

Title	ADVERBIALS, IMPERATIVES AND PRAGMATIC CONDITIONS
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Citation	Osaka Literary Review. 1979, 18, p. 1-18
Version Type	VoR
URL	<a href="https://doi.org/10.18910/25683">https://doi.org/10.18910/25683</a>
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# ADVERBIALS, IMPERATIVES AND PRAGMATIC CONDITIONS

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## 1. Introduction

We often give commands, make requests, and offer suggestions not by using explicit performative sentences, but by using imperative ones.<sup>1)</sup> The following examples which are due to Austin (1962:73) can all have the same surface syntactic form of an imperative, but their illocutionary forces are quite different.

- (1) a. Shut it, do. 'Command' (' ' indicates an illocutionary force.)
- b. Shut it – I should. 'Advice'
- c. Shut it, if you like.<sup>2)</sup> 'Permission'
- d. Very well then, shut it. 'Consent'
- e. Shut it if you dare. 'Warning'

As is often said, the meaning of an imperative can be characterized in terms of the range of illocutionary forces associated with it.<sup>3)</sup> But the problem is to account for why an imperative can be used as a command, or a suggestion, or a request in a certain situation. In order to solve this problem, I would like to propose some pragmatic conditions later.

Some native speakers judge that a certain kind of adverbials can occur freely with imperatives, while other speakers reject

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1) I will use 'commands' for utterances with a particular illocutionary force, and 'imperatives' for sentences with a particular grammatical structure, which lack an overt subject, but whose logical object refers to the hearer and contain a verb form homophonous with the infinitive.

2) The reason adverbial *if*-clauses are used as a motivation for setting up a pragmatic component, because they can usually be associated with the performative.

3) According to Green (1975), many other illocutionary forces than (1a-e) can be associated with imperatives: *Break a leg*. 'Wish' etc.

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such cooccurrence relations. So the second problem is this: how are we to explain the fluctuating judgement among the native speakers? Compare the following pairs.

### A. Adverbials in initial position<sup>4)</sup>

- (2) a. *Please* ( , ) close the door.  
b.\**Please* ( , ) pipe down. – Green (1975)
- (3) a. *Tomorrow* ( , ) go there.  
b.\**Yesterday* ( , ) go there.
- (4) a. *Perhaps* tell him now. – Quirk *et al.* (1972:517)  
b.\**Perhaps* drive the car. – Katz and Postal (1964:77)
- (5) a. *As a favor to me*, be careful. – Bolinger (1977:186)  
b.\**Happily* drink beer. – Nakajima and Imai (1978:6)
- (6) a. *Immediately* ( , ) free the prisoner.  
b.\**Immediately* ( , ) think about doing it.
- (7) a. *Always* play the piano.  
b.\**Often* play the piano.
- (8) a. *Carefully* remove the lid. – Sadock (1974:140)  
b.\**Accidentally* get your finger caught in a mouse trap. – Culicover (1967:2)
- (9) a. *Frankly*, be glad that we're leaving. – Schreiber (1972)  
b.\**Frankly*, come down from there this instant.

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4) Gazdar (1978:26) suggests that in declarative sentences the preverbal position is the most restricted and that the sentence initial position the least restricted. (a)i. *Please*, I will freeze out here. ii. \*I will freeze out here, *please*. iii. \*\*I will *please* freeze out here.

Johnson (1976:147) observes that the appropriateness of *please* is considerably restricted with a question. (b) Where is John, *please*? This would not be used in conversation between two close friends, but it might be used by someone initiating the conversation with a stranger.

Lee (1974) also indicates that perlocutionary request cannot always attached to *please*. (c)i. *Please* it's cold in here. (=close the door) ii. \*It's cold in here, *please*.

Horn (1978:198) and Morgan (1978:26) point out the idiosyncrasy of the lexical items such as *can*, *be able to*, *be possible*, and *have the ability to*. Only *can* has a request force in question. (d)i. *Can you please* close the door? ii. \*Are you able to *please* close the door? iii. \*Is it possible for you to *please* close the door? iv. \*Do you have the ability to *please* close the door?

5) Pragmatics concerns language users and contexts in which language is used, semantics concerns the propositions, and syntax concerns the positions.

## B. Adverbials in final position

- (10) a. Wait here, *please*.  
b.\*Pipe down, *please*.
- (11) a. Go there *tomorrow*.  
b.\*Go there *yesterday*.
- (12) a. Drive the car, *maybe*. – Hawkins (1978:292)  
b.?Come here, *maybe*.
- (13) a. Be careful *as a favor to me*.  
b. Do it *happily*.
- (14) a. Free the prisoner *immediately*. – Lyons (1977:751)  
b.\*Think about doing it, *immediately*. – Lee (1976:116)
- (15) a. Play the piano ( , ) *always*. (but not sometimes.)  
b.\*Play the piano ( , ) *often*.
- (16) a. Remove the lid *carefully*. – Sadock (1974:140)  
b.\*Get your finger caught in a mouse trap *accidentally*.
- (17) a. Tell me *frankly*. – Quirk *et al.* (1972)  
b.\*Come down from there this instant *frankly*.

My aim of this paper is to emphasize the following three points.

- i. Theoretically, I provide a possible solution to account for how *pragmatics interacts with semantics and syntax*.<sup>5)</sup> That is, the pragmatic conditions are intricately related to the meanings and positions of adverbials.
- ii. Practically, adverbials linked to a certain illocutionary force of the utterance can be *used as tests* for identifying which illocutionary force is involved in the imperative.
- iii. If we adopt *the scalar system* proposed by Lee (1976), we can partially explain the systematic relationship between imperatives and forces.<sup>6)</sup>

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6) As shown by R. Lakoff (1977), "Theoretically, an imperative could implicate either a declarative, a question, or another imperative... In actuality, there are many fewer possibilities, and these may be represented schematically by the following hierarchy: question < declarative < imperative. An imperative may implicate only another imperative, not a question or a declarative." For example, *Take out the garbage* conversationally implicates *Follow my orders*, but not *It smells in here*, and *What day does the garbage get collected?* Notice that her analysis is not without problems. But I will leave this problem open here.

II. Previous syntactic and semantic analyses

Before going into our main subject, let us briefly point out the inadequacy of the previous analyses on imperatives and adverbials.

A. Syntax

1. Katz and Postal (1964)

Postulation of an imperative morpheme [Imp] permits these selections [e.g. (4b)] to be stated in the phrase structure in terms of co-occurrence restriction on Imp and sentence adverbials. (p. 78)

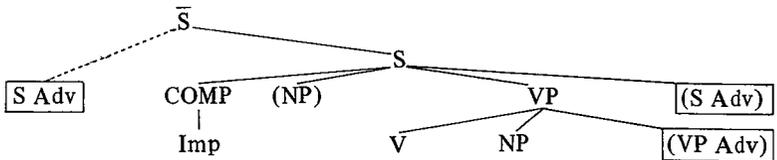
Since (4a) is a counterexample to their analysis, this is insufficient.

2. Reinhart (1976)<sup>7)</sup>

If the COMP position is filled . . . by a Imp (erative) marker, VP Adv preposing cannot take place, but S Adv preposing can. (Cf. p. 71)

(18) a. *In my next picture*, look more cheerful, please.  
(S Adv)

b. \**In my next picture*, find a scratch, if you can.  
(VP Adv)

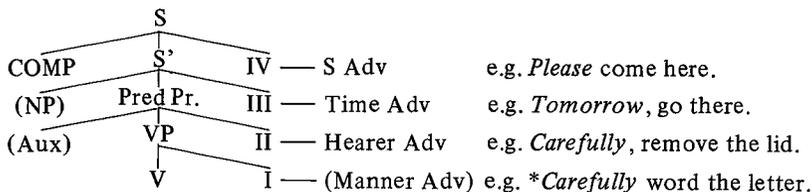


(7a) seems to be a counterexample to this claim, because *always* belongs to the VP Adv, but it can usually be preposed. So this analysis is also inadequate.

3. Williams (1975)

The adverb-preposing rule prepose items in Classes, II, III, and IV, but not I.

7) The reader is referred to Reinhart (1976; esp. Chapter 2) for the detailed discussion about the differences between S-Adv's and VP-Adv's.



I tentatively classify the adverbials into the above four classes with respect to their preposability. Furthermore, this classification can be justified by the following test.

If the two items from different classes appear in the same clause, the one belonging to the highest clause is most naturally preposable, and the other is not.

(19) a. Word the letter *carefully tomorrow*.

I                      III

b. *Tomorrow*, word the letter *carefully*.

c. *\*Carefully* word the letter *tomorrow*.

(20) a. Word the letter *carefully, please*.

I                      IV

b. *Please*, word the letter *carefully*.

(21) a. Remove the lid *carefully tomorrow*.

II                      III

b. *Tomorrow*, remove the lid *carefully*.

c. *?Carefully* remove the lid *tomorrow*.

Although I will adopt this classification in the present paper, not all the adverbials belonging to the classes II, III and IV are preposable as is shown in (2b), (3b), (4b), (5b), (6b), (8b) and (9b). Therefore, pragmatic conditions which will be discussed later must be incorporated in the grammar.

B. Semantics – Cf. McCawley (1979; esp. Chapter 9)

Class I adverbials (e.g. Word the letter *carefully*./\*Word the letter.) are predicated of *the action* indicated by the verb, while Class II advs are predicated of *the hearer* (e.g. Remove the lid *carefully*./Speak *calmly*.). Class III advs are not subcategorized by the verb and have to do with time at which

*the hearer does the action* expressed by the verb. Class IV advs (e.g. *please, clearly* etc.) are predicated of *a proposition*. But this analysis is also inadequate to account for the fluctuating judgment illustrated above.

### III. Pragmatic conditions and adverbials

In this section, I would like to specify the conditions under which an utterance of a sentence would be 'felicitous'. And many of the cooccurrence relations between advs and imperatives seem to be explained by the pragmatic conditions instead of syntactic or semantic ones. Here I will adopt Lee (1976)'s conditions and extend them to accommodate other examples.

#### 1. Status condition

As is pointed out by Lee (1976:121), the status condition can be taken to be one aspect of a scale ('squish'), with commands and requests having special properties (i.e. end points of the scale). These two illocutionary forces are not qualitatively different from suggestions. In short, a request is the weakest act, a command is the strongest act, and a suggestion is considered to be between them. This *scale of strength* comes from the status condition between the speaker and the hearer as follows.

- i. Commands: the strongest act — *the speaker must believe* that he has superior status or authority over the hearer.
- ii. Suggestions: the moderate act — *the speaker must believe* that he and the hearer are of equal status.
- iii. Requests: the weakest act — *the speaker must believe* or be acting as if he believed that he has status inferior to the hearer.

First, consider the following examples in which *please* is a class IV adv.

- (2) a. *Please* ( , ) close the door, 'Request'  
 b.\**Please* ( , ) pipe down. 'Command'
- (10) a. Wait here, *please*. 'Request'  
 b.\*Pipe down, *please*. 'Command'

According to the status condition, requests are the weakest, so leave to the hearer the options of refusal to comply them. The hesitancy of allowing the hearer the options satisfies POLITENESS RULE proposed by R. Lakoff (1977). Thus we can easily account for the acceptability of (2a) and (10a), because *please* functioning as a mitigation marker is compatible with the weakest strength of requests. On the other hand, in (2b) and (10b) *pipe down* means *shut up* and is informally used as a strong command. Therefore, the strongest command force cannot cooccur with *please* in that commands don't permit the hearer to have his options. The same reason excludes the next examples.

- (22) \**Please* march to the rear. 'Command'

*March to the rear* is syntactically identified as a command, since the directional adverbial preposing rule is applicable to this utterance (i.e. *To the rear march* is acceptable.).

- (23) \**Please* put the meat on first. – Nakajima and Imai (1978) 'Suggestion'

Contrary to their judgment, this utterance is acceptable, according to my informant. This fluctuating judgment is predictable from the fact that the condition ii sometimes permits the hearer to have the options, so the imperative-form suggestion may or may not occur with *please*.

- (24) a.\**Please* don't move a muscle. 'Warning'  
 b.\*All right, *please* be miserable. 'Permission'
- (25) a.\*Don't move a muscle, *please*. 'Warning'  
 b.\*All right, be miserable, *please*. 'Permission'

The above two forces behave like commands, because they

don't leave the options to the hearer, and are as strong as the command force.

- (26) a. *Please* take me with you. 'Plea'  
 b. *Please* sleep well. 'Wish'
- (27) a. Take me with you, *please*. 'Plea'  
 b. Sleep well, *please*. 'Wish'

These forces are something like requests because of the compatibility of the condition iii. Thus they are very weak with respect to the scale of strength and cooccur with *please*.

- (28) a. *Please*, be glad that they didn't fire you. – Gordon and Lakoff (1975:98) 'Advice'

b.\*Be glad that they didn't fire you, *please*. 'Advice'

Like suggestions, advice will be marked acceptable or unacceptable by virtue of the moderate strength. We can account for (28a, b) by adding the following place principles.

Principle 1: putting an adverbial initially serves to show the TOPIC.

Principle 2: putting an adverbial in the final position is used to add the adverbial for fear that the previous proposition should be literally interpreted.

In (28a), *please* serves to establish the weakening function of the proposition following it. So the whole utterance becomes very weak. The condition iii and the place principle 2 blocks (28b), since putting *please* finally does not make the whole utterance so weak.

To sum up, *please* can occur with the imperatives only if the speaker believes himself to have less authority about what the hearer will do. If this condition is violated intentionally, the utterances such as (24a) can be used ironically.

## 2. Not done condition

According to Lee (1976:123), the next two subconditions are included in this condition.

- i. *the speaker must believe* that the actions are not performed.
- ii. *the speaker must also believe* that the actions are not, at the time of speech acts, being performed.

The subcondition i blocks all the following (b) examples including some point in the past, while permits the (a) examples referring to the future.

- (3) a. *Tomorrow* ( , ) go there. 'Command'  
 b.\**Yesterday* ( , ) go there. 'Command'
- (11) a. Go there *tomorrow*. 'Command'  
 b.\*Go there *yesterday*. 'Command'

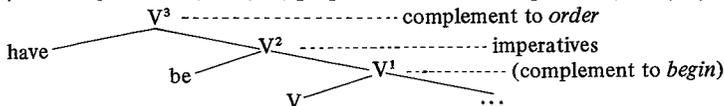
Note that the adverbials in (3) can be interpreted as class III advs indicating topics, but those in (11) as class III advs expressing new information.

- (29) a. Be there *by tomorrow*. 'Command'  
 b.\*Have finished your work *by tomorrow*.<sup>8)</sup> 'Command'
- (29a) satisfies the subcondition i, but in (29b) *by tomorrow* is incompatible with the perfect form implying the non-future reference.

- (30) a. Please be at school *already*. 'Wish'  
 b.\*Please set the clock if you've *already* done so.  
 'Request'

In spite of the fact that the same adverbial *already* is contained, (30a) is acceptable, while (30b) is perfectly ruled

8) Akmajian *et al.* (1979; 38) propose a PS Rule for imperatives;  $S \rightarrow (NP) V^2$



By this rule,  $V^1$  type imperative (e.g. *Drink your milk!*) and  $V^2$  type imperative (e.g. *Be studying your Spanish when I get home!*) can be generated, but  $V^3$  type imperative (e.g. *\*Have left the room by the time I get back!*) cannot. Since the *order* complement is  $V^3$ , *I hereby order you to have left the room by the time I get back.* is allowed. These examples seem to reject the so-called performative analysis. But I will not discuss this matter in any detail here.

out. (30a) is uttered in the situation that a mother hears of some danger to her child if he is still on his way to school. In this way, this utterance implies that it is her wish that the danger is NOT DONE. Note that in (30a) *already* functions as a class I adv. Thus the subcondition i permits (30a), but in (30b) the reason adverbial *if* clause is incompatible with this condition.

Finally, the following example that seems to be an apparent counterexample to the subcondition i can be explained by the subcondition ii, since the underlined part indicates that the first action has already done, but the second action in question has not performed yet.

(31) *I know you just did it*, but please do it again.

### 3. Possibility condition

This condition implies that *the speaker must believe* that the action involved is possible under certain circumstances.

- (4) a. *Perhaps* tell him now. 'Suggestion'  
 b.\**Perhaps* drive the car. 'Command'
- (12) a. Drive the car, *maybe*. 'Suggestion'  
 b.?Come here, *maybe*. 'Command'
- (32) a.\**Perhaps* defy your boss and you'll get sacked.  
 'Warning'  
 b.\**Possibly* come over, please. 'Request'  
 c.\**Maybe* hide the evidence. 'Command'
- (33) a.\**Certainly*, do it at once, John. — Greenbaum (1969)  
 'Command'  
 b.\**Clearly* hide the evidence. 'Command'

These facts show that the adverbials expressing some degree of doubt are quite compatible with the illocutionary force 'suggestion', but not with 'command'. However, in order to capture the real difference between (4a) and (4b), and the unacceptability of (33a, b), we must take into consideration many factors involved in discourse. This problem will be

briefly discussed in the next chapter.

#### 4. Good for condition

*The speaker must believe that the action will benefit the hearer or someone else whom the speaker has an interest in.*

- (5) a. *As a favor to me*, be careful. ‘Request’ (unacceptable as a command)  
 b.\**Happily* drink beer. ‘Command’
- (13) a. Be careful *as a favor to me*. ‘Command’ (rather than a request)  
 b. Do it *happily*. ‘Command’ (*Happily* means *in a happy way*.)
- (34) a. Since it’s *good for* you, don’t touch that. ‘Warning’  
 b.\*Since it isn’t *good for* you, don’t touch that.  
 ‘Warning’
- (35) a. *For the baby’s sake*, keep your voice down. ‘Plea’  
 b.\**For the baby’s sake*, pipe down. ‘Command’

From the above data it follows that commands don’t meet this condition, if the adverbials denoting GOOD FOR someone occur in initial position. Consequently, (5b) and (35b) become unacceptable. On the other hand, requests, pleas, and warnings can occur with these adverbials in initial position like (5a), (34a), and (35a). Notice that commands and warnings are different in this respect. Unlike (5a) with the adverbial *as a favor to me* functioning as IV adv, (13b) can be treated as a command because of the adverbial serving as II adv. The reason why (5b) is unacceptable is that it is not only incompatible with requests, but also violating the NOT DONE condition, since the speaker’s comment indicated by this adverbial is normally said after the action. Notice also that *for X’s sake* can occur with commands like (36), since it does not literally mean GOOD FOR X, so violates this condition.

- (36) *For Christ’s sake*, tell him to stand still and stop prancing around and stepping on us! ‘Command’ –

R.M. Stern *The Tower* p. 164

After this reexamination of Lee's four conditions, let us now set up some other conditions which seem to be relevant for the present discussion.

### 5. Urgency condition

Adverbials indicating urgency tend to cooccur with commands.

- (6) a. *Immediately* ( , ) free the prisoner. 'Command'  
 b.\**Immediately* ( , ) think about doing it. 'Suggestion'

- (14) a. Free the prisoner *immediately*. 'Command'  
 b.\*Think about doing it, *immediately*. 'Suggestion'

This condition prevents (6b) and (14b), but allows (6a) and (14a).

### 6. Specific condition

When the speaker gives a command, frequency adverbials having specific meaning can be inserted in it.

- (7) a. *Always* play the piano. 'Command'  
 b.\**Often* play the piano. 'Command'

- (15) a. Play the piano ( , ) *always*. 'Command'  
 b.\*Play the piano ( , ) *often*. 'Command'

- (37) \**Hardly* finish your work. 'Command'

(7b), (15b) and (37) are ruled out by this condition, but (7a) and (15a) are acceptable.

### 7. Self-controllability condition

When he gives a command, or makes a request, the speaker must believe that the action in question is self-controllable. So (8b) and (16b) are ruled out.

- (8) a. *Carefully* remove the lid. 'Command'  
 b.\**Accidentally* get your finger caught in a mouse trap.  
 'Command'

- (16) a. Remove the lid *carefully*. 'Request' or 'Command'  
 b.\*Get your finger caught in a mouse trap *accidentally*.  
 'Command'

(38) a. Word the letter *carefully*. 'Command'  
 b.\**Carefully* word the letter. 'Command'

(39) a. Do it *willingly*. 'Command'  
 b.?*Willingly* do it. 'Command'

(40) a. Don't do it *reluctantly*. 'Warning'  
 b.\**Reluctantly* don't do it. 'Warning'

As is pointed out in Sadock (1974:140), imperatives with a request sense fail to allow adverb-preposing, while this rule applies in the case of imperatives with a command sense like (8a). But this generalization is too strong to explain (38), (39). It should be noted that the adverbial *carefully* in (16a) belongs to class II advs, but that in (38a) *carefully* is used as a class I adv. In order to account for (39) and (40), we must consider some pragmatic factors other than syntactic and semantic ones. Roughly speaking, volitional adverbials tend to occur with commands in final position, but in initial position they are avoided, because they are too strong (i.e. The command is too strong for *the hearer* to obey.)

#### 8. Frankness condition

The speaker may express his own frankness in what he is saying when he offers a suggestion. Note that *frankly* in (9) is a class IV adverbial.

(9) a. *Frankly*, be glad that we're leaving. 'Suggestion'  
 b.\**Frankly*, come down from there this instant.  
 'Command'

(17) a. Tell me *frankly*. 'Command'  
 b.\*Come down from there this instant *frankly*.  
 'Command'

Schreiber (1972) concludes that the acceptability of these adverbials depends on the illocutionary force of the utterance. That is, commands cannot cooccur with *frankly*, while suggestions can. But this hypothesis is insufficient, in that in

(17a) *frankly* can occur with a command. Note that the adverbial in (17a) belongs to class II advs. Moreover, utterances like (9b) can be used in the middle of the discourse. This point will be treated in the next chapter.

#### IV. Violation of pragmatic conditions and contexts<sup>9)</sup>

In this chapter, I will just touch upon the violation of the rules that I have considered so far and some contextual factors.

(41) a.\*Have gotten out of my sight *by tomorrow*.  
'Command'

b. Don't have hit your head, *please*. 'Wish'

(41b) seems to be an apparent counterexample to the NOT DONE condition. (41a) includes a violation of this condition. (41b) is acceptable in the following situation: the speaker (i.e. a mother) heard a crash in the back room, but she has not verified the act which has completed or might have been completed in the past. In other words, this *not verified* situation satisfies the *not done* condition. So the context makes the utterance including an apparent violation acceptable.

In the following, I will argue that the quantity of the information and the adverbial positions in the discourse are closely related to the acceptability of the examples shown below.

(42) a.\**Perhaps* come tomorrow. 'Command'

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9) Groenendijk and Stokhof (1976) define a pragmatic model as a quintuple  $\langle M, \text{FORCE}, f, d, v \rangle$  in which (a)  $M$  is a revised semantic model; (b) FORCE is a finite set of forces, containing among others ASSERTION, PROMISE, WARNING ... with every force a set is associated; (c)  $f$  is a partial function of meaningful expressions to FORCExFORCE ... xFORCE; (d)  $d$  is a constituent set of formulas; (e)  $v$  is a function from ordered triples consisting of a formula, an ordered  $n$ -tuple of elements of Force and  $d$  to { correct, incorrect }. This approach also seems to be promising.

- b. Speaker A: What should I do now?  
 Speaker B: *Perhaps*, tell him now. (=you should...)  
 'Command'
- (43) a.\**Obviously* do it at once, John. 'Command'  
 b. Speaker A: What should I do now?  
 Speaker B: *Obviously*, go home. (=you must...)  
 'Command'
- (44) a.\**Frankly* come here. 'Command'  
 b. Speaker A: How can I keep the peace with you?  
 Speaker B: *Frankly*, stay out of my way. –  
 Bolinger (1977) 'Command'

It is in the nature of communication that the longer a given conversation is maintained the less abrasive the utterance becomes. As the Gricean maxim of quantity suggests, the speaker and the hearer need a minimum amount of information in the middle of the discourse, but the speaker must provide information enough for the hearer to identify which illocutionary force the given imperative form will have in the discourse-initial position. So examples such as (42b), (43b) and (44b) are acceptable. Note that *perhaps* functioning as a downtoner is compatible with commands in the middle of the discourse, and that the same is true of *obviously* serving as an intensifier.

Finally, different illocutionary forces can be made clear by using disambiguating contexts (= linguistic contexts).

- (45) a. Be here at two o'clock; that's *a command*.  
 b. Wait for your parents to arrive; that's only  
*a suggestion*.

## V. Conclusion

In this paper, I have considered various data obtained from many linguists. From these data it follows that the pragmatic conditions are crucially related to the cooccurrence relations

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between imperatives and adverbials. Needless to say, the validity of Lee's conditions and the other conditions I have tentatively proposed here are far from clear, and established.

The determination of whether the use of an imperative counts as a command, a request, or something else lies with the contexts of the utterance and the speaker's beliefs about the world and the relation between he and the hearer.

(POSITION: I(nitial), F(inal), MD = in the middle of the discourse)

ADVS	CLASSES OF ADV				POSITION			MEANING	FORCES
	I	II	III	IV	I	F	MD		
please				+	+	+		mitigation	Request, Plea
				+	-	-	(+)		Command, Warning
				+	±	-			Suggestion
				+	+	-			Advice
tomorrow yesterday			+		+	+		future	Command
			+		-	-		past	Command
perhaps				+	-	?	+	doubt	Command, Warning Suggestion
				+	+	+			
clearly		+		+	-	-	+	conviction	Command Command
happily		+		+	+	-		benefit	Command Command
immediately			+		+	+		a present point of time	Command. Request
			+		-	-	(+)		
always often		+			+	+		specific	Command
		+			-	-		nonspecific	Command
carefully (remove ... )		+			+	+		hearer's volition	Command Request, Command
		+			-	+		(manner adv)	Command
carefully accidentally		+			-	-		nonvolition	Command
frankly				+	+	+		the speaker's frankness in what he says	Suggestion
				+	-	-	+		Command
		+			-	+			Command

I hope much more will be discussed about the nature of adverbials, imperatives, the discourse, and the interaction among them.

Finally, let us recapitulate the relations between adverbials and syntactic, semantic and pragmatic factors in the table on page 16.

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