

On the semantic change of evidential *jakoby*-clauses in the history of Polish

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Kolloquium Slawistische Linguistik, HU Berlin
June 11, 2018

In this talk, I will examine the use and the development of subordinate evidential clauses in (the history of) Polish headed by the complementizer *jakoby*. Compare the following two examples:

- (1) a. ludziami na ziemi tak było się widziało, **jakoby**
people.DAT on earth.LOC so be.l-PTCP.3SG.N REFL seem.l-PTCP.3SG.N jakoby
się ono na nie obalić chciało
REFL it on them.ACC slay.INF be.l-PTCP.3SG.N want.l-PTCP.3SG.N
'it seemed to the people on earth as if it wanted to slay all of them'
(KG, *Kazanie I: Na Boże Naordzenie*, 26-27)
- b. Firma zaprzeczyła, **jakoby** były zgłoszenia o
company deny.l-PTCP.3SG.F jakoby be.l-PTCP.N-VIR.PL reports about
wadliwych kartach.
faulty cards.LOC
'The company denied that there supposedly were any reports about faulty pre-paid cards.'
(NKJP, *Dziennik Zachodni*, 27/9/2006)

Whereas the example given in (1a) is from Old Polish, (1b) illustrates how argument *jakoby*-clauses are mainly used in Present-day Polish. In (1a), the dependent clause is introduced by the hypothetical comparative complementizer *jakoby* corresponding to the meaning of the English complex complementizer *as if*, as the English paraphrase of (1a) indicates, and it is embedded under the matrix verb *widzieć się* 'seem'. In (1b), in turn, the *jakoby*-clause is embedded under the speech verb *zaprzeczać* 'deny'. What both clauses have in common is that they occupy one of the arguments of the matrix verb. However, in (1b) *jakoby* itself does not render the meaning of what English *as if* expresses; instead it comprises the compositional meaning of a complementizer introducing a dependent declarative clause (= *that*) and,

at the same time, of a hearsay adverb (e.g. *allegedly*, *supposedly* or *reportedly*), giving rise to a hearsay or a reportative complementizer. Remarkably, the meaning of *jakoby* must have changed as in Present-day Polish *jakoby*-clauses are unembeddable under verbs of seeming:

- (2) *Firmie wydaje się, **jakoby** były zgłoszenia o wadliwych
company.DAT seem.3SG REFL jakoby be.l-PTCP.N-VIR.PL reports about faulty
kartach.
cards.LOC
Intended meaning: ‘It seems to the company as if there were any reports about faulty prepaid cards.’

Based on previous work (cf. Jędrzejowski & Schenner (2013)), I will show that the semantic change of *jakoby* involved two main developments. (i) The meaning of *jakoby* was broadened to allow for inferences from reportative information, which is compatible with verbs of seeming. (ii) The reportative flavor acquired by *jakoby* licensed its use in complements of speech verbs. Since these new contexts were no longer compatible with the original inferential meaning, they ultimately lead to the inability to use *jakoby* in its original contexts, cf. (2). In modeling this change, I will make use of the possible worlds semantics initiated by Kratzer (1981, 1991, 2012) and developed further for evidential expressions by Faller (2002, 2011) and Matthewson, Rullmann & Davis (2017).

References

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