

JAN CHLOUPEK

## SOME NOTES ON THE STUDY OF DIALECTAL SYNTAX

1. Czech linguistics has turned its attention to a greater extent to the problems of syntax. A whole number of methodological questions, which require immediate solution, have been called forth by a deepened knowledge of syntax. The point is to grasp the structure of a linguistic form even in syntactical work quite completely, for otherwise syntax would become a more or less accidental "list" of sentences.

All that is valid for dialectology as well. But the situation here is far more intricate than with the studies of the standard language. Firstly, Czech dialectology cannot boast of a long tradition and has so far achieved good results chiefly in phonetics and morphology, the field of phonemics being represented by a comparatively small number of studies. Secondly, when studying dialectal syntax, we come up against a whole number of technical troubles, which make the work with syntactical material considerably difficult.

Of course, however short the tradition of dialectological studies may be, it can claim some success. Thus as early as in 1899 and 1900 J. Malovaný published in *Časopis Matice moravské* his *Skladba nářečí císařovského*, a work, in its time quite outstanding. Another step forward were also the chapters on syntax contained in the dialectological monographs by Adolf Kellner (*Štramberské nářečí*, Brno 1939, *Východolašská nářečí I, II*, Brno 1946, 1949) and in the studies written by his collaborators and pupils (the latest of them being Fr. Konečný's *Nářečí Určic a okolí*, Prague 1957). In these monographs, however, it is just the syntactical section, in which the differential method has been applied without exception (only syntactical features differing from those of the standard language are being recorded), although the remaining sections of grammar are based on a description of the dialectal structure in question. Interesting results may soon be brought in by questionnaires, even if they touch upon the syntactical problems only occasionally: for example the questionnaire concerning the dialects of the Haná region covers only the absolute participle and the negative genitive; the questionnaire concerning the Moravian-Slovak border region quotes the type *naši staříček šli*, the negative genitive, and the absolute participle; the questionnaire concerning Lachian dialects asks about the type *naši staříček šli*, about wish clauses introduced by *aby*, *at*, *až*, respectively, about the type *spi aňi zabýty* and about the construction *ide do suseda*.

2. If we consider a dialect as a specific system embedded in the system of the national language, we must beware, when registering syntactical phenomena, of not introducing elements into it alien to its structure. For example in the archaic dialect of eastern Moravia *protože* is not a causative conjunction, though it has its place in the language of the younger generation of villagers; instead of it there is the traditional conjunction *že*, which — similar to Old Czech — introduces both substantival and causative clauses (*vjeřte, že mi-to utíchlo; hospodu nalíčili červenú barvú, že sa tu staly mordy*). True enough the first conjunction shows an average frequency in the language of the village; this, however, does not necessarily warrant the conclusion that it constitutes a systemic element of the dialectal syntax. We could quote more examples like that: *ne enom* is only a phonetic variant of the standard *nejen* in comparative sentences; the con-

junction *ačkoli* fairly often occurs instead of the dialectal *třeba* or *jak*; the type *naš staříček šel* often occurs instead of the traditional "plural of respect" *naši staříček šli*; common Czech phrases oust dialectal innovations (of course, formed in accordance with the old laws of sentence formation) *zebralo sa smetana* and *tam bylo aj trafika*.

What is then the criterion by which we may decide that one syntactical phenomenon is in accordance with the system, whereas another though synonymous to it is not? The most important criterion is the possibility to explain the phenomenon from the nature of the dialectal structure. For example both the type *zebralo sa smetana* and the type *tam bylo aj trafika* are in agreement with an older way of expression, which did not require the verbal predicate to be in formal concord with the subject, because the latter was either not known or not to be named (cf., e. g., numerous dialectal sentences with an indefinite neutral subject, e. g. even the sentence *aj ty kosti hořelo*). Further the use of the adversative conjunction *než* is in connection with the archaic character of our dialect. (In the case of these two constructions as well as in the case of the adversative conjunction *než*, their synonyms have found their way into the system, but this need not be always necessarily so.) By maintaining the traditional system only in the language of the oldest generation there arise generational differences; it follows that in determining the systemic character of dialectal phenomena the generational criterion does not rank first, although it is of considerable use to the dialectologist: such are usually the systemic variants employed by older speakers. Another criterion, viz. the frequency of the phenomenon, can prove useful only in very distinct numerical proportions: e. g., it is only possible to record an isolated occurrence of the adversative *leč*, but it is impossible to draw any conclusion from it. But on the other hand even isolated cases can complete our description of the syntactical system (e. g. the isolated occurrence of the conjunction *co* in a declarative substantival sentence: *naši nepamatuji, co by tu kožušník byl*; it may only be due to an individual contamination with final clauses, in which the conjunction *co* and the conditional with *a-* are to be found together; it may be a current type, which just by chance has not been recorded more often).

3. The study of the collected material should lead us to a critical evaluation of the existing views. For instance, the assertion that even dialectal word-order reflects the contextual structure of the sentence is definitely not quite free from doubt. It should be borne in mind that the contextual structure is brought about by the phonic means of the spoken language, especially by a rise in intonation. The most important expression in the sentence, the "nucleus" of the given communication, has not such a fixed place in the sentence. It will be approximately as often at the end of the sentence (*tož na sňídání první deň sa pěkly vdolečky*), as in the middle (*mivaly zeliny baby*), or at the beginning of it (even in utterances lacking emotional colouring: *v bahnoch to rádo je*). If the communicative nucleus in an emotionally neutral sentence can show different positions, the word-order cannot be a suitable means of the contextual structure of the sentence.

The dialectal word-order represents another feature typical of dialectal syntax; we have in mind the additional arrangement of sentence members. The speaker tries to state the most important part of the sentence at the very beginning and the rest of the sentence is only added somehow; this tendency becomes manifest partly by shifting the communicative nucleus towards the beginning of the sentence, partly by relegating the formal parts of the sentence

towards the end (*on poklízá fšecko si*), partly by putting the congruent (unstressed) attribute after the noun (*f týchto mlýnoch obyčajných sa mlévávalo*). In the last case the speaker utters the important sentence member first, additionally expanding it only. The additional arrangement of the sentence members originates undoubtedly in the fact that the speakers of the dialect are not aware of the perspective of their sentences, forming them merely *ad hoc* in the very act of their speech. This is by far not such a conscious sentence-forming process as would be observed with written sentences.

4. It is also necessary to avoid such a simplifying interpretation of dialectal structure, as would come from the overvaluation of the superficial cases of correspondence between the dialect and the standard language. In spite of all the seeming correspondence, e. g., there is a substantial difference between the infinitive constructions of a dialect and those of the standard language. The noun in the dialectal sentence *nepřeju mu staroby dočkat* functions as object and the infinitive as referential qualification of the noun; in a corresponding standard sentence, on the other hand, the infinitive is the object of the predicative verb. Why is that so? The grammatical principle of word-order, by which we understand the tendency to place certain sentence members in fixed positions, preserves in the dialect concerned the remnants of old sentence structure. Standing at the end, the infinitive reflects its original referential or final function. In an overwhelming majority of cases the infinitive — an independent substantival sentence originally — takes up the end of the sentence, not occurring immediately after the finite form of the verb, as it is the rule with Standard Czech (cf. *dysi sa im chcelo vody piť* with the standard *kdysi se jim chtělo pít vody*); as a result of the original independence of the infinitive, the particles *sa, si* dependent on it are most often placed after the infinitive (*přide tu negdy postežovat sa*); the infinitive is often separated from the noun it qualifies by a short pause (*idú vidím s taškama nakúpiť*). This all leads up to the conclusion that the infinitive of East-Moravian dialects is a semisentence construction, which performs the function of an adverbial element of purpose or reference.

One must be extremely careful when interpreting the interrelations of clauses in asyndetic complex sentences. The question arises whether we have to do here with co-ordinate or subordinate sentences, or with sentences that are logically subordinate, but co-ordinate in form (e. g., the substantival complex sentence *ukazovali, potte počut*, the conditional complex sentence with the copulative *a — máš, a daj!*, the concessive complex sentence with the copulative *a — štyry roky býł na úálském boišči, a neumřel*).

The semantic relation between the sentences is sometimes determined by words of adverbial character (*šak teprú lehl a už má sny?*), sometimes by a syntactic pattern (*u telefonu jedno slovo vynechat, byla kulka*), in some cases, however, only by the verbal context (the complex sentence *ten ženský čas stratila, vyvalilo sa í do téj nohy* can be temporal, resultative, or causative), or even merely by the situational context (*hen tam mezi horama, toho nevidět!*, which in Standard Czech would mean „*je tam mezi horami, není to totiž vidět*“). It is just because it is often impossible to determine the semantic relation between the clausal members of a complex sentence without the knowledge of the context that we can look for the contradiction between the old form and the new content it is to carry. In this point the dialect differs from the standard language, which either has disposed of the contradiction or is about to do away with it. Of course, this contradiction was not so obvious in the past. It should be remembered that

the dialectal utterances were mostly original expressions of the situation, being closely and immediately linked up with it. Sentences were gradually put one after the other, and the expression of their interrelations was not so important as the actual reaction to the changing situation. The dialect speaker did not conceive his sentences as complex at first, but placed one sentence after the other as the thoughts kept on occurring to him. Thus the simple linguistic form was a reflection of primitive thinking, often consisting of mere associations. It has, however, survived down to the present day, when it has come to convey a new meaning, i. e. subordination.

5. It is possible to follow two ways in treating the collected syntactic material. We shall stress either the historic aspect or the synchronic view. In either case we may proceed either statically — i. e. to establish a sort of “cross-section” of the given linguistic stage —, or dynamically — i. e. to interpret the development of the given linguistic structure. A few words should be added with regard to dialectology.

The historical investigation into dialectal syntax is rendered very difficult by the fact that no written monuments have been preserved. Even those that may be of good use in phonetic and morphological researches can fail us on the syntactic level because of their literary character. But a too great emphasis laid on dialectal literary monuments contradicts the view that a dialect is, and in its history has always been, above all one of the spoken forms of the national language. Last but not least there is another reason, for which the historical approach should not be overestimated: at a time, when folk dialects are quickly dying out due to economic and political circumstances, we have first of all to focus our attention on the “language as it is spoken at the moment”, not on the language of literary monuments and written records in general.

If we adopt the synchronic method, a statical interpretation of the dialectal material deprives us of the possibility to determine the relation of the dialect to the development of the national language as a whole, although the present form of the dialect corresponds to various stages of the national language at different periods of its development. In the same way the statical method prevents us from distinguishing various historical layers of development in the present dialectal structure, which have merged into one structural unity of today. Thus the long historical development of *že* (originally an interjection, now a conjunction) seems to be reflected in the present stage of the dialect, where the change of the interjectional conception (still preserved in the confirmative *že: že ho nenajdeš!*) into the adverbial (*že* means *prý*, e. g. *a tož že přišel tady do Kostelca, že aňi jednoho vlasa nemjel na sobje suchého, že tak se velice poleká!*) or into the conjunctive (*něsla přísadu, že bude zítra sadit* — in Standard Czech „*aby sázela*“) has been completed or is perhaps in progress only just now.

The statical analysis of the present state of the dialectal syntax, however, is of some importance too. The analysis of those cases should not be omitted, in which e. g., the sentences break off without a formal close (aposiopesis); further attention should be paid to various anacolutha, repetition of sentence parts, the violation of formal concord between subject and predicate, the completion or even the substitution of linguistic means of communication by means of gestures and gesticulation etc. All similar statements, however clever their generalization may be, are not typical of dialectal syntax, i. e. of one of the geographically limited forms of the national language, but they may be deduced from the study of the spoken language in general, from the study of the colloquial style of the stan-

dard language. — On the whole, it is still true that a statical description of some dialect is not the last aim of dialectological work.

The most intricate structural interdependences may be elucidated by means of the dynamic conception of dialectal syntax. The present stage is regarded as the result of a long historical development and as a germinal stage of the development to follow. This approach interprets dialectal syntax as a specific part of the syntax of the national language. It makes it possible to distinguish between components of various linguistic structures as they may be observed in the average form with the average village speakers. It allows to draw historical conclusions from synchronical observation.

6. Mention should also be made of the stylistic analysis of dialectal texts. At the present state of knowledge it seems to be premature to devote detailed attention to the problems of dialectal stylistic. It is well known that the stylistic problems of the standard language could be taken up only after a thorough knowledge of grammar has been acquired. It is, however, possible to say already today that beside the unmarked colloquial style there is only one marked style in the dialect, i. e. that of narration. The dialect has only one specific style-forming layer and it employs it only in narration.

Cf., e. g.: *že* to denote another person's narrative: *řtilěj, že sa ohlédne, gdo ide, chlab oškubaný, že tag z něho cáry vissely, á tož on že si pravíl...*; the linking up of sentences by means of *a* (in fact, we can hardly speak here of expressing some co-ordinate relation but only of a chronological link-up of actions): *ide, ide a že* (= St. Cz. *prý*) *dvá chlapci skábú a šak de sa nabrali*; lexical repetition occurring in complex sentences of the type *tož jak šel, přišel do mjesta*; comparative sentences of the type *udelalo sa ich modz jag dyš stěll*; the use of situationally primary utterances in indirect speech without introductory means: *nechtěl tam ležat, já přý puřidu dóm, ale ježš mārja, vy mosíte byd velice tordý*; the use of the so-called inserted sentences: *sem zavolál — šag už je mrtvý — bratranca, také je tesař*; the use of nominal sentences in descriptions: *tot, jag ulekali, taká studénka, a šli tam chytat ježe*; the repetition of sentences and sentence parts in emotionally coloured utterances: *stará hutala, hutala*; the use of the present tense to express past actions: *bývalo, že tam jakěhosi ošruděli, co něši vinen*.

There does not exist any other higher stylistic layer in the dialect, for the speakers are able to substitute it by resorting to the communicative means of an interdialect or to those of the standard language. The functions of the higher stylistic layers are consequently taken over by higher forms of the national language. This is especially obvious in the use of hypercorrect standard forms in cases, in which the dialect speakers — not mastering the standard language well enough — want “to adapt” themselves to the visitor from the town (cf., e. g., the East-Moravian hypercorrect *veičko* with the standard *vajičko* and the dialectal *vaičko*, according to the standard *vejce*; the adversative *gdešto* in dialectal utterances — considered as definitely bookish in the standard language; etc.).

7. What about the technique of dialectal syntax investigation? A necessary presupposition of a successful collection of syntactic material is a safe and thorough knowledge of the analysed dialect. The scholar can proceed with the analysis of syntactical phenomena only after he has mastered the phonetics and morphology of the dialect; otherwise he could not focus his attention on syntax.

Let us consider to what extent it is possible to investigate into syntax by means of old and tried dialectological methods. A dialectal questionnaire is a reliable guide in recording phonic and morphological phenomena, but is not of much use in ascertaining syntactical phenomena. E. g., there are great difficulties when trying to create a situation in which the speaker would use the archaic form of

the 3rd person sg. in a sentence with a general subject: *napravo ide ke Fšetinu* (in Standard Czech *napravo se jde k Všetinu*); and yet the occurrence of this form is by no means rare in the language of the older generation, let alone that its very existence offers a valuable clue to the knowledge of the history of the language. Similarly, it is difficult to make the speaker use an imperative, an optative, a conditional, or an interrogative sentence. Even if he obliges, he is almost sure to use a type corresponding to one of the standard language.

In our opinion the most suitable form of collecting syntactical material is to register the answers or even the questions of the informant (or of those of his domestic environment) in a current talk with the investigator. In this way it is possible to gain the most valuable answers (cf., e. g., nominal sentences in reply to the questions: „*A teď tu žijete u syna?*“ *céra*; „*A tu je dobře, že ano?*“ *zdravý vzduch!*). It is not even necessary to avoid an uninterrupted narration. Without the analysis of such narration we could not establish the typical feature of the dialectal utterances, i. e. the expression of subordinate relations by means of co-ordinate form (e. g., a resultative relation: *začali křít, toš čagany mohli na to vješat*; a causal relation: *oni znajú špás, šak chodíja po svjete a znajú ludi*; cf. above).

The opinion can often be heard that it is impossible to characterize syntax thoroughly without the help of a tape-recorder. The latter is a welcome help in syntactical analysis but not an indispensable one. It is not the exact wording of the dialectal sentences that matters, but rather the sentence types, the sentence patterns. It is evident that the unessential need not be recorded.

8. By way of conclusion we may offer the following summary of our views: the study of dialectal syntax will promote:

a) the knowledge of the historical development of the language in that it discovers such archaisms in the living language, as otherwise would have been preserved only in old literary monuments;

b) the knowledge of the historical development of the language in that, by studying a present day dialect (i. e. a spoken linguistic formation), it discovers parallels to the sentence-forming process, which had occurred before the written language began to unfold;

c) the knowledge of the present state of language in that it provides valuable material concerning the relation between language and thought;

d) the knowledge of the present state of the national language in that it explains its syntax in its local modifications and, at the same time, in that it records even such changes as the syntax of a present day dialect is subject to under the pressure of the standard language.

#### A Note

The examples we quote were collected in the course of an investigation into dialectal syntactic features carried out in 190 villages in eastern Moravia. The syntax of these dialects is more fully treated in our study *Stavba věty a souvětí v archaických nářečích východomoravských* (On the Structure of Simple and Complex Sentences in the Archaic Dialects of Eastern Moravia) which is going to be published in the collection of papers offered to the academician Fr. Trávníček in honour of his 70th birthday. For further references to the literature of the problems concerned see there. The following is an exact phonetic transcription of a dialectal specimen registered by tape-recorder.

## THE SPECIMEN

Mr K. Horsák, aged 91, of Kašava, District Gottwaldov, eastern Moravia, gives an account of how people used to live.

To néjsú fěilej čase. Fěil sú zlaté čase! Vařilo sa kafé enom v nájvečí svátky. No šag jak sem býl doma. Ešče ogarec. Mařenka mi vařili to kafé, bylo to na končiny. A vařa to kafé, tož jako — nebylo šporheltu a jakýchsi krámú, jak fěilěj. Na o'hňšči to vařili. F takovém dlhém hrnci ka'menném. A tož uš to nesú s téj kuchyňe a nesa hňáp na zem. Kafé sa vyvalilo. A tož my deři! Plakaly a plakaly. Mařenka povídajú, neplačte deři. Ešče mám mléko, ešče uvařim vám kafé. No tož nás tým ukročili a my to oblizovali na téj zemi. Pane, to byly časy! A to nebylo enom v našem domě, tá bída. Tá bída byla ve všem, ve všech chalupách. Ve všech, aj u sedláků.

Donésí sa škopeg do izby. Z vodú. A takový býl svícen, co bylo takové vidličky, tam sa strěilo světído a tým sa světilo. Inačí světla nebylo. A jeden mosěl u toho stát a opravjat to — a dýmu! To zme sa aj nevideli. A ráno, dyž zakašlál, takový kašél, jag dyby uhlé vyplůl! Taková, pane byla — nesnáza. A můj otec to deřál f každěj chaľupe jakořka. Strúhali ty světídla.

## POZNÁMKY K STUDIUM NÁŘEČNÍ SYNTAXE

1. Česká dialektologie věnuje nyní zvýšenou pozornost otázkám syntaxe. Prohloubené poznání nářeční syntaxe pak vyvolává řadu důležitých otázek teoretických, které je třeba neodkladně řešit. Jde totiž o to, aby byla i ve výkladech syntaktických dokonale postížena struktura nářečí, neboť jinak by se skladba stala více méně náhodným „souisem“ vět.

2. V „jazykovém průměru“ vesnice se vyskytují jako synonyma (třeba i syntaktická) prvky tradičního lokálního nářečí vedle prvků interdialektických a spisovných. Z čeho usuzujeme na to, že ten nebo onen jev patří k systému starobylého lokálního nářečí? Nejdůležitějším kriteriem je tu možnost vysvětlit jev z celkové povahy nářeční struktury, možnost určit souvislost jevu s jinými, nepochybnými jevy strukturálními. Jiná kriteriia (generální diferenciacie, frekvence jevu atp.) jsou druhotná.

3. Je nutno vyhnout se zjednodušujícímu posuzování nářeční syntaxe podle skladby spisovného jazyka. Tak na př. nářeční slovosled není jen výrazem obsahového (kontextového) členění věty, nýbrž především additivního připojování větných členů. V nářečí nejde totiž ani zdaleka o tak uvědomělý větotvorný proces, jaký je charakteristický pro jazykový projev spisovný, zvláště pak psaný.

4. Nelze přeceňovat povrchní shody nářečí se spisovným jazykem. Tak na př. přes všechnu zdánlivou shodu je podstatný rozdíl mezi infinitivními vazbami východomoravských nářečí a jejich spisovnými obdobami. V nářeční větě *neprěju mu staroby doľkat* je jméno předmětem a infinitiv zřetelovým určením jména, kdežto ve spisovné češtině je infinitiv v obdobné větě předmětem přísudkového slovesa.

5. Jak máme k zkoumání nářeční syntaxe přistupovat? Nejsložitější strukturální závislosti nám může objasnit jen dynamické pojetí nářeční syntaxe. Hodnotí současný stav jako výsledek dlouhého historického vývoje a jako zárodečné stadium vývoje budoucího. Vidí v nářeční skladbě osobitou součást skladby národního jazyka. Umožňuje nám rozeznávat v jazykovém průměru vesnice složky různých jazykových struktur. Může vyvozovat historické závěry ze studia synchronního.

6. Dnes je ještě předčasné propracovávat podrobně nářeční stylistiku. Je však už možno říci, že vedle nepríznačného stylu rozhovorového má nářečí jen jeden styl příznakový, totiž vypravovací. Jedině pro vypravování má nářečí specifickou slohovtornou vrstvu. Přestože nářečí jinou vyšší stylistickou vrstvu nemá, dovede ji dobře nahradit výrazovými prostředky interdialektu nebo spisovného jazyka. Funkci vyšších slohových vrstev tak přebírají vyšší útvary národního jazyka.

7. Pokud běží o technické zpracování nářeční skladby, lze slyšet nezřídka názor, že ji není možno dokonale postihnout bez pomoci magnetofonu. Tento přístroj je opravdu vítaným

pomocníkem pro zkoumání syntaktická, avšak není nepostradatelný. Při hlubokém proniknutí do struktury dialektu není přece třeba zapisovat nářeční věty, nýbrž stačí zachycovat větné typy, větná schemata. Co je nepodstatné, může být při zaznamenávání vynechááno.

## ЗАМЕТКИ К ИЗУЧЕНИЮ СИНТАКСИСА НАРОДНЫХ ГОВОРОВ

В настоящее время чешская диалектология обращает особое внимание на вопросы синтаксиса. Это происходит оттого, что изучение синтаксиса народных говоров приносит языковедению многостороннюю пользу:

а) способствует лучшему усвоению исторического развития языка, обнаруживая в живом языке архаизмы, которые остались только в древних письменных памятниках. Изучение синтаксиса народных говоров указывает параллели в процессе образования предложений в период, предшествующий развитию письменного языка;

б) способствует лучшему знанию современного состояния языка, предоставляя ценный материал касающийся взаимоотношений языка и мышления. Синтаксис национального языка излагается при таком изучении в его местных разновидностях, включая, одновременно, и те изменения, которым в настоящее время подчиняется под давлением литературного языка синтаксис народных говоров.

*Перевела Е. Пухлякова*