

On the status of Polish adverbs in cross-linguistic perspective.

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I explore the hypothesis that traditional adjectives and adverbs are two “allo-categories”, or in other words, members of the same lexical category *A*. This view, lurking in the literature for some time, has recently become more popular and thus deserves more attention. Baker (2003) argues that there are only three distinct major lexical categories: verb (defined as a category that takes a specifier), noun (the only category that has a criterion of identity, allowing it to bear a referential index) and adjective (a default category, the “elsewhere case”, which appears wherever no more specialized category will do). In this system there is no room for a separate category of adverb. Baker (following Emonds 1976, among others) claims that English adverbs ending in *-ly* or French adverbs ending in *-mente* are really adjectives. He also gives support for the idea of reducing the category of adverb to the category of adjective in non-Indo-European languages. Baker suggests (following Déchaine and Tremblay 1996) that *-ly* (as well as *-mente*) is nominal and expects nominal elements to be found in adverbial modification structures in other languages as well. This is related to and consistent with the view developed for Czech adverbs in Caha and Medova (2007), who suggest that adverbs are a heterogeneous class of adjectives with varying degree of nominal functional structure. They claim that adverbial endings in Czech are always Case endings. Specifically, they provide arguments for treating the adverbial ending *-ě* as a locative Case marker attached directly to an adjectival root.

Following (reference to my previous work) I will explore Polish words traditionally classified as adverbs with the goal to verify their status as an independent lexical category. To this end, I will attempt to reconsider the traditional descriptive observations concerning Polish adverbs in view of the recent generative accounts of the adverb/adjective opposition. Tokarski (2001:149) suggests that the most numerous class of adverbs, i.e. the so called ‘serial adverbs’ formed from adjectives by replacing the adjectival inflectional endings with the ending *-o/-e* and appearing in non-agreeing contexts can be considered in a broader perspective as part of an extended adjectival declension. Looking at the origins of the adjectival declension, he also concludes that current serial adverbs are the old adjectival forms (the so called nominal declension of adjectives as opposed to the later adjectival declension). This can be treated as one of the nominal elements found in Polish adverbs. Other arguments for finding nominal elements come from the secondary predication structures such as canonical resultative constructions or the so-called pseudo-resultatives (the latter term is due to Levinson 2006) illustrated in (1) and (2) respectively:

- (1) (a) Janek pomalował ścianę na biało.
‘John (has) painted the wall white.’
(b) Maria wytarła stół do sucha/na sucho.
‘Mary (has) wiped the table dry.’
- (2) (a) Pokroił cienko chleb.
‘He cut the bread thinly.’
(b) Zawiązała ciasno buty.
‘She tied the shoes tightly.’
(c) Zaplotła ciasno włosy.
‘She braided her hair tightly.’

The above syntactic distribution of adverbs (in combination with a preposition in resultative constructions and alone in pseudo-resultatives) might serve as another argument for their close relationship, and the nominal aspect in them. Apart from resultatives, there are

numerous other cases where traditional adverbs co-occur with prepositions and take different case endings, some of which are listed in (3-6):

(3) *na dobre* ('for good') (cf. *dobrze* 'well'), *na marne* ('vain', 'futile') (cf. *marnie* 'poorly')

(4) *po polsku* ('Polish'), *po rusku* ('Russian'), *po niemiecku* ('German'), etc.

(5) *po ludzku* ('in a human way'), *po piesku* ('in a dog-like manner'), *po cichu* ('silently'),
po prostu ('simply'),

(6) *bez mała* ('almost'), *do czysta* ('completely'), *do syta* ('to satiety'), *od dawna* ('for a long time'), *od nowa* ('anew'), *z bliska* ('from close range'), etc.

In addition, there is a group of words which function as adverbials but whose morphological form is that of an inflected noun in the instrumental case, such as those listed in (7) (after Tokarski 2001):

(7) *czasem* ('sometimes'), *ukradkiem* ('furtively'), *rankiem* ('in the morning'), *dniem* ('during the day'), *nocą* ('at night'), *wieczorem* ('in the evening'), *wiosną* ('in the spring'), *latem* ('in the summer'), *jesienią* ('in the fall'), *zimą* ('in the winter'), *cwalem* ('at a gallop'), *klusem* ('at a trot'), *piorunem* ('in a jiffy'), *gwałtem* ('by force' / 'urgently'), *gromadą* ('together in a crowd'), *siłą* ('by force')

In view of the above facts, it is quite reasonable to follow the "allo-category" approach, where the complementary distribution of adjectives/adverbs suggests that they do indeed are members of the same lexical class. Moreover, Polish data support the "nominal" ingredient in the category of adverbs, which may be captured by postulating nominal functional structure in adverbial contexts. This would lead in the direction of treating adverbs as some sort of a mixed category. Another problem which is also relevant in this context and disappears under the "allo-category" approach is the direction of derivation. As will be demonstrated, Polish facts indicate that it is not always the case that adverbs are derived from adjectives. Quite often the adverb seems to be primary and the adjective assumes the secondary interpretation. In sum, Polish adverbs seem to support the recent tendencies in reducing the number of basic lexical categories. It will also be demonstrated that it is much easier to handle categorical contrasts (adverbs vs. adjectives) in comparative perspective if adverbs and adjectives are in fact the same lexical category.

Selected references:

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