

A Corpus-informed Pedagogical Innovation for ITAs

TESOL 2007 Seattle

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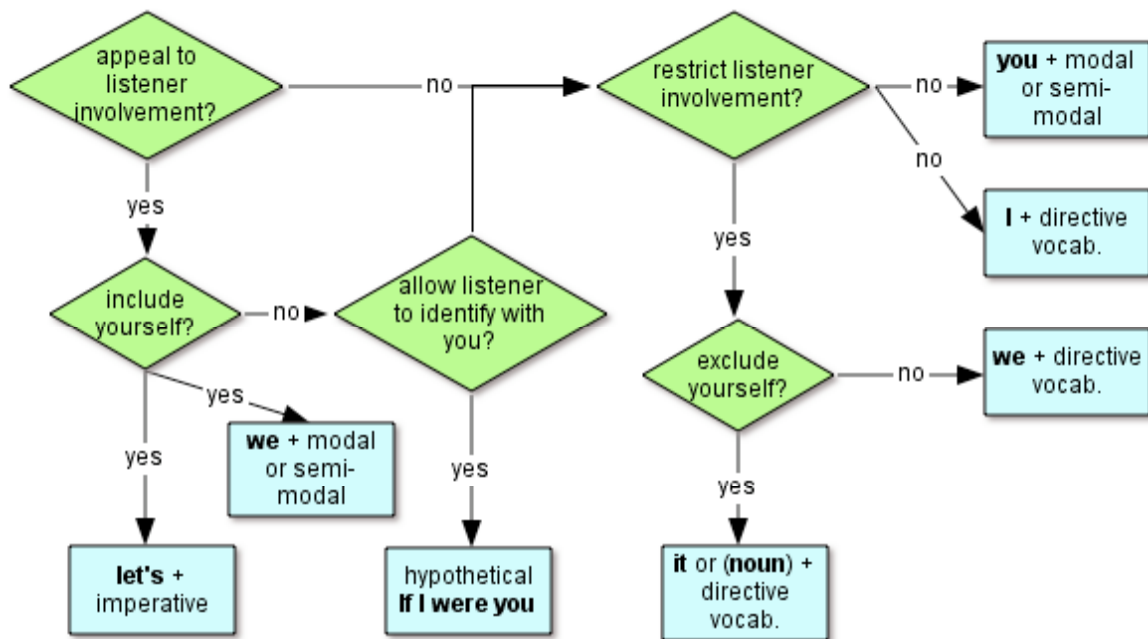
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E. Elements of a directive: Pronoun/Subject Choice:

One way of building solidarity with your listener, or giving them a sense of involvement, is to make strategic use of pronouns that you use in directives. The choice of a pronoun (or subject):

- happens in conjunction with choice of pronoun/subject and modifier
- may change during conversation depending on the reaction of the listener
- depends on speaker choices:
 - Do you want to appeal to listener involvement?
 - Do you want to include yourself in the directive?
 - Do you want to allow the listener to identify with you?
 - Do you want to restrict listener involvement?
 - Do you want to exclude yourself from the directive?

Chart E: Flow chart representing dynamic system of pronoun choice in directives.



1. Neither appealing to nor restricting listener involvement:

a. you + modal/semi-modal

- the most neutral and common means of making a directive
- can often be interpreted impersonally, meaning ‘one’
 - **You** should make your thesis statement clearer.

b. I + directive vocab

- relatively neutral in appeal to involvement
- more authoritative than ‘you + modal’
 - **I** recommend you get the textbook from the bookstore.

2. Appealing to listener involvement:

‘Let’s’ and ‘inclusive we’ can appeal towards listener involvement if the speaker is part of the directive

a. let’s + imperative

- **Let’s** see what you have here.

b. we + modal/semi-modal

- So **we** need to multiply this quantity by this fraction.

c. Allowing listener to identify with speaker:

a. hypothetical ‘if I were you’-like statement

- can appeal towards listener involvement by putting the speaker in the listener’s place
 - **I** would first check with the registrar.

3. Restricting listener involvement:

a. we+directive vocab

‘Exclusive we’ can restrict listener involvement if used exclusively, if the listener is not part of the statement.

- **We** suggest to all students that **they** complete the reading list before starting the course.

b. Excluding yourself from the directive:

- can restrict speaker involvement and exclude both listener and speaker.
- can have the reverse effect of the listener identifying with the speaker, since they are both excluded.

i. it + directive vocab

- **It** is suggested that you take 301 before this course, though it isn't required.

ii. noun + directive vocab

- **The professor** says there's no extra credit.

Questions for consideration
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. What is the difference between inclusive and exclusive we?2. In your language, do you use the 'if I were you' strategy in giving directives?3. In what situations would a teacher want to appeal to involvement of the student? When might they want to restrict it?4. Think of examples of directives you have heard recently, from professors, students, or others. What pronoun was used? Why?5. Try saying a phrase like 'go to the library' or 'do your homework' with different pronouns. What would be the effect of each one on the listener?