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Polish and English compound words

1. Definitions of english compound words

We will start with several definitions of compounds from different sources. The following definitions slightly differ, which does not specify the meaning of a compound.

a) "Compounding is a process of combining lexical categories (nouns, adjectives, verbs, prepositions). With very few exceptions the resulting compound word is a noun, a verb or adjective."   (O'Grady 1996:151)

In this definition it is said that compounds consist of lexical categories such as nouns, adjectives, verbs, prepositions. However, Fromkin and Rodman [1993] say that an article may be a lexical category. This is why this definition is not satisfactory.

b) "Compound words are formed by stringing together other words. There is no limit on the kind of combinations that occur in English."

(Fromkin and Rodman 1993:53)

Here, according to Fromkin and Rodman, a compound consists of words. They give the definition of a word. They say that it is a free sound-meaning lexical item, which can be monomorphemic or complex, for example: *boy, boys*. However, Quirk [1998] gives another definition of a 'word'. He distinguishes content words such as: nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, and grammatical words like: conjunctions, prepositions, articles, pronouns; taking only articles we see that they do not form compounds. This definition, should specify what words it includes.

c) "A compound is a unit consisting of two or more bases."   (Quirk 1998:444)

According to Quirk a compound consists of bases. This definition says that a base is a lexeme (or a morpheme) from which another complex lexeme is formed. For example, the word *book* is a base because we can still add a suffix to it to form the word *books*. However, this definition will not work in case of the compound *bullseye*, where *bulls* is not a base because we will not add any affix to it.

d) "Compounding is a very 'natural' language mechanism of putting 'words' together — two or more lexical items, representing the major syntactic categories N, V, A (sometimes also Adverb, Pronoun, Particle)."

(Szymanek 1998:37)

However, this definition is not sufficient, either because compounds (i) must be distinguished from syntactic phrases (ii).

i) *blackboard*   ii) *black board*
   blackbird   *black bird*
   greenhouse   *green house*

This definition should be more precise about the way in which Lexical items are put together.

e) "Compounding is a process of word formation of composition, a linguistic expression that consists of at least two free morphemes or morpheme constructions: *bath + room, refrigeration (+) mechanic.*"

(Bussmann 1996:91)

Bussmann says that a compound consists of at least two free morphemes, but he does not say what the relations between these forms should be.

f) "Compounding, or composition, is, roughly speaking, the process of putting two words together to form a third."   (Bauer 1983:11)

Bauer says that a compound consists of only two words. However, Szymanek [1998] shows the property of endocentric nominal compounds which is recursiveness. Due to recursiveness endocentric compounds may reach monstruous length and complexity. For example:

vacuum cleaner
vacuum cleaner repair
vacuum cleaner repair shop
vacuum cleaner repair shop supplies, etc.

Bauer bases her definition on 'words' which are put together to form a compound. Unfortunately, the definition of the term 'word' is also unclear. I have mentioned above that Quirk regards articles as grammatical words.

g) "Compounding is a term used widely in descriptive linguistic studies to refer to a linguistic unit which is composed of elements that function independently in other circumstances."   (Crystal 1992:70)

Crystal's definition is not clear. He does not specify 'elements' in his definition.

h) "Compounding is the combination of two free forms, or words that have an otherwise independent existence."   (Adams 1973:30)

In this definition Adams does not clarify the relations which exist between these free forms or words. He also treats compounds as those which consist of only two elements.

i) "The simplest possible compound consists of two underived lexemes which are referred to as a modifier and its head (it determines the category of the en-

tire word). Compounds are generally right-headed in English, which means that in *blackboard*, for instance, *board* is the head, while *black* functions as its modifier."

(Szymanek 1998:37)

This definition is not precise. It says that at least two underived lexems are required to form a compound. However, the compound *sportsman* consists of a derived (*sports*) and an underived (*man*) lexeme.

In my opinion the definition which seems the best from the above is the one presented by Crystal. It says that a compound is composed of elements which exist independently in a language. I said in my comment on that definition, that it is unclear. However, no one has given the definition which would embrace all instances of compounds. Many definitions do not encompass certain compounds. This one at least does not exclude some. Of course, it is very general but compounding itself is quite difficult to define and describe.

2. Definitions of Polish compound words

Polish compound words are very complex. They are divided into three major types. Every type possesses certain characteristic features which differentiate it from the others. Grala [1973:275] presents the following definition of Polish compound words:

> "The compound word is a construction consisting of two or more indepen-
> dent words which are understood as one lexical unit."

We can give the following examples:

żywopłot   *siarkowodór*

Both elements of Polish compound words can exist as independent words. However, in such a construction they are treated as one lexical unit. The definition I have shown above overlaps with the general definition of an English compound word. Thus, like in English, it seems very general and does not take into account all the details which are very important in case of Polish compound words.

First, before I concentrate on the comparison of English and Polish compound words, I will show differences which exist between Polish compound words.

The division is well presented by Grzegorczykowa [1998]. According to her, compound words are divided into: compounds and concretions. The definition of compounds is similar to the one I have presented above. It is very general. Grzegorczykowa [1998] says that concretions have no interfixes (the existence of interfixes — internal elements was characteristic of compounds) and no suffixes. Concretions undergo declension, however, their internal elements do not change, for example:

majster-klepka → majsterklepki
mysikrólik → mysikrólika

The second element in these two concretions differs, but not the first one (*majster* and *mysi* are the same in both cases).

Grzegorczykowa [1979] gives examples which indicate that in some cases the first element of a concretion undergoes declension, which results in the change of the first element, for example:

Białystok → do Białegostoku
Wielkanoc → około Wielkiejnocy

Doroszewski and Wieczorkiewicz [1972] present one more type of Polish compound words. They divide them into: compounds, concretions and iuxtapositions. Doroszewski and Wieczorkiewicz [1972] give their definition of compounds. They say that the compound has such internal elements like -o-, -i-, -y-. These elements join two words into one. The choice of the element depends on the part of speech of the first word, for example:

nosorożec   *dusigrosz*   *męczydusza*

The iuxtaposition, unlike compounds and concretions, is not written as one word, for example:

Zielona Góra   *Zielone Świątki*

Kopcińska [1993] gives some other examples of iuxtapositions:

maszyna do pisania   chustka do nosa

One characteristic feature which binds compounds, concretions and iuxtapositions is that they all refer to one concrete object, although their internal structure may be different.

Differences and similarities between Polish compounds, concretions and iuxtapositions and English compound words will be shown later in this chapter.

3. Wordiness of a compound word

The characteristic feature of English and Polish compound words is that they are both more 'word-like' than syntactic phrases.

3.1. Interrupted forms

Marton [1973] says that compound words are indivisible units and their components can not be separated by any interviewing elements. Thus, while the nominal phrase

ten drewniany, z żelaznymi podporami most (this wooden bridge with iron props)

is grammatical, the complex

*ten obóz przeznaczony dla ludności cywilnej, koncentracyjny (przeznaczony dla ludności cywilnej = destined for the civilian population)

is unacceptable.

*bar bardzo mleczny (bar mleczny = milk bar, bardzo = very)

*obóz całkowicie koncentracyjny (obóz koncentracyjny = concentration camp, całkowicie = completely)

The same situation concerns English compound words. Thus we will not find compound words like:

*garden **big** city → garden city*
very small talk → small talk

3.2. One or separated

Unlike in Polish, English spelling is not decisive in classifying a lexical item of a compound word. The constituent elements in an English compound word may be spaced off or written as a single word and it will not change the syntactic function of this word. Willim and Mańczak-Wohlfeld [1997] give their example, which illustrates it:

boyfrien   boy-friend   boy friend

Obviously, this situation does not concern every English compound word. We can find many examples which do not undergo this change.

In the Polish language the situation is different. For example, the compound word:

Białystok

when spaced off, changes its syntactic function and becomes a phrase:

biały stok (white slope)

What is more, one of the most important criterion which helps to differentiate compounds and concretions from iuxtapositions is whether the lexical unit is written as one word or not. Doroszewski and Wieczorkiewicz [1972] talk about the change of meaning when the compound is spaced off, for example:

Wielkanoc
białagłowa

and

wielka noc
biała głowa

However, an increasing influence of English may introduce some irregularities into Polish. Willim and Mańczak-Wohlfeld [1997] say that the spelling of some recent words adopted to Polish grammar may be different from other examples. English

business woman

is written in Polish as:

businesswoman, bizneswoman or *business woman*

and these three words mean exactly the same, although in two cases they are spaced off.

3.3 Plurality

Adams [1973] says that plurality is an important feature, which may distinguish English compound words from free phrases. To prove it he gave an example:

tear gas (= 'gas which causes tears')

The first element: *tear* is singular, although it has the meaning of plural in the compound word.

The same may be observed in Polish. In the example:

> *grzybobranie*

the first element seems to be in singular. If we made it plural, we would receive

> **grzybówbranie*,

which is incorrect. Thus, although here the idea is plural, the first element is in singular.

In English the plural -*s* is generally attached to the second element, for example:

blackboards	*high schools*
TV shows	*rattlesnakes*

However, there are instances when it is affixed to the first element:

jobs-program	*ladies-in-waiting*
reservations desk	*sisters-in-law*

In Polish everything depends on the type of a compound word:
— In compounds the second element receives plural -*s*, for example:

> *korkociąg → korkociągi*
> *noworodek → noworodki*
> *dwudziestolatki → dwudziestolatki*
> *nosorożec → nosorożce*
> *starodruk → starodruk*
> *żywopłot → żywopłoty*

— An interesting situation concerns iuxtapositions. We can find examples where plural is marked on both elements, for example:

> *łódź parowa → łodzie parowe*
> *mechanik samochodowy → mechanicy samochodowi*
> *złodziej kieszonkowy → złodzieje kieszonkowi*

Thomson and Martinet [1996] say that the same situation applies to English compound words in which the first element is *man* or *woman*, for example:

> *man driver → men drivers*
> *woman driver → women drivers*

iuxtapositions, which have an additional linking element *'do'* have only the first element with a plural marker:

> *proszek do pieczenia → proszki do pieczenia*
> *guma do żucia → gumy do żucia*
> *krem do golenia → kremy do golenia*

— In the following Polish concretions the second element is made plural:

zamążpójście → *zamążpójścia*
duszpasterz → *duszpasterze*

In case of English appositional compound words (appositional compound words are reversible) either element may be plural on condition that it is second in a compound word, for example:

boy servant → *boy servants*
servant boy → *servant boys*
girl slave → *girl slaves*
slave girl → *slave girls*

In English, however, there is a possibility to affix plural -*s* either to the first or the second element (no change of the word order is required). Mańczak-Wohlfeld [1996] says that compound words with the second element ful become plural in both ways:

spoonful → *spoonsful* or *spoonfuls*
handful → *handsful* or *handfuls*

I have not noticed the above situation in Polish compound words:

beczkowóz → *beczkowozy* but not **beczekwóz*
powieściopisarka → *powieściopisarki* but not **powieścipisarka*
gradobicie → *gradobicia* but not **gradówbicie*

In Polish there exist compound words which occur only in plural:

koloniowczasy   *Zielone Świątki*

I have not noticed the above situation in English.
In English, however, as Mańczk-Wohlfeld [1996] says, there exist compound words whose last element is a mass noun and so these compound words do not form plural:

sunshine   *homework*

I have not noticed the above situation in Polish.

Powyższy opis jest tylko częścią pracy, w której zająłem się problematyką wyrazów złożonych zarówno w języku polskim, jak i języku angielskim. Moim celem było pokazanie problemów, które występują przy klasyfikacji angielskich wyrazów złożonych. Problemy te wynikają z braku definicji, która określiłaby dokładnie, czym są angielskie wyrazy złożone. Definicje, które przedstawiłem w rozdziale 1, są niedokładne, nie obejmują niektórych wyrazów złożonych lub są zbyt ogólne. Częściowo problemy te są rezultatem tego, iż w wielu definicjach pojawia się słowo 'wyraz'. Niestety w gramatyce języka angielskiego definicja słowa 'wyraz' też nie jest dokładnie sprecyzowana. W rezultacie otrzymujemy definicję, która sama w sobie nie jest precyzyjna.

W rozdziale 2 przedstawiłem definicje polskich wyrazów złożonych. Zasadniczą różnicą między polskimi a ich angielskimi odpowiednikami jest fakt, iż w języku polskim mamy do czynienia z trzema rodzajami wyrazów złożonych: złożeniami, zrostami i zestawieniami, w języku angielskim podział taki nie występuje.

W rozdziale 3 przedstawiłem jedynie niektóre zagadnienia, jakimi zajmowałem się, porównując polskie i angielskie wyrazy złożone.

W podrozdziale 3.1 zająłem się jedną z najbardziej istotnych cech wyrazów złożonych, ich nierozerwalnością. Zarówno w języku polskim, jak i w języku angielskim, cecha ta obowiązuje, tzn. nie wolno umieszczać innego wyrazu lub wyrazów między dwoma elementami wyrazu złożonego, np. zapis *bar bardzo mleczny* jest błędny, gdyż *bar mleczny* to wyraz złożony. Cecha ta odróżnia wyrazy złożone od wyrażeń składających się z dwu wyrazów.

W podrozdziale 3.2 pisałem o sposobie zapisywania wyrazu złożonego. W języku angielskim zdarza się, że ten sam wyraz złożony może być zapisany jako jeden wyraz, jako dwa oddzielne wyrazy lub jego dwa elementy mogą być oddzielone myślnikiem. Nie dotyczy to oczywiście wszystkich przypadków. W języku polskim takiej dowolności już nie ma. Polskie wyrazy złożone mają praktycznie tylko jeden rodzaj pisowni. Sposób zapisania ma duże znaczenie przy określaniu, z jakim wyrazem złożonym mamy do czynienia, lub czy jest on wreszcie wyrazem złożonym czy jedynie wyrażeniem składającym się z dwu wyrazów; charakterystyczną cechą polskich zestawień jest to, że w pisowni występują jako dwa osobne wyrazy. Oczywiście język angielski ma coraz większy wpływ na gramatykę wielu języków, także języka polskiego. Dlatego też w języku polskim można zaobserwować wyrazy pochodzenia angielskiego, które zapisuje się na kilka sposobów, np. *businesswoman, bizneswoman* lub *business woman*.

W podrozdziale 3.3 pisałem o liczbie mnogiej. Sposób, w jakim liczba mnoga występuje w polskich i angielskich wyrazach złożonych, jest dla nich charakterystyczny i odróżnia je od innych wyrażeń. Charakterystyczną cechą dla wyrazów złożonych w obu językach jest to, iż oba elementy wyrazu złożonego mogą wystąpić w liczbie pojedynczej nawet wówczas, gdy odnoszą się do liczby mnogiej, np. *tear gas, grzybobranie*. W języku angielskim, głównie drugi wyraz występuje w liczbie mnogiej. Jednak w liczbie mnogiej może wystąpić także pierwszy wyraz lub oba wyrazy. Sytuacja ta dotyczy także języka polskiego. W polskich wyrazach złożonych tworzenie liczby mnogiej zależy od rodzaju wyrazu złożonego, z jakim mamy do czynienia.

Porównanie polskich i angielskich wyrazów złożonych wydaje się bardzo interesujące, zważywszy na fakt, że jakiekolwiek porównania ich były do tej pory cząstkowe i nie obejmowały wszystkich zagadnień. Tego typu porównania mogą pomóc nam zrozumieć zasady funkcjonowania języka polskiego.

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