

Reflections on diachronic reflexivity: From the decausative to the deagentive, its relationship to the passive and beyond Part I¹

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ABSTRACT: First, the structure and most significant findings of Jiří Pergler's (2020) monograph on the reflexive deagentive (= RD) in 15th–17th century Czech are presented. Thereafter, selected aspects that draw attention to the constructional approach to accounting for change (Traugott 2015; Smirnova & Sommerer 2020 et al.) are critically developed to show how the features of precursor constructions change along the path towards the reflexive deagentive. By this we aim to emphasize the gradualness of change, favoring a model that posits context-induced small-step reanalyses leading from the decausative to the deagentive construction, instead of positing a single ambiguous form (Pergler 2020), thus also abandoning the traditional dichotomy (e.g. Comrie 1985; Haspelmath 1993; 2021 et al.) between the said constructions. We adapt a model from Heine (2002), according to which there are two successive stages in particular, called the bridging context and the switch context, which can account for the process and result of constructionalization (decausative → transitional → deagentive). Developing the notion of constructional networks (Fried 2013a) according to which reflexive constructions represent a web of family-resemblance relationships (*Familienähnlichkeiten*, Wittgenstein 1953), we treat the network structure of reflexive constructions as organized primarily by family inheritance, being united by genetically related but not identical syntax and by genetically related but not identical semantics (AB...n → BC...n → CD...n → DE...n).

¹ Part I of the article includes the following sections: 1. Composition and findings of Pergler's (2020) monograph; 2. Towards the RD: the gradualness of change and the network of family inheritance; 3. Inside the Czech RD and beyond it: argument structures and verb classes. Part II of the article will be published in the next issue of the journal and will include the following sections: 4. Agent realization within the argument structures of the RD; 5. From inactive situations such as are expressed by the decausative or the object resultative to the RD or passive; 6. Discourse relevance with regard to the participants of the RD; 7. The discourse roles of the RD in the context of family inheritance; 8. Agent realization in view of the discourse roles of the passive; 9. The deagentive infinitive in older Czech; 10. Conclusion; Abbreviations of grammatical terms; List of abbreviations and sources; Sources of corpus data; References.

With respect to the relation of the deagentive to the passive, we propose that divergent manners of agent integration within two different inactive concepts (a processual one, in the case of the decausative, and a stative one, in the case of the objective resultative) participated in the emergence of functionally different constructions, which have not generally been distinguished in the relevant literature (e.g. Haspelmath 1990).

KEYWORDS: constructional change; participial passive; (personal / impersonal / transitive impersonal) reflexive deagentive; reflexive decausative; transitional construction

Úvahy o diachronní reflexivitě:

Od dekauzativu k deagentivu a jeho vztahu k pasivu. Část I

ABSTRAKT: Nejprve představíme obsah a nejvýznamnější poznatky z monografie Jiřího Perglera (2020) k reflexivnímu deagentivu (= RD) v češtině 15.–17. století. Poté soustředíme pozornost na vybrané dílčí aspekty, přihlížejíce ke konstrukčnímu přístupu k diachronním změnám (Traugott 2015; Smirnova & Sommerer 2020 aj.). Zajímat nás bude, jak se jednotlivé rysy předchozích konstrukcí mění směrem k deagentivu. Zdůrazňujeme přitom postupnost změn místo víceznačného užití (Pergler 2020), a tudíž upřednostňujeme kontextuálně vymezenou reanalýzu „po etapách“, vedoucí od dekauzativní k deagentivní konstrukci. Zároveň se tím vzdáváme tradičně vymezované dichotomie mezi těmito konstrukcemi (např. Comrie 1985; Haspelmath 1993; 2021 aj.).

Vycházejíce z pojetí konstrukčního síťování (Fried 2013a), podle něhož reflexivní konstrukce představují uskupení v síti vztahů na základě rodinné podobnosti (*Familienähnlichkeiten*, Wittgenstein 1953), považujeme ovšem za podstatné zachytit to, že koncepce síťování reflexivních konstrukcí je organizována na principu „rodinné dědičnosti“, při níž jsou konstrukce propojeny geneticky příbuznou, nikoliv identickou syntaxí a geneticky příbuznou, avšak ne identickou sémantikou (AB...n → BC...n → CD...n → DE...n).

Modifikujeme zde Heinův (2002) model, v němž vystupují dvě po sobě následující stadia, nazvaná styčný a přepínací kontext, která lze pokládat za odpovědné za proces a výsledek konstrukcionalizace (dekauzativ → přechodná konstrukce → deagentiv).

Co se týče vztahu k pasivu, zůstala doposud nezodpovězena otázka, jak se tyto konstrukce, obě Haspelmathem (1990) označované jako „pasivum“, od sebe navzájem funkčně liší, pokud v daném jazyce vznikly na základě morfoloické inaktivizace situace, označené slovesným kmenem. Předpokládáme, že se v průběhu vývojového procesu participant s rolí agentu, integrovaný do dvou sice původně inaktivních, ale odlišných konceptů (procesuální stadium u dekauzativu a stavové stadium u předmětného resultativu), spolupodílel na utváření do různé míry funkčně odlišných konstrukcí deagentivu a pasiva.

KLÍČOVÁ SLOVA: konstrukční změna; pasívum participiální; přechodná konstrukce; (personální / impersonální / tranzitivně impersonální) reflexivní deagentiv; reflexivní dekauzativ

1. Composition and findings of Pergler's (2020) monograph

Over the past 100 years, the interested reader has rarely been treated to a monograph from Czechia on verbal reflexivity. Their number can presumably be counted on just a single hand, or perhaps with a few extra fingers, depending on one's criteria. It is thus all the more gratifying that Jiří Pergler turned his attention to the field of diachronic syntax. With a focus on the 15th–17th century, his volume investigates the

reflexive deagentive construction (hereafter abbreviated as RD), in which the verb is used in a morphologically reflexive form and the agent is simultaneously demoted out of subject position:

- (1) *když umřel páter Albrecht, ve dvou krajích [...] téměř ve všech městech [...]*

<i>slavné</i>	<i>mše</i>		<i>za</i>	<i>něj</i>	<i>se</i>	<i>sloužily</i>
solemn	masses.NOM.PL.F		for	him	REFL	hold.PST.3PL.F

(TannChan, 157; Pergler 2020: 397)

‘when Father Albrecht died, in two counties [...] in almost all the towns [...] solemn masses were held for him’

Pergler’s volume is divided into a theoretical and an analytical section.² The theoretical section presents the functional-cognitive toolkit that the author relies on throughout his diachronic analysis of the RD.³ It deals specifically with theories of grammaticalization (Hopper & Traugott 2003; Haspelmath 1999 and 2004; Himmelmann 2004 etc.), which is viewed as a unidirectional phenomenon (Haspelmath 1999), and its major manifestations, such as reanalysis (Croft 2000 et al.), gradience (Aarts 2007) and actualization (De Smet 2012); the volume furthermore presents specific constructional changes, such as retraction of the agent (Sansò 2011).

In addition, the author assesses the suitability of the taxonomic, generative and constructional approaches that have been taken to the topic (Croft 2003; Haspelmath 2003; Diewald 2006; Fried 2013a; 2013b; Smirnova 2015; Traugott 2015) as well as typological works on reflexivity (Geniušienė 1987; Kemmer 1993), with an aim to describe the Old Czech RD within an appropriate model of grammar while accounting for language change.⁴

He subsequently presents the RD within the functional network of other agent-defocusing constructions, especially in relation to the participial passive and to the transposed use of 2nd and 3rd person verbal constructions. In so doing, he traces its diachronic emergence from a decausative construction (in his terms, a *spontaneous-event reflexive*, following Fried 2007) against the typological background of other languages (Giacalone Ramat & Sansò 2011; Sansò 2006) and within the framework of the grammaticalization theories mentioned above.⁵

The second, analytical half of the book begins by elucidating Pergler’s selection of sources and their inclusion into the data pool.⁶ As an aside, the author presents a supplementary typology of seventeen reflexive functions from the period under

² Cf. chap. II. (pp. 17–189) and III. (pp. 193–431).

³ Cf. chap. II.2 (pp. 20–59).

⁴ Cf. chap. II.3 (pp. 60–105).

⁵ Cf. chap. II.4 (pp. 106–137) and chap. II.5 (pp. 138–189).

⁶ Cf. chap. III.2.1 (pp. 198–205): 3150 attestations, with at least 500 attestations for each half-century and attention paid to a balance among genres and to original texts.

investigation, which we will not further address here, as it deserves its own study.⁷ The last three chapters are then exclusively dedicated to the deagentive function, the most important findings of which we wish to summarize below.⁸

Among the volume's notable insights are its statistical findings on absolute and relative frequency: the RD increases in frequency from 6 % of all observed uses occurring in the first half of the 15th century to 31.5 % in the second half of the 17th century.⁹ One also obtains an idea of the frequency with which individual lexemes appear in a reflexivized form (*díti*₁ 'to do', *psáti* 'to write', *nacházeti* 'to find', *jmenovati* 'to call', *klásti* 'to put', *nalézati*, *najíti* 'to find' etc.).¹⁰

With respect to argument structure, ca. 87 % of Pergler's observed occurrences involve a personal RD, that is, a structure in which the patient is promoted into subject position.¹¹ This subject is most often inanimate (91 %)¹² and occurs prototypically in preverbal position (71 %), while being contextually integrated as often as it is not. These results accord with the principles of information structure insofar as an initial subject tends to be topical and a postposed subject focalized.¹³ In older Czech, the demoted agent can also appear in surface structure alongside the subject. However, this is observed for only 5.4 % of cases, among which the preposition *od/t* dominates, ahead of *skrz(e)* and the marginal instrumental case; in the other 94.6 % of cases, the agent remains implicit.¹⁴

The preponderant implicitness of the agent has direct implications for its referential status. Accordingly, universal agents (ca. 31.5 %) or generic ones (ca. 40 %) predominate over specific agents (including in the discourse roles of the speaker and addressee, ca. 29.5 %).¹⁵ Such a prevalence of a universal or generic agent correlates with a dominance of utterances that encode generic events (76 %), although these do not exclude the possibility of a specific agent. The advantage of this kind of diachronic and pragmatic analysis reveals itself in that it reflects the referential spectrum of the agent, whereas generative models ascribe to the agent such invariant specifications as "defective indefinite human pronoun" (Rivero & Sheppard 2003), "PRO_{arb}" (Medová 2009) or "arbitrary human quantifier" (Fehrmann & Junghanns & Lenertová 2010).

⁷ Cf. chap. III.2.2 (pp. 205–245).

⁸ Cf. chap. III.3 (pp. 246–339), chap. III.3.4 (pp. 340–404) and chap. III.3.5 (pp. 405–426).

⁹ Cf. p. 248, table 4 and p. 258, table 7. Incidentally, these figures confirm those of Kotsmích (1869: 6), Bartoš (1875: 202–203) following him, Trávníček (1956: 34), Štícha (1988: 24) and Meyer (2010: 298).

¹⁰ Cf. pp. 258–259, table 8.

¹¹ Cf. p. 279, table 11.

¹² Cf. p. 314, table 21.

¹³ Cf. p. 307, table 18, and p. 311, table 19.

¹⁴ Cf. p. 318, table 22.

¹⁵ Cf. p. 324, table 23.

Of interest are also the following observed tendencies with respect to (a) verbal aspect, (b) agency, (c) affirmation, (d) modality and (e) semantic ambiguity in the period under investigation. The author interprets these, in the sense of Smirnova (2015), as exhibiting a gradual decline of contextual restrictions over the period of the RD's development:¹⁶

- (a) imperfective → perfective verbal aspect (in the 1st half of the 15th cent. more than 93.5 % of imperfective attestations as compared to 68 % in the 2nd half of the 17th cent.)¹⁷
- (b) agentive → non-agentive verbs (less than 13 % in the 15th cent. as opposed to 20 to 30 % in the 16th and 17th cent.)¹⁸
- (c) affirmative → negated sentences (more than 93.5 % affirmative attestations in the first half of the 15th cent. as opposed to ca. 85 % in the second half of the 17th cent.)¹⁹
- (d) covert (based on the availability of a generic reading for imperfective verbs) → overt modality (expressed via a modal verb + a perfective verb; in the 15th and 16th cent. the proportion without an auxiliary is higher than 86 %, in the second half of the 17th cent. it is 65 %)²⁰
- (e) ambiguous → non-ambiguous deagentive meaning (in the 1st half of the 15th cent. it is 6.2 % as opposed to 2.5 % in the 2nd half of the 17th cent.)²¹

Last but not least, Pergler's elaboration of the prototypical discourse contexts – so-called situation types – in which the RD was used from the 15th to the 17th century is particularly illuminating. The speaker or writer's motivation to incorporate such a situation type always stood in relation to the agent's reduced degree of discourse relevance. The author abstracts nine such situation types: habitual (18 %), potential (17 %), metatextual (13 %), circumstantial (12 %), instructive (11 %), necessary (10 %), regular (3 %), pragmatically indirect (3 %) and performative (2 %), which are further distinguished depending on whether the event or the agent bears the property of being generic.²²

In the following, we turn our attention to several aspects of the deagentive that are addressed in the monograph. We will begin with the organizational principle of

¹⁶ Cf. p. 338.

¹⁷ Cf. p. 273, table 10, and p. 274, graph 4.

¹⁸ Cf. p. 283, table 12, and p. 284, table 13.

¹⁹ Cf. p. 302, table 17, and p. 303.

²⁰ Cf. p. 299, table 16, and p. 301, graph 5.

²¹ Cf. p. 249, table 5; p. 250, graph 2, and p. 413, table 38.

²² Cf. pp. 340–404.

family inheritance, according to which the inventory of reflexive constructions is conceptualized as an inheritance network. We thereby wish to emphasize the gradualness of change from one reflexive function to the next and to newly identify a transitional construction as an intermediate step along the pathway of reanalysis from the decausative to the RD (decausative → transitional → deagentive; sec. 2). This inheritance path may be seen to include the series of evolving argument structures used in the RD as well as those extending beyond it and can be modelled as a semantic map (sec. 3). Whether or not the agent can appear overtly is determined, in the following, by sketching out the five successive argument structures of the RD, which all reflect continual constructional changes to the status of the patient (sec. 4). We subsequently argue that the RD and the passive each originated from a different construction (the decausative and the objective resultative, respectively) – both of which, however, denote so-called inactive situations – and have later functionally diverged even further via the mechanism of agent implication (sec. 5). This has consequences for the degree of discourse relevance of the participants and for the topicality of the covert agent (sec. 6). Restrictions that determine which discourse roles may be realized in an RD may be explained not by recourse to the patient's degree of discourse relevance but on the basis of family inheritance. This, in turn, allows conclusions to be drawn about the construction's precursors along the same inheritance path (sec. 7 and sec. 8, with an excursion into the discourse roles of the passive). To conclude this paper, we trace one of Pergler's attestations of the deagentive infinitive from *Žiwot a sláwa Swatého Wácława Mučedlnjka* (1669; 1702) – which occurs in the accusative and infinitive construction – back to its Latin prototype and inquire into the reasons why the deagentive infinitive has not become further developed in Czech (sec. 9).²³

2. Towards the RD: the gradualness of change and the network of family inheritance

Most scholars that have contributed to the discussion on how to conceptualize constructional networks differentiate between networks of linguistic patterns either as strict type hierarchies (symbolizing relatedness through inheritance) or as webs of family-resemblance relationships (symbolizing partial similarity but non-inheritance). The function of inheritance relations is to keep track of constructions that share a particular feature (or a set of features), in order from the most abstract and unconstrained to the most restricted (Fried & Östman 2004: 71–72; Smirnova & Sommerer 2020: 25). The modelling of diachronic changes in the network of reflexive constructions cannot be organized via heredity into a vertical taxonomic hierarchy with a single common root, as the constructions only partially overlap, and their features cannot have been inherited entirely from a more abstract hierarchically superordinate schema.

²³ This article owes a great debt to Nicolas M. Jansens, whom I would like to thank here.

For this reason, we prefer to include aspects of a model that posits a networking of reflexive constructions based on the principle of “family resemblance” (*Familienähnlichkeiten*, going back to Wittgenstein 1955) as discussed e.g. in Fried (2013). Here, the constructions partially resemble one another on the level of their individual features without the need for an invariant meaning (*schema*) common to all. According to Rosch & Mervis (1975: 575), a family resemblance relationship consists in a set of features that overlap as follows: AB, BC, CD, DE, such that each item has at least one element in common with one or more other items, but no – or few – elements are common to all items.

Thus, in our opinion, what we have with respect to the reflexive constructions is a case in which genetic inheritance accounts for the overlapping features of the constructions. Neither the terms “resemblance” or “similarity”, which interpret things in a horizontal manner, nor the notion of a merely abstractly inherited invariant meaning in a vertical manner captures this precisely. We therefore treat the network structure as comprising a family inheritance of reflexive constructions united by genetically related but not identical syntax and by genetically related but not identical semantics (AB...*n* → BC...*n* → CD...*n* → DE...*n*).

We refer to an individual strand of the network structure as an inheritance path, upon which a given construction is reanalyzed, and its new reading then co-exists alongside the older one for as long as that one persists in the language. Pergler (2020: 241) postulates that such a construction can be comprehended by a recipient as being “ambiguous”, which can result in it being categorized in a subjective manner, as in the case of the development from the decausative to the deagentive (definitely decausative → likely decausative → decausative or deagentive → likely deagentive → definitely deagentive, Pergler 2020: 243–245). In the following, we aim to demonstrate that one particular type of the construction in question need not necessarily be interpreted as ambiguous, since it has its own communicative function, although it shares features with both the decausative and the deagentive.

The constructional approach to language change taken here elucidates changes in meaning and function by recourse to changes in the individual features of a construction. We were inspired in this by Traugott’s (2015: 54) distinction in the development of new constructions between those arising through a sequence of gradual, stepwise reanalyses of both form and meaning (“constructionalization”) and gradient changes that affect features of existing constructions (“constructional changes”). The transitional construction described here represents an isolated step within a sequence of reanalyses, and we consider this intermediate stage itself to be a stable context-induced formation, which leads in the next stage to constructionalization of the RD.

The organization of network relations can be represented in terms of a so-called semantic map, as is used in typological research (Croft 2001). In the semantic maps created so far (see e.g. Haspelmath 1987; 1990; 2003), the processes of transition between the reflexive functions, involving a multitude of intermediate stages, have been underrepresented, and without a deeper language specific analysis of the nature of these intermediate stages, generalizations concerning the overall development

must remain questionable.²⁴ Kemmer's (1993: 201–205) arrangement in semantic space – based on three criteria – does not entirely capture the relations between the reflexive functions, neither typologically nor historically. The criterium of the participants' reduced distinguishability from one another, which derives from a diminished degree of semantic transitivity, applies consistently for all detransitive reflexive precursors of the RD. The feature of direct affectedness of the chief participant applies primarily to the participant in subject position. And last but not least, we have the criterium of the “low-to-vanishing saliency” of the agent, which is used as a putative link between the deagentive and the decausative. But this low-to-vanishing saliency leaves a corresponding gap in the continuum of agent dissociation. This gap can, however, be closed by positing gradual intermediate stages from non-agentive to agentive, as we wish to do here.

Following up on what we have already indicated above, the development of the RD as outlined in the literature points either to an abrupt reanalysis or to a transition that can have occurred only by way of potential modality (“potential passive”, Meyer 2010: 295–296), the latter of which is not a sufficient explanation on its own in the case of Czech. We were unable to find conclusive evidence for covert potential modality, neither with nor without adverbial support. In this connection, Pergler (2020: 181–182) convincingly shows that Meyer's single attestation, allegedly of this kind, must be explained within the larger context of the metatextual situation types that helped to structure Old Czech textual units in the period after the RD was already fully formed and that such attestations in general appear prototypically with a non-modal reading (2):

(2)	<i>kapitola</i>	<i>padesátá šestá</i>	<i>čte</i>	<i>sě: [...]</i>
	chapter.NOM.SG	fifty-six	read.PRS.3SG	REFL
	(Pror, 41v; Meyer 2010: 296)			
	'chapter 56 reads: [...]'			

Apart from the fact that this metatextual situation type was known already in Old Church Slavonic, we would like to add one further, crucial argument in agreement with Pergler's assessment, which involves semantic verb classes. The verb class of

²⁴ For instance, De Schepper (2010: 205) refers to the Trentino dialect and leaves the impersonal RD unexplained as an abrupt extension of decausatives. Pederson (1991: 92) and, following him, Enger & Nessel (1998: 38) and Enger (2001: 248), in turn, do not convincingly show the Russian dispositionals to be the direct extensions of decausatives without including any bridging constructions. Finally, Holvoet & Grzybowska & Rembiałkowska (2015: 196) assume on the basis of Baltic that dispositionals emerge from telic middle-constructions, without taking into account the different dispositional types within Slavic and potential bridging constructions or structures (Holvoet (2020: unpaginated) expresses a similar view for Slavic). Such a development contradicts the diachronic Czech data, where the evaluative type of reflexive dispositional is, according to currently available data, not attested before the 18th century, but rather only after the RD was fully established.

First half of the 15th cent.: *hledá se* '[...] is sought' (LyraMat, 90r); *obětuje se* '[...] is sacrificed' (HusDcerkaH, 221v); *ofěruje se* '[...] is sacrificed' (BiblOl, 58v); *se...otčovává* '[...] is brought up' (LyraMat, 121v); *se pamatuje* '[...] is remembered' (OtcB, 21v); *popisuje se* '[...] is described' (LyraMat, 12v); *posievá se* '[...] is sown' (BiblOl, 55v); *se posvěcují* '[...] is hallowed' (BiblOl, 65v); *se potvrzuje* '[...] is strengthened' (BiblOl, 236v²); *poznává se* '[...] is recognized' (BiblLitTřeb, 110v¹); *praví se* '[...] is said' (OtcB, 195r); *přidává se* '[...] is added' (LyraMat, 32v); *se přijímá* '[...] is accepted' (KázProv, 199r); *se říká* '[...] is said' (BiblOl, 67v); *se slouží* '[...] is served' (BiblOl, 57v); *věří se* '[...] is believed' (BiblLitTřeb, 209r¹); *se vykládá* '[...] is explained' (BiblOl, 214r); *se...zpívá* '[...] is sung' (KázDzikSct, 155r); *se zvěstuje* '[...] is heralded' (BiblLitTřeb, 92r¹); *se žádá* '[...] is demanded' (LyraMat, 38r)

In the following, we propose a scenario for how a linguistic expression can acquire a new grammatical meaning by way of a transitional construction, which is seen as constituting a context-induced reanalysis.²⁷ Our intention is to show what happened along the path from the decausative to the deagentive. By contrast, the familiar, standard definitions reflect a binary opposition of two clear-cut concepts, each focused on events either *with* (= deagentive) or *without* (= decausative) the involvement of an agent:

Passive and anticausative differ in that, even where the former has no agentive phrase, the existence of some person or thing bringing about the situation is implied, whereas the anticausative is consistent with the situation coming about spontaneously. (Comrie 1985: 326)

The inchoative member of an inchoative/causative verb pair is semantically similar to the passive of the causative (*the stick was broken*), but it crucially differs from it in that the agent is not just unexpressed; rather, the situation is conceived of as occurring without an agent, spontaneously. This does not mean that there cannot be an agent in the objective situation. (Haspelmath 1993: 90)

Moreover, it seems that in many cases the question whether the agentless intransitive should be treated as anticausative or passive is simply irrelevant for the speaker. (Kulikov 1998: 140)

None of these explanations takes into consideration the possibility of a conceptual intermediate spectrum involving a process with a human instigator.²⁸ This is precisely the point we are concerned with here, that the instigator occurs not only in an actual, or so-called objective, situation (as Haspelmath 1993 indicates above) but can also be conceptually inferred without yielding a passive (= deagentive) reading. It is therefore also not irrelevant (as Kulikov 1998 claims above) whether the speaker prefers the transitional construction to the passive when conceptualizing an event. This is the case precisely when the instigator, as the originator of the event, is to be neither prominent (as in canonical diathesis) nor defocused (as in the passive), but rather even more irrelevant (in the words of Kulikov 2011: 232), or when the speaker wishes to emphasize the processual character of the event without simultaneously wanting or being able to eliminate the instigator from the event structure.²⁹

²⁷ The gradual movement from reflexive to passive that Heine (2002: 87–89) formulates on the basis of 49 African languages leaves the former stages generalized under the simple descriptor “reflexive function”.

²⁸ We use the term “instigator” here not to refer to a narrowly defined semantic role but as a semantic construct to refer to the human initiator of a causal event in a transitive predication.

The intermediate stages of the RD's evolution are, to some extent, still present in the Czech language in the form of contextual variations. Following Heine (2002), it is argued that there are two stages in particular, which he calls the bridging context and the switch context, that constituted the evolutionary process (in sum, cf. table 1). For both of these contexts, we isolate the changes that took place in the event structure of the constructions in question. The deviations from canonical event structure, consisting of a causing sub-situation and a caused sub-situation, affected the status of the instigator and can be recognized by the fact that, in each case, a different sub-situation is highlighted (cf. figure 1):

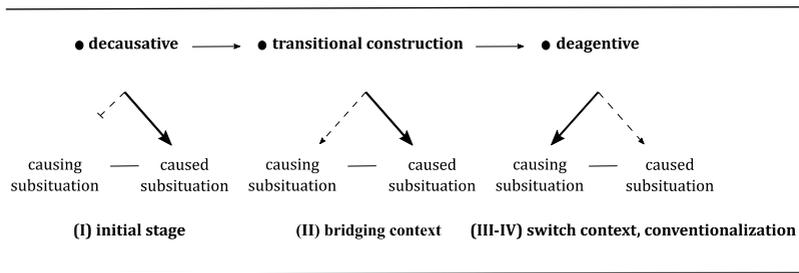


Figure 1: Highlighting of the sub-situations on the path from the decausative to the deagentive

At the initial stage (I), we have a decausative construction with an initial meaning in which the instigator is dissociated from the causing sub-situation and the caused sub-situation is exclusively highlighted by the promotion of the patient into subject position.³⁰

At stage II, we have a bridging context that gives rise to inference to the effect that the initial meaning becomes modified (Heine 2002: 85–86). Here, as well, the caused sub-situation is highlighted and the causing sub-situation is dissociated, though the latter to a lesser extent, such that an attenuated conceptualization emerges in which

²⁹ Lavine's (1997) generative description also remains entrenched in a binary opposition, according to which either an initial external theta role is not selected ("unagentive middle" = decausative, A. P.) or the verb's initial theta role is internalized and suppressed ("agentive middle" = RD, A. P.) in the argument structure. Moreover, the latter category also subsumes examples that we differentiate from the RD as being middle-constructions (p. 14, (14)) or transitional constructions (for a potential example, p. 10, 6(a)).

³⁰ The discontinuous line in the initial stage (I) of figure 1 describes an intrinsic feature of a decausative process (*prádlo se suší* 'the laundry dries / is drying'), namely that a cause is still conceived of, unlike in the case of other processes (*prádlo schne* 'the laundry dries / is drying'). For this reason, it is doubtful that the entire causing sub-situation is eliminated in a decausative event, as Haspelmath (2021: 23) claims. It is equally for this reason that we prefer the term "decausative" to the term "anticausative", which is also common in the literature.

a human instigator is implied but remains backgrounded. Needless to say, such an instigator fails all standard syntactic (!) agentivity diagnostics (overt agent, compatibility with infinitival control structures, agent-oriented adverbs, control of the PRO of a purpose clause, subject control of a secondary predicate).

This bridging context is not confined to the periphery of the languages that have it. It goes back to the oldest documented stages of the Czech and Russian languages and cannot be reduced to an unelaborated stage of development, nor to a hypothetical intention on the part of individual speakers to create ambiguity. Likewise, a (typically non-linguist) addressee does not perceive such a context as an ambiguous dilemma that would have to be dichotomously categorized. In light of these facts and since this context, which triggers its own subtle meaning, still persists even in today's Czech, we ascribe a distinct grammatical meaning to the transitional construction expressed within it.

It is to be expected that the language systems of various language users go through similar but not necessarily the same processes. Thus, various initially generic scenarios may have contributed to the reanalysis and resulting implication of the agent in the following bridging contexts. We wish to illustrate these scenarios using the earliest possible attestations from the second half of the 14th century and the 15th century, which we interpret as later reflexes of earlier constructional adaptations to their respective bridging contexts (cf. (a–b, d)),³¹ and which existed alongside the conventionalized stage of the deagentive. At the same time, modal scenarios based on generics as a subset (generic \supset modal events) are very rarely attested in this period (cf. (c)):

(a) **The verbal domain:** Processes based on mental or physical verbs that take place within a person cannot be completely dissociated from the person in question. This person can therefore more easily shift from being a mere bearer to being an instigator of the underlying event:

(5)	<i>Avšakž</i>	<i>často</i>	<i>v</i>	<i>těj</i>	<i>rozpači</i>	<i>mnohý</i>	<i>skutek</i>	<i>sě</i>
	although	often	in	this	hesitancy	many	deed.NOM.SG	REFL
	<i>otvlačí</i>			<i>podlé</i>	<i>lidského</i>	<i>dómysla,</i>	<i>jehožto bývá bez čísla</i>	
	postpone.PRS.3SG			according	human	insight		

(AlxBM, 3r, v. 196; middle of the 14th cent.)

‘although often in this hesitancy many deeds are postponed according to the people’s insights, of which there are countless many’

³¹ Meyer (2010: 298, cf. table 1) notes in his statistics on reanalysis that “there is a clear rise in the frequency of decausative tokens shortly before the rise of deagentives”. However, the observed rise in the frequency of the decausative might give the false impression that it was not yet a fully developed category in the analyzed period. Moreover, the extent to which a token-based statistic reflects the scenario of bridging contexts in a generic environment, as outlined above, remains unclear.

(b) **The domain of event structure:** The combination of a construction's argument and a verb (and, possibly, an adjunct) allows one to deduce an instigator when a process or state occurs either as a result of direct or indirect causation:

- (6) *Doňadž koně nepokuši, pěči vždy naň jmieti muši;*

ten se takéž skazí stáním, jakož častým osedláním.
 this REFL also spoil.PRS.3SG standing.INS.SG as frequent saddling.INS.SG
 (AlxV, 162r, v. 849; early 15th cent.)

'as long as a horse has not been tried, it must always be cared for; even standing can spoil it, as can frequent saddling'

- (7) *Prvá strana dělí se na čtvero,*
 first unit.NOM.SG divide.PRS.3SG REFL into four
neb najprv ukazuje, kdy psáno jest čtenie: [...]

(LyraMat, 10v; early 15th cent.)

'the first section is divided into four, for it first shows when the Gospel was written: [...]'

An instrumental NP can be read either as a cause or as an instrument (of an implied instigator):

- (8) *A milost se pak ovšem tvrdí*
 And grace.NOM.SG REFL then certainly consolidate.PRS.3SG
modlitvú a zvláště páteřem,
 prayer.INS.SG and especially Lord's Prayer.INS.SG
když rozčicháme, co j' v tom chuti, jesto můžem říci „Otče náš“ bohu.

(ŠtítKlem, 27v; 1376)

'And grace is then consolidated especially through prayer and particularly through the Lord's Prayer, when we realize what pleasure there is in being able to say "Our Father" to God.'

- (9) *„Učinil jest pán buoh dvě velicie světle.“ A zajisté velicie, neb jejich*
 And certainly great for their
kázní a jejich učním cierkev svatá
 decency.INS.SG and their preaching.INS.SG Church.NOM.SG Holy
svietí se skrze vieru jakožto slunce.
 illuminate.PRS.3SG REFL through faith like sun

(KázLeg, 104r; middle of the 15th cent.)

'"The Lord God has created two great lights." And certainly great ones, for through their decency and their preaching, the Holy Church is illuminated by faith like the sun.'

- (10) *V zámutku rozšíříš mě. Protož trp bytie zámutka na tomto světě,*
neb čím více šíří se srdce tvé utrpením,
 for the more expand.PRS.3SG REFL heart.NOM.SG your sorrow.INS.SG
tiem více pán buoh daruov svých duchovních položí v něm, [...].

(AnsNauč, 71v; 3rd quarter of the 15th cent.)

'In sorrow you extend me. Therefore, suffer the existence of sorrow in this world, for the more your heart expands through sorrow, the more of his spiritual gifts the Lord God will place in it [...].'

A PP that originally denotes a demoted instigator in a transitional construction can later be read as an agent, cf. (11–12). It is also possible that such PPs first referred to partial aspects of an instigator before they were able to express a holistic agent, cf. (13):

- (11) *Nemohuť také tohoto zamlčeti, neb to bývá mezi lidmi, že některý velmĕ se vsvietí milostí k bohu, až jako vsviedí,*

<i>ež</i>	<i>by</i>	<i>se</i>	<i>od</i>	<i>něho</i>	<i>i</i>
that	SBJV.3SG	REFL	by	him	also
<i>jiný</i>		<i>někto</i>	<i>mohl</i>		<i>zapáliti, [...]</i>
another.NOM.SG.M		somebody	might.PST.3SG.M		kindle.INF

(ŠtítKlem, 68v; 1376)

‘Nor can I conceal, for so it happens among people, that some become very enlightened through their love for God, as if (to the point that) they would wither away, so that others might also be kindled by them.’

- (12) *Báně plná hněvu božího převrátila se na hlavu jich a snad neodmladie se skrze vás kořenové jich, [...].*
- | | | | | | |
|--------------------|-----------|--------------|------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| | | | | <i>a</i> | <i>snad</i> |
| | | | | and | perhaps |
| <i>neodmladie</i> | <i>se</i> | <i>skrze</i> | <i>vás</i> | <i>kořenové</i> | <i>jich, [...]</i> |
| rejuvenate.PRS.3PL | REFL | through | you | root.NOM.PL.M | their |

(ChelčLid, 97v; 1st half of the 15th cent., manuscript from 1508)

‘A pitcher full of the wrath of God turned over on their heads, and perhaps thanks to you their roots will not be rejuvenated [...].’

- (13) *rozdělili jsú se ot hněvu obličjě jeho*
- | | | | | | | |
|----------------------|------------|------|----|--------------|--------------------|-----|
| divide.PTCP.PRF.PL.M | be.PRS.3PL | REFL | by | wrath.GEN.SG | countenance.GEN.SG | his |
|----------------------|------------|------|----|--------------|--------------------|-----|
- (ŽaltWittb, Ps 54, 22; middle of the 14th cent.)

‘divisi sunt ab ira vultus eius’ (Vulg, III: 286)

‘they are divided by the wrath of his countenance’ (DRV, 1914: 607)

(c) **The domain of modality:** A generic event can be extended to a modal event (possibility, necessity/prohibition) with an instigator involved (14). Moreover, an evaluative adverb not only supports modality but also enforces the implication of an instigator (15). However, as mentioned above, this modal type can rarely be found in the oldest period and the evidence presented here, involving perceptual verbs (*shledati, nalézati* ‘to find’), does not allow for a complete dissociation of the instigator from the event (cf. also (a)):

- (14) *řiedko sama vlhkost jedna od takovéhož povětříe nakaženého při srdci nalézá se, ale vždy smiešena se krví.*
- | | | | | | | |
|-----------|--------|-----------------|--------------|------|------|-----|
| sometimes | itself | moisture.NOM.SG | one | from | such | air |
| infected | at | heart | find.PRS.3SG | REFL | | |

(ČernýMor1506, A2v; late 15th cent.)

‘sometimes the moisture itself from the same infected air can be found at the heart, but always mixed with blood’

- (15) *Neb k tomu, aby skutek byl ctný, slušie, aby ten skutek byl dobrý ot rodu, točičto v sobě a ote všech odstupidelných přičin,*

<i>a</i>	<i>to</i>	<i>sě</i>	<i>nesnadně</i>	<i>shledá.</i>
and	that.NOM.SG	REFL	not easily	find.PRS.3SG

(LyraMat, 52v; early 15th cent.)

'For, in order that a deed be virtuous, it is proper that this deed be good by nature [...], and that that will not be easy to find.'

- (d) **Contextual cues:** The construction can be embedded in an agent-oriented context which tends to allow for reinterpretation of a following natural process as having been initiated by an instigator:

(16) <i>Protož</i>	<i>jakož</i>	<i>sě</i>	<i>kúkuol</i>	<i>vybierá</i>	<i>a</i>
as	like	REFL	tares.NOM.SG	gather.PRS.3SG	and
<i>v</i>	<i>uohni</i>	<i>sě</i>	<i>spálí,</i>	<i>takež bude na skonání světa.</i>	
in	fire	REFL	burn.PRS.3SG		

(BiblDrážď, 548r; Matt 13, 40; 2nd half of the 1360s)

'sicut ergo colliguntur zizania et igni conburuntur | sic erit in consummatione saeculi' (Vulg, V: 100)

'As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world.' (KJV, NT: 20)

(17) <i>proto</i>	<i>na</i>	<i>počátku</i>	<i>bielek vaječný</i>	<i>bývá</i>
that's why	at	beginning	egg white.NOM.SG	be.PRS.HAB.3SG
<i>příkládán,</i>		<i>aby</i>	<i>se</i>	<i>bolest</i>
apply.PTCP.PASS.SG.M		to.SBJV.3SG	REFL	pain.NOM.SG.F
<i>utišila</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>rána</i>	<i>se</i>	<i>čistila</i>
soothe.PST.3SG.F	and	wound.NOM.SG.F	REFL	cleansed.PST.3SG.F

(LékRhaz, 12; 2nd half of the 15th cent.)

'that is why egg white is applied at the beginning, in order that the pain be soothed and the wound cleansed'

Some of such contextual meanings may become more frequent and turn into inherent meanings with a backgrounded instigator. But the development does not stop there and continues on to the next stage. At stage III, we have a new type of context, the switch context, which is incompatible with a decausative meaning and partly also with a transitional one. This stage is characterized by an interaction between context and conceptualization, leading to the rise of the RD as a new grammatical meaning. Although the defocusing of the human instigator links the transitional construction with the RD, in the latter construction the agent is essential to the event and is thus conceptualized as communicatively relevant. The causing sub-situation is thus highlighted in the case of the deagentive, while the caused sub-situation remains a part of the conceptualization, but in the background.

Finally, being no longer associated with the decausative or the transitional meaning, the RD with its newly established meaning was then open to further constructional changes: It was free of the contextual constraints that led to its emergence,

which meant that it could then be used conventionally in new contexts (stage IV). The RD became conventionalized in that it expanded into verb classes that were not involved in its constructionalization, such as the verb class *číst* ‘to read’, which, in being a so-called *deagentivum tantum*, licenses an RD but not a decausative.³² In the case of *deagentiva tantum*, the causing sub-situation is obligatorily highlighted, since their event structure does not allow a decausative, that is, it does not allow highlighting of the caused sub-situation.

Table 1: Context-induced reanalysis of the decausative function as a deagentive one

	Stage	Context	Meaning	Function
I	Initial stage	The instigator is dissociated; exclusive highlighting of the caused sub-situation	Initial meaning	Decausative
II	Bridging context ³³	The human instigator is interpreted as backgrounded; highlighting of the caused sub-situation	Transitional meaning	Transitional
III	Switch context ³⁴	The human instigator is interpreted as foregrounded (as agent), hence highlighting of the causing sub-situation	Final meaning	Deagentive
IV	Conventionalization	The agent is obligatorily implicit; exclusive highlighting of the agentive situation	Diffusion to further contexts ³⁵	e.g. <i>Deagentiva tantum</i> and overt agent

The three phases described here, the initial stage (I), the bridging context (II) and the switch context (III), can be exemplified by means of a single phrase such as *světla se rozsvítla*, as it can manifest as the following three constructions: (I) a decausative construction (18), in which the speaker refers to a light turning on, but the cause (a person, a force of nature, an automatic mechanism etc.) is dissociated (= the caused sub-situation is highlighted), (II) a transitional construction (19), in which the light turning on evidently proceeds from a human instigator, who is, however, without communicative relevance (= the caused sub-situation is highlighted with a backgrounded instigator implied), and finally (III) an RD (20), in which the

³² Contrary to Pergler (2020: 150), we count the *deagentiva tantum* among the post-constructionalizational changes, whereas he places them in the bridging context and at the very beginning.

³³ The bridging context corresponds roughly to what Diewald (2002: 109–114) calls the “critical context”.

³⁴ Switch contexts relate to what Diewald (2020: 287) calls “isolating contexts” and to what Himmelmann (2004: 32–33) names “syntactic context expansion” and “semantic-pragmatic context expansion”.

³⁵ This change can construction-internally involve an increase in the range of elements, which Himmelmann (2004) calls “host-class expansion”. Diewald’s (2020: 287) “isolating contexts” appear to also include the conventionalization stage.

agent is made responsible for the light turning on and is thereby highlighted (= the causing sub-situation is highlighted):³⁶

- (18) *Červené světlo se nerozsvítilo,*
red light.NOM.SG.N REFL turn on.NEG.PST.3SG.N

podle brankáře puk nebyl za brankovou čarou. (syn_v9)

'The red light did not turn on, according to the goalkeeper, the puck was not behind the goal line.'

- (19) *Zachránilo ji to, že když volala o pomoc,*

rozsvítilo se v okně světlo,
turn on.PST.3SG.N REFL in window light.NOM.SG.N

pachatel se lekl a utekl. (syn_v9)

'It saved her that, when she called for help, a light (was) turned on in the window, and the perpetrator was startled and fled.'

- (20) *Když je třeba opravit určitou větev světel,*
when is need repair particular branch.ACC.SG light.GEN.PL
musí se rozsvítit, aby se zjistila závada. (syn_v9)
must.PRS.3SG REFL turn on.INF

'When a particular branch of lights needs to be repaired, one has to turn it on for the fault to be detected.'

If, unlike in the decausative, the event's cause is to be eliminated completely, such that a true "anticausative" construction – here called an "autonomous" one – is produced, the expression *sám* 'itself' or similar must be inserted into the construction (21):

- (21) *Otec měl malý bar, který se sám rozsvítí,*
that.NOM.SG.M REFL itself light up.PST.3SG.M

když se otevřel. (syn_v9)

'My father had a small bar that lit up by itself when it was opened.'

We summarize the characteristics of these four cognate reflexive constructions in table 2, assuming four possible degrees of dissociation of the instigator. While the autonomous reflexive construction is characterized by the maximum degree of dissociation (21), since the instigator is completely eliminated, the deagentive has the minimum degree of dissociation, since the agent is essential to the conceptualization

³⁶ If we take up and modify Goldberg's (1995: 57–58) metaphors, which pertain to a specifically unexpressed participant within a construction, and also take into account constructions where the highest ranked participant is reintroduced, we may map out the stages of the main participants in the Czech reflexive constructions as follows: (a) A=P-merging (semantic-reflexive); (b) P-cutting (autocausative); (c) nearly A-cutting (decausative); (d) A-cutting (autonomous); (e) intensive A-shading (transitional); (f) intensive A-shading, possibly A-attenuation to EXP (middle-construction); (g) A-shading or A-resurfacing (older Czech RD); (h) A-shading (new Czech RD); (h) A-attenuation to EXP with EXP-shading or EXP-resurfacing (dispositional reflexives).

of the event (20). In between is the decausative, where the instigator is almost entirely dissociated (18) but not to the extent that decausatives (*rozsvítit se* ‘to light up’) become synonymous with semantically corresponding expressions based on non-causative verbs (e.g. *začít vydávat světlo* ‘to start giving off light’, cf. also fn. 30). Finally, there is the transitional construction denoting an event that must be traced back to a human instigator, who, however, remains communicatively irrelevant behind the foregrounded process (19). This continuum of dissociation of the instigator reflected by the four constructions under discussion must be separated from cases of genuine lexical or semantic ambiguity, where the addressee finds it difficult to decipher the intended meaning of one of these constructions. It pertains to cases where the conceptualization of agentivity is indispensable for communicative success.

Table 2: Degree of instigator’s dissociation within four reflexive constructions

		Autonomous	Decausative	Transitional	Deagentive
Event	based on trans V	process	process	process	(mostly) action
	self-contained	yes	yes	no	no
Instigator	degree of dissociation	maximum	high	low	zero
		not present at all	only indirectly traceable	present but irrelevant	present and essential

There are still further reflexive constructions observable in older Czech that denote an inactive concept of ‘process + instigator’ comparable to the transitional construction. But unlike the transitional construction, they can realize the instigator overtly without the construction automatically changing from a processual to an agentive reading. For example, the verb *státi se* ‘to happen’ (a *reflexivum tantum*) functions as a semantically weak verb with processual meaning governing an (agentive) event noun or the anaphoric *to* ‘this’, referring to such an event in context, cf. (22–23):

- (22) *A to první popsání stalo*
 and this first taxing.NOM.SG.N happen.PTCP.PRF.SG.N
sě jest ot vládaře syrského Cyrina.
 REFL be.PRS.3SG by governor.GEN.SG Syrian.GEN.SG Cyrenius.GEN.SG
 (BibIOI, 197r; 1417; Luke 2,2)

‘haec descriptio prima facta est praeside Syriae Cyrino’ (Vulg, V: 286)

‘And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.’ (KJV, NT: 73)

- (23) *Páni vecěchu: „To dřěve jest nebývalo ni sě nám jest*
 neither REFL us.DAT.PL be.PRS.3SG
ot kterého ciesaře to stalo.“
 by any.GEN.SG emperor.GEN.SG this.NOM.SG.N happen.PTCP.PRF.SG.N

(DalV, 24r)

‘The lords said: “This was not the case before, it never happened to us from any emperor.”’

An analogous inactive concept is found in the verb *díti*₁ ‘to do, to make’, which also appears in the decausative alternant *díti se* ‘to happen’ as a processual copula to an (agentive) event noun (24):

(24) *Jest Korintus město dávné, vsí ve čsti velmi úpravné, k řecký zemi jako hlava,*

že se v něm děje poprava.
that REFL in it happen.PRS.3SG. justice.NOM.SG

(AlxV, 158v, v. 315)

‘Corinth is an ancient city, righteous in all its honor, like a capital to the Greek lands, as justice is done in it.’

Such an analytical composition of a decausative process and an (agentive) event noun can be specified by introducing a clearly identifiable instigator, without having to ascribe an agentive component to the construction as a whole, since this is already encoded separately in the agent-implying event noun or in the context, cf. (25–26). It is therefore not necessary to skip over this intermediate stage of development and, as assumed by Pergler (2020: 261–262), adopt a deagentive reading once an instigator has been introduced:

(25) *Prvnieť jest násilí trýzni vnitř i zevnitř, [...], to,*
first is fierceness.NOM.SG.N oppression within and from within that
kteréž dálo se ot Židov nevražících na křesťany.
which happen.PST.3SG.N REFL by Jew.GEN.PL hostile to Christians
(LyraMat, 153r)

‘The first [evil event] is the fierceness of the oppression within and from within, [...] which befell the Christians by the doings of the Jews who were hostile to them.’

(26) *Když vládyky do města přijědechu, klobúk jim přivrhuće, hlavy jim sečiechu.*

To se vládykám ot měščan dálo,
this.NOM.SG.N REFL nobleman.DAT.PL by citizen.GEN.PL happen.PST.3SG.N
mé oko to často vídalo.
(DalV, 26c)

‘When the noblemen came into the town, they tore off their hats, cut off their heads. This was done to the noblemen by the citizens, my eye has seen it many times.’

In other decausative alternants, as well, the insertion of an *od/t*-PP need not enforce a deagentive reading but may first introduce the reading of an intermediate stage. Such readings become clear if one takes a closer look at the participants involved. Either the instigator does not have full control over the expressed event (‘giving birth’, (27)) or the patient, as an abstract entity, favors interpretation of the event as a spontaneous occurrence (‘evoking evil’, (28)), such that reintroduction of the instigator does not noticeably change the degree of agentivity expressed by the reflexive construction:

(27) *Poně ženy zrodily sú krále i vešken lid, jenž panuje na moři i na zemi, a*

ten se jest ot žen zrodil
this.NOM.SG.M REFL be.PRS.3SG by woman.GEN.PL bear.PTCP.PRF.SG.M

a ty sú ony učinily, jížto dělají vinnice, z nichžto víno bývá. (BiblOl, 225r; 3 Esd, 4, 15–16)

‘Nonne mulieres genuerunt regem, et omnem populum, qui dominatur mari et terrae; et ex illis nati sunt, et ipsae educaverunt eo qui plantaverunt vineas ex quibus vinum fit?’ (Vulg, V: 1202)
 ‘Women have borne the king and all the people that bear rule by sea and land. Even of them came they: and they nourished them up that planted the vineyards, from whence the wine cometh.’ (1 Esd, 4, 15–16; KJV, Apoc.: 8)

(28) *A tu jest přikázal Judas, aby se oděnci hotovi jměli,*

<i>zdali</i>	by	se	ot	nepřátel	nyetczo	zlosti	vzbudilo [...].
if	SBJV.3SG	REFL	by	enemy.GEN.PL	some	treachery	cause.PST.3SG.N

(BibIOI, 2 Macc 14,22)

‘praecepit autem ludas armatos esse locis oportunis | ne forte ab hostibus repente mali aliquid oriretur’ (Vulg, IV: 1268)

‘Judas placed armed men ready in convenient places, lest some treachery should be suddenly practised by the enemies [...]’ (KJV, Apoc.: 245)

3. Inside the Czech RD and beyond it: argument structures and verb classes

The personal RD does not represent the final stage of development along the inheritance path that led to its emergence, rather the path of development may be continued in line with the argument structures of the RD. We outline in the following a possible chronological scenario motivated by the valency of the verbs involved.

The argument structure of the Czech personal RD, which is based on transitive verbs, may be dated alongside the impersonal RD based on intransitively used transitive verbs, back to the 14th century (Meyer 2010: 297–298). The latter may have served as a bridge upon the inheritance path leading to the later impersonal RD based on “true” intransitives, which is attested only from the 2nd half of the 15th century onward (Schäfer 1982: 169; Meyer 2010: 301). The purportedly significant increase in the use of the RD based on intransitive verbs after the mid-16th century reported by Meyer (2010: 297) can so far not be confirmed; the intransitive-based RD remained consistently marginal for the observed period until the end of the 17th century (ranging from ca. 1 % to 4 % of all observed RDs, Pergler 2020: 279, table 11, 280–281).³⁷

Previous studies have viewed the emergence of the impersonal RD as a catastrophic structural change, whereupon all intransitives obtained this structural option together as a class (Meyer 2010: 302–303). Rather than large-scale “catastrophic” changes (e.g. Lightfoot 1979), we hypothesize a gradual constructional development in the sense of Traugott (2015: 53), and hence we posit successive small, stepwise changes in the use of intransitive verb classes. These changes led – micro-step by mic-

³⁷ Pergler’s (2020: 281) intransitive evidence from the 2nd half of the 15th cent. (*vy jaké se jest smiešenie vešlo* ‘what mixing occurred’) is erroneously assigned to Kronžička instead of VšekK from 1515. While the passage is reproduced with the reflexive in Hanka (1841: 435), it appears in Jireček’s edition (VšekJ, IX, 10, 1874: 449) without it.

ro-step – to intransitives, with respect to form, and from agentive to non-agentive verbs, with respect to semantics, including from unergatives to unaccusatives.

The personal RD's inheritance path by way of an impersonal RD through to a transitive impersonal RD can be traced chronologically in figure 2 in relation to valency. Over the five stages of development (I–V), one can observe that it was, above all but not exclusively, the status of the patient that was continually subject to constructional changes. The patient was first promoted to subject and then postposed, such that it could either retreat to the point of no longer needing to be present in the valency, or it could eventually be reencoded as an object. Accordingly, these constructional changes led from a structural type that featured promotion to one without it. The older stages nevertheless remained in the language, while the later stages have so far not entered into the standard variety. Let us take a closer look at the stages of development from a patient-oriented to a defocused-agent-oriented construction, below.

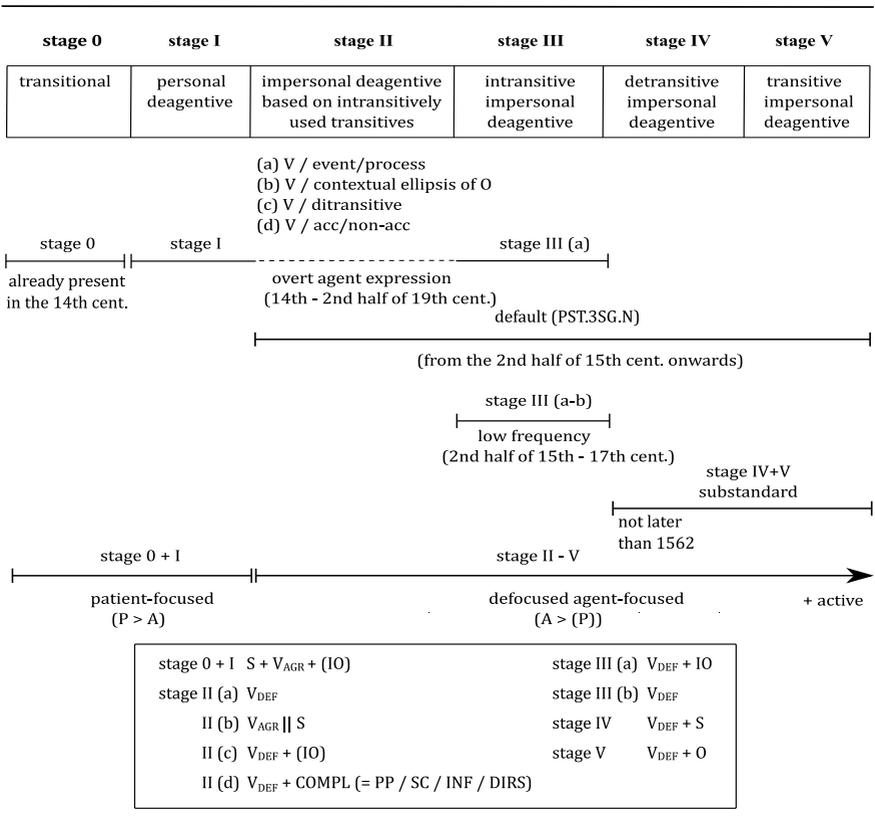


Figure 2: Constructional changes of the argument structure within the Czech RD

From a transitive-verb-based transitional construction emerged a personal RD with a patient promoted to subject (stages 0–I). In the next phase, transitive verbs could be used intransitively (stage II). From the perspective of lexical aspect classes, we are dealing with so-called diffuse event-process lexemes (Anstatt 2003), which optionally omit their object (stage IIa). Such verbs exhibit the inherent property of being able to change from expressing a transitive event contoured by a direct object (*jíst^{impvf} jablko* – *sníst^{pvf} jablko* ‘to eat (up) the apple’) to an intransitive process (*jíst^{impfv}* – *pojíst^{pvf}* ‘to eat (a little)’), which was subsequently reflected in the structure of RDs formed from them in that they transitioned from personal constructions to impersonal ones, cf. (29–30):

(29) *Vy ste suol zemská: pakli suol zhyne,*

<i>čím</i>	<i>sě</i>	<i>bude</i>	<i>soliti?</i>
wherewith	REFL	be.FUT.3SG	salt.INF

(BiblDrážď, 542v; Matt 5,13; 2nd half of the 1460s)

‘Vos estis sal terrae | quod si sal evanuerit in quo sallietur’ (Vulg, V: 52)

‘Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted?’ (KJV, NT: 7)

(30) *Tuto* *sě* *vypravuje* *od* *vzkříšení*
 here REFL tell.PRS.3SG from resurrection
od *našeho* *milého* *Jezu [...]*
 from our beloved Jesus

(PasMuzA, 209; 3rd third of the 14th cent.)

‘Here it is told, beginning from the resurrection of our beloved Jesus [...].’

Moreover, contextual ellipsis of the object could lead to exactly the same result as that of an impersonal structure (stage IIb), cf. (31–32):

(31) *Budete-li* *obětovati* *oběť* *za* *děkovanie* *hospodinu,* *aby*
 when you will sacrifice Sacrifice for thanksgiving Lord in order to
byl *milostiv,* *téhož dne,* *kteréhož* *obětuje* *sě,*
 was merciful same day REL.GEN.SG sacrifice.PRS.3SG REFL
ji esti ji budete, [...]. (BibIOI, 53r; Lev 22, 29; 1417)

‘si immolaveritis hostiam pro gratiarum actione Domino ut possit esse placabilis eodem die comedetis eam’ (Vulg, I: 516)

‘And when ye will offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving unto the LORD, offer it at your own will. On the same day [as it is offered] it shall be eaten up; [...].’ (KJV, AT: 150)

(32) *A to mohlo by býti jinak praveno,* *kdyby to pravenie šlo k múdrym vysokým.*
 if this narration go to wise high

<i>Ale</i>	<i>že</i>	<i>česky</i>	<i>sě</i>	<i>píše,</i>
but	since	Czech	REFL	write.PRS.3SG

musí se ponížiti v tom pravení.

(Hvězd, 74v; middle of the 15th cent.)

‘And this could have been said differently if the narration were addressed to the high wise scholars. But since it is written in Czech, one must diminish oneself in the narration.’

- (37) *Nebo srdcem věří se k spravedlnosti,*
 for heart believe.PRS.3SG REFL to righteousness
ale usty vyznávajúe býva k spasení. (BiblLitTřeb, 209r¹; Rom 10,10; 1411)
 ‘corde enim creditur ad iustitiam [...]’ (Vulg, V: 740)
 ‘For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness. [...]’ (KJV, NT: 199)
- (38) *Tak se o tej střede píše, ež*
 so REFL about this Wednesday write.PRS.3SG that
Ježiš oblášč s svú matkú ten vešken den sedě, ji těšieše a řka [...].
 (KristA, 86r; 1360/1380)
 ‘So it is written about that Wednesday that Jesus sat separately with his mother all day, soothing her and saying [...].’
- (39) *Třetie některým dušám dán jest vláští očištec pro některého svatého prosby uslyšenie,*
jako se čte o svatém Patriciovi [...].
 as REFL read.PRS.3SG about Saint Patrick
 (PasMuzA, 644; 3rd third of the 14th cent.)
 ‘Thirdly, some souls are granted their own purgatory when the request of a saint is heard, as can be read about Saint Patrick [...].’
- (40) *Křivda veš svět oslepila, pro malý dar súd převrátí,*
jakož se tuto dává znáti.
 as REFL here give.PRS.3SG know.INF
 (BawEzop, 21r; 1472)
 ‘Injustice has blinded the whole world, and for the sake of a small gift, judgment will be overturned as it is made known here.’
- (41) *Pravá miera boha milovati jest, nade vše jej milovati a bez miery,*
jakož se zpívá:
 as REFL sing.PRS.3SG
Směj, což můžeš chváliti; takéž já řku: Směj, což můžeš milovati.
 (ŠtítKlem, 22r; 1376)
 ‘The true measure of loving God is to love him above all things and without measure, as it is sung: Dare to praise as much as you can; likewise I say: Dare to love as much as you can.’
- (42) *Neb tak se die tu:*
 for so REFL say.PRS.3SG here
Ktož svítěží, dám jemu skrytú mannu, ješto jí nevie jiný, jen ten, ktož vezme.
 (ŠtítSvátA, 129r; turn of the 14th and 15th cent.)
 ‘For so it is said here: Whoever wins, to him I will give secret manna, so that no one else knows but he who takes it.’

The syntactic use of constructions represented by stages IIa to IIc could, then, have established a link to the intransitive verbs in two respects (stage III).³⁹ On the

³⁹ Stage II in the development of impersonal deagentives with ACC/NON-ACC verbs emerged

one hand, the optional omission of the direct object could have paved the way for the use of objectless intransitives (stage IIb); on the other hand, the way toward the use of intransitive object-taking verbs would have been open, firstly, due to the possibility of encoding the patient by means other than the nominative in the case of ACC/NON-ACC verbs and, secondly, due to the preceding use of optionally ditransitive verbs (stage IIIa). Whether one can confirm a gradual chronological change between stages IIIa and IIIb from intransitive object-taking verbs to objectless verbs would need to be shown by quantitative studies covering the 18th century. Our earliest attestations for true intransitive object-taking and objectless verbs are few in number and currently date to the second half of the 15th century:

(43) *I jináč, když mne bude zdvíhati a opět zase pokládati, necht' se mnú trefně o vše uhodí,*

<i>nebt'</i>	<i>se</i>	<i>málem</i>	<i>dítěti</i>	<i>uškodí.</i>
for	REFL	nearly	child.DAT.SG	harm.PRS.3SG

(NaučRod, 10v; turn of the 15th and 16th cent.)

'And otherwise, when she lifts me up and puts me back down again, she ought to accord with me in everything, lest the child should come to some harm.'

(44) *Ale ani cesty, po které šlo by se tam, but neither way along which go.PTCP.PRF.SG.N. SBJV.3SG REFL there nikdy neznal jsem.*

(TobU, 139v; 2nd half of the 15th cent.)

'But I never even knew a way by which to get there.'

With regard to morphosyntax, it is interesting to observe that, in impersonal structures, the past default form *-lo* (PST.3SG.N) appears with a time delay, in contrast to the default form in the present or future tense. We could find evidence only from the second half of the 15th century onward, which, moreover, appears predominantly in the conditional mood (five conditional attestations compared to one past from the 1480s, cf. 45). This seems to indicate an analogous extension of non-agreeing default forms from the domain of other (non-)reflexive impersonal constructions, but presumably the conditional, with its auxiliary marker *by*, paved the way to the generalization of this rule to the past, with which it shares the use of *l*-participle forms:

(45) *Při těch časech, když se psalo léta božieho narozenie Mho CXIXho, počal se zákon premonstratenský v laodicenské diocesi*
 birth.GEN.SG MCHOXIX.GEN.SG write.PST.3SG.N year.GEN.SG divine.GEN.SG

(MartKronC, 98r; approx. in 1480, cf. Šimek 2019: 19)

'In those times, when the year 1119 was written, the order of the Premonstratensians was founded in the diocese of Laodicea [= Laudunum / Laon].'

also in Old Church Slavonic and Old East Slavonic. Old Church Slavonic additionally exhibits the phenomenon of dropping the object with verbs for which this is actually not expected, following the ancient Greek model (cf. Večerka 1996: 232–233).

- c. Lachian dial.: *kupilo se kuň*
 buy.PST.3SG.N REFL horse.NOM.SG.M
 ‘a horse was bought’ (Vřesina u Bílovce, district Nový Jičín, Balhar 1974: 31)
- d. South Bohemian dial.: *tak dyž měl tvrdou hubu*
tak se používalo lomená ta uzda
 so REFL use.PST.3SG.N bent.NOM.SG.F this bridle.NOM.SG.F
ta byla vprostředku lomená ta se vohejbala a to se tomu koni nasadilo a dal se podbradek
 (oral v1: 2007)
 ‘so, when it had a hard mouth, they used a bent bridle [...]
- (47) *V masový den první krmí k obědu dávalo se obyčejně,*
 on meat day first course to lunch give.PST.3SG.N REFL usually
když hovado v navi zabili, dršťky zřezané
 when cattle in ship slaughter tripe.NOM=ACC.PL.F cut.PTCP.PASS.PL.F
na kausky, a to vždycky čtyřem drobet na misku.
 (Voldřich Prefát z Vlkánova: Cesta z Prahy do Benátek, 1562; Hrdina 1947: 45–46; Bočková 2007: 59)
 ‘On a meat day, the first course of the meal when cattle had been slaughtered on the ship was usually tripe cut into pieces, and a small amount always went into the bowl of each of the four.’
- (48) *Co pak, kdeby zůstalo řízení dotýkající se všeho křesťanstva a služby Jeho Mti císařské w ty největší potřebě,*
tak žeby se musilo kuryra schwalního
 so that REFL must.PST.3SG.N courier.ACC.SG.M special.ACC.SG.M
(a nač) pro jiný creditiv poslati.
 (and to what end) for another credential send.INF
 (Denník hraběte H. Černína, 1644–1645; Slav. Bibl. II, 1858: 256)
 ‘[...] so that it would have been necessary to send a special courier (and to what end) for other credentials.’
- (49) *Politika v klasickém slova smyslu se vytrácí.*
Někoho z politiků se miluje, jiného
 someone.ACC.SG of politician.GEN.PL REFL love.PRS.3SG other.ACC.SG
se nenávidí, ale racionální politický pohled chybí. (syn_v9)
 REFL hate.PRS.3SG
 ‘[...] Some politicians are loved, others are hated, but a rational political perspective is lacking.’
- However, the following early evidence, which we encounter in the second edition of Severýn’s Bible (1537), must be regarded as uncertain in its status as a transitive impersonal construction:
- (50) *Když pak již gíž polowicy fe fwátku wykonalo/wftaupil*
 when then already half.GEN=ACC.SG.F REFL feast.GEN.SG hold.PST.3SG.N
 Gežijfs do chrámu/ a učyl [...]. (BiblSev; John 7, 14; 1537)
 A když sě již den slavný na poly děleše, vjide Ježíš do chrámu i učieše [...]. (BiblOI, 217v; 1417)
 ‘iam autem die festo mediantē | ascendit Iesus in templum et docebat’ (Vulg, V: 417)
 ‘Now about the midst of the feast Jesus went up into the temple, and taught.’ (KJV, NT: 124)

Although Dobrovský (1819: 253) interprets *polowicy* only as an accusative form (“Bey den Alten wird *polowice* in den Accusativ versetzt: [...]’ ‘Among old [= earlier] writers *polowice* is put into the accusative: [...]’), this may originally have been a variant of the genitive *-ci/-cě* from the *i*-stems (Gebauer III, 1896: 208), cf. e.g. *tak snem prsten z svéj pravici* ‘he pulled the ring off his right hand’ (LegKat, v. 1076; Vážný 1959: 149); *U polovici dnón mých pójdu k vratóm pekelným*. (BiblOl, 269v¹; CantIs 10,38) ‘I said in the cutting off of my days, I shall go to the gates of the grave’ (Isa 38,10; KJV, I: 799).⁴³ The genitive case would then function here as a partitive governed by a verb of completion. Moreover, due to the processual reading in Latin (cf. also Koine Greek *τῆς ἐορτῆς μεσούσης*, NLA28, 318), the deagentive interpretation of *vykonalo se* ‘was held’ instead of a decausative one – ‘took place’ – is uncertain, although the former is well attested elsewhere in this period.

From the inheritance path connecting the structures within the RD, we can draw chronological conclusions about the emergence of further constructions that remained unattested until the 18th century and which we consider to be descendants of the RD and the middle construction. In particular, we refer here to dispositional reflexives, which, alongside the argument structures of the RD, have not been taken into account in previous semantic maps. In figure 3, above, we restrict ourselves to the distribution pattern of these reflexive functions and map them onto a two-dimensional conceptual space diagram, without being able to go into their constructionalization in detail.

Part II of the article (including abbreviations of grammatical terms, a list of abbreviations and sources, sources of corpus data, and references) will be published in the next issue of the journal.

⁴³ Szlifersztejnowa (1968: 163) adopts Dobrovský’s interpretation, citing Miklosich IV (1868–1874: 363), who, however, does not distinguish between attestations with accusative and genitive objects.