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INVESTIGATING PREDICATE TYPES AND MOOD SELECTION IN POLISH COMPLEMENT CLAUSES: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY¹

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Introduction

The subjunctive mood has long been deemed to be limited only to the languages with distinctive subjunctive paradigms. Nevertheless, striking similarities have been observed between embedded clauses headed by the complex complementizer *żeby* and the subjunctive mood regarding their semantic and syntactic properties (e.g., Wierzbicka 1988; Tomaszewicz 2009; Orszulak 2016). Hence, the goal of this article is to compare the Polish complement *żeby*-clauses with their Spanish counterparts.

The definition of the subjunctive mood that is followed here goes back to Bybee et al.: “Subjunctive² is the term given to special verb forms or markers that obligatorily occur in certain types of subordinate clauses” (Bybee, Perkins, Pagliuca 1994: 212). Three issues should be immediately noted. First, the subjunctive here is

1 This article is based on my MA Thesis entitled “Aspects of the Subjunctive Mood: View from Spanish, English and Polish” under the direction of Prof. Jacek Witkoś.

2 This article, due to its limited scope, is only concerned with the subjunctive mood in subordinate clauses. As pointed out by an anonymous reviewer, Polish independent sentences with *oby* could be argued to contain related, albeit, separate mood – the optative mood.

not restricted only to distinctive inflectional paradigms as in Spanish or Italian, but also allows for other subjunctive markers. This makes it possible for the subjunctive mood to be extended to languages in which there is no separate verbal marking, such as Polish. Moreover, it does not include any supposed meaning that should be carried by this mood, which avoids running into problems of distinctions such as *realis/irrealis*, that cannot account for all instances of the subjunctive.

Intentional predicates and mood choice

One of the prevalent questions in the subjunctive literature is the one concerned with its triggering conditions and their nature. For some, the mood choice stems from syntactic selectional properties of matrix predicates. However, others see the subjunctive as fulfilling certain semantic requirements. Depending on the approach taken, the division of the subjunctive mood into classes would be different.

One of the most prominent classifications was created by Terrell and Hooper (1974) and it will be pursued here. While there are several other proposals, the one provided by them is intuitive and simple, making it possible to swiftly classify subjunctive-triggering predicates. What should be mentioned here is that the categorisation devised by Terrell and Hooper (1974) is based on the mood distribution in complement clauses in Spanish and was not conceived as a universal classification system for all subjunctive triggers. However, it largely converges with the categorisations of subjunctive-triggering predicates present in the literature. Therefore, as this article focuses on the comparison between Spanish and Polish subjunctive complement clauses, it is suitable for its needs.

Regarding the approach taken, Terrell and Hooper see the mood choice as dictated by the speakers' belief in the truthfulness of the suggestion. Consequently, the six types of predicates that they identified would correspond to six different attitudes towards the truthfulness of the suggestion expressed by the complement clause. As a result, there are three possible broad categories of predicates, which can be further subdivided; those which require their complements to be: asserted, presupposed, or neither asserted nor presupposed (Terrell and Hooper 1974: 486). Such a division allows them to neatly account for all the environments in which the subjunctive appears in complement clauses. The classification is provided below:

Table 1. Classification of verbs selecting the indicative or the subjunctive

Semantic notion	Class	Mood	Examples
assertion	assertion	indicative	<i>afirmar</i> 'to assert'
	report	indicative	<i>decir</i> 'to say'
presupposition	mental act	indicative	<i>darse cuenta</i> 'to realise'
	comment	subjunctive	<i>alegrar</i> 'to make happy'
neither	imperative	subjunctive	<i>ordenar</i> 'to order'
	doubt	subjunctive	<i>dudar</i> 'to doubt'

Source: adapted from Terrell and Hooper (1974).

The first class, which is connected with the notion of assertion, includes both verbs that assert a certain suggestion and reporting verbs. The second group was created based on whether the predicates require presupposition. Two subgroups belong to it: mental act and comment verbs. In the first case, although there is no presupposition, still the indicative is chosen, which Terrell and Hooper find surprising because they assume non-assertive predicates to take subjunctive complements. Yet, even in the case of comment verbs, the situation is not as straightforward, as both moods are acceptable. As a result, the second group poses more trouble as it falls in the middle of the continuum between indicative and subjunctive complements (Farkas 1992: 71). This group is understood as expressing a presupposition, which is a suggestion believed to be true and on which one comments. One of the properties that distinguish it from the first class is the fact that negation does not affect its selectional preferences as it does not have any impact on the presupposition, which is still taken to be true. The only thing that negation changes is the type of attitude. The same does not apply to the first group, which, when negated, shows a preference for the indicative. The last group comprises predicates that neither assert nor presuppose their complements, which include imperative verbs and doubt verbs.

Polish subjunctive mood

Whilst here the Polish subjunctive mood is taken to be restricted only to intensional verbs and their complements headed by the complementizer *żeby* or its stylistically motivated variants, it is a common view that also other subordinate clauses in which *żeby* can appear, e. g. purpose and relative clauses, should be considered instances of the subjunctive mood.

When it comes to complement clauses, they can be subdivided into various classes depending on the meaning of the main predicate. The most prominent one includes

volitional verbs such as *chcieć* ‘to want’ or *prosić* ‘to ask, to beg’. They are obligatorily followed by the complex complementizer and the *l*-participle, which harks back to the definition of the subjunctive mood suggested by Bybee, Perkins and Pagliuca (1994: 212). Another group consists of predicates indicating doubt in the truthfulness of the proposition. However, it should be noted that in contrast to the situation in the Romance languages, here both subjunctive and indicative complements are possible. This group is represented by verbs such as *wątpić* ‘to doubt’.

The conditional and the subjunctive mood

The conditional mood in Polish consists of a moveable particle *by* that can be attached to a verb, but it can also appear on its own, for instance: *Powiedziałbym mu to* and *To bym mu powiedział*; both sentences can be rendered in English as ‘I would say it to him’. It is the presence of the moveable particle *by* that distinguishes the conditional clauses from the subjunctive ones, in which it is not possible to separate *by* from the *żeby* complementizer as shown by the existence of minimal pairs such:

- (1) Krzyczała, że ona *by* jej nie zostawiła.
‘She shouted that she would not leave/would not have left her.’
- (2) Krzyczała, żeby ona jej nie zostawiła.
‘She shouted for her not to leave her.’

The existence of such pairs leads Puzynina (1971: 135) to put forth two possible interpretations: either they represent two separate moods or the variant with the complex complementizer *żeby* belongs, in fact, to the indicative mood. She chose the second option, citing the fact that distinguishing one mood from another would pose considerable difficulty. This view is not shared here, as the conditional and the subjunctive mood differ in terms of distribution and the conveyed meaning. What is more, whereas the conditional sentence allows for coreferentiality between the subjects³ of the matrix and the embedded clause, in (2), it is disallowed.

3 As noticed by an anonymous review, the ban on subject obviation does not extend to all types of subjunctive clauses. In Spanish and other Romance language, there is a division between intensional subjunctive (triggered by the type of predicate) and polarity subjunctive (triggered by the presence of a negative element).

Empirical study in Polish

As the subjunctive mood has not been included in the majority of descriptions of the Polish mood system, this study aimed at investigating whether there is a convergence between the types of predicates that trigger the subjunctive mood in Spanish and those in which the complex complementizer *żeby* is followed by the *l*-participle. To check it, both a grammaticality judgment test and a corpus study were conducted. Importantly, the subjunctive behaviour and complementation are based on the Spanish subjunctive because the Spanish subjunctive system is both robust and well-researched, and can serve as a template. Accordingly, the choice of stimulus in Polish was informed by the categorisation of predicate classes suggested by Terrell and Hooper (1974) for Spanish.

It also should be borne in mind that, in Polish, there is a range of different complex complementizers with immoveable *by*, which can head a subjunctive clause. As there is a stylistic difference (Bańko 2009) between these alternatives, the most widespread and neutral, in terms of the chosen register, is the *żeby* complementizer.

Another point worth mentioning is that some predicates such as *marzyć* ‘to dream’ or *prosić* ‘to ask, to beg’ accept both the complex complementizer followed by either the *l*-participle or the infinitive. Moreover, verbs such as *kazać* ‘to order’ accept a bare infinitive or the *żeby* complementizer followed by either the infinitive or the *l*-participle. To maintain uniformity across different groups of predicates, the stimulus included only predicates followed by the complex complementizer *żeby* and the *l*-participle, excluding any other options. In addition, although it is well known that there is a polarity subjunctive (e. g., *Wierzę, że to zrobił* vs. *Nie wierzę, żeby to zrobił* ‘I (don’t) believe he did it’), this type of subjunctive was excluded since the focus of this study was on predicate types and not on the effects of negation on mood choice.

Following the traditional account of clauses in Polish, all the tested sentences belong to the category of *zdania dopełniające/intencjonalne* (‘intensional’ or ‘complement clauses’) (Grzegorzyczkowa 2004: 106). They have two characteristic features: they are closely linked to the matrix clause and cannot function without it, and the truthfulness of the main clause depends on whether the embedded clause is true or not. As estimated by Grzegorzyczkowa, there are around two thousand intensional predicates in Polish, which indicates that this study can only sketch a picture of their selectional properties.

While the classification of predicates that is followed here is the one provided by Terrell and Hooper, it is still worthwhile to take a look at the categorisation of Polish intensional verbs created by Grzegorzyczkowa (2004: 101):

Table 2. Intensional verbs in Polish

Group	Types of verbs
group I	mental verbs, that is verbs related to thinking and mental activity
group II	volitional verbs, verbs of decision, directive verbs
group III	emotive factive verbs
group IV	verbs of perception and <i>verba dicendi</i>
group V	causative verbs
group VI	impersonal verbs

Source: adapted from Grzegorzycykowa (2004: 101).

What is interesting in this classification is how the predicates are divided into factive and non-factive ones. Factive predicates consist of verbs of perception, some factive-emotive verbs, and epistemic verbs, whereas non-factive predicates include volitional verbs, verbs of thinking, and *verba dicendi*. What immediately draws our attention is the fact that only some factive-emotive verbs are taken to be factive, which follows the observations made by other scholars (e.g. Farkas 1992; Giannakidou 2016) that it is a group that allows for two different interpretations, one being a comment to a factual situation and the other one being an evaluation of a potential situation. In contrast to the situation in the Romance languages, Polish emotive-factive verbs do not behave uniformly and, so far, no clear pattern of complementation has been detected. Compare:

- (3) Żałuję, że Piotr przyjechał.
'I regret that Piotr came.'
- (4) *Żałuję, żeby Piotr przyjechał.
'I regret that Piotr came.'
- (5) Obawiam się, że Piotr się spóźni.
'I fear that Piotr might be late.'
- (6) Obawiam się, żeby Piotr się nie spóźnił.
'I fear that Piotr might be late.'

However, the question that appears here is what exactly the effect of negation is in (6) as it seems to improve considerably its grammaticality. Compare:

- (7) *Obawiam się, żeby Piotr się spóźnił.
'I fear that Piotr might be late.'
- (8) Obawiam się, żeby Piotr się nie spóźnił.
'I fear that Piotr might be late.'

As a result, the grammaticality of (6) might not stem only from the properties of the predicate, but they might work in tandem with negation, as there is no indication that negating the embedded clause in (4) would be enough to render it grammatical. The difference between these two predicates in question might harken back to the fact that *obawiać się* ‘to fear’ in contrast to *żałować* ‘to regret’ is oriented towards the future, which would put it in the category of *irrealis* (Palmer 2001: 5), whereas *żałować* can serve as a comment to the real situation. According to Grzegorzczkowska (2004: 110), the two complementation patterns emerge depending on how certain the speaker is that Piotr will arrive late.

Apart from emotive-factive verbs, there are also decision verbs that allow for either an indicative or a subjunctive complement, as exemplified below:

- (9) Postanowił, że wyjedzie.
‘He decided to go.’
- (10) Postanowił, żeby wyjechać.
‘He decided to go.’
- (11) Zdecydował, że Maria pojedzie.
‘He decided that Maria should go.’
- (12) Zdecydował, żeby Maria pojechała.
‘He decided that Maria should go.’ (examples taken from Grzegorzczkowska 2004:110)

The choice of mood depends here on whether the focus is on the mental action of decision making or on the influence that is exerted over the subject of the subordinate clause.

Methods

The grammaticality judgement test was carried out with the help of Google Forms. The choice of this tool was dictated by the need for question order randomisation since, as pointed out by Schütze (2016:180), the order in which the stimulus is presented might skew the results. For instance, the respondents could be tired towards the end of the questionnaire or stressed at the beginning. Moreover, they could be primed by a previous question to respond in a certain way. However, this means that it is not possible to tell in which order the sentences were presented to each participant; thus it is unknown whether any neighbouring item might have had any influence over the responses given. In addition, the Google Forms application was also chosen because it is intuitive and enjoys a certain popularity among students who were the target group in this study.

Concerning the instructions, the respondents were supposed to choose a number from “1” to “5”, “1” indicating that the sentence was completely ungrammatical, and

“5” that the sentence was completely grammatical. Since some (e.g., Ellis 1991) raised concerns regarding the name that should be given to the middle of the scale, only the extreme two ends of the grammaticality scale were named. Additionally, the respondents were not provided with an example of what kind would receive a given score in order not to influence their linguistic intuition. As mentioned before, grammaticality in this study was seen as a gradient, hence allowing for intermediate levels of grammaticality that could have arisen due to interspeaker or intraspeaker variation as suggested by Tremblay (2005: 132). This approach to grammaticality is reflected through a Lickert-like scale.

The stimulus consisted of 38 sentences. Yet, when the study was conducted, it became apparent that there was an error that led to excluding two items. Because one of these items was a test sentence and the other one a filler sentence, even after their exclusion, the balance between filler and test sentences remained the same. Hence, in the end, the grammaticality test consisted of 36 sentences, 18 of which were tested and 18 were filler sentences. The aim of the filler sentences was to prevent the respondents from finding out the goal of the study and to check for atypical responses. One of the important problems that had to be circumvented was the maturation effect that arises when respondents are presented with too much stimulus. Consequently, the number of sentences per predicate group had to be limited to three test sentences, as, for every tested item, there had to be a filler sentence to counterbalance it. The presented sentences were also balanced in terms of their assumed grammaticality. Nonetheless, as the aim of this study was to test whether some predicates accept the subjunctive mood in their complements, their grammaticality was not certain before conducting the test.

There were 66 respondents who were students from different parts of Poland. The questionnaire was posted on numerous student social media pages, and students were asked to evaluate the grammaticality of presented sentences. Following Schütze's (2016: 183) recommendation, students with a background in linguistics were excluded from this study.

Results and discussion

Table 3. Results of the grammaticality test

Sentences	Mean
Tested sentences: ungrammatical (by hypothesis)	
1. Agnieszka wierzyła, żeby Jan wrócił.	1.64
2. Sądzę, żebyście poszli do sklepu.	1.67
3. Ania myśli, żeby Dominika kupiła książkę.	2.11
4. Adam powiedział, żeby wczoraj padał deszcz.	1.65
5. Dziewczynka stwierdziła, żeby kot wypił mleko.	1.70
6. Pogodynka poinformowała, żeby wieczorem przeszła burza.	1.50
7. Jaś zdawał sobie sprawę, żeby jego przyjaciel kupił samochód.	1.56
8. Marysia wzięła pod uwagę, żeby mama kupiła ozdoby świąteczne.	1.97
9. Grześ zauważył, żeby kot złapał mysz.	1.58
10. Chłopcy cieszą się, żeby rodzice kupili im nowe zabawki.	1.74
11. Jest mi przykro, żebyście zapomnieli biletów.	1.45
12. Smucą się, żeby Maria pojechała na wakacje.	1.56
Tested sentenced: grammatical (by hypothesis)	
13. Staś wątpi, żeby pogoda szybko się poprawiła.	3.59
14. Karol nie wierzył, żeby Agnieszka kupiła słownik.	2.23
15. Mężczyzna zaprzecza, żeby Adam rozwiódł się z Agnieszką.	2.82
16. Dzieci chcą, żeby zawsze świeciło słońce.	4.71
17. Goście życzyli sobie, żeby obsługa codziennie wymieniała ręczniki.	4.79
18. Mama kazała dzieciom, żeby wyniosły śmieci.	3.32

Table 4. Mean results according to predicate type

Predicate type	Mean
Assertion	1.80
Report	1.62
Mental Act	1.70
Comment	1.59
Doubt	2.88
Imperative	4.27

The results largely confirmed the predictions about which types of predicates can be selected for a subjunctive complement. The first group, including assertion verbs, clearly follows the same pattern as their Romance counterparts and thus only

accepts the indicative. This comes as no surprise, as they express certainty regarding the truthfulness of their proposition. The same could be said about mental act verbs, one of which received the lowest score in the whole study. Therefore, the fact that Grzegorzczkowa opted for their inclusion among factive predicates is justified. Reporting verbs also showed a lack of compatibility with the subjunctive mood, as they are used to relate real events instead of imaginary ones. Doubt verbs fall in the middle of the scale, which might reflect their double complementation pattern, as, depending on the meaning one wants to convey, they either trigger the subjunctive or the indicative. Although, it should be noted that *wątpić* decidedly received higher scores than other verbs from this group. It was judged as more grammatical than the verb *kazać*, which was unexpected as *kazać* is an imperative verb. Yet, it can be explained away by the fact that the tested sentence with *kazać* included object control. In addition, *kazać* displays a certain flexibility with the types of complements that it can take, as mentioned before. The group that was judged to be most compatible with the subjunctive mood is the group of imperative predicates, which follows the predictions, as *żeby*-clauses are obligatory for the majority of these verbs. What was unexpected is that the group that received the lowest grammaticality rankings consisted of emotive-factive verbs, which, in the Romance languages, would fall in the middle of the scale from volitional to assertive predicates. Yet, as stated before, this group seems to display a lack of uniformity concerning complementation patterns. Nonetheless, the fact that they obtained the lowest score is surprising.

Additional Corpus Study

In order to supplement the data gathered in the grammaticality study, an additional corpus study was conducted using Narodowy Korpus Języka Polskiego, NKJP [National Corpus of Polish Language] (Przepiórkowski et al. 2012). For this study, the balanced NKJP subcorpus (300 segments) was chosen because it was important to eliminate, as far as possible, any influence of different registers. Also, in the grammaticality study, the tested items were created with mind to being stylistically neutral since there could be a preference for other complex complementizers in more formal registers, which could have interfered with the results.

Data selection and analysis

The corpus was searched for instances of the same predicates that were used in the grammaticality test. Then their complements were classified as either belonging to the subjunctive or the indicative mood. During the data selection process, all repeating sentences were eliminated, as well as those which did not include indicative or subjunctive complements following intensional verbs.

Result and discussion

The graph and the table below present the results of the corpus search:

Fig. 1. Mood selection in Polish

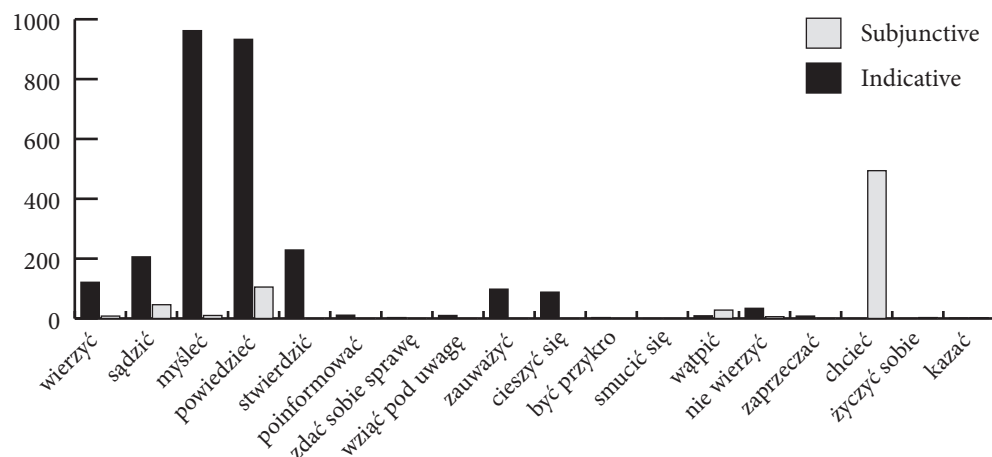


Table 5. Mood selection

Predicate	Indicative	Subjunctive
wierzyć	121	8
sądzić	206	46
myśleć	962	10
powiedzieć	933	105
stwierdzić	229	0
poinformować	11	0
zdać sobie sprawę	3	0
wziąć pod uwagę	10	0
zauważyć	98	0
cieszyć się	88	0
być przykro	3	0
smuć się	0	0
wątpić	9	28
nie wierzyć	34	6
zaprzeczać	8	0
chcieć	0	494

Predicate	Indicative	Subjunctive
życzyć sobie	0	3
kazać	1	2

In general, the results of the corpus study align with the grammaticality study concerning complementation patterns. As predicted, assertion predicates show a predilection for the indicative mood, though some in-group differences are also perceivable, such as in the case of the verb *sądzić* ‘to think, to believe’, which in 1 in 5 instances takes a subjunctive complement. What is interesting, the verb *sądzić* was in the first-person singular in all of them. Apart from that, the majority of them involved negation, suggesting that they could best be analysed as examples of the polarity subjunctive. When it comes to report verbs, the data obtained through the corpus study were convergent with the results of the grammaticality test. Although in the case of *poinformować* ‘to inform’, the number of tokens was so low that it would be difficult to reach any conclusions regarding its behaviour. The verb *powiedzieć* ‘to say’ also presented no surprises, as it had been already known that it can acquire a directive meaning when followed by the subjunctive. Concerning mental act verbs, it is only possible to draw any conclusions concerning the verb *zauważyć* ‘to notice’ since there are not enough data to discuss *zdać sobie sprawę* ‘to realise’ or *wziąć pod uwagę* ‘to take into consideration’. However, the fact that there is no instance of a subjunctive complement with this group of predicates is, in itself, telling. The same situation applies to emotive-factive verbs, as there are only enough tokens of *cieszyć się* ‘to rejoice’ for it to be taken into consideration. Yet, the indicative seems to be the only option here. Only when it comes to dubitative, any evidence of a double complementation pattern emerges, especially in the case of *wątpić* ‘to doubt’, which is more prone to take subjunctive complements than indicative ones. The only group that shows a clear preference for the subjunctive mood is the group of imperative predicates, which is exactly as expected.

Conclusion

To conclude, there is a continuum of subjunctive triggering predicates; yet, the exact scale differs from language to language. Spanish and Polish coincide in that the class that shows the strongest preference for the subjunctive mood is the class of imperative verbs. There is much variation concerning comment verbs. In Polish, the results of both studies suggest that subjunctive complements are by large disallowed. In Spanish, both subjunctive and indicative mood can be used after comment predicates. Yet, the subjunctive is the preferred option. Interestingly, the subjunctive is triggered by dubitative predicates both in Spanish and Polish, but in Spanish, it is

obligatory, while in Polish, it can alternate with the indicative, they carry a different meaning, though. All in all, it is visible that the distribution of the subjunctive mood follows certain patterns and there is a scale of predicates that select for this mood. Yet, not every language restores to it in all environments in which the semantic requirements for the subjunctive to appear are met.

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Abstract

The subjunctive mood has often been deemed to be limited only to languages that have a distinct subjunctive paradigm. Given such assumptions, this mood could not appear in languages like Polish due to its absence of a separate morphological ending for this mood. However, the Polish construction involving the complex complementizer “żeby” and the *l*-participle has comparable semantic and morphosyntactic properties to the Spanish subjunctive mood. This construction appears almost exclusively in subordinate clauses, displays a lack of coreference between subjects, and is temporally defective. Moreover, it can be found after the same types of predicates that trigger the subjunctive mood in the Romance languages. Therefore, this article aims to demonstrate that it is possible to suppose the existence of a subjunctive construction in Polish. This goal is achieved based on the data obtained through a corpus study and a subsequent grammaticality judgment test.

Typy predykatów i wybór trybu w polskich zdaniach dopełnieniowych – badanie empiryczne

Abstrakt

Często zakłada się, że występowanie trybu łączącego jest ograniczone tylko do języków, które mają osobny paradygmat odmian dla tego trybu. Takie założenia sprawiają, że tryb łączący nie może pojawić się w językach takich jak język polski ze względu na brak osobnych końcówek morfologicznych. Jednakże polska konstrukcja, która składa się ze spójnika zdaniowego *żeby* oraz imiesłowu przeszłego, wykazuje właściwości semantyczne oraz morfoskładniowe podobne do tych zaobserwowanych dla hiszpańskiego trybu łączącego. Konstrukcja ta pojawia się prawie wyłącznie w zdaniach podrzędnych, nie pozwala na koreferencyjność podmiotów, a także jest defektywna pod względem czasowym. Ponadto możemy ją znaleźć po tych samych typach predykatów, po których występuje tryb łączący w języku hiszpańskim. Z tego względu celem tego artykułu jest pokazanie, że można założyć istnienie konstrukcji koniunktywnej w języku polskim. To założenie potwierdzają dane uzyskane w wyniku badania korpusowego oraz testu gramatyczności.