Romance Monosyllabic Imperatives and Markedness

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Abstract

The aim of this paper is to account for the particular shape of some Romance imperatives. It has long been recognized that imperatives often equal the bare stem and their morphological make-up reflects their primitive status in language acquisition. It will be shown that in Romance some imperatives can even go farther in phonetic reduction: the verb stem can be radically amputated and the possible reasons for such a drastic reduction will be discussed. It will be argued that phonological subminimality arises even in those languages in which minimal size restrictions have been taken to be at work. The question of frequency will be addressed, and the view will be held that subminimality produces phonologically marked structures which cannot be accounted for by resorting to frequency effects: though frequency appears to be relevant, it will be argued that monosyllabic imperatives are *structurally* marked and that markedness stems from the speech-rooted nature of imperatives.

Nam tres istae voces *intra*, *citra*, *ultra*, quibus certi locorum fines demonstrantur, singularibus apud veteres syllabis appellabantur *in*, *cis*, *uls*. VIII. Haec deinde particulae quoniam parvo exiguoque sonitu obscurius promebantur, addita est tribus omnibus eadem syllaba, et quod dicebatur *cis Tiberim* et *uls Tiberim*, dici coeptum est *citra Tiberim* et *ultra Tiberim*; item quod erat *in*, accedente eadem syllaba *intra* factum est.[For those three words *intra*, *citra*, *ultra* (within, this side, beyond), by which definite boundaries of places are indicated, among the early writers were expressed by monosyllables, *in*, *cis*, *uls*. Then, since these particles had a somewhat obscure utterance because of their brief and slight sound, the same syllable was added to all three words, and what was formerly *cis Tiberim* (on this side of the Tiber) and *uls Tiberim* (beyond the Tiber) began to be called *citra Tiberim* and *ultra Tiberim*; and *in* also became *intra* by the addition of the same syllable
(Gellius, A. Cornelius, *Noctes Atticae* [Attic Nights].
Loeb Classical Library (Vol. II), 1927)]

1. Introduction

The aim of this work is to account for a small class of Romance verb forms, monosyllabic imperatives. Imperatives have long been neglected in the linguistic literature, where they were only dealt with as a peripheral topic in Pragmatics. In fact, imperatives are a fascinating topic, their interest lying precisely in the fact that they concern all aspects of linguistic analysis: syntax, morphology, pragmatics, and of course phonology. Given the multiplicity of the perspectives from which the analysis could be proposed, we shall concentrate on the morpho-phonological side of the question; in particular, we shall raise the question as to whether our imperatives can be said to obey some Minimality Constraints, and we shall argue that such Minimality Constraints are clearly violated by monosyllabic imperatives. And this in turn will raise the question as to whether such Minimality Constraints are active in the languages under review. The question of markedness will be discussed and it will be asked in which sense our imperatives are "marked". We shall argue that the markedness of some of our monosyllabic imperatives does not reduce to frequency effects.

2. The imperatives

One of the most important properties which imperatives share with, say, vocatives, is their speech-rooted character. As a matter of fact, both are directed towards the addressee, whether for naming purposes, or for a command. As such, imperatives are distinguished by their prosodic properties, as is clearly seen in cases where imperatives and indicatives are morphologically syncretic. In standard Italian, a sentence like *mangia la pasta* 'he is eating the pasta' is a mere statement with a constative value in the prosodically neutral variant *mangia la pasta*, ('(s)he is eating the pasta') but it clearly fulfils a directive function when uttered with the appropriate intonational contour: *mangia la pasta*! ('eat the pasta!')

A property which has long been pointed out is the importance of the beginning of the word. It is a well-known fact, identified by Kruszewski and Schuchardt among others, that the beginning of the word plays a crucial role in word recognition. As Kruszewski (1883/1995: 85) puts it,

> Perhaps both the accelerated metamorphosis of the medial sounds of a word and the instability of the final sounds can be explained primarily by the fact that the main carriers of meaning are the initial sounds; we, so to speak, resort to abbreviations in pronunciation, holding to the same principle that we do in writing: we show special care for the beginning and less for the end of a word.

In imperatives and vocatives, the beginning of the word is even more important, given that their intonational contour marks the very nature of the speech act at stake. And this is also the reason why the endings of these categories are so often truncated.

Last, it must be pointed out that the intonational contour of imperatives is correlated with their on-focus value. In languages endowed with a complex focus system, it is not unusual to find that focus marking is suspended in the imperative, the reason being that the imperative carries by itself a focus value, thus pre-empting any focus marking in the other elements of the sentence (cf. Floricic 2009 and the literature cited therein). From the morpho-phonological point of view, one of the most striking features of imperatives is their bareness and their shortness (cf. Lombard 1953: 21), and these properties *iconically* reflect the immediate – we should say non-mediated – relationship carried out by the 2nd person singular imperative. The relationship implied by imperatives can be defined as asymmetrical in so far as the *terminus a quo* of the relationship is backgrounded, while putting in the forth its *terminus ad quem*. In other words, imperatives like vocatives are polarized around the addressee, and the verb or the nominal stem is deprived of any inflexional information, thus offering the bare expression of the state of affairs to be conformed with, or of the individual to be identified.

2.1. Minimality effects

It has long been recognized that the size of independent words should not be inferior to a given prosodic scheme. This was for example the view of Antoine Meillet in his analysis of Old Armenian aorists. When asking why Old Armenian has kept the augment in the third person singular, Meillet (1900: 16) rightly points out that:

> Les formes grammaticales très brèves sont souvent éliminées au profit de formations plus longues et ayant plus de corps phonétique. C'est à cette tendance qu'est due, on le sait, la conservation de l'augment en arménien ancien. La 3ème personne du singulier de l'aoriste a l'augment dans tous les cas où, sans augment, elle serait monosyllabique : *beri, eber*; *baçi, ebaç*; l'augment arménien étant toujours syllabique, les verbes qui commencent par une voyelle en sont dépourvus dans les textes les plus anciens : *arbi, arb* ; par la suite, les verbes à initiale vocalique ont reçu aussi l'augment syllabique, d'où *ēarb*. Les aoristes *edi* 'je posai' et *eki* 'je vins' ont l'augment à toutes les personnes parce que, sans cela, ils seraient monosyllabiques dans toute leur flexion ; *etu* 'je donnai' a de même l'augment à toutes les personnes, sauf la 1ère plur. *tuakh*. [Very short grammatical forms often are eliminated in favour of longer formations with major phonetic substance. It is a well known fact that conservation of the augment in Old Armenian is due to this very tendency. The third person singular in the aorist takes the augment in those cases where otherwise it would be monosyllabic: *beri, eber*;

baçi, *ebaç*; given that the Armenian augment always is syllabic, verbs with an initial vowel are augmentless in the oldest texts: *arbi*, *arb*; subsequently, verbs with an initial vowel have received the syllabic augment, hence *ēarb*. Aorists *edi* 'I put, placed' and *eki* 'I came' take the augment in all the persons because otherwise they would be monosyllabic in the whole paradigm; *etu* 'I gave' takes as well the augment in all the persons, except the first plural *tuakh*]..

We shall not discuss in this paper the views of Robert Gauthiot[1], who devoted a whole chapter of his dissertation to the properties of monosyllables, nor shall we discuss the views of Jacob Wackernagel, who devoted his pioneering work *Wortumfang und Wortform* to the crosslinguistic tendency to avoid "Einsilbigkeit".

The point to be stressed is that the shape of the minimal prosodic unit can vary from language to language, but everywhere in the world one finds examples of languages in which such a prosodic constraint is at work. Minimal word restrictions have been reported in various phonological processes, among which we can mention the formation of hypocoristics, morphological truncation, clippings, etc. Much less attention has been devoted to vocatives and imperatives, and when they have been called into question, they have usually been claimed to obey Minimality Constraints. In many African languages, the imperative is one of the most naked forms. The data in (1a) are from Ndebele, a Bantu language spoken in Zimbabwe, and they show that the second person imperative equals the infinitive, minus the infinitive marker *úkú* (cf. Downing 2000: 25). With monosyllabic roots, however, Hyman et al. (2008) points out that the "stem cannot occur in its bare form in the imperative, but rather acquires an augmentative syllable *yi-*" (cf. (1b)):

The same pattern can be observed in Siswati, another Bantu language mainly spoken in Swaziland. Herman (1996: 39) holds that "There is no word in Siswati that is shorter than two syllables long (with a word in the phonological sense being something which can stand by itself)". And imperatives show that such a constraint is at work: with polysyllabic roots, the imperative is the bare stem, just like in Ndebele:

(1)   The minimal word in Ndebele (Downing 2000: 25; Hyman 2008)[2]

		Infinitive	Imperative	Gloss
(1a)	Multisyllabic			
	C-initial	*úkú=do:nsa*	*do:nsa*	'to pull'
		úkú=bhukú:tsha	*bhukú:tsha*	'to swim'

---

[1] "L'intérêt particulier des monosyllabes se manifeste encore par ailleurs. Leur brièveté les a entraînés à d'autres modifications variées dans la forme mais qui toutes relèvent de la même tendance générale en vertu de laquelle les langues évitent d'employer comme mots normaux, autonomes, à valeur pleine, des éléments trop courts" (Gauthiot 1913: 66). [The particular interest of monosyllables offers other manifestations. Their shortness has led them to other various modifications whose justification lies in the general tendency according to which languages tend to avoid too short elements as independent and semantically full words].

[2] Data and glosses are taken from the authors.

		úkú=khi:pha	*khi:pha*	'to put out'
		úkú=búthéle:la	*buthelé:la*	'to heap up'
(1b)	Monosyllabic	*úkú:=lwa*	*yí:-lwa*	'to fight'
		úku:=phá	*yi:-phá*	'to give'
		úkú:=fa	*yi:-fa*	'to die'
		uku-dl-a	*yi-dl-a*	'to eat'
		uku-z-a	*yi-z-a*	'to come'
		uku-m-a	*yi-m-a*	'to stand'

(2)   The minimal word in Siswati (Herman 1996: 39)

		Infinitive	Imperative	Gloss
(2a)	Multisyllabic	*ku-bon-a*	*bon-a*	'to see'
		ku-ḅal-a	*ḅal-a*	'to write'
		ku-lim-a	*lim-a*	'to plow'
		ku-bal-a	*bal-a*	'to count'
(2b)	Monosyllabic	*ku-y-a*	*y-a-ni*	'to go'
		ku-kʰ-a	*kʰ-a-ni*	'to pick'
		ku-tsʰ-a	*tsʰ-a-ni*	'to say'
		ku-lʒ -a	*lʒ-a-ni*	'to eat'

The examples in (2a) show that here too the imperative equals the infinitive, minus the infinitive marker *ku-* (cf. *bon-a* 'see!'; *ḅal-a* 'write!', etc.). With monosyllabic roots, a minimality violation follows, which is repaired by inserting an enclitic syllable – *ni* –, hence *y-a-ni* 'go!'; *kʰ-a-ni* 'pick!'; *tsʰ-a-ni* 'say!', etc.

We shall not discuss in detail the data from Swahili reported in (3), because they show the same restrictions as those mentioned in Ndebele and Siswati. The common point between Swahili and Ndebele is that the imperative is formed deleting the infinitive marker *-ku*, but the strategy employed in order to avoid minimality is different: in the case of Swahili, the infinitive marker is preserved in those cases where the root would result subminimal (cf. (3b) *ku-l-a* 'eat!'; *ku-nyw-a* 'drink!', etc.):

(3)   The minimal word in Swahili (Park 1998)

		Infinitive	Imperative	Gloss
(3a)	Multisyllabic	*ku-som-a*	*som-a*	'to read'
		ku-fany-a	*fany-a*	'to do'
		ku-kat-a	*kat-a*	'to cut'
		ku-sahau	*sahau*	'to forget'
(3b)	Monosyllabic	*ku-l-a*	*ku-l-a*	'to eat'
		ku-nyw-a	*ku-nyw-a*	'to drink'
		ku-j-a	*njoo*	'to come'
		kw-end-a	*nend-a*	'to go'

The crucial point, however, to which we shall come back later, is that the Minimality restrictions don't apply so blindly. As a matter of fact, if the Minimality constraint holds for most monosyllabic roots, some verb forms may well be subminimal. In the Swahili dialect of Kimakunduchi, Bertoncini (1999) points out that violations of Minimality constraints can be found, and she mentions among others monosyllabic imperative forms like *lya!* 'eat!' (cf. Kraska-Szlenk 2009: 281):

> Some dialects do not respect the minimality constraint as rigorously as Standard Swahili, as seen in the following Kimakunduchi data: the monosyllabic adjective in *nguo pya* 'new clothes' for Standard Swahili *nguo mpya*, or the monosyllabic imperative *lya* 'eat-sg.' for Standard *kula* (Bertoncini 1999).

We came across the same kind of violations in Tswana, where Denis Creissels pointed out to us (p.c.) such forms as *tlá!* 'come!', which is attested along with the augmented form *etlá!*. (see as well Zerbian, this volume).

To close this all too brief panorama, let us mention the case of Old Armenian where, as we said, the third person singular in the aorist is endowed with an augment which prevents monosyllabicity. On the contrary, the Old Armenian imperative does not surface with the augment, but rather as a bare monosyllabic stem, thus showing a violation of the ban against monosyllabic words. As recalled by Meillet (1905–1906: 359),

> Seule, la deuxième personne du singulier de l'impératif, qui est par excellence la forme brève des verbes dans la plupart des langues, est restée monosyllabique (en arménien) dans ce dernier verbe (i.e. *lal* 'pleurer') : *laç* 'pleure'. [The second person singular of the imperative, which is *par excellence* in most languages the shortest verb form, is the only one which remained monosyllabic (in Armenian) in this verb (i.e. *lal* 'to cry'): *laç* 'cry'].

(4)   Old Armenian monosyllabic imperatives
       dir 'lay!'   *laç* 'cry!'
       liç 'fill!'   *baç* 'open!'
       kaç 'stay!'

What we shall see in the remainder of this study is that for those Romance languages where Minimality constraints have been recognized, second person singular imperatives may violate such constraints.

2.2. The Sardinian imperatives

Let us start with a rather clear case, that of Logudorese Sardinian. The fact that a Minimality requirement is at work in this language can be seen in the examples in (5), where an epenthetic syllable has been inserted in those cases which otherwise would be subminimal (cf. Floricic & Molinu 2003: 351):

(5) Sardinian Repair strategies (Molinu 1999)

kie ['kiːɛ]	<	*ki* ('who')
tie ['tiːɛ]	<	*ti* ('you')
mie ['miːɛ]	<	*mi* ('me')
dae ['daːɛ]	<	*da* ('give!')

It is clear from the examples in (5) that the Sardinian Minimal Word is a syllabic trochee. As far as Sardinian imperatives are concerned, when they are polysyllabic, they naturally meet the minimal size requirement and thus, as shown by examples such as *kanta*! 'sing!'; *bénde*! 'sell!'; *drommi*! 'sleep!', and *fáge*! 'do!' in (6), they do not violate any Minimality restrictions.

(6) Sardinian polysyllabic imperatives (Budduso' Logudorese (Molinu 1988–1989)

	Imperative	Indicative present
cantare ('to sing')	*kanta*	*kantas* (2SG), *kantat* (3SG)
béndere ('to sell')	*bénde*	*béndes* (2SG), *béndet* (3SG)
drommire ('to sleep')	*drommi*	*drommis* (2SG), *drommit* (3SG)
fágere ('to do')	*fáge*	*fáges* (2SG), *fáget* (3SG)

However, a number of imperative forms can be found which do violate the bisyllabic pattern. These imperative forms, which are listed in (7), are all truncated versions of an already existing bisyllabic imperative:

(7) Sardinian monosyllabic imperatives (Budduso' Logudorese, Molinu 1988–89; Floricic & Molinu 2003)

Imperative		Indicative present
mi' ['mi]	(< *mira* ['miːra] 'look!')	*miras* (2SG), *mirat* (3SG)
te' ['tɛ]	(< *tene* (['tɛːne]) 'hold!')	*tenes* (2SG), *tenet* (3SG)
ba' ['ba]	(< *bae* ['baːɛ]) 'go!')	*andas* (2SG), *andat* (3SG)
to' ['tɔ]	(< *tocca* ['tɔkːa]) 'take!')	*toccas* (2SG), *toccat* (3SG)
na' ['na]	(< *nara* ['nara]) 'tell!')	*naras* (2SG), *narat* (3SG)
le' ['lɛ]	(< *lea* ['lɛa]) 'take!')	*leas* (2SG), *leat* (3SG)

The feature shared by all the forms in (7) is their subminimality: whilst the basic imperative is a syllabic trochee, the derived truncated form is monosyllabic and mono-moraic, thus showing a phonologically deviant pattern. Thus, the Sardinian data crucially raise at least two questions:

a) is there anything like a "minimal word constraint" in Sardinian?
b) if such a constraint really is at work, what is the reason for the Minimality violations reported in (7)?
c) must "Minimality" apply to surface forms, or should it apply to phonological representations?

We shall return to these questions later. Let us first present the more controversial situation of Italian and Catalan.

2.3. Imperatives and Minimality in Catalan and Italian

In Italian, the Minimal Word has been argued to be a syllabic trochee by Thornton (1996) and (2007), whereas in Catalan it has been taken to be a moraic trochee by Cabré i Monet (1994). And both argued for such a Minimality requirement on the basis of such phenomena as the formation of hypocoristics.

2.3.1. The case of Catalan

As shown by examples such as bisyllabic *Fina* from *Josefina* (cf. (8a)), *Tilde* from *Clotilde* (cf. 8e)) or *Mei* from *Remei* (cf. (8h)), Catalan hypocoristics select a trochee, be it a bisyllabic trochee, or a moraic trochee, as argued by Cabré i Monet (1994).

(8)   The hypocoristics in Catalan
(8a)   Josefina >   Fina, Fineta
(8b)   Enriqueta >   Queta
(8c)   Josepona >   Pona, Poneta
(8d)   Manolita >   Lita
(8e)   Clotilde >   Tilde
(8f)   Magdalena >   Lena
(8g)   Rossita   >   Sita
(8h)   Remei   >   Mei
(8i)   Bartomeu >   Tomeu [tuméw]

The process generating the kind of hypocoristics mentioned in (8) can be represented as in (9):

(9)   F   F
                         /\   /\
                       μ   μ   μ   μ
                       | | | |
             ma.no. [li.   ta] > lita   re.[me   i]

Of course it is not the aim of this paper to discuss whether or not the basic pattern of Catalan hypocoristic formation is a moraic trochee or something else. If we take into account the Catalan monosyllabic imperatives in (10), it can be argued that the moraic trochee indeed is a recurrent prosodic pattern among imperatives, as argued for by Cabré i Monet (1993): as a matter of fact, they generally show up with the scheme CVC or CVGlide. Not only is the moraic trochee the basic pattern of Catalan phonology; this

pattern also is deemed to be responsible for the allomorphic variant of some second person singular imperatives, as argued by Cabré i Monet (1993: 81) who observes:

> Cal ressaltar també que les formes imperatives de 2ps dels verbs *anar*, *fer*, *venir*, no prenen les corresponents de la 3psPI com caldria esperar, perquè questes formes no s'ajusten a les condicions del mot mínim de la llengua: *va/vés*, *fa/fes*, *ve/vine*. [It must be pointed out as well that the (2SG) Imperative forms of *anar* 'to go', *fer* 'to do', *venir* 'to come' don't match with the 3rd psPI as we should expect, because these forms do not obey the conditions on the Minimal Word of the language: *va/vés*, *fa/fes*, *ve/vine*]

(10)   Catalan monosyllabic imperatives (Moll 1929–1932)

Infinitive	Imperative
anar 'to go'	bé/bés/vés
fer 'to do'	fés/fə̆s/fé
veure 'to see'	bé/béw/bés/véw/və̀w
tenir/tindre 'to hold'	té/té/tén/tín
metre 'to put'	mét/mét/mə̀t
tèmer 'to be afraid'	tém/tém/tə̀m
fondre 'to melt'	fón
perdre 'to loose'	pért/péls
dur 'to carry'	dú/dúw/dús/dúʃ
dire 'to say'	dís/díw
venir 'to come' (*bə̆ní, bíndre*)	bén/vén/bín/vine
viure 'to live'	bíw/víw

Let us first point out that the verbs mentioned in (10) may have as well polysyllabic variants in some dialects. Second, if we take a closer look at the data from Catalan considering the historical source of the monosyllabic imperatives, we may ask ourselves whether their formation really obeys some Miminality Constraint. The verbs *anar* 'to go', *fer* 'to do', *dir* 'to say' and *veure* 'to see' have as second person singular imperative the forms *vès*, *fès*, *dis*, and *vés*. Is there, however, any phonological reason for having a CVC imperative in this case? The reason seems to be a morphological rather than a phonological one. Like many other Ibero-Romance varieties, the regularity concerning the formation of Catalan imperatives is that the second person singular imperative equals the third person singular present indicative: this is shown in Catalan, Aragonese, Asturian, Galician and Gascon among others. Thus the Catalan imperative of *anar* 'to go', *fer* 'to do', *dir* 'to say' and *veure* 'to see' should be *va*, *fa*, *di* and *veu*. If their second person singular imperative is *vès*, *fès*, *dis*, and *vés*, with a heavy syllable closed by [s], it is because the second person singular marker [s] has extended its scope from the p2 indicative to the imperative, as suggested by Moll (2006), Pérez Saldanya (1998) and others. In other words, given that the most frequent second person indicative forms

are endowed with the person marker [s], this marker has been overgeneralized to imperatives where it is not etymologically justified. In a dialect like that of Algher (n°148 in Moll's list), such an overgeneralization gives rise to the imperative *pɛls* 'loose!', where phonologically the syllable is super-heavy. This generalization does not apply to all verbs, however, given that we can find verb forms like *te* 'hold!', which lacks any person marker and appears to be subminimal. As pointed out by Fouché (1924: 125):

> Dans le sens de 'voici' on emploie *té* (< tene). Mais si cet impératif conserve sa valeur verbale, il prend l'*n* devant une voyelle, tandis qu'il le prend ou non devant une consonne ; cf. *tén ú* 'tiens-le' ; *tém bé* ou *té ƀé* 'tiens bien' [In the sense of 'here it is', we use *té* (< tene). But if this imperative keeps its verbal value, [n] is preserved before a vowel, while it can be dropped or not before a consonant ; cf. *tén ú* 'hold it' ; *tém bé* ou *té ƀé* 'hold good'].

It seems thus reasonable, following the observations of Fouché, to hypothesize that some kind of transcategorial shift is at least partly responsible for the particular phonological shape of this imperative form.

To sum up, the Catalan monosyllabic imperatives generally show up with a heavy syllable – CVC, CVG(lide) or CVCC – but one can find subminimal surface forms that seem to violate the bimoraic shape.

2.3.2. Minimality in Italian

The same kind of Minimality violation can be found in Italian. As was mentioned above, Minimality effects have been reported in Italian, and such Minimality effects have been argued to show up as well in Hypocoristic formations:

(11)   The hypocoristics in Italian (Thornton 1996 and 2007)
(11a)   Alessandro   >   Ale
(11b)   Adriana/a   >   Adri
(11c)   Antonella   >   Anto
(11d)   Isabella   >   Isa
(11e)   Edoardo   >   Edo ['ɛdo]
(11f)   Patrizia   >   Patri
(11g)   Fabrizio   >   Fabri
(11h)   Teodoro   >   Teo
(11i)   Federica   >   Fede

The data in (11), which are drawn from Thornton (2007), consistently show that the hypocoristic derived from the full proper name is a left-headed bisyllabic word: We thus have *Ale* from *Alessandro*; *Adri* from *Adriana*; *Anto* from *Antonella*; *Isa* from *Isabella*, etc.

When claiming that the minimal prosodic word in Italian is a Trochee, Thornton thus constrains herself to *nominal* expressions, leaving aside many strata of the Italian lexicon. Needless to say, there is no reason to limit the Minimality requirement to, say, the nominal, adjectival or adverbial classes. Incidentally, we should note with Bafile (1997: 450) that

> (...) in Italiano non vige un requisito assoluto di minimalità del piede e quindi (...) della parola, e che le parole monosillabiche non debbano essere considerate marginali rispetto al fondo lessicale [Italian does not show any absolute requirement on foot and Word Minimality, and monosyllabic words should not be considered as marginal with respect to the lexical stock (...)].

In any case, the data in (12a) show that Italian does have monosyllabic imperatives whose syllable can be either light or heavy.

(12a) Italian monosyllabic imperatives (Huber-Sauter 1951: 65ff.; Floricic & Molinu 2003, Mańczak 2004, Maiden 2007, etc.)

	Imperative	Indicative present
tenere 'to hold' / 'keep'	*te', tie'* (< tieni)	*tieni* (2SG), *tiene* (3SG)
togliere 'to take away'	*to'* (< togli)	*togli* (2SG), *toglie* (3SG)
guardare 'to look at'	*gua'* (< guarda)	*guardi* (2SG), *guarda* (3SG)
vedere 'to see'	*ve'* (< vedi)	*vedi* (2SG), *vede* (3SG)
aspettare 'to wait'	*spe'* (< aspetta)	*aspetti* (2SG), *aspetta* (3SG)
dare 'to give'	*da', dai*	*dai* (2SG), *dà* (3SG)
fare 'to do'	*fa', fai*	*fai* (2SG), *fà* (3SG)
stare 'to stay'	*sta', stai*	*stai* (2SG), *stà* (3SG)
andare 'to go'	*va', vai*	*vai* (2SG), *va* (3SG)
trarre 'to pull'	*trai*	*trai* (2SG), *trae* (3SG)
dire 'to say'	*di'*	*dici* (2SG), *dice* (3SG)

From the data in (12a), it appears that the Italian monosyllabic imperatives are generally the truncated variant of the second person singular indicative (cf. *te'* / *tie'* from *tieni*, *to'* from *togli*, *ve'* from *vedi*, etc.). In the case of *gua'* (< *guarda*), and *spe'* (< *aspetta*)*,* of course, the full imperative form is syncretic with third person present indicative. When two allomorphs are available, enclitics can attach to the monosyllabic root, while such an option is not available for the imperatives derived from polysyllabic roots. The enclitic forms in (12b) *dammi* 'give me!', *fammi* 'make me!', *vammi* 'go for me!', *stammi* 'stay me!', *dimmi* 'tell me!' are all grammatical, while forms like *tiello, *tollo, *vello, or *guallo* in (12c) are excluded:

(12b) Clitic attachment to monosyllabic roots:
     i.   *dai*   >   *dammi* 'give me!'
     ii.   *fai*   >   *fammi* 'make me!'
     iii.   *vai*   >   *vammi* 'go for me!'

iv.	*stai*	>	*stammi* 'stay for me!'
v.	*di'*	>	*dimmi* 'tell me!'

(12c) Clitic attachment to polysyllabic roots

|			
vi.	*te'/tie'*	>	*??tello/tiello* (cf. *tienilo* 'keep it')
vii.	*to'*	>	*??tollo* (cf. *toglilo* 'take it off')
viii.	*ve'*	>	*??vello* (cf. *vedilo* 'see it / him')
xix.	*spe'*	>	*??spello* (cf. *aspettalo* 'wait for him/it')
xx.	*gua'*	>	*??guallo* (cf. *guardalo* 'look at him/it')

The reason why clitic attachment is not possible with the monosyllabic imperatives derived from polysyllabic roots is that they have lost any valency property along with their phonetic reduction. The crucial question is then: how can we explain such a drastic reduction of the phonetic substance of the word? And how can we explain the subsequent subminimality observed in languages like Sardinian? Are we dealing with some kind of frequency-induced reduction, or is there any other parameter to call into question?

From a formal point of view, one may want to account for the phonological shape of imperatives in (12a) holding that at least some of them involve some Catalectic constituent (cf. Kiparsky 1991, Jacobs 1994, Kager 1995, etc.). In that case their apparent subminimality would just be a surface phenomenon and imperatives like *ve'* (< *vedi* 'see!') and *fa* (< *fai* 'do!') should be given the representations in (12d):
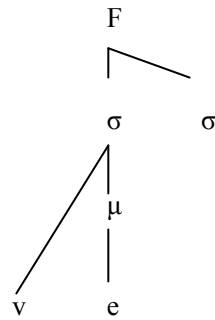
(12d) i.   ii.
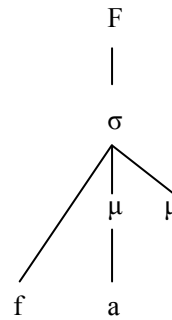
In the case of *ve'* in (12d-i), the catalectic element would be a syllable, while it would be a mora in the case of (12d-ii). The relevance of the catalectic mora in (12d-ii) would also be strengthened by the variation found in imperatives like *fai/fa'* ('do!'), *vai/va'* ('go!'), etc[3]. From our point of view, however, truncation must be accounted for at the

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3   It could be claimed, with Nannucci (1843: 529ff., 552), that the Imperative of *dare*, *stare*, *fare*, *andare*, etc. regularly equals the present Indicative 3rd (SG) (cf. *ama* [< *amare*]), and that *da*, *sta*, *fa*, *va* thus are 'primitive' Imperative forms which surface as a bare stem. This also is the view hold by D'Ovidio (1880: 220–221), who points out that they are the regular outcome of the corresponding Latin Imperatives, while *dai*, *stai*, *fai*, *vai* are borrowed from the (2nd SG) present Indicative. It must be recalled, first, that various verb forms entered the monosyllabic verb class

phonological level, and there is no reason to hold that imperatives in (12) are phonologically wellformed. As mentioned above when discussing Catalan imperatives, we shall argue that these truncated imperatives are of course very frequent forms, but in addition they have shifted towards the category of Interjections: this shift is at least partly responsible for their phonetic reduction. It must be recalled that the frequency argument has already been put forth by Mańczak (2004), who states that

> Si les changements phonétiques irréguliers dus à la fréquence se produisent à l'intérieur d'un paradigme flexionnel ou d'une famille de mots, les réductions ont lieu plus souvent dans les formes les plus fréquentes que dans les formes plus rares. [If phonetically irregular changes due to frequency occur inside a flexional paradigm or in a words family, these reductions more often affect the most frequent forms than the rarer ones.] (See as well Mańczak 1982)

And Mańczak (1980: 68) precisely takes our monosyllabic imperatives to be an example of this frequency-induced phonetic reduction: "In the same vein, the (Latin) imperative ending -*e* disappeared in the forms *fac, dīc, dūc,* which are very often used".

Needless to say, it is the great merit of Witold Mańczak to have repeatedly argued, since the fifties, that frequency is a fundamental force in historical phonetics and morphological change. It is now recognized not as an epiphenomenon, but as a deep constraint on linguistic change: frequent forms are more easily stored in memory and their cognitive salience makes them more resistant to analogical levelling. Rather, frequent forms may form the starting point of paradigmatic restructuring. From this point of view, the works of Witold Mańczak deserve a special mention for their systematicity and their typological relevance. As regards truncated imperatives, it can be recalled that he importance of *Überhäufigkeit* had already been put forth by Schuchardt (1889)[4] and Curtius (1886) as an *explicandum* of their reduction.

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and levelled according to its general pattern. This is the case of *va* (< vade), which probably underwent the attraction of the above mentioned imperatives. Second, assuming that *da*, *sta*, *fa*, etc. are 'primitive' and *dai*, *stai*, *fai*, etc. somewhat 'secondary' (cf. D'Ovidio 1872: 67 and 1886: 86; Schuchardt 1874: 18; Huber-Sauter 1951: 19 fn.16) leads to the conclusion that Imperatives [da], [sta], [fa], [va] are the phonetic merger of different evolutionary pathways.

[4] "Wir haben hier quantitative Veränderungen welche ausserhalb der 'Lautgesetze' liegen, und ihre Ursache ist in der *Überhäufigkeit* des gebrauches zu suchen; wie ich schon anderswo gesagt habe, kann man sich in solchen Fällen nicht auf Tonlosigkeit der Wörter beziehen, da diese selbst erst eine Folge der *Überhäufigkeit* ist, da ferner die sonst in unbetonten Silben herrschenden 'Lautgesetze' nicht beobachtet erscheinen und da endlich auch betonte Wörter bei *Überhäufigkeit* verkürzt werden (vgl. Imperative wie tosk. *gua > guarda*, span. *to > toma*)" (Schuchardt 1889: 529, footnote 1) [We have here quantitative changes which are beyond 'phonetic laws', and their cause can be found in high frequency of use; as I have already said elsewhere, one cannot refer in such cases to the stresslessness of the words, because this itself is only a consequence of high frequency, and because the 'phonetic laws' are not obeyed either in unstressed syllables, and finally because stressed words are also shortened due to high frequency (cf. imperatives like tosk. *gua >* guarda, span. to > toma].

The point to be stressed, however, is that following Mańczak, third person singular should count among the shortest verb forms. Instead, what the Italian and Sardinian evidence indicate is that our truncated imperatives are shorter than the corresponding third person singular verb forms. It thus follows that the shortness of our truncated imperatives cannot be said to be due to frequency. At most, frequency can be said to be a general property of some of the verbs referred to earlier. But the reason why our monosyllabic imperatives may be subminimal is that put forth by the great French dialectologist Georges Millardet, who observes that:

> Historiquement l'impératif est, dans la conjugaison, une interjection verbale aussi brève que possible, réduite le plus souvent au radical inaltéré, avec ou sans voyelle thématique, gr. ἔξ-ει, lat. *ex-ī*, *vid-ē*, gr. φέρε, lat. *age*. (...) l'emploi des impératifs en qualité d'interjections entraîne pour ces formes verbales une certaine usure phonétique. Le même fait peut être constaté dans d'autres langues : ital. *tę*, *vie*, *guar'* ; port. *chete* (Mistero, 113) = *chegate, guarte, calte, tirte, porte* (Millardet 1923: 441, 449). [Historically, the Imperative is, in conjugation, a verbal interjection as short as possible, most often reduced to the bare stem, with or without a theme vowel gr. ἔξ-ει, lat. *ex-ī, vid-ē*, gr. φέρε, lat. *age*. (...) The use of Imperatives as interjections leads them to some phonetic decay. The same fact can be observed in other languages: ital. *tę*, *vie*, *guar'*; port. *chete* (Mistero, 113) = *chegate, guarte, calte, tirte, porte*].

And the same observation can be found in the works of Meillet (1922) and Hofmann (1926).

Of course, as pointed out by Meillet and Curtius, it cannot be excluded that the theme vowel is missing in those monosyllabic imperatives whose frequency rate is very high. However, given the general Ibero-Romance correlation between 3SG of the present indicative and 2SG of the imperative, and given the frequency of third persons, we should expect that the third person forms show up with a phonetic shape which is at least as reduced as that of the imperative. If reduced imperatives violate the phonological restrictions on Minimality, it is because they shifted towards the periphery of the language system, where the restrictions of the phonological system are less active. It is a crucial aspect of the analysis to recognize that lexicon and grammar are not a uniform and iso-functional system where the elements all have the same value, the same place and the same weight. Cumulative centers may be found, as well as 'free electrons' that escape the gravitational force of the system. Imperatives and Vocatives may have this status of 'free electrons' immune to the attraction of the center, hence a growing amount of phonological and morphological 'irregularities'. As was pointed out by Uspensky & Zhivov (1977: 9) in their seminal work on Center and Periphery,

> If we consider the periphery of *langue* (not *parole*) we can establish a general tendency expressed in the existence of anomalous structures in classes of peripheral elements, i.e., here the regularities inherent to the center of language do not hold."

But of course, peripherality is not a matter of binarism and we should not expect a given pattern to be this or that: we are of course dealing with a continuum, and a given element or a given pattern may occupy different zones in such a continuum[5]. This is the case of our imperatives: at the same time inside and outside the core of the verb system.

2.3.3. The case of Aragonese and Asturian

Aragonese and Asturian imperatives will not be discussed at length because they show on the whole the same correlation between P3 of the present indicative and P2 of the imperative. This correlation is not so absolute, however, given that some imperative forms are shorter than the corresponding third person (SG) present indicative:

(13)   Aragonese imperatives (Habla del Valle de Ansó)

	Imperative	Indicative present
dá 'to give' (p.181)	*da*	*das* (2SG), *da* (3SG)
tené 'to hold' (p.184)	*tien*	*tienes* (2SG), *tiene* (3SG)
decí 'to say' (p.186)	*di*	*dices* (2SG), *dice* (3SG)
fé 'to do' (p.187)	*fes*	*fas* (2SG), *fa* (3SG)
í 'to go' (p.188)	*ves*	*vas* (2SG.), *va* (3SG)

As pointed out by Benítez Marco (2001: 170),

> De hecho, el fenómeno [i.e. deletion of the theme vowel] sólo se atestigua en el verbo *tené* (*tien*), mientras que son regulares *sale* y *viene*, que presentan en castellano formas apocopadas. [In fact, this phenomenon (i.e. deletion of the theme vowel) only occurs with the verb *tené* (*tien*), while *sale* y *viene* are regular, which appear as apocopated in Castillan].

The imperative of the verb *decí* 'to say' however shows that the abbreviation process can lead to further reduction; as a matter of fact, the imperative *di* 'say' violates the integrity of the verb root, thus showing an irregular morphological pattern reminiscent of that found in other Romance languages. As for the verbs *fé* 'to do' and *í* 'to go', they illustrate the same hypercharacterization as that mentioned in Catalan: the final consonant of imperatives *fes* and *ves* is not etymological, nor does require any phonologically-grounded explanation[6]. In the Asturian dialect spoken in Parres, it can

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[5]   Cf. Daneš (1966: 14): "[…] there does not exist any clear line separating C and P, but a continuous transitional zone. While there certainly exist phenomena situated "in the very centre" or "in the obvious periphery", one cannot overlook the existence of items which can only be denoted as "more central" (or, respectively, "more peripheral") than others. In short, the central and the peripheral character are qualities revealed by different items of the language system in different degrees (and in view of the fact that the transitions appear to be continuous it would hardly make sense to establish any exactly defined degrees of peripheral character)".

[6]   If the adjunction of final -*s* does not rely on any phonological restriction, on the other hand its deletion with enclitics obeys such restrictions (cf. Benítez Marco 2001: 168). In other words the

be pointed out that the imperative *ve* 'go!' of the verb *dir* does not surface with any morphological exponent, nor does the imperative *fay* 'do!' of the verb *facer*:

(14)   Asturian (Vallina Alonso 1985: 172–173)

	Imperative	Indicative present
tener 'to have'	*ten*	*tienes/ties* (2SG), *tien* (3SG)
facer 'to do'	*fay, fa*	*faces, faes* (2SG), *fay, fa* (3SG)
dicer, dicir 'to say'	*di*	*dices* (2SG), *diz* (3SG)
poner 'to put'	*pon*	*pones* (2SG), *pon* (3SG)
trayer/trer 'to bring	*tray*	*trayes* (2SG), *tray* (3SG)
	tre	*tres* (2SG), *tra* (3SG)
	trai	*traes* (2SG), *trae* (3SG)
ver 'to see'	*ve*	*ves* (2SG), *ve* (3SG)
dir 'to go'	*ve*	*vas* (2SG), *va* (3SG)
venir 'to come'	*ven*	*vienes* (2SG), *vien* (3SG)
dar 'to give'	*da*	*das* (2SG), *da* (3SG)
ller 'to read'	*lle*	*lles* (2SG), *lle* (3SG)

While most of the imperatives mentioned above seem to be syncretic with third person singular indicative forms, such a correlation is less general in Asturian than in Aragonese or Catalan. Putting aside the case of verb forms like *di* 'say!' from *dicer*, *dicir*, whose phonetic reduction has already been discussed, and the case of monophtongized imperatives *ten!* 'hold' and *ven!* 'come', imperatives of the *-er* class surface with final *-i* in the imperative, while the third person singular (present indicative) shows up with final *-e* in Parres (cf. imp. *corri* 'run!' (~ *cuerre* (3SG)); *cueyi* 'catch!' (~ *cueye* (3SG)); *viendi* 'sell!' (~ *viende* (3SG)), etc. (Vallina Alonso 1985: 146, 171, 174). In the dialect of Lena, the contrast between the imperative (2SG) and the indicative has as exponent the metaphony of the stressed vowel, hence the pairs *bibe* 'drink!' (2SG) ~ *bebe* (3SG); *prinde* 'take!' (2SG) ~ *prende* (3SG); *vinde* 'sell!' (2SG) ~ *vende* (3SG), etc. (cf. Neira 1962: 387)[7].

2.3.4. Imperatives and Minimality in Portuguese

For lack of space, the question of Portuguese imperatives will be adressed only briefly. The hypocoristics in (15) indicate that Brazilian Portuguese phonology is not governed

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enclisis of pronominal markers implies the selection of the bare allomorph. The same pattern can be observed in Alguerese, where Bosch i Rodoreda (2002: 172) mentions verbal forms like *fes-la* [fela], *fes-me* [feme], etc.

[7]   The question of the nature and origin of metaphony in this verb class still is object of debate. It has been argued that final *-i* of imperatives in *-ire* verb class has been extended to the verb class in *-er*, where we should not expect metaphony. Needless to say, this question would require an indepth discussion which cannot be addressed in this paper.

by a minimal size restriction. As a matter of fact, these data drawn from Grau Sempere (2006) show that in Brazilian Portuguese, hypocoristics may have the shape of a trochee, be it syllabic or moraic. With paroxitone bases, we thus have nouns like *vál.du* (< *os.vál.du*), *lí.pe* (< *fe.lí.pe*), *nã̌.du* (< *fer.nã̌.du*) and *pów.du* (< *le.o.pów.du*); with oxitone bases, we can register nouns like *kéw* (< *ra.kéw*); *néw* (< *i.ri.néw*); *géw* (< *mi.géw*) and *már* (*ma.ri.már*):

(15)   Portuguese hypocoristics I (Grau Sempere 2006: 123): Portuguese

	Paroxitone base			Oxitone base	
	Base	Trunc.		Base	Trunc.
(15a)	*os.vál.du*	*vál.du*	(15e)	*ra.kéw*	*kéw*
(15b)	*fe.lí.pe*	*lí.pe*	(15f)	*i.ri.néw*	*néw*
(15c)	*fer.nã̌.du*	*nã̌.du*	(15g)	*mi.géw*	*géw*
(15d)	*le.o.pów.du*	*pów.du*	(15h)	*ma.ri.már*	*már*

This is not the only option, however, and the data in (16) show that Brazilian Portuguese may well form monosyllabic and monomoraic hypocoristics:

(16)   Portuguese hypocoristics II (Grau Sempere 2006: 125): Portuguese

	Paroxitone base			Oxitone base	
	Base	Trunc.		Base	Trunc.
(16a)	*aj.váw.ni*	*ní*	(16g)	*ã́.dré*	*dré*
(16b)	*áw.ba*	*bá*	(16h)	*bar.na.bé*	*bé*
(16c)	*á.na*	*ná*	(16i)	*ʒe.sé*	*sé*
(16d)	*a.ná.dʒi*	*dʒí*	(16j)	*ʒa.kó*	*kó*
(16e)	*ar.náw.du*	*dú*	(16k)	*ʒo.sa.fá*	*fá*
(16f)	*aw.dér.li*	*lí*	(16l)	*ʒo.sé*	*sé*

In examples (16a–f), the hypocoristic selects the final syllable of a paroxytone base, regardless of its syllable weight. In examples (16g–l), on the other hand, it is the stressed syllable of the oxytone base which is selected as hypocoristic, but forms like "a" (< *Aleksandre*), "e" (< *Eduardu*) or "i" (< *Inasio*) reported by Grau Sempere seem to show that the Portuguese hypocoristics can select as well the initial vowel of the noun, albeit unstressed[8]. Grau Sempere (2006: 133) thus concludes that "Brazilian

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[8]   It is not sure whether all the monosyllabic forms reported by Grau Sempere are equally acceptable. Some Brazilian Portuguese speakers seem to reject such hypocoristics as [ˈa] for Aleksandre, thus raising the question of the real status of these forms. Gonçalves (2005) rejects such monosyllabic hypocoristics as *Bé* (< Barnabé), *Mé* (< Salomé), or *Dé* (< André), as well as trisyllabic forms like *Nélope* (< Penélope), *Mérico* (< Américo) or *Rípedes* (< Eurípedes), but Thami da Silva (2008) mentions such truncated nouns as *Mé* (< Américo), *Tá* (< Itamar) *Sí* (< Simone) *Fê* (< Fernanda) or *Sú* (< Sueli) that seem to contradict Gonçalves' assumption. Interestingly, Thami da Silva (2008: 88 fnt. 16 and 108) points out that the final vowel of such forms can be lengthened, and that such lengthening should be viewed as an effect of their Vocatival use (cf. on this point Floricic 2010a).

Portuguese is the only Ibero-Romance dialect that accepts monomoraic monosyllabic
Type R truncated words".

Turning now to imperatives, the examples in (17) show that the correlation P3 of the
present indicative and P2 of the imperative holds as well for Portuguese. Furthermore,
the monosyllabic imperatives in (17) show that CVC and CV imperatives are both
attested, thus arguing for the absence of a minimal size restriction in Portuguese.

(17)   Portuguese imperatives

	Imperative	Indicative present
fazer 'to do'	*faz*	*fázes* (2SG), *faz* (3SG)
trazer 'to carry'	*traz, traze*	*trazes* (2SG), *traz* (3SG)
dizer 'to say'	*diz*	*dizes* (2SG), *diz* (3SG)
dar 'to give'	*dá*	*dás* (2SG), *dá* (3SG)
olhar 'to look'	*olha/olh/o* (cf. French *ard*! [aʀd] < regarde! [ʀəgaʀd])	*olhas* (2SG), *olha* (3SG)
deixar 'to let'	*deixa/xá*	*deixas* (2SG), *deixa* (3SG)
ir 'to go'	*vai/va*	*vais* (2SG), *vai* (3SG)
vir 'to come'	*vem*	*vens* (2SG), vem (3SG)
rir 'to laugh'	*ri*	*ris* (2SG), *ri* (3SG)
ler 'to read'	*lê*	*lês* (2SG), *lê* (3SG)
ver 'to see'	*vê*	*vês* (2SG), *vê* (3SG)

Some of the imperatives in (17) – that is, *faz, diz, traz, vai, tem* and *vem* could of course
be said to match the minimal moraic trochee requirement of Brazilian Portuguese
argued for by Carlos Alexandre Gonçalves (2005). It is clear, however, that not all the
monosyllabic imperatives obey this requirement. For example *dá, va, lê, vê, crê*, etc. all
are monosyllabic and monomoraic. We can even find imperatives like *olh* 'look!'
alongside with *olha*. In this case, it will be noted that the imperative can lose the
thematic vowel, and the amputation of the verb form can even lead to the variant [ɔ],
which really is what Gilliéron (1915), Millardet (1923) and others called "un mutilé
phonétique": not only does it show a drastic reduction of the verb root, but it also
illustrates the semantic shift referred to earlier: in other words, the reduced forms *olh/o*
have shifted towards the status of discourse marker and they lost any verbhood[9]. The

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[9]   "Como foi dito no 8.8, há verbos que costumam ser utilizados pelo falante para marcar troca de
turnos numa conversação ou para introduzir um novo assunto. Partimos da hipótese de que verbos
como *olhar, deixar* e *esperar*, em princípio usados como marcadores do discurso, estariam
adquirindo *status* de forma cristalizada e, portanto, favorecendo mais o imperativo associado ao
indicativo. O que motivou o controle desta variável foi o fato de observarmos que as formas
gramaticalizadas de *esperar, deixar* e *olhar* já se apresentarem gramaticalizadas em formas
diretamente associadas ao imperativo no indicativo: *peraí, xá* (*xá comigo*), *óia*" (Teixeira de Jesus
2006: 114) [As mentioned in 8.8, there are verbs that are often used by the speaker to mark turn

same observation holds for the imperative form *xá* (< deixa), which is obtained by aphaeresis, a deletion process which applies on the symetrical side of the word[10]. This form mainly appears in the expression *xá comigo* 'it's up to me', where it is somewhat petrified.

2.3.5. Imperatives in Gascon

We shall close this brief overview with a sketch of monosyllabic imperatives in an Occitan variety – Gascon – which is close enough to Catalan to exempt us from giving a detailed presentation of the data. We shall not say anything either on the syntax of this variety, though it should be pointed that Gascon normally uses preverbal particles (termed 'énonciatifs' in the linguistic literature on this topic) as predicative markers. These markers, however, do not surface with imperatives, nor do they generally surface with negation (for a discussion see Floricic 2009). The data in (18) interestingly show that Gascon patterns with Ibero-Romance as far as imperative morphology is concerned:

(18) Gascon (Massourre 2001: 150ff.)

	Imperative	Indicative present
a'na 'to go'	*'bɛ*(n)	*'bas* (2SG), *'ba* (3SG)
'be 'to come'	*'be, 'ben, 'bene*	*'bes* (2SG), *'be* (3SG)
'da 'to give'	*'da*	*'das* (2SG), *'da* (3SG)
'prene 'to take'	*'pren*	*'prenes* (2SG), *'pren* (3SG)
'hɛ 'to do'	*'hɛ*	*'hɛs* (2SG), *'hɛ* (3SG)
sen'ti 'to feel'	*sen'teʃ/'sen*	*sen'teʃes/'sentes* (2SG), *sen'teʃ/'sen* (3SG)
'te 'to hold'	*'te*	*'tes* (2SG), *'te* (3SG)
'beβe 'to drink'	*'bew*	*'beβes* (2SG), *'bew* (3SG)
sa'βe 'to know'	*'sap*	*'saβes* (2SG), *'sap* (3SG)
dru'mi 'to sleep'	*'drum*	*'drumes* (2SG), *'drum* (3SG)

Not only does Gascon imperative morphology pattern with that of Ibero-Romance; it shows as well the same syncretisms and the same idiosyncrasies as that mentioned in Aragonese and Catalan. The verb *'be* 'come!' (<*'be* 'to come') has at least three

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changes in conversation or to introduce a new topic. Our hypothesis is that verbs like *olhar*, *deixar* and *esperar*, normally used as discourse markers, would be acquiring the status of crystallized forms, and thus, would be favouring the imperative associated with the indicative. What motivated the verification of this variable is the observation that the grammaticalized forms of *esperar*, *deixar* and *olhar* already present themselves as grammaticalized in forms directly linked to the imperative in the indicative: *peraí*, *xá* (*xá comigo*), *óia*].

[10] The exceptional reduction of this form is not more surprising than that found in Lombard or Molisan, where the same kind of amputation leads to *ssa*/*sa* (< *ássa* < *lássa* [cf. D'Ovidio 1878: 168; Salvioni 1895: 127–128; Bovet 1901: 253]).

allomorphs – *'be*, *'ben*, *'bene* (Massourre 2005: 262) – whose shape has long been discussed. Most view in the final consonant *-n/-ne* the outcome of the partitive/locative marker *-ne* (< *inde*). The same observation holds for the form *'bɛ(n)!* 'go!' (< *a'na* 'to go'), whose final *'-n* has been deemed to have the same origin (for a discussion see Floricic 2010b). In this case it will be observed that the imperative verb form does not surface with any person marker, as seen with Catalan *vés/bés*. No hypercharacterization shows up here, nor does it show up with the verb *'hɛ* 'to do' (< *facere*), whose imperative is syncretic with the present indicative third person singular. To conclude, it is worth pointing out that in Gascon this syncretism (2p. imp. = 3p. pres. ind.) even holds in cases where Catalan would resort to subjunctive forms. For instance, the verb *sa'βe* 'to know' has as imperative the form *'sap*, while Catalan generally has *sapigues / sapiguis/sabis*. Another correlation with Catalan, however, can be seen in the imperatives *sen'teʃ/'sen* 'feel!' (< *sen'ti* (sentīre)): the allomorph *sen'teʃ* has the same extension as that found in verbs like *menteix* [*mən'tɛʃ*] (< *mən'ti* (mentīri)), *parteix* [*pər'tɛʃ*] (< *pər'ti* (partīre)), etc. Needless to say, the interdialectal and intradialectal variation found in Catalan and Occitan imperatives should deserve a much more detailed analysis (see Floricic 2010b). We hope at least to have shown that morphology and phonology interact in such way as to question the relevance of purely phonological constraints in their make-up.

3. Conclusion

Minimality restrictions have been argued to be at work in many languages over the world. However, the violations of such restrictions have not yet received the attention that they deserve. Romance monosyllabic imperatives show that imperatives may violate phonological constraints when they lose their verb-hood and shift towards interjections or discourse markers; in addition, it is questionable whether Minimality restrictions should be viewed as heavy constraints applying to the lexicon as a whole. Imperatives, vocatives, and loans are a privileged field where anomalous patterns may be found (cf. Isačenko 1964, Floricic 2002, Floricic & Molinu 2003, etc.), and we have taken minimal size violations in imperatives to be due to their appeal value. Crucially, imperatives like vocatives appear to be the *mirror image* of hypocoristics concerning phonological markedness. In this case, we should talk about the "emergence of the marked" instead of the "emergence of the unmarked". This concept of 'markedness', it must be pointed out, does not dissolve in 'frequency of use' or in high articulatory cost: in an imperative form like Sardinian *mi'* ['mi] 'look!' there is nothing *a priori* that would make it 'marked' from the point of view of 'production'/'perception', or from the point of view of frequency; on the contrary: it is an optimal CV syllable provided with an onset and a rime, and it is rather a frequent form. All the properties of this imperative should thus assign it an 'unmarked' status. But the markedness of this imperative only

stems from its structural position within the Sardinian phonological *system*: Sardinian phonology only allows bisyllabic trochees as minimal words, a constraint which is violated by some imperatives, by vocatives and by interjections. What these categories have in common is a) their speech-rooted character; b) their peripherality with respect to the *structural* make-up of the language: they tend to escape the network of syntagmatic and paradigmatic relations in which any given element of the language is inserted. They are the 'free electrons' of the language and this is the main reason for their structural deviance.

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