

**Derivation and semantic autonomy:
A corpus study of Polish *głowa* ‘head’ and its diminutive *główka***

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As typical of major body part terms, the Polish lexeme *głowa* ‘head’ is highly polysemous and exhibits a number of conventionalized senses extended by means of metaphor or metonymy (cf. Bacz 2009, Derkacz-Padiasek 2010). The word may also occur with the suffix *(e)k* which, according to Polish grammars, indicates smallness or/and positive emotions (e. g. Grzegorzczkowa and Puzynina 1984: 367n., Nagórko 2006: 220, 223), cf. *główka dziecka* ‘(small) head of the child’. However, the derivative *główka* also occurs in some figurative contexts, where the diminutive interpretation is not possible, e. g. *duża główka sałaty* ‘big head of lettuce’. Generally, figurative extensions of the lexeme *główka* partly overlap with that of *głowa*, in some cases are complementary, while together create a semantic network largely similar to those of ‘head’ lexemes in other languages (e. g. Aksan 2011, Kraska-Szlenk 2014, Maalej 2014, Niemeier 2008, Siahhan 2011). We will examine usage patterns of Polish *głowa* and *główka* on the basis of data excerpted from the National Corpus of Polish (www.nkjp.pl). We will construct semantic networks of these lexemes and analyze concordance listings and collocates using computer technology (Biber *et al.* 1998). The lexical pair *głowa/główka* also finds parallels in other body part terms in Polish, cf. *oko* ‘eye’ versus *oczko* ‘eye-dim. (body part)’, but also ‘gem’ (in the ring), ‘eye’ (on a plant), etc. This suggests that the *ek*-suffixation, in addition to deriving diminutives, provides a strategy to reduce polysemy of body part terms and to increase autonomy of some of the metaphorical senses by means of more overt morphological marking. Even though the *ek*-suffix in principle derives an open class of diminutives, in this particular case it functions like other affixes modifying the base-word meaning, cf. *głowica* ‘missile head’, *nagłówek* ‘headline’. Our findings are particularly interesting when the Polish data are contrasted with other languages in which a single word ‘head’ covers a range of meanings corresponding to *głowa* and various members of its lexical nest, cf. Swahili *kichwa* ‘head’ (body part), ‘head’ (of a vegetable), ‘headline’, etc. (Kraska-Szlenk 2014), as well as with languages in which other cues (e. g. compounding, obligatory modifiers) are used for meaning disambiguation and enhance autonomy of particular senses of a polysemous word. By drawing such parallels our study contributes to theoretical research on polysemy and the relation between the meaning and the form.

Selected references

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