



UDC 811.113.4

**Dina Nikulicheva**

*Institute of Linguistics, Russian Academy of Sciences,  
Moscow State Linguistic University*

## **QUASI-SYNONYMY OF DANISH CAUSAL CONJUNCTIONS FROM THE SPEAKER'S PERSPECTIVE\***

**For citation:** Nikulicheva D. Quasi-synonymy of Danish causal conjunctions from the speaker's perspective. *Scandinavian Philology*, 2021, vol. 19, issue 1, pp. 42–60. <https://doi.org/10.21638/11701/spbu21.2021.103>

The article explores a fragment of the grammatical system of the Danish language, which represents a regular formal variation of auxiliary language markers — causal conjunctions *fordi*, *for*, *eftersom*, *thi*. The functional and pragmatic description of each of them is proposed based on the anthropocentric approach. This approach is aimed at studying the linguistic expression of the speaker's orientation in denotative reality and communication. In terms of expressing causation, this presupposes differentiation of ways to substantiate the speaker's assertion, depending on different sources of causation: the speaker's own inference (*for*); appeal to knowledge, common to all participants in communication (*thi*); justifying one objective fact with another (*fordi*), justifying the speaker's own inference with an objective fact (*eftersom*). The etymology of conjunctions, as well as the temporal correlation of the predicates in causal and main clauses, allows us to determine the reasons for the speaker to organize the mental space of causation in different ways. In addition, the use of the conceptual blending concept allows us to explain why one conjunction is replaced by another in oral speech.

**Keywords:** Danish language, anthropocentric approach, causal conjunctions, quasi-synonymy, causal and main clause, sources of causation, mental space of causation.

### **1. INTRODUCTION. THE SYSTEM OF CAUSAL CONJUNCTIONS OF THE DANISH LANGUAGE**

In the article, quasi-synonymous causal conjunctions are understood as conjunctions that introduce causal clauses, can function in an identi-

---

\* With support from the Russian Foundation for Fundamental Research (RFFR), grant no. 19-012-00146.

cal syntactic environment, but at the same time are not interchangeable in other syntactic contexts and express semantic distinctions that are significant for a given language culture.

The overall system of causal conjunctions of the Danish language, in our opinion, includes eight conjunctions. On the one hand, these are four conjunctions that prototypically introduce the rheme of an utterance (*fordi, for, eftersom, thi*) and conjoin main and causal clauses, the latter occupying the rhematic position in the utterance. The first four can be contrasted with another set of causal conjunctions (*da, når, siden, idet*) prototypically related to the theme and mainly occupying the thematic position in the utterance.

In this article, emphasis is given to the functional and semantic differences between the first four conjunctions (*fordi, for, eftersom, thi*) and a description is provided of the linguo-pragmatic specifics of each of them, based on an anthropocentric approach, which takes into account the speaker's factor in his relation to the utterance and to denotative reality, as well as the speaker's orientation in the "mental space" of causation<sup>1</sup>.

To identify the functional and semantic specifics of each of the conjunctions, we developed a set of parameters, which describe each of the causal conjunctions:

- comparison of the dictionary definitions of the four Danish causal conjunctions;
- comparison of the syntactic structure of causal clauses introduced by different conjunctions;
- the etymological analysis of each conjunction with emphasis on the mental localization of spatial representations that underlie their semantics;

---

<sup>1</sup> The concept of "mental spaces" proposed by J. Fauconnier [Fauconnier, 1985] as a working field of mental activity was further developed in the research of psychologists who proved that this concept "reflects an important phenomenon of mental reality, which has an ontogenetic history, occupies a certain place in the system of mental phenomena and can be investigated by psychological methods" [Osorina, 2017, p. 21]. The author shows that "the psychologically primary, sensory-perceptual experience of a person, accumulated as a result of the active, cognitive and motor interaction with the reality of the object-spatial world, lays the foundation for the spatial and temporal organization of secondary, that is, mental, images" [ibid., p. 15]. We will analyze how these mental images are verbalized by the speaker to express causation, using the example of causal conjunctions in the Danish language.

- a study of the frequency and functional characteristics of each conjunction according to the Corpus of the Modern Danish Language (KorpusDK);
- the attribution of the causal clause either to the entire preceding utterance together with its modus frame, or to the immediately preceding proposition;
- comparison of linear and nonlinear temporal correlation of predicates of the causal and main clause conjoined by different conjunctions;
- tracing differences in semantic types of predicates introduced by different conjunctions;
- tracing differences in the compatibility of the analyzed causal conjunctions with the 1, 2 and 3<sup>rd</sup> person particles of epistemic modality.

## 2. DICTIONARY DEFINITIONS

Danish dictionaries reveal the ambiguity of definitions, which indicates the absence of clear semantic criteria recognized by native speakers that would explain why the Danes use causal conjunctions in a different manner. For instance, according to Den Danske Ordbog (DDO), all causal conjunctions introduce a reason, rationale or explanation: *fordi* — “bruges som indledning til en ledsætning der udtrykker en logisk grund eller en årsag i al almindelighed” — “is used as a conjunction introducing a subordinate clause expressing rationale or reason in general”; *for* — “bruges for at udtrykke at det følgende skal opfattes som begrundelse af eller forklaring på det foregående” — “is used to express the fact that the subsequent should be perceived as a justification or explanation of the previous”; *thi* — “bruges for at udtrykke at det følgende skal opfattes som begrundelse af eller forklaring på det foregående, gammeldags, højtideligt eller spøgende” — “is used to express that what follows should be perceived as a justification or explanation of the previous, outdated, solemn or jocular”; *eftersom* — “bruges som indledning til en ledsætning, der udtrykker årsag, især en årsag der anføres som logisk eller naturlig begrundelse” — “used as a conjunction introducing a subordinate clause expressing a *reason*, especially a reason that is offered as a logical or natural justification”. Also, it is impossible to miss the obvious inconsistency of how the “synonymy” of these conjunctions is interpreted. For example,

the DDO provides the conjunction *eftersom* as a synonym for the causal conjunction *fordi*, while the synonym for the conjunction *eftersom* itself is the conjunction *siden*, with no reference to *fordi*. The causal conjunction *for* has a synonym *thi*, as well as the modus clause *og grunden el. forklaringen er at* ‘and the reason is that...’ or ‘and the explanation is that’, although when describing the causal conjunction *thi* with the same dictionary definition as *for*, only *for* is indicated as a synonym.

The anthropocentric perspective proposed in the article offers to semantically differentiate the conjunctions by identifying their perceptual foundation. Etymology allows us to reveal how drastically differently the speaker organizes the mental space of causation in situations introduced by these conjunctions.

In the article, it will be shown that the anthropocentric approach helps to present all causal conjunctions of the Danish language as a wholesome and comprehensive system and to reveal obvious functional peculiarities in each of them.

### 3. FOR

Structurally, the causal conjunctions *for* and *thi* stand alone in the Danish language. Their peculiarity lies in the fact that the causal clause they introduce is topologically always an independent sentence. In Danish, this manifests itself in a different position of the sentential adverbials, for example, the position of negation. Compare the word order of S-V-A in a clause introduced by causal conjunctions *for* or *thi*: (...**for / thi** *han ville ikke tilbage* ‘...because he did not want to return’), identical to the word order in an independent sentence (*Han ville ikke tilbage*), with the word order of S-A-V in standard subordinate clauses introduced by other conjunctions (...**fordi / eftersom / da** *han ikke ville tilbage*).

The relational specificity of the conjunction *for* was indicated by Danish researchers [Therkelsen, 2003; Lund, 2007], who pointed out that it expresses a causal relationship not between two neighboring propositions, but between two speech acts.

The current article will show that the causal conjunction *for* serves as a signal that the speaker expresses his point of view based on his own inferences, generalizations, assessments, etc., that is, that the speaker takes on epistemic responsibility for the reliability of the argumentation.

The starting point for our reasoning is the observation by K. H. Lund that “the clause introduced by the conjunction *for* explains the modus component in the related main clause, and in the absence of verbally expressed modus frame, the clause with *for* explains the message contained in the related clause” [Lund, 2007, p. 168]. *Det er sorgeligt, at Ove stopper, for han var en god træner (\*fordi)*. ‘I am sorry that Ove is leaving — he was a good coach’. The author points out that in such examples “there is no possibility of an equivalent substitution by clauses with the conjunction *fordi*, since such clauses would indicate the reason for the dictum part” [Lund 2007, p. 166]. This would result in an absurd meaning: \**Ove stopper, fordi han var en god træner* \*‘Ove is leaving because he was a good coach’. The presence of a modus frame can be considered as a signaling context that removes quasi-synonymy. In the framework of the anthropocentric approach, it is important for us to emphasize that in statements with the conjunction *for* the speaker’s subjective attitude implicitly (and often explicitly) is present in both parts of the statement: <Jeg synes> *det er sorgeligt, at Ove stopper, for* <jeg synes> *han var en god træner*. The source of argumentation introduced by conjunction *for* is the speaker himself: <I am> *sorry that Ove is leaving, for* <I believe that> *he was a good coach*.

The analysis of examples from the Danish Corpus 2007 [<https://ordnet.dk/korpusdk>] and from fiction will allow us to make several important observations:

1. Often the argumentation introduced by the conjunction *for* explicitly contains a predicate of mental activity that explains the subjective assessment of the proposition by the speaker: *Der er intet forkert i at angle efter store seertal. For jeg opfatter godt tv som noget, der automatisk vil få store seertal* [Dansk korpus 2007]. ‘There is nothing wrong with attracting a wide audience, since (for) good television, I suppose, automatically gets a large audience’; *Han havde ladet hende snakke, for han havde på fornemmelsen hvad der ville følge efter* [Jessen, 2006, s. 9]. ‘He let her rant because (for) he had a presentiment of what would come next’.

2. Both in the presence and in the absence of an explicated modus framework, the conjunction *for* is used if the argumentation consists in the speaker’s predicting potential consequences. The DDO Dictionary recognizes such usages of the conjunction by giving a separate definition: “bruges for at udtrykke at det følgende skal opfattes

som en (tænkt) uheldig følgevirkning der begrundet det foregående” — ‘used to express (conceivable) negative consequences that substantiate the preceding statement’: *Godt, at han har lyset her, for ellers ville han intet kunne se.* ‘It’s good that there is light here, because (for) otherwise he wouldn’t see anything’; *Sejlene måtte endelig ikke blive våde, for så krøb de.* ‘The sails couldn’t get wet because (for) they would shrink later’; *Hold hovedet tildækket, for det er let at få solstik her* ‘Cover your head because (for) it is easy to get sunstroke here’ [DDO].

3. An argument clause with *for* is often accompanied by modal particles of epistemic evaluation. Note that these can be both particles of epistemic responsibility of the 1<sup>st</sup> person (*nok*), and particles of epistemic responsibility of the 2<sup>nd</sup> (*vel*), and the 3<sup>rd</sup> person (*vist*) [Krylova, 2016].

“Hvor er Kristian blevet af?” “Han står **nok** med overkroppen halvvejs inde i køleskabet”, siger Alma, og det gør han **nok, for** han **foretrækker altid** noget andet end det, der bliver serveret [Hesselholdt, p. 15]. ‘Where did Christian go? — **Probably** he is standing and digging in the refrigerator, — replies Alma. This is **probably** true, **since (for)** Christian **always prefers** something else, and not what is served at the table’. The *nok* particle expresses the character’s reasoning, as well as the narrator’s reasoning (*altid* ‘always’) based on the generalized previous experience.

Jeg ved ikke, hvor mange tynde, mørke stuepiger i røde kjoler, der gik planløst rundt og matchede veggene. **For** de var **vel** ikke prostituerede? I så fald kunne de lige godt så have lænet sig op ad solnedgangen i et øde landskab [Hesselholdt, p. 22]. ‘I don’t know how many slender, dark-haired maids in red — matching the color of the walls — wandered aimlessly through the corridors. Because (**for**) not prostitutes (**vel**) were they? <After all> they could just as well have stood leaning against the sunset in the desert’. The narrator, reasoning to herself (hence the usually dialogical particle *vel*), substantiates her assumption that the girls in red dresses were maids. The reasoning is based on the principle of proof “by contradiction”. The *for* conjunction introduces a complex argumentative speech act, starting with an alternative assumption with unreal consequences, which proves the original hypothesis.

Der var (**vist**) ingen hjemme, **for** der var ikke lys i vinduerne. (**\*fordi**) ‘(It seems) no one was at home because there was no light in the windows’. This example with the particle *vist*, borrowed from [Lund 2007, p. 169], is important in that it confirms the impossibility of replacing *for* with *fordi*, even if you omit the evidentiality operator *vist*. The absence of light in the windows is not the reason for the empty house. It is the observable foundation for the speaker to prove his own assumption that there was no one in the house.

4. The analysis of temporal forms used in clauses with *for* allows us to draw a conclusion about the nonlinear temporal correlation of the predicates of the causal and caused clause. The cause here does not precede the effect. On the contrary, we are talking either about the expression of timeless opinions and characteristics (*for han foretrækker altid...*, *for jeg opfatter...*, *for han havde på fornemmelsen...*), or about the predictions of the speaker, that prove his statement (*for så krøb de*, *for det er let at få solstik her*) or the speaker's assumptions that contradict facts (*for ellers ville han intet kunne se*).

5. To explain why exactly the conjunction *for* is used in Danish to refer to the mental representations of the speaker is possible by studying the etymology of the conjunction *for* and functioning of the related preposition and adverb *for*.

Similar to the related preposition and adverb, the Danish conjunction *for* possesses an initial spatial meaning and indicates, among other things, the frontal position of the object relative to the perceiving subject: “*For* præg., adv., konj., . urnord. \**fura*, rot. *faúr*, <...>. Til den ie. præg. \**per* ‘ud over’ <...>, hvoraf gr. *πᾶρά* ‘ved siden af, forbi, ud over’, oldind. *purá* ‘før, tidligere, foran’” [ETYM, s. 127]. Here, as we can see, there are both temporal meanings: ‘before, earlier’, and various spatial meanings: ‘before’, ‘opposite’, ‘next’. It is in this spatial meaning that the preposition *for* is used in modern Danish. *Jeg kunne ikke se fem skridt for mig*. ‘I could not see anything five steps ahead of me’. *Han blev stillet for en dommer* ‘He was brought to stand trial (in front of the court)’ [DRO, s. 247].

In connection with the anthropocentric perspective of the study, it is important to emphasize that the spatial meaning of the preposition *for* can refer not only to localization in the real, but also in the imaginary world indicating the location of the visualized situation in the mental space of the subject. This explains the inner form of the Danish verb *forestille* ‘to imagine’ (ænyd. d. s.; fra mnty. *vorstellen*)<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> Let us note that many borrowed verbs with the prefix *vor-* came to Danish from Middle Low German (mnty.). The absence or presence of spatial semantics was expressed in the opposition of two Danish variants of the German prefix *vor-* as *for-* and *fore-*, respectively. Comparison of etymologies according to the dictionary *Ordbog over det danske Sprog. Historisk ordbog 1700–1950* (ODS) allows us to conclude that, in contrast to direct borrowing from mnty. with a prefix *for-*, such as *forbände* ‘curse’ (fra mnt. *vorbannen*), *forarge* ‘shock’ (fra mnt. *vorargen* / *vorargeren*), *forandre* ‘change’ (fra mnt. *voranderen*), Danish verbs with the prefix *fore-*, although they have German

The example below illustrates that the process of mental construction is conceptualized in Danish as being *in front of* (*for*) the speaker in his mental space. Moreover, the preposition *for* expresses precisely the location in the imaginary world, while the frontal location in the real world is regularly expressed by the preposition *foran*:

*I mine drengeår led jeg af en særlig lidelse, der havde at gøre med tilsynekomsten af billeder, ... som slørede synet af virkelige genstande og greb ind i mine tanker og handlinger. Det var billeder af ting og optrin, som jeg havde set i virkeligheden, aldrig af forestillede. Når et ord blev sagt til mig, viste billedet af genstanden, det betegnede, sig levende **for mig**, og indimellem var jeg fuldstændig ude af stand til at skelne mellem, hvorvidt det, jeg så, var håndgribeligt eller ej. Dette, det uhåndgribeliges håndgribelighed, som Tesla beskriver i sin selvbiografi, "My Inventions", gjorde ham senere i stand til at **se** sine opfindelser **for sig** som færdigskabte, som om de allerede stod på bordet **foran ham** [Hesselholdt, 2010, s. 44]. 'When I was a boy, I suffered from a special ailment related to the vision of images that obscured the view of real objects and invaded my thoughts and actions. These were the objects and scenes that I had seen before, never imagined. When I heard a word spoken to me, a picture of the object being designated vividly appeared in front of me (**for mig**), and sometimes I was completely unable to understand whether or not I could touch it with my hand. This materiality of the immaterial, which Tesla describes in his autobiography "My Inventions", allowed him to then present his inventions in front of him (**for sig**) as if they already existed, as if they were placed on the table in front of him (**foran ham**)'.*

Although the author writes that the character could confuse imaginary and real objects, the verbal means of spatial orientation are organized in Danish in such a way as to systematically distinguish between the location in the real and in the imaginary world.

The preposition *for* is used to localize both imaginary objects and imaginary holistic situations in the mental space: *Min mors væsen. Det står så klart for mig, som om jeg kunne række ud og røre ved det* [Hesselholdt, 2010, s. 67] 'All the essence of my mother. She appears to me (stands in front of me) so clearly that I can reach out and touch her'.

---

equivalents, go back to the Old Danish model "verb + spatial adverb": *foreligge* 'be available' (efter ty. vorliegen, jf. dog ligge for, fore, oldn. fyrir liggja, ligge i baghold for, forefindes, egl.: ligge foran een); *forestå* 'to predate, to lead' (glda. for(e)staa, forstande; samt mnt. vorstan, ty. vorstehen); *foresætte* 'set the aim'(glda. for(e)sætte, jf. mnt. vorsetten — sætte foran; sætte for); *forevise* 'to demonstrate, to present' (ænyd. d. s.; jf. ty. vorweisen — vise frem for en; fremvise).



If we are talking about location in real space, then a complex preposition is used with some clarifying spatial morpheme, for example, *over* for or *foran*: *Vi befandt os inde på afdelingens meget lille køkken, og hun stod lige over for mig. Hun spærrede for døren, så jeg ikke kunne komme ud* [Dansk korpus 2007]. ‘We were in a very small office kitchen, she was standing right in front of (**over for**) me. She blocked my way to the door so I couldn’t get out’. *Dette spørgsmål retter Leonardo stadig til de talrige turister, som står foran hans billede* [Dansk korpus 2007]. ‘This question is still addressed by Leonardo to the multitude of tourists who stand in front of (**foran**) his painting’.

The above facts allow us to conclude that the conjunction *for* signals to the addressee that the justification of the statement belongs to the sphere of the mental construction of argumentation by the speaker. In other words, the speaker assumes responsibility for the reliability of his argumentation.


#### 4. THI

Structurally, the conjunction *thi* behaves exactly as the conjunction *for*. The positional structure of the clause introduced by the conjunction *thi* coincides with the structure of a main clause. Like *for*, *thi* can start a sentence after a fullstop: *Det signalerer, hvorledes den kulturelle debat er en uoverskuelig til det usynlige, at kulturdebat væsentligst består i, at nogen diskuterer med sig selv, offentligt. Thi man kan ikke finde dem, man er oppe imod* [Dansk korpus 2007]. ‘This is a signal that the cultural debate is not transparent, and that much of the cultural debate is that one debates with oneself in public. Because (**thi**) it is impossible to identify those with whom the conversation is being conducted’.

This structural similarity generally suggests that the conjunction *thi*, like *for*, justifies the speaker’s argumentation of the entire preceding speech act. In the example above, the modus frame is explicitly present: *Det signalerer... thi... ‘This is a signal..., because...’*

Another feature of the conjunction *thi*, similar to *for*, is the nonlinear temporal correlation of predicates in the causal and the caused clause. Most often the timeless properties and relationships are thus established.

Below we will focus on the functional specifics of the conjunction *thi*, which distinguishes it from the conjunction *for*.

Usually Danish dictionaries indicate *thi* as: “gammeldags, formel” ‘obsolete’, ‘formal’ [DDO]; “næsten forældet”. “især ”; “foræld. i

talespr., især poet., arkais. (ell. spøg.) og i kancellistil” [ODS] ‘almost obsolete in colloquial speech, bookish, preserved in poetry, clerical style, and creating an archaic or ironic effect’.

At the same time, the analysis of the Danish Corpus 2007 indicates a fairly high frequency of its occurrence — 605 uses. Moreover, only about a third of examples with *thi* out of the first hundred can be described as stylistically archaic.

It cannot be denied that *thi* is commonly used in the modern Danish Corpus when citing historical and Biblical texts. At the same time, the contexts where both conjunctions are used within one statement are of special interest: *I 1600-tallet skulle den syndige kvinde ikke straffes med prygl, for som en højtstående gejstlig sagde: “Med slaaen gjør man ikke fromme kvinder, thi slaar man een Fanden ud, saa slaaer man ni ind igen* [Dansk korpus 2007]. ‘In the XVII century the guilty women were not flogged, **because (for)**, as one high-ranking clergyman wrote, “You cannot make a woman better with a flogging, **for (thi)** you will beat one devil out of her, but you will beat in nine”’.

Our hypothesis is that the first of the causative conjunctions (*for*) indicates that the author of the text attempts to justify the truth of his statement. The assertion that “in the 17th century women in Denmark were not flogged” is substantiated with the words of a certain priest, testifying to the views of that time. As for the quoted statement of the clergyman, his assertion that “women cannot be made better by flogging” is supported not by his own arguments, but, in fact, by a dictum in the form of a proverb. This is evidenced by the asyndetic structure of the conditional sentence, and the generalized personal pronoun *man* in the subject position, and, in particular, by the opposition of the numerals “one” and “nine”, typical of Scandinavian proverbs. Compare: *Ën synd for tyven, ni for bagtaleren* [POSL, s. 4433] ‘One sin for a thief, nine for a slanderer’; *Snyder du marken en gang, så snyder den dig ni* [POSL, s. 876], ‘You deceive the field once, it will deceive you nine times’. *Ni vise kan ikke stoppe munden på en dåre* [POSL, s. 152] ‘Nine wise men will not shut the mouth of one fool’. In other words, the clergyman refers to a statement, taken without proof, as some generally accepted truth.

The opposition of the immutable truth from God (*thi*) and the reasoning of man (*for*) is clearly manifested in the translation of the 1st Epistle of the apostle Paul to Corinthians into modern Danish: *Det har*

Gud åbenbart for os ved Ånden. **Thi** Ånden ransager alt, selv Guds dybder. **For** hvem ved, hvad der bor i mennesket, undtagen menneskets egen ånd. [Bibelen, 1992]. ‘But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. **For the Spirit** searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. **For what man** knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him?’ [Bibelen, 1992].

But why does this conjunction retain its productivity in modern speech?

Of particular interest, from our point of view, are stylistically neutral contemporary contexts of socio-political or popular science texts, which are the most widespread in the Dansk korpus 2007 (at least 60 % of the total number of examples with *thi*).

The argumentation in this case either refers to a well-known state of affairs, or it presents an explanation as a well-known and indisputable fact, although objectively it may not be: *I dag har forskerne travlt med at sortere og efterprøve hundredtusinder af opdagelser gjort af IRAS, og tit viser det sig, at strålingen er udsendt af “et støvet objekt”. Det kan ikke forbavse, **thi** støv er en meget effektiv varmekilde* [Dansk korpus 2007]. ‘Today, researchers process hundreds of thousands of results from the space station, and it often turns out that the radiation comes from a “dust object”. This shouldn’t come as a surprise **since (thi)** space dust is an efficient source of thermal energy’. *Enhver skal have lov til at have sin opfattelse, **thi** vi er dog demokrater* [Dansk korpus 2007] ‘Everyone should be entitled to their own opinion, **since (thi)** we are Democrats after all’. In all such examples, the mode implied by the conjunction *thi* can be explicated as: <som kendt> — ‘as is known’.

An ironic effect is created when *thi* is used in contexts that do not imply a well-known and undeniable argumentation: *Amtsrådene var hurtige, **thi** hvem ville ikke gerne kunne oprette en offentlig tv-station, og medarbejderne var lige så hurtige, **thi** hvem ville ikke gerne ud til sin egen lille mark. Det er gået så hurtigt og flot, at de selvfølgelig ikke kan nedlægges sådan uden videre. ...De er blevet et monument over en politik, der var forkert* [Dansk korpus 2007] ‘The regional councils jumped in because **(thi)** who wouldn’t want to create a public television channel, and the staff jumped in because **(thi)** who wouldn’t want their little fiefdom. Everything went so quickly and smoothly that, of course, you can’t just cancel it all’.

Thus, the invariant meaning of *thi* is the argumentation through deixis to the common knowledge shared by all members of the language

community. And this deictic essence of *thi* is reflected in its etymology. The conjunction *thi* (glda. *thy*, *thi*, oldnord. *þí*, *því*) originates in the old case forms of the demonstrative pronoun corresponding to the modern Danish pronoun *den* [ETYM, s. 451]. That is, both *for* and *thi* conjunctions introduce not just causal clauses, but argumentative clauses, either making the speaker's responsible for the validity of the argumentation (*for*), or referring to common knowledge about the state of affairs in the world (*thi*).

## 5. FORDI

The conjunction *fordi* is the most essential causal conjunction. It is the most common in the Corpus, far more prevalent than other causal conjunctions (*fordi* — 54410 occurrences compared to 1707 occurrences with *eftersom* and 605 with *thi*)<sup>3</sup>.

The conjunction *fordi* signals that the argumentation presented by the speaker is an objective fact. The conjunction *fordi* represents the objective relationship of events in denotative reality. This point of view is supported by: 1) semantic types of predicates of physical activity, typically used in constructions with *fordi*, 2) linear temporal correlation of predicates in the causal and main clauses, 3) etymological analysis of the conjunction *fordi*, 4) analysis of Danish syntactic constructions used for the rhematic emphasis on a causal clause (*ikke fordi X, men fordi Y* and *når X, er det fordi Y*), in which no other causal conjunction can be used other than *fordi*.

The examples with conjunction *fordi* provided by the DDO Explanatory Dictionary may be considered typical: *Jeg blev hjemme, fordi jeg var syg* 'I remained at home, because I got sick'; *Lyd kan gå gennem luft, fordi lyden sætter luften i svingninger* 'Sound can travel through the air because it causes the air to vibrate' [DDO].

The predicates in the clauses conjoined by the conjunction *fordi* denote objective facts: (physical actions and changes in physical states in the

---

<sup>3</sup> The Corpus search does not differentiate between the causal conjunction *for* and homonymous preposition *for* 'for', preposition *for* 'before', spatial adverb *for* 'in front of', and *for* as the simple past form from the verb *fare*. It was therefore impossible to single out occurrences of the causal conjunction out of total 783, 173 word usages recorded. However, the analyzed texts suggest that the occurrence of the causal conjunction *for* is slightly less common compared to *fordi*, but significantly surpasses the occurrence of *eftersom*.

real world), causal to subsequent events. At the same time, there is a linear correlation between the causal event and its consequence in time: <got sick → stayed at home>; <causes vibration → can travel>. In this regard, the example cited by K. H. Lund is indicative: <fell, broke his arm → demanded compensation>: *En mand fra Helsingør ville have erstatning, fordi han faldt og brakkede en arm på vej ned ad en mørk trappe...(\*? for)* ‘A resident of Helsingør demanded compensation because he fell down an unlit staircase and broke his arm’. “Replacing *fordi* with *for* in this example would be less successful, writes the Danish researcher. — The fact is that here the subordinate part indicates a direct physical reason, and in a sentence with the conjunction *for* the reason is presented as a justification, that is, it gets a pronounced mental coloring” [Lund, 2007, p. 168].

When analyzing examples where the conjunction *fordi* cannot be replaced by the conjunction *for*, K. H. Lund also provides examples with a modus frame. Unlike examples with *for*, the causation introduced by the conjunction *fordi* cannot be attributed to the modus frame of the statement, but always refers only to the predicate of the nearest proposition in the main clause.

These observations are confirmed by examples from KorpusDK: Han siger, {han blev anbragt, fordi han smittede sin kone} ‘He says he was placed for treatment because he infected his wife’ <infected → placed for treatment>; Jeg tror nu, {at Cesira har giftet sig med den halvgamle købmand, fordi han var i stand til at tilbyde hende et trygt og anderledes liv i Rom...}, ‘It seems to me that Cesira married an aging merchant, because he was able to provide her with a calm, different, life in Rome ...’ <was able to provide → married >.

Etymologically, the conjunction *fordi* (glda. *for thy (at)*, oldnord. *fyrir því (at)*) is derived from the preposition and adverb *for* and the dative form of the demonstrative pronoun *det* [ETYM, s. 129]. That is, in its internal form, it combines the deictic meaning from the demonstrative pronoun *det*, and the meaning from the preposition / prefix *for* not in its spatial sense (as a position in front of the observer), but in its temporal sense (precedence).

The spatial meaning of the root *for* regularly shifts into the temporal sphere as evidenced by the following compounds: (A) *forben* / *bagben* ‘front / rear leg’, *forhjul* / *baghjul* ‘front / rear wheel’, *forgrund* / *baggrund* ‘foreground / background’, *forhave* / *baghave* ‘garden in front of / behind the house’ and (B) *forfader* → *fader* ‘forefather / father’; *forsom-*

mer → sommer 'late spring (lit. pre-summer) / summer'; *forret* → (hoved) ret 'appetizer (lit. pre-course) / (main) course'; *fortid* → (den nuværende) tid 'past (lit. pre-time) / (present) time', with either spatial (A) or temporal (B) semantics. (On the perceptual foundations of such semantic transition see: [Nikulicheva, 2017, p. 57–58].)

By analogy with the examples of group (B), it can be argued that the conjunction *fordi* indicates (deictic semantics of the demonstrative pronoun *det*) a causal situation that precedes its consequences in time (temporal semantics of the preposition / prefix *for*). That is why, semantically, the sentences with the conjunction *fordi* focus on the linear temporal correlation of predicates in the subordinate causal and main clauses and on the objective link of events in the denotative reality.

Based on the above, we can offer an explanation to the phenomenon noted by Danish researchers on the material of the Danish oral speech corpus Talesprogs-korpuset BySoc [Jensen, 2006] and Danish oral official speech [Gregersen, 2019]. They argued that in oral speech the conjunction *fordi* starts to occur in syntactic distribution typical of conjunction *for*, and even more often than *for* itself: it can combine with epistemic particles (*hun bliver hjemme fordi hendes datter måske / vist er syg* 'she stayed at home, because her daughter, perhaps / apparently, got sick') and with the word order typical of the main clause: *hun bliver hjemme fordi hendes søn er lige blevet syg* 'she stayed at home because her son just got sick' [Jensen, 2006, p. 83–84]. This means that in spontaneous oral speech, *fordi* begins to assume the meaning of subjective argumentation rather than objective causation. In our opinion, this phenomenon can be explained as a manifestation of the conceptual blending [Fauconnier, Turner, 2008]. Formulating the statement as a subjective argumentation, which is characteristic of the conjunction *for*, the speaker uses the conjunction *fordi* instead. This substitution strengthens the pragmatic effect on listeners precisely due to the fact that the use of *fordi* presents the statement as an objectively determined causal relationship.

## 7. EFTERSOM

Similar to the conjunction *fordi*, the conjunction *eftersom* demonstrates how the initially spatial semantics of the preposition and adverb *efter* 'for, behind' <glda. *æftir*, af germ. \**afteri* til ie. \**apo-* 'af, væk —

‘from, away’ [ETYM, s. 104] shifts to the temporal domain: ‘after’. The relative pronoun *som* “is usually used as a conjunction in relative subordinate clauses indicating a previously mentioned person or thing” (“bruges som indledning til en relativ ledsætning med henvisning til en tidligere nævnt person eller ting”) [DDO].

The combination of meanings *efter* and *som* creates a special linear causation model:

STATEMENT < *after which (eftersom) follows* > JUSTIFICATION.

The sentence from DDO can serve as a typical example: *Han er vel blevet forelsket i en pige på Lolland, eftersom han vil derned og arbejde på en gård* ‘He must have fallen in love with some girl from Lolland, as he is going to move there to work on a farm’ [DDO].

The statement “*Han er vel blevet forelsket i en pige på Lolland*” is a mental construct of the speaker. This is his assumption, the epistemic reliability of which is supported by the expected shared opinion of the addressee (as evidenced by the use of the particle *vel*). The use of the conjunction *eftersom* indicates that the speaker substantiates his subjective assumption with objective facts at his disposal: “*han vil derned og arbejde på en gård*”.

Our analysis of examples from the Danish Corpus 2007 confirms that the conjunction *eftersom* is semantically different from other causal conjunctions. The conjunction *eftersom* indicates that the speaker’s inference, often accompanied by epistemic markers (*vel*, *næppe* in the examples below), is justified as logically deriving from an objectively observable fact:

*Vitara i Danmark. Just nu er det slet ikke sikkert, om den kommer. Der er ikke taget stilling til spørgsmålet, fastslår pressechef John Jakobsen. Men det kan vel heller ikke udelukkes, eftersom vi i forvejen har to versioner af den 3-dørs Vitara.* ‘<New car model> «Vitara» in Denmark. It is now completely unclear whether it will appear. According to press manager John Jacobsen, there is no definite position on this issue yet. But this, apparently, cannot be ruled out, since (eftersom) we already have two versions of the 3-door Vitara’ [Dansk korpus 2007];

*Bogen er en litteraturhistorisk kuriositet, som der næppe er noget stort behov for at få oversat, eftersom der herhjemme ikke er mange andre end de engelskstudierende, der kender noget til Shelley og Coleridge.* ‘The book is a literary and historical curiosity that is hardly worth translating, since (eftersom) there are not many people in Denmark now, other than English students who know anything about Shelley and Coleridge’ [Dansk korpus 2007].



## 8. CONCLUSION

To summarize the above, it can be noted that causal clauses with *for* and *thi* possess generalizing semantics, while the semantics of clauses with *fordi* and *eftersom* refers to a specific fact. At the same time, the conjunctions *fordi* and *thi* introduce objective facts or objective knowledge as justification, while the conjunction *for* and *eftersom* substantiate the speaker's subjective inference. Thus, the systemic semantic difference in these conjunctions is based on a combination of semantic parameters "objective" / "subjective"; "concrete" / "abstract". These parameters can be easily presented in the form of four squares of the Cartesian logic. The unmarked member of the opposition is the combination of "objective" and "concrete", expressed by the most neutral conjunction *fordi*, and the most marked are "abstract" and "subjective", expressed by the conjunction *for*:

	<i>Objective</i>	<i>Subjective</i>
<b>Abstract</b>	<p><b>X</b> <b>thi</b> ↑ <b>Y</b> &lt;statement Y is correct, since <b>everyone knows</b> that X&gt; (+) abstract (-) subjective</p>	<p><b>X</b> <b>for</b> ↑ <b>Y</b> &lt; statement Y is correct, since <b>I believe</b>, that X&gt; (+) abstract (+) subjective</p>
<b>Concrete</b>	<p><b>Y → fordi X</b> &lt;the fact Y is true, since <b>BEFORE</b> <b>it there was fact X</b>&gt; (-) (-) (-) abstract (-) subjective</p>	<p><b>Y ← eftersom X</b> &lt;assumption Y is true, since if hap- pens <b>AFTER fact X</b>&gt; (-) (+) (-) abstract (+) subjective</p>

This article did not aim to analyze the prototypical thematic causal conjunctions *da*, *når*, *siden*, *idet*, but a preliminary analysis of the linguistic material allows us to hypothesize that they functionally correspond to the four prototypical rhematic conjunctions. As a result, functional pairs are formed: *fordi* / *da*; *for* / *når nu*; *thi* / *idet*; *eftersom* / *siden*. Testing this hypothesis will be the topic of further research.

Initially it was Per Durst-Andersen who pointed out the importance of verbal marking of the speaker's statement in the Danish language



(as a language where the grammatical system is primarily focused on the addressee). He differentiated between statements made on the basis of objective concrete experience (*oplevelseslager*); on the basis of a subjective concrete assumption (*troslager*); on the basis of objective abstract knowledge (*videnslager*); or on the basis of a subjective abstract opinion (*meningslager*) [Durst-Andersen, 2007, s. 170]. Our study of the system of causal conjunctions confirms this general theoretical idea.

## ABBREVIATIONS

DDO = Den Danske Ordbog  
DRO = Dansk Russisk Ordbog  
ETYM = Nielsen N. Å. *Dansk Etymologisk Ordbog*  
ODS = Ordbog over det danske Sprog  
POSL = Bregenhøj C., Påt S. (red.). *Politikens Ordsprogs Leksikon*

## REFERENCES

- Bibelen*. Available at: <https://www.bibelselskabet.dk/brugbibelen/sog-i-bibelen> (accessed: 05.03.2021).
- Bregenhøj C., Påt S. (red.). *Politikens Ordsprogs Leksikon*. København: Politiken, 1994. 512 s.
- Dansk korpus 2007*. Available at: <http://ordnet.dk/korpusdk> (accessed: 05.03.2021).
- Den Danske Ordbog*. Moderne Dansk Sprog. Available at: <http://ordnet.dk/ddo> (accessed: 05.03.2021).
- Durst-Andersen P. De danske sprogs mange stemmer. *Sproglig polyfoni. Tekster om Bachtin og ScaPoLine*. Rita Therkelsen et al. (red). Aarhus: Aarhus Universitetsforlag, 2007. S. 163–180.
- Fauconnier G. *Mental spaces: roles and strategies*. Cambridge: Mass, 1985. 180 p.
- Fauconnier G., Turner M. *The way we think: Conceptual blending and the mind's hidden complexities*. New York: Basic Books, 2008. 440 p.
- Gregersen S. Årsagssætninger med fordi i (formelt) dansk talesprog. *NyS*, 2019, 57. S. 81–112.
- Hesselholdt Ch. *Camilla og resten af selskabet*. København: Rosinante, 2010. 141 s.
- Jensen A. Om for og fordi. *Ny forskning i dansk grammatik*, 13. Odense: Institut for Sprog og Kommunikation, 2006. S. 81–96.
- Jessen I. *ABC*. København: Gyldendal, 2006. 204 s.
- Krylova E. B. Means of epistemic modality in the Danish language as a paradigmatic hyper-system. *Vestnik Moskovskogo universiteta*. Seriya 9: Filologiya, no. 6. 2016. P. 26–47. (In Russian)
- Lund K.H. Danish causal conjunctions in the text. *Skandinavskaya filologiya*, Vol. IX. 2007. P. 162–175. (In Russian)
- Nielsen N. Å. *Dansk Etymologisk Ordbog*. Haslev: Nordisk forlag A/S, 1989. 522 s.

- Nikulicheva D. B. On some paradoxes of Danish temporal prepositions and their perceptual explanation. *Scandinavian Philology*, 2017, vol. 15, issue 1. P. 54–68. (In Russian)
- Ordbog over det danske Sprog*. Historisk ordbog 1700–1950. Ordbog over det danske Sprog — ordnet.dk (accessed: 05.03.2021).
- Osorina M. V. Mental spaces as a psychological reality. *Vestnik of Saint Petersburg University. Psychology and Education*, 2017, vol. 7. issue 1, P. 6–24. (In Russian)
- Therkelsen R. The functions of Danish causal conjunctions. *Nordlyd*, 31.2. Tromsø, 2003. P. 446–456.

**Дина Никуличева**

*Институт языкознания РАН,*

*Московский государственный лингвистический университет*

### **КВАЗИСИНОНИМИЯ ДАТСКИХ ПРИЧИННЫХ СОЮЗОВ КАК ОТРАЖЕНИЕ ПОЗИЦИИ ГОВОРЯЩЕГО\***

**Для цитирования:** *Nikulicheva D.* Quasi-synonymy of Danish causal conjunctions from the speaker's perspective // Скандинавская филология. 2021. Т. 19. Вып. 1. С. 42–60. <https://doi.org/10.21638/11701/spbu21.2021.103>

В статье исследуется один из фрагментов грамматической системы датского языка, где представлено регулярное формальное варьирование служебных языковых маркеров — причинных союзов *fordi*, *for*, *eftersom*, *thi*. Предлагается описание функционально-прагматической специфики каждого из них, исходя из антропоцентрического подхода. Антропоцентрический ракурс описания нацелен на исследование лингвоспецифических особенностей языкового выражения ориентации говорящего в денотативной реальности и коммуникации. В плане выражения каузации это предполагает дифференциацию говорящим способов обоснования своего утверждения в зависимости от разных источников каузации: собственного умозаключения (*for*); референции к общему для всех участников коммуникации знанию (*thi*); обоснования одного объективного факта другим (*fordi*); обоснования собственного умозаключения объективным фактом (*eftersom*). Обращение к этимологическим значениям союзов, а также учет особенностей временной соотнесенности предикатов каузирующей и каузируемой клауз при использовании разных союзов позволяет выявить различия в организации говорящим ментального пространства каузации, а использование понятия концептуальный блендинг позволяет объяснить, почему в устной речи происходит замена одного союза на другой.

**Ключевые слова:** датский язык, антропоцентрический подход, причинные союзы, квазисинонимия, каузирующая и каузируемая клауза, источники каузации, ментальное пространство каузации.

---

\* Работа выполнена при поддержке Российского фонда фундаментальных исследований (РФФИ), грант № 19-012-00146.

**Dina Nikulicheva**

Dr. Sci. in Philology, Professor,  
Institute of Linguistics of the Russian Academy of Sciences,  
1, Bolshoy Kislovsky per., Moscow, 125009, Russian Federation  
Moscow State Linguistic University,  
38, ul. Ostozhenka, Moscow, 119034, Russian Federation  
E-mail: nikoulitcheva@yandex.ru

**Никуличева Дина Борисовна**

доктор филологических наук, профессор,  
Институт языкознания РАН,  
Российская Федерация, 125009, Москва, Большой Кисловский пер., 1,  
Московский государственный лингвистический университет,  
Российская Федерация, 119034, Москва, ул. Остоженка, 38  
E-mail: nikoulitcheva@yandex.ru

Received: March 10, 2021

Accepted: April 26, 2021