1 Imperatives: the illusion of simplicity

Most — if not all — languages of the world have a special, imperative, clause type, whose prototypical function is to express a directive speech act — in other words, to give orders, formulate requests, wishes, pleas, etc.\(^1\) As Whitney (1891: 215) put it, the imperative in Sanskrit 'signifies a command or injunction — an attempt at the exercise of the speaker's will upon someone or something outside of himself [themself - A. A.]. This, however (in Sanskrit as in other languages), is by no means always of the same force: the command slides off into a demand, an exhortation, an entreaty, an expression of earnest desire'.

Non-imperative forms — statements, questions, exclamations — are frequently co-opted to express varied overtones of 'directive meanings', intruding into the imperative domain. Defining the exact semantic span of a versatile imperative is not an easy task. Nonetheless, in many languages imperatives stand clearly apart from other clause types in

\(^1\) The exact semantic definition of the conceptual domains covered by imperatives is a much-debated issue; for instance, van der Auwera (2006) defines them as 'constructions of grammar that typically express a state of affairs as desirable by the speaker and that furthermore appeal to the hearer(s) to fulfil the desire'; also see Jespersen (1924), Davies (1986: 43-66), König and Siemund (2007), Jakobson (1965), and many more. Yet there are hardly any problems in defining what an imperative is in each particular language. A brief summary of approaches to imperatives is in Aikhenvald (forthcoming). Additional examples and references for each statement here are in Aikhenvald (forthcoming), and are available upon request.
their grammatical properties.\(^2\) The project within which this conference is organised is entitled 'Two modal systems in Omotic: declarative and interrogative clauses'. This paper intends to provide a typological snapshot of the third clause type — the imperative.

Typology can be viewed as a 'handmaid' of language analysis; the best a typologist can do is help fieldworkers discover more about the languages of their expertise, and thus about how languages work in general. My aim today is to draw together ideas and facts about special properties of imperatives, so as to create a background for fieldworkers — especially experts on Omotic languages.\(^3\) Appendix 2 contains a checklist of points concerning imperatives and commands — something fieldworkers may find useful.

What is special about imperatives, in terms of their grammar?

Reading grammars and working on languages from many parts of the world alerts one to the fact that imperatives are rather commonly expressed by the bare root or stem of a verb. An imperative addressed to the singular 'you' is very often the shortest and the simplest form in the language. One of the shortest words in Latin is *i! 'go!*, from the verb *ire 'to go*. The second person singular imperative regularly coincides with the stem of the verb. So, from *amāre 'to love* one forms the second person singular imperative *amā! 'love', and from *audīre 'to listen, 'audī! 'listen'. For a handful of oft-used verbs, the second person imperative is even shorter than the stem itself: *dicere means 'to say, and its second person imperative is *dic!; *facere 'to do, make' forms *fac! 'do, make!'; *ducere 'to lead' forms *duc!; and *ferre 'bear' forms *fer! Similarly, in Dime (Seyoum 2008: 121), 'the imperative form of the verb is the simplest verb form'. Formally speaking, imperatives look like primitive 'poor relations' of their declarative and interrogative counterparts.

\(^2\) Schmerling (1982) is among the first attempts at outlining some specific properties of imperatives as a clause type (mostly based on English). However, her basic thesis about imperatives as a 'primitive' and 'poorly elaborated' clause type does not hold cross-linguistically.

\(^3\) For each non-Omotic language I provide genetic affiliation and area where it is spoken.
But this simplicity is a mere illusion. In many ways, imperatives are 'a law unto themselves': in Jakobson's (1965: 191) words, 'a lonely imperative' is opposed to both declarative and interrogative clauses. Imperatives have their limitations — see §3. They possess a litany of grammatical categories of their own. And categories of declarative and interrogative clauses acquire imperative-specific overtones congruent with the imperative's semantics and interpersonal relations — see §4. A brief summary is in §5.

2 'Canonical' and 'non-canonical' imperatives

For many linguists and language learners alike, 'imperative' implies a command to a second person — such as English Get out! And indeed, in many languages a set of special imperative forms is restricted to commands directed at 'you'. Addressee-directed imperatives are always central to the imperative paradigms. This follows the well-established traditional approach — in Lyons' (1977: 747) words, 'it is implicit in the very notion of commanding and requesting that the command or request is addressed to the person who is expected to carry it out'. Addressee-oriented imperatives will be called canonical imperatives, or imperatives in a narrow sense. In many languages, non-addressee-oriented command forms — or non-canonical imperatives — stand apart from canonical imperatives. The term 'jussive' covers commands to third person, and 'hortative' describes commands to first person.

In a few Omotic languages, canonical and non-canonical imperatives form one paradigmatic set. Full person paradigms in Wolaitta (Lamberti and Sottile 1997: 162) and Haro (Woldemariam 2003: 152) are in Appendix 1 (a similar analysis appears to apply to Zayse: Hayward 1990: 292-3; also see Amha ms, on how canonical imperative and optative used for non-second person addressee can be analyzed as part of the same grammatical system). Alternatively, a non-canonical imperative may stand apart from a canonical one, as
in Dizin (Beachy 2005: 109), in Hamer (Lydall 1976: 421), and in Koyra (Hayward 1982: 251).

A somewhat trickier situation has been described by Breeze (1990: 36-7), for Benchnon: non-canonical imperatives have two alternative forms, one consisting of a future stem + e₂, and the other one of the singular imperative — which equals the basic verb form — plus -mak₂.

Maale (Amha 2001: 128; 157-8) has three canonical imperatives (regular, polite and impolite), and two optative markers used to express wishes and indirect orders to first person (marker -óm)⁴ and to third person (marker -óngó). These markers are mutually exclusive. Just like in Benchnon, canonical imperatives distinguish number, but non-canonical ones don't. Neither do non-canonical imperatives have any special forms for politeness.

The ways in which canonical and non-canonical imperatives can be set apart, or put together, deserve special study. Cross-linguistically, non-canonical imperatives are always more formally marked than addressee-oriented ones. For instance, in Dizin first and third person commands have a subject prefix and second person commands do not. Also, non-canonical imperatives may co-opt a form of another category even if canonical imperatives are expressed with a set of forms of their own: in Koyra (Hayward 1982) the infinitive stem is consistently employed for non-canonical imperatives. And the meaning of first person in non-canonical imperative may be different from that in clauses of other types: 'us' often has an inclusive meaning, 'you and me'.⁵

---

⁴ This form can also be used for third person wishes and indirect orders (Amha 2001: 157).
⁵ This is how Sweet (1891: 112 (§310)) formulates this, for English: 'there can be an imperative of the first person plural when it is equivalent to I or we+you' (also see Davies 1986: 239-42). The same phenomenon has been described for Finnish (Sulkala and Karjalainen 1992: 23), and Russian (Xrakovskij and Volodin 2001). In Figuig, a North Berber language of Morocco, the first person command has an inclusive 'dual' reference, 'you and me' (Kossmann 1997: 126).
3 Imperatives are a law unto themselves

We start with a brief illustration of recurrent features of imperatives which set them apart from interrogative and declarative clause types — phonological features, grammatical relations and constituent order, and semantic and pragmatic restrictions on imperative formation.

3.1 Phonological features

Imperatives are often easy to recognise by the way they sound. Their salient phonological property is intonation — a feature described by Dwight Bolinger as being 'around the edge of language' (Bolinger 1972). This edge — sadly, often ignored by grammarians — is particularly significant for describing an imperative clause. In Warekena, from Northwest Amazonia, a declarative clause has a flat intonation; imperative clauses — which have the same segmental make up — show falling intonation on the last word. Having a specific imperative-only intonation is not universal. In Irakw, Southern Cushitic (Mous 1993: 164; and p.c.), and in Urarina, an isolate from Peru (Olawsky 2006: 569), intonation plays no role in distinguishing imperatives from other clause types: this is done by verbal markers.

Declarative and interrogative clauses in Omotic languages typically have the same intonation contour. My question to Omotic scholars: do imperatives share the same intonation, or not?

An imperative can display segmental idiosyncrasies not found with declarative or interrogative forms. The imperative in Dagbani, a Gur language from Ghana (Olawsky 1999: 101), has different realization depending on the position of the verb in a command. The singular imperative is marked with the suffix -ma if it is not followed by any other word. If it

---

is, the suffix is -\textit{mi} (and the final \textit{i} is often omitted, so the resulting form is just -\textit{m}). The imperative suffix attaches straight onto the verbal root, unmarked for any aspect.

Dagbani

(1) nyu-ma

\textit{drink-IMPV.FINAL}

'Drink!'

(2) nyu-m(i) kom!

\textit{drink-IMPV.NONFINAL} \textit{water}

'Drink water!'

Imperatives may have phonological rules of their own. In Welsh, positive imperatives differ from declarative verbs in that they do not have initial consonant mutation (Watkins 1993: 338; King 1993: 225).\footnote{Also see Maiden and Robustelli (2007: 249), on how the process of \textit{radoppiamento sintattico} applies differently to imperatives, and to non-imperatives in Italian.}

Imperatives in Dizin (Beachy 2005: 109-10) show a nasal assimilation: the second person singular marker is -\textit{g} ; it is -\textit{n} if followed by the second person plural -\textit{ti} or the politeness marker -\textit{de}j, e.g. \textit{wu-g} (enter-IMPV) 'enter (singular)!', \textit{wu-n-ti} (enter-IMPV-PL) 'enter (plural)!'. This process does not seem to occur in any other verb forms.

These phonological features help identify an imperative — see Appendix 2.

\textbf{3.2 Grammatical relations and constituent order}

Marking of verbal arguments in canonical imperatives may differ from that in other clause types, in that the subject does not have to be overtly expressed — the addressee is uniformly
understood as the subject. This recurrent feature — widely attested in Omotic languages — is illustrated by (3), from Haro (Woldemariam 2003: 152) (also see Rapold 2006: 254, on the optionality of addressee in Benchnon):

Haro

(3) magg-á!

be.happy-IMPV

'May you (singular) be happy!'

Even in the absence of an overt subject, it can be identified as such through syntactic tests. Sidaamo (an East Cushitic language from Ethiopia: Kawachi 2007: 498) has same-subject constructions expressing various directional and aspectual meanings (similar to those described by Amha and Dimmendaal 2006 for Wolaitta). If such a construction contains an imperative, the verb with the connective suffix referring to the same subject as the imperative is marked as second person singular or plural, depending on the choice of number in the imperative form.8

Sidaamo

(4a) hig-g-e hakk-í-ra mar-i

return-2sg-CONNECTIVE there-GENITIVE.PRON.M-ALLATIVE go-IMPV.SG

'Go there again' (you sg) (lit. Return and go there)

---

8 Also see subjecthood tests for the omitted subject of canonical imperatives in Koyra Chini (or Songhai), from Mali, by Heath (1999: 165).
A major 'commandment' for a grammar writer and a typologist is 'never take anything for granted'. It is a cross-linguistically established fact that imperatives operate on a nominative-accusative basis — that is, the addressee is the subject. But tests like the one for Sidaamo are crucial because they help transform an assumption into a fact.

The second argument — the object — may not be formally marked at all, unlike other objects in a language. In Finnish the object of a transitive verb in a declarative clause is marked with the accusative case in (5a).

**Finnish**

(5a) Pekkä söi kala-n

Pekka ate fish-ACCUSATIVE

'Pekka ate the fish'

In contrast, the object of an imperative appears in the citation form, the 'nominative' case (see Comrie 1975).

(5b) Syö kala!

eat.2sg fish:NOMINATIVE

'Eat the fish!'

---

9 A similar principle is at work in Estonian, in a number of Uto-Aztecan languages (such as Southern Paiute, Cahuilla, and some dialects of Hopi: Langacker 1977: 56) and in Australian languages Lardil, Panyjima and other Ngayarda languages (Dixon 1972: 135-6; Dench 1991: 204).
A functional explanation to this is quite straightforward: if the subject can only be the addressee, there is no need to disambiguate the subject and the object, and so the least formally marked case is employed.

Constituent order in imperatives can be different from that in statements. In Lele, a Chadic language, 'the syntax of giving orders differs from the syntax of the indicative' in the constituent order. While the subject pronoun for the second person plural precedes the verb in a statement, it follows it in a command. Any complements — such as the direct object in (6) — follow. Constituent order is fixed for both clause types.

Lele (Frajzyngier 2001: 100-1, 270-1)

(5) pàmà ngú
    search.IMPV 2pl

'Search!'

(6) kùlù ngú kùlbá
    buy.IMPV 2pl cow

'Buy a cow!'

A second person pronoun in a declarative clause precedes the verb:

(7) me me è
    you.fem you.fem go

'You (woman) go'

---

10 Subject pronouns preceding the verb have mid tone, and those following the verb have high tone. Mid tone is unmarked (e.g. ngu 'you plural') (Frajzyngier 2001: 100).
Having an imperative-specific constituent order is a well-attested feature. The order of clitics in clauses containing imperatives differ from that in other clause types in a number of Romance languages. In Romanian and Catalan, clitic pronouns (including locationals), immediately follow the imperative, and precede all other forms (see Malinson 1986; Hualde 1992: 25, and Maiden and Robustelli 2007 on Italian). And in many languages whose constituent order in declarative and interrogative clauses depends on pragmatics, it becomes fixed in imperatives. In Tariana, an Arawak language from North-west Amazonia (Brazil), the order in statements and in questions depends on the pragmatic status of the arguments; there is a tendency to put the verb last. But the subject of an imperative — if it is present at all — has to come after the verb. This takes us to the restrictions within imperative constructions.

3.3 The limitations of imperatives

Imperative clauses have one, almost universal, property. If a language has a dedicated focus construction, or focus markers, these are likely not to be used in imperatives. For example, in Urarina, focus markers do not occur in canonical imperatives.12

Along similar lines, no constituent can be focussed in imperative clauses in Manambu, from Papua New Guinea, and in Aghem (Bantu, from Cameroon: Hyman 1979: 61), two languages with special grammatical configurations for focus.13 Cleft constructions never

11 Note that in negative imperatives, clitics tend to precede rather than follow the verb. This may alert us to the possibility of prohibitives displaying properties of a different clause type.
12 To focalise a constituent within an imperative clause, one can use emphatic particles, which are different from focus markers.
13 Having grammatical focus in declarative clauses, but not in imperatives, is a feature of a few Chadic languages, e.g. Mina (Frajzyngier and Johnston 2005) and Lele (Frajzyngier 2001). In many languages, including English, a noun phrase may undergo left dislocation within an imperative construction, for contrastive effect, as in This book, take it away, that book, leave it here!
occur in imperatives. In contrast, they do occur in statements, and are often used in interrogative clauses.\textsuperscript{14}

Focus marking is a crucial feature in distinguishing declarative clauses from interrogative clauses in Omotic languages. (For instance, in Zargulla focus markers occur in declarative, but not in interrogative clauses: Amha ms). I have the impression, from reading Omotic grammars, that focus is incompatible with imperative, just as we would expect. This feature brings imperatives slightly closer to interrogatives (where focus markers do not occur) — we return to this in §5.

This pragmatically-based restriction is intuitively plausible. Imperatives constitute \textit{prima facie} directive acts to which the verb is central. This centrality of the verb is what makes the imperative mutually exclusive with grammatical focus marking of a nominal constituent within the clause (in Hyman's 1979: 61) words, 'imperatives have an overriding intrinsic focus' which is 'mutually exclusive with focus-marking of individual constituents'.

In other languages focus marking can occur in imperative clauses — but not with a focus meaning. An imperative in Cavineña, a Tacana language from Bolivia, can be made stronger with a focus marker \textit{=dya} (Guillaume 2008: 185; 665).

A prototypical directive speech act implies the speaker's or the addressee's control over the activity to be performed. As a consequence, verbs whose meanings do not involve 'control' — such as verbs of state — and passive forms may not form imperatives at all. This is the case in many languages, including Hebrew, Tariana, and Yucatec Maya (Guatemala: Hofling and Ojeda 1994: 282). In Sidaamo, an East-Cushitic language (Kawachi 2007: 499), the passive imperative form can only be used if controllable by the addressee: (8) is grammatical, and (9) is not:

\begin{enumerate}
\item[(8)]
\item[(9)]
\end{enumerate}

\textsuperscript{14} See Lambrecht (1994), on cleft and focus in interrogative and declarative clauses.
In many languages stative verbs, or verbs with non-volitional meanings, do not form imperatives, e.g. Arapaho (Algonquian: Cowell 2007), Haida (isolate, Canada: Enrico 2003) and Onondaga (Iroquoian: Chafe 1970: 20-1).

A semantic restriction may not be an absolute rule: in Turkana, a Nilotic language (Dimmendaal 1983: 181), it is possible to form an imperative on a verb which refers to an uncontrolled event, e.g. 'fear' or 'die', but imperatives are less common with such verbs. They can occur in imperative form if causativised.15 Copula verbs and verbs of possession may not form imperatives, as in Harar Oromo (Cushitic: Owens 1985: 67).16

15 The general consensus among scholars of English is that imperatives of passives and of non-volitional and stative verbs are problematic (Dixon 1994: 132; Takahashi 2000: 239; Quirk et al. 1985: 827). But they are not impossible: linguistic creativity in English is such that once the context is established, many strange things sound less strange. What is virtually impossible is forming imperatives on modal verbs, e.g. *Need a car!

16 The same restrictions may not apply to negative imperatives: see Takahashi (2000), on acceptability of passive negative commands in Japanese, where passive positive commands are not acceptable.
Imperatives may have further limitations. In Zargulla, as in most Omotic languages, genders are not distinguished in imperatives. However, the use of imperatives correlates with categorization of noun referents: only humans and higher animates can be commanded with an imperative (Amha ms). As far as I can see, this is unique to imperatives in Zargulla, and many other Omotic languages. This takes us to our next section.

4 Imperatives: a grammar of their own

We have just seen that imperatives impose restrictions on the kind of addressee. Other categories relating to the addressee include person (see §2 above), number and also gender or noun class: see §4.1. Imperatives may have their own categories relating to verbal action, including aspect, location in time and space, modality, and information source: see §4.2.

A complex of imperative-specific meanings relates to the strength of command, and type of speech act. Depending on the command situation, the 'commander' can be in a higher, or a lower position on the social ladder that the addressee. The relationship between the 'commander' and the addressee can be familiar, or formal. The relative status of the addressee and the commander is, not infrequently, reflected in the special honorific or politeness forms in imperatives. The formal expression of these meaning complexes is discussed in §4.3. They form the basis of imperative-specific extensions of other categories: see §4.4.

4.1 Imperatives, and addressee-related categories

An imperative addressed to the singular 'you' is very often the shortest and the simplest form in the language. In a number of languages, person marking is found only in imperatives: this is the case in Maale and also Malo (Amha 2001: 113; forthcoming: 53; Tesfu 2003).

Gender is not distinguished in Omotic canonical imperatives (the same principle

________________________

17 This limitation is frequent cross-linguistically, but is not universal. In playful situations in Manambu I observed people commanding a plate to sit still, or a pot to boil.
applies to many Cushitic languages, e.g. Alaaba: Schneider-Blum 2007: 224-5, and Kambaata: Treis ms), unlike declarative clauses, and third person commands (see Appendix 1). But in Chipaya (Uru-Chipaya, Bolivia: Cerrón-Palomino 2006: 148-51), gender of the addressee is expressed only in imperatives. Or the choice of an imperative marker may depend on the sex of the speaker, as in Lakhota, a Siouan language. This is the only instance in the language where natural gender is marked in the grammar (Boas and Deloria 1941: 111-12).

Marking singular versus plural number in imperatives is a recurrent feature of Omotic languages. Maale (Amha 2001: 157 and p.c.) has three canonical (addressee-oriented) imperatives which differ in the degree of politeness. The regular imperative and the polite imperative distinguish singular and plural forms — see Table 1. The polite imperative is built on the regular one. The impolite imperative does not distinguish number.

**Table 1 Number marking in canonical imperatives in Maale**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NUMBER OF ADDRESSEE</th>
<th>REGULAR IMPERATIVE</th>
<th>POLITE IMPERATIVE</th>
<th>IMPOLITE IMPERATIVE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>singular</td>
<td>Verb-é</td>
<td>Verb-é-tera</td>
<td>Verb-ibey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>plural</td>
<td>Verb-увáte</td>
<td>Verb-увátera</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This illustrates how the expression of addressee-related categories in imperatives interacts with an imperative's own categories — such as politeness: see §4.3.

**4.2 Imperatives, and categories relating to the verbal action**

Imperatives are widely believed to be poor in **aspectual** distinctions compared to other clause types. In other words, imperatives tend to have fewer aspectual forms, and distinctions,
than non-imperatives. For example, in Boumaa Fijian (Dixon 1988: 293), an imperative can occur with three of the four tense-aspect markers. But note that this is only a tendency, and does not apply to some languages, such as Benchnon (Rapold 2006: 255). We will see, in §4.4, that imperatives and non-imperatives may have the same aspectual forms which can be reinterpreted in terms of other — imperative-specific — meanings, such as politeness.

Imperatives can have aspectual distinctions of their own, not found in non-imperatives. The most frequent imperative-only distinction is continuative versus simple (or punctual) imperative, as in Lavukaleve, a Papuan language from the Solomon Islands (Terrill 2003: 244).

Imperatives may have their own tense distinctions: as predicted by Lyons (1977: 746-7), the most typical one is of immediate versus delayed command. Examples come from North American Indian languages, many of them Algonquian (e.g. Ojibwe: Valentine 2001: 991-3; Fox and Cheyenne: Mithun 1999: 172), and also in Takelma (Sapir 1922: 157-8), and South American languages (Aikhenvald 2008 and references there). A tri-partite tense system — immediate, delayed 'do later', delayed further 'do much later on' — is found in Koasati, a Muskogean language (Kimball 1991: 263-71).

Delayed imperatives may have additional overtones of politeness — as is the case in Nambiquara from Brazil, Epena Pedee, from Colombia, and Yupik Eskimo (Kroeker 2001: 30-2; Harms 1994: 29-30; Mithun 1999: 154). This is understandable: a command with overtones of immediacy is more urgent and thus more imposing than a command without such overtones.

An essentially temporal distinction — that between an 'immediate' and a 'delayed' imperative — has additional meanings relating to spatial distance. A distant imperative in Jarawara (Arawá, Brazil) may refer to a faraway time or place — see (10). And the immediate
imperative refers to 'here and now', as in (11). This extension from time to space is not surprising — but is only found in imperatives (and arguably, also in some deictic systems):

Jarawara (Dixon 2004: 397)

(10) otara noki ti-jahi  
1exc.O wait 2sgA-DISTAL.POS.IMPV.fem  
'You (sg) wait for us (in some distant time or place)'

(11) otara noki ti-na-hi  
1exc.O wait 2sgA-AUX-IMM.POS.IMPV.fem  
'You (sg) wait for us (here and now)'

Having special marking for distance in space is a unique property of imperative clauses which sets them apart from clauses of other types. A typical distinction is between a proximal command, for an action to be carried out close to the speaker 'do here', and a distal command, for an action to be carried out far from the speaker 'do further away'. This is pervasive in East Tucanoan languages, and is also found in Tariana.

Further imperative-only categories include 'extralocality' ('do somewhere else') — as in Paumarí (Arawá, Brazil: Chapman and Derbyshire 1991: 220) and Trio (Carib, Suriname: Carlin 2004: 306); and motion away from speaker or towards speaker — as in many North Carib languages (e.g. Macushi, Brazil: Abbott 1991: 49-51). 18

Grammaticalised evidentiality in declarative clauses covers a wide variety of information sources — whether the event was seen (visual evidential), or heard, smelt or

---

18 Imperative forms often combine with already existing directionals in a language, as in Shoshone, Barasano, Mam, Hup, Turkana (Dimmendaal 1983: 180) and Pero, where imperative has only nonperfective ventive ('away from speaker') aspect (Frajzyngier 1988: 88).
tasted (non-visual evidential), or inferred from some tangible evidence, or assumed, or learnt about through hearsay. Tariana, and many of its East Tucanoan neighbours, have all these meanings obligatorily marked on the verb in each declarative clause. Only the reported, or secondhand, evidential occurs in commands. It is semantically uniform across languages. The form of the evidential in statements and commands may be the same, or it can be different, as in Tucano (Ramirez 1997: 141, 144):

**Tucano**

(12) ba'â-apa'ro

* eat-non.third.person.REPORTED.RECENT.PAST

'You have eaten (reportedly)'

(13) ba'â-ato

* eat-REPORTED.IMPV

'Eat (on someone else's order)!' (that is, eat-you were told to)

That fewer evidential choices are available in commands than in statements or in questions follows from the semantic nature of the command itself. One can question the information source of a statement — 'how do you know?'. In contrast, a command is not intrinsically linked to an information source. This may be a reason why comparatively few languages have any evidentials in their commands. That reported evidentials occur in commands with one uniform meaning, of relaying someone else's order, is congruent with the nature of commands as verbal orders. Evidentials in declarative clauses often — though far from always — have epistemic overtones, implying certainty, uncertainty, doubt or disbelief. Importantly, these overtones are missing from the imperatives. But they may have command-
specific meanings. In Cavineña (Guillaume 2008: 185, 643-7) the reported evidential is a means of 'softening' a command:

(14) Jeti-kwe=pa
    
    come-IMPV.SG-REPORTED
    
    '(Daddy) come over (he says!)'

This is in line with the typical imperative-specific meaning of 'degree of strength' of a command — see §4.3.19

A word on the ways in which imperatives are negated. This is a separate topic — see the insightful analysis by van der Auwera (forthcoming). Grammatical categories expressed in negative statements can be neutralised in negative commands. Declarative negative in Maale (Amha 2001: 119-20, 126-7, 157) is marked differently depending on tense and aspect (the suffixes are -uwá- 'imperfective present', -induwá- 'imperfective future' and -ibá- 'perfective aspect'). There are no tense or aspect distinctions in the negative imperative, and the marker used is quite different:

19 Another option is to have a special grammatical marking of information source available to the 'commander'. Maidu, an isolate from California (Shipley 1964: 51-4), has two imperatives with evidential-like distinctions. One, marked with -pi, is used 'when the action of the order is to be carried out in the presence of the speaker or when there is no interest in the place of the ordered action', as in 'Look! I am dancing'. The other imperative marker, -padá, is used 'when the ordered action is to be carried out in the absence of the speaker', as in 'when you have gotten to my house and have sat down, drink a beer' (Shipley 1964: 54). Meithei, a Tibeto-Burman language from India, uses the non-firsthand evidential in commands to imply that the speaker expects the order to be carried out in their absence (Chelliah 1997: 223). Evidential distinctions in 'warning' imperatives are found in Tariana and in Nivkh (Aikhenvald 2004), and perhaps also Euchee (Linn 2000: 318).
Maale

(15) mukk-ippo

come-NEG.IMPV.2sg

'Don't come!' (singular addressee)

(16) mukk-ippo-te

come-NEG.IMPV-2PL

'Don't come!' (plural addressee)

Positive imperatives are rarely expressed with analytic structures (the few examples I have come from Boumaa Fijian, Nigerian Pidgin, and Ika, a Chibchan language from Colombia). In contrast, negative imperatives are often expressed analytically, with complex predicates. This is the case in many Australian and South American languages, and also in Omotic. In Hamer a negative imperative consists of the verb g\textit{ara} 'leave, stop' used after the dependent form of the lexical verb (perfect aspect), e.g. \textit{k\textipa{U}m\textipa{a}} 'eat!', \textit{k\textipa{um\textipa{n g\textipa{ara}}} (eat+DEPENDENT.MARKER stop:PERFECT) 'don't eat!' (Lydall 1976: 421, 427).

Negative imperative in Zargulla (Amha ms) is formed by a complex predicate consisting of a converb and negative imperative verb.

Or a negative imperative may involve using a verb form which does not have an intrinsically negative value. In Benchnon forming a negative imperative involves a converb of a lexical verb accompanied by a positive imperative of the verb \textit{\textipa{s\textipa{\textipa{i}d}}} 'remain' (Rapold 2006: 244; 259; Breeze 1990: 37). This periphrastic structure is reminiscent of a clause chain:
Benchnon

(17)  mfʔ-ā  ḟid

eat.NON.FACTUAL.STEM-'fem'  remain

'Don't eat!'

Special patterns of negation is what also helps to set imperatives apart from other clause types.

4.3 Imperative-specific meanings: 'strength' of command and interpersonal relations

Imperatives involve a directive speech act: an order, an instruction, a plea; they may cover an invitation, or a piece of advice. These meanings correlate with a general feature of the STRENGTH or DEGREE of a command. The stronger the command, the stricter the requirement for the addressee's compliance and the commander's insistence and authority. The authority itself can be institutionalised, if an order comes from a general to a soldier. Or it can be based on a societal convention, or on age, if it comes from parent to child, or an older sibling to a younger sibling. Strength of command correlates with its illocutionary force. Emphasis in imperatives is often linked to strength of command – the more insistent the commander, the more emphasis they put on the command. Urgency of command is another parameter frequently linked to the command's strength.

The degree of an imperative's strength can vary, from a strict order implying unquestionable authority and compliance, to a soft and mild command bordering on suggestion. An imperative by itself can express a neutral order. It can be strengthened; this implies increasing the authority of the commander and/or the peremptoriness of the command, thus intensifying the requirement that the addressee should comply. Amele, from
Papua New Guinea, employs a special peremptory intonation contour for this purpose, both in positive and in negative commands (Roberts 1987: 40-1), and so do many other languages.

Similar effects can be achieved with segmental markers. Two particles, *no* and *baa*, mitigate a command or a request in Ndyuka, a creole from Suriname, while final *yee* and *oo* strengthen a command (Huttar and Huttar 1994: 56-7).

Imperatives with increased, or decreased, illocutionary force are expected to be more formally marked than neutral imperatives. An emphatic imperative in Haro (Woldemariam 2003: 152-3), expresses a stronger command than the ordinary, neutral imperative. This is marked by an emphatic *-tte* which follows the imperative marker. There are no number distinctions in emphatic imperatives (while the neutral imperative distinguishes singular and plural).

The stronger the command, the more irritated may the commander sound. Tucano (Ramirez 1997: 148) and Desano (Miller 1999: 72-3) have special forms for imperatives involving 'scolding' and anger on the part of the authoritative commander. In Tucano, this would be an abrupt order from an adult to a child:

(18)  apê-a'sã!

play-IMPULSIVE.IMPV

'Play!' (an angry abrupt command)

A neutral imperative is in (19):

(19)  apê-ya!

play-IMPV

'Play!'
This is very much like the 'exigent' imperative in Kham, a Tibeto-Burman language from Nepal: the marker \(-\text{sā}:)\) is added to that of an immediate imperative; the meaning is that of impatience and sometimes anger (Watters 2002: 311).

The appropriate context for softening or strengthening a command depends on conventionalised interpersonal relationships: there can be one way for an adult to command a child, and another for someone to command a peer. Not surprisingly, the ways of strengthening or mitigating a command interact with politeness and conventionalised social hierarchies — another imperative-specific category.

A number of languages — many of them concentrated in Asia — have special linguistic forms explicitly marking deference (or lack thereof) towards the addressee. These fully grammaticalised choices known as 'honorifics' can be expressed in imperatives (see Shibatani 2006, for a comprehensive overview of pragmatic functions of honorific and 'humbling' forms). Roughly speaking, an addressee-oriented honorific marks respect or deference towards the addressee, who may also be perceived as socially superior.

Politeness distinctions acquire segmental marking in a number of Omotic languages — see Table 1 in §4.1, for a tripartite system in Maale. Impolite imperative does not distinguish number of the addressee; but both polite and neutral imperatives do.

This may suggest a dependency between the force of an imperative and the expression of number: the more brusque, and strong — or 'impolite' — the command, the fewer chances there are of overtly expressing other categories, such as number. This is similar to other dependencies between grammatical categories (in the spirit of Aikhenvald and Dixon 1998). The intuitive motivation is clear: once the clause is negated, everything else becomes irrelevant. Likewise, once the command is of exceptional strength, this strength may override the necessity to mark any further grammatical details. This is a tendency, and not a strict rule.
The polite imperative in Dizin (Beachy 2005: 109) behaves differently from the polite imperative in Maale: it does not distinguish number of the addressee, while the neutral imperative does (compare the following underlying forms: \textit{ba:s}'-\textit{ŋ}' 'want!' (sg); \textit{ba:s}'-\textit{ŋ}'-'ii' 'want!' (pl); \textit{ba:s}'-\textit{ŋ}'-'dej' 'want!' (polite)).

This is reminiscent of the binary honorific system in Dolakha Newar, a Tibeto-Burman language (Genetti 2007: 130-1, 180-2): here, non-honorific imperatives distinguish number of the addressee (plural addressee requires the suffix \textit{-n} on the verb), and the honorific ones do not (the honorific marker is \textit{-sin} for any number). It appears that dependencies between politeness and number go both ways.

Special imperative forms can correlate with particular speech acts types, also linked to interpersonal relations. A 'suggestive' imperative in Benchnon (Rapold 2006: 243-4) is a case in point. It has polite overtones. It can be used to encourage a guest to eat more:

\begin{equation}
\text{m’?-ár-ā}
\end{equation}

\begin{equation}
\text{eat.NON.FACTUAL.STEM-NEG-}'fem' \\
'Just help yourself!'\end{equation}

Formally, suggestive imperatives in Benchnon are similar to negative imperatives — see (17).

Further meanings encoded in imperatives may involve different types of speech act. Tuyuca, an East Tucanoan language (Barnes 1979), has special suffixes for invitation, permission, warning, confirmation ('check for yourself'), and a polite imperative.

Politeness, force of command, and type of speech act are intertwined. In Maale, the regular, or neutral, imperative can be used for orders and to instruct someone how to perform a certain task — for instance, in describing how to get somewhere. The polite imperative has 'begging' connotations to it, and does not show strict correlations with age and status of the
speaker with respect to the addressee. In contrast, the impolite imperative does: it is used 'when ordering somebody who is younger or low in status, parents to children when they are angry and most often among children when one of them acts as a boss. The impolite imperative is also used in chasing away pet animals' (Amha 2001: 126). In order to understand the semantics and pragmatics of imperatives we need such in-depth analyses — which can only be achieved through immersion fieldwork, living with the language and knowing it 'through and through'.

**4.4 Imperative-specific extensions of some grammatical categories**

The meaning extensions of categories of declarative clauses when used in imperatives are congruent with the complex of imperative-specific meanings — strength, politeness and speech act. In Yankunytjatjara, an Australian language (Goddard 1983: 190), the imperfective imperative has a 'less pressing, more polite effect, presumably because it implies less attention to the result or completion of the action in question'.

The imperfective in Supyire, a Gur language spoken in Mali, frequently has the same meaning in commands as it has in statements and questions: it indicates that the event is expected to be durative, or incomplete. In addition to this, imperfective can be used as a politeness strategy: in the imperative contexts it is more 'deferential' than the perfective.

Supyire (Carlson 1994: 521)

(21) Ta ma náhá

IMPV.IMPERFECTIVE come.IMPV here

'Come here, please!'

---

20 Russian imperative, and the politeness and other overtones of its aspectual forms are discussed by Shmelev (2002: 272ff); see references therein.
Modal and attitude markers may also have imperative-specific meanings — if they can be used in imperatives at all. Modal words and markers of epistemic modalities are often used to 'soften' a command. In Sochiapan Chinantec, the verificational $d\hat{a}M$ means 'truth, indeed' in declarative clauses, and in imperative clauses it marks a plea (Foris 2001). In (22), from Cavineña (Guillaume 2008: 185), a second position clitic $=ni$ 'maybe' is what imparts the meaning of 'do if you want to' to the command. It is also a way of making a command sound politer:

(22) Ne-duju-kwe=ni mikwana-ra

$\text{IMPV.NON.SG}$-take-$\text{IMPV.NON.SG}$=maybe 2pl-ERGATIVE

'You guys take it if you want!'

West Greenlandic derivational suffixes -$laar$ 'a little' or -$tsiar$ 'a bit', and -$gallar$ 'a while/for the time being' have a softening effect in imperatives (Fortescue 1984). This is consistent with a similar effect of $mal$ 'time, once' in German: a command in (23) sounds 'milder':

(23) Gib mir mal eine Zigarette

give:IMPV.2sg I:DATIVE once INDEFINITE ARTICLE ACC SG FEM cigarette

'Could you give me a cigarette'

Diminutive forms and expressions meaning 'a little' often serve to lessen the force and the insistence of a request, by 'belittling' it and making it sound inconsequential, in Brazilian Portuguese (Koike 1992: 56). Similarly, in Matses, a Panoan language from Peru, and in Cavineña, the diminutive suffix on verbs is used to express politeness. And in Meithei 'the
force of a command can also be reduced by placing an easily attainable upper limit to the task that the addressee will have to perform in order to fulfil the conditions of the imperative. This 'limit' can be indicated by kharə 'some' or mauktə 'just once' (Chelliah 1997: 286-7).

Deliberately downplaying the required activity, or limiting it to being performed just once, has an effect of mitigating the command: it then sounds less insistent, and easier to perform.

Softening a command can be achieved by using a delimitative marker meaning 'only': in Imbabura Quechua and in Huallaga Quechua, adding the suffix -lla 'just, only' to the verb makes the command sound softer (Cole 1982: 31, Weber 1989: 439).

A major question in analysing imperatives is: if a particle or a modality or an attitude marker is used in commands, does it have the same meaning as in declarative clauses? Or is its meaning adjusted to the complex of imperative-special overtones — strength, urgency, insistence, politeness, rudeness, or speech act?

A rather unexpected phenomenon has been described for Hamer (Lydall 1976: 421). Interrogative and declarative forms distinguish perfect, descriptive, imperfect and purposive aspects; the declaratives also have an 'immediate' form. In contrast, imperatives have just the perfect and the imperfect aspect. The perfect aspect in non-imperative clauses refers to a completed action, while the imperfect aspect refers to an incomplete action. But the two aspects in Hamer imperatives do not have the same meanings as one may expect: 'the perfect aspect is used to address particular individuals, whereas the imperfect is used to address non-individuals [...] or when a group of people are being addressed'.

A question to Omotic scholars: how unusual is this within the family?

---

21 e.g. kUma, Declarative: 'has-eaten' = perfect; Imperative: 'Eat!'; kUme, Declarative: 'is-eating' = imperfect; Imperative: 'Eat!'
5 Imperatives and their special traits: a summary

We have seen, throughout this paper, that imperatives are not primitive at all. They have their own phonological and morphological properties, and their own grammatical categories. The essence of the correlations between imperatives, other grammatical categories, and semantic subgroups of verbs lies in the nature of a basic imperative — a prototypical directive act.

The complex of imperative-specific meanings encompasses speech acts, strength of command, politeness, familiarity and other conventionalised interpersonal relations. These constitute the basis for the specific meanings of aspects, modalities and other categories within imperatives.

Further questions are of particular relevance for Omotic languages.

How do imperatives interrelate with other moods? In a number of Omotic languages, interrogatives and imperatives display some similarities. In Dime (Seyoum 2008: 122-3), the plural addressee in imperatives is marked with -is; this morpheme also occurs in content questions addressed to second person plural:

(24) šiftaye-ká taddese-ká kînt’-is
Shiftay-CONJUNCTION Taddese-CONJUNCTION stand.up-PL.ADDR
'Shiftay and Taddese stand up!'

(25) yesé wúy-îm ?îts-îs
2pl.SUBJ what-ACC eat-PL.ADDR.QUESTION
'What did you (plural) eat?'
In Maale, the impolite imperative is similar (but not identical) to the negative interrogative construction (Amha 2001: 127). However, there is an intonational difference between them. An interrogative in Maale is not used for commands (Amha 2001: 127).

Is the usage of questions as means for expressing additional imperative strength spreading into Omotic languages? In Amharic, an emphatic order is expressed by interrogative forms: 'the imperative verb *hid* (go:2masc.sg.IMPV) expresses simple order whereas a negative interrogative form, i.e. *atthedim* 'Aren't you going?', accompanied with a special intonation expresses emphatic order. The latter kind of imperative in Amharic is understood as entailing punishment if the order is not complied with' (Amha 2001: 127).

Imperatives are highly diffusable in language contact: one of the prominent features shared by many Ethiopian languages is suppletive imperatives of motion verbs, especially 'come' (see Tosco 2000: 349-50, for a reappraisal; and also Lamberti and Sottile 1997: 162, for some pan-Ethiopian features of imperatives).

Another issue is the scope and marking of imperative in complex clauses. In a sequence of imperatives in Haro (Woldemariam 2003: 152), non-final verbs are marked as 'converbs', and only the last verb is marked as imperative:

(26) moló-?aykk-i-ni ?ekk-i
    fish  catch-CONVERB-INCHOATIVE  hold-CONVERB
    yood-i-ni kass-á
    come-CONVERB-INCHOATIVE  cook-IMPV

    'Catch a fish, bring it and cook it!' (lit. Catching a fish, holding (and) coming, cook it!)

This same principle operates elsewhere in the world, e.g. in Dolakha Newari (Genetti 2007: 337-8). How widespread is this phenomenon within Omotic?
We saw that various grammatical categories may develop imperative-specific overtones. This may also apply to lexical items. The imperative form *hiid-á 'say!' has an additional meaning in Haro imperative structures: if used after an emphatic imperative it indicates a follow-up command, e.g. 'do that and then do this'. This extension of 'say' is fairly unusual, cross-linguistically, But how unusual is this within Omotic?

Throughout the world, imperatives are used in non-command functions — greetings, farewells, curses and blessings (Seyoum 2008: 122 discusses this issue for Dime). Are imperatives used this way in other Omotic languages?

To conclude: with their linguistic diversity, Omotic languages are among the most challenging testing grounds for typological generalizations, and further discoveries. As Zima (2000: 3) put it, quoting an ancient Latin inscription, *ex Africa semper aliquid novi*, 'Something new always comes from Africa'. Over to Omotic scholars.

**ABBREVIATIONS:** 1, 2, 3 - first, second, third person; A - transitive subject; ACC - accusative; ADDR - addressee; AUX - auxiliary; exc - exclusive; fem - feminine; IMM - immediate; IMPV - imperative; MOD.M - MODIFIED.MASCULINE; masc - masculine; NEG - negative; NON.SG - non-singular; O - object; p - person; PASS - passive; PL, pl - plural; POS - positive; POSS - possessive; PRON.M - pronominal masculine; SG, sg - singular; SUBJ - subject.

**References**


—. 2008. 'Multilingual imperatives: the elaboration of a category in north-west Amazonia', 


—. Ms. 'Verbal subject-agreement and modality distinction in Zargulla'.


—. 1982. 'Nondeclaratives from an intonational standpoint'. *Papers from the parasession on declaratives*. CLS: 1-22.


Schmerling, S. 1982. 'How imperatives are special, and how they aren't'. Papers from the parasession on nondeclaratives. CLS: 202-18.


Treis, Yvonne. Ms. 'Zur Grammatik des Befehlens, Wünchens, Segnens und Verfluchens im Kambaata (Kuschitisch)'.


Appendix 1. Imperative paradigms in a selection of Omotic languages

**Wolaitta** (Lamberti and Sottile 1997: 162)

1sg  \textit{ta oott-ana}  'let me work!'
2sg  \textit{ne oott-a}  'work!'
3masc.sg  \textit{ii oott-o}  'let him work!'
3fem.sg  \textit{aa oott-u}  'let her work!'
1pl  \textit{nu oott-ana}  'let us work!'
2pl  \textit{hiinte oott-ite}  'work (pl)!'
3pl  \textit{eeeti oott-oona}  'let them work!'

**Haro** (Woldemariam 2003: 153) ('The imperative-optative paradigm')

1sg  \textit{miy-á-ni}  'let me eat!'
2sg  \textit{miy-á}  'eat!'
3masc.sg  \textit{miy-á-yi}  'let him eat!'
3fem.sg  \textit{miyá-ya}  'let her eat!'
1pl  \textit{miy-á-nu}  'let us eat!'
2pl  \textit{miy-á-tyo}  'eat (pl)!'
3pl  \textit{miy-utt-á-yi}  'let them eat!'

**Dizin** (Beachy 2005: 109) ('Positive imperative and jussive word forms')

1sg  \textit{ʔf-\text{ba:s}'-ga\text{I}}  'let me want!'
2sg  \textit{ba:s'-q}'  'want!'
3masc.sg  \textit{a\text{I}'-ba:s'-ga\text{I}}  'let him want!'
3fem.sg  \textit{i\text{I}'-ba:s'-ga\text{I}}  'let her want!'
1pl  \textit{ʔf-\text{ba:s}'-ga\text{I}}  'let us want!'
2pl  \textit{ba:s'-q'-ti}  'want (pl)!'
3pl  \textit{i\text{I}_3'-ba:s'-ga\text{I}}  'let them want!'
Appendix 2
Imperatives: how to know more
A checklist for fieldworkers

The aim of this guide is to provide field linguists working on a previously undescribed or insufficiently documented languages with orientation concerning the issues to be addressed in order to establish a complete picture of how imperatives and commands are used in the language.22

PRELIMINARY INFORMATION is needed as a starting point. This includes:
(i) Morphological type: e.g. isolating, agglutinating, fusional; analytic, synthetic, polysynthetic; head-marking or dependent-marking.
(ii) Word classes: open classes (e.g. nouns, verbs, adjectives) and closed classes.
(iii) Grammatical categories for open classes (e.g. number for nouns, tense for verbs).
(iv) Transitivity classes of verbs.
(v) Marking of grammatical relations.
(vi) Clause types.

NATURE OF SOURCES:
(vii) Should be mostly based on participant-observation in speech community and on texts with corroborative grammatical and lexical elicitation.

It is advisable to concentrate on gathering and analysing texts in the language, starting near the beginning of any linguistic fieldwork. Observing how imperatives and commands are used under various circumstances in day-to-day life is crucial to the understanding of the system, and of the language. Gossip, casual remarks, or overheard conversations often provide many more enlightening clues than narrated stories. That is, if a language has a complex system of imperatives and commands and its grammar is based only on the analysis of traditional texts, some of the complexities of marking information source may well be missed.

Any artificial stimuli — such as video clips in traditional communities — should be employed with great care, if at all. We try to understand the language as it is spoken in its own environment. Let the culture talk to you rather than you making the culture say what you want it to say!

Trying to elicit an evidential system using a lingua franca (be it Amharic, English, Spanish, Portuguese, Russian or Mandarin Chinese) is not a sensible or profitable source of action. It is bad technique to ask a linguistically unsophisticated native speaker: 'Why did you use this morpheme?'. Extensive work with both texts and spontaneous conversations is indispensable for an understanding of how imperatives are used in discourse.

Imperatives and commands in a language which has a speech community can only be studied within this community, and not outside it. A grammar based on work with one or two speakers of a 'healthy' language in an urban environment is likely to contain few insights into their use and meaning. Working with immigrant communities is also hardly advisable: imperatives and command strategies are extremely prone to diffusion and are likely to change under the impact of introducing new — and losing old — cultural and linguistic practices. It is likely that patterns of speakers of Serbian or Croatian in Melbourne or Los Angeles have changed under the subtle influence of the Anglophone environment. Studying these patterns is

22 This is based on the author's own field experience in different parts of the world, student supervision in Brazil and Australia, reading of grammars and talking to other linguists about their field experience.
a fascinating issue from the point of view of how commands may get affected by language contact; but this can only be achieved after a preliminary analysis of how the language is spoken in the original community.

2. Expression of imperatives
How are imperatives marked? Does the language have imperative mood, or does it employ a form of another category in imperative clauses? Can you say anything with respect to formal markedness in imperatives? Is there a specific imperative intonation? Are there any special vocative forms of nouns or of pronouns?

Does the language express the same person distinctions in imperatives as in declaratives? Is there a special form for first person and/or third person imperatives? Do all persons have the same semantic content in imperatives and in other clause types (for instance, in some languages first person imperatives distinguish inclusive and exclusive). If the language has all person values for the imperative, do these constitute one paradigm?

What are the arguments in favour of analysing imperatives as a special clause type? Do imperatives share any characteristics with other clause types, such as interrogative or exclamatory clauses? (These properties may involve segmental marking, intonation, constituent order etc.)

What is the scope of an imperative? If a series of action appears in a command, are all the verbs marked for imperative, or just one?

3. Grammatical categories of imperatives
How are grammatical categories of number, gender, tense, evidentiality, aspect, tense and voice expressed in imperatives?

For each grammatical category, the following possibilities can be suggested:
A. Same distinctions with same meaning and same marking in imperatives and in other clause types.
B. Same distinctions with same meaning and different marking in imperatives and in other clause types.
C. Same distinctions with different meaning and same marking in imperatives and in other clause types.
D1. Fewer distinctions in imperatives than in other clause types, with same marking.
D2. Fewer distinctions in imperatives than in other clause types, with different marking.
E. The category is not expressed in imperatives (but is expressed in other clause types).
F. Different distinctions in imperatives and in other clause types.

Do any of the grammatical categories expressed in imperatives have any imperative-specific extensions (e.g. politeness)? Does the language have any imperative-specific category, such as distance in space, or evidentiality?

Are there any restrictions on the formation of imperatives (for instance, some languages do not allow imperatives of copula verbs, or of stative verbs, or of passives; or only verbs which express controlled action can form imperatives). Are there any groups of verbs on which imperatives cannot be formed — copula verbs, verb 'have', modal verbs, or verbs of mental states?

4. Negative imperatives (or prohibitives)
How are negative imperatives marked? How does their marking relate to the marking of positive imperatives and that of negative declaratives (that is, does the language have a special prohibitive negative particle, or does it employ a declarative negative particle accompanying a prohibitive). Can prohibitive be considered a separate clause type, or is it simply the negative counterpart of the imperative?
How do categories found in declaratives and in positive imperatives get expressed in prohibitives? For instance, there can be the same person distinctions as in declaratives and in positive imperatives as in prohibitives. Same question for gender, number, aspect, tense and evidentiality.

5. Semantics of imperatives
If you have more than one imperative, what are the semantic distinctions expressed? For instance, is there any special way of marking permissive, apprehensive ('lest'), or varying degrees of 'strength' or politeness? If you have politeness distinctions, could you explain the conditions of the use of each form in terms of intrapersonal relations, age, social hierarchies and such-like? (This requires a substantial knowledge of the community life, and relationships within it. This overlaps with item 8 below.)

Do imperatives use other verb forms for these meanings, or is there a special imperative-only paradigm? What additional overtones do the imperatives have and what additional forms are used (for instance, some languages have a malefactive imperative)? Do tense and aspect forms of imperatives have politeness overtones (for instance, imperfective and future imperatives are considered more polite in some languages)?

Do prohibitives have the same semantic distinctions as positive imperatives?

6. Non-command meanings of imperatives
Do any of the imperatives and/or prohibitives have non-command meanings — for instance, can they be used in questions, or in conditional or concessive clauses, or in various speech formula, such as blessings or farewells?

7. Imperative strategies
Can any non-imperative structures be used in commands? What is their function and semantics? For instance, can they be used to express more or less abrupt or more or less polite commands? Can they be used to express additional meanings, such as apprehensive?

For instance, can questions be used as commands? What are the semantic and pragmatic consequences?

8. Imperatives and discourse
How is the imperative used in discourse? Are there any special genres in which imperatives appear more frequently than in others? Are there types of addressees to whom imperatives are used more frequently. (For instance, many grammars note that abrupt, impolite or familiar imperatives and command strategies can relate to the addressee (e.g. children) or to the speaker (e.g. when addressing a chief)).

Does the use of imperatives correlate with existing (traditional or contemporary) social hierarchies? What are the social factors governing the use of varied command strategies with different overtones (if any)?

Are there any special patterns of response to commands?

9. Imperatives and the lexicon
Are there any specific imperative lexemes, for instance, used to encourage giving, or driving animals away? How do these correlate semantically with other types of imperatives (for instance, they may be more colloquial, or more impolite than other imperatives). Does the language have any additional ways of marking imperatives and commands outside the verb, e.g. with vocative forms of nouns or interjections?

Are there any lexical restrictions on forming imperatives, or any extensions of imperatives which are characteristic of certain lexical subgroups?
If at all possible, discuss lexemes associated with giving orders and commands.

10. Origins of imperatives
Can you say anything about the diachronic origin of imperatives? (The origins attested so far include the grammaticalization of lexical verbs and reanalysis of subordination). Do imperatives display any archaic patterns (for instance, in marking grammatical relations, or pronominal cross-referencing)?

Can you say anything about imperatives and commands in (i) **genetically related** and/or (ii) **geographically contiguous** languages in contact? Are there any similarities in any of the points (1-7) above? If there are similarities, are they due to shared genetic inheritance, areal diffusion, or independent innovations?

This is a checklist, and not a questionnaire. It is open to discussion — I hope to get feedback on it throughout the conference. Many thanks!