Polish Event-Linking Devices of *przed* 'before' cluster in conversational data – implications for Contrastive Analysis

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Abstract

The poster is part of a larger project on *Event-Linking Devices* (ELDes), and aims to look into one category of Event-Linking phenomena, the concepts of *przed* 'before' cluster in Polish, and their semantic functions of precedence/succession, priority/posteriority, and others in discourse (Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk et al., 2015). The study is based on empirical data derived from referential corpora of Polish (nkjp.pl), as well as, to contrast it with English, from the translational (parallel) English-to-Polish and Polish-to-English corpora available at http://pelcra.clarin-pl.eu/. The focal research questions refer to the uncovering of paths which account for coherent linking of events and their parts in the case of Pol. *przed* 'before' and its adjacent cluster members, with instances of the cognitive *afterness* called forth where relevant.

1 Introduction

Before and *after* are, as suggested by Östen Dahl (2013), *time-creating* conceptual areas. It is argued that *przed* is associated with a *scale of senses* such as the most salient ones including the cognitively basic *object-linking spatial* sense, extended to cover *temporal*, *sequential, contrastive (confrontational)*, and *conditional* interpretations, which, by extension, involve either *event chains* (coordination) or *event hierarchies* (subordination).

2 Research methodology

The research methods used are both quantitative, i.e., considering the frequencies of use of particular forms, as well as qualitative, i.e., involving the cognitive frame-based linguistic and discourse perspectives. The study presents an analysis of Polish corpus data of the *przed cluster* for non-annotated discourse relations, with English translational equivalents of ambiguous connectives (Cartoni et al., 2013), and English parallel corpus data and their functional interpretation.

3 Frames and Reframing

The linguistic *przed/before* clusters activate an original *spatial frame* in which **physical objects** are positioned in terms of primary versus secondary focal (spatial) positions (one object positioned before another object) *przed nim* 'before (in front of) him', *przed telewizorem* 'before (in front of) TV'. A range of *before-*senses is extended by *re-framing* the original spatial relations (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980) into the temporal *before* ones *przed chwilą* 'a second ago', *przed deszczem* 'before (it started) raining'. Further extensions, in complex constructions, cause the mapping of other Target Domains such as *succession/consequence* Eng. *pride goeth before destruction*, *primacy/priority* and *condition*, *concession, causality, nie mam przed tobą tajemnic* 'I have no secrets before you (positive confrontation)', *przed niczym się nie cofnę* 'I will not go back before anything (negative confrontation)', *causality-effect* Eng. *Put the cart before the horse.* The relative frequencies of the senses cover spatial meanings - 30 % of all data examined, temporal - 62 %, confrontational, conditional, priority and others - 8%.

4 Event Linking Devices

Events linked by *przed* are expressed either by a Nominalized gerund or Verbal noun construction *przed zakończeniem/przyjazdem* 'before finishing/arrival', or, in case the event is expressed by a clause, by *przed* taking up a complex form: *przed tym (zanim)* or *(przedtem) (zanim)* lit. 'before that (by the time before)'. The range of senses covered in conversational materials include temporal (most frequent) and, in descending order: contrastive (negative confrontation, invariably introduced by *threat/fear* forms), (temporal) conditional (most frequently introduced by the negative *zanim nie* lit.' before not' (not until/unless), and sequential meanings.

jej trwoga	**przed tym**	, co za chwilę nastąpi

'her fear **before that**, what will happen in a moment' (negative confrontation, challenge)

ja cie nie wpuszczę do mojego mieszkania	**Zanim**	naprawdę będzie. jak będzie skończone to drugie

'I will not let you in to my flat until/before (unless) the other one is finished' (condition)

4.1 Frequencies

All categories of *przed* were first searched in the whole Polish (balanced) corpus, comprising 250 m units with *przed* constructions identified in 253,119 cases. In spoken data the frequency reached 1,494, while in *conversational* materials (ca. 1,5 m), it was 778. For the clause-initial phrase *przed tym,(zanim)*, the frequencies in the whole corpus did not exceed 80 and in the conversational materials the occurrence was below 10 for each. *Przedtem* and *zanim* and their combination have the highest frequency of occurrence (7,882/25,892/74) in all materials with frequencies not exceeding 200 for each in conversational data:

proszę pana ja nie widzę tu w ogóle jakiegokolwiek. a dlaczego	**przedtem**	on nie reklamował ?

'Sir, I can't see any here, and why didn't he intervene before?'

Nie mogę mówić o tym,	**zanim nie**	uzyskam pewności

'I can't talk about it unless (until) I am fully certain'

4.2 Other *przed* cluster members

Forms considered discursively synonymous with the temporal sense of *przed* are *najpierw* lit. 'first', which take a quantitative preference over *przed* in the total corpus (39,869) and in the conversational data reaches 519 occurrences, *poprzedzając* 'preceding/preceded' (42) and a number of others. A combinatorial form which deserves particular attention in Polish is a pair involving the opposite items *przedtem – potem* 'before-after', which however function as practical synonyms in the context of the temporal *przedtem (najpierw)* and *potem jak* (but not *przedtem jak*) combinations in the sense of *succession* (*sequence*, possibly *causal*), revealing the *time* to *succession/cause-consequence* frame-shifting:

Przedtem (Najpierw) zjadłam lody, a potem zachorowałam

(lit. Before)/First I ate ice-cream and then I got sick

Potem jak zjadłam lody zachorowałam.

'After (lit. after how (when)) I ate ice-cream, I got sick' (more frequent in Conversational Data).

5 Further research

Further study is aimed to compare *przed* with *po* 'after' clusters (i.a., with respect to links to spatial and other conceptual domains) as well as to contrast other Polish and English markers, particularly those containing elements of negativity (Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk 2004) and used in emotional contexts, and propose a typology of ELDes in Polish and English, in spoken and written modes. Implications to cross—linguistic study of such phenomena will be presented in order to provide some more explicit ELDes *annotation clues* in the case of complex discourse-related meaning phenomena and *cluster equivalence* in languages.

Acknowledgment

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