

## *Directive turn design and intersubjectivity*

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### **Abstract**

In this paper, we discuss turn design as a locus of intersubjectivity. We focus on two types of directives in Finnish interactions, turns formatted with second-person imperative and turns that contain zero person. Neither of these turn designs contains a separate subject phrase explicating the person(s) referred to, nor does either indicate when the action nominated is to take place. We study the kinds of assumptions these two turn designs make and present as shared, and the interplay of the assumptions in relation to the sequential and activity context of the turn. The design of turns and actions in sequences of interaction thus allows us to see intersubjectivity at work, even when repair does not take place.

### **Keywords**

directive, imperative, zero-person, modal verb, turn design, Finnish, repair, shared assumptions, minimal design, Schuetz

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## 1. Introduction

In broad terms, intersubjectivity involves mutual understanding and sharing of experience between humans. In social interaction, intersubjectivity unfolds turn-by-turn (Schegloff 1992): every single turn, through its design, content, and sequential placement shows how the speaker of that turn has understood the co-participant's prior action and what kind of action sequence and larger activity the participants are engaged in. Furthermore, each turn shows its speaker's understanding of what assumptions about the activity and the relation between the participants are shared (see Schuetz's (1953) notion of 'intersubjectivity for all practical purposes'). In this paper, we will discuss turn design as a locus of intersubjectivity, focusing on the design of directive turns-at-talk in data from ordinary Finnish interactions. We use *directive* in the sense of Goodwin (2006) to refer to turns that are designed to get the other to do (or not do) something, including requests, offers, advice, suggestions, and the like.

More specifically, we will investigate two turn designs that are used to implement a directive action in Finnish, turns formatted with a second-person imperative form, either singular or plural (e.g., *syö\* se loppuki*, 'eat [sg] the rest of it too', Ex. 7, or *syö-kää se loppuki*, 'eat [pl] the rest of it

too')<sup>1</sup> and turns that contain a zero-person form together with a modal expression (e.g., *no sit O pitää mennä uudelleen*, 'well then O must go again', Ex. 6). Neither of these turn designs contains a separate subject phrase making explicit the person(s) referred to, nor do they indicate when the action nominated is to take place nor why it should be carried out. This is not to deny, however, that there are fundamental differences between them: a turn formatted with an imperative form is conventionally understood to be addressed to the co-participant or co-participants,<sup>2</sup> while a turn formatted with a zero-person+modal construction does not have a conventionally understood addressee. Furthermore, a turn formatted with a grammatical imperative is inherently directive, whereas a turn formatted with a zero-person+modal construction is grammatically speaking a declarative and, like declaratives in general, can be used for accomplishing a variety of actions (including directives). Nevertheless, both turn designs are central means for implementing directives in Finnish.<sup>3</sup>

This raises the following question: Do the two turn designs make different assumptions about the extent of intersubjective understanding

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<sup>1</sup> \* stands for boundary gemination, a relic of the imperative marker *-k*; *-kaa* marks the plural imperative (Hakulinen, L., 1961:§61) .

<sup>2</sup> However, morphologically speaking, the imperative forms are not marked for second person (boundary gemination and *-kaa* are markers of the imperative mood in singular and plural) (VISK §118).

<sup>3</sup> There are of course other forms that Finnish speakers can make use of when formulating directives, e.g., simple declaratives, modal constructions, interrogatives with an explicit subject. However, because imperatives and zero-person+modal constructions are the most minimal ones in terms of what they make explicit and, moreover, can occur in the same directive sequence, we have chosen to focus on them here.

concerning what should be done, by whom, when, and why? In this chapter we explore this question, examining first directive turns that are implemented with imperative forms and then directive turns with zero person+modal constructions. A third section deals with directive sequences of turns in which both imperative and zero-person+modal constructions are used. In conclusion we reflect on what these findings mean for our understanding of intersubjectivity in interaction.

## **2. Directive turns with imperatives**

Designing a turn with an imperative form implements an inherently directive action. Imperative forms can of course be used as vehicles for accomplishing other actions, such as permitting someone to do something, advising/encouraging someone to do something, or inviting someone to do something (for examples of these uses see, e.g., Keevallik 2017, Heinemann & Steensig 2017, Sorjonen 2017). But the imperative is nevertheless by virtue of its form always directive, in the sense that it represents a grammaticized form for telling another to do (or not do) something.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Auer (2017) notes that there are (rare) exceptions to this generalization, for example, in the use of imperatives for formulaic wishes and to “open up hypothetical mental spaces” in conversation (p. 422).

Yet turns designed with imperative forms can take a variety of different shapes, some of which are very brief and others of which are more elaborate. Let us consider, for instance, the minimally formatted imperative directive turn in the following extract:

(1) “Levitä” ‘Spread (sprinkles)’ (adapted from Raevaara 2017:390)

[Heli is conducting a cooking class for young girls at the local youth center. Ella has just spread icing on the cake they have baked and Sara is about to add sprinkles on top.]

- 1 Heli: nyt voi Sara, (.) levittää jo  
now can.3SG [name] spread-INF already  
now can Sara, (.) already spread
- 2 nonparelleja  
sprinkles-PAR  
sprinkles
- 3 siihe +kes>kelle<.  
there in the middle.
- 4 Sara: +TAKES HOLD OF THE SPRINKLE JAR
- 5 (1.5) SARA OPENS THE LID OF THE JAR
- 6 Heli: tai siihen, (0.4) päälle.  
or there, (0.4) on top.
- 7 (2.0) ELLA LOOKS AT THE KNIFE SHE HAS USED FOR  
SPREADING THE TOPPING
- 8 Ella: f>mitä mä< tälle +teen;f  
what do I do with this;
- 9 Sara: +HOLDS THE JAR OUT OVER THE CAKE
- 10 Heli: #+no sä voit vaikka nuo:lla  
PRT you can-2SG for.example lick-INF  
well you can for example lick
- 11 Sara: +HOLDS THE JAR OVER THE CAKE WITHOUT POURING

12           s[e;  
DEM3.SG.ACC  
it

13 Sara:       [+a:i  
PRT

14 Sara:       +GLANCES AT ELLA

15           (1.8) SARA LOOKS AT HELI, SHAKES THE JAR WITHOUT  
POURING

16 Heli: → #>levi+tä<?  
spread.IMP.SG  
spread [them]

17 Sara:       +CONTINUES SHAKING THE JAR; BEGINS POURING  
OUT THE SPRINKLES

18           (1.4) SARA CONTINUES POURING THE SPRINKLES

19 Sara:       joka <pualelle>.  
all over.

20 Heli:       mm:;

When Heli instructs Sara to spread the sprinkles on the cake (lines 1–3), Sara takes the sprinkle jar and opens its lid (lines 4–5) in preparation for executing the instruction. But Ella intervenes by asking Heli what she should do with the knife she has just used to spread the icing (lines 7–8). While Heli deals with this contingency (lines 10 and 12), Sara continues to hold the jar over the cake without, however, pouring the sprinkles. She then looks at Heli and shakes the jar (line 15), whereupon Heli produces the following directive: *levitä* ‘spread’ (line 16). The format of this turn is remarkably brief: it consists of just one word, the second-person singular imperative form of the ditransitive verb *levittää* ‘to spread’. Not only does

this turn design leave unspecified what is to be spread and where, it also does not say who of those present is to execute the action, nor when they should execute it, nor why this action is necessary or desirable. Yet the turn is unproblematic in that it is immediately acted upon: Sara begins pouring out the sprinkles on the cake (line 17). Let us examine how this sequence unfolds.

As we can see, the turn in line 16 is perfectly fitted to the circumstances of its occurrence: Heli has actually already instructed Sara to spread the sprinkles on the cake with *nyt voi Sara, (.) levittää jo nonparelleja siihe kes>kelle<* ‘now can Sara already spread sprinkles there in the middle’ (lines 1–3), incremented a split second later with *tai siihen, (0.4) päälle* ‘or there, (0.4) on top’ (line 6). That is, a joint activity has already been initiated that provides for the understanding of who is to execute the action of spreading, what it is that should be spread, where, and when. Moreover, since the common goal is to produce a cake with icing and sprinkles, the participants clearly also know why the spreading is necessary or desirable. In other words, the who, what, when, and why of the action forwarded with the directive in line 16 are intersubjectively understood. What this minimally formatted turn does is simply prompt the execution of the action, which is implied to be urgent given the fast tempo of its production.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> We are indebted to Liisa Raevara for sharing this example and the next with us. In both cases we have relied heavily on her analysis.

Yet if circumstances are such that participants cannot be assumed to share an understanding of the who, when, and why of an action that is to be forwarded, directive speakers must design their imperatively formatted turns more elaborately. This is what we see happening with the maximally formatted imperative directive in the following extract from the same cooking class:

(2) “Pistä sää Nina tonne nurkkaa sitte se” ‘you Nina put it there into the corner then’ (adapted from Raevaara 2017:395)

[Four of the girls are preparing star-shaped pastry with their teacher, Heli. The cut-out pieces of dough are now ready to be placed on the baking tray.]

1 Nina: kaikkie omilla +sä teit [ton,  
with all of your own ones you did that,

2 Nina: +STANDS UP

3 Tiia: [e:-ih vaa  
no but

4 +↑iha omil↓la,  
with my very own,

5 Nina: +TAKES HER PASTRY

6 Heli: → >no< nii pistä sää, (.)  
PRT PRT put.IMP.SG you  
all right you

7 +Nina tonne nurkkaa  
[name] DEM2.LOC-ILL corner-ILL  
Nina put it there into the corner

8 Nina: +BEGINS TO MOVE TOWARDS THE TRAY

9 Heli: sitte ↑se, (0.4) siihe;  
then DEM3.SG DEM3.LOC-ILL  
then, (0.4) there



10 Nina: \*mä kirjotan tähä.  
I'll write here

11 Nina: \*TAKES A PENCIL FROM THE TABLE

12 Heli: → joo-o, (0.5) pistä vähä sinne  
PRT put.IMP.SG a.bit DEM3.LOC-ALL  
yeah, (0.5) put it a bit

13 reunempaa et kato  
side-COMPA-ILL that look.PRT  
closer to the side so that y' see

14 se, (.) mahtuu  
DEM3.SG have.room-SG3  
it, (.) there is room for

15 ↑mahollisimma paljo samaa.  
possible-SUP much same-PAR  
as many [pastries] as possible on the same [tray]

(0.5)

16 Heli: pitää aina miettiä nii;  
0 must always think-INF so  
0 must always think of that

In this extract, Nina and Tiia are having a bit of a spat with one another (lines 1 and 3–4) when Nina stands up (line 2) and takes her pastry (line 5). Heli now instructs her to place it in a corner of the baking tray (lines 6–7 and 9). Nina begins to move towards the tray (line 8) but, before executing the requested action, announces that she wants to write her name on the greaseproof paper next to her pastries (so as to identify them later) (lines 10–11). Heli now explains that Nina should put the pastries closer to the side so that there is room for as many others as possible on the same tray (lines 12–15). After a brief pause, she adds a piece of general advice that it is always important to think of this (line 16).

By comparison with the minimally formatted directive in (1), Heli's directives here are much more elaborate. In lines 6–9 she uses a personal pronoun *sää* 'you' and the proper name *Nina* to specify who the intended agent<sup>6</sup> of the action is, and a full noun phrase *tonne nurkkaa* 'that corner' to specify where the pastries should be placed. Her directive is presented as being less urgent than in Ex. (1) by virtue of the fact that it is prefaced by the turn-initial particles *no nii*, which marks a transition from one activity to another (Raevaara 1989), and that it contains internal pauses. When Nina does not initiate the action immediately but first begins to write her name next to the pastries, Heli issues another directive, again specifying where the pastries should be put: *sinne reunempaa* 'closer to the side' and adding an explanation for why this should happen: *et...mahtuu mahollisimma paljo samaa* 'so that ... there is room for as many as possible on the same [tray]'.

In lines 6–9 of Ex. (2) then, Heli and Nina have not formed a joint focus of attention, in contrast to the previous example, where a joint activity was already initiated. The circumstances thus mandate an explicit naming of the agent of the intended action, a pronominal reference to what is to be placed, and a full lexical specification of where it is to be placed. When a delay ensues before execution of the action, the directive is re-issued in lines 12–15, again with pronominal reference to the pastry and an exact specification of where it is to be placed. Moreover, this re-issued directive

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<sup>6</sup> Throughout this chapter, we use the word 'agent' to mean the individual(s) who is(are) to carry out the nominated action.

turn contains an account, an explicit reason for the desirability of the action.

In short, both directives are designed according to what is shared

knowledge at that moment in order to ensure an intersubjective

understanding of the who, what, when, and why of the intended action.

### 3. Directive turns with zero-person+modal constructions

In addition to designing directive turns with imperatives, Finnish speakers can also make use of a so-called zero-person construction in which a modal expression of necessity or desirability is combined with a non-finite verb form expressing the action to be forwarded. In this construction the verb (modal or copula) is inflected for third-person singular present tense but lacks any expression of a subject: for example, *0 täytyy vaihtaa* ‘0 needs to change’<sup>7</sup> or *0 on pakko syödä* ‘0 must eat’.<sup>8</sup> Unlike directives with imperatives, directives with zero-person+modal constructions can by definition never be fully minimal: this is because the modal expression always makes the necessity or desirability of the intended action explicit.

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<sup>7</sup> *0 täytyy vaihtaa*  
need.to-3SG change-INF

<sup>8</sup> *0 on pakko syödä*  
cop-3SG obligation eat-INF

Here is an example of a directive turn making use of a zero-person+modal construction:

(3) "Maanantaina 0 täytyy hakee se pois" '0 needs to pick it up on Monday' [KTA, Sg94\_A5]

[Make has lent an excavator to his friend Pete. Now he is calling Pete to announce that he needs to get it back.]

1 Make: >joo täytyy tota (.) jollet sä  
PRT need.to-3SG PRT if-NEG-2G 2SG  
yeah, 0 needs to if you don't

2 maanantaina< ö kerkii (0.6) maanantaiks  
Monday-ESS have.the.time Monday-TRA  
have the time on Monday by Monday

3 [kerkii niin täytyy vaihtaa]  
have.the.time then need.to-3SG change  
then 0 needs to change ((it))

4 Pete: [mhhhhh ]

5 Make: toiseen konee[seen sitte.]  
another-ILL machine-ILL then  
to another machine then

6 Pete: [.nhhh ]

7 k- >kyl mä (.) (tota noin ni)<  
PRT 1SG PRT PRT PRT  
I do

8 m (.) sen mitä tarvitaanki ni  
DEM3.SG-ACC what-PAR need-PASS-4-CLI so  
whatever is needed so

9 ehdin tos tekemään et .hhh  
have.the.time-1SG DEM2.SG-INE do-INF-ILL PRT  
I have the time to do ((it)) so

10 Make: ni[i. ]  
PRT  
yes

((11 lines omitted in which Pete describes the problems he has been having with removing the big stones in his yard))

22 Make: no joka tapaukses se (.) 'te  
PRT every case-INE DEM3.SG then  
well in any case 0 needs to pick it up then

23 → maanantaina täytyy  
Monday-ESS 0 need-3SG  
on Monday

24 → kuitenkin hakee (se) pois< ni saat  
anyhow pick DEM3.SG away PRT get-2SG  
anyhow so you'll get

25 toisen tilalle jos tarvi(it [sit],)  
another-ACC instead if need-2SG then  
another one as a replacement if you need it then

26 Pete: [ .nhh]h

27 >tota noin ni joo.=katotaan  
PRT PRT PRT PRT look-PASS-4  
we'll see

28 sitä n't öö öh .hh sä haet sen  
DEM3.SG PRT you.SG pick-2SG DEM3.SG-ACC  
about it you will pick it up

29 pois koska<.h  
up when  
when (('when will you pick it up'))

30 Make: [(-) ]

31 Pete: [>voit sä ha]kee sunnuntainaki  
can-2SG you.SG pick.up-INF Sunday-ESS-CLI  
you can pick it up on Sunday too

32 jos sä haluut<.h=  
if you.SG want-2SG  
if you want to

33 Make: =ö:e:m minä viitti  
NEG-1SG I bother-INF

I won't bother

((Talk continues about the fact that Make has sold the excavator to someone who wants to pick it up on Monday))

After inquiring about how far along Pete is in using the excavator to remove the rocks from his front yard (data not shown), Make now announces that the excavator needs to be picked up on Monday.<sup>9</sup> He quickly adds that Pete can have a replacement for it if necessary (lines 22–25). The form used in Make's turn, *m<sub>a</sub>anantaina täytyy kuitenkin hakee (se) pois* 'anyhow 0 needs to pick it up on Monday' is a declarative expression of need, one that is often said to imply deonticity (Stevanovic 2011, Zinken & Ogierman 2011, Rossi 2015, Rossi & Zinken 2016). However, what characterizes this Finnish construction – and its correlates in languages such as Italian and Polish – is that the agent of the action which is said to be necessary or desirable is not specified.

In the case of (3) the participants can assume that it is Make who will be the agent of the action named, since the excavator belongs to him and he has chosen the deictic verb *hakea* 'pick up' to refer to the process of getting it back. But his announcement has implications for Pete, who will need to make it available on Monday. It is in this sense that Make's turn functions as a directive to Pete. Pete's response acknowledges as much: he

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<sup>9</sup> Note that Make's turn in lines 1–5 also contains a zero-person+modal construction. However, it is treated as an inquiry as to whether Pete will be done by Monday and does not lead to a directive sequence.

first hedges on whether he will need a replacement *katotaan sitä* ‘we’ll see about it’ (lines 27–28) and then inquires when Make wants to pick the excavator up on Monday, indirectly confirming that he is prepared to return it (lines 28–29). He then goes on to offer to give it back already on Sunday (lines 31–32), and by using the second person formulation *voit sä* ‘can-2SG you’ he makes it explicit that Make will be the agent of picking the excavator up. In sum, the turn in lines 22–25 functions as a directive because the participants intersubjectively share assumptions about the tasks that the project involves and their respective agents.

A zero-person+modal directive such as the one in (3) differs from an imperatively formatted directive as in (1) because it does not inherently single out the recipient as agent. Imperatives always target the recipient as agent, although they may not express this explicitly, whereas zero-person+modal directives depend on participant inferencing to determine who is to carry out the action named. In (3) it is the directive speaker who will function as the agent of the picking up, although the recipient is also implicated in this action. In the following case, it is the recipient of the zero-person+modal turn who, it is implied, should become the agent of the action named:

(4) “Kyl niille hyvä smirgelii olis näy:ttää” ‘Indeed would be good [for 0] to show them the sanding machine’ [KTA: Sg 094A\_7] (adapted from Couper-Kuhlen & Etelämäki 2015:12–13)

[Johan has been making some wedges for his friend Petri. In this excerpt he announces that he has just finished them.]

1 Joh: tota: mä tein ne (.) kii:lat  
 PRT I do-PST-1SG DEM3.PL wedge-PL  
 uhm I did the wedges

2 nyt:te just [äskön.]  
 PRT PRT PRT  
 now a moment ago

3 Pet: [aha? ] aha, [.hhh ]  
 PRT PRT

4 Joh: → [ja jah::] kyl  
 PRT PRT PRT  
 and and indeed

5 → >niille niinku< hyvä smirgelii  
 DEM3.PL-ALL PRT good sanding.machine-PAR  
 would be good

6 → olis näy:ttää vähä,  
 be-COND.3SG show-INF little  
 [for 0] to show them a bit of the sanding machine

7 (0.5)

8 Pet: joo, mä voin: mä voin tuola<  
 PRT I can-1SG I can-1SG DEM2.LOC-ADE  
 yes I can I can

9 töissä va[ikka] vetää [ne joo.]  
 work-PL-INE for.example pull-INF DEM3.PL PRT  
 run them through for example at work then

10 Joh: [joo:.] [et tota]  
 PRT PRT PRT  
 yes. so uhm

11 mä kattelin ei siin,  
 I look-FRE-PST-1SG NEG PRT  
 I was looking and thinking that no



12 =jos siin alkaa viilaa  
PRT PRT 0 begin-3 file-INF  
if 0 begins to file

13 niin siin meneep (0.4) ik- ikä pe[rkele.  
PRT PRT go-3SG age EXPL  
then it will take a hell of a long time

14 Pet: [siin  
DEM3.SG.INE  
there

15 on niin monta eri kulmaa  
be.3SG so many different angle-PAR  
are so many different angles

16 kyl[lä.h ]  
PRT  
indeed

In lines 1–2 Johan informs his friend Petri that he has just finished making the wedges. But he goes on to declare that it would be good to sand them down with a sanding machine, using a zero-person+modal construction with an expression of desirability *olla hyvä* ‘be good’ (lines 4–6). This construction does not specify who should do the sanding. However, Petri treats Johan’s turn as a directive to him by committing to execute the action himself at work (lines 8–9).<sup>10</sup> The zero-person+modal construction functions as a directive in this case because the participants can infer that Johan cannot do the machine-sanding himself (presumably because he does not have a machine), whereas Petri can, because he has such a machine at work. This inferencing leads to Petri agreeing to do it in next turn. As Johan goes on to explain, it would take much longer if the wedges were to be filed

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<sup>10</sup> The turn-final *joo* shows that the formulation of Petri’s turn is a response to a prior directive addressed to him.

by hand (lines 11–13), which is presumably what would have to happen if he were to do it himself.<sup>11</sup>

In both Exs. (3) and (4) zero-person+modal constructions are used to implement directive turns in a sequence-initiating position. Subsequently they receive responses that indicate that the recipient is committing to the execution of the action in question. The same construction type can, however, also be used for directive actions in responsive position. Here is a case in point:

(5) ”Sitte 0 täytyy vaan tehdä joku ulkomaan keikka” ’Then 0 just has to make a trip abroad’ [KTA: SG s01b\_07] (adapted from Sorjonen 2001:124–125)

[Sisko has been telling her friend Tuire about her plans to sell her summer cottage. Tuire has, however, pointed to the emotional consequences of doing so.]

1 S: [kyllä se vois olla kauhe>eta mutta ku  
PRT it can-CON.3SG be-INF awful-PAR but as  
surely it could be awful but as

2 mä oon ollu  
I be-1SG be-PPC  
I've been

3 niin (.) semmonen (.) #m m# rapakuntonen ja  
so such mud-condition-ADJ and  
in so (.) such a (.) #m m# a bad shape and

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<sup>11</sup> Note here too the use of a zero-person construction (line 12), in this case, however, without a modal expression of necessity or desirability. The form in line 12 references the action of filing by hand without specifying the agent, but it does not function as a directive because (a) it occurs in a hypothetical conditional clause that is serving as an account and (b) it lacks an indication of necessity or desirability.

- 4 huono olonen kaiken# .hh kaiken ke#sän  
 bad being-ADJ all-ACC all-ACC summer-ACC  
 feeling bad all# .hh all su#mmer
- 5 oikeestaan (.) keväästä lähtien  
 in.fact spring-ELA starting  
 in fact (.) ever since the spring
- 6 ni (.) e mulla e# si- s- siin  
 PRT I-ADE ?it ?it DEM3-INE  
 so (.) er I er i- i- there
- 7 on ollu joitaki asioita jotka on  
 is be-PPC some(PAR) thing-PL-PAR that.PL.PAR is  
 have been some things about it that have
- 8 käyny mulle niinku rasitukses.  
 go-PPC I-ALL PRT burden-TRA  
 become kind of a burden to me.

9 T: → .mhh no sitte 0 täytyy vaan (.) tehdä joku  
 PRT then 0 must just make-INF some  
 .mhh well then 0 just have to (.) make a

10 → ulkomaan keikka sen lisäksi.h[h  
 out-country-GEN trip it-GEN addition-TRA  
 trip abroad in addition.hh

11 S: ⇒ [Nii:.  
 PRT  
 Nii:.

12 ⇒ .mh Mä oon nyt yrittäny rauhottaa  
 I be-1 now try-PPC protect-INF  
 .mh I have tried now to protect

13 ⇒ .mhhh ö marraskuun #uu# kahta  
 November-GEN two-PAR  
 .mhhh er the last two weeks of

14 ⇒ viimmestä viik#koo ja# (.) sanonu matkatoimistoon  
 last-PAR week-PAR and say-PPC travel-office-ILL  
 November and (.) told the travel agency

15 ⇒ että (.) kuhan nyt jonkun matkan #kattoo  
 that if now some-ACC trip-ACC looks  
 that (.) if they just find some trip

16 ⇒ jossa ö ö pääasia että o yhen henge  
 where main-thing that is one-GEN person.GEN  
 in which the main thing is that there's a single

17 ⇒ ↑huone ja ↓lämmintä#.

room and warm-PAR  
↑room and ↓warm.

18 T: loistava tota: [ajanko]hta.  
splendid PRT time-GEN-point  
splendid uh: timing.

In lines 1–8 Sisko concedes Tuire’s point about the emotional consequences of selling her cottage but goes on to say that her current state – she has felt bad ever since spring – means that the cottage has become a burden for her. As is common in such complaint and troubles-telling sequences (Jefferson & Lee 1981), the recipient, here Tuire, positions herself as troubles recipient and offers a piece of advice. This advice is delivered with a zero-person+modal construction: *O täytyy vaan (.) tehdä joku ulkomaan keikka* ‘0 just have to (.) make a trip abroad’ (lines 9–10), which focuses on the situation as a whole. By defocusing the agent, the piece of advice appears as a generic one instead of being a piece of advice concerning a personal situation. Had she instead used a construction with a second-person subject (*sin täytyy vaan...*), the focus would have been more on how Sisko personally handles the situation rather than the situation as such. Given the sequential context, it is clear that Tuire’s turn design targets Sisko as the agent of the action named, although this is not stated as such. Sisko explicates her understanding that Tuire’s turn targets her by agreeing with *nii* and using the first-person pronoun in reporting that she has engaged a travel agent to find a trip for her at the end of November. That is, she acknowledges the deonticity of Sisko’s turn as expressing an obligation for

her to act (Stevanovic & Peräkylä 2012), but claims that she has already acted upon it.

The point we wish to make with respect to zero-person+modal constructions is twofold. First, through the combination of zero person with an expression of necessity or desirability, these constructions can be used deontically as directives. Yet in contrast to imperative directives, in which the necessity or desirability of a particular action is taken for granted, the zero person+modal constructions make it explicit. This means that they can be expected to occur in situations where an intersubjective understanding of necessity or desirability is not given. Second, zero-person+modal constructions target agency in a way that is different from imperatives. Rather than inherently assigning agency to the addressee without necessarily saying as much explicitly, zero-person+modal constructions *underspecify* agency.<sup>12</sup> Participants must infer who is to carry out the intended action and may even find themselves negotiating this role (Couper-Kuhlen & Etelämäki 2015; see also Rossi 2015). These turn designs can be expected to occur when directive speakers wish to focus explicitly on the desirability/necessity of the action itself instead of on who is to accomplish the action.

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<sup>12</sup> We are aware that the word *underspecify* assumes that the default situation is one where agents are specified, but we are unable to develop this point further without more empirical work.

#### 4. Directive sequences with both imperatives and zero-person+modal constructions

An appreciation of the different *modus operandi* of imperative and zero-person+modal constructions in directives can be gained when we examine their co-occurrence in the same conversational sequence or course of action. This happens in particular when a directive issued with an imperative form does not meet with full and immediate compliance or commitment in subsequent talk. Directive speakers will then often turn to zero-person+modal constructions in reissuing the directive, arguably because the recipient's resistance indicates that assumptions concerning the necessity or desirability of the action are not intersubjectively shared. Here is a case where this happens:

(6) ”Käy siinä työpaikkalääkärillä ” ’Visit that company physician’ [KTA: Sg 398]

[Kati has invited her friend Taru over for the evening and they are drinking wine. The topic shifts to dry skin in the winter and Taru shows Kati a bad rash on her forearm. In data not shown here, Kati urges Taru to have the rash examined by a doctor, but Taru insists that she has already done this but the doctor did not take the rash seriously.]

6 Taru: mno mut se oli sitä mieltä et ei se  
well but his opinion was that it isn't

- 7 et [ se on vaan jot]ain.  
that it is just something
- 8 Kati: [no hyvä. ]  
well good
- 9 Kati: jos se on sitä että ku  
if it is so because
- 10 mä:[:# olen# (ihan) kauhuissani ]<sup>13</sup>  
I am totally terrified
- 11 Taru: [mut et sil- sillon >kun mä tietyst<] kävin  
but when when I of course went to
- 12 siel lääkäriellä ni täs ei ollu just mitään.  
that doctor there wasn't much here (=the rash was  
hardly visible)
- 13 .hhhhh (0.2) ja sit taas (m)ei menny ku hetken  
and then it took only a little
- 14 aikaa ni tähän >nkun< ihan kun tyhjästä <taas  
time until here when like from nowhere again
- 15 tuli tämm[östä jotain.> ]  
came something like this
- 16 Kati: → [.hhhh käy sii-nä työ]=  
visit.IMP.SG DEM3-INE work  
visit that
- 17 → =paikkalääkä[ri-llä.=  
place.physician-ADE  
company physician
- 18 Taru: [↑no  
well
- 19 [siellä m]ä oon °käy[ny.°]  
there I have been
- 20 Kati: [sinne ] [pää]see  
there 0 gets
- 21 [nopeesti. ]  
quickly
- 22 Taru: [↑siellä mä kä]vin.  
that's where I went

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<sup>13</sup> It can be inferred from the conversation that she is referring to the possibility of the rash being melanoma.

23 Kati: nii.

24 Taru: >sin< ↑lääkäri katto sen.  
the doctor checked it

25 (0.2)

26 Taru: tai olevinaan  
or doing being

27 s- si[n siinä kohtii.  
at that that time

28 Kati: ⇒ [no sit 0 pitää men-nä uudelleen,  
PRT then must-3SG go-INF again  
well then 0 must go again

29 ku mä aatteli:n- mä sitä tarkoitan että kun  
because I thought- what I mean (is) that if

30 (ne ois katsonu nyt/nyt jos Kelsul nyt)  
(they would have looked at it closely now/you now  
go to the health center)

31 (vä[hän tarkkaan/lähet aikaa)  
(a bit more thoroughly/and (reserve) a time)

32 Taru: [ei ei eiku mä  
no no no since I

33 Kati: niin sinnehän saat sitte taas  
then there you know you get (an appointment)  
then again

34 =seu[raavan kerran ku se on  
the next time when it's

35 Taru: [eiku mä käv- #ni#  
no but I we-

36 kii[nni jo mutta,  
already closed (disappeared) but

37 [kävin työpaikkalääkärillä. =ja sit  
went to the company physician=and then

38 s[e otatti mult #u:  
he took my

39 Kati: [nii,

40 (0.5)

41 Kati: ni[i >mut että se näkis< sen tollasena.



yes but he would see it like that  
 42 Taru: [ve- veri-  
           bl- blood  
 43 (.)  
 44 Kati: nytte.  
           now

When Taru describes how the rash came back suddenly and spread all over her arm (lines 12–15), Taru again proposes a solution with an imperative form: *käy siinä työpaikkalääkärillä* ‘visit that company physician’ (line 16–17), adding that appointments can be gotten there quickly (lines 20–21). The prenominal demonstrative *siinä* draws attention to the company doctor, thus adding to the pursuit of the action expressed in the imperative TCU (cf. the locative adverb *siel* in line 12, see Laury 1996). In overlap, however, Taru responds that the company doctor is exactly where she was (lines 18–19 and 22). She adds that the doctor checked her arm (line 24) or made a semblance of checking it (line 26–27). In the face of this resistance, Kati now reissues her directive with a zero-person+modal construction: *no sit 0 pitää mennä uudelleen* ‘well then 0 must go again’ (line 28).<sup>14</sup> Here too, because Taru’s resistance indicates that she does not see the point of the action, Kati designs her turn with a modal verb explicitly stating that it is necessary, going on to provide an account: *että se näkis< sen tollasena...nytte* ‘so that he would see it like that...now’ (lines 41 and 44). By opting for a zero-

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<sup>14</sup> Her turn preface *no sit* shows that she is taking into account Kati’s previous report, as does her reformulation of the action as *mennä uudelleen* ‘go again’.

person subject, she underspecifies the agent, focussing on the action and its necessity. Both these design features serve to tailor Kati's turn so that it will fit the intersubjective requirements of the moment.

A final example follows basically the same pattern; however, in contrast to the prior example where two different verbs were used for the nominated action (*käydä* 'visit' and *mennä* 'go'), in this case the nominated action is insisted on by using the same verb (*syödä* 'eat'):

(7) "Syö pois vaa" 'Just eat away' [KTA: Sg 399f]

[Mirja and Teemu are a couple and share a flat. Teemu, who is away from the flat, has phoned Mirja, who is at home, to ask about a study assignment. As the call is about to close, Mirja asks Teemu if he has eaten. When he answers in the affirmative, she confesses that she has eaten some of his pizza.]

- 1 Mirja:        [°#aha joo#° ku]  
                   PRT PRT    PRT  
                   aha okay because
- 2                mä söin                sun  
                   1SG eat-PST-1SG 2SG-GEN  
                   I ate your
- 3                pitsasta [puolet,                ]  
                   pizza-ELA half  
                   pizza half-way 'I ate half of your pizza'
- 4 Teemu:                                [söit                mun]        pitsat.  
     eat-PST-2SG 1SG-GEN pizza-PL  
     (you) ate my pizza.
- 5                <°kaik[ki.°>]  
                   all.of.it
- 6 Mirja:                                [siis] E:N        KAIkkee syöny, vaa  
     PRT    NEG-1SG all        eat-PPC PRT  
     no (I) didn't eat all (of it), but only
- 7                puolet,=  
                   half  
                   half (of it)

- 8 Teemu: → =fhehhäf no e:iiku syö pois vaa,  
PRT PRT eat[IMP.SG] away just  
well no just eat away
- 9 eiku mä otan täält  
PRT 1SG take-1SG DEM1.LOC-ABL  
I'll have here
- 10 Mirja: =no ku< MÄ AATTELIN ET sä (mä-s-)  
PRT PRT 1SG think-FRE-PST-1SG PRT 2SG  
well you see I was thinking that you are
- 11 mässytät siel vaa  
munch-2SG DEM3.LOC-ADE just  
just munching there
- 12 kaik[kee hy]v#ää#  
all-PAR good-PAR  
all kinds of good (things)
- 13 Teemu: [>joo joo.<]  
PRT PRT  
yeah yeah
- 14 Mirja: ja meitsil ei oo mit#ää# r#uo#kaa,  
PRT 1SG-ADE NEG BE any-PAR food-PAR  
and poor me doesn't have any food
- 15 Teemu: → fniih heh:f joo eiku syö se  
PRT PRT PRT eat[IMP.SG] DEM3.SG  
yes yeah no eat
- 16 loppuki.  
rest-CLI  
the rest of it too
- 17 ei se nyt (.) (mitää -)=  
NEG DEM3.SG PRT  
it doesn't
- 18 Mirja: =no e:[mmä,>sis] ei mul oo en[ää nälkä]  
PRT NEG-I PRT NEG I-ADE be anymore hunger  
well I won't I mean I'm not hungry anymore
- 19 Teemu: [ (-- ) ] [syö:t ]  
eat[IND]-2SG  
[you] eat
- 20 syöt ku se [mö]  
eat[IND]-2SG PRT DEM3.SG  
[you] eat because it

21 Mirja: [no ] eihän mul oo  
PRT NEG-CLI I-ADE be  
well I'm not hungry

22 [nälkä (enää) ]  
hunger (anymore)  
anymore am I

23 Teemu: ⇒ [ menee pilalle.] pakko syödä,  
0 go-3SG spoiled must eat-INF  
(it will) spoil 0 must eat

24 Mirja: ei mullo nälkä yhtää.  
NEG I-ADE-be hunger at.all  
I'm not hungry at all

25 (.)

26 Mirja: [enää,]  
anymore

27 Teemu: ⇒ [e:iku ] pitää vaa syödä.  
PRT 0 must just eat-INF  
no matter 0 must just eat

28 .hhh NO JOO katellaan sit vähä myöhemmin  
PRT PRT look-FRE-PASS PRT little later  
well okay, we'll see then a bit later

When Mirja announces that she has eaten half of Teemu's pizza (lines 2–3 & 6–7), Teemu uses an imperatively formatted turn to encourage her to continue eating it (line 8): *syö pois vaa* 'just eat away'. Mirja now launches a tongue-in-cheek account for why she felt justified in doing what she did (lines 10–14), whereupon Teemu reiterates his directive: *eiku syö se loppuki* 'no eat the rest of it too'. Both of these turns are minimal, reflecting what is proposed to be an intersubjective understanding of who should do the eating, what Mirja should eat, and why this is necessary or desirable. Yet Mirja now rejects Teemu's directive, claiming that she is not hungry anymore (lines 18). Teemu insists that she should eat the rest, using an

indicative declarative form of the verb *syödä* inflected for second person (lines 19–20),<sup>15</sup> but Mirja reiterates that she is not hungry anymore (lines 21–22). In the face of this resistance, Teemu now resorts to a zero-person+modal construction with a noun (*pakko*) expressing obligation to make his point: *pakko syödä* ‘0 must eat’, prefaced by what is arguably a reason for doing so: *menee pilalle* ‘[it will] spoil’ (line 23). Again Mirja claims that she is not hungry anymore, and again Teemu claims that the left-over pizza should be eaten: *eiku 0 pitää vaa syödä* ‘no matter 0 must just eat’, with a zero-person+modal construction denying the validity of her argument (line 27).

What we can observe happening then in this extended directive sequence is that Teemu’s turns are continually adjusted to adapt to what is perceived to be intersubjective common ground. The imperative forms in lines 8 and 15 suggest that Teemu is assuming that who should eat what and why is intersubjectively shared. But the fact that Mirja resists his directives shows that she does not share Teemu’s assumptions that she should eat the left-over pizza. Teemu then adjusts his turns accordingly, both to express the necessity of the action and to provide a reason for the necessity, at the same time bringing in a moral component (food spoiling). In doing so, he uses verb forms that underspecify agency, focussing on the action and its necessity.

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<sup>15</sup> For more on what Teemu achieves in deploying this second-person declarative form, see Etelämäki & Couper-Kuhlen (2017).

In both examples the zero-person+modal construction, with its verb form in the third-person singular leaving a slot for a singular agent, opens up a normative sphere where anybody in such a situation would be under the same obligation (see Laitinen 2006).

## **5. Discussion and conclusion**

We have shown that by choosing one of two turn designs for implementing directive actions the speaker makes a choice between different assumptions about shared understandings in the activity and sequential context. We have argued that imperatively formatted directives reflect and/or reflexively construct situations in which assumptions about the who, when, and why of the action encoded in the verb are intersubjectively shared (minimal turn design), and that when there are aspects that are not shared, this is made explicit in the design of the turn (elaborate turn design). A directive turn design deploying a zero-person construction, by contrast, makes even fewer assumptions about what is shared. It co-occurs with modal verbs and other expressions that make explicit the necessity or desirability of the nominated action. This comes out clearly in the ordering of the two directive turn designs when they are used in the same sequence for insisting on the same or a similar activity. An imperatively formatted directive, making the most assumptions about what is shared, is used first. In the face of resistance, the

zero-person+modal construction, making fewer assumptions, is deployed later to make explicit the relevance of the nominated action, thus working towards a re-establishment of intersubjectivity.

In a Schegloffian understanding (1992), intersubjectivity is displayed procedurally through the infrastructure of conversational organization in the here and now. In this view intersubjectivity is seen as something achieved in the turn-by-turn unfolding of sequences of action and the initiation of (other) repair is a means for defending intersubjectivity. Yet in our examples we have seen that during these ongoing interactions participants are also making decisions about how to act in the world and that they do not always agree on what should be done. This takes us to a Schuetzian understanding of intersubjectivity (1953), according to which all our interactions are based on the idealized belief of a common view of the world for all practical purposes (reciprocity of perspectives: interchangeability of standpoints and congruent systems of relevancies), one in which assumptions are shared about, for instance, what future actions should be done, by whom, and when. In this understanding intersubjectivity is disrupted when it becomes apparent that participants do not agree on these assumptions. We can see evidence for this lack of agreement when directives are resisted. This can happen even though there is no initiation of repair.

Yet the two understandings of intersubjectivity are not mutually exclusive. For where else would a shared view of the world be negotiated if

not in the here and now, relying on the micro-organization of social interaction and our command of it? If we do not understand what the other person is doing with their turn, we have the option to initiate repair. However, even though we may understand the interaction, we can still disagree about how things should be outside the here and now, and in these situations our systems of relevancies concerning the world are not congruent. This is precisely the situation that arises in our last two examples, where a directive action is implemented first with an imperative turn design and then with a zero-person+modal construction. The use of these two turn designs in a directive sequence where resistance is encountered provides evidence for the fact that the reciprocity of perspectives can be misjudged and that intersubjectivity can be defended without repair.

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