



# The Emergence of New Periphrastic Constructions in Czech and Slovak

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## Outline of my talk

- Periphrastic constructions as sources for new grammaticalized tenses
- Periphrastic constructions in Czech and Slovak
  - “Old” periphrastic constructions  
*Bol som tam. – Budeme spievať. – Rád by som prišiel*
  - “New” periphrastic constructions  
*Mám uprataný byt. – Máme zatvorené. – Boli sme po obede. – Bolo po bitke*  
*Idem mu napísať. – Byl jsem se tam podívat. – Bol som sa tam pozrieť.*
- Brief remarks on the resultative constructions
- Discussion of the “prospective future” and the “absentive”
  - Description of the constructions
  - Some corpus data
  - Stages of grammaticalization



## Brief remarks on the resultative constructions

- resultative constructions of the type

*Mám uklizen byt. - Mám uprataný byt.*

have been considered as new tenses by several authors (e.g. Mathesius 1925)

- this opinion has been refuted by most other authors (e.g. Hausenblas 1962, Giger 2003)
- the main arguments are these:
  - the resultative expresses a state “that is the result of a previous action” (*Nový encyklopedický slovník češtiny*), so it has specific semantics that differ from temporal semantics
  - the resultative can be formed only from perfective verbs
  - the resultative can be combined with all verb tenses



## The “prospective future” or *íst’*-future in Slovak

- classic examples according to Giger:
  - „Peter! Pod’ sem. *Ideme sa fotiť*.“
  - *Idem urobiť* polievku.
  - *Ide pršať*, pod’me sa skryť!
- this construction has been known for a long time and is considered a Slovak peculiarity
- it is rather grammaticalized, since it occurs
  - with inanimate subjects
  - in impersonal sentences
  - both aspects are represented!



## The “prospective future” in Czech

- the construction is not yet mentioned in grammars, but it exists
- some examples
  - Děkuji za informaci, *jdu jim napsat* dopis.
  - „*Nejdu faulovat, jdu vyhrát*,“ má cíl Vémola.
  - Dobře, *jdu publikovat* další obrázky štěňat, co si hrají s dětmi.
- the construction appears to be less grammaticalized than in Slovak:
  - no inanimate subjects
  - no impersonal sentences
  - but both aspects are represented



## The “absentive” in Czech

- examples such as

*byl jsem se koupat, naši byli vázat*

were first described by Dokulil (1949)

- later on this construction was compared to the absentive construction (de Groot 1995) in some European languages
  - John *ist boxen*.
  - János *boxolni van*.
- I wrote about this myself in 2009 and showed, among other things,
  - that the construction only exists in the preterite
  - that it is possible with both aspects



## The “absentive” in Czech II

- some more examples
  - Odpoledne *sem si byla koupit* něco na sebe.
  - Nedávno *jsem byla nakupovat* a uviděla jsem krásné hortenzie za ještě krásnější cenu, kus 29,-
  - Na konci srpna *jsme se byli podívat* na dvou koupalištích ve Zlíně [...]
- if we compare the two following sentences
  - Nejprve *jsem se byla podívat* v německém DM.
  - Nejprve *jsem se podívala* v německém DM

I doubt that there is a special meaning of “absentivity”

- it seems that it is not so important that someone was not there, but rather that it was a lengthy process in the past
- therefore, I consider the “absentive” to be more of a type of progressive



## The “absentive” in Slovak

- the same construction exists in Slovak, as well
- it is mentioned in the literature (cf. Orlovský 1971:233 and Pauliny 1981:269), but it was never studied in detail
- some examples:
  - Menšia skupinka skialpinistov *bola navštíviť* aj symbolický cintorín pod Ostrvou [...]
  - V sobotu *sme sa boli pozrieť* na "Hamnfestival" čo je taký malý festivalík v prístave.
  - Potom *sme sa boli pýtať* vo Svite v hoteli Mladosť a v chemosvitskej závodnej jedálni, tam nás to vyšlo o niečo drahšie.



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## Some results of my corpus analysis

- how frequent are the constructions?
- competing constructions
- animate actors



## Frequency of the constructions

- this time I used the corpora csTenTen2023 and skTenTen2023 (which unfortunately have different size)
- “naive” search for
  - present tense of *jít/ist'* + infinitive
  - past tense of *být/byť* + infinitive

- results

|             | Czech     | Slovak    |
|-------------|-----------|-----------|
| prospective | 56.77 ipm | 35.29 ipm |
| absentive   | 69.11 ipm | 56.74 ipm |

- that wasn't what I expected...



## Constructions with the prospective

- a large proportion of the examples belongs to other similar constructions
- in case of the prospective, we have to distinguish between two groups of examples
  - “normal” concurrence of the verb ‘to go’
  - impersonal constructions with *jde/ide*
- Czech examples
  - Nejdřív jdu do posilovny a pak *jdu běhat*.
  - Na snímku *jde vidět*, že nový Intel umí být v některých hrách pomalejší
- Slovak examples
  - Proste som normálne unavená a kašlem tento týždeň čiastočne na prácu, namiesto toho *idem behať*.
  - Spravidla *ide nastaviť* niekoľko režimov sledovania podľa vzdialenosti psa.



## Distribution of grammatical persons

- statistics (with relative values)

|     | Czech | Slovak |
|-----|-------|--------|
| 1Sg | 18    | 33     |
| 2Sg | 1     | 7      |
| 3Sg | 64    | 25     |
| 1Pl | 4     | 15     |
| 2Pl | 2     | 10     |
| 3Pl | 11    | 10     |

- conclusion
  - the prospective in Czech is grammaticalized much less than in Slovak.



## Constructions with the absentive

- in case of the prospective, we have to distinguish between two groups of examples
  - construction with perception verbs
  - impersonal constructions with *bylo/bolo*
- Czech examples
  - Za chvíli to v hale problesklo a všude *byl cítit* podivný zápach.
  - Dalším krokem *bylo proměnit* firmu Grizly "z baliče na výrobce".
- Slovak examples
  - Vonku pri plote *bol vidieť* veľmi veľký les, ktorý sa tiahol až po horizont.
  - Cieľom výpravy *bolo oslobodiť* Svätú zem od mohamedánov [...]



## Distribution of gender and number

- statistics (with relative values)

|     | Czech | Slovak |
|-----|-------|--------|
| mSg | 13    | 5      |
| fSg | 11    | 6      |
| nSg | 68    | 84     |
| Pl  | 6     | 3      |

- conclusion
  - the absentive in Slovak is grammaticalized much less than in Czech.



## Animate subjects

- In both constructions, almost only animate subjects are attested.
- this includes also animals!
  - Moje kočky *se jdou zbláznit*, moc im chutna ale nevím zda jsou vhodné, Brit žrát nechtěji nechutna jak kdy, jak co...
- in Slovak, nonanimate subjects can be used with the prospective
  - Sociálna poisťovňa *ide prehodnocovať* percentá invalidity



## Summary

- We have two candidates for new tenses, namely
  - the construction *jít* + infinitive, or prospective
  - the construction *být* + infinitive, or absentive
- Both are still weakly grammaticalized, but they are "on the rise"
- and there is a difference between Czech and Slovak
  - the prospective is more grammaticalized in Slovak
  - the absentive is more grammaticalized in Czech



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