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Syntactic indeterminacy on either side of complementation –
Why can it be so persistent?

Slavic languages provide ample evidence for evaluative adverbs recategorized as complement-taking predicates (CTP) with finite clauses headed by default complementizers (COMP), e.g. Pol. *że* 'that' (see 1-2; Wiemer 2019, pp. 128–150). Such 'predicative adverbs' form a productive class. Many of them are highly frequent at least in Polish (Przepiórkowski/Patejuk 2021, p. 844), where this pattern (= P-I) extends to expressions of confirmation or denial (see 3). On the other hand, we encounter structures with an unequivocal CTP followed by an apparent complementizer and a directive-optative marker (DIR; Pol. *niech*, Russ. *pust'*); see (4). This pattern (= P-II) includes cases in which only clause-initial DIR follows on an unequivocal CTP, so that it resembles a complementizer (see 5). If P-II reads like a quotative construction, Pol. *że* hardly qualifies as a complementizer. Moreover, P-I and P-II can even be intertwined (see 6), so that, again, the evaluative lexemes may either be treated as sentence adverbs (i.e. propositional or illocutionary operators) or as CTPs on their own (as in 1-3), whereas COMP behaves like a quotative marker. While such different treatments are highly theory-dependent, and one wonders about their positions in CP-areas discussed in formal frameworks (e.g., Meyer 2007, Krapova 2021), they affect neither the scope relations between COMP, DIR and the evaluative lexeme, nor information structure. Probably this is why speakers do not have problems in (re)producing them.

All these patterns prove persistent over centuries in Polish, Russian and other Slavic languages. They show that clausal complementation can be indeterminate "on either side" of the juncture: sentence adverbs, on the "left side", unanimously become CTPs only if, on the "right side", a linking element acknowledged as complementizer (e.g., Pol. *że*) is used to flag the complement relation (= P-I). However the latter can also turn into a quotative marker (see P-II), while without this element DIR-morphemes acquire properties of complementizers if the left context contains an expression that suits as a CTP.

I will check whether the persistence of such indeterminacy applies particularly to less frequent patterns, which evade clear-cut syntactic categorization. I will propose a usage-based explanation, ask which approaches are able to capture this kind of indeterminacy, and present a comprehensive analysis of patterns P-I and P-II with data from Polish and Russian corpora of the 17th-21st centuries (see list under References). More specific questions to be pursued are: (i) Can the quotative behavior of Pol. *że* (see 4, 6) be identified with a stage before this morpheme "split" into different lexemes (*że*$_{quot}$, *że*$_{comp}$, or even more) distinguished by their syntactic behavior (cf. Guz 2019, Ch. 4)? If yes, how did P-II come about in Russian, whose complementizer (*čto*) has a different history (as a WH-word)? (ii) How widespread has syntactic indeterminacy of sentence adverbs with clausal complements been? For this purpose, I will use

random samples to compare their occurrence with and without COMP (see 7a-7b); indeterminacy obtains in the latter case, since the sentence adverb may alternatively be understood as a parenthetical comment (see 7b).

Examples

(1) Pol.	*Przykro [Źle / Smutno],* ** *że*** *nie udało się uratować sosen.* sorry [bad / sad] COMP NEG Vfin 'I'm sorry [It is bad / sad] **that** we did not manage to save the pines.' (PNC; from Przepiórkowski/Patejuk 2021: 839, adapted)	predicative adverb **(P-I)**
(2) Pol.	*Smutna nasza rodzina... – Smutna, dlatego* **lepiej** **ż*e*** *nosisz inne nazwisko.* better COMP Vfin 'Our family is sad... – Sad, so **better that** you have a different surname.' (PNC; 1991)	
(3) Pol.	*Przyjdziesz dziś? – Oczywiście / Pewnie / Naturalnie,* **ż*e*** *przyjdę.* of course / certainly / naturally COMP Vfin 'Will you come today? – Of course / Sure, **(that)** I will come' (Wiśniewski 1995)	
(4) Pol.	*Stary* <u>*odpowiedział,*</u> **ż*e*** **niech** *nawet w więzieniu zgnije.* CTP COMP DIR Vfin 'The old man <u>replied</u> **that may** he rot even in prison.' (PNC; 1988 [1937])	COMP-DIR **(P-II)**
(5) Pol.	<u>**Powiedz mu,**</u> **niech** *jutro przyjdzie do kantoru.* CTP DIR Vfin '<u>Tell</u> him, **may** he come to the cantor tomorrow.' (PNC; 1898)	DIR = COMP ?
(6) Pol.	*doskonale* <u>*zdawał sobie sprawę*</u> **ż*e*** **lepiej** **niech** *pisze książki* CTP COMP better DIR Vfin 'he was well aware that he had better write books' (lit. '…that better may he write books') (PNC; 2007)	**P-I +** **P-II**
(7a) Ru.	*Bylo* **vidno,** <u>*čto*</u> *ona serditsja.* be.PST.N obvious COMP Vfin 'It was **obvious** <u>that</u> she was angry.' (RNC; 2004)	+ COMP
(7b) Ru.	**Vidno,** *Fomičeva vydaët želaemoe za dejstvitel'noe.* obvious Vfin '**Obviously**, Fomičeva gives out wishful thinking.' (RNC; 2003)	– COMP

For online sources, please state the date of access in brackets (last access: 8 March 2023). Please activate all hyperlinks.

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