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The interaction of event structure and argument structure with gradability in deverbal active adjectives in Polish

The aim of the paper is to demonstrate that deverbal active adjectives in Polish (e.g. *interesuj-ący* ‘interesting’, *odchudzaj-ący* ‘slimming’, *pracuj-ący* ‘working’), just like denominal adjectives, can be argued to fall into two categories, namely qualitative and relational adjectives.

Although the term relational adjectives is standardly restricted to non-gradable denominal forms (Warren 1984; Szymanek 1985 for English and Polish; Demonte 1999 and Fábregas 2007 for Spanish), it can be argued that deverbal formations with active semantics show a cluster of properties that characterize denominal relational/taxonomic adjectives (Knittel 2009), i.e. they have subsective semantics linked to the (sub)kind denotation (McNally and Boleda 2004), they serve as appropriate answers to questions introduced by ‘which (kind)’, they are non-gradable and do not allow degree modifiers, their predicative distribution is severely restricted, though not impossible (i.e. it can be licensed in the presence of a modal verb ‘can’ or in the presence of adverbs underlining the subkind interpretation ‘typically’, ‘mainly’ and under contrastive focus). Cetnarowska (2007) explicitly uses the term classificatory adjective with reference to participial forms in Polish and points to their postnominal distribution as opposed to the sole premodifier function of qualitative adjectives. Qualitative adjectives in *-ący*, in turn, being intersective, will serve as appropriate answers to questions introduced by ‘how’, will allow degree modification, will appear pre-nominally but not post-nominally, will be used predicatively without any restrictions and will serve as bases for other word-formation operations (adverb formation and negation).

The paper points to a systematic correlation between the aspectual and thematic properties of underlying verbal structures and the properties of resulting adjectives. Whereas the existence of a strong link between stative verbs and prototypical gradable adjectives is uncontested (e.g. Brekke’s (1988) Experiencer constraint; Meltzer-Asscher’s (2010) Stativity constraint proposed for English), the relationship between eventive predicates and classificatory adjectives has either gone unnoticed or has been denied. Furthermore, it is argued that the notion of volitional agentivity as opposed to non-volitional causation of the underlying verbal structure plays a key role in the classification of related adjectival structures.

The proposed analysis is constructionist in spirit (Fábregas & Marín 2017; Alexiadou et al. 2015) but it also incorporates/accommodates some lexicalist insights. We follow Fábregas (2016), who argued that the underspecified adjectivizer imposes one of the non-episodic readings on the verb (habitual, potential and dispositional), and that the semantics of the derivative depends on the meaning of the subject noun, its causal link with the event and facilitating circumstances. The semantic interpretation of *-ący* adjectives hinges on the nature of the subject noun, but crucially the noun is co-identified with the subject of the underlying verb (Meltzer-Asscher 2010, 2012) or, to be more precise, the thematically licensed argument occupying the projection above the verbalized root. Notably, the structures in question contain

verbalizing morphology (i.e. *interes-uj-ący* ‘interesting’, *odchudz-aj-ący* ‘slimming’, *prac-uj-ący* ‘working’), which is associated with event implications.

It transpires that there is a close, though, not a complete correlation between stative verbs and qualitative adjectives and dynamic verbs and classificatory adjectives. Stative verbs entailing control or involvement of a sentient participant can sporadically give rise to non-gradable adjectives. In the domain of dynamic verbs, adjectival structures related to degree achievements and change of state verbs with an inherent bound (including unaccusative verbs) show more prototypical adjectival traits than adjectives related to telic verbs with incremental themes and atelic verbs (including unergatives). Causative degree achievements can give rise to both qualitative and classificatory adjectives, because the relevant root participates in the Subject-Instrument alternation (Alexiadou & Schäfer 2006). Telic verbs with incremental themes and atelic verbs give rise only to classificatory adjectives.

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