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The haplology of *by* in Polish: synchrony and diachrony

1. Introduction¹

In this article I will be concerned with the morphosyntactic interpretation of constructions with complement or modifier (adverbial) clauses containing a complementiser or subordinator of the type *żeby*, *ażeby*, *aby*, *iżby* or simply *by*, occurring together with person markers, whereas the verbal predicate is represented by what I will here refer to as the *l*-form, the base form of the past tense, the subjunctive and one variety of the imperfective future tense. They could be illustrated with the following example:

- (1) *Pod* *moją* *nieobecność* *nasza* *droga*
during my.ACC.SG.F absence.ACC.SG our.NOM.SG.F dear.NOM.SG.F
przyjaciółka *zadba,* *by-ście* *nie* *poczuli*
friend[F].NOM.SG take.care.FUT.3SG COMPL-2PL NEG feel.LF.VIR.PL
pragnienia *ani* *głodu,* *panowie.*
thirst.GEN nor hunger.GEN gentleman.VOC.PL
'Gentlemen, in my absence our dear friend will take care you don't suffer thirst or hunger.'
Jerzy Broszkiewicz, 1977, NKJP

In this construction, I want to suggest (and also in instances with an expanded complementiser or subordinator like *żeby* etc.), the segment *by* performs a twofold role: it

¹ I wish to thank two anonymous reviewers for their constructive comments. For the remaining shortcomings of the article, I am solely responsible.

is a complementiser, and at the same time a mood marker entering a subjunctive verb form that is usually given, in conjugation tables, as *poczulibyście* 'you would feel'. I will argue that this account is preferable to those hitherto proposed. I will also suggest that it provides a natural and satisfactory understanding of the diachronic processes involved, and that it additionally provides an explanation for a few other facts connected with the interaction between mood and complementisers in Polish.

The structure of the article is as follows. In Section 2 I will briefly discuss the possible morphosyntactic interpretations of the construction in (1) and present the case for haplology of *by*. Section 3 will be dedicated to diachrony. In this section I will discuss how haplology of *by* was established and what its further consequences were. In Section 4 I will discuss cases where the dual function of complementiser and mood marker has now (completely or partly) been lost. In Section 5 I will summarise the conclusions.

2. Description and interpretation

Polish dictionaries and grammars describe the segment *by* as used in (1) as a conjunction, that is, in the terminology I will use here, a complementiser or an adverbial subordinator. It is known, on the other hand, that on this account the interpretation of the verb form in the complement (subordinate) clause is problematic. Puzynina (1971) argues that the verb form in constructions like (1) cannot be a subjunctive because *by* is part of a series of complementisers such as *aby*, *żeby*, *ażeby* etc., which have developed specific functions and should thereby be regarded as grammatical or lexical entities in their own right. She therefore suggests describing the verb forms in complement and adverbial clauses with *żeby* and the like as a positional variant of the indicative acquiring specific mood functions in the given grammatical context. This is disputed by Laskowski in Grzegorzczkowska et al. (1984, p. 135). Laskowski maintains that the form used in constructions like these is semantically a subjunctive. In his opinion, the verbal forms in complement clauses as in (1) show the same two types of modal meaning as uncontroversial subjunctives in main clauses, viz. potential and counterfactive. Laskowski also points to the lack of the expected past-tense meaning in the complement clauses of sentences like (1). Laskowski's argument from mood semantics is certainly valid; as to the lack of past-tense meaning, it is perhaps less convincing in that a past tense could, in principle, lose its basic temporal meaning in a specific construction and acquire a construction-specific modal function. Here we could think, e.g., of past tenses acquiring counterfactive functions (cf. *if I had a hammer*). It is, however, on morphosyntactic grounds that the past-tense reading should be rejected. Indeed, in a sentence like (1), it is impossible to attach the past-tense person markers to the past-tense stem, which I here refer to (and gloss) as the *l*-form, although this is now the basic form of the past tense. This becomes evident from the ungrammaticality of (2):

- (2) **Nasza droga przyjaciółka zadba,*
 our.NOM.F.SG dear.NOM.F.SG friend[F].NOM.SG take.care.FUT.3SG
by nie poczuł-ście pragnienia ani głodu.
 COMPL NEG feel.LF.VIR.PL-2PL thirst.GEN nor hunger.GEN
 Intended meaning: as in (1).

The identification of the verb form in the complement clause of (1) as a past tense is therefore unlikely on formal grounds, though certain authors seem to accept it as unproblematic (e.g., Hansen et al., 2016). For an overview of the modes of description proposed in the Polish grammatical tradition the reader may be referred to Gaszyńska-Magiera (1998). Though siding with Laskowski, I would like to point out that the formal difficulties are not satisfactorily spelt out in his account. If we accept that the mood in (1) is the subjunctive, how do we account for the status of *by*, considering that this segment also occupies the complementiser position?

A possible solution would be to claim that *by* in (1) is only a mood marker and nothing beyond that. This would necessitate the assumption that the complement clause in (1) contains a zero complementiser to which the mood marker attaches enclitically. This would be necessary because the mood marker *by* is, in itself, enclitic. In a simple clause, it cannot occur in clause-initial position, cf. (3) and (4):

- (3) *Tam by-śmy mogli usiąść.*
 there SBJV-1 PL be.able.LF.VIR.PL sit.down.INF
 ‘We could sit down there.’

- (4) **By-śmy mogli tam usiąść.*
 SBJV-1 PL be.able.LF.VIR.PL there sit.down.INF
 Intended meaning: as in (2).

Positing a phonetically empty complementiser would be normal practice in a derivational (transformational) model of generative grammar. It is not, however, a solution that could seem attractive to linguists of all persuasions. There are, besides, a few minor technical complications: *żeby* appears to be uncontroversially composed of the complementiser *że* and the mood marker *by*, but this could hardly be claimed for the synonymous *aby* (*a* is otherwise known only as a coordinative conjunction, not as a complementiser or subordinator) and *ażeby* (**aże* does not exist by itself). In the case of *ażeby* it would therefore be necessary to assume that the attachment of *by* triggers prothesis of *a-*, whereas for *aby* we would have to assume a complementiser surfacing only when *by* is attached. None of this sounds attractive.

A better and less theoretically dependent solution to our problem is therefore to assume haplology of *by*. The segment *by* occurs only once but it is licenced at the same time by two grammatical constructions: the mandative complementation construction and

the analytic mood construction. This kind of haplology² is not an isolated phenomenon. It is well attested in another domain of Polish grammar, that of reflexive marking (it is discussed in detail in Patejuk & Przepiórkowski, 2015). What was originally the reflexive pronoun *się* (and is, in certain instances, still an enclitic reflexive pronoun though in other instances it has become just a grammatical marker) can now double as reflexive marker and marker of the impersonal construction. Examples (5) and (6) show the constructions involved separately, while (7) shows the two constructions operating together:

- (5) *Tu się pije herbatę.* (marker of the impersonal construction)
 here REFL drink.PRS.3SG tea.ACC
 ‘Tea is drunk here’, ‘People drink tea here.’
- (6) *Tu aktorzy się przebierają.* (reflexive marker)
 here actor.NOM.PL REFL change.PRS.3PL
 ‘The actors dress here.’
- (7) *Tu się przebiera.* (reflexive marker + marker of the impersonal)
 here REFL change.PRS.3SG
 ‘Here’s where people dress.’

An authentic example of the construction with haplology is seen in (8):

- (8) *Po drugie, garderoba to nie tylko miejsce, gdzie się przebiera,*
 secondly dressing.room.NOM COP NEG only place.NOM where
 REFL dress.PRS.3SG
 [ale także przestrzeń, w której można się zrelaksować i przygotować mentalnie do występu.]
 ‘Secondly, the dressing room is not only the place where one changes clothes [but also a space where one can relax and mentally prepare for the performance.]’³

Haplology of *się* is even more frequent where two lexically licenced instances of *się* meet within a complementation construction, as with *starać się* ‘seek’ and *uśmiechnąć się* ‘smile’, both *reflexiva tantum*, in (9):

² Traditionally, the notion of haplology has been applied to phonology, more specifically to a kind of phonological change. Matthews (1997, p. 157) defines it as a “[s]poradic change in which successive syllables, etc. which are similar in form are reduced to one,” as in *idolatrzy* < *idololatry*. The situation we are dealing with here is not a process of change as understood in (historical) phonology: there were never two instances of *by*, one of which was subsequently deleted. As described in Section 3, there was just one instance of *by* which, at a given moment in language history, started performing a dual function. There was a process of reanalysis, but no change in form.

³ https://www.instagram.com/konstelacje.agency/reel/DHvLq98BIDa/?__d=11 (accessed 11.04.2025).

- (9) *Staralem się uśmiechnąć, ale nic z tego*
 seek.LF.M.SG.1SG REFL smile.INF but nothing.NOM from this.GEN
nie wyszło.
 NEG come.out.LF.N.SG
 'I tried to smile but it was no good.'
 Stefan Chwin, 1995, NKJP

The assumption of haplology is therefore not *ad hoc* — it is well attested elsewhere. It provides a satisfactory solution to the descriptive problems that have led to the above-mentioned divergent interpretations of structures like (1). The claims for *by* as a complementiser and a mood marker are not contradictory. The requirement for the complement clause to be introduced by a complementiser, and the obligatory presence of the mood marker *by* in the subjunctive verb form, are both satisfied though *by* is instantiated only once.

There is, however, one possible objection concerning the interpretation of the verb form. If it is a subjunctive, then why cannot the cluster of mood marker and person marker be attached to the verbal stem, the *l*-form, if this can be done in other instances where a subjunctive is involved, e.g., in simple clauses? The answer is obvious when the form *by* is used by itself: in this case it cannot be moved because it has to occupy the complementiser position. But this possibility is blocked even if a form like *żeby* is used, though in this case we would expect it to be possible for *że* to remain in place (in complementiser position) while the mood-plus-person marker is detached from it. The following is an ungrammatical example with the person marker attached to the *l*-form:

- (10) **Nasza droga przyjaciółka zadba, że*
 our.NOM.SG.F dear.NOM.SG.F friend[F].NOM.SG take.care.FUT.3SG COMPL
nie poczuli=byście pragnienia ani głodu.
 NEG feel.LF.VIR.PL=2PL thirst.GEN nor hunger.GEN
 Intended meaning: as in (1).

Obviously in order for the use of *poczuli=byście* to be possible we would have to substitute a different type of complement-taking verb, as in (11):

- (11) *Sądzę, że poczuli=byście pragnienie albo głód,*
 think.PRS.1SG COMPL feel.LF.VIR.PL=2PL thirst.ACC or hunger.ACC
panowie.
 gentleman.VOC.PL
 'I think you would feel/would have felt thirst or hunger, gentlemen.'

In (11) the complement clause could be extracted from its syntactic embedding and function as a simple clause, and the subjunctive would still be retained, as the clause describes a hypothetical situation conditional on an imaginary event. This is not the case in (1), where the subjunctive is strictly required by the complement-taking verb

zadbać ‘ensure, take care’. The difference between (1) and (11) could be formulated as one between complementising mood (that is, mood used as part of a marking strategy for a certain type of complement clause⁴) and complement-internal mood (that is, mood selection licenced within the complement clause and independent of complementation itself). The placement of the mood marker is determined by the principle of iconicity: in its complementising function, subjunctive mood is marked on the complementiser, giving rise to what has been called an irrealis complementiser (cf. Ammann, van der Auwera, 2004). Complement-internal mood, on the other hand, is marked on the verb. However, in both cases the same mood is involved.

How the haplology of *by* was established and what its consequences were is discussed in the next section.

3. Diachrony

Historically, what is now described as the complementiser/subordinator *by* is uncontroversially identical with the subjunctive marker (Pisarkowa, 1984, p. 239). Originally, then, complement clauses of the type illustrated in (1) were marked only by mood, not by a complementiser. We could compare this situation with Latin complement clauses marked only by the use of the subjunctive (12), or German complement clauses marked only by means of a modal verb (13):

- (12) *Quam vellem me invitasses.*
 how wish.SBJV.IPF.1SG me.ACC invite.SBJV.PLPF.2SG
 ‘How I wish you had invited me!’
 Cicero, *Fam.* x.28.1

- (13) *Der Turnierdirektor gab ein Zeichen, sie*
 DEF tournament.director give.PST.3SG INDF sign she
möge sich setzen [...]
 may.SBJV.3SG REFL sit.INF
 ‘The tournament director made her a sign to sit down.’⁵

This original interpretation (complementation or subordination marked only by mood) no longer holds for the contemporary language, because the subjunctive marker is now enclitic, and the only way to account for its clause-initial positioning would therefore be the assumption (already mentioned above) that *by* was reinterpreted as being attached to a phonologically empty complementiser. If one does not accept this type of explanation,

⁴ This type of subjunctive clauses is mainly characteristic of what Kehayov and Boye (2016) call ‘state-of-affairs complements’ as opposed to ‘propositional complements’ as illustrated in (11).

⁵ <https://www.sueddeutsche.de/sport/australian-open-aryna-sabalenka-tennis-1.5741006> (accessed 11.04.2025).

then the fact that the clause-initial position is accessible to *byśmy* in subordinate clauses attests to the shift from the status of mood marker to that of a combined complementiser-plus-mood marker. We may surmise that this shift occurred in the period when the former subjunctive auxiliary lost its orthotonic status: either the mood-plus-person marker became an enclitic mood-plus-person marker or it was reanalysed as a complementiser-plus-mood marker (or subordinator-plus-mood marker).

This being given, it follows that a form like *byście* in (1) is, again from a historical point of view, not a complementiser/subordinator to which the person markers *-m*, *-ś*, *-śmy*, *-ście* have been enclitically attached in accordance with Wackernagel's law. Indeed, though they are now identical with the past-tense person markers, the person markers of the subjunctive have never been clitics. In Proto-Slavonic, they were inflectional affixes in the paradigm of the auxiliary of the subjunctive; this auxiliary was a special form of the verb **byti*. The exact nature of this mood or tense form is not known (it might have been an old optative), but already in Old Church Slavonic it was largely replaced (cf. Stieber, 1979, pp. 222–223) with the aorist of *byti*, whose forms were as follows:

- (14) *bychъ* *bychomъ*
 by, bystъ *byste*
 by, bystъ *byše*

The same situation is found in Old Polish, where the following forms of the auxiliary are attested (Długosz-Kurczabowa & Dubisz, 2006, p. 315).

- (15) *bych* *bychom*
 by *byście*
 by *bychą*

These affixal person markers now entered an interaction with the clitic person markers of the past tense, an interaction where it was mainly the past-tense person markers that influenced those of the subjunctive, though the opposite direction of influence is also attested (Długosz-Kurczabowa & Dubisz, 2006, pp. 308, 315). Thus the subjunctive *robil-bych* was replaced with *robil-bym* under the influence of the past tense; but Polish dialects also have past-tense forms of the type *robil-ech*, with a person marker originally characteristic of the subjunctive. However, the interaction of the two series of person markers, even though modifying the phonological substance of the markers, did not change their morphological status. Whereas the clitic past-tense person markers were and remained clitics, the person markers of the subjunctive were and remained firmly attached to the auxiliary stem, as is normal for an affix. They could only move together with this stem, the mood marker *by-*. Of course, the status of the whole form, stem plus person affix, had evolved. Originally, they functioned together as an auxiliary verb, but as the enclitic present-tense forms of *być* functioning as a past-tense auxiliary lost their status as verb forms and became enclitic markers, a similar process affected

the subjunctive markers. Already at the Old Polish stage, we can no longer regard the sequences *bych*, *byśmy*, *byście* as an auxiliary; rather, they must be described as combined mood-plus-person markers. Though the markers for mood and person can clearly be identified, they were firmly locked together and basically still are in contemporary Polish, with one single exception that will be discussed further on in Section 4. There are no constructions like (16):

- (16) **Co=ście zrobili-by?*
 what.ACC=2PL do.LF.VIR.PL-SBJV
 Intended meaning: ‘What would you do/have done?’

Before moving on, let us mention that haplology of the mood marker *by* was also characteristic of Old Czech, as shown by the complementation construction in (17):

- (17) [*Alexander*] *káza,* *by* *sě* *hotovali.*
 [A.] order.AOR.3SG SBJV REFL pepare.LF.M.PL
 ‘Alexander told them to get ready.’
 Old Czech Alexandreid (Gebauer, 1929, p. 567)

While the conditional marker *by* occurred together clause-initially with the person markers because the two had originated together as a series of inflectional forms, the complementisers *iž*, *iže*, *že* occurred in the same clause-initial position together with the past-tense person markers because the latter were clitics and moved to the Wackernagel position (and unlike the subjunctive person markers, could also be detached from the complementiser). In spite of this different origin, the combinations of complementiser and person marker showed no difference on the surface, as can be seen in (18) and (19):

- (18) *Wyczye,* *yze-smy* *wczyynyly* *radę* *onegda*
 know.PRS.2PL COMPL-1PL make.LF.M.PL counsel.ACC the.other.day
 ‘You know that we have held counsel the other day.’
 Rozmyślanie Przemyskie 508–509
- (19) *Thę* *kasny* *dayę* *vam* *by-szye*
 this.ACC.F.SG commandment.ACC give.PRS.1SG 2PL.DAT SBJV-2PL
szye *mylovaly* *myedzy* *sobę*
 REFL love.LF.M.PL among REFL.INS
 ‘I give you this commandment that you should love each other.’
 Rozmyślanie Przemyskie 556

In this way, a direct parallelism arose between sequences of the type *že=ście* and those of the type *by=ście*. This parallelism was twofold: the two could be opposed, on the one hand, as realis vs irrealis complementisers, as illustrated in the examples just

cited. On the other hand, sequences of the type *by-ście* could also occur as pure mood-plus-person markers (without complementiser function) in the Wackernagel position after clause-initial elements, as in (20):

- (20) *yze nye bądzyczye pyeczalvjący waschey duschy*
 COMPL NEG be.FUT.2PL solicitous.NOM.M.PL your.GEN.F.SG soul.GEN.SG
czo bysczye yedly albo pyły
 what.ACC SBJV.2PL eat.LF.M.PL or drink.LF.M.PL
 ‘You shall not be solicitous about your souls, what you shall eat or drink.’
 Rozmyślanie Przemyskie 280

The parallelism between the two series of markers could now be extended by carrying over the function of mood marker from sequences of the type *by-ście* to sequences of the type *(i)że=ście*. This is what has happened in modern colloquial Polish, where *że* is used as a host for the person markers of the past tense, as shown in (21):

- (21) *Ale że=śmy zjedli razem z Andrzejem obiad.*
 but COMPL=1PL eat.LF.VIR.PL together with A.INS lunch.ACC
 ‘But Andrzej and I had lunch together.’
 Jarosław Józef Szczepański, 2005, NKJP

In this type of structures, *że* is obviously no longer a complementiser, as we are dealing with a simple clause. The parallelism between *że=śmy* and *by-śmy* has pressed it into the function of a realis (indicative) mood marker. This process (dealt with in greater detail in Holvoet, 2024) may have been additionally stimulated by phonological and prosodic factors. In fact, it has been described as a process exclusively driven by the phonological difficulties arising from direct attachment of the bare past-tense person markers *-m*, *-ś*, *-śmy*, *-ście* to certain types of hosts, cf. Migdalski (2006, p. 262). But phonology was probably but a contributing factor. The functional equivalence between *że=ście* and *by-ście* was established for non-phonological reasons in the complementiser position, after which *że=ście* became a combined mood-plus-person marker under the influence of *by-ście*. Due to their greater prosodic weight, the combined mood-plus-person markers of the type *że=ście* posed fewer phonological complications than the bare person markers, which have largely lost their ability to occur in the Wackernagel position in the modern colloquial language.

One could, of course, object to this account by pointing out that sequences of the type *że=ście* were opposed not only to sequences of the type *by-ście*, but also to those of the type *iżby-ście*, *żeby-ście* etc. This is certainly true, but it does not essentially change the situation: it is still the case that *iżby-ście* stood alongside *by-ście*, and in both instances *by* had the twofold function of complementiser-plus-mood marker or just mood marker. This status could now be carried over to *że*, which gave rise to structures like (21). Another thing that should be taken into account is the fact (already mentioned above)

that some of the segments preceding *by* are not independently attested as complementisers. If alongside *by* we find *aby* and *ażeby*, where *a-* and *aże-* have no identifiable function, then it seems attractive to view these segments as meaningless extensions of the complementiser *by*. By the same token, we have to ask whether the same does not apply to *żeby*. It is true that *że* can occur independently, without *by*, but the common and central element of the whole series of irrealis complementisers (and subordinators) is *by*, and the extensions, whether they also exist as meaningful segments in their own right or not, do not matter significantly.

4. Loss of haplology

The establishment of the haplology of *by* can thus, as a historical fact, be located in a chain of diachronic changes starting out from the introduction of irrealis complement and subordinate clauses marked only by means of mood, and involving the reanalysis of the mood marker as a complementiser without loss of the original status of mood marker. The haplology is, at the same time, also a synchronic fact that has to be acknowledged if we want to account in a satisfactory way for structures as illustrated in (1). But there are also instances where this haplology must be assumed to have existed and subsequently lost, leading to a situation where *by* is no longer a mood marker but only a subordinator.

The first instance can be seen in constructions with the subordinator *byleby* ‘if only, as long as’. This subordinator stands alongside the synonymous *byle*. The synonymous use of these two markers is illustrated in (22) and (23):

- (22) [*Dla takich chłopów jak wy również znajdzie się godziwe zajęcie,*
byle-ście znaleźli w sobie ochotę do pracy.
 BYLE-2PL find.LF.VIR.PL in REFL.LOC eagerness.ACC for work.GEN
 ‘For boys like you a decent job will always turn up as long as you find in yourselves the eagerness to work.’
 Tadeusz Konwicki, 1959, NKJP
- (23) *Wojna nie straszna, byle-by-śmy zachowali*
 war.NOM.SG NEG frightening.NOM.F.SG BYLE-SBJV-1PL observe.LF.VIR.PL
neutralność.
 neutrality.ACC
 ‘War is nothing to be afraid of as long as we remain neutral.’
 Wojciech Żukrowski, 1966, NKJP

The coexistence of these two constructions is unusual in that the opposition between the subordinators is formally identical to that which we find between, say, *że* and *żeby*, so that we would expect a difference between two semantic types of subordination,

say, realis and irrealis. Actually this is not the case: the two constructions are exactly synonymous.

The origin of the subordinator *byle* is clear: it is the complementiser/subordinator *by* with the particle *-le* added (Boryś, 2006, p. 49). The addition of the personal suffixes as illustrated in (22) is striking in one respect. Assuming we are still dealing with an instance of the subjunctive mood (and there are good grounds to do so), all its component parts are present: the segment *by* contained in *byle* (it doubles as a mood marker), and the person marker *-śmy*. What is unusual is that the particle *-le* is now inserted between the mood marker and the person marker. This situation is apparently unique: basically, the two are never separated from each other, which is the expected state of affairs considering that *-śmy* was always, in this case, an affix, not an enclitic.

The reason why the particle *-le* could insinuate itself between the mood marker and the person marker should presumably be sought in the dominant position of the 3rd person forms in the inflectional paradigm. This dominating position is well attested elsewhere in Polish: as is known, the whole present-tense paradigm of *być* ‘be’ has been remade on the basis of the 3rd person form *jest*: *jest-em* thus took the place of Old Polish *jeśm* (cf. Długosz-Kurczabowa & Dubisz, 2006, p. 295).

We may thus assume the new subordinator *byle* to have established itself in the 3rd person, where the person marker was zero, and to have been subsequently extended to other persons, yielding forms like *byle-śmy* rather than **byśmy-le*. The new forms of the type *byle-śmy* constituted an anomaly in that the mood and person markers were no longer adjacent to each other. This was probably the source for the divergent developments illustrated in (22) and (23). Either the segment *by* in *byle* could continue to be identified as the subjunctive marker enabling the interpretation of *byleśmy znaleźli* ‘if only we could find’ as an instantiation of the subjunctive mood; or the identification failed and a new subjunctive marker *by* had to be added, yielding the form *bylebyśmy znaleźli*. In both cases the verb form used in the subordinate clause is a subjunctive; the difference consists in where its mood value is expressed: in one case it is the segment *by* in *byle*, in the other case it is the additional *by*, the segment *byle* being treated as morphologically opaque. It is clear that in (22) the segment *by* contained in *byle* still has the dual function, whereas in (23) only the subordinator function is left.

Another obvious instance where *by* has lost the function of mood marker and functions as a subordinator only is in infinitival purpose clauses as illustrated in (24):

- (24) *Nie biegam dla nagród, ale by się spotkać*
 NEG run.PRS.1SG for award.GEN.PL but SUB REFL meet.INF
z kolegami.
 with friend.INS.PL
 ‘I don’t run for awards but in order to meet friends.’
 Słowo Polskie Gazeta Wrocławska, 2005, NKJP

Here the infinitive has replaced the *l*-form of the subjunctive as a result of contamination: the infinitive, which could express purpose by itself, is assumed to have been introduced into subjunctival purpose clauses through substitution of the infinitive for the *l*-form of the verb (on this process cf. Pisarkowa, 1984, p. 239). There is no point in recognising the combination of the infinitive with *by* as an ‘irrealis infinitive’ or ‘subjunctival infinitive’ (cf. also Gębka-Wolak, 2010, on this and related problems), so that *by* is just a subordinator here. The same applies to the construction with *by* and the infinitive in the function of complement clause, as shown in (25):

- (25) *Wirklich* – *stwierdził* *podoficer* *i* *poprosił*, *by*
wirklich state.LF.M.SG NCO-NOM.SG and ask.LF.M.SG COMPL
mu *pokazać* *mieszkanie*.
 him.DAT.SG show.INF flat.ACC.SG
 ‘*Wirklich* – the NCO agreed, and he asked to be shown around the flat.’
 Roman Bratny, 1957, NKJP

There is, on the other hand, no need to assume loss of the mood-marker function of *by* in the case of constructions with the so-called *bezosobnik* or impersonal form in *-no/-to*:

- (26) *W* *1838* *roku* *dał* *znak*, *by* *mu*
 in 1938 year.LOC.SG give.LF.M.SG sign.ACC.SG COMPL/SBJV him.DAT.SG
przyniesiono *strój* *wojenny* [...] *bring*.IMPRS *attire*.ACC.SG *war*.ADJ.ACC.SG.M
 ‘In 1938 he gave a sign for his war attire to be brought to him.’
 Zbigniew Teplicki, 1994, NKJP

The impersonal form in *-no/-to* is similar in status to the *l*-form underlying the past tense and the subjunctive. Both are morphemes⁶ with underdetermined grammatical meanings; their default value, when no other tense or mood marker is added, is past tense (with person markers added in the past tense but not with the impersonal as this is inherently 3rd person), but when combined with *by* they provide personal and impersonal subjunctives respectively. In (25), therefore, *by* has, again, the dual function of complementiser and mood marker.

5. In conclusion

As I hope to have shown, the assumption of haplology of the segment *by*, which may double as a complementiser/subordinator and mood marker, provides a simple solution

⁶ A ‘morpheme’ (a notion introduced by Aronoff, 1993), is a morphological segment comparable to a morpheme but differing from it in that it is not associated with any fragment of linguistic meaning, performing a purely internal function in morphology.

to the problems connected with the morphosyntactic description of complement and adverbial clauses introduced by the segment *by* as well as by compound markers containing it (*żeby*, *aby*...). It also provides an explanation for another interesting phenomenon for which the explanations hitherto proposed (in terms of phonotactics) are unconvincing, viz. the occurrence of *że*-support in the past tense in colloquial Polish. The essence of this *że*-support consists in that a combined mood-plus-person marker (*by*+PERS) develops a dual distribution, occurring either in complementiser or in post-initial (Wackernagel) position (its function is correspondingly that of complementiser plus mood marker or just mood marker); this dual distribution is then carried over to the combined marker *że*+PERS, which can now also occur not only in complementiser but also in post-initial position. As a realis mood marker it would normally be redundant as the absence of the irrealis marker is in itself a sufficient realis marker; but the complementiser provided a convenient support for the person markers, and the occurrence of *że*+PERS in post-initial position was now licenced by the model of *by*+PERS. The phenomenon of *że*-support is therefore an important piece of evidence for the haplology hypothesis.

Abbreviations

ACC – accusative, ADJ – adjective, AOR – aorist, COMPL – complementiser, COP – copula, DAT – dative, DEF – definite article, F – feminine, FUT – future, GEN – genitive, IMPRS – impersonal, INDF – indefinite article, INF – infinitive, INS – instrumental, IPF – imperfect, LF – the *l*-form of the verb, a morpheme underlying the past tense, subjunctive and imperfective future, LOC – locative, M – masculine, N – neuter, NEG – negation, NOM – nominative, PL – plural, PLPF – pluperfect, PRS – present, PST – past, REFL – reflexive, REL – relative pronoun, SBJV – subjunctive, SG – singular, SUB – subordinator, VIR – virile, VOC – vocative

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SUMMARY

Keywords: haplology, complementiser, subjunctive, irrealis, mood marker

In this article, it is argued that the use of the segment *by* as (part of) a complementiser in Old and Modern Polish is an instance of haplology. It performs the dual function of complementiser and subjunctive mood marker. This assumption provides an elegant solution to the problems attendant on the interpretation of the verb forms occurring in complement and subordinate clauses introduced by *by*, *żeby*, *aby* etc. Additionally, it contributes to a correct understanding of another diachronic and descriptive problem, that of *że*-support in the past tense in modern colloquial Polish. This phenomenon finds a simple explanation on the assumption it is a haplology, and may serve as an important piece of evidence for its correctness.

STRESZCZENIE

Haplologia *by* w języku polskim: synchronia i diachronia

Słowa kluczowe: haplologia, spójnik, tryb przypuszczający, irrealis, wykładnik trybu

W artykule argumentuje się, że użycie segmentu *by* w funkcji spójnika (albo części spójnika) w polszczyźnie jest przypadkiem haplogii. Pełni on podwójną funkcję spójnika i wykładnika trybu przypuszczającego. Przedstawiana tu hipoteza pozwala w sposób prosty i przekonujący rozwiązać problemy związane z opisem form czasownikowych wchodzących w skład zdań podrzędnych ze spójnikami *by*, *żeby*, *aby* itd. Hipoteza ta pozwala też w przekonujący sposób wyjaśnić użycie spójnika *że* jako podpory dla wykładników osoby w czasie przeszłym w polszczyźnie potocznej. To zjawisko stanowi dodatkowy dowód na zasadność hipotezy haplogii.