AXEL HOLVOET

Vilnius University
ORCID: 0000-0003-1744-5893

From complementizer to realis marker:
The problem of *że*-support in the Polish past tense

1. Introduction[1]

The subject of this article is the colloquial Polish construction in which the enclitic person markers of the past tense cluster with the segment *że*, which is otherwise known as a complementizer meaning 'that'. It is illustrated in (1):

(1) *Właśnie   wczoraj   żeśmy   skończyły   wianuszki*
    precisely   yesterday   ŻE-1PL   finish.LF.NVIR.PL   wreath.ACC.PL
    robić,   *które   można   powiesić   na drzwiach.*
    make.INF   which.ACC.PL.NVIR   is.possible hang.INF   on door[PL]LOC
    'Just yesterday we finished making those wreaths which you can hang on the doors.'
    https://echo24.tv/aktywni-seniorzy-docenieni-przez-prezydenta-wroclawia/
    (accessed: 7 March 2024)

In literature, this prefixed *że* has been explained as a support for the enclitic person markers inserted due to the phonological and prosodic complications caused by the attachment of the bare person markers to certain types of hosts. The phonological account is, however, not wholly convincing, and the aim of the present article is to look more closely at morphological and other factors which may have contributed to the rise of the construction under discussion. Other accounts have been proposed as well;

whereas they are couched in a minimalist formalism, the account proposed in this article is a functionalist one. In the title of this article, as well as in the text, I use the term '*że*-support' for the sake of brevity and convenience, without associating any specific interpretation with it.

The structure of the article is as follows. Section 2 is descriptive and provides a synchronic and diachronic background. In Section 3, I attempt to formulate an explanation for the rise of the constructions with *że*-support, and Section 4 is a summing-up of the conclusions.

2. An outline of the developments

The development of the clitic person markers of the Polish past tense into inflectional endings is a classroom example of affixalization as part of the grammaticalization process, and is discussed as such in Hopper & Traugott's classic introduction to grammaticalization (Hopper & Traugott, 2003, p. 145–148). Historically, the Polish past tense is based on what was formerly a kind of past active participle, the so-called *l*-participle, and can now be described as a morphome[2] without a meaning of its own; in all Slavic languages this morphome underlies perfects and past-tense forms (that is, original perfects which have developed into preterites) as well as irrealis (conditional, subjunctive) forms, and in some Slavic languages (Polish, Slovenian) also future tense forms. In the present perfect/past tense this morphome, which I will gloss as the *l*-form (LF) because of the affix *-l-* which historically marks it, is used with present-tense forms of the auxiliary 'be'. The treatment of this auxiliary differs between the Slavic languages. In East Slavic it has, by and large, been dropped, leaving only the *l*-form, so that the past tense now inflects only for number and gender, but not for person. In South and West Slavic the auxiliary is preserved, mostly as a clitic, though the 3rd person auxiliaries are often dropped. It is mainly in Polish that the enclitic endings have been affixalized, though some South-Western Ukrainian dialects have this feature as well (Stieber, 1979, p. 235).

Although by themselves the Polish auxiliary clitics can still function as present-tense forms of the verb 'be', in the context of the past tense they can now simply be referred to as person markers.[3] Until well into the 20th century, and occasionally even now, these person markers can be detached from the *l*-form of the verb and occur in the Wackernagel

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[2] The notion of 'morphome', introduced by Aronoff (1993), refers to morphological segments comparable to morphemes but differing from them in that they cannot be associated with any fragment of linguistic meaning, performing a purely morphological function.

[3] As these person markers may also replace the present-tense forms of the copula, it is still possible to describe them as auxiliary forms even though they have become so reduced phonologically that only the person endings are left. This is the approach suggested by Borsley & Rivero (1994), who correspondingly describe the affixal forms as an instance of incorporation.

position, or after a strongly stressed word opening a prosodically close-knit sequence of words:[4]

(2) *Powiedziała=ś   coś?*
  say.LF.F.SG=2SG   anything.ACC
  'Did you say anything?'

(3) *Co=ś   ty   powiedziała?*
  what.ACC=2SG   you[SG].NOM   say.LF.F.SG
  'What did you say?'

In recent times the mobility of the person markers has been severely restricted and nowadays they function as affixes:

(4) *Co   ty   powiedziała=ś?*
  what.ACC   you.NOM   say.LF.F.SG=2SG
  'What did you say?'

For the sake of completeness, I will provide a full past-tense paradigm for the feminine singular and plural. The *l*-morpheme was originally a participle inflecting not only for number but also for gender. In the singular, this morpheme distinguishes masculine, feminine and neuter gender, but for obvious reasons the neuter forms are rarely combined with the 1st and 2nd person markers.[5] In the plural, the distinction is actually 'virile' (male persons) vs 'non-virile' (everything else), and the feminine gender falls under 'non-virile' here. The 1st person singular construction *ja=m widziała* is now archaic, a fact I will comment upon below. The 3rd person markers are zero. The left column shows the pattern with the person marker enclitically attached to the subject pronoun, while the right column shows the forms with affixalized person markers.

(5) 1SG   *ja=m widziała*   *widziała-m*
  2SG   *ty=ś widziała*   *widziała-ś*
  3SG   *ona widziała*   *widziała-ø*
  1PL   *my=śmy widziały*   *widziały-śmy*
  2PL   *wy=ście widziały*   *widziały-ście*
  3PL   *one widziały*   *widziały-ø*

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[4] The fact that the person markers do not consistently occur in the Wackernagel position and there is a lot of variation in their placement has been noted and discussed in literature, cf. Bański (2000), Migdalski (2006), Jagódzka (2018). I will not elaborate on this point as it is not directly relevant to the subject-matter of this article.

[5] This may happen, of course, in literary texts, in apostrophe etc. For a recent study cf. Lewaszkiewicz (2023).

But it is also no secret that in the colloquial language the past-tense person markers can still move to Wackernagel position or to a position after a more strongly accented word within a prosodically close-knit sequence of words if they cluster with the segment *że*, which is homonymous with the complementizer *że* 'that' and, diachronically, is undoubtedly identical with it. This pattern is shown in (1). This construction is banned by most prescriptive grammarians,[6] who insist that forms like *że-śmy* may be used only if the presence of *że* is independently justified in the function of a complementizer, as in (6):

(6) *Ja*   *nie*   *będę*   *na*   *siłę*   *mówił,*
     I.NOM   NEG   FUT.1SG   at   force.ACC   say.LF.M.SG
     że=śmy   *byli*   *teatrem*   *politycznym.*
     that=1PL   be.LF.VIR.PL theatre.INS.SG   political.INS.SG.M
     'I won't insist on claiming that we were a political theatre company.'
     https://teatrnn.pl/historiamowiona/tagi/rewizja-osobista/ (accessed: 7 March 2024)

The fact that the construction illustrated in (1) is considered to be beyond the pale of correct usage seems to have led to its receiving less attention than it deserves. In spite of this, some authors have noted and discussed it, rightly ignoring the prescriptive judgments, which should not interfere with the description of actual language facts and their theoretical interpretation, cf. Witkoś (1997), Bański (2000), Migdalski (2006) and others. Textbooks of Polish also occasionally ignore the prescriptive recommendations, e.g., Schenker (1973, p. 163) merely notes that *że*-support is characteristic of the informal style.

In addition to what has been said, a few more details concerning the distribution of the enclitic person markers of the past tense should be discussed in order to present a more complete picture.

The loss of the enclitic status of the past-time person markers was not a uniform process in time. The 1SG marker was the first to lose it in spoken and written language; the remaining markers retained it for a longer time (Kowalska, 1976, p. 48). This divergent treatment of the first person singular has been explained by avoidance of homonymy: in masculine forms the 1SG marker often had the shape -*em*, which coincides with the instrumental singular ending for many masculine nouns, a fact that could occasionally cause inconvenience (Bajerowa, 1964, p. 17).

Any difference between the individual person markers comparable to what was just mentioned for the first person singular has now probably ceased to exist. While the enclitic bare endings have now all but gone out of usage in the speech of younger generations, they are still available as an archaizing device or when, for instance, Internet users aim

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[6] Mirosław Bańko (https://sjp.pwn.pl/poradnia/haslo/zesmy;9760.html) characterizes it as "colloquial and considered incorrect by most prescriptive sources".

to strike a jocular tone by imitating old-fashioned forms of speech. Within this archaizing convention, there is probably no longer a difference between the 1SG and the other forms. This ironical use of the basically archaic encliticized *-m* is seen in (7), where a humorous effect is achieved by the use, in the same sentence, of the substandard construction of recent origin *w tym temacie* 'on this topic':

(7) *Kolejny   wpis   na   temat   Tetrisa,   bo=m*
    next.NOM.M.SG   entry.NOM.SG   on   topic.ACC.SG   T.GEN   for=1SG
    się   zaniedbał   w   tym   temacie   ostatnio.
    REFL   neglect.LF.M.SG in   this.LOC.SG.M   topic.LOC.SG   lately
    'Here is one more entry about Tetris, for I have shown some neglect in dealing with this topic lately.'
    https://4programmers.net/Mikroblogi/View/59118 (accessed: 7 March 2024)

The person markers combined with *że* do not show any differences between persons and numbers. The following is an example with the 1st person singular:

(8) *Naprawdę   dawno   żem   tak   skrupulatnie   nie*
    truly   long.ago   ŻE-1PL   so   carefully   NEG
    przekładał   kolejnych   kart   albumu.
    arrange.LF.SG.M   successive.GEN.PL   leaf.GEN.PL   album.GEN.SG
    'It's been quite some time since I've turned page after page of a [photo] album so carefully.'
    https://iczek.pl/2016/01/poza-nami/ (accessed: 7 March 2024)

It was noted above that the enclitic forms of the past-tense person markers were originally forms of the present tense of the auxiliary 'to be'. While it could be argued that they have now become mere person markers (especially in those cases where they have been affixalized), they can still independently function as present-tense forms of *być* 'to be' when used as a copula:

(9) [*Dlatego jeśli ma być katolicka, to po wiejsku sprzed stu laty,*]
    bo=śmy   wszyscy   stamtąd
    because=1PL   all.NOM.VIR.PL   thence
    [*i nie imajmy się tego, co za trudne.*]
    '[So if [Poland] is to be Catholic, then it should be in the rural fashion of a hundred years ago], because that's where we all come from, [and let's not attempt what is too difficult for us.]'
    https://www.rp.pl/publicystyka/art18737761-jerzy-surdykowski-chocholi-korowod (accessed: 7 March 2024)

In this type of syntactic contexts *że*-support occurs as well:

(10) *Teraz*   *żeśmy*   *wszyscy*   *jednacy*
      now   ŻE-1pl   all.NOM.PL.VIR   identical.NOM.PL.VIR
      robociarze,   *proletariat*   *i*   *kropka.*
      workingman.NOM.PL   proletariat.NOM   and   period.NOM.SG
      'Now we're all the same working folk, we're the proletariat, period.'
      Korpus Języka Polskiego PWN, Bruno Jasieński, 1929

This shows that the phenomenon we are dealing with is not specifically restrict-ed to the past tense, and there is no reason to associate a past-tense meaning with the markers under discussion. Of course, any explanation for the processes in the past tense should also apply to cases where the person markers function as enclitic forms of the copula.

3. Towards an explanation

The most obvious explanation one could think of to account for the addition of the segment *że* to the past-tense person markers is that its function is simply to facilitate the phonological attachment of the person markers to a host. This has been suggested in the literature, see e.g., Migdalski (2006), who characterizes *że* as a 'supportive par-ticle' added "when encliticalization of the auxiliary is blocked for phonological rea-sons". This happens most often when the last syllable of the clitic host has a "highly sonorous coda" (Migdalski, 2006, p. 262, with a reference to Bański, 2000). But there are certain problems with this phonological account. Migdalski (2006, p. 263) points out that "insertion of the supportive -*że* is obligatory only when there is no suitable phonological host for the auxiliary clitic". The reasoning is not quite watertight here. If the use of *że* is not 'obligatory' in many cases, this does not mean it does not exist beyond the 'obligatory' contexts. There is no reason to doubt that the encliticization of the bare person markers is sometimes blocked for phonological reasons, but it does not follow that it is these phonological factors that have led to the use of the 'supportive particle'. This 'support particle' occurs in other cases as well. There is no phonological problem inducing the use of *że* support in (8) above.[7] A contrasting example without *że*-support can be seen in (11):

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[7] A reviewer points out that the evidence of sentences like (7) and (11) is weakened by the fact that such constructions are a product of archaization, and therefore artificial. What is important, how-ever, is that the construction with *że*-support is apparently always possible. Migdalski's case would be stronger if this construction was ungrammatical or dispreferred in those cases where the cliticization of the bare clitics is blocked for phonological reasons, but this is not the case, as shown by the co-ex-istence of (8) and (11).

(11) *Dawno=m*   *nie*   *czytał*   *tak*   *dobrego*   *i*
      long.ago=1SG   NEG   read.LF.M.SG   so   good.GEN.SG.M   and

      dowcipnego   *tekstu.*
      witty.GEN.SG.M   text.GEN.SG

      'It's been a long time since I have read such a nice and witty text.'
      https://dziadul.blog.polityka.pl/2018/11/26/ciul-to-ciul/ (accessed: 7 March 2024)

   This suggests that (11) and (8) are simply instantiations of two different constructions. One, that with encliticization of the bare person markers, is apparently regressive and its gradual demise, well documented in literature, has led to the abovementioned process of affixalization. Kowalska (1976) documents the process of affixalization advancing over the centuries, and we may assume that the enclitic bare past-tense endings are basically kept alive by speakers' familiarity with the written variety of Polish. The other one, with the so-called support particle, is fully alive despite prescriptive grammarians' attempts to oust it from the language. The difference in diachronic status and distribution according to register should in itself raise suspicion against an account describing one construction as a phonologically conditioned variety of the other. Of course, in many contexts the two alternative constructions are available in principle (though not necessarily in the same language register, considering that the construction with encliticized bare person endings is archaic), whereas in certain phonological contexts encliticization without *że* is blocked. This creates the impression that the only *raison d'être* of the variety with *że*-support is to facilitate encliticization in 'difficult' cases, but this is not a foregone conclusion. It is conceivable that a support particle, coincidentally homophonous with the complementizer *że*, was somehow inserted in those cases where encliticization of the bare person marker was blocked, and then spread to other contexts. But it is also conceivable that both varieties just co-exist in the language and the one with *że*-support is always chosen when the other is blocked for phonological reasons. Neither of these two explanations is inherently flawed, and both would probably be difficult to prove with historical corpus data, considering that '*że*- support' is characteristic of spoken language and probably hard to attest in actual texts before the age of the internet. But an account explaining why it was the complementizer *że* that was chosen to provide support for the enclitic would probably be preferable to one just viewing this as a coincidence.

   Indeed, if the problem had been merely phonological, some phonological solution could have been found, such as the insertion of a meaningless phonological segment. Or perhaps we would have witnessed exploratory use of several different 'fillers', one of which would, perhaps, have ultimately prevailed. Regarding the current situation, what is actually inserted is not just any minor word, but one specific minor word, the complementizer *że*. There must be some explanation for this state. Migdalski notes the fact that the 'supportive' particle is homophonous with the complementizer *że*, but seems to view this as a pure coincidence (Migdalski, 2006, p. 263). Another view is expressed

by Witkoś (1997), who ascribes to the segment *że* a dual nature as a complementizer and the lexical head of an Agr phrase.[8] The identity of the 'supportive' particle with the complementizer is indisputable only as a fact of diachrony. That the two uses of *że* are distinct synchronically is shown by the fact that they may co-occur in adjacent positions, as in (12):

(12)   *Tylko*   *mi*   *nie*   *mów,*   *że*   *że=ś*   *spalił*
       only   1SG.DAT   NEG   tell.IMP.2SG   that   ŻE=2SG   burn.LF.M.SG
       tego   *kurczaka.*
       that.ACC.SG.M   chicken.ACC.SG
       'Don't tell me you burned that chicken!'
       Korpus Języka Polskiego PWN, Jacek Dukaj, 2003

But even if the connection is merely diachronic, the polyfunctionality of *że* might somehow reveal interesting aspects of the processes discussed here.

It is important to note that, while the occurrence of bare past-tense endings in the Wackernagel position (or after the first word of a prosodically close-knit sequence of words) is increasingly archaic, they retain their mobility when clustering with the irrealis marker *-by-*:

(13)   *Zrobiła=by-ś*   *coś*   *takiego?*
       do.LF.SG.F=IRR-2SG   something.ACC   such.GEN.SG.N
       'Would you do such a thing?'

(14)   *Co*   *by-ś*   *zrobiła?*
       what.ACC   IRR-2SG   do.LF.SG.F
       'What would you do/have done?'

In fact, the person markers of the irrealis have always clustered with the irrealis marker *-by-*, which is hardly surprising as historically they are actually not even clitics but simply endings. What now looks like a cluster of clitics was historically an auxiliary with inflectional person markers. In Old Church Slavonic, the oldest forms of the irrealis auxiliary were as follows (Leskien, 1919, p. 214):

(15)   *bimь*   *bimъ*
       bi   *biste*
       bi   *bǫ, bišę*

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[8] Witkoś is not interested in diachronic aspects and does not expressly state that *że*-support was introduced in order to provide a lexical head for an Agr phrase. Should such a claim be advanced, it is not necessarily in contradiction with the account proposed in this article.

The origin of the irrealis auxiliary is not quite clear; it is certainly a form of the verb 'be', but the *-i*-vowel suggests that it could be an old optative. In all Slavic languages, however, its forms have undergone influence of the aorist, which, in Old Church Slavonic, had the following forms (Leskien, 1919, p. 255):

(16) *bychъ*   *bychomъ*
      by, bystъ   *byste*
      by, bystъ   *byšę*

This process began already in Old Church Slavonic, and aoristic forms are the norm in Cyrillic texts (Stieber, 1979, pp. 222–223). In Old Polish, the auxiliary of the irrealis still has the endings of the aorist (Długosz-Kurczabowa & Dubisz, 2006, p. 315):

(17) *bych*   *bychom*
      by   *byście*
      by   *bychą.*

Ultimately, however, the original endings have completely coalesced with the past-tense person markers. Influences went both ways: in Old Polish and in the dialects, aorist endings found their way into the past-tense paradigm, resulting in forms like *nosiłech* 'I carried', *że=ch nosił* 'that I carried' (Długosz-Kurczabowa & Dubisz, 2006, p. 306). In the modern standard language, the person markers going back to the enclitic present-tense forms of the auxiliary 'to be' have prevailed over the aorist-derived endings. The process of unification across paradigms was, however, complicated by one circumstance which is commonly overlooked. There was a sharp asymmetry in the status of the person markers in the two grammatical forms involved. The past-tense markers are not real endings but clitics, whereas the person markers of the irrealis were affixes. So, the question arises whether the affixal person markers of the irrealis have become clitics as well. Are both the irrealis marker and the person markers clitics in their own right? This is hard to test because the person markers of the irrealis always occur together with the mood marker. The cluster they build together behaves as a clitic. There are no constructions in which the person marker could detach itself from the mood marker to move to Wackernagel position:

(18) **Co=ś*   *zrobiła=by?*
      what.ACC=2SG   do.LF.F.SG=IRR
      intended meaning: 'what would you do/have done?'

The irrealis marker *by* can clearly occur without the person marker. This can be seen in 3rd person forms, where the person marker is zero:

(19) *Ona*   *by*   *o*   *tym*   *wiedziała.*
     3SG.NOM.F   IRR   about   this.LOC.SG.N   know.LF.F.SG
     'She would know/have known about it.'

It can also be seen in non-finite contexts where no person marking can be involved, as in the following example from Middle Polish, where *by* functions as a clausal irrealis marker in an infinitival wish clause:

(20) *Kupić*   *by*   *cię,*   *Mądrości,*   *za*   *drogie*
     buy.INF   IRR   2SG.ACC   wisdom.VOC.SG   for   dear.ACC.PL.NVIR
     pieniądze!
     money[PL].ACC
     'If only one could buy you, Wisdom, for big money!'
     Kochanowski, Tren IX

Moreover, *by* occurs in a cluster with *że* in infinitival purpose clauses, where, again, no person is involved, as the reference of the implicit subject of the infinitive is controlled by the main-clause subject. This construction is an innovation starting in the 15th century and definitively established in the 19th century (Pisarkowa, 1984, p. 239):

(21) *Szedł*   *ostrożnie,*   *że=by*   *się*   *nie*   *poślizgnąć.*
     walk.LF.M.SG[3]   carefully   that=IRR   REFL   NEG   slip.INF
     'He walked carefully in order not to slip.'

But all this does not prove that the person markers, when they are added, are not affixes. Ultimately, there is no hard evidence showing that the person endings of the irrealis are clitics in their own right, as they cannot show clitic behaviour by themselves. It could be argued that in the irrealis as well, the person markers must be clitics as they are clitics elsewhere. This argument is weakened, however, by the fact that in the past tense (our basis for comparison) their ability to function independently as clitics has, in recent times, sharply declined to the point of the affixalization having been claimed to be practically accomplished. In the irrealis, the personal endings certainly move, but only in combination with the mood marker. We might say that they have effectively become irrealis person markers, in a process that is analogous to the transition from past tense auxiliary to person markers in the realis domain.

This development is significant for the behaviour of the clitic person markers in other contexts as well. After all, it is legitimate to assume that there might have been

interaction rather than unilateral influence between the person markers of the past tense and the irrealis. As mentioned above, irrealis endings have influenced past-tense endings as well. Here, I would like to suggest that the state of affairs observed in the irrealis domain, more specifically the rise of what I have called irrealis person markers, has provided a model for the interpretation of the cluster *że* + person marker in the realis domain. The establishment of a parallel between the two occurred in complementation. Compare the following structures, the first of which is (as noted above) rejected by prescriptive grammar:

(22)   *Tam*   *że=śmy*   *poszli.*
      there   ŻE-1PL   go.LF.PL.VIR
      'There we went/It's there that we went.'

(23)   *Tam*   *by=śmy*   *poszli.*
      there   IRR=1PL   go.LF.PL.VIR
      'There we would go/It's there we would go.'

The source of constructions like (22) was undoubtedly complement clauses with *że*. If, simplifying somewhat for the sake of convenience, we distinguish 'realis' and 'irrealis' complement clauses, we see that they are differentiated by a complementizer without -*by*- (24) opposed to a complementizer with -*by* (25) or consisting of -*by* (26):

(24)   *Twierdzi,*   *że=śmy*   *tam*   *byli.*
      claim.PRS.3SG   that=1PL   there   be.LF.PL.VIR
      'She/he claims we were there.'

(25)   *Chce,*   *że=byśmy*   *tam*   *byli.*
      want.PRS.3SG   that=1PL   there   be.LF.PL.VIR
      'She/he wants us to be there.'

(26)   *Chcę,*   *by=śmy*   *tam*   *poszli.*
      want.PRS.1SG   IRR=1PL   here   go.LF.PL.VIR
      'I want us to go there.'

The interpretation of *by*- in (26) is not straightforward. The dictionaries and grammars describe it as a complementizer, but if this is the case then it has to double as an irrealis marker (the -*by*- in *żeby* in (25) and the like) as well; alternatively, we could assume haplology of *by*, or we could assume a zero complementizer to which the irrealis marker attaches enclitically. None of these explanations is really convincing. What is now described as the complementizer *by* is originally the 3rd person aorist form used in irrealis function as a result of the process described above (Pisarkowa, 1984, p. 239). Historically, what we are dealing with in (26) is a type of complement clauses

marked only by the subjunctive form of the verb, without complementizers, a model well known from Latin:

(27) *Quam*   *vellem*   *me*   *invitasses.*
       how   wish.SBJV.IPF.1SG   me.ACC   invite.SBJV.PLPF.2SG
       'How I wish you had invited me!' (Cicero, *Fam*. 10.28.1)

Of course, if *by* in (26) is just an irrealis marker, its clause-initial position is difficult to account for; this is evidence in favour of interpreting it as a complementizer. Yet its behaviour remains ambiguous between that of a mood marker and a complementizer, and it actually combines both functions. I am not aware of any synchronic discussions concerning the status of the 'complementizer' *by*.

If we compare only (24) and (26), the symmetry is perfect. If we compare (23) with (24), the symmetry is less perfect, but whether the markers double as complementizers or not is of secondary importance. The point is that *że* contrasts as a realis complementizer plus mood marker with a mood marker *by* which may also double as a complementizer. Even if the details elude us, it seems a priori plausible that complement clauses must have provided a source context for the contrast *żeśmy* (realis) vs *byśmy* (irrealis), as no other possible source for *żeśmy* was available. As forms of the type *byśmy* had become irrealis person markers, those of the type *żeśmy* could become realis person markers. This *żeśmy* has a similar phonological weight and structure as *byśmy*. As the morphosyntactic context for the past-tense marker is a realis context, the segment *że* became eligible as a filler in realis contexts in analogy to *byśmy* etc. in irrealis contexts.

But instead of saying *że* is just a filler, we might just as well say that its function is that of a realis marker. The idea of a realis marker surfacing only in one specific morphosyntactic context may seem somewhat strange. Yet there seems to be no alternative to assigning a crucial role to the person endings clustering with the irrealis marker *-by-* in the whole process. Even if the motive for the occurrence of *że* in a position analogous to that of *-by-* was prosodic (which is possible), the slot it occupies, and the only other occupant of which is *-by-*, is a slot for a mood marker, which presses *że* into the role of a realis marker.

Typologically, complementizer-mood marker polyfunctionality is not rare. A well-known case is that of the Balkan languages, where the so-called 'irrealis complementizer' (Ammann & van der Auwera, 2004) also functions as a kind of mood marker. The modern Greek subjunctive, for instance, has been described as an analytic mood consisting of realis forms with the complementizer *na* (Sampanis, 2012). The idea that complementizers are basically mood markers was advanced in Frajzyngier (1995), and though it is probably too strongly formulated with regard to complementizers in general, it certainly seems to apply to the case on hand.

We also need to discuss the notion of realis and irrealis person markers mentioned above. The literature on irrealis has the notion of 'joint' and 'non-joint' marking of irrealis (Palmer, 2001, pp. 145–148). The North American language Caddo (Chafe, 1995, p. 355) has portmanteau morphs encoding mood (realis or irrealis) together with person:

(28)   *ci-yibahw-ʔaʔ*
       1.AG.R-see-FUT
       'I will look at it.'

(29)   *kúy-t'a-yibahw*
       NEG-1.AG.IRR-see
       'I don't see him.'

The Polish case is, of course, different as no portmanteau markers are involved: mood and person have their separate slots. Yet these slots are locked together and, when moved, move together, constituting a combined mood-person clitic. This lends a certain plausibility to the idea that *że=m*, *że=ś*, *że=śmy*, *że=ście* in past-tense forms must be something similar.

4. In conclusion

The main point I have intended to make in this article is that 'że-support' is not purely phonologically motivated and that the development of irrealis forms might have played a role in its development. It is well known that in Polish the inherited Common Slavic endings of the irrealis auxiliary were assimilated to the person markers of the past tense (the original perfect), but the question has never been raised what the consequences of this could have been for the past tense. What happened (and this is beyond doubt) is that the enclitic past-tense markers were formally identified with something that was not enclitic but a set of inflectional affixes within an enclitic irrealis auxiliary. The analogy established between the two series of forms turned the former auxiliary forms into a series of what we could call 'irrealis person markers'. These were fully mobile and, being phonologically heavier than the bare past-tense endings, required no complex phonological integration with the host as the person ending of the past tense did. On the basis of a realis vs irrealis opposition available in complementation, where *że* and *by* were opposed as realis and irrealis complementizers respectively, a series of realis person markers of the type *że-m*, *że-ś* etc. could be created. One can further speculate whether the phonological complexities arising from the attachment of the bare person markers to certain types of hosts were the factor setting this process in motion or whether the clustering past-tense person markers

arose in an independent process and started providing a convenient means of avoiding phonologically difficult attachment. Even if the impulse came from phonology, this is still just half of the explanation.

Abbreviations

1 – 1st person, 2 – 2nd person, 3 – 3rd person, ACC – accusative, AG – agent, F – feminine, FUT – future, GEN – genitive, IMP – imperative, INF – infinitive, INS – instrumental, IPF – imperfect, IRR – irrealis, LF – *l*-form (the morphome underlying past tenses and irrealis forms in Slavic), LOC – locative, M – masculine, N – neuter, NEG – negative, NOM – nominative, NVIR – non-virile, PL – plural, PLPF – pluperfect, PRS – present, PST – past, R – realis, REFL – reflexive, SBJV – subjunctive, SG – singular, VIR – virile, VOC – vocative

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SUMMARY

Keywords: Polish, past tense clitics, irrealis clitics, complementizer, realis marker

The article discusses the grammatical status of the 'support particle' *że* prefixed in colloquial Polish to the enclitic person markers of the past tense. It is argued that the use of this particle, identical with the complementizer *że* 'that', is not only phonologically but also grammatically motivated, even though it is true that attachment of bare person markers to certain hosts is blocked for phonological reasons. A crucial role in the process of its rise may have been played by the identification of person markers across moods, the enclitic person markers of the past tense being identified with the affixal person markers of the irrealis, which occurred only in conjunction with the irrealis marker and could only be moved together with it. It is hypothesized that this induced the rise of an enclitic conjoint realis plus person marker as a pendant to the conjoint irrealis plus person marker. Clausal complementation provided the source context for the introduction of *że* as a realis marker in addition to its original function as a complementizer.

STRESZCZENIE

Od spójnika komplementacyjnego do wykładnika trybu realis: problem partykuły *że* w polskim czasie przeszłym

Słowa kluczowe: język polski, klityki czasu przeszłego, klityki trybu irrealis, spójniki komplementacyjne, wykładniki trybu realis

W artykule poruszany jest problem partykuły *że*, używanej w potocznej polszczyźnie w charakterze 'podpory' dla wykładników osoby w czasie przeszłym. Argumentuje się, że zjawisko to jest uwarunkowane nie tylko fonologicznie, lecz również gramatycznie, choć faktem jest, że umiejscowienie enklityczne czystych końcówek jest w pewnych wypadkach utrudnione albo wręcz zablokowane z powodów fonologicznych. Pewną rolę mogło tu odegrać utożsamienie enklitycznych wykładników osoby czasu przeszłego z afiksalnymi końcówkami trybu warunkowego, które są ruchome tylko wraz z wykładnikiem trybu -*by*-. Dawne formy czasownika posiłkowego trybu warunkowego (typu *byśmy*) stały się łącznymi wykładnikami trybu (irrealis) i osoby, co mogło stanowić wzór dla stworzenia łącznego wykładnika trybu (realis) i osoby dla czasu przeszłego. Źródłem tych łącznych wykładników typu *żeśmy* itp. była komplementacja zdaniowa.