

6. Imperative (Excerpt from Eggleston, 2013)

The imperative is the command form of the verb, and translates into English as ‘Do it!’ The imperative occurs with second person singular and second person plural subjects only.

Example imperative forms are: *Xá!* ‘Eat it!’, and *Yeexá!* ‘You all eat it!’ Some verbs do not have imperative forms, due to their semantics. An example is *kut aawataan* ‘s/he misplaced it’. Because under normal circumstances, you wouldn’t command someone to misplace something, fluent Tlingit speakers reject imperative forms for this verb. In such cases, “[does not occur]” is indicated in the imperative field in the paradigms on the CD.

There are four things to discuss with respect to the structure of the imperative form: 1) the conjugation prefix; 2) the classifier; 3) the presence or absence of the second person singular subject prefix, and; 4) the verb stem.

Remember that all verbs use one of the four conjugation prefixes (*na-*, *ga-*, *qa-*, or \emptyset - (unmarked)). The imperative is one of the few forms that requires the conjugation prefix. The conjugation prefix occurs after any thematic prefixes (*x’a-*, *ka-*, *ya-*, *tu-*, and *ji-* are examples of thematic prefixes), and before the subject prefix. The imperative form always contains the –I form of the classifier (\emptyset -, *da-*, *sa-*, *s-*, *sha-*, *sh-*, *la-*, or *l-*). The classifier always occurs directly before the stem. Examples (124a-b) and (125a-b) below have the \emptyset -classifier, which is represented in the underlying forms in parentheses, but does not show up in the spoken form. Examples (124a-b) depict a *na* conjugation verb while (125a-b) show a *ga* conjugation verb. In (124b), note the position of the conjugation prefix *na-* after the thematic prefix *x’a-* and before the second person plural subject prefix *yi-*. Note also that the first example in each pair does not have an overt second person singular subject prefix, but that it is understood by virtue of the command being given directly to the listener (shown in the English translation by putting ‘you’ in parentheses). The conditions for an overt second person singular subject prefix will be discussed shortly. The second person plural subject prefix is always present.

(124a) *X’anawóos!* (*x’a-* + *na-* + \emptyset - + *-wóos*) ‘(You) ask him/her!’

(124b) *X’anaywóos!* (*x’a-* + *na-* + *yi-* + \emptyset - + *-wóos*) ‘You all ask him/her!’

- (125a) *Gasháat!* (*ga- + Ø- + -sháat*) '(You) catch it!'
 (125b) *Gaysháat!* (*ga- + yi- + Ø- + -sháat*) 'You all catch it!'

Notice in (124b) and (125b) above the contraction that takes place with the conjugation prefixes *na-* and *ga-* and the second person plural subject prefix *yi-*, producing *nay-* and *gay-* respectively. This contraction is consistent throughout the language where any of the conjugation prefixes (*na-*, *ga-*, or *ga-*) occur next to the second person plural subject prefix *yi-*. It should be noted here that there is additionally another dialect variant for this contraction, used by two language consultants who are sisters. For these speakers, *na-* plus *yi-* becomes *neey-*, *ga-* plus *yi-* becomes *geey-*, and *ga-* plus *yi-* becomes *geey-*. At this time, it is unclear how widespread this variant is utilized, and whether it is regional or personal.

The verbs in the following examples (126a-b) and (127a-b) both contain the -I classifier *da-*. The first is a *ga* conjugation verb and the second a *Ø* conjugation verb. Note that both contain the second person singular subject prefix *ee-*, which becomes short (*i-*) when followed by a classifier containing a vowel. The presence of the second person singular subject prefix *ee-/i-* is contingent on the presence of one of the following classifiers: *da-*, *s-*, *sh-*, or *l-*. What these classifiers have in common is that they are of the -I form (lacking the vowel *i-*) and also have what is called the 'D component'. This label refers to an organization of the classifiers into groups which pattern together in the grammar, some of which contain the sound *d-*. Please refer to the discussion on classifiers to review this topic. The relevance of this to the imperative form is that the second person singular subject prefix is present in the imperative form for verbs which have -I classifiers with the D component. Again, these are: *da-*, *s-*, *sh-*, or *l-*.

In Example (126a), we see the contraction of the conjugation prefix *ga-*, the second person singular subject prefix *ee-* and the classifier *da-*, resulting in the loss of the conjugation prefix vowel (*a-*) and the shortening of the subject prefix to *i-*, producing *gida-*. The shortening of the subject prefix only takes place when followed by a classifier with a vowel (*da-*).

- (126a) *gidaxéet!* (*ga-* + *ee-* + *da-* + *-xéet'*) 'Sweep!'
 (126b) *gaydaxéet!* (*ga-* + *yi-* + *da-* + *-xéet'*) 'You all sweep!'
- (127a) *Idaná!* (*ee-* + *da-* + *-ná*) 'Drink it!'
 (127b) *Yidaná!* (*yi-* + *da-* + *-ná*) 'You all drink it!'

The following example (128), a *na* conjugation verb, shows that the subject prefix remains long (*ee-*) when followed by a classifier that doesn't have a vowel (*s-*, *sh-*, or *l-*).

- (128) *Aneest'eix!* (*a-* + *na-* + *ee-* + *s-* + *-t'eix*) 'Troll!'

As is discussed in Section 2.2, some Tlingit verbs require an object pronoun rather than a subject pronoun. These verbs are called objective verbs and use the object pronouns. One familiar example is *xat yak'éi* 'I am good', where the object pronoun *xat* 'me' is used rather than the subject prefix *xa-* 'I'. The second person singular object pronoun *i-* is a prefix and is written as part of the verb, while the second person plural object pronoun is *yee*, a word written separately from the verb. For example, *iyak'éi* 'you are good' and *yee yak'éi* 'you all are good'. Objective verbs always have the second person singular and second person plural object pronouns present in the imperative, regardless of the classifier. Note that the second person singular object prefix *i-* occurs before all other prefixes, as can be seen in the examples below.

- (129a) *Igak'éi!* (*i-* + *ga-* + *-k'éi*) 'Be good!'
 (129b) *Yee gak'éi!* (*ga-* + *-k'éi*) 'You all be good!'
- (130a) *Yéi inatí!* (*i-* + *na-* + *-tí*) 'Be that way!'
 (130b) *Yéi yee natí!* (*na-* + *-tí*) 'You all be that way!'
- (131a) *A kát isax'ákw!* (*i-* + *sa-* + *-x'ákw*) 'Forget it!'
 (131b) *A kát yee sax'ákw!* (*sa-* + *-x'ákw*) 'You all forget it!'

- (132a) *Itukla.aan!* (*i-* + *tu-* + *ga-* + *la-* + *-.aan*) ‘Be kind!’
 (132b) *Yee tukla.aan!* (*tu-* + *ga-* + *la-* + *-.aan*) ‘You all be kind!’

6.1 Stem Variation in the Imperative

For the most part, the verb stem in the imperative mode is predictable with respect to vowel length and tone. Open roots, regardless of conjugation prefix, will have short high stems in the imperative form. Examples (133) and (134) are CVV roots and are \emptyset and *na* conjugation respectively. Examples (135) and (136) are CVV^h roots and are \emptyset and *ga* conjugation respectively. All four examples have short high stems in the imperative.

- (133) *Kalachá!* ‘Strain it!’
 (134) *Kanas.á!* ‘Grow it!’
 (135) *Satá!* ‘Steam it!’
 (136) *Aaxgatí!* ‘Pick it up off of it!’

There is a small class of open roots that are \emptyset conjugation that unexpectedly have long high stems in the imperative. These same verbs also have long high stems in the hortative and potential modes, where long low stems would be expected. This will be discussed in the chapters pertaining to these modes as well. There is no way to predict which verbs have these unexpected stems, so they must be learned individually. These are notated in the verb theme in parentheses, following the verb’s conjugation prefix and verb type as: *C’V Imp/Hort/Pot*. For example, the theme for the first example given below is: *O-ya-S-s-haa~* (\emptyset act; *C’V Imp/Hort/Pot*). This alerts the reader to the fact that this verb has the unexpected stem form in the imperative, hortative, and potential forms. Note that Leer (1991) and Crippen (2013) use the symbol \check{y} to notate this phenomenon in the theme. The \check{y} represents an abstract suffix that correlates with the stem form. Because my verb database is intended as a pedagogical resource, I use the more transparent *C’V* here instead. The following list of examples includes the known verb themes that fall into this category,

based on the present research and these references: Leer, 1991:269 fn. 9 and Crippen, 2013:39¹.

(137)	<i>áx' kaháa</i>	'be there'
(138)	<i>du toowú lat'áa</i>	'comfort him/her'
(139)	<i>yasaháa</i>	'gather it'
(140)	<i>shukajáa</i>	'instruct him/her'
(141)	<i>sakóo</i>	'know it'
(142)	<i>idusháa</i>	'get married'
(143)	<i>sháa</i>	'marry him/her'
(144)	<i>axáa</i>	'paddle'
(145)	<i>aagáa awóo</i>	'send for it'
(146)	<i>aadé kunanáa</i>	'send her there'
(147)	<i>lal'áa</i>	'suck it'
(148)	<i>sanáa</i>	'sun-dry it'
(149)	<i>idawóo</i>	'take lunch'
(150)	<i>x'áa</i>	'twist it (flexible part of a tree) to limber it'
(151)	<i>idax'óo</i>	'wear it (blanket)'
(152)	<i>idaláa</i>	'yell'

For the closed roots, the situation is a little more complicated, and varies depending on root type and conjugation prefix. Barring a few exceptions that will be discussed next, closed roots that are \emptyset conjugation have short high stems in the imperative. This applies to all three closed root types, and an example of each is given below, where (153) is a CVVC root, (154) a C'VC root, and (155) a C'VC' root.

(153)	<i>Neil sa.ín!</i>	'Bring it inside!'
(154)	<i>Kux teedashát!</i>	'Change your mind!'

¹ Leer (1991) and Crippen (2013) include in this list the theme *O-ka-a-S-Ø-haa~* 'for S to dig O', but speakers consulted for this project have the expected imperative form *kahá* 'dig it'.

(155) *Kaxíl!* 'Bother him/her!'

There are a handful of CVVC \emptyset conjugation verbs that have long low stems in the imperative. What these have in common is that they are all motion verbs, and all have preverbs (a directional word preceding the verb). The known examples are: *kei sataan* 'pick it up'; *gunéi koox* 'get going'; *aa \underline{x} kei yeesh* 'pull it out of there'; *kei jilatsaak* 'raise your hand', and; *kei sageet* 'wake him/her up'. More research is needed to explore the factors that affect membership to this group. Because this is such a small group, and due to space constraints, these are not indicated on Table 15 in Chapter 3, but are indicated in Table 25 below.

Closed roots that are *na*, *ga*, or *ga* conjugation fall into two groups regarding the imperative stem. CVVC roots have long low imperative stems, as exemplified by (156) and (157) below. C'VVC and C'VVC' roots have long high imperative stems, as exemplified by (158) and (159) respectively. Remember that the latter two root types never have long low stems.

(156) *Nalk'oots!* 'Break it!'

(157) *Gataan!* 'Carry it!'

(158) *Gasháat!* 'Catch it!'

(159) *Nall'éex!* 'Break it!'

Table 25 summarizes the discussion of verb stem variation in the imperative. Where more than one form is given in a cell, the second option given is the exception to the general pattern, as discussed above.

Table 25. Stem Variation in the Imperative

Basic Stem Shape ↓	Ø	na, ga, ga
CVV	CV̆ Xá! 'Eat it!' O-S-Ø-xaa~ (Ø act) 'for S to eat O'	CV̆ Akanahá! 'Plant it!' O-ka-S- Ø-haa~ (na act) 'for S to plant O'
	CVV̆ Idusháa! 'Get married!' O-du-Ø-shaa~ (Ø event; CV̆V Imp/Hort/Pot) 'for O to get married'	
CVV ^h	CV̆ Satá! 'Steam it!' O-S-s-taa ^h ~ (Ø act) 'for S to boil, steam O'	CV̆ Natá! 'Sleep!' S-Ø-taa ^h ~ (na act) 'for (singular) S to sleep'
	CVV̆ Sakóo! 'Know it!' O-S-s-koo ^h ~ (Ø event; CV̆V Imp/Hort/Pot) 'for S to know O'	
CVVC	CV̆C Saxúk! 'Dry it!' O-S-s-xook~ (Ø act) 'for S to dry O'	CVVC Naxaash! 'Cut it!' O-S-Ø-xaash~ (na act) 'for S to cut O with knife'
	CVVC Kei sataan! 'Pick it up!' kei O-S-s-taan~ (Ø motion) 'for S to bring out, unearth O'	
CV̆VC	CV̆C Sawát! 'Raise him/her!' O-S-s-wáat~ (Ø act) 'for S to raise O'	CV̆VC galsháat! 'Hold it!' O-S-l-sháat~ (ga act) 'for S to hold, retain O'
CV̆VC'	CV̆C' Sa.át! 'Chill it!' O-S-s-.áat'~ (Ø act) 'for S to make O cold'	CV̆VC' Na.óos! 'Wash it!' O-S-Ø-.óos'~ (na act) 'for S to wash O'