

# INDIRECT IMPERATIVE UTTERANCES AS A DISTINCTIVE ATTRIBUTE OF THE LANGUAGE OF NOVELS BY DAN BROWN

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Dan Brown is an American writer, the author of such bestselling novels as *The Da Vinci Code*, *Angels & Demons*, *Inferno*, *Origin* and many others. The writer is a recognized master of storytelling as he weaves the facts and fiction so well that you can't tell which one is the reality and which is the product of the writer's imagination. The distinguishing feature of Dan Brown's literary style is inserting little pieces of intriguing information into the narrative. Everything in his exiting world of gripping mysteries becomes more than real to the readers. Besides, the writer manages to select the topics that are of greatest interest to youths such as artificial intelligence, history mysteries, symbols, riddles, codes etc. However, the main focus of interest of philologists is first and foremost those means (lexical, structural, stylistic) that the writer applies to create bright, convincing, appealing although sometimes controversial images and identities with immense emotions and deep feelings as well as employing diverse ways of communicating thoughts and ideas. One of such language means which facilitates author's creative purposes is the way to express causation of non-verbal action avoiding the use of imperatives, rather, applying other linguistic tools.

It is probably true to say that that imperative verbs can be hardly regarded as a widespread phenomenon in the modern English language. Like any other semantic meaning, the imperativeness – including the range of commands such as orders, requests,

demands etc. – tends to be expressed not only directly, with the help of imperative verbs. The choice of the language instruments may be determined by different extralinguistic factors such as the level of the speaker's linguistic competence, his speaking habits, the manner of expressing ideas and feelings and other peculiarities of the speaker's idiolect. When the speaker uses only the language in which the form (e.g. imperative mood) corresponds to its meaning (e.g. giving an order), it makes his speech poorer, less expressive and sometimes even impolite (compare, for example: *Open the window!* and *Could you open the window?*) since direct orders are usually appropriate for situations where the listener is obliged to perform certain actions, for instance, in the army or police forces. However being communicated as an indirect speech act (e.g. an interrogative sentence that is used as a request: *Would you mind opening the window, please?*), an utterance becomes more polite as well as more eloquent, gaining additional illocutionary force. Thus, the main the article's objective and tasks are to conduct a survey of indirect speech acts with imperative meaning found in Dan Brown's novels which facilitate the creation of his unique literary style.

The term "a speech act" was introduced by the Oxford philosopher J. L. Austin who paid particular attention to the fact that a statement the main function of which is to inform the hearer about something, can also serve to perform many other actions [1, p. 3]. So, in the communicative process people not only pronounce sentences, but also use them as requests, advice, warning, threat etc; and all these sentences are speech acts.

The developing of the speech act theory approach was supported by the attention to the functional aspect of linguistic phenomena. The scientists paid attention to the fact that diverse language forms can be used to convey similar semantical meanings. These observations caused the enhanced interest in pragmatics that focuses on what is not *explicitly* stated, but rather and on how we interpret utterances in situational contexts [2, p. 6].

All the speech acts – both direct and indirect – have an illocutionary force that is "the speaker's intention in producing that utterance." [1, p. 15]. The illocutionary force is a necessary element of every speech act. Thus, if John says to Mary *Can you pass me the glasses, please*, he performs the illocutionary act of requesting or ordering Mary to hand

the glasses over to him. The functions or actions just mentioned are also referred to as the illocutionary force or *illocutionary point* of the speech act. The illocutionary force of a speech act is the effect a speech act is intended to have by a speaker. Indeed, the term 'speech act' in its narrow sense is often taken to refer specifically to illocutionary act also known as 'illocution'. [2, p. 148 – 149].

According to Austin's classification, all illocutionary acts can be divided into five types, i.e., *verdictives*, *exercitives*, *commissives*, *behabitives*, and *expositives*: one can exercise judgment (Verdictive), exert influence or exercise power (Exercitive), assume obligation or declare intention (Commissive), adopt attitude, or express feeling (Behabitive), and clarify reasons, argument, or communication (Expositive). [2, p. 151 – 152]. In further research, Searle (1976) defines five types of illocutionary speech acts: representatives, commissives, expressives, declarations and directives the last ones being the main focus of our study.

So, directives are regarded in this articles as indirect speech acts which cause the recipient to carry out a task: *Will you call back tomorrow at 2 pm, please? Can I ask you call back tomorrow at 2 pm? Can you call back tomorrow at 2 pm? I would be grateful if you could call back tomorrow at 2 pm etc.*

The detailed analysis of Dan Brown's works allows us to group all indirect speech acts with imperative meaning depending on their structural peculiarities. According to the finding of our research, the writer uses the following language structures to communicate the imperative meaning lexically or grammatically:

### **1) Conditional sentences.**

Intended for expressing factual implications, hypothetical situations and their consequences, conditional sentences have become a conventional way to communicate polite, rather formal requests, for example:

*«I'm happy to wait,” the voice chimed, “if you want to check the data on your smartphone (Dan Brown);*

*“If you leave immediately, you can be here by—”*

*“I'm not going anywhere! It's five o'clock in the morning!” (Dan Brown).*

Shaping the sentence in the form of the second conditional structure, the utterance is

regarded as even more courteous:

*Robert, it would mean the world to me if you of all people could attend (Dan Brown);*

*She pointed to the double doors. “So if you would, ladies and gentlemen, please move inside, and we will see what the amazing Edmond Kirsch has in store for us» (Dan Brown).*

The presence of modal verbs in conditional clause facilitates to the imperative meaning formation:

*«Langdon considered his next words very carefully. “Winston, I don’t know if computers can feel loyalty to their creators, but if you can, this is your moment of truth. We could really use your help» (Dan Brown).*

In the next situation viewing the indirect speech act as causation is supported by the social roles of interlocutors – the usher and a guest:

*“If you’ll come with me, sir, your car is waiting.”*

*Langdon followed her across the runway toward the Signature terminal... (Dan Brown).*

## **2) Interrogative constructions.**

Interrogative sentences of the English language are a conventional way to communicate polite requests, invitations, offers:

*“Shall we start over? Perhaps with some tea?” (Dan Brown).*

*“As soon as you receive this message, would you be so kind as to call Peter directly? You probably have his new private line, but if not, it’s 202-329-5746” (Dan Brown).*

Unlike the questions, which serve to ask for information, the main function of indirect interrogative utterances is to cause the hearer to perform certain action: the speaker expects the hearer to do something rather than answer his question.

*«Langdon puzzled for a moment. “Winston, can you send us the photo from the security feed?» (Dan Brown).*

Questions like that often have in their structure modal verbs **can/could**:

*«I need to go, but **can** you and I meet later? There are some aspects of this discovery I’d like to discuss further with you (Dan Brown).*

Rhetorical questions, which do not generally question the cause or purpose of the

action, but rather ask about the reason for a choice of two alternative situations, often serve as the causation:

*Why not speak plainly so the world could understand?" (Dan Brown).*

Such an understanding corresponds to the speaker's beliefs and opinions. Making his statement interrogative, he calls into question the reasonableness of the actual state of affairs presented in it, and in some cases he also argues his assessment [3, p. 74].

In the formation of the estimated component in the content of question-rhetorical statements, and therefore in their functioning as a motive, the question word **why (not)** play an important role.

### **3) Statements.**

The variety of structures supports the imperativeness in the affirmative sentences. The most common of them are as follows:

#### **- Future Simple structures.**

Denoting the action that **will be done**, the speaker actually communicates the demand to do that:

*"What do you want from me?"*

*"It's simple. You have been given access to something quite ancient. And tonight, you will share it with me" (Dan Brown).*

In the following example the demand to take certain action is supported by the reasoning ('*The prince is waiting to see her*') and the performative 'assured':

*"At the moment, your only concern is Ms. Vidal. The prince is waiting to see her, and I've assured him that you'll have her here shortly" (Dan Brown).*

#### **- Complex Object constructions:**

*"I want you to find him for me immediately" (Dan Brown).*

Owing to the fact that these sentences are supposed to express speaker's wishing for something to happen, they naturally have imperativeness in their meaning, for instance:

*"Chief, time is short," she whispered, "and I want you to get us down to SBB Thirteen as quickly as possible" (Dan Brown).*

*"I would like you to keep it safe for me for a while. Can you do that?" (Dan Brown).*

#### **- Modal Verbs:**

«I compose music too,” Winston chimed. “You **should** ask Edmond to play some for you later, should you be curious. At the moment, however, you do need to hurry. The presentation is starting shortly» (Dan Brown);

“Ms. Solomon?” an unusually airy voice had said. “My name is Dr. Christopher Abaddon. I was hoping I **might** speak to you for a moment about your brother” (Dan Brown);

«At the moment, we **need** to leave. We’re afraid you’re in danger» (Dan Brown).

Considering that the main semantic feature of imperative modality is the potentiality which is described as the possibility of something happening or of someone doing something in the future, the modal verbs – which are acknowledged language tools to express possibility, probability, necessity, prohibition and other modal meanings – are used as a significant semantic instrument to create imperativeness:

«Professor?” Ambra had stepped very close to Langdon and whispered behind him. “I **need** you to listen to me. It’s very important” (Dan Brown).

«I feel we **must** choose the lesser of two evils and take action on behalf of the greater good» (Dan Brown).

«Therefore, I **shall** now leave it to Mr. Kirsch to explain why he has come” (Dan Brown).

«Might I **suggest** that we meditate privately on the matter, and speak again in several days? Perhaps the proper course will reveal itself through reflection» (Dan Brown).

If you’re curious, you should take my mysticism course. (Dan Brown) – compare: Take my mysticism course.

### - **Performatives.**

In the doctrine of J. Austin about speech acts, these words are united into a class of so-called performatives, the use of which by a speaker constitutes an action itself. Such words-actions are, for example, the words *like suggest, demand, request, command, proclaim, declare*:

The man heaved a sigh. “I **suggest** we give him a little more time before we—” (Dan Brown);

«Ms. Vidal, we’re leaving,” Fonseca announced, his tone sharp. “Don Julián has

*demanded that we get you to safety inside the Royal Palace at once” (Dan Brown).*

In point of fact, performances should be regarded as a specific lexical means of explication of the imperativeness in the structure of the statement, but in this case the nature of the command in such statements is clarified through the semantics of the performative verbs: *I order* indicates an order, *I ask* is regarded as a request, *I demand* - as a requirement, *I forbid* - as a requirement not to perform the action etc.:

*«I realize this is all happening quickly,” the voice continued, “but Mr. Kirsch requested that I show you this spiral at which you are now standing. He asked that you please enter the spiral and continue all the way to the center” (Dan Brown).*

One of the most important features of each type of illocutive utterances is motivation [4, p. 159]. The necessity of motivation is determined by the fact that a peculiarity of an illocutive utterance is the subjection of its structure to the speaker’s communicative target [4, 5]. This is because the speaker – concerning about his own interests – tries to influence his interlocutor’s behavior and make him act in accordance with his plans. The problem is that the speaker’s and hearer’s interests do not always coincide. Therefore, in order to implement his plans, the speaker must prove the possibility, necessity or desirability of doing things, underline favourable / unfavourable consequences of its performance / failure and so on. All these can serve as the motivation to act. For example, in the situation:

*Langdon looked at the looming structure and hesitated. “You’re not coming with me?”*

*“Apparently not.”*

*“You know, this is all very strange, and I’m not exactly—”*

*“Professor, considering Edmond brought you all the way to this event, it seems a small request that you walk a short distance into this piece of art. Children do it every day and survive.*

*Langdon followed Winston’s directions through an expansive gallery displaying a series of bizarre art installations» (Dan Brown)*

The request of the speaker to come with him is supported by the explanation ‘*it seems a small request that you walk a short distance into this piece of art*’ as well as by assuring the hearer that it is safe (‘*Children do it every day and survive*’).

In another example:

*“I hope you don’t mind, Dr. Abaddon, but I’d prefer not to discuss the details of my work. I have no immediate plans to make anything public. For the time being, my discoveries will remain safely locked in my lab” (Dan Brown).*

– the motivation is created by the statement about speaker’s preferences (*‘I’d prefer not to discuss the details of my work’*).

Causation to perform an action can be also expressed by the utterances which inform about negative or positive consequences of certain behavior or event. They are to engage the hearer into something and in that way to enforce the illocution of a speech act:

*“As you enter, you will see collection bins for headsets. Edmond asked that you not return your unit, but rather keep it. This way, after the program, I will be able to guide you out of the museum through a back door, where you’ll avoid the crowds and be sure to find a taxi” (Dan Brown).*

In order to create a strong motivation, the speaker can use threats. In contrast to warnings, which serve to inform about existing danger, threats are statements of the speaker’s intention to inflict damage or other hostile action in case the hearer doesn’t change his negative behavior:

*“If you do not listen to me very carefully, then I predict you will be dead by morning, eliminated by the long arm of Bishop Valdespino.” The caller paused. “Just like Edmond Kirsch and your friend Syed al-Fadl» (Dan Brown).*

To sum up, the study has proved structural and semantic complexity and variability of indirect speech acts with an imperative meaning in the texts of the novels by Dan Brown; it has also shown that structures like this enhance the emotionality of an utterance in that way creating convincing motivation and increasing the illocutory force of a speech act.

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