IMPERATIVES AND COMMITMENTS IN
ROMANIAN ACADEMIC MEETING INTERACTIONS

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Abstract

Romanian imperatives may include different constructions that do not necessarily entail an imperative verb, such as the subjunctive and the indicative mood, interjections or elliptical formats. This study focuses on the 'bare' imperative turns-at-talk by applying the methodology of conversation analysis on a corpus consisting of naturally occurring academic meeting interactions. It shows how the imperative expresses actions that display no contingency or difficulty in managing them due to the existence of mainly prior explicit commitments (suggestions, proposals, agreements, previous allocated tasks) that entitle the speakers to use the imperative form in order to direct their recipients. Moreover, it shows how the turn including an imperative verb may also represent a simultaneous commitment, more explicitly an offer that accounts for the lack of contingencies and makes relevant the use of the imperative form within the context of Romanian academic meeting interactions.

Keywords: Imperative; Romanian; Meetings; Commitment; Entitlement; Contingencies.

1. Introduction

This paper explores the Romanian imperative form focussing on its use in the institutional setting of an academic meeting. Although it has been largely discussed from a cross-linguistic perspective (Aikhenvald 2010; Xrakovskij 2001), in Romanian, apart from the traditional grammar studies (Guţu-Romalo 2008; Pană Dindelegan forthcoming), the imperative has not been systematically investigated in detail, especially in naturally occurring interaction. This needs to be explored as grammar does not tell a speaker in what circumstances it is appropriate to use a specific form. If we only had the grammar of the language, we would know that the Romanian imperative has two forms[1], 2nd person singular and plural (Table 1), we would not get to know on what occasion to use it, and we would not be aware of the socially organised practices associated with the choice of using a specific form in a specific context.

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[1] For more details on the morphology of Romanian imperative, see Pirvulescu and Roberge 2000.

Person	Affirmative	Negative
2nd singular	*Vorbeşte!*	*Nu vorbi!*
	'Talk!'	'Don't talk!'
2nd plural = 2nd polite singular[2]	Vorbiţi!	*Nu vorbiţi!*
	'Talk!'	'Don't talk!'

Table 1: Romanian imperative forms

Moreover, concerning the 'imperative', there are terminological inconsistencies that are worth referring to before discussing its use. In Romanian grammars, the term 'imperative' labels sentences structured around an overt or 'bare' imperative form (not prefaced by any particle) (1a-b)[3] or a surrogate[4] imperative, i.e. present subjunctive (1c), present (1d) and future (1e) indicative. Infinitive (1f), supine (1g) and predicative interjections (1h) have also been used to substitute imperative verbs (Vasilescu, Forthcoming):

(1)

    a.   *Pleacă!*   *Plecaţi!*
           leave.IMP.2SG   leave.IMP.2PL
           'Leave!'

    b.   *Nu pleca!*   *Nu plecaţi!*
           not leave.INF.2SG   not leave.IMP.2PL
           'Don't leave!'

    c.   *Să (nu) pleci!*   *Să   (nu) plecaţi!*
           SĂ_SUBJ(not) leave.SUBJ.2SG   SĂ_SUBJ (not) leave.SUBJ.2PL
           '(Don't) leave!'

    d.   *(Nu) Pleci!*   *(Nu) plecaţi!*
           (not) leave.PRES.2SG   (not) leave.PRES.2PL
           'You are (not) leaving!'

    e.   *(Nu) vei pleca!*   *(Nu) veţi pleca!*
           (not) FUT.AUX.2SG leave   (not) FUT.AUX.2PL leave
           'You will (not) leave!'

    f.   *A (nu)   se păstra la loc uscat!*
           A_INF(not) CL.REFL.PASS.ACC keep.INF at place dry
           '(do not) keep in a dry place!'

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[2] Romanian is a *tu-vous* language, like French; the 2nd person plural of the imperative is thereby homonymous with the 2nd person singular polite pronoun.

[3] The symbols used in the gloss are the following:

IMP	Imperative	CL	Clitic
INF	Infinitive	REFL	Reflexive
SUBJ	Subjunctive	PASS	Passive
SUP	Supine	ACC	Accusative
PRES	Present	2SG	2nd person singular
FUT	Future	2PL	2nd person plural
AUX	Auxiliary		

[4] The term 'surrogate' has been expanded in Romanian grammar to refer to other forms than the imperative; Pirvulescu and Roberge (2000) use it only to refer to homonymous verbal forms with the imperative (e.g. present of indicative) that are contextually differentiated from this one.

g. *De   reţinut!*
DE~SUP~ remember.SUP
'Remember!'

h. *Na / Uite! / Hai! / Ssssttt!*
'Here you are! / Look! / Let's! / Hush!'

The literature on directives also refers to imperatives that do not necessarily include an imperative verb. For instance in (2) we have an elliptical imperative, whereas (3) represents an interrogative construction, a so-called embedded imperative:

(2)   2 copies (Bax 1986)
(3)   Could you gimme me a match? (Ervin-Tripp 1976)

Therefore, there are different syntactic forms included under the umbrella term of 'imperative', mainly due to the action the imperative is designed for, which is to get someone to do something (Goodwin 2006).

In order to avoid confusions, the imperative refers in this study only to the 'bare' verbal form, as shown in example (1-a). Some of the forms mentioned in (1) have already been discussed from a morphological (Maiden 2006; Pîrvulescu & Roberge 2000) and syntactic point of view (Gheorghe & Velea 2012). Nevertheless, how do we know when to use these forms that are all labelled as 'imperative'?

From a pragmatic perspective, there are inconsistencies in terminology as well. Romanian imperative has been traditionally noted to be the mood of directives (command, request, advice etc.), used in imperative clauses and characterized by specific intonation (Zafiu forthcoming). Previous literature (Craven & Potter 2010; Ogiermann & Zinken 2011) has distinguished directives from requests, on the basis that directives *tell* whereas requests *ask*[5] someone to do something (see footnote 5, for Romanian). This study does not intend to fit imperatives into the category of directives or requests. It rather attempts to identify the social practices of using certain Romanian linguistic forms by providing an analysis of a systematic pattern of the 'bare' imperative use.

2. Data, method and results

The data for this paper consist of a collection of all the imperative forms (90) extracted from an audio-recorded academic meeting interaction (48 minutes), aligning with previous literature (Curl, Local, & Walker 2006) that highlighted the importance of using authentic data. The analysis comprises cases of imperative used by both the chair (Beth) of the meeting and by the other 'ordinary' members (Brown, Thomson, Emma, Jane, Tom) of the committee. All the participants have been given pseudonyms to comply with the ethical norms.

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[5] The verb 'ask' in Romanian has a twofold reference, reporting both imperative and interrogative sentences:
- Wash the dishes! → He asked me to wash the dishes.
- Can you help me? he asked.

Even though there is an extensive research on various aspects regarding meetings in different settings, such as churches (Pearson 1989; Stevanovic & Peräkylä 2012), government departments (Vine 2004, 2009), multinational telecom companies (Djordjilovic 2012) or manufacturing companies and banks (Svennevig 2012a), there is little work on the systematic use of linguistic constructions in Romanian institutional meeting talk. While studies (Măda 2009) investigating this kind of data in Romanian have applied a socio-linguistic and politeness theoretical perspective, I approach the methodology of conversation analysis (CA) (Drew 2005; Heritage & Clayman 2010; Sidnell 2010), in order to identify the circumstances in which the imperative forms occur. According to the perspective of conversation analysis (Drew & Heritage 1992):

> "We are examining in detail the particular way in which a turn or turns is/are constructed; what actions speakers are engaged in, or conducting, or even 'performing', in a turn at talk; how turns are responsive to one another, and thereby built into sequences; what shapes or patterns those action sequences come to exhibit; and how it is, then, that speakers manage social actions and activities in interaction with one another" (Drew and Heritage 1992: 10).

Although conversation analysis is focussed on action rather than grammar, I provide a sequential analysis of the imperative sentences taking into consideration the action they design within the turn: To get someone to do something. I follow the Gail Jefferson's system (Jefferson 2004) of transcribing the data, with the exception that I replace the cut off (-) with (_) as in Romanian the dash is an orthographic tool. The transcripts have been analysed together with the audio recording, as previous research on CA has already noted that the transcripts serve only as aids memoire (Curl 2006; Curl & Drew 2008; Curl et al. 2006).

Moreover, this paper explores the concepts of entitlement and contingencies related to the use of imperative. With reference to the first concept, within the setting of a Swedish home help service (Lindström 2005) the care recipient chose to make requests expressed through imperative forms towards the home help assistant when she was entitled due to the institutional context of care giving. In a similar setting, within a study focussed on negative and positive interrogatives (Heinemann 2006), the entitlement is not "a predefined category which is oriented towards the use of various formats, it is instead suggested, implied, negotiated and ultimately constituted through the way in which the participants format their contributions" (Heinemann 2006: 1101).

Within the institutional setting of the workplace meeting investigated in this paper, all the participants have various responsibilities that entitle them to use the imperative form. In Figure 1, we can notice an overwhelming use of these forms by the chair (83.33%), who due to her salient interactional role, is in control of topic organisation, tasks allocation and turn taking. However, there are cases where other members use the imperative among themselves (15.55 %) and a small percentage (1.11%) of the cases where Thomson uses it to address Beth.
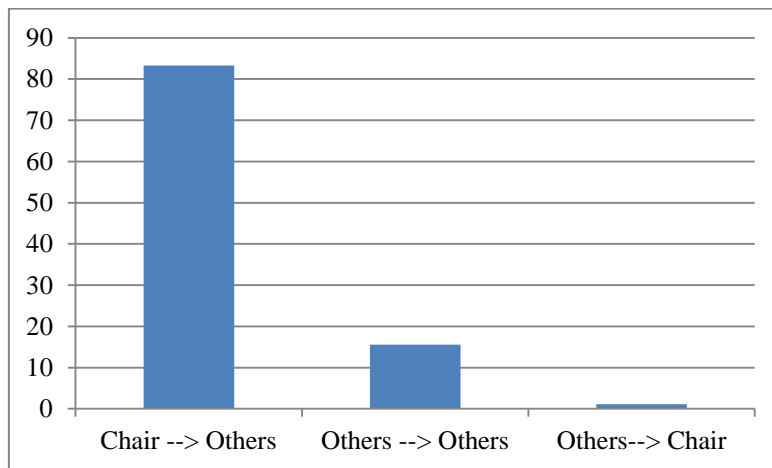
Figure 1: Distribution of imperatives among the participants

The entitlement has also been related to the notion of contingency. Both terms were employed by Curl and Drew (2008) in order to provide a comparative study regarding the use of two request forms: *Could you?* and *I wonder if*. If the entitlement refers to 'the right' of the speaker to make a request, the contingency refers to possible future difficulties that the speaker might anticipate or that the addressee might encounter in performing the request. These two notions have been discussed so far as being fused together (Curl & Drew 2008), thus the form *Could you?* expresses a high entitlement and a low contingency and *I wonder if* is at the opposite end of the scale, displaying a high contingency and a low entitlement. This framework has been applied both in ordinary (Craven & Potter 2010; Keisanen & Rauniomaa 2012) and institutional talk (Antaki & Kent 2012; Lee 2011).

This study needs to prise them apart as in most cases of imperative use the actions it designs display no contingency or future difficulty in performing them. Thereby, the analysis carried in this paper supports the findings of Craven and Potter (2010) in their study on directives where they show that there is no need to acknowledge contingencies within the turn design of an imperative. Nevertheless, this study offers an account supporting the lack of contingencies. This refers to the existence of **prior** or **simultaneous** utterances that represent commitments to perform the action expressed by the imperative as we can see in the following example:

(4)

1	Beth:	*NU LE PUNEM ÎN MAPĂ (.) .hh nu e bine să*
		not them putIND.1PL in workshop pack (.) hh not is good
		'WE DO NOT PUT THEM IN THE WORKSHOP PACK (.) .hh isn't it good to
2		*le avem la noi?*
		them have SBJ.1PL at us?
		have them with us?'
3	Emma:	***o să listez câteva în caz de::***
		PrintFUT.1SG some in case of
		'I will print some in case of::'
4	Beth:	*mai listează câteva*
		more printIMP. 2SG

'print some more'

The main purpose of the meeting investigated for this paper is the organisation of a workshop. Tasks are allocated, offers are provided and also negotiation takes place (Asmuß & Oshima 2012). In line 3, Emma has offered to print some more questionnaires. This commitment enhances Beth's entitlement to use an imperative form in line 4 in order to ratify Emma's offer indicating that there will be no difficulty or contingency in performing the task.

Thereby the key concept discussed in this paper is the one of commitment which has been tackled with in the literature in relation to the favourable responses to requests which display various degrees of commitments (Keisanen & Rauniomaa 2012; Stevanovic & Peräkylä 2012). In a multimodal approach on requests, Rauniomaa and Keisanen (2012) show how the expression of contingencies (the material, temporal context and the bodies of participants) are dealt with in the prebeginnings of request turns insuring thereby the compliance and the formation of requests. In the following, I am going to show how the expression of prior or simultaneous verbal commitments (bolded in the extracts) accounts for the lack of contingencies in circumstances of getting someone to do something, action done through an imperative form.

3. Analysis

This section presents cases similar to extract (4), where we encounter a recurrent pattern referring to the expression of commitments in prior or simultaneous imperative sentences. As the extracts will prove, the commitments embed agreements, suggestions, offers, already task allocations that require subsequent indications or instructions expressed through imperative verbs.

3.1. *Expression of prior suggestions and offers*

In the context of meetings (Asmuß & Svennevig 2009; Svennevig 2012b), talk is organised differently from ordinary interaction as the turn-taking is mainly administered by the chair person who usually allocates turns, "being authorized to encourage contributions and actions that are considered constructive to the goals of the meeting" and defers interventions that is "sanctioning behaviour that are considered illegitimate or counter-productive" (Svennevig 2012b: 5), contributing to the interactional order of the meeting. Moreover, within the meeting investigated for this paper the chair allocates tasks to the other participants regarding the organisation of the workshop. However, as we saw in extract (4), the other members usually make offers and volunteer to bring several items necessary for the good organisation of the workshop. Their action nevertheless requires the chair's orientation.

In general, the chair person is also in charge of the topic organisation as being constrained by the agenda (Asmuß & Svennevig 2009). Thus, Beth is entitled to delay ratifying the others' proposals. In (5) line 1 Emma suggests making an attendance list for the participants at the workshop. She uses a subjunctive inclusive form, her turn ending with a negative tag question, thereby orienting to the chair's entitlement. Beth defers this proposal twice: First in line 2 being overlapped with Emma's and secondly

in line 3 by a quick three part repeated imperative (*wait*) that can function as a multiple saying, similar to the turn initial *no* (Stivers 2004). Moreover, this is followed by a task-oriented imperative (*write*):

(5)

1	Emma:	**să** **[facem o listă de** **pre]zenţă *nu*↑=**
		doSUBJ. 1PL a list of attendance no
		'let's [make a list with the atten]dance no↑'=

2	Beth:	[*numa o clipă*]
		just a second
		['just a second']

3	Beth:	= >*stai stai stai< până la lista de prezenţă* notează*-ţi-o acolo să vedem să*
		wait wait wait till at list of attendance note IMP. 2SG yourself it there see SUBJ. 1PL
		= >'wait wait wait < till the attendance list write that down let's see let's

4		*închidem problema cu rollup-urile*
		closeSUBJ. 1PL problem with rollups
		close the problem with the rollups'

We can notice that the turn containing the imperative 'write' is preceded by Emma's proposal and the implicit ability to make the attendance list indicating thereby the lack of difficulty in performing the task assigned by the imperative verb. When the topic related to the attendance list is pursued later on in the interaction when Brown suggests that the list should have more pages (6, line 1), Beth acknowledges the suggestion and uses a repeated imperative ('make') in 2nd person plural (the verb ending in -*ţi*) which is treated by Emma in line 11 as being the only one in charge of it. Actually this happens through the fact that in (5) line 1 she suggested to make an attendance list, which also represents her being able to do it. What is interesting is the fact that Emma's agreement to do the additional task comes in overlaps with Beth and does not follow her imperative, which indicates a stronger lack of contingency:

(6)

1	Brown:	**la lista asta (.) să fie mai multe pagini**
		at this list (.) beSUBJ. 3SG more pages
		'this list (.) should have more pages'

        ((8 lines omitted))

9	Beth:	*exact (.) exact deci* faceţi *vreo:: multe pagini vreo zece pagini* faceţi
		exactly (.)exactly so makeIMP. 2PL around many pages around ten pages makeIMP. 2PL
		'exactly (.) exactly so make around:: many pages around ten pages make

10		[*de*] *listă din asta*
		of list from this
		[of] this list'

| 11 | Emma: | [*da*   ] |
| | | ['yes'] |

In extract (7) Emma makes another proposal fused with a volunteering act linguistically designed in an indicative assertive formulation, being the right form to use when a problem has already been formulated (Curl 2006). After one of the other members exposes a difficulty related to how to sort out a dinner payment, Emma offers (line 1) to talk to the receptionist at the hotel where the invitee is going to be accommodated, in order to include his bill in the booking receipt:

(7)

1	Emma:	***vorbesc eu cu doamnişoara doam[na::]***
		talkIND. 1SG I with miss lady
		'I talk with the miss la[dy::']

2	Beth:	[*aşa*] *astfel încât consumaţia de* [*atunci*]
		okay so as bill from then
		['okay] so as the bill from [then']

3	Emma:	[*consumaţia de*] *atuncea*
		bill from then
		['the bill from] then

4		*s-o adauge* *l* [*a:*]
		addSUBJ. 3SG it a [t :']
		to add it

| 5 | Brown | [*la*] [*total*]= |
| | | [to] [the total]= |

6	Beth	[*e:xact*]
		exactly
		['e:xactly]

| 7 | Tom | = [*la total*] |
| | | = [to the total] |

8	Beth	[*deci dis*]*cutaţi*
		so discussIMP. 2PL
		[so dis]cuss'

Beth (line 2) continues Emma's turn (line 1) and ratifies the offer in line 8 using an imperative form, in 2nd person plural as Tom and Brown complete Emma's turn at talk (lines 5 and 7). Emma's offer and the others' contribution to the offer indicate thereby no difficulty or contingency in doing the action designed by the imperative in line 8.

There are cases within the meeting when the other participants allocate tasks too, whilst nevertheless relating to Beth, as the person in authority. In (8), Emma uses an interrogative construction to ask Beth if she requires John (non-academic) to do some posters for the workshop (this topic has already been discussed in the meeting). Beth replies positively in line 2 using an imperative form which indicates no contingency as Emma has already implicitly offered in line 1 to talk to John. She only needs Beth's confirmation in order to pursue this action:

(8)

1	Emma:	***mai solicit lui John?***
		more askIND. 1SG to John?
		'do I ask John anymore?'
		(0.7)

2	Beth:	*da domne* cere *şi lui John.*
		yes ((address term)) askIMP. 2SG and to John
		'yes ((address term)) ask John too.'

Therefore, the cases discussed in this subsection highlight the chair's entitlement to use imperative forms and the lack of contingencies or difficulties that the actions expressed by the imperative form display, this being due to the explicit expression of offers or suggestions located in turns coming just before the imperative constructions.

3.2. *Previous allocated tasks and agreements*

In this subsection, I analyse cases in which the lack of contingency or difficulty in performing the tasks designed by the imperative is due to the expression of commitments in prior turns that have already designed allocated tasks and also agreements to perform these tasks.

Earlier in extract (9), Emma has suggested having posters at the workshop; in line 1 Beth is writing a note about where these posters are to be placed. In line 3, Emma inserts an increment to complete Beth's turn; a poster should be printed just to have a proof, and not to be exposed. In line 4, Beth ratifies this by writing it down and the next action she does is to allocate Thomson the task of making some guidelines in order for the participants to know where to come for the workshop. Throughout the meeting, the chair allocates a series of tasks to the other members most often without using an imperative form. For instance this allocation is done in an elliptical format made up of the nomination of the person and the task. Both components are being repeated as Beth writes them down at the same time while talking. After the task has been allocated, instructions are given using imperatives (lines 11):

(9)

1	Beth:	*agenda evenimentului (1.3) trei bucăţi (0.6) unu intrare intrare*
		'the agenda of the event (1.3) three copies (0.6) one entrance entrance
2		((writing)) *(0.6) uşă (0.8) şi:::*
		((writing)) (0.6) door (0.8) and:::'
3	Emma:	*mărturie=*
		'proof'=
4	Beth:	=*mărturie mărturie* ((writing))
		='proof proof ' ((writing))
5	Emma :	*ca la botez*
		'as at the baptism'
6	Beth:	***domnu Thomson domnu Thomson*** ((writing))=
		'mister Thomson mister Thomson' ((writing))=
7	Tom:	=*fã fã pe_*=
		= 'make make f_'=
8	Beth:	= *CÂTEVA IN[DICATOARE]*
		= **'SOME GUI[DELINES']**

9   Tom: [((coughing))] *pentru mărturie fă*   [*un A4*]
                       [((coughing))] for the proof   make [an A4']

10   Beth: [*indi*]*catoare*   ((writing)) (0.8*) sala*
                                                        ['guide]lines ((writing)) (0.8) room

11   (*număr*) *faceţi un ă A4*(*număr sala*) *şi le puneţi cu săgeţile*
                  (number) makeIMP. 2SG a erm A4 (room number) and them putIMP. 2SG with arrows
                  (number) make an erm A4 landscape (room number) and put them with the arrows

12   *cum să-mi vină* [*oamenii*   ]. *da↑*
                  how comeSUBJ. 3PL to me people. yes
                  how my   [people   ]should come. yes↑

13   Thomson: [°((*am înţeles*))°   ]
                                   [°(('I understood'))°]

14   Beth: = *revenim puţin la lista participanţilor*
                    come back IND. 1PL a bit at list participants
                  = we come back a bit at the list of participants'

We encounter no objection from Thomson, thereby no contingency in performing the task. If we think of his social position too, as an administrator, we could suggest that the performance of the task is also part of his duties or responsibilities. Moreover, his agreement (line 13) is made explicit after the insertion of the imperative, but nevertheless in overlap with Beth's turn at talk, reinforcing the grant-ability of what he has to do.

We notice that there is overlap in this extract (lines 8-9), but this does not mean that the role of the chair as the "switchboard" of interaction (Boden 1994) is compromised; even though the chair is in control of the turn-taking, people might interrupt or come in overlap. This is the case of Tom who provides additional instructions to Emma to make an A4 for the layout of the poster proof (lines 7, 9). In line 7, the initial imperative verb ('make') is repeated, the turn is left unfinished and reformulated in line 9. We see that the self-repaired version is differently designed syntactically; the direct object prefaces the verb which has a middle turn position in comparison to the one in line 7.

In the previous extract, the task was allocated and followed immediately by instructions. In (10) Beth comes back to a previous allocated task and assigns additional directions later on in the discussion that are mainly part of the same task, that of taking care of the workshop room.

(10)
1   Beth: **ce i-am spus lui Jane înainte** (.) *în funcţie de numărul de participanţi.*
             what her tell. IND. PAST. 1SG to Jane before (.) in function of number of participants
             '**what I told Jane before** (.) according to the number of participants.

2   *capacitatea sălii este de (1.0) treizeci patruzeci (1.0) cu ă mese (.)*
              capacity room is of (1.0) thirty forty (1.0) with erm tables (.)
              the room capacity is of (1.0) thirty forty (1.0) with erm tables (.)

3   °*dar asta* verifică *puţin Jane dacă încap treizeci*°
               but this checkIMP. 2SG a bit Jane if enter thirty

°but check this a bit Jane if there is space for thirty'°

In line 1, within the same turn, by using the past tense form of the verb *tell* and the deictic *before* Beth already anticipates no difficulty in Jane's checking the room (line 3) who has already been assigned and accepted the task of sorting out the room where the workshop is being organised. Note also the insertion of the diminutive *a bit* in line 3, which contributes to downgrade the scale of the action to be performed.

The context of extract (11) is that Emma has proposed including a questionnaire in the workshop packs, but it needs the chair's contribution to sort out the nature of the questions. After the chair acknowledges this (line 1), it seems that Emma intends to pursue the topic (line 2) having though difficulties (stretched final words) in carrying on with the subject, which entitles Beth to initiate the topic closure and ask if there is something else needed for this event. Note the self repair in line 3. Beth is using a personal possessive form[6] (Romanian: *-mi*, English: 'I') and drops it in the repaired version, using an impersonal construction which diminishes the social distance between her and Emma:

(11)
1	Beth:	*îl definitivăm acum şi vedem=*
		it finishIND 1PL. and seeIND. 1PL
		'we finish it off now and we see=
2	Emma:	*= **da da da ce:: şi:: =***
		= **'yes yes yes what:: and::'** =
3	Beth:	*= bun acuma în rest nu-mi trebuie? (.) altceva nu mai trebuie*
		= 'good now otherwise don't I need? (.) isn't there a need for something else
4		*de la vreun first meeting sau chestie din aia?*
		from a first meeting or a thing of that one?'
5	Emma:	*nu nu:: =*
		'no no::' =

((17 lines omitted))

21	Beth:	*.h bun spune-mi tu ce mai vroiai (.) astea cu mapele*
		.h good tellIMP. 2SG to me you what more wantPAST CONT. 2SG (.) these with workshop
		'.h good tell me you what you wanted more (.) these with the workshop packs
22		*am în[cheiat]?=*
		finish IND. 1PL
		we fi[nished]?'=
23	Emma :	[*atât *]
		['that's all']
24	Emma :	*= da*

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[6] This form is frequently used in Romanian; it is called possessive dative, the possession being identified in the dative clitic –*mi*, translated in English as 'I'.

= 'yes'

In the 17 omitted lines, Beth provides instructions concerning the way in which the questionnaires are to be printed. Then in line 21 she uses an imperative construction to allocate the turn to Emma. As Romanian is a pro-drop language, the subject being freely omitted, its insertion is not random, but frequently emphatic. In this case, the imperative *tell* is followed by the pronoun *you* to highlight that now it's Emma's turn to talk. We can notice that there is no contingency or difficulty associated to the turn allocation in line 21 because Emma has already expressed her agreement and intention to carry on with the questionnaire issue. However, Beth seems to close the topic by the insertion of the discursive marker 'good' and of the deictic 'now'.

In the following extract (12), the prior commitments refer both to an already allocated task and to an explicit agreement. Jane has already been allocated the task to talk to the ladies at the library to sort out the room, Beth starting her turn with *Jane same you*. This shows that the contingencies have been dealt with beforehand and therefore Beth is entitled to use an imperative form to assign Jane an extra related task to ask about the way in which the ladies at the library deal with the door issue (line 5). Beth uses the same imperative twice in order to allocate this task. First, in turn initial position followed by an account. The second imperative summarises the account and is syntactically associated with a deictic pronominal clitic (Romanian: *le*, English: 'them') to nominate the persons to be asked. The turn finishes with another account of why Jane should ask about the door:

(12)

1	Beth:	= *ă tot aşa ă Jane **tot tu*** [*în momen*]*tul în care vorbeşti cu doamnele de la*
		erm the same erm Jane same you in moment in which talkIND. 2SG with ladies from
		= 'erm the same erm **Jane same you** [the mome]nt you talk to the ladies from =

| 2 | Jane: | [***da***   ] |
| | | [**'yes'**   ] |

| 3 | Beth: | = *bibliotecă* = |
| | | = the library' = |

| 4 | Jane: | = ***da*** = |
| | | = **'yes'** = |

5	Beth:	*întreabă de modul în care pentru că ele au sistem (.) sunt*
		askIMP. 2SG about way in which because they haveIND. 3PL (.) are
		'ask about the way in which because they have a system (.) there are

6		*doctorate multe eu am fost acolo la doctorate .hh ştii↑*
		PhDs many I was there for PhDs .hh knowIND. 2SG
		many PhDs I was there for PhDs .hh you know↑

7		*şi întotdeauna a fost deschis deci era lă_lăsată deschisă uşa în momentul*
		and always was open so was le_left open door in moment
		and always it was open so it was le_left open the door the moment

8		*în care sunt evenimente. prin urmare întreabă-le să te asiguri*
		in which are events. so askIMP. 2SG them assureSUBJ. 1SG you
		when there are events. so ask them to make sure

| 9 | | *că în ziua respectivă în sală rămâne deschisă*   [*uşa*   ] *da↑ deci asta* |
| | | that in day designated in room stays open door yes so this |

that the designated day in the room stays open [the door] yes↑ so this'

10   Jane: [*da*   ]
                                                                        ['yes'   ]

Beth treats this task as unproblematic, by the insertion of the previous account: The door always used to be left open during events (lines 7-8). Note the self repairs and the certainty of the account by the insertion of the temporal adverb *always*. Moreover, in lines 2 and 4, we notice Jane's agreement before Beth starts allocating the subsidiary task which reinforces the lack of contingencies in performing the required action.

The same practice is present in extract (13) where the imperative (line 1) is prefaced by a nomination and the task that has already been assigned. Emma who is already responsible for the catering receives an additional task; she has to ask the people in charge of the catering whether they will send a person from the restaurant to check the room a day before the event. Just before Beth inserts the imperative, Emma expresses her agreement which is followed in line 3 by Beth's account specifying the general practice of the catering company:

(13)
1   Beth: ***ă Emma când vorbeşti cu ei** dacă ori cu*   [*cine*   ] *întreabă-i vor să*
               erm Emma when talkIND. 2SG with they if with anyone askIMP. 2SG wantIND. 3PL
               '**erm Emma when you talk to them** if with any[one   ] ask them do they want
               to

2   Emma: [*aşa: da*   ]
                                                                 ['oka:y yes']

3   = *vină un reprezentant al lor că de regulă vine un reprezentant cu o zi înainte*
               comeSUBJ. 3SG a representative of them cause regularly comes a representative with
               a day before
               = send a representative of them cause regularly a representative comes a day before'

After Beth allocates Emma the task presented in the previous extract, she proposes to Jane who is already in charge of the workshop room to join Emma (14, line 1) and have a look in order to sort out the tables from the room. We see that in line 2 Jane already mentions the adverb 'before', implicitly she expresses a prior agreement to perform the task. This is made explicit in overlap (line 4) with Beth's turn including an imperative and an explicit mention regarding an already allocated task (Wednesday was the day of checking the workshop room). Once again we see the recurrent practice: The imperative is preceded by an agreement and followed by a downgrader, such as the diminutive *a bit* (line 1), in order to minimise the action that is to be completed:

(14)
1   Beth: *poate mergi şi tu cu* =
               maybe goIND. 2SG and you with
               'maybe you go too with'=

2   Jane: = ***dinainte*** =
               = '**before**' =

3   Beth: = *eventual*   [*pe (.)*   ] *uită-te un pic **miercuri când mergeţi** ce-i mesele alea*
               possibly   on lookIMP. 2SG a bit Wednesday when goIND. 2PL what is tables those
               = 'possibly   [on (.)   ] have a look a bit **Wednesday when you go** what is with

those tables'

4   Jane :   [*am înţeles*   ]
                         ['I understood']

Thereby the expression of commitments represented by both prior agreements and by the fact that tasks have been already allocated enhances the speakers' entitlement to use imperative verbs that design additional tasks which are treated as non-problematic. We saw that the allocation of tasks is not necessarily expressed through an imperative form. This is employed later on in the interaction when additional instructions to the already assigned tasks are provided and treated by the participants at the meeting as non-contingent as they have already agreed to the task and thereby there is no problem to handle the new instructions. Moreover, the expression of commitments designing positive responses coming in overlap with the imperative sentences strenghtens the grant-ability of completing the required actions.

3.3. *Simultaneous commitments*

In this subsection, I present cases in which the reason for using an imperative form is represented by the fact that it expresses both a prior and a simultaneous commitment, that can refer to an offer. For instance, in extract (15) Beth first interrupts Emma who was listing the contents of the workshop packs in order for Beth to write them down. Then, the chair came back to the topic of printing the fliers for the workshop that had been previously postponed. Beth offers thereby to do the printing task, the imperative sentence expressing both a task allocation and a commitment from the part of the chair. We can also notice that Emma minimally complies before the insertion of the imperative ˹bring˼ (line 4) and in overlap with the turn containing it (line 6). Thereby the contingencies are dealt with before the insertion of the imperative through Emma's prior agreement (the affirmative particle Romanian: *da* − English:˹yes˼), but also at the same time with its insertion, through Beth's self-commitment:

(15)
1   Emma: *agendă pli*[*ante*   ]
                          'agenda fly[ers'   ]

2   Beth: [°*stai stai*   ] *numa că nu nicio musai ar fi bine acuma*
                            wait wait just cause not any must would be good now
                          [° 'wait wait] just cause there isn't any must it would be good now

3   *sau mâine*°=
              or tomorrow'°=

4   Emma: = *da* =
              = 'yes'=

5   Beth: = **ADU-MI-L** *oricum*   [*stick-ul*   ] *mie*
                bringIMP. 2SG to me it anyway   memory stick to me
              = **'BRING** IT TO ME anyway**   [the memory stick] to me'

6   Emma: [*da*   ]
                                                  ['yes'   ]

Extracts (16) and (17) present two cases when Tom uses imperatives that express his offers to bring a tripod after Brown exposed a problematic issue regarding the video camera that will be used for videotaping the workshop. In (16) line 2, Tom employs an imperative verb to express an imprecation which is left unfinished. Beth immediately initiates a ratification of Brown's offer to bring his video camera and this action happens in overlap with Tom's offering to bring a tripod (line 4). In (17) we have the same discussion between Tom and Brown about the tripod and the same offer linguistically initiated by an imperative form, suitable for this sequential context (Curl 2006):

(16)
1	Brown:	*un trepied din ăla mic*=
		'one of that small tripod' =
2	Tom:	=*un trepied din ăla ca lumea dă-l în (0.4) pi*=
		= 'one of that proper tripod give it in (0.4) ...'=
3	Beth:	[= *CAMERĂ VIDEO DOMNUL*] *BROWN*
		[='VIDEO CAMERA MISTER] BROWN'
4	Tom:	[***lasă că aduc eu trepied***]
		[**'drop it cause I bring a tripod'**]
5	Brown:	*e la mine*
		'I have it'
6	Beth:	*.h Brown (0.5) bun (0.5) altceva*
		'.h Brown (0.5) good (0.5) something else'

(17)
1	Brown:	((*e în dreptul tău*))=
		(('it is on your side'))=
2	Tom:	= ***lasă că-l aduc eu***
		= **'drop it cause I bring it'**

In the following extract (18), Tom employs the same imperative verb (line 3); he agrees with Emma in line 2 assuring her that they will follow her catering offer. Moreover, when Emma attempts to summarise the catering topic by also including an account of the irrelevance of what was talked about by others (line 5-6), Tom cuts in (line 7) with a series of imperatives identical with those used by Beth in extract (5). What is salient in this case is that Tom's simultaneous commitment (the offer in line 3) entitles him to use the repeated imperative 'stai' (line 7) to stop Emma's talk and give the floor to Beth.

Emma also uses the imperative form, her sense of entitlement being occasioned by the responsability she has with the catering offer. As other participants at the meeting have also made proposals regarding what catering company to choose, Brown makes a decision highlighting that Emma's offer should be taken into consideration (line 1); he also provides an account, Emma having already talked to a catering company:

(18)

1	Brown:	*rămânem pă rămânem pă Emma ai vorbit*		[*şi:*	]
		stayIND. 1PL on stayIND. 1PL Emma talkIND. 2SG		and	
		'we stick at we stick at Emma's catering offer you talked [and:'			]

| 2 | Emma: | | | [*uite asta* |]= |
| | | | | ['look this']= |

3	Tom:	= *da mă deci ce-ai*	[*hotărât*] **lasă că**	[*o să facem*	]
		yes (adress term) so what	decideIND. 2SG leaveIMP. 2SG cause do.IND. 1PL		
		= 'yes (adress term) so what you have [decided] **forget it cause[(we) will do (it)']**			

| 4 | Brown: | | [*dar* |] |
| | | | ['but' |] |

| 5 | Emma: | | | [*nu dar să citiţi* |] |
| | | | | ['no but read |] |

| 6 | | *d*[*eci nu e nu e* |] *relevant* [*asta am vrut să* |] |
| | | s[o it is not it is not |] relevant [this is what I wanted to]' |

| 7 | Tom: | [*stai stai stai stai* |] |
| | | ['wait wait wait wait'] |

| 8 | Brown : | | [*dar şi asta* |] *(.) la catering* |
| | | | ['but this too |] (.) for catering |

        am fost la faţa locului şi propunerea noastră a fost
        (we/I) were/was there and our proposal was'

Within this subsection, the extracts have highlighted the fact that the contingencies regarding the use of imperative are dealt with not only in prior turns, but also within the turn including an imperative, designing commitments such as offers.

4. Conclusions

This paper brings an important contribution to the literature regarding the imperative use. Even though Romanian presents a rich inventory of forms that are conventionally labelled as 'imperative', actually being constructions used for getting someone to do something, in this paper, I focussed on the 'bare' imperative form in order to avoid terminological confusions.

Figure 2 presents a summary of the relevant findings of this paper. By using Romanian interactions in an academic meeting, I showed how the existence of mainly prior, but also simultaneous commitments embedding suggestions, proposals, agreements, offers can be used to display no contingencies or difficulties regarding the performance of several actions and thereby entitle the speakers belonging to an academic community to use imperative forms in order to direct their recipients. Even though the framework of entitlement and contingency proposed by the Conversational-Analytical perspective of Curl and Drew (2008) has the "great benefit of freeing us from a priori estimates of face, or of speakers' pre-existing social roles, which can vitiate more traditional pragmatic treatments of requests" (Antaki and Kent 2012: 877), this paper has shown that entitlement and contingency should be treated as two separate concepts as in some cases, for instance imperatives, the latter is absent due to the occurrence of prior or simultaneous explicit commitments.
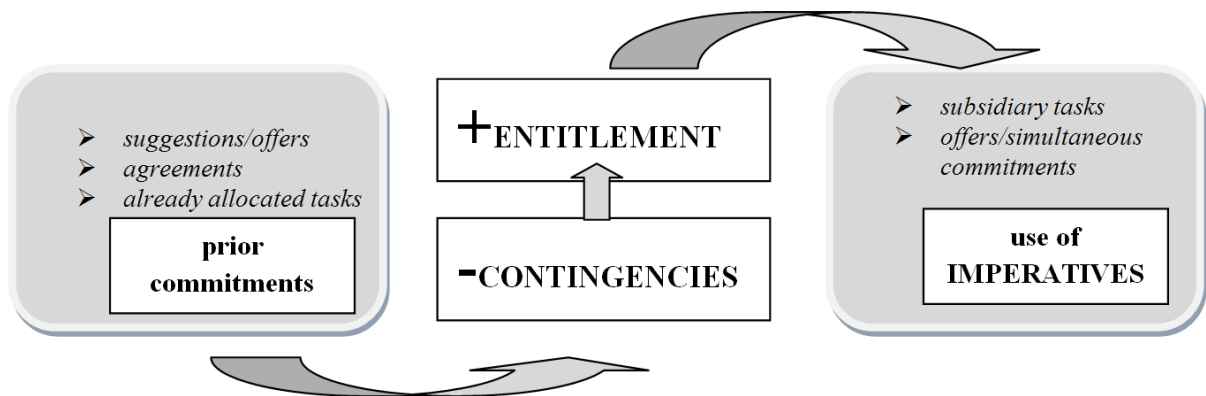
Figure 2: Summary of the findings: Romanian imperative use

Another noteworthy feature of imperative use refers to the occurrence of compliance tokens (Schegloff 2007) such as 'da' ('yes'), 'am înțeles' ('I understood') not only in prior turns, but also in overlap after the insertion of the imperative and before even the chair finishes her turn, being the preferred reponsive action (Kent 2012) to the first part of an adjacency pair represented by the imperatives. These occurences have the role to reinforce the grant-ability of completing the required actions designed through imperative forms.

The findings of this study coming from a methodology inspired from conversation analysis, highlight, on one hand, the organisation of Romanian institutional meeting talk and on the other hand, interesting observations regarding a systematic pattern of imperative use by showing how the lack of contingencies is addressed, acknowledged and oriented in mainly prior turns pointing out the salience of analysing linguistic resources in their sequential interactional context.

Acknowledgements

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