

Preamble

The title of the present volume says it all. We provide a thorough description of the consonantal phonotactics and morphonotactics of Polish in a comparative perspective with English. The description is guided by the theoretical assumptions of the models we adopted, i.e. the Beats-and-Binding phonology and natural morphonotactics. The tools we have used consist in the statistical analyses of language corpora, which supplied the other guideline to our research, alongside the theory. Thus, methodologically, we have combined the deductive with the inductive approach, or, in modern sociolinguistic terms, a corpus-based with a corpus-driven one. Eventually, we also arrive at some actual and potential applications of both the results of the research as well as of the data corpus itself.

The aim of the research was twofold. The first aim was to verify the applicability of the Beats-and-Binding model to the study of phonotactics and of the natural morphonotactics model to the study of morphonotactics. The second aim was to provide extensive descriptive observations concerning the consonantal phonotactics and morphonotactics of Polish and English, with emphasis on the former.

Chapter 1 provides theoretical background for the research. It presents phonotactics and morphonotactics within the framework of Beats-and-Binding Phonology and the natural linguistic explanatory model. The principal tool of analysis – the Net Auditory Distance (NAD) – is introduced. The hypotheses guiding the research are previewed. Chapter 2 describes the phonotactic calculator which was created in order to automatize the calculation of NAD values for consonantal clusters. The phonotactic calculator is available online for the study of phonotactics of further languages. In Chapter 3, the resources for Polish and English used in the analyses are described. Chapter 4 constitutes the most substantial contribution of the present volume: an extensive and novel view on the descriptive phonotactics of Polish. Chapter 5 deals with a comparative analysis of the selected aspects of Polish and English (mor)phonotactics, with a view to indicating some typological and language-specific differences and similarities between the two languages. The volume is equipped with ample appendices containing a realm of data on which the analyses were based. The data constitutes a unique resource for further investigations.

The research presented in the volume has been conducted within the National Science Foundation (NCN) Project no. N N104 382540. The book constitutes an extensive final report of the project research and the obtained results. As much as the project has been a joint effort of the project participants, this volume is also a collaborative endeavour of writing up the outcomes of the common work. The project participants are jointly the authors of the present volume, although it must be acknowledged that it was Michał Jankowski, Paulina Zygorowicz and Paula Orzechowska, who played a crucial role in the editing process.

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