

Crossing Form and Function: First and Second Person Plural Imperatives in the Dialect of Mesocco*

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Abstract

This paper proposes an explanation for the rise and fall of a 1PL imperative ending in the dialect of Mesocco, a Northern Italo-Romance variety from southern Switzerland. This ending cannot be explained with inherited 1PL morphology: rather, it is best accounted for by assuming the reanalysis of a 2PL imperative hosting a 1SG pronominal object clitic. This reanalysis, it is suggested, must have occurred in the syntactic context provided by the ‘ethical’ dative construction. It has been prompted by several factors, among which the crucial one is functional in nature, viz. the pragmatic homology between 1PL imperative – unmarkedly inclusive in meaning – and the ethical dative construction with a 2PL imperative. Comparative evidence is also adduced from studies in linguistic typology, showing that similar crossovers between 1st and 2nd person plural morphology, although unattested in Romance (or, more precisely, in the better-known standard Romance languages), are not without parallels cross-linguistically. Finally, a functional motivation is provided for the deacquisition of this 1PL imperative form in the dialect of the younger generations.

Introduction

In this paper, I will consider a form of 1PL imperative that occurs in alto-Moesano, a dialect of Alpine Lombard (Northern Italo-Romance) spoken in Mesocco. This village (about 1000 inhabitants) is located in the upper part of the Mesolcina valley, in the south-western corner of the Swiss Canton Grigioni/Graubünden (see map in the appendix).

I will show that this imperative form, whose formation has no parallel in cognate Romance varieties, is not inherited but the product of morphological change. This change crucially concerns the grammatical category of person, as the source for our 1PL inflection will turn out to involve a different person of the verb paradigm. Nevertheless, I will argue, the change cannot be explained within morphology. Rather, its elucidation will require that we spot the syntactic structure which fed the reanalysis, and that we provide a motivation for it, based

on the pragmatics of person deixis, in general and with respect to imperatives. In this explanation, formal and functional considerations will be intertwined.

1. The data

To get started, consider the excerpt in (1) from Keller's (1941) text collection.¹ It is the well-known passage from the parable of the prodigal son in which the father gives instructions for the welcome banquet (Keller 1941:287-289, §23):

- (1) a. e 'pe: ca'padən el ve'de:l 'pise 'gras Mesocco
 and then take.2PL the fattest calf
 b. e ma'tsadəl
 and kill.2PL-it
 c. e 'fadum uŋ gran paft, man'jedum e 'ftadum 'su a'leŋer
 and let's make a big dinner, let's eat and let's be happy

The passage contains five imperative forms. The 1PL ones in (1c) will be our main concern: we will tackle them in §1.2. Before this, however, let us first comment on the 2PL forms in (1a-b), since their morphology will prove relevant for our argument. This discussion will also give us the opportunity to mention some further interesting characteristics of the morphological marking of person in this dialect.

1.1. Person and gender marking in 2nd and 3rd person plural

In (1a) one finds the *[-en]* ending typical for 2PL inflections in this dialect. This is a morphological innovation too, which Carlo Salvioni explained assuming the reanalysis of a locative clitic (from Latin *INDE*) in strings like *['van]* 'go-away (from here)', reanalysed as 'go.2PL'. According to Salvioni (1902:912), the ending "sarà stato prima dell'imperativo di 'andare' [...], e, non più inteso nella sua genesi, si sarà esteso all'imperativo degli altri verbi, investendo poi anche ogni altro tempo e modo".² The spread of this *[-en]* to other moods is exemplified in (2a)

- (2) a. 'veŋ e man'dʒeden / a'ven man'dʒoŋ 'trɔp [2 + 2/3]
 'you.PL SUBJ.CLIT eat / have eaten too much'
 b. 'veŋ 'af e man'dʒe / a've man'dʒoŋ 'trɔp [2/polite]
 'you.PL, grandpa, SUBJ.CLIT eat/have eaten too much'

As shown in (2b), incidentally, this innovation made it possible to contrast formally the referential 2PL (denoting a plurality of addressees: 2 + 2/3) with the 2PL employed as a politeness form to address a single senior person, since the latter did not take on the ending *[-en]*. While the (metaphorical) use of a *v* pronominal form, as opposed to a *τ* one, to convey politeness is a recurrent

formal means in Romance and cross-linguistically (Siewierska 2004:216-221), this usually results in lack of formal distinction between the *v* expression (in both pronominal forms and verb agreement) and the referential 2PL. The dialect of Mesocco, thus, is exceptional in contrasting three distinct allocutive expressions, in both verbal and pronominal morphology, as seen in the following paradigm ([kan'ta] 'to sing', pres. ind.):³

(3)	pronoun	subject clitic	verb	gloss
	'mi	e	'kanti	'sing.1SG' ⁴
	'ti	to	'kanta	'sing.2SG'
	'lu _i	el	'kanta	'sing.3MSG'
	'le _i	la	'kanta	'sing.3FSG'
	'ne _i	um	'kanta	'sing.1PL' ⁵
	've _i	e	kan'tan/kan'taden	'sing.2PL' (referential)
	've _i	e	kan'ta	'sing.2PL' (polite)
	'lo:	i	'kanta	'sing.3MPL'
	'lo:	la	'kanten	'sing.3FPL' ⁶

The (2PL) politeness form (2b), via *[-en]* affixation, has become formally distinct from the referential 2PL ((2a)) and consequently cannot be analysed anymore, synchronically, as an instance of metaphorical use of the latter for social deixis. Rather, it has to be considered as an integral part of the person paradigm, on a par with the other two persons used for addressing the hearer(s) (the referential 2PL and the 2SG).⁷

As already seen in (1b) and further illustrated in (4), the *[-en]* ending in the 2PL occurs in complementary distribution with object clitics:

- (4) a. 'teden 'vea l 'paŋ dal 'taʊl e me'tidel in l ar'marja
'take.PL the bread away from the table and put.PL-it into the cupboard'
b. 'tedel 'vea vs. *'tedenel, *me'tidenel etc.
'take.PL-it away'

Synchronically, this implies an ordering paradox, since (object) cliticisation should normally apply after verb inflection. Diachronically, this may be explained as a leftover of the original clitic nature of *[-(e)n]*, before it was reanalysed as part of the 2PL ending.⁸

1.2. *The explanandum*

After these preliminaries, consider now the 1PL imperative forms in (1c). They end in an unstressed *-[um]*, and this is probably the reason why nobody – among the scholars who have published on this dialect (see fn. 1) – ever realised that they are indeed puzzling. In fact, unstressed *-[um]* is a very widespread 1PL ending in the dialects of the area. An overview of the 1PL morphology (in the present indicative) in north-western Italo-Romance is provided in (5), where the different etymological hypotheses proposed for the inflections involved are also listed (see also the map, from Simon 1967:319, reproduced in the Appendix):

- (5) a. *kan'tam* (*kan'tem*), *ve'dem* etc. < Lat. *-ĀMUS*, *-ĒMUS* etc.
 b. *om 'kanta* < *HOMO CANTAT* (Flechia 1876)
 c. *'kantum* < *CANTĀMUS* X *HOMO CANTAT* (Meyer-Lübke 1890-99, II:168, Keller 1937:145, 171, Rohlfs 1966-69, II:253);
 < *-HOMO* affixed as an ending (Spiess 1965:112f, Lurati 1973:30, Lurà 1987:159);
 < *CANTĀMUS* (Salvioni 1906:573).
 d. *kan'tum(a)* < by analogy on *SUMUS* (Meyer-Lübke 1890-99, II:168, Rohlfs 1966-69, II:251);
 < *-HOMO* affixed, preserving stress (Lurati 1973);
 < *HABĒMUS* > *avemo* > *òmo* (Zörner 1996);
 < “aus altem *kantém(a)* und neuem *kántom*” (Simon 1967:222).

Originally, 1PL endings (from Lat. *CANTĀMUS* ‘sing.1PL’, *VIDĒMUS* ‘see.1PL’, *FINĪMUS* ‘finish.1PL’) contained a stressed thematic vowel, and such endings ((5a)) still persist on the outer margins of our territory (see map). In western Lombard (the area centering on Milan, AIS Pt. 261), the original inflection was replaced by an unstressed *-[um]* (*['kantum]* ‘we sing’, *['vedum]* ‘we see’, (5c)). This ending, supported by the prestige of Milanese, has been gaining ground over the centuries, at the expenses of preexisting ones.

One of these was another innovation in this area. In northern Lombard, in fact, *HOMO CANTAT* ((5b)), originally an unspecified human subject (= UHS) construction, was grammaticalised as 1PL within the verb paradigm, with *HOMO* reanalysed as a 1PL subject clitic.⁹

Several scholars, mentioned in (5c), have maintained that a further prosodic reduction of *HOMO* was involved in the creation of the western Lombard ending *-[um]* (unstressed), as well as of the stressed *-['um(a)]* ((5d)) which is found in Piedmontese, western Emilian and eastern Lombard.

Leaving details aside, what is relevant for us in this connection is that the Milanese type *['kantum]*, *['vedum]* is expanding and progressively ousting its competitors in the surrounding area. In Cremona, for instance, *[kan'tum]* was the only 1PL (indicative) form reported by Peri (1847:6-9), and unstressed *-[um]*

is not yet recorded in the AIS survey (carried out in Cremona, Pt. 284, in 1920; cf. AIS VIII 1683-1694). By the time of Rossini's (1975:76, 89) description, on the other hand, free variation [kan'tum]/[l'kantum] had set in. The Milanese type (5c) is spreading also northwards, as many a valley of the Svizzera italiana (Val Maggia, Val Colla, bassa Mesolcina, Alto Vedeggio) is reported to have recently replaced *noi/nün om/am pòrta* 'we bring' by *noi/nün a pòrtom* as part of a general process of koinéisation described by Petrini (1988:216-217).

Given this general picture, one could at first sight get the impression that our imperatives in (1c) are just one more instance of the spread of this 1PL ending. However, this cannot be the case, for several reasons.

Phonetically, the [d] which occurs in the 1PL imperatives in (1c) cannot be possibly explained under this assumption. In Milanese, in fact, the dental stop is part of the verbal root in ['vedum] ((5c), Lat. VIDĒRE), whereas this is obviously not the case in ['fadum], [man'dʒedum] and ['ʃtadum] in (1c) since none of these verbs has a dental root-finally. Consequently, this [d] must be part of the ending, and we must spot a plausible diachronic source for it.

Morphologically, on the other hand, the verbal system of the dialect of Mesocco still has the type (5b) 1PL, HOMO CANTAT, with no evidence of ['kantum]: e.g. [um 'mandʒa] 'we eat'. The innovative ending [-um], moreover, spreads into the systems of the nearby dialects along lines that are incompatible with our imperative forms in (1c), for reasons that become apparent as soon as we consider the distribution of this ending in Milanese, the variety which provides the model for the spread of this inflection (cf. Beretta 1980:139-158):

(6)		indicative	imperative	gloss	Milano
	a. regular verbs	<i>séntum</i>	<i>sentémm</i>	'hear.1PL'	
		<i>finíssum</i>	<i>finissémm</i>	'finish.1PL'	
	b. irregular verbs	<i>femm</i>	<i>femm</i>	'do.1PL'	
		<i>stemm</i>	<i>stemm</i>	'stay.1PL'	

In Milanese, the unstressed [-um] ending is found in the indicative, but did not spread to the imperative. And within the indicative, it is found on regular verbs ((6a)), but not on the irregular ones with monosyllabic root, like the outcomes of FACERE or STARE ((6b)).

Expectedly, then, when this ending spreads into neighbouring dialects, it does not affect strong verbs – even in the indicative – but only regular ones, as seen in (7) with data from the dialect of Airolo, another variety of Alpine Lombard spoken in the Upper Leventina valley, west from Mesocco:¹⁰

(7)		indicative	imperative	gloss Airolo
	a. regular verbs	'nyi i 'sentum	sen'tim	
	b. irregular verbs	'nyi i 'fam	fa'zem	
		'nyi i 'ʃtam	'ʃtem	

In our case (1c), on the contrary, we are dealing with imperative, not indicative, forms ending in *[-um]*. And these forms occur for both regular and irregular verbs, while in the indicative the ending *[-um]* is not found, as shown again in (8), where the relevant 1PL indicative and imperative forms of the dialect of Mesocco are listed synoptically:

(8)	i.	indicative	ii.	imperative	gloss Mesocco
	a.	'neɲ um 'mandʒa we SUBJ.CLIT eat	tʃa k um 'mandʒa PART that SUBJ.CLIT eat	'eat.1PL'	
	b.		man'dʒɛm		
	c.		man'dʒɛdum		

The indicative form instances the *HOMO CANTAT* type. For the imperative, several options are available: one can either use the same form as in the indicative, introduced by an imperative/hortative particle ((8ii-a)) like those found e.g. in Russian (*davaj*), Hebrew (*bo'*), Turkish (and Balcanic, *hajde*), etc.¹¹

Alternatively, two morphologically dedicated forms are available for the same function, viz. the original ending-stressed [man'dʒɛm] ((8ii-b)) and, finally, the innovation [man'dʒɛdum] ((8ii-c)), which, as we have seen, cannot be explained as an inherited 1PL form because of unsurmountable phonetic and morphological difficulties.

2. The analysis

As a first step towards the solution of our puzzle, let us now ask what else the unstressed ending *[-um]* in this 1PL imperative could be traced back to. The answer is that it could be an object clitic, 1SG, from Latin *ME*. This clitic has the appropriate phonetic shape in this dialect (e.g. [pɔrt-um] 'bring me'). Its syntactic distribution is also suitable, as it occurs throughout Romance in enclitic position, although not on 1PL imperatives, as shown with Italian data in (9a):¹²

- | | | |
|--------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| (9) a. | <i>*mangiàmo-mi</i> | 'let's eat me' |
| b. | <i>mangiàte-mi</i> | 'eat me' (or 'for me, on me') |
| c. | <i>mangiàtemi questa minestra</i> | 'eat this soup (on me, please)' |

With a 2_{PL} imperative, on the other hand, this enclisis is perfectly grammatical. Note further that, as shown by the alternative glosses in (9b), this construction allows more than one reading. The most obvious one, in which the clitic is argumental (a direct object here, since the predicate is transitive), is somewhat odd in this case for pragmatic reasons.¹³ But there is another reading available, for speakers of Italian (and of Romance languages in general), in contexts such as (9c). Here, the clitic *mi* is an instance of an ‘ethical dative’ or ‘dative of interest’, as Smith (2005) would rather label it.¹⁴

2.1. Ethical datives

The terminological difference is schematically displayed in (10) with two examples from French:

(10) a. *Paul **m**'a cassé trois verres à Marie!*

b. *Paul **t**'a cassé trois verres à Marie!*

‘Paul CLIT broke three glasses of Mary’s’

Leclère (1976:91)	Smith (2005)	
ethical	interest	1sg
ethical	ethical	2sg

The former terminology, exemplified with Leclère (1976), is the traditional one to refer to both (10a-b), whereas Smith restricts ‘ethical’ to just the construction with 2nd person clitics like (10b) and uses another traditional label, ‘dative of interest’, to refer to all constructions involving a 1sg clitic.

I will not go into the details here and just point out that there is agreement on the insight that this kind of use of Romance clitics marks, within the clause, the discourse role of the participant to the speech situation in a way, however, that differs from canonical person marking on either verb or pronoun morphology. In this case, the corresponding ‘canonical’ person marking would have the form of an argumental indirect object clitic, as in *Gianni mi scrive*, *Jean m’écrit* ‘John writes to me’. The clitics in (10), however, are not related to argument structure (i.e., to grammatical relations attributed by the verbal predicate). They rather directly relate to the locutionary act (the *énonciation*, in Benveniste’s terms). In this vein, Smith (2005) argues convincingly that *te* in (10b) marks the addressee, but non-propositionally. Slightly modifying that proposal, one could also maintain that the same applies to *me* in (10a), which marks the speaker, also – one could surmise – non-propositionally.¹⁵

Be that as it may, we can take stock of this situation: Romance has such enclitics in the construction exemplified in (10), and in this construction a 1sg clitic can be hosted by a 2_{PL} imperative, as shown in (9c).

2.2. The solution

Back to Mesocco, a 2nd person imperative would not only be a plausible host for a 1sg object clitic, as shown in (11c). It would also provide a solution for the phonetic difficulty pointed to above: intervocalic *-d-*, inexplicable in a 1st person ending, occurs regularly in the 2PL imperative ending due to western Romance lenition of intervocalic stops in the Latin inflections *-ĀTE*, *-ĒTE*, *-ĪTE*:¹⁶

(11)

imperative			
a. 1st plural	b. 2nd plural	c. 2PL + 1SG CLIT	gloss
man'dʒɛdum	man'dʒɛden	man'dʒɛd-um	'eat'
be'vedum	be'veden	be'ved-um	'drink'
fe'nidum	fe'niden	fe'nid-um	'finish'
'fadum	'faden	'fad-um	'do'

Note that the forms in (11c), 2PL imperatives hosting 1SG pronominal enclitics, are homophonous with the 1PL forms we set out to explain, which are now repeated in (11a). This homophony results from a circumstance already illustrated above in (4): recall that 2PL imperatives have an extra affix *-(e)n* ((11b)), and that this affix disappears when the imperative hosts an object enclitic.

My hypothesis, now, is that the two homophonous [man'dʒɛdum] in (11a) and (11c) are etymologically identical. At a certain point (stage II in the diachronic development sketched in (12)), strings consisting of 2PL imperative + 1SG clitic were reanalysed as 1PL imperatives:¹⁷

(12)

rise and fall of the imperative ['fad-um] 'let's do'			
	a. stage I	b. stage II (reanalysis)	c. stage III (loss)
1PL		/ʼfadum/ → ['fadum] 'let's do'	
2PL	/ʼfad#um/ → ['fadum] 'do me'	/ʼfad#um/ → ['fadum] 'do me'	/ʼfad#um/ → ['fadum] 'do me'

This assumption can be substantiated with arguments from morphology, syntax and pragmatics, both comparative and internal to the system at issue.

2.3. Verb inflection and (subject and object) clitics

Recall that, within the morphological system of this variety, 1PL indicative sounds [um 'mandʒa] ((5b), (8a)), where the subject clitic [um] is the only morpheme signalling 1st person given the high rate of syncretism among verb inflections apparent in the paradigm in (3) above. Person marking through a subject clitic, normal in this dialect as in all of northern Italo-Romance, may also have contributed to help an *object* (en)clitic [um] to jump the fence and join verb inflections. Moreover, as already shown in §1.2, in many neighbouring dialects the Milanese type ['mandʒum] (5c) is spreading, whose ending is homophonous with the 1SG (en)clitic. So, both intra- and cross-dialectally, the way was paved for the reanalysis #[um] (1st person enclitic) > -[um] (1st person inflection).

Between input and output of this change, however, there is also a distinction in number (SG > PL). In my hypothesis, plural meaning was contributed by the 2PL ending -[Vd]-: to support this assumption, we should be able to provide parallels of changes which involve the 2PL and 1PL morphology.

2.4. First and second person plural

Cross-linguistically, in fact, there is evidence for overlappings between 1PL and 2PL morphology. We will first consider some of this evidence in general and then with reference to imperative, a mood for which a special person hierarchy obtains. Some of the evidence comes from systems displaying an inclusive/exclusive contrast in the 1PL, the morphology for the 2nd person (plural) is identical with the morphology marking 1st person plural, inclusive (as in Potawatomi; cf. Hockett 1966:63, Plank 1985:155) or exclusive (as in Woleaian; cf. Sohn 1975:94, Siewierska 2004:35):

(13)

a. Potawatomi (Algonquian)		b. Woleaian (Austronesian)		
		indep. subject	(weak) subjectives	
1SG	n- kaskumi-	gaang	i	1SG
2SG	k- kaskumi-	geel	go	2SG
1PL _e	n- kaskumi- mun	giish	gai	1PL _e
1PL _i	k- kaskumi- mun	gaaman	si	1PL _i
2PL	k- kaskumi- (u)m	gaami	gai	2PL

Clearly, some previous change involving 1st and 2nd person (plural) must be responsible for these similarities. Note that the patterns in (13a-b) are both relevant for the illustration of overlapping in 1PL/2PL morphology only under the traditional view of in-/exclusiveness (or ‘clusivity’, in Filimonova’s, to appear,

terminology). Under the alternative view put forward by Cysow (to appear) and Daniel (to appear), on the other hand, inclusive is not regarded as a (subtype of) 1PL but rather as a separate person. To eschew this terminological problem, we could reformulate the point saying that in both (13a-b) there is overlap, in the plural, between the morphology of persons whose reference includes the speaker and the morphology of persons whose reference includes the addressee(s).

In his systematic review of morphological syncretisms like those in (13a-b), Cysow (to appear) concludes that both patterns are equally frequent in the languages of the world. This seems to provide a case against one fundamental tenet of Natural Morphology, viz. the one that, *ceteris paribus*, iconicity (correspondence between signans and signatum) will be favoured and, hence, emerge more frequently in morphological patterns (cf. Dressler & Merlini Barbaresi 1994:46, Kilani-Schoch & Dressler 2005: 31, 46). In fact, given the definition of inclusive as a morphological category whose reference includes both speaker and addressee, inclusive morphology showing similarities with (1st and) 2nd person is iconic and hence should be expected to occur more frequently than, say, exclusive morphology showing the same pattern (as is the case in Woleaian, (13b)).¹⁸

Note however that Cysow's conclusion very much depends on the fact that he is admitting as relevant evidence in favour of iconicity (or semantic transparency, in his terms) only cases of perfect syncretisms between 1PLi and 2nd person (like the *k*- prefix in central Algonquian, in (13a)), while excluding from his counts any other instances of (partial) overlapping of 1st and 2nd person morphology in inclusive marking. For instance, the pronoun *yumi* occurring in several English based Creols in the Pacific (cf. Hall 1943:26, Mühlhäusler 1986:161) either as 1PLi (Tok Pisin, Bichelamar) or as 1Dui (Cape York Creole) is explicitly excluded in spite of its arising from compounding of *mi* (= 1SG) + *yu* (= 2SG).¹⁹ Thus, it is difficult to escape the impression that a less restrictive criterion would have led to different results.

Be that as it may, as the focus shifts from person-marking systems in general to person marking in imperatives, the expectation that 2PL and 1PL (inclusive) share some basic properties becomes stronger (cf. (15) below). Evidence from overlap in morphology between these two persons is provided by Russian which, on some analyses, has morphologically dedicated imperative forms only in the 2nd person, singular and plural:

(14) Russian	imperative	indicative	gloss
	2SG	<i>pojdi</i>	
	1PL		
	2PL		
		<i>pojďěš'</i>	'go.2SG'
		<i>pojďēm</i>	'go.1PL'
	<i>pojďite</i>	<i>pojďete</i>	'go.2PL'

To perform speech acts of command in the 1PL, the indicative form may be used (e.g. *pojděm*). However, while this form is just 1PL in the indicative, when used as an imperative its meaning is restricted to ‘you.SG and me’ and it is often called a *dual* imperative (e.g. Xrakovskij & Birjulin 2001:19f, 25, 30), although the language has no dual elsewhere in the verbal system.²⁰ For 1PL imperative with more than one addressee, on the other hand, the form *pojděmte* is used, one of the so called forms *sovmestnogo dejstviija* (‘of collective action’). The inflection of this 1PL imperative, which also turns out to be morphologically dedicated (and therefore should be included in (14) even under the most restrictive definition of imperative), consists of the 1PL + the 2PL endings.

This kind of convergence of 1st and 2nd person morphology in 1PL (inclusive) marking in imperatives is found in language after language, as documented by Dobrushina & Goussev’s (to appear) cross-linguistic overview. Thus, for instance, in the Turkic languages Turkmen and Yakut augmented inclusive imperative is derived by affixing the same marker *-yŋ* occurring in the 2PL; Luvala (Bantoid) forms augmented inclusive imperative by affixing to the minimal inclusive form the same morpheme *-enu* that marks plurality in 2nd person imperatives; and several similar cases are reported by the authors.

Such formal exchanges rest on a firm substantial ground, that becomes apparent as soon as one considers the pragmatics of imperatives, as well as the relation between form and meaning in (the different persons of) this mood. Typological work on imperatives shows that a dedicated form for this mood is most frequent, in the languages of the world, for the 2nd person singular, then comes the 2PL and then the 3rd person or the 1PL inclusive, as shown in (15):

(15) Van der Auwera *et al.* (2004:57):

2sg → 2pl → 3 or 1pli → 1ple → 1sg

This is the core of the semantic map for imperatives/hortatives Van der Auwera *et al.* (2004:57) come up with, based on a sample of 376 languages. The (formal) hierarchy in (15) naturally lends itself to a functional explanation. Comparing the Searlian conditions on the illocutionary acts ‘Command’ and ‘Statement’ (in (16) in Bach & Harnish’s 1979:25 formulation), one readily sees that the H(earer) (or Addressee) is directly involved in the act of command, which is in turn prototypically encoded as imperative:

- (16) a. *Declarative*: *S[peaker]* is saying that it is the case that (...*p*...);
 b. *Imperative*: *S[peaker]* is saying that *H[earer]* is to make it the case that (...*p*...).

From this the typological picture in (15) directly follows: the 2nd person singular is the grammaticization of the discourse role addressee (Bühler 1934:113, Forchheimer 1953:5, Siewierska 2004:2), and hence it is the unmarked person

in the imperative, as opposed to other moods corresponding to different speech act types (cf. Loporcaro 2001:276-278, Kilani-Schoch & Dressler 2005:30-31). The 2PL, furthermore, is a more transparent plural to the 2SG than the 1PL to the 1SG:

“the universal pragmatics of plurality is [...] less transparent with the first person than with the second person. In fact, the only speech situations where *we* is a pragmatically transparent plural of *I* are those in which the speakers utter or sing something in chorus. [...] On the other hand, there are many more speech situations where the speaker refers to all and only the addressees with, e.g. G. *ihr*, It. *voi*, Fr. *vous*, Russ. *vy*, etc.” (Dressler & Merlini Barbaresi 1994:63; cf. also Bühler 1934:143, Siewierska 2004:82).

In (15), either 3rd person or 1PL inclusive comes next. For 1PL – the person we are directly concerned with here – this also has a straightforward pragmatic explanation. The primary pragmatic value of *let's go*, both in languages possessing and in those lacking an inclusive/exclusive grammatical contrast, is to give an order (or make a request) to the addressee(s). Upon this act of commanding, reference to the discourse role of the speaker is superimposed through 1st person morphology.

This is the pragmatic definition of a 1PL imperative, like the ones in (1c) whose strange morphology we have set out to explain. This coincides, however, with the pragmatic structure of another grammatical construction we have already encountered in (9c): a 2PL imperative + a 1SG ‘ethical’ clitic. This is the source of the new 1PL imperative ending, in my hypothesis: the reanalysis of (11c) as (11a) was prompted by the functional similarity in the pragmatic values of the two expressions.

2.5. *Acquisitional scenario*

As for the concrete scenario in which this reanalysis might have taken place, the answer will be the usual one: acquisition. Generational discontinuity as the locus and source for change is often questioned (lately, perhaps most influentially, by Croft 2000:44-51, Blevins 2004:217-236). One of the reasons for this scepticism is the alleged mismatch between acquisitional deviations from adults’ speech and documented instances of change. I cannot discuss the general issue here. I will just point out that, during acquisition, person undergoes various readjustments that involve exchanges and formal overlapping between 1st and 2nd person.

In Italian, for instance, children may generalise for some verbs a 2nd person form (since they hear it frequently) and so use e.g. *kor(r)i* (meaning ‘you run.2sg’ for the adults) when describing their own act of running ((17a)). Similar deviations are observed in the children’s use of possessive pronouns, as shown in (17b):²¹

- (17) a. *kori* (Laura 1;9) ‘run.1SG’ (input *corri* ‘run.2SG’); cf. Tonelli *et al.* (1995:9) for similar cases;
 b. *tuo!* ‘mine’ (Riccardo 2;6, while running after another kid, trying to take his toy away from him). Cf. (adult) Italian *mio* ‘mine’ vs. *tuo* ‘yours’.

The child, at this stage, still fails to master the orientation of deixis, which centers on an *origo*, and thus treats the 2nd person possessive occurring in the input (*tuo*, as in e.g. *Quel giocattolo non è tuo, lascialo!* ‘that toy is not yours, hands off!’) as if it were not liable to shift depending on the speaker.

In our specific case, something similar must have happened in the process of acquisition, so that – as shown in (12a-b) – the 2PL imperative + ethical clitic (‘do it, on me’) was reanalysed as a 1PL imperative (‘let’s do it’), given the similarity in pragmatic function and, hence, in contextual usage.

Of course, there is no direct evidence available from acquisition of past stages of this dialect which may be invoked in support of the reanalysis I am reconstructing. But I did record evidence for the following stage (12c), in which a further change took place, that is the mirror-image of the one I have postulated for the rise of 1PL [man'dʒɛdum]. This second change took place some decades ago, as the speakers who are now in their forties acquired the dialect and reanalysed back (as it were) 1PL imperatives like [man'dʒɛdum] as strings consisting of 2PL imperative + object clitic ((11c)), which of course independently existed in the language all along.

The recorded dialogue in (22) provides clear evidence for this discontinuity among generations: at lines 2 and 7, informant B (40 years old) says that [man'dʒɛdum] is 2PL + an (argumental) clitic. Into the bargain, she says that the utterance sounds odd, since it lends itself to a cannibalistic reading. At lines 4 and 9, on the other hand, informant A (B’s mother) contradicts B, explaining that [man'dʒɛdum] means ‘let’s eat’ (1PL):²²

- | | | | |
|-------------------|--------------|----------|---------------------|
| (18) Informant A: | 70 years old | mother | (Mesocco 29.6.2001) |
| Informant B: | 40 years old | daughter | |
-

- | | |
|-----------------|--|
| 1. ML: | E se io dicessi “a'des man'dʒɛdum”?
and what if I said a'des man'dʒɛdum? |
| 2. Informant B: | nɔ, “man'dʒɛdum” el 'vɔl di 'mandʒum 'mi'.
no, man'dʒɛdum means ‘eat me, myself’! |
| 3. ML: | Ah, vuol dire quello ...
So, this is what that means ... |
| 4. Informant A: | nɔ, nɔ, “man'dʒɛdum” nɔ, l'ɛ plu'ral, l'ɛ 'miga singolare,
ɛ!
no, no, man'dʒɛdum is plural, it's not singular! |

5. Informant B: “*man'dʒɛdum*”!?
6. ML: Cioè, cioè? Come lo capisce lei “*man'dʒɛdum*”?
That is to say? How do you interpret *man'dʒɛdum*?
7. Informant B: “*man'dʒɛdum*” *el vɔl di* ‘*mandʒum* *mi*’, per me.
no, *man'dʒɛdum* means ‘eat me, myself’, according to me
8. ML: Ho capito, vediamo un po’ ...
I’ve got it, let’s see ...
9. Informant A: no, assolutamente nooo, “*tʃa k um man'dʒɛdum*”, *per* ‘*di*
‘*ve*’*nid a man'dʒɛ*’, io lo sento così, dentro ...
no, absolutely not! “*tʃa k um man'dʒɛdum*” (that is) to say
‘come and eat’, I feel it that way, inside ...

The mother is more conservative: she is at stage II in (12b), the same stage documented by Keller’s text (1), in 1941. The daughter, on the contrary, is innovative: her competence has reached stage III in (12c). With her, and her generation, this morphological change has come full circle and the bizarre 1PL imperative form, whose rise I have tried to explain here, has disappeared.

3. Conclusion

The rationale for both rise and fall of 1PL imperative [*man'dʒɛdum*] is provided by the (synchronic) system. The first reanalysis ((12b)), as we have seen, was favoured by the morphological, syntactic and pragmatic factors discussed so far. As for the second reanalysis ((12c)), a look at (8) allows one to realise that our 1PL imperative form was an easy candidate for loss. In fact, after the change (12b), the system had more forms available, in the 1PL, to express imperative than indicative (which subsumes also subjunctive functions in this dialect, see fn. 11). In other words, a wider range of forms was available for the marked function (expression of the marked speech act type ‘command’) than for the unmarked one. Thus, there was abundant functional motivation for the disappearance of the form [*man'dʒɛdum*], which was not only exceptional in its diachronic rise (involving a person-shift), but also made the verbal system exceptional in synchronic typological terms.

Notes

- * This paper was presented at the 38th Meeting of the SLE, Valencia (September 2005): I thank the audience for feedback and discussion, as well as W. U. Dressler, E. Filimonova, J.C. Smith and J. Van der Auwera for comments, suggestions and/or bibliographical help (usual disclaimers apply). The data on the the dialect of Mesocco were collected during fieldwork carried out in June 2001, which was funded by the Faculty of Arts of the University of Zürich. Thanks are also due to all persons who friendly helped us in Mesocco, especially Dafne Mombelli Pini. Throughout the paper, the following abbreviations will be used: IMP(ERATIVE), IND(ICATIVE), PL(URAL), S(IN)G(ULAR), UHS = ‘unspecified human subject’.

For organisational reasons, it was impossible to have this text filtered through the competence of a native speaker of English.

- 1 Keller's transcriptions are transferred into IPA notation. These transcriptions display some phonetic differences with respect to the data presented in most earlier and later work on this dialect (cf. Salvioni 1902, 1907, Sganzi 1933a-b, Tuttle 1982, Lampietti-Barella 1986). Most notably, Keller transcribes palatal stops ([c j]) where all others (including myself, but except for the AIS, Pt. 44) have palatoalveolar fricatives ([tʃ dʒ]). Thus, in my transcriptions the imperative forms in (1a) and (1c) are [tʃa'padən], [man'dʒedum]. As for the 2PL ending, consistently transcribed [-ən] by Keller, its vowel is indeed realised variably as [a], [ɐ] or [e], with [-ən] being the variant most frequently occurring in my records. Anyway, these phonetic details are not germane to our present discussion.
 - 2 Translation: "... will first have occurred in the imperative of 'to go' [...], and, not being anymore understood in its genesis, will probably have spread to the imperative of other verbs, then affecting also all other tenses and moods."
 - 3 This is a first conjugation regular verb. The difference, in the 2PL, between stressed ['a] in (3) and ['ɛ] in (2) is phonological, the latter being the product of palatalisation due to the preceding [dʒ] (cf. Sganzi 1933a:48, Camasral 1959:105).
 - 4 The subject clitic occurring in 1SG and 2PL (referential and honorific) is [e] in the speech of my informants, whereas it was transcribed [a] by Sganzi (1933b:60).
 - 5 1PL and 2PL are actually realised ['neŋ uŋ 'kanta], ['veŋ e kan'ta(de)n] in connected speech.
 - 6 The paradigm in (3) also allows us to briefly comment on another interesting feature of this dialect. As seen in the last line, an ending -(e)n], homophonous with the one occurring in the 2PL although different in origin, is found in this dialect on 3FPL verb forms (cf. (iia) vs. (iib)):
- (ii) a. 'kɛlen ma'taŋ la me de'guten/*de'gute
 those girls SUBJ.CLIT.F DO.CLIT.1SG disturb.3FPL
 b. 'kuŋt la'vor i me de'gute/*de'guten
 those works SUBJ.CLIT.M DO.CLIT.1SG disturb.3MPL
 'those girls / those works disturb me'

As apparent in (ii), thus, this dialect marks gender on finite verb forms, something unheard of for Latin and the standard Romance languages, but found in several Italo-Romance dialects, as discussed in Loporcaro & Vigolo (2005:8).

- 7 It is not obvious how this system can be accommodated in recent typological work on the topic such as Cysow (2003:16), where honorifics are excluded from person systems proper.
- 8 The 2PL imperative ending, like in standard Italian, is homophonous with the corresponding person of the indicative seen in (3). In both cases, in free variation with the forms in (4a), alternative shortened forms can occur, exemplified in (i) with regular conjugations and an irregular verb:

(i)	i. full	ii. shortened	gloss
a.	man'dʒɛden	man'dʒɛn	'eat.2pl'
b.	kan'taden	kan'tan	'sing.2pl'
c.	be'veden	be'ven	'drink.2pl'
d.	fe'niden	fe'nin	'finish.2pl'
e.	'naden	'nan	'go.2pl'

Expectedly, since the shortened endings are a further evolution of [-ed+en], they do not occur with enclitics.

- 9 The same happens in French, although there *nous on chante* is only optionally used with 1PL reference while the original *nous chantons* has not been ousted and has remained side by side with the innovation. The grammaticalisation of UHS constructions – often labeled, less accurately, ‘impersonals’; see Rosen (1981 [1988]:88-122) and Perlmutter (1983) on the structural difference between the two – for the (first person) plural (inclusive) is found in languages from different families (cf. Siewierska 2004:211 fn. 20).
- 10 The data stem partly from Brogini (1998:345), partly from my own fieldnotes (June 2005).
- 11 Cf. e.g. Xrakovskij & Birjulin (2001:25), Veselinova (2003:164). In a Romance perspective, (8ii-a) is originally an instance of ‘hortative’ usage of the subjunctive. In fact, the dialect of Mesocco, having lost a separate subjunctive paradigm, employs [um 'mandʒa] also in syntactic contexts in which, in Latin and elsewhere in Romance, subjunctive mood occurs.
- 12 Note, incidentally, that I have been talking of an ‘imperative’ mood all along for both 2nd and 1st person forms like those in (9a-b). A sharp distinction between ‘imperative’ (where “the person in control of the desired state of affairs is the addressee or the addressees”) and ‘hortative’ (in any other case), as proposed by van der Auwera *et al.* (2005:294), while motivated in semantic/pragmatic terms, would dissolve morpho-syntactic paradigms like e.g. Italian *mangialo* ‘eat.2SG it’, *mangiamolo* ‘let’s eat it’, *mangiatelo* ‘eat.2PL it’ (where enclisis is diagnostic of imperative mood), unless one is willing to speak of an ‘imperative-hortative (and, perhaps, prohibitive) mood’, thereby conflating pragmatics, semantics and morphology.
- 13 It is important not to confuse the pragmatic oddity of (9b) (in a non-cannibalistic culture) with the sheer ungrammaticality of (9a), which is pan-Romance and is due to a categorical morphosyntactic constraint on pronominal clitics, not to the semantics or the pragmatics. This is shown by the fact that the synonymous utterance with a 1SG **tonic** pronoun is at most pragmatically odd (*mangiamo me*) and the same construction, with other predicates, is perfect: *prendiamo/consideriamo me* ‘let’s take/consider me’.
- 14 The clitic occurring in this construction is usually the one employed elsewhere as an (argumental) indirect rather than direct object clitic. However, in most Romance varieties the two series of object clitics display syncretism in 1st and 2nd persons, being morphologically distinct only in the 3rd.
- 15 Smith (2005) rejects this equation adducing the contrast observed between (10a-b), since expressions with a 1SG clitic like (10a), as Leclère (1976:91) puts it, “seraient très bizarres si le locuteur ne connaît pas Paul, alors qu’elles sont très naturelles si ce locuteur est, par exemple, la mère de Paul”, whereas no such constraint applies to (10b). This, however, leads Smith to conflating (10a), under the same heading ‘dative of interest’, with constructions like *On va se boire une bière* ‘we’ll have ourselves a beer’, or *Il m’a cassé la jambe* ‘he broke my leg’, which should be kept distinct, in my opinion (cf. Loporcaro 1998:106-107 for some discussion).
- 16 In (11), the plural imperative paradigm is illustrated with one verb for each of the three regular conjugations, plus the irregular verb ‘to do’.
- 17 Oblique arrows indicate reanalysis, whereas horizontal ones stand for synchronic derivation. Stage III (12c) will be discussed in §2.5.
- 18 Apparently sharing this expectation, Forchheimer (1953:79) defines ‘bewildering’ the formal similarity between 1PL exclusive and 2PL found in Malay.
- 19 In Tok Pisin, the 1PLi pronoun is formed differently than both 1PLE (*mipela* = ‘me+fellow’) and 2PL (*yupela*).

- 20 As Siewierska (2000:84) points out, in another connection (i.e. with reference to Uradhi, an Australian language): “This analysis has its drawbacks too, namely it entails recognizing an additional number opposition just for the first person”. For Russian, one can add that this additional opposition would obtain for just one mood, which suggests that ‘minimal (vs. ‘augmented’) inclusive’ is indeed a better terminology here (cf. Dobrushina & Goussev, to appear). (Cf. however Mühlhäusler 1986:168 for an entirely different view, assuming dual as cognitively more basic than plural.)
- 21 The data in (17a-b) stem from my own observation on the acquisition of Italian by my daughter Laura and my nephew Riccardo. In both cases, the forms were produced spontaneously (i.e. not as repetitions of direct adult inputs). For Laura, at 1;9, *kori* is the only form that has emerged in the paradigm of *correre* ‘to run’.
- 22 The metalanguage in the interview is Standard Italian (normal type). Utterances in the dialect of Mesocco are given in italics, and included in double quotes when mentioned metalinguistically. Glosses provided by the informants are in single quotes.

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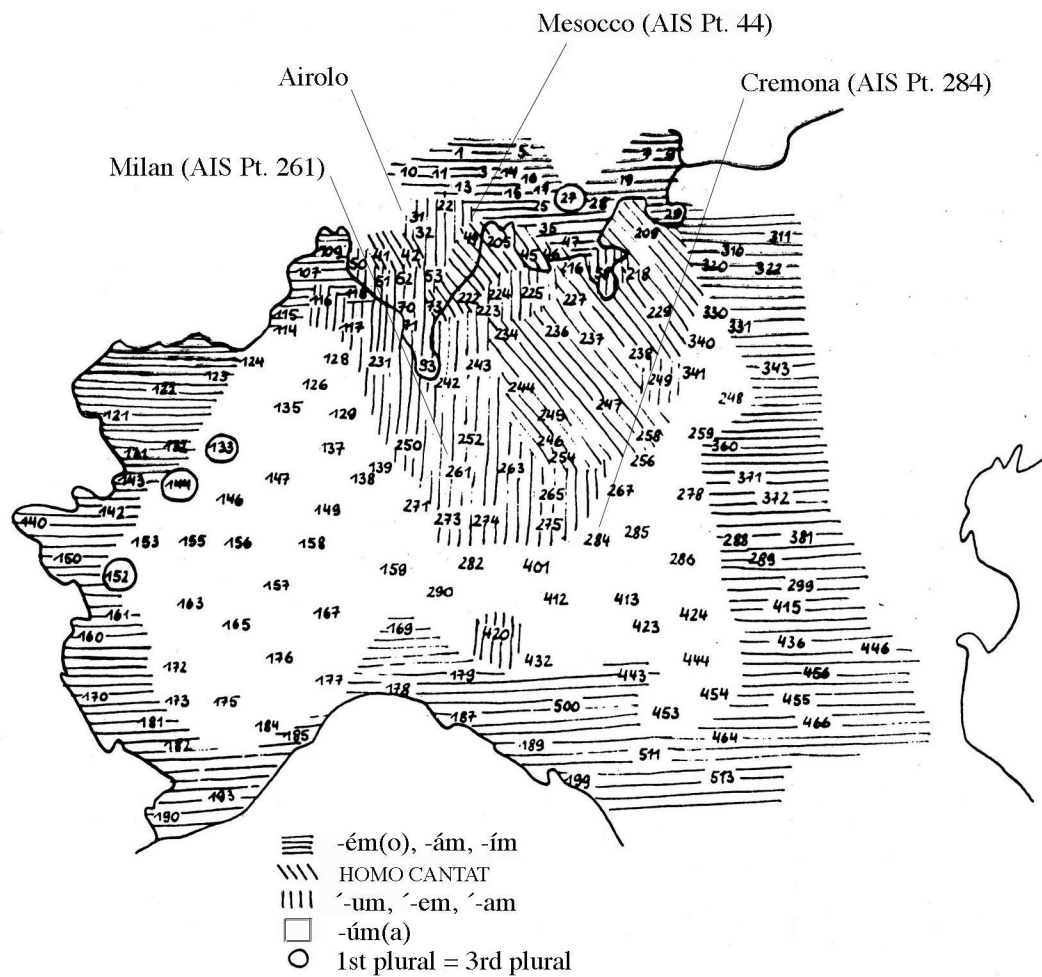
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Appendix



1st plural inflections (present indicative) in north-western Italo-Romance
(adapted from Simon 1967:319, map 83, based on AIS data)