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To cite this article: Elmira Zhamaletdinova (20 Nov 2023): When Modality and Tense Meet. The Future Marker *budet* 'will' in Impersonal Constructions with the Modal Adverb *možno* 'be possible', Scando-Slavica, DOI: [10.1080/00806765.2023.2271900](https://doi.org/10.1080/00806765.2023.2271900)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/00806765.2023.2271900>



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Published online: 20 Nov 2023.



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When Modality and Tense Meet. The Future Marker *budet* 'will' in Impersonal Constructions with the Modal Adverb *možno* 'be possible'¹

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines Russian impersonal constructions with the modal word *možno* 'can, be possible' with and without the future copula *budet* 'will be,' i.e., *možno* + *budet* + INF and *možno* + INF. My contribution can be summarized as follows. First, corpus-based evidence reveals that *možno* + INF constructions are vastly more frequent than constructions with copula. Second, the meaning of constructions without the future copula is more flexible: while the possibility is typically located in the present, the situation denoted by the infinitive may be located in the present or the future. Third, I show that the *možno* + INF construction is more ambiguous and can denote present, gnomic or future situations. Fourth, I identify a number of contextual factors that unambiguously locate the situation in the future. I demonstrate that such factors are more frequently used with the future copula, and thus motivate the choice between the two constructions. Finally, I illustrate the interpretations in a straightforward manner by means of schemas of the type used in cognitive linguistics.

KEYWORDS modality; possibility; future; corpus; Russian

1. Introduction

The future tense and its relation to mood and modality has preoccupied linguists for a long time (Chung and Timberlake 1985; Bybee et al. 1994; Arutjunova 2011; Radbil' 2011; Stojnova 2018). Russian modal constructions with the impersonal modal adverb *možno* 'be possible' express that a situation is possible in the past, present or future. Thus, Russian modal constructions offer an excellent testing ground for hypotheses about the interaction of

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¹Editorial note: This article was submitted to Scando-Slavica before Tore Nessel, who is the second supervisor of the author, was elected member of the editorial board. Nessel has not taken part in the editorial processing of the article.

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tense and mood, since a modal word like *možno* ‘can, be possible’ may combine with a future form of the copula verb *byt’* ‘be’ as in (1) and (2)¹:

- (1) Korrektnye vyvody **možno budet sdelat’** na osnove
 can be.FUT.3SG make.INF.PFV
 itogov Global’nogo raunda.
 ‘Correct conclusions **can be drawn** based on the results of the Global Round.’
 (A. Kosarev. *Esperanto meždunarodnyh sravnenij* // “*Ekspert*,” 2014)
- (2) Prognozy **možno budet delat’** tol’ko bliže k vesne.
 can be.FUT.3SG make.INF.IPFV
 ‘Forecasts **can only be made** closer to spring.’
 (S. Inkižinova. *Razguljalis’* // “*Ekspert*,” 2013)

However, examples where *možno* is used without the future copula have a very similar meaning as in (3) and (4):

- (3) Nu da ... koe-čto eščë **možno sdelat’.** no, uvy, uže nemnogo ...
 can make.INF.PFV
 ‘Well, yes ... something else **can be done.** but, alas, not much ...’
 (Perepiska v ičq meždū agd-ardin i Koljučij drug, 2008)
- (4) S tekstem, daže esli vy ego uže vyvesili, **možno delat’** vsë
 can make.INF.IPFV
 čto ugodno: redaktirovat’, perepisat’ zanovo, uničtožit’.
 ‘Even if you have already posted the text, you **can do** whatever you want: edit, rewrite, destroy.’
 (Zapis’ LiveJournal, 2004)

The present study aims at clarifying the semantic contribution of the future copula in constructions with *možno* ‘can, be possible,’ and at the same time seeks to identify contextual factors that motivate the choice between constructions with and without the future copula. My contribution can be summarized as follows. First, I show that the construction without future copula is vastly more frequent than the one with copula. Second, it is argued that *budet* ‘will be’ functions as a future tense marker that typically locates both the possibility (*možno* ‘can, be possible’) and the event denoted by the infinitive in the future. Third, the meaning of the construction without the future copula is more flexible; while the possibility is typically located in the present, the situation denoted by the infinitive may be located in the present or the future. Fourth, I identify a number of contextual factors that motivate the location of the infinitive situation in the future. Fifth, although these factors are shown to be compatible with both constructions, they are more frequently used with the future copula, and thus motivate the choice between the two constructions. Finally, I relate my findings to cognitive linguistics and show that my findings can be represented in this framework (Langacker 2008).

This is a corpus-based qualitative study where I will use data from the Russian National Corpus (www.ruscorpora.ru), hereinafter the RNC. I will

¹All numbered examples in this article are cited from the Russian National Corpus (www.ruscorpora.com). Examples are partially annotated using Leipzig morpheme-by-morpheme glossing. Metadata is given in brackets.

not engage in statistic modelling of the data, but I will provide quantitative analysis where it is relevant.

This article is structured as follows. Section 2 provides background information about modal constructions with *možno* ‘can, be possible’ and discusses various interpretations of future forms in the Russian language. In section 3, I describe the database, explaining how the data was obtained and annotated. Section 4 presents an analysis of the *možno* + *budet* + INF construction, whereas in Section 5 I provide an analysis of the *možno* + INF construction. Section 6 and 7 present contextual factors that motivate the choice of construction. In section 8, I discuss a case study with *zavtra* ‘tomorrow.’ Section 9 proposes a representation of tense and modality in Cognitive Grammar, before I offer some conclusions in Section 10.

2. The *možno* Constructions and Temporal Location

It has often been observed that Russian future verb forms can have modal and/or temporal readings (Arutjunova 2011; Radbil’ 2011; Stojnova 2018). In particular, Radbil’ (2011) argues that future forms in Russian can convey modal meanings, i.e., express the speaker’s attitude towards the certainty of the proposition, as in (5). However, according to Radbil’ (2011), future forms may also have purely temporal readings as in (6).

- (5) *Zavtra ja pojdu v kino.*
 Tomorrow I.NOM go.PFV.1SG in cinema
 ‘Tomorrow I will go to the cinema.’
- (6) *Zavtra nastupit moj den’ roždenija.*
 Tomorrow arrive.PFV.3SG my day.NOM.SG birth.GEN.SG
 ‘Tomorrow is my birthday.’

In example (5) the speaker expresses her absolute certainty that she will go to the cinema tomorrow regardless of the obstacles that stand in her way. Thus, the content can be paraphrased as ‘I am sure that tomorrow I will go to the cinema.’ In (6), on the other hand, the interpretation ‘I am sure that tomorrow is my birthday’ is redundant, as a birthday is a specific date, and it is impossible to change the time when the person was born. However, the difference between such utterances is quite subtle, and in many cases, it is not straightforward to determine whether a modal nuance is present or not. The situation is particularly complex in constructions with modal words such as *možno* ‘can, be possible’ or *nužno* ‘have to,’ since the speaker’s (un)certainly towards to what is asserted is already present in the modal word.

The modal adverb *možno* ‘can, be possible’² can express ability, possibility and permissibility. *Možno* is an impersonal modal, i.e., it does not allow a

²In this article, I will refer to *možno* as a modal adverb although in Russian scholarly tradition *možno* is called “modal predicative” or “modal predicate.” Both “predicate” and “predicative” are ambiguous terms. The predicative in English grammars corresponds to a linguistic item that follows a copula (*be, seem, appear* etc.). As for the predicate, it might correspond to a single verb or to a verb and other

subject in the Nominative case but combines with an Experiencer in the Dative. The experiencer in the impersonal construction with *možno* can be overtly expressed or omitted. Syntactically, *možno* functions as the head of the infinitival modal construction. Following Goldberg (2006, 5), I define a construction as a “learned pairing [of] form with semantic meaning or discourse function including morphemes or words, idioms, partially lexically filled and fully general phrase patterns.”

According to the logical-based semantic map classification proposed by van der Auwera and Plungian (1998) the modal adverb *možno* can express deontic (permission) or participant-external modal values. Participant-external modality can be described as “circumstances that are external to the participant engaged in the state of affairs and that make this state of affairs possible” (van der Auwera, Plungian 1998, 80).

Možno per se is atemporal. *Možno* implies that the action can be carried out; there may be restrictions, but they are not strong enough to prevent the event from taking place. Traditional grammars (Isačenko 1965; Švedova et al. 1980; Mathiassen 1996; Timberlake 2004) claim that in order to express past or future time reference, one must combine *možno* with the past tense form or future tense form of *byť* ‘to be,’ as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Indicative past and non-past paradigms of modal *možno* ‘can, be possible,’ in which infinitive (*s*)*delat’* ‘do’ represents all the verbs that may occur in this construction.

| | Past | | | Non-Past | | | | | |
|-------------|---------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------------|--|
| | | | | without copula | | | with copula | | |
| IPFV | <i>možno</i> can | <i>bylo</i> be.PST.3SG | <i>delat’</i> make.INF.IPFV | <i>možno</i> can | <i>delat’</i> make.INF.IPFV | <i>možno</i> can | <i>budet</i> be.FUT.3SG | <i>delat’</i> make.INF.IPFV | |
| PFV | <i>možno</i> can | <i>bylo</i> be.PST.3SG | <i>sdelat’</i> make.INF.PFV | <i>možno</i> can | <i>sdelat’</i> make.INF.PFV | <i>možno</i> can | <i>budet</i> be.FUT.3SG | <i>sdelat’</i> make.INF.PFV | |

The only way to express past reference is the construction with copula *bylo* ‘was’ as in (7a) and (7b).

- (7) a. Èto **možno bylo delat’** 10–20 let nazad.
 can be.PST.3SG make.INF.IPFV
 ‘This **could have been done** 10–20 years ago.’
 (D. Tarasov. Globalizacija diktuet pravila mirovoj trgovli // “Metally Evrazii,” 2004)
- b. Vše, što **možno bylo sdelat’** ne tak, Sonja
 can be.PST.3SG make.INF.PFV
 sdelala ne tak.
 ‘Everything that **could have been done** wrong, Sonya did wrong.’
 (T. Solomatina. Devjat’ mesjacev, ili “Komediya ženskich položenij,” 2010)

While it is uncontroversial that the examples with the past tense copula situate the relevant situation in the past, the interpretation of the examples

items, e.g., a verb and auxiliary or phasal verb. *Možno* usually requires an infinitive to form a clause, therefore it might be confusing to refer to a modal without an infinitive as a predicate.

with no overt copula and a copula in the future is less straightforward. Examples (8a) and (8b) represent constructions with no overt copula, which are traditionally analyzed as present tense.

- (8) a. S tekstom, daže esli vy ego uže vyvesili, **možno delat'**
 can make.INF.IPFV
 vsě čto ugodno: redaktirovat', perepisat' zanovo, uničtožit'.
 'Even if you have already posted the text, you **can do** whatever you want: edit, rewrite, destroy.'
 (Zapis' LiveJournal, 2004)
- b. Nu da. koe-čto ešče **možno sdelat'**. no, uvy, uže
 can make.INF.PFV
 nemnogo ...
 'Well, yes. something else **can be done**. but, alas, not much ...'
 (Perepiska v icq meždu agd-ardin i Koljučij drug, 2008.01.16)³

Examples (9a) and (9b) with the future form of the copula are traditionally analyzed as future tense.

- (9) a. Sčitaj, ty priobretěš' ličnogo raba, s kotorym **možno budet**
 can be.FUT.3SG.
delat' vsě, čto ugodno.
 make.INF.IPFV
 'Think about it this way: you will get a personal slave with whom you **can do**
 whatever you want.'
 (A. Pajkes. Kanser // "Volga," 2014)
- b. Tol'ko v konce sezona **možno budet sdelat'**
 can be.FUT.3SG make.INF.PFV
 kakie-to obščie vyvody.
 'The general conclusions **can be drawn** only by the end of the season.'
 (Novosti sporta // "Russkij reporter" .№ 34 [212], 2011)

As shown by the examples above the modal word can combine with a past copula *bylo* 'was' and the future copula *budet* 'will be.' Syntactically, copula functions as the head of construction, however the scope of the copula can modify time reference of both the modal meaning expressed by *možno* and the event expressed by the infinitive. In traditional analysis the absence of an overt copula is said to express present tense. However, Stojnova (2018) points out that the relation between forms with the past tense copula *bylo* 'was' and future tense copula *budet* 'will be' is asymmetrical. While the only way to express past reference is the construction with copula *bylo* 'was,' according to Stojnova future reference might be conveyed by constructions with perfective or imperfective infinitive with or without the future copula.

Stojnova (2018) gives examples with the modal *nužno* 'have to' and states that in sentences with clear future reference (with the adverb *zavtra* 'tomorrow') such as (10) and (11), the modal clause with and without copula will describe two different logic structures. In (10) the future, coded by *zavtra* 'tomorrow' and the copula *budet* 'will be,' affects both the modal *nužno*

³Examples (3) and (4) repeated here as (8a) and (8b) for readers' convenience.

'have to' and the situation described by the infinitive *echat'* 'to go.' In other words, both the necessity and the trip to the factory are situated in future, according to Stojnova. In (11) Stojnova suggests that only the trip to Čeljabinsk is placed in the future, while the necessity expressed by *nužno* 'have to' belongs to the present.

- (10) Po doroge ja govorju drogajlu, čto mne **zavtra** **nužno**
 tomorrow have.to
budet **echat'** na zavod.
 be.FUT.3SG go.INF.PFV
 'On the way I tell the cab driver that **tomorrow** I **will have to go** to the factory.'
 (P. A. Moiseenko, "Vospominanija starogo revoljucionera," 1921–1923)
- (11) Kogda ja vypil, zakusil, M. N. soobščaeť, čto **Zavtra** **nužno**
 tomorrow have.to
echat' v Čeljabinsk k ispravniku.
 go.INF.PFV
 'When I have eaten, M.N. reports that **tomorrow** I **will have to go** to Čeljabinsk in order to meet the police chief.'
 (P. A. Moiseenko, "Vospominanija starogo revoljucionera," 1921–1923)

While not all native speakers may share Stojnova's intuitions, I will not discuss her analysis of *nužno*, but instead focus on constructions with *možno*. I suggest that the temporal marker *zavtra* 'tomorrow' affects both the possibility expressed by *možno* and the situation described by the infinitive, locating both *možno* and the infinitive in the future. I will address the contribution of *budet* in Sections 5–7, and explicitly consider the temporal adverbial *zavtra* 'tomorrow' in Section 8.

3. Data

Možno is polysemous and can appear in various positions in the sentence: at the beginning or at the end of the sentence, following or preceding the future marker. In order to investigate constructions with *možno* with and without the future copula I carried out four corpus searches in the RNC. These queries reflect the canonical word order with *možno* preceding the copula and the infinitive.⁴ The search queries with numbers for raw and clean data are presented in Table 2. These queries yielded a total of 166 534 occurrences. The data were downloaded from the RNC, pseudorandomized, and the first two hundred examples were manually annotated ("clean data") for each construction type, namely *možno* + *budet* + INF.PFV, *možno* + *budet* + INF.IPFV, *možno* + INF.PFV and *možno* + INF.IPFV. Irrelevant examples were weeded out manually.⁵ In addition, I calculated the error conversion ratio (ECR) for each query. The ECR is a measure of accuracy that

⁴I also carried out separate searches for five different construction types with non-canonical word order. These queries returned only 133 examples for both perfective and imperfective infinitives. The scarcity of the data did not allow to draw any conclusion; therefore, I will not discuss them in the article.

⁵All of the data and annotations described in this article are publicly accessible from the Tromsø Repository of Language and Linguistics archive (TROLLing) at <https://doi.org/10.18710/MOJBDK>.

Table 2. The search queries, raw numbers, clean data and error conversion ratio (ECR) per query.

| # | Query | Raw data | Clean data | ECR |
|----|--|----------|------------|------|
| 1. | možno + INF.PFV možno 1–1 V, inf, pf | 114 142 | 200 | 0,07 |
| 2. | možno + INF.IPFV možno 1–1 V, inf, ipf | 47 650 | 200 | 0,03 |
| 3. | možno + budet + INF.PFV možno 1–1 byt' fut 1–1 V, inf, pf | 3 341 | 200 | 0,02 |
| 4. | možno + budet + INF.IPFV možno 1–1 byt' fut 1–1 V, inf, ipf | 1 401 | 200 | 0,04 |
| | Totals | 166 534 | 800 | |

allows to extrapolate the ratio to the raw data. The lower the ECR, the higher is the accuracy of the data.

Constructions without the future copula are less complex in terms of their structure, and as can be seen from the table, are approximately 34 times more frequent than constructions with the future copula. As shown in Table 2, my data includes examples with infinitives of both aspects. Interestingly, the proportion of constructions with perfective infinitives to constructions with imperfective infinitives is equal for constructions with and without *budet* 'will,' and is approximately 2.4:1. Thus, the perfective aspect is more than twice as frequent as the imperfective aspect, and this holds for constructions with and without a copula.

All examples in the dataset were annotated by the following semantic and syntactic features:

- a) modal function of *možno*;
- b) verb class of the infinitive;
- c) aspect of the infinitive;
- d) presence of temporal adverbials, conditional clauses, perfective verbs or gerunds, etc.

A priori, one might think that these factors would help us predict the choice between constructions with and without the future copula. However, with regard to the modal function in (a), my analysis did not reveal much variation. Most of the examples in the database (95%) denote external possibility, so this factor proved unhelpful as a predictor.

Concerning the verb class of the infinitive in (b), I followed the classification in the Russian National Corpus, which offered annotations of 203 out of 416 infinitives in my dataset. The remaining infinitives I annotated myself using the tags from the RNC. Unfortunately, no clear tendencies emerged from this classification. The verbs were unevenly distributed between 18 verb classes. 16 verb classes had less than 30 instances. It

appears that verb class of the infinitive does not help us predict the choice between constructions with and without future copula.

Aspect in (c) also turned out to be unhelpful as a predictor. Typically, linguists expect that the aspect of the infinitive can motivate the meaning of modal constructions in Russian (Choi 1999; Šmelev, Zaliznjak 2006; Divjak 2009). However, different researchers have come to contradictory conclusions. Choi (1999) and Šmelev, Zaliznjak (2006) claim that imperfective infinitives convey deontic readings, while perfective infinitives convey alethic (epistemic) readings. However, Divjak (2009) argues that imperfective infinitives convey deontic readings, whereas perfective infinitives convey participant-external readings. The analysis of my data does not indicate any correlation between the modality type and the aspect of the infinitive, and I will therefore not provide a detailed discussion of the relationship between aspect and modality.

We are then left with temporal adverbials and the other contextual clues mentioned in (d). These proved helpful as predictors, and I will therefore consider their impact in detail in sections 6–7 below.

4. The Meaning of *možno* without Future Copula

Možno + INF.PFV/IPFV can express gnomic ('universal truth') as in (12), present as in (13) or future situations as in (14). In (12) the speaker says that the same solution can be applied to different types of plants without pointing out a specific time when the action should take place. In example (13) the situation is such that a person can highlight the particular passages in the text at the moment of speech, i.e., in the present.

- (12) Ėtot že sovet **možno** **primerit'** i k lukovičnym kul'turam.
 can apply.INF.PFV
 'The same advice **can be applied** to bulbous plants as well.'
 (Ideja! // "Sad svoimi rukami," 2003)
- (13) **Teper'**, esli govorit' bolee konkretno, **možno** **vydelit'**
 can highlight.INF.IPFV
 te samye otdel'nye mesta i formulirovki [...].
 'Now, more specifically, I **can highlight** those particular passages and formulations [...].'
 (M. Krongauz. Rodnaja reč' kak juridičeskaja problema // "Otečestvennye zapiski," 2003)

In (14) the hearer can try to act in a certain way in the future when the speaker will create special conditions facilitating the relevant action.

- (14) No **možno poprobovat'**. Ja daže special'no dlja ètogo sozdam
 can try.INF.PFV
 special'nye uslovija, vot smotrite [...].
 'But you **can try**. I will even create special conditions for this, look [...].'
 (E. Griškovec, "OdnovrEmEnno," 2004)

I used the label "future" for example (14); this is because the following sentence includes a perfective verb with future reference (*sozdam* 'I will

create'). Since this sentence describes conditions that must be in place before *možno poprobovat'* 'can try' takes place, it seems clear that *možno poprobovat'* also has future reference. This applies both to the possibility denoted by *možno* and the event denoted by the infinitive.

For gnomic examples such as (12) it is difficult to determine whether they involve present or future reference. Gnomic situations are essentially atemporal, so the action in question could take place both in the present and in the future, see (Janda 2004, 491). In other words, examples of this type are ambiguous unless they have contextual clues that locate them in the present or in the future.

In my dataset, there are ten rhetorical questions such as (15) that can be interpreted as gnomic situations. It should be noted that no such examples in the clean data were observed with the future copula.

- (15) [...], no **razve** **možno** **pozvolit'** **zadevat'**
 how can allow.INF.PFV hurt. INF.PFV
 NAŠICH ŽENŠČIN.
 '[...], but **how can we allow to hurt** OUR WOMEN.'
 (Kollektivnyj. Forum: Muščina v škole [Vzgljad na Muščinu v škole
 snaruži i iznutri], 2011)

As mentioned, contextual clues may help to locate the event in the present or in the future. Examples include temporal adverbials such as *segodnja* 'today' and *teper'* 'now' that clearly locate both *možno* and the infinitive in the present as in (16).

- (16) Vo vsjakom slučae imenno takie razgovory **segodnja** **možno**
 today can
uslyšat' v kuliarach Gosdumy.
 hear.INF.PFV
 'In any case, it is precisely such conversations that **can be heard today** in the State Duma's lobby.'
 (I. Pylaev, Vojna sryvaet posevnuju // "Eženedel'nyj žurnal," 2003)

However, examples with temporal adverbials are few and far between in constructions without the copula. In my dataset I have only nine examples with temporal adverbials that locate the situation in the present. The remainder of the examples lack explicit temporal markers except three examples containing if-clauses as in (17) and two examples containing the adverbial *togda* 'then' as in (18). Examples with if-clauses denote gnomic situations, whereas *togda* place the situation in the future.

- (17) Ėffekt **možno** **usilit'**, **esli** **podobrat'** k
 can enhance.INF.PFV if match. INF.PFV
 takoj modeli džemper s rukavami kontrastnogo cveta.
 'The effect **can be enhanced by matching** a jumper with sleeves in a contrasting color.'
 (Obnovit' garderob? Legko! Sočetanija, sozdajuščie stil' // "Daša," 2004)

- (18) **Tol'ko togda možno poverit'** v ser'ěžnost'
 just then can believe.INF.PFV
 načatoj Gryzlovym bor'by za pravoporjadok i čistotu kadrov.
 'Just then can one believe in the seriousness of the struggle for law and order and the purity of
 personnel that had been begun by Gryzlov.'
 (Oborotni pervoj volny // "Zavtra," 2003)

Examples (18) can be used with copula *budet* without any changes in its semantics. Therefore, I suggest that when *možno* + INF.PFV/IPFV is used with various future temporal expressions, it will denote future situations similar to the constructions with the future copula *budet*. I will address this question in Section 8.

Overall, my data suggest that *možno* without the copula can refer to both present and future events. Contextual clues such as temporal adverbials may disambiguate the construction. However, such contextual clues are relatively infrequent and therefore the majority of constructions without the copula are ambiguous with regard to time reference.

5. The Meaning of *možno* with Future Copula

The analysis of my data shows that constructions with the future copula *budet* 'will be' unambiguously locate both the possibility of carrying out an action and, consequently, the action itself in the future. In example (19) it is impossible to visit Ulja at the moment of speech, but it will be possible in the nearest future (*skoro* 'soon').

- (19) Dejstvitel'no, leteli dni [...]. Kazalos', včera byl fevral' i prazdnovali novosel'e,
 a segodnja ijun', i **skoro** **možno budet**
 soon.ADV can be.FUT.3SG
echat' v pustynju naveščat' Ulju.
 go.INF.PFV
 Indeed, the time has flown by [...]. It seemed that yesterday was February and we celebrated
 housewarming, and today is already June, and **soon it will be possible to go** to the desert to visit
 Ulja.
 (V. Michal'skij, "Dlja radosti nužny dvoe," 2005)

In the previous section we saw that contextual clues can disambiguate the temporal reference but such contextual clues are very rare for constructions without the future copula. In constructions *with* the copula, on the other hand, the situation is very different. Here the majority of examples (3/4) have explicit future reference such as *v 2013 godu* 'in 2013,' *skoro* 'soon,' *posle* 'after' etc., or future reference is implied by a conditional clause with a perfective non-past verb form. However, even if the sentence lacks such contextual clues, it still receives future interpretation as in (20).

- (20) Nalogi **možno** **budet** **oplatit'** **č**ez Internet.
 can be.FUT.3SG pay.INF.PFV
 'Taxes **can be paid** online.'
 (Nalogi možno budet oplatiť čez Internet. // <http://www.rbcdaily.ru/2011/03/23/finance/562949979920489.shtml>, 2011)

Example (20) is the headline of a news article, from which it immediately becomes clear to the reader that it is impossible to pay taxes via the Internet yet, but that such a possibility will appear in the future. However, such examples are less frequent than examples in which the future copula and future temporal marker are simultaneously present. In the next section I will discuss the temporal adverbials and sequencing markers that involve future time reference.

6. Contextual Factors 1: Temporal Adverbials and Sequencing Markers That Denote a Point in Time

Constructions with the future copula have a tendency to appear in a sentence together with various temporal adverbials that help locating the situation in time. These temporal adverbials are of two types, which I will refer to as "specific" time markers and "sequencing" markers.

Specific time markers are mostly prepositional phrases such as *k vesne 2015* 'by spring 2015' and future temporal adverbials such as *skoro* 'soon,' *popozže* 'a bit later.' All these time markers locate the event after the moment of speech, that is in the future. More examples are given in Table 3. As shown

Table 3. Temporal adverbs and sequencing markers used with *možno + budet + INF*. Numbers in brackets show the number of examples in my dataset.

| Contextual factor | Example |
|---|--|
| Specific time markers (123 examples) | <i>16 janvarja</i> 'on the 16 th of January' <i>bliže k vesne / k 2015</i> 'closer to spring / to 2015' <i>čez X let</i> 'in X years' <i>eščě paru let i</i> 'a couple more years and' <i>popozže</i> 'a bit later' <i>s 2015</i> 'from 2015' <i>s tret'jej nedeli</i> 'from the third week' <i>skoro</i> 'soon' <i>teper</i> 'now' <i>utom</i> 'in the morning' <i>v 2013 / v janvare / v budušem / v dal'nejšem / v ponedel'nik</i> 'in 2013 / in January / in future / later on / on Monday' <i>zavtra</i> 'tomorrow' etc. |
| Sequencing time markers (83 example) | a) <i>posle X</i> 'after X'; <i>potom</i> 'afterwards'; <i>zatem</i> 'then'; <i>a tam</i> 'and then'; <i>prežde čem</i> 'before' (53 examples) b) preceding clause with non-past perfective future verb form with or without temporal adverb including when-clauses with the non-past verb form in the protasis (30 examples) |

in the table, there is a total of 123 examples of this type in my dataset. Example (21) illustrates how the specific temporal markers work.

- (21) Programmnjy direktor NTV Aleksandr Nečaev zajavil, čto **v** **2013**
 in 2013
godu **možno** **budet** **govorit'** "daže ne ob otdel'nyh
 year.INSTR.SG can be.FUT.3SG talk.INF.IPFV
 izmenenijach setki, a v celom o značimych sdvigach v programnoj politike kanala."
 'The program director of NTV, Alexander Nečaev, said that **in 2013 it will be possible to talk** "not
 just about individual changes in the network, but about significant shifts in the channel's program
 policy in general."
 (V. Nesterov, Žarenym propachlo // "Ogonek," 2013)

As for sequencing markers they are temporal adjuncts such as *posle* 'after,' *zatem* 'after' etc. or when-clauses. The sequencing markers denote that there is an event that must take place in the future before the *možno* construction. By implication, the *možno* construction is therefore located in the future. A list of examples is provided in Table 3. Example (22) shows how the sequencing markers work.

- (22) **Posle** **opytnoj** **ekspluatacii,** vozmožno, proizojdēt
 after experimental.GEN.SG use.GEN.SG
 korektirovka konstrukcii, **možno** **budet** **zadumyvat'sja**
 Can be.FUT.3SG consider.INF.IPFV
 ob organizacii serijnogo proizvodstva "avtolokomobilej."
 'After the trial, perhaps, the design will be adjusted, and it **will be possible to consider**
 launching of the serial production of "autolocomobiles."
 (D. Fedečkin. Znakomtes': "Avtomobil'!" // "Ural'skij avtomobil"
 (Miass), 2004)

7. Contextual Factors 2: Conditional Constructions and Other Clues

The contextual clues discussed in the previous section are temporal in nature. However, conditional constructions can also locate a situation in the future. In my dataset I have conditional constructions with *esli* 'if' and *v slučae* 'in case of,' as shown in (23) and (24).

- (23) **Esli ètot process uspešno zaveršitsja,** **možno** **budet**
 can be.FUT.3SG
govorit' o moščnom èkonomičeskom partnerstve biznes-grupp,
 speak.INF.IPFV
 podnjavšichsja pri Borise El'cine.
 'If this process is successfully accomplished, it will be possible to talk about a powerful
 economic partnership between business groups that emerged under Boris Yeltsin's government.'
 (I. Gal'perin, Vlast' "delom" zanimaetsja // "Soveršenno sekretno," 2003)
- (24) Po ego slovam, **v** **slučae** **uspecha** **možno**
 in case success can
budet **uveičit'** količestvo sputnikov i takim obrazom
 be.FUT.3SG increase.INF.PFV
 rašširit' ocvah zemnoj poverchnosti.
 'According to him, **in the case of success it will be possible to increase** the number of
 satellites and thus expand the coverage of the earth's surface.'
 (D. Rudakova, Sputniki predskazut zemletrjasenija // <http://www.rbcdaily.ru/2011/03/23/cnews/562949979918859.shtml>, 2011)

In (23) the conditional clause contains the perfective verb *zaveršitsja* ‘will be accomplished,’ which unambiguously places the conditional clause in the future. Since the conditional clause specifies an event that must take place before the *možno* construction, it is clear that the *možno* construction has future reference. Similarly in example (24) the construction *v slučae uspecha* ‘in the case of success’ denotes a successful completion of an event in the future, that precedes the situation marked by the *možno* construction. In my dataset, a total of fifty-eight examples contained conditional clauses.

In addition to the contextual clues discussed above, my dataset contains 19 examples with other contextual clues. These clues involve questions with perfective infinitives like (25) and various elements in the wider context that locate the *možno* construction in the future. An example is provided in (26).

- (25) Ich **možno** **budet** **ugovorit’** **molčat’?**
 can be.FUT.3SG persuade.INF.PFV be.silent.INF.PFV
 ‘Can we persuade them to remain silent?’
 (S. Šikera. Vybor natury // “Volga,” 2014)

- (26) **Cel’** **issledovanija** — **polučit’** **test,** po
 aim.NOM.SG research.GEN.SG get.INF.PFV test.ACC.SG
 rezul’tatam kotorogo **Možno** **budet** **opredelit’**,
 can be.FUT.3SG determine.INF.PFV
 naskol’ko real’nyj pacient raschoditsja s “grafikom” svoego ideal’nogo zdorov’ja.
 ‘The aim of the study is to get a test, according to the results of which it will be possible to determine how much a real patient deviates from the “schedule” of his ideal health.’
 (E. Kudrjavceva, Čto s’est’ na zavtra // “Ogoněk,” 2014)

In (26) the main clause *cel’ issledovanija – polučit’ test* ‘the aim of the study is to get a test’ contains a perfective infinitive *polučit’* ‘obtain’ which signals that the test will be created in the future. Consequently, it will be possible to apply this test once the research will be completed.

As can be seen from data in Table 4, constructions with the future copula have a tendency to appear together with various contextual clues, whereas

Table 4. Contextual clues and their frequency in my dataset, “future” stands for time markers placing an event in the future, whereas “present” stands for time markers placing an event in the present.

| | | with future copula | without future copula |
|------------------------------|----------------|--------------------|-----------------------|
| Specific time markers | present | – | 9 |
| | future | 123 | – |
| Sequential markers | present | – | 2 |
| | future | 83 | – |
| Conditional clauses | present | – | 3 |
| | future | 58 | – |
| Miscellaneous | present | – | – |
| | future | 19 | – |
| No contextual clues | present | – | 386 |
| | future | 117 | – |
| Total | | 400 | 400 |

constructions without the future copula are less likely to be accompanied by temporal, sequential or conditional markers.

8. Case Study: The Role of the Future Temporal Adverbial *zavtra* ‘tomorrow’ within Modal Constructions

As shown in the previous sections, the construction *možno* + INF.PFV/IPFV can be used to mark future events. The construction *možno* + *budet* + PFV/IPFV INF is used to mark future events as well, but at the same time this construction tends to be accompanied by future temporal adverbials. In order to get a better understanding of how the presence of a future temporal adverbial affects the semantics of the constructions, I decided to carry out a case study with the adverbial *zavtra* ‘tomorrow.’ I searched the RNC for examples in which constructions with and without the future copula combine with this temporal adverbial. The search queries, raw numbers and clean data are presented in Table 5. The following examples illustrate the use of *zavtra* with *možno* constructions.

- (27) [...] i **zavtra** že **možno** **uechat'**: nu, chot' v
 tomorrow can leave.INF.PFV
 Norvegiju, ili, naprotiv, ostat'sja na mesjac, na god, na dva v ètom čut' staromodnom, ujutnom pansione [...].
 '[...] and **tomorrow it will be possible to leave**; well, at least to Norway, or, on the contrary, to stay for a month, for a year, for two in this slightly old-fashioned, cozy boarding house [...].'
 (G. V. Ivanov, "Peterburgskie zimy," 1928)
- (28) Andrej priedet, my vse uznaem, a **zavtra** **možno** **budet**
 tomorrow can be. FUT.3SG
uechat'
 leave.INF.PFV
 'Andrej will come, we will find out everything, and **tomorrow it will be possible to leave**.'
 (A. B. Gol'denjezer, "Vblizi Tolstogo," 1910)

As shown in Table 5, all constructions are compatible with *zavtra* which combine with perfective and imperfective infinitives with and without the

Table 5. The search queries, raw numbers and clean data for constructions with *zavtra* ‘tomorrow.’

| # | Query | Raw data | Clean data |
|----|--|----------|------------|
| 1. | zavtra + možno + INF.PFV zavtra 4 – -4 možno 1–1 V, inf, pf | 88 | 43 |
| 2. | zavtra + možno + INF.IPFV zavtra 4 – -4 možno 1-1 V, inf, ipf | 23 | 23 |
| 3. | zavtra + možno + budet + INF.PFV zavtra 4 – -4 možno 1–1 byt' fut 1–1 V, inf, pf | 30 | 28 |
| 4. | zavtra + možno + budet + INF.IPFV zavtra 4 – -4 možno 1–1 byt' fut 1–1 V, inf, ipf | 9 | 9 |
| | Totals | 150 | 103 |

future copula. The construction without the copula has more attestations with *zavtra* compared to the constructions with the copula. This is likely because the construction without copula is much more frequent in general, as mentioned in Section 3.

In constructions without the copula, *zavtra* forces a future reading. In sentences like (27) the event denoted by the infinitive is clearly located in the future. The possibility denoted by *možno* can pertain both to the present and to the future. In other words, (27) may mean that the possibility is already there while the trip will take place tomorrow, or that the possibility will arise tomorrow when the trip will also take place. The difference between these two scenarios is admittedly subtle. However, imagine a situation where a citizen in Russia wants to travel to Norway. Sentence (27) would be appropriate in a situation where the Russian citizen has her visa in hand today and plans to travel to Norway tomorrow. But the sentence is equally appropriate if the Russian citizen does not have a visa yet but will receive the visa the next day.

The construction with copula unambiguously places the situation in the future, even without *zavtra*. However, *zavtra* is often added in order to clarify exactly when the event will take place. Smith (2002, 68) points out that

there is a nonarbitrary relationship between meaning and the form or structure used to encode that meaning – i.e., that grammatical structure somehow reflects its function or what it designates (i.e., its meaning) (cf. Givón 1990, 966–976). Iconicity also encompasses the idea that linguistic forms “are frequently the way they are because, like diagrams, they resemble the conceptual structures they are used to convey” (Haiman 1985, 1).

I propose that iconicity is relevant for the use of *budet* in constructions with *možno*. I suggest that the presence of the future copula between the modal word and the verb reflects not only that the verb locates the event in the future but also reflects the temporal distance between the moment when the speaker can carry out an action and the moment when the speaker performs this action. In examples (29) and (30), that express almost the same semantics, the possibility (*možno*) and the action (*echat'*) are both located in the future. However, in (29) the possibility will be activated tomorrow (*zavtra*), whereas the action of leaving (*echat'*) can take place tomorrow or on some other day in the future. In (29) *zavtra* can be interpreted as a starting point on the temporal axis. On the other hand, in example (30) both the possibility of leaving and the actual leaving will happen tomorrow almost at the same time. In (30) *zavtra* is a unique time slot in which the action can be carried out.

Thus, the presence of the future copula between the modal word *možno* and the verb *echat'* seems to reflect the temporal distance between these

events. These can be analyzed as an example of iconicity since a longer time span corresponds to a longer string of words.

- (29) Avtomobil' naš našelsja. My postavili ego na ulice protiv gostinicy. **Zavtra**
tomorrow

| | | | |
|---|--------------|---------------|--|
| možno | budet | echat' | |
| can | be. FUT.3SG | go.INF.PFV | |
| 'Our car was found. We parked it in front of the hotel. We can leave tomorrow. ' | | | |
| (N. Nosov, "Neznajka v Solnečnom gorode," 1958) | | | |

- (30) "Zavtra voskresen'e, **zavtra možno echat'** dal'se!" —
tomorrow can go.INF.PFV

uprjamo povtorjal on, otkazyvajas' pokinut' ukromnoe mesto.
"Tomorrow is Sunday, tomorrow we can go on!" – he stubbornly repeated, refusing to leave the secluded place.'
(V. Kargalov, "Kolumb Vostoka," 1978)

Iconicity might be a relevant factor, but the topic requires much more systematic review, that must be left for the future research.

9. The Representation in Cognitive Linguistics

In Cognitive linguistics we can represent the relations between form and meaning as schemas (Langacker 2008). In the following I show that three schemas are sufficient to summarize my findings about constructions with *možno*. Those schemas are depicted in Figures 1.1–1.3.

The analysis of examples from RNC confirms that both the modal *možno* and the infinitive can be located in the present or in the future depending on the construction they are used in. To represent that pattern, I divided the temporal space into two fields, namely the present and the future, see Figures 1.1–1.3. In these figures, the present includes gnomic situations, see Section 4. The present and future fields are separated by a dashed line. Each element of constructions discussed in this paper (the modal adverb *možno*, the future copula *budet*, infinitives and temporal markers) can be placed above the line, denoting a present event; below the line, denoting a future event, and on the line. When the element is situated on the line, this element might belong to the present or to the future depending on the context.

Figure 1.1 locates all the parts of the situation in the future: the future copula *budet* locates both the modal word and the infinitive in the future. In 75% of the examples, as shown in Section 7, the copula *budet* is used together with various future temporal markers, so the temporal markers are also located below the line.

The relationships between the modal *možno* and the infinitive within the construction *možno* + INF are more complex. Both the possibility encoded by

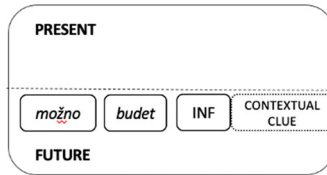


Figure 1.1. Schema for *možno budet* + INF + contextual clue

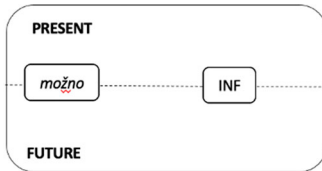


Figure 1.2. Schema for *možno* + INF

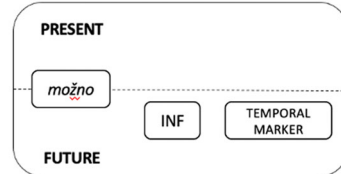


Figure 1.3. Schema for *možno* + INF + temporal marker

Figure 1. The schemas for modal constructions. The dashed horizontal line represents the boundary between present and future readings. A dashed rectangle indicates that the contextual clue can be omitted without changing the interpretation.

možno and the situation described by the infinitive can be located in the present or the future. Hence, the modal word and the infinitive are placed on the line in [Figure 1.2](#).

[Figure 1.3](#) demonstrates that *možno* + INF in combination with a temporal marker locates the infinitive in the future, however the possibility might belong to the future or to the present. In general, therefore, it seems that the speaker is prompted to use the future copula together with the temporal marker to avoid ambiguity and locate the situation in the future.

10. Conclusions

In this article, I have analyzed the constructions with *možno* with and without the future copula *budet* 'will be.' My findings can be summarized as follows. First, I have demonstrated that constructions without the future copula are 34 times more frequent than the constructions with the copula. Second, it has been shown that constructions with the copula have a tendency to combine with various contextual clues, namely temporal, sequential, conditional and other markers that unambiguously locate the situation in the future. Third, contextual clues are less frequent in constructions without the copula. Fourth, constructions with copula locate the situation in the future regardless of whether the contextual clues are present. Fifth, the construction without the future copula is more ambiguous and can denote present, gnomic or future situations. The addition of a temporal marker forces the interpretation whereby the event denoted by the infinitive takes

place in the future, while the possibility denoted by *možno* may be in the present or the future. Finally, the interpretations were illustrated in a straightforward manner by means of schemas of the type used in cognitive linguistics.

The present study opens up a number of avenues for future research. In particular, it would be interesting to investigate the contribution of aspect in the construction under scrutiny. Another open question concerns the interplay of iconicity and word order with the constructions with *možno* and the future copula. However, these and other questions must be left for future studies.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

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