

# Rhetorical Imperatives in Japanese

Mana Asano

*International Christian University*

## 1. Introduction

We often utter imperatives in our daily conversation, for example, to command or forbid something. It is cross-linguistically observed that the interpretation of the imperatives differs depending on the context in which they are uttered. According to Donhauser (1986), there are several speech acts associated with German imperatives. For example, while German imperatives such as *lies das!* 'read this!,' can be used as commands in some situations, it is also possible to see German imperatives which can be used as a request, such as *dreh bitte das Licht ab* 'turn off the light, please.' In Japanese, the meanings of imperatives can also change depending on situations. Consider (1).

- (1) a. (Yasai-mo) tabenasai!  
vegetable-too eat-IMP.POL  
'Eat (vegetables), too!'  
b. (Rooka-o) hashiru-na!  
hall-ACC run-NEG.IMP  
'Do not run in the hallway!'

As for (1a), imagine the following situation. Jiro does not like vegetables, but his mother wants him to eat them. During their lunch, Jiro ate everything but the vegetables on his plate. In such a situation, Jiro's mother might say (1a) (*yasaimo tabenasai!* 'eat (vegetables), too!') to make Jiro eat vegetables. In this context, (1a) generates the interpretation 'eat (vegetables), too!,' which is the same as the literal meaning of (1a). The imperative (1b) can be uttered when a teacher meets a student who is running in the hallway although there are a lot of other people walking around there. Then, the teacher might say to the student (1b) (*rooka-o hashiruna!* 'do not run in the hallway!') to forbid running in the hallway. In this context, too, the imperative (1b) generates the interpretation 'do not run in the hallway!,' which is the same as its literal meaning. What (1a) and (1b) have in common is that they both are interpreted to mean the same as their literal meanings.

On the other hand, the examples in (2) act differently from (1) in terms of the interpreted meaning.

- (2) a. Baka i-e!<sup>1</sup>  
stupid say-IMP  
'lit. Say a stupid thing!'  
b. Uso tsuk-e!  
lie tell-IMP  
'lit. Tell a lie!'

The imperatives in (2) can generate the reverse interpretation to the literal meaning in certain situations. A possible situation for (2a) is as follows. Suppose that Jiro has not started writing his thesis yet. Despite this situation, he says 'I bet I will be able to finish my senior thesis in just three days!' In such a case, John might say to him (2a) *baka ie!* 'say a stupid thing!' immediately after Jiro's utterance, to accuse him of having a stupid attitude toward the senior thesis. While the literal meaning of (2a) is 'say a stupid thing,' the interpreted meaning is more likely to be the reverse to the literal meaning, that is, 'don't say a stupid thing.' The example (2a) indicates that, unlike the examples in (1), the literal meaning and its interpretation are not identical. The example (2b) is the same as (2a) in this respect. The example (2b) can be uttered in the following context. Mary went to a concert after school. Therefore, Mary did not have time for homework. Nevertheless, she tells her friend Hanako that she has finished her homework the next day. Since Hanako knows that Mary went to the concert, Hanako could not believe what Mary said. In such a case, Hanako might say to Mary (2b) *uso tsuke!* 'tell a lie!' immediately after Hanako heard that Mary has finished her homework, to accuse Mary of telling a lie. The interpreted meaning of (2b) can be

---

<sup>1</sup> The abbreviations in the glosses in this paper are: ACC=accusative, IMP=imperative, NEG=negation, POL=politeness marker, PROG=progressive, SFP=sentence final particle.

‘do not tell a lie,’ whereas the literal meaning is ‘tell a lie.’ In this case, too, there is no accordance between the interpreted meaning and the literal meaning of (2b). Therefore, (2b) also generates the reverse interpretation of its literal meaning.

Since the reverse interpretation is not generated in imperatives in the ordinary use, I would call the imperatives in (2) rhetorical imperatives (RIs) in this thesis. By contrast, I will call imperatives in the ordinary use such as the examples in (1) ordinary imperatives (OIs). This paper aims to reveal how the reverse interpretation is generated in RIs, from the viewpoints of semantics and pragmatics. This paper consists of the following sections. Section 2 investigates the conditions of appropriate use of OIs and RIs. Section 3 is the review of a previous study, Kaufmann (2012). Section 4 is the analysis of RIs, based on the previous study. Section 5 deals with the process of the interpretation of the reverse meaning on the pragmatic level. Section 6 presents a conclusion.

## 2. The Appropriate Use of OIs and RIs

**2.1 *The Appropriate Use of OIs*** This section deals with the appropriate use of OIs. Consider (3).

- (3) a. Ne-nasai!  
 sleep-IMP.POL  
 ‘Go to bed!’  
 b. (Shiryoo-o) yom-inasai!  
 material-ACC read-IMP.POL  
 ‘Read the material!’

As an example of a possible context for (3a), imagine that John stays up late because he is playing a game, but his mother wants him to stop playing the game and go to bed. If (3a) is uttered by the mother in such a situation, (3a) generates the interpretation ‘go to bed!’, which is the same as the literal meaning of (3a). As for (3b), suppose the following context. A teacher gave students a reading assignment. However, Hanako does not read the material although a week has passed from the due date and the teacher is angry about it. If (3b) is uttered by the teacher in such a situation, (3b) generates the interpretation ‘read (the material)!’, which is the same as the literal meaning of (3b). These descriptions for (3a) and (3b) suggest that the OIs are uttered under the following two conditions:

- (4) a. Imperatives are uttered before the events described by the imperatives occur.  
 b. The literal meanings of imperatives correspond to the speaker’s preferences.

(Kaufmann, 2012)

Let us look at the examples in (3) one by one. The example (3a) describes the event in which John goes to bed. Since John has not gone to bed when (3a) is uttered, (3a) meets the condition (4a). Also, as pointed out previously, John’s mother’s preference here is that John goes to bed. This preference corresponds to the literal meaning of (3a). As a result, we can see that (3a) satisfies both conditions in (4). In the case of (3b), the event described by the imperative is that Hanako reads the material. Since Hanako has not read it when (3b) is uttered, (3b) meets the condition (4a). Furthermore, in the case of (3b), the teacher’s preference is that Hanako reads the material to complete the assignment. This preference corresponds to the literal meaning of (3b). Thus, (3b) satisfies the condition (4b). As a result, (3b) also satisfies the two conditions in (4). What we have seen in the examples in (3) is that both (3a) and (3b) satisfy the conditions in (4). This result indicates that OIs satisfy the conditions in (4).

**2.2 *The Appropriate Use of RIs*** This section discusses the appropriate use of RIs, and compares it to the use of OIs which we saw in Section 2.1. Consider the examples in (5).

- (5) a. Baka i-e!  
 stupid say-IMP  
 ‘lit. Say a stupid thing!’  
 b. Uso tsuk-e!  
 lie tell-IMP  
 ‘lit. Tell a lie!’

As shown in the Introduction, the imperatives in (5) can be uttered as RIs in the following conditions. The imperative (5a) is uttered by John immediately after Jiro’s ‘stupid’ utterance ‘I bet I will be able to finish my senior thesis in just three days!’, to accuse Jiro of having a stupid attitude. The imperative (5b) is

uttered by Hanako immediately after she hears that Mary has finished her homework, which is unbelievable for Hanako. With the utterance (5b), Hanako accuses Mary of telling a lie. These examples indicate that, in contrast to the OIs in (3), the RIs in (5) do not satisfy the two conditions in (4). As for the condition (4a), it is pointed out by Mori (2006) that what are called RIs in this paper are uttered after the event described by the imperative occurred. I agree with this conclusion. Let us first look at (5a) as an example. The event described in (5a) is that Jiro says a stupid thing. In the case of (5a), Jiro has already said a stupid thing when (5a) is uttered. It means that the event that Jiro says stupid thing has already occurred at the utterance time of (5a). Therefore, it contradicts the condition (4a). Moreover, considering that John accuses Jiro's stupid utterance, John's preference is that Jiro does not say a stupid thing. This preference does not correspond to the literal meaning of (5a), which results in the violation of the condition (4b). As a result, both conditions in (4) cannot be satisfied by (5a). The result is the same as in the case of (5b). The event described by (5b) is that Mary tells a lie. When (5b) is uttered, Mary has already said something unbelievable to Hanako. It means that the event that Mary tells a lie, or more precisely, the event in which seems to Hanako that Mary tells a lie, has already taken place at the utterance time of (5b). In addition, since Hanako accuses Mary of telling a lie, Hanako's preference here is that Mary did not tell a lie. This preference is in contradiction to the literal meaning of (5b), which results in the violation of the condition (4b). As a result, (5b) fails to satisfy both conditions in (4). What the RIs in (5) indicate is that, unlike OIs, RIs do not satisfy the conditions in (4).

In Section 2, we have explored the appropriate use of OIs and RIs. The finding is that RIs do not satisfy two conditions which are satisfied by OIs. That is, unlike OIs, RIs are uttered after the events described by the imperatives occurred, and their literal meanings contradict the speaker's preferences.

### 3. Previous Study: Kaufmann (2012)

This section overviews the previous study on imperatives, before analyzing RIs. There are several studies on imperatives, such as Portner (2005) or Kaufmann (2012). This paper mainly refers to Kaufmann (2012) so that we get the basic idea about imperatives before the analysis of RI. Kaufmann (2012) argues that an imperative sentence can be semantically analyzed as a proposition of performative *you should* sentences. For instance, an imperative sentence “close the door!” is semantically denoted as “you should close the door.” In his argument, Kaufmann (2012) points out that imperatives usually satisfy two presuppositions in the Epistemic Uncertainty Constraint (EUC), and the Ordering Source Restriction (OSR). Let us explain them one by one.

**3.1 The Epistemic Uncertainty Constraint (EUC)** In this section, I will explain the basic idea of the EUC.

(6) The Epistemic Uncertainty Constraint (EUC)

$\llbracket OP_{Imp} \rrbracket = \lambda f \lambda g \lambda t \lambda P \lambda w. (\forall w' \in O(f_{CG(c)} \cup f, g, c_T, w)) [P(t)(w')]$ ,

presupposes: the precontext  $c'$  of  $c$  is such that for all  $w \in CS(c')$  :

$(\exists w' \in Bel'_{c_s}(c'_T)(w)) (\exists w'' \in Bel'_{c_s}(c'_T)(w)) [\neg p(t)(w') \ \& \ p(t)(w'')]$

(= the speaker believes that both  $\neg p$  and  $p$  are possible)

(Kaufmann, 2012 p.157)

The EUC is a presupposition which means that “issuing an imperative seems to require that the speaker believes the thus modalized proposition to be possible, but not necessary. That is, if the speaker is sure that  $\phi$  is going to happen (or will not happen), then issuing an imperative  $\phi!$  is infelicitous” (Kaufmann, 2012 p.156). This point is exhibited by “the speaker believes that both  $\neg p$  and  $p$  are possible” in (6). Look at example (7).

(7) # I know that you are going to do this no matter what, so do it also. (Kaufmann, 2012 p.156)

The example (7) shows that the utterance “I know that you are going to do this no matter what, so do it also” is infelicitous. The infelicity of this sentence can be explained by the EUC. When we regard the imperative “do it also” as “ $p!$ ,”  $p$  depicts an event in which the addressee does it.  $\neg p$  depicts instead an event in which the addressee does not do it. In order to meet the EUC, both  $\neg p$  and  $p$  should be epistemically possible when (7) is uttered. However, the preceding sentence “I know that you are going to do this no matter what” implies that the speaker knows that  $p$  will occur. In other words, there remains no possibility of  $\neg p$  epistemically, and it contradicts the EUC. As a result, the utterance (2) is infelicitous.

The EUC can, of course, be used for the analysis of the Japanese OIs. The felicitous OI meets the

EUC. Consider (8), which is repeated from (1).

- (8) (Yasai-mo) tabe-nasai!  
 eat-too IMP.POL  
 ‘Eat (vegetables) too!’

Let us suppose the following context for (8). The imperative (8) is felicitously uttered by Jiro’s mother when Jiro ate everything but vegetables on his plate for their lunch, but his mother wants him to eat vegetables. When we regard the imperative (8) (*yasaimo tabenasai!* ‘eat (vegetables), too!’ as “p!,” p depicts an event that Jiro eats the vegetables.  $\neg p$  depicts instead an event that Jiro does not eat vegetables. When (8) is uttered, both  $\neg p$  and p events should be epistemically possible because it is uncertain whether Jiro will eat vegetables or not. Thus, the felicitous imperative (8) meets the EUC.

**3.2 The Ordering Source Restriction (OSR)** In this section, I will explain the presupposition OSR. The OSR is presented by Kaufmann (2012) to explain the relationship between imperatives and speaker’s preference. Kaufmann (2012) claims that the ordering source for imperatives, that is, the propositions which include a performative modal, are speaker’s preference-related. As a matter of fact, however, imperatives do not always correspond to the speaker’s preference. Think about the advice imperatives’ case with the example (9) below.

- (9) A: How do I get to Harlem?  
 B: Take the A-train.  
 B’: #Take the A-train but I don’t want you to do this. (Kaufmann, 2012 p. 159)

In the example (9), the imperative B acts as an advice to the question A. In this case, the imperative “take the A-train” does not need to correspond the speaker’s preference. In other words, it is possible that the speaker of B does not care if the speaker of A will not take A-train. In contrast to B, the imperative B’, which is followed by the sentence “but I don’t want you to do this” is infelicitous. What B’ indicates is that, although imperatives do not always correspond to the speaker’s preference, it is infelicitous if it is overtly expressed that the speaker does not prefer the event described by the imperative. Based on the descriptions for (9), we amount to saying that imperatives can be uttered although the speaker personally does not prefer the event described by the imperative in certain cases. However, in such cases, it is infelicitous if it is overtly expressed that the speaker does not prefer the event described by the imperative. In order to explain such a trait regarding imperatives and the speaker’s preference, the OSR is presented as follows:

- (10) The Ordering Source Restriction (OSR)  
 $\llbracket OP_{Imp} \rrbracket^c = \lambda f \lambda g \lambda t \lambda P \lambda w. (\forall w' \in O(f_{CG(c)} \cup f, g, c_T, w)) [P(t)(w')]$ ,  
presupposes: either (i) in  $c$  there is a salient decision problem  $\Delta(c) \subseteq \mathcal{P}(W)$  such that in  $c$  the imperative provides an answer to it,  $g$  is any prioritizing ordering source, and speaker and addressee consider  $g$  the relevant criteria for resolving  $\Delta(c)$ ;  
 or else, (ii) in  $c$  there is no salient decision problem  $\Delta(c)$  such that the imperative provides an answer to it in  $c$ , and  $g$  is speaker bouletic.

(Kaufmann, 2012 p.160)

As shown in (10), two conditions are supposed with respect to the relationship between imperatives and the speaker’s preference. Let us first consider the definition of the OSR (i). The OSR (i) is applicable to imperatives linking to salient decision problems, situations where whether or not the event described by the imperative will occur is under the addressee’s control. For such cases, the ordering sources for the imperatives are the prioritizing ones. In other words, the ordering sources for the imperatives are the speaker’s bouletic, teleological, or deontic ones. According to von Stechow (2006), the definitions and the examples of speaker’s bouletic, teleological, or deontic ordering sources are as follows. The speaker’s bouletic ordering source refers to “what is possible or necessary, given a person’s desires”. For example, if a sentence “you have to go to bed in ten minutes” is uttered by a stern father, it is in a bouletic ordering source. The speaker’s teleological ordering source refers to “what means are possible or necessary for achieving a particular goal.” For example, a sentence “to get home in time, you have to take a taxi” is in a bouletic ordering source. The speaker’s deontic ordering source refers to “what is possible, necessary, permissible, or obligatory, given a body of law or a set of moral principles or the like.” For example,

since a sentence “visitors have to leave by six pm” describes the hospital regulation, it is in a deontic ordering source. The important point is that such ordering sources should be mutually believed between the speaker and the addressee to be the relevant criteria for the decision problem. This point captures that it does not matter if the speaker personally does not prefer the event described by the imperative. At the same time, it can be also explained that the imperative is infelicitous should the speaker overtly expresses that the speaker does not prefer the event described by the imperative. Since the ordering sources for the imperatives should be the speaker’s bouletic, teleological, or deontic ones, it is awkward if overtly expressed, or is so obvious that the speaker does not prefer the event described by the imperative. In summary, the OSR (i) points out that imperatives linking to salient decision problems act as relevant criteria for the decision problem, and that they are infelicitous if it is obvious that imperatives do not correspond to the speaker’s preferences. Based on this definition of the OSR (i), let us examine the example (9), repeated in (11).

- (11) A: How do I get to Harlem?  
 B: Take the A-train.  
 B’: #Take the A-train but I don’t want you to do this. (Kaufmann, 2012 p. 159)

The imperative B “take the A-train” can be analyzed by the OSR (i) since whether or not the addressee will take the A-train is under the addressee’s control. The event described by B is that the addressee takes the A-train. The imperative B acts as an advice for the question A within the context in (11). Therefore, it is totally possible that the speaker of B may not care whether the speaker of A takes the A-train. This point meets the requirement of the OSR (i) because, despite the absence of the speaker’s preference, the advice imperative B describes the suitable way to realize that the addressee go to Harlem. Thus, the imperative B can be regarded as the relevant criteria for the answer to the question A. As a result, the imperative B is felicitous. On the other hand, the imperative B’ is infelicitous from the viewpoint of the OSR (i) because the sentence “but I don’t want you to do this” overtly implies that the imperative “take A-train” is not what the speaker prefers. Therefore, we can see that the OSR (i) correctly explains the felicity and the infelicity of the imperatives B and B’ respectively.

The OSR (i) is applicable to the Japanese OIs, too. Consider (12), which is repeated from (3).

- (12) Ne-nasai!  
 sleep-IMP.POL  
 ‘Go to bed!’

Imagine the following context for (12). John stays up late because he is playing a game, but his mother wants him to stop playing the game and go to bed. If (12) is uttered by the mother in such a situation, (12) generates the interpretation ‘go to bed!’ which is the same as the literal meaning of (12). The event described by the imperative (12) is that John goes to bed. with respect to this, the imperative (12) should be analyzed with the OSR (i) because the event described by the imperative is under the addressee’s control. This means that (12) is not infelicitous unless it is obvious that the speaker does not prefer the event described by (12). In the case of (12), we see that the speaker’s preference corresponds to the event described by (12) and therefore, (12) meets the OSR (i).

Next, let us examine the definition of the OSR (ii). Unlike the imperatives we saw in (11) and (12), there are imperatives that are not related to a salient decision problem. The OSR (ii) is applied in such cases. As one of the examples of an imperative linking to no decision problem, consider the case of (13).

- (13) Please don’t have broken another vase!  
 (Kaufmann, 2012 p.160)

The imperative (13) is unique in that it refers to the past event, as indicated by the auxiliary ‘have.’ Because of the reference time, it acts as a wish for the past. Since the event described by the imperative is in the past, it is impossible for the addressee to realize the event. In other words, the event described by the imperative is not under the addressee’s control. Thus, the imperative (13) is considered unrelated to a decision problem. With respect to this, imperatives like (13) can be analyzed by the OSR (ii). The definition of the OSR (ii) is the following. The OSR (ii) is applicable to imperatives that are not related to a decision problem. In such cases, the ordering sources for the imperatives should be the speaker’s bouletic ones. As explained previously, speaker’s bouletic ordering source refers to “what is possible or necessary, given a person’s desires” (von Stechow, 2006). In summary, the OSR (ii) points out that imperatives linking to no salient decision problems correspond to the speaker’s preferences. Given this definition of the OSR (ii), the imperative (13) is felicitous because (13) expresses the speaker’s wish, that

is, the speaker's preference. Therefore, we can see that the OSR (ii) can offer an explanation for the felicity of the example (13).

Section 3 overviewed two presuppositions, the EUC and the OSR, proposed by Kaufmann (2012) as presuppositions for imperatives. The EUC is a presupposition that points out that an imperative “p!” is uttered felicitously if both p and  $\neg p$  are epistemically possible. The OSR explains the relationship between the speaker's preference and the event described by the imperative in terms of decision problems.

#### 4. RIs and Two Presuppositions: the EUC and the OSR

**4.1 Violation of the EUC** In this section, I will analyze RIs from the perspective of the EUC. This analysis will show that unlike the OIs, RIs do not satisfy the EUC. As shown in Section 3.1, the EUC is the presupposition that points out that “if the speaker is certain that  $\phi$  is going to happen (or will not happen), then issuing an imperative  $\phi!$  is infelicitous” (Kaufmann, 2012 p.156).

(14) The Epistemic Uncertainty Constraint (EUC)

$\llbracket OP_{Imp} \rrbracket = \lambda f \lambda g \lambda t \lambda P \lambda w. (\forall w' \in O(f_{CG(c)} \cup f, g, c_T, w)) [P(t)(w')]$ ,

presupposes: the precontext  $c'$  of  $c$  is such that for all  $w \in CS(c')$  :

$(\exists w' \in Bel'_{c_S}(c'_T)(w)) (\exists w'' \in Bel'_{c_S}(c'_T)(w)) [\neg p(t)(w') \ \& \ p(t)(w'')]$

(= the speaker believes that both  $\neg p$  and  $p$  are possible)

(Kaufmann, 2012 p.157)

But before analyzing RIs, we must carefully consider how the EUC can be applied in the case of RIs. As discussed in Section 2.2, one of the distinctive characteristics of RIs is that they are uttered immediately after the event described by the imperative occurs. Let us briefly review this point with the example (15).

(15) Baka i-e!

stupid say-IMP

‘lit. Say a stupid thing!’

When the imperative (15) is used as a RI, the event in which the addressee says something stupid must have already occurred when (15) is uttered. Under such a circumstance, (15) is uttered referring to the past event. This trait, that is, referring to a particular past event is problematic when we try to analyze RIs with the EUC because the EUC was initially proposed by Kaufmann (2012) for imperatives based on the assumption that they were future-oriented. In addition, the evaluation of the EUC is based on a speaker's belief that is time-sensitive. It means that the past events are out of the domain of the evaluation. To resolve this problem, I adopt Saito's argument (2016) that the EUC is evaluated not with respect to the speaker's belief, but to the common ground. The common ground is where propositions are stored, and it is given by context. Since context is time-insensible, we can assume that evaluation of the EUC can also be executed time-insensibly following the analysis by Saito (2016). It means that past events can also be included in the domain of the evaluation. In this paper, I will analyze RIs with this revised EUC, that is, the EUC that is evaluated with the common ground.

Based on the revised EUC, let us analyze RIs using (15) as an example. As explained previously in this paper, when (15) is used as a RI, it is uttered under the context in which the addressee has already said something stupid to the speaker. If we regard (15) *baka ie!* ‘say a stupid thing!’ as “p!,” p describes an event in which the addressee says something stupid.  $\neg p$  describes instead an event in which the addressee does not say something stupid. In order to meet the conditions of the EUC, both p and  $\neg p$  should be possible. However, in the case of (15), p has actually already occurred when the imperative “p!” is uttered. Therefore, there remains no possibility of  $\neg p$ , that is, the speaker has not said something stupid. As a result, unlike OIs, the RI (15) cannot satisfy the EUC.

**4.2 Violation of the OSR** In this section, I will analyze RIs from the perspective of the OSR. The analysis shows that, as with the case of the EUC, the RIs do not satisfy the OSR. As shown in Section 3.2, the OSR is the presupposition which refers to the relationship between imperatives and the speaker's preference, depending on the whether there is a salient decision problem or not.

(16) The Ordering Source Restriction (OSR)

$\llbracket OP_{Imp} \rrbracket^c = \lambda f \lambda g \lambda t \lambda P \lambda w. (\forall w' \in O(f_{CG(c)} \cup f, g, c_T, w)) [P(t)(w')]$ ,

presupposes: either (i) in  $c$  there is a salient decision problem  $\Delta(c) \subseteq$

$\mathcal{P}(W)$  such that in  $c$  the imperative provides an answer to it,  $g$  is any prioritizing ordering source, and speaker and addressee consider  $g$  the relevant criteria for resolving  $\Delta(c)$ ;

or else, (ii) in  $c$  there is no salient decision problem  $\Delta(c)$  such that the imperative provides an answer to it in  $c$ , and  $g$  is speaker bouletic.

(Kaufmann, 2012 p.160)

The ordering sources of the imperatives linking to a salient decision problem should be considered as the relevant criteria for resolving the decision problem, as pointed out in the OSR(i) above. That is, the event described by imperatives does not always correspond to the speaker's preferences. However, in such cases, the imperatives are infelicitous if the speaker overtly expresses that he or she does not prefer the event described by the imperative. On the other hand, The ordering source of the imperatives linking to no salient decision problem should be speaker bouletic, as pointed out in the OSR (ii). In other words, the imperatives linking to no salient decision problem correspond to the speaker's preferences. Based on the OSR, consider the example (17).

- (17) Uso tsuk-e!  
lie tell-IMP  
'lit. Tell a lie!'

The example (17) can be uttered in the following context. Mary went to a concert after school. Therefore, Mary did not have time for homework. Nevertheless, she tells her friend Hanako that she has finished her homework the next day. Since Hanako knows that Mary went to the concert, Hanako could not believe what Mary said. In such a case, Hanako might say to Mary (17) *uso tsuke!* 'tell a lie!' immediately after Hanako heard that Mary has finished her homework, to accuse Mary of telling a lie. The interpreted meaning of (17) can be 'do not tell a lie,' which is the reverse to the literal meaning. When the imperative (17) is uttered as a RI, it always refers to a past event in which the addressee said something unbelievable. Since the imperative refers to the past event, the event is not under the addressee's control. Given this situation, we can say that (17) is an imperative linking to no salient decision problem. It means that in order for (17) to meet the OSR, its ordering source should be speaker bouletic, as described in the OSR (ii). In other words, the event described by (17) should correspond to the speaker's preference. However, it does not correspond to the speaker's preference in (17). The imperative (17) can be uttered as a RI to express a negative reaction to the addressee's unbelievable utterance. In this sense, (17) generates the reverse meaning of its literal meaning and the speaker's actual preference is also the reverse of its literal meaning. Thus, (17) fails to correspond to the speaker's preference. As a result, it does not satisfy the OSR.

The analysis in this section reveals that RIs are different from other imperatives with respect to the EUC and the OSR. Unlike the OIs, RIs do not satisfy the EUC and the OSR. Thus, we can summarize the characteristics of the imperatives as in the following chart:

(18)<sup>2</sup>

	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EUC	*EUC
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OSR	OIs	
*OSR		RIs

**4.3 The Condition in which the Reverse Interpretation is Generated** The previous section discussed how RIs do not satisfy the two presuppositions the EUC and the OSR. Since the violation by RIs differs from the OIs, the violation might be the key for imperatives to generate a reverse interpretation. Then the question here is whether it is necessary to violate both the EUC and the OSR for the reverse interpretation, or whether the violation of either one of them is sufficient to generate a reverse interpretation. In this section, I will investigate the conditions in which the reverse interpretation is generated, and show that a reverse interpretation would never be generated unless both the EUC and the

<sup>2</sup> Usually, an imperative should be infelicitous if it does not satisfy the presuppositions. However, it is still unclear why RIs are felicitously used even though they do not satisfy the presuppositions, the EUC and the OSR. Further investigations are necessary for this issue.

OSR are not satisfied. Let us consider the chart which shows the distribution of imperatives with respect to EUC and OSR again.

(19)

	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EUC	* EUC
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OSR	OIs	<b>(A)</b>
* OSR	<b>(B)</b>	RIs

In order to examine under which condition a reverse interpretation is generated in imperatives, we should analyze whether the imperatives which are assigned for (A) and (B) in the chart (19) would generate a reverse interpretation. (A) refers to imperatives which do not satisfy the EUC, but satisfy the OSR. In contrast, (B) refers to imperatives which do not satisfy the OSR, but satisfy the EUC. In order to consider the imperatives in these conditions, let us consider the example (20), with the possible situations shown in (21a) and (21b).

(20) Paati-ni ik-e-yo!  
Party-to go-IMP-SFP  
'go to the party!'

- (21) a. The addressee is in Japan now, but a party in the USA will begin in 2 hours, and the speaker wants the addressee to go to the party. The addressee knows that the speaker wants the addressee to go to the party.  
b. The addressee insists on going to a party, but the party does not seem to be worth going in the speaker's opinion. The addressee knows that the speaker does not want the addressee to go to the party.

The interpretation of the imperative (20) depends on the situations in which they are uttered. Let us first consider the situation (21a). Imagine that the addressee is in Japan now but a party in the USA will begin in 2 hours, and the speaker wants the addressee to go to the party. When we regard (20) *paati-ni ike-yo!* 'go to the party!' as "p!," p depicts an event in which the addressee goes to the party.  $\neg p$  depicts instead an event in which the addressee does not go to the party. If (20) is uttered in the situation described in (21a), the EUC is not satisfied because the speaker knows that it is impossible for the addressee to participate in the party, that is, the speaker knows that p would never happen. On the other hand, the OSR is satisfied. In the situation (21a), it is impossible for the addressee to go to the USA in 2 hours. Thus, the event described by (20) is not under the addressee's control. This means that (20) should be evaluated with respect to the OSR (ii), which is used for imperatives linking to no salient decision problems. In other words, (20) satisfies the OSR if the event described by (20) corresponds to the speaker's preference. In the case of (20) under the situation (21a), the literal meaning of the imperative corresponds to the speaker's preference, that is, the addressee will go to the party. Therefore, (20) satisfies the OSR. Since the imperative (20) under the condition (21a) does not satisfy the EUC but satisfies the OSR, we can regard it as an example of the imperative (A) in the chart (19). As a matter of fact, however, the imperative (20) under the condition (21a) is infelicitous. From this observation, it can be said that imperatives (A) result in infelicitous utterances, and it cannot generate a reverse interpretation.

Next, let us see the imperatives (20) under the situation (21b). Suppose that the addressee insists on going to a party, but the party does not seem to be worth going in the speaker's opinion. The addressee knows that the speaker does not want the addressee to go to the party. In such a situation, (20) generates the interpretation which is the same as the literal meaning of (20), but it is more sarcastic than the literal meaning. When we regard (20) *paati-ni ike-yo!* 'go to the party!' as "p!," p depicts an event in which the addressee goes to the party.  $\neg p$  depicts instead an event in which the addressee does not go to the party. If (20) is uttered in the situation described in (21b), the EUC is satisfied because it is not sure whether the addressee will go to the party or not, that is, whether p will occur or  $\neg p$  will occur. On the other hand, it does not meet the OSR. Since the event described by the (20) under the condition (21b) is under the addressee's control, it should be evaluated with respect to the OSR (i), which is used for imperatives linking to a salient decision problem. This means that (20) cannot satisfy the OSR if it is obvious that the speaker does not prefer the event described by (20). In the case of (20) under the situation of (21b), the speaker's preference is that the addressee will not go to the party. This preference is obvious for both the speaker and the addressee in the situation (21b). Nevertheless, the literal meaning is in contradiction to the preference. Thus, (20) under the situation (21b) does not meet the OSR. Since the imperative (20) under the situation (21b) satisfies the EUC but does not satisfy the OSR, this imperative can be regarded

as one of the examples of the imperative (B) in the chart (19). As mentioned briefly, the imperative (20) under the situation (21b) can at least generate the sarcastic meaning, but it does not generate the reverse interpretation which is as salient as RIs'. The considerable difference between the sarcastic meaning of (20) under (21b) and the reverse interpretations in RIs is that, while the speaker of (20) gives up his or her first preference when the imperative is uttered, the speaker of RIs does not.

Let us take a look at one more example on imperative (B), which does not meet the OSR, but satisfies the EUC.

- (22) (Okashi-o) tabe-te-nasai!  
 sweets-ACC eat-PROG-IMP.POL  
 'Keep eating sweets!'

The example (22) *tabetenasai!* 'keep eating sweets!' is an imperative which consists of an imperative (*okashi-o tabenasai!* 'eat (sweets)!') and the progressive aspect *teiru*. Thus, it approximately corresponds to 'keep eating (sweets)!' in English. As for the context for (22), suppose that there is a boy named Jiro, who has to lose his weight. One day, however, his mother finds that he is secretly eating sweets in his room, and she really becomes angry about that. As in the case of (20) under (21b), (22) also generates the interpretation which is the same as the literal meaning of (22) but actually has a sarcastic meaning in such a situation. When we regard (22) (*okashi-o tabetenasai!* 'keep eating (sweets)!') as "p!", p describes the event in which the addressee keeps eating sweets.  $\neg p$  depicts instead an event in which the addressee does not keep eating. If the mother says to him, (22) (*okashi-o tabetenasai!* 'keep eating sweets!'), it actually satisfies the EUC. At first glance, it does not seem to satisfy the EUC because when the imperative (22) is uttered, the event in which Jiro eats sweets has already occurred. However, this does not mean that it is certain Jiro will 'keep' eating sweets. Thus, there remain both possibilities of p and  $\neg p$ , which means the imperative (22) satisfies the EUC. On the other hand, the imperative (22) does not satisfy the OSR. Since the event described by (22) is under the addressee's control, (22) should be evaluated with respect to the OSR (i), which is used for imperatives linking to a salient decision problem. This means that (22) does not satisfy the OSR if it is obvious that the speaker does not prefer the event described by (22). In the case of (22), while the literal meaning orders the addressee to keep eating, the speaker's preference is in contradiction to the literal meaning. Since the speaker's preference is obvious for both the speaker and the addressee, the imperative (22) fails to satisfy the OSR. As in the case of imperative (20) under the situation (21b), the imperative (22) also generates a sarcastic meaning, but in this case, too, the speaker gives up her first preference when the imperative (22) is uttered. Therefore, unlike RIs, the imperative (22) does not generate the reverse interpretation. What was revealed by the example (20) under (21b) and (22) is that only a violation of the OSR cannot generate the reverse interpretation, which means, imperatives (B) in the chart (19) cannot generate a reverse interpretation.

As a matter of fact, almost the same example as (20) under the condition (21b) in English is introduced by Kaufmann (2012) as a concession, which is not discussed as much in Kaufmann (2012). The example shown in Kaufmann (2012) follows:

- (23) Well then go to that damn party!

We notice that example (23) includes 'then.' Actually, the examples in (20) under the condition (21b) and (22) sounds more natural when they are preceded by *sonnan nara*, which means 'then.' Here I speculate that the reason why they sound more natural when 'then' precedes the imperatives is that 'then' overtly describes that the speaker gives up his or her first preference. In this sense, the examples (20) under the condition (21b) and (22) can be considered as concessions, same as (23). Thus, in this paper, I consider the imperatives which do not satisfy the OSR but satisfy the EUC as concessions.

The analysis in this section reveals that the reverse interpretation cannot be generated unless both the EUC and the OSR are not satisfied. Only the violation of either of them cannot generate the reverse interpretation. Based on the analysis in this section, the distribution of the imperatives with respect to the EUC and the OSR is as follows:

(24)

	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EUC	* EUC
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OSR	OIs	Infelicitous
* OSR	Concessions	RIs

In Section 4, we have seen that RIs do not satisfy both the EUC and the OSR. It is also proved that

the violation of either of the EUC or the OSR is not sufficient to generate the reverse interpretation. Only the violation of the EUC results in the infelicitous utterance, and only the violation of the OSR results in concession.

## 5. The Interpretation of the Reverse Meaning on a Pragmatic Level

**5.1 The Interpretation of RIs on a Semantic Level** In this section, I will investigate how the reverse interpretation is generated in RIs. Let us first think about the interpretation of RIs on a semantic level. As mentioned previously, Kaufmann (2012) argues that an imperative sentence can be semantically denoted as a proposition of performative *you should* sentences. I consider the semantics of RIs is the same as the semantics of the OIs. For instance, an OI (*yasaimo*) *tabenasai!* ‘eat (vegetables), too!’ can be denoted as ‘you should eat (vegetables), too’ semantically. The RI *baka ie!* ‘say a stupid thing!’ is the same on the semantic level, for it is interpreted as the proposition with performative *should* ‘you should say a stupid thing.’ The reason why they are analyzed in the same way on the semantic level is that RIs sometimes fails to be interpreted as the reverse meaning, especially when it comes to the conversation with little children or people with intellectual disability. In such cases, the factor of the misunderstanding may be that the OIs and RIs semantically have the same meanings. Therefore, I assume that the different interpretation between the OIs and RIs can be generated due to pragmatic factors.

**5.2 The Information which should be Shared in Advance** Let us explore the information which should be shared in advance for the interpretation of the reverse meaning on the pragmatic level. As for the difference of OIs and RIs, I use the case of ordinary questions and rhetorical questions as a reference. According to Capnigro & Sprouse (2007), ordinary questions and rhetorical questions are the same in that they both are questions semantically. The difference is generated on the pragmatic level. While the answers to the questions are not the part of the common ground in ordinary imperatives’ case, the answer is already in the common ground in the rhetorical questions’ case. Because of the information shared in common ground in advance to the utterance, rhetorical questions do not require the answers. This analysis suggests that certain information should be shared in advance for the interpretation of the rhetorical meaning.

RIs are the same in that the reverse meaning in RIs would not be interpreted successfully if the certain information is not shared in advance. Look at example (1).

- (25) Fuzaker-o!  
joke.around-IMP  
‘lit. Joke around!’

The example (25) *fuzaker-o!* ‘joke around!’ is one of the imperatives which can be used as a RI. The possible situation is as follows. John has finished his senior thesis one month before the due, but Hanako is still working on hers. She envies that John is now free from his senior thesis. Moreover, she says to John “please write one more senior thesis for me” as a joke. If (25) is uttered by John immediately after Hanako’s utterance, (25) is expected to generate the reverse interpretation ‘don’t joke around!’. However, there are possible situations in which such an interpretation is not generated as expected. Imagine that the addressee does not know which of his or her utterance corresponds to the event in which the addressee jokes around. In other words, if the addressee is not aware that he or she has joked around to the speaker, it is impossible for the addressee to understand which event the speaker refers to by the utterance (25). In fact, RIs are almost always uttered immediately after the event described by the imperative occurred but seldom uttered long after the event. Otherwise, it is difficult for the addressee to know which of his or her utterance corresponds to the event described by the speaker. Actually, if the addressee is aware that he or she has joked around to the speaker, the literal meaning of (25) sounds redundant because the event has already occurred before the imperative is uttered. Therefore, it is highly awkward to interpret the literal meaning of (25) as it is. Conversely, if the addressee is not aware of the redundancy, it is natural to interpret (25) as it conveys the literal meaning. As a result, the reverse interpretation cannot be generated.

There is one more possible situation in which the reverse interpretation may not be successfully generated. Think about the case that the addressee does not know that joking around to the speaker makes the speaker have bad moods. Such a situation is seldom observed in our conversation because joking around is not regarded as a good thing in our common sense. If the imperative (25), however, is uttered under such a condition, it is difficult to be aware of the awkwardness of the literal meaning of (25), that is, the inconsistency between the literal meaning of the utterance and the possible speaker’s preference. Thus, in such a case, too, the interpretation of the reverse meaning may not take place.

What is suggested by imperative (25) is that, for the reverse interpretation, the awareness of the

awkwardness is important. In order to feel awkward with literal meanings of RIs, it is necessary to know what event is referred to by the speaker, and that the event described by the literal meaning of the imperative makes the speaker feel bad. Thus, as is the case with rhetorical questions, these kinds of information should be in the common ground of the addressee and the speaker in advance to the interpretation of RIs.

### 5.3 *The Process of the Generation of the Reverse Interpretation with Cooperative Principle*

Based on what kind of information should be shared for the interpretation of RIs, let us now investigate the step of the interpretation of the reverse meaning. I adopt the cooperative principle (Grice, 1975) for the analysis, especially focusing on the Maxim of Quantity and Quality. The definitions of the Maxim of Quantity and Quality are the following:

- (26) a. The Maxim of Quantity: Make your contributions as informative as is required. Do not make your contribution more informative than is required.  
 b. The Maxim of Quality: Try to make your contribution one that is true. Do not say what you believe to be false. Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence.

As a matter of fact, RIs violate both of the maxims in (26). First, (26a) the Maxim of Quantity is violated because when RIs are uttered, the events described by the imperatives have already occurred. It means that the redundant contents are uttered. The Maxim of Quality in (26b) is violated because RIs do not correspond to the speaker's preference. It means that the speaker believes the literal meaning of the utterance is not true.

With respect to the violation of the two maxims, the reverse interpretation is generated in the following steps in (27):

- (27) Step 1: The speaker is a cooperative conversational partner.  
 Step 2: Therefore, she or he is trying to convey some information that is useful.  
 Step 3: The sentence is infelicitous because it conveys redundant information, and it does not correspond to the speaker's preference.  
 Step 4: Therefore, the sentence cannot mean what it says literally.  
 Step 5: Thus, the speaker expects me to fill in some unsaid meaning that will make the sentence meaningful.

Among the five steps in (27), Step 3 corresponds to the violation of the Maxim of Quantity and Quality. The violation of the Maxim of Quantity is indicated by the former part in Step 3 "it conveys the redundant information," and the violation of the Maxim of Quality is indicated by the latter part in Step 3 "it does not correspond to the speaker's preference." As a result of the steps above, the reverse interpretation is generated in RIs on the pragmatic level.

In Section 5, we have discussed how the reverse interpretation is generated in RIs. The analysis argued that the reverse interpretation is generated not on the semantic level but the pragmatic level. It is also pointed out that certain information should be shared in advance for the interpretation of the reverse meaning. That is, the addressee should be aware of what event is referred to by the speaker, and that the event described by the literal meaning of the imperative makes the speaker feel bad. As for the interpretation of RIs on the pragmatic level, I used the cooperative principle by Grice (1975). Based on the cooperative principle, I argued that the reverse interpretation is generated by the violation of the Maxim of Quantity and Quality.

## 6. Conclusion

In this paper, I have examined RIs from the viewpoint of semantics and pragmatics. The analysis has revealed that, unlike the OIs, RIs do not satisfy the two presuppositions: the EUC and the OSR. The reverse interpretation would not be generated unless both the EUC and the OSR are failed to be satisfied. As for the interpretation of the reverse meaning, it is not generated on the semantic level. Yet, storing certain information in common ground in advance enables the successful interpretation of the reverse meaning. Then the reverse interpretation is generated on the pragmatic level, by the violation of the two maxims: the Maxim of Quantity and Quality.

## References

Capnigro, I. and J. Sprouse. (2007) "Rhetorical Questions as Questions," in E. Puig Waldmüller, ed., *Proceedings of*

- Sinn und Bedeutung* 11, 121-133. Universitat, Pompeu Fabra Barcelona.
- Donhauser, K. (1986) "Der Imperativ im Deutschen: Studien zur Syntax und Semantik des deutschen Modusystems," Buske Hamburg.
- von Stechow, K. (2006). "Modality and language," in D. M. Borchert ed., *Encyclopedia of Philosophy* Second Edition. MacMillan Reference, Detroit.
- Grice, H P. (1975) "Logic and Conversation," in Cole P and Morgan J. L, eds., *Syntax and Semantics 3: Speech Acts*, 41-58. Academic Press, New York.
- Kaufmann, M. (2012) "*Interpreting Imperatives*," Springer Netherlands, Netherlands.
- Mori, H. (2006) "Three Types of Imperatives: Japanese/English Imperatives and the Scale of Potential/Actual-Type," *Gengo Kenkyu* 129, 135-160.
- Portner, P. (2007) "Imperatives and modals." *Nat Lang Semantics* 15, 351–383.
- Saito, H. (2016). "Past imperatives in Japanese." Ms., University of Connecticut.
- Vendler, Z. (1957) "Verbs and Times," *The Philosophical Review* 66, 14560.