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Imperatives as Underquantified Propositions

The intuition that imperatives and deontic modality should be treated on a par is widely accepted. This common assumption is shared by two different theoretical approaches: (1) Dynamic theories and (2) Modal theories. The first approach argues that imperatives are not propositions but properties added to the To-Do-List (TDL) which represents the requirements that an addressee in discourse has to bring about (Portner 2004, 2005, 2007, 2009, 2012). The second approach argues that imperatives contain a covert modal component (deontic by default) which defines a predetermined domain of quantification (Han 2000) which is either always universal and existential readings are derived via pragmatics (Schwager 2005a, 2005b, 2006; as Kaufmann 2011) or ambiguous between an existential and a universal reading (Grosz 2009).

A set of data (information content, descriptive uses, performative uses, ordering source restriction, modal force, temporal orientation, speaker's commitment, negation, embedding, illocutionary force, and embedding performatives) show that imperatives are not predetermined quantifiers and differ from other directive expressions (see deontic modals). Let us review three characteristic cases. *Speaker's ordering source* (refer to example in 1): The ordering source is one of the parameters in interpreting modality (see Kratzer 1977, 1981, 1991b). Ordering source determines what is an obligation or permission and orders the worlds in the modal base $\cap f(w)$ with respect to the set of propositions that are either obligatory or permissible. The case of imperatives is different. The ordering source depends on the speaker; meaning that the ordering permutations on the modal base depend on the speaker, and this is why there is no contradiction when using an imperative proposition. *Modal Force Test* (refer to example in 2): Imperatives do not have a prespecified modal force. Those that convey obligations are universal quantifiers and those that grant permission are existential quantifiers, but the quantifier choice depends on the speaker (see conditions in 1 below). *Temporal Orientation Test* (refer to example in 3): Imperatives have a strict non-past temporal orientation.

The purpose of this paper is to show that imperatives do not incorporate a covert modal component and that they do not have a predetermined modal force (universal or existential). In other words, the range of quantification for imperatives is neither fixed nor ambiguous. I argue that imperatives' modal base is underquantified which means the imperatives have a nonpartitioned quantificational domain (Q_D henceforth). To partition a Q_D and turn an imperative to either a universal or existential quantifier, I employ an ordering source depending on the speaker ($g_{speaker}$ henceforth) who determines what is an obligation or permission and orders the possible worlds in the modal base $\cap f(w)$ with respect to the set of propositions that are either obligatory or permissible with respect to his/ her directive goals. The speaker's ordering source $g_{speaker}$ selects a subset of the set of propositions, the modal base on which the selected quantifier will quantify over under two conditions. First, if there are at least some deontically possible worlds w.r.t the speaker then the domain of quantification is existentially quantified (see imperative in example 3a interpreted as suggestion in 3c):

(1) a. If $D_Q < (f_{(w)} \leq g_{speaker})$ then D_Q is existentially quantified

Second, if the domain of quantification overlaps with the set of all deontically possible worlds then it is universally quantified (see imperative in example 3a interpreted as an order in 3b):

b. If $D_Q = (f_{(w)} \leq g_{speaker})$ then D_Q is universally quantified

Where D_Q = domain of quantification
$f_{(w)}$ = modal base
$g_{speaker}$ = ordering source

(2) Speaker's ordering Source

a. Take a nap. Take a walk. I don't care!

b. # You have to take a nap. You have to take a walk. I don't care!

c. # You may take a nap. You may take a walk. I don't care!

(3) Modal Force

a. Take a left turn! *…as a direction ∀ or suggestion ∃*

b. You # may / have to take a left turn. *…as a direction by a driving instructor*

c. You may / # have to take a left turn. *…as a suggestion on a trip*

(4) Time

a. Send everybody a reminder by email on Monday! *Non-past orientation*

b. # Send everybody a reminder by email yesterday! *Past orientation*

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