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The Word Order and Prosody of Polish Constructions with Subject-oriented Evaluative Adverbs and Their Impact on the Meaning of These Structures (Part 2)

Abstract

The article examines the impact of word order and prosody on the meaning of constructions with evaluative adverbs in Polish. While Polish literature on adverbs often suggests that the position of adverbs “proper” carries no semantic significance, unlike that of metatextual particles (some of which are formally identical to them), there exists a specific subclass of adverbs that exhibit similar behaviour to particles in this regard. This subclass, known as subject-oriented adverbs, includes evaluative adverbs, which are the main focus of this analysis.

The article is divided into two parts. Part 1 introduced the category of evaluative adverbs and examined cases of semantic ambiguity inherent in sentences featuring them, discussing their syntactic-semantic representations and corresponding prosodic and information structures. Part 2 begins, in Section 1, by demonstrating the prevalence of the phenomenon under discussion through selected corpus examples. It also discusses, on the one hand, the most characteristic syntactic and lexical markers indicating particular readings, and on the other, the issue of potential ambiguity in sentences with the same word order and prosodic pattern. Finally, in Section 3, the article addresses the question of the lexical status of the expressions under study that can occupy different syntactic positions, and compares the approach advocated here with views expressed in the relevant literature.

Keywords

evaluative adverbs, information structure, Polish, polysemy of adverbial structures, subject-oriented adverbs, theme vs rheme, word order

Abstrakt

Przedmiotem artykułu jest wpływ szyku wyrazów i prozodii na znaczenie konstrukcji z przysłówkami oceniającymi w języku polskim. W polskiej literaturze na temat przysłówków często przyjmuje się, że pozycja przysłówków „właściwych”, w odróżnieniu od metatekstowych partykuł (czasami formalnie z nimi identycznych), nie odgrywa istotnej roli semantycznej. Istnieje jednak pewna podklasa wyrażen, które mają pod tym względem właściwości podobne do partykuł – chodzi mianowicie o przysłówki zorientowane na podmiot, w tym przysłówki oceniające, będące przedmiotem tego artykułu.

Artykuł podzielono na dwie części. W części pierwszej wprowadzona została kategoria przysłówków oceniających, po czym na podstawie analizy niejednoznaczności semantycznej zawierających je zdań została omówiona ich reprezentacja syntaktyczno-semantyczna oraz struktura prozodyczna i komunikacyjna. Celem sekcji drugiej części drugiej artykułu jest ukazanie powszechności omawianego zjawiska na podstawie wybranych danych korpusowych, a także omówienie, z jednej strony, najbardziej charakterystycznych wykładników składniowych i leksykalnych wskazujących na poszczególne interpretacje, a z drugiej, możliwej dwuznaczności struktur o tym samym szyku i rozkładzie akcentowym. Przedmiotem rozważań w sekcji trzeciej jest status leksykalny wyrażen zajmujących różne pozycje składniowe; prezentowane podejście w tej kwestii zostaje przy tym skonfrontowane z poglądami wyrażanymi w literaturze przedmiotu.

Słowa kluczowe

język polski, przysłówki oceniające, przysłówki zorientowane na podmiot, struktura komunikacyjna zdania, struktura tematyczno-rematyczna, szyk zdania, wieloznaczność konstrukcji przysłówkowych

1. Introduction

In Part 1 of the article (Duraj-Nowosielska 2024), I focused on presenting structures with evaluative adverbs (compared to other adverbs, particularly subject-oriented ones), for which word order and/or prosody appear to significantly affect their semantic interpretation. I distinguished two basic syntactic models: one in which evaluators are rhematised ($\text{Adv}_{\text{Eval}}\text{Rh}$) and another in which they form part of the thematic proposition ($\text{Adv}_{\text{Eval}}\text{Th}$). The latter has multiple variants depending on which part of the sentence (marked as rhematic) falls within the scope of evaluation. In the course of that discussion, $\text{Adv}_{\text{Eval}}\text{Rh}$ structures were interpreted as semantically equivalent to, and derived from, structures in which the evaluator in the thematic position refers to a rhematised adverb of manner. As a result of a syntactic shift, the evaluator assumes the position of a manner adverb, while the assessed manner itself remains implicit.

2. Evaluative adverbs – aspects of usage

With the above framework in mind, let us take a look at a number of examples attested in the NCP. For simplicity, in these sentences, I only mark the placement of the main stress as suggested by the word order and/or the sentential context. It should be pointed out that this convention leaves a certain margin of interpretive freedom regarding what belongs to the “broad rheme” in Adv_{Eval}Th structures. Thus, I leave aside the question of the inherent ambiguity of these constructions and focus on the broader opposition between adverbial (Adv_{Eval}Rh) and adrhematic (Adv_{Eval}Th) readings, regardless of the precise nature of the latter.¹ The examples below show that the opposition under discussion is systematic in Polish.

Let us now consider the first two NCP examples:

- (1) *Kapryśny król, niedawno jeszcze zwolennik tolerancji, teraz poczyną sobie DESPOTYCZNIE i po BARBARZYŃSKU.*

‘The capricious king, until recently an advocate of tolerance, is now acting DESPOTICALLY and BARBARICALLY.’

- (2) *Despotycznie PRZETASOWAŁEM ich, równie despotycznie w Prezydium osadziłem SEKRETARZA i VICE, sobie rezerwując dogłąd ogólny.*

‘Despotically, I shuffled them AROUND and equally despotically, I appointed the SECRETARY and his DEPUTY to the Presidium, reserving general supervision for myself.’

In (1), the king’s behaviour is described as despotic, while in (2), the focus is not on the despotic manner of reshuffling people and appointing the secretary, but on the fact that such reshuffling itself constitutes an act of despotism (as the speaker candidly admits).

The following examples feature the adverb *głupio* ‘stupidly/foolishly/in a silly way’:

- (3) *Z nieba – na głupie pytanie GŁUPIO odpowiada Pętał.*

‘“From heaven,” the stupid question is answered STUPIDLY by Pętał.’

- (4) *Debren uśmiechnął się GŁUPIO, nie mając pojęcia, jak skomentować tę uwagę.*

‘Debren smiled FOOLISHLY, having no idea how to respond to the remark.’

- (5) *Jedynie Kazek [...] spróbował mu wyjaśnić: – No b-bo tak się głupio CIESZYSZ [...].*

‘Only Kazek [...] tried to explain [it] to him: “Well, b-because you’re GRINNING so foolishly [...].”’

¹ In the case of VP rhematisation, the main sentence stress may be placed on the verb itself or on its complements, depending on pragmatic predictions regarding the relative informativeness of these constituents. For insights into the significance of “information load” in such contexts, see the classic studies by Bolinger (1972) and Cruttenden (1997).

- (6) *Jedna z dziewczyn, którą lepiej widzę, KRYGUJE się głupio.*
 ‘One of the girls, whom I can see better, is SIMPERING foolishly.’

In (3) and (4), the adverb is interpreted as a modifier to the verb, while in (5) and (6) it assumes an adrhematic reading – here, ‘grinning’ and ‘simpering’ are characterised as inherently silly. In (6), this interpretation involves inversion and does not directly result from word order. To illustrate the difference between the most probable prosodic pattern in this sentence and one that would imply a stupid manner of simpering, compare the following structures, where (8) clearly should not sound the same as (7) when read aloud:

- (7) *Jedna z dziewczyn zachowuje się GŁUPIO.*
 ‘One of the girls is acting STUPID.’
- (8) *?Jedna z dziewczyn kryguje się GŁUPIO.*
 ?‘One of the girls is simpering FOOLISHLY.’

Locating the main stress in (8) in the same place as in (7) would suggest that it is possible, in the speaker’s view, to simper in a more intelligent way.

Another set of examples illustrates the adverbial (9–10) and adrhematic (11–12) uses of *heroicznie* ‘heroically’:

- (9) *Wieżenie sowieckie Władek zniósł HEROICZNIE.*
 ‘Władek endured the Soviet prison HEROICALLY.’
- (10) *Walczyli HEROICZNIE i byli niesłychanie masakrowani.*
 ‘They fought HEROICALLY and were incredibly massacred.’
- (11) *Leszczyński WYŁAMAŁ się wtedy heroicznie i zgłosił votum SEPARATUM, dając niewątpliwy dowód cywilnej odwagi.*
 ‘Leszczyński then heroically broke RANKS and submitted a *votum SEPARATUM*, giving undeniable proof of civil courage.’
- (12) *Kusił mnie SZNYCEL wiedeński z klinem świeżej cytryny i pieczonymi kartoflami w talarki, jakie podawali w Adlerze na Mokotowskiej, heroicznie wybrałem jednak PIEROGI z jagodami w pobliskim Ejlacie.*
 ‘I was tempted by a WIENER schnitzel with a wedge of fresh lemon and baked potatoes in slices, as served at Adler in Mokotowska Street, but heroically, I chose blueberry DUMPLINGS at the nearby Ejlat Café.’

Examples (9) and (10) refer to the heroism of the attitude or action indicated by the predicator, whereas the adverbs in (11) and (12), even despite the somewhat misleading inversion in the former, are interpreted adrhematically; that is, the very act of breaking ranks by submitting a *votum separatum*, and the choosing of blueberry dumplings, are apparently considered acts of heroism (whether seriously or jokingly).

Further NCP examples are given in (13–28), where the odd-numbered examples illustrate manner-evaluative readings and the even-numbered ones feature adverbial adverbs, with relevant comments left to the reader's interpretation:

- (13) *Jeśli ktoś traktuje ją NIESPRAWIEDLIWIE [...], REAGUJĄ, zanim ona zdąży się odezwać.*
'If someone treats her UNFAIRLY [...], they REACT before she has a chance to speak.'
- (14) *Niesprawiedliwie SKRACAM te wywody, ale dodać wypada, że autor zwraca uwagę także na postać KOBIECĄ.*
'Unfairly, I am CONDENSING these arguments, but it is worth adding that the author also draws attention to the FEMALE figure.'
- (15) *Pismo próbowało odpowiedzieć na PYTANIE – dlaczego obywatele Niemiec na obcym terytorium zachowywali się tak NIKCZEMNIE?*
'The magazine tried to answer the QUESTION – why did German citizens behave so DESPICABLY on foreign territory?'
- (16) *[...] jestem już tak dostatecznie ZNUŻONY, w głowie mi się MĄCI, więc momentalnie się PODDAJĘ i nikczemnie CZMYCHAM.*
'[...] I am already so thoroughly EXHAUSTED, my head is SPINNING, so I immediately give UP and, disgracefully, I run AWAY.'
- (17) *Nie zgadzam się, że wciąż gram EGOISTYCZNIE.*
'I don't agree that I still play SELFISHLY.'
- (18) *Politycy egoistycznie planują ZAKAZ handlu w niedziele.*
'Politicians selfishly plan a BAN on Sunday trading.'
- (19) *Uśmiechał się NIEMĄDRZE i NIE mógł stłumić tego niemądrego uśmiechu.*
'He smiled FOOLISHLY and COULDN'T suppress this foolish smile.'
- (20) *Nikt jednak nie USTRZEŻE z zewnątrz czegoś, co bywa [...] niemądrze DEPRECJO-NOWANE od środka.*
'However, no one can SAVE from the outside that which, foolishly, is [...] DEPRECIATED from within.'
- (21) *Gospodarujmy MĄDRZE, ROZTROPNIE i OSZCZĘDNIE.*
'Let's manage WISELY, PRUDENTLY, and ECONOMICALLY.'
- (22) *Konrad POWSTRZYMAŁ się roztropnie od przekazania starcowi wyrazów swego potępienia.*
'Prudently, Konrad REFRAINED from expressing his condemnation to the old man.'
- (23) *Osoba, która NIEROZTROPNIE obchodzi się z ogniem, może zostać ukarana mandatem w wysokości do 500 złotych.*
'A person who handles fire IMPRUDENTLY may be fined up to PLN 500.'

- (24) *Nieroztropnie ZAPEWNILIŚMY ją, że towarzystwa Putramenta przy naszym stoliku nie przewidujemy.*
 ‘Imprudently, we ASSURED her that we did not expect Putrament to accompany us at our table.’
- (25) *Dlaczego Bóg tak OKRUTNIE Polskę i Polaków doświadcza?*
 ‘Why does God test Poland and Poles so CRUELLY?’
- (26) *Los okrutnie przełamał jej życie na okres SZCZĘŚCIA i POWODZENIA, oraz późniejszy czas utraty osób sobie NAJBLIŻSZYCH.*
 ‘Fate cruelly broke her life into a period of HAPPINESS and SUCCESS, followed by a later time of losing those CLOSEST to her.’
- (27) *Przywołani przez ojca podchodzą NIEŚMIAŁO.*
 ‘Summoned by their father, they approach TIMIDLY.’
- (28) *Większość z nich nieśmiało zaczyna od sprawdzania SALDA.*
 ‘Most of them timidly start by checking their [bank account] BALANCE.’

Collocations characteristic of manner adverbs, but unusual in the adrhematic interpretation, involve verbs that generalise actions, such as *zachowywać się* ‘behave’, *traktować kogoś/coś* ‘treat sb/sth’, *podchodzić do czegoś* ‘approach sth’, *postępować z kimś/czymś* ‘deal with sb/sth’ or *postępować* ‘act’, which obligatorily connote an adverb of manner; cf. other NCP examples of this kind:

- (29) *[...] bo my nie traktujemy polskiego wejścia do Unii Europejskiej EGOISTYCZNIE [...].*
 ‘[...] because we don’t treat Poland’s accession to the EU SELFISHLY [...].’
- (30) *Postąpił ze mną NIKCZEMNIE, NIEGODNIE, HANIEBNIE!*
 ‘He treated me DESPICABLY, DISGRACEFULLY, [and] SHAMEFULLY!’
- (31) *Ja też zgadzam się z dziewczynami, że postąpiłaś NIEMĄDRZE.*
 ‘I also agree with the girls that you acted FOOLISHLY.’
- (32) *Ktoś, kto oszczędza na takim wydatku, zachowuje się co najmniej NIEROZTROPNIE.*
 ‘Someone who saves on such an expense is behaving at least IMPRUDENTLY.’
- (33) *Rodzice podchodzą do tego ROZTROPNIE.*
 ‘Parents approach this PRUDENTLY.’

Conversely, only an adrhematic reading is allowed with collocations involving negated verbs, as seen in the following NCP examples:

- (34) *[...] podobnie jak polska gospodarka na dobrych z Francją stosunkach, których niemądrze i krótkowzrocznie nie DOCENIAMY.*
 ‘[...] similarly to how the Polish economy [benefits] from good relations with France, which we foolishly and short-sightedly do not APPRECIATE.’

- (35) *Wilhelm roztropnie nie POZWOLIŁ im na żadne samodzielne działania i w 1067 roku [...] zabrał ze sobą do NORMANDII.*
 ‘William prudently did NOT allow them to take any independent actions and in 1067 [...] he took them with him to NORMANDY.’
- (36) *Kastylijski dynasta wzbraniał się przed uznaniem książęcego tytułu swego poddanego, ale roztropnie nie usiłował odebrać go SIŁĄ.*
 ‘The Castilian dynast refused to recognise his subject’s principality, but he prudently did not attempt to take it by FORCE.’
- (37) *Papież roztropnie nie poprowadził armii NAJKRÓTSZĄ drogą, gdyż wiodła ona przez terytoria kontrolowane przez NORMANÓW.*
 ‘The Pope prudently did not lead the army along the SHORTEST route, as it passed through territories controlled by the NORMANS.’

This property of evaluative adverbs is sometimes considered evidence that, in adrhematic uses (including adsentential ones in relevant contexts), they lose their connection with the textual level of the utterance and begin to function at the metatextual/metapredicative level. This is a view expressed by Danielewiczowa (2012), who, in her work on what she refers to as “metapredicates of attestation” (Pol. *metapredykaty atestacyjne*),² lists several examples of subject-oriented adverbs, suggesting that in their case, one can observe, “in action,” the breaking of the relation between an adverb and the textual level. One argument in favour of their intermediate status between strictly adverbial and metapredicative expressions is precisely the fact that they can refer to negative states of affairs. In Danielewiczowa’s example (2012: 155), *Sędzia rozważnie nie ogłosił wyroku* ‘The judge prudently did not pass the sentence’, it is stated that the subject refrained from passing the sentence and that this was prudent on his part. Indeed, “ordinary” adverbs (much like mental state expressions, but unlike i-exponents, which resemble evaluators in this respect) behave differently. For instance, the sentence *Sędzia beznamyślnie nie ogłosił wyroku* ‘The judge did not pass the sentence dispassionately’ could mean either that the judge passed the sentence but did not do so dispassionately, or alternatively, that he did not pass the sentence dispassionately because he did not pass it at all. Although Danielewiczowa does not make a definitive claim that a transition from the textual to metatextual level has indeed taken place in these examples, she uses a parallel interpretative mechanism elsewhere to argue that this time, we are dealing with homonymous language units (an adverb and a metapredicate). Compare the following two examples

² These are inherently thematic comments made by the speaker that “attest” to (the adequacy of) the application of a given predicate, such as *jawnie [korupcyjny]* ‘blatantly [corrupt]’, *iście [piekielny]* ‘truly [hellish]’, *stanowczo [za mały]* ‘definitely [too small]’, *dosłownie [wstrząśnięty]* ‘literally [shaken]’, etc. In Bogusławski’s (1999) terms, inherently thematic expressions are those that cannot undergo rhematisation.

she discusses in her book: *Chory DZIWNIE chrapie* ‘The patient is snoring STRANGELY’, that is, in a way other than that which would not attract attention, and *Chory dziwnie CHRAPIE* ‘Strangely, the patient is SNORING’, where the very fact that s/he is snoring attracts attention” (Danielewiczowa 2012: 83). Although the issue is not fully resolved, the general assumption is that homonymy is diagnosed whenever an evaluator clearly functions on two planes of language – the textual and the metatextual/metapredicative. However, the criteria for determining whether the adverb in a given syntactic function has already separated from the predicative plane or not remain problematic; see the proposals in Grochowski (2008, 2014) and Danielewiczowa (2012: 81–92), as well as a critical summary of the most frequently used criteria in Duraj-Nowosielska (2022).³ This issue will be revisited in Section 4.

Admittedly, the problem of interpretation, based on TRS data, is more complex than the above simple comparisons suggest. First, as previously noted (in Part 1), a single instance of linear order may correspond to various sentence structures that differ in terms of TRS and, consequently, in the function that the adverb performs. The interpretations of (1–28) above are proposed as the most probable in the given contexts, but it is possible to identify numerous constructions where the basic reading is difficult to determine. For example, sentence (38), taken from the NCP, may either imply that the mere act of throwing oneself into the midst of events is already heroic or that the manner in which it was done is praised as heroic:

- (38) *Heroicznie rzuca się w wir zdarzeń.*
 ‘He heroically throws himself into the midst of the events.’

Similarly, the NCP sentences (39) and (40) imply either that the fishermen fight heroically and that it is prudent of the ducks to march, or that it is heroic to take up the fight against such a powerful element, and that the ducks are marching in a manner demonstrating prudence:

- (39) *Na pokładzie skromnego kutra heroicznie walczą ze sztormem stulecia.*
 ‘On board of a modest fishing boat, they heroically fight the storm of the century.’
 (40) *Po rżysku roztropnie maszeruje sznur kaczek.*
 ‘A line of ducks is prudently marching across the stubble field.’

A similar ambiguity can be identified in the following sentences (also from the NCP):

³ It should be emphasised, however, that not all authors dealing with meta-expressions accept that they constitute lexemes homonymous with expressions from the textual plane. For example, Wajszczuk (2005: 68–69) argues that if it is possible to formulate a paraphrase identical to that of the corresponding adverb (by expanding the default context of the sentence), then there is no proper repartition of meaning, and therefore no question of homonymy.

- (41) *Groszek mądrze odchrząknął, ale nic mu to nie pomogło.*
 ‘Bean sagely cleared his throat, but it didn’t help him.’
- (42) *Na to pan Bieganek mądrze pokiwał głową i oświadczył, że nie dziwi się temu [...].*
 ‘In response, Mr Bieganek sagely nodded his head and said that he was not surprised by it [...].’
- (43) *W jednym z poprzednich felietonów okrutnie dworowałem sobie z instrukcji kierownika przyuczelnianej przychodni zdrowia.*
 ‘In one of my previous columns, I mercilessly ridiculed the instructions of the head of the university health clinic.’

Ambiguities of this type are usually resolved in speech by means of the mechanism discussed above, that is, prosodic cues (cf. also (44–45) and (46–47) below). This corresponds to the approach to the TRS as a pragmatic strategy satisfying the principle of cooperation between the speaker and the hearer (in accordance with Clark and Haviland 1981 or Chafe 1994). Rhematisation of the adverb, along with thematisation of the VP, naturally excludes the adrhematic reading, and *vice versa* – an “ordinary” (see below) thematisation of the adverb and rhematisation of (part of) the VP normally exclude a manner-evaluative interpretation, unless, of course, it is the adverb of manner itself that is rhematised. In the latter case, the evaluative comment is typically anticipatory, referring to what is conveyed later in the linear order, but, as we have seen, this is not always the case – what matters here is primarily its role as a thematic commentary attached to the basic predication. However, it should be noted that thematised evaluators, unlike their counterparts in the rhematic position, which always function as manner adverbials, may sometimes act as VP modifiers, which *prima facie* complicates the overall picture. Yet, this is only possible with the so-called operation of explicit theme selection (cf. Bogusławski 1977), as in the case of answering an explicit or implicit question (*Co X zrobił nieśmiało/nieroztropnie?* ‘What did X do timidly/imprudently?’, etc.). In such cases, the thematic part is separated from the rhematic one with a characteristic short pause, which clearly distinguishes these constructions from those that are the focus of this discussion.

Still, an adequate interpretation of the sentence along the lines sketched above may not always be easily available in some contexts, and this is because the unambiguity of the construction in terms of the TRS does not always translate into its semantic unambiguity. This is the case when a sentence has two intonational peaks distributed between the adverb and the VP, indicating their double-rhematic nature.⁴ In such structures, the recipient, deprived of the above-mentioned prosodic cues, may not know (unless it is

⁴ This prosodic phenomenon in Polish was first discussed by Pisarkowa (1965) and Klemensiewicz (1968); for English, see Cruttenden (1997).

clear from the context) whether the adverb syntactically refers to the VP or the entire sentence. The former usually occurs when the speaker introduces the VP as new information and uses a modifier to modify it (here, a manner-evaluative word) within the same sentence. A typical modifier construction Adv(VP), with the VP thematised, would disrupt the information structure of the utterance (contradicting expectations about it), because it would suggest that the VP is part of the given, or, in Chafe's (1994) terms, belongs to the elements of the sentence that are active or semi-active in the hearer's consciousness (as assumed by the speaker). Thus, there is a tension here between what might be called, following Krifka (2007), Common Ground content, which reflects semantic relations within the sentence, and Common Ground management, which relates to the information structure of the utterance in the context – and the compromise is achieved at the cost of the structure's ultimate ambiguity. A different mechanism, related to what is sometimes referred to as the "psychological accent,"⁵ most likely underlies double-apex adrhematic structures. Here, the adverb is understood as the speaker's comment, whose importance is specially emphasised by means of parallel sentence stress. Therefore, although there are two different mechanisms at play in adverbial and adrhematic readings, their resultant prosodic patterns are very much alike (cf. (48)). In both cases, an evaluator may also function parenthetically, as indicated by the intonation characteristic of such structures (cf. (49)). As an illustration, let us consider six variants of the NCP example in (43), four unambiguous (44–47) and two ambiguous (48–49) ones:

- (44) Adv_{Eval}Th – unambiguous adrhematic reading

*W jednym z poprzednich felietonów okrutnie **DWOROWAŁ** sobie z instrukcji kierownika przyuczelnianej przychodni zdrowia.*

'In one of the previous columns, he mercilessly RIDICULED the instructions of the head of the university health clinic.'

- (45) Adv_{Eval}Th with inversion – unambiguous adrhematic reading

*W jednym z poprzednich felietonów **DWOROWAŁ** sobie okrutnie z instrukcji kierownika przyuczelnianej przychodni **ZDROWIA**.*

'In one of the previous columns, he RIDICULED mercilessly the instructions of the head of the university HEALTH clinic.'

- (46) Adv_{Eval}Rh – manner reading

*W jednym z poprzednich felietonów **dworował** sobie **OKRUTNIE** z instrukcji kierownika przyuczelnianej przychodni zdrowia.*

'In one of the previous columns, he ridiculed MERCILESSLY the instructions of the head of the university health clinic.'

⁵ This pertains to the strengthening of the rheme or the theme. See, for example, the category of emphasis in Mel'čuk (2001).

- (47) Adv_{Eval}Rh with inversion – manner reading
W jednym z poprzednich felietonów OKRUTNIE dworował sobie z instrukcji kierownika przyuczelnianej przychodni zdrowia.
 ‘In one of the previous columns, he MERCILESSLY ridiculed the instructions of the head of the university health clinic.’
- (48) Two nuclear accents – ambiguity between the adrhematic and adverbial reading
W jednym z poprzednich felietonów OKRUTNIE DWOROWAŁ sobie z instrukcji kierownika przyuczelnianej przychodni zdrowia.
 ‘In one of the previous columns, he MERCILESSLY RIDICULED the instructions of the head of the university health clinic.’
- (49) Adv_{Eval} in emphatic parenthesis, ambiguity between the adrhematic and adverbial reading
W jednym z poprzednich felietonów DWOROWAŁ sobie, OKRUTNIE, z instrukcji kierownika przyuczelnianej przychodni zdrowia.
 ‘In one of the previous columns, he, MERCILESSLY, RIDICULED the instructions of the head of the university health clinic.’

Sentences (44–45) imply that the subject ridiculed someone and that it was cruel of him, while (46–47) mean that he ridiculed someone in a cruel way. Contrary to them, for (48–49), these are two equally possible interpretative options.

In conclusion, prosodic features do not always guide the addressee towards the correct reading – and unless it is clear from the context, I think it can be assumed that in such cases, disambiguating the sentence is of little importance to the speaker. Be that as it may, the fact that speakers sometimes express themselves imprecisely – simply because, in certain situations, precision has no particular communicative significance or contradicts other goals perceived as more important – does not undermine the value of elucidating precisely the differences between the constructions in question, which are bound to emerge in other contexts. At least, this is the position generally advocated by structurally-oriented semantics, as opposed to its more “ecological” trends, as in cognitivist and other context-oriented approaches.

3. Research on subject-oriented adverbs and the issue of polysemy

Despite the differences demonstrated above concerning word order and prosody in evaluative constructions, there is no compelling reason to treat evaluators as ambiguous lexical units, as is sometimes suggested in the relevant English-language literature (see below). “Recklessness” or “foolishness”,

for example, clearly retain the same semantic features regardless of whether they refer to an implicit manner or any explicit part of the sentence, including the content of the entire sentence itself. A more detailed justification for this position has been presented in Part 1, along with the proposed basic semantic-syntactic formula for evaluators, corresponding to the Adv_{Eval}Th structure, and a metonymy-based model of a secondary, Adv_{Eval}Rh, reading. One can conclude, then, that the interpretive discrepancies between these constructions do not extend beyond what results from a change in the scope of their reference.

Although I generally accept the (synchronic) homonymy of formally identical units operating on the textual and metatextual levels (such as those mentioned in Section 1 of Part 1, and many other expressions, including metapredicates analysed by Danielewiczowa 2012, such as *jawnie* 'openly', *normalnie* 'normally', *naturalnie* 'naturally', *wprost* 'directly' or *spokojnie* 'easily', lit. 'calmly'), there is no reason to assume that evaluative adverbs regularly serve the metatextual or metapredicative plane. The thematic position they occupy does not alter this but merely modifies their scope of reference. As part of the theme, adverbs such as *mądrze/nie mądrze* 'wisely'/'foolishly', *śmiało/nie śmiało* 'boldly'/'timidly', *rozważnie/nierozważnie* 'prudently'/'imprudently', *lekkomyślnie* 'recklessly', etc., typically refer to situations expressed on the textual plane of the utterance, not to the act of speaking itself, as is the case with meta-expressions. There are exceptions to this rule, such as *szczerze* 'sincerely' (cf. fn. 6) and possibly *dziwnie* 'strangely', which in the thematic position does seem to "gravitate" towards the metatext. What exactly these lexemes are, however, can only be determined through careful semantic analyses of particular cases, rather than by generalised rules.⁶ Thus, *dziwnie* and, for example, *lekkomyślnie* are both possible in sentence (50) and its semantic paraphrase (51), serving there as an adrhematic adverbial comment, but (50) can be interpreted strictly metatextually only in the case of *dziwnie*, as illustrated by the two parallel structures in (52) and (53), where only *dziwnie* sounds natural:

⁶ Interestingly, the authors of *An Introductory English-Polish Contrastive Grammar* (Fisiak et al. 1978: 217) note that *dziwnie*, contrary to its English equivalent *strangely*, functions only as an adverb of manner. The same claim is made about the pair *szczerze* and *frankly*, which, this time, is certainly not true of contemporary Polish – the sentence *Szczerze, nie mam nic do powiedzenia* 'Frankly, I have nothing to say,' classified by the authors as ungrammatical, sounds perfectly natural today. Assuming that their observations were correct at the time, these words can be seen as examples of relatively recent semantic shifts between adverbs and meta-expressions. It is also worth noting that the distinction between strictly metatextual and metapredicative expressions, emphasised by many Polish linguists researching this field (cf. fn. 1 in Part 1), although set aside here, appears relevant in the case of *dziwnie*, which may cause some interpretive confusion.

- (50) *Dziwnie/lekkomyślnie wtedy nic nie odpowiedział.*
 ‘Strangely/recklessly, he didn’t respond at that time.’
- (51) *Nic wtedy nie odpowiedział i to było dziwne/lekkomyślne (z jego strony).*
 ‘He didn’t respond at that time, and it was strange/reckless (on his part).’
- (52) *To, co powiem, jest dziwne / będzie może dla ciebie brzmiało dziwnie: nic wtedy nie odpowiedział.*
 ‘What I’m going to say is strange / may sound strange to you: he didn’t respond at that time.’
- (53) ??*To, co powiem, jest lekkomyślne / będzie może dla ciebie brzmiało lekkomyślnie: nic wtedy nie odpowiedział.*
 ??‘What I’m going to say is reckless / may sound reckless to you: he didn’t respond at that time.’

In Section 3, I mentioned the doubts about the lexical status of this type of thematic expressions in the context of Danielewiczowa’s commentaries (2012). Apart from Danielewiczowa, one of the few researchers who directly address this problem regarding Polish is Bogusławski (2005).⁷ Mostly, however, this issue appears to be overlooked in Polish grammatical studies (comprehensive grammatical compendia as well as in-depth studies on adverbs), which should be considered unjustified in light of the considerations presented above, irrespective of the conclusions. Meanwhile, the debate on the monosemous vs polysemous nature of subject-oriented adverbs, depending on their linear arrangement in the sentence, has been ongoing in English linguistics for years, undoubtedly due to the positional nature of English. This discussion was initiated by John Austin in his epochal treatise *A Plea for Excuses* (1957), where he noted that in the sentences *Clumsily he trod on the snail* and *He clumsily trod on the snail*, “we describe his treading on the creature at all as a piece of clumsiness, incidental, we imply, to his performance of some other action”, while in *He trod clumsily on the snail* and *He trod on the snail clumsily*, “to tread on it is, very likely, his aim or policy, what we criticise is his execution of the feat” (Austin 1957: 25).

Subsequently, Jackendoff (1972) sought to systematise Austin’s rather loose observations within the early generative grammar framework by introducing two pairs of oppositions: manner vs subject-oriented reading, and manner vs speaker-oriented.⁸ In the following years, researchers introduced

⁷ He strongly opposes the idea of “multiplying language units”, both in this context and elsewhere. As for other authors, their position can be sometimes inferred from how they present the linguistic data, even though they do not explicitly take a stance. This is the case with the monograph by Grzegorzczukowa (1975), in which these two types of use are described in two different sections.

⁸ The first type of adverb orientation conveys information about the subject’s mental state (like *carefully*), while the other reflects the speaker’s assessment (like *disgustingly*),

further, increasingly precise distinctions with reference to adverb orientation, sometimes in a broader adverbial context. For example, Croft (1984: 3) distinguished between “predicative” adverbs as mono- and bivalent predicates, with the latter comprising “behaviour” (e.g. *rudely*, *nicely*), “ability” (*cleverly*, *foolishly*), “evaluative” (*fortunately*, *surprisingly*), and “intentional” (*intentionally*, *willingly*) types. Interestingly, lexemes defined here as evaluators appear in the first two groups but not in the “evaluative” category, which is strictly metatextual. Ernst (2002), in turn, defined evaluators as “agent-oriented” and distinct from “mental-attitude” adverbs (both of which belong to the subject-oriented class, reflecting some terminological confusion as to the scope of “agent-oriented” and “subject-oriented” groups).⁹ Taverniers and Rawoens (2010) abandoned general labels and proposed referring to particular groups, generally related to the ones specified by Ernst, using sample words, in this case, the “wisely-type” (paraphrased as: “it is ADJ of X to _ / X is ADJ to _”). Based on Ernst (2002), and Taverniers and Rawoens (2010), Kelepouris proposed a “dynamic theory of adverbs”, in his scientific debut under the supervision of Miriam Taverniers (Kelepouris 2012). From a typological perspective, it is also worth mentioning the monograph by Ozga (2011), who presented his own categories based on the isomorphism/non-isomorphism of the semantic and syntactic planes of language, using Polish, English, and Russian material. Regarding Polish, meticulous distinctions were introduced by Grzegorzczkowska (1975), who viewed “oriented” expressions as mediating between the class of “quasi-adverbs”, referring solely to the subject or object of the sentence, and adverbs “proper”, which modify verbs. A detailed review of these classifications and their foundations can be found in Duraj-Nowosielska (2021: 550–565), while the focus below is on the problem of mono- vs polysemy.

Jackendoff (1972), who launched systematic syntactic studies on adverb orientation, generally argued for a monosemous interpretation, as did the authors of later works such as Vendler (1984), Wyner (1994), Geuder (2002), as well as the above-mentioned Croft (1984) and Ernst (2002). Conversely,

which results in two distribution classes. However, the author does not precisely define these classes and assumes that certain expressions might share common characteristics. Jackendoff’s interpretation of such adverbs was later developed within his conceptual semantics framework by Hofland (2011), who highlighted their subjective and evaluative character in his proposed conceptual analyses; cf. *Louisa rudely departed* = [DEPART(LOUISA)] [THINK(ME[BE(X[RUDE(Y)]))]] (Hofland 2011: 89). Notably, when the speaker evaluates a certain behaviour as rude, they are not explicitly stating that it is their opinion that it is rude; this can only be assessed by someone else or, possibly, by the speaker themselves in another statement. Although the author acknowledges this distinction in commentary, it is not reflected in the proposed formal representation, which is ultimately “too flat”.

⁹ The latter is sometimes treated as related to the phenomenon of passive sensitivity and is thus narrower in scope than the former; cf. Section 1 of Part 1.

homonymy was advocated by Swan (1997) and Piñón (2009); see also the “[fixed] base position areas for adjunct classes” discussed by Lang et al. (2003: 8), with reference to the articles included in the volume. Huddleston and Pullum (2002: 575–577) support this approach, explaining that the possible ambiguity in the preverbal position arises because this location allows for the use of both adverb types. However, this remains a less common approach, and most authors accept a fixed semantic point of reference, most likely assuming, to adapt Kelepouris’s (2012: 34) observation regarding monosemy, that the problem with homonymous theories is that they lack a couple of generalisations. Kelepouris himself attempts to reconcile these positions; his stance is close to mine, adopting a single lexical entry while recognising the variability of structures in which a given lexeme is involved.

It should be emphasised as well that although English studies often focus on syntactic position alone (cf. comprehensive grammars such as Quirk et al. 1985 or Huddleston and Pullum 2002, which distinguish five basic positions of adverbs: initial, medial, and final, with three variants of the medial position), they still concern universal mechanisms related to TRS exponents. Some researchers address this issue, for instance Wyner (1994), Eckardt (1998), Herburger (2000), Núñez (2002), Potts (2005), and Kelepouris (2012). It is worth noting that such communicative factors were already mentioned by Austin (1957: 25, fn. 14): when considering the difference in the interpretation of *clumsily* depending on its position in the sentence *He trod on the snail*, he observed that “[a]s a matter of fact, most of these examples *can* be understood the other way, especially if we allow ourselves inflexions of the voice, or commas, or contexts” (emphasis original). In any case, narrowing linguistic interpretation to word order alone not only fails to address the core of the problem but also overlooks other formal means by which analogous meanings can be expressed (as shown, a sentence-initial thematic comment can be relatively freely moved around within the sentence, just as manner-evaluation may be signalled preverbally). This applies to both Polish, with its relatively free word order, and English, in which, due to the lack of inflection, the linear sequence of constituents carries a greater functional load than is the case in Polish.

Overall, then, it can be concluded with reference to evaluative expressions, as well as subject-oriented adverbs in general, that their position and the associated TRS affect their scope of reference, rather than their basic semantic features. The polysemous approaches discussed above typically stem from a methodological stance that maximises what is included within semantic characteristics, resulting in two parallel series of formally identical expressions. Still, polysemy may also be a unique feature of individual lexemes, following their specific semantic properties, in one way or another

deviating from typical class characteristics. Among i-exponents, expressions such as *z rozmysłem* ‘with deliberation’ and *chcąc nie chcąc* ‘willy-nilly’ are considered polysemous in Duraj-Nowosielska 2021 (see the justification on pp. 459–460 and 399–401, respectively). As for the evaluators discussed here, a list of such lexemes is yet to be defined. Nevertheless, a semantic description of subject-oriented adverbs, including evaluators, should consider the flexibility of their reference and, consequently, the potential ambiguity of constructions involving them. This includes both referential variability itself and basic mechanisms that govern it, which vary among different groups of expressions, while being always related to information structure.

4. Conclusions

Although the issues discussed in this article, concerning the influence of word order and prosody on the meaning of structures involving certain types of adverbs, are not new in linguistics, the scope of specific studies on this topic still leaves room for improvement. Research on English largely concentrates on the question of linear order, which provides only a partial view of these issues, if one assumes, as I do, that word order is inherently related to the problem of the information structure of sentences. Unlike specific rules of linear arrangement, this appears to be a universal mechanism applying cross-linguistically, thus providing an adequate tool for describing the phenomena under discussion in various languages. However, even those works where the TRS plays a significant role often focus on the syntactic binary opposition between manner vs subject/speaker-oriented readings, while overlooking the affinity of these lexemes with metatextual expressions. Meanwhile, exactly this affinity, and not their adverbiality, decides about the presence of a range of potential interpretations depending on what constitutes the rheme of the sentence. On the other hand, Polish research on the influence of the TRS on the semantics of the sentence seems to focus primarily on the metatextual level of language. In such studies, adverbs are mainly mentioned when they are contrasted with meta-expressions (either strictly metatextual or metapredicative, which is a distinction absent, in the given sense, in English linguistics), especially when homonymy is at issue. Still, there is a large group of expressions in Polish whose syntactic properties are analogous to those of particles or related words, but which cannot be broadly included in this group (except for certain cases that have evidently transitioned to the metatextual level, as mentioned above). These include, among others, the evaluative adverbs discussed in this article.

The primary aim of this study was to demonstrate that structures with such adverbs, like other subject-oriented expressions, are systemically ambiguous in Polish. This claim was supported by numerous examples, both constructed and drawn from the NCP. The ambiguity in question (which extends beyond mere duality) has not been sufficiently addressed in studies on Polish, which prompted me to give it more detailed treatment here. Nonetheless, the ambiguity does not imply that multiple lexemes are involved here, because the difference in meaning arises merely from differences in the scope of reference. Since this is a rather controversial issue in adverbial research, it was discussed separately in Section 3.

Another aim was to establish the additional semantic factors which influence the variety of potential readings in the indicated subgroups of subject-oriented adverbials, as well as the surface exponents that uniquely co-occur with specific meanings within the evaluative class. The main finding with regard to the former is that the presence of an external observer – the epistemic subject – enables the scope of predication (evaluation, in this case) to include not only the action represented by the VP but also its performer (i.e. the subject-agent) as well as the entire situation designated by the sentence. The absence of such an external subject excludes the last two options, as predication is then limited to the perspective of the sentence subject, thus systematically limiting the number of available interpretations (as is the case with mental-attitude adverbs and adverbs of intentionality). On the other hand, this number is increased by the potential for a manner reading, characteristic of evaluative and mental-attitude expressions, in contrast to those marking intentionality. Regarding surface exponents of evaluative structures, I mentioned, on the one hand, combinations with verbs connoting manner, which are only possible with a manner reading, and on the other hand, connectivity with negated verbs, which is only possible with an adrhematic interpretation. It should be emphasised that since both collocational issues and factors determining the number of potential meanings are naturally related to the semantics of the structures in question, the proposed description, in my understanding, creates an overall coherent picture of this class of expressions, where their deep semantic features are reflected in their surface properties.

The primary theoretical objective was to match the identified interpretations with corresponding semantic-syntactic formulas and to determine which structure could be considered synchronically basic – assuming that there must be some contemporary semantic-structural connection between these constructions, not necessarily coinciding with the direction of derivation in a diachronic sense. I argued that the basic structure is “It is *y* of *X* to do *p*,” in which the object *p* of evaluation *y* is rhematic, with variations

depending on which part of the sentence constitutes the rheme. One such variant, “It is y of X to do p **in the manner q** ,” I regard to be the semantic equivalent and derivational basis of structures in which the evaluator is rhematised. The corresponding semantic-syntactic formula is $X \text{ did } p \text{ } y\text{-ly} \approx$ “To do p in a certain manner q **is y of X** ,” showing that the adverb $y\text{-ly}$ refers to the implicit manner q and occupies the standard place of its exponent in the syntactic structure (as a result of a metonymic shift). Thus, again, the proposed description integrates the most important internal properties of the analysed structures, represented in their semantic formulas, with features that are directly reflected in the surface properties of the sentence, concerning its information structure. At the same time, it offers an integration of these structures at the semantic level, which corresponds to the intuition that suggests a single semantic core behind such constructions.

Abbreviations

Adv_{Eval}Rh – evaluative adverb in the rhematic position

Adv_{Eval}Th – evaluative adverb in the thematic position

NCP – National Corpus of Polish

R – rheme

TRS – theme-rheme structure

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