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## Directives in Finnish language acquisition

**Abstract:** This article examines the means of expressing agent-oriented modality in Finnish from a developmental perspective with particular attention to directives, especially requests. For this purpose the spontaneous speech of two children, aged 1;7–2;6, as well as that of their caregivers is analyzed. The kinds of formal means used in early child language as well as their functions are traced in the course of time. The results show a wide variety of expressions with directive functions in child-directed speech as well as child speech. The first directives to emerge in child speech are 2nd person singular imperatives and verbless requests followed soon by simple passive forms. Modal expressions occurring in child speech include most of the types found in child-directed speech, excluding certain more indirect and polite expressions such as conditional forms, suggestions formulated as questions, and passive forms mitigated in different ways.

### 1 Introduction

In the present article, the development of directives, especially requests, in Finnish child language is examined in the speech of two children. The child-directed speech (CDS) of their caregivers is also studied in order to determine the models made available to the children as well as the directive types to emerge later in child speech (CS). The aim of the study is to give a comprehensive overview of the development of the forms and functions of directives in early Finnish language acquisition until the age of 2;6 or 2;10.

Directives are speech acts used in situations where the speaker's goal is to get others to do what he wants them to. This is a fundamental human communicative motive (Tomasello 2010: 84). Directives not only include commands (direct requests for action), but also mitigated requests such as suggestions and invitations (indirect requests). These speech acts constitute a functional category expressed by a variety of lexical, inflectional and syntactic means.

The theoretical background of this study is constructivist and usage-based. The child is assumed to learn the language by observing and comprehending the linguistic means used by others interacting with him or her (input) and producing utterances which are in the beginning rote-learned and directly based

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on the models offered by the input; later the child proceeds to a more creative stage and starts to produce analogical formations and other novel expressions. In the framework of pre- and protomorphology the analogical innovations and the miniparadigms (paradigms consisting of at least three different forms of the same lexeme) are regarded as important steps in the child's language development (Dressler, Kilani-Schoch and Klampfer 2003).

Forms and functions of Finnish directives are presented in section 2 as far as these are relevant for the description of early CS and CDS. Previous studies on the acquisition of modality in Finnish are reported in section 3. After the presentation of the data in section 4, the means of expressing requests and other directives are examined in the longitudinal data of two children and their CDS in section 5. In section 6, the results are summarized and some general conclusions are drawn.

## 2 Forms and functions of agent-oriented modality in Finnish

### 2.1 Forms and functions of directives

Directives are modalized utterances that fall under the scope of deontic modality, one of the two domains of agent-oriented modality. While deontic modality is concerned with obligation and permission, dynamic modality covers volition and capability.

The most important means for expressing directives in Finnish are certain forms of full verbs and a group of modal verbs. However, especially in early child language, verbless directives consisting of a noun or adverb also occur. Furthermore, there are several ways of expressing directives in an indirect way, especially so in adult language. A comprehensive presentation of modal expressions in standard Finnish is to be found in Kangasniemi (1992).

Each Finnish finite verb form can carry at most one modal or temporal suffix attached to the active or passive stem and in addition a final personal suffix as well as clitics, for example the interrogative clitic *-ko*. The major Finnish verb forms expressing deontic modality are the imperative, the conditional, passive forms and the third infinitive illative constructions, which may express both singular and plural (Table 1). These devices will be described in the following sections.

**Table 1:** Major Finnish verb forms expressing deontic modality.

	SG	PL
IMP	<i>syö!</i> eat.IMP.2SG 'eat!'	<i>syö-kää!</i> eat-IMP.2PL 'eat!'
	<i>syö-kö-ön</i> eat-IMP-3SG '(s)he shall eat'	<i>syö-kö-öt</i> eat-IMP-3PL 'they shall eat'
COND	<i>tul-isi-t-ko?</i> come-COND-2SG-CLIT 'would you come?'	<i>tul-isi-tte-ko?</i> come-COND-2PL-CLIT 'would you come?'
PASS		<i>men-nään</i> go-PASS 'let's go!' <i>men-nään-kö?</i> go-PASS-CLIT 'shall we go?'
INF3-ILL		<i>syö-mä-än</i> eat-INF3-ILL 'come and eat!' <i>nukku-ma-an</i> sleep-INF3-ILL 'you must go to bed'

## 2.2 Finnish imperatives

Imperative forms are the most important means for expressing deontic modality in Finnish. There are two imperative systems in the language: the formal paradigm and the colloquial paradigm of contemporary spoken Finnish (Table 2). The colloquial imperative paradigm is used in CDS and CS.

While the two paradigms are identical in the 2nd and 3rd persons, their most important difference is that in colloquial Finnish the first person plural is replaced by the passive.

Second person imperatives form a productive part of verb inflection and are used to express direct requests (commands). Third person imperatives are especially used in frozen idioms such as congratulations (example 1).

- (1) *Onne-ksi ol-ko-on!*  
luck-TRANSL be-IMP-3SG  
'Congratulations!'

**Table 2:** The imperative paradigm of colloquial Finnish.

	SG	PL
1	–	<i>syö-dään</i> eat-PASS 'let's eat'
2	<i>syö</i> eat.IMP.2SG 'eat'	<i>syö-kää</i> eat-IMP.2PL 'eat'
3	<i>syö-kö-ön</i> eat-IMP-3SG '(s)he may eat'	<i>syö-kö-öt</i> eat-IMP-3PL 'they may eat'

In the first person plural of the colloquial paradigm the passive used with a hortative function expresses suggestions rather than commands. As is common with hortatives in other languages (Aikhenvald 2010: 52–53) this form has an inclusive meaning implying the participation of both the addressee and the speaker. In contrast to the passive used with a hortative meaning in colloquial Finnish, the formal 1st person plural imperative carrying the imperative suffix *-kaa* is used almost exclusively in ceremonial phrases and certain conventional expressions (example 2).

- (2) *otta-kaa-mme esimerki-ksi.*  
take-IMP-1PL example-TRANSL  
'Let us take as an example.'

Lauranto (2013: 178) found that in recorded telephone conversations the function of the first person plural inclusive imperative was nearly exclusively expressed by the passive rather than the formal *-kaa-mme* form (1 in 57 tokens).

In spoken Finnish 3rd person singular and plural imperatives are often conflated. This may have originated in affective speech but is nowadays quite general. Thus, the third person plural imperative may be used in referring to a singular argument as in the lexicalized 3rd person plural imperative *olkoot* 'never mind' in example (3) (literally 'let it be', instead of the singular *olkoon* with the same meaning). Illustrative examples from adult spoken Finnish concerning this tendency to mix up the singular and plural third person imperatives are found in Yli-Vakkuri (1986: 60).

- (3) Boy, 3;10 (from Toivainen 1980: 35)  
*tämä on-kin rikki. ol-ko-ot.*  
 this be.3SG-CLIT broken be-IMP-3PL  
 ‘Oh, this is broken. Never mind.’

The forms preferably used in both CDS and CS are the colloquial 2nd person singular and plural imperatives as well as the passive. The latter mainly functions as the 1st person plural inclusive imperative.

In about one third of the languages of the world the 2nd person singular imperative is identical to the verb stem (Aikhenvald 2010: 18). Although this is also mainly the case in Finnish, in the spoken language an additional marker of the imperative may be present. Thus, if the word following a 2nd person singular imperative form begins with a consonant, this consonant is realized as the final sound of the imperative, for example *annas se minu-lle* ‘give it to.me-ALL’. But this consonant gemination is not realized in early child speech so that the bare stem is used, e.g. *anna* ‘give.IMP.2SG’, *sano* ‘say.IMP.2SG’, *tule* ‘come.IMP.2SG’.

The negated imperative expressing prohibitions consists of the negative auxiliary constructed with a main verb. Negative 2nd person imperatives are formed with *älä* (2SG) or *älkää* (2PL) ‘don’t’, the latter of which carries an imperative ending (example 4). In the 2nd person singular negative imperative main verbs only have the weak stem (e.g. *älä nuku* ‘don’t.2SG sleep’), but in the 2nd person plural the suffix *-ko* is attached to the strong stem of the main verb (e.g. *älkää nukku-ko* ‘don’t sleep’). In the 2nd person singular, there is no *ko*-suffix on the main verb and the auxiliary has no suffix either (example 5).

- (4) Boy, 3;10 (from Toivainen 1980: 35)  
*äl-kää tul-ko!*  
 AUX.NEG-IMP.2PL come-IMP.NEG  
 ‘Don’t come!’ (plural)

- (5) Boy, 3;10 (from Toivainen 1980: 35)  
*älä tule!*  
 AUX.NEG.2SG come.IMP.NEG  
 ‘Don’t come!’ (singular)

In colloquial speech, negative imperatives of both the 1st person plural and the passive are expressed by a combination of the basic form of the negation verb *ei* (3rd person singular indicative, also grammaticalized as a negative adverb) and the passive stem of the verb, e.g. *ei men-nä* (NEG go-PASS ‘let’s not go’) (Table 3).

**Table 3:** The colloquial paradigm of the Finnish negative imperative (prohibitive).

	SG	PL
1	–	<i>ei syö-dä</i> NEG eat-PASS 'we shall not eat'
2	<i>älä syö ~ e-t syö</i> NEG eat.IMP ~ NEG-2SG eat.IMP 'don't eat'	<i>äl-kää syö-kö ~ e-tte syö</i> NEG-IMP.2PL eat-IMP ~ NEG-2PL eat.IMP 'don't eat'
3	<i>äl-kö-ön syö-kö ~ ä-l-kö-öt syö-kö</i> NEG-IMP-3SG eat-IMP ~ NEG-IMP-3PL eat-IMP '(s)he ~ they shall not eat'	
PASS		<i>ei syö-dä</i> NEG eat-PASS 'let's not eat'

Negated second person singular and plural present indicative forms are used as alternatives of negated imperatives, e.g. *e-t mene* (NEG-2SG go.NEG) 'you don't go'. Both negated 3rd person imperative and passive forms are neutral with regard to the number distinction. In contrast to 1st and 2nd person imperatives, third person imperative forms are only infrequently found in CS and CDS.

### 2.3 Other forms used with directive functions

Conditional forms are a more polite way to express directives. These forms distinguish the second and third person singular and plural (see Table 1 above).

The so-called Finnish "passives", which are actually pseudopassives, are important forms for expressing indirect requests. They are 4th person indefinite verb forms which presuppose an actor and are neutral to the distinction between singular and plural. These forms are often used in spoken Finnish in the function of 1st person plural forms for expressing hortatives including the speaker and the addressee and are suggestions rather than commands (see Seppänen 1989: 202–207). Directives in the passive may be mitigated by the conditional as for example in *men-tä-isi-in-kö* (go-PASS-COND-PASS-CLIT) 'should we go?'.  
 Another way to express hortatives are illative forms of the 3rd infinitive (see Table 1). These are formed by the *mA*-suffix with the illative case suffix added and express motion towards some place (e.g. *syö-mä-än* (eat-INF3-ILL)

‘let’s go and eat’). An example of this construction typically used in daily routines in CDS is *nukku-ma-an* (sleep-INF3-ILL) ‘let’s go and sleep’.

Besides the inflectional forms of full verbs discussed so far, Finnish also possesses modal verbs for expressing different degrees of modal strength. The constructions illustrated by examples (6) convey deontic necessity, i.e. an obligation to act. These expressions can be used for a generally admitted necessity. If the relevant parameters are specified in the context, it is possible to eliminate a complement (examples 6a–d) or specify the performer of the action by a noun phrase in the genitive (examples 6e–g). In many constructions the main verb is in the first infinitive form, which is the basic infinitive without any case suffix.

- (6) a. *pitä-ä teh-dä.*  
 must-3SG do-INF1  
 ‘One must do.’
- b. *täyty-y teh-dä.*  
 must-3SG do-INF1  
 ‘One has to do.’
- c. *on pakko teh-dä.*  
 be.3SG necessity do-INF1  
 ‘It is necessary to be done.’
- d. *on teh-tä-vä.*  
 be.3SG do-PASS-PRS.PTCP  
 ‘It must be done.’
- e. *Ulla-n pitä-ä teh-dä.*  
 Ulla-GEN must-3SG do-INF1  
 ‘Ulla must do.’
- f. *sinu-n täyty-y teh-dä.*  
 you-GEN must-3SG do-INF1  
 ‘You have to do.’
- g. *minu-n on pakko sano-a.*  
 I-GEN be.3SG necessity say-INF1  
 ‘I must say.’

The modal verb *saada* ‘may’ expresses the deontic notion of permission (example 7a) and *voida* ‘can’ may render both deontic possibility and dynamic ability (example 7b). When these verbs are negated they convey prohibition (example 7c) or impossibility (example 7d).

- (7) a. *saa teh-dä.*  
 may do-INF1  
 ‘One may do.’
- b. *voi teh-dä.*  
 can do-INF1  
 ‘It can be done.’
- c. *ei saa teh-dä.*  
 NEG may do-INF1  
 ‘It must not be done.’
- d. *ei voi teh-dä.*  
 NEG can do-INF1  
 ‘It cannot be done.’

From early on, children often use a two-syllabic variant of the 3rd person singular form of the verb *haluta* ‘want’, namely *halu-u* (full form *halua-a*) (want-3SG) ‘wants’ to express their desires. Such expressions may function as indirect requests (example 8). As has been found in many languages, young children commonly refer to themselves by the 3rd person singular before having acquired the so-called shifters of the 1st and 2nd person.

- (8) *halu-u leikki-mä-än.*  
 want-3SG play-INF3-ILL  
 ‘He/she wants to play.’ (= ‘I want to play.’)

Verbless requests are also commonly found in early Finnish child data as well as in colloquial Finnish. Thus, the adverb *uudelleen* ‘again’ may be used when one wants something to be repeated. Other verbless directives consist of nouns in certain case forms including partitives such as *maito-a* (milk-PARTIT) ‘some milk’ and illatives, e.g. *syli-in* (lap-ILL) ‘into the lap’.

### 3 Previous studies on the acquisition of modality in Finnish

Although the acquisition of modality by Finnish children has not been the subject of intensive studies so far, there are a number of interesting observations to be found in Toivainen’s and Kauppinen’s work (Toivainen 1980, 1997; Kauppinen 1982, 1998). Toivainen (1980) examines the acquisition of suffixes occurring in



directives such as the imperative and the passive. Toivainen (1997: 107, 110–111) in addition presents some other means of expressing modality in Finnish.

Kauppinen (1982: 150–156) discusses different types of negation in the early speech of a Finnish-speaking boy. In Kauppinen (1998) she analyzes the functions of conditional forms in Finnish CS, e.g. in play situations when planning and suggesting something. The conditional is used in suggestions occurring in children's role play in much the same way as e.g. the past tense in English: *You were mother and she didn't want you to go* (Lodge 1978).

The development of certain directive expressions is reported in detail in Kauppinen 1998. In her data (Kauppinen 1998: 60), the verb *haluta* 'want' is first used at the age of 1;11 in a simplified, suffixless form *alu* (< *haluu* ~ *haluaa*). At 2;0–2;4, the 3rd person singular form appears, once at 2;0 in a shortened form *alu* accompanied by the first person singular personal pronoun. Finally, starting at 2;4, the 1st person singular ending is used (*halua-n* 'want-PRS.1SG', 'I want to').

Toivainen's and Kauppinen's findings will be discussed in more detail below, along with the analysis of the data on which the present study is based.

It has been noted that the earliest functional distinction of verb forms is that between modal and non-modal ones (for Greek see Stephany 1985: 115 and for Turkish Terziyan and Aksu-Koç, this volume). Finnish children typically first distinguish between 2nd person singular imperatives and 3rd person singular indicatives (Toivainen 1980: 44–48). Similar results have also been found for Spanish (Aguirre 2003: 5, 21), Croatian (Katičić 2003: 246), Lithuanian (Wojcik 2003: 409), and Russian (Gagarina 2003: 146). In German (Klampfner 2003: 306–307) and Russian (Voeikova and Bayda, this volume) infinitives used in both a modal and non-modal function are among children's first verb forms. Due to their formal complexity Finnish infinitives are acquired only later.

## 4 The data

The data in the present study consist of recordings and diary material from two Finnish-speaking children, a girl called Mari and a boy called Tomi.<sup>1</sup> The data are basically the same as those analyzed in Laalo (2003) and Laalo (2011). The number of utterances of the diary data and the duration of the recording sessions are presented in Tables 4a and 4b. Other materials, such as the recordings of 25 Finnish-speaking children aged 1–3 years (Toivainen 1980), will be used for comparison.

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<sup>1</sup> Mari and Tomi are pseudonyms for the children's real names used in former studies.

**Table 4a:** Diary data of Mari and Tomi.

Age range	Mari	Tomi
	utterances	
until 1;8	1,000	1,000
1;9–1;11	1,500	1,000
2;0–2;6	2,000	1,300

**Table 4b:** Recordings of Mari and Tomi.

Age	Mari	Tomi
	minutes	
1;6		30
1;7	96	30
1;8	120	30
1;9	90	60
1;10	30	60
1;11	90	60
2;0		60
2;1	120	30
2;2	105	60
2;3	30	60
2;4	60	60
2;5	90	60
2;6	90	60
2;8	60	
2;9	60	
2;10	60	

## 5 Results

### 5.1 Directives in CDS

Although CDS provides important models for language acquisition, only certain aspects are adopted by the children so that important differences exist between CS and CDS. One of these is that requests are softened by questions and turned into suggestions in CDS but not in CS. Such mitigations typically consist of conditional forms of full verbs used in the passive and of modal verb constructions.

Tables 5 and 6 present the different expressions of directives found in the early recordings of Mari's and Tomi's CDS.

**Table 5:** Expressions of directives in Mari's CDS (tokens).

	1;7	1;8	1;9	1;10	1;11
PASS	1	≤4	≥5	1	≤4
PASS + Q	≤4	≤4	≥5	1	≥5
PASS NEG					1
PASS COND + Q					≤4
COND					1
COND + Q		1			
PRS.2/3SG + Q	2SG ≤4	3SG ≤4			3SG ≥5
IMP.2SG	1	≥5	≥5	1	≥5
IMP.2SG NEG					1
IMP.3SG			1		
MDL.V	1	≥5	≤4	1	≥5
MDL.V COND	1	≥5		1	≥5
MDL.V NEG					≤4
<i>haluaa</i> 'wants to'	1	1	≤4		≥5
<i>tahtoo</i> 'wants to'		3SG ≤4	≤4		2SG 1
<i>tahto.COND</i> 'would like to'			≤4		2SG 1

**Table 6:** Expressions of directives in Tomi's CDS (tokens).

	1;7	1;8	1;9	1;10	1;11	2;0
PASS	1	≤4	≤4		≤4	1
PASS + Q	≤4	≤4	1	1	1	1
PASS NEG			1			1
PASS COND						1
COND NEG					1	
PRS.2/3SG + Q	3SG ≤4	3SG 1			2SG ≤4	2SG 1
MDL.V	≥5	≥5	≥5	≥5	≥5	
MDL.V NEG			≤4	1	1	
MDL.V COND	1	1	≤4		≤4	
IMP.2SG	≥5	≤4	≥5	≥5	≥5	≥5
IMP.2SG NEG		1			≤4	
IMP.3SG						1
<i>haluaa</i> 'wants to'		≤4				
<i>tahtoo</i> 'wants to'					1	

Directives expressed by passive forms or modal verb constructions are found in CDS in all these recordings. They are typically used in suggestions for actions where both the speaker and the addressee are involved. The suggestions are often formulated as questions, thus having the interrogative enclitic particle *-kO* attached to the passive form. Passives used in suggestions may also carry other enclitic particles for mitigating purposes; for example, the particle *-pA(s)*, e.g. *ote-taan-pas* (take-PASS-CLIT) ‘let us take’. Example (9) is a typical mitigated directive chosen from CDS.

(9) CDS, Mari, 1;11

(referring to a stone collection)

FAT: *ruve-tta-(i)s(iin)-ko me tutki-ma-an Tuuliki-n*  
 start-PASS-COND-CLIT we study-INF3-ILL Tuulikki-GEN  
*kiv-i-ä?*  
 stone-PL-PARTIT  
 ‘Should we start to examine Tuulikki’s stones?’

Prohibitions are usually expressed by negated 3rd person singular present forms of modal verbs such as *ei saa* ‘must not’, *ei voi* ‘cannot’ and *ei tarvitse* ‘need not’. In a few instances negated forms of the passive and conditional are used. The most direct way of expressing prohibitions is by the negated form of the 2nd person singular imperative. There are more negated 2nd person singular imperative forms to be found in Tomi’s CDS (especially at 1;11) than in Mari’s. The reason is that with Mari, a greater number of softer directives expressed by the conditional are used than with Tomi.

Some forms occur only once or twice. For example, the 3rd person imperative is used in concessive-type expressions such as *ol-koon nyt* (be-IMP.3SG ADV) ‘let it be’.

The 2nd person singular imperative is the most frequent form used for requests in CDS and occurs in at least one instance in each of both children’s recordings. An especially frequent imperative form found in both children’s recordings is *kato* ‘look.IMP.2SG’ meaning ‘note, be aware’ and drawing the child’s attention to something. In addition, *kuule* ‘listen’ is frequent in Tomi’s CDS from 1;6–1;8 and 1;10–1;11 but is absent from Mari’s. Both of these imperatives, requesting actions for the addressee’s rather than the speaker’s benefit, are also generally used in adult-directed speech (about *kato* in this function see Hakulinen and Seppänen 1992).

Since only one of the two siblings was present during each of the recordings, 2nd person plural imperatives do not occur in CDS, although they are

found in Mari's data when she is speaking to her toys (recordings 2;3, 2;6, 2;8 and 2;9).

Jussives expressed by the third person imperative are only rarely used by the caretakers. The first recorded instance is found in the mother's speech at Mari's age 1;9 (example 10).

(10) CDS, Mari, 1;9

MOT: *no ol-ko-on kala sitten vielä tä-ssä.*  
 so be-IMP-3SG fish then still here-INESS  
 'Well, let the fish then still be here.' (referring to a toy)

In both children's CDS, directives are frequently expressed by modal verb constructions (see Tables 5 and 6 above). The modal verb *pitää* 'must' denoting deontic necessity is commonly used not only in CDS but also in spoken Finnish more generally (example 11).

(11) CDS, Mari, 1;8

MOT: *miks nalle-n pitää nukku-u?*  
 why teddy.bear-GEN must-3SG sleep-INF1  
 'Why must the teddy bear sleep?'

Several other ways of expressing indirect directives besides softened passives (see example 9 above) belong to CDS but are scarcely used by the children. For example, questions such as "can you reach the milk?" or "could you open the window?" must be pragmatically interpreted as requests for action rather than information.

Directives expressed by 3rd infinitive illative forms are typically used by the caretakers in daily routines: e.g., *syö-mä-än* (eat-INF3-ILL) 'come and eat' (invitation call) or 'let's go and eat' (suggestion or request), *nukku-ma-an* (sleep-INF3-ILL) 'let's go to sleep', *katso-ma-an* (look-INF3-ILL) 'come and see'. These forms are not observed in the recording sessions of CDS but only in CS when the children give instructions to their toy animals. In the early periods, the children use these forms only of a few verbs: e.g. Mari 1;6 *työmää* [for *syömään*] 'let's go and eat' and Tomi 1;8 *kattommaa* [for *katsomaan*] 'come and look', *ukkummaa* [for *nukkumaan*] 'let's go to sleep'.

## 5.2 The development of directive expressions in Mari's speech

### 5.2.1 The emergence of Mari's directive verb forms

The first two verb forms used by Mari were second person singular imperative and third person singular present indicative. From a formal point of view they may be taken to be basic verb forms because they are short and morphologically simple and may be used as building blocks in more complex forms to be acquired later. These forms are also basic from a functional point of view since the 3rd person singular indicative is the most neutral verb form being used for informing the interlocutor while the 2nd person singular imperative is the most simple verb form serving the instrumental use of language.

The first directive verb forms in Mari's speech are 2nd person singular imperatives, which were first recorded at 1;7. However, in the diary data, examples of imperative forms are found even earlier: 1;0 (*kato* 'look', 1;3 *avaa* 'open', 1;4 *anna* 'give', *pa(ne)* 'put on' (the light), 1;5 *ota* 'take', *pese* 'wash' and 1;6 *pelaa* 'play'. From 1;7 on, Mari enlarges her inventory of verbs used in the 2nd person singular imperative every month; e.g. 1;7 *notta* [for *nosta*] 'lift', *pyyhi* 'wipe off', 1;8 *tule* 'come', *työ* [for *syö*] 'eat', *mene* 'go'.

The next verb forms Mari uses in requests in addition to imperatives are passive and 3rd infinitive illative forms. According to the diary data, her first passive form with a directive function already emerged at 1;4, namely the formulaic *men-nään* (GO-PASS) 'let's go' (Laalo 2003: 327, 332). After several months during which this had been her only passive form, the girl added negative passives with a modal meaning (see below).

Typical early passives in Finnish CS are 1;4 *katotaa* [for *katsotaan*] 'let's watch', 1;4 *mennään* 'let's go' (Laalo 2003: 327, 332), and 1;8 *luetaan* 'let's read' (Toivainen 1980: 56–57, 1997: 106).

A typical colloquial way of using the passive for making suggestions is in negated forms of the first person plural. Such examples occur in Mari's speech from 1;11 on, yet the diary data show that she already used them at 1;8 (examples 12 and 13).

(12) Mari, 1;8

*ei lähde-tä vielä.*

NEG GO-PASS yet

'Let's not leave yet.'

- (13) Mari, 1;8  
*ei men-nä tinne* [for *sinne*].  
 not go-PASS there  
 ‘Let’s not go there.’

Another type of verb forms used with a directive function to emerge early in Mari’s speech is the 3rd infinitive illative. An example occurring in the diary data from 1;6 on is *syö-mä-än* (eat-INF3-ILL) ‘let’s go and eat’ used by Mari when calling her toy animals for meals. A likely reason for the early acquisition of such infinitives is that they are frequently used in CDS during daily routines. In the recordings 3rd infinitive illatives occur when Mari engages in performing daily routines with her toys.

Finally, another important verb form category developing in Mari’s speech for expressing directives is the 2nd person plural imperative. As described in section 2, with many verbs the 2nd plural imperative is formed by just adding the suffix *-kAA* to the 2nd person singular imperative, but there are numerous exceptions for several verb types which require stem alternations before this suffix. Children, however, initially often use the simple principle of just adding the suffix to the 2nd person singular imperative of all verbs (Laalo 2011: 243–244) and so did Mari. As is common in child speech, she only started to overgeneralize such imperative forms after first having used the correct forms imitated from CDS. Mari’s first 2nd person plural imperative is the correct reproduction of the standard form *pysy-kää* (stay-IMP.2PL) ‘stay (here)’ noted in the diary data at 1;8 and also at 1;9 in the expression *pysy-kää tässä* (stay-IMP.2PL here) ‘stay here’. In the recordings this form does not occur until 2;3.

In view of the fact that the formation of the 2nd person plural imperative is complicated, Mari produced some interesting analogical forms. In verbs with consonant gradation, 2nd person singular imperatives have weak grade but 2nd person plural imperatives strong grade, e.g. *anna* ‘give’ (2SG, weak grade *nn*) vs. *anta-kaa* ‘give’ (2PL, strong grade *nt*). In verbs having both a consonantal and a vowel stem the final stem vowel *e* is preserved in the 2nd person singular (vowel stem with final *e*) but dropped in the 2nd person plural imperative (consonantal stem without *e*) in front of the *-kAA* suffix (e.g., *tule* ‘come.IMP.2SG’, *tul-kaa* ‘come-IMP.2PL’). Even more complex alternations of stem formation occur in the imperative of contracted verbs such as *irtoa* ‘get loose (IMP.2SG)’ vs. *irrot-kaa* ‘get loose (IMP.2PL)’, *haukkaa* ‘take a bite (IMP.2SG)’ vs. *haukat-kaa* ‘take a bite (IMP.2PL)’.

The first 2nd person plural imperatives were repetitions of standard forms. Later the child constructed her own analogical forms resulting from the overuse of the principle of forming 2nd person plural imperatives by simply adding the

suffix *-kaa* to the singular form. This is theoretically interesting because it shows that the child starts to actively process linguistic material. Examples of Mari's analogical formations of contracted verbs are presented in (14) and (15).

(14) Mari, 2;7

*nyt leego-t irto-kaa* [for *irrot-kaa*].  
 now lego-PL loosen-IMP.2PL  
*ne irto-s.*  
 they loosen-PST  
 'Now lego bricks, come loose.  
 They came loose.' (after separating them)

(15) Mari, 2;10

*haukkaa-kaa* [for *haukat-kaa*] *ruoka-a.*  
 bite-IMP.2PL food-PARTIT  
 'Now take a bite of the food.'

An example of an analogical formation of the negated 2nd person plural imperative, which is also quite intricate in standard Finnish, is *äl-kää tule* [for *äl-kää tul-ko*] (NEG-IMP.2PL come-IMP.NEG) 'don't come' at 1;11. The model for this analogical formation is the 2nd person singular imperative negated form *älä tule* (NEG.IMP.2SG come.IMP.NEG) 'don't come'. Mari uses the same verb correctly in the simpler positive imperative *tul-kaa* 'come-IMP.2PL'.

Third person imperatives rarely occur in Mari's data. In one of the infrequent but typical examples (16) she repeats her mother's utterance word for word making an indirect request of eating some biscuits.

(16) Mari, 2;5

*ol-koon nyt näin joulu-n alla.*  
 be-IMP.3SG now so Christmas-GEN under  
 'Let it be so before Christmas.'

Mari expresses indirect prohibitions constructed with the 3rd person singular indicative form of the negation verb *ei* and the negated form of the main verb in a standard form from age 1;8 on (examples 17 and 18).

(17) Mari, 1;8, diary data

*ei äiti auta.*  
 NEG.3SG mother help.NEG  
 'Mother does not help.' (meaning 'mother must not help')



(18) Mari, 1;8, diary data

*ei isi auta. Tuuti itte keinu-u.*

NEG.3SG father help.NEG Tuuti herself swing-PRS.3SG

'Father does not help (= must not help). Tuuti is swinging by herself.'<sup>2</sup>

Directive verb forms occurring in Mari's recordings from 1;7 through 2;10 are presented in Table 7 (see Laalo 2003: 327). As far as passives and 3rd infinitive illatives are concerned, only instances used as directives have been included in the counts<sup>3</sup> (example 19).

**Table 7:** Mari's directive verb forms (types/tokens).

Age	IMP 2SG	INF3 ILL	PASS	PASS NEG	IMP 2PL	IMP 2SG NEG	IMP 3SG	COND
1;7	3/3	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
1;8	8/12	1/2	3/9	–	–	–	–	–
1;9	3/3	–	2/3	–	–	–	–	–
1;10	3/3	1/1	4/5	–	–	–	–	–
1;11	4/5	–	7/9	1/1	–	–	–	–
2;1	7/11	–	–	1/1	–	3/3	–	–
2;2	5/6	1/1	11/24	–	–	2/2	–	–
2;3	3/13	–	–	–	1/1	–	–	–
2;4	1/1	1/1	1/6	–	–	–	–	–
2;5	2/7	1/5	6/16	2/2	–	–	1/1	1/1
2;6	5/9	1/1	3/6	2/3	1/1	–	–	–
2;8	3/14	–	6/20	–	1/1	–	–	–
2;9	6/8	–	5/8	–	1/1	–	–	–
2;10	5/9	–	4/6	–	–	–	–	–

(19) Mari, 2;5

*hei nyt nukku-ma-an.*

hey now sleep-INF3-ILL

'Now let's (go and) sleep.'

Many early directive verb forms, above all 2nd person singular imperatives, passives in a hortative function, and the 3rd infinitive illatives are so frequently used in Finnish CS that they are often included in the first miniparadigms of

<sup>2</sup> Tuuti is a nickname for Mari; the child is here referring to herself.

<sup>3</sup> In Laalo (2003) all verb forms are included, not only those used in directive function.

verbs emerging in the children's language. Four miniparadigms found in Mari's language at 1;8 are presented in Table 8 (based on Table 1 in Laalo 2011: 25).

**Table 8:** Mari's early miniparadigms at 1;8.

IMP.2SG	PRS.3SG	PST.3SG	PRS.PASS	PST.PASS	PASS.NEG
<i>anna</i>	<i>anta-a</i>	<i>anto-i</i>			
'give'	give-3SG 'gives'	give-PST.3SG 'gave'			
<i>mene</i>	<i>mene-e</i>	<i>men-i</i>	<i>men-nään</i>	<i>men-tiin</i>	<i>ei men-nä</i>
'go'	go-3SG 'goes'	go-PST.3SG 'went'	go-PRS.PASS 'let's go'	go-PST.PASS 'we went'	go-PASS.NEG 'let's not go'
<i>syö</i>	<i>syö</i>	<i>sö-i</i>	<i>syö-dään</i>	<i>syö-tiin</i>	
'eat'	eat-3SG 'eats'	eat-PST.3SG 'ate'	eat-PRS.PASS 'let's eat'	eat-PRS.PASS 'we ate'	
<i>tule</i>	<i>tule-e</i>	<i>tul-i</i>		<i>tul-tiin</i>	
'come'	come-3SG 'comes'	come-PST.3SG 'came'		come-PST.PASS 'we came'	

### 5.2.2 Verbless directives in Mari's speech

In early Finnish child language (as well as in many other languages) directives are often expressed by verbless one-word utterances consisting of a noun or adverb. Such simple expressions may allow for more specific requests than the use of a verb in the imperative (e.g. *leipää!* 'bread.PARTIT!' vs. *anna!* 'give.IMP.2SG!'). The following adverbs and case forms of nouns expressing directives in Mari's speech are typical of early Finnish CS more generally:

- The partitive of mass nouns denoting nourishments, such as *vet-tä* 'water-PARTIT' or *leipä-ä* 'bread-PARTIT';
- illatives such as *koti-in* (home-ILL) '(let's go) home';
- the partitive of the lexicalized adverb *lisä-ä* 'more-PARTIT';
- other adverbs such as *uudelleen* 'again' (when the child wants some activities to be repeated), *luo* 'close', *hiljaa* 'quiet' and *pois* 'away' (when the child wants to leave or wants something to be removed).

Such one-word utterances in which the verb is omitted are often expanded by the caretakers so that e.g. *vet-tä* 'water-PARTIT' becomes *otetaan lisää vettä* 'let's have some more water', *pois* 'away' becomes *mene ~ mennä(än) pois* 'go ~ let's go away', and *uudelleen* 'again' becomes *lasketaan uudelleen* 'let's slide downhill again'.





by repeating the negator, e.g., *ei ei ei* at 1;6. A similar use of the negator by a boy aged 1;7 has been reported by Kauppinen (1982: 146–147). In CS, the expression *ei enää* ‘no longer’ used for stopping an activity may be shortened to the one-word utterance *enää*.

In sum, verbless directives play an important role in the early stages of language acquisition because a great number of quite different meanings may be simply expressed by one-word utterances. From 1;9 on, verbless directives are no longer used frequently because Mari has acquired additional means for expressing requests, above all many new verb forms. Also, from then on, adverbs are constructed with verbs rather than used in one-word utterances.

### 5.2.3 Directives expressed by modal verbs in Mari’s speech

Mari started to use modal verb constructions with *pitää* ‘must’ and *ei saa* ‘must not’ already by 1;8. Such constructions are modeled on CDS since they are grammatically correct from the very beginning. Examples (26) and (27) from the diary data illustrate prohibitions expressed by a construction consisting of the negation particle *ei* and the modal verb *saa* ‘may’ in the 3rd person singular meaning ‘must not’. This kind of prohibitions is typical of everyday speech.

(26) Mari, 1;8, diary data

*ei saa Juuso tönii.*

NEG must Juuso push

‘Juuso must not push.’

(27) Mari, 1;8, diary data

*ei äiti taa [for saa] nostaa Tuuti-a.*

not mother must lift Tuuti-PARTIT

‘Mother must not lift Tuuti.’

Examples such as (28) belong to daily routines and reflect behavioral rules occurring in CDS.

(28) Mari, 1;11, diary data

*pitä-ä puhalta-a.*

must-3SG blow-INF1

‘One must blow.’ (noticing that the food is too hot)

### 5.2.4 Indirect requests with the verbs *haluta* ‘want to’ or *tahtoa* ‘want to’

Wishes expressing indirect requests are found in Mari’s speech from early on. A frequently occurring verb of desire is *haluta* ‘want’ (*haluu* ~ *haluaa* ‘wants to’) used in the 3rd person singular present indicative referring to the speaker (examples 29). The synonymous verb *tahtoa* ‘want’ (*tahtoo* ‘wants to’) is used with the same function (example 30).

(29) a. Mari, 1;8, diary data

*Tuuti halu-u juutto-o.*

Tuuti want-3SG cheese-PARTIT

‘Tuuti wants some cheese.’

b. Mari, 1;8, diary data

*äilim [for äidi-n] massu(-lle) halu-u Tuuti.*

mother-GEN belly(-ALL) want-3SG Tuuti

‘Tuuti wants (to lie) on mother’s tummy.’

(30) Mari, 1;10, diary data

*tahto-o syö-mä-ä(n) pöytä-ä(n).*

want-3SG eat-INF3-ILL table-ILL

‘(Mari) wants to eat at the table.’

## 5.3 The development of directive expressions in Tomi’s speech

### 5.3.1 The emergence of Tomi’s directive verb forms

The overall development of agent-oriented modality emerging from Tomi’s data is quite similar to Mari’s. The first directive verb forms to occur are 2nd person singular imperatives, passive forms with a hortative function, and 3rd infinitive illative forms (cf. Laalo 2011: 82–84). Frequently used imperatives are *anna* ‘give’ and *auta* ‘help’ (examples 31).

(31) Tomi

1;0 *anna* ‘give’, *avaa* ‘open’

1;5 *auta* ‘help’, *tu(le)* ‘come’

1;7 *istu* ‘sit’, *kat(s)o* ‘look’

1;8 *puha(lla)* ‘blow’

Passive present indicative forms in the function of the 1st person plural hortative expressing a joint action involving both the speaker and the addressee(s) are illustrated by examples (32).

- (32) Tomi  
 1;6 *pestää* [for *pestään*] ‘we shall wash’ (formulaic)  
 1;8 *mennään* ‘let’s go’

3rd infinitive illatives expressing the child’s suggestions to go in some direction and reach a goal or state are presented in examples (33).

- (33) Tomi  
 1;8 *katso-ma-an* (watch-INF3-ILL) ‘let’s watch’  
 1;8 *nukku-ma-an* (sleep-INF3-ILL) ‘let’s sleep’

The grammatical categories of directive verb forms occurring in Tomi’s recordings are presented in Table 9. The first verb forms used in requests are the three 2nd person singular imperatives found at 1;7. A month later, Tomi also uses passive present forms. 3rd infinitive illative forms occur at 1;9 in indirect requests.

**Table 9:** Tomi’s directive verb forms (types/tokens).

Age	IMP. 2SG	INF3. ILL	PRS. PASS	PASS NEG	IMP.NEG. 2SG	PRS. 3SG
1;7	3/6	–	–	–	–	–
1;8	1	–	1	–	–	–
1;9	3/3	1/5	–	–	1/2	–
1;10	3/5	2/4	4/9	–	–	–
1;11	3/4	–	2/3	1/2	–	–
2;0	5/7	–	1/1	–	–	1/1
2;1	2/2	3/4	3/4	1/3	1/1	–
2;2	2/6	2/4	5/18	1/1	–	–
2;3	3/3	–	3/3	–	–	–
2;4	9/11	–	3/4	–	–	–
2;5	8/14	1/1	6/38	–	–	–
2;6	4/4	2/2	6/13	2/2	–	–

Second person singular imperatives as well as the 3rd infinitive illative are members in two verbal miniparadigms having developed in Tomi's language at the age of 1;8 (Table 10, based on Laalo 2011: 90).

**Table 10:** Tomi's early miniparadigms at 1;8.

IMP.2SG	PRS.3SG	PST.3SG	PASS.PST	INF3.ILL
<i>auta</i> 'help'	<i>autta-a</i> help-3SG 'helps'	<i>autt-i</i> (for <i>auttoi</i> ) help-PST 'helped'		
<i>kat(s)o</i> 'look'	<i>katso-o</i> look-3SG 'is looking'		<i>katsot-tiin</i> look-PASS.PST 'we looked'	<i>katso-ma-an</i> look-INF3-ILL 'let's go and look'

### 5.3.2 Tomi's verbless directives

Tomi uses verbless directives similarly to Mari, namely partitive (examples 34 and 35) and illative forms of nouns and certain adverbs.

(34) Tomi, 1;7

*pipa-a* (for *pipari-a*)  
biscuit-PARTIT  
*pookka-a* (for *porkkana-a*)  
carrot-PARTIT

(35) Tomi, 1;8

*puukka-a* (for *puolukka-a*)  
lingonberry-PARTIT

Illatives express requests for motion toward locations and often occur in daily dressing routines (examples 36a and b).

(36) a. Tomi, 1;3

(wanting to have his shoes put on)  
*kaaka-a(n)* (for *jalka-an*)  
foot-ILL



- b. Tomi, 1;6  
 (wanting to have his gloves put on)  
*käte-e(n)*  
 hand-ILL

In Tomi's diary material many different adverbs serving a number of directive functions have been noted very early (examples 37). Thus, in example (37a) the boy either expresses his wish to get rid of some food he dislikes, to move from the baby-chair, or to get help with getting undressed.

- (37) a. Tomi, 1;4  
*poo* (< *pois*)  
 'away'  
 b. Tomi, 1;8  
*tähä(n)*  
 'here' (wanting berries to be added to his porridge)  
 c. Tomi, 1;6–1;8  
*toho(o)* (< *t[u]o-hon*)  
 'there'

The very early *too*-variant for 'there' was elaborated to *toho(o)* in the course of time and was used for example when wanting some building bricks to be fastened or something to be moved to a certain place.

### 5.3.3 Tomi's use of modal verbs in directive function

Modal verb constructions expressing directives emerge in Tomi's speech at 2;1 and thus much later than verbless directives and certain inflected forms of full verbs (Table 9). As has been found with Mari, also Tomi uses modal verbs correctly from the very beginning (examples 38a and 38b). The boy's development of shifters is difficult to follow because he does not use them often, but in these examples he correctly addresses his father in the 2nd person singular.

- (38) a. Tomi, 2;1  
 FAT: *saa-n-ko*    *autta-a?*  
 may-1SG-CLIT help-INF1  
 'May I help?'

TOM: *saa-t*.  
 may-2SG  
 ‘You may.’

b. Tomi, 2;6

FAT: *saa-n-ko mä omena-n syö-dä?*  
 may-1SG-CLIT I apple-ACC eat-INF1  
 ‘May I eat the apple?’

FAT: *saa-t ja pipari-n saa-t syö-dä.*  
 may-2SG and biscuit-ACC may-2SG eat-INF1  
 ‘You may and you may also eat the biscuit.’

The negated form of the modal verb *saada* ‘may’ is used in the 3rd person singular in prohibitions with a generic meaning (example 39).

(39) Tomi, 2;1

*ei saa men-nä sii-he(n).*  
 NEG may.3SG go-INF1 DEM-ILL  
 ‘(One) must not go there.’

Examples (40) and (41) illustrate prohibition and permission addressed to the boy’s sister using the 3rd person singular form to clarify who is addressed.

(40) Tomi, 2;1

*ei saa sisko men-nä!*  
 NEG may.3SG sister go-INF1  
 ‘The sister may not go.’

(41) Tomi, 2;1

*kohta saa sisko sii-hen men-nä ui-ma-an.*  
 soon may.3SG sister there-ILL go-INF1 swim-INF3-ILL  
 ‘The sister may soon go and swim there.’

Another modal verb expressing permission or prohibition is *voida* ‘can, may’ (examples 42 and 43).

(42) Tomi, 2;2

*keltase-sta voi lähte-e.* [for *lähte-ä*]  
 yellow-ELAT may.3SG go-INF1  
 ‘When yellow, one may start.’

(43) Tomi 2;2

*punase-sta ei voi lähte-e.* [for *lähte-ä*]  
 red-ELAT not may.3SG go-INF1  
 ‘When red, one may not start.’

A third modal verb emerging in Tomi’s data at 2;4 is *pitää* ‘must’ expressing obligations (example 44).

(44) Tomi, 2;4

(building a toy train with his father)  
*tää pitä-ä pan-na kiinni sii-hen.*  
 this must-3SG fasten-INF1 closed it-ILL  
 ‘This must be fastened to that one.’

Although Tomi’s development is similar to Mari’s in many respects, there are two differences. Unlike Mari, Tomi uses 2nd singular forms of modal verbs (examples 38 above) but does not express indirect requests by the 3rd singular of the verb for ‘want’.

## 5.4 Similarities and differences between CDS and CS

Most directives containing a verb and occurring in both CDS and CS are either 2nd singular imperative, passive, or modal verb constructions. All of them are also used in negated forms conveying prohibitions. The marked 3rd singular imperative is found only twice in CDS.

While certain verb forms are limited to CDS, others only occur in CS. Since only one of the children at a time was present during the recording sessions, the 2nd plural imperative does not occur in the audiotaped data of CDS. It is, however, used by Mari in addressing her toy animals.

Among the verb forms typical of CDS are mitigated directives, i.e. active or passive conditional forms of main verbs or conditional forms of modal verbs, some of them constructed with a question particle. An active conditional form of a full verb only occurs once in Mari’s speech at 2;5.

Directives expressed by illative forms of the 3rd infinitive are typically used by the children when they are playing with dolls or animals. In CDS, these infinitive forms are constructed with another verb, especially in the passive (e.g., *men-nään nukku-ma-an* (go-PASS sleep-INF3-ILL) ‘let’s go to sleep’).

The verbs *haluta* ‘want to’ and *tahtoa* ‘want to’ are used in the 3rd person singular form when the child is referring to herself. CDS offers a model for this,

because these forms are typically used when addressing the child (examples 45a and b). As has also been noted for other languages, use of the 3rd person instead of the 1st or 2nd is a common strategy of babytalk keeping personal deixis constant and avoiding the problem of shifting the communicative roles of the interlocutors.

- (45) a. Mari 1;8  
       *äiti autta-a.*  
       mother help-PRS.3SG  
       ‘The mother helps.’
- b. Mari 1;9  
       *tahto-o-ko Mari?*  
       want-3SG-Q Mari  
       ‘Does Mari want to?’

The verbless directives typical of early CS are often expanded by the caretakers (example 46).

- (46) Mari, 1;8  
       MAR: *uulellee* [for *uudelleen*].  
       ‘Again.’
- MOT: *uudelleen kerro-taan mitä siinä teh-dään.*  
       again tell-PASS what there do-PASS  
       ‘Let’s tell again what is done there.’

Although directives of CS containing a verb form may be taken to be modeled by CDS, verbless requests of CS consisting of a noun do not occur in the recorded material of CDS and those consisting of an adverb such as *uudelleen* ‘again’ are only rarely found.

## 6 Discussion and conclusions

The earliest functional distinction of verb forms found in the acquisition of a number of languages is that between modal and non-modal forms (see section 3). In Finnish this contrast is materialized between 2nd person singular imperative and 3rd person singular present indicative verb forms expressing directives and statements, respectively.

In early Finnish child speech directives are expressed by 2nd person singular imperatives or verbless utterances. The early emergence of the 2nd person singular imperative can be explained by its important communicative function on the one hand and its short and simple form coinciding with the verb stem on the other. Furthermore, this form is frequently modeled in CDS.

In the beginning, the lexical inventory of verbs used in the imperative is quite limited. Verbs occurring in the imperative much more frequently than others are *anna* 'give' and *katso* 'look' getting the addressee to execute an action in his or her favor and drawing his or her attention to something of interest, respectively. These results not only coincide with Toivainen (1980: 33) for Finnish but also with Stephany (1997) for Greek, Gagarina (2003) and Voeikova and Bayda, this volume, for Russian and Aguirre (2003) for Spanish. This shows that the exchange of objects as well as the linguistic successor of the early pointing gesture are significant in the communication of children and their caregivers.

Besides imperatives, another way to express requests and wishes which emerges early in Finnish language acquisition are verbless utterances containing certain case forms of nouns or adverbs. Nouns in the partitive are used for requesting various kinds of food and illatives indicate places to go. Requests expressed by nouns have more specific meanings than those rendered by bare imperatives (e.g. *vettä!* 'water!' vs. *anna!* 'give!').

Another form of directives which also develops early is the inclusive imperative expressed by the passive and having a hortative meaning. Examples are *men-nään* (go-PASS) 'let's go' and *pes-tään* (wash-PASS) 'let's wash', which also frequently occur in CDS.

An important type of non-finite directives are illative forms of the 3rd infinitive such as *syö-mä-än* (eat-INF3-ILL) 'let's go and eat' (or 'come and eat') and *nukku-ma-an* (sleep-INF3-ILL) 'let's go to sleep', which belong to daily routines and are regularly used in CDS. But because the recordings were made in situations of free play, these forms only occur in CS when the children are speaking to toy animals or dolls.

The 2nd person plural imperative is a verbal category giving rise to analogical formations (examples 14 and 15 above). Such formations are evidence of the child's active processing of inflectional verb forms. Since 2nd person plural imperatives are not only quite complex and rarely occur in CDS (outside the recording sessions when more people are addressed at the same time), these imperatives do not easily become entrenched and are therefore acquired slowly. Only three tokens of this form were found by Toivainen (1980: 34–35) in his recordings of 25 Finnish-speaking children aged 1–3 years.

Several means for softening requests are used in CDS; for example, passives are mitigated by interrogative clitics or conditional forms. In CS there are some means to soften requests, e.g. conditional forms are used for making suggestions, such as distributing the roles in imaginary play situations. Another way of softening directives found early in CS are indirect requests, such as expressing desires by the verb *tahtoa* ‘want to’ or its synonym *haluta*. This type of requests has also been found in other languages (Stephany 1986: 391).

As shown by the present study, the use of directives in CDS offers models for developing their expression in CS. Many directive types, such as illative forms of the 3rd infinitive and modal verb constructions, are easily acquired and show no particularly childlike features, but some – for example the 2nd person plural imperative – are morphologically complex and give rise to analogical formations.

Further studies of the acquisition of the vast and communicatively important domain of modality should not only enlarge the number of subjects and extend their age range considerably but must also take the development of epistemic modality into consideration.

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