

The verb's semantics and its compatibility with temporal adverbials in Polish

The aim of the present paper is to assess the degree of correlation between the semantic properties of Polish verbs and their compatibility with temporal adverbials. We will also examine the role of temporal adverbials in the aspectual interpretation of Polish sentences.

The semantic classification of Polish verbs adopted in the paper is based on the verb typology proposed in Laskowski (1996, 1998). Reference will frequently be made to the aspectual classification of English predicates outlined in Vendler (1967). Polish temporal adverbials will be divided into several semantic types (cf. Grzegorzczkova 1975, Laskowski 1998, 2003, 2005), including adverbial expressions of duration (*godzinę* 'an hour', *przez godzinę* 'for an hour'), completive (i.e. time-span) adverbials (*w ciągu dwóch lat* 'within two years', *w dwie godziny* 'in two hours') as well as adverbials denoting duration of the result state (*na dwie godziny* 'for two hours'). For each type (and subtype) of the temporal adverbials, its co-occurrence with verbs of a given semantic class will be examined (see examples in 1-4). The analysis will be carried out separately for perfective and imperfective verbs (cf. 3 and 4).

It will be shown that when discussing the compatibility of Polish temporal adverbials with a verb predicate, we cannot focus only on the general type of the event denoted by the predicate (i.e. its aspectual class or Aktionsart), as in Vendler's classification. It is often indispensable to take into account fine-grained details of the verb's semantics, such as the controllability and directionality of the eventuality denoted by the verb or the possibility of setting a temporal limit to the result state. This is exemplified in (5) and (6) for the result state (RS) adverbials occurring with verbs of destruction and construction.

Moreover, the compatibility of verb classes with a particular temporal adverbial is determined both by the general type of the adverbial (i.e. durative, completive or result-state one) and by the length of the time span denoted by it (see 7).

Ambiguity will be exemplified (as in 8 and 9), concerning the aspectual interpretation of sentences containing imperfective verb forms and durative adverbials (*przez kilka godzin* 'for a few hours'). Sentences (8) and (9), for instance, are ambiguous as to whether the aim of the action has been reached or not.

It will be indicated (as in 10 and 11) that the semantic interpretation of some temporal expressions in Polish may change, depending on the semantic class of the main verb and on its grammatical (perfective or imperfective) aspect.

1. Piotr spał godzinę/ przez godzinę / *na godzinę/ *w godzinę.
'Peter slept-impf. an hour/for an hour/*for an hour (RS)/ *in an hour.'
2. Rozmawiałem z nim godzinę/ przez godzinę/ *na godzinę/ *w godzinę.
'I talked-impf. to him an hour/ for an hour/ *for an hour (RS)/ *in an hour.'
3. Uporządkowałam dokumenty *godzinę/ przez godzinę/ na godzinę/ w godzinę.
'I put-pf. (the) documents in order *an hour/ for an hour/ for an hour (RS)/ in an hour.'
4. Porządkowałam dokumenty godzinę/ przez godzinę/ *na godzinę/ *w godzinę.
'I put-impf. (the) documents in order an hour/ for an hour/ *for an hour (RS)/ *in an hour.'
5. Miasto zostało zniszczone przez najeźdźców *na kilka lat.
'The city was destroyed-pf. by (the) invaders for several years (RS).'
6. Sporządził umowę *na dwa dni.
'He drew-pf. up a contract for a few days (RS).'
7. Piotr przez dwie minuty/ *kilka godzin wstawał z krzesła.
'Peter for two hours/*several hours rose-impf. from (the) chair.'
8. Porządkowałam dokumenty (przez) kilka godzin.
'I put-impf. (the) documents in order (for) a few hours.'
9. Długo dawałem ci tę książkę.
'For a long time I gave-impf. you this book.'
10. Zbudował dom w trzy lata.
'He built-pf. (a) house in three years.'
11. Znalazł klucz w dziesięć minut.
'He found-pf. (the) key in ten minutes.'

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