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BAKALÁŘSKÁ PRÁCE

English translation correspondences of Czech finite subjectless sentences

Anglické překladové protějšky českých finitních vět jednočlenných

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines English constructions corresponding to Czech subjectless sentences with a finite verb form. A structurally congruent equivalent of these sentences does not exist in English; English sentences always contain a subject, even if it may be expressed solely through expletives (e.g., It is raining). Therefore, the thesis focuses primarily on the selection of the English subject and the factors influencing it. The analysis was based on material excerpted from the Czech-English subcorpus of the parallel translation corpus InterCorp. The query formulation was based on the form of the predicate of the Czech sentence – the verb in the third person singular, the neuter singular participle, and the excerpt was narrowed down to past tense forms. One hundred translation pairs were described and classified.

The results of the analysis confirmed that the meanings of these sentences (mental and physical states, atmospheric conditions, etc.) and the structure of the Czech sentence (presence of objects, adverbials, etc.) play a significant role in the selection of translation counterparts for single-clause sentences. On the other hand, the form of the Czech predicate (verbal or verbo-nominal predicate, reflexivity of verbs) also contributes to this selection process.

KEYWORDS

Czech finite subjectless clauses. English translation counterparts. Expressions of the subject. Semantic categories. English/Czech. Parallel corpus.

ABSTRAKT

Bakalářská práce zkoumá anglické konstrukce, které odpovídají českým jednočlenným větám s finitním tvarem slovesným. Strukturně kongruentní protějšek těchto vět v angličtině neexistuje; anglické věty vždy obsahují podmět, i když může být vyjádřen jen expletivou (např. *It is raining.*). Bakalářská práce se proto zaměřila zejména na volbu anglického podmětu a faktory, které ji ovlivňují. Analýza byla založena na materiálu excerpovaném z česko-anglického subkorpusu paralelního překladového korpusu InterCorp. Formulace dotazu vycházela z formy přísudku české věty – sloveso má tvar 3. os. sg., participium sg. neutra, excerpce byla zúžena jen na tvary minulého času. Bylo popsáno a klasifikováno 100 překladových dvojic.

Výsledky analýzy potvrdily, že důležitou roli ve volbě překladových protějšků jednočlenných vět hrají významy těchto vět (např. duševní a tělesné stavy, atmosférické stavy apod.) a struktura české věty (přítomnost předmětu, adverbiale apod.). Volbu překladového protějšku ovlivňuje také forma českého přísudku (predikát slovesný nebo verbo-nominální, reflexivita sloves).

KLÍČOVÁ SLOVA

České jednočlenné věty slovesné. Anglické překladové protějšky. Vyjádřování podmětu. Sémantické kategorie. Angličtina/čeština. Paralelní korpus.

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Introduction

The aim of this thesis is to examine the English equivalents of Czech finite subjectless clauses and evaluate the potential factors that influence their selection. Given the absence of non-elliptical finite subjectless clauses in English, a range of counterparts can be expected, influenced by factors like the presence or absence of an implied agent and the nature of the situation described.

The theoretical part outlines a general summary of the material regarding Czech subjectless clauses and their usage, alongside their English equivalents. Employing a contrastive approach, the thesis draws upon English and Czech grammatical sources.

In the practical part, the Czech-English parallel corpus ‘InterCorp’ was utilized to extract one hundred instances of Czech finite subjectless clauses and their English counterparts. These clauses are scrutinized for their syntactic structures and the semantic categories they denote, such as environmental descriptions, physical or psychological states. Special attention is devoted to the selection of subjects in English translations, hypothesizing a correlation between the semantic category of the clause and the type of subject in the English structure.

1 Theoretical background

“The sentence is an elementary communicative utterance through which the speaker reacts to some reality or several items of reality in a manner that appears to be formally customary and subjectively complete.” (Mathesius 1975: 79)

This chapter introduces the Czech finite subjectless clauses and also identifies some of their English counterparts.

In Czech the most common type of sentence is the two-part sentence, which contains a subject and a predicate. However, some sentences have no subject. In subjectless sentences, such as *Prší, Stýská se mi po dětech* the predicate does not require the left valency position, i.e. the syntactic position of a subject (Hirschová 2017).

The predicate of subjectless sentences can be expressed by a verb (i.e. ‘verbal subjectless sentences’) or by another word class, namely a noun, adjective, adverb, interjection or particle (i.e. ‘non-verbal subjectless sentences’). The verbal subjectless sentences can be further classified according to the form of the verbal predicate into finite and non-finite (infinitival) subjectless sentences. The infinitival sentences can be illustrated by, for instance, *Mlčet!* or *Petr, a lhát!* (Hirschová 2017).

In finite verbal subjectless sentences the predicate does not carry the grammatical categories expressing congruence with the subject; it only expresses the predicative categories of tense and mode (Grepel&Karlík 1998:232). The most common form of the predicate corresponds morphologically to the third person singular, neuter gender, e.g.: *Pršelo, Stýskalo se mu po dětech* (ibid.).

As pointed out by Vondráček (2006: 196), from the semantic point of view, the relationship between subjectless sentences, whose predicate verb does not require the subject valency position (e.g. *prší, sněží*), and sentences whose predicate always presupposes the existence of the subject (e.g. *píše, roste*), can be seen as a cline, with predicates such as *fouká* occupying a medial position. Such verbs occur both in subjectless sentences (e.g. *Venku fouká*) and in sentences with a subject (e.g. *Fouká vítr*); the subjectless uses are more

frequent in newspaper reporting and fiction, those with the subject are preferred in texts requiring more objectivity (ibid.: 207).

It is believed that there exists a certain appropriateness in suggesting, based on the Vondráček's article, that there are verbs that never require a subject, while conversely, there are those that consistently imply it to some extent. Moreover, there exists a category of verbs that lie between these extremes – they have the potential to exist within either single-clause or two-clause sentences.

The categorization of verbal subjectless sentences can be based on various criteria:

- sentences with a verbal predicate (*Prší; Otrnulo mu*) vs. sentences with a verbo-nominal predicate (*Je chladno; Je mi zima*);
- sentences without valency complements (*Prší; Je zima*) vs. sentences with valency complements of the verb (*Otrnulo mu; Je mi zima*);
- primary subjectless sentences (*Prší*) vs. secondary subjectless sentences that are formed by passivization of sentences with a subject, e.g. *O tom se dlouhodobě diskutuje // O tom je dlouhodobě diskutováno ← O tom lidé dlouhodobě diskutují.* (Hirschová 2017).

Czech subjectless sentences can be divided into two types according to Příruční mluvnice češtiny (1995: 388) and Skladba Češtiny (1998: 232) and also Dušková et al. (2009), subjectless sentences with a verbal predicate, and those with a verbo-nominal predicate.

1.1 Subjectless sentences with a verbal predicate

Subjectless sentences with a verbal predicate comprise two types of sentences – primary and secondary subjectless sentences. Secondary subjectless sentences are usually sentence structures understood as a result of a transformation of some kind of default structure with a subject: *Mistr zdravotnictví se rozhodl o zvýšení platů lékařů → O zvýšení platů lékařů se už rozhodlo.* Primary subjectless sentences, on the other hand, are not a result of a transformation (Nekula et al. 2012: 388). Usually, primary subjectless sentences deal with various types of processes or changes.

1.1.1 Atmospheric processes and changes

No agent is implied: therefore, the only constitutive element of the sentence is the verb/predicate, e.g. *Prší/ leje/ sněží/ mrholí; To se blýská; Už se šerí; Svítá*. In some cases, the predicate requires an adverbial of place, e.g. *Venku fouká* (Nekula et al. 2012: 388).

1.1.2 Mental and physical processes and changes

The relevant types of predicates create sentence structures with one constitutive clause element in the form of the dative. Semantically, this clause element refers to the undergoer or experiencer of a process or change, for instance: *Otci se stýská; Nemocnému se ulevilo/ přitížilo; Chtunalo ti?* The structure may also comprise another constitutive element, usually in the genitive case, e.g. *Králi se zželelo nebohé dívky* (ibid.).

1.1.3 Processes and changes inside inanimate objects

The predicates create sentence structures containing a single constitutive element, namely the adverbial of place, specifying where a particular event takes place. Examples include *V hodinách hrklo; V zámku zaskřípalo; V motoru zarachotilo* (ibid.). These processes do have their agent, but since it remains hidden inside something, it is “mysterious” and unspecified, and therefore unidentifiable to us. It can be indicated by the pronoun *to*, e.g. *V hodinách to hrklo* (ibid.: 390).

If the agent is referred to as “something” (*něco, cosi*), it is no longer hidden or secret, but it is still unknown to the interlocutors, e.g. *V zámku něco zakřípalo*. However, this sentence is no longer an example of a subjectless sentence, but of a sentence with an indefinite agent (ibid.).

1.1.4 Processes and changes inside body parts

The predicates that describe physical and mental processes form sentences with two constitutive clause elements: the body part or organ where the action takes place is expressed by an adverbial that specifies the location, and the individual or animal whose bodily organs we have in mind is identified by a noun. These nouns can either be in the dative: *Dědečkovi hučelo v hlavě, Nějak mi vyschlo v krku* or in the accusative, which is more common, e.g. *Pálí ho na prsou; Dědečka bolelo v zádech* (ibid.).

1.1.5 Processes and changes with a specific agent

These types of predicates have an agent (it is possible to imagine the agent). However, for the reasons listed below, the subjectless sentence is used as if there was no agent (ibid.:391). In line with both Příruční mluvnice češtiny (1995) and in Skladba češtiny (1998) we can distinguish several types.

Types of sentences that have a specific non-personal agent (especially “the elements”) that is known to the speaker

By using subjectless sentences, the speaker expresses that it is not important who or what causes a given action, but on the contrary, our main attention is directed to the action itself. The reason is that the addressee can imagine what the cause or agent is. In these sentences, the object involved in the action is expressed by an adverbial of place and the person or animal to whom the object belongs and who is affected in some way by the event by a noun in the dative. Examples include: *Uhodilo nám do střechy; Teče mi z nosu; Kape nám do pokoje* (Nekula et al. 2012: 391).

Types of sentences that have a specific non-personal agent

This agent is understood as a force that is undefined and is expressed by the pronoun *to* in the form of the nominative. The object affected by the event is then usually in the form of the accusative, for example: *Bratra to zabilo; Na prahu ji to obrátilo*. In some dialects it is possible to find this type of sentence without the pronoun *to* the expression: *Sousedá ranilo; Bratra zabilo*. Alternatively, the affected participant can be expressed by a noun in the instrumental case, e.g. *Petrem (to) škublo*. The pronoun *to* is often optional in these cases (Nekula et al 2012: 391).

Types of sentences that have a specific agent and the agent is in the form of the instrumental or alternatively in locative with the preposition *po* (after)

In these sentences, there is an adverbial specification of place and there can appear the pronoun *to* (it), for instance, *V pokoji (to) vonělo růžemi/ po růžích*. (ibid.: 392); the construction with the formal subject is more frequent in fiction and newspapers (Vondráček 2006: 205).

1.1.6 Spontaneous occurrence of an event or state

Sentences in this category always comprise the verb *dojít*. This verb expresses that something has happened or occurred, more or less spontaneously without taking into consideration the actual agent. The event is usually expressed in the form of the dative with the preposition *k*. Examples include: *Došlo k boji; Na křižovatce došlo ke srážce dvou tramvají; Ve sklepě došlo k výbuchu* (Nekula et al 2012: 392).

1.1.7 Point of interest

“Sentence structures expressing the subject of interest are based on a few predicates that require one constitutive clause element, which expresses the subject of interest.”¹ When the predicate is expressed by the verbs *jít, běžet, jednat se*, the nominal clause element referring to the point of interest has the form of the accusative with the preposition *o* (e.g. *Jde o všechno*), but with the predicates *záležet, nesejít*, it takes the form of the locative case with the preposition *na* (e.g. *Záleží na všech*) (ibid.: 393). The participant interested in the matter can be added to the sentence in the form of the dative: *Jde mi o všechno; Nezáleží mi na ničem* (ibid.).

1.2 Types of subjectless sentences with a verbo-nominal predicate

Subjectless sentences with verbo-nominal predicates always represent the state. The state can be expressed directly or indirectly. Examples of the direct expression of state include: *Dnes je ošklivo*. Sentences with an indirect expression of state are implemented by comparisons, for example: *Dnes je, jako by se měli čerti ženit*, or by result: *Dnes je, že bys ani psa nevyhnal* (ibid.: 394).

1.2.1 Atmospheric states, states of surroundings, and physical and mental states

- “Predicates that are used to describe atmospheric state do not need any constitutive clause element”² : *Bylo chladno; Bylo pod mrakem; Brzy bylo po dešti; Venku byla tma jak v pytli* (ibid.).

¹ „Větné struktury vyjadřující předmět zájmu jsou založeny na několika málo predikátorech, které vyžadují jeden konstitutivní větný člen, jímž je předmět zájmu vyjádřen.“ (Translation mine)

² „Predikátory popisující atmosférické stavy nevyžadují žádný konstitutivní větný člen.“ (Translation mine)

- “Predicates that are used to describe states of surroundings need one constitutive clause element – an adverbial of place that expresses the location, where the state takes place”³: *Na ulicích bylo kluzko/ hlučno/ čisto; V sále je hluk; Ve sklepě byla tma; Bylo tam, jako by už roky neuklízeli* (ibid.).
- “Predicates that are used to describe physical and mental states need one constitutive clause element – the undergoer or experiencer of the state in the form of the dative”⁴: *Dědečkovi bylo smutno; Je mi na zvracení; Bylo mu nanič; Petrovi je do pláče; Bylo mi, jako bych měl umřít* (ibid.). If the state is placed in some part of a body, the dative expresses appropriation as well: *V srdci mi bylo smutno (= v mém srdci bylo smutno) x V Praze mi bylo smutno (≠ v mé Praze mi bylo smutno)* (ibid.). When some impulse causes the mental or physical state, the predicate needs another constitutive clause element which is in the form of the genitive: *Té dívky je mi líto; toho chlapce je škoda; Je mi líto, žes přišel o ten film* (Nekula et al. 2012: 395).

1.2.2 Temporal states

- “Predicates that are used to describe temporal states do not need any constitutive component; only temporal expressions are used.”⁵: *Už je pozdě; Bylo poledne; Ještě je brzo*, or expressions that characterize a period of time: *Byla válka = ‘byl čas, kdy se válčí’* (ibid.).
- The predicate noun is in the form of the nominative: *Byly Vánoce; Byla noc; Byl pátek* and the predicate *být* is in the same form and corresponds with it. When referring to seasons, it is possible to say *Byla zima* (*Bylo zima* means ‘it was cold’) (ibid.).
- In predicates that are related to nouns referring to months, the noun is in the genitive: *Dnes je šestého června; Dnes je dvacátého čtvrtého prosince.*, however if the date is

³ „Predikátory popisující stavy okolního prostředí vyžadují jeden konstitutivní větný člen, a to příslovečné určení místa, která vyjadřuje místo, kam je daný stav lokalizován.“ (Translation mine)

⁴ „Predikátory popisující tělesné a duševní stavy vyžadují jeden konstitutivní větný člen, a to s formou dat, v němž je vyjádřen nositel nebo poživatel stavu.“ (Translation mine)

⁵ „Predikátory popisující stavy časové nevyžadují žádný konstitutivní komponent. Využívá se v nich výrazů s časovým významem“ (Translation mine)

in some way significant, it is possible to use the form of the nominative to highlight the importance: *Dnes je dvacátý čtvrtý prosinec*. This form cannot be used with the month September: *Dnes je prvního září*// **první září* (ibid.).

- With predicates that refer to holidays or festivals, it is possible to use not only the form of the genitive but also the form of the nominative: *Bylo Dušiček* // *Byly Dušičky*; *Včera bylo Mikuláše* // *Včera byl Mikuláš*. The nominative must be used in the following examples: *Byly Vánoce*; *Byly Velikonoce*, but the form of the genitive must be used in cases like: *Včera bylo Pavla* (ibid.).
- “Several predicates express the temporal state as a relation between two points in time (segments), thus creating subjectless sentence structures with two constitutive clause elements – an adverbial of time.”⁶ It can either have a meaning of quantification of time: *Od velikonoc do Vánoc je (to) dlouho* // *celá věčnost*, or a meaning of quantification of space: *Od Velikonoc do Vánoc je (to) daleko* (ibid.).
- One of the adverbials of time may remain unexpressed. The reason is that the point of time is obvious from the context, or it is the moment of speaking: *Do Vánoc je (to) ještě dlouho* (=e.g. *from today*) (ibid.).
- If one of the segments of time is marked with some event, it is necessary to use the pronoun *to* in the form of the nominative or the dative: *Je to* // *tomu už dávno* // *dvacet let (od té doby)*, *co umřel* // *od jeho smrti* (Nekula et al. 2012: 396).

1.2.3 Spatial states

- “Predicates that are used to describe spatial relations between two places construct subjectless sentence structures including two constitutive clause elements – adverbials of space. These predicates can be used to express the meaning of the quantification of space”⁷: *Z Prahy do Brna je (to) daleko* // *sto devadesát kilometrů* // *jen skok*, or the quantification of time: *Z Prahy do Brna jsou to dvě hodiny* // *je (to) cobydup* (ibid.).

⁶ „Řada predikátorů vyjadřuje časový stav jako relaci mezi dvěma časovými body (úseky) a zakládá tak bezpodmětové větné struktury se dvěma konstitutivními větnými členy, a to určením času.“ (Translation mine)

⁷ „Predikátory vytvářející prostorové relace mezi dvěma místy vytvářejí větné bezpodmětové struktury předpokládající dva konstitutivní větné členy, a to určením místa. Složkou těchto predikátorů mohou být výrazy s významem kvantifikace prostorové“ (Translation mine)

- One of the adverbials of space does not need to be expressed if it is understood from the context or if it is the place of speech: *Na nádraží (to) byl(o) jen kousek* (= e.g. *from here*); *Z nádraží (to) byl(o) jen kousek* (= e.g. *here*) (ibid.).

“Subjectless sentences with the verb *být* describing a state that does not need any constitutive clause element in the form of the dative are partly in competition with sentences describing a state that contains a subject and use the verb *mít*. The subject can be implemented by something or someone that is concerned with the verbo-nominal predicate (participation or interest). Sentences with the verb *být* do not have this. The difference can be seen in the following examples”⁸: *Je tu chladno – Máte tu chladno; Dnes je pod nulou – Dnes máme pod nulou; A jsou zase Vánoce – A máme zase Vánoce; Na nádraží je (to) daleko – na nádraží (to) má Petr daleko* (ibid.).

“Sentences that contain a predicate that needs a component in the form of the dative do not compete with sentences with the verb *mít*. The reason is that someone related to the mental or physical state is expressed in the form of the dative”⁹: *Petrovi bylo úzko* (Nekula et al. 2012).

A different classification of subjectless sentences is given by Štícha (2006). The classification is based primarily on the semantics of the subjectless clauses:

- Climatic and astronomical phenomena I:
- Climatic phenomena II:
- Psychosomatic phenomena:
- Other sensory perceptible subjects, external circumstances:

⁸ „Stavovým bezpodmětným větám s *být*, které nevyžadují dativní konstitutivní větný člen, částečně konkurují stavové podmětové věty s *mít*: Věty s *mít* mají podmět, v němž může být – ve srovnání s větami s *být* navíc – vyjádřen ten, koho se stav popisovaná slovesně-jmenným predikátorem týká (účasť, zájem, zainteresovanost).“ (Translation mine)

⁹ „Větám založeným na predikátorech vyžadující dativní komponent podobné věty s *mít* nekonkurují, neboť ten, koho se (tělesný nebo duševní) stav týká, je v nich vyjádřen právě ve formě dat.“ (Translation mine)

Drawing on corpus data, Štícha (2006:195) argues that “although some older syntactic studies claim that statements like *Byla tma; Bolí mě záda; Bolí mě v zádech* express the same meaning, we argue that it is not systematically possible.”¹⁰

¹⁰ „Ačkoliv se v některých starších syntaktických studiích konstatuje, že výpovědi typu *Byla tma; Bolí mě záda; Bolelo mě v zádech* vyjadřují totéž, namítáme, že to systémově není možné.“ (Translation mine)

2 English counterparts of Czech verbal subjectless sentences

In English, subjectless sentences do not constitute a special sentence type. The basic rule of English sentence structure requires every sentence to have both a subject and a predicate. Sentences without a subject, unless elliptical, are rare (Dušková: 176; cf. Pospíšil 2015).

A genuine subjectless sentence is encountered only in a dependent clause after *as* or *than*, e.g. *as was shown above*.

In Dušková (1999) the division of English counterparts of Czech verbal subjectless sentences is as follows. According to the form of the verb, verbal subjectless sentences fall into two basic groups – non-reflexive and reflexive (Dušková 1999: 177).

- Non – agentive verbal subjectless sentences
- Non – agentive verbo-nominal subjectless sentences

2.1 Non – agentive verbal subjectless sentence

2.1.1 Weather and other atmospheric conditions

Phenomena associated with the transition from day to night and vice versa encompass a range of intriguing occurrences. This category of subjectless sentences aligns with three distinct sentence types in the English language, each characterized by a unique subject. Notably, the same natural phenomenon frequently lends itself to description through any combination of these constructions, thereby offering a rich linguistic landscape for capturing the complexities inherent in the dynamic shift between daylight and darkness (Dušková 1999: 178).

Sentences with *it* as a subject

Within this context, the pronoun *it* assumes a strictly formal function devoid of any referential or semantic implications, serving exclusively to occupy the subject position within the sentence structure. Notably, in Old English, sentences exhibiting this characteristic were constructed as subjectless, as in contemporary Czech. This linguistic continuity underscores the enduring interplay between historical grammatical conventions and present-day syntax, elucidating the enduring legacy of linguistic evolution across diverse language systems.

(ibid.). Here are some examples: ‘it’s raining’ (*prší*); ‘it’s getting dark’ (*stmívá se*); ‘it’s clearing up’ (*jasní se*), etc. (ibid.)

Apart from the presence of the formal subject *it* in English, sentences of this type exhibit comparable syntactic structures in the two languages. However, a notable distinction emerges in expressions denoting a shift in states, where English often adopts a verbo-nominal structure, exemplified by sentences like *it’s getting dark*. or *it has grown cold*. Furthermore, English appears to be more flexible with respect to alternative constructions, some of which may even be preferable to sentences with the formal subject *it*. This variance underscores the dynamic nature of language, revealing how linguistic nuances and preferences contribute to the diverse ways in which ideas are conveyed in different cultural and linguistic contexts (Dušková 1999).

The construction with *there* filling the position of the subject

This type of sentences can be found in the following cases: ‘there is a draught’ *táhne*, cf. *je tady průvan*; ‘there was a flash of lightening’ *zablesklo se*; ‘there was a peal/ crash of thunder’ *zahřmělo se*. In cases like *there was no wind*, *there was a light breeze*, *there were showers in the morning*, Czech employs sentences of the subject-predicate form: *nebyl vítr*, *vál mírný vánek*, *ráno byly přeháňky* (Dušková 1999: 179).

The subject is a noun describing the event in question or connected with it by the nature of things

As evidenced by certain equivalents and alternative constructions provided within brackets, this mode of expression is frequently viable in Czech; however, its applicability is not universal. Examples include: *the snow was falling thick* (‘*hustě sněžilo*’, cf. ‘*padal hustě sníh*’), *the rain came down heavily* ‘*silně pršelo*’, *the day is breaking/ downing* ‘*svítá*’, *the lightning struck* ‘*uhodilo*’, cf. ‘*uhodil blesk*’; *the weather/ the sky is clearing up* ‘*vyjasňuje se*’ ‘*počasí/ obloha se vyjasňuje*’ (ibid.).

2.1.2 Physical states

Verbal subjectless sentences delineating physical states differ from the preceding type by incorporating the participant impacted by the state in question, known as the experiencer. The experiencer, formally speaking, may manifest in the accusative, dative, or locative form

in Czech, e.g. ‘I itch’ *svrbí mě*, ‘I shiver/ I feel chilly’ *mrazí mě*, ‘I have a pain in my chest’ (*bolí mě na prsou*), ‘my head is/ my ears are singing/ buzzing’ *hučí mi v hlavě/ v uších*, ‘he has no appetite’ *nechutná mu*, ‘he gave a start’ *hrklo v něm* (Dušková 1999: 180).

In English sentences of this type the experiencer typically assumes the role of the subject. This occurs exclusively in constructions where the experiencer is the sole participant in the verbal action, as seen in examples such as *I itch, I shivered, and I was seething*. However, when the sentence additionally involves the locality specifically affected by the state, two constructions emerge. In one, the experiencer serves as the subject, followed by the verb *have*, object, and local adjunct, e.g. *I have a pain in my side*. Alternatively, the experiencer may appear in possessive form attached to the locative subject, as illustrated in sentences like *My hands are freezing; My back aches, and Your stomach is rumbling*. In cases of pain, both constructions are sometimes used to describe the state: *I have a pain in my shoulder – my shoulder aches/ hurts* (similarly in Czech, *bolí mě v rameně – bolí mě rameno*) (Dušková 1999).

2.1.3 Psychic states

The sentences expressing psychic states usually employ a verbo-nominal predicate. The verbo-nominal predications are more characteristic of the mental states as well. Examples featuring a verbal predication exhibit a similar trend to the preceding type, namely, the inclination to designate the experiencer (represented by the Czech dative) as the subject. This tendency underscores the consistent pattern observed in constructions where the experiencer takes precedence in assuming the role of the subject within the sentence structure, e.g. ‘I miss you’ (*stýská se mi po tobě*), ‘I feel lonely’ *stýská se mi*; ‘he took pity on her’ *zželelo se mu jí*, ‘they are doing/ getting on well’ *daří se jim dobře* (Dušková 1999: 181).

2.1.4 Other types of non-agentive verbal subjectless sentences

These types of sentences do not lend themselves to a semantic classification but can be distinguished on formal grounds, which can be seen below.

Instances like *hoří*

Formally, these instances bear resemblance to *prší* in that they do not necessitate an adjunct. However, in English, they belong to distinct sentence types, cf. *there is a (house on) fire* (ibid.).

Type of sentences that contain a locative element as the subject

This component signifies either the source or the locality of the event under consideration. In both scenarios, English constructs the locative element as the subject, e.g. ‘the place is haunted’ *straší tam*, ‘the clock gave a click’ *v hodinách hrklo*, ‘the floor cracked’ *v podlaze zapraskalo*, ‘the woods are steaming/ smoking’ *kouří se z lesů*, etc. (ibid.).

Czech can sometimes construe the locative element as the subject as well, e.g. *podlaha zapraskala, okna zařinčela*. English sometimes allows an alternative construction with there: *there was a click in the clock; the place smells* ‘páchne tady’ - *there is a smell* ‘je tady zápach’. Similar to the situation with other verbs, the verb *be* in this context has the capacity to convey not only a state but also an action. This flexibility allows for the expression of dynamic occurrences or ongoing processes (Dušková 1999: 182).

Types that contain both the source and the locality of the event denoted by the verb

The two complements allow for various constructions as listed below:

- *V pokoji vonělo růžemi/ po růžích; v pokoji voněly růže, pokoj voněl růžemi/ po růžích*; similarly, *z úst mu páchlo česnekem; v místnosti páchlo myšinou*. Nevertheless, the construction utilizing the instrumental case (*růžemi*) encompasses a broader semantic scope compared to those employing the nominative (*růže*) and the prepositional case (*po růžích*). This is because the instrumental case can be employed regardless of whether roses are present in the room or not. Conversely, the nominative construction is limited to the former interpretation, while the prepositional case implies the absence of roses (ibid.).
- Other instances, e.g. *v očích mu jiskří radostí; v řece se hemžilo rybami*, have only one alternative form, specifically the one employing the nominative case: *v očích mu jiskřila radost; v řece se hemžily ryby*. In both cases, both forms suggest the existence of the source of verbal action. The English structure mirrors *pokoj voněl růžemi*, where the locative element is interpreted as the subject.: *the room smelt of roses; his*

breath smelt of garlic; the room smelt of mice; his eyes sparkled with joy; the river teems with fish. In the case of *smell*, the construction remains equally impartial regarding the actual existence of the source, resembling the Czech construction with the instrumental case (ibid.).

- In the majority of instances, the locative element also permits adverbial construction, e.g. *fish teem in that river* ‘v té řece se hemží ryby’; *roses smelt in the whole house* ‘růže voněly po celém domě’. The possibility to interpret the same semantic element as either subject or adverbial can function as a means of functional sentence perspective¹¹ (ibid.).

Sentences with a subjective human dative

Instances can be following: *Daří se mu dobře* ‘he is getting on well’; *nemocnému se ulevilo* ‘the patient felt better’. These types of sentences have been examined in relation to both physical and mental states. Sentences featuring a subjective genitive have analogous counterparts in English, wherein the genitive is construed as the subject or anticipated by *there*: *obyvatelstva ubylo* ‘the population has decreased’; *v řece přibýlo vody* ‘the water in the river has risen’; ‘there is more water in the river’, *napadlo sněhu* ‘(a lot of) snow has fallen’ (Dušková 1999).

The verbal subjectless construction is found with different verbs taking prepositional objects

First, there are verbs like *jde o, jedná se o, běží o*. In English, these correspond to various subject-predicate constructions, all of which aim to indicate the rhematic nature of the Czech verb, e.g. *tady jde o spravedlnost* ‘this is a matter/ question of justice’; *běželo o něco jiného* ‘the point (in question) was something else’; *o to nejde* ‘that is not the point’, etc. (ibid.: 183).

In instances like *jde/ jedná se o vaši čest, postavení, velkou částku*, where the meaning involved is ‘be endangered’ (cf. the synonymous expression *je ohrožená vaše čest*,

¹¹ Functional sentence perspective: functional analysis of sentences; the sentence is viewed as a dynamic phenomenon developing in the act of communication (aktuální členění větné). (Dušková 2009)

postavení, je v sázce velká částka), English has *your honour/ your position/ a large sum is at stake* (ibid.).

Another type is represented by *dojít k něčemu*. In this context, the verb signifies a process of emergence, with its English equivalents including *occur, take place, and there is*. When a verb such as *occur* is used, the Czech prepositional phrase emerges as the subject, its thematic nature signalled by its determiner or quantifier, e.g. *došlo k nějakým změnám* ‘several changes have occurred’; *došlo k jistému zlepšení* ‘there has been some improvement’; *došlo k boji* ‘there was a fight’ (ibid.).

Finally, there exist miscellaneous examples where the syntactic structure in English relies on the constructional capabilities of the English equivalent of the Czech verb under consideration, e.g. *nesejde na tom* ‘it doesn’t matter’, ‘it makes no difference’; *na penězích mu nezáleží* ‘money doesn’t matter to him’; *schyluje se k dešti* ‘it is going to rain’; *schyluje se k Vánocům* ‘Christmas is drawing near’; *schyluje se k půlnoci* ‘it is getting on for midnight’ (Dušková 1999: 184).

2.2 Subjectless sentences with the reflexive form of the verb

2.2.1 Subjectless sentences implying the general human agent

Subjectless sentences employing the reflexive form of the verb to imply a general human agent, align with the passive voice in English, given that the verb possesses a complement capable of serving as the subject (ibid.).

Subjectless sentences featuring the reflexive passive form, incorporating an indirect or prepositional object, hold functional equivalence with and frequently substitute subjectless sentences employing the periphrastic passive construction, e.g. *Jakých výsledků bylo dosaženo?/ Jakých výsledků se dosáhlo?* ‘What results have been reached (achieved, obtained)?’; *s vaší spoluprací bylo počítáno/ s vaší spoluprací se počítalo* ‘your cooperation was reckoned with’ (ibid.).

When the verb lacks an object, whether it's transitive with the object omitted or intransitive, English relies on two distinct constructions to accommodate such instances:

- Active man-Sätze with an explicit man-device, e.g. *Here a fenced path ran along between two great lonely meadows, till you came to the wood.* ‘Tady vedla oplocená pěšina mezi dvěma velkými osamělými loukami, až se přišlo k lesu’ (ibid.).
- The construction with there, e.g. *There was no riding or shooting or anything of that kind.* ‘Nejezdilo se na konci ani se nestřílelo nebo něco podobného’ (ibid.: 185). The construction is also used if the verb has an object, e.g. *There was very little talk about any of the things in which she was interested.* ‘Velmi málo se hovořilo o něčem, co jí zajímalo’ (Dušková 1999).

2.2.2 Subjectless sentences with the reflexive form of the dispositional type

Subjectless sentences with intransitive verbs like *šlo se špatně, nyní se žije lépe*. They are construed with the verbal noun either as the predicate or as the subject: *it was hard going, life/ living is easier now* (ibid.).

If the verb has an object, English construes it as the subject, e.g. *he is difficult to get on with* ‘těžko se s ním vychází’; *he was a splendid man to work with* ‘skvěle se s ním pracovalo’ (ibid.).

Additionally, with numerous adjectives, there exists an alternative construction, such as *it is difficult to get on with him* or *it is hard to understand him*, which also finds parallel in Czech: *je těžké s ním vyjít, je těžké mu rozumět*. In contrast to *těžko se s ním vychází*, which is a subject-predicate sentence with the subject constituted by the infinitive, English differs only in having the infinitival subject preceded by *it* (ibid.).

If the sentence includes a local adjunct, it can function as the principal element of the nominal component within the predicate, e.g. *u té firmy se dobře pracuje* ‘it is a good firm to work for’ (ibid.).

Sentences with an agentive dative in Czech are similar to English constructions with a personal subject. When it comes to stative verbs, the subject directly relates to the lexical verb, like in *špatně se mu dýchalo* ‘he was breathing with difficulty’. However, with actional verbs, there's a semantic similarity to the verb *find* in English, which comes between the subject and the actual statement (ibid.).

As in the previous case, it is again possible to use the construction with *it*: *it is easy/hard for somebody to do something*, e.g. *lehko se mu kritizuje* ‘it is easy for him to criticise; *lépe se mi tak hraje* ‘it is easier for me to play like that/ I find it easier to play like that’ (Dušková 1999: 186).

The infrequent dispositional type, lacking any qualifying element, typically features the agentive dative, which is once more construed as the subject in English, e.g. *nechce se mi číst* ‘I don’t feel like reading’; *o tom se nám ani nesnilo* ‘we did not even dream about it’ (ibid.).

The emotive type lacks a structural parallel, with equivalents found in various constructions depending on the syntactic structure of the Czech sentence, e.g. *tady se (to) odpočívá!* ‘What a (nice) place to rest in!’ (ibid.).

2.3 Verbo-nominal subjectless sentences

Verbo-nominal subjectless sentences entail a copula and a nominal element, with the copula primarily being *být* ‘to be’, while other linking verbs are uncommon in this structure, as seen in examples: *udělalo se jí špatně* or *přišlo jí špatně*. The essence of verbo-nominal subjectless constructions revolves around sentences describing various states: physical, psychological, and those concerning the immediate and broader environment. Sentences indicating physical and psychological states typically incorporate the experiencer in the dative form (ibid.).

2.3.1 Physical state

In English, the subject is typically located within the experiencer, with *be* or *feel* as the linking verb. A shift in a state is indicated by a resulting copula (*get, grow, become*, etc.). *Cítit se* in Czech is much more restricted in this function, cf. *I don’t feel well* ‘*není mi dobře/ necítím se dobře*’; but *she felt sad* only ‘*byla smutná*’, ‘*bylo jí smutno*’, not ‘*cítila se smutná*’ (ibid.).

2.3.2 Psychic state

Psychic states exhibit an identical syntactic structure to physical states, wherein the experiencer is construed as the subject alongside the copula *be* or *feel*, e.g. *bylo jí úzko* ‘she felt uneasy/ anxious’, *je mi blaze* ‘I am happy’; *bylo mi bídně* ‘I felt wretched/ miserable’;

je mi jako bych omládl ‘I feel as if I were young’; *není mi do smíchu* ‘I don’t feel like laughing’, etc. (Dušková 1999: 187).

2.3.3 States of the wider (natural) environment

Similar to verbal sentences of this type, these constructions primarily use the formal *it* as the subject. Changes in a state are indicated by resulting copulas (or copulas of becoming) such as *get*, *grow*, and similar verbs, contrasting with corresponding Czech sentences that feature verbal predications with verbs derived from various prefixes (but sometimes the opposite obtains, e.g. *dělá se pěkně* ‘it’s clearing up’). *Bylo tma/ zima/ chladno* ‘it was dark/ cold’; *je oblačno/ zamračeno* ‘it is cloudy/ overcast’ (ibid.).

Another subject type emerges within the locality of the state in question, frequently alternating with the subject construction of the state itself: *je jasno* ‘the sky is clear’; *bylo zamračeno* ‘the sky was overcast/ it was overcast’. In some cases, Czech has an analogous construction, e.g. *obloha byla zatažená* (ibid.).

Sentences detailing the weather frequently adopt both forms: *it was fine/ dry/ warm/ mild – the weather was fine/ dry/ warm/ mild* ‘*bylo pěkně/ sucho/ teplo/ vlaho*’ – ‘*počasí bylo pěkné/ suché/ teplé/ vlahé*. With adjectives of wide application, the second construction tends to be somewhat ambiguous. (*it’s clear/ nice/ nasty/ dull* is usually understood as having referential *it* ‘*to je jasné/ pěkné/ ošklivé/ nudné*’), unlike *the weather was clear /nice/ nasty/ dull*. Another construction involves the weather as part of the predicate: *it was fine/ nice/ dry/ wet/ warm/ cold/ nasty/ clear/ dull*, etc., weather ‘*bylo pěkné/ suché/ mokré/ teplé/ chladné/ ošklivé/ jasné/ pošmourné počasí*’ (ibid.).

The alternative construction *it was fine/ the weather was fine/ it was fine weather* implies that in this context, the subject *it* isn’t merely a formal element, as seen in *it rained*, but rather reflects the underlying notion of ‘weather’ (Dušková 1999: 188).

2.3.4 States of the nearer (local) environment

States of the nearer (local) environment are articulated in a comparable manner, featuring either *it* or the locative element as the subject, frequently appearing in flexible variation, e.g. *bylo tam čisto/ klidno/ hlučno* ‘it was clean/ quiet/ noisy there’ – ‘there was clean/ quiet/

noisy’; *je zde příjemně* ‘it is pleasant in here’; *je tam vždy rušno* ‘the place is always swarming with people’ – ‘the place is always very busy’ (ibid.).

2.3.5 Reference to time and space

Typically, sentences of this type are constructed with *it* as the subject, and the predicate comprising *be* plus a temporal or spatial expression, e.g. *je čtvrt na pět* ‘it is quarter past four’; *je pozdě* ‘it is late’; *bylo po půlnoci* ‘it was after midnight’; *je tomu už pět let* ‘it’s five years now’, ‘it has been five years now’; *k lesu bylo daleko* ‘it was a long way to the wood’ (ibid.).

This form occasionally alternates with constructions incorporating a temporal or locative subject, e.g. *dnes je středa* ‘it is Wednesday today’ – ‘today is Wednesday’; *bylo po škole* ‘it was after school’ – ‘school was over’ (Dušková 1999).

An individual's age is conveyed through a construction featuring a personal subject (equivalent to the dative in Czech). The example is: *My father was at that time thirty-eight.* ‘Mému otci bylo tehdy třicet osm.’ *He is getting on for seventy.* ‘Táhne mu na sedmdesát’ (ibid.: 189).

2.3.6 Modal types of subjectless verbo-nominal sentences

Constructions with a modal adjective (in the predicative form) and other modal nominal expressions

The constructions can contain for example: *nutno, třeba* ‘necessary’, *možno, lze* ‘possible’, *záhodno, radno* ‘advisable’.

The English form is alike, except for the use of *it* as the subject: *je nutno odejít* ‘it is necessary to leave’; *je záhodno s ním o té věci promluvit* ‘it is advisable to discuss the matter with him’; *nelze to zařídit* ‘it is impossible to arrange’, etc. In this construction, *it*, while serving to occupy the subject position, diverges from the purely formal *it* found in sentences like *it rained* or *it is late* by anticipating the infinitive that follows. The infinitive thus becomes the actual subject, as evidenced by its potential occurrence in the subject position: *to go near was not advisable* (ibid.).

In addition to the copular construction featuring a modal predicative adjective and anticipatory *it*, English exhibits the following constructions as equivalents of the Czech type under discussion (ibid.).

- If the sentence allows passive construction, it can be rendered by means of the appropriate modal verb, e.g. ‘The following question can now be asked.’ *Nyní lze položit následující otázku.* Czech also allows the construction with a modal, cf. *bude se muset překonat řada negativních vlivů, odpověď se může někdy uhodnout.* In English, the selection between a modal adjective and a modal verb enables various word-order arrangements, which in turn can serve as a mechanism for functional sentence perspective, cf. *bude nutno zkontrolovat všechny údaje* ‘it will be necessary to check all data’ (Dušková 1999: 190).
- Besides modal adjectives there is a construction with there anticipating the appropriate modal noun, e.g. *There was no need to summon a general gathering.* ‘*Nebylo třeba svolávat valné shromáždění.*’
- In relative clauses this Czech modal type corresponds to the English attributive infinitive, e.g. *The first problem to be solved, however, is this.* ‘*První problém, který je třeba vyřešit, je tento.*’
- *Je něčeho třeba* also corresponds to the active or passive construction of *require*, e.g. *na to je třeba velké trpělivosti* ‘it requires great patience’; *není třeba podrobností* ‘no details are required’. Modal predicative adjectives or nouns can also be used here, e.g. *it’s time* ‘*je čas*’, ‘*je na čase*’; *it’s best* ‘*je nejlépe*’, e.g. *it’s time we left /to leave* ‘*je na čase, abychom šli*’; *it would be best to wait* ‘*bylo by nejlépe počkat*’ (ibid.).

Constructions with an infinitive

Verbo-nominal predications featuring an infinitive as the nominal component convey necessity or possibility. The expression of necessity through this method is considered archaic in contemporary Czech and is restricted to formal styles. In English, modal adjectives, nouns, or modal verbs are used instead, e.g. *jest rozhodnout* ‘it is necessary to make a decision’; *všem lidem je umřít* ‘all men must die’; *po porážce bylo Čechům ustupovat* ‘after the defeat the Czechs had to retreat’ (Dušková 1999: 191).

Given that sentences of this type border on sentences with a general human agent, even instances such as: *jest rozhodnout* may be expressed by a modal verb with a *man*-pronoun as the subject: *we must make a decision, one must make a decision* (ibid.).

The construction primarily conveys the modal sense of possibility, especially when applied to verbs related to sensory perception. Unlike instances expressing necessity, this construction is quite prevalent even in casual conversations. Structurally, it lacks the agentive dative, with the agent being general and unexpressed. Therefore, English equivalents are predominantly found among the impersonal constructions (*man*-Satz), both explicit (using *you* or *they*) and implicit (utilizing the passive voice), constructed with a modal verb indicating possibility rather than a modal adjective. Here are examples: *But you could not see the little Tudor cottage which stood among the trees.* ‘Ale tudorovský dům, který stál mezi stromy, nebylo vidět.’ *In the summer-house faint chalk drawings of dragoons could still be made out.* ‘V pavilonu bylo ještě rozeznat slabé křídové kresby dragounů.’ (ibid.).

For the sense of *smell*, which can also function as a noun, this meaning is conveyed through the existential construction, e.g. *There was a smell of damp leaves and moss.* ‘Bylo cítit vlhké listí a mech.’

The existential construction also appears with *see* and *hear*, but given that they aren't used as nouns, they function as modifiers of the nominal component of the predicate. Here are some examples: *There was still no river to be seen.* ‘Pořád ještě nebylo vidět řeku.’ *There are so few horses to see.* ‘Je vidět tak málo koní.’ (ibid.).

In addition to this category, Czech possesses a modal type featuring an indefinite pronoun or adverb, e.g. *není co dělat* ‘there is nothing to do’; *není kam jít* ‘there is nowhere to go’; *není se na koho obrátit* ‘there is no one to turn to’. In English, there exists a regular structural equivalent in the form of the existential construction with an indefinite pronoun or adverb. Examples: *There was generally no one to play with.* ‘Obyčejně si nebylo s kým hrát.’ *There was nothing to fear.* ‘Nebylo se čeho bát.’

The difference between *nebylo co vidět* and *nebylo nic vidět* is obscured within *there was nothing to see*. However, the latter can be clearly expressed by *nothing could be seen or you could see nothing/ you couldn't see anything* (Dušková 1999: 192).

3 Material and Method

In the analytical section of this thesis, an in-depth examination is conducted on 100 instances of English translations of Czech subjectless sentences. These examples were sourced from the extensive InterCorp parallel Czech-English corpus (version 16). A subcorpus was formed to contain Czech original texts and their English translations from the section ‘*Core*’, which comprises texts whose alignment has been checked manually. It is important to note that the majority of the source texts encompass various genres, predominantly comprising works of fiction and drama. The size of the subcorpus was 6 160 888 tokens.

The CQL query formula below was used to identify subjectless clauses in the original Czech texts:

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[tag="V.N.....R.*"]
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The search query was designed to identify all verbs inflected for the third person singular neutrum and for the past tense, which commonly appear as the predicate verb in Czech subjectless sentences. The query was narrowed down to past tense verb forms in order to increase the precision of the results. To ensure the integrity of the findings and mitigate potential bias stemming from a singular source or sparse data, the results of the CQL query search were deliberately randomized. Subsequently, 1000 examples were downloaded, and the initial 100 relevant ones were selected manually to ensure that all 100 Czech excerpts indeed conformed to the criteria of subjectless sentences. Then these 100 instances were classified with respect to the form of the Czech predicate and the presence and form of nominal clause elements (e.g. the object in the dative case) and adverbials in the Czech sentence, semantics, and the type of the subject in the English sentence. The quantitative analysis was performed using an Excel spreadsheet.

4 Analysis

The analysis relies on 100 instances of Czech finite subjectless sentences and their English counterparts. Like the theoretical part of this thesis, their division is based on two main criteria: formal and semantic. Czech sentences with no subject can be divided into two formal classes – verbal and verbo-nominal. The verbs can be further classified on the basis of their reflexivity (see Table 1).

Predicate	Non-reflexive	Reflexive	Total
Verbo-nominal	24	4	28
Verbal	44	28	72
Total	68	32	100

Table 1: The forms of the predicate in Czech subjectless clauses

Table 1 shows that there are 28 percent of verbo-nominal predicates (ex. 1 a) and 72 percent instances represent the category with verbal predicate (ex. 1 b). Most of the verbal clauses (61.1 percent of verbal, and 85.7 percent of verbo-nominal ones), employed the non-reflexive form of the verb. The repertoire of reflexive predicates is more limited than that of the reflexive ones. All the reflexive verbo-nominal predicated comprise the verb *udělat se* (ex. 1 c), and there are 21 types of verbal predicates (ex. 1 d).

(1)

- a) Když si Archibald uvědomil svou chybu, **bylo už pozdě**. (Ajvaz)
- b) **Pršelo** pak mimochodem pět dní v kuse — něco jako generálka na povodně. (Viewegh)
- c) Zametali jsme spolu, **udělalo se mu zle** na ulici. (Klíma)
- d) **Stmívalo se**, když jsem se vrátil. (Bajaja)

Through the research, it has been concluded that the 100 excerpts can be categorized into four broad semantic categories. As Table 2 below shows, the majority of instances refer to environmental conditions (52 examples). Physical and mental states are represented by 27 and 6 sentences, respectively. The delimitation of the fourth category ‘passive’ is based on the possibility to identify an unexpressed agent, experiencer, or undergoer of the action or

state described by the predicate. There were also seven instances of subjectless sentences which proved impossible to classify within any of the above major groups.

Semantics	Number
States of the environment	52
Physical states	27
Mental states	6
Passive	8
Other	7
Total	100

Table 2: Semantic classification of subjectless clauses

The broad semantic classes can be further sub-classified, as shown in the section below. There can be observed some general tendencies for some semantic classes of phenomena to correlate with the formal means of expressing the predicate. While physical states can be expressed by verbal and verbo-nominal predicates approximately to the same extent (51.8 and 48.2 percent of predicates, respectively), mental states tend to be referred to by verbal predicates only. The only semantic category which admits a considerable proportion of reflexive predicates is the states of the environment, namely the atmospheric conditions; 32.7 percent of predicates in the category describing the states of the environment are reflexive (ex. 1 d above).

Semantic category	Verbo-nominal	Verbal	Total reflexive	Total (all)
State of the environment	12	40	17	52
Physical state	14	13	7	27
Mental state	0	6	3	6
Passive	1	7	4	8
Other	1	6	1	7
Total	28	72	32	100

Table 3: The correlation between the semantic class and the form of the predicate in Czech subjectless clauses

4.1 Semantic classification

In this section a closer classification into semantic categories will be provided.

4.1.1 States of the environment

This category comprises 52 instances, which describe atmospheric conditions, weather and environmental states, including time. To make this category more clear, it was divided it into 2 subcategories: weather and atmospheric conditions, and environmental states.

Weather and atmospheric conditions

Weather and atmospheric conditions describe the current state of the atmosphere, like temperature, the presence of sunlight and other factors. This category is represented by 41 instances, which indicates that the category extends across the boundary between verbal (38 instances, ex. 2a) and verbo-nominal clauses (only 3 cases, ex. 2b). There are 24 examples that do not use the reflexive form (ex. 2 b) and the remaining 17 employ a reflexive form (ex. 2 a).

(2)

- a) Právě **se začalo stmívat** za tím dlouhým dnem, a on se těšil, jak jim všem i celému okolí pořádně posvítí. (Kohout)
- b) **Bylo jasno.** (Topol)

The most frequent predicates are *pršelo* (10 instances) and *začalo* (e.g. *pršet*, *mrznout*, 7 instances). The predicates refer either to the current states (ex. 3 a) or to a change in the conditions (ex. 3 b), expressed by the verbs *začalo*, *začínalo*, *přestalo*, or by the verbal prefix, e.g. *ochladilo se*, *zešěřilo se*.

(3)

- a) **Bylo horko a mrtvo** (Durych)
- b) Najednou **začalo** i trochu foukat, musel jsem se obléct. (Vopěnka)

Environmental states

‘Environmental states’ is a semantic category that deals with the states and phenomena of the natural environment. The most frequent phenomena (8 out of 10 instances) in this category are sentences related to time (ex. 4). The temporal specification involves either

stating the time (ex. 4 a), or relating time to some event or schedule (*bylo už pozavírací hodině, bylo už pozdě*). The two remaining sentences deal with the states of the environment (ex. 4 b). None of the instances in this category employ a reflexive form. Nine predicates are verbo-nominal, comprising the verb *bylo*; one is verbal, with the verb *chtělo* (ex. 4 c). As illustrated by examples 4 a and b, a sentence may comprise several subjectless clauses referring to the states of the environment.

(4)

- a) **Bylo už skoro čtvrt na jedenáct** a venku dosud přšelo. (Klíma)
- b) **Bylo mokro**, asi přšelo, skrz roztrhané mraky prosvítalo slunce. (Šindelka)
- c) **Chtělo tu vyvětrat**, ale Gita mě na cestě k oknu objala, silně a majetnický, až mě to přivedlo do rozpaků. (Urban)

4.1.2 Physical states

This category consists of 27 example sentences. The subjectless clauses in this category refer to the physical condition of a person. The term physical state refers to the overall condition or state of the body and its various components. It encompasses factors such as health, fitness, and overall well-being of a person. A distinct sub-category, represented by four examples, refers to the person's age. (ex. 5 a). Ten instances, including all the age-related ones, employ a verbo-nominal form of the predicate (ex. 5 b) and the remaining thirteen use the verbal form of the predicate (ex. 5 c). Most of the predicates (21) have a non-reflexive form, and the rest of examples comprise the reflexive form of the verb (ex 5 d). Similarly to the states of the environment, the examples referring to the physical states describe either a current state or a change in the physical state (ex. 5 d). All the subjectless sentences describing physical states comprise a nominal clause element either in the dative (e.g. *mi* in ex. 5 b) or in the accusative case (*mě* in ex. 5 e), which refers to the experiencer or undergoer of the state. In addition, eight of the clauses in this category include an adverbial which specifies the physical location of the state (e.g. *z čela* in ex. 5 c).

(5)

- a) **Bylo jí dvaadvacet let** (jako Goethovi, když se dvořil její matce), ale cítila se být stále dítětem. (Kundera)
- b) **Bylo mi velice dobře**, cítil jsem se jako bojovník mezi bojovníky. (Škvorecký)

- c) **Z čela mu** vyloženě **teklo**. (Škvorecký)
- d) [...] a když se **mi** pak na Slupi **udělalo mdlo** a začal jsem mluvit z cesty [...]. (Urban)
- e) Až **mě zamrazilo**. (Urban)

4.1.3 Mental states

This category refers to the mental or emotional condition of an individual. It encompasses a person's psychological well-being, emotions, thoughts, and mental processes. This category contains 6 examples and all of them have the verbal form of the predicate. Half of them do not use the reflexive form of the verb (ex. 6 a). All the examples comprise a nominal clause element in the dative case, which refers to the experiencer of the mental state. (e.g. *mu* in ex. 6 a, b).

(6)

- a) Výpary způsobily, že **mu začalo být** omamně lehké. (Kohout)
- b) **Vedlo se mu** dobře. (Jedlička)

Example 6 b proved to be difficult to categorize. A new category could be created for this sentence, called, for instance, “experience”, however it was concluded that this instance still relates to psychical state (i.e. experiencing mentally one’s life as a good one), even though it may also relate to physical well-being. It was finally placed within the category of mental states.

During research of this category, a very interesting example was found (ex. 7). In this clause Prague is personified, which means attributing human characteristics or qualities to something non-human (in this case a city). In the end it belongs to this category because it is still a sentence relating to psychical state no matter who the experiencer is.

(7) Praze sklaplo. (Škvorecký)

4.1.4 Passive

The category is referred to in this manner because it implies an agent or the experiencer. The verb should also express some action. The category passive provides 8 examples and only 1 of them represent the verbo-nominal form of the predicate. The remaining examples employ the verbal form of the predicate (ex. 8). Half of the examples in this group have a reflexive verb (ex. 8).

(8) **Malovalo se krásně.** (Škvorecký)

4.1.5 Other

This category consists of 7 examples which did not seem to fit in any of the above categories. It is a heterogenous category, whose representatives refer to situations external to the human participants but cannot be seen as descriptions of the environment. Often some human agency is implied, but the formulation is impersonal. Only one sentence uses the verbo-nominal form of the predicate (ex. 9 a), and the predicates of the remaining 6 examples are verbal (ex. 9 b). Only one sentence represents the reflexive form of the verb (ex. 9 c).

(9)

- a) Ale **bylo zle.** (Bajaja)
- b) Potom **došlo** na obsah kapes. (Vopěnka)
- c) A tak **se i stalo.** (Balabán)

4.2 Nominal phrases in the Czech sentences

Nominal Phrases	Number
Empty	54
Dative	31
Accusative	9
Locative	4
Instrumental	2
Total	100

Table 4: Nominal phrases in the Czech sentences

As shown in the Table 4 above, almost half of the examples (46 %) employ a nominal phrase in the Czech sentence. The majority of instances, 31, contain the dative in the sentence (ex. 10 a). The dative is usually used with the semantic category Physical state with 20 examples (ex. 10 a) or Mental states with 6 examples. The second largest group (9 instances) uses the accusative (ex. 10 b), often complementing the preposition *na*. The accusative is mostly used with Physical states or Weather and atmospheric conditions (ex. 10 b). The locative case is represented by 4 instances (ex. 10 c). Three out of four examples belong to the semantic

category Environmental states, and they are related to time. The last two instances contain an instrumental with the preposition *s/se* (ex. 10 d) and belong to the semantic category Passive. 54 instances remain without any nominal phrases, most of them (39) represent the semantic category Atmospheric conditions and weather (ex. 10 e).

(10)

- a) Bylo **mi** velice dobře, cítil jsem se jako bojovník mezi bojovníky. (Škvorecký)
- b) ... viděl jsem je, v hadrech, šátcích, přšelo na ně... na obnažených loktech jsem viděl husí kůži, šly.... (Topol)
- c) Bylo **po deváté**, určitě přijde o hlavní film, sakra! (Otčenášek)
- d) Hejbal se **s časem**. (Topol)
- e) Už se šerilo. (Vopěnka)

4.3 Adverbials in Czech sentences

Adverbials in Czech sentences	Number
No adverbials	56
Adverbials	44
Total	100

Table 5: Adverbials in Czech sentences

This chapter deals with adverbials in Czech sentences. At the beginning it is important to note that only adverbials that are not a part of the verbo-nominal predicate are analysed in this chapter (ex. 11 a). Adverbials in the verbo-nominal predicate are already a part of the predicate so they are not analysed (ex. 11 b) and are not a part of the Table 5 above. As shown in Table 5, almost a half of Czech sentences employ an adverbial and a few sentences even employ more than one adverbial.

(11)

- a) **V noci** sprchlo a až dopoledne dalšího dne se obloha probírala k nevýrazné modři. (Vopěnka)
- b) **Bylo mi hrozně**. (Urban)

Sentences that do not have any adverbials usually belong to the semantic category Atmospheric conditions (12 examples) (ex. 12 a), but a broad scale of examples and semantic categories, like Age, Physical states (ex. 12 b), Mental states and many more, can be found in this group.

(12)

- a) **Začalo mrholit**, vítr už pomalu přinášel podzim. (Hájíček)
- b) Až mě **zamrazilo**. (Urban)

Sentences that employ one adverbial are relatively frequent and have a broad scale of types of adverbials. However, it is necessary to distinguish between adverbs that are part of the verbo-nominal predicate and are therefore obligatory, and adverbial modifiers that expand the predicate. The latter can be obligatory (e.g., *Hučí mi v uších.*) or optional (e.g., *Pršelo na starou kolonii.*).

Three main groups were found – employing a local, manner and time adverbial. The largest group is the one that utilizes local adverbial. It is represented by 15 examples. More than half examples (9 instances) belong to the semantic category Physical states (ex. 13 a). It is possible to say that generally people tend to localize the place which relates to their physical state. But this group is also represented by more than one semantic class, it is possible to find examples in the semantic category of States of the environment, Mental states and Passive. The second largest group (9 instances) are the sentences that employ a time adverbial (ex. 13 b). Six out of those examples belong to the semantic category States of the environment (ex. 13 b), but also, as mentioned before a larger scale of semantic categories, such as Age, Mental states and a few more semantic categories employ the time adverbial. Next very frequent group employs the manner adverbial and has eight instances. Often, a manner adverbial was used in sentences from the semantic category Physical states (ex. 13 c). The other groups, such as cause, condition, result and more, are usually represented by one or two sentences.

(13)

- a) Vyprahlo mi **v krku**. (Urban)
- b) **V noci** sprchlo a až dopoledne dalšího dne se obloha probírala k nevýrazné modři. (Vopěnka)

c) Dýchalo **se lehce**. (Šindelka)

In summary of this category, it becomes evident that numerous Czech sentences incorporate various types of adverbials, thereby enriching and enhancing the overall complexity of the sentence structure. This inclusion of adverbials serves to augment the linguistic diversity and completeness within the discourse.

4.4 Realisation of English subject

In this chapter, the form of realisation of English subject is examined. As shown in the Table 6 below, two major groups were identified. In the first group, the English subject corresponds to a clause element of the Czech subjectless clause (a nominal element, an adverbial or the verb). In the second, the English subject, similarly to the situation in Czech, has no referent – these English clauses have the empty *it* or the existential *there* subject; in two clauses the subject was unexpressed. Other types of subjects are less frequent. The English subject can refer to a person, either a specific person (2 examples) or the general human agent (1 instance). The last class comprises referential *it* subjects anaphoric or cataphoric.

Classification of English subject	Number
From a clause element of the sentence	46
Empty subject (empty <i>it</i> , <i>there</i> , unexpressed)	48
Personal (specific or general)	3
Referential <i>it</i>	3
Total	100

Table 6: Classification of English subject

The broad categories can be classified into sub-categories listed in Table 7 below. This chapter aims to provide a structured framework by breaking down the main categories of realization of English subject into smaller, more manageable sub-categories. By doing so, the goal is to offer a clearer understanding of the complexity, thus enabling a more in-depth exploration and analysis.

English subject	Sub-categories	Number
From a clause element of the Czech clause	Nominal or adverbial clause element	26
	The verb	20
Empty subject	Empty <i>it</i>	40
	Existential <i>there</i>	6
	Unexpressed	2
Personal	Specific person	2
	General human agent	1
Referential <i>it</i>	Anaphoric	2
	Anticipatory	1
Total		100

Table 7: Classification of sub-categories of English subject

4.4.1 A clause element of the Czech subjectless clause

This sub-category is represented by 46 instances. The English subject corresponds to an object (ex. 14 a, b), an adverbial (ex. 14 c) or the verb (ex. 15 a). The correspondence between the Czech object and English subject occurs typically in sentences referring to Physical states. Out of the 18 instances of this type of correspondence, 12 describe Physical states. It is the only type of correspondence attested in sentences stating person's age (ex. 14 b). The English subject corresponds to the Czech adverbial most often in sentences which relate to Physical states (6 out of 9 instances of this type of correspondence, ex. 14 c). Out of the 18 sentences where the English subject corresponds to the Czech verb, 14 describe Atmospheric and weather conditions (ex. 15 c).

(14)

- a) Pak se **mu** patrně udělalo nevolno... (Škvorecký)
Then **he** must have felt ill...
- b) Macechu otec přivedl domu, když **mi** bylo pět. (Viewegh)
My father brought my stepmother home when **I** was five.

- c) Přestalo mi téct **z očí**. (Topol)

My eyes stopped watering.

(15)

- a) Tak krásně se tu **žilo**. (Tučková)

Life here was so good.

- b) Z čela mu vyloženě **teklo**. (Škvorecký)

The sweat was pouring from his forehead, his face was ashen.

- c) **Stmívalo se**, když jsem se vrátil. (Bajaja)

Dusk was falling when I got back.

- d) Slunce zašlo a rychle **se ochladilo**. (Vopěnka)

As the sun set, the **temperature dropped fast**.

The correspondence between the Czech predicate and English subject may rely on a direct translation counterpart (e.g. *žilo se – life* in ex. 15 a, *stmívalo se – dusk* in ex. 15 c), but in some counterparts the English subject is only implied in the verbal description of the state in Czech (e.g. *z čela mu teklo*, i.e. ‘tekl mu pot’, corresponding to *the sweat* in ex. 15 b). In the latter cases, the Czech verb corresponds, more precisely, to the English subject and predicate (e.g. *ochladilo se – the temperature dropped* in ex. 15 d).

Where the Czech subjectless clause comprises both the object and an adverbial, three types of correspondence with the English subject were observed: the English subject may correspond to the Czech object (ex. 16 a), adverbial (ex. 16 b), or verb (ex. 16 c). As shown in ex. 16 d, where the English subject refers to a body-part, it usually comprises counterparts of both the Czech adverbial (the head of the noun phrase *throat* in ex. 16 d) and the dative object (*mi* corresponding to the determiner *my* in ex. 16 d).

(16)

- a) Až se **mně** zatmělo v hlavě tím užasným zjištěním. (Vopěnka)

I felt almost light-headed at this amazing discovery.

- b) Koukám na písmenko zblízka, **z vočí** mi pořád teklo ... ono to bylo ř! (Topol)

Took a look up close, **eyes** still watering ... it was the ř!

- c) Byl celý červený, sotva popadal dech a z úst mu **hvízdalo**. (Urban)

He was deeply flushed and could hardly catch his breath, and **a sound of wheezing** came from his lips.

d) Vyprahlo mi **v krku**... (Urban)

My throat went dry...

4.4.2 Empty subject

This category is the biggest group and contains 48 examples. It comprises non-referential empty *it* and existential (-locative) *there* subjects, and two instances where the subject was not expressed in the English sentence were also included here (ex. 17 c). All instances employ empty *it* as their English subject (see examples 17 a, b). Empty *it* refers to the use of the pronoun *it* in a sentence without a clear referent, employed for syntactic reasons rather than conveying specific meaning, which is demonstrated on examples bellow. Most of the empty *it* subjects (41 out of 40) occurred in sentences which relate to the semantic group Atmospheric conditions, weather and states of the environment (17 a).

There subjects occur in existential and existential-locative clauses; the notional subject is in post-verbal position of the clause (ex. 17 d). In all six instances of the *there* subject the notional subject corresponded to the predicate verb of the Czech clause (eg. *Hučelo* – a roaring in ex. 17 d). *There* subjects did not display clear preference for any semantic group; it occurred in sentences describing Atmospheric conditions and weather, Physical and other states.

(17)

a) Už **se šěřilo**. (Vopěnka)

It was already getting dark.

b) Mělo to upevnit říši, **bylo ale už pozdě**. (Pánek)

It was intended to consolidate the Empire, but **it** was too late for that.

c) Kdyby na tebe zapršelo, měl bys to jako dvě jezírka. (Topol)

Come rain-two little ponds.

d) **Hučelo** mi v uších. (Urban)

There was a roaring in my ears.

Example 18 proved to be complicated to categorize. Firstly, it may seem that the subject is unexpressed since there is no subject, but after a closer look it is clear that there is an ellipsis

of *it*, which in this case is an empty *it*. The *it* is taken from the previous sentence, so there is no need for repetition of the subject.

(18) Bylo morko, **asi pršelo**, skrz roztrhané mraky prosvítalo slunce.

It was wet, **had probably rained**, and the sun was shining through tattered clouds.

4.4.3 Referential *it* subjects

Unlike the empty *it* subjects described above, the referential *it* subjects have a specific referent. Two types of reference of the *it* subject occurred in the dataset – anaphoric and cataphoric. Anaphoric *it* refers to the usage of the pronoun *it* to refer back to something previously mentioned in the discourse or text (ex. 19). This group consists out of 2 examples.

(19) Nějakou dobu jsem si poležela **a bylo**. (Hůlová)

I stayed in bed a couple days and that was **it**.

Anticipatory *it* is a pronoun used in a sentence before introducing a specific noun, serving as a temporary placeholder. This category has only one example (ex. 20).

(20) A **tak se i stalo**. (Balabán)

And so **it** happened that Petr, whom Martin didn't understand anyway, disappeared into that void, which stretched out from the western slopes of the Šumava mountains.

4.4.4 Person

This category consists of four examples, where the subject of the English sentence refers to a person. The difference from the category 'From a clause element of the Czech clause' is that the subject in these sentences (person) is not any part of the Czech subjectless clause. However, it was mentioned in another clause earlier in the Czech sentence or in the preceding context. There was also one example in which the English subject refers to the unspecified general human agent (ex. 22). It was also found out that two out of the three examples with a specific anaphorical personal subject in this category employ the Czech verb '*dojít na*', which is demonstrated in sentences bellow (ex. 21 a, b).

(21)

- a) Studené obklady s octem mi jenom zhoršily, hlen v dutinách ztuhl a vytvořil tvrdou nepropustnou masku, která by bránila dýchání. Ale Gitě jsem za ty obklady políbil

ruku. Nakonec **došlo** na další Hofmanův prášek a teď se mi nejvíc ze všeho chtělo spát. (Urban)

I hated cold vinegar compresses that thickened the mucous in my sinuses and formed a hard, impenetrable mass that prevented me breathing, but I had kissed Gita's hands for putting them on me. **I had ended up** taking another one of Hoffmann's pills, and now what I wanted to do most of all was sleep.

- b) Denis se však jen háhadně usmál: “Nakonec všechno uvidíš. I tak máš dost teplého oblečení.” Potom **došlo na obsah kapes**. (Vopěnka)

But Denis just gave me a mysterious smile. ‘You’ll see when you get there. And anyway you have plenty of warm clothes already.’ After that **he** checked the contents of my pockets.

- (22) Malovalo se krásně. (Škvorecký)

One painted beautifully.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this thesis delves into the exploration of English constructions corresponding to Czech subjectless sentences with a finite verb form. Given the absence of structurally congruent counterparts in English, with sentences always requiring a subject, even if expressed through expletives (e.g., *It is raining.*), the focus of this study lies on the selection of English subjects and the factors which influence the choice. The description of the 100 excerpts relies on two main factors: the semantic factor and the choice of subject in the English counterpart. By considering both aspects, we aim to fully understand how the sentences are translated and what may influence those choices. To ensure a homogeneous set of results in the corpus search, only Czech sentences containing verbs inflected for the third person neuter and past tense were employed.

The aim of this thesis was to explore the possibility to qualify and analyse these sentences using a different and new approach. The traditional way of analysing subjectless sentences is by the formal division – classification according to the predicate, as Dušková (1999) suggests. The predicate can be either verbo-nominal or nominal. This method was also applied for the 100 excerpts, however the analysis did not bring conclusive results since there was almost no difference in expressing the semantic categories between the two types of predicates, as can be seen in Table 8 below.

Semantic category	Verbo-nominal predicate		Verbal predicate		Total (all)
	total	%	total	%	
State of the environment	12	42.8	40	55.6	52
Physical state	14	50.0	13	18.1	27
Mental state	0	0	6	8.3	6
Passive	1	3.6	7	9.7	8
Other	1	3.6	6	8.3	7
Total	28	100.0	72	100.0	100

Table 8: Classification of semantics according to the predicate

Looking at Table 8 it is clear that there is not a significant difference between the two categories since most clauses with both types of predicates refer either to the States of the environment or to Weather and atmospheric conditions. However, a few interesting facts came up. Some categories are expressed by only one category of a predicate, such as the category Mental states that employs only verbal predicate. The category Age, a sub-category of Physical state, is expressed only by the construction with a verbo-nominal predicate ‘BÝT + (pro)noun in the dative case + numeral (+ let)’, e.g. *Včera mi bylo šestnáct, Františku!* (Fischerová). On the other hand, the category Physical states is expressed almost equally by verbal and verbo-nominal predicates. Other categories contain too small number of examples, so it is impossible to make any conclusions.

When speaking about the realisation of the English subject in relationship with the formal division also did not provide any conclusive results (see Table 9). The Czech sentences with a verbal predicate proved to use a broader scale of the English subjects in the translation counterparts (10, including the English subject corresponding to the Czech verb) than the verbo-nominal ones, which corresponded to sentences with only four types of English subject (i.e., English subjects corresponding to Czech objects or adverbials, anaphoric *it* and empty *it* subjects).

English subject	Verbo-nominal predicate		Verbal predicate		Total (all)
	total	%	total	%	
From a clause element of the sentence (nominal or adverbial elements or the verb)	12	42.9	34	47.2	46
Empty subject (<i>empty it, there, unexpressed</i>)	15	53.6	33	45.8	48
Personal (specific or general)	0	0	3	4.2	3
Referential <i>it</i>	1	3.5	2	2.8	3
Total	28	100.0	72	100.0	100

Table 9: Types of subjects in the translation counterparts of Czech sentences with verbo-nominal and verbal predicates

Taking into consideration the semantic part, 5 general groups were found: States of the environment (which can be further sub-classified into Weather and atmospheric conditions, and Environmental states), Physical states, Mental states, Passive and Other. The groups were classified based on the meaning of the Czech sentences. As mentioned above, the semantic groups were not equally spread with the category Atmospheric states containing more than half of those examples (52 instances), and the second biggest group (Physical states) having almost a third of the examples (27 instances). The remaining categories carry a different number of instances that represent them: States of the environment (52%), Physical states (27%), Mental states (6%), Passive (8%) and Other (7%).

Looking at the realisation of the English subject, the biggest category is the Empty subject that contains almost half of the examples (48%). Supported by the theoretical part (see 2.1, especially ‘Sentences with *it* as a subject’ and ‘The construction with *there* filling the position of the subject’), it is possible to say that this result was expected. The second largest group called clause element of the Czech subjectless clause was represented by 46 instances. This result was also anticipated and confirmed the theoretical part. The approach adopted in this thesis, however, made it possible to identify more precisely the patterns of correspondence between particular clause elements (objects, adverbials, or the verb) and the English subject, and reveal instances where the English subject corresponds to two clause elements of the Czech sentence at the same time (e.g., *vyprahlo mi v krku - my throat went dry*). The translation pairs analysed also highlighted the cases where several translation options are available as counterparts of Czech sentences with similar syntactic structure. Then there were two less frequented categories, both comprising only three per cent of the sentences. Even in this category nothing out of the order or in contradiction with the theoretical part was found. At the same time, the approach adopted here points out that while English existential and existential-locative sentences can be classified as a separate type of counterpart of Czech subjectless sentences on the basis of the *there*-subject, the notional, post-verbal subject displays correspondence patterns similar to other, pre-verbal subjects in being related to the verbal predicate of the Czech sentence, e.g. *Hučelo mi v uších. - There was a roaring in my ears.*

To bring it all together, the findings largely support the theories proposed in the thesis's theoretical framework. The study reveals that speakers are sometimes influenced by the context of the sentence, although it is not a strict rule. Instead of strict rules, this thesis suggests patterns observed in how Czech subjectless sentences are translated into English, with the translation often influenced by the sentence's meaning.

While the analysis does not disprove any hypotheses from the theoretical section, it does show that there is a wider range of possible translations within some semantic categories than previously thought. In conclusion, while it is not certain that the semantic class of the subjectless structure is always the main factor in choosing the English counterpart, it does play a significant role that needs to be considered.

Research on this subject has proven to be exceptionally captivating, and delving into it on a larger scale would undoubtedly bring interesting results and provide fascinating insights.

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