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Björn Wiemer

DIRECTIVE-OPTATIVE MARKERS IN SLAVIC: OBSERVATIONS ON THEIR PERSISTANCE AND CHANGE

Abstract

*The article examines the usage range and the provenance of 'particles' that, in Slavic languages, are employed as markers of directive-optative speech acts. The investigation concentrates on typical representatives derived from LET-verbs (*nehati, pustiti*) and on Cz.* ať. *These units serve not only as illocutionary markers, but have found their way into domains of clause combining, such as concessive or complement clauses. As a pilot study, this article presents pieces of a global picture that should bring together issues concerning the diachronic development of these units in terms of syntactic variability and semantic expansion, and how both correlate. Jointly, the article raises general methodological issues relevant for clause combining and the representation of meaning variation on a synchronic and a diachronic level.*

Keywords

Slavic syntax; diachronic syntax; directive-optative markers; clause combining

1. Introduction

All Slavic languages employ function words to mark directive or optative illocutionary force. Practically all of them reveal a transparent etymology, and, with one exception, all of them originate in imperatives; most of these are truncated imperative forms of verbs meaning 'let, release' that no longer inflect for number. Compare

(1) Russian *pust'* (< *pusti*), *puskaj* (= IMP.SG of *puskat'/puskati*) 'let'

Ukr. / Bel.	*(ne)xaj / (nja)xaj*	
Polish	*niech(aj)*	
Slovak	*nech*	< **nehati* 'let' (< **ne hajati* 'not care')[1]
Upper Sorbian	*njech*	
Bulg./Mac./BCMS	*nek(a)*	
Slovene	*naj*	

Henceforth I will refer to these morphemes as *LET*-units.

As we see, among the contemporary languages two varieties are "odd ones out", although for different reasons. One of them is standard Russian. It is the only Slavic language in which the said directive marker does not derive from the etymon **nehati*; in the other languages these units are cognates. The other odd one out is modern Czech: *nech(ť)* has become obsolete in the relevant function;[2] probably by the 19th century, it was ousted by *ať* (Bauer 1960, 170), which in our assembly of directive 'particles' is the only item that does not derive from a verb. Instead, *ať* is a merger of a coordinative connective (*a*) with an emphatic enclitic (*ti*) (see §3.1.1).

Regardless of their etymology, the aforementioned units arose in the context of directive ('jussive, hortative') or optative speech acts, and they are still employed this way; as a cover term I will refer to them as *DIR*-units (= *LET*-units + *ať*). They all belong to a loose class of connectives, which have been described either as auxiliaries of analytical moods or as 'particles' able to serve as clause combining devices, in particular as adverbial subordinators (conjunctions) or even as complementizers. I deliberately avoid any commitment as for the morphosyntactic status of such units and will use 'connectives' as a neutral cover term. The assembly of units provided above is by no means exhaustive: certainly, in the history of Slavic languages, many more units (based on other etyma) have been employed that fit the considerations to be communicated below. However, the abovementioned units are prominent representatives of a class of function words which have raised discussions concerning mood marking and clause combining. Here, I do not intend to give any survey over the general problems connected to assuming analytical moods or complementation,[3] nor do I want to discuss to which extent, and under which conditions, the phenomena I am going to point out might be subsumed under grammaticalization. This notion has been excessively applied to a broad array of complex

1 Several researchers consider negated **hajati* 'care' as ultimate source expression. If they are right, this probably relates to an earlier layer and would, thus, not contradict the origin from **nehati* (cf. Wiemer 2021, 84, with references; also Szczepanek 2014, 50).

2 Instead, the verb *nech(áv)at*, from which this marker originated, is still used as fully inflected verb (with an imperfective aspect partner) in analytical (factitive or permissive) causatives; see ex. (5). This also applies to the Slovak cognate; cf. Toops (1992).

3 For such surveys cf. Wiemer (2021, 2023) and Fortuin – Wiemer (forthcoming).

processes that condition language change. Whatever different researchers understand by grammaticalization, the use of this term remains vague unless one spells out the particular parameters that combine in a coevolution of form and meaning. Thus, instead of leaving the term underspecified (and thus not too telling), I prefer to spell out what (probably) has been happening time and again with a certain class of units that start playing a quite significant role in clause-combining. Whether these processes and steps of changes will then be called grammaticalization, depends not so much on the analysis of the related phenomena, but rather on the results of a meta-discussion embedded in a comprehensive theory of language change (cf. Wiemer 2014). After all, function words are lexical units, in the first place, and in this respect, they result from lexicalization; whether function words enter into grammaticalization, depends on further conditions (cf. Lehmann 2002). Here I will not dwell upon this issue further (see, however, the introduction to §4).

In this article, I want to highlight aspects that are relevant for an analysis of the diachronic development of *DIR*-units, including "reflexes" of this development in their contemporary behavior. This should bring together hitherto disparate threads and point out what seems to have been neglected (see §5). I will focus on Russ. *pust'/puskaj*, Pol. *niech(aj)* and Cz. *ať*, but the background for units in South Slavic shall be considered as well. I will start with a discussion of principled problems in the analysis of clausal connectives that operate on the reality status of utterances (§2) before I will ask for different pathways describing the diachronic changes of the relevant connectives (§3). In order to assess these questions, I will put together facts and observations concerning the relevant units (§4) and end up with preliminary conclusions and an outlook (§5).

For space reasons, examples will be glossed at a minimal extent, but translations will highlight the crucial expressions as in the originals.

2. From illocutionary markers to subordinating connectives?

In standard descriptions, units like those mentioned in §1 are treated as uninflected function words. They are morphemes that operate on the content of entire clauses by manipulating illocutionary force and, thus, reality status. Manipulation of reality status is an inherent property of whatever linguists consider representing (non-indicative) moods (Fortuin – Wiemer forthcoming), but it also characterizes many clause-initial connectives; as for the latter ones, the question arises whether they are indicative of subordination (Wiemer 2023). Since all these linguistic signs serve virtually identical functions, we face recurrent problems.

2.1 Notorious problems with DIR-connectives

One principled problem appears when morphemes that occur as self-standing word units need not be interpreted as part of the verb phrase (or a complex predicate), in particular because they can "move around" between clause-initial position and a position immediately before the verb. Thus, very often, if not predominantly, *DIR*-units occur in clause-initial position, see (2)–(3), and, if no further material appears between them and the finite verb, see (4)–(5), one cannot determine whether their position is clause-initial or immediately before the finite verb, since it is both.

Polish
(2) *Proszę, mości Marszałku Sejmowy,* ***niech*** *już ten projekt będzie przeczytany.*
'Please, Speaker of the Sejm, **let** this draft be read.'
(PNC; Wychowawca, 2004)

Czech
(3) *Pojď blíž,* ***ať*** *se na tebe můžu pořádně kouknout.*
'Come closer, **so (that)** I can take a look of you.' (or '...for me to have a look...')
(CzNC; C.D. Payne: Mládí v hajzlu 4. 2000)

Polish
(4) *Powiedz dyżurnemu,* ***niech*** *weźmie straż i rozpędzi tę hołotę, a* ***niech*** *nie żałuje kijów – rozkazał wyniośle.*
'Tell the duty officer, **may** he take the guard and disperse this riffraff, and **may** he not spare the sticks – he commanded haughtily.'
(PNC; Wł. Reymont: Rok 1794. 1918)

Czech
(5) *Nechal sem ji,* ***ať*** *vybere a objedná nám oběma.*
'I let her choose (so that) she **may** order for both of us.' (lit. 'I let her, **may** she order...')
(CzNC; C.D. Payne: Mládí v hajzlu 4. 2000)

A more convincing case against clausal connectives can be made only if such units occur non-initially, see (6)–(8), all the more if the clause is introduced by an established (standard) complementizer, see (9)–(10):

Polish
(6) *Ja tam wierzę swoim metodom, a komputerami* ***niech*** *<u>się zajmują</u> geniusze.*
'I believe in my methods; as for computers, **may** geniuses <u>deal with</u> them.'
(PNC; A. Barczyński: Ślepy los. 1999)

Russian

(7) *(…) lučše nalogi potratit' na obrazovanie, medicinu, kul'turu, a ličnye uvlečenija* ***pust'*** *graždane* *oplačivajut* *iz svoego karmana.*
'(…) it is better to spend taxes on education, medicine, culture; as for personal hobbies, **may** citizens pay (for them) out of their own pocket.'
(RNC; Forum, 2008)

Slovene

(8) *Tu notri stoji zapisano: Vsak* ***naj*** *vzame svoj križ na rame.*
'Here it is written: **Let** each one take his cross on his shoulder.' ('…Everybody may take…')
(Gigafida. 1991)

Polish

(9) *Tusk powiedział,* ***że*** *politycy najlepiej* ***niech*** *wrócą do stołu rozmów po wyborach.*
'Tusk said **that** it is best for politicians (that) they **may** return to the negotiating table after the elections.'
(PNC; Usenet – pl.soc.polityka. 2005)

Russian

(10) *Armen (…) teper' xodil v osnovnom po prefekturam, polagaja,* ***čto*** *ežednevnoj rabotoj* ***pust'*** *zanimajutsja drugie.*
'Armen (…) now walked mainly around the prefectures, believing **tha**t others **should/may** do the day-to-day work.'
(RNC; A. Gračev: Jaryj protiv videopiratov. 1999)

We also encounter combinations in which an apparent complementizer and a *LET*-unit appear adjacent to each other; compare (11)–(13).

Polish

(11) a. *Stary odpowiedział,* ***że niech*** *nawet w więzieniu zgnije.*
'The old man replied **that may** he even rot in prison.'
(PNC)

b. *Gdy złożyłam papiery do szkoły artystycznej, mama powiedziała jedynie,* ***że niech*** *się dzieje wola nieba i najlepiej poczekać na rezultaty.*
'When I submitted my papers to the art school, my mother only said **that may** heaven's will be done and it would be best to wait for the results.'
(PNC; Gazeta Poznańska, 2005)

Russian

(12) a. *On govoril ej, čtoby ne vydumyvala,* ***čto pust'*** *pol'zuetsja vsem, čem nado.*
'He told her not to invent, that she should use everything needed.' (lit. '… **that may** she use…')
(RNC)

b. *Babuška, dumaja,* ***čto pust'*** *lučše lobotrjasy prixodjat k nim, čem Koka uxodit, každyj raz servirovala im stol s nenužnoj roskoš'ju.*
'Grandmother, thinking **that** it would be better for loafers to come to them than for Koka to leave, each time she served them a table with unnecessary luxury.'
(lit. '… thinking **that may** loafers come to them…') (RNC; M. Gigolašvili: Čertovo koleso. 2007)

Slovene

(13) a. *Rekel mi je,* ***da naj*** *vas pričakam.*
'He told me to pick you up.' (lit. '…**that may** I…')
(http://opus.nlpl.eu)

b. *V enem dopolnilu denimo predlagajo,* ***da naj*** *reden dodiplomski študij ostane brezplačen.*
In one supplement, for example, they propose that full-time undergraduate studies should remain free.' (lit. '…**that may**… remain free.')
(Gigafida. 2001)

Admittedly, auxiliaries of presumed 'analytical moods' are not required to occur adjacent to "their" lexical verbs. Acknowledged auxiliaries of Slavic languages, provided they are not clitics, are usually not restricted by any word order rules and can even occur after the lexical verb (compare the future marker *bud-/będ-* and modal auxiliaries in North Slavic). *LET*-units practically do not occur after the finite verb,[4] but this restriction can be explained by their presumable provenance from juxtaposition in asyndetic junctures (see §4.2); otherwise they move freely.

Another basic question is whether *DIR*-units may be treated as subordinators, in particular as complementizers. Complementizers are "conjunctions that have the function of identifying clauses as complements" (Kehayov – Boye 2016, 1), i.e., they are flags marking clauses as arguments of higher-order predicates. At least in European languages, these flags occur at the left edge of the clause. However, saying that a clause B serves as an argument of a verb or noun in another (mostly adjacent) clause A, only begs the question, since it opens up the usual bunch of problems in telling apart arguments from adjuncts (cf. Schmidtke-Bode 2014, 22–26; Letučij 2021; Wiemer 2023, §3). All units discussed here serve in clause combining, but in

4 I know of but one exception, from 16th century Polish: *Dokonam niech tego lata* 'May I accomplish it this summer' (RejKup F), adduced in SłPolXVI (1987, 157). An exceptional case for contemporary Sln. *naj* is provided by Sonnenhauser (2021, 447, ex. (10a)).

practice it is notoriously difficult to determine whether, in particular stretches of discourse, the relevant units are signs of structural embedding[5] or simply make salient a semantic relation to the preceding context (i.e., discourse coherence). One side of this problem is that subordination (embedding) can be arranged on a gradient: its diagnostics is based on shifts of egocentricals (expressions or oppositions),[6] and these need not (and often do not) occur simultaneously. Thus, symptoms of subordination are:

a) loss of an independent illocution;
b) shift of person-deictic expressions (pronouns, possessives);
c) shift of expressions of local and temporal deixis ('here – there', 'now');
d) shift of temporal deixis marked by verbal morphology (e.g., relative tenses) or expressions like 'before, earlier' (vs 'ago'), 'at this/that time', 'then';
e) lack of exclamatives (e.g., 'wow', but also 'look!, listen!').

Probably, these expression classes (or categorial distinctions) form an implicative hierarchy. I will not discuss this issue here and restrict myself to (a) and (b). After all, regardless of how a hierarchy of egocentricals may look like, what determines the baseline beyond which a clause A counts as embedded in clause B? Can we establish it in a non-arbitrary way? Apart from theoretical considerations, the distinction between structural embedding and mere discourse coherence becomes troublesome, for instance, when a *DIR*-connective occurs in coordination after an established complementizer (or before it, see (20)); compare (14)–(17).

Polish

(14) *Małpa była tresowana, umiała rzucać lotkami. I oni wpadli na pomysł, żeby wypisać na tarczy nazwy wielu spółek i* ***niech*** *małpa rzuca dziesięć razy.*
'The monkey was trained and could throw darts. And they came up with the idea to write the names of many companies on the dial and **let** the monkey throw ten times.' (lit. '...came up with the idea that... and **may** the monkey throw ten time.')
(PNC; Zb. Górniak: Siostra i byk. 2009)

Polish

(15) *Helciu, idźcie razem, jesteś starsza, pilnuj, żeby się nic spóźnił i* ***niech*** *nie lata z chłopakami.*
'Helcia, go together, you're older, make sure (that) he's not late and don't **let** her fly with the boys.' (lit. '...make sure that he's not late and **may** she not fly...')
(PNC; I. Jurgielewiczowa: Ten obcy. 1990)

5 For a definition, cf. Lehmann (1988, §1), particularly for clausal complements cf. Schmidtke-Bode (2014, 7).
6 For a detailed discussion of egocentricals, cf. Padučeva (2019).

Czech
(16) *„Mám obavy, že nevím, koho myslíte", řekne tónem, kterým mi naznačuje, že ji obtěžuju a **ať** jí dám pokoj."*
'"I'm worried I don't know who you mean", she says in a tone that suggests that I'm bothering her and **may** I let her rest.'
(CzNC; B.E. Ellis: Americké psycho. 1995)

Slovene
(17) *Pa mi reče, da se, res neumen in **naj** si izberem pomočnikov.*
'And s/he told me that I am really stupid and (that) I should select me assistants.'
(lit. '...and **may** I select...')
(Gigafida, Delo 2008; cited from Sonnenhauser 2021, 457)

Moreover, even if we determine clause B as embedded in clause A, a connective (like *DIR*-units) in initial position of clause B need not *eo ipso* be considered a subordinator (let alone a complementizer). Thus, examples like the following ones allow for different interpretations:

Russian
(18) *Ja by skazal: **pust'** Stalin menja snova pošlet v Kazaxstan.*
'I would say: **may** Stalin send me again to Kazakhstan.'
(RNC; Žizn' nacional'nostej. 2000)

Polish
(19) *W końcu, żeby zrobić mu przyjemność, powiedziałem, **niech** przyniesie.*
'In the end, to please him, I said, **may** he bring it.'

Czech
(20) *Munro všechno potvrdil. Řekl mi, **ať** nedělám problémy, že válka je peklo a tak dál.*
'Munro confirmed everything. He told me not to make trouble, that war was a hell and so on.' (lit. '... **may** I not / **that** I don't make trouble...')

Russ. *skazat'*, Pol. *powiedzieć*, and Cz. *říct* 'say, tell' undoubtedly require an expression that spells out the content of speech; conversely, the clauses introduced by Russ. *pust'*, Pol. *niech*, Cz. *ať* fulfil this requirement of these verbs.[7] If this justifies embedding, the *DIR*-connective behaves like a complementizer. However, the connection between both clauses may count as an asyndetic juncture, so that the *DIR*-connective still has the same status as in main clauses, namely to independently mark directive or optative illocution. This, however, would put into question lack of independent illocution as a hallmark of subordination (see criterion (a) above); we might give up, or downgrade, this criterion, but this must not be done in an *ad*

7 We might also say that these verbs have some content of speech as their lexical entailment, and this entailment is complied with by the subsequent clauses.

hoc and circular manner. Yet, a third option would be to argue that the *DIR*-clause codes quoted speech. This would probably take the subordination issue from the agenda, but other problems remain: first, we have to admit that direct speech can occupy the position of a clausal argument entailed by a predicative expression in the preceding clause. How can this be justified in a principled way? Second, as we have seen, such "quotes" can be coordinated (or juxtaposed) with clauses introduced by connectives that count as established complementizers. We either have to question the complementizer status of the latter as well, or to account for coordination (or chaining) of clauses under the same complement-taking predicate (CTP), again, in a non-*adhoc* manner. Third, clauses with initial *DIR*-connectives usually turn out not as real quotes, because person-deictic expressions are shifted to the perspective of the reporting speaker.[8] This can be clearly seen, for instance, in (16) and (20), where the original ("quoted") speech act would go with second person (*ať dáš / nedělá*š) or, more probably,[9] with the imperative (*dej / nedělej*). More such cases will be indicated below.

The same bunch of issues can also be considered, as it were, from a paradigmatic point of view: DIR-connectives and acknowledged complementizers can occur in the same initial "slot" of a clause that follows on a clause with a semantically suitable predicate. Compare these two Czech examples, which almost look like a minimal pair for *aby* and *ať*:

Czech

(21) a. *<u>Požaduje</u>, **aby**ch s ní šel na večeři.*
'S/He <u>demands</u> **that** I go to dinner with her.'
(CzNC; 1995)

b. *Položím na stůl loket a zatnu svaly, pak ji <u>požádám</u>, **ať** vyzkouší můj biceps.*
'I put my elbow on the table and tighten my muscles, then I <u>ask</u> her **that** she test my biceps.'
(CzNC; 1995)

It is such contexts which led the authors of MČ/III (1987, 494) to characterize *ať* as an "optative particle" (*přací částice*) able to acquire the function of a conjunction ("nabývá funkce spojovacího výrazu").

Finally, the same problems for a theoretically consistent account of *DIR*-connectives, but also of presumably established complementizers, aggravate if we look at combinations of these two types of units in immediate adjacency, as, for instance, in (11)–(13). Potential pathways for the rise of such combinations will be discussed in §3. For space reasons, and to not make things even more complicated, I will

8 In narratives this perspective usually shifts to the narrator (who may differ from the speaker, or author). Compare, for instance, (9), (10), (11a)–(11b), (12a)–(12b), (14) and (86a)–(86b).

9 *DIR*-units almost never combine with second person.

refrain from considering combinations of *DIR* + *by/bi* (+ *l*-form), and *DIR* + *da* (e.g., in Bulgarian). Let us now dwell upon the functional network of *DIR*-units (§2.2), before we deal with their diachronic development (§3–4).

2.2 Functional network of DIR-connectives

To my knowledge, there is no systematic account of *DIR*-units in Slavic languages. Up to date, most comprehensive across Slavic is Topolińska (2008b), who points out different adverbial (conditional, purposive, concessive) relations, but gives almost no diachronic background and does not use corpora. Likewise, Szczepanek's (2014) small diachronic study on Pol. *niech* is based on dictionaries. Corpus-based accounts exist only for Slovene and Russian.[10] Apart from the synchronic study on Sln. naj in Holvoet - Konickaja (2011, 11–13), Sonnenhauser (2021) presents the most comprehensive investigation of Sln. *naj*, it includes the diachronic background and concentrates on issues related to the morphosyntactic status of this unit. Apresjan (2006) considers Russ. *pust'* in the context of concessive-adversative relations from a functional, but strictly synchronic perspective. Likewise, Dobrushina (2019) investigates contemporary (1970+) data from the RNC, while Dobrushina (2008) works with corpus data of the 19th–21st centuries. After all, from a functional point of view, Dobrushina (2019) may be regarded as a good point to start with.

As regards contemporary Russ. *pust'/puskaj*, Dobrushina (2008, 2019) established the following usage types (meanings):

(i) indirect causation ("3rd person imperative")
(ii) optative
(iii) permissive
(iv) assumption (hypothesis)
(v) non-curative
(vi) concessive
(vii) complementizer

See illustrations:

indirect causation

Russian

(22) *V častnosti, v otvete rukovoditelej pravooxranitel'nyx organov utveržd aetsja, čto oni ne naxodjat ser'ëznyx pričin dlja rassledovanij. (...) Togda* ***pust'*** *ob"jasnjat, otkuda u Rossii nabralos' 140 mlrd. dollarov vnešnix dolgov?*

10 For a contrastive study of these two languages cf. Uhlik (2018), for more casual comparisons also Uhlik – Žele (2018a, 2018b, 2022, Ch. 6). Kramer (1986, 65–74) presents an overview of Balkan Slavic *neka*.

'In particular, the response of law enforcement officials states that they do not find serious reasons for investigations. (...) Then **let** them explain where Russia got 140 billion dollars of foreign debts from?'
(RNC; Zavtra. 2003)

optative

Russian
(23) *Udači vam.* ***Pust'*** *vsë projdet xorošo!*
'Good luck to you. **May** everything go well!'
(RNC; Naši deti: podrostki. 2004)

permissive

Russian
(24) *Ladno –* ***pust'*** *so vsem ėtim razbiraetsja sledstvie...*
'Okay – **let** the investigation deal with all this...'
(RNC, Kriminal'naja xronika. 2003)

assumption

Russian
(25) ***Pust'*** *skorost' avtomobilja otnositel'no dorogi ravna v. Togda ego skorost' otnositel'no vstrečnoj kolonny ravna v + v = 2 v.*
'**Let** the speed of the car relative to the road be v. Then its speed relative to the oncoming column is equal to v + v =2 v.'
(RNC; Sbornik zadač po fizike. 2003)

non-curative

Russian
(26) *Da čto už tam, ne tol'ko oni – ves' ee otdel i polovina sotrudnikov «Oksidžena» spletničajut o ee romane s podčinennym. Nu i fig s nimi.* ***Pust'*** *spletničajut.* ***Pust'*** *govorjat čto xotjat, ee ėto ne volnuet.*
'Why, it's not just them – her entire department and half of the Oxygen employees gossip about her affair with a subordinate. Well, figs with them. **Let** them gossip. **Let** them say what they want, she doesn't care.'
(RNC; A. Marinina: *Angely na l'du ne vyživajut*, t. 1. 2014; Dobrushina 2019, §2.5)

concessive

Russian
(27) *Počemu že ne pišut sami cenzory, sposobnye zatmit' pisatelej?* ***Pust'*** *ix ne znaet naučnyj mir, zato ix znaet pravitel'stvo.*
'Why don't the censors themselves write, capable of eclipsing the writers? **Maybe [= although]** the scientific world doesn't know them, but the government knows them.'
(RNC; Otečestvennye zapiski. 2003)

On use as a potential complementizer see below.

Usage types (i)–(iii) are closely associated with directive speech acts and non-factitive causation. In indirect causation the speaker asks the addressee to convey a request, or command, to a third person (*May she come!*, *Let him come!*). A permissive shows an identical constellation between speech act participants, but it reacts to a previous request. In turn, an optative (wish) need not relate to an action to be performed, but can relate to an event that cannot be controlled by anyone (*May the sun shine!*). Moreover, optatives are not restricted to an implicit posterior time reference, but can also refer to anterior events; they are then counterfactual (*If only had you come in time!*).[11]

By contrast, assumptions (Russ. *dopuščenija*) are mere intellectual acts by which the speaker introduces some condition from which such and such consequences follow. This is typical of discourse in logics. They contain propositions and are closely associated to conditionals ('provided *p* applies, then *q* applies as well'), but there need not be subordination, as (25) shows. For our concerns, assumptions are rather irrelevant (and in Dobrushina's corpus study they prove marginal, too).

In the non-curative meaning the speaker accepts a situation, a request or an assertion, as a fact, but also expresses indifference ("vyražaet svoe bezrazličie") for this fact. In contrast to the concessive meaning, nothing else follows from this, but, as with the concessive meaning, non-curative use is not restricted to posterior situations; see (28) cited from Dobrushina (2019, §2.5):

Russian
(28) *Ja ležal pod odejalom s otkrytymi glazami v temnote.* ***Pust', pust'*** *<u>iskala</u> menja, <u>bespokoilas'</u>. Da razve ėto glavnoe?*
'I lay under the covers with my eyes open in the dark. **Perhaps, perhaps** she <u>was / had been looking</u> for me, <u>was / had been worrying</u>. Is that really the main thing?'
(RNC; Zvezda. 2001)

11 This is what Kramer (1986) calls 'unfulfillable directives' when discussing Mac. *neka* with past tense forms (see §4.2).

With the concessive meaning, in turn, a speaker acknowledges a fact (*p*), but denies the consequences which the interlocutors (or somebody else) might assume to follow from this. In this sense, the consequent (*q*) is unexpected (for people other than the speaker). This usually amounts to the confrontation of two propositions which can be represented as: 'even though *p*, (not) *q*'; this is the converse of an adversative relation ('*p*, but (not) *q*').[12] Instead of 'even though', we may insert 'even if'; this makes clear the inherent relation between concessive and conditional clauses, which essentially differ only in whether the expectation connected to *p* is denied or not.[13]

Finally, Dobrushina also considers complementizer use. Complementizers must be semantically compatible with their complement-taking predicates (CTPs). Apart from that, they differ from concessive (and non-curative) connectives in that the propositional content is not taken for granted. Actually, Dobrushina's own examples only show Russ. *pust'/puskaj* following on the standard complementizer (*čto*), as in examples (11)–(13) above, so they cannot illustrate *pust'/puskaj* as a complementizer on its own. In this respect, examples such as (29)–(31), are better suited:

Russian
(29) *No prežde trebuju,* ***pust'*** *začinščiki predstanut pered zakonom i sudom za vojnu v Čečne i vse soveršënnye imi zlodejanija.*
'But first I demand **that** [lit. *let*] the instigators be brought before the law and the court for the war in Chechnya and all the atrocities they have committed.'
(RNC; Zavtra. 2003)

Russian
(30) *I skažite svoim doverennym –* ***pust'*** *ne boltajut.*
'And tell your trusted ones – (**that**) they **may** not chat.'
(RNC; A. Lazarčuk / M. Uspenskij: Posmotri v glaza čudovišč. 1958)

Russian
(31) *My vse davno znakomy, vse vybrali svoju žizn' sami, i ja xoču poželat' každomu:* ***pust'*** *on v svoem dele budet «profi».*
'We have all known each other for a long time, everyone chose their own life, and I want to wish everyone: **may** each be a "pro" in their field.'
(RNC; E. Kozyreva: Damskaja oxota. 2001)

12 Cf. König (1986) and the overview in Apresjan (2006, 625–634); cf. also Topolińska (2008b, 209f.).

13 Concessive use is the only type in which *pust'/puskaj* can syntactically modify constituents below clause level (e.g., *Ėto skoree političeskij proekt,* ***pust'*** *i blestjaščij* 'This rather is a political project, **albeit** a brilliant one'). Note, however, that even then it semantically scopes over a proposition ('it is a brilliant project').

Here, the clause introduced by *pust'* follows immediately on a clause with a semantically compatible expression (underlined) entailing a directive (or optative) illocution, i.e., this expression requires an argument which "spells out" this speech act. Such instances are rare, at least in Russian, and when they occur one may argue that the *pust'*-clause is part of direct speech (see §4.2.1).

The meanings, or usage types, discussed here for Russ. *pust'/puskaj* should be understood as focal points in a conceptual space based on different discourse constellations (including illocutions and assumptions about knowledge). The boundaries between these focal meanings are fuzzy, so that often *DIR*-units in real discourse cannot be clearly assigned to one of these meanings, but, as it were, oscillate between them. Corresponding bridging contexts add to the network of usage types of Russ. *pust'/puskaj*, which builds on family resemblance. What is not clear, however, is the structure of this network itself and, correspondingly, how it relates to diachronic development. Is it shaped as a top-down branching structure of a strict taxonomy or rather as a looser agglomerate of usage types (= nodes) in which the nodes (or not all nodes) are not ordered hierarchically?

Table 1 can be read as a checklist of the properties (horizontal axis) of the particular usage types (vertical axis) distinguished by Dobrushina for Russ. *pust'/puskaj*.[14] As we can see, the properties do not form consistent "clines" across usage types; at least I have been unable to arrange them in any such ordering. For instance, while non-curative use is the most likely bridging member in the chain between permissive and concessive use (see above), the 'assumption' use unites with concessive and complementizer use (but not necessarily with non-curative use) in that all three operate on propositions; however, the 'assumption' use is marginal (see above), and one wonders whether, after closer scrutiny, it turns out as an "appendix" to the concessive use under specific discourse conditions. A taxonomic structure therefore does not seem an adequate presentation of the meaning structure of this unit, and how it has developed diachronically. Regardless, its properties can be further employed to compose a semantic map of its usage types – which is another task to be left for future research.

14 Actually, *puskaj*, which is considerably less frequent, might have a less developed network than *pust'*. This needs to be checked.

Table 1: Usage types of directive-optative markers

	related to action / proposition	**reactive**	**at least one particpant has control over situation**	**situation posterior to speech act**	**situation (action or proposition) taken for granted**	**clause combining**
ind. caus.	action	no	yes	yes	no	no
optative	action / (proposition)*	no	(yes) / no	yes / no **	no	no
permissive	action	yes	yes	yes	no	no
assumption	proposition	no	irrelevant	irrelevant	irrelevant	no
non-cur.	action / proposition	yes	yes	yes / no	yes	no
concessive	proposition / action (?)	yes	irrelevant	yes / no	yes	yes
COMP	proposition	no	irrelevant	irrelevant	no	yes

Remarks:
( ) alternative depending on specific conditions
* if counterfactual (*If only did he come!*)
** follows from action (> posterior) vs proposition (> non-posterior)

The properties illustrated for Russ. *pust'/puskaj* apply to all *DIR*-connectives discussed in this article. Pointing out bridging contexts and building semantic maps for them would help clarify whether all of them have developed in the same sequence of "steps". However, these properties (or a semantic map based on them) do not, and cannot, clarify, let alone explain, the (morpho)syntactic status of such units. That is, issues concerning subordination (in particular, complementation) or whether any of these units should count as marker of 'analytic mood', are to be decided on a different level (see §2.1). Moreover, some DIR-connectives may occur as isolated one-word utterances (with optative, permissive or non-curative function); this usage seems to be particularly prominent for Russ. *pust'* and Sln. *naj*, while for Pol. *niech* this is unusual, and for Cz. *ať* it seems excluded.

3. Potential pathways

Contemporary data reveals a very similar range of functions, both in semantic and syntactic terms, of *DIR*-connectives across Slavic. One wonders whether they all have gone through the same order of changes. Before we examine diachronic data, we should draw attention to the cooccurrence of a complementizer-like (COMP)

and a directive-optative (DIR) element in the same clause, which, albeit not very frequent, is attested in all languages considered here. In particular, COMP and DIR in direct adjacency (henceforth: COMP-DIR combinations) raise a couple of problems mentioned already in §2.1. Different interpretations are possible, and when it comes to whether DIR might have been developing as a new complementizer, there are in principle two alternative explanations. Either combinations with an earlier, already established COMP serve as a door-opener for DIR to acquire the function of the former; the earlier complementizer disappears, but COMP and DIR enter into a paradigmatic relation (concerning the clause-initial "complementizer slot"). Such a process would amount to an ellipsis (or drop out) of the earlier complementizer. Or co-occurrence of DIR after COMP has not been involved; instead, DIR acquires the complementizer status from contexts in which it frequently occurs clause-initially and immediately after a predicative unit (verb, noun, or else) that semantically suits the directive-optative semantics of DIR. In this case we would be dealing simply with reanalysis.[15]

There remains a third possibility of how COMP-DIR combinations may be interpreted: neither COMP nor DIR are complementizers; instead, COMP is just a device that marks the connection of two adjacent clauses (a general 'clause linker'), and DIR simply continues to appear, in whatever semantic function, in a syntactically independent clause. In this constellation, COMP functions like a quotative marker and DIR simply marks directive or optative illocutions.

Table 2 subsumes these three alternatives:

Table 2: Possible changes occurring to DIR

$_{cl1}$[potential CTP] – $_{cl2}$[COMP$_{old}$ + DIR] >	$_{cl1}$[CTP] – $_{cl2}$[~~COMP$_{old}$~~ DIR (= COMP$_{new}$)]	ellipsis
$_{cl1}$[potential CTP] + $_{cl2}$[DIR] >	$_{cl1}$[CTP] – $_{cl2}$[DIR (= COMP$_{new}$)]	reanalysis
($_{cl1}$[CTP] –) $_{cl2}$[QUOT + DIR] >	($_{cl1}$[CTP] –) $_{cl2}$[QUOT + DIR]	no change

In fact, in many cases, COMP-DIR combinations can be interpreted as direct speech (quotes) attached loosely to a preceding clause. A similar interpretation applies if we assume that DIR simply functions as directive-optative marker and that the DIR-clause is subordinated to the preceding clause asyndetically (see §2.1). Theoretically, COMP-DIR combinations might also be considered double complementizers. However, this consideration does not elucidate anything, it rather runs the danger of becoming entangled in circularity (cf. Wiemer 2021, 132–134; 2023, §4 for discussion).

15 Reanalysis from DIR to COMP can be shown to have taken place with *da* in Old Serbian (cf. Wiemer 2023, §3.4; following Grković-Major 2004).

On first sight, from the three aforementioned alternatives the last one (loose attachment) could be most plausible in the case of, e.g., Polish, since *że* is also used as a quotative marker (*że*$_{\text{QUOT}}$); *że*$_{\text{QUOT}}$ can be distinguished in contemporary Polish from the complementizer *że* (*że*$_{\text{COMP}}$), but diachronically they arose from the same general clause connective *że* (Guz 2019, Ch. 4). Incidentally, considering Pol. *że* an undifferentiated clause linker would be tantamount to Topolińska's (2008a) treatment of *że* as an "all powerful introducer of new clauses".

By contrast, a similar scenario seems highly implausible for Russ. *čto*. At least since Middle Russian times (15th–17th c.), *čto* is attested not only as a *wh*-word in embedded questions or as a relativizer (e.g., of headless relative clauses), but also in the complementizer function (Meyer 2017, 105; Eckhoff 2021, 409–412). However, to my knowledge, it has not been attested in the context of quotation.

As for Sln. *da*, its diachronic pathway is particularly complex and hardly accessible in all necessary details. Through its "career" in the history of South Slavic, *da* has been employed not only in practically all usage types considered here for DIR units, but in an even broader range of syntactic and semantic functions.[16] It is attested with imperatives not only in Old Church Slavonic (Wiemer 2018, 296f.; see ex. (32)–(33)), but also in Slovene at least since the 19th century (Dvořák 2005; Sonnenhauser 2021, 470); see (34).

Old Church Slavonic

(32) *°g-i, da* ***ispravi*** *ny i* ***očisti***
Lord-voc irr fix-imp.sg 1pl.acc and clean-imp.sg
'Lord, **improve** and **clean** us'

(33) *pros-imъ tję °g-i. da* ***da-zъ*** *namъ prisno naslědova-ti*
ask-prs.1pl2sg.acc Lord-voc irr give-imp.sg1pl.dat always follow-inf
'we ask you, Lord, that (...) **give** [= let] us always follow (you)'
(Večerka 1993, 80f.)

Slovene

(34) *Rek-l-i so ti,* ***da*** *prines-**i** piv-o.*
say-pst-pl aux.prs.3pl 2sg.dat con bring-**imp**.sg beer-acc
'They told you that you bring the beer.' (lit. '...**that** bring the beer!')

This makes drawing the boundary between quoted (direct) and reported (indirect) speech a very difficult task, even though in contemporary Slovene *da* + imperative hardly occurs outside of complements of verbs of speech (Uhlik – Žele 2018b, 215). On the other hand, in Slovene (and Slovak) the imperative can occur also in other clause types considered as embedded, e.g., in embedded interrogative and in (restrictive) relative clauses (Dvořák 2005, Meyer 2010, 364). So, the phenomenon is

16 For a comprehensive account, cf. Wiemer (2018, 295–306; 2021, 58–84).

broader and forces us to (re)consider the role of independent illocutions as a hallmark criterion in the discussion on subordination. Moreover, it needs to be clarified whether between the oldest attested stages of South Slavic, i.e., Old Church Slavonic, and modern South Slavic languages the usage of *da* with the imperative reflects any continuity, or whether this is a polygenetic phenomenon. This holds the more as *da* in the western part of South Slavic has expanded into the realis domain and, therefore, can be more directly compared to Pol. *że* and its cognates in the other West Slavic languages.

As concerns the combination *da naj*, Topolińska (2008b, 215) claims it to be "sekundarno derivirana". She does not give a reason, but a motivation might be that *naj* entered the scene much later than *da* (which was inherited from Common Slavic). However, in view of the multifaceted pathways of *da*, a more crucial question to be asked is which functions *da* fulfilled at the moment when it "came into contact" with *naj* (see §4.2.2.3).

4. Facts and observations

When assessing the development of clause connectives, we need to keep apart two processes. On the one hand, we need to understand how such connectives arose as lexical units, e.g., by univerbation. On the other hand, once arisen, these units start participating in different kinds of clause combining. That is, as lexical units they occupy slots in clause frames that should be viewed on the background of their contribution to discourse coherence, and in some cases looser connections to the immediate discourse turn into tighter syntactic connections ending up in embedding, i.e., subordination. The big question is how to diagnose this type of tightening (see §2.1). Another problem is to establish whether, and to which extent, functional/semantic changes correlate with degrees of tightening.[17]

What follows is a selective survey of *DIR*-connectives. After information concerning the rise of these function words as lexical units, I will dwell upon their functional development. On this backdrop we can ask whether changes in the syntactic status of these units have occurred (see §5).

4.1 Cz./Slk. ať

Ať is a merger of the coordinative connective *a* and the emphatic enclitic *ti* (not to be confused with the 2sg-dative enclitic); cf. Bauer (1960, 170–173, 298f.), Lamprecht et al. (1986, 347, 393). Sławski (1974, 163) claims that originally *ať* (or *ati*) served as kind of "attention catcher" ('a oto, i oto' ≈ 'look!'). The emphatic enclitic *ti* occurred in other parts of early Slavic as well, for instance in the Old

17 A joint investigation of both questions would contribute to the issue to which extent *DIR*-units undergo, or take part in, grammaticalization (see §1).

Novgorod birchbark letters. For these, Zaliznjak (2008, 32) ascribes *ti* primarily the function of a "booster of affirmation" (Russ. *usilitel' indikativnosti*), e.g., *ucelelъ* ***ti*** *esmь otъ požęru* ≈ 'I did survive from the fire' (transliteration simplified). Whether emphatic affirmation of assertion was the original meaning all over the Slavic dialect continuum is difficult to judge. In later sources of the Bohemian-Moravian territory we encounter *ať* in other than assertive environments, namely in optative clauses (35a), purpose clauses (35b) and in clauses with indefinites conveying a permissive or non-curative meaning that can be employed as concession (35c). The following examples are from older Slovak:[18]

(35) a. *žádagme,* ***ať*** *nám dá*
'let us demand **may** he give us'
(HSSJa; ASL 1532)
b. *wzdegtež prozby za nás,* ***at*** *sme zachowaňý k spaseňý*
'raise requests for us, **may** we be saved for salvation'
(HSSJa; CC 1655)
c. ***ať*** *což činýme, wždy tě chwálíme*
'**may** we do anything [i.e. whatever we do], we always praise you'
(HSSJa; CC 1655)

Optative and purpose clauses can be interpreted as clausal complements, if the preceding conjunct contains a potential CTP, like *žádati* (35a) and *prozba* (35b). As for Old Czech, a perusal of the records from the 13th–18th centuries in diakorp v6 (CzNC) shows that, apart from directives and optatives, *ať*-clauses with a purpose meaning are frequent as well. Purpose clauses[19] already presuppose a certain degree of tightening between adjacent conjuncts; simultaneously, it happens to be difficult to determine whether the directive illocution conveyed by the *ať*-clause should not be read as a quote with independent illocutionary force; see (36).

(36) *Dajtež jemu chválu a čiňte pokání,* ***ať*** *se smiluje nad vámi.*
'Praise(pl) him and exercise(pl) repentance'
(i) '**so that** he takes mercy with you(pl) / **in order** for him to take mercy with you(pl).'
(ii) '**may** he take mercy with you(pl).'
(Čtení Nikodémovo. 1577)

18 As a reviewer pointed out, the texts in HSSJa may have been modelled on Czech. However, most likely they were still influenced by local dialects which later contributed to modern Slovak. This is why here I am referring to them as "older Slovak".

19 Purpose, in turn, often cannot be discriminated from the consecutive meaning, see translation (i) of (36).

The probability of such ambiguous readings increases in third-person clauses,[20] for which possible shifts of person deixis remain unvisible.

Diacorp v6 also brings to light quite a lot of records after imperatives; see already (36) and the following examples:

(37) *Učiňte, **ať** porozi.*
'Do (something) for her to give birth.' (lit. 'do (something) **may** she give birth')
(Pasionál muzejní (Muz III D 44) (R). 1350–1400)

(38) *Otče, otpusť křižijícím mě, kaž, **ať** já pro tvú milost otpustím všěm mně zle činícím.*
'Father, forgive those who are crossing me, order, **may** I, with your love, forgive all (people) who do me harm.'
(J. Milíč z Kroměříže: Milíčovský sborník modliteb (UK XVII F 30) (R). 1350–1400)

(39) *Netáhne-li tebe, pros, **ať** tě potáhne.*
'If he doesn't tear you(SG), ask(SG) (him), **may** he tear you(SG).'
(T. Štítný ze Štítného: Řeči besední. Budyšínský rkp. 20 56 (R). 1389–1401)

Contrary to (36), the *ať*-clauses in these examples can be understood as complements of the preceding verbs (underlined). Consequently, if *ať* does not qualify as a complementizer (but simply marks directive or optative illocutions), we are dealing with asyndetic complementation. Moreover, in (37) the CTP does not code a speech act, but causation, and its complement at once marks purpose; this demonstrates that purpose and argument relation may naturally intersect. If the potential CTP marks a speech act, we usually observe shift of person deixis: in (38)–(39) the *ať*-clause is in first or, respectively, second person, it is thus coded from the perspective of the speaker who utters the imperative.[21]

In general, an intersection between (or indiscriminate reading of) volition, direct speech, purpose and complement clause is not at all rare. It can even be predicted given the fact that the illocution of the *ať*-clause is "harmonic" with a predicative expression in the immediately preceding context; wishes, commands and similar speech acts, e.g., conjuring as in (42), are usually issued with the intention to make happen something desirable (or to make stop, or not happen, something undesirable). This, again, does not ultimately clarify whether the *ať*-clause is to be considered embedded. Such features like shift of person deixis in the *ať*-clause (see above) favor its interpretation as an embedded clause, but shift of person deixis usually remains unaccompanied by other symptoms of embedding, or it cannot be "seen" since the original utterance is in third person, anyway.

20 Third-person clauses are probably most frequent, although, in the early sources, *ať* with first singular is by no means rare.
21 For equivalent examples in other Slavic languages cf. Topolińska (2008b, 208f.).

(40) *Neb, milostivý otče, vidíš toho nám potřěbu pilnú,* ***ať*** *bychom sě vždy modlili (...).*
'For, gracious father, you see our urgent need that we always pray.' (lit. '...**may** we always pray')
(J. Milíč z Kroměříže: Milíčovský sborník modliteb (UK XVII F 30) (R). 1350–1400)

(41) *Kaž jemu našim buohóm obět vzdáti,* ***ať*** *sě jeho buoh naň rozhněvá (...).*
'Order him to give our gods his promise, **may** his god get angry at him.'

(42) *Zaklínám tě skrze nerozdílnou svatou trojici,* ***ať*** *se nic nedává z toho statku ani biskupovi, ani kostelu, ale raději rozdej to všecko vdovám, sirotkům a chudým lidem (...).*
'I curse you through the indivisible holy trinity, **may** nothing of this wealth be given to the bishop, nor to the church, but rather give all this to the widows, the orphans and to the poor people.'
(P. Diaconus: Historie pobožná a velmi příkladná. 1768)

Bauer (1960, 168) argues that *ať* has been occurring in complement clauses (*obsahové věty* 'content clauses') since the 14th century, i.e., this can be considered a very stable feature in the history of Czech for this environment. He adds that these complements only represent direct speech (see also Bauer 1960, 299). Furthermore, Bauer claims that the auxiliary function of *ať* in an analytical imperative (*opsaný imperativ*) is secondary in relation to its function in clause combining, as it appears only late, in modern Czech.[22] Simultaneously, he prefers to treat the relation between a clause headed by *ať* and a preceding clause as an asyndetic juncture (*asyndetická souvětí*), that is, he rather does not consider *ať* a subordinating connective (Bauer 1960, 170). The last consideration is particularly intriguing; however, Bauer's argument bears some problems. First of all, the examples which he adduces himself show a shift of person deixis in accordance with the reporting speaker; they are of the same kind as discussed above, and thus do not represent direct speech "pure and simple". See, for instance, (43)–(44).

(43) *jdiž k ňemu a pokoř sě jemu a rci jemu,* [***ať*** *to vyloží, což jest povědel*] [2 > 3]
'go to him, humble yourself before him and tell him, [**may** he deliver what he said/promised]'

(44) *proste jeho,* [***ať*** *mě u pokoji nechá*]. [3 > 1]
'ask him, [**may** he leave me alone]'
(from Bauer 1960, 168)

In fact, from a persual of diacorp v6 it appears that it is shift of person deixis with *ať*-clauses after verbs of speech which is a stable indicator of reported speech, i.e., of embedding, over the entire documented history of Czech.

22 Obviously, this opinion has not been supported in later descriptions. Lamprecht et al. (1986, 347) claim that the analytical imperative (with *ať* or *nechť*) started spreading in the 15th century.

Moreover, Bauer's conviction that *ať* did not function as an "imperative particle" in Old Czech turns out to be based on two things. First, his treatment of examples (Bauer 1960, 170, fn. 13) implies the assumption that, as an auxiliary of an analytic imperative, *ať* is more tightly related to the verb (by being adjacent to it) than it would be as a strictly clause-initial 'particle'. Bauer concedes that *ať* occurred non-initially and adjacent to the finite verb in early texts, see (45a), but he explains this away by analogy with *aby* (+ *l*-form), which was used in other translations of the same Latin originals, see (45b):

(45) a. *obraň* *jazyk-u* *tv-ému* *ot* *zl-ého,*
defend-(IMP.SG) tongue-DAT.SG POSS2-DAT.SG from bad-GEN.SG
a *rt-y* *tv-á* ***ať*** *ne-mluví-ta* *lst-i.*
and mouth-NOM.PL POSS2-NOM.PL DIR NEG-speak-PRS.3DU ruse-GEN
(Žaltář Wittenberský, mid-14th c.)

b. *zabraň* *jazyk* *tvój* *ot* *zl-ého,*
prevent-(IMP.SG) tongue-(ACC.SG) POSS2-ACC.SG from bad-GEN.SG
a *rt-y* *tv-á* ***aby*** *ne-mluvi-l-a* *lst-i.*
and mouth-NOM.PL POSS2-NOM.PL IRR NEG-speak-LF-PL ruse-GEN
'prevent your tongue from evil, and your mouth **may** not speak ruse'
(Žaltář Klementinský, first half of 14th c.)

In (45a), Bauer holds, *ať* occurs non-initially only because a nominal argument (*jazyku tvému*) is coordinated with a clausal argument, which creates a "disproportion". He does not consider the possibility of the subject (*rty tvá* 'your mouth') being anteposed as a contrastive topic, which is a phenomenon frequently observed with comparable directive markers in modern stages of West and East Slavic, see ex. (6)–(7). Remarkably, Bauer does not take issue with the non-initial position of *aby* in (45b). After all, *ať* and *aby* occupy identical "slots" in a sequence of clauses (compare with (21a)–(21b) in §2.1), and either allows for topicalized NPs moved left to it.

Ironically, Bauer's covert assumption that auxiliaries of 'analytical imperatives' tend towards adjacency with "their" lexical verbs (and away from clause-initial position) brings about an empirical problem as well. A perusal of *ať* for the 14th–18th century in diacorp v6 shows that non-initial position of *ať* – such as in (46)–(48) for different periods – was widespread:

(46) *A pak každý* ***ať*** *varuje sě nemoci toho času, totiž hliz.*
'And yet everybody **may** beware of illness of the time, namely tuber.'
(CzNC, diakorp v6; Hvězdářství krále Jana (R). 1440–1460)

(47) *Duch tvůj* ***ať*** *ve všem spravuje, pro Krista nás potahuje do ráje nebeského.*
'Your spirit **may** cope with everything, bring us closer to the heavenly paradise for Christ.'
(CzNC, diakorp v6; J. Liberda: Harfa nová na hoře Sion znějící. 1732)

(48) *K tomu páni muzikanti **ať** zahrají teď ochotně, pak budem tancovat notně.*
'For that the musicians **may** play now willingly, notably we will dance.'
(CzNC, diakorp v6; Desatero připíjení mládenecké. 1738)

By contrast, it is hard to find examples in modern Czech (in InterCorp v15) in which *ať* does not occur clause-initially. Whether this is accidental remains to be investigated.

Moreover, in Old Czech *ať* could even follow on *nech* (for which see §4.2.2.2); compare examples from the late 16th century:

(49) *Všecky byliny, kteréž přisazovati chceš, **nech ať** dobře vzejdou a nesázej jich, když země jest suchá.*
'All herbs which you are going to plant, **may** (they) come up well, but don't plant them when the soil is dry.'
(Knížka o štěpování rozkošných zahrad. 1558)

(50) *Nezapomínejte pána v srdcích vašich času žádného. **Nech ať** synové Aronovi v trouby troubí (...).*
'Don't ever forget the lord in your hearts. **May** Aron's sons honk into their horns (...)'
(Paprocký z Hlahol, Bartoloměj: Kvalt na pohany. 1595)

Subsequently, both truncated *nech ať* and non-truncated *nechaj ať* univerbated into "particles": *nechajť* and *nechať*, the latter further shortened into *nechť* (Bauer 1960, 169). From this, different variants of a directive-optative marker arose (see §4.2.2.2).

I have been unable to find *ať* in the concessive use and spotted only one instance (from the mid-19th century) in a similar function, namely a choice between alternatives:

(51) ***Ať** jest člověk u vyšším neb nižším postavení, chud nebo bohat, vždy dle schopností a sil svých působiti může k rozkvětu a zdaru národa.*
'**May** a man be of high or low rank, poor or rich, with his capabilities and capacities he can always act for the heyday and succes of his people.'
(Diacorp v6; Český študent. 1869)

As for the modern language, it is hard to find concessive usage in intercorp v15 as well.

4.2 LET-units

To my knowledge, nobody has so far come up with an explanation of the constructional frame from which the petrified (and mostly truncated) forms of 'let'-verbs (= *LET*-units) arose. A clear indication of how this construction probably looked like comes from the observation that, throughout Slavic, *LET*-units in directive-optative usage predominantly combine with the present tense. This is not very telling

for North Slavic, where non-past forms of pfv. stems do not distinguish present and future.[23] As for South Slavic, where present and future are morphologically distinct also with pfv. stems, the picture is more complicated. Sln. *naj* hardly combines with the future in the contemporary language: compare *naj vzame* vs **naj bomo vzali* 'let us take' (cf. Uhlik – Žele 2018a, 96). In 18th–19th century Slovene, *naj* with future is exceptional as well; a perusal of an extensive sample of relevant texts (from IMP)[24] brought to light only one instance:

(52) *Modróst* *vam* ***naj*** *bo* *vodi-l-a*.
wisdom[F]-(NOM.SG) 2PL.DAT DIR fut-(3SG) lead[IPFV]-LP-SG.F
'Wisdom **may** be leading you.'
(A.M. Slomšek: Hrana evangeljskih naukov. 1835)

Sonnenhauser (2021, 468) adduces an analogous example; in either case, *naj* + future codes an optative meaning void of propositional content. This contrasts with attested cases in other, contemporary South Slavic languages (see below). Anyway, while the future does not seem to be entirely excluded (at least in older stages), it is extremely marginal and can certainly be explained as an expansion from the present tense. Otherwise, *naj + bo-* occurs only in contexts in which *bo-* is used as a copula or existential-locational verb (see examples in Sonnenhauser 2021).[25]

As for Bulgarian and Macedonian, I am ignorant of attestations of *neka* with future markers (Bulg. *ště*, Mac. *ќе*); cf. Topolińska (2008b). Kramer (1986, 68, 73f.) discusses cases of Mac. *neka* with past tense forms, e.g., with the imperfect, as in (53).

Macedonian
(53) *Ako ne sakala taa neskromna devojka,* ***neka*** *ne se vlečeše noќe so mladite selani vo štabot*.
'If that immodest girl didn't want to, **let** her not have tagged along at night with the young villagers to the headquarters.' (or rather: '...she better had not tagged along...')

Remarkably, past tense forms only occur in counterfactual contexts, i.e., contexts which imply propositional content, since they deny facts (Kramer's 'unfulfillable

23 The combination with 'be' **bǫd-* (> Russ./Cz. *bud-*, Pol. *będ-*, etc.) deserves special attention, since this future form of 'be' behaves differently from the "normal" future (see also fn. 25).

24 Provided by courtesy of Barbara Sonnenhauser.

25 This seems to hold true also for earlier Slovene. In the data from the IMP-sample, we find *naj + bo-* in the passive (e.g., *Judje profsio sa Barabba, inu vpiejo k' Pilatoshu* ***naj*** *bo Chriſtus krishan* 'The people asked for Barabas, and they shouted at Pilat **that** Christ be crossed'; J. Japelj: Pridige za vse nedelje v letu. 1794) and with *bo-* as a copula (e.g., *Voda* ***naj*** *bo ſnashna, zhifta, mehka* 'Water **may** be strong, clean, mild'; V. Vodnik: Kuharske bukve. 1799) or an existential-locational verb (e.g., *Bog po_tem rezhe:"Luzhi* ***naj*** *bodo na nebu (...)."* 'Then God spoke: "The people **may** be in heaven"'; Chr. von Schmid: Zgodbe Svetega pisma za mlade ljudi.1830).

directives'). An analogous point holds true for all other units dealt with in this article: they occur with past tense forms only in clauses with admitted or denied propositional content, first of all in non-curative or concessive usage. Compare the following example from colloquial Serbian:[26]

Serbian
(54) ***Neka*** *je proveo dan pišući, ali nije napisao više od 10 rečenica.*
'**Although (admittedly)** he spent the day writing, (but) he didn't write more than 10 sentences.'
(M. Mirić, p.c.)

Serbian *neka* is also occasionally used with the future, but, again, this implies propositional content, as in concessive clauses; see (56).

(55) ***Neka će*** *padati kiša, ja izlazim večeras / ja ću izaći večeras.*
'**Even though** it **will** rain, I'm going out tonight / I'll go out tonight.'
(M. Mirić, p.c.)

The very restricted use of *LET*-units with the future tense may be interpreted as a late (and areally restricted?) extension. Thus, tentatively, diachronic and contemporary data suggests that *LET*-units started being used with present tense (or non-past) forms, while other tenses only appeared later (if at all). This can be taken as a reasonable starting point for assuming that *LET*-units developed from an asyndetic biclausal construction that looked as follows:

(56) *LET*.IMP.SG + PRESENT INDICATIVE
e.g., Russ. *pusti* (+ object) + *pomožet / pomogut*
'let (it be) + s/he helps / they help',
or: 'let (him/her) + s/he helps (will help) / they (will) help'

Presumably, from an asyndetic biclausal juncture, the construction turned into a complex predicate; concomitantly, the imperative form became a fossilized unit. This process was supported by phonetic erosion and the loss of number distinctions.

4.2.1 Russ. pust' / puskaj

The birchbark letter subcorpus of the RNC contains two fragments with *pusti*, which hardly can be interpreted as regular imperatives of *pustiti* 'let' in a physical sense. The first fragment is from the early 14th century (57), the second one originated 100 years later (58).[27]

26 Topolinjska (1999, 26) adduces analogous examples; however, she does not realize that the concession of a fact (in the past or present) deprives the *neka*-clause of its non-factual (or irrealis) function.
27 This example made it into dictionary entries on *pusti* (*pust'*), e.g., SRJAXI-XVII (1995, 60).

(57) *i vy imъ kъne mъi golubyi daite sъ ljudmi date sъxě ne klade a ne vъzme i vy. vo stadъ pustite pedъ ljudmi* ***pusti*** *na nemъ tężę a ne na mně.*
'And if he does not take it, then you let the horse into the herd in front of the people. **Let** the litigation be on him (Mark), and not on me.'
(Berestjanaja gramota 142, 1300–1320)

(58) *prikazyvaju. ostatoko. svoi. – svojemu. maksimu. zando. jesmъ. pusta.* ***pusti****. jego. t[y](mъ) po mně. pomęn[e](tь).*
'I bequeath my estate to [...] my Maksim because I am childless. **Let** him use [that] to hold commemoration services for me.'
(Berestjanaja gramota 692, 1400–1410)

Although establishing clause boundaries for this kind of documents is a tricky matter, it is possible to say that, in both cases, *pusti* occurs clause-initially inasmuch as it modifies the argument structure of the immediately following, and not of the immediately preceding, context.

Curiously, in (57) *pusti* is preceded by *pustite* used as the regular imperative (plural); this parallel use can be taken as indicating that *pusti*(SG) started that early to separate from the verbal paradigm and that, before phonetic erosion took place, there was a period of layering, i.e., of parallel ("homonymic") usage of *pusti* as the regular imperative and as a fossilizing marker of directive-optative illocution.

The eroded form *pust'* is attested nine times in the *Starorusskij korpus* (RNC), the earliest from the end of the 14th century, see (59). In the earliest attestations, *pust'* does not occupy the initial position of its clause:

(59) *A na tomъ vaši* ***pust'*** *k namъ jedut' čisto.*
'And in case of peace, your people **may** come to us with quiet conscience.'
(Poslanie polockogo namestnika Montigirda... 1394–1396)

In one case, *pust'* occurs coordinated with an imperative:

(60) *Da pirogi platkom pokroj, da* ***pust'*** *pokamest ezdiš[']* *do 3 ž nočej.*
'Yes, cover(SG) the pies with a handkerchief, but for the time being **may** you go until 3 nights.'
(Svadebnyj obereg. 1625–1650)

As for *puskaj*, we find eight instances, but all of them from Avvakum's writings (1672–1675).[28] Some of them represent non-curative meaning, also with a past tense form (61)–(62). In other cases, *puskaj* can be intepreted as part of direct speech with the directive-optative function (63):

28 There are 11 further attestations of *puskaj*, but these represent the ordinary imperative singular.

(61) *sam emu otdalsja: vižu, čto sogrěšilъ,* ***puskaj*** *menja b'etъ.*
'I gave myself up to him: I see that I have sinned, **may** he beat me.'

(62) *otstupniki i tovo muča mnogo i sožgli v ogně na Moskvě, na Bolotě.* ***Puskaj*** *evo ispekli – xlěbъ sladok s[vja]těj tro[i]cě.*
'the apostates tormented much and burned him in the fire in Moscow, in the Swamp. **May** they have baked him – the bread from the holy trinity is sweet.'

(63) *to ljudjamъ i skazyvaju:* ***puskaj*** *b[o]gu moljatsja o mně.*
'so I'm telling people: **let** people pray to god for me'

The non-curative, or even concessive, use of *pust'* is attested at least from the turn of the 18th to the 19th century:

(64) *pri mnogixъ nevol'no ostanoviš'sja i podumaeš':* ***pust'*** *Pavelъ, vъ pervuju minutu gněva (...) mogъ ėto prikazat'; no kakimъ obrazomъ poslě mogъ on sii rěšenija svoi vyslušivat' xladnokrovno!*
'with many, you involuntarily stop and think: **let** (it be) that Pavel in the first moment of anger could give this order; but how afterwards could he listen to these decisions coolly!'
(1780–1814)

The same holds true for two of three examples provided by SRJaXI-XVII (1995, 47) on *puskaj*, all from the late 17th century.

Cases with the past tense, like (62) and (64), demonstrate that, in mid-17th century, *puskaj* and *pust'* were no longer restricted to directive or optative speech acts and could also scope over propositions. However, if *pust'* or *puskaj* occurred in the context of speech, there is no clear sign that they functioned like complementizers. In general, *pust'* and *puskaj* have remained scarce in environments favoring the complementizer function. In a random sample of 360 tokens for the period 1700–1850 only 6 tokens occurred in such contexts, and only with constructed speech or thought, as in (65). In a random sample of 540 tokens for 1859–1920 I spotted only 9 such attestations, see (66), in a random sample of 520 tokens for 1989–2020 only 13 such attestations. This corresponds to 1.7% of such items for the earlier periods and 2.5% for the most recent one.

(65) *Osip, skaži im:* ***pust'*** *ždut.*
'Osip, tell them: **may** they wait.'
(1836)

(66) *Nado skazat' Tane:* ***pust'*** *ona napišet emu, čtoby on isključil ėto.*
'I must tell Tanya: **let** her write to him so that he rules it out.'
(1910)

Such occurrences keep reminding us of direct speech. Rather exceptionally, clauses introduced by *pust'* can be interpreted as complement clauses because they occur after undisputable complement clauses of speech verbs, attached either asyndetically (67) or in coordination (68):

(67) *Ja skazala, čto* [[*poka ne znaju*], [***pust'*** *ždet u golovnogo vagona*]].
'I said that [[I don't know yet], [**may** he wait at the head car]].'
(V. Vojnovič: Zamysel. 1999)

(68) *Ja poželala ej* [[*skorej opravit'sja*] *i* [***pust'*** *segodnjašnee DTP budet ej v nazidanie, a ne v strax*]].
'I wished her to [[get well soon] and [**may** today's accident be an edification to her, not fear]].'
(T.N. Tkačenko: Dnevnik 1995 g. 1995)

In a random sample (period 1989–2020) of 50 tokens,[29] only 6 such items occurred, apart from 4 quote-like ones, as in (63)–(66). Whether this is really representative of *pust'*, also for other periods, needs to be examined. Anyway, the occurrence rate of "complementizer contexts" is low, but we see that the potential has been existing for centuries.

4.2.2 NEXATI

Let us now come to representatives of DIR-units derived from **nexati*.

4.2.2.1 Polish

For Polish, the following sources were consulted: (i) dictionaries – SłStar (*sub verbo*), SłPolXVI (*sub verbo*); (ii) corpora – ERGPO, PolDi, KorpStar, KorBa (see References).

In the earliest texts (14th–15th c.), *niechać* still occurred as a lexical verb (in various meanings like 'let', 'quit', 'keep in peace', 'resist (to do)', 'stop (doing)'; cf. also Szczepanek 2014, 44–47) and as an auxiliary in analytical causatives (cf. SłStar and SłPolXVI, *sub verbo*). No other usage is attested in the oaths of ERGPO.[30] The *Psałterz Floriański* (turn of 14th to 15th c.) has *niech(aj)* only in analytical causatives (with the infinitive, e.g., *Rzekł jeśm złym:* ***Niecha-j-cie***.IMP-2PL *źle czynić!* 'I said to the evil (people): **stop/don't dare** to do evil'), but in the *Kazania gnieźnieńskie* (early 15th c.) we find an instance of directive use of *niechać* (< *niecha* + *ci* = *ti* as in Cz. *ať*) with the present indicative:

29 Sample provided by courtesy of Imke Mendoza.

30 SłPolXVI still registers *niechać* as a lexical verb, but not in analytical causatives. The same applies to KorBa (1600–1772), which provides 20+ examples of *niechać* as a lexical verb, but not as a causative auxiliary.

(69) *A przezto **niechać** się ten to lud przed tobą spowieda, a ty je przeżegnaj.*IMP.SG.
'And thus **may** these people confess before you, and you make the sign of the cross on them.'

This use – *niech/niechaj/niechać* + present indicative – occurs, often in a formulaic way, in many 15th century texts, e.g., in *Wacław's Prayers* (*Modlitwy Wacława*; e.g., ***Niechaj** przyjdą mnie smiłowania twoje i żyw będę* '**May** all your mercy come to me and I be alive'), in *Rozmyślania przemyskie* (e.g., ***niech** cię nie zasmęca to, cociem rzekł* '**May** what I said to you not worry you'). As in other texts of that time, *niechać* is also still employed in causative constructions in an auxiliary-like fashion (see KorpStar). All in all, however, already in Old Polish we see a predominant use of [*niech(aj)/niechać* + present indicative] in the directive-optative (incl. permissive) function (see PolDi, SłStar). This meaning also applies when the construction is conjoined with another clause to mark conditionality (70); the same meaning surfaces in headless relatives, i.e., with generic reference (71):

(70) *Sø-ly to bogowye, **nyechacz** vilazø s tego gezyora.*
'If these are gods, **may** they come out of this lake.'
(SłStar; Błaż 321)

(71) *Chthory ma dwye sukny, **nyechay** da nye mayączemu, a chthory ma pokarmy, thakyesz **nyechay** czyny.*
'Who has two dresses, **may** (he) give (them) to the deprived one, and who has much food, **may** (he) do so as well.'
(SłStar; EwZam 298)

No essential changes seem to have occurred during the 16th century; the usage types adduced and illustrated in SłPolXVI are the same, including a large number of formulaic expressions. However, non-curative use starts appearing, as it seems, predominantly in religious contexts, see (72), but there are also cases with a "secular" background, see (73). Non-curative seems to be the most frequent usage type in Jan Sobieski's *Listy do Marysieńki* (1665), see (74), and they are encountered in KorBa (1600–1772) as well, see (75).

(72) ***Niech** będźie co Bog raczy/ iá ná tym prze ſtánę.*
'**May** (it) be what God deigns/ I will stop with that.'
(SłPolXVI; Prot Ev)

(73) *O niewiá ſto wielka ie ſt wiárá thwoiá/ **niechać** ſię ſtánie iáko żąda ſz.*
'Oh woman, your belief is strong/ **may** it be as you demand.'
(SłPolXVI; KrowObr 58v)

(74) *Ja raz rzekłszy i na karcie podawszy te moje wydane pieniądze, o swoje kłaniać się nie będę.* ***Niech*** *czynią, co chcą, bobym ja na sobie tego przewieść nie mógł.*
'Once I said (it) and declared the money I had spent on it on a card, I won't truckle for what is mine. **May** they do as they want, for I wouldn't be able to carry that on myself.'
(PolDi; Jan Sobieski: Listy do Marysieńki)

(75) ***Niech*** *czyni co chce, i przez kogo chce, byleby był łaskaw do końca.*
'**May** he do as he wants, and through who he wants, if only he will be delicate until end.'
(KorBa; A.K. Kryszpin Kirszensztein: Stateczność umysłu. 1769)

Concessive contexts surface already in some of the examples in SłPolXVI, see (76). However, concessive use remains rather occasional: in a random sample of 120 tokens from KorBa (1600–1772) I was able to spot only 5 concessive cases, see (77)–(78).

(76) ***Niech*** *ſie iáko chce mie ſzáć w ſzytko będzie/ Cnotá káżdego ma ozdobić w ſzędzie.*
'**May** everything mix up as it likes, everything will be/ Virtue should decorate everybody and everywhere.'
(SłPolXVI; *Rej Zwierc 211 (14)*)

(77) ***Niech*** *się źli boją, zazdrościwi płoną, nikt nie usłyszy inszej odpowiedzi.*
'**May** the bad ones fear and the envious burn, nobody will hear any other answer.'
(KorBa;W. Potocki: Muza polska. 1676)

(78) *Co Wm Pana ma martwić?* ***Niech*** *ona sobie czyni co chce. Iam Wm Panu Córkę przyrzekł, ia Ociec iestem.*
'What might worry Your Majesty? **May** she do what she wants. I have promised (it) Your Majesty's Daughter, I am the Father.'
(KorBa; Fr. Bohomolec: Staruszkiewicz. 1766)

Nota bene, combinations of conjuncts as in (76)–(78) acquire a concessive relation, but this does not necessarily imply an increase in syntactic tightness. The conjuncts following on the *niech*-clauses are not embedded in the constituency structure of the latter; they simply denote a proposition or an announcement that runs counter to an expectation triggered by the non-curative *niech*-clause ('nothing can be changed'). Thus, examples like (76)–(78) supply good illustrations of how discourse coherence favors shifts from the non-curative to concessive meaning without a change in syntactic relations. Tightening of concessive relations (i.e., embedding) may follow, but need not.

Finally, in SłPolXVI some potential complement clauses (after verbs of speech) can be found, see (79)–(81), likewise in KorBa, see (82)–(83).

(79) *Ka∫z* ***niech*** *zábiją te*^{go} *kurá*.
'Order **may** they kill that rooster.'
(SłPolXVI; HistRzym 109)

(80) *rádzę* ***niech*** *nikt prętki do po∫ądzenia niebędzie*.
'I advise **may** nobody be quick to blame.'
(SłPolXVI; SkarŻyw 100)

(81) *Prośimy* ***niech*** *będzie zábit ten cżłowiek*.
'We ask (you) **may** this man be killed.'
(SłPolXVI; Leop Ier 38/4)

(82) *powiedzcie odemnie,* ***niech*** *przed temi pochlebcami uszy zatula,* ***niechaj*** *im nie wierzy*.
'Tell (him) from me, **may** he cover his ears before these flatterers, **may** he not believe them.'
(KorBa; Anonim: Przestroga Rzpltej potrzebna… 1607)

(83) *A kiedy iuż być niemoże ináczy, Zyczmy iey,* ***niech*** *nią szczęście nie dziwaczy*.
'And when it already cannot be otherwise, let us wish her, **may** luck not freak her.'
(KorBa; E. Drużbacka: Zbiór rytmów. 1752)

The question whether such occurrences might better be subsumed under quotation raises the same principled problems as with the other units[31] (see on Cz. *ať* in §4.1).

4.2.2.2 Czech

For Old Czech, diverse variants are attested: *nech, nechajť, nechajž, nechajžť, nechať* > *nechť, nechažť, nechžť*. The meanings of the lexical verb *nechati* largely correspond to those of its Old Polish cognate (see §4.2.2.1). The same holds true for the functions of *nech* (and its variants) in comparison to Pol. *niech*, that is, we encounter directive-optative and permissive uses alongside *nech* in purpose and conditional clauses. Among examples meant to illustrate the latter meaning, StarČSl (1977, 474) actually adduces a few ones in concessive contexts; for instance:

(84) ***Necha****t se svět jakž chce mění, ty měj v svém srdečném chtění, aby… žádal nebeské radosti*.
'**May** the world change as it wants, you keep in the striving of your heart that he may demand the joys of heaven.'
(Flaš-RadaA. 1627)

31 Interestingly, in such cases SłPolXVI speaks about complex asyndetic sentences (*W konstrukcjach bezspójnikowych, odpowiadających zdaniom podrzędnie złożonym* 'In conjunctionless constructions corresponding to complex sentences with a subordinate part'), as did Bauer (1960) concerning Cz. *ať*; see §4.1.

(85) ***necht*** *utnú tobě prst, však pro to neumřeš.*
'**May** they cut off your finger, yet you won't die from that.'
(HusVýklB 104b)

Bauer (1960, 170, fn. 13) points out that, contrary to *ať*, *nechť* did not occur in complement clauses. Here the caveats discussed above apply, again.

4.2.2.3 Slovene

The following summary on Sln. *naj* is mainly based on Sonnenhauser (2021, 460–472). In his Slovene-German dictionary from 1894, Pleteršnik still registered *naj* as a verb form inflected for the imperative (*naj*.2sg, *najta*.2du, *najmo*.1pl, *najte*.2pl) in the meanings 'let' and 'stop', which were attested also for Old Polish *niechać* (see §4.2.2.1). In the former meaning, *naj* occurred with and without *da* (+ present indicative or infinitive). This construction could either indicate a directive speech act or be treated as an analytical causative; e.g., *najte*.2pl *da izvemo*.1pl 'let us find out' (< 'you.(pl) let that we find out'), *naj se groziti*.inf 'do not threaten'.[32] Inflected imperative forms cease to appear in corpora after the beginning of the 20th century. Conversely, uninflected *naj* + finite verb (prs.ind) in directive-optative meaning is attested since the 16th century.

A comparison of earlier and contemporary translations of the New Testament suggests that *naj* (+ prs.ind) has been ousting *da bi* (+ *l*-form) as a complementizer of clausal arguments of illocutionary verbs; compare, for instance, (86a) and (86b):

(86) a. *inu kadar ſo ga vględali, ſo ga prosili,* ***de bi*** *prozh ſhàl od njih krajov.* (JAP, 1784–1802)
b. *In ko so ga zagledali, so ga prosili,* ***naj*** *odide iz njihovih krajev.* (SSP3, 2003)
'And when they saw him, they begged him to leave their region.'
(lit. '…**that** he leave(s) their region'; Mt 8, 34)

Often such linear arrangements can be interpreted as quoted speech (or thought). However, regardless of the syntactic interpretation, person deixis is always coded from the perspective of the reporting speaker. Thus, *njih* and *njihovih* 'their' in (86a)–(86b) relate to the subject of *prosili* '(they) begged'; in direct speech we would expect *naših* 'our'. See also (87) from the 19th century:

(87) *in brata*$_y$ *prosil*$_x$, ***naj*** *se nikar ne prenagli*$_y$.
'and he asked his brother (that) **may** he not rush on any account'
(IMP; Hirlanda, bretanska vojvodina, 1851; cited from Sonnenhauser 2021, 469, translation adapted)

32 Note, however, that as an analytical causative *naj* was only weakly integrated: inflected *naj* and the lexical verb may differ in person-number marking (see the example). In the meaning 'stop', *nehati* continues being used as a lexical phasal verb (Sonnenhauser 2021, 461).

The finite verb in the *naj*-clause is in third person, not in second person. The perspective of the reporting speaker is also retained in *da+naj*-combinations; compare, for instance, (13a).

Obviously, *naj* entered the field of complementation via reproduced speech acts conveying an indirect transmission of directive illocutions (cf. also Holvoet – Konickaja 2011). In contemporary Slovene, this is also manifested by the fact that *naj* practically never occurs in contexts where both interlocutors of the reported speech event are also the immediate speaker and the addressee in the reporting speech event. In such a case, only *da* may be used (Wiemer 2021, 89f., also for the example):

Slovene
(88) *Ukazal sem ti,* ***da / *naj*** *prideš jutri.*
'I asked you **that** you come tomorrow (> to come tomorrow).'

This amounts to an almost complementary distribution of *naj* and *da* in potential clausal arguments of verbs allowing for reproduced speech.

Notably, with respect to the just specified type of context, Sln. *naj* differs from Cz. *ať*, which is not "banned" from this context type. Compare (88) with (89):

Czech
(89) *Bruno Modjaleski ti natrhne prdel, až tě najde. Už dávno* <u>*sem ti říkal*</u>*,* ***ať*** *si s tím idiotem nic nezačínáš.*
'Bruno Modjaleski will rip your ass off when he finds you. <u>I told you</u> a long time ago **that** you don't start anything with that idiot.' (lit. '...**may** you not start...')
(CzNC; C.D. Payne: Mládí v hajzlu 4. 2000)

As concerns the relation between mood marking ('analytical imperative') and functions as a clause connective, Sonnenhauser (2021, 468–471) argues that *naj* developed from the former to the latter. Her main argument is that *naj* has also been attested in combination with the imperative. She takes this as indicative that *naj* "loosened its connection to the verb and moved to the left into a position occupied by elements such as the general complementizer *da*" (Sonnenhauser 2021, 470). However, while co-occurrence of *da* with the imperative is well attested (see §3), *naj* + imperative has been attested very rarely, and this combination seems hardly acceptable after verbs of speech[33] (Wiemer 2021, 90). Moreover, such cases are known already for 16th century texts (Sonnenhauser 2021, 446), and in none of the adduced examples does *naj* + imperative occur in an embedded clause.

33 By contrast, *da* + imperative occurs exactly in this environment. Thus, *naj* and *da* tend toward complementary distribution with respect to whether the addressee of the reported speech event is also the addressee in the reporting speech event (→ *da*) or not (→ *naj*).

Therefore, one wonders whether this combination has been a marginal, but stable phenomenon over centuries, and whether it has played any role in the tightening of clause linkage.

Finally, when it comes to the question whether *da* might have served as a door-opener for *naj* to appear in clause-initial position as a complementizer, available data is likewise not very conclusive. Combinations of *da+naj* do occur in 19th century texts (Sonnenhauser 2021, 469f.); they are suggestive of the scenario based on an ellipsis of the first element (*da*) (see §3). However, data is as yet not sufficient, and we need to check whether *naj* did not occur clause-initially without *da* in contexts favoring its interpretation as a complementizer at the same time or even earlier.

4.2.2.4 Other South Slavic

A review of the scarce literature on *neka* in South Slavic is supplied in Wiemer (2021, 84–86). Essentially, no water-proof, and non-circular, criteria for telling apart *neka*'s status as a complementizer (or adverbial subordinator) or as a mood auxiliary have been provided. This is true also of two otherwise very insightful articles by Topolinjska (1999) and Topolińska (2008b). Usually, a crucial point seems to be how researchers treat (or ignore) the possibility of quoted speech and its gradient transitions into reported (= indirect) speech (see §2.1). For instance, we find examples like (90) from Serbian (cited by Topolińska 2008b, 208), in which the shift of person deixis supports embedding:

(90) *(...) majka*$_x$ *mi*$_y$ *reče,* ***neka*** *mu*$_z$ *skočim*$_y$ *na leđa.*
'my mother told me to jump on his back' (lit. '...**may** I jump...')

Another crucial issue is the question in which domain *neka*, in the particular languages, is employed primarily: with speech act verbs denoting directive-optative speech acts (= more original function) or in the permissive-concessive domain?

On the basis of a perusal of Serbian standard grammars and dictionaries and a small questionnaire study among Belgrade students, which contrasted *neka* with *da* in complement clauses, Topolinjska (1999) concluded that, apart from its function in directive or optative utterances, Serb. *nek(a)* is primarily employed to mark "lack of resistance" by the relevant subject[34] (speaker or subject of matrix clause). This amounts to the non-curative use, which can be considered a bridging context for concessive uses to arise (see §2.2). This employment becomes particularly obvious in contrast to *da*. Both connectives may occur as initial elements in clausal complements of Serbian, but *neka*-clauses sound strange after CTPs that mark strong directive speech acts or simply volition (*naređujem, da* / ?*neka* 'I order that'; *zahtevam, da* / ?*neka* 'I wish that'), in contrast to requests, or advice (e.g., *molim, da* / *neka* 'I beg, suggest'). In this respect, Serb. *neka* differs from Cz. *ať*. Moreover, if

34 „široko shvaćenu garanciju neprotivljenja od strane govornog lica" (Topolinjska 1999, 25).

there is a choice after general speech act verbs (compatible with directive speech acts) Serb. *neka* and *da* yield clearly distinct readings; compare:

(91) *Reci majci*
a. ***da*** *svrati do nas ponekad.* → imposes the speaker's volition
b. ***neka*** *svrati do nas ponekad.* → suggestion (in the addressee's interest)
'Say mother **that** she should (*da*) / may (*neka*) drop in (at our place) sometimes.'

Moreover, *neka* cannot be used after negated CTPs. This obviously holds true for the other DIR-units as well (I am unaware of any examples to the counter), but Topolińska seems to be the only researcher who has stated this explicitly for a *DIR*-unit. Finally, her observations suggest that the functional range of Serb. *neka* is biased toward the permissive/non-curative domain, and this possibly creates favorable conditions for an expansion of *neka* into concessive contexts, which Topolinjska focuses on.[35]

Nonetheless, Topolinjska denies Serb. *neka* the status of a complementizer. Her argument is strange: *neka* undeniably occurs in clausal arguments of speech act verbs (see above) – and Topolińska does not interpret them as quotes – but *neka* also occurs in conditional, purpose and concessive clauses. For her, this diversity of semantic relations revealed in clause linkage can only be explained if *neka* counts as a mood marker (Topolinjska 1999, 27). This conclusion is strange because, first, diversity of meaning is normally considered an indication for a linguistic sign to be general enough for marking more abstract grammatical relations; following Topolińska's reasoning, we would have to claim that standard (or default) complementizers ('that': Serb. *da*, Pol. *że*, Russ. *čto*, etc.) are not complementizers, but markers of something like 'attitudinally neutral (declarative/affirmative...) mood'.[36] Second, *neka*'s function as a complementizer may be distinct from its function in adverbial subordination, i.e., these functions represent different focal points of conceptual space (captured by semantic maps). It is intriguing that Topolińska herself admits for interpreting clausal complements with *neka* as an asyndetic juncture (Topolinjska 1999, 26) in which the complement clause contains analytical non-declarative mood (namely *neka* + Vfin).[37] This means we are aware that the complement relation is determined by predicative expressions which entail, or are at least compatible with, the *neka*-clause as their clausal argument. After all, this again leaves us with the question how non-indicative mood might be preserved in subordinate clauses (see §2.1).

35 Topolinjska (1999, 27) also draws attention that in clausal complements Pol. *niech* contrasts with *żeby* in an analogous way as do Serb. *neka* and *da* (see above). However, she claims the range of usage contexts for Pol. *niech* to be much more restricted.
36 Cf. Wiemer (2023, §2.7) for discussion of such an imaginable, though unorthodox view.
37 Also more generally for analogous constructions across Slavic in Topolińska (2008b, 215).

5. Conclusions and outlook

This survey of *DIR*-connectives in a selection of Slavic languages bears an exploratory character. It presents us with a fragmentary picture mainly because it relied on a perusal of pertinent descriptions in the research literature, in which different aspects were addressed, and on available dictionaries and corpora of unequal quality and usability. Nonetheless, some preliminary findings deserve to be formulated, as they are useful to set the stage for a systematic investigation.

First of all, contemporary data shows that all *DIR*-units treated here share a very similar range of functions, both in semantic and in syntactic terms, although these functions are distributed unevenly, also at the contemporary stage. Obviously, none of the *DIR*-units is compatible with negated (potential) CTPs. Differences can be observed in detail. For instance:

(i) Serb. *neka* sounds weird with strong directive speech acts or volition (e.g., *naređivati* 'order', *hteti* 'want'), while Cz. *ať* is well-attested after these CTPs.
(ii) Sln. *naj* is barred from contexts in which both interlocutors of the reported speech act are also the immediate speaker and the addressee in the reporting speech event, while Cz. *ať* "feels good" in this context.
(iii) Russ. *pust'/puskaj* is well-attested in single-word utterances, but for Pol. *niech* this is less typical, and for Cz. *ať* this is probably impossible.
(iv) Concessive use is quite well attested with Russ. *pust'*, but less so for Pol. *niech*. Moreover, Cz. *ať* is hardly attested in the concessive use, both in earlier stages and nowadays. However, there is an instance of concessive *ať* in 17th c. Slovak, and *nech(a)t* is attested in Hus' writings and in the early 17th c. Czech (before it was ousted by *ať*).

More generally, from a syntactic point of view, *DIR*-units can simply be labelled as 'particles'. However, apart from analyzing them as auxiliary-like components of analytical non-indicative moods, one might argue that they be treated as conjunctions (of concessive, purpose, consecutive or conditional clauses) or even complementizers. Their latter use is debatable, since complementizers presuppose suitable predicative expressions (CTPs) in the immediate (left) context that allows for, or even entails, a clausal argument; however, this is only a necessary, not a sufficient condition: even then if such an expression is available in the preceding conjunct, alternative interpretations still need to be eliminated. Thus, first, one may argue that the *DIR*-unit continues to be just an illocutionary modifier and the connection with the preceding conjunct is still asyndetic. This is tantamount to saying that the clause-initial *DIR*-unit functions as in simple clauses and not as a flag of an argument relation to a higher-order predicate. Second, many (if not most) of the complementizer-like uses of *DIR*-units occur in clauses that can be interpreted as quotes. However, closer inspection reveals that even in quote-like clauses with an

initial *DIR*-unit (and after a potential CTP) person deixis is shifted to the reporting event. This is indicative of embedding, and this property of quote-like *DIR*-clauses is observed already in the earliest texts and proves highly time-stable for all *DIR*-units examined here. Another bridging context for *DIR*-units to acquire complementizer function is purpose clauses (e.g., 'make that S'), and both complementation and purpose systematically intersect with verbs denoting manipulative speech acts ('ask, request, beg'). As for *DIR*-units functioning as concessive conjunctions, non-curative contexts ('I don't care') serve as bridges, and non-curative usage is more or less well-attested for practically all examined markers. Thus, an important issue is the question of how embedding may be diagnosed. Apart from a shift of person-deictic expressions, the loss of independent illocution has been considered a crucial feature of embedding, but this feature is difficult to test in a systematic way, in particular with data of earlier stages.

Moreover, it has covertly (e.g., Bauer 1960 for Cz. *ať*, Topolińska 1999 mainly for Serb. *neka*) or explicitly (Sonnenhauser 2021 for Sln. *naj*) been assumed that clause-initial position is a favorable condition for a *DIR*-unit to acquire the complementizer status. It, therefore, would be useful to examine whether there is an increasing tendency for *DIR*-units to be used clause-initially and detached from the finite verb, instead of being used non-initially and immediately before the finite verb.

From a semantic point of view, we observe a range from the original directive-optative over the permissive and non-curative to the concessive use. The concessive use seems to imply an integration of *DIR*-units into complex sentences, of which they introduce the dependent clause; however, a concessive relation may arise even without syntactic tightening (see §4.2.2.1). Regardless, the concessive use is comparatively rare, e.g., with Pol. *niech* and probably also with Cz. *ať*; it appears to be more frequent with, e.g., Russ. *pust'*. However, occasionally we find *DIR*-units in concessive contexts also of older data (e.g., 16th c. Pol. *niech*, 17th c. Slk. *ať*, late 18th c. Russ. *pust'*). This raises the question whether the concessive use can really be considered the (relative) diachronic endpoint of the functional evolution of *DIR*-units. Dobrushina's (2008) study on Russ. *pust'/puskaj* seems to speak in favor of this assumption, but this study only covers the last 200 years, and we cannot exclude the possibility that the concessive use was "available" to speakers of Russian at an earlier time (see §4.2.1), also in view of early, but rare, attestations of the concessive usage for other units. Dobrushina (2008) also showed that the usage range and frequency of *pust'/puskaj* varied depending on the text genre.

These observations justify a general methodological question: what do occasional attestations witnessing usage types that are assumed to be "latecomers" in functional development tell us? Are we to revise semantic maps that arrange usage types of *DIR*-units in conceptual space and make us assume that the concessive use comes after all other uses (except, maybe, the complementizer use)? Or

are occasional concessive readings of *DIR*-clauses to be taken as indicative that the functional potential of *DIR*-units was developed nearly as fully as in contemporary stages already very early, albeit the distribution might have been skewed differently? After all, what significance are we to ascribe to different token frequencies for different usage types?

A similar point is valid for the complementizer(-like) use, and we may ask whether the concessive and complementizer use developed on the same "branch" (and one after another), or in parallel, if they developed at all.

Finally, most of the *DIR*-units examined here can co-occur (sometimes even adjacently) in the same clause with units that are considered standard complementizers, such as Russ. *čto*, Pol. *że*, Sln. *da*. Such COMP-DIR combinations are not very frequent, but this phenomenon is recurrent and, again, attested also for earlier stages. Provided we interpret these occurrences as quotes (with the same person-deictic shifts as mentioned above), we get into troubles explaining what COMP really is. It may be just a "linker" that sets off clauses (or information units) from one another, and both the complementizer and quotative use may be derived (in suitable syntactic contexts) from a more general, and vaguer, function. This, however, would require an explanation, for instance, of how Russ. *čto* might ever have had this kind of vague usage.

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KorBa: *The Electronic Corpus of 17th- and 18th-century Polish Texts (up to 1772)*: korba.edu.pl/query_corpus

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