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Constructing grammatical meaning

Isomorphism and polysemy in Czech reflexivization*

Mirjam Fried
Princeton University

In a usage-based analysis of four syntactic reflexives in Czech, this paper examines the question of representing speakers' knowledge of polyfunctional grammatical categories. I argue that the reflexives form a prototype-based network of partially overlapping grammatical patterns, organized by the pragmatic concept of unexpected referential status in agent–patient relations. This concept is manifested in four distinct communicative functions: marking referential identity between agent and patient roles; distancing discourse participants from their involvement in the reported event; recasting a transitive event as a spontaneous change of state; expressing an attitude toward the reported event. Each function is shown to conventionally co-occur with a set of properties involving various combinations of the following: preferences in aspect and transitivity; semantic and/or pragmatic constraints on agents and patients; verb semantics; shifts in modality and pragmatic force; morphosyntactic constraints. Overall, the analysis supports the view that grammatical categories cannot be properly defined outside of broader grammatical context, thus arguing for a constructional approach to linguistic structure and for re-interpreting the principle of isomorphism in terms of 'constructions' in the sense of Construction Grammar.

1. Introduction

This study addresses some of the core issues involved in determining the meaning of polyfunctional grammatical categories, particularly the problem of establishing a 'basic' meaning and the relationship between polysemy and isomorphism; by isomorphism I mean the functionalist hypothesis of a one-to-one association between linguistic form and its content (e.g. Martinet 1962: 39, Bolinger 1977: x, Haiman 1980: 26, Givón 1995: 4, Ungerer 1999: 307). At the

heart of this enterprise is the tension between aiming for maximally abstract generalization on the one hand, and the need to capture the full detail of the surface facts on the other, in representing speakers' native-like understanding of grammatical structure and meaning.

In order to illustrate the analytic challenges and to propose empirically well-documented generalizations, I will examine one particular case of a hard-to-define grammatical category, namely, the reflexive morpheme as we know it in Indo-European (and many other) languages. I will focus on its manifestations in Czech, and specifically on the four commonly attested patterns exemplified in (1)–(4); the reflexive morpheme is *se*.[1]

(1) *jenom se vyřešil   problém,   za pět minut*
only   RF PF:solve:PST.SG.M problem:NOM.SG.M in 5   minutes
se šlo   domů
RF go:PST.SG.N home[2]
'(there was a meeting —) you$_{generic}$ just solved a problem [and] in five minutes everybody went home' [PMK333; 60935]

(2) *je fakt, že ta doba   se tak trochu změnila*
[it]'s.true that that era:NOM.SG.F RF just little   PF:change:PST.SG.F
'it's true that times have changed a little bit' [PMK272; 97901]

(3) *Jestli se vám   v týhle   nesedí*
if   RF 3PL.DAT in this:LOC.SG.F NEG:sit:IPF.PRES.3SG
pohodlně, sedněte   si   do jiný
comfortably sit:PF.IMP.2PL RF$_{dat}$[3] into another:GEN.SG.F
'If it isn't comfortable for you to sit in this one, sit down in another one.' [SYN2000; 12407682]

(4) *ty   starý   babky   se*
that:NOM.PL.F old:NOM.PL.F granny:NOM.PL.F RF
zamknou (a umřou v tom zamčeným bytě…) [PMK315; 27145]
lock:PF.PRES.3PL
'those old grannies lock themselves up (and then they die in those locked-up apartments)' [the speaker is lamenting the fact that old people living in cities are too afraid to leave their doors unlocked but then nobody can check on them to discover an accident in time for help]

We can make a few preliminary observations about these examples, to illustrate the main issues involved in the analysis of *se*:

– The sentence in (1) contains both a transitive verb (*vyřešit* 'solve') and an intransitive verb of motion (*jít/šlo* 'go/went'), thus showing that the reflexive morpheme cannot be seen simply as an intransitivizer.

– The example in (2) is based on a transitive verb (*změnit* 'change') but reports a different event type from (1): while (2) expresses the result of an involuntary event for which there is no identifiable trigger, (1) expresses an action carried out by an anonymous human agent. I will argue that a crucial property of (1) is the reporting of an *event* as a whole, rather than profiling *entities* in the event. This feature sets (1) apart from both the reflexive in (2) and the *be*-passive.

– Both (2) and (4) appear to have a subject that could be described as 'self-affected', but in (2) the self-affectedness is the result of a spontaneous event, while in (4) the action is deliberately directed toward the self. In contrast, self-affectedness is not an issue in (1) or (3).

– Finally, (3) differs from all the other examples in that it marks the agent with the dative and necessarily contains an evaluative adverbial (e.g., *pohodlně* 'comfortably'); this pattern reports not just a process, but the agent's attitude toward it (cf. the label "modal deagentive" in Nedjalkov 1978: 30; Geniušienė 1987: 273), which makes it distinct from the other three patterns.

It is agreed among Slavic linguists that each of these patterns presents a different usage of *se*; I will refer to them as Anonymous-Agent reflexive (1), Spontaneous-Event reflexive (2), Dispositional reflexive (3), and Pronominal reflexive (4).[4] This polyfunctionality does not pose any communicative problem in actual discourse and we may ask, then, what kind of linguistic knowledge corresponds to this patterning. However, the overall goal of the paper is not only to advance our understanding of the Czech reflexive as one particular example but to extend the approach to the organization of grammatical categories in general.

The answers suggested in this paper are based on a detailed analysis of the full grammatical environments in which *se* occurs, rather than following the traditional attempts to define *se* in isolation, as an abstract syntactic entity. The contextually grounded view of grammatical semantics as a general analytic approach has been most succinctly and forcefully argued for by Croft (2001: 85), but it underlies all versions of the general research strategy that sees grammar as arising from language use, rather than existing independently of it, as is commonly assumed within the generative models of language. I will demonstrate that each of the patterns above is associated with a set of features (semantic, pragmatic, morphosyntactic) that cannot be predicted simply from the fact that

each contains the morpheme *se*. Consistent with Geniušienė's (1987: 59) observation that reflexives form a continuum with focal points of distinction but with frequent overlap, the four patterns will be shown to overlap with respect to specific combinations of various formal and functional criteria (transitivity, aspect, verb meaning, animacy of the agent, and the semantic and discourse properties of the patient), while simultaneously differing from each other in several ways that are not simply an issue of interpretation. The result is a prototype-based radial network, in which I introduce the notion of 'constructional maps' for representing adequate generalizations about grammatical structure. This notion is akin to the way 'semantic maps' are used in cognitively oriented typological research to represent cross-linguistic generalizations about grammatical categories (Croft et al. 1987, Kemmer 1993, Haspelmath 1997, 2003, Croft 2001), and I will show how the constructional map may relate to the functional space of voice relations proposed by Croft (1994, 2001).

The material deserves the attention of general linguists for several reasons. For one, it poses a more complicated problem than Russian in that the Czech reflexive morpheme is a clitic. The Russian-based analyses are commonly tied to the contrast between the independent, clearly argument-coding full pronoun *sebja* 'self' and the verbal affix *-sja* as its reduced-form counterpart. In Russian the two morphemes usually cannot occur in the same environment, as the following examples from Haiman (1983: 804) illustrate:

(5)   a.   *Viktor   nenavidit   sebja.*
           Victor:NOM.SG.M hate:PRES.3SG self:ACC
           'Victor hates himself.'
      b.   * *Viktor nenavidit-sja.*
           Viktor hate:PRES.3SG-RF

The Czech clitic *se* corresponds to many of the 'derived' uses of Russian *-sja* (such as the patterns in 1–3), but also to the pronominal uses associated with *sebja*. As shown in (6), the equivalents of both (5a) and (5b) are possible in Czech and both variants are instances of the Pronominal reflexive seen in (4).

(6)   a.   *Nenáviděla ho.   Nenáviděla   sebe.*
           hate:PST.SG.F 3SG.ACC.CL hate:PST.SG.F self:ACC
           'She hated him. She hated HERSELF.' [SYN2000; 7184372]
      b.   (*Stojím před výkladem s dýkama*)
           a   nenávidím   se,   jakej   jsem posera
           and hate:PRES.1SG self:ACC.CL what.kind am   shit.eater:NOM.SG.M
           '(I'm standing in front of a store with daggers) and I hate myself for
           being such a chicken' [SYN2000; 3586954]

The material thus presents interesting observations with respect to simple iconic correlations between relative bulk and predictability/familiarity as they have been applied in the semantically based accounts of Russian (Haiman 1983, Kemmer 1993), and it also speaks to Kemmer's typology of reflexives and middles. On the surface Czech would seem to fall into Kemmer's (1993: 25) two-form cognate system (together with Russian), since it has both the full form *sebe* and the reduced cognate form *se*. However, this paper will show that in terms of functional coverage, Czech instead displays the features of a one-form system (such as that of German or French), revolving solely around the reduced form *se*, while the full form *sebe* is outside of the system altogether, appearing merely as an alternative to one function of *se* under specific discourse conditions.

Above all, though, the analysis will serve as a vehicle for addressing the theoretical question of establishing and representing grammatical meaning, and specifically the issue of relating the distribution of a polyfunctional grammatical morpheme to the isomorphism hypothesis. While there is agreement across theoretical models (generative and cognitive alike) that polyfunctional categories may involve polysemous relations, rather than being instances of random similarity in form, it is not clear how such relations can be adequately captured in a systematic manner. For one thing, establishing polysemy networks always raises the question of how this relates to the idea of a basic, invariant meaning that holds independently of context. The answer to this question depends largely on the theoretical model one applies: the invariance approach is characteristic of both structuralist and generative accounts, while cognitively oriented approaches argue for prototype-based structures.

Apart from the question of establishing a core meaning/function (whether invariant or prototypical), it is not self-evident exactly in what way polysemy interacts with the 'one-form-one-meaning' principle or how the effects of these apparently conflicting categorization strategies may be best captured. The present analysis rejects the absolutist view of invariance in favor of a prototype-based model of meaning. I will argue that there is a unifying property around which the Czech reflexive network is organized: namely, the pragmatically grounded function of *se* as a marker of unexpected referential status in agent–patient relations. This abstract function manifests itself in different modifications, each of which highlights some aspect(s) of the unifying function. At the same time, an adequate account of the polysemy network forces the issue of how we should understand the 'form' portion of the isomorphism hypothesis and what linguistic entity actually carries the prototype status. I will argue that we cannot be concerned simply with the item per se (here, the morpheme *se*) but must treat the 'form' as having the status of a grammatical construction,

as understood in Construction Grammar: a particular cluster of both formal and semantic or functional properties united in a conventionalized grammatical pattern. The present paper thus also takes a new step toward reconciling the dynamic relationship between lexical and constructional polysemy and strengthens the analytic and representational potential of Construction Grammar as a powerful tool for capturing syntactic phenomena in a systematic way while also keeping in focus their functional and cognitive nature.

The paper is organized as follows. Section 2 briefly summarizes the existing analyses of Slavic reflexives. Sections 3 and 4 present the morpho-syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic details of the patterns exemplified in (1)–(4). In Section 5 I discuss the features of the proposed constructional map, their relationship to Croft's Voice Continuum, and the effect of the constructional analysis on reinterpreting the notions of invariance and isomorphism. Section 6 concludes the paper.

2.   Existing analyses

It is generally agreed that the uses of the reflexive morpheme are mutually related in regular ways. What has remained a matter of dispute is *how* they are related, what each of them actually marks in the sentence, whether they share an invariant meaning and, if so, whether the unifying feature is syntactic or semantic. Most of the existing proposals, based primarily on Russian, prove to be too reductionist, leaving certain aspects of the attested patterns unaccounted for or proposing implausible analyses (an informative critical survey concerning Slavic languages is given in Schenker 1988; critiques from a broader typological perspective can be found in Geniušienė 1987, Croft et al. 1987, Kemmer 1993).

Syntactic analyses have invariably reduced the reflexive to a marker of derived intransitivity, with some difference of opinion about the involvement of semantics. Some proposals have taken a completely non-semantic view, in which the reflexive morpheme functions simply as an intransitivizer (Fortunatov 1899, Isačenko 1960, Babby & Brecht 1975), while other analyses formulate the syntactic function of the reflexive in terms of valence reduction (Jakobson 1957/1971, Babby 1983, Haiman 1983). As we shall see, treating the changes in valence structure in purely syntactic terms is much too broad; anything that helps differentiate among the patterns has to be simply stipulated, as *ad hoc* conditions fundamentally unrelated to the phenomenon of reflexivity.

More recent treatments have focused their attention on semantics, recasting the search for the common property in terms of a basic meaning of the

reflexive morpheme. This meaning has been understood in terms of reconfiguring the agent–patient relations captured in the semantic valence of verbs. A purely semantic account, organized around the concept of self-affectedness, has been proposed by Janda (1993). Similar in spirit is also the approach advocated in Croft et al. (1987) and Croft (1994, 2001), arguing that a unified account of voice distinctions, including their manifestations in Slavic reflexives, must be primarily semantic; the semantic distinctions are formulated in terms of relative distinctness of event participants, an issue I will return to in Section 5.1.

This paper turns its attention to actual usage of *se* in natural discourse and argues that Czech speakers' conventional understanding of *se* necessarily includes specific pragmatic and discourse-related functions, in addition to semantic and syntactic factors. The analysis will be carried out in the spirit of Construction Grammar (Fillmore, Kay & O'Connor 1988, Fillmore 1989, Croft 2001, Goldberg 2002, Fried & Östman 2004), which is a constraint-based theory whose basic unit of analysis is a *grammatical construction*. A construction is defined as a symbolic entity that represents a conventional association between particular morphosyntactic features and particular meanings and/or communicative functions. Grammar, then, is seen as consisting of networks of constructions, related through shared properties. I will propose that by taking a constructional approach to grammatical meaning, we can capture the nuances and complexities seen in form-function associations without sacrificing our ability to make more abstract generalizations about grammatical structure.

3. Czech syntactic reflexives

3.1 Anonymous-Agent Reflexive (AR)

The sentence in (1) exemplifies the seemingly least problematic pattern of the four and the one most commonly studied, since it displays the most obvious contrast to the argument-coding function of a reflexive pronoun. Additional instances of AR are given in (7), all of which involve transitive verbs (*najít* 'find', *držet* 'hold', *krájet* 'slice'); the patient argument is in the nominative, agreeing in number (and, in the past tense, gender) with the verb.

(7) a. (*ne každej je špatnej*) *a   dobrej   se najde (i tam i tam)*
                        and good.one:NOM.SG.M RF PF:find:PRES.3SG
          '(not everyone is bad) and you$_{generic}$ can find a good person (both here [in the city] and there [in the country])' [PMK136; 147500]

b. *u nás   se eště drží   sobota   a*
at 1PL.GEN RF still hold:IPF.PRES.3SG Saturday:NOM.SG.F and
neděle
Sunday:NOM.SG.F
'one still honors Saturday and Sunday here' [PMK272; 97955]

c. (*bylo uvaříno, upečíno*), *knedlíky   se krájely*
                                    dumpling:NOM.PL.M RF slice:IPF.PST.PL
'(all the cooking and baking was done), somebody was slicing
dumplings' [PMK199; 3753]

The agreement pattern here is the same as in the *be*-passive, shown in (8a),
which uses the patient$_{nom}$–agent$_{ins}$ coding, in contrast to its corresponding ac-
tive sentence in (8b), which is of the agent$_{nom}$–patient$_{acc}$ variety. For an analo-
gous comparison, (7b′) shows a non-reflexive use of the verb *držet* 'hold' used
in (7b) above:

(8) a. *Šli   kolem lavičky,   která   byla*
go:PST.PL around bench:GEN.SG.F which:NOM.SG.F be:PST.SG.F
obsazena   lázeňskými   hosty.
occupy:PF.PASS.SG.F spa.ADJ:INS.PL.M guest:INS.PL.M
'They walked past a bench that was occupied by spa guests.'
[SYN002-p80s27]

b. *lavičku   obsadili   lázeňští   hosti*
bench:ACC.SG.F occupy:PST.PL spa.ADJ:NOM.PL.M guest:NOM.PL.M
'spa guests occupied the bench'

(7) b.′ *u nás   eště držíme   sobotu   a*
at 1PL.GEN still hold:PRES.1PL Saturday:ACC.SG.F and
neděli
Sunday:ACC.SG.F
'we still honor Saturday and Sunday here'

Because of this formal similarity, the reflexives in (7) have been traditionally
classified as 'passive reflexive', both patterns presumably sharing the feature
of making the patient argument more prominent and downplaying the agent.
However, a systematic comparison (Fried 2006) reveals a number of funda-
mental differences between them, revolving around aspect, verb meaning,
constraints on agent expression and interpretation, constraints on the patient
referents, and ultimately, incorporating the issue of transitivity as well. Below I
will review just some of the main arguments for a non-passive analysis.

3.1.1 *Agent backgrounding*

The AR pattern does not permit any expression of the agent, in contrast to the passive, shown in (8a). Many instances of AR resemble more closely the clause type known as generic-agent sentences (Panevová 1973), in which the verb is in the 3rd pers. plural and the agent, necessarily human, is obligatorily unexpressed and is interpreted as 'folks that can be expected to do such things'. Direct evidence of this similarity is given in (9), which shows a reflexive form involving the transitive verb *vyrábět* 'manufacture', followed by what is offered as its non-reflexive paraphrase, with the verb *montovat* 'put together, construct' instantiating the 3rd pers. plural generic-agent pattern:

(9) *tam se dřív vyrábělo,   tam montovali*
     there RF earlier make:IPF.PST.SG.N there put.together:IPF.PST.PL
     ňáký   auta
     some:ACC.PL cars:ACC.PL.N
     'in the old days, they$_{nonreferential}$ manufactured, they$_{nonreferential}$ were making cars there' [PMK276;107902]

The anonymous agent in AR does not have to be interpreted generically or indefinitely, however. In another sharp contrast to the *be*-passive, the AR pattern often appears in contexts in which the agent is, in fact, one of the discourse participants but the speaker has reasons for maintaining a communicative distance from his own or his interlocutor's involvement in the reported event. This is the case in (1), repeated here as (10), which is part of a narrative about a meeting the speaker attended; the understood agent is *my* 'we all'.

(10) *jenom se vyřešil   problém,   za pět minut*
      only   RF PF:solve:PST.SG.M problem:NOM.SG.M in 5   minutes
      se šlo   domů
      RF go:PST.SG.N home
      'you$_{generic}$ just solved a problem, in five minutes everybody went home' [PMK333; 60935]

Reference to discourse participants in the passive is bizarre, as shown in (11a). Moreover, if no agent is expressed, as in (11b), the passive can never be used to imply the speaker or the hearer as being the understood agent; the agent can only be some unidentified third party.

(11) a. **lavička   námi byla   obsazena*[5]
         bench:NOM.SG.F 1PL.INS be:PST.SG.F PF:occupy:PASS.SG.F
         'the bench was occupied by us'

b.   *inzerce   také nebyla   brána*
advertising:NOM.SG.F also NEG:be:PST.SG.F take:IPF.PASS.SG.F
příliš vážně
too   seriously
'advertising wasn't taken too seriously, either [by someone/by folks
in general/*by us/*by you/*by me]' [SYN2000; 109-p7s2]

3.1.2   *Transitivity and verb semantics*

The 'passive' analysis of AR can also be challenged on the grounds of verb se-
mantics, as demonstrated by the juxtaposition of the transitive *vyřešit* 'solve'
and the intransitive verb of motion *jít/šel* 'go/went' in (10). On the basis of syn-
tactic transitivity, the Slavic grammatical tradition would classify the second
clause in (10) as 'impersonal reflexive', as distinct from the first clause, the 'pas-
sive reflexive'. As has been documented elsewhere (Fried 1990, 2004), this divi-
sion, motivated solely by the syntax of the given sentence (not even necessarily
by the semantic transitivity of the verb), glosses over two important facts.

   First, the *be*-passive and the AR *differ* with respect to the verb classes tar-
geted by each syntactic pattern: intransitive verbs, and especially verbs of mo-
tion, do not passivize, but they do freely occur in the reflexive form, as long as
they denote an action or process (I will qualify this generalization with respect
to stative verbs in a moment). This includes inherently intransitive verbs (*jít*
'go' in (10), *pracovat* 'work' in (12a), *svítit* 'use electric lights' in (12b)), but also
transitive verbs whose patient argument is left unexpressed, such as *týrat* 'tor-
ment, abuse' or *kouřit* 'smoke' in (13); the verbs in all these examples are in the
'impersonal' 3rd pers. sg., in the past tense also marked for the neuter gender.

(12)   a.   *jak se ve světě   pracuje*
          how RF in world:LOC.SG.M work:IPF.PRES.3SG
          '(I have to keep up to date about) how folks work in other countries'
          [PMK204;283941]

       b.   *aby   se zbytečně   nesvítilo, (tak zhasněte)*
          so.that RF unnecessarily NEG:use.electric.lights:IPF.PST.SG.N
          'so we don't waste electricity, (turn the lights off)' [PMK277; 112971]

(13)   a.   1:   (*lidé, že jo, kteří teda* <u>*týraj své vlastní děti*</u> *sou samozřejmě velice*
          2:   *hluboce neštastnými rodiči* —) *a   bohužel   se*
                                          and unfortunately RF
          týrá, [PMK400;75803]
          abuse:IPF.PRES.3SG
          '(people, y'know, who <u>abuse their own children</u> are of course deeply
          unhappy as parents —) and unfortunately abusing does exist'

b. *Občas   se na cimře   kouří*
sometimes RF in room:LOC.SG.F smoke:IPF.PRES.3SG
'Sometimes you_generic smoke in the room' [SYN2000; 1414678]

These facts call into question the intransitivization analysis of *se*, but they also highlight the second point of similarity between the 'passive' and 'impersonal' reflexives, which is left unexplored in the syntactic accounts: both syntactic types have something significant in common *functionally* (cf. also Geniušienė 1987: 233). They both report events that are brought about by human agents that remain obligatorily unexpressed, thereby drawing attention to the event itself rather than to its participants. Whether the event ends up syntactically 'personal' or 'impersonal' thus may depend not only on the verb's syntactic transitivity but also on the speaker's decision whether to be explicit about the patient of a transitive verb, or leave it implicit (as in (13)). In this respect, the example in (13a) is particularly informative in that a single discourse turn contains both the fully instantiated non-reflexive transitive expression *týraj své vlastní děti* '[they] abuse their own children' (line 1, underlined) and the formally impersonal reflexive *se týrá* 'abuse is going on' (line 2). Transitivity clearly is not crucial in these cases.

Occasionally we also find examples of reflexive sentences that are based on transitive verbs but whose form does not reflect the standard 'promotional' verb-agreement pattern. In such cases the syntactic function of the patient argument is often indeterminate, due to the nominative-accusative syncretism in many noun paradigms. One such morphosyntactically ambiguous example is in (14a): the form *písničky* 'songs' could formally be considered either nominative or accusative plural and thus (if taken as accusative) potentially incapable of triggering the expected plural agreement. However, the feminine singular form *díra* 'hole' in (14b) is unambiguously in the nominative and the verb still is in the non-agreeing impersonal form; an agreeing analogue to (14b) is given in (15).

(14) a. *kdy se sedělo   na příkopu,*
when RF sit:IPF.PST.SG.N on ditch:LOC.SG.M
zpívalo   se písničky
sing:IPF.PST.SG.N RF song:NOM/ACC.PL.F
'when everybody sat along the ditch, sang songs' [PMK186;120003]
  b. *možná by se tam dalo   udělat*
maybe CD RF there give:PF.PST.SG.N make:PF.INF
ňáká   díra
some:NOM.SG.F hole:NOM.SG.F
'maybe one could make some sort of hole there' [PMK194;651268]

(15) *tam už   se daly   udělat   podmínky*
        there already RF give:PST.PL make:INF condition:NOM.PL.F
        '(y'see, I was a seamstress there, so) there one could create [one's own
        working] conditions' [PMK447; 811755]

It is not clear under what syntactic definition of voice or transitivity distinc-
tions the non-agreeing sentences could be incorporated in a plausible way into
the grammar of Czech reflexivization. Yet they evidently overlap with both re-
flexive variants in terms of their function, in backgrounding the agent, as will
be further discussed in the following section.

3.1.3   *Semantics and pragmatics of AR*

Based on the preceding discussion, we can argue that the crucial point in un-
derstanding the inherently non-passive nature of AR is its overall interpreta-
tion: its meaning is *active*, not passive (although some overlap in construal is
possible; I will return to this issue in Section 5). AR sentences never report
states (Grepl & Karlík 1998: 135) nor do they serve the fundamental passive
function of making the patient argument communicatively more prominent
than the agent; the irrelevance of the patient in the reflexive has been noted in
various other studies as well (Geniušienė 1987: 280, Toops 1985: 75, Marguliés
1924: 203ff.).

   Instead, AR downplays the relevance of the agent, independently of the
status of the patient. The AR is best understood as being about the *events* of
solving a problem (10), spotting a person (7a), keeping weekends free of work
(7b), slicing dumplings (7c), singing songs (14a), working (12a), etc., rather
than about *entities* to which something happens — a problem being solved,
holidays kept, dumplings sliced, etc. — as would be the case in a true passive
interpretation.[6] Put differently, the AR sentences would be a natural follow-up
to a question such as *What do/did people do*?, not to *What happened to x*?. This
property speaks in an interesting way to Comrie's (1977) proposal for splitting
'passives' into two mutually independent types, demotional versus promotion-
al. The Czech material shows that syntactic promotion/demotion need not be
isomorphic with functional foregrounding/backgrounding and that additional
distinctions are needed: while the Czech *be*-passive is promotional both for-
mally and functionally, the AR is formally promotional (verb usually agrees
with patient), but functionally demotional.[7]

   The non-agreeing pattern (14) seems to instantiate the main communica-
tive purpose of AR in crystallized form: by leaving the patient only loosely as-
sociated with the rest of the sentence, this pattern emphasizes the event itself to

an extreme degree, by de-emphasizing both its agent and its target (if potentially present), thus bridging the formal difference between ARs based on syntactically transitive vs. intransitive verbs. The vague syntactic status of the patient in (14) is also consistent with certain formal idiosyncrasies that the non-agreeing pattern displays. Most strikingly, it has a partially fixed word order — the verb always precedes the patient — which is decidedly not a property of Czech word order in general or of reflexivization in particular (cf. the patient-verb order in (7a) and (7c)).[8]

The features that are evidently shared across all the above examples are thus primarily pragmatic and semantic. By removing any overt reference to the source of responsibility for the reported event, the AR presents the agent's identity as anonymous and allows either individual or generic interpretation, depending on context. At the same time, the reported event is always an activity or process initiated by a human agent. Consequently, only verbs that are at least construable as expressing such an event are permitted.

These semantic properties predispose the AR toward particular extensions, which are reflected in various additional features: aspectual preferences, and also the interaction between event roles (agent, patient) and discourse roles (speaker, hearer). First, agent backgrounding is naturally compatible with expressing generalizations: if no particular agentive referent is permitted to be singled out, the event is easily interpretable as a habitual occurrence. This interpretation, in turn, is consistent with the AR's often-noted preference for imperfective verbs: the Czech imperfective covers on-going processes as well as habitualness. And second, the focus on events, rather than their participants, interacts with the referencing of discourse roles, giving rise to the main pragmatic function associated with AR: the pattern commonly serves as a 'distancing' device, allowing the speaker to refer to discourse participants in an indirect way. (Further extensions of these features will be addressed in Section 3.1.5.)

The indirectness applies to the identity of the agent, as was shown in (10), as well as the patient. For example, AR is rarely used with a patient that is simultaneously the speaker or the hearer. As we shall see in subsequent sections, such a restriction is not a general property of Czech reflexives. In AR, though, explicit reference to a discourse participant clashes with the pattern's distancing function. Note also that this constraint cannot be attributed to a putative general prohibition on animate patients in AR, as demonstrated by (7a), repeated here as (16):

(16) *dobrej*   *se najde (i tam i tam)*
      good.one:NOM.SG.M RF PF:find:PRES.3SG
      'you~generic~ can find a good person (both here [in the city] and there [in
      the country])' [PMK136; 147500]

The problem, rather, is the patient's discourse role. The example in (17a) is
syntactically perfectly well-formed and the verb is semantically appropriate,
but the sentence is odd pragmatically, as indicated by the symbol #; this usage is
restricted to institutional language and serves as a performative (Grepl & Kar-
lík 1998: 135). As such, it constitutes a distinct formal and functional subtype
of AR. Note in (17b) that the *be*-passive form is completely natural with 1st or
2nd person patients.

(17) a. #*Odsuzujete*   *se k pěti   letům   vězení.*
          sentence:IPF.PRES.2PL RF to five:DAT year:DAT.PL jail:GEN.SG
          'You are [hereby] sentenced to five years in prison.'
          (example from Grepl & Karlík 1998: 135)
      b. *Byl*   *jste*   *odsouzen*   *k pěti letům vězení.*
          be:PST.SG.M AUX.2PL PF:sentence:PASS.SG.M …
          'You've been sentenced to five years in prison.'

3.1.4   *AR as a grammatical construction*

The constructional description of AR is provided, in an informal way, in Dia-
gram 1.[9] The nested boxes, used as a typographically more convenient variant of
square brackets, reflect constituent structure, but also the distinction between
'external', construction-level properties (the outer box) and 'internal', constitu-
ent-level properties (the inside boxes). This distinction is crucial in that it rep-
resents the fact that a construction as a whole is not just the sum of its parts but
has its own idiosyncratic properties *as* a construction. Thus in Diagram 1, the
features listed at the top of the outer box represent the constructional proper-
ties of AR that cannot be predicted simply from adding up the properties of its
constituents. The features listed in the left-daughter box express the constraints
associated with the verbs that are welcome in AR. The right-daughter box rep-
resents the morpheme *se*; the '2P clitic' statement is an abbreviation for the fact
that the morpheme is subject to syntactic and prosodic constraints that apply to
all second-position (2P) clitics in Czech, independently of reflexivization. Be-
yond the external-internal distinction, however, the order in which the features
are listed within the same box has no theoretical status, nor does it imply any
kind of hierarchical organization. Similarly, the order of the inside boxes does
not reflect any word order requirements; those are handled by independently
needed constructions. The symbol '>>' is a shorthand for 'preferred over'.
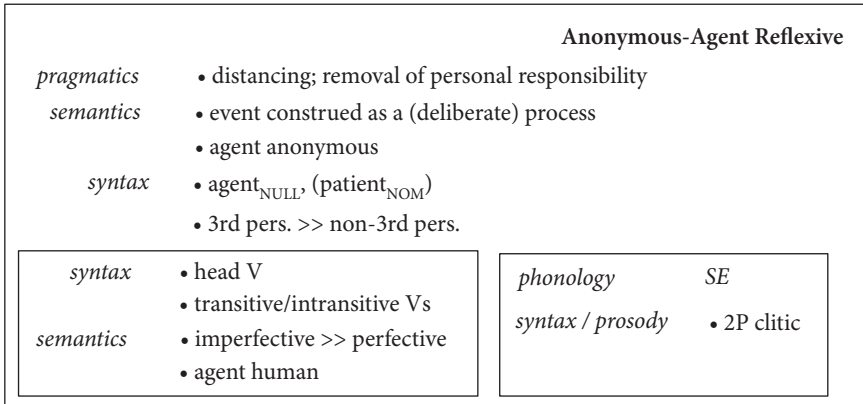
<table>
<tr><td colspan="2" align="right">**Anonymous-Agent Reflexive**</td></tr>
<tr><td>*pragmatics*</td><td>• distancing; removal of personal responsibility</td></tr>
<tr><td>*semantics*</td><td>• event construed as a (deliberate) process</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>• agent anonymous</td></tr>
<tr><td>*syntax*</td><td>• agent$_{NULL}$, (patient$_{NOM}$)</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>• 3rd pers. >> non-3rd pers.</td></tr>
</table>

syntax	• head V		*phonology*	*SE*
	• transitive/intransitive Vs		*syntax / prosody*	• 2P clitic
semantics	• imperfective >> perfective			
	• agent human			

Diagram 1. Anonymous-Agent Reflexive construction.

The specifications in Diagram 1 represent a construction in the sense of an abstract, symbolic unit that licenses specific tokens, such as the examples in (7), (10), or (12–13), by imposing a given set of constraints. In theoretical terms, a construction is a hypothesis about speakers' knowledge of a conventionalized 'blueprint' which is needed for both encoding and decoding the type of tokens that satisfy the constructional requirements, and which is, by definition, noncompositional. The 'Gestalt' nature of the specifications in Diagram 1 can be demonstrated in various ways and I will exemplify it briefly by touching on some of the construction's extensions, starting with the verb semantics.

3.1.5 *Extensions of the AR construction*

AR is defined as expressing a process and as such plainly favors verbs whose lexical meaning fits that specification; stative verbs, whether transitive (18a) or intransitive (18b), are typically not found:[10]

(18) a. * *milovaly   se jeho filmy*
            love:IPF.PST.PL RF his film:NOM.PL.M
            'everyone/you$_{generic}$ loved his movies'
      b. * *před zkouškama   se omdlívalo   strachem*
            before exam:INS.PL.F RF faint:IPF.PST.SG.N fear:INS.SG.M
            'before exams you$_{generic}$ [would] shake in your boots with fear'

Consequently, the examples in (19) would appear to constitute uses that should be ruled out as impossible, since neither the verb *dostat* + NP$_{ins}$ 'get (hit)' in (19a) nor *být* 'be' in (19b) involves any agentive participant or expresses a deliberate activity. It may also be worth pointing out that these verbs cannot occur in the *be*-passive, while the transitive verb in (18a) can (*být milován* 'to be loved').

(19)   a.   *ve škole   se dostalo   rákoskou   přes*
          in school:LOC.SG.F RF get:PF.PST.SG.N stick:INS.SG.F across
          ruce [PMK101;164892]
          hand:ACC.PL.F
          'at school one got [a spanking] on the hand with a stick'
       b.   (*jednou za šest týdnů je zastupitelstvo*),
          tam se je   taky do půlnoci
          there RF be:PRES.3SG also till midnight
          '(once every six weeks there's the Council meeting), one can easily be
          there till midnight' [PMK190; 530464]

Yet these are attested examples and they certainly are interpretable in the spirit
of AR, even if they do sound somewhat odd and occur only marginally. The
virtue of the constructional analysis consists in acknowledging explicitly that
a grammatical construction can *impose* a particular interpretation, even if the
lexical semantics of its parts (in this case, the verb) does not always offer a per-
fect match. The result of such a 'mismatch' is some stretching in interpretation,
here giving rise to a dynamic, 'episodic' interpretation of inherently stative
verbs. The shift imposed by the construction may show varying degrees of ac-
ceptability, but it does not automatically lead to an absolute prohibition.

   A slightly different aspect of the construction's non-compositionality can
be illustrated by the commonly found modal extensions of AR. Examples (16)
and (19b) illustrate an epistemic reading of possibility, which is a natural con-
sequence of the AR's compatibility with habitual interpretation: if something
occurs habitually, it implies that we *can* (easily) expect it to happen. But com-
bined with the distancing function of AR, the habitual reading can motivate
additional extensions, leading to deontic interpretations involving other mo-
dalities: permission, prohibition, or obligation. In fact, AR is often used as a
politeness strategy (which is generally based on indirectness in Czech), allow-
ing speakers to issue directives that are necessarily aimed at 'folks in general',
not at any explicitly singled out discourse participant. One example is in (20),
in which the speaker tries to stop the interlocutor from smoking (for additional
examples and discussion, cf. Fried 2006).

(20)   1:   "*Tady se nekouří   (…) Tady je ordinace!*" [SYN2000; 3507648]
          here RF NEG:smoke:IPF.PRES.3SG …
       2:   *Okamžitě se stáhl s omluvným úsměvem.*
       1:   '"One can't smoke here (…) This is a doctor's office!"'
       2:   'He immediately stopped with an apologetic smile.'

How do Czech speakers know that the sentence in (20) is not a description of a fact ('smoking isn't going on here/smoking isn't done here'), which in principle would also be possible, but instead expresses a generalized prohibition ('one isn't allowed to smoke here')? This interpretation does not follow automatically from simply knowing the meaning of every word in the sentences in question, including some 'basic' meaning of *se*; it is something that is associated with the AR pattern as a whole, as a particular modification of its agent-backgrounding nature, and it has to be specified as such.

Thus AR actually constitutes a small family of constructions connected through principles of inheritance and/or family resemblance; the family is centered around the most general, prototypical, version of AR (captured in Diagram 1), with several more specialized constructions extending from it, as sketched roughly in Diagram 2. The notion of inheritance is used in constructional analysis as one way of expressing generalizations about grammatical patterns that show partial overlap of features, whether formal or functional. The overlaps can be structured as hierarchies of patterns that represent progressively more constrained and specialized instantiations of a general pattern whose properties are inherited by the more narrowly defined variants. The links at the bottom of the diagram indicate that the reflexives also share certain (but not all) features with other, non-reflexive constructions that are not discussed here. The arrows are a shorthand for indicating the direction of this partial inheritance, without going into full representational detail (e.g., it is
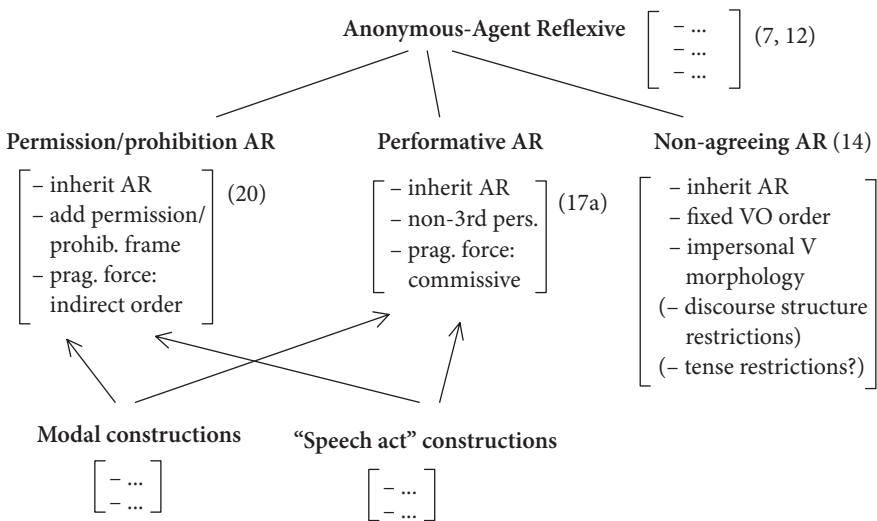
Diagram 2. A constructional network connecting AR and its extensions.

not clear whether strict inheritance structure, rather than family resemblance links, would be most appropriate for capturing this part of the network, but this paper is not concerned with this particular issue). The numbers indicate relevant examples.

The full representation of each extension will thus contain all the properties of AR, indicated by the *inherit AR* statements in Diagram 2, together with additional extension-specific constraints of their own. The diagram includes the deontic modal readings, as semantic and pragmatic extensions; the non-agreeing patterns, as formal (and possibly discourse-related) extensions; and the performative variant, as a pragmatic extension with additional idiosyncrasies of form.

3.2 Spontaneous-Event Reflexive (SR)

As we have seen, the traditional classification into 'passive reflexive' vs. 'impersonal reflexive' not only is problematic in its own right, but it also leads inevitably to another undesirable consequence, namely, lumping together the 'passive reflexives' and the usage shown in (2) (*doba se změnila* 'times have changed'). Additional examples of the latter are given in (21).

(21) a. *aby   se jim   sem nenavalila   revoluce*
         PURP RF 3PL.DAT here NEG:pile.up:PF.PST.SG.F revolution:NOM.SG.F
         '(they let national states form) so that revolution wouldn't barge in on them' [PMK137; 148122]

   b. *vona   se vždycky votevře   někde   jinde*
         3SG.F.NOM RF always   open:PF.PRES.3SG somewhere else
         'it [= hole in the ozone layer] then opens up again somewhere else' [PMK349; 72181]

It is true that identifying any general criteria for differentiating between patterns (1) and (2) has proven to be elusive (Geniušienė 1987: 270), especially in those accounts that reduce the problem to valence reconfiguration. But a closer look reveals that there are certain correlations that make the distinction more than just a matter of inference and that justify us in treating the examples in (2) or (21) as tokens of a different construction, the Spontaneous-Event reflexive (SR).

3.2.1 *Transitivity and verb semantics*
Semantic accounts usually note the difference in the event structure encoded by each pattern as a crucial characteristic. The subject in examples like (2) or

(21) is described either as marking identity between agent and patient (Croft et al. 1987), or as not including any concept of agency at all (Janda 1993: 312, Kemmer 1993: 72), while the AR usage, in either treatment, keeps the two participants distinct. But these insights by themselves do not address the question of why some verbs (such as (*v*)*otevřít* 'open') can be used in both SR (21b) and AR (22), while other verbs can only occur in one or the other, even though both verb types have an agent and a patient in their valence.

> (22) (*v chodbě* [*sme*] *nechali udělat z palubek jednu dřevěnou stěnu, protože*)
>   *hned jak   se votevřely   dveře   do bytu,*
>   as.soon.as RF open:PF.PST.PL door:NOM.PL.F into apartment
>   (*tak si naproti měla umakart…*) [PMK212;300202]
>   '(in the hallway we've had one wall covered in wooden paneling because)
>   as soon as you_{generic} opened the door into the apartment (you'd have
>   formica [staring] at you)'

Intuitively, the SR examples in (2) and (21) have a distinctly passive flavor, more so than the presumed 'passive reflexive' (AR). SR also resembles *be*-passives superficially in that it always contains a patient subject, because it only allows transitive verbs, unlike AR. Yet instances of SR are not paraphraseable by the *be*-passive at all, because they do not serve the same communicative purpose: while the Czech passive is used to highlight the result of a transitive event and keep the agent in the background (hence also the stative flavor and overwhelming preference for perfective stems), SR is used to recast a transitive event as a spontaneous change of state that is independent of any agent.

   Other properties follow from this function. One is the well-known fact that while both AR and SR allow an instrumental-marked NP, its interpretation is not the same. The instrumental in AR marks an instrument role (i.e., something deliberately manipulated by the anonymous agent to bring about a result); compare the AR in (23a) with the impossible form in (23b), in which the instrumental NP would be interpreted as an agent. A similar example was given in (19a).

> (23) a. *čim   se   to   dělá*?
>   what:INS RF it:NOM do:IPF.PRES.3SG
>   'what does one use to accomplish this? (lit. 'with what does one do
>   this') [PMK178; 503633]
>   b. **Psalo   se to   studenty.*
>   do:IPF.PST.SG.N RF it:NOM student:INS.PL.M
>   'It was written by students.'

In contrast, an instrumental in SR can only be understood as a paraphrase of a locative PP expressing a circumstance that is independent of any agentive participant; it cannot be interpreted as an instrument, as shown in (24):

(24) *Okno   se průvanem   / v průvanu   zavíralo.*
      window:NOM.SG.N RF wind:INS.SG.M / in wind:LOC.SG.M close:PST.SG.N
      'The window kept getting closed in (by) the wind.'

This difference is not an arbitrary fact (as a syntactic account has to conclude) but a feature predictable from the overall event structure expressed by SR: since the SR event structure does not contain any agent, it cannot accommodate an instrument (which presupposes an agent). AR, on the other hand, can support such a role because an agent is still part of the event, albeit relegated to anonymity. The sense of an involuntary event is sometimes marked explicitly by including the pronoun *sám* 'without another, without help', often used to convey a sense of surprise that something just occurs on its own, without any apparent cause. This is illustrated in (25), which comes from a conversation about learning to use a piece of software; here the speaker is concerned about something that 'just happened', resulting in something on the screen that the speaker not only did not intend but does not even know how 'it happened':

(25) (*už to tam je, jo? jé, to je blbě,*)
      to   se udělalo   jako samo?
      it:NOM RF PF:do:PST.SG.N like alone:NOM.SG.N
      '(it's now there, right? hey, it's screwed up,) it got done, like, on its own?'
      [PMK178; 503471]

In general, adverbs that allow the interpretation of a spontaneously occurring process are welcome only in SR, whereas adverbs presupposing deliberateness (*opatrně* 'carefully', *pečlivě* 'meticulously', *úmyslně* 'deliberately', etc.) are compatible only with the meaning of AR.

It follows that not every transitive verb can occur freely in both patterns, and if the data in PMK are any indication, certain criteria for distinguishing the two usages do emerge. Verbs whose lexical meaning incorporates the sense of a deliberate action cannot be easily used in SR. These include in particular verbs of quintessentially human activities, whether physical or mental, not all of which have to have a truly affected patient (*slavit* 'celebrate', *potlačit* 'suppress', *vymyslet* 'think up', *trestat* 'punish', *žehlit* 'iron', *vychovávat* 'rear [offspring]', *řešit* 'solve', *poznat* 'recognize/discern', *pustit* 'turn on [an appliance]', *natřít* 'paint [a surface]', *rozmazlovat* 'spoil [a person]', etc.). Situations described by these verbs simply cannot occur without a human agent, whether the agent is

explicitly mentioned or backgrounded. In contrast, verbs that depict situations that are not crucially dependent on human involvement are found only in SR (*kupit* 'accumulate', *vlít* 'fill [a liquid] into st.', *šířit* 'spread', *navalit* 'pile up', *uklidnit* 'quiet down', etc.); note that these do have a truly affected patient.

This is obviously only a very rough and preliminary distinction. The important point is that in order to fully understand the nature of SR (and hence also its relationship to other reflexive patterns), we must accept that certain details of the verb meaning itself play a systematic role in establishing the defining properties of the construction. The relevant semantic feature seems to be something like volition. Some verbs are inherently marked for volition, and their syntactic behavior reflects this — their meaning clashes with the meaning of SR. Some verbs, on the other hand, may be neutral with respect to this feature and as a result they can occur in both patterns, AR and SR, e.g. *měnit* 'change', *otevřít* 'open', *zavřít* 'close', *probudit* 'wake', *utopit* 'drown', *pozvat* 'invite', *zabít* 'kill'. Thus the fact that certain verbs can occur under both reflexive interpretations has to do with the degree to which their inherent meaning can accommodate either the deliberate flavor of AR, which only removes explicit reference to the human agent but retains the agent's presence as part of the interlocutors' background understanding, or the spontaneous flavor of SR, which completely excludes the participation of a human agent and the element of intentionality that such an agent carries with it.

The change in verb meaning imposed by SR thus lies at the heart of a full description and understanding of this pattern. Externally, SR expresses uncontrolled, spontaneously or accidentally occurring events resulting in a change of state (cf. Geniušienė's 1987: 236f. "modal" analysis based on the interpretation 'by chance, inadvertently' that is commonly associated with this kind of reflexive). This meaning motivates both the prohibition on an instrumental role and the incompatibility with adverbials of deliberate involvement. It is also consistent with the fact that SR shows much greater compatibility with perfective stems, in clear contrast to AR, and hence has a stative (often resultative) flavor overall — even though the SR pattern is not based on inherently stative verbs. In fact, SR can be most accurately specified as being neutral with respect to the aspect of its head verb; its representation, therefore, does not need to include any explicit statement concerning the aspectual type of the stem. Finally, the overall meaning is compatible only with transitive verbs that have a true patient as their second argument — an entity that undergoes a change of state (hence the construction's overwhelming preference for inanimate patients). The patient, in turn, is always in the nominative.

3.2.2   *SR as a grammatical construction*

Diagram 3 summarizes the properties of SR, again differentiating between the SR's external, constructional constraints and its internal characteristics. The prohibition on instrumental roles is to be taken as a very rough approximation to a delimitation of the semantic classes of verbs allowed in this construction, in the absence of a detailed lexical analysis that would provide a more precise formulation. And it is again the co-occurrence of all these particular constraints that identifies SR as a distinct grammatical construction.

	Spontaneous-Event Reflexive	
semantics	• spontaneous/unintentional/accidental events resulting in a state • incorporates notions of spontaneity and suddenness	
syntax	• patient$_{\text{NOM}}$	
syntax *semantics*	• head V • transitive Vs only • Vs with affected patients • Vs without instrumental role	*phonology* SE *syntax / prosody* • 2P clitic
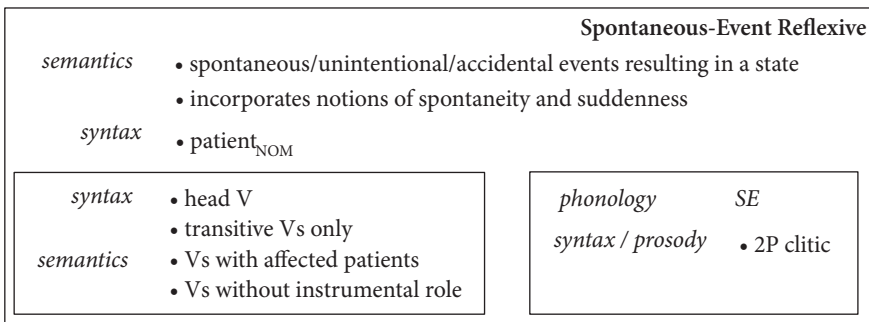
Diagram 3. Spontaneous-Event Reflexive construction.

A principled distinction between AR and SR thus rests on the conceptual difference between the agent's anonymity vs. the agent's absence, respectively. The distinction can be subtle and is, of course, completely lost in accounts that do not look beyond the level of argument removal, but it is associated in a rather robust way with systematically observable constraints on grammatical patterning. We shall see in Section 4 that another pair of notions that are often treated as instances of a single phenomenon — namely, absence of an agent vs. co-reference between agent and patient — also need to be kept apart, this time in differentiating SR from the argument-coding function of *se*.

Finally, taking the lexical meaning of the verb as part of the internal make-up of SR gives us a more systematic way of addressing not only the source of the often noted ambiguity in the reflexive usage of a particular verb, but also the common observation that SR frequently leads to 'lexicalization'. AR manipulates the referential status of the agent, and as such does not really affect the meaning of the verb itself. In contrast, SR, by denying that an inherently transitive event has any semantically autonomous agent at all, changes the semantic structure of the verb dramatically. It is not surprising, then, that incorporating the concept of spontaneity or lack of control may lead to establishing independent lexical items, which may or may not manifest additional semantic

shifts (e.g. *zabít* 'kill' → *zabít se* 'die in an accident', *vytvořit* 'create' → *vytvořit se* 'arise/appear', *naplnit* 'fill' → *naplnit se* 'become fulfilled/realized', *sypat* 'pour [a grainy substance]' → *sypat se* 'fall apart', etc.). The above-mentioned *a priori* indifference to aspect also strengthens the 'lexicalization' argument, since aspect marking is not a purely grammatical matter in Slavic. While adding an aspectual prefix always marks perfectivity in Czech, most of the time these prefixes simultaneously contribute specific semantics and as such have to be marked lexically for the vast majority of verb stems.

From a constructional point of view, however, there is no need to determine whether a given token instantiating this construction is to count as a case of lexicalization or as a purely syntactic use. Since constructions are taken as the basic unit of analysis that applies to *all* linguistic expressions of any size or complexity (including single words) and the distinction between lexicon and grammar is seen as a continuum, the constructional model sees no justification for, nor explanatory advantage in, forcing this notoriously elusive distinction into a binary mold. This means that individual tokens of SR may differ simply in the degree to which they have become conventionalized in a specific (shifted) meaning and usage of the construction. A constructional analysis is helpful in that it leads to generalizations through which we can better understand (and formulate our understanding more precisely) the gradient nature of the semantic shift known traditionally, and very imprecisely, as 'lexicalization'.

3.3 Dispositional Reflexive (DR)

A pattern that is not often included in systematic studies of Slavic syntactic reflexives was introduced in (3) (*nesedí se vám pohodlně* 'it isn't comfortable for you to sit there'), and additional examples are given in (26), showing the transitive verbs *popisovat* 'describe' and *malovat* 'paint'. Like AR, this type, too, allows both transitive and intransitive verbs, and the difference in transitivity is again reflected in the agreement morphology: impersonal with an intransitive verb, such as *sedět* 'sit' in (3), and patient/subject-verb agreement otherwise (26). Unlike all the other reflexive uses, though, here the agent argument can be expressed and it is marked by the dative — *vám* 'to you' in (3), *jim blbcům* 'to them, the fools' in (26b).

(26) a. *u mě   se tendleten problém   asi   dost*
          at 1SG.GEN RF this   problem:NOM.SG.M maybe quite
          těžko   popisuje
          with.difficulty describe:IPF.PRES.3SG

'in my case, it's probably quite difficult to illustrate the issue' [the speaker does not consider his case to be very typical for what his interviewer wants to document] [PMK197; 541637]

b. *to se jim   blbcům   malovaly   ty*
    DP RF 3PL.DAT fool:DAT.PL.M paint:PST.PL that:NOM.PL.M
    průzory   v těch   vobrazech
    view:NOM.PL.M in that:LOC.PL.M painting:LOC.PL.M
    (*dyž bydleli v tom, v takovýmdle prostředí!*)
    'big deal for them, the fools, to paint those landscapes in
    those pictures (when they lived in it, in this kind of place)!'
    [PMK405;89144]

It is generally agreed that such sentences belong in the family of patterns that de-emphasize an agent and that their special function is that of 'emphasizing a different aspect [of the agent argument]' (Grepl & Karlík 1998: 147), namely, casting the agent as not merely instigating but also experiencing the action in a particular way (positive or negative). Following the Czech grammatical tradition, I refer to this pattern as the Dispositional reflexive (DR).

The special modality, which is often marked prosodically by exclamative intonation, motivates both the semantic and the formal properties of DR. For example, with transitive verbs DR allows only imperfective aspect, and this restriction is fully consistent with its communicative focus on expressing a general attitude/disposition toward an action or process, rather than on the particulars (including the result, e.g. Panevová 1974: 23). Similarly, marking the agent by the dative, which is the quintessential marker of experiencers in Czech, fits with the dispositional reading. So does the obligatory presence of an evaluative expression. The latter can be an adverbial phrase, such as *pohodlně* 'comfortably' in (3) or *těžko* 'with difficulty' in (26a); but in emotional speech, the evaluation can also be encoded simply by an exclamative intonation contour, sometimes reinforced by an exclamative discourse particle, such as *to* in (26b), without any adverb present. The example in (26a) shows that the agent can also be left unexpressed, under a generic interpretation, reminiscent of AR; this characteristic is evidence that the dispositional pattern is not *just* about recasting the agent as simultaneously the instigator and the experiencer of the event, but can involve agent backgrounding as well.[11]

The range of expressive options can be illustrated by the example in (27a) below. This example, like (26a), also contains only an adverb and no dative; however, as part of a more emotional conversation, it could quite naturally turn up in several other variants, shown in (27b)–(27d), all being instances of DR.

Example (27b) is the most explicit version in that it contains both an evaluative adverb and a dative pronoun *mi* 'for me'; (27c) contains a dative pronoun but no adverb; and (27d) is the most open-ended of all, having neither a dative NP nor an adverb of evaluation. Crucially, though, (27c) and (27d) must be exclamations; without this prosodic feature, (27c) would be incoherent and (27d) could only be interpreted as an instance of AR ('one talks with him').

(27) a. (*další kluk* […], *docela chytrej*),
          dobře se s   nim   kecá
          well   RF with 3SG.DAT.M gab:PRES.3SG
          '(another guy […]) pretty smart), fun to gab with' [PMK405;87152]
    b. *dobře se mi s nim kecá*   'it's fun for me to gab with him'
    c. *s nim se mi kecá!*   'what fun for me to gab with him!'
    d. *s nim se kecá!*   'what fun to gab with him!'

There is an additional subtlety to DR that is not usually noted but that affects its well-formedness. This construction is incompatible with stative verbs (*milovat* 'to love', *vidět* 'see' or *slyšet* 'hear', *být* 'be', etc.), which follows from its function: recasting as an experience what is inherently an action or a process dependent on the intentional involvement of a human participant. This constraint, which can be described as a stronger version of the comparable condition on verb semantics in AR, must likewise be specified as part of the constructional make-up. But while the episodic semantics is a matter of conventional construal in AR, and hence specified as an external, constructional property that may accommodate a less than perfectly matched head verb, in DR it is more accurately represented as an internal restriction on the verbs than can participate in this construction since accommodation is not possible in DR. The DR representation is in Diagram 4.
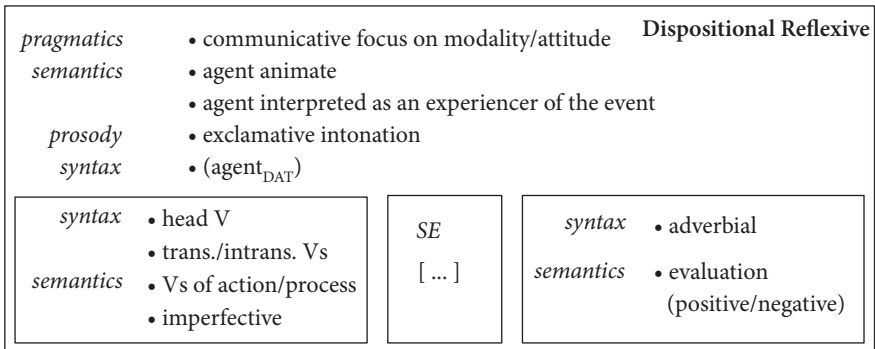
pragmatics	• communicative focus on modality/attitude	**Dispositional Reflexive**		
semantics	• agent animate			
	• agent interpreted as an experiencer of the event			
prosody	• exclamative intonation			
syntax	• (agent$_{DAT}$)			

syntax	• head V	*SE*	*syntax*	• adverbial
	• trans./intrans. Vs	[...]	*semantics*	• evaluation
semantics	• Vs of action/process			(positive/negative)
	• imperfective			

Diagram 4. Dispositional Reflexive construction.

4.   Pronominal Reflexive (PR)

Most linguists would identify *se* in AR, SR, and DR as a grammatical marker of some sort, in contrast to *se* in examples such as (4): in *babky se zamknou* 'the old grannies lock themselves up', *se* is an autonomous syntactic constituent that instantiates the patient of a transitive verb, although its semantic autonomy is eroded by the fact that the agent and patient refer to the same real-world entity.

4.1 Erosion of referential autonomy

Although there is some controversy as to which instances of *se* can truly count as argument-encoding, it is traditionally accepted that a pronominal *se* can be identified in those cases where it is substitutable by the non-clitic accusative form *sebe*. Another feature of the pronominal use of *se*, in contrast to all the other patterns, is that with a plural subject the sentence can be ambiguous between a purely reflexive reading and a reciprocal one, as shown in (28).

> (28)   (*já pustim teď ňákej rep na plný koule* […])
>   *to   se   neuslyšíte*
>   DP self:ACC NEG.PF:hear:PRES.2PL
>   '(I'll put on some rap at full blast now […]), you won't hear yourselves'
>   [i.e., (i) hear each other; (ii) hear your own words as you speak]
>   [PMK189; 526311]

The weakened referential autonomy of the agent and the patient is manifested formally in the agreement patterns between the patient and a secondary predicate. In (29a), the prosodically independent accusative *sebe* agrees in case and gender with the adjective in the secondary predicate (*celého* 'whole:ACC.SG.M'), just as would be expected with any accusative-marked object, cf. (29b). But when the reflexive is in the *se* form, the same secondary predicate appears in the nominative (*celý* 'whole:NOM.SG.M'), agreeing with the subject of the main verb rather than with *se*, as shown in (29c).

> (29)   a.   *Sebe*_i   *umyl*   *celého*_i.
>   self:ACC PF:wash:PST.SG.M whole:ACC.SG.M
>   'He washed himself completely.'
>   b.   *Chlapce*_i   *umyla*   *celého*_i.
>   boy:ACC.SG.M PF:wash:PST.SG.F whole:ACC.SG.M
>   'She washed the boy completely.'

c. *člověk*   *by se*ᵢ   *chtěl*   *umejt*
man:NOM.SG.M CD self:CL.<u>ACC</u> want:PST.SG.M wash:INF
*uplně celý*ᵢ   *i*   *s*   *hlavou*
entirely whole:<u>NOM</u>.SG.M also with head:INS.SG.F
'one would like to wash completely, head to toe' [PMK322;41761]

This syntactic behavior (first noted by Havránek 1928: 104) has sometimes been taken as evidence that this kind of *se* is also just a grammatical marker with an intransitivizing effect on the verb (*Mluvnice češtiny* 1986/II: 175), not an argument-encoding pronoun. However, such an approach makes it difficult to move beyond taxonomy and toward a coherent generalization.

The problem with making a categorical distinction between a pronominal and an intransitivizing function, based simply on the form (*sebe* vs. *se*), is particularly evident in the reciprocal uses. The example in (30), an entirely natural-sounding conversation about reasons for the high divorce rate among young people, illustrates the fluid relationship between the full pronoun *sebe* and the prosodically dependent *se* — both are clearly used as paraphrases of each other. The first *se znaj* in (30) is communicatively neutral and, based on the preceding context, clearly reciprocal ('they know each other'). The full form *sebe znaj* that follows is used as an elaboration on the nuances of what it means to know somebody, but *sebe* is clearly understood as referentially equivalent to *se* in the first clause. This is confirmed by the 'summarizing' repetition of *se znaj* again, further followed by the contrasting *neznaj* 'they don't know' with an independent object.

(30)   *málo se*   *znaj*   (…) *možná že sebe*
little self:CL.ACC know:PRES.3PL (…) maybe that self:ACC
znaj   *navzájem, že se*   *znaj,*   *ale*
know:PRES.3PL mutually that self:CL.ACC know:PRES.3PL but
neznaj (třeba prostředí) [PMK424; 747246]
NEG:know:PRES.3PL (…)
'they know each other very little (…), maybe they each know the other person, they know each other, but perhaps they don't know (the background from which the other person comes)'

But the same fluidity also holds in non-reciprocal uses, where the choice between *sebe* and *se* is again conditioned by discourse structure (focus, emphasis, contrast, etc.), not by an inherent referential difference, as we saw in (6), here repeated as (31).

(31) a. *Nenáviděla   ho.*   *Nenáviděla   sebe.*
          hate:PST.SG.F 3SG.ACC.CL hate:PST.SG.F self:ACC
          'She hated him. She hated HERSELF.' [SYN2000; 7184372]
      b. (*Stojím před výkladem s dýkama*)
          a   nenávidím   se,   jakej   jsem posera
          and hate:PRES.1SG self:ACC.CL what.kind am   shit.eater:NOM.SG.M
          '(I'm standing in front of a store with daggers) and I hate myself for
          being such a chicken' [SYN2000; 3586954]

The difference between (31a) and (31b) lies in information structure, not in
meaning or syntactic function. *Sebe* in (31a) and *se* in (31b) are referentially
identical. However, in (31a), the speaker is contrasting the reference to herself
with reference to another person in the preceding sentence, while in (31b) no
such emphasis is necessary and hence *se* is used.

   Examples such as (30) and (31) show that *se* can be treated as a pronoun
based on its referential status and its substitutability by *sebe*; or we may simply
be unable to tell what *se* is, in the absence of a secondary predicate to decide
(recall (29)). But even the secondary predicate cannot be taken as conclusive
proof of a non-pronominal *se*, since examples such as (32) are ambiguous be-
tween plain reflexive and reciprocal readings. The reciprocal reading reinforces
the argument status of *se*, because two clearly differentiated participants are
involved; but the agreement pattern on the secondary predicate speaks against
it in the traditional analysis.

(32) *Studenti$_i$ se$_i$ představili   jako*
       student:<u>NOM</u>.PL.M self:CL.<u>ACC</u> introduce:PST.PL as
       zástupci$_i$ různých   místních   škol.
       representative:<u>NOM</u>.PL.M various:GEN.PL local:GEN.PL school:GEN.PL.F
       i.   'The students introduced themselves as representatives of various
            local schools.'
       ii. 'The students introduced each other as representatives of different
            local schools.'

4.2 Patient/object properties of *se* in PR

If we refrain from reducing the question to the oversimplifying and factually
incorrect intransitivity-based syntactic account, we can make the analysis more
precise without sacrificing the facts. A semantic argument in favor of treating
this *se* as an autonomous constituent is offered by Oravec (1977), who shows,
on the basis of Slovak, that there are many more instances of pronominal *se*

than is usually assumed. He argues that the pronominal use of *se* depends on semantic knowledge which speakers evidently associate with the verb and the construction and which is normally connected with specific argument roles. He identifies semantic classes of verbs that are likely to allow *se* as a direct object constituent, using the following criteria (fully applicable to Czech as well as Slovak): semantics of the verb (intentional/deliberate action), semantics of the agent (must be animate), and also the semantic type of the patient (affected, targeted, or content roles, but not effected roles, nor the animate patient of so-called psychological predicates, e.g. *zajímat* 'to interest', *překvapit* 'to surprise', *trápit* 'to torment'). For *se* to function as a true direct object, all of these conditions must hold at once. If *se* were simply a marker of derived intransitivity, by contrast, the semantics of the patient should not matter.

The argument status of *se* is also suggested by its place in paradigmatic patterning. Unlike in Russian, where this is not an issue since the syntactic reflexive is truly an affix, in Czech *se* occurs in the same slot as other clitic direct objects which just happen to take on the prosodically and syntactically dependent status of second-position clitics; here the use of the clitic form is determined by information structure relations and has nothing to do with referential status. There is thus nothing special about *se* in example (33), a variation on (29c), when compared to other pronominal objects (*tě* 'you:SG.ACC' and *ho* 'he:ACC'), all of which are second-position clitics:[12]

(33) *chtěl*   *bych* *se*   */ tě*   */ ho*   *umejt*
       want:PST.SG.M CD.1SG self:CL.ACC / 2SG.CL.ACC / 3SG.M.CL.ACC wash:INF
       'I'd like to wash myself/you/him'

The referential status of the reflexive pronoun *is* weaker, of course, and I will propose in the next section to take this as crucial to our understanding of how the different *se*-patterns relate to each other. But the referential weakening alone is not enough to simply dismiss the argument-status of *se* altogether in the above examples. Rather, it translates into the semantic notion of self-affectedness of the agent, which is unique to this reflexive pattern (PR).

4.3 PR as a grammatical construction

An adequate account of the Czech PR thus must allow for a principled treatment of the conflicting evidence in a way that properly captures speakers' understanding and does not force us to make arbitrary decisions about which properties are *a priori* entitled to greater relevance in an adequate representation of the complicated facts. Again, we must see PR as a conventional association

between its morphosyntactic and semantic/pragmatic features. The constraints that jointly identify this construction are summarized in Diagram 5.

<div>

Pronominal Reflexive

pragmatics	• referential identity between agent and patient
semantics	• agent interpreted as self-affected
	• reciprocal interpretation possible with plural subject
syntax	• nominative agreement on secondary predicates
	• *se/sebe* substitution possible

syntax	• head V
	• transitive Vs only
semantics	• sem. restrictions on patients
	• agent animate

phonology	*SE*
syntax / prosody	• 2P clitic

</div>

Diagram 5. Pronominal Reflexive construction.

It should now be clear that PR is distinct from SR (rather than both being variants of a single co-referent use of *se*, as traditional analysis often has it). But this still does not offer any better answer to what might be the basic meaning of *se*, if 'basic' is understood in the invariant sense. Several features appear repeatedly among the definitional criteria for the four constructions (transitivity, aspect, verb meaning, semantic and discourse properties of the agent and the patient), but we cannot extract any one of them as holding across all four constructions independently of anything else.

5. Representation of grammatical meaning

Based on evidence drawn from syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic details associated with the presence of *se* in a sentence, the preceding discussion has established that the four patterns both differ from each other and overlap along various subsets of criteria that go beyond derived intransitivity, valence reduction, passive voice, or agent–patient configurations. Instead, generalizations that help differentiate among the patterns revolve primarily around semantic and pragmatic properties: status of agent (absence vs. anonymity vs. co-reference with patient), interaction with discourse roles, the pattern's overall communicative function (roughly, event-centered vs. participant-centered), the meaning of the verb, and aspectual preferences. The approach I have taken here relies primarily on evidence provided by actual usage in specific communicative situations, which more closely reflects the role of pragmatic and semantic

criteria in shaping grammatical categories and the intricate relationships be-
tween form and function. The usage-based generalizations highlight several
points of broader theoretical interest.

First, the material calls for an approach in which pragmatic and semantic
considerations are on equal footing with syntax in representing linguistic struc-
ture and in which syntagmatic context determines grammatical categories. I
argued in Sections 3 and 4 that constructions (as symbolic units) allow us to
capture the 'Gestalt' nature of grammatical patterns as well as the gradience in
the goodness of fit between the meaning/function of a pattern as a whole and
the information contributed by its constituents. Another point is the question
of finding the unifying concept that can motivate the polyfunctional distribu-
tion of *se*. I will argue in Section 5.1 that this central unifying notion is a prag-
matic one. However, the network encompassing all four patterns is not a simple
extension of a single concept, nor can its representation be reduced to a single
form-function configuration if we are aiming for a faithful representation of
the facts. In Section 5.2, I will suggest a family-resemblance representation of
the constructional relationships and relate the network to a general functional
account of voice-related phenomena, which will also corroborate the non-pas-
sive analysis argued for in Section 3. Finally, the constructional analysis offers a
coherent approach to reconciling conflicting categorization strategies in gram-
matical organization and leads toward re-evaluating the isomorphism hypoth-
esis, which is taken up in Section 5.3.

5.1 Referential non-uniqueness as a functional space

In his study of reflexivization issues in Slavic, Timberlake (1980) argues that a
reflexive form is an explicit marker of 'referential non-uniqueness' between two
semantically distinct participants. He defines this notion as follows (p. 794): "A
nominal is referentially unique to the extent that its reference is unique in a
given proposition; it is non-unique to the extent that its reference is replicated
by other nominals [in the proposition]." This special 'non-unique' referential
status can hold between entities of various semantic kinds, including possessive
relations expressed NP-internally, which have nothing to do with manipulating
verbal valence. The accusative of the Slavic reflexive personal pronoun (*se/sebe*
in Czech), as one particular type of reflexive form, is necessarily dedicated to
marking this special referential relationship between agents and patients. In
semantic terms, then, the weakening of referential uniqueness signaled by *se*
can be formulated as a weakening of the agent–patient opposition, as suggested
by Schenker (1988: 370). This presupposes semantically transitive verbs as the

prototypical domain of *se/sebe*-based reflexivization, as manifested in PR. As we saw in Section 4, certain morphosyntactic and prosodic features are associated with this weakening, and their contradictory nature reflects the tension between the verb semantics on the one hand ('expect two participants') and what the reflexive morpheme signals pragmatically ('do not expect as many'). In fact, the clitic form (intermediate between free form and affix) can be taken as an iconic reflection of this ambivalence.

It is important to stress, though, that we cannot reduce the analysis purely to the agent-patient opposition if we wish to understand what motivates each of the individual extensions (AR, SR, and DR) and the seemingly peculiar features each of them displays. For that we need the notion of referential non-uniqueness as the crucial link. Specifically, the extensions can be accounted for in terms of loss of individuation on the part of either the agent or the (necessarily transitive) patient, and in terms of loss of intentionality on the part of the agent. Neither of these concepts can be automatically expressed at the level of semantic valence because they derive from a referent's status in discourse, not from the relations between the event participants. Indeed, it is cognitively plausible that speakers would opt for an explicit signal to indicate that certain expectations about referential distinctness of event participants are being violated. The unifying function of *se* is precisely to express such a violation. The individual patterns just represent different ways of framing this lower degree of referential autonomy for different communicative purposes. The differences can be summarized as follows.

The PR construction is the most transparent, prototypical manifestation of this function, expressing simply the referentially motivated weakening of the agent–patient opposition. One extension of this prototype is the AR family of constructions, in which the referential non-uniqueness manifests itself in casting the agent as an (unmentioned) participant that is not highly individuated. Its referent is necessarily neutral with respect to number (singular vs. plural), a clear sign of lower referentiality and individuation. This property allows the generic reading and is common to both the AR and the *be*-passive. Unlike the passive, though, where agent suppression is only optional in Czech (presumably because referential contrast is not an issue with the passive), AR marks the agent's weak referential status directly, by never allowing the agent to appear explicitly. Consequently, the absence of an agent-coding constituent in AR can be interpreted either as referring to a (generically understood) group, or to an individual, including a discourse participant. It further follows that, in contrast to the PR prototype, the AR usage can easily extend to both transitive and intransitive verbs (including the potential for accommodating inherently

non-agentive verbs), as it is not primarily about agent–patient relations, but about marking the agent as referentially obscure.

Other extensions revolve around manipulating the agent's intentionality. In PR, the verb must express an action or a process and the agent must be animate. In comparison, SR represents a shift in which the referentially blurred agent–patient distinction is taken to its extreme, by removing the agent as a potentially distinct referential entity altogether and thus shifting the salience onto the remaining participant — the patient. As a result, a given event is presented as having no intentional source. Here, the pragmatically motivated function of *se* crystallizes into a new meaning: spontaneity expressed by a verb whose lexical meaning is not that of spontaneity but, rather, presupposes some independent agentive force.

A weaker version of the downplaying of the agent's intentional nature is the DR pattern. Here the agent is not removed but its role of an active, intentional force is de-emphasized in favor of an experiential role. The agent's identity is not necessarily *referentially* obscure in the same way as in the other reflexive patterns; only its *involvement* in the event denoted by the verb is obscure. In this respect, DR does imply a degree of spontaneity in the way it presents the overall situation, similar to SR. At the same time, the referential status of the patient in DR (unlike in SR) is relatively unimportant for the speaker's communicative purposes, since DR is about an attitude toward the event, rather than about its result. Consequently, DR shows the same indifference to transitivity we see in AR — both intransitive and transitive verbs can co-occur with *se* in the DR pattern. To take this similarity between AR and DR even a step further, we can say that it is not a coincidence that both constructions include an element of modality (explicitly coded in DR, implicit in AR). In both cases, the primary function is to de-individuate the participants and instead draw attention to the event itself, thereby leaving room for including the agent's attitude toward it.

The functional map that captures these relationships is shown in Diagram 6. It delimits a space (functional, semantic, cognitive) onto which both the reflexive and other, non-reflexive forms can be mapped, each resulting in a distinct conventional way of expressing a certain aspect of the central, pragmatically grounded notion of unexpected referential status. The overlapping circles represent the specific pragmatic/semantic extensions as attested by the four reflexive patterns discussed in this paper, while the dotted lines indicate that there are other, non-reflexive syntactic forms that can overlap functionally with the given reflexive pattern. Notice that SR, AR, and DR are all represented as direct extensions of PR, but DR stands out in sharing properties with all
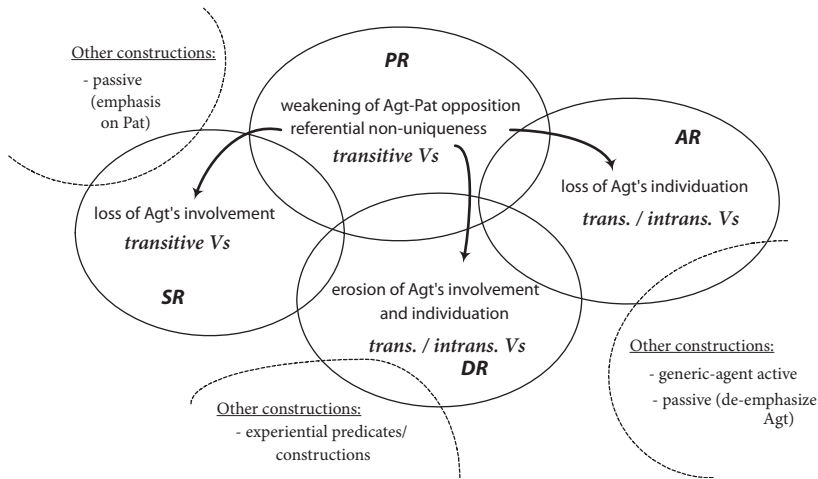
Other constructions:
- passive (emphasis on Pat)

PR
weakening of Agt-Pat opposition
referential non-uniqueness
transitive Vs

AR
loss of Agt's individuation
trans. / intrans. Vs

loss of Agt's involvement
transitive Vs

SR

erosion of Agt's involvement
and individuation
trans. / intrans. Vs
DR

Other constructions:
- generic-agent active
- passive (de-emphasize Agt)

Other constructions:
- experiential predicates/ constructions

Diagram 6. Extensions of the referential non-uniqueness of Czech *se*.

three. The arrows reflect the radial prototype structure, and the (in)transitivity labels are a shorthand for the distribution of the event-centered (AR, DR) vs. participant-centered (PR, SR) extensions.

5.2 Constructional networks

This conceptual organization can be further elaborated by incorporating details from the constructional descriptions in Diagrams 1 and 3–5, in order to get a more precise picture of the full grammatical knowledge that underlies the attested patterns. The constructional network that emerges is represented in Diagram 7, again including some points of overlap with non-reflexive constructions. The prototype is enclosed in a dashed-line rounded rectangle; the extensions are drawn in such a way as to indicate which particular features are shared and which are unique to each construction. The respective manifestations of the unifying functional property of *se* are reflected most directly in the overall pragmatic function or meaning of each construction (printed in italicized boldface): expression of self-affectedness in PR, the distancing function of AR, spontaneity in SR, and agent's attitude expressed by DR. The lines extending from the AR space are a reminder that AR motivates additional, specialized variants (recall Diagram 2).

Notice that beyond the concept of referential non-uniqueness, we cannot isolate a single feature (syntactic or functional) that would be shared by all four constructions as either necessary or sufficient for capturing its essence. The advantage of the constructional approach inheres in the fact that it does
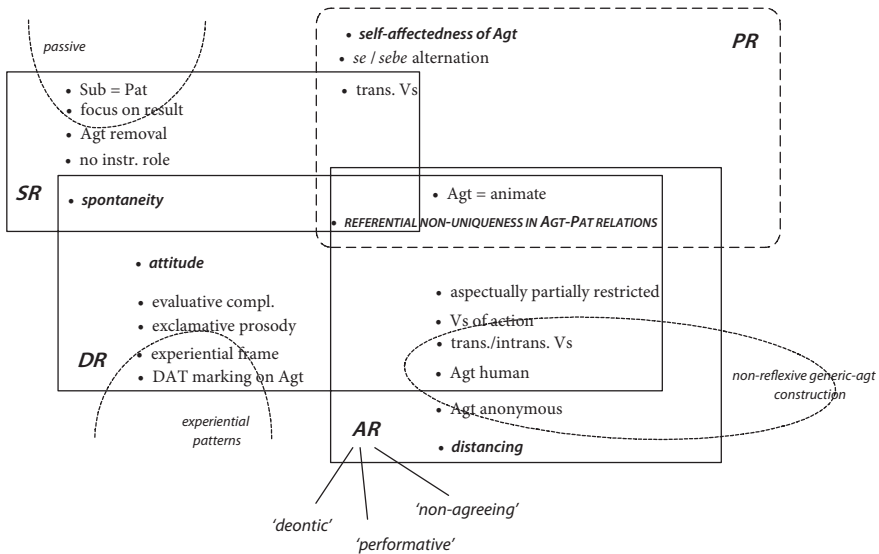
Diagram 7. (Partial) constructional map of Czech *se*.

not reduce the representation to a single notion; rather, it pays systematic attention to both the pragmatic/semantic dimension and the morphosyntactic details that *all together* are needed to define the category in question and to motivate its polyfunctional structure. The partitioning of the functional space is established through complex grammatical patterns, rather than being a set of predetermined criteria, whether syntactic or semantic, applied independently of grammatical context. It is equally clear now that grammatical organization cannot always be captured through hierarchical inheritance structures such as the one which perhaps applies to the AR family itself (Diagram 2). We can easily see in Diagram 7 that none of the four patterns could serve as the root node of such a hierarchy and simply have its properties inherited by the remaining patterns. A family-resemblance structure of the kind proposed here appears to provide a more realistic picture of the relationships.

Finally, the notion of referential non-uniqueness is highly compatible with the way Croft (1994, 2001: Ch.8) captures the functional dimension expressing a wide range of voice relations: he states the generalizations in terms of relative indistinctness of event participants, as reflected in their "Speech Act Participant" status (SAP). His "Voice Continuum" is set up as a functional space defined for the purpose of broader typological comparisons across distinct constructions. Croft's presentation is restricted to non-reflexive forms only. Working out the details of fully incorporating the reflexives and presenting all the arguments is not possible in the space of this paper, but based on

the properties discussed here we can at least suggest a way of distributing the four reflexives vis-à-vis the *be*-passive structure in Czech. In Diagram 8, I use Croft's (2001: 284) representational format of plotting Agent properties on the vertical axis and Patient properties horizontally, both of them in terms of their SAP status adjusted for distinctions that appear to be relevant in Czech voice distinctions: 1st person < 2nd person < (3rd PN < 3rd CN, prn)$_{animate}$ < 3rd$_{inanimate}$. (Here PN = proper personal noun, CN = common noun, prn = pronoun; the parentheses indicate that the types of 3rd pers. referents are hierarchically organized not just by the type of NP but also by animacy.) The thick black lines spanning certain cells represent a semantic reflexive relation (PR).
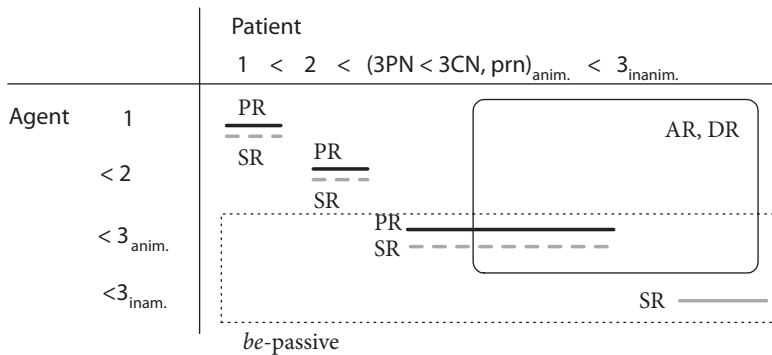
Diagram 8. Distribution of Czech reflexives across the Voice Continuum.

We see that the *be*-passive and the reflexive patterns claim distinct, though overlapping, parts of the space. The *be*-passive (dotted-line rectangle) covers relations in which the agent is a 3rd person entity, regardless of animacy, but not a direct discourse participant, while the patient is semantically unrestricted. The AR and DR patterns (solid-line rectangle) are restricted to animate agents and, preferentially, to 3rd pers. patients, excluding proper personal nouns (Grepl & Karlík 1998: 135, Fried 2006). PR is represented by the thick black lines appearing throughout the reflexive space with animate referents of all kinds. Finally, SR in its prototypical use is associated with inanimate patients and is thus essentially in complementary distribution to PR, as indicated by the thick grey line in the 3rd pers. inanimate cell. However, SR does allow animate patients of *all* persons (the interpretation in these cases is necessarily one of an accident, in contrast to the deliberate action expressed by PR), and this is indicated by the grey dashed lines in the PR reflexive cells.

This is only a rough representation that will require further elaboration (e.g., it does not include the generic-agent active construction or other agent-backgrounding constructions). But it does capture the essence of the distributional

properties of the patterns discussed in this paper, as well as the resulting ambiguities for which *se* is known (Kopečný 1954, *Mluvnice češtiny* 1986, Grepl & Karlík 1998) but that have never been adequately accounted for.

5.3 Isomorphism, polysemy, and constructions

The theoretical questions raised by *se* are in many ways the same as those concerning a polysemous lexical item. If we use a prototype model, the issue is not only what can be established as the prototype and how it is internally organized, but also the more difficult question of how the prototype structure squares with what we know about categorization and its reflection in natural language. Polysemy emphasizes discontinuities and ever-finer distinctions observable in surface patterning, which is in direct conflict with an equally salient tendency toward the creation of maximally general categories that can apply to as wide a range of tokens as possible. Focus on the latter has been the preferred view of meaning in the long Aristotelian tradition, which sees identification of a stable, invariant, maximally general meaning as the primary goal of semantic theory. In contrast, much of the recent work in lexical semantics has shifted attention to the role of context in defining linguistic meaning (Fillmore 1982, Cruse 1986, Fillmore & Atkins 1992, Pustejovsky 1995, Ravin & Leacock 2000), which is seen, to varying degrees, not as a fixed entity in the sense of a discrete abstract category, but rather as a continuous interpretive process (most directly formulated as such in Geeraerts 1993: 260).

By taking a constructional approach, this study attempts to show that both of these categorization strategies (abstraction and differentiation) can be brought together in a principled way without elevating either one to the status of inherently greater importance. Moreover, dealing with grammatical meaning, which manifests polysemy through morphosyntactic behavior, forces us to be more precise about what 'context' means in grammatical patterning; to move away from the absolutist view of isomorphism in delimiting syntactic categories; and to be more open to accepting the view that the distinction between grammatical and lexical entities is only a matter of degree.

I argued in Section 5.1 that, at the most abstract level, we can identify a general function that motivates all the different uses of *se*; it could be defined as marking 'unexpected referential status of agents and patients'. The usefulness of this level of abstraction (taken as a superordinate category above the prototype structure in Diagram 6) lies not only in unifying the different uses of *se*, but also in providing a conceptual connection to other reflexive phenomena. However, while the prototype structure dispenses with the problem of invariance, it

still does not, in itself, resolve the polysemy-isomorphism dilemma; one form — the morpheme *se* — still has multiple distinct interpretations, albeit organized around a central prototypical function instead of an invariant one.

The present analysis suggests that even our understanding of the 'form' portion of the isomorphism hypothesis calls for a more discriminating view than simply sticking to the item itself (in our case, the morpheme *se*). The issue of the form, in turn, determines what kind of linguistic entity bears the status of the prototype. The fact is that neither the communicative functions associated with the different readings of *se*, nor the semantic differences, nor the idiosyncratic formal features are fully predictable from the superordinate function hypothetically formulated above. All four patterns embody some version of this function, but without knowing all the additional details as well as what conventional associations hold between those details and the overarching abstract function, we cannot claim to really know what grammatical knowledge the shared features involve or require. The single unifying category is much too general, and reduces the complexity of the patterns in the same way that other single 'basic' features do.

Strictly speaking, the morpheme *se* on its own does not mean anything. Its meaning can only be seen in terms of a particular interpretation of the prototype that arises from a *particular grammatical context* — by which I do not mean specific sentences (tokens), but relatively abstract grammatical patterns of usage, that is, constructions. Each usage of *se* can adequately be identified only in the context of the formal, semantic, and pragmatic properties that have to co-occur. If we concentrate only on the morpheme *se*, we continue to face the problem of 'one form — many meanings'. If, however, we accept the possibility that the 'form' in question is actually a construction, and not a morpheme, the problem disappears, since each construction clearly is a 'sign': a uniquely identifiable grammatical entity with its own unique meaning. Admittedly, the result is not a simple, elegant formula, but it reflects more faithfully the complexity of the data, without being unsystematic.

To summarize, in the constructional account, the polysemy links within a grammatical category are not necessarily reducible to just the functional/conceptual dimension, nor to just the formal dimension, along which a particular morpheme can form a hierarchy of related uses. Rather, the relative invariance underlying the polysemy is distributed across complex meaning-form pairings. In order to adequately represent the lexical entry of Czech *se*, it would not be enough to simply provide a definition of *se* — whether syntactic (in terms of intransitivization or valence reduction), conceptual (in terms of self-affectedness or causation), or pragmatic (in terms of unexpected referential status of

event participants). It would not even be enough to formulate the definition in terms of the functional prototype structure in Diagram 6. In order to ensure that the lexical entry truly reflects a native-like understanding of the use of *se*, it would have to resemble the constructional map in Diagram 7, which captures, on the one hand, the fact that the four uses of *se* are related through specific manifestations of a particular functional feature, but also, on the other hand, the fact that each use amounts to a conventionalized grammatical pattern (cf. Goldberg's 2002 notion of 'surface generalizations').

Once we admit a constructionally based understanding of the 'one form — one meaning' view, we can also account for why the various reflexives acquire the flavors they do (e.g., why some reflexives acquire passive meaning, while others do not), as well as situate them in the context of other grammatical patterns with which they may share either functional or formal features, as suggested in Diagram 8. Without having to choose a single feature or even a subset of features as being a necessary and sufficient condition on 'reflexiveness' in general, embodied in the morpheme *se* outside of any context, we can capture the mutual relatedness of all usages by identifying the points of overlap, formal and/or functional. Through the same mechanism, we can also identify points of overlap between the reflexives and other, non-reflexive patterns in the grammar of the language; in the present case this includes other agent-backgrounding constructions, experiential patterns, expressions of modality and speech acts. The result is a richer and more coherent understanding of the overall grammatical inventory and thus a more accurate representation of what speakers of the language have to know.

6. Conclusion

This paper is intended as a usage-based case study illustrating a general approach to identifying the meaning and behavior of grammatical categories in a principled and descriptively adequate manner. The paper argues for a prototype-based constructional analysis as an alternative that gives us a much more accurate description and understanding of the grammatical knowledge speakers must possess about the meaning and behavior of a particular morpheme. When we examine the morphological, syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic details, we come to the following conclusion about the four *se* patterns in Czech. The same morpheme is found in four functionally and semantically different environments, each of which also carries with it various morphosyntactic peculiarities. What unites all of them is the erosion of referential distinctness/

salience and the interaction of this erosion with the agent–patient opposition in particular. But, as the analysis has shown, limiting the meaning of *se* to this abstract function would be much too narrow to capture the true nature of how grammatical categories may be formed, modified, extended, or delimited, and how they are incorporated in grammatical patterning, in all its richness. Above all, it is evident that whatever definition of the meaning of a grammatical category we may wish to settle on (invariant or prototype-based), it cannot be established in isolation, without first studying the given element's role in the larger patterns in which it is used.

Notes

* Among the colleagues with whom I have discussed this work, I am indebted especially to Adele Goldberg and Doris Payne for their careful reading of an early version of this article; their comments and encouragement have been extremely helpful to me. I also wish to thank two anonymous reviewers who provided additional useful feedback, and Orin Gensler for his thoughtful and meticulous editorial work.

1. Most of my data comes from the Czech National Corpus, which is an electronic corpus of both spoken (PMK) and written (SYN2000) contemporary Czech, representing a variety of speakers, genres, and speech situations. The rest of the data includes examples taken from the linguistic literature and a few made-up sentences. Although Czech is known for its diglossia, the spoken and written varieties do not display any significant differences with respect to reflexivization, which is highly productive and occurs very naturally in both.

2. Abbreviations in glosses: NOM 'nominative', GEN 'genitive', ACC 'accusative', DAT 'dative', INS 'instrumental', LOC 'locative', M/F/N 'masculine/feminine/neuter', SG/PL 'singular/plural', RF 'reflexive', RF_{dat} 'reflexive dative', PRES 'present tense', PST 'past tense', PF/IPF 'perfective/imperfective', IMP 'imperative', INF 'infinitive', NEG 'negative', AUX 'auxiliary', CD 'conditional', PURP 'purposive', DP 'discourse marker', CL 'clitic', NCL 'non-clitic'. Also 2P 'second-position clitic', AR 'Autonomous-Agent Reflexive', SR 'Spontaneous-Event Reflexive', DR 'Dispositional Reflexive', PR 'Pronominal Reflexive'.

3. The accusative form *se* is distinct from the dative *si*. While both case forms are used as reflexive pronouns as well as grammatical markers, the dative has to be analyzed in its own terms, not as a variant of *se*; the two are not interchangeable. This paper is concerned only with the accusative. In (3), the verb *sednout si* simply means 'sit down' and its reflexive form is entirely independent of the issues discussed in this paper.

4. As is well known to Slavists, there are also several other uses of *se* (not just in deponent verbs but also in various derivational functions). I will not be concerned with the derivational aspects of *se* here, but the general proposal provides a direction for incorporating them as well.

5. As one reviewer suggested, it is conceivable that one might use some equivalent of (11a), but only in a very specific context, perhaps in a contrast to an explicitly mentioned other referent. The instrumental pronoun would have to be clause-final and form the prosodic peak for the expression to sound relatively natural and even then, a prepositional expression *od nás* 'from us', as a general expression of source rather than an agentive causer, seems more likely.

6. It is important to note that we cannot treat this difference in terms of topic-focus relations, as an opposition of patient-topic (*be*-passive) vs. predicate-focus ('passive reflexive'), since in AR the patient argument does not need to follow the verb or, more generally, be in the clause-final position reserved for focus in Czech (cf. 7a, 7c), nor does it have to be clause-initial in the *be*-passive (Fried 2006). While there is undoubtedly some (and possibly a high) degree of interaction between the two layers of sentence structure (topic-focus relations on the one hand and agent–patient manipulations on the other), they cannot simply be conflated and treated as a single phenomenon. This is because topic-focus relations are automatically expressed positionally in Czech, and hence there is no need for a special morphological form to signal shifts in information structure *per se*, without other, independent motivation.

7. This difference, furthermore, might help explain the relative frequency of the reflexive (very high) vs. passive (practically non-existent) in spoken Czech: discourse-motivated promotion of the patient is handled by word order, thus eliminating any need for morphological marking; diminishing the referential status of the agent, on the other hand, seems to require explicit marking. I will revisit this issue in Section 5.1.

8. The fixed post-verbal placement of the patient cannot be classified simply as an expression of discourse focus, either. As shown in (15), an agreeing pattern is just fine if the only issue is to encode the focus status of the patient; the agreeing form is perfectly natural, and in terms of information structure equivalent to (14b). While the use of the non-agreeing pattern can probably be tied to issues of information structure, it is much more complicated than simple focus marking and needs separate investigation.

9. In the interest of general accessibility, I prefer to express the constructional properties in the form of brief prose statements; engaging the reader in the full technical detail of representations as practiced in Construction Grammar would only serve as a distraction, given the focus of this paper. For a general overview of the formalism, cf. Fried & Östman 2004.

10. It is difficult to find semantically unaccusative verbs with which to construct hypothetical examples of AR, since such predicates are very often, perhaps overwhelmingly, reflexive in form to begin with. I will argue in Section 3.2 that they arise from a conventionalization of a different reflexive construction, one that imposes a spontaneous interpretation on inherently dynamic verbs.

11. The aspectual constraint is somewhat less strict (although by no means irrelevant) with intransitive verbs, which sometimes allow both aspects (i); comparable substitutions with transitive verbs fail, presumably because the perfective aspect explicitly draws attention to the result. It must be noted, though, that the perfective requires the explicit presence of a

dative agent, whereas the imperfective allows either a specific (explicit) or a generic (implicit) identity of the agent.

(i) *dobře se mi   tam usínalo   / usnulo*
    well   RF 1SG.DAT there fall.asleep:IPF.PST.SG.N / PF.PST.SG.N
    'it was easy for me to all asleep there'

12. The non-pronominal *se* occurs in the same slot as the pronominal *se* within the clitic cluster, but it cannot alternate with other pronominal clitics, because it has no referential content.

Source of data

Český národní korpus (PMK, SYN2000). Ústav Českého národního korpusu FF UK, Praha. <http://ucnk.ff.cuni.cz>

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Author's address

Mirjam Fried
Dept. of Slavic languages and literatures
East Pyne
Princeton University
Princeton, NJ 08544, USA

mfried@princeton.edu