

SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES BETWEEN NOTIONAL
PASSIVE SENTENCES IN ENGLISH AND IN POLISH

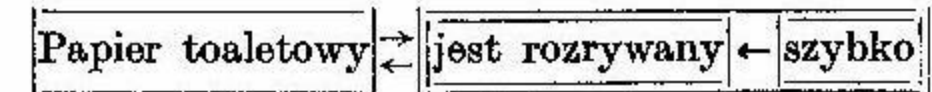
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The transformational contrastive description of Polish and English notional passive that is proposed by A. Wołczyńska-Sudół does not take into account Polish sentences that can be doubly interpreted. It seems that the relationships between the elements of the following Polish sentence:

Papier toaletowy jest rozrywany szybko

are possible to represent in two diagrams which have been proposed by Wołczyńska-Sudół (1977 : 156—7). First, it is an agentless formal passive construction,



second, it is a notional passive one



Let us note that if the relationships between the elements of the sentence are as in the second case, the verb *rozrywać* means only 'buy quickly'. If the relationships are as in the first case, the verb has an etymological meaning.

In addition, Wołczyńska-Sudół proposes different deep structures for Polish and English passive sentences, as she introduces the following phrase rules:

E PS 3 VP → V

P PS 3 VP → V_{rfi}¹

¹ Wołczyńska-Sudół formulates a third, more "extensive" phrase rule: E PS 3 VP → V(psv)

P PS 3 VP → V $\begin{pmatrix} \text{rfi} \\ \text{psv} \end{pmatrix}$

However, there is no passive element in the deep structure of the notional passive sentence.

In this paper I shall try to construct identical deep structures for the Polish and English notional passive sentence. They contain the same phrase rule:

EP PS 3 VP \rightarrow V NP

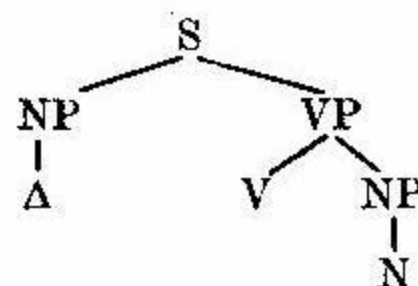
According to this, the relevant fragment of the base component should be as follows:

EP PS 1 S \rightarrow NP VP

EP PS 2 NP \rightarrow $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \Delta \\ N \end{array} \right.$

EP PS 3 VP \rightarrow V NP

It may be represented in a phrase marker² which will also be the propositional deep structure of notional passive sentences:



(where the symbol Δ represents an unlexicalized NP).

The descriptions of Polish and English notional passive sentences should be different in the transformational component (and in the lexicon). The following transformational rule is postulated for English:

ET 1 NP₁ V NP₂ \Rightarrow NP₂ V³
condition: NP₁ = Δ

It is an obligatory transformation.

It seems that in Polish the situation is more complex. There are the following transformational rules there:

PT 1 NP₁ V NP₂ \Rightarrow NP₂ V
condition: NP₁ = Δ

PT 2 NP V \Rightarrow NP Vpsv
condition: V is transitive

PT 3 NP V \Rightarrow NP Vrf⁴

² Horn (1977) has proposed the deep structure that is proposed in this paper but he made two mistakes:

a) he proposed a base rule V \rightarrow Vsię

b) he did not differentiate the notional passive from the formal one.

³ ET 1 (or PT 1) is not a passive transformation, because we believe that there is no such rule in grammar; see below.

⁴ The symbol Vrf is not the equivalent of the term "reflexive verb", but of the term "a verb that is united with się".

condition: V is intransitive

V is united with się

PT 4 NP Vpsv \Rightarrow NP Vrf

condition: V is united with się

All the transformations are obligatory. If the verb is intransitive and is not united with się, the structure undergoes only PT 1. If the verb is intransitive but is united with się, the structure undergoes PT 1, thereafter PT 3. If the verb is both transitive and united with się, the structure undergoes in succession PT 1, PT 2, PT 4.

Let us examine some sentences (for the most part adopted from Wolczyńska-Sudól).

ES 1 The mechanic stopped the train.

ES 2 The train was stopped by the mechanic.

ES 3 The train was stopped.

ES 4 The train stopped.

ES 5 *The train stopped by the mechanic.

PS 1 Zupa smakuje dobrze.

PS 2 Papier toaletowy jest rozrywany szybko ...

a) ... przez Janka.

b) ... przez to, że go brakuje.

PS 3 Papier toaletowy rozrywa się szybko ...

a) ... *przez Janka.⁵

b) ... przez to, że jest delikatny.

PS 4 Książka rozchodzi się szybko.

PS 5 Pociąg zatrzymał się.

PS 6 Pociąg został zatrzymany.

PS 7 *Pociąg zatrzymał się przez maszynistę.

There are three types of sentences here:

a) active (ES 1),

b) formal passive (ES 2, ES 3, PS 2 — the first meaning, PS 2a, PS 6).

c) notional passive (ES 4, PS 1, PS 2 — the second meaning, PS 2b, PS 3, PS 3b, PS 4, PS 5).

PS 2 is ambiguous (see above): first, it is considered to be a formal passive without an agent when the verb *rozrywać* has an etymological meaning; secondly, it is a notional passive when the verb means 'buy quickly'. If in the PS 2 an agent appears (as in PS 2a), the sentence has only a formal passive meaning. PS 2b perhaps has only a notional passive meaning. In the PS 3,

⁵ If the word *Janek* is treated as a cause (not as the agent) the semi-sentence PS 3a (and, under similar conditions, PS 7, too) will be unequivocally a notional passive sentence. The verb *rozrywać* will have only the etymological meaning.

which is unequivocally a notional passive sentence, the verb *rozrywać* has only an etymological meaning, because it is not united with *się* in the meaning 'buy quickly'.

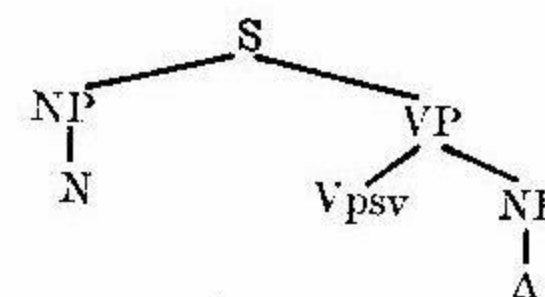
ES 4 and PS 1 have in their derivations ET 1 and PT 1, respectively (both transformations are of the same form). ET 1 is the only relevant transformational rule for English, whereas Polish has four, but the underlying structure of PS 1 does not undergo the remaining transformations because the verb *smakować* is not transitive and is not united with *się*, either. In the case of verbs like *smakować*, Wolezyńska-Sudół proposes to include in the lexicon a new sort of constraint. The present description need not postulate this constant, because the conditions of the remaining transformations are not met and the transformations are not applied. The underlying structure of PS 2 (in the notional passive sense) undergoes PT 1, later PT 2; it does not undergo PT 4, because the verb *rozrywać* in the meaning 'buy quickly' is transitive but is not united with *się*. The structures of PS 3 and PS 5 undergo in succession PT 1, PT 2 and PT 4, as the verbs *rozrywać* (in the etymological meaning) and *zatrzymać* are both transitive and united with *się*.

The sentences that have a verb that is not united with *się* can be doubly interpreted. If in the deep structure of a notional passive sentence there is a verb that is united with *się*, PT 4 is obligatory. A sentence that has in its derivation history only PT 1 and PT 2 and a verb which is not united with *się* is only formally passive. A notional passive sentence should differ from a formal passive one, if that is possible; in the case of PS 2 it is not possible.

It seems that the deep structure of notional passive sentences that is proposed in this paper could be universal. This hypothesis is confirmed by other Indo-European languages. The differences are in the transformational and lexical components. Some languages perhaps do not have the transformations that are proposed; some languages may have other rules in addition to the ones given here. In languages that have a structure of notional-passive voice like that in Polish (e.g., the Slavic languages, Spanish, Italian) the differences will concern the arrangement of the transformations, their conditions, etc. The hypothesis, however, must still be verified and so it is necessary to do further detailed contrastive research.

In order to avoid methodological misunderstandings let us specify our theoretical assumptions:

A) It seems that there is no passivisation in the grammar of natural languages, as formal passive sentences have a passive deep structure. It is impossible to identify a notional passive sentence with a formal passive one without an agent (ES 3, PS 2 in the second meaning, PS 6), because the former has a deep structure different from the latter. The deep structure of formal passive sentences without an agent is as follows:



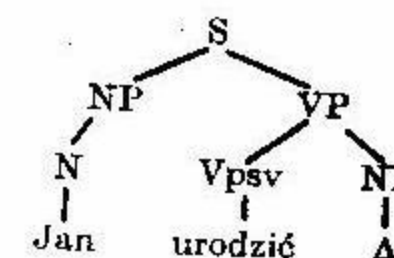
There are two possible explanations of the ungrammaticality of ES 5, PS 3a, PS 7:

- it may be explained in the deep structure of notional passive sentences,
- it may be explained in the deep structure of formal passive sentences.

The sentences are a result of contamination of notional and formal passive.⁶

B) We are not adherents of a transformational incorporation of pronouns, but we think that there is a phrase rule like the following:

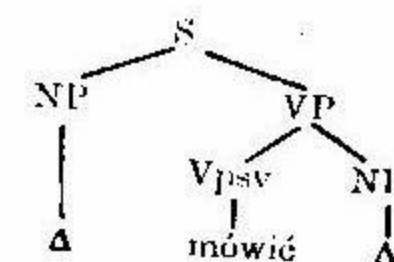
⁶ The contamination is a frequently occurring mistake of performance, because some formal passive sentences without an agent may appear in the form uniting with *się* (Szlifersztajnowa 1968); for instance, the sentence *Jan urodził się*, which has a deep structure like this



undergoes the following transformations:

- $$NP_1 Vpsv NP_2 \Rightarrow NP_1 Vpsv$$
- condition: $NP_2 = \Delta$
- $$NP Vpsv \Rightarrow NP Vrfi$$
- condition: V is united with *się*

It seems that sentences that are made up only of the verb+*się*, e.g., *Mówi się*, are formal passive sentences, too. The underlying structure is as follows:



It undergoes these transformations:

- $$NP_1 Vpsv NP_2 \Rightarrow Vpsv$$
- condition: $NP_1, NP_2 = \Delta$
- $$Vpsv \Rightarrow Vrfi$$
- condition: V is united with *się*

This is another argument in favour of the present description of notional passive sentences.

$$\text{NP} \rightarrow \left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{N} \\ \text{Pron} \end{array} \right\}$$

It seems, however, that *się* performs two functions:

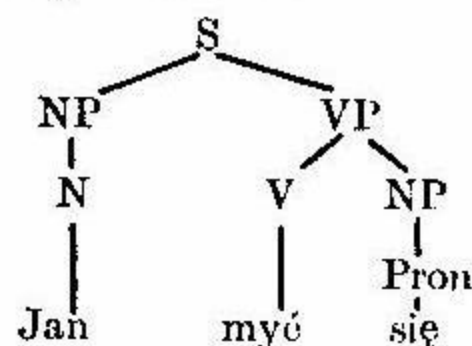
a) it may be a reflexive pronoun and it is inflected (see Szober 1953 : 228 and Saloni 1975),

b) it may be a component of the verb.⁷

Się in the first function is incorporated in the deep structure, e.g., in the sentence PS 8:

PS 8 Jan myje się

which has the following deep structure:



In the surface structure *się* of this kind has an alternative form *siebie* (Szober 1953 : 325) and it can be used in oblique cases, e.g.

PS 9 Jan myje siebie.

PS 10 Jan mówi o sobie.

PS 8, PS 9 and PS 10 are sentences in the so-called reflexive voice in that *się* is co-ordinated with a verb. In the notional passive, *się* always functions in the verb component (the verb is united with *się*). This is why *się* need not appear in the deep structure of notional passive sentences in Polish.

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⁷ The multifunctionality of *się*, has been observed by Wilczewska (1966), who has even attempted to treat it as a formative morpheme of some verbs.