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RESEARCH ARTICLE

THE OBLIGATORY IMPERATIVE SUBJECT IN Fɛʔfɛʔ

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ABSTRACT

This research starts from the observation that imperative clauses in Fɛʔfɛʔ have both canonical and non-canonical subjects which are phonetically overt, and this alongside subjectless imperatives. This is unexpected from the perspective of early generative assumptions. Wherefore, the need to provide an explanation for the observed variation. It is argued, building on the separation between agent and addressee that all phonetically overt subjects are in fact performing the function of the agent in charge of executing the prescribed imperative order, while all phonetically silent subjects result from a perfect identity between agent and addressee. The latter combination fails to be silent only when the need of making the agent salient arises in the presence of alternatives.

INTRODUCTION

This paper discusses the variation involving overt versus covert imperative subjects in Fɛʔfɛʔ (Grassfield Bantu). Early generative studies on the imperative posit the canonical imperative subject *you* as always present underlyingly, but deleted during the derivation. It follows that the imperative subject is not expected to be phonetically overt as observed in examples (2) to (3). The overt phonetic realization of the subject in these examples therefore raises the question regarding the parameter that requires the phonetic silence of the imperative subject in the second singular person in (1) while enforcing its obligatory phonetic presence still in the second singular person in (4). Taking into account the distinction between addressee and agent proposed by Platzack and Rosengren (1998), and adopted by Jensen (2003), I argue that the obligatory deletion of the canonical imperative subject *you* in Fɛʔfɛʔ results from a perfect identity between addressee and agent. It follows that an obligatory imperative subject arises whenever the agent fails to be perfectly identical to the addressee. From this perspective, the phonetic realization of the canonical second singular subject in (4) should not be expected.

- (1) a. Zɑ' wu zɑ'
Eat food
'Eat!'
- b. γɛ' ko
Go farm
'Go to the farm!'

- (2) a. Pɛ zɑ' wu zɑ'
2PL eat food
'Eat!'
- b. Pĩ Siani γɛ ko
2Sg Siani go farm
'You and Siani Go to the farm!'
- (3) a. Siani sɑ ʔ [ɑ zɑ wu zɑ]
Siani come [3SG eat food]
'When Siani comes, she should eat!'
- b. Siani sɑ ʔ, [pĩ-yɔ' zɑ wu zɑ]
Siani come [2PL eat food]
'You and Siani eat when she comes!'
- (4) Siani sɑ ʔ [o zɑ wu zɑ]
Siani come [2SG eat food]
'Eat once/when Siani has come!'

Yet, (4) is grammatical and needs to fit an account of imperative subjects in the language. I therefore propose a second generalization according to which the unmarked option to be expected is a phonetically overt imperative subject as observed in (2) to (4) where the phonetically overt subject is the agent in charge of performing the prescribed order. From this perspective, the need to account for the deletion of the second singular subject found in (1) arises, given that this subject also serves the function of the agent. However, unlike in (2) to (3) where the agent can be clearly separated from the addressee,

the agent in (1) is perfectly identical to the addressee. Hence, given that the addressee is already known from the background, providing the relevant information anew would go against Grice's maxim of quantity. Regarding the second singular subject in (4), the reader may want to know why it is not redundant just as in (1). Making the second singular subject in (4) salient despite the fact that it is already known from the background is still informative because there is another candidate that could potentially be the agent in the immediately preceding clause. A Comparison between (4) and (3a) shows that the agent in (4) could also be the subject of the clause preceding the imperative. Hence, not specifically stating who the agent in charge of performing the imperative order in (4) should be would violate Grice's maxim of manner and thus leads to ambiguity. The analysis thus summarized is laid down in section 3. Prior to this, section 1 discusses previous claims regarding both the range of subjects encountered across languages in the imperative clause, and the occurrence of the latter in complex sentences. Then section 2 unfolds the typology of imperative subjects as encountered in Fɛʔfɛʔ.

1. Early claims regarding imperative subject and clause types

This section discusses previous claims regarding both the range of subjects encountered across languages in the imperative clause, and the occurrence of imperative in complex sentences.

1.1. The range of subjects encountered in imperatives across languages

Though it was believed by traditional grammarians that there can only exist second person imperative subjects, present day scholars have provided extensive cross-linguistic illustrations backing the claim that imperative subjects are not restricted to the second person. The following examples which are taken from Postdam (1998) and Rupp (2003) back up this position.

- (5) a. Nobody move!
 b. The boy in the corner stand up!
 c. Someone call a doctor!

While the subjects in (5) cannot be used to talk with someone who does not happen to belong to a group of addressees, it is clear that none is a second person subject. These as well as illustrations from other languages (Danish, German, Dutch, etc) show that Fɛʔfɛʔ is not strange in making use of examples such as observed in (2b) and (3) above. In fact, Rupp (2003) demonstrates that all DPs subjects apart from the first person (note that first plural is used as imperative subject) may be used as imperative subjects. In the same vein, a wide range of subjects may occur in the imperative clause in Fɛʔfɛʔ as seen in section 2. Before that, let's pay attention to the nature of clauses that may precede the imperative as in (3) to (4).

1.2. What clause types for the imperative?

The examples in (3) and (4) may appear to be marked given the traditional view (Katz and Postal 1964; Palmer 1986; Platzack and Rosengren 1998) according to which imperatives can only occur in matrix clauses. However, counterexamples against this view have been discovered crosslinguistically since a few decades. Illustrations have been provided in many languages. Among these Rignvaldsson (1998) and Platzack (2007) for Old Germanic; Rus (2005) for Slovenian, Kaufmann (2014) for Colloquial German, etc... Though the imperative clauses encountered in examples (3) and (4) fail to occur first in a clausal sequence and may as such be questioned with regard to their status as matrix clauses, they however cannot be considered to be embedded clauses because of the nature of the clause alongside which they are used. In (3) and (4) repeated here as (6) and (7) for the sake of convenience, the imperative is the second clause. It is clear that whether a clause occurs first or not in linear order within the complex sentence does not determine whether it is a matrix clause or not.

- (6) a. Siani sz ʔ [a' zɔ́ wu zɔ́]
 Siani come [3SG eat food]
 'When Siani comes, she should eat!'
 b. Siani sz ʔ, [pí-yɔ' zɔ́ wu zɔ́]
 Siani come [2PL eat food]
 'You and Siani eat when she comes!'
 (7) Siani sz ʔ [o' zɔ́ wu zɔ́]
 Siani come [2SG eat food]
 'Eat when Siani has come!'

So, given that the controversy has been about the non/embeddedness of the imperative clause, the concern at this point should be whether the second clauses in (6) and (7) share the major characteristic properties of embedded clauses.

First of all, an embedded clause occurs within the matrix clause typically as one of its argument (complement clause) or as a component of its argument (relative clause). In the first case, the complement clause functions either as internal or external argument of the main clause (Noonan 2007). In the second case, the relative clause is comprised within one of the arguments of the matrix clause and has the function of providing specific informations to delimit the said argument (Andrews 2007).

Secondly, in Fɛʔfɛʔ, both relative and complement clauses are introduced by a subordinator, as illustrated in (8) for the relative clause and in (9) for directive and indicative complements respectively.

- (8) Siani fhu' ko pi sak [mɔ́ a tɔ́m]
 Siani return farm with bird [Rel 3SG hit]
 'Siani returned from the farm with a bird which he has hunted'
 (9) a. Siani le [mɔ́ mu u le yɛʔ]
 Siani T0-say [that child P3 cry]
 'Siani (has) said that the child did cry'.
 b. Ya ca k [mɔ́ pɛ' yɛ' mɔ́ ʔ]
 it must [that 2pl go work]
 'You must go to work'

One can observe that the first clause in (6) and (7) is not an argument of the following clause, nor is it introduced by a subordinator. Hence it is not an embedded clause. So the imperative that occurs within a complex sentence in Fɛʔfɛʔ is not positioned after an embedded clause. Furthermore, it is not introduced by a subordinator, nor is it an argument to the clause it follows. Actually, the imperative clause in (6) and (7) follows a temporal when clause. The question raised at this point is no longer whether this imperative is an embedded clause, given that it is not, but rather whether it is a matrix clause. Before answering this question, I provide the other clause type in Fɛʔfɛʔ that co-occurs with the imperative within a complex sentence (10b).

- (10) a. Ba k lo [sowɛ n si tɔ́m ndu á]
 Rain fall [n-person Neg get out house]
 'No-one goes out when/once it has rained'
 b. Ba k lo' [sowɛ n si tɔ́m ndu á]
 Rain fall [n-person Neg get out house]
 'Let no one go out if it rains'

While the first clause in (10a) is a when clause, the first clause in (10b) is an if-clause. The difference between the two clauses (temporal when clause and the protasis of the condition clause) is manifested tonally. While the temporal clause has a high tone verb preceded by a high tone subject, the condition clause/protasis has a verb with a rising tone and a low tone subject. The sequential or

consecutive imperative clause remains the same in both complex sentences

It is important to understand what these two clause types have in common. Both belong to the category of oblique clauses. The latter function neither as subjects or objects of the main clause. Rather, Palmer (1977) considers them as having an adverbial, adjunctive or oblique status. Coming back to the question whether the imperative clauses in (10a) and (10b) are matrix clauses or not, Thompson and al. (2007: 255) state that the term 'if' clause is the one 'which names the condition', while the term 'then' clause is the main clause. They further say that 'these terms are not intended to imply anything about the order in which the two clauses occur with respect to each other, nor about the obligatoriness of the morphemes which signal these clauses'. It follows that the imperative in (10b), though not in initial position, is actually the matrix clause because it is the 'then clause'. The overall complex construction should be referred to as a conditional clause, with the only difference that one gets an imperative rather than an indicative clause as the consequent/ of the condition clause. The parallelism between (10a) and (10b) leads to the conclusion that the imperative in (10a) as in (6) and (7) is also the matrix clause.

The first clause in both (10a) and (10b) are oblique, adverbial or adjunctive clauses (Palmer 1977). This in fact backs up the position that the imperative that follows them in (10a&b) is the matrix clause. This is because adverbial clauses attach to already complete clauses as also held by Payne (2006: 297). This leads me to conclude that the imperative clauses that occur in a complex sentence in $F\epsilon?f\epsilon?$, rather than contradicting the traditional position held by Katz and Postal (1964), Palmer (1986), and Platzack and Rosengren (1998) unexpectedly confirms it. The same cannot however be said regarding imperative subjects. $F\epsilon?f\epsilon?$, rather seems to depart from the traditional view as observed from the data displayed in the following paragraphs.

2. The typology of imperative subjects in $F\epsilon?f\epsilon?$

This sections provides insight into the types of items that may function as imperative subject in $F\epsilon?f\epsilon?$. Section 2.1 discusses pronominal imperative subjects, while sections 2.2 and 2.3 are respectively concerned with quantificational and nominal imperative subjects.

2.1. Pronominal imperative subjects

Phonetically overt pronominal imperative subjects include pronouns from the third singular to the third person plural as illustrated with the simple imperative clauses below (11). It should be noted that the second person singular in (11a) does not have a phonetically overt subject.

11) a.	Yɛ	ko	b.	A	yɛ	ko	
	Go	farm		3SG	go	farm	
	'Go to the farm!'			'S/he go to the farm!'			
c.	Pu:	yɛ	ko	d.	pãpɛ	yɛ	ko
	1PL (EXC)	go	farm		1PL (INC)	go	farm
	'Let's (you & I) go to the farm!'			'Let's (all of us) go to the farm!'			
e.	pwa:pu	yɛ	ko	f.	Pwi:	yɛ	ko
	we and them	go	farm		1PL (EXC)	go	farm
	'Let's (we & them) go to the farm!'			'We (I and him) go to the farm!'			
g.	Pɔ:	yɛ	ko	h.	pi yɔ	yɛ	ko
	1PL(EXC)	go	farm		2PL(EXC)	go	farm
	'We (pl) & them go to the farm!'		'You(sg) and him/her go to the farm!'				

i.	Pi:pu	yɛ	ko	j.	Pɛ:pu	yɛ	ko
	2pl	go	farm		2pl	go	farm
	'You (sg) and them go to the farm!'			'You (pl) and them go to the farm!'			
k.	Pɛ	yɛ	ko	l.	Pu	yɛ	ko
	2pl	go	farm		3pl	go	farm
	You go to the farm			'They go to the farm!'			

The examples above display the pragmatic polysemy of the $F\epsilon?f\epsilon?$ pronominal system. Here, we encounter the availability of specific items used to convey restricted meanings all corresponding to the first and second person plural. For instance, *we* conveys the pragmatic interpretations 'I and you' to the exclusion of all others as in (11c), 'I and him/her' to the exclusion of all other including the addressee(s) (11f), 'we and them' to the exclusion of the addressee(s), and 'all of us' as in (11d).

Similar pragmatic distinctions are also available for the second plural pronoun as in (11 h-j), with (11k) being the more generic item corresponding to the French *vous* which stands for the second person plural *you* in English. All the pronoun in (11) may be used as imperative subjects in $F\epsilon?f\epsilon?$. However, (11b) is more accurate in a sequential imperative, that is, an imperative clause that occurs after a *when clause* or an *if clause* as discussed in the previous section. It is worth noting here that (11a) holds only for a standalone imperative clause. Whenever the imperative occurs as a second clause in a complex sentence as in (7), the second singular imperative subject must be phonetically overt. All the other pronouns in (11) may be used indiscriminative either in a sequential or in a standalone imperative clause.

2.2. Quantificational imperative subjects

Quantificational subject may occur in both an imperative clause following a *when clause* (12a), and in an imperative functioning as the consequent of a *condition clause* (12b).

(12) a.	Ba k	lo	mbɔ wɔlɔ'	dɪ'	mbe e	
	Rain	fall	everyone	remain	home	
	'Everyone remains home when/after it has rained'					
b.	Ba k	lo'	mbɔ wɔlɔ'	dɪ'	mbe e	
	Rain	fall	everyone	remain	home	
	'Let everyone remain home if it rains'					
(13) a.	Ba k	lo	[sɔwɛ n si	tɔim	ndu ɔ]	
	Rain	fall	n-person	Neg	get out	house
	'No-one goes out when/once it has rained'					
b.	Ba k	lo'	[sɔwɛ n si	tɔim	ndu ɔ]	
	Rain	fall	n-person	Neg	get out	house
	'Let no one go out if it rains'					

The quantificational subject does not differ as one shifts from the conditional imperative to the imperative following a temporal main clause. We also observe that the verb in a sequential/consecutive imperative clause (14b) does not have a mid-tone like the verb in a simple, standalone imperative clauses (14a). Furthermore, the pronominal subject in a simple standalone imperative clause bears a high tone (15b), while the pronominal subject in a sequential/consecutive imperative bears a mid-tone. This leads to the generalization that the sequential or consecutive imperative is tonally lower than the simple lone standing imperative.

- (14) a. *Zx' wu zɔ'* b. *Siani sɔʔ* [o zɔ wu zɔ]
 Eat food Siani come [2SG cat food]
 'Eat!' 'Eat once/when Siani has come!'
- (15) a. *Siani sɔʔ*, [pí-yó zɔ wu zɔ] b. *pí yó yɛ ko*
 Siani come [2PL cat food] 2PL(EXC) go farm
 'You and Siani eat when she comes!' 'You and him/her go to the farm'

2.3. Nominal constructions as imperative subjects

Though nominal imperative subjects are recurrent in sequential/consecutive imperative clauses, their status is questionable in simple, lone-standing imperative clauses. I therefore ignore the latter for present purposes.

- (16) a. *Siani sáʔ*, [kwè: mɛ́pí:pú: bá: yɛ kò]
 Siani come [all small children Dem go farm]
 'All those little children go to the farm when Siani comes'
- b. *Siani sáʔ*, [kwè: mɛ́pí:pú: bá: yɛ kò]
 Siani come [all children Dem go farm]
 'All those little children go to the farm if Siani comes'

3. The optional silence of the imperative subject in Fɛʔfɛʔ

The goal of this section is to propose an explanation for the obligatoriness of the non-canonical imperative subject as found in (2) to (3), while accounting for the exceptional and yet obligatory deletion of the canonical imperative subject as seen in (1), without disregarding the imperative subject found in (4) and partaking both with (1) in being second singular and with (2) to (3) in being phonetically overt. In line with the claim made by early generativists and according to which the canonical imperative subject *you* is always present underlyingly, Rupp (2003) argues that pro -though phonetically null, is the syntactic subject of imperatives lacking a lexical subject. However, the non-optionality or obligatory requirement of a phonetically overt second singular subject in sequential/consecutive imperatives as observed in the Fɛʔfɛʔ language (4) still raises the need to look further into the properties that get into play to impose the requirement of an imperative subject. In 3.1, I discuss the split of the imperative subject between the agent and addressee. In section 3.2, I propose that the phonetically overt imperative subject in Fɛʔfɛʔ is the agent in charge of performing the prescribed order. Then I rely on Grice's maxim of quantity to motivate the deletion of the second singular imperative in Section 3.3. Finally, the existence of (an) alternative(s) provided by the immediately preceding clause is relied upon in section 3.4 to provide an explanation for the non-deletion of the second singular imperative in sequential imperatives.

3.1. Agent and addressee set apart

The separation between addressee and agent advocated by Platzack and Rosengren (1998) and later adopted and developed by Jensen (2003) receives empirically support in the pronominal system of Fɛʔfɛʔ. As a matter of fact, the second plural subject, though having a generic version 'pé' that may be translated as 'you' in English, comes in variable polysemous versions corresponding to variable pragmatic interpretations as already seen in section 2.1. Each of the second plural pronouns below is made up of two morphemes. In the second column, we have 'pí' that refers to the singular *you*, and 'yó' that refers to a singular third party. In the third column, we have 'pí' that refers to the singular *you* and 'pú' that refers to a plural third party. In the fourth column, we have 'pé' that refers to the plural *you*, and 'pú' that refers to a plural third party. The third party is always excluded from the face to face conversation and, as such, cannot be the addressee. By contrast, the portion standing for the pronoun *you* is the (only) one standing in the position of the addressee and thus involved into the face to face conversation. It follows that one has to do with two sets whenever any of these pronouns is used. Namely, the set of addressees and the set of agents, with the addressee also potentially

belonging to the set of agents. In all these instances, the addressee is never co-referential with the third party. As a consequence, the second plural pronoun in Fɛʔfɛʔ is always at least a dual entity. Reason why I consider it as not being a canonical, pure second person subject.

(18)	Sing +sing	Sing + plural	Plural + plural	Generic form
	píyó	Pí:pú	Pé:pú	Pé
Singular addressee	Pí-	Pí		Pé
Plural addressee			pé	Pé
Potential agent(s)	Pí + yó	Pí + pú	Pé + pú (Pé

From this perspective, I propose in 3.3 below that the obligatory deletion of the canonical second singular imperative subject *you* in Fɛʔfɛʔ results from a perfect identity/coreferentiality between addressee and agent. This perfection in identity is never found between the morphemes composing the second plural subject, thus explaining why it is never deleted. I thus posit that the second plural subject is not a canonical imperative subject in Fɛʔfɛʔ. One should also understand that the availability of a third party within the second plural pronoun provides the possibility of giving any such third party a proper name as in (17a) repeated here as (19)

- (19) *Pí: Siani yé kò*
 2Sg Siani go farm
 'You and Siani Go to the farm!'

Siani in (19) corresponds to the 'yó' part of the second plural subject *píyó* found in the second column of the tabular data above. The fact that a clear separation of functions can thus be found within a pronominal item (11h-j) provides evidence supporting the claim that the individuals corresponding to each of the functions are not compelled to act together as agent performing the prescribed imperative order. This bipartition of the subject as seen in (19) shows that the second singular *pí* and *Siani* must not necessarily act together. We further understand from both the items in the tabular data and the subject in (19) that the second singular subject is serving two functions and, yet does not always have to. While the function of addressee is compulsory and unavoidable, the function of agent is optional. Consequently, whether these two functions simultaneously operate together or not is crucial in the following sections, and is particularly instrumental with regard to the deletion or non deletion of the canonical second singular imperative subject.

The separation between addressee and agent has been acknowledged by many other scholars (Potsdam, 1998; Rupp, 1999 & 2003; R. Zanuttini, 2008; Isac, 2015). Yet, these authors postulate only two possibilities: in the first case, the order to do something must be personally executed by the addressee. In the second case, the addressee has the responsibility to make sure that some other person executes the given order. However, we can see from the foregoing that the Fɛʔfɛʔ pronominal system provides a third possibility, namely that the addressee and a third party together execute the given order as a kind of team as in (11h-j) and (19). Now, whether the prescribed action gets to be performed by the addressee alone or not brings about two different sets of situations. In the first case, the imperative subject is phonetically silent as discussed in section 3.3. In the second case, the imperative subject is obligatorily overt phonetically as seen immediately below in section 3.2.

3.2. The agent as the phonetically overt imperative subject in Fɛʔfɛʔ

The addressee is always present in any communication situation whether involving the imperative or not. Moreover the addressee is always a second person whether singular or plural. Yet, given the potential complexity of the second person plural (18) just described above as encountered in Fɛʔfɛʔ, I restrict the notion of addressee in the present discussion to the second singular addressee. As the inherent entity of the conversation, the addressee is known from the

background/common ground and as such becomes redundant if made salient by any foregrounding strategy. This is in line with Grice's maxim of quantity according to which a speaker should provide no more information than is needed. The addressee not only being involved in the exchange, but also known, needs no further mention. The imperative clause type however differs from other communication situations because the utterance results into a to-do list as stated by Portner (2004), thus bringing about the requirement to carry out some prescribed action. This in turn raises the question whether the agent intended to carry out the action is the addressee or some other person. Hence, the name that is mentioned is meant to provide an answer to the question regarding who should carry out the given order. It follows that all phonetically overt imperative subject have the function of the agent in charge of performing the given order.

Hence, whenever the addressee features in the subject position of an imperative, it is there as (one of) the agent in charge of performing the prescribed action. Even when the imperative subject is a first plural subject as in (11c&d) repeated as (20a-b), if the feature of the addressee occurs in such a subject, it is there for the only reason that the addressee is called upon to partake in the execution of the to-do list. In (20a) below, we have an exclusive first plural subject. This means that all other persons are excluded apart from the singular speaker and the singular hearer. And these two are expected to execute the given order.

- (20) a. Pú: yê kò
 1PL (EXC) go farm
 'Let's (you & I) go to the farm!'
- b. Pá:pè yê kò
 1PL (INC) go farm
 'Let's (all of us) go to the farm!'

In the same vein, all individuals included in the first plural pronoun in (20b) are expected to partake to the execution of the given order. In this case the first plural subject has an inclusive interpretation including the speaker(s), the addressee(s), and a group of others. This state of affairs also holds for (21) where the subject involves the addressee and a third party. Both are to execute the given order together as a team.

- (21) a. Siani sɔʔ, [pɪ-yɔ' zɔ' wu zɔ] b. Pɪ yɔ yê ko
 Siani come [2PL eat food] 2PL(EXC) go farm
 'You and Siani eat when she comes!' 'You and him go to the farm!'

To sum up, my position in this research is that the phonetically overt imperative subject in $F\epsilon?f\epsilon?$ is always the performing agent. This raises the question regarding the where about of this performing agent in subjectless imperative clauses. The immediately following section provides the answer to this question.

3.3. The obligatory deletion of the 2nd singular subject

This section provides an explanation for the obligatory deletion of the second singular imperative subject as seen in (1) repeated here as (22). Portner (2004) considers the imperative clause to be the denotation of a to-do list. This means that there must necessarily be an agent in charge of executing the said to-do list. Yet, we come across imperative clauses without subject as seen in the following example. If Portner is right, then the linguist has the responsibility to explain what has happened to the subject of clauses such as found in (22).

- (22) a. Zɔ' wu zɔ' b. yê ko
 Eat food Go farm
 'Eat!' 'Go to the farm!'

As stated earlier, the addressee is an inherent part of the imperative meaning. As such it needs not be foregrounded according to Grice's maxim of quantity. So we are not searching for the addressee here, but rather for the agent. Where could it possibly be? 'After the addressee' could be the shortest answer to this question. In order to help my reader agree with me, I would like to restate that the second singular imperative subject is the only one that can be phonetically silent in $F\epsilon?f\epsilon?$. Now the imperative subject has two parts and we already know why the addressee is silent, namely because it is already known. In the case of the second singular subject, the addressee and the agent are perfectly identical. This means, given that the addressee is known and should not be foregrounded in order to respect the maxim of quantity, that the agent which is perfectly identical to the addressee is also known and cannot be foregrounded either. I therefore conclude that the obligatory deletion of the canonical second singular imperative subject *you* in $F\epsilon?f\epsilon?$ results from a perfect identity/coreferentiality between addressee and agent. This raises yet another question: if perfect coreferentiality between addressee and agent leads to the total deletion of the second singular subject in standalone imperatives, then why do we have a phonetically overt second singular subject in sequential imperatives?

3.4. Alternatives and the non-deletion of 2nd singular subject in $F\epsilon?f\epsilon?$

This section addresses the intriguing contrast between (22) and (4) repeated here as (23). Both examples are instantiations of second singular imperative subjects. Yet, this subject is obligatorily deleted in the first case, and obligatorily overt phonetically in the second case. The question here is why perfect identity between addressee and agent does not also trigger the deletion of the second singular subject in (23)? Also compare (23) to (24) while considering this question.

- (23) Siani sàʔ [ò zɔ' wúɔ]
 Siani come [2SG eat food]
 'Eat once/when Siani has come!'
- (24) a. Siani sàʔ [à zɔ' wúɔ]
 Siani come [3SG eat food]
 'When Siani comes, she should eat!'
- b. Siani sàʔ, [pɪ-yɔ' zɔ' wúɔ]
 Siani come [2PL eat food]
 'You and Siani eat when she comes!'

The difference between (22) and (23) lies at the level of the environments in which they occur. In the first case, there is a standalone imperative with no possible other subject either preceding or following it. So one can only see an addressee and an agent. In the second case, there is another clause with its own subject preceding the imperative. This provides an environment where the subject of the clause preceding the imperative could potentially be the agent in charge of performing the imperative order.

This is exactly what happens in (24a). In (24b), both the subject of the preceding clause and the addressee are potential candidates for performing the imperative's order. In this case, they both do it together as a team. This shows that there are other candidates that could potentially stand in the position of the agent in (23). Therefore, in order to be as informative as possible and thus answer the question of whosoever may be wondering who out of all alternatives should execute the given order, we must once more respect the maxim of quantity and provide the most specific and informative answer possible. This explains and motivates the foregrounding and saliency of the second singular subject who otherwise should be silent phonetically.

CONCLUSION

The goal of this paper was to account for the variation involving overt versus covert imperative subjects in Fe?fe?. From the perspective of early generative assumptions which posit a phonetically silent imperative subject, the obligatoriness of both canonical and non-canonical imperative subjects in Fe?fe? constitutes an intrigue deserving due attention. Building on the separation between agent and addressee which receives strong empirical support in Fe?fe?, I have provided illustrations to demonstrate that an obligatory subject arises whenever the agent fails to be perfectly identical to the addressee. Hence, I propose that the portion of the imperative subject functioning as agent is what surfaces phonetically as the obligatory subject. Regarding the obligatoriness of the second singular subject of sequential imperatives, which are unexpectedly overt despite the perfect identity between agent and addressee, I rely on Grice's maxim of quantity to argue that the presence of alternatives imposes on the speaker the requirement to make salient the agent designed to execute the given order.

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