

At the intersection of Cognitive Construction Grammar and Construction Morphology: The case of Czech ASCs with prefixes

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Argument structure constructions (ASCs) have been the major concern of Cognitive Construction Grammar (Goldberg, 2019); derivation has been mainly a concern of constructionist approaches to morphology (Booij, 2010; Jackendoff & Audring, 2020). Argument structure and prefixation in Slavic languages such as Czech are somewhat intertwined (e.g., Skoumalová, 1968; Bémová, 1981; Jirsová, 1985). However, this connection – and its similarity to valency-changing operations found in various languages – has not been explored very thoroughly, largely due to the structuralist view of language predominant in Czech linguistics, which clearly separates morphology, viewed as a matter of combining morphemes to meet onomasiological ends, from syntax.

It is possible to postulate ASCs, such as the ditransitive construction, for Czech, which can enable us to explain the occurrence of non-conventional, yet acceptable and interpretable uses of verbs in various ASCs (as shown by Sláma, 2021). However, due to the interaction of prefixation and argument structure in Czech, I will demonstrate that it is possible, or even necessary, to postulate ASCs with prefixes – i.e., ASCs whose form includes (apart from schematic slots for the base verb and for complements) a specific prefix, and often a reflexive morpheme.

Two such constructions had been qualitatively analyzed previously (Sláma, 2022): e.g., imperfective verbs prototypically denoting activities can be used in a construction which contributes the prefix *pro-* and a slot for an accusative-marked object denoting either the time or the money spent by the activity (cf. the conceptual metaphor TIME IS MONEY), thus producing a perfective prefixed verb with a modified argument structure. As a whole, the construction has a non-compositional meaning: ‘to spend/lose time/money (specified by the accusative-marked object) by an activity (specified by the base verb).’ For example, the imperfective verbs *pít* ‘to drink’ (transitive or intransitive) and *hajlovat* ‘to heal’ (intransitive), when used in this construction, as in the following examples, become perfective, and the construction contributes the prefix as well as the slot for the time/money complement, thus rendering the verbs obligatorily transitive:

- (1) **pít*_{imperfective} *výplatu*_{direct accusative object} ‘to drink the salary’
× *pro-pít*_{perfective} *výplatu*_{direct accusative object} ‘to drink away the salary’
- (2) **pít*_{imperfective} *večer*_{direct accusative object} ‘to drink the evening’

× *pro-pít*_{perfective} *večer*_{direct accusative object} ‘to drink away the evening’

(3) *pro-hajloval osmdesátá léta* ‘he heiled away the eighties’

Based on a quantitative analysis of neologisms in Czech and a qualitative analysis of corpus data, I identified thirteen salient constructions with non-compositional constructional meanings, which, apart from contributing a prefix, systematically modify the aspect of the base verb as well as its argument structure, either contributing argument slots or suppressing them, e.g. rendering transitive verbs intransitive. Furthermore, I analyzed data in a database of Czech neologisms, showing that these thirteen constructions in fact account for 21.3% of new prefixed perfective verbs in Czech.

This contribution suggests one of the ways in which Construction Grammar and Construction Morphology can be expanded by accommodating data from Slavic languages, while also illustrating how the two can be employed in tandem to adequately analyze certain linguistic phenomena.

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