

## Slovenian Imperatives: You Can't Always Embed What You Want!

ADRIAN STEGOVEC & MAGDALENA KAUFMANN, UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT

Many languages distinguish declarative, interrogative, and imperative clauses morphosyntactically and relate them to the canonical functions of asserting, questioning, and directing. Declaratives and interrogatives typically have embedded correlates, but this has long been negated for imperatives (cf. Han 2000). More recently, a flurry of languages are claimed to embed imperatives (Korean, Old Germanic, German, Japanese, Slovenian, Ancient Greek, Mbyá, Vietnamese, even English). So far, there is relatively little discussion of their interpretations and of restrictions imposed by particular languages (but see Pak, Portner, Zanuttini 2008 on Korean), and it is generally ill understood why embedded imperatives are marked cross-linguistically and within single languages. Slovenian is claimed to be particularly permissive in allowing the morphological verb forms that mark main clause imperatives in various embedded contexts, including non-quotational speech reports and relative clauses (cf. Rus 2005, Dvořák 2005, Dvořák & al. 2008). In this talk, we take a closer look at their interpretations and highlight patterns that will hopefully contribute to a better understanding of the semantics of imperatives in general and the markedness of their embedded occurrences.

**Central issue:** Canonically interpreted main clause imperatives result in directive speech acts by which the speaker imposes an obligation on the addressee (or, for 1p, the group including the speaker). For embedded occurrences, this raises the question of (i) whether the utterance of the entire sentence is invariably directive ('pragmatically transparent'), (ii) who is (described as) imposing an obligation, and (iii) who is (described as) becoming obligated.

**Slovenian imperatives** in main clauses are marked by morphological forms of the verb, which exist for 2p sg, dual, pl, and 1p dual, pl (cross-linguistically, sometimes 'exhortatives' for '1p imp.'). Rus (2005) and Dvořák (2005) report that all five can occur in various types of embedded clauses, e.g. speech reports (cf. (1-a)), relative clauses (cf. (1-b)):

- (1) a. Peter<sub>i</sub> je rekel, da ga<sub>i,k</sub> poslušaj.  
Peter<sub>i</sub> is said that him<sub>i,k</sub> listen.IMP.2.SG  
'Peter said that you should listen to him.'  
b. To je knjiga<sub>i</sub>, ki jo<sub>i</sub> preberi, in to je knjiga<sub>j</sub>, ki jo<sub>j</sub> daj tatu.  
this is book<sub>i</sub> that her<sub>i</sub> read.IMP and this is book<sub>j</sub> that her<sub>j</sub> give.IMP father  
'This is the book you should read and this is the book you should give to father.'

Pronominalization ('him' for matrix speaker) shows that (1-a) is an instance of indirect speech (non-quotational). The conjunction of two definites in (1-b) shows that the relative clauses are restrictive. These data suggest that imperativized verbs can occur freely in embedded contexts and contribute deontic modality ('should'). But embedded imperatives systematically retain properties of their main clause equivalents, and we take these to be revealing regarding the semantics of imperatives in general. First, imperatives in reported speech are not pragmatically transparent (ok: '(1-a) but I don't think you need to do this'). The source of the obligation is the matrix subject (*Marija*, not the actual speaker). But the person obligated is the 2pSg of the actual context (analogously for all other imperative forms). This is particularly surprising for cases with an overt addressee in the matrix clause:

- (2) Marija<sub>i</sub> je rekla Petru, da jo<sub>i,k</sub> poslušaj.  
Marija<sub>i</sub> is told Peter.dat. that her<sub>i,k</sub> listen.IMP.2.SG  
'Marija told Peter that you should listen to her.'

- a. not: ‘Marija<sub>i</sub> told Peter<sub>j</sub> that {i. you/ii. he<sub>j</sub>} should listen to her<sub>i,k</sub>.’
- b. ‘Marija<sub>i</sub> told Peter<sub>j</sub> that he<sub>j</sub> should see to it that you listen to her<sub>i,k</sub>.’

Other languages (e.g. Korean, Pak & al. 2008) interpret the analogue of (2) as (2-a)-ii. We take (2-a)-i-type vs. (2-a)-ii-type interpretations to indicate non-shiftable vs. shiftable indexicality of the person features associated with the imperative morphology (Schlenker 2003, Pak & al. 2008). Slovenian (2) displays an additional complication: it reports an utterance which imposes an obligation on the matrix addressee (*Peter*) to see to it that the actual addressee lives up to the obligation expressed by the embedded imperative, cf. (2-b). This second layer of obligation cannot come from the matrix predicate *rekel* ‘tell’ alone, but involves the embedded imperative: it is absent if the imperativized verb is replaced by a deontic modal plus infinitive like *moraš poslušati* ‘should.3.sg. listen.inf’ (interpreted as (2-a)-ii).

Imperatives in relative clauses are different: they are pragmatically transparent (#‘(1-b) but I don’t think you should do it’). The actual speaker remains the source of the obligation, which is imposed on the participant(s) of the actual context indicated by the verbal inflection. This imposes various restrictions both on the site of attachment and on the main clause predicate, which we will derive from pragmatic transparency together with the general assumptions about imperatives sketched in the following.

**Proposal:** Imperatives express modalized propositions (Grosz 2011, Kaufmann 2012, Medeiros 2013). Their non-descriptive nature results from restrictions on contexts of felicitous use, implemented as presuppositions on the Kratzerian parameters of a covert modal operator, Kaufmann (2012:162). In particular, the Ordering Source Restriction requires that the imperative provide a (possibly partial) answer to a salient ‘What shall I do?’-question of the addressee (for 1p IMP: group including the speaker). In the absence of a matrix context describing an utterance event, these presuppositions are evaluated in the actual utterance context, resulting in the pragmatic transparency of restrictive relative clauses. For reported speech, the presuppositional meaning component is evaluated locally (in the matrix context, Crnič & al. 2009). In Slovenian, the references to speaker and addressee in Kaufmann’s presuppositions are shiftable. The person marking on the imperativized verb (restricting the interpretation of subject *pro*) contributes to the propositional pre-jacent of the modal operator and behaves like an ordinary strict indexical. Thereby, the multi-dimensional imperative semantics can derive two layers of obligation for sentences like (2).

**Conclusion:** Interpretations and restrictions for embedded imperatives in Slovenian can be derived from Kaufmann’s (2012) propositional imperative semantics. Following Pak & al. (2008) this involves distinctions in shiftability of different indexical meaning components. We hypothesize that, thanks to its particular constellation of shiftable and unshiftable components, Slovenian allows for a wider range of embedded imperatives than other languages.

Crnič & Trinh (2009) ‘Embedding Imperatives’. *NELS 39*. Dvořák (2005) ‘Slowenische Imperative und ihre Einbettung’. *PhiN*. Dvořák & Zimmermann (2008) ‘Imperative Subordination in Slovenian’. *Issues in slavic syntax and semantics*. Grosz (2011) ‘German Particles, Modality, and the Semantics of Imperatives’. *NELS 39*. Han (2000) *The Structure and Interpretation of Imperatives*. Garland. Kaufmann (2012) *Interpreting Imperatives*. Springer. Medeiros (2013) *Formal Approaches to the Syntax and Semantics of Imperatives*. PhD Thesis. Pak, Portner, Zanuttini (2008) ‘Agreement in promissive, imperative, and exhortative clauses’. *Korean Linguistics*. Rus (2005) ‘Embedded Imperatives in Slovenian’. *G UWPL*. Schlenker (2003) ‘A Plea for Monsters’. *L&P*.