

Manuscript title:

Object drop in imperatives and the status of imperative subjects

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1 Introduction

2 This paper examines object drop in a particular type of imperatives, the starting
3 point being such object drop in English imperatives. While imperatives typically
4 have a null subject (1), the subject can be overtly realized (2).

- 5
6 (1) Buy yourself a nice present!
7 (2) You buy yourself a nice present!
8

9 Object drop in imperatives is illustrated by (3)a). Previous literature has observed
10 that object drop in imperatives is blocked when the imperative subject is overtly
11 realized, as in (3)b) (see Sadock 1974; Sigurðsson and Maling 2008; Bošković
12 2011).¹

- 13
14 (3) a. Open carefully!
15 b. *You open carefully!
16 c. cf. You open it carefully!
17

18 I will use this paradigm to probe into the nature of the null element in question
19 as well as the position of overt subjects in imperatives. I will argue that the null
20 object undergoes movement to the left periphery for licensing reasons. This is on
21 a par with what has been argued for in the literature for other null elements (see
22 e.g. Johnson 2001; Fujiwara 2022; Mizuno 2022). Overt subjects in imperatives
23 will also be argued to undergo movement. It will be observed that there is actually
24 crosslinguistic variation regarding constructions like (3)b), and a principled
25 criterion that distinguishes contexts and languages where (3)b) is allowed and
26 where it is disallowed will be proposed.

27 2 Parasitic gaps

28 One argument for movement of null objects under investigation comes from
29 parasitic gap licensing. It is well-known that parasitic gaps are licensed only
30 under overt A'-movement. Importantly, the null object in question licenses
31 parasitic gaps, which indicates that it undergoes A'-movement.

- 32
33 (4) Open without closing afterward.

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.

1 3 The blocking effect of overt imperative subjects on object 2 drop

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

8 (5) A: Hvað finnst þér um nýja húsvörðinn?
9 what think you about new janitor.the

10 B: Veit é(g) ekki __, hef é(g) ekki séð __ enn.
11 know I not have I not seen yet
12 'I don't know (that), I have still not seen (him). (Icelandic)

13 (6) A: Vad tycker du om den nya vaktmästaren?
14 what think you about the new janitor.the

15 B: Vet ja(g) inte __, har ja(g) fortfarande inte sett __.
16 know I not have I still not seen
17 (Swedish, Sigurðsson and Maling 2008)
18

19 Sigurðsson and Maling (2008) argue that such null objects are possible only with
20 an empty SpecCP, as stated in (7) and illustrated by (8)-(9), where the presence
21 of an element in SpecCP (9), but not in C (8), blocks object drop.
22

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

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

27 b. (Það) þekki é(g) ekki __. Icelandic
28 (that) recognize I not

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

30 b. *Núna þekki é(g) ekki __. Icelandic
31 now recognize I not
32

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

38 Bošković (2011) argues that the licensing is actually accomplished via
39 movement of null objects to the Specs of these projections. Since this must be
40 A'-movement it is blocked by an intervening SpecCP in (9), as shown in (10).

1 (10) [Top/ΛA/ΛP [CP SPEC ... [IP ... Ø ...
 2 ↑ _____ ↑
 3 *
 4

5 If SpecCP must always be filled in V-2 clauses, the requirement can be satisfied
 6 by the null object in (5)-(6) (cf. Huang 1984), which would be moving through
 7 SpecCP on its way to the context-linking projections.

8 Alternatively, the movement of null objects takes place to SpecCP (i.e. this is
 9 where the licensing is done), this is why SpecCP cannot be filled by anything
 10 else. I will leave the choice between these two possibilities open here.

11 It should be noted that Sigurðsson and Maling (SM) argue that the effect in
 12 (7) is a PF processing effect. There are some obvious issues with this proposal
 13 (see Bošković 2011). First, it is strange to treat an intervention effect of the kind
 14 typically found in syntax as a PF phenomenon. Also, the effect has a semantic
 15 reflex (determining the reference of the null object), it is obviously quite tricky
 16 to capture that in a PF analysis. Furthermore, if we were dealing here with a
 17 processing effect we might expect speakers to be able to “recover” from it, which
 18 does not happen. In light of this, I will adopt the movement intervention analysis
 19 from Bošković (2011).

20 Turning to the blocking effect of overt imperative subjects on object drop
 21 (3)b), note that the overt subject is focalized, i.e. it is contrastively focused, in
 22 contrast to the null subject. The suggestion is then that, being focalized, the
 23 subject in (3)b-c) undergoes A'-movement to the left periphery, hence it blocks
 24 A'-movement of the null object (see here Bošković 2023; the reason for subject
 25 movement will be slightly revised below). The blocking effect then also provides
 26 an argument for movement (in particular, A'-movement) of the null object.

27 It is worth noting here that Icelandic imperatives also show the blocking
 28 effect in question. Sigurðsson and Maling (2008) report that object drop improves
 29 when a clitic is used instead of a full pronoun subject. That makes sense from the
 30 current perspective since a clitic subject cannot be focalized (the account will be
 31 slightly revised below).

32 Note also that the effect in question is found with non-pronominal subjects as
 33 well, though it is somewhat weaker in this case.

34
 35 (11) Everyone open it carefully.

36 (12) ??Everyone open carefully.
 37

38 With an embedded clause object drop, a higher clause overt imperative subject
 39 induces an intervention effect (albeit somewhat weaker), which indicates that the
 40 movement of the null object here goes into the imperative matrix clause—it does
 41 not stop in the embedded clause CP field.
 42

- 1 (13) Make sure that they open carefully.
2 (14) ??You make sure that they open carefully.

3 **4 Islandhood effect**

4 Another argument for movement is provided by islandhood effects. The dropped
5 object is embedded within an island below, a Complex NP in (15) and a wh-
6 island in (17). The islandhood effect indicates that the object is moving out of
7 these islands.

- 8
9 (15) Print the instruction to open it carefully
10 (16) ?*Print the instruction to open carefully
11 (17) Ask how you can open it with a knife
12 (18) *Ask how you can open with a knife
13

14 There is also a Coordinate Structure effect (CSC). The effect is found in (19),
15 where the null object itself is a conjunct (namely, the first conjunct), but not in
16 (20), where it originates within the conjunct. I interpret this as indicating that
17 when imperatives are coordinated, there is no movement out of an imperative
18 conjunct itself (the movement can take place to the edge of the imperative in (20)
19 without moving outside of the coordination).

- 20
21 (19) *Keep and other medications out of the reach of children.
22 (20) Hold can six inches from underarm and push down to spray.
23 (Saddock 1974)

24 **5 P-stranding**

25 Another argument for movement of null objects in imperatives concerns P-
26 stranding. Consider (21). What is dropped in (21) is an object of a preposition,
27 stranding the preposition. As far as I know, null objects with Ps as in (21) are
28 possible only if the language allows P-stranding under movement (a number of
29 languages that allow imperative object drop but not P-stranding are discussed
30 below—none of them allow examples like (21)). This may then provide another
31 argument for the movement of the null object.²

- 32
33 (21) Dispose of carefully. (Saddock 1974)

²It should, however, be noted that such constructions are not very productive in English either (see Saddock 1974), which may have to do with the recoverability of what is dropped.

1 **6 Slavic and what really matters for the blocking effect of** 2 **overt subjects**

3 Turning now to Slavic, we will see in this section that Slavic languages enable us
4 to pinpoint more precisely what is going on regarding the intervention effect
5 discussed in section 3.

6 First, the blocking effect of overt imperative subjects on object drop is not
7 found in Serbo-Croatian (SC).

8
9 (22) { Otvori / Pažljivo otvori }
10 { open / carefully open }

11 (23) Ti { otvori / pažljivo otvori }
12 you { open / carefully open }

13 (24) ?*You wash leeks and you chop and place in boiling water.³

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

16
17 While SC differs from English regarding the blocking effect of overt subject on
18 object drop, there are still islandhood effects with such object drop in SC, as
19 shown by (26)-(27), which indicates that it is not the case that the null object in
20 SC simply does not move.

21
22 (26) ?*Udji u kuću kad Ivan bude otvorio
23 enter in house when Ivan be opened

24 (27) ??Odštampaj instrukcije kako da otvoriš
25 print instructions how that opens

26
27 Regarding the English/SC contrast, it is in principle possible that there is a
28 difference in the nature of the null object, or that the subject Case matters (the
29 subject is vocative in SC). I will argue this is not what matters. Rather, what
30 matters is a difference in the verbal form. SC has a dedicated imperative verbal
31 form, which is not the case with English.

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

36
37 (28) a. Otkryvaj oštorožno!
38 open.IMP carefully

39 b. Ty otrkyvaj oštorožno!

³The context for (24)-(25): two people cooking, each ‘you’ a different person. Note that (24) is fine if the overt subjects are dropped.

- 1 you open.IMP carefully
2
- 3 However, Russian can also use infinitives (with dative subjects) as imperatives.
4 In infinitival imperatives, the blocking effect in question shows up: an overt
5 subject blocks object drop (noted by Ksenia Zanon, p.c.; pronominal subjects in
6 general are worse than quantified subjects in Russian infinitival imperatives).
7
- 8 (29) a. Otryvat' ostorožno!
9 open.INF carefully
- 10 b. ?*Vsem otkryvat' ostorožno!
11 all.DAT open.INF carefully
- 12 c. ?Vsem otkryvat' pis'ma ostorožno!
13 all.DAT open letters carefully
- 14 (30) a. ?*Vsem nemedlenno zakryt'!
15 all.DAT at.once close.INF
- 16 b. ?Vsem nemedlenno zakryt' učebniki!
17 all.DAT at.once close.INF textbooks
- 18 c. *{ Tebe / vam } nemedlenno zakryt'!
19 you.SG/ you.PL at.once close.INF
- 20 d. ?*/(???) { Tebe / vam } nemedlenno zakryt' učebniki!
21 you.SG/ you.PL at.once close.INF textbook
- 22
- 23 Note that there is an islandhood effect with object drop.
24
- 25 (31) *Vojdi v dom, kogda Ivan otkroet
26 enter in house when Ivan opened
27
- 28 Consider also Slovenian (the Slovenian data are due to Adrian Stegovec).
29 Slovenian also has regular imperatives and infinitives as imperatives. Dropped
30 objects with overt subjects are better with the former. (Pronominal subjects are
31 not allowed with the latter, only quantificational subjects. Recall that the blocking
32 effect in question is weaker with non-pronominal subjects in English as well, cf.
33 (12)).
34
- 35 (32) Odpri vrata!
36 open.IMP door
- 37 (33) Ti odpri (vrata)!
38 you open.IMP door
- 39 (34) a. ?Zdaj vsi odprite (vrata)!
40 now all open.IMP (door)
- 41 b. ??Zdaj vsi odpret!
42 now all open.INF

1
2 Notice that the object drop in Slovenian is also island-sensitive.
3

4 (35) a. ?*Stopi v hišo ko bo Ivan odprl.
5 step.IMP in house when FUT.3SG Ivan open
6 Intended: ‘Step into the house when Ivan will open.’

7 b. *Stopi v hišo ko Ivan odpre.
8 step.IMP in house when Ivan opens
9 Intended: ‘Step into the house when Ivan opens.’
10

11 A short side remark is now in order regarding imperatives without a verb,
12 illustrated by (36).
13

14 (36) Takoj domov!
15 immediately home
16 ‘Come home right now!’
17

18 A. Stegovec (p.c.) observes that all these involve a direction, like ‘home’ or ‘to
19 school’, but not a regular object, so there are contextual limitations on what can
20 be dropped (cf. (37) vs (38)). Some verbs (like *go*) are general enough to be
21 possible to recover them from the directionality of the PP. The same holds if there
22 is another way of expressing direction, as in (39)).
23

24 (37) Takoj v šolo!
25 immediately in school.ACC
26 ‘Go to school right now’

27 (38) *Takoj roke!
28 immediately hands.ACC
29 Intended: ‘Wash your hands right now!’

30 (39) Takoj denar nazaj!
31 immediately money.ACC back
32 ‘Give back the money right now.’
33

34 The phenomenon is also found in Russian
35

36 (40) a. Nemedlenno spat! (infinitive)
37 immediately sleep.INF

38 b. Nemedlenno vstal (i vyšel)! (past tense)
39 immediately got.up.M.PST (and left. M.PST)

40 c. Nemedlenno v krovat! (no verb)
41 immediately to bed
42

43 The point to be made here is that these no-verb-imperatives do not come from
44 (underlying) infinitival imperatives since SC, which does not have infinitival

1 imperatives, has them (overt subject is also possible, in vocative where this can
2 be seen).⁴

3
4 (41) Odmah u školu!
5 immediately in school.ACC
6 'Go to school right now'

7 (42) Svi odmah u školu!
8 all immediately in school.ACC
9

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

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

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

23
24 (43) a. ?Ouvre!
25 open
26 b. *Tu ouvre!
27 you open
28 c. (?)?Tu ouvre la porte!
29 you open the door
30 d. Ouvre la porte!
31 open the door
32

⁴One 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
'Take three times a day'
b. *Svi popiti tri puta na dan!
all to-drink three times on day

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

6 In light of all this, I suggest that the relevant difference for the blocking effect
7 under consideration is true imperatives vs other/bare forms used as imperatives.
8

9 (44) The blocking effect of overt subjects on object drop arises in imperatives
10 with non-imperative-specific verbal forms, i.e. where a bare verb or a
11 different verbal form is used as an imperative.
12

13 To account for this, I suggest that only true imperatives have/license SpecIP. (The
14 intuition here is that non-imperative imperatives need to be somehow marked,
15 which is done through them not allowing “regular” subjects). Overt imperative
16 subjects cannot stay in SpecvP (see Potsdam 1998 and fn 5). In English (3)b), the
17 overt imperative subject then must move to the left periphery, where, being
18 located in an A'-position, it blocks A'-movement (see also Bošković 2023).⁵ This
19 is not the case in e.g. SC (22), where the imperative subject in SpecIP then does
20 not block A'-movement of the null object.

21 As noted briefly above, Sigurðsson and Maling (2008) report that object drop
22 in Icelandic imperatives improves when a clitic is used instead of a full pronoun
23 subject (see section 7 for the data). This makes sense, given that a clitic would
24 undergo cliticization movement, and given that traces do not count as interveners
25 (see Chomsky 1995, Bošković 2011; to illustrate the effect, Italian experiencers
26 block subject movement (45)a), but not when they undergo cliticization (46) or
27 topicalization (45)b)).
28

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

30 Gianni seems to Maria to be ill

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

32 to Maria Gianni seems to be ill

⁵Potsdam 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 (46) Gianni_i gli_j sembra t_j [t_i essere stanco].
2 Gianni her seems to be ill (Italian)

3
4 To summarize the discussion in this section, we have seen that languages (and
5 particular constructions within the same language) differ regarding the blocking
6 effect of overt subjects on imperative object drop. I suggested that the relevant
7 difference for the blocking effect in question is true imperatives vs other/bare
8 forms used as imperatives. The preliminary generalization regarding the blocking
9 effect in question was given in (44). The generalization was motivated by
10 English, Icelandic, SC, Russian, Slovenian, and French (additional motivation is
11 provided below with Spanish and Italian). The reader should, however, take the
12 above discussion as a preliminary investigation of the validity of the potential
13 typological generalization in (44).⁶

14 7 Inverted imperatives

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

20
21 (47) Don't everyone expect a raise.

22
23 Turning now to object drop, there is a blocking effect of overt subjects on object
24 drop in inverted imperatives as well, which seems to be surprising, given that the
25 negation here is in C.

- 26
27 (48) a. Don't you open forcefully.
28 b. Don't you open it forcefully.
29 c. *Don't anyone open forcefully
30 d. Don't anyone open it forcefully
31

⁶There is a potentially interfering factor to bear in mind when testing the analysis presented above with respect to other languages. Consider example (i) from Hungarian (due to András Bárány), where subjunctives are used as imperatives. In Hungarian, transitive verbs indicate a third person definite object by object agreement. A pronominal object is then generally dropped. In (i), an overt subject and a null object can co-occur. However, this is a different kind of a null object from the one discussed so far. It is an agreement licensed null object—in this respect it is more similar to subject *pro*-drop in languages like SC or Spanish. The above discussion is not intended to apply to agreement licensed *pro*.

(i) (Te) (ezt) óvatosan nyisd ki!
you this carefully open
'Open it/(this) carefully!'

1 still it is lower than the inverted element in C (what is important for us is that (50)
 2 provides independent evidence that the required subject A'-movement is possible
 3 below C).

4 In fact, in Icelandic imperatives the verb quite generally precedes an overt
 5 imperative subject that induces a blocking effect, i.e. Icelandic imperatives are
 6 quite generally inverted.⁸

7
 8 (54) a. Skerið (*þið) ___ í litla bita.
 9 cut.IMP.2PL (*you.PL) in small pieces
 10 'Cut in small pieces.'

11 b. cf. Skerið (þið) þau í litla bita.
 12 cut.2PL (you.PL) them in small pieces
 13 '(You) cut them in small pieces.' (Sigurðsson and Maling 2008)

14
 15 Spanish and Italian, which have real imperatives, may also be relevant here. They
 16 disallow overt preverbal subjects in imperatives, but an overt subject is possible
 17 postverbally. Importantly, it is also possible with object drop, as shown by
 18 (55c)/(56c). (Recall that the verb form here is imperative specific. Note that the
 19 object drop in question is contextually more restricted in Spanish, thus (55)a) e.g.
 20 does not work for jars).^{9,10}

⁸Improvement with clitic subjects, noted above, 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.2PL-CL_{2SG} (them) into bowl and ... (Sigurðsson and Maling 2008)

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 fn 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 (55)c) and (56)c) 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.

(i) a. No abras!

'Don't open.SUBJ!'

b. *Tú no abras (la puerta)!

Intended: 'You don't open.SUBJ (the door)!'

c. *No abras tú!

- 1
 2 (55) a. *Arbre!*
 3 open
 4 b. **Tú abre (la puerta)!*
 5 you open the door
 6 c. *Abre tú*
 7 open you (Spanish)
 8 (56) a. *Apri!*
 9 ‘Open!’
 10 b. **Tu apri (la porta)!*
 11 Intended: ‘You open (the door)!’
 12 c. *Apri tu!* (Italian)

13 8 A test for null objects

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

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

- 21
 22 (57) a. *Eat!*
 23 b. *You eat!*
 24 c. *Eat without boiling!*
 25 d. **You eat without boiling!*
 26

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

- 28
 29 (a) a different phenomenon
 30 (b) the usual moving null imperative object

Intended: ‘You don’t open.SUBJ!’ (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
2 (57)b) is then acceptable because of option (a) and (57)c) because of option (b).
3 Notice that (57)d) forces option (b) because of parasitic gap licensing, which
4 requires movement, hence an overt subject, which blocks the movement in
5 question, is not possible.

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

- 8
9 (58) a. Alex donated ten dollars to the fund.
10 b. Alex donated to the fund.
11 c. Alex donated ten dollars.
12 d. He hasn't donated yet.

13
14 Consider now the imperative paradigm in (59). The selective blocking effect of
15 the overt imperative subject in (59)) indicates that there is a null object in (59)b)
16 but not (59)c). This means that the intransitive usage is not really intransitive—
17 there is a null DP object on that usage, i.e. donate must have at least one internal
18 argument.

- 19
20 (59) a. Please donate
21 b. *You donate
22 c. You donate to the fund

23 9 Conclusion

24 To conclude, the null object under consideration undergoes movement to the
25 left periphery. It exhibits the following properties, all of which are indications
26 of such movement:

- 27
28 • it licenses parasitic gaps
29 • it is island sensitive
30 • it correlates with the possibility of P-stranding
31 • it is blocked by overt imperative subjects, which was interpreted as
32 indicating that the movement in question is blocked by overt subjects
33 that undergo local A'-movement
34

35 I have argued that there is crosslinguistic variation regarding whether overt
36 imperative subjects can stay in SpecIP—the relevant difference is true
37 imperatives vs other/bare forms used as imperatives (though it is possible that
38 further research will lead to a more specific restriction regarding the latter or even
39 show that what we are dealing with here is a tendency, as most typological
40 generalizations are).

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

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