

# On exceptive clauses in (the history of) Polish

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**Abstract** In this talk, I will examine the synchrony and the diachrony of exceptive clauses in the sense claimed by von Fintel (1992) in Polish. (1) is a case in point:

- (1) Dzisiaj po południu mogą wyjść na wolność, \*(chyba) że / \*iż sąd  
today afternoon may.3PL go:OUT.INF on freedom presumably that / that court  
zdecyduje inaczej.  
decide.3SG differently  
'They are allowed to be released from prison today afternoon, unless the court will  
take a different decision.'

(NKJP, *Dziennik Zachodni*, 30/12/2004)

In the example given in (1), the exceptive clause is introduced by *chyba że* 'unless', consisting of the discourse particle *chyba* 'presumably' and the complementizer *że* 'that'. Synchronically, I argue that both *chyba* and *że* form a complex complementizer introducing adverbial exceptive clauses. Evidence for this claim comes from the fact that *chyba* cannot be omitted, indicating that it has been incorporated into the exceptive clause structure and accommodated into its compositional meaning. Additionally, *że* cannot be replaced by its stylistic counterpart *iż* mainly used in higher-register texts. Diachronically, I show that exceptive clauses emerged in Old Polish (till 1543) and that subjunctive morphology in the embedded clause was a necessary condition for them to arise. I outline individual steps of how exceptive clauses developed, what role the discourse particle *chyba* 'presumably' played in this development, and, finally, account for why subjunctive morphology in Present-day Polish exceptive clauses can be dispensed with altogether.

## References

- von Fintel, Kai. 1992. Exceptive conditionals: The meaning of *unless*. *Proceedings of the North East Linguistics Society* 22. 135–151.