Conditional imperatives in Dutch and Russian

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1. Introduction

In addition to being used to perform a directive speech act (command, request etc.), imperative forms in both Dutch and Russian may be used in a conditional-like construction. The Dutch and Russian 'conditional imperative' constructions (CIC) are exemplified in (1) (Proeme 1991:39) and (2) (Fortuin 2000:182), respectively. In both examples, the imperative in the first clause may be paraphrased by means of a conditional *if*-clause.

(1) Hang de was   buiten en   het gaat regenen.
    hang the laundry outside and it   goes rain
    'If you hang the laundry outside, it starts raining.'

(2) Мне кажется, что выскажись   мы —
    I.DAT seems   that say.IMPER.PERF.2SG we
    и   все   пойдет   по-старому
    and everything goes.PRES.PERF as before
    'It seems to me that if we speak out, everything will become as before.'

The fact that different languages use one and the same form to present both directives and conditionals suggests that directive and conditional meaning constitute a *semantic map* in the sense of Haspelmath (2003; cf. Croft's 2001 *conceptual space*). In this paper, we will show that the notion of a semantic map may be used to elucidate, first, the multifunctionality of a language-particular construction and, second, the differences in use between 'similar' constructions across languages. In Section 2, we will present three such differences between the Dutch and the Russian conditional use of the imperative. After having introduced, in Section 3.1, the idea of a semantic map connecting directive and conditional meaning, we will show what 'chunks' of the directive-conditional

continuum are covered by the Dutch (3.2) and the Russian (3.3) construction. In the final section, we will present some questions for further research.

2.   Language-specific constraints on CIC

2.1   Subject of the imperative part of CIC

The most conspicuous difference between the Dutch and the Russian CIC, as exemplified in (1) and (2), concerns the subject of the imperative part of the construction. There are two 'subject constraints' on the Dutch CIC, both of which are not operative for the Russian construction.

   The subject of the imperative in Dutch (1) can be either the addressee (paraphrase: "if you hang the laundry outside now, it will start raining") or it can be generic (paraphrase: "every time one hangs the laundry outside, it starts raining") (Proeme 1991: 39). The Dutch imperative, both in its directive and its conditional use, does not allow for a 1st or 3rd person implicit subject. Thus, the sentence in (3), despite the 1st person subject in the second part of the CIC, can only be interpreted as "if *you* miss this train, we'll definitely be late", and not as "if *we* miss this train, we'll definitely be late". (The latter, according to Clark 1993: 116, is a possible reading of its English equivalent.)

> (3)   Mis die trein en we komen zeker te laat.
>   'Miss that train and we'll definitely be late.'

In Russian, the subject of the imperative in the CIC can be any person in both numbers. The subject in (2) is 1st person plural, the one in (4) is 1st person singular.

> (4)   Свари   я эту картошку во время,
>   boil.IMPER.PERF.2SG I this potatoes   in time
>   мы бы   не опоздали.
>   we PART not late
>   'If I had boiled the potatoes in time, we would not have been late.'

In addition to being restricted to 2nd person subjects, the imperative part of the Dutch CIC does not allow for the subject to be explicit. Unlike the first constraint, this one can not be regarded as inherited from the directive use of the imperative since in the directive use, the subject of the imperative can be explicit, at least in the presence of (untranslatable) particles such as *maar*, *eens*, and *maar eens*. The sentence in (5a), for instance, is fine, but the one in (5b) is incoherent.[1]

> (5)   a.   Hang jij de was   maar eens buiten.
>   hang you the laundry PARTICLES outside
>   'Hang the laundry outside.'

    b. *Hang jij de was   buiten en het gaat regenen
         hang you the laundry outside and it   goes rain

In Russian, the subject of the imperative, at least when used in the CIC, is always explicit, as was demonstrated in examples (2) and (4); in the directive use, the subject need not be explicit. In addition, impersonal verbs may occur in the conditional part of the Russian CIC, as in (6), whereas these are ungrammatical in the Dutch construction, as can be seen in (7).

  (6)   Темней   вчера   пораньше, мы бы
         be dark.IMPER.IMPERF.2SG yesterday earlier   we PART
         не пошли   в парк.
         not go.PAST PARTICIPLE to park
         'If it had been dark earlier yesterday, we would not have gone to the park.'

  (7) *Was eerder donker geweest en we waren niet naar het park gegaan.
       Lit. Had been dark earlier en we would not have gone to the park

In sum, there are no constraints at all on the possible subject of the imperative in the Russian CIC, but the Dutch construction is restricted to 2nd person and generic (but not impersonal) subjects, that, moreover, can not be explicit.

2.2 Kind of conditional relation compatible with CIC

A common constraint of the Dutch and the Russian CIC is that neither is compatible with a pragmatic conditional relation. '*If*-constructions' may be used to express such relations, in which the two events are not temporally — let alone causally — related, as is demonstrated for English in (8) (Athanasiadou & Dirven 1997).

  (8)   If you're thirsty, there's beer in the fridge.

Pragmatic conditional relations are to be distinguished from content conditional relations, that suggest a definite temporal and, very often, causal relation between the events presented in the protasis and apodosis. If we present the two events of (8) by means of a CIC, as in (9), a content relation seems to be the only possible reading.

  (9)   Heb dorst en er is bier in de koelkast
       'Be thirsty and there is beer in the fridge.'

The sentence may be used, for instance, to suggest that the beer somehow appears in the fridge at the very moment you're being thirsty. Thus, the CIC in (9) imposes a 'content conditional reading', i.e. a sequence reading, in which the second event comes after, and may in fact be caused by, the first event.

    Within the domain of content conditional relations, there is an important difference between the Dutch and the Russian CIC. The Russian construction

allows for hypothetical and counterfactual content readings equally well; the Dutch construction usually resists a counterfactual reading. In Russian, the counterfactual reading of the CIC can be distinguished from the hypothetical reading on formal grounds, since, on the counterfactual reading, the verb in the apodosis appears in the subjunctive form, while on the hypothetical reading, the apodosis usually contains perfective present (see examples (4) and (2), respectively). In the protasis, there seems to be a subtle difference as well (Trnavac 2003): on the hypothetical reading, the imperative form has perfective aspect (see example (2)), whereas in the counterfactual reading it may have either perfective aspect, as in (4), or imperfective aspect, as in (6) and (10).

(10)   Открывай   я окно   постоянно,
       open.IMPER-IMPERF.2SG I window regularly
       он бы   простудился.
       he PART get flu.PAST PARTICIPLE
       'If I opened the window regularly, he would get the flu.'

Dutch may use tense to distinguish between hypothetical and counterfactual readings of the CIC.[2] More specifically, a past perfect imperative in the protasis of the construction indicates 'counterfactuality to the past' (Duinhoven 1995); the apodosis in these cases may contain either a simple past form, or a 'future in the past' (consisting of the past tense of the auxiliary *zullen* ('will') and an infinitive).

(11)   Had het gisteren afgemaakt en je hoefde vandaag niet te werken.
       Lit. Had finished it yesterday and you would not have to work today.
       'If you had finished it yesterday, you would not have to work today.'

However, unlike in Russian, the counterfactual reading of the Dutch CIC is marginal at best. While it is possible to express 'counterfactuality to the past', as in (11), it is difficult to trigger 'counterfactuality to the present'. In principle, one could use a simple past, rather than past perfect, imperative in the protasis of the CIC to get this reading, as in (12), but such cases seem to be rare.

(12)   ?Stopte met roken en je voelde je veel fitter.
       Lit. Quit smoking and you would feel much better.

Moreover, instances of the Dutch CIC containing a past imperative in the protasis such as (12) prefer a habitual past reading (see Section 3.2). In fact, all of the Dutch examples given so far allow for a habitual reading, whereas the Russian CIC is incompatible with such an interpretation.

2.3   Order of protasis and apodosis

In accordance with our claim that the CIC typically expresses content relations of sequence and causality, the order of protasis and apodosis in the CIC is relatively fixed: the events are presesented iconically, i.e. in the order in which

they happened, or would happen in a hypothetical or counterfactual world. For the Dutch CIC, this is the only possible order; for Russian, however, counter-examples, such as (13), can be found.

(13) Лично   мне все единo, будь   вы хоть зеленого цвета.
      personally I.DAT all the same be.IMPER you even green   skin
      'Personally, it's all the same to me, even if you had green skin.'
      (Fortuin 2000:180)

2.4 Summary

The different constraints on the Dutch and the Russian CIC can be summarized as follows.

		Subject	Order		Relation
Dutch CIC	–	2nd person (hearer or generic)	Fixed	–	Hypothetical
				–	Counterfactual?
	–	not explicit		–	Habitual
Russian CIC	–	1st/2nd/3rd	Free	–	Hypothetical
	–	impersonal verbs		–	Counterfactual
	–	explicit			

3. Towards a semantic map for directives and conditionals

3.1 From directive to conditional

While constructions, are, by definition, language-specific (Croft 2001), one would obviously not want to claim that it is just a coincidence that in different languages one grammatical category is used to perform both a directive and a conditional function. To show how directive and conditional meaning are related, and how the Dutch and the Russian CIC are related, we will use the notion of a *semantic map* (Haspelmath 2003; cf. Croft's 2001 *conceptual space*). According to Haspelmath, "the leading idea of the semantic map method is that multifunctionality of a gram occurs only when the various functions of the gram are similar." (2003:215). So in what sense are directive and conditional readings 'similar'?

    As pointed out by De Haan (1986), the common semantic denominator of directives and conditionals is that both refer not to an actual event but to an event that may be realized in some 'possible world', in a 'mental space' that is not the 'base space', but rather a generic, a hypothetical, or a counterfactual space (Fauconnier 1985). It is part of the meaning of directives that the event presented is not realized (yet); directives, in addition, have as part of their

meaning that the speaker wants the addressee to make sure that the event does get realized. The latter part of the meaning of directives — the fact that they are 'hearer directed' — is absent when an imperative is interpreted exclusively as a conditional.

The conceptual link between directive and conditional meaning is captured by assuming that they constitute parts of one semantic map, which is supposed to be universal.[3] When relating language-specific constructions to the map, this should happen in accordance with the Semantic Map Connectivity Hypothesis: "Language-specific and construction-specific grammatical categories should map onto connected regions of conceptual space" (Croft 2001: 105). The boundaries of the semantic domain covered by a specific construction may be fuzzy. In the following section we will try to put the Dutch and the Russian CIC 'on the map'. We will show that there is ample evidence for the existence of an intermediate category of directive/conditional meaning, which, especially in Russian, corresponds to a specific construction distinct from the CIC, namely the CDIC (Conditional Directive Imperative Construction). Thus, the semantic map for directives and conditionals is arguably as follows.

DIRECTIVE – DIRECTIVE/CONDITIONAL – CONDITIONAL

3.2 Putting the Dutch CIC on the map

Which part of the semantic map given in 3.1 is covered by the imperative as used in the Dutch CIC? Starting at the left hand side of the directive-conditional continuum, it should first be noted that an imperative occurring in the Dutch grammatical pattern "IMPERATIVE + *en* + DECLARATIVE" may still be a pure directive. This is at least one of the readings of (14).

> (14)   Zet dat boek daar neer en je mag naar huis.
>   'Put the book there and you can go home.'

In the first clause, the speaker directs the addressee to put the book at the appointed place; the imperative is interpreted no differently than when occurring in an independent clause. Such examples, then, allow for a strictly compositional analysis: they can be treated as the coordination of two different constructions — a Directive Imperative Construction (DIC) and a Declarative Construction — rather than as instances of one complex CIC. In (14), the conditional element may be the result of a pragmatic inference, more specifically a 'bridging inference' needed to arrive at a 'maximally relevant' interpretation (Clark 1993).

Let us now turn to the conditional part of the continuum. There are four types of contexts in which the imperative in the CIC necessarily gets a conditional rather than a directive reading. The first type is constituted by contexts in

which it is clear that the speaker does not want the addressee to execute the action of the imperative. Thus, in (15), the imperative can not be strictly directive. (Unless, of course, the addressee is looking for a place to put a book that he'd rather never see again in his life.)

(15)   Zet dat boek daar neer en je vindt het nooit meer terug.
         'Put the book there and you will never find it again.'

A directive reading is also ruled out in the generic cases mentioned earlier; in order for an imperative to be interpreted as a directive, the agent of the imperative clause has to be the addressee. Thus, on the generic reading of (14), the sentence constitutes an unambiguous instance of the CIC. Yet another 'felicity condition' of a directive speech act is that the hearer is able to execute the action requested. Therefore, situations that are beyond the control of the addressee cannot occur in the Directive Imperative Construction, as demonstrated in (16).

(16)   [?]Heb blond haar!
         'Have blond hair'

However, they can be used in the CIC, as in (17), which is then necessarily interpreted as strictly conditional.

(17)   Heb blond haar en ze denken dat je dom bent.
         Lit. Have blond hair and they think you are stupid.
         'If you are a blond, people automatically assume you are stupid.'

Finally, the Dutch CIC allows for past tensed imperatives, as in (18).

(18)   Vergat je fiets op slot te zetten en hij werd gestolen.
         Lit. Forgot (past imperative) to lock your bike and it got stolen.

The past tense is incompatible with a directive reading of the imperative as well, since when using a directive, the speaker is trying to get the addressee to realize an action in the (near) future.

    Thus, the examples in (15), (17) and (18) clearly belong in the conditional part of the semantic map outlined in Section 3.1. Many other occurrences of the Dutch grammatical pattern "IMPERATIVE + *en* + DECLARATIVE" are more difficult to 'put on the map', since, as discussed with respect to example (14), the Directive Imperative Construction (DIC) is not incompatible with an inference of conditionality either and it is impossible to determine at precisely which point such an inference becomes part of the conventionalized meaning of the construction.

3.3 Putting the Russian CIC and CDIC on the map

Since, as seen in Section 2, the Russian CIC does not have any of the constraints of the Dutch CIC, we assume that it covers the entire conditional domain of the

semantic map outlined in 3.1. The left side of the map in Russian, like in Dutch, is occupied by the directive use of the imperative (DIC). In addition, Russian has a construction that corresponds rather neatly to the intermediate domain of the semantic map, namely the Conditional Directive Imperative Construction. The CDIC is exemplified in (19).

(19) Скажи   кому-нибудь хоть слово и   я никогда тебя
     tell.IMPER-PERF.2SG anybody   even word and I never   you
     не прощу!
     not forgive.PRES-PERF
     'Tell anyone about this and I will never forgive you.' (Internet)

The CDIC is a construction in its own right, since it has formal and semantic characteristics that make it different from the CIC (see also Fortuin 2000). For instance, the aspect of the imperative in the CDIC can be both perfective and imperfective whereas in the hypothetical CIC, the imperative can only be perfective (see Section 2.2). Since Dutch does not have overt, grammatical aspect (Boogaart 1999), it is difficult to compare this feature of the Russian CDIC with the Dutch construction. However, it turns out that other defining characteristics of the Russian CDIC are shared by the Dutch construction. Most notably:

- The CDIC is possible with implicitly or explicitly expressed 2nd person singular or plural subjects (cf. Section 2.1).
- When the subject is implicit, the sentence gets a generic reading (cf. Section 2.1).
- The order of protasis and apodosis is fixed (cf. Section 2.3).
- Non-controllable events are not always possible in the CDIC, whereas in the CIC they are always possible.[4] This is evidenced in (20) and (21).

(20) *Очутись   в Москве и   все будет хорошо!
     happen to be.IMPER.PERF.2SG in Moscow and all is   fine
     Lit. Happen to be in Moscow and all is fine.

(21) Очутись   он в Москве, он бы ее навестил.
     happen to be.IMPER.PERF.2SG he in Moscow he PART her visit
     'If he had happened to be in Moscow at that time, he would have visited her.'

- The CDIC is incompatible with counterfactual readings. In this respect, the Russian construction differs from the Dutch one, which does allow for counterfactual readings, albeit only marginally so (cf. Section 2.2)

3.4 Summary

Since, in many respects, the Dutch construction is much more like the Russian CDIC than like the Russian CIC, it makes sense to refer to the Dutch construction as a CDIC as well. We will still assume that the Dutch construction covers

part of the strictly 'conditional' domain of the map, because of its compatibility with uncontrollable events, counterfactual readings, and past tense. The different semantic domains covered by the directive and conditional imperative constructions of Dutch and Russian can now be represented in the following way.[5]

	Directive	Directive/conditional Hypothetical	Conditional Hypothetical/counterfactual
Dutch	DIC		
		CDIC	CDIC
Russian	DIC		
		CDIC	
			CIC

4.   Conclusion

In this paper, we tried to provide insight into the differences and similarities between the Dutch and the Russian 'Conditional Imperative' by relating both of them to different regions of a semantic map we hypothesize to exist for directive and conditional meaning. Among the questions that remain for future research are the following. Why is the habitual reading so prominent for the Dutch construction, while it is not compatible with the Russian CIC, nor with the Russian CDIC? Why is the counterfactual reading so common for the Russian CIC, but hardly possible for the Dutch construction? Furthermore, as Haspelmath (2003:233) notes, semantic maps can be an important tool for the study of grammaticalization, since they may predict the different stages of diachronic change. For the development from directives to conditionals, our research on the Dutch and Russian conditional imperative suggests that the following 'grammaticalization chains' are relevant.

1.   Directive → Conditional Directive → Conditional
2.   Hypothetical → Counterfactual (→ Pragmatic?)
3.   Subject: Addressee → Generic → All persons

Differences between similar constructions across languages may then be regarded as resulting from the different degree to which such language-specific constructions have grammaticalized.[6] In order to substantiate our semantic map, we obviously need to look at more languages and at actual diachronic developments. An important question will be if the relation between directive and conditional meaning is unidirectional, as is suggested by the diachronic version of our semantic map. Examples such as (22), where a conditional

sentence is used as a directive, suggest that the conceptual link between these notions may, in fact, be more flexible than is suggested by the grammaticalization approach.[7]

(22) Als jij nou eens je mond hield.
      Lit. If you kept your mouth shut
      'You just keep your mouth shut'.

Notes

1. Independent of the subject being explicit or not, the particles are themselves also incompatible with a strictly conditional reading of the imperative. An exception is constituted by the '*maar eens*-construction', as in *Verlies maar eens je paspoort* ('Imagine loosing your passport') (Proeme 1991), which may also occur as the first part of the Dutch conditional imperative construction.

2. In Russian, the imperative does not have tense; whether the counterfactuality involved is 'to the present' or 'to the past' has to be derived from temporal adverbials or context.

3. An anonymous reviewer suggested that, in addition, the semantic map may provide a useful tool to describe the directive use of declaratives (*You will report to the dean tomorrow!*) and interrogatives (*Why don't you leave me alone?!*) .

4. In Section 3.2, we showed that uncontrollable events may occur in the imperative part of the Dutch construction (see example (17)), but this possibility seems to be as restricted as it is in the Russian CDIC.

5. To graphically represent the notion of a semantic map, we use the format of the 'synchronic grammaticalization tables' from Boogaart (1999), whose description of the perfect in English and Dutch may serve as a further illustration of the semantic map method.

6. Moreover, each language-specific construction constitutes a 'node' in a taxonomic network of closely related constructions (Croft & Cruse 2004: 262 ff.), so differences between languages are partly determined by the availability of alternative means of expression within the language, and the functional range of those other constructions.

7. We want to thank Theo Janssen for bringing this example to our attention.

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