

Realizations of deonticity in Lithuanian: The case of particles

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Abstract. The present paper focuses on non-epistemic modal particles in contemporary Lithuanian that have received far less attention in the literature than epistemic particles. Based on authentic data drawn from the Corpus of the Contemporary Lithuanian Language, the study aims to disclose the formal and functional features of the particles *tegu(l)*, *te* and *lai* in spoken discourse and fiction. The study has shown that the particles under investigation occur in hortative constructions where they express the speaker's desire to get a third person or the addressee to carry out some action. Although *tegu(l)*, *te* and *lai* share a number of functions (e.g. hortatives, negative or positive performative optatives), functional extension is more typical of *tegu(l)* than of *te* and *lai*. The formal features of the particles (their co-occurrence with indicative or subjunctive forms) provide evidence for their functional variation.

Keywords: deontic particle, desirability, hortative, optative, permissive, attitude

1 Introduction

In recent decades, expressions of both epistemic and non-epistemic modality in Lithuanian have been widely explored from various perspectives. Much attention has been devoted to the syntactic and semantic properties of modal verbs and their degree of grammaticalization, highlighting similarities and differences between these modal markers in Lithuanian and Latvian (Holvoet

2007). Corpus-based studies have revealed the polysemy (i.e. epistemic and non-epistemic readings) of the most frequent modal verbs of possibility (*galėti* ‘can/could/may/might’) and necessity (*turėti* ‘must/have to’) and discussed their English translation correspondences and functions in discourse (Šolienė 2013; Šinkūnienė 2016). A number of corpus-based studies have dealt with the formal and functional features of the impersonal modal verb *reik(ė)ti* ‘need’ and the acquisitive verbs *tekti* ‘be gotten’ and *gauti* ‘get’ in contemporary Lithuanian (Usonienė & Jasionytė 2010; Jasionytė 2012) and in the 16th–17th century Lithuanian texts (Jasionytė-Mikučionienė 2015; Jasionytė-Mikučionienė & Šinkūnienė 2017).

Alongside modal verbs, considerable attention has been devoted to sentence adverbials expressing modal meanings (Usonienė & Šolienė 2010; Šolienė 2012, 2013, 2015; Šinkūnienė 2012). Studies into realizations of epistemic possibility and necessity have shown that, like in Slavic languages, epistemic meanings in Lithuanian tend to be coded by adverbials or particles rather than by modal verbs, for the latter are not highly grammaticalized elements (Usonienė & Šolienė 2010). As evidenced by the qualitative and quantitative findings obtained from the parallel corpus *ParaCorp*, English modal verbs of necessity and possibility are rendered into Lithuanian by a variety of adverbials displaying culture-specific conceptualization of epistemic modality (Šolienė 2012, 2013). For instance, adverbials of necessity “can cover the whole range of the epistemic scale”, blurring the distinction between the degrees of the speaker’s commitment to the proposition (Šolienė 2012, 35). Versatile formal and functional translation correspondences of the Lithuanian epistemic adverbials mirror their multifunctionality (see the post-modal uses of the adverbials *gal* and *galbūt* ‘perhaps/maybe’ Šolienė 2015).

The area that has received less attention in the field of modality in Lithuanian are non-epistemic modal particles, such as *tegu(l)*, *te* and *lai*. It is not surprising that these particles have not been the focus of modality, for they are much less common than epistemic particles. The scarce marking of non-epistemic modality by adverbs or particles “may be one of the biggest formal distinctions to epistemic modality” (Narrog 2016, 93). In European languages, only the Slovene language has a modal sentence adverb marking deontic and dynamic meanings (Holvoet 2007, 131), and “the use of a modal adverb instead of a modal verb is not generally characteristic of deontic modality either”

(ibid. 132). The meaning and use of non-epistemic particles (cf. *lai* in Latvian, Holvoet 1998, 2007; Holvoet & Konickaja 2011; *niech* in Polish and *pust* in Russian) is highly dependent on the verb of the sentence, as illustrated below:

- (1) *Tegul* *jis* *ateina*.
 PTC 3SG.NOM come.PRS.3
 ‘Let him come.’ (Holvoet 2007, 38)

In (1), the particle *tegul* and the verb *ateina* make up a deontic construction that conveys the speaker’s recommendation given to a third party to perform the action. Although in the *Lithuanian Grammar* these constructions have been viewed as third-person imperative forms or as a separate optative mood (Ambrasas 1997, 261), they are not analytic forms of expressing the imperative or optative mood because the verb of the construction is in the indicative form (Holvoet 2007, 38). The fact that the constructions with non-epistemic particles are not manifestations of the imperative or optative mood exemplifies the relationship between deontic modality and realis meaning overlooked in previous Lithuanian studies (ibid. 65).

Although non-epistemic modal particles are less common than epistemic ones, they display an array of functions, as evidenced by their multiple meanings provided in dictionaries¹. For example, the particle *tegu* has six different meanings, namely 1) granting permission; 2) expressing a wish, volition; 3) giving encouragement or an order; 4) issuing a threat; 5) expressing good wishes; 6) expressing indifference (used without a verb). The particle *lai* is defined as the synonym of *tegu(l)* and *te* and is said to be typical of some regional varieties, but not of standard Lithuanian. Given the fact that non-epistemic modal particles are less common and more restricted in their use than epistemic particles as well as less researched in contemporary Lithuanian, the present paper aims to explore the correlation between their modal meaning and formal features as well as to establish their paradigmatic relations. By drawing on authentic data obtained from the Corpus of the Contemporary Lithuanian Language (CCLL), the study focuses on the particles *tegu(l)*, *te* and *lai* in spoken discourse and fiction.

1 See the Lithuanian dictionary at www.lkz.lt.

The structure of the article is as follows. Section 2 provides the notion and realizations of non-epistemic modality, focussing on deontic modality. Section 3 presents the functional range of the particles *tegu(l)*, *te* and *lai* in contemporary Lithuanian. Section 4 provides a summary of the findings.

2 Non-epistemic modality: The domain of deonticity

Traditionally, deontic modality has been defined by the notions of obligation and permission, which stem from a deontic source (person, authority, convention) (van der Auwera & Plungian 1998; Huddleston & Pullum 2002, 178) and are typically realized by modal verbs. However, empirical studies into deontic modal verbs (Nuyts, Byloo & Diepeveen 2010; Miche 2018) and deontic adjectives (Van linden 2012) have stressed the necessity for a broader definition of deontic modality, since the notions of obligation and permission do not cover the full functional range of deontic modal verbs and adjectives. In a study into deontic modal verbs in Spanish, Miche (2018, 113) maintains that deontic modality “often serves to reflect a personal opinion of the speaker or an attitude about how things should be or how someone else should act” and the speaker may not be necessarily the authority (deontic source) exerting an influence on the addressee to act. In a diachronic and synchronic study of modal adjectives, Van linden (2012) proves that deontic adjectives and verbs encode different deontic meanings and argues for the distinction between the conceptual deontic meanings related to the speaker’s desirability of the state of affairs and the illocutionary directive meanings of obligation and permission expressed by modal verbs and imperative adjectives.

To do better justice to empirical data, both Nuyts (2005) and Van linden (2012) propose a wider definition of deontic modality based on the notion of moral desirability. Nuyts (2005, 9) defines deontic modality “as an indication of the degree of moral desirability of the state of affairs expressed in the utterance, typically but not necessarily on behalf of the speaker”. The speaker assesses the moral desirability of the state of affairs on the basis of norms established by society or an individual (ibid. 9). Similarly, Holvoet (2007, 17) claims that the foundation of deontic modality should be volitional, i.e. concerned with the speaker’s acts of will. This definition establishes a clear link between deontic modality and mood, namely the imperative mood, hortative or optative elements, which are all related to ‘acts of will’ (Holvoet 2007, 17–18). The

hortative or optative particles are not manifestations of mood in Lithuanian, but components of constructions expressing deontic meaning. The present study adopts a wide view of deontic modality, since the modal particles under consideration reveal a variety of modal meanings that pertain to the speaker's desirability of the state of affairs and extend beyond the meanings of obligation and permission.

3 Deontic particles: formal properties and functional profile

The distribution of the deontic particles in the subcorpora of fiction (CCLL-Fic) and spoken (CCLL-Sp) discourse in the Corpus of the Contemporary Lithuanian Language (Table 1) shows that they are slightly more common in fiction than in spoken discourse. The higher frequencies of the particles in fiction may be related to their occurrence in fixed or archaic expressions characteristic of literary style (e.g. *Tegul padeda Dievulis!* 'May God help you!', *Lai nudžiūsta jam abi rankos!* 'Let him lose his two hands!'). In fiction, *tegu* is used most frequently, while in spoken discourse *tegu* predominates. However, it should be noted that the occurrences of *tegu* and *tegu* also include their use as concessive conjunctions (e.g. *Čia mokslinis darbas, tegu ir kuklus, bet labai reikalingas* 'It is a scientific study. Although it is modest, it is very necessary'). The particles *te* and *lai* in both subcorpora are least frequent. The low frequency of *te* is determined by the fact that it may also be used as a prefix (e.g. *Žmonės teateina poryt* 'Let people come the day after tomorrow')².

Particle	Fiction (CCLL-Fic)		Spoken (CCLL-Sp)	
	Raw frequency	f/ 10.000 words	Raw frequency	f/ 10.000 words
<i>tegu</i>	1.950	1.24	71	1.59
<i>tegu</i>	3.168	2.01	45	1.01
<i>te</i>	109	0.07	3	0.07
<i>lai</i>	143	0.09	13	0.29
Total	5.370	3.41	132	2.96

TABLE 1. Raw and normalized frequencies of the particles in the subcorpora of fiction and spoken discourse in the CCLL

2 Cases where *te* is used as a prefix were not included in the analysis.

3.1 The particles *tegu*, *tegu* and *te*

Tegu(l) originated from the particle *te* and the verb *gulėti* ‘lie’ and denoted ‘let (it) lie’ (Smoczyński 2007, 1680). According to the *Dictionary of Etymology* (ibid.), the core meaning of *tegu(l)* is permissive; in Lithuanian grammars and dictionaries, *tegu*, *tegu* and *te* are considered within the semantic-functional class of optative particles illustrating a variety of modal meanings (Ambrazas 1997, 401; 2006, 436; Ulvydas 1971, 562–566). However, the question arises whether the broad term ‘optative’ is sufficient to describe all listed meanings coded by the particles mentioned above.

The formal features of *tegu*, *tegu* and *te* show that they are used in constructions with third-person present indicative or (more rarely) with third-person future or subjunctive forms, cf.:

(2) – *Kam tu čia tuos vaikus neleidi, leisk,*

tegu eina su visais vaikais. (CCLL-Sp)

PTC go.PRS.3 with all children.INSTR

‘Why do you not let the children, let them, **let** them go with all children.’

(3) *Te kiekvienas čia esantis įsidėmi šį vardą*

PTC everybody.NOM here be.PTCP notice.PRS.3 this name.ACC

– *ketvirtojo mano sūnaus vardą.* (CCLL-Fic)

‘**Let** everyone here notice this name, the name of my fourth son.’

(4) *Tegu jis sudžiūtų kaip virvė!* (CCLL-Fic)

PTC 3SG.NOM get.dry.IRR.3 like rope.NOM

‘**Let** him dry up like a rope. (lit.) / **Let** him perish.’

The verb that the particle co-occurs with can be omitted, but it is possible to retrieve it from the context. As illustrated in the examples above, the subject can be expressed (3–4) or remain implicit (2). If the subject is expressed, then it takes the position between the particle and the verb. Thus, the sentential position of the particles *tegu(l)* and *te* is in a sense fixed: they appear clause-initially.

Constructions with the particles under investigation reflect an act of volition on the part of the speaker or some other person than the speaker. Unlike in typical imperatives, the person in control of the desired state of affairs is a third party, but not the addressee:

- (5) – *Virginija, pasakyk jam,*
tegu ryt rytą skambtelia į rajono
 PTC tomorrow morning.ACC call.PRS.3 to district.GEN
prokuratūrą. (CCLL-Fic)
 prosecutor’s office.ACC
 ‘Virginija, tell him to call the prosecutor’s office tomorrow morning.’

In (5), the speaker demands that a third person, not directly participating in the speech act, should carry out the action. The addressee adopts the role of a mediator, which is emphasized by the imperative form *pasakyk (jam)* ‘tell (him)’ that precedes the construction with the particle *tegu*. Thus, the addressee is supposed to inform a third person, who does not participate in the conversation, about the speaker’s recommendation (i.e. to call the district prosecutor’s office). In such contexts, the particles fulfil a hortative function. As claimed by Nikolaeva (2016, 76–77), “in hortatives the person expected to carry out the action is not necessarily a participant of the speech situation, therefore the speaker does not control the situation in the same way as she controls it when the inducement is directed towards the addressee” (see also van der Auwera, Dobrushina & Goussev 2005).

Hortative meaning can be strengthened by contextual elements. The particles *tegu* and *tegu* may be used in combination with other deontic elements, for example, with the expressions *verčiau, geriau* ‘rather, (had) better’ or the deontic verbs *reikėti* ‘need to’ or *turėti* ‘must/have to’:

- (6) – *Tamsta, žinai, geriau austi tegu ne-moka,*
 you know.PRS.2SG better weave.INF PTC NEG-learn.PRS.3
bet šokti mergai reikia mokėti, – patvirtino kaimynė. (CCLL-Fic)
 ‘You know, she **had better** not learn how to weave, but she should learn how to dance, - assured the neighbour.’

As has been mentioned, the particles *tegu(l)* and *te* typically occupy the initial position in a clause, but when combining with other modal elements (or at times due to the information structure of a sentence), they may be found in medial position (as in the example above).

The data obtained from the subcorpora show that the person supposed to perform the action is not necessarily a third party, for the action may be controlled by the addressee(s), cf.:

(7) – *Tai nereik laikyt.*

Tik paspausk ir tegu bėga. (CCLL-Sp)

Only press.IMP.2SG and PTC flow.PRS.3

‘So, you do not have to hold it. Just press it and **let** it flow.’

In (7), the addressee is directly responsible for the desired action (*tegu bėga* ‘let it flow’). This indirect recommendation to the addressee to perform the action is found in contexts where the subject of the verb that the particle *tegu* co-occurs with is inanimate. To avoid the directness of the imperative, the speaker chooses the construction with the hortative particle, for hortatives “are usually perceived as more polite or remote future imperatives conveying the illocutionary meaning of inducement or a mild suggestion” (Nikolaeva 2016, 76).

As has been discussed, the desired state of affairs in the present or in the future is typically outside the sphere of influence of the speaker. However, the data provide instances where the action performed by a third person depends on the will of the speaker or, in other words, it falls within the scope of the speaker’s influence. In such cases, we can talk about the permissive use of *tegu(l)* and *te*:

(8) – *Jis man paskambino, o aš atėjau su tavim pasitarti...*

– *Daugiau nieko nesakė?*

– *Ne.*

– *Gerai, – atlyžo <...> brolis.*

– **Tegul** važiuoja, jeigu taip veržiasi... (CCLL-Fic)

PTC go.PRS.3 if so want.PRS.3

‘– He called me, whereas I wanted to ask you... – Did he not tell you anything? – No. – Ok, – the brother <...> agreed – **Let** him go, if he is so willing ...’

In (8), the speaker has authority and (s)he grants permission to a third party, who is not a participant of the speech situation, to perform the action.

Attention should be paid to contexts illustrating the bleaching of the semantic component of desirability. In such cases, the speaker expresses alignment with the interlocutor, for (s)he is not associated with authority and does not insist that the action should be carried out. The speaker simply agrees with the addressee on the certainty of the proposition of the previous utterance:

- (9) – [Š]iaip sau kažką rašinėji iš nuobodumo.
 – Gal ir ne iš nuobodumo. Gal ir romaną.
 – Jeigu pats nežinai ką – vadinasi, ne romaną.
 – Gerai. **Tegu** bus – ne romaną. (CCLL-Fic)
 okay PTC be.FUT.3 not novel.ACC
 ‘– [S]o you are writing something because you are bored. – Perhaps not because I am bored. It could be a novel. – If you yourself do not know, so it is not a novel. – Ok. **Let** it be, it is not a novel.’

In the example above, the speaker’s reply can be paraphrased in the following way: “I allow you to say like this”/“I agree with you that I have not been writing a novel”. Constructions with the deontic particle *tegu(l)* expressing permission as well as agreement are found in interactive contexts and may be preceded by discourse markers, for example, the confirmation marker *gerai* ‘okay’. The discursive use of the deontic particle is also apparent in contexts where it co-occurs with the reflexive pronoun *sau* ‘to oneself’ which functions as an intensifier, cf.:

- (10) “Poryt ji išskrenda į savo Moldaviją.
 ir **tegul** sau skrenda.
 and PTC RFL fly.PRS.3
 Kam ji man?” (CCLL-Fic)
 ‘The day after tomorrow she is flying to Moldova. And **let** her fly. I do not need her.’

Here, additional semantic aspects can be noticed: the speaker does not care about the state of affairs presented. In fact, this semantic aspect is even more salient when *tegul* and *tegu* stand alone, cf.:

- (11) **Tegul** nustato, kad esu beprotis, **tegul!** (CCLL-Fic)
 PTC find.out.PRS.3 that be.PRS.1SG mad.NOM PTC
 ‘**Let** them find out that I am mad, **let** them do this!’

Contrary to imperatives, hortatives are not prototypically associated with directive force, thus, it is not surprising that “they are closer to expressives and are often loaded with additional emotional content” (Nikolaeva 2016, 76).

There are more contexts where *tegul* and *tegu* reinforce the speaker's feelings. For example, the construction *tegu(l) + tik + 3rd person verb* is used to express a threat:

- (12) **Tegu** *tik pabando ne-atsakyti,*
 PTC only try.PRS.3 NEG-answer.INF
mažas bjaurus riešutų gliaudytojas! (CCLL-Fic)
 'Just **let** him try not to answer, the awful little nut sheller!'

As observed by Ambrazas (1997, 710), the particle *tik* strengthens the meaning of threat. The distinguishing feature of such constructions is the main predicate realized by the affirmative form and the infinitival complement containing negation (*pabando neatsakyti* 'he tries not to answer'); however, the meaning implied is the opposite one: the speaker expects a third person to answer. In threats, the particles *tegul* and *tegu* often collocate with the third-person indicative form of the lexical verb *pabandyti* 'to try'. The semantics of threat may also be apparent in examples missing the particle *tik*:

- (13) **Tegu** *dabar jis pabando iš jos atimti namą.* (CCLL-Fic)
 PTC now 3SG.NOM try.PRS.3 from her take.INF house.ACC
 'Let him try to take the house from her now.'

Alongside hortative uses, the particles under consideration may display optative use, i.e. the expression of the speaker's wishes. In these contexts, there is no appeal to the addressee or to a third party to make the desirable state of affairs true, e.g.:

- (14) **Tegu** *Dievas tau padės.* (CCLL-Fic)
 PTC god.NOM 2SG.DAT help.FUT.3
 'May God help you.'

- (15) **Tegu** *jį velniai!* (CCLL-Fic)
 PTC 3SG.ACC devils.NOM
 'Let the devils take it!'

As illustrated, wishes may be positive (blessings) or negative (curses). In the literature, they are sometimes referred to as “performative optatives” (Plungian 2011, 202), since they are used as performative speech acts to bless or curse. Wishes related to the speaker him-/herself acquire an emotional colouring:

- (16) **Tegu** aš prasmengu, Kupriau,
 PTC 1SG.NOM fall_down.PRS.1SG Kuprius.VOC
jei čia ne jo žodžiai! (CCLL-Fic)
 ‘Let me disappear, Kuprius, if these are not his words!’

In (16), the particle *tegu* occurs with the first-person form of the present tense, which is extremely rare in the data analyzed and seems in a sense unusual. The speaker tries to convince the addressee about the truthfulness of somebody’s words.

Curses often contain idiomatic phrases and illustrate stand-alone cases of the particles (without a verb), as in (15). Moreover, the particles in curses can be replaced by other optative markers without any change in meaning (for example, by the particle *mat* (**Mat** *ji velniai!*) or by the third-person form of the verb *imti* ‘to take’ (**Ima** *ji velniai!*) or its reduced variant *ma* (**Ma** *ji velniai!*)).

Special attention should be paid to the particle *te*, which, alongside its hortative and optative functions, may express inducement. In such cases, the particle is used clause-initially and functions as the verb *take* conveying the imperative meaning and requiring direct objects (17) or co-occurs with other imperative forms (18), cf.:

- (17) *Panosė šlapia.*
Te skudurą, nusišluostyk. (CCLL-Fic)
 PTC cloth.ACC clean.IMP.2SG
 ‘Your nose is wet. Take the cloth, clean it.’

- (18) **Te**, paragauk, – sako ji atsargiai. (CCLL-Fic)
 PTC try.IMP.2SG say.PRS.3 3SG.NOM cautiously
 ‘Here, try it, – she says cautiously.’

The meaning of inducement is evident in interactive contexts: the target of a directive speech act is the addressee.

In its hortative and optative use, the particle *te* is restricted to the co-occurrences with third-person forms. *Tegul* and *tegu*, on the contrary, may combine not only with third-person forms, but also with first-person forms, albeit very rarely. In old Lithuanian, the usage of the particle is more diverse: *te* can be attached to the first-person form and express a request for permission (Holvoet & Konickaja 2011, 9). However, in contemporary Lithuanian, *te* does not combine with first-person forms nor is used in requests for permission.

3.2 The particle *lai*

The etymology of the particle *lai*, functionally regarded as permissive, may be related to the iterative verb *laidyti* ‘let, allow’, in a similar manner to the Latvian particle *lai* (Smoczyński 2007, 773). Although the distribution of *lai* is said to be restricted to the dialects of northern Lithuania and to fiction (Ulvydas 1971, 562), the particle is attested in different types of written and spoken discourse, as illustrated by its frequencies in all the subcorpora of the CCLL³.

The Latvian cognate *lai* seems to be more grammaticalized than its Lithuanian counterpart, since it displays a variety of meanings. The functional range of the Latvian particle extends from imperatives, hortative uses, requests for permission and deontic requests to negative assessments of other people’s acts of volition (Holvoet & Konickaja 2011; see also Holvoet 1998). As further analysis shows, the Lithuanian particle *lai* is mainly associated with hortative or optative functions.

Typically, *lai* is used in constructions with the third-person forms of the present or (more rarely) future tense of the indicative mood. Occasionally, it may also occur with the third-person forms of the subjunctive. Due to the remarkably rare co-occurrences of *lai* with the subjunctive mood, some authors claim that, in contrast to the Latvian particle *lai*, it cannot be used with subjunctive forms at all (cf. Župerka & Kvašytė 2006, 322). Like the particles *tegul* and *tegu*, *lai* tends to take the initial position in a clause and precedes the verb that it co-occurs with. However, it may also be found in medial position following the verb, especially in spoken discourse, cf.:

3 The number of the occurrences of *lai* in the other subcorpora of the CCLL is the following: 141 (non-fiction), 133 (administrative literature) and 475 (news).

(19) – *Naujus tapetus reikės dėti.*

– *Tai jo. Eina **lai** ir tvarko.* (CCLL-Sp)
yeah go.PRS.3 PTC and do.PRS.3

‘– You will have to hang new wallpaper.’

‘– Yeah. **Let** him go and do it.’

Functionally, the Lithuanian particle *lai* is primarily associated with hortative contexts where the speaker expresses a wish that the action would be performed by some third party:

(20) – *Gal Elona padės.*

– *Ne Elona, Skaidrė **lai** ateina.* (CCLL-Sp)
not Elona Skaidrė PTC come.PRS.3

‘– Perhaps Elona will help.’

‘– Not Elona, **I wish** Skaidrė would come.’

By using the construction with *lai*, the speaker provides recommendation to a third party to perform the action. In (21), the speaker makes it clear that the action recommended to an absent participant of the speech situation is appropriate and desirable in the given circumstances and should be carried out:

(21) – *Tegu jai bus rytu, man ir vakarai bus gerai.*

– *Teisingai! Jai bus šviesiau prie veidrodžio šukuotis, – šyptelėjo į ūsą Petrošius.*

– *Tik pasakyk, **lai** ne-si-dažo.* (CCLL-Fic)
only tell.IMP.2SG PTC NEG-RFL-make_up.PRS.3

‘– Let her have the east part, I will be fine in the west one.’

‘– All right! She will be exposed to more light while sitting in front of the mirror and combing her hair, – Petrošius gave a secret smile.’

‘– Just tell her, she **had better** not do a make-up.’

The hortative meaning in (21) is strengthened by the imperative form *pasakyk* (i.e. ‘tell her: ‘don’t do a make-up!’). This use of *lai* displays a functional similarity with *tegu(l)* and *te*.

The hortative meaning of the particle is also attested in permissive contexts: the speaker grants permission to a third party to perform the action:

- (22) – *Na, gerai, – nusileido jis.*
 – **Lai** *būna* *klasėj.* (CCLL-Fic)
 PTC be.PRS.3 class.LOC
 ‘– Well, ok,’ – he gave in. – **Let** it be in class.’

In its permissive use, the particle *lai*, like the particles *tegu(l)* and *te*, may be found in interactive contexts where the construction with *lai* expresses an affirmative response to the addressee’s request. Moreover, the construction may be preceded by the confirmation marker *gerai* ‘okay’.

Although the particle *lai* is usually combined with third-person forms, it may also co-occur with first-person forms, cf.:

- (23) – *Ėjimas teisingas <...>.*
 – **Lai** *sutiksiu* *su* *vyresniojo* *nuomone, –*
 PTC agree.FUT.1SG with senior.GEN opinion.INSTR
nusileido Palijasūra ir vis dėlto išlošė partiją. (CCLL-Fic)
 ‘– It is the right movement <...>.’
 ‘– I **will** agree with the opinion of someone who is senior, – admitted Palijasūra, however, the party won.’

In (23), the speaker expresses agreement with the opinion voiced by the interlocutor (who has authority in the given context). It is worth mentioning that in the contexts under discussion the verb following the particle *lai* is used in the future tense. As observed by the *Lithuanian Academic Grammar*, optative particles in combination with the future tense usually reflect a weak desire (Ulvydas 1971, 563). The corpus data indicate that the extension of meaning of the particle *lai* is quite salient in interactive contexts: the element of desire is bleached and the speaker simply agrees with the addressee on the certainty of the proposition of the previous speech act.

Alongside hortative constructions, the particle *lai* may occur in the so called “performative optatives”:

- (24) **Lai** *gyvuoja* *žmonių* *valdoma* *Lietuva!* (CCLL-Fic)
 PTC live.PRS.3 people.GEN govern.PTCP Lithuania.NOM
 ‘Long live Lithuania governed by its people!’

- (25) *Lai varnos išlesiotų tavo lūpas ir liežuvį.* (CCLL-Fic)
 PTC crows.NOM peck.IRR.3 your lips.ACC and tongue.ACC
 ‘Let the crows peck at your lips and tongue.’

As shown in (25), the negative performative optative co-occurs with the verb in the subjunctive mood. In this context, *lai* could be replaced by the Lithuanian optative particle *kad*.

To sum up, the data under study have revealed that the particle *lai* encodes similar meanings to those of the particles *tegu(l)* and *te*. However, the latter display a wider range of meanings than the former: they may convey different emotive aspects and signal the speaker’s feelings (*tegu* and *tegu*) or express inducement (*te*). These meanings are not characteristic of *lai*.

4 Conclusions

The present study has shown that the deontic particles under investigation are not limited to optative use, i.e. the realization of wishes lying outside the sphere of influence of the speaker. *Tegul*, *tegu*, *te* and *lai* are common in hortative constructions where they express the speaker’s desire to affect not only a third person but also the addressee. The particles acquire a salient hortative function in permissive contexts where the speaker grants permission to a third person to carry out the action. In interactive contexts, the deontic particles under study seem to reveal the semantic bleaching of the component of desirability and function as markers of alignment with the addressee’s opinion. A similar functional extension into intersubjective markers may be displayed by epistemic adverbs or particles (Traugott & Dasher 2002; Šolienė 2015).

The study has thrown light on the paradigmatic relations within the set of the deontic particles analyzed. The particle *lai* considered as a regional variant in Lithuanian grammars has been attested in the corpus data representing standard Lithuanian. Therefore, it could be regarded as a functional equivalent of other deontic particles. *Tegul*, *tegu*, *te* and *lai* perform similar hortative functions, and they all may occur in negative or positive performative optatives. However, functional extension is more typical of *tegu* and *tegu* than of *te* and *lai*. The former are more prone to encode the speaker’s negative attitudes (e.g. indifference, threat, annoyance) than the latter. The study has also observed some correlation between the verb form that the particles co-occur with and

their function. Negative optatives indicate preference for subjunctive forms, whereas hortatives and positive optatives combine with indicative forms.

The deontic meaning of the particles can be strengthened by contextual elements, such as *verčiau*, *geriau* ‘rather, (had) better’ or the deontic verbs *reikėti* ‘need’ and *turėti* ‘must/have to’, which also convey the degree of the speaker’s desirability of the state of affairs. In fact, *verčiau* and *geriau* ‘rather, (had) better’ have not received any attention in Lithuanian studies of modality so far. Therefore, let us explore the semantic and grammatical status of these markers in our future research.

Abbreviations

1 ‘first person’, 2 ‘second person’, 3 ‘third person’, ACC ‘accusative’, DAT ‘dative’, f ‘frequency’, FUT ‘future’, GEN ‘genitive’, IMP ‘imperative’, INF ‘infinitive’, INSTR ‘instrumental’, IRR ‘irrealis’, NEG ‘negation’, NOM ‘nominative’, PRS ‘present’, PTC ‘particle’, PTCP ‘participle’, RFL ‘reflexive’, SG ‘singular’, VOC ‘vocative’

Data sources

CCLL – Corpus of the Contemporary Lithuanian Language, available at: <http://tekstynas.vdu.lt/tekstynas/>

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