Argument Omission in Conditional Imperatives

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1. IxDs / "Conditional Imperatives"

⇒ IxDs:
Imperative + and / or + Declarative (IaD / IoD)

⇒ *Press the button, or we are all lost!*
⇒ *Press the button, and we are all lost!*

⇒ Some of them may acquire conditional function. This subclass is sometimes called "conditional imperatives" or "type II".
A note on terminology

The structure we are dealing with has been given different names:

- "Pseudo-imperatives"
  (Franke 2005, 2008; Rooij / Franke 2010: IoD + IaD-II; Clark 1993: only neutrals)

- Conditional imperatives
  (Fortuin / Boogaart 2009: IoD + IaD-II)

- IoDs / IaDs
  (Kaufmann 2012 [Schwager 2006]; von Fintel / Iatridou 2009)

- Paratactic conditionals with an imperative P-clause + or / paratactic conditionals with a (pseudo)-imperative + and
  (Declerck / Reed 2001)
Interpretation of the conjuncts

(1) IoD

Press the button, or we will all die!

form I o D

function instruction negative consequence if instruction is not obeyed

paraphrase: "You must press the button. Your not pressing the button will lead to our death."
(2) IaD (positive)

*Press the button, and we will survive!*

**form** I  a  D

**function** instruction positive consequence if instruction is obeyed

paraphrases:

1. "You must press the button. Your pressing the button will lead to our survival."
2. "If you press the button, we will survive."
(3) IaD (negative)

Press the button, and we will all die!

form  I  a  D

function instruction  negative consequence if instruction is obeyed

paraphrase:
"If you don´t press the button, we will all die!"
(4) IaD_{SAC}^*

Press the button, and I turn on the switch.

function instruction assertion

form I a D

paraphrases:
"You shall press the button and I will turn on the switch." / "I will turn on the switch and you shall press the button."

*SAC: speech-act coordination
Kaufmann (2012) postulates two subclasses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>+ &quot;true imperative&quot;</th>
<th>- &quot;true imperative&quot;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Press the button, and I turn on the switch. / Press the button, or we will all die!</td>
<td>Press the button, and we will all die!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>directive structure; first conjunct is a speech-act</td>
<td>conditional structure; first conjunct: protasis for second conjunct</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( \text{IaD}_{\text{SAC}}, \text{IoD} &amp; \text{IaD I} )</td>
<td>( \text{IaD II} )</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Summary of the classification

(1) Press the button, or we will all die! (IoD)

(2) Press the button and I turn on the switch.
    Press the button, and we will survive!
    Press the button, and we will all die!

(IaD \textsubscript{SAC})

(IaD / type I/II) (positive)

(IaD / type II) (negative)
Grammatical behaviour of IoD/IaD-I vs. IaD-II
(Kaufmann 2012)

a) speech-act sensitive elements
b) binding
c) negative polarity items
Discourse / modal particles
(Kaufmann 2012, Culicover / Jackendoff 1997)

*Bring bitte/doch Whiskey mit, oder Karl ist unzufrieden.* IoD
Please bring some whiskey, or Karl is unhappy.

*Bring bitte/doch Whiskey mit, und ich kaufe das Bier.* IaD_{SAC}
Please bring some whiskey, and I’ll buy the beer.

*Bring bitte/doch Whiskey mit, und Karl ist auch zufrieden.* IaD- I / # pos
Please bring some whiskey, and Karl is happy, too.

#/* *Bring bitte/doch Whiskey mit, und Karl besäuft sich.* IaD-II neg
#/* Please bring some whiskey, and Karl will drink himself into a stupor.
Binding
(Culicover / Jackendoff 1997; examples from Kaufmann 2012)

Sei nett zu ihm, und jeder Politiker hilft dir.
Be nice to him and each politician helps you.

⇒ According to Kaufmann, only type II allows binding from the second into the first conjunct (parallel to conditional structures).

Send ihm einen Bericht, oder jeder Projektleiter glaubt du bist faul.
Send him a report or every project-leader thinks you are lazy.
Negative polarity items (NPIs)
(Kaufmann 2012; following Bolinger 1967 and Davies 1986)

Only IaD-IIIs allow the insertion of a NPI.

*Come any closer, or I will shoot.  
Come any closer, and I will shoot.
Interim results

Kaufmann (2012) postulates two subclasses of IaDs/IoDs. One of them has a first conjunct which behaves like a plain imperative. The first conjunct of the other one behaves like the protasis of a conditional.

IoDs belong to the first class (type I). Negative IaDs belong to the second class (type II). IaDs with positive interpretation cannot be clearly categorized, unless they are disambiguated by one of the features discussed above.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>or</th>
<th>and</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>positive</td>
<td>IoD</td>
<td>IaD&lt;sub&gt;SAC&lt;/sub&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>negative</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In what follows, we want to establish argument omission (AO) as an additional criterion for imperative status which also distinguishes IaD-II from the rest:

Pt 2: We will explain what we mean by AO and its relevance to sentence type.

Pt 3: We will compare imperative’s AO behaviour with that of IxDs.
2. Argument Omission (AO)

DFG project JA 381/6–1 (2013 – today): *Argumentweglassung zwischen Valenz und Konstruktion* ('Argument Omission between Valency and Construction')

Project leader: Joachim Jacobs

Central hypothesis: The omissibility of arguments does not only depend on the verb which governs them, but also on the sentence type.
We have carried out empirical tests with

- 8 questionnaires
- 380 test items
- more than 900 participants

to elicit judgments of sentences in which the direct argument is not realized.
Design of test items

• Test sentences are given in contexts
• The contexts suggest everyday oral communication
• Participants are asked to judge the acceptability of the test sentences in the given context
Elise und Gerd brechen nachts auf einem einsamen Gehöft ein, dessen Besitzer verreist sind. Auf der Suche nach Wertgegenständen macht Gerd im Wohnzimmer das Licht an. „Bist du bescheuert?“, zischt Elise. „Mach aus! Jeden Lichtschein sieht man hier meilenweit!“

Ja  Nein

Yes  No

During the night, Elise and Gerd break into an isolated farmstead whose inhabitants are on vacation. Gerd, searching for valuables, switches on the light in the living room. "Are you crazy?", Elise hisses. "Switch off! Any gleam of light will be visible for miles!"
Exclusion of additional factors

Beside verb lexeme and sentence type, the literature discusses many other factors which could have an impact on AO:

- Generic interpretation
- Contrast (e.g. Blume 1993)
- Genre (e.g. Ruppenhofer / Michaelis 2010; Massam / Roberge 1989)
- Specific constructions (e.g. way-Construction, Goldberg 2001) and also syntactic positions/configurations (German topic-drop, coordination ellipses etc.)
- Different verb readings with incorporate / indefinit arguments (e.g. *geben* "to give" and "to deal playing cards")

We excluded all of these factors.
Central hypotheses of our study on AO

H1 An argument´s omissibility can depend on the verb which governs it.

Verbs with (virtually) synonymous meanings can differ in their tolerance towards AO (sentence type and other factors remaining constant).

Examples:  
verfassen vs. schreiben (einen Roman),  
ausschalten vs. ausmachen (ein elektrisches Gerät)
Central hypotheses of our study on AO

H2 An argument’s omissibility can depend on the sentence type.
(Jacobs 2014)

The acceptability of AO can vary with the sentence type (other factors being equal).

Examples:

Ich habe (den Fernseher) schon angeschaltet. (declarative)
I have already switched on (the TV).

Schalt (den Fernseher) an! (imperative)
Switch on (the TV)!

(Den Fernseher) anschalten! (infinitive)
Switch on (the TV)!
Results gained from our questionnaires confirm H1 and H2 to be true:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>lexeme</th>
<th>infinitive</th>
<th>imperative</th>
<th>declarative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>anschalten</td>
<td>48.1 %</td>
<td>80 %</td>
<td>17.5 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>einschalten</td>
<td>88.5 %</td>
<td>89.7 %</td>
<td>28 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>schreiben</td>
<td>97.1 %</td>
<td>76 %</td>
<td>74.2 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>verfassen</td>
<td>73 %</td>
<td>11 %</td>
<td>3.9 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- The different possibilities of argument omission of *anschalten* and *einschalten* – as well as *schreiben* and *verfassen* – show the lexeme’s influence on AO.
- The sentence type has a specific effect on the possibility of AO, too (see below). For instance, the infinitive sentence type can overrule a lexeme’s low tolerance towards AO (*verfassen*).
Some examples

„Mareike und Fabian sind im Auto unterwegs. Sie diskutieren darüber, ob sie die Autobahn eine Abfahrt früher verlassen sollen, weil es auf der folgenden Teilstrecke häufig Stau gibt. „Kommen um diese Uhrzeit nicht immer die Verkehrsmeldungen im Radio?“, erinnert sich Fabian. – „Stimmt!“, ruft Mareike. „Schnell anschalten!“ 48,1 %
„Schnell einschalten!“ 88,5 %
„Quickly, turn Ø on!“

Im Verein der Ratgeberautoren wird diskutiert. „Der Markt ist reif für ein Buch über Katzenfutter“, behauptet Konrad. „Worauf wartest du dann noch?“, entgegnet Brigitte. „Schreib doch!“ 76 %
„Verfass doch!“ 11 %
„Write Ø (MOD.PART.)!“
Some statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>infinitive</th>
<th>imperative</th>
<th>declarative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>mean</td>
<td>81 %</td>
<td>60,4 %</td>
<td>36,2 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>range</td>
<td>93,2</td>
<td>94,5</td>
<td>97,8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>standard deviation</td>
<td>15,4</td>
<td>31,5</td>
<td>31,5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Box Plot
Test for variance (Kruskal-Wallis) between these sentence types shows a significant difference in their permission of argument omission (H(2) = 36,7; p < 0,001).

Subsequent post-hoc tests (Mann-Whitney-U with Bonferroni-Holm adjustment) prove that the differences between all three sentence types are highly significant (inf – decl / imp – decl: p < .001; inf – imp: p < .01).

- The infinitive has a high potential to omit arguments, whereas the declarative is the most conservative sentence type regarding argument omission. The imperative is quite similar to the infinitive as it has a high potential for argument omission.
We have shown that imperatives have a specific behaviour towards AO. In what follows, we will compare it to the AO behaviour of the first conjuncts of IxDs and show that the AO data confirm Kaufmann’s classification.
3. Argument Omission in Conditional Imperatives

Hypothesis

H3: AO is an additional grammatical criterion to distinguish IaD type II from the other IxDs.
To test hypothesis 3, we took a sample of 16 verbs and checked the acceptability for AO in $\text{IaD}_{\text{SAC}}$, IoDs and IaDs (I/II (+) and II (-)).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>imperative</th>
<th>$\text{IaD}_{\text{SAC}}$</th>
<th>IoD</th>
<th>$\text{IaD-I/II (+)}$</th>
<th>$\text{IaD-II (-)}$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>mean</strong></td>
<td>68 %</td>
<td>55,9 %</td>
<td>55,9 %</td>
<td>48,9 %</td>
<td>29,7 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>range</strong></td>
<td>80,9</td>
<td>62,1</td>
<td>88,2</td>
<td>61,6</td>
<td>68,5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>standard deviation</strong></td>
<td>24,9</td>
<td>22,5</td>
<td>26,6</td>
<td>21,4</td>
<td>20,6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Box Plot**
examples for *aufschließen* (to unlock)

**Imp.:** [...] „Schließ ∅ sofort auf!“
   „Unlock ∅ immediately!“  
   95,8 %

**LaD$_{SAC}$:** [...] „Schließ schon mal ∅ auf, und ich hole noch schnell den Rest aus dem Auto.“  
   „Unlock (MOD.PART.) ∅, and I’ll get the rest out of the car.“  
   93,8 %

**IoD:** [...] „Schließ schon ∅ auf, oder du erfährst nie, ob er dir treu ist.“
   „Unlock (MOD.PART.) ∅, or you’ll never know, whether he is faithful to you.“  
   93,7 %

**LaD-I/II (+):** [...] „Schließ ∅ auf, und du erfährst, ob er dir treu ist.“
   „Unlock ∅, and you’ll know whether he is faithful to you.“  
   88,7 %

**LaD-II (-):** [...] „Das darfst du nicht. Schließ ∅ auf, und ich rufe die Polizei.“
   „You mustn’t do that. Unlock ∅, and I’ll call the police.“  
   39,6 %
Test for variance (Kruskal-Wallis) between these sentence types shows a significant difference in their permission of argument omission ($H(4) = 41.69; p < 0.001$).

Subsequent post-hoc tests (Mann-Whitney-U with Bonferroni-Holm adjustment) prove that not all sentence types differ from each other significantly.

There are significant differences between the following sentence type-couples ($p < .01^*/p < .001^{**}$):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>significantly different couples</th>
<th>non-significantly different couples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Imp – IaD-II (-)**</td>
<td>Imp – IoD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IoD – IaD-II (-)*</td>
<td>Imp – IaD_{SAC}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IaD_{SAC} – IaD-II (-)**</td>
<td>IoD – IaD_{SAC}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IaD-I/II (+) – IaD-II (-)*</td>
<td>IoD – IaD-I/II (+)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imp – IaD-I/II (+)*</td>
<td>IaD_{SAC} – IaD-I/II (+)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Summary of the statistics:
- IoD/IaD_{SAC} and the imperative perform significantly alike with respect to AO, whereas IaD-I/II and imperative do not.
- IaD-II (-) differs significantly from all other tested sentence types.
- IoD/IaD_{SAC}/IaD-I/II (+) do not differ significantly under AO.

Conclusion:
- Both IaD-I/II (+) and IaD-II (-) differ from the imperative, but they also differ from each other.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>significantly different couples</th>
<th>non-significantly different couples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Imp – IaD-II (-)**</td>
<td>Imp – IoD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IoD – IaD-II (-)*</td>
<td>Imp – IaD_{SAC}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IaD_{SAC} – IaD-II (-)**</td>
<td>IoD – IaD_{SAC}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IaD-I/II (+) – IaD-II (-)*</td>
<td>IoD – IaD-I/II (+)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imp – IaD-I/II (+)*</td>
<td>IaD_{SAC} – IaD-I/II (+)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Classification based on the AO data would be as follows:

IMP  

\( \text{IoD} \)  
\( \text{IaD}_{SAC} \)  
\( \text{IaD-I/II} \ (+) \)  

\( \text{IaD-II} \ (-) \)
Summary

1. Kaufmann (2012) proposes two subclasses of IxDs. One of them (IoD / IaD-I) contains a "true imperative" as first conjunct and has a directive interpretation. The second class (IaD-II) consists of conditionals; the first conjunct is not a true imperative. Several grammatical criteria (speech-act sensitive material, binding, NPIs) illustrate the differences between the subclasses.

2. In our empirical study on AO, we could show that different sentence types involving the same verb behave differently with respect to AO.
Summary

3. We then compared the imperative´s specific AO behaviour to the IxDs´s AO behaviour. The results support Kaufmann´s classification: Indeed, there is no significant difference between plain imperatives, IoDs (and also IaD_{SAC}). Positive IaDs, whose status is unclear, receive medium results: they are still near to IoDs, but differ significantly from the plain imperative. IaD-II (-) differs significantly from the imperative as well as all other IxDs.

4. We suggest that AO is an additional grammatical criterion to distinguish IaD-II from the other IxDs.
References


