Syntax and semantics of imperative subjects

Britta Jensen
University of Oxford

1. Introduction

It has been traditionally assumed that imperatives always have second person subjects. Sweet (1960: 111) writes, "As the imperative can be used only in addressing someone, the subject of an imperative sentence must always be in the second person." Early works (e.g., Katz and Postal 1964) argue exclusively for a second person imperative subject. More recent accounts (Zhang 1990; Potsdam 1996; Platzack and Rosengren 1998; Rupp 1999 and others) have noted that a variety of subjects are possible in English imperatives. The examples in (1) are from Rupp (1999).

(1)   a. *You* give it to me!
        b. *Nobody* move!
        c. *Someone* call a doctor!
        d. *Whoever took the money* return it immediately!
        e. *The tallest of you* sit at the back!
        f. *Those in the front row* stop giggling!
        g. (*You*) *truck drivers* keep to the right!
        h. (*New*) *students* sign up at the front door!
        i. *The boy in the corner* stand up!
        j. *Chris* stand by the door and *Shirley* watch the window!

While English readily allows a range of imperative subjects, Mainland Scandinavian (MSc) imperatives are more constrained. A comprehensive analysis of imperative subjects must account for both (i) the cross-linguistic preference for second person subjects and (ii) the observed typological variation: the availability of the diverse range of subjects shown in (1) for some languages (e.g., English) and the constraints on imperative subjects in other languages (e.g., MSc languages).

Differences in the nature and interpretation of imperative subjects have been used to argue that imperative phrase structure differs from declarative phrase structure (e.g., Platzack and Rosengren 1998). This paper aims to account for the interpretation of imperative subjects and word order variation with as few departures as possible from declarative clauses. Characteristics of declarative and imperative clauses are investigated in Sections 2 and 3, which leads to a proposal that the differences between imperatives and declaratives reduce to featural

changes on one functional X°. Section 4 summarises data from the MSc languages, and in Section 5 the observed variation is accounted for with reference to two points of difference: ±identity and ±case neutralisation.

2. VP-internal properties
Evidence from object shift, particle verbs and adverbs supports the claim that imperatives have the same VP-internal properties as declaratives.

2.1 Object shift
MSc main clauses display object shift (OS) with phonologically light objects (Holmberg 1986). In most dialects, OS is obligatory while in others it is optional. In dialects where OS is optional in declarative clauses, OS is optional in imperatives too. If OS is obligatory in one clause type it is obligatory in both clause types. Swedish imperatives exemplify this in (2).

(2) a. Köp *bollen inte/ inte bollen!
   Buy-IMP the ball not / not the ball
   'Don't buy the ball'

   b. Köp den inte / *inte den!
   Buy-IMP it not / not it
   'Don't buy it'

   c. Köp inte DEN!
   Buy-IMP not THAT
   'Don't buy THAT'

2.2 Particle verbs
The MSc languages are known to divide in terms of the behaviour of particle verbs. Swedish declaratives strictly require [particle + verb] word order (as in (3)) and Danish declaratives equally strictly require [verb + particle] (as in (4)). Norwegian is a language that affords both options, and dialects of Norwegian differ as to whether they pattern with Swedish or Danish or allow both options equally (Svenonius 1996).

(3) a. John åt upp äpplet   b. *John åt äpplet upp
   John eat- PAST up the apple   *John eat- PAST the apple up*
   'John ate up the apple'   'John ate the apple up'

(4) a. *John lukker op gaven   b. John lukker gaven op
      John open-PRES up the gift   *John open-PRES the gift up*
      'John opens up the gift'   'John opens the gift up'

For each language, imperatives pattern with declaratives. Compare Swedish (3) with (5) and Danish (4) with (6).

(5) a. Ät upp äpplet!   b. *Ät äpplet upp!
      Eat-IMP up the apple   *Eat-IMP the apple up*
      'Eat up the apple'   'Eat the apple up'

(6) a. *Luk op gaven!   b. Luk gaven op!
      Open-IMP up the gift   *Open-IMP the gift up*
      'Open up the gift'   'Open the gift up'

2.3 Verb raising

MSc and English differ in terms of verb-raising in root clauses.[1] MSc finite verbs leave the VP, while English ones remain in the VP. Adverbs, which are well-established as diagnostics for verb movement, illustrate this. Contrast the Danish and English declarative examples (7-8).

(7) a. *Johan hurtigt spiste æblet.   b. Johan spiste hurtigt æblet.
      John quickly ate the apple   *John ate quickly the apple*
      'John quickly ate the apple'   'John quickly ate the apple'

(8) a. John quickly ate the apple.   b. *John ate quickly the apple.

Within each language, verb-raising phenomena are the same for imperative as for declarative clauses, as demonstrated in (9-10).

(9) a. *Hurtigt spis æblet!   b. Spis hurtigt æblet!
      Quickly eat-IMP the apple   *Eat-IMP quickly the apple*
      'Quickly eat the apple'   'Quickly eat the apple'

(10)   a. Quickly eat the apple!   b. *Eat quickly the apple!

In sum, imperatives seem to have the same VP-internal properties, and therefore the same phrase structure, as declaratives.

---

[1] In MSc embedded clauses, the verb remains in the vP. This fact is not relevant for this investigation, since imperatives are not embedded in these languages.

3. VP-external properties

This section aims to explain the interpretational difference between declarative and imperative subjects and how this difference is encoded syntactically. Since imperative subjects have been conflated with vocatives, the first section is dedicated to defining vocatives and thus separating them from imperative subjects. Then, after a discussion of the two-part semantics of subjects, I present a phrase structure proposal to account for the interpretive differences in declarative versus imperative subjects.

3.1 Vocatives

For Thorne (1966), vocatives and imperative subjects are two instantiations of the same phenomenon. Schmerling (1975) and others dispute this view. I provide criteria to identify vocative DPs, thereby ruling them out as subjects and eliminating them from the discussion of imperative subjects.

The claim that vocatives are distinct from subjects is supported by the fact that in languages with phonologically or morphologically marked vocatives, a vocative form may never occur in a subject (argument) position. This is evident in languages that case-mark vocative DPs (Zhang 1990). Within MSc, some dialects of Northern Norwegian require a pronoun to obligatorily precede a personal name in argument positions (e.g., *ho Kari*). The corresponding vocative is *Kari!* but not **ho Kari*! (Delsing 1993: 54.) Göteborg Swedish phonologically distinguishes subject *du* versus vocative *du* (Lars-Olof Delsing, p.c.).

Because the division between vocative and subject is not morphologically or phonologically marked in Danish or English, diagnostics are required to determine which DPs are vocatives and which are not.[2] The following six criteria classically distinguish vocatives. It is not the case that each criterion is visible or provable in every language, but every language is predicted to display some of these criteria that converge on isolating a set of vocative DPs.

---

[2] Potsdam (1996: 201) relies on the following properties which typify English vocatives:
     i. Special intonation
     ii. Reference only to the addressee
     iii. Trigger only second person agreement
I include three more criteria in order to capture the variation observed across languages.

(11) Vocative criteria
    a. <u>Phonological</u>: special pronunciation of vocative DP
    b. <u>Prosodic</u>: special intonational contour, usually including a prosodic boundary between the vocative DP and the VP
    c. <u>Morphological</u>: special vocative case or other morphological marking
    d. <u>Syntactic</u>: can not trigger 3rd person agreement, even when the vocative DP is 3rd person
    e. <u>Phrase structure</u>: occupy a clause-external position
    f. <u>Semantic</u>: reference only to the addressee

Criterion (a) is realised in Göteborg Swedish, (c) is realised in Northern Norwegian and (b), (d), (e) and (f) are realised in all of MSc and English. Criterion (d) represents a fact that is widely recognised in the English imperative literature (Potsdam 1996) and holds in other languages as well (Zhang 1990): a vocative DP only ever triggers 2nd person agreement. An example of this "anaphoric mismatch" is shown in (12), where the ellipsis '…' is used to represent English vocative intonation.

(12) Everybody$_i$ … make yourself$_i$ at home.[3]

Contrast (12) with the declarative sentence in (13). In accordance with Principle A of Binding Theory, a declarative subject DP must agree in terms of its ϕ-features with a co-referential anaphor lower in the clause.

(13) Everybody$_i$ made himself$_{i/*j}$ / *yourself$_i$ at home.

Given (11d), we expect that substitution of a third person anaphor in sentence (12) will result in ungrammaticality. This prediction is borne out.

(14) *Everybody$_i$… make himself$_{i/j}$ at home.[4]

I represent vocatives as adjoined to the highest functional projection. Justification for this structure includes the facts that vocatives: (i) require special prosody, and such 'comma intonation' is usually represented by an adjoined structure; (ii) can iterate as in (15); (iii) can be sentence initial or

---

[3] Various analyses of anaphoric mismatch have been proposed: Potsdam (1996) relies on 'semantic binding' whereas and Rupp (1999) assumes a null second person 'subject' as the syntactic antecedent. I follow Rupp, as will become clearer in section 3.2.

[4] This sentence is ungrammatical due to the ϕ-feature mismatch between the anaphor and the non-overt 2nd person 'subject' that obligatorily serves as its antecedent.

sentence final as in (16) or even sentence medial in declaratives as in (17).

(15)   You swine, you filthy liars, you scoundrels…get off my lawn!
(16)   (Everybody)… grab a partner… (everybody)!
(17)   Your shoes…Jonathan…are muddy.

While vocatives are non-arguments located in clause-external _ positions, subjects are clause-internal arguments.

3.2 Subjects

In this section I deconstruct the notion *thematic subject* into two semantically distinct parts. Whereas these two parts are normally conflated, making each of them explicit paves the way toward understanding the relationship (and the differences) between declarative and imperative subjects. Each is discussed in turn.

In the derivation of a declarative sentence, a DP merges in its thematic position (where the external θ-role is assigned). The DP may move to a higher position, as in English, and become the 'subject of predication.' In some languages (e.g., Icelandic), an alternative is present; an expletive may be merged instead, deriving a transitive expletive construction (TEC). The very presence of this type of construction suggests that the two parts of the subject (the thematic part and the 'predication' part) are distinct.

Imperative subjects differ from declarative ones. Indeed, the question of how to understand the notion 'imperative subject' has been debated in the literature (Potsdam 1996, Platzack and Rosengren 1998). Intuitively, "The imperative NP…can be used only to talk TO the addressee not ABOUT him or her" Platzack and Rosengren (1998: 177). Pragmatic, semantic and syntactic analyses have been put forward to explain the interpretive constraints on the imperative subject (Downing 1969, Potsdam 1996). I propose that, parallel to the declarative subject, the imperative subject contains two semantically distinguishable parts.

As in declaratives, the first part of the imperative subject is a thematic role. Potsdam writes, "The imperative event has an agent…" (1996: 244).[5] Since an imperative is a call for an event to be brought about (a notion to be made clearer shortly), I adopt the term *intended agent* from Hamblin 1987. In the sense that the *intended agent* is *the one to cause or initiate an*

---

[5] Unlike declarative subjects, which may receive a variety of thematic roles, the particular semantics of the imperative requires an agentive theta-role. This is probably due to the fact that one can only implore someone to do something that is within her control to do. To the extent that they are OK, unaccusative and stative imperatives take on an agentive interpretation – *Blush!* can only mean *Make yourself blush!*

event, it is similar to the familiar thematic role 'agent.' Both imperative and declarative subjects contain a thematic part, so the difference between them hinges on the second semantic function each of them have.

The second part of a declarative subject is the 'subject of predication,' and the second part of the imperative subject is an *addressee*. The imperative subject has been linked to the notion 'addressee,' and it has been defined in various ways in the literature. For Hamblin (1987:53):

> There is a sense of 'addressee' which includes all intended recipients of an utterance, including those who are bystanders to the immediate transaction. (But excluding *over*-hearers.)… The addressee is expected to pass the imperative on, by some appropriate means, and perhaps persuade, threaten or cajole the intended agent [into initiating the event].

The addressee and intended agent are related in one of two ways. In the default case, they are related by identity: the *addressee* and *intended agent* are perceived as the unified imperative subject. When an imperative is issued to an addressee *x*, then *x* can be said to have been ordered / implored / invited to bring about some event *by doing it himself*, as in (18).

(18) Move!

Uttering (18) to *x* constitutes a command for *x* to move. Crucially, (18) cannot be uttered to *x* to implore *y* to move.[6]

Otherwise, when *addressee* and *intended agent* are not related by identity, "…the addressee in a sense mediates between the speaker and the intended agent of the required action…" Rupp (1999: 73). In other words, the relationship between *addressee* and *intended agent* may be mediated by CONTROL (in the sense of Potsdam 1996).[7] Rather than a grammatical notion, Potsdam's notion of control is a real-world, sociological notion in which the addressee is able to "persuade, threaten or cajole" the intended agent into initiating the event named by the VP. In order for (19)-(20) to be felicitous, the *addressee* and *intended agent* must be related in some sense by hierarchical control. Consider first (19), below.

---

[6] As Potsdam (1996) points out, there need not be anyone present in order to utter *Somebody help me*! In this case, the addressee is interpreted as identical to the agent.

[7] Potsdam (1996: 236) defines *Control Relationship* as: *x* is in a control relationship with *y* if *x* has potential control over *y* in some domain *z* (where *z* may range over social, military, political, economic, discourse or other situations.)

(19)   Someone move this dog!

Someone is the *intended agent* and the *addressee* is some salient group of people (including *all intended recipients of an utterance*). Generally, the *someone* in question is a member of the addressee group.[8]

Zhang (1990), Platzack and Rosengren (1998) and others note that quantifiers quantify over the set of addressees. Contra Downing (1969), it is not the case that every *intended agent* must be a subset of the addressee, as illustrated in (20) (from Potsdam 1996: 232-3) where the addressee consists merely of the singular *you*.

(20)   a. **You and your men** be on guard for anything suspicious!
       b. **You and William** do the cooking and I'll provide the wine!
       c. …going camping? Well **you all** enjoy yourselves!

The imperatives in (20) can only be understood to be felicitous only if the *addressee* is (in some sense) in control of the *intended agent*.

Deconstructing the notion *subject* into two semantic parts makes clear the parallel between declarative and imperative subjects. Each subject is assigned a thematic role. The difference between declarative and imperative subjects is that only the former includes a 'predicated of' part. By contrast, the *addressee* provides the second part of the imperative subject. The syntactic encoding of the two-part subjects is detailed in the next section.

3.3 Imperative phrase structure
The spirit of this approach resembles previous proposals (e.g., Postdam 1996; Platzack and Rosengren 1998; Rupp 1999) in that it attempts to show that imperative syntax is regular and can be explained using standard syntactic mechanisms. This proposal differs in that it makes use of more recent syntactic mechanisms in its implementation.

Section 2 showed that imperatives display the same VP-internal properties as declaratives. Thus imperatives project VP and vP. The vP-shell is the locus of the external θ-role in declarative and imperative derivations.

---

[8] This generalisation is only for quantified intended agents (see discussion of (20)) and it may not hold in every case. Consider *Someone move this dog, John!* Following (11f), the vocative *John* defines the *addressee*. The responsibility of carrying out the event is thus John's, and the intended agent may be John or someone that John enlists. The intended agent need not be present at the time of utterance, nor part of the addressee group. Thanks to a reviewer for pointing this out.

I propose that imperative phrase structure contains the same projections as declarative phrase structure: minimally vP and TP and potentially also AspP, NegP and AuxP. The difference between imperatives and declaratives reduces to the featural composition of T° in each case.

Cross-linguistically, imperative clauses lack overt tense and resist modal verbs. Most linguists have taken this to mean that imperative clauses do not contain TP (Platzack and Rosengren 1998, Rupp 1999). My proposal is that tense morphology is cross-linguistically absent from imperative verbs due to the presence of an imperative-flavoured-T° that competes with prototypical-declarative-T° for this functional position. Crucially, $T_{Imp}°$ has a different feature composition from $T_{Decl}°$. My proposal rests on two assumptions.

First, following Pesetsky and Torrego (2000) NOM case is the result of a DP checking its uT feature against an interpretable T feature. On this view, the feature composition of $T_{Decl}°$ includes an interpretable tense feature and $u\phi$-features. Similarly, to account for the fact that imperative intended agents cross-linguistically bear NOM case, I propose that $T_{imp}°$ contains an interpretable tense feature and an interpretable 2nd person ϕ-feature that is unspecified for number.[9,10]

Second, the two flavours of T° differ in their interpretations. For $T_{Decl}°$, T = time of event. That is, tense binds the event variable e provided by the verb (Davidson 1967, Higginbotham 1985). In addition to binding the event variable, the T feature on $T_{Imp}°$ is anchored to speech time.

The syntax of the declarative subject can now be made clearer. The DP that merges to [Spec, vP] (the θ-position) and later moves to [Spec, T_{Decl}P] to check its uT feature against T°. The result is a 'subject' DP bearing Nominative case. [Spec, T_{Decl}P] is not conventionally considered to be a position that is associated with a semantic value, but arguably it facilitates the ABOUTNESS property that is typical of declarative subjects.[11] The predication associated with the subject DP could be brought about by

---

[9] Evidence comes from tag questions and anaphoric mismatch. The facts that (i) imperatives can only ever be followed by tag questions including *you* and not other DPs and (ii) 3rd person vocative DPs only ever take 2nd person anaphors (see (12)) support the claim that $T_{Imp}°$ contains a second person feature.

[10] Rupp (1999) proposes that imperative I° carries a $u\phi$-feature that is checked by a 2nd person *pro* in [Spec, IP]. Given current theoretical assumptions, it may no longer be plausible to appeal to analyses using *pro*. It remains to be seen whether these are really two significantly different proposals or just notational variants.

[11] As a reviewer correctly points out, not *all* declarative subjects have this property.

virtue of the DP being in this structural position.[12]

As discussed, the subject of declarative clauses is composed of two semantic parts: (i) an agent/causer/initiator and (ii) being predicated of. These two components so typically characterise the declarative subject that we do not usually conceive of the subject being comprised of two distinct parts. However, the two structural positions ([Spec, vP] and [Spec, T_{Decl}P]) can be straightforwardly shown to contribute to the semantics of the declarative subject in this way. The virtue in this division is that the semantic contribution of the [Spec, T_{Decl}P] position is made clear. This paves the way to understanding the parallel with imperative subjects.

In imperatives, a DP merges to [Spec, vP] where it receives the agent θ-role; it may be a full DP or *pro*.[13] This DP is interpreted as the *intended agent*. $T_{Imp}°$ merges with vP and projects its label, T_{Imp}P. The feature complex of $T_{Imp}°$ includes a 2φ-feature and a T feature. It is the 2φ-feature on $T_{Imp}°$ that is interpreted, cross-linguistically, as the *addressee*. The *addressee* is not predicted to be overt in any language. There is no need to check either of the features on $T_{Imp}°$ since interpretable features survive until LF.[14] No further projection is licensed; there is no CP.

The difference between declarative and imperative subjects is that the former are in some sense 'subjects of predication' and the latter contain the notion *addressee*. The difference between 'subject of predication' and 'addressee' is a matter of structural position: [Spec, T_{Decl}P] versus $T_{Imp}°$, respectively. The feature complexes on $T_{Decl}°$ and $T_{imp}°$ and their interpretations are summarised below:

$$T_{Decl}° \quad \begin{bmatrix} T_{Decl} \\ u\phi \end{bmatrix} \qquad\qquad T_{Imp}° \quad \begin{bmatrix} T_{Imp} \\ 2\phi \end{bmatrix}$$
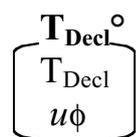
T = time of event
[Spec, vP] = agent
[Spec, T_{Decl}P] = subject of predication
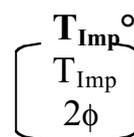
T = speech time
[Spec, vP] = intended agent
2φ = addressee

The utility of this split-subject approach is that it clearly shows the syntactic contribution of each part of the declarative and imperative two-

---

[12] Hale & Keyser (1993: 102) write, "subjects…raise to [Spec, IP] to satisfy the requirements of that projection and, presumably, to realize the relation traditionally called predication, that holds between [Spec, IP] and the VP." See also Rothstein (1983).

[13] *pro* is licensed because $T_{Imp}°$ is specified for a 2nd person φ-feature.

[14] As for the difficulty associated with 3rd person intended agents, see section 5.2.

part subjects argued for in section 3.2.

Focusing on the imperative, the syntactic representation for (19) *Someone move this dog* is shown in (21). Quantified intended agents generally quantify over an addressee group, so though there may be only one mover, the entire addressee group is responsible for bringing about the moving event.

(21)   [$_{TImpP}$ [$_{TImp°}$ 2PL] [$_{vP}$ [someone] move$_i$ [$_{VP}$ t$_i$ this dog]]]

Support for this proposal comes from Latin and colloquial Finnish where IMPERATIVE-2PL morphology co-occurs with a 3SG quantified intended agent bearing NOM case. While this morphology would otherwise seem perplexing, on this analysis it is expected since moving the verb to T$_{Imp}$° (which contains a 2nd person feature) results in 2nd person agreement morphology. Inflecting the verb with 3rd person singular morphology to match *someone* results in ungrammaticality, at least for Latin.

(22)   a. Aperi-te   aliquis   *Latin*
          open-IMP-2PL someone-NOM-SG   (Plautus, Mercator 131)
          'Someone open'

      b. [$_{TImpP}$ [$_{TImp°}$ aperite$_i$] [$_{vP}$ aliquis t$_i$ [$_{VP}$ t$_i$]]]

(23)   a. Maista-kaa   joku   keitto-a   *Finnish*
          Taste-IMP-2PL   someone-NOM-3SG soup-PART
          'Someone taste some of the soup'
      b. [$_{TImpP}$ [$_{TImp°}$ maistakaa$_i$] [$_{vP}$ joku t$_i$ [$_{VP}$ t$_i$ keittoa]]]

4. MSc data
In Jensen (2003), imperatives modelled on those in (1) were tested in Danish, Norwegian and Swedish using various word order combinations and the vocative diagnostics in (11).[15] For reasons of space, only the generalisations are shown.

The fact that no MSc language admits pre-verbal intended agents

---

[15] Using vocative diagnostic (11d): *a vocative can not trigger 3rd person agreement, even when the vocative DP is 3rd person*, informants were presented with a series of imperative examples including various 3rd person DPs together with 2nd or 3rd person anaphors. In a sentence that was judged to be grammatical with a 2nd person anaphor, the DP was considered to be a vocative. A grammatical sentence with a 3rd person anaphor was considered to contain a DP subject. For 2nd person DPs, diagnostics (a-c) were employed.

indicates that the verb leaves the vP (see table 1, below). MSc is much more restricted than English as regards the typology of overt intended agents. Interestingly, Swedish seems to divide into two dialects, represented below as *Northern Swedish* (N Swedish) and *Southern Swedish* (S Swedish). The only MSc languages to accept overt intended agents were Danish and Southern Swedish, and in these languages the only readily available overt intended agents were 2nd person pronouns.[16] The data is as below.

Table 1. Word order variation in MSc overt intended agents

	Danish	S Swedish	Norwegian	N Swedish
Du + verb	*	*	*	*
Verb + *du*	✓	✓	*	*

As regards vocatives, MSc allows a variety of vocative DPs, just one or two fewer than English allows. This is shown in Table 2, below.

Table 2. Vocative DPs in English and MSc

	English	Danish	Norwegian	Swedish
2nd person pronoun	✓	*	✓	✓
You there	✓	✓	✓	✓
*You-*description	✓	✓	✓	✓
Who-clauses	✓	✓	✓	✓
Superlative partitive	✓	✓	✓	✓
Bare plural	✓	✓	✓	✓
Definite description	✓	✓	✓	✓
Proper names	✓	✓	✓	✓
Universal quantifier	✓	✓	✓	✓
Indefinite	✓	*	*	*
Negative quantifier	*	*	*	*

---

[16] Further, 3rd person pronouns and some 3rd person quantifiers seem to be possible post-verbally in Southern Swedish imperatives, though judgements vary quite widely.

5. Analysis

The observed differences in English and MSc reduce to three points of variation: (i) verb raising, (ii) identity relation and (iii) case neutralisation.

5.1 Verb raising

As evidenced by the facts in section 2.3, the imperative verb is argued to leave the VP in MSc but not in English. The location of the verb has consequences for word order. Since the English verb remains low, English imperative word order is restricted to [DP + verb]. Since the MSc verb raises to $T_{Imp}°$, the word order is restricted to [verb + DP].

5.2 Identity relation

Some languages require an identity relation (in which features are obligatorily shared) to hold between $T_{Imp}°$ and the highest specifier of the thematic domain. The most trivial instantiation of this relation is the case of null subject imperatives, where *pro* occupies [Spec, vP]. In such cases, we understand the addressee and intended agent as one entity (see discussion of example (18).) This identity relation also necessarily obtains with 2nd person DPs. Since English does not require this identity relation in all cases, this language allows a range of 3rd person DPs to obtain in [Spec, vP] (without the derivation crashing at LF due to incompatibility of 2nd and 3rd person φ-features). MSc languages do require identity, and thus only 2nd person subjects are allowed - with the following variation:

Danish and Southern Swedish: [Spec, vP] may either contain *du* or *pro*. There can be no featural difference between *du* and the addressee.[17]

Norwegian and Northern Swedish: [Spec, vP] is only ever occupied by *pro*. I propose that this is due to a feature clash, as is detailed below.[18]

5.3 Case neutralisation

In some languages, Nominative case has been neutralised. This is to say that Nom_{Decl} and Nom_{Imp} have collapsed (as in English, Danish and Southern Swedish). In these languages and also cross-linguistically (see Zhang (1990)), we observe 'nominative' case on imperative subject DPs.

---

[17] Note: this relation must not be obligatory for Swedish since 3rd person pronouns may obtain post-verbally. If correct, Swedish differs from Danish in this way.

[18] Zhang (1990) writes that some languages have special imperative subject pronouns that are not observed to occur in subject positions of other clause-types. Northern Swedish and Norwegian could be argued to have the null version of such a pronoun.

In other languages (e.g., Northern Swedish and Norwegian), the two flavours of Nominative case are distinct: Nom_{Decl} differs from Nom_{Imp}. Given that all DPs carry an uT feature that requires checking by T, I propose that Northern Swedish and Norwegian contain the lexical entry *du* [uT_{Decl}] but not *du* [uT_{Imp}]. On this assumption, Northern Swedish and Norwegian *du* are not possible in imperatives because they are not specified for $uT_{Imp.}$[19] Northern Swedish and Norwegian must contain *pro* [uT_{Imp}] since it is the only possible imperative subject DP in these languages.

Consequently, in Norwegian and Northern Swedish imperatives, *du/dokker* can only be vocatives, here shown in right-adjoined positions.[20]

(24) a. Gi meg den du / dokker   *Norwegian / Northern Norwegian*
          Give-IMP me it you-SG / you-PL
          'Give it to me, you / you guys'

      b. Sitt kvar du   *Northern Swedish*
          Sit-IMP there you
          'Sit there, you'

6. Conclusion

In this paper I presented evidence that internal to the VP, a language's imperatives have the same properties as its declaratives. Imperatives and declaratives differ in the interpretation of subjects. In decomposing the notion *subject* into two semantic parts, I identify a relation between declarative and imperative subjects: each contains a thematic role. For imperatives, this role is necessarily agentive, interpreted as the *intended agent*. The difference between declarative and imperative subjects is reduced to the nature of the second semantic part: *subject of predication* and *addressee*, respectively. This difference is argued to arise due to the syntax of each clause type.

I propose that imperative and declarative phrase structure is composed of the same functional projections up to and including TP. The differences between imperatives and declaratives are reduced to a difference of features on $T_{Decl}°$ versus $T_{Imp}°$. Specifically, while $T_{Decl}°$ contains T and u ϕ features, $T_{Imp}°$ contains T and a 2ϕ-feature. It is the 2ϕ-feature on $T_{Imp}°$ that is interpreted as the *addressee*. Further, this feature accounts for the cross-linguistic preference for 2nd person imperative subjects.

---

[19] Of course, dialectal variation may result in some Norwegian dialects patterning with Danish and Southern Swedish in allowing post-verbal *du* subjects.

[20] Danish and Southern Swedish also allow right-adjoined, sentence-final *du*.

Taken together, this view of phrase structure and two points of difference (±identity and ±case neutralisation) provide an account of the variation between MSc and English imperatives. The facts that call for explanation (interpretation of imperative subject and word order variation) are explained with as few departures as possible from declarative clauses.

References:

Davidson, Donald. 1967. 'The Logical Form of Action Sentences,' in N. Rescher (ed.) *The Logic of Decision and Action*, University of Pittsburgh Press, Pittsburgh, pp. 81-95.

Delsing, Lars-Olof. 1993. *The Internal Structure of Noun Phrases in the Scandinavian Languages,* Department of Scandinavian Languages, University of Lund.

Downing, Bruce T. 1969. 'Vocatives and Third-Person Imperatives in English,' *Papers in Linguistics* 1, 570-592.

Hale, Kenneth and Samuel J. Keyser. 1993. 'On Argument Structure and the Lexical Expression of Syntactic Relations,' *The View from Building 20*, MIT Press, Cambridge. 53-109.

Hamblin, C.J. 1987. *Imperatives*, Basil Blackwell, Ltd., Oxford.

Higginbotham, James. 1985. 'On Semantics,' *Linguistic Inquiry* 16, 547-593.

Holmberg, Anders. 1986. *Word order and syntactic features in the Scandinavian languages and English*, University of Stockholm, Stockholm.

Jensen, Britta. 2003. *Imperatives in English and Scandinavian*, Doctoral dissertation, University of Oxford, Oxford.

Katz, Jerrold J., and Paul M. Postal. 1964. *An Integrated Theory of Linguistic Descriptions*, MIT Press, Cambridge.

Pesetsky, David, and Esther Torrego. 2000. 'T-to-C Movement: Causes and Consequences,' in M. Kenstowicz (ed.) *Ken Hale: a Life in Language*, MIT Press, Cambridge.

Platzack, Christer and Inger Rosengren. 1998. 'On the subject of imperatives: A minimalist account of the imperative clause,' *The Journal of Comparative Linguistics* 1, 177-224.

Potsdam, Eric. 1996. *Syntactic issues in the English imperative*, Doctoral dissertation, University of California Santa Cruz, Santa Cruz.

Rothstein, Susan. 1983. *The syntactic forms of predication*, Doctoral dissertation, MIT.

Rupp, Laura. 1999. *Aspects in the syntax of English imperatives*, Doctoral dissertation, University of Essex, Essex.

Schmerling, Susan. 1975. 'Imperative subject deletion and some related matters,' *Linguistic Inquiry* 6 (3), 501-511.

Svenonius, Peter. 1996. 'The Optionality of Particle Shift,' *Working Papers in Scandinavian Syntax* 57, 47-75.

Sweet, Henry. 1960. *A new English grammar, logical and historical*, The Clarendon Press, Oxford.

Thorne, J. P. 1966. 'English Imperative Sentences,' *Journal of Linguistics* 2, 69-78.

Zhang, Shi. 1990. *The status of imperatives in theories of grammar*, Doctoral dissertation, University of Arizona.