A Statistical Approach to Czech Prepositional Collocations

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Abstract

The paper deals with prepositional collocations in Czech which consist of a preposition and an autosemantic word, esp. abstract noun, either of paradigmatic type, e. g. v rámci (within the framework of), or non-paradigmatic type -vzhledem k (with respect to). After the description of their rhythmical and lexical structure, a statistical analysis of five chosen groups follows. The statistical values are frequency of the abstract noun, frequency of the prepositional collocation, ratio between these two frequencies and MI-score. It appears that the high statistical data, i. e. MI-score and the ratio between the collocation frequency and the lemma frequency are fundamental for searching of the basic member of each group as well as of other fully lexicalized members. These collocations should be elaborated in specific lemmas.

1. Topic

The aim of this paper is to study Czech compound prepositions or prepositional collocations, such as according to, with respect to etc. in English (s ohledem na in Czech). These prepositions mostly consist of a preposition and an autosemantic word, esp. noun. Some of these compounds in Czech are fully lexicalized, such as vzhledem k (owing to) or v rámci (within the framework of), some of them are used rarely or in specific types of texts. In this paper the compounds will be studied from the aspect of their a) frequency, b) frequency of the autosemantic lemma, c) ratio between these two frequencies, d) MI-score and e) structure of the prepositional compound. The open question is: under what conditions do Czech users consider a specific combination as a compound preposition? The representative 100 mil. corpus of the Czech language SYN2000 (Czech National Corpus) which was built at Charles University, Faculty of Arts in Prague, includes 60 per cent of newspaper texts, 15 per cent of fiction and factual literature, and 25 per cent of academic prose. As these prepositions occur mostly in newspapers and academic prose (85 per cent of the corpus, i. e. 85 mil. word forms) there is a strong possibility of exploiting the results given below in lexicography.

2. Structure of the Czech Prepositional Collocations

There are 370 prepositional collocations in Czech, which are described in the appendix of "Czech Idiom Dictionary" ("Slovník české frazeologie a idiomatiky") devoted to nominal idioms. The structure of these collocations can be either paradigmatic or nonparadigmatic

(Čermák 1996). The paradigmatic type consists of a preposition and an abstract noun, i. e. prep - N^{Abst} , e. g. v rámci, or of a preposition, an abstract noun and another preposition, i. e. prep - N^{Abst} - prep, e. g. na rozdíl od. Other types are nonparadigmatic, esp. those including other parts of speech, such as verbs, adverbs and synsemantic words. We will examine here 303 paradigmatic collocations and compare them with 10 nonparadigmatic collocations including nouns as well. First nonparadigmatic type consists of a noun in instrumental form and a preposition, i. e. N^c - prep, e. g. vhledem v and the second type consists of a noun, a preposition and a repetition of the same noun, i. e. N - prep - N, e. g. bok po boku.

3. Abstract Nouns

There is quite a limited number of the abstract nouns which can stand as components of the prepositional collocations. With the exception of several nouns, such as život, life', práce ,work', svět ,world', slovo ,word', rok ,year', národ ,nation', pravda ,truth' the most frequent abstract nouns are on the list. According to the manuscript of F. Čermák "Grammatical phrasemes and idioms" the majority of the abstract nouns is of a static, nondynamic character, derived from verbs, cf. pomoci - pomoc, to help - help', přát si - přání , to wish - wish', vztahovat se - vztah, to relate - relation'etc. Some of them have local and temporal meaning, e. g. střed, centre', konec, end', oblast, area', doba, čas, time, days' etc. In addition to the primary abstract nouns the prepositional collocations with secondary abstract nouns, i. e. metaphorically used concrete nouns apear as well, such as somatic ones, e. g. bok ,side', čelo ,forehead, fore', ruka ,hand', tvář ,face', and some others, e. g. vrub ,score', půda ,soil, ground', zástěrka ,apron, cover-up, pretext'. Nevertheless, the somatic nouns occur in the non-paradigmatic types in the first place, e.g. tváří v tvář , face to face' (see 6.2). There is a rule that an abstract noun is usually used in one prepositional collocation, while its occurence in two prepositional collocations is a signal of variants. This can be tested on the basis of their translation into English, e. g. the Czech collocations s podporou and za podpory have the same English equivalent, with the support of. The only exception are the nouns doba and čas, time, days' which can occur in several prepositional collocations.

4. Paradigmatic Types

As the structure of collocations will be compared with their MI-score, two paradigmatic types will be treated as a common structure prep – N^{Abst} (within MI-score only two members can be statistically taken into account). In the following list the main paradigmatic structures are given. Explanation of the table: The first word of the structure is the Czech one-word preposition, e. g. bez, do, na, v, s, z (English without, to, on, in, with, from), the second word is the abstract noun, where M,F,N stand for masculine, feminine, neuter in specific case and the number of the case is 2, 3, 4, 6 or 7 for genitive, dative, accusative, local, instrumental. The slash / divides the grammatical information from the rhythmical information, i. e. the number signifies number of syllables of the structure. As an example, the most frequent member of the group is chosen. It can be clarified on one of the structures, e. g. the structure number 12 has five members and consists of the preposition na, on and a three-syllable feminine noun in accusative form.

NO.	STRUCTURE	EXAMPLE	ENGLISH EQUIVALENT	NUMBER OF MEMBERS
1	bez + M2/3	bez ohledu (k/na)	, without regard to '	4
2	bez + N2/3	bez vědomí	,without s.o.'s knowing'	1
3	do + F2/1	do řad	,into y ranks of	1
4	do + F2/2	do doby	,till the time of	2
5	do + M2/2	do středu	,into the centre of	2
6	do + N2/2	do centra	,into the centre of	1
7	do + N2/3	do popředí	,to the fore of	2
8	k + F3/2	k poctě	,in honour of	2
9	ke + F3/2	ke škodě	,to the detriment of	1
10	ke + M3/2	ke konci	,towards the end of	1
11	na + F4/2	na dobu	,for the period of	7
12	na + F4/3	na adresu	directed at	5
13	na + F6/2	na půdě	on the grounds of	3
14	na + F6/3	na úrovni	on the level of	4
15	na + M4/2	na rozdíl (od)	, in contrast to	19
16	na + M4/3	na motivy	,on the leitmotifs of	1
17	na + M6/2	na konci	,in the end of	3
18	na + M6/3	na základě	on the basis of	10
19	na + N4/2	na přání	,according to wish of	2
20	na + N4/3	na znamení	,as a sign of	1
21	na + N4/4	na naléhání	,on the insistence of	1
22	na + N6/3	na pozadí	,against the background of	2
23	o + F6/3	o otázce	,about the problem of	1
24	o + M6/3	o rozsahu	,in the extent of	1
25	od + F2/1	od dob	,since the days of	1
26	od + F2/2	od doby	,since the time of	1
27	po + F4/2	po dobu	,for the duration of	1
28	po + F6/2	po stránce	,in respect of	1
29	po + F6/3	po dohodě (s)	,by agreement with'	2
30	po + M6/2	po boku (s)	,side by side with	2
31	po + M6/3	po způsobu	,after the fashion of	2
32	pod + F7/2	pod tíhou	,under the weight of	1
33	pod + F7/3	pod záštitou	, under the auspices of	8
34	pod + F7/4	pod patronací	,under the auspices of	1
35	pod + M7/2	pod názvem	,under the title of	6
36	pod + M7/3	pod titulem	,under the title of	1
37	pod + M7/4	pod patronátem	,under the auspices of	1
38	pod + N7/2	pod heslem	,under the slogan of	2
39	pod + N7/3	pod vedením	,under the leadership of	1
40	pro + F4/3	pro potřeby	,for uses of	2

41	pro + M4/2	pro případ	,in case of	1
42	při + F6/4	při příležitosti	on the occasion of	2
43	při + M4/3	pro účely	for the purposes of	1
44	při + M6/3	při pokusu	,attemting to	1
45	s + F7/4	s účinností	,with effect from	1
46	s + M7/2	s cílem	,with the aim of	2
47	s + M7/3	s ohledem (k/na)	,with a view to	7
48	s + N7/3	s vědomím	,with consent of	2
49	s + N7/4	s odvoláním (na)	,with reference to	5
50	s+ F7/3	s pomocí	,with the help of	4
51	se + M7/2	se sklonem (k)	,tending to	1
52	se + M7/3	se zřetelem (k)	,with a view to'	3
53	se + M7/4	se zaměřením	,with a view to	1
54	se + N7/2	se zřením	,with a view to'	1
55	u + F2/5	u příležitosti	on the occasion of	1
56	u + N2/3	u vědomí	,being aware of	1
57	v + F4/3	v náhradu (za)	,in compensation for	2
58	v + F6/2	v době	,during the time of	9
59	v + F6/3	v oblasti	, in the area of	15
60	v + F6/4	v souvislosti (s)	,in connection with	4
61	v + F6/5	v záležitosti	,in the affair of	1
62	v + M4/3	v neprospěch	,to the disadvantage of	1
63	v + M6/2	v rámci	,within the framework of	5
64	v + M6/3	v případě	,in the case of	14
65	v + M6/4	v protikladu (k)	in contrast with,	2
66	v + N6/2	v čele	,at the head of	4
67	v + N6/3	v okolí	,in the environs of	9
68	v + N6/4	v porovnání (s)	,in comparison with	4
69	ve + F6/2	ve sféře	,in the sphere of	10
70	ve + F6/3	ve šlépějích	,in footsteps of	1
71	ve + F6/4	ve vzdálenosti	,in the distance of	2
72	ve + M4/2	ve prospěch	,for the benefit of	1
73	ve + M6/2	ve vztahu (k)	,in relation with	8
74	ve + N6/2	ve znění	,in the wording of	3
75	z + F2/1	z řad	out of the ranks of	1
76	z + F2/2	z funkce	,in the capacity of	5
77	z + F2/3	z pozice	,in the position of	4
78	z + F2/6	z iniciativy	on the initiative of	1
79	z + M2/3	z důvodů	,for the reasons of	11
80	z + M2/4	z nedostatku	,due to lack of	1
81	z + N2/3	z hlediska	,from the aspect of	1
82	z + N2/4	z rozhodnutí	,following the decision of	2

83	za + F2/1	za dob	,in the days of	1
84	za + F2/2	za dobu	,during the time of	2
85	za + F2/3	za účasti	,with the participation of	2
86	za + F2/4	za přítomnosti	,in presence of	4
87	za + F2/4	za cenu	,at the (very) cost of	1
88	za + F7/3	za příčinou	,for the aim of	1
89	za + M2/2	za časů	in the days of	2
90	za + M2/3	za souhlasu	,with the agreement of	1
91	za + M2/4	za předpokladu	on the assumption of	2
92	za + M7/3	za účelem	,with the aim of	1
93	za + N2/3	za přispění	,with the contribution of	1
94	ze + F2/2	ze strany	,from the side of	2
95	ze + F2/4	ze vzdálenosti	,from the distance of	1
96	ze + M2/2	ze středu	, from the centre of	1
97	ze + N2/4	ze stanoviska	,from the aspect of	1

Table 1: Paradigmatic structures of the Czech prepositional collocations

It appears that the groups with 1-2 members include a noun form consisting either of 1 or 4 and more syllables, cf. na vrub, at the expense of and pod patronátem, under the auspices of etc. On the other hand, the groups consisting of 3 and more members have usually two-or three-syllable noun form, such as z důvodů, for the reasons of ve sféře, in the sphere of vokolí, in the environs of etc. However, it must be emphasized that 97 types of prepositional collocations in the table 1 can be reduced if the vocalized prepositions – i.e. ve, se, ke, ze are included in one group together with the non-vocalized prepositions v, s, k, cf. two groups ve prospěch (72) and v neprospěch (62) The prepositional collocation ve prospěch includes a vocalized preposition ve (1 syllable) and the noun consists of two syllables – prospěch, benefit, opposed to the prepositional collocation with the opposite meaning v neprospěch, to the disadvantage of which has a non-vocalized preposition v (0 syllables) and a three-syllable noun neprospěch, disadvantage Similarly, into one group the groups v oblasti, in the area of (59) and ve sféře, in the spere of (69), se sklonem (k), tending to (51) and s ohledem (k/na), with a view to (47) etc. can be incorporated.

5. Statistical Analysis of the Prepositional Collocations

In the following analysis 5 groups will be studied in a more detailed way. The number of the members in each of the following group will include additional 3-5 members, i. e. more than in the previous group, namely 4 members, 8 members, 11 members, 15 members, 20 members. The frequency of the lemma and frequency of the collocation as well as their ratio (collocation frequency/lemma frequency) and mutual information (MI-score) will be taken into account.

5.1 The "bez+M2/3" Group

In this group collocations with preposition bez, without and a masculine noun in genitive case the form of which consists of three syllables are studied.

bez + M2/3		bez ohled	lu (k/na)	(without regard to)	4
LEMMA	LEMMA FREQ.	RATIO	MI- SCORE	COLLOCATION	COLLOCATION FREQ.
nárok	10278	0.01	8.026	bez nároku (na)	176
ohled	11071	0.39	9.924	bez ohledu (k/na)	4362
rozdíl	23087	0.02	9.133	bez rozdílu	558
zřetel	1190	0.04	7.838	bez zřetele (k/na)	42

Table 2: Type bez ohledu (k/na)

The MI-score values in this group grow from 7.8 to 9.9. The collocation with the highest MI-score value is bez ohledu k/na which is the most frequent but which has the highest ratio between collocation and lemma frequency as well = 0.39. The average ratio of the other members of this group is 0.03. It seems that collocation bez ohledu k/na is the strongest member of this group and under its influence the rest of this group are taken as prepositional collocations. The MI-score depends on the frequency of the first preposition – frequency of preposition bez is 86340.

The nouns used in this group are nárok ,claim', ohled ,regard', rozdíl ,difference' and zřetel ,respect, regard'.

5.2 The "pod+F7/3" Group

In this group the collocations with the structure preposition *pod*, under and feminine noun in instrumental consisting of three syllables are studied:

pod + F7/3		pod zášti	itou (under	8	
LEMMA	LEMMA FREQ.	RATIO	MI- SCORE	COLLOCATIO N	COLLOCATIO N FREQ.
ochrana	17791	0.01	8.402	pod ochranou	189
pečeť	652	0.01	6.708	pod pečetí	9
podmínka	36458	0.01	7.302	pod podmínkou	229
pohrůžka	313	0.47	10.467	pod pohrůžkou	147
taktovka	650	0.66	10.476	pod taktovkou	429
záminka	1163	0.24	9.729	pod záminkou	282
zástěrka	227	0.05	8.077	pod zástěrkou	11
záštita	950	0.59	10.528	pod záštitou	561

Table 3: Type pod záštitou

This group is very strong. Two members have the ratio over 0.50 (pod taktovkou ,under the baton' and pod záštitou ,under the auspices of ') and one is very near to this value (0.47 – pod pohrůžkou ,under threat of'). All these three representatives have MI-scores over 10. The MI-score value depends on the frequency of the preposition pod ,under' which is rather low – 69374. The average ratio of the other member of this group is 0.06. It can be expected that in future new compound prepositions with this structure will appear. The nouns occuring in this group are ochrana ,protection', pečet' ,seal', podmínka ,condition', pohrůžka ,threat', taktovka ,baton', záminka ,pretext', zástěrka ,cover-up, pretext', záštita ,auspice'.

5.3 The "z+M2/3" Group

In this group collocations with preposition z, from and a three-syllable form of masculine noun in genitive are studied:

z + M2/3		z důvodů	(for reaso	11	
LEMMA	LEMMA	RATIO	MI-	COLLOCATIO	COLLOCATIO
	FREQ.		SCORE	N	N FREQ.
aspekt	3570	0.00	2.352	z aspektu	10
dosah	1894	0.07	5.031	z dosahu	125
důvod	35358	0.05	5.446	z důvodu	1750
důvod	35358	0.06	4.859	z důvodů	2061
návod	2321	0.01	2.652	z návodu	21
podnět	3873	0.06	5.974	z podnětu	227
pohled	24309	0.06	4.877	z pohledu	1451
popud	699	0.11	5.899	z popudu	82
příkaz	4250	0.01	3.876	z příkazu	60
rozkaz	2690	0.01	3.364	z rozkazu	25
titul	16510	0.02	4.053	z titulu	405

Table 4: Type z důvodů

This group is very specific. There is no member with the ratio value near 0.50. The highest ratio is 0.11 (z popudu, on the iniciative of). The MI-scores vary from 2 to 6 which depends on the high frequency of the preposition z, from '-861071. These collocations are nevertheless treated in various dictionaries and grammars as prepositions. The reason may be the existence of a similar structure but with a neuter noun, z hlediska, from the aspect of with the ratio 0.55 and MI-score 6.432. The nouns which appear in this group are aspekt, aspect', dosah, reach', důvod, reason', návod, instruction', podnět, stimulation', pohled, sight', popud, initiative', příkaz, order', rozkaz, command', titul, title'. (z titulu, by virtue of').

5.4 The ,,v+F6/3" group

In this group collocations with the structure preposition v, in and three-syllable feminine noun in local are described:

v + F6/3		v oblasti	(in the are	15	
LEMMA	LEMMA	RATIO	MI-	COLLOCATIO	COLLOCATIO
	FREQ.		SCORE	N	N FREQ.
blízkost	4040	0.41	4.517	v blízkosti	1674
hodnota	32203	0.09	4.783	v hodnotě	3035
intence	403	0.45	5.249	v intencích	185
naděje	12808	0.00	2.261	v naději na	36
oblast	44806	0.27	4.364	v oblasti	12040
osoba	32311	0.01	2.327	v osobě	224
otázka	48635	0.03	4.137	v otázce	1299
otázka	48635	0.01	3.458	v otázkách	420
platnost	7109	0.06	3.421	v platnosti	420
podmínka	36458	0.03	3.039	v podminkách	978
podoba	17494	0.24	4.539	v podobě	4244
poloha	6494	0.04	3.120	v poloze	248
povaha	6112	0.02	2.440	v povaze	107
rovina	4228	0.15	4.128	v rovině	637
úloha	7399	0.01	3.440	v úloze	158

Table 5: Type v oblasti

In this group, two members have the ratio value very close to $0.50 - v \, blizkosti$, nearby' and $v \, intencich$, within the intentions of but it seems that the leaders of this group are $v \, oblasti$, in the area of with ratio 0.27 and $v \, podobe$, in the form of with ratio 0.24 and with higher frequencies of the collocation and quite high MI-scores about 4. As the preposition v, in' is the most frequent preposition in Czech with 2525275 occurences, MI-scores are rather low, from 3 to 6. The average ratio of the remaining 11 members is 0.04. The nouns in this group are blizkost ,neighbourhood', hodnota ,value', intence ,intention', naděje ,hope', oblast ,area', osoba ,person', otázka ,question', platnost ,validity', podmínka ,condition', podoba ,form', poloha ,position', povaha ,character', rovina ,level', úloha ,role'.

5.5 The "na+M4/2" Group

In this group the structure the preposition na, on and a two-syllable masculine noun in accusative is examined:

na + M4/2	na rozdíl	(od) (in co	19		
LEMMA	LEMMA	RATIO	MI-	COLLOCATIO	COLLOCATIO
_	FREQ.		SCORE	N	N FREQ.
doklad	5982	0.00	0.166	na doklad	18
důkaz	7465	0.03	2.945	na důkaz	249
konec	57888	0.02	3.235	na konec	1038
motiv	5845	0.00	-0.224	na motiv	20
námět	3059	0.01	1.826	na námět	35
nátlak	1739	0.09	3.851	na nátlak	152
návod	2321	0.00	-1.709	na návod	4
návrh	34017	0.02	1.971	na návrh	796
podnět	3873	0.03	2.960	na podnět	129
pokyn	3262	0.06	3.660	na pokyn	212
popud	699	0.27	5.324	na popud	192
pořad	10843	0.03	2.631	na pořad	280
protest	4593	0.18	5.084	na protest	818
příkaz	4250	0.06	3.447	na příkaz	258
účet	10526	0.09	4.329	na účet	920
úkor	1945	0.95	6.113	na úkor	1849
úvod	4720	0.09	4.858	na úvod	408
závěr	18773	0.14	5.312	na závěr	2771
způsob	44054	0.01	1.875	na způsob	537

Table 6: Type na rozdil (od)

For the whole group only one member is central. The collocation $na\ ukor$, at the expense of has the ratio 0.95 and MI-score over 6. The reason why a collocation with the same meaning but with one-syllable noun form $-na\ vrub$, on tick of - is used as a compound preposition is in its comparable statistical data: ratio 0.86 and MI-score 6.019. The other members have sometimes very low MI-scores, even negative values. The average ratio of the remaining 18 members of this group is 0.06. The nouns occurring in this group are doklad, evidence, dukaz, proof, konec, end, konec, end, konec, kon

6. Nonparadigmatic Types

There are two groups including abstract nouns. The first group is represented by the collocation vzhledem k, i. e. abstract noun in instrumental form and a preposition, the second group includes abstract noun – preposition – abstract noun.

6.1 Structures with Instrumental Forms

The first group consists of two-syllable or three-syllable form instrumental form and k, to':

Noun7/2-3 -	+ k	vzhledem	k (with res	5	
LEMMA	LEMMA FREQ.	RATIO	MI- SCORE	COLLOCATION	COLLOCATIO N FREQ.
čelo	13925	0.02	5.953	čelem k	209
směr	21619	0.15	6.355	směrem k	3305
vzhled	17487	0.62	7.824	vzhledem k	14967
náhrada	4772	0.03	6.846	náhradou za	149
odměna	3906	0.03	6.313	odměnou za	120

Table 7: Type vzhledem k

It is evident that in the 2-syllable group that the less frequent members are fully fixed to the member with highest ratio 0.62 and MI-score over 7 while in the 3-syllable group the statistical data are comparable. There usage is supported by the masculine group. The nouns used in this nonparadigmatic type are čelo, forehead, fore, směr, direction, vzhled, appearance, náhrada, compensation, odměna, reward.

6.2 The Structure Noun - Preposition - Noun

This structure is not so evident but the strongest member is *tváří* v *tvář* because of the ratio value. These prepositions are on the decline.

Noun-Prep-Noun		tváří v tvo	íř (face to f	3	
LEMMA LEMMA FREQ.		RATIO	MI- SCORE	COLLOCATIO N	COLLOCATIO N FREQ.
bok	4551	0.02	3.353	bok po boku	118
ruka	53446	0.01	1.669	ruku v ruce	498
tvář	20359	0.07	3.680	tváří v tvář	1451

Table 8: Type tváří v tvář

7. Conclusion

After this statistical research it is possible to extend the number of units in each studied group and get new lemmas for the dictionary description on the basis of the corpus SYN2000. These observations are relevant for future lexicographic work, esp. on a new Czech dictionary. The high statistical data, i. e. MI-score and the ratio between the collocation frequency and the lemma frequency are fundamental for searching of the basic member of the group as well as of other fully lexicalized members. These collocations should be elaborated in specific lemmas.

8. Acknowledgments

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