Celebrating EUROMOSAIC vs. language policies: the case of the Czech language

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Božena Bednaříková
Palacký University Olomouc/Cz
Universita degli Studi di Udine/I
WHAT is the presentation ABOUT

- the EU language policy and the European Commission project EUROMOSAIC
- internal diversification of the official/national languages (regional variants)
- the case of the Czech language
- standard Czech vs. diglossia?
- situation in Moravia
- the only „genuine“ grammar of Czech and the Czech National Corpus LEADERSHIP (?)
The EU language policy and the project EUROMOSAIC

- enshrined in Article 22 of the European Charter of Fundamental Rights
Internal diversification (of national languages)

- national language from the **functional point of view**
- territorial and social criteria → **varieties**:
  - regional dialects + **interdialects** (koinésation – elimination of marked features)
  - sociolects (slangs, argots, etc.)
  - **STANDARD language** (literary language)
- **functions**:
  - representative and symbolic
  - integrative
  - a sign of intellectual and cultural level
→ institutionalized and regulated
= a „construct“
The case of the Czech language

• basic facts:
  - territory of 78,866 square km
  - population of 10 504 203 (according to the Czech Statistic Office – 31.12.2011)

• West Slavonic language, high linguistic proximity

• Czech from the typological view:
  = the so-called inflectional language
LANGUAGES typologically

2 basic differences:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>element</th>
<th>element</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>vertical:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>function</td>
<td>f1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>horizontal:</strong></td>
<td>semantic</td>
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</tbody>
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stěna domu (vidím stěnu)

the wall of a house
Specifics of the „inflectional“ word

1. Separate ways of inflection for nouns, verbs, and adjectives

2. „Cumulative segment“ (morpheme):
   Tehdy vstal a otevřel okno moušě.

   mouš-e

   (gender, number, case) + communicative function

3. Stylistic „values“: píšu X píši (I write)
Standard Czech vs. diglossia?

- status of STANDARD Czech
- linguistic self-confidence
- questioning the role of the so-called literary Czech:
  - „violent changes of language development“ (Cvrček 2010)
  - a diglossia in Czech - a result of a bad and elitist language policy“ (Čermák 2003)
DIGLOSSIA?

Stereotypes:

• the Czech national revival is responsible!

a strong AHISTORISM

• most Czech speakers use, in their everyday speech, *Common Czech* X

the eastern part (Moravia) = a much smaller linguistic area

more than 4 million inhabitants live in Moravia (4 146 361 of 10 504 361)
Bohemia and Moravia
Common Czech

• spontaneous spoken language of private and semi-official communication, referred to as substandard Czech (used in Bohemia but spreading to the whole territory)

X an interdialect limited to a particular territory

• a more natural variety, presented as a contrast to Standard Czech (frustration of school children!), suitable to be included into the codification

X a marked variety, „pragocentrismus“

• research: dialogue of 5000 words, only 10% of the text showed „deviations“ from the standard (Bláha 2010)

→ a DIGLOSSIA? A CODE SWITCHING?
The only „genuine“ grammar of Czech and the Czech National Corpus „LEADERSHIP“ (?)
Methodology

• any decision and judgement about language have to be based on modern data (Čermák 2003)
• a prerequisite to any further research, is to be found in a large, representative corpus (Čermák 2003)


• the first grammar description which shows how the grammar actually looks“ (Cvrček 2010)
• the first guide that tries to describe not only written but also spoken language (Cvrček 2010)
A representative corpus of spoken language?

- Prague spoken Corpus

- spoken Czech in Cvrček’s Mluvnice:

  SÁZET = to plant (flowers), 3rd pl. (they)
  6 % (oni) sází
  10 % (oni) sázejí
  84 % (oni) sázej
  - *not used in Moravia!*

- regionally marked, stylistically marked
„Leadership“ of the Czech National Corpus

- statistical data
- high frequency in corpus = used (is correct)
- Prague Spoken Corpus – a leading spoken corpus (others are ignored), a relevant base for codification?
- ambition of the grammar (Cvrček´s Mluvnice) to be enforced as the school grammar
- the grammar (a set of statistical tables) as a potential base for codification disrupts the integration function of the Standard Czech
- (leadership) DICTATORSHIP