

## Main Sessions

mood/modality

### Acquisitive modals in Latvian

Van der Auwera et al. (2009: 272) defines acquisitive modal (AM) as ‘an expression of modality that goes back to a predicate meaning ‘acquire, get’’. AM are found in some of the Circum-Baltic languages and languages of Southeast Asia. Van der Auwera et al. (2009: 285, 289) list *dabūt* as a candidate for AM in Latvian without giving any further detail. My paper is the first attempt to investigate modal and non-modal meanings of *dabūt* as well as of another possible AM in Latvian, *tikt*, as they are reflected in the Latvian corpus ([www.korpuss.lv](http://www.korpuss.lv)) and other sources on the Internet.

1. As typical of AM in other languages, the Latvian verbs, especially *dabūt*, can express both participant–external possibility and necessity depending on the context and situation. But Latvian is different in that its AM do not express deontic modality. Actually, the meaning of *dabūt* and *tikt* in combination with the infinitive is closest to what Enfield (2003) labels as ‘result of prior event’ with respect to ‘acquire’ verbs in languages of Southeast Asia.

- (1) a. *Ilgi dabūj-ām gaidī-t.*  
long acquire.PST-1PL wait-INF  
‘We had to wait long’
- b. *Beidzot Helēn-a dabūj-a apsēs-tie-s.*  
finally Helen-NOM.SG acquire.PST-3 sit.down-INF-REFL  
‘Finally, Helen was able to sit down’
- (2) *Beigās es tikt-u ie-t mājās*  
finally I arrive.at.PST-1SG go-INF home  
‘Finally, I could go home’

2. Since the main meaning of *tikt* is ‘arrive at’ rather than ‘acquire’, it does not precisely fit the definition of AM. Nevertheless, *tikt* serves as an intransitive equivalent of *dabūt* in some of its meanings — compare the Lithuanian AM pair *gauti* ‘acquire’ and *tekti* ‘be acquired’ in Usonienė & Jasionytė (2010). Both verbs often correspond to a single AM in other languages, for example, English *get* (Gronemeyer 1999), Swedish *få* (Viberg 2012), and Estonian *saama* (Tragel & Habicht 2012).

- (3) a. *Vis-i dabūj-a balv-as*  
all-NOM.PL acquire.PST-3 prize-ACC.PL  
‘Everybody got prizes’
- b. *Balv-as tik-a vis-iem*  
prizes-NOM.PL be.acquired.PST-3 all-DAT.PL  
‘Prizes were received by everybody’
- (4) a. *Es tikt-u virs ūden-s*  
I arrive.at.PST-1SG above water-GEN.SG  
‘I got above the water’
- b. *Viņš dabūj-a galv-u virs ūden-s*  
He acquire.PST-3 head-ACC.SG above water-GEN.SG  
‘He got his head above the water’
- (5) a. *Es tikt-u vaļ-ā no gar-ajiem mat-iem*  
I arrive.at.PST-1SG freedom-LOC.SG from long-DAT.PL.DEF hair-DAT.PL  
‘I got rid of my long hair’
- b. *Es dabūj-u durv-is vaļ-ā*  
I acquire.PST-1SG door-ACC.PL freedom-LOC.SG  
‘I got the door open’

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