

On the diachrony of causal *jako-że*-clauses in Polish

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Introduction Usually, a natural language possesses different possibilities to encode a causal relation on the syntactic level having more than one type of causal clauses. Polish is not different in this respect; confer the causal conjunctions *bo*, *ponieważ* and *jako że* (all meaning 'because'), cf. Bąk (1999) or Skibicki (2006). In this talk, I will examine the diachrony of causal *jako-że*-clauses (= CCs) in the history of Polish. Firstly, I will show that CCs differ from causal clauses introduced by the inherent causal complementizers *bo* and *ponieważ*. Secondly, I will examine emergence conditions as well as the development of CCs, and provide empirical evidence accounting for where differences between the particular causal clause types in Polish come from.

Phenomenon Compare the following corpus example from Present-day Polish:

- [1] *Te inwestycje, jako że są najbardziej widoczne, zadowolają mieszkańców*
these investments as that are at:most visible satisfy inhabitants
'These investments satisfy inhabitants because they are the most visible ones'
(*National Corpus of Polish, Dziennik Zachodni*, 15/11/2004)

In [1], the CC is headed by the complex complementizer *jako że* 'because' giving rise to a causal interpretation. Remarkably, *jako że* is not an inherent causal complementizer, as it consists of the comparative preposition *jako* 'as' and the canonical complementizer introducing usually declarative clauses, i.e. *że* 'that'. Compositionally, however, the embedded clause in [1] is interpreted as a content or a propositional causal clause (cf. Sweetser 1990 for English and Frey 2016 for German), whereby the proposition embedded in the causal clause is interpreted as a fact causing another fact. In this connection, the diachronic question of how CCs came into being needs to be addressed.

Diachronic analysis Diachronic studies dealing with CCs are still missing and the main aim of this talk is to fill this research gap. Based on diachronic data extracted from different historical corpora, I argue that CCs grammaticalized in Middle Polish (1543-1765) and that this grammaticalization process is to be traced back to the compositional meaning of *jako* as a comparative preposition on the one hand and *że* as a complementizer on the other. Accordingly, both elements contributed two seeds that determined the further development of the complex causal complementizer *jako że* 'because': i) *jako* -> comparison, ii) *że* -> subordination. While component i) paved the way for a comparison of two events triggering a causal relation between them, component ii) enabled the use of *jako że* in adjunct clauses, establishing a dependency relationship between the matrix clause and the embedded clause. I assume that the causal relation between two events is a presupposition in Old Polish (till 1543) and that it has been accommodated into the compositional meaning of CCs in Middle Polish. The incorporation of the complementizer *że* 'that' into the clause structure of CCs, in turn, will explain why CCs cannot be interpreted as epistemic or speech act causal clauses.

References

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