

Note to the Author: Please provide  
Keywords for this chapter.

# A strange variant of Russian čtoby-construction

Alexander Letuchiy

Philological Department, Higher School of Economics, Moscow

In my paper, I discuss the choice of the verb form in constructions with a complementizer/adverbial subordinator *čtoby*. I show that while the situation is rather trivial in biclausal constructions, analysis of triclausal constructions where another clause is embedded under the *čtoby*-clause reveals a phenomenon which is not accounted for in any Russian grammatical descriptions. The marker imposes the past tense form not only to the verb in its clause, but also to the temporal clause which is embedded deeper. The existence of such an unusual construction results from both semantic and syntactic factors: namely, from the fact that the ‘unreal’ meaning carried by *čtoby* spreads to the temporal clause and from the syntactic properties of *čtoby* and *kogda*, the latter not imposing any formal restrictions on the verb form in the temporal clause.

**Keywords:**

## 1. Introduction

In Russian, as in many languages, there are numerous types of embedded clauses. These types are different both semantically and syntactically. For instance, they can be divided, as it is traditionally done (see Shopen 1985 for detailed classification), into three semantico-syntactic classes: relative clauses (as in *People who are from Sweden tend to be very hard-working*), adverbial clauses (with the meaning of time, reason, purpose, and so on, as in *I was late because I lost my bag*), and sentential arguments (as in *I want to visit my friends*).

Another classification, which is more relevant for the present paper, concerns the verb form in the embedded clause. The verb form in the embedded clause is sometimes restricted – these restrictions are often related to individual properties of the subordinator under analysis.

Consider, for instance, embedded clauses containing the subordinators *kogda* and *čtoby*. In the former, the verb can have a wide range of finite verb forms: forms of present, future or past tense and subjunctive mood. Their choice is semantically motivated:

- (1) a. *Kogda ja pridu, ja tebe pozvonju.*  
     when I:NOM come:PF<sup>1</sup>.1SG I:NOM you:DAT call:PF.1SG  
     ‘When I come, I will call you.’
- b. *Kogda ja prixožu, ja emu vsegda zvonju.*  
     when I:NOM come:IPF.1SG I:NOM he:DAT always call:IPF.1SG  
     ‘When I come, I always call him.’
- c. *Kogda ja prišel, ja emu pozvonil.*  
     when I:NOM came:PF.M I:NOM he:DAT called:PF.M  
     ‘When I came, I called him.’
- d. *Kogda ja prišel by, ja by emu pozvonil.*  
     when I:NOM came:PF.M PART I:NOM PART he:DAT called:PF.M  
     ‘When I would come, I would call him.’

The variant with subjunctive mood, as in (1d), is somewhat less frequent than the other ones. However, it is not at all ungrammatical or semantically peculiar. It can be used, for instance, in a context like:

- (1') A. *Why didn't you call your uncle? Today is his Birthday.*  
     B. *He had to wait a bit. I would call him when I came home,  
         I couldn't do it at my job.*

Thus, the adverbial subordinator *kogda* does not prohibit any verb form in the embedded clause.

This is not the case with the word *čtoby* used both as a complementizer and an adverbial (purpose) subordinator. *Čtoby* was historically a combination of the complementizer *čto* and the particle *by* which marks subjunctive mood and, more generally, meanings related to unreality, such as wish, advise, and so on. The canonical subjunctive mood forms consist of *by* and the past tense verb form – or, more precisely, a form homonymous to the past tense form. There are also combinations of *by* with infinitive which are regarded as subjunctive forms by some researchers but are not considered to be subjunctive forms by others.

Today *čtoby* is hardly understood by native speakers as a combination of *čto* + *by*. However, linguists are not unanimous concerning the question whether the

1. The lexical aspect (perfective/imperfective) is marked for all verbs except *byt* ‘be’. Most examples are elicited but examples of the construction under analysis are from the Russian National Corpus ([www.ruscorpora.ru](http://www.ruscorpora.ru)).

linguistics properties of *čtoby* can all be compositionally derived from *čto* + *by* (see Panov 1966 and Brecht 1977 for analysis of existing points of view). At least, there are many properties which distinguish *čtoby* from the combination of *čto* and *by*. First of all, *by* in this case always follows *čto* while in other cases this particle has a relatively free linear position. Second, the range of meanings of *čtoby* (e.g. the purpose meaning) cannot be explained by the meaning of its components. However, the formal restriction on the verb form of the embedded clause is retained in the contemporary language: the verb should always be in the infinitive or past tense form:

- (2) a. *Prixodi čtoby za nas poboleť*.  
 come:IPF.IMP in-order-to for we:ACC support:INF  
 'Come and support us!' (e.g. to a football match).
- b. *Čtoby bylo ponjatnee, ja vstavil tablicu*.  
 in-order-to was:NEUT clear:COM I:NOM inserted:M table:ACC  
 'I inserted a table so as to make it clearer.'

Other forms, such as future and present, are impossible:

- c. \**Čtoby budet ponjatnee, ja vstavil tablicu*.  
 in-order-to be: FUT.3SG clear:COM I:NOM inserted:M table:ACC  
 Intended: 'I inserted a table so as to make it clearer.'

Dobrushina 2011 proposes to distinguish two types of *čtoby*: the first one she calls 'purpose *čtoby*' and the second one 'irreal *čtoby*'. She shows that the two *čtoby* behave in different ways and are reducible to the combination of *čto* and *by* to different extent.

Thus, the subordinator<sup>2</sup> *čtoby* restricts the use of verb forms in the embedded clauses. In what follows I will examine only constructions with *čtoby* and I will begin with a short sketch of its functions.

The principal aim of my study is to consider constructions with *čtoby* containing 'double embedding': in other words, *čtoby* hosts a clause embedded under the main one, but another clause is embedded deeper under the *čtoby*-clause. I seek to answer the question whether there are any special kinds of behavior characterizing these 'tripartite' structures.

2. Here and below, the marker *čtoby* is often called 'subordinator' in order to avoid mention of all its syntactic functions. The marker is glossed as 'to' or 'in order to', depending on the function in the given context.

## 2. Functions of *čtoby*

The word *čtoby* has various functions, being used both in biclausal and monoclausal constructions (see Dobrushina 2011 for details). In biclausal constructions, its main uses are (1) in purpose adverbial clauses and (2) in complement clauses marked for irrealis.

First, *čtoby* is the main adverbial subordinator marking purpose clauses in Russian (see, for instance, (2a–b) above). Other subordinators are *daby*, which is much more rare than *čtoby*, and the combination *dlja t-ogo čtoby* (for that-GEN. SG.N to) which includes *čtoby*. These complementizers do not show significant semantic differences when compared to the marker under analysis.

The second function of *čtoby* is to form complement clauses marked for irrealis. Some verbs whereof the clausal complement denotes an unreal situation require use of *čtoby* (3), not the default complementizer *čto*, illustrated in (4).

- (3) *Ja xoč-u čtoby priexal moj djadja.*  
 I:NOM want:1SG to came:M my:NOM uncle:NOM  
 'I want my uncle to come.'
- (4) *Ja ponjal čto oni menja obmanuli.*  
 I:NOM understood:M that they:NOM I:ACC deceived:PL  
 'I understood that they deceived me.'

The verb *xotet* 'want' cannot be used with *čto*.

Russian possesses another class of lexemes which are compatible with both *čto* and *čtoby*: here belong *dumat* 'think', *somnevatišja* 'doubt' and so on. For some of them, such as *somnevatišja* the semantic difference between the two variants is very little and not at all obvious. Others, such as *dumat*, take *čto* as a default option, while *čtoby* is possible under certain conditions. For *dumat*, *čtoby* is possible only if the verb is negated:

- (5) *Somnevajus' čto/čtoby oni tebja ponjali.*  
 doubt:1SG that/to they:NOM you:ACC understood:PL  
 'I have some doubts that they understood you.'
- (6) *Dumaju čto/\*čtoby on tebja ponjal.*  
 think:1SG that/to he:NOM you:ACC understood:M  
 'I think that he understood you.'
- (7) *Ne dumaju čtoby on tebja ponjal.*  
 NEG think:1SG to he:NOM you:ACC understood:M  
 'I don't think that he understood you.'

In (5), *čto* and *čtoby* are interchangeable, and almost no semantic difference is observed between the two variants. In contrast, the verb *dumat'* with *čtoby* seems to presuppose a greatest degree of unreality of the situation, though it is difficult to be checked against the corpus data.

There is another difference, both in (5) and in (6)–(7), namely that in variants with *čto*, the tense of the verb in the embedded clause can be past, present or future, depending on whether the event (e.g. 'he understands you') took place before, after or simultaneously with the speech act. In variants with *čtoby*, only the past tense form is possible in the embedded clause, which is typical for all constructions with *čtoby*, and the temporal reference can be either – for instance, in (5), the situation 'they understand you' could take place before, after or simultaneously with the speech act, and the verb form will remain the same.

Note that the choice of the verb form is organized differently depending on whether *čtoby* plays a role of purpose subordinator or 'unreal' complementizer. In the former function, the verb in the embedded clause can take either the past tense, as in (2b) or the infinitive form, as in (2a). Infinitive is mainly used when the subjects of the main and the embedded clause are co-referent, which is the case in (2a), and more rarely in different subjects constructions.

In contrast, when *čtoby* is used as a complementizer, as in (5) and (7), infinitive is impossible in the embedded clause, and the verb always takes the past tense form.

Finally, *čtoby* has a special particle-like use in which it denotes an unpolite type of command, mostly in combination with the first or third person:

- (8) *Čtoby ja ètogo Peti u nas ne videl!*  
 to I:NOM this:GEN.M Petja:GEN by we:GEN NEG saw:M  
 'I don't want to see this Petja at our home.'

In what follows, only examples illustrating the first two functions (those of adverbial subordinator and marker of sentential arguments) will be considered. However, I will treat these two classes together, as I haven't discover any contexts where it is relevant for the problem under analysis if *čtoby* is used as an adverbial subordinator or sentential argument marker.

### 3. Tense in Russian complex clauses

As stated above, the verb in constructions with *kogda* can be in the past, present or future tense or in the subjunctive mood. Importantly, tense forms in Russian, as in many other European languages, can have absolute or relative uses. The three

tense forms of the indicative mood can either denote the temporal localization of the event with respect to the speech act (absolute use), or with respect to another event mentioned in the discourse (relative use).

Relative uses of verb forms logically correspond to their absolute uses. The past tense denote the precedence of the event to the speech act (absolute use) or another event (relative use). Similarly, the present tense designates that the event is simultaneous (in any precise sense) with the speech act (absolute use) or another event (relative use), while the future tense means that the event follows the speech act (absolute use) or another event (relative use).

Russian complementizers and adverbial subordinators differ with respect to their compatibility with absolute or relative uses of verbs forms in the embedded clause. For instance, the complementizer *čto* is compatible with both types of uses:

- (9) a. *Ja znal čto on tam rabotal.*  
           I:NOM knew:IPF.M that he:NOM there worked:IPF.M  
           'I knew that he worked there.'
- b. *Ja znal čto on tam rabotaet.*  
           I:NOM knew:IPF.M that he:NOM there work:IPF.3SG  
           'I knew that he works there.'
- c. *Ja znal čto on tam bud-et rabotat'.*  
           I:NOM knew:IPF.M that he:NOM there be:FUT.3SG work:IPF:INF  
           'I knew that he would work there.'

In (9a), the past tense can be used absolutely or relatively. If the 'absolute reading' is chosen, the sentence means 'I knew that he worked there before the speech act (and simultaneously to the moment when I knew it)'. In the 'relative reading', the sentence means 'I knew that he had worked there earlier (before the moment when I knew it or find it out)'. The other two verb forms in (9bc), not surprisingly, can only be interpreted relatively. The present tense means 'I knew that he worked there' (the meaning is synonymous to the 'absolute' reading of (9a)), and the future tense means 'I knew that he would work there after the moment when I knew it or find it out'.

In contrast, the adverbial subordinator *kogda* does not admit relative interpretation of any tense in the embedded clause. In (1abc), all tense forms are interpreted absolutely, in other words, the past, present and future tense denotes the location of the event before, simultaneously or after the speech act, respectively. Note that no construction like (10) is possible:

- (10) \**Kogda on prišel ja emu otdam den'gi.*  
           when he:NOM came:PF.M I:NOM he:DAT give:PF.1SG money:ACC  
           Intended: 'When he comes I will give him the money back.'

The relative interpretation of the past tense *prišel* ‘came’ in the embedded clause (e.g. the location before the other event, *otdam* ‘give’ is impossible). The absolute interpretation is possible but yields a reading which is impossible semantically: speaker’s action (‘I will give him the money back’) is planned for the future, after another event which has already taken place (‘He came’).

#### 4. Tripartite constructions

In most languages, including Russian, a complex clause can include more than two simple clauses (these constructions are called ‘complex clauses with multiple embedding’ by Shopen 1985 and others). For instance, a temporal clause can be embedded under conditional clause to yield something like ‘If you see John when he is playing football tell me please’.

Here I will focus on constructions where a temporal clause is embedded under a purpose clause or a clausal complement containing *čtoby*. The main issue I address is how the tense form in the ‘third’ clause, the temporal one with *kogda* is chosen.

Grammatical descriptions do not say anything on tripartite constructions, neither in the descriptive nor in the prescriptive respect (see, for instance, Russian Grammar 1970; Russian Grammar 1980; as well as Brecht 1977 and Timberlake 2004). Neither are these constructions mentioned in typological literature on complex clauses. However, it would be logical to suppose that *čtoby* only applies restrictions on the verb form in its clause, not on the deeper one. Also, as said above, we know that *kogda* does not restrict the verb form in its clause in any way. Thus, the tripartite clause must follow the general pattern, the verb form in the temporal clause being chosen semantically.

This is really the case in most examples, e.g. in (11) and (12):

- (11) *Ja ne pomnju slučaja čtoby kogda on podključalsja k operacii byvali provaly.*  
 I:NOM NEG remember:IPF.1SG case:GEN to when he:NOM participated:IPF.M to operation:DAT was:ITER.PL failures:NOM  
 ‘I do not remember cases when he participated in a [military] operation and it failed.’

[Vjačeslav Morozov. Admiral FSB]

- (12) *Xoču čtoby kogda ja umru ona vspomnila kakaja u nee ... byla babuška.*  
 want:IPF.1SG to when I:NOM die:PF.1SG she:NOM recalled:PF.F which:NOM.F at she:GEN was:F grandmother:NOM  
 ‘I want that when I die she recalled which grandmother he had.’

[Anatolij Najman. Rasskazy o Anne Axmatovoj.]

For instance, in (11), the past tense is semantically motivated: the person the speaker mentions worked in the military forces before the speech act. Thus, this example illustrates an absolute use of the past tense: the tense is with respect to the speech act, not the time of other events described.

Similarly, in (12), the future tense is also used absolutely. The speaker (Anna Axmatova) will presumably die after she says these words, thus, the future tense means that the time of her death is situated on the time axis after the moment of speech. In both of these examples, the tense in the temporal clause is motivated by the position of the event with respect to the moment of speech.

However, there is another variant of the same construction which is much less usual and less frequently observed in the corpus data. In this variant, the verb form in the temporal clause is chosen based on the form in the *čtoby*-clause (the standard variant represented in (11) and (12) is also possible for these examples):

- (13) *Ja xoču čtoby kogda ja prixodil domoj dver' otkryvala žena.*  
 I:NOM want:IPF.1SG to when I:NOM came:IPF.M home:ADV door:ACC opened:IPF.F wife:NOM
- 'I want my wife to open (me) the door when I come home.' [Film "Tišina"].

- (14) ('I want to have a flat in my mother city, Saint-Petersburg, with the following purpose:)  
*Čtoby kogda ja tuda priežžala mogla otdoxnut'.*  
 in-order-to when I:NOM there came:IPF.F could:IPF.F rest:INF  
 'In order to be able to rest there when I come to Saint-Petersburg.'

In (13), the past tense of the verb *prixodit* 'come' cannot be used absolutely: the unreal situation 'When I come home, the wife opens the door' cannot take place before the speech act - it is unreal, and can only be realized after the speech act. In (14), the situation is the same: the object of wish 'When I come to Saint-Petersburg I have a place where to live' can only be realized after the speech act.

Neither can the past tense be used relatively, marking the position of the event in the temporal clause with respect to the event in the *čtoby*-clause. As long as the tense is past both in (13) and (14), the event designated in the temporal clause had to take place before the event in the *čtoby*-clause. But this is obviously not the case. While in (13) the event in temporal clause really precedes the one in the *čtoby* - though the latter directly follows the former which makes the relative use of tense rather improbable - in (14), the verb *priežžat* 'come' in fact means 'come and live for a while', and thus, the situation in *čtoby*-clause occurs simultaneously with one in the temporal clause, rather than follows it (all the time when the subject is in Saint-Petersburg she wants to have a place where to live).

What is more important, as stated above, the relative use of tense is uncommon in Russian *kogda*-clauses. Recall that no construction like (10), repeated here as (15), is possible:

- (15) \**Kogda on prišel ja emu otdam den'gi.*  
 when he:NOM came:PF.M 1:NOM he:DAT give:PF.1SG money:ACC  
 'When he comes I will give him the money back.'

For the sake of systematic description, we should not analyze the cases in (13) and (14) as a relative use of tense that is possible in tripartite constructions, but not in bipartite ones.<sup>3</sup>

The only way to consider things like (13) and (14) is to propose that the past tense in the temporal clause is motivated by the complementizer *čtoby* which is situated in another clause, a purpose adverbial clause or a clausal complement.

The tripartite structures under analysis call for the 'tense agreement' analysis proposed by Świdziński 1990 for some Polish constructions. The main clause can contain any possible tense form, the past tense of the predicate in the second clause (*dver' otkryvala žena* in (13)) is entirely determined by the subordinator *čtoby*. But how will the language treat the third clause: will there be any 'tense agreement' between the third clause (*kogda ja prixdil* in (13)) and the main clause or the third clause will follow the pattern of the *čtoby*-clause?

It could be tempting to mention 'tense agreement' when discussing (13) and (14). This term denotes cases when there is a requirement of identity of tense forms between the two parts of complex clause. However, the case in (13) and (14) seem to be in a sense opposite to this phenomenon.

In tense agreement, the identity requirement is to some extent semantically motivated. For instance, the fact that the Polish subordinator *ponieważ* 'because' allow the tense forms of the verbs in the two clauses be different, while *póki* 'while' requires them to be identical, follows from the semantics of the two units: *póki* denotes two simultaneous events, whereas for *ponieważ*, one of the situations (the reason) can precede the other one (the consequence).

In contrast, the two variants in (11) and (12) vs. (13) and (14) do not seem to reflect different interpretations. The two constructions are synonymous, and the difference is only in the syntactic behavior. In the main variant, the tense is assigned to the verb in *kogda*-clause autonomously, based on the temporal

3. Note that the aspectual issue is left beyond the scope of the present article. At least it is evident that, though imperfective verbs prevail in the temporal clauses, as in (13) and (14), perfective forms are also used in this construction.

characteristics of the event. In (13) and (14), *čtoby* is responsible for case assignment in *kogda*-clause.

It is also important that the situation in (13) and (14) is typologically unusual: the situation when a particular complementizer or conjunction regulates the verb form in its clause is very widespread but nobody mentions that *čtoby* can also change the verb form in other clauses.

The grammaticality of the construction under analysis does not depend on the semantic function of *čtoby*. For instance, in (13), a clausal complement of the verb *xotet* ‘want’ is build with *čtoby*, while in (14), *čtoby* is used as a purpose subordinator – but the past tense in the temporal clause is possible in both cases. The third, imperative-like use of *čtoby* is also compatible with the construction under analysis, though this construction is not found in literary texts, maybe due to the fact that this use of *čtoby* tends to occur in colloquial oral speech and its imitations:

- (16) *Čtoby kogda ja prišel moi vešči byli uže vystirany!*  
to when I:NOM came:PF.M my:PL.NOM things:NOM was:PL  
already washed:PART.PL

‘I want that when I come my clothes have already been washed!’  
[An anecdote].

In this case, the construction is the same as in (13) and (14), except that what used to be historically the main clause is absent. The presence of *čtoby* in the main clause influences the verb form in the embedded temporal clause.

The parameter which really matters for (im)possibility of the past tense is word order. Note that in (13), as well as (14), the temporal clause is inserted into the *čtoby*-clause (more precisely, it immediately follows *čtoby*). If the temporal clause followed the whole *čtoby*-clause the construction would become impossible:

- (13') \**Ja xoču čtoby dver' otkryvala žena kogda ja prixodil domoj.*  
I:NOM want:IPF.1SG to door:ACC opened:IPF.F wife:NOM when  
I:NOM came:IPF.M home:ADV

‘I want my wife to open (me) the door when I come home.’

The relevance of the word order evidences for the assumption that it is the marker *čtoby* itself which can sometimes impose its restrictions on the verb in the third (temporal) clause. Note that the standard variant with the present or future tense is always possible – not only can it replace the construction under analysis in (13) and (14), but remains acceptable in cases like (11') where the word order is changed.

The word order as in (13) and (14) is rather frequent in Russian. In RNC, there are 286204 examples of *čtoby*, 390262 examples of *kogda*, whereas the ordering *čtoby kogda* occurs in 163 examples. This figure may seem not really significant – but note that in Bulgarian one does not find in the National Corpus any examples of this sort (a few of them occur in the Google search, while *za da* ‘in order to’ is used 570449 times, and *kogato* ‘when’ occurs in 697937 contexts. Thus, in comparison to Bulgarian, Russian has a rather high percentage of contexts with insertion.

Outside the Slavic family, the situation is very diverse. In any case, there are languages similar to Bulgarian, where insertion is not at all frequent: in the Arabic corpus (ArabiCorpus.byu.edu) no examples were found where ‘*indama* ‘when’ followed *li an* ‘in order to’ or ‘*an* ‘to, that.’ Thus, if *čtoby* really influences the choice of the tense form in the temporal clause, the Russian word order favours emergence of the construction under analysis, because constructions with insertion occur relatively often.

Note that the variant illustrated in (2a) with infinitive in the embedded clause is impossible in the tripartite construction under analysis – in other words, there are no examples analogous to (13) and (14) where infinitive occurs both in the *čtoby*-clause and in the temporal clause, even if the subject of the main clause is co-referent to the subject of the *čtoby*-clause and the temporal clause. This can be related to the fact that infinitive never occurs in usual, bipartite constructions with *kogda* – only finite forms, as in (1), are possible. The impossibility of the infinitive in the bipartite construction, which is more often, causes its impossibility in the rare tripartite construction under analysis, as in (13) and (14).

## 5. Semantic motivation of the past tense in the temporal clause

Of course, the construction under analysis can be thought of as a purely formal type of the double embedding construction. However, the past tense in the temporal clause has a purely semantic motivation.

Recall that the marker *čtoby* in all its uses bears a component of unreality in its semantics. It denotes that the situation in the *čtoby*-clause has not occurred and the speaker is not sure that it occurs, but only expresses its subjective attitude to this possible event.

Of course, the clause introduced by *čtoby* denotes an unreal event. For instance, the situation ‘The wife opens the door’ in (13) is unreal – by the time of speech the speaker’s wife often is out when he comes home and does not open the door, or even the speaker is not married, and his wife does not exist. The question whether the temporal clause is included into the scope of unreal semantic operator is much more difficult.

On the one hand, this sentence can very well be used if the event in the temporal clause already takes place. For example, in (13) the speaker presumably comes home every evening, though his wife does not behave in the way he requires. Thus, the temporal clause can denote an unreal or real event.

On the other hand, it is plausible to suppose that the unreal meaning in (13), and (14), and similar examples applies to both embedded clause (the clausal complement and the temporal clause). In this case, the meaning of this sentence can be reformulated in the following simplified way: 'I want that the following situation take place: [I come home, by this moment my wife is at home and opens the door].'

Moreover, even if the speaker really wants only that the second part of the situation take place ('my wife is at home and opens the door'), it does not prevent us from proposing that the first part ('I come home') is in the scope of the unreal operator. Note that this sentence can be used when the speaker is not yet married and, perhaps, does not work and is mainly at home. Thus, it can well be the case that the whole state of affairs including two subevents is under the scope of *irrealis*. In this case, the use of the past tense in the deepest embedded temporal clause in (13) and (14) is semantically motivated: the past tense form is a part of the subjunctive mood form, which is logically possible for the temporal clause, because it may denote an unreal event.

## 6. Other complementizers

Of course, a question arises whether the same construction is possible with other pairs of complementizers and adverbial subordinators. The question requires an additional search of data, but for the moment, almost no analogous examples have been found.

In order to check it, we had to search for similar contexts with a pair of complementizers where the first one requires a particular verb form, while the second one allows use of any verb form, including the three tenses of the indicative mood and the subjunctive mood forms.

Examples of the same construction where the first marker is *čtoby* and the second one another temporal subordinator, except *kogda*, occurs sometimes in Google, but not in the corpus, and they are less numerous than contexts with *kogda*:

- (17) *Ja xoču čtoby kak tol'ko otkryvala forum tam srazu byla moja ljubimaja kartinka.*  
 I:NOM want:IPF.1SG that as only opened:IPF.F forum:ACC there right-away was:F my:NOM.F favourite:NOM.F picture:NOM  
 'I want that at the moment when I open the forum there was already my favourite picture.'

The statistical difference between *kogda* and other (e.g. temporal) subordinators results from two factors. First, in general *kogda* is by far the most frequent temporal subordinator. Second, only *kogda* admits any temporal relations: sequence, precedence, posteriority between the main and the embedded clause and, thus, there are no requirements or even tendencies regulating the verb form in the embedded clause. All other markers bear more narrow meanings: for instance, in sentential adjuncts *kak tol'ko* denotes posteriority, while *poka* designates that the two events took place simultaneously.

On the other hand, in Russian there are many constructions with complementizers and particles which require the verb to be in the past tense. These include, for instance, the unreal variant of the conditional subordinator *esli by* 'if' and the same combination used as a particle with the meaning of wish, similar to English *if only*, as well as combinations *net by* and *vot by* which also express the meaning of wish. All of them require the verb in the same clause to be in the past tense, but no marker from this list occurs in the construction under analysis.

For instance, in the construction where the marker *esli by* occurs in combination with *kogda*, followed by a verb in the past tense, the absolute use of the past tense form is observed. In (18), the speaker means that the whole sequence of events took part in the past, and the past tense *priexal* 'came' denotes that the speaker came to Sochi before the moment of speech, thus, the tense is used absolutely:

- (18) *Esli by mne, kogda ja v 1995 godu priexal na festival' v Sochi, kto-to skazal, chto ja budu general'nym direktorom AMiKa, ja by dolgo smejalsja.*  
 'If anyone told me when I came to the Sochi festival in 1995 that I would be the General Manager of AMiK I would laugh for a long time.'

Some of my informants allow a non-canonical reading for similar contexts where the event expressed in the temporal clause has not yet taken place. Cf., for instance, (19):

- (19) *Kak zdorovo bylo by esli by kogda on prišel  
 how great was:NEUT PART if PART when he:NOM came:PF.M  
 tort uže stojal na stol-e.  
 cake:NOM already stood:IPF.M on table:LOC*  
 'How great it would be if the cake was already on the table when he comes!'

Some native speakers consider two interpretations as possible for (19):

- (i) The person the speaker tells about has already come, and the cake was not on the table. The speaker says that it would have been great if the cake had been on the table (counterfactual conditional construction).

In this case, the choice of past tense in the temporal clause is not related to the presence of *esli by* in the main clause. It denotes that the event (the arrival of the hero) took place before the moment of speech.

(ii) The person the speaker tells about has not yet come, and the speaker says that it will be great (in the future) if the cake is on the table (real conditional construction).

In this case, we observe the construction under analysis, where the use of the past tense *prišel* in the deepest (temporal) clause is motivated by the presence of *esli by* in the main clause. However, interpretation (ii) is never found in real texts. Similarly, the construction under analysis is not found with *vot by* and other expressions of wish.

The question why the non-standard past occurs almost exclusively with *čtoby* is not at all simple. However, it supposedly results from the fact that the behavior of *by* in *čtoby* differs from its behavior in all other constructions. For instance, as mentioned below in Section 7, *by* in *čtoby* cannot be doubled by another *by* in the same clause, as opposed to all other instances of *by*. More precisely, *by* in *čtoby* seems to lose its autonomous status and does not behave as a particle – this is why it can be doubled by another particle *by*. It is thus not surprising that *by* in *čtoby* does not strictly obey to the restriction valid for all other instances of particle *by* – namely, that *by* in a clause cannot lead to apparition of a past tense form in another clause.

## 7. *By* in the temporal clause

The construction under analysis could seem to be just copying the verb forms under the influence of the marker *čtoby*. What makes the situation more complicated is the fact that the particle *by* sometimes occurs in the temporal clause:

- (20) *Čtoby kogda narod videl by ego v yaščike, in-order-to when people:NOM saw:IPF.M PART he:ACC in box:LOC nemedlenno podčinjalsja*  
immediately obeyed:IPF.M  
'So that the people obey him immediately when they see (saw) him in the box (i.e. in the TV)'

In usual bipartite constructions with *čtoby*, *by*, as a rule, cannot be used in the embedded clause:

- (21) *Ja sdelal èto čtoby menja (\*by) ponjali.*  
I:NOM did:PE.M this:ACC in-order-to I:ACC PART understood:PE.PL  
'I did it so that they understand me'

Note that the general rules of Russian admit two instances of *by* in the same sentence – for instance, the first of them can occur in the unreal variant of the conditional subordinator *esli by* 'if', and the second one can be situated after the finite verb:

- (22) *Esli by možno bylo by čto-to sdelat'...*  
 if PART possible was:NEUT PART something:ACC do:PF.INF  
 'If it only was possible to do something...'

However, *čtoby* rarely occurs with this type of doubling, which may be due to the fact that the particle inside *čtoby* is fully lexicalized.

The fact that *by* becomes possible in tripartite constructions makes it evident that the past tense form in the temporal clause occurs not only under the influence of *čtoby*. If it was the case, the behavior of this temporal clause had to be the same as that of the *čtoby*-clause, in particular, the particle *by* had to be ungrammatical. However, examples like (20) show that the situation in these two clauses is not the same. While the properties of *čtoby*-clause is fully defined by the presence of *čtoby*, and *by* is impossible, since the complementizer already contains this particle, the temporal clause is embedded deeper, and *čtoby* is not a component of this clause.

Thus, the presence of *by* is due to the fact that the temporal clause can fall into the scope of the unreal semantic operator, as said in Section 5. It is not the case that *čtoby* simply can impose its grammatical requirements to all verbs in the embedded clauses – the unreal meaning is present and can be manifested also by the particle *by*.

## 8. Conclusions and explanations

In the present article, a special Russian construction was discussed. Its peculiarity is that the presence of the complementizer/purpose subordinator *čtoby* influences not only the choice of the past tense form in the same clause, but also the occurrence of the same form in the deeper embedded temporal clause. Though Barentsen 1995 and Padučeva 1996 proposes that many of Russian verb forms can have special uses and readings in embedded clause, there is no mention of any special properties of the tripartite constructions with double embedding. This is partly due to the fact that these constructions are relatively rare in literary texts and especially in the oral discourse.

The Russian phenomenon may seem to enter naturally into the class of phenomena discussed by Świdziński 1990: in these examples, so-called 'tense agreement' is discussed. The term means that for some types of complex clauses, there is a condition that if one part has a tense characteristics, the same tense characteristics should be present in the other part. Moreover, the author shows that some tenseless forms, such as imperatives, are semantically (based on tense agreement) close to those bearing a particular tense (for instance, future for imperatives).

However, there are important differences between the Russian case and the Polish constructions discussed by Świdziński. First of all, in the *čtoby*-construction the variant where the form of the verb in the *kogda*-clause is dictated by *čtoby* can always be replaced by the main variant where the tense in the *kogda*-clause is chosen semantically – in the examples pointed at by Świdziński, the tense agreement is obligatory.

Second, the Russian construction very often contains the default temporal subordinator *kogda* which is not subject to any strict rules regulating temporal order of events. This makes a possible analysis of the variant illustrated by (13), (14) as tense agreement between the two parts of the construction problematic (there can be any temporal order between the two events, correspondingly, the hypothetic tense agreement would not correspond to any natural semantic relation between the events).

The most straightforward way to explain the existence of the construction under analysis is to propose that the subordinator *čtoby* influences not only the clause it introduces but also the temporal clause. However, this fact demands an explanation why this is possible almost exclusively in combinations *čtoby* + *kogda*.

The explanation seems to be as follows: *čtoby* is one of the few Russian subordinators which strictly regulate the choice of the verb form. In contrast, *kogda* is the least restrictive subordinator, both formally (the verb in the temporal *kogda*-clause can be in present, past, future or subjunctive, see (1)) and semantically (the two events in the *kogda*-construction can be situated in different ways on the time axis). As a result, the boundary of the temporal clause, marked with *kogda*, which does not impose its own restrictions, is transparent for the influence of *čtoby*. The fact that the temporal clause often occurs immediately after the marker *čtoby* facilitates the penetration of the grammatical features imposed by *čtoby* into the following (temporal) clause.

At the same time, another possible explanation, namely that *kogda* behaves in examples like (13) and (14) as a co-ordinate conjunction, and the past tense (e.g. *prixodil* and *otkryvala*) in (13) in a sense mark two members of the conjunction relation does not seem to be true. Examples like (20) show that *čtoby*-clauses and *kogda*-clauses do not behave symmetrically, e.g. with respect to the occurrence of the particle *by*. In the clause introduced by *čtoby* *by* is rarely doubled and this doubling is not fully grammatical (see (21)), while in the temporal clause the doubling becomes grammatically perfect.

What is important, and this fact is also illustrated by examples like (20), is that the choice of the past tense in the temporal clause has semantic grounds. If the *čtoby*-clause marks an unreal situation, it is likely that the temporal clause is also inside the scope of this unreal semantic operator. The question whether the unreal meaning spreads to all language material embedded under the irrealis marker or only within one clause requires a thorough typological consideration.

The data analyzed above are important for the general theory of subordination and complex clauses. In the syntactic research, the authors (e.g. Świdziński 1990; Shopen (ed.) 1985 et al.) mostly restrict themselves with bipartite sentences assuming (explicitly or implicitly) that the behavior of structures with double embedding can easily be derived from structures with single embedding. This, however, is not the case. In the Russian construction under analysis, the verb form in the main clause is relevant for the choice of the form in the third clause – thus, tripartite structures with double embedding have a unique property which cannot be discussed on standard structures with single embedding. This means that the analysis of structures with double embedding can also be useful for descriptions of other languages and typological investigations.

Our data also put forward the whole group of problems related to the tripartite constructions with double embedding. These constructions contain two embedded clauses. Each of them can have its own formal and semantic properties, and their relation to each other, as well as to the main clause are far from being trivial. These constructions allow multiple variants of temporal reference and uses of tense forms in each of the clauses – this variance is inaccessible in usual constructions with one main and one embedded clause.

## Acknowledgements

I am grateful to Sergey Say for his valuable comments and remarks. I would also like to thank the audience of my talks at the conferences “Slovo i jazyk” (Moscow, 2010) and “The 6th meeting of the Slavic Linguistic Society” (Aix-en-Provence, 2011) for their questions and comments.

## Abbreviations

|         |   |                             |      |   |                      |
|---------|---|-----------------------------|------|---|----------------------|
| 1, 2, 3 | = | first, second, third person | M    | = | masculine            |
| ACC     | = | accusative                  | N    | = | neutral              |
| ADV     | = | adverb                      | NEG  | = | negation             |
| COM     | = | comparative                 | NOM  | = | nominative           |
| F       | = | feminine                    | PART | = | subjunctive particle |
| FUT     | = | future tense                | PF   | = | perfective           |
| GEN     | = | genitive                    | PL   | = | plural               |
| IMP     | = | imperative                  | PRS  | = | present tense        |
| IPF     | = | imperfective                | PST  | = | past tense           |
| IRR     | = | irrealis                    | SG   | = | singular.            |
| ITER    | = | iterative                   |      |   |                      |

## References

- Barentsen, Adrian. 1995. Shifting points of orientation in Modern Russian. Tense selection in 'reported perception'. In *Reported Speech: Form and Functions of the Verb* [Pragmatics & Beyond New Series 43], Theo A.J.M Janssen & Wim van der Wurff (eds), 15–55. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Brecht, Richard. 1977. Čtoby or čto and by. *Folia Slavica* 1: 33–41.
- Dobrushina, Nina R. 2011. Subjunctive embedded clauses in Russian. Ms.
- Padučeva, Elena V. 1996. *Semantičeskie issledovanija*. Moscow: Jazyki russkoj kul'tury.
- Panov, Michai V. 1966. Russkij jazyk. In *Jazyki narodov SSSR*, Vol. 1: *Indoevropejskije jazyki*, 55–122. Moscow: Nauka.
- Shopen, Timothy (ed.). 1985. *Language Typology and Syntactic Description*, Vol. II: *Complex Constructions*. Cambridge: CUP.
- Švedova, Natalia Ju. (ed.). 1970. *Grammatika sovremennoj russkoj literaturnoj jazyka*. Moscow: Nauka.
- Švedova, Natalia Ju. (ed.). 1980. *Russkaja grammatika*. Moscow: Nauka.
- Świdziński, Marek. 1990. Interclausal syntactic connections in contemporary Polish. *Revue des Etudes Slaves* 62(1–2): 427–438.
- Timberlake, Alan. 2004. *A Reference Grammar of Russian*, Cambridge: CUP.
- Xrakovskij, Viktor S. (ed.). 2009. *Tipologija taksisnyx konstrukcij*, Moscow: Znak.