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Object drop in imperatives and the status of imperative subjects

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- 1 **Abstract:** The paper examines object drop in imperatives and argues that the null
2 object in question undergoes movement to the left periphery. The paper also
3 examines the position of overt imperative subjects, and argues that in some, but
4 not all languages overt imperative subjects undergo movement to the left
5 periphery, where the crosslinguistic variation in question correlates with the
6 precise verbal form used in imperatives, the relevant difference being true
7 imperatives vs other/bare forms used as imperatives (the latter leads to movement
8 of overt imperative subjects to the left periphery).
- 10 **Keywords:** imperatives, null objects, *pro*-licensing, subject A'-movement

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11

1 Introduction

This article examines object drop in a particular type of imperatives, the starting point being such object drop in English imperatives (though the discussion will include a number of Slavic, Romance, and Germanic languages, as well as Hungarian). A major concern during the discussion will be what this object drop can tell us about the position of imperative subjects. While imperatives typically have a null subject, as in (1), the subject can be overtly realized, as in (2).

- (1) Buy yourself a nice present!
(2) You buy yourself a nice present!

Object drop in imperatives is illustrated by (3a). Previous literature has observed that object drop in imperatives is blocked when the imperative subject is overtly realized, as in (3b) (see Sadock 1974; Sigurðsson and Maling 2008; Bošković 2011).¹

- (3) a. Open carefully!
 b. *You open carefully!
 c. cf. You open it carefully!

I will use this paradigm to probe into the nature of the null element in question as well as the position of overt subjects in imperatives. I will argue that the null object undergoes movement to the left periphery for licensing reasons. This is on a par with what has been argued in the literature for other null elements (see e.g. Johnson 2001; Fujiwara 2022; Mizuno in press²). Overt subjects in imperatives will also be argued to undergo movement. It will be observed that there is actually crosslinguistic variation regarding constructions like (3b), and a principled criterion that distinguishes contexts and languages where (3b) is allowed and where it is disallowed will be proposed. The precise verbal form used in imperatives will be argued to play a crucial role in this respect. Consequences of object drop in imperatives for analyzing argument drop in several other contexts, e.g. with verbs like *eat* and *donate*, will also be examined. Finally, the paper will also discuss inverted imperatives and imperatives where no overt verb is present.

2 Parasitic gaps

One argument for movement of null objects under investigation comes from parasitic gap licensing. It is well known that parasitic gaps are licensed only under

¹The judgments are given for the transitive use of *open*. I will be ignoring its intransitive use, as in *We are opening on Monday*. It should be also noted that there is some speaker variation regarding the object drop cases discussed in the paper—this may not be surprising, since, as we will see below, objects can be dropped through different strategies, so the issue might be which strategy is employed.

²Also relevant is den Dikken's (1992) null operator movement analysis of certain Dutch imperatives, which was brought to my attention after this paper was originally written.

1 overt A'-movement. Importantly, the null object in question licenses parasitic
2 gaps, which indicates that it undergoes A'-movement.

3

4 (4) Open without closing afterward.

5 **3 The blocking effect of overt imperative subjects on object** 6 **drop**

7 Another argument for movement comes from the blocking effect of overt
8 imperative subjects on object drop, illustrated by (3). What will be relevant to the
9 account of (3) given below is object drop in Germanic V-2 languages, illustrated
10 by (5)-(6), where dashes indicate the canonical object position.

11

12 (5) A: Hvað finnst þér um nýja húsvörðinn?

13 what think you about new janitor.the

14 'What do you think about the new janitor?'

15 B: Veit é(g) ekki __, hef é(g) ekki séð __ enn.

16 know I not have I not seen yet

17 'I don't know (that), I have still not seen (him). (Icelandic)

18 (6) A: Vad tycker du om den nya vaktmästaren?

19 what think you about the new janitor.the

20 'What do you think about the new janitor?'

21 B: Vet ja(g) inte __, har ja(g) fortfarande inte sett __.

22 know I not have I still not seen

23 (Swedish, Sigurðsson and Maling 2008)

24

25 Sigurðsson and Maling (2008) argue that such null objects are possible only with
26 an empty SpecCP, as stated in (7) and illustrated by (8)-(9), where the presence
27 of an element in SpecCP (9), but not in C (8), blocks object drop.

28

29 (7) The Empty Left Edge Condition (ELEC): The left edge of a clause (i.e.
30 SpecCP) containing a silent referential argument must be phonetically
31 empty.

32 (8) a. (Det) känner ja(g) inte __. Swedish

33 b. (Það) þekki é(g) ekki __. Icelandic

34 (that) recognize I not

35 (9) a. *Nu känner ja(g) inte __. Swedish

36 b. *Núna þekki é(g) ekki __. Icelandic

37 now recognize I not

38

39 Adopting a split CP, Sigurðsson and Maling argue that there are context-linking
40 elements Topic, Logophoric Agent/Speaker (ΛA) and Logophoric patient/hearer
41 (ΛP) above CP (i.e. above the projection where the initial element in V-2 clauses
42 is located); null objects must enter into a licensing relation with them, which is
43 blocked by something in SpecCP.

1 (22) { Otvori / Pažljivo otvori }
2 open / carefully open

3 (23) Ti { otvori / pažljivo otvori }
4 you open / carefully open

5 (24) ?*You wash leeks and you chop and place in boiling water.⁴

6 (25) Ti operi prasu, a ti izreži i stavi u vruću vodu.
7 you wash leeks and you cut and place in hot water
8

9 While SC differs from English regarding the blocking effect of overt subjects on
10 object drop, there are still islandhood effects with such object drop in SC, as
11 shown by (26)-(27), which indicates that it is not the case that the null object in
12 SC simply does not move.
13

14 (26) ?*Udji u kuću kad Ivan bude otvorio.
15 enter in house when Ivan be opened
16 Intended: 'Enter the house when Ivan opens [the door].'

17 (27) ??Ođštampaj instrukcije kako da otvoriš.
18 print instructions how that opens
19 Intended: 'Print the instructions on how to open [it].'
20

21 Regarding the English/SC contrast, it is in principle possible that there is a
22 difference in the nature of the null object, or that the subject Case matters (the
23 subject is vocative in SC). I will argue that this is not what matters. Rather, what
24 matters is a difference in the verbal form. SC has a dedicated imperative verbal
25 form, which is not the case with English.

26 That this is what is relevant here is confirmed by Russian (all Russian data
27 below are due to Ksenia Zanon). Russian imperatives pattern with SC imperatives
28 in the relevant respect: there is no blocking effect of an overt imperative subject
29 on object drop.
30

31 (28) a. Otkryvaj oštorožno!
32 open.IMP carefully

33 b. Ty otkryvaj oštorožno!
34 you open.IMP carefully
35

36 However, Russian can also use infinitives (with dative subjects) as imperatives.
37 In infinitival imperatives, the blocking effect in question shows up: an overt
38 subject blocks object drop (as noted by Ksenia Zanon, p.c., pronominal subjects
39 in general are worse than quantified subjects in Russian infinitival imperatives).
40

41 (29) a. Otkryvat' oštorožno!
42 open.INF carefully
43

⁴The context for (24)-(25): two people cooking, each 'you' a different person. Note that (24) is fine if the overt subjects are dropped.

- 1 b. ?*Vsem odkryvat' ostorožno!
2 all.DAT open.INF carefully
3
- 4 c. ?Vsem odkryvat' pis'ma ostorožno!
5 all.DAT open letters carefully
- 6 (30) a. ?*Vsem nemedlenno zakryt'!
7 all.DAT at.once close.INF
- 8 b. ?Vsem nemedlenno zakryt' učebniki!
9 all.DAT at.once close.INF textbooks
- 10 c. *{ Tebe / vam } nemedlenno zakryt'!
11 you.SG/ you.PL at.once close.INF
- 12 d. ?*/(???) { Tebe / vam } nemedlenno zakryt' učebniki!
13 you.SG/ you.PL at.once close.INF textbook

14
15 Note that there is an islandhood effect with object drop.

- 16
17 (31) *Vojdi v dom, kogda Ivan otkroet.
18 enter in house when Ivan opens
19 Intended: 'Enter the house when Ivan opens it.'

20
21 Consider also Slovenian (the Slovenian data are due to Adrian Stegovec).
22 Slovenian also has regular imperatives and infinitives as imperatives. Dropped
23 objects with overt subjects are better with the former. (Pronominal subjects are
24 not allowed with the latter, only quantificational subjects. Recall that the blocking
25 effect in question is weaker with non-pronominal subjects in English as well, cf.
26 (12).)

- 27
28 (32) Odpri vrata!
29 open.IMP door
- 30 (33) Ti odpri (vrata)!
31 you open.IMP door
- 32 (34) a. ?Zdaj vsi odprite (vrata)!
33 now all open.IMP (door)
- 34 b. ??Zdaj vsi odpret!
35 now all open.INF

36
37 Notice that the object drop in Slovenian is also island-sensitive.

- 38
39 (35) a. ?*Stopi v hišo ko bo Ivan odprl.
40 step.IMP in house when FUT.3SG Ivan open
41 Intended: 'Step into the house when Ivan will open.'
- 42 b. *Stopi v hišo ko Ivan odpre.
43 step.IMP in house when Ivan opens

1 Intended: ‘Step into the house when Ivan opens.’
2

3 A short side remark is now in order regarding imperatives without a verb,
4 illustrated by (36).
5

6 (36) Takoj domov!
7 immediately home
8 ‘Come home right now!’
9

10 Adrian Stegovec (p.c.) observes that all these involve a direction, like ‘home’ or
11 ‘to school’, but not a regular object, so there are contextual limitations on what
12 can be dropped (cf. (37) vs (38)). Some verbs (like *go*) are general enough to be
13 possible to recover them from the directionality of the PP. The same holds if there
14 is another way of expressing direction, as in (39)).
15

16 (37) Takoj v šolo!
17 immediately in school.ACC
18 ‘Go to school right now’

19 (38) *Takoj roke!
20 immediately hands.ACC
21 Intended: ‘Wash your hands right now!’

22 (39) Takoj denar nazaj!
23 immediately money.ACC back
24 ‘Give back the money right now.’
25

26 The phenomenon is also found in Russian, as in (40c).
27

28 (40) a. Nemedlenno spat! (infinitive)
29 immediately sleep.INF

30 b. Nemedlenno vstal (i vyšel)! (past tense)
31 immediately got.up.M.PST (and left. M.PST)
32 ‘Immediately get up and leave!’

33 c. Nemedlenno v krovat! (no verb)
34 immediately to bed
35

36 The point to be made here is that these no-verb-imperatives do not come from
37 (underlying) infinitival imperatives since SC, which does not have infinitival
38 imperatives, has them (overt subject is also possible, in vocative where this can
39 be seen).⁵

⁵One can imagine infinitival imperatives being possible in very limited single sentence instructions/warnings on labels. A rare, OKish case is given in (ia). An overt subject is still completely impossible here (ib), which is not the case with no-verb imperatives (cf. (42)). This also indicates that no-verb-imperatives do not come from (underlying) infinitival imperatives.

(i) a. Popiti tri puta na dan.
to-drink three times on day

- 1
 2 (41) Odmah u školu!
 3 immediately in school.ACC
 4 ‘Go to school right now!’
- 5 (42) Svi odmah u školu!
 6 all immediately in school.ACC
 7 ‘Everyone immediately to school!’
 8

9 Taking stock of the main point of the discussion so far, taking SC, English,
 10 Russian, and Slovenian into consideration, the blocking effect of overt subjects
 11 on object drop does not show up with true imperative forms; it shows up in cases
 12 where an infinitive or a bare verb is used as an imperative.

13 Also relevant is Icelandic. As noted above, Sigurðsson and Maling (2008)
 14 note that Icelandic imperatives also show the blocking effect in question (see
 15 section 7 for the data). While they gloss the relevant verbal form as imperative,
 16 the form in question for 2sg is formed by dropping the -a ending from the
 17 infinitival form of the verb, which yields a bare stem. The 2pl plural imperative
 18 form is the same as the exhortative/indicative/subjunctive form. So the situation
 19 here is similar to English.

20 Consider also French: the relevant imperative paradigm from French is given
 21 below.

- 22
 23 (43) a. ?Ouvre!
 24 open
- 25 b. *Tu ouvre!
 26 you open
- 27 c. (?)?Tu ouvre la porte!
 28 you open the door
- 29 d. Ouvre la porte!
 30 open the door
 31

32 (43) indicates that French displays the overt imperative subject blocking effect.
 33 (An overt imperative subject is somewhat degraded; however, (43b) is worse than
 34 (43c).) What is relevant for us is that French imperative is syncretic with
 35 indicative (there is a difference for -er verbs but it is only orthographic: *Chante!*
 36 (You sing!) vs *Tu chantes* (You sing)).

37 In light of all this, I suggest that the relevant difference for the blocking effect
 38 under consideration is true imperatives vs other/bare forms used as imperatives.
 39

40 (44) The blocking effect of overt subjects on object drop arises in imperatives
 41 with non-imperative-specific verbal forms, i.e. where a bare verb or a
 42 different verbal form is used as an imperative.

-
- ‘Take three times a day’
 b. *Svi popiti tri puta na dan!
 all to-drink three times on day

1
 2 To account for this, I suggest that only true imperatives have/license SpecIP. (The
 3 intuition here is that non-imperative imperatives need to be somehow marked,
 4 which is done through them not allowing “regular” subjects). Overt imperative
 5 subjects cannot stay in SpecvP (see Potsdam 1998 and footnote 6). In English
 6 (3b), the overt imperative subject then must move to the left periphery, where,
 7 being located in an A'-position, it blocks A'-movement (see also Bošković
 8 2024).⁶ This is not the case in e.g. SC (22), where the imperative subject in
 9 SpecIP then does not block A'-movement of the null object.

10 As noted briefly above, Sigurðsson and Maling (2008) report that object drop
 11 in Icelandic imperatives improves when a clitic is used instead of a full pronoun
 12 subject (see section 7 for the data). This makes sense, given that a clitic would
 13 undergo cliticization movement, and given that traces do not count as interveners
 14 (see Chomsky 1995, Bošković 2011; to illustrate the effect, Italian experiencers
 15 block subject movement (45a), but not when they undergo cliticization (46) or
 16 topicalization (45b)).
 17

18 (45) a. *Gianni_i sembra a Maria [t_i essere stanco].

19 Gianni seems to Maria to be tired

20 b. A Maria_j, Gianni_i sembra t_j [t_i essere stanco].

21 to Maria Gianni seems to be tired

22 (46) Gianni_i gli_j sembra t_j [t_i essere stanco].

23 Gianni her seems to be tired

24 ‘Gianni seems to her to be tired.’ (Italian)

25

26 To summarize the discussion in this section, we have seen that languages (and
 27 particular constructions within the same language) differ regarding the blocking
 28 effect of overt subjects on imperative object drop. I suggested that the relevant
 29 difference for the blocking effect in question is true imperatives vs other/bare
 30 forms used as imperatives. The preliminary generalization regarding the blocking
 31 effect in question was given in (44). The generalization was motivated by
 32 English, Icelandic, SC, Russian, Slovenian, and French (additional motivation is
 33 provided below with Spanish and Italian). The reader should, however, take the
 34 above discussion as a preliminary investigation of the validity of the potential
 35 typological generalization in (44).

⁶Potsdam 1998 places the overt imperative subject in English in SpecIP. His arguments, however, only show that the subject cannot be lower than that—they are compatible with a movement-to-the-left-periphery treatment. Thus, the data in (i)-(ii) simply show that the imperative subject is not lower than SpecIP—they do not tell us anything about whether the subject is in SpecIP or higher.

(i) There’s plenty of room.

*Simply everyone move to his right a little!

(ii) a. Don’t you *simply* stand there!

b. *Don’t *simply* you stand there!

c. *Don’t stand there *simply*!

(Potsdam 1998)

1 7 Inverted imperatives

2 I will now briefly consider inverted infinitives. They involve true inversion, as
3 indicated by the fact that negation takes wide scope in (47) ((47) is fine on the
4 “everyone should expect...” reading, not on the “nobody should expect...”
5 reading. Potsdam (1998) in fact claims that negation in inverted imperatives
6 always takes the widest scope, just as in other constructions involving inversion).

7
8 (47) Don't everyone expect a raise.
9

10 Turning now to object drop, there is a blocking effect of overt subjects on object
11 drop in inverted imperatives as well, which seems to be surprising, given that the
12 negation here is in C.
13

- 14 (48) a. *Don't you open forcefully.
15 b. Don't you open it forcefully.
16 c. *Don't anyone open forcefully.
17 d. Don't anyone open it forcefully.
18

19 What is relevant here is the discussion of inversion above the phrase hosting local
20 subject A'-movement in Bošković (2024). Bošković (2024) argues that local
21 subject A'-movement goes to a lower phrase than non-subject A'-movement of
22 the same type. Thus, he argues that *who* in *who left* undergoes wh-movement, but
23 its landing site is lower than the landing site of *what* in *what did Mary buy*.
24 Bošković (2024) argues that focalized subjects in indicatives also undergo this
25 lower A'-movement (see Bošković 2024 for a more detailed discussion of the
26 nature of the position/movement in question, which I am simplifying here).
27 Consider (49).
28

- 29 (49) a. Only his girlfriend does John give any flowers.
30 b. *John gives only his girlfriend any flowers.
31 c. Only Mary showed any respect for the visitors. (Branigan 1992:84)
32

33 The *only* licenser c-commands the NPI in both (49a) and (49b). The contrast then
34 indicates that the licensing here is apparently not possible from an A-position.
35 (49c) can then be captured if the focalized subject undergoes local A'-movement:
36 The *only* DP in (49c) is then not in SpecIP, hence it can license the NPI, but it is
37 also not in SpecCP. Consequently, it does not block inversion.
38

39 (50) Did only Mary show any respect for the visitors?
40

41 Another element that undergoes this type of subject focus-movement is *nobody*
42 in (53). Consider the paradigm below. (51) indicates that an object can scope over
43 a subject in SpecIP. The lack of inverse scope in (52) then indicates that *who* here
44 does not stay in SpecIP. Interestingly, inverse scope is also not possible in (53).⁷
45 Based on this, Bošković (2024) argues that *nobody* undergoes the same kind of
46 focus-movement as the focalized subject in (49c)/(50) (on focus-movement of

⁷See e.g. Beghelli (1995), Sato (2003), Collins (2017).

1 negative constituents, see Bošković 2007, 2009; note that inversion is also
2 possible with *nobody*, as in *?Does nobody like John?*.

- 3
4 (51) Someone likes everyone. inverse scope OK
5 (52) Who likes everyone? inverse scope *
6 (53) Nobody likes everyone. inverse scope *
7

8 The suggestion is then that the imperative subject movement discussed above
9 targets the same position. What is important for us is that an overt imperative
10 subject can undergo that kind of movement, hence be in an A'-position, even in
11 inverted infinitives: (48c) in fact patterns with (50) in the relevant respect: in both
12 cases, the subject undergoes short A'-movement, as indicated by the blocking
13 effect on object drop in (48c) and the relevant NPI-licensing in (50); still it is
14 lower than the inverted element in C (what is important for us is that (50) provides
15 independent evidence that the required subject A'-movement is possible below
16 C).

17 In fact, in Icelandic imperatives the verb quite generally precedes an overt
18 imperative subject that induces a blocking effect, i.e. Icelandic imperatives are
19 quite generally inverted.⁸
20

- 21 (54) a. Skerið (*þið) ___ í litla bita.
22 cut.IMP.2PL (*you.PL) in small pieces
23 'Cut in small pieces.'
24 b. cf. Skerið (þið) þau í litla bita.
25 cut.2PL (you.PL) them in small pieces
26 '(You) cut them in small pieces.' (Sigurðsson and Maling 2008)
27

28 Spanish and Italian, which have real imperatives, are also relevant here. They
29 disallow overt preverbal subjects in imperatives, but an overt subject is possible
30 postverbally. Importantly, it is also possible with object drop, as shown by
31 (55c)/(56c). (Recall that the verb form here is imperative specific. Note that, as

⁸Improvement with clitic subjects, noted in section 6, is illustrated below.

- (i) ... þrjú egg ...
three eggs
a. *Brjót þu ___ í skál og ...
break.IMP.2SG you.SG (them) into bowl and ...
b. ?Brjóttu ___ í skál og ...
break.IMP.2SG-CL2SG (them) into bowl and ... (Sigurðsson and Maling 2008)

1 observed by Aarón Sanchez, p.c., the object drop in question is contextually more
2 restricted in Spanish, thus (55a) e.g. does not work for jars).^{9,10}

- 3
4 (55) a. ¡Abre!
5 open
6 b. *¡Tú abre (la puerta)!
7 you open the door
8 c. ¡Abre tú!
9 open you (Spanish)

- 10 (56) a. Apri!
11 ‘Open!’
12 b. *Tu apri (la porta)!
13 Intended: ‘You open (the door)!’
14 c. Apri tu! (Italian)

15 8 A test for null objects

⁹However, it may also be relevant here that subjects can stay in SpecvP in general in Spanish and Italian (though the issue is whether subjects can stay in situ in imperatives; it should, however, be noted that Miyoshi 2002 and Bošković 2004 argue that in languages with a ban on negative imperatives, like Spanish and Italian (see footnote 10), in non-negative imperatives there is an affixal imperative head which needs to undergo PF merger with the verb under PF adjacency—an imperative subject in SpecIP is then pronounced in a lower position, postverbally (cf. (55c)/(56c)), not to block affix hopping. At any rate, no intervention effect is expected to be found in (55c) and (56c) given that we are dealing with imperative-specific forms.

¹⁰In both Spanish and Italian, imperatives cannot be negated—in that context a surrogate imperative, subjunctive in Spanish and infinitive in Italian, is used. However, an overt subject is not possible in surrogate imperatives regardless of object drop. (Spanish data in this section are due to Cristina Cuervo and Aarón Sanchez, and Italian data are due to Giulio Ciferri Muramatsu and Pietro Cerrone).

- (i) a. ¡No abras!
‘Don’t open.SBJV!’
b. *¡Tú no abras (la puerta)!
Intended: ‘You don’t open.SBJV (the door)!’
c. *¡No abras tú!
Intended: ‘You don’t open.SBJV!’ (Spanish)

- (ii) a. Non aprire!
‘Don’t open.INF’
b. *Tu non aprire (la porta)!
Intended: ‘You don’t open.INF (the door)!’
c. *Non aprire tu!
Intended: ‘You don’t open.INF!’ (Italian)

1 The discussion above can be used as a diagnostic test for null objects (possibly
2 of a particular kind). In this section I will use imperative object drop to examine
3 cases where an argument optionally surfaces overtly (e.g. with *eat*, *donate*),
4 where it is not clear whether we are dealing with optionally transitive/ditransitive
5 usage, without a null element, or whether there is a null element.

6 Regarding *eat*, there is some speaker variation with *eat*; one of the patterns
7 displayed by my informants is given below.
8

- 9 (57) a. Eat!
10 b. You eat!
11 c. Eat without boiling!
12 d. *You eat without boiling!
13

14 The pattern can be accounted for if these speakers have two options:
15

- 16 (a) a different phenomenon
17 (b) the usual moving null imperative object
18

19 Example (57b) is then acceptable because of option (a) and (57c) because of
20 option (b). Notice that (57d) forces option (b) because of parasitic gap licensing,
21 which requires movement, hence an overt subject, which blocks the movement
22 in question, is not possible.

23 Consider now *donate*, which can take a DP and PP object, both of which are,
24 on the surface, optional. This is illustrated by the paradigm in (58).
25

- 26 (58) a. Alex donated ten dollars to the fund.
27 b. Alex donated to the fund.
28 c. Alex donated ten dollars.
29 d. He hasn't donated yet.
30

31 Consider now the imperative paradigm in (59). The selective blocking effect of
32 the overt imperative subject in (59) indicates that there is a null object in (59b)
33 but not (59c). This means that the intransitive usage is not really intransitive—
34 there is a null DP object on that usage, i.e. *donate* must have at least one internal
35 argument.
36

- 37 (59) a. Please donate!
38 b. *You donate!
39 c. You donate to the fund!

40 9 Conclusion

41 To conclude, the null object under consideration undergoes movement to the left
42 periphery. It exhibits the following properties, all of which are indications of such
43 movement:
44

- 45 • it licenses parasitic gaps
- 46 • it is island sensitive
- 47 • it correlates with the possibility of P-stranding

- 1 • it is blocked by overt imperative subjects, which was interpreted as
 2 indicating that the movement in question is blocked by overt subjects that
 3 undergo local A'-movement
 4

5 I have argued that there is crosslinguistic variation regarding whether overt
 6 imperative subjects can stay in SpecIP—the relevant difference is true
 7 imperatives vs other/bare forms used as imperatives (though it is possible that
 8 further research will lead to a more specific restriction regarding the latter (see
 9 also the discussion of Hungarian in the appendix) or even show that what we are
 10 dealing with here is a tendency, as most typological generalizations are).

11 It should, however, be noted that it would be strange if the kind of null object
 12 under consideration here would be confined to imperatives. In fact, even in
 13 imperatives it is contextually restricted—it is typically found on labels, on signs,
 14 and in recipes, it just happens that imperatives are typically used in those
 15 contexts. There are, however, languages where its distribution may be broader—
 16 the null object that is allowed in Germanic V-2 languages and illustrated by (5)-
 17 (6), which do not involve an imperative, may in fact be the same kind of a null
 18 element (or very similar to it) as the one we have been concerned with in this
 19 paper—recall that this object is subject to a similar intervention effect as the one
 20 we have been concerned with in this work (see also section 8). The most
 21 conspicuous property of the null object under consideration, movement, has also
 22 been argued to be involved in the derivation of other types of null elements (see
 23 especially Fujiwara 2022 and Mizuno in press regarding argument ellipsis in
 24 Japanese; they also consider the possibility of a movement derivation applying to
 25 radical *pro*-drop in Japanese—notice that radical *pro*-drop is also not agreement
 26 licensed, like the null object under consideration, which may be relevant here—
 27 i. e. it is possible that non-agreement-licensed *pro* is licensed through movement
 28 of the kind discussed in this paper).¹¹ I will, however, leave the possibility of a
 29 unification, or a more fine-grained typology of null elements from this
 30 perspective, for future research.

31

32 **Appendix: Hungarian**

33

34 There is a potentially interfering factor, hinted at in the conclusion section, to
 35 bear in mind when testing the analysis presented in this paper with respect to

¹¹As another potential case, SC is one of the languages where a yes-no question is typically answered with a verb (ia). John Bailyn (p.c.) observes that an overt subject is not possible in such cases ((ib) is unacceptable on the relevant usage, see also Gribanova 2017 regarding Russian), which can be accounted for if there is a null element that undergoes movement to the left periphery, with the overt subject pushed into the left periphery due to the raising of the verb in this construction (on the raising of the verb, see e.g. Gribanova 2017, Holmberg 2015, Martins 2007, Sato and Maeda 2021; the null element could be a *pro*-form or the remnant VP from which the verb moves, given that there have been proposals for movement of VPs to be elided, see e.g. Johnson 2001).

(i) Voli li Anu? a. Voli b. *{ On/Jovan } voli.
 love_{3sg} Q Ana_{ACC} love_{3sg} he/Jovan loves_{3sg}
 'Does he love Ana? Yes.'

1 other languages. Consider example (60) from Hungarian (all Hungarian data in
2 this section are due to András Bárány), where subjunctives are used as
3 imperatives. In Hungarian, transitive verbs indicate a third person definite object
4 by object agreement (object agreement with definite objects is obligatory; for
5 discussion of object agreement in Hungarian, see e.g. Bartos 1997, Kiss 2002,
6 Coppock and Wechsler 2012, Bárány 2015). A pronominal object is then
7 generally dropped. In (60), an overt subject and a null object can co-occur.
8 However, this is a different kind of a null object from the one discussed so far. It
9 is an agreement-licensed null object—in this respect it is more similar to subject
10 *pro*-drop in languages like SC or Spanish. The discussion in the text regarding
11 movement of null elements is not intended to apply to agreement-licensed *pro*.
12

13 (60) (Te) (ezt) óvatosan nyisd ki!
14 you this carefully open.SBJV.2SG.SBJ>3.OBJ up
15 ‘Open (this) carefully!’
16

17 Hungarian also has infinitival imperatives, which do not show object agreement
18 (A. Bárány notes that they are often used on signs and often involve object drop).
19

20 (61) Óvatosan kinyitni!
21 carefully open up.INF
22 ‘Open carefully!’
23

24 Overt subjects are not possible with infinitival imperatives, hence the blocking
25 effect under discussion in this paper cannot be tested with Hungarian infinitival
26 imperatives.
27

28 (62) *Te (ezt) óvatosan kinyitni!
29 you this carefully open up.INF
30 ‘You open (this) carefully!’
31

32 Returning to non-infinitival imperatives, when the subject is second person,
33 object agreement only shows up with a third person object, not first. Interestingly,
34 as noted by A. Bárány (p.c), without an overt indefinite object, a bare second
35 person transitive imperative is interpreted as having a first person null object. So,
36 example (63) with a non-object agreeing verb form (i.e. without object
37 agreement) is interpreted as having a first person dropped object.
38

39 (63) Nyissál ki!
40 open.SBJV.2SG.SBJ up
41 ‘Open me!’
42

43 Furthermore, an overt subject allows a null object even with a first person null
44 object (i.e. when the null object appears not to be agreement licensed); thus, both
45 examples in (64) are acceptable.
46

47 (64) a. Te nyissál ki!
48 you open.SBJV.2SG.SBJ up
49 ‘You open me!’

1 **ABBREVIATIONS**

2

3 ACC	accusative	M	masculine
4 CL	clitic	PL	plural
5 CSC	Coordinate Structure Constraint	SBJV	subjunctive
6 DAT	dative	SBJ	subject
7 FUT	future	OBJ	object
8 IMP	imperative	SC	Serbo-Croatian
9 INF	infinitive	SG	singular

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