

Czech Subjunctive

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Abstract: The subjunctive is a verbal mood rarely discussed in the context of the Czech language. One reason for this might be its morphological equivalence with the Czech conditional mood. Despite sharing the same morphological structure, these moods differ in their usage, which also impacts their syntactic properties. While the conditional mood is predominantly used in conditional clauses, the subjunctive mood in contemporary Czech includes the inflected conjunction *aby* and typically appears in subordinate mandative clauses. This study compares the Czech subjunctive with its counterparts in other European languages, contrasts it with the conditional mood and highlights the unique behavior of the morpheme *by* within clitic clusters.

Keywords: Czech language, verb, morphological structure, conditional

1. Introduction

Standard accounts of Czech verbal moods include the indicative, imperative, and conditional, excluding the subjunctive as a recognized mood. However, there are compelling reasons to reconsider this view. Although the idea of a Czech subjunctive is not new, previous discus-

sions (e.g., Karlík 1982) have only hinted at the possibility, often attributing it to remnants of Latin influence on Czech. In this article, I aim to demonstrate that a subjunctive mood does indeed exist in Czech and that its role is far from marginal. I begin by outlining the traditional system of Czech moods and reviewing relevant studies. Next, I examine the distinctive features of the Czech subjunctive, contrasting it with subjunctives in other languages. Finally, I analyze the differences between the Czech subjunctive and conditional mood, focusing on their c-selection, s-selection, and the behavior of clitics within these clause types.

2. Mood

Verbal mood is a phenomenon on a semantic-syntactic interface. Different moods contrast in their morphosyntax, namely by having different inflectional suffixes in Czech. Moods also have distinct uses. For example, in English, both irrealis moods (the imperative and subjunctive) use the so-called plain form, i.e. zero agreement morphology. The present subjunctive is used in mandative clauses and to express hypothetical situations. It is incompatible with facts. The imperative is also incompatible with facts, but it expresses orders and requests directly.

In Czech, all moods are marked by some form of inflectional morphology. The only realis mood is the indicative, as in:

- (1) Petr hrál tenis.
Petr played_{3.SG.M} tennis
'Petr played tennis.'

Its morphology encodes the agreement with the subject in person, number and gender, and it also carries the feature of tense. Irrealis moods include imperative, whose morphology shows person and number agreement with the subject:

- (2) Petře, hraj tenis!
Petr play_{2.SG} tennis
'Petr, play tennis!'



The other irrealis mood is conditional, which is a verbal complex of the verb *být* ('be') inflected for person and number agreement with the subject and a lexical verb in past participle inflected for number and gender agreement:

- (3) Já bych hrál tenis, kdybych nebyl nemocný.
 I be_{1.SG.COND} played_{SG.M} tennis if_{1.SG.COND} not-been ill
 'I would play tennis if I weren't ill.'

In use, the form and function do not always correspond one-to-one. A single form may serve multiple functions, and some functions can be expressed by multiple moods. The indicative, for example, can appear in conditional sentences, sometimes interchangeably with the conditional mood, with little or no shift in meaning:

- (4) Kdybych nebyl nemocný, tak teď hraju tenis.
 if_{1.SG.COND} not-been ill so now play_{1.SG.IND.PRES} tennis
 'If I weren't ill, I would be playing tennis now.'

The conditional typically marks counterfactuality (also called "X-marking"; see Von Fintel and Iatridou, 2023; Sæbø, 2024) and can convey hypothetical scenarios. Different languages use various strategies to express counterfactuality, and in Czech, this is achieved through the conditional morpheme *by*. Czech isn't the only language that uses one morpheme for several functions:

The literature identifies many other languages whose X-marking strategy employs morphemes that have apparently different uses in other environments (Sæbø, 2024, 1474).

This non-exclusive relationship between forms and functions is echoed in Fábergas (2014) who observes that in Spanish, there are at least four different classes of the inflectional subjunctive mood, suggesting syncretism.

It is not a controversial idea that the Czech conditional morpheme can mark both conditions and irrealis modality. In a conditional sentence, there are typically two clauses: one which contains the conditional subordinate clause (protasis), and the main clause (apodosis).

They can both contain the conditional mood in Czech, we saw this in (3). The protasis part can be and often is omitted. The conditional form can furthermore express a kind of modality. This typically involves a cooccurrence with some modal verb, like *moci* ('can'):

- (5) Je tak stará, že by mohla by být tvou matkou.
 is so old that be_{COND} can be_{INF} your mother
 'She's old enough to be your mother.'

This sentence expresses a kind of speculation on the side of the speaker as it conveys epistemic modality.

The list of Czech moods is typically finished here, however, there is still another use of the conditional form. This one corresponds to the uses where the speaker is expressing a wish, a demand or some indirect order. This use matches the subjunctive mood in many languages. Even though this mood is not usually recognized in Czech grammar books, some linguists (e.g. Ceplová, 2007; Sæbø, 2024; Biskup, 2020) have used the term "subjunctive" for certain Czech constructions. This terminology can serve to avoid confusion for English readers or to distinguish the irrealis uses of *by* that go beyond the conditional mood.

This brings us to the starting point of my argument: I propose that a semantic and structural difference exists between the conditional and subjunctive uses of the Czech *by* form. When functioning as a subjunctive, *by* forms a verbal complex with the morpheme *a*, producing the complementizer *aby*, which combines with a lexical verb in the past participle:

- (6) Přeji si, aby šel Petr do školy.
 wish_{1.SG} REFL SUBJ_{3.SG} went_{3.SG} Petr to school
 'I wish that Petr go to school.'

The distinction between the conditional and subjunctive use lies in the context. The conditional typically requires a certain condition to be expressed or understood or it expresses epistemic modality from the point of view of the speaker. The subjunctive, often selected by emotive or other irrealis verbs, expresses the speaker's wish, obliga-

tion, or possibility without the need for conditionality. In distribution, the Czech subjunctive and conditional are complementary:

The Czech subjunctive appears productively in subordinate clauses only, in line with its possible Latin origin as *modus coniunctivus* (in Czech referred to as *konjunktiv*), which means a “connecting mood” (Karlík, 1982). The conditional appears in conditional sentences, and it may appear in both main and subordinate adverbial clauses. Let us now examine the specific uses of the Czech subjunctive.

3. Czech subjunctive

According to Karlík (1982), the origin of Czech subjunctive can be traced back to the Latin *modus coniunctivus*, which was used for imperfect and past perfect aspect. During the rise of Humanism in Europe, Latin’s influence on Czech increased, resulting in what Karlík (1982, 127) refers to as the “golden age of the conditional.” One of the uses of the conditional mood at that time was for the subjunctive function. The Latin influence did not last for all the conditional-subjunctive uses (e.g. for adverbial clauses). It, however, remained in other types of subordinate clauses to express that the speaker is not convinced about the validity of the clause’s contents. The Czech subjunctive primarily appears in specific subordinate clauses with a non-reality emphasis, especially following a negative main clause (Karlík, 1982, 128–129).

Currently, the Czech subjunctive appears only in selected complements. There is no distinct morphology that would be used with subjunctive only. Its conjugational paradigm is the same as the conjugation of the conditional form of the verb “be”. The auxiliary *by* can be used in both parts of a conditional sentence – i.e., the protasis and apodosis:

- (7) Požadoval by, abych jí to řekl.
demanded COND₃ SUBJ_{1.SG} her_{DAT} it_{ACC} said
‘He would demand that I tell her.’

In example (7), we see both uses of the Czech morphological conditional, for conditional and subjunctive meaning. The subjunctive complementizer *aby* is composed of two parts: the morpheme *a* and the auxiliary *by* (a form of ‘be’), which is inflected for person and number as shown in Table 1:

1SG	2SG	3SG	1PL	2PL	3PL
(a)bych	(a)bys	(a)by	(a)bychom	(a)byste	(a)by

Table 1: Morphology of Czech subjunctive conjunction *aby*

In Czech, there are thus two candidates for subjunctive: one using the auxiliary *by* (‘be’) without specific verb selection and another selected by certain verbs with the *aby* complementizer, where *a* merges with *by*. We will examine both in detail.

3.1 Not selected subjunctive complement

The first type of subjunctive appears in subordinate clauses only with a negative main clause interpretation as in (8). The verb does not select the subjunctive complement because the subjunctive mood can alternate with the indicative without significant change in the interpretation. However, when the main clause is positive, like (9), the use of *by* is not subjunctive; rather, it is interpreted as conditional. In this case, the only possible mood for speculation about the present situation is the indicative, as in (10).

- (8) Neřekl mi, že by bydlel / bydlí na vesnici.
not-told me that SUBJ_{3.SG} lived / lives in village
‘He didn’t tell me he lived in the village.’
- (9) * Řekl mi, že by bydlel na vesnici.
told me that SUBJ_{3.SG} lived in village
- (10) Řekl mi, že bydlí na vesnici.
told me that lives in village
‘He told me he lives in a village.’

A similar restriction is found in other languages, such as French. Both the indicative and subjunctive can be used to express a similar idea, as shown in (11). However, after a positive matrix clause, only the indicative is possible in the subordinate clause, as in (12).

- (11) Je ne crois pas qu'il est / soit venu.
I not believe not that he _{IND} / _{ISUBJ} come
'I don't think that he came.'
- (12) Je crois qu'il est venu / vient / viendra.
'I believe that he has come / comes / will-come.'

In examples (8)–(12), the subjunctive is not selected, and therefore, no subjunctive appears if the polarity of the main clause is positive. In negative clauses it alternates with the indicative. Selected complements, on the other hand, cannot be replaced by the indicative, regardless of whether the matrix verb is negated. This analysis aligns with Sočanac (2019) who argues that similar patterns occur in both Slavic and Romance languages.

3.2 Selected subjunctive complement

The second type of subjunctive is a complement lexically selected by the matrix verb. In these cases, the subjunctive cannot be replaced by any other mood, such as the indicative, as this would require a different complementizer.

- (13) Požaduji, aby byl přítomen.
demand SUBJ were present
'I demand (that) he be present.'

The fact that the Czech subjunctive appears in subordinate clauses only corresponds to subjunctive use in other languages. In English, for instance, subjunctive in main clauses appears only in formulaic expressions, like: *God forbid*, or *perish the thought*. Other than that, it appears productively in subordinate (mostly mandative) clauses. Czech also mirrors the English use of infinitives (irrealis), which is one of the biggest competitors for the declining use of the present sub-

junctive in contemporary English (see Čakányová, 2022). Here are examples of infinitival complements from English realized as subjunctive in Czech. These are mostly object control infinitives, as in (14), including embedded imperatives, as in (15) and some exceptionally case marking infinitives like (16).

- (14) Přesvědčil jsem ho, aby rezignoval.
persuaded am him SUBJ resigned
'I persuaded him to resign.'
- (15) Nařídil jsem mu, aby odešel.
ordered am him SUBJ left
'I ordered him to leave.'
- (16) Chtěl jsem, aby odešel.
wanted am SUBJ left
'I wanted him to leave.'

Comparing the use of the Czech selected subjunctive complementizer *aby* with other languages, we can see it echoes French use of *subjonctif* in subordinate selected clauses. The subjunctive in examples (17)–(20) is highlighted in bold:

- (17) Il est préférable que tu **fasses** ce travail aujourd'hui.
Je vhodnějši, abys tu práci udělala dnes.
'It is better if you did the work today.'
- (18) Je veux qu'il **aille** acheter le pain.
Chci, aby šel koupit chleba.
'I want him to go buy bread.'

We can also see a similar kind of use in Italian. All these examples include verbs triggering the use of the irrealis mood:

- (19) I miei genitori vogliono che io **suoni** il pianoforte.
Moje rodiče chtějí, abych hrál na klavír.
'My parents want me to play the piano.'

- (20) Ti aiuto affinché tu **superi** l'esame.
 Pomáhám ti, abys složil zkoušku.
 'I'm helping you so that you can pass the exam.'

This second type of subjunctive is highly productive and is not restricted by the polarity of the sentence. The only restriction or constraint is the selecting verb which needs to require the irrealis mood.

3.3 Adjunct introduced with *aby*

The conjunction *aby* can also appear in another context: it introduces adjuncts expressing purpose (21) and result (22):

- (21) Sundali jsme si boty, abychom nedělali hluk.
 took-off are REFL shoes so-as-to_{1.PL} not-made noise
 'We took off our shoes so as to not make noise.'
- (22) Otevřela ten dopis, aby zjistila, že ji přijali.
 opened that letter so-as-to_{3.SG} learnt that her accepted
 'She opened the letter to learn she was accepted.'

In English, these are expressed using the infinitival phrase. Czech employs the inflected conjunction *aby*, however, this time the mood is not selected by the verb in the main clause. The subordinate clauses are not complements, but they are adjuncts expressing the adverbial of purpose and result. The conjunction *aby* does not express a hypothetical situation in (22), but it expresses a fact. This contrasts with its typical use, where it expresses irrealis. Similarly, the English infinitive rarely expresses facts; it usually marks the irrealis. It seems that the only time the English infinitive and the Czech conjunction *aby* can express facts is when they appear in adjuncts, not complements.

4. Czech subjunctive versus Czech conditional

As we have already seen, the subjunctive mood in Czech does not have its own distinct morphology; it uses the same set of morphemes as the conditional. In the case of the selected subjunctive, these mor-

phemes are bound to the complementizer *aby*. Both conditional and subjunctive are irrealis non-appellative moods. Czech is not the only language which has the shared morphology between the subjunctive and conditional mood. Polish, for example, does not have distinct subjunctive morphology either. Instead, there is a rule that the *by*-containing particle must be placed in front of the dependent clause in subjunctive use (Tomaszewicz 2009):

- (23) Upieram się, że wychodzi. (indicative)
 'I insist that he is leaving.'
- (24) Upieram się, (že)by wyszedł. (subjunctive)
 'I insist that he leave.'
- (25) Upieram się, że wyszedłby. (conditional)
 'I insist that he would leave.'

A similar rule seems to apply in Czech as well. The key difference in use between the Czech conditional and subjunctive seems to be the (in)separability and (im)movability of the *by*. In the conditional mood, the particle *by* can appear separately and be moved to a certain degree with a slight rearrangement in the word order:

- (26) Řekl jsem, že bych klidně zazpíval jednu píseň.
 said am that would calmly sang one song
 'I said that I would gladly sing one song.'
- (27) Řekl jsem, že jednu píseň bych klidně zazpíval.
 said am that one song would calmly sang
 'I said that I would gladly sing one song.'

In subjunctive, this is obviously impossible, as *by* is a bound morpheme in this instance:

- (28) Přeji si, aby si dala pivo.
 wish REFL SUBJ_{3.SG} REFL got beer
 'I wish she had a beer.'
- (29) * Přeji si, pivo aby si dala.
 wish REFL beer SUBJ_{3.SG} REFL got

The particle *by* is by itself not a complementizer but it can be part of one. The reason *aby* cannot move at all is that it occupies a complementizer position. The conditional particle *by* is in fact one of the Czech clitics which typically appear in the second position after the first expression or a phrase. If clitics appear in a clitic cluster, then there is a rather strict order to them (see Toman 1999). The order goes “complement – auxiliary clitic – reflexive – dative clitic – accusative/genitive clitic – main verb”, as we can see in the following example:

- (30) *že – by – se – jí – ho – zželelo*
 that – COND – REFL – her_{DAT} – him_{GEN} – feel-sorry
 ‘that she should feel sorry for him’

In (31) the reflexive clitic *se* is located in the second (pre-subject) position, in (32) it is in the third (post-subject) position and as such it is located in I.¹ The meaning of both sentences is identical. Following Kašpar (2016, 76–77), this indicates that *že* is located in a higher functional head; there is a subject in between the complementizer and the clitic in (32):

- (31) *Filip řekl, že se mu to auto porouchalo.*
 Filip said that REFL him that car malfunctioned
 ‘Filip said that his car broke down.’
 (32) *Filip řekl, že to auto se mu porouchalo.*
 Filip said that that car REFL him malfunctioned
 ‘Filip said that his car broke down.’

If we add the particle *by* (IP layer) expressing conditional mood, we can see that the situation is similar. In (33) and (34) the conditional

¹ I am using the label I for inflection and not the label T for tense, as these morphemes do not really express tense. However, some of them carry inflection which reflects the agreement with the subject. This division of inflection into agreement and tense in the sense of Picallo (1984) seems ideal for depicting the differences between realis and irrealis moods.

particle can be moved. In (33) it is pre-subject and in (34) it appears after the subject:

- (33) *Filip řekl, že by mu Jana zavolala.*
 Filip said that COND_{3.SG} him Jana called
 ‘Filip said that Jana would call him.’
 (34) *Filip řekl, že Jana by mu zavolala.*
 Filip said that Jana COND_{3.SG} him called
 ‘Filip said that Jana would call him.’

When we compare this with the subjunctive *aby* where the C and I layers are merged, we will quite predictably see that with *aby*-clauses the I position is already taken by the bound suffix *by*. The position of the clitic *se / mu* is therefore fixed:

- (35) *Filip chtěl, aby se mu to auto porouchalo.*
 Filip wanted SUBJ REFL him that car broke-down
 ‘Filip wanted his car to break down.’
 (36) * *Filip chtěl, aby to auto se mu porouchalo.*
 Filip wanted SUBJ that car REFL him broke-down

This distribution of clitics within a clitic cluster demonstrates that the subjunctive *aby* is indeed both a C and I item where the heads are merged. This prevents any other element from being inserted between the C and I head, unlike with the C complementizer *že*.

5. S-selection

Verbs select a particular complement in a particular mood. The type of the complement is selected based on the semantics of the matrix verb and the complementizer denotes the type of the content clause. The options for Czech are for the most part the conjunction *že* (‘that’), which typically introduces indicative mood complements and is used for statements of facts. Verbs selecting this conjunction also typically express facts:

- (37) Petr tvrdil, že / *aby
 ‘Peter claimed that / *so-that’

The alternative option is the conjunction *aby*, which signals the subjunctive and is typically selected by desiderative verbs:

- (38) Petr doporučil Pavlovi, *že / aby
 ‘Petr suggested to Paul, *that / to’

There is a category of so-called emotive verbs, which express a subjective, emotional, or evaluative reaction (Kiparsky and Kiparsky, 1970, 169). These verbs and their complements do not express truth values. Based on the Czech National Corpus (SYN v12), we can confirm that the most frequent occurrences of verbs selecting the expression *aby* are indeed such verbs. The first eight most frequent verbs include: *chtít* (‘want’), *stačit* (‘be enough’), *přát si* (‘wish’), *potřebovat*, (‘need’), *dovolit* (‘allow’), *snažit se* (‘attempt’), *prosit* (‘plead’), and *žádat* (‘ask’). All these verbs select either a subjunctive or an infinitive VP (subject control) in Czech. The emotive verbs can be further specified as assertive or desiderative:

- (39) Je potřeba, abys pospíchal.
 is needed SUBJ hurried
 ‘You need to hurry.’
- (40) Přála si, aby ji našel.
 wished REFL SUBJ her found
 ‘She wanted him to find her.’

On the other hand, propositional verbs select indicative CP complements and never the subjunctive nor infinitive. Propositional verbs include verbs of cognition and introduce propositions that can be declared true or false. They are very often factive verbs like: *radovat se* (‘be happy’), *vědět* (‘know’) or *litovat* (‘regret’), which always select the realis mood, i.e., the indicative (Kiparsky and Kiparsky 1970):

- (41) Ona byla šťastná, že ...
 ‘She was happy that ...’

- (42) Petr věděl, že / *aby jeho matka je nemocná.
 Petr knew that / SUBJ his mother is sick
 ‘Petr knew that his mother was sick.’

Sometimes, however, one verb can select either of the two complementizers with a different effect. The complementizer specifies the kind of clause as either a proposition, as in (43) or an indirect order, as in (44):

- (43) Řekl mu, že přijde.
 told him that come
 ‘He told him that he would come.’
- (44) Řekl mu, aby přišel.
 told him SUBJ came
 ‘He told him to come.’

This distinction is also possible in English, especially the American variant, where some verbs (like *insist*) and some adjectives (like *important*) can have either an indicative or subjunctive complement, changing the meaning:

- (45) We insist that he is on time every day. (i.e., he is punctual)
- (46) We insist that he be on time every day. (i.e., he may not be punctual)

Kempchinsky (2009) suggests that subjunctive clauses include a quasi-imperative operator, which results in the obviative reading where the person who is supposed to perform the activity is neither the speaker nor the subject of the matrix clause. This is a type of embedded imperative, but it differs from an infinitival clause. An infinitival clause typically expresses a reported imperative, where the agent may be, but does not have to be, the subject of the matrix clause.

A similar observation is described in Jackendoff (1985) who distinguishes between the complements depending on their selection—he differentiates between the propositional attitudes and intentions. This distinction aligns with the ForceP layer as described by Rizzi (1997),

the highest position in the left periphery. The head of this phrase is selected by the verb which is higher in the structure of the sentence. Let's take the verb *persuade* as an example. It can be complemented either by a *that* clause or an infinitival clause, with different meanings in English. This distinction is mirrored in Czech with complementizers *že* and *aby*. The complementizer *aby* is used with intentions (action verbs), while *že* is used with propositions (state/event verbs):

- (47) Přesvědčil ho, aby se vzdal.
persuaded him SUBJ REFL give-up
'He persuaded him to give up.'
- (48) Přesvědčil ho, že je tráva vysoká.
persuaded him that is grass tall
'He persuaded him that the grass was tall.'

Non-factive verbs can also select the complementizer *že*, but it does not automatically mean that the complement has a truth value. Moreover, factivity can be downgraded with an expression of futurity or modality in the complement, as in (49), and this always yields an irrealis reading. In these instances, it might be possible to use the complementizer *aby* in the same sense:

- (49) Rozhodl, že ho mají potrestat.
decided that him should punish_{INF}
'He decided that they should punish him.'
- (50) Rozhodl, aby ho potrestali.
decided SUBJ him punished
'He decided that they should punish him.'

If there is no modal downgrading present in the complementing clause, the only option for this verb is to select the complementizer *že*:

- (51) Rozhodl, že je podvod.
decided that is it scam
'He decided that it is a scam.'
- (52) * Rozhodl, aby to byl podvod.
decided SUBJ it was scam

From the above, it seems apparent that the size of the complement matters. The larger the complement, the more independent it can be. Independence means, among other things, the ability to express facts. There is a scale ranging from the most independent CP complements (the complementizer *že*) that include the tense layer, through the CP+IP layer (the subjunctive bound marker *by*) to a VP layer, which is the smallest and the least independent:

- (53) CP > IP > VP (bi-clausal) > VP (mono-clausal)

The more to the right, the less likely that the complement is to be independent and capable of expressing facts.

6. C-selection

In Czech, selected nominal content clauses introduced by the complementizer *že* typically contain indicative mood and those introduced by the complementizer *aby* contain the subjunctive mood. In contrast, the subordinate adverbial clauses contain or yield conditional mood and typically function as adjuncts.

Some verbs that select indicative mood complementizer *že* can take different sizes of complements (CP, VP, DP or a PP):

- (54) Petr se rozhodl odjet /, že odjede /pro odjezd.
Petr REFL decided leave_{INF} / that leave_{3.SG.FUT} / for departure
'Peter decided to leave /that he would leave / for a departure.'

Likewise, verbs that select *aby* can take a CP-IP, an infinitival VP, or a DP as their complement. The CP-IP is typically a nominal content clause:

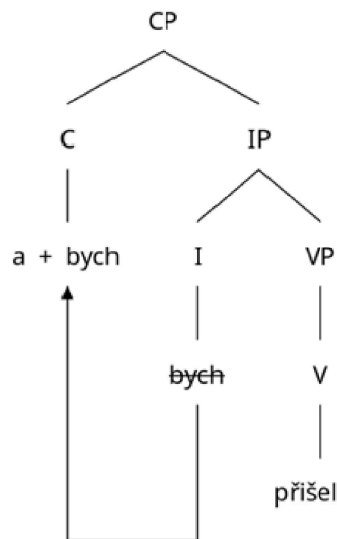
- (55) Petr chtěl koláč /, aby mu dali koláč /jíst koláč.
Petr wanted cake / SUBJ him gave cake / eat_{INF} cake
'Peter wanted cake / them to give him cake / to eat cake.'

The conditional mood is not selected and may appear in both subordinate and main clauses. If it appears in a subordinate clause, it forms an adverbial clause of condition, functioning as an adjunct:

- (56) Kdybych znala jeho číslo, zavolala bych mu.
 if_{1SG.COND} knew his number called would_{COND} him
 ‘If I knew his number, I would call him.’

As previously suggested, the morpheme *by* in subjunctive clauses occupies the I position. It agrees with the subject in number and person. However, when selected by the lexical verb in the main clause, this *by* needs to move to the higher position C. It undergoes the I-to-C movement, merging with *a-* to form a complementizer *aby*:

(57)



Due to its I properties, this complementizer can carry inflection. The tense interpretation of the subjunctive clause is dependent on the matrix clause. In this respect, the subjunctive complements may be equivalent to infinitival complements in both Czech and English. They can express past or non-past tense relative to the matrix tense:

- (58) Chtěl, abychom to udělali před rokem/hned/za rok.
 wanted SUBJ it did yesterday today tomorrow
 ‘He wanted us to do it last year / immediately / in a year.’

Considering the observations so far; we can summarize some of the key properties of Czech irrealis morpheme *by* used in subordinate clauses in Table 2. The examples of conjunctions included for conditional mood do not constitute a complete list:

Mood	Form	Function	Use	Position of <i>by</i>
SUBJ	<i>aby</i>	complement	deontic modality	C-I (merge)
COND	<i>že + by</i>	complement	epistemic modality	I
COND	<i>kdyby;</i> any subord. conj. + <i>by</i>	adjunct	condition, or epistemic modality	C-I (merge), or I

Table 2: Properties of morpheme *by* in irrealis moods.

7. Conclusion

We have identified two potential types of subjunctives in Czech: one that is unselected and follows a negative matrix clause, and another that is selected by the matrix verb and includes the complementizer *aby*. The first type is arguably not a true subjunctive, as it can alternate with the indicative mood. Consequently, the Czech subjunctive is restricted to selected subordinate clauses.

The Czech subjunctive shares morphological features with the conditional mood, but it is distinct in its usage. It is consistently associated with the inflected complementizer *aby*, which represents a fused I and C head. This fusion accounts for the fixed positions of clitics in subjunctive clauses, contrasting with the clitic climbing observed in indicative and conditional clauses. The complementizer *aby* is inherently marked for irrealis and may occupy the head of ForceP (Rizzi 1997), signaling a non-assertive context.

Furthermore, verbs that select *aby* may also select infinitives, which share the irrealis feature. The Czech subjunctive and conditional moods are in complementary distribution: the conditional mood, not the subjunctive, is used in conditional sentences. In contrast, the

subjunctive appears in clauses that frequently convey mandative meanings, where the conditional does not occur.

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