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## THE MIDDLE OF A FAMILY: REFLEXIVELY MARKED STRUCTURES IN POLISH

**Abstract.** The paper is devoted to an analysis of ‘notional middles’ in Polish within a construction-based morpho-syntax. The problem of the distinction which should, or should not, be drawn between middle and anticausative structures is taken up here. We analyze the Polish data, considering the correlation of major parameters distinguishing middles and anticausatives in languages of the world, and decide that in Polish ‘notional middles’ constitute a single class. As a consequence, the differences between anticausatives and middles should not be reflected by distinct structures ascribed to these groups of forms by grammar. The existent differences should be attributed to broader context and to encyclopedic knowledge concerning events.

**Key words:** middle voice; anticausative; clitic *się*; agency; genericity; Polish.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The center of Polish morpho-syntax is formed by a large group of reflexively marked forms, in which the clitic element *się* may, but does not have to, play the function of a reflexive pronoun. The variety among these forms in Polish has been observed and duly described by a number of researchers, e.g. by Wróbel (1984), Laskowski (1984), Tabakowska (2003), Bułat (2004), Cetnarowska (2004,) Kibort (2004), Janic (2014), Krzek (2014, to appear), Cichosz (2012) and many others. However, we still feel that this family of words presents many interesting problems which await solution. In this text we will be preoccupied with the group of closely related *się* forms which share the common property that their external arguments are not agents. Instead, these arguments are in some way affected by the events rendered by

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their clauses. Additionally, these arguments function as subjects of intransitive sentences. We will investigate whether indeed, as suggested in the literature on anticausatives and middles in the world (see e.g. Kemmer 1993, Reinhart and Sioni 2005, Ackema and Schoorlemmer 2006), the distinction between the two groups of forms finds its reflection in the Polish data. We shall consider whether the differences between the two groups of verbs correlate with important structural properties of the contexts in which they appear or whether the distinction is illusory, and largely resulting from our encyclopedic knowledge. In particular we will ask and answer the question whether the implicit agentive argument may/must co-occur with such verbs and whether the presence of individual level and stage level predicate properties (see Carlson 1977) constitutes a corollary of the presence of the agentive argument with such verbs. Along similar lines, Aktionsart types of such predicates will be considered, as well as the transitivity issues of the same-stem verbs. We will work within the framework of root-based construction-oriented views on morpho-syntax, based on such works as Alexiadou and Anagnostopoulou (2004), Embick (2009), Borer (2005), Alexiadou (2010), Alexiadou and Doron (2012), of course with our own developments. This framework will allow us to represent similarities and differences between anticausative and middle formations, without the need to point out the source lexemes of such forms. A similar explanatory analysis would not be available within lexicalist approaches to morphology, where anticausatives and middles would have to be derived by means of distinct rules from a specific base or bases (see e.g. Chomsky 1970, Aronoff 1976, Beard 1981).

## 2. THE SCOPE OF RESEARCH

Verbal forms accompanied by reflexive-like clitics are especially problematic in Polish, as they cover a whole range of structures formed in the same way, but quite varied semantically (see Grzybowska and Rembiałkowska 2015). Apart from the common formative, all these verbs share the intransitive structures which they enter.

We have decided to concentrate only on such verbs which are ‘notionally middle’ (see Condorav 1989), i.e. they focus the whole predication on a single argument, which is typically affected by what happens in the clause. According to descriptive accounts of Polish morpho-syntax, these verbs encompass anticausative verbs (see e.g. Laskowski 1984:139-141):

## (1) Polish reflexive anticausatives

*starzeć się* ‘grow old’, *wydłużać się* ‘grow longer’, *topić się* ‘melt’

However, if various types of constructions with ‘notionally middle’ verbs are scanned, we notice that the appearances of such verbs in clauses manifest a variety of linguistic contexts and a wealth of behaviors (see e.g. Tabakowska 2003). These are the problems which we will discuss in this text. Having in mind the ‘middle focus’, we will exclude reflexiva tantum and reflexives proper<sup>1</sup> from the scope of our interest. An additional condition to be imposed on this group, this time non-notional, specifies that the sole argument of the verbs under analysis be realized as the external argument of the clause – which rules out Polish impersonal reflexively marked constructions.<sup>2</sup> Our research problems will be to establish whether the data show any properties that may allow us to distinguish separate classes of anticausatives and middle verbs, and then, if that turns out to be viable, our main preoccupation will be to represent and account for the differences.

### 3. PARAMETERS DISTINGUISHING SUBCLASSES OF VERBS WITH MIDDLE SEMANTICS

A starting point of our analysis will be an especially extensive and universally oriented presentation of the middle constructions juxtaposed with other morphologically similar classes of verbs presented by Ackema and Schoorlemmer (2006). In their presentation, they consider a number of parameters that may be used to single out middles in various languages. Underneath, we will employ two major parameters important for defining the class of middles, i.e. the presence of the implied agent in middle clauses and

<sup>1</sup> *Reflexiva tantum* in Polish show frequently unergative semantics, i.e. their external arguments are agentive in character and as such will be of no interest to us. Such verbs can be exemplified by e.g. *modlić się* ‘pray’, *śmiać się* ‘laugh’, *spieszyć się* ‘hurry’. Some reflexiva tantum are unaccusatives, and these would be analyzed by us along the lines drawn for other ‘notionally middle’ verbs in this text. These will include such forms as e.g. *pocić się* ‘sweat’.

Similarly, true reflexives, which show traces of agentivity of the external argument, such as: *czesać się* ‘comb, refl.’, *ubierać się* ‘dress, refl.’, *myć się* ‘wash, refl.’ will not be included: Their subject arguments can be treated as external agents.

<sup>2</sup> Polish has a wealth of impersonal structures formed with the reflexive-like clitic *się*. For an overview see e.g. Grzybowska and Rembiałkowska (2015). They do not qualify as middles according to the criteria we have adopted because they have no (surface) subjects, agentive or otherwise, e.g.: *Śmiano się i płakano*. ‘(Somebody) laughed and cried.’

genericity of a middle clause, to see whether they delimit identical scopes of predicates in Polish, and, consequently, whether we have enough evidence to single out middles from among other anticausatives in Polish. We assume that if we have at least two parameters which delimit a certain class of forms, we may claim with some certainty that such a class of forms represents a specific structure in a given language, in other words, that such a class of forms is grammatically coded. If parameters are at cross purposes, then the viability of distinguishing a given class is undermined and we will assume that a given group of forms possesses no grammatical status. It follows that the properties of such non-grammar dependent constructions have to be accounted for in other ways (thanks to our encyclopedic knowledge, for instance). The belief that not all distinctions in language have to be grammatically coded is very strongly expressed by Borer (2005) and we share this belief. Our analysis will show that the distinction between middles and anticausatives may in fact be of a non-grammatical kind.

### 3.1. THE PARAMETER OF THE IMPLICIT AGENTIVE PARTICIPANT IN A MIDDLE EVENT

The first property that Ackema and Schoorlemmer (2006) consider, and which is generally believed to constitute the touchstone of true middles, is the implication of the intervention on the part of an agentive argument in the middle event. Such implicit agency does not appear in the case of anticausatives (see e.g. Levin and Rappaport 1995). The agentive argument is semantically present as a logical argument of an event, but it is not spelled out by any lexical elements. Alternately, it may reveal its presence in a non-argumental position, realized for instance as a complement in a prepositional phrase, satellite to a given event. Then, it may be an argument introduced by a projection in the basic morpho-syntactic structure, e.g. in the applied projection, as long as it does not figure in the projection dedicated to the introduction of the external argument into a clause (e.g. not as the Initiator in Ramchand's 2008 model). Finally, the presence of the agent can be deduced thanks to a broader sentential context, or even thanks to encyclopedic, extralinguistic knowledge.

Below we will analyze some Polish structures in which the presence of agentive participants can be pinpointed. We have selected typical examples from the *National Corpus of the Polish Language*.<sup>3</sup> As the examples show,

<sup>3</sup> The Polish name is *Narodowy Korpus Języka Polskiego* and in our references it will be included as Przepiórkowski et al. (2012).

agents, if structurally present in the clause with the middle semantics, take the form of either a phrase in the dative case (2a), or some PPs (2b, c, d, e). Occasionally, they adopt the form of the reflexive anaphoric pronominal element which resumes the nominative subject of the clause, and reflects its grammatical marking (2f). Semantically, however, the anaphoric pronominal signals the presence of a causer in the event structure, which in such cases is identical with the internal argument (see 2f below). Its overt presence, as we see it, marks the disparity of functions (or bi-functionality) of the argument spelled out as the subject argument of the clause. In this way, the presence of an agentive participant is made felt.

We may treat the presence of so marked agentive arguments in Polish clauses as symptoms of the presence of middle verbs, according to Ackema and Schoorlemmer's (2006) main agency parameter.<sup>4</sup>

(2)

- a. **Kandydatom**<sup>5</sup> pomysły wyczerpują się na etapie projektowania plakatów.  
 applicant.dat.pl idea-nom.pl exhaust.pres.3rd pl refl on phase.loc.sg designing.  
 gen.sg poster.gen.pl  
 'Ideas get exhausted at the point when projects of posters are being drawn by the applicant.'
- b. *Wieczór zaczął się dla Mühlhausa pechowo.*  
 evening.nom.sg begin.pst.3<sup>rd</sup> sg refl for Mühlhaus bad luck.adv.  
 'The evening started for Mühlhaus ominously.'
- c. *Bardziej niż przeszłość liczyło się dla niej to, co teraz.*  
 more than past.nom.sg count.pst.3<sup>rd</sup> sg refl for her this what now  
 'More than the past she minded what was then.'
- d. *Leczyli się u tego samego lekarza.*  
 treat.3<sup>rd</sup> pl refl. at that same doctor.nom.sg  
 'They got their treatment from the same doctor.'
- e. *Niby że się u nas rewolucja szykuje.* 'As if the revolution was cooked by us.'  
 as if refl at us revolution.nom.sg prepare.pres.3<sup>rd</sup> sg
- f. [...] *uznając zapewne, że mecz sam się im wygra* [...]  
 recognize.part apparently that match.nom.sg.m itself.nom.sg.m refl they.dat  
 win.fut.3<sup>rd</sup> sg  
 'Apparently recognizing that the match will win itself for them.'

<sup>4</sup> Cf., however, Kibort (2004), who disputes the agency of e.g. dative arguments in middle clauses.

<sup>5</sup> The relevant realizations of agentive semantics will be given in bold characters in the examples from the corpus, although they were not originally marked in this way.

Contrary to so defined middle event structures, anticausatives should not be accompanied by any traces of agents involved in the situations expressed by the clauses in which such reflexively marked predicates appear. In the corpus we find a number of sentences answering this description, so according to Ackema and Schoorlemmer's (2006) agency parameter, Polish also has anticausatives. As the data below show, anticausatives may also appear with additional arguments, but these arguments are not agentive in character. The typical additional arguments are inanimate causers (3a, d, g) (see also Junghanns et al. 2011), instruments (3c, e) or forces of nature (3b, f, h):

(3)

- a. *Nieporozumienia biorą się z błędnego **funkcjonowania** systemu.*  
misunderstanding.nom.pl take.pres.3rd pl refl from wrong.gen.sg functioning.gen.sg system.gen.sg  
'Mistakes result from a disfunctional system.'
- b. *Buty ślizgają się **na** lepkiej **mazi**.*  
shoe.nom.pl slip.pres.3rd pl refl on sticky.loc.sg goo.loc.sg  
'The shoes slip on sticky goo.'
- c. *Żrenice rozszerzają się bowiem **pod wpływem** każdych ciemnych szkieł.*  
pupil.nom.pl dilate.pres.3rd pl refl under influence.inst.sg dar all.gen.pl dark.gen.pl glass.gen.pl  
'Pupils dilate under the influence of all dark glasses.'
- d. *Stoły uginają się **od** potraw.*  
table.nom.pl bend.pres.3<sup>rd</sup> pl refl from dish.gen.pl  
'Tables give in under (the load of) food.'
- e. *Bakterie przenoszą się **na kropelkach** wody.*  
bacterium.nom.pl inseminate.pres.3rd pl. refl on drop.loc.pl water.gen.sg  
'Bacteria disseminate on drops of water.'
- f. *Lek i jego metabolity wydzielają się z **mlekiem**.*  
medicine.nom.sg and its metabolite.nom.pl discharge.pres.3rd.pl with milk  
'The medicine and its metabolites get discharged with milk.'
- g. *Zwierzęta łatwo adaptują się **do** zanieczyszczonego **środowiska**.*  
animal.nom.pl easily adapt.pres.3rd pl refl to polluted.gen.sg environment. gen.sg  
'Animals easily adapt to the polluted environment.'
- h. ***Pod wpływem** wysokich temperatur bakterie mnożą się łatwiej.*  
under influence.inst.sg high.gen.pl temperature.gen.pl bacterium.nom.pl multiply refl easier  
'Under the influence of high temperatures bacteria multiply easier.'
- i. *Wyjazdy odbywają się pod nazwą „Wakacyjna przygoda...”*  
trip.nom.pl take place.pres.3<sup>rd</sup> pl refl under name.inst.sg summer.nom.sg adventure.nom.sg  
'The trips take place under the heading 'Summer Adventure'.'

Notice that if you apply the criterion of the presence of the agentive argument in the clause, then the class of anticausatives encompasses not only change of state verbs (3c, d, g), which are generally included under the anticausative heading, but also change of location verbs as well (see 3a, b, e, f).

The examples quoted above illustrate the claim that middles and anticausatives can be distinguished in Polish if we apply the criterion of agency. However, if two classes of forms are differentiated just by a single feature in a grammatical system, this distinction may not reflect a significant grammatical division, i.e. the division that merits posing distinct word-formation rules or distinct structures to reflect it. We assume that a distinction needs to have some other correlates, e.g. in shapes or disparate behaviors of the forms to be grammaticalized.

In the latter part of this text, we will check whether the division of the ‘notional middles’ in Polish into middle and anticausative verbs has any useful correlates.

### 3.2. TYPES OF VERBS IN ‘NOTIONAL MIDDLES’

Even a brief analysis of the types of verbs involved in the examples above shows that they belong to various classes which do not correlate in any way with the agency criterion. If we consider Vendlerian (1967) classical *Aktion-sartal* distinction into states, activities, achievements and accomplishments, we see immediately that no correlation between these types and the proposed subclasses of middle situations can be observed. Both among middles (2) and anticausatives (3) we spot all the classes of verbs. In the examples below we use the non-cliticized forms of the relevant verbs, as the middle voice frames in which the cliticized forms are used obscure the typology.

(4)

Accomplishments: (2 a) *wyczerpać* ‘exhaust’, (3 c) *rozszerzyć* ‘dilate’

Achievements: (2 f) *wygrać* ‘win’, (3 f) *wydzielić* ‘issue’

Activities: (2 e) *szkować* ‘prepare’, (3 b) *ślizgać* ‘glide’

States: (2 c) *liczyć (na)* ‘count (on)’, (3 e) *odbywać* ‘take part in’

Other semantic criteria do not work either. For instance anticausatives are frequently taken to have the ‘change of state semantics’ (see Dowty 1979), and indeed in our data we find examples of ‘change of state’ verbs, e.g. *rozszerzyć* ‘dilate’ (3 c), but so we do among middles, e.g. *wyczerpać* ‘exhaust’ (2a).

Transitivity of predicates cannot be taken to be a distinguishing feature either, although middles can be expected to have transitive verbs corresponding to them, as such a correspondence in lexicalist terms would explain why they can be accompanied by the agentive thematic role. However, corresponding non-reflexive verbs in both groups contain transitives: (2 e) *szykować* ‘prepare’, (3 e) *przenosić* ‘disseminate’. Strangely enough, also intransitive predicates can be found in both groups: (2c) *liczyć na* ‘matter’ is not a transitive verb in Polish, and likewise (3 a): *brać*, in the sense: ‘come from’.

The above examples show clearly that the distinction between the clauses with implicit agentive participants and the ones without them does not correlate with any significant verb classes in Polish, whether semantic, or grammatical. Consequently we cannot find in these quarters any justification for the grammatically significant division between middles and anticausatives.

### 3.3. GENERICITY PARAMETER

Another significant parameter that is supposed to define middles in languages of the world is the genericity of a clause (see e.g. Marelj 2004, Reinhart and Siloni 2004, Ackema and Schoorlemmer 2006: 140). Middles are supposed to be individual level predicates, to put it very crudely, specifying types of situations, and not individual instances of their occurrence, and, indeed, in the corpus we find such middles. The clauses below are statements of general facts. According to the so-far accepted parameter of agency, they are middles. In (5a) the agency is suggested by the context, where the use of the verbal noun *sadzonkowanie* ‘producing cuttings’ with the external argument in the agentive function prompts the agentive participant in the middle event. In (5b), the adverb *łatwo* is interpreted as modifying the mode of performance, the meaning characteristic of middle clauses (see Fellbaum 1986), and not the ease with which the situation may occur – which would be characteristic of anticausative clauses. Consequently, (5b) may be interpreted as middle, although the agentive participant is just implicit.

(5) Middles with generic, individual level meaning:

- a. *Pelargonie rozmnażają się łatwo jesienią przez sadzonkowanie pędów.*  
 geranium.nom.pl reproduce.pres.3<sup>rd</sup> pl refl easily in autumn.inst.sg by cutting.  
 acc.sg shoot.gen.pl  
 ‘Geranium reproduces easily in autumn through cut shoots.’



- b. *Takie zapachy zmywają się łatwo.*  
 such smell.nom.pl wash.pres.3rd pl refl easily  
 ‘Such smells wash easily.’

However, not all middles are generic. In some middle structures (judging by the presence of dative agentive participants) proper names are used, and specific occasions positioned in terms of time are mentioned, which excludes the generic interpretation of the sentences in (6 a, b) below:

(6) Middles with non-generic, stage level meaning:

- a. *Zimą kontrakty kończą się Mariuszom Śrutwie i Masternakowi.*  
 winter.inst.sg contract.nom.pl end.pres.3rd pl refl Mariusz.dat.pl Śrutwa.dat.sg  
 and Masternak.dat.sg  
 ‘In winter Mariusz Śrutwa’s and Masternak’s contracts expire.’
- b. *Wieczór zaczął się dla Mühlhausa pechowo.*  
 evening.nom.sg begin.pst.3<sup>rd</sup> sg refl for Mühlhaus bad luck.adv.  
 ‘The evening started for Mühlhaus ominously.’

As the two groups of examples clearly show, agentivity implied in clauses does not correlate with genericity of such clauses.

Unlike middles, anticausatives are claimed to be characterized by stage level, non-generic interpretation, and indeed such anticausatives appear, although, contrary to our expectations anticausatives are frequently generic (see e.g. examples in 3 above):

(7) Anticausatives with non-generic, stage level interpretation:

- a. *Jeżeli pretensje okażą się uzasadnione, nałożymy karę finansową.*  
 if complaint.nom.pl turn out.fut.3rd pl justified.nom.pl impose.fut.1<sup>st</sup> pl fine.  
 acc.sg financial.acc.sg  
 ‘If complaints turn out justified, we will impose a fine.’
- b. *Twoje dopiero co kupione eleganckie buty zsuwają się ze stóp.*  
 your just buy.nom.pl.pst.part. elegant.nom.pl shoe.nom.pl slip.pres.3<sup>rd</sup> pl refl  
 from feet.gen  
 ‘Your just bought elegant shoes slip off from your feet.’

Apart from the examples in (3), we find in the corpus other examples of generic anticausatives, as the ones exemplified in (8) below:

(8) Anticausatives with generic, individual level meaning:

- a. *Dzieci zarażają się najłatwiej przez kontakt z rówieśnikami.*  
 child.nom.pl infect.pres.3rd pl refl easiest by contact.acc.sg peer.inst.pl  
 ‘Children infect most easily through contact with their peers.’

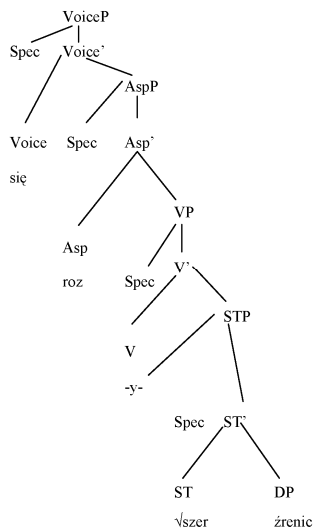
- b. *Czasem nawet kobiety gubią się, nie wiedząc, które wybrać.*  
 sometimes even woman.nom.pl lose.pres.3rd pl refl not knowing which  
 choose.inf  
 ‘Sometimes even women get disorientated not knowing which to choose.’

As the above data reveal, anticausatives in Polish, just like middles, appear in the clauses with individual and stage level characteristics.

#### 4. THE STRUCTURE FOR POLISH MIDDLES AND ANTICAUSATIVES

The parameters that might characterize classes of middles and anticausatives cut across groups of middles and anticausatives in Polish, as established on the basis of the agency parameter. Consequently, it seems that the non-arbitrary singling out of the classes of middles and anticausatives in Polish is a futile task.<sup>6</sup> We will propose then that anticausatives and middles are identical creations in structural terms. The structure, presented in (9) below, is inspired by the research on voice systems offered by Alexiadou and Doron (2012), and the proposal of the State Phrase contributed by Embick (2009).

(9)



<sup>6</sup> Grashchenkov (2015), for instance, claims that in such languages as Tatar, or Russian no such distinction is needed at all and that the common grammatical representation for various groups of ‘notional middles’ is enough.

(10) *Żrenice rozszerzyły się.* ‘The pupils have delated.’

The structure in (9) can represent the clause in (10), minus inflectional morphemes, which will be inserted by late spell-out rules. The head for the Voice Phrase, *się*, is responsible for the properties of the middle voice, i.e. it prevents the introduction of an additional external argument equipped with agentive thematic properties into the clause (such an argument would be projected by active voice heads in transitive clauses). Consequently, the specifier of the Voice Phrase, not filled with the agentive external argument, will be the ultimate landing site for the internal argument of the clause, i.e. *żrenice*. This argument will be assigned the nominative case, as the bearer of the EPP feature (see Chomsky 2000). *Roz-* constitutes the head of the lexical aspect, as it introduces not only the perfectivity of the clause, but also additional semantic elements.<sup>7</sup> *-y-* is (one of the allomorphs of) a verb forming morpheme, one of many elements setting up stems of verbs in Polish.  $\sqrt{\text{szer}}$  is the verbal root on which the verbal form is founded, while *żrenic* makes up the root for the noun which appears in the Determiner Phrase (DP) complementing the verbal root. The morphemes will have been linearized before the phonological representation is ready, according to the principles of Chomsky (1995).

The very same structure will serve the formation of middles. What remains to be accounted for is the occurrence of the logical agentive participant in the clause, while such an argument does not find its place in the so-designed morpho-syntactic structure. We claim here that the presence of the agentive argument results from our knowledge of the world, or it is prompted by the context. In other words, it is not grammatical. The appearance of the implicit agentive argument or its presence in satellite phrases is not a corollary of any other property of ‘notional middles’, as we have shown, so, consequently, it may be extra-grammatical.

For instance if we take a root like: *łam*, depending on the context and our general knowledge, it can be realized as a middle formation (see 11 a, b), or as an anticausative (see 11 c):

<sup>7</sup> Prefixes in Polish can be divided into classes that have distinct properties (see Młynarczyk 2004). As a rule, *roz-* modifies the basic meaning of the verb to which it is attached, e.g. *dzielić* ‘divide’ vs. *rozdzielić* ‘distribute’ and thus is classified as a lexical prefix. We extrapolate this property of the prefix onto such cases as (10), where no visible modifications of the lexical meaning of the basic verb occurs.

(11)

- a. *Trzciny łamią się w odpowiednich miejscach do wiązania.* ‘Canes break in the places appropriate for tying them.’
- b. *Trzciny łamią się nam łatwo.* ‘Canes break easily for us.’
- c. *Ołówek złamał się i był bezużyteczny.* ‘The pencil broke and it was rendered useless.’

Neither parametrical properties of ‘notional middles’, nor their behavior in clauses like the ones in (11) above point to the grammatical, structure-coded status of the distinction between middles and anticausatives.

#### 5. A NOTE ON CONSTRUCTION ROOT BASED AND LEXICALIST FRAMEWORKS

The common structure for middles and anticausatives in Polish reflects the fact that the distinction based on the agency prompted in middle clauses does not correlate with other verbal properties. At the same time, it is possible to identify the encyclopedic knowledge related factors, as well as broader context phenomena that enforce the agentive reading in some clauses. Thus the distinction between middles and anticausatives analyzed in this text is shown to be extra-grammatical, and may be expediently rendered within the construction based approaches to morpho-syntax.

No such elegant solution is available within the lexicalist approach. First of all we would need a class of bases for the middles and anticausatives, as they are morphologically complex formations, characterized by the clitic *się*. As we have seen in a number of cases, such a base would be missing, as e.g. for some structures we would need intransitive verbs that do not exist (see section 3.2.). While in the construction based approach to morpho-syntax the actual non-appearance of a form does not disprove the viability of a given structure—a given structure need not be spelled out—in the lexicalist approach such forms are problematic, especially if they are to function as bases for word-formation rules, and not as potential derivatives. Then there is a problem of the lexical status of middles and anticausatives. Should both groups be entered in the lexicon? We assume that the answer would be negative, as the grammatical status of middles vitally depends on the context in which they are inserted. Consequently, while anticausatives would be lexical elements, middles would probably have to be considered grammatical constructs, which, in turn,

would create additional problems: Anticausatives are much more frequent in the corpus than middles. If anticausatives are lexicalized, while middles are not, this is just the unwanted result. The root-based construction approach to morpho-syntax allows us to steer clear of all such problems and thus seems to be better designed to serve an analysis of Polish ‘notional middles’.

## 6. CONCLUSION

Notional middles constitute a very difficult research problem in the Polish language as the very basis of establishing interesting distinctions within the group is problematic. In this text we have considered the most basic parameters that may be useful for grouping the relevant language material. We have analyzed the correlations between three different parameters which find their application for the relevant group of verbs and established that these parameters do not give parallel results as far as the divisions within the group of middles ‘notional’ in Polish are concerned. We have considered the agency parameter, semantics and transitivity of corresponding verbs, as well as the genericity of the clauses with ‘notional middles.’ No correlations among these parameters have been found, so we propose that the distinction between anticausatives and middles in Polish is extra-grammatical. The agency factor present in some clauses is either a corollary of a broader context or of our general knowledge of the world.

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## ŚRODEK RODZINY.

## ZWROTNIE NACECHOWANE STRUKTURY W JĘZYKU POLSKIM

## Streszczenie

Artykuł poświęcony jest zagadnieniu pozycji konstrukcji medialnych w języku polskim. Po zanalizowaniu materiału językowego pod względem tego, jakie parametry są istotne w języku polskim dla wykrywania podtypów tych konstrukcji, okazało się, że parametry ogólnie uważane za istotne do odróżnienia konstrukcji medialnych i antykauzatywnych w materiale polskim dają sprzeczne ze sobą wyniki. Dlatego wydaje się, że rozróżnienia czasowników medialnych i antykauzatywnych nie opierają się na gramatycznie kodowanych konstrukcjach, a raczej wynikają z informacji dostępnych w szerokim kontekście i z wiedzy encyklopedycznej.

**Słowa kluczowe:** strona medialna; antykauzatywa; klityka *się*; agentywność; typ; język polski.