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Czech type nouns: Evidence from corpora

Abstract: In many languages (see e.g. Aijmer [2002], Denison [2005], Davidse et al. [2008], Janebová and Martinková [2017] for English; Voghera [2013] and Mihatsch [2016] for Romance languages; Kolyaseva and Davidse [2018] for Russian; Anna Kisiel [2018] for Polish), type nouns, i.e. nouns originally denoting a type or subclass, have acquired "pragmatic, interpersonal, and speaker-based functions" (Traugott 1995: 32). In Czech, a West Slavic language, there are two type nouns: *druh* 'kind/sort' (a group of individuals sharing the same characteristics, or a collection of characteristic features), and *typ* 'type' (a model, example, or an individual with characteristic features; a group of individuals or things with the same features). While the type meaning of *druh* developed from the animate reading ('member of a group; companion'), *typ* is a 19th-century borrowing, arguably via German (Rejzek 2001). Given the lack of detail regarding the distribution of *druh* and *typ* in major Czech grammars and dictionaries, in Janebová and Martinková (in preparation) we carry out an exploratory corpus-based study of original Czech fiction translated into English and of spoken Czech.

Based on our study, I will talk about the functions of the two Czech taxonomic nouns (following Kolyaseva and Davidse [2018] on Russian) by analysing their distributional patterns in informal spoken Czech as represented by the corpus ORAL v.1 (Kopřivová et al. 2017) and in original Czech fiction translated into English.

As especially spoken data suggest, unlike *typ* (which has acquired exemplifying, similative and quotative functions), *druh* mostly retains its "subtype" meaning, even though there is evidence of its gaining approximative functions (quantifying and hedging). These changes are quite complex: the categorial shift is marked by changes in the case assignment, agreement and positional variation (from obligatory postposition to premodification). These paths of development in Czech taxonomic nouns may provide further evidence for possible paths of development of taxonomic nouns across languages.

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