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## Means of sentence condensation in written journalism

✦ Кључне речи:  
*journalistic style, persuasion,  
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Linguistic literature has traditionally described condensed structures as a phenomenon typical of professional, scientific registers, while admitting that they may also feature in other registers, e.g. in fiction and in journalism. In particular, condensed structures are commonly employed in written journalism, making it possible to present more information within texts of limited length. This is particularly useful in analytical writing, e.g. in commentaries, where the

У раду се аутор бави сажимањем текста у актуелној штампи. Испитивање се фокусира на оне форме које се често користе у чешким дневним листовима. Језички материјал који се анализира долази из два извора: (1) квалитетних дневних новина, које укључују *Mladá fronta Dnes*, *Právo* и *Lidové noviny*, и (2) из дневних таблоида, попут *Aha*, *Blesk*, и *Šíp* – сви који су изашли из штампе између новембра 2006. и октобра 2007. године. Основна хипотеза је била да две врсте различитих новина требају користити различите кондензаторе; међутим, та теза није потврђена актуелним подацима.

lower dynamism of presentation resulting from condensation is not a problem.

In his study of competing linguistic forms, Milan Jelínek (1995: 752) describes condensed structures as a means of implementing a scheme of condensed syntactic structure, as opposed to a non-condensed, regular syntactic structure. The condensed elements are more firmly integrated into the sentence than e.g. subordinate clauses into a complex sentence. Depending on their



word class, he classifies them as transgressive, participial, infinitival, nominal, adjectival and adverbial condensers, respectively. In a broader perspective, he includes among the condensers even some stative nouns and adjectives. In his opinion, the competing condensed forms manifest the implicitness – explicitness dichotomy and are related to cohesive competitors.

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J. V. Bečka (1992) employs the concept of compactness of expression within clauses, clause elements or their constituent parts. Condensation occurs when “one of two ideas originally represented by two respective clauses ... becomes increasingly dependent syntactically on the other, until it becomes its constituent part” (Ibid: 234). He distinguishes compactness related to predication, coordination and, partly, even to determination, and gives a basic scale of compactness (from loose to compact) as follows: coordinated clauses, subordinate clauses, participial or infinitive non-finite clauses, and non-clausal nominal structures. This scale may be extended by including loosely attached complements, appositions, stative nouns or dynamic adjectives. As Bečka points out, a comprehensive compactness scale cannot be created in practice, since the separate structural variants have semantic limitations: e.g. infinitive structures in Czech cannot express anteriority but only posteriority, while participial transgressives cannot express posteriority, but may be used to convey simultaneity or anteriority.

A treatment of the means of language condensation is presented in *Mluvnice češtiny*, vol. 3, (*Czech Grammar*), 1987, which explores transformations of subordinate clauses into clause constituents. The nominal or adjectival structures resulting from the process of nominalisation increase the compactness and economy of expression,

which makes them particularly frequent in written journalism.

Condensed structures and their distribution in scientific texts written between 1877 and 1905 are the topic of a monograph by Eva Hošnová called *K vývoji české syntaxe* (*On the development of Czech syntax*, 1994). The author compares their use in the above-mentioned period with their current use in written and, to some extent, also in spoken language, classifies the data into separate types of clausal and non-clausal condensation, and uses statistical methods to establish the frequency of the structures in the texts explored.

A particularly frequent form employed in syntactic condensation is the adjectival attribute as an alternative to a relative clause. Its use in scientific texts from the period of the Czech National Revival is described by M. Jelínek (1971), while Jarmila Alexová (2005) explores attributive structures in two scientific texts from the Baroque period.

Condensed forms may fulfil the roles of both marked and neutral language structures. The neutral, unmarked condensers include infinitives, which, owing to their stylistic neutrality, occur across the whole range of written and spoken registers, emphasising the dynamic, actional nature of presentation. The present corpus of data includes only several examples where the infinitive is used to express the imperative or indicative mood. Some of the examples are exclamatory, e.g. *Sestavit vládu závislou na komunistech!*, others are used to convey assessment, e.g. *Oprášit, vyznamenat, potrást rukou a opět honem do futrálu* (speaking of war veterans). Both of these examples express disapproval, outrage, or rejection of the events described. On the whole, infinitives employed as condensers are rare in current written journalism.

Among distinctly formal, bookish structures in current Czech are participial transgressives. With the exception of some set phrases they are extremely rare in spoken communication, and always stand out conspicuously in written journalism, particularly when they contrast with the stylised pseudo-spoken manner of communication. Transgressives convey a temporal relationship with the main clause, typically simultaneity or anteriority. The relatively more frequent present form is used for events or activities occurring at present, such as *Nejsa však členem ODS, mohu si jenom povzdechnout ...; v sobotu večer, žmoulaje sešitek, kontroluje s policejním prezidentem...*; *Ale J. D. jde dál. Píše, máje na mysli maďarskou protikomunistickou revoluci...*, etc. In addition to their temporal meaning, transgressives may suggest a range of other typically adverbial meanings (Bauer – Grepl, 1980: 176–177), such as reason. Although infrequent, participial transgressives are used, owing to their condensation potential, both in academic writing and in journalism, reflecting the intellectual nature of the two registers and the need to express generally valid concepts, as well as the need in the latter register to present as much information as possible within limited space.

Written journalism frequently employs apposition as a condenser. Apposition was treated as a kind of attribute in some early textbooks and grammars of Czech, while current descriptions (Příruční mluvnice češtiny, 1995: 519) include it among the complex clause elements. V. Mathesius (1947) characterises the relationship between apposition and its governing noun as one of broad equivalence, a syntactic relationship of its own kind. Broad equivalence means that one item of information is expressed in at least two ways. The order of the elements may be optional, since it is sometimes difficult to determine which of them presents more

important information, e.g. *Prezident Václav Klaus, čestný předseda ODS, ...; ... Vladimíra Tomšíka, od příštího týdne nového centrálního bankéře, ...; Munír Haddád, jeden z devíti soudců, ...; Rada bezpečnosti, nejakčnejších z jejích orgánů, ... (= UN bodies); Jiří Čunek, místopředseda a přední ministr Topolánkovy vlády,...* etc. As is clear from the above examples, apposition conveys a variety of semantic relations between its constituents (e.g. explanation, listing, focussing, summary, identification, revision or correction), completing the original information or elaborating on it. Apposition in written journalism sometimes conveys affective meanings, e.g. *My bychom měli pustit z hlavy marginálního Čunka, tohoto neohroženého Josefa Hybeše naší doby, ...; ... Petra Hulinského, pražského radního a známého přeborníka v bojovém umění a politických čachrech, ...* etc., and can therefore function as a means of linguistic activation.

J. V. Bečka (1992) uses the term loose or “French” complement for structures expressing meanings which the writer does not wish to present formally as separate clauses in order to keep the hypersyntactic sequences compact. These are nominal forms “which are typically used to express the origin, condition, function or ability of the person in question” (Ibid: 240), e.g. *Dvacetiletá vycházející hvězda pokořila v pátek v přímém souboji daleko zkušenějšího českého kolegu v brance Floridy...*; *Fanyynka Tří sester pokřtila Mydlovary ...* etc.

The role of a condenser can also be fulfilled by the past participle. Czech dailies occasionally employ this form in the role of the predicate, with the auxiliary verb elided. The temporal setting, which is crucial for understanding, is then supplied by the context, e.g. *Vystrašen uvádající popularitou, zaskočen některými stranickými kolegy, ... a možná poučen z výsledků nedávných voleb ...*

(Paroubek); *To Topolánek, podroben kritice i svých stranických druhů, je člověk přímočarý, žádný pokrytec a nevysvětluje nic.* In written journalism these structures, on the whole, feel bookish and lack dynamics.

Frequently occurring as condensers in written journalism are deverbal adjectives, i.e. adjectives formed from verbs. The usual base forms in the word-formation process of adjectivisation include the present participles of the verbs, transgressives, or past participles.

Imperfective verbs yield active deverbal adjectives expressing actions simultaneous with those presented by their superordinate clauses, e.g. *monarcha tahající z Hradu za politické nitky; řidičům přijíždějícím do Prahy; vyhýbající se fiat dostal smyk; lidé čekající na vlak a mířící z nádraží; dramaticky rostoucí počet úmrtí* etc. Actions or events completed before the time indicated by the finite verbs are conveyed by active deverbal adjectives expressing anteriority, e.g. *včera se shromáždivší celostátní konference lidovců; odstoupivší předseda KDU-ČSL; Strana, ..., lehce si zakoketovavší s rovnou daní...* etc. However, these forms have very limited distribution in written journalism.

Passive deverbal adjectives specify the head noun, conveying additional meanings related to it, e.g. *dobroty uvařené Adolfem Hauptmanem mohou ještě dnes lidé ochutnat; proudění málo okysličené krve; preference vyjádřené voliči; kvůli otravě podomácku vyrobenou vodkou; na již uhrazené předplatné se změna nevztahuje; tyto dál rozpracované teorie* etc. Deverbal adjectives are a very useful tool in written journalism, making it possible to express an ongoing activity or a permanent quality, preserving aspectual and sometimes even valency distinctions, and conveying temporal information (for more detail see Dokulil, 1962: 43). Since they are stylistically neutral, they are inconspicuous

in written journalism and rank among the means of language automation, unless they are authorial coinages employing unusual or even deliberately incorrect word-formation processes, in which case they are graphically highlighted (for instance by quotation marks), e.g. *platební karta "přednabitá" určitou částkou* etc. However, some uses of deverbal adjectives may be inappropriate, e.g. *Sražený a v lese pohozený Karel se vrátil domů.*

Similar properties are manifested by deverbal nouns derived by suffixes *-ní, -tí, -í* or *-í* from past participle bases in what is a very productive word-formation strategy. Owing to their verbal origin, the deverbal nouns can convey processes including their agents, and even preserve aspectual distinctions. As a particular linguistic form they remain inconspicuous in written journalism, unless they occur in large numbers within a limited space. However, excessive accumulation of deverbal nouns is considered inappropriate, since it makes the structure of the text less transparent, e.g. *... sledujeme poslední kroky vedení ODS při vyjednávání o sestavení nové vlády* etc.

Contemporary written journalism typically employs condensed structures which are themselves richly expanded by other clause elements. These structures represent alternatives to finite subordinate clauses, making it possible for the writer to present as much information as possible within a very limited space, e.g. *údajně nejstarší bez přestávky vydávané noviny světa.* This produces complex constructions abounding in various types of attributes modifying the head noun, e.g. *... mírný pokrok v mezích zákona v podobě vládou navrhovaného tříprocentního poklesu počtu zaměstnanců státu...* The tendency towards nominal compactness is not an exclusive feature of journalistic texts; these structures also commonly occur in official documents and regulations.

Another very common type of condensation employs expanded attributive structures whose meaning is gradually made more precise by adding other items of information. The attributive adjectives modifying the head noun in turn govern additional clause elements, such as objects and adverbials.

Among such adverbials, those conveying temporal information are the most frequent, since temporal orientation of events is of prime importance in journalism, e.g. *kdysi nejpopulárnější politička v zemi Petra Buzkova; právě sestavená vláda ODS; advokáti dnes už bývalých policistů; za již nahlášené události souvisící s větrem; nemá ani jindy obvyklé týdenní zásoby potravin; dopis od tehdy čtrnáctileté dcery; láva ze tří dnes již vyhaslých sopek; tato dnes moderní metropole; nyní pětáctýřicetiletá řeholnice; rekonstrukce deset let starého domu; spoustu stromů sám před zhruba pětatřiceti roky sázel; vyplývá to ze včera zveřejněného únorového volebního modelu; přes dosud příznivou zimu* etc. As is clear from the above examples, the temporal specification is usually only approximate.

Another frequent type of complementing adverbials are those of measure, e.g. *... otázka ... elektrizovala jinak poněkud odevzdané auditorium sociálnědemokratické elity ...; částečně obnovené místnosti; nepříliš známý senátor Mirek Topolánek; ... nešlo o nijak masové akce; má na svědomí již několik převážně méně závažných atentátů; Neumannová vyhrála s téměř půlminutovým náskokem ...* etc., followed by structures presenting spatial orientation, e.g. *... tyto na dně umístěné segmenty; v Česku vyrobené stroje; v domě žijící starší manželé s dospělým synem; smrtelně zranil dvě osoby v okolo jedoucím voze; z pět kilometrů vzdáleného Kostelce nad Černými Lesy* etc. On the other hand, adverbials of respect are much rarer, e.g. *Dalo mi trochu práce jinak sympatickému čtenáři vysvětlit, ...*

The following group of condensers comprises nominal structures containing the object governed by an adjective, e.g. *lidmi přeplněné Václavské náměstí; tato či jí podobná skupina; ... zjištěným skutkovým stavem a stejně pečlivě z něj odvozeným právním posouzením...; ... tím více svobodu omezujících nařízení ... v násilím zmítaném Iráku* etc. A number of these condensers express the agent, e.g. *počet lékařem předepsaných receptů; námi oslovení řidiči; jím nastudovaná opera; četné od brouků vyšlapané cestičky; první rána jím (i.e. by Paroubek) ohlášené modernizace ČSSD* etc., including instances of “inanimate agent” (Mluvnice češtiny vol. 3: 45, 258), e.g. *větrem vyvrácený strom, v této státem ovládané firmě, Právem (= by a Czech daily paper) oslovení genetici* etc.

Some of the structures used in an effort to make the text as economical as possible are distinctly inappropriate. These include a combination of two different prepositions in juxtaposition, e.g. *V roce 1977 se zamíloval do o pět let mladší Evy – Posílání vzkazů přes bulvární média považuje za do očí bijící projev nestability osobnosti – Těsně před Liduškou se ovšem (Brodský) platonicky zamíloval do o šest let starší hvězdy stříbrného plátna Ljuby Hermanové. – Dlouho však váhal, zda má začít vztah s o 34 let mladší ženou. – Lužní les se proměňuje na pro střední Evropu typickou komáří džungli. – Všichni si rádi pochutnají na za minutu hotových omáčkách a sýrech. – Klidně tu postrádají mnohé z pro nás nepostradatelného* etc. The writer's excessive effort to achieve maximum economy results in stylistically inappropriate constructions. However, examples similar to those given above are by no means unusual in Czech dailies.

A specific type of condensation is represented by elliptical utterances with the verb left out, e.g. *Napětí, elegance, myšlenkový střet nikde. Ve vzduchu těžká atmosféra*

*splněné povinnosti. – Chátrající, zanedbaný, dlouhodobě bez využití. Odhad nákladů na záchranu: deset až třicet milionů korun. Systematic research into linguistic forms employed in Czech dailies has revealed that even verbless, strictly nominal sentences occur relatively commonly, e.g. Nepředstavitelný klid a pohoda. Volný režim. Hřiště na všechny možné sporty. Ženy, děti a domorodci. Škola a nemocnice. Práce a prosperita. Architektonicky zajímavé domovy ve tvaru polokoulí. Žádná zdravotní rizika. Rekreační destinace pro přepracované politiky?*

CONCLUSION: Although condensed structures occur most frequently in texts of an intellectual nature, e.g. legal or administrative, they feature prominently even in professional writing and in journalism. The choice of

alternative structures varying in their degree of condensation is of extreme importance in journalism and reflects the need for concise and compact ways of expression. On the other hand, an excessive accumulation of condensers may result in “overloading” the text with information. The use of condensers displaying varying levels of condensation may help the reader to establish the structure of the information presented and to distinguish the essential information from marginal details. As a rule, the presentation of unique, essential information typically employs looser sentence structures, while condensers are used to present information which is general, marginal, or likely to be known by the reader.

## summary



### Means of sentence condensation in written journalism

The paper explores means of sentence condensation in Czech written journalism, focussing on those which are frequent, such as infinitive and participial structures, apposition (including a variety of expanded attributive structures), past participles, and deverbal adjectives. In written journalism, these forms can be employed as means of both language automation and activation.

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