

## SOME PROBLEMS WITH THE DESCRIPTION OF PARADIGMS OF POLISH VERBAL MULTI-WORD UNITS<sup>1</sup>

*Abstract:* The present paper aims to indicate some basic problems connected with the description of paradigms of verbal multi-word units. Moreover, a concept of a digital inflectional dictionary of paradigms of Polish multi-word units is presented. From the functional perspective, the verbal phraseological units fulfill the role of a verb in a sentence. They are also inflected as standard verbs. Sometimes they inherit the paradigm of a funding verb yet sometimes they have some additional constraints of grammatical, semantic or pragmatic nature. Thus, the paradigm of a verb and the paradigm of a verbal multi-word unit based on this verb may differ significantly.

*Keywords:* idiom, inflection, phraseology, verbal multi-word units.

### Introduction

Verbal multi-word units<sup>2</sup>, such as *posłać kogoś na zieloną trawkę* (to put sb out to grass; lit. to send sb to green grass)<sup>3</sup>, are units of language that occurring in a sentence fulfill the role of a verb and, consequently, are conjugated as verbs. However, numerous verbal multi-word units may reveal interesting constraints of their paradigms, e.g. they have no future or past tense.

In this paper I intend to present some basic problems connected with determining paradigms of Polish multi-word units and, moreover, to put forward by use of examples what consequences they have on the content of the electronic dictionary of verbal phraseological units being realized in the University of Warmia and Mazury in Olsztyn. There are three main methodological premises underlying the analysis. Firstly, the concept of linguistic units (Bogusławski 1976). Secondly, the Lewicki's (1986; 2003) concept of verbal multi-word units (in Polish *zwrot*) conceived functionally, i.e. from the perspective of their role in a sentence. Thirdly, the verbal inflectional categories following Saloni's description of Polish verbs (Saloni 2000; 2001). These methodological premises will be described in greater detail below yet as first the verbal multi-word units and the possible constraints in their paradigms are to be generally discussed.

### 1. Verbal multi-word units

The inflection of Polish phraseological units has already been the subject of research (especially cf. collections of papers: Lewicki 2009 and Bąba 2009) and resulted in numerous vital observations. Nonetheless, only phraseological units fulfilling in a sentence a role of a noun have been examined thoroughly so far (Kosek 2010) and have been worked out in the lexicography (Czerepowicka, Savary 2012). The very paradigms of Polish verbal multi-word units have not been a subject of exhaustive

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<sup>2</sup> I shall also call them here *verbal phraseological units*.

<sup>3</sup> If it is possible to find an English verbal phraseological equivalent to the Polish one, I give it in the brackets in the first place, then I give the literal, non-compositional translation of the Polish unit. However, if there is no English counterpart that is close in meaning, I define the Polish multi-word unit and then give its literal, non-compositional translation.

research yet. There are only some, albeit significant, remarks in papers by Lewicki (1986; 2003; 2009), Bąba (2009) and Liberek (2006). The paper by Kosek (2013) provides a comprehensive summary of the state of art in both linguistic research and Polish dictionaries.

As mentioned above, in a sentence verbal multi-word units may take a position and function of a standard verb and may be inflected as any other verb. They comprise a verb and a nominal group (or nominal groups) that can be accompanied by an additional preposition. Thus, their basic form may be presented as follows: *V + (prep) NG + (prep/NG...)*, where *V* stands for a verb, *prep* for a preposition and *NG* for a noun group (Lewicki 2003: 59). Here are some standard examples of verbal multi-word units: *ktoś wysadza coś w powietrze* (*sb blows sth up*; lit. *sb blows sth up in the air*), *ktoś idzie z kimś do łóżka* (*sb goes to bed with sb*), *coś pęka w szwach* ('*sth is overcrowded*'; *sth is bursting at the seams*), *ktoś nie ma do kogo ust otworzyć* (*there's nobody to talk to*; lit. *sb does not have anybody to open his mouth to*), *ktoś nie kiwnął palcem, żeby zrobić coś* (*sb did not lift a finger to do sth*; lit. *sb did not move his finger to do sth*).

Verbal phraseological units can be conjugated as standard verbs. Thus, one can generally claim that they inherit from verbs their inflectional categories, i.e.: person, number, gender, tense and mood. Nevertheless, it does not mean that all verbal multi-word units have the same amount of forms as a verb that is their main component. Indeed, many verbal multi-word units have a full paradigm, so as the verb that founds them. For instance, *ktoś leci z kimś w kulki* (*sb takes sb in*; lit. *sb is flying in balls with sb*) has as many forms as the verb *lecieć* (*to fly*), that is to say it is inflected by all verbal inflectional categories. Yet there are numerous verbal multi-word units that have some forms blocked. The unit *ktoś nie urodził się wczoraj* (*sb lived through a thing or two*; lit. *sb was not born yesterday*), for example, has only forms of the past tense and cannot be used in present or future tense. While another defective unit *coś nie chodzi piechotą* (*sth is no trifling matter*; lit. *sth does not go on foot*)<sup>4</sup> has only two possible forms, i.e. third person singular and plural in present tense and indicative mood (*nie chodzi piechotą*; *nie chodzą piechotą*).

In all the examples given above the verb opens a place for an argument in the nominative case that can be fulfilled by a noun or a pronoun. However, there are verbal multi-word units that do not leave a place for a left-side argument, e.g.: *pieniądze się kogoś nie trzymają* ('*sb spends all the money he's got*'; lit. *money do not hold on to sb*), *oko komuś zbieleje* ('*sb will be surprised or envious*'; lit. *sb's eye will turn white*), *nogi się komuś plączą* (*sb is unsteady*; lit. *sb's legs get tangled*). Both groups of verbal multi-word units have a verb as the main component of their structure. In both cases verbs, and hence whole phraseological units, can be conjugated. Still, the latter group<sup>5</sup>, having the left-side argument's place occupied by a nominal component of a particular verbal multi-word unit, cannot be inflected by person, number and gender. It can be inflected only by tense and mood (e.g. *nogi plątały się komuś* – *sb was unsteady*; *nogi plączą się komuś* – *sb is unsteady*; *nogi plątałyby się komuś* – *sb would be unsteady*). These kinds of verbal phraseological units are not taken into account in my following remarks. Henceforth, I shall focus

<sup>4</sup> The argument's place is normally fulfilled by the word *money* (Polish: *pieniądze nie chodzą piechotą* – lit. *money does not go on foot*), a certain amount of money or something that can be treated as an equivalent of money.

<sup>5</sup> These kinds of phraseological units are in Polish phraseological literature called either *verbal multi-word units* (Polish: *zwroty związku głównego* – Lewicki 2009) or *phrases* (Polish: *frazy* – Bąba 2009).

Some problems with the description of paradigms of Polish verbal multi-word units only on the former type of verbal multi-word units, namely, those that have an open left-side place for an argument.

## 2. The constraints of paradigms of verbal multi-word units

Let us briefly look at the verbal grammatical classes and examples of defectivity within units that have certain grammatical forms blocked for a variety of reasons<sup>6</sup>. They may be blocked because of the grammatical, semantic and pragmatic reasons. The constraints of paradigms comprise all the inflectional categories, i.e. person, number, gender, tense and mood. Moreover, certain constraints refer also to derivatives (nominalisations, adjectivisations) and aspectual pairs.

The limitations including person are mostly of a general nature. All the verbal multi-word units that have not *somebody* as the left-side argument do not create the forms of the first and the second person<sup>7</sup>. For instance, *coś lepi się komuś do rąk* (*sb has sticky fingers*; lit. *sth sticks to sb's hands*) has not the forms: *\*lepię się komuś do rąk* (lit. *I stick to sb's hands*), *\*lepicie się komuś do rąk* (lit. *you stick to sb's hands*) etc. There are also units that have only certain forms blocked. Lewicki (2003a: 60) is indicating an expression *ktoś wyciera sobie kimś gębę* ('to speak about sb without respect'; lit. *sb is wiping his mug with sb else*) as one that cannot be used in the first person, i.e. *\*wycieram sobie nim gębę* (lit. *I am wiping my mug with him*).

It seems that the category of the number of verbal phraseological units has no constraints of an inflectional nature. The possible limitations arise mostly owing to syntactic, semantic and pragmatic qualities of verbal phraseological units and noun phrases followed by them. For instance, the string *pokłaść się spać* ('to go to bed')<sup>8</sup> seems to have limitations concerning the number of the verb. Namely, it seems not to occur in singular forms and to be typically used in plural forms, e.g.:

- (1) Dzieci pokładły się spać wcześniej niż zwykle. (Children went to bed earlier than usually)
- (2) \*Dziecko pokładło się spać wcześniej niż zwykle. (The child went to bed earlier than usually)

Yet, if one takes a closer look, at least two cases appear that deny the initial intuitions. Firstly, in the Polish syntax verbs subsequent to nominal group containing cardinal numbers (except *one* and those ending with *two*, *three* and *four* that are followed by singular)<sup>9</sup> and, generally, lexemes determining numbers (e.g. *wiele* 'a lot',

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<sup>6</sup> For other examples of defective verbal phraseological units cf. Kosek 2013; Czerepowicka, Kosek, Przybyszewski. The first paper is an introductory examination of the issues of defective verbal multi-word units and the information on their paradigms given in modern Polish dictionaries.

<sup>7</sup> Moreover, as Kosek (2013: 55) points out aptly, these types of verbal phraseological units have no impersonal verb forms, known as *-no*, *-to* forms of verbs, e.g. *\*lepiono się komuś do rąk*. One may create the impersonal verb forms only if the verb has a person as its left-side argument.

<sup>8</sup> The discussed multiword unit is in fact not merely 'to go to bed' yet it has some semantic surplus – it presupposes a group of agents (cf. e.g. ISJP and USJP, s.v. *pokłaść się*). In Polish one may also use expressions *iść spać* ('to go to sleep') or *iść do łóżka* ('to go to bed') that may be used both in singular and in plural. One of the reviewers remarked that it is doubtful if the discussed string of words is in fact a distinct unit and suggested that it is rather a regular derivative, called distributive *po-*, for the unit *iść spać*. After a closer look, I cannot find arguments against this suggestion. Thus, however ISJP enumerates it among the units of language (cf. ISJP s.v. *pokłaść się*), I am inclined to admit that it is a regular instance of distributive *po-*, created from *iść spać* ('to go to sleep'), with all its consequences, e.g. the plural character of the arguments. For more information on distributive *po-* see e.g.: Bogusławski 2010.

<sup>9</sup> Talking about plurals in Polish, one ought to keep in mind that there is the agreement between a cardinal number and a noun if the number is *two*, *three*, *four* or any compound number ending up with *two*, *three* or *four*. Except these numbers, all the other ones are in the relation of government. In the former situation nouns are in nominative plural and verbs are in plural, too. In the latter situation nouns occur in genitive plural and connect with verbs in 3<sup>rd</sup> singular (e.g. *25 dziewczyn poszło*; *25 girls went* – *poszło* is 3<sup>rd</sup> sg neuter of the past tense).

*trochę* ‘some’, *mało* ‘little, few’, *mnóstwo* ‘host’) occur in singular. Secondly, nouns naming groups of people (e.g.  *tłum* ‘crowd’,  *oddział* ‘troop’,  *lud* ‘folk’) or nouns being a metonymy of a group of people (e.g.  *wieś* ‘village’;  *obóz* ‘camp’) may be followed by verbs in singular, e.g.:

- (3) Mnóstwo ludzi pokładło się spać. (Host of people went to bed.)
- (4) Cała wieś pokładła się spać. (The whole village went to bed.)

As to the category of the gender, similarly as in the category of the number, it seems that there are no units whose grammatical forms are constrained to a certain gender. Some verbal phraseological units look as if they occurred only in one gender yet after a meticulous analysis it proves to be false. Let us consider a unit: *ktoś chodzi z brzuchem* (‘sb is pregnant’; lit. *sb is walking with a belly*). Prima facie, one may reckon that the paradigm of this verbal multi-word unit is constrained to the feminine gender. Yet it is only appearance. The constraint is only of a semantic nature and thus it is the natural gender that is important here, not the grammatical gender. Namely, the unit may be used with an argument that is in the feminine gender, e.g. *kobieta* (‘woman’), *dziewczyna* (‘girl’), but also with nouns that name women, however, are not grammatically in feminine gender yet in masculine (e.g. *babsztyl*, colloquially and offensively ‘woman’) or in neuter (e.g. *dziewczę*, bookishly ‘girl’).

Moving on to the tense, we may say that there are numerous undeniable instances of constraints including this verbal inflectional category. A good illustration being the unit already mentioned in the first paragraph: *ktoś nie urodził się wczoraj* (*sb lived through a thing or two*; lit. *sb was not born yesterday*). This verbal phraseological unit cannot be used in any tense but in the past. For instance, it is not possible to say:

- (5) \*Przecież Anna nie urodzi się wczoraj. (But Anna won’t be born yesterday.)

In the given example the tense of the verb *urodzić się* (‘to be born’), being the main component of the phraseological unit, is bound to the adverb of time *wczoraj* (‘yesterday’) that blocks, as contradictory, forms different to the past ones. Nevertheless, there are many examples that are not bound up with another component of the phraseological unit yet have similar constraints. Let us, by way of example, take the unit *ktoś urwie komuś głowę* (‘sb will be very angry with sb’; lit. *sb will tear sb’s head out*):

- (6) Szef urwie jej głowę, kiedy się o tym dowie. (lit. The boss is going to tear her head out when he gets know about it.)
- (7) Szef urwałby jej głowę, gdyby się o tym dowiedział. (lit. The boss would have teared her head out if he had got know about it.)
- (8) ? Szef urwał jej głowę, kiedy się o tym dowiedział. (lit. The boss teared her head out when he got know about it.)

The first two examples are absolutely acceptable whereas the latter is not. The examined phraseological unit cannot be used in a sentence that would suggest that the situation described by the phraseological unit has happened or is happening at the moment of speaking. The unit is used as a threat and threats often include a kind of expressive exaggeration. The use of past would cause here a loss of metaphorical sense. This is also the reason of the lack of the perfective participle:

- (9) ? Urwawszy Kowalskiemu głowę, szef poszedł na spotkanie zarządu. (Having teared Smith’s head, the boss went to the meeting of the board of directors)

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Examples similar to the mentioned above, may be multiplied: *powyrywać komuś nogi z tyłka* (to kick the shit out of sb; lit. to tear sb's legs out of his bottom), *utopić kogoś w łyżce wody* ('to hate sb, to wish sb ill'; lit. to drown sb in a spoon of water) etc. None of them has past forms and, moreover, since they occur only in the perfective aspect, they have no present tense.

The mood – the last of verbal inflectional categories – may also have some constraints in the paradigm of a verbal phraseological unit. There are, for example, units containing a verb in conditional mood like: *ktoś dalby się posiekać za kogoś/coś* (sb would go through hell for sb/sth; lit. sb would let himself being chopped for sb/sth). It can be inflected by person, number and gender yet it seems to occur only in the conditional:

- (10) Dalibyśmy się za siebie posiekać. (lit. We would let ourselves being chopped for each other.)  
(11) \*Daliśmy się za siebie posiekać. (lit. We have let ourselves being chopped for each other.)

Within the category of mood it is also worth to mention about the issue of the imperative that was already noticed by Kosek (2013: 58p.). Let us take as an example units: *ktoś ma duszę na ramieniu* (sb's heart is in his/her mouth; lit. sb has his/her soul on his/her arm) and *ktoś jest jedną nogą w grobie* (sb has one foot in the grave; lit. sb is with his one leg in the grave). It is doubtful whether one may reasonably order somebody to be hardly alive or to be afraid as in the following sentences:

- (12) ?Miej duszę na ramieniu! (Have your heart in your mouth!)  
(13) ?Bądź jedną nogą w grobie! (Have your one foot in the grave!)

What one gets in sentences like those above is by no means a standard directive (in its pragmatic meaning) form but rather a kind of wishful saying. This type of situation refers to unintentional states that normally cannot be the topic of imperative utterances<sup>10</sup>. There are also numerous units that clearly have no imperative because of their grammatical form, as for example the mentioned above conditional *ktoś dalby się posiekać za kogoś/coś*. However, there are also many units whose status is not clear and it makes problems to unequivocally decide whether they might occur in the imperative. For example, they seem to have the imperative but only in negatives (Kosek 2013: 59), e.g. *ktoś zapomniał języka w gębie* (sb lost his/her tongue; lit. sb lost the tongue in his mouth).

Another problem is the issue of arguments that are required by certain verbal phraseological units. Numerous units demand an argument that ought to comply with specific requirements. So it is for example with the argument marked by *coś* (something) in the unit *ktoś podnosi coś do potęgi* (sb raises sth to a power), where *coś* (something) is a number or an unknown. Another instance is a unit *ktoś wyciął kogoś w pień* (sb put sb to the sword; lit. sb cut down sb into the trunk) where the second personal argument ought to be a group of people (expressed by a noun phrase in singular or plural). The nature of such kind of requirements referring to arguments is purely semantic and is beyond the essential aims of the inflectional dictionary of verbal multi-word units.

The aspect in Polish is typically not treated as an inflectional category (cf. Saloni 2000; 2001) and seems to be situated somewhere between morphology and inflection (Lewicki 2003). The aspect is, however, decisive when it concerns the type and amount of possible inflectional forms. The perfective has no present tense but has the perfective participle. The imperfective in turn has the present tense and the present

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<sup>10</sup> For a thorough analysis of this kind of imperatives cf. Bogusławski 2002; Laskowski 1998.

participle yet has no perfective participle<sup>11</sup>. Most of the verbal phraseological units occur in both aspects, however, numerous units are only perfectives or imperfectives. Among the units occurring only as perfectives one may mention: *ktoś pozjadał wszystkie rozumy* (*sb has all the answers*; lit. *sb ate up all minds*); *ktoś ruszył głową* ('*sb started to think*'; lit. *sb moved his head*) etc. In turn, as instances of imperfectives one may indicate: *ktoś ledwo wiąże koniec z końcem* (*sb barely makes ends meet*; lit. *sb barely ties one end with another*), *ktoś łowi ryby w mętnej wodzie* (*sb fishes in troubled water*), *ktoś widzi tylko czubek własnego nosa* (*sb does not see beyond the end of his/her nose*; lit. *sb sees only the tip of his/her nose*). If one tries to make a sentence with a non-existing – for the certain unit – aspect, the verbal phraseological unit undergoes the loss of its metaphorical meaning, e.g.:

- (14) ? Jan ruszał/rusza/będzie ruszać głową. (John was moving/moves/will be moving his head.)  
 (15) ? Ewa zobaczyła tylko czubek własnego nosa. (Eve saw only the tip of her nose.)

In such instances we have to do with demetaphorisation – the sentences given in examples above are well built sentences, however, they lose their phraseological meaning and may be read only literally. Thus, the former sentence says something about John's making movements with his head and the latter sentence says nothing other than about Eve who perceived only the tip of her nose. Moreover, it is worth to quote Bąba's remark (2009a: 175) on the frequency of tenses in aspectual variants of verbal phraseological units. Namely, the imperfectives favour the present tense whereas the perfectives favour the past tense. It happens both in a situation when there exist two aspectual variants of a verbal multi-word unit and when there is only one variant, perfective or imperfective.

Some verbal phraseological units have even no infinitive. Sometimes it happens as a consequence of constraints of the very verb being the main component of the verbal multi-word unit, as it is for instance with the unit *ktoś powinien znać swoje miejsce* (*somebody should know his/her place*). The verb *powinien* has no infinitive and the verbal phraseological unit only inherits, together with the verb, this feature. Though there are also units that have no infinitive form despite they contain a verb that normally occurs in the infinitive. A good example of such a case is the already discussed unit *coś nie chodzi piechotą* (*sth is no trifling matter*; lit. *sth does not go on foot*). As we have noticed above, its inflection is limited to merely two forms: third person in singular and in plural, indicative of the present tense. Therefore, the infinitive *nie chodzić piechotą*, although possible as a string understood literally, does not occur as a form of the verbal multi-word unit.

Another issue is forming derivatives of verbal multi-word units. Basically, there are three regularly formed derivatives of verbal phraseological units<sup>12</sup>. Nominalisation that results in creating a gerund is the first of them, e.g. *chodzenie z brzuchem* ('*being pregnant*'; lit. *walking with a belly*), *łowienie ryb w mętnej wodzie* (*fishing in troubled water*). One ought to remark that when the verbal multi-word unit consists a noun in accusative that in the unit takes the position of the object, the noun in nominalisation

<sup>11</sup> The active and passive participle are treated here, following Saloni (2000; 2001), as adjectives. Thus, they are not included into the very paradigm of the verbal multi-word unit yet they are treated as verbal derivatives, so as the gerund form is.

<sup>12</sup> Lewicki (2003: 69p.) rates nominalisations and adjectivisations, as results of regular and categorial transformations, into the paradigm of verbal multi-word units. In our approach, however, following inflectional perspective of Saloni (2000; 2001) and his description of Polish verbs, we do not count these forms into the strict paradigm of verbal multi-word units. They are treated as regular derivatives here and as such ones, they are included into the inflectional information of verbal multi-word units only as additional information.

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changes its form to genitive (as in the second example in this paragraph: *ryby* vs. *ryb*). Two other derivatives, the result of adjectivisation, are: the active participle (e.g. *chodzący z brzuchem* – *walking with a belly*) and the passive participle (e.g. *posłany na zieloną trawkę* – *put out to grass*; lit. *sent to green grass*). The former is built of an imperfective verb while the second of both perfective and imperfective verbs. The passive participle of a verbal multi-word unit might be obviously formed if the verb making the phraseological unit is transitive and, moreover, the noun in accusative that appears in the expression is not a part of the verbal phraseological unit (Lewicki 2003: 68).

### 3. The dictionary of verbal multi-word units

All the problems presented above are to be considered in the electronic inflectional dictionary of verbal multi-word units that is being realized at the University of Warmia and Mazury in Olsztyn (Poland)<sup>13</sup>. The project aims at description of paradigms of 5,000 verbal multi-word units. As already mentioned in the introduction, there are three key methodological premises that make the basis for the research.

The first premise determines what is considered as a multi-word unit of language. Referring to the concept of units of language formulated by Bogusławski (1976), one may claim that a unit of language is a minimal element of structures whose limits are determined by the notion of open/closed substitution class and that are strictly proportional in their formal and functional properties. Thus, one counts among units of language, for instance, the following multi-word strings: *ktoś chodzi z brzuchem* ('sb is pregnant'; lit. *sb walks with a belly*), *ktoś ledwo wiąże koniec z końcem* (*sb barely makes ends meet*; lit. *sb barely ties one end with another*) because the parts of those strings make no open class. It is not possible, for example, to replace *z brzuchem* (*with a belly*) by another string (e.g. *z garbem* – *with a hump*; *z podbrzuszem* – *with an abdomen* etc.) that would be a unit semantically proportional. On the other hand, one cannot count as a unit of language the string *ktoś chodzi na grzyby* (*sb goes mushrooming*) because the part *na grzyby* is an element of an open class (*na zakupy* – *for shopping*; *na koncert* – *to a concert* etc.). That is why it is treated as a mere collocation.

The second key premise is the functional classification of phraseological units by Lewicki (e.g. 2003; 2009). According to Lewicki's approach, verbal multi-word units are strings of words that may fulfill in a sentence the role of a verb. From the inflectional perspective one may add that some of these units inherit fully inflectional features of a funding verb or they have some other constraints that have an impact on the paradigm of a verbal multi-word unit.

The third methodological concept that is significant in the presented description of verbal multi-word units is the Saloni's approach to Polish verbs (Saloni 2000; 2001) resulting in the amount of inflectional categories that are considered. Therefore, following Saloni we take into consideration five inflectional categories that were already discussed in the former section. Namely, person, number, gender, tense and mood. The whole paradigm of verbal phraseological unit is to be presented in the form of tables, more or less so as it is worked out in the Saloni's electronic inflectional dictionary of Polish (Saloni et al. 2012). The dictionary of verbal multi-word units is not to look completely the same as the one just mentioned, though. For instance, we do not intend to include the first and second forms of singular neuter that

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<sup>13</sup> There are three people working on the project: I. Kosek (the head of the project), M. Czerepowicka and Przybyszewski. The project is described in detail in: Czerepowicka, Kosek, Przybyszewski 2014. The dictionary is planned to be finished and available online fully in 2017.

are normally given in Saloni's dictionary. Moreover, some additional pragmatic and semantic comments on the use of verbal phraseological units are to be added.

In the following section an example of the paradigm description of a verbal multi-word unit is presented.

#### 4. Examples of description

Let us take as an instance of analysis probably one of the most cited idiomatic units *ktoś kopnął w kalendarz* (*sb kicked the bucket*; lit. *sb kicked the calendar*). Firstly, it is necessary to make sure whether the discussed string is a unit of language and not a mere collocation. The string seems to fulfill all the conditions of being a unit of language, e.g. replacing *kalendarz* 'calendar' by any other word does not create a semantically proportional unit. What we may also notice is that there are some other verbal variants of this phraseological unit. Thus, in the place of the verb *kopnąć* 'to kick', the verbs *stuknąć* 'to knock', *walnąć* 'to bash' and *uderzyć* 'to hit' may appear. It seems, hence, that there are some variants of our verbal phraseological unit: *ktoś kopnął w kalendarz*, *ktoś stuknął w kalendarz*, *ktoś walnął w kalendarz* and *ktoś uderzył w kalendarz*. All of them ought to have a separate entry<sup>14</sup>.

Then we have to decide whether the perfective form has its imperfective counterpart. One can notice that trying to use the unit as an imperfective leads to the loss of metaphorical sense (i.e. to die):

(16) ? Jan kopie w kalendarz. (John is kicking the calendar.)

(17) ? Byłem przy nim, kiedy kopał w kalendarz (I was with him when he was kicking the bucket.)

The lack of the imperfective may be caused by the punctual character of the unit, so to say it means more than just 'to die', it means 'to die suddenly' (McGinnis 2002). Thus, it seems there is only the perfective aspect that should be considered<sup>15</sup>.

The fact that the verbal phraseological unit is perfective has its consequences in the amount of forms that comprise the paradigm. On the one hand, there is no present tense, present participle and the derivative active participle. On the other hand, there is a perfective participle and simple future tense. However, the perfective participle arises some doubts. The use of a perfective participle in a gerund clause demands the same agent in the main clause, thus, presupposing that the agent did something else after the action described in the gerund clause (cf. *Kopnąwszy w kalendarz, on...* – *After he had kicked the bucket, he...*). Of course, one may think of very special contexts where using the perfective participle would be possible yet in a way it remains odd:

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<sup>14</sup> It is possible that the list of verbs may be prolonged (WSJP enumerates additionally *strzelić w kalendarz*). One of the anonymous reviewers also listed *pierdolnąć w kalendarz* and *jebnąć w kalendarz*, that contain vulgar verbs *pierdolnąć* and *jebnąć* (both meaning 'to fuck' and in this particular use 'to whack'). They are indeed widespread in the colloquial variant of Polish. However, they will not be included into the dictionary because of being colloquial. We decided to consider only those units that are used in the standard variant of Polish language.

<sup>15</sup> There is, however, one type of forms that may cause some reservations. It seems that even if the imperfective aspect cannot be accepted in whole, the sentences in the 3<sup>rd</sup> person of present tense uttered with a general reference of nominal group are acceptable. For instance: *Wcześniej czy później każdy kopie w kalendarz*. (lit. *Sooner or later everybody kicks the calendar*.). The present tense used in such kind of utterances is habitual, not current (cf. the distinction in: Laskowski 1984: 134p.). In the National Corpus of Polish (NKJP) there are only four instances of imperfective forms – all of them in the 3<sup>rd</sup> person of present tense.



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- (18) *Kopnąwszy w kalendarz, jeszcze przez jakiś rok straszył swojego szefa. (After he had kicked the bucket, he haunted his boss for a year or so.)*

Because of the structure of the unit there is no passive participle form and, subsequently, no use of passive voice possible. One observes here the same intransitiveness as in the verb *umrzeć* 'to die'.

The use of the unit *ktoś kopnął w kalendarz* in imperative is also specific. The problem was already mentioned when the issue of mood was discussed. All in all, the form of imperative has no sense of order whenever one has to do with unintentional verbs, so to say whenever the change of state is out of control (Laskowski 1998) and does not depend on the agent. Then the imperative is a mere advice, wish, spell or curse.

In general, the discussed verbal phraseological unit has almost full set of possible forms. To sum up, the paradigm of the unit, together with its derivatives, yet without the pragmatic and semantic comments, is presented in the table below.

*ktoś kopnął w kalendarz*

**THE INDICATIVE**

**THE FUTURE TENSE**

	singular	plural
1 <sup>st</sup>	<i>kopnę w kalendarz</i>	<i>kopniemy w kalendarz</i>
2 <sup>nd</sup>	<i>kopniesz w kalendarz</i>	<i>kopniecie w kalendarz</i>
3 <sup>rd</sup>	<i>kopnie w kalendarz</i>	<i>kopną w kalendarz</i>

**THE PAST TENSE**

	singular			plural	
	masculine	feminine	neuter	virile	non-virile
1 <sup>st</sup>	<i>kopnąłem w kalendarz</i>	<i>kopnęłam w kalendarz</i>		<i>kopnęliśmy w kalendarz</i>	<i>kopnęłyśmy w kalendarz</i>
2 <sup>nd</sup>	<i>kopnąłeś w kalendarz</i>	<i>kopnąłaś w kalendarz</i>		<i>kopnęliście w kalendarz</i>	<i>kopnęłyście w kalendarz</i>
3 <sup>rd</sup>	<i>kopnął w kalendarz</i>	<i>kopnęła w kalendarz</i>	<i>kopnęło w kalendarz</i>	<i>kopnęli w kalendarz</i>	<i>kopnęły w kalendarz</i>

**THE IMPERATIVE**

	singular	plural
1 <sup>st</sup>		<i>kopnijmy w kalendarz</i>
2 <sup>nd</sup>	<i>kopnij w kalendarz</i>	<i>kopnijcie w kalendarz</i>

**THE CONDITIONAL**

	singular			plural	
	masculine	feminine	neuter	virile	non-virile
1 <sup>st</sup>	<i>kopnąłbym w kalendarz</i>	<i>kopnęłabym w kalendarz</i>		<i>kopnęlibyśmy w kalendarz</i>	<i>kopnęłybyśmy w kalendarz</i>
2 <sup>nd</sup>	<i>kopnąłbyś w kalendarz</i>	<i>kopnęłabyś w kalendarz</i>		<i>kopnęlibyście w kalendarz</i>	<i>kopnęłybyście w kalendarz</i>
3 <sup>rd</sup>	<i>kopnąłby w kalendarz</i>	<i>kopnęłaby w kalendarz</i>	<i>kopnęłoby w kalendarz</i>	<i>kopnęliby w kalendarz</i>	<i>kopnęłyby w kalendarz</i>

**THE IMPERSONAL FORMS**

INFINITIVE	<i>kopnąć w kalendarz</i>
IMPERSONAL –no, –to	<i>kopnięto w kalendarz</i>
PERFECTIVE PARTICIPLE	<i>kopnąwszy w kalendarz</i>

**THE DERIVATIVES**

GERUND	<i>kopnięcie w kalendarz</i>
PASSIVE PARTICIPLE	

The discussed verbal phraseological unit has almost the same amount of forms as the verb *kopnąć* yet without passive participle that is a logical consequence of occupying the place of object by the NG *w kalendarz*. The paradigm of the discussed unit is not represented fully in the National Corpus of Polish (NKJP). One may notice that out of around hundred results that the browser PELCRA returns, there are almost all forms of the future tense (except 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> plural) yet, on the other hand, there are only forms of the 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular and plural of the past tense. There is a single instance of conditional (1<sup>st</sup> person singular). Moreover, no instances of either imperative or participles occur.

The presented fundamentals of research on verbal multi-word units still need theoretical development. It is expected that the work on the electronic dictionary will be a good occasion to indicate the problems more precisely and to determine groups of units that behave similarly because of their grammatical, semantic or pragmatic features. Moreover, the units will be described thoroughly in the dictionary, hence the work on natural language processing has also a chance to develop.

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