

Polish Modal Ellipsis

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Abstract

Over the past years, Modal Ellipsis (ME) has been the focus of some cross-linguistic investigations in languages such as Spanish (Dagnac 2010, Fernández-Sánchez 2023), Dutch (Aelbrecht 2010), French (Authier 2011), and Czech (Gruet-Skrabalova 2017), among others. Initially, it was considered to involve a null proform – a silent pronominal element standing in for the missing complement (Brucart 1999, Depiante 2000). More recent analyses, however, argue that this elliptical construction should be analysed as PF-deletion. According to this approach, the ellipsis site has a full syntactic structure deleted at Phonetic Form. In this paper, I propose that Polish ME follows the PF-deletion pattern, specifically targeting the complement of VoiceP. To test this hypothesis, I examine three diagnostics – extraction, case connectivity effects, and syntactic mismatches. The data reveal that Polish ME allows extraction and exhibits case-matching effects between the remnant and the elided structure. These findings provide compelling evidence that Polish ME involves an underlying syntactic structure deleted at PF.

Keywords: ellipsis; modal verbs; Polish; PF-deletion

1. Introduction

The interpretation of linguistic expressions relies on the mapping between sound and meaning. However, many constructions disrupt this correspondence. These fall under the category of ellipsis – a phenomenon, in which a part of the syntactic material is missing. This paper examines a type of ellipsis that allows the omission of the complement of a modal verb, known as Modal Ellipsis (ME). The examples of Polish ME are illustrated in (1a) and (1b).¹

- (1) a. On zjadł całą paczkę chipsów, chociaż nie powinien ø.
he eat.PST.3SG whole bag crisps.ACC even though not should.PST.3SG
'He ate a whole bag of crisps, even though he shouldn't.'

¹ The following abbreviations are used in the paper: 1, 2, 3 – first, second, third person, Mod – modal verb, ACC – accusative, NCA – Null Complement Anaphora, ACD – antecedent-contained deletion, NOM – nominative, ASP – aspect, PF – perfective, DAT – dative, PL – plural, DP – determiner phrase, PRS – present tense, FUT – future tense, PST – past tense, GEN – genitive, PTCP – participle, IMPF – imperfective, REFL – reflexive, INF – infinitive, SG – singular, ME – Modal Ellipsis, TP – tense phrase.

- b. Przesłali jej wszystkie dowody, które mogli \emptyset .
 send.PST.3PL her all evidence.ACC that could.PST.2PL
 ‘They sent her all the evidence they could.’

One of the central questions regarding elliptical phenomena is the nature of the structure present in the gap (marked with \emptyset). There are two main lines of investigation. The former, known as PF-deletion, assumes that there is a silent syntactic structure which is deleted at Phonetic Form (Hankamer 1979, Sag 1976, Merchant 2001). This approach is illustrated in (2a) and (2b), where the unpronounced material is crossed out. In the alternative theory, the gap contains an atomic element, often referred to as a null proform (Fiengo and May 1994, Lobeck 1995). A representative case of this is Null Complement Anaphora (NCA), as shown in (2c), where the missing material is interpreted as a silent pronoun (Depiante 2000).

- (2) a. Frank has visited this museum, but Mary hasn’t \emptyset =~~visited this museum~~.
 b. David kissed someone, but we do not know who \emptyset =~~David kissed~~.
 c. Mary didn’t take me to the cinema, although she promised \emptyset .

In the literature on Spanish, ME has initially been analysed as a phenomenon falling under the category of Null Complement Anaphora (NCA), and thus classified as an elliptical construction involving a null proform (see Depiante 2000, Brucart 1999). However, recent investigations argue that ME should be considered as a case of deletion ellipsis. This stance has been supported by Dagnac (2010) for French and Spanish, Aelbrecht (2010) for Dutch, Authier (2011) for French, Gruet-Skrabalova (2017) for Czech, and Fernández Sánchez (2023) for Spanish. The main argument in favour of these analyses is that extraction from within the ellipsis site is possible, a characteristic of deletion ellipsis.

This article contends that Polish ME is derived through PF-deletion. The key factors supporting a deletion account include extraction and case connectivity effects. Additionally, the syntactic mismatch test is applied to define the scope of the ellipsis. The paper is structured as follows: Section 2 presents Polish modal verbs. Section 3 explores the behaviour of Polish ME with respect to the established criteria, providing data that support its PF-deletion analysis. Section 4 investigates the scope of the ellipsis, and Section 5 concludes the discussion.

2. Polish modal verbs

There are five ‘core’ modal verbs in Polish, namely *móc* ‘can’, *mieć* ‘have to, must, be said, be claimed’, *musieć* ‘must, have to’, *powinien* ‘should, be supposed’, *winien* ‘should, be supposed’ (Jędrzejowski 2015: 126–129). These verbs differ in both morphological and grammatical properties, which makes defining a precise class of Polish modals particularly challenging. For instance, *móc*, *musieć*, and *mieć* inflect for person, tense, and number. In contrast, *powinien* and *winien* inflect only for person and number, and crucially, they are defective as they lack infinitival and participial forms. Therefore, the primary criterion for identifying modal verbs is their ability to convey epistemic and deontic modality (Jędrzejowski 2015, Kaleta 2020). The former reflects the speaker’s knowledge or beliefs about a proposition, while the latter encodes

notions such as obligation, permission, ability, duty, or volition (Zagona 2008: 276). For a detailed account of Polish modal verbs evaluated against these two modal bases, see the analysis in Jędrzejowski (2015: 127–130).

This paper explores ME in the context of four ‘core’ modal verbs in Polish: *móc*, *mieć*, *musieć*, and *powinien*, illustrated in (4), (5), (6), and (7), respectively.² The verb *winien* is excluded from the present analysis due to its limited use in contemporary Polish.

(4) *móc* ‘can’

- a. Art. 97 mówi, kto może wykonywać czynności lotnicze, A
 Art. 97 say.PRS.3SG who can.PRS.3SG perform.INF activities aeronautical and
 dokładnie kto nie może \emptyset .
 precisely who not can.PRS.3SG
 ‘Article 97 states who can perform aeronautical activities – or more precisely, who cannot’.
 (NKJP, *Sprawozdanie stenograficzne z obrad Sejmu RP*, 2002)

(5) *mieć* ‘have to, must, be said, be claimed, be supposed’

- a. A: Miał przecież ojciec grać w wista.
 suppose.PST.3SG after.all father play.INF in whist
 B: Miałem \emptyset , miałem \emptyset , ale nie miałem z kim.
 suppose.PST.1SG suppose.PST.1SG, but not have.PST.1SG with who
 A: ‘After all, father, you were supposed to play whist.’
 B: ‘I was, I was, but I had no one to play with.’
 (NKJP, *Teatr 3*, 1974)

(6) *musieć* ‘must, have to’

- a. Ten z kolei może rozpatrzyć reklamacje, ale nie musi \emptyset .
 this from turn can.PRS.3SG consider.INF complaints but not must.PRS.3SG
 ‘This one, in turn, can consider the complaints, but doesn’t have to.’
 (NKJP, *Metropol*, 2001)

(7) *powinien* ‘should, be supposed’

- a. Sławek nie zmieniał nic w następnych scenach, chociaż powinien \emptyset .
 Sławek not change.PST.3SG nothing in following scenes although should.PST.3SG
 ‘Sławek did not change anything in the following scenes, although he should have.’
 (NKJP, *Gwiazdy mają czerwone pazury*, 1998)

In essence, all the examples illustrating Polish ME involve deontic modal verbs. In contrast, the distribution of ME with epistemic modals appears to be significantly more restricted. As noted by Drubig (2001) for English and Authier (2011) for French, ME is generally not attested with epistemic modals, as shown in (8). This view is also supported by McDowell (1987) and Depiante (2000), among others.

² Bondaruk (2015) claims that the verb *dać się* ‘give się’ can also receive a modal reading; however, its interpretation is strictly deontic. Hence, it is not taken into consideration in this study. Nevertheless, it is crucial to note that Polish ME can also occur with this semi-modal:

(i) Tych książek nie da się szybko przeczytać, ale tamte opowiadania się da \emptyset .
 These books not can.PRS.3SG się quickly read.INF but those short stories się can.PRS.3SG
 ‘These books can’t be read quickly, but those stories can be.’

- (8) a. John must wash his car every day and Peter must \emptyset too. (*epistemic/deontic) (Drubig 2001:30)
- b. *La police doit arriver dans cinq minutes et (*epistemic/deontic)
 the police must.PRS.3SG arrive.INF in five minutes and
 l'ambulance doit \emptyset aussi.
 the ambulance must.PRS.3SG also
 'The police must arrive in five minutes and the ambulance must also.' (Authier 2011: 193)

The following Polish examples demonstrate instances of ME with epistemic modals. Some of these, such as (9c) and (9d), appear more acceptable and may reveal variation in speaker judgments. Notably, there remains a marked contrast in acceptability between ME with deontic versus epistemic modals – a pattern similarly observed by Aelbrecht (2010: 49). While a full explanation for the restricted distribution of ME with epistemic modality lies beyond the scope of this paper, it should be addressed in future research.³

- (9) a. *Świeci się światło w pokoju, więc Alicja musi już być w
 shine.PRS.3SG REFL light in room so Alicja must.PRS.3SG already be.INF at
 domu, a Piotrek jeszcze nie może \emptyset .
 home but Piotrek yet not can.PRS.3SG
 'The light is on in Alicia's room, so Alicja must already be at home and Piotrek couldn't yet.'
- b. ??Od nowego roku Maria miała pracować zdalnie, a Karolina nie miała \emptyset .
 from new year Maria suppose.PST.3SG to work.INF remotely but Karolina not suppose.PST.3SG to
 'From the new year, Maria was supposed to work remotely, and Karolina wasn't supposed to.'
- c. ?Tomek twierdzi, że zrobił już zakupy, ale nie mógł \emptyset , bo
 Tomek claim.PRS.3SG that do.PST.3SG already shopping but not can.PST.3SG because
 sklepy są zamknięte.
 shops be.PRS.3PL closed
 'Tomek claims that he has already done the shopping, but he couldn't, because the shops are closed.'
- d. ?Ania mówi, że nie zgubiła kluczy, ale musiała \emptyset , bo
 Ania say.PRS.3SG that not lose.PST.3SG keys but must.PST.3SG because
 znalazłam je na drodze.
 find.PST.1SG them on the road
 'Ania says that she didn't lose the keys, but she must have as I found them on the road.'

3. Criteria

The main arguments in favour of PF-deletion analysis of Polish ME include extraction and case connectivity effects.⁴ In order to support a deletion analysis, ellipsis should permit extraction and

³ Authier (2011) suggests that the ungrammaticality of ME with epistemic modals is related to topicalisation. He posits that the complement of the modal verb in French must be able to undergo topicalisation; if this is not possible, elision is not allowed. This observation correlates with the claim that, unlike deontic modals, epistemic modals are incompatible with topicalisation in French (see Authier 2011: 199-203). Further research will determine whether this observation can be extended to Polish.

⁴ A number of early studies, notably by Grinder and Postal (1971) and Bresnan (1971), argue that the so-called "missing antecedents" phenomenon supports a PF-deletion analysis of ellipsis. Their core claim is that if a pronoun can refer to an element inside an elided clause, then that clause must contain syntactic structure at some level. This is illustrated in (ii), where the pronoun in the final clause refers back to the elided DP 'a

display case matching between the remnant object and the ellipsis site. Additionally, the syntactic mismatches test is applied. Although this test is not a definitive diagnostic for the existence of an internal structure, it may still be useful for approximating the scope of the ellipsis. This paper investigates three types of mismatches, namely voice, aspect, and tense asymmetries.

3.1. Extraction

Extraction has been demonstrated to be the most effective mechanism for investigating the presence of an internal structure. When elliptical construction permits various A- or A-bar movements, it suggests the presence of a silent syntactic structure. That is because elements can only be extracted if there exists a syntactic position from which they can move. English VPE, for instance, permits *wh*-movement, as demonstrated in (10). The *wh*-phrase moves from its underlying position, extracting out of the ellipsis site before the verb phrase undergoes deletion. This behaviour indicates that English VPE has an internal structure that can host the trace of a *wh*-phrase. In contrast, constructions involving null proforms do not allow A- or A-bar movements, as they do not contain the internal structure needed for the extraction. This is demonstrated in (11), where *do-it* anaphora fails to allow extraction due to the absence of such a structure.

camel'. Since indefinites under negation, like the first instance of a camel, cannot normally bind pronouns (Hankamer and Sag 1976), the logical antecedent must come from the ellipsis site.

- (i) a. I've never ridden a camel, but Ivan's ridden a camel_i, and he says it_i stank horribly.
 b. I've never ridden a camel, but Ivan has \emptyset , and he says it_i stank horribly.

(Hankamer and Sag 1976: 403)

However, this test has been widely debated. While Polish ME appears to behave similarly, its local equivalent of deep anaphora, *zrobić to* 'do it', also licenses pronouns referring to an elided constituent, as illustrated in (ii), thereby undermining the predicted contrast. Given that such deep anaphora is not assumed to involve internal syntactic structure, these findings challenge the test's reliability.

- (ii) a. Henryk nie mógł kupić nowego aparatu, ale Ania mogła ~~kupić nowy aparat~~ i
 Henryk not can.PST.3SG buy.INF new camera but Ania can.PRS.3SG and
 korzysta z niego_i codziennie.
 use.PRS.3SG of it every day
 'Henryk couldn't buy a new camera but Ania could and she uses it every day.'
- b. Henryk nie mógł kupić nowego aparatu, ale Ania to zrobiła i
 Henryk not can.PST.3SG buy.INF new camera but Ania it do.PST.3SG and
 korzysta z niego_i codziennie.
 use.PRS.3SG of it every day
 'Henryk couldn't buy a new camera but Ania did it and she uses it every day.'

Moreover, Merchant (2013), building on Hardt (1993), shows that English *do-so* anaphora, typically analysed as null proform, permits missing antecedents as well, see the example in (iii).

- (iii) Jerry wouldn't read a book by Babel, but Meryl has done so and it was pretty good. (Merchant 2013a: 541)

While some searchers (e.g., Authier 2011) maintain the test's usefulness, others (e.g., Ziat 2018, Miller et al. 2020, Fernández-Sánchez 2023) question its importance due to cross-linguistic variation and inconsistent interspeaker judgments. For these reasons, this paper does not rely on the missing antecedents test as diagnostic evidence.

- (10) I know which film she watched, but I don't know which she didn't [_{vp} ~~watch~~ _{t_{which}}].
- (11) *I know which film she watched, but I don't know which she didn't do it.

Polish ME is compatible with several types of A-bar movement, as exemplified in (12). This includes wh-movement in (12a) and (12b), ACD (Antecedent-Contained Deletion) in (12c), free relatives in (12d) and topicalisation in (12e) and (12f). These examples provide strong evidence for the presence of a silent syntactic structure within the ellipsis site, thereby supporting PF-deletion analysis of this phenomenon.

- (12) a. Zgadnij, kto musi posprzątać po imprezie, a kto nie musi \emptyset .
 guess.PRS.2SG who must.PRS.3SG clean.INF after party and who not must.PRS.3SG
 'Guess who has to clean up after the party and who doesn't have to.'
- b. Pamiętam, komu miałam przekazać wiadomość, a
 remember.PRS.3SG who suppose.PST.1SG to convey.INF message and
 komu nie miałam \emptyset .
 whom not suppose.PST.3SG to
 'I remember who I was supposed to give message to, and who I wasn't supposed to.'
- c. Nie robimy wszystkich badań, które powinniśmy \emptyset .
 not do.PRS.1PL all tests which should.PRS.1PL
 'We don't do all the tests that we should.'
- d. On pomoże komu(kolwiek) będzie mógł \emptyset .
 he help.PRS.3SG whoever be.FUT.3SG can.FUT.3SG
 'He'll help whoever he can.'
- e. Ona chce przeczytać jakąś książkę, ale "Zbrodni i Kary"
 she want.PRS.3SG watch.INF some book but Crime and Punishment
 nie powinna \emptyset , bo jest jeszcze za młoda.
 not should.PRS.3SG because be.PRS.3SG still too young
 'She wants to read a book, but she shouldn't read "Crime and Punishment" because she's still too young.'
- f. Ola chce wypić jakiś sok, ale pomarańczowego nie może
 Ola want.PRS.3SG drink.INF some juice but orange not can.PRS.3SG
 \emptyset , bo jest już przeterminowany.
 because be.PRS.3SG already expired
 'Ola wants to drink some juice, but she can't drink orange juice because it's already expired.'

3.2. Case connectivity effects

Case connectivity effects, such as case matching between a remnant object and its correlate in the ellipsis site, provide another strong argument for the existence of a silent syntactic structure. The underlying assumption is that the remnant object receives case from the elided clause before it undergoes the ellipsis. For instance, in sluicing, the wh-remnant must exhibit the same case as its correlate in the antecedent clause. This implies that the remnant receives its case from within the elided structure and undergoes movement prior to ellipsis. Since case assignment requires the presence of syntactic structure, we must assume that the remnant escapes deletion by moving out of the ellipsis site, which retains the necessary case-assigning configuration, as is illustrated in (13). The verb *schmeicheln* 'flatter' assigns dative; hence, only

the dative *wem* is grammatical in the sluiced clause. The ungrammaticality of *wer* (nominative) and *wen* (accusative) confirms that the sluiced structure retains the case-assignment properties of the ellipsis site.

- (13) Er will jemandem schmeicheln, aber sie wissen nicht, (*wer
 he want.PRS.3SG someone.DAT flatter.INF but they know.PRS.3PL not who.NOM
 /*wen) wem [er t_{wem} smeicheln will].
 who.ACC who.DAT he flatter.INF want.PRS.3SG
 ‘He wants to flatter someone, but they don’t know who.’ (Merchant 2001: 146)

Polish ME exhibits case connectivity effects, as demonstrated in (14). In (14a), the topicalised noun *kryminału* ‘crime novel’ appears in the genitive case, rather than the accusative case assigned by the verb in the matrix clause. This is due to the genitive of negation, a well-attested phenomenon in Polish, whereby objects that would otherwise receive the accusative case are marked with the genitive under the scope of negation. Crucially, this alternation is preserved under ellipsis, indicating that the remnant receives case from the ellipsis site that contains case-assigning syntactic structure.

- (14) a. Adrian chciał przeczytać jakąś książkę, ale (*kryminał)
 Adrian want.PST.3SG read.INF some book but *crime novel.ACC
 kryminału nie może [przeczytać], bo jest za młody.
 crime novel.GEN not can.PRS.3SG read.INF because be.PRS.3SG too young
 ‘Adrian wanted to read a book, but crime novels he can’t, because he’s too young.’
 b. Kasia nie przeprosiła koleżanek, ale (*Ani) Anię powinna
 Kasia not apologise.PST.3SG friends but Ani.GEN Anię.ACC should.PRS.3SG
 [przeprosić], bo to jej najlepsza przyjaciółka.
 apologise.INF because it her best friend
 ‘Kasia didn’t apologise to her friends, but she should to Ania, because she is her best friend.’
 c. Adrian zaprosił niektóre dziewczyny do domu, ale nie chce
 Adrian invite.PST.3SG some girls to house but not want.PRS.3SG
 powiedzieć, (*które) których nie mógł.
 say.PRS.3SG which.ACC which.GEN not can.PST.3SG
 ‘Adrian invited some girls over, but he doesn’t want to say which ones he couldn’t.’

3.3. Syntactic mismatches

3.3.1. Voice mismatches

According to Hankamer and Sag (1976), surface anaphora does not allow syntactic mismatches. This claim aligns with sluicing, an example of PF-deletion ellipsis, that does not tolerate voice mismatches between the elided constituent and its antecedent. This is shown in (15), where the combination of a passive antecedent and an active elided site yields an ungrammatical string.

- (15) *The car was stolen but we don’t know who ~~stole the car~~.

Nevertheless, this test alone is insufficient to support PF-deletion analysis of ME. For instance, English VPE, despite having a silent syntactic structure (Aelbrecht 2010), allows certain voice mismatches, as exemplified in (16).

- (16) a. There was really no one at the meeting who could answer the question the way it should be answered.
b. The system can be used by anyone who wants to use it.

(Merchant 2013b: 3)

To account for the discrepancy between sluicing in (15) and VPE in (16), Merchant (2013b: 14–15) attributes this phenomenon to differences in the position of the syntactic head encoding voice. Namely, in VPE, VoiceP is higher than the nodes computing identity. Therefore, VoiceP is not targeted by the ellipsis. Sluicing, which involves the deletion of TP, does not permit voice mismatches because VoiceP is contained within the elided TP.

The two sets of examples in (18) and (20) show that Polish ME rules out voice mismatches. In other words, constructions with a passive antecedent and an active elided site, as well as those with an active antecedent and a passive elided site, are not permitted. To help establish this contrast clearly, parallel examples matching in voice are provided in (17) and (19) to confirm that the ungrammaticality of the mismatched cases stems from the voice clash. Following Merchant (2013b), I assume the ungrammaticality of examples involving voice asymmetries to indicate that the ellipsis site includes VoiceP.

- (17) a. Policjant nie ukarał kierowców, chociaż mógł \emptyset .
policeman not fine.PST.3SG drivers although can.PST.3SG
'The policeman didn't fine the drivers, although he could have.'
(ACTIVE ANTECEDENT-ACTIVE ELLIPSIS SITE)
- b. ?Kierowcy nie zostali ukarani przez policjanta, chociaż mogli \emptyset .
Drivers not be.PST.3PL fine.PTCP.3PL by policeman although could.PST.3PL
'The drivers weren't fined by the policeman, although they could have been.'
(PASSIVE ANTECEDENT-PASSIVE ELLIPSIS SITE)
- (18) a. *Policjant nie ukarał kierowców, chociaż mogli \emptyset .
policeman not fine.PST.3SG drivers although can.PST.3PL
'The policeman didn't fine the drivers, although they could have been.'
(ACTIVE ANTECEDENT-PASSIVE ELLIPSIS SITE)
- b. *Kierowcy nie zostali ukarani przez policjanta, chociaż mógł \emptyset .
Drivers not be.PST.3PL fine.PTCP.3PL by policeman although can.PST.3SG
'The drivers weren't fined by the policeman, although he could have.'
(PASSIVE ANTECEDENT-PASSIVE ELLIPSIS SITE)
- (19) a. Żołnierz nie uwolnił jeńców, chociaż myślę, że powinien \emptyset .
soldier not free.PST.3SG captives although think.PRS.1SG that should.PST.3SG
'The soldier didn't free the captives, although I think he should have.'
(ACTIVE ANTECEDENT - ACTIVE ELLIPSIS SITE)
- b. Jeńcy nie zostali uwolnieni przez żołnierza, chociaż myślę, że powinni \emptyset .
captives not be.PST.3PL free.PTCP.3PL by soldier although think.PRS.1SG that should.PST.3PL
'The captives were not freed by the soldier, although I think they should have.'
(PASSIVE ANTECEDENT - PASSIVE ELLIPSIS SITE)

- (20) a. *Żołnierz nie uwolnił jeńców, chociaż myślę, że powinni ø.
 soldier not free.PST.3SG captives although think.PRS.1SG that should.PST.3PL
 ‘The soldier didn’t free the captives, although I think they should have been freed.’
 (ACTIVE ANTECEDENT - PASSIVE ELLIPSIS SITE)
- b. *Jeńcy nie zostali uwolnieni przez żołnierza, chociaż myślę, że powinien ø.
 captives not be.PST.3PL free.PTCP.3PL by soldier although think.PRS.1SG that should.PST.3SG
 ‘The captives were not freed by the soldier, although I think he should have freed them.’
 (PASSIVE ANTECEDENT - ACTIVE ELLIPSIS SITE)

3.3.2. Aspect mismatches

In the literature on ME, the main focus is given to voice mismatches. Nevertheless, in Polish, another distinctive grammatical feature needs to be analysed. Polish verbs can be divided according to aspect. Almost all verbs, including infinitives, can be classified as imperfective or perfective. The imperfective form emphasises the ongoing or habitual character of an action. The perfective form indicates a completed action and is marked morphologically, for instance, by adding a prefix or suffix (Milczarski 2021: 72) as in *sprzątać*.IMPF – *posprzątać*.PF ‘to clean’.

Interestingly, despite the lack of voice mismatches, it is possible to find examples of aspect asymmetries. The complement of the modal verb within the gap can be interpreted as perfective, even though the antecedent is imperfective, and vice versa. This phenomenon is illustrated in the examples provided in (21) and (22). For instance, in (21a), the antecedent verb *sprzątam* ‘I clean’ is imperfective, emphasizing a habitual action. However, the elided material, interpreted as *posprzątać* ‘to clean up’, is perfective, indicating a completed action.

- (21) (IMPERFECTIVE ANTECEDENT - PERFECTIVE ELLIPSIS SITE)
- a. Teraz codziennie **sprzątam** sypialnię, bo w zeszłym miesiącu nie
 Now every day clean.PRS.IMPF.1SG bedroom because last month not
 mogłem [jej **posprzątać**] ani razu.
 can.PST.1SG her clean.INF.PF even once
 ‘Now I clean the bedroom every day because last month I couldn’t even once.’
- b. Maria **robi** zakupy, bo ja wczoraj nie mogłam [ich **zrobić**].
 Maria do.PRS.IMPF.3SG shopping because I yesterday not can.PST.1SG them do.INF.PF
 ‘Maria is doing the shopping because I couldn’t yesterday.’
- (22) (PERFECTIVE ANTECEDENT - IMPERFECTIVE ELLIPSIS SITE)
- a. Maria **zrobiła** zakupy, więc ja już nie muszę [ich **robić**].
 Maria do.PST.PF.3SG shopping so I already not must.PRS.1SG them do.INF.IMPF
 ‘Maria did the shopping so I don’t have to.’
- b. ?Właśnie **posprzątałam** sypialnię. Niestety, nie mogłam [jej **sprzątać**]
 just clean.PST.PF.3SG bedroom unfortunately not can.PST.1SG her clean.INF.IMPF
 na bieżąco, bo miałam za dużo pracy.
 regularly because have.PST.1G too much work
 ‘I’ve just cleaned the bedroom. Unfortunately, I couldn’t regularly because I had too much work.’

- c. Kasia **poszła** do sklepu, chociaż w tym momencie nie powinna [tam
Kasia go.PST.PF.3SG to shop although at that moment not should.PRS.3SG there
iść]. Jest już późno, a ona miała odpoczywać.
go. INF. IMPF be.PRS.3G already late and she suppose.PST.3SG to rest. INF
'Kasia went to the store, even though she shouldn't be at that moment. It's already late, and she was
supposed to be resting.'

3.3.3. Tense mismatches

A third type of mismatch involves tense mismatches. The elided infinitive allows its antecedent to be in the past tense as in (23a), present tense in (23b), and future tense in (23c).

- (23) a. Ania **ugotowała** obiad, bo Marek nie mógł [go ugotować].
Ania cook.PST.3SG dinner because Marek not can.PST.3SG it cook. INF
'Ania cooked dinner because Marek couldn't.'
- b. Ania **je** popcorn, chociaż nie miała [go jeść].
Ania eat.PRS.3SG popcorn although not suppose.PST.3SG it eat. INF
'Ania is eating popcorn, although she wasn't supposed to.'
- c. Janek **posprząta** jutro dom, żeby Kasia nie musiała [go posprzątać].
Janek clean.FUT.3SG tomorrow house so that Kasia not must.PST.3SG it clean. INF
'Janek will clean the house tomorrow so that Kasia won't have to.'

To summarise, the results of the syntactic mismatches test show a mixed pattern. While Polish ME clearly blocks voice mismatches, it appears to tolerate mismatches in tense and aspect.

4. Proposal

Before presenting the analysis, it is important to outline the theoretical assumptions regarding ellipsis licensing. Following Aelbrecht (2010) and Merchant (2001), I assume that (i) ellipsis is licensed due to the Agree relation between [E]-feature and the licensing head, (ii) the [E]-feature allows the material to be elided at PF. The [E]-feature is specified for each type of ellipsis in a given language and carries an uninterpretable feature [uF], which must match the category feature [CAT] of the head that licenses the ellipsis. Once this Agree relation is established, the uninterpretable feature is checked, activating the [E]-feature. This activation triggers deletion of the complement of the head at PF.

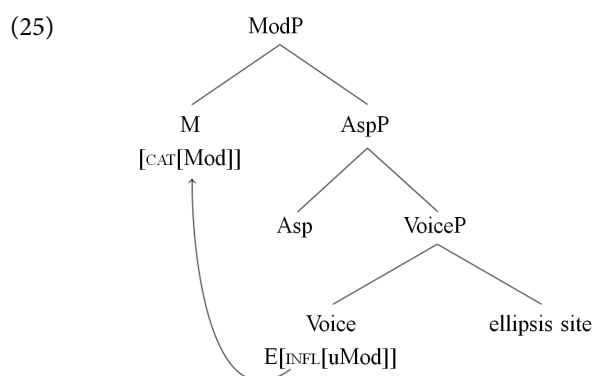
Based on these assumptions, I argue that in the case of Polish ME, the [E]-feature is located on the head of VoiceP. This placement has significant consequences: it predicts that the ellipsis will delete the complement of VoiceP, and that the licensing head – ModP – must merge above VoiceP and establish an Agree relation with [E]. I further propose that the [E]-feature in this context bears [uMod], an uninterpretable modal feature, which must be checked against a matching [Mod] feature on a deontic modal verb, as illustrated in (25).

To motivate this syntactic configuration, I adopt the extended verbal projection for Polish proposed by Ruda (2014) and Jędrzejowski (2015): TP-ModP-AspP-VoiceP. This structure

accounts for the behaviour of modals as well as the interaction between ellipsis and aspect or voice mismatches. Numerous researchers (e.g., Zabrocki 1979, Witkoś 1996) argue that Polish modal verbs are base-generated within the VP, as most of them inflect for tense, person, and number. However, they differ from prototypical verbal heads in that they cannot undergo passivisation. Furthermore, Polish modal verbs cannot be stacked - i.e. they cannot co-occur as shown in (24). Due to their properties and for the sake of clarity, I assume that Polish modals occupy their own functional projection, ModP.

- (24) *Ja muszę móc obejrzeć te filmy.
 I must.PRS.1SG must.INF watch.INF these films
 (Intended:) 'I must be able to watch these films.'

This structure helps explain the results of the analysis. The syntactic mismatches test supports the view that ellipsis in Polish ME deletes the node containing VoiceP. As Merchant (2013) argues for sluicing, voice mismatches are disallowed because VoiceP is included in the ellipsis site. Similarly, Polish ME does not permit voice mismatches, indicating that ellipsis targets a node containing VoiceP. However, aspect mismatches are allowed. This asymmetry can be explained by the fact that AspectP c-commands VoiceP – it remains outside the ellipsis scope.



The resulting structure for the sentence in (26a), repeated from (1b), is illustrated in (26b). This configuration aligns with Czech ME, where VoiceP has likewise been analysed as the head bearing the [E]-feature which, once activated, deletes its complement (Gruet-Skrabalova 2017).

- (26) a. Przesłali jej wszystkie dowody, które mogli \emptyset .
 send.PST.3PL her all evidence.ACC that could.PST.2PL
 'They sent her all the evidence they could.'
- b. Przesłali jej wszystkie dowody, [CP które_i [TP pro [ModP mogli [AspectP [VoiceP [\overline{VP} ~~przesłać t_j]]]]]]]]~~

5. Conclusion

This paper has investigated the properties of Polish Modal Ellipsis (ME) with regard to three diagnostics: extraction, case connectivity effects, and syntactic mismatches. The results point to ME as a type of deletion ellipsis. In particular, the possibility of extraction and case

matching effects indicate that ellipsis involves an internal structure that is left unpronounced. The mixed results from the mismatch tests – i.e., blocking voice mismatches while permitting aspect and tense asymmetries – suggest that the ellipsis site includes VoiceP but excludes higher projections such as AspP. Based on this evidence, I argue that Polish ME involves PF-deletion of the VoiceP node. To capture these patterns, I have proposed that the [E]-feature responsible for ellipsis licensing is hosted by the modal head in ModP, which checks its uninterpretable feature [uMod] via Agree relation with VoiceP, thereby triggering deletion of its complement. The proposed analysis aligns Polish ME with similar patterns observed in languages such as Czech (Gruet-Skrabalova 2017).

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Cite this article as:

Modrzejewska, N. (2025). Polish Modal Ellipsis. *LingBaW. Linguistics Beyond and Within*, 11, 141–153.