

## Left-Peripheral Interactions in English Imperatives

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### Main Questions

- How do the information-structural restrictions of imperatives differ from declaratives (and questions)?
- Are these restrictions semantic or syntactic?
- Can a universal syntactic model explain these restrictions in English, while permitting cross-linguistic variability?

### What's in the imperative CP field?

Several hypotheses have been proposed in the literature:

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Unitary CP</b> (e.g. Han 2000)                                     | CP > TP ...                                   |
| <b>Clause-specific phrase</b> (Zanuttini 2008, Zanuttini et al. 2012) | JussiveP ≥ TP ...                             |
| <b>Articulated CP</b> (Rizzi 1997)                                    | ForceP > TopP > FocusP > TopP > FinP > TP ... |

I adopt a structure for English that incorporates Rizzi-style positions but also allows conflation of adjacent positions.

### **Extended articulated CP for English** (following Haegeman 2004)

Sub / Force / TopP > FocusP > FinP > TP ...  
*Sub / Force / TopP is a single, conflated phrase = CP*

### *Key features:*

- No low TopP in English.
- C<sup>0</sup> carries three features: [±Sub, Force{DEC/INT/IMP}, ±Top]

### What kind of topics are allowed?

Only contrastive topics (hosted in FocusP) are allowed in English imperatives.  
 (Cormany forthcoming)

- (1) The book, John bought \_\_\_\_.
- (2) \*The book, buy \_\_\_\_!
- (3) These stocks, the broker bought immediately.
- (4) These stocks, buy immediately! (Those avoid at all costs!)

|             | contrastive topic | non-contrastive topic |
|-------------|-------------------|-----------------------|
| declarative | ✓                 | ✓                     |
| imperative  | ✓                 | ✗                     |

What topics do other languages allow?

Non-contrastive topics do freely appear in other languages.

(5) Chayk un ilke-ra!  
book TOP read-IMP  
"Books, read!"

(Korean)

Korean distinguishes SubP and ForceP (Zanuttini et al. 2012)

*Un* overtly marks high TopP, an available fronting position.

How are clauses typed?

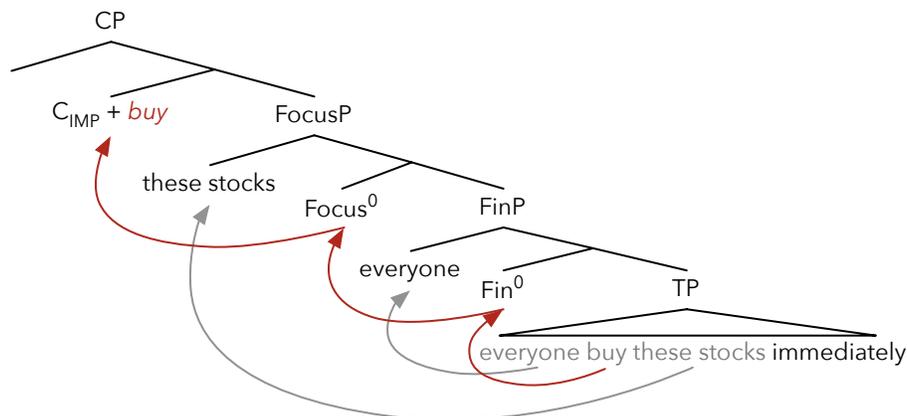
### Clause typing hypothesis

All clauses contain an element that scopes over a propositional constituent (TP) and specifies its discourse function. (Cheng 1991)

### Methods that don't work for English:

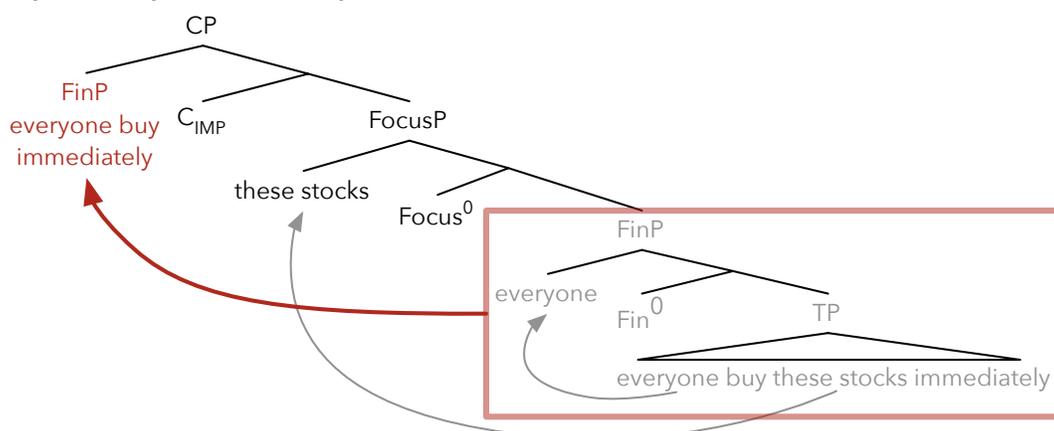
#### Head movement of V to C (Han 2000)

(6) \*Buy these stocks everyone immediately!



#### Phrasal movement to Spec ForceP (Koopman 2007)

(7) \*Everyone buy immediately these stocks!



**Method that does work for English:**

**Force feature of C<sup>0</sup>**

Not in free variation; portmanteau with Sub and Topic.

|               | [-Sub] |        | [+Sub]      |        |
|---------------|--------|--------|-------------|--------|
|               | [-Top] | [+Top] | [-Top]      | [+Top] |
| declarative   | ∅      | ∅      | that, ∅     | X      |
| interrogative | ∅      | X      | if, whether | X      |
| imperative    | ∅      | X      | ∅           | X      |

Interactions with typed C<sup>0</sup>

English embeds both DEC and IMP clauses (Crnic and Trinh 2009)

Neither is headed by a [+Top] complementizer.

- (8) \*John said [a book that he bought \_\_\_\_.]
- (9) \*John said [a book ∅<sub>SUBORD.DEC</sub> he bought \_\_\_\_.]
- (10) \*John said [a book ∅<sub>SUBORD.IMP</sub> buy \_\_\_\_.]

**Embedded clauses still have FocusP.**

- (11) John said [<sub>CP</sub> that [<sub>FocusP</sub> THE BOOK he bought \_\_\_\_.]  
(...not the magazine.)
- (12) John said [<sub>CP</sub> ∅<sub>SUB.IMP</sub> [<sub>FocusP</sub> THESE STOCKS buy \_\_\_\_.]  
(...those avoid.)

**Subjects never precede negation** in English imperatives.

- (13) \*You don't do that! high subject X
- (14) You, don't do that! vocative ✓
- (15) Don't you do that! low subject ✓

Placing Neg in FocusP enforces this order. (Zanuttini 1997)

**Wh-extraction is impossible** from English imperatives.

- (16) John<sub>i</sub> said [∅<sub>IMP</sub> send his<sub>i</sub> mother to the store].
- (17) \*Who did John say [send \_\_\_\_ to the store]?

Other types of extraction, e.g. clefting (18) and long-distance topicalization (19), are more acceptable. (Cormany forthcoming)

- (18) a. It's this book (that) John said [read \_\_\_\_].  
b. ?It's at the library, John<sub>i</sub> said [meet him<sub>i</sub> \_\_\_\_].  
(19) His<sub>i</sub> mother, John<sub>i</sub> said [send \_\_\_\_ to the store].

### **Conclusions**

- English imperative clauses have different information-structural restrictions because they must be typed IMP.
- The limited left-peripheral structure in English requires that clause-typing and topicalization occupy a single position.
- Lexical gaps (no [+Top, Force{IMP}] complementizer) and in-situ clause typing block non-contrastive topic raising.
- Other languages' complementizer inventories (as conditioned by syntax) will drive similar processes.

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