

INTRANSITIVE PREPOSITIONS IN POLISH¹

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1. Introduction

Traditional definitions of the category 'preposition' (P) in the English and Polish literature exclude the possibility of analysing certain lexical items as 'intransitive prepositions' — lexical items with the distributional properties of prepositional phrases (PP's) but without a complement. Curme's (1935) definition of prepositions is representative of the tradition in the English literature. According to Curme, a preposition is 'a word that indicates a relation between the noun or pronoun it governs and another word, which may be a verb, an adjective, or another noun or pronoun' (1935:87). A similar definition is adopted in contemporary Polish work on Polish. Saloni and Świdziński, for example, define prepositions as 'a class of uninflected items, whose unique form cannot appear on its own, has a relating function, and requires a specific case value' (1985:95).² Given either of these definitions, a preposition always takes a complement.

As far as English is concerned, such definitions have been called into question in works of Jespersen (1924), Emonds (1972), and Jackendoff (1973, 1977). As far as Polish is concerned, however, they are quite widely accepted.

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² [*Przymyki to*] klasa leksemów nieodmiennych, których jedyna forma nie jest używana samodzielnie, ma funkcję łączącą i wymaga określonej wartości przypadkowej. (Saloni and Świdziński 1985:95).

In the present paper, I shall briefly present arguments for distinguishing a class of intransitive prepositions in English (Section 2), and then argue that Polish too has intransitive prepositions (Section 3). The argument involves a comparison between prepositions and verbs, and an examination of the distributional properties of the items in question. Then (Section 4), I shall present a critique of Saloni and Świdziński's (1985) argument that prepositions in Polish are not heads of phrases. In conclusion (Section 5), I shall note some implications of the proposed analysis.

In view of the fact that in some grammatical work, the items under consideration are regarded as 'adverbs', I shall use the term 'prepositional adverbs' from Quirk *et al.* (1985:662) as a neutral term of reference for them, without adopting the view that they really are adverbs. On the contrary, the case for the recognition of intransitive prepositions rests in part on evidence that 'prepositional adverbs' are not 'adverbs'.

2. Intransitive prepositions in English

The notion 'intransitive' preposition has been developed on the basis of theoretical as well as empirical considerations. Jespersen's (1924) argument, echoed in Emonds (1972:547) and Jackendoff (1973:346), is of the former type.

Jespersen seeks to establish a greater regularity in the system of parts of speech by drawing parallels between verbs and certain 'particles', which include prepositional adverbs.³ He suggests (p. 88) that just as verbs like *sing* in his examples in (1) below can be 'incomplete' (i.e. 'transitive') and 'complete' (i.e. 'intransitive'),

- (1) a. He *sings* a song.
b. He *sings*.

so should prepositions be classified in these terms, given that items like *in* and *before* can occur both with and without a complement. His examples in (2) and (3) illustrate.⁴

- (2) a. He was *in the house*.
b. He was *in*.

³ For Jespersen (1924:91), 'particles' are words that cannot be classified as nouns, adjectives, pronouns, or verbs. Apart from prepositions, this class includes adverbs, coordinating and subordinating conjunctions, and interjections.

⁴ The terms 'transitive' and 'intransitive' preposition refer to prepositions that do and do not take a complement, respectively. The term 'transitive' verb is usually applied to those verbs that take a complement and have participial forms that appear in passive constructions. Thus, 'transitive' verbs are only a subset of verbs that can take a complement. Jespersen's term 'incomplete' verbs seems to be appropriate for all complement-taking verbs.

- (3) a. He had been there *before breakfast*.
b. He had been there *before*.

What seems to be tacitly assumed in Jespersen's argument has been made explicit by Emonds (1972:547) and repeated by Jackendoff (1973:346). This is that the morphological identity and semantic similarity between the preposition *in* or *before* and the prepositional adverb *in* or *before* suggests that one may be missing a generalization by placing these and similar items in two separate world classes. It looks, then, as if we should say, as Emonds (p. 548) and Jackendoff (p. 348) do, that some prepositions (e.g. *with*, *at*, and *for*) subcategorize for an obligatory NP complement, some (e.g. *before*, *down*, and *around*) subcategorize for an optional complement, and that certain other items with the same distribution as ordinary PP's (e.g. *apart*, *beforehand*, and *away*) are prepositions that subcategorize for no complement. This gives us the following lexical entries for the three types of prepositions:

- (4) a. $\left[\begin{array}{c} \text{with} \\ \text{P} \\ +[_ \text{NP}] \end{array} \right]$ b. $\left[\begin{array}{c} \text{in} \\ \text{P} \\ +[_ (\text{NP})] \end{array} \right]$ c. $\left[\begin{array}{c} \text{apart} \\ \text{P} \\ +[_] \end{array} \right]$

This proposal is quite plausible. It should, however, be supported by empirical considerations. We can do this by a comparison of the distributional properties of prepositional adverbs with prototypical, 'ordinary' PP's on the one hand and with prototypical adverb phrases (ADVP's) on the other. By a 'prototypical' PP, I mean a PP consisting of a preposition and its NP complement, and by a 'prototypical' ADVP, I mean an ADVP headed by a central member of the category 'adverb' — an item related to an adjective with, in English, a *-ly* suffix. If it can be shown that prepositional adverbs have the same distribution as PP's but not as ADVP's, then it can be claimed that they are prepositions and not adverbs.

It follows that the fact that prepositional adverbs can appear in the adverbial position does not have any bearing on the question of their category status because, as illustrated in (5), both PP's and ADVP's can appear in that position.⁵

- (5) Peter read the minutes $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \textit{beforehand.} \\ \textit{at lunch.} \\ \textit{previously.} \end{array} \right.$

⁵ As Quirk *et al.* (1985:49) note, it is important to distinguish between the category 'adverbial' and the category 'adverb'. (The Polish counterparts of these terms, are respectively, *okolicznik* and *przysłówek*.) The former is a functional category like 'subject' (*podmiot*), 'object' (*dopełnienie*), etc., and the latter is a lexical category of the same type as 'noun' (*rzeczownik*), 'verb' (*czasownik*), etc. Some definitions of syntactic categories imply that only adverbs can function as adverbials.

Four constructions in which prepositional adverbs have the same distribution as PP's have been considered by Emonds (pp. 550-554) in his argument for intransitive prepositions.⁶ Below, I shall give examples of a construction not considered by Emonds, which I think make the point quite forcefully.

The construction involves pre-modification of adjectives. As we can see in (6) and (7), in the pre-adjectival position, prepositional adverbs share their distribution with prototypical PP's but not with prototypical ADVP's.⁷

- (6) a. **In recent days* } **Since* } *acquired* documents reveal the truth.
 Recently }
- b. We always buy **opposite the abbey* } *grown* vegetables.
 **away* }
 locally }
- (7) **In recent years* } **Since* } *poor* people are now rich.
 Recently }

Given the similarity between prepositional adverbs and PP's, and the contrast between prepositional adverbs and ADVP's, it can be concluded that prepositional adverbs are prepositions, and not adverbs.

3. The Polish data

In this section, I shall argue that certain Polish preposition-like items which appear without a complement should be analysed as intransitive prepositions. (8)–(11) contain the relevant examples.

- (8) a. *Autobus zatrzymał się obok dworca.*
 bus stopped PRT by station(GEN)
 b. *Autobus zatrzymał się obok.*
- (9) a. *Bank zbudowano naprzeciw muzeum.*
 bank was-built opposite museum(GEN)
 b. *Bank zbudowano naprzeciw.*
- (10) a. *Wokół domu chodzą kaczki.*
 around house(GEN) walked ducks
 b. *Wokół chodzą kaczki.*

⁶ All Emonds' arguments are repeated by Jackendoff (1973:345-348).

⁷ I am grateful to Mr T. F. Hoad for providing me with the example in (7). For some speakers, all examples in (6) are fairly acceptable.

- (11) a. *Wewnątrz domu* było pełno dymu.
 inside house (GEN) was much smoke
 b. *Wewnątrz* było pełno dymu.

The items in question are standardly classified as 'prepositions' when followed by an NP in sentences like (8a)–(11a), but when not followed by a complement, as in (8b)–(11b), they are 'adverbs' (*przysłówki*; cf. Sambor (1971:126-128); Grzegorzycowa (1975:116)) or 'particle-adverbs' (*partykulo-przysłówki*; cf. Grochowski (1984:259); Saloni and Świdziński (1985:95-97; 115)).⁸ According to Wątor (1969:373), what I describe as prepositional adverbs are regarded as prepositions used as adverbs. According to Klemensiewicz (1937:67), the items in question in (8a)–(11a) are 'defective prepositions' (*przyimki niewłaściwe*), which are adverbs when they appear on their own.

The multiple classification of these items as prepositions and as adverbs resembles the traditional classification of similar items in English. In response to this classification, we can recall Jespersen's comparison between 'incomplete' and 'complete' verbs and 'incomplete' and 'complete' prepositions (cf. p. 172 above). As illustrated in (12), Polish also has verbs of both types and so Jespersen's case for intransitive prepositions based on this comparison is equally plausible for Polish.

- (12) a. *Zespół zaśpiewał piosenkę.*
 band sang song
 b. *Zespół zaśpiewał.*

As far as I am aware, Polish data have not been considered in the light of this argument. It is my task, then, to assess the viability of this argument for Polish by considering the empirical evidence for analysing *obok*, etc. in (8b)–(11b) as intransitive prepositions.

As in my discussion of English prepositional adverbs, I shall compare the distributional properties of Polish prepositional adverbs with prototypical PP's and prototypical ADVP's. The latter, in Polish, are phrases headed by forms related to adjectives, ending in *-o* or *-e* such as, for example, *daleko* 'far' and *wcześnie* 'early', whose related adjectives are, respectively, *daleki* 'far' and *wczesny* 'early'.

⁸ According to Saloni (1974:100), and Saloni and Świdziński (1985:95, 97), the class of 'particle-adverbs' is a heterogeneous set of items, which do not meet the criteria for any other lexical category, including prepositions and adjective-related adverbs. It resembles somewhat Jespersen's class of 'particles' (cf. note 3 above). In my argument below, the fact that prepositional adverbs do not pattern with prototypical ADVP's is not of any consequence for this position. However, the fact that prepositional adverbs have the same distribution as prototypical PP's argues that they should not be regarded as members of an unrelated category with unpredictable properties.

We look first a subjectless predicative construction such as in (13).

- (13) Dziadkowi było blisko do dworca.
 granddad(DAT) it-was near to station
 'It was close to the station for granddad.'

This contains an experiencer NP in the dative case and a predicative ADVP. (14) illustrates that neither the prepositional adverbs nor the corresponding PP's from (8)—(11) can appear as predicates in this construction.⁹

- (14) *Dziadkowi było $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{obok (dworca).} \\ \text{naprzeciw (muzeum).} \\ \text{wokół (domu).} \\ \text{wewnątrz (domu).} \end{array} \right.$

Here, then, we have one example of a contrast between prepositional adverbs and PP's on the one hand, and ADVP's on the other.

We turn next to a construction with the verb *wyglądać* 'look' in the sense of 'seem' or 'appear to be'. As illustrated in (15), an ADVP can appear as its complement.

- (15) Stąd te drzewa wyglądały bardzo daleko.
 from-here these trees looked very far

However, neither a PP nor a prepositional adverb can appear in this position:

- (16) *Stąd te drzewa wyglądały $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{obok (dworca).} \\ \text{naprzeciw (muzeum).} \\ \text{wokół (domu).} \\ \text{wewnątrz (domu).} \end{array} \right.$

Finally, we consider the intensifier *tuż*. Like *right* in English, it can modify PP's and prepositional adverbs but not equivalent ADVP's.¹⁰ The examples in (17) illustrate that *tuż* cannot co-occur with ADVP's.

⁹ In accordance with standard practice, in (14) and subsequently, optional elements in example sentences are marked off by parentheses.

All three categories, ADVP's, PP's, and prepositional adverbs can occur as predicates with *być* in non-subjectless sentences, eg.:

- (i) Bank był $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{dalej} \\ \text{naprzeciw (muzeum).} \end{array} \right.$
 bank was $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{further} \\ \text{opposite museum} \end{array} \right.$

This construction, then, does not provide any evidence for the category status of prepositional adverbs.

¹⁰ The co-occurrence of *tuż* with PP's in Polish is somewhat restricted in comparison with *right* in English.

- (17) a. Adam mieszka tuż blisko.
 Adam lives right near
 b. *Wypadek zdarzył się tuż poprzednio.
 accident happened PRT right previously

The examples in (18) illustrate that *tuż* can modify PP's and prepositional adverbs.

- (18) a. Autobus zatrzymał się tuż obok (dworca).
 bus stopped PRT right by station
 b. Bank zbudowano tuż naprzeciw (muzeum).
 bank was-built right opposite museum
 c. ?Tuż wokół (garażu) chodziły kaczki.
 right around garage walked ducks
 d. Tuż wewnątrz (domu) było pełno dymu.
 right inside house was much smoke

It turns out, then, that not only a general comparison between verbs and prepositions but also the distributional properties of prepositional adverbs suggest that they should be analysed as intransitive prepositions.

These intransitive prepositions differ from other prepositions, such as *przed* 'in front', *koło* 'by', *za* 'behind', etc. when they appear without a complement. These prepositions can appear on their own only in a specific linguistic context, such as illustrated in (19), which is an exchange between two speakers.

- (19) A: Mam postawić ten wazon koło stołu czy na?
 have-I put this vase by table or on
 'Shall I put this vase by the table or on the table?'
 B: Postaw koło.
 put by

Intransitive prepositions can also appear in such contexts, as the following example illustrates.

- (20) A: Posadzić te warzywa obok szklarni czy wewnątrz?
 plant these vegetables by greenhouse or inside
 'Shall I plant these vegetables by the greenhouse or inside?'
 B: Posadź wewnątrz.
 plant inside

Apart from this, however, intransitive prepositions can appear without a specific preceding discourse. Thus, there is a clear contrast in acceptability in the following examples with intransitive prepositions (similar to the examples in (8b)—(11b)) and with transitive prepositions with no com-

plement:

- (21) a. $\left. \begin{array}{l} \textit{Obok} \\ \textit{Naprzeciw} \\ *Kolo \end{array} \right\} \text{wybudowali nam lotnisko.}$
 $\left. \begin{array}{l} \text{by} \\ \text{opposite} \\ \text{by} \end{array} \right\} \text{they-built us airport}$
- b. $\left. \begin{array}{l} \textit{Wokół} \\ *Nad \end{array} \right\} \text{mieliśmy piękny widok.}$
 $\left. \begin{array}{l} \textit{around} \\ \textit{over} \end{array} \right\} \text{we-had beautiful view}$
- c. $\left. \begin{array}{l} \textit{Wewnątrz} \\ *W \end{array} \right\} \text{było całkiem ciepło.}$
 $\left. \begin{array}{l} \textit{inside} \\ \textit{in} \end{array} \right\} \text{was quite warm}$

Given this contrast, it is appropriate not to regard the occurrences of prepositions like *kolo* in special contexts like (19) as instances of intransitive prepositions.

4. Polish prepositions as heads of phrases

Having presented the case for intransitive prepositions in Polish, I now return to Saloni and Świdziński's (1985) definition of prepositions (cf. p. 171 above). In particular, I shall consider their view that prepositions in Polish are not heads of phrases.

The data in (8)–(11) above call into question this definition, especially, the clause stating that the unique form of a preposition 'cannot appear on its own'. Saloni and Świdziński would most likely agree that *obok* 'by', *naprzeciw* 'opposite', etc. are prepositions when followed by an NP and these forms — as we have seen — do appear on their own without special linguistic context (cf. (21) above). I think that the lack of discussion in their work of the data I have considered constitutes a significant gap in their account of prepositions and prepositional phrases.

Saloni and Świdziński's inclusion of this clause in the definition of prepositions seems to be a consequence of their conception of heads of phrases, which — I shall argue — is unsatisfactory irrespective of the 'intransitive prepositions' data. Since Saloni and Świdziński give a good deal of prominence to the idea that prepositions are not heads of phrases in Polish and since in recent grammatical theory it is assumed that prepositions are heads of phrases even in languages with a mixture of prepositions and a range of morphological case

forms (see especially Jackendoff (1977), Emonds (1985)), it seems worth discussing Saloni and Świdziński's position.

The only reason that they have for denying prepositions the status of a head is that prepositional constituents of which they are a part cannot be reduced to the preposition itself (p. 54). For example, *z kina* 'from the cinema (GEN)' cannot be reduced to *z*. Since a phrase like this cannot be reduced to the noun (or NP) alone either, they conclude (p. 55) that phrases like *z kina* are exocentric (i.e. head-less) preposition-nominal (PNP) phrases (*frazy przyimkowo-nominalne (PRNP)*).

It is not clear what general criterion Saloni and Świdziński are appealing to here. Either they claim that it must be possible for all members of a category to appear on their own for it to be a head, or they claim that only some members of a category must have this ability. If they assume the former, then they cannot regard Polish adjectives as heads because it is not possible for all of them to appear on their own, e.g.,

- (22) a. *Tomek jest skłonny do żartów.*
 Tomek is inclined to jokes
 b. **Tomek jest skłonny.*
 Tomek is inclined

and they cannot regard English verbs as heads because it is not possible for all of them to appear on their own, e.g.:

- (23) a. *He's been eating.*
 b. **He's been devouring.*

Furthermore, if they assume that it must be possible for all members of a category to appear on their own for it to be a head, then Polish verbs count as heads only if utterances like (24)B are considered as legitimate examples of verbs appearing on their own.

- (24) A: *Nie jestem pewien, czy Piotr przekona*
 not I-am sure whether Piotr will-convince
 ją do małżeństwa.
 her to marriage
 'I'm not sure if Piotr will talk her into marriage'.
 B: *Przekona.*
 'He will.'

Such 'reductions' of verb phrases to verbs alone are possible in specific linguistic contexts but not as meaningful utterances in their own right (cf. Polański 1966:87).

But if verbs in such contexts count as heads, then prepositions will also because — as we have already seen — any preposition can appear on its

own in similar circumstances (cf. (19) and (20) above). (25) and (26) contain further examples of this point.

25) *Kazałem, by usiedli przy stole, a nie na.*
I-told that they-sat at table and not on
'I told them to sit at the table, not on the table.'

26) A: *Czy wypadek zdarzył się przed koncertem?*
whether accident happened PRT before concert
'Did the accident happen before the concert?'

B: *Nie, po.*
'No, after.'

It is doubtful, then, whether Saloni and Świdziński assume the strong version of the criterion.

If, however, they assume its weaker version, whereby it is sufficient for only some members of a category to appear on their own for it to be a head, then the fact that *obok* 'by', *naprzeciw* 'opposite', etc. can appear with and without a complement argues for analysing Polish prepositions as heads.¹¹

There is one other reason why one should be sceptical about the value of Saloni and Świdziński's criterion for identifying heads of phrases. As far as prepositions are concerned, it has the consequence that among non-heads (e.g. determiners and intensifiers), there is a class of items which have the central characteristics of heads.

It is generally accepted that heads determine the identity and — to a large extent — the structure of phrases of which they are a part.

Most linguists would agree that the fact that a phrase like *an old man* or its Polish counterpart *stary człowiek* contains a noun makes it a 'noun phrase'. Likewise, the fact that a phrase like *quite young* or its Polish counterpart *calkiem młody* contains an adjective makes it an 'adjective phrase'. That heads affect the structure of the phrase of which they are a constituent can be illustrated with examples of 'subcategorization'. For example, the verb *kick* in English requires an NP but not a clause as a complement (cf. *kick a ball* vs. **kick that he'll walk again*), and the verb *hope* requires a clause but not an NP (cf. *hope that he'll walk again* vs. **hope a ball*).

Polish prepositions have both these characteristics and, in fact, Saloni and Świdziński describe prepositions as having these characteristics. As was noted earlier (cf. p. 179 above), they label a phrase that contains a preposition a 'preposition-nominal phrase' — obviously distinct from a phrase not con-

¹¹ It is worth noting that not even the weaker form of the criterion is accepted within the Government-Binding framework, in which INFL and COMP are regarded as heads of S and S-bar, respectively (cf. Chomsky (1985)). Neither S nor S-bar can be reduced to these elements.

taining a preposition. Furthermore, if the case form of the NP complement of a preposition is a component of the structure of the 'preposition-nominal phrase', then prepositions determine this aspect of the structure of the phrase through their specific requirements.

Given that Polish prepositions have both these central characteristics of heads, analysing them as non-heads is a problematic position in any restrictive approach to grammatical description.

5. Conclusion

In this paper, I have presented the case for recognizing a class of 'intransitive prepositions' in Polish as well as in English. This is analogous to the class of 'intransitive verbs' and includes lexical items traditionally classified as 'adverbs' (or as 'particle-adverbs'). In comparing the distribution of these items with the distribution of 'ordinary' PP's and ADVP's I hope to have demonstrated that this position is well-motivated. Turning to a separate but related issue, I have provided a critical evaluation of Saloni and Świdziński's (1985) claim that prepositions in Polish are not heads of phrases.

The recognition of intransitive prepositions extends the membership of the category 'preposition' but it reduces the heterogeneity of the category 'adverb' (or 'particle-adverb'). It also undermines traditional definitions of prepositions while allowing a more adequate classification of the items in question.

In my discussion, I referred only to four lexical items for which the 'intransitive preposition' analysis is appropriate. Further attempts at the classification of other preposition-like items (simple and complex) which can appear with or without a complement should include a consideration of the 'intransitive preposition' option.

Finally, let me note that there are, I think, good reasons for analysing the Polish demonstratives *tu* 'here', *wtedy* 'then', *stąd* 'from-here', *przedtem* 'beforehand', etc. as intransitive prepositions rather than '(pronominal) adverbs' or 'pronouns', as they are usually referred to in the literature. Arguments for and a discussion of some of the implications of this position can be found in Jaworska (1986).

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