

12. Prohibitive (Excerpt from Eggleston, 2013)

The prohibitive is the negative command form of the verb, and translates into English as 'Don't do it!' Example prohibitive forms are: *Líl eexáak!* 'Don't eat it!', and *Líl yixáak!* 'Don't you all eat it!' As with the imperative forms, there are some verbs that are semantically awkward in the prohibitive form, in which case '[does not occur]' is indicated in the prohibitive field in the paradigms on the CD.

Structurally, the prohibitive form is based on the negative imperfective, the negative repetitive imperfective, and/or the negative perfective forms. In other words, there are three varieties of prohibitive: the imperfective prohibitive, the repetitive imperfective prohibitive, and the perfective prohibitive. For some verbs, all three types of prohibitive exist, but for most, there is a preferred one among the three. It is not clear whether there is much of a semantic distinction between the three, but Leer (1991) has posited that the imperfective prohibitive and perfective prohibitive both mean 'don't do it' while the repetitive imperfective prohibitive means 'don't ever do it'. Active and stative verbs (which have basic imperfective forms) tend to use the imperfective prohibitive while eventive and motion verbs (which lack basic imperfective forms) use either (or both of) the perfective prohibitive and repetitive imperfective prohibitive.

Like all negative forms, the prohibitive requires a choice of negative particles: *líl*, *tlél/tléil*, or *hél* meaning 'not', 'don't' or 'no'. The choice of particle seems to be based on individual speaker preference and not regional dialect and therefore any of these are correct for any region. In this resource, *líl* is used with all prohibitive forms, simply for consistency. The prohibitive form is exactly like the corresponding negative imperfective, negative repetitive imperfective, or negative perfective form plus the addition of the prohibitive suffix *-(i)k* or *-(u)k*. The vowel *-i/-u* in the suffix is present only when the verb stem ends in a consonant. (The choice of the vowel is discussed a little later). When the stem ends in a vowel, the suffix is simply *-k*. As can be seen in Examples (276a-b) below, verbs with a stem ending in a consonant such as: *-gwaal* take the suffix *-ik*. Examples (277a-b) show a verb stem ending in a vowel *-xá*, which takes the suffix *-k*. Note also that open verb stems (those ending in a vowel) with a short vowel (*a, e, i, u*) become long when the suffix *-k* is

added. As you can see, the stem goes from *-xá* to *-xáak* when the prohibitive suffix is added. As a side note, in each set below (a) is the negative imperfective form and (b) is the imperfective prohibitive form.

(276a) *Tlél eegwaal.* 'You're not beating it.'

(276b) *Líl eegwaalík!* 'Don't beat it!'

(277a) *Tlél eexá.* 'You're not eating it.'

(277b) *Líl eexáak!* 'Don't eat it!'

Verb stems ending in aspirated consonants undergo a change when the prohibitive suffix is added. Specifically, the following aspirated consonants become unaspirated before the prohibitive suffix: *t --> d*, *tl --> dl*, *ts --> dz*, *ch --> j*, *k --> g*, *k̄ --> ḡ*. The change from an aspirated consonant to unaspirated between vowels is a natural phenomenon in speech and occurs in English all the time, as well as many other languages of the world. Let's look at a few examples to clarify. In Table 48 below, we see the verb stem *-shát*, ending in *t*, become *-shádík* in the prohibitive. The *t* on the verb stem becomes *d* before the prohibitive suffix *-ík*. Similarly, the verb stem *-xook* ending in *k* becomes *-xoogúk* in the prohibitive, the *k* becoming *g* when the prohibitive suffix is added. Finally, the verb stem *-x'aakw* ending in *k̄w*, becomes *-x'aagúk* in the prohibitive. Here the *k̄* becomes *ḡ* in the prohibitive.

Table 48. Aspirated Consonants Become Unaspirated before Prohibitive Suffix

t --> d

<i>Tlél ilashát.</i>	'You're not holding it.'
<i>Líl ilashádik!</i>	'Don't hold it!'

k --> g

<i>Tlél isaxook.</i>	'You're not drying it.'
<i>Líl isaxoogúk!</i>	'Don't dry it!'

k --> g

<i>Tlél a ká<u>x</u> iseix'aak<u>w</u>.</i>	'You don't forget it.'
<i>Líl a ká<u>x</u> iseix'aagúk!</i>	'Don't forget it!'

Notice also that the tone on the prohibitive suffix is always the opposite of the tone on the stem. If the stem has a low tone, the suffix takes a high tone. If the stem has a high tone, the suffix takes a low tone. Two examples in Table 48 above lead us to another topic. When is the prohibitive suffix *-ik* and when is it *-uk*? The rules governing the choice of vowel in the prohibitive suffix are the same as for the possessive suffix, described in detail in Dauenhauer et al (2010:23). They are as follows. The suffix will be *-ik* unless: 1) the stem ends in *w* preceded by a vowel (as in *líl isalagaawúk!* 'Don't be loud-voiced!'); 2) the stem ends in any form of *k* or *x* preceded by *oo* or *u* (as in *líl isaxoogúk!* 'Don't dry it'), or; 3) the stem ends in any form of *k* or *x* followed by *w* (as in *líl a káx iseix'aagúk!* 'Don't forget it!'). Note that the *w* drops off when the suffix *-uk* is added in this final scenario. This phenomenon is called rounding spread, where a sound that requires protrusion (rounding) of the lips spreads this effect onto a neighboring sound. Also note that in the final two examples just given, the stems end in *k* and *kw* respectively (as illustrated by the negative perfective forms in Table 48 above). These aspirated consonants become unaspirated (*g* and *g* respectively) with the addition of the suffix, since they are between two vowels. Stems falling into any of these three categories take the suffix *-uk*.

To summarize, the verb stem in the prohibitive is predictable, based on its partner form. If you know the second person negative imperfective, perfective, or repetitive imperfective

form, it should be easy to construct the associated prohibitive form from there, simply by adding the prohibitive suffix with the appropriate vowel and tone. For this reason, the prohibitive is excluded from Tables 14 and 15 in Chapter 3, since the verb stem form is determined based on the partner modes. As a reminder, stem variation for the negative repetitive imperfective is the same as for the affirmative repetitive imperfective. Note that there are four verb themes with invariable stems documented in the present research that have irregular stem forms in the prohibitive. These are illustrated in Section 15.4.