

Abstract

The dissertation deals with semantic relations between adjectives and deadjectival verbs in Czech. It focuses on the question how the property scale conveyed by adjectives is encoded in the semantics of deadjectival verbs. After the first chapter which presents the topic of the dissertation, in the second chapter, I describe the theoretical and methodological context of contemporary linguistics from a broader perspective in order to relate the theoretical and methodological procedures present in this paper to the current linguistic development. The third chapter pursues the semantics of adjectives in Czech and various approaches to their classification. It presents a scalar classification of adjectives according to which adjectives denote a scale of some property, i.e. an ordered set of degrees along a dimension. With support of empirical research (based on a questionnaire survey and corpus data) I show that it is possible to implement the scalar model into the description of Czech adjectives. This approach states that adjectives are one of many means in language that serve to express measurement (and attribute it to objects and individuals). At the end of the chapter, I propose a classification of Czech adjectives and generalize prototypical semantics of adjectival classes by vector constructions common in construction grammar. The fourth chapter concentrates on deadjectival verbs in Czech. It investigates whether and how the original adjectival scale influences semantic and morphosyntactic features of a derived verb. The following section presents various approaches to telicity and relates them to other features of verbal semantics (grammatical aspect, temporal boundedness). The main part of the chapter introduces the scalar model of deadjectival verbs, originally designed to account for English data. In the following empirical part, which comprises two psycholinguistic experiments consisting of acceptability judgments, I show that Czech deadjectival verbs are morphologically more complex than their English counterparts, and therefore the original adjectival scale seems to be covered by the grammaticalized opposition perfective–imperfective, which can also be conceived as a special tool to express measurement in the verbal domain. Consequently, scalarity in the semantics of Czech deadjectival verbs is not manifested formally, but mainly semantically – by the way deadjectival verbs convey the telic meaning, i.e. progress to a natural endpoint of an event: deadjectival verbs prototypically denote both agentive and non-agentive development of a situation to a standard degree of a property; the degree is a proper endpoint of an event and is set either by the linguistic or the extralinguistic context.

Key words

Czech – telicity – scalarity – aspectuality – aspect – situation types – adjectives – deadjectival verbs – categorization – semantics – property scale – degree adverbs – mereology – formal semantics – vector constructions – construction grammar – grammatical judgments – empirical research methods