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## A POLISH CONJUNCTION ON ITS WAY OF PARADOX

Customary accounts of the Polish conjunction *ani* present it as a synonym of the conjunction *i* in the context of negation. Intuitively speaking, it rather deserves a treatment in terms of antonymy *vis-a-vis* the conjunction *i*. The author tries to resolve this paradox by submitting a semantic representation of *ani* where the main outline is identical with the semantic representation of the conjunction *i* with the reservation that *ani* introduces the thematised element of negation as ascribed in the capacity of a common characteristic to both concomitant members.

While it is tempting to say that the Polish conjunction *i* 'and' is mysterious and that the conjunctions *lub / albo* 'or' are troublesome, it is the epithet "surreptitious" that seems to be the most appropriate adjective to apply to conjunctions *ni / ani* 'neither, nor'. Although we have here to do with the third member of the opposition of conjunctions of natural language on which open enumerative constructions can be based, I wish to have a closer look at the *specificity* of the last mentioned conjunction only. Its specificity offers a good illustration of the nature of correlations set up with the help of conjunctions<sup>1</sup>.

A preliminary note is in order at this point. As a matter of fact, we come across *two* almost synonymous conjunctions *ni* and *ani*. The latter has appeared to be more livable. The conjunction *ni* is stylistically marked, old-fashioned. The semantic contradistinction between *ni* and *ani* is nowadays hard to grasp.

There is an additional complication proper to our conjunctions: alongside the ordinary use of *ani / ni* as single expressions a multiple *ni \_\_ ni \_\_* and a multiple *ani \_\_ ani \_\_* are used<sup>2</sup>. The possibility of being used before most of the members of an enumerative

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<sup>1</sup> An exact syntactic description of these conjunctions is given in Kallas (1994). Such a syntactic analysis is a prerequisite for an adequate description of their meaning.

<sup>2</sup> It is interesting to note that in the Russian system of conjunctions (which on the whole is very close to that of Polish) merely the conjunction *ni* has been preserved; it is reiterated before each member. Dictionaries of contemporary Russian do not register any single uses of *ni*, even though one can still come across single uses in older texts, cf.: "He может дерево доброе проносить плоды худые, ни дерево худое проносить плоды добрые." (The Gospel according to St. Matthew 7, 18). Sannikov (1995), too, only mentions *ни \_\_, ни \_\_*; he makes a reservation to the effect that this conjunction occurs exclusively in noun phrases.

series (or before all of the members, including the first one) is a characteristic feature of the conjunction *i* as well as the alternative conjunctions *albo* / *baqđ* / *czy*. This is a problem in its own right which requires a separate study.

I only have to make a brief comment on the literature of the subject. The distinction just made between the single and the multiple conjunctions is often not observed. One often lumps both types of use together; or else one of them is claimed to be basic without the details of their possible differences being duly investigated. Thus, for example, in an overview of Polish conjunctions by Wojtasiewicz (1972) we only find the entries *ani\_*, *ani\_* and *ni\_*, *ni\_* (the latter is merely said to be a non-colloquial stylistic variant of the former), cf. Wojtasiewicz's notation: " $ANI\ p\ ANI\ q - \sim p \wedge \sim q$ " with the following comment:

"One of the many cases where a conjunction of natural language probably yields itself to an exact description by means of the sentential functors of propositional calculus" (Wojtasiewicz 1972: 127).

Attention may be called to the word "probably" in this quotation which shows that the author had some doubts about the adequacy of his formula, even though it had been proposed in a categorical way. This might have been a rhetorical trick on his part, though. The affinity between the single and the multiple use of *ani* / *ni* is undeniable. But affinity is by far not equal to meaning identity.

While formulating his basic claims concerning, not conjunctions, but relations that bind predicative expressions, Grochowski (1984) chooses, in the grammatical description of contemporary Polish, the conjunction *ani* in its single, not reduplicated, variant<sup>1</sup> as the basic exponent of the relation of "exclusion" (as it is customarily called) conveyed by the conjunctions *ani* / *ni*; he does not mention the conjunction *ni* at all. Grochowski's characterisation of the relation  $p\ ANI\ q$  does not differ from the one accepted by Wojtasiewicz, even though it has been enriched by the inclusion of several observations, cf.:

"Relation:  $p\ ANI\ q$

Impossible:  $ani\ p, q$

Possible:  $q\ ani\ p$  – in a restricted range of cases<sup>2</sup>

Context: Nie mamy nart, ani śniegu nie jest dużo.

Preliminary description:  $p\ ani\ q = nie\ p\ i\ nie\ q$ ; it is possible to reiterate *ani* before *p*.

In both constituent sentences *p*, *q* finite verb forms must be preceded by negation.

Absence of negation is possible in a single sentence, e.g.: *Kowalska była ani mądra, ani głupia*. It is debatable whether it is possible to oppose this relation to the relation  $p\ i\ q$  (I)." (Grochowski 1984: 274)

Thus, the conjunction *ani* is described in terms of the conjunction *i*: as its denial.

Let us have a closer look at the appropriate correlations so we can make the sense of this statement precise and possibly find out what is at work as the factor that governs the distribution of such redoubled linguistic devices?

In defiance of the clear logical formula sentences schematised as *nie p i nie q* cannot be automatically replaced in Polish by sentences like *p ani q*, cf.:

(1) Jan nie pije i nie pali.

'J. does not drink and does not smoke'

(2) \* Jan pije ani pali.

The condition "In both constituent sentences *p*, *q* finite verb forms must be preceded by negation." removes the paradox only superficially. Consider

(3) Jan nie pije ani nie pali.

It is necessary to point out what should be substituted for *p* and *q* in (3). According to Grochowski's formula:

**(F1)  $p \text{ ani } q = \text{nie } p \text{ i nie } q$**

we have to substitute the negated constituents for *p* and *q* in the right-hand side of (F1). But this does not lead to a synonymous sentence. Rather, we obtain

(4) Jan nie [jest tak, że] nie pije i nie [jest tak, że] nie pali.

which, by the Law of Double Negation, is equal to

(5) Jan pije i pali.

i.e., to a sentence which is contradictory with regard to (3).

Therefore, to account for the affinity of (1) and (3), one has to take recourse to (F2), rather than (F1):

**(F2)  $\text{nie } p \text{ ani nie } q = \text{nie } p \text{ i nie } q$**

with the reservation that *p* and *q* as they stand in (F2) are barred from being conjoined by *ani*, cf. (2).

However, the well known and commonly accepted claim that the conjunction *ani* is a variant of the conjunction *i* in negated sentences is untenable.

The meaning of this statement is not quite clear. So it is expedient to make it more precise before we decide whether or not to assent to it.

There are negative contexts where *i* is replaceable by *ani* (with a slight meaning difference which we shall ignore for the time being); there are also others where it is not possible to substitute *ani* for *i*<sup>3</sup>, cf.:

- (6) W dzieciństwie nie zbierał znaczków i nie bawił się klockami. (*i // ani*)  
 'in his childhood he did not collect postage stamps and did not play with building blocks'
- (7) Jako student nie wychodził z czytelni i nie miał czasu na sport. (\* *ani*)  
 'as a student he did not leave the reading room and did not have time for sport'
- (8) Nie chciałam go zawstydząć i nie zapytałam, kto to zrobił. (\* *ani*)  
 'I did not want to ashame him and I did not ask him, who had done that'

<sup>3</sup> Some cases of the impossibility of exchanging one of the conjunctions for the other have been noted by Kallas (1994: 108-110). However, the author has not carried out the relevant investigation in a systematic way. She deals above all with the possibilities of replacing *ani* with *i*, thus, her examination is one-sided. Its value is also weakened by the fact that the reduplicated uses of the conjunction *ani* are not sufficiently kept apart from its single uses.



A substitution of *ani* for *i* in (7)-(8) may not be wholly unacceptable and perhaps is liable to an interpretation which would display the necessary background coherence; still, it brings about a distinct change of the meaning of the initial sentences.

It is easy to see that it is the conjunction *i* whose use is connected with the meaning of temporal succession or a cause-effect link between the members that is not susceptible to being exchanged for the conjunction *ani*. The use of *ani* requires so-called uniformity of the members conjoined by it which in its turn is determined by the possibility of their being interpreted as members of an enumerative sequence.

To see this more clearly, consider the following sentences: first, the sentence

- (9) Nie wstał i nie wyszedł.  
'he did not stand up and did not leave'

which is a sequence of denials in a report on a *possible* sequence of positive events the utterer has in mind:

- (10) Wstał i wyszedł.  
'he stood up and left'

and second, the most improbable sentence

- (11) ?Nie wstał ani nie wyszedł.

On the other hand, a very probable denial of another speaker's report (10) reads:

- (12) Nie wstawał i nie wychodził – nic takiego nie miało miejsca.

or

- (13) Nie wstawał ani nie wychodził.

Example (11) does not entail, however, the impossibility of a denial by means of *ani* of two or more ascriptions, even if they render a sequence of events. What is necessary is only a kind of common denominator going beyond the mere temporal sequence; cf.:

- (14) – Wyszła za mąż i urodziła dziecko? To jakieś plotki! Niestety! Nie wyszła za mąż ani nie urodziła dziecka.  
'has she married and has she given birth to a baby? These are gossips! Alas! She has neither married nor has given birth to a baby.'

One more piece of evidence in support of the discrepancy between, on the one hand, the *nie-i-nie*-pattern and on the other, *nie-ani-(nie)*-pattern is supplied by the examples where the relevant conjunctions connect nominal phrase:

- (15) Dam te pieniądze nie tobie i nie jej. [\* Nikomu ich nie dam.]  
'I shall give the money to none of you; neither to you nor to her. [\*I shall give the money to nobody.]'

- (16) Nie dam tych pieniędzy tobie ani jej. [Nikomu ich nie dam.]  
 ‘I shall give the money neither to you nor to her. [\*I shall give the money to nobody.]’

where evidently (15) ≠ (16).

The question of what the difference between the patterns just mentioned consists in will be touched upon later on.

If a sentence expresses denial by using the particle *nie* as accompanying the superordinate predicate joined by two or more further predicative expressions, *nie* has a wider scope and is not reiterated, whereas the further expressions as objects of denial are conjoined by *ani*, cf.:

- (17) Ta dziewczyna była ani wysoka ani szczupła.  
 ‘this girl was neither tall nor slim’  
 (18) Ta dziewczyna nie miała długich jasnych loków ani niebieskich oczu.  
 ‘this girl had neither long fair curls nor blue eyes’  
 (19) Ta dziewczyna nie była bogata ani wykształcona.  
 ‘this girl was neither rich nor educated’

(On the other hand, it is impossible to reduce negation to *ani*, cf.:

- (20) \*Ta dziewczyna była bogata ani wykształcona.<sup>4</sup>

We may add that our formula (F2) is not an exact model of negative sentences with parallel *nominal* members as in (17)-(20).)

Following the preparatory observations made above I shall now try directly to specify the meaning of the conjunction *ani* in such a way that it can be held to be responsible for the highly idiosyncratic properties of the functioning of our conjunction, in particular, for the difference between the *nie-i-nie*-pattern and the *nie-ani-(nie)*-pattern discussed and illustrated a while ago.

It is now time to answer the question: How can the paradoxes highlighted above be resolved?

Meaning non-identity of (15) and (16) is due to the fact that negation is applied to different points in the two sentences. This suggests that the use of the conjunction *ani* – because of its being bound with negation – is dependent on the place of the nominal phrase in the theme-rheme structure of an utterance whereas the use of the conjunction *i* is not.

A full exchangeability of the conjunction *i* and the conjunction *ani* in negated contexts can be observed in the rhematic position, which is in the scope of negation, cf.:

- (21) (a) Moje ani twoje dzieci by się tak nie zachowały.  
 ‘neither my nor your children would have behaved like this’  
 (b) Moje i twoje dzieci by się tak nie zachowały.  
 ‘my and your children would not have behaved like this’

<sup>4</sup> What is acceptable is only: *Ta dziewczyna była ani bogata, ani wykształcona.*, with the double *ani*!

On the other hand, *i* in thematic position is not exchangeable even in negated contexts, cf.:

- (22) (a) Nasze dzieci, Piotruś i Agatka, tak by się nie zachowały.  
 'our children, P. and A., would not have behaved like this'  
 (b) \*Nasze dzieci, Piotruś ani Agatka, tak by się nie zachowały.  
 'our children, neither P. nor A., would have behaved like this'
- (23) (a) \*Jeśli chodzi o nasze dzieci, Piotrusia ani Agatkę, one by się tak nie zachowały.  
 (but: Nie chodzi o nasze dzieci, o Piotrusia ani o Agatkę! One by się tak nie zachowały.)
- (24) (a) Piotr, który ją lubi i który jest uczciwy, tego nie zrobił.  
 'P., who loves her and who is honest, has not done this'  
 (b) \*Piotr, który ją lubi ani który jest uczciwy, tego nie zrobił.  
 'P., who neither loves her nor who is honest, has not done this'

The pivot-stone of my interpretation is the *place* of what *ani* conveys in the overall content structure of the utterance, the place to which I assign that information. The conjunction *ani*, according to this view, develops its force at the level of metatextual (or even metametatextual) commentary added to the parts of the current utterance that are at the object level of the utterance. This commentary takes potential or real utterances about the superordinate topic (theme) isolated in a canonical way as its *themes* which are subsequently and in a successive way ascribed the following property: the property of their being rejected. This lies at the root of the irresistible impression of a "polemical" character of *ani*. The conjunction brings in a comment on two predicates as *potentially* proper to the superordinate theme and in both cases negation comes in as the actual rheme affecting the conceptual themes. The whole process has a dynamic structure. The predicates are taken into consideration in turn. First, the first predicate is pondered on and assigned negation. Then, the conjunction starts its action by expressing the commentary concerning the next predicative theme, to the effect that this theme is no different from the former.

In other words, the conjunction carries an anaphoric indication of what has been said and what currently undergoes thematisation as well as a cataphoric indication of (a) what is going to be uttered (*viz.* the second part of the theme, *i.e.* the predicate of a potential sentence), (b) the identity metapredicate saying that what is the object of the utterance is the same, relative to the chosen aspect, to the aspect at hand, as what has just been the object of the utterance; the rheme, *viz.* negation, is being repeated.

An additional gloss on the nature of the conjunction *ani*, a gloss that emerges from textual material discussed above, would read: *ani* is a special device of denying an alternative whose constituents refer to a salient unique aspect of the described object, *i.e.* display a clear common denominator.

I am fully aware that the above exposition is not quite easy to process.

In order to make my interpretation easier to assimilate, I shall exemplify it by applying it to the following specific utterance:

- (25) Ja nie zjadłam tych jabłek ani tych śliwek.  
 'I have eaten neither these apples nor these plums'



In (25), "I" is the superordinate theme,  $T_0$  {in relation in  $T_1, T_2$ };

- 'about these apples' is the theme  $T_1$  (with the concrete aspect Q of its characterisation, i.e. the potential answer to the question: 'is it possible to say: I have eaten them?'); with its rheme  $R_1$  = 'no, I haven't eaten them';
- 'about these plums' is the theme  $T_2$  (with the concrete (the same) aspect Q of its characterisation, i.e. the potential answer to the question: 'is it possible to say: I have eaten them?'); with its rheme  $R_1$  = 'no, I haven't eaten them'.

So far the message is the same as the one inherent in the asyndetic construction:

(26) Ja nie zjadłam tych jabłek, tych śliwek.

The special information brought in by *ani* alone can be represented in two clauses:

- (i) what has been said is not all about what is spoken about [ $T_0$ ] in respect of what is taken to be that which is spoken about [Q]; not about all that is spoken about something has been told in respect of what is taken to be that which is spoken about [Q]
  - { $T_1$  ["the apples"] (Q) ['is it possible to say: I have eaten them?'] is  $R_1$  ["no"]}
- (ii) to say all about what is spoken about [ $T_0$ ] in respect Q, it is necessary to say **the same** ('no') as has been said about that [in our case: "the apples"] about what remains as something such that something is to be said about it [in our case: "the plums"]; this thing said might have been different in respect Q-from that thing said:
  - { $T_2$  ["the plums"] (Q) ['is it possible to say: I have eaten them?'] is the same [ $R_2$  = 'no']}

Thus, the conjunction *ani*, in addition to its negation impact, carries a rich current commentary on the utterance in progress.

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