Can a division of lexemes according to syntactic criteria be consistent?

Problems of the overall division of the lexicon of Polish, in particular, of the division of the earlier often neglected non-inflected expressions, including the so-called function expressions\(^1\), appear to have been neither an altogether marginal nor a weak motif of the Polish linguistic thought in the past quarter of a century (should we entertain an overview beginning with Saloni’s (1974) morphological classification). To set up such a division of Polish lexemes was a task that has engaged the whole of the theoretical knowledge accumulated by the time as well as the corresponding conceptual apparatus and the state of methodological awareness present in the era; the work devoted to it has proved to be of great, perhaps fundamental, importance for the ensuing research attempts.

A strong impulse for the growing interest in the problem just indicated was the debate concerning the proposal of a general typology of linguistic means laid down in the integrated grammatical description of Polish (cf. GWJP 1984). Therefore, the recent new edition of the second part of „Grammar of contemporary Polish”, an improved version of its „Morfologia” (GWJP 1998), appearing 14 years after the first edition has been awaited as a sort of harvest benefitting from that debate, summing up the current knowledge and depicting the state of research in the area concerned at the end of the second millennium.

\(^1\) The need of a complementation of the knowledge of Polish through an insight into the regularities governing various „small words” in Polish was acknowledged immediately after the war; this was the source of a debate over particles (cf. Mirowicz 1948,1949); subsequently, a stream of semantic research developed, in parallel to the attempts at their syntactic characterisation undertaken in that period of time; it was initiated by Wierzbicka’s works (in particular, her meaning explications in her „Draft entries for a Polish-semantic dictionary” (Wierzbicka 1969: 49-62) and her pioneering work on meta-text (Wierzbicka 1971)).
The feeling which the presentation of the research results offered in GWJP-M 1998 produces is that of disappointment. No fundamentally new proposal of the division of Polish lexemes has been worked out; what little of novelty has been introduced are just superficial corrections. True enough, we have received a brief survy of possible divisions of the lexicon which could be opposed, as consistent schemes, to the traditional inconsistent sorting out of „parts of speech”. This fragment of the book is written in a perspicuous way and has a great paedagogical value. However, in Laskowski’s positive proposal of the so-called „functional division” substantial flaws proper to the first edition (cf. GWJP-M 1984: 26-37 and GWJP 1998: 52-65) persevere. Since proposals submitted by other authors show similar deficiencies, the question arises: can these flaws be at all removed?

The enormous difficulty of tackling the problems at hand is undeniable. The carrying out of a correct functional syntactic classification requires a revision of the fundamental syntactic concepts and their ensuing definition; in any case a painstaking reflection on what one presupposes and what one substantiates is mandatory. Gruszczyński (1987) is right when he warns against a vicious circle in this domain: can we be sure that our rubrics are not just a product of our preconceived images, i.e. our previous characterisations of the objects yet to be arranged in an objective order? Perhaps it is beyond our power to avoid errors in this domain — the risk of error is always there, but isn’t it possible to achieve a greater degree of exactitude in formulating the respective criteria and a greater degree of consistency in reasoning?

One cannot construct even a preliminary division of linguistic means without asking the question of what it is that we in fact classify, without assuming an independent procedure of disengaging units to be classified, on the one hand, and a coherent apparatus applicable to the domain investigated, an apparatus which is supposed to supply us with appropriate classificatory criteria.

The debate over the problem of a coherent and consistent division of the lexicon has been initiated and continues. In the eighties three main proposals were discussed: those by Saloni (1974), Laskowski (1984), and Grochowski (1984a, 1986). Now some new or renewed schemes are before us. I am going to consider here three of them: Wróbel’s (1996), Laskowski’s (1998) scheme in GWJP-M 1998, and Grochowski’s (1998) scheme published almost simultaneously with GWJP-M 1998 which differs from the latter on some substantial points. Laskowski apparently is not aware of Grochowski (1998), as is clear from the fact that he makes reference, in GWJP-M 1998, to an earlier version of Grochowski (Grochowski 1986) which appeared somewhat later than GWJP-M 1984 and could not be reckoned with in that book2. As we see, it is hard to say that the development of research we are interested in has been quite transparent. Our knowledge about the lexical system of Polish is perhaps slightly richer at the end of the second millenium than it used to be 50 years ago, but it is hardly more definite. The structure of the lexicon does not emerge before us in a clear and distinct shape.

---

2 I shall also refer to other works where the problem of fundamental criteria of division of lexemes has been taken to be the starting point of analyses of particular phenomena, cf., e.g., Wiśniewski (1994), Bobrowski (1995), Małdżewska, Bątowa (1995), Dobaczewski (1998).
Therefore, the question posed in the title of the present contribution is apt to start a new stage in the debate we are concerned with. What is needed is first of all a general reflection on the fundamentals of the division we entertain; as for subdivisions at lower levels, they would be determined – step by step – by these main decisions.

* * *

To begin with, I would like to analyse several most striking drawbacks of all the three latest proposals and subsequently to consider the possibilities of how they could be removed. What I am interested in are actually just two main criteria of the divisions that have been submitted. I call the first of the criteria, because of its preliminary character, „criterion 0”, the second, expressly syntactic, criterion, „criterion I”; in this way I try to set up a reference frame for the questions to be discussed, a frame which would be independent from the works under consideration.

The first level of description. Criterion 0

„Depending on the ability of a lexeme of entering syntactic relations with other lexemes, two basic groups must be distinguished. Syntagmatic lexemes have a definite syntactic combinability, i.e. display an ability to enter syntactic relations with other lexemes whereby they make up complex syntactic constructions. Their syntactic function may be of different kinds: they function as constituents (members) of an utterance or as exponents of syntactic relations between utterance constituents. Non-syntagmatic lexemes primarily function as independent utterances, failing to display any syntactic relations to other text elements (hej!, biec!, halo!, baczno!, tak, nie).” (GWJP-M 1998: 56)

The distinction indicated at the starting point of the discussion is really fundamental: (a) the ability / inability of a lexeme to enter syntactic relations, (b) the ability / inability of a lexeme to function as an independent utterance.

Wróbel (1996) and Grochowski (1998) separate these criteria: Wróbel makes use only of the former, (a), Grochowski, only of the latter, (b). However, under a certain interpretation it may appear that we have to do with two aspects of the same reality. What we need is a separation from the basic stock of linguistic means of their analogons which properly speaking do not belong to it. At certain key points all the possible divisions, in so far as they are traced according to substantial criteria, should coincide!

So called non-syntagmatic lexemes – how inappropriate the term „lexeme” as applied here seems to be! – differ from syntagmatic devices in all respects. They differ from the latter by their phonological and word-formation structure, or more exactly, by the lack of such structure. Even words borrowed from the system lose their usual properties and undergo deformations as soon as they get out from the system and begin to function as appeals or interjections; they no longer refer to word formation models, they show irregularities, they display, as it were, idiosyncratic, ad hoc „deri-
vations”, they lose inflection and customary combinability, cf., e.g. *cholera!*, *holender!*,
*cholerstwo!*, *choroba!*, *uwaga!*, *stop!*, *cisza!*, *sza!*, *tss!*

By far not without a good reason Bühler (1934/1971) opposed the expressive or
emotive function of language to the appeal or impressive function and both of them to
the cognitive or representation function: they have been conceived of as separate semiotic kinds of entity. For him, all of them are signs based on different mechanisms of
meaning! Means of expressivity are symptoms, appeals are signals. Should we re-
spect his basic suggestion to reach, in an account of the relevant differences, the level
of semiotic fundamentals, we would rather look upon means of expressivity and ap-
peals as signs displaying a different motivation, as indexical items, and oppose both
their kinds to the most essential signs of language – signs which are not motivated in
that way, i.e. symbols. I adopt the name of “appeals” for devices which are called upon
to bring about a change in the receiver’s behaviour (Grochowski calls them
“wykrzyknienia wolicjonalne” and he disengages their group from the class of inter-
jections). The relevant linguistic means we are concentrating on here should be recog-
nised as separate subsystems affiliated to the language system in its proper, more nar-
row sense.¹

After all, if the units set apart in the indicated way do not make use of any syntax
in the first place, can they be recognised as belonging to the same system as units
which have their syntax, and a complicated one to boot? Should we then start talking
about their joining something, for example, the vocative (cf. Gruszczyński 1987), we
would reject our own distinction. Dobaczewski (1998: 30) was right in opposing this
stance. What we have to do with here is a kind of co-occurrence of expressions rather
than their typical syntactic combinability. Apparently, it is for this reason that
Grochowski chooses variant (b) of the criterion. But in so far as we do not decide
whether the utterance independence is determined by the lack of combinability, we
indulge in an evasive attitude as regards the problem at hand.

The criteria of classification of units which are deprived of combinability cannot
be syntactic. A great number of researchers are aware of that, but they do not draw
sufficiently unequivocal conclusions from the difficulty that has been observed. We
find a very clear and exact statement to that effect in Dobaczewski (1998: 29). Still, in
spite of the fact that he understands that we have to do here with two varieties of
“syntax”, he extends this term to what is not syntax in the proper sense:

“They are only on the condition that the comprehension of the concept of syntaxis is
explicitly made to include the abovementioned phenomena (which we can pre-
liminarily describe as “text co-occurrence” [co-occurrence with other elements

¹ When we penetrate linguistic or paralinguistic expressions in search of expressions that are most similar
to interjections and appeals, we quickly obtain palpable results. What first occurs to us are devices such as
halo, aha, y-hm / u-humm [approval], je-je-je-je [disapproval], ii-tam [contempt], a-a! [appreciation],
hmm ... [pondering], and especially khmy-khmy [calling attention to one’s presence], various conventio-
nalised noises, mumbling, etc., which Pisarkowa (1974) calls “phatic signals”, or even “moans of reflec-
tion” distinguished by Bąk (1974). This list must be checked with respect to their appurtenance or other-
wise (a good introduction to the appropriate considerations is Lebda 1979). Non-linguistic phatic signals,
generally speaking, have the status of indices.
division of lexemes

of text – J.W.] that it will be possible to speak of syntactic criteria of division as applying to asyntagmatic lexemes and characterise the syntactic features of particular elements of the set of these lexemes”.

While describing the principles of co-occurrence of expressions it is well advised to avoid using the terms syntax, syntagmatic features, let alone syntactic relations (for the necessity keeping syntactic relations between expressions apart from their juxtaposition, or co-occurrence, see Bogusławski 1966).

Most certainly, they can have a general semiotic character, they are likely to help distinguish different kinds of signs. But then it is more appropriate to envisage a superordinate, absolutely first criterion. We call it „criterion 0” here. For example, it seems appropriate to include onomatopoetic devices here. All of this would yield a list of categories of the following kind:

1. (1) symbolic devices (semantemes);
2. indexical devices (interjections, appeals);
3. (3) iconic devices (onomatopoetic expressions).

Their mutual links, within the respective classes, are asyntactic. And so are, too, the links between the classes. Interjections, appeals, onomatopoetic expressions make up separate „satellite” subsystems added to language proper. The division of the lexicon of natural language does not begin here; it begins at a higher level.

Before I come down to this crucial problem, I shall make a comment on the status of so called „adjoined utterances” („dopowiedzenia”). They are distinguished in all the three divisions we have been discussing by being opposed to interjections at the same level of classification.

“Adjoined utterances” do not display such a fundamental kind of semiotic distinctness as is proper to interjections or appeals. Their utterance status is on the one hand quite ordinary, on the other, rather inordinary. Dobaczewski (1998) makes a convincing case for the specificity of this class; he notices their metatextual character, but he is not bold enough radically to sever the kind of dependence on context that sets them apart from syntax in the traditional sense of the word. What he calls obligatory co-occurrence with an earlier utterance is neither a syntactic nor an asyntactic junc-}

It is necessary to specify the relation proper to them precisely as a “meta” relation, an “about”-relation; this would circumscribe a unique field for their semantics – as for expressions which are able to bridge two utterances, even in a way that disregards the change of the speaking subjects within a dialogue, otherwise, as Bakhtin (1959-1961) emphatically pointed out, the only real, empirical boundary of units of parole. All of this makes it mandatory to recognise a special status of so called “adjoined utterances” and to analyse this class after it has been set beyond syntax as a type of utterance that is distinguished by their object, above all in the functional order of speech.

They appear in the theatre of speech as displaying most varying setups, not only as responses, but also coupled with interrogativity of some utterances, as Czy tak?, Tak czy nie?, Chyba tak. Chyba nie. as well as at a meta-meta-level (something rightly pointed to by Dobaczewski): next to questions which are supposed to check under-
standing on the receiver’s part, both in yes / no questions and in wh-questions, cf.:

(A) – Gdzie jest Andrzej?
(B) – Gdzie jest Andrzej?
(A) – Tak. Gdzie jest Andrzej?! (Dobaczewski’s example, op.cit. p.51)

or – an authentic telephone conversation:

(A) – Monument?
(B) – Monument?
(A) – Tak. Pytam, czy to firma „Monument”.
(B) – Tak.
(A) – Tak? No to co się pan tak dziwi?!

But it is not the special class of lexemes as such, but rather the particular way of
organisation of affirmative – negative – interrogative use of language (above all, dis-
playing relevance with respect to the current topic) that constitutes the utterances.
(Cf.: Tak właśnie sformułowałem pytanie. Chyba mogę tak zapytać? Tak można to
określić. Tak się to nazywa. Nie można tak tego określić)

The corresponding lexemes as such – bearers of the relevant utterance-making
intonation – are representations of sentences made autonomous (and, owing to the
high frequency of their occurrence, cf. Mańczak’s theory, obfuscating their build-up);
these are new lexemes which enrich the class of basic lexemes: their specificity lies in
their constituting fragments of meaningful sentential responses. Even if they acquired
a certain autonomy as a class, they are equivalents of utterances in a different sense
than interjections or appeals are4.

The second level of description. Criterion I

The basis of the division of syntagmatic lexemes into autosyntagmatic and non-
autosyntagmatic ones, or, as the author of the relevant proposal, Laskowski, explains
his terms, syntactically independent and syntactically dependent ones, is hard to sepa-
rate from the properties invoked as the criteria at the preceding level; all the more so
as Laskowski uses an auxiliary criterion in the shape of formula (b), i.e. the test of the
possibility of a lexeme functioning as an independent utterance (this being its second-
ary function). The formula which has been taken as basic at this level is (c) „capable /

While making these distinctions we face the urgent necessity of specifying what
we understand by „the ability of a lexeme to enter syntactic relations”, once we now
refuse to ascribe the ability of being a constituent of a sentence (a sentence which is no

4 Dobaczewski (1998) convincingly argues for the specificity of this class. However, the kind of its conte-
xtual involvement (“obligatoryjna kookurencja tekstowa”), assuming that it does in fact distinguish the
class, would rather incline one to place it above all in the functional, not syntactic, order of phenomena.
25

DIVISION OF LEXEMES

In fact we invoke here, in a veiled way, the distinction of two kinds of syntactic relations.

The idea everybody must be familiar with when he wrestles with lexical material or at least follows up other persons’ efforts in this area is the idea of setting apart such elements of the system which, in spite of their displaying a certain amount of combinability of sorts or even „being obligatorily joined by other expressions on both sides” (conjunctions are a case in point), do so in a completely different way than the entire basic lexicon. Here, we have to do with other kinds of combinability or perhaps even with other meanings of the word „combinability” (let me add that the kind of combinability I have in mind is also different from that present in a case like Hej! Kolego!).

Whereas combinability in an ordinary sense implies an expression (as a representative of its class) creating definite expectations concerning the appearance of some expression from another class (a well defined class which may happen to be a certain subclass of a class) in juxtaposition with the former expression, combinability in the other sense, in the sense we are envisaging now, does not carry any such presuppositions. It does not imply imposing categorial constraints by one expression upon another, constraints that could be couched in syntactic terms.

Even if the criterion of division we have made precise in this way may seem, at first sight, too restrictive, it is still worth introducing; moreover, it will be useful to learn that it divides the entire lexicon into unequal parts one of which includes lexemes taking the position of a constituent in a sentence, i.e. entering various syntactic relations and thus making up the structure of the sentence (all these descriptions are synonymous), the other, those which enter no such immediate relations, do not function as constituents, stand beyond the sentence. Should we decide to cover both types of combinability with the word „syntagmatic”, we have to make this explicit and then, in the very next move, separate them from each other. This is the first and most important duty someone who carries out a syntactic division is confronted with: to recognise and reveal these distinctions.

The next problem to be faced is a rigorous, consistent complementation of the division in question. This issue has not been indicated in a sufficiently clear way by the three authors. One can get the impression that the authors, while being aware of the separate statuses of the units that are set apart, have not clarified for themselves how they should interpret that fact: should the matter boil down to the counterdistinction of the exponents of syntactic relations between constituents on the one hand and the constituents themselves on the other (this is the old idea of Klemensiewicz)? As it happens, prepositions and relative pronouns are placed in the same group side by side with conjunctions, something which infringes on certain reasonable criteria (I shall say more about this below). The so-called connecting function is brought to the fore. However, conjunctions – as opposed to prepositions and „relators” – are not expo-
ments of those syntactic relations which are taken to typically characterise syntactic combinability of expressions. If they are exponents of some relations, then these relations are in any case different from those ones.

Thus, even if we correct the very formulation of the criterion, there still remains the issue of the relevant qualities to be assigned to the objects in question, qualities that require a careful investigation.

(1) Among autosyntagmatic lexemes we find particles which do not play the part of constituents (cf. Wróbel 1996 and Laskowski 1998; they are called „modalisers” (“modalizatory”) in Laskowski as well as in the present treatment; these are lexemes of the kind that can be illustrated with chyba «perhaps» on the one hand, and on the other, with nawet «even»). This erroneous qualification has migrated from GWJP-M 1984 to GWJP-M 1998. Contributions by Kallas (1995), Wajszczuk (1992) pertaining to this question have not been heeded. Grochowski (1998) apparently evaded the problem, but it is inherent in the substantive fabric of his division: particles are registered alongside adverbs.

(2) Should all expressions functioning as constituents find their way to autosyntagmatic lexemes, relative pronouns (alias relative connectors, alias relators) must be classed here, too, even if they cannot substitute utterances. This shows that two criteria have criss-crossed here. Wróbel (1996b) has tried to remove this flaw: he has transferred relative pronouns (with their more exact subdivision: accommodated // inflected, unaccommodated // uninflected) to the class of autosyntagmatic lexemes setting them apart – within that class – in terms of the connecting function; thus, he has made this criterion cut across both branches of the division in that it has been applied to, as well as covered, the whole range of syntagmatic lexemes (called infelicitously „non-independent” by him). This has no doubt been a step towards making the division more coherent; but it has not been reflected in GWJP-M 1998.

(3) This criterion – „a lexeme exerts the connecting function” – has been applied concurrently in all the three proposals at the same place of the respective schemata, i.e. on the third level, to classify: in Laskowski’s terminology, non-autosyntagmatic (syntactically non-independent) lexemes, in Wróbel’s terminology, more broadly, both such exponents of syntactic relations which are not sentence parts and – separately – such exponents of syntactic relations which are sentence parts. The filling of the place is also different in the works discussed. A class of non-connecting lexemes is opposed to connectors (conjunctions, prepositions and relators, in Wróbel’s work – conjunctions and prepositions); this class is small in Laskowski’s and Wróbel’s presentations; it has been worked out in a more detailed way in Grochowski’s scheme.

Both these classes: connectors and non-connectors, have come out, in all the three authors’ expositions, as intrinsically not fully coherent.

Three groups of lexemes with a totally different nature have been placed among connectors; and only conjunctions meet the preliminary condition: they do not function as constituents indeed. First, relators (relative pronouns, cf. the preceding point) do not function in that way, as Laskowski states straightforwardly, thus excluding any suspicion of a mistake having slipped into the text (this arrangement of phenomena has been transferred from GWJP-M 1984). Prepositions do not, either. True enough,
they are parts of constituents, but not in an immediate way. This correction with
respect to the old Szoberian tradition of taking prepositions to be, on an equal footing
with conjunctions, indicators of relations was made by Klemensiewicz long ago (1957)\(^5\).
For some incomprehensible reason it has been ignored ever since: in all the three
schemes prepositions go hand in hand with conjunctions.

The class of non-connectors is not internally homogeneous, either. Very different
kinds of „operators” are lumped together here. But I shall not go into the details of the
relevant fine distinctions.

A separate comment is in order on the issue of independence // dependence of
lexemes as possible self-contained utterances. This issue is raised in many contribu-
tions.

Whether the relevant formula is applied as a basic criterion (Grochowski 1998) or
as an auxiliary criterion (Laskowski, i.e. GWJP-M 1998), it needs to be made more
specific. For it is by far not clear, what we in point of fact check by using it. The
conditions of the test must be specified in an exact way. There are circumstances
where every lexeme can attain utterance independence: what I have in mind are „mini-
mal responses” which are dependent on an interrogative context, cf.: *Bia‡*, *Wczoraj*,
*Szybko!*, *Bardzo!*, in particular, when they reiterate a word contained in a question, or
vice versa, when they impose interrogative intonation on a word, e.g. – *Za czy przeciw?*
– *Przeciw!*; – *Dam mu tylko dwie.* – *Tylko?*

The difference between such responses and so-called adjoined utterances
(„dopowiedzenia”) like *Tak*, *Owszem*, *Dobra*. which are endowed with contextual in-
dependence (as explained by Wróbel) is fairly tangible, yet the existence of such short
responses in which the respective member represents a complex sentence structure does
not seem to be a syntactic phenomenon. These facts reflect, not syntactic features in a
narrow sense, but rather functional features. All predicates in the function of a rhematic
expression can be minimal utterances; thus, under appropriate contextual circumstances
it is quite easy for adsentential operators to be such minimal utterances, cf. *Mo¿e...*, *Na
pewno?*, *Oby...!, Niechby!*, *Gdyby ...!*, *A mi¿!*, the same applies to conjunctions, albeit
not all of them, cf. questions like *I?*, *WiŒc?*, „Modalisers” or particles are perfect bearers
of semantically self-contained utterance intonations: *Przeciez!*, *Tylko!*, *Nawet!*

Even adprepositional operators like tu¿, zaraz and adnumeral operators like *oko¥o*,
*ponad*, *przeczo* (cf. Wróbel 1986 and Grochowski 1998 who followed Wróbel; the
classes mentioned here have been introduced recently) can turn up as independent
utterances. It is in fact hard to exclude the possibility of appearance of responses like
*Ponad*, say, when this is a more exact specification of some rough estimate: *Zarabia
pewnie kolo tys¥ca!, or even to exclude the possibility of dialogues like: – *Stan¥ przy
mnie. Tu¿-tu¿*; – *Wychodzisz po nim! – Zaraz?* – *of all of that in spite of the fact that what
we have to do with in such cases are sometimes specimina of a sort of „parcellation”
of utterance elements, so that we deal here with a periphery rather than the centre of
ordinary verbal behaviour.

\(^5\) I have analysed the drawbacks of this arrangement in a similar way already in Wajszczuk (1992, 1997).
In the present article I introduce some not very far-reaching, but important specifications.
All these observations are not readily reconcilable with the heading of almost the whole of the class of non-inflected lexemes in which Grochowski (1998), but also Laskowski (even though he makes only a secondary use of this criterion), place them. Wróbel avails himself of the formula merely where he explains the status of adjoined utterances; thus, on the face of it he does not slip into a collision with himself.

Practically speaking it is only relative pronouns (relators) that are, in their special function, so strongly entangled in dependency syntax that they cannot occur as self-contained utterances.

* * *

It is interesting to note that in the tradition invoked by our authors thoughts were formulated which changed traditional attitudes making them more modern and transmitted suggestions which, if heeded, were in a position to prevent many inconsistencies and help overcome a number of difficulties.

I would like to point to one such move of thought that has not been used to the benefit of further research. This is a small article by Henryk Misz from 1968 „Additional intellectual determiners from a formal-syntactic point of view”.

Although it had been devoted to a fairly particular problem, it made Klemensiewicz’s fundamental division of „sentence elements” into three disjoint classes: 1. constituents, 2. indicators of adjunction, and 3. additional determiners, into its starting point. The author took interest in a certain subclass of additional determiners (particles) – so-called „intellectual determiners”; these words or expressions are deprived of syntactic value. They are in no way constitutive for the grammatical structure of the sentence, they stand outside it, they exert no modifying function. They must therefore be opposed to the basic class of expressions, i.e. „syntactemes” which are susceptible to being constituents. The author reinforces these statements by comparing the distribution of both classes while at the same time making, among other things, the difference between particles and adverbs more salient. It is worth noting that the authors we were talking about earlier on have blurred this difference!

The author also upholds the differentiation of „intellectual determiners” as introduced by Klemensiewicz yielding, on the one hand, the class of those ones which are adjoined to constituents and on the other hand, the class of those ones which are adjoined to sentences; at the same time he makes deeper observations pertaining to that vital point. To wit, he calls attention to the interrelation between the first subclass of determiners just mentioned and the functional articulation of the sentence which he calls „psychological articulation”; furthermore, he shows the non-arbitrary connection between the determiners and prosodically as well as positionally marked constituents, bearers of sentential stress, „bearers of the content dominant”, or as we would put it nowadays, rhemes, cf.:

„The linkage between a determiner with that constituent is indicated by the immediate neighbourhood of both elements (in written speech, usually preposition of the determiner).” [p. 168]
On the other hand, the adsentential determiners do not show any such properties, even though they are sentence elements:

„I have mentioned that some determiners are adjoined to the whole sentence; it should be added that such a sentence may have an arbitrary structure. This confirms the statement to the effect that determiners do not have a syntactic value (which would be the condition of correctness of the sentence). A sentential determiner usually takes the initial position, and the neighbouring expression is not a marked constituent. This position of adsentential determiners allows us to set them apart from determiners which are adjoined to constituents. Adsentential determiners do not belong, it is true, to formal devices rendering the psychological articulation of the sentence overt, but they do not participate in making up its grammatical structure, either.” [p. 168]

This brief article which is nonetheless saturated with much content ends in a very important conclusion:

„In a syntactic system, alongside syntactemes, i.e. elementary units which constitute the grammatical structure of syntactic products (strings of syntactemes, syntactic groups, sentences), there are also elementary units which are non-grammatical in nature. Among them are additional intellectual determiners discussed above which are used only in products of sentential rank. The presence of determiners in the syntactic system shows that it is necessary to distinguish two planes in it: the grammatical and the non-grammatical.”

That the two planes are necessary to distinguish is confirmed, according to the author (cf. his reference to Szober’s work of 1937), by the very presence in a sentence of such elements as definite prosodic phenomena (e.g., sentential stress) and so-called „non-grammatical word order”.

It is this two-planehood of syntax envisaged by Szober, who was backed by Misz in a matter-of-fact and substantial manner, a property they regarded as an empirically given reality, has been completely ignored in contemporary classifications we have analysed, notwithstanding the fact that the development of linguistic research in the domain of functional sentence perspective not only confirms its existence, but shows its remarkable importance.

No matter how much place is devoted to particularised descriptions of the relevant linguistic means6, they should be accounted for at the very starting point, i.e. in the syntactic division of lexemes (at least those ones which represent segmental (lexical) means). The expressions utilised in functional articulation of utterances (expressions placed beyond the sentence) should be disengaged already at this stage, they must not be mixed up with „syntactemes”. Among them are not only particles (Laskowski’s „modalisers”), but also conjunctions, as I have tried to show elsewhere (Wajszczuk 1997).

The distinction of adsentential particles and those ones which are adjoined to constituents, essentially as proposed by Misz (who followed Klemensiewicz’s lead), but

6 To say nothing about the necessity of compiling a new structural description of prosodic means! An integrated description of Polish must include a special chapter: „Prosody”.
no doubt after being duly translated into the terms of functional syntax (to wit: particles operating on entire T-R structures, ultimate rhemes, adrhematic particles of different levels operating on members of that structure, rhemes undergoing thematisation and adjoined to themes), can be upheld, with the proviso that the essential similarity of the two classes has to be shown, in particular, the involvement of the former on an equal footing with the latter in the shaping of the thematic-rhematic structure (functional perspective) of utterances. The present stage of development of knowledge in this area allows us to successfully handle many a recalcitrant phenomenon.

The description of Misz’s „adsentential determiners” quoted above: „Adsentential determiners do not belong, it is true, to formal devices rendering the psychological articulation of the sentence overt, but they do not participate in making up its grammatical structure, either.” [p. 168] which has a totally negative character and does not suggest any solution should simply be corrected in the sense of a uniform presentation of the general function of particles as „modalisers”, as correlators of meanings that are specifically proper to utterances.

Today Misz’s observations may seem not to be particularly revealing. The features of the shifting position of particles and their broad combinability which is radically opposed to combinability of adverbs (Misz exemplifies the problem merely with tylko «only»; the article was published in 1968!) are now becoming clear to a greater circle of language researchers; and still the latest description of Polish does not reflect these findings7. Grochowski’s and Laskowski’s self-corrections (in the former case 1998 with respect to 1986, in the latter, GWJP with respect to GWJP-M 1984) do not contain those qualifications. Wróbel is right when he emphasises the unlimited combinability of particles, but he does not draw the necessary conclusion. Grochowski shows a rather cautious attitude here and even gives vent to his doubts on that account. But these doubts can be waived if one stresses the difference between various perspectives of description: in syntactic respect combinability of particles is unlimited, i.e. particles do not impose any constraints on class appurtenance of expressions; restrictions concern the rules of semantic combinability! One can assent to what the author of the monograph on Polish particles claims: there remains a lot to be done; everything must be carefully examined and checked.

It is necessary to state the following: Klemensiewicz’s three-member and at the same time three-plane division of linguistic means is now interpreted in a wrong way – by reducing the three planes to one. It should be not so much corrected as additionally interpreted by reducing the planes of description to just two, in accordance with what Szober and Misz envisioned. Each of the planes has to receive its separate elaborated language of description: on one plane – that of syntax proper – of constituents and indicators of adjunction, on the other – functional syntax, syntax of utterance – of additional determiners and ... other indicators of adjunction.

---

7 Mobility of adverbs has a completely different character from that of particles (variability of linear position); therefore, it is ill-advised to account for it in a unitary form: „variability vs. stability of linear position”. This point in the new version of the division of non-inflected lexemes submitted by Grochowski is a step backwards compared to excellent observations by Misz (1998).
The essential division of linguistic means from the vantage point of syntax is that into two classes: first, „syntactemes” – as they are called by Misz – or what is apt to play the part of constituents, and second, all those linguistic elements which are not bearers of syntactic values. In fact only the former ones represent „sentence elements” since, as Misz rightly put it, they make up its structure. What stands beyond the sentence should be excluded from the common label „syntactic” because this name is by far too misleading.

A classification based on syntactic criteria can only be applied to syntactemes. What has no syntactic value is in service of functional syntax, i.e. of content organisation working on already syntactically shaped material, in other words, of the thematic-rhematic structure. What term is apt to embrace all those means in such a way that the upholding of the combinability point of view could be made possible? „Functionals”? The semantic aspect of the problem suggests that Bogusławski’s (1979) term „metatextual comments” is appropriate here: this term is indeed close to their true nature. All of them are metatextual predicates; their use adds a metautterance plane, as it were, from above.

Means of utterance-creating operations are to be handled with the aid of other immanent division criteria. The traditional division: „connect / do not connect” is in a certain sense applicable here, but only after units to be affected by the connecting operation have been ascertained as really existent.

„Connecting” is proper to indicators of adjunction of units at the same level of the thematic-rhematic structure, or of the respective rhemes – it is proper to conjunctions of different types and such that they display various ways of application.

„Not connecting” is proper to units that materialise comments embedded in the relevant specific domain of meanings as referring to units of the appropriate level of the thematic-rhematic structure (this structure, it will be remembered, is hierarchical in nature), i.e. to rhemes; it is thus proper to particles of different types and displaying various ways of application.

This is the method by which we can translate the strong intuitive vision of the nature of the little „wordlets” which are so mysterious into a perhaps still not sufficiently perfect language of functional syntax, of syntax of utterance. Both kinds of units must then be subdivided into functional subsets corresponding to specific tasks they are supposed to fulfill. Certain suggestions concerning the appropriate subdivisions have been laid down by Bogusławski (1979, 1999).

„Functionals”, like syntactemes, are organised in a systemic way. As operators of functional „syntax”, they help transform a sentence into an utterance and thus embed it in a quite different set of coordinates, or more exactly, in the multidimensional space of the speech act. That kind of methodological decision cannot be mistaken for opening the door into an amorphous pragmatic space; otherwise, it might still be well advised to delineate an appropriate domain as a subdomain of linguistic pragmatics in a narrower sense, provided a serious revision of the term „speech act” and its more exact definition has been submitted. The present day terminological usage (or ways of usage which are yet to be sorted out) so far does not make this possible. What is needed already now is awareness of the fact that all utterance-creating operations...
including decisions concerning the choice of „speech act” means are strictly conventionalised, in harmony with the main constructor’s of the basic instruments for the level of description now under consideration, Austin’s (1962), outlook.

Both methodological objections to the classification schemata voiced by Gruszczynski (1987) were well taken. They can, however, be complemented and reinforced. It is by far not indifferent in what way units of description are define\(^8\).

One cannot establish these units, i.e. the material basis of investigation, without clarifying the borderline between inflection and word formation, morphology and syntax (cf., e.g., Bogusławski 1992). The respective procedures are really endangered by a vicious circle. If we set up the relevant boundaries in an arbitrary way, we just cannot expect that our investigation procedure will in point of fact ascertain or explain anything.

One cannot point out what units we really deal with until their disjoint existence has been proved. This is at bottom the Saussurean idea which Bogusławski calls linguists’ attention to and elaborates on in some of his works.

There is a great amount of work ahead. For example: „noun”, „adjective”, „verb” are in fact morphological classes (unlike „numeral” which is a semantic class). Now, the units of syntax cannot be handled by invoking their morphological description; their task is to transfer semantic hierarchical predicate-argument structures into the plane of linear organisation. It is necessary to say in a rigorous way what we are to understand by „entering a syntactic relation” or „dependence” ( „dependence in the content plane” and „dependence in the expression plane”). What is overdue is an exact description of all the intricacies of juxtaposition. It is necessary to delineate utterance-creating functions and set apart the units materialising them which should be independent of syntactemes. Only after all of this, and much else, has been done can one hope for the task of a consistent syntactic and functional classification having acquired chances of a successful fulfillment. It has constantly to be kept in mind that two planes must be distinguished: two “syntaxes” are at work in speech – the syntax of sentence and the syntax of utterance.

To sum up.

It is semantemes that make up language in a narrow sense. As we move into their field we see that their main divide leads to the distinction of two different zones of meaning: of what sets up meaning by our relation to the world (object language), and of what sets up meaning by reference to the very process of speaking; the latter domain is the domain of „metaspeech”.

This has its reflexes in syntax (understood as based on „sign to sign” relations): there are different kinds of combinability (class requirements / syntactic value / lack of class requirements).

Let us call these two subsystems of linguistic means operating on different planes: syntactemes (after Misz) and functionals (from the semantic vantage point – „metatextual comments”, after Bogusławski 1979).

\(^8\) It is for this reason that what Wiœniewski (1994: 83) submits with respect to a possible division of his “syntactic wholes” is hard to make use of in our consideration since his objects are not classes of lexemes, syntactically indivisible units of language.
Thus, there are two syntactic orders: the ordinary object order and the functional metautterance order.

In a similar way we have to envision an account of semantics and an account of how it reveals itself in formal, materially tangible ways, as well as further subdivisions within the two classes. We can say in advance, however, that the statements of combinability of particular classes according to the pattern: „they can combine with verbs”, „they can combine with nouns” – do not yield disjoint classes. One had better make a sustained effort to set up a correct, really adequate characterisation of combinability of particular classes. Much remains to be done.

The scheme of the main nodes of division that emerges from the present analysis is not radically different from the one in Wajszczuk (1997); however, it has been somewhat clarified. It reads as follows:

(0) opening of places
  for other expressions
    no
    (asyn tagmatics, (motivated signs))
    yes
    (syntagmatics “semantemes” (symbols))

(I) opening of places
  for representatives
    yes
    (autosyn tagmatics (AS), “syntactemes”)
  of definite classes
  by expressions
    no
    (synsyntagmatics (SS), “functionals”)
  as representatives
    of definite classes

A glance at the third level of division. Criterion II

Further subdivisions of the classes of AS and SS must take their different nature into account.

It appears to be imperative to make the following contradistinction within the class of SS: between, on the one hand, the expressions which open two positions (let us emphasise once again: positions filled, by definition, with expressions (syntactemes) undergoing no categorisation as regards their appurtenance to definite classes or their level of syntactic complexity, expressions including sentences as well) and, on the other hand, those ones which open one juxtaposed place, one position (it may be filled even by a whole sentence). In this way a broadly understood class of connectors is distinguished which is carved out in a similar way as traditional conjunctions used to be distinguished and which includes a subclass made up by conjunctions in a narrower sense. Connectors will not include relators or prepositions, or even expressions like ¿e, ¿eby, aby, czy: all the three classes just mentioned are necessarily concomitant to expressions in definite expression classes. Connectors are opposed to particles, varying greatly, to be sure, in their nature which co-occur with most varied expressions without any categorial motivation of their curious accompaniment.

All preliminary investigations that have been done so far indicate that both subclasses mentioned above show sufficient functional affinity as “discourse words”.

DIVISION OF LEXEMES
Attention should be called to the fact that the criterion which has been applied here is the so called “connecting function” now in wide use. But it undergoes an interpretation that substantially restricts it and makes it more specific. Further subdivisions of connectors and particles would only invoke positional features of SS – so scarce is the repertoire of their syntactically relevant properties.

The selection of a criterion for the division of syntactemes (AS) is a much more complicated task; an we know – let’s state it clear – that it is only at this point that a division of the basic building material of sentences begins. Which question, out of those questions we can ask having syntactemes in mind, should gain priority, which of them is the most general and promises to make a sufficiently deep insight into the mechanisms of the syntax of sentence? Ought we first to extend the criterion of “connecting function” to this area of phenomena (as proposed by Wróbel)? Should this criterion be applied in the same sense as in the course of division of SS, we would have to separate the expressions which open one position from those ones which open two such positions. A minute’s reflection is enough to become aware that an exactly identical opposition cannot be recovered on the syntactemes’ side.

Let us try, by way of digression, consider Wróbel’s proposal to isolate, within syntactemes, the group of connectors (with an eye, in particular, to giving an account of relators). It will be remembered that there still remain relators as well as prepositions (moved away from the area of SS) which are waiting for being somehow accommodated in the new place. Should we distinguish the subclass of “connectors” among SS by applying the apparently ready-made criterion “connect” (a criterion only, as it were, waiting for being employed) without having checked what exact sense the criterion has in fact been assigned, we would run the danger of enforcing our background notions of linguistic reality presupposed beforehand upon the division to be made. The point is that the property of the opening of two syntactic positions (“on both sides”) ascribed traditionally to relators and prepositions appears upon a closer inspection to be an illusion. Relators (ten, kto __, __; __ temu, komu __; taki __, jaki __ etc.) are “congruents” (to use the apt and convenient notion introduced by Bogusławski 1966), rather than “governing” members in an accommodation relation, with respect to members which are not only different, but belong to different sentences, so that they, far from connecting sentences, “link” them as it were. Prepositions cannot be said to open both positions in the same way, either. They are congruents in their relation to the verb and governing members in their relation to the noun (NP), something which changes the sense of the criterion; the latter only spuriously preserves its previous apprehension. As we see, at this stage of the division of AS there are no sufficient grounds for using the criterion “the opening (in the same way) of two positions”.

In order to be able to submit a criterion of division of lexemes from the viewpoint of kinds of their combinability (as representatives of the respective classes) with other expression classes, we have to have a full safeguard that the mechanism of “opening syntactic positions” is unitary in its nature. Thus, we know, for example, how to count so-called “argument positions” that are opened in the semantic plane by specific verbal predicates while keeping non-implied positions, positions of “circumstances”, “determinants”. But how are we to formulate the criterion of this distinction so as to
make it sufficiently general, to embrace both, and eventually all (i.e. three, as the experts claim) kinds of dependency? Is it, for instance, the case that the kind of dependency holding between certain classes of nouns and numerals, while the former fill the places “implied”, “opened” by the latter, can be equated with the kind of dependency holding between an argument expression and an agentive or mental predicate? And what about the dependency between a noun and an adjective? When we peruse the huge literature of the subject we come across most varied attempts of ordering the types of syntagmatic dependency, attempts that do not supply us with a satisfactory answer. In the tradition of syntactic description the very subject matter of analysis has not yet been properly defined.

The most careful account of the types of syntagmatic dependency between two elements taking all kinds of relation in a given context based on a unitary descriptive apparatus was given by Bogusławski (1961).

So perhaps the first and foremost task is to find an appropriate way of asking the question of what kinds of “opening places” we can at all to do with. What are the formal properties of expression classes which are symptomatic of those kinds of “opening places”?

Without a proper, in-depth study of such questions, also with an eye to further ensuing questions and answers, it is impossible to carry out a syntactic division of Polish lexemes.

However, before we answer all those questions, it is worth contemplating, as a matter of a preliminary idea, the possibility of using the direction of syntactic relation as a classificatory criterion that may have a special value. This criterion would yield two subclasses of expressions: expressions which open syntactic positions for specific expression classes, but do not enter positions opened by other expression classes vs. expressions which open syntactic positions for specific expression classes and themselves enter positions opened by other expression classes too. These classes would include, on the one hand, finite verbal forms, adjectives, numerals as well as various intensifiers and operators of approximation like _bardzo_, _prawie_, _zaraz_, _około_, on the other, nouns and adverbs as types of unit that complement other expressions.

---

9 A reservation must of course be made at this point to the effect that the concept of implied syntactic positions is given a totally different interpretation in the formalists’ approach (cf. Szpakowicz 1986, Saladziūtė 1981) where expectations generated by a specific segment of written text (not an expression class, not a lexeme, but a given word form, e.g. _chłopiec_, _chłopca_, _Kowalskiego_, _obrązy_) are estimated with respect to the probability of another text segment occurring in juxtaposition (on the left-hand side or on the right-hand side) regardless of their possible semantic relationship. All combinations must be taken care of; the problem of the vector of the respective relations (if any) is neutralised in this type of description. This is a syntax understood in a completely different way which has its own descriptive object and goal wholly deserving scholars’ attention.

10 Contemporary research in the West includes a vast trend of investigations in the field of syntactic-inflectional accommodation which has hitherto not been satisfactorily assimilated, cf. Folia Linguistica XXXIII / 2. Agreement. Special Issue.

11 Cf. the idea of applying this kind of criterion, albeit only with respect to a much more restricted field of non-inflected expressions, in Wajszczuk 1992; a similar criterion has also been used by Wiśniewski 1994 who applies it, however, in a different way: in regard of “asyn tagmatics” (what he is paying attention to are not purely syntactic relations).
As a result, we would obtain a separation of all the items of a metapredicative nature from all the items which serve the purposes of predication at the object level. There is little doubt that the problem raised here calls for a special inquiry.

The division at the third level would assume – according to my tentative proposal – the following form:

(II)
(AS) Syntactemes
fill places opened by other classes yes no
complementing characterising

(SS) Functionals
open two places yes no
connectors (conjunctions) particles

Just to revert to the question posed in the title: a complex consistent division of Polish lexemes has to be made from scratch; this includes setting up an appropriate scheme of criteria. In pursuing the goal thus outlined a strict distinction must be made between on the one hand a formal classification which has yet to define its ends, methods and criteria as applying merely to unilateral entities and a functional classification on the other, the latter fulfilling the task of obtaining a deeper insight into bilateral linguistic entities, an insight which would do full justice to the striking correlations of purely semantic and expository factors.

Summary

In the article an analysis of several syntactic divisions of Polish lexemes recently put forth has been carried out, first of all of the scheme submitted in the new edition of the textbook “Gramatyka współczesnego języka polskiego. Morfologia” (1998).

The main drawback of the divisions is the deficit of precision concerning the respective criteria; a clear cut and coherent conceptual apparatus of syntactic description behind the authors’ proposals is hard to recover; this applies, in particular, to contextual dependency, self-contained character of utterances, connecting function. Whatever criteria are used in the works under consideration, they do not warrant a disjoint nature of the classes that are set up.

The author makes an attempt at stating an order of the initial, preliminary steps of the classificatory process. Yet she is arrested at a stage where the proper division is to be undertaken since she does not find, in the works she has scrutinised, any indications pointing to criteria which could be sufficiently relevant for a description of how units of language combine.

References


