

GRAMMAR

ON SOME PROPERTIES OF ACTION NOMINALS IN POLISH AND THEIR ENGLISH EQUIVALENTS¹

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The term *Action Nominals* will be used throughout the present paper to denote the names of actions expressed in Polish by derivatives of the *propozycja* type, called henceforth a *deverbal substantive*, as well as a *verbal*

substantive with the derivational endings $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} -enie \\ -anie \\ -cie \end{array} \right\}$, c.g., *czytanie*, *robienie*, *mycie* (cf. Puzynina 1969 : 28), corresponding basically to *-ing* of nominals in English though sharing certain characteristics also with the English gerundives.

In English three corresponding types of nominal occur in the regular usage: the nominal derivatives of verbs of the *proposal* type (*deverbal substantive*), called *substantive nominalizations* by B. Fraser (1970: 85), *-ing* of nominals, termed "Action Nominals" in Lees (1963 : 64), c.g. *the reading of a book*, and gerundial nominals proper, e.g. *reading a book*.

The analysis of the equivalence of some features of the above mentioned nominal structures in Polish and English is the subject of the present paper. The discussion will not be exhausted here (it is a subject of a more extensive study), it will signal only some properties of these constructions in both the languages.

Verbal substantives (S_{verb}) being a categorial type, are morphologically more uniform than deverbal substantives (S_{deverb}), and may be formed from almost all verbs in Polish (Puzynina 1969 : 28). A similar characteristics seems to be shared by the English *-ing* of and gerundial nominals, which,

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in the morphological sense, form one class of item. S_{deverb} , on the other hand, in English and Polish, are both formally and semantically non-categorical, having more varied types of derivational endings and formed from a smaller group of verbs. In this sense then, a certain analogy can be drawn between the Polish S_{verb} on the one hand, and English gerunds and *-ing of* nominals on the other, as well as between the English and Polish S_{deverb} . The Polish S_{verb} seem to combine the features of both English gerunds and *-ing of* nominals.

Out of the number of possible interpretations of action nominalizations (cf. Fraser 1970: 84 - 85), we shall choose for our present discussion the opposition between the factive interpretation and that expressing the way in which a given action is performed.

Gerunds and *-ing of* nominals may be sometimes homophonous in English (Lees 1963: 64), so when the formal markers are lacking, numerous cases of ambiguity may occur. Since, however, a high correlation between factivity and gerundialization has been stated in English (the Kiparskys 1968; Stockwell 1968: 588 - 590), almost all *-ing* derivatives considered to be of gerundial type can be paraphrased by factive constructions:

- (1) She did not approve of his painting²

The sentence may be disambiguated when followed by a subsidiary clause or when paraphrased:

(2) She did not approve of his painting as he was not very good at it. equals in meaning:

- (3) She did not approve of *the way* he painted as he was not very good at it

Another interpretation of (1) is also possible when completed with a different clause:

- (4) She did not approve of his painting as he never had enough time to take her out to lunch

which can be paraphrased by:

- (5) She did not approve of *the fact* that he painted as he never had enough time to take her out to lunch

The Polish language would employ either S_{deverb} or S_{verb} (corresponding in meaning to the paraphrase with *the way*) in the first case, while in the second one, S_{verb} corresponding to the "factive" paraphrase would be used:

- (1a) Nie pochwałała jego malowania

may be expanded into either:

- (2a) Nie pochwałała jego $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{malowania} \\ \text{malarstwa} \end{array} \right\}$, bo nie robił tego dobrze

² For the examples and their analysis consult Lees (1963: 65 - 67). The possible interpretation of *painting* as a *painted picture* will be ignored in the present discussion.

which, to the author of the present paper, means:

- (3a) Nie pochwałała *sposobu*, w jaki malował, bo nie robił tego dobrze

or:

- (4a) Nie pochwałała jego malowania, gdyż nigdy nie miał dość czasu, by ją wziąć na obiad

which can be paraphrased as:

- (5a) Nie pochwałała *faktu*, że malował, gdyż nigdy nie miał dość czasu, by ją wziąć na obiad

A separate class of gerund is lacking in Polish, but possible ambiguities of the type mentioned above are observed both within the class of S_{verb} and

S_{deverb} :

- (6) Twoje mówienie denerwuje mnie

- (6a) Your talking gets on my nerves

The above sentences may denote either:

- (7) *Fakt*, że mówisz denerwuje mnie

- (7a) *The fact* that you are talking gets on my nerves

or:

- (8) *Sposób*, w jaki mówisz denerwuje mnie

- (8a) *The way* you are talking gets on my nerves

The class of S_{deverb} may also contain similar ambiguities:

- (9) Jej wejście ściągnęło uwagę wszystkich

- (9a) Her $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{entrance} \\ \text{entering} \end{array} \right\}$ attracted everybody's attention

which may be interpreted either as:

- (10) *Fakt*, że weszła ściągnęła uwagę wszystkich

- (10a) *The fact* that she entered attracted everybody's attention

or:

- (11) *Sposób*, w jaki weszła ściągnęła uwagę wszystkich

- (11a) *The way* she entered attracted everybody's attention

If a verb can form both verbal and deverbal nominals, S_{deverb} is used in Polish more frequently to express the way in which a given action was performed, while S_{verb} — to indicate the fact that the action was performed (cf. Puzynina 1969: 179):

- (12) Podoba mi się jego *gra* (*sposób*, w jaki gra)

gra — S_{deverb}

- (12) I like his *playing* (*the way* he plays)

- (13) *Granie* w tej orkiestrze przynosi mi zaszczyt (*fakt*, że gram w tej orkiestrze)

granie — S_{verb}

- (13a) *Playing* in this orchestra is an honour to me (*the fact* that I play in this orchestra)

The similar differentiation in English is not so obviously equivalent. While the class of S_{deverb} has rather the factive interpretation, the *-ing* class of nominals may be assigned the meanings of both *the fact* and *the way*. In such case the *-ing* form with the factive interpretation is classified as a gerundial nominal (14), the other one (16) being considered an S_{verb} :

(14) Eating so much must cause a stomach-ache

(14a) Jedzenie w takiej ilości (tak dużo) musi spowodować ból żołądka understood as:

(15) *The fact* that somebody eats so much must cause a stomach-ache

(15a) *Fakt*, że ktoś tak dużo je, musi spowodować ból żołądka

vs.

(16) His eating was disgusting

(16a) Jego jedzenie było odrażające

in the meaning of:

(17) *The way* he was eating was disgusting

(17a) *Sposób*, w jaki jadł był odrażający.

The next problem I would like to signal, refers to the categorial analysis of the action nominals. The most characteristic feature of these constructions seems to be their ability to retain some nominals categories on the one hand, and some of the verbal ones on the other. The discussion will be limited in this paper to the verbal characteristics.

The category of *aspect* is generally agreed to be present in Polish S_{verb} . Compare:

(18) podczas *czytania* tej książki

(18a) during the *reading* of the book

with

(19) po *przeczytaniu* tej książki

(19a) after *having read* the book

The ungrammaticality of:

(20) *podczas *przeczytania* tej książki

(20a) *during *having read* this book

and the acceptable phrase:

(21) po *czytaniu* tej książki

(21a) after *reading* the book

as compared with (18) and (19) show the perfective status of the nominal in (19) and the imperfective in (21)³.

Similarly S_{deverb} in Polish can express the perfective-imperfective opposition, e.g. perf. *strata* (loss) vs. imperf. (or unmarked) *budowa* (construction).

³ Note that for English *during reading the book is just as ungrammatical as (20a). The formal aspects of these Polish and English constructions will be examined in greater depth in one of the subsequent papers.

It has been noticed, however, (Puzynina 1969: 86 - 94) that some S_{deverb} express the formal neutralization of the category of aspect, e.g., S_{deverb} *klamstwo* may share the distribution of 'either imperf. (unmarked) S_{verb} *klamanie* (lying):

(22) Tomek przywykł do $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \textit{klamstwa} \\ \textit{klamania} \end{array} \right\}$

(22a) Tom got used to *lying*

or the perf. S_{verb} *sklamanie* (lying):

(23) Jego $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \textit{klamstwo} \\ \textit{sklamanie} \end{array} \right\}$ było dla mnie niespodzianką

(23a) His *having lied* was a surprise to me

(*klamstwo* in the meaning of a product of lying, i.e. a lie is not considered here.)

The English S_{verb} , as can be seen from the above examples, do not transfer the perfective aspect of the Polish S_{verb} *sklamanie*, since they are not able to express the category of aspect. English gerunds, on the other hand, though can retain the auxiliary *have*, do not share all the distributional characteristics with the Polish S_{verb} , so cannot be used as direct equivalents in all the cases where the Polish language employs the nominals derived from the verbs marked for the perfective aspect.

In his transformational study of the English grammar, Stockwell (1968: 589) mentions a class of verbs, mostly non-factive, which are not compatible with the perfective gerunds. The equivalent verbs in Polish do not tolerate S_{verb} derived from the perfective verbs in the immediate context:

(24) He *continued reading* the book

(24a) *Kontynuował czytanie* książki

as opposed to the ungrammatical:

(25) *He *continued having read* the book

(25a) **Kontynuował przeczytanie* książki

Such English verbs as *stop*, *finish* and their Polish equivalents (*s*)*kończyć* seem to share the same feature.

The above observation would point at a certain equivalence between English perfective gerunds and Polish S_{verb} of perfective verbs, as well as these S_{deverb} which can be matched with the corresponding perfective verbs, e.g.,

(26) He *stopped building* the house

(26a) *Przerwał* $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \textit{budowanie} \\ \textit{budowę} \end{array} \right\}$ tego domu

vs.

(27) *He *stopped having built* the house

(27a) **Przerwał zbudowanie* tego domu

Another characteristic feature expressed by verbs and derived nominals can be accounted for by taking into consideration what is usually called

an "Aktionsart", denoting either a state or the way a given action is performed⁴. It is in fact a semantic category, marked morphologically in some cases, comprising a few subclasses of verbs, such as e.g.

- a. durative — stressing the duration of an action:
 (28) *schnąć* — *schnięcie*
 (28a) to dry /to become dry — drying/ becoming dry
- b. causative — referring to the cause of an action
 (29) *suszyć* — *suszenie*
 (29a) to dry /to make dry — drying/ making dry
- c. momentary — denoting a single action
 (30) *kopnąć* — *kopnięcie*
 (30a) to kick — kicking (as a single act of kicking)
- d. iterative — denoting a repeated action
 (31) *jadać* — *jadanie*
 (31a) to eat — eating (as a repeated action)

Some of the classes mentioned above have, as could be seen, separate morphemes in Polish, while the English language employs devices of a more analytical form (various auxiliary verbs). For some of these verbs and their nominals the finding of exact equivalents in English involves certain problems. The class of iterative verbal forms, for instance, is morphologically distinct in Polish, e.g.

- (32) *pisywać* — *pisywanie* vs. *pisać* — *pisanie*
jadać — *jadanie* vs. *jeść* — *jedzenie*
chadzać — *chadzanie* vs. *chodzić* — *chodzenie*

where the first column comprises the iterative actions, while the second one is unmarked in this respect. The differentiation cannot be directly accounted for in English as the English equivalent forms are not marked for this feature, so they may determine both single and iterative actions, i.e., correspond to the second column in (32):

- (32a) to write — writing
 to eat — eating
 to go — going

Another interesting class of verbs characteristic for the problem under consideration is a class exemplified in Polish by such verbs as (33) *dojadać*-*dojadanie* (S_{verb}), which is not distinct in the English verb system. The following semantic interpretations of the action expressed in (33) may be given:

- (33a) 1. a single act of *eating*, not completed

⁴ In English the term *aspect* is used sometimes in this case (cf. Jespersen 1954 : 366, "inchoative or ingressive aspect"), nevertheless, to distinguish between the grammatical category of *aspect* and the morphological or purely semantic category of "Aktionsart", the latter term may prove to be more useful.

2. repeated acts of *eating*, not completed
 3. repeated acts of *eating*, completed.

This class of verbs is formed in Polish by adding the perfective prefix *do-* or *z-* to the verb of the iterative group⁵.

On the other hand, such grammatical category as that of the progressive aspect in English, generated regularly as *to be -ing* form for the English verbs, remains formally unmarked not only for the verbs in Polish but also for the derived nominals in both the languages:

- (34) *jeść* — to eat/to be eating
 (35) *jedzenie* — eating/*being eating

That is why the duration of an action will be expressed in both the languages by the durative form of an "Aktionsart" rather than the durative aspect in action nominals.

Verbal and deverbal substantives in English and Polish have ordinarily no reference to time. As Jespersen notices (1954:96): "on account of his coming may be equal to 'because he comes' or 'because he came' or 'because he will come', according to the connexion in which it occurs". The corresponding Polish phrase:

- (36) *z powodu jego przyjscia/przyjazdu*

does not imply any indication of time either. In order to establish these relations the English language has developed the gerundial forms which may express both the perfective aspect and a sequence of actions in a sentential string. In Polish and English S_{deverb} as well as S_{verb} and *-ing of* nominals respectively, this relative time, understood as a relation between the time of performing one action and that of another one, may be expressed only by a semantic interpretation of the verbs connoting particular nominals.

- (37) I intend *writing* a book

- (37a) Planuję (zamierzam) *napisanie* książki

refers to the future, while

- (38) I remember *writing* the book

- (38a) Pamiętam *pisanie* tej książki (że pisałem tę książkę)

refers to the past action only on account of the meaning of *intend* and *remember* (cf. Jespersen 1954 : 96). All the substantives in the examples quoted below may express the actions performed simultaneously or prior to the actions denoted in the predicate:

⁵ Since the class of non-iterative verbs is in fact unmarked in Polish, they often imply repeated actions as well. In this sense e.g., *chodzić*-*chodzenie* may be synonymous to *chadzać*-*chadzanie*. In the group mentioned here, then, represented by *dojadać*, the perfect. prefix may be sometimes added to non-iterative stems, which leads to the same effect: *dochodzić*, used more frequently than slightly awkward *dochadzać*. The similar substitution, though, does not work correctly in all cases: *dojeść*, for instance, is not equivalent to *dojadać* in this respect.

(39) John $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{did not like} \\ \text{does not like} \\ \text{will not like} \\ \dots \end{array} \right\}$ her reaction

(39a) Jankowi $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{nie podobała się} \\ \text{nie podoba się} \\ \text{nie będzie podobać się} \\ \dots \end{array} \right\}$ jej reakcja

The ambiguity may be sometimes eliminated in both the languages by including one of the appropriate adjectival or adverbial phrases, e.g.,

(40) John does not like her *present reaction*

(40a) Jankowi nie podoba się jej *obecna reakcja*

(40) and (40a) express the state of *liking* which is contemporary with the activity represented by *reaction*. Some other phrases may express futurity, e.g.,

(41) They were talking of the *future landing* on this planet

(41a) Rozmawiali o *przyszłym lądowaniu* na tej planecie

In order to refer to a past time, the English language may use the gerundial nominal in the perfective form, which is absent from the Polish nominal system, or one of the expressions implying the past, which have direct equivalents in Polish:

(42) John did not like her *having reacted* in this way

(43) John did not like her *then reaction* at that time

(43a) Jankowi nie podobała się jej *ówczesna reakcja*

In many examples quoted above the nominals were preceded by a possessive pronoun marking *the category of person*. The category of person is not directly present in S_{deverb} , S_{verb} or gerund in either of the languages. The possessive pronouns and partly Gen. Sg. and Pl. of nouns take this function and mark the category of person for Polish and English nominals. The difference between the two languages in this respect lies in the lower frequency of their usage in Polish. Let's compare the following examples (some of the Polish examples inspired by Puzynina 1969: 94 - 95):

(44) I am pleased with *my going* to France
which in Polish may be expressed in three ways:

(44a) Cieszę się $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{z mojego} \\ \text{ze swojego} \\ \text{z } \emptyset \end{array} \right\}$ wyjazdu do Francji

vs.

(45) I am pleased with *his going* to France
which will find its Polish equivalent only in:

(45a) Cieszę się z *jego wyjazdu* do Francji

Another set of examples:

(46) Janek cieszy się $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{ze swojego} \\ \text{z } \emptyset \end{array} \right\}$ wyjazdu do Francji

where the possessive pronoun *jego* (3-rd person Sg. Masc.) could be also used, it would indicate, however, a different referent.

The English equivalent form:

(46a) John is pleased with *his going* to France

has the ambiguous pronoun *his*, referring either to *John* or to another [+Masculine] noun,

vs.

(47) John is pleased with *her going* to France

(47a) Janek cieszy się z *jej wyjazdu* do Francji

allows no such ambiguity.

If, then, in Polish, a nominal and a noun in subject position refer to the identical referent, the possessive pronoun may be either neutralized to the form *swój* (or any of its morphological variants), or else totally deleted. Otherwise, the pronoun is obligatorily present. In English, on the other hand, the pronoun is most often obligatory, if the subject of the action is explicitly stated.

The same function of person marker may be fulfilled in both the languages by the Gen. case of nouns:

(48) Marię zdziwił *wyjazd Janka*

(48a) Mary was surprised with *John's departure*

The final remark in this paper will refer to the position of the nominal modifier in combinations with action nominals and will signal some remaining verbal properties of this kind of nominalization.

The English S_{verb} may be preceded by an adjective, while gerund- followed by an adverb, the opposite being ungrammatical. This behaviour points at a closer affinity of S_{verb} to substantives, and gerundives — to the corresponding verbs. S_{deverb} , on the other hand, may be only preceded by an adjective. The Polish S_{deverb} also tolerates only, similarly to the English one, the preceding adjective (cf. (49a) and (50a) with those from Lees 1963: 65). The Polish S_{verb} combines the features of the English S_{verb} and gerund, allowing either an adjective in the preceding position or an adverb in the following one.

(49) the *rapid painting* of the wall

(49a) *szybkie malowanie* ściany

(50) *painting the wall* rapidly

(50a) *malowanie ściany* szybko

S_{deverb} type:

- (51) his *unusual flight*
 (52) *his *flight unusually*
 (51a) jego *niezwykły lot*
 (52a) *jego *lot niezwykle*

Other verbal features of the Polish S_{verb} are: 1. the retention of the passive voice, which is characteristic of the English nominal of the gerundial type:

- (53) the necessity of *loving* and *being loved* (quoted from De Quincey after Jespersen 1961 : 115)

(53a) *potrzeba kochania i bycia kochanym*

and 2. the preserving of the reflexive pronoun *się* in the Polish S_{verb} derived from the reflexive verbs (Damborský 1965: 154 - 157):

- (54) *całować się — całowanie się*

(54a) to kiss (each other) — kissing (each other)

While, however, the verb in (54) must be complemented by *się* or some other object, the nominal in the reflexive meaning may delete *się*: *ich całowanie*, if the subject is explicitly stated (*ich*). In English the phrase *each other* is optional in either case: *they kissed (each other) — their kissing (each other)*.

As a final remark, it should be pointed out that all the sentences and phrases employing nominal forms may be expressed by the corresponding clausal structures, and though the sentential paraphrases were not given in all instances, it is obvious that all of them are the nominal equivalents of predicates expressed by finite forms of verbs. In both formal and semantic aspects, the verb is the primary, and the nominal — the secondary formant, nominal constructions, however, prove to be useful by providing a tool for introducing synonymous stylistic variants both in Polish and English.

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