

## ON SOME SUBJECT CLAUSES IN ENGLISH AND POLISH

ROMAN KALISZ

*University of Gdańsk*

### 0. Abstract

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The aim of this paper is to look for the best way of a unified analysis of subject complements in English and Polish. In the first section three major approaches in transformational grammar are presented. Further sections present subject complements in English and Polish. In the first section three major approaches in transformational grammar are presented. Further sections present an attempt of the analysis of Polish data in terms of the three theories. The conclusion is that the classical Extraposition is the best of the three approaches to account for some initial Polish data and that it should be maintained for a framework for English-Polish contrastive grammar. In the last section some problematic cases concerning *that*-clauses are discussed i.e. sentences beginning with *the point is...*, *the fact is...*, etc. It is argued that they should be analysed in the terms of Extraposition and *it*-dismount transformation which is formulated in this paper.

### 1.

Polish subject *że*-complement constructions<sup>1</sup> exhibit a lot of interesting phenomena when they are confronted with their corresponding English sentences.

#### 1. *To, że on tam pójdzie jest oczywiste.*

<sup>1</sup> In this paper I deal exclusively with English *that* and Polish *że* complements. Polish infinitival constructions in subject clauses are rare and they do not exhibit the interesting phenomenon of retaining *to* in subject position.

*Pójść tam jest przyjemnie.*

*Jest Przyjemnie pójść tam.*

*\*To, pójść tam jest przyjemnie.*

- 2%. Że on tam pójdzie jest oczywiste.  
 3%. To jest oczywiste, że on tam pójdzie.  
 4. Jest oczywiste, że on tam pójdzie.  
 5. To, że on zdobędzie pierwszą nagrodę jest oczywiste.  
 6%. Że on zdobędzie pierwszą nagrodę jest oczywiste.  
 7%. To wydaje się oczywiste, że on zdobędzie pierwszą nagrodę.  
 8. Wydaje się oczywiste, że on zdobędzie pierwszą nagrodę.  
 9. Jasne jest, że on zdobędzie pierwszą nagrodę.  
 10. Jasne, że on zdobędzie pierwszą nagrodę.  
 11. To jasne, że on zdobędzie pierwszą nagrodę.<sup>2</sup>

- 1a\*. It that he will go there is obvious.  
 2a.. That he will go there is obvious.  
 3a. It obvious that he will go there.  
 4a\*. Is obvious that he will go there.  
 5a\*. It that he will win the first prize seems obvious.  
 6a. That he will win the first prize seems obvious.  
 7a. It seems obvious that he will win the first prize.  
 8a\*. Seems obvious that he will win the first prize.  
 9a\*. Clear is that he will win the first prize.  
 10a\*. Clear that he will win the first prize.  
 11a\*. It clear that he will win the first prize.

The acceptability of Polish sentences marked with % varies from speaker to speaker. The distinction between dialect 1 where those sentences are unacceptable and dialect 2 where those sentences are acceptable is made throughout the paper. This, of course, does not imply that there exists a systematic division into dialects with respect to the above phenomenon or that the above distinction has anything to do with regional or social varieties of Polish.

It is assumed in this paper that *to* in the above constructions corresponds to English *it*. In many other cases there is no such correspondence. It may be argued that Polish *to* has a higher degree of demonstrativeness than the English *It*. It is possible to assign focus to Polish *to* in sentences like 12 whereas the English congruent structure is unacceptable.

12). TO jest ważne.

12a\*. IT is important.

where 12b is the proper equivalent of 12.

<sup>2</sup> Many sentences relevant to the present discussion, like multiple embedded complements, pseudocleft, etc., are not discussed here. A more fair analysis of the entire phenomenon will be given in Kalisz (in progress). Pseudocleft sentences in Polish exhibit an interesting phenomenon of retaining the double *to*.

Co jest jasne *to to*, że nie mamy wyboru.

12b. THIS is important.

*To* is an equivalent of *this*, *that* and *it* in different sentences, however, *to* seems to perform the same function as the English *it* in subject complement clauses serving as the antecedent of a complement sentence. The focus assignment to *to* in subject complement clauses is impossible as in the case of English equivalents.

13\*. TO jest ważne, że przyszedł.

14\*. TO, że przyszedł jest ważne.

13a\*. IT is important that he came.

## 2. The three approaches

There are three major approaches in transformational grammars of English concerning the presentation of the relation between sentences like 15 and 16.

15. That he went there seems obvious.

16. It seems obvious that he went there.

The approaches are Extraposition 1, Intraposition and Extraposition 2.

### 2.1. Extraposition 1

Rosenbaum (1967) has formulated a very well known rule of Extraposition relating sentences like 17 and 18 or 19 and 20.

17. That he is a genius is obvious.

18. It is obvious that he is a genius.

19. That he will receive this award seems reasonable.

20. It is reasonable that he will receive this award.

Sentences 17 and 19 are closer to the underlying structure whereas 18 and 20 are derived by Extraposition which has been formalized in the following way.

21.	X	NP <sup>(S)</sup>	VP	Y
	SI	1	2	3
	SC	1	∅	3+2
				4

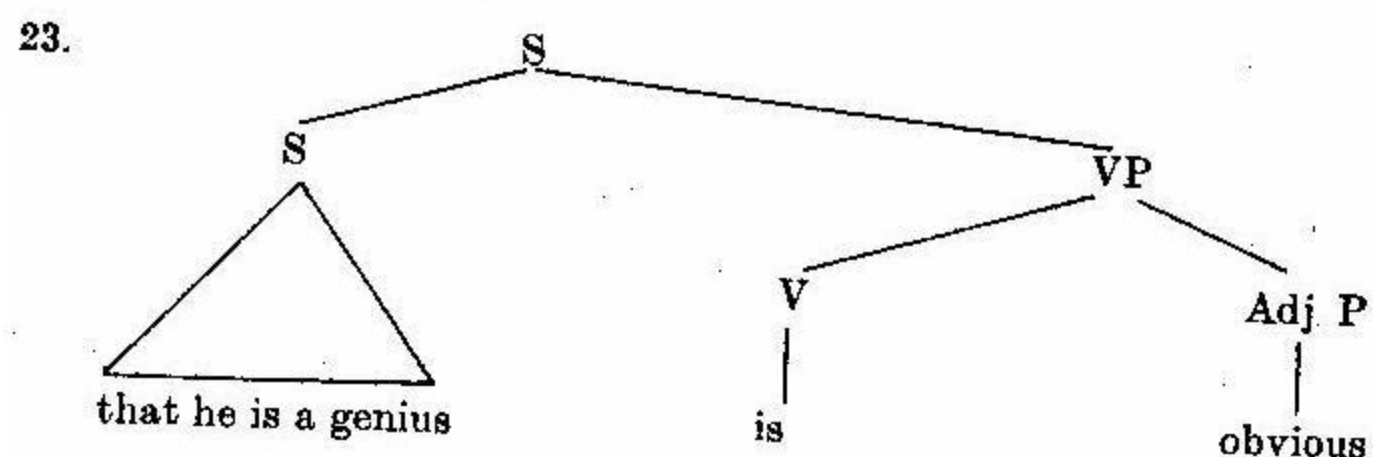
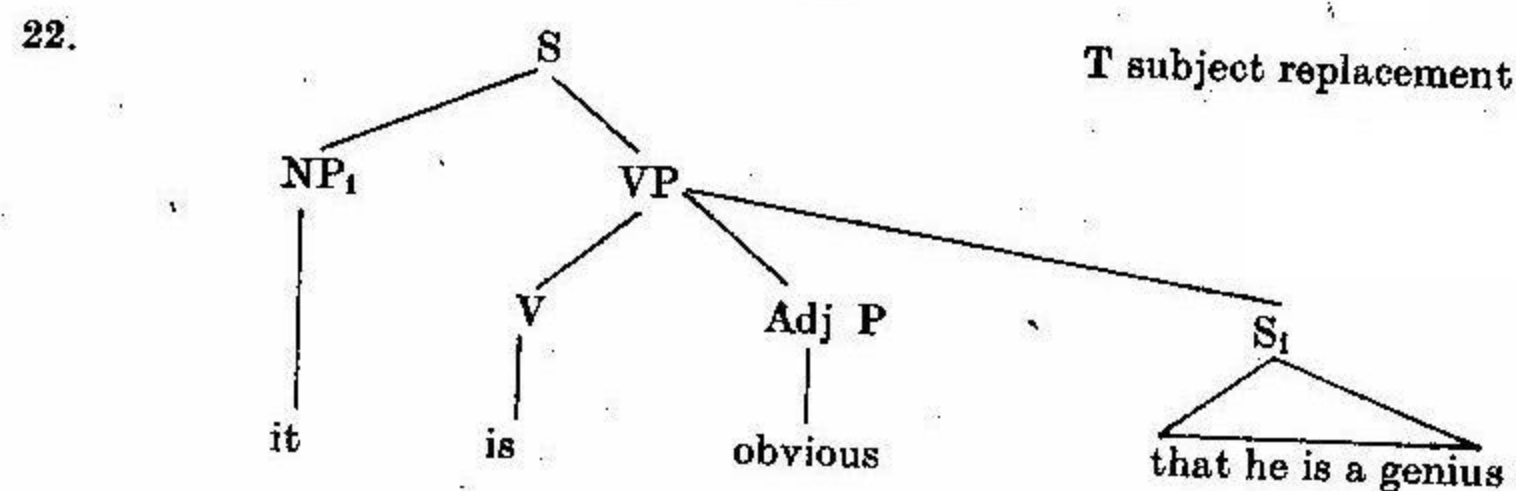
*It* correferential with *S* is present immediately before *S* node in the underlying structure. *It* is obligatorily deleted when the Extraposition does not apply and it is obligatorily retained when the Extraposition does apply. Complementizers are inserted transformationally by Complementizer Placement transformation.



The majority of linguists accept the above transformation although with minor changes sometimes, i.e., the transformational introduction of *it* e.g. Keyser and Postal (1976) or a different status of complementizers (Bresnan 1972).

## 2.2. Intraposition

An alternative approach is presented in Emonds (1970), within a broader hypothesis concerning the division of transformations into root and structure preserving. Emonds claims in his dissertation that sentences like 17 and 19 are derived from 18 and 20 respectively by Subject Replacement transformation (the transformation called Intraposition in Baker and Brame (1972)). Subject Replacement transformation is considered to be a root transformation destroying the basic structure of a sentence



The differences between Edmonds' (1970) analysis and Rosenbaum's approach do not pertain solely to the directionality of the movements of the two transformations but also to the nodal categories which dominate complement sentences. In Rosenbaum's approach, *that*-complements can be dominated exclusively by NP nodes. Rosenbaum justifies his claim on the basis of the possibility of pseudo-cleft formation with complements and passivization.

24. What is obvious is that he is a genius.

25. That Mary is beautiful is believed by anyone.

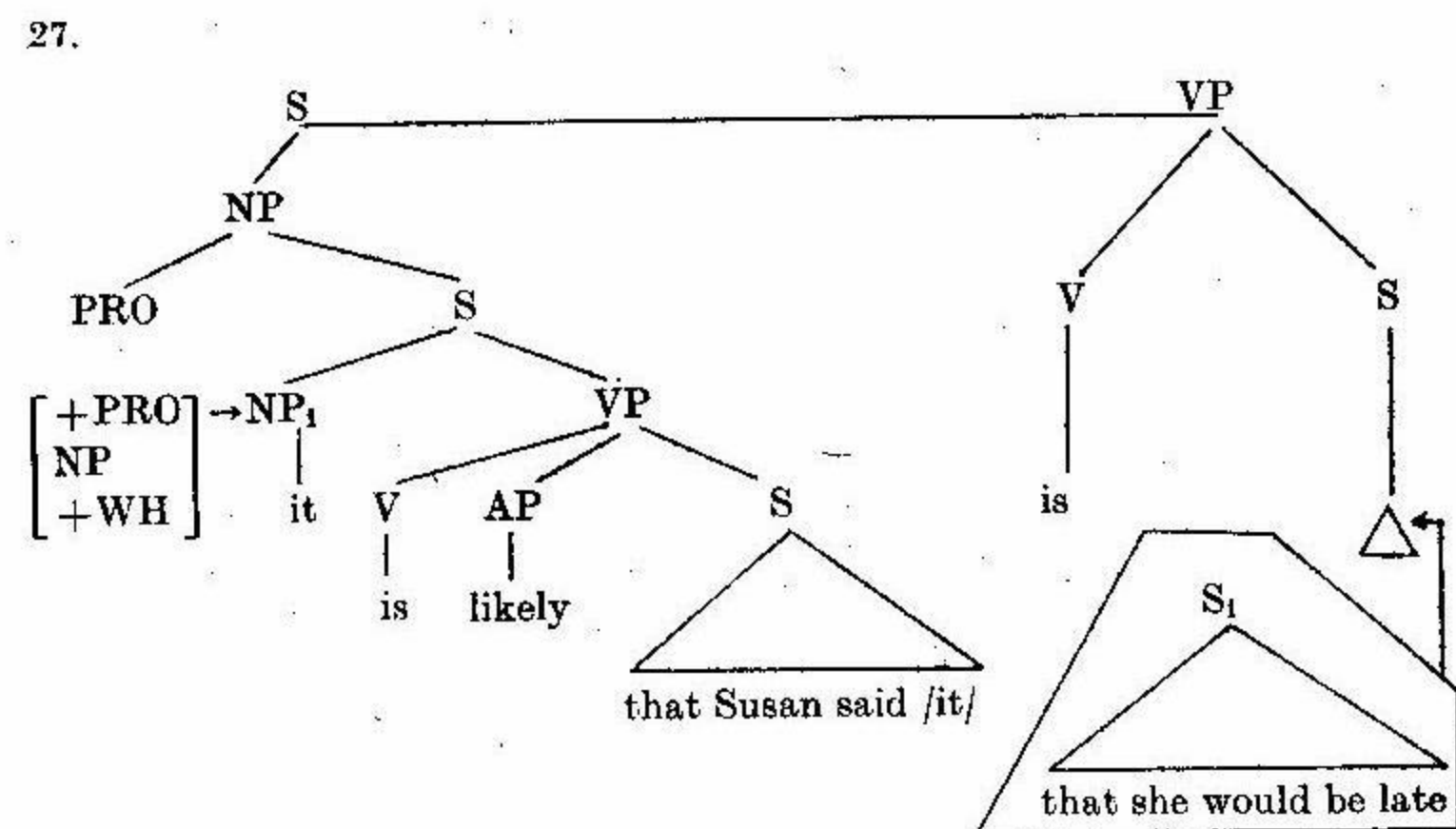
Emonds (1970) argues that *that* and *for... to* complements are never dominated by NP. Non-NP behavior is brought by Emonds to justify his claim.<sup>3</sup> Other restrictions imposed on Intraposition come from the general characteristics of root transformations i.e. root transformations are applied only once in a given sentence and they cannot be applicable in an embedded clause.

## 2.3. Extraposition-Interposition controversy

Higgins (1973) argues at length against Intraposition in favor of Extraposition on the basis of five types of constructions i.e. pseudocleft sentences, topicalization, sentential relatives and two kinds of comparative constructions. Higgins maintains that the analysis of the above sentence types can be handled in a better way when Extraposition analysis is retained. The majority of his arguments pertains to the treatment of *it* in Emonds' theory although Emonds himself states that his treatment of *it* is essentially the same as in Rosenbaum (1967). According to Higgins (1973) there is no way of preventing the derivation of 26 (Higgins' 14) if Emonds' analysis is to be maintained.

26\*. What is most is likely that Susan said (it) that she would be late.

Higgins (1973:156) presents 27 (his 13) as a derivation made in Emonds' terms which is supposed to lead to the ungrammatical 26.



<sup>3</sup> Most recently G. Horn (1977), favoring Extraposition 1, has elegantly shown that at the initial stage of derivation, complements behave like NPs since they are dominated by NP node to the moment of *it* Deletion and the pruning of NP node in NP[S]NP, where NP no longer branches. After pruning complements stop behaving like NPs.

Higgins writes that there is no coreference marking in Emonds (1970) that would prevent such a derivation. Emonds' analysis, however, can be maintained since such a constraint can easily be formulated. Such a principle may probably be stated as follows: *It* dominated by a subject NP is coreferential with an S which is immediately dominated by VP in the same clause. This constraint on coreferentiality is sufficient, at least for cases like 27 which would be rejected on the basis of the above principle. The coreferential assignment would correctly mark *that Susan said that she would be late* as coreferential with NP<sub>i</sub> in 27.

Higgins (1973) does succeed in demonstrating that Subject Replacement has to be applicable in embedded clauses (see e.g. Higgins' discussion of topicalized constructions (1973: 159 - 160). Nevertheless, he does not succeed in showing throughout his paper that the directionality of movement of complement clauses should be from left to right (Extraposition) and not vice versa.

In Kalisz 1977, (in progress) I defend Interposition against Higgins' criticism bringing out some syntactic and semantic arguments. Let me present one of them.

28. That he is a nice person and that he will do it for us is obvious.

29. It is obvious that he is a nice person and that the will do it for us.

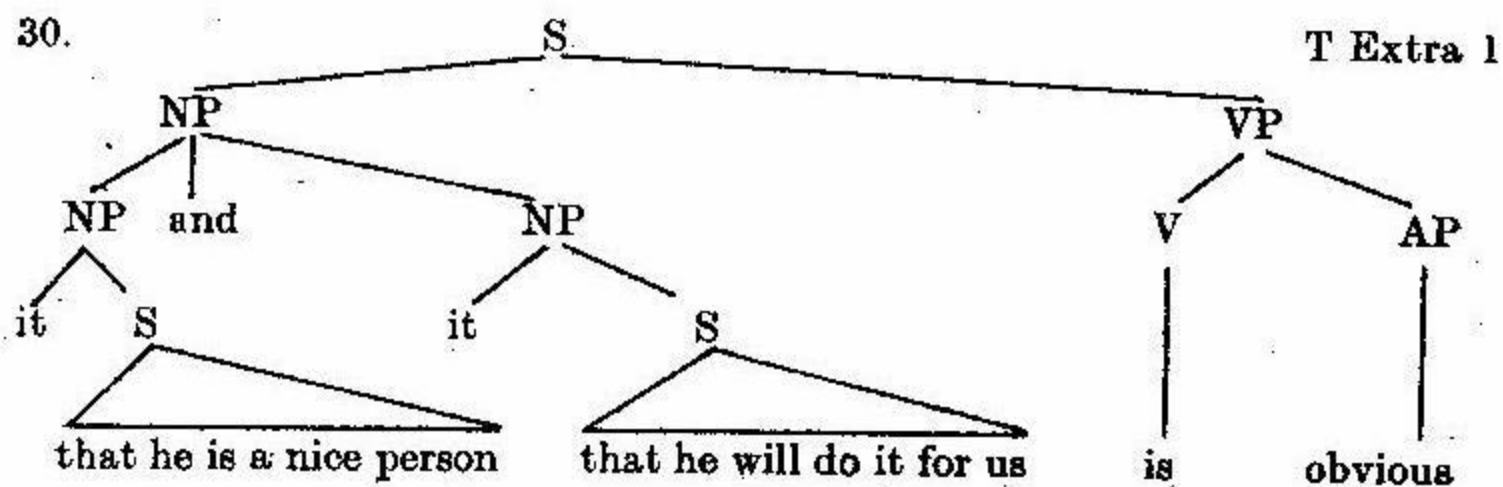
Both 28 and 29 are ambiguous having at least two readings. According to one reading the fact *that he is a nice person* is obvious and the other fact *that he will do it for us* is obvious. On the other reading a conjunction of the two facts is obvious. The difference between the two readings of 28 is syntactically marked in Polish. 28a and b correspond to the first and the second reading of 28 respectively.

28a. To, że on jest miły i to, że on to zrobi dla nas jest oczywiste.

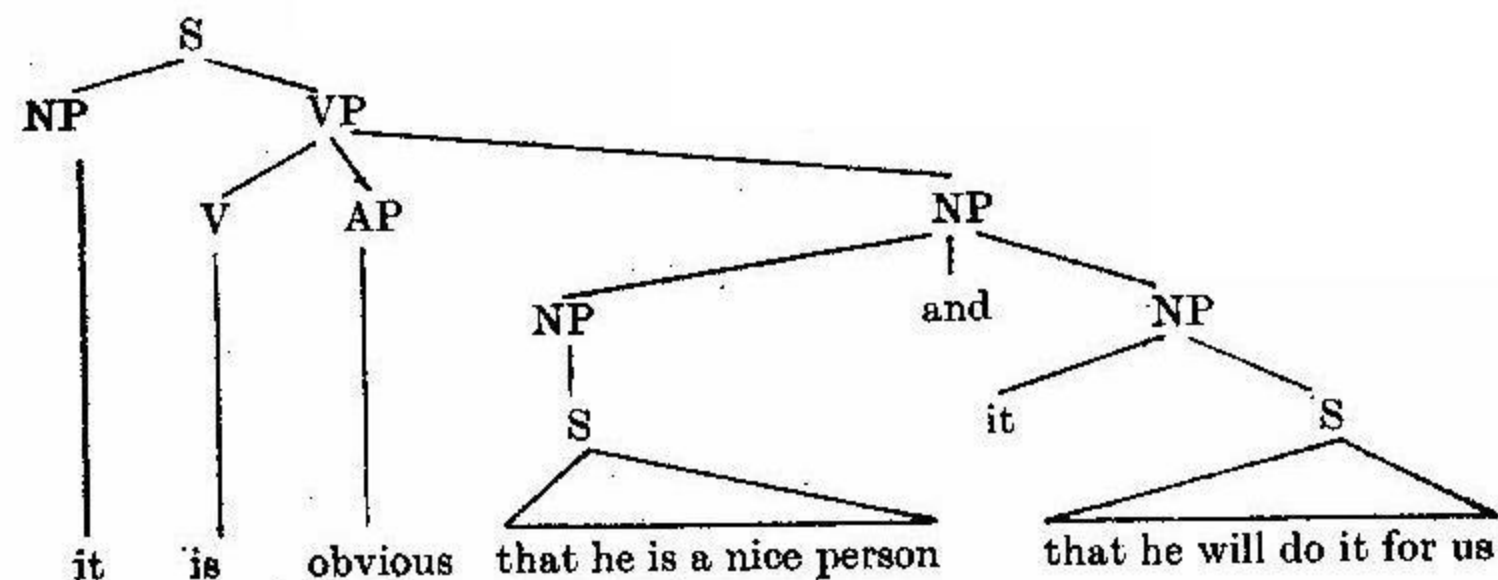
28b. To, że on jest miły i że zrobi to dla nas jest oczywiste.

To account for the conjunctive reading Extraposition 1 has to be modified, otherwise 29a would be generated.

29a\*. It is obvious that he is a nice person and it that he will do it for us.



31. = 29a



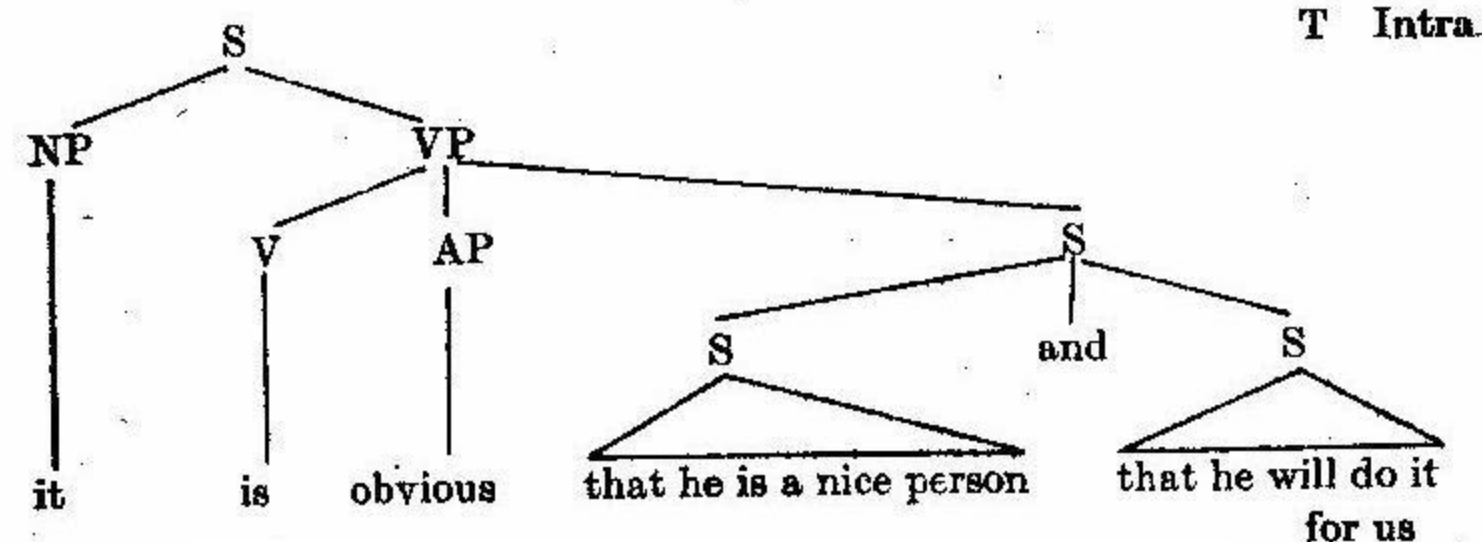
31 is blocked by a more general constraint saying that nonconstituents cannot be moved since *that he is a nice person and it that he will do it for us* is not a constituent.

If one would claim that both *its* are affected by Extraposition, then 32 would be produced.

32\*. It, it is obvious that he is a nice person and that he will do it for us

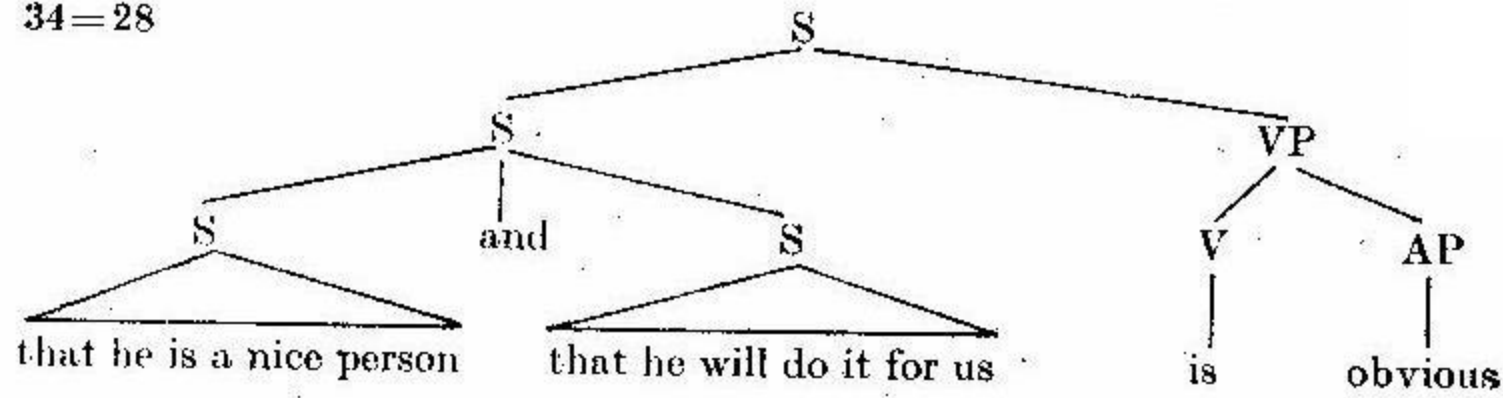
Extraposition 1-analysis can be saved by postulating an *ad hoc* constraint to the effect that only one *it* remains in a subject position and all other occurrences of *it*, as sisters of complements, are deleted. Furthermore, the correct assignment of *it* in the underlying structure is probably to the NP dominating the conjunction. I have not met, however, such a formulation and it does not follow from Rosenbaum 1967 analysis. Intraposition, however, does not need any additional constraints or modifications in order to account for the conjunctive readings of 28 and 29.

32. = 29.





34=28



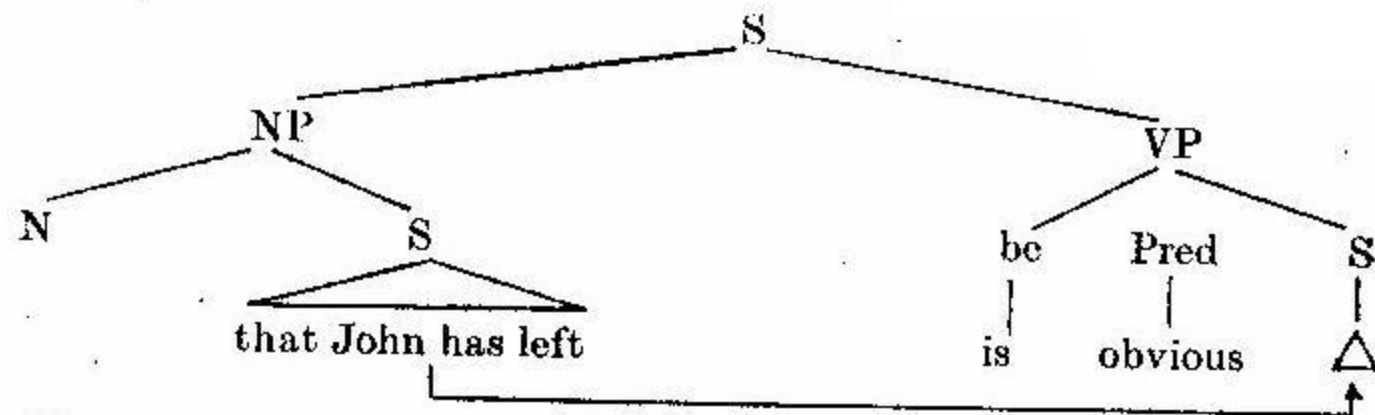
For the other readings of 28 and 29 Extraposition and Intraposition analyses are almost mirror images of each other, disregarding nodal assignments.

2.4. Extraposition 2

Emonds (1976) presents still a different analysis of the phenomenon. In his more recent work he formulates a new rule of extraposition. He does not, however, argue against his earlier analysis in terms of Intraposition stating that both can probably be maintained with equal results. Extraposition as formulated in Emonds (1976:122) requires empty nodes to which *it* and the complement are inserted.

35.	X	NP <sup>[4S]</sup>		Y	S <sup>[4]Z</sup>	
	SI	1	2 3	4	5 6	
	SC	1	it Ø	4	3 6	

36.



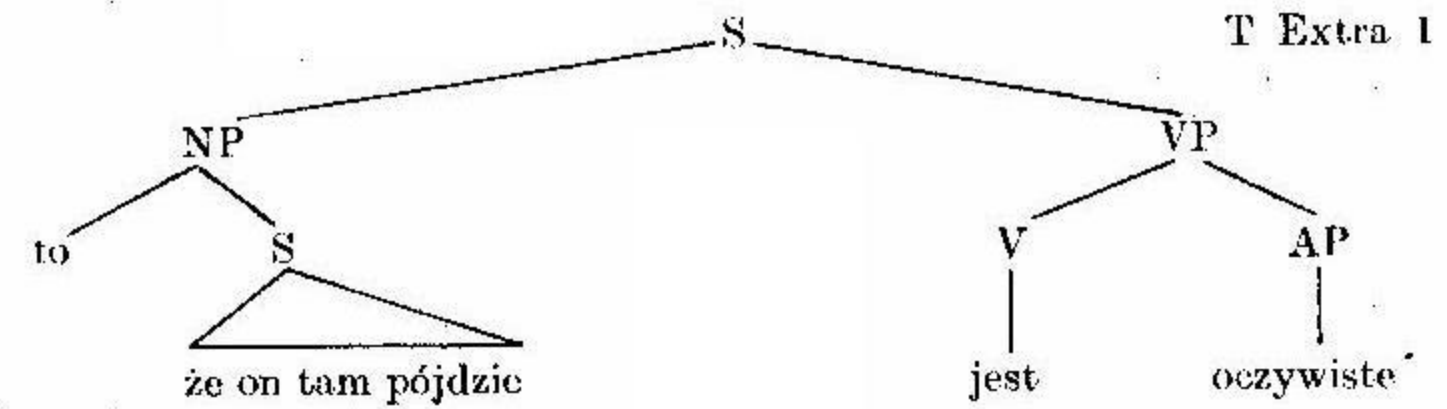
The underlying structure possesses an empty node under N which is a sister constituent of the complement in the subject position. This node is deleted when Extraposition does not apply.

3. The three approaches in Polish and in English-Polish contrastive grammar

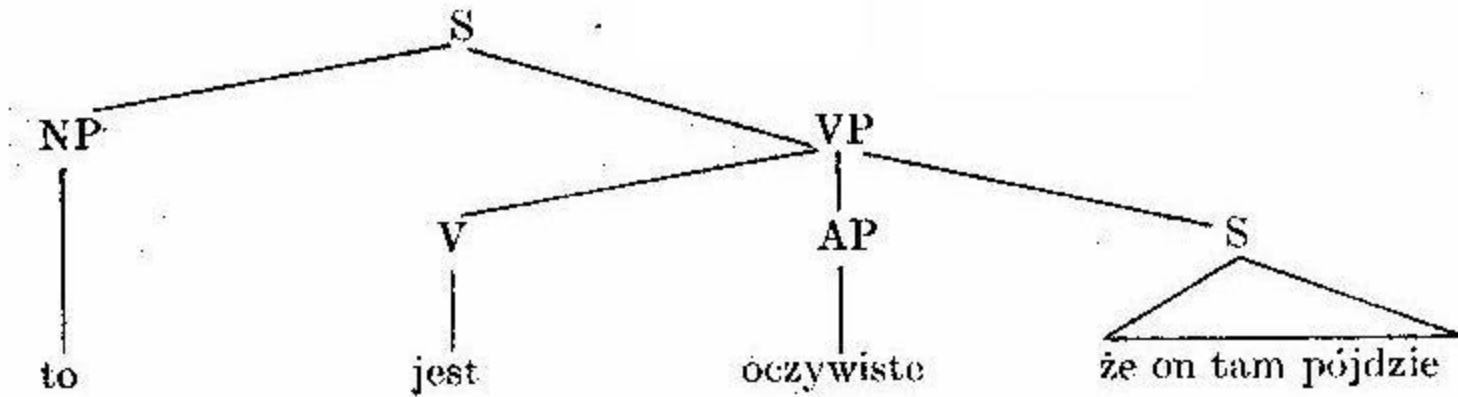
Let us now consider the three approaches in terms of their applicability to Polish data. The evaluation of the approaches will be based on the number and seriousness of revisions necessary for the derivation of 1-11.

3.1. Extraposition 1

37=(1)



38 (3)



The existence of *to* in the underlying structure is motivated for Polish since it may be preserved throughout the operation. The underlying structure 37 (1) is identical with the underlying structure for the English sentence 2a. The difference between 1 and 2a consists in the application of the obligatory Pronoun Deletion transformation as formulated in Rosenbaum 1967 for English sentences like 2a. Such a transformation is blocked in Polish dialect 1 and is optional for dialect 2. 38 is identical with the extraposed sentence 3 which is possible only in dialect 2. 4 can be derived by Polish *to* Deletion transformation.

39. to Deletion	X	NP[toX]	być	Y	S	Z
(optional)	SI	1	2	3	4 5 6	
	SC	1	Ø	3	4 5 6	

39 is independently motivated for a variety of "subjectless" Polish sentences like *Jest ładnie*. *To* Deletion is a different transformation for the English-like Pronoun Deletion from [to S] which has to be blocked for dialect 1.

Polish *to* Deletion has to be applied after *być* Deletion so that 11 can be produced.

11. To jasne, że on zdobędzie pierwszą nagrodę.

40. <i>być</i> Deletion (optional)	X	NP[to]	być	Y	S	Z
SI	1	2	3	4	5	6
SC	1	2	Ø	4	5	6

*Być* Deletion is independently motivated for other sentences or sentence equivalents like 41.

41. To jasne jak słońce.

It is claimed in this paper that sentences like 9 are derived from structures like 38 by *to* Dismount transformation.

9. Jasne, jest że on zdobędzie pierwszą nagrodę.

42. <i>to</i> Dismount <sup>4</sup> (optional)	X	NP[to]	jest	Adj	S	Z
SI	1	2	3	4	5	6
SC	1	4	3	Ø	5	6

42 is presented as a replacement transformation since Adjective Fronting would produce unacceptable sentences like 43.

43\*?. Jasne to jest, że on zdobędzie pierwszą nagrodę.

It can be claimed that Adjective Fronting would be applicable after *to* Deletion. However, *to* Deletion has to be applied after *być* Deletion because 9 would not be produced. The order of transformations should be formulated as follows in order to account for 1–11 in the best way:

44. I. Optional *to* Deletion from NP to S in dialect 2. Blocked for dialect 1.
- II. Extraposition 1
- III. Polish *to* Dismount
- IV. Polish *być* Deletion
- V. Polish *to* Deletion

Polish sentences like 10 can be derived by the application of either I, III, IV or II, V.

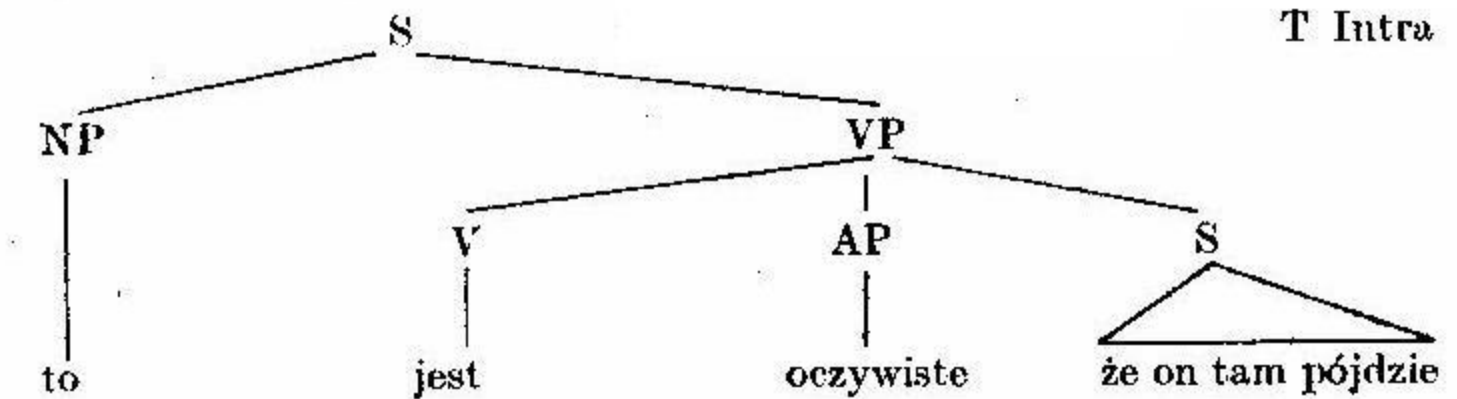
III, IV, and V are transformations that are applicable only in Polish, therefore English sentences 4a, 8a-11a are ungrammatical. I is applicable only in Polish dialect 2 and it is optional. However, it is obligatory in English when II is not applied. For that reason English sentences 1a and 5a, where I has not been applied, without the application of II are unacceptable, and corresponding Polish sentences 1 and 5 are perfect.

It will be noted in the final section of this paper that III has to be reformulated to allow the replacement of *to* by nouns. It will be claimed that III, substituting nouns for pronouns, has to be postulated for English too.

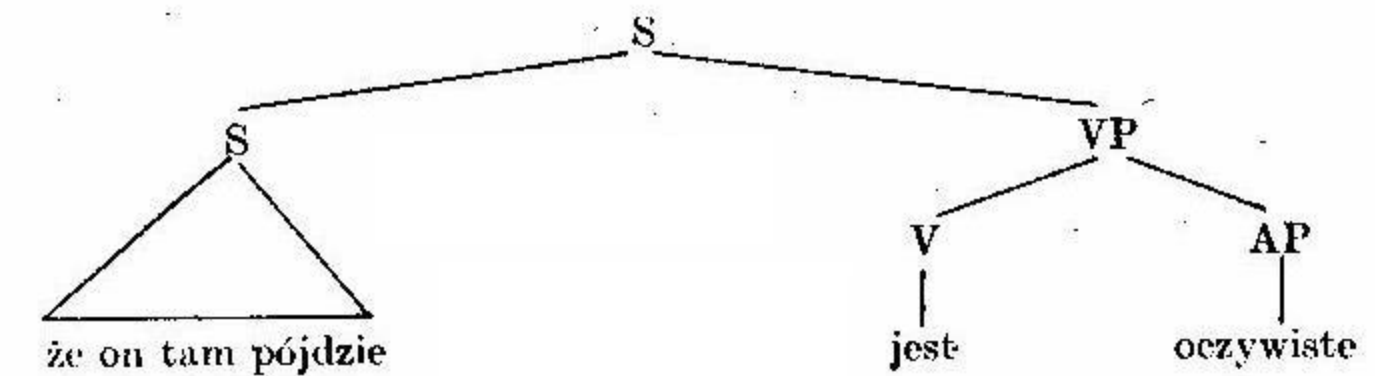
<sup>4</sup> 42 is called Dismount in order not to be confused with Emonds' *it* Replacement.

### 3.2. Intraposition in Polish

45 (3)

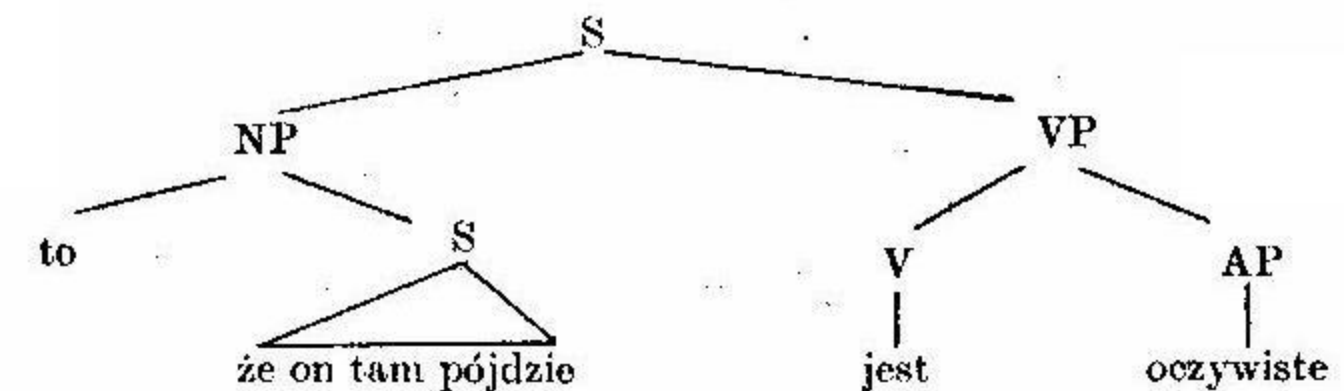


46 (2)



Intraposition, as it was formulated in Emonds 1970 cannot account for sentences like 1 or 5. The node [to S] seems to be absolutely necessary for Polish in the intraposed position. Intraposition can no longer be viewed as Subject Replacement transformation if it would claim to account for Polish data. There is a possibility of saving Intraposition by its reformulation. Intraposition would not be a root transformation but would have to be structure preserving. The conclusion is similar to that in Higgins (1973) study or in Postal (1974), though each arrived at on different grounds.

47 (output of revised Intraposition)



47 is nothing else but an underlying structure in terms of Extraposition 1 analysis. 47 is a base-generated string in terms of Intraposition and the extra-



posed sentence within the concurrent theory. In such a formulation the two analyses are mirror images of each other and there seems to be no evidence to give one preference over the other. 44 would have to be reformulated if the revised Intraposition were maintained. III—V would be applicable before Intraposition only if Intraposition were not applied to a given string

### 3.4. Extraposition 2 and Polish

Extraposition as presented in Emonds (1976) does two things. It inserts *it* under the empty node N and moves the complement sentence under the empty S node, which is a constituent of VP. In Polish dialect 1 *to* would be inserted under the exactly opposite condition i.e., it would insert *to* under the empty node N when Extraposition has not been applied to a given string and the insertion of *to* would be blocked, i.e. the empty N node would be deleted when Extraposition is applied. This correctly matches the situation in dialect 1, which is exactly the opposite from English. For dialect 2, however, *to* insertion makes no sense since *to* can be present both before and after Extraposition.

3.5. The conclusion is that Extraposition 1 is the best suited operation for the analysis of Polish subject clauses since it requires no essential modification and it can be easily supplemented by a series of transformations necessary for the derivation of some Polish sentences containing subject clauses. The virtue of this approach is that it contains [to S] node in the underlying structure, which seems to be indispensable for the analysis of Polish subject clauses, especially in dialect 2.

### 5. Some further cases

I have been puzzled for some time by sentences like 48—50.

48. The fact is that we have no choice.

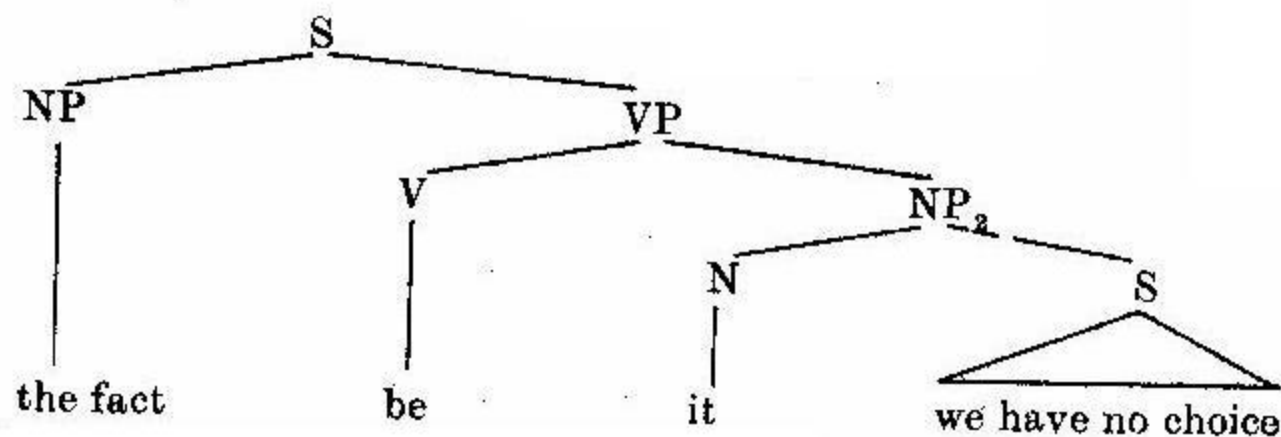
49. The truth is that we have no choice.

50. The point is that the President should lead this country.

(Time)

48—50 have been analysed traditionally as in 51. For the most recent analysis in these terms see G. Horn (1977).

51.



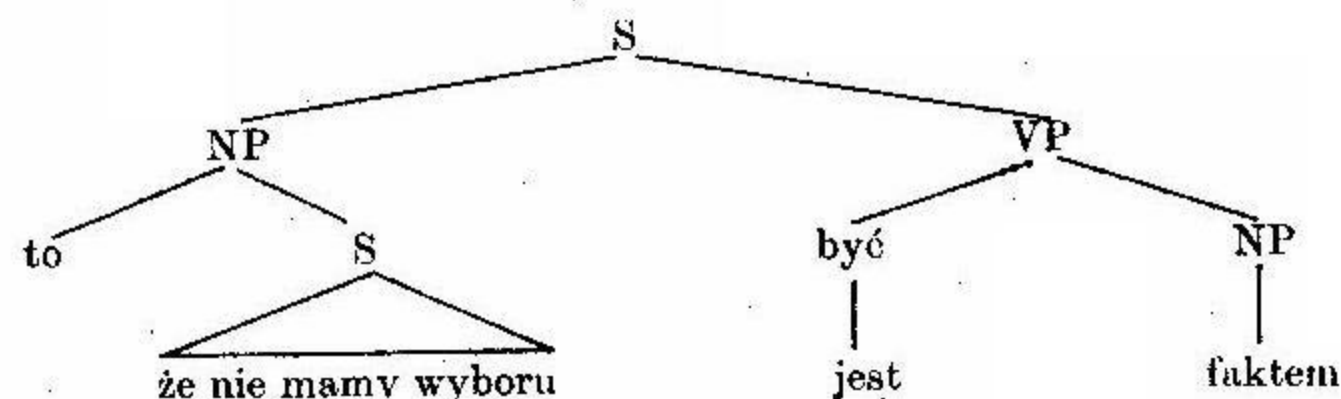
Polish equivalent sentences to 48 and 49 are 48a and 49a.

48a. Faktem jest, że nie mamy wyboru.

49a. Prawdą jest, że nie mamy wyboru.

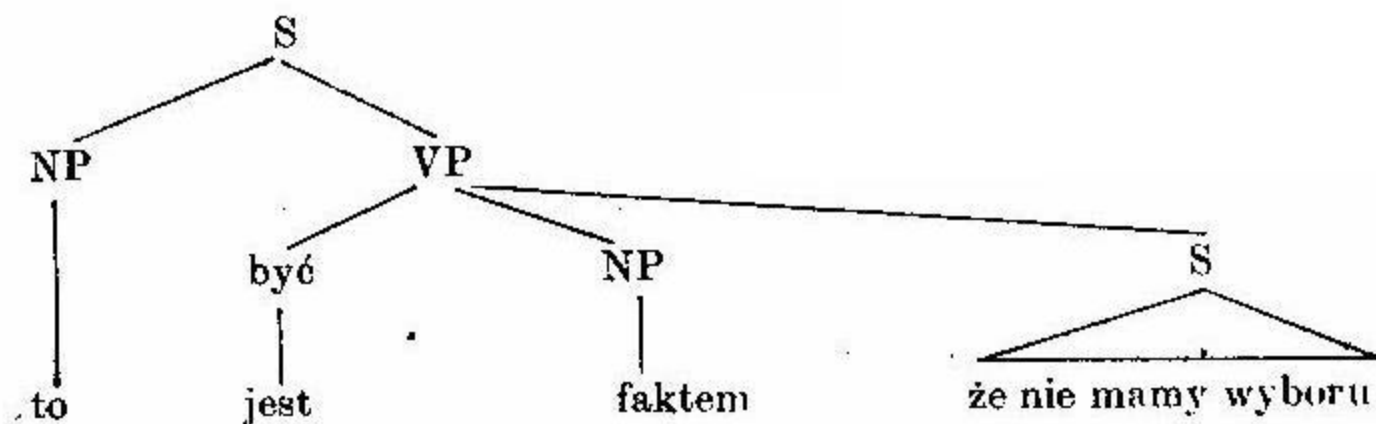
Polish initial NPs in the above sentences are in the instrumental case and they have never been viewed as subjects in Polish grammars. The correct, I believe, analysis of these sentences is as follows:

52.



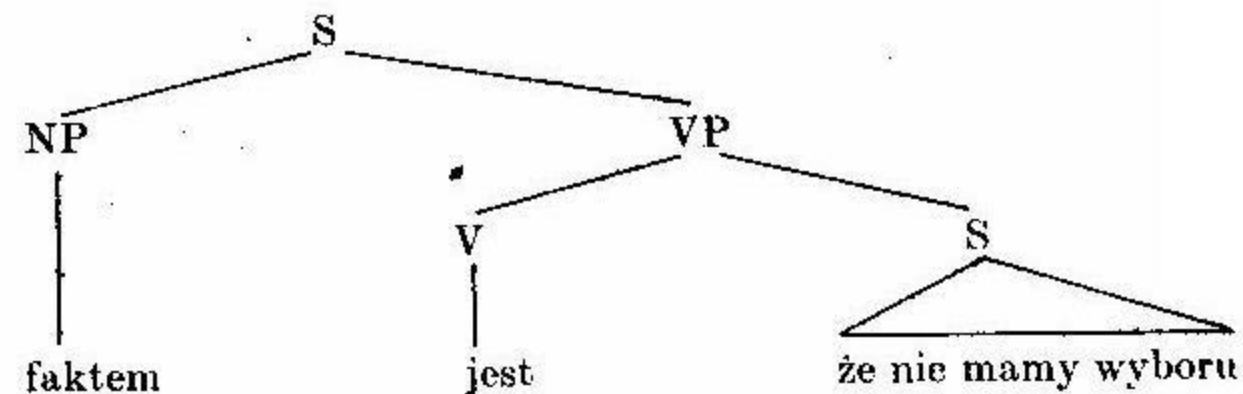
Extraposition 1 triggers:

53.



To Dismount produces:

54.



It seems that such an analysis can throw some light on English sentences like 48—50. Since English has almost no surface case marking it is not surprising that subjecthood may be perceived in English in a slightly different way

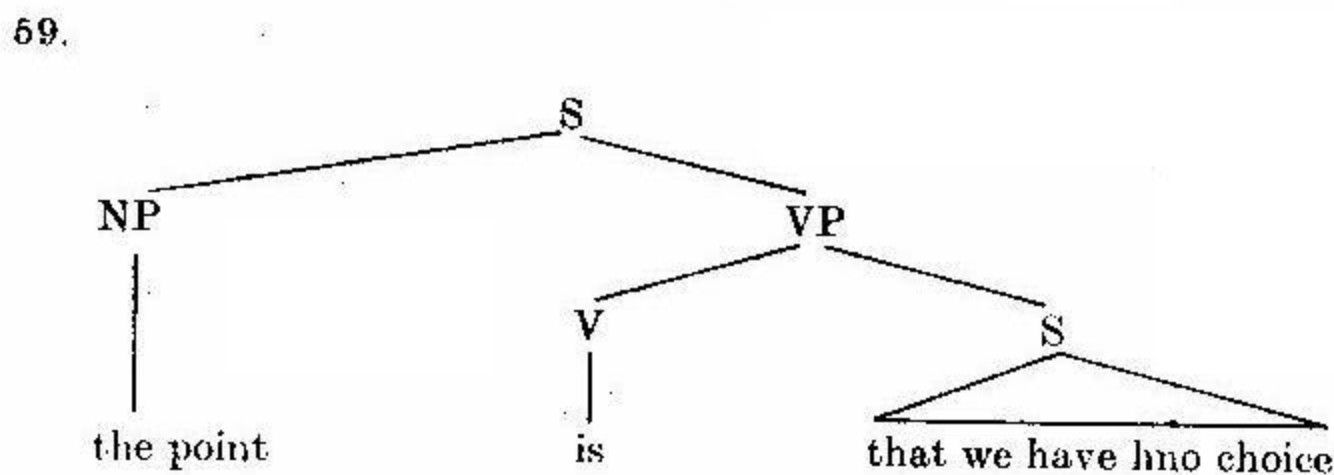
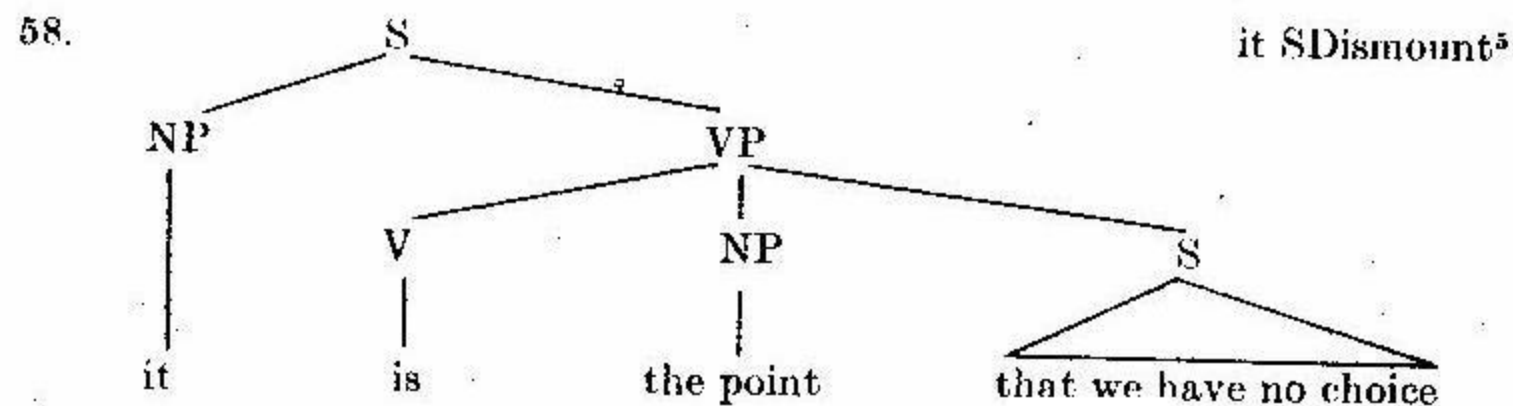
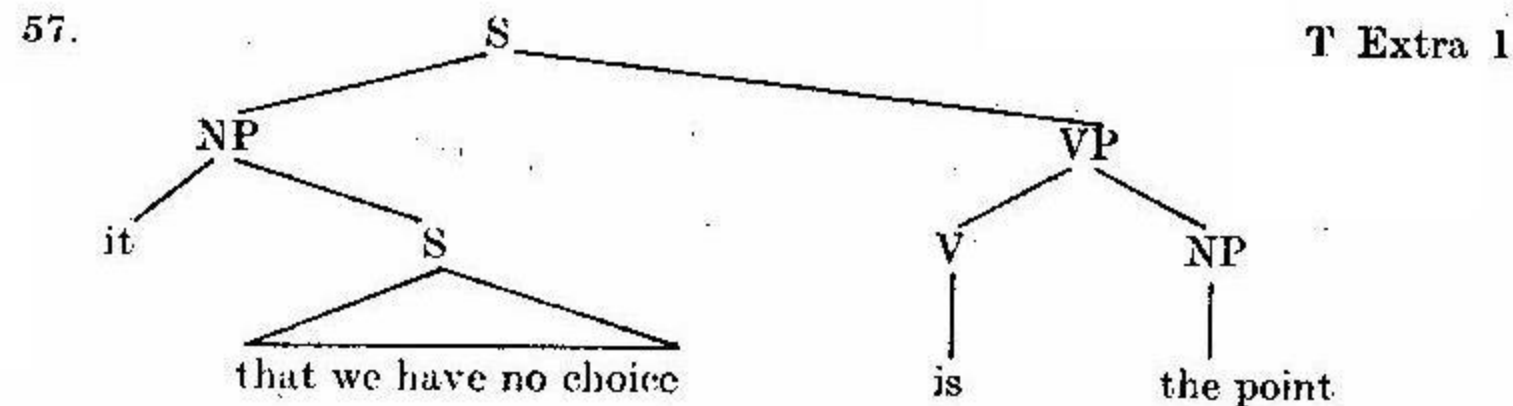
On the other hand it would be somewhat odd to analyze sentences like 48–50 as completely different structures from 49a and 48a though the absence of the equivalent construction in Polish of *the point is...* may partially motivate such a different treatment.

Some of my Berkeley informants considered sentences like 55 and 56 as acceptable.

55? That we have no choice is the point.

56. That he went there is a fact.

If the above sentences are acceptable the question concerning their relationship with sentences like 48–50 arises. My guess is that sentences like 48–50 are derived from underlying structures which are similar to 55 and 56 by means of Extraposition and *it* Dismount, similar operation to Polish *to* Dismount.



<sup>5</sup> It is possible that such a transformation has already been postulated for English, and it is even possible that I have seen it but I do not remember when and where.

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