your Highness, *what a pleasure (...)*.
  - *What a dump.*
  - Oh my God, *how embarrassing.*
  - "Hell, *how unnerving!*" Jane sympathized.
- exclamative phrase **followed by a clause**:
  - *What a shame (...)* ***the series could not finish there.*** (finite clause)
  - *What a lucky country* ***to be able to talk about its people as a unified group.*** (non-finite clause)
  - *What a waste of time* ***talking to older brother and sister.*** (non-finite clause)