

## Settling the unsettled - in search for the base-generated position of the Polish Experiencer Dative

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This study focuses on the Polish *piacere*-type psychological verb *podobać się* ‘to please’, which licenses a Dative Experiencer (Exp<sub>DAT</sub>) and a Nominative Theme (Th<sub>NOM</sub>). It has been proposed (Belletti and Rizzi 1988; Miechowicz-Mathiasen and Scheffler 2008; Jiménez-Fernández and Rozwadowska 2016; a.o.) that the argument structure of *please*-verbs is that of a double object unaccusative, which draws a parallel between Experiencer Datives and Dative-marked indirect objects (IO<sub>DAT</sub>) of double object constructions (DOCs). However, such analysis does not explain the syntactic as well as semantic differences between IO<sub>DAT</sub> and Exp<sub>DAT</sub> found cross-linguistically. Because of these differences many frameworks take IO<sub>DAT</sub> and Exp<sub>DAT</sub> to be projected in different syntactic positions, Exp<sub>DAT</sub> being generated higher than IO<sub>DAT</sub> (e.g. Pylkkänen 2002, Cuervo 2003). In order to test the unaccusative analysis of *podobać się* ‘to please’, we conduct two experiments examining the binding potential of IO<sub>DAT</sub> (Exp1) and Exp<sub>DAT</sub> (Exp2).

As a starting point, in Exp1, we test the acceptability of object coreference in DOCs, illustrated in (1).

- (1) b. Marta<sub>1</sub> opowiedziała Markowi<sub>2</sub> o swojej<sub>1/\*2</sub> /jego\*<sub>1/2</sub> młodości.  
 Marta<sub>NOM</sub> told Marek<sub>DAT</sub> about self's youth.  
 ‘Marta told Marek about his youth’ (Bondaruk and Szymanek 2007)

It has been argued in the literature that IO<sub>DAT</sub>s of Polish DOCs can locally bind pronouns only, as in (1) (Willim 1989; Reinders-Machowska 1991; Witkoś 2003, 2007; Bondaruk and Szymanek 2007; a.o.). We test the claim in Exp1 and use object coreference in DOCs as a point of reference for Exp2. More precisely, taking Exp<sub>DAT</sub> to be equivalent to IO<sub>DAT</sub>, i.e. assuming an unaccusative analysis of *please*-verbs, we expect the two to show similar binding properties. Therefore, in Exp2 we expect Exp<sub>DAT</sub> to be able to bind pronouns only.

In both experiments, we elicited grammaticality judgments using a 7-point Likert scale, testing experimental items based on four binary variables. In this presentation, we focus on two variables, namely bindee type (possessive pronoun vs. possessive reflexive) and bindee embedding (one-degree vs. two-degree embedding, as in e.g. [<sub>NP</sub> friend [<sub>NP</sub> self's/her sister<sub>GEN</sub>].), as illustrated respectively in (2) for IO<sub>DAT</sub>, and (3) for Exp<sub>DAT</sub>.

- (2) a. Babcia pokazała wnukowi<sub>1</sub> swoją<sub>1</sub>/jego<sub>1</sub> kuzynkę.  
 granny<sub>3SG.F.NOM</sub> showed<sub>3SG.F.PST</sub> grandson<sub>DAT</sub> self/his cousin<sub>ACC</sub>  
 ‘Grandmother showed her grandson his cousin’  
 b. Babcia pokazała wnukowi<sub>1</sub> zdjęcie swojej<sub>1</sub>/jego<sub>1</sub> kuzynki.  
 granny<sub>3SG.F.NOM</sub> showed<sub>3SG.F.PST</sub> grandson<sub>DAT</sub> picture<sub>ACC</sub> self/his cousin<sub>GEN</sub>  
 ‘Grandmother showed her grandson a picture of his cousin’  
 (3) a. Markowi<sub>1</sub> podobają się swoje<sub>1</sub>/jego<sub>1</sub> koleżanki.  
 Marek<sub>3SG.M.DAT</sub> please<sub>3PL</sub> REFL self/his friends<sub>3PL.NOM</sub>.  
 ‘Marek likes his (female) friends’  
 b. Markowi<sub>1</sub> podobają się koleżanki swojej<sub>1</sub>/jego<sub>1</sub> siostry.  
 Marek<sub>3SG.M.DAT</sub> please<sub>3PL</sub> REFL friends<sub>3PL.NOM</sub> self/his sister<sub>GEN</sub>.  
 ‘Marek likes the (female) friends of his sister’

The results of Exp1, on DOCs, confirm the claims in the literature, i.e. IO<sub>DAT</sub> can bind only a possessive pronoun embedded in the direct object, but never a possessive reflexive. Thus, coreference between the two objects of DOC, as in (2), can be expressed only with the pronoun (main effect of bindee.type  $F(1,56)=103.74$ ,  $p<.001$ ). We found a similar effect in Exp2, on Exp<sub>DAT</sub>. Exp<sub>DAT</sub> can bind only possessive pronouns; reflexives are rated unacceptable (bindee.type  $F(1,71) = 86,812$ ,  $p=.000$ ). With regard to embedding effects, the results of Exp1 indicate no statistically significant effect of bindee's level of embedding, which means that the same binding possibilities hold regardless of pronoun/reflexive embedding. In Exp2, two-degree embedded bindees were rated higher ( $F(1,71)=28,975$ ,  $p=.000$ ), though this effect did not influence their acceptability status – two-degree embedded bindees were still judged unacceptable. Therefore, the similar results of Exp1 and Exp2 indicate that the IO<sub>DAT</sub> of DOCs and Exp<sub>DAT</sub> of *please*-verbs occupy the same position, [spec.VP].

This conclusion, however, is unexpected in the light of analyses which take Exp<sub>DAT</sub>s to be projected higher than IO<sub>DAT</sub>s. Moreover, if we consider a broader range of Polish Exp<sub>DAT</sub> contexts, it

seems, in fact, that there are cases where Exp<sub>DATs</sub> do bind anaphors. Witkoś (2007, 2008) observes that Exp<sub>DAT</sub> can bind a PP embedded anaphor, as in (4a). Similar observations were made in Tajsner (2008) and Wiland (2009, 2016) for Accusative Object Experiencers binding into the nominative Theme (Th<sub>NOM</sub>), as in (4b).

- (4) a. [Nowakom<sub>2</sub>]spodobała się [nowa książka (Kowalskich<sub>1</sub>) o sobie<sub>1,2</sub>]  
 Nowaks<sub>DAT</sub> liked REFL new book<sub>NOM</sub> (Kowalskis') about self<sub>LOC</sub>  
*'The Nowaks liked the new book (by the Kowalskis) about themselves.'* (Witkoś 2007: 467)
- b. Marię irytowały historie ze swojego dzieciństwa.  
 Maria<sub>ACC</sub> irritated stories<sub>NOM</sub> from self's childhood<sub>GEN</sub>  
*'Stories from her childhood irritated Maria.'* (Tajsner 2008: 423)

Therefore, although the results of our study indicate that IO<sub>DATs</sub> and Exp<sub>DATs</sub> are projected in the same position, it could be the case that Exp<sub>DATs</sub> are in fact projected higher than IOs, allowing for anaphor binding. If so, the unacceptability of anaphors in (3) must be attributed to a different factor than the low [spec;VP] position of Exp<sub>DAT</sub>.

If Exp<sub>DAT/ACC</sub> can bind anaphors as soon as these are embedded and, consequently, marked for case different than nominative, the unacceptability of example (3a) with a reflexive possessive could be due to the Anaphor Agreement Effect (AAE) (Rizzi 1990, Woolford 1999). Rizzi (1990: 26) submits that "anaphors do not occur in syntactic positions construed with agreement". Thus, because Th<sub>NOM</sub> is the argument involved in an Agree relation with T, the nominative reflexive possessive is illicit irrespective of the type of its binder. Therefore, should: a) AAE hold for Polish, and b) Exp<sub>DAT</sub> be merged high, in [spec;vP] or [spec;AppIP<sub>high</sub>] (depending on a framework), we would expect Exp<sub>DATs</sub> to be able to bind anaphors embedded in NPs/PPs that do not agree with T, as argued in the literature and illustrated in (4).

However, even though contexts as in (4) often reappear in the literature as an argument for a subject-like behaviour of Exp<sub>DAT</sub> (and therefore its high projection), the grammaticality of (4) is in fact subtle and far from settled. Therefore, we aim to test contexts as in (5) and (6) with reflexives in non-agreeing arguments. We use the same binary variables as in Exp1 and Exp2 in order to compare the results.

- (5) a. Marii było wstyd za swojego/jej młodszego brata.  
 Maria<sub>DAT</sub> was ashamed for self's/her younger brother<sub>ACC</sub>  
*'Maria was ashamed because of her younger brother'*
- b. Marii było wstyd za żarty swojego/jej młodszego brata.  
 Maria<sub>DAT</sub> was ashamed for jokes<sub>ACC</sub> self's her younger brother<sub>GEN</sub>  
*'Maria was ashamed because of her younger brother's jokes'*
- (6) a. Marii brakowało swojego/jej narzeczonego.  
 Maria<sub>DAT</sub> missed/lacked self's her fiance<sub>GEN</sub>  
*'Maria was missing her fiance'*
- b. Marii brakowało towarzystwa swojego/jej narzeczonego.  
 Maria<sub>DAT</sub> missed/lacked company<sub>GEN</sub> self's her fiance<sub>GEN</sub>  
*'Maria was missing the company of her fiance'*

The fact that the two-degree embedded Genitive-marked reflexives in Exp2, as in (3b), were rated higher than the one-degree embedded anaphors in (3a) may validate the AAE. However, even though the contexts as in (3b) were more acceptable, they were still strongly dispreferred. Therefore, if the AAE holds generally of agreeing arguments, i.e. Nominative-marked arguments in Polish, the unacceptability of (3b) cannot be explained by the AAE alone. The third experiment is designed to shed new light on this issue.

#### Selected references:

**Bondaruk, A., Szymanek, B. 2007.** Polish nominativeless constructions with dative Experiencers: form, meaning and structure. *Studies in Polish Linguistics* 4: 61-99. **Cuervo, M. 2003.** *Datives at Large*, PhD thesis, MIT. **Miechowicz-Mathiasen, K.; Scheffler, P. 2008.** A corpus-based analysis of the peculiar behavior of the Polish verb *podobać się*. In: *Elements of Slavic and Germanic Grammars: A Comparative View*. J.Witkoś, G.Fanselow (eds.) Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 89-111. **Rizzi, L. 1990.** On the anaphor-agreement effect. *Rivista di Linguistica* 2:27-42. **Witkoś, J. 2007.** Polish A-type Scrambling. In: Peter Kosta and Lilia Schürcks (eds.). *Linguistic investigations into formal description of Slavic languages*. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang.