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SOME REMARKS CONCERNING ENGLISH AMBIGUOUS NOMINAL CLAUSES
AND THEIR RELATIVE
AND INTERROGATIVE EQUIVALENTS IN POLISH

Before attempting any analysis of ambiguous nominals, it is necessary to work out a possibly exhaustive set of contrasts between nominal relatives (NR) and dependent questions (DR) in both the languages compared. The two often being identical in form, it is not always easy to determine the syntactic status of a given nominal clause without its context.

In some cases, the subordinating pronoun may suffice to determine the status of a given nominal clause. For instance, R. Quirk gives the following comment: *"Whether, if, who* are not used for the nominal relative type, the pronouns ending in *-ever* in question-word interrogative clauses"[1]. The Polish language reveals a similar characteristic of dependent interrogative clauses, i.e. *czy*, which can never be used in nominal relatives. The Polish pronoun *kto*, however, corresponding to *who* in English is often used in nominal relative clauses. This may be accounted for by the fact that there is a divergent relation between English *whoever*, which expresses both definite and universal meaning, and Polish *kto* and *ktokolwiek*. Like in English, Polish compound relative pronouns (universal) *ktokolwiek* and *cokolwiek* never occur in dependent question.

Another feature of Polish nominal relatives is observed by Z. Urbańczyk. Although what he says refers to clauses beginning

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[1] R. Q u i r k, S. G r e e n b a u m, G. L e e c h, J. S v a r t n i k, *A Grammar of Contemporary English,* London 1976.

with the pronoun *co*, his comments are also valid for other types
of nominal relatives. The first part of the fragment deals with
the earlier stages of the development of the Polish   language:
"[...] *co*, rozpoczynające pytanie zawisłe, nie mogło się łączyć z
partykułą -że, -że, to, z którymi się często łączyło *co* względne.
[...] Dziś na odwrót wzmacnia się pytanie zarówno wprost jak i
zawisłe, tymi partykułami bądź razem, bądź każdą z osobna, a nie
można ich dodać do *co* względnego"[2]. Unfortunately, such   con-
structions ` are rather rare, and therefore cannot help to dis-
tinguish the two types of clauses in Polish. In English, there
are no equivalents of such constructions.

    According to R. Quirk, analysis of the function of a given
clause in a sentence may also be helpful in determining the re-
lative or interrogative quality of a nominal clause. The exam-
ples he gives show that "WH-interrogative clauses can function
as adjectival complements"[3]:

    (1) .I wasn't certain whose house I was in.
        Nie byłem pewien, w czyim jestem domu.

    (2) She wasn't sure what he did.
        Nie była pewna, co on zrobił.

While both English and Polish nominal relatives can   never
function as adjectival complements, dependent questions in the
two languages cannot be indirect objects and object complements.

    As it was mentioned earlier, Polish and English nominal re-
latives and dependent questions may begin with formally the same
subordinators. The pronouns opening Polish nominal   relatives,
however, differ from their interrogative counterparts in   that
neither do they have any antecedents in the main clause,   nor
is it possible to insert them there without their becoming un-
grammatical. Hence, the practical test to distinguish these con-
structions in Polish may be the actual presence or only the
possibility of inserting an appropriate pronoun into the main
clause[4]. It often happens that these pronominal antecedents are

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[2] S. U r b a ń c z y k, *Zdania rozpoczynane wyrazem "co" w języku pol-
skim*, Kraków 1939.

[3] Q u i r k a n d o t h e r s, *op. cit.*, p. 735.

[4] S. J o d ł o w s k i, *Podstawy polskiej składni*, Warszawa 1976, pp.
184-185.

ellipted, especially in cases where the two pronouns are in the Nominative or Accusative[5]. In order to make sure that a given clause is a relative nominal, an appropriate pronoun may be inserted. If the resultant sentence is grammatical and of the same meaning, the clause must be classified as relative. The following list gives the most common pairs of pronouns functioning as antecedents (1) and relative pronouns themselves:

(1)		(2)	
	ten		kto
	ten		który
	to		co
	taki		jaki
	tak		jak
	tam		gdzie
	wtedy		kiedy

The test described above reflects at the same time an important difference between Polish nominal relatives and their English equivalents, which are not preceded by any antecedents. Such combinations as *those who* or *those which*, which might be considered similar to the pairs of Polish pronouns we have mentioned, are not classified in the present paper as characteristic of nominal relatives, but rather of attributive constructions.

Beside other factors, certain semantic features may help to determine whether a given clause is relative or interrogative. Firstly, it the clause is concrete in meaning, it is certainly a nominal relative. This applies to Polish and English:

(1) He eats what I buy for him.
On je (to), co mu kupuję.   concrete - relative

(2) They asked me what he eats.
Zapytali mnie, co on jada.   abstract - interrogative

Secondly, the meaning of the predicate of the main clause may be decisive. As J. Kock remarks "Doubt is only possible when the clause is dependent on some word involving narration, utterance, perception, remembrance, knowledge, while the clause

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[5] U r b a ń c z y k, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

is always interrogative after a word involving question, doubt,
uncertainty, curiosity[6].

The third type of nominal-relative-clause-identyfying crite-
ria lies the field of phonology. The role of suprasegmentals
in the identification of English nominal relative clauses is
partially explained by O. Jespersen: "[...] the pronoun in a de-
pendent question may have strong stress and nucleus tone",
while "the relative pronoun is always weakly stressed[7]. S. Ur-
bańczyk[8] comments on the same problem in Polish in the follow-
ing way: "W mowie odznaczają się pytania zawisłe (w porównaniu ze
zdaniami względnymi) specjalną melodią i ewentualnym przyciskiem
na co, którego nie może być w zdaniu względnym[9]. This is also
true of those nominal clauses which are introduced by other pro-
nouns.

R. P. Stockwell, P. Schachter, B. H. Partee suggest insert-
ing the phrase "the answer to the question" between the main
and the dependent clause to identify dependent question[10]. In
case of English ambiguous nominal clauses, the test, unfortuna-
tely, can only be used to confirm that one of the two inter-
pretations of a given nominal clause is a dependent question.

A more convenient test which consists in paraphrasing the
sentence in question into the form *If..., then...* was proposed
by R. Lees[11]. The test will be presented in the course of the
paper.

Finally, it is very often the context that enables us to
decide whether a given clause is ambiguous or not: To perceive
the distinction between a RN and a DQ interpretation of English
ambiguous nominal clauses is not always easy, as the structur-
al differences involved here very often result in very subtle
differences in meaning. It is interesting to see how English

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6 J. K o c k, *English Relative Pronouns,* Lund 1897.

7 O. J e s p e r s e n, *A Modern English Grammar on Historical Princi-
ples,* Part III, Vol. II, London 1909-1949, Allen and Unwin.

8 U r b a ń c z y k, *op. cit.*

9 *Ibidem.*

10 R. P. S t o c k w e l l, P. S c h a c h t e r, B. H. P a r t e e,
The Major Syntactic Structures of English, New York 1968.

11 R. L e e s, *The Grammar of English Nominalizations,* Bloomington 1960,
Research Center in Anthropology, Folklore and Linguistics.

clauses of the type under discussion are realized   in   Polish.
Consider the following examples:

DQ/RN/1 You have to explain to us what you do.

Paraphrase:

RN/ 1   If you do X then explain X to us.

DQ/ 1   If you do X then explain to us that you do X.

DQ/ 1a Musisz nam wytłumaczyć, co robisz.

RN/ 1a Musisz nam wytłumaczyć, to co robisz.

The two different meanings of the English sentence are   a-
chieved in Polish by means of the presence and/or absence of the
pronoun "to" functioning as an antecedent. The sentence in which
the antecedent is present is a relative nominal, while the one
without it is undoubtedly a dependent question..

The next sentence to be analysed was given by R. Graver as
an example of a nominal relative clause:

DQ/RN/2 The teacher tested the students to see if they re-
membered what they had learned[12].

The choice, however, does not seem to be very fortunate.   It
is clear that this clause may also function as a dependent ques-
tion. Thus, two Polish counterparts are ascribed to the English
sentence:

DQ/2a Nauczyciel testował uczniów, aby sprawdzić, czy pamię-
tają, czego się uczyli.

RN/2b Nauczyciel testował uczniów, aby sprawdzić, czy pamię-
tają to, czego się uczyli.

Context:

2a The teacher wanted to know if the students remembered the
topics of the lessons they had attended.

2b The teacher wanted to know if the students had   assimi-
lated the contents of these lessons.

The verb *to imagine* also belongs to the class of verbs that
may be followed by both relative nominals and dependent   ques-
tions:

DQ/RN/3 I can't imagine what may happen.

DQ/3a   Nie mogę sobie wyobrazić, co się może zdarzyć.

RN/3b   Nie mogę sobie wyobrazić *tego*, co się może zda-
rzyć.

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[12] B. D. G r a v e r, *Advanced English Practice*, London 1976,   Oxford
University Press.

When we compare the two variants of the sentence in para-
phrase, the difference becomes clearer:

3a If something is to happen, then I don't know what it is.

3b I know that something is to happen, but I don't know what
it is like.

Finally, the verbs *to remember* and *to forget* may also cause
difficulty as regards the recognition of clauses functioning as
their objects:

DQ/RN/4 I don't remember what he said.

DQ/4a   Nie pamiętam, co powiedział.

RN/4b   Nie pamiętam *tego*, co powiedział.

Paraphrased version:

4a   If he said X, then I don't remember that he said X.

4b   If he said X, then I don't remember X.

DQ/RN/5 I forgot what I should have brought.

DQ/5a   Zapomniałem, co powinienem był przynieść.

RN/5b   Zapomniałem *tego*, co powinienem był przynieść.

Paraphrased version:

5a   If I should have brought X, then I forgot that I should
have brought X.

5b   If I should have brought X, then I forgot X.

The examples described in the following part of the paper
will show other changes, besides the insertion of antecedents,
that take place in the process of rendering of an English am-
biguous sentence into Polish:

DQ/RN/6 They asked me what I did not know.

DQ/6a   Zapytali mnie, czego nie wiedziałem.

RN/6b   Zapytali mnie *o to*, czego nie wiedziałem.

Context:

6a   They wanted to tell him everything he should know
about the office he was to be the director of.

6b   They gave him just the question the answer to which
he did not know.

The two Polish equivalents of the English ambiguous sentence
differ in more than one respect. Not only is the antecedent
to inserted into the main clause, but also the preposition *o*
is placed before that pronoun. The antecedent in such clauses
may never be ellipted. Another example:

DQ/RN/7   He told me what he wanted.

DQ/7a   Powiedział mi, czego chciał[13].

RN/7b   Powiedział mi to, co chciał.

Paraphrased version:

7a   If he wanted X, then he told me that he wanted X.

7b   If he wanted to tell me X, then he told me X.

In this case, besides the addition of the antecedent "to",
there is also a change of case, i.e. the Accusative of the re-
lative pronoun is changed to Genitive. This is due to the nature
of the verb "chcieć", which, when followed by a noun of pronoun
as its object, requires the genitive case.

Another phenomenon observed in Polish is the differentiation
between two meanings and, consequently, two structural   inter-
pretations of an English ambiguous sentence containing a nomi-
nal clause by means of the perfect/imperfect contrast. To   be
more precise, the contrast is only employed to emphasize the dif-
ference, which may be illustrated on the basis of one of the
sentences we have already discussed:

DQ/2a   Nauczyciel testował uczniów, aby sprawdzić, czy pa-
miętają, czego się uczyli.

RN/2b   Nauczyciel testował uczniów, aby sprawdzić, czy za-
pamiętali to, czego się uczyli.

The following discussion will be concerned with sentences of
the type given by R. Lees. This is how he comments upon   such
structures: "[...] a sentence like:

I know what he knows,

is ambiguous; the Question-Word Factive Nominal has a   meaning
like that of:

If he knows X, then I know X"[14].

Let's see how these two interpretations would be rendered into
Polish:

DQ/RN/8   I know what he knows.

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[13] "Powiedział mi, co chciał" is also possible. The sentence may be
either a relative nominal whose antecedent has been ellipted, or a depend-
ent question. The contrast between *co* and *czego* in the dependent question
variant of the sentence is as follows: *co* (the pronoun denotes activity) –
Chciał jeść. He wanted to eat. *czego* (the pronoun refers to an object) –
Chciał chleba. He wanted some bread.

[14] L e e s, *op. cit.*

DQ/8a   Wiem, co on wie.

RN/8b   Wiem to, co on wie.

However, this is not all. Two more equivalents may be as-
signed to this sentence. The reason for this is the fact that
the verb *to know* itself may be ambiguous, i.e. it may be re-
alized in Polish as either *wiedzieć* or *znać* [15] depending on the
context involved. Hence, the remaining two possibilities are:

DQ/8c   Wiem, co on zna.

RN/8d   Znam to, co on zna.

The next example represents a sentence in which the clause
in question is introduced by the pronoun *whose*. Although it is
usually interrogative in nominal clauses, some cases may be
found where *whose* has the function of a relative pronoun. The
ambiguity of the sentence below has been confirmed by at least
one native speaker:

DQ/RN/9 I know whose house this is.

DQ/9a   Wiem, czyj to jest dom.

RN/9b   Znam *tego*, czyj to jest dom.

It is necessary to mention, however, that the most common
way of expressing the meaning of 9b would be the following: "I
know the person whose house this is".

The following two cases of ambiguity in English nominal
clause sentences are different from those presented so far, i.e.
the ambiguity involved here does not only concern the DQ/RN
contrast, but also the contrast between two different nominal
relative clause sentences in Polish and the corresponding En-
glish nominal clause sentence. Compare:

DQ/RN/10 We found what they had expected.

RN/10a   Znaleźliśmy *to*, czego oni się spodziewali.

RN/10b   Dowiedzieliśmy się *tego*, czego oni się spodziewa-
li.

A DQ-interpretation of 11 is also possible:

DQ/10c   Dowiedzieliśmy się, czego oni się spodziewali.

Paraphrased version:

10a   If they had expected X, then we came into posses-
sion of X.

10b   If they had expected X, then we came to know X.

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[15] Identical verb deletion is allowed only in relative nominals. For ex-
ample, "Wiem, to co on" or "Znam to co on".

10c   If they had expected X, then we came to know that
they had expected X.

Like *to find*, the verb *to learn* may also bring about   am-
biguity:

RN/11   We have not yet learned what we should know.

RN/11a   Nie dowiedzieliśmy się jeszcze *tego*, co powinniśmy
wiedzieć.

RN/11b   Nie nauczyliśmy się jeszcze *tego*,   co   powinniśmy
wiedzieć.

Two interrogative   interpretations of the sentence may also
be postulated:

DQ/11c   Nie dowiedzieliśmy się jeszcze, co powinniśmy znać.

DQ/11d   Nie dowiedzieliśmy się jeszcze, co powinniśmy wie-
dzieć.

The difference in meaning between 11a and 11b may be clari-
fied by comparing the two Polish verbs: *dowiedzieć się* and *nau-
czyć się*, which correspond . to *to learn* in English.   While   the
former refers to *being informed*, the latter is connected   with
gaining knowledge.

In case of an interrogative interpretation, the ambiguity of
the sentence lies in the verb of the dependent clause, because
the verb *to know* may correspond either to *wiedzieć* or to *znać*,
the meaning of the verb in the main clause being like that of
11a.

On the whole, the Polish language possesses a formal system
of antecedents that serve to discriminate between relative nom-
inal and dependent question interpretations of such   English
nominal clauses that may be used as either relative or   inter-
rogative, depending on the context involved. Wherever a double
interpretation of an English nominal clause sentence is avail-
able, the   antecedent of its nominal relative equivalent   must
not be ellipted.

In conclusion, a few remarks may be made as   regards some
views on the criteria of differentiation between relative nom-
inals and dependent questions in Polish.

For example, S. Jodłowski states that "w połączeniach wzglę-
dnych bardzo często pomija się zaimek zapowiadający". As regards
the relative/interrogative distinction, he is of the opinion
that: "występujące tu (i.e. in dependent questions) na   czele

wypowiedzeń podrzędnych [...] tym się różnią od tak samo brzmiących zaimków względnych, że w wypowiedzeniach nadrzędnych nie mają żadnych zapowiedników, ani ich tam nie można sensownie wstawić"[16].

While the first statement incorrectly implies that pronominal antecedents may or may not be used in relative nominals without any influence on the grammaticality of these constructions, the last remark in the second quotation is rather controversial, because whether a given clause is a relative nominal or a dependent question cannot always be determined by means of inserting an appropriate antecedent into the main clause. As the examples presented so far show, such an insertion may be possible and yet the clause in question may not be a relative nominal. For instance, it is possible to insert an antecedent into the following sentence:

> Zapomniałem, co powinienem był przynieść.

As a result we obtain:

> Zapomniałem tego, co powinienem był przynieść[17].

Jodłowski's requirement is fulfilled, because the sentence we obtained "makes sense". The clause in question, however is not a relative nominal. Insertion of an antecendent into a sentence of this type transforms the dependent question it contains into a relative nominal.

Unlike S. Jodłowski, P. Bąk does not approve of the existence of doubtful cases: "Zdania podrzędne rozpoczynające się od zaimków względnych, nazywamy względnymi i po tych zaimkach zawsze możemy je bezbłędnie rozpoznać"[18]. Unfortunately two of the examples he gives are in open contradition with the above satement, i.e. the following sentences, which have been described by Bąk as containing relative clauses are, in fact, good examples of dependent interrogative constructions:

> Nigdy nie wiadomo, co się może przytrafić[19].
> Nie wiem, czyja to sprawa[20].

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[16] J o d ł o w s k i, *op. cit.*

[17] These two sentences correspond to the two interpretations of English "I forgot what I should have brought".

[18] P. B ą k, *Gramatyka języka polskiego,* Warszawa 1977.

[19] One of the possible versions may be the following: "What may happen is not known".

[20] English version: I don't know whose business this is.

The reason for this is the fact that both "wiadomo" and "wie-
dzieć" may not be followed by a relative nominal[21].

Our previous discussion has shown that the use of antece-
dents in certain types of Polish nominal relatives is obligato-
ry. Their occurrence in other cases seems to be interesting
enough to justify a slight deviation from the main interest of
this paper. The sentences to be analysed do not involve ambigu-
ity, but they may be helpful in formulating a few other con-
ditions that govern the use of antecedents in Polish nominal
relative clauses. Compare the following sentences:

Nominal Relative Clauses

(1) I want to do what I like.
     Chcę robić (to), co mi się podoba.

(2) Give it to whoever you want.
     A) Daj (to) (temu), komu chcesz.
     B) Daj to (temu), komukolwiek chcesz,
     C) Daj to (temu), komu tylko chcesz.
     D) Daj to (temu), komu bądź chcesz.

(3) Take what you want.
     Weź (to), co chcesz.

(4) Take whatever you want.
     A) Weź (to), cokolwiek chcesz.
     B) Weź (to), co tylko chcesz.
     C) Weź (to), co bądź chcesz.

Dependent Interrogative Clauses

(5) I know what you would like to do.
     Wiem to, co chciałbyś robić.

(6) I don't know who you want to give it to.
     *Nie wiem tego, komu chcesz to dać.

(7) Tell me what you want to take.
     *Powiedz mi *to*, co chcesz wziąć.

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[21] To be precise "wiedzieć" may be followed by a relative nominal if the
dependent clause also contains this verb or a verb similar in meaning.

Apart from the fact that these examples show absolute impossibility of inserting antecedents into sentences containing dependent questions, they also reveal a certain regularity in the occurrence of antecedents in different types of Polish nominal relatives. While all Polish sentences with nominal relatives of definite meaning may be preceded by appropriate antecedents, those of the universal type behave in a different way.

There seems to be a regular pattern in the use of antecedents in Polish relative nominals expressing universal meaning. Thus, a sentence like 2C is grammatical. The pronoun *temu* may be ellipted according to what is stated by the general rule. A sentence like 2B, on the other hand, is ungrammatical because of the presence of the antecedent in the main clause. A sentence of the type represented by 2D is also ungrammatical. In case of *o*, similarly, both sentences in which the relative pronoun is of the form: *x-kolwiek*, or followed by *bądź* are ungrammatical. Insertion of an antecedent in such cases will always result in an ungrammatical sentence. Only sentences like 4B, i.e. those in which the relative pronoun is followed by *tylko* are grammatical (the antecedent is optional). This fact may probably be accounted for in terms of different degrees of *indifference of choice*, expressed by *tylko* as opposed to *-kolwiek* and *bądź*, the latter two expressing a somewhat higher degree of this feature.

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UWAGI NA TEMAT WIELOZNACZNYCH ANGIELSKICH ZDAŃ NOMINALNYCH
I ICH WZGLĘDNYCH ORAZ PYTAJNO-ZALEŻNYCH ODPOWIEDNIKÓW
W JĘZYKU POLSKIM

Artykuł zawiera próbę analizy wybranych problemów związanych z realizacją w języku polskim takich angielskich zdań rzeczownikowych, których wieloznaczność wynika z formalnej identyczności pewnych rzeczownikowych zdań względnych oraz pytań zależnych. W języku polskim wieloznaczność tego typu występuje

stosunkowo rzadko, co związane jest z faktem, że zapowiedniki   w   zdaniach
względnych z reguły nie są opuszczane.

Nie tylko system zapowiedników, ale również inne cechy składni tych zdań
mogą być pomocne w identyfikacji polskich rzeczownikowych zdań względnych o-
raz pytań zależnych. Jako przykład tych cech wymienić można: przypadek zaim-
ka wprowadzającego, obecność przyimka w zdaniu głównym, kontrast między do-
konaną i niedokonaną formą czasownika, a także znaczenie czasownika   będącego
orzeczeniem zdania głównego.

W świetle przykładów przedstawionych w niniejszym artykule wydaje się,
że kryteria rozpoznawcze tych dwu typów zdań podrzędnych podawane przez więk-
szość podręczników gramatyki polskiej nie zawsze są właściwe.