Polysemy or monosemy: Interpretation of the imperative and the dative-infinitive construction in Russian
Fortuin, E.L.J.

Citation for published version (APA):

General rights
It is not permitted to download or to forward/distribute the text or part of it without the consent of the author(s) and/or copyright holder(s), other than for strictly personal, individual use, unless the work is under an open content license (like Creative Commons).

Disclaimer/Complaints regulations
If you believe that digital publication of certain material infringes any of your rights or (privacy) interests, please let the Library know, stating your reasons. In case of a legitimate complaint, the Library will make the material inaccessible and/or remove it from the website. Please Ask the Library: http://uba.uva.nl/en/contact, or a letter to: Library of the University of Amsterdam, Secretariat, Singel 425, 1012 WP Amsterdam, The Netherlands. You will be contacted as soon as possible.
CHAPTER III

The Russian imperative

3.1 Introduction

In Russian there is a special imperative morphological form that is an instantiation of the lexical verb. The lexical verb can be seen as an abstraction from the different instantiations of the stem (infinitive, imperative, past tense, present tense, gerund, and participle), expressing an identical situation. In my analysis, I will use the term 'imperative' both for the morphological form and for the combination of the lexical verb and the morphological form. I will use the term 'imperative situation' for the lexical verb of the imperative. In the literature (e.g. Ebeling, 1956; Isachenko, 1957; Muravickaja, 1973; Veyrenc, 1980; Russkaja Grammatika, 1980) it is generally accepted that the imperative can be used for different functions, or to put it differently, that there are different imperative uses. This can be seen below, where I present different instances of the imperative as they are given in the literature, and the names that will be used use in my classification, are given:

Directive use ('povelitel'noe znachenie')

(1) Bud' gotov. (Ebeling, 1956: 86)
    be-IMP-IMPERF ready
    'Be prepared.'
The imperative is used to direct the addressee present in the speech situation to realize the imperative action. This imperative use can be paraphrased, depending on the context, with the infinitive, and with modal predicates like *dolžen* (‘must’) and *xoit* (‘want’).

**Necessitive use (‘dolženstvovatel’noe znachenie’)**

(2) Vse ushi, a ja *sidi* doma i *rabotaj* (Shvedova, 1974: 107)
all went, but I sit-IMP-IMPERF at home and work-IMP-IMPERF
‘Everybody has gone out, but I have to stay at home and study.’

The imperative is used to express that the subject is forced or obligated to do the imperative action. This imperative use can be paraphrased, depending on the context, with modal predicates that express necessity such as *dolžen, nado* (‘must’, ‘have to’).

**Narrative use (‘povestovatel’noe znachenie’)**

(3) [B]arin tvoj prikazal mne otnesti k ego Dune zapisochku, a ja i *pozabud* gde Dunja-to master your ordered me take to his Dunja note, but I and forget-IMP-PERF where Dunja PRT his lives
‘Your master ordered me to take a note to his Dunja, but I forgot where his Dunja lived.’

The imperative is used to express that the imperative action is unexpected. This imperative use can be paraphrased, depending on the context, with the past tense, the historical present, and a construction with the verb *vzjat’* (‘take’).

**Optative use (‘zhelatel’noe znachenie’)**

(4) Minuj nas pushche vsex pechalej I barskij gnev i barskaja ljubov’. (Xrakovskij & Volodin, 1986: 234/Griboedov)
pass-IMP us more than all sorrows and masters wrath and masters love
‘May us pass more than all sorrows both the master’s wrath and the master’s love.’

The imperative is used to express that the speaker wishes the realization of the imperative action. This imperative use can be paraphrased, depending on the context, with *pust’* (‘let’) or with the subjunctive (past tense + *by*). This use of the imperative is not productive in modern Russian and occurs almost exclusively in petrified expressions.
The Russian imperative

Concessive use (уступительное значение)

(5) Kuda on ni skryvajeja, on ot menja ne ubezhit. (Mazon, 1914: 69)
where he not hide-IMPER-IMPERF, he from me not run
‘Wherever he may hide, he won’t get away from me.’

The imperative is used in sentences that express concession. This imperative use can be paraphrased, depending on the context, with the perfective present, the subjunctive, or the infinitive.

Conditional use (условное значение)

(6) Razgoris’ atomnyj pozhar – i okazhutsja bessmyslennymi usiliya ljudej dobroj voli.
break.out-IMP-PERF atom war – and turn.out.to.be useless efforts of.people of.good will
‘If a nuclear war breaks out, the efforts of the people of good will will be useless.’

(7) Pridi ja na desjat’ minut ran’she, nichego by ne sluchilos’. (Isachenko, 1957: 11)
come-IMP-PERF I on ten minutes earlier, nothing IR IR not happened
‘Had I come ten minutes earlier, nothing would have happened.’

The imperative is used to express both the so-called hypothetical and the counterfactual condition. This imperative use can be paraphrased, depending on the context, with the conditional form esli (‘if’), or in the case of the counterfactual use, with the subjunctive.

Without giving a detailed analysis of these uses, it is clear that the imperative has a different function in each of the sentences given above. The imperative occurs not only in its prototypical directive function, where the speaker attempts to direct the behavior of the addressee, but also in other functions where the agent of the action is not the addressee but a first, second or third person subject. Although the imperative can be said to have a different function in each of the sentences given above, I think that careful analysis of the imperative leads to the conclusion that the different uses are related to each other. In my analysis I will argue that the basic feature that keeps these uses together is the central feature of ‘directivity-hortation’; this central feature means that the speaker intends to manipulate the world, or more specifically, intends to contribute to the realization of the imperative situation, by using the imperative form.¹ In the case of the directive variant,

¹ In the terms of the language philosopher Searle (1975), the direction of fit is word-to-world.
the speaker gives an impulse to the addressee, who is identical to the subject of the imperative. I use the term *hortative* for those cases where the speaker gives an impulse to a specified or non-specified entity (the addressee, a supernatural force) that is not identical to the subject of the imperative.²

The close relation between the different uses is underlined by the fact that some instances of the imperative can be classified as borderline cases between two different usage types, and that all the different imperative uses express so-called 'subjective modal features'; this means that in the case of the imperative the speaker expresses his attitude (wish, discontent, surprise, etc.) toward the imperative proposition. These subjective modal features are mentioned in the literature (e.g. Garde, 1963; Shvedova, 1974; Vasil’eva, 1969), but it does not make clear what these features precisely are, and how they come about.³ As I will try to show below, the subjective modal features are interpretations of the 'directive' or 'hortative' meaning, and are typical for the imperative form; this means that they are not expressed by oppositional forms; that is, forms with which the imperative can be paraphrased.

Besides the semantic features shared between the different uses, we find that all the imperative uses share particular formal and syntactic features (or absence of features):

- + aspect (perfective, imperfective); all verbs in Russian have aspect
- - inflection for tense and gender
- + possibility of combination with nominative subject (and in some cases absence of an expressed formal subject)

Other semantic-syntactic features of the imperative form, or semantic-syntactic features of the clause in which the imperative occurs, differ from use to use. These are for example:

- The occurrence of the agreement suffix *-te*, which is attached to the imperative stem in the case of the directive uses if the subject is a second person plural.
- The possibility of attachment of the element *-ka* in the case of some directive, optative, and conditional uses.
- The word order of the imperative clause; for example the obligatory V₃mpS order of the conditional and optative imperative.

² In the linguistic literature the term 'hortative' is also used for cases where the speaker gives an impulse to himself, or himself and other people to perform an action. I will not use the term hortative in this way.

³ Not all authors use the term 'subjective modality' in relation with the imperative.
The Russian imperative

- The occurrence of particles; for example the occurrence of the particle i, which is usually placed before the narrative imperative, or the occurrence of the particle by, indicating irrealis, with some optative and conditional uses.
- The sentence structure in which the imperative clause occurs, for example the coordinate structure of the conditional imperative.

These semantic-syntactic features constitute context types for the different imperative uses.

About the meaning of the imperative one could ask such questions as:

(i) What are the relations between these different uses?
(ii) What are the contexts in which the different uses occur?
(iii) How should the different uses be categorized?
(iv) Can something like a general meaning be formulated?
(v) If so, what is the status of this general meaning?

An analysis of the imperative must further explain the semantic and syntactic features that are shared by all imperative uses and those that differ from use to use. To give an example: in the case of the conditional use of the imperative as in (6) and (7), we always find that the first part of the sentence is introduced by the imperative; this is to say that the conditional use always has a verb subject (VS) order. The analysis must explain why this is the case. Furthermore, the analysis must show how the imperative uses differ from their nearest oppositional forms. To give an example: the analysis must explain the difference between the conditional imperative use (6–7) and conditional sentences with the conditional form esli ('if').

In the literature the Russian imperative we find analyses of individual uses (e.g. the analysis of the necessitive use by Shvedova, 1974). In other analyses different imperative uses are discussed (e.g. Isachenko, 1957), but the question concerning the relations between the different imperative uses is either not addressed or not put forward as the main question. An example of an analysis devoted to the different imperative uses in relation to one another is the study of the Russian imperative given by Ebeling (1956). Ebeling, following the model of Jakobson, gave a compact analysis of the Russian imperative from the monosemous point of view, that is, from the point of view that one can speak of one general imperative meaning and that the different uses must be seen as interpretations of this meaning. Since Ebeling’s analysis is one of the few analyses known
Chapter III

to me that tries to relate the different imperative uses to one another in an adequate way, and since Ebeling’s analysis is the starting-point for my own, I will briefly discuss it here.

In his analysis, Ebeling gives the following definition of the imperative meaning: “an action fulfilled as the result of a foreign impulse or permission” (1956: 86). Different cases may be distinguished according to the origin of the impulse or the permission. These different cases are:

(i) The speaker is the giver of the impulse. An example of this use is (1): bud’ gotov (‘be prepared’). Ebeling calls this the imperative in a narrower sense. In the case of conditional/concessive use of the imperative (like (5)–(7)) above, the speaker can also be seen as the giver of the impulse. In these cases “the speaker invites us to suppose a fact, and by using the imperative he adds that this fact would break the flow of events to which it would belong” (1956: 87). In the case of optative use like in (4): Minuj nas pushche vse: pechalej I barskij gnev i barskaja ljubov’ (‘May us pass more than all sorrows both the master’s wrath and the master’s love’), the speaker can also be seen as the giver of the impulse, but the subject is a third person, in contrast to bud’ gotov, where the subject is a second person.

(ii) The impulse or authorization does not come from a person, but from a whole situation. These are cases of type (2) above. The example given by Ebeling is Drjani-cheloveku odol’chat’ja ne sleduet. Eshche spasibo emu govari (‘It does not do to be under obligations to a good-for-nothing, for then you have to say thank you to him’).

(iii) The actor himself is the urging or enabling force. These are cases of type (3) above. The example given by Ebeling is the following: A tut eshche, kak narochno, podvernis’ drugoj znakomyj nam gimnazist, a nachni chvatat’ja novymi chasami (‘And there still, as if on purpose, another schoolboy known to us crops up and begins to brag about his new watch’). In this case you can speak of a foreign impulse, because the action is presented as not in accordance with the preceding actions, as breaking the line of events.

Ebeling states that: “Thus the word ‘foreign’ in our definition does not point solely to the actor, but to the natural flow of events as a whole (…)’ (1956: 86). With the provision that one meaning has to be given to the imperative, Ebeling’s definition of the imperative could be reformulated as: ‘an action that breaks the natural flow of events’. This definition is intended to function as a general meaning, that is, a necessary and sufficient condition for the correct use of the imperative form; the specific interpretation of the invariant meaning is influenced by the context in which the imperative form occurs.

Although Ebeling’s analysis of the imperative seems adequate in many respects, and is preferable to analyses that do not go into the relations between the different uses, it has some weak points:
The Russian imperative

1. The first definition of the imperative given by Ebeling, 'an action fulfilled as the result of a foreign impulse', seems to be more adequate than the second, where he speaks of "an action that breaks the natural flow of events." The first definition, however, does not take account of type (iii) (the actor himself is the urging or enabling force), which is problematic if one wishes to give one meaning for the imperative. This second definition of the imperative is not very clear, because it remains unspecified what exactly the natural flow of events is, and what breaking the natural flow of events means. Following this definition, one cannot adequately explain the semantic features which do not occur in all imperative cases, that is, which are not part of the imperative meaning, but are the result of the interaction of the imperative meaning and the particular context in which this meaning occurs. If we take, for example, sentence (2) and we interpret the imperative as the instruction that we have to interpret the predicate verb as an action that breaks the natural course of events, we could interpret it in different ways, for example:

a. They have all gone out, but I will stay home and study.
b. They have all gone out, but I stayed home and studied.
c. They have all gone out, but I have to stay home and study.

In (a) and (b) the action of the subject breaks the natural flow of events because the action is seen as contrastive by the speaker of the sentence (as in the case of the narrative use); in (c) the action breaks the natural course of events because the action is seen as contrastive because it is again seen as contrastive and because the action is the result of a foreign (that is non-subject) impulse. The correct interpretation for (2) however is (c); interpretation (a) is impossible, while interpretation (b) is not possible in the given context since a narrative reading only occurs if the particle-conjunction is placed before the imperative, and if the imperative is perfective.

Note also that on the basis of the imperative meaning given by Ebeling it is impossible to predict which uses are possible, and which are not. The description given by Ebeling cannot motivate why the following sentences with the given interpretation are incorrect:

(8) Zavtra bud' teplo.
tomorrow be-IMP warm
Cannot mean: 'It must be hot tomorrow.'

(9) Idil!
go-IMP
Cannot mean: 'Let's go.'
The Russian imperative cannot be used to express epistemic necessity, or to express an impulse from the speaker to himself together with other people. The fact that the imperative meaning formulated by Ebeling can also be seen as a description for uses that are described by oppositional forms, is problematic if the meaning has the status of a necessary and sufficient condition for the correct use of a form.

2. The meaning of the imperative does not fit the different imperative uses equally, and needs more elaboration. More specifically, in my opinion it is correct to say that in the case of the directive sentence *bud' gotov* ('be prepared') there is an impulse from the speaker to the hearer to perform the action conveyed by the imperative, but it is doubtful whether in the case of the conditional imperative like *Skazhi on mne, ja sejchas ustroi by vse* ('If he had told me that, I would have arranged everything by now') there is a similar impulse from the speaker to the hearer to suppose a certain fact. In my opinion, it is necessary to make a distinction between 'directive' and 'hortative' imperative uses. In the case of the directive uses the speaker gives an impulse to the addressee, who is identical to the subject of the imperative, to perform the action. In the case of the hortative uses such as the optative and the conditional, the speaker directs the addressee to contribute to the realistic or imagined realization of the imperative situation by another agent. As I will show below, the difference between directive and hortative uses can be motivated by the occurrence or non-occurrence of the suffix *-te*.

3. The meaning does not explain or give sufficient insight into the relations between the different uses. To give an example: the necessitive use seems to be more closely related to the directive use than to the optative use. Ebeling’s analysis does not account for this, because all uses have the same status of interpretation. An analysis along the lines of Ebeling does not take into account that in some cases clear usage types can be distinguished (viz. the different types given above), while other uses seem to have the status of interpretations (e.g. different directive uses, such as order versus permission).

4. The analysis does not specify the process of interaction between the general meaning and its context. It does not take account of different semantic and syntactic features of the imperative sentence like word order, aspect, the occurrence of particles, etc., which makes the analysis incomplete.

In order to resolve the weak points mentioned above, one could try to reformulate the imperative meaning and extend the given analysis, or one could formulate another analysis. In the literature (e.g. Wittgenstein, 1984; Rosch, 1973, 1978; Bartsch, 1985; Lakoff, 1990) the idea that abstract meanings can be given for linguistic items has been under fierce attack. These analyses propose that forms may be associated with different
The Russian imperative

interrelated meanings, and that polysemy is the rule rather than the exception in language. I think that the weak points in the description of the Russian imperative can be seen as resulting from the fact that Ebeling wishes to analyze the imperative from a strict monosemous point of view, whereas a polysemy-based approach to the imperative would be more appropriate. If one claims that the imperative is a polysemous complex, this means that we cannot speak of one invariant imperative meaning such as the meaning proposed by Ebeling, but should rather speak of different imperative uses that are related to one another.

In principle a polysemy-based analysis can be seen as an analysis that treats all the uses in the polysemous complex as having the status of 'semes'; in such an analysis the different meanings can all be described in terms of definitions (necessary and sufficient conditions for the correct use of a form). In my opinion, such an analysis is incorrect for the description of the Russian imperative, because it does not take into account that (i) the idea of direction is basic to all the imperative uses, and (ii) some instances of the imperative can be seen as borderline cases between different uses. In my opinion this can best be captured by giving a basic imperative meaning; this basic meaning of the Russian imperative can be defined as in Figure 3.1.

**Figure 3.1**

Definition of the meaning of basic $V_{IMPERATIVE}$

By using the imperative the speaker expresses that he gives an impulse directed at the realization of \('V'\) (by \(S\), if \(S\) is expressed or not identified); this presupposes that:

- 'not \(V\)' is given
- there is a contrast between \('V'\) and 'not \(V\)' (because otherwise no impulse would have to be given to realize \('V'\)); put differently \('V'\) breaks the expected course of events in the sense that giving an impulse presupposes that without the impulse, \(V\) would not be realized

where the notion of impulse can be understood as follows: by uttering the imperative, the speaker intends to contribute to the realization of the imperative action, because the addressee (which may be expressed by the subject of the imperative predicate, or in the case of the optative, some other force) can follow the direction by contributing to the realization of \('V'\).
The basic use can be seen as the imperative use on the basis of which other imperative uses can be understood; note that this definition applies both to the directive use and to the optative use. In the case of directive uses the speaker intends to manipulate the behavior of the addressee present in the speech situation to realize the imperative situation, whereas in the case of optative uses, the speaker tries to manipulate the behavior of the subject indirectly; by using the imperative the speaker hopes that the addressee or some non-specified force will contribute to the realization of the imperative situation by the non-addressee subject. For such cases I use the term 'hortative'. In modern Russian, the optative use can no longer be seen as a productive use of the imperative. It can therefore be argued that for the modern Russian language system the basic use has to be reformulated or specified such that the impulse is directed at the second person addressee. I will say more about this below when I discuss the different imperative uses.

An important reason to define a basic imperative meaning is that in this way the features that are shared by all the imperative uses (and that may be absent in the case of oppositional forms) can be motivated. The imperative is an instantiation of a lexical verb, which means that the imperative has aspect, and the valency structure of the lexical verb with which it forms a synthesis. There are three important interrelated features shared by all verbs in the imperative mood that can be attributed to the basic imperative meaning given above, viz. (i) the absence of tense, (ii) the possibility of combining the imperative with a nominative subject, and (iii) the subjective modal nature of the imperative. I will discuss these features here.

The imperative can be seen as a verb, or put differently, the imperative is one of the instantiations in the verbal system. Traditionally, from the Greek period on, the verb has been seen as a grammatical part of speech that expresses an action or activity (in my terminology ‘situation’), that is, roughly speaking, the conceptualization of something that is realized in time, which can function as (part of) the predicate of the sentence (cf. Jarcveca, 1990). This description contains two important notions, viz. the idea of realization in time and the notion of predicate. The word ‘predicate’ comes from the Greek logico-philosophical tradition, where the predicate is defined as the basic part of a judgment, that which says something about the subject. Below, I will briefly discuss the two important aspects of the verb, viz. the notion of time, and secondly, the notion of subjecthood.

The traditional idea that verbs have to do with phenomena that are conceived in time is worked out in different ways in the literature. Givón (1984: 51–52), for example, argues that “experiences (...) which stay relatively stable over time (...) tend to be lexicalized in human language as nouns (...). At the other extreme of the lexical-
phenomenological scale, one finds experiential clusters denoting rapid changes in the
state of the universe. These are prototypical events or actions, and languages tend to
lexicalize them as verbs”. Note that the description given here by Givón must be seen
as an extensionally based description. In the world, as we experience it, there are things
that remain stable, and there are things that change; language mirrors this observed
distinction.

Another, more intensionally based, way of describing verbs is used by Langacker
(1991a/b). The description that Langacker (1991) gives of verbs can be seen as a
translation of the traditional view about verbs in terms of the model of Cognitive
Grammar. The traditional perspective that verbs express something that takes place in
time is translated in terms of the perceptive-cognitive abilities that we need in order to
experience something in time. According to Langacker, in the case of verbs we
manipulate the perceptual information in terms of sequential scanning. This can be seen as
the cognitive mode of processing in which a series of states are conceived through the
successive transformation of one into another in a non-cumulative nature. The mode of
sequential scanning is represented by Langacker (1991b: 80) as in Fig. 3.2.

Figure 3.2

The mode of sequential scanning can be opposed to the mode of summary scanning,
in which the component states or specifications are activated in a cumulative fashion,
so that all facets of a complex structure are coexistent and simultaneously available as a
gestalt (cf. Figure 3.3).
Langacker argues that this latter mode of scanning is typical for prepositions like *across*, while for spatial verbs like *cross*, where the aspect of *movement* is important, the idea of sequential scanning means that every scanned state differs from the other because of the position of the scanned object. In the case of verbs where such an idea of movement is absent, for example in the case of verbs that indicate mental states, such as *think that, want*, etc., or in the case of copular verbs like *be*, every scanned state is identical to the one preceding or following it. The description that Langacker gives of verbs can be seen as an intentionally based description because he emphasizes the cognitive abilities of humans to *impose* their cognitive-perceptual structure on the world. As such, the same state of affairs can often be conceptualized as a verb or as a noun (e.g. *arrive* versus *arrival*; for a more detailed discussion of nominalization see 4.4.2).

Neither Givón nor Langacker, in the cited extracts, goes into the function that verbs have in the sentence, viz. the predicative function of verbs, and the idea of subjecthood. As I have discussed above, an important feature of verbs is that they express phenomena that are conceived in time. An important difference between verbs and other parts of speech (such as prepositions) is that verbs are often associated with *actors* and other participants of an action or event.

The importance of subjecthood in the case of verbs can be illustrated by reinterpreting the picture given by Langacker in the following way. When we perceive a dynamic phenomenon, we often perceive it as a property of a thing or entity. For example, if we watch the movement of a ball flying through the air, we see the movement as a property of the ball, that is, although the ball and its movement may be
The Russian imperative

conceptualized separately, they are not conceptualized independently of each other. Figure 3.2 above can be interpreted as a scene where we can identify a referent (ball) which stays identical over time, and the action of the referent (flies); this can be expressed in language as 'The ball flies'. The inflection on the verb for person, number and tense (and in Russian in some cases gender) indicates that the action is related to a specific person, and to the time relative to the speech-moment. The presence of agreement features (person, number, gender) means that the subject and the verb are interdependent (finite verb presupposes subject, subject presupposes finite verb). In my opinion, the idea of a phenomenon in time, the idea of a subject, and the idea of realization, are interrelated in the case of a subject-predicate structure. In the case of a subject, prototypically in the nominative case, we interpret the subject as expending ‘energy’ on realization of the situation, such that we perceive a phenomenon in time.4

The imperative can be seen as an instantiation of a verb, which means that the imperative expresses a situation, that is, a phenomenon conceived in time. In the case of the imperative we find a nominative (pro)noun whose function is to identify the subject of the imperative; in some cases the pronoun is not expressed, and here the identity of the subject is (i) given in the context (S=addressee), (ii) left unspecified (S=generic), or, (iii) in the case of impersonal verbs, absent. The nominative in the case of the imperative can be motivated as follows. The basic imperative presupposes a conceptualization that can be broken down into the following two (interrelated) features:

(i) The addressee has to imagine a scene where the subject performs the imperative action.

(ii) The addressee has to comply with this scene (if S=addressee), or contribute to the compliance with the scene (if S≠addressee).

Feature (i) means that part of the imperative conceptualization is the idea of a scene where the agent and the situation are abstracted from an identical scene where the situation is conceptualized in its moment of realization. In my opinion, this accounts for the occurrence of the nominative subject. In contrast to the indicative and the past tense, however, in most cases the imperative does not express agreement. There is only agreement between the subject and the verb with second person plural directive uses, that is, with uses where the second person plural addressee is identical to the subject of the

4 The idea of energy also applies to cases where the verb only indicates a property of a referent, for example, the ball is red. The notion of subjecthood in general falls beyond the scope of this analysis.
verb. It could be argued that this means that with these directive uses there is only agreement with the subject of the force or impulse, and not with the subject of the lexical verb. In the case of directive second person plural, the occurrence of agreement is connected with the type of impulse (see 3.2.3.2). The notion of agreement in the case of the directive imperative differs from the notion of agreement in the case of the indicative. In the case of the indicative the scene expressed by the verb is conceptualized in its moment of realization, which means that the morphological form for person, number or gender and the nominative refer to an identical referent and scene. In the case of the imperative the verb expresses an imagined situation that is to be performed by the addressee, which can be expressed in the nominative. I suspect that the absence of agreement with all imperative uses (except for the second person plural directive use) may be connected with the fact that the imperative always expresses the idea of compliance. Although the imperative always presupposes the idea of an action conceptualized in its moment of realization, it also presupposes the idea of an action that is to be realized by some force (feature (ii)). The function of the nominative is to identify a referent, which is the imagined subject of the imperative. As such, the relation between the imperative situation and the nominative pronoun is different from the relation between the finite verb and the nominative (pro)noun.

Besides the absence of agreement in most cases, the imperative does not express tense. In Russian the term ‘tense’ is used for the function of two conjugations of the verb, viz. the indicative and the past tense, of locating situations (states, events, etc.) in a temporal domain during, after or before the moment of speaking or the ‘now’. Tense is not expressed by the imperative and the infinitive (for the absence of tense in the case of the infinitive, see Chapter IV). The absence of tense is connected with the fact that the imperative expresses that there is some force which is directed at the realization of the situation. By uttering the imperative the speaker gives an impulse to realize the imperative situation (in the case of the directive use, optative use, conditional use and concessive use), or ‘mimics’ the impulse directed at the realization of the situation (in the case of the necessitative use, and in a weakened sense in the case of the narrative use).

The absence of tense for those cases where the speaker is the giver of the impulse (directive, optative, conditional, concessive) can be motivated in a straightforward way because giving an impulse presupposes that the situation has not been realized yet. In the case of the necessitative and the narrative, however, the situation may have been realized at

5 The function of the nominative (pro)noun can partly be compared to the function of the pronoun in the nominative-infinitive construction; in the case of this construction, however, the verbal element is not expressed by a form, but is an interpretative phenomenon. (see 4.4.3).
The Russian imperative

the moment of speaking (in the case of the necessitive) or has necessarily been realized before the moment of speaking (in the case of the narrative). In these cases, however, uttering the imperative means that the speaker partially identifies with the impulse giver in the sense that he ‘repeats’ in his mind the moment where some force is directed at the realization of the situation. In the case of the necessitive this means that the speaker acts as if he places himself at the moment where the impulse is given, in the case of the narrative this means that the speaker does as if he directly experiences the narrated course of events. I will use the term ‘dynamic construal’ for the specific construal of the imperative. Another instance of ‘dynamic construal’ is the use of verbal interjections such as буг, гляд’, прыг, толк, чlap, and сап карп.

(10) Ja, znaete, kak vizhu muzhchinu, tak srazu прыг k nemu na koleni i sizhu sebe, pok ne otdeFet.6 (A. Kazancev, Byeuchchie Stranniki)
I, you know, when I see man, then immediately jump-PRT to him on knees and sit to.myself, as.long.as not they.tear.of
‘You know, as soon as I see a man — jump! — I am on his knees and I stay there, as long as they don’t pull me away.’

What the imperative use under discussion and these cases have in common is that a close contact between the speaker, the hearer, and the narrated events is established, by partial mimicking of the narrated events.

The so-called subjective modal features can also be attributed to the basic meaning given above. The imperative expresses that there is some force directed at the realization of the situation. This presupposes that without this impulse the situation would not be realized, or put differently, the realization of the imperative situation breaks the expected course of events. As I will argue below, the subjective modal features of the different imperative uses can all be accounted for if this specific nature of the imperative is taken into account.

I have argued that a basic imperative meaning can be given, and that this meaning can account for the shared features of the imperative. The idea of a basic use can be compared to the idea of a prototypical use. The term prototype is used by Rosch (1973, 1978) for the clearest example of a category such as ‘bird’. In the case of the imperative, one cannot speak of categorization in the same sense, because the different phenomena that can be expressed by the imperative do not have the same ontological status as different types of birds. More specifically, a particular instance of a bird exists no matter whether one has a

---

6 http://www.theatre.ru:8084/drama/kazancev/stranniki_2.html
linguistic expression for it or not, and no matter how it is classified. This is not the case for the different extensions of basic imperative use. In the case of the imperative the basic use is not so much the clearest example of some category, but must be seen as the use that always plays a part if the imperative form is used. In other words, the different imperative forms can only be understood on the basis of this basic form.

In my analysis I will describe the understanding of the imperative by the process of selection (and in one case canceling) of features of the basic meaning under perspectives provided by contexts. The basic imperative use presupposes a particular attitude of the speaker toward the imperative action, namely that the speaker wants the action to be realized in the stretch of time starting with the moment of speaking, and a particular situational context, namely that the addressee is not performing or is not going to perform the imperative action/situation. Different uses arise when the situational context is changed, or when the attitude of the speaker toward the imperative action is changed. Change of the imperative use is possible if the language user can interpret the new use, and integrate it in the conceptual structure built up so far by selection and in some special cases canceling of features with the help of general cognitive-pragmatic knowledge.

The idea of selection of features can be seen as the highlighting of some features and the backgrounding of others from some set of interrelated features. In the case of the imperative one can speak of a set of interrelated features expressed by the imperative because the existence of some feature presupposes the existence of some other feature. To give an example, the feature 'directivity' presupposes the feature 'at the moment of speaking the imperative action is not being realized'. In some cases the idea of direction is present, but the imperative is uttered in a situation where the subject of the imperative is already performing the imperative action, e.g.:

\[
(11) \text{Muchajsja! Ne nado delat' takie gluposti! (Barentsen, forthcoming)} \\
\text{suffer-IMP-IMPERF! not necessary do-INF-IMPERF such stupid.things} \\
\text{‘Yes suffer! You shouldn’t have been so stupid.’}
\]

In such cases the feature of ‘speaker commitment’ present in the feature of ‘direction’ is selected, and highlighted, such that the imperative is used to express that the speaker agrees with the performance and continuation of the imperative action.

Bartsch (1998) argues that canceling of features is not part of the process of meaning extension. In my opinion, canceling is indeed not part of most cases of

---

7 Such conditions can be seen as obviousness conditions (cf. Searle, 1975)
meaning extension, but may take place in special cases. An example of such as special case is possibly the narrative imperative. In the literature it is often remarked that the narrative has a special status in the imperative complex of uses, because the idea of ‘direction’ or ‘impulse’ does not seem to be part of the narrative imperative meaning. The narrative imperative is therefore sometimes treated as unrelated to the other imperative uses (e.g. Muravickaja, 1973). As I will argue, in the case of the narrative imperative the feature of ‘unexpectedness’ is selected, and the idea of ‘direction’ is canceled, or at least weakened. In the case of the central uses (directive or necessitive use) the feature of ‘unexpectedness’ is presupposed by the feature of ‘foreign impulse’, that is, they form a cluster of features, whereas in the case of the narrative use the feature of ‘unexpectedness’ occurs independently from the feature of foreign impulse (although it could be argued that the latter is still present in a weakened form). Note that a particular use can only be extended if the new use shares more characteristic features with the basic use than with an oppositional form, otherwise there is no need for the language user to extend the use of a form. In the case of the narrative use this means that the feature of ‘unexpectedness’ is not on a par with the feature of ‘unexpectedness’ expressed by other forms, but can only be compared to the feature of ‘unexpectedness’ as it occurs in the other imperative uses, viz. unexpectedness as the result of a foreign impulse. Because of this, the narrative imperative can still be seen as part of the polysemous complex of imperative uses.

The extension of the basic imperative use presupposes the capacity to integrate different contextual information, both linguistic and non-linguistic, in order to come to the correct interpretation of the form in its context. This means that the language user must be able to integrate information such as word order, and the absence/nature of the expressed subject with the meaning expressed by the imperative, and be able to infer how the change in situational context changes the basic meaning of the imperative.

The process of looking for new perspectives for extending the use of the imperative form is mediated and facilitated by various cognitive and pragmatic capacities that are part of human knowledge. If we look at the meaning extension of the imperative we can see that the following capacities play an important part:

(i) The capacity to abstract from here and now (from the immediately given speaker-addressee context), and to identify with, or to take the perspective of, a force other than the speaker.
(ii) The capacity to construe a hypothetical imaginary scene, where the scene is not actually to be realized, but is placed in an imaginary or mental space for reasoning purposes only.

The strategies named under (i) account for the extension of the directive imperative use to the necessitative imperative use. As I will argue, the extension from the directive use to the necessitative use can be reconstructed as taking place in various intermediary steps, where the feature of 'speaker involvement' is weakened. The strategy named under (ii) accounts for the extension of the directive use to the conditional and concessive directive use, and of the optative use to the conditional use. This strategy is reminiscent of the cognitive capacities described in terms of mental spaces (Fauconnier & Sweetser, 1996). In my analysis I will show how these various strategies play a part in the extension of the basic imperative use.

An important question that I will address in this analysis is how different uses of the imperative can be distinguished from one another. Because of the existence of a basic use that plays a part in every imperative use, the polysemous complex cannot be seen as a complex of clear-cut and discrete meanings or 'semes'. Although some uses can be clearly distinguished from one another, many borderline cases exist. The imperative has no invariant abstract meaning that can be compared to a definition, but must be seen as a complex of different interrelated uses that can have a more or less independent status, but that always function in relation to other uses in the same complex, because of the existence of the basic directive meaning.

The different uses in the polysemous complex can be seen as different functions of the imperative. Some insight into the status of the different uses can be found in Muravickaja (1973). She asked (highly educated) native speakers to label different imperative uses with the following meanings: *povelenie/poburzenie* (instruction), *pozhelenie* (wish), *dolzhensstvovanie* (necessity), *uslovie* (condition), and *ustupka* (concession). She did not give examples of the narrative use because in her view this use must be seen as not related to the other uses (i.e. it is a case of homonymy). It was found that the respondents could very easily distinguish these different uses from one another (1973: 51). It was also found that in the process of distinguishing the respondents leaned heavily on the possibility of paraphrase (1973: 55.) Thus necessitative use could be easily distinguished from other uses because this use can be paraphrased with *dolzhen*, which is not the case for other uses.

Although Muravickaja's (1973) test leaves many questions unanswered, it suggests that language users classify primarily on the basis of function, rather than on the basis
of meaning. An example of a function is ‘condition’; such a function can be expressed by different usage types, for example the conditional use, the directive use and the optative use. This provides evidence that function and meaning play a part on different levels in language. Function can be seen as a category of use, whereas meaning must be seen as an abstraction from use. As I will argue, the meaning of the imperative can be identified with the basic meaning given earlier, whereas the different uses of the imperative can be seen as different functions of this basic meaning.

It should be noted, finally, that other linguists have pointed to the polysemous nature of the imperative. Take for example the following remark by Xrakovskij & Volodin (1986: 227): “From what we have said, it follows, that we are skeptical about the efforts to define a general meaning for the imperative that accounts for both the literal and the non-literal uses of the imperative”. Similar remarks are made by Vasil’eva (1969), Muravickaja (1973), Veyrenc (1980), and others.

An important task of my analysis is to elucidate which linguistic and non-linguistic contextual factors contribute to the interpretation of the imperative form, or to put it differently, I will try to determine the context-types for the different uses. With this analysis I hope to explain the semantic and syntactic features that are shared by all the imperative uses, the features that differ from use to use, and the semantic and syntactic differences between the imperative uses and their oppositional forms.

In the following sections I will give an analysis of the different imperative uses. I will discuss each use separately and then give an overview of the relations between the different uses. The relations between the different uses can be represented in a simplified way as presented in Figure 3.4.

The model given in Figure 3.4 is simplified because borderline cases exist between different uses. These borderline cases will be discussed in the analysis that I will give in the following sections. In my presentation I will employ the following classification of the imperative use:

(a) Directive use and derived uses (3.2)
(b) Necessitive uses (3.3)
(c) Narrative uses (3.4)
(d) Optative uses (3.5)
(e) Conditional uses (3.6)

---

8 "Iz skazannogo sleduet, chto my skepticheski otnosimsja k popytkam vydelit' u imperativa takoe obshchee znachenie, kotorye bylo by emu svojstvenno kak pri prijamyx, tak pri neprijamyx upotreblenijax." (Xrakovskij & Volodin, 1986: 227)
(f) Concessive uses with \textit{ni} and \textit{xot}' (3.7)

The classification given here is in accordance with most classifications given in the literature (e.g. Ebeling, 1956; \textit{Russkaia Grammatika}, 1980; Veyrenc, 1980).

Below I will discuss these different usage types.

Figure 3.4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Narrative use</th>
<th>Necessitive use</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Directive use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Conditional use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Concessive use (2 person)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Concessive use (1/3 person)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Conditional use</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(i) Directive uses
(ii) Conditional uses
(iii) The speaker is the giver of the impulse
(iv) The impulse giver is not the speaker
(v) Uses where there is a (more or less) identifiable impulse giver
(vi) Hortative uses (the speaker directs the subject indirectly)

3.2 The directive use of the Russian imperative

3.2.1 Introduction

In this section I will give an analysis of the directive imperative construction. I will argue that one can define a basic directive meaning for the imperative, from which it is possible to derive other uses that can be seen as extensions of this basic meaning by means of
selecting some features and backgrounding others under a perspective provided by a context. I will argue further that the directive imperative has particular features that are not expressed by oppositional forms, which are taken to have similar functions in certain contexts but, as I will show, have different cognitive functions or meanings. I will argue that the existence of the directive meaning accounts for the specific distribution of the directive imperative, and motivates the difference in use from its oppositional forms.

This section has the following structure. In 3.2.2 I will give a definition of the meaning of the basic directive imperative use. In 3.2.3 I will discuss some semantic-syntactic features of the imperative. In 3.2.4 I will discuss some peripheral uses of the directive imperative.

3.2.2. The meaning of the directive imperative

I will start my analysis of the imperative with the most frequent imperative use, viz. the directive use of the imperative. This is the use where the speaker attempts to get the hearer (or addressee) to do something, or in the case of negation, not to do something. The following sentences are examples of directive uses of the imperative:

(12) Vstan'.
    get-up-IMP-PERF
    'Get up.'

(13) Nenavid', preziraj menja, dumaj obo mne kak xochesh', no ne ... ubivaj menja! (A. Chekov, Bezgodoshchina)
    hate-IMP-IMPERF, despise-IMP-IMPERF me, think-IMP-IMPERF about me how you want, but no ... kill-IMP-IMPERF me
    'Hate me, despise me, think of me whatever you want, but don’t .... kill me'

In these sentences the imperative has a directive meaning, viz. it expresses the impulse from the speaker to the addressee to perform the action expressed by the imperative. The notion ‘directivity’ means that the speaker intends to contribute to the realization of the imperative action by the addressee by uttering the imperative.

Following the strategy of concept formation discussed in Chapter I, I will start the analysis by giving an informal definition of the basic directive imperative, and then discuss peripheral uses of the directive imperative by showing how these uses can be derived by selection of some features and backgrounding of others under contexts. This means that I will not try to incorporate all the uses of the directive imperative within one description,
but I will rather define a basic use, and describe other (peripheral) uses as particular extensions of this basic use.

In Figure 3.5, I give a definition for the basic directive imperative. Figure 3.6 can be used as a frame for the directive imperative.

Figure 3.5

The speaker directs the hearer at \( t_0 \) to perform the imperative situation \( V \):

\[
\rightarrow \text{SIT}(V_{+\text{aspect}})_{t_1}, \ t_0 < t_1
\]

SIT maps a linguistic expression on the situation at \( t \) in which this expression is fulfilled

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Situation</th>
<th>= action, state, process</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Directs</td>
<td>= the speaker intends to contribute to the realization of the situation by the addressee by uttering the imperative; this means that the speaker invokes the addressee to perform the imperative situation. The idea of directivity ranges from orders, where the speaker wants the realization of the situation, to cases of permission, where the speaker only accepts the imperative situation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SIT(( V ))</td>
<td>= situation where the action expressed by the imperative verb and its context is present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( t_1 )</td>
<td>= idea of realization of the imperative action(^9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>= time or period associated with the realization of the imperative action, posterior to ( t_0 ), the moment of uttering</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 3.6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Force</th>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Subject of situation</th>
<th>Object of force</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Speaker</td>
<td>( \rightarrow \text{SIT}(V_{+\text{aspect}})_{t_1} )</td>
<td>Addressee</td>
<td>Addressee</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^9\) I would like to stress that the idea of realization expressed by the imperative cannot be equated with the idea of change of situation that is typical for the perfective aspect as described in Barentsen (1985). In the case of the imperative the idea of change of situation relates to the non-occurrence of the action versus the occurrence of the action. In the case of the perfective aspect the idea of change of situation relates to the attainment of some natural or imposed end point of the action. In the case of the imperative the speaker conceptualizes the idea of realization of an already aspectual action: \( \text{SIT}(V_{+\text{aspect}}) \).
The meaning of the imperative given in Figure 3.5 and 3.6 presupposes that:

(i) The situation is conceived as controllable or as something to which the addressee can contribute.
(ii) The imperative situation breaks the expected course of events, that is, at the moment of speaking SIT (not V) is the case, or is to be expected.
(iii) The speaker commits himself to wishing or accepting the realization of the situation.
(iv) If the imperative is uttered, the addressee is directed to *imagine* a scene where he is the subject of the situation, and to fulfill this situation by performing the situation in question. As I will argue below in 3.2.4 the presence of the feature 'impulse to imagine' accounts for the derived uses of the imperative, more specifically the conditional use, and for the differences in use from oppositional forms.\(^\text{10}\)

I will briefly discuss these different presuppositions below.

### 3.2.2.1 Controllability

Because the imperative expresses a direction of the speaker to the hearer to perform an action, the hearer must in principle be able to follow the direction of the speaker, or at least be able to contribute in some way to the realization of the imperative action. This explains why sentences like the following, given in Xrakovskij & Volodin (1986: 146–147), are not possible in a normal context:

(14) ?Ochutis' v Krymu.
    find yourself-IMP-PERF in Crimea
    'Find yourself in the Crimea.'

(15) ?Legko otkroj dver'.
    easily open-IMP-PERF door
    'Easily open the door.'

\(^{10}\) Of course, imagination is part of every act of conceptualization. In this case, however, an *impulse* is given to imagine something, which presupposes that the act of imagination requires some effort from the addressee.
It is important to notice that the fact that the addressee must be able to control the situation, or at least be able to contribute to the situation, is presupposed by the directive meaning: by using the imperative, the action denoted by the verb is conceptualized as a controllable situation or as a situation that the addressee can influence by his behavior.

In some cases the imperative predicate is used in the case of situations which do not have a clear controllable character, and in which the direction has the character of a wish. This is the case for example in the sentence *Spi spokojno* (‘Sleep peacefully’) where the imperative is used with the verb *spat’* (‘sleep’) and an adverbial modification. Here the speaker expresses his wish that the addressee will sleep well. In this case the addressee cannot of course really ‘control’ the action, but he can contribute to the likelihood that the action will happen, for example by taking a comfortable position in bed, closing his eyes, and thinking about nice things such that any disturbances may be overcome.

The idea of ‘contributing to the (non-)realization of the situation’ is also present in the case of negation and the perfective aspect. This is exemplified by the following sentence:

(16) Ne zabolej, Norman. Tol’ko ne zabolej.11 (A. Azimov, *Vybor*)
not fall.ill-IMP-PERF, Norman. just not fall.ill-IMP-PERF
‘Don’t fall ill, Norman. Just don’t fall ill.’

In this sentence the speaker urges the addressee not to realize the undesirable imperative action *zabol’* (‘fall ill’). Here one might speak of control because the speaker directs the addressee to gather all his strength so that the undesirable situation will not happen. In such cases, it may be that the speaker pretends to hold the addressee responsible for the possible realization of the imperative situation, thus stressing that he finds the imperative situation undesirable.12

---

12 Aspect plays a very important part with respect to control in cases like these. Compare for example *Ne zabud’* (not forget-IMP-PERF) versus *Ne zabuyej* (not forget-IMP-IMPERF). The perfective aspect is typical of cases where the speaker just expresses that he does not want the addressee to forget the situation (e.g. ‘When you go to the shop, don’t forget to buy a bottle of wine.’), whereas the imperfective aspect is typical of cases where the speaker urges the addressee to ‘keep on putting energy’ in the non-realization of the situation (e.g. ‘I really need the wine, so please don’t forget to buy it.’). The aspect of the directive imperative in relation to the notion of control is discussed by many authors (e.g. Xrakovskij (1988) and Paducheva (1996)); I refer the reader to these authors for more discussion.
The Russian imperative

It must further be noted that the directive imperative may also be used in cases where the speaker acts as if he directs the addressee to perform the imperative situation. This is the case for example in the sentence Ne umiraj! ('not die-IMP-IMPERF; 'Don’t die!). Such sentences stand on the borderline between optative sentences, where the speaker directs some ‘supernatural force’ to contribute to the realization of the imperative action, and directive sentences, where the speaker directs the addressee as if he could contribute to the (non-)realization of the imperative action.¹³

In some other contexts, specifically in the case of conditional contexts, and in the case of so-called reinforcement use, the directive imperative can occur with actions that are usually not performed in contexts where they can be seen as controlled. Consider for example the following sentence:

(17) Muchajsja! Ne nado delat' takie gluposti! (Barentsen, forthcoming)
suffer-IMP-IMPERF! not necessary do-INF-IMPERF such stupid.things
‘Yes suffer! You shouldn’t have been so stupid.’

Such cases must be seen as interpretations of the basic meaning where some features are selected under a particular perspective provided by the context. These cases do not directly fall under the basic use of the directive imperative. I will discuss them in 3.2.4.

Note that the extent to which the combination of the imperative and some lexical verb creates an acceptable sentence may be partly conventional. In Russian it is perfectly normal for example to say Bud’ zdorov (‘Be-IMP healthy: ‘May you be healthy’, ‘Take care’), whereas a translation in Dutch with the same verb and an imperative (Wees gezond) is not acceptable. A complete description of the directive imperative will have to list such conventions, and state any regularities in the compatibility of lexical verbs and the imperative. Note that such regularities may possibly be motivated by pointing at other, non-directive uses of the imperative. In contrast to English or Dutch, the Russian imperative may also be used as an optative with third and first persons; in the case of the optative use of the Russian imperative the speaker does not direct the addressee to realize the imperative situation, but directs some other, often supernatural, force to contribute to the realization of the imperative situation. It could be that the use of bud’ zdorov may be seen as a use close in character to the optative use of the imperative (‘May you be healthy’) The fact that in Russian the imperative can be used

¹³ A similar phenomenon can be found in sentences like Drop dead! Such sentences, I think, must be seen as special, playful uses of the directive imperative, because the speaker here is not actually intending to contribute to the realization of the action by using the imperative.
for various non-directive functions suggests that the directive use of the Russian imperative may share semantic features with other non-directive uses, and as such, may differ in meaning from directive imperatives in other languages, where the imperative does not have these other functions.

There seem to be further restrictions on the use of the directive imperative that have to do with control. Xrakovskij & Volodin (1986: 147), for example, remark that it is unclear why the following sentence is ungrammatical *Ivan, otboxni iz-za golovnej boli (lit. Ivan, rest because of your headache), whereas the following sentence is fully acceptable Ivan, otboxni, u tebja golova bolit, (lit. Ivan, rest, you have a headache). In my opinion this is a syntactic problem. In the first sentence, the modification ‘because of your headache‘) directly modifies the imperative action, whereas in the second sentence, the modification occurs as a separate clause. In the case of a direction the speaker wants the hearer to fulfill the imperative action. The specification iz-za golovnej boli ‘because of your headache‘ cannot, however, be seen as part of the action that the speaker wants the addressee to fulfill. As such, it cannot be part of the linguistic expression of the direction.

3.2.2.2 Impulse to realize or impulse to keep on realizing

By using the imperative the speaker hopes to contribute to the realization of the imperative action. Normally it only makes sense to direct someone to fulfill an action if this person is not already performing this action when the imperative is uttered. In some sentences, however, the imperfective imperative is used when the addressee is already performing the imperative action at the moment of speaking, for example:

(18) **Sidite, sidite, pozhalujsta.**

sit-IMP-IMPERF-2PL, sit-IMP-IMPERF-2PL, please
‘Please, remain seated.’

In this case the speaker wants the addressee to **continue** the imperative action. Birjulin (1994) argues that the Russian imperative has two basic meanings, viz. ‘change V’, and ‘continue V’. I do not think, however, that it is either necessary or possible to separate such meanings. The idea of continuation arises in those cases where the speaker needs to express that he wants the imperative action to be realized. Such cases only occur if the addressee can be expected to stop performing the action, or when the speaker wants to assure the addressee that he won’t interfere with the realization of the action. This is the case for example in the following sentence, given in Birjulin (1994: 49):
The Russian imperative

(19) Zanimaet's? Vot èto s vashej storony, mus'ju, prekrasno, chto vy zanimaetes'. Nu, zanimaetes', ja ne budu vam meshat'. (...). (Kuprin)
you.work? well that from your side, monsieur, terrific, that you work. well, work-IMP-IMPERF-PL, I not will you bother (...)
'Are you busy? Well, for you, monsieur, it's terrific that you are working. Keep on working, I won't disturb you.'

Birjulin (1994: 49) correctly remarks that the 'continuation' interpretation occurs in those pragmatic contexts where the speaker informs the addressee that he will not direct the addressee to realize not V.

A counter-argument to the claim that the idea of continuation cannot be seen as a separate meaning, or does not have to be accounted for in the basic meaning of the directive imperative, might be that in other languages, such as Dutch, the imperative is not easily used to express direction to continue an action. A sentence like (18) would be translated into Dutch with an imperative of the verb blijven ('remain'), and not with an imperative of the verb zitten ('sit'). I do not think, however, that such facts must be seen as arguments to speak of different meanings. I would rather say that the specific possibilities of use fall naturally within the framework provided by the basic meaning, but that the actual way in which a language uses these possibilities is conventional. Such differences in use of imperatives in different languages may possibly be attributed to differences in the linguistic system, such as the existence of morphological aspect in Russian, the existence of particles in Dutch that do not occur in Russian, and differences in distribution between the imperative and its oppositional form, the infinitive, in Russian and Dutch. To give an example: it may be that in Russian the idea of continuation does not have to be expressed by a specific lexical verb similar to blijven ('remain'), because of the strong association of the imperfective aspect with the idea of continuation.

In some special cases the idea of 'continuation' arises in contexts where the imperative action is not at all controllable, and where consequently no intention can be ascribed to the addressee to stop performing the action. This is the case for example in (17) above, where we find the verb muchat'ija ('suffer'). I analyze such cases as special interpretations of the basic imperative meaning, where the idea of direction to continue an action is weakened, but is still partly present because the imperative action is naturally evaluated in a negative way by the performer (the addressee). This means that in such cases one may presuppose that the addressee would like to stop performing the action. I will discuss such sentences in 3.2.4.2.
Chapter III

3.2.2.3 Speaker commitment

If the speaker uses the directive imperative, he commits himself to wishing or accepting the fulfillment of the action. The actual attitude of the speaker toward the action may, however, be different. In some cases the speaker wishes the realization of the action, but in other cases the speaker permits the addressee to realize the action. If we look at the imperative, it seems that different uses can be distinguished on the grounds of the type of direction, as is remarked by Bondarko & Bulanin, who claim that: “[t]he meaning of instruction can be realized in language in different shades. It can be a request, appeal, order, prescription, advice, exhortation, entreaty, and so on. All these shades are determined by the conversational situation, the intention and the emotional attitude of the speaker” (1967: 127).

The different directive types as given by Bondarko & Bulanin (pros’ba, sovet, mol’ba etc.) are not unique to the Russian imperative system, but occur in other languages as well. Donhauser (1986) gives an analysis for the German imperative, and claims that the occurrence of the different directive types can be explained by the different evaluations (by the speaker) of (future) action possibilities of the hearer, which can be evaluated from two points of view: (a) from the perspective of the speaker’s interest and (b) from the perspective of the hearer’s interest (which is known or supposed by the speaker).

On the basis of this model, Donhauser makes a division into four directive types: Aufforderung, Rat/Warnung, Angebot/Drohung and Erlaubnis.

Donhauser’s explanation of the four imperative types is very similar to that of Xrakovskij & Volodin (1986) for the Russian imperative. Xrakovskij & Volodin claim that “[i]n order to distinguish and classify these interpretations, it is necessary to take into account the relation between the participants in the illocutionary act and their attitude toward the caused act” (Xrakovskij & Volodin, 1986: 136). To analyze the different directive types Xrakovskij & Volodin look at the following features:

A – Who is the giver of the causational impulse (A or S)?
A1 – S is the giver of the causational impulse

---

14 “[z]nacheniie pobuzhdenija realizуется v rechi v razlichnyx ottenkax. Èto mozhet byt’ pros’ba, prizyv, prikazanie, predpisanie, sovet, uveshchanie, mol’ba i t.p. Vse èti ottenki opredeljajutsja situacij rechi, namereniem i emocional’nym otosheniem govorjashchego.”

15 “Dljaa togo chtoby vydelit’ i klassificirovat’ èti interpretacii, neobxdimo uchityvat’ kak otoshenija mezhdu uchastnikami rechevogo akta, tak i ix otoshenija k kauziremomu dejstvu.”
The Russian imperative

A2 — A is the giver of the causational impulse
B — In whose interest is the imperative action (A or S)?
B1 — realization of the action is in the interest of S
B2 — realization of the action is in the interest of A
C — What is the hierarchical relation between S and A?
C1 — S considers himself to be higher in the hierarchical system
C2 — S does not consider himself to be higher in the hierarchical system

On the ground of these features Xrakovskij & Volodin make a distinction between prikaz (order), pros'ba (request), instrukcija (instruction), predloženije (suggestion), razrěšenije (permission) and sovet (advice). This is made clear in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types</th>
<th>Classificational features and their meaning</th>
<th>Causational impulse</th>
<th>Interest</th>
<th>Subordination</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Order</td>
<td>A1</td>
<td>B1</td>
<td>C1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Request</td>
<td>A1</td>
<td>B1</td>
<td>C2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instruction</td>
<td>A1</td>
<td>B2</td>
<td>C1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suggestion</td>
<td>A1</td>
<td>B2</td>
<td>C2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permission</td>
<td>A2</td>
<td>B2</td>
<td>C1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advice</td>
<td>A2</td>
<td>B2</td>
<td>C2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not interpretable</td>
<td>A2</td>
<td>B1</td>
<td>C1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not interpretable</td>
<td>A2</td>
<td>B1</td>
<td>C2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The analysis of Xrakovskij & Volodin (1986) is basically the same as that of Donhauser. In both analyses the different directive types occur as the result of the specific speaker-addressee context. We can say that the evaluation by the speaker of (future) action possibilities of the hearer in Donhauser's analysis can be identified with the causational impulse in the analysis of Xrakovskij & Volodin. Furthermore, both analyses take account of whose interest the action is in. In contrast to Donhauser, however, Xrakovskij & Volodin take the hierarchical relation between the speaker and the addressee into account. Xrakovskij & Volodin can therefore differentiate between prikaz and pros'ba, whereas Donhauser only speaks of Aufforderung (which has to include both).

It is interesting to see that although both analyses are basically the same in that they define the different directive types by the same features, the explanation of the specific
types is not the same. Take for example permission and advice in the case of Xrakovskij & Volodin. According to them in both cases the giver of the causational impulse is the hearer, and in both cases the action is in the interest of the hearer. The only difference is that in the case of permission the speaker has a higher hierarchical status relative to the hearer, and in the case of advice the speaker has a lower or equal hierarchical status relative to the hearer. Donhauser, however, thinks the giver of the impulse in the case of advice (Rat) to be the speaker, whereas in the case of permission (Erlaubnis) her explanation is similar to that of Xrakovskij & Volodin. It could be that Donhauser's advice is not the same as the advice of Xrakovskij & Volodin. I do not want to go further into the analysis of the different types of direction here, but I would like to point out that some imperative cases cannot be seen as clear-cut examples of one of the four types, which is a reason to regard these types as interpretations of one directive meaning. This is also stated by Xrakovskij & Volodin: "(...) we think that the imperative has one meaning – direct volition of the speaker directed at the performance of the action mentioned by him." (1986: 136) The different interpretations can be seen as specifications of this meaning, which can, in some cases, be classified according to some linguistic expression (e.g. order, advice, etc.), as is shown in Figure 3.7.

Figure 3.7

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meaning (underspecified); meaning + context</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>^ abstraction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specification</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

16 Donhauser (1986) probably does not make the distinction between instrukcija and sovet in the sense of Xrakovskij & Volodin (1986). Note, however, that in my opinion analyses like these are, at least to some extent, arbitrary, since I can well imagine contexts where the speaker is higher in the hierarchical structure than the addressee, yet still advises the addressee to do something. Of course, it could be argued that in that case the speaker acts as if he is not higher in the hierarchical structure, but I do not find this a very convincing argument. Whether something is advice depends on the definition of the term 'advice'. A definition of such a term on the basis of the parameters given above is inherently fuzzy, since these parameters themselves are not discrete (why, for example, is it not possible that the action is in the interest of both the speaker and the addressee?)

17 "(...) my schitaem, chto imperativ imeet odno znachenie – prjamoe voleiz"javlenie govorjashchego otnositel'no ispolnenija nazyvaemogo im dejstvija." (Xrakovskij & Volodin, 1986: 136)
The Russian imperative

Although the basic meaning of the imperative can be said to be underspecified in relation to the parameters mentioned above (causational impulse, relation of speaker-hearer, etc.), these specifications cannot be seen as meanings themselves. The difference between an order and permission cannot be analyzed in terms of decomposing the 'order' concept into subfeatures and extending this to a permission case by selecting and backgrounding of features. The features that constitute the differences between a case of permission and an order cannot be attributed to differences in conceptualization but are differences in use, and are attributed by the context. For a more detailed analysis of such interpretations I refer the reader to Birjulin (1994).

3.2.2.4 The notion of 'directivity' and oppositional forms

The specific directive meaning of the imperative can best be explained by comparison with oppositional forms. Directive imperatives can in some contexts be paraphrased with modal verbs like xotet' ('want') and dolžhen ('must') and with infinitives. The difference between the directive imperative and its oppositional forms is that the directive imperative has a directive meaning, whereas the oppositional forms have a directive interpretation. Put differently, in the case of a form like the infinitive, the directive use must be seen as a special function of a more basic conceptual notion (viz. 'situation type'), whereas in the case of the imperative, the function of direction is directly part of the basic conceptual structure.

In some contexts the directive imperative can be paraphrased with modal verbs like xotet' ('want') and dolžhen ('must'):

(20) Ja xochu chtoby ty prochital' knigu.
    'I want that you read book'

(21) Ty dolžhen prochitat' knigu.
    'You must read book'

In these cases, however, the feature of direction is not expressed by the form itself, but is attributed by situational or contextual factors. Therefore you can say:

(22) Ja xochu chtoby ty prochital' knigu, no ja znaju chto ty ètogo ne budesh' delat'.
    'I want you to read the book, but I know you won't do it.'
Chapter III

(23) Ty dolzhen prochitat’ knigu, no ja znaju chto ty etogo ne budesh’ delat’.
‘You have to read the book, but I know you won’t do it.’

But not:

(24) Prochitaj knigu, no ja znaju chto ty etogo ne budesh’ delat’.
‘Read the book, but I know you won’t do it.’

It can be argued that these oppositional forms lack a directive meaning but can have a directive interpretation.

The directive meaning of the imperative is underlined by some other specific features. Bondarko (1990: 190) remarks that the imperative cannot be accompanied by modal subjective words like vozmozhno (‘possibly’), mne kazhetsja (‘it seems to me’), po ix mneniju (‘according to them’) etc. (*po ix mneniju risuj xorosho). The imperative cannot be used in subordinate clauses with chto (‘that’), (*On skazal chto risuj xorosho); in such cases the subjunctive (chtoby and a past tense) is used (On skazal, chtoby ja risoval xorosho). These features indicate that the directive imperative can only be used in the direct speaker-addressee context, where the speaker, by using the imperative, gives an impulse to the addressee to realize the imperative situation.

The importance of the notion of direction can be shown if we compare the directive imperative with the infinitive, which can also be used as a directive, especially in orders and in the case of general statements like recipes (Maurice, 1996: 166/7). Although the infinitive can be seen as an oppositional form – both the imperative and the infinitive can be used as directives – they do not have exactly the same meaning, and hence not exactly the same distribution of use. In the case of the imperative the addressee is directed to imagine the imperative situation and consequently to perform this situation, whereas in the case of the infinitive the directive use is an interpretation of the more general meaning ‘situation type’. The idea of directivity or instruction is not part of the infinitive meaning but must be seen as an interpretation in a certain pragmatic context, viz. that which provides a direction. The infinitive cannot for example be used in permissive directive contexts like the following:

(25) Mozno otkryt’ okno?
‘May I open the door?’
Otkryvajte
open-IMP
The Russian imperative

'Yes go ahead.'  
*Otkryvat'  
open-INF

The imperative expresses that the addressee is permitted to perform the imperative action. This means that the addressee wants to perform the action and that by giving an impulse the speaker makes it possible for the addressee to realize the imperative action. The infinitive expresses that the action type 'open' is the appropriate action type (and not another action type). This is not compatible with the permissive context, where it is the addressee that intends to fulfill the imperative action, or put differently, where the addressee defines the appropriate action type.18

Another context where the imperative can normally not be paraphrased with an infinitive is the conditional context. I think this is because the infinitive does not express the idea of directivity, and consequently lacks the feature of 'imagination'. I will go into this in 3.2.4.1.

3.2.3 Semantic-syntactic features

Above I have discussed the meaning of the basic directive imperative use. In this description I abstracted from from some of the specific semantic-syntactic features of the directive use. For the directive imperative, the following semantic-syntactic features are relevant:

(i) +aspect (perfective/imperfective)
(ii) -tense
(iii) possibility of expressing subject (ty/vy)
(iv) +suffix -te in the case of second person plural (vy)
(v) combinable with negation ((nikogda) ne)
(vi) combinable with clitic/suffix -ka
(vii) no fixed word order
(viii) occurrence of imperative complements

18 Note that Bricyn (1990: 255) gives the following example from Zoshchenko of a directive infinitive with a permissive reading: V'ygruzhat', chto it? - Konечно, ygruzhat', - skazal muzhik, ne do letu krozhat' tovaru. ('Shall I unload or not? Of course you should unload, said the man, the goods cannot lie there till summer.') In this case the permissive character is made possible by the interrogative character of the sentence: the speaker asks if the action type expressed by the infinitive is the appropriate one.
I will here briefly discuss these semantic-syntactic features of the imperative; for the absence of tense see 3.1.

3.2.3.1 Aspect

In Russian, aspect is a morphological category, which means that verbs occur either in the perfective or in the imperfective aspect. Frequently pairs of perfective or imperfective verbs share all or most of their lexical meaning; in such cases an aspectual opposition occurs. Directive imperatives occur with both aspects. Xrakovskij (1988) argues that the following factors are important in studying the aspect of the directive imperative: (i) the meaning of the perfective and imperfective aspect, (ii) the different types of direction (order, wish, advice, etc.), and (iii) the situational context and the social relation between the speaker and the addressee. He further argues that the following features are important in the aspectual choice: (a) presence or absence of negation, (b) singularity/non-singularity of the action, (c) process character or non-process character of the action, (d) type of direction (factual/permissive/wish). In his study Xrakovskij (1988) shows that features such as the controllability of the action, the presence of specific indicators of time, and pragmatic context are important in the choice of aspect.

In this study I will discuss and analyze the aspect of the imperative only in relation to the main question of this analysis, viz. how the different imperative uses are related to one another. For a general and extensive discussion of aspect in general I refer the reader to Forsyth (1970) and Barentsen (1985), and for a discussion of aspect in the case of directive imperatives, to Xrakovskij (1988) and Paducheva (1996).

3.2.3.2 Valency structure, subjecthood, and word order

The imperative is a verb, and as such has the typical valency structure of verbs. This means that depending on the specific valency structure of the lexical meaning of the verb in question, the imperative can occur with different types of syntactic arguments such as subject, object, indirect object, instrumental object, etc. The directive imperative clause has no fixed word order, but seems to follow the general pragmatic principles of word order for Russian. As I will argue below, the word order of the imperative sentence, or more specifically the order of the verb relative to the subject (VS, SV, or V), is related to the specific type of imperative directivity.
A special position in the valency structure of the imperative is taken by the *agent* of the situation. The directive imperative *always* evokes the thought of an agent or performer of the action; in the case of the directive use the agent of the action is identified with the addressee. The addressee may be formally expressed by a second person pronoun in the nominative:

(26)  

\[ \text{Ty ej prosto \textit{skazhi} chto ty ee ljubish' i xochesh' pocelovat'}. \]

you-NOM her just tell-IMP-PERF that you her love and want kiss

'Just tell her that you love her and want to kiss her.'

In the majority of cases, however, the addressee is not expressed. In such cases the identity of the addressee can be inferred from the context.

When the addressee can be identified with a second person plural (*ty*), the suffix *-te* has to be added to the verb unless a group of people is seen as a collective:

(27)  

- a. Pishite!
  write-IMP-IMPERF-PL
  'Write!'

- b. — Nu, rebjata, — skazal komendant, — teper' otvorjaj vorota, bej v baraban. (Barentsen, forthcoming/Pushkin)
  well, guys, said commander, now open-IMP-IMPERF gate, beat-IMP-IMPERF drum
  ‘Well guys’, said the commander, ‘now open the gate and beat the drum.’

This suffix *-te* can be seen as an agreement-feature between the verb and the expressed or non-expressed agent of the imperative situation, since the expression or idea of a second person plural subject always agrees with the expression of *-te*. In this case the difference between a plural agent (expressible by *ty*) and a singular agent (expressible by *ty*), and consequently the expression or non-expression of *-te*, may be related to a modification of the *type* of impulse, since the hierarchical relation between speaker and addressee is an important factor in the type of directivity.

The directive imperative can also occur with the pronoun *kto-nibud* ('someone'):

(28)  

\[ \text{Teper' poprobuj-ka kto-nibud' slovo skazhi}. \]

(Veyrenc, 1980: 94)

now try-IMP-PERF-PRT someone-NOM word say-IMP-PERF

'Now one of you just try to say a word [meaning: don't do that, because if you do there will be negative consequences for you].'
Such cases can be seen as directives because the pronoun *kto-nibud'* refers to a specific but non-specified person in the immediate speaker-addressee context ('one of you').

Something should be said here about the semantic-syntactic status of the nominative pronoun in the case of the directive imperative. Some scholars define the pronoun as the *subject* of the sentence (e.g., Yokoyama, 1986; Dippong, 1995). Others, such as Isachenko (1982), argue that one cannot in this case speak of a grammatical subject, but rather of a vocative pronoun (*obrashchenie*). Of course, whether or not one can really speak of a subject in this case depends on the particular definition of subject employed. It is preferrable to ask why the case of the pronoun is nominative, and why the pronoun is expressed in some cases, and not in others.

In my opinion the pronoun occurs in the nominative case because the function of the nominative is to identify some referent, which is the imagined agent of the imperative action. As such, the imperative can indeed be seen as a predicate of the pronoun-subject. (See 3.1 for a more detailed analysis.) In contrast to regular subjects, however, the nominative pronoun is not only the subject of the lexical verb, but also expresses the identity of the addressee to whom the impulse is directed. The referent of the pronoun thus has a more independent character, and shows similarities to a vocative. In some cases the vocative character is emphasized by the information structure of the sentence, e.g.:

(29) Slushaj, ty, rasserdilsja korol' (...). (Barentsen, *forthcoming*/A. Schmidt)
listen-IMP-IMPERF, you, said.angrily king
“You there, listen to me, said the king angrily.’

(30) Ne fyrikaj, ty! - skazal emu Redrik. (A. & B. Strugackie, *Piknik na oboshchine*)
not belch-IMP-IMPERF, you! - said him Redrik
“Don’t belch!” said Redrik.’

(31) Ty, Mak, pomeshivaj, pomeshivaj. Smotri, esli prigorit. (A. & B. Strugackie, *Obitaemyj Ostrov*)
you, Mak, stir.from.time.to.time-IMP-PERF, stir.from.time.to.time-IMP-PERF. look, if burns
‘Max, stir from time to time. Be careful not to let it burn.’

---

19 In Russian there is no formal difference between a nominative or vocative noun.
The Russian imperative

In (29) the addressee is first directed to realize the imperative situation, and subsequently the identity of the addressee is made explicit. In all these sentences the subject (pro-)noun forms a separate informational unit (indicated by commas).

The function of the noun may be to contrast the agent with other persons or actions:

(32) **Ty posidi 10 minut, a ja podnimus' dvumja ètazham i vyshe.**

you sit-IMP-PERF 10 minutes, but I go.upstairs two floors higher

‘You sit down for ten minutes, while I go two floors up.’

Another function mentioned in the literature, is the modification of the strength and character of the direction. It is further argued that the order of the predicate and the subject plays an important part in the way the expression of the subject modifies the strength of the direction. Concerning the meaning of the order of the imperative and the subject, however, opinions differ. Dippong (1995: 53) cites Shaxmatov, who argues that the order **[pronouns + IMPv]** occurs in the case of a categorical order, whereas **[IMPv + pronouns]** must be seen as a weakened case of instruction. Vinogradov (cited in Dippong, 1995: 53), however, argues that **[IMPv + pronouns]** must be seen as a strong request.

In my opinion, the analysis of the function of an expressed agent in the case of the imperative, and the function of word order should not be based on a notion such as ‘weakening or strengthening of the direction’. Such an analysis is insufficient because (i) it does not make the right predictions (some sentences with an SV order have a ‘strong’ directive character, while others have a ‘weak’ character), and (ii) it remains unclear how one can motivate this supposed function of word order in terms of the function of word order in general.

Instead, I would like to suggest that the SV order occurs in those cases where there is some implicit contrast with another action (which means that the imperative verb, or one of the constituents of the verbal phrase, is accented), and where the (need for the) realization of some action may be presupposed. Such contexts are often constituted by adverbs such as **luchshe** (‘better’) or **tol’ko** (‘only’) which presuppose the idea of contrast. Consider the following sentences:

(33) **Ty luchshe uspokojsj a i rasskazhi vse po porjadku.**

you better calm.down-IMP-PERF and tell-IMP-PERF all in order

‘You’d better calm down and tell everything in the right order.’

---

In (33) the speaker expresses that in the given circumstances the best action for the addressee is to do \( X \) (\( = \)calm down), and not some other given or implied action; such sentences have the character of advice. In (34) the speaker expresses that he wants the addressee to perform just one particular action (and not another one); in this case there is a contrast between the imperative action, and the set of expected actions. The idea of contrast may also be interpreted differently, as in the following examples:

(35) \[ \text{Net, ty ne ovtorachivajsa, ne ovtorachivajsa!} - \text{rasserdilas' babushka. (ibid.)} \]
\[ \text{no, you not turn.around-IMP-IMPERF, not turn.around-IMP-IMPERF said angrily old.woman} \]
\[ \text{“No, don’t turn around, don’t turn around!” said the old woman angrily.”} \]

This sentence expresses that the speaker thinks that the given action of the addressee is inappropriate, and that the addressee should do not \( X \); in this sentence there is a contrast between the given situation and the negation of the imperative action. The idea of contrast is also clear in the following example, where the speaker explicitly expresses that the addressee should perform action \( X \), instead of action \( Y \):

(36) \[ \text{E-e ... – Nikolin'ka zamorgal. – A pochemu takoj vopros? Ty otvechaj, a ne pochemuchkaj.}^{22} \text{ (O. Postnov, Posluchnoe vremja)} \]
\[ \text{Eh, Nikolin'ka started.to.blink. but why such question? you answer-IMP-IMPERF, and not ask.why-IMP-IMPERF} \]
\[ \text{“Eh”, Nikolin'ka started to blink. “But why such a question? You should answer, and not ask why.”} \]

...
The Russian imperative

('I want this now'), but on the specific identity of the action, or circumstances of realization of the action, by the given subject. Sentences with a SV order first express that there is some subject, which presupposes an action that the subject performs, while the identity of the action is given later. This means that the assumption that the subject is the agent of some implicitly or explicitly given other action is negated. These sentences express that as far as the subject is concerned, he should realize the imperative situation (and not another situation).

Besides sentences without expressed subject, and sentences with a SV order, there are sentences with a VS order; such cases are less frequent than those cases with an SV order (Barentsen, forthcoming). Some examples are given below:

(37) Zabuďte vy sejchas i ob èotoj tvari, i o korabljax. Ne èto glavnoc.23 (A. Bushkov, Letajuschie ostrow)
forget-IMP-PERF-PL you-NOM now and about that creature, and about ships. not that main thing
‘You’d better forget about that creature and about the ships. They are not important.’

(38) Otec Kabani, bud’te ljubezny, voz’mite vy moix loshadej i otvédite ix k baronu Pampe.24 (A. & B. Strugackie, Trudno byt’ bogom)
father Kabani, be-IMP good, take-IMP-PERF-PL you-NOM my horses and bring-IMP-PL them to Baron Pampa
‘Father Kabani, be so good as to take my horses and bring them to Baron Pampa.’

(39) Da skazhi ty mne nakonec, — ty menja ljubish’? 25 (V. Nabokov, Masben’ka)
yes say-IMP-PERF you-NOM me at last, you me love?
‘Tell me finally, do you love me?’

(40) — Ubirajšja ty ot menja! — vzvizgnula ona (Barentsen, forthcoming/Dostoevskij)
beat.it-IMP-IMPERF you-NOM from me! cried she
‘Beat it’, she cried.

I suspect that sentences with a VS order can be seen as directive cases where the expression of the subject has the character of an afterthought or addition. This means that the verb in such sentences is similar in character to the imperative in subjectless

23 http://www.kuzbass.ru/moshkow/lat/RUFANT/BUSHKOW/ostrow.txt
24 http://www.moshkow.pp.ru:5000/lat/STRUGACKIE/be_god.txt
25 http://lib.nordnet.ru/lat/NABOKOW/maty.txt
cases (the speaker focuses on the realization of the action expressed by V), but that the speaker further adds the identity of the addressee to the information given by V. The addition of the identity of the agent may be typical of cases of advice where the expression of the subject creates a personal attitude toward the addressee, and of cases where the speaker wishes to emphasize the identity of the agent (as in ((29), (30)) above). The addition of the agent also seems to be further typical of cases where the speaker expresses his wish that the imperative situation be realized, but cannot control the addressee. The relation between VS order and the interpretation of ‘wish’ requires further analysis.

3.2.3.3 Negation

The imperative can be combined with negation, as in Mal'chik, ne chitaj etu knigu (‘Boy, don’t read this book’). Such sentences are called ‘prohibitive’ in the literature (cf. Xrakovskij & Volodin (1986: 93, 150), who distinguish between prohibitive and preventive negative sentences). In the case of (prohibitive) negation the speaker directs the addressee not to perform the imperative action.

Xrakovskij & Volodin (1986: 89–96) argue that in the case of the negative directive imperative there is no simple accordance between the semantic and the formal structure of the sentence. According to them, the meaning of the imperative can be decomposed into the features ‘direction of the speaker’, ‘taking place’ and the meaning of the lexical verb. In their syntactic schema the negation must be applied to the feature ‘taking place’, and not to the feature direction. I think, however, that it is questionable whether the meaning of the imperative can be decomposed into different separate meaning components in this way. If there is something like a directive ‘component’ of the meaning of the imperative, I do not see how this component could in any way be negated since uttering the imperative always means manipulating in some way or another. Whether the negation must be applied to the lexical verb (direction to perform not X), or whether it must be applied to the idea of taking place (direction to not perform X), makes no difference, as they extensionally amount to the same thing.\(^{27}\)

\(^{26}\) Note that in the case of the optative imperative we also find VS order, and that in most necessitive cases we find an SV order.

\(^{27}\) Note, however, that there may be conceptual differences in the way different types of directives are used with negation. I suspect that in this respect there are important differences between the infinitive and the imperative.
The Russian imperative

3.2.3.4 The clitic -ka

The imperative can be accompanied by the clitic -ka. For the use and function of this particle I refer the reader to Levontinina (1991); I will confine myself here to a few observations. The clitic -ka can be combined with imperatives, analytical imperative constructions (with past', daj and davaj), with the first person perfective present, with the directive use of the past tense, with the directive use of the first person plural, with some interjections (nu), and in specific contexts with the infinitive. In all these contexts these forms have a directive character. Like any clitic, -ka is attached to some other form, and cannot be accented. In the case of the imperative, -ka is usually attached to the imperative form. In some cases the form -ku is attached to the particle nu, instead of to the imperative form. If the suffix -te is expressed, this suffix forms a unit with the imperative, which means that -ku is attached to this unit.

About the meaning of the suffix, opinions differ (see Xrakovskij & Volodin, 1986: 179). Xrakovskij & Volodin (1986: 183) remark that -ku is only used when the speaker can be seen as the causational impulse (it is not used in permissives, where the hearer can be seen as the causational impulse), where the social status of the speaker is the same as or higher than that of the hearer, and where the speaker has a friendly relation with the hearer. They describe the function of the particle as modifying (weakening/strengthening) the instruction, by expressing the informal and spontaneous relationship between the speaker and the hearer. Levontina (1991) gives a more detailed analysis of the meaning of the particle. She also emphasizes the spontaneous nature of the meaning of the clitic, stating that the thought or need to do the action just occurred to the speaker. Barentsen (forthcoming) further notes that the particle is used in cases where the speaker wants the immediate realization of the imperative situation.

The suffix -ka seems to function as a support of the impulse to immediately realize the imperative situation. Such an extra support is needed if it can be expected that the addressee will not perform the action without this extra support. This means that the suffix cannot be used in the case of permissives, where the addressee already intends to realize the imperative action. A reason to support the impulse to realize the imperative situation may be that the speaker challenges the addressee to perform the imperative situation, as in (28) above, or that the speaker wants the addressee to perform the imperative action, whereas the addressee still shows no sign of performing the action:

\[(41)\] Pogljadite-ka skoree, skazal Anton. (Barentsen, forthcoming/Mulisch)
look-IMP-PERF-PRT faster, said Anton
“Come on, hurry up, have a look”, said Anton.”
Chapter III

(42) Ėlli rezko obryvaet ego: — Pomolchi-ka, morjak! Nichego smeshnogo. (Barentsen, forthcoming)
Élly sharply interrupts him: be.silent-IMP-PERF-PRT, sailor! nothing funny
‘Élly sharply cuts him off: “Be silent, you sailor! There is nothing funny about it.”’

(43) Ty pogljadi-ka luchshe, Mashek, chto tut u menja v sumochke pripaseno! (V. Loginov, Shagovaja Ulica)
you look-IMP-PERF-PR T better, Mashek, what here at me in bag store d
‘You’d better look, Mashek, at what I stored in my bag.’

The idea of supporting the impulse may also be that the speaker wants to stimulate the addressee to come forward and perform the action. In such cases the expression of -ka creates a feeling of ‘solidarity’:

(44) A skazhi-ka, Mak: ty mog by mne sdelat’ ljubeznost’? (O. Postnov, Pesochnoe vremja)
but tell-IMP-PERF-PRT, Mak, you can IRR me do favor?
‘But tell me Mak, can you do me a favor?’

(45) — Nina, pokazhi-ka svoi risunki, predlozhila Milicija Ivanovna. (G. Klimov, Imja moe legion)
Nina, show-IMP-PERF-PRT your drawings, suggested Milicija Ivanovna
‘“Nina, why don’t you show your drawings”, suggested Milicija Ivanovna.’

It must be noted that in comparison with a language like Dutch, in Russian the imperative is not used with many different modifying particles. In Dutch the expression of particles (dan, maar, eens, toch, and nou) is necessary to modify the strength of the direction; without these particles the imperative direction would be felt as rude or too categorical. In Russian, the imperative form itself does not need the expression of these particles to soften or modify the strength of the direction, probably owing to the presence of morphological aspect.

29 http://www.litera.ru:8085/slova/postnov/pv/author.htm
30 http://moshkow.relline.ru:5000/lat/PROZA/KLIMOV_GP/legion.txt
The Russian imperative

3.2.3.5 Complement

In Russian two directive imperatives may be combined without conjunction in sentences where the second imperative is semantically a complement to the first, as in (28) above. This construction with two directive imperatives is used to indicate that the speaker wants the addressee to perform one action, which is conceptualized as two different actions. Note that a similar phenomenon also occurs with other moods in Russian, for example with the perfective present and verbs of motion such as pojti ('go'):

(46) Ja pojdu postavlj u chaj, - skazala Alisa. (K. Bulichev, Vojna s liliputami)
I go-PRES-PERF put-PRES-PERF tea, said Alisa
"I'll go and make some tea", said Alisa.'

A similar phenomenon occurs in sentences like the following:

(47) Smotri, ne upadit (Dippong, 1995: 56)
look-IMP-IMPERF, not fall-IMP-IMPERF
'Be careful not to fall.'

I do not agree with Dippong (1995: 56) that in this case one can speak of embedding; in this sentence the speaker directs the addressee to be careful, and consequently not to fall.

In the preceding sections I have discussed the basic imperative meaning. In some special contexts this basic directive meaning is changed or reinterpreted under the influence of the context in which the form occurs. In the following section I will discuss these uses.

3.2.4 Derived uses

Besides the basic directive uses, one can also speak of derived or adjusted uses. Some examples of such uses are given below:

(48) Pust i babu v raj, a ona korovu za soboj vedet. (Mazon, 1914: 93/proverb)
let-IMP-PERF this woman into paradise, but she cow with her will.take
'Let a woman into paradise, and she will still take her cow with her.'

(49) Tol’ko poprobuji! Ja tebja pridushu, — otvetil chelovek, kotoryj ee derzhal. (K. Bulichev, Vojna s liliputami)
just try-IMP-PERF! I you strangle, answered man, that her held
"'Just try! I will strangle you',' answered the man that held her.'

(50) **Muchajsja! Ne nado delat' takie gluposti!** (Barentsen, *forthcoming*)
suffer-IMP-IMPERF! not necessary do-INF such stupid.things
'Yes suffer! You shouldn’t have been so stupid.'

(51) Vecherom (...) na nee napal kashel'. – Ne **begaj bosikom po rose!** – zataratorila Katja (...).
(Barentsen, *forthcoming*/Iskander)
in.the.evening (...) on her fell cold. – not run-IMP barefoot in dew! cried Katja (...)
'During that evening she caught a cold. “You shouldn’t have run barefoot in the dew!”
cried Katja [...].'

(52) Sdelae m more – i u nas mel’nica elektricheskaja budet. A ja, kak provedut tok, priemnik
we.will.mak ee sea and a us windmil l electric will.be. but I, when they.bring electricity,
kuplju .. Na vse volny **nastraiवाजी** (Vasil’eva, 1969: 40)
transistor will.buy. to all frequencies turn.in-IMP-IMPERF!
'We will make a sea, and we will have an electric windmill. And as soon as there is
electricity, I will buy a transistor. Just tune in to all the frequencies!'

The use of the imperative in (48) and (49) clashes with the *performance* character, because
the speaker does not want the addressee to perform the action, but only to imagine the
action. The use of the imperative in (50) clashes with the *future time character* because the
addressee is already performing the action at the moment of speaking. The use of the
imperative in (51) clashes with the future time character because it expresses that the
agent should not have performed the action; this means that the direction is aimed at/motivated by a past action. The use of the imperative in (52) clashes with the idea
that the speaker wants the realization of the imperative situation by a specific addressee
present in the speech situation.

The new uses have to be interpreted; that is, if the already established concept – the
basic meaning given earlier – were related to the world, it would partly clash with the
new situation. To integrate this new use into the conceptual structure, some features are
selected while others are backgrounded relative to some context. Below I will discuss
the peripheral uses mentioned above: the conditional use, the ‘reinforcement use’, the
non-future cases, and the cases with a generic agent.
The Russian imperative

3.2.4.1 Conditional-concessive use

In the case of the prototypical directive use the addressee is instructed to perform the imperative action. In some cases there is not so much an instruction to perform a certain action, but much more to imagine a certain situation:

(53) **Pusti babu v raj, a ona korovu za soboj vedet.** (Mazon, 1914: 93/proverb)

let-IMP-PERF woman in paradise, but she cow with her will take

‘Let a woman into paradise, and she will still take her cow with her.’

(54) 

[A] prosi u nego, kak proiti k fabrike – on tebja obol’et prezreniem s nog do golovy.

(Barentsen, forthcoming/A. & B. Strugackie, Gadkie lebedi)

but ask-IMP-PERF at him, how go to factory, he you will pour over with contempt from feet till head

‘But ask him how to get to the factory, and he will look at you contemptuously from head to toe.’

(55) **Da voz’mite vy ljubyx pjah’ stranic iz ljubogo ego romana, i bez vsjakogo udostovereniya vy ubedites’, chto imeete delo s pisatelem.**

(M. Bulgakov, Master i Margarita)

yes take-IMP-PERF-2PL you-2PL of any kind five pages from any kind of his novel, and without any proof you will be convinced that you have deal with writer

‘Just take five random pages from any of his novels, and you won’t need any proof to convince you that you are dealing with a writer.’

Cases where the addressee is instructed to imagine a certain situation always have a conditional or concessive character, and have the structure of a conditional sentence: protasis-apodosis. The following semantic-syntactic features are relevant for this use:

- The imperative clause is the first clause in the co-ordinate structure.

---

31 http://lib.ru/lat/BULGAKOW/master.txt
32 In some special cases (such as in (49) above) the apodosis is left out or expressed as a separate sentence. In my opinion this sentence must be seen as a case where the speaker ‘challenges’ the addressee to do the imperative situation, and expresses in a subsequent sentence that realizing the situation will have negative consequences for the addressee; such sentences are conditional sentences, because the negative consequences of realizing of the imperative situation are either explicitly expressed or presupposed. Cases like these cannot strictly be seen as cases where the addressee is directed to imagine a situation, but should be better analyzed as ‘ironic’ cases, where the speaker ironically challenges the addressee to perform a situation.
— The imperative is prototypically perfective.
— The addressee may be expressed or may remain unspecified.
— The suffix -te is expressed in the case of the second person plural.
— The imperative situation is not necessarily controllable.
— The subject may be expressed or may remain unspecified.
— The second clause can be introduced with i (‘and’) or a (‘but’).
— In the second clause the perfective present is prototypically used.

The speaker first directs the addressee to imagine the imperative situation, and consequently expresses what the consequences of this realization are. In contrast to normal use of the directive imperative, where the addressee is to perform the imperative action, the conditional use of the directive imperative also occurs with non-controllable situations:

(56) Duxovnaja zhizn' voobshche – ne jastreb i bystree strely, no sumej ee uderzhat', i ljubov' – ideal, neizmennaja krasota – jarkaja, svetlaja.33 (O. Platonov, Zhizn' za carja) spiritual life in general not hawk and faster than arrow, but know-IMP-PERF her not let go, and love, ideal, invariable beauty, clear, light ‘The spiritual life is not at all like a hawk and fast like an arrow, but if you know how to hold on to it, you will get love, ideal, never-changing beauty, clear and bright.’

The subject is often not expressed, and in such cases the imperative agent has a clear generic character. In some cases the subject is expressed, as in (55). In these cases the subject also has a generic character, since it is expressed that there is a generally valid relation of condition and consequence between the realization of the imperative action and the situation expressed in the second clause. On the basis of this general relation the speaker can direct any addressee to imagine the imperative situation.

The relation of condition and consequence can be made explicit with the conjunctions a (‘but’) and i (‘and’). Note that in conditional sentences with esli (‘if’), no coordinative conjunctions occur (Esli pustit' babu v raž, (*a) ona korovu za soboj vedet). These conjunctions occur, however, in the case of other conditional sentences without conditional adverbs, for example in conditional sentences with past tense or infinitive mood + by (Formanovskaja, 1989: 42). The coordinative conjunctions can be expressed in the case of the conditional directive imperative because they indicate the temporal sequence of the realization of the imperative action and the consequences of this

33 http://moshkow.perm.ru/lat/PLATONOWO/rasputin.txt
The Russian imperative

action, whereas in the case of *esli* the *conditional* (and therefore also temporal) relation is explicitly expressed. Note that it is quite natural to interpret the idea of temporal sequence of two events in terms of condition, as cause and effect are essentially observed by the regular temporal sequence of events. In sentences without *i* or *a*, the temporal sequence of the clauses in speech time is interpreted as referring to the temporal sequences of the narrated events.

The occurrence of the directive imperative in conditional constructions is not a typical trait of Russian, but exists in many European languages. The following examples are given in Donhauser (1986):

(57) Commande deux bières et tu passeras pour un Bége. (French)

(58) Mach eine Bewegung, und ich drücke los. (German)

Constructions like these can be paraphrased with conjunctions like *si* (French) and *wenn* (German). As Donhauser (1986) remarks, the fact that adverbs that are typical of the direct speaker-hearer situation, like the German *besser* ("better"), can occur with the conditional imperative, but not in the protasis of sentences with *wenn*, can be seen as evidence for the directive character of the imperative conditionals. As I will discuss below, the directive character of the conditional directive imperative is further underlined by the specific *subjective modal* character of the conditional directive imperative, more specifically its concessive or restrictive character.

The occurrence of directive imperatives in conditional constructions in different languages is evidence that something like ‘direction’ can be semantically related to something like ‘condition-implication’; this is remarked by the German linguist Erdmann in the following fragment:

“An einen jeden Befehl nämlich kann sich die Angabe eines Ereignisses anschliessen, das auf die Aufführung desselben folgen wird: *thue das, so wirst du leben*. Da nun die Handlung im moment des Befehlens noch nicht ausgeführt ist, sondern bloss vorgestellt wird, so lag es nahe, den Imperativ auch dann zu brauchen, wenn eine wirkliche Ausführung desselben, überhaupt nicht gewünscht, vielmehr bloss die Vorstellung desselben erweckt und mit dem Fall der Verwirklichung eintretenden Folgen kombiniert werden soll.” (cited in Donhauser, 1986: 172)

34 Note, however, that in some cases, at least in Dutch, the directive conditional is also used with coordinations where no temporal sequence is intended: *Los die som op, en je bent slim* (solve-IMP that equation, and you are smart; ‘If you solve that equation, you must be smart.’). The basic idea of temporal sequence leads to the presupposition of a (non-mentioned) ‘situation’, viz. the idea of ‘concluding’.

101
Proeme, in his analysis of the Dutch (directive) imperative gives the following description of such imperative cases, which can also be applied to the Russian imperative:

"In what I will call the 'interpretation of imagination', the speaker uses the [imperative] form to direct the addressee to imagine that he (the addressee) fulfills in the situation in question the role that would be performed by the referent of the subject if the situation were described by another sentence type. The goal of the speaker is to direct the addressee to take stock of the consequences of the presented situation. Such consequences can be mentioned by the speaker in a main clause that immediately follows the imperative sentence." (Proeme, 1991: 36)

According to Proeme there is something like a general or invariant meaning of the Dutch directive imperative. The interaction of this general meaning and a particular linguistic or pragmatic context results in a particular interpretation. This interpretation can be such that the addressee is directed to perform the act as specified in the proposition or such that the addressee is directed to imagine himself as the actor (and the consequences of the act). The (general) meaning given by Proeme is stated here:

"The speaker directs the addressee to consider himself to be performing the role in the imperative action which otherwise (in another sentence type) would be performed by the referent of the subject." (Proeme, 1991: 39)

It is also possible to state that the performance interpretation must be identified as the central meaning of the imperative, and that the imagination interpretation must be seen as a more peripheral use of the directive imperative. One then has to conclude that the directive imperative shows something like prototypical effects; some imperative uses are better satisfied by the given definition than others. An argument in favor of this conclusion is that the imagination interpretation only occurs in a conditional context,

35 "In wat ik de 'voorstellingsinterpretatie' zal noemen gebruikt de spreker de vorm om de toegesprokene ertoe te bewegen zich voor te stellen dat hij (de toegesprokene) in het genoemde gebeuren of de genoemde situatie de rol vervult die zou worden vervuld door de referent van het subject als het genoemde werd beschreven door middel van een ander zinstype; de spreker heeft daarbij de bedoeling de toegesprokene de gevolgen van de voorgestelde situatie of het voorgestelde gebeuren in ogenschouw te laten nemen. Zulke gevolgen kan de spreker zelf noemen in een direct op de imperativuszin volgende hoofdzin (...)."

36 "[D]e spreker zet de toegesprokene(n) ertoe aan zichzelf te beschouwen als in het genoemde de rol vervullend die anders (bij een ander zinstype) zou worden vervuld door de referent van het subject."
often with a generic agent.\textsuperscript{37} Furthermore, the imperative action is always a future action, which means that sentences like the following are not possible:

\begin{enumerate}
\item[(59)] Win de wedstrijd, wat had je met het geld gedaan?
\end{enumerate}

meaning: “Suppose that you had won the game, what would you have done with the money?”

This cannot be explained on the basis of the (general) meaning of the imperative given by Proeme. What is missing in Proeme’s definition of the imperative is the idea that the addressee should take account of the consequences of his performance.

It is important to get an answer to the question why the interaction of the general meaning of the imperative and the particular linguistic or pragmatic context may, without a special context, lead to a performance-interpretation, but may only lead to an imagination interpretation if the context has a conditional character. In my opinion this problem can be ‘solved’ if we accept that the central meaning of the imperative relates to the fact that the addressee is to perform the imperative situation, and that in a generic conditional context this meaning may be interpreted \textit{as if} the subject is directed to perform the act conveyed by the imperative. This \textit{as if} interpretation occurs in a conditional context only, because here it is clear that the speaker only wants to emphasize the consequences of the performance of the imperative action by a subject and is not actually challenging the addressee to perform the action.

Proposing this \textit{as if} interpretation’ is the same as saying that the subject is instructed to imagine himself to be the actor of the situation conveyed by the imperative predicate and its environment. My analysis differs from that of Proeme because he considers the performance interpretation and the imagination interpretation to have the same status, whereas I think that the performance interpretation must be seen as the central use of the directive imperative, and the imagination interpretation as a modification of the performance interpretation. In the case of the imagination interpretation the speaker is not actually challenging the hearer to perform the imperative situation, but rather is

\textsuperscript{37} In Dutch the conditional context can be pragmatic like \textit{Verlies in de Sovjetunie maar eens je paspoort! (Dan ben je nog niet jarig)} (Lose-IMP in the Soviet Union PRT your passport! (Then you will be in trouble). According to Proeme the expression \textit{maar eens} is not obligatory to maintain the given interpretation. I do not fully agree with that. In my opinion, \textit{Verlies in de Sovjetunie je paspoort!} is initially interpreted as an instruction to perform the imperative. In my opinion, the word \textit{maar} (with facultatively \textit{eens}) is natural to maintain the imagination interpretation here.
challenging any hearer (the generic hearer) to imagine that he himself is the performer of the imperative situation to describe the consequences of this act (Figure 3.8).

Figure 3.8

**Basic meaning.**

The speaker directs the hearer at to perform the imperative situation:  
\[ \rightarrow \text{SIT(V)} \]

**Context:**
- The imperative is the first in a sequence of clauses.
- The relation expressed in the sequence of clauses must be pragmatically interpretable as indicating cause–effect, rather than as something that the addressee must actually perform at the moment of speaking. If the situation is controllable, the subject of the action cannot (only) be equated with the hearer present in the speech situation, but rather with the 'generic' agent, that is, anyone in the given context (and if the action is uncontrollable, common sense has it that the addressee cannot follow the impulse to perform the action).

**Interpretation:**

The speaker directs the hearer to imagine himself to be the performer of the imperative situation: \( \rightarrow \text{SIT(V)} \), to make him realize the consequences of this performance (or in other words: the speaker directs the hearer hypothetically to perform the imperative action.)

**Selected:** idea of imagination of the imperative action

**Backgrounded:** idea of actual performance of the imperative action

The imperative is always connected to the idea of realizing an action and the idea of imagining the consequences for the addressee, which means that the feature of 'imagining' is a necessary part of the directive imperative meaning. In the case of the basic imperative use, the idea of realization is connected to the actual performance of the action, which is lost in the case of the conditional use.

The directive character of the conditional imperative under discussion accounts for the so-called 'subjective modal' character of this use. This means that in these sentences the speaker expresses his attitude toward the imperative proposition. The subjective modal character is absent in the case of oppositional forms. The subjective modal character can be made visible if we paraphrase such sentences with other forms and find
presuppositional focus-sensitive particles like *even* and *only, just*: ‘*Even if you let this woman into paradise she will take a cow with her*’; ‘*Just ask him how to go to the factory, and he will look at you contemptuously from head to toe*’. In these two sentences we find the following pragmatic context for the imperative. The speaker wishes to make the point that *q* (she is a woman who always takes her cow with her; he does not like it if people ask how to get to the factory), under the assumption that the addressee does not expect *q* to be the case.

In the case of the conditional directive imperative, the hearer is not expected to already imagine himself to be the performer of the imperative action because it is not expected that the realization of *X* leads to *Y*. This can be motivated as follows. It only makes sense to give an *impulse* to the addressee to imagine himself to be the performer of the action, in those cases where it can be expected that without that impulse the addressee will not imagine himself to be the performer of the action. The breaking of the expected course of events can be interpreted differently, depending on the context in which the imperative occurs. In some cases the expectation might be that the realization of *X* is not enough to lead to *Y*; in such cases it is stated that *just* the realization of *X* is enough to lead to *Y*. In other cases the expectation is that of all the actions that can be realized, the realization of *X* is the least likely to lead to *Y*; in such cases it is stated that *even* the realization of *X* will lead to *Y*. These latter cases have a concessive character.

Note that the feature of ‘imagination’ is not expressed by the infinitive. This accounts for the difference in use between the imperative conditional directive and the conditional infinitive. A conditional directive imperative sentence like (48) cannot be paraphrased with an infinitive:

(60) *

The infinitive can only be used to express condition if the speaker expresses that there is a general relation of condition-result between the infinitive situation and another situation, or if the speaker actually wants the realization of the infinitive situation, for example:

(61) *

*
Chapter III

'Sitting in the cabin means burning the rest of the fuel that would just about be sufficient for the sovxoz. But not heating the cabin means that we will just freeze to death.'

(62) A ej skazat', ona premier blizko k serdcu (...). (ibid./L. Petrushevskaja, P'ey)
but her say-INF-PERF, she will take close to heart (...)
'If you tell her, it will trouble her deeply.'

(63) Po smutnom sne bezdelica trevozhit. Skazat' vam son: pojmete vy togda. (Maurice, 1996: 164/Griboedov)
through disturbing dream trifle disturbs. say-INF-PERF you-DAT dream: will understand you then
'Disturbing dreams can make you worry about trifles. Shall I tell you the dream, than you will understand/Telling you the dream will make you understand.'

In these sentences the idea of 'just imagine Y to be the case', and consequently the unexpected relation between the apodosis and protasis, is absent. The infinitive does not express the idea of a force directed at the hypothetical performance of some situation (→ SIT(V)), but expresses the idea of an appropriate situation type, which makes it unsuitable for use in contexts in (60). In order to interpret the infinitive as a conditional, a special context is necessary. This is a so-called predicative context where it is expressed that the infinitive situation is the case, or applies to some specified or non-specified agent. This infinitive in a predicative context may have a general character, or a specific character. In the case of the general character, the non-expressed infinitive agent remains unspecified, such that it is interpreted as the generic agent. In these cases it is expressed that the realization of X always or necessarily leads to Y (or put differently, situation type X always involves situation Y); such a case is exemplified by (61), where the speaker expresses what one can expect if the infinitive situation is realized. In other cases the infinitive can be associated with a specific agent. This is the case for example in (63) where the speaker is associated with the infinitive agent. This sentence can be interpreted as a question where the speaker asks the addressee whether he agrees with the realization of the infinitive

---

38 Note that the infinitive can be used without conditional conjunction (esli) in counterfactual conditional sentences with an optative character, as in the following construction [[infinitive + by + (dative)] [subjunctive]]: Priji by tebe ran'che, i my aho vsem by dogovorilas' (Formanovskaja, 1989: 42); come-INF-PERF particle you-DAT earlier, and you about everything particle reach agreement; 'If only you had come earlier, we could have reached an agreement about everything'. I think these infinitives can be used in a conditional context because of the hypothetical interpretation that results from the particle by.
situation; this case can be seen as a special instance of the modal infinitive sentences discussed in 4.15.

3.2.4.2 Use of reinforcement

Another peripheral use of the directive imperative is the use what I will call ‘reinforcement’ use. These are cases like the following (repeated for convenience):

\[(64) \quad \text{Muchajcja! Ne nado delat' takie gluposti!} \quad (\text{Barentsen, forthcoming})\]
\[\text{suffer-IMP-IMPERF! not necessary do-INF such stupid.things}\]
\[\text{‘Yes suffer! You shouldn’t have been so stupid.’}\]

In sentences like these the addressee is performing the imperative action at the moment of utterance without the expectation that he will stop performing the action. In most cases the addressee does not desire the action, although this seems not to be a necessary feature. The speaker agrees with the realization of the action by the addressee, and often takes a kind of malicious pleasure in the performance of the action. The situation can be uncontrollable. Cases like these can possibly be analyzed as in Figure 3.9.

---

**Figure 3.9**

**BASIC meaning:**

The speaker directs the hearer at t₀ to perform the imperative situation:

\[\rightarrow \text{SIT(V)}\]

**+ context:**

- The addressee is performing V at t₀
- The situation can be uncontrollable
- The action can be seen as negative for the addressee

**Interpretation:**

By giving an impulse to the realization of the imperative action, the speaker reinforces the imperative action, and as such expresses that he agrees with the realization, and especially the continuation of the imperative action by the addressee.

**Selected:** speaker commitment

**Backgrounded:** idea of an action that breaks the expected course of events
By reinforcing the imperative situation the speaker expresses that he agrees with the realization of the imperative situation by the addressee. It may be that the idea of reinforcement mostly arises in cases where the situation is not performed volitionally by the addressee (like mubat'sja) and where the idea is attributed to the addressee that he would like to stop performing the situation. As such, the idea of ‘breaking the expected course of events’ occurs in a weakened form. These cases are similar to the ‘continue V’ cases discussed earlier. Facts such as these point at the fuzzy borders between the different usage types or interpretations. These fluid extensions between the different uses point at the fact that we cannot treat them as separate representations, but rather must see them as interpretations or adjustments.

3.2.4.3 ‘Non-future’ use

A third peripheral case that I will briefly discuss is that of sentences where by using the imperative the speaker expresses that a particular action is prohibited, although the action in question has already been realized and the negative consequences of this action are present. These are sentences like (51) above, and the following sentence:

(65) Isaju Gorbovu ja bashku otorvu, uvidish'! — Za chto? — sprosil xoxol. — Ne shpion', ne donosil (Barentsen, forthcoming/Gor'kij)
Isaja Gorbova I mug tear off, you see!— for what?, asked Ukrainian. not spy-IMP-IMPERF, not squeal-IMP-PERF
"I'll tear off Isaja Gorbov's head, you know!" "What for...?" asked the Ukrainian. "He shouldn't spy and squeal."

Cases like these are different from prototypical imperative cases in that the idea of performing a future action is not expressed. Furthermore, in sentences like these the direction is not per se aimed at the addressee present in the speech situation. I propose to analyze sentences like these as in Figure 3.10.

---

39 Note that one cannot say that the speaker gives an impulse to the further realization of the action because this would imply that the action would have to be controllable.
The Russian imperative

Figure 3.10

**BASIC meaning:**

The speaker directs the hearer to perform the imperative situation: \( \rightarrow \text{SIT}(V) \)

+ **context:**
  - The imperative occurs with negation (не V)\(^{40}\)
  - Some agent x is introduced that has performed action V
  - The consequences of realizing V are present or imminent and are evaluated negatively by the speaker

**Interpretation:**

The speaker expresses: if the generic agent wants the consequences of V not to happen, realize не V, where agent x is substituted for the generic agent, or put differently, where the generic agent is interpreted as agent x. Because agent x has already realized V, this implies that the speaker expresses that the agent *should not have realized* V.

**Selected:** idea of impulse to perform an action

**Backgrounded:** idea of immediate realization in the speech situation

The possibility of using of the imperative in contexts where the agent is not the addressee present in the speech situation, but rather the generic agent, can be seen as an important factor for the transfer of the directive imperative to the necessitive imperative, which will be discussed in the next subsection.

3.2.4.4 Uses with a generic agent: Borderline cases between directive use and necessitive use

The imperative can be used in Russian with uses where the agent can be identified with a *generic* agent. Such uses can be seen as borderline cases between the necessitive use, which I will discuss in the next section, and the directive use. Consider the following sentences:

\(^{40}\) This is possibly not necessary. I have not, however, seen sentences with the structure: x did not do V, the consequences of not doing V are negative, and to avoid these negative consequences the agent should have done V.
The first sentence has a permissive character; which means that the addressee can be seen as the causational impulse (see 3.2.2.3); the second sentence has the character of an order. In contrast to prototypical directive (permissive) uses, the imperative does not occur in a direct speaker-addressee context; the addressee is not specific but potential or generic, and the speaker states that in the given situation the imperative action applies. This means that the speaker is not the impulse giver, but he identifies with the impulse giver and states that in the given situation the generic agent is to realize the imperative action. The meaning of this construction can roughly be paraphrased in English with: If you are in situation X, do Y.

The abstraction from the direct speaker-addressee context is, at least to some extent, a matter of degree. In the sentences given above one can still speak of directive uses, because the speaker can identify with the impulse giver and give the impulse from this perspective, and the addressee can identify with the agent of the imperative situation; in other sentences the directive character is weakened further, for example:

'Life in the hut was very pleasant for Vasily. He only had to lie all day on the fresh, fragrant straw, look to make sure the boys did not steal any apples, and whistle and sing songs.'
The Russian imperative

(69) — I za porjadkom v kavartire sledi, i subbotniki provodi i s objazatel'stvami po dvoram xodi, — dumate, legko odnoj-to? (Shvedova, 1974: 113)
and after order in house keep-IMP-IMPERF, and voluntary work do-IMP-IMPERF and with obligations in courtyards go-IMP-IMPERF, you think, easy for a woman alone-PRT 'I have to keep the apartment tidy, and I have to voluntary work and I have to fulfill my obligations in various places, do you think, that is easy for a woman all alone?'

Such sentences express necessity, in (68) with a nuance of permission, and in (69) with a nuance of order. In these sentences the feature of direction is weakened even more because the identification of the speaker with the impulse giver is weaker; this is especially clear in (69) because in this sentence the speaker disagrees with the performance of the imperative situations. Furthermore, in these sentences the non-expressed agent of the imperative situation is associated with a specific agent, viz. the third person subject Vasily in (68), and the speaker in (69). As such, these sentences do not have a typical generic character. Such sentences are therefore usually not classified as directive cases, but as necessitive cases (e.g. Shvedova, 1974).

One speaks of directive use when the speaker gives an impulse to the second person addressee to perform an action, whereas one speaks of necessitive use if there is an impulse directed at the realization of the situation, and the speaker cannot be seen as the giver of the impulse and the second person addressee cannot be seen as the agent of the imperative situation (as in (2) above). Clear directive cases occur in the immediate speaker-addressee context, whereas clear necessitive cases occur if the subject of the imperative is a third or a first person subject. I do not think, however, that it is possible to draw clear boundaries between directive use and necessitive use. Generic cases constitute intermediate cases between directive cases and necessitive cases; in these sentences the addressee is not the agent of the imperative action, but it is expressed that anyone in the given situation, including the addressee, is directed to perform the imperative action.

In some sentences there is a close association between the intended agent of the imperative situation and the speaker. The close semantic relation between such cases and second person cases can be demonstrated with the following sentence, where the imperative occurs with a second person subject (70):

(70) Devica platok uronila — ty podnimaj, ona vxodit — ty vstawaj i davaj ej svoj stul, uxodit —
ty provozhaj...(Vinogradov, 1947: 600/Chexov)
girl handkerchief dropped — you-NOM take-up-IMP-IMPERF, she enters — you-NOM stand-up-IMP-IMPERF and give her your chair, goes out, you-NOM accompany-IMP-IMPERF
Chapter III

‘If a girl drops her handkerchief, you are to pick it up, if she enters, you have to get up, and offer her your chair, if she goes out, you have to accompany her.’

In this sentence the second person subject does not refer to the addressee, but is generic and implicitly refers to the speaker. The speaker takes the perspective of a force (general law, norm, or habit) which gives an impulse to anyone in the given context, including the speaker and the addressee, to realize the imperative situation.

In this subsection I will briefly discuss one specific generic imperative construction, viz. the use of the imperative with the particle xot’ to indicate that the imperative situation is a far-fetched but only adequate or possible reaction to a certain situation. The following sentences are examples of this construction:

(71) Pocherku menja velikolepnejshij, xot’ v pisateli ili v ministry idi. (Barentsen, pc/Chexov)
handwriting at me magnificent, almost in writers or in ministers go-IMP
‘My handwriting is just magnificent, I might as well become a writer or minister.’

(72) [V]oobshche zhe v S. chitali ochen’ malo, i v zdeshnej bibliotekte tak i govorili, chto esli by
ne devushki i ne molodye evreii, chto xot’ zakryva v biblioteku. (Veyrenc, 1980: 124
/Chexov)
generally PRT in S. they.read very little, and in local library such and they.said, that if PRT
not girls and not young jews, that almost close-IMP-IMPERF library
‘In general they read very little in S, and in the library here they used to say that had it not
been for the girls and young jews, one might as well close the library.’

(73) I tut navalivaetsja takaja rasslabuxa, chto xot’ lozhis’ i pomiraj. (V. Kunin, Kysja)
and here attacks such weakness, that almost lie.down-IMP-IMPERF and die-IMP-
IMPERF
‘And I was overwhelmed by such a weakness, that one could almost lie down and die.’

The following semantic-syntactic features are relevant for this construction:

– The imperative prototypically occurs in a sequence of sentences, either as the second
sentence in a coordinate structure (with an intonational pause), or as an embedded
sentence (with chto).41

41 In some cases the sentences do not occur in a coordinate structure, e.g. A vot, podite zh, vtorichno zamuzh
vyhit bukval’no ne v sostojani. Prjamo xot’ v gazete pechatay (‘But she is literally not able to marry for a second
time. One might as well put an add in the newspaper.’)
The Russian imperative

- The particle xot' is placed before the imperative (it modifies the imperative).
- No subject is expressed; the subject is interpreted as the generic subject.
- The imperative is prototypically imperfective, indicating that the subject could almost engage in the imperative situation.

Many instances of this construction have a strong phraseological or idiomatic character (cf. Lubensky, 1995). Xrakovskij & Volodin (1986) give the following description of this use:

"From the point of view of content there is a comparison of two situations: a real situation that is judged by the speaker to have reached its natural end point of realization, and a potential situation (expressed by the construction with the particle xot' and the imperative), that objectively follows from the real situation, since it is determined by it. In this respect it is not important whether the potential situation could in fact actually be realized by the will of the speaker (or another person), or whether this is not the case." (Xrakovskij & Volodin, 1986:241)

They further remark that the construction can be paraphrased in Russian with mozhno ('may') + infinitive (1986:241).

I think it is best to relate this use of the imperative to the basic directive imperative use. The sentences under discussion convey that the scene expressed by the first clause is almost a reason to give an impulse to the realization of the imperative situation. This is a hyperbolic statement, since it is clear that in reality the actual realization of the imperative situation does not apply. The imperative use under discussion can be seen as a case of possibility or permission because it is expressed that situation X removes a potential barrier to the realization of Y (see Talmy, 1985, for an analysis of possibility in terms of the dynamics of forces). Since the relation of condition is assumed to be generally valid, the speaker acts as if he almost directs the generic agent (any agent in the given situation) to realize the imperative action. The construction can therefore not be seen as a directive use in the strict sense; this is underlined by the possibility of the construction occurring in subordinate clauses, as in ((72), (73)). On the other hand, the construction cannot occur with first or third persons; this underlines the relation between this imperative use and the basic directive use.

3.2.5 Conclusion

In this section I have given a description of the directive imperative. The directive imperative can be described as follows: The speaker directs the hearer to perform the
imperative situation. This presupposes (i) that the addressee is not intending to realize the imperative action, or that the addressee is expected to stop realizing the imperative action, (ii) that the action is controllable by the addressee, and (iii) that the speaker by uttering the imperative intends to contribute to the realization of the imperative action by the addressee. The directive imperative differs from oppositional forms in that the idea of directivity leading to the realization of the action must be seen as a meaning, and not as an interpretation. Besides the basic use, derived uses of the directive imperative occur, for example the conditional use, the reinforcement use, and the non-future use. One can speak of a derived use because under the influence of a particular context, some aspects of the basic imperative meaning are selected, whereas others are cancelled. This process of interpretation is not random, but is based on general principles of rationality, that is, the (conventionalized) interpretations are reasonable given the context, and the aim of the language user to choose for optimal interpretation.

In the next section I will give a description of an extended use of the directive imperative, viz. the necessitive imperative. This use differs from the directive imperative uses discussed in this section, because the features 'impulse to the addressee' is backgrounded.

3.3 Necessitive use of the imperative

3.3.1 Introduction

In the previous section I gave an analysis of the directive imperative. I showed that it is typical of the directive situation that there is an addressee who is directed by the speaker to perform the imperative action. This description applies to the basic directive use; peripheral uses can be seen as extensions of this use by selection and backgrounding of features under perspectives. In this section I will give an analysis of the so-called necessitive use of the imperative. I will argue that the necessitive imperative can be seen as an extension of the directive imperative by selection and backgrounding of features under perspectives. The necessitive can be seen as a separate imperative use because the central feature of the directive imperative — direction from the speaker to the addressee — is backgrounded. This means that the imperative is used in non-directive contexts (with first, third person subjects, inanimate subjects, and impersonal verbs).

The section has the following structure. In 3.3.2 I will give a definition of the meaning of the necessitive imperative. In 3.3.3 I will discuss the semantic-syntactic features of the necessitive imperative. In 3.3.4, I will further analyze the relation between the necessitive
The Russian imperative

imperative and the directive imperative, and discuss difference in meaning between the necessitive imperative and its oppositional forms.

3.3.2 The meaning of the necessitive imperative

The following sentences are examples of the so-called necessitive use of the imperative:

(74) Vzjalsj a uchit' tak on i uchi. (Shvedova, 1974: 117)
 started study, so he-NOM and study-IMP-IMPERF
 'He has begun his studies, so he should continue them.'

(75) Ljudi bedokurjat, a ovcy - otvechaj. (Shvedova, 1974: 115/Spasskij)
 people cause.trouble-IMP-IMPERF, but sheep-NOM - be.responsible-IMP-IMPERF
 'The people cause trouble, but the sheep are held responsible.'

(76) Vse ushli, a ja sidi doma i rabotaj. (Shvedova, 1974: 107)
 all gone, but I-NOM sit-IMP-IMPERF at.home and work-IMP-IMPERF
 'Everybody has gone out, but I have to stay at home and work.'

(77) Im udovol'stvie, a my muchajsa... (Uppsala corpus)
 they-DAT pleasure, but we-NOM suffer-IMP-IMPERF
 'They have pleasure, but we have to suffer...'

(78) V dome vsegda bud' teplo, a sam ne xoches' dazhe drov prinesti. (Veyrenc, 1980: 99/Russkaja Grammatika, 1980, II: 590)
 in house always be-IMP warm-ADV, but self not you.want even wood bring
 'You always want it to be warm in the house, but you don't even want to go for some wood yourself.'

In these sentences the imperative is used to express that the imperative action is obligated, or conceived as necessitive. Necessitive imperative use can be paraphrased in Russian with modal forms such as dolzhen, nado, prixditisja and the dative-infinitive construction. The necessitive imperative prototypically occurs in contrastive constructions where the necessity for the subject to perform the imperative action is compared with another situation. I will use the term 'necessitive use' for this use of the imperative, as a translation of the Russian term dolzhenstvovatel'noe naklonenie/znachenie (cf. Shvedova, 1974). In contrast to the directive use of the imperative, the speaker does not direct the addressee to perform an action, but expresses that there is some force (other than himself, although he may
identify with the force) that directs the agent of the action (expressed in the nominative) to realize the imperative action. The force may be a person, a social norm, or the circumstances in general. Because the imperative does not occur in the directive context, the subject of the imperative is not restricted to second person subjects, but occurs foremost with third and first persons, and in impersonal constructions. Following Shvedova (1974), two main types of necessitive uses can be distinguished:

(a) Sentences where the necessity appears as an obligation, and where, dependent upon the character of the obligating force, the speaker may express his negative attitude to the action imposed on the subject, especially if he/she is to be identified with the subject (e.g. (75)—(78)).
(b) Sentences where the necessity is the result of something like custom or habit, and where the speaker accepts the imperative situation (e.g. (74)).

As I will argue below, type (a) shares features with directive imperative use, while some uses of type (b) share features with optative imperative use.\(^{42}\) The second necessitive type is less frequent than the first type, and Shvedova (1974: 116) cites Shmelev, who argues that this use is not productive in modern Russian; she disagrees with this statement, claiming that this use still occurs in modern Russian. The data at my disposal, however, confirm that uses of type (b) are much less frequent than uses of type (a); most instances of the necessitive imperative use occur either with non-expressed generic subjects (such cases can also be seen as directive cases), or with third/first persons in contrastive constructions (e.g. (75)—(78)). I suspect that the rather infrequent occurrence of type (b) is connected with the fact that such cases can also be expressed with the oppositional form \textit{pust}'; and that the decline of this necessitive use is directly related to the decline of the optative imperative use as described in 3.5. I will motivate the tendency of restriction of the necessitive use to constrastive contexts with first/third persons by pointing at the meaning of the construction.

The following description can be given for the necessitive imperative use:

\textbf{There is some non-speaker force aimed at the realization of the imperative situation (expressed by the subject in the nominative if the verb is personal).}

Figure 3.11 shows the frame that can be given for the (basic) necessitive imperative.

\(^{42}\) In fact, some instances that Shvedova (1974) calls necessitive are classified as optative cases by Vinogradov & Shvedova (1964).
The Russian imperative

Figure 3.11

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Force</th>
<th>Directed at</th>
<th>Subject of situation</th>
<th>Object of force</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-speaker</td>
<td>$\rightarrow$ SIT(V+aspect)_{t1}</td>
<td>$S=1/(2)/3$sg-pl/impersonal</td>
<td>$S$</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The meaning of the necessitive imperative given above presupposes that:

(i) The imperative situation breaks the expected course of events

(ii) By using the imperative the addressee is invited to imagine the realization of the imperative situation

Note that two of the presuppositions of the directive imperative are absent in the case of the necessitive, viz. (a) controllability, and (b) speaker commitment (cf. 3.2.2.0). The presupposition of speaker commitment is absent because the speaker is not the impulse giver. The presupposition that the situation is controllable is also absent, and this is underlined by the occurrence of impersonal cases, and cases like (77). In the case of the directive imperative the feature of control could be attributed to the manipulative character of the directive (expressing the imperative is intending to change someone's behavior). In the case of the necessitive this manipulative character is absent. By using the necessitive imperative the speaker expresses that he imagines some force directed at the realization of the imperative situation. Since this force may also be an abstract force (the circumstances), such cases do not necessarily have a clear controllable character. Note furthermore, that in most cases an agent expressed in the nominative can be seen as a participant that must contribute to the realization of the imperative action. Put differently, the non-agent force is directed at the subject of the imperative action. This is less clear, however, with the verb бьтъ ("be"), where no subject is expressed, or where the subject is non-animate (as in (89) below). In such sentences the force is aimed at some other contextually given participant, or some non-specified participant, that must contribute to the realization of the imperative action.

The two other presuppositions of the directive imperative, viz. (i) the imperative situation breaks the expected course of events, and (ii) by using the imperative the addressee is directed to *imagine* the imperative situation, are (partly) preserved in the case of the necessitive imperative. If we look carefully at the use of the necessitive imperative, we can see three important features that set this use apart from oppositional forms, such as докбен and нado, viz.:
Chapter III

11

(i) Necessitive imperative sentences always express so-called ‘subjective modal’ nuances.
(ii) The necessitive imperative prototypically occurs in contrastive contexts.
(iii) In the case of the necessitive imperative we do not find tense.

Below I will argue that these specific features can only be motivated if we relate the meaning of the necessitive to the meaning of the directive imperative. Both in the case of the necessitive use of the imperative and in the case of the directive use of the imperative, an essential part is played by the idea of direction aimed at the realization of the action (→ SIT(V)), and consequently the idea of contrast between SIT(V) and SIT(not V).

Before discussing the specific meaning of the necessitive and the relations between the necessitive and the directive, I will first briefly consider some semantic-syntactic features of relevance for the necessitive imperative. I will then examine the relations between the necessitive imperative and other imperative uses, especially the directive imperative.

3.3.3 Semantic-syntactic features

(i) + imperfective aspect, perfective in some cases
(ii) – tense
(iii) + all subjects in nominative /dative/impersonal constructions
(iv) no plural morpheme -te or directive suffix -ka
(v) occurrence of embedded necessitivess
(vi) no fixed word order

I will briefly discuss these features below.

3.3.3.1 Aspect

The necessitive imperative occurs with both aspects, but in most cases we find the imperfective aspect. This can be motivated by the fact that in most necessitive cases the imperative indicates a state that the subject is in. Two examples are given below of sentences with a perfective aspect:

(79) Filat i na bazar sbegaj, i svari, i podaj, i vychisti, i vymoj, i ubajukaj Vasen'ku, i nakormi ego kashkoj, i ponjanchi ego, i vezde Filat, i na vse emu vremja. (Vinogradov & Shvedova, 1964: 227/Vel'tm.)
The Russian imperative

Filat and on market run-IMP-PERF, and scald-IMP-PERF, and give-IMP-PERF, and clean-IMP-PERF, and wash-IMP-PERF, and lull-IMP-PERF Vasen'ka, and feed-IMP-PERF him with porridge, and nurse for a while, and everywhere Filat, and on all him time Filat has to run to the market, and cook, and serve, and clean, and wash, and lull little Vasja, and feed him porridge, and nurse him for a while, and Filat is everywhere, and has time for all these things.'


He not understand, that she from those women, that not can make fun of their own feelings. One of these: or take away-IMP-PERF he-NOM her, energetically act-IMP-PERF, or give-IMP-PERF leave. But this kills her

'He doesn't understand that she is one of those women that cannot make fun of their own feelings. One of the two: either he should take her away, and act energetically, or he should let her go. But this is killing her.'

The first sentence could be seen as a case of 'nagljadno-primerno znachenie' ('good example meaning'), that is, the action is presented as if it were a single fact to illustrate that the action is typical of the subject in question. Besides the 'nagljadno-primerno znachenie', which typically favours the perfective aspect, the perfective may also be chosen to indicate that the obligated actions occur in a narrative chain of events; for such cases the perfective aspect is typical (see Barentsen, 1985).

In the second sentence the speaker focuses on the positive result of the hypothetical performance of the imperative action, put differently, the speaker expresses that the subject should realize one of the alternative imperative actions. This sentence is very close to an optative imperative. Although the perfective aspect is typical of sentences where the speaker agrees with the realization of the imperative situation, we do not find the perfective aspect in all such. Consider for example the following sentence, where we find two perfectives and an imperfective:

Kogda kto v polon popadet – drugoj prodaj vse i daj vykup, a ne to sam stupaj v polon (...) (Gogol: 173)

When who in prison ends up, other sell IMP-PERF everything and bail out IMP-PERF, or else self step IMP-IMPERF in prison (...) 'When one of them is captured, the other must sell everything and bail the other out, or else go to prison himself.'
In this sentence the speaker agrees with the realization of the imperative action, but nevertheless an imperfective is chosen in the case of the third imperative (stupaj). This may be motivated by the fact that ne to ('or else') implies a negative alternative; this use of the imperative in this sentence may be seen as a case of 'pristup k dejstviju' ('start to do an action'). From this sentence it can be concluded that speaker agreement is not a sufficient condition for the perfective aspect.

In the case of negation we find the perfective aspect:

(82) On vse dni gde-to propodaet, a ja iz domu ne vyjdi. (Xrakovskij & Volodin, 1987: 238)
he all days somewhere vanishes, but I from house not go.out-IMP-PERF
‘Every day he goes to somewhere else, but I cannot even leave the house.’

(83) V perednom vagone skuchno i xitura i na nogu nikomu ne nastupi. (A. Zoshchenko, 1935: 5)
in first railway carriage dull and depressing and on foot nobody-DAT not step-IMP-PERF
‘In the first railway carriage it is dull and depressing, and you may not step on anyone’s foot.’

Such cases express prohibition ('may not'). In the case of negation there is some understood intention of the agent to fulfill the action, but the intended action is blocked or interdicted by the obligating force. The perfective aspect is triggered by the fact that the subject intends to realize the situation, but is blocked in this realization, and may not even realize the situation on a single occasion.

3.3.3.2 Tense

The necessitive does not express tense. I discussed the absence of tense in the case of the necessitive imperative in 3.1. I argued that the absence of tense in the case of the necessitive imperative is connected with the fact that the speaker partially identifies with the force that is directed at the realization of the imperative situation, leading to a so-called dynamic construal of the realization or dynamic realization. Because of the dynamic construal the speaker invites the addressee to imagine the realization of the imperative situation at the moment of uttering. The feature of dynamic realization is not compatible with the idea of placing the action before, during, or after the moment of speaking. As such, the necessitive is not marked for tense. Note that absence of tense does not mean that the necessitive only refers to present actions; the necessitive imperative may refer to past
The Russian imperative

situations. This is the case for example in (68) above. The past character is not part of the meaning of the form but must be seen as an *interpretation*.

3.3.3.3 Subject

In contrast to the directive imperative, which only occurs in the speaker-addressee context where the hearer can be seen as the subject of the predicate, the necessitivising can be combined with first persons and third persons in the nominative case. It is questionable whether the necessitivising also freely occurs with second persons. It might be expected that second person sentences give rise to ambiguity between a directive reading and a necessitivising reading, and are therefore avoided. In section 3.2.5 I gave an example of a second person singular case where the subject implicitly refers to the speaker (70). Below two more examples are given:

(84) Grjaz', chicher, ni puti ni dorogi, a ty idi, klanjaisja ... da esche ne to dadut, ne to net ...
(1980: 96/Bunin)
* dirt, wet snow, no route, no road, but you-NOM go-IMP, bow-IMP-IMPERF ... and still not that they give, not that not 
* 'Dirt, wet snow, an invisible road, but you go anyway, and make your bow ... and still they give you something you don't need, or they give you nothing at all ...'

(85) Nesusvetnaja zhara, a ty sidi i zanimajisja kak milen'kij.
(Vasil'eva, 1969: 40)
* unbearable heat, but you-NOM sit-IMP-IMPERF and study-IMP-IMPERF as sweet child 
* 'The heat is unbearable, but you have to sit and study like a sweet child.'

I have seen no examples of sentences where the second person subject does not implicitly refer to the speaker, and I have not attested examples with a second person plural.43

Shvedova (1974: 112) observes that in some sentences the subject of the imperative predicate is expressed in the dative; such sentences have a strong colloquial character. Shvedova gives three examples; two of these sentences are given below:

(86) — Nu, malo li druzhkov u Kuz'mina? Za vorotnik ponalivajut, a mne razvozi.
(Shvedova, 1974: 112/Literaturnaja gazeta)
* well, few PRT friends with Kuz'min? behind collar they pour, but I-DAT deliver-IMP-IMPERF

---

43It may be that such sentences, provided with an appropriate context, are possible.
Well Kuzmin has lots of friends. They drink lots of booze, and I have to drive them around.

(87) Ne xodi, Kolja, èto on opjat’ vypivat’. – A chto zhe, mne vse kopaj da polivaj? Rab ja, chto li? (ibid./Izvestia)
not go, Kolja, it he-NOM again drink-INF. but what PRT, I-DAT all dig-IMP-IMPERF and water-IMP-IMPERF. slave I, what PRT?
“Don’t go, Kolja, he only wants to drink again.” “So what, do I have to dig and water the garden? Do you think I am a slave or something?”

The occurrence of the dative in these sentences can be motivated by the fact that the speaker experiences the imperative action as initiated by some other force; as such, the speaker-subject can be seen as the experimenter of the force to do the imperative action. This means that the idea of a situation conceptualized in its moment of realization is weakened. The occurrence of the dative in these cases is comparable to the occurrence of the dative in the case of the dative-infinitive construction (see Chapter IV).

Sentences with the verb byt’ (‘be’) have a special status since they can occur without subject, or in sentences where the force is not aimed at the subject itself:

(88) U nas bud’ tishina, a im mozno shumet’? (Russkaja Grammatika, 1980, II: 116)
at us be-IMP silence-NOM, but they-DAT may-ADV make.noise-INF?
“We have to be quiet, but they are allowed to make noise?”

Here the non-agent impulse is directed at the speaker together with some other people (‘us’), and not at the inanimate subject of the verb. The Russkaja Grammatika (1980, II: 579) gives the following sentence where a dative is expressed that can be identified with the non-subject force that desires the imperative action:

(89) Emu i rabota bud’ legkaja, i zarplata bol’shaja.
he-DAT and work-NOM be-IMP easy-ADJ and the income-NOM high-ADJ
‘He wants his work to be easy, and his income to be high.’

This sentence expresses that if it is up to the dative participant, the work should be easy and the income high.

As I argued earlier in 3.2.4, in many sentences the subject is not expressed; in such cases the subject has a generic character (if the verb is personal), e.g.
The Russian imperative

(90) Ja ne ljubljju moskovskoj zhizni. Zdes' zhivi ne kak xoches' — kak tetki xotjat. (Shvedova, 1974:113/fragment from letter by Pushkin)
I not like Moscow life. here live-IMP-IMPERF not as want-2sg , like aunts want
‘I don't like Moscow life. Here you can't live the way you want, but you have to live like
those old women want you to.’

Sentences like this one are closely related to directive cases, since they share features with
second person cases. In this sentence the second person character is underlined by the
occurrence of xochesh’ (want-2-SG). Such cases can be seen as intermediate cases between
the directive imperative and the necessitive imperative. Sentences with a first or third
person, and sentences with impersonal verbs are clear examples of necessitive cases.
Sentences with a second person subject are interpreted as directive cases, although in
some instances a necessitive interpretation is possible, namely in those cases where ty
does not refer to the addressee but to the speaker. Some instances of the imperative
with personal verbs without subject can be interpreted as clear directive cases, while
others share more features with necessitive cases. However, many cases that have a
generic interpretation can be classified both as directive cases and as necessitive cases; in
these cases it is not possible to decide whether the speaker can be seen as the giver of
the impulse.

Note furthermore, that the expression of the subject in the case of the necessitive is
often facilitated by the contrastive context in which the necessitive occurs: there is a
contrast with another explicitly or implicitly given subject. The contrastive context may
be marked by a pause before or after the pronoun. (Veyrenc, 1980: 97) Consider the
following sentence:

(91) Vse ushli, a J'A— sidi doma i rabotaj.
all gone, but I-NOM sit-IMP-IMPERF at home and work-IMP-IMPERF

This sentence has the following structure: ‘Everybody is gone, but as far as I am
concerned: I have to stay at home and work.’

3.3.3.4 Lack of directive features

The following characteristics point at the difference between the necessitive imperative
and the directive imperative:
Chapter III

- The plural directive suffix -te does not occur in the case of the second person plural. (although no good examples of such second person plural cases are given in the literature).

- The necessitive can occur with first and third persons, with impersonal verbs, and with dative subjects.

- Absence of a directive intonation (Shvedova, 1974.)

- The clitic -ka, which is typical of the directive context, does not occur in the case of the necessitive use of the imperative.

- In contrast to the basic directive imperative, the necessitive imperative can occur in embedded sentences:

(92) Ja ne pisal stixov. Ja govoril, chto prezhde Zemlej, vodoj i nebom ovladej, chtob uznat' derev'ja po odezhde, i po glazam razgljadyvat' ljudej. (Shvedova, 1974: 116/Lavrov)
I not wrote poetry. I said, that before Earth, water and sky control-IMP-PERF, in.order know-INF, in.order know people
'I didn't write poetry. I said that first one has to control the earth, the water and the air, in order to understand the trees by their clothing, and the people by their eyes.'

3.3.3.5 Word order

In most sentences where the subject is expressed, the necessitive clause has an SV order. I suspect that this order can be motivated by the function of the different constituents in the sentence, and that the general principles governing the word order of Russian also apply in the case of the necessitive imperative. As I argued before, the SV order is typical of cases where there is some contrast with another action, which is a typical necessitive context (see 3.2.3.2 for the SV order in the case of the directive imperative, and 3.3.3.3, on the meaning structure of the necessitive). A VS order occurs in some cases, for example in (80) given above. This sentence is close to an optative imperative. It must be remarked that the VS order is typical of the optative and the conditional use of the imperative. The VS order is possibly chosen here because the speaker focuses on the hypothetical realization of the imperative action; the subject in this

44 According to my informants the subject in sentences with an expressed second person (y) could hypothetically speaking be substituted with you, in which case -te is not added to the imperative.
The Russian imperative

sentence has the character of an afterthought. I will discuss the VS word order of the optative in more detail in 3.5.3.3.45

Now that I have discussed some semantic-syntactic features of the necessitive, I will discuss the relation between the necessitive and the directive use of the imperative.

3.3.4 The necessitive imperative use and other imperative use

In this subsection I will discuss the meaning of the necessitive imperative by showing how it can be related to the other imperative uses, especially to the directive imperative. I will argue that the necessitive imperative can be seen as an extension of the directive imperative by backgrounding the specific speaker-hearer features of the idea of direction.

In the literature it is normally assumed that the directive imperative use and the necessitive imperative use are semantically closely related uses of the imperative. Ebeling (1956), in his description of the Russian imperative, argues that both the necessitive use and the directive use are interpretations of a more general abstract meaning of the imperative that accounts for all the imperative uses. The meaning of the imperative that he gives is “an action fulfilled as the result of a foreign impulse or permission” (1956: 86). The difference between the directive imperative use and the necessitive imperative use is that in the former case the speaker can be seen as the foreign impulse (and the subject is a second person), whereas in the latter case the authorization does not come from a person, but from a whole situation.46 Following Ebeling’s line of thought, the specific contextual features of the necessitive use and the directive use (-ste, -ka, embedding, etc.) must be seen as contributing to the specific interpretation of the abstract imperative meaning.

In my opinion, the analysis given by Ebeling adequately points at shared features of different imperative uses. A weak point of the analysis, however, is that both directive and necessitive use are treated as having the same status (both are interpretations), whereas this does not seem to be supported by the facts. Firstly, although some instances can be seen as borderline cases between necessitive use and optative or directive use, the necessitive imperative and the directive imperative are clearly

45 A VS order also occurs in the following sentence: I podaj ja, i primi ja, i ochu' ja, i za nim i pered nim, vse ja (Vinogradov & Shvedova, 1964: 227/Plavil' shch.). In this sentence the imperative is accented, and the subject has the character of an addition (‘And THIS I have to do, and THAT I have to do’).

46 This description is rather unfortunate because in some necessitive cases the authorization may also come from a person, e.g. Emu i rabota bud' legkaja i zarplata bol'shaja (‘For him the work should be easy and the income high.’)
distinguishable, for example because of the presence of first or third person subject. This contrasts with the non-discrete status of the different directive variants, where many uses can be classified differently because of the flexible nature of the classificational parameters. Secondly, the directive imperative use is more basic than the necessitive use because: (a) directive imperative use is more frequent than necessitive imperative use; (b) the necessitive use is more stylistically colored than the directive use; (c) imperatives without additional context are interpreted as directive cases, rather than as necessitive cases, and (d) in some necessitive cases the speaker can, at least partially, be identified with the foreign impulse; this means that the typical feature of the directive imperative ‘speaker direction’ seems, in some way or another, to be prevalent in many necessitive cases as well.

Ebeling’s analysis does not adequately account for the specific relation between the necessitive use and the directive use. Furthermore, his analysis is incomplete. He does motivate how the necessitive imperative use differs from oppositional forms, and how these differences can be motivated by the abstract meaning of the imperative. The meaning that Ebeling gives for the necessitive, viz. ‘an action realized as the result of a foreign impulse or permission’ can, without further explanation, also be seen as a description for sentences with modal predicates like *dolžen* and *nado*.47

Shvedova (1974) argues that the directive imperative and the necessitive imperative have two different meanings, and can be seen as different grammatical moods. She gives the following arguments for this opinion: (a) there is a typical necessitive imperative construction that has a different syntactic structure than the directive imperative; (b) an independent meaning can be defined for the necessitive; (c) the necessitive has a different intonational pattern than the directive imperative; (d) the necessitive has different oppositional classes; and (e) the subject of the necessitive can occur in the dative case.

The arguments given by Shvedova (1974) are strictly speaking not arguments against a position such as the one taken by Ebeling, but rather arguments against the position that the necessitive imperative use must be seen as a directive imperative use embedded in a different context. This latter position seems to be expressed by Veyrenc (1980: 97), who speaks about a transposition of the direct mode of the directive imperative to the indirect mode.48 According to such a position, a sentence like (2) should be interpreted as an

---

47 This can hardly be seen as a shortcoming, since Ebeling’s analysis is part of a rather small article and he does not claim that his analysis is complete.

48 Veyrenc is not, however, very clear on the question whether one must actually analyze such cases as indirect directives, or whether such cases must be seen as extensions of the directive imperative into the indirect discourse, leading to a change of meaning of the basic directive use.
indirect direction ('but as for me'): Vse ushli, a ja 'sidi doma i rabotaj!' I agree with Shvedova (1974), that this is not a fully correct analysis. This opinion is supported by the occurrence of embedded necessitives, the occurrence of necessitives with impersonal verbs, inanimate subjects, and probably the absence of the suffix -te in the case of the second person plural. A weakness of Shvedova's analysis, however, is that in many necessitive cases the idea of direction seems to play some part, for example in cases where the speaker agrees with the realization of the imperative action. Furthermore, we find directive cases that share features with necessitive cases, such as those discussed in 3.2.4.

I will recapitulate my main point. It seems to me that the linguistic analysis has to motivate the following facts:

- Different meanings can be given for the necessitive imperative and the directive imperative on the basis of clear examples and the absence or presence of particular semantic-syntactic features (intonation, embedding, impersonal constructions, inanimate subject, etc.).
- Some directive cases share features with necessitive uses; in such sentences the feature 'directivity' is, at least partly, present.
- Some necessitive cases share features with hortative-optative uses; in such sentences the feature 'directivity' is at least partly present.
- The directive imperative is more basic than the necessitive imperative (without context the imperative is interpreted as a directive case, the directive imperative is more frequent, there are necessitive cases with directive or hortative features.
- A general meaning can be given for both the necessitive imperative and the directive imperative (see Ebeling, 1956).
- In the general meaning the feature of 'directivity', and thus speaker involvement, is abstracted, i.e. pushed to the background.
- The general meaning given by Ebeling (1956) does not motivate the difference between the necessitive use and its oppositional uses (the modal subjective nature, and the absence of tense).

I would like to suggest that the necessitive imperative must be seen as an extended use of the directive imperative by selection and backgrounding of features under contexts. The relation between the necessitive imperative use and the directive imperative use can be analyzed as shown in Figure 3.12.
Chapter III

The speaker directs the addressee at $t_0$ to perform the imperative situation $V: \rightarrow \text{SIT}(V))t_1$

+ context:

- The speaker does not direct some participant present in the immediate speaker-addressee context to realize the imperative situation, because no such participant is available
- The realization of the imperative situation is presented as the result of some force other than the speaker himself (i.e. the speaker cannot be held responsible for the direction; in cases where the speaker agrees with the realization of the imperative situation, the impulse leading to the realization of the situation is presented as the result of some general law or norm)

Interpretation:

The speaker pictures some non-agent force that gives an impulse to the realization of the imperative situation: $\rightarrow \text{SIT}(V)t_1$

Presupposition:

- $< t_0$ not $V$, where $t_0$ is the moment where no impulse is given to realize the situation
- $t_1$ can be seen as the moment of realization of the necessitive situation

The process of extension described here can be reached by selection and backgrounding of features in the following way:

Selected: abstracted feature 'non-agent force gives an impulse to the realization of the situation'

Backgrounded: specific 'speaker-addressee features' (idea of contributing to the realization of the situation by uttering the imperative verb), but partly preserved because by uttering the imperative, the speaker invites the addressee to imagine the force directed at the realization of the imperative situation

If we analyze the necessitive in that way, we can motivate the meaning of the necessitive, account for the differences between the necessitive imperative and oppositional uses (more specifically the presence of the feature 'speaker-involvement' in the case of the necessitive), and motivate why the directive imperative is more basic than the necessitive
The Russian imperative

imperative. This approach does not have the shortcomings of an analysis where both the necessitive and the directive imperative are seen as interpretations of one abstract meaning that have equal status. The analysis that I give also leaves room for directive cases that share features with necessitive cases, and necessitive cases that share features with directive cases.

The necessitive imperative is normally treated as a separate imperative use (e.g. Ebeling, 1956), or meaning (e.g. Shvedova, 1974). This contrasts with for example different directive adjustments. The special status of the necessitive can be motivated by the fact that the extension from the basic directive to the necessitive can be analyzed in terms of backgrounding the central directive feature ‘speaker direction’. In the case of the different directive adjustments discussed in 3.2.4, the idea of ‘speaker direction’ was not abstracted.

Note that the extension I propose is a reconstruction. It could also be argued for example that the directive imperative must be seen as an extension of the necessitive imperative. I do not think there is any a priori reason why this could not be the case. There is, however, some additional evidence that one can perhaps speak of an extension in the way sketched above. This evidence is provided by the possibility of reconstructing of a path of extension from the directive to the necessitive, as I will discuss below. It is questionable whether a reverse path can be constructed in the same way.

Note furthermore that the necessitive imperative might also be seen as an extension of the optative imperative, which I will treat in 3.5. In my opinion, this could be the case indeed. In the case of both the directive imperative and the optative imperative the speaker can be seen as the impulse giver. The occurrence of the two basic types of necessitive cases (those where the speaker agrees with the realization of the imperative action, and those where there is no such identification) can possibly be related to the optative and the directive imperative respectively. I would like to stress that in my analysis it is natural that some instances of the necessitive imperative show more or fewer similarities to other imperative uses. Some instances of the imperative are on the borderline between directive and necessitive cases, while other instances share features with both optative and necessitive cases. In the analysis that I proposed such borderline cases need not pose problems; they can be seen as different instances of the process of selecting and canceling features under contexts.

The analysis of the necessitive as an extension of use of the basic directive imperative is sustained by the occurrence of (directive) cases with generic subjects; such cases can be seen as intermediate ‘steps’ between the directive and the necessitive use.
The extension from the directive imperative use to the necessitive use can be analyzed in terms of weakening of the speaker-commitment to the realization of the imperative action, and abstraction from the direct speaker-addressee context. This can happen because it is possible to take the perspective of some other force with which the speaker identifies. Sanders & Redeker (1996: 293) define the notion of ‘perspective’ as “the introduction of a subjective point of view that restricts the validity of the presented information to a particular (person) in the discourse”. The following path for the extension of the directive to the necessitive can possibly be given (with an example from English, viz., the verb go):

a. Direct mode: perspective speaker (I said: ‘go!’)
b. Direct mode: perspective non-speaker force (If you are in this situation then: ‘go!’)
c. Indirect mode: perspective speaker (But he go!)

In (a) one can speak of a regular directive: the action is conceptualized from the perspective of the speaker, who gives the addressee an impulse to realize the action. In (b) the speaker takes the perspective of the impulse giver, and repeats the impulse given by this force. In (c) one can speak of embedding of the direction: the speaker reports that there is some force that directs the agent to realize the action. In such cases, prototypically with non-second person subjects, the feature of speaker commitment is abstracted even further; the speaker only partially identifies with the impulse giver. The partial identification with the impulse giver accounts for the difference between the necessitive imperative and other forms that express necessity. The necessitive imperative differs from its oppositional forms in two important respects. Firstly, the necessitive imperative often has a subjective modal interpretation, i.e. the speaker expresses his attitude to the proposition. Secondly, the necessitive imperative does not express tense (in contrast to oppositional forms, e.g. *Vse usbli, a ja dolzhen byl sidet’ doma*). If we wish to give an adequate description of the necessitive we have to explain these facts. I have argued, above, that the absence of tense is connected with the fact that in the case of the necessitive, expressing the imperative means conceptualizing the impulse directed at the realization of the imperative situation. In my opinion, this feature is closely related to the so-called subjective modal nature of the necessitive imperative. Below I will briefly discuss this special necessitive imperative feature.
The Russian imperative

3.3.5 Subjective modal features

The so-called subjective modal nature of the necessitative is mentioned by Shvedova (1974), who distinguishes three types of modal subjective interpretations: (i) The speaker finds the action difficult to realize or undesirable; (ii) the speaker finds the action easy to realize, and (iii) the speaker disagrees with the breaking of some norm or habit. According to the Russkaja Grammatika (1980), the particular modal subjective features of the necessitative must be seen as interpretations of the necessitative meaning, that is, they must be seen as variants of the necessitative meaning that occur in a particular context:

"In a particular context the necessitative form often shows meaning features of condemnation, undesirability, discontent because something is obligated, demanded by someone or forced from the outside. However, the feature of inner rejected instruction is not contained in the meaning of the form itself; it only rests on the necessitative meaning in the context, and in this way the main semantic division in the necessitative form can occur: it can be the obligation forced by an isolated situation, or the obligation dictated by custom, by what is taken to be generally accepted." (Russkaja Grammatika, 1980, II: 117; my translation)

This view seems justified to me; the different uses must be seen as variants of one necessitative meaning.

The problem that remains to be solved is how to relate the different interpretations of the necessitative imperative to its meaning. The solution, I think, must be sought in the notion of directivity. In the case of the necessitative the speaker partially identifies with the impulse giver, which leads to the so-called dynamic construal, where the action is conceptualized as if the impulse to realize the imperative is given at the moment of speaking. The partial mimicking of the force means that the speaker establishes a closer contact with the narrated events. As such, the necessitative imperative differs from oppositional forms such as dolžen, where the necessity is only indirectly conceptualized (dolžen expresses a state of some referent, that is characterized by a force directed at the realization of some situation, whereas the utterance of the necessitative imperative itself can be seen as the force). I argued above that this feature accounts for the fact that the necessitative does not express tense. Another result of this feature is that the focus is on the fact that the agent is not expected to realize the action himself. This means that there is a contrast between the imperative action (SIT $V_{\text{imp}}$) and the action(s) expected of the agent (SIT not $V_{\text{imp}}$).

If the subject is not the giver of the impulse, it may be that he is forced to act. In such a context it is plausible that the action is a non-desirable action or experienced as very
hard as in (2) above. In (2) the contrastive nature of the obligated action is strengthened by the contrastive context in which it occurs. In this sentence there is a contrast between the action expected of the agent (SIT (not V\text{imp}), e.g. to go out, just like the others) and the actual imperative action (SIT(V\text{imp})).

Besides cases of type (i) we find cases of type (ii), where the idea of ‘protest’ or ‘resentment’ is totally absent, and where, in contrast to type (i), the action is seen as easy to accomplish, as in the following sentence:

(93) A nash Nikolaj ej ni na chto ne nuzhen. A on tjanetsja voobshche ujti za nej. Ona tol’ko morgni. (Petrushevskaja, \textit{Tri devushki v golubom})

but our Nikolaj she-DAT not on that not is needed. but he reaches in general go out for her. she just blink-IMP-PERF

‘And she in no way needs our Nikolaj. While he is tempted to go completely for her. She just has to blink.’

How can these two opposite interpretations be linked to each other?

I think that in both cases there is a contrast between the imperative action and the action expected of the agent. In the sentence above, the contrast is connected with the idea of restriction. There is some expectation that more actions are necessary than just the imperative action. This means that there is some restriction on the set of necessary actions. The character of restriction of necessity can be seen as a particular interpretation of the necessitive, and is the result of the particular presuppositions of the interpreter and the context in which the necessitive occurs, for example the presence of tol’ko in (93). In (93) the idea of restriction is connected with the conditional character of the sentence: the necessitive action is enough for another action to occur. This sentence has the structure: For Y to occur it is necessary to realize only X. Although (93) is similar to the conditional use of the imperative, it does not have all the properties of the conditional imperative (division into apodosis and protasis, VS order in the protasis, etc.). As such it can possibly be seen as a borderline case between the necessitive use and the conditional use.\textsuperscript{50}

\textsuperscript{49} It can be argued that in the case of the contrastive sentences one can also speak of restriction, namely restriction of the agent to realizing a certain single act. Possibly the feature of ‘restriction’ is present in all the imperative cases, and can be compared to what Percov (1998) calls ‘emotionality’.

\textsuperscript{50} A different type can be found in (68). Here there is a restriction relative to some “general standard” (the imperative actions in (68) are generally seen as easy to accomplish). Cases like these with the imperfective aspect have a permissive character and seem only to occur with generic agents, which underlines the relation between this use and the directive imperative use.
The third interpretational type, viz. the speaker disagrees with the breaking of some norm or habit, occurs in sentences with so-called speaker involvement, e.g. (74). In these sentences the modal-subjective interpretation is connected with the fact that the agent of the action is not intending to do the action (as such, he breaks with some norm or habit) and the speaker states that there is some necessity to do the imperative action. This means that in this case there is a contrast between the real world, where (not V) is the case, and the ideal hypothetical world, where (V) is the case. It could be argued that a sentence like (74) must be seen as a case of volition: the speaker wishes the realization of the action conveyed by the imperative. A counter-argument to this is that necessitive cases like these do not only express the wish of the speaker for the imperative situation: the speaker’s wish for the realization of a certain action is always justified by pointing at ‘objective’ factors. The necessity is always presented as the result of custom, habit, or other ‘objective’ factors.

Necessitive cases like (74) occur in both the imperfective and the perfective aspect, in contrast to regular necessitive cases that are normally imperfective. Further it must be noted that in the case of regular necessitive use we find that the word order is normally SV, whereas in the case of this type we find both SV and VS word order. Sentences like these can be seen as borderline cases between necessitive use and directive or optative use. The relation between the optative use and this type of necessitive is underlined by the occurrence of necessitive sentences with a VS order and a perfective aspect as in (80), features that are typical of the optative use. Whether or not the speaker must be seen as the giver of the impulse is a question that can possibly not be answered; only if the language user has to make this decision this is a relevant question.

3.3.6 Conclusion

The necessitive imperative can be defined as follows: there is some non-agent force that directs the agent to perform the imperative action: → SIT (V). I have proposed to analyze the necessitive as an extended case of the directive imperative. In the case of the directive imperative it is the speaker who gives the impulse to realize of the action, whereas in the case of the necessitive it is a non-speaker impulse. In the case of the necessitive, however, there is a partial indentification of the speaker with the impulse giver, leading to the

51 Vinogradov & Shvedova (1964) classify cases with the structure [X, tak Vimp] as optative cases.
52 It may be asked for example if the suffix -te occurs in the second person plural, and whether we find embedded cases; I have not, however, seen any such examples.
feature of dynamic realization. This partial identification is absent in the case of oppositional forms, and can account for both the absence of tense and the presence of so-called subjective modal features.

3.4 Narrative use of the imperative

3.4.1 Introduction

In this section I will give an analysis of the so-called narrative use of the imperative (in short: narrative imperative). I will argue that the narrative imperative can possibly be seen as an extension of the necessitive imperative where the feature 'non-agent impulse' is weakened or cancelled.

The section has the following structure. In 3.4.2 I will introduce the narrative imperative and define its meaning. In 3.4.3 I will briefly discuss semantic-syntactic features of the narrative imperative. In 3.4.4 I will discuss the relation between the narrative imperative and the other imperative uses. In 3.4.5 I will discuss an oppositional (and in some cases co-occurring) form of the narrative imperative, viz. the so-called tvat'-construction, and show how this oppositional form differs from the narrative imperative.

3.4.2 The meaning of the narrative imperative

The following sentences are examples of narrative imperatives:

(94) I vdrug togda, v tu sekundu, kto-to i shepni mne na uxo. (Veyrenc, 1980: 104/Dostoevskij)
and suddenly then, in that second, someone-NOM and whisper-IMP-PERF me in ear
'And suddenly then, in that second, someone whispered something in my ear.'

(95) ... Stala ja soosedok rassprashivat', chto Katja bezmenja delaej; a oni mne vse i rasskazhi ...
(Prokopovich, 1969: 56/Nekrasov)
started I women.neighbors interrogate, what Katja without me does, but they-NOM me all and tell-IMP-PERF...."
'I started to interrogate the neighbor women what Katja was doing without me, but they just told me everything.'
The Russian imperative

(96) Noch'ju, byvalo, prosnesh'sja, s polatej vniz gljanesh', a on ves' belyj pered obrazom i skvoz' zuby shipom shipit: "Ty menj a s-slyshish'? Ty s-slyshish?" Ja i skazh i em u odin raz: slyshu, govorju. Ke-ek on zatrijasetjsja da vskochit, a uzh ja ne mogu, iz menj a smex nosom idet.53 (E. Zamjatin, Slovo predostavljajetsja tovarishchhu churigimu)

(...) I and tell-IMP-PERF him one time: I.listen, I.say. (...) 'At night, it often happened that you woke up, and you looked down from your sleeping bench, and he would be in front of the icon, looking all white, hissing through his teeth: "Do you hear me? Do you hear me?" And once I just told him: "I am listening", I said. He starts to shake and jumps up, but I can't hold myself anymore, and am overcome with laughter.'

(97) Bibliotekarsh a poshl a vypolnjat * trebovanie , a mo j malen'ki j istori k t o  sklonis ' na d prilavkom ,, t o  pomash i ruko j kom u  i z  znakomyx , t o  uh/bnis *  mne . (Vasil'eva, 1969: 42)

library.miss went deal.with order, but my little historian then bend-IMP-PERF over counter, then waved-IMP-PERF with.hand who-DAT from his.friends, then smile-IMP-PERF at.me

'The library miss went to deal with the order, but my little historian bent over the counter, waved to some of his friends, or smiled at me.'

(98) Ego zhdut , a on i opozdaj na celyj chas . (Russkaja Grammatika, 1980, II: 625)

him they.wait, but he-NOM and come.late-IMP-PERF on whole hour

'They waited for him, but he was one whole hour late.'

In the case of the narrative use there is not only abstraction from the directive context, such that the narrative can occur with first and third person subjects, but also abstraction from the feature 'impulse'. In the sentences given above the idea of a foreign impulse is absent, or at least extremely reduced. The imperative form is used to express that the imperative situation is unexpected. The action may be unexpected in the sense that it is a sudden action, in (94); such actions often occur with adverbs that indicate the suddenness of the action like vdrug. The action may also be unexpected in the sense that is an inappropriate action, as in (98).

Following Mazon (1914: 94), I use the term 'narrative imperative' for the imperative use under discussion because the imperative occurs in what is called narrative discourse; this is the type of discourse where past events are described in temporal order.54 Another

54 Note that Mazon (1914: 71-72) also uses the term 'narrative imperative' for uses that I call necessitve. The narrative imperative under discussion he calls 'perfective narrative or historic imperative' (1914: 94).
term that is used in the literature is 'impérative de dramatisation' (e.g. Veyrenc, 1980: 86) or 'descriptive imperative' (Ebeling, 1956: 90).

The narrative imperative is typical of the spoken language, and occurs mostly in colloquial style discourse and in so-called 'skaz' style discourse (Prokopovich, 1969; Russkaja Grammatika, 1980, II: 625). As such, the narrative is not a neutral way to express unexpectedness in modern literary Russian. On the basis of the data at my disposal, I suspect that the narrative imperative was more frequently used in the nineteenth century than in the twentieth century. It seems probable that in the nineteenth century the restriction of the narrative imperative to colloquial discourse and skaz-style discourse was less strong.55

Something should be said here about the oppositional forms of the narrative imperative. In cases where the unexpected nature of the situation is expressed by forms other than the narrative imperative, such as in (94), the narrative imperative can be paraphrased with a past tense or with the historic present (I vdrug togda, v tu sekundu, kto-to shepnul/shepchetshepnul/shepchet mne na uxo; and suddenly then, in that second, someone whispered/whispers me in ear). In cases where the unexpected nature is only expressed by the narrative imperative, the imperative can be paraphrased with a construction with the verb vzjat' ('take') conjuncted with a perfective verb in the past tense (henceforth: vzjat'-construction), for example Ego zdut, a on vzjal da i opozdal na vse ty chas. I will discuss the difference in meaning between the narrative imperative and the vzjat'-construction in 3.4.5.

The meaning of the narrative imperative can be formulated as follows:

Unexpected realization (→ SIT (V)) of the imperative situation (by the subject expressed in the nominative if the verb is personal).

As I will argue below, the narrative imperative can be seen as an imperative use where the feature of 'impulse' or 'force' is backgrounded or even cancelled, and where the presupposition that the action breaks the expected course of events is selected as the meaning of the imperative. This means that the frame, that I used to model the directive use and the necessitive use cannot be applied to the narrative imperative, since the parameters 'force' and 'object of force' do not apply in the case of the narrative. Nevertheless, a possible way to analyze the narrative imperative is to identify the force with something like 'fate'.

55 It may be that in contemporary Russian there is a tendency to use the narrative imperative only with a specific class of verbs. I have attested, for example, several instances of the construction (Nu) ja i skazhi ('I just said').
Some non-observable and non-identifiable force gives an impulse to the realization (→ SIT (V)) of the imperative situation (by the subject expressed in the nominative if the verb is personal).

Under this analysis the frame in Figure 3.13 can be given.

**Figure 3.13**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Force</th>
<th>Goal (in the case of the fate analysis)</th>
<th>Subject of situation</th>
<th>Object of force (if the force is analyzed as ‘fate’)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Absent (or partly present if the force is identified with ‘fate’)</td>
<td>[\rightarrow SIT(V_{\text{aspect}}t)\text{S}=1/2/3\text{sg} \text{-pl/impersonal}]</td>
<td>[S\text{ if }V=\text{personal}]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We can give the following presuppositions for the narrative imperative:

(i) The imperative situation breaks the expected course of events
(ii) By using the imperative the addressee is invited to imagine the realization of the imperative situation

I will say more about the validity of this analysis in 3.4.4 below, where I discuss the relation of the narrative imperative to the other imperative uses.

An important feature of the narrative imperative is the feature of dynamic realization. As I discussed in 3.1, this feature is part of every imperative use, and accounts for the absence of tense, for the analysis of tense, see 3.1. Note that most linguists describe the meaning of the narrative imperative as an unexpected action in the past. This description fails to take account of the feature of ‘dynamic realization’, and the relation between the narrative imperative construal and the construal of the other imperative uses. This means that it is insufficient.
3.4.3 Semantic-syntactic features

Before discussing the meaning of the narrative imperative, and the relation between the narrative imperative and the other imperative uses, I will briefly discuss the relevant semantic-syntactic features of the narrative imperative:

(i) +aspect perfective
(ii) —tense
(iii) +subject in the nominative (and occurrence of impersonal constructions)
(iv) occurrence of i, da (‘and’) before the imperative
(v) co-occurrence of the vzjalt’-construction
(vi) + embedded narratives
(vii) —-te or -ka
(viii) no fixed word order

For the discussion of tense, I refer the reader to 3.1, but I will make a short remark. The interpretation of the narrative imperative as a past event must be explained by the narrative nature of the imperative. Since narrative discourse refers to situations that are already known to the speaker, the narrative imperative always refers to a past event. I think that the typical narrative nature of the narrative imperative must — either synchronically or diachronically — be attributed to the ‘fate’ character of the force. In the case of the narrative imperative the speaker expresses that the imperative action is a non-expected action in the narrative chain of events. This unexpectedness can be analyzed as the result of some force (‘fate’) that gives an impulse to the realization of the imperative situation. The ‘fate’ character is absent in the case of interjections like pyg, which can there also be used for future events.

3.4.3.1 Aspect

The aspect of the narrative is always perfective. The perfective aspect is natural for the narrative because the narrative typically indicates an action in a chain of events; typical of such cases is the perfective aspect (see Barentsen, 1985). Ebeling (1956: 90), however, argues that imperfective cases occur, and gives the following sentence with a non-telic situation:

(99) Vse vzjalis’ na rabote, a on lezhi na pechke. (Ebeling, 1956: 90)
    everyone took.off for work, but he lie-IMP-IMPERF on stove
The Russian imperative

Ebeling's translation: 'Everyone took to his work, but he lay on the stove.'

Ebeling is probably mistaken here; this case must be seen as a necessitive case ('Everyone took to his work, but he has to lay on the stove'), which is underlined by the contrastive context, and the absence of the particle i, which one would expect in the case of a narrative imperative.56

3.4.3.2 Subject

Narrative use of the imperative occurs with all subjects in the nominative.57 Second person cases are very rare, but Vinogradov gives the following examples:

(100)  A ty pojdi i skazhi ob ètom babushke? (Vinogradov, 1947: 552)
but you-NOM go-IMP-PERF and tell-IMP-PERF about that grandmother?
'And you just went and told grandmother about that?'

(101)  A vy i pover’ emu? (ibid.)
but you-NOM-PL and believe-IMP-PERF him?
'And you just believed him?'

In my opinion the infrequent occurrence of the second person has to do with the narrative discourse: it is pragmatically odd to tell someone what this person did himself. This pragmatic 'restriction' does not apply to the sentences given here because they are questions.58

The narrative imperative also occurs in sentences with impersonal verbs (with a dative subject in the role of experiencer):

(102)  [N]am ved’ tak by vazhno uznat’, ne videl li kto ix, v vos’mom-to chasu, v kvartire-to, chto i mne i voobrazhis’ sejchas, chto vy tozhe mogli by skazat’. (Prokopovich, 1969: 56/Dostoevskij)

56 This specific example was already given in Mazon (1914: 72), where he classifies it under 'Impératif narratif ou historique de l'action'. Note, however, that Mazon also uses this term for necessitive cases.
57 I have not seen examples where the subject is a first person plural noun. I suspect, however, that such sentences are in principal possible.
58 Another exception is (105), but this sentence is an instance of the take-construction.
we-DAT PRT so IRR important know, not saw PRT who them, in eight-PRT hour, in house-PRT, that and I-DAT and imagine-REFL-IMP-PERF just.now, that you also could IRR tell

‘You know, it would have been so important for us to find out whether someone saw them, after seven o’clock, in that house, that I suddenly realized just now that you could have told me that yourself.’

3.4.3.3 Co-occurrence of other forms

In the vast majority of cases, the narrative imperative occurs with the conjunction-particle i (‘and’), or da i. This conjunction-particle is always placed immediately before the imperative. The same conjunction-particle also occurs in the case of the vəjat‘-construction (see 3.4.4). About the different uses of the particle i, Vasilyeva (1972: 134) remarks: “The particle i comes from the conjunction i ‘and’ and in many cases retains its copulative meaning, while at the same time assuming new meanings and shades of meaning”. In the case of the narrative imperative, the function of conjunction is not clear in most instances of the construction. An exception is the following sentence, where i also occurs at the beginning of a phrase; in this sentence the relation between the particle i and its copulative meaning is more evident:

(103) (...) Proshlo goda dva – i popadis’ mne pis’mo ot nego Varvare ... (Prokopovich, 1969: 57/Skitalec)

(...) passed.by year two, and fell.in.hands-IMP-PERF I-DAT letter-NOM from him to Varvara

‘About two years passed by – and a letter from him to Varvara fell into my hands.’

An explanation must be given of the contribution of i to the narrative construction. It seems that in most sentences i is obligatory; in a sentence like (98), for example, the particle cannot be left away (‘Ego zdut, a on opozdag na celyj chas). On the other hand, there are sentences where it does not occur, for example in (97). In this particular sentence the absence of the particle may be motivated by the special meaning of intermittent repetition.59

59 However, an alternative analysis has to be given for the absence of the particle in the following sentence from a well-know fable by Krylov (cited in Vinogradov, 1947: 550): No skvorushka uslysh’ kak xvaljat solov’ja (...) (‘But the starling heard how they praised the nightingale’). It may be that the non-occurrence of the particle is influenced by the metric structure of the text.
The Russian imperative

It may be that the function of $i$ in the case of the narrative imperative is to create a rupture in the narrative discourse; this rupture has the effect of focussing on the imperative event following in the narration. I suspect that the use of $i$ is related to the use of $i$ in sentences with a past tense like the following:

(104) Okazyvaetsja, Tat’jana Nikolaevna ego blizkaja rodstvennica. A ja i ne znal, i ne slyshal nichego ob etom. (Vasilyeva, 1972: 135)

It turns out, Tat’jana Nikolaevna his near family. but I and not knew, and not heard nothing about that

‘It turns out that Tat’jana Nikolaevna is a close relative of his. And I didn't even know, and didn’t hear anything about it.'

In this sentence the particle $i$ has a so-called ‘emphatic’ meaning, close to dažbe ('even'). It stresses that the situation to which it is applied, is the least expected situation in the given context. In the case of the narrative imperative a similar analysis can be given, since the narrative situation expresses an unexpected situation in the narrative discourse.

Another form that co-occurs with the narrative is voz’mi, the imperative form of voz’at’ (‘to take’), occurring with the particles $i$, da or the combination da $i$:

(105) Ja voobchshe soskuchilas'. Po rabote, po shkole, po ljudam. A vy voz’mi i pridi (...).

(Prokopovich, 1969: 56/ Ju. German)

I totally was.fed.up. about work, about school, about people. but you-NOM-PL take-IMP-PERF and come-IMP-PERF (...)

‘I was totally fed up, with my work, with school, with people. And you suddenly came.'

The verb voz’mi co-occurring with the narrative imperative is an instance of the construction with ‘voz’at’. This construction can occur in the imperative, past tense, perfective present, subjunctive, or infinitive mood, conjuncted with a verb with the same tense or mood. In this construction the verb voz’at’ can be seen as a modal auxiliary that has lost its original lexical meaning (‘to take’) and valence. The construction with voz’at’ and past tense is very similar to the narrative imperative, but shows some differences, especially the absence of the feature of dynamic realization, which is typical of the imperative. I will discuss this construction and the differences from the imperative in 3.4.5.
3.4.3.4 Absence of directive features

The narrative cannot be seen as a directive use, which is underlined by some syntactic-semantic features:

- absence of the suffix -te in the case of a second person plural (see (101) and (105) above)
- no attestation of the suffix -ka
- occurrence of embedded cases (e.g. (102) above)
- occurrence of impersonal cases

These features point at the non-directive nature of the narrative, that is, they show that in the case of the narrative the speaker does not give an impulse to the addressee.

3.4.3.5 Word order

There is no fixed word order for the narrative imperative; the word order seems to be governed by the general pragmatic rules of word order for Russian. In most cases the subject occurs before the verb. This can be motivated in the same way as the SV order in the case of the directive use and the necessitative use (see 3.2.3.2 and 3.3.3.5): the situation expressed by the narrative is often contrasted with another explicitly given, or implied situation. Note, however, that other orders occur as well. This is the case for example in (103), with an animate dative participant and an inanimate subject, or in the sentence below, where we find a VSO order (with an accent on the V):

(106) [U] nej na tabakerke ee sobstvennyj portret, kogda eshche ona nevestoj byla, let shest'desjat nazad. Vot i urohi ona tabakerku (...). (Prokopovich, 1969: 53/Dostoevskij) at her on snuffbox her own portrait, when still she bride was, year sixteen ago. Well and loose-IMP-PERF she-NOM snuffbox (...) ‘She had a snuffbox with her own portrait on it, dating from the time when she was still a bride, sixty years ago. But then she just lost the snuffbox.’

3.4.4 The narrative imperative and other imperative use

In this section I will discuss the meaning of the narrative imperative by showing how it can be related to the other imperative uses. I will argue that the narrative can possibly be seen as an extension of the necessitative imperative. Before giving my analysis, I will briefly
say something about the different opinions that exist in the literature about the relation of
the narrative to the other imperative uses.

Different explanations are given in the literature for the occurrence of the narrative
imperative. Three of such explanations, and the type of analysis that I prefer, are given:

(i) The narrative imperative is not genetically related to the other imperative uses but
must be seen as a relict of another form (Stender-Petersen, 1930; Vinogradov,
1947)
(ii) The narrative imperative is an instance of another construction (Isachenko, 1960)
(iii) The narrative imperative is an instance or interpretation of a more general
imperative meaning (Ebeling, 1956)
(iv) The narrative imperative must be seen as an extension of other imperative use
with an independent status (my analysis)

I will briefly discuss these analyses here.

The first opinion is put forward by Stender-Petersen (1930). He argues that when the
aorist disappeared in Russian, the imperative, which showed morphological overlap with
the aorist, took over some of its functions, especially the non-perfect past tense character,
and attributed some features to the meaning of the new aorist form, viz. modal nuances
like unexpectedness of the action. According to Stender-Petersen, the narrative imperative
can be seen as a modern variant of the aorist.

Stender-Petersen’s reconstruction is discussed by Isachenko (1960), who rejects the
analysis on two grounds: (i) the narrative imperative cannot be seen as a past tense form,
but must be seen as a form whose use to refer to past events is comparable to the historic
present, (ii) the narrative imperative has a strong expressive meaning, which we do not
find in the aorist.

Isachenko’s criticism of Stender-Petersen’s analysis seems partly valid to me. Especially the first remark that the narrative imperative must be seen as a use comparable
to the historic use of the imperfective present indicative, is compatible with my idea that
in the case of the narrative one can speak of dynamic realization. The second remark
made by Isachenko is not justified, in my opinion, because Stender-Petersen argues that
the imperative attributed some functions to the aorist. It remains unclear in Stender-
Petersen's analysis, however, both why this happened, and how the modern narrative imperative can still be seen as a form that functions like the aorist.\textsuperscript{60}

Further evidence against the position taken by Stender-Petersen is that in other languages the imperative can also be used to express notions like unexpectedness. This is the case for example in some variants of Arabic. The basic function of the imperative form in these is to express directivity; but the same form can also be used in a way quite similar to that of the Russian narrative use (cf. Palva, 1977, 1984). In these variants of Arabic the so-called 'descriptive imperative' is used to highlight a sudden or unexpected turn in the narrative, or to describe a quick or rapid succession of events. Palva argues on the basis of synchronic data that this is a case of diachronic change. According to him the imperative was first used in a way more similar to the directive use of the imperative; by using the imperative the speaker establishes a closer contact between himself and the listeners, which gives it an exclamatory character. Palva claims that when the form was used in several successive sentences, the idea of suddenness and unexpectedness was weakened, and this development resulted in a new, secondary function of the descriptive imperative.\textsuperscript{61} He states: "The form became a special kind of narrative consecutive form expressing quick succession, a development hardly possible without a weakening of the original expressive power as the result of frequent use" (Palva, 1977: 26).

Although one must be careful about generalizing over languages, the Arabic data give some interesting information. They provides us with some evidence that something like unexpectedness may well be semantically related to something like directivity. However, the exact nature of this relation remains unclear under such an analysis.\textsuperscript{62} Thus it is not clear whether in Russian narrative cases the relation to the directive use is still present, or whether we must speak of a diachronic change, as is claimed to be the case for Arabic. Furthermore it remains unclear in the analysis for Arabic precisely how directivity is related to something like 'an exclamatory character' or 'close contact with the hearer' in terms of semantic transfers.

A second way to explain the occurrence of the narrative imperative is suggested by Isachenko (1960), who argues that the narrative imperative can possibly be seen as an

\textsuperscript{60} There may also be formal diachronic arguments against Stender-Petersen's analysis (especially the fact that the morphological overlap of the imperative and the aorist was so marginal that the suggested change of function seems very unlikely). I will, however, not go into them here.

\textsuperscript{61} He has no diachronic data to show this.

\textsuperscript{62} Other evidence for the relation between 'unexpectedness' and 'directivity' is the use of the construction with laten ('to let') and nou ('now') in Dutch. Most narrative imperative sentences can be paraphrased with this construction, e.g. Wij wachtten op hem, maar laat hij nou een uur te laat komen (translation of (98) in Dutch).
The Russian imperative

elliptical construction where the idea of 'to think' is not expressed, or as a construction
that derived from such a construction. Isachenko argues this as follows: "It is not
impossible that the construction of the type *a on i vernis* is in some way derived from the
elliptical abbreviation of the sentence: *a on [podumai]: 'vernis'!*. (...) It must not be forgotten
that the verb *vzialt*, occurring in the stereotypical construction of the type *voz'mi da i vernis*,
has the meaning of *vzdumat* ('take it into one's head')" (Isachenko, 1960: 501).

It seems to me that the analysis suggested by Isachenko may be right, but there are a
number of reasons which make it less plausible, or in any case incomplete. First of all,
the evidence given by Isachenko for the occurrence of the narrative imperative is partly
based on the meaning of the *vzialt*-construction; this construction may be close in
meaning to the narrative imperative, but not identical. Secondly, Isachenko does not
explicitly explain how the expression (or omission) of something like *podumat* could lead
to the meaning of 'unexpectedness'. Thirdly, it remains unclear to me how one could
argue that something like *vzdumat* is expressed in sentences without nominative
subject. The idea of *vzdumat* is, I think, also absent in many cases with a nominative
subject, especially in sentences with non-animate subjects. If one wishes to account for
such cases, it must be argued that there has been a diachronic change. First the idea of
*podumat* was left out in sentences with animate subjects, leading to the interpretation of
unexpectedness, and subsequently the form could also be used in contexts where the idea
of *podumat* was absent. To sustain the analysis suggested by Isachenko, diachronic data
would be necessary; unfortunately, I have no such data at my disposal. The earliest
instance of the narrative imperative I have attested is given by Sobolevskij (1962 [1907]:
155), who touches on the possibility of using the narrative imperative use to indicate a
quickly realized action; he gives the following example dating from 1518:

(107)  Theofan" stareec" s'' brat'ej u i starosta ... oni vozmi obraz" Prechistye da povedi,
(Sobolevskij, 1962 [1907]: 155/Ak. Jur. 30)
Theofan elderly monk with brothers and village elder ... they take-IMP-PERF icon
of.pure.mother.god and bring-IMP-PERF,
The elderly monk Theofan with his brothers and the village elder ... they took the icon of
the pure mother of God and brought it,'

This sentence seems to be an example of the narrative imperative proper, where the verb
take occurs in its original meaning.

Diachronic data will have to explain the exact relation between the *vzialt*-construction
and the narrative, and establish whether the narrative imperative occurred through the
influence of the *vzialt*-construction, or vice versa. Nevertheless, on the basis of synchronic

145
data, I suspect that the narrative imperative occurred independently of the vorjet'-construction; the occurrence of the vorjet'-construction in the narrative imperative mood was probably facilitated by the existing narrative imperative use (see 3.4.5 for an analysis of the vorjet'-construction).

A third way to explain the occurrence of the narrative imperative is proposed by Ebeling (1956), who claims that both in the case of the directive imperative use and in the case of the narrative imperative use, we find the feature of 'unexpectedness'. He argues (1956: 86) that in the case of the narrative imperative "we can speak of a foreign impulse, because the action is presented as not in accordance with the preceding actions, as breaking the course of events. Thus the word 'foreign' in our definition does not point solely at the actor, but at the natural flow of events as a whole (and so it must be understood in the first and second types also [i.e. other imperative uses])".

In my opinion, the analysis given by Ebeling is adequate since it relates the feature of 'unexpectedness' present in the narrative use to the directive imperative uses, but the actual explanation that he gives is insufficient. Firstly, the relation between the notion of 'direction' and 'unexpectedness' remains vague and unexplained in the description given by Ebeling. Secondly, if we follow the line of thought proposed by Ebeling we have to give the following general definition for the imperative: 'an action that breaks the natural course of events'. In my opinion, this description cannot account for the different imperative uses. Thirdly, in his analysis the narrative imperative is treated as one of the different interpretations of the imperative, having essentially the same status as the other uses. This does not seem to be sustained by the intuitions of native speakers. Muravickaia (1973), for example, claims that speakers of Russian do not relate the narrative imperative to other imperative uses (whereas for example speakers relate the directive imperative to the necessitiv imperative). Furthermore, there are no borderline cases between the narrative imperative and other imperative uses. This suggests that the narrative imperative has a clear independent conceptual status. This conceptual status can be sustained by the absence of the notion of 'a foreign impulse' in the case of the narrative.

Although this claim is not based on psycholinguistic evidence, I think that the narrative does indeed have a special status in the imperative complex, because the idea of a foreign impulse is cancelled or weakened.

Another suggestion to explain the occurrence of the narrative is made by Percov (1998). In his analysis, Percov claims that the narrative imperative can be seen as a special extension of the directive imperative where only the feature of expressiveness is preserved. Although I think that the strategy that he takes to relate the narrative imperative to the other imperative uses is right, I think his specific explanation is insufficient. It remains unclear to me what the feature 'expressiveness' actually means, and how this feature constitutes the meaning of the narrative imperative.
In my opinion, the narrative imperative can best be reconstructed as an extension of the necessitive imperative where the feature of a ‘non-agent impulse’ is cancelled, and the feature of ‘unexpectedness’ is selected and strengthened, reoccurring as the meaning of the imperative. This process of extension can be showed if we proceed from the necessitive meaning as in Figure 3.14.

Figure 3.14

There is some non-agent force that directs the subject to perform the imperative action: SIT (not V) → SIT(V)

**presupposes:**
There is no intention of the agent to do the imperative action, which implies that the agent is not expected to realize the imperative situation.

**context:**
(i) the action takes place before the moment of utterance
(ii) the imperative situation occurs after another situation (is embedded in the narration)
(iii) the action can be controllable or not controlable
(iv) there is no force available in the context (for the speaker to identify with) that directs the realization of the imperative action (although in some cases it may be argued that the situation can be attributed to fate)
(v) sometimes explicit indication of unexpectedness (vdrug, voit etc.)

**Interpretation:**
Because of (iv), the action cannot be seen as the result of a foreign impulse; the interaction between the definition given above and the narrative context leads to the selection of the presuppositional property of unexpectedness as the meaning of the narrative:

Expression of the unexpected (→ SIT (V)) of the action (and consequently the contrast between (V) and (not V))

Selected: Unexpected realization of the imperative situation
Cancelled: Idea of a foreign impulse/Weakened: Idea of a foreign impulse; the idea of a foreign impulse may partly be preserved in the idea of ‘fate’
It could be argued that the action is conceptualized *as if* it is induced by some unknown force, and is thus unexpected. For the conceptualizer, experiencing a sudden and unexpected action by some agent has the same effect as the situation where some non-observable force gives a ‘push’ to the agent to perform the action.\(^{65}\) As such this can partly be compared to what is called ‘resultative perception’ or ‘fictive change’ as discussed in Matsumoto (1996), where the current state of the object is perceived as the result of a possible past history.

I do not think, however, that in the narrative imperative the idea of resultative change is preserved in modern Russian. It is possible that it can be seen as a diachronic step, leading to the present meaning. It could be argued that a trace of this meaning is preserved in the existence of cases with ‘uncontrolled’ situations where the agent is not intentionally planning the action, but is overwhelmed by the action, e.g.:

(108) \[ V \text{ ètu-to Dunjasha i vljubis'} Akim! Da tak, kak prezhde nikogda ne vljubljalsja. \]
\[ \text{in that PRT Dunjasha and fall.in.love.IMP-PERF Akim-NOM. yes so, as before never not fell.in.love} \]
\[ 'Akim \text{ fell in love with that Dunjasha, as he had never fallen in love before.'} \]

(109) \[ Barin tvoj prikaza l mne otnes ti k ego Dun e zapisochku, a ja i pozabud', gde Dunja-to ego zhivet. \]
\[ \text{master your ordered me take to his Dunja note, but I-NOM and forget-IMP-PERF where Dunja PRT his lives} \]
\[ 'Your master ordered me to take the note to his Dunja, but I forgot where his Dunja lived.' \]

In this case the presence of a non-agent impulse might be identified with a non-observable force. It could be argued that one meaning must be attributed to the narrative imperative. As such, cases like these all express an unexpected action, without reference to some non-subject force. This means that the idea of a foreign impulse is not *backgrounded*, but *cancelled*. On the other hand, it may also be argued in the case of the narrative, the feature of a foreign impulse is backgrounded more in some cases than

\(^{65}\) Another albeit similar way to preserve the idea of a foreign impulse is to analyze the narrative imperative as a use where it is the speaker himself that ‘directs’ the realization of the imperative action. In the narrative context, the speaker can be seen as the creator of the narration. As such, the speaker can act as if he can manipulate the actions of the participants in the narration by directing them to *perform* an action that is not expected of them.
The Russian imperative

others, whereas in the case of other forms or constructions, such as the construction with *kak* + perfective present, the idea of a foreign impulse is totally absent.  66

It must be noted that for the language user there is probably no clear relation between the narrative imperative and the other imperative uses. Muravickaja (1973) therefore does not take account of the narrative imperative in her 'psycholinguistic' tests for the distinction between the different imperative uses. I think that Bondarko & Bulanin (1967: 120) are right when they remark that the narrative imperative can be seen as a borderline case of homonomy, rather than as a case of polysemy. The fact that language users do not perceive the relation between the different uses, does not mean, however, that the linguist cannot point at shared features. I think that the feature of 'dynamic realization' is shared by all the different imperative uses. This may explain the 'vivid' and 'lively' character of the narrative and the absence of tense, which are otherwise difficult to explain. This feature cannot, however, be seen as the meaning of the form, which explains why language users do not relate the meaning of the narrative imperative to the other imperative uses.

As I mentioned before, the narrative imperative can be paraphrased with the *vzjat'*-construction. In the next section I will briefly discuss this construction. I will argue that the meaning of the narrative imperative cannot be seen as identical to the meaning of the *vzjat'*-construction.

3.4.5 The *vzjat'*-construction

In this subsection I will briefly discuss the meaning of one of the *oppositional* forms of the narrative imperative, namely the construction with the verb *vzjat'* ('take') that can occur in the indicative, past tense, subjunctive, infinitive and imperative mood. I will henceforth use the term 'vzjat'-construction' for this construction. I will devote a relatively large amount of attention to the meaning of the *vzjat*-construction for the following reason. Some linguists, such as Isachenko (1960), treat the narrative imperative as a special kind of *vzjat*-construction, namely a *vzjat*-construction where the verb *vzjat* is left out. Often the descriptions given of the *vzjat*-construction are rather general, such that the difference in meaning and use between the *vzjat*-construction and the narrative imperative is not made clear.  67 In this section I will try to describe the

---

66 A possible test to resolve this problem would be to see if uncontrolled verbs are more typical of the narrative than of other constructions that express similar notions.

67 Consider for example the following description of the *vzjat*-construction given in the *Slovar' Russkogo Jazyka*: "Upotrebljaetsja v sochetanjax s sojuzami da, i, da i, i sledujushchimi glagolom v znachenii vspomogatel'nogo glagola dlja vyrazhenija vnezapnogo ili neozhidannogo dejstvija." (It is used in
meaning of the "vzjat"-construction, and try to make some suggestions as to how the construction differs from the narrative imperative. I will start my discussion with some of the relevant semantic and syntactic features of the "vzjat"-construction in Russian, and then I say something about the meaning of the "vzjat"-construction.

3.4.5.1 Semantic-syntactic features of the "vzjat"-construction

In the "vzjat"-construction we find the following forms:

a. The verb "vzjat" in the present tense, subjunctive mood (past tense + by/infinitive + by), past tense, imperative mood, or infinitive.
b. The conjunction da, i, or da i.
c. A perfective verb with the same mood or tense as "vzjat".

The meaning of the "vzjat"-construction is an abstraction from the different occurrences of the construction. As such, it is an abstraction over the different tenses or moods of the verbs that occur in the construction. This means that an occurrence of the "vzjat"-construction in the narrative imperative mood must be analyzed as a combination of the abstract meaning of the "vzjat"-construction, and the meaning of the narrative imperative. 

As such, my analysis differs from analyses that treat the narrative imperative as a special instance of the "vzjat"-construction (such as Isachenko, 1960), or from analyses that make no distinction between narratives with or without "vzjat" (e.g. Prokopovich, 1969).

Below, I will briefly discuss different semantic-syntactic features of the "vzjat"-construction in some detail.

3.4.5.1.1 Tense and mood

The verb "vzjat" can occur in the present, subjunctive (past tense + by/infinitive + by), past tense, imperative or infinitive mood, and is conjuncted with a perfective verb in the same mood, tense and conjugation. Some examples are given below:

combination with the conjunctions da, i, da i, and a verb as an auxiliary to express a sudden or unexpected action.) Although this description is adequate for the "vzjat"-construction, it is not specific enough, because it also applies to the narrative imperative.
The Russian imperative

Perfective present

(110) A chto, kak ja v samom dele voz’mu da zhenjus’ na nej? (Vinogradov, 1947: 604/Chemyshevskij)
but what, how I indeed take-PERF-PRES-1SG and marry-PERF-PRES-1SG her
‘But what if I indeed marry her.’

Past tense

(111) vzjali neozhidanno uexal (Russkaja Grammatika, 1980, II: 222)
he.took-PERF and suddenly he.went-PERF
‘he suddenly went away’

Infinitive

(112) Oni tol’ko pishuty prikazy, a kapitan vypolnjaj. Vot vzjat’ da i otkazat’sja. (Russkaja Grammatika, 1980, II: 222)
they just write orders, but captain perform-IMP-IMPERF. PRT take-INF-PERF and
and refuse-INF-PERF
‘They just write orders, but the captain must perform them. Well, one could just refuse.’

Infinitive + by

(113) Izvini, bratan, nu ne xotel ja tebjja obider’. Mne by vzjat’ da i skazat’, chto prav
sorry, brother, well not wanted I you insult. I-DA T IRR take-INF-PERF and say-INF-
that right fellow Zelenyj, so not – it.picked me in bottom not agree
‘Sorry, brother, but I didn’t want to insult you. I could/should have said that this guy
Zelenyj is right, but no, for some stupid reason, I just didn’t agree with him.’

Past tense + by

(114) I zhal’ bylo svoego chuvstva ... tak zhal’, chto kazhetsja, vzjali by i zarydal. (Chexov, Ionye)
and sorry was for.his.own feelings ... so sorry, that seems, took IRR and cried
‘He felt so sorry for himself, so sorry, that it seemed he could burst out into tears.’

68 http://alisa.ru/ArmyAlisa/ArmyAlisa7.htm
Chapter III

Note that the imperative mood can be narrative or directive, which can be shown by the absence or presence of the suffix -te in the case of the second person plural (see (105) above, that can be seen as a narrative case). Below, an example is given of a directive imperative case:

(115) Ešli vy svjato ubezhdeny, chto Fedor Ivanovich Shaljapin nikak ne predstavlen ni v russkoj, ni v mirovoj Seti – ne nado iskat’ strelchnika i stavit’ diagnoz. Prosto voz’mite da i sozdajte ego stranicu.\(^69\)

If you holy convinced, that Fedor Ivanovich Shaljapin in.no.way not portrayed not in Russian nor in world site, not need-ADV search scapegoat and make diagnosis. just take-IMP-PERF-2PL and and create-IMP-PERF-2PL his page

"If you are totally convinced that Fedor Ivanovich Shaljapin is not portrayed on a site in Russian or somewhere else in the world, you should not look for a scapegoat and make your diagnosis. Just make him a page yourself."

In the case of the second person singular, directive imperative use may occur without an expressed subject:

(116) Mnë nado sxodit’ v magazin: “Tak voz’mi i sxodi”.

I-DAT need go to shop: so take-IMP and go-IMP

"I have to go to the shop: "Then go."

In some exceptional cases the mood of the verb vzjat’ and the conjuncted verb are not identical, e.g.:

(117) Podumal ja: chto mne zlit’sja? Vzjal i pisłu: “Syn!..” (Uspenskij, Idilliya)


"I thought: why should I make myself angry? I just started to write down: “Son!..”"

In this case the past tense form is conjuncted with a historical present in the imperfective aspect. This switching of tense is a typical trait of narrative discourse in Russian.\(^70\)


\(^70\) It may also be argued that vzjal indicates that the decision has been taken, and pisłu indicates the result of it, that is, the action in its progress.
The Russian imperative

3.4.5.1.2 Subject

The verb *vjat*’ can occur with a nominative pronoun or noun if the verb occurs in the present or past tense, or in the imperative mood. The participant expressed in the nominative is the subject of the action expressed by *vjat*’, and the action expressed by the verb with which *vjat*’ is conjuncted. The *vjat*-construction can occur with all subjects; I have not, however, attested examples with a third person plural. The *vjat*-construction can also occur without expressed subject; in such cases the identity of the subject can be inferred from the context, e.g.:

(118) "Menja prigovorili k rasstrelu, a zatem nachali pochemu-to doprashivat'. Ja prigotovilsja umeret' s dostoiством, a tut menja voz'mi da i nachni izbivat' bil'jardnym kiem."

In this sentence the agent of the action expressed by the verb is the people given in the context ('they'). On the basis of the meaning of the construction (see 3.4.5.2), one would not expect instances of the construction with impersonal verbs; the only example I have attested is given by Karcevski, who gives the following example with an impersonal verb in the imperative mood:

(119) "Toľko bylo cvetи raspuštilis', kak vdrug voz'mi da primoroz'." (Karcevski, 1927: 140)

I have not seen examples with impersonal verbs and a dative, which may be connected with the fact that the action must be volitionally performed by the agent, or presented as such. Note that this contrasts with the narrative imperative, where we find impersonal sentences with a dative.

---

71 http://www.anekdot.ru:8084/d43.html
3.4.5.1.3 Syntactic function

In most cases the verb *vzjat’* and the verb with which it is conjuncted can be seen as the head or predicate of the sentence. If the verb occurs in the infinitive mood, the [vzjat’ conjunction V] constituent does not occur as the head of the sentence, but as the topic of the sentence.

3.4.5.1.4 Word order

The normal order of the construction is [vzjat’ conjunction V], but other orders or configurations occur as well:

take-argument V (=object)-and-V:

(120)  Gad ty, i bol’she nikto. Vzjala by tebja i ubila. (Lubensky, 1995/Vamilov)
creep you, and more nothing. took-FEM IRR you-ACC and killed-FEM
‘You’re a creep, that’s all. I could kill you.’

take-and-argument V (=object)-V:

(121)  No sej mudryj izograf/.../vzjal i sovsem inoe napisal. (Leskov, Zapecchatlennyj angel)
but that wise icon-painter / .../ took and entirely other painted
‘But that wise icon-painter / .../ just painted something totally different.’

take-and-argument V (=indirect object, instrument, object)-V:

(122)  [O]na kakuj u zhe shtuku pridumala, vzjala da muzhu varen’em i lico i borodu
vymazala. (Ostrovskij, Starij Drug L. Du.)
she which PRT joke thought.out, took and husband with jam and face and beard
smeared
‘She thought out this joke, she made the beard and the face of her husband dirty with
jam.’

An example with a [V conjunction vzjat’] order:

(123)  “... kakoj vy otec? ... Udavljus’ vot voz’mu!” (Russkaja Grammatika, 1980, II:
220/Uspenskij)
The Russian imperative

"... what you father? ... strangle.myself-PERF-PRES-1SG  PRT take-PERF-PRES-1SG
""... What kind of father are you? ... I will strangle myself."

Note that with reverse order no conjunction is expressed. In some exceptional cases with the normal order we also find no conjunction (da, i, or da i) expressed:

(124) Ruchkoj-to svojeju, znaete, vzjali obnjali, a zdes'... (Shvedova., 1955: 296/Leskov)
with.hand PRT, his, you.know, took embraced, but here...
'With his hand, you know, he [the tsar] suddenly embraced me, and then ...

3.4.5.2 Meaning of the vzjat'-construction

In the literature the meaning of the vzjat'-construction is discussed by various authors, such as Shvedova (1955), Isachenko (1960), Coseriu (1966), and Ekberg (1993). Shvedova (1955: 295) gives the following description for the meaning of the vzjat'-construction in Russian: "The decision to realize the action is in no way encumbered, often the action has a nuance of 'arbitrariness, entirely caused by the personal whim of the subject.'"72 In her analysis Shvedova (1955: 296) emphasizes that the construction has two different basic interpretations. In some cases the construction expresses an action that is easily fulfilled in the absence of any obstacles or barriers; in other cases, however, the construction expresses an arbitrary and undesirable action; in such cases the feature of easiness of the realization of the action is absent. Shvedova (1955) does not discuss how these interpretations are related to the meaning of the construction, and the context in which the construction occurs.

Isachenko (1960: 501) gives an analysis of the vzjat'-construction in terms of the meaning of the component vzjat'. He argues that the meaning of the verb vzjat' in the V-construction can be seen as identical to 'vzdumat”, roughly translatable into English as 'to take it into one's head’. This means that vzjat’ expresses that the action can be seen as volitional, but at the same time as non-premeditated, as something that is not the result of planning by the agent.

Both Shvedova (1955) and Isachenko emphasize that the subject agrees with the realization of the action, but that the action is not planned, and that the realization is unexpected. Problematic in such a description is that the vzjat’-construction also occurs

---

72 "Dejstvie kak nichem ne zatrudnennoe osushchestvlenie prinjatogo reshenija, chasto – s ottenkom 'proizvol'nogo dejstvija, vsecelo obuslovennogo lichnoj prixot'ju sub'ekta.'"
in the case of actions where the will of the subject plays no part at all. This is the case for example in sentences with the verb *umeret* (‘die’) and the narrative mood:

(125)  Lekarja nashli, zastavili xvorogo voina celit’, a voin tot voz’mi da i pomri, nevziraja ni na kakoe celenie.73 (Elena Xaeckaja, *Obretenie ènkidü*)

physician found, forced ill soldier heal, but soldier that take-IMP-PERF and and die-IMP-PERF not looking no on what healing

‘They found the physician, and gave an order to heal the soldier, but the soldier just died, notwithstanding whatever healing.’

In this case the action is non-premeditated, unexpected and non-volitional. Nevertheless, it may be argued that in this case the action is presented as if it is the result of a whim or caprice of the subject. If some action has a whim-like character, it will be unexpected, and if some action is unexpected, a whim-like character is attributed to the action. In the sentence above this means that the speaker acts as if he holds the subject responsible for the realization of the action. As such, the description given by Shvedova (1955) and Isachenko (1960) also applies in these cases.

I suspect that the presence or absence of the volitional character of the action is related to the context in which the construction occurs, and more specifically to the mood or tense of the verbs in the construction, and the person of the subject. It may be that the volitional character is most clearly expressed in sentences that do not refer to past events, such as the following with a directive imperative:

(126)  Komu chto interesno – Voz’mi da kupi. (Advertisement, Internet)

who-DAT what interesting, take-IMP-PERF and buy-IMP-PERF

‘For everyone who is interested: Just buy it.’

In this sentence the *vzjat*‘-construction is used to eliminate the addressee’s possible hesitation to do the action. In narrative style sentences with a third person, the emphasis does not have to be on the whim-like character of the action, but can also be on the unexpected and sudden nature of the action:

(127)  No sej mudryj izograf/…/vzjali sovssem inoe napisal (Leskov, *Zapechatennyyj angel*)

but that wise icon-painter /…/ took and entirely other painted

‘But that wise icon-painter /…/ just painted something totally different.’

Although there seems to be some plausibility to Isachenko's (1960) idea that the verb *vzjat* can be defined as expressing something like 'vzdumat', it remains unclear how this meaning is related to the meaning of the construction as a whole. Another question that is not addressed by Isachenko is how the basic meaning of the verb *vzjat* is related to the meaning that it has in the *vzjat* -construction. To find an answer to these questions one has to look outside of the Russian linguistic literature, namely to the analyses of Coseriu (1966) and Ekberg (1993).

Coseriu (1966: 13—55) compares different analyses of paratactic constructions with the verb 'to take' and another verb in different European languages (Greek, Spanish, Russian, Italian dialects, Albanian, Danish, Finnish and others). Coseriu draws the following conclusions for this construction. The construction must be seen as a grammatical unit, where the verb 'take' has no predicative function of its own. The meaning of the construction can be defined as the expression of "the unity and indivisibility of the action" (1966: 42). Other shades of meaning (unexpectedness, suddenness, arbitrariness, etc.) must be seen as interpretations, that is, they occur as the result of the context in which the construction occurs (especially the meaning of the verb in the construction). Coseriu argues that there is no synchronical relation between the auxiliary 'take' in the construction and the basic meaning of *take*. According to him, the construction is so 'peculiar' that it is not possible it has developed independently in the different languages; the occurrence of the construction must probably be seen as the influence of Greek (1966: 44—55).

Coseriu's analysis is the starting point for that of Ekberg (1993). Ekberg gives an analysis of parataactic constructions with *take* as they can be found in different languages such as Swedish, some variants of English, Spanish, Polish, etc. from a cognitive semantics framework. There are two main differences between the analyses of Ekberg and Coseriu. Firstly, Ekberg argues that the *take*-construction cannot purely be seen as a grammatical unit. She says that at the level of event structure the *take*-construction has a complex or split representation, as the construction refers to both the initiation and the boundedness of the event expressed by the verb with which the verb *take* is conjuncted. Secondly, the verb *take* is not purely grammatical, but rather lexico-grammatical. According to Ekberg, the meaning of the construction can be related to the basic meaning of *take*. The relation between the basic meaning of the verb *take*, and the meaning of *take* in the *take*-construction can be explained as follows.

The verb *take* designates a complex event, consisting of the subcomponents 'Initiation', 'Transfer', and 'Possession'. The first image-schematic component corresponds to the initiation of the overall event. As this event is volitional and
inceptively momentaneous, the initiation component is distinguished by two properties, viz. [+Volitional] and [+Momentaneous]. Take does not focus on the entire image-schematic structure in the take-construction. Only the properties of the first subcomponent, Initiation, are explicitly kept in the take-construction. This means that there are two main properties that characterize the take-construction and oppositional forms, viz. (a) the marking of the initiation of the event expressed by the second verb, and (b) the marking of the volitionality of this event.

Although Ekberg mainly focusses on the semantic-syntactic properties of the take-construction in Swedish, she claims that the analysis is appropriate for the take-construction in all the different languages she discusses. According to Ekberg this cross-linguistic claim is sustained by the remarks of Bybee & Pagliuca (1985: 75) that metaphorical extensions are “cognitively based, and are similar across languages”.

Ekberg’s analysis gives us some interesting insights into the construction, but precisely the claim that the analysis is valid cross-linguistically, is one of the weak points of the analysis. Ekberg sometimes refers to the construction in other languages to prove her point for Swedish, but fails to do this when Swedish differs from these languages. As a description of the Russian vzjat’-construction, the analysis is therefore not fully appropriate. To give an example: in Russian, the vzjat’-construction is compatible with the goal-oriented verb meaning ‘come’ (vzjat da prishel, voz’mi da pridi), in contrast to Swedish (Ekberg, 1993: 29). In Russian the vzjat’-construction can occur with non-volitional actions, e.g. voz’mi da i umri, in contrast to Swedish (Ekberg, 1993: 33) (although such cases have a ‘ironic’ nature). Generally, it seems that in Swedish the take-construction is used to indicate the initiation of a volitional and momentaneous action (with additional shades of ‘mental contact with the subject of the action’, cf. Ekberg, 39), whereas in Russian the construction more strongly emphasizes the idea of arbitrariness and unmotivatedness of the action.

Nevertheless, I think we can use Ekberg’s type of analysis to capture the meaning of the Russian vzjat’-construction. It seems to me that the same basic event (a basic ‘take’ event) can be extended in different ways in different languages, giving rise to similar but

74 In my opinion, this is often a problem of analyses that try to define the meaning of specific forms in language in terms of more general basic cognitive structures.

75 Most examples that are given for Swedish cannot be paraphrased in Russian with the vzjat’-construction. To give an example. The sentence Han tog och läste en bok, när det började regna. (Ekberg, 1993: 28), is translated in English with ‘He started to read a book, when it started to rain’. If I understand the example correctly, the idea of unexpectedness, inappropriateness, or unmotivatedness, which we find in the case of the Russian construction, is not present in this sentence.
The Russian imperative

not identical use of comparable constructions in different languages. We can motivate the idea of 'arbitrariness' if we relate the specific relation between the subject and the object present in the basic meaning of 'take', to the vejat'-construction. In the case of the basic meaning of 'take' there is an agent that performs an action to get something in his possession. This means that the subject can be seen as an agent, whereas the object must be seen as a patient. In the case of the vejat'-construction, the agent and the patient can be seen as two manifestations of the same entity, that is the entity expressed by the subject. The action can be seen as a volitional action by the agent, that is the subject is an agent, but at the same time the action is not the result of a process of preplanning or premediation. We conceptualize the moment when the agent feels the urge to perform an action that breaks the expected flow of events, or to put it more crudely, we conceptualize the scene as if the agent 'takes himself' to do an action.

Now, let us go back to the initial question of this section, namely, what is the difference in meaning between the vejat'-construction and the narrative imperative? Prokopovich, in his analysis of the imperative mood, discusses the vejat'-construction with imperative mood. He gives the following description (originally from Vinogradov) for the vejat'-construction with voz'mi: "So, very characteristic is the feature, close to the voluntative [i.e. narrative imperative] mood, viz. the modal nuance of the arbitrariness of the action, entirely caused by the personal 'whim' of the subject, his arbitrary will" (1969: 59).76 According to Prokopovich, the narrative imperative has the same meaning as the vejat'-construction, but the character of unmotivatedness (proizvol'nost) is less articulated in the former case than in the latter. Prokopovich does not discuss the difference in meaning between the narrative imperative and the vejat'-construction with other moods than the imperative.

In the case of the narrative imperative the action is conceptualized as if it is the result of some non-agent force. As I argued earlier, the action is conceptualized in its dynamic realization (→ SIT(V)). This feature accounts for the absence of tense in the case of the narrative. The feature of dynamic realization is absent from the meaning of the vejat'-construction, although it can be added to the meaning of the construction if the verb vejat' and the main verb with which it is conjoined occur in the narrative mood. Because

76 "Tak, ochen' xarakteren blizkij k voluntjativnomu nakloneniju modal'nyj ottenok proizvol'nogo dejstvija, vscecel obuslovlennogo lichnoj 'prijot'ju' sub'ekta, ego proizvolom."
the *vzjat*'-construction does not express the idea of dynamic realization, it can occur in non-narrative moods, such as the infinitive.\(^{77}\)

In the case of the *vzjat*'-construction the idea of suddenness and unexpectedness arises because the subject of the action is conceptualized both as the agent and as the patient of the action. This construal hinges on the specific meaning of the verb *vzjat*’ in the construction. That a meaning can be attributed to *vzjat*’ is made clear in the following example, where the verb *vzjat*’ is placed between parentheses:

(128) Ne znaju, chem ja zasluzhil doverennost’ moego novogo prijatelja, — tol’ko on, ni s togo, ni s sego, kak govorit’ja, ‘vzjal’ da i rasskazal mne dovol’no zamechatel’nyj
sluchaj … (Prokopovich, 1969: 60/Turgenev)
not I know, through what I deserved trust of my new friend, just he, not of that not of this, as one says, ‘took’ and told me rather remarkable story
‘I don’t know how I deserved my new friend’s trust, but all of a sudden, as one says, he just *told* [lit. took and told] me a rather remarkable story.’

In my opinion, the *vzjat*'-construction expresses that the subject of the action volitionally and intentionally performs an action, which the speaker takes to be unexpected for the hearer. As such, the speaker attributes the idea of ‘vzdumat’ (‘take it into one’s head’) to the subject of the action. This does not mean, however, that the subject himself is necessarily overwhelmed by the action. This can be elucidated with the following sentence, where the subject can be identified with the speaker:

(129) Dama ot ètogo otkazyvalas’, govorja: ‘net, net, menja ne budet doma!’ — A Step a
uporno nestaival na svoem: ‘a ja vot *voz’mu da i pridul!’ (Bulgakov, *Master i Margerita*)
lady from that refused, saying, “no, no, I not will be at home!”’ but Stepa stubbornly
was holding his ground: but I here take and and will come
‘The lady was refusing this, saying, “no, no, I won’t be home!”’ But Stepa was
stubbornly holding his ground: “I just will make sure to come!”

In this sentence the speaker uses the *vzjat*'-construction to indicate that he will engage in an action that is not expected of him, and not to indicate that he himself is overwhelmed by the action.

---

\(^{77}\) It may be that the narrative imperative is more easily used in impersonal sentences than the *vzjat*'-
construction. In any case, I have seen just one example of an impersonal *vzjat*'-construction. Impersonal
sentences, however, occur with the narrative imperative without *vzjat*’.
The Russian imperative

I think that the differences between the *vzdat*-construction and the narrative imperative are also connected with the fact that in the case of the *vzdat*-construction the idea of unexpectedness can be attributed to a specific lexeme, viz. *vzdat*. Because of this, the idea of "vzdumat" and the idea of 'engaging in an activity' or 'initiation of an action' are more clearly expressed in the case of the *vzdat*-construction than in the case of the narrative imperative. In those cases where the *vzdat*-construction occurs with the narrative imperative we find both the so-called dynamic conceptualization and the meaning expressed by *vzdat*; such cases are the most expressive and vivid. In those cases where we find the *vzdat*-construction without the narrative, we do not have the feature of dynamic realization; furthermore, it may be that in such sentences the idea of 'being overwhelmed' by the action is absent, and that, instead, the volitional character of the action is stressed.78

3.4.6 Conclusion

The narrative imperative can be defined as follows: unexpected dynamic realization of the imperative situation. The narrative can be analyzed as a special extension of the necessitive or directive imperative where the idea of an impulse is cancelled, or at least extremely reduced. The narrative shares with the other imperative uses, that the imperative situation breaks the expected course of events. In the case of the other imperative uses this must be seen as a presupposition, whereas in the case of the narrative, this feature is selected as the meaning of the narrative. It may be argued that in the case of the narrative the idea of an impulse is partly preserved in the idea of 'fate'. Under this analysis the imperative situation is conceptualized as if there is some non-specifiable force, call it 'fate', that contributes to the realization of the imperative situation.

78Finally, it must be remarked that in modern Russian the narrative imperative seems to be restricted to special styles, and discourse types, whereas the use of the *vzdat*-construction is less restricted. As such the two constructions cannot be seen as purely oppositional forms, but must be seen as similar uses that occur in different domains of the language register.
3.5 Optative use of the imperative

3.5.1 Introduction

In this section I will give a description of the optative use of the imperative form (henceforth: optative imperative). The optative imperative can be seen as an instantiation of the basic meaning of the imperative, viz. the directive-hortative meaning. The basic status of the optative imperative is underlined by diachronic data, rather than by synchronic data. Diachronic data suggest that in older stages of the Slavic languages (for example in Church-Slavonic and in Old-Russian), the imperative form was used as an optative, conjunctive or hortative (Sobolevskij, 1962 [1907]; Issatchenko, 1983: 377). Issatschenko (1983: 377) argues that the Slavic imperative originates from an Indo-European optative with the feature *-oi-. Although the current imperative form probably derived from a form whose basic function was to express optativeness, in nineteenth-century and twentieth-century Russian, the optative imperative use occurs almost exclusively in petrified expressions, and is no longer a productive use of the imperative anymore. Nevertheless, I will briefly discuss this imperative use here. This discussion is relevant because I will argue in in 3.6 that the conditional use of the imperative (with first and third persons) can be analyzed as an extended use of the optative imperative.

3.5.2 The meaning of the optative imperative

The following sentences, the first two both from the nineteenth century, and the third from the twentieth century, are examples of optative imperatives:

(130) Nagradi vas gospod' za vashu dobrodetel'. (A.Pushkin, Kapitanskaja doch')
reward-IMP-PERF you-ACC god-NOM for your goodness
'May God reward you for your goodness.'

(131) Sgin' ona! (N. Leskov, Ledi Makbet Meenskogo uezda)
die-IMP-PERF she-NOM
'May she die!'

(132) Nu, ja pljunul i govorju: davaj po rukam, bud' chto budet.79 (V. Belov, Privychnoe delo)
well, I spat and say: let's over hands, be-IMP what will be

79 http://lib.ru/lat/PROZA/BELOW/delo.txt
The Russian imperative

'Well, I spat and said: “Let’s make a deal, come what may.”’

This use of the imperative is called *optative*, because the imperative is used to express the wish or desire of the speaker that the imperative action will be realized. In contrast to the basic directive use of the imperative as discussed in 3.2, which only occurs with second persons, the optative imperative occurs with first, second, and third persons.

Before discussing the optative use in more detail, I will give a description of the meaning of the optative imperative:

The speaker intends to contribute to the realization of the imperative situation (by the participant expressed in the nominative if the verb is personal) by giving an impulse to the addressee or some other non-specified force, to contribute to this realization.

The meaning-frame shown in Figure 3.15 can be used for the optative imperative.

![Meaning Frame](image)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Force</th>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Subject of situation</th>
<th>Object of force</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Speaker</td>
<td>$\text{SIT(V+aspect)}_{tt}$</td>
<td>$S=1/2/3\text{sg-pl/impersonal}$</td>
<td>Addressee, non-specified force</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The meaning of the optative imperative given above presupposes that:

(i) if the hearer cannot contribute to the realization of the situation by the subject, some supernatural force is presupposed for helping to bring about the situation

(ii) at $<tt$ not $V$, or there is some intention of the subject to do not $V$

(iii) the speaker commits himself to wanting the realization of the imperative situation

In the case of the optative imperative the speaker hopes to contribute to the realization of the imperative situation by uttering the imperative. Therefore a sentence like the following is not possible:

(133) $\text{Provalis’ ona, no ja znaju chto ets nevozmozhno.}$

*80* An example where the hearer can contribute to the realization of the situation can be found in (136) below.
Chapter III

get.lost-IMP-PERF she-NOM, but I know that is impossible
‘May she disappear, but I know it is not possible.’

In the case of the optative imperative the speaker cannot influence the realization of the imperative situation directly by manipulating the agent of the situation, but he intends to contribute to this realization by uttering the imperative because he directs the addressee or some non-specified force to contribute to the realization of the imperative situation. As such, the optative imperative can be said to have a hortative function.

The non-specified force can often be identified with a supernatural force like a saint, the lord, god or satan. This supernatural force is often mentioned in the sentence, and is sometimes expressed in the vocative form, such as in Bozhe soxrani (‘Oh God, protect’). Consequently, Veyrenc calls this imperative the ‘injonction à l’extrapersonnel’. According to Veyrenc all optative imperative cases have this extrapersonal character. Veyrenc states that:

“Le sujet apparaît, qui peut être alors de genre inanimée (...), n’est que le réflexe superficiel d’un objet profond. C’est en réalité une entité surnaturelle non designée qui est implicitement chargée de l’accomplissement éventuel de l’action néfaste.” (Veyrenc, 1980: 102)

He sees evidence for this in the occurrence of sentences with a passive form:

(134) Bud’ ja prokljat.
be-IMP I-NOM cursed
‘May I be cursed.’

In this case the passive form of the verb may indicate that “[l’opérateur de la malédiction est extérieur à la personne prise pour sujet de ce passif” (Veyrenc, 1980: 101). Other evidence for the ‘supernatural’ character of the optative imperative is the fact that there are very few sentences in modern Russian where the performer is not expressed as a supernatural force, and they always occur with a special kind of act (like ‘provalit’sja’ which can be seen as indirectly performable by a supernatural force. Thus in modern Russian we do not find sentences like:

(135) ?Prochitaj on ètu knigu.
read-IMP-PERF he that book
‘May he read the book.’
The Russian imperative

It may be argued that the optative imperative occurs only with a very specific type of actions, namely those actions that can be seen as (indirectly) performable by a supernatural force, which are typically actions that cannot be controlled by the subject. Such cases occur mostly in petrified expressions where the supernatural force is mentioned or implied. Note that this is not the case with *pust*, the lexical element expressing optativeness; *pust* can be seen as the natural way to express optativeness in modern Russian.

Although in modern Russian all optative imperative cases seem to have a supernatural character, this character does not appear to be a necessary feature of this use in earlier stages of Russian. Vinogradov & Shvedova (1964: 224–226) discuss the optative imperative in the nineteenth century and claim that in the second half of the eighteenth century, the optative imperative was used in both literary style and colloquial style. Until the 1850s the optative imperative was freely used, whereas in the second half of the nineteenth century the optative imperative disappears from the high style literature, but its place is taken by *pust'/puskaj* in the second half of the nineteenth century the use of the optative imperative is preserved only in texts with a colloquial style. Vinogradov & Shvedova (1964) do not discuss the difference in meaning between the optative imperative and the *pust* construction, but the examples they give do not all have a clear supernatural character. Take for example the following extract from a letter, written in the nineteenth century (1826):

(136) Blagodarju miluju Mashen'ku ... i nezhno celuju; pereceluj ona takzhe za menja sestric i Pavlushu. (Vinogradov & Shvedova, 1964: 225/Vjazemskij)
I thank dear Masha ... and tenderly I.kiss; kiss-IMP-PERF she-NOM also for me sisters and little Pavel
'I thank dear Masha and kiss her gently; let her also kiss in my name the sisters and little Pavel.'

In this sentence the speaker directs the reader of the letter to make the subject of the imperative realize this action; the imperative action can be controlled by the subject. The occurrence of sentences like this suggests that the optative imperative was originally used to address both supernatural forces or the addressee present in the speaker-hearer context (as is the case with *pust*), but that this use declined, probably owing to the influence of

---

81 Vinogradov & Shvedova (1964) give the following sentence where *puskaj co-occurs with the optative imperative: Kto xochet, tot puskaj serdis', Nad nashoj sboris'ju osiris'. (Vinogradov & Shvedova, 1964: 224/Griboedov)
past', in the middle of the nineteenth century. Nowadays, the imperative only occurs in set expressions where a supernatural force is mentioned or implied, and with the verb *by*:

### 3.5.3 Semantic-syntactic features

The following semantic-syntactic features are relevant for the optative imperative:

(i) —tense  
(ii) +aspect (perfective, imperfective)  
(iii) +subject  
(iv) prototypically VS order  
(v) no suffix -te  
(vi) suffix -ka  
(vii) in some cases expression of particle *by*  
(viii) idiomaticity

Below I will briefly discuss some of these features; for the feature tense I refer to 3.1.

#### 3.5.3.1 Aspect

The optative imperative occurs in both the perfective and the imperfective aspect. By using the perfective aspect, the speaker indicates that he wishes the subject to reach the natural or imposed end point of the imperative action, because of the desirable consequences of this realization. In the case of the imperfective aspect, the action qua action is seen as desirable, e.g.:

(137)  

Net, *delaj* on to chto mne poleznjae. (Vinogradov & Shvedova, 1964: 224/Sumarok)  
no, do-IMP-IMPERF he-NOM that what me more useful  
*‘No, may he do what is more useful for me.’*

#### 3.5.3.2 Subject

The optative imperative occurs with all persons in the nominative, and with impersonal verbs:

(138)  

*Bud’* by zdes’ tixol (Russkaja Grammatika, 1980, II: 106)  
be-IMP IRR here quiet
The Russian imperative

‘If only it would be quiet here.’

(139) Poskol’ku bol’shinstvo kul’turnykh proektov segodnia rukovodstvujutsja lozungom “Dozhit’ do rasveta!”, to izdanie, vidimo, gotovilos’ po principu “Vvjazhemsja v draku, a tam xot’ ne rasvetaj.”

In so far as majority of cultural projects today are being managed with motto “live till dawn!” then edition, obviously, was prepared according to principle “let’s throw ourselves in fight, but there PRT not dawn-IMP-IMP”

‘In so far as the majority of the cultural projects today are managed according to the motto “Live till dawn!”, this edition was obviously prepared according to the principle “Let’s start fighting, and let it remain dark there.”’ (meaning: ‘let’s get on with the job, the rest is not important’)

The optative imperative can occur with non-animate subjects:

(140) Esli ty goloden i nag,/Bud’ tebe utexoju uchebnyj shag. (K. Pruktov, Army aphorismi)

‘If you are hungry and naked/May the drill-training be like a consolation to you.’

The nominative pronoun or noun can be seen as the subject of the imperative predicate. In the case of a second person singular there is no clear distinction between the directive use and the optative use. Veyrenc (1980: 101) gives the following example of a second person optative with the verb provalit’sja (‘to get lost’):

(141) Provalis’ ty. (Veyrenc, 1980: 101)

get.lost-IMP-PERF you

‘Get lost.’

The verb provalit’sja is a typical optative lexical verb (it is a situation that cannot be controlled by the subject, but which could be influenced by some supernatural force), and the VS order is typical of the optative imperative; nevertheless, there are no clear criteria for deciding whether it is an optative case or a directive case. Note, however, that in the case of the second person plural, the suffix -te is sometimes attached to the verb, whereas in other cases it is not:

---

82 http://www.russ.ru:8085/krug/kniga/99-07-06/knyazev.htm; I have attested several instances of the expression a tam xot’ ne rasvetaj, which suggests that it is idiomatic, at least to some degree.

83 http://www.litera.ru:8085/stixiya/authors/appendix/prutkov_voennoe.html
I do not think that such cases have a different meaning. I think that second person cases must be seen as borderline cases between optative use and directive use. In the case of a second person singular, this 'ambiguity' may remain underspecified. In the case of the second person plural, however, where a choice has to be made between adding -te or not, both variants occur.

3.5.3.3 Word order

Optative sentences normally have a verb subject (VS) order. The imperative usually takes the first position in the clause, but in some cases other constituents (than the verb) may be expressed, for example:

(144) Puskaj pogibnet svet, Lish' toliko mne syschis' ljubeznaja sobaka. (Vinogradov & Shvedova, 1964: 224/V. Majk.)
let die earth, just only I-DAT find-IMP-PERF favorite-NOM dog-NOM
'The earth may be destroyed, I only want to find my favorite dog.'

In most cases the verb and subject are not separated by other constituents, but exceptions occur:

(145) Bud' ej teper' moja sud'bina! (Vinogradov & Shvedova, 1964: 225/Borat.)
be-IMP she-INSTR my destiny
'May my destiny now be hers.'

The imperative verb is always accented. The last accent of the optative construction may be on the imperative predicate (e.g. *umRI ona*) or on another constituent, which may be the

---

84 http://www.magister.msk.ru:8085/library/prose/ognen003.htm
85 http://www.moshkow.pp.ru:5000/lat/BULYCHEW/kora03.txt
The Russian imperative

subject or another constituent (e.g. BUD’ by tishiNA; PerecelU] ona takzhe za menja sestric i PavLUsblu). Deviance from the VS order rarely occurs. Below an example is given with an SV order:

(146) Ego primer bud’ nam naukoj. (Pushkin, Evgenij Onegin)
      his example be-IMP us science
      ‘May his example be like a lesson to us.’

The order here is possibly influenced by the poetic structure of the text.

The word order of the optative imperative is connected with the specific semantics of this use, and also occurs in the case of other optative use without optative conjunctions.

Subjunctive optative

(147) Uexali by onil
      went IRR they
      ‘If only they would go away!’

Infinitive optative

(148) Zhit’ vam do sta let!
      live-INF you-DAT to hundred years
      ‘May you live a hundred years.’

This suggests not only that the VS order is linked not only to the meaning of the imperative optative but, more generally, that it may be a natural order when the predicate is interpreted as expressing wish.

It may be that there are differences between moods in the extent to which word order is fixed. Bondarko (1990: 175) claims that in the case of the subjunctive with an optative meaning the SV order is possible:

(149) Papasha, vy by govornili s Aleksandroj. (Bondarko/Gor’kij)
      papa, you IRR spoke with Alexandra
      ‘Papa, if only you would talk to Alexandra.’
According to Bondarko, however, this order is never obligatory; sentences like this can always be rendered to a VSX order (Papaja, govorili by vy s Aleksandrij). Shvedova (1967: 75), on the other hand, claims that another order than VS in the case of the subjunctive optative is "practically excluded". She states that in the following sentence Byl by u menja drug! the verb obligatorily takes the first position in the clause. Unfortunately, neither Shvedova (1967) nor Bondarko (1990) discuss the difference in word order in terms of the information structure of the clause. The evidence that they provide, however, suggests that the normal order for optative is VS (X). The fixedness of the VS order suggests that an explanation of the word order cannot solely be based on the general pragmatic principles of word order (cf. Keijser, 1985; Kompeer, 1992).

In my opinion the word order in the case of the optative imperative can possibly be motivated as follows:

SV_{imp} order

The expression of the subject presupposes the existence of some action, the identity of which is given later.

V_{imp}S order

The expression of the verb means that the existence of the action is introduced in a hypothetical mental space or world, and presupposes the existence of a subject, when the verbs is personal.

In the case of the sentences under discussion the VS arrangement is not connected to the theme status of V and the theme status of some constituent following V. In the case of the optative the existence of the situation expressed by the verb is not given, but introduced in the discourse. In such sentences the verb expresses the information that is the 'starting point' for the rest of the information expressed in the clause. This may motivate its clause initial position; the subject in such sentences has the character of additional information. In the case of the optative imperative the starting point for the optative situation is the predicate: the speaker pictures to himself the presence of the optative situation expressed by the predicate. One might say that the position of the

---

86 Bondarko claims that this sentence can be seen as an optative case because it can be paraphrased with xot' by. Unfortunately, Bondarko does not discuss the difference between these sentences in terms of their information structure.
subject relative to the imperative verb gives information about the reality-hypotheticality status of the imperative action from the perspective of the speaker. This analysis of the VS order in the case of the optative imperative remains highly speculative. I will say more about the VS word order in 3.6.3.3, where I will discuss the VS order of the conditional.

3.5.3.4 Presence of -ka

I have attested one example of a combination of the optative imperative and the suffix -ka:

\[(150)\] Razverni-ka on im ètu knigu i nachni chitat' bez premudryx slov i bez xvanstva, bez voznolesenija nad nimi, a umilenn o i krotko, sam radujas' tomu, chto chitaesh' im i chto oni tebja slushajut i ponimajut tebja (...)\]

(F.M. Dostoevskij, Brat'ja Karazmazov)

open-IMP-PERF-PRT he they-DAT that book and start-IMP-PERF read without wise words and without boasting, without elevation above them, but emotionally and gently, self enjoying that, that you.read them and that they you listen and understand you (...) 'May he open the book for them and start to read without using difficult words and boasting, without placing himself above them, but read emotionally and gently, enjoying yourself that you read them and that they listen to you and understand you.'

This extract is from a nineteenth-century novel, and from the speech of a monk who uses language with archaic features. Nevertheless, the possibility of combining the optative imperative with -ka underlines that it can be seen as a hortative use.

3.5.3.5 The particle by

The Russkaja Grammatika (1980, II: 106) notes that in modern Russian we find the optative imperative of the verb by't' in conjunction with the particle by (which indicates that the predicate to which it is applied does not occur in the real world but in a counterfactual world):

\[(151)\] Bud' by zdes' tixo! (Russkaja Grammatika, 1980, II: 106)

be-IMP IRR here quiet

'If only it were quiet here.'

\[(152)\] Bud' by druz'ja rjadom. (ibid.)

87 http://www.magister.msk.ru:8085/library/dostoevs/karama06.htm
be-IMP IRR friends-NOM close
'I only my friends were close.'

According to the *Russkaja Grammatika* (1980, II: 106), this use is typical of the spoken language.

There is possibly a tendency to to use the particle *by* with other verbs as well, which seems to be stated by the *Russkaja Grammatika*: “It is possible to express wish by the imperative form together with the particle *by*, such sentences have a general personal meaning” (1980, II: 624). The following examples, both from Bunin, are given by the *Russkaja Grammatika* (1980, II: 624):

(153) **Propadi** (by) vse propadom.
get.lost-IMP-PERF (IRR) all without.a.trace
'The hell with them.'

(154) **Provalis'** (by) oni v tartarary.
disappear-IMP-PERF (IRR) they-NOM to hell
'Damn them.'

Below, another example is given:

(155) Kakaja vse-taki zhizn'! – v odin mig vse srazu ruxnulo. Da i **propadi** by on propadom,
which still life! in one moment all immediately it collapsed. yes and disappear IRR he without.a.trace, that leather.jacket
Èto kožan!
'What a life this is! In one moment everything has collapsed. Well, the hell with that leather jacket.'

The occurrence of optative imperative sentences with the particle *by* can possibly be seen as the modern implication of the ‘supernatural optative’. In the case of the optative imperative as described above the speaker addresses a force that can contribute to the realization of the imperative action. The desirable situation conveyed by the imperative

---

88 "Pobuzhdenie v soedinenii so znacheniem zhelatel'nosti vyrazhaetsja formoj povelit. nakl. v vozmozhnom sochetanii s chasticей *by*, takie predlozenija imejut obobshchennoe-lichnoe znachenie." (*Russkaja Grammatika*, 1980, II: 624)

89 It is unclear to me whether *by* occurred in the original text.

The Russian imperative

cannot be accomplished by the subject because it can only be accomplished by a supernatural force; in the case of the 'modern optative' the imperative indicates a desirable situation that can be accomplished neither by the subject (if there is any), nor by a supernatural force. Note that the particle by does not occur in optative cases where the supernatural force is mentioned. I have not attested sentences like:

(156) *

*Nagradi by vas gospod' za vashu dobrodetel'.
reward-IMP-PERF IRR you-ACC the Lord for your goodness
'May the Lord reward you for your goodness.'

We could explain this by pointing at the fixedness of this expression. On the other hand, the particle by does occur in other set expressions, like in (154). These are all expressions where the supernatural force is not mentioned. It can be argued that with the disappearance of the idea of indirect appeal, the idea of the action being realizable is also lost; the speaker can no longer influence the realization of the action by some other force. It seems therefore that the occurrence of optative imperative sentences with by is connected with the disappearance of the supernatural character of the optative. The imperative no longer expresses the indirect appeal of the speaker toward supernatural forces or to some understood agent, and can be seen as more or less equivalent to subjunctive optative use:

(157) Byli by druz'ja rjdom! (Russkaja Grammatika, 1980, II: 106)
be-PAST-PL IRR friends-NOM close
'If only my friends were here!'

(158) Da provalilos' by vse k bezdnam kosmicheskim!
(PRT disappear-PAST-PERF-NEUT IRR all to hellhole cosmic
'If only everything would disappear into that cosmic hellhole!'

In Russian the subjunctive can be used to express wish. The examples of optative subjunctives that I have seen often occur in a conditional structure. Unfortunately, the Russkaja Grammatika does not provide additional context for the optative imperative with by and byt; it is not clear to me how and to what extent the optative imperative differs from the optative subjunctive. The Russkaja Grammatika (1980, II: 106, 107, 108) also

---

91 http://www.magister.msk.ru:8085/library/sf/legoa003.htm
92 Here I should note that when I checked the use of the imperative optative with the particle by, I found that the respondents interpreted these sentences as the protasis of a conditional clause. A sentence like: Bud' by tishina
mentions the possibility of using *pust' by* to express wish; this use can be paraphrased with modal constructions that express necessity like *peredosato by*, *nuzhno bylo by* (*should have*), indicating that it would have been/be more appropriate to realize an alternative situation:

(159)  
Trudnyj narod ěti zhenshchiny! – on zasunul ruki v karmany i daleko vpered vytyjanul nogi, – zachem, naprimer, menja poslali po ètomu delu? Pust' by ezdił Begemot, on obajatel'nyj ...³⁵ (M. Bulgakov, *Master i Margarita*)

("What a difficult kind of people, those women!" – he put his hands in his pockets and fully stretched his legs in front of him, "Why, for example, did they send me to take care of this matter? Begemot should have gone, he’s charming ...")

In the case of the optative imperative with *by*, as it occurs in (155), the idea of ‘necessity of an appropriate alternative situation’ is absent.

### 3.5.3.6 Idiomaticity

As I mentioned above, in modern Russian the optative imperative occurs only in petrified expressions, mostly in expressions where reference is made to a supernatural phenomenon, and in expressions with the verb *byt’* such as *ne v obidu/v upor/v uprek/v gnev* *bud’ skazano* (*No offense is meant.*).³⁴

### 3.5.4 Conclusion

The imperative can be used to express optativeness with a hortative character. This use of the imperative is not productive in modern Russian but only occurs in more or less petrified expressions. In modern Russian the analytical form *pust’* is a more neutral way to express hortative-optativeness. The optative imperative can co-occur with the particle *by*;

('If only it was quiet') was seen as a subordinate conditional clause without the main clause. This is comparable to the occurrence of optative sentences with *esli* (*if*) like *O esli byja mog ee uvidit’!* (*'If only I could see her.*). As I will discuss in the next section, in modern Russian the particle *by* can also be conjoined with the counterfactual conditional imperative use. This seems to be a nineteenth-century phenomenon. Note that optative imperative use with *by* already occurs in the second half of the nineteenth century in colloquial style: *Chto pjadetsjat’ bysjač, užh propadat’ by oni.* (Vinogradov & Shvedova, 1964: 226/Vel’tman)

³⁵ http://lib.ru/lat/BULGAKOW/master.txt

³⁴ Data of the verb *byt’* show that the restriction to more or less fixed expressions (*budi tebe izvestno/vedomo; bud’ na tebe milost’ božjja*, etc.) already occurred in the eighteenth century, and to a lesser extent in the seventeenth century.
The Russian imperative

the use of by possibly indicates that the ‘hortative’ feature of the optative is weakened in modern Russian. In the next section I will discuss the conditional imperative. I will argue that the conditional imperative can be seen as an extension of the optative imperative.

3.6 Conditional use of the imperative

3.6.1 Introduction

In this section I will give an analysis of the conditional use of the imperative. I will argue that the conditional imperative can be seen as an extension of the optative imperative where the feature of ‘wish’ has been modified or weakened. In the case of the optative imperative the speaker hopes to contribute to the realization of the imperative action by uttering the imperative because he wishes the realization of the optative action in this world; in the case of the conditional imperative, the speaker wishes the hearer to imagine the realization of the imperative action, and describes in the following part of the sentence what the consequences of the hypothetical realization of the imperative action would be or could have been.

The section has the following structure. In 3.6.2 I will discuss the meaning of the conditional imperative. In 3.6.3 I will discuss some of the semantic-syntactic features of this use, in 3.6.4 I will discuss the relation between the conditional use and other imperative uses, and in 3.6.5 I will discuss the so-called ‘subjective-modal’ features of the conditional imperative use, which are absent in the case of oppositional forms.

3.6.2 The meaning of the conditional imperative

The following sentences are examples of conditional imperatives:

(160) Razgoris' atomnyj pozhar – i okazhutsj a bessmyslennym i usilij a ljudej dobroj voli.
(Wade, 1992: 328)
break.out-IMP-PERF atomic fire, and turn.out.to.be useless efforts of.people of.good will
‘If a nuclear war breaks out, the efforts of the people of good will be useless.’

(161) Nachni on vykladyvat’ emu podobnye dovody, kak tot srazu zhe sprosit: “A zahem
prinimaesh’ uchastie v srazhenijax?”95 (J. Nikitin, Zolotaja shpaga)

95 http://www.moshkow.pp.ru:5000/lat/NIKITINYU/gold.txt
begin-IMP-PERF he-NOM motivate him such arguments, how that one immediately PRT will ask: "but why you take part in battles?"
'The he starts to motivate similar arguments to him, the other will immediately ask: "But why do you participate in such battles?"'

(162) Pridi ja poran'she, mozhet stoja l by sejchas rjadышkom s infantil'nymi astronavтами (...).96 (S. Lukjanenko, Teni snoi) come-IMP-PERF I-NOM somewhat earlier, maybe stood IRR now besides with infantile astronauts (...) 'Had I come just a little bit earlier, I might have stood here together with those infantile astronauts.'

(163) A Simon i vovse poterjal oshchushchenie real'nosti, i pojavits' pered nim sam Satana sobstvennoj personoj, on by prinjal eto kak dolzhnoe i lish' vjalo perekrestilsja by, izgoniya nechistogo prochno'.97 (O. Avramenko, Princ Galli) but Simon and entirely lost feeling of reality, and appear-IMP-PERF before him self Satan-NOM in. own person, he IRR took that how necessity and only limply made the sign of the cross, chasing the evil one away 'But Simon had completely lost his feeling of reality, and if Satan himself in his own person would appear before him, he would take it as a necessity, and he would only limply make the sign of the cross, to chase the evil one away.'

In Russian the imperative can be used with all subjects, or with impersonal verbs, as the first constituent of a clause in a co-ordinate complex to express condition. Depending on the situation mentioned in the clause following or preceding the imperative clause, the conditional imperative may be interpreted as a case of hypothetical condition or counterfactual condition.98

Sentences (160) and (161) are examples of hypothetical conditional imperatives. In the case of a hypothetical conditional imperative, we find the indicative mood (perfective present) in the clause following or preceding the imperative clause. The term 'hypothetical' conditional is used to contrast this type of conditional with the 'counterfactual' conditional; in contrast to the latter, the construction with the hypothetical conditional

96 http://moshkow.perm.ru/lat/LUKXQN/tenisnov.txt
97 http://www.kuzbass.ru/moshkow/lat/RUFANT/AWRAMENKO/prince2.txt
98 Dancygier & Sweetser (1996: 87) argue that the term 'counterfactual' is not correct for English sentences with if because of the occurrence of sentences like If you got me a cup of coffee, I'd be very grateful, where the realization of the action can still occur in this world. They therefore prefer to use the term 'negative epistemic stance'. For the Russian conditional imperative, however, the term 'counterfactual' suffices.
The Russian imperative

imperative expresses that the realization of the imperative situation is hypothetical. This means that the question whether in reality the imperative situation could be fulfilled is left open. As I will argue below in 3.6.5, in the case of the hypothetical imperative conditional, the imperative situation breaks the expected course of events, that is, it is a situation that the addressee is not likely to imagine, or a situation that the addressee is not likely to associate with leading to the situation mentioned in the protasis. The hypothetical status of the conditional imperative is therefore merely rhetorical. Hypothetical conditional imperative use can be paraphrased with a construction with esli ("if") + perfective present.

In the case of counterfactual conditional imperatives like (162) and (163), we find a subjunctive (past tense + by; infinitive mood + by) in the clause following or preceding the imperative clause. Such uses are called ‘counterfactual’ because the imperative situation is interpreted as a situation whose actual realization is seen as contrary to the facts. There are two possible interpretations of the counterfactual conditional, viz. (i) the imperative situation could have occurred in the past, but did not occur, or (ii) one could imagine the actual world being slightly different, such that the imperative situation would be the case. Put differently in terms of possible worlds, in a world close to the factual world, the imperative action would have occurred, as in (162), or could occur, as in (163), but in this world it did or does not. Sentences like these can be paraphrased with esli ("if") + by + past tense in the subordinate clause and a subjunctive (past tense + by) in the main clause, or with a subjunctive.99 The close relation between the conditional counterfactual imperative and the subjunctive is underlined by the following sentence, where the imperative co-occurs with a subjunctive:

(164) Bud' ja pomolozhe, i pozvolil a by komplekcija, sam by polez, ej bogu! (A. Chexov, 1988)
be-IMP I-NOM younger, and allowed IRR bodily.constitution, self IRR climb, PRT
'Thad I been younger, and had my bodily constitution allowed it, I would have climbed myself.'

Whether we are dealing with a hypothetical or a counterfactual conditional cannot be determined from the imperative form itself but only from the apodosis (whether it is in the indicative or the subjunctive). In some counterfactual cases, however, we find the particle by in the imperative clause. The following example is given in the Russkaja Grammatika (1980, II):

99 Note that in this case the imperative is conjoined with a subjunctive mood.
I will discuss such cases in 3.6.3.6.

The meaning of the conditional imperative construction can be formulated as follows:

By uttering at to the imperative the speaker gives an impulse to the addressee to contribute to the realization of the imperative situation \( \rightarrow \) SIT (V)\( t_t \) by the subject (if the verb is personal) in a imagined world only, in order to describe the consequences of the hypothetical realization of this situation; this means that the speaker gives an impulse to the addressee to imagine the imperative situation.

The frame given in Figure 3.16 can be used for the conditional imperative.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Force</th>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Subject of situation</th>
<th>Object of force</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Speaker</td>
<td>( \rightarrow ) SIT(V+aspect)( t_t ) in an imaginary world only</td>
<td>S=1/2/3sg-pl/impersonal</td>
<td>Addressee</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The conditional imperative meaning given above presupposes that:

(i) the imperative situation breaks the expected course of events
(ii) the speaker commits himself to wanting to illustrate the relation of condition and consequence between the imperative and some other expressed situation

As I will argue below, the fact that the speaker gives an impulse directed at the imaginary realization of the imperative situation means that the addressee is not expected to imagine the realization of the imperative situation by himself. Consequently, the contrast between SIT (not V) and (SIT V), which is typical for of the other imperative uses, is also present in the case of the conditional imperative use. The semi-hortative meaning of the conditional imperative gives rise to the so-called subjective modal interpretations of the
The Russian imperative

conditional imperative use, features which are absent in the case of the conditional structure with *esli* and are also absent in the case of the subjunctive conditional.

Below I will go into the meaning of the conditional imperative in more detail. I will first discuss some semantic-syntactic features of the conditional imperative. The discussion of these features gives greater insight into the meaning and use of the conditional imperative. Further, I will discuss the relation between the conditional imperative with other imperative uses, and then discuss the subjective modal interpretations of the imperative in some detail.

3.6.3 Semantic-syntactic features

(i) +aspect (perfective, imperfective)
(ii) -tense
(iii) +all subjects
(iv) fixed VS order
(v) no suffix -te; occurrence of -ka
(vi) occurrence of embedded conditional imperatives
(vii) co-ordinated protasis-apodosis structure
(viii) occurrence of *by* in the imperative clause
(ix) lexical verbs

I will discuss some of these features below. For the absence of tense I refer to 3.1.

3.6.3.1 Aspect

The conditional imperative occurs in both the perfective and the imperfective aspect, although most cases are perfective. The perfective aspect is chosen in those cases where the speaker wants to express that the realization of the imperative situation, including the natural or imposed end point of the situation, leads to another situation. The imperfective aspect is chosen in the case of inherently imperfective verbs and in those cases where the speaker wants to express that the existence of some state is the condition for some other action, e.g.:
(166) Porabota j oni tak, kak rabota et Sara Bernar, znaj stol’ko, skol’ko ona znaet, oni daleko by poshili (A. Chexov, 1988: 27)
work-IMP-PERF they-NOM so, as works Sarah Bernard, know-IMP-IMPERF so.much, how.much she knows, they far IRR went
‘If they worked as Sarah Bernard works, if they knew what she knows, they would have (had) more success.’

In this sentence we find the imperfective imperative znaj (know-IMP); the nearest related perfective (uznaj) would convey the idea of proceeding from a situation of non-knowing into a situation of knowing, which is not what the speaker wants to convey.

3.6.3.2 Subject

The Russian imperative can be used with all persons, expressed in the nominative. In the case of the second person plural use, the plural suffix -te does not occur:

(167) Ne bud’ vy, a drugaja – ni za chto by ne poshel provozhat’ (A. Zoshchenko, 1935: 9)
not be-IMP you-NOM-PL, but other-NOM, not for what IRR not went accompany
‘If it were not you but another woman, I would never accompany her home.’

(168) Lichno mne vse edino, bud’ vy xot’ zelenogo cveta.100 (Discussion about discrimination)
personally I-DAT all the.same, be-IMP you-NOM-PL even green color
‘Personally, it’s all the same to me, even if you had a green skin.’

The conditional imperative also occurs with impersonal constructions and a dative subject, and with impersonal subjectless verbs and constructions:

(169) Verojatno, luchshe bylo by, dovedis’ mal’chiku ispolnjat’ svoe zhelanie. (Russkaja Grammatika, 1980, II/Sharov)
probably, better was IRR, bring-REFL-IMP-PERF boy-DAT fulfill his wish
‘Probably, it would have been better, had the boy gotten the opportunity to work on fulfilling his wish.’

100 http://www.forum.msk.ru:8084/files/990711152833.gb.html

180
The Russian imperative

(170) **Rassvetaj segodnya poran’she, ja by vstal vo-vremja.** *(Russkaja Grammatika, 1980, II: 104/ Dumovo)*

dawning-IMP-IMPERF today earlier, I IRR get.up in time
‘If teh dawn had started earlier, I would have got up on time.’

(171) **Toł’ko vot ljubvi u nas i malo, a buď’ ee pobolee, – Grigorij Efimovich sokrushenno vzdoxnul, – ne to by, dorogoj, bylo.** *(O. Platonov, Zbîzja za carja)*

just here of.love at us and little, but be-IMP she-GEN more, Grigori Efimovich broken sighed. not that IRR, dear, was
“‘But we have so little love, and if we had more of it’, Grigori Efimovich said and sighed upset, “it would not be like this(, but things would be nice).’”

(172) **Ne znaju, chto bylo eizvestno o sotrudnichestve Èfrona s GPU, no dumaju, buď’ ej izvestno dazhe vse, ona by ot nego ne otshatmula’.** *(Interview with I. Brodsky)*

not I.know, what was-IMPERS she-DAT known-ADV about cooperation of.Efro with GPU. but I.think, be-IMP she-DAT known-ADV even everything, she IRR from him not move.away
‘I didn’t know what she knew about Efro’s cooperation with the GPU, but I think that even if she had known everything, she would not have turned her back on him.’

3.6.3.3 Word order

The prototypical word order of the conditional is VS (in those cases where S is expressed). The first position of the imperative clause is prototypically taken by the imperative, but the verb may be preceded by the conjunction *chto* (‘that’), negation, or particles like *nu, da*, etc. In most cases the subject is put immediately after the verb, but the verb and the subject may be separated by other constituents, as in (163) above, or as in the following sentence, where the verb and subject are separated by an indirect object:

---

101 http://moshkow.perm.ru/lat/PLATONOWO/rasputin.txt
102 http://lib.ru/lat/BRODSKIJ/wolkow.txt
103 In the case of the impersonal construction with *sluchit’sja* (‘happen’) the conditional imperative can co-occur with a verb in the perfective present: – A kuda denesh’sja, – otvechala jarkaja energichnaja devushka-korotyshka. – Ja uzhe na ètu zarplatu dva groba sebe pripasla. Sluchis’ pomru, a groby u menja pod rukoj. (http://www.rvb.ru:8090/mamleev/01prose/2stories/5end/01-2-5-08.htm); (...) happens-IMP die-PRES-PERF-1SG...; (...) ‘If it happens that I die...’. Perhaps, a tendency toward grammaticalization of *sluchis’* can be perceived here.
Chapter III

(173) (...) ne bud' emu okazana vsestoronnjaja pomoshch' mirovym soobshchestvom.104

(...) not be-IMP he-DAT [=people of Kuwait] given from.all.sides help-NOM by.world community

'(...) if the extensive help from the world community had not been given to the people of Kuwait.'

The subject may be followed by another constituent, or group of constituents V S X. The last accent of the conditional construction may be on the imperative:

(174) Mne kazhetsja, chto vyskazhis' my – i vse pojdet po-staromu.

'me seems, that speak.out-IMP-PERF we – and all goes as before

'It seems to me that if we speak out, everything will become as before.'

In most cases, however, the last accent is on another constituent (e.g. Razgor's' atomnyj poZHAR; in (160)). Note that the information structure of the conditional imperative sentence is different from the optative imperative sentence because of the co-ordinate protasis-apodosis structure of these sentences. This could imply that the last accent of the sentence always falls in the final clause. It seems, however, that the protasis of the clause can be seen as an independent information unit as far as the word order and information structure is concerned. Additional evidence for this is that the order of the protasis and apodosis may be changed (protasis-apodosis to apodosis-protasis), without changing the placement of the last accent in the protasis.

The occurrence of an SV order with conditional imperatives is a very rare phenomenon. The only example of an SV order in the case of the conditional imperative that I have found is the following sentence105:

(175) Da, pravda, ne svoi bedy – dija vas zabavy. Otec rodnoj ubejja – vse ravno.

'Moreover, true, not own misfortune, for you amusement. father-NOM own-NOM kill-REFL-IMP-PERF, all the same

'Yes, indeed, someone else’s misfortune is amusement to you. Your own father may even kill himself/get killed, for you it’s nothing.'

The relatively fixed VS(X) word order of the conditional imperative, but also of the optative imperative, cannot be explained (solely) in terms of the division of the clause

---

105 The concessive character of this sentence is discussed in 3.6.5.2.
The Russian imperative

into topic and focus; rather the fixed word order must be connected with the specific meaning of the conditional imperative construction. Note that the same fixed VS order also occurs in the case of the subjunctive conditional without conditional conjunction, and infinitive conditional:

(176) Uchilsja by syn, mat' by ne ogorchalas'. (Russkaja Grammatika, 1980, II: 104–105)

'studied' IRR son, mother IRR not was sad

'If the son had studied/would study, the mother would not have been/be sad.'

(177) Prijti by teb'e ran'she, i my obo vsem by dogovorilis'. (Formanovskaja, 1989: 42)

'come-INF-PERF you-DAT earlier, and we about everything IRR reach.agreement

'If only you had come earlier, we could have reached an agreement about everything.'

Deviance from this order may probably occur under particular circumstances. Shvedova (1967: 75) gives the following sentence with SV order in the protasis:

(178) Noch' byla by, tak on by sumel skryt'sja.

'If it were night, he could hide.'

The basic word order for the conditional imperative clause is VS(X), and perhaps more specifically (X)VS(Y) where the X may be filled with the subject. The VS order is relatively fixed and cannot be explained solely in terms of the theme-rheme division of the clause. I have argued earlier, in 3.5.3.3, that the VS order can possibly be motivated as follows:

$SV_{imp}$ order

the expression of the subject presupposes the existence of some action, the identity of which is given later.

$V_{imp}S$ order

the expression of the verb means that the existence of the action is introduced in a hypothetical mental space or world, and presupposes the existence of a subject when the verbs is personal.
In the case of optative and conditional sentences the existence of the situation expressed by the verb is not given but introduced in the discourse. In such sentences the verb carries the most important information in the clause, which may motivate its clause initial position; the subject in such sentences has the character of additional information. The verb itself expresses independent information, and the identity of the subject can be seen as an addition to this information. As I remarked earlier, the conditional situation could be seen as the supposition of a hypothetical action to be true. It is only against the background of this supposition that the prediction expressed by the apodosis can be understood. Because of the background status, it may be natural that the first position is taken by the imperative.

Note that the tentative analysis here also accounts for the first position of the conjunctions *esli* and *pust’* in the case of conditional and optative sentences. It may be that the idea of backgrounding is related to contrast between a real situation and some supposed situation expressed by the imperative. However, the exact relation between topicality, or background, and hypotheticality is not clear to me.

The VS order under discussion can possibly be compared to VS order in other languages such as Dutch. The VSX order in Dutch is called inversion of the basic word order pattern; in Dutch, the basic word order is verb second, which means that the finite verb normally comes in the second position. Inversion of the word order pattern SV is typical for optatives, conditionals, questions, and in the case of contrast:106

(179) Kwam hij maar. (optativeness)
came he but
'If only he came.'

(180) Komt hij, dan ga ik ook. (condition)
comes he, then I go too
'If he comes, I will come as well.'

(181) Komt hij? (question)
comes he

106 Further note that a VS order also occurs in sentences where the first constituent is not expressed, e.g. *Doen we!* ('We will do that'). Sentences like these can be said to adhere to the V2 principle of Dutch. Other sentences where the VS order occurs, are sentences where the verb indicates some unexpected action, e.g.: *Ik loop op straat, komt zij er opeens aan,* 'I am walking on the street, when suddenly she comes up to me.' It may be that such sentences adhere to the V2 principle, because the first clause must be seen as the first constituent, or suggest the idea of 'at that particular moment.'
The Russian imperative

'Ish he coming?'

(182) Komt Peter vaak te laat, Jan komt nooit te laat. (contrast)
comeS Peter often too late, Jan comes never too late
'Whereas Peter often comes late, Jan never is late.'

What these contexts have in common is that in all cases the action is supposed, rather than asserted. This means that the speaker does not give a description of the state of affairs of the real world, but gives an invitation to imagine an action to be true. This can be explained for the different context in the following way. In (179) the speaker pictures a hypothetical world where the desired action takes place. In (180) the speaker pictures a hypothetical world where the action takes place, in order to describe the consequences of this action. In (181) the speaker pictures a hypothetical world where the action takes place and asks whether this situation applies in the real world. In (182) the speaker invites the addressee to accept the validity of the proposition, in order to contrast it with another situation.

A final word should be said about the status of the VS order of the conditional imperative. I have argued that the VS order must be explained from the meaning of the conditional imperative. Note that a particular word order need not necessarily point at a particular interpretation; a VS order can point at the topical status of the verb in general and does not necessarily point at the hypothetical status of the verb. Furthermore, a VS order in the case of the imperative need not necessarily point at a conditional (or optative) interpretation; we find VS order in the case of other imperative uses as well, for example in the case of the narrative. The specific conditional or optative meaning requires a specific word order, and the specific word order together with the rest of the context and the meaning of the imperative points in the direction of a particular interpretation.

---

107 In generative treatments (Model, 1991: 62) the VS order in the case of the Dutch conditional is 'explained' by pointing at the notion of complementary distribution. In this case this means that the finite verb is moved to the complementizer place only if this place is not taken by another constituent. Because of this we get the configuration {C...V_{[+fin]} } in the case of a conditional adverb, and the configuration {V_{[+fin]} ...r} in the case of absence of a conditional adverb. It remains to be explained, then, which element is missing in the other cases. Furthermore, this does not explain the semantic relation between the different contexts.
3.6.3.4 Absence and presence of directive-hortative features

The conditional imperative cannot be seen as a directive use, which is underlined by the following features:

- absence of the suffix -te in the case of the second person plural (see sentences (167), (168) above)
- occurrence of the conditional imperative in embedded clauses (see (174) above)

The hortative character is, however, underlined by the occurrence of the suffix -ka. Such occurrences are rare, but Garde (1963: 215) gives two examples:

(183) *Znaj-ka on umnye-to slova, po nashej by storone mnogo mog vyigrat*. (Garde, 1963: 215/Ostrovskij)

know-IMP-IMPERF PRT he wise-PRT words, for our IRR side much could win

‘If he knew these wise words, he could win a lot for our side.’

(184) *Dovedi-ka ja kakim-nibud’ processom nashu pargalovskuju glinu do togo, chtoby iz nego vyxodil farfor luchshe saksonsogo ili sevreskogo, tak ty dumaesh, tut ne bylo by prisutstvija vysshej sily?* (Garde, 1963: 215/Goncharov)

accompany-IMP-PERF-PRT I with some process our Pargalovskij clay till that, in order to from it came porcelain better than Saxonian or from Sevres, then you think, here not was IRR presence of highest power?

‘If I turned our clay from Pargalov through some kind of process into something from which you can make porcelain better than Saxonian porcelain or porcelain from Sevres, would you really think that there would not be a presence of a higher power?’

3.6.3.5 Sentence structure

The following features are relevant for the conditional imperative:

- occurrence of the conditional imperative in a coordinate structure
- possibility of introduction of the second clause with i
- prototypically protasis-apodosis order (deviance is possible)

The sentence of the conditional imperative can, like any conditional, be divided into a protasis and an apodosis. In the protasis the condition is expressed, and in the apodosis the
consequences are expressed. The regular order is protasis-apodosis, although the reverse order occurs as well:

(185) Ona nikogda by ne dogadalas', chto on – chuzhak, ne skazhi on ob ètom.\(^{108}\) (A. Azimov, *Gal'ka v nebe*)

she never IR not guessed, that he, alien, not tell-IMP-PERF he-NOM about that

'She would never have guessed that he was an alien, had he not told her about it.'

Note that this differs from the directive conditional imperative, where an apodosis-protasis order is not possible. It is typical of conditional sentences with *esdi* ('if') that the protasis can be seen as a subordinate clause, and the apodosis as a main clause. In the case of the conditional imperative, however, it is better to speak of a coordinate complex. This means that the conditional sentence consists of two clauses that are conjoined, and form a semantic and syntactic unit. There are different ways in which the two clauses may be coordinated:

- the apodosis (in sentences with a protasis-apodosis order) is introduced with a pause, graphically represented with '‐' (as in (167))
- the apodosis (in sentences with a protasis-apodosis order) is introduced with the conjunction *i* ('and') (as in (164)), or in the case of a concessive interpretation with *a* ('but'):

(186) *Bud' on semi pjaden' po lbu, a ot vara moego ne ujdet.* (Garde, 1963: 210/Pushkin)

be-IMP he seven pjad'around forehead, but from my judgment not will.go.away

'Even if he is a real genius, he won't escape my judgment.'

- the apodosis (in sentences with a protasis-apodosis order) is introduced with a pause and then a conjunction (as in (160))
- the apodosis is introduced with *kak* (as in (161))
- the apodosis is introduced with *to*:

(187) *Opozda j on xot' na minutu, to vse pogiblo.* (Barentsen, p.c.)

come.late-IMP-PERF he just on minute, then all was.lost

'If he will be just one minute too late, everything is lost.'

According to Formanovskaja (1989), in Russian an implicational clause can be introduced by *if* if the conditional character is not expressed by a conditional conjunction (*esli*). In Russian conditionality can be expressed without *esli* in the case of subjunctive conditional use, conditional use with infinitive and *by*, imperative use, and perfective present conditional use. Formanovskaja paraphrases this use of the conjunction *if* with *and then* or *in that case*. According to Formanovskaja *esli* can be left away because the conditional character is expressed by the VP itself; the same argumentation may explain the absence of *if* in the case of *esli*: 

\[
[Esli A, \ A \ B]\ 
\]

can only be interpreted as 

\[
[Esli [A \ B]]
\]

because *esli* has an inherent conditional meaning. As in the case of the conditional directive imperative use (see 3.2.4.1), the conjunction *if* can occur in the case of the imperative because it indicates the temporal sequence of the realization of the imperative action, and the consequences of this action, whereas *esli* A, B does not express the idea of the realization of an action, and consequently the realization of another action, but rather expresses that in those worlds where A is the case, B is the case as well (which is usually interpreted as a causal effect of A on B).

3.6.3.6 Particle *by*

In some cases the particle *by* is conjoined with the imperative; such cases have a counterfactual interpretation, and mostly seem to occur with the verb *byt*. An example was given above in (165); two other examples are given below:

---

109 On the basis of the data that I have seen, I suspect that the conjunction *if* occurs more frequently in the case of hypothetical condition, than in the case of counterfactual condition. This may perhaps be connected with the fact that in the case of the counterfactual the imperative situation will not be realized in reality, in contrast to the hypothetical imperative.

110 Because of this reading, sentences with *esli* can also be used in contexts where the conditional relation does not convey that A leads to B, but that on the basis of A, one can conclude B (e.g. *If the lights are on, John must be home*). This sentence expresses that on the basis of the protasis, one can conclude that the situation expressed in the apodosis is the case. Such sentences do not convey the idea of a condition between situations expressed as a causal effect that can be perceived in time (B follows A in time, because A leads to B).

111 The *Russkaja Grammatika* (1980, II: 104) gives an example with *zajdi*; I give it here with some additional context: 

\[
\text{Da zajdi } b \text{ on ko mne, ja by emu polnyu ka}jistru za glaza nasypal .... Na, beri – svinej kormim, ne zhal' der'na dlja xorosthogo cheloveka! (A. Fadeev, Razgrom); PRT came-IMP-PERF IRR he to me, (...); ‘Well, if he came up to me, I would pour out for him as much as a whole bag .... Here, take it, we feed the pigs with it, we can give a good man as much as he likes of that shit!’
\]
The Russian imperative

(188) **Bud'** by K. dejstviteln o podlecom, on by sechjas spokojno by nezhilsja sebe gde-nibud' na belom pesochke pod zharkim solnyshkom, navsegda zabyv pro `etu stranu.\(^{112}\) (Internet forum)

be-IMP IRR K. really scoundrel, he IRR now quietly IRR cherish himself somewhere on white sand under hot sun, for:always having:forgotten about this land 'If K. really were a scoundrel, he would now be enjoying himself somewhere on the white sand under the burning sun, forever having forgotten this land.'

(189) Nu, **bud'** by eshche kakoj zhanr, no fantastika – i bez novizny?\(^{113}\)

but be-IMP IRR still other genre, but fantasy, and without new things?

Well, had it been another genre, [it would not have been so bad,] but fantasy, and than without any innovation? [that's no good].'

I suspect that the particle in these sentences is used to emphasize that the realization, occurrence or being the case of the imperative situation is contrary to the facts:\(^{114}\) in (188) because the speaker does not think that K. is a scoundrel, and in (189) because it is clear that the genre in question is fantasy.

3.6.3.7 Lexical meaning of the imperative verbs

There are no special restrictions on the verbs that occur in the construction with the conditional imperative, although, as I will explain below, the meaning of the construction may impose particular restrictions on the verbs that can occur in the construction. (See 3.6.5). Garde (1963: 213–214) claims that in the nineteenth century the construction under discussion (with third persons) occurred in the majority of studied cases with the verb **byt'**, and with the verb **popast'sja**, but also with other verbs; however, in the twentieth century the conditional imperative construction almost exclusively occurs with the verb **byt'**. Garde (1963: 214) even says about **bud'** that it has become "un simple équivalent de l'expression un peu lourde esli by byt'. The data at my disposal do not confirm Garde's observation that in the twentieth century the construction only occurs with **byt'**; as my examples show, the

\(^{112}\) http://www.forum.msk.ru:8084/files/981215124655.gb.html

\(^{113}\) http://sf.glasnet.ru:8105/esli/rubr/kritika/es497gak.htm

\(^{114}\) In Dutch these two sentences can be translated with the particle now: 'als het nou zo was dat X'.
construction occurs with different types of verbs, but nevertheless the verb *byt'* is relatively frequent.115

3.6.4 The conditional imperative and the other imperative uses

In this subsection I will show how the conditional imperative is related to the other imperative uses, especially the optative imperative. I will argue that the conditional imperative can be seen as a hortative imperative in a weakened form.

In the literature opinions differ about the relation between the conditional imperative and the other imperative uses. Two main opinions are given below:

(i) The conditional imperative can be seen as a *directive* use of the imperative where the speaker gives an impulse to the hearer to *suppose* an action, instead of *performing* it (Ebeling, 1956).
(ii) The conditional imperative can be seen as an extended case of the optative imperative (e.g. Isachenko, 1957; Percov, 1998).

In my opinion, both opinions are to some extent valid. Below I will discuss these opinions, and then give my own extended analysis.

According to Ebeling the conditional use of the imperative can be compared to the directive use of the imperative because both cases concern "an action fulfilled as the result of a foreign impulse or permission". According to him, both in the case of the directive use and in that of the conditional use the speaker can be seen as the giver of the impulse, who gives an impulse to the hearer. In the case of the directive imperative the speaker gives an impulse to the hearer to *perform* the imperative action, whereas in the case of the conditional imperative the speaker gives an impulse to the hearer to *suppose* the imperative action. The description given by Ebeling (1956) seems to imply that the conditional imperative can be paraphrased in English with ‘suppose that’. This means that the speaker gives an impulse to the hearer to perform the action of supposing.

The relation between conditionality and the act of supposing is underlined by the fact that conditionality in general is sometimes said to be an expression of supposition. Take for example the following extract from *ANS* (1984) where it is claimed that the Dutch marker of conditionality (*als*), which is comparable to the English *if*, can be paraphrased

115 If the relatively frequent occurrence of *byt'* is higher in the case of the conditional imperative than in the case of oppositional forms, I propose that this be attributed this to the meaning of the imperative conditional construction (although morphological features may also play a part (cf. Garde (1963)).
The Russian imperative

with 'suppose that/imagine that': "als is te omschrijven met 'stel dat'". If we accept that in the case of the conditional imperative there is a direction from the speaker to the hearer to suppose a situation, we can see a close semantic relation between conditional imperatives and directive imperatives that occur in a conditional context as discussed above in 3.2.4.1. In a conditional directive sentence like (48) above it can be argued that the hearer is instructed to imagine himself to be the agent of the action. In the case of the conditional imperative the idea of performing the imperative action is not present, but the idea of performing the act of supposing is present.

Although the relation sketched here between the conditional imperative and the directive imperative seems plausible, there are some indications that one cannot speak of an impulse to suppose a fact in the case of the conditional imperative in the same way as one can speak about a impulse to suppose a fact in the case of the conditional directive imperative. That 'direction to the hearer to perform an act' is part of the meaning of the directive conditional imperative, and not of the non-directive conditional imperative, or other conditional constructions, nor of other conditional constructions with esli, can be shown by the following features:

**Directive imperative with conditional interpretation**

- suffix -te with second person plural
- apodosis-protasis order
- no occurrence in embedded clauses

**Conditional imperative**

- no suffix -te with second person plural
- apodosis-protasis/protasis-apodosis order
- occurrence in embedded clauses

What these facts show is that the conditional directive must be seen as a directive use where the notion of performance of the imperative situation plays an essential part, which is not the case for the conditional imperative.

Firstly, in contrast to the directive imperative with a conditional interpretation, the conditional imperative does not occur with the suffix -te. The presence of -te indicates that the conditional directive imperative is a directive use; in the case of conditional sentences this means that the speaker acts as if the addressee is to perform the imperative situation.
This description does not account for the conditional imperative, where the speaker only wants the hearer to imagine the imperative situation.

Secondly, in contrast to the conditional imperative, the order of the directive imperative sentences with a conditional character is always apodosis-protasis. This fact can be explained with reference to the principle of iconic ordering as defined in Dik's (1989) Functional Grammar:

Constituent ordering is a matter of Iconic Patterning to the extent that the order of constituents, say AB, in some sense corresponds to the temporal or psychological order of the items A and B.

According to the principle of iconic patterning it can be expected that the order of AB in the sentence reflects the temporal/psychological order of AB. In the case of directive use this implies that you first have to direct someone to suppose a certain act or situation (A), and then you can name the consequences of the realization of that act or situation (B). If we accept this principle, the incorrectness of an apodosis-protasis order in the case of the conditional directive use can be explained, because in this case the implication is given before the condition. We can say that the occurrence of the order BA is psychologically strange when A must be seen as an impulse from the speaker to the hearer to do ('suppose') a certain situation.\(^{116}\)

Thirdly, another argument against the hypothesis that the conditional imperative is connected with the feature of 'performing' a situation, is the fact that the conditional imperative can occur in a subordinate clause introduced by chto ("that") (see (174) above). Directive imperatives do not occur in subordinate clauses with chto, because the speaker-addressee context is absent there.

On this basis it can be argued that if we understand the notion of directivity in the same way as in the case of the directive imperative use, the meaning of the conditional imperative cannot be defined as 'an impulse from the speaker to the hearer to suppose a certain fact'. Further evidence for this is the occurrence of cases that have both an optative and a conditional character (sentences where the realization of the imperative action is wished because it leads to desirable consequences expressed in another clause). In Ebeling's approach, conditional cases would have to be seen as sentences where the speaker gives an impulse to the hearer to imagine an action by some agent expressed in

\(^{116}\) Note that the same principle may also account for the strong tendency that in conditional sentences the protasis (A) comes before the apodosis (B). It should be noted, however, that this is just a tendency: conditional sentences where the order is BA do occur.
The Russian imperative

the nominative, whereas optative cases would have to be seen as sentences where the speaker gives an impulse to a third person nominative subject to perform/fulfill the imperative action. In my opinion, such an analysis does not adequately describe the similarities and differences between these uses.

Another approach to the conditional imperative is advocated that by Isachenko (1957), who claims that the conditional imperative must use be seen as closely related to the optative use, and even as an extension of the optative use. This meaning is expressed by Isachenko in the following extract:

"Genetically it is not difficult to show that we find here [that is, in imperative conditional cases like Pridi ja ran'she, nichego by ne sluchilos'] a case of transposition of the imperative. We only have to reconstruct the modality of wish of the first part of the sentence by means of the corresponding interjection, and the origin of such constructions becomes clear: O, vernis' ja ran'she! Nichego by ne sluchilos'. ['O, if only I had come earlier, Nothing would have happened.']. In modern language, of course, this modality of wish is lost." (Isachenko, 1957: 10-11)\(^{117}\)

In the extract above Isachenko claims that the conditional must be seen as a transferred case of the optative. Consider the following sentences:

(190) O, vernis' ja ran'she! Nichego by ne sluchilos'.
     o return-IMP-PERF I earlier! nothing IRR not happened
     "O, if only I had come earlier. Nothing would have happened."

In the first sentence of this example the imperative action is desired by the speaker. In the second sentence the consequences of this desirable act are mentioned. This can be seen as an explanation of the desirability of the situation conveyed by the optative clause. Because the action conveyed by the optative is desired by the speaker of the sentence, we can see the content of the optative situation as volition proceeding from the speaker and directed at the realization of the imperative situation. In the case of the conditional the aspect of desire is lost: the speaker no longer wishes the imperative action.

In my opinion Isachenko's suggestion to relate the conditional imperative to the optative imperative is right, but his analysis is incomplete and is not sustained by any kind of synchronic or diachronic evidence. First of all, Isachenko claims without any

\(^{117}\) "Geneticheski netrudno pokazat', chto zdes' nalico transpocizija imperativa. Stoit tol'ko vosstanovit' zhelatel'nuju modal'nost pervogo predlozenija vvedeniem sootvetstvujushchego mezhdometija, i kartina vozniknovenija takix postroenij stanet jasnja: O, vernis' ja ran'she! Nichego by ne sluchilos'. V sovremennom jazyke èta zhelatel'naja modal'nost', konechno, utrachena" (Isachenko, 1957: 10-11).
explanation or reference, that it is ‘very easy’ to show that there is a genetic relation between the optative imperative and the conditional imperative; to my knowledge, however, no diachronic research has been done on the proposed relation. Secondly, Isachenko relates the counterfactual conditional imperative to the non-counterfactual optative imperative, which makes the proposed analysis not entirely accurate. Thirdly, Isachenko does not discuss the meaning of the conditional use in detail; more specifically, he does not address the question of how the conditional imperative differs from oppositional use such as constructions with esti, and how the difference in use between these constructions is related to a difference in meaning.

In my opinion the suggestion made by Isachenko (1957) to relate the optative imperative to the conditional imperative is sustained by the following correspondence of formal features:

**Optative imperative & Conditional imperative**

- VS order
- absence of the suffix -te in the case of the second person plural
- conjunction of the imperative with the particle by (IRR) in some cases

What these features show is that both the optative imperative and the conditional imperative have no directive meaning, that is, there is no impulse from the speaker to the addressee to perform an action. One can speak of directivity if the speaker wants to contribute to the performance of the action by the addressee-subject by uttering the imperative form. A typical directive use is the basic directive imperative use. Here the speaker has the idea of contributing to the realization of the imperative action because he thinks that he can manipulate the addressee-performer present in the speech context. In the case of the optative imperative the directive context is not present, although one can speak of indirect direction. In the case of the optative the speaker gives an impulse to the hearer or some other specified or non-specified entity to contribute to the realization of the imperative action. In the case of the conditional the idea of direction is weakened even more, since the speaker wants the realization of the imperative action in a hypothetical world only. In the case of the conditional imperative the speaker assumes the imperative situation to be true (→ SIT (V)) for the sake of the argument. This act of supposition can be seen as an invitation by the speaker to the hearer to imagine a situation. As I argued earlier, such an invitation cannot be equated with a direction to perform an action: in the case of such a direction the speaker wants to direct the behavior of the addressee, whereas
The Russian imperative

in the case of an invitation, the speaker pictures to himself an action, and in doing this invites the hearer to picture the same situation.

In modern Russian, there is no clear semantic relation between the conditional imperative and the optative imperative, since the optative imperative is no longer a productive use of the imperative anymore. This means that it cannot be argued that the conditional imperative can only be understood on the basis of the optative imperative, analogous to understanding the conditional directive imperative on the basis of the basic directive imperative. Nevertheless, a diachronic relation may be reconstructed between the optative imperative and the conditional imperative, as follows:

a. Optative imperative
b. Optative imperative with conditional structure
c. Hypothetical conditional imperative
d. Counterfactual conditional imperative

The optative imperative is used to express that the speaker gives an impulse to some concrete or abstract entity present in the speech situation to realize the imperative action. This optative sentence can be extended with a clause where the desirable consequences of the realization of the imperative action are mentioned (a→b). In those cases in which the optative clause is conjoined with another clause, the situation of the clause following the imperative clause is interpreted as the apodosis of the optative clause. This relation of 'implication' has the character of a temporal sequence: the occurrence of some situation X is followed in time by the occurrence of situation Y. In my opinion, the idea of immediate temporal sequence of two events is closely related to the idea of a conditional relation between two events. In those cases where the occurrence of some event is always followed by the occurrence of some other event, it is natural to see the occurrence of the first event as the condition for the occurrence of the second.

The next step (b→c) can be reconstructed as a case where the speaker acts as if he directs the hearer or some abstract entity to contribute to the realization of the imperative action. This means that the idea of actual wish to realize the action is lost, but that the feature of wish reoccurs in a modified way. In this case the speaker does not wish the realization of the action in this world because of the desirable consequences of this realization, but rather wishes the realization of the action in a possible world, only in order to describe the consequences of this hypothetical realization; this means that the speaker wants the addressee to imagine the imperative situation. The imperative in such sentences has become a device for reasoning about things, rather than as a device for expressing a
wish or desire, and for realizing this wish by manipulation. In this case there can be no restrictions in terms of controllability on the imperative verb, since the speaker only wants the addressee to imagine the imperative situation.

The loss of the feature of wish must have helped the occurrence of the conditional in counterfactual cases (c→d). Here it is clear that the action cannot be realized, because it only occurs in a counterfactual world.\footnote{Note, however, that since the process of meaning extension (metaphor, metonymy, etc.) is a basic strategy of humans, it may be that different extensions have been part of the imperative use from the very start. Study of diachronic data may possibly give insight into this question.} Note furthermore that, considering the data at my disposal, the counterfactual conditional imperative use is more frequently than the hypothetical conditional imperative use. It may be that the frequent occurrence of by is related to the specific meaning of the conditional imperative use, namely the fact that the speaker gives an impulse to the addressee to imagine a certain situation. As I will motivate below, this specific feature means that the imperative situation breaks the expected course of events. This feature accords with counterfactual cases, where it is explicitly expressed that the realization of the imperative situation is not in accordance with the actual way things happened, or the actual way reality is. The productive occurrence of the conditional imperative in the twentieth century, which contrasts with the non-productive use of the optative imperative, may also be motivated by the loss of the feature of wish. As I argued above, the optative imperative use probably declined under the influence of the oppositional form past'. This form, however, is not (strictly speaking) an oppositional form of the imperative used as a conditional. It may be that when the function of the optative imperative was taken over by past', the conditional imperative had already taken its unique position in the linguistic structure, and survived when its source – the optative – declined.

In this section I have argued that the conditional imperative must be seen as an extended optative imperative where the feature of 'wish' is weakened. The quasi-hortative character of the conditional imperative accounts for its specific semantics, more particularly its subjective modal nature, and the difference in meaning from oppositional forms. The subjective modal nature of the conditional imperative will be the theme of the next section.

3.6.5 Subjective modal interpretations of the conditional imperative

In this section I will discuss the so-called 'subjective modal' interpretations of the conditional imperative. These subjective modal features are absent in the case of the
oppositional form *esli*. I will argue that the difference between these forms is connected with the semi-directive feature of the conditional imperative. I will argue that the contrast between the imperative situation (SIT(V$_{imp}$)) and the situation that is imagined before the impulse to realize the imperative situation is given (SIT(not V$_{imp}$)) is essential for the meaning of the conditional imperative, and that this feature is absent from the meaning of conditional sentences with *esli* ("if"). The contrast between these two situations relates to the notion of *impulse* and the idea of *breaking the expected course of events*. In the case of the conditional imperative the speaker gives an impulse to the addressee to imagine the imperative situation for two reasons:

- It can be expected that the addressee does not imagine the imperative situation because he does not expect that the realization of the imperative action will lead to the scene expressed in the apodosis.
- The imperative situation itself is unexpected, and therefore something that the addressee does not imagine.

This contrastive nature of the conditional imperative, or put differently, the idea of breaking the expected course of events, is often called 'modal'. The following different modal interpretations can be distinguished:

a. Character of unexpectedness
b. Character of immediate implication/restriction ('only' character)
c. Character of concession ('even' character)

The different interpretations are the result of the context in which the imperative occurs and the presuppositions of the interpreter. Note that in some cases it is difficult to distinguish between these different interpretations. This is a natural consequence of the fact that they are interpretations of the same basic meaning. Note furthermore, that the interpretations (b) and (c) also occurred in the case of the conditional directive imperative use (see 3.2.4.1); these interpretations have essentially the same structure as the conditional imperative interpretations under discussion.

In the literature some remarks are made about this so-called modal character, although the systematic relation between the different interpretations and the relation of these interpretations to the imperative meaning is not recognized. Here I will briefly discuss the different interpretations.
3.6.5.1 Character of unexpectedness

Conditional imperatives with a character of 'unexpectedness' are difficult to define because there are no additional formal specifications as in the case of the restrictive or concessive interpretation. The nature of unexpectedness is, however, remarked by various authors, such as Isachenko (1957: 10–11):

“In modern language, of course, the modality of wish [that is in the case of the conditional] is lost, but something of modality, different from the modality of the actual conditional, has been preserved; consider: 'On sterpel by, ne nachni Mëri vsë chastche i chastche zagovarivat' o položenii cvetnych. (...)’ [‘He would have been able to stand, if Mary had not started to talk about the situation of the non-white people. (...)’] One could argue that ne nachni means something like ‘if she had not by accident (as if to annoy him).’”

Vasil’eva (1969: 42) observes that the conditional imperative can express additional meaning features of ‘sluchajnost’ (“coincidentality”) or ‘neozhidannost’ (“unexpectedness”). She suggests that the following sentences can be rendered to conditional imperative cases without the additional specifications:


(192) My tak davnó ne videlis’, chto esli by on sluchajno vstretilisja, ja by ego ne uznala. We so long not saw each other, that if IRR he accidentally met, IRR not him recognized ‘We haven’t seen each other for such a long time that if he were to accidentally meet me, I would not recognize him.’

In the following sentences with a conditional imperative an element of unexpectedness might be observed although they lack the specifications as vdrug or sluchajno (occurring in (191) and (192)):


119 “V sovremennom jazyke èta zhelatel’naja modal’nost’, konechno, utrachena, no soxranilos’ nekaja modal’nost’, otlichnaja ot modal’nostii chisto uslovnoi ili soslagatel’noi; sr.: ‘On sterpel by, ne nachni Mëri vsë chastche i chastche zagovarivat’ o položenii cvetnych (...)’. Ved’ zdes’ ne nachni mozhno tolkovat’ kak ‘ne nachni sluchajno, kak na zhe. (Isachenko, 1957: 10–11)

120 Vasil’eva (1969: 42) suggests that meaning features like ‘neozhidannost’’, ‘sluchajnost’’, ‘zhelatel’nost’’ can be said to be part of the conditional meaning. These features do not, however, occur in every conditional case. I would therefore prefer the term conditional interpretation.
The Russian imperative

(193) Mozhno li chto-to sdelat'? Ili krovoprolitie nikogda ne konchitsja? Vse delo v Vejnte. Umri ona – i vzaimnoe istreblenie prekratitsja.¹²¹ (G. Garrison, Zima v èdemi) may-ADV PRT something do-INF? or bloodshed never not will.stop? all case in Vejnta. die-IMP-PERF she, and mutual destruction will.end 'Is there something that we can do? Or will the bloodshed never end? It's all connected to Vejnta. If she dies, the mutual destruction will come to an end.'

(194) I vriad li 'ljudi v chernom' vypolnili by zadachu, ne pomogi im v nuzhnyj moment milaja ledi-patologoanatom Lorel. (From description of the film 'Men in Black')¹²² and probably not 'men in black' performed IRR task, not help-IMP-PERF them in necessary moment sweet lady-pathologist-NOM Lorel 'And probably the men in black wouldn't have performed their task, were it not that the lady-pathologist Lorel had not helped them at the right moment.'

In the following extract the speaker expresses that he is offended by people who use English on a Russian discussion page on the Internet:

(195) Interesno, kakov byl by èffekt, zajdi ja na kakoj-nibud' amerikanskij forum i nachni tam pisat' na russkom jazyke?¹²³ interesting, what was IRR effect, visit-IMP-PERF I-NOM on some American forum and start-IMP-PERF there write on Russian language 'It would be interesting to know what the effect would be, if I visited some American forum and started to write in Russian.'

The character of unexpectedness is due to the fact that in the case of the conditional imperative the speaker gives an impulse to imagine the imperative situation. This means that the hearer is not expected to imagine the imperative situation himself. In the case of the sentences under discussion, this is because the situation itself is unexpected. Consequently, there is a contrast between the imperative situation and the normal expected situation. Cases like these can also be seen as cases of immediate implication as discussed in the following subsection because they express that the reality could very well have been/be different, if only the imperative situation had not been/is the case. In such

¹²¹ http://kulichki-lat.rambler.ru/moshkow/GARRISON/edem3.txt
cases it is no so much the imperative situation itself that is unexpected, but rather the relation between the imperative situation and the situation expressed in the apodosis.

3.6.5.2 Character of restriction/immediate implication

In the following sentences we find examples of conditional imperatives with a restrictive character or a character of immediate implication:

(196) **Rassvetaj tol'ko, i my poedem.** (Barentsen, p.c.)

day.break-IMP-IMPERF only, and we go
‘As soon as the day breaks, we will go.’

(197) **Nu skazhi on: treshku platjat. I srazu nevidannaja summa perejdet v ego karman.**

(Zoshchenko, 1935)

well say-IMP-PERF he: three.ruble they.pay. and immediately unprecedented amount disappears in his pocket
‘Well, if he says: they pay three rubles, all this money will disappear immediately into his pocket.’

The character of restriction and that of immediate implication are semantically closely related. This can be clarified by the observation of Garde (1963: 210), who notes that the hypothetical conditional imperative often occurs with focus-sensitive and presuppositional particles like *chut’* (‘almost’) and *tol’ko* (‘just’), indicating that the slightest occurrence of a particular situation leads to another situation. In the case of the conditional imperative the hearer naturally expects that more is needed than X to lead to Y, but it is expressed that X immediately leads to Y.

Vasil’eva (1969: 42) suggests that specifications of restriction in conditional sentences with *esi* can be left out if these sentences are paraphrased with imperatives:

(198) **Esi by tol’ko on ne zadel moego syna, ja by promolchala togda.**

if IRR only he not hurt my son, I IRR remained.silent then
‘If only he had not hurt my son, I would have remained silent then.’

(199) **Ne zaden’ on moego syna, ja by promolchala togda.**

not hurt-IMP-PERF he my son, I IRR remained.silent then
‘If only he had not hurt my son, I would have remained silent then.’
This gives an indication that the feature of restriction is expressed by the imperative itself and cannot solely be attributed to the specifications: because of the special character of the conditional imperative, it is easily combined with restrictive particles.

I think one can motivate the character of restriction as follows. In the case of the optative use in a conditional context the speaker gives an impulse to realize the imperative situation because the realization of the imperative situation is followed by a desirable situation. The directive situation furthermore presupposes that the subject is not already expected to realize the imperative action. In the case of the conditional imperative under discussion, the speaker does not want the realization of the action, but he gives an impulse to the imaginary realization of the imperative action only to indicate what the consequences are of the realization of the imperative action; this means that the realization of the imperative action only takes place in an imaginary world. This presupposes that the hearer is not expected to know that the realization of the imperative action leads to another situation. In the case of the restrictive interpretation of the conditional imperative the situation described in the protasis (p) leads to the situation described in the apodosis (q), while one would normally expect that p is not enough to lead to q (for q only p is necessary). One can say that in these cases the speaker restricts the domain of actions that could be imagined to a certain single one.

Note that in many cases we do not find the additional specifications of restriction; this is the case for example in the sentences given below:

(200) Ne bud' vy, a drugaja – ni za chto by ne poshel provozhat'. (Zoshchenko, 1935: 9)
not be-IMP you-NOM-PL, but otherNOM-FEM. never IRR not went accompany
‘If it were not you but another woman, I would never accompany her home.’

(201) Bud' u nas bardaki, tak nikakix ljubovnyx svjazej, lzhi vsej etoj ne bylo by (...).
(Amal'rik, 1970: 90)
be-IMP at us brothels-NOM, so no amourous affairs, lie all that not was IRR (...)
‘If we had brothels, then we wouldn’t have any amourous affairs, all those lies wouldn’t be there.’

shout-IMP-PERF Zhen’ka-NOM yes, all IRR probably worked.itself.out
‘If Zhenka had shouted “yes”, everything would probably have worked itself out.’

These sentences can also, however, be seen as cases of ‘immediate implication’ or restriction. By using the imperative the speaker underlines that the situation mentioned
in the main clause (which is not the case in this world) could easily be the case or could easily have been the case if the imperative situation applied. The conditional imperative therefore has a different character than conditional sentences with esli ("if"), where this subjective-modal character is absent. The subjective modal character of the imperative also differs from the subjunctive conditional. I suspect that the subjunctive is used exclusively, or at least foremost, in cases where the speaker wishes the realization of the imperative situation, or where he thinks that the subjunctive situation would be good. The feature of 'breaking the expected course of events' is not expressed by the conditional subjunctive construction. Compare the following two examples of the subjunctive with the imperative:

**With subjunctive**

(203) **Byl by** Shura na meste Vodily – problem voobchshe ne bylo by. (V. Kunin, *Kysja*)

was IRR Shura-NOM on place of Vodila, problem at all not was IRR

‘If only Shura had been in the place of Vodila, there would not have been a problem at all.’

(204) **Byl by** èto moj rebenok, ja by ej takoe pokazala, chto ona tri dnja sidet’ by ne smogla!

(V. Kunin, *Russkie na Marienplac*)

was IRR that my child-NOM, I IRR her such showed, that she three days sit IRR not could

‘Had it been my child, I would have given her something, such that she would not have been able to sit for three days.’

**With imperative**

(205) [In the following extract the author speaks about an illustration in a fairy tale about Pinocchio written by Alexej Tolstoj, where Pinocchio pierces through a fireplace with his nose]:

**Bud’** ja na meste Alekseja Tolstogo – chego, konechno zhe, byt’ ne mozhet, a vse-taki!

– ja by uzh pobol’she, chem on, nakrutil vokrug ètogo narisovannogo ochaga.124 (E. Kljuev, *Mehdu dvux stul’ev*)

be-IMP I-NOM on place of Alexej Tolstoj, what, of course PRT, be not may, but nevertheless!, I IRR PRT more, than he, made up around that drawn fireplace

---

The Russian imperative

‘If I had been in the place of Alexej Tolstoj – which is, of course, impossible! – I, more than he did, would have made up a story around that drawn fireplace.’

(206) V ego naruzhnosti byli vse te zhe semejnye cherty (...) golos ego byl ix golosom, no rech' otlichalas' takoj ser'eznost'ju i ceremonnost'ju, chto, bu'd' eto moj kuzen Dzhasper, proizvodila by vpechatlenie napyschennoj i fal'shivoj, u nego zhe, ochevidno, byla estestvennoj i nenarochitoj.125 (I. Vo, Vozvrashchenie v Brajdshed)

in his appearance were all these PRT family features (...) voice his was their voice, but language distinguished by such seriousness and ceremoniousness that, be-IMP that my cousin Jasper, created IRR impression of pompous and of false, at him PRT, of course was natural and not ostentatious

‘In his appearance were the same family features (...) , his voice was like their voice, but the way he spoke was characterized by such a seriousness and ceremoniousness, that had he been my cousin Jasper, it would have made a pompous and false impression, but in his case, of course, it was natural and not ostentatious.’

In (203) the speaker expresses that the counterfactual situation where Shura had been in the place of Vodila would have been good, since that would have led to the desirable situation where there would have been no problems. In (204) the speaker expresses that the hypothetical situation where he was the parent of the child would be good, because then the child would have gotten a good beating. In (205) the speaker stresses that in reality the imperative situation cannot occur; this means that the realization of the imperative situation would break the expected course of events. In (206) the speaker does not wish the realization of the imperative situation, but expresses that the hypothetical situation (‘he is my cousin Jasper’) would immediately lead to another situation. This character of immediate restriction is probably not a necessary part of the subjunctive.

3.6.5.2 Character of concession

In this subsection I discuss interpretations of the conditional imperative that have a concessive character. It must be noted that these uses differ from the imperative uses that I call ‘concessive use’, which will be discussed in 3.7. The concessive uses under discussion here all have VS order, and do not have a character of performance (which is underlined by the absence of the suffix -te in the case of the second person plural). As such, they must be seen as interpretations of the conditional imperative.

125 http://lib.nordnet.ru/lat/WO/brajdshed.txt
In the following sentences the imperative has a so-called scalar concessive character:

(207) Da bud* on xot' princ Americanskij – ne podumaju zamuzh za nego idti. (Garde, 1963: 210/Gor'kij)
yes be-IMP he-NOM even prince American – not I think marry after him go
‘Even if he were an American prince, I wouldn’t think about marrying him.’

(208) Da bud* ja i negrom prekdonnyx godov, i to bez unyn'ja i leni, ja russkij by vyuchil toľko za to, chto im razgovarival Lenin. (Majakovskij, 1989: 20)
yes be-IMP I-NOM and negro of venerable years, and then without dejection and laziness, I russian IRR learned only for that, that by him spoke Lenin
‘Even if I were a negro of old age, I would, without dejection or laziness, learn Russian, just because Lenin spoke it.’

The concessive conditional interpretation occurs in the case of hypothetical condition, as in (207), or in the case of counterfactual condition, as in (208). One can speak of a concessive when the proposition expressed in the main clause contrasts with the expectation that would normally be based on the proposition expressed in the subordinate clause. One can speak of concession if we find the expectation that p will lead to not q, but this relation is denied (p → q). In most cases we find a negation in the second part of the coordinate clause (as in (207)), but this is not necessarily the case (see (208)). Here there is an expectation that p (he is a negro of old age) will not lead to q (he will learn Russian), but this relation is denied (p leads to q).

In the case of the concessive interpretation of the conditional imperative the imperative normally has a scalar concessive character. This means that of all the situations that may lead to not q, p is the most likely; this relation is, however, negated. In the context the scalar character is often sustained by particles like xot’ (‘even’; particle indicating permission), i (‘even’), as in the sentences above, and dazhe (‘even’), as in the sentence below:

(209) A krome togo, dazhe napishi ja èto po-russki, slova èti ne uvideli by sveta dnja pod russkim nebom. Kto b togda prochel ix? 126 (I. Brodskij, Poltory komnaty)
but besides that, even write-IMP-PERF I these in Russian, words that not saw IRR light of day under Russian sky. who IRR then read them?
‘But besides that, even if I had written everything in Russian, my words would not have been published in Russia. Who would then have read them?’

126 http://kulichki-lat.rambler.ru/moshkow/BRODSKIJ/rooms.txt
The Russian imperative

In my opinion, concessive conditional cases have a permissive character. The permissive character of the imperative clause is the result of the interaction between the imperative clause and the contrastive clause that follows it, and is further strengthened by the use of particles like *xot*. The permissive character means that the speaker gives an impulse to imagine the realization of the imperative action because he presupposes that the addressee ‘wants’ the imagined realization of this action. This presupposition has a ‘rhetorical’ character because the speaker does not actually know that the addressee wants p. The speaker supposes that the addressee holds not q to be true under particular circumstances, especially under the presupposition that p is the case, since p is the most likely to lead to not q. In such cases the speaker permits the hearer to imagine p, because p leads to q, where there is an expectation that p is the most likely action to lead to not q. In English, sentences like these could be paraphrased as ‘Let even X be the case, and still it leads to Y.’

Muravickaja (1973: 54) argues that in some sentences, such as (175) above, one can speak of a mixed concessive-conditional type. In my opinion, this sentence can be said to have a concessive interpretation, because on the basis of p (your own father kills himself) one would expect that not q (you will think that is terrible), but this relation is denied (you don’t care). I am not sure whether in this case one has to speak of a mixed conditional-concessive type. I would rather say that this imperative can be interpreted both as a conditional and as a concessive. To decide which type it is we need a particular context. In some cases the context may lead to two interpretations. These interpretations cannot, however, be seen as occurring at the same time, that is, they are discrete. The most important difference between the concessive and the conditional is that in the case of the concessive the imperative predicate has a permissive interpretation, whereas in the case of the hypothetical conditional the emphasis is on the causal relation between the protasis and the apodosis. The imperative predicate cannot be seen as permissive (as in the case of the concessive) or desired (as in the case of the optative), but functions as the marker of conditionality.

The relation between the (restrictive) conditional use and the concessive conditional use of the imperative is thus a matter of a difference in expectation. One can speak of a concessive conditional interpretation if there is an expectation that the imperative action will lead to another opposite action (p → not q), because p is most likely to lead to not q, but this relation is denied (p → q). In both the restrictive interpretation and the concessive interpretation the speaker suggests or supposes an action to be true, while there is some presupposition that another action is to be supposed. This means that there is a contrast
between the imperative action and another expected action. Put differently, there is a
contrast between SIT (V) and SIT (not V). In the case of the concessive conditional
interpretation the addressee is assumed to hold the position that not q is true under
particular circumstances, especially if p (=SIT(V) + environment) is the case. The speaker
wants to prove the opposite, and acts as if he sacrifices his strongest argument, viz. the
addressee is permitted to imagine p to be true, only to show that even p does lead to q. In
this case SIT(not V) is expected because p (SIT (V) + environment) is the strongest
argument for not q (and the speaker wants to prove that q). In the case of the restrictive
conditional interpretation the speaker assumes that the addressee does not expect that the
realization of V is enough to lead to the consequent. This expectation is, however, denied:
the speaker states that p is enough to lead to q.

3.6.6. Conclusion

The conditional imperative use can be defined as follows: ‘The speaker hopes to
contribute to the realization of the imperative situation (→ SIT (V)), only to describe the
consequences of this realization; this means that the speaker wants the addressee to
imagine the imperative situation’. The conditional imperative can be seen as an extended
optative imperative, where the features of direction and wish occur in a weakened form.
The weak directive nature of the conditional does, however, account for the so-called
modal subjective interpretations of the conditional imperative use.

3.7 Concessive use of the imperative

3.7.1 Introduction

In this section I will give an analysis of two other concessive uses of the imperative, viz.
the concessive use with an interrogative adverb/adjective and ni (so-called ‘universal
concessive use’), and the concessive use with the particle xat’ (‘even’), and a character of
performance; this character is underlined by the presence of the suffix -te in the case of the
second person plural. As I showed in the preceding section, the conditional imperative
can also be interpreted as a case of concession. Nevertheless, the concessive use of the
conditional differs from the concessive uses under discussion here because these latter
uses have a character of performance, which is absent in the case of the former
(underlined by the absence of the suffix -te in the case of the second person plural). It is
The Russian imperative

because of the difference in formal and semantic features between these two concessive uses and the conditional imperative use, that I will discuss these two uses or constructions separately.

I will argue that the concessive imperative uses under discussion can be seen as an extension of the directive imperative, where one of the presuppositions of the basic directive imperative, viz. speaker commits himself to wanting or accepting the imperative situation, is changed, and where the context of use is broadened from the directive context to third persons.

The section has the following structure. In 3.7.2 I will discuss the meaning of the concessive construction with *xot'* In 3.7.3 I will discuss the semantic-syntactic features of this construction. In 3.7.4 I will discuss the meaning of the concessive construction with an interrogative and *mi*, and in 3.7.5 I will discuss the semantic-syntactic features of this construction. Finally, in 3.7.6 I will discuss the relation of these two constructions to the other imperative uses.

3.7.2 The meaning of the concessive imperative construction with *xot'*

The following sentences are examples of concessive imperatives with a second person, and a third person respectively:

(210) *Xot' ubivajte, ne možhet* (Vasil'eva, 1969: 43)
    even kill-IMP-IMPERF-2PL, not can
    'You may kill her, but he/she can't.'

(211) Nad nim xot' krysha upadi, tak on ne poboitsja smerti. (proverb)
    above him even roof fall-IMP-PERF, so he not will.fear death.
    'The roof may even fall on his head, and still he won't fear death.'

The imperative can be used with all persons in the nominative as a concessive in the first clause of a co-ordinate complex. One can speak of a concessive when the proposition expressed in the first clause contrasts with the expectation based on the proposition expressed in the second clause. Concessive uses with *xot'* have a so-called *scalar* concessive character. In the case of scalar concessive use the imperative expresses a situation that can be seen as the situation that is most likely to lead to another situation; this relation of interdependency is, however, denied. The scalar character is expressed by the particle *xot'* together with the concessive context in which it occurs, that is the information contained
in the protasis and the apodosis and the presuppositions concerning their normal relations.

Note that in the preceding section I discussed the scalar concessive use of the conditional imperative. Although both imperative uses have a scalar concessive interpretation, they cannot be seen as identical. The difference between these uses can be illustrated by their different semantic-syntactic features:

Concessive use of the conditional imperative

- no occurrence of the suffix -te in the case of the second person plural.
- protasis-apodosis /apodosis-protasis order.
- VS order
- particle xot' does not modify the imperative.
- prototypically perfective aspect.
- no obligatory expression of xot'.

Concessive use with xot'

- occurrence of the suffix -te in the case of the second person plural.
- prototypically protasis-apodosis order.
- no strict VS order.
- particle xot' modifies the verbal phrase.
- prototypically imperfective aspect.
- the particle xot' is an obligatory element of the construction.

The features given above are evidence that the concessive use with xot' is different from the concessive interpretation of the conditional imperative. More specifically, the former has a character of performing the situation, which is absent in the case of the latter, which has an imaginative character. Note, however, that in some cases the difference between these two types is not very straightforward. This is the case for example in (211) above. On the basis of formal criteria this cannot be seen as a conditional use because of the VS order is absent. On the other hand, in this case we find the perfective aspect, and the particle xot' can be interpreted as modifying the subject of the verb; this sentence is therefore close to a conditional case (Upadi nad nim xot' krysha, tak on ne poboitsja smerti; Fall-IMP-PERF on him PRT roof, so he not will.fear death). This example shows that borderline cases may exist between the different usage types. The same can be said about
The Russian imperative

cases with a second person; such cases are borderline cases between basic directive use of the imperative and concessive use. I will, however, discuss the concessive use separately because of its special semantics and the possibility of third person subjects.

The meaning of the concessive use of the imperative can be formulated as follows:

The speaker directs (or permits) the subject-addressee (in the case of a second person) or some other subject indirectly (in the case of a third person) to realize the imperative situation: \((\rightarrow \text{SIT} (V + \text{aspect}))\), only in order to express in another clause that the imagined realization will not lead to the expected consequences.

In the case of the scalar concessive use the expression of the particle *xot*’ leads to the meaning attribution of the idea of ‘even’. The following frame (Figure 3.17) can be used for the concessive imperative:

**Figure 3.17**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Force</th>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Subject of situation</th>
<th>Object of force</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Speaker</td>
<td>(\rightarrow \text{SIT}(V + \text{aspect})_t)</td>
<td>Addressee/3sg-pl/impersonal</td>
<td>Addressee</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The meaning of the concessive imperative given above presupposes that:

(i) If \(S=\text{addressee}\): the imperative situation is conceived as controllable.
(ii) The imperative situation breaks the expected course of events.
(iii) The speaker acts *as if* he commits himself to wanting or accepting the imperative situation.
(iv) If \(S=\text{addressee}\): the addressee is directed to imagine and perform the imperative situation; if \(S \neq \text{addressee}\): the addressee is invited to imagine the imperative situation.\(^{127}\)

As I will argue, the concessive can be seen as a special, playful use of the directive imperative, where the speaker permits the subject to realize the action, only to describe that the hypothetical realization of the action does not lead to the expected consequences. The permissive character of the concessive accounts for the impossibility of combining it with the suffix -kea.

\(^{127}\) As I will explain, this performance has a strong ‘as if’ character.
Chapter III

The scalar concessive imperative can be paraphrased with the subjunctive, indicative (mostly perfective present, past tense), or infinitive. These moods can all be seen as instantiations of the same scalar concessive construction (see 3.7.6 for examples): 

\[ [\text{xot'} V] \text{clause} \ [X] \text{clause} \]

where: \( V = \text{subjunctive, perfective present, past tense, infinitive} \)

The use of the imperative mood in this construction with a third person was still normal in the nineteenth century, and occurred both in idioms and in non-idiomatic expressions, but is archaic in modern Russian; for third person cases the indicative mood is used in this construction. In modern Russian the concessive imperative with \( xot' \) is used primarily in cases with a second person; such cases often have an idiomatic character. The idiomatic character of this construction may be facilitated by its meaning, viz. the speaker permits the subject to realize the 'extreme' situation expressed by the imperative and \( xot' \), only to describe that the hypothetical realization of the action does not lead to the expected consequences. Language has evolved fixed ways to express such 'extreme' situations. The language user can easily draw from this wide range of playful expressions, in order to make his point as effectively as possible.

Before discussing the universal concessive imperative construction, and the relation between the concessive imperative use and the other imperative uses, I will first briefly discuss the semantic-syntactic features of the scalar concessive imperative use.

3.7.3 Semantic-syntactic features of concessive use with \( xot' \)

(i) +aspect (prototypically imperfective)
(ii) +all subjects (possibly no first person cases)
(iii) word order
(iv) occurrence of suffix \(-te\)
(v) co-ordinated protasis-apodosis structure
(vi) occurrence in embedded cases

I will briefly discuss some of these features below.
The Russian imperative

3.7.3.1 Aspect

The aspect of the scalar concessive use is predominantly imperfective, although perfective cases also occur. Note that the imperfective aspect is typical of permissive directive cases. In the case of permission, it is not the speaker who wants the realization of the situation, but the addressee; the emphasis is therefore not on reaching the endpoint of the situation, but on the fact that the addressee is permitted to engage in the situation.

In some cases the same concessive imperative expression may occur with both aspects. Consider the following construction (with a different implied object):

(212) Xot' ubivajte, ne mozhet. (Vasil'eva, 1969: 43)
    even kill-IMP-IMPERF-2PL, not can-3SG
    'You may kill her, but she can’t.'

(213) [X]or' ubej, ne ponimaju. (Lubensky, 1995/Vojnovich)
    even kill-IMP-PERF, not understand-1SG
    'You may kill me, I don’t understand it.'

3.7.3.2 Subject

The scalar concessive imperative occurs with third and second person subjects in the nominative, and with generic agents (cases without subject can be generic or second person cases). According to Garde (1963) the concessive imperative use with xot' only occurs with second person singular or plural and with third person singular, implying that it does not occur with the first person: "La proposition à l’impératif s’emploie à la 3e personne du singulier ou à la 2e personne du singulier et du pluriel" (Garde, 1963: 237). I have indeed not attested cases with a first person. It may be that first persons do not occur because of the permissive nature of the use; in the case of a first person the speaker would permit himself to do the imperative situation.128

According to Garde (1963: 237) the use of the scalar concessive imperative is, in contrast to the nineteenth century, not productive in modern Russian, but occurs, in the spoken language only, mostly in set expressions, and very infrequently, with a second

---

128 This restriction does not occur in the case of the other moods/tenses and in the case of pust' ('let'), which can be used in concessive sentences: Pust' ja neprav, no ty dolžhen menja vyslushat' (lit. 'Let me be wrong, but you must listen to me').
person plural. The data at my disposal confirm this observation, although the statement that cases with a second person plural only occur in the spoken language is too strong.

3.7.3.3 Word order

There is no fixed word order for the scalar concessive use. A restriction on the word order is that the particle *xot* occurs at a position before the imperative predicate, such that it modifies the verbal phrase. We find the following possibilities:

\[ xot'SV \]
\[ X\, xot'SV \]
\[ xot'V\, S\, X \]

By placing the particle *xot* before the predicate, the speaker expresses that he acts as if he gives ‘permission’ to the realization of the imperative predicate.

3.7.3.4 Occurrence of -te

In the case of the second person plural the suffix *-te* is added to the verb (see (212) above). This suffix is obligatory.

3.7.3.5 Sentence structure

The concessive imperative prototypically occurs in the first clause of a co-ordinate structure, while in the second clause a verb in the indicative mood occurs. In some cases, however, the order is reversed:

(214) *Ja ne pomnju ee, xot' ubej.*₁²⁹ (N.Shitova, *Derzkaia*)

'I don't remember her, even kill-IMP-PERF

'I don't remember her, even if you kill me.'

In some cases the second clause, with a verb in the indicative, is introduced with the conjunction a.

(215) *Xot' zarezh'te menja, a ja vam nichego ne pridumaju.* (Xrakovskij & Volodin, 1986: 242)

₁²⁹ [http://moshkow.aaanet.ru/lat/PROZA/shitowa.txt](http://moshkow.aaanet.ru/lat/PROZA/shitowa.txt)
The Russian imperative

even stab.to.death-IMP-PERF me, but I you-DAT nothing not think.out
'You may stab me to death, but I can't think of anything for you.'

The conjunction *but* points at the contrast between the expected consequence of the antecedent and the presented consequence.

3.7.3.6 Occurrence of embedded cases

The concessive imperative with xot' also occurs in embedded sentences:

(216) Dozhd' popolam s gradom lupit takoj, chto xot' krichi – nichego ne uslyshish'. (F. Iskander, *Sandro iz Chegema*)

rain half-and-half with hail barks such, that even shout-IMP-IMPERF – nothing not you.hear
'The rain together with the hail was making such a noise, that even if you shouted, you couldn't hear anything.'

The occurrence of such cases shows that the speaker does not direct the addressee present in the speech situation to realize the infinitive situation, but that the direction is abstracted from the direct speaker-addressee context.

3.7.4 The meaning of the concessive imperative construction with *ni*

Below we find two sentences with generic agents (no expressed subject), one sentence with a second person plural agent, and one with a third person agent respectively:

(217) Kakuju versiju ni razvivaj, ona mozheta byt' legko perebita inoj iz nix. (*Izvestija*, 5-5-1995)

which version not develop-IMP-IMPERF, she can be easily broken by.another of them 'No matter which version you develop, it may be easily broken by another one.'

(218) Kak ni schitaj, vse ravno dorogo.\(^\text{130}\)

how not consider, all.the.same expensive
'No matter how you look upon it, it is expensive.'

(219) [D]ja, neshchast'e, kak vy ni nazyvajte, ja znaju chto to, chto sluchilos' s vami v Moskve, bylo neshchast'e. (L. Tolstoj, *Vojna i mir*)

yes, misfortune, how you-2PL not name-IMP-IMPERF-PRT, I know that that, what happened with you in Moscow, was misfortune
‘Yes, a misfortune, whatever you call it, I know that what happened with you in Moscow, was a misfortune.’

(220)  Kuda on ni skryvajsja, on ot menja ne ubezhit. (Mazon, 1914: 69)
where he not hide-IMP-IMPERF, he from me not run.away
‘Wherever he may hide, he won’t escape me.’

In these sentences the imperative occurs with interrogative adverbs or pronouns like kak, kuda, kto, gde, chto, etc. or with interrogative adjectives like kakoj, kotoryj together with the negative particle ni. In the literature it is normally assumed that it is not possible to define the meaning of the construction compositionally and that the interrogative together with ni must be taken as one semantic unit (Tarlanov, 1982: 43).

The construction under discussion has a so-called universal concessive character: it is expressed that q is the case under any circumstance (p), while there is an expectation that there must be a condition for not q to occur. Universal concessive sentences are similar to the scalar concessive sentences discussed above, because both usage types of the imperative have a character of performing the imperative situation. The character of performance is underlined by the occurrence of the suffix -te in the case of the second person plural. As such, the meaning given above for the scalar concessive imperative also applies for the universal concessive imperative:

The speaker directs the subject-addressee (in the case of a second person) or some other subject indirectly (in the case of a third person) to realize the imperative situation: (→SIT (V+aspect)), only in order to express in another clause that the imagined realization will not lead to the expected consequences.

In the case of the universal concessive imperative construction the expression of [interrogative + ni ] leads to the meaning attribution of the idea of ‘no matter where, who etc.’. The same frame and presuppositions can be given for the universal concessive use as for the scalar concessive use (Figure 3.18).

131 Note that a sentence like the following is not possible *On idet kuda ni (‘He goes everywhere.’). This may indicate that (i) the meaning of the construction cannot be compositionally defined, and (ii) the construction may still have an interrogative character.
The Russian imperative

### Figure 3.18

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Force</th>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Subject of situation</th>
<th>Object of force</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Speaker</td>
<td>$\rightarrow$ SIT($V_{aspect}t_1$)</td>
<td>Addressee/3sg-pl/impersonal</td>
<td>Addressee</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The meaning of the concessive imperative given above presupposes that:

(i) If $S=$ addressee: the imperative situation is conceived as controllable.
(ii) The imperative situation breaks the expected course of events.
(iii) The speaker acts *as if* he commits himself to wanting or accepting the imperative situation.
(iv) If $S=$ addressee: the addressee is directed to imagine and perform the imperative situation; if $S \neq$ addressee: the addressee is invited to imagine the imperative situation.

Like the scalar concessive imperative, the universal concessive imperative can be paraphrased with the subjunctive, indicative, past tense, or infinitive. Such cases can all be seen as instantiations of the same concessive construction.

$$[\text{Interrogative} + [ni + V]_{\text{clause}} [X]_{\text{clause}}]$$

where: $V=$ subjunctive, perfect present, past tense, imperative

Note furthermore that the construction $[\text{Interrogative} + [ni + V]_{\text{clause}}$ with moods/tenses other than the imperative also occurs in non-concessive contexts (see (229) below).

Like in the case of the scalar concessive use, the use of the imperative with third person cases is archaic; in modern Russian the imperative mood mainly occurs with second person cases and with generic cases.

Before discussing the relation between the concessive imperative and the other imperative uses, I will first briefly discuss the semantic-syntactic features of the universal concessive imperative use.

#### 3.7.5 Semantic-syntactic features of the universal concessive use with *ni*

(i) +aspect (prototypically imperfective)
(ii) +all subjects (possibly no first person cases)
Chapter III

(iii) word order
(iv) occurrence of suffix -te
(v) co-ordinated protasis-apodosis structure/cases without co-ordinated structure
(vi) occurrence in subordinate clauses

I will briefly discuss some of these features below.

3.7.5.1 Aspect

The aspect of the universal concessive is predominantly imperfective, but perfective cases also occur; compare the following sentences:

(221) Vpered i — kuda ni gljan' — voda, ravnina, ostrova.132 (J. Mamleev, Blaghenstvo i okajanstvo)
    ahead — where not look-IMP-PERF — water, plain, islands
    ‘Ahead of us, wherever you look, there is water, plains, and islands.’

(222) V kakuyu storonu ni glyadi, vyxoda net.133 (A. Azol'skij, Stepan Sergeich)
    in which side not look-IMP-IMPERF, escape not
    ‘No matter in which direction you look, there is no way out.’

The occurrence of the imperfective aspect in most cases can be motivated in the same way as the occurrence of the imperfective aspect in the case of the scalar concessive use (see 3.7.2).

3.7.5.2 Subject

The universal concessive can occur with subjects in the third and the second person and with generic agents. I have not attested clear first person cases, but in the following sentence a first person plural is implied:

(223) (...) Sram-to byvait u bogatyx, a my, kak ni zhivi, nikomu do etogo dela net. (Barentsen,
    p.c./Ostrovskij)
    shame-PRT is at rich.people, but we, how not live-IMP-IMPERF, to.no one till that
    business not

132 http://www.rvb.ru:8090/mamleev/01prose/2stories/4folk/01-2-4-04.htm
133 http://www.bryansk.ru/moshkow/lat/AZOLXSKIJ/stepan.txt
The Russian imperative

'The rich people know what shame is, but in us, no matter how we live, no-one is interested.'

The concessive use under discussion also occurs with non-animate subjects as in the following sentence with the verb *sluchits'ja* ('happen'):

(224)  No – chto ni *sluchis'!* – Prodolzhaetsj a zhizn'.
but – what not happen-IMP-PERF – goes.on life
'But no matter what happens, life goes on.'

The tendency for modern Russian to use the imperative in the universal concessive construction only when the subject is a second person or a generic agent can also be perceived for the universal concessive; for example:

(225)  Samolet, kak ni *starijsja*, ne uderzhish' v vozduxe dol'she neskol'kix chasov.
plane, how not try-IMP-IMPERF, not keep-2SG in air longer some hours
'No matter how you try, you won’t keep a plane in the air for more than some hours.'

Garde argues that the concessive imperative (including the universal concessive) figures almost exclusively in set expressions.

"Les propositions concessives au conditionnel et à l’impératif sont en régression dans l’ensemble de la langue, excepté des survivances isolées dans certaines expressions toutes faites." (Garde, 1963: 248)

The data at my disposal confirm this observation, although it must be remarked that sentences with generic agents or second persons probably occur more frequently than cases with third persons.136

134 http://lat.online.stack.net/~turkin/pugach/alb2/37.htm
135 http://moshkow.donetsk.ua/lat/RBACH/bach04.txt
136 The opinion that the concessive imperative is declining in modern Russian seems, at least for the universal imperative, to be supported by the findings of Osipova (1992), who discusses the concessive with *ni*. The examples of universal concessive imperatives she gives from the twentieth century are mostly set expressions or cases with a generic subject. I do not, however, agree with all Garde’s observations. Garde (1963: 245) notes for example that the universal construction with *ni* never occurs with the verb *byt’*. I think this statement is too strong. In some texts, and probably confined to specific genres, cases with *byt’* even occur relatively frequently (e.g. in O. Platonov, *Zhizn’ 2 Car’ja*, a text with about 110,000 words, the
3.7.5.3 Word order

In the case of the universal concessive imperative we find the following structure:

\[ \text{Interrogative } S \ ni \ V_{\text{imperative imperfective/perfective } X} [(a) \ V_{\text{indicative}}] \]

where X is S, or another constituent

The interrogative takes the first position in the clause and is followed by the subject (if expressed) and the imperative. The particle \( ni \) is always placed before the imperative. In most cases we find an [Interrogative S ni V] order, although other orders occur, as below where the subject of the clause occurs at the end of the clause:

(226) Kakov ni \textbf{bud'} grozen den', a vecher nastanet. (Osipova, 1992/proverb)

how not be-IMP terrible day, but evening comes

'No matter how terrible the day may be, the evening will come.'

3.7.5.4. Occurrence of the suffix -\textit{te}

In the case of the second person plural the suffix -\textit{te} is added to the verb (see (219) above). This suffix is obligatory.

3.7.5.5 Sentence structure

The universal concessive imperative prototypically occurs in the first clause of a coordinate structure. In some cases the order is reversed:

(227) Ja lezhal na gladkoj tverdoj, odnako neskoly'ko iskrivlennoj poverxnosti. Ja ne byl
svjazan, no signaly ot mozga ne proxodili k konechnostjam, kak ni \textbf{starajsja}.\textsuperscript{137} (A.
Tjurin, \textit{Vooruzhennoe vosstanie zhivotnyx})

(…) I not was tied.up. but signals from brain not come.through to limbs, how not try-
IMP-IMPERF

\textsuperscript{137} http://www.moshkow.pp.ru:5000/lat/TYURIN/annew.txt
The Russian imperative

'I was lying down on an even, hard, but somehow bent surface. I wasn’t tied up, but the signals from my brain did not reach my limbs, whatever one tried.'

In some cases the second clause, with a verb in the indicative, is introduced with the conjunction a:

(228) Kak ni kolotis', a bez brani ne zhit'e. (Taranov, 1982: 44/proverb)
how not beat, but without swearing not life
'No matter how you beat me up, there is no life without swearing.'

The conjunction a ('but') points at the contrast between the expected consequence of the antecedent and the presented consequence.

Some clauses with a universal concessive character do not occur in a co ordinate structure, e.g.:

(229) Sjad' vozle dverej, i ne zabud' podat' komandu 'Vstat', Smirno', esli kakaja ni bud'
rozhia iz oficerov nadumaet sjuda sun't'sja.138 (Veles i Kompanij, Nevoennaja xronika
soldatskoj slu%zhby)
sit-IMP next.to doors, and not forget-IMP give command 'Stand-INF, ... at attention',
if which-F-SG-NOM not be-IMP bastard from officers decides here to.interfere.with
'Sit down next to the doors, and don’t forget to give the command “Stand ... at
attention”, if one of those bloody officers decides to interfere.'

In this sentence the imperative clause can be seen as a modification to the noun phrase. The form kakaj-nibud' ('some') is highly grammaticalized in Russian. In this sentence, however, the particle ni and the imperative are not contracted into one word, which points at the compositional status of the construction. Compare this with the following case with a normal occurrence of kakaja-nibud':

(230) Chto zh on, ptica kakaja-nibud', chtoby per', da eshche posle smerti?139 (J. Mamleev,
Sluchaj v mogile)
what PRT he, bird some, in.order sing, yes still after death
'What is he, some kind of bird, that he still sings after his death.'

139 http://www.rvb.ru:8090/mamleev/01prose/2stories/5end/01-2-5-13.htm

219
3.7.5.6 Occurrence of embedded cases

The universal concessive imperative prototypically occurs in the first clause of a co-ordinated structure. In the following sentence, however, the imperative occurs in a subordinate clause:

(231) Bukashki bystro polzli v nashu storonu. Ix processija javno napominala boevoj porjadok, i ja ponjal, chto, kak ni starajsja, nevozmozhno izbezhat' vstrechi.¹⁴⁰ (K. Sajmak, Rakovaja kukla)

insects quickly crawled in our direction. their procession clearly reminded of war order, and I understood, that what not try-IMP-IMPERF, impossible avoid meeting 'The insects crawled up in our direction. Their procession looked like soldiers marching, and I understood that, no matter how one tried, it would be impossible to avoid them.'

Such sentences show, in my opinion, that the expression kak ni starajsja is idiomaticized, such that the basic directive meaning is weakened.

3.7.6 The concessive imperative construction and the other imperative uses

In the literature it is assumed that the concessive use of the imperative can be seen as a case of 'permission'. This opinion is expressed for example by Ebeling (1956: 87), who argues that in the case of the concessive imperative use, the speaker gives permission to the hearer to suppose a certain act. In my opinion this analysis of the concessive imperative is right, but incomplete on two points. Firstly, it is necessary to state explicitly why one can speak of permission in the case of the concessive use; and secondly, Ebeling's description does not differentiate between the concessive uses under discussion, and conditional concessive cases as discussed in 3.6.5. As I explained above, these latter cases have a different semantic character, which is underlined by the different word order, the different placement of nöte', and most importantly, the fact that the directive plural suffix -te does not occur in these sentences.

Isachenko (1957: 11) emphasizes the diachronic relation between directive cases and concessive cases. He expresses this opinion in the following fragment:

¹⁴⁰ http://kulichki-lat.rambler.ru/moshkow/SIMAK/destdoll.txt
The Russian imperative

"The use of the imperative form in concessive constructions like Kak ty tam ni kruti, chto ty tam ni govori, ja tebe vse ravno ne poverju, can be seen as a transposition of the [directive] imperative. Such constructions in modern language occurred from the combination of two independent sentences, that is the exclamation (Govori chto ugodno! Govori chto xocheb'!) ['Say what you want'] and the statement (ja tebe ne poverju) ['I won't believe you']." (Isachenko, 1957: 11)

In my opinion concessive cases with a second person can indeed be seen as a special instance of the directive use of the imperative. This can be illustrated with the sentence given by Isachenko with a second person singular:

(232)  Chto ty tam ni govori, ja tebe vse ravno ne poverju.
      what you there not say-IMP-IMPERF. I you all.the same not will.believe
      'No matter what you say, I won't believe you.'

In this sentence the speaker assumes that the addressee-subject holds that under particular circumstances not q (I will believe you) is the case. By directing the addressee to perform the imperative action ('say whatever you want'), the speaker acts as if he agrees with accepting or permitting the addressee to prove that not q will be the case, by assuming that the addressee wants to make his point that under particular circumstances not q is the case. The speaker can direct the addressee to realize the imperative situation, since he assumes that q ('I will not believe you') will be the case anyway.

Note that in many cases it is clear that the speaker does not actually expect the addressee to give in to the impulse to realize the imperative situation. This is especially evident with the construction with xot', as in (213) with the verb ubit', where the occurrence of the imperative situation is presented as the most extreme possible situation relative to the given context. Cases like these underline that the concessive is primarily a rhetorical device to prove that q (=situation mentioned in the clause cooccurring with the imperative clause) is the case, rather than a form that is used to manipulate the actual behaviour of agents.

The directive performative nature of the concessive is underlined by the occurrence of the directive suffix -te in the case of the second person plural. In the case of a third person and in the case of generic agents, however, such an analysis does not apply.

141 "Transpoziciej imperativa sleduet priznat' upotreblenie etoj formy v ustupitel'nyx predlozhenijax tipa Kak ty tam ni kruti, chto ty tam ni govori, ja tebe vse ravno ne poverju. Podobnye konstrukcii sovremennogo jazyka voznikli iz sochetanija dvux samostojatel'nyx predlozhenij vosklicatel'nogo (Govori chto ugodno! Govori chto xocheb') i povestvovatel'nogo (Ja tebe ne poverju)" (Isachenko, 1957: 11).
Chapter III

Generic cases can be seen as intermediate between third person cases and second person cases. In the case of third persons, the speaker gives an impulse to the realization of the situation by the agent, which is not present in the speech situation. Such cases are closer to hortative-optative cases, so one can speak here of indirect direction. By uttering the imperative the speaker intends to contribute to the realization of the imperative situation that is not present in the speech situation. Cases with third persons can be seen as extensions of the concessive directive imperative by broadening of context of use. The occurrence of such cases is probably facilitated by the occurrence of other imperative uses with third persons, especially the optative imperative use.

Finally I will say a few words about the oppositional forms of the concessive imperative. As I remarked earlier, the concessive construction with xo' and ni can occur in different moods and tenses, viz. the present, past tense, subjunctive, and the infinitive. Below we find the same expression with the verb staratsja (‘try’, ‘do your best’, ‘make an effort’) in different moods/tenses:

skol'ko + ni + infinitive

(233) Skol'ko ni staratsja/Stanu udaljatsja/Zhizn'ju naslazhda-a-at'sja/I v stolice zhit' (…). (F. Dostoevskij, Brat'ja Karamazovy, Kniga Pjataja)
how.much not try-INF-IMPERF/I.will.start go.away/with.life enjoy/and in capital live-INF-IMPERF
‘No matter how much it takes/I want to get away/Enjoy life /And live in the capital.’

kak + S + ni + past tense

(234) Kak on ni staralsja vtolkovat’ im, oni nichego ne ponjali, a mozhet byt’, nichemu ne poverili.142 (A. & B. Strugackij, Uliika na sklonë)
how he not tried to.explain them, they nothing not understood, and may be, nothing not believed
‘No matter how he tried to teach them something, they didn’t understand anything, and perhaps believed nothing.’

142 http://lib.novgorod.net/lat/STRUGACKIE/bespokoj.txt
The Russian imperative

*kak* + S + *ni* + present

(235) Zadacha uchenika — otrazit' udar chem pridetsja. Uzh kak on ni naprjagaetsja, kak ni staraetsja uгадат' otkuda budet vypad, vse zrja.143 task of student — parry blow with. what will. come. at. hand. PRT how he not exerts. oneself, how not tries guess from. where will. be. attack, all for. nothing 'The task of a student is to parry the blow coming at him using whatever he can. No matter how he exerts himself, and tries to guess from which direction the attack will come, it's all for nothing.'

*kak* + *by* + *ni* + past tense

(236) Chelovek, kak by ni staralsja byt' Bogu vernym vo vsex pravilax, ne ustoit pered iskusheniem, dazhe, esli by on pretendoval v etom na Bozh'ju pomoshch'.144 man, how IRR not try be. to. God faithful in all rules, not will. resist before temptation, even if IRR he claims in that on God help 'Man, no matter how he might try to be faithful to God according to all the rules, will not be able to resist temptation, even if he sought for God's help God.'

*kak* + imperative

(237) Samolet, kak ni starajsja, ne uderzhish' v vozduxе dol'she neskol'kix chasov.145 (R. Bax, Most cherez vechnost') plane, how not try-IMP-IMPERF, not keep-2SG in air longer some hours 'No matter how hard you try, you won't keep a plane in the air for more than a few hours.'

Above we find the *ni* construction with the lexical verb *staraetsja* ('try') and the pronoun *kak* (except in (233), where the pronoun skol'ko ('how much') occurs), with the infinitive; past tense, present tense, subjunctive and the imperative. It should be noted here that the extracts are from different types of text, and that the first extract is from the nineteenth century, in contrast to the others, which are from the twentieth century. Such facts are important, since instances of the construction with particular moods/tenses may be archaic (such as the use of the imperative, especially with third persons), while other moods or tenses may be confined to particular styles (e.g. Garde, 1963: 245) argues that in

143 http://www.anekdot.ru:8084/d66.html
144 http://lib.ru/lat/HRISTIAN/prospect.txt
145 http://moshkow.donetsk.ua/lat/RBACH/bach04.txt

223
modern Russian the perfective present is used in the spoken language, whereas the subjunctive is used in the written language). The restriction to particular styles and periods indicates that the different moods/tenses of the construction cannot strictly be seen as oppositional forms; put differently, if there is a possibility of choice between different particular moods/tenses, this choice is based not only on purely semantic grounds, but also on register and style. Furthermore, in the case of this construction the question of (the level of) idiomaticity plays an important part (cf. Garde, 1963). It may be that some instances of the construction (in particular with the imperative mood as in (237)) have a higher degree of idiomaticity than others. This suggests that the use and distribution of the construction cannot solely be attributed to the meaning of the particular moods/tenses.

Leaving aside the factors mentioned, it seems that the differences between the different moods/tenses are connected with the meanings of these different moods. The imperative is used in those cases where the agent is generic, and where the speaker gives an impulse to the addressee (and anyone like him in the same situation) to imagine the imperative action. This means that in the case of the imperative (i) there is more speaker-addressee involvement than in the case of the other uses, (ii) the construction itself does not express the relation between the scene and some specific moment in time (as in the case of the indicative and the past tense), and (iii) there is no agreement between the agent of the verb and some specific agent (as in the case of the indicative and the past tense). The speaker-addressee involvement resulting from the directive nature of the construction with the imperative means that this construction is more lively and expressive than instances with other moods/tenses. Furthermore, it implies that the idea of ‘breaking the expected course of events’ is more clearly expressed in the case of the imperative than in that of the other moods/tenses. This means that in the case of the imperative the speaker assumes that the addressee holds that there must be some way of trying such that not q will be the case; this relation of interdependency is, however, denied. The difference between the imperative and other moods can further be illustrated with the following sentence with a perfective present, where the construction chto + ni + V does not occur in a coordinated concessive context:

(238) Vse, chto on ni skazhet, dolzhno vosprinimat’sja lish’ kak ego lichnoe menenie, a ne kak prikaz ot moego imeni ili ot imeni Legiona.147 (R. Asprin, Shutterstock rota)

146 An exception could be made for cases with -te.
147 http://lib.nordnet.ru/lat/ASPRIR/phule_1.txt
The Russian imperative

all, that he not says-PRES-PERF, must be take only as his personal opinion, and not as order from my name or from name of Legion

'Everything that he says should be taken as his own personal opinion, and not as an order on behalf of me, or on behalf of the Legion.'

If we compare this sentence to (237) — a similar construction with an imperative — we see some important differences, viz. in (238) (i) the construction with ni does not occur in a co-ordinated concessive structure, (ii) the verb is perfective, and (iii) the subject is a third person. In contrast to (237), in (238) the idea of challenging the subject ('I don't care what the subject does') is absent. In this sentence the construction is only used to refer to any future instance of the subject performing the situation expressed by the verb. It is precisely the feature of 'just go ahead, I don't care anyway because I know that it doesn't make any difference' that is typical of the imperative in the concessive construction, and not of the other moods and tenses in the concessive construction.

In my opinion, a similar analysis accounts for the imperative cases with a third person, and for concessive imperative cases with xar'. The idea of breaking the expected course of events is absent in the case of the other moods. In the case of the past tense, subjunctive, or perfective present no such assumption is made; it is only expressed that the subject in question tried/would or could try/will try different things, but that this does not lead to not q. The idea of breaking the expected course of events is also absent in the case of the infinitive in (233); this sentence has a necessitive nuance ('it does not matter how much effort one has to make').

3.7.7 Conclusion

I have argued that the concessive imperative construction with ni or xar' can be seen as an extension of the directive imperative where one of the presuppositions of the basic directive imperative, viz. speaker commits himself to wanting or accepting the imperative situation, is changed, and where the context of use is broadened from the directive context to generic cases, impersonal cases and third persons. In modern Russian third person cases are no longer productively used.

3.8 Conclusion and further remarks

In this chapter I have given an analysis of the Russian imperative. The aim of the analysis was to give an overview of the different uses of the imperative, to show how these uses
are related to one another, to account for different semantic-syntactic features of the imperative, and to show how the imperative differs from oppositional forms.

I have argued that the Russian imperative can best be seen as a complex of interrelated uses with a basic meaning. The basic imperative meaning can be defined as shown in Figure 3.19, where the meaning of \( V_{\text{IMP}} \) can be seen as the circumstances under which \( V_{\text{IMP}} \) may be uttered.

**Figure 3.19**

*Definition of the meaning of basic 'V\( _{\text{IMPERATIVE}} \)'*

By using the imperative the speaker expresses that he gives an impulse directed at the realization of 'V' (\( \rightarrow \) SIT (V)); by S, if S is expressed or given in the context; this presupposes that:

(i) 'not V' is given (that is, V is a future situation)
(ii) there is a contrast of expectation between 'V' and 'not V' (because otherwise no impulse would have to be given to realize 'V'); put differently, 'V' breaks the expected course of events.

The notion of impulse can be understood as follows: by uttering the imperative, the speaker intends to contribute to the realization of the imperative action, because the addressee (which may be expressed by the subject of the imperative predicate, or in the case of the optative imperative use, by some other entity) can follow the direction by contributing to the realization of 'V'.

The basic meaning given here can be seen as an abstraction from the directive uses and the hortative-optative uses. These uses have basic uses themselves, and extensions from these basic uses by the process of selecting, and in the case of the narrative imperative, possibly cancelling features under perspectives provided by contexts. The process of extension by feature selection occurs in different degrees (corresponding to the number of selected features), such that some instances of the imperative can be seen as borderline cases between different uses. The different uses should therefore be seen as *usage types*.

The different usage types correspond to *context types*. To decide which different uses can be distinguished I have looked at both semantic criteria and formal criteria. In the following scheme an overview is given of some of the relevant formal features of the different imperative uses. These are the occurrence of a subject (S), the occurrence of the
The Russian imperative
directive suffix -te in the case of an expressed or implied second person plural subject, the occurrence of embedded imperatives (chto V), the occurrence of the directive particle -ka, the occurrence of a set word order (WO), the aspect of the imperative, the occurrence of the particle by and the occurrence of the imperative in a co-ordinate complex, and the order of the clauses within this complex. If a particular feature is attested I have indicated this with a +, if it is a necessary feature, I have expressed this with N. An overview of different imperative uses and the linguistic context types of these uses is given in Table 3.2.

The different linguistic features give indication of the following usage types:

- S: gives information about the directive or non-directive context of use; identification of directive versus non-directive uses
- -te: necessary with second person plural directive variants; identification of directive versus non-directive uses
- -ka: possible with non-permissive hortative-directive variants; partial identification of directive/hortative versus non-directive/hortative uses
- chto: not possible in the case of basic directive/hortative cases
- WO: VS order is obligatory in the case of the optative use and conditional use; identification of hortative (optative, conditional) use
- aspect: the narrative imperative is obligatorily perfective; identification of narrative imperative
- by: can be expressed with the optative and counterfactual conditional; identification of the abstraction from the basic hortative use
- coordinate complex: identification of conditional-concessive uses
- clause order: an apodosis-protasis order is not possible in the case of the conditional directive and conditional optative interpretation; identification of the abstraction from the basic directive-hortative context

As I argued, the imperative can be used in different ways, such that different functions of the basic meaning can be defined. Different functions of the imperative constitute different usage types. The different imperative usage types and the relations between them are given in Figure 3.20.

In Figure 3.20 the lines represent semantic relations between the uses as described in the preceding sections. The arrows point at hierarchical relations that exist between uses. They represent semantic transfers. If use B is a transferred case of use A, there is a
hierarchical relation between A and B in the sense that B can be transferred from A, and not A from B.

Table 3.2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Uses*</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>te</th>
<th>chto</th>
<th>ka</th>
<th>WO</th>
<th>aspect</th>
<th>by</th>
<th>co-complex</th>
<th>Cl-order</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DIR</td>
<td>2sg/pl, Ø= addressee or generic</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>V, SV</td>
<td>VS</td>
<td>perf, impf</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>A-P</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEC</td>
<td>123sg/pl, Ø= generic or impers, 2 = speaker</td>
<td>+</td>
<td></td>
<td>SV, (VS)</td>
<td></td>
<td>impf (perf)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAR</td>
<td>123sg/pl imp, Ø= impers.</td>
<td>+</td>
<td></td>
<td>SV, (VS)</td>
<td></td>
<td>perf</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OPT</td>
<td>123sg/pl imp, Ø= impers.</td>
<td>+148</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>VS149</td>
<td>perf (impf)</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+ A-P</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COND</td>
<td>123sg/pl imp, Ø= impers.</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>VS</td>
<td>perf (impf)</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>N Both</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONC</td>
<td>2,3sg/pl150 Ø= generic, (impers.)152</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>Interr S</td>
<td>impf</td>
<td>N151 A-P</td>
<td>(P-A)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+ ni</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>ni V X</td>
<td>(=S)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONC</td>
<td>2,3sg/pl Ø= generic, (impers.)</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>xot'V</td>
<td>impf (perf)</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>A-P (P-A)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* DIR=directive, NEC=necessitive, NAR=narrative, OPT=optative, COND=conditional, CONC=

148 Cases with -te could equally be seen as directive cases.
149 With a few exceptions.
150 Although I have not attested first person singular cases, I suspect that such uses are also possible.
151 There seem to be a few exceptions here (see (229)).
152 I have not attested concessive impersonal uses (with ni or xot'), but I suspect such uses are possible.
The Russian imperative

concessive, A=apodosis, P=protasis, wo=word order, S=subject, V=verb, +=possible, N=necessary.

Figure 3.20

(i) Directive uses
(ii) Conditional uses
(iii) The speaker is the giver of the impulse
(iv) The impulse giver is not the speaker
(v) Uses where there is an identifiable impulse giver\(^ {153} \)
(vi) Hortative uses (the speaker directs the subject indirectly)
(vii) Uses where the impulse is aimed at the actual performance of the situation

Contexts (c) are given that are relevant for the semantic extensions:

\[ c_1 = \text{The imperative occurs in a coordinate complex; the subject of the imperative can be equated with the generic addressee} \]

\[ c_2 = \text{The subject is a first or third person, a force other than the speaker is given or understood from the context} \]

\(^ {153} \) In the case of the necessitive there is a clear force, but the identity may be less identifiable.
$c_3 =$ The aspect of the verb is perfective; the imperative action is embedded in the narration; no force is given or understood from the context (although one may perhaps still speak of fate)

$c_4 =$ The verb occurs in a coordinate complex; there is no feature [+wish]; there is a possibility of placing 'V' in a counterfactual world (+by)

$c_5 =$ The imperative occurs in a coordinate complex; introduced with universal interrogative adverb +ni, or xoi'

This means that an abstraction from both use A and use B would result in loss of information, and that the meaning of use B can only be explained in terms of its relation to A (B is understood in terms of A).

The creation of the polysemous complex is the result of applying the imperative in a new context of use, whereby the meaning of the new use can be understood only on the basis of the interaction between the basic meaning and the new context. In some cases the relation between the original use and the new use is no longer transparent, for example in the case of the relation between instances with the feature 'non-subject force' and the narrative; this can probably be seen as a case of cancelling features. As I have explained in my analysis, the process of understanding requires knowledge of general pragmatic-cognitive principles. As such, the different uses can be seen as interpretations with an independent status. They can be seen as interpretations, because they can only be understood on the basis of the basic meaning, but they can be seen as independent uses, because different uses can be defined on the basis of clear examples. In the case of some uses, more specifically the narrative, the independent status is even stronger, as there are no borderline cases exist between the narrative and other imperative uses.

The specific relations between the different uses can further be described in the following way:

A1: Prototypical directive use

Main features:
1. Force: speaker
2. Goal: $\rightarrow$ SIT(V)
3. Subject situation: addressee
4. Object force: addressee

B. Necessitive: Extension of A1 by change of perspective (embedding)
The Russian imperative

select 2, modify 1: force other than speaker to get SIT(V) done, modify 3, 4: subject situation to 1,3sg/pl and impersonal, object force is subject situation:
1. Force: non-speaker
2. Goal: \( \rightarrow \text{SIT(V)} \)
3. Subject situation: 1-3sg/pl, impersonal
4. Object force: subject situation

C. Narrative: Modification or weakening of B
modify 2 by adding presupposition of unexpected nature SIT(V); possibly cancelling 1, or weakening 1 (force is 'fate')

D. Concessive: Modification of A1 by (i) changing precondition, and (ii) broadening context
(a) select all, modify 2: the speaker acts as if he wants the addressee to perform V, (b) modify 3, 4, such that subject situation = third person (broadening context of use), and object of force is addressee

A2: Prototypical hortative-optative use

Main features:
1. Force: speaker
2. Goal: \( \rightarrow \text{SIT(V)} \)
3. Subject situation: 1,2,3sg/pl, impersonal
4. Object force: addressee (hearer, non-specified phenomenon)

B2: Conditional use Modification of A2 by 'rhetorical' reasoning (weakening feature of performance)
modify 2, only hypothetical performance (as if/performace)

In many cases the idea of extension can be interpreted synchronically. This is the case for example with the necessitive imperative, which can be understood on the basis of the directive imperative. In other cases the notion of extension must be interpreted diachronically. This is the case for example with the conditional imperative, which can be seen as an extension of the optative imperative. In contemporary Russian, however, the optative imperative is not productive. Nevertheless, in modern Russian the imperative is still productively used as a conditional with third and first persons. In my
opinion, the conditional use must be seen as a remnant of an extended optative imperative, which has survived independently. This means that the conditional imperative can only be analyzed diachronically as an extension of the optative use. The fact that the conditional imperative is still productively used in modern Russian points to the fact that it can be seen as a use with an independent status: If the conditional imperative could only be interpreted on the basis of the optative imperative, the loss of the optative imperative would lead to a loss or at least a change of the conditional imperative. In my opinion, the 'survival' of the conditional is probably made possible by the fact that it shares important features with directive uses, or directive-based uses (such as the necessitive). The different directive uses, and the conditional use, which can be seen as a hortative use in a weakened form, can all be seen as instances of the basic directive-hortative imperative meaning.

It could be argued that the loss of the optative imperative means that the basic meaning of the imperative given above could be undergoing a change, restricting the use of the imperative to directive contexts, or contexts that can be derived from directive use, such as the necessitive. Such a phenomenon may possibly be perceived in the case of the concessive use, which seems to be restricted to second persons in modern Russian, in contrast to earlier stages where the concessive also occurred with third persons. The occurrence of the conditional, however, points to the fact that the basic meaning of the imperative must still take (semi-)hortative variants into account. In the synchronic system, however, the directive use has a more central status than other uses, such as the narrative and the conditional. The present central status of the Russian directive imperative may be an important factor in future changes in the imperative system.

Although it is not possible to give a necessary and sufficient definition for all the uses of the imperative, it is possible to abstract from the uses on different levels. On the highest abstractional level we find the unexpected realization of the imperative situation, which is typical of all the imperative uses, and can therefore be seen as a necessary condition. The imperative is always linked to the idea of contrast of expectation between situations: there is always a contrast between the imperative situation (SIT(V)) and the situation expected of the agent (SIT(not V)); because of the contrast the imperative often has a so-called modal subjective character.

On a lower abstractional level we find that the idea of contrast is the result of the non-agent or foreign impulse: the impulse leads to a change of situation, and a contrast between the imperative action and the expected action of the agent. This foreign impulse may be the speaker or another force and the performer/agent of the action may be the
The Russian imperative

hearer or an entity not present in the speaker-addressee context. In the case of the highest abstraction, exemplified by the narrative, we find that the idea of change of situation and the resulting contrast between the imperative action and the expected action of the agent appear independently of the foreign impulse, although it may be that in the case of the narrative 'fate' can be identified with the foreign impulse.

The directive-hortative character of the imperative accounts for the absence of tense and agreement features. The aspect of the imperative gives information about the internal structure of the action, and can be perfective or imperfective. The imperative expresses an action, event, or state and can evoke the thought of an agent or the carrier of an event or state. The subject of the imperative is expressed in the nominative case. It is not expressed in the case of a generic agent and is often not expressed if it is clear from the context, as in the case of the directive use. A dative subject occurs in some necessitave uses and, according to the general rule in Russian, with impersonal verbs. The word order for the imperative clause follows the general principles of word order in Russian. In the case of the optative use and conditional use, however, we find a fixed VS order. The clause initial position of the imperative verb is connected with the 'background' status of the verb.

The highest abstraction described above, or the basic imperative meaning cannot be seen as the meaning of the imperative. However, it does not include the use of the oppositional forms of the imperative (e.g. directive use of the infinitive, necessitave use with dle etc.; conditional sentences with esli etc.). This may be connected with the borders of the polysemous complex: the polysemous complex can only be extended if the new highest abstraction does not capture oppositional use. This means that in the polysemous complex a particular given imperative use shows more similarity to the other imperative uses, more particular to the basic imperative use, than to an oppositional form.154

A few words should be said about the question of polysemy versus monosemy. In my opinion both frameworks point at important aspects of the meaning of the imperative. Important aspects of the different approaches are given below:

Important aspects of the monosemous approach

(i) The idea of direction (or foreign impulse) is a feature of every use, or is necessary to understand every use.

(ii) Many instances of the imperative can be seen as borderline cases between different usage types.

154 This is in contrast to the level of function, where uses show more similarity to their oppositional forms than to uses of the same form with a different function.
(iii) All imperative uses share features that stand in opposition to other uses.

**Important aspects of the polysemous approach**

(i) There is no necessary and sufficient condition for the imperative that predicts which uses are correct and which are not.

(ii) Different imperative uses have an 'independent' character.

(iii) The relation between the different uses can be analyzed in terms of semantic transfers (which means that some uses can be seen as extensions of other uses).

The approach that I advocated can be seen as an intermediate position between the monosemous approach and the polysemous approach. It shares with the monosemous approach the idea that some collection of features (viz. directivity) can be seen as a necessary and sufficient condition for the correct understanding (rather than correct use) of the imperative, and with the polysemous approach it shares the idea that different uses have a more or less independent status, and that different uses can be analyzed in terms of extensions of other uses. I would like to stress that it is quite possible that new data, both synchronic and diachronic, may change the proposed structure of meaning relations between the different uses. Nevertheless, I think that an analysis of the meaning structure of the imperative must principally follow the approach that I have used.

Finally some words have to be said about the status of the different types. In my analysis I have not thoroughly investigated the issues of (a) period and diachronic change, (b) style and register, and (c) idiomaticity. Below I will briefly make some general remarks about these issues.

Firstly, some uses are confined to a particular period, and are no longer productively used in modern Russian. This is the case for example with the concessive uses with third persons, which were still productive in the nineteenth century, but in modern Russian occur almost exclusively in petrified expressions. No clear motivation can be given for the disappearance of this use, but it may be that the disappearance of third person cases is connected with the disappearance of clear third person hortative cases in the imperative system, more especially the disappearance of the optative imperative.

The optative imperative use occurs in modern Russian only in petrified expressions; in the beginning of the nineteenth century the optative imperative was still productive in high-style literary discourse with archaic features. The decline of the optative imperative is probably related to the rise of the lexical item *past*; this explanation also
motivates the productive use of the conditional imperative, since this use does not stand in opposition to *pust*.

A similar phenomenon can be perceived in the case of the narrative imperative. In the nineteenth century the narrative imperative still occurred in literary texts, but in modern Russian there seems to be a stronger restriction to very specific styles and registers (*skaz*, spoken language). The tendency of decline of the narrative imperative can probably be attributed to the oppositional construction with *vzijat*.

Secondly, the style and register are important in the study of the polysemous complex. Some uses of the imperative are confined to particular styles or registers. This is the case for example with the narrative imperative, which in modern Russian only occurs in spoken language, and in *skaz*-type language. In the case of the other imperative uses, restrictions to particular styles can often be attributed to the *meaning* of the imperative. Since the imperative always expresses a situation that breaks the expected course of events, it has a typical modal subjective character. This character is typical of discourse where the speaker's involvement is at stake, and not so much of less informal texts, such as scientific texts.

Finally, the study of the polysemous complex must take account of degrees of idiomaticity and the restriction of uses to particular lexical items, and particular contexts. In the case of the necessitive imperative use, there is a tendency of restriction to constructions without expressed subject (generic interpretation) and to third or first person subjects in contrastive constructions. As I have explained above, these restrictions can be attributed to the meaning of this use. In the case of the optative imperative there is a restriction to petrified expressions, mostly expressions where reference is made to a supernatural force; in the spoken language, the optative imperative can be used in non-petrified expressions with the lexical item *byt* and the particle *by*. The concessive imperative use is restricted to idiomatic expressions in the case of third persons. Also in the case of a non-expressed subject (generic interpretation), or second persons a tendency can be perceived to use the construction in idiomatic expressions. I think that the tendency to idiomaticity is, at least partly, connected to the specific 'rhetorical' character of the imperative construction under discussion: the language user can make use of 'prefab' expressions with a strong rhetorical character. Further analysis of the imperative will have to focus on these specific features.