

72. Imperative–Hortative Systems

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1. Definition of values

This chapter documents the homogeneity of imperative–hortative paradigms. First, the notions of imperative and hortative will be defined. Then we turn to the issue of homogeneity.

1.1. Imperative and hortative. Imperatives and hortatives both have to do with the expression of a wish of the speaker about a future state of affairs. In this respect they are like **optatives** (see chapter 73), but in contrast to optatives, they convey an appeal to the addressee(s) to help make the future state of affairs true. In case the person in control of the desired state of affairs is the addressee or addressees, we speak of an *imperative*. In any other case, we speak of a *hortative*. Consider these examples from English:

- | | | | |
|-----|----|-------------------------------------|--------------|
| (1) | a. | <i>May he live a hundred years!</i> | (Optative) |
| | b. | <i>Sing!</i> | (Imperative) |
| | c. | <i>Let's sing!</i> | (Hortative) |
| | d. | <i>Let him sing!</i> | (Hortative) |

(1a) illustrates an optative. It expresses a wish of the speaker, but there is no appeal to the addressee to make it true. (1b–d) also express a wish of the speaker, and in each case, there is an appeal to the addressee to help make it true. With the desired future state of affairs specified as that of someone's singing, we note that the person who is supposed to sing is/are the addressee(s) in (1b). In (1c), however, the intended singer is the addressee(s) together with the speaker. And in (1d), the intended singer is a third person.

Note that negative structures such as (2), which can be called *prohibitives* (see chapter 71), fall outside the scope of this chapter.

(2) *Don't sing!*

The constructions studied have to be grammaticalized, but they need not be morphologically or syntactically uniquely imperative–hortative. Thus the English form *sing* is not morphologically dedicated; but the construction as a whole, without subject pronoun and with the verb in first position, may be said to be **syntactically** dedicated. Waunana (Choco; Colombia and Panama) illustrates a **morphologically** dedicated imperative second singular (see chapter 70).

(3) Waunana (Sanchez and Castro 1977: 73)

Cö-ba!

eat-IMP.2SG

'Eat!'

An example of an imperative that is neither morphologically nor syntactically dedicated can be found in Nunggubuyu (Australian, Gunwinyguan; Northern Territory, Australia), which uses the future for the expression of imperatives.

(4) Nunggubuyu (Heath 1984: 343–344)

Ba-bura!

2SG-sit.FUT.CONT

'Sit!' or 'You will sit!'

One could argue that Nunggubuyu does not have an imperative, or that the form called “future” is vague between a strictly future meaning and an imperative one. In the case of Nunggubuyu, in which no other form regularly conveys the imperative meaning,

the morphologically future forms will be counted as imperatives. This makes Nunggubuyu different from English. English *you will sit* will not be included as an imperative, nor will the modal construction in (5a) or the construction with a main verb *want* in (5b).

- (5) a. *You should sing!*
 b. *I want you to sing.*

Some cases are difficult to judge, even for a language as well studied as English. Third person *let*, for instance, can be analyzed as a main verb, much like *want* in (5b). Still, Quirk et al. (1985: 148) grant third person *let* the status of a pragmatic particle, although they note that the grammaticalization of the first person plural form *let's* has progressed further, in particular with respect to its univerbation with the pronoun.

Note that in terms of grammaticalizability, grammatical persons are not equal. Cross-linguistically, the most pervasively grammaticalized imperative–hortative is the imperative second singular, the order or request to just one addressee. The imperative–hortative that is least easily grammaticalized is the hortative first singular, the ‘let me’ meaning with which a speaker exhorts himself.

1.2. Formal homogeneity. The map distinguishes between four types of imperative–hortative systems. The basic parameter is what we will call the formal **homogeneity** of the system, but we will also need two interlinked auxiliary notions, viz. the **maximality** or **minimality** of the homogeneity, defined in terms of homogeneity with the imperative second singular.

As to the notion of homogeneity, two imperative–hortative forms will be called *homogeneous* if they are formed using the same kind of morphological or syntactic means. The following parameters are relevant: (i) is the construction dedicated to the imperative–hortative? (ii) insofar as the strategy is

morphological, is it of the same type in terms of distinctions such as base modification vs. affixation or, within affixation, is the relevant affix ordered in the same position relative to the base? and (iii) insofar as the strategy is syntactic, is it of the same type in terms of the presence of e.g. imperative–hortative particles or pronouns? Note that in determinations of morphological homogeneity, we allow zero morphemes. In some cases it can be difficult to decide whether a marker is bound (morphological) or free (syntactic) — see Creissels (2000: 235, 238), who claims that for West African languages what are traditionally called pronouns should be analyzed as prefixes.

As to maximality and minimality, if a language has a system with an imperative second person singular that is not formally homogeneous with any of the other forms, then the language will be said to have a “minimal system”. If, on the other hand, the second singular imperative is formally homogeneous with the other second persons, with the third persons, and with at least an inclusive first person plural, then the language will be said to have a “maximal system”. In terms of maximality and minimality the map distinguishes between four systems.

@	1. The language has a maximal system, but not a minimal one.	133
@	2. The language has a minimal system, but not a maximal one.	20
@	3. The language has both a maximal and a minimal system.	21
@	4. The language has neither a maximal nor a minimal system.	201
	total	375

The first type shown on the map includes **languages with a maximal system and no minimal one**. An example is Hungarian. A so-called “indefinite” paradigm for the verb *vár* ‘wait’ is shown in (6).

(6) Hungarian (Kenesei et al. 1998: 311)

	SINGULAR	PLURAL
1		<i>várjunk</i>
2	<i>várj(ál)</i>	<i>várjatok</i>
3	<i>várjon</i>	<i>várjanak</i>

Here there is complete homogeneity: all of the morphology is suffixal and none is fully dedicated, for the forms also have a subordinate subjunctive use. Note that the slot for the first singular remains empty. In fact, there is a first singular, and it is used with a hortative meaning, but then it is obligatorily accompanied by *hadd*, a particle meaning ‘let’. This particle is optional for the other persons. So one could say that Hungarian even has two maximal imperative–hortative systems: one with *hadd* for all six persons, and one without *hadd* for all but the first singular.

The second type is that of **languages that have a minimal system, but no maximal one**. Consider the system of the intransitive imperative–hortatives of Soninke (Western Mande; Mali and Senegal). The imperative second singular consists of the bare stem with no personal pronoun. Since this strategy is not found for any other person, it qualifies as a minimal system. For the other persons there is no one strategy; hence there is no maximal system. The second person plural combines the stem with a special form of the second person pronoun. The hortatives require the normal pronoun as well as the marker *n* or the markers *nà* and *n*.

(7) Soninke (Diagana 1995: 239)

a.	IMP.2SG:	no pronoun + stem
b.	IMP.2PL:	special pronoun + stem
c.	HORT.1PL:	normal pronoun + <i>n</i> + stem
	HORT.3SG/3PL:	normal pronoun + <i>n</i> + stem
d.	HORT.3SG/3PL:	normal pronoun + <i>nà</i> <i>n</i> + stem

The third type of language shown on the map has **both a minimal and a maximal system**. In Lingala (Bantu; Democratic Republic of Congo) the imperative second singular consists of the root of the verb, followed by a high tone suffix *-á*.

(8) Lingala (Meeuwis 1998: 28)

Sál-á!

work-EPV.IMP.SG

'Work!'

This constitutes a minimal system. In order to express an order or a request to more than one addressee, Lingala resorts to what Meeuwis (1998: 29) calls a subjunctive strategy; it is formally different (person-number prefix, no high tone on the suffix) and it has a wider semantic range. This subjunctive codes not only orders and requests addressed to the second plural but to all persons, including the second singular (Meeuwis 1998: 29, and p.c.). Thus Lingala also has a maximal imperative-hortative system.

(9) Lingala (Meeuwis 1998: 28, and p.c.)

	SINGULAR	PLURAL
1	<i>ná-sál-a</i>	<i>á-sál-a</i>
2	<i>ó-sál-a</i>	<i>bó-sál-a</i>
3	<i>tó-sál-a</i>	<i>bá-sál-a</i>

The fourth type of language has **neither a maximal nor a minimal system**. Meadow Mari (Uralic; Russia) has suffixal second person imperatives. Third person hortatives have the same structure, and Sebeok and Ingemann (1961: 21-22) list only one paradigm, comprising both the second and third person forms. This system is neither minimal nor maximal.

(10) Meadow Mari (Sebeok and Ingemann 1961: 21-22)

	SINGULAR	PLURAL
2	-Ø /-t	-za/-sa
3	-še/-že/-šo/-žo/-šö/-žö	-(ə)št

2. Geographical distribution

The map shows that most languages have neither a minimal nor a maximal strategy. Put positively, they have a strategy common to the second singular and plural, optionally including also the first plural or the third person, but not both the first plural and the third person. This strategy is found across the world. The only area in which it does not seem particularly common is eastern Eurasia.

The maximal strategy is also well represented. The only clear area where it is absent is central Europe. The strategy does occur in Irish, but then it skips the central area, to show up again in the Balkans — as a Balkanism (Ammann and van der Auwera in press) — and in Finno-Ugric, in both the north with e.g. Estonian, and the south with Hungarian; finally, we land in eastern Eurasia, an area for which it seems most typical.

The minimal strategy is most typical for an area extending from West Africa to central Congo. There it occurs in different families of Niger-Congo: e.g. Supyire (Gur; Mali), Idoma (Benue-Congo; Nigeria), Vai (Mande; Sierra Leone), and Talinga (Bantu; Uganda). This is also the area that is typical for having both a minimal and a maximal system, this time drawing from even more widely divergent genetic groups, with e.g. Koyraboro Senni (Songhay; Mali), Hausa (Chadic; Niger), and within Niger-Congo e.g. Koromfe (Gur; Burkina Faso), Grebo (Kru; Liberia), Birom (Platoid; Nigeria), Bambara (Mande; Mali), and Lingala (Bantu; Democratic Republic of Congo).

3. Theoretical issues

There are two main problems. One is how to distinguish

between imperatives, hortatives, optatives, jussives, subjunctives, irrealis and still other categories. Recent work includes Xrakovskij (2001) and Ammann and van der Auwera (2004). The other problem concerns the demarcation of imperative–hortatives from deontic modality. Some ideas can be found in Palmer (1986) and in Hengeveld (in press).