

# LEXICAL REALIZATION OF BENEFACTIVE AND BENEFICIARY IN POLISH AND ENGLISH

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## 0. INTRODUCTION

Benefactive is sometimes defined as a verbal aspect expressing that the action or state denoted by the verb is performed or brought about by someone for his own benefit or that of another person.

He bought (himself) a car  
Kupił (sobie) samochód  
He found (himself) a perfect girl  
Znalazł (sobie) doskonałą dziewczynę  
The policeman gave Tom a ticket  
Policjant dał Tomkowi mandat

The reader will please notice that benefits are relative and must be considered from the point of view of pragmatics. Each cloud has its silver lining and only time will tell whether the ticket Tom got should be construed as a positive benefit or a negative benefit (a loss).

The above definition is quite incomplete because it does not account for situations where the deep structure Benefactive case is not determined by semantic features in the verb but rather by "the nature of the noun's participation in the state, process, or action expressed by the verb" (Cook 1972 : 16). Usually, these situations are syntactically marked in the surface structure by a preposition, most commonly *for* and *dla*.

Any description of the lexical realizations of Benefactive must, therefore, include at least both categories: semantically intrinsic benefactives and syntactically marked ones. The criteria used in my classification of intrinsic

verbal benefactives and semantico-syntactic benefactives are based on definitions given by Chafe (1970) and by Brown (1973). Most examples of structures are borrowed from these two authors and from Hill (1968) as well as Wood (1967).

## 1. DEFINITIONS

### 1.1. Intrinsic benefactives

Chafe (1970 : 147 ff) distinguishes three basic types of intrinsically benefactive English verbs describing benefactive situations in which someone (called beneficiary) benefits from whatever is communicated by the rest of the sentence. All these verbs are obligatorily accompanied by the beneficiary NP which is, usually, [+animate] and appears in the surface structure as a subject in the absence of any agent, as in 1.1.1. and 1.1.2., or with another function and syntactic order when an agent is present as in 1.1.3.

1.1.1. Verbs with prime features including [+state, +benefactive]  $V_+$  [-Bj, O] (Cook 1972 : 18)

Tom has (or Tom's got) the tickets  
Tomek ma bilety

where Tom is in the transitory possession of something (the tickets);

Tom has (or Tom's got) a convertible  
Tomek ma kabriolet

where Tom is in the non transitory possession of something (a convertible), provided he is not a car dealer (Radden 1976)

Tom owns a convertible  
Tomek posiada kabriolet

where something (a convertible) is the private property of Tom.

1.1.2. Verbs with prime features including [+process, +benefactive]  $V^+[-B, O]$  (Cook 1972),

Tom lost (found, won) the tickets  
Tomek zgubił (znalazł, wygrał) bilety

where an event took place introducing a change in the disposition of the patient (tickets). Tom has ceased (come) to be in the transitory possession of the tickets.

Tom acquired (sold) a convertible  
Tomek nabył (sprzedał) kabriolet

where Tom has come (ceased) to be in the transitory possession of a convertible. In both cases Tom is the beneficiary of the process.

1.1.3. Verbs with prime features including:  
[+action, +process, +benefactive]  $V_+[-A, B, O]$  (Cook 1972 : id)

Mary sent (gave) Tom the tickets  
Maria posłała (dała) Tomkowi bilety

where Tom comes to be in the transitory possession of the tickets benefiting from Mary's action

Mary bought (sold) Tom a convertible  
Maria kupiła (sprzedała) Tomkowi kabriolet

where likewise Tom benefits from Mary's action and comes to be in the non transitory possession of a convertible.

1.1.4. Verbs with prime features including: [+action, +benefactive]  $V_+[-A, B]$ .

Although Chafe placed upon benefactive verb types the restriction that "only nonaction verbs are intrinsically benefactive" (Chafe 1970 : 146), Cook has demonstrated the existence of this type of intrinsic benefactive. I have marked it with an asterisk because its nature is quite different from the other three types as it contains verbs which are usually derived from 1.1.3. through lexicalization of [O] into the verb and its deletion (Cook 1972 : 24). This transformation appears language bound and more frequent in English than in Polish.

John bribed the waiter  
Jan przekupił urzędnika

but

John tipped the waiter  
Jan dał kelnerowi napiwek.

The official and the waiter benefit from John's actions and come to be in the possession of a bribe and a tip respectively. These situations are similar to those expressed in 1.1.3.

Marginal examples for this type were given to me by Radden (1976):

Mary gave the flowers fresh water  
Mary watered the flowers

and

Mary gave the car a new coat of paint  
Mary painted the car  
Maria wymalowała samochód

where the flowers and the car probably benefit from Mary's actions but, according to Chafe's (my 1.1.) and Brown's (my 1.3.) definitions, would be patients rather than beneficiaries.

### 1.2. Semantico-syntactic benefactives

In addition to intrinsic benefactives, it appears possible to have benefactive expressions containing a verb which is not intrinsically benefactive.

Jane wrote Christina a letter

Jasia napisała Krystynie list

where Christina benefits from Jane's action. The prime features of the main verbs appearing in this type of construction include: [+action, ±process]. The expression becomes semantically and syntactically benefactive whenever an optional beneficiary NP is added. In the example above, the beneficiary shows up as a noun directly following the verb, it could also appear "as a sentence-final noun preceded by the preposition *for*" (Chafe 1970 : 151).

Jane wrote a letter for Christina

Jasia napisała list dla Krystyny.

As we shall see, other prepositions may also be used with some verbs. It seems that this post prepositional position is preferred for emphatic or otherwise marked statements.

### 1.3. Datives and benefactives

In *The case for case* (1968 : 24) Fillmore defined the dative more or less as the animate being affected by the state or action identified by the verb. This definition has shown to be inadequate to describe fundamental differences among sentences containing a patient, an experiencer or a beneficiary.

Brown (1973 : 8) has summarized the basic distinctions among these three cases. As I have used his definition of beneficiary to decide which of the sentences I analyzed constitute good examples of benefactive constructions, I shall quote him:

	Definition	Examples
Patient	Someone or something either in a given or suffering a change of state	<i>The wood is dry.</i> <i>John murdered Bill.</i> (Brown 1973 : 133)
Experiencer	Someone having a given experience or mental disposition	<i>Tom saw the snake.</i> <i>Tom wanted a drink.</i>
Beneficiary	Someone who profits from a state or process including possession.	<i>Mary has a convertible.</i> <i>Tom bought Mary a car.</i>

It becomes clear that all beneficiaries are datives but not all datives are beneficiaries. That is where our problem begins. Already Chafe (1970 : 148) stated that there are some differences in the semantic functions of the experiencer and the beneficiary although both relations may be represented as datives in surface configurations. Seuren (1973 : 36) after having a long list of verbs taking two complements in French or English

ex: Enseigner le français à l'étudiant  
Teach French to the student

equates deep structures object and beneficiary with surface structure accusative respectively.

Polish (and some English) surface structures are often ambiguous whenever the beneficiary NP follows the verb directly because dative is used and thus:

Jasia napisała Krystynie list  
Jane wrote Christina a letter

means only

Jane sent a letter to Christina  
Jasia posłała list do Krystyny

although we still don't know whom the letter was intended for (for Christina), for Jane herself or some third party).

## 2. CLASSIFICATION

Since surface structures appearing in the dative may represent a patient, an experiencer or a beneficiary, we must discover their semantic prime features in order to distinguish among the three possible cases. This is not always easy to do and some heuristic questions may prove very useful. Based on Brown's definitions (my 1.3.), the following questions helped me to classify my 150 sample sentences:

for patients: What (new) inherent characteristic does the NP exhibit?

for experiencers: What happened to the NP? What influence does he (she) undergo? How does the NP feel?

for beneficiaries: Who profits from a particular voluntary action? Who becomes (is) the possessor? Who ceases to possess?<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Brown (1973 : 322) states that "it makes sense to say of a voluntary action that it was done for someone other (benefactive), but it does not make sense to speak so of an involuntary action

*He eats spinach for his mother's sake but not  
He likes spinach for his mother's sake".*

- I thus discovered 31 utterances with a patient  
 (Charlie has taken to drink, I fear  
 Obawiam się, że Karolek zaczął pić)  
 25 with an experiencer (I am not keen on cold mutton  
 Nie mam ochoty na zimną baraninę)  
 35 with an intrinsic benefactive and 59 semantico-syntactically benefactive.

### 2.1. Intrinsic benefactives

As seen above (1.1.) all intrinsically benefactive utterances obligatorily contain a verb describing benefactive situations. Most of these verbs can be replaced by have, get (come to have) or cause to have (cf. Niedzielski 1976: tables 2 and 3).

#### 2.1.1. Stative

These are [+state, +benefactive] verbs.

They answer the heuristic question: Who is the possessor?

In addition to the example quoted in 1.1.1., we find

He holds (has) a checking account in this bank.

Posiada (ma) konto czekowe w tym banku.

I keep (have) two horses on my farm.

Trzymam (mam) dwa konie na swojej farmie.

#### 2.1.2. Dynamic

With the meaning of 'come to have', these are [+process, +benefactive] verbs.

They answer the heuristic question: Who becomes the possessor? In addition to the examples quoted in 1.1.2., we may list obtain, conquer, procure, secure, catch, beget, gain, take and steal, corresponding to wydobyć, zdobyć, wy-starać się, zapewnić sobie, złapać, porodzić, zyskać, wziąć, ukraść. We may add the following verbs answering the heuristic question: Who profits from a particular voluntary action? — benefit by, benefit from, learn, study and korzystać z, uczyć się, studiować.

#### 2.1.3. Causative

With the meaning of 'cause to have', these verbs are essentially [+process, +action, +benefactive].

They answer the heuristic question: Does anyone profit from a particular voluntary action? To the examples quoted in 1.1.1., we may add provide, and zaopatrzyć, pożyczyc.

The director provided us with enough liquor for a whole week.

Dyrektor zaopatrzył nas w wódkę na cały tydzień.

### 2.2. Semantico-syntactic benefactives

Our analysis of 59 benefactive expressions containing a beneficiary but no intrinsically benefactive verb revealed two disturbing facts:

a. *for* (*dla*) is not the only preposition used to introduce the beneficiary; on the other hand it has various other functions,<sup>2</sup>

b. the beneficiary is not always expressed through a surface structure dative. This surface structure case seems to depend on the preposition introducing it; in turn, this preposition seems to depend on some intrinsic features of the verb to which it is added. However, whenever the beneficiary follows the verb directly without any preposition, as it may happen with most intrinsic benefactives, the case is dative.

Table I gives an indication of the relative frequency and distribution of the various English prepositions and their Polish translations as found in our example sentences. Of course, I do not claim that this sample is large enough to be valid for an absolute generalization but it does offer an insight into general trends.

	dla	na	za	do	w	u	verb	ku	o
	30	10	7	3	3	2	2	1	1
for 37	 								
to 15									
(be) in +NI 4									
ON (+N) 3									

#### 2.2.1. FOR

About two thirds of our sample sentences contain the preposition *for* and in the great majority of cases the Polish translation uses *dla*. This is no surprise since most linguists and dictionary makers give as first definition

<sup>2</sup> A vivid illustration of the complexity of the question is the example of some prepositions used after or with the noun *benefit*. "When *benefit* is used as a noun, the following are the chief prepositional constructions in which it occurs: confer a benefit on someone; derive benefit from something; do something for the benefit of a person — or for someone's benefit; be of benefit to someone; be to one's benefit ("It would not be to my benefit to do that"); be in benefit; be out of benefit. In the last two *benefit* is used in a special sense — that of entitlement to draw money from a club, society, fund, etc., in times of sickness or unemployment. A person is said to be in benefit when he fulfils the necessary conditions that entitle him to the benefit, and out of benefit when he does not fulfil them. "Wood 1967: 137 — 138).

'to convey the idea of benefit or advantage, or reverse' (Wood 1967: 33) or to introduce the person (thing which receives) suffers something or gets the benefit of something (Hill 1968: 61).

#### 2.2.1.1. FOR=DLA

In general, *for* is used to introduce a beneficiary which is explicitly [+animate, +direct instigator]. The latter feature means that the beneficiary initiates the action or triggers the reaction.

Whom do you work for?

Dla kogo pracujesz?

"He is a selfish, uncouth fellow, who has no respect for anyone"  
(Wood 1967: 448)

To egoista, nieokrzesany typ, który nie ma żadnego szacunku dla nikogo

In all semantico syntactic benefactive sentences containing *for* translated as *dla*, it would seem that, in addition to the features indicated above, the beneficiary, is [+intention]. This feature is particularly clear in a sentence like:

Do it for the sake of your family

Zrób to dla dobra twojej rodziny

If the agent and the beneficiary are identical, the construction is semantically and syntactically reflexive.

ex: I work for myself

Pracuję dla siebie

The following sentence probably exhibits all the above mentioned features best:

I shave myself for my wife

Golę się dla (swojej) żony

In addition, it suggests that there may be more than one beneficiary for a single benefactive action.

Since reflexivization appears possible with all types of semantico syntactic benefactives, I shall not mention it any longer unless it exhibits some special traits.

Whenever the beneficiary has at least one feature differing from those stated above, another preposition is used in Polish even when English uses *for*. Generally, it is a directional preposition, which points to the beneficiary.

#### 2.2.1.2. FOR=DLA

I work only for my children

Pracuję tylko dla dzieci

Vote for Wilson

Głosuj na Wilsona

I have learnt some very good exercises for the legs

Nauczyłem się paru doskonałych ćwiczeń na nogi.

The beneficiary is [+animate] but it may be only an inalienable possession of a living being. When it is [+human] it is also indirect [+instigator] and/or indirect [+beneficiary].

#### 2.2.1.3. FOR=ZA

I work for (instead of) my wife

Pracuję za żonę

I cannot speak for others

Nie mogę mówić za innych

The main difference between *na* and *za* seems to lie in the fact that, generally, *za* is used when some kind of substitution takes place — usually, that of the agent for the beneficiary who thus benefits indirectly from the action of the agent. Quite often, the beneficiary is [−concrete] but [+animate] through personification:

They gave their lives for their country

Oddali życie za ojczyznę

Walczymy za wolność waszą i naszą

Let us fight for our liberty, yours and ours.

#### 2.2.1.4. FOR=DO

I have a question for you

Mam pytanie do ciebie

The objective is [+abstract] The action is intended for someone (*for*) and addressed to him (*do*).

#### 2.2.1.5. FOR=U, W

He used to play for Tottenham Hotspur

On grywał w (dla) Tottenham Hotspur

My father worked for an elderly bookseller

Mój ojciec pracował u (dla) starszego księgarza

Although *dla* would generally be grammatical, *w*, *u*, are used in sentences denoting or implying a location.

#### 2.2.1.6. FOR=KU

The Lord created Eve out of Adam's rib for his pleasure

Stworzył Pan Bóg Ewę z kości, Adamowi ku radości

The beneficiary includes a mental disposition, or feeling, which is the destina-

tion of the action. While *do* implies that the goal is reached, *ku* considers the movement toward the goal, which might never be reached.

#### 2.2.1.7. FOR=O

Who will provide for her now that her father is dead?  
Kto będzie się o nią troszczył, kiedy umarł jej ojciec?

This sample shows that other prepositions may be used in Polish but actually it belongs to the class of intrinsic benefactives: (provide for, *troszczyć się*) described under 1.1.4.

#### 2.2.2. TO

The second most widely used preposition to introduce a beneficiary in English is *to*. Accordingly, some of the definitions I have found are almost identical with those listed under *for*. The only differences that Hill (1968 : 61 & 165) reports are syntactic. While *for* may be used in at least six different types of constructions, *to*, introducing a beneficiary, may be used only in two patterns  $N_1-P_xN_2$  or  $Adj. - P_xN.$ <sup>3</sup>

It is a hindrance to progress  
To jest przeszkoda dla postępu  
He was very good to us  
Był dla nas bardzo dobry

It is probably easier to distinguish these two prepositions semantically as *to* emphasizes the aim or direction of the action (or process) while *for* stresses its intention.

#### 2.2.2.1. TO=DLA

Quite a number of English benefactive sentences containing *to* translate into Polish sentences with *dla*.

Youth should always show respect to old age  
Młodzież powinna zawsze okazywać szacunek dla starszych  
This book is available to everyone for reading it  
Ta książka jest dostępna do czytania dla każdego.  
He will be a great help to you  
Będzie wielką pomocą dla ciebie

We may observe some general trends, some of which have already been reported by Wood (1967 : 78 & 80). The adjectives concerned in structures like

<sup>3</sup> Hill (1968 : 165) states that "the meaning is that the N after the P gets the benefit of  $N_1/Adj$ , or suffers the bad effects of the latter; e.g. in *It is a hindrance to progress*, progress ( $N_2$ ) suffers the bad effects of the hindrance ( $N_1$ ); and in *He was very good to us*, we (N) get the benefit of the goodness (the nominal idea contained in the Adj.)".

She was always kind to children  
Była zawsze uprzejma dla dzieci

generally describe an attitude or a conduct *towards* the beneficiary. This beneficiary is [+animate] (or personified), [-direct instigator], [+direction] (or aim). Quite often, it is found after an intrinsically benefactive verb like *give*.

#### 2.2.2.2. TO=NA

Another large area of correspondence is that found between *to* and *na*.

I will say nothing to the detriment of my colleagues  
Nie powiem nic na szkodę kolegów  
He took off his hat to the ladies  
Zdjął kapelusz na cześć pań

The beneficiary is made up of a N+its nominalized attribute, the preposition directly introduces the NP's characteristic and the possessing NP follows; in English the characteristic may be elided. Thus, like in 2.2.1.2., we have an indirect beneficiary. Often, the agent's action is directed towards the realization of a wish.

Let us drink to the health of the bride  
Wypijmy za zdrowie panny młodej

#### 2.2.2.3. TO=ZA

Similar semantic features may be observed in

Let us drink to the success of your voyage  
Wypijmy za sukces twojej podróży

One possible difference is that the [+animate] beneficiary is not directly expressed, but rather one of his activities which, on the surface, substitutes for it.

#### 2.2.2.4. TO=DO

Jane wrote a letter to Christina  
Jasia napisała list do Krystyny

The correspondence between Polish and English is perfect here; both prepositions have as their basic meaning 'in the direction of'. They point to the person to which the activity is directed. Destination takes precedence over intention which may actually be totally unimportant if the letter Christina receives is not for her at all.

Most of those present were in favour of the proposal  
Większość z obecnych były za propozycją  
He is not in favour with the powers that be  
On nie ma względów u obecnych władz

His brother came in his stead  
 Jego brat przyszedł za niego  
 I write this on behalf of my assistant  
 Piszę to na rzecz mojego asystenta

In most benefactive utterances containing *in* this *in* is followed by an abstract noun expressing an attitude of mind intending to help or hurt the beneficiary. Quite often this prepositional phrase is preceded by the verb *be* paralleling *to be for*. In Polish, generally, some locative preposition is used to indicate the position of the agent in relation to the beneficiary.

#### 2.2.4. ON (+N)

He is just a scrounger, who lives on other people  
 To jest sknera, który żeruje na innych

This is probably a metaphoric usage of *on*, reminding of predators on their preys.

I am writing on behalf of my client  
 Piszę w obronie mojego klienta

This should actually be in behalf of (2.2.1.) but a confusion seems to exist in many speakers' mind. Originally, *on behalf of* meant only *on the side of*.

#### 2.3. Emphatic benefactives

Both English and Polish seem to use the same device to emphasize the feature of benefactive. Of course, there are differences in its distribution between the two languages.

##### 2.3.1. Intrinsic benefactives

###### 2.3.1.1. State benefactives

Since state benefactives are characterized in 1.1.1. with the features  $V_+[-B_s, O]$ , it should be clear why it is possible to emphasize  $B_s$  only. The most frequent device in English is to appose the appropriate reflexive pronoun next to the beneficiary; in Polish, the appropriate form of *sam* is preposed to the beneficiary.

Tom, himself, owns a convertible  
 Sam Tomek posiada kabriolet

###### 2.3.1.2. Process benefactives

The same devices are used as for state benefactives:

Tom, himself, lost the tickets  
 Sam Tomek zgubił bilety

Although considered substandard, structures like

? I found me a house

are more and more frequent in US English and must be noted.

#### 2.3.1.1. Process-Action benefactives

He bought a car  
 Kupił samochód

versus

He bought himself a car  
 Kupił sobie samochód

The reflexive structure emphasizes the [+beneficiary] feature of *he* which is also [+agent]. The dual function of *he* is already present in the non reflexive structure but it could pass unnoticed.

The same devices are used as for state benefactives and process benefactives:

John bribed the officials themselves  
 Jan przekupił samych urzędników

Note that for all three groups in most cases where *sam* is used it is possible and sometimes clearer to use *nawet*.

#### 2.3.2. Semantico-syntactic benefactives

##### 2.3.2.1. Stative

As semantico syntactic benefactives imply an action (or possibly a process), this set will remain empty for the time being (until further research).

##### 2.3.2.2. Dynamic (cf. 2.1.2.)

Let everyone speak for himself  
 Niech każdy mówi za siebie  
 I am washing (myself) a shirt  
 Piorę (sobie) koszulę

According to Lyons (1971: 374), "the reflexive implication in sentences like this might be described as 'benefactive' (for the benefit of, in the interest of)".

It is worthwhile to note that with pseudo-intransitive benefactive verbs, which are semantically reflexive, the emphatic expressions do not use full verbal structure (eg. to shave oneself, to dress oneself). The original reflexive marker remains deleted:

I am shaving by myself  
 Gole się sam  
 I am dressing by myself  
 Ubieram się sam

In Polish, a subgroup of this class exists. In a sentence like:

W czasie jazdy trzymać się uchwytu

(W czasie jazdy trzymać uchwyt)  
Please hold on to the rail

what is implied is something like: for your own good (dla twojego dobra).  
In all these sentences, the beneficiary is also the agent.

### 2.3.2.3. Excessive (Visan-Neuman 1972 : 126)

Two syntactic subgroups of excessive benefactives (actually malefactives) can be distinguished in their surface structures. Semantically, they are similar. They have the general meaning of damaging oneself by doing an action to excess. One subgroup prefixes the verb with the preposition *over*

He overate (himself)  
Przejadł się

The other subgroup follows the pattern

V<sub>[+action]</sub> + refl. + adj.<sub>[+inherent characteristic]</sub>

in English and, generally,

perfective verb + refl. + *do* + N

in Polish:

He shouted himself hoarse  
Zakrzyczał się do zachrypnięcia

### 2.3.2.4. Causative (cf. 2.1.3.)

He got himself hired  
Wynajął się do pracy

With the meaning 'He caused someone to hire him=He made someone give him a job', these sentences contain an ergative initiator: the unspecified hirer who is at the same time the object of the main causative predication: He caused someone... and the subject of the downgraded predication: someone hired him.

The non emphatic construction would just state:

He got hired  
Dostał pracę

It is dynamic, instead of causative, and corresponds to:

Someone hired him  
Ktoś dał mu pracę

It is an action-process benefactive with *he* as beneficiary.

## 3. CONCLUSION

Although no definite rules have been arrived at, some general trends have been observed:

3.1. Surface structure-dative often, but not always, represents a semantic benefactive; it is traditionally referred to as 'dative of interest'. Semantic prime features must then be established, especially to account for lexical realizations of various types of benefactive. Transforming the surface dative into its corresponding prepositional structure will help to determine these features and, consequently, will facilitate translation from one language into the other.

3.2. Whenever a verb is intrinsically benefactive, the corresponding underlying sentence is also benefactive.

3.3. When the verb is not intrinsically benefactive, the sentence may be made benefactive through the use of a special preposition.

3.4. The basic benefactive prepositions are *for* and *dla*. Some other prepositions, mostly locative, may be used; the most frequent being *to* and *na* or *za*. These 'locative' prepositions are usually directional and stress one of the prime features which may characterize a benefactive (where an action or process brings benefit, profit or loss to the beneficiary). The most basic of these prime features and the prepositions expressing them are summarized in the following table:

Semantico Syntactic Benefactives		
BENEFICIARY [+animate, ±direct instigator, +intention +direction...]/prep		
Basic	+Intention	+Direction
Distinctive	+Direct Instigator	+Direct Instigator
Feature	FOR	TO
Essential Specific Semantic Features		
DLA		DLA
NA	indirect beneficiary [±direct instigator]	NA
ZA	substitution	ZA
DO	approaching destination	
KU	tending toward destination	DO
U, W	location	

3.5. A surface structure reflexive may be used for purposes of emphasis with intrinsic benefactives or with semantico syntactic benefactives.



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