



Imperatives and negation in Romance languages

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1. Introduction: Diversity in the relationship between imperatives and negation

Imperatives (= true imperatives) in Romance languages (and not only in them) may or may not be negated.

Pre-verbal negation incompatible with imperatives; Italian 2nd pers (also Daco-Romanian and Spanish):

(1) **Non parla !* `Don`'t speak` (*parla*= true imperative)

Pre-verbal negation incompatible with plural imperatives but compatible with singular ones; the dialect in Cortina D`Ampezzo, Italy.

2nd pers:

(2) *No laõra !* `Don`'t work` (*laõra* =true imperative)

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5th pers (= 2nd pers. pl.):

(3) **No lourà !* `Don`t work` (*lourà*=true imperative)

Pre-verbal negation compatible with imperatives; Aromanian (a dialect of Romanian)

2nd pers:

(4) *Nu zi !* `Don`t speak` (*zi*=true imperative)

3

Post-verbal negation compatible with imperatives;

French (also Wallon, several dialects of Italian – Piedmontese, Valdotain, Milanese - and several varieties of Occitan - see Zanuttini 1997:111-112)

2nd pers.:

(5) *Ne parle pas !* `Don`'t speak` (*parle*=true imperative)

4

Post-verbal negation incompatible with imperatives; Modern Central Occitan.

2nd pers:

(6) **Canta pas !* `Don`'t sing` (*canta*=true imperative)

Is a unified perspective on this diversity possible ?

Leading concepts in the present analysis: verbalization and deverbalization.

2. Expressing directives

Parts of speech crucially involved in expressing directives: interjections and verbs. Spanish:

(7) ¡ Anda, Juan ! `Come on John !`

(8) ¡ Habla ! `Speak !`

A property of interjections and verbs: when involved in expressing directives they are no longer pure interjections or verbs.

An interjection that expresses a directive (a *D-interjection*) loses a feature of interjection but acquires a feature of verb.

A verb form that expresses a directive (a *D-verb form*) loses something from its verbhood and acquires a feature of interjection.

So, D-interjections tend to become verbs, whereas D-verb forms tend to become interjections. In Romance languages these tendencies are illustrated by two properties: independent occurrence and adverbial modification.

3. Independent occurrence

Interjections in general never occur in subordination. The same holds for D-interjections. Romanian:

(9) **Hai** ! `Come on !` / I-am spus *că **hai** ! `I told him *that come on !`

Verbs in general are allowed (or even have to) occur in subordination:

(10) I-am spus că (ea) **mănâncă** `I told him that (she) was eating`

D-verb forms, though, cannot be subordinate:

(11) **Mănâncă** ! `Eat !` (sg.) / I-am spus că * **mănâncă** ! `I told him that eat !`

The incapacity of the D-verb forms to occur in subordination is a (weak) symptom of de-verbalisation: due to this property, D-verb forms tend to come closer to interjections.

4. Adverbial modification

Verbs in general may be modified by adverbials. Italian:

(12) Gianni è venuto subito `John has come quickly`

Interjections on the other hand cannot be modified:

(13) Uff, **subito**, Gianni, subito ! `Ooh, quick, John, quick !`

Nevertheless, D-interjections are allowed to be modified. Compare (14) with (15):

(14) Smettila **adesso!** `Stop it right now !`

(15) Vieni **subito !** ”Come quickly !`

The availability of the D-interjections to adverbial modification is a weak symptom of their verbalisation.

5. D-words

D-words: an intermediary category in between verbs and interjections.

D-words= D-interjections and D-verb forms

	Independent occurrence	Adverbial modification
D-words (interjections or verb forms)	+	+
Non-D-interjections	+	-
Non-D-verb forms	underspecified or -	+

5.1. D-words and negation

D-interjections cannot be negated. This is relevant, because their incompatibility with negation goes with another interjection property – the independent occurrence.

On the other hand, in spite of the fact that negation *does* characterize the verb in general, some D-verb forms may be negated, whereas some others may not.

Compatibility with negation may be interpreted in this context as more verbhood in the nature of imperatives, whereas incompatibility means less verbhood and more de-verbalisation.

6. Verbalization and deverbalization scales

D-interjections on the one hand and D-verb forms on the other may be seen as occupying different positions on two scales, the scale of the D-interjections and the scale of the D-verb forms, respectively.

The D-interjection scale describes distinct stages in the verbalisation of the D-interjections. The D-verb form scale in turn records the stages of the deverbalisation of the verb forms.

The D-interjection scale (verbalisation):

Int-P1 (the lowest position): D-interjections non-inflected and incompatible with negation (examples: It. *Dai* !, Sp. *Anda* !)

Int-P2: D-interjections inflected and incompatible with negation (Ro. *Hai-de-ți* !
`Come on !` (pl.))

The D-verb form scale (de-verbalisation):

Verb-P1 (the highest position: full verbhood): inflected or auxiliary-composed D-verb forms compatible with negation (suppletive imperatives in Romanian, Italian and Spanish, auxiliary-composed imperatives in the dialects of Padua and Cortina D`Ampezzo, true imperatives in French (post-verbal negation))

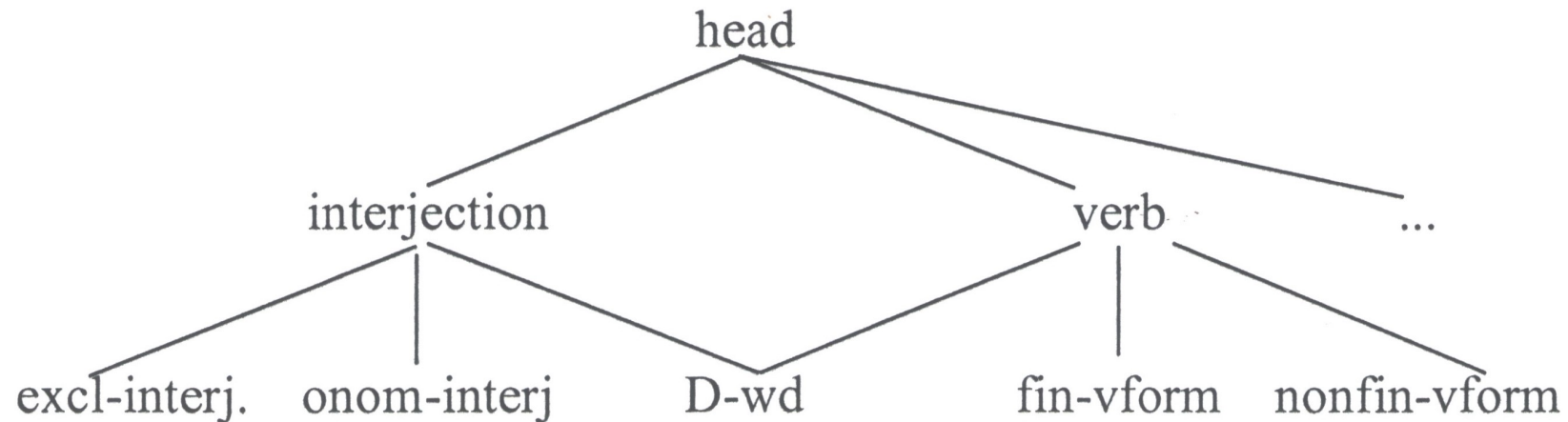
Verb-P2: inflected D-verb forms incompatible with negation (imperatives in Romanian, imperatives of the 5th person in the Cortina D`Ampezzo dialect),

Verb-P3: non-inflected D-verb forms compatible with negation (root imperatives in Aromanian).

Verb-P4: non-inflected D-verb forms incompatible with negation (root and truncated imperatives in Romanian, Italian and Spanish).

7. D-words as a mixed category in the HPSG Hierarchical Lexicon

A mixed category: a type with a position in the hierarchy such that the type has (usually) two super-types (Malouf 2000). The type: *D-wd*. Its super-types: *interj* and *verb*.



Encoding the availability of D-words to dependents through inheritance.

Non-D-interjections (i.e. exclamative and onomatopoeic interjections) are not available to dependents:

C1: *excl-interj* → [DEPS: *elist*]

Verbs, on the other hand, *are* available to:

C2: *verb* → [DEPS: *list*]

Thanks to C2, D-words inherit from verbs the availability to have dependents.

Encoding the independent occurrence of D-words through inheritance

Interjections have independent occurrence:

C3: *interj* → [IC: +]

On the other hand the availability to subordination may be represented as a property of the finite verb forms (a subtype of *verb*):

C4: *fin-vform* → [IC: *boolean*]

Thanks to C3, D-words inherit from interjections the property of independent occurrence.

Avoid the clash of distinct values for the HEAD attribute through constraint inheritance.

Default constraints for interjection and verb.

C6: *interj* → [HEAD: /*interj*]

C7: *verb* → [HEAD: /*verb*]

If no other more specific constraint appears, the HEAD value of an interjection is the type *interj* and the HEAD value of a verb is the type *verb*.

8. Conclusions

A new understanding of imperatives and in this context a new interpretation of the relationships between imperatives and negation

The new understanding inspires an explanation of these relationships.

Thank you !

...And special gratitude to the anonymous reviewers !