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## Explicit second person subjects in Russian imperatives: semantics, word order, and a comparison with English<sup>1</sup>

### *Abstract*

*This paper offers an analysis of the function of the second person subject of the imperative in Russian. Apart from expressing contrast, the subject of the imperative is used for various pragmatic functions. It is shown that these functions can only be accounted for by looking both at the information structure of the sentence as a whole (word order and sentence stress), and the vocative-like properties of the subject. The specific analysis of these functions is supported by corpus data, more specifically the use of lexical verbs and the use of modal particles. Finally, the function of the subject of the imperative in Russian is compared to the function of the subject of the imperative in English. This comparison shows that the pragmatic functions of the imperative subject in English differ significantly from those of Russian. It is suggested that the difference between Russian and English may be partly due to the fact that English has a relatively rigid word order, whereas Russian word order is largely determined by information structure.*

### 1. Theoretical preliminaries

In many languages the imperative can be used without a pronoun that expresses the agent of the imperative action (see Dryer 2005, who argues that many languages that normally employ pronouns in subject position in declarative sentences do not do so in imperative sentences). Russian is no exception to this tendency (see e.g. Rozental' 1977). A typical imperative utterance in Russian therefore occurs without a pronoun that functions as the subject of the imperative:

- (1)    *Idi*                      *sjuda!*  
         come-IMP.2SG   here  
         ‘Come here!’

For the remainder of the paper I will use the term ‘subject’ for instances of the second person pronoun in nominative singular (*ty*) or plural (*vy*) of the imperative. I will not discuss Russian counterparts of English third person subjects like *nobody*, *everyone*, etc. It should also be stressed that I will not deal with uses of second person pronouns that are clearly vocative (see also section 3.1).

Even though imperative sentences without a subject are the rule rather than the exception, there are specific contexts where subjects are used. In some sentences, the use of the subject is connected to the contrastive context in which the imperative occurs, for example:<sup>2</sup>

- (2)    *Net, ty*                      *skazi.*  
         no,   you-NOM.SG tell-IMP.2SG  
         ‘No, you tell me.’  
         (www.aldebaran.ru/det/vasina/vasina6/?13)

In other sentences, however, a contrastive context is lacking. Such sentences can occur with the subject both before or after the verb:

- (3) *Da zamolčite vy!* [Mitja addresses a professor]  
 PRT stop.talking-IMP.2PL you-NOM.2PL  
 Oh, stop talking!  
 (E. Popov, *Golubaja flejta*)
- (4) [Anja wants to become an actress, but her parents are not that pleased]  
*Ty posmotri na sebja, kakaja iz tebja aktrisa?*  
 you-NOM.2SG look-IMP.2SG at self, what from you actress?  
 ‘Just have a look at yourself, what kind of actress are you?’  
 (Stolica, 1997.09.29)

In these sentences the use of the subject plays a part on the *intersubjective* level between the speaker and the hearer (see Verhagen 2005 for the term intersubjective). The use of a subject modifies the way in which the speaker tries to influence the behavior of the addressee. Such pragmatic functions are, however, notoriously difficult to capture.

Traditionally, the occurrence of non-contrastive subjects is explained in terms of the strengthening or weakening of the categorical character of the direction (e.g. Šaxmatov 1941; Vinogradov 1947). The general view is that word order – specifically the position of the subject before or after the verb – plays an important role in the function of the subject. However, there is considerable disagreement among scholars about the specific function of the placement of the subject (see e.g. Dippong 1995; Moon 1995 for an overview of these different views). To give an example, Šaxmatov (1941) argues that the order [pronouns<sub>S</sub> + IMP<sub>V</sub>] occurs in the case of a categorical order, whereas [IMP<sub>V</sub> + pronouns<sub>S</sub>] must be seen as a weakened case of instruction. Vinogradov (1947), however, argues that [IMP<sub>V</sub> + pronouns<sub>S</sub>] must be seen as a strong request.

In my opinion, the analysis of the function of the subject 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’. First, it remains unexplained what exactly is meant by ‘weakening’ or ‘softening’. Second, even though in some contexts the use of a subject may indeed be associated with the weakening or softening of the tone of the imperative as compared to sentences without a subject (see Moon 1995: 100, for examples), the weakening-softening notion itself is not sufficient to account for the occurrence of the subject. As the following sentences show, the use of a subject before the verb can be associated both with a categorical order and a polite request:

- (5) – *Ty zamolči, – velel Vasilij (...).*  
 you-NOM.SG be.quiet-IMP.2SG ordered Vasilij  
 ‘‘Be quiet’, ordered Vasilij.’  
 (D. Doncova, *Mikstura ot kosoglazija*)
- (6) *Včera večerom syn 3-x let, ukladyvajas’ spat’, tak vežljivo mamke:*  
 – *Mam, a ty kupi mne mašinku, velosiped,*  
 mom, PRT you-NOM.SG buy-IMP.2SG me toy,car, bicycle  
*konstruktor, pistol, soldatikov...*  
 erector set, pistol, soldiers...

‘Yesterday evening my three year old son, putting himself to bed, so politely asked his mother: ‘Mom, (can you) buy me a toy car, a bicycle, erector set, a pistol, soldiers...’  
(humor.kinnet.ru/an/an0601/o060123.html)

Similarly, in sentences with a VS order the directive speech act may have a rude character as in (7), or the character of a gentle advice as in (8):

- (7) *Da ne revī ty, staraja,*  
PRT not cry-IMP.2SG you-NOM.SG, old.woman,  
*grubo prevral ja Manulixu.*  
rudely interrupted I Manuljixa  
‘Stop crying, old woman, I rudely interrupted Manuljixa.’  
(A. Kuprin, *Olesja*;  
[www.klassika.ru/read.html?proza/kuprin/olesya.txt&page=13](http://www.klassika.ru/read.html?proza/kuprin/olesya.txt&page=13))
- (8) *Ne slyšaj ty èti sipy-dergi, Èdin’ka,*  
not listen-IMP.2SG you-NOM.SG those hoarse-screamers, Èdin’ka,  
– *laskovo govorila babka.*  
gently said granny  
‘‘Don’t listen to that hoarse screaming’, granny said gently.’ [said about a type of music]  
(È. Limonov, *U nas byla Velikaja Èpoxa*)

Sentences such as these show that an analysis based on the weakening-strengthening notion does not make the right predictions (e.g. some sentences with an SV order have a ‘strong’ directive character, while others have a ‘weak’ character). Furthermore, it remains unclear how one can motivate this supposed function of word order in terms of the function of word order in Russian in general.

Another, more sophisticated approach to the non-contrastive function of the imperative subject is provided by Moon (1995: 118–121). She provides an analysis within the transactional model of discourse set forth in Yokoyama (1986). Moon sees a relation between the vocative-like use of the pronoun, for example, the use of the pronoun to attract attention or establish eye-contact, and the use of the subject in non-contrastive sentences. She argues that the main reason why a subject is used is that the addressee is found in the periphery of the shared set of the speaker’s and addressee’s common concern, despite his/her pre-established contact with the speaker (Moon 1995: 119). In such contexts, she argues, the speaker uses the subject to mark that the addressee is the (temporal) discourse topic of the coming utterance. In other words, the use of the subject focuses the attention on the addressee in a context where the discourse topic has been something other than the addressee. This can be illustrated with (9), where the discourse topic preceding the imperative is the talkative speaker. In this sentence, Moon argues (1995: 118), the subject is required because the speaker needs to place the addressee in the center of the shared set of the speaker’s and addressee’s common concern:

- (9) [Translation of the utterance preceding the imperative: ‘Well there, I’ve chattered away like a machine gun. It was all bottled up inside me.’]  
*Vy ne podumajte, mne xorošo živetsja!*

you-NOM.2PL not think-IMP.2PL (...)  
 ‘Don’t get the wrong idea. I am getting along fine!’

Although I think Moon correctly identifies the importance of vocative-like properties of the subject, and the relation between the use of a subject and discourse topicality (discourse predictability), there are two reasons why Moon’s analysis is not entirely correct, or at least incomplete as an explanation for the use of the imperative subject.

First, even though in contexts like (9) with the verb *podumat* ‘(think)’ the use of the imperative subject is very natural, it is not obligatory. This means that a change in discourse topic as in (9) does not imply that the speaker has to place the addressee in the center of the shared set of the speaker’s and addressee’s common concern by using a subject. Furthermore, in many contexts where a subject is used, it is not even really evident that the speaker wants to *switch* the discourse topic to the addressee. A sentence like (4) or (9) can therefore very well be used at a moment in the discourse where the speaker has already been talking about the addressee. Also note that the imperative subject can be used in sentences where a second person pronoun is used in the sentence preceding the imperative. This is for example the case in (10):

- (10) *Ty vstal, ispugalsja čego-nibud’? – prosnulas’ mama.*  
 you got.up, were.scared of.something? had.woken.up mummy  
 – *Ty ne bojsja, s nami papa, čego bojat’sja!*  
 you-NOM.2SG not be.afraid-IMP.2SG with us daddy, of.what be.afraid  
 ‘‘You got up, were you frightened by something?’’, mum had woken up.  
 ‘Don’t be afraid, daddy is with us, there is nothing to be afraid of.’’  
 (Tramvaj, 1991)

Moon’s analysis can also partly be falsified by one of her predictions with respect to the notion of topic predictability or topic switch. As is suggested by Moon (1995: 119; note 35), the use of a vocative – for example a name – places the addressee in the center of attention of the shared set of the speaker’s and addressee’s common concern. This analysis predicts that if the imperative is preceded by a vocative, the imperative subject is not used, or at least its use is less natural. However, this prediction is not corroborated by the data. Sentences where the subject is preceded by a vocative are in fact quite natural, as can be illustrated by (6). In a similar vein, Moon’s analysis does not explain the occurrence of sentences like (11), where we find two imperative subjects in the same discourse fragment:

- (11) *Ty prixodi ko mne objazatel’no, čajku pop’em,*  
 you-NOM.2SG come-IMP.2SG to me definitely, tea drink.1PL  
*ty ne bojsja, privodi muža (...).*  
 you-NOM.2SG not be.afraid-IMP.2SG, bring-IMP.2SG husband  
 ‘You really should pay me a visit, and drink some tea, don’t be afraid, bring your husband with you.’  
 (K. Vasilij, *Lilija Brik. Žizn’*)

I do, however, agree with Moon that imperatives without subject cannot be used ‘out of the blue’. In order for an imperative to be used, the addressee should be placed in the ‘‘shared set of the speaker’s and addressee’s common concern’’. In a discourse situation

in which the addressee is found in the periphery of the shared set of the speaker's and addressee's common concern despite his/her pre-established contact, a subjectless imperative can therefore only be used if the topicality of the addressee is marked by special means such as the use of a name, the use of a pause, or specific markers such as particles that introduce a new discourse topic. Such markers are not required in the case of imperatives with a subject because the use of the preverbal pronoun signals that the addressee is the topic of the utterance. This does not mean, however, that the only or even the main factor that triggers the subject is a change in discourse topic.

Second, in her analysis, Moon does not take word order, sentence stress (sentence accent) and intonation into account. However, as is acknowledged by Moon herself (1995: 125) and by other scholars that have studied the imperative subject, these factors play an important role in the function of the imperative subject. An analysis of the function of the imperative subject therefore should take *information structure* into account. I will use this term to refer to the division of the utterance into a theme (also called 'topic') and rheme (also called 'focus'), and the formal properties of utterances that are associated with these notions, specifically word order and prosodic means such as sentence stress and intonation. The terms 'theme' and 'rheme' originate from theory of 'functional sentence perspective' or in Russian 'aktual'noe členenie' developed by the Prague School (see e.g. Sirotinina 1965 and Kovtunova 1976 for applications of the model of functional sentence perspective on Russian). There is considerable variation among scholars how these terms are defined (see e.g. Wenk 1992: 9–66, for an overview). The present work adopts the description used in the Academy Grammar (Švedova 1980: 91), where the theme and the rheme are known respectively as base of the utterance (i.e. what is being talked about) and communicative center of the utterance (i.e. what is being said about the theme). In this paper, I will mainly focus on sentence stress (also called sentence accent) and word order with regard to the theme-rheme division of the sentence (cf. Yokoyama 1986, who also takes intonation into account). As is emphasized by Wenk (1992: 61) the theme-rheme division of the utterance cannot be equated with the degree of givenness of the information for the addressee (cf. Moon's notion of discourse topic). Givenness, however, plays an important part in information structure, and should therefore be considered as well.<sup>3</sup>

To summarize, no answer has been offered that satisfactorily explains the exact function of the imperative subject in Russian is. Therefore, the goal of this paper is to give an answer to the following questions:

- (i) What are the functions of the expressed subject in Russian (both contrastive and non-contrastive use)?
- (ii) How can these functions be explained? To what extent can these functions be explained in terms of the function of information structure (word order and sentence accent), and to what extent do other properties play a part?

As I argue that information structure plays an important part in the function of the imperative subject in Russian, my analysis predicts that the specific functions of the imperative subject in Russian are partly absent in languages with a more rigid word order. In order to test this prediction, I will also briefly look at data from English:

- (iii) To what extent can the function of the subject of the imperative in Russian be compared to similar uses in other languages, specifically languages with a rigid word order such as English, e.g. *You listen to me!*, *Don't you worry*.

This paper has the following structure. In section 2, a general introduction to the imperative in Russian is given. Section 3 constitutes the main part of this paper, and provides a detailed analysis of the different uses of the imperative subject. In section 4, the use of the imperative subject in English is discussed and the extent to which this use can be compared to the use of the imperative subject in Russian. Finally, in section 5, the conclusion is given.

## 2. General introduction to the Russian imperative

In Russian, the imperative is a distinct morphological form. The basic or prototypical meaning of this form is directive, and expresses an impulse from the speaker to the addressee to realize the situation expressed by the imperative (see Fortuin 2000, 2008 for an overview of various non directive uses).

In the Russian pronominal system, there is a difference between the subject pronoun *ty*, which is used in the context of a non-formal or close interlocutor relationship, and the subject *vy*, which is used in the context of a formal or distant interlocutor relationship, or in the case of plural subjects (see e.g. Mayer 1975 who stresses that the use of *vy* signals formality, and Popov 1985, who argues that the use of *vy* conveys politeness, respect and a certain degree of formality). The same difference also plays a part in the case of the imperative. If the interlocutor relationship is distant, or in the case of plural addressees, the postfix *-te* is attached to the imperative stem. Compare the following sentences:

- (12) *Posmotri!*  
look-IMP.2.SG  
'Look!'
- (13) *Posmotrite!*  
look-IMP.2PL  
'Look!' [more than one addressee or distant interlocutor relationship]

In (12) and (13), the imperative is used without subject. However, as I have discussed in section one, it is possible to use a subject (non-formal *ty* or plural or formal *vy*). The subject of the imperative always occurs in the nominative. As such, it shares features both with actual subjects, that is subjects of regular finite verbs, and with vocatives, which can be used to name or identify a particular person, for example:

- (14) *Nataša, idi sjuda!*  
Nataša-NOM come-IMP.2SG here  
'Nataša, come here!'

Rozental' (1977: 142-143) states that the presence of pronouns is more customary for personal forms of the indicative mood, whereas in the case of the imperative the absence of pronoun is more customary (for so-called pro-drop contexts in the case of the indicative, see for example Lindseth 1998). Isačenko (1957: 8) explains this difference

between the indicative mood and the imperative in terms of the function of the imperative. He argues that the subject of the imperative always coincides with the addressee and is always clear from the speech situation of direct address. Therefore the subject does not need to be expressed by a separate pronoun. Similar remarks have been made with respect to other languages (e.g. Quirk et al. 1985: 828 for English). Even though this functional explanation is certainly valid, it is not complete, since the same argumentation could also be applied to the second person indicative, where the subject always coincides with the addressee as well (cf. Moon 1995: 101). In my view, there are two factors which may explain why the absence of a pronoun is more customary for the imperative than for the second person indicative mood.

First, in Russian the second person indicative is part of the indicative paradigm. As such, the second person indicative probably displays or inherits syntactic features of the indicative paradigm such as the use of a subject.<sup>4</sup> Second, the fact that the omission of the imperative subject is a cross-linguistic phenomenon suggests that the *directive* meaning of the imperative probably plays an important part. The function of the imperative can be seen as an *act*: giving an impulse. By uttering the imperative, the speaker focuses the attention of the addressee on the hypothetical situation that is to be realized. The imperative is often used in a context where either contact has already been established between speaker and hearer, or contact is established between speaker and hearer by use of the imperative. Both the focus on the situation which is to be realized, and the inherent involvement of the addressee make the expression of a subject functionally redundant in many contexts.

In this section, I have briefly discussed the general properties of the imperative in Russian, and the question of why the subject is not used in most contexts. In the next section, I will discuss the main topic of this paper – the function of the imperative subject in Russian.

### 3 The function of the imperative subject in Russian

#### 3.1. Basic structures

As I have discussed in section 1, the function of the imperative subject is correlated with information structure. This means that word order and sentence accent (sentence stress) play an important part in the function of the subject. See table 1 for an overview of the different structures and their basic semantic functions that I will distinguish in this paper, and which I will explain in detail in the next sections (3.2–3.4).

In this overview, S represents the imperative subject, and V represents the VP (or the verb if the VP consists of only a verb). The accent on the V or S represents sentence accent or sentence stress, which means that the accented word is somehow perceived as more prominent than its environment (see e.g. Keijsper 1985 for the notion of sentence accent in relation to information structure, and Streefkerk 2002 for an analysis of the acoustic correlates of prominence). As a general rule (see Kovtunova 1976: 10), the rheme of the sentence can be identified with the word or constituent with the last sentence stress (see e.g. Nikolaeva 1982: 37–38, and Wenk 1992 for a more elaborate discussion).

**Table 1: Basic functions of the imperative subject**

Form	Function of the structure
------	---------------------------



SV, VŠ, ŠV, VŠ (accented subject)	expressing contrast (or parallel) with another subject (see e.g. (2))
SV	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- expressing contrast with another situation, or part of the situation expressed by the VP (see e.g. (37), (38))</li> <li>- stressing the appropriateness or necessity of the realization of the situation expressed by the imperative (see e.g. (5))</li> <li>- expressing emotional involvement, increased personalization (see e.g. (4)), or familiarity (see e.g. (58))</li> </ul>
VŠ	reinforcing, emphasizing the directive speech act (see e.g. (3) (7) (8))

As table 1 shows, imperative structures with an accented subject express a contrast with another subject, regardless of the word order of the sentence. Sentences with an unaccented subject before the verb can express a contrast with another situation, but in addition the function of the subject may also play a part on the intersubjective level between the speaker and the hearer. More specifically, the subject has a function in the way the speaker tries to influence the behavior of the addressee. In the case of sentences with an unaccented subject following the verb the use of the subject also plays a part on the intersubjective level between speaker and hearer even though the specific effect is different.

Before discussing these structures in detail, I would like to make two more general remarks about my analysis. First, as I mentioned earlier, in this paper I will not discuss uses of *ty* with a clear vocative function, for example:

- (15) *Èj, ty, vyxodi!*  
 hey, you-NOM.SG come.out-IMP.2SG  
 ‘Hey, you there, come outside.’  
 (A. Mel’nik, *Avtoritët*)

In (15) the pronoun has a clear vocative function, because by using it the speaker wants to make contact with the addressee – which in this sentence is already stressed by *èj* ‘hey’ – and identify him/her as the person to whom the utterance is addressed (see e.g. Zaitseva 1992 for a general description of vocatives in Russian). Although in (15) the pronoun refers to the agent of the imperative, it functions as a separate constituent, which is underlined by the prosodic boundary between the pronoun and the imperative.

Second, in Russian there is a difference between spoken language and written language with respect to information structure and word order. In standard written Russian the theme of the sentence usually occurs before the rheme, which can be identified by the element (or constituent) with utterance final stress. However, in spoken Russian sentences where the rheme occurs before the theme are more common than in written Russian (see for example Sirotinina 1965, Kovtunova 1969, and Keijsper 1985 for the specific features of the information structure of spoken Russian). In this paper, I will use data from written Russian, primarily from the *Nacional’nyj Korpus Russkogo Jazyka* ‘Russian National Corpus’, henceforth RNC. This corpus contains examples

from written Russian from different genres (prose, poetry, newspapers, journals, etc.).<sup>5</sup> However, because of its directive meaning, the use of the imperative is typical of dialogue. In the corpus many of the examples of imperatives are in fact fragments of dialogue between a speaker and a hearer written down by the author. Because of this, the word order of the imperative may be expected to show features both of the written and spoken language.<sup>6</sup>

### 3.2. *Accented subject: contrastive and parallel function*

I will first discuss the ‘simpler’ cases, that is sentences with an accented subject. Utterances with an accented subject, regardless of word order, express a contrast with another potential subject. Below, I will discuss the semantics of the different structures with an accented subject in detail, and address the question how one can explain the specific word order of these structures.

3.2.1. *ŠV or VŠ: negating the idea that the addressee is not the subject of the imperative situation.* Sentences with a ŠV order (the accented subject precedes the verb) have a contrastive interpretation, as shown in (2) above and (16) below:

- (16) *Net, snačala TY                      skaži.*  
 no, first you-NOM.SG tell-IMP.2SG  
 ‘No, first you tell me.’  
 (magazines.russ.ru/slovo/2006/52/ha9.html)

In these sentences the accent on the pronoun *ty* (‘you’) contradicts the contextually given idea that the speaker (or a third party) will realize the imperative situation and, as such, stresses that the referent of the pronoun (the addressee) is in fact the intended agent of the imperative. Note that in such sentences, the use of the subject is necessary to express a contrast.

A contrastive interpretation also occurs in sentences where the imperative subject has the last accent and where the verb precedes the subject (VŠ):

- (17) *[K]to pojdet? – Idi TY,                      otvetil Džoss.*  
 who go-FUT.2SG? – go-IMP.2SG, you-NOM.SG answered Džoss  
 ‘Who will go? – You go, Joss answered.’  
 (www.lib.ru/INOFAANT/DUEJN/cops\_3.txt)

In sentence (17) the imperative is an answer to the question ‘Who will go?’ In sentences with a VŠ structure like (17) the imperative can be seen as given information, whereas the accent on the subject denotes the right subject from a set of (contextually given) subjects and as such constitutes the new information (the rheme or focus). Another context of this structure can be found in (18). In this sentence the verbal phrase (*voz’mi bulavki* ‘take the pins’) is not accented because the idea of someone bringing the pins (to pin down a butterfly) is already introduced in the context preceding the utterance. Another person has said that she is afraid to deal with the pins. Because of this, the speaker assigns the action of bringing the pins to someone else (Katja):

- (18) *Katja! Voz'mi bulavki TY!.. Zoja, vedi nabljudenie!*  
 Katja! take-IMP.2SG pins you-NOM.SG! Zoja, supervise-IMP.2SG  
 'Katja! You take the pins!.. Zoja, you supervise!  
 (V. Medvedev, *Barankin, bud' čelovekom!*)

Such sentences can be seen as instances of 'actor selection', instead of 'actor switch', as in (2). The reason why the *ŠV* order is not chosen in (17) or (18) is that the *ŠV* order more sharply expresses the idea of 'turning the table' on the interlocutor (often in the context of negation), whereas the *VŠ* order has a more neutral character, and expresses something like 'the one who must perform the action is you', often in a context where the question is put forward who should do the action. Sentences like (2) and (16) with a *ŠV* order are therefore similar to constructions with (*ty*) *sam* ('(you) self'), or the cleft construction [*èto ty* imperative] ('it is you that') as in (20), which is usually found in discourse contexts where someone is correcting a false belief (here: 'you are wrong, it is you who should stop'):

- (19) *Idi sjuda, prijatel'! (...)* – **SAM** *idi sjuda!*  
 come-IMP.2SG here, friend! (...) – self-NOM.SG come-IMP.2SG here  
 "Come here, my friend." "Come here yourself."  
 (www.aldebaran.ru/zfan/stash/stash18/)
- (20) *Prekrati. – Èto TY prekrati!*  
 stop-IMP.2SG – that-NOM.SG you-NOM.SG stop-IMP.2SG  
 "Stop." "Stop yourself."  
 (E. Markova, *Kapriz favorita*)

It should be kept in mind, however, that in many contexts, both orders are possible, each with a different function. An example is (21), where the *VŠ* order is used in a context where the speaker reacts to the addressee, and the accent on the subject contradicts the idea that the addressee is not the one to realize the imperative action:

- (21) – *Ty èto im skaži.*  
 you-NOM.SG that them tell-IMP.2SG  
 – *Skaži TY.*  
 tell-IMP.2SG you-NOM.SG  
 "Tell them that." "You tell them [instead of me]."  
 (K. Surikova, *Budu*)

3.2.2. *The ŠV and VŠ structure and the function of word order.* One of the goals of this paper is to explain why particular functions of imperative subjects are correlated with particular word orders. Below, I will briefly address this question with regard to the *ŠV* and *VŠ* orders that I have discussed in 3.2.1.

As I have shown with regard to example (2), the *ŠV* order is used to express a contrast with another subject. In such sentences the rheme of the sentence – the element with the last sentence accent – occurs before the verb. It should be stressed that this pattern differs from the basic word order pattern of standard, usually written, Russian where the rheme (focus) of the sentence occurs *after* the theme (topic). Nevertheless, the possibility of using the rheme-theme structure in the case of a contrastive reading is a more general property of Russian. King (1995) argues that although there is no single

phrase structure position associated with – what she calls – contrastive focus in Russian, contrastively focused arguments and adjuncts tend to occur immediately before the verb.<sup>7</sup> The following example of a contrastive declarative sentence is given by Richter & Mehlhorn 2006:

- (22) *MIROSLAVA uexala v Jaltu.*  
 Miroslava left for Yalta  
 ‘It is Miroslava who left for Yalta.’  
 (Richter & Mehlhorn 2006: 357)

As is remarked by Richter & Mehlhorn (2006), such sentences are also associated with a particular intonation. The most prominent syllable of the subject (*Miroslava*) is associated with a high tone and a following low trail tone (rise and fall in *Miroslava*). The postfocal material (*Miroslava uexala v Jaltu*) is deaccentuated. Such sentences seem to display the same information structure as imperative sentences with a *SV* order and a contrastive interpretation, but it should be noted that deviations from this intonational pattern are probably possible.<sup>8</sup>

Even though the literature on word order in Russian (e.g. King 1995) suggests that in the case of contrastive contexts the *SV* order is more common than the *VS* order in all sentences types, to my knowledge, no analysis is provided of the specific difference in meaning between such orders, and the relation between these functions with the general rules of word order in Russian. Cases where the rheme precedes the theme are usually called subjective (non-objective) or emotive in the literature. What ‘emotive’ or ‘subjective’ exactly means often remains unexplained (see e.g. Keijsper 1985 for a critical discussion). A possible explanation is that in standard Russian the *SV* order may serve as an explicit mark of dependence on the preceding context (see Keijsper 1985: 149–156, and Yokoyama 1986). This is for example the case in contexts where the occurrence of one situation explains another as in (23) (see Bonnot and Fougeron 1982: 315):<sup>9</sup>

- (23) *Gde-to okolo časa on prosnuľsja: TELEFON zazvonil.*  
 somewhere around one.o’clock he woke.up: telephone rang-PERF  
 ‘Somewhere around one o’clock he woke up (because the) telephone rang.’  
 (Bonnot & Fougeron 1982: 320)

Another type of context can be found in declarative sentences where the subject expresses new information, and the information expressed by the verb is contextually given and already focused on<sup>10</sup>:

- (24) *[Čto upalo?] VAZA (upala).*  
 [What fell?] vase-NOM.SG (fell-SG.FEM)  
 ‘What fell? The vase (fell).’

In the model given by Keijsper (1985: 155), such sentences do not introduce the idea of a new world (‘situation’, ‘mental space’) containing a particular subject, but only give additional information about an already existing world containing the subject.<sup>11</sup> This means that by using the *SV* order the speaker indicates that the information expressed by the verb (and consequently the subject) is dependent on the preceding context and

taken to be something that is already known or evident. A similar effect can be found in contrastive imperative sentences like (2), where the speaker takes as evident that the addressee, and not someone else should realize the imperative situation. Such cases differ from sentences like (17) with the more neutral VŠ order, which have a regular theme-rheme (topic-focus) structure. To what extent the specific character of contrastive sentences with non-final sentence stress like (2) or (22) is due to the function of the rheme-theme structure, and to what extent the function of intonation plays a part, is a topic of further investigation.

To conclude this section: imperative sentences where the subject has the last sentence accent express a contrast with another subject. The word order of such sentences—specifically the relatively unmarked character of the ŠV order – can be explained in terms of the general rules of information structure and word order in Russian.

3.2.3. *Parallel function.* The ŠV order also occurs in sentences with the focus words *tože* ('too') or *i* ('too', 'also'), which have a so-called parallel or additive meaning (see also Moon 1995: 107–108):

- (25) *Nu ladno, Larisa, bud' zdorova. – I TY bud' zdorov (...).*  
 well, OK, Larisa take.care-IMP.2SG and you-NOM.SG take.care-IMP.2SG  
 'Well OK, Larisa, take care. 'You take care too.'  
 (T. Nabatnikova, *Den' roždenija koški*)
- (26) *I vy TOŽE priezžajte.*  
 and you-NOM.PL also come-IMP.2PL  
 'And you should pay me a visit as well [like the other people].'  
 (B. Ekomov, *Prodaža*)

As is illustrated by (26), in the case of *tože* ('also') the accent is not on the subject itself, but on *tože*, which forms one constituent with the subject. The same forms also occur in sentences with a VŠ order:

- (27) *Sadis' i TY, Fedor Ivanovič!*  
 sit-IMP.2SG and you-NOM.SG Fedor Ivanovič!  
 'You sit down too, Fedor Ivanovič!'  
 (V. Lipatov, *Derevenskij dedektiv*)
- (28) *Idite vy TOŽE, ja xoču byt' odin.*  
 go-IMP.2PL you-NOM.PL too, I want-1SG be-INF alone  
 'You go too, I want to be alone.'  
 (E. Radov, *Zmeesos*)

The forms *tože* and *i* ('too') in (25) and (26) trigger an accented subject (*i TY*), or subject constituent (*ty TOŽE*) because they express that along with another agent, the addressee is the subject of the imperative. The use of the accented subject therefore contradicts the idea that the addressee is not the agent of the imperative action ('not only X, but Y<sub>ADDRESSEE</sub> as well'). Note, however, that unlike actual contrastive sentences like (2), (16) or (17), the use of a subject is not necessary in the case of *tože*, because *tože* itself implies the idea of another entity ('not only X, but Y as well'). Although the use of a subject is preferred in sentences where *tože* relates to the

imperative agent (the addressee), subjectless uses are not excluded as long as the context provides enough clues that the other entity is the addressee, for example:

- (29) [The speaker tells everyone to sit down, and reminds the addressee that she told him not to leave without her permission. The addressee reacts by saying that he is willing to comply. The speaker then says:]  
*Xorošo. Sadis' TOŽE. Vsem sidet'!*  
 Good. sit.down-IMP.2SG too. all-DAT sit-INF!  
 'Ok. (You) sit down too. Everyone sit down!'  
 (www.hrono.info/text/2007/dvor0507.html)

In (29) the context and the sentence accent on *tože* makes clear that *tože* applies to the addressee, and not to the situation expressed by the verb ('sit in addition to something else').

3.2.4. *ŠV' (VŠ) order: assigning different situations to different agents.* In addition to sentences where we only find an accented subject, and where the agent is contrasted with another agent, there are also sentences where both the subject and the VP are accented. The *ŠV'* order (thematic and rhematic accent) is used in sentences where there is a contrast between different subjects and different situations. In (30), with a *ŠV'* order, the addressee has to perform X, in contrast to another subject, which performs Y:

- (30) *TY POKAZYVAJ, a JA budu PRAVIT'.*  
 you-NOM.SG show-IMP.2SG, and I will steer.  
 'You read the map, and I will drive'  
 (Domovoj, 2002.12.04)

By using the accented subject, the speaker selects a particular agent by contrasting it with another agent, and by using the accented verb, the speaker selects the right situation for the subject (from the set of possible situations). The information structure of such sentences follows the normal pattern of declarative sentences where two things are contrasted:

- (31) *ON ŠEL, a ONA LETELA.*  
 he walked, and she flew.  
 'He was walking, and she was flying'

Moon (1995, 108, 110) observes that in contrastive sentences where the imperative action is assigned to X, and another action to subject Y, the imperative subject can be omitted only if it occurs in the first clause of the sentence. This can be illustrated with the following sentences, which consist of a clause with a regular imperative and a clause with the directive *pust'* ('let'):

- (32) *Ostavajsja na meste, a on pust' podojdet sjuda.*  
 stay-IMP.2SG on spot, and he-NOM let come.up here  
 'Stay in your place, and let him come here'  
 (Moon 1995: 108)
- (33) *\*Pust' (on) idet sjuda, (a) ostavajsja na meste.*

let he-NOM go here, and stay-IMP.2SG on spot.  
 ‘Let him come here, and stay in your place’  
 (Moon 1995: 110)

Moon proposes to explain why the subject can only be omitted in the first part of the sentence in terms of topic predictability. In (32) it is clear for both the speaker and the addressee that the addressee is the subject of the imperative subject in the first part of the clause. In Moon’s terms, the addressee constitutes the topic at that moment in the discourse. In the second clause another topic is introduced, which is made explicit by the use of the pronoun *on* ‘he’. In (33), however, the topic of the first clause is *on*, and in the second clause this topic changes to the addressee. Because of this change in topic, the subject has to be made explicit in the second clause.

Note that although not using a subject is typical of the imperative, a similar phenomenon can also occur with other forms. Consider for example the following sentence with the directive *pust* ‘let’:

- (34) *Pust’ idet sjuda, a ty ostavajsja na meste.*  
 let come.up here, and you-NOM stay-IMP.2SG on spot  
 ‘Let him come here, and you stay in your place’

Sentence (34) is acceptable if the topic (for example *on* ‘he’) is established in the context preceding the utterance.

Besides sentences with a ŠV order, the VŠ order is also used, e.g.:

- (35) *Katja, POKRUTI TY, a JA dam GAZU.*  
 Katja, turn-IMP.2SG you NOM.SG, but I give gas  
 ‘Katja, you turn [the handle], and I will step on the gas.’  
 (A. Fadeev, *Molodaja gvardija*)

A similar structure occurs in sentences where an unaccented verb precedes the accented subject, and the last accent is on a part of the VP, for example an adverb or object (VŠX̂). In such sentences the verb is usually not repeated in the second part of the sentence (so-called ‘gapping’), e.g.:

- (36) *Proverjaj TY ŠKAF, a JA – VEŠALKU.*  
 check-IMP.2SG you-NOM.SG, closet and I-NOM hatstand  
 ‘(If) you search the closet, I will check the hatstand’  
 (V. Belousova, *Vtoroj vystrel*)

The reason why the verb precedes the subject in (35) and (36) is that it contains (contextually) given information. Put differently, the use of VŠ order in (35) creates the idea that, considering the situation at hand, it is fully understandable that particular tasks have to be carried out. This could also explain why both examples seem to have an (implicit) conditional-contrastive character: ‘if you do X with respect to Y, I do X with respect to Z’.

### 3.3. Non accented subjects before the verb: contrastive & quasi-contrastive use

In section 3.2, I discussed the different structures with an accented subject. In all cases the function of the subject was relatively straightforward: expressing a contrast (or parallel) with another subject. In this section I will discuss sentences where the subject is not accented and where the accent is on the VP.

3.3.1. *Non accented subject: contrastive use.* The *SV* order can be used in sentences where there is a contrast between different actions of the same agent, for example:

- (37) *Ty ne PEREBIVAJ, a SLUŠAJ!*  
 you-NOM.SG not interrupt-IMP.2SG, but listen-IMP.2SG!  
 ‘Don’t interrupt me, listen to me!’  
 (*Tramvaj*, 1991)

In such sentences, the subject is not accented, whereas the accent on the verb or part of the verbal phrase selects the right kind of situation from the set of possible situations. Note that in contrastive contexts, the sentence stress is not necessarily on the verb, but may also be on another part of the VP. An example of this use is given in Zemskaja (1973: 387), who provides an example from spoken Russian (cf. Moon’s example (38): 1995: 118):

- (38) *Vy SLIVOVOGO voz'mite varen'ja.*  
 you-NOM.PL plum take-IMP.2PL jam  
 ‘Take some plum jam’ (implying that there is a choice of other jams)

Although the contrast is usually linguistically expressed as in (37), where we find a negation in the first part of the sentence, it may also be implied. This is the case in the following sentence in which there is an implied contrast between the action that the addressee should do first (try something), and an action that the addressee may do later (actually DO it):

- (39) *Dlja načala ty POPROBUJ.*  
 for beginning you-NOM.SG try-IMP.2SG  
 ‘For starters give it a try.’

The information structure of sentences with a non accented subject before the verb is not different from the information structure of non-imperative sentences like the following:

- (40) *Tol'ko on ne ŠEL, a LETEL.*  
 only he-NOM not walked, but flew.  
 ‘Only, he wasn’t walking, he was flying’

The subject is triggered in sentences like (37)- (39) because it functions as the topic or theme of the sentence. Formally, such sentences are similar to regular imperatives without subject where the accent is (by definition) on the VP. Compare (37) with (41):

- (41) *Ne PEREBIVAJ, a SLUŠAJ!*



not interrupt-IMP.2SG, but listen-IMP.2SG!  
 ‘Don’t interrupt, listen!’

In comparison to sentences without subject sentences with a subject more clearly express the idea of ‘with respect to you, you should do X’.<sup>12</sup> However, since the subject is not expressed to convey a contrast with another agent, it may be omitted in both the first and the second clause, without significantly altering the meaning of the sentence.

In most sentences with an imperative and an explicit contrastive context, the subject is not retained in the second clause (see (37)). For this an analysis can be given along the lines of Moon (1995), who uses the notion of ‘topic predictability’. This means that because the subject is introduced as the theme/topic in the first clause, it is predictable for the addressee that it will also function as such in the second clause, and can therefore be omitted. Subject retention is, however, not excluded, as is illustrated by the following sentence, where the subject is also used in the second clause:

- (42) – *Pobožis’, čto nikomu ne skažeš’.* – *Nu? – Čto ‘nu’?*  
 swear-IMP.2SG, that no-one-DAT not say-FUT.2SG. PRT what PRT?  
 – *Ty ne NUKAJ, a ty POBOŽIS’.*  
 you-NOM.SG not say.what-IMP.2SG but you-NOM.SG swear-IMP.2SG  
 “Swear that you won’t say anything to anyone.” “What?” “What what? Don’t say what, just swear.”  
 (A. Panteleev, *Len’ka Panteleev*)

Note, however, that sentences without a subject in the first clause, but a subject in the second clause are unacceptable:

- (43) *?Ne PEREBIVAJ, a ty SLUŠAJ.*  
 not interrupt-IMP.2SG, but you-NOM.SG listen-IMP.2SG  
 ‘Don’t interrupt, you listen!’

In such sentences the two clauses are part of the same sentence, and form one intonational unit (only the second sentence has a final low pitch boundary, which, in Russian, is associated with finality). In (43) the first imperative occurs without subject, which suggests that there is no special reason to focus on the VP or emphasize the identity of the subject. Since the identity of the subject does not change in the second part of the sentence, and the second subject cannot easily function as the theme of the sentence, the use of the subject is unacceptable.

3.3.2. *Non accented subject: quasi contrastive use.* As I have shown in section 3.3.1, the SV order can be used in sentences where the speaker stresses that the subject should do situation X, instead of another situation. Such sentences have a contrastive meaning. The same SV order also occurs in sentences where there is no clear context of contrast, for example:

- (44) – *Vse govornjat, čto v teatre krizis. No ja kak-to ne zamečaju.*  
 all say, that in theatre crisis. but I somehow not notice  
 – *Ty POSMOTRI, čto teper’ dajut v teatral’nom bufete!*  
 you-NOM.SG look-IMP.2SG, what now give-3PL in theatre.bar

“‘They say the theatre is in crisis, but I haven’t really noticed it.’ ‘You should see what they serve in the theatre bar nowadays!’”

(*Kollekcija anekdotov: teatr (1970–2000)*)

- (45) [The addressee is telling the speaker what happened at the battle field, and mentions that there were a lot of tanks, and some attacks. The speaker then reacts:]

*Bol’sie poteri? Da? Ty govori PRAVDU!*

big losses? yes? you-NOM.SG speak-IMP.2SG truth

*Požalujsta... Ty vse RASSKAŽI!*

please... you-NOM.SG all tell-IMP.2SG

‘Big losses? Yes? Tell me the truth! Please... Tell me everything!’ (site

Voennaja literatura, Ju. Bondarev, *Gorjačij sneg*)

Sentences like these provide a challenge for the description of the imperative subject, because it is not immediately clear why the subject is used. In my view, it is best to explain the function of the subject by looking at the specific information structure of these sentences. It is no coincidence that both in the case of explicit contrastive sentences as discussed in (42), and in the case of these sentences we find the same SV structure. The common property of these types of sentences is that by using a subject, the subject functions as the theme (topic) of the sentence, and the verb receives special *focus*. Sentences with this order have the following semantic-syntactic structure: the addressee is mentioned (and personally addressed) and the appropriate or right kind of situation (selected from the set of possible situations) is assigned to the subject. In the case of a contrastive context, the speaker selects the right situation for the addressee by contrasting it with a contextually given situation (X is selected from the set of contextually given situations), but in the case of sentences like (44) or (45) such a contrastive context is absent. Contexts like these can be called *quasi contrastive* because by using the subject the speaker stresses that the addressee is to perform X, *and X only*: ‘with respect to you, you are to realize this action (and no other one).’ A similar meaning cannot be expressed in sentences without the subject because they lack a theme-rheme (topic-focus) structure. Because of the theme-rheme structure, and the idea of ‘appropriateness’ associated with this structure, sentences with a subject often have a necessitive character, and point at an existing necessity or desirability (‘you must/should’).

Besides expressing the meaning of the abstract theme-rheme (topic-focus) structure, the use of the subject, both in the case of contrastive and non-contrastive uses, seems to have an additional pragmatic function. As I will argue below, the use of the subject may have the effect of stressing the emotional involvement of the speaker or add a character of familiarity.

In order to analyze the function of the subject, 550 imperatives with *ty* from the RNC were collected.<sup>13</sup> Of these sentences 436 had an SV order. In this sample, contrastive uses (with an accented subject) or vocative uses were not considered. In the appendix (table 1 of the appendix), an overview is given of the most frequently attested verbs of this search. The survey shows that verbs that are frequently attested with the SV order with the subject *ty* ‘you’ are *posmotret* ‘look’; *gljadet* / *gljanut* ‘look’; (*ne*) *govorit* / *skazat* ‘(not) say, tell’; (*po*) *dumat* ‘think’; *izvinit* ‘forgive’; *prostit* ‘forgive’, and *ne bojat’sja* ‘not be afraid’. In the survey, both perfective and imperfective verbs were attested.<sup>14</sup> A similar search with the subject *vy* (polite form) resulted in more or

less the same verb classes (see table 2 of the appendix). It should be noted that in some cases, frequently attested verbs occur relatively frequently in idiomatic or set expressions. This is for example the case with the verb *podumat* ('think'), which was attested 17 times with the subject *vy*. In many of these cases it is used to express amazement (*Vy podumajte* 'Just think!'), or to correct a false believe (*Vy ne podumajte* 'Don't get the wrong idea') as in (9). Below, I will take a closer look at the specific type of verbs that is used with a subject.

Transitive perception verbs like *posmotret* ('look') as in (44) constitute an important verb class of sentences with a non accented subject before the verbal phrase. With these verbs the use of *ty* seems to have a semiotic index function, that is, the speaker uses *ty* to point at something important, and focuses the attention of the addressee on the content of the perception verb: 'you should really consider this'. The effect of using *ty* can be illustrated with the following example where in the first sentence no subject is used, and in the second sentence the imperative occurs with *ty*:

- (46) – *Posmotri, Di! – uslyšala ona ego šepot. – Net, ty tol'ko*  
 look-IMP.2SG Di heard she his whisper no you just  
*POSMOTRI – do čego ona na tebjā poxoža!*  
 look-IMP.2SG until what she to you similar  
 "Look, Di!", she heard him whisper. "No, you simply must see how much she looks like you!"  
 (Zvezda, 2003)

First, the speaker gives an impulse to the addressee to look without delay, without expressing additional modal nuances. In the second sentence, he uses a subject to focus the attention of the addressee on a remarkable fact, which is also underlined by the use of the focus particle *tol'ko* ('just'): 'you should really take a look at this'.

It should be stressed that the difference between sentences with *ty* and sentences without *ty* is often very subtle. In the following sentence, *ty* is used to stress that the fact that someone has come is somehow remarkable ('you should really come and have a look, guess who is here!'):

- (47) *Mama, ty POSMOTRI, kto k nam prišel! Èto Iročka,*  
 Mother, you-NOM.SG look-IMP.2SG who to us came that Iročka,  
*vnučka Anny Markovny.*  
 granddaughter Anna.Markovna-GEN  
 'Look who has come to see us, mother! It's Iročka, Anna Markovna's granddaughter.'  
 (L. Ulickaja, *Bron'ka*)

However, the same sentence could also be used without *ty*. The difference between such cases could be analyzed in terms of the markedness for semiotic index function mentioned above. Whereas sentences with a subject are marked for this feature, this feature is not necessarily present in sentences without a subject. A similar analysis can be given for (44). In this sentence the SV order has an important argumentative function, because by using it the speaker tries to correct the view of the addressee ('You don't believe that the theater is in crisis? Well, in that case you should take a look at the

buffet there’). In the same sentence without a subject this feature is not explicitly transmitted.

Another verb which is typical of the SV’ order is (*ne*) *govorit’/skazat’* ((‘not’) ‘tell’, ‘speak’). By using *ty*, the speaker points at an existing appropriateness or necessity of the realization of the imperative situation by the subject-addressee. This is for example the case in (45) where the speaker uses *ty* to stress that that it is of vital importance that the imperative situation is realized: ‘you really must tell me the truth’. A similar meaning is expressed in (48), which has a conditional structure: ‘if you want to tell me something, you should speak’:

- (48) *Ty GOVORI, esli xoeš’ čto-to skazat’.*  
 you-NOM.SG speak-IMP.2SG if want-PRES.2SG something say-INF  
 ‘Speak up, if you want to say something.’  
 (G. Praškevič, A. Bogdan, *Čelovek “Č”*)

The additional nuance of stressing the inherent necessity or importance of the realization of the imperative situation is absent in sentences without *ty* as in (49), where the speaker just directs the addressee to perform the imperative action without delay:

- (49) *Nemedlenno govori PRAVDU!*  
 immediately say-IMP.2SG truth  
 ‘Speak the truth at once!’  
 (D. Doncova, *Dollary carja Goroxa*)

The difference between the SV’ order, and a regular imperative without subject can also be illustrated with the following sentence:

- (50) [He walked quickly to Samojlenka and, when he stood right before him, looking into his eyes, asked:]  
*Ty govori OTKROVENNO: on razljubil? Da?*  
 you-NOM.SG tell-IMP.2SG honestly: he stopped.loving? yes?  
*Govori: razljubil?*  
 tell-IMP.2SG: stopped.loving?  
 ‘You must tell me honestly, has he fallen out of love with her? Yes? Tell me: has he stopped loving her?’  
 (A. Čecov, *Duèl’*)

The effect of using the subject in the first sentence (*Ty govori OTKROVENNO*) is that the speaker stresses that it is of great importance that the addressee speaks honestly. In the fragment following that utterance the subject is dropped (*Govori*), because the speaker just urges the addressee to speak as soon as possible. Note, however, that subject drop is not a necessary property if the subject is used in the preceding context, as is illustrated by (11) and (45). Note furthermore that unlike sentences with an explicit context of contrast (e.g. (43)), subject retention is possible if the imperative is preceded by a subjectless imperative. In most of the instances attested by me the first subjectless imperative is a perception verb like *slušať* (‘listen’):

- (51) *SLUŠAJ Vit', ty OTVET' mne na takoj vopros.*  
 listen-IMP.2SG Vitja, you-NOM.SG answer-IMP.2SG me to that question  
 'Listen, Vitja, give me an answer to that question.'  
 (A. Jakovlev, *Omut pamjati*)

Examples with other verbs are, however, possible as well:

- (52) *POSTOJ, ty POSTOJ!*  
 stand-IMP.2SG you-NOM.SG stand-IMP.2SG  
 'Wait a minute, wait a minute [what are you talking about]!'  
 (K. Fedor, *Orexov*)

Sentences like (52) differ from contrastive sentences like (43), because they consist of two separate utterances.

It should be noted that the way in which the SV order is interpreted depends very much on the lexical verb and the larger discourse context. In (50) the use of the subject suggests that the speaker gives the addressee no chance but to realize the imperative situation. This differs from the following sentence:

- (53) [A woman enters a room where a man is sleeping. He wakes up and asks her what she is doing there]  
*Prosto posmotret', kak ty zdes' ustroilsja. Ty SPI,*  
 just look-INF, how you here settled.down you-NOM.SG sleep-MP.2SG  
*SPI.*  
 sleep-IMP.2SG  
 'I just came to see how you are doing here. Just go back to sleep, sleep.'  
 (A. Volos, *Nedvižimost'*)

In (53) the speaker does not use the SV order to express that the addressee has no other choice but to sleep, but rather to express that he should not worry, and that *the right thing to do* is to go back to sleep. Similar sentences can also be found without subject, but in such contexts the speaker just gives an impulse to sleep, and the feature of 'the right situation in the given context' is not explicitly expressed<sup>15</sup>:

- (54) *Spiš', Marina? Nu SPI, SPI.*  
 sleep-2SG.PRES, Marina? well, sleep IMP.2SG sleep IMP.2SG  
 'Are you sleeping Marina? Well, go to sleep, sleep.'  
 (V. Astaf'ev, *Proletnyj gus'*)

What all cases of the SV structure discussed so far have in common is not only that the speaker stresses the importance of the realization of the imperative situation, but also that the speaker expresses a more emotional attitude towards the addressee. In comparison to sentences without subject, sentences with a subject therefore have a more emphatic character:

- (55) *Glavnoe – ZVONI esli čto.*  
 main.thing call-2SG if something  
 'The main thing is – call if there is anything.'

- (A. Gračev, *Jaryj -3. Order na smert'*)  
 (56) Ja tebe tam vizitku svoju ostavil na stole,  
 (...)  
 ty ZVONI esli čto.  
 you NOM.SG call-2SG if something  
 'I left my businesscard on the table, (be sure to) call me if there is anything.'  
 (A. Berseneva, *Polet nad razlukoj*)

By using the subject in (56) the speaker emphasizes the impulse to realize the imperative situation because he wants to make sure that the addressee will take his advice seriously. In such contexts, the emotional involvement of the speaker can be equated with an extra request for attention for the content of the imperative. Similarly, in (6) the son uses the subject to stress that he really wants his mother to buy various presents. The feature of 'emotional involvement' also explains why the verb *prostit'* ('forgive') is among the most frequent verbs in non-contrastive contexts. The use of a subject with this verb stresses the emotional appeal on the hearer ('please forgive me', 'you really should forgive me').

It may be that this specific effect of the subject is not solely due to the meaning of focus which is created by the SV structure, but also by the vocative-like function of the subject. As is noted in the literature, vocatives (e.g. the use of a name) can be used to establish or emphasize contact with the addressee during discourse (see e.g. Zaitseva 1992: 162). A similar function can be perceived in the case of the imperative subject (cf. Moon 1995: 119). It is, however, difficult to determine to what extent what feature (e.g. 'emotional involvement of the speaker', 'request for extra attention' or even 'appropriateness of the realization of the imperative situation') is inherited from what structure (theme rheme structure or vocative-like use of the subject), because both structures occur at the same time.

In non-contrastive contexts the use of the subject also seems to add a nuance of familiarity. This may explain some observations by Yokoyama (1986) and Moon (1995) with regard to differences in use between the informal subject *ty* and the formal subject *vy*. Yokoyama (1986: 249) and Moon (1995: 122) argue that when the action is only in the benefit of the speaker, and the interlocutor relationship is distant enough so that this benefit cannot be shared by the addressee in any practical or emotional way, the subject *vy* cannot be retained. The following example is provided by Moon (1995):

- (57) (Vy?) dajte desjat' kopeek na tramvaj.  
 you-NOM.PL give-IMP.2PL ten kopecks on tram  
 'Please give me ten kopecks for the tram'  
 (Moon 1995: 122)

Close relationships, however, allow for the use of the subject *ty*. The following example from Yokoyama is repeated by Moon (1995: 123):

- (58) Ty pojdi kupi mne sigaret.  
 you-NOM.SG go-IMP.2SG buy-IMP.2SG me cigarettes  
 'You go buy me some cigarettes'  
 (Yokoyama 1986: 213)

According to Yokoyama (1986: 214), (58) can be seen as an informal request for a favor from an addressee with whom the speaker is on informal terms. The feature of appropriateness is absent, or at least not strongly present in this sentence, even though one could argue that the speaker stresses his/her emotional involvement with the imperative situation (cf. (6)). Consultation of native speakers indicates that whereas the use of sentences like (58) is possible, similar sentences with *vy* are less acceptable. The reason why a speaker would use the subject in sentences like (58) is probably that in the context of situations that are entirely in the benefit of the speaker, the use of the imperative may easily get a categorical character, for example:

- (59) [Posylaet bol'shoj načal'nik našego zavxoza s ukazaniem].  
*"Pojdi, kupi mne lazernuju ukazu!"*  
 go-IMP.2SG buy-IMP.2SG me laser pointer.  
 'The big boss sends the supply manager with the following order: 'Go and buy me a laser pointer.'  
 (tavria.8m.com/humor/story-1900.html)

Because the use of *ty* adds a tone of familiarity to the utterance, it softens the directive speech act in contexts like (58). This use is comparable to the use of a vocative, such as a name, e.g.:

- (60) **Ljus'**, *pojdi kupi mne butylku moloka (...).*  
 Ljus', go-IMP.2SG buy-IMP.2SG me bottle milk-GEN  
 'Ljus', go and buy me a bottle of milk.'  
 (http://www.perevod.it/elkost/ludmila\_ulitskaya/interviews/the\_younger\_sixtier.html)

This increased familiarity is more typical of a second person singular (*ty*) rather than the polite second person plural (*vy*) because of the more informal interlocutor relationship associated with *ty*. However, sentences with *vy* are not fully excluded in similar contexts. In the following example a woman asks the doctor for medication, and, in addition to the idea of appropriateness, the use of the subject signals an increased familiarity towards the doctor:

- (61) *Vy dajte mne čego-nibud' na skoruju RUKU: pustjaki!*  
 you-NOM.PL give-IMP.2PL me something rough-and-ready: trifles  
 'Just give me something rough-and-ready: it's nothing serious!'  
 (Novyj Mir, 2002)<sup>16</sup>

This means that although the use of *vy* is typically described as more formal (e.g. Mayer 1995), in imperatives it may also be associated with a particular degree of familiarity.<sup>17</sup>

To summarize the main conclusions of section 3.3, sentences with an unaccented subject before the accented verbal phrase have a theme rheme (topic focus) structure. The last accent on the verbal phrase emphasizes that the imperative situation, and no other situation, is the right or appropriate situation for the addressee to perform. In some sentences the idea of appropriateness is linked to the contrastive context in which the imperative is used, whereas in other contexts an explicit contrastive context is absent. The specific way in which this function is interpreted, highly depends on the meaning of

the verb and the context in which the imperative is used. For example, in some contexts the use of the subject focuses the attention on something interesting, whereas in other contexts the use of the subject stresses the emotional involvement of the speaker. In addition the meaning of the theme-rheme structure, the use of the subject seems to add a nuance of familiarity, especially in the case of second person singular subjects. This function of the subject seems to be closely related to the vocative-like function of the subject. It may be that other features of the SV structure, for example the feature of emotional involvement, or the focussing attention on something interesting, are also partly due to the vocative-like properties of the imperative subject. However, to what extent what features are inherited from what (theme-rheme structure or vocative-like property of the subject) is hard to determine.

### 3.4. *V'S order: function and information structure*

3.4.1. *Reinforcing (emphasizing) the directive speech act.* Besides sentences with a SV order, there is another use of the subject which is not clearly contrastive, namely sentences with a V'S order as in (3) given earlier or in the following sentences:

- (62) Da ne SPEŠI ty!  
 PRT not hurry-IMP.2SG you-NOM.SG!  
 'Don't hurry!'  
 (A. Gračev. *Jaryj-3. Order na smert'*)
- (63) Ja tebjā ne pilju, (...) no POJMI ty, èto  
 I you not nag but understand-IMP.2SG you-NOM.SG, that  
*dejstvitel'no vredno.*  
 really harmful  
 'I am not nagging you, but (please) understand that it is really bad for you.'  
 (V. Dragunskij, *Deniskiny rasskazy/Odna kaplja ubivaet lošad'*)

In these sentences, the subject is always placed immediately after the verb (with the exception of modal particles like *že*, *ka*), and can be followed by other linguistic material (see e.g. (68), (69)). In most sentences the sentential stress is on the imperative, even though there are exceptions ((see e.g. (68), (69)).

The V'S structure is used in contexts where the speaker emphasizes or reinforces the impulse to realize the imperative situation, for example because he is impatient as in (62) or has already given an impulse to realize the action before, or because he does not expect the addressee to comply, and is not in a position where he can easily control the addressee as in (63).

The meaning of the V'S order can be illustrated by looking at the type of verbs that occur with this structure. From the search in the RNC resulting in 550 imperatives with the subject *ty*, 114 had a V'S order (see appendix, table 1 for a list of the most frequent verbs). Among the verbs that are typical of the V'S order are *brosat* 'stop'; *idti* 'go' (often used metaphorically as in *idi ty* 'you are kidding me!'); and *zamolčat* 'be silent'. The same search with the pronoun *vy* (417 instances with *vy*) resulted in more or less a similar result (see the appendix, table 2, for the most frequently attested verbs).<sup>18</sup> I will explain the results of this survey by illustrating them with some verbs.

Consider the verb *zamolčat* ('be silent') as in (64), which is more typical for the V'S order than for the SV order:



- (64) *Žral ogurcy, okajannyj! (...) Otvečacet muž među stonom:*  
 ate cucumbers, cursed.one answers husband groaning  
 – *ZAMOLČI ty, čto-nibud' žrat'-to ved' nado!*  
 be.silent-IMP.2SG you-NOM.SG something eat-INF-PRT PRT necessary!  
 “‘You have eaten the cucumbers, you cursed one!’ (...) The husband answers  
 groaning: “‘Shut up, I have to eat something!’”  
 (M. Šaginjan, *Peremena*)

In (64) the verb *zamolčat'* is used in a context where the speaker wants to emphasize that he disagrees with what the addressee has said, and that she should not have spoken altogether ('shut up already'). This feature of disagreement is absent in the following sentence without *ty*:

- (65) *No ona ne dala mne doskazat'. Zakričala: “Zamolči!”*  
 but she not gave me finish. shouted be.silent-IMP.2SG  
 ‘But she wouldn’t let me finish. She cried: “Shut up!”’  
 (Zvezda, 2001)

A similar feature of disagreement can be found in the case of many other verbs that occur with a *VS* order. Consider for example the verb *bežat'* ('run'). First, let's consider an example without a subject:

- (66) *BEGI! – slyšu krik so storony svoej bazy.*  
 run-IMP.2SG! hear-1SG shout from side own base  
 – *Ja tebja prikroju.*  
 I you cover  
 “‘Run!’”, I hear someone shout from the direction of our military base, “‘I will  
 cover you.’”  
 (D. Gusev, *Vot pulja proletela, i aga!!Homes & Gardens*, 2002)

In (66) no pronoun is used because the speaker wants to direct the hearer to immediately realize the imperative action without expressing further modal nuances. Now consider the following sentence where first a *SV* order is used and then a *VS* order:

- (67) *Ty – BEGI! – Kuda? – BEGI ty, xolera*  
 you-NOM.SG run-IMP.2SG whereto run-IMP.2SG you-NOM.SG cholera  
*na tebja!*  
 on you!  
 “‘You – Run!’” “‘Whereto?’” “‘Run, god damn it!’”  
 (V. Bykov, *Boloto*)

First the speaker orders the addressee to run ('what you have to do is run'). Only when the addressee does not comply, the speaker uses the *VS* order to stress that the addressee should comply, expressing an additional nuance of annoyance ('what are you waiting for, run!').<sup>19</sup>

As I discussed earlier, in the case of the *SV* order there are differences in use between the pronoun *ty* and the pronoun *vy* (formal or distant interlocutor relationship)

that have to do with the character of familiarity associated with the use of a subject. Even though Moon (1995) does not take word order into account in her analysis, she provides the following example with a *VS* order to illustrate that subject retention in imperatives that are issued for the benefit of the speaker is only possible in the case of the pronoun *ty*:

- (68) *Daj ty mne xot' odin deněk pošalit'.*  
 give-imp.2sg you-NOM.SG me PRT one little.day be.naughty  
 'Give me at least one day to be naughty.'  
 (Moon 1995: 123)

The data attested by me do not fully corroborate the observation made by Moon (1995) that when the action is only in the benefit of the speaker as in (68), the subject *vy* cannot be used. Sentences which are similar to (68) can also be found with the subject *vy*, as in (69) where the use of *vy* instead of *ty* can be accounted for in terms of deference towards an elderly person:

- (69) [Grandmother wants her granddaughter to get up from the sofa and help her with domestic tasks, but the granddaughter replies:]  
*Dajte vy mne xot' dva dnja v nedelju otdoxnut'!*  
 give-IMP.2PL you-NOM.2PL me PRT two days in week rest-INF  
 'Give me at least two days a week to rest!'  
 (zhurnal.lib.ru/b/blondi/eh.shtml)

3.4.2 *Explanation of the VS word order.* It should be answered WHY the *VS* order, rather than any other order, is associated with a meaning of 'reinforcement' or 'emphasis' in the case of the imperative. In my view, there are two factors which probably play a role. First, there seems to be a relation with the structure of so-called syntactic reduplication here (see Israeli 1997, for this term). Israeli (1997) argues that in Russian reduplication may serve as a request for increased cooperation from the hearer, for example in imperative sentences like the following where the imperative itself is repeated:

- (70) *Beri! Beri!*  
 take-IMP take-IMP  
 'Please take it!'[insisting on the offer]

In this respect it is interesting to point at the remark by Davies (1986) that the use of the subject with the imperative has special significance, and can be regarded as something like an imposition upon the addressee. Although in the case of the imperative one cannot speak of reduplication in a strict sense, one may argue that the imperative verb itself implies the use of a subject, and that using the subject after the verb has the effect of demanding from the addressee to comply and cooperate. This function is reminiscent of the function of the vocative – for example the use of a name – to emphasize contact with the addressee during discourse, especially in sentence internal positions (see Moon 1995: 116, 117) where the use of the vocative can be used to sustain and reinforce the contact.

Second, I think it is possible to point at a relation between the *VS* order of the imperative, and the *VS* order in non-imperative sentences. As I mentioned before, in

Russian, sentences where the focus precedes the topic are more closely linked to the preceding discourse than sentences with a regular topic-focus structure (see section 3.2.2). Keijsper (1985: 44) argues that in written Russian, sentences with a VS order are very infrequent, and constitute only 2-4% of sentences with a VS order (that is sentences with a VS or VŠ order). Furthermore, in written texts the VSO order occurs foremost with pronominal subjects and objects (Keijsper 1985: 45), which suggests that the identity of the subject is already established in the discourse preceding the utterance. The following sentences can be seen as examples of this use:

- (71) [The speaker has been asked if a certain topic might be raised publicly]  
*Da uže GOVORIL ja ob ètom publično.*  
 PRT already talked I about that publicly  
 ‘But I already DID talk about that in public.’  
 (magazines.russ.ru/novyi\_mi/2003/12/kostyrko.html)
- (72) *Net, ne ZNAL ja nikakogo Borju iz ‘Mosvodoproda’.*  
 No, not knew I no Borja from Mosvodoprod  
 ‘No, I (really) didn’t know any Borja from Mosvodoprod.’  
 (Ju. Vizbor, *Zavtrak s vidom na Èl’brus*)

In these sentences the accent on the verb reinforces the information by the verb (verbal phrase) and stresses that the information is really the case (cf. Nikolavea 2000: 66; Yokoyama 1986). A similar pattern can be observed in the case of the imperative, because by using the non-accented subject, the speaker reinforces the impulse to realize the imperative situation.<sup>20</sup>

### 3.5. Validation of the analysis: use of modal particles

In the preceding sections, I have argued that the placement of the subject before or after the verb is associated with a different meaning. This difference was illustrated by the different types of verbs that occur with these orders. Another type of evidence for the meaning of the VS order as opposed to the SV order is the use of modal particles. I already presented some examples with modal particles: (3), (7), and (62) (with *da*);

(6) (with *a*); and (46) (with *tol’ko*). Other modal particles that were attested in the sample of 550 sentences were *že*, *už*, *-ka* and *tak*. Table two gives an overview of the most frequently attested modal particles from the sample of 550 imperatives with the non-contrasted subject *ty*.

**Table 2: particles in sentences with *ty***

	SV	VS	Total
number of cases <i>da</i>	15	38	53
number of cases <i>že</i>	4	7	11
number of cases <i>a</i>	42	6	48
number of cases <i>už</i>	13	1	14
number of cases <i>tak</i>	13	0	13
number of cases <i>tol’ko</i>	17	0	17
total number of cases with <i>da...tol’ko</i>	104	52	156
other uses (without <i>da...tol’ko</i> )	332	62	394

number of sentences with word order	436	114	550
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The data from table two suggest that the particles *da* and *že* are more typical of the *VS* order than of the *SV* order. This is especially clear for *da*. Table three shows that the particle *da* has a 40% correlation with the *VS* order in comparison to sentences with the *SV* order. In the case of the particle *že* a 15% correlation could be established with the *VS* order. In both cases the correlation is significant. Note, that these correlations cannot be contributed to a very frequent occurrence of a particular set pattern (e.g. *da bros' ty*), or a particular author that uses *da* or *že* relatively frequently. The data show that both particles are attested with different types of verbs, and with different authors.

There are also particles that are more typical of the *SV* order. Note, for example, that in the sample, the forms *tol'ko* and *tak* are attested only with a *SV* order. No significant correlation with either the *VS* or the *SV* order could be established for the particles *a* and *už*.

**Table 3: correlation and significance for different particles in sentences with *ty*<sup>21</sup>**

	Correlation with <i>VS</i> order	$\chi^2$
<i>da</i>	40%	92
<i>že</i>	15%	12,57
<i>a</i>	6%	2,17 (not significantly different from the null hypothesis, i.e. there is no correlation)
<i>už</i>	5%	1,16 (not significantly different from the null hypothesis, i.e. there is no correlation)

Because of the small numbers, the  $\chi^2$  test is less reliable in the case of *že* and *už*. However, the Fisher Exact Probability Test which takes smaller samples into account presents the same picture. In the case of *že*, the observed value with the *VS* order is 7, whereas the expected frequency per null hypothesis is 2,28. According to the Fisher exact test (two-tailed),  $P = 0,002$ , which means that the chance that the 15% correlation is really 0% (i.e. there is no correlation between the *VS* order and the occurrence of *že*) is only 0,2%. In the case of *už*, the observed value with the *VS* order is 1, whereas the expected value per null hypothesis is 2,9. According to the Fisher exact test (two-tailed),  $P = 0,319$ , which means that the chance that the 0,05% correlation is really 0% (i.e. no correlation) is 32%.

These results sustain the general semantic description given above. I will illustrate this with a brief discussion of these particles. First consider the particle *da*. According to Zybatow (1990: 97) the function of *da* in imperative sentences is to express a contrast with regard to the imperative proposition. The particular interpretation of the contrast depends on the context. In many cases the particle emphasises that the addressee is expected not to comply, and stresses the importance to realize the imperative. This is in accordance with the observation that when the speaker does not expect the addressee to comply, the *VS* order means that the speaker insists upon compliance. This meaning

combines very well with the meaning of the modal particle *da*, as is illustrated by (3) and (7) given earlier.

A similar explanation can be given for the use of *že*. Vasilyeva (1972: 54) argues that this particle conveys a categoric and insistent emphasis of the indisputability of a fact. The speaker attempts to influence the addressee in a subjective and emotional manner and to display such emotions as irritation and impatience. Again, this meaning is better in accordance with the meaning of the *VS* order than with the meaning of the *SV* order. Here, some remarks are in order. As table three shows, there is a correlation between *že* and the *VS* order, but this correlation is not very strong (only 15%). Furthermore, three occurrences of *že* with the *VS* order also contain the particle *da*. This suggests that the *VS* structure can be combined with the particle *že* quite well, but that in this structure this particle easily occurs with *da*, which can be seen as the prototypical particle of the *VS* order.<sup>22</sup>

Table 1 shows that there are also particles which are more typical of the *SV* order. This is for example the case with the particle *tol'ko* ('just', 'only'), which can occur either before the imperative, as in (46), or after it:

- (73) *Ty GLJADI tol'ko kakie mužiki-to pošli žirnye!*  
 you-NOM.SG look-IMP.2SG just what men-PRT went fat-NOM.PL  
 'Just look how fat the men have become nowadays!'  
 (V. Šuškin, *Nakaz*)

The reason why *tol'ko* is more typical of the *SV* order than the *VS* order can be explained in terms of the meaning of this particle. By using *tol'ko* with verbs of perception the speaker invites the addressee to focus his attention on this specific action ('you should really have a look'). More generally, by using *tol'ko* the speaker stresses that he/she wants the addressee to realize the imperative situation, and not any other (contextually given or understood) situation (cf. English *just*, *only*, that can stress the importance of the realization of the imperative situation). As I explained in the preceding section, this meaning of implicit contrast or focus is typical of the *SV* order. A similar explanation can be given for the particle or conjunction *tak*, which always occurs in the second half of a statement:

- (74) – *Ty ženit'sja, čto li, ezdil, Fed'ka? – žalobno skazala*  
 you-NOM.SG marry-INF, perhaps, came, Fed'ka? dolefully said  
*staruxa. – Tak ty ŽENIS', na menja ne smotri.*  
 old.woman. then you-NOM.SG marry-IMP.2SG, at me not look-IMP.2SG  
 "“So you went there to marry, did you, Fed'ka?”, the old woman said dolefully.  
 “Get married then, and don't look at me”"  
 (E. Popov, *Inostranec Paukov*)

This form expresses that the realization of the imperative action is something which is the natural result of some norm. This meaning is in perfect accordance with the *SV* order, which expresses that the right kind of action in the given context is the imperative action.<sup>23</sup>

In the preceding sections, I have established three basic functions of the different imperative structures in Russian:

- (i) Expressing a *contrast* (or *parallel*) with another agent (accented subject).
- (ii) Expressing a *contrast* with another situation (or part of the situation expressed by the VP), or stressing the *appropriateness* or *necessity* of the realization of the imperative situation (in sentences where the unaccented subject occurs before the accented verb), often with nuances of *emotional involvement* of the speaker or *increased personalization* or *familiarity*
- (iii) *reinforcing* (emphasizing) the directive speech act (in sentences where the unaccented subject occurs after the accented verb)

I have argued that information structure plays an important part in these different structures, even though vocative-like properties of the use of the subject may play a part as well. My analysis is corroborated by the distribution and functional peculiarities of the discourse particles that are discussed. An interesting question is whether these functions of the imperative subject are similar to those of other languages. A cross-linguistic comparison falls outside the scope of this paper, but in the next section I will provide a brief discussion of the differences between Russian and English non-contrastive imperative subjects.

#### 4. The Russian data in a comparative perspective

##### 4.1. *The subject of the imperative in English*

In this section I will discuss the use of the subject of the imperative in English, and in section 4.2. I will briefly compare the use of the imperative subject in English with the use of the imperative subject in Russian. I will not deal with intonation and sentence stress, because the main functions of the subject can be analyzed in abstraction from information structure. The choice for English can be motivated by two reasons.

First, English is not closely related to Russian, and has a fairly rigid word order. As such, it is typologically rather distinct from Russian where word order plays an important role in the function of the imperative subject. Second, the function of the subject in English has been described in quite some detail. There is a large amount of literature on the syntax of imperative subjects in English, especially within formal frameworks (for example Platzack & Rosengren 1998; Rupp 2003; Zanuttini 2008). Analyses devoted to the semantics and pragmatics of the subject in English are Davies (1986: 144-151), Moon (2001), Flagg (2001), Stefanowitsch (2003), and De Clerck (2005, 2006). In my discussion, I will focus primarily on insights provided by Davies (1986), which are elaborated on in Moon (2001), and De Clerck (2005, 2006), and similar to the analysis given in Langacker (2008).

In English, the subject is used in sentences where the pronoun *you* occurs before the imperative. The VS structure that we find in Russian is therefore absent in English.<sup>24</sup> As has been noted before in the literature (see e.g. Davies 1986 for an overview), there is no morphological difference between the imperative and the infinitive in English. In some cases it is therefore difficult to make a functional distinction between these parts of speech. Consider for example the following sentence, in which the phrase *be quiet* could be interpreted both as an infinitive and as an imperative:

(75) *Me be quiet? You be quiet!*

([www.imdb.com/title/tt0460681/quotes](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0460681/quotes))

Not considering these complications, it is possible to provide a number of functions of the imperative subject in English. Davies (1986) notices that an important reason to use the subject *you* in English is to indicate a contrast. She provides the following sentence:

- (76) *The others can go now, but you stay here with me.*  
(Davies 1986)

A similar explanation may be given for sentences where only the subject is accented and sentences with a parallel meaning:

- (77) *No, you come here.*  
(78) *You be careful too.*  
([www.stumblebumstudios.com/fiction\\_tomorrows-light-4-4.htm](http://www.stumblebumstudios.com/fiction_tomorrows-light-4-4.htm))

Like in Russian, English also has a number of uses of the imperative subject that are non-contrastive. As is remarked by Davies, in some sentences the imperative subject seems to add a nuance of ‘irritation’, or ‘impatience’, or even ‘aggression’. The following sentences can be seen as examples of this use:

- (79) *‘You be quiet, woman!’; he shouted.*  
(BNC)

However, in other sentences these nuances are missing, and the imperative subject seems to add a note of ‘amicable encouragement or comforting reassurance’:

- (80) *That’s right, you help yourself.*  
(Davies 1986)  
(81) *Don’t you listen to them, John, you do just what you want to do.*  
(ibid)

Davies tries to account for both types of uses in terms of the common element of *authority*. According to her the use of a subject signals an imposition upon the addressee. The feature of authority is also present in cases like (80) because the speaker is expressing his authority to advice or approve a particular course of action for the addressee. This view is also held by De Clerck (2005, 2006), and reformulated by Moon (2001) in terms of the speaker’s territorial claim on the information expressed by the imperative.

In my view, Davies is right in explaining the function of the subject in terms of the relation between the hearer and the speaker. What all the uses of the subject have in common is that the speaker *reinforces* or *emphasizes* the directive speech act in a context where it is taken into account that the addressee will not perform, considers not performing the situation or where the mere idea of non-realization is contextually implied. This can be illustrated with the following contexts.

First, the speaker may use a subject because he demands from the addressee to cooperate and comply (often with words like *now* that focus the attention of the addressee on the action that has to be performed). In some cases this use signals an

authoritarian attitude towards the speaker as in (82), but in many contexts the speaker takes into account that the addressee will be inclined not to comply immediately as in (83):

- (82) *Now, you go to the sink and give yourself a thorough good wash.*  
(<http://infomotions.com/etexts/gutenberg/dirs/1/1/4/8/11480/11480.htm>)
- (83) *"What are you doing? You come here right now. Now!"*  
([www.janetlapierre.com/dd.html](http://www.janetlapierre.com/dd.html))

In the context of negation this type can easily have the character of 'don't dare to do this', presupposing that the speaker takes into account that the addressee might perform the situation:<sup>25</sup>

- (84) *The first thing he said to me is, "Now don't you come in here with any false expectations."*  
([www.virginia.edu/uvanewsmakers/newsmakers/cobell.html](http://www.virginia.edu/uvanewsmakers/newsmakers/cobell.html))
- (85) *I've got a gun, lady. Don't you tell me what to do.*  
([www.thewestcoast.net/bobsnook/stg/nt/anna.htm](http://www.thewestcoast.net/bobsnook/stg/nt/anna.htm))

Note, speaker's expectation of the hearer's non-completion of the action may also explain why in the case of a regular categorical order the subject is not used (cf. (82)):

- (86) *?You come here!*

In the case of a categorical order, the possibility of non-completion is not (yet) taken into account. Similarly, the subject is not used in sentences like *look out!*, where the addressee has to comply immediately (cf. De Clerck 2005: 99):

- (87) *?You look out!*  
(De Clerck 2005: 99)

Second, the subject can be used to urge the addressee to realize the imperative situation, where the speaker takes into account that the addressee is inclined to realize another situation, or is already realizing another situation, e.g.

- (88) *When asked about his reasons for threatening humanity, Stewart responded "No! You talk to Mr. Whipples! Mr. Whipples!!"*  
([www.crappycelebrity.com/home\\_13.html](http://www.crappycelebrity.com/home_13.html))

Third, the subject may be used because the speaker wants the addressee to mark his words, and take notice:

- (89) *I know many reading that will say no way, but you just wait and see! It will happen.*  
[boardsus.playstation.com/playstation/board/message?board.id=racing&message.id=190386](http://boardsus.playstation.com/playstation/board/message?board.id=racing&message.id=190386)



Fourth, the speaker may use the subject to assure the addressee that it is a good idea to realize the situation ('the speaker knows best'), presupposing that possible barriers are taken away:

- (90) *Easy, easy your head. I'll have a job. Don't you worry about that.*  
([drama.eserver.org/plays/contemporary/biggs.html](http://drama.eserver.org/plays/contemporary/biggs.html))
- (91) *"Well, you go to sleep now. Sweet dreams." Katelyn looked at her little sister one last time before she closed the door behind her.*  
([www.writers-voice.com/KLMNO/N/Nichole\\_Dunst\\_rainbows.htm](http://www.writers-voice.com/KLMNO/N/Nichole_Dunst_rainbows.htm))

Similarly, the speaker may use the subject to stress that he is not at all against the realization of the imperative situation, taking away possible hesitations of the hearer to realize the imperative situation:

- (92) *You go and have fun!*  
([answers.yahoo.ca/question/index?qid=20080608130044AAZR8tg](http://answers.yahoo.ca/question/index?qid=20080608130044AAZR8tg))

Finally, the speaker may use the subject to encourage the addressee, or stress that the addressee has done the right thing. By using the subject, the speaker attempts to remove the agent's possible doubts concerning the action already performed:

- (93) *Yes, you tell them, Mr. Wooten!*  
([www.ajc.com/.../content/shared-blogs/ajc/thinkingright/entries/2007/09/11/on\\_schip\\_bush\\_should\\_use\\_veto.html](http://www.ajc.com/.../content/shared-blogs/ajc/thinkingright/entries/2007/09/11/on_schip_bush_should_use_veto.html))

This list of usage types does not exhaust all the possible usages, but gives insight into the different ways in which the idea of 'non-realization' or 'non-compliance' may play a part. In my view, the idea of 'authority' and the idea of 'non-realization' are two sides of the same coin. It is only in contexts where the non-realization of the situation is somehow contextually salient that the speaker needs to stress his 'authoritarian' position. To some extent this is reminiscent of the view put forward by Stefanowitsch (2003), who argues that "with subjectless imperatives, there is no suggestion that the hearer would bring about the event referred to before the utterance; with the OSI [imperatives with a subject], this is clearly the case" (Stefanowitsch 2003: 3). As is convincingly shown by De Clerck (2005, 2006) this statement is incorrect as a general description of the use of the imperative subject in non-contrastive contexts, but in my view Stefanowitsch's analysis is not fully erroneous. Compare for example (90) with the following sentence given by Stefanowitsch (2003: 3):

- (94) A: *Do you know what fraction that would be of the whole pizza?*  
B: *Er...*  
A: *What fraction's that? [...] Well don't worry if you don't know. How many of those would you need to make a whole pizza?*  
<BNC: FMH #008-012>

In (90) the speaker uses the subject to reinforce and strengthen that the addressee should not worry. This presupposes that the addressee is already worrying or that it is

quite likely that she will. In (94) such a context is absent. In the same vein, the context of non-realization may also explain the observations by Flagg (2001). She argues that what all imperatives with an explicit subject have in common is that they are marked for the feature [+start]. This means that the action expressed by the imperative should be brought about immediately. According to her, this feature explains why (95) is correct whereas (96) is not:

- (95) *Inspire others to come out of their shells!*  
 (96) \**You inspire others to come out of their shells!*

De Clerck (2005, 2006) shows that the position by Flagg cannot be maintained. He provides examples where the feature of [+start] is present and where a subject cannot be used, e.g. (87), and sentences where a subject is used, and where the feature of [+start] or immediacy is absent, e.g. (97):

- (97) *She smiled at me and I heard her say “Well, Becky, you be careful at night with the burglaries around your neighbourhood”.*  
 (De Clerck 2005: 98; [www.thumbspy.com/galleries/series-28.htm](http://www.thumbspy.com/galleries/series-28.htm). Accessed 13/05/2004).

In my view, the reason why sentences like (96) given by Flagg are not acceptable is that there is no context of non-realization, and therefore no reason to strengthen or reinforce the directive speech act (or express ‘authority’, in Davies terminology). In general this is true for more generic, general directives, including other examples provided by Flagg (2001), where the use of a subject would be unacceptable (*Know your rights and responsibilities!*; *Love your doggy!*, etc.). A similar explanation can be given for the reason why the subject is not used in utterances like *Come in!* (see Moon 2001: 161–162).

Another important question is to what extent one can actually explain why the use of the subject has the effect discussed above. In my view, Davies (1986: 149) is essentially correct when she explains the origin of the function of the subject in the following way: “one might speculate that it is perhaps related to the fact that in many cultures the act of explicitly designating an addressee is invested with special significance, being regarded as something like an imposition upon the addressee, and is therefore not something that everyone has the right to do in every circumstance.” In all of the cases discussed above, the function of the subject shares features with the use of names or vocative-like expressions like *woman* as in (79), or *Mr. Wooten* in (93) (cf. De Clerck 2005, 2006). The use of a vocative-like expression may either signal that the speaker demands attention from the addressee or create an atmosphere of familiarity (cf. (93)). Such functions are reminiscent of the use of the imperative subject. The explanation of the use of the subject in English put forward the question to what extent such pragmatic functions are valid cross-linguistically, or whether they are language specific. In the next section, I will address this topic by briefly discussing the similarities and differences between Russian and English non-contrastive imperative subjects.

## 4.2 English versus Russian

If we compare the use of imperative subject in Russian and English, there are some similarities that make sense from a functional point of view. An obvious example is the need to use a subject to express a contrast. It is to be expected that this factor is a trigger for the use of the subject cross-linguistically, and it therefore comes as no surprise that we find this use both in Russian and English.

As I have shown, the subject of the imperative plays an important part on the interpersonal level between speaker and addressee both in Russian and English. However, the specific function of this type of use in Russian differs considerably from English. Unfortunately there are no extensive quantitative analyses of the use of the imperative subject in English, making it difficult to compare the type of verbs that occur in imperative sentences with a subject. The only existing quantitative analysis of English is given by De Clerck (2005, 2006), but his sample of 18 imperatives with a subject from the *International Corpus of English-Great Britain* comprises of only 10 non-contrastive uses. This is too small to draw any conclusions. Nevertheless, on the basis of the data that we find in the literature one may conclude that the typical verb classes that we find in Russian sentences with a SV order such as verbs of perception do not occur in English (e.g. \**You look what's going on!*). In the case of other frequent verbs, e.g. *govorit'* ('tell'), similar uses are possible in English, but such cases have a different meaning. Compare for example (48) in Russian with the following English sentence:

- (98) *You tell me where the dope is. Right now.*  
(Catherine Arnold, *Journey: A Novel*)

In the English example the use of the subject reinforces the directive speech act. This feature is absent in the case of the Russian sentence, where the use of the subject stresses the appropriateness or importance of the realization of the imperative situation. Because of these differences, the use of the Russian imperative with a subject can almost never be translated into similar structures in English (and vice versa). As an illustration of this, two examples are given from the Russian novel *Master i Margarita* by Bulgakov, and the English translation from the Amsterdam Slavic Parallel Aligned Corpus:

- (99) *Pozvoni ty, požalujsta, Lixodeevu ešče raz,*  
call-IMP.2SG you-NOM.SG please, Lixodeev still time  
– *razdraženno skazal Rimskij.*  
testily said Rimskij  
'Please try and ring Likhodeyev once more,' said Rimsky testily.'  
(100) *Da ty ne tolkajsja, ja tebja sam tolkanu!*  
prt you-NOM.SG not push-IMP.2SG, I you self push  
'Stop pushing and grabbing or I'll punch your face in!'

In (99) we find a typical example of the VS order because the speaker reinforces the directive speech act, whereas the SV order in (100) can be explained by the contrastive context. In both cases the English translation does not contain a subject, and in both cases the use of the subject in English would be unacceptable.

A possible exception might be the verb *worry*, which figures prominently in different analyses on the imperative subject in English, e.g.:

- (101) *don't you worry my girl*  
(Stefanowitsch 2003: 2; BNC).
- (102) *He's alright, I said, but he's a bit old. Don't you worry about that, said Bernie, I'll have ten years off him.*  
(De Clerck 2006: 8; BNC)

Such uses seem to be similar to Russian sentences with *bojat'sja* ('be afraid') or *bespokoit'sja* ('worry'), which are relatively frequent among Russian sentences with a SV order. In such sentences the use of subject is connected to the theme-rheme construction, and the emotional appeal to the addressee ('you really mustn't worry'). Here, we find a relation with the English context of 'non-realization', where the use of the subject reinforces the directive speech act by expressing the feature of authority. A similar relation can be found in the case of sentences like (88) given earlier, or sentences with *just* like the following:

- (103) *Don't sing. You just drive.*  
([highfam.blogspot.com/2007/10/out-of-mouth-of-my-babe.html](http://highfam.blogspot.com/2007/10/out-of-mouth-of-my-babe.html))

Such sentences are typical examples of the English imperative with a subject because the speaker stresses that the addressee should realize the imperative situation only, and not something else. Such cases show similarities to Russian sentences with a theme-rheme (topic-focus) structure, where the speaker uses the SV order to emphasize that the imperative situation is the appropriate situation (the so-called semi-contrastive cases). In

(103) the idea of focus is underlined by the use of the focus particle *just*. As I have discussed with regard to sentences like (73), a similar use can be found in Russian in sentences with *tol'ko* ('just').<sup>26</sup>

Another possible relation can be found with respect to the feature of familiarity that was typical of some uses of the imperative subject in Russian. In English this feature can be found in the case of exhortations, or in the case of a supportive expression of concern, where the addition of *you* to the bare imperative entails an increased personalisation of the message, emphasising the existing social relationships of bondedness and intimacy between the interlocutors (see De Clerck 2006: 77–79), e.g.:

- (104) D: *I think this is too thin.*  
D: *It's for a tiny little hand* <,>  
D: *What you do is wear it like that* <,>  
D: *You try it later on and see* <,>  
(ICE-G)

But again, the specific way this personalisation works out is certainly not identical to Russian. In Russian the use of the subject in the phrase *ty pobrobuj* (lit. you try) first of all stresses the appropriateness of the realization of the imperative situation ('you should/could try (it)'), and the character of support is absent or at least not strongly present.

Generally speaking, one may conclude that in Russian the use of the subject is possible with a much wider range of verbs and context types, whereas in English the use of the subject seems rather limited.<sup>27</sup> Although there may be similarities between

Russian and English on a very abstract level, the differences between Russian and English are more striking than the similarities. A possible or partial explanation is for the difference between Russian and English is that in Russian the function of the subject is closely related to information structure, whereas in English the influence of information structure is less prevalent, and the subject is used mainly for its vocative properties. Possible evidence for this argument includes the fact that some of specific functions of the English imperative with a subject can also be found in other languages with a rigid word order such as Dutch (see e.g. De Haan 1986 for a description of the Dutch imperative in general, and Fortuin 2004 for a description of Dutch imperatives with a subject). By using the subject the speaker considers himself in a position where he/she is able to determine what the addressee must do. In the following fragment from a story this authoritarian character is explicitly mentioned in the fragment preceding the imperative:

- (105) *(Ik herinner me dat de toon bazig was toen we de kamer verlieten.)*  
*Kom JIJ maar eens MEE zei ze*  
 come-IMP you-SG PRT PRT with she said  
*(en ze leidde me met haar hand op mijn rug naar haar kamer op de eerste verdieping.)*  
 ‘I remember that she spoke with a tone of authority. You come with me, she said, and she led me to her room on the first floor with her hand on my back.’  
 (Corpus Gesproken Nederlands)

Note, that in the corresponding sentence without subject (*Kom maar eens mee*), the authoritarian tone would be absent or less clear. Another parallel between English and Dutch is that contexts of comforting reassurance or amicable encouragement like in the English examples (80) or (81) can also be found in Dutch imperative structures with a subject:

- (106) *Ga jij maar lekker spelen.*  
 go-IMP you-SG PRT nicely play  
 ‘You go and play now.’

Although the semantics of such sentences is not fully identical to the English cases, the similarity suggests that there is indeed a natural relation between the use of an imperative subject and the feature of authority. In addition to this, language specific conventions play a part as well. Nevertheless, the data suggest that no language-independent pragmatic explanation can be given for the function of the subject, and that ‘putting on stage the addressee’ cannot be associated with one specific function. Of course, a more extensive survey of a larger sample of languages is necessary to test this hypothesis.

## 5. Conclusion and further remarks

In this paper, I have given an analysis of the function of the subject in imperative sentences in Russian. Even though different authors have discussed the use of the subject, no satisfactory answer has been offered to the question of what the exact function of the subject is.

Generally speaking, one may conclude that the pronoun has two basic functions. In sentences where the pronoun is accented, it serves to select the agent (addressee) from a set of possible or contextually given agents. In such sentences the use of the subject is necessary to introduce the contrastive function of accent. Furthermore, by positioning the subject before or after the non-accented verb, the specific semantics of these orders can be introduced.

The second basic function of the subject can be found in sentences where it is not accented. In such sentences the subject has a pragmatic or intersubjective function. I have shown, that in order to describe this function of the subject, one has to take into account both word order and sentences stress (sentence accentuation) and properties of the subject that are reminiscent of vocatives. In sentences where the non-accented subject occurs before the verbal phrase, the subject stresses the appropriateness in realizing the imperative action, often pointing at a given necessity or desirability. This use of the subject may also stress the emotional involvement of the speaker, or signal increased familiarity. In sentences where the subject occurs after the verb, the use of the subject reinforces or emphasizes the directive speech act, often in a situation where the speaker cannot control the addressee. The difference in meaning between these word order structures (postverbal or preverbal subject) was underlined by a survey of the different lexical verbs and modal particles that are used in these constructions.

The analysis of the different functions of the imperative subject raises the question to what extent these functions are typical of Russian, and to what extent they are similar to the function of the imperative subject in other languages. A brief comparison with English showed that there are both similarities and differences. The more objective function of the subject – expressing a contrast with another agent/subject – was found in both languages. With respect to the intersubjective, pragmatic functions of the subject similarities could be found on an abstract level only. The specific way in which these functions operate differs considerably, however, from Russian to English. Such differences are probably due to the different linguistic structures in which the imperative operates. Russian has a relatively free word order, which also plays a part in the case of a subject used with the imperative. Due to this, the specific semantics associated with specific word orders also plays a part in the case of the imperative with a subject. In English, however, this feature does not play a part because it has a relatively rigid word order. More specifically, where Russian has a semantic division of labor between the *V*S order and the S*V* order, English has a much simpler structure, with only one order (the S*V* order).

Further research should focus on both the differences and similarities across languages, and the way these similarities and differences can be explained. A related topic is the diachronic dimension. As I remarked (see note 20), data suggest that the use of the imperative subject in Russian has changed. It is, however, not clear what factors have contributed to this change, and to what extent these factors tell us something about the use of the imperative subject in modern Russian. Another important topic for further investigation is the relation between the information structure on the level of the sentence (theme rheme division), and discourse topicality. In this paper I have argued that the use of the imperative subject in Russian must be explained in terms of the theme rheme (topic focus) division, but as I have pointed out, this division is connected to various contextual factors including discourse topicality (cf. Moon 1995). How these two levels of information structure interact is a topic that deserves much closer study.

Finally, further research on the use of the imperative subject in Russian should also take intonation into account, for example along the lines of Yokoyama (1986), or Odé (2008). Although it is possible to describe the functions of the subject in abstraction from intonation, a description that also looks at intonation would refine the analysis given so far. Such research would also give a better understanding of the relationship between spoken Russian and written Russian.

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## Appendix

**Table 1:** Most frequently attested instances with *ty*  
(non-contrastive interpretation) from sample of 550 sentences

<i>Verb</i>	<i>ty before V</i>	<i>ty after V</i>
<i>bojat</i> 'sja 'be afraid'	8	2
<i>brat</i> 'take'	2	
<i>brosat</i> 'throw'	6	11
<i>byt</i> 'be'	2	4
<i>verit</i> 'belief'	4	
<i>vzgljanut</i> 'glance'	2	1
<i>vrat</i> 'lie'	2	1
<i>vyjti</i> 'go out'	2	
<i>gljadet</i> 'look'	2	
<i>gljanut</i> 'glance'	5	
<i>govorit</i> 'talk'	9	
<i>gorevat</i> 'mourn'	2	
<i>grubit</i> 'be rude'	2	
<i>davat</i> 'give'	4	
<i>dat</i> 'give'	4	
<i>delat</i> 'do'	4	
<i>deržat</i> 'hold'	2	
<i>deržat</i> 'sja 'cling'	2	
<i>dumat</i> 'think'	2	1
<i>ženit</i> 'sja 'marry'		2
<i>žit</i> 'live'	2	
<i>zabyvat</i> 'forget'	2	
<i>zabyt</i> 'forget'	2	
<i>zalivat</i> 'pour'	2	
<i>zamolčat</i> 'shut up'		2
<i>idti</i> 'go'	7	17
<i>izvinit</i> 'pardon'	5	5
<i>imet</i> 'have'	2	
<i>molčat</i> 'be silent'	2	2
<i>napisat</i> 'write'	2	1
<i>ob</i> "jasnit" 'explain'	2	1
<i>obižat</i> 'sja 'be offended'	3	
<i>orat</i> 'shout'	3	
<i>ostavit</i> 'abandon'	2	2
<i>otvetit</i> 'answer'	2	
<i>otvečat</i> 'answer'	2	
<i>pereživat</i> 'survive'	2	1
<i>pet</i> 'sing'	2	
<i>pogovorit</i> 'talk'	3	
<i>podoždat</i> 'wait'	5	5
<i>podumat</i> 'think over'	9	

<i>poexat</i> 'go'	4	1
<i>pozvonit</i> 'ring'	3	1
<i>pokazat</i> 'show'	2	2
<i>ponjat</i> 'understand'	11	3
<i>poprobovat</i> 'try'	3	
<i>posidet</i> 'sit for a while'	2	
<i>poslušat</i> 'listen for a while'	3	1
<i>posmotret</i> 'look'	15	
<i>predstavit</i> 'imagine'	2	
<i>priežžat</i> 'come'	2	
<i>prikinut</i> 'add'	2	
<i>progovorit</i> 'say'	2	
<i>projti</i> 'go through'	2	
<i>prostit</i> 'forgive'	12	1
<i>ravnjat</i> 'equate'	2	
<i>rugat</i> 'swear'	2	
<i>sadit'sja</i> 'sit down'	3	
<i>sidet</i> 'sit'	3	2
<i>skazat</i> 'say'	23	3
<i>slušat</i> 'listen'	8	4
<i>smotret</i> 'look'	3	10
<i>snimat</i> 'remove'	2	
<i>spat</i> 'sleep'	3	1
<i>sprašivat</i> 'ask'	2	
<i>sprosit</i> 'ask'	3	
<i>sxodit</i> 'go and fetch'		
<i>sčitat</i> 'consider'	2	
<i>tešit</i> 'amuse'	2	
<i>tjanut</i> 'pull'		2
<i>udivljat'sja</i> 'be surprised'	2	
<i>uxodit</i> 'go away'	2	
<i>učest</i> 'consider'	2	
<i>xodit</i> 'go'	2	1

**Table 2:** Most frequently attested instances with *vy* (non-contrastive interpretation) from sample of 417 sentences

<i>Verb</i>	<i>vy before V</i>	<i>vy after V</i>
<i>bespokoit'sja</i> 'be worried'	6	
<i>bojat'sja</i> 'be afraid'	5	
<i>brošit</i> 'throw'	2	7
<i>byt</i> 'be'	2	2
<i>verit</i> 'belief'	2	1
<i>vzjat</i> 'take'	1	2

<i>vspomnit</i> 'remember'	3	1
<i>vyčerknut</i> 'strike out'	2	
<i>gnat</i> 'chase'	3	
<i>govorit</i> 'talk'	5	
<i>dumat</i> 'think'	4	
<i>žit</i> 'live'	2	
<i>zabyt</i> 'forget'	2	
<i>zajti</i> 'go after'	2	
<i>zamolčat</i> 'shut up'		2
<i>zaxodit</i> 'go after'	2	
<i>zaxotet</i> 'want'	2	
<i>idti</i> 'go'	3	6
<i>izvinit</i> 'pardon'	15	
<i>kričat</i> 'scream'	3	
<i>krutit</i> 'turn'	3	
<i>napisat</i> 'write'	3	
<i>obraščit</i> 'turn to'	2	
<i>ob"jasnit</i> 'explain'	3	2
<i>ostavit</i> 'abandon'	2	
<i>otvetit</i> 'answer'	4	
<i>perestat</i> 'stop'		2
<i>pogljadet</i> 'look'	2	
<i>pogovorit</i> 'talk'	2	
<i>podoždat</i> 'wait'	3	3
<i>podojti</i> 'approach'	3	
<i>podumat</i> 'think over'	17	1
<i>poexat</i> 'go'	2	
<i>pozvonit</i> 'ring'	4	
<i>pojti</i> 'go'	2	1
<i>ponjat</i> 'understand'	8	2
<i>poprobovat</i> 'try'	2	
<i>posidet</i> 'sit for a while'	6	
<i>poslušat</i> 'listen'	3	2
<i>posmotret</i> 'look'	18	
<i>postarat'sja</i> 'try'	2	
<i>poščupat</i> 'feel'	2	
<i>predstavit</i> 'imagine'	5	
<i>prijti</i> 'come'	3	
<i>propast</i> 'vanish'		2
<i>prosledit</i> 'trace'	2	
<i>prostit</i> 'forgive'	9	
<i>pročest</i> 'read'	3	
<i>razrešit</i> 'allow'	2	
<i>rasskazat</i> 'tell'	3	
<i>skazat</i> 'say'	20	
<i>slušat</i> 'listen'	3	2
<i>smotret</i> 'look'	6	1

<i>somnevat'sja</i> 'doubt'	4
<i>sprašivat'</i> 'ask'	3
<i>stesnjat'sja</i> 'be shy'	2
<i>sxodit'</i> 'go and fetch'	2

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<sup>2</sup> The examples in this paper are taken from the *Nacional'nyj Korpus Russkogo Jazyka* 'Russian National Corpus' (RNC) <<http://ruscorpora.ru/>>, or from the Internet.

<sup>3</sup> Moon also seems to be aware of information structure on the level of the utterance, when she introduces the term *utterance topic* as "the item of temporary concern that holds its topical status for a single utterance only" (Moon 1995: 119). It should be noted, though, that Moon's utterance topic is still defined in terms of temporary topic *switch*. In my analysis, the level of the utterance is basic, and belongs to the linguistic means that the speaker has at his disposal to express the intended meaning. This sentence structure can *presuppose* particular contextual and discourse features, (e.g. the use of a subject may presuppose that the addressee is a new topic), but it is not possible to predict a single sentence structure on the basis of the preceding discourse.

<sup>4</sup> In Russian the category of person is not expressed in the past tense.

<sup>5</sup> I will not consider examples from poetry, because the rules of word order in poetry differ considerably from that of prose or spoken language (see e.g. Kovtunova 1976: 195).

<sup>6</sup> The RNC does not indicate sentence accent. The placement of accents is derived from the larger linguistic context. That is, taking into account the context in which the sentence occurs, the most likely accentuation is chosen.

<sup>7</sup> King (1995) does not present statistical data to sustain her claim. Such a statistical analysis is much needed but falls beyond the scope of this paper. The data from the RNC suggest that a tendency for contrastively focussed subjects to occur before the verb can be observed in imperative sentences, at least with some verbs. To give an illustration, in the RNC the phrase *Skaži TY* was attested only once, whereas several instances were attested of the phrase *TY skaži*.

<sup>8</sup> In Yokoyama's model (1986) such sentences are pronounced with a so-called type II intonation.

<sup>9</sup> In sentences with the VŠ order, this dependency on the context is absent:

- (1) Gde-to okolo časa on prosnulsja: zvonil. TELEFON  
 somewhere around one.o'clock he woke.up: rang-IMERF telephone  
 'Somewhere around one o'clock he woke up. The telephone was ringing.'  
 (Bonnot & Fougeron 1982)

<sup>10</sup> A complicating factor is that the rheme-theme structure is also typical of spoken Russian (see Kovtunova 1969: 61). In this analysis, however, it remains unclear to what extent the rheme-theme structure in spoken Russian is semantically and functionally distinct from the theme-rheme structure.

<sup>11</sup> In the case of declarative sentences, the VŠ order has a so-called 'objective' character. In the majority of such sentences both the subject and the verb present new information:

- (1) Na platformu prišel POEZD.  
 on platform arrived train  
 'A train arrived (there was a train that arrived) on the platform.'

This sentence has a so-called existential character (see Keijsper 1985: 155, for an analysis).

<sup>12</sup> This is a specific property of the imperative, which is absent with other verb forms. Consider for example the SV order of the imperative to the SV order of a regular declarative sentence:

- (2) Poezd prišel VOVREMJA.

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train arrived on.time  
'The train has arrived on time.'

The most natural interpretation of this sentence is that the subject is interpreted as expressing old information, whereas the idea of coming on time expresses new information. The subject is not accented, because no other referents than trains are considered here (see Keijsper 1985: 180-182). In the case of the imperative the relation between the subject and the verb is different, because the identity of the subject is already given by the imperative verb. Because of this, using the subject before the verb creates a theme-rheme structure which is associated with an explicit or implicit idea of contrast.

<sup>13</sup> The examples were collected by searching for [imperative + *ty/vy*; maximum distance 3 words], and [*ty/vy* + imperatives; maximum distance 3 words] in the whole corpus. From this search sentences with an accented subject or use of the subject that were clearly vocative were removed. This resulted in a total of 550 sentences. This number of sentences corresponds to all sentences with a non-accented subject in the whole corpus at that time (with the exception of sentences where the distance between the subject and the verb is more than 3 words). Since the number of data in the RNC has increased considerably in the mean time, a similar search at the present moment would of course yield much more hits. Finally, it should be stressed that the data collected from the RNC do not provide any information about the type of verbs that occur in subjectless imperative sentences.

<sup>14</sup> In Russian, verbs, including the imperative, are morphologically marked for aspect, and occur in so-called aspectual pairs. This means that in the case of telic verbs one and the same lexical verb in the imperative mood can occur both in the imperfective and the perfective aspect (see e.g. Benacchio 2002 for an analysis of the factors that determine the choice of aspect with the imperative).

<sup>15</sup> In (53) the omission of the subject makes the sentence less acceptable. This can be explained in terms of the notion of topic predictability introduced by Moon (1995). In the sentence preceding the imperative, the speaker is talking about herself. In this context, the use of a bare imperative would imply a non-predictable topic switch. This differs from (54), where in the context preceding the imperative, the speaker uses the name of the addressee, and the particle *nu* ('well', 'ok'), which expresses a conclusion (Vasilyeva 1972, 101), suggesting that the addressee is already established as the discourse topic. It should be noted, though, that in contexts where the topic is predictable like (54) the subject can also be used (*Nu ty spi, spi*). This shows that the use of a subject cannot be explained solely in terms of topic predictability.

<sup>16</sup> Moon (1995: 124) also suggests that this is a more general phenomenon because the same interlocutor relationship may hold for imperatives issued for the benefit of the addressee. She suggests that one cannot replace the subject *ty* for the subject *vy* in (1):

- (1) Ty idi (lučše) spat'. (Moon 1995: 124)  
you-NOM.SG go-IMP.2SG better sleep  
'You should go to sleep'

This is not sustained by the data that I attested. In the RNC I looked for imperative sentences with *lučše* 'better' and the pronouns *ty* or *vy* (polite use). The search was [*ty/vy* – *lučše* – IMP] and [*ty/vy* – IMP – *lučše*]. Sentences where *vy* referred to plural addressees were not considered. This resulted in 73 sentences with *vy*, and 166 sentences with *ty*. One could perhaps argue that in some of these sentences the realization of the imperative situation is not only in the benefit of the addressee but also beneficial for the speaker. However, by looking at each individual context, I determined in which sentences the realization of the imperative situation could best be regarded as being in the benefit of the addressee only. This was the case in 30 instances of sentences with *vy* (41%), and in 45 instances of sentences with *ty* (27%). The data therefore do not corroborate the hypothesis that when the action is only in the benefit of the addressee, the subject *vy* cannot be retained.

<sup>17</sup> Moon (1995: 123) also argues that retention of *vy* is not possible in the case of threats or warnings like \**Vy ne smejte tak razgovarivat'* (you-NOM.PL not dare-IMP.2SG so talk; 'Don't you dare talk like that') because the speaker is not positioned above the addressee. According to Moon, the use of *ty* would be possible in such sentences. One would indeed expect that the feature of 'stressing the inappropriateness of the situation', and the feature of 'familiarity' associated with the subject are not very well in accordance with the formal relationship that is typical for contexts where *vy* is used. It should be noted, though, that instances of *vy ne smejte* (you-NOM.PL not dare-IMP.2PL; 'Don't you dare') can be attested on the internet. Here, further research is necessary.

<sup>18</sup> As was pointed out by an anonymous reviewer, in the case of idiomatic expressions the word order may be conventionalized as well. This may indeed be the case for the expression *Idi ty!*, lit. ‘Go away’, if it is interpreted as ‘You are kidding me!’, ‘Don’t talk nonsense’. In the examples I have attested from the RNC, I have only found examples of this expression with VS order. Although the idiomaticity of the expression may play a part here (the expression is conventionalized, including its word order), one probably also has to explain the set word order in terms of the specific function of this expression. Furthermore, deviations from such conventionalized word orders are possible. An example is the idiomatic expression *Ne tjani ty!* (lit. ‘Do not pull’, meaning ‘Don’t spin it out, speak up!’). This expression can also occur with the VS order:

- (1) German, ty ne tjani! (*Naš sovremennik*, 2004)  
 German, you-NOM.SG not pull-IMP.2SG  
 ‘German, speak up!’

<sup>19</sup> Note, that the VS order is also typical of sentences where the speaker cannot control the addressee, such as in the case of wishes or curses:

- (1) IDI ty k ČERTU!  
 go-IMP.2SG you-NOM.SG to devil  
 ‘Go to hell!’ (Ė. Radzinskij, *Obol’stitel’ Kolobaški*)

Such sentences conform to the general pattern in Russian (and in fact other European languages) that the VS order is associated with a hypothetical status of the predicate (foremost in wishes and conditional sentences without explicit conditional form).

<sup>20</sup> Interestingly, in older versions of Russian, the postverbal use of the subject seems to have been different from modern Russian. Consider the following sentence from the 17-th century Low German Manual of Spoken Russian by Tönnies Fenne:

- (1) Posobi tÿ mne sdimat ne motzi mne odnomu sdinut.  
 help-IMP.2SG you-NOM.SG me lift (...)  
 ‘Help me lift, I can’t lift it alone.’ (TF 236.10-11, taken from Hendriks and Schaecken 2006)

Since the word order typical of modern literary Russian was not part of older stages of Russian (see for example Bulaxovskij 1958: 417-430; Kovtunova 1969), it may be expected that the function of the subject of the imperative subject has changed as well. More diachronic research is necessary to validate this hypothesis.

<sup>21</sup> Boundary for significance:  $\chi^2 > 3,8$ .

<sup>22</sup> The particles *už* and *a* are somewhat different from *že* or *da*, because they lack the feature of emphasis of the directive speech act, for example in a context where the speaker does not expect the addressee to comply, or where the speaker does not comply immediately. This also explains why they can also be combined with requests (see Vasilyeva: 75, 235). One would predict, therefore, that they are more typical for the SV order than for the VS order. This is, however, not corroborated by the data. As is shown in table three, there is no correlation between these particles and the VS order or the SV order. Further research is necessary here. Such research should also focus on combinations of particles. It is probably not a coincidence that the one occurrence of *už* with the VS order also contains the particle *že*.

<sup>23</sup> Xrakovskij and Volodin (1986: 156) suggest that sentences with a subject and the modal particles *nu*, *a nu*, *nu-ka*, *že* or *-ka* are extremely rare, whereas the use of a subject is normative in sentences with the particle *da*. These observations are not fully corroborated by the data attested by me. In the 550 examples of sentences with a subject there were 10 sentences with *nu*, 10 sentences with *-ka* and 11 sentences with *že*. It is therefore questionable whether one can really speak of extremely rare occurrences. Moreover, a phrase like *ty smotri-ka* (‘you have a look’) can be attested quite frequently on the internet. Nevertheless, since there were 53 instances of the particle *da*, it is fair to say that this particle is more typical of sentences with a subject than the particles *nu*, *-ka* or *že*. With regard to the question whether there is a positive or negative correlation between the use of a subject and particular modal particles, the correlation test given in table 2 does not provide any information. To answer this question, sentences without subject would have to be considered too. Nevertheless, it should be pointed out that in the case of verbs that are typical of the VS order (for example *brosat*) a positive correlation with *da* strongly suggested. To give an

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illustration, a search for [*brosat'*<sub>imp</sub> + *ty*] in the RNC at a later stage resulted in 311 hits, whereas the search [*da brosat'*<sub>imp</sub> + *ty*] resulted in 147 hits (almost 50%).

<sup>24</sup> An exception has to be made for the vocative like use of the pronoun in sentences like *Come here you!* Furthermore, the subject occurs after the finite verb in negative sentences with *do*-support (e.g. *don't you worry*).

<sup>25</sup> One anonymous reviewer argued that there is a correlation between the use of the subject and negative imperatives. It may be true indeed that there is such a relation, but unfortunately there are no quantitative analyses available of the use of the imperative subject to sustain this view. Nevertheless, a possible correlation could be explained as follows. The abstract idea of an impulse to realize a situation in a context of 'non-realization' is most clearly expressed in contexts where there is a contrast between the action performed by the addressee at the moment of speaking, and the action expressed by the imperative (i.e. contexts of 'disagreement').

<sup>26</sup> This is not to say, of course, that English *just* and Russian *tol'ko* are fully equivalent.

<sup>27</sup> In Russian, the percentage of sentences with a subject is probably much higher than in English (Yokoyama 1986: 213). In English uses with a subject (including *nobody*, etc.) constitute about 4.0% of the total number of imperatives in English (see e.g. De Clerck 2006). A pilot search of 100 randomly selected examples of imperatives from the RNC resulted in 9 examples. In dialogue the percentage is probably much higher.