

# Imperative Answers to Questions Under Discussion

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## 1 Introduction

Imperative constructions are universally attested in natural language (Portner 2004a), so their interactions with context and other utterances are a crucial piece of any theory of discourse. In this work, I propose a new definition of when commands are relevant in discourse, and explore how they interact with Questions Under Discussion (QUDs). Compared to assertions and questions, commands are highly restricted with respect to when they can provide an answer to a QUD and thus be relevant. Several of these restrictions are directly predicted by defining relevance in terms of the illocutionary relation of a clause, while others will require further investigation.

Much recent work on the semantics of imperatives (e.g. Portner 2004a; 2007; Kaufmann 2011) seeks an explanation of when imperatives can be felicitously uttered. The sorts of restrictions that have been proposed include restrictions on the addressee (Portner 2004a), restrictions imposed by the speaker's knowledge (Portner 2007:364), and a variety of "presuppositional" constraints including the timeframe of the commanded action and the speaker's authority (Kaufmann 2011).

On the other hand, work on the structure and mechanisms of discourse (e.g. Roberts 2004; Roberts et al. 2009; Simons et al. 2011) has formalized relevance in terms of an utterance's relationship to the current Question Under Discussion. Simons et al. (2011) defines relevance for assertions and questions as follows:

(1) *Relevance for assertions and questions*

- a. An assertion is relevant if it contextually entails a partial or complete answer to the QUD.

- b. A question is relevant if it has an answer which contextually entails a partial or complete answer to the QUD.

(after Simons et al. 2011: ex. 13)

However, Simons et al. (2011) does not address the issue of what makes a command relevant. Roberts (2004) does provide a preliminary definition of imperative relevance, but it is not as precise as those in (1).

(2) *Preliminary definition of imperative relevance*

A move  $m$  is Relevant...if  $m$  is...an imperative whose realization would plausibly help to answer [the QUD]. (Roberts 2004:216)

The issue I seek to address in this paper is what form a more robust definition of imperative relevance must take and what benefits it provides to the overall theory of relevance. In Cormany (to appear), I extended Simons et al.'s (2011) paradigm of relevance (1) with a corresponding definition for commands (3).

- (3) A command is relevant if what it prefers contextually entails a partial or complete answer to the QUD.

Formulating the definition in this way does have several advantages. It allows for the relevance of commands to be determined directly and in the same manner as other utterance types—by comparing a portion of the utterance to the potential answers of the QUD. One implication of the three definitions of relevance in (1) and (3), taken as a paradigm, is that all utterance types have a propositional component.<sup>1</sup> I maintain that this is indeed the case, and that any sentence can be divided into two portions: propositional content, and an *illocutionary relation*. Following Murray (2010), I define an illocutionary relation as a function that takes the discourse context and a proposition, and returns an updated, structured context. The illocutionary relation of declaratives performs set intersection; that of interrogatives partitions the context. I propose

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<sup>1</sup>Note that this is contra Portner (2004a; 2007), which claim that all imperative sentences have the semantic type of properties,  $\langle e, \langle s, t \rangle \rangle$ .

that the illocutionary relation of imperatives imposes a preference, following Starr (2010).

The remainder of this paper will examine whether the definition of imperative relevance in (3)—in terms of preference and the QUD—makes the appropriate prediction about the felicity of imperative utterances. In §2, I provide some scenarios in which an imperative is a natural response to a QUD, and discuss how their propositional contents match the criteria for relevance. Then in §3 I break QUDs into several subclasses and show that imperatives are not equally felicitous with all types of QUDs. Several differences between imperatives and modals arise when comparing their applicability to QUDs. One modal in particular, *should*, has unexpected interactions with imperatives, and I discuss this issue in §4. Finally, in §5, I show how the three definitions of relevance given in (1) and (3) can be unified.

## 2 Utterances in Proximity to Imperatives

It has long been observed that certain utterances are infelicitous when immediately following an imperative (Iatridou 2008). For one, they are not truth-evaluable, and resist direct challenges in terms of truth or falsity (Cormany to appear).

(4) A: Take out the trash!

B1: #That's true! I (will) take out the trash.

B2: #That's false! I won't / don't take out the trash.

The failure of propositional anaphora in these cases has led some to argue that imperatives are non-propositional. Cormany (to appear) argues that all clause types have a propositional component, but while declaratives canonically assert a proposition, imperatives canonically prefer a proposition. This difference in illocutionary relation is responsible for the divergent results of challenges to declaratives and imperatives. When examining imperative relevance, it is important to bear in mind that imperatives have a significantly different relationship with the surrounding discourse material than declaratives do.

Relevance for imperatives deals with the preceding utterances and context—the opposite of challenge tests, which use subsequent utterances as a diagnostic. It is trivial to state that there are certain dialogues in which it is well-suited for the next utterance to be imperative in form, and to issue a command. The

question is whether these dialogue states all have something in common, and whether that commonality can be expressed in terms of the QUD. Take, for example, the following dialogue:

- (5)     A: Are you going out for lunch today?  
          B: Yes, but I don't know where to go.  
          A: Go to the taco place! They have a special today.

In this brief exchange, two QUDs are raised, and both are answered—one with a declarative and one with an imperative. The first QUD is a polar question and has the answers  $\{A \text{ is going out for lunch today, } A \text{ is not going out for lunch today}\}$ . B then answers this question in the affirmative with the elliptical response *Yes*. The remainder of B's utterance introduces an argument Wh-question as the new QUD, which have several answers of the sort  $\{B \text{ goes to the cafeteria for lunch, } B \text{ goes to the hot dog stand for lunch, } B \text{ goes to the taco place for lunch, ...}\}$ . This question is answered by A's imperative, which prefers the answer *B goes to the taco place (for lunch)*. B also explains his reasoning for introducing this new preference.

However, there are many questions that an imperative simply cannot address. By their very nature, imperatives prefer propositions that the addressee can make true. A question about a third party only has answers pertaining to that third party, and thus an imperative response is ruled out.

- (6)     A: Where's Bob? I need to talk to him about our project.

The answers to this question are of the form  $\{Bob \text{ is at his desk, } Bob \text{ is in the lounge, } Bob \text{ is at the coffee shop, ...}\}$ . No imperative can prefer any of these options.<sup>2</sup> However, either a question or an assertion can make a relevant contribution. For example, the question *Is he at his desk?* has the answers  $\{Bob \text{ is at his desk, } Bob \text{ is not at his desk}\}$ . The former is a complete answer to the QUD, while the latter is a partial answer to the QUD. In either circumstance, the question is relevant, and a felicitous response. Likewise, asserting either of those propositions outright is also a relevant contribution.

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<sup>2</sup> This is certainly the case if Bob is not a participant in the discourse; imperatives are always addressee-directed. Additionally, given the nature of this QUD, if Bob were present, the QUD itself would be a very odd thing to ask. Even if A asked his question out of an extreme lack of perception—Bob is right there in front of him!—an imperative of the sort *Bob, be right here!* would also be infelicitous because it commands something that is already true in the current context.

Interestingly, there is a third type of relevant response, which may or may not be fully subsumed under the definition of relevance for assertions. It is possible to respond to the QUD in (6) with a modal declarative. The type of modality expressed by such a response can even vary, and can be clarified with additional explanation.

(7) A: Where's Bob? I need to talk to him about our project.

B1: He should be at his desk. The boss says he has to be there from 9 to 5.

B2: He should be at his desk. He sets his own schedule, but I know he's almost always there at this time of day.

The connections between imperatives and declarative modals have not gone unnoticed in the literature. Portner (to appear) claims that the norms introduced by imperatives can later be used by modals as (a portion of) their ordering source, while Kaufmann (2011) goes as far as equating imperatives and modals entirely. As I examine various types of QUDs in the next section, there will be instances in which imperatives and declarative modals are equally relevant, and cases (like the one above) in which they diverge. In §3 I will be primarily concerned with the relevance or irrelevance of imperatives; §4 will take a look at imperatives and modality, and the behavior of the modal *should* in particular.

### 3 Answering Different Types of QUDs

The simple examples given in the previous section could give the impression that imperative relevance is restricted solely by whether the QUD is addressee-oriented. In this section, I break QUDs into semantic/syntactic classes and show that not all addressee-oriented questions are answerable by imperatives. Certain QUDs do not have any available imperative answers, which can be accounted for by the definition of imperative relevance presented at the outset of the paper (3). In other cases, additional facts, such as information structure, must be taken into account to explain variations in the relevance of imperatives.

### 3.1 Polar Questions

The simplest QUD is a polar question. Since polar questions only have two potential answers, a relevant response can only give a complete answer to the question, never a partial one.<sup>3</sup>

However, the simplicity of polar questions is responsible for their incompatibility with imperative answers. Observe the significant contrast between modal declarative answers and imperative answers in the following example:

- (8) A: Do I have to take out the trash?  
B1: You do (have to take out the trash).  
B2: #?Take out the trash! / #?Do it!  
B3: You don't (have to take out the trash).  
B4: #Don't take out the trash! / #Don't do it!

Both positive and negative imperative answers to this modal polar question are marginal or infelicitous. Although these imperatives appear to address the QUD introduced by A, they do not in fact prefer one of its potential answers. The potential answers to the QUD are  $\{A \text{ has to take out the trash, } A \text{ does not have to take out the trash}\}$ . However, the imperative responses prefer the propositions  $A \text{ takes out the trash}$  (B2) and  $A \text{ does not take out the trash}$  (B4).<sup>4</sup> This mismatch accounts for the irrelevance and infelicity of these responses.

Of course, it is possible to establish a non-modal polar question as a QUD. The QUD in (9) fits this description; its answers are  $\{A \text{ wins the race, } A \text{ does not win the race}\}$ , but an imperative response fares just as poorly as it did with the modal QUD in (8).

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<sup>3</sup>I am abstracting away from responses that indicate the possibility or likelihood of a potential answer to the QUD. Simons et al. (2011) acknowledges that this is an outstanding issue for the current theory of relevance, which “is overly restrictive and should be weakened at least to allow for discourse moves which merely raise or lower the probability of some answer to the QUD being correct” (2011:8, fn. 3). Presumably whatever the necessary modifications to the theory of relevance are, they apply equally to imperatives.

<sup>4</sup>It is impossible to construct an imperative that does prefer one of the answers to this QUD (e.g., *\*Have to take out the trash!*). This is the result of a general prohibition against embedding a modal within an imperative, the reasons for which I do not have space to address in this paper.

- (9) A: Will I win the race?  
 B1: You'll win the race. (Everyone else is slower than you.)  
 B2: #Win the race! (Everyone else is slower than you.)

Here the imperative answer does prefer one of the answers to the QUD, namely *A wins the race*, yet is still infelicitous. Why is this so? I contend that is not due to a fault in the definition of imperative relevance. Rather, the imperative is strictly speaking relevant, but infelicitous on independent grounds. Specifically, imperatives cannot be used to make predictions of future facts, but must allow for the non-realization of what they prefer. The failure of the imperative *Win the race!* to answer the QUD in (9) is thus akin to its inability to reaffirm a declarative claim of future fact.

- (10) A: I will win the race. Everyone else is slower than me.  
 B1: Yes. You will win the race, then.  
 B2: Yes. #Win the race, then!

### 3.2 Argument Wh-Questions

Wh-questions are more open-ended than polar questions, and may have an unbounded number of potential answers. This allows imperatives to supply either a complete or partial answer to a question.

- (11) A: Who should I see at the conference?  
 B1: See Mary! She always gives fantastic talks.  
 B2: Don't see Mike! He does good research, but he mumbles.

The potential answers to the QUD in (11) are {*A should see Mary at the conference*, *A should see Mike at the conference*, *A should see Jane at the conference*, ...}. B1 provides a complete answer, while B2 provides a partial answer. Both of these responses are felicitous, but if the same logic applied to the modal polar question in (8) is used here, it predicts that neither response would be relevant. This is clearly not the case, but I contend that the reason for this discrepancy lies with the modal *should* in the QUD, which I discuss in detail in §4.

One other possibility that arises in Wh-questions containing modals is the possibility for the modal to be ambiguous between a descriptive and performative use. *Must* in the QUD in (12) is an example of such a modal.

(12) A: Who must I see at the conference?

B1: You have to see Mary. She always gives fantastic talks.

B2: See Mary! She always gives fantastic talks.

B3: You have to see Jane. I know you don't like her, but she's running the registration desk.

B4: #See Jane! I know you don't like her, but she's running the registration desk.

If *must* is interpreted performatively, either a performative declarative modal or an imperative is felicitous, because either establishes a new norm. Conversely, if *must* is interpreted descriptively, only a descriptive modal response is appropriate. The sentence in B2 conveys new information to the speaker of A, but does not change any of the necessities, possibilities, or preferences in the world in which this discourse takes place (if the conversation never took place, speaker B would still wind up seeing Jane). Moreover, the use of an imperative (B4) in place of a descriptive modal (B3) when attempting to make a descriptive conversational move is infelicitous. This is due to the fact that imperatives are unambiguously performative. As such, they can be used with or without a supporting body of facts, but cannot contradict those facts if they are made explicit. By the same reasoning, in (13) below, both B1 and B3 are felicitous.

(13) *Context: Two people are trying to agree when to meet for lunch.*

A: OK, so when should we meet at the cafeteria?

B1: I have a meeting at 1:00, so be there at 12:00!

B2: I have a meeting at 1:00, so you have to be there at 12:00.

B3: Hmm, I don't know. Be there at 12:00(, I guess)!

B4: Hmm, I don't know. #You have to be there at 12:00(, I guess).



In B3, the fact that *Be there at 12:00!* is prefaced by *I don't know* makes it clear that the preference established by the imperative is a new one. We can imagine that the first time speaker B ever formulated a preference on this matter was actually during the first part of his utterance. A brand new preference of this sort cannot be expressed with a declarative modal, which requires a suitable ordering source to be felicitous. When one is provided explicitly (B2), both speaker and addressee can evaluate the modal claim on the same basis, but in the absence of either explicit or contextual background information, only an imperative can establish a preference (B4).

### 3.3 Adjunct Wh-Questions

Although adjunct Wh-questions may have many syntactic differences when compared to argument Wh-questions in a given language, they are semantically quite similar. Both classes of questions denote a potentially unbounded set of propositional answers which assign different values to the variable specified by the Wh-word or phrase. Thus, as QUDs, the two classes should behave identically.

However, some adjunct Wh-questions appear to accept declarative responses asserting a propositional answer, but disallow imperative responses preferring the same answer.

(14) A: Why does everyone assume that I smell bad?

B1: (It's because) you take out the trash.

B2: #Take out the trash!<sup>5</sup>

However, questions formed with *why* in English are deceptive in this regard. Since *why* takes the place of a clausal adjunct, it is tempting to say that the answers to the questions in (14) are of the form {*A takes out the trash, someone started a rumor that A smells bad, ...*}. However, this is not the case, as questions with non-clausal adjuncts show. The potential answers to the question *When did Bob eat dinner?* are not {6:00, 7:00, *as soon as he got home, ...*}—clearly not, since these are not propositions. Rather, they are of the form {*Bob ate dinner at 6:00, Bob ate dinner at 7:00, Bob ate dinner as soon as he got home, ...*}.

By the same token, the responses to the QUD introduced in (14) are properly represented as {*everyone assumes A smells bad because A takes out the trash, everyone assumes A smells bad because someone started a*

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<sup>5</sup>Thanks to an anonymous TLS 13 abstract reviewer for providing this example.

*rumor that A smells bad, ...*}. Despite the potential for ellipsis indicated in B1, a relevant response must contain propositional content that is a full answer to the QUD, at least underlyingly. The supporting material necessary to meet this requirement cannot be overtly represented in an imperative answer, as shown by the ungrammaticality of *\*It's because take out the trash!*.<sup>6</sup> Thus it appears safe to say that imperative answers do show uniform behavior with both argument and adjunct Wh-questions.

### 3.4 Multiple Wh-Questions

The final, and perhaps least common, class of QUDs that I will address is multiple Wh-question QUDs. The fact that multiple Wh-questions have two (or more) variables to be filled places a greater burden on their relevant responses. In English, where multiple Wh-questions always receive a pair-list interpretation, this burden cannot be carried by an unadorned imperative.

(15) John: So, Bob, you're in charge. Who has what job?

Bob (to John): #?Take out the trash!<sup>7</sup>

The reason that Bob's response in (15) is inadequate seems to be that it doesn't sufficiently express the pair-list type of answer required by the QUD. In this context, *Take out the trash!* does prefer the proposition *John takes out the trash*, so it ought to be relevant. However, the subject of the bare imperative in (15) is null, and null elements typically represent backgrounded information. In pair-list answers, both elements of the pair are foregrounded information, and in English they receive special prosodic marking.

There is a method for foregrounding the subject of an imperative: the vocative. Portner (2004b) likens the information structural status of vocatives to sentence topics. Using vocatives, Bob can answer John's question with a list of imperatives, which are all relevant. Even if Bob can only offer a partial answer (i.e. not an exhaustive list), the addition of a vocative to the imperative improves the response dramatically.

(16) John: So, Bob, you're in charge. Who has what job?

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<sup>6</sup>Trying to move the imperative marking to the matrix clause of the expanded answer has an equally nonsensical result:

*\*Be because you take out the trash!*. This imperative sentence is ungrammatical because it is not addressee-oriented.

<sup>7</sup>Thanks to an anonymous TLS 13 abstract reviewer for raising this issue and providing a similar example.

Bob: John, take out the trash! Mary, sweep the floor! I'll do the dishes.

Bob: John, take out the trash! I haven't decided what the rest of us should do.

Thus imperative answers to multiple Wh-questions exhibit a very interesting interaction between relevance and information structure. There may be other similar interactions between discourse pragmatics and information structure, either with imperatives or other clause types, and I leave these possibilities open to further research.

## 4 The Issue of *Should*

As originally proposed in (3), the definition of imperative relevance prohibits imperatives from ever providing a relevant answer to any modal question. Modal questions have modal propositions as their potential answers, and it is generally not possible for an imperative to prefer a modal proposition, both in English and cross-linguistically. As shown in §3.1, this is a desirable result for certain polar questions.

- (17) A: Do I have to take out the trash? see (8)  
B: #?Take out the trash! / #?Do it!

However, we saw in §3.2 that imperatives are perfectly felicitous and relevant responses to some modal argument Wh-questions.

- (18) A: Who should I see at the conference? = (11)  
B: See Mary! She always gives fantastic talks.

If the potential answers to the QUD in (18) are  $\{A \text{ should see Mary}, A \text{ should see Jane}, A \text{ should see Bob}, \dots\}$ , an imperative response cannot prefer one of these propositions. The response given, *See Mary!*, prefers the proposition *A sees Mary (at the conference)*.

There is one way that discourses like the one in (18) can be accounted for without modifying the definition of relevance. Recall that for an imperative to be relevant, it need not actually prefer one of the member

propositions of the set denoted by the QUD, but must contextually entail one of them.

- (19) A command is relevant if what it prefers *contextually entails* a partial or complete answer to the QUD. = (3), emphasis added

The question then is whether *A sees Mary at the conference* entails *A should see Mary at the conference* in the above context. I will not work out the details of the modal logic responsible for connecting these two propositions via entailment, but I will point out some facts showing that such a tie does exist, and is conditioned on the type of modality indicated by *should*.

By default, *should* has a deontic reading, and deontic modals are most compatible with imperative responses. Of course, *should* is not exclusively deontic; in the proper context, it can have an epistemic reading, and QUDs containing epistemic *should* cannot readily be answered with an imperative.

- (20) *Context: Mary is sick and consulting a doctor, who has just prescribed some medicine for her.*

Mary: So I have to take these pills for two weeks, right?

Doctor: Yes, that's right.

Mary: Should I start feeling better before the two weeks are up?

Doctor: Yes, you should start feeling better in about three days.

- (21) Mary: Should I start feeling better before the two weeks are up?

Doctor: #Yes, start feeling better in about three days!

I leave the exact explanation of this contrast to future work, but one possibility is that the difference may lie in the content of the QUDs themselves. Note that modal questions containing *should* pattern with the felicity of imperative responses when they are expressed in the form *Is it the case that... ?* In the scenario involving Mary's visit to the doctor, her question contains epistemic *should*, can only be answered with a declarative, and can be phrased with or without *Is it the case that... ?*

- (22) Mary: Is it the case that I should start feeling better before the two weeks are up?

Doctor: Yes, you should start feeling better in about three days.

Conversely, it seems impossible to pose a question containing deontic *should* with the same construction. Consider the following scenario in which one of the participants raises a QUD that solicits the imposition of a new deontic norm:

(23) *Context: Two people had a meal at a restaurant, and received poor service. The bill has just arrived.*

A1: Should I leave a tip?

A2: #Is it the case that I should leave a tip?<sup>8</sup>

Adopting A2 as the QUD would prohibit the interlocutor from answering with an imperative. However, if A1 is adopted as the QUD, either an imperative or a declarative response is relevant and felicitous.

(24) B1: Leave 10%! The service wasn't *that* bad.

B2: You should leave 10%. The service wasn't *that* bad.

Collectively, these data show that there is a link between the type of modality represented in a QUD and the relevance of imperative responses. The open question is whether to modify the representation of the QUD (perhaps to contain preferences rather than bare propositions), or to establish an entailment relationship between non-modal propositions preferred by the imperative and modal potential answers. The latter would allow for the definition of relevance for commands to go unchanged. I hope that cross-linguistic data from languages will shed light on this question. For instance, a language with modals that unambiguously indicate a single type of modality could provide even clearer evidence that deontic and epistemic modals behave differently in QUDs.

Even judging the matter solely on the English data, I think it is safe to work with (3) as the definition of relevance for commands. In the next section, I show how adopting this definition allows relevance to be generalized across all utterance and clause types.

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<sup>8</sup>In a different context, this question could represent non-deontic modality and be felicitous. Imagine a context where speaker A is visiting a foreign country and doesn't know whether it is customary to add a tip on top of the billed price, but thinks that speaker B does know. In this scenario, uttering A1 or A2 is acceptable.

## 5 Generalizing Relevance

Recall that the definition of relevance for commands that was tested in §3 above was formulated to fit into the paradigm of relevance given by Simons et al. (2011). I have shown that although further refinements can be made, these definitions are adequate for dealing with ordinary cases of determining relevance. The paradigm, in full, is as follows:

- (25)
- a. An assertion is relevant if it contextually entails a partial or complete answer to the QUD.
  - b. A question is relevant if it has an answer which contextually entails a partial or complete answer to the QUD.
  - c. A command is relevant if what it prefers contextually entails a partial or complete answer to the QUD.

All three definitions are of the same form: a propositional component of the utterance is compared to the propositional potential answers of the QUD. The ways in which the utterance types vary is in their illocutionary relation, which specifies how the propositional content updates and structures the current context. The illocutionary relations of the three major clause types are set intersection, partitioning or covering, and preference, respectively.<sup>9</sup> Since the definitions of relevance vary solely in terms of illocutionary relation, we can view the paradigm not as three distinct tests, but as three variations of a single, unified definition of relevance.

(26) *Unified Definition of Relevance*

An utterance is relevant if the propositional argument of its illocutionary relation contextually entails a partial or complete answer to the QUD.

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<sup>9</sup>Note that Simons et al.'s (2011) definition of relevance for assertions treats the entire assertion as a bare proposition. I would reword this definition to indicate that assertions are not bare propositions, but propositions dominated by an assertoric illocutionary relation imposing an intersection relation on the Context Set. Positing an illocutionary level above the propositional level for assertions is supported by any language that has distinct morphology or syntax in the left periphery of matrix declarative clauses. See Zanuttini et al. (to appear) for a summary of Korean clause-typing, which is just one example of this phenomenon.

In more intuitive terms, an utterance’s relevance is determined by its propositional content. Its illocutionary relation may have independent effects on the felicity of the utterance—this is especially true of imperatives—but does not directly affect relevance.

Adopting the unified definition in (26) has several benefits. Foremost, it completes and simplifies the concept of relevance. Minor clause types (such as exclamatives, promissives, and the like) can now be tested for relevance with the same diagnostic as major clause types. Additionally, any further refinements to the criteria for relevance (such as allowing gradeable rather than binary responses to the QUD; see fn. 3) will automatically apply to the relevance of all utterances.

Another advantage is that the relevance of commands can be determined by comparing only the imperative utterance and the QUD. In a theory where imperatives have no propositional component, this is impossible. For example, in the property theory of Portner (2004a; 2007), to compare an imperative to a QUD, the imperative first must be added to a To-Do List—a set of properties assigned to a given participant in the conversation—and then a proposition must be derived from that list by an independent process. Similarly, in a theory that treats imperatives and modal declaratives as semantically identical (e.g. Kaufmann 2011), the contrasts in relevance and felicity between imperatives and declaratives, as exhibited in §3, must be attributed to outside factors. None of these problems arise in a system where illocutionary relation is the sole mediator between propositional content and discourse.

## 6 Conclusion

Imperatives, like all clause types, have direct relationships with Questions Under Discussion. To do so, they must have a propositional component which can be compared with the potential answers of QUDs. Representing imperatives as preferring a proposition satisfies this requirement.

Imperatives which prefer a partial or complete answer to the QUD are relevant. Several inherent properties of imperatives limit what propositions they can prefer, and thus what QUDs they can address. Also, certain types of QUDs introduce additional restrictions, such as the information structure restrictions of multiple Wh-questions. Finally, imperatives have complex interactions with modal questions. Several open issues remain regarding the relationship between imperatives and modals, particularly *should* in English, but

the data shows that the type of modality represented by the QUD plays a major role.

Relevance for imperatives completes the concept of relevance for major clause types. Defining it in terms of an illocutionary relation and a propositional component allows relevance for all clause types to be unified under a single definition. Imperatives require no extra pragmatic machinery and fit naturally into this system of discourse.



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