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# Permission and obligation intertwined: The twofold modal meaning of the Finnish jussive from a discourse perspective\*

Rea Peltola

Abstract

This paper examines the representation of semantic vagueness in discourse as well as the connection between deontic modal meaning and third person reference through the semantics and uses of the Finnish jussive mood. The data used in the analysis come from a collection of newspaper texts and a corpus of dialectal speech. Analyzing jussive forms that give rise to various modal readings, I argue that the two poles of the deontic axis, permission and obligation, are simultaneously present, albeit highlighted to different extents, in the interpretation of a jussive clause. This binary nature of the jussive semantics reveals itself to be a discursive resource: it allows the position of the speaker and other intentional agents to be taken into account in regard to the event that is potentially taking place, thus presenting more than one point of view in the situation. The jussive mood can therefore be regarded as contributing to the dialogical dimension of language.

Keywords: deontic modality, verb mood, permission, obligation, jussive

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Objectives of the study

The aim of this paper is to investigate the simultaneous presence of the two modal poles, *permission* and *obligation*, in the uses of the Finnish jussive mood. In line with the comprehensive grammar of Finnish (Hakulinen et al. 2004: § 1667), the term *jussive* refers, in this study, to the third person singular and plural as well as to the so-called passive form of the

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imperative mood.<sup>1</sup> In other words, in Finnish, the jussive is not a mood with a full personal paradigm of its own (as in the closely related Estonian), but neither is it just a function of the imperative. It has a morphological marker (*kOOn/t*) that is different from the other personal forms of the imperative.

Imperatives in general can produce either a permissive (*Go ahead, eat it!*) or an obligative reading (*Stop it right now!*) depending on the interactional context and the other elements present in the directive clause. In the case of the Finnish jussive, the two readings can be activated simultaneously, although one or other of the modal extremes can be foregrounded.

This type of *semantic vagueness* (van der Auwera and Plungian 1998: 100–104) has been observed in the modal verbs and verb constructions of a number of languages. In the present study of a verb mood, my aim is to account for the co-occurrence of the two modal meanings in discursive terms. In other words, through a microanalysis of the jussive clause and its context, I investigate the pragmatic function of semantic vagueness. I suggest that, from a discursive perspective, the jussive is characterized by a modal openness, that is to say it allows for more than one point of view on the situation to be taken into account. Due to the third person reference, the jussive lends itself well to this function. It inherently opens up another perspective on the event in addition to the one shared by the speech act participants.

The following example illustrates the semantic complexity of the Finnish jussive mood. This example is an extract from an interview where the speaker is telling a story about a boat accident caused by a storm as people were on their way to the church. The speaker’s grandfather was leading a group of people who were meant to have returned home by boat after the service.

- (1) *meijjäv voar [oli] sanonu että olkoo siinä ve- vene. ja ei muuta ku tul’vat sittem maita myötem pois sielt.* (SA, Mäntyharju)

‘our grandfather [had] said that the boat **had to / could** stay there. and that’s it they returned by land.’

*Meijjäv voar [oli] sanonu että ol-koo siinä vene*  
 POSS.1PL grandfather AUX.IPF.3SG say.PST.PTCP COMP be-JUSS there boat

We can see that the two readings of the jussive form *olkoo* are simultaneously activated. This is made clear by the two different translations into English (‘had to / could’). I will analyze this extract in more detail later.

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<sup>1</sup> This presupposes the adoption of the broad definition of imperative clauses, according to which any participant (as opposed to just the addressee) can perform the function of the agent. Thus, the category of imperative clauses is not limited to second person imperatives (see Birjulin and Xrakovskij 2001: 5–8).

This paper is organized into five sections. In the remainder of this section, I present the data that was used in the study (Section 1.2) and give an overview of the verb moods in Finnish (Section 1.3). Section 2 outlines the theoretical framework of the study with a discussion of the different aspects of the modal meanings of permission and obligation. I will also take a closer look in this section at the semantic structure of the jussive. In Section 3, I analyze the uses of the Finnish jussive against this theoretical background and, in Section 4, I discuss the results of the analysis in view of the dialogical dimension of language. Section 5 presents the conclusion to the study.

## 1.2 Data

The data consisted of 231 occurrences of the jussive, gathered from both the Finnish Language Text Collection (henceforth FTC), which includes newspaper texts, and the Syntax Archives (SA), which is composed of dialect data. The number of occurrences per database is shown in Table 1. References for the databases can be found in Appendix 1.

Table 1. Jussive occurrences per database

<b>Corpus</b>	<b>Jussive occurrences</b>
Finnish Language Text Collection	145
Syntax Archives	86
<b>Total</b>	<b>231</b>

The sample of 145 jussive occurrences in the FTC was drawn from the results of a search in the following categories of the corpus: *Aamulehti* 1999, *Demari* 2000, *Hämeen Sanomat* 2000, *Kaleva* 1998–1999, *Karjalainen* 1999, *Turun Sanomat* 1999.<sup>2</sup> For the Syntax Archives, the search was carried out in all dialect groups.<sup>3</sup> The areal distribution of the jussive occurrences obtained as a result of the search was regular: 42 occurrences came from the Western group of dialects, 44 from the Eastern group.

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<sup>2</sup> The name of the subcategory of corpus corresponds to the name of the newspaper, which is followed by the year of publication.

<sup>3</sup> The extracts of dialect data analyzed in this paper are followed by the name of the town or village represented by the informant.

The data varied in terms of time, mode of production and social and regional distribution. The FTC newspaper texts presented standard written Finnish of the late 1990s, while the dialect corpus provided regional spoken variants of Finnish from the late 19<sup>th</sup> to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Although contrasting the use of jussive in different varieties is not the focus of this paper, some comparative remarks on the two types of data are made during the analysis.

The examples presented in this paper are given with their English translations. In order to make the structure transparent to the reader, an interlinear morphemic gloss is given for each jussive construction examined and its immediate context (see Leipzig Glossing Rules 2008). The abbreviations used in the glosses are explained in Appendix 2.

### 1.3 The morphosyntax and semantics of Finnish verb moods

Mood is a morphological category of the verb expressing deontic, dynamic and epistemic modalities. The relationship between mood (grammatical category) and modality (notional category) is comparable to that of tense and time (see Thieroff 2010: 2). I will present the Finnish system of moods in this section before moving on to a discussion of the different types of modal meanings in Section 2.

Finnish verbs have four moods: indicative, potential, conditional and imperative.<sup>4</sup> The formally unmarked indicative, shown in (2), is usually described as expressing categorical affirmations, although it can appear in various types of modal contexts. Following Bybee et al.'s (1994) typological grammaticalization theory, it has been shown that the Finnish potential, marked by the affix *-ne-*, as in (3), and conditional, constructed with the affix *-isi-*, as in (4), have both developed from expressions of intention (see Forsberg 1998; Kauppinen 1998). In contemporary Finnish, these two moods code different types of epistemic possibility, although the conditional has also preserved its intentional uses (see Kauppinen 1998).

(2) *istu-Ø-n*  
sit-Ø-1SG  
'I sit'

(3) *istu-ne-n*  
sit-POT-1SG  
'I probably sit'

(4) *istu-isi-n*  
sit-COND-1SG

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<sup>4</sup> For a more exhaustive presentation of the Finnish verbal system, see Tommola (2010).

‘I would sit’

The second person singular imperative form corresponds to the vowel stem of the verb, entailing a gemination on the subsequent word boundary (5), whereas the first and second person plurals include the affix *-kaa-* (6, 7).

- (5) *istu<sup>x</sup>*  
sit.Ø  
‘(you) sit’
- (6) *istu-kaa-mme*  
sit-IMP-1PL  
‘let us sit’
- (7) *istu-kaa*  
sit-IMP.2PL  
‘(you all) sit’

When it comes to the jussive in Finnish grammar, it is regarded as the third person and the passive form of the imperative. It should be noted that in the literature on other languages, the term is reported as being used for a number of purposes. For example, in Estonian, another Balto-Finnic language, the jussive is not included in the imperative paradigm but instead displays a full personal paradigm of its own (Metslang and Sepper 2010).<sup>5</sup> It is thus considered to be a mood that is autonomous from the imperative mood. In Sorbian (Scholze 2010: 384), Albanian (Breu 2010), Bulgarian and Macedonian (Lindstedt 2010: 412), the term *jussive* refers to an analytic form that includes a specific auxiliary or particle. According to Lindstedt (2010: 412), the analytic jussive is a Slavic and Pan-Balkan item.

In some studies, the jussive is not considered a mood but rather a meaning, function or illocutionary act operated by certain imperative forms, in particular the third person imperatives (see Johanson 2009: 489; Lindstedt 2010: 412, 415; Squartini 2010: 239). In all cases, even though the grammatical status of the form varies, the third person reference seems to be typical of jussive semantics. The third person reference of the Finnish jussive will be discussed later in this paper. I will now move on to the morphosyntactic characteristics of this mood.

In standard Finnish, the jussive is marked by the affix *-ko*<sup>6</sup> and the personal endings *-On* and *-Ot*, which are usually considered to be coding the difference between singular and plural

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<sup>5</sup> Note that, in Estonian, the third person imperative form in the singular and plural is, however, homonymous with the jussive (for a discussion of the status of the Estonian jussive as a mood, see Metslang and Sepper 2010: 533–534). The difference between the Finnish and Estonian jussives is that the latter can appear with first and second person pronouns: *ma/sa/ta/me/te/nad istu-gu* ‘1SG/2SG/3SG/1PL/2PL/3PL sit-JUSS’ (Erelt and Metslang 2004: 167).

<sup>6</sup> In non-standard variants, the jussive is also marked by several other affixes.

(8, 9). The passive form is constructed with *TA* marking (10). The jussive also presents a compound form (11), coding the perfective aspect.

(8) *istu-ko-on*  
sit-JUSS-SG  
'let him/her sit'

(9) *istu-ko-ot*  
sit-JUSS-PL  
'let them buy'

(10) *sano-tta-ko-on*  
say-PASS-JUSS-SG  
'let one/them/people say'

(11) *ol-ko-on*      *sano-ttu*  
AUX-JUSS-SG    say-PST.PTCP  
'let it be said'

However, when examining the jussive forms in colloquial language, it becomes apparent that the difference between the singular and plural is not coded in the verb form since the personal endings *-On* and *-Ot* both appear with no regard to the number of the subject NP. In fact, the final element of the jussive form occurs frequently without any closing consonant (12). The neutralization of the opposition between singular and plural in third person imperatives has also been identified in other languages, although it is not very common (see Birjulin and Xrakovskij 2001: 27).

(12) *sano-ko-o*  
say-JUSS-SG/PL  
'let him/her/them say'

For this reason, the affixes *-kO* and *-O(n/t)* are marked in the examples below as one entity (*-kOO[n/t]*).

In terms of its syntactic properties, the jussive differs considerably from other imperative forms. While it can occur with or without an explicit subject, the object case in a jussive clause is determined by the same factors as in declarative clauses with a subject. The word order in a jussive clause also follows the same principles as that of a declarative clause in the indicative mood. In contrast to the second person imperative, the verb of the jussive clause is thus not necessarily in clause-initial position. Consider the following examples containing a declarative clause in the indicative mood (13), a jussive clause (14) and a second person singular imperative clause (15).

- (13) *Pauli ottaa tämä-n kirja-n.*  
 PROP.NOM take.IND.3SG DEM-GEN book-GEN  
 ‘Paul takes/will take this book.’
- (14) *Pauli otta-koon tämä-n kirja-n.*  
 PROP.NOM take-JUSS DEM-GEN book-GEN  
 ‘Let Paul take this book.’
- (15) *Ota tämä kirja.*  
 take.IMP.2SG DEM.NOM book.NOM  
 ‘Take this book.’

In (13) and (14), the indicative and jussive verbs take an overt nominative subject (*Pauli*) and a genitive total object (*kirjan*). In (15), however, the second person imperative verb is in the clause-initial position, without a subject and followed by a nominative total object.<sup>7</sup>

## 2. The semantics of the jussive

### 2.1 The two modal poles

#### 2.1.1 Typology of modalities

Linguistic modalities can be organized according to a dichotomy between necessity and possibility. On an epistemic level, factual events are necessarily true, counterfactual events necessarily false and nonfactual events possibly true or false (see, for example, Lyons 1977: 787). When it comes to non-epistemic modalities, the possibility end of the axis is represented by expressions of permission (deontic modality) or capacity and ability (dynamic modality), while the necessity pole corresponds to deontic obligation, such as speaker’s intention and social norms, or dynamic constraints that are either internal to a person (different type of needs) or caused by the circumstances (see, for example, Palmer 2001, although he makes a slightly different distinction between deontic and dynamic modalities; Hakulinen et al. 2004: § 1554–1557).

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<sup>7</sup> In addition to the moods presented here, there is a form of the second person singular called *optative* with a very limited, archaic use, for example, *tull-os* (‘come-OPT.2SG’). According to Lehtinen (2007: 130), this form was originally marked with the affix *\*yO*, the weak grade of *kO* undergoing consonant gradation (for a discussion of the presence of this form in Finnish grammars, in Old Finnish and in the dialects, see Leskinen 1970: 19–37, 38–39, 66–75). According to a theory on the evolution of the Estonian jussive, the optative would have given rise to the *gu-/ku-*formed jussive of modern Estonian (Metslang and Sepper 2010: 546).



This typology of modalities presupposes that the factors making a state of affairs possible or necessary are either participant-internal (capacity, need, intention) or participant-external (permission or norms coming from an authority, circumstantial constraints). On the basis of this division and using the typological grammaticalization paths of Bybee et al. (1994) as a starting point, van der Auwera and Plungian (1998) developed the semantic map of modalities, taking into account both the diachronic and synchronic dimensions of the modalities. The typology also assumes that the different types of modalities imply different psychosocial and physical force oppositions, meaning the subject has a tendency toward an action and faces an external pressure of some kind opposing this tendency (see Talmy 1988: 77–88).

In what follows, I demonstrate that the Finnish jussive essentially codes both participant-internal and participant-external deontic modal meanings plus, more marginally, dynamic constraints. Instead of different propositional truth values (see, for example, Boye 2012: 31), the Finnish jussive brings to the fore intentional, personal agents as well as their position in regard to other agents and the circumstances.

### 2.1.2 Permission, obligation and agency

Deontic modalities involve the distinction between performative and descriptive expressions (see Nuyts 2005: 15), depending on whether the speaker is performing a linguistic act in order to influence the state of another participant or the circumstances or merely reporting the events. In this paper, the concepts of permission and obligation are used in both senses. The two poles entail different types of speaker attitudes toward an event.

In the case of permission, these depend on whether the speaker actively authorizes an event initiated by another intentional agent to take place, thus making it possible, or whether the speaker acts passively in not opposing an event that takes place. In terms of force dynamics, the permissive relation can be regarded as a situation involving opposite forces, asymmetrical in their relative strengths, where the intrinsic tendency of one overrides the other (Talmy 1988: 77–88, see also Leino 2012: 223–227).

Egan (2012: 69–70) illustrates the permissive meaning by a situation in which the permitter enables the permittee to pass, on a conceptual level, either by removing a barrier blocking the path of the latter or by not imposing any barrier. In the case of barrier removal, the prior existence of a barrier is inferred on the basis of the immediate co-text or on our general knowledge of the world. For example, when interpreting the clause *Claudia relaxed her fingers*,

*letting the pencil drop to the desk*, we use our knowledge of the physical world and conceive the fingers as the barrier removed (Egan 2012: 71–72).

Obligation can also involve either a direct speech causation, in other words a directive function, or a description of a necessity imposed on one of the participants. In both cases, the intention of the participant figuring as the source of the necessity is foregrounded, whereas the meaning of permission is based on the pre-existence of another agent's will or other form of necessity toward which the subject directs their (permissive) attitude (see, e.g., Fortuin 2005: 55, Hans-Bianchi 2012: 129). The difference between permission and obligation can thus be accounted for in terms of different perspectives on the event.

Apart from events that are (potentially) instigated by another intentional agent, the permissive relation can involve an event that is otherwise independent of the subject's will, for example, a self-induced motion of an entity or a natural course of events (see, e.g., von Waldenfels 2012: 210–213). This was the case in the example above, *Claudia relaxed her fingers, letting the pencil drop to the desk*, where the pencil is not conceived as an intentional being but merely as an entity subject to gravity.

The various deontic readings are thus based on the presence or absence of other intentional participants in the event. In the case of an expression of deontic necessity, the speaker instigating the obligation is obviously viewed as being in control of the event. However, the speaker permitting is also inherently an agent with will because even the act of not opposing is a choice, which implies the capacity, at least theoretically, to control the situation (see Laitinen 1992: 176–177; Leino 2012: 236).<sup>8</sup> Like obligation, permissive meaning can only occur in a situation where the agent has control over the state of affairs (see, however, the discussion on the permeability of the border between controllable and uncontrollable actions in Birjulin and Xrakovskij 2001: 17–18).<sup>9</sup>

### 2.1.3 Permission, obligation and time

There is one more aspect of permission and obligation that should be pointed out before moving on to an analysis of the jussive occurrences. The relationship of permissive meaning to time is

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<sup>8</sup> As van der Auwera et al. (2009: 275) pointed out, however, the distinction between permission authorized by the speaker and by some other party is not necessarily always clear.

<sup>9</sup> Permission seems to be close to directive acts like invitation and advice in many languages (see, e.g., Nasilov, Isxakova, Safarov and Nevskaja 2001: 203; Ogloblin 2001: 235; Spatar 2001: 476). All three directive types are characterized by the central role of the other agent's will in the interpretation of the clause. The event in question is considered, in principle, as wanted by or otherwise favorable to the other agent.

different from that of obligation. Consider the following semantic definition of imperative sentences:

Imperative sentences are positive or negative sentences conveying the idea of direct speech causation that can be interpreted as: “The speaker [=prescriptor], wishing (or not wishing) action P (which is either being or not being performed at the moment of speech) to take place, informs the listener [=recipient of prescription] as to who should (or should not) be the agent of action P [=performer of the prescribed action], thus attempting to cause (or prevent) action P by the very fact of this information”. According to this definition, the aim of any imperative sentence in general consists in either changing the existing reality (i.e. transforming a certain imagined world into a real one) or preserving it. (Birjulin and Xrakovskij 2001: 5)

With an imperative clause coding obligation, the speaker aims to cause action P. Since action P has not yet taken place, these imperative clauses entail a future reading, which is not inherent in the same manner to permission clauses. Expressions of permission that code the absence of speaker opposition (not imposing a barrier) and which are therefore not regarded as active authorizations (“making something possible”) can refer to events that have already taken place. They do not involve a change but rather the continuation of an already existing state of affairs (on the different combinations of directivity and the concepts of change and continuation, see Birjulin and Xrakovskij 2001: 11–13). Consider the following example, extracted from the newspaper corpus, concerning the opinion of a German newspaper on the Finnish municipality Urjala:

- (16) *Olkoon* vaan *Urjala saksalaislehd*en mukaan *persläpi*, mutta *nuoret tahtovat asua siellä*.  
(FTC, *Aamulehti* 1999.)

‘Urjala **may be** a real hole, according to the German newspaper, but young people want to live there.’

*Ol-koon* vaan *Urjala saksalais-lehde-n* mukaan *pers-läpi*,  
be-JUSS PTCL PROP german-newspaper-GEN according.to ass-hole

*mutta nuore-t tahto-vat asua sie-llä*.  
but young-PL want-3PL live PROADV-ADE

In this concessive clause, the speaker admits the negative description given by the German newspaper of the Finnish municipality. The event of admitting is posterior to the event of describing. The permission that gives rise to the concessive reading is thus addressed toward a state of affairs that has already taken place.

The permissive meaning as such does not foreground the temporal connections and truth value of the proposition but, rather, the position of the speaker and of another intentional agent

in regard to it. This is due to the difference in scope between modalities. Epistemic modalities have a wide scope, operating over the whole proposition, whereas dynamic and deontic modalities focus on parts of the proposition, particularly on the agent of the action (the interlocutor or someone else) (see, e.g., Radden and Dirven 2007: 238).

Unlike the indicative and conditional moods, the jussive (along with other forms of the imperative paradigm and the potential mood) does not inherently involve temporal structuring, which would determine the relationship between the moment of event and the moment of speech (see Peltola 2011: 129–214). In this sense, the Finnish jussive can be counted among the verb forms that leave the temporal and epistemic interpretation of the event undetermined, to be defined by contextual factors (for a similar analysis of the French subjunctive, see Gosselin 2005: 94–96, 186).

## 2.2 Modal openness

As with the first and second person imperative forms, the jussive is an element allowing the speaker to express his will concerning the action or state of another participant or the state of circumstances (see Birjulin and Xrakovskij's [2001] semantic definition of imperative clauses above). In the analysis of the data presented below, we will see that this *intentionality* gives rise to a number of modal readings depending on the contextual factors, such as the semantics of the verb, the presence or absence of an intentional agent (other than the speaker) and our general knowledge of the world.

As mentioned in the introduction, it is common for imperative forms to be used for expressing both commands and permission, depending on whether or not the denoted action is viewed as initially wanted by the agent. This is also true for the Finnish second person imperative. Example (17) contains a command, meaning the speaker wishes the interlocutor to act according to his will. Example (18) illustrates permission as the speaker displays adjustment to the will of another agent (here, the interlocutor).

(17) *Ota tämä kirja. En jaksa kantaa kaikkia yksin.*  
take.IMP.2SG DEM.NOM book.NOM  
'Take this book. I can't carry them all by myself.'

(18) –*Saanko ottaa tämän kirjan?*  
'Can I take this book?'

- *Ota*                      *vaan*.<sup>10</sup>  
 take.IMP.2SG PTCL  
 ‘Go ahead, take it.’

The relationship between the two modal meanings of *ota* (‘take.IMP.2SG’) in these examples is characterized by a certain degree of ambiguity, following the definition given by Tuggy (1993: 280–282). They share the same morphophonological form, but they are separable in the sense that it would be difficult to treat (17) as permission and (18) as a command.

When it comes to the modal meaning of the Finnish jussive, I argue that, rather than ambiguity, it is better described as semantic vagueness, or unspecificity. It is not about expressing different modal meanings in different contexts with the same form, as in (17) and (18), but about the simultaneous presence of both necessity and possibility, in other words the opposite modal meanings are inherently intertwined in the jussive semantic structure. This inseparability of the two (or more) meanings is typical of vague structures (see Geeraerts 1993: 228; Tuggy 1993: 275; for the difference between vagueness and polysemy, see also Haspelmath 2003). Another argument for the vagueness analysis is that in the case of negation, both modal readings are negated (‘not p1 and not p2’) (see Geeraerts 1993: 234, 248).<sup>11</sup>

(19) *Men-köön*.

go-JUSS  
 ‘S/he **has to/can** go’

(20) *Äl-köön men-kö*

NEG-JUSS go-JUSS  
 ‘s/he **does not have to/must** not go’

It is not unfeasible that the same type of vagueness can also be found behind certain second person imperative uses. Forsberg’s (forthcoming) analysis of the different degrees of directivity in uses of the Finnish imperative shows that the second person imperative also displays many non-directive uses, for example, that of disapproval.

The jussive is nevertheless worth examining separately because the third person reference makes it fundamentally different from the second person imperative. The jussive can be used either to refer to someone or something outside of the speech situation or to address someone present in the speech situation without introducing the polarity between the first and second

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<sup>10</sup> The presence of the discourse particle *vaan* is not a condition for the permissive meaning to occur, but the particle makes the meaning more explicit in this example (see Hakulinen et al. 2004: § 828).

<sup>11</sup> For a discussion of the relationship between permission and obligation in negative contexts, see Fortuin (2005: 55–56). For a discussion of the conceptualization of negative permission, see Egan (2012: 81–82, 100–101).

person (for a discussion of the presence or absence of the third person referent, see Yamamoto 1999: 26).<sup>12</sup> This is illustrated by example (21), where the speaker reports how her niece (*Milja*) and the niece's fiancé (*Martti*) ask her to come and visit them:<sup>13</sup>

- (21) *ku tul' se Milja sulhanekii ja patistiit minua Rätäkkää (...) se sano miule, Miljakii juoks ni et, et lähtööks vanhaäit tuol ja, et tul't seä vua Rätäkkää kattomaa mei paikkoja ni, no se sulhane se Martti sano voa niin ikään et se o vanhaäiti sen ko lähteköö et sen ku myö tulloo oamul hakem ne tul' Moantakoa (mu hakemoa) ja meä käi siel kattomas siit senkii paika viel.*

'then Milja's fiancé came too and they urged me to go to Rätäkkä (...) and he told me, Milja came running too [and asked], is grandmother going and are you coming to Rätäkkä to see our place, so the fiancé Martti also said **grandmother should / may come** we'll come and fetch [you/her] in the morning they came to Moantaka (to fetch me) and so I got to see that place too.'

*lähtöö-ks vanha.äit tuol ja et tul'-t seä vua*  
leave.3SG-Q old.mother PROADV and CONJ/PTCL come-2SG 2SG PTCL

*Rätäkkä-ä katto-ma-a mei paikko-j-a ni.*  
PROP-ILL look-INF-ILL 1PL.GEN place-PL-PART PTCL

*vanha.äiti sen ko lähte-köö*  
old.mother PTCL PTCL leave-JUSS

The jussive clause *vanhaäiti sen ko lähteköö* ('grandmother should / may come'), assigned to the niece's fiancé, *Martti*, simultaneously codes an invitation addressed to *vanhaäiti* ('grandmother') and an alignment to the initiative that *Milja* has taken previously, namely the request denoted by the two interrogative clauses (*lähtööks vanhaäit [...] tul't seä vua Rätäkkää [...] 'is grandmother going [...] are you coming to Rätäkkä [...]'*). The third person reference is present not only in the jussive clause, but also in one of the interrogative clauses. As it is clear from the context that the three participants share the same spatiotemporal setting, the third person forms are conceived as referring to a participant present in the situation who is a potential next speaker (see Sacks 1992: 573; Seppänen 1998: 126–127).<sup>14</sup>

In this example, the jussive clause allows the interlocutors to view the situation from more than one point of view, namely from that of the addressee of the invitation as well as from that of the two other participants. This is due to the third person reference (which places the polarity between first and second person to the background) and the semantics of the jussive where two modal meanings meet. The jussive is thus a form that leaves the referential and modal reading

<sup>12</sup> Third person forms cannot thus be described as referring only to an "outside person not included into [*sic*] the act of communication" (cf. Birjulin and Xrakovskij 2001:19).

<sup>13</sup> For a more detailed analysis of the extract, see Peltola (2011: 171–174).

<sup>14</sup> For a discussion of the referential complexity of imperative clauses from a typological point of view, see van der Auwera, Dobrushina and Goussev (2004).

open to a certain extent. Figuratively, it can be regarded as a prism that splits the perspective from which the event is observed into more than one parallel point of view.

Modal vagueness, where the meanings of possibility and necessity co-occur, has been observed in a number of modal verbs and modal verb constructions in different languages. The Swedish modal verb *få* ('get') and its equivalent in Finnish *saada* display the same type of openness between permission and command reading as the Finnish jussive (see Viberg 2012):

- (22) Swedish: *Maria får gå hem.*  
Finnish: *Maria saa mennä kotiin.*  
'Maria is **allowed to / has to** go home.'

Viberg (2012) demonstrated this correspondence between *få* and *saada* in his contrastive study investigating the translations of *få* into English, Finnish, French and German. Apart from *få*, the verb *saada* was the only marker in his data to display the binary modal meaning (on the types of modality expressed by the Finnish verb *saada* and its equivalents in other Balto-Finnic languages, see Keyahov and Torn-Leesik 2009: 371–374). Modal verbs covering the two extremes of deontic modality simultaneously have also, however, been found in other languages. Laitinen (1988) presents a similar analysis on the Inari Sámi *kolgađ* and Davidsen-Nielsen (1990: 187) and van der Auwera et al. (2004) on the Danish *måtte*. Furthermore, the causative verb *lassen* is used in modern German for coercive and permissive causation alike (see Hans-Bianchi 2012). Its Finnish equivalent *antaa* covers factitive and permissive causation in a similar way (see von Waldenfels 2012: 208–209, 212–214).<sup>15</sup> As for modal affixes and verb constructions, a comparable vagueness is displayed, for example, by the negative imperatives formed with the marker *-nghit-* in Asiatic Eskimo (Vaxtin 2001: 141), by the German *sein + zu* infinitive construction (van der Auwera and Plungian 1998: 101) and by the Russian dative-infinitive construction (in the context of negation) (Fortuin 2005: 55–56).

Semantic vagueness does not only apply to the meanings of obligation and permission in the languages of the world. Van der Auwera et al. (2009) showed that, within the Indo-European and Finno-Ugric languages of Northern Europe, there is a concentration of modal markers expressing, on the one hand, acquisition and, on the other, modal possibility, including permission and, in many cases, capacity. The Estonian verb *saama* ('get'), for example, marks not only participant-external meanings, such as possibility due to the circumstances or authorization coming from another intentional party (see the semantics of the 'get' verbs analyzed above), but also participant-internal ability (see van der Auwera et al. 2009: 286–287;

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<sup>15</sup> On the origins of the binary modal meaning of the verb *antaa*, see Leino (2012: 239–242).

for an exhaustive analysis of the semantics of *saama*, see Trigel and Habicht 2012). Furthermore, it is not uncommon for the modal reading of the verb *saama* to be left open (Trigel and Habicht 2012: 1394).

In the present study, the focus is on a verb mood. The analysis of the data presented below shows how semantic vagueness is represented in discourse and what the *raison d'être* of this vagueness is in terms of interaction. I argue that, in the case of the Finnish jussive, even though the context may highlight one of the deontic modal poles, the other is nevertheless also present. This simultaneous presence appears in discourse as modal openness, allowing more than one point of view on the event to be taken into account.

### 3. Necessity and possibility intertwined

In this section, I analyze the uses of the Finnish jussive, drawing attention to the coexistence of two modal readings, permissive and obligative, as well as to the dynamism between them. I begin by examining command and optative clauses, where the necessary meaning appears to be dominant (Section 3.1). My aim is to show that, in these clauses, along with the modal meaning displaying the speaker as an initiator of the action or at least as the source of the intention, there is another point of view on the event that is construed: that of a participant allowing the event to take place. In Section 3.2, the situation is reversed. I argue that the jussive clauses used for authorizing and consenting occur in contexts of decision-making. They thus function simultaneously as expressions of norm setting. In Section 3.3, I discuss a third group: jussive clauses that display obligation caused by circumstances. Finally, I present examples of grammaticalized and lexicalized jussive clauses in Section 3.4.

#### 3.1 Necessity highlighted: Commands and optatives

When contextual factors do not present any reason to consider the event as initiated or wanted by another intentional agent, the jussive clause is interpreted as a command from the speaker to be followed by either the other participants of the speech situation or someone else. The use of the jussive in legislative texts is based on this type of disposition:

(23) *Tätä kaikki asianomaiset noudattakoot.* (Example cited by Hakulinen et al. 2004: § 1667.)

‘This **must be respected** by all parties concerned.’



*tätä kaikki asianomaiset noudatta-koot*  
 DEM.PART all party.concerned.PL respect-JUSS

However, in the data analyzed for the present study, the referent of the jussive form was not necessarily a potential actor whose behavior in the situation could be submitted to the speaker's intention. In this type of case, the command cannot be addressed to the referent of the jussive form. In the following two examples, the referent of the jussive form is, first, an inanimate entity (*boat*) and, second, an unconscious human being. The context of example (24) was described at the beginning of this paper (see example 1). In example (25), the speaker was reporting how people used to take care of someone who had drunk too much alcohol.

(24) *meijjäv voar [oli] sanonu että olkoo siinä ve- vene. ja ei muuta ku tul'vat sittem maita myötem pois sielt.* (SA, Mäntyharju)

'our grandfather [had] said that the boat **had to / could** stay there. and that's it they returned by land.'

*meijjäv voar [oli] sanonu että ol-koo siinä vene*  
 POSS.1PL grandfather AUX.IPF.3SG say.PST.PTCP COMP be-JUSS there boat

(25) *ne korjasiit sit sen ne- otti jos se ulos kaatus' ni jot ei se jäänt sinne palentummaa ne veivät siit johookii sellasee lämpimää suojaa se olkoo hää tääl.* (SA, Ruokolahti)

'they took him away then they- took if he fell outdoors so they didn't leave him there to freeze they took him in some warm shelter **let** him **stay** here.'

*ol-koo hää tääl*  
 be-JUSS 3SG here

Even though the referent of the subject is unable to change their own state in these examples, the speakers are accompanied in the situation by other parties who figure as intentional agents and potential actors. The command can thus be understood as directed at them. In example (24), the speaker (grandfather) addresses the other potential passengers of the boat, indirectly prohibiting the use of the boat by all, including himself. In (25), the unspecified, possibly collective speaker expresses an obligation, involving all the participants present that could affect the referent's location.

At the same time, the permissive reading is not entirely absent in these examples. While the jussive clause is used to obligate the participants present, it also codes a state that is favorable to someone. In (24), the directive clause can be understood as liberating the participants from having to move the boat. In (25), the permissive stance is addressed to a

momentarily unconscious, but personal and empathy-worthy being who is now protected from the cold.

If the event denoted by the jussive clause cannot be considered as controlled by an intentional agent, whether this is the referent of the jussive form, the speaker or another party, the speaker's intention is foregrounded and an optative meaning emerges (for a similar use of the Estonian jussive, see Metslang and Sepper 2010: 532; see also Scholze 2010: 388 for the Sorbian jussive).

(26) *Vallitkoon maailmassamme oikeus, totuus, hyvyys, kauneus ja suurimpana rakkaus, hän sanoi.* (FTC, Kaleva 1998–1999.)

'**May** justice, truth, goodness, beauty and — the greatest of all — love **prevail** in our world, he said.'

*Vallit-koon*    *maailmassamme*    *oikeus*  
prevail-JUSS    world.INE.POSS.1PL    justice

In this example, the referents of the subject NPs (*oikeus*,... 'justice,...') are abstract, unintentional entities. On the other hand, the state of affairs coded by the verb *vallita* ('prevail') is in itself static, in other words, there is no implication of a change that could be caused by someone. As with the examples (24) and (25), which also include a static verb (*olla* 'be'), the jussive gives rise to an implication, according to which the state of affairs coded by the verb could, however, be interrupted. The permissive aspect of jussive semantics can be observed in this regard. The directive speech act advocates not only a state of affairs that the speaker presents as desirable, but also a state of affairs that prevails if allowed to do so.

Consequently, the optative meaning produced by the jussive mood does not typically give rise to an expression of personal interest. This type of wish is expressed in Finnish by the conditional mood (Kauppinen 1998: 187–189), as in (27):

(27) *Ol-isi-pa*                    *jo*            *kesä*  
be-COND.3SG-PTCL    already    summer  
'If only it could already be summer'

Instead of implying an authority that allows the desired event to take place (or to prevail), the conditional, essentially a mood of epistemic modality in contemporary Finnish, highlights the event as belonging to a possible world, which is parallel to the reality constructed in the discourse. The division of labor between the jussive and the conditional in Finnish optative clauses appears to be comparable to that observed in Sorbian by Scholze (2010: 388, 390).

The types of jussive clauses illustrated in this section foreground the speaker's intention toward other parties' actions on the world. In other words, they foreground how things should be according to the speaker's will while, at the same time, including the idea of allowing a state of affairs to take place. In the next section, the positions have changed: the permissive stance is dominant.

### 3.2 Permission and decision-making

The permissive reading occupies the foreground when, in addition to the speaker, another intentional agent is present in the context and the action denoted by the jussive form is understood as either desired by this other agent or generally favorable for them. The speaker's intention appears in the form of conforming to the realization of the event. This is illustrated in example (28), where the speaker's attitude toward smoking is expressed, and in (29), where the informant reports the words of one of her former employers, for whom she had worked as a servant in her youth. The extract concerns the possibility of the servants going out and the attitudes of their employers toward it.

- (28) (...) *tupakoitsija polttakoon vapaasti, kunhan muut ihmiset eivät joudu siitä kärsimään. Onko tämä liikaa pyydetty?* (FTC, Aamulehti 1999.)

'(...) **let** smokers smoke as much as they want, as long as other people don't have to suffer from it. Is that too much to ask?'

*tupakoitsija poltta-koon vapaasti*  
 smoker smoke-JUSS freely

- (29) *ko ei Pusal kyl se emänt- ol vähä kans semmone et ei hän sit- oikke siit ni miälisäs- ollu mut ko isänt sanos- ai va et mitä sil väli o ett- anta men va et **menkkö** vaa nim paljon ko kon kerkkevä et ko hes sillon koton- ovak kon tarvita et- e häne sunka mittä väli ol- et hänem pualestas saa men vaa et- e mittä hän mittä est ja.* (SA, Karjala)

'because in Pusa the wife was also of the type that she didn't really like it but since the master always just said that it didn't matter just let them go they **can / should go out** as much as they like as long as they are home when they are needed that it didn't matter for him that as far as he was concerned they could go out that he wouldn't stop them and.'

*anta men va et men-kkö vaa nim paljon ko kon kerkkevä*  
 let.3SG go PTCL PTCL go-JUSS PTCL as much as as can.3PL

In (28), the action expressed by the jussive form ('smoke') is presented as being in accordance with the intention of the referent 'smoker'. The will is made explicit by the adverb *vapaasti*

(‘freely’, ‘according to his/her/their own will’). The speaker shows his or her alignment to the realization of the action. In (29), the will of the potential executor of the action of going out is implied by the third person plural verb form *kerkkevä* (inf. *keretä* ‘to be able to, within the limits of time’), in other words achieving the temporal landmark entailed by *keretä*, with as much going out as possible, presupposes that the agent has a tendency toward the action of going out. Furthermore, the modal verb *saada* (‘could/should’, see section 2.2) in the clause *et hänen pualestas saa men vaa* (‘that as far as he was concerned they *could* go out’) foregrounds the permissive reading due to the adverbial *hänen pualestas* (‘as far as he was concerned’), which leaves the conceptual path open for another participant to pass through (‘not imposing a barrier’).

Although the events in examples (28) and (29) are in line with the intention of the potential executor of the action, the jussive clauses cannot be interpreted as mere consents. These permissions are, as were the obligations analyzed in the previous section, situated in a context of decision-making. By expressing his or her conformity to the realization of the event initiated by another participant, the speaker sets up a norm, which is addressed to parties who are not the potential executors of the action denoted by the jussive form, but who have their say in the matter. In example (28), this party is the people who could potentially prevent the smoker from acting “freely” and, in (29), it is the housewife who is not in favor of the young employees going out.

In (29), the preceding construction *anta men va* (‘just let them go’) with the modal permissive verb *antaa* (‘let’) is revealing. The construction includes the so-called “zero person”, in other words the position of a nominal element with unspecified referent is left empty. In (29), the position of the syntactic subject is open ( $\emptyset$  *antaa men va* ‘ $\emptyset$  just lets them go’), and the verb takes the third person singular form accordingly. By using the zero person construction, the speaker leaves the subject position (“the permitter”) of the clause open, allowing the other participants of the speech situation, who potentially have control over the event, to place themselves in this position (see Laitinen 2006). Von Waldenfels (2012: 195–196) considers this type of permissive construction, with the verb *antaa* and the zero person, to be a special type of imperative clause, which is a demonstration of the illocutionary force of the construction (for the syntax and semantics of *antaa*, see Leino 2003, 2005).

In both examples, we can thus recognize the modal necessary meaning of the jussive behind the highlighted permissive reading.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Furthermore, example (29) includes an occurrence of another permissive marker, the modal verb *saada* (‘get’). Its semantic similarity with the jussive is discussed in Section 2.2.

### 3.3 Dynamic necessity and the non-intervention of the parties present

The third group of jussive occurrences, where permission and obligation are inseparable, consists of clauses where the jussive codes a necessity imposed on an agent by the circumstances. These clauses do not produce a directive speech act, but a modal expression of necessity. The jussive clause figures as part of a complex construction in which the initial member denotes a state of affairs having taken place and the second, the jussive clause, is a necessary consequence of it, in other words a situation that the agent must comply with (see Birjulin and Xrakovskij 2001: 47–48). At the same time, the jussive clause expresses an event that the other participants of the situation let happen.

All occurrences of this type came from the South Eastern dialects of Finnish data. These dialects belong to the larger category, composed of the Eastern dialects, which generally display a particularly rich variety of imperative clause usage compared with the standard language (see Forsberg, forthcoming). This type of jussive is illustrated in example (30), where the speaker describes a typical situation of receiving guests in a house, and in (31), where the speaker recounts a Christmas celebration of the past.

- (30) *siit ol piirakat paistettu ja pullat ja rieskat ja ne kannettii kokonaa pöyväle ja ottakoo puuko jokkaine taskustaa mil ne söi ja lusikat ol talo puolesta.* (SA, Nuijamaa.)

‘the pasties and buns and bread were baked and all of it was put on the table and everyone **would have to / was left to take** their knife out of their pocket to eat and the spoons were provided by the house.’

*ja otta-koo puuko jokkaine taskustaa mil ne söi*  
and take-JUSS knife everyone pocket.ELA.POSS.3SG/PL REL.ADE 3PL eat.IPF.3SG/PL

- (31) *kell- ol' viinaa se joi viinaa ja mitäs siinä ol'i kell- ei ollu ni sitte olkoo juomatta.* (SA, Sortavalan mlk.)

‘he who had liquor drank liquor and that’s it he who didn’t have it well then **he had to stay without drink / he was left without**’

*kell- ei ollu ni sitte ol-koo juomatta*  
REL.ADE NEG.3SG be.PST.PTCP PTCL PTCL be-JUSS drink.INF.ABE

The events coded by the jussive clauses, ‘everyone would have to / was left to take their knife out of their pocket’ and ‘he had to stay without drink / he was left without’, cannot be considered as particularly favorable from the subject referent’s point of view in either of the examples. The

permissive meaning of the jussive is therefore not interpreted as the speaker conforming to another intentional agent's will, but as the other participants' nonintervention, or passiveness, in the situation. As for the meaning of obligation, due to the generic-habitual context, it does not give rise to a proper directive reading.<sup>17</sup> The clause is understood as a description of the dynamic generic necessity arising from circumstances as opposed to an intentional agent.<sup>18</sup>

### 3.4 Conventionalized uses

In this section, I address a series of jussive constructions that have been grammaticalized or lexicalized to different degrees and point out their semantic link to the modal binarity of the jussive analyzed in the previous section.

The first type of conventionalized constructions is the concessive jussive clauses. It has been pointed out that expressions of permission are likely to develop into concessives (Bybee et al. 1994: 227; see also Haspelmath and König 1998: 598–599).<sup>19</sup> In complex constructions, the permissive meaning conveyed by the jussive in main clause position, based on the situation of interaction and the agency of the participants, is modified so that it turns into an interclausal relation overriding the contradiction between events, which are, by implication, displayed as exclusive. In other words, it is not about the speaker conforming to the will of another intentional agent, but about the absence of opposition between events, which, by definition, are assumed to be opposed (Peltola 2011: 188; Duvallon and Peltola 2013, 2014).

The interclausal link produced by the permissive meaning of the jussive can be qualified either as an alternative concession, non-factual by its truth value, or as a simple concession, involving factual events. Example (32) includes an alternative concessive clause.

(32) *Lukekoon valmentajan ohjelmassa mitä tahansa, on levättävä silloin kuin keho niin sanoo.* (FTC, *Aamulehti* 1999.)

‘**Whatever** the coaching program **says**, you have to rest when your body tells you to.’

*Luke-koon valmentajan ohjelmassa mitä tahansa*  
say-JUSS coach.GEN program.INE whatever

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<sup>17</sup> See Nuyts et al. (2005: 27–29), for a comparable series of examples of permissive expressions in a generic context.

<sup>18</sup> Note that examples (30) and (31) offer another illustration of the jussive associated with the past tense, expressing past events (see the discussion on deontic modalities and time in Section 2.1.3).

<sup>19</sup> See, however, Souesme's (2009) analysis of the English verb *may* where the permissive meaning is not considered the source of the concessive reading.

The concessive reading is founded on a situation where several elements are displayed in the subordinate clause as taking the place of the referent alternatively, with no consequence in respect of the realization of the main event. These elements can be presented in the form of a list, a scale or as alternatives that are in mutual contradiction (see Peltola 2011: 185–190). In (32), the concessive reading depends on free-choice quantification (*mitä tahansa* ‘whatever’) (see König 1986).

Example (33) contains a simple concession, sometimes called “real concession”, since no explicit alternatives to the state of affairs are presented. However, due to the nonspecific temporal semantics of the jussive, the state of affairs is displayed as a theoretical possibility (see Leech 1987 [1971]: 113–116) rather than as a fact (see Section 2.1.3 above):

(33) *Olkoon teatteri ressurkka, mutta maailmanensi-iltoja tulee viisi.* (FTC, *Aamulehti* 1999.)

‘**Though it is / it may be** a poor little theater, there will be five world premieres.’

*Ol-koon teatteri ressurkka, mutta maailmanensi-iltoja tulee viisi*  
 be-JUSS theater poor but world.GEN.premiere.PL.PART come.3SG/PL five

The concessive jussive clauses are adverbial because they denote the circumstances under which the event expressed by another clause takes place (see Cristofaro 2003: 155). In functional terms, they can thus be regarded as subordinate to this other clause.

In the Eastern dialects of Finnish, the concessive relation between events can furthermore be coded by the concessive conjunction *vaik(ka)* (‘even though’), even in the case of a jussive clause (34):

(34) A: *kuulooko se [kyy] heti.*

B: *no ei se iha tarkkaa kuole vaik sem päänkii hienontakkoo ni sannoot et se ellää auringo laskuu ast viel* (SA, Nuijamaa)

A: does it [viper] die immediately.

B: well it isn’t completely dead **VAIK you smash its head** they say it’s alive until the sunset

*no ei se iha tarkkaa kuole*  
 PTCL NEG 3SG quite completely die.NEG

*vaik sem päänkii hienonta-kkoo*  
 even.though 3SG.GEN head.GEN.CLT smash-JUSS

The co-occurrences of the clause-initial *vaik(ka)* and the jussive are the result of their semantic similarity: they both code theoretical alternatives (see Duvallon and Peltola 2013, 2014). They

also prove that this type of jussive form is to be interpreted in relation to the accompanying clause.<sup>20</sup>

It is possible that the jussive displays a greater facility to occur in subordinate clauses than the second person imperative forms. Due to its third person reference, the jussive does not activate the polarity between the first and second person. As the directive speech act can be viewed as being addressed prototypically from the speaker to the listener (see, e.g., Birjulin and Xrakovskij 2001: 5–8, according to whom all imperative clauses other than second person are non-canonical), jussive semantics may be more receptive to being reoriented from speech-act participant to interclausal relations.<sup>21</sup> The conventionalized use of the jussive discussed below demonstrates that, in certain regions, the jussive has undergone further semantic bleaching in its interclausal, adverbial position.

These jussive uses are also a particular feature of the Eastern dialects. The jussive itself appears to have developed into a marker of adverbial elements in these regions, as demonstrated in (35).

- (35) *no siin ol' tanssipaekka siinä ko ol' - ni sano että hyö rupes sitte **olkoo kellarikatollev vae mi- johokii ni hyö rupes kortipelluusee.*** (SA, Mikkelin mlk.)

‘well there was a dancing place there was- so he said they started **OLKOO** on a cellar **roof or wh-** somewhere so they started to play cards.’

*hyö rupes*                      *sitte ol-koo kellarikatollev*                      *vae mi- johokii*  
3PL start.IPF.3SG/PL PTCL be-JUSS cellar.GEN.roof.ALL or Q- somewhere

*ni hyö rupes*                      *kortipelluusee*  
PTCL 3PL start.IPF.3SG/PL card.GEN.play.ILL

In (35), the circumstances coded by the jussive clause *olkoo kellarikatolle vae mi-* (‘*OLKOO* on a cellar roof or wh-’) do not strictly speaking correspond to another event, but rather to a spatial frame within which the event coded by the main clause takes place. This frame is nonspecific by its reference because the permissive meaning of the jussive allows more than one referent to alternately take the place of the subject. The list of possible referents, the components of which are coordinated with the disjunctive conjunction *vai* (‘or’), is left open with the indefinite pronoun *johokii* (‘somewhere’). In this context, the nonspecific reference is understood as a difficulty in recalling the name of the place.

<sup>20</sup> See Metslang and Sepper (2010: 546–547) for a similar evolution (from permission to concession) of the Estonian permissive particle *las* (< *laksuma* ‘let’), and Scholze (2010: 384) for a comparable concessive use of the Sorbian jussive.

<sup>21</sup> See also Scholze (2010: 388) for an example of the Sorbian jussive mood in a completive clause.



In the data, this type of construction also expressed temporal circumstances (36) or modified the representation of one of the participants (37).

- (36) *vaik olkoo nykyjeäkii ni kyl niiss [kaloissa] o oma hajusa kuka ei tykkeä kalahaisust nis se ei mäk koko kala, puot'ii.* (SA, Taipalsaari)

‘even **OLKOO** today, well they [the fish] have their own particular smell if someone doesn’t like the smell of the fish well they just won’t go to the fish shop.’

*vaikk ol-koo nykyjeä-kii ni kyl nii-ss o*  
even.though be-JUSS today-CLT PTCL PTCL DEM.PL-INE be.3SG

*oma hajusa*  
own smell-POSS.3SG/PL

- (37) *nii sellasta ol sillo ko miekii muistamaa rupian nii, ne käi rahoomassa siitt että, käyköö siit sulhase isä elikkä joku muu.* (SA, Nuijamaa)

‘so that’s what it was like from the time that I can remember so, they passed and paid and, **be it the groom’s father or someone else.**’

*ne kä-i rahoo-ma-ssa siitt että käy-köö siit sulhase*  
3PL pass-PRET.3SG/PL pay-INF-INE PTCL PTCL pass-JUSS PTCL groom.GEN

*isä elikkä joku muu.*  
father or INDEF other

In example (36), the jussive clause (*vaik olkoo nykyjeäkii* ‘even OLKOO today’) serves to construe a temporal setting that covers an entire timescale extending to the present moment. The proposition ‘the fish have their own particular smell’ is held to be true for all points on that scale. In examples (35) and (36), the jussive clause verb (*olla* ‘to be’) is lexically weak.

In example (37), the speaker is describing the old custom for proposing marriage, according to which the proposal was made not by the groom, but by some older people, who also offered money to the young woman. The main clause verb (*käydä* ‘to pass’) is repeated in the jussive clause. The lexical contribution of the jussive verb is thus minimal here too. As in the previous examples, the jussive clause conveys a nonspecific reference. Due to the permissive meaning of the jussive, the referents of the two elements coordinated by the disjunctive *elikkä* (‘or’) can potentially take the position of the subject.

In examples (35) to (37), the semantic process is the same as that in the concessive clauses, in other words the permissive meaning of the jussive takes a syntagmatic, relational dimension. In contrast to the concessive clauses in (35) to (37), the jussive clauses do not denote an event but a spatiotemporal setting or the range of potential participants of the event coded by the main

clause. They include very few constituents: only the jussive verb with weak lexical contribution and the elements denoting the potential subject of the jussive verb. These jussive clauses do not therefore seem like prototypical subordinate clauses. The permissive meaning of the jussive operates not so much at interclausal level, as in the case of the concessive clauses, but within the main clause, allowing the integration of the nonspecific reference.<sup>22</sup>

Using the jussive in concessive clauses and as a marker of a nonspecific adverbial element highlights the permissive modal meaning of the mood. These jussive forms denote that it is possible for seemingly contradictory events to co-occur (examples 32–34) or for the event of the main clause to take place despite the (non-specified) circumstances (examples 35–37).

The next two groups of conventionalized jussive constructions allow the necessary side of the jussive semantics to come to the fore. In standard Finnish, the passive voice of the speech act verbs in the jussive has conventionalized into a rhetorical means by which the speaker can anticipate and refer to his own speech act. This is a function also displayed by the passive forms of the same group of verbs in the present indicative (see Makkonen-Craig 2011). Consider the following example:

(38) *Mainittakoon, että naiset pääsivät seuran jäseniksi vasta vuodesta 1966 lähtien.* (FTC, *Turun Sanomat* 1999.)

‘Let me say in passing that women were accepted as members of the association only from 1966 onward.’

*mainit-ta-koon*      *että*    *naiset*      *pääsivät*  
mention-PASS-JUSS COMP woman.PL be.able.to.go.IPF.3PL

With this kind of construction, the speaker guides the interlocutor. The construction can thus be considered a kind of command (see also the use of the jussive in legal contexts, example 23, above).

Furthermore, the jussive occurs in a number of conventionalized constructions of affect. Some examples of these are presented in (39).

(39) a. *Eläköön!*

‘Hurray!’

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<sup>22</sup> The jussive is not the only permissive element in the Finnish language to have undergone semantic bleaching. The second person imperative forms of the permissive modal verb *antaa* (‘let’) have grammaticalized into a discursive marker, announcing the next action of the speaker, as described in von Waldenfels (2012: 194–195, 204–205).

*Elä-köön*  
live-JUSS

b. ***Eläköön valinnanvapaus!***

‘Long live freedom of choice!’

*Elä-köön valinnan-vapaus*  
live-JUSS choice.GEN-freedom

c. ***Siunatkoon!***

‘Oh my god!’

*siunat-koon*  
bless-JUSS

d. ***Pahus soikoon!***

‘Damn it!’

*Pahus soi-koon*  
damn sound-JUSS

e. ***Onneksi olkoon!***

‘Congratulations!’

*Onneksi ol-koon*  
happiness.TRANSL be-JUSS

It seems to be characteristic of jussive forms generally in languages to appear in this type of affective, conventionalized clause. The Estonian jussive displays comparable uses in curses and swear words, such as in *And-ku jumal andeks!* ‘May god forgive!’ (Metslang and Sepper 2010: 546). Malygina (2001: 274) reports that some Old Hebrew jussive forms are present in Modern Hebrew in conventionalized expressions like *lu yehi* (‘let it be’) and *texi yedidut* (‘long live friendship’).

#### 4. Discussion

We have seen, in the previous section, that the jussive allows speakers to express the interests and points of view of two or more parties simultaneously: what is one’s necessity is another’s possibility. The fact that the two modal meanings, presented as opposite ends of the modal axis, can meet in the uses of a linguistic element shows the twofold nature of permissions. In order

to allow something, there has to be another agent's will or some other form of necessity that pre-exists.<sup>23</sup>

It should be stressed that this double modal meaning should not be analyzed as causing a lack of clarity in the discourse. Viberg (2012: 1427) remarked that uses of the Swedish modal verb *få*, otherwise semantically vague, are restricted to permissive meaning in legal context. This is also true for the equivalent Finnish verb *saada*. As for the uses of the jussive in a similar context, the meaning of obligation comes to the fore (see Hakulinen et al. 2004: §1667; see also example [23] above). Formal language registers, such as legal language, do not tolerate the twofold modal meaning under discussion here for understandable reasons.

However, in more spontaneous language use, such as that represented by the data in this study, there is no reason to think that the interlocutors consider the coexistence of two modal readings as problematic. Rather, the simultaneous presence of permission and obligation represents the dialogical nature of modal elements and illustrates the fact that grammatical constructions have their foundation in human interaction. Following Linell's (2012: 111) definition of dialogism (or contextualist interactionism), the binary modal meaning of the jussive reveals the speaker's "understanding of self, others and the world". Semantic vagueness takes the form of discursive openness as several points of view on the event are left available. The situation where the two modal poles stay simultaneously active can therefore be regarded as a discursive resource.

## 5. Conclusion

In this paper, I have regarded the Finnish jussive mood as a meeting ground for the modal meanings of permission and obligation and examined its semantics and use. I have argued that the two readings are simultaneously present in the interpretation of jussive clauses, which gives rise to various positionings of intentional agents in regard to each other and to the event that potentially takes place. The twofold modal meaning of the jussive can be considered a discursive resource: it allows more than one point of view on the event to be expressed. Due to its third person reference, the jussive inherently dissolves the unity of perspective from which the event is viewed, based on the polarity between the speaker and the listener. As a deontic modal expression, it introduces another intentional agent in addition to the two speech act participants.

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<sup>23</sup> On the other hand, while what is obligatory is permitted, the converse is not true (von Wright 1951: 4; Lyons 1977: 838).

The present paper has aimed to illustrate the variety of modal readings afforded by jussive semantics, ranging from those where necessary modality is foregrounded to those where the meaning of permission is dominant, but where the presence of the opposite pole is always in evidence.

I have pointed out some differences between the two types of data used, drawing attention in particular to the richer variety of uses of the jussive in the Eastern dialects of Finnish as compared with the standard language represented by the newspaper data. Social and regional variation in the uses of the jussive remains, however, to be investigated using a larger dataset.

In light of the jussive semantics, I have shown that linguistic modality is not merely a structure of mutually exclusive categories and that the inverse modal meanings open up different perspectives on the event and reflect the dialogical aspect of language.

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## Appendix 1: References of the data collections used

FTC – Finnish Language Text Collection – *Suomen kielen tekstikokoelma*. Electronic collection of written Finnish gathered by the Research Institute for the Languages in Finland, the Department of General Linguistics of the University of Helsinki and the Foreign Languages Department of the University of Joensuu. <http://www.csc.fi> (accessed 1 July 2014).

SA – Syntaxe Archives – *Lauseopin X-arkisto*. Research Institute for the Languages of Finland and School of Languages and Translation Studies, University of Turku. <http://syntaxarchives.suo.utu.fi> (accessed 1 July 2014).

## Appendix 2: Abbreviations used in the interlinear morphemic translations

ABE – abessive, ADE – adessive, ALL – allative, AUX – auxiliary, CLT – clitic, COMP – complementizer, COND – conditional, DEM – demonstrative, ELA – elative, GEN – genitive, ILL – illative, IMP – imperative, INDEF – indefinite, IND – indicative, INE – inessive, INF – infinitive, IPF – imperfect, JUSS – jussive, NEG – negation, NOM – nominative, OPT – optative, PART – partitive, PASS – passive, PL – plural, POSS – possessive, POT – potential, PROP – proper noun, PST – past, PTCL – particle, PTCP – participle, Q – question marker, REL – relative, SG – singular, TRANSL – translative