

Kutenai Imperatives

Matthew S. Dryer

1. Positive imperatives

Imperatives are characterized in Kutenai by (1) the absence of morphemes associated with the indicative and subordinative moods, and, (2) in some instances, by distinct imperative suffixes on verbs.

Examples (1) to (3) illustrate imperative clauses, involving the second person singular imperative suffix *-n* ~ *-in*:

- (1) ç'ina-n
 go-2SG.IMPER
 'go!' (Chief and Ogress Text, line 220)
- (2) ʔin qa.kiʔ ʔik-in
 that there eat-2SG.IMPER
 'eat there'
- (3) his-in xaʔʔcin
 feed-2SG.IMPER dog
 'feed the dog!'

Compare the imperative sentence in (1) with the indicative sentence using the same verb in (4), where there is a second person proclitic *hin* preceding the verb and where the verb bears an indicative suffix *-i*.

- (4) ʔat hin=ç ç'inax-i
 HABIT 2SUBJ=FUT go-INDIC
 'you will go there' (Tape 71, Second Part, line 64)

Compare these also to the subordinative form (which is used in questions and in subordinate clauses) in (5), with the subordinative and second person subject proclitics and no suffix on the verb.

- (5) k=in hanʔukpqa ?
 SUBORD=2SUBJ run
 'did you run'

The second person plural imperative forms involve the same second plural suffix *-kiʔ* that is used in the indicative. The example in (6) and (7) illustrate second person plural imperative forms.

- (6) taxa-s ʔa ç'ina-kiʔ
 then-OBV back go-2PL
 'go back now!' (Tape NS.7, Story 2, line 16)
- (7) huqnani--kiʔ
 move.camp-2PL
 'move camp!' (Chief and Ogress Text, line 18)

The example in (8) illustrates the same suffix *-kiʔ*, but the fact that this is indicative rather than imperative is indicated by the presence of the indicative suffix *-(n)i* and by the second person subject proclitic *hin*.

- (8) *hin* *ɕxaʔ* *mitxa-kiʔ-ni* *qu* *tuʔɕqamna*
 2SUBJ FUT shoot-2PL-INDIC that bird
 ‘you will all shoot at that bird’ (Tape 21, line 179)

The second person plural imperative is also distinct from the second person plural subordinative, in that the latter involves the subordinative proclitic *k-* and the second person subject proclitic *hin*, which coalesce into *kin* if adjacent, as in (9).

- (9) *qapsin-s* *k=in=sʔ* *ʔaqakʔatʔ* *hamat-kiɕ-kiʔ* *qapsin-s*
 why-OBV SUBORD=2SUBJ=DUR for.that.reason give-BENEF-2PL thing-OBV
 ‘why are you people giving it stuff?’ (Tape NS.7, Story 2, line 12)

The text example in (10) is interesting because it illustrates an imperative morphological form for a subject that lacks a volitional subject, the intransitive verb *hanmukuku* ‘boil’.

- (10) *taxas* *wasʔ* *hanmukuku-n*
 then quickly boil-2SG.IMPER
 ‘now boil quickly!’ (Tape 126, Side A, line 51)

There are also distinct imperative forms used with first person objects. There is an imperative suffix *-(n)u*, which indicates a second person singular subject and a first person object, as in (11) and (12). (Note that there are otherwise no morphemes in Kutenai which simultaneously code the subject and object.)

- (11) *hamat-ikɕ-u* *yaqsuʔmiʔ*
 give-BENEF-2SG.1.IMPER canoe
 ‘give me a canoe’ (Boas Text 67: Wolf, line 77)
- (12) *ʔatqananuqixuʔ-nu*
 carry.across-2SG.1OBJ.IMPER
 ‘carry me across’ (Chief and Ogress Text, line 140)

This suffix combines with the first person plural object suffix *-(n)awas* to form an imperative form with a second person singular subject and a first person plural object, as in (13).

- (13) *taxa-s* *ʔa* *ʔunanuxu-maʔ-nawas-nu*
 then-OBV back fly.down-COMIT-1PL.OBJ-2SG.1OBJ.IMPER
 ‘now fly us back down’ (Coyote and Yawukiykam Text, line 246)

The imperative forms for a second person plural subject and a first person object involve the same pronominal suffixes that occur in corresponding indicative and subordinative moods, but without the additional morphemes associated with those forms, namely the indicative suffix, the indicative proclitic (which occurs only before stems beginning with /h/ or /ʔ/), the subordinative proclitic, and the second person subject proclitic *hin*. In particular, if the object is first person singular, the verb occurs with the first person singular object suffix *-ap* and the second person plural suffix *-kiʔ*, as in (14).

- (14) *ʔa* *ɕxa-nat-ap-kiʔ* *kaʔs* *k=u=ʔ* *ʔa-qakin*
 ah say-TRANS-1SG.OBJ-2PL what,OBL SUBORD=1SUBJ=IRREAL do
na *k=u* *ʔiʔwa*
 this SUBORD=1SUBJ shoot.and.kill
 ‘Ah, tell me what I should do with my game [literally: what I killed]’

And when the object is first person plural (and the subject second person plural), just the first plural object suffix *-(n)awas* is used, as in (15).

- (15) ?iktuqu-nawas
wash-1PL.OBJ
'(you plural) wash us!' (Morgan 1991)

2. Negative imperative clauses

Negation of nonimperative clauses in Kutenai involves the use of a preverb *qa*, without further modification of the clause, as in (16).

- (16) qa ?ik-ni kanusnana-?is
NEG eat-INDIC apple-3POSS
'he did not eat his apple'

Negation of imperative clauses involves a distinct negative prohibitive word *maʔɕ*, with the appropriate imperative form of the verb, as in (17) to (20).

- (17) maʔɕ ɕina-n
PROHIB go-2SG,IMPER
'don't go' (Tape 71, Second Part, line 295)
- (18) maʔɕ ?upit-kiɬ
PROHIB kill-2PL
'don't kill him' (Boas Text 72: Pine Cone, line 63)
- (19) maʔɕ ?upɬ-u
PROHIB kill-1SG.OBJ,IMPER
'don't kill me' (Chief and Ogress Text, line 105)
- (20) maʔɕ ɬuɬamax-nu
PROHIB bite.off.head-1SG.OBJ,IMPER
'don't bite my head off' (Chief and Ogress Text, line 105)

The prohibitive word *maʔɕ* also occurs in what are formally indicative clauses containing the future preverb *ɕxaɬ ~ ɕ*, as in (21) and (22), but where the intended pragmatics is apparently that of an imperative.

- (21) maʔɕ hin ɕxaɬ ?aqaɬnaq-ni
PROHIB 2SUBJ FUT swim.close-INDIC
'don't swim close to that' (Tape 127, Last Part, line 165)
- (22) maʔɕ hin=ɕ husanuxinqaʔ-ni
PROHIB 2SUBJ=FUT run.away-INDIC
'don't run away' (Tape 71, Second Part, line 318)

Whether there is a difference in meaning between formally imperative clauses with *maʔɕ* and formally indicative clauses with *maʔɕ* is not clear. In some instances, such clauses were not translated with English imperatives, but in the context still could be described as having imperative meaning, as in (23) and (24).

- (23) ?at maʔɕ hin=ɕ ɬa mitixa-kaʔ-ni
HABIT PROHIB 2SUBJ=FUT again attack-INDEF.OBJ-INDIC
'you must not attack anyone from now on' (Tape NS.7, Story 1, line 89)
- (24) maʔɕ hin=ɕ ?upxa-ɕit-kiɬ-ni ɬkam-niɬtik
PROHIB 2SUBJ=FUT know-CAUS-2PL-INDIC child-PLUR
'you will not let the children find out' (Chief and Ogress Text, line 20)

The negative word *maʔɕ* also occurs in indirect commands, where the clause is formally subordinative rather than imperative, as in (25).

- (25) qakɬ-aps-i niʔ-s ʔaɦiɕkiɦ-ʔis
 tell-INVERSE-INDIC the-OBV cousin-3POSS
 maʔɕ k=ɦ=quqakin
 PROHIB SUBORD=IRREALIS=do.something.to
 ‘his cousin told him to leave her alone’
 (literally ‘his cousin told him that he should not do something to her’)
 (Tape NS.21, Story 1, line 6’)

The negative word *maʔɕ* also occurs in indicative clauses where the subject is third person, as in (26), but where there is still an implicit imperative meaning of a sort.

- (26) maʔɕ ɕxaɦ ɦa ɕɦkax-i
 PROHIB FUT back come-INDIC
 ‘he is not to come back’ (Chief and Ogress Text, line 493)

The examples in (27) and (28) are similar, though they are subordinative, since they occur in complements of the verb for *qakiʔ* ‘say’.

- (27) miksaɦ qakiʔ-ni maʔɕ k=ɕxaɦ ɦa ɕɦna-s nasuʔkin-s
 but say-INDIC PROHIB SUBORD=FUT back go-OBV.SUBJ chief-OBV
 ‘but they said that the chief is not to go back there’ (Chief and Ogress Text, line 506)

- (28) piɦak-s qakiʔ-ni
 earlier.time-OBV say-INDIC
 maʔɕ k=ɕxaɦ ʔituqwuʔt-ɦ-is nisqaʔit
 PROHIB SUBORD=FUT give.meat-PASSIVE-OBV.SUBJ Nisqaʔit
 ‘he previously said that Nisqaʔit was not to be given any meat’
 (Tape 146, Story 1, line 141)

(The noun *nisqaʔit* would by normal rules be expected to bear obviate marking in (28).) Note that in so far as (28) involves an indirect command, it is the implicit agent of the passive verb who receives that command.

The example in (29) is somewhat analogous to (26), but with a first person subject.

- (29) maʔɕ hu=ɦ haqmaxu-nis-kiɦ
 PROHIB 1SUBJ=IRREAL scare-2OBJ-2PL
 ‘don’t let me scare you’ (Tape NS.21, Story 5, line 57)

Note that (29) is unusual in that the verb lacks the indicative verbal suffix and thus this clause does not fit into the normal array of mood options available in Kutenai of indicative, subordinative, and imperative. It differs from a normal indicative clause only in lacking the indicative suffix.

There are other instances in which *maʔɕ* occurs where there does not appear to be imperative meaning, but where there is still some sort of irrealis meaning, as in (30).

- (30) taʔq maʔɕ ɦiʔwam skinkuɕ
 OPT PROHIB get.here coyote
 ‘I hope Coyote doesn’t come’ (The Coyote, Mole, and Thunders Text, line 312)

The example in (31) occurs in a passage of represented thought, and represents a decision of the speaker; although the English gloss does not sound irrealis, the clause does contain the irrealis preverb ɦ.

- (31) taxa-s maʔɕ hu=ɬ ɕinam
 then-OBV PROHIB 1SUBJ-IRREAL go
 ‘so I will not go’ (Tape NS.21, Story 3, line 37)

Note that (30) and (31) are similar to (29) above in lacking the indicative suffix and thus do not fit into one of the normal moods. The second clause in (32) also involves *maʔɕ* in a clause with a first person subject; it too is irrealis to the extent that it corresponds semantically to the the apodosis of a conditional sentence, although this clause is not formally a conditional in Kutenai.

- (32) ʔaki ɬa qaqa=ɕ taxa-s maʔɕ k=u ɕxaɬ haɬkikwaɕ
 also again happen=and then-OBV PROHIB SUBORD=1SUBJ FUT scream
 ‘if it should happen again I will not scream’ (Tape 71, Second Part, line 168)

There are also a few instances in my data of *maʔɕ* occurring in clauses without any obvious irrealis meaning beyond that of future, such as (33).

- (33) maʔɕ hu=ɕ ʔupɬ-is-ni ɕakaps
 PROHIB 1SUBJ=FUT kill-2OBJ-INDIC Tsakap
 ‘I will not kill you, Tsakap’ (Boas Text 31: The Two Tsa’kap , line 14)

Note, however, that the normal way to negate a simple future clause is not with *maʔɕ* but with the regular negative word *qa*, as in (34) to (37).

- (34) taxa-s ɕxaɬ qa winikit-ni
 then-OBV FUT NEG long.time.elapse-INDIC
 ‘then it won’t be much longer’ (Tape 127, Last Part, line 222)
- (35) hu ɕxaɬ qa ʔup-naɬaʔ-ni
 1SUBJ FUT NEG die-1PL-INDIC
 ‘we will not die’ (Tape 71, Second Part, line 230)
- (36) hin=ɕ qa ɕikat-iɬ-ni
 2SUBJ=FUT NEG look.at-passive-INDIC
 ‘they will not look at you’ (Boas Text 56: Coyote and Dog, line 165)
 (literally ‘you will not be looked at’)
- (37) ɕxaɬ qa ʔiɬxn-ap-ni ɕupqa
 FUT NEG bite-1SG.OBJ-INDIC deer
 ‘the deer will not bite you’ (Boas Text 63: Coyote and Deer, line 9)