Left-Peripheral Interactions in English Imperatives

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Many syntactic accounts of imperatives involve the CP layer (e.g. Han 2000, Zanuttini 2008), but they often adopt a unitary CP or *ad hoc* imperative-specific projections. These structures are too limited to explain the array of information-structural effects found in imperative clauses. This work seeks to address three main issues regarding the left periphery of imperatives. 1) How do the information-structural restrictions of imperatives differ from declaratives and questions? 2) Are these restrictions semantic or syntactic? 3) Can a universal syntactic model explain these restrictions in English, while permitting cross-linguistic variability?

I present evidence that independently-derived facts about the English left periphery not only accommodate imperatives, but predict interactions with information-structural movement, negation, and Wh-extraction in imperatives.

What's in the imperative CP field?

Several hypotheses have been proposed in the literature:

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

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

Extended articulated CP for English (following Haegeman 2004)	Sub / Force / TopP > FocusP > FinP > TP … (Sub / Force / TopP is a single, conflated phrase = CP)

The key features of the extended articulated CP for English are the absence of low TopP and the fact that C^0 carries three features: [±Sub, Force{DEC/INT/IMP}, ±Top]

What kind of topics are allowed?

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

(1) The book, John bought ____.
(2) *The book, buy ____!

(3) These stocks, the broker bought ____ immediately.
(4) These stocks, buy ____ immediately! (Those avoid at all costs!)

	contrastive topic	non-contrastive topic
declarative	✔	✔
imperative	✔	✗

What topics do other languages allow?

Non-contrastive topics do freely appear in other languages.

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

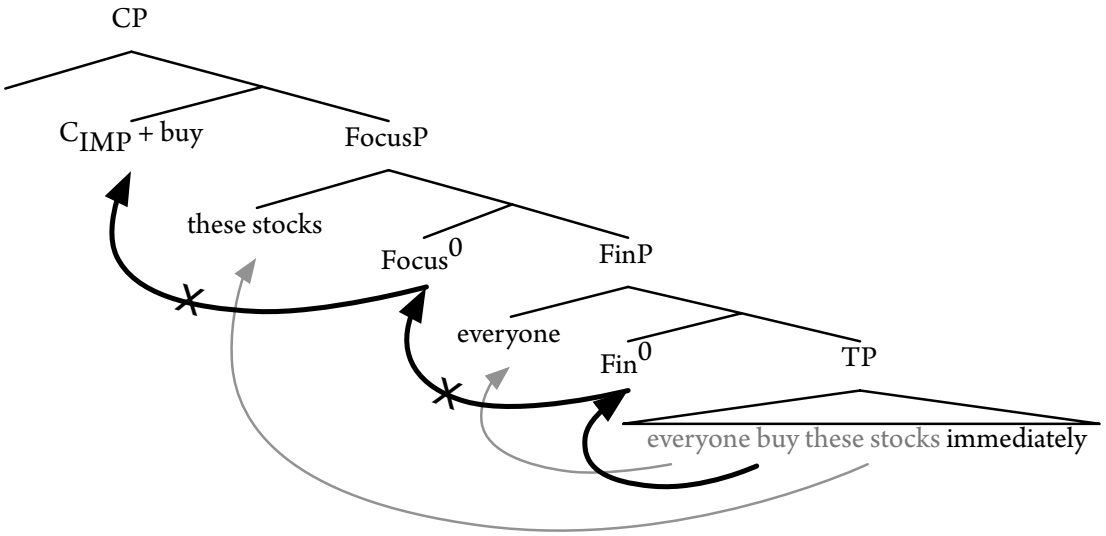
Korean distinguishes SubP and ForceP (Zanuttini et al. 2012), and *un* overtly marks high TopP, an available fronting position.

How are clauses typed?

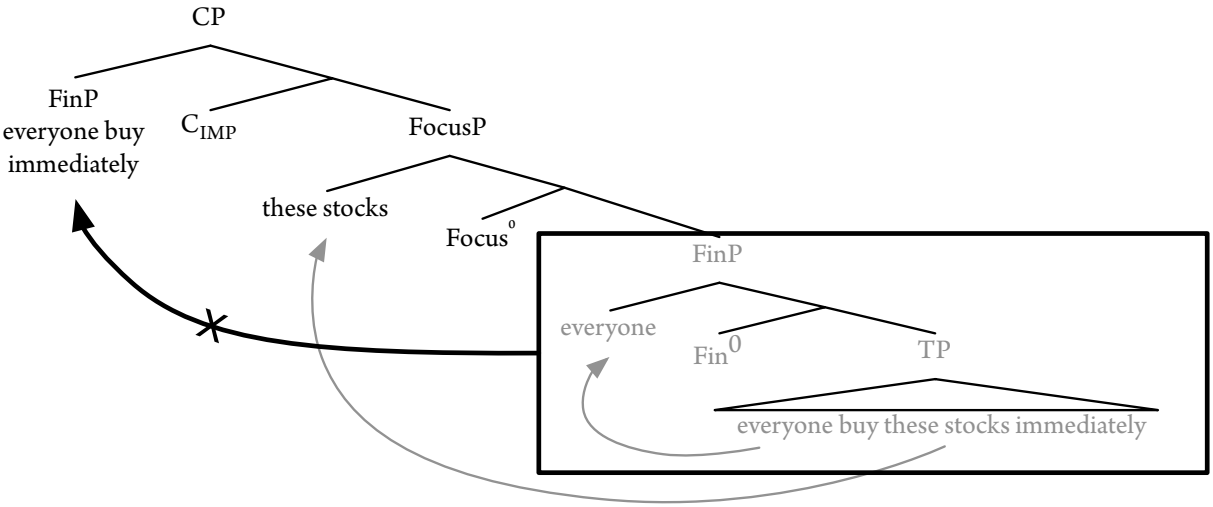
Clause typing hypothesis
All clauses contain an element that scopes over a propositional constituent (TP) and specifies its discourse function. (Cheng 1991)

Methods that don't work for English:

Head movement of V to C (Han 2000)
(6) *Buy these stocks everyone immediately!



Phrasal movement to Spec ForceP (Koopman 2007)
(7) *Everyone buy immediately these stocks!



Method that does work for English:
Force feature of C⁰
Not in free variation; portmanteau with Sub and Topic.

	[–Sub]		[+Sub]	
	[–Top]	[+Top]	[–Top]	[+Top]
declarative	Ø	Ø	*that*, Ø	✗
interrogative	Ø	✗	*if, whether*	✗
imperative	Ø	✗	Ø	✗

Interactions with typed C⁰
English embeds both DEC and IMP clauses (Crnic and Trinh 2009)
Neither is headed by a [+Top] complementizer.
(8) *John said [a book that he bought ____.]
(9) *John said [a book $Ø_{SUBORD.DEC}$ he bought ____.]
(10) *John said [a book $Ø_{SUBORD.IMP}$ buy ____.]

Embedded clauses still have FocusP
(11) John said [$_{CP}$ that [$_{FocusP}$ THE BOOK he bought ____.]] (…not the magazine.)
(12) John said [$_{CP}$ $Ø_{SUB.IMP}$ [$_{FocusP}$ THESE STOCKS buy ____.]] (…those avoid.)

Subjects never precede negation in English imperatives.
(13) *You don't do that! high subject ✗
(14) You, don't do that! vocative ✔
(15) Don't you do that! low subject ✔

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

Wh-extraction is impossible from English imperatives (17). Other types of extraction, e.g. clefting (18) and long-distance topicalization (19), are more acceptable (Cormany forthcoming).

(16) John$_i$ said [Ø$_{IMP}$ send his$_i$ mother to the store].
(17) *Who did John say [send ____ to the store]?

(18) a. It's this book (that) John said [read ____].
b. ?It's at the library, John$_i$ said [meet him$_i$ ____].
(19) His$_i$ mother, John$_i$ said [send ____ to the store].

Conclusions

English imperative clauses have different information-structural restrictions because they must be typed IMP. The limited left-peripheral structure in English requires that clause-typing and topicalization occupy a single position. Lexical gaps (the lack of a [+Top, Force{IMP}] complementizer) and in-situ clause typing block non-contrastive topic raising in English. Other languages' complementizer inventories, as conditioned by syntax, will drive similar processes.

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