

# From evaluative to deontic predication: Evidence for the grammaticalization path from clausal complementation strategies

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**Abstract.** A shift from evaluation (‘it is good, fitting’, etc.) to deontic modality is well known from the literature on grammaticalization. This article looks at it from the viewpoint of complementation. In Lithuanian, a complementation strategy characteristic of evaluative predicates has been carried over to deontic contexts. The complementation strategy referred to consists in the reuse of an originally conditional adverbial clause structure with evaluative predicates as a means of avoiding the factive implication usually associated with evaluatives (cf. *it is good that... : it would be good if...*). The conditional clause type under discussion contains the anteriority converb in *-us*, which, as a result of the shift ‘evaluative → deontic’, has become characteristic of a set of deontic constructions where it competes with the infinitive. This development moreover involved processes of insubordination and resubordination. The relevance of the Lithuanian facts (apart from their intrinsic interest, also from the viewpoint of resubordination processes) consists in that the extension of the complementation type from evaluative to unambiguously deontic contexts provides palpable proof of the transition while the research has hitherto failed to find a cut-off point between evaluation and deontic modality.

**Keywords:** evaluative predicates, deontic modality, complementation strategies, insubordination, resubordination

## 1 Introduction

Heine & Kuteva (2007, 178) refer to “a universal strategy whereby predicates of the kind ‘it is enough/fitting/suitable/good (that)’ are grammaticalized to markers for necessity or obligation”. Examples include Archaic Chinese *yi* ‘suitable, fitting’ developing into Classical Chinese *yi*, an auxiliary for deontic necessity (Kuteva et al. 2020, 414) or Tepehuán (Uto-Aztecan, Mexico) *jixbai’na* ‘it is good’ becoming an expression for deontic possibility, i.e., permission (Kuteva et al. 2020, 220). Expressions like ‘it is good’ or ‘it is fitting’ are cited among the frequent lexical sources for ‘obligation’ in Bybee, Perkins & Pagliuca (1994, 183). Some of the data for this path of grammaticalization come from European languages, where a special emphasis has been laid on ‘comparative modal constructions’ like English *you’d better*, French *il vaut mieux* (and related constructions) ‘it would be better’ etc. (Mitchell 2003, Patard & van der Auwera 2017 etc.).

The grammaticalization path is therefore well documented, but at the same time the exact juncture between evaluation and deontic modality remains elusive. So, for example, Patard and van der Auwera (2017) carry out an evaluation of the degree of grammaticalization of French ‘comparative modal constructions’ (like *il vaut mieux*) based on Lehmann’s (1995) criteria, and also attempt an answer to the question to what extent these ‘modal’ constructions have emancipated themselves from their evaluative source construction. As far as we can judge from their analysis, the degree of grammaticalization is weak, but more crucially the constructions under research are mostly ambiguous between evaluation and modality. What seems to be the case is that one can qualify these constructions as evaluative, the modal function being a pragmatic inference. To what extent one regards the modal meaning as predominant is probably subjective, and the decision is often difficult to make in view of the ‘persistence’ effect that manifests itself even in cases of relatively advanced grammaticalization (Hopper 1991). It is conceivable, however, that the evaluative construction simply remains evaluative, being at the same time substituted for a deontic modal construction as a politeness or hedging strategy. Cultural constraints may also impose the use of evaluative instead of deontic or desiderative expressions. So are there any tests we could apply in establishing whether an evaluative construction has indeed become deontic?

In this article I discuss a development in Lithuanian consisting in a complementation type characteristic of evaluative predicates (it is originally a pseudo-conditional strategy used to avoid factive readings with evaluative predicates) extending to deontic and desiderative constructions, thus testifying to the actual occurrence of the shift from evaluative to deontic predication. What happened is that certain evaluative predicates acquired a deontic or desiderative function while retaining their complementation type characteristic of evaluative predicates, and this complementation type could then be extended to other deontic and desiderative constructions not of evaluative origin. The Lithuanian facts

dealt with here have not been discussed earlier, and they are also relevant to the study of Lithuanian complementation and historical syntax in general, but it is because of their more general relevance to the study of the grammaticalization path from evaluation to deontic and desiderative modality that they are presented here. Their interest consists in that they introduce discreteness into a transition that is otherwise extremely fluid. Generally speaking, the shift from evaluation to modality can be viewed as a pragmatically driven gradual process. In the Lithuanian development on hand we can discern two distinct stages: reanalysis (of evaluation as modality) and extension (of a complementation type from evaluative to deontic and desiderative contexts), in a two-step process of successive reanalysis and extension as in the classical model proposed by Harris & Campbell (1995).

The structure of the article is as follows. Section 2 presents the Lithuanian grammatical form on which my whole argument is based, the anteriority converb in *-us*. Those usage types that are of particular interest for us here are presented in more detail in Section 3, where it is also suggested that the synchronically co-existing constructions represent different stages in a diachronic development. A diachronic hypothesis concerning the nature and mechanisms of this development is formulated in Section 4. It is argued that the most important link in the proposed chain of developments was the shift from evaluative to deontic and desiderative meaning. Section 5 deals with the interaction between infinitival and converbial deontic and desiderative constructions and draws attention to a functional differentiation between the two possibly attesting to a persistence effect in the transition from evaluative to deontic complementation. Section 6 contains a summing-up of the conclusions reached in the article.

To conclude this introductory section, a few words on the sources are needed. Apart from the Corpus of Contemporary Lithuanian I have relied on my own excerption of works by Mykolaitis-Putinas, Šeinius and Tumas-Vaižgantas. Examples from Jurgis Matulaitis, the Lithuanian émigré press (<https://www.spauda.org>) and other texts accessible on the Internet were found through Google searches. The Internet database of Old Lithuanian texts (<https://seniejirastai.lki.lt>) covers mainly the 16th and 17th centuries and could therefore yield no evidence, as the historical processes outlined in the article were of later date. A historical corpus of Lithuanian covering the 18th, 19th and early 20th centuries remains a desideratum for the future.

## 2 The Lithuanian anteriority converb in *-us* and its atypical uses

Lithuanian has two undeclinable converbs typically used as counterparts of finite adverbial clauses; one of them, with the marker *-ant/-int*, is basically used for cases of simultaneity or co-occurrence with the main-clause event, while the other, with the marker *-us*, is used for cases of anteriority with regard to the main-clause event. I give an example only for the latter, as its further developments will figure prominently in this article:

## (1) Lithuanian (constructed)

*Svečiams išėjus galėjome atsipalaiduoti.*  
 guest.DAT.PL leave.CVB be\_able.PST.1PL relax.INF

‘The guests having left, we could relax.’

In this example the converb in *-us* occurs with a dative subject in a construction called the dative absolute (a counterpart to the Latin ablative absolute and the Classical Greek genitive absolute). Like the corresponding English construction with the gerund in *-ing*, this construction can render different semantic relationships with the main clause, the most prominent being temporal, causal and conditional. The conditional use being of particular relevance in the context of this article, an illustration is given in (2):

## (2) Jurga Ivanauskaitė 2006, CCLL

*Įmanoma ne tik parsirasti į praeitį, bet,  
 possible.N NEG only get\_back.INF into past.ACC but  
 panorėjus ar labai pasistengus, dirstelėti į ateitį.  
 want.CVB or very make\_an\_effort.CVB peek.INF into future.ACC*

‘It is possible not only to go back to the past, but also, if one wishes it or makes a strenuous effort, to peek into the future.’

Apart from these converbial usage types, the converb in *-us* occurs in a series of constructions where its use is, at the very least, unexpected if one takes the adverbial uses as a point of reference. Leaving a detailed overview for the next section, I give an example with a deontic question, i.e., a question aiming at eliciting an instruction rather than a piece of information:

## (3) Lithuanian (constructed)

*Kur čia mums atsisėdus?*  
 where here 1PL.DAT sit.down.CVB

‘Where could/should we sit down?’

The development leading from (1) to (2) is the object of section 4, where I will argue that the converb in *-us* was (apart from its prototypical uses) used as part of a conditional strategy to avoid a factive reading with evaluative (commentative) predicates, and subsequently shifted to the deontic domain in a development illustrating the widely known grammaticalization path mentioned in section 1. This was a process involving a number of successive stages, all of which are still fully alive in contemporary Lithuanian and will be presented in Section 3. The fact of their preservation in the modern language creates the preconditions for an internal reconstruction of the diachronic processes connecting

them; reliance on internal reconstruction is essential here because the lack of a historical corpus of Lithuanian prevents us, at the present juncture, from locating the successive stages of the posited development in time. Moreover, due to the limited use of Lithuanian in writing in the 18th and early 19th centuries there is no guarantee that, once available, a historical corpus will provide answers to all questions concerning sequence and chronology of the changes. However, the mechanisms of change involved at the successive stages of this development are independently attested and well known from the literature. They are the following:

- (i) the use of pseudo-conditional clauses as a strategy to avoid a factive reading with evaluative predicates (cf. Noonan 2007, 115);
- (ii) the semantic/pragmatic development of an evaluative predicate into a deontic or desiderative predicate, that is, a development from ‘it would be a good thing if *x* happened’ to ‘*x* should happen’ (deontic) or ‘I want *x* to happen’ (desiderative) (cf. references above);
- (iii) insubordination, that is, the reuse of a subordinated clause structure in the function of a simple clause (Evans 2007);
- (iv) resubordination, that is, the reuse of a simple-clause structure, itself arising from subordination, in a new type of subordinated clause structure.

I will start with giving an overview of the relevant usage types of the converb in *-us* in contemporary Lithuanian, after which I will discuss the diachronic connections between them in section 4.

### 3 An overview of the uses of the Lithuanian converb in *-us*

The Lithuanian converb in *-us*<sup>1</sup>, which is historically descended from the Indo-European active perfect participle in *\*-wes-* (Beekes 2011, 279)<sup>2</sup>, is used, first of all, in non-finite adverbial clauses expressing anteriority with regard to the situation described in the main clause. The converb may have a subject in the dative (the ‘dative absolute’):

<sup>1</sup> Apart from the anteriority converb in *-us*, Lithuanian has several other converbs which are not characterized in detail here as they do not participate in the processes dealt with in this article. For an overview cf. Ambrazas, ed. (2006, 363–364).

<sup>2</sup> In Slavic this participle has given rise to an anteriority converb in *-vъši*, as in Polish *powiedziałwszy* ‘having said’. In Slavic the anteriority converb has, however, undergone a different syntactic development. It is mainly restricted to adverbial clauses whose subject is coreferential with that of the main clause, whereas in Lithuanian the converb in *-us* is never used in such contexts. Rather, its subject, when implicit, is generic or contextually retrievable but distinct from the main-clause subject. These features enable its use with predicative adjectives and adverbs expressing an evaluation, as in (6).

## (4) Saulius Tomas Kondrotas 1996, CCLL

*Mėgo apie tai pasakoti progai pasitaikius.*  
 like.PST.3 about this.ACC narrate.INF occasion.DAT.SG occur.CVB

‘He liked to tell this story whenever an occasion presented itself [lit. ‘an occasion having presented itself.]’

Often, however, the converb has no overt subject. The implicit subject may then be specific and contextually retrievable, in which case it may not be coreferential with the main-clause subject; or it may be generic, which is often the case when the main clause has an implicit subject that is also generic:

## (5) Jurga Ivanauskaitė 1999, CCLL

*Bet, kartą įžengus į užgintą teritoriją,*  
 but once enter.CVB into forbidden.ACC territory.ACC

*būtų geriau iš jos nebe-grįžti.*  
 be.COND better.ADV from 3.GEN.F no.more-return.INF

‘But, once one has entered the forbidden territory, it would be better not to return from it.’

Another typical use of the anteriority converb in *-us* is in complement clauses with verbs of knowing, saying and epistemic stance. The anteriority meaning is preserved here.

(6) *Lietuvos rytas* 2002, CCLL

*Šeimininkas kaltino savo svečią pavogus stalo*  
 host.NOM.SG accuse.PST.3 RPOSS guest.ACC.SG steal.CVB table.GEN.SG

*įrankius.*

implement.ACC.PL

‘The host accused his guest of having stolen [his] cutlery.’

Apart from these rather typical converbial uses, the *-us* converb is used in a series of constructions where its function is stated in the Lithuanian Academy Grammar (Ulvydas, ed. 1971, 391–392) to be close to that of the infinitive. I will refer to these types of use of the converb as ‘purposive’, not so much in the restricted sense of expressing purpose (though this is crosslinguistically the source for infinitives, cf. Haspelmath 1989) as in the broader sense of prototypically expressing a virtual event in the future viewed as an object of an act of volition, an evaluation in terms of desirability, etc. The features pertaining to relative location in time (anteriority), evident in examples (1) and (2), are lost completely. I list the usage types in the order in which they are listed in the Academy Grammar, though the way the constructions are described here is not identical with the characterizations offered in this grammar. The ‘purposive’ anteriority converb occurs:

- with predicative adjectives and adverbs expressing an evaluation. This semantic feature of the adjectives and adverbs involved is not mentioned in the Academy Grammar but this is actually an essential feature.

(7) Vincas Krėvė (Ulvydas, ed. 1971, 391)

*Gal geriau būtų namo grįžus;*  
 Maybe better.ADV be.IRR.3 home return.CVB

*palauktume, kol išauš.*  
 wait.IRR.1PL till dawn.FUT.3

‘Perhaps it would be better to return home; we could then await dawn.’

- in independent or embedded deontic questions (this term is taken from Palmer 1986, 106–108; it corresponds to Huddleston’s ‘direction questions’, Huddleston 1994, 434). A deontic question seeks to elicit not a piece of information but a directive as to the course of action to be taken by the speaker (or, less frequently, other persons). Deontic questions have traditionally been known as deliberative questions, but I will use this term in a different sense, see Section 4 below. The independent variety is shown in (8) and the embedded variety in (9):

(8) Vincas Mykolaitis-Putinas (Ulvydas, ed. 1971, 392)

*Mama, kaip čia man su Katryte pasimačius?*  
 mum.VOC how PTC 1SG.DAT with K.INS meet.CVB

‘Mum, how could I arrange a meeting with Kate?’

(9) Juozas Baltušis (Ulvydas, ed. 1971, 392)

*Neišmanau, kur tave paguldžius.*  
 NEG.know.PRS.1SG where 2SG.ACC lay.down.CVB

‘I’ve no idea where to put you up [for the night].’

- in wish clauses introduced by the marker *kad* ‘that’, usually by the combined *kad tik* or *kad taip* ‘if only’:

(10) Juozas Baltušis (Ulvydas, ed. 1971, 392)

*Ė, kad tik greičiau atvykus į vietą.*  
 INTERJ that only faster.ADV arrive.CVB on spot.ACC

‘If only we could reach our destination as soon as possible.’

To the three usage types listed here we could add a fourth, which the authors of the Academy Grammar probably do not mention on purpose, as it is condemned by prescriptive

sources. The converb is used in rationale clauses<sup>3</sup> whose implicit subjects are controlled by the agent/subject argument of the matrix clause, or that have implicit subjects with arbitrary control. Such clauses correspond to infinitival rationale clauses of many other languages (English *in order to know*, French *pour savoir*, German *um zu wissen* etc.). In Lithuanian, infinitival rationale clauses are proscribed in the standard language as they probably owe their existence to Slavic (Polish, Russian) influence. The converbial type of rationale clause illustrated in (11) below has no counterparts in neighbouring languages and is undoubtedly an indigenous Lithuanian development, so that the reason for the prescriptive ban is, in this instance, unclear. Due to this ban one does not find the converbial construction frequently in modern printed texts, but they can often be found in literary and other texts predating World War II:

(11) Jurgis Matulaitis, 1910<sup>4</sup>

*Ne tik visą Europą, bet dažnai ir Ameriką*  
 not only whole.ACC Europe.ACC but often also America.ACC  
*apvažinėja, kad patyrus, kaip kitur panašios*  
 travel.PRS.3 in\_order\_to experience.CVB how elsewhere similar.NOM.PL.F  
*įstaigos yra įsteigtos ir*  
 institution.NOM.PL be.pst.3 set\_up.PTCP.PST.PASS.NOM.PL and  
*vedamos.*  
 run.PTCP.PRS.PASS.NOM.PL

‘They travel not only all over Europe but often also all over America in order to see how such institutions are set up and run elsewhere.’

Manuals of correct usage state the ban without providing any reasons (e.g., Kazlauskienė, Rimkutė & Bielinskienė 2008, 147). The fact that prescriptive grammarians deem it necessary to condemn the construction suggests that it is still used in actual practice.

Though the purposive, infinitive-like usage types illustrated in (7)–(11) are clearly different from the typically converbial function illustrated in (4) and (5), the Academy Grammar does not comment on this contrast, neither does it raise the question what kind of development could have led from the converbial to the purposive usage types. This

<sup>3</sup> By ‘rationale clause’ I understand (following Huettner 1989) a purposive clause adjoined at clause level, of the type that can be introduced in English by *in order that/to*. Huettner further distinguishes goal clauses, which are VP-internal (*went to open the door*) and purpose clauses, which are NP-internal (*a book for her to read*). In Lithuanian both goal and purpose clauses are infinitival, in contrast to rationale clauses, and they are not introduced by subordinators. Both in Lithuanian and in English, rationale clauses can either precede or follow the main clause (which proves their adjunction at clause level rather than at VP or NP level), whereas goal and purpose clauses tend to have a fixed position after the verb or noun.

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.vargdieniu.lt/biblioteka/pal-jurgio-matulaicio-rastai/uzrasai?start=2>



could, of course, hardly be expected as the Academy Grammar is a synchronic grammar of the contemporary standard language, with only rare excursions into diachrony. Still, one could have expected some comment as the presence of two so different types of use makes the functional domain of the converb in *-us* conspicuously heterogeneous. The purposive uses clearly do not correspond to the basic meaning of the converb, which the authors of the Academy Grammar formulate as reference to ‘a secondary event’, and which involves relative location of events in time. On a more contemporary, construction-based approach there is obviously no point in looking for a semantic invariant: what is traditionally known as the converb in *-us* could be viewed as a morpheme-like entity acquiring its functions within the constructions of which it is part. I will not pursue this point here, concentrating instead on the diachronic processes and on the insights that can be gained from them.

#### 4 The diachronic path

In this section I will argue that the different constructions in which the converb in *-us* is used in a purposive function (as discussed in section 3) are interconnected by diachronic relationships which, in the absence of attested corpus data, can be established by methods of internal reconstruction complemented with insights from linguistic typology and grammaticalization theory. I assume that the reconstructed diachronic development is an indigenous process of Lithuanian, as it has no parallels in those languages with which Lithuanian has been in close areal contact (Old Northern Ruthenian, Polish, Modern Russian and German), so that the hypothesis of language contact as a determining factor can be confidently discarded.

Though the purposive uses of the past converb in *-us* are noted in the grammars, no explanation has been offered for them in diachronic studies. Vytautas Ambrazas, the greatest authority on historical Baltic syntax, has written a number of fundamental studies on the history of Lithuanian participles (Ambrazas 1979; 2006), but he does not mention the constructions interesting us here. Indeed his emphasis is on the Indo-European origins of the Lithuanian participles and their development as reflected in the oldest Lithuanian texts dating from the 16th and 17th centuries. Ambrazas’ work on participles also touches upon the converbs, among them the converb in *-us*, as these historically developed from cases forms (accusatives or datives) of declinable participles. The fact that Ambrazas does not mention the usage types of the converb in *-us* discussed in this article is sufficient evidence to conclude that they are of later origin. Their rise must probably be dated to the 18th or 19th century, but there has been no follow-up research covering this period.

Looking at the usage types mentioned by the Academy Grammar, we can see that the second (deontic questions) and the third (wish sentences) could be subsumed under a

broadly deontic-desiderative function (referring to an event that is deemed necessary or desirable), while the first is evaluative. I hypothesize that it is the evaluative type that mediated between the original converbial uses and the deontic-desiderative uses. The process can be reconstructed in the following way.

Predicates like *it's a pity*, *it's a good thing*, *it is strange* and the like belong to a type of complement-taking predicates I will here call evaluative. Noonan (2007, 127) proposes the terms 'commentative' and 'factive'. The latter of these two does not refer to the distinctive semantic features of the class of complement-taking predicates in question but focuses on a property first noted for these predicates in Kiparsky & Kiparsky (1970). They impose a factive reading on their clausal complements if these are finite:

(12) *It's a pity that she left.*

This sentence presupposes: *She left*. However, though often factive, evaluative predicates are not inherently so: it is just that when combined with a finite complement clause and the default complementizer corresponding to English *that*, they get a factive reading. However, languages have means of cancelling this factive reading. One of them is what we could call a conditional strategy, consisting in the higher evaluative predicate and its complement being embedded in a conditional structure:

(13) *It would be a pity if she left.*

While we could take this construction at its face value and describe it as a complex sentence with a conditional adverbial clause, Noonan (2007, 115) describes *if* in this use as a complementizer. Indeed, in (12) the main clause does not refer to an event or a state of affairs conditional upon what is expressed in the subordinate clause, but contains an evaluation of the state of affairs described in the subordinate clause; it is the potential rather than actualized character of this state of affairs that is encoded by means of a pseudo-conditional construction. We can thus speak of a conditional strategy aiming at avoiding the factive reading frequently associated with evaluative predicates. What is important here is the role the conditional complementizing construction could have played in the extension of the use of the past converb in *-us*. First, let us note that in Lithuanian, as in English and many other languages, the conditional strategy is used to mark nonfactivity with evaluative predicates:

(14) Algirdas Pocius 2007, CCLL

*Ramunė pagalvojo, kad būtu nuostabu,*  
R.NOM reflect.PST.3 that be.IRR.3 wonderful.N

*jei jis sugrįžtu į universitetą.*  
if 3.NOM.SG.M return.IRR.3 into university.ACC.SG

'Ramunė reflected it would be wonderful if he went back to university.'

A conditional subordinate clause can be encoded not only by means of a subordinator like *jei(gu)* ‘if’, but also by means of a converbial construction, as illustrated in example (2) above. This equivalence between a finite conditional clause with a subordinator and a converbial construction occurs not only in canonical conditional sentences, but extends to situations where the conditional subordinate clause is used as part of a pseudo-conditional strategy for encoding the complement of an evaluative predicate in a way that imposes a non-factive reading, as in (15):

(15) Bronius Bušma 1995, CCLL

*Man kilo mintis, kad ne pro šalį būtu*  
1SG.DAT arise.PST.3 thought.NOM that not.amiss be.IRR.3

*įsirengus dar vieną, atsarginę, operacinę...*  
install.CVB yet one.ACC spare.ACC.F operation.room.ACC

‘It occurred to me that it would not be amiss to install one more operation room to fall back on.’

In order to show that the converb in (15) is indeed a strategy to avoid a factive reading with the evaluative predicator *ne pro šalį* ‘not amiss’, just like the construction with *jeigu* ‘if’, I add an example with the latter:

(16) Internet<sup>5</sup>

*Apskritai būtu ne pro šalį, jeigu pretendentai*  
generally be.IRR.3 not.amiss if pretender.NOM.SG

*į pranašus deklaruočiau interesus.*  
to prophet.ACC.PL declare.IRR.3 interest.ACC.PL

‘On a general note, it would not be amiss if pretenders to prophethood would declare their interests.’

The choice between the constructions in (15) and (16) depends largely on whether there is an overt subject in the complement of the evaluative predicate or whether this subject is implicit and contextually retrieveable. In the latter case, an alternative to the converbial construction is an infinitival construction, a non-factive construction attested in other languages as well (cf. *It is a pity she stayed away* vs *It would be a pity to stay away*). For Lithuanian it is illustrated in (17):

(17) Petras Venclovas, 1997, CCLL

*Ar ne geriau būtų viską pamiršti nedrąsiai pasiūliau.*  
q NEG better be.IRR.3 everything.ACC forget.INF timidly suggest.PST.1SG

‘“But wouldn’t it be better to forget everything?” I suggested timidly.’

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.teise.pro/index.php/2021/01/13/konstitucinio-teismo-atnaujijimas-teisininkai-izvelgia-gresmes-teisinei-valstybei/>, accessed 11-04-24

If the assumption concerning the introduction of the converb in evaluative contexts is correct, then the use of the anteriority converb with evaluative predicates evolved from its ‘absolute’ uses, where, when the subject is overtly expressed, it occurs in the dative in the so-called ‘dative-absolute’ construction. In the evaluative construction as well, the subject, when expressed, is in the dative, as can be seen in (18).

(18) Ignas Šeinius, *Kuprelis*, 1913

*Geriau būtu mums greičiau vedus.*  
better.ADV be.IRR.3 1PL.DAT quicker.ADV. get\_married.CVB

‘It would be better for us if we got married as soon as possible.’

Constructions like these are, however, syntactically ambiguous, as the dative could be interpreted either as the subject of the converb (‘for us to get married’) or as being selected as a complement by the main-clause predicate (‘better for us’). Due to the free word order characteristic of Lithuanian this cannot be decided without contextual cues.

We may assume that constructions with the predicator ‘good’ or its forms of comparison must have played a crucial role in the further developments starting out from evaluative constructions. In many cases, especially with the comparative and superlative, they are basically evaluative in the sense that they assess the comparative merit of one among several courses of action:

(19) Vincas Mykolaitis-Putinas, *Altorių šešėlyje*, 1933 (1967, 244)

*Gal ir geriau būtų sušaukus susirinkimą,*  
maybe PTC better be.IRR.3 call.CVB meeting.ACC

*kaip jie nori, ir viską išsiaiškinus.*  
As 3.NOM.PL.M want.PRS.3 and everything.ACC sort\_out.CVB

‘Perhaps it would be better to call a meeting, as they suggest, and to sort everything out.’

But *gerai būtu* often seems to have a purely desiderative meaning, the comparative context being absent:

(20) Juozas Tumas-Vaižgantas, *Pragiedruliai*

*Ak, kad privargau... Ak, kaip gerai būtų pasilsėjus...*  
oh PTC get.tired.PST.1SG oh how good.ADV be.IRR.3 rest.CVB

‘Oh, how tired I am... Oh, how nice it would be to get some rest...’

It is probably such entrenched constructions with the predicate ‘good’ (and possibly a few others with similar meaning) that provided the point of departure for further develop-

ments in line with the path of grammaticalization known from the literature and referred to in the introduction above. We could characterize it as a shift to desiderative-deontic, or volition-based, modality. Here I am referring specifically to the ‘wish construction’ mentioned by the Academy Grammar and illustrated in (10) above. Indeed, in the literature we also find shifts from evaluation to desiderative. For Irish this is mentioned by Noonan (2007, 135). When used with an indicative, Irish *maith* ‘good’ is evaluative, but with an irrealis form of the copula it acquires desiderative function:

(21) Irish (from Noonan 2007, 135, glosses adapted)

*Is maith dhó i a theacht.*  
 COP good to.him her COMP come.NMLZ  
 ‘It’s good for him that she came.’

(22) *Ba mhaith liom í a theacht.*  
 COP.COND good with.me her COMP come.NMLZ  
 ‘I want her to come.’

The extension of the anterior converb from evaluative constructions with desiderative overtones to other constructions in the desiderative-deontic domain is a process that cannot be documented for lack of source data (as mentioned above, a historical corpus is not available), so that we have to rely on internal reconstruction. On this basis, we can formulate a few conjectures concerning the extension of ‘purposive *-us*’. If the assumption concerning the crucial role of evaluative predicates is correct, we may venture that the next step was the substitution of a dedicated marker of wish clauses like *kad tik* ‘if only, would that’ for evaluative constructions like *gerai būty* ‘it would be a good thing if...’, yielding the construction in (10). *Kad tik* ‘would that, if only’ is attested in wish clauses with irrealis mood already in Old Lithuanian, as shown in (23), and is still commonly used in the contemporary language.

(23) Old Lithuanian: Chylinski’s OT, Gen 17.18 (Kavaliūnaitė, ed. 2008, 44)

[*Ir tare Abrahomas Diewop,*]  
*Ach, kad tykt Ismael gitu po weydu tawo.*  
 oh that only Ismael live.IRR.3 under face.INS your  
 ‘[And Abraham said unto God,] O that Ishmael might live before thee!’

The wish construction with *kad tik* ‘if only’ was therefore available at the moment when at least in part of the contexts of its use the evaluative construction with the converb was interpreted as desiderative-deontic. It should be noted that this reanalysis goes hand in hand with a process of insubordination. The notion of insubordination (cf. Evans 2007) refers to situations where an originally subordinated structure starts being used as an in-

dependent clausal structure. In our case this happened through obliteration of the clausal boundary between the evaluative expression and the converb, followed by the substitution of an optative marker for the evaluative expression. The evaluative construction as illustrated in (20) is still a biclausal construction with a main clause containing the evaluative predicate and its clausal complement whose predicate is expressed by the converb. This converb, by the way, may still be said to have preserved, at this stage, its original anteriority meaning: a desirable state is achieved after completion of what is expressed in the subordinate clause. In (10), on the other hand, we have a monoclausal structure. It is atypical in that simple clauses usually contain finite verb forms while converbs are characteristic of subordinate clauses. The occurrence of the converb in (10) thus gives us a clue as to its origin in insubordination, and we can now identify this subordinate structure as a pseudo-conditional clause with evaluative predicates.

We may further assume that such desiderative sentences are the source of adverbial rationale clauses as illustrated in (11). The semantic development from desiderative to purposive is straightforward, and the marker *kad*, occurring as a wish particle in (10), was already used as a complementizer (with desiderative verbs) and subordinator in both desiderative and purposive clauses. (24) is a 17th-century example of a rationale clause with the subordinator *kad* and a verb in the irrealis (conditional):

(24) Chyliniski's Old Testament (1660), Gen. 2.15 (Kavaliūnaitė, ed. 2008, 35)

<i>ir</i>	<i>užfate</i>	<i>ghi</i>	<i>Sode</i>	<i>Eden,</i>	<i>kad</i>
and	put.PST.3	3.ACC.M	garden.LOC	E.	in.order.that
<i>apdirbtu</i>	<i>ghi</i>				
cultivate.IRR.3	3.ACC.M				

'and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it'

The marker *kad* occurring both in wish clauses like (10) and in rationale clauses, conditions were met for the converb in *-us* to be transferred to rationale clauses with subjects coreferential with those of the main clause. The existence of varieties transitional between the wish construction illustrated in (10) and the rationale construction in (11) confirms this conjecture. One transitional variety, illustrated in (25), has the wish marker *kad tik* 'would that, if only', and control, to the extent that it is not arbitrary (as in the wish sentences providing the source for the rationale clause), is semantic, that is, oriented towards the implicit agent of the main clause:

(25) Juozas Daumantas, *Partizanai*, 1950<sup>6</sup>

<i>Iš</i>	<i>bulvinės</i>	<i>buvo</i>	<i>išnešta</i>	<i>beveik</i>
from	potato_shed.GEN.SG	be.PST.3	carry_out.PTCP.PST.PASS.N	almost

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.partizanai.org/index.php/homepage/monsinjoro-a-svarinsko/rutos-trimoniens/bendraminciu-straipsniai/aktualijos/aldonos-vilutienes/roberto-patamsio/kalendorius/juozas-daumantas-partizanai>

*metras gylio žemės į lauką,*  
meter.NOM.SG depth.GEN earth.GEN outdoors

*kad tik suradus tą „bonkelę“.*  
that only find.CVB that.ACC.SG bottle.ACC.SG

‘A one meter deep layer of earth was carried out of the potato shed just to find that “bottle”’

We may surmise that what was to become the rationale clause was initially an independent wish clause loosely connected to the preceding clause as a kind of comment, without strict rules for control. In the course of time a relation of subordination established itself, which manifested itself, among other things, in the possibility of inverting the order of subordinate and main clause, as we see in (26):

(26) *Draugas* 28-03-1934<sup>7</sup>

*Kad žinojus kiekvienu momentu kiek*  
that know.CVB every.INS.SG.M moment.INS.SG how.many

*yra Lietuvoje gyventojų,*  
be.PRS.3 Lithuania.LOC inhabitant.GEN.PL

[*centralinis statistikos biuras nuo 1923 metų veda smulkią gimimų ir mirimų apyskaitą.*]

‘In order to know at every moment how many people live in Lithuania, [the central bureau for statistics has conducted an accurate count of births and deaths since 1923.]’

More research on this construction is necessary so that we could reconstruct the process of resubordination, the control properties of the new type of rationale clause etc.

As to the deontic questions as illustrated in (8) and (9), the exact mechanism leading to their rise cannot be reconstructed, but it is clear that once the shift from evaluation to desiderative or weak deontic modality had been accomplished, the extension to deontic questions also became available. Several important observations on the two subtypes of deontic questions can be found in the following section.

## 5 Interaction with infinitival constructions

As pointed out, the Academy Grammar compares the function of the anteriority converb in the constructions under discussion with those of the infinitive. This is a rather vague characterization as the infinitive has a broad functional scope and its functions can, at best, be defined within the constructions in which it occurs. But it is a fact that most of the constructions with the anteriority converb stand alongside analogous constructions with the infinitive, and that there has been a certain interaction between the infinitival and the

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.draugas.org/archyvas-pdf-1934/>

converbial constructions. As the infinitival constructions must have been well established (they have close counterparts in Latvian as well as in Slavic), it was the morphosyntactic properties of the previously established infinitival constructions that influenced those of the new converbial constructions. The most conspicuous feature is object marking.

The Eastern dialects of Lithuanian have the so-called nominative object, a feature well known from the Fennic languages but also known in Baltic and in the Northern dialects of Russian, and therefore sometimes regarded as a Circum-Baltic feature (Timberlake 1974; Ambrazas 2001). The nominative object is used mainly with the infinitive in impersonal clauses, as in (27), where the null subject of the infinitive *rasti* ‘find’ is controlled by the main-clause argument *Rymui* ‘Rome’ (the verb *pavykti* being impersonal):

(27) Jurgis Matulaitis<sup>8</sup>

*Šiuo sykiu Rymui ypač pavyko*  
this.INS.SG.M time.INS.SG Rome.DAT particularly turn.out.well.PST.3

*rasti toks vyras,*  
find.INF such.NOM.SG.M man.NOM.SG

[*prieš kurį jokios tautos žmonės nieko negali turėti.*]

‘This time Rome succeeded in finding a man [against whom the people of no nation could object.]’

The same nominative object is, however, found with the *-us* converb in the dialects that are also characterized by the construction with the nominative object of the infinitive:

(28) Tumas-Vaižgantas, *Geradaris* (Vaižgantas 1984, 300)

*Ak, kaip būtų gerai, jie kur į*  
oh how be.IRR.3 good.ADV 3.NOM.PL.M somewhere to

*nuošalį išvežus nuo tų miesto*  
remote\_place.ACC.SG convey.CVB from this.GEN.PL city.GEN.SG

*papiktinimų, nuo dykiniavimo!*  
offense.GEN.PL from idleness.GEN.SG

‘O, how good would it be to take them to some remote place, away from the city’s temptations and idleness.’

As argued by Ambrazas (2001), the nominative object arises from reanalysis of a source construction with a nominative subject and an infinitive of purpose: from *alus sveika(s) gerti* ‘the beer is healthy to drink’ to *sveika gerti alus* ‘it is healthy to drink beer’. It is only after this reanalysis that the noun starts functioning as the object of the infinitive; in part of the Lithuanian dialects its case form is correspondingly changed to the accusa-

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.vargdieniu.lt/biblioteka/pal-jurgio-matulaicio-rastai/uzrasai?start=2>, accessed 05-11-2023



tive, but in East Lithuanian the original nominative is retained as an archaism. In view of this, it is likely that the nominative object was carried over from the infinitival construction to the constructions with converbs, where the occurrence of a nominative object has no independent diachronic motivation, as in converbial constructions the converb (developed from a participle) always had the ability to govern an accusative object. The following examples show the equivalence of the two constructions, which presumably created the conditions in which the nominative object case was carried over from the infinitival to the converbial construction:

(29) *Dirva* 02-05-1962<sup>9</sup>

*Kas čia padaryti, kad Smetona į Ameriką neatvažiuotų?*  
 what.NOM PTC do.INF that S.NOM to America.ACC NEG.come.IRR.3  
 ‘What is to be done to prevent Smetona from coming to America?’

(30) Tumas-Vaižgantas, *Dėdės ir dėdienės* (Vaižgantas 1984, 81)

[*Dovydienė, pridėdama delną prie kaktos, tyrė, ar nekarščiuoja,*  
*ir neišmanė, kas čia padarius.*  
 and NEG.figure\_out.PST.3 what.NOM PTC do.CVB  
 ‘[Dovydienė put her hand to his forehead to see whether he had fever] and couldn’t figure out what to do.’

If we assume that the anteriority converb was introduced into constructions that until then had contained an infinitive, we can conclude that in the appropriate contexts the converb inherited the syntactic features of the infinitive which it replaced.

While the morphosyntactic interaction attests to a parallelism and competition between the infinitival and converbial constructions, in one instance there is an interesting functional differentiation between the infinitival and the converbial construction, viz. in the case of deontic questions. The constructions in (31) and (32) are partly interchangeable, but not always.

(31) *Šiaulių kraštas* 28-04-2006<sup>10</sup>

„*Kuo jus pavaišinti? Jonai – atnešk*  
 what.INS 2PL.ACC regale.INF J.VOC bring.IMP.2SG  
*kriaušių kompoto,*“ – *susizgrimba senutė.*  
 pear.GEN.PL compote.GEN collect.oneself.PRS.3 old.woman.NOM  
 ‘What could I offer you? John, bring some pear compote,’ the old woman collects herself.’

<sup>9</sup> found on <http://www.spauda.org/dirva/archive/n1962/1962-05-02-DIRVA.pdf>, retrieved 05-11-2023

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.krastas.lt/?data=2006-04-28&rub=1146168963&id=1146169493>, accessed 05-11-2023

(32) Aleksandra Dantaitė 2014, Lithuanian translation of Kenneth Grahame, *The Wind in the Willows*

*Palaukit, kuo čia jus pavaišinus?*  
wait.IMP.2PL what.INS PTC 2PL.ACC regale.CVB

[*Eime vidun, užkąsime ko nors.*]

‘Wait a moment, what could I offer you? [Let’s go inside and have something to eat.]’

The difference is that the construction with the infinitive illustrated in (31) may actually expect an answer (in the form of a directive speech act), whereas the converbial construction expresses inner deliberation. The addressee may be invited to take part in a common deliberation but is not actually asked to provide a directive which the speaker will then execute. Both questions are deontic in Palmer’s terminology, but we could call (31) a deontic inquisitive question in the sense that an answer (a direction) is expected, whereas (32) would be deontic-deliberative, as it does not expect an answer.<sup>11</sup> The relationship between the two constructions is, however, asymmetrical: while the construction with the converb can only be deontic-deliberative, that with the infinitive can be both deontic inquisitive and deontic deliberative. As can be seen from example (32), the deontic deliberative construction is additionally marked by the particle *čia*, which seems to be obligatory. The original meaning of this particle was ‘here’, but in this case it is simply a discourse marker. The presence of *čia* enables the identification of the question as deliberative even if the infinitive is used (in (31) it is missing as this construction is deontic-inquisitive). The deontic question constructions with infinitive and anteriority converb are therefore distinct though related (and partly overlapping) constructions rather than one construction with interchangeable use of the two forms.

The relevance of the distinction between an inquisitive and a deliberative subtype in the deontic domain is confirmed by a parallel distinction in what we could call epistemic questions:

(33) *Who’s knocking at the door?* (inquisitive)

(34) *Who could be knocking at the door?* (deliberative)

The formal marking of the two types of questions in the epistemic domain shows that we are indeed dealing with two distinct constructions, which strengthens the case for two distinct constructions in the deontic domain as well.

<sup>11</sup> This is more or less in line with the use of the term ‘deliberative’ proposed in Wheatley (1955), who, however, does not set apart ‘deontic questions’ as a distinct type. The use of ‘deliberative’ with specific reference to deontic questions (as ‘deliberative subjunctive’) seems to be common in grammars of the Classical languages, cf. Weir-Smith (1920, 405).

As mentioned above, deontic questions are the only construction type in which a functional difference between the infinitive and the converb can be stated. It is highly unlikely there could be a highly general meaning difference associated with the use of the infinitive vs the converb that could be generalized across the constructions dealt with here; at any rate, any hypothesis concerning this would be hard or even impossible to operationalize. But in the case of deontic questions a functional differentiation is clearly present. By what it was driven we have no means of establishing with certainty, but a plausible explanation could involve the notion of persistence effect as defined by Hopper (1991). The principle of persistence consists in that traces of an earlier lexical meaning can be detected in the distribution of a more grammaticalized construction. An evaluative construction can be viewed as deliberative in contrast to a deontic necessity construction as it evaluates a virtual event on its inherent merits without stating its necessity in the concrete situation on hand. At the stage of deliberation a sentence like (32) can be formulated as ‘What would be a good thing to offer you?’, so that there is still a strong evaluative element in spite of the absence of an evaluative lexical predicate. On the other hand, in the deontic inquisitive type illustrated in (31) we are dealing with a question aiming at eliciting a deontic (directive) utterance. It is no longer the speaker who carries out the evaluation here, so that we are no longer in the domain of evaluation. The deliberative character of deontic questions with the converb in *-us* could therefore hark back to the evaluative constructions in which this converb acquired its purposive function, and in this sense it would be a persistence effect in Hopper’s terms.

## 6 Concluding remarks

The hypothesis proposed above to account for a number of usage types of Lithuanian anteriority converbs provides a plausible scenario of diachronic development based on internal reconstruction. When a historical corpus becomes available for Lithuanian, it will perhaps be possible to provide empirical verification for the claims made here, and to establish an approximate chronology. Let us recapitulate the development and, correspondingly, the historical layers coexisting in the functional domain of what is traditionally called the Lithuanian anteriority converb:

- (a) anteriority marker with temporal or conditional overtones;
- (b) conditional marker used as a nonfactive strategy for the complementation of evaluative predicates (the anteriority feature is lost);
- (c) as a result of the shift ‘evaluative > deontic’, which is known from the literature, the evaluative construction acquires a meaning of desirability or weak necessity; this process involves insubordination;
- (d) as soon as the deontic-desiderative use of the converb in monoclausal structures is established, the way is open for extension to deontic questions;
- (e) in a final stage, consisting in resubordination, purposive *-us* extends to adverbial rationale clauses.

The historical process outlined here is complex and involves both a semantic shift (initially probably a pragmatic shift in that the deontic-desiderative meaning must have started as an implicature) and syntactic changes (insubordination and resubordination). The axial point of the whole development, at which the function of the form in *-us* undergoes a radical change, is the shift from evaluative to deontic-desiderative function. Insubordination and resubordination are also important processes, but they are a consequence of the shift from evaluative to deontic meaning, which can therefore be described as the linchpin holding together all the processes discussed in the article. The interest of the extension of the originally conditional complementation strategy for evaluative predicates to unambiguously deontic-desiderative contexts consists in the clear-cut character of the transition involved. It is natural for speakers to use a construction like ‘It would be a good thing if *x* happened’ in order to convey that they want *x* to happen, but at what moment do we know that the desiderative meaning ‘I want’ is the conventionalized linguistic meaning of an expression like ‘it is (would be) a good thing?’ It would almost take a diachronic rupture such as the loss of the original lexical meaning of the evaluative expression to make the transition an objectively observable fact. Against this background the Lithuanian facts depicted above are significant as they attest to a formal interaction between evaluative and deontic constructions. The substitution, in a sentence like (9), of a desiderative-deontic marker for an originally evaluative predicate, with retention of a complementation strategy that betrays its origin in an evaluative construction, suggests that the originally evaluative construction must have been, at one point, susceptible of a purely desiderative or deontic interpretation, even though the original evaluative meaning might still have been available at the relevant stage. The process of lexical extension that must have occurred in order for the converbial construction to spread to the deontic domain cut off the connection with the evaluative domain: the context in which the converb in *-us* occurs is now exclusively deontic. As to the complementation strategy, it is conceivable that it still preserves traces of its original association with evaluative predicates if the deliberative reading of deontic questions with the converb is indeed a persistence effect, as suggested in Section 5. For the reasons expounded here the Lithuanian data seem to provide important evidence for the evaluation to (necessitative or desiderative) modality pathway.

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## Abbreviations

ACC – accusative, ACT – active, ADV – adverb, COMP – complementizer, COP – copula, CVB – converb, DAT – dative, F – feminine, FUT – future, GEN – genitive, ILL – illative,

IMP – imperative, INF – infinitive, INS – instrumental, INTERJ – interjection, IRR – irrealis, LOC – locative, M – masculine, N – neuter, NEG – negative, NMLZ – nominalization, NOM – nominative, PASS – passive, PL – plural, PRS – present, PST – past, PTC – particle, PTCP – participle, Q – question marker, RPOSS – reflexive possessive, SG – singular, VOC – vocative

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