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The Mood of Persuasion: Imperatives and Subjunctives in Attic Oratory

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Abstract: This paper aims to examine whether imperatives are used in the same or a similar way in forensic, symbouleutic, and epideictic orations, what the semantic differences are between addressing the audience in the imperative and the so-called *mandative subjunctive* (which conveys requests, suggestions, and recommendations) or *prohibitive subjunctive* (which instructs the audience to avoid actions), and what impact these two moods are intended to have upon the judges and onlookers. It will be argued that subjunctives, when used in main clauses (those in subordinate clauses are not examined), take their level of forcefulness (i. e., how polite and discreet they are) from their immediate context, and that, in some instances, they may have a similar semantic force and persuasive potential to imperatives.

Keywords: Imperative, subjunctive, persuasion, speaker, audience, opponents, politeness.

1 Introduction

In a recently published article, "A Triangle in the Law-court: Speakers-Opponents-Audiences and the Use of the Imperative", in which I examine the use and purposes of 2013 instances of imperatives in the whole corpus of Attic forensic speeches (both public and private), I put forward the argument that imperatives should not be seen as an improper, impolite, or abrasive means of communication in the law-court, but rather as a decisive and confident way of sustaining a triangular relation between the speaker, his opponent, and the audience.[1] There are, I argue, three types of context which are meticulously crafted by the speaker

1 I would like to thank Alessandro Vatri and Millie Gall for the useful and thought-provoking feedback they offered me, helping me think again about, and improve, the arguments of this paper.

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to enable him to communicate smoothly with the audience and persuade it to undertake decisive actions: the AUD (the abbreviation stands for "Audience") context, where the speaker uses patterns that allow him either to fawn upon the judges or to press them cognitively/emotionally; the AUD/OPP ("Audience-Opponent") context, consisting of patterns that seek to incriminate the opponent, so that the use of the imperative in the calls to the judges to punish him seems to be justified or unavoidable; and finally, the OPP ("Opponents") context, in which imperatives are directed at the speaker's opponent.

In the conclusion of my article, I point out that "more work is needed in figuring out how imperatives are used in symbouleutic and epideictic orations, and what the semantic differences are between imperatives and other moods that are used to denote exhortations and prohibitions, as the subjunctive is". These are exactly the two purposes of this new paper: firstly, to examine how imperatives are used in symbouleutic and epideictic orations; and secondly, to explore Attic forensic texts and contexts (both public and private) in order to collate the instances, and explain the patterns and purposes, of the so-called *mandative subjunctive* (which conveys requests, suggestions, and recommendations), when used in main clauses (subjunctives in subordinate clauses are not under consideration). Confuting the general scholarly view of the subjunctive as being polite and discreet in conveying a message to the audience, it is argued that the subjunctives take their level of forcefulness (how polite and discreet they are) from their immediate textual context, and that, in some instances and within specific contexts, they may have the same semantic force and persuasive potential as imperatives.

These research aims will allow us to evaluate the impact that oratorical genre (and thus also the institutional settings for public speaking and the speaker's purposes when addressing well-specified target audiences in these settings)[2] may have upon the use of moods for persuasion. For it has been argued that the difference between the etiquette (i. e., the purposes and the norms) of oratorical genres – not only the main three types of orations, (forensic, symbouleutic, and epideictic) but also other generic and contextual distinctions (i. e., between public and private cases, prosecution and defence, and logographic and non-log-

2 Aristotle, in *Rhetoric* 1358b, argues that forensic, symbouleutic and epideictic orations are delivered in different institutional contexts, having varied purposes on the part of the speaker: forensic speeches are delivered in law-courts to prosecute or defend individuals concerning past cases; symbouleutic speeches are delivered in the Assembly to provide counsel about the future; and epideictic orations are delivered at religious, athletic or other conventions to eulogize the city, praise the fighters for freedom and provide advice on present or future decisions and actions.

ographic speeches) – has an impact upon the speaker's choice of rhetorical techniques used for persuasion, since it is thought that "the Athenians voted differently, according to the speaking context and institutional setting in which they were called to make decisions".[3] This is the theory of New Institutionalism, according to which different institutions have different 'logics of appropriateness' which condition the ways in which discourses interact and affect society.[4] An evaluation of the most appropriate means of persuasion for each kind of speech will enhance our knowledge and understanding of the techniques, features, and limitations of public speaking, and how the speakers gauge the audience and tailor their speeches to the occasion.

2 Imperatives in symbouleutic and epideictic orations

My recent article on imperatives in Attic forensic oratory explains in detail the grammatical and semantic features of imperatives: they have (strong or weak) directive force, being used to influence the addressee and affect his decisions, actions, and general behaviour; aspect is what determines the character of the directive force, i.e., actions that are requested by *present-stem*, the so-called *imperfective* imperatives, and more decisive actions are demanded by *aorist-stem* (also known as *perfective*) imperatives; and most of all, "imperatives were not considered in antiquity as an impolite or indecent way of communicating with the target audience in the law-court". Imperatives, I argue, are an assertive and forcible, but not an offensive way of conveying a request to the audience, unless they are directed to the speaker's opponent with the purpose of undermining him before the judges and onlookers in court. "This is the reason why imperatives are used both in private and public forensic speeches, where there is a high risk: that of persuading or alienating the judges, who would then have decided for the inno-

3 Serafim 2021a, 64.

4 On New Institutionalism: Serafim 2021a, 63–64. In Serafim 2021a, 63–81 (Chapter 2 of my newly published book, *Religious Discourse in Attic Oratory and Politics*), I argue that several dichotomies between speeches (e.g., forensic, symbouleutic and epideictic or public and private) affect the use of religious discourse. For similar ideas about how pleas to emotion are made in speeches and how other rhetorical techniques are used: Rubinstein 2004, 187–203; 2005, 129–145, where the role of the legal character of the speeches, public or private, is emphasized as an important factor that plays a role in delimiting the public speaking choices of the speaker.

cence or the guilt of the speaker and/or his opponent".[5] Even in cases where we cannot translate imperatives by adding "please", as E. Dickey suggests,[6] they are not, in oratorical texts and contexts, meant to be offensive towards the addressed audience, but rather have a forceful and persistent, but still polite "you should/must (not) do" sense.[7]

That is also the reason why imperatives are used in symbouleutic speeches, where persuasion remains, as in the law-court, the purpose of the orator. Using "The Diorisis Ancient Greek Corpus",[8] a digital collection of 820 ancient Greek texts (from Homer to the early fifth century AD) that allows complicated linguistic inquiries, I found 343 instances of imperatives in both symbouleutic and epideictic orations. This number is close to the figure which C.W.E. Miller gives in his 1892 article, an impressive first professional attempt to investigate the use of imperatives in all the texts and contexts of the (then known) Attic oratorical corpus (368 instances).[9] Overall, I counted 2355 examples of imperatives in Attic oratory, whereas Miller's number is 2445 (or 2426 – I counted the numbers he gives in his paper, but there seems to be a miscalculation of the total number of instances he claimed to have found in each of the oratorical genres). The different methodological approaches that Miller and I used when exploring the use of imperatives in speeches results in different conclusions regarding the number of examples.[10] But both Miller and I draw the conclusion that imperatives are used in higher frequency in forensic than in symbouleutic and epideictic speeches. The data from my research inquiry indicate this difference in frequency quite clearly: the ratio of imperatives in forensic speeches is ca. 0.46 %, in contrast to ca. 0.22 % in the other two oratorical genres combined.[11]

It is worth trying to understand this difference in frequency. As mentioned above, persuasion is a significant end in political speeches: the political gravity of the Assembly, with all its discussion about foreign and war policy (as discussed and determined, for example, in the three Olynthiac and the four Philip-

5 Serafim 2021b, 395.

6 Dickey 2016, 241.

7 On the "you should/must (not) do" sense of the imperatives in the distinct context of prayers: Nickau 1993, 158–166; Duhoux 2000, 249–251; Willi 2003, 31–33.

8 See Vatri/McGillivray 2018, 55–65.

9 Miller 1892, 399–436.

10 I do not examine, for example, the speeches of Isaeus that follow the legal process of *diadikasia*.

11 Ratios are calculated by the quotient of the number of imperatives and the total number of words in forensic (2013 instances of imperatives in 428591 words) and symbouleutic/epideictic orations (343 instances in a total of 149894 words).

pic speeches of Demosthenes), and about ways of sustaining the constitution and protecting democracy, is evident and undoubted. The less compelling need to use imperatives in the political speeches may be – we cannot be more assertive here, unfortunately – due to the level of the speaker's personal involvement in a case. Unlike court speeches, where the speaker would be personally harmed or benefited by the casting of the final juridical verdict, decisions in political conventions do not entail an immediate personal impact upon the speakers. The decisions do, of course, affect the *polis* as a whole, and prospectively also the speakers (e. g., by boosting or busting their political careers), but the advantage or the danger is not immediate or unmanageable, as it is the case of court speeches, where the losing party runs the risk of being punished with death, exile, or imprisonment. For this reason, the speakers may not feel obliged to use imperatives in abundance, not even in hortatory political contexts, where we expect the audience to be guided in clear and forceful terms regarding future political actions, or in adversarial contexts, where we expect them to be strongly directed against serious (inter- or intra-state) threats.

The only exception to this overarching rule that imperatives are used only sparingly in symbouleutic and epideictic orations can be found in the speeches of Isocrates which are directed at a specific individual: in his speeches *To Demonicus* (speech 1), *To Nicocles* (speech 2) and *Nicocles or the Cyprians* (speech 3), I found imperatives used with denser frequency – 78, 70, and 44 instances respectively, more than a half of the total number of instances I counted in symbouleutic and epideictic orations. While the distinct preponderance of imperatives in these hortatory speeches is understandable – the speeches are composed to advise an individual as what to do and what to avoid – it is not completely clear why other speeches of the same kind do not include as many instances of imperatives as the three speeches I mention above. The speech *To Philip* (speech 5) contains only 8 imperatives; the quotient of the number of imperatives and the total number of words indicates that imperatives are used at a rate of 2.69 % in Isocrates 1, 2.32 % in speech 2, 1.17 % in speech 3, and only in 0.09 % in speech 5. It may be that speaker takes into serious consideration the specific addressee, the person to whom each speech is directed: Isocrates, in other words, may not think it necessary or proper to instruct, by means of imperatives, an experienced monarch, as Philip was, in contrast with the young prince Nicocles, the son of Evagoras of Cyprus.

Beyond the frequency of imperatives in symbouleutic and epideictic orations, differences also occur in the ways in which these are used. There are, of course, *instrumental imperatives* in symbouleutic and epideictic oratory, as there are in forensic oratory. These, as argued in my recent article, are the imperatives that convey messages to specific individuals (e. g., clerks, witnesses) which are not

strictly connected with the argument of the speakers. Instrumental imperatives can be found, for example, in the speeches of Isocrates, whenever he pretends to be in the court and asks the clerk to read out documents (cf. 15.29, 59, 65, and 72).[12] It is notable, however, that symbouleutic and epideictic orations contain imperatives that are only directed to the audience, not both to the audience and to the speakers' opponents, as in forensic oratory. This absence is reasonable, since political and epideictic speeches do not have the heightened interpersonal adversarial tone of forensic speeches – hence the lack of imperatives addressed directly to opponents, who, unlike in the law-court, were not necessarily present in the Assembly (e. g., Philip was not there when Demosthenes delivered speeches criticizing his policies and his obsession with conquering Greek cities). One might still expect, however, the speakers to ask the audience to make decisions against collective enemies, as Philip is manifestly presented to be in demosthenic political rhetoric.

What remains the same in all oratorical genres is the attempt of the speakers to actively instruct the audience, which mainly consists of Athenians, to think and examine matters seriously, to protect the city and the democratic constitution, and to take specific decisions. Imperatives that encourage the Athenians to think and examine matters meticulously can be found very frequently in political speeches, such as, for example, in Demosthenes 3.4, 9.3,[13] 9.43; Isocrates 11.47, where two tautologous imperatives are used, perhaps as a way of placing emphasis on the demand that the Athenians give careful consideration to the matters in

12 Isocrates 15.29: "But in order that I may not overtax your patience by speaking at undue length before coming to the subject, I shall leave off this discussion and attempt forthwith to inform you on the question which you are to vote upon. Please read the indictment". § 59: "Now I thought that I should be able to go through these passages myself, but I find that my age hampers me and causes me to give out easily. So then, in order that I may not break down utterly while there are still many things which I must say, let the clerk begin at the place marked and read the passage on the hegemony" [extracts from *Panegyricus* follow]. § 65: "After having dwelt upon this subject, deplored the misfortunes of Hellas, and urged Athens not to allow herself to remain in her present state, finally I summon her to a career of justice, I condemn the mistakes she is now making, and I counsel her as to her future policy. Now begin at the point where I start to discuss these matters and read this selection also to the judges". § 72: "And I try to persuade him also that it ought to be revolting to his mind to see the base ruling over the good and the foolish giving orders to the wise, saying to him that the more vigorously he condemns folly in other men, the more should he cultivate his own understanding. Now then, begin where I have left off and read to the judges the rest of the discourse".

13 Demosthenes 9.3: "I claim for myself, Athenians, that if I utter some home-truths with freedom, I shall not thereby incur your displeasure. For look at it this way" (σκοπεῖτε γὰρ ὠδί).

hand;[14] 5.58, 115;[15] 8.22, where the audience is instructed not to have a specific thought.[16]

Demosthenes 3.4 and 9.43 are notable for different reasons. In the first passage, it is disputable that the verbal form is in the imperative:

> ἀναγκαῖον δ' ὑπολαμβάνω μικρὰ τῶν γεγενημένων πρῶτον ὑμᾶς ὑπομνῆσαι. **μέμνησθ'**, ὦ ἄνδρες Ἀθηναῖοι, ὅτ' ἀπηγγέλθη Φίλιππος ὑμῖν ἐν Θρᾴκῃ τρίτον ἢ τέταρτον ἔτος τουτὶ Ἡραῖον τεῖχος πολιορκῶν.
>
> I must first refresh your memory with a little history. **Remember**, men of Athens, when news came three or four years ago that Philip was in Thrace besieging the fortress of Heraeum.

The verb μέμνησθ[ε] can equally well be a second person plural either of the perfect indicative or the perfect imperative.[17] In this context, I argue, the imperative would better fit the purpose of the speaker to prompt the Athenians in the audience to think about a past event. Despite the perfect imperatives being used only infrequently in Attic oratory, we can nevertheless find attestations in other texts, such as, for example, in *Iliad* 22.364–366.[18] The perfect tense is used to refer to an action which was undertaken in the past, but its effect is ongoing. The perfect imperative can be taken as having the same semantic qualities as the present imperative, in that the action indicated by the present imperative is constant, ongoing, or repeated, and that "this is the obvious choice for an imperative when there can be no doubt as to what action the person addressed is supposed to be taking – whether 1) because this action has been mentioned or implied earlier or 2) because he is already performing it – and the imperative serves to ask him or her either to continue or stop doing so".[19] If we take μέμνησθ[ε] as a

14 Isocrates 11.47: σκέψαι δὲ κἀκεῖνο καὶ δίελθε πρὸς αὑτόν "again, consider this, and meditate upon it".

15 Isocrates 5.58: "Consider (σκέψαι) first the exploits of Alcibiades"; § 115: "And think (σκέψαι) that I am summoning you to an undertaking in which you will make expeditions [...]".

16 Isocrates 8.22: "For do not think (μὴ γὰρ οἴεσθε) that Cersobleptes will wage war with us over the Chersonese, or Philip over Amphipolis, when they see that we do not covet any of the possessions of other peoples".

17 In fact, Vince 1930 translates this verbal form as being in perfect indicative.

18 Homer, *Iliad* 22.364–366: τὸν καὶ τεθνηῶτα προσηύδα δῖος Ἀχιλλεύς / τέθναθι· κῆρα δ' ἐγὼ τότε δέξομαι ὁππότε κεν δὴ / Ζεὺς ἐθέλῃ τελέσαι ἠδ' ἀθάνατοι θεοὶ ἄλλοι "And to him even in his death spoke godly Achilles: "Lie dead; for my part I will accept my fate whenever Zeus and the other gods see fit to send it". I prefer the translation "lie dead", but I also think proper the translation "be dead" that is suggested by De Jong 2012, 153. With this perfect imperative Achilles expresses his satisfaction that his arch enemy lies dead.

19 Sicking 1991, 157. Also: Fantin 2010, 89.

perfect imperative in the context of 3.4 we can better understand how and how insistently Demosthenes invites the Athenians to think of the day when the sorry news about the siege of Heraeum arrived in the *polis*, and to keep thinking of this and other past events which are important for the political situation at the time the speech was delivered. It is more expedient for him to convey his message by using a verb in imperatival form, in the hope of being more effective in achieving his purpose.

Demosthenes 9.43 is another important passage that contains imperatives. This is because religious discourse accompanies the speaker's request to the Athenian audience to think.

> **λογίζεσθε δὴ πρὸς θεῶν**, τίς ἦν ποθ' ἡ διάνοια τῶν Ἀθηναίων τῶν τότε, ταῦτα ποιούντων, ἢ τί τὸ ἀξίωμα. ἐκεῖνοι Ζελείτην τινά, Ἄρθμιον, δοῦλον βασιλέως (ἡ γὰρ Ζέλειά ἐστι τῆς Ἀσίας) ὅτι τῷ δεσπότῃ διακονῶν χρυσίον ἤγαγεν εἰς Πελοπόννησον, οὐκ Ἀθήναζε, ἐχθρὸν αὐτῶν ἀνέγραψαν καὶ τῶν συμμάχων αὐτὸν καὶ γένος, καὶ ἀτίμους.
>
> **Think, therefore, in heaven's name** of what the intention of the Athenians who did this thing was, or what their proud claim was.[20] They proscribed as their enemy and the enemy of their allies, disfranchising him and his family, a man of Zeleia, one Arthmius, a slave of the Great King (for Zelea is in Asia) because in the service of his master he conveyed gold, not to Athens but to the Peloponnese.

By using the present imperative, Demosthenes asks the audience to think of the past event he refers to and keep that thought in mind until the end of his speech, when they will have to decide about their attitude towards Philip. This request, I argue, is endorsed by means of the religious discourse that is used: πρὸς θεῶν is one of the standard phrases speakers use to address the gods or the divine.[21] To place such a reference in a context where the audience is instructed in forceful terms to think of a man, Arthmius of Zeleia, who was directed by Xerxes to bring the gold of Persia into Greece and barely escaped death in Athens, is to invite the members of the Assembly to think of the ways in which their forefathers stood up not only to their own enemies, but also to the enemies of their allies, as Arthmius was. Civic spirit/patriotism in classical Athens is interconnected with religiousness, as many examples in Attic oratory indicate.[22] The combination of

20 Vince 1930 does not accurately translate the passage to denote the use of religious discourse in context: "I earnestly implore you to consider what the intention of the Athenians who did this thing was, or what their proud claim was".

21 Serafim 2021a, 65 where it is argued that vocative and prepositional phrases, and the particles νή and μά are used in forensic and symbouleutic (but not in epideictic orations) to invoke the gods or swear oaths.

22 Serafim 2021a, 126–133.

the imperative with religious discourse and the emotionally laden reference to the Athenian forefathers aims to make Demosthenes' message more pronounced and emphatic: think, bear that thought in mind, show patriotism by imitating the noble decisions and actions of your forefathers, and stand up to Philip, who threatens the leading role of the *polis* in Greek affairs.

Clearer examples of imperatives which are used to invite the audience to make decisions can be found elsewhere in the political speeches of Attic orators. One such an example from the demosthenic corpus validates the argument made in both this and my recently published article on the use imperatives in Attic oratory: that imperatives are not abrasive or impolite, when addressing the audience in court or in the Assembly, but rather a confident and decisive, still civil way to instruct its members what to think and how to vote (cf. Isocrates 15.179 and 323).[23] Demosthenes 4.14 stands out in the corpus of Attic speeches in that it combines tenses in three imperatival verbal forms, all aiming to present the speaker as the caring and knowledgeable advisor of the *dēmos*.[24]

> When you have heard everything, then **pass your judgement (κρίνατε)**. **Do not be premature (μὴ πρότερον προλαμβάνετε)**; and even if at the outset I seem to be suggesting a novel kind of expeditionary force, **do not imagine (μηδ' ἡγείσθω)** that I am trying to postpone our operations. It is not those who cry "at once" or "today" that really speak to the purpose, for no dispatch of forces now could prevent what has already happened.

Both present and aorist imperatives are used in this context (this combination also occurs in forensic oratory, such as, for example, in Dinarchus 1.113). This combination indicates Demosthenes' purpose to exploit the aspectual and semantic potential of both imperatival verbal forms, with the two present imperatives (μή … προλαμβάνετε and μηδ' ἡγείσθω) aiming to communicate the need for the audience to pass timely and thoughtful judgment, and the aorist imperative (κρίνατε) giving an authoritative invitation to the audience to make decisions only when they have listened to all sides involved in an argument or situation. The order of

23 Isocrates 15.179: "Be patient, therefore, with the manner of my discourse and with my frankness of speech; permit me to use up the time allotted to my defense; and then cast your ballots as each of you thinks is right and in accordance with the law" (οὕτω φέρετε τὴν ψῆφον). § 323: "being assured, therefore, that I am of this mind, and that I believe that whatever you decide will be for my good and to my advantage, let each one cast his vote (τοῦτον τὸν τρόπον φερέτω τὴν ψῆφον) as he pleases and is inclined".

24 Demosthenes never ceases to undertake the role of advisor in his speeches, as also indicated in 18.172–173, where he claimed that he was the only Athenian leader who stood up to provide comfort and advice to his fellows during the stormy day of the announcement of the capture of Elatea by Philip). On 18.172–173 and the role of Demosthenes as an advisor to the Athenians: Serafim 2015, 103–105.

the imperatives also seems to be purposeful: the speaker wants first to grasp the attention of the audience with a strong and pronounced message, which is delivered by an aorist imperative, since this presents a sharper command than the present imperative,[25] before giving two imperatival clarifications of the message, indicating that the audience should always keep the message in mind and carry out the designated action. In the clarifications of the message, the imperfective aspect of the present imperative, which signals the need for an action to be constant, underlines the perennial value and importance of what the speaker says to the audience.

Imperatives in symbouleutic and epideictic orations also seek to invite the Athenians to protect the democratic constitution of the *polis*. This is the role of the two pairs of imperatives in Demosthenes 6.24 and 15.33:

> 6.24: And all these are wrought by hand and entail expense. But there is one common bulwark which the instinct of sensible men possesses within itself, a good and safe one for all, but invaluable for democracies against tyrants. And what is that bulwark? It is mistrust (ἀπιστία). **Guard that (ταύτην φυλάττετε)**; **hold fast to that (ταύτης ἀντέχεσθε)**. If you preserve it, no harm can touch you.

> 15.33: Then those who, by adopting oligarchical principles, abandon the post taken over by us from our ancestors, ought to be disqualified from ever giving you advice. As it is, **consider (νομίζετ᾽)** as most devoted to you the allies who have sworn to regard your friends and your enemies as their own, but where politicians are concerned, **take (ἡγεῖσθε)** as your most trusted advisers the men who, to your certain knowledge, have thrown in their lot with the enemies of the State.

It is notable that only present imperatives are used in the passages above. Some translators think that the verbal forms of the second passage are in indicative, but in my view the passage makes better sense if we attribute imperatival meaning to both forms, νομίζετ[ε] and ἡγεῖσθε.[26] In the first sentence, Demosthenes suggests that the Athenians should politically disqualify those who espoused oligarchical principles. This seems to imply that disqualification was not happening in Athens, and that the *dēmos* should imitate the attitude of its ancestors towards the people who tried to undermine the democratic constitution. Hence, to emphasize that this is the role of his fellows, the speaker rightly uses two imperatives, whose present tense functions well in context, since, as scholars argue, present or imperfective imperatives are used to emphasize that an action mentioned

25 Bakker 1966, 44; Fanning 1990; Sicking 1991, 156; Rijksbaron 2006, 45; Lamers/Rademaker 2007, 462; Campbell 2008, 81; Keersmaekers/Van Hal 2016, 19–51; Serafim 2020, 10.

26 That is why I amended the translation of Vince/Vince 1926: to indicate that imperatives, not indicatives, are used.

earlier – here, in the first sentence – should be undertaken by the audience in perpetuity.[27]

To sum up, this first part of this article explores the frequency and patterns of using imperatives in the whole Attic corpus of symbouleutic and epideictic orations. It becomes clear from the data and the passages I have examined that imperatives are used less frequently in these oratorical genres of oratory than in the forensic, and that despite the similarities we can find in their use (e. g., imperatives to instruct the audience to show patriotism and protect the *polis*; others that are accompanied and reinforced by religious discourse; and others that enable the speaker to present himself as the advisor of the people), there are also important differences. There are no imperatives that are directed at the opponents, for example, nor even at the audience with the aim of instructing its members to stand up to enemies (e. g., to Philip, as we would reasonably expect in adversarial contexts like those of Demosthenes' *Olynthiacs* and *Philippics*). Interpretative attempts to explain the differences in the ways of using imperatives in varied oratorical genres have been made above, in order to give scholars a complete picture of how, and for what purposes, imperatives are used in Attic oratory.

3 Subjunctives in forensic oratory

To establish a more complete picture of the use of moods in oratory for the purpose of audience persuasion, it is useful – if not necessary – to examine subjunctives, which can overlap with imperatives, in the sense that both moods are used as a means of issuing prohibitions and making exhortations to the target audience. These functions of subjunctives raise a few questions: what is the semantic difference between imperatives and subjunctives? Is it as clearly articulated as modern scholars tend to think and suggest? Are subjunctives in Attic oratory only used to denote actions that are desirable and potential (as in the English formulas "let us do something" or "may we do something"), as scholars suggest that subjunctives in principle do?[28] This section of the article aims to offer some answers to these questions, exploring the instances of subjunctives in the *main clauses* of Attic forensic oratory. I argue that, beyond grammatical restrictions on the use of imperatives and subjunctives (i. e., in the case of prohibitions, iterative actions are denoted by present imperatives, whereas momentary actions are expressed by

27 On present imperatives: Bakker 1966, 31–66; Sicking 1991, 157; Bary 2009, 11–13; Keersmaekers/Van Hal 2016, 19–51. On present imperatives in Attic forensic oratory: Serafim 2021b, 388–417.
28 Rouchota 1994, 119–121.

aorist subjunctives; in the case of exhortations, verbal actions in the first person singular/plural are expressed by subjunctives, whereas those in the second and third persons are indicated by imperatives), their semantic difference, i. e., their level of forcefulness, is determined by the context in which they are placed.

The idea that context affects the meaning of subjunctives has already been established in modern interdisciplinary scholarship. The linguist V. Rouchota, for example, is right to argue that "in some [Modern Greek] contexts the use of [the subjunctive] instead of an imperative is inappropriate. For example, if the speaker and the hearer are in danger and must run to save their lives, the speaker will most probably utter the imperative rather than [the subjunctive]".[29] The use of moods in Ancient Greek, especially in Attic oratory, is noticeably more complicated. The overarching conclusion I can draw, after reading the entirety of the extant Attic forensic speeches, is that there is no clear-cut distinction in meaning between subjunctives and imperatives: despite the argument in scholarship that the imperative is a less polite and polished way of communicating with the addressee, in Attic oratory the subjunctive can be as forcible and 'pressing' as the imperative is thought by scholars to be. Subjunctives can be 'polite', 'gentle', 'implicit', or 'forceful', depending on the context in which they are used, i. e., the arguments or the purposes of the speaker and the addressee. There is some level of obscurity, however, concerning the specific contexts that make the use of either the subjunctive or the imperative more suitable and appropriate: there are passages where both moods are used to denote actions that should urgently be undertaken by the addressee. In what follows, I discuss some salient examples, trying to understand the framework for using subjunctives in the public and private speeches of Attic forensic oratory, and clarify their semantic and persuasive connection with imperatives.

Let us start with some overarching conclusions, before proceeding to the examination of specific passages. Subjunctives, quite surprisingly, are used less frequently in the main clauses of Attic forensic speeches than imperatives. Parsing Attic forensic speeches using "The Diorisis Ancient Greek Corpus", I discovered that subjunctives are used 855 times, in comparison with imperatives, which are used 2013 times. This difference in the frequency of these two moods can be clearly shown by ratios: subjunctives are used with a frequency of ca. 0.20 %, while imperatives are used with a frequency of ca. 0.46 %.[30] The distinct difference in the frequency of subjunctives and imperatives in Attic forensic speeches may indicate

29 Rouchota 1994, 117.

30 Ratios are the quotient of the number of subjunctives and imperatives in the total number of words in forensic speeches, i. e., 428591 words.

that the former were not considered to be a more "polite" way of communicating with the audience than the latter. In fact, the opposite is apparent: imperatives, as already argued in the first part of this article as well as in my recently published one, have a confident but not uncivil force, and this makes them preferred in the texts of forensic oratory whenever persuasion is the main objective.

In principle, subjunctives in Attic forensic oratory can have both the audience and the opponents of the speaker as addressees, conveying to them the message to carry out an action (*mandative subjunctives*)[31] or to avoid it (*prohibitive subjunctives*). Subjunctives are, therefore, as forceful and 'pressing' as imperatives are thought to be. This makes the lower frequency of subjunctives in forensic speeches even more puzzling. The difference between the subjunctive and imperative can, arguably, be one of style and tone rather than one of grammatical substance and semantics: the Athenians of the fourth century may perhaps have intuitively understood that subtle distinction, and used subjunctives, as shown in passages below, *mostly* when they had sensitive personal pleas to make. If imperatives represent a more confident means of communication with the audience than subjunctives, it might have been considered inappropriate to use them to express a request about personal matters. The imperative is used when the speaker seeks to convey grand political messages to the audience (e. g., the request to the judges to protect the *polis* and the constitution), or when matters of a highly adversarial nature are discussed (e. g., whenever the speaker asks the audience to punish his opponents). This pattern has, of course, its limitations, in the sense that, in a few forensic passages from the demosthenic corpus of speeches (such as, for example, in 19.78 and 20.142),[32] and that of Dinarchus (as in 1.29),[33] subjunctives can also be used to convey messages that have politi-

31 Peters 2004, 52 calls mandative subjunctives a "call for a particular action"; cf. Quirk/Greenbaum 1973, 5; Biber *et al*. 1999, 66.

32 Demosthenes 19.78: "If as an offset to the Phocians and Thermopylae and all our other losses he tells you that the city still retains the Chersonese, I adjure you not to accept that excuse (μὴ ἀποδέξησθε). In addition to the wrongs, he has done you by his embassy, you must not suffer him (μηδ' ὑπομείνητε) by his defence also to fasten upon the city the reproach that, while stealthily securing some of your own possessions, you made sacrifice of the safety of your allies". 20.142: "then do not now destroy (μὴ ... ἀνέλητε) the very qualities on which throughout its history our city's reputation is founded; do not, in order that Leptines may vent his spite on men whom he dislikes, rob (μηδ'... ἀφέλησθε) both yourselves and your city of the fair fame that has been yours in every age; do not suppose that anything else is at stake in this trial save the honor of Athens, whether it is to stand unimpaired as of old, or to pass into neglect and degradation".

33 Dinarchus 1.29: "Do not acquit him (μὴ ἀφῆτε), men of Athens. Do not let go unpunished (μὴ ἀφῆτε) this man who has endorsed the misfortunes of his country and the rest of Greece, when he has been caught with bribes against the city in his very hands".

cal or adversarial flavour. Languages, especially Ancient Greek, are complicated systems, and the exceptions are more than the rules. In the case of the semantic distinction between the subjunctives and the imperative, there is a clear tendency in speeches towards the pattern I suggest, while the few exceptions that can be found serve to corroborate the major point this article puts forward: that subjunctives and imperatives share a similar semantic force and persuasive potential.

There are three superb examples that point to the "imperatival" character of (prohibitive) subjunctives in Aeschines 2.127 and Demosthenes 28.19, 20. The three passages read as following:

> Aeschines 2.127: κἂν φῶσιν ἀπόκοιτόν με τουτωνὶ πώποτε τῶν συσσίτων γεγονέναι, **μὴ φείσησθέ μου**, ὦ ἄνδρες Ἀθηναῖοι, ἀλλ' ἀναστάντες **ἀποκτείνατε**.
>
> If the slaves testify that I ever slept away from these messmates of mine, **spare me not**, fellow citizens, but rise up and **kill me**.
>
> Demosthenes 28.19: **μηδαμῶς**, ὦ ἄνδρες δικασταί, **γένησθ'** ἡμῖν τοσούτων αἴτιοι κακῶν: **μηδὲ** τὴν μητέρα κἀμὲ καὶ τὴν ἀδελφὴν ἀνάξια παθόντας **περιίδητε** ...
>
> **Do not**, men in the judging panel, **be** to us the cause of such deep distress; **do not allow** my mother, my sister and myself **to suffer undeserved** misfortunes ...
>
> Demosthenes 28.20: οὕτως ὄναισθε τούτων, **μὴ περιίδητέ με**, **μηδὲ ποιήσητε τὴν μητέρα** καὶ τῶν ἐπιλοίπων ἐλπίδων εἰς τὸν βίον στερηθεῖσαν ἀνάξιον αὐτῆς τι παθεῖν.
>
> So may heaven give you joy of them, **do not look upon me** with indifference **nor cause my mother deprived** of the hopes in life that are left her, to suffer a lot unworthy of her.

It is known of course, as argued earlier in this section, that, in the case of prohibitions, iterative actions are denoted by present imperatives, whereas momentary/non-iterative actions are expressed by aorist subjunctives. So, in other words, in the case of μὴ φείσησθέ μου and μηδὲ ποιήσητε, to refer to two examples in the passages that are cited above, the aorist subjunctive is used in preference to the present imperative because Aeschines and Demosthenes choose to indicate non-iterative actions; aspect is what determines the use of mood and tense. But this paper aims to investigate why the orators make this choice in the first place, as the present imperative is used elsewhere in Attic speeches (such as, for example, in Aeschines 3.206, which is discussed later in this section), and whether the subjunctives carry any additional semantic force in the passages above and those that follow in the rest of the chapter. In all three passages, subjunctives are used to convey a strong message to the audience, thus having no sharp semantic difference from imperatives. It is notable that in the first passage

aorist verbs are used in both moods, the subjunctive and the imperative. This is a clear indication that the two moods are used in a supplementary way, and that, in context, they have a similar level of forcefulness in sending the message to the target audience – hence the translation of subjunctives in the same way as imperatives.[34] It is also important to note that prohibitive subjunctives are used when references are made to sensitive personal issues that involve the speaker and his fellows; they serve as a means of dramatizing the request that is being made to the audience and elevating the emotional tone of the discussion.

This is also the way subjunctives are used in other passages, such as, for example, in Demosthenes 23.1 and Lysias 3.47; the second passage includes both an imperatival present form to remind the law-court audience of their duty to cast a just verdict, and a subjunctive, when the speaker asks the judges not to drive him out of the *polis*.[35] Isaeus 2.47, where the speaker, in an emotionally laden plea to the judges, asks them not to deprive him of his name, that is of the parenthood that Menecles offered after he adopted him as his lawful son, is also marked out because of the combination of subjunctives and imperatives. These moods, which are enhanced in context by religious discourse (the mention of the gods is underlined in the passage below), aim to dramatize and solemnify the pleas of the speaker. Here is the passage:

> **μὴ** οὖν, ὦ ἄνδρες, πεισθέντες ὑπὸ τούτων **ἀφέλησθέ** μου τὸ ὄνομα, τῆς κληρονομίας ὃ ἔτι μόνον λοιπόν ἐστιν, ἄκυρον δὲ τὴν ποίησιν αὐτοῦ **καταστήσητε**: ἀλλ᾽ ἐπειδὴ τὸ πρᾶγμα εἰς ὑμᾶς ἀφῖκται καὶ ὑμεῖς κύριοι γεγόνατε, *βοηθήσατε καὶ ἡμῖν καὶ ἐκείνῳ* τῷ ἐν Ἅιδου ὄντι, καὶ **μὴ περιίδητε**, <u>πρὸς θεῶν καὶ δαιμόνων δέομαι ὑμῶν</u>, προπηλακισθέντα αὐτὸν ὑπὸ τούτων, ἀλλὰ μεμνημένοι τοῦ νόμου καὶ τοῦ ὅρκου ὃν ὀμωμόκατε καὶ τῶν εἰρημένων ὑπὲρ τοῦ πράγματος, τὰ δίκαια καὶ τὰ εὔορκα κατὰ τοὺς νόμους *ψηφίσασθε*.
>
> **Do not** therefore, gentlemen, listen to my opponents and **deprive** me of my name, the sole remnant of my inheritance, and **annul** Menecles' adoption of me; but since the matter has come before you for judgment and you have the sovereign right of decision, *come to the aid both of us and of him* who is in the other world, and **do not allow** Menecles, <u>by the gods and deities I beseech you</u>, **to be insulted** by my opponents, but mindful of the law and of the oath which you have sworn and of the arguments which have been used in support of my plea, *pass* in accordance with the laws *the verdict* which is just and in conformity with your oath.

34 As Jacobsson 1975, 220 points out "it is sometimes difficult to keep them [subjunctives and imperatives] apart".

35 Demosthenes 23.1: "Men of Athens, I beg that none of you will imagine (μηδεὶς ὑμῶν … νομίσῃ) that I have come here to arraign the defendant Aristocrates from any motive of private malice". Lysias 3.47: "Remembering these things, give your vote (ψηφίζεσθε) for justice, and do not suffer me (μὴ περιίδητε) to be unjustly ejected from my native land".

The passage is marked by the combination of aorist verbs in both moods: there are three prohibitive subjunctives (marked in bold; in the case of καταστήσητε the negative particle is missing from the text, being perhaps unnecessary because one such negative particle is already used as an accompaniment of ἀφέλησθε) and two imperatives (in italics) which convey a positive message, an exhortation to the audience. When the speaker asks the judges to think of him subjunctives are most suitable (except for the last one, μὴ περιίδητε), but when the pleas concern people other than the speaker imperatives are used. The use of the imperative is necessary because of the person (in exhortations, the second person is expressed by imperatives), but it is not without semantic meaning in the passage. In Isaeus 2.47, unlike the other passages discussed above, the imperatival commands to the audience include the speaker himself, Philonides, in whose defence this speech is delivered – which is why a plural personal pronoun ἡμῖν is used – and Menecles, the speaker's dead father – hence, ἐκείνῳ. The imperative, therefore, still refers to others, despite the masterly inclusion of the speaker in that group. The aorist tense is also important at least in the case of imperatives because, as mentioned earlier, it expresses a strong command. Isaeus 2.47 is also interesting because religious discourse, as indicated by the invocation πρὸς θεῶν καὶ δαιμόνων, accompanies both prohibitions and exhortations to the audience, elevating the solemn tone of the passage and the persuasive potential of the speech.[36]

The distinction I suggest in the meaning and the use of the two moods – i. e., subjunctives for personal matters and imperatives for grand political affairs and adversarial contexts – is clearly articulated in another group of forensic passages, the common feature of which is the grammatically ambiguous use of verbs, in the sense that these can potentially be in both the subjunctive and imperative moods. Let us read Aeschines 3.206 to see an example of this ambiguity:

> ὥσπερ οὖν ἐν τοῖς γυμνικοῖς ἀγῶσιν ὁρᾶτε τοὺς πύκτας περὶ τῆς στάσεως ἀλλήλοις διαγωνιζομένους, οὕτω καὶ ὑμεῖς ὅλην τὴν ἡμέραν ὑπὲρ τῆς πόλεως περὶ τῆς στάσεως αὐτῷ τοῦ λόγου μάχεσθε, καὶ **μὴ ἐᾶτε** αὐτὸν ἔξω τοῦ παρανόμου περιίστασθαι, ἀλλ᾽ ἐγκαθήμενοι καὶ ἐνεδρεύοντες ἐν τῇ ἀκροάσει, **εἰσελαύνετε** αὐτὸν εἰς τοὺς τοῦ παρανόμου λόγους, καὶ τὰς ἐκτροπὰς αὐτοῦ τῶν λόγων **ἐπιτηρεῖτε**.
>
> As, therefore, in gymnastic contests you see the boxers contending with one another for position, so do you for the city's sake fight with him the whole day long for position as regards argument; and **do not let him** set his feet outside the bounds of the illegality charged, but watch him and lie in wait for him as you listen, **drive him** into discussion of the illegality, and **look out** for the twists and turns of his speech.

36 On the impact of religious discourse upon the audience in Athenian public speaking contexts: Serafim 2021a, especially Chapters 3 and 4.

In this context, three imperatives are used: ἐᾶτε, εἰσελαύνετε and ἐπιτηρεῖτε. Aeschines aims unquestionably to invite the audience to undertake specific actions against Demosthenes: to guard him, be careful of the deceitful content of his speech, and make him speak about his illegal actions. To achieve this –in fact, to rally the judges and onlookers in the law-court to create a group that shares the same values, especially lawfulness, from which Demosthenes is excluded – Aeschines should sound confident and decisive. Imperatives are, therefore, a suitable choice, given the highly adversarial context in which they are placed. And the imperfective aspect of the present imperative indicates a repeated action that is not limited to the law-court session of the embassy trial in which Aeschines 3 was delivered but should also be undertaken whenever Demosthenes addresses the Athenian *dēmos*.

Demosthenes 27.59 presents a similar case of ambiguity: "but in my case, fourteen talents in ten years, when consideration is given to the time and the terms of his lease, ought to have been more than trebled. Ask him (ἐρωτᾶτ') why he did not do this". The verb ἐρωτᾶτ' is considered a present imperative, but it could equally well be a present subjunctive. What marks the verb as an imperative is its context: Demosthenes urges the audience to undertake a specific action, to ask his opponent a question. If the audience complies and reacts as Demosthenes instructs, *thorubos* would have been stirred up in the law-court, giving the impression that the audience is pressing the speaker's opponent, putting him into a sort of corner. *Thorubos* can be seen then as a means of persuasion. Demosthenes attempted many times to work and activate the audience, with the aim of eliciting a reaction that could be detrimental to his opponents. A telling example is in 18.52, where he asks whether Aeschines was a hireling (μισθωτός) or a friend (ξένος) of Alexander and then apostrophizes his opponent to add "you hear what they are saying". As the *Scholia Demosthenica* 104a-c inform us, this points to the response of the audience: when Demosthenes mispronounced the word μισθωτός by putting the accent on the antepenult (μίσθωτος), the audience (especially, the judges among the others present in the law-court) corrected him by uttering the correct form of the word. The *Scholia 104b* also refer to Menander as the leader of a group of court onlookers, who shouted out that Aeschines was a hireling of Alexander, allowing Demosthenes to take this as the general attitude of the audience towards his opponent.[37]

37 Cf. Usher 1993, 190; Yunis 2001, 140. On *thorubos*: Bers 1985, 1–15; Thomas 2011, 175–185.

4 Conclusions

This article has examined the use and function of imperatives and subjunctives in different genres of Attic oratory: the former is examined in symbouleutic and epideictic orations, while the latter is discussed as it is found in the extant forensic orations. Two overarching conclusions can be drawn. The first, concerning the imperative, is that its use in symbouleutic and epideictic oratory both converges with and diverges from its use in forensic oratory. While some of the patterns used in the latter are the same as those used in the former (i. e., imperatival exhortations to the audience to protect the *polis* or verbal forms that enable the speaker to present himself as the virtuous counsellor of the *dēmos*), there are also considerable differences, the most pronounced of which is that there are no adversarial imperatives, i. e., those directed at the opponents.

The second conclusion I can draw has to do with the subjunctive, which, when used in main clauses of Attic forensic speeches, is not more implicit or civil than the imperative, but rather shares a similar semantic force and persuasive potential. The context in which the subjunctive is used determines the level of forcefulness and meaning. The neat distinction I made between the two moods, i. e., that the subjunctives are used when sensitive personal issues are employed in speeches, whereas imperatives are used in adversarial and politicized contexts, offers a useful framework which can generate further research in other kinds of rhetorical texts in ancient literature beyond oratory. Despite its limitations, this framework may help us shed a bit more light on the complicated use of language for persuasive rhetorical ends.

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