Czech and Polish Analytic and Synthetic Anticausatives in Generative Morpho-Syntax

Abstract
Polish and Czech superficially resemble each other in the area of the anticausative formations. Their systems of anticausatives subsume synthetic and analytic “reflexive” anticausatives formed with almost identical morphological elements. Many other properties of the systems coincide, as for instance the fact that the “reflexive” morpheme does not occupy an argument position and that all anticausatives can be modified by similar prepositional phrases. Nevertheless, while in Czech parallels can be observed between stem forming vowels and resultative adjective forming suffixes, in Polish the forms no longer coincide in the same way: Czech distinction between stem forming vowels signals the presence of structures of different complexities, i.e. unaccusative, simple structures, and unergative, complex structures, in Polish the morpho-syntactic division cuts across the morphological exponents as anticausatives of all types possess fairly uniform unaccusative structures, while some of them share exponents, but not behavior, with stative verbs. Consequently, no correlation between the type of stem and the structural complexity argued by Medová (2011) for Czech can be traced in Polish. When considered more closely, the two languages prove to have very different anticausative systems.

Keywords: Slavic languages, morpho-syntactic systems, anticausatives, derivational morphology, Czech language, morphology.

1. Introduction

Although Czech and Polish are closely related Slavic languages spoken in bordering countries, their morpho-syntactic systems, even in the areas showing such strong segmental similarities as “reflexive” morphology, ¹

Anna Malicka-Kleparska

reveal significant differences, if carefully considered. In this paper I will look at anticausative formations in Czech and Polish: they show identical behavior where the non-argumental status of the “reflexive” morpheme is scrutinized. Likewise, morphological subclasses of anticausatives present remarkable parallels. At the same time the structures that should be ascribed to synthetic and analytic anticausatives in the two languages differ significantly. In Czech one can find arguments for deriving analytic anticausatives from structures compatible with transitive verbs, while in Polish such evidence is missing, with both analytic and synthetic anticausatives functioning indiscriminately in the morphological system.

2. Data

Anticausatives in Polish and Czech are formed on two distinct patterns: synthetic and analytic. In the synthetic pattern the morphological marking is effected with the use of suffixes. For Czech the major suffixes realizing unaccusative meaning are: -a-, -ě- and -nou, for Polish: -e- and -łączę.

\[(1)\]
\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Filip oněm-ď-ł} & \quad \text{'Philip grew speechless'} \quad \text{(Czech)} \\
\text{Mi začal měk-nou-ť mozek} & \quad \text{'My brain began to soften'} \quad \text{(Czech)} \\
\text{Barman oniemi-a-ł } & \quad \text{(niemi-eć Inf) 'The barman grew speechless'} \quad \text{(Polish)} \\
\text{Śnieg zaczął mięc-łączęć} & \quad \text{'Snow began to soften'} \quad \text{(Polish)}
\end{align*}
\]

The analytic pattern employs a clitic shared with a number of other formations in the two languages. In Czech it takes the form of se, in Polish – of się. Below we supply illustrative examples:

\[(2)\]
\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Vyřešil se tím problém s přesahem televizního signálu} & \quad \text{‘The problem with the transmission of the television program got explained’} \quad \text{(Czech)} \\
\text{Wyjaśnił się problem koloru} & \quad \text{‘The problem of color got explained’} \quad \text{(Polish)}
\end{align*}
\]

In both languages the verb frequently possesses -i- as a stem forming vowel, although other morphemes are possible as well (Czech -ova- and Polish -owa-).

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2 We use the term anticausative for the change of state verbs which are morphologically complex and the formative responsible for their intransitive character can be clearly identified. We do not limit the use of this term to such verbs that possess causative counterparts. In the theory of grammar within which we work, i.e. root based morphology, such a classification is not warranted as particular morphological patterns are not dependent on each other and anticausatives are not derived from causatives, or vice versa (see Embick 2009; Alexiadou & Doron 2012; Doron & Labelle 2011; Malicka-Kleparska 2013a).

3 For morphological details see Janda and Townsend (2000), Medová (2011: fttn 2).

4 See Wróbel’s state and processual verbs (1984: 495, 498, 503).

5 -a- constitutes here the past tense allomorphic variant of -e-. Details are of no consequence for this paper.

6 The same clitics appear in Czech and Polish in reflexive, dispositional middle, reciprocal, and antipassive constructions, as well as in reflexiva tantum, see e.g. Laskowski (1984), Medová (2009).

7 Unless stated otherwise examples come from, or are based on, the data from the Polish and Czech National Corpora.
3. The status of the reflexive clitic – se/się verbs as monoargumentals

Although the elements se and się marking analytic anticausatives are identical with reflexive pronouns in the considered languages, yet while marking the anticausative verbs the clitics do not perform the function of arguments. Below some tests laying bare their non-argumental nature will be supplied. It will be essential for the structures we propose in section 5 to establish whether analytic anticausatives are monoargumentals, just like synthetic anticausatives.

A very telling body of data is supplied by depictives, which in both languages can modify either the external or internal arguments of transitive clauses, sharing with the modified argument its inflectional features overtly visible as specific suffixes. If a verb has two arguments, then a depictive can be anaphorically controlled in two ways, by the subject or by the object argument; if, however, in spite of misleading appearances, a verb has just one argument – then the control by the pseudo-argument (the "reflexive" clitic) is not possible.

Medová (2009: 114) gives some Czech examples of depictives used with transitive verbs along the lines in (3). Analytic anticausatives behave differently in Czech, as an example from the corpus illustrates (see 5). The grammatical possibilities differ in the case of the two structures, showing that anticausatives are mono-argumental. For Polish the situation is parallel, as evidenced by the examples in (4) and (6) below.

(3) Jana, umývá Janouška, [cel-á vesel-á] 'Jana – all happy – washes Janoušek'
Jana NOM.F wash 3.SG Janoušek.ACC whole happy NOM.F

Jana, umývá Janouška, [cel-ou vesel-ouj] 'Jana washes Janoušek, who is all happy'
Jana NOM.F wash 3.SG Janoušek ACC whole happy ACC.F

(4) Jacek, zaprasza Marka, cały w skowronkach 'Jack – happy as a lark – invites Mark'
Jacek NOM.M invite 3.SG Mark ACC all NOM.M in larks

Jacek, zaprasza Marka, całego w skowronkach 'Jack invites Mark, happy as a lark'
Jacek NOM.M invite 3.SG Mark ACC all ACC.M in larks

(5) zatoulala se hostitelka na krok k jeho židli, celá veselá/*celou veselou
roll PAST se manager NOM.F by a step in direction his chair, all happy Nom.F/*all happy ACC.F
‘The manageress has rolled by a step in the direction of his chair, all happy’

(6) Zaczerwieniła się Janka, cała wesoła/*całą wesołą
redden PAST się Jane NOM.F all happy NOM.F/*all happy ACC.F
‘Jane has grown red, all happy’

The data above show clearly that grammar does not interpret se/się clitics with anticausatives as occupants of the argument positions. The clitics do not differ from suffixes in anything but their morpho-phonological properties and greater freedom in linearization.9

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8 I would like to acknowledge here the help of Małgorzata Brzozowska with the Czech examples I have used in this text.

9 We will not discuss here the linear placement possibilities of the clitics, see however Ozga (1976). Suffice it to say that the clitic may precede or follow the verb, given certain prosodic and information structure conditions: Czech: zavřel se k počítači ‘he
Another kind of structure which tests clauses for the appearance of arguments is jako ‘as’ structure, where jako complement modifies an NP and bears the same case as the NP it modifies (Medová 2009: 116, after Fried 2006). If a structure has an internal argument that jako can modify, the phrase bears the accusative case, if, however, there is no internal argument, then the phrase modifies the external, nominative argument and consequently it bears the nominative case. Transitive clauses in Czech (7) and Polish (8) may have the accusative jako phrases:

(7) kterou me představili jako novou členku ‘who (they) introduced to me as a new member’
    whom ACC me introduced 3.PL.PAST as a new member ACC

(8) Jan przedstawił ją jako swoją żonę, ‘John introduced her as his wife’
    John NOM.M introduce3.SG.PAST her ACC.F as his wife ACC.F

On the other hand in the sentences with analytic anticausatives only subjects are modified with the nominative jako phrases:

(9) Valila se jako lavina ze severu ‘It fell as an avalanche from the north’
    fall 3.SG.F.PAST se as avalanche NOM.SG from north

(10) Janka postarzała się jako jego żona, ‘Jane grew old as his wife’
    Jane NOM.F grew 3.SG.PAST się as his GEN.SG.M wife NOM.F

A number of other arguments can be presented which show that the reflexive clitic accompanying the anticusative verb is neither an internal, nor the external argument (see e.g. Malicka-Kleparska 2012, 2013a). We feel that the evidence above suffices for the purposes of this paper. If the clitic is not the internal argument in this structure, the question arises what position (and in what structure) it should be ascribed.

4. Medová’s (2011) structures for Czech’s anticasatives

Medová (2011) offers an analysis of anticausative structures in Czech, which we will adumbrate here. Then we will show that an alike analysis is not plausible for the Polish data. The similarity of the two languages is only partial and largely apparent.

The gist of Medová’s (2011) analysis lies in recognizing the existence of two classes of suffixal stem forming heads in Czech. One type of stem forming heads spells out a rich verbal structure, spanning all the intermediate projections from the root up to the external argument. Depending on a particular framework, it could span the Voice and V projections of Alexiadou and Doron (2012) or resultant and processual projections of Ramchand (2008).

It has to be stressed here that although Medová’s (2011) analysis is couched in the framework of Distributed Morphology, the paper is overly sketchy, so not all the conclusions have clear justification and details are not readily available.
vowel -i-. The verbs formed with this vowel correspond to resultative adjectives containing -n/t-, where -n/t- also spells the same rich structure.

(11) z-trat-i-t ‘lose’ vs. z-trace-n(ý)12 ‘lost’

Poorer structure, up to the Voice projection (processual projection) is spelled out by -e- and -nou- in active verbs and -l- in resultative adjectives.

(12) krn-ě-t ‘atrophy’ vs. za-krn-e-l(ý) ‘atrophied,’ z-mrz-nou-t vs. z-mrz-l(ý)

The morpheme -i- is met only in structures of structurally complex make up. Consequently, the analytic anticausatives, which subsume this morpheme, must have much richer morpho-syntactic structure than the synthetic anticausatives – with the low structure morphemes.

This whole line of reasoning is based on the correspondence of the morphological make up of verbal and resultative adjectival forms of the two types.13

(13) se zmraz-i-t ‘freeze’ vs. zmraže-n(ý) ‘frozen’

Medová (2011) claims that in Czech se anticausatives are derived unergatives. This must be so because they share the same rich structure morpheme -i- with causatives (unlike monoargumental -e- and -nou- anticausatives), yet they are monoargumentals, like unergatives (see section 3). Consequently, their subjects must occupy the structural position comparable to that of external arguments in causative transitives, and not to this in unaccusatives.

This analysis may seem odd as the subject argument of se anticausatives is still the affected argument of an event, and not the Agent. However, Medová (2011) proposes that both external and internal arguments are “bundled” together.14 The same rich structure can be spelled out by -n/y- resultative adjectives and participles, which use the same stems as se anticausatives. These formations have rich, agentive structure because they can appear for instance in eventive passives with an overt original Agent argument:

(14) Frankenstein byl zmražen v čase zlými lidmi ‘Frankenstein was frozen in time by bad people’
Frankenstein was frozen M.SG in time bad people INS.

This analysis for Czech is substantiated by language facts, morphemic distribution in particular, but it has weak points.

First of all, if both types of anticausatives should subsume structures of different complexity, then they should behave differently in the system of Czech. Doubts as to whether this really happens in Czech may be cast by some data quoted by Medová (2011: e.g. 31, 32) herself, who discusses the behavior of both anticausative types with respect to ‘by itself’ phrase. The appearance of this phrase should test for

12 Desinences are given in brackets.
13 Also some other forms correlate with the two types of anticausatives, but we disregard them here to shorten the presentation.
anticausatives with external causer arguments, its non-appearance – for the anticausatives that admit of no external causer.\(^{15}\) Czech, like Polish, makes no difference here between the two types of anticausatives:

(15) Můj mozek se sám od sebe změnil v pátrací mašinu 'My brain has changed into a searching machine by itself'

Kov zrezivěl sám od sebe 'Metal corroded by itself'

Another problem is connected with the data which are not considered in this paper in any detail. In Czech, like in Polish, the complexity of the structure associated with a verb does not have to be connected with the stem vowel. In fact there is a considerable body of data where the transitive, agentive character of a verb is conditioned by the presence of a prefix. Medová (2009: 33–34) writes about such data. Spát 'sleep' is an intransitive stative verb. If prefixed with e.g. do-, the verb takes the direct object:

(16) abychom dospali zbytek noci 'for us to sleep the rest of the night'

Consequently, stem marking is not the only mechanism which correlates with structural complexity of an event. Thus the problem whether the presence of a particular suffix equals complex, multi-layered transitive-like structure is not as definitely resolved as Medová (2011) claims.

Additionally, the example above shows that transitive verbs in Czech are not uniquely marked with the morpheme -i-. Still another morpheme present in transitives is -ova- (see Medová 2011):

(17) Jan nastart-ova-l motor 'Jan started the engine'

Then not all unaccusative se verbs in Czech possess the -i- morpheme in their structure either (cf. Medová 2011):

(18) Jan se zatoul-a-l 'Petr wandered'

Excepting the above reservations, the Czech anticausative morpho-syntax may be summed up as follows: two differently marked kinds of verbal stems in Czech have corresponding differently marked adjectival stems. The two stem types may be of different (see 13 vs. 14) structural complexity. In Czech morpho-syntax the major division runs between rich structurally, -i- marked stems and -e- marked stems, which realize the verbal structure only up to the processual projection.

5. Polish anticausative structures

If Czech presents us with a case for treating the analytic anticausatives as possessing affinity to transitive or unergative verbs, with multi-layered structure, Polish does not supply even feable justification pointing that way. Although Czech and Polish share a lot of morpho-syntax, here they part ways. In this section we will show that the morphemic system of Polish does not show the correspondences characteristic of

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\(^{15}\) See Chierchia (2004: 42).
Czech. No distributional parallel can be drawn between -i- verbal stems and -l- adjectival ones. Moreover all anticausatives function in the system of Polish in the same way, which argues against assigning them distinct structures. On top of this, -e- realizes the stems which belong to two classes of forms with very different properties. These classes diverge in complexity, which is attested by the reluctance of one class – stative verbs – to appear with the aspectual projection. Consequently, in Polish the major morphosyntactic distinction relating to anticausatives criss-crosses morphemic realizations and breaches verbs into stative and unaccusative, not into unaccusative and unergative (as may be the case in Czech). Thus the systems of Czech and Polish are very different.

The major bulk of evidence for the unergative analysis of Czech se formations came from the sphere of the distribution of stem forming morphemes. In Modern Polish no correlation can be argued between the morphemes marking synthetic anticausatives, i.e. -e- and -nq- on the one hand, and the -l- resultative adjective marker – on the other. The resultative adjectives in -n/-t- correspond indiscriminately to -e-, -nq- and -i- się verbs. The adjectives with -l- are generally receding in the system of Polish. For instance in Biblia ks. Wujka from 1599 we find examples of such -l- adjectives which no longer function in Polish:

(19) ostaly ‘the one that stayed,’ uciekły ‘fled,’ zabyły ‘forgotten,’ pobiegły ‘the one that has run,’ samomarły ‘dead’

Nowadays the adjectives in -n/t- take over the function of the adjectives in -l- and are formed more or less regularly from all kinds of unaccusatives. Recently on Polish TV\(^\text{16}\) the form rozkwitnięty ‘in flower’ was used, although the corresponding anticausative verb has in its make up the morpheme -nq-, allegedly non-characteristic for -n/-t- resultative adjectives: rozkwitnąć ‘bloom.’ This has h apped even though the -l- adjective based on the same root still functions in Polish (109 hits in the Balanced Corpus). The National Corpus of the Polish language does not list the word, but such formations creep in more and more frequently. The diachronically weak position of -l- resultatives is evidenced by the presence of numerous doublets in -l- and -n/-t-. Moreover, many -l- forms in such doublets have specialized, highly lexicalized meanings, sometimes far removed from the original resultative reading. The presence of such readings may suggest that the forms are on their way out of the regular, productive system of language. Below we give a few examples of what is a strong trend in contemporary Polish:


Consequently, no regular relationship between -e-, -nq- verbs and -l- adjectives can be claimed in the Polish language.\(^\text{17}\)

\(^{16}\) The 5th of May 2014 on TVN.

\(^{17}\) For a thorough discussion of the regularities and irregularities in the formation of resultative adjectives corresponding to different classes of anticausatives see Cetnarowska (2000, 2002).
Likewise, the vowel \(-i\) is present in the stems of a variety of Polish verbs, not necessarily causative transitives, whose appearance with the Czech corresponding vowel is taken to argue for the unergative status of the anticausative se derivatives. Because in Polish the vowel occurs in a wider variety of verbs, it does not have to spell the same, significantly complex, amount of structure as it does in Czech. Thus, for instance we have this vowel in intransitive stative and unergative verbs, judging by their semantics (see 21) and syntactic environments in which they appear (22); these verbs cannot appear with an additional argument and they cannot be passivized:

(21) \(\acute{s}\acute{w}\acute{i}\acute{e}\acute{c}\) ‘emit light,’ \(p\acute{\text{so}}\acute{c}\acute{i}\) ‘play tricks,’ \(\acute{w}\acute{r}\acute{\acute{o}}\acute{c}\acute{\acute{i}}\) ‘come back,’ \(\acute{p}\acute{l}\acute{a}\acute{c}\acute{\acute{i}}\) ‘pay,’ \(m\acute{\text{i}}\acute{e}\acute{r}\acute{\acute{y}}\acute{\acute{c}}\) ‘measure, be tall,’\(\acute{\w}\acute{\acute{\text{e}}}\acute{r}\acute{\acute{y}}\) ‘trust,’ etc.

(22) Gwiazda \(\acute{s}\acute{\text{w}}\acute{\acute{i}}\acute{c}\) \((\ast \text{blask})\) ‘The star emits light’ – *Blask jest \(\acute{s}\acute{\text{w}}\acute{\acute{e}}\acute{\acute{c}}\acute{\acute{y}}\) ‘Light is emitted;’ Gwiazda \(\acute{s}\acute{\text{w}}\acute{\acute{e}}\acute{\acute{c}}\) \(\acute{\text{m}}\acute{\text{o}}\acute{\text{c}}\acute{\text{n}}\acute{\text{y}}\) \(\text{b}l\acute{\text{a}}\acute{\text{k}}\acute{\text{i}}\acute{\text{e}}\acute{\text{m}}\) ‘The star emits a strong light’
Chłopak \(p\acute{\text{so}}\acute{c}\) \((\ast \text{g}l\acute{\text{u}}\acute{\text{p}}\acute{\text{o}}\acute{\text{t}}\acute{\text{y}})\) ‘The boy plays silly tricks’ – *Głupoty są psocone ‘Silly tricks are played,’ Chłopak \(p\acute{\text{so}}\acute{\text{c}}\) \(\text{coś/swoje}\) ‘The boy plays something / his own’

The only additional arguments which can appear with such verbs are cognate objects, which probably have a non-argumental status in Polish (see Malicka-Kleparska 2013b), or non-specific objects (with existential indefinite interpretation).

Medová (2011) claims that the stem creating vowel is a symptom of the complexity of the verbal structure underlying a given verb, yet in Polish the stem forming vowel -e- (whose Czech counterpart spells out low complexity structures), may realize two different levels of structural complexity. Medová (2011) maintains that in Czech the vowel spells out the projections of processual and resultant levels together (see Ramchand 2008). In Polish -e- verbs may realize the semantics, and consequently the structures of two distinct types. Some of them are stative verbs – with presumably the least complex structures among the predicates available in Slavic languages; some are change of state verbs, with a more baroque, processual structure.

The difference may be represented for instance in the way following the general outlines of Embick (2009) and Malicka-Kleparska (2013c). Thus the representation of the verb like \(c\acute{z}\acute{e}\acute{r}\acute{w}\acute{\acute{i}}\acute{\acute{n}}\)-\(e\)-\(c\) ‘grow red / be red’ would be twofold, depending on whether we are dealing with the unaccusative, processual verb (23), or the stative verb (24):

![Diagram]

18 The element -\(\acute{y}\)- is an allophone of -\(i\)- in these examples. For details see Gussmann (2007).
19 Only such complementation is attested in NKJP.
Statives and unaccusatives (processual verbs) clearly differ in meaning and other morphological properties. For instance processual verbs can be prefixed and made telic in Polish, stative ones - cannot. The possibilities of prefixing the processual, but not stative verbs with aspectual formatives prove that the projection at which these formatives are added is not available for stative verbs, so they have simpler structure; they do not have the aspectual projection (or the one connected with telicity: the Voice projection mapping the basic event structure). Consequently, in Polish the division does not cut between the low structure -e- anticausatives and high structure -i- anticausatives (as will be argued below), but between high(er) structure unaccusatives and low structure statives:

\[(25)\] Stative:

_Daleko na horyzoncie ("*s/po)czerwieniał wśród niebieskiego nieba wysoki komin gorzelni_ 'Far away on the horizon a high chimney of a destilling plant showed red among the blue sky'

Anticausative:

_Nad nią ("s/po)czerwieniała wysoko na wietrze łopocąca flaga_ 'High over red red a flag her showed, flapping in the wind'

_Policzki chłopca (p)czerwieniały z dumy_ 'The boy's chicks grew red with pride'

_Jurek (s)czerwieniał z zażenowania_ 'Jurek grew red with embarrassment'

This conclusion is supported by the fact that anticausatives of the two types behave in Polish uniformly, so Polish morpho-syntax supplies no arguments in favor of distinct structures for -i- się and -e- anticausatives. A number of arguments can be presented here. One, concerning the identical ‘by itself’ phrase modification, has been presented in section 4 (e.g. 15). Here, let us just mention two other selected arguments.\(^{21}\)

For instance Doron and Labelle (2011) argue that the difference between different types of anticausative structures may show in the types of subjects that they take. The subjects may or may not undergo internally driven changes. In Polish no such distinction between analytic and synthetic anticausatives can be noticed:

\[(26)\] **Maria czerwienieje** ‘Mary reddens’ (synthetic, internally caused)

Mary-NOM-SG redden-PRS-SG  
_czerwieniała_ wokół domu gleba na skutek reakcji chemicznych (synthetic, externally caused)
redden-PST-F-SG around house-GEN soil-NOM-F-SG because reaction-GEN-PL chemical

_Józio czerwienił się co chwila_ ‘Józio reddened every moment’ (analytic, internally caused)

Józio-NOM-M-SG redden-PST-M-SG PRT-REF every moment

_woda czerwieniła się od krwi_ ‘water reddened from blood’ (analytic, externally caused)
water-NOM-F-SG redden-PST-F-SG from blood-GEN-SG

Also entailment phenomena are identical in the case of both classes of anticausatives (cf. however Koontz-Garboden 2009; Jabłońska 2007):

\[(27)\] **Ziemia nie wysuszyła się – słońce ją wysuszyło** ‘The soil did not dry up – the sun dried it up’

\(^{21}\) For much more thorough argumentation see e.g. Malicka-Kleparska (2013a).
According to Koontz-Garboden (2009) and Jabłońska (2007) different types of anticausatives should show different entailments here, in particular synthetic anticausatives should not be grammatical in such structures, as they do not make allowances for entailing an outside causer in the event structure. As the examples above show no differences along such lines (see Malicka-Kleparska forthcoming) are attested in Polish.

6. Conclusions

In spite of the superficial similarities of the Polish and Czech anticausative systems, in Czech we find more justification for the structurally reflected division between synthetic and analytic anticausatives. The first may have the unaccusative, poor structure, the second – much richer derived unergative structure, showing affinity to transitive verbs.

Polish, on the other hand, supplies no arguments for such a distinction among anticausatives, which behave uniformly in the morpho-syntactic system, while their morphemic build-up does not support the analysis based on the structural unaccusative/unergative division. In the Polish system the distinction between stative and anticausative verbs seems to play the leading role.

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