

Linguistics classes, verb and noun

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“ Discuss and contrast some of the main features of the classes VERB and NOUN in English and any other language. ” In this essay I will make an attempt to discuss differences between two classes of lexemes, which are verb and noun. In order to conduct that analysis in a detailed manner I will refer to two languages, English and Polish (minor references to French will also help my studies). I will start from defining what one can refer to as class in linguistics. I will refer to certain shadows of doubt that may be casted on that categorization.

This will be followed by elaborating subtleties of what constitutes a verb providing examples and showing contrasts between two languages examined. With the help of studying materials I'll manage to outline empirical criteria for how the concept of verb can be understood by a linguist. Then, I will implement similar methodology to clarify the concept of a noun class. Finally I will arrive at a conclusion that beyond any doubt those two categories are distinctly different and minor similarities emphasized by two drastically different languages simply make the case more interesting.

A scholar is able to divide every language into two diverse, but mutually supplementing, categories. Grammar is a set of closed system that determines how items of the language interact with each other. Lexicon, on the other hand provides a glossary of lexemes. Lexeme is more than a word, as it refers to all possible variations of linguistic items used within language. Its relation to the meaning can sometimes proves difficult to define without implementing a variety of terms in the definition. To fully explain what a given lexeme means it has to be placed in a variety of contexts and supported with examples.

An alternative to lexicon is called a thesaurus and it groups words accordingly to their semantic similarities. Lexicon can be further divided into classes of lexemes. Unlike grammar, these systems of lexical concepts are open, which means their content varies depending on the language. Before drawing the line between nouns and verbs I'd like to draw attention to possible blurs of that line. In English language words such as [walk] relate to both a noun and a verb. This is not exactly a homonym (lexeme that has the same form but varies in its meaning) as both words refer to the same activity.

Interesting comparison with the Polish language is that it never uses verbs as noun but still has large variety of verb derived nouns such as zapalenie (inflammation) or skojarzenie (association). Despite that fact verb derived noun in Polish such as bieg (a run) is not its noun form of the verb – bieganie (running). It also contains a significantly smaller number of homonyms, most of which either differs in spelling (kot-kod) or has a foreign origin (pilot – tv remote and pilot – one that steers a plane) and is usually a noun. English uses multiple homonyms within different classes and semantic distances: pitch, division.

As no universal differentiation can be drawn for classes of verb and noun they are most commonly identified by several categories of lexemes. Verb in every language refers to motion, rest, giving, affect, corporeal, attention and speaking. Some languages allow further distinction to nuclear and non-nuclear verbs. Nuclear verb of rest in Polish would be leżec (means to lay, applied to either an object or a person) and the non-nuclear item that can be

defined only by a reference to the nuclear verb – zalegac (to lay somewhere for a long time/to stand in the way of everyday activities).

English, on the other hand cannot provide a good example of such a lexical item. A scholar can also mark off verbs to be transitive or non-transitive. A transitive verb needs to be completed by an object of the action (We left John.) while the intransitive is complete without any object to follow (We could not stand it so we left.). In Polish transitive (przesuwac - to move an object) are entirely different words than intransitive verbs (skakac - to jump). Categories that will only refer to verbs class are modality and tense aspect.

Both in Polish and English future past and present tenses occur, however in Polish perfect tenses are only implied by the context: Patrze na niego od godziny – I've been watching him for an hour. What's also fascinating is that in past and future continuous tense Polish verbs suddenly have gender. Discussing modality it's worth mentioning that in Polish imperative mode of a verb is always a different form any regular conjugation (which wouldn't be the case in French). English modality is most likely to be contained within the context of the sentence.

Comparing these languages from the perspective of verbs scholar should also bear in mind that while English has phrasal verbs (put it off) that are quite different from their lexeme of origin (put) Polish does not. I'd risk a statement that this function is associated with a complex system of prefixes (wlaczyc, wylaczyc – turn on, turn off). Following the applied logic one ought to explain the lexical class of noun with its typical references. Nouns describe parts of the human body and components of other things, fauna, flora, sun moon and stars, elements, and artefacts.

They also stand for abstract terms such as emotions, colour or time. Latter one often leads to interesting observations when examined from a linguistic perspective. In Polish and French instead of asking for the time, one asks for the number of the hour. A noun could be derived from verbs or adjectives (swim, hatred) or underived (beauty, fish). Dixon stated that transitivity value of verbs is equally important to the gender of the noun. In English nouns don't have gender, while in Polish and French even objects have gender. Distribution of gender qualities within these lexemes can be conditioned by the context of culture.

It's also often implied by vowel suffix in French and Polish (e in French and a in Polish). Nouns can take singular form or plural form when added a suffix (s in English and i in Polish). There are exceptions both grammatical (fish) and mass-nouns (mud). Some languages include use of a possessive suffix, however neither English nor Polish would be an example. Class of nouns also includes generic terms, which mean a word that can mean a variety of things depending on the implied intention. An example that is close to perfection is the noun "thing" which can stand for any other noun.

It can as well be a feature of speech style. Curious detail is, when translated, the word thing in Polish can take two forms (*cos/rzecz*), both have a similar meaning but are used in different context and the latter one has a female gender. Less obvious example would be a Polish word *wiersz*, which can refer to a poem as well as to a single text line. According to scholars like Marantz certain lexical items can be used in a variety of syntactic structure and implementation of any lexicon, therefore classes such as nouns or verbs are entirely futile.

I beg to differ as the summary of my analysis shows multiple differences and distinctive features of each class. Verbs and nouns are defined with a variety of different concepts. Every additional term that refers to categories within a class is like an additional dimension, which outline boundaries of semantic field necessary for understanding the concept. Therefore, provides a valuable methodology for linguistic studies. Blake Lezenski Word Count: 1235 Bibliography: R. M. W. Dixon, 2012. Basic Linguistic Theory Volume 3: Further Grammatical Topics. Edition 1. Oxford University Press, USA. Erkelens, M. A. , 2009.

Learning to categorize verbs and nouns: studies on Dutch. Utrecht: Amsterdam Center for Language and Communication----- [1]. Dixon R. M. W. Dixon, 2012. Basic Linguistic Theory Volume 3: Further Grammatical Topics. Edition 1. Oxford University Press, USA, p. 290. [2]. Ibid 291. [3]. Ibid 291. [4]. Ibid 300. [5]. Ibid 293. [6]. Ibid 300. [7]. Ibid 305. [8]. Ibid 291. [9]. Ibid 302. [10]. Ibid 301. [11]. Erkelens, M. A. , 2009. Learning to categorize verbs and nouns: studies on Dutch. Utrecht: Amsterdam Center for Language and Communication, p. 26.