

Person, politeness, and the embeddability of imperatives

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1. Drawing a new connection: politeness and imperatives. Many languages have grammatical markers of politeness that cannot be freely embedded. These markers express information on the social/hierarchical relation between speaker and addressee. Examples include allocutive agreement in Basque (Oyharçabal 1993), the Japanese politeness marker *-mas* (Miyagawa 2012), and the speech style particles of Korean exemplified in (1) and (2):

- (1) *pi-ka oass-supnita.*
rain-nom came-dec.formal
'It rained.'
- (2) **Inho-ka [pi-ka oass-supnita-ko] hayssta.*
Inho-nom rain-nom came-formal-comp said
(Intended) 'Inho said it rained.'

In this paper, we argue that the same factor that prevents markers of politeness from being embedded is also at play in an unexpected place: it constrains the embedding of imperatives.

We develop this insight into a formal analysis that combines ideas from the treatment of imperatives by Zanuttini et al. (2012), the analysis of second person pronouns of Baker (2008) and Kratzer (2009), and the representation of the addressee in the left periphery by Speas and Tenny (2003), Miyagawa (2012), Haegeman and Hill (2013) and Zu (2018).

Drawing a connection between the encoding of the speaker-addressee relation and the embedding of imperatives allows us to understand the complex patterns that we find. Cross-linguistically, we see the difference in embedding illustrated by Italian, where a canonical imperative cannot be embedded (3) and by Korean, where an imperative can be embedded if marked with a “plain form particle” (4), which does not encode information on the speaker/addressee relation:

- (3) **Ha ordinato mangia.*
has ordered eat.Imp
(Intended: 'He/she ordered to eat!')
- (4) *Inho-ka mek-ula-ko hayssta.*
Inho-Nom eat-*Imp.pln*-Comp said-dec
'Inho said to eat.'

2. Our hypotheses. Intuitively, imperatives are often “face threatening” because they are seen as an imposition on the addressee. In our view, this reflects the fact that imperatives, in many cases, express that the speaker is socially higher than (with power over) the addressee. In languages like English, the marking of the social relation between speaker and addressee is covert; however, in other languages it is expressed overtly. We encode the speaker-addressee relation in the syntax with a feature [status], whose values are [status: $S < A$], [status: $S \geq A$], etc. We have developed a semantics for the [status] feature in a paper to appear in *Language*.

The first hypothesis we make is that **imperatives differ from other clause types in their functional structure and its connection to the subject**. Specifically, all imperative clauses have a functional projection JussiveP that introduces the 2nd person feature and Agrees with the subject, thus sharing the person feature with it ([author: -]). This explains the well-known restriction on imperative subjects to the second person.

The second hypothesis is that **the [status] feature is linked to the person feature**. Specifically, when [status] is present, it always co-occurs on a functional head with the person feature in the left periphery.

Our third hypothesis is that, **when imperatives cannot be embedded, it is because they contain the [status] feature in the functional structure of the clause**. When [status] is absent, imperatives can be embedded.

3. The speaker-addressee relation in syntax. According to our previous work, when the [status] feature is present, it is introduced in the projection of the left periphery that also introduces first and second person features in the way proposed by Baker (2008) and Kratzer (2009). This projection, which we label cP ('little c' for 'context'), cannot be embedded because of the special meaning of [status], which “performatively” affects the discourse context. We take Korean speech style particles, allocutive agreement, and Japanese *-mas* to realize c directly; the restriction on embedding cP thus accounts for the main clause status of

these forms. In contrast, we take second person pronouns to be bound by *c* and receive both their person feature [author: -] and the [status] feature from it. We argue that they can occur in embedded clauses precisely because they receive their features via binding. That is, they are minimal pronouns and get their [status] feature from the functional head *c* (which is in the main clause) by binding and subsequent agreement, in a way similar to how person features are treated by Kratzer (2009) and Baker (2008).

In imperatives, the Jussive head introduces the second person feature, and so it plays the role of *c*. (We assume that Jussive and *c* are both projected but are spelled out together, but one could also consider Jussive a variety of *c*.) Thus, in imperatives, Jussive+*c* hosts both the person feature [author: -] and the [status] feature. What is special about the Jussive head is that it *Agrees* with the subject, and shares features with it (and with *T*) that way. Thus it must be in the same clause as the imperative subject.

4. Explaining the embeddability of imperatives. In Korean, all clauses (imperatives included) can be embedded when they have a plain form particle, as in (4); this is because the plain form particle does not mark [status]. In contrast, clauses (imperatives included) cannot be embedded when they have a speech style particle; this is because they mark [status]. We see this in the declarative in (2) and the imperative in (5), which contrasts with (4):

(5) *Inho-ka [mek-eyo-ko] hayss-ta.
 Inho-Nom eat-*Imp.Polite*-Comp said-dec
 Intended: ‘Inho said to eat.’

In other words, Korean has imperatives with the [status] feature (5) and imperatives without it (4), and only the latter can be embedded. In other languages, like Italian, one cannot remove the [status] feature from an imperative. We explain this in terms of the interplay between imperative structure and the features marked on a second person pronoun. Specifically, because the subject pronoun (when overt) and verb form mark the polite-familiar relation (cf. (6)-(7)), [status] must always be present when the person feature [author: -] is present:

(6) Rispetta l’ambiente! respect. <i>Imp</i> the-environment ‘Respect the environment!’ (familiar)	(7) Rispetti l’ambiente! respect- <i>Subj</i> the-environment ‘Respect the environment!’ (polite)
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Thus, there is no direct analogue in Italian of the Korean plain form, i.e. an imperative clause that does not encode [status]. Hence there are no embedded imperatives. The closest thing would be the infinitival directives like (8), which state a requirement on people in general:

(8) Rispettare l’ambiente! respect- <i>Inf</i> the-environment ‘Respect the environment!’ (to people in general)	(9) Rispettare i (*tuoi/*vostri) genitori! respect the your(sing/pl) parents ‘Respect (your) parents!’
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Crucially, the infinitival directive cannot contain a second person pronoun, (9), because it lacks the [status] and person features.

5. Conclusion. We have proposed that, in some languages, the person feature goes hand-in-hand with the [status] feature, which conveys information on the speaker/addressee relation. Building on this, we have put forth a new approach to the embeddability of imperatives. Whereas most work has assumed that the restriction on embedding imperatives has to do with their directive illocutionary force, we propose that it is due to their encoding of the speaker/addressee relation. This allows us to draw a connection between imperatives and main clause phenomena that involve the speaker/addressee relation, such as speech style marking and allocutive agreement.