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Deontic and dynamic necessity in Latvian: debitive vs vajadzēt

- characterization of debitive vs *vajadzēt*
 - frequency of debitive vs *vajadzēt*
- types of modal meanings
 - peculiarities of *vajadzēt*
- corpus study of debitive vs *vajadzēt*
 - communicative purpose, factivity, scope of negation and other criteria

the Balanced Corpus of Modern Latvian at www.korpuss.lv

(the subcorpus *miljons-2.0* and its annotated version *miljons-2.0m*)¹

1. Characterization of debitive vs vajadzēt

Vajadzēt is an impersonal verb: *vajadzē-t* (inf) *vajag* (3prs) *vajadzēj-a* (3pst)².

(1) constructed examples³

- | | | | | |
|----|------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------|----------------|
| a. | <i>Man</i> | <i>vajag</i> | <i>maiz-i.</i> | |
| | 1SG.DAT | <i>vajadzēt.3PRS</i> | bread-ACC.SG | |
| | 'I need bread' | | | |
| b. | <i>Man</i> | <i>vajag</i> | <i>ēs-t</i> | <i>maiz-i.</i> |
| | 1SG.DAT | <i>vajadzēt.3PRS</i> | eat-INF | bread-ACC.SG |
| | 'I should/have to eat bread' | | | |

¹All instances of the debitive were extracted from *miljons-2.0m* by making use of a special query "[tag=".*:v..d.+_*"]" (See the instructions for the Corpus at <http://www.korpuss.lv/uzzinās/instrukcija.html#miljons>). Due to technical imperfections in the search mechanism of *miljons-2.0m*, the queries [lemma=".*:vajadzēt_*"] and [lemma=".*:nevajadzēt_*"], supposed to retrieve all instances of the verb *vajadzēt*, ignored the present tense which has a different stem *vajag-*. It turned out, however, that the number of instances retrieved by the queries [lemma=".*:vajadzēt_*"] and [lemma=".*:nevajadzēt_*"], are the same as the number produced by the queries "vajadzē.+," "nevajadzē.+." (Such queries are normally used in order to retrieve all instances containing a certain sequences of letters. Symbols "+." stand for an unlimited number of any letters at the end of the word.) This fact enabled me to search for *vajadzēt* with the help of three sets of different queries. Firstly, "vajadzē.+." and "nevajadzē.+." for those forms of *vajadzēt* that contain the infinitive and past tense stem *vajadzē-*. Secondly, "vajag.+." and "nevajag.+." for forms containing the present tense stem *vajag-* in combination with any morphemes on the right, and thirdly, "vajag" and "nevajag" for the 3 person present tense form. (The queries "vajag.+." and "nevajag.+." also yielded the longer variants of the 3 person present tense form *vajaga*.)

²Historically a nominal form borrowed from Finnic.

³If not stated otherwise, examples are from the Balanced Corpus of Modern Latvian.

The debitive is a verbal form that can be produced from any Latvian verb⁴ and is made up of the present tense⁵ in the 3d person⁶ and the prefix *jā*-⁷. An auxiliary is used optionally in the present tense but becomes obligatory in order to refer to other tenses and moods.

(2) constructed examples

- a. *Man (ir) jā-ēd maiz-e.*
 1SG.DAT (be.3PRS) DEB-eat.3PRS bread-NOM.SG
 'I should/have to eat bread'
- b. *Man bija jā-ēd maiz-e.*
 1SG.DAT be.3PST DEB-eat.3PRS bread-NOM.SG
 'I had to eat bread'
- c. *Man būs jā-ēd maiz-e.*
 1SG.DAT be-3FUT DEB-eat.3PRS bread-NOM.SG
 'I will have to eat bread'
- d. *Man būtu jā-ēd maiz-e.*
 1SG.DAT be-3SBJ DEB-eat.3PRS bread-NOM.SG
 'I would have to eat bread'

The negation morpheme is only added to the auxiliary.⁸

(3) constructed examples with negation

- a. *Man nav jā-ēd maiz-e.*
 1SG.DAT NEG-be.3PRS DEB-eat.3PRS bread-NOM.SG
 'I should not / don't have to eat bread'
- b. *Man ne-bija jā-ēd maiz-e.*
 1SG.DAT NEG-be.3PST DEB-eat.3PRS bread-NOM.SG
 'I should not have eaten bread / I did not have to eat bread.'

⁴Including *vajadzēt*, as in a sentence from the Internet *Kāpēc būtu jāqrib un jāvajaq pieskrūvēt objektīvu otrādāk?* 'Why one must want and need to fasten the objective lens in some other way?' <http://klab.lv/community/pajautaa/2086728.html> (23.10.2015).

⁵The exception is the verb 'be': *jā-bū-t* (DEB-be-INF).

⁶In the Baltic languages there is no differentiation between singular and plural in the 3 person.

⁷Historically a relative pronoun (Holvoet 2001: 9–27).

⁸There is at least one counterexample in the Corpus where the negation is inserted between the root and the debitive marker:

Tikai jā-ne-aizmirst domā-t.
 only DEB-NEG-forget.3PRS think-INF
 'One only must not forget to think.'

The expected form would be:

Tikai nav jā-aizmirst domā-t.
 only NEG-be.3prs DEB-forget.3PRS think-INF

Both *vajadzēt* and the debitive take a subject in the dative, but the debitive only takes an object in the nominative.⁹

Although traditionally seen as a mood (see the literature in Lokmane & Kalnača 2014), the debitive freely combines with the other moods and tenses. Holvoet (2007: 184–185; 2001: 41–43) treats the debitive marker *jā-* as an incorporated modal verb.

Both verbs (*vajadzēt* and the debitive) are roughly synonymous, but the debitive is the only option in official documents.¹⁰

1.1. Frequency of debitive vs *vajadzēt* (based on Daugavet 2015)

The more grammaticalized debitive is predictably much more numerous than *vajadzēt* (in combination with verbs in the infinitive).

debitive	<i>vajadzēt</i>	
	infinitive	other
10 597	1 830	779
	2 609	

The most frequent form of the debitive is the present tense (80%), the rest divided in equal parts between the subjunctive mood, the past, and the future tense. 60% of all debitive forms are the present tense without auxiliary. The unusually small share of negated forms, especially in the present tense, possibly reflects an avoidance of the auxiliary.

debitive total		10597	100,00%	10597	100,00%
prs	posit	6387	60,27%	8785	82,90%
	posit aux	1999	18,86%		
	neg	399	3,77%		
sbj	posit	553	5,22%	622	5,87%
	neg	69	0,65%		
pst	posit	516	4,87%	562	5,30%
	neg	46	0,43%		
fut	posit	487	4,60%	533	5,03%
	neg	46	0,43%		
other forms		95	0,90%	95	0,90%

⁹With the exception of some personal pronouns.

¹⁰This does not mean, however, that in official texts *vajadzēt* is uniformly replaced by the debitive as there are other expressions, including the stylistic neutral adjective *vajadzīgs* 'required', cf. *vajag palīdzēt* 'one must help' vs *Ir vajadzīga palīdzība* 'help is needed'.

The verb *vajadzēt* concentrates 40% of its uses in the subjunctive mood, the present tense coming second. In comparison to the debitive, negation is used rather frequently.

vajadzēt total		1830	100,00%	1830	100,00%
sbj	posit	562	30,71%	792	43,28%
	neg	230	12,57%		
prs	posit	317	17,32%	505	27,60%
	neg	188	10,27%		
pst	posit	326	17,81%	389	21,26%
	neg	63	3,44%		
fut	posit	76	4,15%	87	4,75%
	neg	11	0,60%		
other forms		57	3,11%	57	3,11%

The prevalence of the subjunctive mood with *vajadzēt* is connected to its use as a modal verb. When used without a verb, the most frequent form is the present tense.

	inf		other	
total	1830	100,00%	779	100,00%
sbj	792	43,28%	59	7,57%
prs	505	27,60%	528	67,78%
pst	389	21,26%	105	13,48%
fut	87	4,75%	70	8,99%
other	57	3,11%	17	2,18%

The high frequency of the subjunctive will be discussed with respect to the semantics.

2. Types of modal meanings (Palmer 2001; van der Auwera & Plungian 1998)

- Epistemic / propositional necessity conveys the speaker's certainty about the truth of a proposition. The expression of epistemic necessity by means of the debitive or *vajadzēt* is possible but not common.

(4) epistemic use of the debitive

<...> *teorētiski netālu jā-būt arī div-ām automašīn-ām.*
 theoretically not.far **deb-be** also two-dat.pl car-dat.pl
 'In theory, there also must be two cars in the vicinity.'

- Non-epistemic / event / root necessity is concerned with how the event itself is influenced by certain circumstances, including social norms and public opinion.

The further division depends on how the line is drawn between internal circumstances, external circumstances and public opinion (reflected in deontic modality).

dynamic		deontic
participant-internal	participant-external	

(5) examples from Endzelīns (1951: 972) reproduced from Holvoet (2007: 163)

a. deontic *vajadzēt*

Tev vajag dzer-t tēj-u bez cukur-a.

2.DAT.SG **vajadzēt.PRS.3** **drink-INF** tea-ACC.SG without sugar-GEN.SG

‘You should drink tea without sugar.’

= It’s my advice that you don’t eat sugar sugar.

b. dynamic debitive

Tev jā-dzer tēj-a bez cukur-a.

2.DAT.SG **DEB-drink** tea-NOM.SG without sugar-GEN.SG

‘You have to drink tea without sugar.’

= There is no sugar left.

Holvoet (2007: 144): “*vajadzēt* tends to express deontic modality whereas the debitive tends to be dynamic”.

(6) counterexamples to Endzelīns (1951: 972)¹¹

a. dynamic use of *vajadzēt*

<...> *viņ-a ģimen-ei ēs-t vajag šodien.*

2-GEN.SG family-DAT.SG **eat-INF** **vajadzēt.3PRS** today

‘It is today that his family needs to eat.’ = People eat regularly to be alive.

b. deontic uses of debitive

Tieši Valencij-ā ir jā-ēd paelj-a.

exactly Valencia-LOC.SG **be.3PRS** **DEB-eat** paella-NOM.SG

‘It is in Valencia that one should eat paella.’ = It is my recommendation.

Kalnača (2013), Lokmane & Kalnača (2014) do not distinguish between deontic and dynamic uses of the debitive but assign *vajadzēt* deontic meaning.

2.1. Peculiarities of *vajadzēt*

Dynamic uses of *vajadzēt* in the Corpus usually convey participant-internal necessity.

(7) participant-internal necessity with debitive

Piedod, man ir depresija!

¹¹Note the marked information structure of both sentences!

Man vajag pa-bū-t vien-am!
 1DAT.SG vajadzēt.3PRS DLM-be-INF alone-DAT.SG

‘Sorry, I have depression. I need to be alone for some time.’
 = I’m compelled to be alone by my depression.

I suggest that *vajadzēt* combines participant-internal necessity with deontic necessity, skipping over the participant-external necessity, cf. the adjacency requirement in van der Auwera & Plungian (1998).

	deontic
participant-internal	participant-external

The two meanings have in common a personal connection to the event. Participant-internal necessity reflects a person’s needs and deontic necessity often involves participants expressing their personal views about a situation.

The verb *vajadzēt* is frequently used with the subjunctive in order to avoid sounding too insistent and even unreasonable. The supposed personal involvement prevents *vajadzēt* from being used in official texts.

(8) debitive vs *vajadzēt* in one sentence

Ja brīv-ajā laikā izsauc uz darb-u,
 if free-LOC.SG.DEF time-LOC.SG summon.3PRS to work-ACC.SG

vajag¹ strādā-t, tad ir jā-strādā¹.
vajadzēt.3PRS work-INF then be.3PRS DEB-work.3PRS

Vajag² samaks-u saņem-t? Ne-pienākas.
vajadzēt.3PRS payment-ACC.SG receive-INF NEG-be.due.3PRS.REFL

‘If one is summoned to work in their free time, it is required that they work, then they have to work. Is it required that they receive a payment? It is not due for them.’

vajag¹— ‘The employees are ordered to work by their employers’ (deontic necessity involving other people’s will)

jāstrādā¹ — ‘The employees have to work because they are employees and will otherwise lose their job’ (participant-external necessity)

vajag²— ‘The employees need to be paid’ (participant-internal necessity)

(9) possibly quotative use of *vajadzēt*

Vai viņa grib ieiet istabās un tās apskatīt? Jā. Florence drosmīgi pamāja.

Viņ-ai pavisam noteikti vajadzēja redzēt maz-o istab-u.

3-SG.DAT quite certainly **vajadzēja redzēt** small-ACC.SG.DEF room-ACC.SG

‘Whether she wishes to enter the rooms and see? Yes. Florence nodded bravely. She certainly needed to see the small room.’

3. Corpus study¹² of debitive vs *vajadzēt*

The data have been evaluated against three different criteria based on discussion in Holvoet (2007), each corresponding to a separate group of sentences.

- communicative purpose
(present, future and subjunctive forms without negation)

Both modals receive deontic interpretation in the overwhelming majority of cases. The share of deontic examples ranges from 70% in the future tense to almost 100% in the subjunctive. (No difference in meaning is linked to the presence or absence of the auxiliary in the present tense of the debitive.)

- factivity (past without negation)

The debitive and *vajadzēt* are still equally found with both meanings but the percentage of dynamic uses amounts to 50%. (The rest is either deontic or ambiguous between dynamic and deontic.)

- scope of negation (all forms with negation)

With the exception of the future tense which conveys dynamic necessity for both modals, deontic interpretation prevails with *vajadzēt* counting from 60–70% in the past tense to almost 100% in the present and the subjunctive.

In the debitive dynamic uses are more common ranging from 50% in the present tense to 70–80% in the past and the subjunctive.

3.1. Communicative criterion

Coming in a form of suggestions, demands, advice, instructions, rules, and formulations of social norms deontic necessity implies that the subject of a modal expression has a choice or, if the subject is inanimate, its reaction is not entirely predictable. The aim of deontic expressions is either to help the subject to make the right choice or to describe the right reaction. Dynamic necessity, on the contrary, is a statement depicting the only possible way to act in a particular situation or the only possible reaction. See Holvoet (2007: 24): “Representing the necessity as dynamic involves the pretence that the subject’s free will was cancelled <...>”.

¹²Since it would be impossible to analyse 10 597 instances of the debitive plus 1 830 instances of *vajadzēt*, I selected a hundred examples of each of the four most frequent categories (present, subjunctive, past, and future) without negation and the same number of examples from each category with negation. (In some cases the overall number of sentences in the category was less than a hundred.) Sentences for both modals were arbitrarily selected by their initial letters from a list of alphabetically arranged examples.

The communicative purpose of a sentence is sensitive to whether the subject of the modal verb coincides with the speaker. Apart of expressing internal necessity *vajadzēt* may simultaneously convey intention.¹³

(10) *Kāpēc jūs neliekat man mieru?*

Man vajag pa-domā-t.

1SG.DAT **vajadzēt.3PRS** DLM-think-INF

‘Why you are not leaving me in peace? I need to think (for a while).’

If the person of the subject is changed, intention is also changed into suggestion and the sentence becomes ambiguous between dynamic and deontic.

(11) *Tad varbūt tev vajag iz-staigā-tie-s. Izej ārā.*

then may.be2SG.DAT **vajadzēt.3PRS** PVB-walk-INF-RFL go.2SG.IMP outside

‘Then you probably need to go for a long walk. Go outside.’

The application of this criterion is not unproblematic because almost every sentence can be imagined as a directive, with a varying degree of insistence and on varying grounds. A practical solution is to interpret an example as dynamic only if a deontic reading is impossible, and such approach may have led to an increase in the number of deontic examples in my results. Another problem with communicative purpose is that in 20–30% of examples necessity verbs are found inside embedded clauses that cannot have a communicative purpose themselves.¹⁴

¹³There are few examples that mostly convey intention rather than necessity with both *vajadzēt* and the deictive as well.

(1) *Nu, kā ta, vajag sarunāt, kā ar t-iem briež-iem.*
 INTERJ INTERJ **vajadzēt.3PRS** arrange-INF how with DEM-DAT.PL.M deer-DAT.PL
Darbs jau negaidīs<...>

‘Well, it is necessary to come to an agreement about those deer. The work is not going to wait for us <...>’

(2) *Es izlasīju avīzē par jūsu biznesu un nodomāju — cik interesanti, cik aizraujoši, jā-aizbrauc apskatī-t<...>*
 how interesting how exciting **jā-go.3PRS** view-INF

‘I have read about your business in a newspaper and thought ‘How interesting, how exciting, I need to go and see for myself <...>’

¹⁴Certain types of adverbial clauses actualize the dynamic reading. If the necessity is introduced by *kad* ‘when’ and *ja* ‘if’, I view it as produced by circumstances rather than obligations.

(1) *Kad jā-atsod parād-s, tad vairs ne-var bū-t personisk-ās dzīv-es.*
 when **jā-give.back.3PRS** debt-NOM.SG then more NEG-can.3PRS be-INF personal-GEN.SG.F.DEF life-GEN.SG

‘When one is required to pay a debt, then there can be no personal life anymore.’

(2) *Ja vajag izšķir-tie-s par smag-u lēmum-u,*
 if **vajadzēt.3PRS** make.choice-INF-RFL about difficult-ACC.SG decision-ACC.SG

3.2. Factivity

As Holvoet (2007: 166–167) points out, factivity defines the choice between dynamic and deontic interpretation. ‘If the speaker has performed an action in spite of its being in contradiction with some rule of conduct, then he will usually present it as having being inevitable and imposed by outward constraint, i.e. he will formulate this necessity as ‘dynamic’; with reference to exactly the same situation, this necessity will be presented as deontic when the action was not performed <...>’ In (12)–(13) the potentially negative evaluation of consuming less water or working hard arises from the fact that the subjects are presented as having no choice about important issues.

(12) factive uses

a. debitive

Cilts pārstāvju kļuva arvien vairāk,

bet ūden-s daudzum-s, ar ko viņ-iem bija jā-iztiek,

but water-GEN.SG quantity-NOM.SG with REL.ACC 3-DAT.PL **be.3PST DEB-subsist**
aizvien saruka.

ever shrink.3PST

‘The number of people in the tribe was increasing, but quantity of water that they had to subsist on was shrinking.’

b. *vajadzēt*

Pagājušajā sezonā bija tik daudz darba, ka skrēju kā vāvere ritenī.

Vajadzēja apgū-t un spēlē-t četr-as jaunas lom-as

vajadzēt.3PST learn-INF and play-INF 4-ACC.PL.F new-ACC.PL.F part-ACC.PL

teātr-ī plus vēl paspē-t uz televīziju-u<...>

theatre-LOC.SG plus more **be.in.time-INF** on television-ACC.SG

piemēr-am, par studij-u maks-u,

example-DAT.SG about study-GEN.PL fee-ACC.SG

tad vadīb-a izstrādā priekšlikum-u<...>

then government-NOM.SG work.out.3PRS proposal-ACC.SG

‘If it is necessary to decide on a difficult issue, for example, on the payment of education fees, then the government puts forward a proposal <...>’

The same effect is achieved in clauses introduced by *lai* ‘in order to’ if they refer to necessity that one desires to avoid. It is normally used with negation but in there is an example without negation.

(3) <...> *darba apjoms būs pietiekami liels,*

lai tiešām vajadzē-tu sadalī-t š-īs komisij-as darb-u.

in.order.to really **vajadzēt-SBJ split-INF** DEM-GEN.SG.F commission-GEN.SG work-ACC.SG

‘<...> the amount of work is large enough that it is necessary to split the work of this commission.’

‘There was so much work in the last season that I was running like a squirrel on a wheel. I had to learn and play four new parts in the theatre plus be in time <for my work> on television.’

(13) counterfactive uses

a. debitive

Rūdolf-am darb-ā bija jā-bū-t
 Rudolf-DAT.SG work-LOC.SG **be.3PSTDEB-be-INF**
jau seš-os no rīt-a,
 already 6-LOC.PL from morning-GEN.SG

bet viņš nekad nevarēja piecelties.

‘Rudolf was required to be at work 6 o’clock in the morning but he was never able to get up.’

b. *vajadzēt*

Tev vajadzēja sargāt mant-as, viņ-i teica.
 2.SG.DAT **vajadzēt.3PSTguard-INF** property-ACC.PL 3-NOM.PL say.3PST

Kā tu drīkstēji aiziet prom?

‘You were supposed to watch over <our> things. How could you go away?’

Although the majority of the sentences are easily interpreted as either factive or counterfactive, in some cases it is not important, or not even known, if the necessity they express was ever realized because the focus lies on the necessity itself.

(14) formulations of agreements or rules

a. debitive

<...>*venēciešu delegācija mierīgi apsēdās pie sarunu galda ar mongoļiem un noslēdza ar viņiem līgumu.*

Venēcieš-iem bija jā-apgādā mongoļ-i ar kart-ēm
 Venetian-DAT.PL **be.3PST DEB-provide.3PRS** Mongol-NOM.PL with map-DAT.PL
un visu nepieciešamo informāciju, lai tie varētu iebrukt Eiropā.

‘The Venetian delegation sat around the negotiating table with the Mongols and made an agreement with them. The Venetians were supposed to provide the Mongols with maps and all the information they required in order to attack Europe.’

b. *vajadzēt*

Bet pie šādiem nosacījumiem Briseles pirmā atbilde,

kur-u saņēm-ām septembr-ī un uz kuru
 REL-ACC.SG receive.PST-2PL September-LOC.SG and to REL-ACC.SG

vajadzēja do-t atbild-i līdz oktobr-im, bija<...>
vajadzēt.3PST give-INF answer-ACC.SG until October-DAT.SG be.3PST

‘But in such conditions, the first answer from Bruxelles, which we received in September and which was to be answered until October, was <...>’

(15) sentences that may have dynamic meaning

a. *vajadzēt*

Viņš gaidīja , kad varēs izrauties virszemē, tieši tai brīdī, kad ziema pāriet pavasarī,

tikai vajadzēja nogaidīt-t,

only **vajadzēt.3PRS wait-INF**

jo saprata, ka ir agrais zieds, pārējie pārējie nāks pēc tam<..>.

‘He waited for the time when it would be possible to break out onto the surface, exactly the moment when winter turns into spring; he only had to wait, because he understood that he was an early one, and the rest would come later.’

b. debitive

Morics nekad to un vispār neko saistītu ar mašīnām vairs negribēja atcerēties,

jo tas taču bija neatgriezeniski

because dem.NOM.SG nevertheless **be.3PST** permanently

jā-izdedzina no viņ-a apziņ-as.

DEB-burn.3PRS from 3-GEN.SG consciousness-GEN.SG

‘Maurice wished to never remember either this or anything associated with cars because this (kind of things — AD) was to be wiped from his memory.’

In several deontic examples with the debitive the required action was nevertheless made real, which separately mentioned later in the sentence.

(16) *Tie bija sveši cilvēki , kas deva man pajumti.*

Man bija jā-ievēro viņ-u noteikum-i, ieradum-i,

1SG.DAT **be.3PST DEB-respect.3PRS** 3-GEN.PL rule-NOM.PL habit-NOM.PL

kaprīz-es, valdonīb-a

whim-NOM.PL arrogance-NOM.SG

— *to gan es pacietu līdz zinām-ai robež-ai.*

— DEM-ACC.SG ptc 1SG.NOM endure.PST-1SGto known-DAT.SG.F border-DAT.SG

‘They were strangers, those people that gave me shelter. I was supposed to respect their rules, habits, whims, arrogance. I did, to a certain point.’

3.3. Scope of negation

Both *vajadzēt* and the debitive normally only add negation to the modal constituent, while adding negation to the main verb is only found under special condition with *vajadzēt*. Irrespectively of the position of the negation morpheme it may have scope either over the modal verb or the main verb.

(17) scope over modal verb, lack of necessity

a. debitive

Man nuo viņiem vairs nav jābaidās.
1SG.DAT from 3-DAT.PL more neg.be.3PRS DEB-fear.3PRS-RFL

‘I don’t need to be afraid of them anymore.’

b. *vajadzēt*

Vai šiem grozījumiem vajag vai
q DEM-DAT.PL.M change-DAT.PL vajadzēt.3PRS or

nevajag noteikt steidzamību?
NEG-vajadzēt.3PRS determine-INF urgency-ACC.SG

‘Does one need to determine the urgency for these changes?’

(18) scope over main verb, necessity to avoid situation

a. *vajadzēt*

Nevajag pirkt pirotehniku no privātpersonām<...>
NEG-vajadzēt.3PRS buy-INF firework-ACC.SG from individual-DAT.PL

‘One must not buy fireworks from individuals.’

b. debitive

<...> *krustojumā nav jābrauc ar lielu ātrumu.*
crossroads-LOC.SG neg.be.3PRS DEB-drive.3PRS with big-ACC.SG

speed-ACC.SG

‘One must not drive at high speed at crossroads.’

My data partly confirm the statement by Holvoet (2007, 144) that negated forms of the debitive usually mean the lack of necessity, while with *vajadzēt* negation is ambiguous between lack of necessity and negative deontic necessity — *vajadzēt* expresses the necessity to refrain from an action in 60–90% of examples in the present and past tenses, as well as in the subjunctive. The future tense forms an exception as all of its uses are interpreted as lack of necessity.

Although Holvoet states that ‘<...> if an action is not required, it is usually irrelevant whether lack of dynamic necessity or lack deontic necessity is involved’, very often the type of modality can nevertheless be identified.

(19) lack of necessity in future form of *vajadzēt*

a. lack of dynamic necessity

Rīt būšu vesela,

un tev ne-vajadzē-s man-ā viet-ā neko darī-t.

and 2SG.DAT NEG-**vajadzēt-3FUT** my-LOC.SG place-LOC.SG

nothing.acc do-INF

‘I will be well tomorrow and you won’t have to do anything in my place.’

b. lack of deontic necessity

Lai gan igauņi var cerēt,

ka viņ-iem ieceļošan-ai ASV vairs

that 3-DAT.PL.M travelling-DAT.SG USA more

ne-vajadzē-s saņem-t vīz-u,

NEG-**vajadzēt-3FUT** obtain-INF visa-ACC.SG

Vašingtona, domājams, pieprasīs, lai potenciālie ceļotāji

vispirms ar interneta starpniecību vērstos pie ASV iestādēm.

‘Although Estonians may hope that they won’t have to obtain a visa in order to travel to USA, it is possible that in Washington they will require that potential travellers apply to USA representative offices via internet.’

Yet it is very often dynamic necessity that is found in those sentences that convey lack of necessity.

A special use of dynamic necessity refers to a situation that one wishes to avoid. The construction is much more frequent with the debitive than with *vajadzēt*.¹⁵

(20) negated subjunctive forms after *lai* ‘in order to’

a. debitive

<...>viņš sarīkoja apvērsumu,

lai vēlēšan-ās ne-bū-tu jā-piedzīvo zaudējum-s.

in.order.to election-LOC.PL NEG-**be-SBJ** DEB-**suffer.3PRS** DEFEat-NOM.SG

‘<...> he organized a coup d’état so that he would not suffer an electoral DEFEat.’

¹⁵It is also found with the present tense of the debitive, although less often. As for the present tense of *vajadzēt*, there is no instances of *lai nevajag* in the Corpus at all, even though it can be found on the Internet.

b. *vajadzēt*

Tomēr iniciatīva jāuzņemas,

lai ne-vajadzē-tu pavadī-t dzimšan-as dien-u,

in.order.to NEG-*vajadzēt*-SBJ spend-INF birth-GEN.SG day-ACC.SG

raizējoties — vai tikai viņš atkal to neaizmirsīs?

‘But one must take initiative so that one doesn’t spend their birthday worrying if he hasn’t forget it, again.’

Several sentences with the debitive as well as one sentence with *vajadzēt* warn against a situation that nevertheless takes place.

(21) *Viņš man mazliet palasīja morāli,*

kāpēc neesmu griezies pie veikala vadības ar savu pretenziju

— *tad t-as vis-s tik-tu atrisinā-t-s uzreiz*

then DEM-NOM.SG.M all-NOM.SG.M aux-SBJ resolve-PST.PP-NOM.SG.M at.once

un ne-bū-tu jā-iesaista portāl-a redakcij-a.

and NEG-be-SBJ DEB-involve.3PRS portal-GEN.SG editorial.board-NOM.SG

‘He gave me a short lecture that I should have spoken to the shop management about my complaint, then all this would have been resolved and one would not have need to involve the editors of the portal.’

Lack of necessity with reference to the past implies that the situation was never made real. In most cases necessity may be interpreted as dynamic.

(22) lack of dynamic necessity in past forms

a. debitive

<...> *rekonstrukcijas laikā pārvietošanās pa ceļu bija iespējama*

un ne-vien-u brīd-i ne-bija jā-meklē

and NEG-one-ACC.SG moment-ACC.SG NEG-be.3PST DEB-look.for.3PRS

apbrauc-am-ie ceļ-i.

drive.around-PRS.PP-NOM.PL.M.DEF road-NOM.PL

‘It was possible to use the road during the reconstruction and there was no need to look for roundabout ways at any time.’

b. *vajadzēt*

<...> *nu viņ-i bija klāt uz viet-as un*

now 3-NOM.PL.M be.3PST present on place-GEN.SG and

vairs nekur ne-vajadzēja brauk-t.

more nowhere NEG-*vajadzēt*.3PST go-INF

‘Now they were at the location and there was no need to go any further.’

The necessity to refrain from certain actions with respect to the past, on the contrary, means that the actions were carried on (23a) but see (23b) where the debitive may refer to the prohibition in the past.

(23) criticism of past actions

a. *vajadzēt*

Zādzība viņus absolūti neinteresēja.

Ne-vajadzēja vērtīg-as liet-as atstā-t,
NEG-vajadzēt.3PST valuable-ACC.PL.F thing-ACC.PL leave-INF

– *viens no tiem pamācīja <...>*

‘The theft didn’t spark their (the police — AD) interest. You shouldn’t have left valuable possessions, one of them lectured <...>’

b. debitive

Lai smalkā aristokrātija aiz biezajiem dzīvžogiem varētu slēpt savas vājības, melus, nodevību, kaislības un intrigas — visu cilvēcisko vājību paleti.

T-as nejauš-ajiem garām-gājēj-iem ne-bija jā-zina.
DEM-NOM.SG.M accidental-DAT.PL.M.DEF by-passer-DAT.PL NEG-be.3PST DEB-know

‘So that behind the thick hedges the refined aristocracy could hide their weakness, lies, treachery, passions and intrigues — the whole range of human weakness. The accidental passers-by were not entitled to know this.’

4. Conclusions

Although the Corpus shows large difference in frequencies of the two modals, it is almost always possible to find examples in any grammatical form illustrating that both the debitive and *vajadzēt* may have deontic as well as dynamic meanings.

The communicative criterion reveals no noticeable difference in the distribution of deontic and dynamic uses of the two modals with respect to various tense and mood forms. The majority of examples in the present and future tense, as well as in the subjunctive, receives deontic reading. The introduction of the factivity criterion in the past tense gives the increase of dynamic uses for both the debitive and *vajadzēt*.

A noticeable difference between *vajadzēt* and the debitive is only found in negated forms due to the different scope of negation. With *vajadzēt* negation most often scopes over the main verb resulting in (usually deontic) necessity to avoid the situation. With the debitive negation normally scopes over the (incorporated) modal verb resulting in lack of (usually dynamic) necessity.

The well-known stylistic markedness of *vajadzēt* (viewed as more colloquial and excluded from official texts) has been found out to be due to a combination of

deontic and participial-internal uses that gives *vajadzēt* an additional meaning of personal involvement in the situation.

Abbreviations

1 — 1st person, 2 — 2nd person, 3 — 3d person, ACC— accusative, DAT — dative, DEB — debitive, DEF — definite, DLM — delimitative, EVID — evidential, F — feminine, FUT — future, GEN — genitive, INF — infinitive, LOC — locative, M — masculine, NEG — negation, NOM — nominative, PL — plural, POSIT — positive, PRF — perfect, PRS — present, PST — past, PA — active participle, PP — passive participle, SBJ — subjunctive, SG — singular

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