

## Argument Omission in Conditional Imperatives

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When an imperative sentence is followed by *and/or* and a declarative, it can lose its speech-act function and take on a conditional interpretation:

- (1) *Switch on the ventilators, and you'll blow the fuses!*  
 'If you switch on the ventilators, you'll blow the fuses!'

It has often been noted (e. g. Kaufmann 2012; Declerck & Reed 2001) that the grammatical features of a conditional imperative (CI) like (1) differ from those of a plain imperative. We will connect this observation with our empirical study on argument omission (AO) in German, comprising acceptability judgments of sentences like (2) and (3), in which the verb's direct argument is not realized. The acceptability of such sentences does not only depend on the verb, but also on the construction it appears in (Jacobs 2014).

- (2) *Ich schalte den Geschirrspüler ein.* decl 33%  
 'I switch on the dishwasher.'  
 (3) *Schnell, schalt das Navigationsgerät ein!* imp 80.7%  
 'Quickly, switch on the navigation system!'

Indeed, the CIs' results clearly differ from the results of sentences with plain imperatives involving the same verb. We also present data about additional factors for AO in coordinated structures with a directive sentence as first conjunct: (a) *und* vs. *or*, (b) CIs vs. coordinated speech acts, (c) desirability of the second conjunct, (d) form of the first conjunct etc.

Our results not only suggest that AO is an additional formal criterion for the grammatical description of CIs and related phenomena. They also give further substance to the assumption that AO in German depends on many factors, including construction / sentence type.

**References:** Declerck, R. & S. Reed. 2001. *Conditionals*. Berlin: de Gruyter • Jacobs, J. 2014. Satztypkonstruktionen und Satztypsensitivität. In: *Satztypen und Konstruktionen im Deutschen*, eds. R. Finkbeiner & J. Meibauer. Berlin: de Gruyter • Kaufmann, M. 2012. *Interpreting Imperatives*. Dordrecht: Springer.