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**Дурст-Андерсен П.В.**

# ОТРАЖЕНИЕ СОЦИЕТАЛЬНОЙ ЛОГИКИ В ИСПОЛЬЗОВАНИИ ФОРМЫ ИМПЕРАТИВА НОСИТЕЛЯМИ РУССКОЙ ЛИНГВОКУЛЬТУРЫ[1]

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*Аннотация*. В статье представлены результаты исследования прагматического использования грамматических форм инфинитива и императива для реализации речевого акта директивы, передающих знание о возможном / невозможном, необходимом / ненужном, разрешенном / запрещенном, обязательном / не обязательном. Рассматриваются ситуации речевого взаимодействия представителей русской лингвокультуры в рамках авторитарного и неавторитарного типов общения. Делается вывод о том, что в русской лингвокультуре инфинитив используется для реализации запретов или приказов на авторитарном уровне общения, тогда как императив используется при решении задач на обиходно-бытовом уровне коммуникации. По сравнению с индивидуалистической культурой Соединенного Королевства, которая базируется на алетическом представлении о возможностях, и по сравнению с коллективистской культурой Китая, которая основана на деонтическом понятии обязательства, в российском обществе применяется третья разновидность социетальной логики, объединяющая признаки алетической и деонтической логики, что, в свою очередь, является одним из оснований того, что форма императива в рамках русской лингвокультуры не соотносится с негативными коннотациями.

*Ключевые слова*: аспект и модальность; инфинитив и императив в функции директивы; индивидуалистические и коллективистские культуры; лицо; первое, второе и третье лицо.

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**Durst-Andersen P.V.**

**The Russian imperative as a mirror of societal logic**

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*Abstract*. By separating and defining the use of infinitives and imperatives as directives it is concluded that the infinitive is used to issue prohibition or to give orders at the authoritative level of the Russian society, whereas the imperative is used in social problem solving among ordinary people at the non-authoritative level of the society. When dealing with single actions, it is demonstrated that the perfective imperative form is linked to alethic modality, i.e. laws of nature, while the imperfective imperative is tied up with deontic modality, i.e. laws of society. Compared to the individualist culture of United Kingdom that seems to be based on the alethic notion of possibility and compared to the collectivist culture of China that seems to be grounded in the deontic notion of obligation, the Russian society stands out as a third variety with a sharp distinction between two different types of societal logic: knowledge of what is possible, impossible, necessary or unnecessary and knowledge of what is permitted, prohibited, obligated or not obligated for specific persons in concrete situations. It is furthermore demonstrated that whereas the English society focusses on the hearer's face and the Chinese society on the speaker's face, the Russian society focusses on both the speaker's and the hearer's face. In that way, a problem is considered a mutual problem, a problem of society that has to be solved as quickly as possible. By constantly establishing contact between members of the society the imperative mood can be said to have a binding effect. This is part of the reason why the imperative itself has no negative connotations.

*Keywords*: aspect and modality; infinitives and imperatives as directives; individualist and collectivist cultures; face; first, second and third person.

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## 1. Introductory remarks

One of the most striking features of Russian aspect in comparison to, for instance, English or French aspect (cf. [Durst-Andersen, 2018]) is its penetration of the total system of verbs so that all verbal forms, finite as well as infinite forms, have a perfective variant as well as an imperfective one. As to the imperative mood, the result is that all action verbs, i.e. verbs that name an activity related to a state by telicity, have a perfective form (e.g., *Sjad'te*! 'Sit down!') and an imperfective one (e.g., *Sadites'*! 'Sit down!'). This means that whenever one uses a direct speech act to issue a directive, there is an

obligatory choice between the perfective and the imperfective imperative.

Whereas English speakers often prefer an indirect speech act (e.g., *Won't you sit down?; Why don't you sit down?; You may sit down; Will you sit down!*; etc.) to the direct one (*Sit down!*), Russian speakers tend to use a direct speech act instead of one of the indirect alternatives when issuing directives. So when one in English says *Can you pass me the salt, please*? or *Won't you have a cup of coffee*? Russians would tend to say *Podajte mne sol', pozhalujsta*! and *Berite kofe, pozhalujsta*! [Rykov-Ibsen, 2016]. The preference for the imperative mood appears very clearly from an extensive questionnaire study involving English and Russian speakers [Ларина, 2009] as well as a face-to-face interaction study [Bolden, 2017]. T.V. Larina [Ларина, 2009, p. 151) shows that Russians prefer the imperative form to all other forms of request, whereas it is the opposite with English speakers. G. Bolden [Bolden, 2017] demonstrates that 90% of all Russian requests were carried out via an imperative construction and the majority of them did not involve any mitigating devices. This clear tendency is confirmed by our Global English Communication Project which also included a production test in the participants' mother tongue, i.e., Russian, Danish, British and Chinese (which is disregarded here because it has no imperative form)[1]. In the so-called Trolley scenario (one out of 17 scenarios), the test showed that 84% of the Russian speakers, 50% of the British English speakers and 24% of the Danish speakers used the imperative form to give an offer, while 4% of the Russians, 30% of the English and 64% of the Danes used the interrogative form and 12% of the Russians, 20% of the English and 12% of the Danes used the declarative form. Although the percentage may vary from scenario to scenario, the figures support T.V. Larina's and G. Bolden's findings. This observed discrepancy in frequency among the three languages might have to do with the fact that Russian speakers have at their disposal two imperative forms, i.e., a perfective as well as an imperfective form, as opposed to the British English and

[1] The GEBCom Project was supported from 2013 to 2018 by The Carlsberg Foundation and included 275 participants from local Carlsberg factories and public universities in England, Denmark, Russia, China and Japan. The participants were tested with respect to speech production in English and in their mother tongue, and with respect to speech reception and word associations in English.

Danish speakers, who have only one. There is, however, also another important difference in pragmatic usage between Russian speakers, on the one hand, and British English and Danish speakers, on the other. In Russian, the infinitive form is also used to issue directives, whereas this is not the case in English or in Danish, since the infinitive is not employed in this way.

## 2. The differences between the infinitive and the imperative when used to issue a directive

If you are in the metro or at a university in Russia, you cannot avoid noticing that the infinitive form is used to issue a prohibition, for instance, *Ne prislonjat'sja*! 'Don't lean against the door!' and *Ne shumet'! Idet ekzamen.* 'Don't make noise! Exam.' In these two cases, the imperative form is used in English, but not in Russian. In the same way, if you look into the way commands, i.e., military orders, are issued in the Russian Army, you will not find the imperative form, but the infinitive form, e.g., *Smotret' prjamo*! 'Front!'; *Nalevo ravnjat'sja*! 'Fall in!'; *Povernut' napravo*! 'Turn right!', etc. Again we notice that the imperative is used in English, but not in Russia. It thus turns out that real orders cannot be issued via the Russian imperative form, but have to be issued via the infinitive form, while they are given via the imperative in English. This might be an important part of the reason why Russians do not associate an order with the imperative form and why British speakers do.

Let us try to define the use conditions of the infinitive and the imperative forms in Russian. Why do we find the following sign in front of the escalator in the metro: *Stojte sprava, prochodite sleva*! and not '*Sprava stojat', sleva prochodit'*! Any infinitive form used as a directive would leave you with no choice: you must obey the order. Moreover, you are not in a position to negotiate, when you are confronted with an infinitive form. In the metro scenario, you are about to stepping on the escalator and you are facing a problem which you have to solve – due to the width of the escalator you must place yourself either on its right side or on its left side. There is room for both solutions, but you have to choose. The sign tells you how to solve the problem: if you want to be standing, you choose right; if you want to move by yourself, you choose left.

The examples with the infinitive forms from the metro wagon and the army have nothing to do with problem solving. As a matter of fact, you will get into trouble and create a lot of problems for yourself, if you decide not to obey the orders. If you ignore what is prohibited or what is ordered, you will break the laws that apply to the wagon and the military. In that way, it turns out that the Russian language seems to sharply distinguish between directives used to solve the speaker's or the hearer's problems in normal social contexts and interaction and directives used in well-defined areas with their own laws where the equal notions of speaker and hearer are replaced by those who have the right to issue directives and those who must follow the directions laid down. The former, i.e. face-to-face interaction, are expressed by the imperative, the latter, i.e. official face-to-group face interaction, by the infinitive.

Russian recipes may be written in the imperative or in the infinitive. If the recipe is written in the imperative mood, it is a completely normal recipe. If it is written in the infinitive, the recipe turns into a technical instruction with specific instructions to be followed step by step in order to achieve the warranted result. Note that all professional instructions are written in the infinitive. This means that if, for instance, the machinery does not work after its components have been put together by the buyer due to the fact that the assembly instructions were not followed, the buyer is not liable for compensation. In short, the very use of the infinitive automatically creates a more formal relationship between the sender and the addressee based on power and authority with loss of personal attributes. This is confirmed by the fact that commands to dogs are always given in the infinitive, e.g., *Sidet'*! 'Sit!'.

The existence of two different forms to issue directives and the division of labour between them explain why the Russian imperative itself does not bear any kind of negative connotations. This means that the Russian imperative can be considered a neutral form that is not associated with either politeness or impoliteness (cf. [Ларина, 2009]. If these associations indeed turn up with the hearer, they will be related to the perfective or imperfective aspect, to the particles *zhe* (negative) and *pazhalujsta* (positive) or will derive from the speaker's tone of speech or his or her mimics. The imperative form itself is not a face-threatening act as it is stated in, for instance, [Brown, Levinson, 1987; Leech, 1983; Watts, 2003]. Microanalyses of concrete interaction

between people at home, at work or in public spheres show that it is in no way justified to argue that imperative forms are impolite ways of imposing one's will (cf. [Vine, 2004; Imperative turns at talk, 2017]. This is particularly true of the Russian imperative.

## 3. The perfective and imperfective imperative

When using an imperative form the speaker is not reporting what has happened, is happening or will happen. In J.R. Searle's terminology [Searle, 1983, p. 5], the imperative does not have WORD-TO-WORLD direction of fit, but WORLD-TO-WORD direction of fit. The function of the non-negated imperative form of action verbs is to make the hearer change the world and the function of the negated imperative form of action verbs is to leave the world unchanged. As to choice of aspect in connection with the imperative, we must assume that whether the speaker says *Sad'te* (pf) 'Sit down' or *Sadites'* (ipf) ''Sit down!', s/he wants exactly the same, namely, that the hearer is sitting. Similarly, we must assume that whether the speaker says *Ne sjad'te'* (pf) 'Don't sit down!') or *Ne sadites'* (ipf) 'Don't sit down', s/he wants exactly the same, namely, that the hearer is not sitting. This amounts to saying that when using the non-negated imperative in connection with action verbs the speaker always wants an *event*, i.e. a new state caused by the hearer's activity, but when using the negated imperative the speaker wants a *non-event*, i.e. no new state (see also [Durst-Andersen, 1992; 1995].

It would be surprising, if the two aspects were used to perform exactly the same kinds of speech act in the imperative mood, since, for instance, it is only the present perfective that is used to give a promise (by presupposing the activity description and asserting the state description) and since it is only the imperfective aspect in the present tense that is used to issue a so-called *declaration* (cf. [Апресян, 1986; 1988].

Choice of aspect in the above-mentioned example is often explained by using the notion of politeness. It is claimed that the imperfective is more polite than the perfective aspect (cf. [Краткая русская грамматика, 1989; Tyurikova, 2008; Benacchio, 2002]). It might be the case in this and other contexts, but to make such a generalization would be false, as pointed out by J. Forsyth [Forsyth, 1970, p. 208).

If you are in a restaurant and say *Dajte* (pf) *mne stakan* 'Give me a glass (lit.)!' and, if this request leaves no result, you may utter *Davajte* (ipf) *zhe stakan!* 'Will you give me that glass!' thereby putting severe pressure on the waiter. While in this case the perfective form is the normal and polite way to ask for a glass, the imperfective form is impolite and may only be used, if you already have ordered a glass and have been waiting for it for too long. It is interesting to note that already both A. Mazon [Mazon, 1914, p. 67] and S. Karcevskij [Karcevskij, 1927] stated that the imperfective imperative is always more direct than the corresponding perfective one. The reason why S. Karcevskij and A. Mazon felt that the imperfective imperative form is more direct than the corresponding perfective form may have to do with the fact that the imperfective aspect is closely linked to deontic modality, while the perfective aspect is intimately connected to alethic modality, as we shall attempt to demonstrate in the following paragraph (cf. [Durst-Andersen, 1995; Šmelev, Zaliznjak, 2006].

## 4. Alethic vs. deontic modality

Alethic modality is concerned with (physical) possibility and impossibility as well as with (internal) necessity and non-necessity, i.e., with laws of nature. Deontic modality deals with permission, prohibition, obligation, and non-obligation, i.e. with laws of society. Since laws of nature and laws of society have something to do with the mental state of knowing, alethic and deontic modality, although distinct types, enter into a common class, i.e., non-epistemic modality. This class is in opposition to epistemic modality that relates to lack of knowledge, i.e. beliefs or laws of the human mind. Alethic and deontic modalities have the same scope, i.e., they operate on the phrastic part (cf. [Hare, 1952] of the utterance (*It is true that it is possible to produce an activity…*) in opposition to epistemic modality which operates on its tropic part (*It is possibly true that...*). However, they have different domains, i.e., the alethic and deontic modes operate on different propositional structures or involve different statement models in opposition to epistemic modes that operate on both structures (see [Durst-Andersen, Lorentzen, 2015 a]. It is interesting to note that G.H. von Wright, the inventor of deontic logic [Wright, 1951] based his distinction between alethic and deontic modality on different domains.

Thus G.H. von Wright [Wright, 1968] only connects deontic modes with what he calls actions symbolized 'H' (e.g., (-P-H)) and alethic modes with what he calls states of affairs symbolized 'p' (e.g., (-P-p)). In other words, he indirectly linked deontic modes to the assertion of an activity (H) and alethic modes to the assertion of a state (p). This is exactly what the two aspects in Russian do: the imperfective aspect presents an action as a process by asserting an activity description and leaving the state description as a standard implicature, whereas the perfective aspect presents the action as an event by asserting the state description and presupposing the activity description [Durst-Andersen, 1992, 1995; Durst-Andersen, Lorentzen, 2015 b]. This appears very clearly from the perfective imperative in its negated form, e.g., *Ne upadi*! "Mind you don't fall!'. That is, you are requested to do something in order not to be on the ground.

The deontic modes have two functions. They are used descriptively as well as prescriptively – as opposed to the alethic modes that are used only descriptively, i.e., to describe state of affairs. However, when the imperfective aspect is used in the imperative mood, it will always be used prescriptively, or in A. Mazon's and S. Karcevskij' words: directly. As to deontic modality used prescriptively, the following uses are distinguished: permission (*I hereby make it possible for you to produce an activity with the intention*...), prohibition (*I hereby make it impossible for you to produce an activity with the intention*...), obligation (*I hereby make it necessary for you to produce an activity with the intention*...), and cancellation of an obligation denoted non-obligation (*I hereby make it possible for you <u>not</u> to produce an activity with the intention*...). The point is that whenever the perfective imperative is used, the speaker will always make an alethic statement, where s/he describes a possible, impossible, necessary or unnecessary state. Whenever the imperfective imperative is used the speaker will necessarily use a deontic performative, i.e., in using it the speaker will give a permission, issue a prohibition, dictate an obligation or cancel an obligation. Let me give some illustrative examples.

### 4.1. Permission vs. possibility

Let us take a close look at the host-guest setting and the doctor-patient setting. Both the host and the doctor occupy roles that, by

convention, are superior to the guest- and patient-roles. This means that the role relationship between the participants of these two situations is the same. Moreover, their status roles are defined by the settings themselves. Although the guest is, say, a professor and the host is, say, a worker, the professor will still have a lower status role than the worker within the host-guest setting. The same applies to the doctor-patient setting. Although the patient is a minister, s/he will still have a lower status role in comparison to the doctor in that setting. Situational status roles overrule social status roles. Besides that, the two settings are relatively formal and leave only limited 'choice of freedom': Hosts / doctors know their rules and expect guests / patients to behave like 'guests' / 'patients', and vice versa (cf. [Brown, Yule, 1983, p. 62]. In order to acquire the status of a guest one has to be invited by the host to participate in some kind of social event, which itself includes a series of subevents, e.g., arrival, welcome, dinner, etc..., leave-taking. If the guest accepts an invitation, s / he, at the same time, accepts participating in all subevents, the rules of which are known to her / him. The rule that seems to govern all other rules says that the guest should not enter into a subevent before the host has allowed him to do so. This is the reason why guests do not, although invited, enter through the door before the host or hostess has asked them to do so, that they do not sit down, do not take food from the dishes, do not leave the table, etc. before they have received the permission or a corresponding signal to do so. This is known to the host as well. So when the host / hostess sees that his / her guest is standing and s/he wants her / him to be seated, s/he will know that the reason why the guest is standing is not that s/he does not want to be seated in a comfortable chair, but that s/he is waiting for the signal that would solve her / his problem: what to do? Therefore, I suggest that when the host utters (1 a), he solves the quest's problem by permitting the guest to sit down. Thus he asks the guest to sit down against the background of a state prescription.

(1 a). *Sadites'* (ipf) 'sit down (lit.)!'

Let us now turn to the situation, where a patient is going to see his doctor. In contrast to the above mentioned situation a patient will never be invited; s/he, in fact, invites her/himself and is entitled to do so, since s/he either directly or indirectly pays for her / his 'visit' to the doctor.

When the patient enters the consulting room and tells the doctor about her / his problem, the doctor can presuppose that the patient wants to be there and wants to do anything that is necessary for the medical examination. In other words, when the patient is standing, s/he is not waiting for the doctor's permission to sit down, because all patients have this permission beforehand. Instead, s/he is waiting for the doctor's signal that solves her / his problem: what to do? Which of the possible states does the doctor want her / him to realize: should s/he sit down, lie down, or take off her / his clothes? The patient does not care and will do exactly what the doctor wants her / him to do and finds necessary to do. Therefore, I suggest that when the doctor utters (1 b) he asks the patient to sit down against the background of a state description.

(1 b). *Sjad'te* (pf) 'sit down (lit.)!'

Briefly speaking, (1 a) and (1 b) have the same situational source, i.e. both the guest and the patient are standing up, the same desire, i.e., they are sitting on a chair, and the same cause, i.e. the state of sitting is a necessary part of a series of social routines. When the host and the doctor utters (1 a) and (1 b), respectively, they ask the hearer to change manner of location by producing the required activity. The only difference between (1 a) and (1 b) is their preconditions. In (1 a) the preconditions are prescribed by the host. In using the imperfective aspect, the host lays down the precondition for the hearer to perform the requested action, i.e. *I hereby make it possible for you to produce an activity with the intention that you are in chair-location*. Note that the host has to perform this speech act, because the guest will not or does not dare to sit down, which is an obstacle that has to be removed. The only person to remove it is the host [Durst-Andersen, 2009]. When the guest receives (1 a), s/he will know that s/he is requested to act on the basis of a permitted state. In issuing a permission, the speaker thus satisfies the preconditions for the hearer to comply with her / his request. This is the specific extra-linguistic function of the imperfective aspect. In (1 b) the preconditions are already laid down. It is presupposed that the patient is permitted to sit down. Therefore the doctor does not prescribe a state, i.e. he does not make something exist which did not exist beforehand, but, instead, he describes the possible and / or necessary state that is desired by her / him. The extra-linguistic function of the perfective aspect is thus also to satisfy the preconditions

for the hearer to comply with his request. This is done by stating that the desired state is possible, i.e. there is no obstacle, and, perhaps, also necessary.

### 4.2. When the preconditions are not satisfied

Let us test the claim that the imperfective imperative prescribes the preconditions, in our case, a permitted state, whereas the perfective imperative describes them, in our case, a possible state, but, that they, at the same time, have a common meaning which is carried by the imperative form itself. O.P. Rassudova [Рассудова, 1982, p. 138] creates the following scenario (2 a-2 b).

Some people are sitting in a room. Suddenly there is a knocking on the door. One of them utters (2 a).

(2 a). *Vojdite* (2 pl/pf) 'Come in (lit.)!'

Nothing happens. The person who has uttered (2 a) opens the door and sees a little boy. Then this person utters (2 b).

(2 b). *Ne bojsja! Vchodi, vchodi!* (2 sg/ipf)
'Don't be afraid! Come in, come in (lit.)!'

The boy has a problem: He wants to enter the room, but the door is closed. This is an obstacle that has to be removed. O.P. Rassudova's explanation is not convincing. She says that (2 a) is a permission to come in, whereas (2 b) is an invitation. The point is, however, that if (2 a) had involved a permission, the boy had come in. What prevents him from opening the door and going into the room is exactly the perfective aspect combined with the 2 plural imperative. These two things tell the boy that the request (i.e., the speaker wants to solve the hearer's problem) is not issued to a child and that it does not involve a simultaneous permission. These two facts make the child confused and paralyzed at the same time. Although (1 a) is a request, it does not contain the necessary license – the preconditions for the boy to comply with the adult's request are not satisfied – he needs a 'license issued in his name'. When the adult opens the door and sees the little boy, he realizes exactly what confused and paralyzed the boy and thus prevented

him from doing what he was requested to do. Therefore, the adult changes the plural ending to the singular and the perfective aspect to the imperfective one. In this way, s/he directly shows the boy that s/he is addressing him and only him and directly shows him that the request involves a license issued in his name. Now the preconditions are satisfied and the boy can comply with the adult's request without being afraid of doing so. His problem has been solved. (2 a) might seem less polite than (2 b), because it does not involve a simultaneous permission. In uttering (2 a), however, the speaker takes for granted that the hearer knows that it is permitted to enter and s/he is therefore addressing the hearer as an equal, which is, in general, more polite than acting upon other people from a superior position. The perfective imperative only describes, it does not prescribe the preconditions. This state description has the status of a presupposition, i.e. it can in no way be denied that it is possible that the boy exists in the room.

### 4.3. Obligation vs. necessity

Although it is possible to view the subjective notion of politeness as a continuum ranging from extraordinarily polite via neutral to extraordinarily impolite, it is not possible to view deontic modality in this manner. As to the positive imperfective imperative, it will prescribe the preconditions either in the shape of a permitted state or in the shape of an obligatory state. The former is felt to be polite, the latter impolite. Since these two readings of the positive imperfective imperative are found at the opposite ends of the politeness scale, their use conditions are quite different. The two meanings cannot be mixed. The very prescription of an obligatory state requires an extremely specified context and it is only used in the last resort, as should appear from the following scenario description (3 a–3 b).

The managing director of a firm has sent for one of his assistants in order to discuss a required staff reduction. The problem is whom to fire. The assistant brings up his own suggestions. The list does not, however, include a certain person, Ivanov, who is a personal enemy of the managing director, but, unfortunately, at the same time a personal friend of the assistant. After some discussion, the managing director says to the assistant:

(3 a). MD: *uvol'te* (pf) *Ivanova*! 'Fire Ivanov!'

The assistant tries to ignore the message, the managing director gets upset and says:

(3 b). MD: *uvol'njajte* (ipf) *ego!* 'fire him!'

The assistant now has two choices: either he fires Ivanov or he does not. If he chooses the latter and thereby ignores the managing director's message, the assistant may be fired himself. Both (3 a) and (3 b) have been created against the same background. The firm is in a certain deficient state – it lacks money. This is a problem that has to be solved. The deficient state has created a need for money, which automatically has created a wish in the managing director to perform an action by the implementation of which the deficient state will be eliminated, the need satisfied and his problem will be solved. Since it costs money to have employees, one can save some costs and get some money by firing persons. The desire underlying (3 a) as well as (3 b) is therefore that Ivanov be gone from the firm. If the request is carried out by the assistant, the problem is gone. Before uttering (3 a) the managing director presumed that the assistant would fire Ivanov – that there would be no obstacle – if he was told that the state was necessary. However, just before uttering (3 b) he could presuppose that the assistant would not fire Ivanov due to his opposite desire. In order to make the assistant fire Ivanov and remove the obstacle the managing director changed the preconditions. In (3 a) the precondition was a state description saying that *it is necessary that Ivanov does not exist with the firm*. Since the assistant did not want to comply with the managing director's request, the preconditions were not satisfied by issuing a description. In (3 b) the state description is therefore changed to a state prescription saying that *I hereby make it necessary for you to do so that Ivanov does not exist with the firm*. By using the imperfective imperative the managing director puts his full authority behind his words. S/He thus addresses the assistant as a superior addresses a subordinate. This demonstration of power leaves the assistant no choice, if he wants to keep his own position. The fact that the assistant himself will be fired, if he does not comply with the prescription, is explainable in terms of deontic modality: a man can – to use the words of G.H. von Wright [Wright, 1968] – break something deontic, but he

cannot break the laws of nature, i.e. something alethic (for more examples and a more formal treatment, see [Durst-Andersen, 1995].

## 5. Modality distinctions, logic and societal logic

It has been demonstrated that the perfective aspect in Russian is linked to alethic modality that is concerned with laws of nature, whereas the imperfective aspect is connected to deontic modality that is concerned with laws of society. These correlations are found among action verbs consisting of an activity description related to a state description by telicity, i.e., among telic verbs when they denote single actions (all non-single actions are handled by the imperfective aspect). Atelic verbs, i.e. state verbs and activity verbs, are, in principle, ambiguous. Thus it seems to be the case that the distinction between alethic and deontic modality plays an important role in the Russian language. The focus on knowledge of the laws of nature and the laws of society should be compared to the absence of grammatical means in Russian to express epistemic modality, i.e., laws of the human mind. One has to use lexical means, e.g., *mozet byt'* '(lit.) can be' and *dolzhno byt'* (lit.) must be' (cf. [Durst-Andersen, Lorentzen, 2015 a]. This means that the Russian language pays a lot of attention to objective knowledge and little attention to subjective beliefs. This is a specific feature of Russian. The same is true of the distinction between the infinitive and the imperative that both are used as directives, but at different places and in different ways. The importance of these distinctions for the Russian culture will be discussed later after we have looked into the British English and the Mandarin Chinese linguacultures. The importance of something may often reveal itself against the background of something else.

### 5.1. Modality and logic in the British English linguaculture

In the English language, we find a sharp distinction between epistemic modality and non-epistemic modality, the latter consisting of alethic modality and deontic modality. The distinction, however, is traditionally described as a distinction between epistemic and deontic modality or root modality [Leech, 1983; Coates, 1983; Palmer, 2014]. It is

maintained that «alethic modality has been the main concern of logicians, but it has little place in ordinary language» [Palmer, 2014, p. 6] and it has always been subsumed under epistemic modality.

It makes little sense to sharply distinguish two meanings, i.e. the epistemic meaning and the deontic meaning, if they are not separated by the English language, but by English speakers. The utterance *He may come tomorrow* is ambiguous: it has an epistemic reading, i.e., *It is possible that he comes tomorrow*, and a deontic meaning, i.e. *He is permitted to come tomorrow*. I acknowledge that English speakers are good at distinguishing the epistemic reading from the deontic reading (they are forced to develop this ability, since the English language does not express it overtly), but this is not tantamount to saying that the English language makes such a distinction. It does not, if we look at modal verbs. Let us look at another utterance that at first sight seems too unambiguous: *He can come tomorrow*. The third person utterance is unambiguously alethic and means that *it is possible for the person to come tomorrow*. But if the utterance is made second person oriented, one gets a deontic reading: *You can come tomorrow.* Now it involves a permission, i.e., *You have my permission to come tomorrow*. In other words, the conclusion must be that utterances involving the modal verb *can* are also ambiguous.

In contrast to Russian, English as well as other Germanic languages such as German, Danish and Swedish have at their disposal a lot of other epistemic means (in the form of particles, adverbials, and word order), but they do not distinguish between alethic and deontic modality as Russian does. Since epistemic modality concerns beliefs, whereas alethic and deontic modality concerns knowledge, I shall argue that English distinguishes between epistemic modality and non-epistemic modality, i.e. between beliefs and knowledge, but with no distinction between knowledge of laws of nature and knowledge of laws of society. In relation to the tradition that has alethic modality within epistemic modality (which is a mixture of beliefs and knowledge), I place alethic modality together with deontic modality and in this way we obtain a clean distinction. This alternative look at English modality has its advantages.

Having arrived at a distinction between epistemic vs. non-epistemic modality in English, it would be natural to ask the following question: How is it possible to explain the fact that English, German, French, Spanish, or any other language being spoken in the West do not

distinguish between alethic and deontic modality, although they represent different types of knowledge and different types of logic? And, at the same time, why is it true – as F.R. Palmer argues – that logicians are mainly concerned with alethic logic and often ignore deontic logic? (G.H. von Wright who was Finnish was the exception). My answer is the following: Just as Western logicians derive all kinds of modalities from the alethic notion of possibility (represented by diamond, ◊), i.e., possibility is ◊, impossibility is ¬◊, necessity is ¬◊¬, and unnecessity is ◊¬), Western societies are built on the alethic notion of possibility, i.e., the logic that applies to the laws of nature has been transferred to and has become the logic of Western societies. This explains why Western societies are so-called individualist cultures (for the distinction between individualist vs. collectivist cultures, see [Triandis, 2018]): What is possible for one person is not possible for another person. The focus on nature is evident in Western countries. People do not want to destroy nature and they want to visit nature without losing the illusion of being inside nature itself. At the same time, Western architecture stresses the importance of building houses or buildings that nicely fit with the surroundings – the ideal being that the boundaries between nature and buildings are not visible. If people's knowledge of the laws of nature has been used to build the rules and laws of society, it is completely understandable why people in their language do not distinguish between alethic and deontic modality. One might argue that the mixture of nature and society is reflected in the English language. The focus on the possibilities of the individual in the society is also reflected in the crucial role epistemic modality, i.e. subjective beliefs, plays in the English language. In short, I shall argue that the British English societal logic derives from alethic logic based on the notion of possibility from which all other modalities are derived, i.e. impossibility, necessity and non-necessity.

### 5.2. Modality and logic in the Mandarin Chinese linguaculture

As a person raised in a Western society and trained in traditional logic, I saw nothing wrong with the way English and Danish people interpreted the four scenarios in our GEBCom Project involving cancellation of an obligation, for instance, cancellation of an appointment. In one of the scenarios, a person had persuaded his friend

to take a day off to help him moving to a new flat, because his family could not help him on that day. On the day before his actual moving, he is supposed to call his friend to tell him that his help is not needed anymore, because his family has, unexpectedly, turned up. The English and Danish persons who played the role of his friend all interpreted this cancellation either positively or in neutral terms. When I analyzed the Chinese participants' verbal reactions to the same scenario, I realized that cancellation of an obligation can be something very bad that requires many words and apologies. While the English and the Danish participants viewed «breaking a law» as yielding a possibility to do something else (and possibility is good), the Chinese participants conceived cancellation of an obligation as breaking a law, which might have serious consequences for the personal relationship between the speaker and the hearer (for a detailed description, see [Zhang, 2018]). For a long time I could not figure it out. I was stuck in my own Western logic. But, after a while, I realized that the Chinese society must be grounded on a different logic from the Western alethic logic. However, the question is which kind of logic and which kind of modality we are dealing with.

Since the Chinese only use the imperative at home, since the Chinese language has not really ordinary modal verbs, but instead particles for various speech acts (e.g., *ma, ba, a, ya, le, ne*), and since it has no regular ways to express permission or prohibition (*Beg you not to park* is the Chinese way of saying 'Parking is not allowed'), I was forced to think in a completely alternative direction. I formed the hypothesis that Chinese societal logic is built on obligation, i.e., a deontic type of modality. From obligation (represented by □) all other modalities are derived, i.e., cancellation of obligation (¬□), permission (¬□¬) and prohibition (□¬). This would not only explain the Chinese data, but also why the Chinese society is claimed to be a collectivist culture: obligation is for every one without exception. It would also explain why permission to do something is understood as a signal to do it in Western countries, but lacks this appellative element in the Chinese society: *It is not obligatory not to do so* makes room for contemplation rather than action. Moreover, it would explain why sights in nature are often transformed into minisocieties in nature. The Chinese societal logic that builds on deontic modality has been transferred into nature. In short, in the Chinese society we find the opposite direction of that taken by Western countries.

### 5.3. Modality and logic in the Russian linguaculture

As should be evident from the two preceding sections, the Russian language differs fundamentally from the English and the Chinese languages with respect to logic and modality. The fact that Russian sharply distinguishes between alethic modality and deontic modality indicates that the Russian societal logic neither derives from the alethic notion of possibility, nor from the deontic notion of obligation. The Russian societal logic cannot be said to be grounded in the logic of nature, although knowledge of what is possible, impossible, necessary and unnecessary is incorporated into it. In the same way, the Russian societal logic cannot be said to be grounded in the deontic notion of obligation, although the notion of obligation has been incorporated into it – in line with the other three deontic modalities, viz. permission, prohibition and cancellation of an obligation. The incorporation of two types of logic that both relate to the realm of objective knowledge being common knowledge of all members of a society combined with the «excorporation» of epistemic modality that relates to the realm of subjective knowledge characteristic of each individual member of the society explain why Russians score low (39 out of 100) on G. Hofstede's individualism-collectivism dimension [Hofstede, 1980, 1991]. It does not belong to individualist cultures (United Kingdom has a score of 89), but it does not seem either to be as collectivistic as China that has a score of 20. It turns out that it is very difficult to make Russian culture fit into G. Hofstede's binarily defined dimensions. Russian culture is described as a culture with high power distance and a high level of competition, but at the same time it is a feminine and not a masculine culture. Normally, high power distance and masculinity go together as in the case of the US and Chinese societies. Things do not make sense in G. Hofstede's framework. The Russian society and culture seem to belong to a third variety that is impossible to grasp in a framework employing binary thinking. Let us try to define this third variety against the background of the results of the analysis of the Russian data presented in section 2 and 3.

As demonstrated in section 2, both the Russian infinitive and imperative are employed to issue directives. And as shown in section 3, the use of imperatives involves a choice between the perfective and the imperfective aspect that is identical to a choice between alethic and deontic modality. Moreover, it is apparent that epistemic modality plays

no crucial role in the Russian language. The question is now whether or not these linguistic distinctions can be said to reflect distinctions in the Russian society and be of importance to Russian culture.

I shall argue that the distinction between the infinitive and the imperative reflects a distinction between the authoritative level and the non-authoritative level of Russian society (not to be confused with 'authoritarian'). The first level is made up of the authorities that are found at the macro level in the form of the government as well as at the micro level in the form of various institutions, be they big as the Russian army or be they small as a typical Russian school. These authorities have power to issue rules and laws that must be followed by all members belonging to the non-authoritative level of the Russian society, i.e. all ordinary people who are not part of the upper level and all people when they appear to be outside the micro level where they have a place at its upper level.

The non-authoritative level of the Russian society consists of the public sphere and the private sphere. These two spheres are important and their existence is reflected in grammar. In the private sphere, one uses *Len*! 'Lena!', says *mamina sumka* 'Mommy's bag' and *my s Lenoj* '(lit.) we together with Lena, Lena and me', whereas in the public sphere one uses *Lena*! 'Lena!', says *sumka mamy* 'Mommy's bag' and *Lena i ja* 'Lena and me' (see [Durst-Andersen, Lorentzen, 2017]). The interesting thing is that the imperative form is used both in the private and in the public sphere (cf. the use of the Chinese imperative at home). The imperative mood and the vocative forms *Len*! and *Lena*! have in common that they are used in connection with social problem solving. If the speaker has a problem of his own and therefore need something that can be satisfied via the hearer, s/he makes a request by using the imperative (*Uvol'te* Ivanova! 'Fire Ivanov!') or the vocative (*Len*! / *Lena*! 'Lena! (I need you)'). If the speaker notices that the hearer has a problem and therefore need something that can be satisfied by the speaker, s/he will make the hearer an offer by using the imperative (*Berite chasku kofe*!) or by using the vocative (*Len*! / *Lena*! 'Lena! (you need me)'). Russian people use the imperative form in connection with requests and offers, if and only if the speaker and the hearer can be said to share the same world. If they do not, you have to use a question, e.g., *Vy ne mogli by skazat' mne gde…*? 'Couldn't you be so kind to tell me where…?'. When one uses an imperative form or a vocative form, one automatically establishes contact with another person, always

psychologically, but often also physically. Interestingly enough, the notion of contact plays a crucial role in the Russian prepositional case system, where the locative and the accusative are contact cases, while the genitive, the dative and the instrumental are non-contact cases (see [Durst-Andersen, Lorentzen, 2018]). Here it is demonstrated that Russian has developed a direct patient role linked to the accusative case of the pure case system on the basis of the notion of contact from the prepositional case system, cf. *povredit' stul vs. zdorov'ju*).

The sharp distinction between the perfective and the imperfective aspect in the imperative mood shows that Russian people distinguish between two types of knowledge, viz. knowledge of laws of nature and laws of society. Both types of logic are present in the Russian society. One might argue that any society is built upon a set of states (reflected in the perfective aspect and alethic modality) given by nature and these states have been supplied with permitted and prohibited activities (reflected in the imperfective aspect and deontic modality) given by the authoritative level of the society. I will not dare to give a name to this kind of society that is not built upon the individualistic notion of alethic possibility as, for instance, the British society and that is not grounded in the collectivistic notion of obligation as, for instance, the Chinese society. But I shall argue that the notion of togetherness takes a big part in it. It presupposes the notion of individualism and the notion of collectivism and implies the notion of contact between two or more people.

## 6. Sentence forms and the notion of face

Since E. Goffman [Goffman, 1967] and P. Brown and S.C. Levinson [Brown, Levinson, 1987] it has been a tradition to distinguish between negative and positive face. Unfortunately, the original Chinese concepts of face (cf. [Hu, 1945]) that involved a separation of 'lien' and 'mianzi' (corresponding to P. Bourdieu's notions of internal and external habitus, cf. [Bourdieu, 1994]) were blurred and the result was a mixture of the Western concept of politeness and the Eastern concept of face. We cannot cancel this development, but have to stick to its result. If we do that, it becomes possible to differentiate three distinct understandings of face: 1) first person's face, 2) second person's face and 3) third

person's face. All types of faces are, of course, present in all types of societies and cultures, but one of them will be prioritized.

I shall argue that the British English culture is oriented towards the face of the second person, the hearer's face. In connection with requests and offers, the speaker avoids giving solutions to a problem to the hearer by using the imperative and instead often uses the interrogative mood to give the hearer an open proposal. The speaker does not dare to touch the hearer. In short, one does not want to step on somebody else's toe.

I shall argue that the Chinese culture is oriented towards the face of the first person, the speaker's face. In the Chinese society, one cannot use the imperative outside home, one cannot use the interrogative as a request (*ma* will always be a question that needs a specific answer) and instead the speaker uses the declarative form that is the speaker's proposal to a solution to a problem that must be negotiated with the hearer or s/he uses *ba* that is the speaker's recommendation to the hearer – the recommendation need not be followed by the hearer, because it may place a burden on the hearer: s/he must pay it back at some point in the future.

I shall further argue that Russian culture is oriented towards the face of the third person, the situation itself, i.e., the problem itself. Russians use the imperative mood, because they are focused on the solution of the problem. The problem constitutes a common problem for the speaker and the hearer – a problem that has to be solved immediately to remove unbalances in society. To employ the imperative form as a neutral form presupposes that the speaker and the hearer are together in solving the problem and that they prefer balance to unbalance and harmony to disharmony. The form itself can thus be said to have a binding effect in the Russian society.

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