

Argument and Adjunct Nominals in Polish: Syntax, Semantics, Lexical Licensing

Polish noun phrases (NPs) typically occur in syntactic structures as subjects and objects. However, genitive, dative, accusative and instrumental NPs can also occur as adjuncts (Szober, 1969; Urbańczyk, 1978). An overview of morphological cases in Polish in the context of marking argument NPs (ArgNPs) and adjunct NPs (AdjNPs) is provided in (1).

Whereas the licensing of nominative-, locative- and vocative-marked NPs does not cause any problems for grammatical theories and is rather unspectacular due to the compatibility of their syntactico-semantic features in each syntactic context in which these NPs may occur, an adequate and particularly non-redundant modeling of genitive-, dative-, accusative-, and instrumental-marked nouns seems more challenging. Previous approaches to these NPs used as AdjNPs focus particularly on the aspects of case assignment. Emonds (1976), Bresnan and Grimshaw (1978) and McCawley (1988) treat AdjNPs as being embedded in a prepositional phrase headed by a null preposition assigning case to those NPs. Larson (1985) argues against such a position, assuming that AdjNPs are bare NPs headed by nouns which bear the case assigning feature specification [+F]. Jaworska (1986) suggests that English AdjNPs have no case at all. For Polish AdjNPs, she assumes a specification of the form [CASE, INST], [CASE, GEN], and [CASE, ACC] in the lexical entry of each noun that can head an AdjNP. This strategy, however, leads to redundancies in the lexicon. Kasper (1997) discusses semantico-combinatorial aspects of AdjNPs versus ArgNPs. The essential idea of his proposal is to distinguish the inherent meaning of a word or phrase from its uses in different constructions. According to this theory, the inherent meaning of a noun heading an AdjNP is on par with the inherent meaning of this noun when used in an ArgNP. However, we will show that ArgNPs and the corresponding AdjNPs differ in their selectional restrictions and, hence, cannot have the same inherent meaning.

In this paper, we examine a range of AdjNPs with respect to determination and quantification, modification, pluralization and referentiality. The objective is to specify a set of syntactic and semantic properties that AdjNPs share with ArgNPs, and to determine properties that AdjNPs provide in contrast to ArgNPs. The results of the applied tests are presented in (2). Given these results, the generalization can be made that Polish AdjNPs share syntactic features and the property of referentiality with the corresponding ArgNPs but differ from them in selectional properties.

Based on these empirical generalizations, we propose a constraint-based analysis implemented in the framework of Head-Driven Phrase Structure Grammar (Pollard and Sag, 1994). The proposed analysis applies lexical and phrasal implicational constraints which (i) license nouns heading ArgNPs and AdjNPs, (ii) account for the syntactic and semantic selection, and (iii) ensure the right percolation of semantic information along the complex structures. Our strictly lexicalist analysis enables the modeling of both ArgNPs and AdjNPs without the need for introducing lexical rules or extending the standard framework and without any redundancies in the lexicon.

(1) An overview of morph. cases in Polish in the context of marking ArgNPs and AdjNPs

	ArgNPs		AdjNPs
<i>Nom.</i>	→ Jan <i>is_sleeping</i> 'Jan is sleeping.'	→	none
<i>Gen.</i>	→ Maria zażądała <i>pieniędzy</i> . Maria demanded money 'Maria demanded the money.'	→	Jan odjechał <i>tej nocy</i> . Jan left this night 'Jan left that night.'
<i>Dat.</i>	→ Piotr dedykował swój doktorat <i>rodzicom</i> . Piotr dedicated his thesis parents 'Piotr dedicated his thesis to his parents.'	→	Maria wypila <i>Janowi</i> piwo. Maria drank John beer 'Maria drank John's beer.'
<i>Acc.</i>	→ Jan zobaczył <i>Marię</i> . Jan saw Maria 'Jan saw Maria.'	→	Maria płakała <i>całą godzinę</i> . Maria was crying whole hour 'Maria was crying for a whole hour.'
<i>Inst.</i>	→ Jan posłużył się <i>nożem</i> . Jan used RM knife 'Jan used a knife.'	→	Piotr uciekł <i>lasem</i> . Piotr escaped forest 'Piotr escaped through the forest.'
<i>Loc.</i>	→ Jan jest teraz w <i>szkole</i> . Jan is now in school 'Jan is in school now.'	→	none
<i>Voc.</i>	→ <i>Mamo, poczekaj!</i> mama wait 'Wait, mama!'	→	none

(2) Summary of the results of tests applied to Polish AdjNPs

	determination/ quantification	modification	pluralization	control
<i>genitive</i>	+	+	? / -	+
<i>dative</i>	+	+	+	+
<i>accusative</i>	+	+	+	+
<i>instrumental</i>	+	+	+	+

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