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Idioms and aspect in Polish



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RELEVANT BACKGROUND ON ASPECT
IN POLISH

Most verbs in Polish have
both perfective and
imperfective variants

pisać-IPFV – napisać-PFV
'to write'

PERFECTIVE

pisaćIPFV – **n**apisaćPFV
'to write'

błyskaćIPFV – błys**n**ąćPFV
'to flash'

IMPERFECTIVE

primary imperfective

pisać 'to write'

secondary imperfective

podpisać --> podpisywać
'to sign'

wbić --> wbijać
'to hammer'

There is no single
dedicated perfective
marker in Polish.

DO-

WY-

OD-

PRZE-

POD-

ZA-

STAWIAĆ
'TO PUT STH'

NA-

ZE-

ROZ-

W-

Are aspectual prefixes the
morphological exponents
of a perfective aspectual
operator?

There can be more than
one
exponent of aspect
within a single verb.

[po- [pod- ~~v~~pis] -yw(a)]
'DIST- LP- root of 'write' -SI'.

The exponents of
inflectional categories
normally occur
once per clause
and
are in complementary
distribution
with other members of the
same category

We follow Tatevosov (2020): aspectual operators PFV and IPFV are computed at the level of AspP but aspectual morphology merges lower. PFV or IPFV operators are computed on the basis of the information provided by the topmost piece of structure spelled out as „verbal morphology”.

THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

The issue

Slavic aspectual morphemes do not form a uniform class and different scholars provided evidence for the distinction between **lexical** prefixes and **superlexical** prefixes.

(Isačenko 1962; Petr 1986; Babko-Malaya 1999; Dickey 2000; Ramchand 2004; Romanova 2004, 2006; Svenonius 2004; Di Sciullo and Slabakova 2005; Arsenijević 2006; Biskup 2007, 2012; Richardson 2007; Szucsich 2007, 2014; Gehrke 2008; Tatevosov 2008; Lehmann 2009; Žaucer 2009, 2012; Markova 2011; Gvozdanović 2012; Wiland 2012; Biskup and Zybatow 2015 among others).

Standard criteria used to distinguish between lexical and superlexical prefixes

LEXICAL PREFIXES	SUPERLEXICAL PREFIXES
▪ alter the argument structure of a verbal predicate ▪ cause idiosyncratic changes in the lexical meaning of a verbal predicate ▪ impose idiosyncratic restrictions on the choice of arguments of a verbal predicate ▪ have secondary (derived) imperfective counterparts – YW(A) suffix ▪ do not stack over other prefixes	▪ do not change the argument structure ▪ cause predictable changes in the meaning of a verbal predicate ▪ usually disallow secondary imperfectivization ▪ can stack over other prefixes

Standard assumption

According to Romanova (2004) and Svenonius (2004), among others, these facts suggest that lexical and superlexical prefixes occupy different syntactic positions with respect to vP:

- lexical prefixes are *vP-internal* and
- superlexical prefixes are *vP-external*.

However, it is still debated which prefixes are lexical and which are superlexical and whether this division into these two classes can be maintained.

Opinions are divided ...

- Some scholars claim that some or even most superlexical prefixes are in fact VP-internal (lexical):
 - Babko-Malaya (1999) claims explicitly that repetitive *pere-* is a lexical prefix.
 - Žaucer (2010, 2012) argues that perdurative and cumulative/saturative prefixes are VP-internal (see also Arsenijević 2006, 2007; Žaucer 2008).
 - Biskup (2019) argues that cumulative and distributive prefixes are VP-internal.

Opinions are divided ...

- Some scholars claim that some prefixes can be both lexical and superlexical
 - Schoorlemmer (1995) has advocated a split approach to Russian perduratives whereby some of them would be internal and some external.
 - Milićević (2004) argues for the existence of both lexical and superlexical *iz-*, *na-* and *po-*.

Opinions are divided ...

- Some scholars say that the division into lexical and superlexical prefixes is insufficient because there are also intermediate prefixes.
 - Tatevosov (2008) argues for a more articulated hierarchical structure, whereby there is a separate projection for *intermediate prefixes*, distinct from lexical and superlexical prefixes. These are for example: completive *do-*, repetitive *pere-*.
 - Markova (2011) assumes that superlexical prefixes do not form a uniform class and they should be subdivided into inner and outer.

What is also debated is ...

- the status of secondary imperfective morphology (typically -YW(a)).

Opinions are divided ...

- -YV(A) is low in the structure in the part describing the eventuality description (Arsenijević 2006, Antonyuk-Yudina, Arsenijević, Quaglia and Simonović 2020)
- -YV(A) is a morphological exponent of the aspectual imperfective operator IPFV (Filip 2005)
- -YV(A) is the head of AspP (Ramchand 2008)
- -YV(A) in Russian merges in a position internal to vP but it is not interpreted as IPFV in the position where it is merged, IPFV and -YV(A) are located at a distance (Tatevosov 2015, 2020)

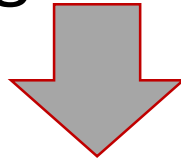
[... IPFV ... [... v ... [... **YV(A)** ...]]]

In this talk...

We intend to contribute to this dispute by examining the constraints on the use of aspectual morphology in VP idioms in Polish.

How can idioms help us to shed light on this debate?

- Marantz (1997:208): “[t]he syntactic head that projects agents defines a locality domain for special meanings”. In other words, “the syntactic head introducing the external argument (Agent) is the boundary delimiting the domain of special idiomatic meanings”.



- Assuming that idioms are stored in the lexicon/encyclopedia as VPs, they can serve as a useful criterion allowing us to test which aspects of our linguistic knowledge are vp/VP-internal and which are vP/VP-external.

For example, Kędzierska et al. (2018):

- it is relatively easy to change the tense or add modal verbs and negation to VP idioms because these modifications concern higher functional projections – external to vP.
- it is very difficult to change the number of the NP object or modify it by using adjectival or relative clause modification because these modifications concern VP internal elements.

Our study

GOAL: We use VP idioms as a testing ground for investigating which aspectual morphemes are “vP-VP”-internal and which are “vP-VP”-external.

Material: Polish idioms and aspect

VP idioms in Polish constitute a perfect testing ground for this set of questions because they are aspectually heterogenous;

by default perfective:

rozprostować kości 'to stretch one's bones' (lit. to stretch one's bones)

by default imperfective:

klepać biedę 'to be poor' (lit. pat poverty).

Material and procedures

Step 1

- We created an initial list of 80 VP idioms (selected from The PWN Dictionary of Polish idioms, Drabik, Sobol and Stankiewicz 2006).
- While selecting idioms we included only those whose figurative paraphrases are eventive to make sure that the selected idioms are truly VP and not DP idioms.
 - For example, the idiomatic phrase *wsadzić kij w mrowisko* literally means ‘to put a stick into an anthill’ and its figurative interpretation is to make somebody angry by bringing up some controversial or unpleasant issue.

Procedure

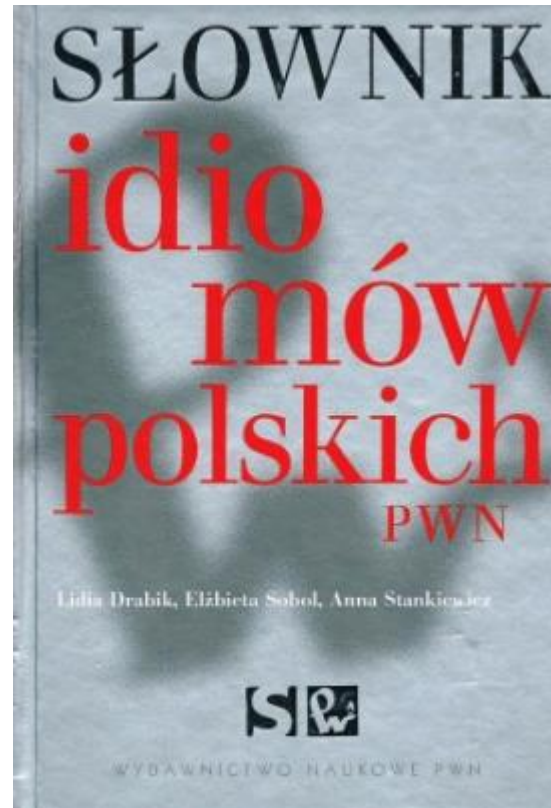
Step 2

We divided them into

- those whose basic variant is **perfective** (henceforth referred to as *perfective VP idioms*) and
- those whose basic variant is **imperfective** (henceforth referred to as *imperfective VP idioms*).

Criteria used to determine the division into perfective and imperfective VP idioms

- The form used in the dictionary (perfective or imperfective)



Criteria used to determine the division into perfective and imperfective VP idioms

- We checked the lemma frequencies (per million words) of all the forms: basic perfective, secondary imperfective, basic imperfective, potential perfective forms of the basic imperfective using the PELCRA search engine for the National Corpus of Polish (NKJP) (Przepiórkowski et al. 2012), the balanced version (Pęzik 2012).

Criteria used to determine the division into perfective and imperfective VP idioms

- We conducted a questionnaire in which we used all idioms in aspectual pairs and we asked the participants to decide which variant is the basic one and which one is derived.

Która forma: "1" czy "2" jest formą podstawową? Proszę zaznaczyć wybraną formę. *

☐ 1 rozprostowywać kości

☐ 2 rozprostować kości

Criteria used to determine the division into perfective and imperfective VP idioms

- We conducted a questionnaire in which the participants were asked to fill in the missing verbs in the idioms (to test whether the default aspectual form of the verb is perfective or imperfective).

..... z założonymi rękami (używane w sytuacji, kiedy ktoś nic nie robi) *

Tekst krótkiej odpowiedzi

.....

..... korzenie (używane w sytuacji, w której ktoś mieszka w danym miejscu długo i się w związku z tym do tego miejsca przyzwyczaił) *

Tekst krótkiej odpowiedzi

.....

The final list

- After all these tests, we narrowed down the list of perfective and imperfective VP idioms to the ones whose default form was unquestionably perfective or imperfective.
- The final list consisted of 27 perfective and 33 imperfective VP idioms.

PERFECTIVE VP IDIOMS	LITERAL	MEANING
<i>nabrać wody w usta</i>	to take water in the mouth	to keep secret
<i>rozprostować kości</i>	to stretch bones	to stretch one's bones
<i>przymknąć oko</i>	to close eye (a bit)	to turn a blind eye to sth
<i>zacisnąć pasa</i>	to tighten belt	to tighten one's belt
<i>odkryć Amerykę</i>	to discover America	to discover America
<i>wyłożyć karty na stół</i>	to put cards on table	to make things explicit

IMPERFECTIVE VP IDIOMS	LITERAL	MEANING
<i>bujać w obłokach</i>	to rock in the clouds	to dream
<i>klepać biedę</i>	to pat poverty	to be poor
<i>połykać książki</i>	to swallow books	to read a lot
<i>trzymać język za zębami</i>	to hold tongue behind teeth	to keep secret
<i>czuć miętę do kogoś</i>	to feel mint to someone	to be infatuated with sb
<i>pluć sobie w brodę</i>	to spit oneself in chin	to regret

Our research question

- To what extent is it possible to modify the basic perfective and imperfective variants of VP idioms by means of additional aspectual morphology without losing their figurative interpretation?

Focus on perfective VP idioms

Prediction

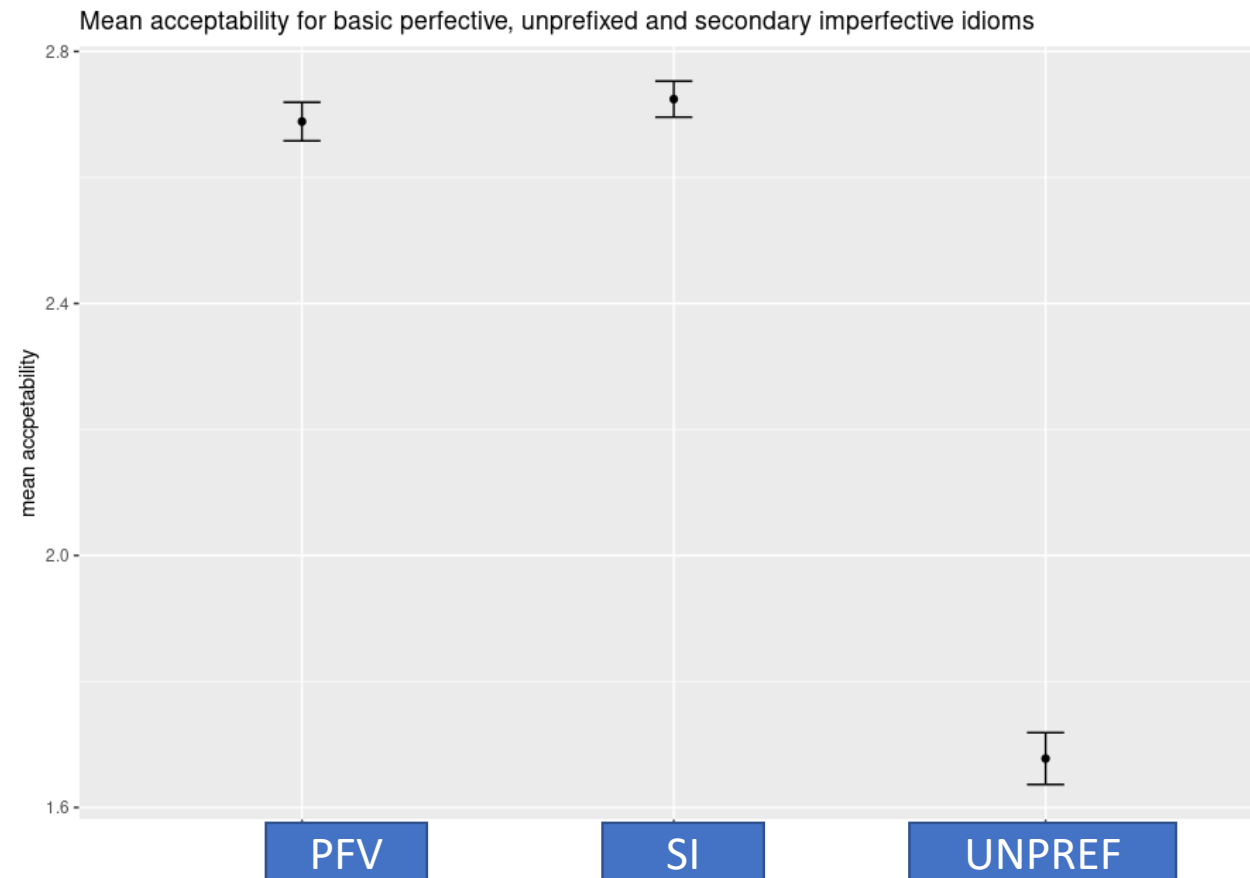
- Assuming that vP is a domain of idiosyncratic meanings, we predict that only lexical prefixes which can result in idiosyncratic (unpredictable) meanings should be part of basic perfective VP idioms.
- It shouldn't be possible to strip off the prefix in perfective VP idioms without losing their figurative meaning.
- Perfective VP idioms should be easily compatible with secondary imperfective morphology.
- If this turns out to be the case, it will serve as strong evidence that secondary imperfective morphology is vP-external.

Lemma frequencies and acceptability rating questionnaire

PERFECTIVE VP IDIOM	WITHOUT A PREFIX	SECONDARY IMPERFECTIVE VARIANT
wyłożyć kawę na ławę ☐ 1 - nieakceptowalne ☐ 2 - średnio akceptowalne ☐ 3 - akceptowalne to put.pfv coffee on table – to make things explicit	rzucić coś na ruszt * ☐ 1 nieakceptowalne ☐ 2 średnio akceptowalne ☐ 3 akceptowalne to throw sth on grate – to eat sth (the basic variant is perfective wrzucić coś na ruszt)	sprzedawać coś na pniu ☐ 1 - nieakceptowalne ☐ 2 - średnio akceptowalne ☐ 3 - akceptowalne the basic variant is perfective sprzedać coś na pniu

Focus on the perfective VP idioms (27 items)

- In an online acceptability rating questionnaire, we tested whether the perfective VP idioms maintain their idiomatic meaning when the prefix is removed or when a secondary imperfective form is created.



Acceptability ratings

The examination of planned contrasts showed that perfective idioms are rated significantly better than their unprefixed counterparts ($\beta = -1.05598$; $t(71.18735) = -11.971$; $p < 0.0001$).

However the acceptability of perfective idioms and their secondary imperfective counterparts did not show significant differences ($\beta = 0.02354$; $t(71.48677) = 0.273$; $p < 0.786$).

Lemma frequencies

The results of the test showed that perfective idioms (mean = 0.2025) are significantly more frequent than their secondary imperfective counterparts (mean = 0.0612); ($t(16.898) = 2.6948$; $p = 0.0154$).

Interim conclusion

Even though basic perfective VP idioms turned out to be statistically significantly more frequent than their secondary imperfective counterparts, there was no significant difference in their acceptability rating scores.

This indicates that our perfective VP idioms are the basic forms and that their secondary imperfective counterparts are derived but they are perceived as very natural.

Interim conclusion

Secondary imperfectivization is a productive vP external morphological operation.

Dropping the prefix in perfective VP idioms resulted in their significantly lower acceptability as compared to the basic perfective forms → these prefixes are part of basic perfective VP idioms and hence they are vP internal.

Focus on imperfective VP idioms

What did we do with imperfective VP idioms?

We tested the compatibility of different classes of apparent superlexical prefixes with our imperfective VP idioms.

Goal

- We wanted to understand the semantic constraints on the (in)compatibility of some classes of superlexical prefixes with imperfective VP idioms.

Study

- To investigate it we used Wiland's (2012) classification of Polish superlexical prefixes.

Wiland's (2012) classes of superlexical prefixes

SUPERLEXICAL PREFIX	EXAMPLE
distributive	<i>porozkładać</i> 'to distribute'
attenuative	<i>poddusić</i> 'stew a bit'
delimitative	<i>poczytać</i> 'to read for a while'
saturative	<i>najeść się</i> 'to eat to the full'
cumulative	<i>naścinać</i> 'to cut a lot of sth'
excessive	<i>przekrzyczeć</i> 'to shout louder than sb'
repetitive	<i>przerobić</i> 'to do sth again'
perdurative	<i>przesiedzieć</i> 'to sit through the length of some event'
completive (additive)	<i>dokroić</i> 'to slice more of sth'
terminative	<i>odśpiewać</i> 'to sing a song from the beginning to the end'

Observation

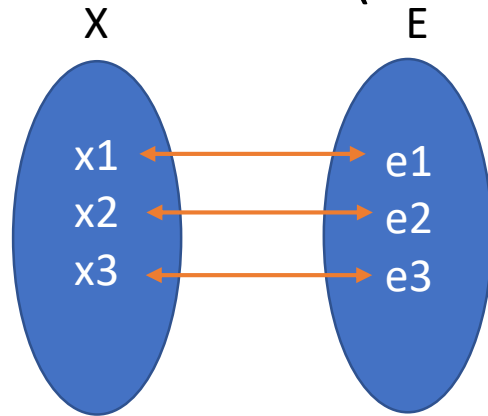
- It turned out that it is possible to add **distributive, delimitative, saturative and perdurative** prefixes to some of the imperfective VP idioms used in our study.
- The remaining superlexical prefixes included in Wiland's (2012) classification, namely the **completive, terminative, repetitive, cumulative, excessive, attenuative** ones turned out to be impossible with imperfective VP idioms used in our study.

**Prefixes compatible with imperfective
VP idioms**

**DISTRIBUTIVE, SATURATIVE, PERDURATIVE,
DELIMITATIVE**

Distributive *po-*: some facts about its semantics

- Distributive *po-* acts on plural events and plural individuals
- It creates a relation of bijection between members of the plural sets of events E and individuals X (see Piñón 2003)



- *po-*'s distributive argument is most typically an internal argument

Basia pootwieraa **okna**.

‘Basia opened each window.’

- but it can also be an external argument

Dzieci pokończyły szkoły.

‘Each child finished schools (i.e., obtained an education).’

Distributive *po-* with an imperfective VP idiom

Wszyscy *po-chowali* *głowę* *w* *piasek*.

all_{NOM} DIST-hide_{PST.3PL} head_{ACC} in sand_{ACC}

‘Everyone hid his/her head in the sand.’ (fig. ‘to bury one’s head in the sand’)

chować głowę w piasek
‘to hide one’s head in the sand’

Distributive *po-* and idioms

In our example, *po*-'s distributive argument is external (*wszyscy* 'all_{NOM}' is not part of the idiomatic VP configuration)

There is no intervention in the VP-internal semantics of an idiom.

Saturative *na-*: some facts about its semantics

Jan *na*pracował się *do utraty sił.*
John *na*-worked REFL till loss of strength

Saturative *na-*: some facts about its semantics

- We account for the semantics of the saturative prefix *na-* by adopting Kagan's (2013, 2015) Scale Hypothesis.

A verbal prefix imposes **a relation between two degrees on a scale**:

(1) one of which is a degree associated with the event

AND

(2) the standard of comparison contributed by the linguistic environment in which the prefix appears (verb, object, temporal expression) or by the prefix itself.

Saturative *na-*: some facts about its semantics

- Saturative *na-* involves a relation between the degree on a scale associated with the event and a degree associated with some agent-oriented contextually relevant standard of comparison (e.g., the level of exhaustion, satisfaction of the agent).
- It imposes a saturation requirement in that the action must reach the upper-bound of the contextually relevant scale (the state of satisfaction, exhaustion of the agent).
- For this reason, verbs with saturative *na-* are compatible with a result phrase *to the full*.

<i>Jan</i>	<i>na</i> pracował	<i>się</i>	<i>do utraty sił.</i>
Jan	na-worked	REFL	till loss of strength

Saturative *na-*

Na-szukał ***się*** ***dziur*** ***w*** ***całym.***

SAT-look_for_{PST.3SG.M} REFL hole_{GEN.PL} in whole

‘He looked for holes in the whole (to the full).’ (fig. ‘to pick holes’)

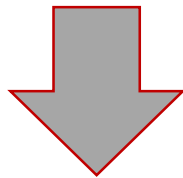
Na-dzielił ***się*** ***włosów*** ***na*** ***czworo.***

SAT-split_{PST.3SG.M} REFL hair_{GEN.PL} in four

‘He split hairs into four parts (to the full).’ (fig. ‘to split hairs’)

Saturative *na-* and idioms

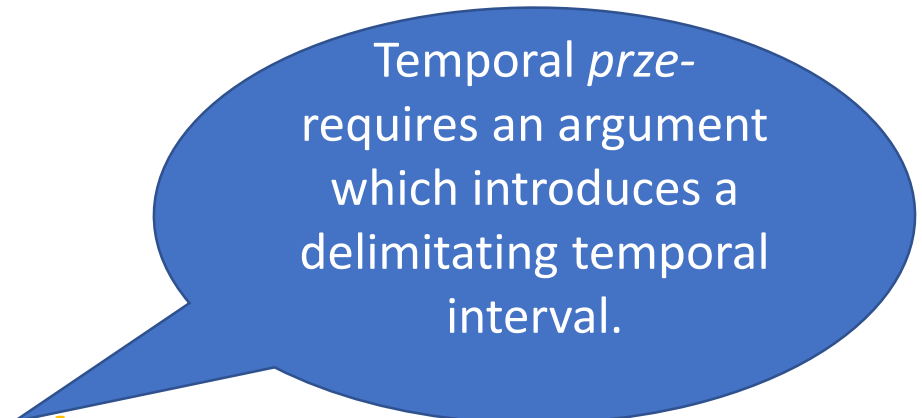
- The saturation requirement of the prefix *na-* is related to the scale associated with the agent (VP-external element), so it is possible to use it with an imperfective idiomatic VP without losing its intended figurative meaning.



There is no intervention with the VP-internal semantics of an idiom.

Perdurative *prze-*: some facts about its semantics

- (1) *Jan siedział.*
Jan sat (was sitting).
- (2) **Jan przesiadział.*
Jan **prze**-sat
- (3) *Jan przesiadział wykład.*
Jan **prze**-sat lecture



Temporal *prze-* requires an argument which introduces a delimitating temporal interval.

Perdurative *prze-*: some facts about its semantics

- A perdurative prefix imposes a relation between two degrees on a scale:
 - (1) one associated with the temporal trace of a process
 - (2) one associated with an additional argument introducing a delimitating temporal interval.
- The prefix *prze-* specifies that the temporal trace of an event is included and reaches the upper bound of the interval provided by a delimitating temporal argument.

Perdurative *prze-*

Prze-leciał

na

opinii

cały ten rok.

PERD-fly_{PST.3SG.M}

on

opinion_{LOC.SG} whole this year_{ACC}

‘He flew on the opinion throughout the whole year.’ (fig. ‘to live on one’s reputation’)

Perdurative *prze-* and idioms

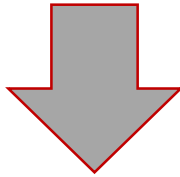
- One may say that because *prze-* changes the argument structure of a verb, it is in fact lexical and not superlexical.

Prze-leciał *na* *opinii* *cały* *ten* *rok.*
PERD-ride[fly]_{PST.3SG.M} on opinion_{LOC.SG} [whole this year]_{ACC}
'He rode on the opinion throughout the whole year.' (fig. 'to live on one's reputation')

- We are inclined to conclude that it is superlexical (VP-external) and it adds its own temporal argument in its own VP-external projection.

Perdurative *prze-* and idioms

- *prze-* is added VP-externally and it measures over a scale introduced by its own temporal argument.



It does not intervene in the semantics of an imperfective VP idiom.

Delimitative *po-*: some facts about its semantics

- The delimitative prefix *po-* is a marker of temporal delimitation. It is often translated with a temporal phrase 'for a while' (see Pinóñ 1994).
- It delimits the temporal trace of an event and specifies that it is short relative to some expectation value.

Delimitative *po-*

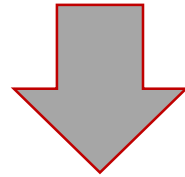
Po-grał *nam na nerwach cały wieczór*
DELIM-play_{PST.3SG.M} us_{DAT} on nerves_{LOC} [whole evening]_{ACC}
i wyszedł zadowolony.

and leave_{PST.3SGM} satisfied

‘He played on our nerves the whole evening and then left satisfied.’
(fig. ‘to get on sb’s nerves’)

Delimitative *po-* and idioms

- it delimits a temporal trace of an (idiomatic) event and it does not alter the semantics of the event itself



It does not intervene in the semantics of an imperfective VP idiom.

Interim conclusion

- Superlexical prefixes are compatible with imperfective VP idioms as long as they measure
 - (i) over the temporal trace of an idiomatic event or over some scale associated with the VP-external material or
 - (ii) distribute over an external argument.

**Prefixes incompatible with imperfective
VP idioms**

CUMULATIVE, ADDITIVE, ATTENUATIVE

Cumulative na-: some facts about its semantics

Cumulative *na-* combines with transitive verbs

nagotował zupy

na-cooked soup.GEN

or with intransitive verbs but then it adds its own argument

*nalatał 'na-flied'

BUT:

nalatał mil

na-flew miles.GEN

(in the latter case the internal argument is a unit of measure)

it measures the amount
of objects that undergo
a change in the course
of the event

Jan *na-gotował* zupy /ziemniaków/*ziemniaka.

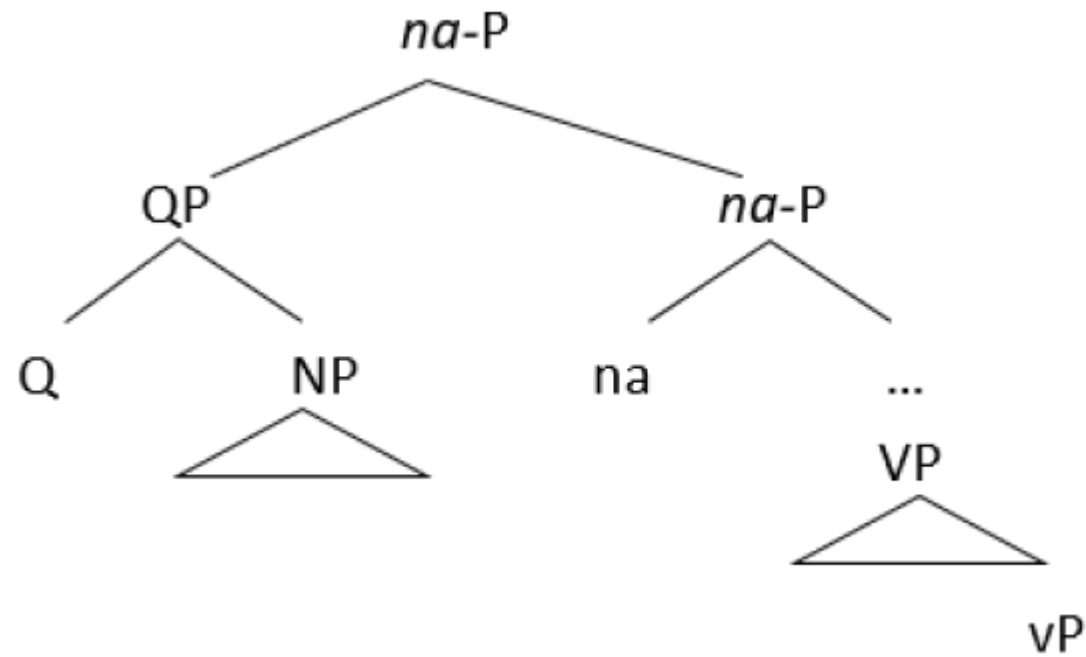
Jan CUM-cook_{PST.3SG.M} soup_{GEN.}/potatoes_{GEN}/potato_{GEN}

‘John cooked a lot of soup/potatoes/*a potato.’

Filip (2005) *na-* serves as an extensive measure function and it affects the referential and quantitative interpretation of the bare nominal argument by **directly measuring the quantity of the involved argument that has a non-specific indefinite meaning.**

Pereltsvaig (2006) claims that the internal argument of a cumulative verb is not a DP but a QP (the object is genitive-marked and it cannot be referential - specific).

- Pereltsvaig (2006) *na-* is a head of a projection merged above VP
- *na-* always selects a QP argument, not a DP argument



Cumulative *na-*

#*Na-budował zamków na piasku.*

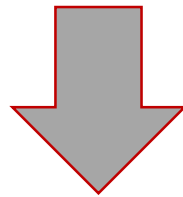
na-build_{PST.3SG.M} castle_{GEN.PL} on sand

lit. 'He built a lot of castles on the sand.'

(intended figurative: *budował zamki na piasku* '(he) built castles in the air')

Cumulative *na*- and idioms

- Cumulative prefixes are incompatible with VP idioms because the internal argument of VP idioms would need to be reinterpreted as a QP in order to satisfy the requirements of cumulative *na*-.



It would be a VP-internal intervention.

Additive *do-*: some facts about its semantics

do-lat

*do-pour*_{PST.3SG.M}

wody

water_{GEN.SG}

Kagan (2015, Chapter 3, Section 1.2)

Predicates with additive *do-* describe a complex event being a sum of a presupposed event and an entailed one.

In the course the presupposed event a particular norm or expectation value (the standard of comparison) fails to be reached. This expectation value is met and the desirable result is achieved at the end of the entailed event. The sum of the two events renders a joint “result”.

Additive *do-*

#On nie miał nic konkretnego do powiedzenia

he NEG have_{PST.3SG.M} nothing specific to say

tylko *do-lať* *wody*.

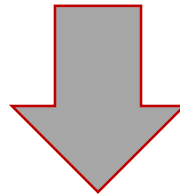
only *do-pour*_{PST.3SG.M} water_{GEN.SG}

‘He did not have anything specific to say and only added water.’

(intended figurative: *lať wodę* ‘(he) beat about the bush’)

Additive *do-* and idioms

- Just like cumulative *na-* verbs, additive *do-* verbs take QPs but not DPs as their arguments (the objects of verbs with additive *do-* have properties of small nominals (QP) in the sense of Pereltsvaig (2006) - the object is genitive-marked and it cannot be referential (specific).
- Additive *do-* prefixes are incompatible with VP idioms because the internal argument of VP idioms would need to be reinterpreted as a QP in order to satisfy the requirements of additive *do-*.



So it is a VP-internal intervention.

Attenuative *pod-*: some facts about its semantics

pod-duszać *mięso*

pod-stew meat

'to stew meat a little bit'

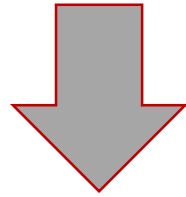
- Attenuative *pod-* is associated with the 'low amount' / 'low degree' meaning and it is often translated by means of *a little, a few*.
- Attenuative *pod-* combines with verbs of gradual change, it applies to the scale contributed by the predicate and it delimits the degree of change of an event.
- It requires that the degree of change does not exceed some contextually specified expectation value.

Attenuative *pod-*

#*Jest chytrusem i pod-dusza każdy grosz.*
be_{PRS.3SG} cunning_person_{INS} and *pod*-pinch_{PRS.3SG} every penny
lit. 'He is very cunning and pinches slightly every penny'
(intended figurative: *dusi każdy grosz* '(he) pinches every penny')

Attenuative *pod-* and idioms

- The attenuative *pod-* is incompatible with imperfective VP idioms because it measures over a scale which is encoded by a verbal predicate.



It is a VP-internal intervention.

SUPERLEXICAL PREFIXES

SEMANTIC CONSTRAINTS ON THEIR COOCURENCE WITH IMPERFECTIVE VP IDIOMS

DISTRIBUTIVE, SATURATIVE, PERDURATIVE, DELIMITATIVE

- (i) measure over the temporal trace of an idiomatic event or
- (ii) over some scale associated with the VP-external material or
- (iii) they distribute over an external argument (no VP internal intervention)

CUMULATIVE, ADDITIVE, ATTENUATIVE

intervene with the intended meaning of VP idioms by measuring over some scale associated with the VP-internal material.

Interesting correlation

The lower a prefix is in the hierarchy the more it can influence the VP semantics.

- A modified version of Willand's (2012) hierarchy of superlexical prefixes:

DIST >> DELIM >> SAT >> CUML >> PERD, EXC, REP, ATT, ADD, TERM



Concerning terminative, repetitive and excessive prefixes, there were no verbs inside our tested imperfective VP idioms which naturally combine with these prefixes making it impossible to take a definite stand on the issue of their compatibility with VP idioms in Polish.

How does our secondary imperfective morpheme –YWA fit this hierarchy?

- Recall that our perfective VP idioms are all subject to secondary imperfectivization, which we take to indicate that secondary imperfective *-ywa-* is VP-external.

SUPERLEXICAL PREFIX	Perfective	Secondary imperfective
Distributive	porozkładać 'to distribute'	*porozkładowywać
Delimitative	poczytać 'to read for a while'	*poczytywać
Saturative	naścinać się 'to cut sth to the full'	*naścinywać się
Cumulative	naścinać 'to cut a lot of sth'	*naścinywać
Perdurative	przespać 'to sleep through the length of some event'	przesypiać
Excessive	przekrzyczeć 'to shout louder than sb'	przekrzykiwać
Repetitive	przerobić 'to do sth again'	przerabiać
Attenuative	poddusić 'stew a bit'	podduszać
Completive (additive)	dokroić 'to slice more of sth'	dokrajać
Terminative	odśpiewać 'to sing a song from the beginning to the end'	odśpiewywać

DIST >> DELIM >> SAT >> CUML >> SI >> PERD, EXC, REP, ATT, ADD, TERM



We distinguish two groups of superlexical prefixes: **high** and **low** superlexical prefixes.

High superlexical prefixes include DISTRIBUTIVE, DELIMITATIVE, SATURATIVE, CUMULATIVE ones.

Low superlexical prefixes include PERDURATIVE. EXCESSIVE, REPETITIVE, ATTENUATIVE, COMPLETIVE, TERMINATIVE.

The former merge higher than secondary imperfective morphology.

The latter merge lower than secondary imperfective morphology.

Secondary imperfectivization is not a reliable criterion distinguishing between lexical and superlexical prefixes.

AspP

IPFV/PFV

projections of high superlexical prefixes
(DIST, DELIM, SAT, CUM)

SP_{high}

morphologically
pfv verb

SP_{high}

projection of secondary imperfective morphology

-yw(a)

morphologically ipfv verb

projection of low superlexical prefixes
(PERD, EXC, REP, ATT, COMP, TERM)

SP_{low}

morphologically pfv verb

vP

VP

(RP)

PP

morphologically ipfv/pfv verb

lexical prefix

Puzzle

Someone may say that maybe the superlexical prefixes which are incompatible with imperfective VP idioms are in fact lexical:

- because they add arguments and because they are low in the hierarchy

Interim conclusion

We argue that we can still maintain the view that these prefixes are vP external and their incompatibility with imperfective VP idioms follows from purely semantic restrictions and is conditioned by whether or not the prefix intervenes in the VP-internal semantics of an idiom leading to the loss of its figurative meaning.

A cumulative prefix *na-* provides a strong argument in favor of this view.

The case of cumulative *na-*

- Notice, that a cumulative prefix *na-* which is not compatible with imperfective VP idioms also adds an argument. One could say that it is VP-internal. But crucially, it can stack over secondary imperfectivized verbs leading to their perfectivization:

na-[[*podpis*]-*ywa-*]_{IPFV}_{PFV} *dokumentów*
'to sign a lot of documents'



- This shows that the cumulative prefix *na-* is projected above the secondary imperfective one.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION

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Criteria used to determine the division into perfective and imperfective VP idioms

- A pretest: the participants were asked to add possible prefixes to the basic imperfective counterparts without losing their idiomatic interpretation → only the ones which were provided by most participants were included in our study as the potential perfective counterparts of the basic imperfective VP idioms.

DZIELIĆ WŁOS NA CZWORO *

Tekst długiej odpowiedzi

GRAĆ NA ZWŁOKĘ *

Tekst długiej odpowiedzi

- Kagan (2013: 490, footnote 8) also noticed an interesting tendency holding across prefixes: “if the verbal stem lexicalizes a scale, the prefix will apply to this scale. If the stem does not lexicalize a scale but
- 8 A *scale* is a set of degrees (abstract representations of measurement) that are ordered along a certain dimension (e.g., height, duration, temperature, etc.). A degree may be linked to an event in several different ways; for instance, it may constitute its degree-of-change argument. 20
- the object does, the prefix will apply to the scale contributed by the object. Finally, if neither the stem nor the object contributes a scale, the prefix applies to a time scale”.