

On Extra Clausal Constituents: The case of imperatives

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Imperatives exhibit crosslinguistically a wide range of structures, and this makes it difficult to generalize on them or to propose a structural definition that really would apply to all, or at least to most of them. My concern will be more narrowly with what has been called “canonical imperatives”, that is, with information units having an (implicit) second person singular subject referent as a hearer (or reader or signee) and expressing commands or requests directed at the hearer.

Canonical imperatives have been called extragrammatical or extrasyntactical forms (Watkins 1963; Aikhenvald 2010). Building on the recent work within the framework of Discourse Grammar (Kaltenböck et al. 2011; Heine et al. 2013) I will attempt to account for such forms within this framework. While exhibiting central features of extra-clausal constituents, imperatives pose some problems both to this concept and to the framework of Discourse Grammar. These problems will be the subject of the paper to be presented.

References

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