Word formation in terms of two-suffix combinations: Evidence from Polish

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One aspect of the morphological description of any language is a specification of how morphemes can be concatenated. Principles governing derivation, in particular suffixation, have been proposed by a large body of researchers (e.g. Siegel 1974, Mohannan 1982, Fabb 1988, Plag 1996, Hay 2002, Manova 2011, among others) and have been based on a wide range of factors including grammatical, psycholinguistic, cognitive or statistical (cf. Manova & Aronoff 2010 for an overview). Accounts of Polish morphotactics have the form of general descriptions (Grzegorczykowa − Puzynina 1984, Kowalik 1998, Nagórko 2001, Szymanek 2010, Burkacka 2015), are focused on a specific word-class (Kowalik 1977, Waszakowa 1993), or a theoretical framework (Rubach 1984, Szpyra 1995).

In this contribution, we tackle the derivation of already derived words of the type BASE-SUFFIX1-SUFFIX2, e.g. *mlecz-ar-stwo* 'dairy industry'. Our study is based on the observation that there is a systematic relationship between SUFF1 and the lexical category of SUFF2. Previous research on Bulgarian, Russian, English and Italian showed that there is a clear tendency for a SUFF1 to select only one SUFF2 belonging to a major lexical category, i.e. nominal, verbal and adjectival. The proposed approach varies from others in that it not only tries to predict the existing combinations instead of positing rules for the attested ones but also allows for a reliable cross-linguistic comparison. This analysis is concerned with combinations, in which SUFF1 is a person-forming suffix as in the aforementioned example *mlecz-arz* 'milkman'.

First, an exhaustive list of 26 person-forming SUFF1 suffixes and their combinations with SUFF2 suffixes was extracted from dictionaries, grammars and corpora. For each SUFF1, we created a list of SUFF2 suffixes of a particular lexical category (N, V, ADJ). If more than one SUFF2 existed, we controlled for semantics that the different SUFF2 suffixes derive and also determined the number of all derivatives containing those suffixes. For instance, SUFF1 *-ak* concatenates with several adjectival suffixes, such as *-ki, -owaty, -ny*, out of which the first applies by default (*pływ-ak > pływ-ac-ki* 'swimmer' > 'swimming' ADJ). The two remaining suffixes form only several adjectives.

The results of the study lend support to the observations made for other languages. In Polish, SUFF1-SUFF2 combinations rely on semantic information; SUFF1 with the same semantics have the same or similar combinability. If more than one SUFF2 of the same lexical category attaches to SUFF1, either one of the SUFF2 suffixes applies by default or the different SUFF2 suffixes derive different semantics (e.g. an abstract noun and an object as in *piek-ar-stwo* 'baking industry' and *piek-ar-nik* 'oven'). This approach provides new insights into principles governing the combinability of affixes in Polish, and complements the existing approaches.

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