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## An imperative form in non-imperative constructions in Russian

This paper will revisit the non-imperative uses of the Russian second person singular imperative form in constructions with surface subjects. There are four such uses with concrete subjects and one with a generalized subject. Birjulin & Xrakovskij (1992: 47-50) mention four uses, but some of their statements require clarifications and additional comments.

Xrakovskij & Volodin (1986: 234-246) discuss these constructions in the same subchapter that covers phrases such as *Bože upasi*, and *čert voz'mi*, such expressions of surprise such as *gljadi(-ka)*, and *podumajte*, and the imperative construction with optative meaning. Jászay (1995) separates the optative use from those that will follow. He also provides a detailed classification and an extensive semantic analysis. However, some of his explanations and definitions warrant a reexamination. Neither of these works discuss word order.

In all uses, the imperative form is singular regardless of the grammatical number of the subject NP, and since the meaning in these constructions is non-imperative, we could refer to them as *pseudo-imperative* constructions. In two uses the word order is unrestricted VS, while in the other three it is inverted. Each word order will be examined in turn.

### I. Unrestricted word order.

The word order in this section follows the general rules of Russian word order, which means that most often it will be unrestricted word order.

#### 1. Unexpected actions in the past.

This construction was discussed in detail in Prokopovič (1982: 163-177) and mentioned by Glovinskaja (1989: 118-119). It can be used with the first or third person of the subject, but not with the second person, (Prokopovič 1982: 169, Birjulin & Xrakovskij 1992: 49), although Prokopovič (fn. 159) cites two "extremely rare" examples of such use. The restriction can be explained pragmatically: the speaker is unlikely to describe to the addressee the addressee's own actions in the past; such a statement would not be informative. What would be informative is the speaker's reaction, provided the addressee was not aware of it at the time, which will be discussed later.

The pseudo-imperative expresses an unexpected action in the past (Prokopovič 1982: 170, Xrakovskij & Volodin 1986: 245, Glovinskaja 1989: 118). Not surprisingly, many examples also include the phrase *voz'mi (da) i* which by itself means an unexpected, sudden action:

- (1) a. А Элька возьми и рухни. (Г. Щербакова. Ей во вред живущая)

'And Elka *unexpectedly collapsed*.'

- b. Я уже засыпал, а он возьми и стукни кулаком по столу.

'I was already falling asleep and *all of a sudden* he *banged* his fist on the table.'

- c. И когда она стала изучать...в Москве возьми и обхъявись Варвара. (Г. Щербакова. Эмиграция по-русску [sic!])

'And when she began studying . . . *Varvara all of a sudden turned up* in Moscow.'

Xrakovskij & Volodin (1986: 245) limit the use of the pseudo-imperative to "the second part of the adversative construction." Yet, it can be found in the first part as well:

- (2) а. Раз он ему и скажи: “Вижу, Азамат, что тебе больно понравились эта лошадь...” (Лермонтов. Бела) (Prokopovič)

'Once he said to him unexpectedly, "I see, Azamat, that you like this horse very much.'

- б. В Москве – то, сударь мой, приглянись княжна князю Алексею Юрьевичу. (Мельников-Печерский. Старые годы) (Prokopovič)

'It's in Moscow, sir, that the prince Alexey Yurievich *unexpectedly took a liking* to the princess.'

The fact that the action in (3) is "performed by the agent against his will" (Birjulin & Xrakovskij 1992: 49) is purely coincidental; compare it with (2a):

- (3) Прожили они год душа в душу, а на другой-то год она возьми да и помри (Г. Успенский)

'They lived in perfect harmony for a year, and the next year she *all of a sudden died*.'

The main question here is an issue left out by all of the authors: for whom is this action unexpected? I suggest that it is unexpected for the speaker. In (3), the death of the P<sup>n</sup><sub>1</sub> certainly cannot be unexpected for P<sup>n</sup><sub>1</sub>. It may be unexpected for P<sup>n</sup><sub>2</sub>, in which case the speaker may represent another participant's point of view, empathizing<sup>1</sup> with him/her. In (2a), the P<sup>n</sup><sub>1</sub>'s words were not a surprise for him; he (Pechorin) had planned the theft of the horse in order to secure Azamat's help in kidnapping Bela. But for the speaker (Maksim Maksimych), it was a surprise. In the case of the rare second person examples, the statement conveys the speaker's surprise about the addressee's action:

<sup>1</sup> I am using the term empathy as it was introduced by Kuno and Kaburaki (1977).

- (4) Ведь говори, да и в газетах было даже тиснуто, что вы в Немане потонули. А тут возьми да и вынырни на Волге... (Вс. Иванов. Пархоменко) (Prokopovič)

'It was said, and even printed in newspapers that you drowned in Neman. And here *all of a sudden you surfaced* on the Volga.'

Discussing (5), Glovinskaja (1989: 118) mentions that many linguists have noted that "this form usually means that the action was not to the point and is undesirable for the participants of the situation":

- (5) А он возьми и накопи денег. (Glovinskaja 118)  
'And he, lo and behold, saved up some cash.'

She does not elaborate on her sources nor substantiate her reasoning for the undesirability. Examining (5) more closely, the word used for money *den'žata*, is somewhat condescending. So the unexpectedness of the savings in combination with condescension may create the feeling that the action was undesirable from the speaker's point of view. The action described by this pseudo-imperative construction may be desirable as in (2a), or undesirable, as in (1), or such that only the larger context could specify the +/-desirability, as in (6), where the action is desirable. In (6), the protagonist is trying to take care of his step-daughter after his wife and her mother have died in a fire.

- (6) Девочка молчала весь вечер. Отказалась есть. Фролов не знал, что делать, и метался по кухоньке. У него просто паника случилась. Вспоминал себя ребенком, чего ему тогда хотелось в первые послевоенные годы? Не мог вспомнить. А потом вдруг вспомнил. Молочный кисель! И даже вспомнил, как он его захотел. Мать ему читала сказку, и были в ней слова про "молочные реки и кисельные берега". Ему возьми и представься все это... Бежит белая такая речка, вся в бурунчиках, и берега



розово-осклизлые, которые можно откусывать губами... (Г. Щербакова. Двое и одна)

'The girl was silent all day. She refused to eat. Frolov did not know what to do and was restless in the kitchen. He simply started panicking. He remembered himself as a child, what did he want then during the first postwar years? He could not remember. And then suddenly he remembered. Milk jello! And he even remembered how it happened. His mother was reading to him a fairy tale, and in it there were words about "milk rivers and jello shores". *He all of a sudden imagined all that...* Such a white river flows all in crests and the banks are pink and slippery and you can bite them with your lips...'

The event described by this pseudo-imperative is a welcome one; in fact, the protagonist whose point of view is presented conjured it up.

Consequently, the construction itself is not inherently undesirable or inherently against the will of the participant.

## 2. An undesirable action imposed upon the subject.

Xrakovskij & Volodin (1986: 237) describe this usage as "the use of 2nd person singular imperative in the second part of the adversative construction for the expression of «realized» obligation, instructions or imposed action." Thus they ascribe to the action modality but do not recognize that the undesirability represents the speaker/subject's point of view, just as *dative + pridetsja* represents a construction where the action is undesirable, as opposed to *dative + nado/nužno* where such additional meaning is not expressed. On the other hand, Šeljakin (1990: 113-114), in his cursory remarks on this construction, does say that the pseudo-imperative "expresses the meaning of the obligation of the performance of the action in combination with the negative evaluation, blame, displeasure".

It is impossible to imagine a sentence where the action in the adversative clause is more pleasant than the main one, even if it is prescribed:

- (7) Мои друзья работают, как проклятые, а я отдыхай у моря, наслаждайся природой.

'My friends work themselves to death and *I have to rest* by the sea and *enjoy* the nature.'

And indeed, all of Xrakovskij & Volodin's examples as well as my own indicate the relevance of the undesirability of the action from the speaker's point of view. Often the lexical choice (*taskajsja* in (8a)—(8b), *nabredil, rasxlebyvaj* in (9c)), or the tone of the exchange, as in (8c) and (9b) below, additionally emphasize the undesirability:

- (8) а. Опять я таскайся по учреждениям и собирай подписи.

'Again *I have to drag myself* around offices and gather signatures.'

- б. —Ты будешь шляться неизвестно где, а я бегай за тобой! (В. Панова. Ранним утром)

"You will roam who knows where, and *I have to run* after you!"

- в. Панька плюнула и заорала:

--За Николая?! Еще чего выдумала! Он здесь и не живет, а я плати? (И. Грекова. Вдовый пароход)

'Panya spat and started to scream:

-For Nicholas?! What an idea! He doesn't even live here and *I have to pay*?'

Jászay's (1995: 349) definition of this construction includes four components: "[1] X is compelled to do something, [2] even though he doesn't have to do it, [3] X considers this situation inappropriate, and [4] maybe won't do it." His definition is correct only in the third point.

The first component, according to Jászay, is totally imposed on the participant (*vynuzďajut*), which actually may or may not be the case. It is not the case in the examples in (9), where no one forces the participant to perform the actions in question. Even though the actions described represent an obligation, the participant has agreed to such an obligation and views it as a norm or a duty, even if it is an undesirable one. In (9a), that is the way men are supposed to behave towards women, (9b) is a mother's duty, as she sees it, in (9c) this is the duty of the night patrol during the war, in (9d) it is the readers' choice to figure out what Goethe meant, in (9e) it is a mother's duty to take care of a sick child, and in (9f) it is the participant's choice to catch up in his studies.

The second and fourth components are linked to the first: in those cases where the participant performs the action in question out of choice or duty, it is impossible to claim that "he doesn't have to do it" or "maybe won't do it."

The third component, "X considers this situation inappropriate", needs modification to "X considers this situation undesirable".

Xrakovskij & Volodin (1986: 237) emphasize that the subject of these pseudo-imperatives is usually the first person, although the third person is also possible. In fact, in all of those cases (including with 3 p. of the subject NP), the speaker either refers to himself/herself, as in (9a) and (9b), or to a group he or she belongs to, as in (9c), or to a person or group he or she strongly empathizes with, as in (9d). In (9e), the 3 p. narrative has the focalization<sup>2</sup> on Oxnar, its main protagonist. The last sentence in the passage represents Oxnar's inner speech with the generalized *ty* form. In French, such a character's speech in the author's text is called *style* or *discours indirect libre* (cf. Vuillaume 1998). Thus in (9e), we have *discours indirect libre* with the protagonist referring to himself in the generalized *ty*-form.

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<sup>2</sup> Genette's (1972) term.

- (9) а. Девушка платок уронила – ты поднимай, она входит – ты вставай и давай ей свой стул, уходит - ты провожай. (Чехов. Женское счастье)

'A girl dropped a handkerchief and *you have to pick it up*, she enters and *you have to get up and offer* her your chair, she leaves and *you have to escort her*.'

- б. –Кто ж это лежит одетый? С ногами на покрывале, а мать стирай. У меня руки тоже не казенные Утром с ведром, вечером с корытом...

-А кто тебя просит? Сам постираю.

-Знаю я, как ты стираешь. Папироску в зубы, пых-пых – и пошел.

А мать надрывайся. (И. Грекова. Вдовый парашод)

'''Who's lying around all dressed? With their feet on the bedspread, but *mother has to wash*. My hands are also not rented. In the morning I am with the bucket, in the evening with the trough...''

"Who's asking you? I'll do the washing myself."

"I know how you wash. A cigarette between your teeth, puff-puff and off you go. And *mother has to strain herself*.'"

- в. Хорошо было Гете – взял, набредил, а потомки – расхлебывай, думала я, шагая с почты. (Аю Эфрон. Письма из ссылки)

'It was easy for Goethe — he wrote all this delirium, and the *descendants have to unravel it*, I thought this returning from the post office.'

d. Мимо старухи, тогующей “раскидаями”, мимо пьяненького инвалида со связкой дряблых воздушных шаров, Наталия Ивановна подошла к лотку... А народу на улице все больше, наверное, кончилась уже демонстрация... А вон рыжая собака фотографируется с флажком в зубах, встала, как Будто понимает: голова набок, хвост кверху, парень, еще мальчишка, без шапки – еще простудится, а мать крутись, с работы отпрашивайся. (Н. Катерли. Треугольник Барсукова)

'Past the old woman selling yo-yos, past the tipsy invalid with a bunch of limp balloons Natalia Nikolaevna went to the stand . . . And there are more and more people in the street, the demonstration is probably already over. . . . And here a red-haired dog is being photographed with a little flag in its mouth, it had taken a pose as if it understood: head to the side, tail up, a lad, only a boy without a hat, he could catch a cold, and *his mother has to run around, ask permission* to miss work.'

е. Учись Охнарь как все, он бы постепенно нагнал свой класс. А теперь вот с утра до вечера корпи над географией, ботаникой, синтаксисом: товарищи играют на улице, а ты лишь бросай тоскливые взгляды в окно. (В. Авдееву Ленька Охнарь)

'Were Oxnar to study like everyone else, he would have gradually caught up with the class. And now morning till night *he has to cram* in geography, botany, syntax: friends play outside, and *you* can only *cast* longing glances through the window.'

Jászay (1995: 348-350) following Gasparov (1978) suggests that 1) the necessity of the forced action is imposed from outside (and not from the perceived obligation by the agent); and 2) the action is imposed by people and not by objective circumstances (Gasparov 1978: 73). These statements are supported by the following examples:

- (10) a. \*В этом году зима суровая, вот мы тут и мерзни.

'This year the winter is harsh, thus *we* here *have to freeze*.'

- b. Они топить не хотят, а мы тут мерзни.

'They don't want to heat the place, and *we have to freeze*.'

Examples (9b) and (9e) contradict the first of the Gasparov-Jászay premises, since they represent the mother's perceived duty to take care of the child be it in terms of cleanliness or well-being.

The ill-formedness of (10a), on the other hand, can be corrected if we establish a logical link between the two clauses (otherwise the statement is somewhat of a non-sequitur: the fact that the winter is harsh does not automatically mean that people should suffer, since there are means of warming oneself up):

- (10<sup>1</sup>) a. В этом году зима суровая, а дрова кончились, вот мы тут и мерзни.

'This year the winter is harsh, and we ran out of firewood, thus *we* here *have to freeze*.'

The absence of firewood should be seen as "circumstance" — 'stečenie obstožatel'stv' and not someone's malicious act.

On the other hand, there may be events which are imposed by people or perceived as such, yet these may produce impossible statements:

- (11) a. \*Он меня заразил гриппом, и я теперь болею.

'He infected me with the flu, and *I have to be sick* now.'

- b. \*Он мне тут оставил свою статью перевести, и/а я сиди переводи.

'He left me here his article, and *I have to sit and translate it.*'

Meanwhile, (9e) also exemplifies circumstances, granted circumstance created by humans and not by nature, but there are no specific persons one could indicate; rather it is a societal convention to study and take exams.

Let us examine the main part of (9e) as (12a) and a similar (12b):

(12) а. товарищи играют на улице, а ты лишь бросай тоскливые  
взгляды в окно.

'friends play outside, and *you* only can *cast* longing glances through  
the window.'

б. Все гуляют, а я работаю.

'Everybody is outside and *I have to work.*'

In neither (12a) nor (12b) is the action which is perceived as undesirable or imposed on the participant in the second clause caused by the participants of the first clause. What we have here is a contrast. As Yokoyama (1986: 314) points out in discussing the conjunction *a*, "Contrast is an intuitively clear but not clearly defined concept." Myhill & Xing (1996) attempts to define the notion of contrast. They state that a contrast can be exhibited by elements of a set; they allow (1996: 310-311) seven different types of sets: complementary, organizational, proximate, hierarchical, rhetorical, conjoined, and analogical.

In (12) we have an organizational set: "A group of people or things which are of the same 'social organization' constitutes a set." (1996: 310)

In addition, we find instances where the expressed culprit has neither caused the speaker's undesired action, nor is part of the social set containing the speaker, but is exempt from the action in question:

(13) Литературу у них учили "по образам", и ненавидел он их до  
зубного скрежета.

-На кой мне образ Лизы Калитиной из “Дворянского гнезда”?  
Наплевать мне на это гнездо вонючее... Она “ах”, он “ох”, она в  
монастырь – бух, а я учи! (И. Грекова. Вдовый паракход)

'They studied the literature by "images", and he hated them with a  
passion.

"Why the hell do I need the image of Liza Kalitina from the  
«Gentlefolk nest»? I could not care less about the stinking nest... She  
says "ah", he says "oh", she plops into the convent and *I have to  
study*."

In this very subjective statement, the speaker puts the blame on the characters' actions for  
having to study them as part of the literature course.

I suggest that we rephrase Jászay's semantic description of the construction as  
follows:

'[1] X is compelled to do something, [2] even though X doesn't want to do it,  
meanwhile [3] Y who belongs to the same set as X doesn't have to do it, or [4] Y by his  
actions caused X do it; [5] the statement represents X's point of view.'

## **II. Inverted word order. Conditionals.**

This construction is by far the most common. The subject can be first, second or  
third person, singular or plural.

Birjulin & Xrakovskij (1992: 48) and Xrakovskij & Volodin (1986: 146) mention  
that such constructions can be formed with verbs that semantically do not allow an  
imperative:

- (14) а. Принадлежи эта книга мне, я был бы самым счастливым  
человеком на свете.



*'Had this book belonged to me, I would have been the happiest man in the world.'*

b. Очутись я/ты/он/она/мы/вы/они тогда в Крыму, все было бы иначе.

*'Had I/you/he/she/we/you(pl)/they been in the Crimea then, everything would have been different.'*

с. Получись у мужа все ловко, аккуратно, можно было бы и заорать, и затопать на него ногами,... (Г. Щербакова. Мандариновый год)

*'Had the husband been doing everything adroitly, neatly, it would have been possible to scream and stomp her feet at him,...'*

Moreover, such constructions can be formed from verbs that morphologically do not have an imperative, such as *uvid'* in (27a) and *uslysh'*, for example:

- (15) Казалось, вспыхни сейчас пожар, застучи град, послышьясь человеческие голоса полные ужаса, зовущие на помощь, все это только рассеяло б страх, помогло б ощутить себя человеком, которому ничто, кроме смерти, грозить не может. (Ф. Горенштейн. Испупление)

*'It seemed, were a fire to flair up now, were there a hail to start hammering, were human voices full of horror calling for help to resound, all of that would have only dispersed the fear, would have helped one to feel like a person who is threatened by nothing but death.'*

In addition, in order to create such constructions with the verb *exat'* and its derivatives, the only possible form is one that is not allowed by standard grammars and dictionaries, yet that is morphologically predictable (and attested as early as 1911 in Pasternak's letter to Olga Freidenberg): *ed'*.

- (16) –Вы хорошо приехали, - сказала мачеха, -у нас все лето дачники жили, приедь вы раньше на два дня – ни топчана, ни подушки бы не было, пришлось бы вам на рядне в сарае с нами спать. (В. Панова. Сестры)

"You came well," said her step mother, "all summer long we have summer-tenants; *had you come* two days earlier, there would not have been a cot or a pillow, you would have had to sleep in the barn on plain linen cloth."

In most studies of Russian conditionals (Xrakovskij 1994, Xrakovskij 1996a, Wierzbicka 1997, Hacking 1998), such constructions are simply mentioned on a par with other counterfactual conditionals, while some studies (Kasevič 1998) do not mention them at all. The two studies that do discuss conditionals with imperative forms (Xrakovskij & Volodin 1986 and Birjulin & Xrakovskij 1992) fail to discuss the semantic distinctions between these conditionals and the conditionals with *esli/esli by*. Semantically we are dealing with two constructions, the conditional counterfactual (as in (14-16)) and conditionals proper. Jászay (1995: 353-355) treats them together.

### 1. Conditionals proper.

This construction can be used with the first or third person of the subject; the second person is theoretically possible, yet so far not attested. It is quasi-synonymous with the *esli* construction.

Sil'nickij (1990: 98), discussing (17), suggests that this form "implies a certain interest on the part of the Speaker in realization/nonrealization of the action of the subordinate conditional clause".

(17) [??] Приди он ко мне с повинной, я тут же прощу его.

*'Were he to come to me asking forgiveness, I would immediately forgive him.'*

I would like to suggest that (17) is unlikely and that the more likely example would be (17'):

(17<sup>1</sup>) Приди он ко мне с повинной, я его тут же выгоню.

*'Were he to come to me asking forgiveness, I would immediately throw him out.'*

Similarly, I disagree with Birjulin's & Xrakovskij's (1992: 48) suggestion that this construction can be used to express a real upcoming situation. Their example is highly questionable:

(18) [??] Привези он ленту через полчаса, сеанс начнется вовремя.

*'If he brings the film in half an hour, the show would start on time.'*

Their reasoning is that "a future tense form in the main clause underscores the reality of realization of the situation."

But before analyzing (17) and (18), let us examine what has been actually attested:

(19) а. Умри я сегодня, что с вами будет? (А. С. Пушкиню Письмо Н. Н. Пушкиной 28 июня 1834 г.)

*'Were I to die today, what would happen to you?'*

b. и вспоминала она, что ей уже не двадцать лет и даже не сорок,... И что умри она или уйди на пенсию, - *и* все трудом налаженное дело постепенно начнет распадаться. (И. Грекова. Хозяйка гостиницы)

'and she remembered that she was no longer twenty or even forty years old, ... And that *were she to die or retire*, all of this business established with so much effort would gradually fall apart.'

с. А случись невероятное, напади снова, как в 41-м, агрессор *и* он, этот самый водопроводчик, пойдет защищать эту жизнь, эту власть, которая не кормит его, а разрешает воровать – и за это он ей благодарен – пойдет защищать, как защищали ее сталинградские солдаты. (В. Некрасов. Саперлипопет)

'And *were* the unbelievable *to happen*, *were* the aggressor *to attack* again like in 1941, he, this very plumber would go to defend this life, this power, which does not feed him, but allows stealing — and he is grateful to it for this — he would go to defend it the way the Stalingrad soldiers defended it.'

d. И так мне от этой песни [от военной песни во славу Сталина] страшно стало и тошно, так я вдруг себе ясно представил, что случись у нас опять какая-нибудь заваруха, и нас под такую песню, действительно снова поведут, как телят на бойню,... (В. Куниню Русские на Мариенплац)

'And I felt so scared and nauseated from that song [a war song glorifying Stalin], and I so vividly all of a sudden imagined that *were*

here again *some kind of scuffle happen*, and we would be indeed again taken like calves to the slaughter to this song,...'

е. Ведь даже волшебный мешок и волшебная дубника ничего сами не могут, может лишь человек, который ими владеет. Попади они к злому человеку – и злых дел будет не сосчитать. (“Любовь к трем апельсинам”)

'For even a magic bag and a magic club cannot do anything by themselves, only a person who owns them can. *Were they to fall into the hands* of an evil person, all the evil deeds would be uncountable.'

- (20) а. А случись беда, есть рядом родной человек. (Речь Б. Ельцина 8 марта 1995)

'And *were something bad to happen*, there is your kin next to you.'

б. У Зой Синцовой в троллейбусе вытащили кошелек с получкой... Что делать теперь, Зоя не знала. ... И снова Зоя подумала, что, остановись оно сейчас, это проклятое сердце, тоже было бы лучше. (Г. Щербакова. Вечер был...)

'Zoya Sintsova's wallet with her salary was stolen in the trolley...  
... Zoya did not know what to do now. . . . And again Zoya thought that *were it*, this wretched heart, *to stop* now, it also would have been better.'

- (21) а. Ей казалось, что отлучись она из квартиры на день – и случится что-то ужасное, произойдет непоправимая катастрофа. (А. Алексин. Неправда)

'It seemed to her that *were she* to leave the apartment for a day, something terrible would happen, an irreparable catastrophe would take place.'

b. Тамара талдычит: работа, любовь... Какая работа? Отвлекись хоть на час, и все начнет рушиться, заваливаться на бок, Колька будет оставаться на продленке, есть что попало, научиться матерным словам. Дом зарастет пылью, на обед готовые пельмени. (В. Токарева. Инфузория-туфелька)

'Tamara keeps saying: work, love... What work? If she *were to divert her attention* even for an hour, everything would start collapsing, fall on one side, Kolya would go to the after school program, eat whatever, learn swear words. The home would get covered with dust, for dinner there would be pre-made dumplings

с. Как ей объяснишь, что отпусти она, Анна, Алексея [мужа], то до гробовой доски быть ей одной. Не за кого в школе выходить замуж. (Г. Щербакова. Мандариновый год)

'How could she explain to her that *were she, Anna*, to let Alexey [her husband] go, then she would be alone till her death. There is no one to marry at school.'

- (22) а. Ну в самом деле, вернись сейчас кто-нибудь с того света – то-то его вопросами замучают. (В. Буковскийю “И возвращается ветер...”)

'Indeed *were anyone to return* now from the other world, my, oh, my, people would torment him with their questions.'

b. Казалось, появишься здесь в [автобусе] каким-то неведомым образом челевец, и его разорвут на части. ("Огонек" № 48-49, 1994)

'It seemed that *were a Chechen to appear* here [in the bus] by some unknown way, he would be torn to pieces.'

In almost all of the above sentences describing two events (not an event and a state), the conjunction connecting two clauses is *i*, which signals the immediacy of the consequence. The only example which does not contain the conjunction *i*, (22a), has *to-to*, which expresses strong assuredness in the consequence.

In (19), there is a disastrous event in the protasis, in (19a) and (19b) death or retirement lead to disastrous consequences, in (19c) and (19d) another war, like in 1941, is imagined, and in (19e) the magic bag and the magic club in the hands of an evil person lead to disastrous results. In (20), a disastrous event is mitigated by the presence of a close person in (20a) and liberation from all troubles by death in (20b).

In (21) the benign protasis leads to a disastrous apodosis: a catastrophe in (21a), everything falling apart in (21b), and husbandless life till the grave in (21c). In (22) we deal with eerie events in the protasis and a disastrous events in the apodosis.

Let us modify the sentences:

(21<sup>1</sup>) a. ??? Отлучись она из квартиры на день – и ничего не случится.

'*Were she* to leave the apartment for a day, nothing would happen.'

a<sup>1</sup>. \* Отлучись она из квартиры на день – и мы устроим ремонт.

*'Were she to leave the apartment for a day, we would do the remodeling.'*

b. \*Отвлекись она на час, и все будет в порядке.

*'If she were to divert her attention even for an hour, everything would be all right.'*

c. \*Отпусти она, Анна, Алексея, то наконец-то вздохнет свободно.

*'Were she, Anna, to let Alexey go, then she would finally breathe easily.'*

No context with positive implications has yet been attested. That is why I think that Silnickij's example (17) is unlikely and Birjulin's & Xrakovskij's example(18) is highly unlikely. In the context of *povinnaja* there is at least some conflict involved, although I do not expect it to end on a positive note. Benign, likely or highly desirable contexts do not allow imperative-conditional:

(23) a. \*Зазвони телефон, и я подуйду.

*'Were the phone to ring, I would answer.'*

b. \*Приди она сейчас, и сядем обедать.

*'Were she to come now, we would start dinner.'*

c. \*Заговори Наташа сначала с Соней, а потом с матерью, и я ей сделаю предложение.

*'Were Natasha to speak first with Sonya and then with her mother I would propose to her.'*



Moreover, as we have seen, clauses describing events of cause and effect are connected by the conjunction *i*, which is missing in (17) and (18).

The not-so-disastrous circumstance warrants a *esli*-conditional:

- (24) а. Если Люда выйдет замуж, как ее муж отнесется к Матвею [Людиному внебрачному сыну]? Большой вопрос. (И. Грекова. Кафедра)

*'If Luda gets married, how will her husband treat Matvey [Luda's son out of wedlock]? It's a big question.'*

- б. Если тебя спросят то-то и то-то, отвечай так-то... (И. Грекова. Маленький Гарусов)

*'If they ask you such and such, answer such and such.'*

Let us now examine why the imperative-conditional may be used instead of the *esli*-conditional. Let us compare (19a) and the examples in (25):

- (25) а. \*Умри я сегодня, моя жена опубликует мои стихи.

*'Were I to die today, my wife would publish my poetry.'*

- б. Если я умру сегодня, моя жена опубликует мои стихи.

*'If I die today, my wife would publish my poetry.'*

Both (19a) and (25a) express the same disastrous event in the protasis, yet (25a) is ill-formed. The difference is that in (19a) the event of death in the protasis entails certain consequences for the participants in the apodosis. That same event in (25a) creates a different world without the speaker, and in the apodosis of (25a) the world simply takes into account the absence of the participant mentioned in protasis.

## 2. Conditional counterfactuals.

Semantically the imperative construction, as opposed to the conditional, adds the meaning of 'momentous' to either the cause or the effect, or the meaning of 'highly speculative nature' of the proposition.

Examples that have a disastrous event, usually in apodosis, are numerous:

- (26) а. Так вот, дежуря однажды “свежей головой” ночью в типографии, Анна Константиновна обнаружила грубую, просто ужасную опечатку: проскочи она в тираж, многим бы в редакции не сносить головы, в том числе и главному. (В. Перуанская Кикимора)

'And so, once while being on duty by her "fresh head" at night at the printing shop, Anna Konstantinovna discovered a bad, a simply horrible mistake: *had it made it* into print, many in the editorial office including the chief editor would have been facing imminent death.'

- б. Меня за такую мысль, выскажи я ее вслух, -писала она, - распяли бы без суда и следствия, и правильно сделали бы! (Г. Щербакова. Романтики и реалисты)

'For such a thought, *had I spoken it aloud*, she wrote, I would have been crucified without a trial or investigation, and they would have been right to do so!'

- с. Люди, разумеется, понимали, что окажись руководство умнее, оно не довело бы страну до паники, вызванной разгромом 1941 года. (Е. Эткинд. 1946 год: крушение надежд)

'People naturally understood that *had the leadership been smarter*, it would not have brought the country to the level of panic brought by the total defeat in 1941.'

d. Отними у него Татьяну, у него просто мужская функция отомрет... За ненужностью. (Г. Щербакова. Реалисты и жлобы)

'If Tatyana *were taken away* from him, he simply would lose his male function... For lack of necessity.'

The disastrous events may be in the protasis:

(27) а. Да увидь она вокруг себя беду и людское горе, она бы вмиг протрезвала. (Г. Щербакова. Реалисты и жлобы)

'*Had she seen* around herself the trouble and human suffering, she would have immediately sobered up.'

б. Зинченко смекнул: не будь всего этого вместе – справочно-медицинского идиотизма, плохой железной дороги, - умри, скажем, девочка от сквозняка из форточки, не было бы никакого письма. (Г. Щербакова. Реалисты и жлобы)

'Zinchenko immediately figured it out: *had there not been* all of this informational-medical idiocy, bad rail roads, *had the girl died* from let's say a draft from a window, there would not have been any letters.'

In some instances, the disaster is not localized in the protasis or the apodosis, but serves as a background for the imperative-counterfactual. In (28a) the female character has a premonition that her husband's accreditation as a journalist in a foreign country has

failed, in (28b) Zinchenko's world is collapsing — his wife is about to leave him and he is accused of bribery:

(28) а. Может все в полном порядке и они едут за границу, и она смехом зайдет завтра, когда она будет вспоминать этот охвативший ее психоз?

Но чувствовала — смеха не будет. Что-то там лопнуло. Как ей Зинченко сказал: “Я не сделаю этого для вас”. Имей Валя назначение, сделал бы. (Г. Щербакова. Реалисты и жлобы)

'Maybe everything is absolutely all right and they are going abroad, and tomorrow she will die of laughter when she remembers this psychosis of hers that seized her?

But she felt: there won't be any laughter. Something broke there. The way Zinchenko said to her, "I won't do this for you." *If Valya had had the appointment*, he would have.'

б. Сейчас бы он [Зинченко] подарил бы не то что лисью — норковую [шубу], окажись жена в редакции. Но Татьяны не было. (Г. Щербакова. Реалисты и жлобы)

'Now he [Zinchenko] would have given not a fox coat, but a mink one, *were his wife* in the editorial house. But Tatyana wasn't there.'

Now let us examine (29) with focalization on *она*:

(29) ? Спроси она мать — все было бы у нее лучше.

*'Had she asked* her mother, everything would have been better in her life.'

The reason the sentence is strange is that the protagonist must feel that her life is out of sorts in order to produce such a conjecture. And the next question would be: so why

didn't she ask her mother? The original sentence has a focalization on her mother who thinks that there is something wrong with her daughter and her daughter's life, and such a reading makes the sentence immediately acceptable:

- (29<sup>1</sup>) Выросла дочь самостоятельной, гордой и неласковой. Все в жизни сама.... Спроси она мать – все было бы у нее лучше. Но никогда! (Г. Щербакова. Единственная неповторимая)

'The daughter grew up independent, proud and not tender. She did everything in her life herself. ... *Had she asked* her mother, everything would have been better in her life. But she would never have done it!'

Another common type is when the imperative-counterfactual is not only counterfactual but totally impossible. The component of 'highly unlikely' or 'impossible' is best shown by example (30), where the author speaks of his deceased mother:

- (30) Думаю, что самой веселой, окажись она здесь, была бы именно она. (В. Некрасов. Мама)

'I think that the most joyous person *had she been* here, would have been none other than her.'

There is nothing unpleasant or impossible in examples (31-32), but there is an element of the events being 'highly unlikely'. In (31a), as in (31b), the author speaks of himself:

- (31) а. Возможно, дружи я с Корнейчуком, выступай на собраниях, против космополитов и националистов, затаптывай в грязь Максима Рыльского и Владимира Сосюру, а потом включись в запоздалый хор славословий сначала одному, потом другому – избери я такой путь, может быть все бы пошло иначе. (В. Некрасов. Записки зеваки)

'Possibly, *had I been friends* with Korneichuk, *had I spoken* at meetings against the cosmopolites and nationalists, *had I been trampling* into dirt Maxim Rylsky and Vladimir Sosyura, and then *joined* the belated chorus of glorification first to one and then to the other, *had I chosen* such a path, maybe everything would have gone differently.'

b. Насчет исходивших от него [Сталина] гипнотических или каких-то других флюидов, ничего не могу сказать – думаю, что моя скованность на первых порах...была такой же, сиди я перед Черчиллем или де Голлем. (Г. Некрасов. Саперлипопет)

'Regarding hypnotic or any other auras exuded by him [Stalin] I cannot say anything ,— I think that my initial tenseness . . . would have been the same *had I been sitting* in front of Churchill or de Gaulle.'

The unlikeliness of (32) lies in its randomness:

- (32) Столкнись вы с ним где-нибудь в метро или на улице, и не оглянулись бы. (Ю. Кузнецов. Русский роман)

*'Had you bumped* into him somewhere in the subway or in the street, you would not have turned around.'

### 3. Conditionals with generalized subjects.

Strictly speaking, this construction, which expresses a highly hypothetical action, is an extension of a subjectless one, as in (33a). The subject is expressed by the second person singular or plural of the personal pronoun, or the indefinite pronoun *kto/kto–nibud'*. There is an additional restriction on word order: if the subject is expressed by a

personal pronoun, it precedes other NPs, as in (33b); if the subject is expressed by an indefinite pronoun *kto* or *kto–nibud'*, it is preceded by other NPs, as in (33c) and (34):

(33) a. А предложи ему денег – откажется.

'And *were one to offer* him money, he would refuse.'

b. А предложи ты ему денег – откажется.

'And *were you to offer* him money, he would refuse.'

c. А предложи ему кто денег – откажется.

'And *were someone to offer* him money, he would refuse.'

(34) a. А убей его кто – никто и не заметит.

'And *were someone to kill him*, no one would notice.'

b. Иногда без копейки сидим, а попроси у него кто в долг – вон часы со стены снимет, продаст и виду не покажет. (В. Розов. С вечера до полудня)

'Sometimes we are without a kopeck, and if *someone had asked* him for a loan, he would take down the clock from the wall, sell it and not let anyone see.'

c. Странное чувство вызывали в Зинченко эти деньги. Он умел и знал, как их брать и за что. Скажи ему кто, что он берет взятки, Зинченко вполне мог бы съездить по физиономии. (Г. Щербакова. Реалисты и жлобы)

'Zinchenko had a strange feeling about this money. He knew how to take money and for what. *If someone had told him* that he takes bribes, Zinchenko could have easily hit him in the face.'

d. Они оскорбились бы, предложи им кто-то не прямой путь получения чего бы то ни было. (Г. Щербакова. Реалисты и жлобы)

'They would have gotten offended *had someone offered them* an indirect way of receiving anything what so ever.'

е. Но подумать, что совсем бы другой она возможно была, и другая была бы у нее жизнь, подари ей кто-нибудь красивые сережки двадцать лет назад. (В. Панова. Сестры)

'Just think that she could possibly have been completely different, and her life could have been different *had someone given her* beautiful ear rings twenty years ago.'

When the protasis precedes the apodasis, the conjunction *a* in many of these examples represents the meaning that Fougeron (1991: 255) and Yokoyama (1991: 382-383) describe as unexpectedness on the part of the speaker.

To summarize: first, pseudo-imperative form constructions involve two types of word order: discourse-driven unrestricted word order (Yokoyama 1986) and grammatical inverted word order.

The constructions with unrestricted word order may represent either 1) unexpected action in the past from the speaker's point of view (most commonly with reference to the third person); or 2) an action perceived by the speaker as undesirable and forced on the subject (most commonly in the first person).

The constructions with inverted word order represent either conditionals or conditional counterfactuals. In both cases, there is either a very high degree of unlikelihood of the event in the protasis taking place or an element of disaster either in



protasis, in apodasis, or as a background. The word order in the conditionals with generalized subject represents additional restrictions.

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