

“Extended imperatives” in Russian and Polish

Natalia Anisimova
Slavisches Seminar

1. Introduction

My PhD project deals with imperative forms, labeled preliminarily as “extended imperatives”, in modern Russian and Polish. The forms I am interested in consist of at least two elements, whereas at least one of them is a morphological imperative. Besides, I consider the whole construction to be used as a single directive speech act with illocutionary force. At the same time, the verb (imperative) may be supposedly classified as the main element ruling other elements of the utterance. Syntactic and semantic relationships between the elements should be however clarified more in detail.

2. Research object & conceptual basis

Several “extended imperatives” have recently come into focus of Slavonic linguistics. However, the number of studies is scarce, and in both languages (Russian and Polish) they have been discussed separately of other Slavic languages (with no comparison to each other) so far.

Zinken & Deppermann (2017: 51) call such new developments in Polish “double imperatives”. With this term they consider the combination of ‘take’-IMP with V-IMP:

Weź mi wyjmij proszę torebkę!

Take-IMP me **take-out-IMP** please bag

In utterances of this type the verb ‘take’ “do[es] not always request that the other person »take« something” (ibid.). The verb ‘take’ has rather lost its literal meaning and serves only as an extension of the main verb.

Similar utterances were also described before by Pułaczewska (2010, 2012). She wrote about [‘take’-IMP + V-IMP], as well as [‘come’-IMP + V-IMP] and [‘give’-IMP + V-IMP] in Polish as partly “periphrastic imperatives” and partly “serial imperatives”.

The Russian linguistics deals with [‘give’-IMP + V-IMP] mainly as periphrastic imperatives (e.g. Barentsen 2003, Birjulin 1994, Podlesskaja 2005). Sometimes the terms “double verbs” (Weiss 2013) or “analytical imperatives” (Hansen 2004, von Waldenfels 2012) are used. Constructions of the types [‘take’-IMP + V-IMP] and [‘come’-IMP + V-IMP] in Russian are not analyzed linguistically at present.

3. Research question & hypotheses

My research question is innovative insofar as I will try to analyze “extended imperatives” systematically and in both languages in parallel. Furthermore, I will try to

get through terminological dispute on the status of such imperatives and relationships of their elements. To reach the second goal various hypotheses will be tested.

In particular, the question will be addressed, if the first element of the construction preserves some autonomy from a morphosyntactic and semantic perspective, and if it forms a single imperative unit with the main verb only in a particular context (on pragmatic reasons). In this case, the “extended imperative” consists of a full imperative and a discourse marker.

On the other hand it will be tested if the first element of the construction has undergone the process of grammaticalization, so that it has largely lost its own autonomy, became a particle and the whole construction may be regarded as an “analytical” (or “serial”) imperative. The criteria of the so called “grammaticalization” should be however assembled in the most objective way (e.g. alongside with Lehmann 2002, mainly followed in Slavonic linguistics, also Heine, Claudi & Hünemeyer 1991, Hopper & Traugott 2008, Givón 1979 etc.).

The first two papers of my cumulative dissertation deal with the [‘give’-IMP + V-IMP] constructions in Russian and Polish, following [‘come’-IMP + V-IMP] and [‘take’-IMP + V-IMP] (third and fourth publications). My aim is to clarify morphosyntactic and semantic relationships in each language, to compare them, as well as to draw some typological conclusions.

4. Methods

My methods are both theoretical and empirical. As to the empirical part, I began to work with the Russian National Corpus and Polish National Corpus. Both corpora are representative and comparable in terms of the amount and variety of sources. The main emphasis is on the analysis of data from the 1990s onwards. The recent liberalization of language use in Poland and Russia might have resulted in a higher frequency of non-standard forms which previously were largely ignored. My preliminary corpus study has already revealed the presence of “extended imperatives” in the contemporary Russian and Polish literature.

In the following, language tests will be performed with native speakers of Russian and Polish. Preliminary conclusions made during the analysis of corpus data will be thus verified by means of acceptance tests. Some further experiments (elicitation tests, descriptive tests etc.) are also considered. In this respect, I will be grateful for any advice.

5. Time schedule

I began working on my PhD thesis in September 2017 and have already conducted my first corpus studies (constructions of the type [‘give’-IMP + V-IMP]). In the next future, I am going to control and evaluate the obtained results, as well as to design language experiments (June-July 2018). Then, I intend to perform the experiments and evaluate them in order to prepare the first two publications (August-December 2018). The following two publications will be prepared 2019 – beginning of 2020. I intend to complete my PhD thesis by mid-2020.

References:

- Barentsen A.A. (2003). O nekotoryh izmenenijah v upotreblenii vyraženiij prizyva k sovmestnomu dejstvu v russkikh tekstah poslednih dvuh stoletij [On some changes in the use of expressions with 1st person plural imperative semantics in Russian texts of the last two centuries]. In: *Time flies. Festschrift for William Veder*. Pegasus Oost-Europese Studies 2. 13-40.
- Birjulin, L. (1994). *Semantika i pragmatika russkogo imperativa [The semantics and pragmatics of the Russian imperative]*. Slavica Helsingiensia 13. Helsinki.
- Givón, T. (1979). *On Understanding Grammar*. Ch. 5, Syntactization. New York: Academic Press
- Hansen, B. (2004). The Grammaticalization of the Analytical Imperatives in Russian, Polish and Serbian/Croatian. In: *Welt der Slawen XLIX*. 257-274.
- Heine, B., Claudi, U. & Hünnemeyer, F. (1991). *Grammaticalization: a Conceptual Framework*. Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press.
- Hopper, P.J. & Traugott E.C. (2008). *Grammaticalization*. 2nd ed. Cambridge Univ. Press.
- Lehmann, Ch. (2002). *Thoughts on grammaticalization*. 2nd rev. ed. Arbeitspapiere des Seminars für Sprachwissenschaft der Universität Erfurt.
- Podlesskaja, V.I. (2005). Russkie glagoly *dat'/davat'*: ot priamych upotreblenij k grammatikalizirovannym [Russian verbs *dat'/davat'*: from direct to grammaticalized use]. In: *Voprosy jazykoznanija* 2. 89-103.
- Pułaczewska, H. (2010). Conceptual Focus in Social Encounters: The Case of Directives. In: *Lodz Papers in Pragmatics* 6.1. 171-189
- Pułaczewska, H. (2012). *Directives in Young Peer Groups. A Contrastive Study of Reality TV*. Lincom Europa.
- Von Waldenfels, R. (2012). *The Grammaticalization of 'Give' + Infinitive. A Comparative Study of Russian, Polish, and Czech*. De Gruyter Mouton.
- Weiss, D. (2013). Russian double verbs in the 1st pl Imperative. In: *Wiener Slawistischer Almanach* 85. 165-175.
- Zinken & Deppermann (2017). A cline of visible commitment in the situated design of imperative turns: Evidence from German and Polish. In: Sorjonen, M.-L. et al. (eds.): *Imperative Turns at Talk. The design of directives in action*. John Benjamins Publishing Company.