The Meaning of Uninflectedness: A Case Study in Form and Function

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The motivation and framework for this paper are taken from Dwight Bolinger, who says in the introduction to his book Meaning and Form, "If a language permits a contrast in form to survive, it ought to be for a purpose." (p. 18) One of the arguments Bolinger uses in support of this claim involves several English sentence-types in which the uninflected verb is used. What I will do is examine two important uninflected verb sentence patterns which Bolinger does not discuss, to see whether Bolinger's formulation of the meaning of the uninflected verb works for these patterns, as well as for the ones he has examined. I will suggest that while Bolinger is absolutely right that uninflectedness serves a specific purpose in English, his formulation of this purpose is in need of some clarification. I will attempt to formulate what I think is a more complete "definition" of uninflectedness, and, finally, suggest reasons why this definition is interesting.

I do not think there is any need for me to summarize Bolinger's arguments, as he has stated them better than I could. What follows is a summary of the kinds of sentences Bolinger deals with and the conclusions he draws about the uninflected verbs in these sentences. Bolinger starts with imperatives which are commands ("Shut the door;" "Sit down"), the kind which are given the most attention in generative arguments about imperatives (e.g. Katz and Postal, 1964). He then shows that there are other kinds of sentences which cannot be distinguished from imperatives in any principled way. These are:

a) conditions like "Spare the rod and spoil the child."
b) wishes, hopes, and advice, like "God help us," "Hope it rains," and "Get well soon."
c) elliptical answers to certain questions, like "What can I do for her?" - "Give her a call."
d) clauses of indifference (Jespersen's term) like "Be that as it may," or "try as she will."

Having established that all these things are kinds of imperatives, Bolinger next examines several other uses of the uninflected verb. These include:

a) responses to suggestions, like "Why don't you ride your bike?" - "And freeze my hands
off! Not on your life."

b) repetition of advice or suggestions, like "Don't sit around waiting for the phone to ring! Call her yourself." - "Call her myself? That might be an idea."

c) expressions of disbelief or unlikelihood, like "Your brother flunk out of college? I don't believe it," or "George do his homework? Fat chance."

Bolinger's conclusion about what ties together these uses of the uninflected verb (he calls them "bare infinitives") is as follows: "The infinitive is a general hypothetical that includes the imperative as its most frequent manifestation." (p. 178) Bolinger's evidence for this claim consists of the facts that (a) the uninflected verb is very difficult to use in sentences that refer to the past, and (b) the action to which an uninflected verb refers is not yet accomplished or confirmed.

At the risk of being repetitious, I will now restate what I think Bolinger's claim is:

Uninflected verbs are used to express hypothetical meaning. "Hypothetical" means "unaccomplished or unconfirmed, in the future."

In the next sections of this paper, I will examine two kinds of sentences involving uninflected verbs which are not discussed by Bolinger. These are (1) subjunctives, and (2) causatives with let, make, and have. I will examine each of these sentence types in considerable detail, to see if I can ferret out as many of their semantic characteristics as possible. Then I will go back and see what subjunctives and let-, make- and have-causatives have in common with the uninflected verb sentences Bolinger discusses, and whether Bolinger's claim about the meaning of uninflected verbs cannot be refined.

2. Subjunctives

2.1 Formal characteristics

The first group of sentences with which I will concern myself are subjunctives. Subjunctives will be defined as sentences in which a that-clause containing an uninflected verb is embedded by one of a number of predicates which allow this pattern. The predicates which allow uninflected that-clauses to be embedded will be called subjunctive predicates. There are three groups of subjunctive predicates which can be formally distinguished: the first group consists of verbs like request, recommend, urge, be anxious, and desire, the second of nominalizations of these
verbs, such as suggestion, proposal, and request, and the third of certain adjectives like important, vital, and urgent.

2.2 Review of literature

Most of the treatments of subjunctives in the literature of ESL and linguistics have been somewhat unsatisfactory. The clauses which follow subjunctive predicates have been given labels like "expression of theoretical meaning" (Leech, 1971) or "optative subjunctive" (Long, 1966; Zandworgt, 1961); since both these labels are misleading they are really no better than the traditional, non-explanatory label "present subjunctive." R. Lakoff, in a paper about tense and time in English verbs (Lakoff, 1970), completely ignores the subjunctive, as does McCawley (1971). Stockwell, et.al. (1968) and Schreiber (1972) both discuss the subjunctive with an eye to showing that subjunctives contain embedded imperatives.

2.3 Semantic characteristics

2.3.1 Mandativity

If we examine the lists of subjunctive predicates on pages and in notes 1 - 3, we notice that, although they all have something to do with telling what the speaker would like to have happen, they range from the purely mandative command to the purely wish-reporting desire. If we use these predicates in non-subjunctive sentences, the wide range of their meanings is clear:

+mand

1) The judge commanded the demonstrators to leave.
2) The judge instructed the demonstrators to leave.
3) The judge requested the demonstrators to leave.
4) The judge said it was necessary for the demonstrators to leave.
5) The judge preferred the demonstrators to leave.

-mand

6) The judge desired the demonstrators to leave.

We see the same range of meaning when these predicates are used in subjunctive sentences, but with a distinct shift towards the mandative end:

1') The judge commanded that the demonstrators leave.
2') The judge instructed that the demonstrators leave.
3') The judge requested that the demonstrators leave.
4') The judge said it was necessary that the demonstrators leave.
5') The judge preferred that the demonstrators leave.
leave.

(6') The judge desired that the demonstrators leave.

Even sentence (6') has a tinge of mandativity; put this way, there is at least a slight implication that the judge not only desired peace and quiet, but also did something about it.

To make the case as strong as possible, I have put all the examples above in the third person, past tense. When subjunctives are used in the first person present, their mandativity becomes even clearer:

(1'') I command that the demonstrators leave.
(2'') I instruct that the demonstrators leave.
(3'') I think it is necessary that the demonstrators leave.
(4'') I request that the demonstrators leave.
(5'') I prefer that the demonstrators leave.
(6'') I desire that the demonstrators leave.

2.3.2 Mander responsibility

Before examining a second semantic feature of subjunctives it will be necessary to introduce a new term: the "mander" in a subjunctive sentence is the person who is making, or who originally made, the demand, request, suggestion, etc. In a first-person subjunctive like "I request that you go," and in it is subjunctives like "It is imperative that you go," the mander is the speaker. In third person subjunctives like "John requested that you go," and "John's request that they go was denied," the original speaker, or John in these cases, is the mander.

The next semantic feature of subjunctives which I will discuss, then, will be called mander responsibility. By this I mean that the mander of a subjunctive sentence must be able to be responsible for the action or state referred to in the that-clause, and he must be willing to accept that responsibility. The two parts of this claim will be examined separately.

First, the mander must be able to be responsible for the action of the that-clause. This is why we cannot say things like:

(7) *The weatherman proposes that it rain tomorrow.
(8) *Susan suggested that the Fourth of July be on a Wednesday last year.
(9) *The dog begged that I take him for a walk.
(10) *This book demands that you read it.

Sentences (7) and (8) are inappropriate because the that-clauses refer to things for which the manders cannot be responsible ("acts of God" here). Sentences (9) and (10) are inappropriate because there is something wrong with the manders. Note that both of these sentences are acceptable with to-infinitives:
The dog begged to be taken for a walk.

(10') This book demands to be read.

Beg and demand in these two sentences both have a slightly metaphorical tinge: they work because they are not interpreted as [+spoken]. The subjunctive sentences (9) and (10) force a [+spoken] reading for the verbs beg and demand. I think that this is generally true of subjunctive sentences; the mands which they report must be spoken. Hence, a subjunctive mander must be a person.

The second component of mander responsibility is that the mander must be willing to accept responsibility for the that-clause action or state. This is why it is inappropriate to say:

(11) *I insist that he be at the meeting, because he cancelled his appointment with me so he could attend.

(12) *It is imperative that we meet, but I don't want to be held responsible if we do.

(13) *The general commanded that the army advance, but he had nothing to do with their advancing.

The difference between the next two sentences is largely a difference in the degree of mander responsibility.

(14) Texas is beautiful, and I'd just as soon it remained that way.

(15) Texas is beautiful, and I'd just as soon it remained that way.

It seems to me that what distinguishes these two sentences is the amount of responsibility the speaker will have for Texas' remaining the way it is, if it does. Sentence (14) is questionable when the mander explicitly refuses any responsibility, much better when he explicitly takes responsibility.

(14') ?Texas is beautiful, and I'd just as soon it remain that way, but there's no point in trying to do anything about it.

(14'') Texas is beautiful, and I'd just as soon it remain that way. I've written to my congressman to tell him so.

Sentence (15), on the other hand, is all right when the speaker refuses responsibility, or when he explicitly places the responsibility elsewhere:

(15') Texas is beautiful, and I'd just as soon it remained that way, but there's no point in trying to do anything about it.

(15'') Texas is beautiful, and I'd just as soon it remained that way, but who knows what those legislators up in Washington will decide?
2.3.3 Future reference

Given the fact that subjunctive predicates refer to things the user wants to have happen, and that subjunctive sentences tend to be mandative, it is to be expected that the uninflected verbs in subjunctive that-clauses refer to the future. This is indeed the case. Subjunctive that-clauses are unacceptable with adverbials which force past readings:

(16) *I propose that he try to do better on the exams last year.

(17) *The chairman insisted that everyone be present at the meeting two days before.

(18) *I recommend that you be finished already.

In present-tense subjunctives, uninflected perfective forms like have eaten are also unacceptable:

(19) *He demands that he have read the book yesterday.

(20) *I urge that he have finished.

(21) *I suggest that he have given me his paper.

There is, however, one way in which sentences like (20) and (21) could be made to have an appropriate reading. A health spa, for example, might send a brochure to prospective guests which says: "It is advisable that the potential dieter have been examined by her family doctor before she arrives." In this case, though, the pastness marked by the perfective have been examined is past with reference to the arrival, and not with reference to the advice-giving. The that-clause is still in the future with reference to the subjunctive predicate.

For a related reason, perfective uninflected forms are acceptable with past-tense subjunctive predicates:

(22) They asked that he have finished his dissertation by May.

(23) It was advisable that Henry have eaten breakfast before having his blood test.

In cases like these, the perfectives are past only with reference to the moment of speaking, and not with reference to the moment of asking, or being advisable. Subjunctives are also unacceptable with adverbials that force present-tense readings of the that-clause:

(24) *I suggest that he be telling us right now what his problem is.

(25) *They recommended that we be reading the paper now.

(Sentence (25) can be given a reading in which be reading refers to the time of speaking, but be reading cannot be cotemporal with the recommendation.)

Having established that subjunctives tend to be mandative and that their embedded clauses refer to the future, I am in a position to elucidate partially what
seemed (and still somehow seems) to me to be a mystifying distinction. This is the distinction between subjunctive sentences like

(26a) He commanded that we leave.
(27a) We asked that they not interrupt.

and similar sentences with to-infinitives:

(26b) He commanded us to leave.
(27b) We asked them not to interrupt.

Part of the difference between the (a) sentences and the (b) sentences is the fairly obvious fact that the indirect objects of the subjunctive sentences are not overtly stated. In (26a), for example, the command could be made to someone other than the "we" who are supposed to leave. This is why a king could say

(28a) I command that his head be chopped off.

but not

(28b) *I command him to chop of his (own) head.

The reason for this difference between subjunctives and to-infinitive sentences like the (b) ones is that the to-infinitive sentences are the result of raising to object position, while subjunctives are not.

There is, however, a further distinction between sentences like (27a) and ones like (27b). This distinction has to do with the fact that subjunctive that-clauses refer to the future, while to-infinitive clauses can refer to the immediate present. This difference is very subtle, and may not be felt by everyone, but it seems to me that sentence (27b) could report a request made at the same time as the interruption was going on, while (27a) could only report a request made before an expected interruption.

A full explanation of the difference between subjunctives and to-infinitive embedded sentences would be the subject of another paper, and I am still not at all sure what the difference really is. I offer the above only as a clue.

2.3.4 Modality

A fourth semantic feature of subjunctives is what I will call "deontic modality." Deontic modality is the meaning of should, in its root sense, that is, when should indicates practical or ethical obligation (as opposed to the binding obligation signalled by must or the implication signalled by the derived sense of should). That the meaning of a subjunctive sentence includes deontic modality is related to the fact that subjunctives are mandative: we do not normally request, command, or recommend that someone do something unless we think he should do it. Or, put in Searle's (1964) terms, one of the sincerity conditions for mands is that the speaker must believe that the addressee should do the action. Thus it is inappropriate to
say:

(29) *I urge that you submit your article for
    publication, but I don't think you should.

(30) *The emperor desires that dinner be served,
    but adds that dinner shouldn't be served.

(31) *It is imperative that the prisoner be in-
    formed of his legal rights, but he shouldn't
    be informed.

Sentence (31) might be acceptable if the speaker were
reporting someone else's opinion about what is imper-
ative, and his own opinion in the but clause, but it
is not acceptable if the point of view in both clauses
is the same.

The verb should can in fact be used together with the
uninflected verb in a subjunctive sentence:

(32) He recommended that we should read the books
    on this list.

(33) The doctor stated his preference that no
    visitors should be allowed in the recovery
    room.

(34) I insist that you should be there.

In many dialects of American English, the trend seems
to be toward replacing all uninflected subjunctives
with should. It is not surprising to discover that
should, like all modals, is itself uninflected.

Further evidence for the deonticity of subjunctives
comes from a comparison of subjunctive and indicative
sentences with suggest, insist, and propose, the three
subjunctive predicates which can also take indicative
that-clauses:

(35) I suggest that he cheat. He should cheat, after all.

(36) They insisted that John be on time. They
    thought he should be prompt.

(37) We propose that the director be dismissed
    because of his ineptitude. He should be
    dismissed, too.

(38) I suggest that he cheats. He should cheat, after all.

(39) They insisted that John was on time. They
    thought he should be prompt.

(40) We propose that the director will be dis-
    missed because of his ineptitude. He should
    be dismissed, too.

The addition of should in the subjunctive sentences
(35) - (37) creates redundancy, because should is al-
ready implied by the use of the subjunctive that-clause.
The addition of should to the indicative sentences
(38) - (40) adds new information.
3. Sentences with let, make, and have

3.1 Formal characteristics

The second uninflected verb pattern which I would like to examine is the pattern in which the uninflected verb is embedded by let, make, or have. Examples of such sentences are these:

- (40) His parents let him go to the movies whenever he wants.
- (41) We finally made them see the light.
- (42) The judge had the criminal pay a large fine.

In some dialects, leave replaces let:

- (43) Leave him sit on the couch.

Let, make, and have sentences are formally similar to subjectives in several ways. First, as I have shown, they take uninflected verbs in their embedded clauses. Second, they take the same kind of negation as subjectives, when the scope of negation is the embedded clause:

- (44) I recommend that he not go to school.
- (45) His parents let him not go to school.
- (46) My suggestion was that he not read any more comic books.
- (47) I made him not read any more comic books.
- (48) He urged that the committee not promote her.
- (49) He had the committee not promote her.

One interesting difference between subjectives and have and make sentences is in the way the embedded clauses passivize. While subjectives and let and make sentences always have be in passive embedded clauses, sentences with have may drop the be:

- (50) They requested that he be examined by a doctor.
- (51) They let him be examined by a doctor.
- (52) They made him be examined by a doctor.
- (53) They had him be examined by a doctor.
- (54) They had him examined by a doctor.

Although sentences (53) and (54) seem equally acceptable to me, there are some cases in which have sentences with full be passives sound less acceptable than ones with reduced passives:

- (55) Mr. Johnson has his shirts pressed at the laundry.
- (56) *Mr. Johnson has his shirts be pressed at the laundry.
- (57) Have this typed immediately.
- (58) *Have this be typed immediately.

It seems to me that the trouble with sentences (56) and (58) is that they imply that a shirt could arrange to have itself pressed, or a letter to have itself typed. Sentence (53) was all right because a person
could have himself examined by a doctor. Note that make has the same kind of restriction on non-human passives:

(59) *I made this chair be repaired.
(60) *They always make their cats be neutered after their first litter.

Let, however, has no such restriction:

(61) I finally let my hair be cut after everyone told me how much nicer it would look.
(62) They let their cats be neutered.

One further confusion: although have- and make-sentences are causative, their nonhuman passive restriction is not shared by cause itself:

(63) Mr. Johnson causes his shirts to be pressed at the laundry.
(64) Cause this to be typed immediately.
(65) I caused this chair to be repaired.

The problem would be, then, to explain why the subjects of full embedded passives with have and make must be human, while the subjects of embedded actives with these verbs do not. While I do not know what the answer is, the answer is clearly not "because of restrictions on sentences of this syntactic type" (since let does not share the restriction) or "because nonhuman passives do not go with causatives" (because they are all right with cause). Beyond that, I do not know.

3.2 Semantic characteristics

3.2.1 Causativity

Sentences with have and make are causative. The subject (overt or understood) of have or make is getting something to happen; sentences like these can be paraphrased with sentences with cause or get:

(66) Bill had him leave the room.
(67) Bill caused him to leave the room.
(68) Bill got him to leave the room.
(69) They made it rain by seeding the clouds.
(70) They caused it to rain by seeding the clouds.
(71) They got it to rain by seeding the clouds.

Sentences with let are somewhat different; the best paraphrase of let, in many cases, is allow:

(72) His parents won't let him see "Emmanuelle."
(73) His parents won't allow him to see "Emmanuelle."

However, let is historically a causative. This is clear, for example, in its Biblical usage:

(74) And God said, "Let there be light."

There is some admixture of causativity along with permission in sentences like

(75) Let the dog out.

and even more in dialectal sentences like
(76) Let the bag set on that table there.  
So, although the meaning of let has shifted somewhat, it is clearly related to make and have, because of its causativity. I will henceforth use the word "causative" to refer to have, make, and let sentences. It seems to me that causatives and mandatives are semantically very closely related. In fact, I would like to claim that mandatives are a kind of spoken causatives. One way of causing something to happen is to tell someone to do something. There is a func-
tional continuum between causatives and mandatives in which bid might be seen as the mid-point, bid being a mandative which occurs in causative-like constructions
(77) He bids you be seated.
as well as subjunctives
(78) He bids that you be seated.
It would not be surprising, then, to find that caus-
atives share other semantic features with mandatives.

3.2.2 Future reference
For one thing, the uninflected verbs in causatives are in the future with reference to the main verb. Causatives are not acceptable with adverbials that would force the uninflected verb into the past:
(79) *He makes them do homework every day last year.
(80) *The president had the committee report to him the year before.
(81) *I let him go yesterday. (present tense)
With the perfect infinitive, causatives in the pre-
sent tense are not acceptable:
(82) *Make him have eaten dinner already.
(83) *They have us have come.
(84) *We let them have gone to the movies.
In past-tense causatives, perfect infinitives can only make the embedded clause past with relation to the moment of speaking. Even then they sound very clumsy. They must be future with relation to the moment of causing:
(85) ??I made him have arrived by 8:30, so he would be ready to start work by the time I came.
(86) ??The university had him have been examined by his family doctor before arriving on campus.
(87) ??Let him have gone by now.
Sentence (87) has a kind of prayer-like quality. Prayers, I think, are one case in which we can use mandatives and causatives that have true reference to the past; only God can make something already have happened. This is significant, because Bolinger's only example of an imperative with true past reference
(as opposed to ones with only formal pastness) is labelled as a prayer: "Her lips formed an agonized wish that was almost a prayer: 'Please, Neale, don't have read it yet!'" (Bolinger, p. 169).

While the embedded clause of a causative is always future with reference to the main clause, causatives do not share the "hypotheticalness" of subjunctives. If someone says

(88) He urged that we stop.

it is not clear whether we stopped or not. The stopping is in this sense hypothetical. (This is at least how Bolinger uses the word.) On the other hand,

(89) He made us stop.

implies that we stopped. Part of Bolinger's claim about the meaning of uninflectedness is that the action referred to by the uninflected verb is "unconfirmed or unaccomplished." Here is a clear exception to that generalization.

3.2.3 Modality

Like subjunctives, causatives involve a kind of modality. This is not the deontic should modality of subjunctives, but rather the modality of must. Note the redundancy of the following sentences.

(Since "make someone must" is ungrammatical for other reasons, I have used the paraphrase have to.)

(90) He made us have to stop talking.

(91) I have them have to do homework every night.

In other words, it is possible to make or have something happen without implying that it should happen (whereas you cannot command that something happen without implying that it should), but when something is made to happen or someone has something happen, then it must happen.

4. Reexamination of uninflectedness

4.1 Modality in other uninflected-verb patterns

Before pulling all of the things I have discussed together, I would like to examine the kinds of sentences Bolinger is concerned with to see if they, too, share a kind of modality, since this seems to be a striking feature of the sentence types I have examined, and one which Bolinger does not mention.

First, imperatives: Imperatives clearly share the deontic modality of subjunctives. When I say

(92) Sit down.

I mean that you should sit down. The following pairs of sentences are also related by implication:

(93) Get well soon./You should get well.
(94) Pray for rain. You should pray for rain. In Yiddish-influenced dialects, **should** is often used in imperative-like sentences:

(95) You should eat more!

Second, responses to suggestions and repetition of suggestions: Both of these sentence types also imply deontic modality:

(96) Why don't you type it yourself? - Yeah, and spend the next two weeks. (=You're saying I should spend the next two weeks.)

(97) Well, don't just sit there. - Not just sit here? But I enjoy just sitting here. (=I shouldn't just sit here? But...)

Third, expressions of disbelief or unlikeliness: Here the modality is slightly different from deontic, as Yiddish-English paraphrases make clear:

(98) My wife eat peas?! (=My wife should eat peas?!) She's never touched them in her life.

(99) You kill a fly?! (=You should have killed a fly?!?) You're too much of a sissy to even kill the lights.

### 4.2 Re-presentation and discussion

I would now like to return to Bolinger's claim about the meaning of uninflcted verbs, to see what all the above information has to do with it. I will first present things again in outline form (fig. 1).

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<tr>
<td>&quot;hypothetical meaning&quot;</td>
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<td>includes:</td>
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<tr>
<td>(a) Future reference</td>
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<td>(b) Action &quot;unconfirmed, unaccomplished&quot;</td>
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<td>(c) Causativity/Immandativity</td>
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<td>(d) Deontic modality, or</td>
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<th>suffixes</th>
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Fig. 1
We see now that Bolinger's claim about the meaning of the uninflected verbs in the sentences he examined does not entirely hold up for the kinds of sentences I have examined. Furthermore, there seems to be a strong tendency for sentences with uninflected verbs to be mandative/causative, and to include modality (usually deontic) as a semantic feature, two characteristics which Bolinger does not mention.

It seems to me that what ties all these uses of the uninflected verb together is that they all have something to do with the future, which is the realm of the unaccomplished and the modal. Events in the future cannot be reported about, but they can often be influenced by the hand or voice of man; hence they are "unconfirmed" but often causative or mandative. It is interesting to note that the will of the future tense\(^3\) is uninflected, and that it is usually considered a modal and is at least historically related to the will of intention. Uninflectedness, then, is a sort of aspectual marker in English which marks a cluster of notions which cannot be clearly separated: the class of events which have not yet happened but which might be caused to happen.

If this idea could be shown to stand up under further testing, then it is even stronger support for Bolinger's claim that form follows function than what he himself offers. It also suggests that microscopic formal and semantic analyses of this kind might be useful in the study of the cultural classifications of events which are reflected in the languages of other cultures.

Notes

1 The others are: suggest, insist, propose, bet, ask, plead, pray, require, command, implore, decree, advise, arrange, be eager, direct, instruct, intend, prefer, move, and vote.

2 Others are: plea, prayer, requirement, command, decree, advice, arrangement, eagerness, recommendation, desire, instruction, preference, move, and vote.

The only noun in this group that does not correspond to a verb in group (1) is wish.

3 Others are: advisable, better, desirable, fitting, imperative, necessary, preferable, and right.
"Theoretical" is misleading, because we do not refer to theories in the subjunctive. We say Columbus' theory was that the world is round.

*I wish that the meeting be postponed.
There is just one use of the present subjunctive with wish. This occurs with a nominalization:
It is my wish that he be imprisoned.

5. A sentence is mandative when its main function is to cause someone to do something. Although even a sentence like
I wish you would clean up your room.
can be mandative when said with the right intonation, we are concerned here only with sentences whose first reading when mentioned out of context is mandative.

6. These sentences were suggested by John Lawler.
Sentence (14) came from Newsweek.

7. This term was suggested by Ann Borkin (personal communication).

8. A detailed examination of modals is beyond the scope of this paper, though they would have to be included in a complete study of uninflectedness in English. There are several ways in which at least some modals are semantically similar to some of the patterns I am discussing: most modals refer to the future, most are hypothetical in meaning, and should and must in their root meanings, as well as ought and shall, can be deontic.

9. This is from the local dialect of central Pennsylvania, a kind of Appalachian but also influenced by Pennsylvania Dutch (German).

10. Negation with not is also a characteristic of several of the uninflected verb patterns discussed by Bolinger:
"Tell them your dog ate it." - "And not ever be able to show my face again? No, thanks."
"Sam not be there on time? Incredible."
"Just don't say anything about it." - "Not say anything? That's an idea."
In fact, negation with not is common to all uninflected-verb patterns except imperatives and very imperative-like patterns. Perhaps the do in imperative negations
with don't functions as a kind of speech-act marker, something like the Navy's "Now hear this" before commands.

11. The same dialect as mentioned above. Appalachian dialects are noted for their archaisms; this is an interesting example of what might be considered a semi-archaic meaning for let.

12. Although I do not intend to discuss imperatives in detail, it is worth noting that imperatives having to do with God are unusual in other ways as well. For example, although imperatives are usually not appropriate when the hearer would do the action anyway (*"Get out of here because you're already leaving," vs. "Get out of here because I said so"), "act of God" imperatives like "Obey Me of your own free will" are all right. Since imperatives (like subjunctives and causatives) are ways of getting things done, it is to be expected that an omnipotent being could use more different kinds of imperatives than an ordinary mortal!

13. This meaning is not exactly like the should of "I see his coat, so he should be here." In fact, I have not been able to find any other cases in English in which it is used in exactly this way. It is closest to German sollen as used in "Das soll Bier sein?! Dass ich nicht lache." (That's supposed to be beer?! That's a laugh.)

14. "Future" is used here not as the name of a formally marked tense (like "past perfect" or "simple present"), but to refer to a semantic category of events. Paz Naylor (personal communication) has suggested that since the distinction which I am describing has more to do with aspect that with time, a better label might be "unreal."

15. A note about the "going to" future: This form seems to be used more to talk about present states than for making real predictions, or for causing things to happen in the future. "I am going to go" means "I now intend to go;" we say "I predict that he will flunk" rather than "I predict that he is going to flunk," and in getting something to happen, we would say something with an uninflected verb, like "Do as I say," or "You will do as I say," rather than *"You are going to do as I say."
References

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