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**Clause-initial connectives as disguised mood markers?  
– pros & cons with theoretical premises and empirical conditions**

**Abstract**

In linguistic practice, moods are a motley bag of clause-level distinctions manipulating on what has been called ‘(ir)realis’ meanings. From this perspective, ‘mood’ can be marked anywhere, including choices between clause-initial connectives, which themselves may be morphologically complex, at least given their etymology (e.g., Mac. *deka* vs *da*, Russ. *čto* vs *čtoby*, Cz. *že* vs *aby*). I will argue that a typology of ‘(ir)realis’ marking will profit from telling apart mood as a verbal category and clause-level distinctions marked by connectives.

From this perspective, moods, if understood as a category marked on verbs (or on the VP), have never been well distinguished in Slavic languages. The so-called subjunctive (conditional, conjunctive) is marked by clitics which constrain the range of forms on the lexical verb, but they also occur as integral parts of connectives that tend to occur clause-initially (see above). As for these clitics, a clear-cut areal division between North and South Slavic (within which Slovene occupies an intermediate position) has become apparent in historical time, with *by* being used in the North, *da* in the South. Both morphemes have developed differently, in terms of the direction of clisis, degrees of morphologization (coalescence with particular word classes) and uses as self-standing (i.e. non-clitic) function words (e.g., Pol. *by*, BCMS/Sln. *da*). These differences influence the possibilities of telling apart the occurrence of *by* and *da*, respectively, as (parts of) clausal connectives (complementizers, conjunctions, particles) vs components of mood markers.

In addition, there are more recent units used as independent markers of directive illocutions (and thus related to deontic modality), such as Russ. *pust’*, Pol. *niech*, Ukr. *nexaj*, Bulg. *neka*, Sln. *naj*, which can also be used as subordinative connectives or combine with well-established complementizers (e.g., Russ. *čto pust’*, Pol. *że niech*, Sln. *da naj*) or with older irrealis markers (e.g., Russ. *pust’ by*, Pol. *niech by*). By analogy, we encounter units that have arisen as modifiers of propositions (epistemic modality, evidentiality), compare Russ. *budto*, Pol. *jakoby*, *niby*, which likewise can either occur as self-standing subordinators, as particles, or in combination with well-established complementizers.

The first part of the talk will survey the phenomena across Slavic that should serve as arguments in favor of distinguishing (verbal) mood and functionally equivalent (ir)realis distinctions indicated by connectives. This implies pointing out “fuzzy” cases and a couple of analytic problems. The second part will be devoted to case studies based on Polish and Russian diachronic corpora, that are intended to illustrate such analytical problems for earlier stages of these languages, but also to show, as far as possible, the dynamics in time for selected connectives.