

# SOME DIFFERENCES BETWEEN ENGLISH AND POLISH ON THE LEVEL OF THE BASIC SENTENCE PATTERN

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The comparison of English and Polish basic sentence patterns shows that the differences on this level concern three types of phenomena:

1. Some B.S.P. (basic sentence patterns) occur only in English, with no corresponding B.S.P. in Polish for the same type of predicator.
2. Some B.S.P. occur only in Polish, with no corresponding B.S.P. in English for the same type of predicator.
3. For the same type of predicator two different B.S.P. occur in English and Polish,

where by the term basic sentence pattern we mean a linear organization of abstract objects which represent the surface syntactic functions of the lexical items occurring in the deep structure repeated within the same pattern.

In this paper we discuss an example of a B.S.P. which appears only in English and never in Polish.

The following sentence pattern, common in English does not occur in Polish.

S.P. 1	Subject	—	Verb	—	Object	—	Verbal Complement
	NP <sub>1</sub>		V <sub>1</sub>		NP <sub>2</sub>		Comp + V <sub>2</sub>

Sentences 1 - 4 follow this pattern:

1. I want him to sing.
2. Mary heard her uncle sing.
3. She believed him to win.
4. I prefer for John to sing.

The different realizations of Comp (complementizer) are irrelevant here.

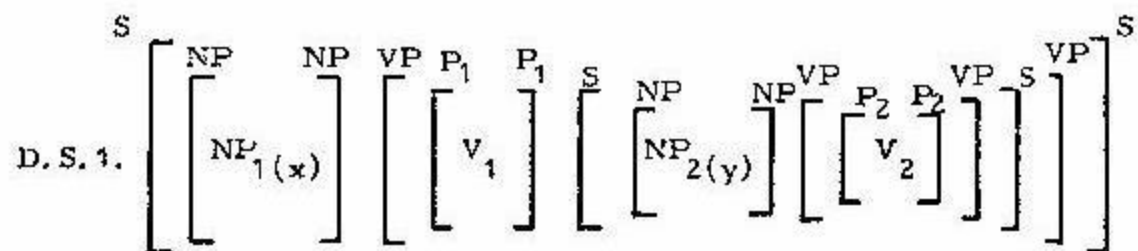
These four sentences above share certain features as far as the structures underlying them are concerned:

- a. The main verb is a two place predicate ( $\text{Pred}^{\text{II}} = V_1$ )
- b. V<sub>1</sub> takes as its arguments a noun phrase and a sentence
- c. The subject of the sentence which functions as the second argument

of  $V_1$  is correferential with the other argument of  $V_1$ . Hence the logico-semantic representation common for sentences 1-4 is something like this:

$$\left[ \left[ V_1^{II}; NP_{1(x)} \right], \left[ V_2^I; NP_{2(y)} \right] \right]$$

d. It is  $NP_1$  (and not S) that is chosen by an appropriate rule of subjectivization to function as the surface structure subject in 1-4. Thus the deep syntactic structure that we assume for these sentences is D.S. 1:



Polish sentences corresponding to 1-4 are 5-8:

5. Ja chcę, żeby on śpiewał.
6. Mary słyszała, że (jak) jej wujek śpiewał.
7. Ona wierzyła, że on zwycięży.
8. Ja wolę, żeby Janek śpiewał.

These sentences have the same logico-semantic structure as their English counterparts and the same deep syntactic structure. The Polish sentence pattern derived from D.S. 1 is different, however, from the English S.P. 1:

S.P. 2	Subject <sub>1</sub>	—	Verb <sub>1</sub>	—	Comp	—	Subject <sub>2</sub>	—	Verb <sub>2</sub>
	$NP_1$		$V_1$		Comp		$NP_2$		$V_2$

The main difference between S.P. 1 and S.P. 2 is that S.P. 2 is not a basic sentence pattern according to our definition because the syntactic functions of subject and verb are repeated twice. We would rather say that S.P. 2 includes another sentence pattern — Subject — Verb which is a basic sentence pattern<sup>1</sup>.

Our objective here is to examine why the subject — verb relation of  $NP_2$  and  $V_2$  which exists in the deep structure no longer exists in the English surface structure and why must this relation be retained in Polish. In other words we shall deal with the problem of shifting  $NP_2$  in the derivation of the English sentences from the domination of the lower S

<sup>1</sup> S.P.2 occurs in English too. The point is that in Polish for the deep structure D.S.1 there is no other surface structure but S.P.2 possible whereas in English it can be either S.P.1 or S.P.2, according to the verb (many verbs can occur in both with no change of meaning).

under the domination of VP of the higher S. We shall call the transformation responsible for this shifting *the sentence brackets erasure transformation*.

In order to establish the conditions under which this transformation applies to D.S. 1 let us consider the derivation of S.P. 1 in some detail. For clarity of presentation we repeat D.S. 1 in the form of a tree diagram (Diagram 1):

We assume that the first transformation that applies to this structure is the above mentioned sentence brackets erasure transformation, abbreviated here S.B.E. tr. This transformation erases the sentence brackets within the VP bracket and all inner brackets within this sentence. In terms of node domination this transformation liquidates the lower S node together with all nodes dominated by this node. The result of this operation is shown in the diagram below (Diagram 2):

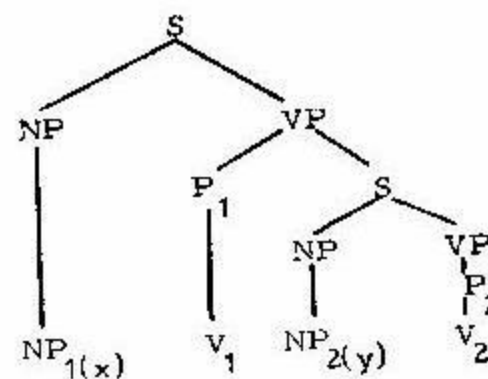


Diagram 1

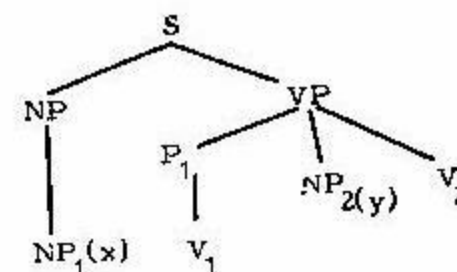


Diagram 2

One obvious condition of the application of this transformation is the occurrence of S under the VP node. This is, however, by no means sufficient because there are deep structures in English similar to D.S. 1 (with S immediately dominated by VP) for which this transformation is not permitted. For instance sentence 9 is unacceptable:

9. I said (for) him to come here.

The only possibility here is 10:

10. I said that he came here.

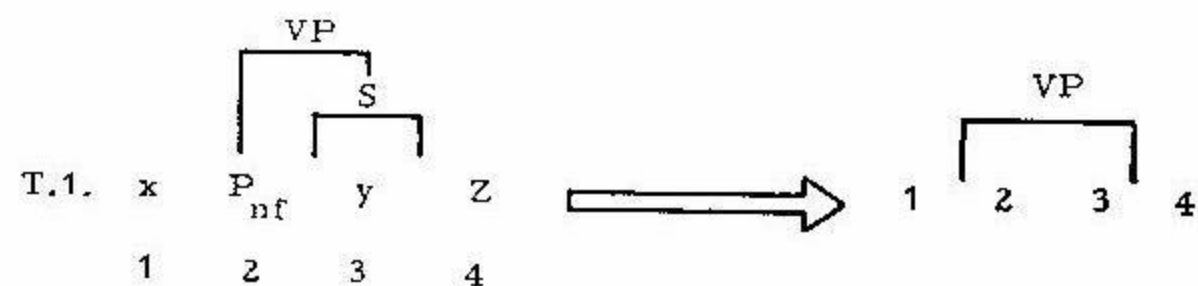
Similarly, only 11 is acceptable, but not 12:

11. I resent that Mary has been the one who did it.
12. I resent Mary to have been the one who did it.

This leads us to the conclusion that not all verbs allow the S.B.E. tr. Verbs that allow this transformation to apply to D.S. 1 are the so-called non-factive verbs. *Say* and *resent* in the examples above are factive verbs for which the surface structure like S.P. 1 is not permissible.

Taking this important distinction into consideration we formulate the

sentence brackets erasure transformation for English in the following way:



$P_{nf}$  = non-factive predicates<sup>2</sup>

Due to this transformation every element that was previously dominated by the S node is now dominated immediately by the VP node (see diagram 2).

To the structure presented in diagram 2 the complementizer 1 introduction transformation applies. This transformation needs the following structural index: two verbs (one of which may be a copula) must be dominated by the same VP node. The effect of this operation (diagram 3) is that the complementizer congruent with the fact that the erasure of sentence brackets took place, i.e. COMP 1, is introduced in front of the second verb.

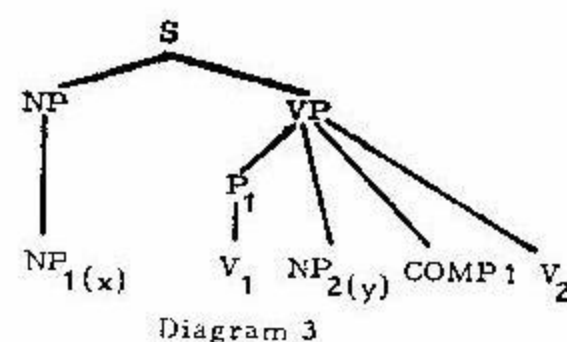
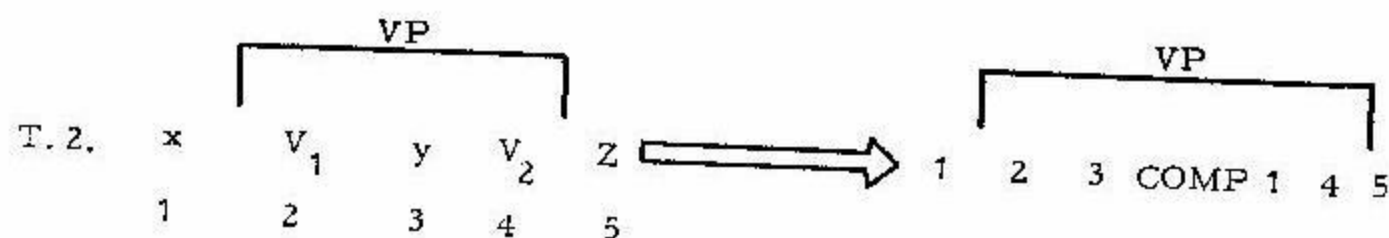


Diagram 3

The introduction of COMP 2 is automatically excluded (COMP 2 is transformationally introduced whenever the S.B.E. tr. does not apply, e.g. in the examples 10 and 11).

The transformation introducing COMP 1 is formalized in the following way:



Further transformations do not interest us here because these are sufficient to achieve the sentence pattern level.

<sup>2</sup> In the structural description of the transformations presented in this paper the emphasis is not only on the relevant elements but also on the relevant node domination. This particular transformation does nothing else to the elements of the structural description but change the node that immediately dominates element 3.

Shifting now to Polish — if we consider example 5:

5. Ja chcę, żeby on śpiewał.

we can easily state that although the conditions necessary for the application of the S.B.E. tr. in English are met, this transformation can not apply to D.S. 1 to produce a grammatical Polish sentence. Sentences like 13 and 13 are not acceptable:

13. \*Ja chcę jego tańczyć.

14. \*Ona wierzyła jego zwyciężyć.

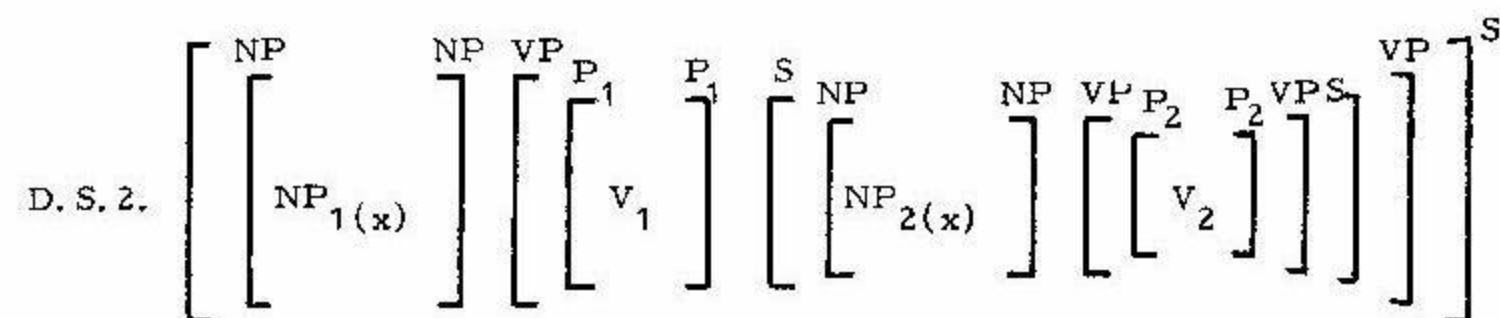
This could mean two things: 1. either the S.B.E. tr. does not exist in Polish at all, or 2. it exists but it works under different conditions than in English.

The first assumption can be immediately rejected if we take the following Polish sentences into consideration:

15. Ja chcę tańczyć. (I want to dance)

16. On lubi czytać. (He likes to read)

It is obvious that transformations leading to structures like 15 and 16 must include the S.B.E. tr. Notice, however, that the deep structure underlying these sentences is not D.S. 1 but D.S. 2 in which  $NP_1$  is correferential with  $NP_2$ <sup>3</sup>:



The correferentiality of  $NP_1$  and  $NP_2$  is not still the sufficient condition for the S.B.E. tr. If it were, the following sentence would have to be acceptable:

17. \*Ja wierzę umrzeć.

Although  $NP_1 = NP_2$  only the surface structure without the sentence brackets erasure transformation is acceptable:

<sup>3</sup> I took it for granted that sentences like:

I want to dance.

have an embedded sentence of the form *I dance* in their underlying structure. This is a common assumption among the transformational grammarians.

During the discussion of this paper one of the participants of the conference raised the problem of the syntactic evidence of the occurrence of the second NP correferential with the first NP in the deep structure. This evidence is given for instance in Robin Lakoff (1968:30) who gives the examples from Latin and English.

18. Ja wierzę, że (ja) umrę. (I believe that I shall die)

Our conclusion is that the deletion of NP<sub>2</sub> (if NP<sub>2</sub>=NP<sub>1</sub>) is the condition sine qua non for the application of the S.B.E. tr. in Polish. Whenever the verb (factive or not) does not allow the second correferential NP to be deleted<sup>4</sup>, e.g. wierzyć (believe) in 17, this transformation is not possible in Polish.

Not so in English. For these verbs which do not allow the deletion of NP<sub>2</sub> (but are non-factive verbs) the S.B.E. tr. is not blocked. Compare for instance 19 and 20:

19. He fancies to be an expert.

20. He fancies himself to be an expert.

The Polish structural counterpart of 20 is not acceptable:

21. \*On wyobraza sobie być ekspertem.

Summing up these considerations we state that in Polish the S.B.E. tr. must be preceded by the identity erasure transformation. The latter applies whenever the verb (V<sub>1</sub>) occurring in the deep structure of the type D.S. 2 allows the deletion of NP<sub>2</sub>. The identity erasure transformation:

In Polish, like in Latin the gender agreement in the sentence

Julia woli być posłuszna. (Julia prefers to be obedient) but not

\*Julia woli być  $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{posłuszny} \\ \text{posłuszne} \end{array} \right\}$

points out to the fact that the noun Julia must function as the subject of the embedded sentence at some phase of the derivation of this sentence.

The evidence from English is exemplified in Lakoff by the following pair of sentences:

Mary likes to talk to herself.

\*Mary likes to talk to himself.

<sup>4</sup> Apart from the distinction between factive and non-factive, verbs taking a sentential complement belong to one of the following subclasses:

a. verbs that must have the subject of the lower sentence identical with the subject of the higher sentence. The second NP must be deleted, e.g.

I tried to dance.

\*I tried (for) you to dance. \*I tried  $\left. \begin{array}{l} \text{me} \\ \text{myself} \end{array} \right\}$  to dance.

b. verbs that may have either NP<sub>1</sub>=NP<sub>2</sub> or NP<sub>1</sub>≠NP<sub>2</sub>. If NP<sub>1</sub>=NP<sub>2</sub>—NP<sub>2</sub> must be deleted, e.g.

I love to play piano. I love Bill to play piano.

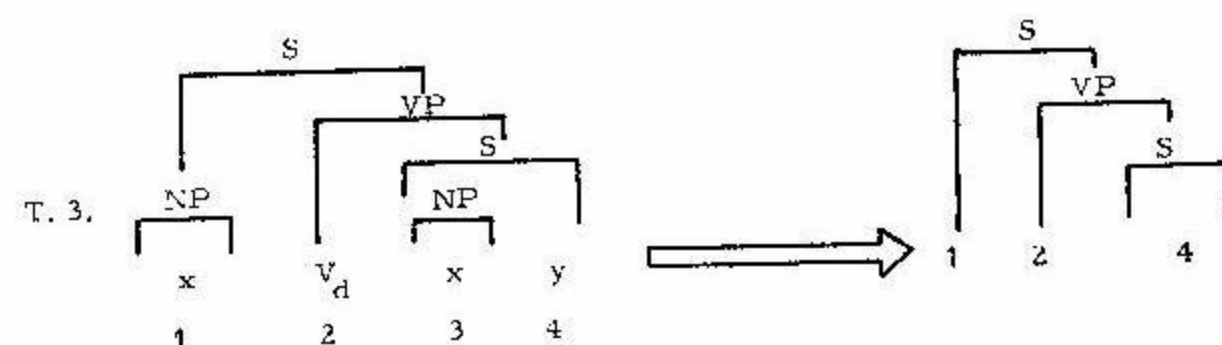
\*I love  $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{myself} \\ \text{me} \end{array} \right\}$  to play piano.

c. verbs that may have either NP<sub>1</sub>=NP<sub>2</sub> or NP<sub>1</sub>≠NP<sub>2</sub>. In neither case NP<sub>2</sub> can be deleted:

John fancies Jane to be an expert.

John fancies himself to be an expert.

\*John fancies to be an expert.



where V<sub>d</sub>=a verb allowing the deletion of NP<sub>2</sub>

We assume here that this transformation can function across the sentence boundaries in a configuration like this one<sup>5</sup>.

If we compare this transformation with Rosenbaum's formulation (Rosenbaum, 1967:6) we can see that from the three conditions governing the application of this rule two are expressed here in the rule itself in terms of the node domination. These are the following conditions:

1. NP<sub>j</sub> (our NP<sub>2</sub>) is dominated by S<sub>α</sub>

2. NP<sub>i</sub> (our NP<sub>1</sub>) neither dominates nor is dominated by S<sub>α</sub>

The third condition, namely the minimal distance principle is not taken into account here because in the form as stated by Rosenbaum it can be easily invalidated by sentences which are counter examples to it<sup>6</sup>. As this is not our primary concern we do not attempt to replace it with anything else here.

After the application of T3 to the deep structure D.S.2 (diagram 4) we get the phrase marker presented in diagram 5:

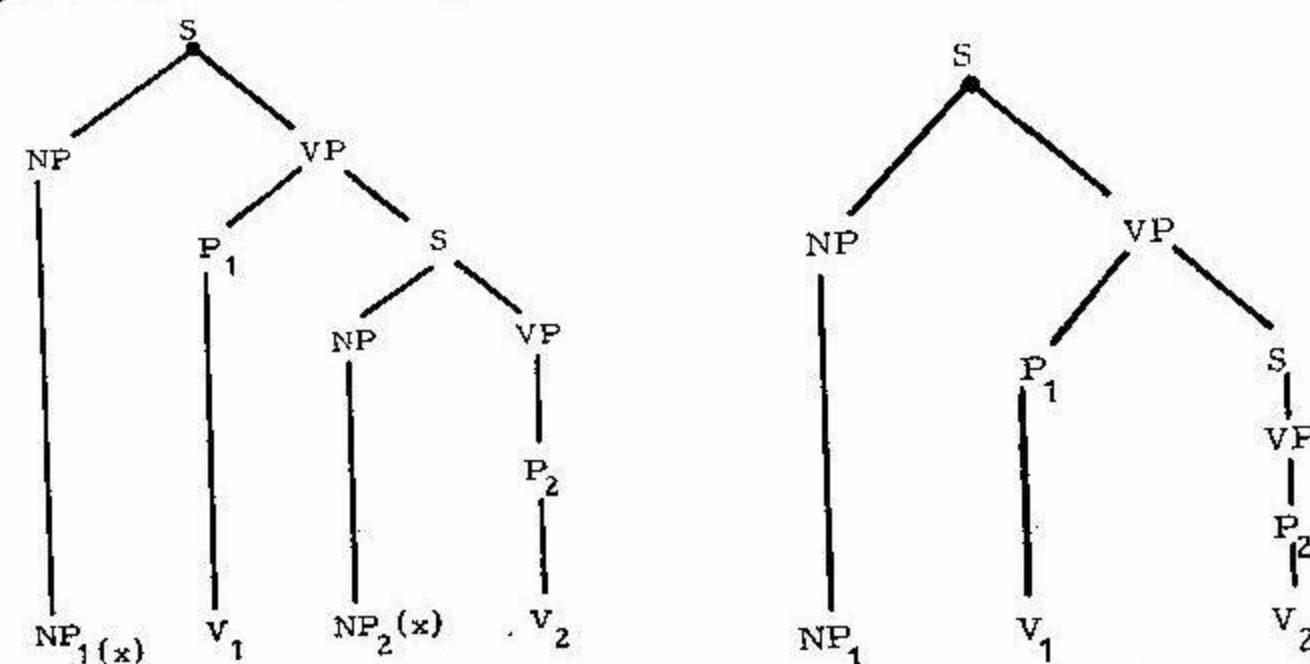


Diagram 4 (D. S. 2)

Diagram 5

Only to this structure (diagram 5) the S.B.E. tr. can apply in Polish.

<sup>5</sup> We assume that the identity erasure tr. can function across the sentence boundaries. The fact that operations on correferential noun phrases can work across sentence boundaries is reflected for instance in anaphoric processes. Compare also Grinder's supper-equi-NP-deletion (Grinder, 1970)

<sup>6</sup> cf. Grosu, A. 1971.

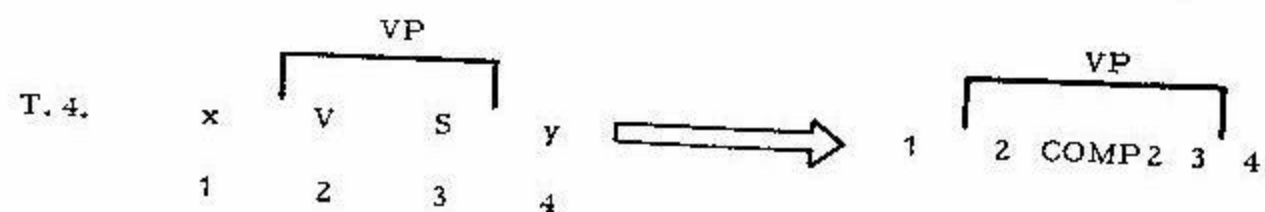
Notice incidentally that in this case the S.B.E. tr. agrees with Ross's principle of tree-pruning (see note 7).

Getting back to the Polish sentence with which we have started this discussion:

5. Ja chcę, żeby on śpiewał

we are now in a position to say that the S.B.E. tr. cannot apply here because the identity erasure transformation is not possible and that is why the deep structure D.S.1 is never realized in Polish as S.P.1.

To these structures for which S.B.E. tr. is blocked the complementizer 2 introduction transformation applies obligatorily. This operation introduces COMP 2 under the VP node in front of the embedded S:



The order of these transformations is again important. If the COMP 2 transformation were first the following unacceptable sentence could result:

22. \*Ja chcę, żebym ja poszła (I want that I go)

instead of 23:

23. Ja chcę iść (I want to go).

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<sup>7</sup> Ross's rule of tree-pruning is a formal condition of the wellformedness of trees and is independent of the order of transformations. Here the S.B.E. tr. has a fixed position among other transformations; it is the previous application of the identity erasure transformation that conditions the S.B.E. tr. in Polish and not the fact that the S node does not branch any further at this point.