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Verb

1. General overview

From the functional point of view, verbs form a class of language units whose classifying connotative properties are the same as their completive properties. In other words, verbs perform the primary function of the main constituent of a sentence (cf. Kuryłowicz 1949; Laskowski 1998b; Zaron 2009). From the morphological perspective, their key categories are that of mood, hierarchically superior for this group of lexemes, and tense. At the most general semantic level, verbs describe states, processes, activities and events (cf. Vendler 1957, 1967; Durst-Andersen 1992: 17–27; Bogusławski 1999). Verbs have classifying accommodating properties with respect to the case (or, in a broader sense, the nominal value), cf. Zuzanna Topolińska (1998), while in terms of their inflectional properties they can be divided into personal and impersonal (based on the category of person) as well as main and defective (literally *improper* in Polish) verbs (based on their synthetic and analytic or solely analytic inflection). Personal verbs have the categories of mood, tense, person, and – in the case of forms based on the now obsolete second past active participle (referred to in Polish as *imiesłów l-owy*, or the *l*-participle) – also number and gender (cf. *pisze*, *idź* v. *spała*, *będzie czytała*, *poszedłby*). Impersonal verbs have the categories of mood and tense (cf. *grzmi*, *trzeba będzie*, *należałoby*). What is more, this class of verbs could be also extended by adding such invariable expressions as *biada*, *huzia*, *trach* (cf. Zaron 2009: 161).

When it comes to defective verbs (predicatives), Roman Laskowski (1998b: 60–61) distinguishes between impersonal and personal forms [there is an overlap between the group thus defined and *uninflected verbs* in Stanisław Jodłowski's description (1971: 83–90), as well as *defective* and *impersonal* verbs identified in the classification by Zygmunt Saloni (1974ab)]. Although not finite forms of verbs, predicatives perform the function of the main constituent of a sentence. They form a heterogeneous class, made up from lexemes such as: *trzeba*, *warto*, *można*; *widać, że_*, *czuć, że_*; *szkoda, że_*, *wstyd, że_*, *pora, żeby_*; as well as certain adverbs that require a complement in the dative when in the predicative function, cf. *Smutno mi.*, *Duszno tutaj.* Personal predicatives include the predicative forms of adjectives that are not inflected for case, e.g. *(po)winien*, *rad*, *kontent*, *wart*, *ciekaw*, *pełen* etc.
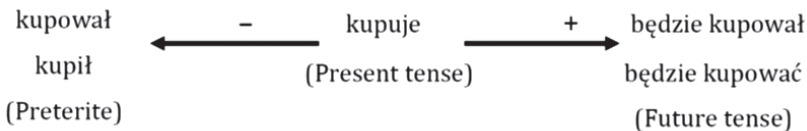
2. Verbal categories

2.1. Mode

Mode is an inflectional, nominative, syntactically independent and non-determining verb category. This means that verbs may take different values of the mood category (they are inflected for mood), such values do not depend on the syntactic context of verbs and they do not determine any grammatical form of any lexeme syntactically linked to the verb in an utterance. The category of mode expresses modality – the attitude of the speaker to the content of the utterance. In Polish, deontic (volitional) modality is expressed by the imperative mode, while epistemic (truth-related) modality – by the subjunctive. The indicative mode is a double-marked element of opposition and indicates neutral modality.

2.2. Tense

The category of tense is nominative, syntactically independent and non-determining. Being a deictic category, it identifies the relation between an event and the temporal coordinates determined by the speech act or by a different moment indicated in the linguistic reality (absolute time). The event may also refer to another event which constitutes the content of a sentence co-occurring in a text (relative time). R. Laskowski (1998a: 177) presented the structure of tenses in the Polish language using a chart where the arrow points to the marked component of the temporal opposition, the minus points to a past event equivalent to the remembered one, while the plus points out to a future, i.e. expected, anticipated event:

kupował				
kupił	←	− kupuje	+ →	będzie kupował
(Preterite)		(Present tense)		będzie kupować
				(Future tense)

The forms of the tense may have an actual meaning (the event takes place at a specific time placed on a time axis) or a non-actual meaning (the event is not related to any specific moment in time). A non-actual event is of habitual (repeatable) or omnitemporal (timeless) nature (Grochowski 1972).

2.3. Aspect

The category of aspect is usually regarded as classifying. Nevertheless, in the case of aspect pairs, some arguments support the view of it being an inflectional category (cf. Bogusławski 2001). On top of this, the category is nominative, and its value is not dependent on the syntactic context of the verb. From the perspective of aspect, verbs may be divided into perfective and imperfective. Aspect manifests itself in two ways: by suffixes, cf. *zapisać – zapisywać*, and prefixes, cf. *pisać – napisać*. Certain verbs, such as *móc, musieć*, do not have their perfective counterparts (*imperfectiva tantum*), while others, e.g. *uszcznąć, uświerknąć* lack the imperfective forms (*perfectiva tantum*). A certain group of verbs is treated as double-aspect lexemes, e.g. *abdykować*. Perfective and imperfective verbs differ in terms of the range of

forms they may take. Perfective verbs do not have present tense forms, and they do not create the forms of the future compound tense. By contrast, imperfective verbs have no present tense forms and their future tense forms are analytic. What is more, active adjectival participles and contemporary adverbial participles (transgressives, *imiesłów przysłówkowy współczesny* in Polish) cannot be created from perfective verbs, while no anterior adverbial participles (*imiesłów przysłówkowy uprzedni*) can be derived from imperfective verbs.

2.4. Voice

Voice is a grammatical category used to signal the differences in terms of diathesis, i.e. the differences in the hierarchical order of syntactic positions. In an unmarked order, the form signifying the agent fills the position of the subject and the name of the object or the outcome of the activity fills the position of the object, e.g. *Jan napisał list*. A sentence constructed in this way is an active voice sentence. If the hierarchy is reversed, a passive voice sentence is produced – the position in the nominative case is taken by the names of the objects of an activity, e.g. *List napisany przez Jana*. The passivisation only applies to transitive verbs with objects in accusative or dative, as well as to verbs that denote governing, managing something and require a complement in the instrumental case e.g. *Instytut był kierowany przez dyrektora*. There is a lot of internal diversity where it comes to the structures that contain the segment *się* (cf. Bogusławski 1977). Only some of them may be considered as reflexive, where *się* takes the position of direct object while the agent and object of an activity are the same, e.g. *Jan się skaleczył.*, or as middle voice structures, where the object of an activity is the apparent subject of the sentence (expressed through the reflexive voice), even though it is actually much closer to the passive voice object, e.g. *Kura gotuje się na wolnym ogniu.*

2.5. Person

Person is a category inherent to verbs, nouns and pronouns (cf. Topolińska 1967). In the case of verbs, this is an inflectional, syntactically dependent, non-determining category set out by the subject of the sentence. By contrast, in the case of nouns and pronouns, this category is classifying, syntactically independent, but determining. Being a deictic category, it is used to identify the participants of a situation referred to in an utterance in relation to the participants of the act of speech (the speaker and the listener). There is a group of verbs that are not inflected for person, cf. *słychać*, *świtać*, *trzeba*. Some forms of personal verbs are impersonal: these include the infinitive, past impersonal, participles, gerund.

3. Semantic properties of verbs

The semantic classifications of Polish verbs are either based on the analysis of the types of situations described by verbs (cf. Laskowski 1998a: 152–157) or take account, in terms of their meaning-related description, of the syntactic positions implied by the verbs and the functions thereof (cf. Zaron 2009: 52–88).

The classification proposed by R. Laskowski is based on the concept of Zeno Vendler (1967) and the findings made with regard to the Russian language by Elena Paducheva (Падучева 1996). It distinguishes between the seven semantic types of verbs "characterised by

the different development of the situation over time and the type of the situation described by a sentence containing a given verb" (Laskowski 1998a: 153). The classification criterion is based on the presence of variable situations characterised as 'dynamics', 'change to state', 'telicity' and 'control' or the lack thereof:

	States	Events	Activities	Processes	Activities	Accidents	Acts
Dynamics	–	+	+	+	+	+	+
Change to state	–	–	–	+	+	+	+
Telicity	–	–	–	+	+	–	–
Control	–	–	+	–	+	–	+

(after: Laskowski (1998a: 156))

The classification criterion adopted by Z. Zaron relies on the number of syntactic positions which enter into specific relations with the predicate and the qualitative differences between them. It distinguishes between the six basic types of relations with the verbal predicate: agentive, objective, thematic, addressative, instrumental, and locative. On this basis, she distinguishes between the six basic semantic functions of syntactic positions, and, in consequence, the two large verb classes further subdivided into subclasses: class I is made of predicates which name properties (predicates of states and becoming), while class II is made of correlation predicates (of experience, mental, volitional, of contact, movement and action). Zaron's classification relies on her previous findings (cf. Zaron 1980) and on the proposals put forward by Wallace Chafe (1970) and Andrzej Bogusławski (1974), while the inventory of semantic roles is partially borrowed from the work by John Fillmore (1968), and partially based on the semantic functions developed by Igor Melchuk (Мельчук 1974) and adopted by Jurij Apresyan (Апресян 1974).

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