Who controls who (or what)*

Magdalena Kaufmann
University of Connecticut

Abstract Language can be used to bridge the gap between expert knowledge and ability to act. I argue that this function is grammaticalized in imperatives (and in some languages, larger paradigms of directives), and that this becomes evident in restrictions on the (co-)reference of their subjects. I develop an account of the conventional semantics of imperatives and directives in general that associates the prohibited constellations with conflicting discourse requirements.

Keywords: imperatives, modals, subjunctives, perspective, obviation

1 Introduction

The imperative clauses of any given language are commonly identified as the sentential form types that are prototypically used for ordering. Orders are a form of directive speech acts, which can be defined as 'attempts [. . .] by the speaker to get the hearer to do something' (Searle 1976: 11). (1) exemplifies different strategies of marking imperative(clause)s, including syntactic means as in English, verbal morphology as in Japanese and Slovenian, a combination thereof in German, or sentence-final particles as in Korean.

(1)   a.   Read this book!   English

        b.   Kono hon-o   yom-e!   Japanese
            this   book-ACC read-IMP

        c.   Preberi to   knjigo!   Slovenian
            read.IMP this.F.SG.ACC book.F.SG.ACC

        d.   Lies   dieses Buch!   German
            read.IMP this   book

        e.   I   chayk-ul ilk-ela.   Korean
            this book-ACC read-IMP

From the use of a Searlean definition of directive speech acts as the heuristic for the individuation of imperatives across languages, it follows that, on their canonical use, they involve the utterance speaker and addressee intended hearer) in two roles that I will *director* and *instigator*, respectively. When examining the most typical of the thus individuated forms (see Sect. 2.2 for others), it stands out that across the different formal marking strategies there is a grammatical connection with the addressee: the addressee is the referent of the often covert grammatical subject (Aikhenvald 2010: 66), which can be realized overtly for emphasis or contrast. This is exemplified in (2), where the reflexive bound by the subject bears second person marking independently of whether there is an overt subject.[1]

(2)   Wasch   { Ø, du   } dich!
        wash.SG.IMP { Ø, 2.NOM } 2SG.REFL
        '(You) wash yourself!'

I refer to the thus individuated forms as *canonical (second person) imperatives*, and their behavior can be summarized as in (3):

(3)   Canonical imperative 'ϕ!' (with *prejacent* ϕ) in its prototypical use:

        a.   The utterance speaker plays the role of a *director*, who selects and promotes the course of events described by ϕ.
        b.   The utterance addressee is the *instigator*, who *sees to it that* (or, causes) the course of events described by ϕ
        c.   The grammatical subject of ϕ refers to the utterance addressee.[2]

The restriction on the grammatical subject has received considerable attention in the literature, and is sometimes considered definitional for canonical imperatives (Ammann & van der Auwera 2004). Following the standard view, I assume that this link is determined by the grammar. It is more controversial to what degree speech act related aspects are part of what is encoded linguistically, and if so, if this happens at the level of compositional semantics (and could thus feed into the composition of larger linguistic entities) or post-compositionally (in terms of use conditions that guide updates in a discourse model).[3] Accounts differ specifically in which (if any)

---

1 In some languages such 'second person' imperative forms can occur with quantifiers or third person referential expressions like proper names as subjects (e.g. *Nobody moves!; Kids, Sebastian open the door and Tobias put away the toys.*). Downing (1969) claims that the subject of an English imperative has to refer to (an element of), or quantify over, the (set of) addressee(s). In Kaufmann 2012, I defend his claim against Potsdam 1998 and Zanuttini, Pak & Portner 2012, and provide an analysis that constrains imperative subjects to referential or quantificational expressions that are, or can be mapped to, quantifiers over (subsets of) the set of addressees.

2 Or quantifies over (a subset of) the set of addressees, see Fn. 1.

3 Speech act related meaning at the compositional level is adopted a.o. by Kamp (1978), Krifka (2014),

of the prototypical links between grammatical subject, instigator, and addressee are encoded conventionally, and even more so, if the speaker (or, in terms of role, the director) appears in the syntax or the semantics of imperative clauses.[4]

In the following, I argue that canonical imperative clauses are the central players in a possibly larger paradigm of directive clauses, which languages grammaticalize to close with linguistic means a gap between presumed expert knowledge and the power to realize a presumed optimal course of events. To develop this point, I turn to embedded imperatives and imperative-like directives (**surrogate imperatives**). I focus on the parameter of the director and show the grammatical impact of this role in connection with the value of subject and instigator in the form of a co-reference restriction (*directive obviation*). I develop an account for these data that is compatible with a syntactic representation of the director but does not require it–as long (i) as the linguistic structure contains some element(s) that encode(s) speech act related meanings that reference the director, and (ii) the parameter of who counts as the director can be influenced by switches in perspective as associated with interrogative formation or attitude reports.

2 Canonical imperatives as part of linguistic systems

The recent literature on imperatives emphasizes the need to consider canonical second person imperatives in the context of larger linguistic structures as well as in comparison with other forms that overlap or are closely related in function (Alcázar & Saltarelli 2014; von Fintel & Iatridou 2017).

2.1 Embedded imperatives

Contrary to what has long been the received wisdom on imperative clauses, in many languages the morpho-syntactic form elements characteristic of canonical matrix imperatives can appear in the syntactic and semantic scope of other linguistic material. Complements of indirect speech reports constitute the most wide-spread such context, exemplified in (4)–(6)::

Murray (2014), Starr (2011). For imperatives specifically, Portner (2007) and Rudin (2018) propose post-compositional speech act related meanings in the form of use-conditions and as moves in Farkas & Bruce's (2010) Table Model, respectively.

4 Accounts that do not assume the speaker or director to be linguistically encoded in any way include Hausser 1980, Huntley 1984, Han 1999, Han 2000, Portner 2005, Portner 2007, Barker 2010, von Fintel & Iatridou 2017. In contrast, the speaker plays a role in the conventional meanings assigned in Bierwisch 1980, Schwager 2006, Kaufmann 2012, Eckardt 2011, Condoravdi & Lauer 2012, and Oikonomou 2016 a.o. Isac (2015) sees no evidence for the speaker's syntactic relevance in imperative clauses, whereas Alcázar & Saltarelli (2014) and Stegovec (2019) argue in favor of a syntactic representation.

(4) Rekel (ti) je, da mu   pomagaj.
     said.M (2.Dat) is that 3.M.DAT help.IMP.(2)
     'He$_i$ said (to you) that you should help him$_{i,k}$.'

                                    Slovenian, Sheppard & Golden (2002)

(5) Hans hat gesagt ruf   seinen Vater an.
     Hans has said   call.IMP his   father up
     'Hans$_i$ said that you should call his$_{i,l}$ father.'   [%]German, Schwager (2006)

(6) John$_i$ said call his$_{i,k}$ father.   [%]English, Crnič & Trinh (2009)

With some speaker variation, the German and English examples are ambiguous between direct and indirect speech reports. The direct speech construal can be excluded on semantic grounds when indexicals are interpreted with respect to the actual utterance context (for further tests, see Crnič & Trinh 2009). In Slovenian, no such ambiguity results thanks to the non-quotative complementizer *da*.[5]

Before comparing them to matrix imperatives, it is worth noting that languages differ in what counts as the 'addressee' picked out by the grammatical subject. Speech reports involve two utterance contexts, the ***reporting context*** in which the report is made (absent further embedding, the actual utterance context), as well as the context that is being described (***reported context***). With that, they involve an actual and a reported addressee. Kaufmann (2014) shows that languages differ in which of the two is referenced by the subject of an embedded imperative: for instance, Slovenian second person imperatives relate to the actual addressee (Stegovec & Kaufmann 2015), Korean imperatives relate to the reported addressee (Portner 2007). For speakers of English who accept imperatives in indirect speech, either reading seems possible. In (7), the indicated interpretation of the indexicals ensures a construal as indirect speech, and (7a) favors interpreting the embedded subject as referring to the actual addressee (Peter), (7b) to the addressee of the reported context (Mary):

(7) a. [Context: *Peter's visa is about to expire. Mary tells him:*]
         I$_i$ talked to a lawyer yesterday, and he said marry my$_i$ sister.
     b. [Context: *Mary has lost her wallet. She tells her husband:*]
         I talked to John, and he$_i$ said call his$_i$ bank.

Stegovec & Kaufmann (2015) attribute these cross-linguistic differences to non-

---

5 Embedded imperatives are also attested for instance in Old Scandinavian (Rögnvaldsson 1998), Japanese (Han 1999; Oshima 2006; Schwager 2006), Korean (Pak, Portner & Zanuttini 2008), and Mbyá (Guillaume 2012). However, not all languages allow for embedding of imperatives in indirect speech: examples as in (4) to (6) seem to be unavailable for instance in Greek, French, Italian, or Bosnian-Croatian-Serbian. So far, little is known about what properties this correlates with; Portner, Pak & Zanuttini (2019) suggest to relate it to contextual anchoring as required by politeness marking.

shiftable, obligatorily shifting, and optionally shifting indexicality in the imperative subject marking.[6]

2.2 Other directives

After an initial focus on canonical second person imperatives,[7] more recent works on the semantics of imperative clauses emphasize the relevance of other forms in imperative-like usages (***surrogate imperatives***). Canonical and surrogate imperatives together constitute the class of ***directive clauses*** (or ***directives***).

Alternatives to canonical morphosyntactic imperative marking are employed to form negative imperatives in languages where morphosyntactic imperative marking cannot co-occur with negation. Italian, for instance, employs infinitivals as in (8).[8]

(8) Leggi! – Non {leggere, *leggi}.
     read.IMP2 – not   read.INF, read.IMP2
     'Read!' – 'Don't read!'   Italian

Moreover, some languages employ alternative forms for directions formulated with prejacents whose subjects don't refer to the addressee(s).[9] For instance, in Bhojpuri, second person imperatives belong to a morphological paradigm that also contains first and third person forms as in (9) (Zanuttini et al. 2012); Slovenian employs subjunctives as in (10).

(9) Tebulwa: sa:ph   rahe!
     table-NOM clean-NOM be-IMP3Sg
     'Let the table be clean!'   Bhojpuri, (Zanuttini et al. 2012)

(10) Naj pomaga!
      SBJV help.3
      '(S)he should help!'   Slovenian, *naj*-subjunctive

We might ask how these pass our definition of imperatives (or: directives) as, on their protoypical use, expressing orders to the addressee to see to it that a certain course of events be realized. In our terms, this implies that even if the grammatical subject is a third person expression that does not refer to the addressee, it is still the latter who plays the role of the instigator. Zanuttini et al. (2012) consider this part of the conventional meaning of a form like (9) and call these 'third person imperatives'

---

6 In German, indirect speech reports with imperatives are possible only if the two contexts share the same addressee, (Kaufmann & Poschmann 2013).

7 For exceptions, see for instance the discussions of *let's* in Davies 1986 and Mastop 2005.

8 Given that the incompatibility between imperative marking and negation is not universal, most authors propose a syntactic solution (e.g. Zanuttini 1997; Zeiljstra 2006; Isac 2015).

9 Or quantify over (subsets of) the set of addressees, see Fn. 1.

(similarly Isac 2015 for Romanian subjunctives). For Slovenian, Stegovec (2019) argues that it is not part of the conventional meaning that the addressee is the instigator, but typically the inference will arise that the addressee is expected to contribute to the realization of the prejacent (for instance, by conveying a message to the referent of the subject). As the heuristic of association with ordering is concerned with prototypical use only, both takes are compatible with classifying such cases as third person imperatives or directives.

The cases discussed so far serve to fill gaps where the regular morphosyntactic marking of second person imperatives cannot be used. However, surrogate imperatives can also appear in what seems to be free variation with canonical second person imperatives, as witnessed by Greek *na*-subjunctives and Slovenian *da*-clauses. However, the cases of that type that have been discussed in the literature all display slight differences in functional type (unlike the cases in (8)–(10)). For Greek, Oikonomou (2016) shows that *na*-subjunctives with second person subjects and morphological imperatives differ with respect to default temporal interpretation and in whether they can be used for wishes (Fn. 16). Another subclass of surrogate imperatives is confined to command-like uses of imperatives (***strong directives***, von Fintel & Iatridou 2017), as for instance Slovenian *da*-clauses.

(11) Greek:

    a.   Trekse tora amesos!   imperative
          run.IMP now immediately

    b.   Na   treksis tora amesos!   *na*-subjunctive
          SBJV run   now immediately
          'Run right now!'   command, invitation, advice,. . .

(12) Slovenian

    a.   Pojdi levo!   imperative
          go.IMP left
          'Go left!'

    b.   Da mi   greš levo!   *da*-clause;
          that 1.DAT go.2 left
          'Go left!'   only command

Person	Sg	Pl
1(Excl)	naj pomaga-m	naj pomaga-mo
	I should help	we.EXCL should help
1+2	–	pomaga-j-mo
		(we.INCL) let's help
2	pomaga-j	pomaga-j-te
	(you.SG) help!	(you.PL) help!
3	naj pomaga	naj pomag-jo
	(s)he should help	they should help

Table 1   Slovenian directive paradigm (dual forms pattern with plurals)

3 Directive obviation

3.1 Slovenian directives: imperatives and *naj*-subjunctives

Slovenian verbs have inflectional forms for second person singular, dual, and plural, as well as first person inclusive[10] dual and plural imperatives. Stegovec (2019) argues that subjunctive forms (marked with the particle *naj* and regular indicative person morphology) fill in a full person paradigm of directive clauses (cf. Table 1): they serve for non-constative speech acts which typically aim at getting the addressee (possibly together with others) to influence the course of events in the way specified. In addition to their functional similarity, Stegovec (2019) points out that these forms jointly participate in a pattern of person restrictions that I call **_directive obviation_**:[11] in main clauses, their distribution is constrained by utterance function (directing vs. asking), in embedded clauses, it is constrained by the reference of the matrix subject.

When directives are used for orders, requests, advice, or the like, their subject can be second person as in regular imperative clauses, first person inclusive (sometimes labeled **_exhortatives_**), or third person. However, first person exclusive forms (singular or plural) are ungrammatical:

(13)   Main clause directive: anyone *but first person exclusive*.

   a.   *Naj pomagam! – *Naj pomagamo!
         SBJV help.1   –   SBJV help.1Pl
         int.: 'I should help!' – int.: 'We should help!'

---

10 First person inclusive expresses reference to the speaker and addressee(s) (and possibly others) together, first person exclusive to the speaker (and possibly individuals other than the addressee(s)).

11 Stegovec uses the term 'generalized obviation'.

b. Pomagaj! – Pomagajte! – Pomagajmo!
help.IMP.2 – Help.IMP.2Pl – Help.IMP.1Pl(Incl)
'Help!' – to more than to people: 'Help!' – 'Let's help!'

c. Naj pomaga! – Naj pomagajo!
SBJV help.3 – SBJV help.3Pl
'(S)he should help!' – 'They should help!'

In information seeking interrogatives, subjects whose referents include the addressee(s) (including first person plural inclusive) are unacceptable:

(14) Interrogative: anyone *but second person*.

a. Naj pomagam? – Naj pomagamo?
SBJV help.1 – SBJV help.1Pl
'Should I help?' – 'Should we (*not including you*) help?'

b. *Pomagaj? – *Pomagajte? – *Pomagajmo?
help.IMP2 – Help.IMP.2Pl – Help.IMP.1Pl(Incl)
int.: 'Should { you(*sg*) you(*pl*) we (*including you*) } help?'

c. Naj pomaga? – Naj pomagajo?
SBJV help.3 – SBJV help.3Pl
'Should (s)he help?' – 'Should they help?'

For embedded occurrences, the matrix attitude holder becomes decisive: directives are unacceptable if this is who their subject refers to. The general schema for the embedded case is given in (15), an example for the second person case in (16).

(15) Embedded directive: anyone *but attitude holder*.

a. I said that *I/you/he should. . .
b. You said that I/*you/he should . . .
c. (S)he$_i$ said (to Y) that I/you/(s)he$_{*i/j}$ should. . .

(16) *Rekel si$_\mathbf{i}$, da več telovadi$_\mathbf{i}$.
said.M are.2 that more exercise.IMP.(2)
int.: 'You said that you should exercise more.

Stegovec (2019) argues convincingly that these constraints are grammatical in nature: 'An objection one could raise here is that the coreference ban is not a grammatical effect—it is merely odd in most cases to tell or remind oneself what to do, so reporting such cases should be likewise odd. [. . .] does not hold up mainly because [. . .] *scenarios of this kind can be reported felicitously—just not using imperatives or subjunctives*.' (Stegovec 2019: emphasis mine) Imagine you hear me proclaim 'I should exercise more!'. Then, while you can't use (16) to remind me, you can very well use (17):

(17) Rekel si$_i$, da moraš$_i$ več telovadit.
      said.M are.2 that should.2 more exercise.INF
      'You$_i$ said that you$_i$ should exercise more.'

Stegovec concludes that the problem is grammatical in nature, and in fact, syntactic. In the following, I argue that he is right in seeing it as grammatically encoded, however, I suggest that the effect arises for semantic reasons: in a nutshell, while telling oneself to do something (and reporting such an utterance) is perfectly possible, such a situation is incompatible with conventionally encoded requirements for the felicitous use of directives. But before considering his account and developing a semantic alternative, I place directive obviation in the broader context of related linguistic phenomena that also inform Stegovec's account.

3.2 Implications and comparable patterns

Directive obviation emerges as a pattern where grammar bans reference of a directive's subject to the speaker (in a matrix directive clauses), the addressee (in matrix interrogatives), and the referent of the matrix subject (in embedded directives). With this, it looks like an instance of a series of phenomena that have been taken to depend on a perspective holder that varies between utterance speaker in the base case, addressee in interrogatives, and referent of the matrix subject in attitude or speech reports. The change in dependency between matrix declaratives and interrogatives specifically is known as ***interrogative flip***. Speas & Tenny (2003) adduce a long list of phenomena including epistemic modals, Japanese experiencer predicates, and speech act adverbials. Another phenomenon they mention is conjunct-disjunct marking as found in Kathmandu Newari; this consists in verbal subject agreement that distinguishes between subjects referring to the perspectival center (determined according to the lines described) in contrast to any other individual (Hale 1980; Wechsler 2018; Zu 2018).

Speas & Tenny provide an account for the interaction between perspective dependence and clause type that relates illocutionary forces to syntactic configurations. They argue that speaker, hearer, and ***perspectival center*** (the 'seat of knowledge', the individual "who can evaluate, or process, or comment on the truth of a proposition", p. 332) are represented in specifier and argument positions of two functional heads relating to speech act and evidence, respectively. Clause types differ in where speaker and addressee are realized in the structure and what the seat of knowledge is coindexed with: in matrix declaratives, it is the representation of the speaker; in matrix interrogatives, of the addressee; in clauses embedded under verba dicendi and sentiendi, the matrix subject (denoting the attitude holder). Speas & Tenny (also Alcázar & Saltarelli 2014) intend the speech act related projections in the left

clausal periphery as improved versions of Ross's (1970) ***performative hypothesis***, which analyzes clause types as surface versions of the corresponding explicitly performative construction (exemplified in (18) and (19)).

(18)   a.   You are reading this book.
       b.   I assert that you are reading this book.

(19)   a.   Read this book.
       b.   I order you to read this book.

The classical explicit performative hypothesis is bevexed by a series of problems, most prominently incorrect truth-conditions (compare (18a) and (18b)) and overly specific illocutionary forces (for instance, (19a) could just as well be used for advising rather than ordering). Speas & Tenny argue that their version avoids these issues while retaining the explanation for why utterance speaker and subjects of speech and attitude reports play analogous roles for perspective dependent items in matrix and embedded clauses, respectively.

When comparing the pattern of directive obviation to other perspective sensitive phenomena, it stands out that what we considered the base case (matrix clauses sensitive to the utterance speaker) are directives in the former but declaratives used for assertions for the latter. Intuitively, this does reflect a unified understanding of perspective sensitivity: what Speas & Tenny (2003) consider the perspective holder (seat of knowledge) for epistemic modals, evidentials, taste predicates, and the like seems to correspond to the director as the person knowledgeable about whatever criteria underly the choice of action promoted for a directive.[12] Similarly, for interrogatives with directive subjunctive or imperative marking on the main verb, it is the addressee who is asked what course of actions to select, suggesting that the addressee is granted epistemic authority about what is the best choice of action.

When focusing only on embedded directive subjunctives (ignoring embedded second person imperatives for the moment), directive obviation is an instance of subject obviation as familiar from subjunctive marked complement clauses for instance in Romance languages or in Hungarian. Subjunctives under verbs of directing and desiring are well-known to disallow co-reference between matrix and embedded subject (for an overview, see Quer 2006).[13]

---

12 Speas & Tenny (2003) argue for a syntactic structure that links the seat of knowledge in imperative clauses to the addressee as the indidvidual that is "responsible for realizing the unrealized (nonfinite) proposition", (p. 335). In light of the pattern of directive obviation, I take it that, on their account, the seat of knowledge should be linked to the speaker instead, just as it is in a declarative clause.

13 Stegovec (2019) is the first to extend this paradigm to include embedded imperatives (and matrix interrogatives), but Kempchinsky (2009) already notices the parallel between the lack of first person (exclusive) imperatives and subject obviation in subjunctive marked complement clauses (which she calls quasi-imperatives).

(20) [SUBJ$_i$ { want, hope, insist, … } [SUBJ$_{j,*i}$ … VERB$_{Subjunctive}$ …]]

(21) a. Je veux partir.
          I want leave.INF
          'I want to leave.'   Ruwet (1984)
      b. *Je veux que je parte.
          I want that I leave.SUBJ

Most of the existing literature adopts one of the following two approaches. First, subjunctives can be seen to compete with constructions like (21a) that are structurally simpler (e.g. Bouchard 1983) or encode additional conventional meaning (e.g. responsibility for the course of events, Farkas 1985, or that the attitude is held *de se* Schlenker 2005). For desiderative and directive matrix verbs, Kempchinsky (2009) argues that a blocking account fails to account for the absence of comparable obviation effects with object control verbs. For Slovenian embedded directives, Stegovec (2019) rejects a blocking account mostly for the lack of a suitable competitor and because it is unclear how to extend it to the constraints observed with matrix clauses. Second, authors have tried to reduce subject obviation to a Condition B effect, that is, a locality violation between embedded and matrix subject. The restriction, would, for instance, fall out from independently motivated assumptions if in the relevant cases of embedded subjunctive clauses, the binding domain of the embedded subject is extended to include the matrix subject. Accounts differ widely in what exactly triggers such a domain extension and are, accordingly, susceptible to different sorts of criticisms. The main syntactic issue for any such account is that the conflict arises solely between the two subjects. Kempchinsky (2009) proposes a third type of solution that relies on obligatory binding by what she calls an anti-logophoric element. She does not spell out the details of the anti-logophoric binding, but a full-fledged solution along these lines would likely amount to a semantic account of subject obviation. In the following, I propose a different, but explicitly semantic-pragmatic account for directive obviation, and I conclude with a brief discussion of how to extend it to subject obviation for subjunctive clauses under desiderative and directive predicates in general. Before going into this, I discuss Stegovec's (2019) syntactic solution, which crucially informs my discussion and, as the sole existing account for directive obviation overall, should serve as baseline.

3.3 A syntactic account for directive obviation

Inspired by binding-theoretic accounts of subject obviation, Stegovec (2019) proposes a syntactic account of directive obviation. He argues that in directive clauses the director is represented syntactically as ***perspectival PRO***. Analogously to obligatorily controlled PRO in the subject position of infinitival attitude complements,

perspectival PRO is bound by a speech act operator COMMIT (in matrix directives and matrix declaratives) or QUESTION (in matrix interrogatives), or by the matrix predicate (in speech reports). This results in identificaiton with speaker, addressee or matrix subject referent.[14] The binding domain of the subject contains perspectival PRO, and directive obviation is explained as a Condition B violation:

(22)   Directive obviation in (22a) matrix and (22b) embedded clauses:
    a. $\{$COMMIT$_{\text{Sp}}$, QUESTION$_{\text{Addr}}\}$ λx [$\underline{\text{PRO}_x}$ [SUBJECT [. . .]]]
    b.   [SUBJECT said that [λx [$\underline{\text{PRO}_x}$ [SUBJECT [. . .]]]]]

For the interpretation, Stegovec adopts the proposal that imperatives express prioritizing modality (Kaufmann 2012, 2016; see Sect. 5.1), but assumes that the relevant modal operator contains a slot for an individual argument that reflects the source of the rules, desires, etc. that the directive clause is based on. This slot is filled by perspectival PRO. In the following, I draw on the idea that directive obviation results from identity between the person directing and the referent of the directive clauses's subject, but I consider it a semantic conflict and not an issue with the representation. My motivation to search for a semantic solution that is sensitive to contextual assumptions is twofold: (i) with imperatives, some of the unacceptable configurations are predicted to be infelicitous already based on independently motivated semantic assumptions, (ii) (directive) obviation effects are sensitive to functional differences and contextual assumptions whose representation in the syntactic structure is not obviously motivated. In Section 4, I highlight a series of phenomena that exemplify this second claim, before developing the semantic solution in Section 5.2.

4   Contextual assumptions affect obviation effects

Independently of technical details specific to individual syntactic accounts of subject obviation, the effect's susceptibility to semantic or pragmatic phenomena is problematic for any such attempt (Farkas 1992). In the following, I discuss a list of phenomena that affect perspective sensitivity in general and subject obviation in particular. The fact that most of them also impact canonical imperatives corroborates the status of the latter as part of the directive paradigm.

---

14 The speech act operators are adopted from Pearson (2013), who uses ASSERT and QUESTION which combine with properties and impose felicity constraints on which discourse participant commits to a property by self-ascription (the speaker of an ASSERT-modified sentence), or is supposed to truthfully self-ascribe one of a set of properties (the addressee of a QUESTION-modified sentence).

4.1 Tampering with interrogative flip

In matrix interrogatives, sensitivity to the speaker (as observed in the base case) is normally replaced by sensitivity to the addressee, resulting in obviation effects for second person subjects. However, there are a series of exceptions.

First, Stegovec (2017) observes that Slovenian imperatives (i.e., second person directives) are felicitous in **scope marking questions** that can shift information seeking questions. As in English (23), the interpretation of (24) is similar to the corresponding long distance extraction out of an attitude or speech report (Dayal 1994):

(23) What does John think? Where is Mary?
≈ Where does John think that Mary is?

(24) Kaj je   rekla? Kaj kupi?
what AUX.3 said.F   what buy.IMP(2)
'What did she say? What should you buy?'
≈ 'What did she say that you should buy?'

While unacceptable on its own, *Kaj kupi?* (lit. 'What buy.IMP?') is felicitous when following an interrogative about what someone said. Inuitively, the second interrogative is interpreted in the scope of the speech report mentioned in the first, and similarly to what happens in speech reports, the individual relevant for obviation effects is not the utterance addressee (as in regular interrogatives) but the subject of the first interrogative.

Second, Oikonomou (2016) shows that the infelicity of Greek *na*-subjunctives with second person subjects in matrix interrogatives can be overcome by contextual settings. (25a) becomes felicitous in a context where speaker and addressee are supposed to decide together, or a third party (e.g. the mother) has already made the decision; (25b) explicitly introduces the non-participant opinion holder.

(25) a. Ti na fas avrio?
what SUBJ eat.2 tomorrow?
'What could you eat tomorrow?'   *deciding together*
      b. Ti   gnomi ehi i mama? Na pas sto   parti?
What opinion has the mom   SUBJ go.2 at-the party
'What's your mom's opinion? Can/Should you go to the party?'

Third, rhetorical questions affect the usual pattern of perspectival sensitivity. Hale (1980: 100) observes that in Newari, rhetorical questions behave like declaratives for the purpose of subject agreement. That is, verbs agreeing with first person subjects carry conjunct agreement and verbs agreeing with any non-first person noun phrase carry disjunct marking. And, indeed, some languages seem to allow imperative

morphology in rhetorical *wh*-questions. Wilson & Sperber (1988) report this for Omotic (spoken in Southern Ethiopia), without, however, providing examples. Kaufmann & Poschmann (2013) find that in some colloquial varieties of German, imperatives can occur in rhetorical *wh*-questions:

(26) Wo stell den Blumentopf (schon) hin? %German
 where put.IMP the flower.pot DISCPART VERBPART
 'Come on, where should you put that flower pot? (It's obvious.)'

Fourth, canonical imperatives and surrogates with second person subjects can occur with rising intonation, which serves to turn them into suggestions (Schwager 2006: 201; Portner 2018; Rudin 2018):

(27) a. Help him (maybe)?
  b. Pomagaj? Slovenian
   help.IMP.2
   'Should you help him?'
  c. {Pročitaj / Da pročitaš} ovu knjigu? Serbian
   read.IMP2 / that read.2.Pfv this book
   'Read this book, maybe?'

Rudin (2018) offers an analysis in which the rising tune signals the absence of speaker commitment; the prejacent of the imperative is proposed as a possible action commitment. Intuitively, in these cases, neither speaker nor addressee alone have sufficient knowledge to determine what is best; the speaker appears to suggest that information should be pooled.

4.2 Lack of control

Ungrammaticality due to subject obviation is alleviated if the referent of the two subjects is taken to lack control over the course of events described in the complement (Ruwet 1984; Farkas 1988, 1992; Szabolcsi 2010). This has been observed amongst other with non-agentive complements (e.g. (28a)) and actions that are controlled jointly with others (e.g. (28b)); Szabolcsi (2010) subsumes effects of focus on the embedded subject under the case of joint control.[15]

---

15 The cases discussed involve mostly desire predicates, as directive predicates tend to lexically indicate that the person talked to is (taken to be) in control. However, directive predicates like *insist* can be shown to have similar effects (Kempchinsky 2009):

(i) %[La ministra]$_i$ insiste en que ELLA$_i$/[ella misma]$_i$ presida la sesión.
  'The minister insists that SHE/she herself chair.SUBJ the session.' Spanish, (her 11d)

(28)   a.   Je veux que je sois   très amusant ce soir.
              I   want that I be.SUBJ.1 very amusing   this night
              'I want for me to be quite amusing tonight.   Ruwet 1989:(68a)

       b.   Je veux que tu partes   et que je reste.
              I   want that you leave.SUBJ.2 and that I stay.SUBJ.1
              'I want for you to go and for me to stay.'   Ruwet 1989:(49)

Oikonomou (2016: (38)) observes that directive *na*-subjunctives in Greek, which display the directive obviation effect, are sensitive to contextually presumed control. She describes (29) to be acceptable when uttered by a person without an alarm to their mother who is known to get up early independently (A. Stegovec, p.c., shares these judgments for Slovenian *naj*-subjunctives):

(29)   Avrio   na   ksipniso stis   6:00am.
         Tomorrow Subj wake.1Sg at   6:00am.
         'Tomorrow I should wake up at 6:00am.'

Here, too, obviation with respect to the utterance speaker is alleviated once they are not presumed to be in control over the course of events described by the prejacent.[16]

4.3   A question of interface

The previous two sections have shown that directive obviation in matrix and embedded contexts is sensitive to contextual presumptions about who is knowledgeable about, or in charge of, the content of the relevant rules, and who can control the course of events selected. Such distinctions are not normally taken to be reflected in the syntactic structure. For instance, rhetorical questions have been argued to be structurally regular interrogatives used in contexts incompatible with speaker ignorance (Rohde 2006; Caponigro & Sprouse 2007). Similarly, it is not obvious in what sense contextually presumed control over a course of events is encoded grammatically. Consequently, while directive obviation itself seems to be grammatical in that it is tied to the forms of imperatives and directive subjunctives, the parameters it is sensitive to do not appear to be determined by syntax or semantics

---

16 It may not be possible to replicate this effect with canonical second person imperatives, which are sometimes taken to conventionally encode that the subject (the addressee) is in control of the course of events under consideration (Farkas 1988). This, however is too strong; imperatives are compatible with the lack of control when used for wishes:

(i)   a.   Please be there already!   silent wish, while running to a meeting
      b.   Please don't have broken another vase!   Culicover & Jackendoff (1997)

For reasons unknown to me, at least in German and in Slovenian (Adrian Stegovec, p.c.), wish readings seem unavailable for embedded imperatives and for imperative marking in interrogatives.

alone.[17] In light of these considerations, I would like to explore the possibilities of a semantic-pragmatic account for directive obviation.

5 Directive obviation as a semantic conflict

The account of directive obviation developed in the following returns to the idea of directive clauses (canonical and surrogate imperatives) as associated with directive speech acts: they are ear-marked for use by a ***director*** d to influence actions of an ***instigator*** a in favor of a making true the prejacent ϕ. For a second person imperative in canonical use, the director is the utterance speaker and the instigator a is the utterance addressee.

Intuitively, directive speech acts require particular contextual constellations, and building on my earlier work (Schwager 2006; Kaufmann 2012, 2016), I assume that imperatives carry conventional meaning that allows for them to be used felicitously in such but not other contexts. Thereby, these requirements derive the inherently non-descriptive (non-assertive) character of imperatives (and other directives). Generally, directive speech acts with content p can be performed only if (i) d does not take p for granted,–in the semantics of the imperative, this surfaces as the ***Epistemic Uncertainty Condition*** (EUC); and (ii) d possesses the relevant authority,–in the semantics of the imperative, this surfaces as a combination of ***Epistemic Authority Condition (EAC)*** and ***Decisive Modality (DM)***. The main idea of the semantic-pragmatic account for directive obviation is that the conventional meaning expressed by directive clauses with the respective subject settings is at odds with the contextual requirements for the felicitous use of a directive. In Sect. 5.1, I introduce the account of second person imperatives in canonical uses and its extension to other occurrences of directives, in Sect. 5.2, I show how the account derives the obviation effects, and in Sect. 5.3, I explore how particular settings can alleviate them.

5.1 The modal operator theory: Imperatives as modalized propositions

Declarative sentences containing deontic modals are known to be amenable to both descriptive and performative uses; they can describe what is permitted, commanded, recommended, and so on (***descriptive***), but they can also be used for speech acts like permissions, commands, or recommendations that change matters of that kind (***performative***); (Kamp 1973, 1978). For instance, I can use (30a) to report to a friend what I have just heard from their sibling, and I can use (30b) to pass on to my

17 Szabolcsi (2010) shows, however, that presumed absence of control rescues positive polarity items in the scope of negated desire predicates. Zu (2018) analyzes this by letting phasehood depend on presumed control, the syntactic status of which she sees corroborated by its impact on conjunct-disjunct marking.

husband what I've been told by the manager of the hotel who is setting out bowls of fruit. However, I can also use (30a) to get my husband to call my mother-in-law, or (30b) to give my son permission to take an apple.

(30)   a.   You have to call your mother.
       b.   You may take an apple.

Evidence for one or the other type of use comes from the respective (in)felicity of reacting to the move with *That's (not) true!*, or a follow-up by the same speaker with *but I absolutely don't want you to do this*. Both can be felicitous with descriptive, but are infelicitous with performative uses. Cross-linguistically, it appears to be common for modals to do duble duty in this sense, and a pragmatic analysis has become standard (e.g. Schulz 2005). The distinction between descriptive and performative is thus between different types of usages of one and the same lexical item.

The main motivation for the **modal operator theory**[18] is that imperatives are similar to declaratives with performatively used modals, patterning together for instance with respect to the aforementioned follow-ups. Imperatives, however, lack descriptive uses. If, as the pragmatic analysis would have it, it is the context that decides if a modal verb is used descriptively (**descriptive context**) or performatively (**performative context**), and imperatives are supposed to at some level be interpreted just like modal verbs, then imperatives have to be banned from occurring in descriptive contexts. To achieve this, it is assumed that imperatives contain a covert modal operator OP_{Imp} that is interpreted like *have to* or *should* at the level of at-issue meaning, but triggers a series of presuppositions that can be met by performative, but not by descriptive contexts.[19] Modulo presuppositional meaning, we obtain equivalences as in (31):

(31)   [[Clean up your desk!]] $\approx$ [[You must/should clean up your desk.]]

To spell out the details of the analysis, I translate natural language to standard modal logic with unary operators $\Box$ and $\Diamond$ indexed for different epistemic and prioritizing interpretations. Interpretation proceeds with respect to a frame $F = \langle W, D, B, R \rangle$, where W is a set of possible worlds, D a set of individuals including speaker S and

---

18 Proposed in Schwager 2006 and elaborated further in Kaufmann 2012; Kaufmann & Kaufmann 2012; Kaufmann 2016.

19 For the purposes of this discussion, I assume that the operator is of universal quantificational force. This is an oversimplification: First, Medeiros (2013) argues that necessity as conveyed by imperatives is weak ($\approx$ *should, ought*) rather than strong ($\approx$ *must, have to*). Second, necessity readings of imperatives are either in alternation with possibility readings or result from exhaustifying possibility (*you can't do anything else but* $\approx$ *you must*), see Kaufmann 2012, Grosz 2009, Oikonomou 2016, and Francis t.a. for discussion. I will leave it to future research to evaluate the proposal presented in this paper against the foil of potential variability in quantificational force.

addressee A, B maps any contextually relevant individual x to x's belief relation $B_x \subseteq W \times W$ (serial, shift-reflexive, and transitive),[20] and $R \subseteq W \times W$ is the salient prioritizing modal flavor. I employ two belief operators with interpretations derived from B:

(32) a. ***Mutual joint belief*** $\Box^{CG}$, which is indexed for interpretation with respect to the transitive closure of $B_S \cup B_A$ (Stalnaker 2002).

   b. ***Public Belief:*** Individual x is publicly committed to believing p: $\Box^{PB_x} p := \Box^{CG} \Box^{B_x} p$.

The context set CS is the set of possible worlds compatible with mutual joint belief at the world in which the utterance takes place.

Imperatives and modalized sentences are translated as in (33) (where R in the object language abbreviates sensitivity to the salient prioritizing necessity; this is determined conventionally for imperatives):

(33) If ϕ translates to p,

   a. *must*$^R \phi$ translates to $\Box^R p$

   b. imperative ϕ! (also: $OP_{\text{Imp}} \phi$) translates to $\Box^R p$

Kaufmann (2012) argues that performative contexts are characterized by the fact that the salient prioritizing modality enjoys a special status in the context of the conversation (***Decisive Modality***, DM), the speaker is considered knowledgeable about this modal flavor (***Epistemic Authority Condition***, EAC), and the speaker is assumed to consider the prejacent possible but not take it for granted (at least not independently of this very imperative utterance itself; ***Epistemic Uncertainty Condition***, EUC).[21] To get the connection between linguistic expressions and speech acts off the ground, I assume that uttering a proposition-denoting object by default commits the speaker to publicly believing it and taking any presuppositions conventionally associated with it to be either mutual joint belief or uncontroversial enough to be accommodated (for assumptions along these lines see Portner 2005; Schwager 2006; Kaufmann 2012; Condoravdi & Lauer 2012; Lauer 2013). I assume that uttering a sentence translated as, and hence committing the speaker to, $\Box^R \phi$ or $\Diamond^R \phi$ amounts to a speech act other than an assertion in a context that (regarding R) meets the characteristics captured by DM, EAC, and EUC. While performative modals allow, but do not require, a speaker to presuppose these conditions, imperatives conventionally force the speaker to presuppose them. Consequently, if the conditions cannot reasonably be presupposed, imperatives result infelicitous; if they are met, imperatives result in

---

20 A relation R is shift-reflexive iff for any w, w' s.t. wRw', also $w'Rw'$. This ensures that the individuals believe to not have wrong beliefs, but allows from them to be actually mistaken.

21 For simplicity, I am setting aside expressive imperatives, see Fn. 16.

some non-assertive speech act.[22]

Building on the characterizations of *decisive modality* and *decision problem* in (34) and (35), DM, EAC, and EUC are spelled out as follows:

(34)   A set of propositions Δ is a *decision problem* for an agent a in a context c iff Δ partitions the context set CS_c and CS_c entails that for all $q \in \Delta$, CONTROL(a, q) (where CONTROL$(a, q) := $ TRY$(a, q) \rightarrow q$).

(DM)   *Decisive Modality*: Given context set CS and a salient partition Δ on CS, the salient modal flavor R is *decisive* iff it constitutes the contextually agreed upon criteria to choose between the cells of Δ.

(35) R being the *decisive modality* implies for any participant a to the conversation: Kaufmann & Kaufmann (2012)

   a.   If $\Box^R q$, a does not have an effective preference against q.[23]
   b.   If Δ is a decision problem for a, a tries to find out if $\Box^R q$ for any $q \in \Delta$.
   c.   If Δ is a decision problem for a and a learns that $\Box^R q$ for $q \in \Delta$, a tries to realize q.

(EAC)   *Epistemic Authority Condition*: The speaker has perfect knowledge of R: for any $p \in \Delta$: $\Box^R p \leftrightarrow \Box^{B_S} \Box^R p$.

(EUC)   *Epistemic Uncertainty Condition* (EUC): In uttering a sentence translated as $\Box^R p$, speaker S holds possible both p and $\neg p$: $\Diamond^{B_S} p \wedge \Diamond^{B_S} \neg p$

Imperative marking triggers DM, EAC, and EUC as presuppositions, which means that the speaker takes them to be entailed by the context set by the time the content of his utterance is used to update the context set (Stalnaker 2002). Beyond the base case of canonical second person imperatives in matrix clauses, directive marking can occur in questions or speech reports (Sections 2 and 3). Therefore, the requirements that, so far, were stated about the speaker and the addressse, have to be generalized to director and instigator (which, in the canonical case, happen to be the speaker and the addressee, respectively).

(36)   a.   The *director* has epistemic authority (EAC) and uncertainty (EUC).
        b.   If Δ is a decision problem for agent a, then a is the *instigator* associated with the reported or actual speech act the directive clause is used for.

Speakers of directive clauses in utterance events e presuppose these conditions about the context of e. In speech reports, the presupposition can be bound to the

---

22 For detailed derivations of command-like imperatives, see Kaufmann 2016.
23 Where *effective preference* is understood in the sense of Condoravdi & Lauer (2012) as preferences that are ranked so as to be mutually consistent on the agent's belief state, who uses them to determine his choices of action.

corresponding parameters of the reported event (Stegovec & Kaufmann 2015). By presupposing them, speakers using directive clauses become publicly committed to believing that EAC, EUC, and DM are mutual joint belief. We can now use this effect to explain directive obviation as a clash in discourse commitments.

5.2 Accounting for directive obviation at the semantics pragmatic interface

From the presuppositional meaning of directive clauses, we can derive the principle of ***Director's Anticipation*** in (37); the proof is given in (38):

(37)   ***Director's Anticipation:*** If director d is publicly committed to believing that instigator a believes that $p \in \Delta$ is R-necessary, then d is publicly committed to believing that p will come true: $\Box^{PB_d}\Box^{B_a}\Box^R p \to \Box^{PB_d} p$

(38)   a. $\Box^{PB_d}\Box^{B_a}\Box^R p$ Assumption
        b. $\Box^{PB_d}(\Box^{B_a}\Box^R p \to \mathrm{TRY}(a, p))$ Decisive Modality
        c. $\Box^{PB_d}\Box^{B_a}\Box^R p \to \Box^{PB_d}\mathrm{TRY}(a, p)$ K
        d. $\Box^{PB_d}\mathrm{TRY}(a, p)$ 1, 3, MP
        e. $\Box^{PB_d} p$ presumed control (decision problem)

Let's first consider the case of unembedded directives in their prototypical directive use. In line with Searle's definition of directive speech acts, the role of the director is played by the utterance speaker and, in the unmarked case, the instigator appears as the grammatical subject. In this case, a first person subject results in identity between director and instigator. The descriptive characterization of directive obviation tells us that this is excluded (universally, languages appear to lack designated first person singular imperative forms, and surrogate forms like Slovenian *naj*-subjunctives cannot be used to close this gap in the paradigm). The theory proposed here does indeed predict such cases to be inherently contradictory, see (39):

(39)   a. $\Box^{PB_d}\Box^R p$ Committing utterance by d
        b. $\Box^{PB_d}\Box^{B_d}\Box^R p$ Def. of *PB*
        c. $\Box^{PB_d} p$ b, Director's Anticipation
        d. $\Box^{PB_d}(\Diamond^{PB_d} p \wedge \Diamond^{PB_d}\neg p)$ EUC
        e. $\neg\Box^{PB_d} p$ d, System K
        f. $\Box^{PB_d} p \wedge \neg\Box^{PB_d} p$ c,e: ⨍

With embedded directives, following general preferences of presupposition resolution (van der Sandt 1992), we expect the requirements the directive imposes to regard the reported utterance context.[24] Imperatives and directives are found embedded

---

24 Qua presuppositions, they could in principle also project to the main context or be accommodated locally to avoid inconsistency. It remains to be seen to what extent this is indeed a possibility, or else,

under speech act verbs that can describe directive speech acts (like *say, tell, order*, etc.). By the semantics of these embedding predicates, the matrix subject has to be the director of the reported speech event. If, however, the director is also the referent of the subject and considered the instigator in the context that is being described by the matrix predicate, the restrictions imposed on the reported context are just the same conflicting ones we have derived for the actual utterance context in the committing matrix case, resulting in the infelicity of the schemata in (40):

(40) a. *I said that I should. . .
      b.   *You said that { you should , V.IMP.2p }. . .
      c. (S)he$_i$ said that (s)he$_{j,*i}$ should. . .

In matrix interrogatives, conflicting requirements arise with an addressee denoting subject. Descriptively, this patterns with other phenomena that are subject to interrogative flip (see Sect. 4.1). At the theoretical level, it prompts us to reconsider the role of the director. Information seeking interrogatives are not used for directive speech acts, in that sense, no individual aims to impose restrictions on anyone by the utterance carried out with the interrogative containing the directive form. However, if we take serious the idea that the contextual requirements imposed by whatever licenses imperative morphology or directive subjunctives are presuppositions, we would assume that, like other presuppositions, they project. Clearly, the requirement that the speaker be knowledgable is at odds with the settings for information seeking questions. By looking at how the presuppositions characterize the director in the matrix declarative case, it turns out that the individual that can naturally fulfill these requirements in the context of an information seeking question is the addressee. In line with the expectation from Director's Anticipation that directive obviation results typically when director and matrix subject referent are the same, directive obviation results with addressee referring subjects in (information-seeking) interrogatives (*Go.IMP/*Should you go?*).

  Unlike declaratives, interrogatives do not commit the actual speaker to believing a proposition expressed (as, typically, interrogatives are not taken to express propositions). However, information seeking questions are typically taken to commit a speaker to consider possible more than one or maybe even all semantic answers. For an interrogative expressing the semantics answers in (41a),[25] we can reason that the

---

in what ways combinations of shiftable and unshiftable indexicality in the parameters referenced by the directive semantics (for discussion, see Pak et al. 2008; Kaufmann & Poschmann 2013; Stegovec & Kaufmann 2015) prevent alternative resolutions along these lines.

25 Under the assumption that the directive has to resolve the decision problem, I assume that the negative answer $\neg\Box^R p$ is strengthened to $\Box^R \neg p$. If this assumption is not made, the second disjunct would be consistent as long as $\neg p$ does not name a cell in the decision problem (if it does, EAC leads to inconsistency here, too). But the speaker of an information seeking interrogative can not felicitously

speaker commits to holding possible their disjunction (cf. (41b)); moreover, they commit to the presuppositions associated with the directive (cf. (41c)). By the laws of standard modal logic, we derive that the speaker is committed to a contradiction.

(41)   a. $\{\Box^R p, \Box^R \neg p\}$ Semantic answers
       b. $\Box^{PB_S}(\Box^R p \vee \Box^R \neg p)$ Interrogative commitment
       c. $\Box^{PB_S}(\Box^R p \leftrightarrow \Box^{B_A}\Box^R p) \wedge \Box^{PB_S}(\Diamond^{B_A} p \wedge \Diamond^{B_A} \neg p)$ EAC, EUC
       d. $\Box^{PB_S}((\Box^R p \wedge \Box^{B_A}\Box^R p \wedge \Diamond^{B_A} \neg p) \vee (\Box^R \neg p \wedge \Box^{B_A}\Box^R \neg p \wedge \Diamond^{B_A} p))$
                                                                b,c; EAC

The obviating constellation is predicted correctly to be at odds with the felicitous use of a directive in an information seeking question.

5.3   Obviating directive obviation

The proofs that serve to explain unacceptability rely on identification of the director with the referent of the grammatical subject who is also the instigator–the individual that is taken to be able to, and directed to, bring about the relevant course of events. There are, however, various ways of breaking these links (that are compatible with the conventional semantics of the directive marking). In line with what is expected on the basis of a semantic-pragmatic account, the directive obviation effect goes away (cf. Sect. 4). The challenge is now to fit these phenomena into the formal framework. First, scope marking questions change the parameters of what amounts to directive obviation. If they behave sufficiently like speech reports for semantic and pragmatic purposes (Dayal 1994), the switch in sensitivity falls out from the account proposed for embedded directives. Oikonomou's (2016) data on Greek *na*-subjunctives suggest that the parameter of the director can also be set to a contextually salient point of view. Second, while languages do not allow second person imperatives in information seeking questions, imperatives with rising intonation can serve for (tentative) ***suggestions***. In these cases, no obviation results for second person (similarly to declaratives), yet, the speaker can be, and can present themself as being, genuinely insecure of whether this is the best option. This means however, that they cannot be the director, else the Epistemic Authority Condition would be violated. It seems reasonable to assume that, for one thing, rising intonation marks a question-like move in that the speaker does not commit to believing the proposition they express (no epistemic commitment to $\Box^R p$ results, Rudin 2018). Moreover, the speaker presents themself as sharing epistemic authority with the addressee, in that they together figure out what the right solution is. Technically, the

---

commit herself to holding possible only a single answer (the consistent one). The obviation effect is thus predicted independently of the presumed strengthening in (41a).

idea that speaker and addressee together count as the director can be made sense of if EAC is evaluated w.r.t. **distributed belief**, defined as in (42a). Even though neither of the participants alone has enough information to settle the decision problem, it can be solved if the information they hold separately is pooled:

(42)   a. $R^{DB_{S,A}} := B^S \cap B^A$ (Fagin, Halpern, Vardi & Moses 1995)
       b.   EAC: $\Box^{DB_{S,A}}\Box^R p \leftrightarrow \Box^R p$

Assuming that the instigator is the addressee, director and instigator are no longer equivalent, so there is no Director's Anticipation ($\Box^R p$ can be distributed knowledge between speaker and addressee, without the addressee, the instigator, knowing). No inconsistent discourse commitments are predicted. Third, the account looks promising also for rhetorical questions. In line with what was said above, they seem to be used in contexts where, as with declaratives or regular directives, epistemic authority resides with the speaker. If so, the speaker counts as the director and no obviation is expected for second person cases, i.e. canonical imperative marking.

In Sect. 4.2 we have seen that lack of control is another case that allows for subject obviation to be voided. Specifically, if the director is not committed to assuming that the matrix subject has control over the prejacent, the presumption that the subject knows what is necessary does not give rise to the inference that the prejacent will be realized. Consequently, no director's anticipation is derived. However, cases along these lines are complicated by two phenomena: (i) matrix predicates describing directive speech acts tend to lexically encode that their subject ascribes control to the object (the addressee of the speech act described), (ii) canonical second person imperatives appear to differ from other directive forms in the ease with which they can be used in contexts where the subject lacks control (cf. Fn. 16). I will leave it to further research to explore the impact of presumed lack of control on the directive obviation effect.

6   Conclusions

I have argued that canonical second person imperatives can form part of a larger class of directive clauses which all express a particular type of prioritizing modality. The modality in question relies on a director who selects courses of events as optimal in a given contextual setting but cannot control them and is not sure that they will be realized. With this, a directive utterance carried out, or reported, with a directive clause is a (presumed) expert's attempt to ensure the realization of the course of events they recognize as best based on contextually salient criteria; an interrogative containing a directive seeks to extract such an attempt from an expert. In this sense, directives grammaticalize a gap between (presumed) expert knowledge and practical powers (control of the world as such). Cases with prejacents where the director

appears as the agentive subject are typically at odds with the requirement that the director does not yet know whether the prejacent will get realized. This effect lies at the heart of directive obviation, which materializes itself in the absence of first person exclusive imperative forms, the ungrammaticality of canonical imperative marking in information seeking interrogatives, as well as subject obviation for embedded directives. Directive obviation thus provides evidence for the conventional encoding of the director in imperatives and directive subjunctives. Since I propose to derive the clash in terms of conflicting discourse commitments, the effect itself does not provide evidence that the director has to be represented in the syntax. However, in line with other phenomena of perspective sensitivity, we have to ensure that the speaker (as the director in the base case) can be replaced by the addressee and the referent of the matrix subject in interrogative formation and speech reports, respectively. I will leave it to further research to settle the question whether this sensitivity in perspective dependence in general can be derived without a syntactic representation of the perspectival center.

The semantic-pragmatic proposal for directive obviation may have implications for two cross-linguistic puzzles related to promising. First, Pak et al. (2008) argue that Korean imperatives, exhortatives, and promissives differ only in which conversational participant they seek to commit to behave in a certain way: the addressee, addressee and speaker together, or the speaker. However, assimilating them in this way, seems, as they observe, at odds with the cross-linguistic markedness of permissives. On the account proposed here, promissives stand out in that they grammaticalize identity rather than a gap between presumed expert knowledge and presumed control (the director commits themself to act as indicated). In unmarked contexts where agents are taken to be in control of their future actions, promissives fail to signal a special effect over and above what could be achieved by a declarative. In contrast, imperatives and exhortatives signal a difference between descriptive and performative contexts. Second, the analysis of promissives as anti-obviating forms may also shed light on a puzzle about lexical predicates of promising: such verbs are predicted to select subjunctive by many theories of mood selection (given their relation to preferential action courses or non-realization); yet, they stubbornly select indicative complements Zanuttini et al. (2012). If, as I assume, standard obviation effects as associated with subjunctives embedded under directive and desiderative predicates are instances of directive obviation, triggered by the particular semantics of directives in the relevant constellations, then the subcategorization pattern for verbs of promising falls out. More work needs to be done, however, to obtain a full-fledged account of the composition of directive and in particular desiderative matrix verbs with independently modalized complements containing this type of obviative prioritizing modality (promising starting points can be found in Farkas 1988; Kratzer 2006; Moulton 2009).

24

References

Aikhenvald, Alexandra. 2010. *Imperatives and commands*. Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press.

Alcázar, Asier & Mario Saltarelli. 2014. *The syntax of imperatives*. Cambridge University Press.

Ammann, Andreas & Johan van der Auwera. 2004. Complementizer-headed main clauses for volitional moods in the languages of South-Eastern Europe: a balkanism? In Olga Mišeska Tomić (ed.), *Balkan syntax and semantics*, 293–314. John Benjamins.

Barker, Chris. 2010. Free choice permission as resource-sensitive reasoning. *Semantics and Pragmatics* 3(10). 1–38. doi:10.3765/sp.3.10.

Bierwisch, Manfred. 1980. Semantic structure and illocutionary force. In John Searle (ed.), *Speech act theory and pragmatics*, Dordrecht: Reidel.

Bouchard, Denis. 1983. The avoid pronoun principle and the elsewhere principle. In *Proccedings of NELS 13*, 29–36. Amherst: Univeristy of Massachusetts, GLSA.

Caponigro, Ivano & Jon Sprouse. 2007. Rhetorical questions as questions. In Estela Puig Waldmüller (ed.), *Proceedings of Sinn und Bedeutung 11*, 121–133. Barcelona: Universitat Pompeu Fabra.

Condoravdi, Cleo & Sven Lauer. 2012. Imperatives: Meaning and illocutionary function. In Christopher Piñon (ed.), *Empirical issues in syntax and semantics*, vol. 9, 1–21.

Crnič, Luka & Tue Trinh. 2009. Embedding imperatives in English. In Arndt Riester & Torgrim Solstad (eds.), *Proceedings of sinn und bedeutung 13*, 113–127. University of Stuttgart.

Culicover, Peter W. & Ray Jackendoff. 1997. Semantic subordination despite syntactic coordination. *Linguistic Inquiry* 28. 195–217.

Davies, Eirlys. 1986. *The English imperative*. London: Croom Helm.

Dayal, Veneeta. 1994. Scope marking as indirect wh dependency. *Natural Language Semantics* 2(2). 137–170.

Downing, Bruce. 1969. Vocatives and third-person subjects in English. *Papers in Linguistics* 1. 570–592.

Eckardt, Regine. 2011. Imperatives as future plans. In Ingo Reich (ed.), *Proceedings of Sinn und Bedeutung15*, Universität des Saarlandes.

Fagin, Ronald, Joseph Halpern, Moshe Vardi & Yoram Moses. 1995. *Reasoning about knowledge*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Farkas, Donka. 1992. On the semantics of subjunctive complements. In P Hirschbühler & E. F. K. Koerner (eds.), *Romance languages*, 69–104. Benjamins.

Farkas, Donka & Kim B Bruce. 2010. On reaction to assertions and polar questions. *Journal of Semantics* 27. 81–118.

Farkas, Donka F. 1988. On obligatory control. *Linguistics and Philosophy* 11. 27–58.

Farkas, Donnka. 1985. *Intensional descriptions and the romance subjunctive mood*. New York: Garland.

von Fintel, Kai & Sabine Iatridou. 2017. A modest proposal for the meaning of imperatives. In Ana Arregui, María Luisa Rivero & Andrés Salanova (eds.), *Modality across syntactic categories*, 288–319.

Francis, Naomi. t.a. Imperatives under *even*. In Maggie Baird, Duygu Göksu & Jonathan Pesetsky (eds.), *Proceedings of the North East Linguistics Society (NELS) 49*, Amherst, MA: GLSA.

Grosz, Patrick. 2009. German particles, modality, and the semantics of imperatives. In S Lima, K Mullin & B Smith (eds.), *The proceedings of North East Linguistics Society NELS 39*, Amherst, MA: GLSA.

Guillaume, Thomas. 2012. Embedded imperatives in Mbyá. In *Proceedings of NELS 43*, .

Hale, Austin Everett. 1980. Person markers: finite conjunct and disjunct verb forms in Newari. In Ronald L Trail (ed.), *Papers in South East Asian linguistics*, vol. 7, 95–106. Canberra: Australian National University.

Han, Chung-hye. 1999. Deontic modality, lexical aspect and the semantics of imperatives. In The Linguistic Society of Korea (ed.), *Linguistics in the morning calm*, vol. 4, Seoul: Hanshin Publications.

Han, Chung-hye. 2000. *The structure and interpretation of imperatives: mood and force in universal grammar* Outstanding Dissertations in Linguistics. New York: Garland.

Hausser, Roland. 1980. Surface compositionality and the semantics of mood. In John Searle, Ferenc Kiefer & Manfred Bierwisch (eds.), *Speech act theory and pragmatics*, vol. II, 71–95. Dordrecht: Reidel.

Huntley, M. 1984. The semantics of English imperatives. *Linguistics and Philosophy* 7(2). 103–133.

Isac, Daniela. 2015. *The morphosyntax of imperatives* Oxford Studies in Theoretical Linguistics. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Kamp, Hans. 1973. Free choice permission. *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 74. 57–74.

Kamp, Hans. 1978. Semantics versus pragmatics. In F. Guenthner & S. J. Schmidt (eds.), *Formal semantics and pragmatics for natural languages*, 255–287. Dordrecht: Reidel.

Kaufmann, Magdalena. 2012. *Interpreting imperatives*. Berlin: Springer.

Kaufmann, Magdalena. 2014. Embedded imperatives across languages: Too rare to expect too frequent to ban. Colloquium presentation at Rutgers University, November 21.

Kaufmann, Magdalena. 2016. Fine-tuning natural language imperatives. Journal of Logic and Computation. First published online, June 18, 2016, doi:10.1093/logcom/exw009.

Kaufmann, Magdalena & Stefan Kaufmann. 2012. Epistemic particles and performativity. In *Proceedings of semantics and linguistic theory (SALT) 22*, 208–225.

Kaufmann, Magdalena & Claudia Poschmann. 2013. Embedded imperatives - empirical evidence from colloquial German. *Language* 89(3). 619–637.

Kempchinsky, Paula. 2009. What can the subjunctive disjoint reference effect tell us about the subjunctive? *Lingua* 119(12). 1788–1810.

Kratzer, Angelika. 2006. Decomposing attitude verbs. Honoring Anita Mittwoch on her 80 th birthday at The Hebrew University of Jerusalem July 4, 2006.

Krifka, Manfred. 2014. Embedding illocutionary acts. In Tom Roeper & Margaret Speas (eds.), *Recursion, complexity in cognition*, vol. 43 Studies in Theoretical Psycholinguistics, 125–155. Berlin: Springer.

Lauer, Sven. 2013. *Towards a dynamic pragmatics*: Stanford University PhD dissertation.

Mastop, Rosja. 2005. *What can you do?*: ILLC Amsterdam PhD dissertation.

Medeiros, David. 2013. *Formal approaches to the syntax and semantics of imperatives*: University of Michigan PhD dissertation.

Moulton, Keir. 2009. *Natural selection and the syntax of clausal complementation*: University of Massachusetts, Amherst PhD dissertation.

Murray, Sarah E. 2014. Varieties of update. *Semantics and Pragmatics* 7(2). 1–53. doi:10.3765/sp.7.2.

Oikonomou, Despina. 2016. *Covert modals in root contexts*: MIT PhD dissertation.

Oshima, David Y. 2006. *Perspectives in reported discourse*: Stanford University PhD dissertation. Revised version published as a monograph with VDM Verlag in 2011.

Pak, Miok, Paul Portner & Raffaella Zanuttini. 2008. Agreement in promissive, imperative, and exhortative clauses. *Korean Linguistics* 14. 157–175.

Pearson, Hazel. 2013. *The sense of self: Topics in the semantics of de se expressions*: Harvard University PhD dissertation.

Portner, Paul. 2005. The semantics of imperatives within a theory of clause types. In Kazuha Watanabe & Robert B. Young (eds.), *Proceedings of SALT 14*, New York: CLC Publications.

Portner, Paul. 2007. Imperatives and modals. *Natural Language Semantics* 15. 351–383.

Portner, Paul. 2018. Commitments to priorities. In Daniel Harris, Matt Moss & Daniel Fogal (eds.), *New work in speech acts*, Oxford University Press.

Portner, Paul, Miok Pak & Raffaella Zanuttini. 2019. Speaker-addressee relation in imperatives. In T Bondarenko, J Colley, C Davis & D Privoznov (eds.), *The*

proceedings of WAFL 14, MIT working papers in Linguistics, 90.

Potsdam, Eric. 1998. *Syntactic issues in English imperatives*. Garland. Unrevised UCSC PhD Thesis from 1996.

Quer, Josep. 2006. Context shift and indexical variables in sign languages. In E Georgala & J Howell (eds.), *Proceedings of semantics and linguistic theory 15*, 152–168. Ithaca, NY: CLC Publications.

Rögnvaldsson, Einar. 1998. The syntax of the imperative in Old Scandinavian. Manuscript, University of Iceland.

Rohde, Hannah. 2006. Rhetorical questions as redundant interrogatives. *San Diego Linguistics Papers* 2. 134–168.

Ross, J.R. 1970. On declarative sentences. In R.A. Jacobs & P.S. Rosenbaum (eds.), *Readings in English transformational grammar*, Waltham, MA, Toronto, London: Ginn and Company.

Rudin, Deniz. 2018. *Rising above commitment*: University of California Santa Cruz, CA PhD dissertation.

Ruwet, Nicolas. 1984. Je veux partir/* je veux que je parte. a propos de la distribution des complétives à temps fini et des compléments à l'infinitif en français. *Cahiers de grammaire* 7. 75–138.

van der Sandt, Rob. 1992. Presupposition projection as anaphora resolution. *Journal of Semantics* 9. 333–377.

Schlenker, Philippe. 2005. The lazy Frenchman's approach to the subjunctive. In Twan Geerts, Ivo van Ginneken & Haike Jacobs (eds.), *Romance languages and linguistic theory 2003: Selected papers from 'Going Romance' 2003, Nijmegen, 20–22 November*, 269–310. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Schulz, Katrin. 2005. A pragmatic solution to the paradox of free choice permission. *Synthese* 147. 343–377.

Schwager, Magdalena. 2006. *Interpreting imperatives*: University of Frankfurt PhD dissertation.

Searle, John R. 1976. A classification of illocutionary acts. *Language in Society* 5(1). 1–23.

Sheppard, Milena Milojević & Marija Golden. 2002. (Negative) Imperatives in Slovene. In Sjef Barbiers, Frits Beukema & Wim van der Wurff (eds.), *Modality and its interaction with the verbal system*, vol. 47 Linguistik Aktuell/Linguistics Today, 245–260. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Speas, Peggy & Carol Tenny. 2003. Configurational properties of point of view roles. In Anna Maria DiSciullo (ed.), *Asymmetry in grammar*, 315–343. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Stalnaker, Robert. 2002. Common ground. *Linguistics and Philosophy* 25. 701–721.

Starr, William. 2011. *A preference semantics for imperatives*: Rutgers University PhD dissertation.

Stegovec, Adrian. 2017. !? (where's the ban on imperative questions?). *Proceedings of SALT* 27. 153–172.

Stegovec, Adrian. 2019. Perspectival control and obviation in directive clauses. *Natural Language Semantics* 27(1). 47–94.

Stegovec, Adrian & Magdalena Kaufmann. 2015. Slovenian imperatives: You can't always embed what you want! In Eva Csipak & Hedde Zeijlstra (eds.), *Proceedings of Sinn und Bedeutung*, 621–638. Göttingen.

Szabolcsi, Anna. 2010. Infinitives vs. subjunctives: What do we learn from obviation and from exemptions from obviation. Ms. NYU.

Wechsler, Stephen. 2018. In Simeon Floyd, Elisabeth Norcliffe & Lila San Roque (eds.), *Egophoricity* Typological Studies in Language 118, 473–494.

Wilson, Deirdre & Dan Sperber. 1988. Mood and the analysis of non-declarative sentences. In J Dancy, J Moravcsik & C Taylor (eds.), *Human agency: Language, duty and value*, 77–101. Stanford CA: Stanford University Press.

Zanuttini, Rafaela. 1997. *Negation and clausal structure*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Zanuttini, Raffaella, Miok Pak & Paul Portner. 2012. A syntactic analysis of interpretive restrictions on imperative, promissive, and exhortative subjects. *Natural Language and Linguistic Theory* 30. 1231–1274.

Zeiljstra, Hedde. 2006. The ban on true negative imperatives. In Olivier Bonami & Patricia Cabredo Hofherr (eds.), *Empirical issues in syntax and semantics 6*, 405–424.

Zu, Vera. 2018. *Discourse participants and the structural representation of the context*: New York University PhD dissertation.