

## The multilayer analysis of prefixes and prepositions in Polish

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### Abstract

The aim of the paper is to investigate a unified structural account of verbal prefixes and their corresponding prepositions in Polish. This analysis is inspired by Tolskaya (2007), who provides an account of Russian prefixes and prepositions, where the division into various syntactic types is correlated with a similar type of distinction in the domain of prepositions.

The account builds on the neoconstructionist approach to syntax (e.g. Ramchand 2008), which assigns interpretative potential to syntax. This is done in the fashion that grammaticalized elements of meaning are associated with structural positions and as a consequence the presence of a given element of meaning (e.g. boundedness) is taken as proof for the existence of a given structure in the derivation.

Following the analyses of prefixes and particles (e.g. Romanova 2004, Svenonius 2004) into lexical and superlexical, the distinction is assigned to two different structural positions at which these elements are derived. Tolskaya (2007) links this distinction with Ramchand's (2008) structural analysis of verb semantics and argument structure, proposing more fine-tuned division into three levels of events, corresponding to the initial, process, and the result subevents. The subtypes of prefixes and prepositions can modify the event on one of these levels.

The multilayer analysis explains the typological differences between languages which make use of verbal particles, prefixes and aspectual PPs to mark perfectivity. In accounts like Svenonius (2004), these are treated as single lexical entries which receive different interpretations by being realised in particular positions of the derivation. In other words, an element such as Polish *prze(z)-* is expected to have the same lexical semantics and differ only in its structural realisation.

- (1) a. *przez* ulicę 'across the street'  
Dzieci szły *przez* ulicę.  
children-Nom go-Past across street  
'The children were walking across the street.'
- b. *przejść* *przez* ulicę / *przejść* ulicę 'walk across the street'  
Dzieci *przeszły* *przez* ulicę / ulicę.  
children-Nom go-Perf-Past across street / street-Acc  
'The children went across the street / crossed the street.'
- c. Dzieci *przeleżały* cały dzień w łóżku.  
children-Nom lie-Perf-Past all day-Acc in bed  
'The children spent all day in bed.'

The interpretation of the sentences in (1) indicates that a unified approach can be maintained for *prze(z)-*. The general interpretation in this case is 'traverse a path', which as a PP receives spatial interpretation (1a), and as a prefix it refers either to a culmination in spatial (1b) or temporal terms (1c). However in many cases the prefix and the corresponding preposition do not have the same phonological form (2) or the same semantics (3), and thus applying a unified account in such cases does not seem to be directly justified.

- (2) a. Zosia *wybiegła* z pokoju z krzykiem.  
Zosia-Nom run-Perf-Past from room with scream  
'Zosia ran out of the room screaming.'

- b. Biegacze wbiegli *na* stadion / *do* szatni.  
runners run-Perf-Past on stadium / into locker room  
'The runners ran onto the stadium / into the locker room.'
- (3) a. Janek *napisał* referat *na* konferencję.  
Janek-Nom prepare-Perf-Past paper-Acc for conference  
'Janek prepared a paper for the conference.'
- b. Student *podał* przykład *po* niemiecku.  
student-Nom give-Perf-Past example-Acc in German  
'The student gave an example in German.'

The possibility of deriving all interpretations of a single prepositional element from one lexical entry is methodologically superior to proposing homophonous entries. However, it appears that it may not be feasible in all cases. A unified account of prefixes and prepositions in the fashion of Tolskaya (2007) when applied to Polish tends to overgeneralize. There seems to be strict division of labour between the prepositional domain and the verbal (prefixes) domain rather than an overlap. We would like to investigate to what extent a unified account of prefixes and corresponding prepositions in Polish is synchronically viable, and to what extent it is a reflection of a diachronic shift into verbal prefixation as a marker of perfectivity.

#### **(Selected) References**

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