



The spatial dimension in the teaching of Czech for foreigners (particularly in prepositional phrases with the locative meaning ADV Loc)¹

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ABSTRACT:

Spatial relations are an important element of communication. They are expressed using prepositional (*Jeli podél řeky*. 'They drove alongside the river.')

as well as nonprepositional phrases (*Prošli hlubokým lesem*. 'They crossed a deep forest.')

locative adverbs (*Všichni sešli dolů*. 'They all came downstairs.')

and subordinate clauses (*Došli až tam, kde cesta končila*. 'They arrived to the place where the path ended.').

ADV Loc phrases assume secondary meaning in communication (*Je úplně na dně*. 'He has hit bottom.' — he is in a critical situation).

Originally, local relations played a fundamental role in the formation of other meanings: the meanings of purpose, effect, and cause evolved in the dynamic component while the meanings of condition, aspect, manner, etc. developed in the static component.

Local relations receive due attention in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages as well as in the reference level descriptions for Czech (A1–B1). The same applies to selected textbooks of Czech for foreigners. There is, however, room for improvement which could be achieved by: a) applying the onomasiological approach (grouping prepositions based on semantic units) instead of the semasiological one; the obstacle to this is the horizontal description of Czech declension (a step-by-step presentation of grammatical cases rather than entire paradigms), b) taking advantage of the knowledge of the use of primary prepositions (linguo-didactic instructions) and c) taking advantage of other aspects, e.g. the presentation of the preposition *na* 'for' as a preposition of purpose and not place (*Jde na oběd*. 'He is going for lunch.' — not "where", but "why"); paying more attention to differences (*z Brna* vs. *od Brna* 'from Brno' vs. 'from around Brno'); synonyms (*podle/podél řeky* 'along/alongside the river'); and the competition between prepositions (*za mlhy / v mlze* = 'during the fog / in the fog').

KLÍČOVÁ SLOVA / KEY WORDS:

čeština pro cizince, lingvodidaktická instrukce, prostorová dimenze, předložka, sémantický celek
Czech for foreigners, linguodidactic instruction, spatial dimension, preposition, semantic unit

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 ON THE ROLE OF THE LOCAL DIMENSION IN LANGUAGE COMMUNICATION

Expressing spatial meanings and local relations in the broad sense naturally represents a very important aspect of language communication, and arguably the most important one (together with other fundamental relations, such as temporal, causal,

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final, quantitative, etc.). This is a logical consequence of the prominent position the spatial (or spatio-temporal) dimension holds in the lives of individuals and the entire language community. The ability to provide a succinct, adequate description of this dimension in a clear and understandable form is therefore one of the key aspects of linguodidactics in general, including the teaching of Czech as a foreign language.

The ways of expressing spatial meanings and relations in Czech, just like in all other languages, are quite varied. These include: a) various prepositional phrases with the locative meaning ADV Loc (*Jeli podél řeky.*), which have the most detailed structure of all the prepositional relations, the most thorough system and the most frequent distribution (highlighting their special position); b) non-prepositional constructions (*Prošli hlubokým lesem.*); c) locative adverbs (*Všichni sešli dolů.*); and, last but not least, d) compound sentences (*Došli až tam, kde cesta končila.*).

In terms of the locative dimension, it is interesting to note that some phrases with primarily spatial meanings can also gain other, secondary meanings in communication: compare *Je úplně na dně.* (in a very difficult, critical situation, “down”); *Je na koni.* (in a secure, dominant position, confident, “up”), etc. Spatial relationships were absolutely crucial in the development of many other (particularly adverbial) meanings (see Kroupová, 1985; Blatná, 2006).

Formulating a succinct, adequate and understandable encapsulation and expression of the spatial dimension is a significant challenge for native speakers of other languages (particularly if they are genealogically and typologically distant) and therefore an important task when teaching Czech as a foreign language.

1.2 STRUCTURE OF THIS PAPER AND ITS OBJECTIVES

This paper will discuss the following interlinked and closely related aspects of these topics:

- 1) The role of the spatial dimension (and specifically one selected component, namely prepositional phrases with a locative meaning, ADV Loc) in Czech grammar and its role in expressing other meanings. This part will also highlight some problematic areas in the use of these prepositional phrases in contemporary language which may be useful for teaching practice (see Section 2).
- 2) The conceptualisation and linguodidactic presentation of locative relations in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (hereinafter the CEFRL) and the reference level descriptions for Czech as a foreign language (A1–B1) that are used (or should be used) as support and a methodological guideline for authors of teaching materials (see Section 3).
- 3) An exploratory probe of selected teaching materials of Czech for foreigners (again at the analogical levels of communicational competence of speakers of other languages) with a focus on the linguodidactic conceptualisation of locative meanings and relations (see Section 4).
- 4) The linguodidactic expression of spatial relations, where the primary focus will be on the segment in which the conceptualisation and language expression are particularly relevant, i.e. selected adverbial phrases with locative meaning. The aim



will be to determine to what extent and in what ways the concept of the corresponding parts of various teaching materials contribute to the desired mastery of Czech as a target language (from the perspective of the communication method), particularly for speakers whose first language is not Indo-European. The paper will also, and this is its main objective, try to outline the shortcomings in the current “textbook” conceptualisation of the locative dimension, underutilised opportunities and problematic aspects (see Section 5).

2 PREPOSITIONAL PHRASES (PARTICULARLY WITH THE ADV LOC MEANING) FROM THE LINGUODIDACTIC PERSPECTIVE

Concerning the use of prepositional phrases with the locative meaning in speech, we should first note some of the relevant moments when we need to pay special attention to the description and linguodidactic presentation of Czech to speakers of other languages (naturally, respecting their communication competences in Czech).

First, there are the rather complex and not always respected rules of their distribution in speech, and second, the considerable variations in real use by the native speakers of Czech. A research probe among students of Czech Studies shows that in the locative dynamic directional meaning (movement somewhere) in connection with the lexemes *Antarktída* ‘Antarctica’ and *poušť* ‘desert’, the preposition *na+Acc* is used more often (*na Antarktídu* was mentioned 17 times, *na poušť* 18 times) than the alternative *do+Gen* (*do Antarktídy* was used 10 times, *do pouště* 9 times). Surprisingly, the various combinations are not equally represented: nine respondents used *na+Acc* in both cases (i.e. *jedu na Antarktídu, na poušť*) and only one used *do+Gen* twice (i.e. *jedu do Antarktídy, do pouště*). Eight respondents preferred the combination *na+Acc* — *do+Gen* (*jedu na Antarktídu, do pouště*) and nine chose the reverse combination, *do+Gen* — *na+Acc* (*jedu do Antarktídy, na poušť*); for more details, see Hrdlička (2019).

The dominance of the preposition *na+Acc* can be explained by its expansive character and the fact that the students probably perceived Antarctica as an island rather than a continent (in which case the *do+Gen* preposition would be used — e.g. *do Asie, do Evropy*, etc.). In the case of the lexeme *poušť*, the relative position (distance) of the speaker from the place itself may play a role. If the desert is seen as a remote destination at the end of a journey, it usually combines with the preposition *na*; if the speaker stands on the edge of the desert, the preposition *do* may be used to indicate penetrating into the desert, deep inside its interior (cf. the analogous *O víkendů si pojedeme zalyžovat na hory. × Expedice vyrazila na několikadenní túru do hor.*), see also Hrdlička (2000).

One of the strongest trends in the use of prepositions in contemporary Czech is the steadily growing distribution of the preposition *na* (Čechová, 1981). This preposition often systematically replaces other prepositions: cf. the now common *jde na pokoj, na hotel, na ubytovnu, na recepci, na vrátnici*, etc. Even earlier (Daneš, 1964), some linguists have pointed out that in the case of objects in which we do not differentiate between the surface and the inside (or do not need to), the *na+Acc* or

na+Loc prepositions were starting to dominate (Hrdlička, 2000). Today the preposition *na* also appears in other contexts, cf. *Mám na vás dotaz.* (not *k vám*), *Klíč vám vydám jen na podpis.* (not *proti podpisu*), *Blížíme se na stanici.* (not *ke stanici*), *Doma na to nemáme místo.* (not *pro to*), *Ten mladý útočník je silný na puku.* (not *při hře / ve hře s pukem*), etc.

In terms of locative meanings, more advanced students of Czech may find it interesting to consider the role played by customary usage patterns (cf. *jedu na Kladno, na Mělník, na Dobříš*, commonly used in Central Bohemia instead of *do+Gen*) or some special cases bordering on language politics. Quite recently, officials of the young Ukrainian Republic requested language users to reflect on the change in status of the territory by using *jede do Ukrajiny, žije v Ukrajině* instead of the traditional *jede na Ukrajinu, žije na Ukrajině*. In contemporary Czech, the preposition *na+Acc* (movement towards) and *na+Loc* (position) is used with territories that do not have a clear administrative boundary and are somewhat vague; cf. *jede na Břeclavsko, na Hanou, na Vysočinu, na Floridu* compared to *jede do okresu Břeclav,² do Olomouckého kraje, do Kraje Vysočina, do státu Florida* (cf. in below).

The use of the preposition *na* in the cases of *Morava, Slovensko* and *Ukrajina* may reflect the fact that these lands were part of larger states in which their exact boundaries were somewhat imprecise. To emphasise their political (administrative) delimitation, speakers systematically use *do+Gen (v+Loc)*: *jedu na (jižní) Moravu, jsem na (jižní) Moravě* × *jedu do Jihomoravského kraje, jsem v Jihomoravském kraji*; *jede na Slovensko, je na Slovensku* × *jede do Slovenské republiky, je ve Slovenské republice* (see Hrdlička, 2000, 2015, 2019).

3 THE LOCATIVE DIMENSION IN THE COMMON EUROPEAN FRAMEWORK OF REFERENCE FOR LANGUAGES AND IN REFERENCE LEVEL DESCRIPTIONS OF CZECH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE (LEVELS A1-B1)

3.1 COMMUNICATION APPROACH TO LANGUAGE TEACHING IN THE CEFR AND THE ROLE OF SPACE DIMENSION HEREIN

It is generally acknowledged that the process of learning a foreign (second) language, either through teaching or acquisition, develops over a background of previously internalised language knowledge, not only of the first language, but possibly also of other language codes as well (cf. the issues of positive transfer and plurilingualism, CEFR, 2002, p. 4 et seq.). Native speakers of other languages, particularly those that are typologically and genealogically remote (such as the agglutinative Korean or polysynthetic Chinese), learning a highly inflected language such as Czech may be grappling with severe systemic differences and considerable issues with interference. Besides structural peculiarities, these may be also caused by potential (and

² As a consequence of the aforementioned expansion of the preposition *na*, however, native speakers commonly use *jede na okres Břeclav* even today.



sometimes strong) differences in the language conceptualisation of objective reality (“state of the world”).³

The CEFRL (*ibid.*, p. 13 et seq.) considers language teaching in its socio-cultural context and approaches it from a strongly communicative perspective with awareness of a broad spectrum of factors. It uses the term communicative language competence⁴ (see p. 101 et seq.), which consists of a) a linguistic component (including lexical, phonological and grammatical knowledge and skills, and other dimensions of language understood as a system), b) a socio-linguistic component (related to the sociocultural contexts of language use, including etiquette, etc.) and c) a pragmatic component which refers to the functional use of language means (realisation of speech, coherence and cohesion, differentiating between texts of various types and forms, etc.).

The CEFRL emphasises an active and pragmatically oriented process of language acquisition (i.e. learning a language, not learning about a language) and understands languages as tools of social communication and interaction. “The approach adopted here, generally speaking, is an action-oriented one in so far as it views users and learners of a language primarily as ‘social agents’, i.e. members of society who have tasks (not exclusively language-related) to accomplish in a given set of circumstances.” (*ibid.*, p. 9). The concept foregrounds the need to obtain communicative language competences “which empower a person to act using specifically linguistic means” (*ibid.*).

The CEFRL can be considered an appropriate starting point and useful support for the modern teaching, learning and testing of foreign languages.

Particularly relevant for the purposes of this article are the discussions of the locative dimension in the sections Domains (*ibid.*, p. 45 et seq.)⁵ and Communication Themes (*ibid.*, p. 51 et seq.)⁶. In our opinion, the CEFRL emphasises the importance of the spatial dimension to an adequate degree.

3 To give a simple example, Czechs would say that something is “on” a picture (*Na fotografii je dům.*), whereas the English would say that it is “in” the picture (*In the picture there is a house.*).

4 The Czech translation of the CEFRL (2002) is rather inconsistent, frequently interchanging the terms *komunikační* and *komunikativní*, *jazykový* and *řečový*; instead of *jazykové funkce*, it would be advisable to use *komunikační funkce výpovědi*.

5 The CEFRL (2002, p. 45) considers four dimensions: personal, public, occupational and educational. A table titled “External Context of Use” (p. 50 et seq.) specifies them in more detail.

6 There are fourteen basic themes and most of them strongly involve the spatial dimension — see theme 2 (House and Home, Environment), theme 3 (Daily Life), theme 4 (Free Time, Entertainment), theme 5 (Travel), theme 12 (Places).

3.2 ON THE INCLUSION OF THE SPATIAL DIMENSION IN SELECTED DESCRIPTIONS OF THE A1-B1 LEVELS OF CZECH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE



Describing the levels of the individual national languages of the European Union member states also plays an important role in contemporary foreign language teaching and the testing of the communication competences of speakers of other languages.

The essentially agrammatical reference level description of A1 Czech (Hádková et al., 2005) pays a mostly adequate amount of attention to the locative dimension, in particular the static meaning (*Kde?*), the dynamic directional meaning (*Kam?*) and, understandably less so, to the other parameters (*Odkud?*, *Kudy?*). Locative meanings are discussed (albeit non-systematically and in places overly ambitiously) in the section on General Terms (p. 128–129) which include “position” (though the inclusion of terms such as *na východě*, *na západ od* etc. can be problematic), “relative position” (*dole*, *na začátku*, etc.), “distance” (*blízko*, *daleko*) and “movement of an object” as well as their specific encoding in language (see p. 138 et seq.).

The locative dimension is also mentioned on p. 66 et seq. (List of Phrases Presented without Grammar), but only quite briefly: “*Pojď / Pojďte dál., Jsem tady., Není tady., Odkud jsi / jste?, Kde bydlíš / bydlíte?, Kde ses / jste se narodil / narodila?, Kde pracuješ / pracujete?*”; in order to ensure the success of foreign speakers in communication, this list should bear extending. Moreover, it is discussed on p. 226 (Looking for a Place, Finding a Way): “*Kde je tady supermarket, prosím?, Jak / Kudy se dostanu na nádraží?, Jeďte pořád rovně., Pojedete doleva., Jděte na náměstí., Půjďte doprava., Lékárna je tam., Pošta je tady nalevo.*” and on p. 248 et seq. (Cases and Prepositions)⁷ and p. 257 (Adverbs) as part of the grammatical primer.

A somewhat more detailed discussion (understandably and desirably so) of spatial relationships is provided in the description of level A2 (Čadská et al., 2005), particularly in the section Various Forms of Expressing Existence in Space (p. 50 et seq.), which is considered sufficient.⁸ Particularly notable is the listing of “directional prefixes with verbs of motion” with regard to prepositions (p. 53), which is far from commonplace (Hirschová, 1977); cf. e.g. *vy-* “1. *Auto vyjelo ven z garáže. Nevychází z pokoje., 2. Výtah vyjel nahoru do pátého patra.*” (cf. also below).

Spatial relationships are also mentioned on p. 20 (questions with adverbs *kde*, *kam*, *odkud*, *kudy*), on p. 80 et seq. (Specific Terms), p. 208 (spatial adverbs) and p. 210 et seq. (an overview of prepositions with cases). In this context, it should be at least mentioned that there is a debatable interpretation of the meaning of phrases such as *na Vánoce* (p. 212), which are here considered as temporal (e.g. *přijel na Vánoce*,

7 P. 249 erroneously matches the preposition *po* with the instrumental case and illogically ignores the locative preposition *za*+Instr, even though all the others are included (*mezi*, *nad*, *pod*, *před*, *s/se*).

8 There are however many things to criticise as well: e.g. p. 50 (location somewhere) only mentions prepositions *v*+Loc, *na*+Loc a *u*+Gen and not others (*nad*, *pod*, *za*, *před*, *mezi* aj.), differences of the type *z/od Prahy* are not addressed at all, etc.



na víkend — when?) and not as purpose-oriented. This is, however, a more general issue: *Přijel o Vánocích*. — when? (= when it was Christmas) and *Přijel na Vánoce*. — why? (= to celebrate Christmas).

In our opinion, the reference description of level B1 (Šára et al., 2001) represents a significant improvement in quality (even if it sometimes places excessive demands on the communication competences of a non-native speaker) and can be considered exemplary. Spatial relationships are described very competently, exhaustively, meticulously and in great detail (see p. 85 et seq., 308, 311 and elsewhere). Apart from the aforementioned issue of arguably making unduly high demands on B1 students, there are no major criticisms. The emphasis on the cooperation of prefixes and prepositions in the expression of movement and local relations (p. 326 and elsewhere) is commendable.

In conclusion, the examined reference level descriptions of Czech as a foreign language fulfil their role in their conceptualisation of local relations. They can serve as a good starting point for further elaboration in textbooks. The reference level descriptions for Czech as a foreign language, however, which is a point worth emphasising, serve mainly as a summary of the required skills and knowledge. Specific linguodidactic implementation always depends on careful selection and the competences and qualities of the writers of teaching materials.

4 THE SPATIAL DIMENSION IN TEXTBOOKS OF CZECH FOR FOREIGNERS

4.1 THE CONCEPTUALISATION OF ADV LOC PREPOSITIONAL PHRASES IN OLDER TEXTBOOKS

Providing an outline of how locative relations expressed by prepositions⁹ are conceptualised in textbooks of Czech for foreigners is far from easy; in many cases, the individual approaches are literally incomparable. Teaching materials of Czech as a foreign language often differ in key parameters — in the scope of content¹⁰ and its structure (different order of cases, etc.), target audience (varying levels of communication competence in Czech, etc.), method (induction or deduction) and training (a cognitive approach or drill), use of an intermediary language (extent and method), etc. There is little point in going into specifics; the aim of this paper is to observe rel-

⁹ Besides grammar, another interesting aspect of textbooks is how much attention they pay to the individual cities and regions of the Czech Republic. While Prague remains dominant, its near-monopoly is on the decline and other regions and cities are gaining prominence (UNESCO sites — e.g. Český Krumlov, Kutná Hora, Olomouc, Brno, etc.).

¹⁰ Besides textbooks which are expected to be exhausted over several weeks (e.g. Bischofová, 2015a, 2015b) or months (Štindl, 2008 and others), there are also extensive series of books that take years to master. These series provide an excellent opportunity for this research (Adamovičová et al., 2009, 2010, 2014; Boccou Kestřánková et al., 2013, 2016, 2017; Cvejnová, 2008, 2011, 2012, 2017).



evant tendencies. In addition to an analysis of various textbooks, this section will also be based on previously gained knowledge and years of experience.

In an earlier paper (Hrdlička, 2000), it has been noted that these textbooks published in 1980s and 1990s generally pay little and arguably insufficient attention to prepositions, particularly those that call themselves communication oriented. They often understand prepositions as a largely peripheral language phenomenon; their system is either not described at all or described far too briefly.

The key problem with this approach is the predominantly (and sometimes exclusively) formalistic view — prepositions are only discussed together with their corresponding cases without a sufficient (or indeed any) explanation of their wider system. This means that foreigners e.g. learn that the preposition *do* is followed by a noun or adjective in the genitive case, but are taught little about the context of its use or when another preposition would be a better fit.

Another significant shortcoming of this formalistic approach is the lack of any commentary, explanation or instructions on how to use prepositions in speech. In some cases, this absence is somewhat successfully addressed with lists of typical examples of the use of a specific preposition, but this is often inadequate. The rate of success or failure in mastering the distribution of Czech prepositions therefore mainly rests in the hands of the teacher or the linguistic sensibilities and skills of the non-native speaker.

Another point of contention is the listing of examples that are misleading, unclear, debatable or confusing. Textbooks e.g. mix up the locative meaning with the expression of purpose or do not differentiate between objects expressed by prepositional phrases and by adverbial meanings (purpose, cause, etc.), which can be considered undesirable. One example is the following list of prepositions with the accusative case which includes *Jdu na koncert (poštu, přednášku).*, / *Dávám klobouk na hlavu.*, *Píšu slova na papír.*, *Dívám se na děvčátko.* (for more details, see Hrdlička, 2000).

There are also numerous undesirable simplifications which should be criticised. While some degree of qualified reduction and simplification of the prepositional system is advisable and necessary for students starting to learn Czech, it should not be too excessive. Simplifications that are not duly considered and are performed without critical thinking can easily become a source of misunderstanding, wrong analogies, etc. For instance, it is now common that the preposition *za* is not listed for the genitive case (*za války, za první republiky*) and neither are the prepositions *v, o, po* for the accusative case (*věřit ve vítězství, doufat ve spravedlnost; zajímat se o literaturu, starat se o nemocnou matku; bylo tam po kolena sněhu, voda dosahovala až po okraj*).

4.2 PREPOSITIONAL PHRASES WITH THE ADV LOC MEANING IN CONTEMPORARY TEACHING MATERIALS

Going through a representative sample of contemporary textbooks of Czech for foreigners, one can conclude that the situation has improved quite significantly in the last decades. Prepositions are no longer ignored and instead are treated with the care they deserve (roughly one in ten words in any utterance is a preposition). The situation can be therefore considered satisfactory. Some issues however remain,



particularly a lack of reliable instructions concerning the distribution of prepositions and prepositional phrases in terms of their semantics. For objective reasons, this will probably remain unresolved for quite some time (see below).

Various positive elements are now encountered far more often, including illustrations (*kniha je na stole, ve stole*, etc.), useful tables differentiating between the meanings of location and purpose (cf. Adamovičová et al., 2012, p. 127: “*Jedu / Jdu KAM? PROČ? do Bruselu na kurz; do restaurace na oběd; do klubu na koncert; do parku na procházku; na ambasádu pro vízum,*” etc.) and an explanation (with illustrations) of the differences in movement expressions between objects and people (Štindl, 2008, p. 124: “*KAM? KDE? ODKUD? — Jdu do školy. — Jsem ve škole. — Jdu ze školy. / Jdu k doktorovi. — Jsem u doktora. — Jdu od doktora.*”) with explicitly formulated rules,¹¹ e.g. Holá (2012, p. 87):

2. The preposition *na* expresses motion onto/towards a surface (*Dávám knihu na stůl*) or to open-space localities (*Jedu na letiště, na nádraží*). However, the preposition *na* is also used with: a) actions and activities (*na diskotéku, na koncert*) and some public institutions (*na poštu, na ambasádu*), b) islands and peninsulas (*na Floridu, na Maltu*), c) exceptions (*na Moravu, na Slovensko*).

Generally speaking, the locative dimension (in addition to the temporal dimension which is sometimes considered more important for beginners)¹² plays an important role in textbooks of Czech for foreigners. The situation in various teaching materials is often quite similar. After introductory phrases, such as *Odkud jsi? Kam jdeš? Kde studuješ?* (at first mainly or exclusively using the verb *být*, therefore, often with the locative case), the content gradually moves on to other spatial meanings (*Město / Můj pokoj / V restauraci / V obchodě / Jedeme na výlet*, etc.) which add more communicationally rich verbs (including verbs of motion) and the ability to express a much broader palette of local relations. At first, this means locative adverbs, prepositional and non-prepositional cases, and later also locative adverbial clauses (see above).

5 LINGUODIDACTIC RECOMMENDATIONS

Despite the largely satisfactory manner in which prepositional phrases with the locative meaning (ADV Loc) are conceptualised in contemporary textbooks, there are some suggestions concerning areas that could make the teaching more efficient and successful, particularly for non-Slavic speakers.

11 While some formulations could be criticised (see Hrdlička, 2000, 2009), many users of these teaching materials will find them useful and sufficient. Compared to the earlier situation, this undoubtedly represents progress in the right direction.

12 These include *včera, pozítří, často, brzo, pozdě, někdy, za hodinu, příští týden, minulý měsíc, ve středu, večer, odpoledne*, etc. Such terms are discussed early on in connection with the linguodidactic presentation of tenses, which requires a corresponding framework for time.



1) Virtually all the analysed textbooks of Czech for foreigners are semasiological (Hrdlička, 2017) and present the Czech declension system mainly horizontally (i.e. one case after another; not vertically, i.e. by declension paradigms, Hrdlička, 2000, 2009). The semasiological approach enjoys a near-monopoly in the grammatical descriptions of Czech, probably because the semantic dimension of grammatical categories and phenomena is sufficiently known to native speakers who are the primary users of grammars. The areas that these speakers typically struggle with are the codified forms of standard Czech (and yet the situation in the far rarer grammars of Czech intended primarily for foreigners is similar, emphasising the formal aspects).

Another relevant cause for semasiology's dominance is undoubtedly the fact that a grammatical system of the target language constructed from this perspective is far easier to understand and describe; grammatical forms seem less ambiguous and more specific than the rather amorphous field of semantics.

The onomasiological approach goes in the opposite direction: from universal language meanings and communicational functions of an utterance to formal realisations, which is considered very fruitful. It is, thus, believed that there is more benefit in starting from what the individual languages have in common and progressing to where they differ (the realisation of the speaker's intention through a specific morphosyntactic code). In this context, it is appropriate to quote Skalička's apt claim that *Languages are different attempts to solve the same problem*. One of the undisputable benefits of onomasiology is also the fact that it provides an opportunity to present alternative forms of expression. It is, however, also necessary to take into account some of its more problematic and unresolved aspects (number of semantic units and their structure, difficult applicability to certain grammatical categories, e.g. the case system, etc.).

The parcellation of the case system (as in the aforementioned horizontal approach) is easier for non-Slavic speakers of a typologically different native language and provides ample opportunity for explaining and training any specific case, but has one significant drawback. This approach makes it impossible to discuss individual semantic units¹³ (locative, temporal, causal, quantitative, possessive expressions, etc.) that enable various formal representations of a given meaning. In the current approach, the representation of prepositions is fragmentary, incomplete and not fully functional. The deciding criterion is not the meaning (function) of the preposition, but rather its association with the specific case that is being discussed. This means that one lesson may feature a mixed list of prepositions with various meanings. Discussions of the genitive, therefore, include locative meanings (*Odjel z města.*, *Jde do práce.*), temporal meanings (*Je tu od soboty.*, *Za války žil na venkově.*), causal meanings (*Udělal to ze vzteku.*), etc. Using the onomasiological concept¹⁴ (and a vertical presentation of paradigms, Hrdlička, 2017) would be more useful in this aspect.

13 In this approach, this can only be done at the end of a textbook, after all the cases have been discussed, as a summary of the taught content.

14 Or more accurately onomasiological-semasiological, given the highly inflected nature of Czech.



2) Even though the situation has somewhat improved, comments and instructions on how to use prepositions correctly have many shortcomings.¹⁵ We take as an example the prepositions *na* and *do*, because they are very frequent and rank among the most difficult ones in teaching Czech for foreigners. In the context of prepositional phrases with the locative meaning ADV Loc, the following facts may be considered relevant to their description and linguodidactic approach (B1 level speakers shall master all collocations and use them actively, A2 level speakers shall focus on selected frequent ones, for A1 level, only several basic cases are sufficient):

The preposition *na+Acc* (and *na+Loc*) is among other uses associated with:

- a) open, unroofed, peripheral or elevated locations (*jdu/jedu na náměstí, na koupaliště, na ulici, na předměstí, na venkov, na půdu, na kopec*);
- b) with administrative (regional) units which have unclear or fuzzily defined borders¹⁶ (*jedu na Rokycansko, na Apeninský poloostrov, na východní pobřeží USA*);
- c) mountain ranges (or peaks) in the singular¹⁷ (*jedu na Šumavu, na Ural, na Kavkaz, na Českomoravskou vrchovinu, na Sněžku, na Praděd*);
- d) important institutions of the state (*jdu na obecní úřad, na magistrát, na finanční úřad, na policii, na poštu, na velvyslanectví, na konzulát, na ministerstvo*);
- e) secondary and tertiary schools (*jde/chodí na gymnázium, na střední školu, na jazykovou školu, na vysokou školu, na fakultu, na univerzitu, na děkanát, na rektorát*), etc. (for more information, see Hrdlička, 2000).

The preposition *do+Gen* has the exact opposite parameters, cf. *jde/jede do restaurace, do sklepa, do údolí, do centra města, do Podunajské nížiny, do Pošumaví, do Povltaví, do Krkonoš, do Vysokých Tater, do Alp; chodí do základní školy*,¹⁸ *do tanečních*, etc. Many

15 This note does not only apply to locative cases, but also to many others as well. These principles further apply to prepositional phrases with the meaning of purpose (ADV Fin). The preposition *na+Acc* combines with substantivised feminine adjectives (*řekl na to uvítanou, na vysvětlenou*), verbal substantives (*dal jim to na hraní, na psaní, na čtení*) and other substantives (*jeli tam na rekreaci, na návštěvu, na koncert, na dovolenou, na večeri*), including elliptical expressions of purpose as an action (*krém na boty, prášek na bolení hlavy, prostředek na myši*). The preposition *k+Dat* is used with verbal substantives expressing mental activity (*poslali nám to k rozboru, k posouzení, k vyřešení*) or affiliation (*hudba k tanci, sušenky k čaji*). For more examples of ADV Fin with other prepositions (temporal ADV Temp, causal ADV Caus), cf. Hrdlička (2000).

16 The situation with islands and island countries is somewhat ambivalent. If they are discussed primarily in terms of geography, the *na* preposition is preferred; in other cases, *do* is used instead: *jedou na Kubu × do Kubánské republiky*. Some exceptions are, however, common in real usage: *jedou na Krétu, na Sicílii, na Filipíny, na Maledivy × do Indonésie, do Japonska, do Karibiku*.

17 The one exception to the rule is *do Himaláje*. A possible source of complications are appellatives that are used as proper nouns: *do Českého lesa*.

18 Because of its already discussed expansion, the preposition *na* also commonly appears here (Čechová, 1981): *chodí na základní školu / na základku*, etc.

other specific distribution cases could be mentioned. These include e.g. a change in status, inclusion in a certain community or group (*vstoupit do organizace, do stavu manželského, do rodiny*), description of an impact on some part of the body (*uhodit se do hlavy, bouchnout do zad, kopnout do nohy*), etc., see Hrdlička (2000). Similar recommendations for teaching practice must be developed and further specified to ensure they are clear, understandable and easy to learn.

3) Many partial questions need to be addressed in linguodidactics. Experience indicates that it is useful to explain phrases such as *jde na výstavu, na oběd, na kurz* as expressions of purpose (Why does she go there? With what objective? For what purpose? = to see an exhibition, to have lunch, to learn) and not location¹⁹ (Where is she going?). This prevents numerous errors (cf. *jde do koncertu, do diskotéky, do němčiny*, etc.).

Moreover, many other partial differences also need to be mentioned (respecting language skill levels), e.g. between *je z Brna* × *je od Brna, vzala to ze stolu* × *se stolu*, etc. Attention must be paid to the difference between competing prepositional and non-prepositional phrases (*šli přes les* × *šli lesem*), frequent nuances in meaning (*Nerada řídí v mlze*: local meaning: where? = a space full of fog × *Nerada řídí za mlhy*: temporal meaning: when? = when it's foggy) as well as synonymous uses (*Šli podle/podél řeky*.) and the breadth of meaning of various prepositions. The preposition *kolem* does not only mean “okolo”, but also “podél”, “k” – *Jede ta tramvaj kolem náměstí? Jede ten autobus kolem fakulty?* To resolve these and similar issues, the onomasiological approach seems optimal. Finally, in lieu of conclusion, it should be added that in the presentation of prepositional phrases with the locative meaning ADV Loc, we must not neglect the cooperation between verbal prefixes and prepositions (*Vešel do kanceláře. Vyšel z pokoje*).

6 CONCLUSION

Expressions of locative meanings and relations enjoy a privileged position in speech communication (and, therefore, naturally in the linguodidactic view as well), which is appropriately also taken into account in important documents of the Council of Europe (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, descriptions of the levels of Czech as a foreign language A1–B1). In the teaching materials of Czech for speakers of other languages from the last two decades, prepositional phrases with a locative meaning (ADV Loc) are explained in fairly satisfactory ways. It is believed, however, that the efficiency of the teaching and the quality of the mastery of Czech by speakers of other languages would benefit from a significantly greater use of the onomasiological approach and the presentation of prepositions (and other phenomena) in semantic units, which offers both a comprehensive and clear overview, and also the opportunity to list synonymous and alternative phrases. It is also favourable

¹⁹ Cf. the simple opposition *jde do Opery* (= to the opera building) × *na operu* (= to see an opera performance).



to incorporate a more frequent use of qualified comments and linguodidactic instructions on the distribution of prepositions in speech, which would also help address other partial issues of their use in communication.

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