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Lab 2 writeup

In Polish, nouns are inflected for case and number, and have the inherent feature of gender (also known as class sometimes). There exist both simple and compound nouns. There are many other divisions of nouns, such as common vs. proper, animate, male human, male non- human, vs. inanimate, concrete vs. abstract, countable vs. uncountable, individual vs. collective.

Stem endings influence the allomorphs of inflectional endings, and sound shifts within the stem can also occur as a result of that. Depending on the paradigm, different endings can mean different things.

In Polish we can identify three genders: masculine, feminine, and neuter. Masculine is further divided into animate and inanimate. There is some regularity to how this is assigned, namely on the basis of the biological gender or gender identity of the referent or the nominative case ending of the word. In the plural, the divisions are slightly different. There is the plural masculine human, plural masculine non-human, plural feminine and plural neuter; the non-human plurals are often grouped together, e.g. in the case of inflecting verbs by gender.

“In the singular, the main declension patterns for nouns are: masculine

animate, masculine inanimate, feminine, and neuter. In the plural the main

declension patterns for nouns are: male human plural and no male human

plural (with no male human plural patterns subdivided into masculine,

feminine, and neuter)” (122)

Declension patterns do not necessarily align with the gender of the noun, e.g. here are singular masculine nouns that can follow the feminine declension pattern, but the adjectives, verbs, etc., will have masculine endings.

In some situations there is a free choice between -a or -u endings; it has been theorized that mobile nouns are more likely to take -a, as are loanwords.

Within feminine and masculine paradigms we can distinguish between soft- and hard-stem nouns. These look the same in the nominative, but take different case endings.

Overall, for nouns of all numbers and genders the following declension paradigms can be identified:

1. Stems ending in a velar consonant (k, g, ch, h)
2. Stems ending in a “historically soft” consonant (c, dz, sz, dz, ż, cz, dż)
3. Stems ending in a soft consonant (ś, ć, ź, dź, ń, l, soft b, soft m, soft w, soft p, j)
4. Stems ending in all other consonants – hard stems

Nevertheless, there is variation within those, and there are special cases and/or exceptions from these rules. Sometimes more than one ending is correct, and is up to personal or social preference.

Overall the following table illustrates the variety of case endings for different genders: Table

Description automatically generated(p. 217)

Pejorative and augmentative nouns’ gender is based on their form in the nominative. For diminutives of nouns that refer to humans, the actual gender is preferred in most cases. Abbreviations usually take the gender of their main noun, with exceptions. Loan words are invariable if their construction is atypical and does not fit into the paradigms. There are endings to turn some masculine nouns into feminine nouns (-ini/-yni for velar or historically soft consonants, -ka, -owa for others).

There are nouns where the gender can differ depending on “personal preference”; there are also homographs (and homophones) that have different meaning depending on the gender.

When it comes to nouns, it is relevant when it comes to agreement with: adjectives (number, gender, case), demonstrative pronouns (same), personal pronouns (same), 1st and 2nd person singular and plural possessive pronouns (same), singular past tense verb forms (number and gender), future progressive tense (same), conditional verb forms (same), adjectival participles (number, gender, case).

Overall there are two numbers, with leftovers of a third one. Most nouns have a singular and plural form, and some have a dual one as well. There are mass nouns and abstract nouns that rarely have a plural form. There are also nouns that only occur in plural.

As mentioned before, many different types of nouns can be identified, but the most important division here is probably between common and proper nouns.

As for adjectives, they inflect for number, case, and gender of the noun they describe. They can occur in pre- or post-nominal position; the first option describes some quality of the noun, while the second one is used to classify it (e.g. “brunatny niedźwiedź”, literally “brown bear”, means a bear that is brown, while “niedźwiedź brunatny”, literally “bear brown”, means a bear belonging to the species called the brown bear).

Predicate adjectives agree in number and gender and appear in nominative or instrumental depending on the context.

In the singular, adjectives can be masculine, feminine, or neuter. In plural they can be plural male human or plural no male human. Singular masculine adjectives end in -i (k, g, soft stem) or -y. Feminine ones always end in -a, and neuter ones in -e or -ie (k, g, soft stem). In plural male human adjectives end in -y or -i, and the rest in -e. Stem alterations can happen. Depending on the stem of the adjective (same division as with nouns), different declension patterns can be applied.

A small group of adjectives has short and long masculine forms that occur only in nominative and are archaic.

Some adjectives can impose case on the following noun. This happens in cases where in English we would need some preposition, e.g. “unworthy **of** trust” or “close **to** heart”.

Feminine nouns ending in -owa are declined like adjectives.

Negated adjectives are written as one word, but adverbs are written mostly separately. Some intensifiers are written together, and some separately.

There are suffixes that signify emotive versions of adjectives.

Adjectives have comparative and superlative forms. Comparative forms are created by adding a suffix -szy/-ejszy in masculine (and the last vowel changes depending on the gender of the noun described). Superlative forms are created by adding a prefix naj- and the same suffix as in comparative.

Lower and lowest degree are created using adverbs “mniej” (less) and “najmniej” (the least).

Some adjectives have completely irregular comparative and superlative forms.

Some adjectives do not have comparative and superlative forms and instead use adverbs such as “bardziej” (more) and “najbardziej” (the most).

There exist demonstrative adjectives, which are roughly the same as English determiners (this, that, etc.). They have their own declensional paradigm. It is also the case for distributive adjectives (each, all), as well as the adjectives meaning “some” and “other”.

“Który”, “jaki”, “czyje” (which, what (kind of), whose) are also considered adjectives, so-called interrogative adjectives and they need to agree with the noun they modify.

There also exist relative adjectives which are declined like regular adjectives.

Verbs conjugate to reflect the person, number, tense, voice, aspect, and sometimes gender of the subject. Personal pronouns are often omitted since all the necessary information is conveyed by the verb.

As for the number, singular and plural are distinguished. As for genders, masculine, feminine, neuter singular and human male and no human male plurals are relevant. Not all of them are marked in every tense: they are relevant for every number and person only in constructions using past tense verb forms.

The two aspects in Polish are the perfective and imperfective one. Verbs appear in pairs that represent the perfective and imperfective aspects. The pairs are created by: adding a prefix to the imperfective infinitive, shortening or modifying the stem of the imperfective infinitive, using two completely different verbs. One imperfective form can have many perfective counterparts that may vary in semantics (e.g. to have been eating vs. to have eaten vs. to have eaten up vs. to have eaten a bit, vs. to have eaten enough not to be hungry); usually the meaning can be partly guessed from the prefix used. Depending on the aspect, the verbs can only take some tenses: perfective aspect does not occur in the present tense. Some verbs can serve both as the perfective and imperfective form, and some appear only in perfective or only in imperfective. Some verbs have two versions of the imperfective aspect, one of which being the regular one, and the other the habitual or frequentative or iterative verbs.

There are four conjugation patterns for Polish verbs: I. verbs ending in -ać, II. verbs ending in -eć, III. diverse verbs, including pseudo-ać, IV. verbs ending in -yć/-ić/-eć.

The following moods can be distinguished: indicative, imperative, conditional, subjunctive. Not all moods can occur in all tenses or for all persons.

The following tenses can be distinguished: (infinitive), present, past, (archaic) past perfect (formed by “to be” + past form), future simple (perfective – using the perfective form of the verb in the present tense form), future compound (imperfective – using the future form of “to be” with the imperfective infinitive).

A special set of endings (also inflected by number, person, gender) are used to create conditional forms. They can be used as suffixes, but also detached and used as particles separately.

Imperative forms are based off of the infinitive. The ending thereof is dropped, and sometimes stem sound changes occur. For the 2nd person singular that is the form, while for second person plural and first person plural suffixes are added (-cie, -my).

There are three adjectival participles (present active, present passive, past passive) and two adverbial participles (present and past). All of those can be formed both from perfective and imperfective forms. The adjectival ones are declined using adjectival paradigms. The adverbial ones are not declined.

There are impersonal forms of personal verbs (somewhat similar to passive).

There are two voices: active and passive. The passive voice is formed by using auxiliary verbs “być/to be” (for imperfective) or “zostać/to become” (for perfective) and the past participle. The participle agrees with the person/thing acted upon (so the subject of the newly-formed sentence). To mark the performer of the action the preposition “przez” and the accusative case or just the accusative case can be used.

Reflexive verbs take the suffix “się” (spelled separately) in all the forms.

The verb “być” (to be) is mostly used as a linking/copula verb, but is also sometimes an auxiliary (compound future tense, passive voice, modal verbs, impersonal expressions). Sometimes it can be used independently (or with an implied dummy subject). When negated, “być” only inflects by tense.

Modal verbs are also inflected. They are followed by infinitives. They include “mieć” (to be supposed to), “musieć” (must), “móc” (can/may/be able to/be allowed to), “powinien” (should, ought to), “chcieć” (to want), “potrzebować” (to need to). There are also modals that take no personal endings and can only be used with unspecified actors: “można” (it is possible), “powinno się” (one should), “trzeba” (it is necessary), “warto” (it is worthwhile), “wolno” (it is allowed).

There exist impersonal verbs that do not have personal forms and are used as the infinitive or third person singular (neuter wherever applicable). These most often refer to weather conditions, but not only.

In indirect speech there are no tense shifts.

Cases were mentioned in the noun and adjective sections. In addition, they influence pronouns, numerals, and adjectival participles. Polish has 7 different cases: nominative, accusative, genitive, dative, locative, instrumental, vocative.

The nominative is the form used for subjects of a sentence and is the basic form of a noun. Accusative is the case for the direct object. Dative is the case for indirect objects and logical subjects of impersonal verbs. Locative is the case for pointing to a location (figurative or literal). Instrumental is the case which signifies that the noun is being used as a tool or means of some action. Vocative is the case used when addressing someone.

Many of the cases can be triggered by specific verbs of prepositions that they are required by (rection).

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