

Polish nominativeless constructions with dative Experiencers: Form, meaning and structure

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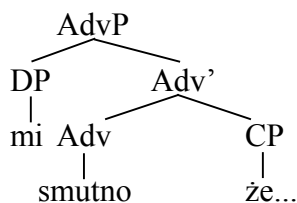
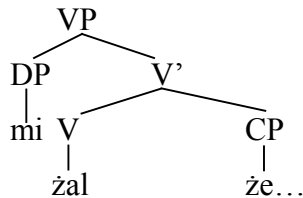
The paper addresses the question of the interplay between the morphosyntactic concept of case and the semantic notion of theta role on the basis of so-called nominativeless constructions with dative Experiencers in Polish (see e.g. Wolińska 1978, Śpiewak 2000). Another vital and closely related problem scrutinized here involves the mapping of the Experiencer theta role onto syntactic functions, such as Subject or Object (cf. Zaenen, Maling and Thráinsson 1985, Belletti and Rizzi 1988, Rozwadowska 1992, Landau 2005). Still another issue examined in this paper concerns the interpretation of structures with psych-predicates containing an Experiencer in the dative (see e.g. Wierzbicka 1988, Dąbrowska 1997). An attempt is made to shed some new light onto these fields of inquiry by investigating the morphology, syntax and semantics of the construction under scrutiny. By relying on a variety of theoretical frameworks, including traditional grammar as well as the most recent generative model, such as the Minimalist Program, this investigation is meant to produce a holistic picture of nominativeless structures with dative Experiencers in Polish.

First a brief overview is offered of what theta roles can be borne by dative arguments and of how the role of Experiencer can be realized in Polish. Afterwards, a morphological analysis of dative forms is carried out, followed by an examination of their semantics. The major claim proposed in this context is that dative Experiencers with psych-predicates in Polish represent mental locations (cf. Jackendoff 1990, Brandt 2003, Landau 2005). Finally, the syntax of the construction is subjected to a detailed analysis. The syntactic analysis focuses on dative Experiencers found with predicative adverbs such as *smutno* ‘sadly’ and items like *żal* ‘pity’, *wstyd* ‘shame’, etc. (cf. sentences (1) and (2) below). No thorough syntactic analysis of such structures has been offered in the literature so far and the existing analyses normally subsume them under some type of subjectless construction (cf. Wolińska 1978, Śpiewak 2000, among others). First of all, we argue that dative DPs, despite bearing some resemblance to subjects, are different from subjects in many important aspects, such as their resistance to Raising, their failure to trigger the conjunction reduction, their insensitivity to the genitive of negation and their occurrence with resumptive pronouns in co-relatives. All these differences make us conclude that dative Experiencers in Polish should not be treated as subjects. Then, we examine the categorial status of the predicates with which they co-occur. We argue that predicative adverbs represent a special class of adverbs, which unlike ordinary adverbs, project argument structure. Since items like *żal* ‘pity’, *wstyd* ‘shame’, etc., can be modified by adverbs and can take the same range of arguments as their verbal equivalents, such as *żałować* ‘regret’ and *wstydzić się* ‘feel shame’, they are classed as verbs. Dative Experiencers co-occurring with these two classes of predicates are argued, contra Tajsner (1990), not to function as adjuncts, but are shown to be true arguments, which occupy the specifier of either a VP or AdvP (cf. (3) below). From this position they can be moved, not to Spec, TP, a canonical subject position, but to a TP-adjoined position. This movement is called Topicalisation and is argued to be triggered by the need to disambiguate different information loads. Since dative Experiencers never appear in Spec, TP, we conclude that they cannot function as quirky subjects, unlike the corresponding DPs in Icelandic or Russian (see e.g. Preslar 1998, Markman 2002, Farrell 2005). As regards the canonical subject position, it is suggested that it can be either filled with expletive *pro* if the EPP is operative in Polish, or otherwise it is not projected at all.

- (1) Jest jej smutno, że nie zdała egzaminu.
 is her-DAT sad-adv. that not passed exam
 ‘She is sad that she has not passed the exam.’

- (2) Jest jej żal/wstyd, że nie zdała egzaminu.
 is her-DAT pity/shame that not passed exam
 ‘She feels sorry/ashamed that she has not passed the exam.’

(3)



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