

IMPERATIVE IN IMPRECATIVES

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ABSTRACT. *Imperative in Imprecatives.* This study follows those imprecatives (invective structures) in Romanian language that contain in their structure verbs in the imperative. On the one hand, we had in view the organisation of these structures and on the other hand we highlighted some pragmatic-semantic aspects, starting from one corpus and extracting patterns from different areas of the language.

Keywords: *imperative, imprecative, Romanian language.*

REZUMAT. *Imperativul în imprecății.* Studiul de față urmărește acele imprecății în limba română (structuri invective) care cuprind în structura lor verbe la imperativ. Am urmărit, pe de o parte, organizarea sintactică a acestor structuri, iar pe de altă parte am evidențiat și unele aspecte pragmatico-semantică, pornind de la un corpus cu eșantioane extrase din diferite domenii ale limbii.

Cuvinte cheie: *imperativ, imprecăție, limba română.*

Imprecatives are language forms with insulting characteristics, which expresses the speakers' hostile attitude towards a target (in most cases an other speaker). Imprecatives can have a multitude of forms starting from a wish that someone were in an unpleasant situation to insult or curse. Compliant with DSL (2001:260), an imprecative is „a product of colloquial speech”, „introducing in text formal marks of address”, „among which the imperative verb is mentioned”.

Syntactically speaking invective structures can have the organization of a verbal or nominal group (Ghiorghiaș: 2003). Verbal structures are subcategorised in invectives with imperative centres, (structures which we are interested in the following) and structures with other verb forms.

Considering imperatives with invective structures, Aikhenvald (2019) thinks that these are not real imperatives because they do not have prototypical syntactic features: they cannot appear in negative forms and they cannot be associated with forms of politeness. Supporting this idea he gives an

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example of specialized imperative for imprecative from a Brazilian dialect, a structure which he calls „malefic imperative” (Aikhenvald 2019: 11-29). He shows that there are imperatives which do not have all the syntactic characteristics of the prototypical imperative forms with a directive sense. The imperative from an imprecative shows an emotional state, it is a modality of emotional discharge and not a directive act.

In the following section we propose to check if in the case of verbal invective structures in Romanian language, the features of the imperative verb can be identified, which distinguishes from the prototypical imperative from directive structures.

The analyses is based on a corpus, including 600 imperative structure forms, where we identified approximately 70 invective structures. We took into consideration the syntactic organisation of these structures as well as the semantic-pragmatic aspect which can tell the special use in invective constructions.

The corpus which we worked on comes from two different sources: (i) folcloric texts (incantations, chants) and (ii) online forum comments.

The examples from the folcloric texts contain inherently the belief in magical powers. In many cases the evil darted upon the man attributes to evil spirits or malefic human beings. Thus, the imperative in the imprecatives points towards these third-party beings with the aim of persuasive purpose. Often, imperative forms are associated with vocative which appeals to the divine or saint power:

- (1) a. *Bate-o, **Doamne**, ş-o mai bate,/ Că m-a băgat în păcate*
'Damn it all, damn it/'cause made me sin'
 b. *Bate-o, **Doamne**, arde-o-n foc,/ Că m-a prăpădit de tot*
'Damn it, burn it/'cause destroyed me all'
 c. *Bate-o, **mare Dumnezeu**, că prea m-a pedepsit rău.*
'Damn it, 'cause punishment gave me all'

The inventory of the imperatives have relatively few verbs. Those which aim at chasing away the bad spirits, freeing from the evil eye are *to run*, *to come out*, *to take*, *to be*, *to go* (rom. *a fugi*, *a ieşi*, *a lua*, *a fi*, *a merge*). These verbs appear in imperative forms in second person, and the vocative names the one which has to be banished:

- (2) a. *Fugi, deochi!*
'Run, the evil eye!'
 b. *Dimone, spiriduş rău,/ Mergi la ursitorul meu.*
'Dimone, evil spirit,/Go to my destiny.'

- c. *Fugiți, gânduri blestемate/ Și cugete necurate.*
'Run, cursed thoughts/And dark ideas.'
- d. *Ieșiți, voi, gânduri urâte,/ În cap, în creieri vârate,/ Negre și posomorâte.*
'Come out bad thoughts,/Creeping in the head and mind,/Black and gloomy.'

Regarding the imperatives syntactical grouping of these imprecatives from the folk register, we can observe the following types:

- a. Imperative followed by subordinate clauses:

In most cases the imperative occurs with subordinate clause, causal preferred, being specified the motive to whom it is addressed conforming with the will of the speaker. Contains a threat, a danger which comes upon the one who refuses to fulfil the order expressed in imperative:

Fugi, deochi,/ Dintre ochi,/ Că te-ajunge, te sosește,/ Și amar te pedepsește/ Sabie de foc cerească,/ Pronie dumnezeiască.

'Run the evil eye,/will catch you,get to you,/and punishes you dearly/ Divine fire sword,/Divine providence.'

Fugi, deochi,/ Dintre ochi,/ Că eu te-oi sufla/ Și tu vei crăpa.

'Run the evil eye,/cause I blow you,/And you'll crack.'

The structure: *Dați omului sănătate, Că sabie de foc vă bate!* ('Give man's health,'cause fire sword beats you!') can be completed in the following way: *Dați omului sănătate, Că [dacă nu √]sabie de foc vă bate!* ('Give man's health,'cause if you don't a fire sword will beat you!').

Appears the verb *to let/leave* (rom. *lasă*) pragmatical causal:

Dar, lasă, c-o să-l ia dracul!

'But, let, the devil will take him!'

There can be found the conditional structure and imperative:

De-i deochiat/ De vro fată Mândră și-mpopoțonată,/ Crape-i țâțele,/ Pice-i cosițele.

D-ei fi de la bărbat/, Fie blestemat;/ De va fi pre jos,/ Stea neputincios;/ De va fi călare, calul i-ar crăpare!

'It was evil eyed,/by a girl beautiful and as gaudy as a peacock,/Chop the boobs,/Pluck the plait of hair. If they are from a man,/Be damned,/If it's on foot,/ Stay powerless,/If it's on a horse, the horse should crack!'

The imperative at the end is very rare in these patterns:

Bagă mâna-n pozânar,/ Scoate iască și amânar,/ Și ai să dăm foc câmpului,/ La vânta pământului [...]/Ca să-i sară ochii-ndată.

'Put you hands in your pocket,/Take the amadou and flint out,/Let's set the field on fire,/ At the middle of the ground [...]/ So knock his eyes out at once.'

- b. Imperative verb with vocative and a prepositional locative:

Fugiți, gânduri blestемate/ Și cugete necurate;/ Mergeți în pustietate.

'Run, damned thoughts/And dark ideas/Go to desolation.'

- c. Imperative with interjection and vocative:

Pfff! Ieși, dăochi,/ Dintre ochi!

'Argh! Out you come,/Out of eyes!'

O, năjite, pricăjite,/ Tu ieși din creierii capului.

'Oh, dwindle,/ Out you come out of the brain in the head.'

- d. Repeated imperative, inserted vocative between two imperatives with the role of intensification:

Fugi d-aici, dimone,/ Fugi, pierе!

'Run away demon,/Run, get lost!'

Bate-o, Doamne, ș-o mai bate.

'Damn it and damn it.'

In some cases the meaning is repeated with the partial synonym of the initial verb in imperative:

Fugi, piei dor, te prăpădește.

'Run, get lost yearning, be perished.'

Sparge-te, te risipește.

'Torn yourself apart, vanish self.'

Fugiți, mergeți amărâte.

'Run all of you, go sad.'

- e. Coordinated imperative:

Luați fapтul din masă/, Și vă duceți asupra cui a dat/ Un atare fapт.

'Take the deed out of the table,/And bring to the one who gave it/A similar deed.'

When a verb is accompanied by clitics the imperative carries inversion in affirmative form, however the rule does not apply in the case of coordinated imperative. In this case a second verb can appear in uninverted form:

Fugi, piei dor, te prăpădește/ și de petre te lovește;/ Sparg-te, te risipește,/ Pe (cutare) liniștește.

'Run, get lost yearning, be perished,/and hit the rocks;/Smash yourself, vanish,/ Calm down (sbody).'

- f. The imperative occurs in an inserted structure:

Cată, f...i mumă-sa,/ Asta o să fie așa.

'Bitch, f... his mother (motherf...)/ This is gonna be.'

In this case the verbal rudiment is missing and the structure is a clichè.

The examples from the online space were identified from comments and different forums. In many cases the subject proposed to discussion, the topic or the comments before, raise intense negative feelings leading to the emotional implication and materializes through verbal reactions with invective characteristics. In most cases it is a discussion between two unknown parties and because being an online communication wears the formal conversations characteristics as well as informal ones. In this situation the worry not to hurt the other's feeling, decreases, and gets to the usage of certain constructions which in a face-to-face communication would probably be censored more carefully.

Those verbs which appear in these insulting structures are few, and they have a fixed form. Imprecatives are identified with clitics in accusative III person forms:

Mai dă-l încolo de bac;

'Forget about the finals';

Hai mai dă-o încolo și pe aia cu ursulețul, ce o costa să interacționeze un pic cu copilul?

'Com'on, screw that with his teddy bear, what would it cost if he'd interacted with the child?'

In these examples the clitic is referred to a person or a thing. The verb is in imperative II person, accusative appears in the structure *dă-te-n gâtul mă-tii!* ('f... your mother!') followed by a locative in accusative.

The verb *leave* also appears: *Lăsați dracu' filmele americane.* ('F.../leave to the devil/Forget about the American films'); *Lasă naibii empatia și simpatia*

falsă, conversațiile de umplutură cu "How are you" și falsetto-urile. ('Leave the damn empathy and false sympathy, conversations with empty fillers of 'How are you', shams and falseness.'). In the structure of these phrases near the imperative verb, the locative dative can be found. We can also observe that not the imperative verb gives imprecative value to these structures but the verb associated with the dative meaning which follows. In the structure *Lasă-i să moară* ('Let/Leave him die'), the verb leave in imperative is a clichéd, pragmatic form, v. Gheorghe (2018), notes as a 'linguistic act of solace' (Manu Magda, în GALR II 2008 881).

An other example we can find with the verb in reflexive form *to rest/to give a rest* (rom. *a se odihni*) imperative form in III. person with accusative locative *odihnească-se pe pustii* ('May he rest in wilderness'), it is fixed form with a bad wish.

The fact that these imperatives with fixed forms are „false imperatives”, constitutes a special category of imperative forms it is verified by the method applied by Aikhenveld (2019). Thus, it is observed that these imperative forms cannot be expressed in indirect mood transposing the imperative into conjunctive (In Romanian language, in indirect mood the transposed imperatives are expressed through subordinates which include the conjunctive.), they do not appear in negative forms, cannot be accompanied by a form of politeness which could keep the denotative meaning.

The negative form in these phrases do not make any sense:

**Hai nu mai da-o încolo și pe aia cu ursulețul.*

Com'on, **do not screw that with his teddy bear.'*

****Do not** f... your mother!'*

The apparition of the politeness also results in a senseless collocation.

**Mai dă-l încolo de bac, te rog.*

Forget about the finals, **please!*

**Hai mai dă-o încolo, te rog, și pe aia cu ursulețul.*

Com'on, **please screw that with his teddy bear.'*

Te rog, lasă naibii empatia și simpatia falsă, conversațiile de umplutură cu "How are you" și falsetto-urile.

****Please**, leave the damn empathy and false sympathy, conversations with empty fillers of 'How are you', shams and falseness.'*

Structures which contain II. person clitics accept polite forms but these function as ironic based on the process *blame by praise* (Măda, Săftoiu 24).

In the case of the structure *Odihnească-se pe pustii!* ('May he rest in wilderness!') politeness cannot be added, the phrase refers to a third person.

Another interesting category of offensive collocations are those structures, which have an imperative verb but the imprecative value is realized through a vocative associated with.

Ia zi-ne tu, luminatule, cum funcționează democrația?
'Please, tell us, you enlightened, how does democracy work?'
Moșule, ține-ți simpatia.
'Old man, keep your sympathy.'
Tati, ia spune tu unde am zis eu că nu poți să plătești cu cash.
'Daddy, tell me, where did I say that you cannot pay by cash.'
Oprește-te, mămică.
'Stop, ma'/mommy.'

In these cases the insulting utterance takes the form of advice, these in fact are false pieces of advice, irony for the interlocutor, and the vocative with an ironic sense, makes the message stronger, having a pronounced pragmatic function. In some of these structures the personal pronoun *you* appears in the subject position placed at the end of the imperative. Many times these hide strong negative feelings like indignation, disagreement etc. These constructions create a hierarchical system when the speaker self positions himself as superior to whom he addresses.

The prototype-function of imperatives is a command as Kaufmann (2012) shows, however other functions can be associated with. These situations were considered in the above, where the imperative alleviates the prototypical function in favour of other functions or loses this function in order to load with other functions.

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