A deontic possibility modal in Latvian: Personal vs. impersonal uses in a corpus

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Abstract. A corpus-based study of a dedicated deontic possibility modal in Latvian focuses on its impersonal variety with a non-canonical subject in the dative. Normally, *drīkstēt* 'may' and other possibility modals have nominative subjects, while dative subjects are found with expressions of necessity. As distinct from other constructions where non-canonical dative subjects are experiencers, the modals are also used with inanimate subjects.

A frequent ellipsis of lexical verbs in the impersonal uses of *drīkstēt* not only reflects the informal style of the construction but also points to the Russian *možno* / *nel'zja* as a possible source, especially when combined with an object in the accusative referring to food. The Russian construction has a meaning of deontic possibility, but its use is restricted to animate subjects. The article claims that the animacy restriction was lifted in Latvian under the influence of the necessity modals in contexts of prohibition.

Keywords: Baltic, Latvian, modals, deontic possibility, impersonal, non-canonical subjects

1 Impersonal modals

Drīkstēt, which is a dedicated deontic possibility modal in Latvian, has an impersonal variety that has not so far made its way into the existing descriptions of Latvian modals. This article aims at filling the gap by presenting a study of the construction as it is used in the Latvian Web Corpus (lvTenTen14) of 530 mln words. The main question I am trying to answer is why *drīkstēt* is the only Latvian modal that has impersonal as well as personal uses.

1.1 On impersonal constructions

Impersonal uses of modals here are understood as those with the experiencer-like subject in the dative rather than nominative, compare (1) and (2). According to Malchukov & Siewierska's structure-based classification of impersonal constructions (2011, 2), (1) represents the type "with a subject that does not display canonical subject properties". Another type of impersonal construction, that "with an argumental subject which is not fully referential", as in (3), will only be mentioned in connection to the former.

(1) *Vecākiem   nedrīkst   būt   pārāk   konservatīviem.*
    parent.DAT.PL   NEG.may.PRS.3   be.INF   too   conservative.DAT.PL.M
    'Parents should not be too conservative.'

(2) *Mazi   bērni   nedrīkst   skatīties   televīziju*
    small.NOM.PL.M   child.NOM.PL   NEG.may.PRS.3   watch.INF   television.ACC.SG
    ilgāk   par   divām   stundām   dienā.
    longer   than   two.DAT.PL.F   hour.DAT.PL   day.LOC.SG
    'Small children may not watch television longer than two hours
    a day.'

(3) *Nedrīkst   palaist   šo   iespēju   garām.*
    NEG.may.PRS.3   let.INF   DEM.ACC.SG   opportunity.ACC.SG   along
    'One should not miss this opportunity.'

I will return to the problem of dative subjects after a brief introduction into the main means of expressing modality in Latvian.

1.2 On expressing modality in Latvian

Necessity is conveyed by the verb *vajadzēt* 'need' and the verbal category of debitive, see Holvoet (2007; 2001, 9–62) for more detail. Both expressions are roughly synonymous and cover a wider range of meanings including dynamic, deontic and epistemic modality. (4)–(5) are examples[1] with the dynamic meaning, but our main interest lies with another feature they all have in common, i.e. the experiencer in the dative.

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1   Examples here and further are taken from lvTenTen14, if not stated otherwise.

(4) [*Tas nav vienas dienas darbs.*]

    Bet   cilvēkiem   vajag   ēst   katru   dienu.

    but   people.DAT.PL need.PRS.3 eat.INF   every.ACC.SG day.ACC.SG

    '[This is not one day's work.] But people must eat every day.'

(5) [*Domāju, ka pārtikas uzņēmumi izdzīvos,*]

    jo   cilvēkiem   jāēd   katru   dienu.

    because people.DAT.PL DEB.eat every.ACC.SG   day.ACC.SG

    '[I think that food producers survive] because people must eat every day.'

A similarly wide range of meanings in the field of possibility is expressed by the verb *varēt* 'can', which, in contrast to the expression of necessity, is a personal construction with a subject in the nominative.

(6) dynamic

    Vai   mākslinieks   var   mainīt   sabiedrību?

    PTC   artist.NOM.SG   can.PRS.3 change.INF   society.ACC.SG

    [*Manuprāt var, ja grib.*]

    'Can an artist change the society? [I think s/he can if s/he wants.]'

(7) deontic

    Vai sievietes   var   ieņemt   rabīna   amatu?

    PTC woman.NOM.PL can.PRS.3 occupy.INF rabbi.GEN.SG position.ACC.SG

    'May women be ordained as rabbis?'

(8) epistemic

    Bez   noteiktas   sistēmas   bērns   var

    without   definite.GEN.SG.F system.GEN.SG child.NOM.SG can.PRS.3

    pamatīgi   apjukt.

    thoroughly get.confused.INF

    'Without a clear system, a child might be utterly confused.'

Alongside *varēt* 'can', there are expressions specialized in deontic possibility (*drīkstēt*) and what Plungian and van der Auwera (1998) call participant-internal possibility (*spēt* 'be able'). Both receive nominative subjects, like *varēt*.

(9) *Vai vecākais   bērns   drīkst   pieskatīt*
PTC   older.NOM.SG.M.DEF child.NOM.SG may.PRS.3 look.after.INF
jaunāko?
younger.ACC.SG.DEF
'May an older child look after a younger one?'

(10) *Cik   diennaktis   cilvēks   spēj   izturēt*
how.many day.night.ACC.PL human.NOM.SG be.able.PRS.3 endure.INF
neguļot?
NEG.sleep.CVB
'How many nights can a person go without sleep?'

Out of the three possibility verbs only *drīkstēt* is also found in an impersonal construction with the dative, which is the focus of this article.

(11) *No   kāda   vecuma   bērnam   drīkst   lietot*
from   what.GEN.SG.M age.GEN.SG child.DAT.SG   may.PRS.3 use.INF
kontaktlēcas?
contact.lens.ACC.PL
'At what age may a child start using contact lenses?'

1.3 On dative subjects in Latvian

Apart from displaying non-canonical marking, dative subjects of Latvian modals also lack agentivity. On the whole, it is not uncommon for an experiencer to receive dative marking in Latvian. Apart from the necessity constructions mentioned above, see also examples from Holvoet & Nau (2014, 21), with some of the verbs oscillating between nominative and dative marking of their first arguments in a manner reminiscent of competing patterns found with *drīkstēt*.

(12) *Man   sāp.*
1SG.DAT   hurt.PRS.3
'I am in pain.'

(13) *Viņam   vienmēr   veicas.*
3SG.DAT.M always   be.lucky.PRS.3
'He is always lucky.'

(14) *Man   skauž   /   Es   skaužu*
      1SG.DAT   envy.PRS.3   1SG.NOM   envy.PRS.1SG
      'I am envious'

Holvoet (2013; 2015) applies the notion of quasi-subjects to dative experiencers and states that in case of more than one participants, as in (15), subject properties are spread over several NPs. The NP in the dative appears to be the least oblique as it is usually in topic position at the beginning of the clause and animate (Holvoet & Nau 2014, 24–28).

(15) *Man   patīk   šī   grāmata.*
      1SG.DAT   please.PRS.3   DEM.NOM.SG.F   book.NOM.SG
      'I like this book'

However, not all dative subjects are necessarily given the experiencer role by the verb. Modals select an infinitival complement, bringing us to the problem of raising vs. control verbs. Traditionally, epistemic modality is associated with a raising structure, and root modality with a control structure. As Holvoet (2007, 147) points out, in case of the epistemic use of *vajadzēt* this would involve raising the subject of the embedded clause to the position of dative complement, as in (16)[2]:

(16) *Tur   vajag   būt   apraktai   naudai.*
      there   need.PRS.3   be.INF   buried.DAT.SG.F   money.DAT.SG[3]
      'The money must be buried there.'

An alternative solution suggested by Holvoet is to treat the dative subject as belonging to the infinitival clause because it is not unusual for infinitival embedded clauses to have overt dative subjects in Baltic, as in example (17) from lvTenTen14. A linear position of the dative subject is not indicative of its place in a syntactic structure because of free word order in Latvian.

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2   See also Holvoet (2007, 149): "Latvian is the only language within Baltic-Slavonic which uses impersonal modals in epistemic meaning. Generally, the stage of epistemic meaning does not seem to be readily accessible to impersonal modals verbs and constructions."

3   The original glosses are changed to be compatible with the Salos glossing rules.

(17) *Ir   bīstami   presidentam   lietot   tādu*
   be.PRS.3   dangerous.ADV   president.DAT.SG   use.INF   such.ACC.SG
   jēdzienu.
   notion.ACC.SG
   'It is dangerous for a president to use such a notion.'

Holvoet suggests that the deontic example (18) might also contain a dative subject in the infinitival clause. His argument is that (18) is synonymous with (19) and in both examples the participant responsible for helping the parents is not the experiencer of the 'need'.

(18) *Tev   vajadzētu   palīdzēt   vecākiem.*
   2SG.DAT   need.SBJ   help.INF   parent.DAT.PL
   'You should help your parents.'

(19) *Vajag,   lai   tu   palīdzētu   vecākiem.*
   need.PRS.3   COMPL   2SG.NOM   help.SBJ   parent.DAT.PL
   'It is necessary that you should help your parents.'

Holvoet does not say it explicitly but it can be inferred from his text that the dative subject gradually becomes differentiated from the experiencer as a modal extends its scope from dynamic and deontic to epistemic use, which is a development accompanied by an increase in the degree of grammaticalization. Holvoet (2007, 148–149) gives the corresponding facts as an argument against radical differences in the syntactic structure between deontic and epistemic uses, and views modal verbs as "an area of inter-determinacy between 'raising' and 'control'".

Separation of the experiencer from the subject of a modal verb corresponds to what Barbiers (1995, 141–150) calls directed and non-directed deontic modality depending on whether the subject of the sentence is also the person who is given permission/assigned an obligation. Non-directed deontic modality is thus grouped together with epistemic modality as both operate on the entire proposition. From the syntactic viewpoint, these considerations provide grounds for treating non-directed modals as raising together with epistemic modals, and directed modals as control verbs together with dynamic modals (de Schepper & Zwarts 2009).

This article does not further investigate the question whether the dative subjects are raised from the embedded clause or not. But the semantic difference between directed and non-directed modality corresponding to a higher degree of grammaticalization is useful when explaining inanimate subjects that cannot be experiencers and are therefore never found with non-modal verbs like *sāpēt* 'hurt', etc., as cited above. The examples in (20)–(21) are from Daugavet (2018):

(20) *Gāzei   ir   jāplūst* <…>
     gas.DAT.SG   be.PRS.3   DEB.flow
     'Gas must be supplied <…> (literally: Gas must flow)'

(21) *Virtuvei   labāk   vajadzētu   atrasties   pa kreisi   no*
     kitchen.DAT.SG   better   need.PRS.3 be.situated.INF.RFL   leftwards   from
     mājas   ieejas <…>
     house.GEN.SG   entrance.GEN.SG
     'The kitchen should better be situated on the left from the entrance to the house <…>'

Inanimate subjects are also found with *drīkstēt*, both in the dative and in the nominative:

(22) *Briļļu   lēcām   nedrīkst   rādīt   jums*
     glasses.GEN.PL   lense.DAT.PL NEG.may.PRS.3 create.INF   2PL.DAT
     papildus   grūtības   vai traucēt   pildīt   visas
     additional   difficulty.ACC.PL   or hinder.INF perform.INF   all.ACC.PL.F
     nepieciešamās   funkcijas.
     necessary.ACC.PL.F.DEF   function.ACC.PL
     'The lenses of your eyeglasses should not cause you any discomfort or hinder you from performing any activities.'

(23) *Lences   nedrīkst   noslīdēt.*
     ribbon.NOM.PL   NEG.may.PRS.3   slip.away.INF
     'The ribbons should not slip away.'

I will look more closely into the differences between dative and nominative subjects in the next sections.

2 Impersonal uses *of drīkstēt* in the corpus

Examples with the experiencer in the dative are very rare, which explains their absence from literature on Latvian modals. Indeed, out of 99[4] randomly selected instances of the affirmative *drīkstēt* from the Corpus only two were found to contain it, and only one such example was found in the sample of 98 instances of the negated *nedrīkstēt*. The corresponding figures for the experiencer in the nominative are 60 and 44, respectively, which reveals that the impersonal construction is a rather peripheral option.

Additionally, the two samples showed that the present tense *(ne)drīkst* is a prevailing (about 80%) form both with and without negation, which was a defining factor in shaping other samples.

In order to provide data for the research, sequences of *drīkst* and *nedrīkst* preceded by a noun or a pronoun in the dative were extracted from the corpus. After manually selecting those examples where the dative corresponded to the experiencer-like subject of the modal, the following figures were obtained (Table 1). The higher frequencies of datives with the negated *nedrīkst* are easily explained by the overall higher frequency of *nedrīkstēt* in comparison to *drīkstēt* in the Corpus (168 vs. 71 ipm).

	drīkst	*nedrīkst*
nouns	26	71
pronouns	28	64

TABLE 1. Nouns and pronouns with *(ne)drīkst*

In what follows, these samples are compared with four other samples containing *(ne)drīkst* in combination with a preceding nominative form of a (pro)noun, obtained by a similar procedure from a list of randomly selected sequences.

The data revealed differences between the dative samples and the nominative sample with respect to animacy of (quasi-)subjects and ellipsis; although negation, too, is an important factor.

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4   Here and further the initial number of randomly selected corpus examples was 100, but a varying number of examples had to be rejected as incoherent (mostly as a result of machine translation).

2.1 Animacy

All (quasi-)subjects were divided into four groups comprising animate nouns (humans and animals), inanimate nouns (for example, *nosaukums* 'name', *māja* 'house') and collective nouns (*karaspēks* 'army'). Because of the small size of the samples, presenting the share of (in)animate nouns as a percentage of all subjects in a sample seemed uninformative. Instead, a ratio between inanimate nouns and animate nouns was chosen for comparison, ignoring the collective nouns altogether.

	drīkst		*nedrīkst*	
	DAT	NOM	DAT	NOM
animate	20	53	46	25
inanimate	1	11	20	45
collective	5	23	6	13
sum	26	87	71	83
inanim/anim	0.1	0.2	0.4	1.8

TABLE 2. Animate vs. inanimate nouns with *(ne)drīkst*

The main factor behind the distribution of animate vs. inanimate subjects is negation. In combination with *nedrīkst*, inanimate subjects in the nominative are almost twice as frequent as the animate ones. The usage is typical of instructions and regulations, the most frequent verbs being *būt* 'be' and *pārsniegt* 'exceed', as in (24). Without negation, the ratio is reversed, with inanimate nominative subjects comprising only 0.2 compared to animate nominative subjects.

(24) *Evakuācijas   laiks   nedrīkst   pārsniegt   30*
    evacuation.GEN.SG   time.NOM.SG   NEG.may.PRS.3   exceed.INF   30
    minūtes.
    minute.ACC.PL
    'Evacuation time should not exceed 30 minutes.'

The same tendency is maintained by dative subjects, as their ratio to the number of animate subjects is 0.4 with negation and 0.1 without negation. Probably reflecting a less formal character of the source texts, the verb *pārsniegt* is

only found once in the dative sample of *nedrīkst*. The example in (25) might be an informal rendering of an official instruction:[5]

(25) *Maksimālai   grīdas   temperatūrai   nedrīkst*
    maximal.DAT.SG.F floor.GEN.SG temparature.DAT.SG   NEG.may.PRS.3
    pārsniegt   26°C.
    exceed.INF   26°C
    [*Tā ir grīdas temperatūra pašās aukstākajās ziemas dienās, parasti grīdas temperatūra ir mazāka.*]
    'The maximum temperature of the floor should not exceed 26°C.
    [This is the floor temperature on coldest winter days. Normally, the floor temperature is lower.]'

But even with *nedrīkst*, the number of inanimate dative subjects never exceeds the number of animate dative subjects, and one may conclude that the impersonal construction is more preferable. This conclusion would be in full agreement with the fact that the dative is associated with the experiencer semantics, clearly absent from inanimate subjects. Pronouns show the same tendency, although with smaller numbers because of a much higher frequency of animate referents in general.

2.2 Ellipsis

With both dative and nominative subjects the main verb can be omitted, with various degrees of recoverability. Obviously, the verb is easiest to recover if it is present in context, often within the same sentence.

(26) [*Kosmētikas ražošanai pastāv likumi, kas regulē,*]
    ko   ražotājs   drīkst   un   ko
    what.ACC manufacturer.NOM.SG may.PRS.3 and what.ACC
    nedrīkst   iekļaut   kosmētikas   līdzekļa
    NEG.may.PRS.3 include.INF cosmetics.GEN.SG   agent.GEN.SG
    sastāvā.
    composition.LOC.SG

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5   The use of the dative with an inanimate subject is probably not dissimilar to the substandard use of the 3rd person *viņš, viņa* instead of the demonstrative pronouns *tas, tā* in order to refer to inanimate entities.

'There are laws regulating cosmetics manufacturing that define what <substances> a manufacturer is allowed or not allowed to include into <the formula of> a cosmetic product.'

(27) *Kāpēc   šajā   valstī   vieniem   drīkst   darīt*
why   DEM.LOC.SG   country.LOC.SG   some.DAT.PL   may.PRS.3   do.INF
visu,   bet   citiem   nedrīkst   neko?
all.ACC.SG   but   other.DAT.PL   NEG.may.PRS.3   nothing.ACC
'Why are some allowed to do everything in this country, but others are not allowed anything?'

The verb doesn't need to be in the infinitive, especially with the dative:

(28) [*Es kā privātīpašnieks arī labprāt nojauktu vecu būdu,*]
bet   man   nedrīkst   —   vēsturiskā,   redzies!
but   1SG.DAT   NEG.may.PRS.3   historic.NOM.SG.F.DEF   see.PRS.2SG.RFL
'[As a private owner, I would gladly tear down the old shack] but I'm not allowed to—it's historic, they say!'

In other cases, the verb can be recovered from its arguments:

(29) [*Godātie kolēģi,*]
vai   es   drīkstu   ārpus   protokola?
PTC   1SG.NOM   may.PRS.1SG   outside   record.GEN.SG
'[Dear colleagues,] may I <speak> off the record?'

(30) [*Nobeiguma punkts ar laivām – Radmanov<e> Mlinice,*]
diemžēl   tālāk   mums   nedrīkst,
regrettably   further   1PL.DAT   NEG.may.PRS.3
[*tālāk ir atklātā jūra.*]
'[The final point for the boat is Radmanove Mlinice.] Regrettably, we are not allowed <to go> further. [Further, there is open sea.]'

A combination of *(ne)drīkstēt* with a noun in the accusative meaning food or other objects of consumption makes up a distinct construction in its own right.

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(31) [*tu tak tievē,*]

tev	*nedrīkst*	*vistu*	*vai kartupeļus*	*vai*
2SG.DAT	NEG.may.PRS.3	chicken.ACC.SG	or potato.ACC.PL	or

vēl	*nez ko,*	[*izņemot salātlapu.*]
yet	god.knows.what.ACC	

'[But you are on a diet,] you shouldn't eat chicken or potatoes, or god knows what else, [except lettuce.]'

Another case is the accusative of pronouns *ko* 'what' or *visu* 'everything'. Sometimes, the omitted verb then is also supposed to mean 'use/consume', but very often its meaning can be treated as very general: 'do', 'afford' with an animate subject and 'be', 'happen' with an inanimate subject.

(32) [*Tagad es dzīvoju ar apziņu,*]

ka	*es*	*drīkstu*	*visu*	*un*	*kad*	*gribu,*
that	1SG.NOM	may.PRS.1SG	all.ACC.SG	and	when	want.PRS.1SG

[*bet man noteikti to visu nevajag.*]

'[I live with a feeling now] that I can <afford> everything, whenever I want, [but I certainly don't need all this.]'

(33) [*Jo viņam ir radies tāds aizlieguma sajūta,*]

ka	*viņam*	*daudz*	*ko*	*nedrīkst*	*ko*	*citiem*
that	3SG.DAT	much	what.ACC	NEG.may.PRS.3	what.ACC	other.DAT.PL

drīkst.
may.PRS.3

'[Because he has got this feeling of prohibition,] that he is not allowed to <do> many things that other people are allowed.'

The same general meaning can be claimed for those uses of *(ne)drīkstēt* that lack any arguments.

(34) [*sapirkos Fini 2 veidu beglutēena želejkonfektes un miers.*]

Nav	*dārgi,*	*un*	*visiem*	*drīkst.*
NEG.be.PRS.3	expensive.ADV	and	all.DAT.PL	may.PRS.3

'[I bought two sorts of gluten-free jelly candy, and that was it.] Inexpensive, and everybody is allowed <to eat them>.'

In the table that follows all dative examples (negated and affirmative as well as those with nouns and pronouns are pooled together), and so are nominative examples.

	DAT	NOM
verb in context	16	6
acc nouns	9	0
acc pronouns	13	5
other arguments	1	1
no arguments	21	1
all ellipsis examples	60	13
all examples	97	170
all ellipsis/all examples	61.9%	7.6%

TABLE 3. Ellipsis with *(ne)drīkst*

The table reveals a tendency which justifies space devoted to ellipsis in this article that almost two thirds of the dative data are those with ellipsis, which is a striking contrast with less than 10% in the nominative data. In other words, when a speaker uses *(ne)drīkstēt* with the dative, the chances are high that the lexical verb is omitted, and it is only in 16 out of 60 ellipsis examples that the lexical verb is present in context. For the nominative data, the verb is almost always preserved, and when it is not, it is still found in the context in half of the sentences where ellipsis is found. Evidently, these figures reflect a stylistic difference between the dative and the nominative construction, the dative construction being characteristic of informal style.

3 Sources

In its original meaning 'dare', still extant, the verb *(ne)drīkstēt* combines with a nominative subject, see example (35) from Holvoet (2007, 157). Therefore, the use of a dative subject with *(ne)drīkstēt* must be a new development. The question then is what made this change possible, and why it did not take place with other possibility verbs, that is, the universal *varēt* and the dynamic *spēt*.

(35) *Kā   tu   drīkstēji   Izai   piegādāt   vēstules*
how   2.SG.NOM   dare.PST.2SG   PN.DAT.SG   pass.on.INF   letter.ACC.PL
bez   manas   ziņas?
without   my.GEN.SG.F   knowledge.GEN.SG
'How did you dare pass on letters to Iza without my knowledge?'

There are three possible sources that might have provided the verb *(ne) drīkstēt* with the dative subject and more than one source is probably involved.

One is a construction consisting of the verb *būt* 'be' and a truncated form of the adverb *brīvi* 'freely' (Holvoet 2007, 46–47). It conveys deontic possibility and, unlike other possibility constructions in Latvian, has the experiencer in the dative. It is similar to the datival variety of *(ne)drīkstēt* in that both are informal in style, but *(ne)būt + brīv* has a distinct archaic flavour as it is also used in the language of the Bible. Here is an example from the Corpus:

(36) *Saki,   vai   mums   ir   brīv   ķeizaram   nodevas*
tell.IMP.2SG   PTC   1PL.DAT   be.PRS.3   free   emperor.DAT.SG   tax.ACC.PL
dot   vai   ne?
give.INF   or   not
'Tell <us>, should we pay taxes to the emperor, or should we not?'

Another source is a similar Russian construction with a modal predicative *možno* (in the affirmative) / *nel'zja* (in the negative), also with the meaning of deontic possibility and the experiencer in the dative. See the translation of (11) into Russian. It is not excluded that the use of the dative subject with *(ne) drīkstēt* developed under the Russian influence:

(37) *S   kakogo   vozrasta   rebënku   možno   ispol'zovat'*
from   what.GEN.SG.M   age.GEN.SG   child.DAT.SG   allowed   use.INF
kontaktnye   linzy?
contact.ADJ.ACC.PL   lense.ACC.PL
'At what age may a child start using contact lenses?'

Finally, the third possibility is that the dative was taken over from the necessity constructions. There are two kinds of contexts where such transfer might

have taken place. Firstly, *nevajadzēt*, as well as the negated version of the debitive, can be synonymous with *nedrīkstēt* in examples like (38)–(40) where they express prohibition.[6]

(38) *Lietuvas   prezidentam   nedrīkst   pārstāvēt*
    Lithuania.GEN   president.NOM.SG   NEG.may.PRS.3   represent.INF
    kādu   partiju   [— viņš ir visas tautas pārstāvis.]
    some.ACC.SG   party.ACC.SG
    'The president of Lithuania may not represent any party.
    [He represents the whole nation.]'

(39) *[Žurnālistikā vispār tiek uzskatīts,]*
    ka   žurnālistam   nevajag   strādāt   publisko
    that   journalist.DAT.SG   NEG.need.PRS.3   work.INF   public.GEN.PL.DEF
    attiecību   jomā.
    relation.GEN.PL   sphere.LOC.SG
    'In journalism, they believe that a journalist should not work in
    public relations.'

(40) *Žurnālistam   nav   jāpārstāv   jebkādas*
    journalist.DAT.SG   NEG.be.PRS.3   DEB.represent   any.ACC.PL.F
    citas   intereses,
    other.ACC.PL.F   interest.ACC.PL
    [izņemot sabiedrības tiesības zināt patiesību par notikumiem, kas tai
    šķiet nozīmīgi un interesanti.]
    'A journalist must not represent any other interests apart from the society's right to know about events that seem important or interesting.'

Secondly, it is not uncommon for prohibition or permission expressed by *(ne)drīkstēt* to be found in coordination with obligation expressed by the necessity constructions:

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6   The scope of negation in necessity expressions can include either the modal verb/morpheme or the main verb. Negation on the main verb means that the whole expression conveys prohibition of the action expressed by the main verb. As it is well known, such cases are synonymous with negation having scope over a possibility modal.

(41) *Sacensības*   *dalībniekiem*   **nedrīkst**   *piesārņot*
competition.GEN.SG   participant.DAT.PL   NEG.may.PRS.3   pollute.INF
dabu   *trases*   *teritorijā*   *un*   *ar*   *cieņu*
nature.ACC.SG   track.GEN.SG   area.LOC.SG   and   with   respect.ACC.SG
jāizturas   *pret*   *apkārtējo*   *vidi.*
DEB.behave   towards   surrounding.ACC.SG.DEF   environment.ACC.SG
'Competition participants may not pollute the nature around the track and should treat the environment with respect.'

(42) [*Tās rindas, kas dziesmā atkārtojas*]
un   *ko*   **drīkst**   *un*   *pat*   **vajag**   *visiem*   *kopā*
and   what.ACC   may.PRS.3   and   even   need.PRS.3   all.DAT.PL   together
dziedāt,   [*sauc par piedziedājumu.*]
sing.INF
'Those song lines that are repeated and can and even should be sung together by everybody (literally: those that everybody may and even should sing together), are called a refrain.'

3.1 Animacy restriction

Apart from the meaning of deontic possibility and the dative marking of the subject, arguments for and against each of the sources involve other features associated with *(ne)drīkstēt*, namely, animacy of the subject and ellipsis, especially with objects of consumption. With respect to these two, *(ne)būt + brīv* seems to be an unlikely candidate for a direct influence on *(ne)drīkstēt*.

Firstly, *(ne)būt + brīv* is almost never used with inanimate subjects in the Corpus. Out of 57 nouns in the subject position, two instances of inanimate subject (4%) represented either metonymy where a vehicle stands for its driver or a poetic metaphor, as in (43). For comparison, the general number of inanimate nouns used as dative subjects with *(ne)drīkstēt* is 21 out of 97, or 22%.

(43) [*Un neļausim,*]
lai   *vienaldzībai*   *tik*   *bieži*   *sirdīs*   *ienākt*   *brīv.*
that   apaty.DAT.SG   so   often   heart.LOC.PL   enter.INF   free
'[And we shall not allow] that apathy is free to enter our hearts so often.'

Secondly, *(ne)būt + brīv* is possible with the object in the nominative in the absence of the lexical verb in at least several examples in the Corpus, which is in stark contrast to the accusative found with *(ne)drīkstēt*. Compare the following examples:

(44) *Teicu,   ka   Tev   tas   nav   brīv!*
tell.PST.1SG   that   2SG.DAT   DEM.NOM.SG.M   NEG.be.PRS.3   free
'I told <you> that you are not allowed <to do/have> this!'

(45) *Gaļu   negribu,   man   to   nedrīkst.*
meat.ACC.SG   NEG.want.PRS.1SG   1SG.DAT   DEM.ACC.SG   NEG.may.PRS.3
'I don't want meat, I'm not allowed <to eat> it.'

The only example combining *(ne)būt +brīv* with an object in the accusative seems to be under the influence of *(ne)drīkstēt*.

(46) *A   riekstus   nav   brīv   vakarā*
PTC   nut.ACC.PL   NEG.be.PRS.3   free   evening.LOC.SG
[— *tur OH tomēr.*]
'It is not allowed <to eat> nuts in the evening. They still have OH in them.'

Otherwise, all uses of *(ne)būt + brīv* with *ēst* 'eat' appear to refer to the propriety of the action rather than a healthy diet.

(47) [*Ka viņš gāja Dieva namā un tie ēda skatāmās maizes,*]
ko   nebija   brīv ēst   ne   viņam   pašam,
what.ACC   NEG.be.PST.3   free eat.INF   not   3SG.DAT.   self.DAT.SG
ne   viņa   biedriem,   bet vienīgi   priesteriem?
not   3SG.GEN.   companion.DAT.PL   but only   priest.DAT.PL
'[That he went into the house of God and they ate the consecrated bread] that was not lawful to eat either for him or his companions, but only for the priests?'

The Russian construction seems to be a more likely source for the use of the dative with *(ne)drīkstēt* exactly because it is commonly used to refer to eating

habits with an omitted verb and the object of consumption in the accusative, as in (48) from the Russian National Corpus (RNC):

(48) *Ničego   kušat'   nelz'ja: baraška   nel'zya,*
     nothing.GEN eat.INF NEG.allowed   lamb.ACC.SG NEG.allowed
     selëdku   nel'zya,   vodku   nel'zya,   ničego
     herring.ACC.SG NEG.allowed vodka.ACC.SG NEG.allowed nothing.GEN
     nel'zya.   [Doktor zapretil.]
     NEG.allowed
     'I'm not allowed to eat anything: lamb is not allowed, herring is not
     allowed, vodka is not allowed, nothing is allowed.
     [My doctor prohibited <to eat them>.]'

But, not unlike the Latvian *(ne)būt + brīv*, the use of the dative with predicatives in Russian is restricted to animate experiencers (Zimmerling 2009). One can suggest therefore that the animacy restriction was lifted after the pattern was adopted into Latvian. Since inanimate subjects are only found with the negated *nedrīkstēt*, they were probably transferred from synonymous expressions with *nevajadzēt* and the debitive.

4 Conclusion

The use of the dative (quasi-)subject with the deontic possibility modal *drīkstēt* is very infrequent, which explains its absence from major works on Latvian modals. Also, the high percentage of ellipsis confirms the informal character of the construction. A frequent use of the construction for referring to consumption habits and the object of consumption in the accusative points to the synonymous Russian construction *možno / nel'zja* as a likely source. In fact, this might be another reason why the use of the dative with *drīkstēt* is ignored by researchers.

Nevertheless, the Latvian construction cannot be simply seen as a Latvian calque of the Russian expression. The corpus data shows that animacy restriction, characteristic of the Russian *možno / nel'zja*, is lifted in Latvian so that the dative (quasi-)subject is used to refer to inanimate participants. The development is indicative of a higher degree of grammaticalization in comparison to either the Russian source or the synonymous Latvian expression *būt + brīv*, even though the share of inanimate subjects in the dative is still lower than in the mainstream version of *drīkstēt* involving the nominative subject.

Since inanimate subjects are much more likely to appear with negation, inanimate dative subjects might have been introduced from the expressions of necessity, namely, *vajadzēt* and the debitive. These two constructions are only possible with the dative and, when negated, they are capable of conveying prohibition which is also the meaning of *nedrīkstēt*. Introducing inanimate dative subjects into the *drīkstēt* construction makes the latter susceptible to the issues that remain unresolved for *vajadzēt* and the debitive, that is, whether *drīkstēt* can be interpreted as a raising verb.

List of Abbreviations
1—first person, 2—second person, 3—third person, ACC—accusative, ADJ—adjective, ADV—adverb, COMPL—complementizer, CVB—converb, DAT—dative, DEB—debitive, DEF—definite, DEM—demonstrative pronoun, F—feminine, GEN—genitive, INF—infinitive, LOC—locative, M—masculine, NEG—negation, NOM—nominative, PL—plural, PN—proper name, PRS—present, PTC—particle, RFL—reflexive marker, SBJ—subjunctive, SG—singular

Data sources
lvTenTen LatvianWeb Corpus. Available at: sketch.engine.eu
RNC Russian National Corpus. Available at: at ruscorpora.ru

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