

Deriving case mismatch in Polish relative clauses

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Synopsis. Polish exhibits case concord between the noun and its NP-internal modifiers, including the wh-pronoun *który* ‘which’, as in (1), where the noun ‘player’ and the wh-pronoun agree in case.

- (1) [*Któr-y* *zawodnik-Ø*] *strzelił* *gola?*
which-NOM player-NOM score.PST.3SG goal
‘Which player scored the goal?’

In contrast, in relative clauses (RCs) like in (2), the wh-pronoun ‘which’ and the head noun show a case mismatch.

- (2) *Znam* *zawodnik-a* [_{RC} *któr-y* *strzelił* *gola*]
know.PRS.1SG player-ACC which-NOM score.PST.3SG goal
‘I know the player who scored the goal.’

We propose an analysis of the case mismatch in Polish RCs that is based on Cinque’s (2020) double-headed structure of RCs and argue against the existing alternative accounts.

“Raising” and “matching” relatives in Polish. The case mismatch seen in (2) applies only to *który*-relatives and not to the other type of RCs in Polish, the one with the invariant relativizer *co*:

- (3) *Znam* *zawodnik-a* [_{RC} *co* *strzelił* *gola*]
know.PRS.1SG player-ACC REL score.PST.3SG goal
‘I know the player who scored the goal.’

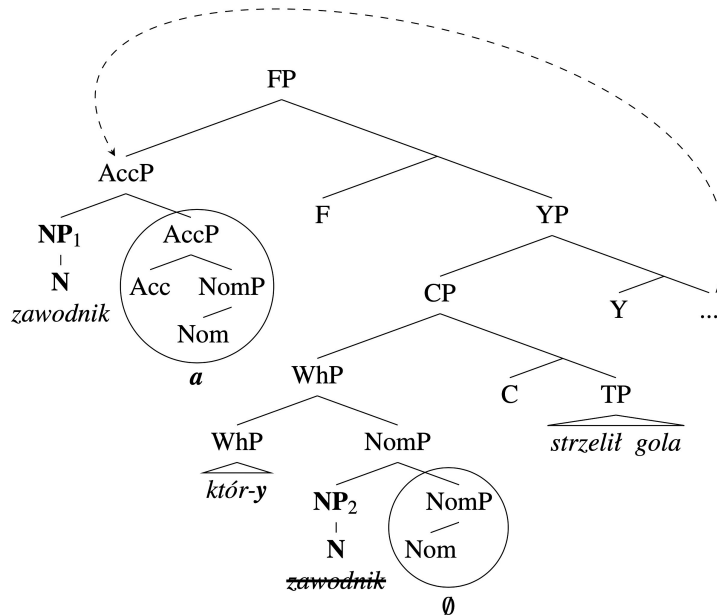
Szczęgielniak (2004) argues that *co*-relatives like in (3) show the properties associated with the so-called “raising” derivation of RCs. In turn, *który*-relatives like in (2) show typical “matching” properties of RCs.

Double-headed RC analysis. In Cinque’s (2020) analysis, both types of RCs are derived from a single underlying double-headed structure, outlined in (4a) on the example of *the book (that) John wrote*.

- (4) a.
b.
A dashed arrow in (4b) points from the NP1 'book' to the NP2 'book', indicating the double-headed structure.

In the “matching” derivation illustrated in (4b) – the one that is instantiated by Polish *który*-relatives – the external head (NP₁ *book*) raises overtly to the specifier of a functional FP from where it licenses the deletion of the internal head (NP₂ *book*) inside the RC under the c-command condition on identity. **Case mismatch.** The application of the double-headed structure to the analysis of the Polish “matching” RCs allows us to explain the case mismatch like in (2). (5) illustrates the derivation of (2) according to (4b).

(5)



Assuming case containment in Caha (2009), where nominative is structurally contained in accusative, the accusative external head NP₁ *zawodnik-a* ‘player’, which is selected by the verb *znam* ‘know.PRS.1SG’, raises to the pre-RC position (in Spec-FP). From there it c-commands the RC-internal nominative NP₂ *zawodnik*, which deletes under identity with NP₁, and leaves the nominative wh-pronoun *który* inside the RC. We support our analysis with evidence from islands, locality of case-marking, and a ban on extraction from complements of prepositions in Polish.

References

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