Abstract

In actual verbal discourse, the basic unit of meaning is not word but sentence. Declaratives, Interrogatives and Imperatives are ubiquitous in this present day but in-depth studies in this field, especially of the comparative nature, are regrettably lacking. It was often seen misunderstood that the function of a sentence and its grammatical form invariably correspond. However, this might not paint the entire picture. This thesis therefore attempts to examine the relationship between declaratives, interrogatives, imperatives and their interchangeability.

This thesis focuses on the following areas:
(a) The characteristics of declaratives, interrogatives and imperatives
(b) The interchangeability between declaratives, interrogatives and imperatives
(c) The conversational implicatures behind the interchange

The finding of this thesis suggests that interchangeability is possible between declaratives, interrogatives and imperatives. When it comes to expression, the relationship between the form and the meaning of a sentence is far more subtle, far more dependent on the intention of the utter or the inner orientation of the receiver. Presuppositions and scenarios are also two other significant factors to be taken into consideration. Thus, we must be prepared to suspend the usual criteria by which we judge the meaning of declarative, interrogative and imperative sentences.