

# Nominalization tendencies in selected speech acts

## A corpus study

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**ABSTRACT:** This paper discusses a nominalization tendency realized in the performance of certain speech acts, which the author discovered in research conducted on Polish chat room conversations. The investigation presented arose as part of a large-scale study of Internet chat room communication. The said study was conducted with the use of corpus linguistics methodology. For the purpose of this study, the author created a corpus of Internet text-based chats. These were conversations held in the main chat window recorded between February 20, 2004 and March 27, 2006. After certain processing of the received language material, the author arrived at a corpus of human communication in a Polish Internet text-based chat consisting of 1,629,823 words. Having studied the chat room lexis, especially lexical items used in selected speech acts (greetings, farewells, thanks and apologies), a number of word-formation processes were detected. In this article, one of the tendencies, namely nominalization, is presented.

**Key words:** nominalization, Internet chat, corpus

### 1 Introduction

Investigating Internet chat room communication, Szymański focuses on expressions used in selected speech acts. The said linguist enumerates several trends which he found in the researched samples. One of the habits of the studied subject is a custom to make nominal forms from words of other grammatical categories. This tendency has already been indicated in a number of studies concerning online communication (see Szymański, 2009, 2011 and 2012a), but has not been studied or reviewed separately, which is the focus of this paper.

The present article begins with a brief explanation of terminology the author finds essential to understand further parts. This is followed by a research description. In this study, the present scholar investigates the nouns created on the basis of other words and used in the speech acts of: greeting, farewell, apology and thanks. These are viewed from the perspective of both theoretical and sociolinguistic, plus certain elements of pragmalinguistics might be found. The author takes the reader through instances of nominalization in the listed speech acts. Aside from this, the grammatical categories of number and gender are discussed. In addition to this, the emotional load in the constructed nominal forms is presented. All these considerations lead further to final conclusions.

Before approaching the above-introduced investigation, the reader needs to be made aware of the fact that the study referred in the present paper was conducted with the use of corpus linguistics methodology. The research in question was carried out on a corpus of Polish text-based Internet chats. Therefore, a condensed delineation of the language samples is also included in the initial part of the text.

## 2 Terminological background

In this part, the reader is provided with essential terminology which both: constitutes the theoretical background for further research and allows the reader for full comprehension of the discussed issues.

### 2.1 Speech act – the definition

John Langshaw Austin (1962) observed that with language, speakers perform various functions. Language is used for a number of purposes, for instance: greeting, apologizing, thanking, warning, congratulating or promising. A speaker's utterance directed at a receiver, which serves a certain function in communication is known as a *speech act*.

### 2.2 Nominalization – the definition

Similarly to speech acts, words also perform certain functions. With this regard, words have been classified into several grammatical categories called *parts of speech* or *word classes*. *Verbs* name actions or states. *Adverbs* modify verbs. *Nouns* are the part of speech which is used to identify (or name) a person, a place, an object or a quality. They may be substituted with *pronouns*. Nouns and pronouns may be further modified by *adjectives*. The relationships between a noun or pronoun and other words in a clause or sentence are shown by *prepositions*. Words, clauses or phrases may be connected with *conjunctions*. *Interjections* express emotions. *Determiners* introduce a noun.

Parts of speech fall into two classes: *open class words* and *closed class words*. The former is a class of words to which new words may be added. This group includes: adjectives, adverbs, nouns and verbs. The latter is a group which is hardly ever added new words to and includes: determiners, conjunctions, prepositions and pronouns. In this paper, an attempt is made to portray how the open class is enriched with new nominal constructions thanks to the linguistic creativity of Internet chatters.

*Nominalization* is a word-formation process in which a noun is created from another part of speech. This paper presents research findings on a nominalization tendency which the author discovered studying speech acts in a corpus of Internet chats. The next section of this paper brings the said corpus closer to the reader.

## 3 Corpus material

As indicated above, the language material for the discussed research comes from a corpus of Internet text-based chats. The said corpus has already been subject to description in, for example, Szymański (2009, 2011 or 2012a). Therefore, the information about the studied samples of language might also be found in those sources.

Before proceeding with the aforementioned analysis, the concept of corpus needs to be explained. Following McEnry et al. (2006), a *corpus* is understood as “a collection of (1) *machine-readable* (2) *authentic* texts (including transcripts of spoken data) which is (3) *sampled* to be (4) representative of a particular language or language variety (McEnry et

al., 2006: 5)”. The choice of the corpus-based approach allows for empirical research, which entails producing reliable and undeniable results. What is more, this methodology permits outcome which might be unobtainable through qualitative studies (Sambor, 2001).

The findings presented in this article stem from conclusions after the large-scale research discussed at length by Szymański (in press). For the purpose of the study, the said author created a corpus of Internet chats. The reader will find a brief summary of the most crucial facts, in the present author's reasoning, about the studied language samples.

The said corpus was built from a collection of scripted Internet text-based chats. Those interactions lasted between February 20, 2004, 17:32 and March 27, 2006, 22:54.<sup>1</sup> The raw material was further edited in order to receive only human communication. Accordingly, all instances of non-human interaction were erased both mechanically, with the use of certain software, and manually. As Szymański (2012a) enumerates, system announcements, software-generated expressions and time stamps were removed. Aside from these, also the deformed diacritic marks were improved.

Calculated with the use of *Wordsmith*<sup>2</sup>, the corpus arrived at consists of 1,629,823 running words. The average word length equals 4.36 letters. Following Piotrowski's (2003a) typology of corpora, the discussed corpus is monolingual since the collected chats were conducted in Polish. The corpus covers a short period of time and the chats are characteristic of this type of online communication; this means that the corpus is synchronous and balanced. The multiplicity of language varieties in the samples make the corpus mixed. The small size of the corpus file (9.6 MB in text format) allows for its storage on one computer, which makes the corpus local.

A short note needs also to be made about the context of these interaction exchanges. The author's observations led him to a finding that this was a virtual place which the chatters treated as a parallel one to the reality. However, this virtual Internet-located world was rather for entertainment or fun. Therefore, the communication which took place there was saturated with a high level of informality.

#### **4 Semantic and pragmalinguistic interpretations**

This section of the present article constitutes a research report on the nominalization tendency revealed in the realization of speech acts. The said trend was observed in selected speech act analyzed in depth and covered thoroughly by Szymański (in press). Below, the reader will find selected elements of the large study, yet exclusively limited to the speech acts of greetings, farewells, apologies and thanks. On the basis of listed words and phrases performing the mentioned phatic functions, the tendency to make nouns of other parts of speech is portrayed.

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1 This information was obtained from time stamps beginning each line of interaction. The time stamps were further deleted in the proces of corpus building.

2 Wordsmith is a software application for linguistic analyses. For more information see [www.lexically.net/wordsmith/](http://www.lexically.net/wordsmith/) (date of access 20.12.2012)

## 4.1 Greetings

*Greetings* are expressions which initiate a meeting or interaction. Similarly to spoken communication, in an Internet chat room, a chat is expected to be inaugurated with such an expression. The Polish language differentiates several classes of greeting expressions. Marcjanik (2006) enumerates the following: formal, informal and religious. The distinction between formal and informal greetings depends on the level of formality between the interlocutors involved in a communication act. The use of religious greetings is restricted to contacts with clergy members.<sup>3</sup>

As far as the phenomenon of nominalization is concerned, this was observed with the first two categories of greetings; that is with formal and informal expressions. As for the religious greetings category, such a trend was not witnessed in the studied corpus.

To start with, the Polish language typically and normatively applies two formal greeting phrases which are time-of-the-day dependent. During a day, the appropriate phrase is *dzień dobry*; whereas in the evening, *dobry wieczór* is expected. Investigating chat room communication, Szymański (in press) points out a sociolinguistic tendency to lessen the level of formality in an Internet chat room. This is achieved, among other measures, with the use of phrases derived from these formal greeting expressions. By the means of compounding the adjective *dobry* and the noun *dzień*, the chatters from the studied language community created the words: *dzieńdoberek* or *dziendoberek* (with a non-diacritic spelling). What is more, the form arrived at underwent also a process of diminutivization. These two word-formation processes combined together culminated in nominalization of the *noun + adjective* phrase into a diminutive noun.

In addition to the above, the said author cites also instances of the diminutive *doberek* in noun phrases: *dzień doberek* and *dzien doberek* (a non-diacritic spelling). The function and purpose of these constructions, however, remains the same as in the case of *dzieńdoberek*. Nevertheless, these two-word expressions occur in the studied corpus more frequently than their one-word equivalents. This might mean that the cited chatters were aware of the two-word origin of the desired expressions and wanted to preserve such a form even in the newly constructed one.

Furthermore, a single occurrence of a word *dziendoberki* was also found in the studied corpus. A speaker of Polish definitely recognizes this word as a plural form of the diminutive *dzieńdoberek*. The plurality might have been motivated by two reasons. For one thing, the plural number, diminutives alike, performs the function of a positive atmosphere arouser. Aside from this, a multiplication function might be assumed. This might mean that the message sender wanted to greet either multiple interlocutors or to greet the interlocutors many times with the application of one word.

Language users' creativity and higher frequencies of words in the researched corpus were regarded in the realm of informal greetings. Selected of these are discussed below in the alphabetical order.

One of the informal Polish greetings is the exclamation *hej*. Colloquial as this expression

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<sup>3</sup> A more comprehensive account of this subject may be found in Szymański (2012b)

is, chatters, none the less, attempted even more informality. Hence they employed certain word-formation process making thus their communication environment a desirably enjoyable place from the very birth of one. Following this reasoning, one of such newly-evoked forms is the word *heja*, made up from the non-declensional exclamation *hej* suffixed with *a*. This operation entails a production of a feminine noun, or a word which looks like one, and still is used as a greeting exclamation.

The already mentioned tendency of chatters to make diminutive forms of nouns brought to functioning words such as: *hejka* (689 tokens) and *hejcia* (122 tokens). Both these diminutive forms received infixes: *hejka -k-* and *hejcia -ci-*. These two are used in Polish to form diminutives; however, the latter, presumably through its lower frequency and inapplicability to most nouns in Polish, makes the received diminutive more positively emotional.

Aside from the above, the studied corpus includes also the discussed greetings with non-standard spelling. In such instances, two types of spelling regularity were violated. First of all, certain letters were multiplied, which implies emphasis. In addition to this, in several words the letter *j* was substituted with the letter *y* (*hey, heya, heyka*), which was done for the purpose of fun and humor. Notwithstanding this, however, when it comes to the nominalization tendencies, these were exactly the same as with the normatively spelled equivalents.

Another informal greeting expression which was observed to have undergone the process of nominalization is *jak się masz?* (in English: *how are you?* or *how are you doing?*). This phrase is reduced by Poles casually into *siema*.

*Siema* is a greeting exclamation used only with people who know each other very well and in informal contexts. Otherwise, this exclamation may cause offense or uneasiness at least. In the studied corpus there were 783 occurrences of this word form. This interjection was made up from the phrase *jak się masz?*, with the drop of the word *jak*, compounding the reflexive pronoun *się* with the second-person, singular, present tense verb form *masz*, and finally clipped into *siema*. Moreover, the nasality of the low front vowel was eliminated. Also, the interrogative form was utterly lost.

The word *siema* seems treated by Polish speakers as a noun since they make diminutives of this form. Through the infixation of a diminutive morpheme *-k-*, chatters greeted others with the word *siemka*, which clearly is a derivative from *siema*. This emotionally loaded form occurs in the studied corpus 410 times.

Phonic similarity to the diminutive *siemka* was made use of to employ twice the word *ściemka* as a greeting. *Ściemka*, however, is a colloquial diminutive noun for an act of loafing or doing nothing. This word is associated with informal, casual contexts and positive atmosphere. Ergo, one may argue that the application of this emotionally positive word as a greeting, due to the similarity in sound to *siemka*, serves the purpose of establishing a positive and friendly, even humorous, atmosphere from the very beginning of a conversation.

The word *siema*, which looks like a feminine noun in its form, was further also suffixed. Thus the form *siemano* (40 tokens) was achieved. This word is a neuter noun as for the gender. Further, *siemano* was infixed, and a diminutive form *siemanko* was obtained.

The latter was reported the occurrence of 231 tokens in the researched corpus. A higher frequency of the diminutive allows to reason that language users aim at diminishing the distance between interlocutors and, of course, establish a positive atmosphere.

Derivatives from *siema* are also subject to language plays. This is how words such as: *siemanuwa*, *siemanolo* and *siemanowice* came into existence. With the first two words, their origin may be traced to the creativity and playfulness of the chatters. However, the word *siemanowice* is motivated with a jocular reference to a town in Silesia, Poland, namely *Siemianowice Śląskie*.

As Szymański (in press) remarks, treating the word *siema* as a noun exemplifies that the language users do not feel the motivation of this word, which is a short of a three-word verb phrase.

In one of his works, Szymański (2012b) focuses on an unaware misuse of the word *witam* as a greeting exclamation by Polish speakers. *Witam* is a first-person, singular, present tense verb, which literally means “I am welcoming”. The final morpheme *-m*, however, is sometimes dropped, and this is how the word *wita* comes into existence. This word form may function either as a third-person, singular, present tense verb or as a singular, feminine noun. The latter case is of interest for the time being.

Six occurrences of *wita* as a greeting exclamation were reported in the studied corpus. This noun was further transformed into a diminutive *witka* (96 tokens) through the infixation of the diminutive morpheme *-k-*. A collateral diminutive was also formed with the addition of the morpheme *-ecz-*, in this manner, producing the word *witeczka* (11 tokens). This is thought to have given rise to the emotionally-colored form *witencja* (4 tokens).

Following Szymański (in press), *wita*, as a word stem, might be assumed to look like a singular, feminine noun. So, the application of nominal declension seems natural in such a case. Consequently, the diminutive forms: *witka* and *witeczka*, as well as the emotional form *witencja*, were produced. In conclusion, concordance analysis allows to state that *witka* (and also the remaining two derivative forms) seems to be treated as a non-declensional greeting exclamation, with an infix characteristic of nouns.

## 4.2 Farewells

Identically to greetings, when an interaction instance comes to an end, one is expected to be, as it were, closed with an appropriate expression. Such words or phrases are called *farewells*. They may be classified according to the same rules of formality-dependence as greetings (see Marcjanik, 2006). Below, a discussion of nominalization in the speech act of farewells is presented in the alphabetical order, on the basis of results shown by Szymański (in press).

One of the formal ways of saying goodbye, used either before or at night, is the interjection *dobranoc* (good night). This exclamation was also treated by chatters as a noun, which resulted in the production of *dobranocka*. This is a diminutive form of a 37-token frequency in the studied corpus. One may wish to argue, unquestionably, that the received word exists in Polish and means an evening-broadcast show for children, usually a cartoon. In the studied language samples, though, as concordance analysis proves, this word was used as a farewell expression.

Among various word-formation processes, an interesting shortening tendency was observed with the word *dobranoc*. This farewell expression was deprived of the first syllable in the form *branoc* (991 tokens). This one received nominal treatment from users as well, which is proven by the diminutive *branočka* (126 tokens) which was constructed as a derivative. This process is similar to the one described before with *dobranoc* and *dobranočka*.

The derivatives from the word *dobranoc* discussed above are all feminine nouns, or at least, they are perceived as such by the users. This might be assumed from the suffixation of these words. However, three tokens of the word *branocek* were reported in the studied corpus, stemming from *dobranoc*. The said *branocek* is a diminutive noun, yet this form is masculine. Thus, a gender shift is observed in this case.

Further alterations to the interjection *dobranoc* were found in the researched corpus. This time, through the process of clipping, a nominal form is constructed. This is so since the word *dobranoc* is reduced to a single syllable *noc*. The word *noc*, however, exists in Polish and denotes the time from the sunset to the sunrise. Howbeit this, the analyzed corpus provides 128 out of 438 occurrences of *noc* utilized as a farewell expression. One may say that by analogy, the word *noc* was further transformed into a diminutive *nočka*, which performed the function of a farewell in 56 out of 64 occurrences of this word. Altogether, the words: *noc*, *dobranočka* and *nočka* are neosemantisms because they are words already in existence, which have gained new meanings and functions. Szymański's (in press) investigations led the author to a finding that these new ones are not mentioned in dictionary entries.

Another goodbye expression which underwent the process of nominalization is the informal *na razie* (English: *so long*). This prepositional phrase is frequently approached as a single word *narazie*, which is against the rules of orthography. This manner is proven by the results from the studied corpus in which the single-word form *narazie* finds 638 whereas the two-word form *na razie* 198 tokens.

Since this expression is perceived as a single-word construction *narazie*, several diminutives were constructed from this stem. These include diacritic-free forms: *narazka*, *narazko*, *narazkoo*, as well as forms with diacritics: *narazko* and *narazkoo*. Aside from the diminutives, one form was reported as an augmentative: *narazisko*.

In addition to the above processes, *narazie* was also subject to the process of clipping. By this means, the form *nara* was achieved, which was found in the studied corpus 156 times. Unlike with the word *branoc*, where an unstressed syllable before a stressed one was dropped; with *nara*, on the other hand, the eliminated syllable was an unstressed one as well, but one after a stressed syllable.

*Nara*, despite being a shortening itself, constitutes an essential element of the lexical subsystem of the Polish language. This argument might be proven by the fact that this word constitutes the basis for several other words. Among these, one finds *narka* (183 tokens), which is a diminutive derived from *nara*. An interesting hybrid spelling may be found in *narq* (30 tokens) and *narqa* (40 tokens), both of these being intentional language plays by chatters. Aside from this, being a diminutive, *narka* was also further diminutivized into the word *nareczka* (11 tokens).

Phonetic similarity of *narka* to the word *narta* might have led to the use of the latter as a farewell expression. Although the word *narta* word exists in Polish and means *a ski*, in the studied corpus this construction and its plural form *narty* function as equivalents to *goodbye* 32 and 5 times respectively.

Another sound-based resemblance, this time to *nara*, may be found in the use of the word *nera* as a farewell. This word is commonly treated as an augmentative of *nerka* (*a kidney*). Unsurprisingly then, if *nerka* sounds much alike to *narka*, the former will also begin to function as a farewell expression. The studied corpus provides the following forms: *nera* (11 tokens), *nerka* (21 tokens) and *nereczka* (2 tokens), whose goodbye function stems from the phonetic similarity.

Nominalization tendency with farewells was also observed for an informal exclamation *papa*. This is a very informal expression which is used typically in communication with children. In the analyzed samples, this word was suffixed with *-ty*, thanks to which, the form, looking like a plural noun, *papaty* was obtained. No singular form of *papaty* (14 tokens) happened to be found in the researched material. Nevertheless, this plural-resembling form was brought to a diminutive form, and *papatki* (123 tokens) was created. However, an attempt to receive a singular noun from *papatki* was made. The corpus provided one occurrence of *papatka*, which is a feminine singular diminutive noun.

The word *papa* gave also rise to a number of nouns, such as: *papajki* (6 tokens), *papaki* (4), *papaloty* (1), *papapacie* (1), *papapty* (1), *papasie* (2), *papaski* (2), *papatusie* (1), *papaulki* (3), *papcie* (1) or *paputy* (1).<sup>4</sup> For a speaker of Polish, these forms, plus those derived from *papa* discussed before, except for the word *papatka*, are or resemble plural nouns. This plurality might imply that the users performed a multiplied farewell action, or a multiple speech act of farewell, with one word. Simply speaking, with one word they said goodbye to many interlocutors at the same time.

An interesting nominal construction in the inventory of farewells, with the frequency of two occurrences, constitutes the word *3mka*. This one is used by two different chatters as a farewell expression. The discussed construction features a digit which substitutes the cluster of letters: *trzy*. In fact, *trzy* is how this digit, 3, is spelled in Polish. Hence this might be an element of chatters' language play. Users might have wished to reveal their originality as well as jocularly. However, the diminutive morpheme *-k-* plus the feminine suffix *-a* make the digit-letter configuration resemble a feminine singular noun.

### 4.3 Thanks

One of important elements of phatic contacts and politeness is *thanks*. These are expressions of gratitude for something which someone has done to the message sender performing this speech act. As Szymański (in press) states, primarily thanks in Polish are utterances which derive from the stem *dzięk* (or its alternative form *dzięcz*). As far as chat room communication is concerned, the reader needs to be aware that Poles have a tendency to substitute letters with diacritics with non-diacritic ones in this mode of text-based interaction.

Prototypically, speakers of Polish express their gratitude with two standard forms: either

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4 Examples based on Szymański (in press).



with the first-person, singular, present tense verb *dziękuję* (*I thank you*) or with the exclamation *dzięki* (*thanks*). The latter, thanks to its suffix *-i* looks like a plural noun, and so this word is perceived by users.

The word *dzięki* appears in the studied corpus 361 times, and its diacritic-free form, *dzieki*, 869 times.<sup>5</sup> This proves the predominance of the non-diacritic spelling over the standard one. However, in addition to this, within the realm of gratitude statements, a tendency to construct singular noun forms may be observed. Forms such as: *dziekowka*, *dziekówka* and *dziękóweczka* are diminutive, singular, feminine nouns; whereas *dziekowa* and *dziekówna* are augmentative, singular, feminine nouns. A conclusion may be drawn that for a single act the gratitude is expressed with a singular noun.

#### 4.4 Apologies

Another essential element of phatic communication, also associated with politeness, are apologies. An *apology* is an act of expressing repentance for something the sender has done to the receiver.

With apologies, the nominalization tendency was observed in the studied corpus for the internationalism *sorry*. This word has already become an element of the Polish lexical subsystem (see Piotrowski 2003b).

The researched corpus provides a number of derivatives from this English borrowing. In the source language, the word *sorry* is an adjective. Poles, however, maintain a trend to treat this word as a noun.<sup>6</sup> Concordance analysis of *sorry* proved that none of its instances in the analyzed samples does denote features of nouns.

An important remark needs to be made before the said nominalization of *sorry* is portrayed. Polish chatters display a tendency to spell the word and its derivatives according to the target language rules of orthography. Since *sorry* is pronounced with a single [r], the studied subjects apply also a single letter *r* in the constructed word forms. Of course, words with double *r* are also found in the discussed language samples. Szymański's (in press) studies show that the single *r* spelling (65.38 % of derivatives from *sorry*) outnumbers those spelled with the original double *r* (34.62 %). One may conclude then that Polish chatters aim at depicting the way they speak in the graphic form.

No matter how many *rs* the word is spelled with, both *sorry* and *sory* seem to be perceived by Poles as plural nouns. This is so because in Polish, the plural suffix *-y* is characteristic of plural, non-masculine-human nouns. This suffix is typically added to nouns which end with the suffix *-a* in singular. Such singular nominal constructions are feminine. Therefore, due to analogy, singular, feminine nouns, such as: *sorra* and *sora* were arrived at. What is more, this view is proven by further noun-formation tendencies, as *sorra* and *sora* received the diminutive infix *-k-*, which resulted in *sorrka* (3 tokens) and *sorka* (95 tokens). From these diminutives, the chatters followed to build diminutive plural forms through the addition of *-i* instead of *-a*: *sorrki* (7 tokens) and *sorki* (225 tokens). There was yet another noun derived

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<sup>5</sup> Other spelling phenomena are presented in Szymański (in press).

<sup>6</sup> The change in the grammatical category of *sorry* is observed also by Piotrowski (2003b) and Szymański (in press).

from *sorry*, namely *sorencje*. This one was received a suffix which is typical of foreign borrowings to Polish. All in all, these tendencies provide evidence for strong embedding of this borrowing (or internationalism) in the system of the Polish language.

#### **4.5 Grammatical number of the constructed nouns**

The Polish language has two number classes: singular and plural. Out of the nouns enumerated throughout this paper, 28 types are singular and 19 types are plural.<sup>7</sup>

Plurals in the forms of nouns used in speech acts might imply the multiplication of action reflected in word forms. This might additionally mean one action performed towards a number of addressees at the same time with one word employed.

#### **4.6 Grammatical gender of the constructed nouns**

In Polish, every noun is featured by gender. Singular nouns may belong to one of the following categories: masculine, feminine or neuter; whereas plural nouns fall into the categories of either masculine-human or non-masculine-human.

With the nouns discussed in this paper, a certain gender-related tendency was observed as far as singular nouns are concerned. Out of all the 28 singular nouns (types), three are masculine and three are neuter. The remaining 22 types are all feminine. This leads to a conclusion that new nouns, created out of other words already existing in Polish, received principally a feminine form. As for the plural nouns, all the 19 constructions were non-masculine-human, which also might imply feminine origin of the stems.

#### **4.7 Emotional load**

An interesting point seems to have been observed as for the emotions revealed through the received noun forms. The study showed that 17 types were emotionally neutral, 28 diminutives and two augmentatives. Clearly then can a diminutivization tendency be distinguished. The reason for the habit unveiled above might be the willingness of language users to achieve a friendly and polite, sometimes even jocular, atmosphere. They also appear to maintain this atmosphere till the very final stage of the interaction. The studied subjects utilized diminutives in order to achieve this aim, since these word forms are considered more polite and more positively predisposed towards the interlocutors. Diminutives function then as a tool to serve users' non-linguistic purposes.

With reference to augmentatives, these constructions were used in the researched samples for the purpose of showing one's sense of humor. Therefore, in a friendly and entertaining environment, chatters employed forms which were supposed to show their jocular mood.

### **5 General conclusions**

Leszek Szymański's studies on Internet chat room communication, published so far, have unveiled a number of trends characteristic of this medium. On their basis, however, this

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<sup>7</sup> Type and token after Scott (2004-2011).

author has spotted one more linguistic phenomenon. As the present article demonstrates, there exists the nominalization tendency observed in the lexical realization of speech acts.

As shown above, Polish chatters play with language producing new nouns out of already existing words. Most of these newly-evoked constructions are singular, feminine diminutives. Considering the users' purposes, diminutive forms are used to create a friendly and positive atmosphere. Augmentative nouns are made rarely. These, however, are also aimed at jocularly and fun, which also adds informality to the interaction, diminutives alike.

With reference to grammatical number, some remarks might be made to the use of plural forms. These words, as it were, suggest that one word might serve as an expression of a multiplication of an action. Thus, message senders are not necessary to produce several instances of interaction, yet, through a smart application of a single grammatical construction, they may behave in a multiplied manner. Plural form, one may say, helps them perform a number of acts with a single word.

The author's observations allow him to state that Polish chatters feel the need to apply nominal constructions in the realization of speech acts. Nouns are short and seem to be universal. Some of them have already become rooted in the lexical subsystem of the language. Others were produced occasionally, but also stand such a chance. None the less, the existence of this tendency to nominalization may indicate that Poles feel a need for new words to express their messages.

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