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## “To mamy wpajane od dziecka” – a recipient passive in Polish?

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**Summary:** The Polish construction *mieć* ‘have’ + passive participle has recently been discussed as a possible new perfect tense in the process of grammaticalization, but good arguments against this interpretation have been put forward: Semantically it is merely a resultative construction, and diachronically it has been attested with the same semantics since the beginning of literacy. However, a certain group of sentences with *mieć* + passive participle has not been paid sufficient attention so far. In these sentences the participle can be formed from an imperfective verb, it can be combined with a temporal adverbial referring to the time of the event and the subject is never the agent but the beneficiary. These constructions have to be classified as a recipient passive. In parallel with the Polish direct passive, there are three recipient-passive constructions (imperfective, perfective, resultative). Together with the resultative active, the constructions with *mieć* + passive participle fill a gap in the Polish voice system.

**Keywords:** grammaticalization, indirect passive, perfect tense, Polish, resultative

### 1 Introduction

The present article was inspired by the recently renewed interest in the Polish construction *mieć* ‘have’ + passive participle (henceforth “*mieć* + pp”). This construction was ‘discovered’ for Polish linguistics by Nitsch (1913) more than a century ago and from the very beginning suspected to be a perfect tense *in statu nascendi* (cf. also Gołąb 1959: 432; Gallis 1960: 186; Pisarkowa 1964; Vasilev 1968; Weiss 1977: 369–373; Bartnicka et al. 2004: 301, 308), although Lempp (1986: 124) called it “a matter of taste” whether to call *mieć* + pp a perfect or not. After Łaziński’s (2001) well-argued and virtually devastating reply to Weydt/Kaźmierczak’s (1999) argument in favour of a developing perfect function, it seemed to be clear once and for all that none of the forms ever cited in support of the perfect-tense hypothesis actually qualify as a perfect. As Maslov (1988) and Kałyn (1999a,

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2010) had shown before, they are *resultatives*, i.e. they denote a state which is the result of an action – but not the action itself. Consequently, the semantically most *equivalent* translation of

(1)	<i>t-en</i>	<i>list-∅</i>	<i>ma-m</i>	<i>napisa-n-y</i>
	this-M.ACC.SG	letter.M-ACC.SG	have-PRS.1SG	write:PF-PP-M.ACC.SG

would be ‘this letter of mine is written’ rather than ‘I have written this letter’ (although in a given context the latter translation can of course be *adequate*). During the decade following Łaziński’s article, there seemed to be agreement about the classification of this construction as a resultative (cf. Wiemer/Giger 2005; Nomachi 2006; Skibicki 2007; Giger 2009).<sup>1</sup>

However, the perfect-tense hypothesis has recently been put forward again. Piskorz (2012) and Piskorz/Abraham/Leiss (2013) do not really provide new empirical evidence but instead bring a new, typically Leissian argument: After the decline of the Indo-European perfect (which only left traces like Church Slavonic *vědě* ‘I know’, cf. Lat. *vīdī* ‘I saw’; Townsend/Janda 2003: 155, §9.0) the Slavic languages developed a new perfect (with a form of *byti* ‘be’ + past participle, e.g. *napisala esi* ‘you have written’). After this construction (which in Modern Polish has the form *napisalaś*) ceased to be a perfect by becoming a universal past tense in most Slavic languages (including Polish), due to a postulated ‘cyclic’ development it is only “logical” (cf. the subtitle of Piskorz 2012) that the Polish language should now develop a new perfect tense – this time using the Western European model of ‘have’ + passive participle. This “logic”, however, is obviously not enough to prove that *mieć* + pp is developing into a perfect tense. This can easily be seen from the fact that many languages all over the world (including most Slavic languages) lack a perfect tense.

The hypothesis about the grammaticalization of a new perfect was recently argued for in the present journal as well: Lea Sawicki (2011) calls *mieć* + pp a “perfect-like construction” and collects new colloquial data from the internet to prove that this construction indeed “takes the path of the evolution of the perfect” (ibid. 82). Interestingly enough, some of the examples she gives really are hard to explain away as resultatives:

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<sup>1</sup> Note that the same construction ‘have’ + pp also exists in other Slavic languages, and a resultative construction with the Russian possessive periphrasis exists in the East Slavic languages (cf. Koronczewski 1993, Giger 2009: 271–273). According to Giger (2009: 273), in Kashubian/Slovincian, in some northern Russian dialects and in Macedonian this construction actually has the semantics of a perfect tense, whereas in all other Slavic languages – including Polish – it is a resultative.

- (2) *A wszystko to, bo dobrze się uczyłam – twierdzono także, że mam “kupowane” [IPF] oceny przez moją mamę.*  
 ‘And all this because I have been a good student – it has also been claimed that **I have** my grades “**bought**” by my mother.’ (Sawicki 2011: 71)
- (3) *ciekawa jestem przez ile lat **będ[ę] miała wypominane** [IPF] zdarzenia z przeszłości*  
 ‘I am curious for how many years **I’ll be reminded** of these events from the past’  
 (ibid. 71f.)

As one can see, there is no resulting state in the focus here. And in both sentences it is quite clear that the subject is not the agent: In (2) the agent is indicated as *przez moją mamę* ‘by my mother’, while in (3) it is the group of people who witnessed or have been told about the events in question.

The present article aims to show that the construction in (2) and (3) is neither a resultative nor a perfect but a recipient passive.

## 2 A newly developing perfect tense?

Contemporary Polish has traditionally been analysed as having three tenses (preterite, present and future) and two aspects (perfective and imperfective). Furthermore, the specificity of the Polish voice system is that it has three passive forms: an imperfective dynamic passive formed with *być* ‘be’ and the passive participle of an imperfective verb (e.g. *był czytany* ‘was (being) read’), a perfective dynamic passive formed with *zostać* ‘become’ and the passive participle of a perfective verb (e.g. *został przeczytany* ‘was read’) and a stative passive formed with *być* ‘be’ and the passive participle of a perfective verb (e.g. *był przeczytany* ‘was (already) read’). The construction *mieć* + pp, which has traditionally not been regarded as part of the Polish verbal system, has recently been proposed as a newly developing perfect tense. More precisely, since *mieć* can have all three tense forms, the construction would add three new tenses to the system: perfect (with *mieć* in the present tense: *ma przeczytany* ‘has read’), pluperfect (with *mieć* in the preterite: *miał przeczytany* ‘had read’) and future perfect (with *mieć* in the future: *będzie miał przeczytany* ‘will have read’; cf. Piskorz 2012: 184–200).

As stated above, Łaziński (2001) has already argued convincingly that *mieć* + pp is not a perfect tense but a resultative. The main difference between a perfect tense form and a resultative construction is that in the perfect tense (e.g. *I have already written three letters*) the event indicated by the verb is asserted and a consequence for the present is implied; a resultative (e.g. *Three letters are already written*) asserts a state and only implies a preceding event that brought about a change of state. In both cases the assertion is clear but the implication remains

vague. Thus, for the preceding event of a resultative the agent and the time interval are usually not determined. Similarly, the use of a perfect tense like *I have already written three letters* can be licensed by an implication like the three finished letters lying on the desk, but the consequence for the present can also be that my right hand aches.

Łaziński's (2001: 14) five main arguments for a purely resultative meaning of *mieć* + pp are: 1. The construction can only be used with verbs that cause a change of state (rather than with all verbs including state verbs). 2. The resultative state is not always closely tied to the process that the verb indicates in its active form. 3. The construction cannot be used with adverbials of time referring to the action preceding the state. 4. The subject is a beneficiary, not necessarily the agent. 5. Even though the constructions are sometimes not compatible with *mieć* in the meaning 'possess', the verb *mieć* is not blurred but keeps its meaning 'to be characterized by something'.

Here I would like to add an argument that to my knowledge has not been put forward yet. In the texts of the proponents of the perfect-tense hypothesis, example sentences are usually translated as a German or English perfect to stress their point:

- (4) “*ma odrobione zadania domowe pisemne i ustne* [...] he **has done** (his) written and oral homework” (Sawicki 2011: 77, original emphasis)
- (5) “*Mam to zastrzeżone w kontrakcie* ‘Ich habe das im Kontrakt vorbehalten’” (Weydt/Kaźmierczak 1999: 5, original emphasis)

Apart from the theoretical dispute about the semantics of this construction, which has implications for the adequacy of the proposed translations, one might try to find out in practice whether the Polish construction is used to translate a perfect tense in languages that have one or whether it is translated as a perfect tense by professional translators translating from Polish.

I used *ParaSol* to find examples of *mieć* + pp (with up to three words in between and in both word orders) and their translations. Let us first look at how this construction is translated into other languages. Here are two examples:

- (6) “Siwe włosy **miała upięte** [PF] za pomocą kilku grzebyków z brązowej masy plastycznej.” (Stasiuk, *Opowieści galicyjskie*; ParaSol)  
“Ihr graues Haar **war** mit Hilfe einiger brauner Plastikämme **hochgesteckt.**”
- (7) “Tu **masz** to **napisane** [PF].” (Lem, *Solaris*; ParaSol)  
“Hier **hast** du es **schriftlich.**”

In (6) the construction is translated into German with a stative construction with *sein* ‘be’ and the past participle *hochgesteckt* ‘pinned up’ unambiguously indicating a state, not an action. In (7) the Polish past participle *napisane* ‘written’ is translated with an adjective, *schriftlich* ‘in written form’. All the other examples found in the corpus are similar to these. Not in a single instance is the Polish construction translated as a perfect tense. There is only one ambiguous example:

- (8) “Oczy **miała otwarte** [PF].” (Lem, *Solaris*; ParaSol)  
 “Sie **hatte** die Augen **geöffnet**.”

In the German sentence in (8) there is a grammatical homonymy: It can be a pluperfect, i.e. ‘she had opened her eyes’, but *geöffnet* can also be a synonym for the adjective *offen* ‘open’, so that this sentence can also be a static construction, i.e. ‘she had her eyes open’. The context seems to imply the latter reading, which is also confirmed by the Russian translation: “Glaza u nee byli otkryty” (“Her eyes were open”).

Similarly, Polish translators never use *mieć* + pp to translate a perfect tense in another language. They use it exclusively to convey statives and resultatives:

- (9) “his trousers and sleeves **were rolled up**” (Rowling, *Harry Potter 1*; ParaSol)  
 “**miał podwinięte** [PF] spodnie i rękawy”
- (10) “Il cappuccio, che venendo di fuori **aveva ancora levato**, [...]” (Eco, *Il nome della Rosa*; ParaSol)  
 “Kaptur, który **miał nasunięty** [PF] na głowę, albowiem przychodził z zewnątrz, [...]”  
 “The hood, which **was still raised** since he had come in from outside”

In (10) the adverb *ancora* ‘still’ clearly indicates that *levato* denotes the persisting state of the hood being raised rather than the process of raising the hood. I have found only a single case in the corpus in which the original text actually has a perfect form, in this case a pluperfect:

- (11) “sein inneres Imperium, in das er von Geburt an die Konturen aller Gerüche **eingegraben hatte**” (Süskind, *Das Parfum*; ParaSol)  
 “jego wewnętrzne imperium, gdzie **miał wryte** [PF] kontury wszystkich zapachów”  
 “the innermost empire where he **had buried** the husks of every odor encountered since birth”

In this case it seems to me (and native speakers of Polish confirmed this) that the translation is not completely equivalent (though not inadequate). The German original actually talks of a long process: The perfumer has been carving all the smells into his memory since his birth. The Polish translation focuses on the

resulting state, the smells' being carved into his memory. It is probably no coincidence that the equivalent of *von Geburt an* 'since his birth' is missing in the Polish translation, since it would not be compatible with the resultative construction (or else *od urodzenia miał wyrzeć* would mean that the smells had already been carved into his memory when he was born).

To sum up the results of this little corpus study, professional translators do not treat Polish *mieć* + pp as equivalent to a perfect tense in languages like German, English or Italian, neither when translating into Polish nor when translating from Polish into one of these languages. On the contrary, literary translations testify to the Polish construction's equivalence with stative and resultative constructions in other languages.

Now proponents of the perfect-tense hypothesis might say that even though the construction does not have the semantics of a perfect tense yet (at least not in literary texts) there is a very dynamic development going on at the moment whose outcome will very soon be a new perfect tense in Polish. In claiming this they presuppose that the construction is relatively new and that its function is currently undergoing a change. However, Mendoza (forthcoming) has proved this presupposition completely wrong. Her thorough analysis of historical text corpora shows that *mieć* + pp with its current semantic and morphological features has been around "since the beginning of literacy" ("seit Beginn der Schriftlichkeit"). Instances of their use "appear already in the earliest Old Polish texts" ("tauchen bereits in den frühesten altpolnischen Texten auf"). Among the earliest examples she has found is the following from the *Kościán Oaths* (*Roty kościńskie*; no. 168), dated to 1401:

- |      |   |           |                |              |                   |
|------|---|-----------|----------------|--------------|-------------------|
| (12) | <i>Mikołaj</i>                            | <i>ma</i> | <i>czwartą</i> | <i>część</i> | <i>wydzieloną</i> |
|      | Nicholas                                  | has       | fourth         | part         | assigned:PF       |
|      | 'Nicholas <b>was assigned</b> a quarter.' |           |                |              |                   |

This is a powerful argument against the theory that even though the Polish construction does not quite have a perfect function yet (as even Piskorz 2012: 310 admits), they might currently be developing this function. There simply is no change going on.

### 3 Extent of the construction

Only perfective verbs denote a change of state. Therefore the resultative function ought to be confined to perfective verbs. Following Sawicki's (2011: 69) argument, if the construction can also be used with imperfective verbs, this might be a sign

of its development into a full-fledged tense form. She provides several examples of this from the internet:

- (13) *Komp[uter] [...] miał stawiany 2 razy system od nowa*  
 computer had set:IPF:PP 2 times system from new  
 “The computer [...] had (its) system (being) reloaded (lit.: **had reloaded** ... system) twice.” (Sawicki 2011: 71)

Further examples are (2) and (3), where the verbs *kupować* ‘buy’ and *wypominać* ‘remind’ are also imperfective. In (13) it is obvious that the adequate translation given by Sawicki clashes with the “lit[eral]” one including an English past perfect. Her attempt to explain the resultative meaning of the presumed perfect tense is equally far-fetched. In her opinion, the construction can denote “a result or a consequence of some action, but this action does not necessarily precede the emergence of the state or cease[...] with its emergence” (Sawicki 2011: 71).

Strangely enough, a very important counter-argument against the purely resultative interpretation of the construction has not been put forward at all so far. According to Nedjalkov/Jaxontov (1983: 11) and Łaziński (2001: 2), temporal adverbials used with a resultative construction cannot refer to the time interval of the event but only to the ensuing state:

- (14) \**Mam opublikowany 14 grudnia artykuł.*  
 I.have published:PF 14 December article  
 intended meaning: ‘I (**have**) **published** an article on 14 December’ (Łaziński 2001: 3)

With a perfect tense, a temporal adverbial can refer to both time intervals. (Note that the English present perfect is a ‘resultative perfect’ and therefore usually does not license momentary adverbials referring to the event; however, Łaziński (2001: 3) quotes the following passage from a spoken text in the British National Corpus: “No, but this has been published. It’s been published December the fo[u]rteenth, and I haven’t had my copy yet...”.)

Although Sawicki (2011) does not make this point herself, among her examples from the internet there are several sentences with a temporal adverbial referring to the time of the event:

- (15) *Ząbki miał oglądane w czerwcu.*  
 teeth he.had examined:IPF in June  
 ‘His teeth **were examined** in June.’ (Sawicki 2011: 71)
- (16) *Moja mała miała zrobione zdjęcie jak miała rok.*  
 my small had made:PF photo when she.was year  
 ‘The photo of my little one **was taken** when she was one year old.’ (ibid.: 78)

- (17) *W 2003 r. [...] 88 podmiotów ma prowadzone postępowanie upadłościowe*  
 in 2003 [...] 88 entities have conducted:PF bankrupty proceeding  
 ‘In 2003, 88 entities [in the funds portfolio] **have** bankrupty proceedings being  
**conducted.**’ (ibid.: 70f.)

This fact needs an explanation. Clearly these examples cannot be classified as resultatives. Note also that a) in many of these cases the participle is formed from an imperfective verb, and b) in none of these cases is the subject the agent.

## 4 A ‘new’ passive construction

The interpretation of the empirical facts I want to propose here is the following. Apart from the resultative construction, which undoubtedly exists in Polish and is attested in sentences like (1) or (4), there is also another construction (attested e.g. in (2), (3), (5), (13), (15), (16) and (17)), which

- looks similar to the resultative construction (i.e. *mieć* + pp),
- can be formed from perfective and imperfective verbs alike,
- does not denote any precedence in time if formed from an imperfective verb,
- often does not have any resultative meaning,
- can be combined with temporal adverbials referring to the event,
- always has to be interpreted as passive (i.e. the subject is never the agent) and
- represents the subject as a beneficiary of the event denoted by the participle.

This construction is a **recipient passive** (also called *dative passive*, *indirect passive*, *beneficiary passive* or *addressee passive*).<sup>2</sup> A recipient passive exists in several other languages, cf. English *I was given a book* (vs. the direct passive *The book was given to me*) or German *Und jeder, der uns mag, kriegt unser Einmaleins gelehrt* ‘And whoever likes us will be taught our multiplication table’ (from the German version of the *Pippi Longstocking* song). The German construction with *kriegen* or *bekommen* ‘receive’ + passive participle was borrowed (or replicated, cf. Heine/Kuteva 2008) in several Slavic languages, among them Upper and Lower Sorbian (ibid.: 70–71) and Czech (Giger 2003a):

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<sup>2</sup> I have chosen the term *recipient passive* merely because it is the most widespread term. However, the terminology I use is deliberately eclectic. Thus the semantic role of the subject in a recipient passive is called *beneficiary* (rather than *recipient*), and the ‘normal’ passive is referred to as *direct passive* (rather than *patient passive*). Note that the term *benefactive passive* often refers to something different (cf. Babby 1993: 343, Toyota 2007: 145).

- (18) *Karel dostal (od otce) přikázáno vrátit se včas.*  
 Karel received from father ordered:PF return:INF REFL in.time  
 ‘Karel **was told** (by his father) to come home in time.’ (Czech; Giger 2003a: 85)

- (19) *Ja krydnu wot mejstarja nowy woblak šyty.*  
 I receive from master new suit sewn:IPF  
 ‘A new suit **is** being **sewn** for me by the master.’ (Lower Sorbian; Giger 2003a: 96)

However, as Weiss (1982: 204) states, “such constructions are alien to the Polish language” (“Solche Konstruktionen sind dem Polnischen fremd”). Kątny (1999b: 655–656) enumerates several alternative constructions that can be used in Polish to translate the German recipient passive:

- (20) *Książkę tę dostałem w podarunku*  
 book:ACC this:ACC I.received:PF in present  
 ‘I was given this book as a present.’

- (21) *Powiedzia-no jej to trzy razy*  
 tell:PF-PST.IMPRS her this three times  
 ‘She was told this three times.’

- (22) *Różnica zostanie ci zwrócona*  
 difference:NOM will.become you.DAT returned:PF  
 ‘You will be returned the difference.’

Curiously, this enumeration does not include *mieć* + pp, although in the same year the same author published an article about this construction and classified the German recipient passive as one of its equivalents (Kątny 1999a: 104). It is easy to demonstrate that all three sentences can be translated using *mieć* + pp:

- (20′) *Książkę miałem podarowaną*  
 book:ACC I.had presented:PF

- (21′) *Miała to powiedziane trzy razy*  
 she.had this told:PF three times

- (22′) *Różnicę będziesz miała zwróconą*  
 difference:ACC you.will have returned:PF

The constructions originally given by Kątny, however, belong to a higher register. The Polish recipient passive seems to be marked as colloquial, just like the resultative construction (and maybe even more so). Nonetheless, a fairly representative questionnaire study among 158 Polish native speakers conducted by Piskorz (2012: 90–102; cf. Błaszczuk 2013 for criticism) gave relatively good

results. Among the 14 sample sentences tested, two unambiguously contained a recipient passive:

(23) *Od lat mam obiecwaną podwyżkę.*  
 for years I.have promised:IPF pay.raise  
 ‘For years I have **been promised** a pay raise.’ (Piskorz 2012: 94)

(24) *Przez kogo masz poprawione wypracowanie?*  
 by whom you.have corrected:PF essay  
 ‘Who **corrected** your essay?’ (ibid.: 95)

According to the charts given by Piskorz, the vast majority of the speakers admitted to use or at least know these constructions; only 6% and 9% claimed not to know sentences similar to (23) and (24), respectively (ibid.: 95). Responding to the question about grammatical correctness, 68–72% considered the recipient passives correct, 29–32% incorrect (with slightly better values for (24); ibid.: 98). 50% classified the two sentences as typical of spoken communication, 35–43% as both spoken and written, and 7–10% as exclusively written (ibid.: 101).<sup>3</sup>

A corpus study conducted by Przepiórkowski et al. (2012: 233–234) shows that the most frequent verbs used in the “quasi-perfect construction” are “*zapewniony* ‘assured, guaranteed’, *podpisany* ‘signed up’, *zagwarantowany* ‘assured, guaranteed’ [...] [which] hardly allow for the interpretation in which the agent and beneficent of the action is the same person. If we say *mamy zapewnione* or *mamy podpisane*, it means that somebody else has assured or signed something for us.” In other words, in contrast to the impression conveyed by the choice of sample sentences (and sometimes the choice of translation) in studies like Piskorz (2012), in actual language use the recipient passive is not a marginal phenomenon next to a much more frequent active construction.

It has to be pointed out that the insight that certain instances of *mieć* + pp can be interpreted as a recipient passive is not new. Koronczewski (1993: 254) semantically classifies the Slavic possessive resultatives as “Perfectum possessivum Mediopassivi”. Łaziński (2001: 12–14) subdivides the examples given by Weydt/Kaźmierczak (1999) according to the semantic role of the subject, singling out a group he describes as “Konstruktionen, in denen sich das Partizip auf eine

<sup>3</sup> Weydt/Kaźmierczak (1999: 8–16) also conducted a questionnaire study with 51 sixteen- to eighteen-year-old students. However, the results seem to be flawed by the inclusion of idiomatic collocations and some semantically rather strange sentences like *Ten koń ma osiodłany grzbiet* ‘This horse has a saddled back’ (or ‘This horse had its back saddled’; ibid.: 9). Furthermore, acceptability, normative correctness and diaphasic classification were conflated into a single five-point scale (ibid.: 8).

Tätigkeit einer anderen Person als des Subjekts bezieht, wobei das Subjekt Benefizient oder Malefizient des aus der Tätigkeit resultierenden Zustands ist” (“constructions in which the participle refers to an action of a person different from the subject, with the subject being the beneficiary or maleficiary of the state resulting from the action”, *ibid.*: 12). Piskorz (2012: 202) describes the same group as “*mieć*-Passiv”, distinguishing it from “*mieć*-Perfekt” and “possessives *mieć*”. For sentences with a participle formed from a *verbum dicendi* like *miał powie-dziane* ‘he had been told’ (and only for those), she even remarks in passing that the construction “behaves here like the recipient passive” (“*verhält sich hier wie das Rezipientenpassiv*”, *ibid.*: 152). Fici Giusti (1994: 113–115) treats the “*perfetto possessivo*” in her monograph about the Slavic passive because the subject is not obligatorily the agent.

However, what has not been done so far is an analysis of temporal reference, verbal aspect, resultativity, etc. of the recipient passive separately from the active resultative. The dominant view so far has been that the interpretation of the subject of *mieć* + pp as agent and/or beneficiary is facultative, depending on the context and the semantics of the verb (e.g. Weiss 1977: 371–372). Consequently, Sawicki (2011: 79) argues that “the relation of agentivity is simply irrelevant for the formation of the PLC [perfect-like construction]”. I will show that this is not the case and that the recipient passive is a separate and completely autonomous construction within the Polish grammatical system.

A very good step into the right direction is Giger’s (2003b: 486) observation that apart from the resultative there is a separate “causative construction *mieć* + imperfective participle” (“*kausative Konstruktion mieć + imperfektives Partizip*”) in Polish. For this construction he gives the example *Mam ząb wrywany* ‘I am having a tooth extracted’ and explicitly refers to a similarity with the corresponding English construction with *have* (cf. *I had my bike repaired*). However, in sentences like (3) or (13) above the girl who is reminded of an embarrassing event and the computer that is reloaded are clearly not causers. On the other hand, in the English construction the subject is not necessarily the beneficiary, e.g. in *I had my daughter’s bike repaired*. So although in some contexts – when the subject is both causer and beneficiary – the two constructions can be equivalent, the English construction *have* + pp is a causative construction but not a recipient passive, and the Polish construction is a recipient passive but not causative.

## 5 Typological and diachronic aspects

At first glance, it seems strange that the Polish language should use *mieć* ‘have’ rather than ‘receive’ as auxiliary to form a recipient passive, given that, as stated

above, it is almost surrounded by Slavic languages exhibiting a recipient passive with ‘receive’ and that the Polish direct passive with *zostać* ‘become’ was borrowed from German. However, recipient passives with ‘have’ are not without parallel. For example, there is a completely identical construction in Sicilian Italian:

- (25) *ho avuto fatto piaceri più grossi* (regiolect)  
*appi fattu piaciri cchiù grossi* (basilect)  
 I.had made pleasures more big  
 ‘I was given greater pleasures.’ (Krefeld 2004: 107)

A parallel potentially more relevant to the Polish construction is a German construction which Bredel/Töpler (2007: 890) call “stative passive of the recipient passive” (“Zustandspassiv des *bekommen*-Passivs”; however, cf. Gese 2013, who argues that this is not a passive at all but a stative construction with *haben* as a full verb):

- (26) *Petra hat die Haare (vom Frisör) geschnitten*  
 Petra has the hair by.the hair-dresser cut:PP  
 ‘Petra’s hair has **been cut** (by the hair-dresser).’ (Bredel/Töpler 2007: 890)

- (27) *Sie will das Kleid gewaschen haben*  
 she wants the dress washed have:INF  
 ‘She wants her dress to **be washed**.’ (Kaṭny 2010: 65)

It is not the objective of this article to take a stance as to whether the Polish recipient passive was borrowed from another language. However, if it was borrowed, the German stative recipient passive in (26) and (27) might well have served as a model. The German constructions might first have been translated with a perfective verb, yielding the construction attested in (15) and (16). Then the difference between stative passive and dynamic passive, which in German is indicated by a change of auxiliary (*bekommen* ‘receive’ for dynamic, *haben* ‘have’ for stative passive), could easily be rendered by a change of aspect in the participle (imperfective for dynamic, perfective for stative passive). Note that in Sorbian and Slovincian (and to a lesser extent also in Czech) a recipient passive with ‘have’ exists alongside a recipient passive with ‘receive’:

- (28) *Što ceš měc nowe kupjene?*  
 what you.want have:INF new bought:PF  
 ‘What new things do you want to be bought?’ (Upper Sorbian, Giger 2003a: 84)

It seems that the Sorbian constructions mirror the German situation, i.e. the construction with ‘have’ is a stative recipient passive, whereas the recipient passive with ‘receive’ is dynamic (cf. Löttsch 1969: 104, 107, 108).

However, it will be hard to prove a borrowing relation for Polish (and especially its direction), since, just like the resultative construction, it is new to the linguistic community, but not at all new to the Polish language. It is attested at least since the 15th century – cf. (12) above and (29):

- (29) *a każdy [sic] swą chorągiew ma od Cesarza daną*  
 and everyone their banner has by emperor given:PF  
 ‘and everybody has **been given** their banner by the emperor.’ (Kronika turecka, 1496–1501, PolDi, quoted from Mendoza in print)

Consequently, the question of a possible calque from German (or from another language, e.g. Latin, cf. Mendoza forthcoming) has to be left to further research.<sup>4</sup>

## 6 Place in the Polish voice system

According to current grammars, the Polish voice system consists of two active forms (imperfective and perfective) and three passive forms (imperfective, perfective and stative/resultative). Schematically, this can be represented like this:

**Table 1:** The traditional Polish voice system

	process	event	ensuing state
<b>Active</b>	<b>imperfective active</b> <i>robi-t-∅</i> do:IPF-PST-3SG.M	<b>perfective active</b> <i>zrobi-t-∅</i> do:PF-PST-3SG.M	–
<b>Passive</b>	<b>ipf. dynamic passive</b> <i>było robione</i> was done:IPF	<b>pf. dynamic passive</b> <i>zostało zrobione</i> became done:PF	<b>stative passive</b> <i>było zrobione</i> was done:PF

To keep the scheme as simple as possible for our purposes, various peripheral constructions are neglected, e.g. the habitual aktionsart of the auxiliary (*bywało robione* ‘was usually done (ipf.)’, *zostawało zrobione* ‘was usually done (pf.)’), the reflexive (*robiło się* ‘did itself, was done’), the impersonal *-no/-to* form (*robiono* ‘people did’) or peripheral participial constructions (*drzwi pozostały zamknięte*

<sup>4</sup> The Latin language, which Mendoza puts forward as a possible alternative source for the resultative construction, does not easily lend itself to the recipient passive, since Medieval Latin does not seem to have had any such construction (cf. Stotz 1998: 329–331 for periphrastic passives; *ibid.*: 350–352 for the *habere* perfect). Nonetheless this question might deserve a closer inspection.

‘the doors stayed closed’; cf. Lehmann 2011: 170–174 for a more comprehensive scheme of the Polish tense-aspect-voice system).

The resultative construction *mieć* + pp has already been proposed by Kałny (2010: 62) to have entered the system as another “stative passive” (“Zustandspassiv”) in the sense that *koszulę mam uprasowaną* ‘my shirt is ironed’ can be transformed into *moja koszula jest uprasowana* ‘idem’. On the basis of an analysis of *mieć* + pp as a group of several different constructions it can be shown that they provide missing links and fit well into the system:

**Table 2:** Proposal for a more complete Polish voice system

	process		event		ensuing state	
<b>active</b>	<b>imperfective active</b>		<b>perfective active</b>		<b>resultative active</b>	
	<i>robił</i>		<i>zrobił</i>		<i>miał zrobione</i>	
	did:IPF		did:PF		had done:PF	
<b>recipient passive</b>	<b>ipf. dynamic recip. p.</b>		<b>pf. dynamic recip. p.</b>		<b>stative recip. passive</b>	
	<i>miał</i>	<i>robione</i>	<i>miał zrobione</i>		<i>miał zrobione</i>	
	had	done:IPF	had done:PF		had done:PF	
<b>direct passive</b>	<b>ipf. dynamic passive</b>		<b>pf. dynamic passive</b>		<b>stative passive</b>	
	<i>było</i>	<i>robione</i>	<i>zostało</i>	<i>zrobione</i>	<i>było zrobione</i>	
	was	done:IPF	became	done:PF	was done:PF	

Note that the resultative active, the perfective recipient passive and the resultative recipient passive are homonymous.<sup>5</sup> This homonymy explains the well-known ambiguity of *mieć* + pp. It is ambiguous both with respect to voice (the subject can be the agent or only the beneficiary) and with respect to its resultativity (it can denote an event or the state that results from it). However, if the resultative and non-resultative reading as well as the active and passive reading were elements of the meaning of a single, polysemous construction, it would be hard to explain why this construction can have an active resultative, a passive resultative and a passive non-resultative reading, but never an active non-resultative one (i.e. *miał zrobione* cannot have the non-resultative active meaning ‘he did it’). In other

<sup>5</sup> Apart from this, there sometimes is an ambiguity between the construction *mieć* + pp in any of its functions and a plain main verb *mieć* ‘have, possess’ with an attributive passive participle (cf. Lempp 1986: 127–128). For example, *miał podwinięte spodnie i rękawy* in (9) above might also be interpreted as ‘he had rolled-up trousers and sleeves’. In this paper, only unambiguously verbal constructions have been taken into account; example (9) would not have been used as evidence for the *mieć* + pp construction if it had not been written by a translator as the Polish equivalent of *his trousers and sleeves were rolled up*.

words, despite the existing ambiguities it is exactly the meaning of a tense form (e.g. a perfect tense) that is blocked because the homonymy does not encompass that element of the system.

The homonymy is in fact a complex case consisting of a double ambiguity: A. The passive participle is polysemous, since it can denote a state (due to its nominal nature) or an action (due to its verbal nature). In the Polish direct passive this polysemy is resolved by a change of auxiliary (*zostać* for the actional meaning vs. *być* for the stative meaning), but in the recipient passive *mieć* is used for both.<sup>6</sup> B. The other ambiguity is based on the homonymy between a resultative construction formed with *mieć* (maybe borrowed from Latin, cf. Mendoza forthcoming) and a recipient passive construction formed with *mieć* (maybe independently borrowed from German, see above).

Note that similar homonymies in grammatical constructions are fairly widespread across languages. The German sentence *Sie hatte die Augen geöffnet* in (8) above, which can be interpreted as a stative (‘her eyes were open’) or as a pluperfect (‘she had opened her eyes’) is an example very similar to the Polish ambiguity of the perfective recipient passive and the resultative recipient passive (opposition A above). The German sentence in (26) *Petra hat die Haare geschnitten* can also be interpreted as a perfect (‘Petra has cut (her) hair’) or as a stative (‘Petra’s hair is cut’). Additionally, it is possible here to explicate the agent: *Petra hat die Haare selber geschnitten* ‘Petra cut (her) hair herself’ or *Petra hat die Haare vom Frisör geschnitten* ‘Petra’s hair has been cut by the hair-dresser’.

For a voice homonymy compare also the following three English sentences formed with *get* + passive participle:

- (30) a. *He didn’t care as long as it **got done**.*  
 b. *He had a job to do and he **got it done**.*  
 c. *Tell me about your tattoo. – Oh, I love it. I **got it done** on Haight Street.*

(COCA)

In (30 a), *get* is a colloquial alternative to *be* for forming a passive where the subject of the sentence is the patient (cf. also *things get voted on that don’t get read*); in (30 b), *get* means something like ‘accomplish’ and clearly forms an active construction where the subject is the agent (cf. also *if you go out to your shop and do something every day on your airplane, you’ll get it built*). In (30 c), *get* forms a construction where the subject is the causer and the beneficiary but

<sup>6</sup> Kątny (1999a: 105) distinguishes between a “stative” (“Zustandskonstruktion”) and a “dynamic reading” (“dynamische Lesart”). He assumes that the latter is only possible with modal verbs, as in *Chcę to natychmiast mieć objaśnione!* ‘I want to get this explained at once!’. However, I would argue that (16) and (24) convey this dynamic meaning without a modal verb.

not the agent (cf. also *I managed to get it repaired for very little money*). The constructions in (30 b) and (30 c) are completely homonymous, so that a sentence like *they can get it repaired*, out of context, is ambiguous as to whether *they* will repair *it* themselves or have it repaired by someone else (all examples from COCA; cf. Wanner 2009: 85–109 for an analysis of the interrelation between the English *get* constructions). This situation looks very similar to the homonymy of the resultative active and the resultative recipient passive in Polish (opposition B above).

Native speakers of Polish employing this construction are conscious of the voice ambiguity. This can be deduced from numerous clarifications like the following:

- (31) *mam napisany (przeze mnie) algorytm*  
 I.have written:PF by me algorithm  
 ‘I **got** an algorithm **written** (by myself).’  
 (<http://www.eprog.pl/archive/index.php/t-1387.html>)

There might be an additional etymological difference between the active resultative and the recipient passive. For the resultative it has often been shown how the semantic shift from ‘she has a written letter’ to ‘she has written a letter’ came about in other languages with a possessive perfect tense (cf. Öhl 2009; Piskorz 2012: 38–46). We can assume that a similar shift from an attributive participle to a participle as part of a verbal construction occurred in Polish as well. As to the recipient passive, the similarities with the direct passive (which in turn emerged under the influence of the German passive, cf. Weiss 1982) are so striking that the functions of the aspect of the passive participle seem to have been modelled on the direct passive.

## 7 Temporal reference

The temporal reference of the alleged new perfect has already been examined in depth by Piskorz (2012: 164–200; cf. also Sawicki 2011: 71–72; Piskorz/Abraham/Leiss 2013: 284–287). Her analysis turns out rather complicated: Temporal reference seems to be rather a matter of probability and context – which Piskorz of course takes as a sign that the construction is currently undergoing a change. However, these results are merely due to the fact that she does not take the semantic role of the subject (i.e. voice) into account when analysing temporal reference. For example, Piskorz (2012: 184) has to state that the “*mieć*-Plusquam-perfekt” (i.e. the construction with the preterite of *mieć*) can have the meaning either of a pluperfect or of an ordinary past tense. If one looks at her sample

sentences, however, it becomes clear that the simultaneous meaning only occurs with an imperfective recipient passive (ibid.: 187).

If one analyses the active and the recipient passive separately, it becomes clear that for the active resultative constructions like (1), the temporal reference is always the same: simultaneity of the state and anteriority of the implied event. For the recipient passive, several cases have to be distinguished.

If the passive participle is formed from an imperfective verb, the construction indicates simultaneity of the event, i.e. the tense of the auxiliary *mieć* indicates the time of the event as past, present or future – cf. (2), (3) and (11), repeated here for convenience:

(2) *twierdzono także, że mam “kupowane” oceny przez moją mamę.*  
 claimed:PST.IMPRS also that I.have bought:IPF grades by my mum  
 ‘it has also been claimed that I **have** my grades “**bought**” by my mother.’

(3) *ciekawa jestem przez ile lat będ[ę] miała wypominane zdarzenia z przeszłości*  
 curious I.am through how.many years I.will have  
 reminded:IPF events from past  
 ‘I am curious for how many years I’ll **be reminded** of these events from the past’

(13) *Komp[uter] [...] miał stawiany 2 razy system od nowa*  
 computer had set:PP:IPF 2 times system from new  
 ‘The computer [...] **got** its system **reloaded** twice.’

(32) *Ciągle mam obiecywane [IPF], że już, już, tuż, tuż teren będzie uporządkowany, a mury chociaż wstępnie zabezpieczone. I tak mijają lata...*  
 ‘Constantly I am **being promised** that now very soon the ground will be fixed and the walls at least provisionally secured. And thus the years pass...’  
 (<http://www.gryfino.info/viewtopic.php?t=4497>)

Consequently, (33) has to be interpreted as a habitual in the present tense and would be mistranslated if a present perfect was used:

(33) *to mamy wpajane od dziecka – wiarę w ludzi*  
 this we.have drilled:IPF from child trust in people  
 ‘this **gets drilled** into us from childhood – trust in people’  
 (<http://forum.interia.pl/internet-kreuje-uczucia-jak-sadzicie-tematy,dId,405204>)

With the resultative recipient passive, the ensuing state exists at the time indicated by the auxiliary, while the implied event precedes it. This is a commonality of all three resultative/stative constructions in the far right column of table 2 (cf. also (5) above).

- (34) [...] 28% *średniej płacy, bo to mają zagwarantowane*  
 28% middle:GEN wage:GEN because this they.have guaranteed:PF  
 ‘[...] 28% of the average wage, because this **is guaranteed** to them’  
 (Sejm minutes, 1998, NKJP)
- (35) *W dyplomie każdy miał wpisane to, co może wykonywać.*  
 in diploma everyone had written:PF this what he.can perform  
 ‘In everyone’s diploma **was written** what they were capable of.’  
 (Sejm minutes, 2001, NKJP)

However, the perfective participle does not necessarily denote anteriority. In sentences like (16) or (36), simultaneity seems to be the more appropriate interpretation:

- (16) *Moja mała miała zrobione zdjęcie jak miała rok.*  
 my small had made:PF photo when she.had year  
 ‘The photo of my little one **was taken** when she was one year old.’
- (36) *gminy w 100% będą miały zrekompensowane wydatki*  
 communities in 100% will have reimbursed:PF expenses  
 ‘The communities will **be returned** 100% of their expenses.’  
 (Sejm minutes, 1998, NKJP)

This temporal ambiguity can be explained by the homonymy between the resultative recipient passive and the perfective non-resultative recipient passive (see table 2). It is comparable to the same ambiguity in the English passive; cf. its stative meaning in (37) vs. its processual meaning in (38):

- (37) *I know what **is written** on the other side. I wrote it.*  
 (Andromeda Romano-Lax, *The detour*, 2012; COCA)
- (38) *a string of “one” and “zero” bits is sent to the encoder and then to the laser driver, and **is then written** on the disk*  
 (P. Asthaa/B. I. Fikelstei, *Rewritable optical disk drive technology*, 1996; COCA)

## 8 Conclusion

Apart from the resultative, which has recently entered descriptive grammars of Polish as a single construction with a voice ambiguity (e.g. Bartnicka et al. 2004: 301, §308; Skibicki 2007: 404), the recipient passive should be envisaged as a relevant element of the Polish voice system as well. Its imperfective variant clearly differs from the resultative in form (the active resultative cannot be formed

from imperfective verbs and does not license temporal adverbials referring to the time of the event) and function (with an imperfective verb the subject cannot be the agent), but also the forms that happen to be homonymous with the active resultative can be better understood if they are treated as separate entities.

Many questions are still unresolved. The diachronic aspect has merely been hinted at: In spite of the lack of sources for the time of the emergence of *mieć* + pp it might be possible to provide better arguments for a borrowing from a contact language or for an independent development. While the construction as such is old, its frequency has probably increased recently in accordance with “a yet wider tendency, namely to prefer human, especially first person subjects where possible” (Strang 1970: 151). Apart from the obvious diaphasic (and diastatic?) markedness of the constructions (which, however, might be different for the recipient passive than for the active resultative), possible diatopic variation, which to my knowledge has not been examined at all, has to be taken into account as well.

## Corpora used

COCA = Davies, Mark. 2008–. *The Corpus of Contemporary American English*. <<http://corpus.byu.edu/coca/>>.

NKJP = Bańko, Mirosław et al. 2008–. *Narodowy korpus języka polskiego*. <<http://nkjp.pl/>>.

ParaSOL = von Waldenfels, Ruprecht/Roland Meyer. 2006–. *A parallel corpus of Slavic and other languages*. <<http://parasolcorpus.org/>>.

PolDi = Meyer, Roland. 2011–. *A Polish diachronic online corpus*. <<http://rhssl1.uni-regensburg.de/SlavKo/korpus/poldi>>.

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