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**Bedřich Smetana's Czech : analysis of Smetana's correspondence written in Czech : summary**

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# SUMMARY

## Bedřich Smetana's Czech. Analysis of Smetana's Correspondence Written in Czech

*Já bych si přál, aby se v motto tomto krátce ale tak, aby i cizinec stručný představ  
o Vyšehradu tím popsaním dostal, mluvílo...*<sup>197</sup>  
(Bedřich Smetana to František Augustin Urbánek)

### The Aims of the Work

The aim of the monograph is to introduce Bedřich Smetana's use of Czech language through an analysis of his correspondence and contribute to the knowledge of constitutive standard language of the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Bedřich Smetana (1824–1884) lived in the period which is, in works on history of language, referred to as revival (until 1840s) and post-revival (from 1840s to the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century). From a linguistic perspective, this period is typical of replacement of German by Czech in the function of high written communication variety and formation or more precisely stabilization of modern standard language norm. We pose a question how contemporary speakers mastered this norm or to what extent they sought to master it. The next question is at which phenomena was the norm in motion and in what direction did it evolve.

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<sup>197</sup> I wish this motto briefly, but in the way so that even a foreigner could through this description gain the idea of Vyšehrad, spoke...

### **Theoretical, Methodological and Material Foundations**

The book follows the studies on Czech language of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The closest to our research are those grounded on epistolary texts (mainly works of Robert Adam et al. created in connection with the latest edition of Božena Němcová's correspondence and with forthcoming edition of Karel Havlíček's correspondence), comparison can be also provided by studies reflecting other types of texts (e.g. Bohuslav Havránek's work on Karel Hynek Mácha's language, Miroslav Grepl's work on Josef Kajetán Tyl's language and Milan Jelínek's work on revival technical texts).

From the methodological point of view, we focus on detailed analysis of language matter (using methods of corpus linguistics), which results are interpreted on the background of contemporary context and relevant data from composer's life (some procedures of sociolinguistic method of language biographies are used implicitly).

The possibility of getting closer to the real contemporary *usus* which is not preserved for older stages of Czech language history in a more authentic way is considered to be the unique feature of researched correspondence material. Moreover, private correspondence enables to learn the language of 'ordinary' speakers who stand outside of literary or scientific circles because even people who do not write literary or scientific texts do write letters (or at least they did in the 19<sup>th</sup> century). In fact, their language can be a more representative demonstration of the contemporary state of language than language of people who worked with Czech professionally and who were able to participate on constituting of the standard norm. From the language point of view, Bedřich Smetana is one of those 'ordinary' speakers. Similarly to other contemporary speakers, he did not attend Czech schools, he studied in German and for some time German represented for him higher means of communication, while Czech was used in private spoken communication. Smetana used Czech in written works in adulthood in connection with his gradual involvement in the national revival process.

The relevance of research results is supported by the range of material: considering artistic uniqueness of Smetana's personality, the volume of his correspondence was quite wide and because of the same reason a large number of his letters maintained until today. During the analysis, we proceed from 424 sent and 337 received Smetana's letters (most of them are stored in Bedřich Smetana Museum in Prague). After verification of transcriptions in accordance with autographs, we and our technical support Pavel Rychlý from the Faculty of Informatics MU created an electronic corpus *Korpus odeslané a přijaté česky psané korespondence Bedřicha Smetany* which became an analysis tool.

Considering the aim of the work, we used a representative example of 100 semi-official letters, i.e. letters for people who were primarily in a working relationship, partially changing into a friendly relationship, to Smetana. These are supposed to content Smetana's biggest effort to keep the norm. Intimate or family

letters were excluded in the first phase because the penetration of features which are not part of the norm can be related to the type of researched texts (a personal letter is more penetrable for features out of the norm than some other texts). Official letters were excluded because it is not possible to clearly say to what extent was Smetana their author and to what extent other people helped him with wording (we know that Smetana asked for help when writing official letters on the basis of his own correspondence).

Only in the next step were studied features analyzed by using corpus means in all letters written by Smetana. Discovered data were compared to the received correspondence for more objective understanding of contemporary *usus* and for verification of prototypicality or specificity of Smetana's written Czech. Since the whole received correspondence is significantly varied, we focused on particular writers differentially. Letters of Josef Srb were regularly studied, Srb, considering his type of education and professional orientation, is supposed to be Smetana's antipole, bearer and expert of contemporary standard norm. Also, letters written by people not educated in linguistics were taken into consideration and also findings from studies of other speakers of the 19<sup>th</sup> century were complementarily used.

### Analysis and Its Results

Motivational foundation of the research was Smetana's reflection of his own deficiency when expressing himself in Czech which can be found in a letter addressed to Jan Ludevít Procházka from 11<sup>th</sup> of March 1860 (Smetana's gradual transition to Czech in written works is dated from the 1860s): *Prosím, bi jste mně především odpustil všeccky chybi jak ortograficky tak grammatykálnj, ktere v hojně se v mým psanij nalesnau; neb až do dnešnjho času mně nebylo dopřáno, se v naši mateřské řeči doturdjij.* We focused on mapping of all more prominently represented out of norm features which appear in Smetana's orthography and grammar (morphology and syntax). Our aim was to provide a comprehensive view on Smetana's Czech thus we also complementarily focused on lexis.

Studied features were chosen and then classified on the basis of contemporary language reference books (especially grammar books written by Václav Hanka, Martin Hattala, Václav Zikmund, Jan Slavomír Tomíček and a dictionary written by František Štěpán Kott). Considering Smetana's biographic data, the features were divided on those which are connected to Smetana's lack of knowledge of contemporary orthographical and grammatical rules (or they were not automatic for him) and those which follows the spoken *usus* (Czech Linguistic Atlas was used to know their extension on Czech language area) and those which are influenced by Smetana's Czech-German bilingualism.

The first group contains orthographic features such as writing of *i/y* (mainly after consonants orthographically ambiguous, namely in the roots of words: *neobičejnou; zysk*, in the endings of nouns and adjectives: *pro kusi; za předešlí rok*,

in the endings of participle: *básně* [...] *mě přiměli*, but also after consonants orthographically hard: *přič* or soft: *kteřý*), then writing of *mě/mně* (*pisemě; v zimně; pro mně; mě* [...] *o tom pište*) or prepositions *s/z* (*Marie Roubalová z její sestrou Gabrielou*). It also contains grammatical features mainly attaching wrong endings or suffixes and endings. The use of nominative form in different cases appears repeatedly (*při práce; z upokojenou mysl*), declension and conjugation of a word by strongly represented type (*v umění naším; nabýváje*), assimilation by form occurring in a near context plays a role (*co jsem* [...] *dostal nějakou zprávou; určit jemu v scéně nejbližšímu pana zpěváka*) or the loss of the utterance perspective (*smlouvou stvrzenou nás obou p. Pollinim a mnou, podpisem*).

Features following the spoken usus are, in orthography, represented by voicing assimilation (*lechké kalamajky; těžká věc*), the loss of voice at the end of the word (*aš; sloch*) or simplifying of groups of phones, which is, unlike previous features, out of the norm even in the spoken form (*kuli = kvůli; s kerou; řáký*). In grammar, among features following spoken (out of norm) usus of nouns and adjectives (and also pronouns and numerals) belong mainly the unification tendency in plural (it is manifested by attaching of feminine or dual endings in the instrumental plural: *s kobercem; s penězma* and also by unification of adjectives and pronouns forms in the nominative and accusative plural of all three genders: *mladý Polákové; tyto místa*), narrowing *é > í* leading to the unification of the whole paradigm of hard adjective declension (*moje starý Branibory; v novým bytu*), the unification of the genitive and locative plural (or rather the penetration of locative ending to the genitive, be it the attachment of the whole genitive ending: *konec mých starostech* or just the ending *-ch*: *svou zásobu musikaliích*), genitive and dative forms of numbers *dva, oba* and the noun *ruce* in the form *dvouch, obouch, rukouch* and *dvoum, oboum, rukoum*, compound adjective declension of possessive adjectives (*o pobytu Bendlovém*), the pronoun *onen* (*aby si oné recitativy přispůsobili*) and the number *jeden* (*z jedného pokoje do druhého; jedným slovem*). From the verb forms of spoken usus follow the use of endings *-u* and *-ou* for the 1<sup>st</sup> person singular and the 3<sup>rd</sup> person plural present tense of the verb paradigm *krýt* and *kupovat* (*zahraju; pozdravujou*), present form for the 1<sup>st</sup> person plural without the ending *-e* (*jedem*), forms *můžu, můžou*, infinitives *mocť, říct* (instead of the only contemporary appropriate *moci, říci*), the use of forms *jseš a nejni*, forms of the past tense without auxiliary verb *být*, which function is overtaken by personal pronoun (*já viděl*), infinitives with a change *-st > -ct* (*uvěct; zavěct*), forms of active participle without ending *-l* (*zaved*), the attachment of endings *-e/ějí* in the 3<sup>rd</sup> person plural indicative present active of verb paradigms *prosít* and *trpět* (*obdařejí; utrzejí; nevidějí a neslišejí*). Territorially most marked features are the use of nominative instead of accusative plural at animate masculine nouns (*opije zbrojnoši*), at verbs, it is e.g. the presence of *l*-participle of the verb *dělat* in a phonic varied form *ďál* (territorial extension of those features overlaps with areas where Smetana lived during his childhood and youth).

Regarding the influence of German, it is noticeable in both the orthography (and graphic) and in grammar. In orthography, it is presence at e.g. writing of appellatives with capital letter (*do Hotelu; za Klavír*), marking of geminates by a macron above particular grapheme (*na rekōmendaci; viňou*), the use of German graphemes (*pro tragōda*), graphical form of foreign words (*applaus; efekt; korektura*). German also plays a role in morphology e.g. with difficulty in using reflexive possessive pronoun *svůj* (*Piš tedy brzo / Tvému [...] Bedř. Smetanovi; Vždyť Vám pro svoje zdokonalení v umění svém [...] nezbyvá tolik času*) and in the substitution of adjectives and adverbs forms (*aby naše přátelství zůstalo trvanlivě; na [...] svěření od Tebe též německé psaně*). The influence of German, or more generally foreign paradigms, is also significant in syntax. It is presence in imitation of foreign languages word order schemas e.g. placing verbs at the end of the sentence (especially at subordinate sentences), by using the so called frame constructions (*Chtěl jsem Vám alespoň něco potěšitelného ohlásit*), postposition of congruent attribute (often at attributes expressed by possessive pronoun: *z oper mých*), by using German preposition phrases instead of corresponding Czech phrases (*interess pro umění*) or by using prepositional phrases instead of non-prepositional ones (*přijedu do Prahy [...] s poledním vlakem*). The penetration of German features is also visible at lexis i.e. placing of German words into a Czech text (*My myslíme, že jsme mohli zde o všech těch Geschäftsangelegenheiten hovořit*) or calquing of German phrasemes (*...jsem si vzal tu smělost* according to German *sich die Freiheit nehmen*).

The comparison with received correspondence showed that at people, who we defined as language professionals (i.e. Josef Srb or Eliška Krásnohorská), the deviation from contemporary norm was visible only at features which gradually became a part of standard language norm (e.g. nowadays colloquial forms as *kupuju, kupujou, můžu, můžou* or the use of Czechified forms of foreign words) or – in orthography – features which are problematic for speakers until today (mistakes in participle *-pomněl* and derivatives of the word *rozum*).

Speakers, who we defined as less language skilled, made mistakes at the same features as Smetana did (i.e. Smetana's student Josef Jiránek, singer Josef Paleček, Smetana's wife Bettina or a singer Marie Sittová). There were features caused by German education at the expense of the Czech one, spoken features and reflection of language contact of Czech and German. This 'non-exceptionality' of Smetana's expressing affirms that Smetana can be seen as a model representative of non-professional users of Czech for a given period of time.

Regarding movements in the norm, studying of syntactic features was proved to be the most interesting. Smetana's correspondence shows how principles, that were most likely used to determine the word order in spoken language (in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century as well as nowadays), gradually substituted foreign word order paradigms. It is a principle of functional sentence perspective which determines the place of verb in the sentence (the verb moves from the ending

position of main and subordinate clauses at simple verbal predicates and also at predicates expressed by compound verbal form or compound verbal predicates) and a principle of rhythm which determines the position of clitics (they are placed to the post-initial position so apart from Smetana's *z Iho předst. dostal jsem tantiémy* or *U nás zde aš po dnes pořád jen se lilo* also *Vloni jsem napsal 4 Polky pro klavír* or *co se ve světě děje* occur in his letters). In this context, it is worth to notice that features following the spoken usus, which are noticeable at Smetana's orthography and morphology, are against the contemporary norm and are (with exceptions) against the future norm too. On the contrary, syntactic features penetrating under the spoken usus influence show the divergence of contemporary norm and their use is in accordance to the direction of standard norm development.

The answer to the question what is in Smetana's expressing, which we defined as prototypical in many aspects, extraordinary is that the specific of his expressing is mainly in lexis, which was proved by the analysis. Lexis is distinguished by significant vividness, imagery and expressivity (shown by e.g. many phrasemes: *jsem hluchý jako pařez; přislíbil hory a doly* or metaphors: *Ale vnitřní apparát [ucha] – ta klaviatura obdivuhodná našeho vnitřního ústrojí – jest porouchaná, rozladěná, kladívka vžejí, a žádný ladič dosud nedovedl, tuto klaviaturu zase úpravití*). The fact that Smetana was able to fully express feelings, attitudes and evaluations is besides other things an argument affirming the assumption that Czech was his real mother tongue. In this context, it is interesting to compare results of our research with findings of Marek Nekula who focused on Smetana's German analysis. Nekula discovered that Smetana did not have problems in German orthography or morphology, however he discovered Smetana's deficiency in lexis, particularly in phraseology. So this situation is exactly the opposite than in Czech. Smetana acquired German orthographical and grammatical rules at school thus he commanded them undoubtedly. However, the private sphere connected to spoken (colourful, expressive) communication was more likely bounded to Czech and thus Smetana's expressing seems to be lexically more vivid in Czech.

## Conclusion

The monograph generally demonstrated usefulness of combination of biographical data study and contemporary social context with detailed language analysis supported by corpus frequency data. In analytical part, it demonstrated how was Smetana's expressing contemporary prototypical and in contrary extraordinary. Created electronic corpus of correspondence is available for other research of Smetana's Czech; the results of analysis can serve as a comparative material for similarly oriented studies. Only the comparison with research of other contemporary speakers' language (whether language of professionals or not) can lead to more objective knowledge of Czech of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.