

The Case Marking of PRO in Polish Revisited

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The aim of the paper is to examine what case PRO can be marked for in Polish and how this case marking proceeds. Since PRO is phonologically null, its case marking becomes visible only if one considers primary predicates (e.g. predicative adjectives) or secondary predicates (e.g. *sam* ‘alone’) whose case typically testifies to the case borne by the item they are predicated of. The data crucial for determining the case of PRO in Polish include instances of case transmission, where the case of PRO and the case of its controller are the same, as in (1) below, and those in which the predicate (and hence) PRO exhibits default case: instrumental for primary predicates and dative for secondary ones, as in (2) and (3) below.

- (1) Marek chce [PRO być zadowolony z życia].
Mark-Nom wants to-be content-Nom with life
‘Mark wants to be content with his life.’
- (2) Marek kazał Marii [PRO być zadowoloną z życia]/[PRO przyjść samej].
Mark-Nom told Mary-Dat to-be content-Instr with life to-come alone-Dat
‘Mark told Mary to be content with her life/to come alone.’
- (3) Marek uczył Marię [PRO być zadowoloną z życia]/[PRO samej naprawiać komputer].
Mark-Nom taught Mary-Acc to-be content-Instr with life / alone-Dat to-repair computer
‘Mark taught Mary to be content with her life/to repair a computer alone.’

Other data discussed include the PRO found in subject control clauses with the overt complementiser *żeby* ‘so that’, where alongside case transmission, the default case can also be used, cf. (4):

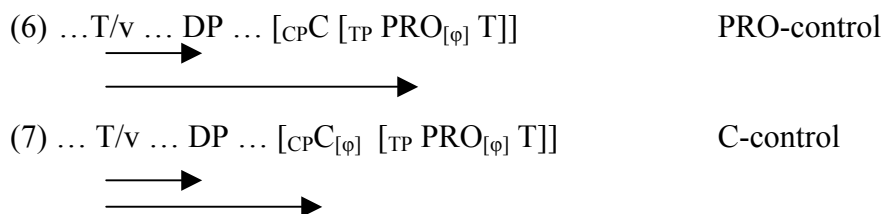
- (4) Marek marzy [żeby PRO być zadowolony /zadowolonym z życia].
Mark-Nom dreams so-that to-be content-Nom/content-Instr with life
‘Mark dreams of being content with his life.’

The two options of case marking attested in sentences like (4) can also be encountered in complements of verbs like *obieczać* ‘promise’, illustrated in (5):

- (5) Marek obiecał Marii [PRO być zadowolony/zadowolonym z życia].
Mark promised Mary-Dat to-be content-Nom/content-Instr with life
‘Mark promised Mary to be content with his life.’

In the paper an attempt is made to answer the questions which the data above embody, namely: why case transmission is allowed in subject control (cf. (1), (4) and (5)), but not in object control (cf. (2) and (3)) and what mechanisms are responsible for the obligatory case transmission (as in (1)) on the one hand, and for its optional application (as in (4) and (5)) on the other. The model adopted in order to address these problems is Landau’s (2007) analysis of the analogous data in Russian. Landau (2007) derives control by appealing to successive applications of Agree (cf. Landau (2004)). The elements affected by Agree include the matrix T (in subject control) or the matrix *v* (in object control), the controller of PRO as well as the

embedded T and C. Each of these items carries a set of features which interact with other features. In particular, under specific conditions both the embedded C and T may be marked as [+/- Tense] and [+/- Agr] as well as for the feature + or -R (referential), which underlies the correlation between C/T and PRO carrying the feature [-R]. If C is marked [+Tense, +Agr], then it can be targeted for Agree by the matrix probe, i.e. T or v; if C lacks ϕ -features, then it is PRO that undergoes Agree with the matrix probe. This opens up what Landau (2007) calls ‘two routes to control’ - via the embedded C or via PRO, cf. (6) and (7) (quoted after Landau (2007:3)):



Landau (2007) hypothesises that in Russian, wherever PRO functions as a target for Agree, case transmission takes place, whereas if C serves as an Agree goal, it assigns dative to PRO. It is argued that Polish case transmission, as in (1), can be handled along the lines suggested by Landau for Russian. The optionality of case transmission, as in (4) and (5), is also derivable from Landau’s analysis under the assumption that C either has or hasn’t got ϕ -features. However, by opening ‘two routes to control’, Landau’s model predicts that case transmission should obtain also in object control. This in fact is possible in Russian, where the accusative of the controller can be transmitted to PRO. Nonetheless, Polish, unlike Russian, does not tolerate accusative case transmission in object control (cf. (3)). This forces us to modify Landau’s analysis in the following way: in Polish object control only C can be targeted by Agree from v, therefore the control via PRO is blocked and hence no case transmission can arise. It is assumed that v in Polish is always specified as [+R] and consequently cannot target [-R] PRO. This feature specification for v follows from Reinhart and Reuland’s (1993) definition, which specifies that an entity carrying a full set of ϕ -features and structural case is always [+R]. Since v is a structural case assigner in (3), it seems justified to treat it as [+R]. If the [+R] v targets the [-R] PRO, a mismatch arises and the derivation crashes, which successfully blocks case transmission in such cases. No case transmission is possible in (2), either, since, as argued by Landau, lexical case does not transmit. Thus, the paper demonstrates that Landau’s Agree-based model can account for the case marking of PRO in Polish with just minor modifications. Consequently, this account can be regarded as a viable alternative for Witko’s (2007) analysis of similar facts within the movement theory of control of Hornstein (1999).

References

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