Etymology in the
Polish Academy of Sciences
Great Dictionary of Polish*

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Abstract: The article offers an insight into etymological information provided in the Polish Academy of Sciences Great Dictionary of Polish (Pol. Wielki słownik języka polskiego PAN, WSJP PAN). The dictionary and the rules of producing the entries are briefly presented. These rules influence the way of working on etymology within the project. The main part of the article is devoted to the presentation of the field relating to origin and the etymological information which is given in one-word entries. The principles of elaborating upon this information in the dictionary are presented in detail and illustrated with examples. Moreover, some problems, like the question of borrowings, calques and semantic motivation, are discussed in the paper as well.

Keywords: ETYMOLOGY, POLISH ACADEMY OF SCIENCES GREAT DICTIONARY OF POLISH (WSJP PAN), LEXICOGRAPHY, POLISH

Résumé: Étymologie dans le Grand dictionnaire de la langue polonaise de l’Académie polonaise des sciences. L’article porte sur les informations étymologiques fournies dans le Grand dictionnaire de la langue polonaise de l’Académie polonaise des sciences (pol. Wielki słownik języka polskiego PAN, WSJP PAN). Il présente le dictionnaire même, ainsi que les règles de l’élaboration des articles qui influencent la façon de travailler sur l’étymologie dans le cadre du projet. La partie principale de l’article est consacrée à la présentation du champ relatif à l’origine et aux informations étymologiques qui sont données dans les articles n’ayant qu’un seul mot comme entrée. Les principes de l’élaboration de ces informations dans le dictionnaire sont présentés en détail et illustrés avec des exemples. De plus, l’article offre également une discussion d’autres problèmes, à savoir, la question des emprunts, les calques et la motivation sémantique.

Mots-clés: ETYMOLOGIE, GRAND DICTIONNAIRE DE LA LANGUE POLONAISE DE L’ACADÉMIE POLONAISE DES SCIENCES (WSJP PAN), LEXICOGRAPHIE, POLONAIS

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1. Introduction

The aim of the article is to present the principles of elaborating upon etymological information in the most important lexicographic project being carried on in Poland in the 21st century, namely the Polish Academy of Sciences Great Dictionary of Polish (Pol. Wielki słownik języka polskiego PAN, WSJP PAN). First of all, the dictionary and the rules of producing the entries are briefly presented. These overriding rules influence and condition the way of working on etymology within the project. In this situation, the task of etymologists is to find a balance between the traditional principles of offering etymological information and the requirements of an electronic dictionary of a purely synchronic character, available to a wide audience from all over the world.

Therefore, the main part of the article is devoted to the presentation of the field relating to origin and the etymological information given in one-word entries, which are the most important ones for the etymologists working in the WSJP PAN. The rules of elaborating upon this information in the dictionary are presented in detail. They embrace various types of words from the point of view of their origin and are illustrated with examples. Finally, some other problems are discussed in the paper as well, including among others: borrowings, calques, semantic motivation, problematic etymologies — in short, the questions that etymologists inevitably encounter in their everyday work.

2. About the Polish Academy of Sciences Great Dictionary of Polish (WSJP PAN)

As one can learn from the introduction to the dictionary, authored by its editor, Piotr Żmigrodzki, the Polish Academy of Sciences Great Dictionary of Polish is a documentary dictionary, i.e. one which is based on authentic data. The basic source of the dictionary is in the first place the National Corpus of the Polish Language (Pol. Narodowy Korpus Języka Polskiego, NKJP). Another important source of data is a supplementary corpus created at the Institute of the Polish Language of the Polish Academy of Sciences especially for the sake of the dictionary, which is comprised of texts that are not a part of the NKJP. Yet another different source is the Polish Internet, besides which, the authors’ own choice of entries is possible too. To a limited extent the authors of the entries also use other lexicographic resources developed at the Institute of the Polish Language of the Polish Academy of Sciences. The WSJP PAN includes only those lexical units (words, phraseological units, proverbs) which have been attested to in those resources.

The WSJP PAN is a dictionary of Contemporary Polish in a broad sense of the word, as it covers the time beginning with the year 1945, yet one needs to emphasise that due to the character of the sources the majority of the material comes from the last decades of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century. The WSJP PAN is at the same time a descriptive dictionary, and not a
normative one. It needs to be stressed that the authors do not remove from the
description those language forms which are considered to be incorrect. They
only limit their actions to informing the user about the normative unaccept-
ability of the noted facts, following the Great Dictionary of Correct Polish (Pol.
Wielki słownik poprawnej polszczyzny PWN, see Markowski WSPP) and the sty-
listic qualification of substandard units.

The WSJP PAN is at the same time an academic dictionary due to the fact
that the authors strive to apply the achievements of the 20th century Polish
linguistics as much as possible, especially with regard to the semantic, inflec-
tional, and syntactic description of the lexical units. However, the description
provided by the dictionary is at the same time user-friendly, because it is
addressed to the broadest possible group of Polish speakers.

The WSJP PAN is finally an electronic dictionary sensu stricto, i.e. it has
been planned as such from the very beginning, and not as a transfer of the
printed dictionary into an electronic form. Due to this it is possible to apply an
entry structure and a form of presentation that breaks away from the limita-
tions typical of paper dictionaries. One can find the following types of entries
in the dictionary: single words (one-segment units) representing various parts
of speech, phraseological units, most frequently used proverbs, abbreviations,
acronyms and selected proper names.

The dictionary can be accessed on the Internet at the following address:
http://wsjp.pl.

3. Etymological information in the WSJP PAN

3.1 The task of etymology

As is commonly known, the task of etymology is to establish the origin of
words. It is worth emphasising that an etymological investigation aims for the
reconstruction of a previous, even original form of the word, its root, and of an
earlier, possibly original meaning, i.e. its etymological meaning. It is then
important to reconstruct the initial motivation for the word and explain its
form, i.e. define its morphological structure. Thus, etymology deals with both
the formal side of vocabulary and revealing its semantic motivation and devel-
opment. None of the aspects of the reconstruction, neither the formal nor the
semantic one should dominate and none of them can be ignored. A rule is
applied here which may be called the "law of the form and content agreement",
an investigation concerning the formal development must always go hand in
hand with the studies of the development of the meaning. Etymological stud-
ies rely on the methodology of historical-comparative grammar, which allows
for identification of historically related words, i.e. those which are equivalent to
each other, after the application of adequate language laws. One may talk
about credible etymology when all the structural modifications from a given
form going back to the original form may be explained by means of the influ-
ence of specific language laws, while semantic changes are rational and have semantic parallels.

It is obvious that the issue concerning etymological investigation is extremely diverse in its character, as the form of the word may not always be explained as inherited or borrowed. It may also be a result of morphological, word-formation (as e.g. the Pol. KAWIARNIA ‘a place for drinking coffee’) or semantic processes (semantic extension, narrowing or shift, cf. e.g. the Old Polish BIEGUN ‘runner, messenger’ and the Contemporary Polish BIEGUN in a number of scientific meanings: ‘pole’, ‘rocker’, etc.).

3.2 Selection of entries in the WSJP PAN and etymology

An important issue for the team of etymologists employed by the WSJP PAN to consider are the principles of entry selection in the dictionary which condition, indeed, define the steps taken when drafting the information concerning the origin of words. In the WSJP PAN the criteria for selecting entries are the graphic form of the entry word and the grammatical interpretation of the unit. Thus, separate entries describe units that differ in terms of spelling (capital/lower case letter), e.g. BARAN (an animal – ‘sheep’; skin – ‘sheepskin’; about a man – ‘dunderhead’) – BARAN (‘Aries’: constellation; a Zodiac sign; a person born under this Zodiac sign) as well as units of a different grammatical categorisation at the level of so called parts of speech. The consecutive entries of the same shape are indexed with Roman numerals, e.g.:

- PIEC I (verb – ‘to bake’), PIEC II (noun – ‘furnace, stove’);
- ABSOLUTNIE I (adverb – ‘absolutely’), ABSOLUTNIE II (functional word used by the speaker to emphasize that he has no doubts about what he is saying);
- PIEC I (numeral – ‘five’), PIEC II (noun – ‘a very good mark at school’);
- ZIELONY I (adjective – ‘green’), ZIELONY II (noun – ‘the colour green’).

As a result, the entry articles are not divided on the basis of their etymology, as — according to the dictionary authors — this would mean a confusion of the criteria of synchronic and diachronic character. Besides, a consistent adherence to etymology in connection with the use of only the direct source of borrowing in the entries would have to lead to a significantly larger number of “double” entries (as for a number of meanings of lexemes, such as e.g. MYSZ ‘a device for navigating the computer’, SEZON ‘a set of episodes of a TV series’, which are semantic borrowings from English mouse and season, one would have to postulate separate entries). These types of rules concerning the entry selection in the WSJP PAN have resulted in the information about the origin being given separately for each meaning-subentry.

Naturally, in many entries the origin is common for all the subentries. However, entries where the origin of particular subentries is different are rela-
tively frequent. An example of such a situation may be a polysemous entry ŁATA, which has as many as 11 meanings-subentries in the WSJP PAN:

1. ‘a piece of material sewn on a hole in clothing in order to cover it or in some other worn area in order to reinforce it’;
2. ‘a piece of material of a certain colour, shape or with a certain inscription, worn on clothes by people who are in this way stigmatised’;
3. ‘what fills in or covers a hole formed in something’;
4. colloquial ‘a correction or an update of an earlier version of a computer programme in order to remove defects, add new functions to it or enlarge its productivity’;
5. ‘a spot of a contrasting colour against its background’;
6. ‘a part of beef carcass cut out between the round, the plate and the loin’;
7. ‘a large, wooden board square or rectangular in shape, fastened with nails to elements of a wooden construction, mainly a roof’;
8. ‘a smooth board used for checking the evenness of the layers of plaster, floor and other surfaces and for their levelling’;
9. ‘an instrument in the shape of a wooden strip with a scale, used for measuring length and differences in height’;
10. technical ‘a device in the shape of a post with a scale on it driven into the river bed, used for measuring the water level in the river’;
11. technical ‘in the wood industry, lumber with a roughly square cross section and 32 mm to 10 cm thick’.

The first three senses as well as the fifth and sixth one have the Proto-Slavic *lata ‘flap, petal; insert, patch (on clothing, shoes)’ as a base, the fourth meaning is a calque from the English word patch, the seventh and eighth senses are derived from the Middle High German latte, late ‘roof patch, prop, beam’, while the ninth, tenth and eleventh come from the German Latte ‘slat’.

3.3 Principles of providing etymological information in the WSJP PAN

The principles of providing information concerning the origin of particular words have changed in relation to what was binding at the outset of the work on the WSJP PAN and what was applied in practice in entries completed before 2012 (cf. the above footnote 2). It was assumed then that etymological information would be given only in entries describing foreign words. Beginning with 2013 etymological information is provided in all the entries in preparation which have a one-word entry form belonging to the following types: regular entries (nouns, adjectives, adverbs, verbs, pronouns, and numerals) and function entries (e.g. prepositions, particles) as well as in some phraseological entries. In other words, etymology is given for each one-word entry, whereas multiple-word entries usually do not contain etymological information. In the
one-word entries which were drafted earlier (before 2013), the origin of words is also gradually being supplemented at present.\textsuperscript{10} In the case of native words etymological information is usually limited to quoting a reconstructed Late Proto-Slavic form which retains a suitable notation following the data from etymological dictionaries of the Polish language and detailed etymological studies. Here are some examples:

- **GŁOWA** ‘head’: <Proto-Slavic *golva>
- **SPAĆ** ‘to sleep’: <Proto-Slavic *șpǎtći>
- **PIĘKNY** ‘beautiful’: <West Proto-Slavic *pěkń̆y ‘motley, coloured, colourful, decorative’; the nasal vowel -ę- in piękny is a secondary development>.

When the etymology of a given word is not obvious (for instance when the views of etymologists diverge), and we quote it from a specific source, we use the reference in the form of an acronym of this work. For example the abbreviation “Bor” at the end of the information providing the origin of the word in the WSJP PAN indicates that it was based on the interpretation of facts and linguistic premises postulated by Wiesław Boryś in his *Etymological Dictionary of Polish* (SEJPBor).

In the case of derivatives explained synchronically only their derivational base is indicated, i.e. the entry where one can find full information concerning its origin, e.g.

- **KWIATEK** ‘flower’: <see kwiat> (‘flower’);
- **POGODNY** ‘sunny; cheerful’: <see pogoda> (‘weather’);
- **GRZANKA** ‘toast’: <see grzać> (‘to heat’).

As regards the method of referring to other entries in the case of native words and early borrowings, we rely on the system of cross-referents used in SEJPBor. This approach ensures cohesion and referential uniformity of etymological information in all the WSJP PAN entries.

In the case of a derivative which is not explained synchronically, full information concerning its origin is provided, just as in the case of remaining native words, cf.:

- **PRZYCHÓD** ‘income’: <verbal noun from the prefixed verb przychodzić; see chodzić>.

In some entries the meaning of the Proto-Slavic etymon differs from the sense (senses) of the Polish continuation to such an extent that its semantic development needs to be explained and presented. Thus, in entries in which it is necessary, we devote some attention to historical semantics, especially if the explanations refer to some not so broadly known aspects of Slavic culture, cf. e.g.

- **PRZYSŁAĆ** ‘to swear’: <Proto-Slavic *prisęgti ‘to reach, touch’; the sense of ‘swearing an oath, taking a pledge’ is secondary, it probably came into
being in a phrase *prisęgti zemjǫ 'to touch, reach the ground, the soil', hence 'to take a pledge, swear an oath (on the earth)', in connection with the ritual of taking a solemn vow with ancient Slavs during which the person taking a vow touched the ground or ate earth, kissed it or held it in the hand (Bor);[11] see sięgać.

The origin of foreign words, fully or partly borrowed from another language, i.e. borrowings and calques, is established on the basis of data from dictionaries of foreign words, information from etymological dictionaries, monolingual and bilingual dictionaries and from detailed etymological studies. An example of a fully imported word is:

— KAMUFLAZ 'camouflage: <French camouflage>.

A foreign word that is the base of the borrowing is quoted in its original spelling (with the maintenance of diacritics) when a given language is written with the help of Latin script, cf. e.g.:

— BANKRUT 'bankrupt' <French banqueroute>.

The graphic form of a foreign word that is the base of a borrowing is always provided when it differs from its graphic form in Polish. In the case of a word coming from a language which uses a different alphabet than the Latin script, the word that constitutes the base of the borrowing is given in transliteration, with the retention of suitable diacritics, e.g.:

— BORYKAĆ SIĘ 'to struggle, cope': <Ukrainian borykáťysja>.

The length of a sound (in the form of a horizontal line above the letter) is marked only in the case of long vowels, cf.:

— LUMBAGO: <Latin lumbāgō>.

The meaning of the foreign word in the source language is always given when it differs from the sense of the borrowed word. Listed below are some examples of detailed situations connected with borrowings:

(1) a given word has been borrowed from another language, yet its spelling and sense have not been modified in comparison to the source word in that, e.g.:

— BARMAN: <English>;

(2) a given word has been borrowed from another language, but its graphic form has been modified in relation to the source word in the language from which it has been borrowed, while the meaning of it in both languages is the same, e.g.:

— MAKIJAZ 'makeup': <French maquillage>;
(3) a given word has been borrowed from another language, its graphic form has not been changed in relation to the source word in that language, however, the meaning of the word in the two languages differs, e.g.:
   — FILIA ‘a branch of an institution, company (…)’: <Latin ‘daughter’>;

(4) a given word has been borrowed from another language, its graphic form has been changed in relation to the source word in that language, and the meanings in the two languages are different, e.g.:
   — ADWENT ‘in the catholic liturgy the period covering the four weeks before Christmas, advent’: <Latin adventus ‘arrival, coming’>.

Among the WSJP PAN entries one may also come across borrowed word-quotations. The same principles of etymological description apply to them as to the other borrowings, cf.:
   — AD REM ‘relevant, pertinent’: <Latin>;
   — AB OVO ‘from the beginning’: <Latin ‘from the egg’>.

Some borrowings found in the WSJP PAN also belong to the category of internationalisms. If a word that is the base of a borrowing appears in more than one language and there is no certainty as to which one it has been taken from, the qualifier "internac." (< Pol. internacjonalizm) is added as well as symbols of these languages along with forms of the word to be found in them. Moreover, internationalisms are quite often composed of morphemes which have their origins in Latin and/or Greek. In such a case the etymological description comprises not only forms in the three foreign languages, but also the origin of those forms, including Greek and/or Latin morphemes. Here is how it looks:
   — AGRESJA: <international: Eng. aggression, Fr. agression, Germ. Aggression, from Latin aggressio>;
   — LEUKOCYT: <international: Eng. leucocyte, Fr. leucocyte, Germ. Leukozyt, from Neo-Latin leucocytus>; <Gr. leukós ‘white’ + Gr. kýtos ‘jug, vessel; body’>.

In the last example one can see that if borrowings are composed of foreign morphemes, these morphemes are always presented together with their meaning, similarly as in e.g.:
   — MAGNETOTERAPIA: <international: Eng. magnet therapy, Fr. magnétothérapie, Germ. Magnettherapie>; <Late-Greek mágnēs, -ētos ‘magnet’ + Greek therapeía ‘care, respect, treatment’>.

In the case of borrowings we also very often deal with a situation in which some language mediates in the process of borrowing. Then as the first language provided is the one from which the word was directly borrowed by Polish, and further sources are listed (if they are evident, commonly known or important in some other way), e.g.:
If some word is a derivative of a foreign word, the dictionary uses a cross-reference to the derivational base. In the indicated entry, full information concerning the origin is provided, e.g.:

— **BANKRUTOWAĆ** 'to go bankrupt': <from bankrut>;
— **BARMANKA** 'barmaid': <from barman>.

The field of origin in the WSJP PAN offers not only strictly etymological information. This is usually a concise commentary which may be helpful in the understanding of the meaning of the unit, and it is not a part of its definition. It most often concerns eponyms, winged words, proverbs, phraseological units with components referring to characters, geographical names or historical events (biblical, mythological) as well as terms with a proper name as an element. We can quote the following entries as examples:

— **KURONIÓWKA** colloquial 'unemployment benefit' <from the name: Jacek Kuroń (1934–2004), social and political activist, minister of labour and social policy in the years 1989–90 and 1992–93);
— **KOŚCI ZOSTAŁY RZUCONE** 'the die is cast; something has happened whose results cannot be reverted': <words which were allegedly uttered by Julius Caesar when crossing the Rubicon river and this way starting a civil war in Rome in 49 BC>.

### 3.4 Problematic etymologies

As mentioned above, the origin of words is not always obvious. We often need to decide which of the numerous etymological conceptions offered in various studies is more reliable. Then we apply strictly defined principles which allow us to choose a better reconstruction of an earlier form and meaning, as well as a more probable semantic motivation.\(^1\) We can use the word **MANDARYNKA** 'mandarin orange' as an example. Tokarski's *Dictionary of Foreign Words* s.v. (Pol. *Słownik wyrazów obcych*, see Tokarski SWO) suggests that it may derive from the noun *mandaryn* 'a high public official, dignitary and scholar in ancient China' due to the colour of the robes of those Chinese officials, or from the island of Mandara = Mauritius. Sobol's *Dictionary of Foreign Words* s.v. (Pol. *Słownik wyrazów obcych*, see Sobol SWO) presents only one option, namely that *mandarynka* is a borrowing from the French *mandarine*, which in turn comes from the Spanish (*naranja*) *mandarina* 'an orange from the Island of Mandara' (the Island of Mauritius in the Indian Ocean).\(^2\) The only way out in this case was to check the origin of the expression in Spanish. It allowed for a final conclusion that the French (*orange*) *mandarine* comes from the Spanish (*naranja*) *mandarina*, in a literal sense 'the Mandarin (orange)', and the semantic motivation of the *mandarine* is the colour of the robes of mandarins, and not the name of the Island of Mauritius.\(^3\)

When compiling the information concerning the origin of words for the
WSJP PAN we must often correct erroneous etymologies present in etymological dictionaries and dictionaries of foreign words. It may be illustrated by the example of the entry WOLONTARIUSZ: <Latin voluntārius 'volunteer'>. In Sobol SWO s.v. an incorrect origin of the word from the French volontaire is given, while both the form of the word (the ending -usz) and the historical attestations (with -u-) as well as their dating (cf. WSJP PAN s.v.) point to the borrowing from Latin.

When working on etymology we also have to deal with a situation when the etymology of a given word is missing. The problem usually concerns colloquial, older, specialist or dialectal vocabulary, mainly that which originates from foreign languages. Its origin has not been investigated in Polish so far. An example may be the entry PACYNKA, which has four subentries, and almost each one has a different origin. Especially the meaning 'a puppet fitted over the hand which moves thanks to the movement of fingers' has caused us numerous problems. After a long investigation we opted for the following solution: possibly: Germ. Patsche 'hand, little paw', possibly: Pol. *palcynka 'a puppet manipulated by the movement of fingers'; unclear etymology; the word propagated by Jan Sztautynger, an expert on puppet theatres, who — according to his own words — borrowed it from his grandfather> (cf. WSJP PAN s.v.). Such mysterious words which do not have an established etymology are numerous. Listing them, however, would take too much space. The task of etymologists is to investigate what their origin is likely to be.

A considerable problem in the study of the origin of words in the WSJP PAN are calques. Indeed, although many of them have long been identified, numerous words (and still new ones) lead to the conclusion that they may reflect the semantic structure of elements from another language. The problem of calques is most complex for us despite a relatively rich literature on the subject. In general terms, we can suspect the existence of calques in contemporary Polish vocabulary especially when we deal with the newest lexis and terminology, particularly in the field of economy, politics and computer technology. Of certain help in this respect, although to be approached with a large dose of caution, is the ESJPBarńk.

4. To wind up

To sum up the discussion, one needs to clearly emphasise that the field of origin in the WSJP PAN, as of now, does not provide etymology par excellence, but only a concise piece of etymological information which allows the reader to gain some orientation as to where a given word comes from. As a result, derivatives are cross-referenced to their derivational bases, and only the entries which describe basic words provide some broader knowledge concerning their origin. Despite offering such limited information concerning etymology, we fully apply all the methodological principles to be adhered to in the investiga-
tion of the origin of words. We meticulously analyse the form and semantics of each word, at the same time paying the utmost attention to the chronological aspect, which is particularly important as regards borrowings, since much can be deduced from the knowledge of when a given word was attested to the first time.

Notes

2. The first version of the rules of the dictionary preparation was drafted in 2012 and can be found at the following address: http://rcin.org.pl/dlibra/docmetadata?from=rss&id=53406.
5. The literature on this subject is very extensive, cf. e.g. Sławski 1958 and, recently, Jakubowicz 2010: 35–44.
6. Language laws, methodological principles followed in the reconstruction of the form and meaning, and semantic changes may be a subject of separate discussion, yet there is no space for analysing these problems here.
9. Obviously, the German Latte ‘slat’ continues the Middle High German latte, late ‘roof patch, prop, beam’.
11. As the (Bor) abbreviation indicates, it is Boryś’ own explanation excerpted from SEJPBor.
12. Quoting the rules of etymological methodology would exceed the limitations of this paper.
13. Such an etymology can also be found in Andrzej Bańkowski’s Etymological Dictionary of Polish s.v. (Pol. Etymologiczny słownik języka polskiego, see ESJPBańk). It is worth mentioning that Bańkowski also developed its etymology in Sobol SWO.
14. It appears that the Island of Mauritius has never had the name of Mandara. What source the conception presented in both dictionaries is based on is unknown, at the same time, it may also be seen that dictionaries repeat a number of claims one after the other without any further in-depth verification.
15. At this point it is worth adding that etymology has been provided for a certain portion of the Old Polish vocabulary listed in the glossary of Old Polish edited by Decyk-Zięba and Dubisz (2008), while an etymological dictionary of Polish dialects is currently in preparation (cf. Waniakowa 2013).
16. A paper by Jadwiga Waniakowa on the origin of the word pacynka (in different meanings) is currently in preparation.
17. For instance, the recently published guide to English loanwords in Polish (Witalisz 2016), which particularly devotes much attention to various types of calques from the English language, has proved very helpful in this respect.
18. Bańkowski sees calques almost everywhere he turns. He spotted them even where they are quite unlikely, and certainly not evident. In fact, he never considered the possibility of their independent, parallel semantic development in the Polish language.
References


NKJP = Narodowy Korpus Języka Polskiego: http://nkjp.pl/.


