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Case in Polish Predication and Control

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Abstract

In this paper, a unification of case markings in Polish predication and control is proposed. It is argued that adjectives with instrumental case marking in control environments are actually modifiers of DPs, and not bare APs, therefore following the predictable case assignment mechanism of Polish predication. This paper discusses cases of subject control and non-obligatory control.

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1 Introduction

The rich literature on control distinguishes two types of control: Obligatory control (OC) and non-obligatory control (NOC) (Hornstein 1999, Landau 2000, 2013, Witkoś 2008, 2010 and references therein). The data in (1) and (2) show OC, while (3) shows NOC.

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|--|----------------------|
| (1) Peter ₁ tries PRO ₁ to be nice | OC – Subject Control |
| (2) Peter forces Tom ₁ PRO ₁ to be nice | OC – Object Control |
| (3) PRO _{arb} To be nice is PRO _{arb} to be stupid | NOC |

In (1), *Peter* acts as the controller of PRO in the non-finite clause. In (2), it is the object *Tom* who controls PRO. In (3), PRO has no controller and therefore gets arbitrary interpretation. The data in (1)-(3) can be reproduced for Polish with some interesting case variations.

- (4) Piotr próbuje być miły / miły-m
Peter.NOM tries be.INF nice.NOM / nice-INST
'Peter tries to be nice.'
- (5) Piotr kazał Tom-kowi być miły-m / *mił-emu
Peter.NOM ordered Tom-DAT be.INF nice-INST / nice-DAT
'Peter ordered Tom to be nice.'
- (6) Być miły-m / *miły to być głupi-m / *głupi
Be.INF nice-INST / nice.NOM TO be.INF stupid-INST / stupid.NOM
'To be nice is to be stupid.'

In (4), the subject *Piotr* 'Peter' carries nominative, just like in the English counterpart. Unlike in English, adjectives in Polish inflect for case.¹ In (4), we see that the adjective *miły* 'nice' may agree in case with *Piotr* 'Peter' or it can appear in instrumental. In (5), the controller *Tom* carries dative; the corresponding adjective, however, cannot appear in dative, but must instead appear in instrumental.² In (6), a non-obligatory control case, only instrumental is possible.

The focus of this paper will be on obligatory subject control, as in (4), and NOC, as in (6). It will be argued that the case properties in these examples do not stem from specific control mechanisms, but result from the simple predicational structure that is projected in the infinitival clause of control.³ I will follow Landau's (2015) two-tiered theory of control when modelling the control relation.

2 The Data and Previous Analyses

Predicative adjectives in Polish subject control behave as if they can be doubly case-marked – agreeing nominative and instrumental. These case variations are also independent from the different types of OC (Landau 2008, 2015); see (7)-(8).

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¹They also inflect for gender and number, but these features are not the focus of this paper.

²Respective examples with accusative controllers display the same pattern, therefore the case phenomenon is independent of the structural/lexical case distinction.

³The case of object control is more complex, and for space reasons, I will leave it out of the discussion here. For an analysis of object control, the interested reader is referred to Lindert (2016).

- (7) a. Piotr powinien być miły / miły-m Modal
 Peter.NOM should be.INF nice.NOM / nice-INST
 ‘Peter should be nice.’
 b. Piotr zaczął być miły / miły-m Aspectual
 Peter.NOM started be.INF nice.NOM / nice-INST
 ‘Peter started to be nice.’
- (8) a. Piotr planował być trzeźwy / trzeźwy-m Desiderative
 Peter.NOM planned be.INF sober.NOM / sober-INST
 ‘Peter planned to be sober.’
 b. Piotr nienawidzi być chory / chory-m Factive
 Peter.NOM hates be.INF sick.NOM / sick-INST
 ‘Peter hates to be sick.’

In (7a), the control verb is a modal, in (7b), the control verb comes from an aspectual class. It has been argued that these verbs are exhaustive control (EC) predicates displaying non-attitude contexts. In (8), the control verbs stem from the desiderative class (8a) and the factive class (8b). These verbs are partial control (PC) predicates and express attitude contexts (Landau 2015). The case properties of Polish adjectives in control are independent of the respective control relation, i.e. agreeing case is always available, as is instrumental.⁴ As I will argue that these case properties are independent of the respective control structure, it is not surprising that case variation is not restricted to one or the other class of control predicates.⁵

Previous work on control and case in Polish has treated the instrumental option in (4) as either bad (Bondaruk 2004) or substandard (Witkoś 2008, 2010). Przepiórkowski and Rosen 2004 and Przepiórkowski 1999, 2004a offer analyses within the HPSG model to account for the optionality. There it is stated that whenever agreement is possible, instrumental is as well, at least syntactically. It is then extra-syntactic factors that deem one or the other better, or both equally good. However, Przepiórkowski (2004a) does not spell out what these factors are. For NOC, as in (6), the instrumental case has been taken as a default case as there is no regular case assignment possible in this environment.

I will argue that both case options – agreeing and instrumental – are derived via predicational structures within the non-finite clause. I will show that Polish has two different predication structures, AP and DP predication, which result in different case markings: agreeing case on adjectives in AP predication and instrumental on nouns in DP predication. Since these structures are embedded in control, the case properties of Polish control are derived without stipulating specific control mechanisms or default cases.

In the following section, I will give an overview of Polish predication and its case properties. Then, I will show how these structures can be embedded in Polish subject control and non-obligatory control.

3 Two Routes of Predication

In predicational structures, the distribution of cases follows a very strict pattern, see (9).

- (9) a. Piotr jest miły. AP Predication
 Peter.NOM is nice.NOM
 ‘Peter is nice.’
 b. Piotr jest (miły-m) lekarz-em. DP Predication
 Peter.NOM is (nice-INST) doctor-INST
 ‘Peter is a (nice) doctor.’

⁴This is not entirely true, as there are cases with overt interrogative complementizers where the agreeing case is rated worse, if not ungrammatical, see Witkoś 2008, 2010 for examples and discussion. More research is needed on these cases, especially whether they really fall into the class of obligatory control.

⁵This does not mean that the respective split of control verbs into EC and PC predicates does not exist in Polish; the point is that the case marking of the predicate is independent of the split.

In (9a), called AP predication here, a predication relation is established between *Piotr* ‘Peter’ and the adjectival predicate *miły* ‘nice.’ Both elements agree in case, here nominative. In (9b), the predicate is a full-fledged DP. While the subject carries nominative, the whole predicate appears in instrumental. This is the general pattern of predication in Polish; adjectives agree with their corresponding subject, while predicative DPs surface in instrumental case markings.⁶

In sum, predication in Polish follows a rather strict pattern. Adjectives agree with their subjects,⁷ while nouns surface in instrumental marking. In the next section, I will show how we can plug in the two types of predication into subject control and therefore explain the apparent puzzling case properties of adjectives in control.

4 Predication under Control: Subject Control

Having now briefly sketched the situation of predication in Polish, I will show how the presented facts can account for the case properties of adjectives in Polish subject control. As mentioned in the introduction, I will follow Landau’s (2015) two-tiered model of control. In this model, Landau assumes two mechanisms to derive control: predicative control for EC predicates and logophoric control for PC predicates. Since in this paper, the main focus is on the infinitival clause, I will only concentrate on cases of predicative control and leave out examples of logophoric control.

Let me briefly outline Landau’s proposal for predicative control here. Please consider the data in (10).

- (10) a. Mary began to paint the wall
 b. [_{TP} Mary [_{VP} ~~Mary~~ began [_{VP} ~~began~~ [_{FinP} PRO [_{TP} ~~PRO~~ T to [_{VP} paint the wall]]]]]

In (10), there is a predication relation between the controller *Mary* (referential argument) and the infinitive *to paint the wall* (predicate). The derivation runs as follows: In the infinitival clause, the TP hosts the PRO subject. Above, a predicative head is projected, which Landau calls FinP. Due to movement of PRO into the specifier of said projection, FinP is turned into a predicate (operator movement). FinP is then merged as the complement of the control verb, here *begin*. Little *v* introduces the external argument and acts as a relator (den Dikken 2006) establishing predication between the controller *Mary* and FinP, which has been turned into a predicate. Turning to Polish predicative control, the structures under investigation are repeated in (11).

⁶See Bondaruk 2014 for a different view and Bogusławski 2001 for some exceptions to this rule. Slavic languages do not behave uniformly when it comes to predicative case marking. Russian freely allows instrumental adjectives in predication, unlike Polish. In addition, in present tense predicative DPs must be nominative, but in past and future tense, there is optionality between nominative and instrumental (Geist 1999). In Czech, adjectives must agree with their subject, and predicative DPs may appear in either case, nominative or instrumental, irrespective of tense. Moser (1993) gives a historical overview of the development of Slavic nominative/instrumental variations of predicative nouns.

⁷All of the discussed examples show agreeing nominative case, however, it is also possible for the adjectival predicate to agree in any other case; see (i) and (ii).

- (i) Pamiętam go miły-m / mił-ego (Przepiórkowski 1999:202)
 I.remember him.ACC nice-INST / nice-ACC
 ‘I remember him as nice.’
- (ii) Pięć kobiet było miły-ch / mił-e (Przepiórkowski, p.c.)
 Five.ACC women.GEN was nice-GEN / nice-ACC
 ‘Five women were nice.’

In (i) agreement between the accusative object *go* ‘him’ and the predicate *miły* ‘nice’ in case is possible. Please note that the instrumental option is also available. In (ii), the situation is more complex as we are dealing with a structure involving numerals. Numerals are assumed to be inherently accusative in Polish (Przepiórkowski 2004b); in addition they assign genitive to their complements, here to *kobiety* ‘women.’ As a result, the predicative adjective may agree with the numeral (accusative) or with the noun (genitive) in case.

- (11) a. Piotr próbuje być miły.
 Peter.NOM tries be.INF nice.NOM
 ‘Peter tries to be nice.’
 b. Piotr próbuje być miły-m.
 Peter.NOM tries be.INF nice-INST
 ‘Peter tries to be a nice one.’

I submit that the structure of the infinitival clause in (11a) involves AP predication, as in (9a). That is to say, that the infinitival clause constitutes the structure of simple AP predication and therefore follows its case assignment rules. The data in (11b) correspond to DP predication, as in (9b). In this example, DP predication is projected in the infinitival clause and therefore its case properties, namely instrumental on the predicate, are expected as well. The instrumental adjective is therefore situated in a larger DP whose head noun has been elided in a process of NP-ellipsis. As nouns receive instrumental case in predication, the case marking on the adjective in (11b) would be derived without any stipulation of a default mechanism (see also Lindert 2016).

The analysis crucially rests on the assumption that instrumental adjectives as in (11b) are actually modifiers of DPs, i.e., they are attributive adjectives in disguise. Is there empirical evidence that there is a full-fledged DP in the structure? Let me briefly outline two arguments in favor of this idea.

One argument involves the semantic structure of these constructions. As can be seen from the translation, in (11a), the semantics translate as simply *Peter wants to be nice*. However, with the instrumental adjective (11b), the corresponding interpretation is closer to *Peter wants to be a nice ONE*. This interpretation can easily be derived if a silent noun is assumed in the corresponding position.

In addition, the elided noun may be actually phonologically realized. Once it is realized, the only possible case marking on the noun and the adjective is instrumental (see 12).

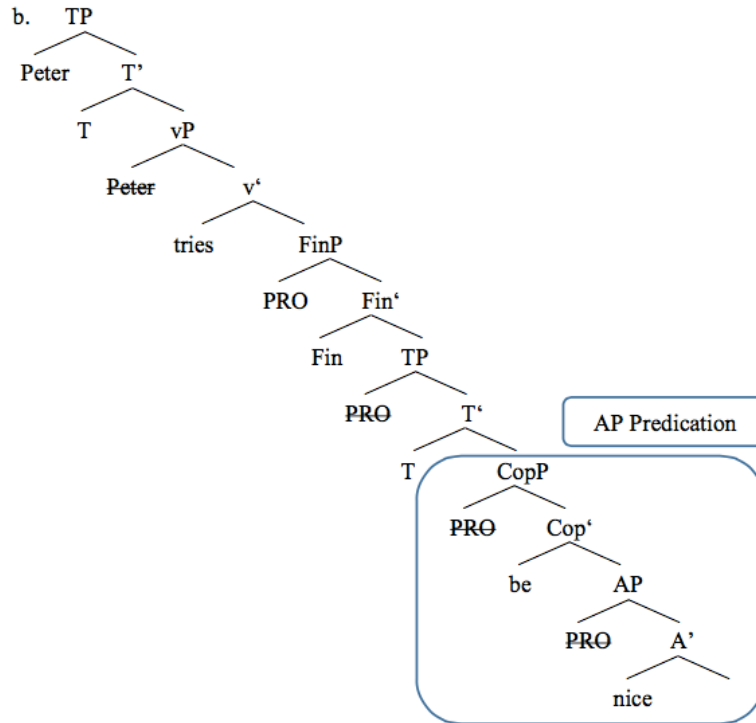
- (12) a. Piotr próbuje być miły-m człowiek-iem /*miły człowiek
 Peter.NOM tries be.INF nice-INST man-INST / nice.NOM man.NOM
 ‘Peter tries to be a nice man’
 b. Piotr próbuje być nim /*on
 Peter.NOM tries be.INF he-INST / he.NOM
 ‘Peter tries to be him.’

In (12a), we see that once the full DP is realized the only case marking that can be assigned to it is the instrumental case. Nominative is illicit. This is expected since (12a) involves a clear case of DP predication. Similarly, in (12b), we have a pronoun in the respective position. As is well-known, pronouns constitute DPs, and therefore it is not surprising that they appear in instrumental marking as well.

Having now briefly presented arguments in favor of an elided noun for the data in (11b), let us now turn to the details of the analysis. I will start with the structure involving nominative adjectives as in (11a). The corresponding derivation is illustrated in (13).

- (13) a. [TP Piotr [_{VP} ~~Piotr~~ próbuje [_{FinP} PRO [TP PRO [_{CopP} PRO być [_{AP} PRO miły]]]]]]⁸

⁸For space reasons, I simplify the structure of the VP here.



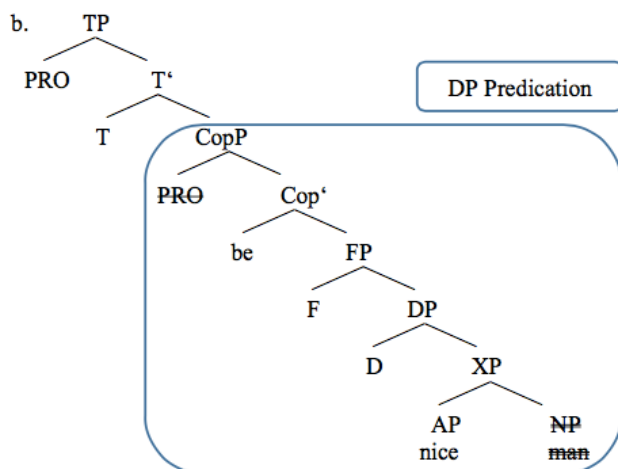
I will go through the derivation step by step. The derivation starts with the adjective *mily* ‘nice’ and its subject, PRO, being base-generated in the same clause, the AP. They match their phi-features (Frampton and Gutmann 2000). PRO moves up into Spec,CopP where the predication relation is established (den Dikken 2006).⁹ PRO moves up to Spec,TP where it checks the EPP and establishes agree with T (Landau 2000). PRO further moves up to FinP (Landau 2015). When the finite clause is built up, *Piotr* ‘Peter’ is merged in the verbal domain as the external argument of the verb *próbować* ‘try.’ The predication relation is established between the controller *Piotr* ‘Peter’ and FinP via little *v* as the relator. As a result, PRO inherits all of the controller’s phi-features via agreement (Landau 2015). Once *Piotr* ‘Peter’ gets nominative, the case is also transmitted to PRO and all elements PRO has matched its phi-features with. This includes the adjective. The adjective’s case feature can thus be satisfied and the derivation succeeds.

Let us now consider the subject control data with instrumental adjectives, where I propose that DP predication is embedded. In (14b), I have only represented the structure of the non-finite clause up to TP, as the derivation of the finite clause is the same as in example (13b).

- (14) a. [TP Piotr [_{vP} ~~Piotr~~ próbuje [_{FinP} PRO [TP ~~PRO~~ [_{CopP} ~~PRO~~ być [_{FP} F
Peter.NOM tries
[DP ~~mily-m~~ ~~człowiek-tem~~]]]]]]]¹⁰
nice- INST man-INST

⁹I do not assume PredP (Bowers 1993, Bailyn 2001, Bondaruk 2013) here, as I will follow den Dikken 2006 in the assumption that a functional projection, like the CopP, can establish the predication relation. For AP predication, it is generally assumed that a PredP in AP predication is phi-feature defective and therefore instrumental is not available (Bondaruk 2013). A non-defective PredP assigns instrumental to its complement, as it is the case in DP predication. See Pitsch 2014:81–84 for some criticism of the idea.

¹⁰A crossed out element is a copy, a doubly crossed out element indicates ellipsis.



The derivation starts with a DP, not with an AP. The DP is merged with the adjective *mily* ‘nice’ and a noun. In a neutral context I assume that the present noun is of a very generic nature, in this case *człowiek* ‘man.’ These two elements share their phi-features. Atop of the DP, a functional projection (FP) is projected, which assigns instrumental to its complement. I assume a FP here mainly for two reasons; the first is case assignment. Instrumental cannot come from the copula as otherwise it would assign instrumental to adjectival complements as well. Thus, there must be a case assigner between the copula and the DP to account for the instrumental case. The second reason is the status of DPs in predication. As is well-known, DPs do not act as predicates. Therefore, I assume, that the FP turns the saturated DP into a predicate for it to participate in predication relations.¹¹ One could assume a PredP here that assigns instrumental to its complement. However, I want to stay neutral as to the exact nature of the FP as it is not relevant for the present discussion. The derivation continues in the same fashion as in (13b) with the CopP establishing predication and PRO moving into CopP, TP, and FinP.

When the control relation is established, PRO and *Piotr* ‘Peter’ share their phi-features and *Piotr*’s case is transmitted to PRO and consequently to all elements PRO has matched its phi-features with. In this structure, however, PRO has not shared its phi-features with the adjective. Instead, the adjective and the elided noun have shared their phi-features and the case features have been satisfied by the assignment of instrumental by FP. The derivation succeeds.¹²

The analysis proposed so far involves projecting predication structures into the infinitival clause of control to explain the apparent puzzling case properties of adjectives in this construction. When control embeds predication, the case pattern is expected and predictable, and not all unexpected or control specific. For this, I have outlined that case-agreeing adjectives correspond to AP predication, whereas instrumental adjectives are actually DPs in disguise projecting DP predication. Please note, that the proposed analysis does not shed more light onto the nature of control; it simply shows that the case properties found in the presented control examples can be explained by independent principles of the language, without adding new rules to the control module or assume a default instrumental case (Bondaruk 2004, Witkoś 2008, 2010). This is true for subject control and non-obligatory control, to which I will turn in the next section.¹³

5 Predication under Control: Non-Obligatory Control

Having presented the analysis for subject control and its case variations, let us now turn to NOC, where we do not find similar variation; the respective data is repeated in (15).

¹¹See Lindert, to appear, for arguments why there are DPs, and not NPs, in predication in the first place.

¹²One needs to spell out the details of how exactly NP-ellipsis works here. I follow Alexiadou and Gengel’s (2012) analysis of NP-ellipsis. The details of its application to Polish are presented in Lindert 2016.

¹³Obligatory object control is a different matter. In Lindert 2016, I argue that the control module interacts with the predicational rules which explains why AP predication is illicit in these constructions.

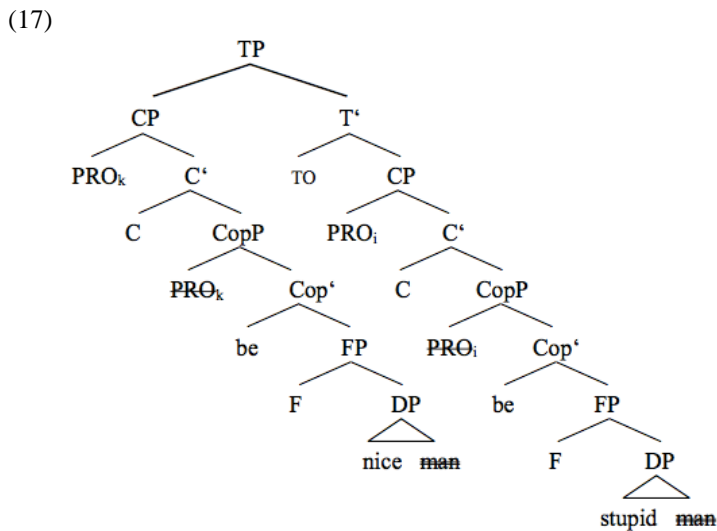
- (15) Być miły-m / *miły to być głupi-m / *głupi.
 be.INF nice-INST/ nice.NOM that be.INF stupid-INST/stupid.NOM
 ‘To be nice is to be stupid.’ (Przepiórkowski 2004a:106)

In (15) only instrumental is licit, nominative is out. This has been taken as evidence for instrumental being default (Witkoś 2008, 2010). However, there is an alternative to explain the case properties without stipulating a default case. Let us first consider the option with nominative and see why it is illicit.

- (16) *Być miły to być głupi.
 be.INF nice.NOM TO be.INF stupid.NOM
 ‘To be nice is to be stupid.’

The structure in (16) involves AP predication, i.e. a structure where the adjective agrees with its controller. PRO and the predicate may share their phi-features, and PRO starts moving. However, PRO will never find a proper controller in the structure. This is a hallmark of non-obligatory control; the non-availability of a local controller. Therefore, PRO cannot check phi-features and case values from a controller. As a consequence, there are no phi-features and case features that PRO can transmit to the adjective, and therefore the latter’s case feature remains unchecked. However, there is the possibility that PRO might get nominative from non-finite T. This is not likely in Polish as (16) shows that the structure is illicit with the adjectives surfacing with nominative case marking. As a consequence, I conclude that non-finite T does not assign nominative in Polish.¹⁴

As Polish has two predication structures, and if control embeds predication, NOC can still be present in the language. As the preconditions for AP predication are not met in this construction, DP predication might still be working. Consider (17) for the underlying structure of (15) with instrumental adjectives.



The derivation starts with DP predication. A DP, here *głupi człowiek* ‘stupid man,’ is projected. FP is projected atop and assigns instrumental. PRO is inserted in CopP where predication is established. PRO further moves to CP.¹⁵ I follow Citko 2008 in assuming that the lexical element

¹⁴An interesting possibility would be to assume that non-finite T assigns instrumental in Polish, thus explaining its availability in non-obligatory control. Przepiórkowski (1999:217–220) offers some arguments against this idea.

¹⁵The tree is simplified for space reasons. As non-obligatory control falls into the realm of logophoric

to is base-generated under T. As the head of finite TP is filled by a lexical element, it is assumed that nominative is absorbed and T does not assign case at all.

In the specifier of TP, another DP predicate *miły człowiek* ‘nice man’ is projected. The derivation is the same as for the DP predicate in the complement position of TP. In addition, predication between the elements in the specifier and complement position of TP is established by T acting as a relator. According to this analysis, the instrumental marking in NOC is derived without stipulating a default case mechanism.

As it is with the cases of obligatory subject control, the elided noun can actually be phonologically realized, see (18).

- (18) Być miły-m człowiek-iem to być głupi-m człowiek-iem
 be.INF nice-INST man-INST TO be.INF stupid-INST man-INST
 ‘To be a nice man is to be a stupid man.’

In (18) the realization of the covert noun results in instrumental marking. As nominative is the default case for Polish (Lindert 2016), one would expect the nominal elements to appear in nominative if the environment in (18) was indeed a default case environment. However, the presented analysis shows that case assignment in (15) and (18) is regular.

With this analysis, one does not need to assume a default instrumental case to explain the case marking of adjectival predicates. Instead, if one assumes that these predicates are part of a nominal projection, their case marking is predictable and expected. Thus, this analysis unifies two occurrences of the instrumental case in Polish that have so far been treated as the result of two separate mechanisms.

6 A Closer Look on DP Predication

In this last section, I want to discuss briefly some apparent counter-examples to the generalization on case marking of predicative DPs in Polish. It has been claimed that predicative nominative nouns do exist, see (19)-(20).

- (19) Jesteś świnia! (Przepiórkowski 2004a:106)
 you.are pig.NOM
 ‘You are a swine!’
- (20) Jestem professo (Bondaruk 2013:351)
 I.am professor.NOM
 ‘I am a professor.’

In (19) the predicative noun *świnia* ‘pig’ can surface with nominative case marking; instrumental is fine as well, and would be used if the addressed person was an actual pig. The most natural reading of (19) is that the person behaves like a pig, and is not an actual one. Therefore, the speaker maps properties of a pig to the properties of the addressed person. The predicate in (19) displays an adjectival use of the noun. Swan (1993) has already proposed that *be+inst* equals identification whereas *be+nom* equals having the traits of something. To put it differently; the more adjective-like an element is, it will be agreeing nominative. The more noun-like an element is, it will appear in instrumental. The implicit assumption is thus that there is a continuum between nouns and adjectives. In (19) what looks like a full-fledged noun, is actually closer to an adjective. The data in (20) show *professor* in nominative, contrary to the expected instrumental. One should mention that instrumental is fine here as well and is preferred by most native speakers. For (20), I would argue that one does not make reference to the job of a professor, but rather to its title. The term *professor* can be ambiguous in this sense; it can refer to a job or it can refer to a title. Since the latter use is possible, nominative case marking seems to be licit. In (21), we can see another example of this, where the predicate *prezydent* ‘president’ may marginally appear in nominative.

control (Landau 2015), one would assume a more elaborated structure of the CP hosting a logophoric center. In addition, I have left out the FinP below CP. The point here is that the case marking can be explained when looking at the structure of the infinitival clause only.

In these examples, the predicative noun designates a property of the subject and thus behaves more like an adjective.

- (21) ?Jesteś prezydent (Przepiórkowski 1999:106)
 you.are president.NOM
 ‘You are the/a president.’

The question remains how to project these predicates syntactically. Are they APs or DPs? Assuming that they are projected as real adjectives, one prediction would be that they could not be modified by another adjective without a conjunction. This prediction is not borne out, see (22).

- (22) Jesteś okropna świnia!
 you.are terrible.NOM pig.NOM
 ‘You are a terrible swine!’

The example in (22) shows that the predicate *świnia* ‘pig’ can be modified by an adjective, here *okropny* ‘terrible.’ If the predicate were an adjective syntactically, one would expect that it could not be modified by another adjective. However, in (22) we see that it is possible. We can therefore reject the idea that the predicates in (19)-(21) are syntactically adjectives. At the same time, it would be problematic to assume that they are DPs. I have outlined here that predicative DPs appear in instrumental only. This is due to FP being projected above DP to turn it into a predicate. There is, however, a third option, namely that these predicates (19)-(21) are projected as bare NPs. If they are NPs, it is straightforwardly explained why they can be modified by adjectives (22). In addition, an NP can function as a natural predicate and therefore, there would be no need for an FP to be projected atop of it. As FP is the locus of instrumental, it also explains why these predicates may surface without instrumental case marking.

7 Conclusion

In this paper, I have taken a closer look at the apparent puzzling case markings of adjectives in Polish subject control and non-obligatory control. I have argued that these case markings come from regular predication structures, where agreeing adjectives are subject to AP predication, whereas instrumental adjectives are assumed to be modifiers of DPs and subject to DP predication. As predicative nouns receive instrumental in Polish, instrumental on adjectives in control can be derived. Furthermore, one does not need to stipulate a default instrumental for the case marking of adjectives in non-obligatory control if one projects DP predication into these structures thereby explaining the case marking syntactically.

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