

The background features a large, faint watermark of the University of Basrah logo. The logo is circular and contains a central emblem of a palm tree above an open book. The text around the emblem includes 'جامعة البصرة' (University of Basrah) in Arabic, 'COLLEGE OF EDUCATION FOR HUMAN SCIENCES' in English, and the year '1975' on both sides.

**English Grammar  
Fourth Year  
2019-2020**

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# **Week 6: The Simple Sentence**

## **Lecture No. 16:**

- **Directives (Commands)**



# Directives (Commands): Introduction1

*Commands represent the sentence type that is normally associated with the **Imperative Mood**.*

*When we examine commands such as:*

- ***Go away.***
- ***Be quiet.***

*we are struck by the fact that there is no obvious (overt) subject noun phrase.*

# Directives (Commands): Introduction2

*It is intuitively clear that the meaning of a directive implies that the omitted subject is the 2nd person pronoun **you**. The implication can be demonstrated by the:*

- *Occurrence of **you** as subject of a following tag question (**Be quiet, will you?**),*
- *Occurrence of only **yourself** or **yourselves** as the reflexive (**Behave Yourself** or **Behave yourselves**, not **\*Behave myself**, etc)*
- *Occurrence of only the emphatic possessive **your own** (**Use your own comb**, not **\*Use her own comb**, etc)!*

# Commands: Clause Patterns

(S)V: **Wait.**

(S)VC: **Be quiet.**

(S)VOC: **Consider yourself traitor.**

(S)VOA: **Put the flowers on the table.**

(S)VO: **Open the door.**

(S)VA: **Get inside.**

(S)VOO: **Tell me the truth.**

# Verbless Commands

*Adverbials may have the illocutionary force of commands. Generally a verb of motion is implied.*

- ***Forward!***                      ***Faster!***                      ***Left, right!***
- ***Inside!***                      ***Hands up!***                      ***Eyes down!***
- ***Backs to the wall!***                      ***Shoulders back!***
- ***Hands on head!***                      ***Thumbs up!***
- ***Thumbs down!***                      ***Heads up!***

# Lack and Restriction 1

*The imperative verb lacks tense distinction and does not allow modal auxiliaries. The progressive form is rare, and the perfective even rarer:*

- *Be listening to this station the same time tomorrow night.*
- *Be doing your homework when your parents arrive home.*
- *Start the book and have finished it before you go to bed.*

## Lack and Restriction 2

*Passives with **be** occur chiefly in negative directives, where they generally have the meaning 'Don't allow yourself to be . . .':*

- *Don't be deceived by his looks.*
- *Don't be made to look foolish.*
- *Don't be bullied into signing.*
- *Don't be told what to do.*

*They are less common in positive directives:*

- *Be guided by what I say.*
- *Be reassured by me.*



# Lack and Restriction 4

*Imperatives are restricted to predications that allow a dynamic interpretation, hence the incongruity of :*

***\*Need a car, \*Be old, \*Sound louder.***

*Many predications that are stative with respect to disallowing the progressive are easily available with a dynamic interpretation for imperatives:*

***Forgive us, Love your enemies, Owe nobody anything,  
Be early, Be glad that you escaped without injury,  
Don't be a stranger, Be a pilot, Know the poem by  
heart by the next lesson.***

# Lack and Restriction 5

*Imperatives 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.***

# Commands with *Subject*

*There is, however, a type of directive in which the stressed subject **you** is added. **You** may be non-contrastive and admonitory, and express strong irritation.*

- ***You keep your mouth shut.***
- ***You be quiet.***
- ***You do your job silently.***

*There is also a type of directive with 3<sup>rd</sup> person subject:*

- ***Parents with children go to the front.***
- ***Men in the front row take one step forward.***
- ***Nobody move.***

# Commands with *Let*

*First person imperatives can be formed by preposing the verb **let** followed by a subject in the objective case:*

- ***Let us vote for the fittest.***
- ***Let them confess their guilt.***
- ***Let me think what to do next.***

*The same applies to 3<sup>rd</sup> person subjects :*

- ***Let no one speak badly about him.***
- ***Let each man decide for himself.***
- ***If anyone shrinks from this action, let him speak now***

# Negative Commands

*To negate 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> person imperatives, one simply adds an initial (Don't), replacing assertive by non-assertive forms as well:*

- *Don't wear loose clothes.*
- *Don't work without gloves.*
- *Don't take off your helmet.*
- *Let's not say anything about it.*
- *Don't let me disturb you.*

# Persuasive Commands

*We can make a positive imperative more persuasive or insistent by adding (do) before the verb. Do reinforces the positive sense of the imperative:*

- ***Do have another piece of cake.***
- ***Do let's go to the movies.***
- ***Do be seated.***

# Mitigated Commands

*Commands are apt to sound abrupt unless tone down by markers of politeness such as **please**:*

- ***Please show me your hands.***
- ***Go ahead please.***

*Another way to mitigate the force of the imperative is by changing the structure into a statement of a question:*

- ***Will you convince them to come?***
- ***I wonder if you would kindly answer my question.***

# Illocutionary Force of Commands 1

*Imperative sentences are used for a wide range of illocutionary acts. It is not, however, always possible to make precise distinctions because the illocutionary force depends on the relative authority of speaker and hearer and on the relative benefits of the action to each. Here are some examples of sentences that may be used for different illocutionary acts, but we should be aware that illocutionary force depends in most cases on the situational context.*

# Illocutionary Force of Commands 2

- **ORDER, COMMAND** *Fire! [fire as verb]*
- **PROHIBITION** *Don't touch.*
- **REQUEST** *Shut the door, please*
- **PLEA** *Help!*
- **ADVICE, RECOMMENDATION**  
*Take an aspirin for your headache*
- **WARNING** *Lookout*
- **SUGGESTION** *Ask me about it again next month*
- **INSTRUCTION** *Take the first street on the left.*

# Illocutionary Force of Commands 3

- **INVITATION** *Make yourself at home*
- **OFFER** *Have a cigarette*
- **GRANTING PERMISSION** *Help yourself*
- **GOOD WISHES** *Enjoy your meal*
- **IMPRECATION** *Go to hell*