

# Different treatment of aspect in English and Czech

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Bachelor Thesis  
2009



Tomas Bata University in Zlín  
Faculty of Humanities

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Univerzita Tomáše Bati ve Zlíně

Fakulta humanitních studií

Ústav anglistiky a amerikanistiky

akademický rok: 2008/2009

## ZADÁNÍ BAKALÁŘSKÉ PRÁCE

(PROJEKTU, UMĚLECKÉHO DÍLA, UMĚLECKÉHO VÝKONU)

Jméno a příjmení: **Jakub JÜNGLING**

Studijní program: **B 7310 Filologie**

Studijní obor: **Anglický jazyk pro manažerskou praxi**

Téma práce: **Rozdílné použití slovesného vidu v anglickém a českém jazyce**

Zásady pro vypracování:

Úvod do problematiky a vymezení pojmů

Srovnání českého a anglického přístupu

Stanovení hodnotícího kritéria pro výzkum

Výběr materiálů pro výzkum

Provedení výzkumu

Shrnutí a hodnocení výzkumu a stanovení závěru

Rozsah práce:

Rozsah příloh:

Forma zpracování bakalářské práce: tiskárenská/elektronická

Seznam odborné literatury:

Biber, Douglas, Edward Finegan, Stig Johansson, and Susan Conrad. Longman grammar of spoken and written English. Harlow: Longman, 1999.

Quirk, Randolph, Sidney Greenbaum, Geoffrey Leech, and Jan Svartvik.

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Dokulil, Miloš et al. Mluvnice češtiny 1 : Fonetika, Fonologie, Morfonologie a morfejmika, Tvoření slov. Praha : Academia, 1986.

Vedoucí bakalářské práce:

Mgr. Petr Daniel Hajkr

Ústav anglistiky a amerikanistiky

Datum zadání bakalářské práce:

30. listopadu 2008

Termín odevzdání bakalářské práce:

15. května 2009

Ve Zlíně dne 10. února 2009



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## **ABSTRAKT**

Záměrem této bakalářské práce je popsat a po té porovnat vidové kategorie a jejich projevy jak v jazyce anglickém, tak v jazyce českém. Nejprve se zaměřím na popis termínů spojených s videm a jejich struktury v angličtině a češtině a také se pokusím vysvětlit základní rozdíly mezi dokonavostí a nedokonavostí sloves. Dále v praktické části analyzuji a porovnáám použití vidu a jeho součástí v českém textu a jeho anglickém překladu

Klíčová slova: sloveso, vid, použití, dokonavý, nedokonavý, opětovací, opakovací

## **ABSTRACT**

The aim of this bachelor thesis is to describe and then compare the category of aspect and its expressions in English and Czech. At first I will concentrate on the description of terms associated with aspect and its structures in English and Czech and will try to explain the basic differences of perfective and imperfective aspect. Further in the practical part I will analyse and compare the treatment of aspect and its components in a text in Czech and its English translation.

Keywords: verb, aspect, treatment, perfective, iterative, frequentive

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I am really grateful for the assistance of Mgr. Petr Daniel Hajkr, consultant of my Bachelor thesis. He supported me not only through my studies but mainly while I was elaborating this paper. I would like to thank my family, friends and my girlfriend for their never-ending support and understanding.

**DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY**

I hereby declare that the work presented in this thesis is my own and certify that any secondary material used has been acknowledged in the text and listed in the bibliography.

April 19, 2009

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## INTRODUCTION

The focus of this paper is on the different treatment of aspect in English and Czech language. I was familiarised with Czech aspectual class of verbs at a secondary school and still remember the basic distinction of verbs to ‘dokonavý’ and ‘nedokonavý’ (or as in English ‘perfective’ and ‘imperfective’). The first time I found out about the English aspect was at my bachelor thesis consultant’s seminars. I realised that the treatment of both Czech and English is very complex.

While tense of a verb refers mainly to the placement in past and present time, aspect relates to the way in which we concern the completion or lack of completion of events and states. Whether the event (or state) is completed (finished) or in progress (continues) and whether we perceive it as repetitive or simple (unmarked of aspect).

In the theoretical part of my paper I will first describe the grammatical and morphological features of aspect in English using mainly publications written by Randolph Quirk and Douglas Biber and then features of aspect in Czech using publications by Miloš Dokulil and Bohuslav Havránek. Whereas Quirk’s book provides a clear and understandable explanation of elaborate grammatical issues, Biber provides his definitions with conclusions concerning beneficent corpus findings. As for the Czech publications, Dokulil provides structural changes in word-formation during aspectual changes and Havránek gives examples of whole verb forms and their counterparts.

In the analytical part I will focus on the different treatment of aspect in the Czech novel ‘The Unbearable Lightness of Being’ by Milan Kundera and its English translation. I will use short excerpts from this text to demonstrate how aspect is used in these two languages. The usage of this text should be efficient for my bachelor thesis, although it does not provide all examples of vast usage of aspect. Afterwards I will try to summarize the most valuable findings from the practical section.

## **I. THEORY**

## 1 ASPECT IN ENGLISH

Generally we can describe aspect as ‘a category used in the grammatical description of verbs (along with tense and mood), referring primarily to the way the grammar marks the duration or type of temporal activity denoted by the verb.’ (Crystal, 2008, 38)

The perfective aspect shows that the action is completed and on the other hand, progressive (or imperfective) denotes that the action is incomplete (in progress) and both aspects can be combined with both present and past tense. But according to Quirk this is an ‘oversimplified view, as is clear as soon as we observe that these two aspects may combine within a single verb phrase (e.g.: *I have been reading* is both perfective and progressive).’ Considering this we can distinguish six types of aspect as presented by Quirk (189):

Present perfective	<i>he has examined</i>
Past perfective	<i>he had examined</i>
Present progressive	<i>he is examining</i>
Past progressive	<i>he was examining</i>
Present perfective progressive	<i>he has been examining</i>
Past perfective progressive	<i>he had been examining</i>

According to Biber (460) the perfect aspect is marked by the auxiliary verb have + ed-participle and progressive aspect is marked by the auxiliary verb be +ing-participle.

As Biber’s corpus findings (461-462) indicate, verb phrases unmarked for aspect are the most common among all registers (conversation, news and academic writing) and hence the perfective and progressive aspects convey specialized kinds of meaning, they are used less commonly than simple present and past tenses. It is also interesting that in comparison with British English (BrE), American English (AmE) favours the progressive aspect, whereas BrE largely uses the perfective one.

### 1.1 Perfective aspect

As is said by Biber (463), the present perfect aspect is mainly used in news, academic prose and also in conversation. The most common present perfect verb is *have/has got*, although I rarely occurs in academic writing.

Quirk states that ‘the overlap of meaning between tense and aspect is the most problematic in English in the choice that has to be made between simple past and present perfective:’

Ex.:     Simple past:             I *worked* in Prague for six years.  
           Present perfective:     I *have worked* in Prague for six years.

Both these examples show a situation before the present, but the simple past indicates that the time of the employment has come to an end, whereas the present perfective shows that the employment has continued up to the present time (and may continue afterwards). According to Quirk this is often summarized in the statement that the present perfective signals past time ‘with current relevance’. In addition to this Quirk adds more general interpretation of the perfective aspect: ‘It indicates *anterior time*... time which is preceding whatever time orientation is signalled by tense or by other elements of the sentence or its context.’ (Quirk et al, 2004, 189-191)

Ex.:     I *have* already *met* your sister. (*I have met your sister before this moment.*)

The flight was cancelled after we *had paid* for the ticket.

(*We paid for the tickets before the time our flight was cancelled.*)

(Emphasis added)

### 1.1.1 Present perfective

So as stated hereinbefore the present perfective is used to refer to an event or state in the past. And as Biber (467) mentions, in the contrast with past simple, which describes a situation that no longer exists or an event that took place at a particular time in the past, the present perfective describes ‘a situation that continues to exist up to the present time. These meaning differences often made explicit by time adverbials accompanying the main verb.’ The duration adverbials are common with the present perfective and with the past tense adverbials describe the time when the event or state occurred.

Ex.:     I **saw** him *yesterday*.

*At that moment*, Toby **knocked**.

I **met** Giovanni *during my second year in Paris*.

*Then* they **said** well and *then* they **realised**, that it was Fennite.

I **saw** her *a week ago*.

(Biber et al, 1999, 467-468) (Emphasis added)

And Biber says like *then*, the most common time adverbial used with the past simple (used for a simple progression of past events as shown in the example above), other adverbials (i.e. *in*, *during*, *throughout* and *for*) simply delimit the period or duration of past time, ‘thus making a clear ending point before the present time.’ (Biber et al, 1999, 467)

On the contrary, as stated by Quirk (192) the duration adverbials are used in the following meanings of the present perfective:

(a) STATE LEADING UP TO THE PRESENT

That house **has been** empty *for* ages.

*Have* you **known** my sister *for* long?

(b) INDEFINITE EVENT(S) IN A PERIOD LEADING UP TO THE PRESENT

**Have** you (*ever*) **been** to Florence?

All our children **have had** measles.

(c) HABIT IN A PERIOD LEADING UP TO THE PRESENT

Mr Terry **has sung** in his choir *ever since* he was a boy.

The province **has suffered** from disastrous floods *throughout* its history.

(Emphasis added)

These adverbials indicate the beginning point or the duration of the period of time, but seldom show the ending time [supposed to be the present (or the time of speaking)]. As written by Quirk the sentences in (a) differ from the past simple in specifying that the state continues at least up to the present moment; (b) corresponds to the ‘event past’, but varies from it in that past time in question is indefinite (*rather than definite: Did you go to Florence last summer?*); (c) concurs to the ‘habitual past’, but like in (a), the period identified continues up to the present. Quirk also says that the usage of present perfective or past simple is generally ‘determined whether the speaker means an implicit time zone which has not yet finished’:

Ex.: *Have* you *seen* the Javanese Art Exhibition? (yet)

Did you see the Javanese Art Exhibition? (when it was on display)

(Emphasis added)

Whereas the first example clearly shows that the Exhibition is still open, the second one means it has finished. The present perfective is also used with verbs ‘whose meaning implies the accomplishment of a change of state:’

Ex.: The apples *have* all *been* eaten.

My mother *has* *recovered* from her illness. (Emphasis added)

From the first example we can clearly tell that ‘there are no apples left’ and from the second one that ‘my mother is better now’. It has an evident connotation with the present. These cases can occur without adverbials, although there might be a tendency to use them with adverbials such as *recently*, *just* (which emphasize ‘recency’) and ‘time relationship adverbials such as *already* and *yet*.

Ex.: **I have just bought** an apple.

The bigger nations, for their part, **have already developed** systems of takeover supervision.

(Quirk et al, 2004. 192-194) (Biber et al, 1999, 468) (Emphasis added)

### 1.1.2 Past perfective

As is mentioned by Quirk (195) the past perfective might not only be concerned as an ‘anterior version’ of the present perfective, but also the simple past. According to Quirk the past perfective “has the meaning of ‘past-in-the-past’”. We can contemplate following examples:

Ex.: No wonder Miss Mathews’ French was excellent – she **had lived** in Paris *since* childhood.

When we bought it, the house **had been** empty *for* several years.

(Emphasis added)

“The three meanings (as mentioned in 1.1.1) of ‘state’, ‘event’ and ‘habit’ can all occur in the past perfective. The two examples above illustrate the ‘state’ meaning; the following two illustrate ‘event’ and ‘habit’ respectively.”

Ex.: The goalkeeper *had injured* his leg, and couldn’t play.

It was foolish to fire McCabe: in two seasons, he *had scored* more goals than any other player.

(Quirk et al, 2004, 195-196) (Emphasis in the original)

As it is shown in Biber (469), the past perfective is mainly accompanied by time adverbials and it often occurs in dependent clauses. This is supported by Quirk (196) who states that “when transposed into the ‘past in the past’ by means of the past perfective, the contrast between the simple past and the present perfective is neutralized:”

Ex.: My aunt *had lived* in Italy for four years. (Emphasis in the original)

In this example according to Quirk, the four-year period could be a ‘period leading up to’ a specific time in the past or a ‘period which had ceased’ before the specific time in the past, ‘as would be clear in:’

Ex.: In her youth, my aunt *had lived* in Italy for four years. That’s why she spoke Italian so well.

(Emphasis in the original)

This example clearly states that it is sometimes difficult to recognize the speakers’ intended time reference. Thus the former example could be a ‘projection further into the past’ of either of the following examples:

Ex.: My aunt *lived* in Italy for four years.

My aunt *has lived* in Italy four years.

(Quirk et al, 2004, 196) (Biber et al, 1999, 469) (Emphasis in the original)

And as Biber says, when past perfect verb phrase appears in dependent clauses, the main clause ‘provides the anchor for interpreting the time reference.’ The past perfective is, according to Biber’s findings, mainly used in adverbial and complement clauses (in fiction) and in academic prose in relative clauses.

Ex.: When I **had sorted** that out, I shrugged.

It came almost as a shock to realize that her night **had been** peaceful.

The 245-year-old was remnant of the old-growth lodgepole pine that **had** originally **covered** the area of all three stands.

(Biber, 1999, 496-470) (Emphasis in the original)

## 1.2 Progressive aspect

Activities and events in progress at a certain time, generally for a limited duration, indicate the progressive aspect, which is sometimes called, as stated by Quirk (197), the durative or continuous aspect. It can also be said that it describes events that are ‘currently in progress or are about to take place in the near future; the past progressive aspect describes events that were in progress or about to take place at some earlier time.’

(Biber et al, 1999, 470)

We can easily compare the simple present and present progressive on these two examples:

Ex: Simple present: Peter *plays* the guitar well.



Present progressive: Peter *is playing* (the guitar) well.

Both sentences have the same tense, but different aspect. Aspect changes the meaning of the second sentence. Whereas the first one states that Peter is a good guitar player (his permanent skill) the second one shows Peter's production (current performance) on a certain event or during a specific period of time. We can easily transpose this contrast to the past tense:

Ex.: Past simple: Peter *played* well.  
 Past progressive: Peter *was playing* well.

However the contrast between these two examples is different (considering the first one as a past event). The past progressive shows an activity in progress (during the certain event) and the past simple shows how Peter played at the certain event. And as Quirk (197-198) states that the definition of the progressive can be divided into three elements, not all of which 'need to present in a given instance:'

- (a) The happening has DURATION
- (b) The happening has LIMITED duration
- (c) The happening is not NECESSARILY COMPLETE

Quirk further says 'that the first two components add up to the concept of temporariness.' Therefore in the sentence '*Peter is playing well*' the progressive signals that Peter's performance is just temporary rather than a permanent event. On the other hand, in '*Peter was playing well*' the progressive signals that the event lasts over a period of time, rather than at once. In the first progressive sentence the aspect "'shrinks' the time span of plays"; in the second progressive sentence it "'stretches out' the time span of played.'

(Quirk et al, 2004, 198)

Quirk (198) also claims that this contrast arises because of the distinction of (a) for single events; whereas (b) is distinctive particularly in the case of 'certain types of dynamic verb meaning called CONCLUSIVE:'

Ex.: I *read* a novel yesterday. [I.e. the whole novel]

I *was reading* a novel yesterday evening.

[I.e. there is no implication that I finished the novel in the course of the evening]

(Emphasis in the original)

The progressive aspect also differently construes the three verb senses of state, event and habit. And according to Biber (471), ‘progressive aspect is most common in conversation and fiction. In conversation, most progressive verb phrases are in the present tense, while in fiction, most progressive verb phrases are in the past tense.’

### 1.2.1 State progressive

Many verbs rarely occur with the progressive. Biber (472) lists the verbs referring to states or activities, which rarely occur with the progressive: *agree, appreciate, associate, attribute, base, believe, conceive, concern, conclude, correlate, delight, desire, know, like, reckon, suspect, want...*

Quirk also points out that in many cases this type of aspect can not be used with stative verbs.

Ex.: We *own* a house in the country.

\*We *are owing* a house in the country. \*Sam’s wife *was being* well-dressed.

(Emphasis in the original)

Quirk (189-199) explains that these verb meanings are ‘inimical to the idea that some phenomenon is in progress.’ When we use the stative verb we imply that no progress is made and when the progressive *does* occur it shows ‘temporariness rather than permanence.’

Ex.: We *are living* in the country [temporary residence]

We *live* in the country [permanent residence]

(Emphasis in the original)

However according to Biber (472-473) both dynamic and stative verbs are contained among the most common verbs used in progressive. ‘The common progressive aspect verbs typically take a human subject as an agent, actively controlling the action (or state) expressed by the verb. ... But some of the verbs, rarely occurring in the progressive, may take the human subject who doesn’t control the action or state and functions as experiencer.’

Ex.: He’s **staring** at me now.

I **saw** him the other day.

(Emphasis in the original)

### 1.2.2 Event progressive

As stated by Quirk, with the event meanings, the progressive carries the intention that an event has a span, and is not finished yet. Quirk contrast the ‘instantaneous present meaning’ of the first example with the duration implied by the second and third:

Ex.: The referee *blows* his whistle.

The referee *is blowing* his whistle.

The train *was approaching*.

(Emphasis in the original)

Quirk (199) compares the first two situations, which can be part of a radio commentary on a football match. The first suggest a short blow of the whistle, while the second one might suggest an incessant or repetitive blowing.

### 1.2.3 Habitual progressive

As its name suggests, combined with habitual meaning, this type of progressive aspect indicates that the repetition happens over a limited period of time. As shown by Quirk (199):

Ex.: The professor *is types* his own letters. (*The habit is permanent*)

The professor *is typing* his own letters while his secretary is ill.

(*The habit is temporary*)

At that time she *was having* regular singing lessons.

(Emphasis in the original)

When a clause contains an adverbial of time or frequency, ‘the progressive combines with habitual meaning to suggest that every event in a sequence of events has duration/incompletion:’

Ex. Whenever I see her, she’s *working* in the garden.

Remember that when *you’re taking* a rest, someone else *is* always *working*.

(Quirk et al, 2004, 199) (Emphasis in the original)

## 1.3 Perfective progressive

As mentioned hereinbefore the perfective and progressive aspect can be combined in one verb phrase (e.g. *has been playing*). Quirk (210) points out that the phrase also combines the features of meaning associated with each of them. Nevertheless, the perfective

progressive and its semantic range are not entirely predictable from the meaning of its components.

Furthermore Quirk (211) associates DURATION, LIMITATION OF DURATION, and POSSIBLE INCOMPLETENESS with the main meaning of the progressive (see 1.2), where the first two give the perfective progressive a sense of ‘temporariness’; as can be seen in these examples:

Ex.: I’ve *been writing* a letter to my nephew.  
How *have you been getting* on?  
It’s *been snowing* again.

(Emphasis in the original)

The three examples contain durative verbs which are typical for the progressive aspect and they describe a temporary situation leading up to the present. According to Quirk some verbs (such as live, stand, lie) have a ‘weak limitation of duration’ and by all means should not be used with the perfective progressive. As in:

Ex.: We’ve **lived** in Europe all our lives.  
We **have been living** in Europe all our lives. Or  
He **has been starting** his car.  
(*This considers the ability of the engine of the car*)  
\*He **has been starting** his book.

(*Assigns duration to something which cannot have it*)

(Quirk et al, 2004, 211) (Emphasis in the original)

Quirk (211) further says that when we combine the perfective progressive with accomplishment and process predication, a feature of possible incompleteness becomes evident, as in:

Ex.: I’ve *cleaned* the windows.  
I’ve *been cleaning* the windows.

It is obvious that here, the simple perfective indicates that the job is finished (The windows are now clean.). But the perfective progressive can be used even if the job is not finished:

Ex.: *Have you cleaned* the windows?  
No, I *haven’t finished* them yet.  
*Have you been cleaning* the windows?

Yes, but I *haven't finished* them yet.

(Quirk et al, 2004, 211) (Emphasis added)

Quirk (212) says that because of the resultative meaning we can not use a verb, which denotes accomplishment, when a clause contains an adverb of duration.

Ex.: They've *been repairing* the road for months.

\*They've *repaired* the road for months.

However Quirk (212) states an exception to this, which 'occurs where the adverbial applies to the resultant state itself or where the clause is negative:'

Ex.: They've *gone* to Spain *for two weeks*.

They *haven't repaired* the road *for years*. (Emphasis in the original)

In following examples Quirk (212) shows, that when there is not an adverbial of duration, the implication is often that the effects and results of the event are still visible:

Ex.: You *have been fighting* again. ('I can tell that from your black eye')

It's *been snowing*. ('Look, the ground is white')

Quirk summarizes the main use of the perfective progressive as follows:

The happening (a) has (limited) duration

(b) continues up to the present or recent past

(c) need not to be complete

(d) may have effects which are still apparent

(Quirk et al, 2004, 212)

#### 1.4 Present progressive expressing future time

According to Quirk (215) the present progressive can pertain to a future event anticipated in the present. 'Its basic meaning is: FUTURE ARISING FROM ARRANGEMENT, PLAN, OR PROGRAMME:

Ex.: The orchestra *is playing* a Mozart symphony after this.

The match *is starting* at 2.30 (tomorrow).

I'm *taking* the children to the zoo (on Saturday).

As mentioned by Quirk (and also hereinbefore) the progressive cannot ordinarily be used with certain stative verb types and this also applies to the use of the present progressive for the future:

Ex.: \*Strawberries are being more expensive next week.

Quirk (215) also says that when we speak about the nearest ('imminent') future happenings we might use the present progressive, unless it is opposed by a more distant event (or actions, or 'time') observed in the context.

Ex.: That does it! **I'm leaving**. (*Soon is understood*)

**I'm leaving** the university in two years' time.

(E.g. *when I've finished my studies*)

(Emphasis added)

## 2 ASPECT IN CZECH

As like in many other Slavic languages, in Czech there exist two or even three forms of one verb, which differ only in their aspectual class (although they can be translated to other languages with one word, e.g. ‘psát’ and ‘napsat’ might be translated as write). Traditionally aspect was examined in the fields of morphology and word-formation and aspect in Czech was understood only as a characteristic of a verb and its surveys were focused only on the verb and not on its syntactical context (or surroundings). Aspect in Czech is marked by morphological devices on the verb root or stem and was mainly defined on the basis of opposition of ‘perfectiveness’ and ‘imperfectiveness’. This degree of ‘completion’ characterizes both categories in a unique way. In the theoretical part I will focus on this opposition and also how are the verbs modified by different affixes. For better orientation in the text Czech words are stated in quotation marks and my examples are in italics.

### 2.1 Perfectiveness (‘Dokonavost’)

A perfective verb, according to Havránek (193) expresses an event(s) as somehow limited. On the other hand, the imperfective verb expresses an event as continuous without limitation. In Czech the perfective verbs cannot represent present time; their present forms mark future [e.g. ‘vyrobí’ (*he will make*), napíše (*he will write*)]. Thus the perfective verbs can only form past and future tenses [e.g. ‘vyrobil’ – ‘vyrobí’ (*he made – he will make*), napsal – napíše (*he wrote – he will write*)]. So they express a finished action (e.g. ‘dočetl jsem’ – *I have finished reading*) or an unfinished one (e.g. ‘dočtu’ – *I will finish reading*). The future tense is created by one word (a simple form).

The perfective verbs are mostly created from simple forms of imperfective verbs by adding prefixes. There is a large scale of prefixes that can be used in order to form a perfective verb [e.g. do-, na- nad(e), o-, od(e), -za, pod(e), pro-, roz-, při-, and many others].

Ex.:	‘vidí’ – ‘uvidí’	( <i>he sees – he will see</i> )
	‘učí se’ – ‘naučí se’	( <i>he is learning – he will learn</i> )
	‘píše – napíše’	( <i>he is writing – he will write</i> )
	‘zpívá – zazpívá’	( <i>he is singing – he will sing</i> )
	‘smát – rozesmát’	( <i>laugh – start laughing</i> )

According to Havránek (193-194) verbs created by adding a prefix not only change their aspect [e.g. ‘přinese’ (*he will bring*), ‘přijde’ (*he will come*), ‘najde’ (*he will find*), ‘ubere’ (*he will take*), ‘vydělá’ (*he will earn*)], but also the meaning of the verb [as in: ‘najde’ (*he will find*), ‘vzdělá’ (*he will educate*)]. So these prefixes can modify the aspectual attributes as well as the lexical semantics of the verb: ‘kreslit’ vs. ‘nakreslit’ (*paint vs. finish painting something*) or ‘zpívat’ vs. ‘zazpívat’ (*sing vs. sing only once or one song*).

Dokulil (418) describes, compared to adding prefixes, a less frequent way of ‘perfectivization’, suffixation. This way of adding suffixes creates a modal tone of the ‘swiftness’ of the verb. These verbs are thus called ‘instantaneous’ (or momentaneous). These verbs are formed by the affix **-nou(t)**. The main derivational base is imperfective verbs with simple duration [of paradigm ‘dělat’ (*do*)].

Ex.: Neutral verbs, body and sense expressions like: ‘dýchnout’ (*breathe once*), ‘chytnout’ (*catch once*), ‘plivnout’ (*spit*), ‘vrhnout’ (*throw*), ‘očtnout se’ (*appear*).

When the affix **-nou(t)** changes only ‘foundational’ perfective verbs it creates a marked form of instant perfective verbs:

Ex.:	‘Chytit’ – ‘chynout’	( <i>catch – catch once</i> )
	‘Říci’ – ‘řeknout’	( <i>tell – tell once</i> )
	‘Zmizet’ - ‘zmiznout’	( <i>disappear – disappear at once</i> )

(Dokulil et al, 1986, 418)

## 2.2 Imperfectiveness (‘Nedokonavost’)

The imperfective verbs describe the present tense with present verb forms and they might express present, past and even future [e.g. ‘čte’ (*he reads*) – ‘četl’ (*he read*) – ‘bude číst’ (*he will read*)]. The future tense is mainly a compound form of a verb form ‘budu’ and an infinitive or is formed by a prefix **-po** (‘ponesu’ – *I will carry*).

According to Havránek (194) the formation of imperfective verbs (from perfective ones) is often accompanied by a change of stem vowel, especially by ‘drawing out’ (prolonging) of the vowel (using ‘á’ instead of letter ‘o’, ‘í’ instead of letter ‘i’):

Ex.: ‘skočí’ – ‘skáče’ (*he will jump – he is jumping*)



‘rozvine’ - ‘rozvíjí’ (he will unroll – he is unrolling/ unfurling)

Sometimes the imperfective verb formation changes the consonant ending the root, as in:

Ex.: ‘hází’ – ‘hodí’ (he is throwing – he will throw once)  
 ‘přinese’ – ‘přináší’ (he will bring – he is bringing)  
 ‘oplatí’ – ‘oplácí’ (he will make up/requite – he is making up/ requiting)  
 ‘opustí’ – ‘opouští’ (he will leave – he is leaving)  
 (Havránek et al, 1960, 194) (Emphasis in the original)

As it is stated in Dokulil (418-419) the process of ‘imperfectivization’ of perfective verbs (especially the prefixed ones) creates, so called, derivative (secondary) imperfective.

Ex.: ‘zůstat’ – ‘zůstávat’ (stay – stay longer)  
 ‘dát’ – ‘dávat’ (give – give repeatedly)  
 ‘vyšíť’ – ‘vyšívat’ (embroider once – embroider)  
 ‘vyrobit’ – ‘vyrábět’ (make once- make)

As seen above the secondary perfective is created by affixes, as listed by Dokulil (419):

(a) **-v-a(t)**: i.e. by a word-forming suffix -v- and stem-forming suffix -a(t), with an obligatory ‘prolonging’ of the vowel.

Ex.: ‘dodávat’ (to be supplying), ‘dodělavat’ (finish making), ‘dohrávat’ (to finish playing), ‘vypracovávat’ (to be elaborating), etc.

(b) **-ova(t)**: is similar to (a), although without ‘prolonging’ the vowel

Ex.: ‘dokončovat’ (to be finishing), ‘dostahovat’ (to be pulling off), ‘vyletovat’, etc.

(c) **-a(t)**: is similar to (a) and (b):

Ex.: ‘vyrůstat’ (to be growing up), ‘vytloukat’ (to be knocking out), ‘pomloutvat’ (to be maligning), etc.

(d) **-ě/e(t)**: is very common; especially this suffixation changes both vowels and consonants in the stem. Change of vowel as in: ‘zACLONIT’ - ‘zACLÁNĚT’ (obscure/shade - to be obscuring) and ‘DOSUŠIT’ - ‘DOSOUŠET’ (finish the drying - to be finishing the drying). Change of the consonant as in: ‘VYSADIT’ - ‘VYSÁZET’ (plant once/drop off - plant).

### 2.3 Iterativity and Frequentivity

According to the understanding of the progress of actions we can express the action which happened or happens many times. Dokulil states (419-420) that according to the context the multiplied verbs can signal both multiplied action and not multiplied action (used with iterative verbs) or just a multiplied and often repeated action (used with frequentative verbs). So the iterative verbs ('opětovací') are mainly derived from not-multiplied both perfective and imperfective verbs and create a pair verbs: e.g. 'házet' - 'hodit' (*throw repeatedly - throw once*), 'vracet' - 'vrátit' (*give back repeatedly - give back once*), 'zavírat' - 'zavřít' (*close repeatedly - close*), 'mluvívat' - 'mluvit' (*talk repeatedly - talk*).

According to Dokulil (420) the iterative verbs are represented by these word-formation types:

(a) The type 'sázet' (*plant*) is created by suffix - **ě/e(t)** mainly from imperfective verbs. There is a frequent morphological alternation of both stem consonants and vowels, as in:

Ex.: 'sádit' (*perf. and imperf.*) - 'sázet' (*imperf.*).

('Dnes sází Petr.' *'is multiplied - 'Petr sází pravidelně pět set.' 'is not-multiplied*)

'věsit' - 'věšet' (*hang once - hang repeatedly*)

'stavít' - 'stavět' (*build - build repeatedly*)

(b) The type 'nosit' (*carry*) is created by suffix -**i(t)** from imperfective motion verbs [e.g. 'nést' - 'nosit' (*carry - carry repeatedly*), 'vést' - 'vozit' (*deliver - deliver repeatedly*), 'vést' - 'vodit' (*lead - lead repeatedly*)] with the 'e - o' vowel alternation. The verbs of this type express an action which does not give the sense of direction [e.g. 'Chodí po domě.' *He is walking around the house*). They can also denote unusual lexical tone that indicates certain capability to an activity (e.g. 'Nosí moderní oblečení.' *He wears modern garments.*)

(c) The type 'chytat' (*catch*) is formed by suffix -**a(t)** from 'instantaneous' perfective verbs [e.g. 'klesnout' - 'klesat' (*descend*)]. This type represents a specific group in which the iterative verb can either mean a continuing action (e.g. 'Ted' chytám já.' *I am catching now*) or a multiplied action in the sense of sequential acts of same nature ('Klesá níž a níž'. *It is descending more and more.*). Because of the fact that the iterative verbs might indicate a simple continuing action it is possible to interpret the aspect pair 'klesat - klesnout' vice versa as 'klesat - klesnout'. The creation of iterative verbs is nowadays no very productive.

According to Havránek (200) the frequentative verbs have an emotional tone (e.g. ‘Chodíval k nám.’ *He used to visit us.*). And when they are prolonged by additional suffix -**va** they might state an emotional tone of a distant memory (eg. ‘Chodívával k nám rád’. *He used to like to visit us.*), as you can see hereinafter.

As Dokulil (420-421) says the frequentative verbs are represented by these word-formation types:

(a) Type ‘chodívat’ (*walk*) is created by suffix **-v-a(t)** from imperfective simple and prefixed verbs. This type adds (prolongs) the stem suffix of the root [e.g. ‘mluvit’ - ‘mluvívat’ (*talk - talk often*)]. The derivational base of frequentatives is both already derived [e.g. ‘honívat’ (*catch often*), ‘končívat’ (*finish often*)] and not derived verbs [‘brávat’ (*take*), ‘malovávat’ (*paint*)]. When we want to emphasise a regular, frequent and usually long period (season) of lasting repetitiveness we might use an extended variation of this suffix (a) **-váv-at** [e.g. ‘chodívávat’ (*to go very often*), ‘říkávávat’ (*to tell very often*), ‘bývávat’ (*to be very often*)]. Nevertheless the frequentative verbs cannot be created from verbs which indicate consecutive change from one state to another [e.g. ‘stárnout’ (*get old*), ‘vadnout’ (*to wither*)].

(b) Type ‘vídat’ is nowadays non-productive. It is created by suffix **-a(t)** from imperfective continuous verbs [e.g. ‘pást’ - pásat (*to shepherd - shepherd repeatedly*), ‘vidět’ - ‘vídat’ (*to see - to see someone repeatedly*)].

## 2.4 Other forms of aspect

As stated by Dokulil (421) the creation of marked forms of ‘action mood’ (or in other words: ‘ways of verbal actions’) is represented by:

(a) ‘Distributiveness’ [e.g. ‘posedět - sedět’ (*sit repeatedly - sit*)]: as said by Havránek (201), does not state just the repetition of the event, but a repetition in a sense of affecting one event after another:

Ex.: ‘Vyházel z okna všechny věci.’ *He has thrown away all the things out of the window - that means one thing after another.*

‘Pozavíral okna.’ *He had closed all the windows. (one by one.)*

‘Zavíral denně okna.’ *He used to close the windows daily.*

(b) 'Phase' (of action progress): We distinguish 'initiative' verbs [e.g. 'vyběhnout' (*to start running*)], 'concluding' verbs [e.g. 'doběhnout' (*to finish running*)] and possibly 'limiting' [e.g. 'proběhnout se' (*to go running*)].

(c) 'Degree of the action' can be either small, then we use the prefix **-po**, e.g. 'poposednout' (*to sit down and move a bit*) or big, then we use the prefix **-vy**, e.g. 'vysedávat' (*to sit for a long time*).

(d) 'Effectiveness' should be understood as a mutation of the verb to reach a certain state.

Ex.: The verb 'sednout si' (*to sit down*) shows that we have to do this activity in order to 'sedět' (to be sitting).

(Dokulil et al, 1986, 421)

## **II. ANALYSIS**

### 3 INTRODUCTION

In this section of my paper I will analyse examples and treatment of aspect, both of which I shall obtain from my research. This research is based on book by Milan Kundera called 'The Unbearable Lightness of Being'. The aim of this research is to reveal and discuss main differences of treatment of aspect in English and Czech. By main differences it is meant the basic contrast between the formation of perfective and imperfective aspect. As I have discussed hereinbefore the aspect in Czech is mainly formed by adding affixes and word-formation changes of the verb. I will also try to focus on the use of aspect in fiction and the tone in which it is used. I mainly focus on tone of longer parts of the text rather than compare the aspect of single verbs, although I may use this comparison in order to support my explanation of the tone (or mood) of the extracted part of the text.

I have chosen Milan Kundera's book for my research, because he is globally appreciated and popular writer and the book 'The Unbearable Lightness of Being' is considered to be among of his most famous work. I might also add that I've enjoyed reading it. Kundera has also written in French, and due to the fact that he revises the French translations of his books; they are therefore not considered translations but original works.

The English translation is also very readable and was translated by Michael Henry Heim. I assume that the translation and its experienced author are both relevant for my research, as the author is a professor of Slavic Languages and Literatures and Comparative Literature at the University of California, Los Angeles languages and also a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. Among his translation works he writes book for young adults.<sup>1</sup>

The unmarked excerpts from the Milan Kundera's book and its English translation can be found in appendices.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www2.scholastic.com/browse/contributor.jsp?id=173511> (accessed May 7, 2009).

## 4 ANALYSIS OF THE TEXT

In this part of my bachelor thesis I will first provide examples that I have chosen from the book. At first I will state the part of text (in Czech); analyse it and then I will compare my conclusion with the English counterpart. I will also try to compare the different treatment of aspect in those examples. For better orientation in the excerpts I will mark ‘*perfectivness*’ in *Italics* and ‘**imperfectivness**’ in **bold** print. I divided my research into four chosen parts, which I found interesting when considered the vast field of verb forms appearing in connection with aspect. The first part provides three excerpts that show a certain flow of the text and also relate to the possible connections to past event occurring before other ones. The second part of my analysis concerns the philosophical subtext of the narrated scenes and shows the appearance of imperfective aspect. The third part about the inner thoughts of the narrator and is marked by both imperfective aspect and perfective aspect which secures the flow of the text. The last part discusses occurrence of events and whether there are repetitive or not.

### 4.1 Dějovost (action of events)

#### Excerpt 1 CZ

**Myslím** na Tomáše už řadu let, ale teprve ve světle této úvahy *jsem* ho *uviděl* jasně. *Viděl jsem* ho, jak **stojí** u okna svého bytu a dívá se přes dvůr na zeď protějšího činžáku a neví, co má dělat.

*Potkal* Terezu poprvé asi před třemi týdny v jednom malém českém městě. *Byli* spolu sotva hodinu. **Doprovázela** ho na nádraží a *čekala* s ním až do chvíle, kdy *nasedl* do vlaku. O deset dnů později *přijela* za ním do Prahy. *Milovali* se spolu ještě téhož dne. V noci dostala horečku a *zůstala* pak celý týden s chřipkou u něj v bytě.

*Pocítil* tehdy nevysvětlitelnou lásku k té téměř neznámé dívce; zdálo se mu, že je to dítě, které někdo *položil* do ošatky vytřené smolou a *poslal* po vodě řeky, aby je Tomáš *vylovil* na břeh své postele.

The marked perfective verbs in this part of text in Czech signalize the action of events and they ‘push forward’ the events themselves. It is obvious that they provide the text with dynamics and gradation. All the events are in past tense and occur successively and are

considered to be completed. They all have a specific affix which indicates the completion of the past tense [e.g. ‘uviděl’ (*I saw*) can be put in the contrast with ‘viděl’ (*I have seen*), which would not denote the completion of the action]. ‘Myslím’ and ‘stojí’ represent author’s thoughts at the time of writing the novel and the present simple tense shows the connection with present time, although it is unlikely that the author is thinking about Tomas now.

### Excerpt 1 ENG

**I have been thinking** about Tomas for many years. But only in the light of these reflections did I see him clearly. I saw him standing at the window of his flat and looking across the courtyard at the opposite walls, not knowing what to do.

He **had first met** Tereza about three weeks earlier in a small Czech town. They **had spent** scarcely an hour together. She **had accompanied** him to the station and waited with him until he boarded the train. Ten days later she paid him a visit. They made love the day she arrived. That night she came down with a fever and stayed a whole week in his flat with the flute.

**He had come** to feel an inexplicable love for this all but complete stranger; she seemed a child to him, a child someone had put in a bulrush basket daubed with pitch and sent downstream for Tomas to fetch at the riverbank of his bed. (Emphasis added)

In English translation there is a clearly bigger quantity of imperfective verb forms, indicating events that happened before a certain time and it is also clearer which event took place beforehand. For example the sentence ‘*He had first met Tereza about three weeks earlier...*’ suggests that the character had met Tereza before the narrator saw him standing at the window, this is also visible in the Czech text, because the perfective verbs indicate duration; although the events seem to be completed. These forms are used to set a scene and establish something (occurrence, consequence) which happened before a certain event.

The present perfective progressive *have been thinking* shows us that a possible incompleteness in author’s thoughts (occurring in anterior time). So both Czech and English are considering the state of author’s thoughts and use the imperfective, although in Czech it is expressed with present simple imperfective.



In next additional example, it is also obvious that the perfective verbs provide a dynamic gradation of the events. On the contrary, the Czech form 'setkává' is imperfective.

### Excerpt 2 CZ

Na začátku onoho románu, který *držela* pod paží, když *přišla* za Tomášem, **setkává se** Anna s Vronským za podivných okolností. Jsou na nástupišti, kde právě někdo *spadl* pod vlak. Na konci románu se **vrhá** pod vlak Anna. (Emphasis added)

### Excerpt 2 ENG

Early in the novel that Tereza clutched under her arm when she went to visit Tomas, Anna *meets* Vronsky in curious circumstances: they are at the railway station when someone is run over by a train. (Emphasis added)

The form of the verb 'meets', in the English excerpt, indicates a situation in the novel that can be understood as a re-citation of a certain event in a book, so the event remains in the present (*In the novel Anna always meets Vronsky, so this might be considered as a stative present perfective and it is used without reference to a specific time.*). It can also be noticed that the past simple in the English extract does not bear any aspectual reference. Unlike the past forms of Czech verbs which are perfective and are viewed as complete.

In the third supportive example of action of events the Czech version shows a clear successiveness of steps performed by the dog (again all the verbs have relevant affixation) and all the verbs are marked for the perfective aspect. In English the verbs does not show progression or projection further into the past, thus they are not marked for aspect.

### Excerpt 3 CZ

Přesto se mu [psovi] *podářilo* brzy obnovit i v curyšském bytě starý řád a staré ceremonie. Stejně jako v Praze *vyskočil* za nimi ráno na postel, aby je *přivítal* do dne, *doprovázel* pak Terezu na první ranní nákup a *vyžadoval* si jako v Praze pravidelnou procházku. (Emphasis added)

## Excerpt 3 ENG

Nonetheless, he [a dog] soon managed to re-establish the old order and old rituals in the Zurich flat. As in Prague, he would jump up on their bed and welcome them to the day, accompany Tereza on her morning shopping jaunt, and make certain he got other walks coming to him as well.

In summing up the affixed Czech forms of past tense with a perfective aspect show a contrast to the past tense of verbs in English, which in order to obtain an aspectual meaning have to be either progressive, have a limited duration or have to be happening in a reference to past (event).

## 4.2 Philosophical subtext

The passages of the Czech text which carry a philosophical subtext within the narration make mostly use of the imperfective verbs. And because the author in this case contemplates the state of peoples' lives he uses the present simple tense, which is in Czech (in the terms of aspect) represented by imperfective verbs [*without any affix modification; e.g. 'drtit' (crush) would change its aspect into perfective after the addition of a prefix roz- 'rozdrtit' (crush once)*]. We can also observe no time limitation in these imperfective verb forms and because it does not refer to a specific time, this signs of everlasting statements can be applied at any time.

## Excerpt 4 CZ

Je-li věčný návrat nejtěžším břemenem, pak se **mohou** naše životy **jevit** na jeho pozadí ve vší nádherné lehkosti. Ale je tíha opravdu hrozná a lehkost nádherná?

Nejtěžší břemeno nás **drtí**, **klesáme** pod ním, **tiskne** nás k zemi. Ale v milostné poezii všech věků žena **touží** být zatížena břemenem mužova těla. Nejtěžší břemeno je tedy zároveň obrazem nejintenzivnějšího naplnění života. Čím je břemeno těžší, tím je náš život blíž k zemi, tím je skutečnější a pravidelnější.

Naproti tomu absolutní nepřítomnost břemene **způsobuje**, že se člověk **stává** lehčí než vzduch, **vzlétá** do výše, **vzdaluje** se zemi, pozemskému bytí, **stává** se jen

napůl skutečný a jeho pohyby jsou stejně svobodné jako bezvýznamné. (Emphasis added)

In English there is not shown any progression and although the present simple carries some duration (as in ‘causes’), there is no strong continuation and because of the ‘temporariness’ the use of static verbs is not marked with aspect. The present simple in English also represents events that are in majority ‘true’ (this can be rather taken as statements by the author); so they can be taken as equal to the Czech simple tense of the verbs, although they are imperfective.

#### Excerpt 4 ENG

If eternal return is the heaviest of burdens, then our lives can stand out against it in all their splendid lightness. But is heaviness truly deplorable and lightness splendid?

The heaviest burden crushes us, we sink beneath it, it pins us to the ground. But in the love poetry of every age, the woman longs to be weighed down by the man’s body. The heaviest of burdens is therefore simultaneously an image of life’s most intense fulfilment. The heavier the burden, the closer our lives come to the earth, the more real and truthful they become.

Conversely, the absolute absence of a burden causes man to be lighter than air, to soar into the heights, take leave of the earth and his earthly being, and become only half real, his movements as free as they are insignificant.

This example only supports the previous examples, where the Czech ‘nezamykejme’ has its English counterpart in ‘don’t lock’. The Czech verb provides clear ‘imperfectivness’ and shows a repetitive situation [e.g. compare ‘zamykat’ (*lock*) with ‘zamknout’ (*lock once*)] and implies that we shouldn’t be locking ourselves every time we go to lavatory (because usually we do and the statement is true). The English verb implies that we should only lock ourselves when the statement is true.

### Excerpt 5 CZ

Chvíle defekování je každodenní důkaz nepřijatelnosti Stvoření. Buď, anebo: buď je hovno přijatelné (a potom se **nezamykejme** na záchodě!), anebo jsme stvořeni nepřijatelným způsobem.

Z toho vyplývá, že estetickým ideálem kategorického souhlasu s bytím je svět, v němž je hovno popřeno a všichni se chovají, jako by neexistovalo. Tento estetický ideál se **jmenuje** kýč. (Emphasis added)

### Excerpt 5 ENG

The daily defecation session is daily proof of the unacceptability of Creation. Either/or: either shit is acceptable (in which case don't lock yourself in the bathroom!) or we are created in an unacceptable manner.

It follows, then, that the aesthetic ideal of the categorical agreement with being is a word in which shit is denied and everyone acts though it did not exist. This aesthetic ideal is called 'kitsch'.

To sum up the different treatment of aspect in this case I would like to point out that it is important to realize that in Czech some verbs may occur with even three forms of a verb and are marked for aspect (they might not differ in their lexical meaning). Compared to English, where the main focus is put (when considering the aspect of the verb) to the way in which we regard or encounter the verb action with relationship to time. Hence in comparison the Czech text is filled much more with verbs with aspect while describing activities and events either in the present or past tense.

## 4.3 Inner monologue

Like the philosophical subtext the principle of 'inner monologue' uses mainly the imperfective verbs, although it sometimes alternates with the perfective verbs, and helps the progression of the text, as shown on this example:

## Excerpt 6 CZ

*Zůstala* u něho týden, než se *uzdravila*, a pak zase *odjela* do svého města vzdáleného dvě stě kilometrů od Prahy. A tehdy *přišla* ta chvíle, o které jsem *mluvil* a která mi **připadá** jako klíč k jeho životu: **stojí** u okna, **dívá** se do dvora na zed' protějšího činžáku a **přemýšlí**:

Má ji pozvat do Prahy natrvalo? *Bál* se té odpovědnosti.

Kdyby jí teď k sobě *pozval*, *přijela* za ním, aby mu *nabídla* celý svůj život.

Anebo se jí už **nemá** hlásit? To by *znamenal*, že Tereza *zůstane* servírkou v restauraci jednoho zapadlého města a on ji už nikdy *nevidí*.

*Chtěl*, aby za ním *přijela*, anebo *nechtěl*?

*Díval* se do dvora na protější zed' a *hledal* odpověď. **Vzpomínal** si znovu a znovu, jak **ležela** na jeho gauči; **nepřipomínala** mu nikoho z jeho předchozího života. **Nebyla** to ani milenka nebo manželka. (Emphasis added)

In the Czech text we can find both perfective and imperfective verbs. The perfective ones (e.g. 'zůstala', 'uzdravila', 'přišla', 'pozval', 'přijela', 'nabídla', etc.) all show us (you can notice the affixes, as in 4.1) the completion of successive events, while the imperfective ones indicate the 'inner dialogue' of the omnipresent narrator (his thoughts and of the character).

## Excerpt 6 ENG

She stayed with him a week, until she was well again, then went back to her home, some hundred and twenty-five miles from Prague. And then came the time *I have* just *spoken* of and see as the key to his life: Standing by the window, he looked out over the courtyard at the walls opposite him and deliberated.

Should he call her back to Prague for good?

He feared the responsibility. If he invited her to come, then come she would, and offer him up her life. Or should he refrain from approaching her?

Then she would remain a waitress in a hotel restaurant of a provincial town and he would never see her again. Did he want her to come or did he not? He looked out over the courtyard at the opposite walls seeking for an answer. He **kept recalling** her lying

on his bed; she reminded him of no one in his former life. She was neither mistress nor wife.

(Emphasis added)

Both the Czech verb 'vzpomínal' (*remember/recall*), which expresses a repetitive action done (again and again) in the past, and the English verb phrase *kept recalling* express imperfective aspectual meaning. This phrase (especially the verb *keep +ing*) is very common in fiction (among other 'catenative' verbs like *begin, stop* or *commence*) and it clearly shows duration, although in this case a limited one because of the past tense 'kept'.

We can also observe the frequent occurrence of the perfective aspects in the Czech text compared to just two indications of 'imperfectiveness' in English text. This might be a consequence of the characteristic of the text which is describing inner thoughts; that are expressed (in Czech) by the present simple and in contrast to this 'mental activity' there's a vast amount of perfective verbs in the past simple giving this monologue a dynamic flow. In English we can just observe consecutive events in the past not making any connection amongst themselves.

But at the end this is put in the contrast rest of text by the verb 'mluvil' and its counterpart *have just spoken*; both are perfective. They show a finished event, although in English there is a clearer connection to present time.

#### 4.4 Opakovanost (iterativity)

Verbal forms that create iterativity or 'násobenost' denote multiplied actions (which occur for several times). This type of aspect as it can be seen in the following excerpts occurs not very often in Czech and is not described in English. And the iteratives can be derived not only from perfective, but also from imperfective verbs [e.g. compare 'slétali' (*the birds kept alighting*) and 'odcházela' (*She was leaving for several times*)].

The English translation uses past simple to express such and substitutes the aspectual characteristics of the verb with context and adverbials.

Excerpt 7 CZ

Povzbuzena ptáky náhod, kteří se jí **slétali** na ramena, aniž cokoli řekla matce, vzala si týdenní dovolenou a *nasedla* do vlaku. *Odcházela* často na záchod dívat se do zrcadla

a prosit duši, aby v rozhodujícím dni jejího života *neopustila* ani na chvíli palubu jejího těla. Když se tak na sebe **dívala** lekla se najednou: *ucítila* škrábání v krku.

(Emphasis added)

### Excerpt 7 ENG

Impelled by the birds of fortuity fluttering down on her shoulders, she took a week's leave and, without a word to her mother; boarded the train to Prague. During the journey, she made frequent trips to the toilet to look in the mirror and beg her soul not to abandon the deck of her body for a moment on this most crucial day of her life. Scrutinizing herself on one such trip, she had a sudden scare: she felt a scratch in her throat.

In the following example is the more clear how a verb accompanied by a time adverbial might also denote a 'multiplied' action. In the first sentence we assume that 'snažila se odhrabat' (i.e. in *she tried to dig up* you can note that in English is used just a simple past plus infinitive with to) means that she tried just once and did not succeed. The other verbs in this sentence show finished events, hence are in Czech perfective and not indicate any repetition. In the second sentence beginning with 'Znovu' (*once more/again*) already shows a repetitive action, nevertheless the verb 'odhrabat' accompanies a suffix and hence '**odhrabávala**' (*was digging repetitively*) indicates the repetition itself [compare with verb 'odhrabala' without suffixation (*She dug once*)]; *until the time she succeeded (in pulling the crow out)*. In Czech there is quite strong sign of 'imperfectiveness'; but although English uses an adverbial the verb phrase 'scratched away' hardly represents any repetition. It only shows a finished action with its result (which can be rather connected to the verb 'odhrabala' rather than 'odhrabávala').

### Excerpt 8 CZ

Pak si *klekla* na zem a [ona] *snažila se odhrabat* udupanou zem kolem těla zaživa pohřbeného ptáka. *Nebylo to lehké. Zlomila si nehet, **tekla** jí krev. ... Znovu si klekla* na zem a **odhrabávala** hlínu, až konečně *mohla vránu vytáhnout z jejího hrobu. ...*

(Emphasis added)

### Excerpt 8 ENG

Then she knelt down and tried to dig up the soil that *had been stamped* down around the bird to bury it alive. It was not easy. She broke a nail. The blood began to flow. ...

Once more she knelt and scratched away at the dirt. At last she succeeded in pulling the crow out of its grave. (Emphasis added)

The English translation provides a verb with a past perfective aspect instead of the Czech adjective ‘udupanou’ (*stamped out*) and the form of the verb indicates that the soil was in this state before the attempts of the character to remove it. It is a clear indication of an ‘anterior time’ and the perfective aspect refers to a certain event in the past that had preceded the character’s attempt.

So as stated hereinbefore: as a result of repetitiveness the Czech verbs might carry a clear sense of ‘imperfectiveness’ and they also need not to be accompanied by any time adverbials which will show the multiple actions [although it is possible and common to use not-multiplied verbs with, e.g. ‘ted’ (*now*), *vždy* (*always*)]. English verbs, on the other hand, do not convey this type of aspectual contrast and use adverbials to show the multiplied actions.



## CONCLUSION

In my bachelor thesis I wanted to introduce and discuss the topic of verbal aspect both in English and Czech. Understanding that this topic is very extensive I have selected the ways of formation of aspect, which I find the most important for a good understanding of the difference between the two languages and the common distinction of this term. I realised that aspect is not just related to the time declaration but also to the durability and 'repetitiveness' of certain events. I also became aware of the basic forms of word-formation techniques which might change the forms and attributes of the aspect of the verb in Czech.

In the practical part I paid main focus to the treatment of aspect and its most common uses. I have selected a Czech novel and its English translation and selected various parts of the text. According to the style of the text I have decided to create four major parts of relevance, which in my opinion, best describe the different treatment of aspect in English and Czech. I understand that my conclusions are based on a small amount of examples (considering the sphere of verbal aspect), but I believe that for the purposes of my work and to describe the main differences they are sufficient enough. The first part of the analytical part of my paper describes the action of events and points out that in this case more imperfective verb forms arise in English. They are basically used to describe uncompleted events and their relevance to certain time in the past. In the second part concerning the tone of the narration the bigger amount of imperfective verbs occur this time in the Czech part of the text. In this section we can observe the fact that even the present simple forms of Czech verbs convey aspect and its unlimited duration. In the penultimate section we find out that the inner thoughts of the narrator (as well as) are supported mainly by imperfective verbs and the flow of the events is accompanied by perfective verbs, which help the progression of the text. In Czech the mental activity is expressed with present simple and in English it is mainly past simple. And in the last part of the practical section I describe verbal forms which create so-called 'iterativity' (or 'násobenost'); explain that this type of aspectual contrast appears only in Czech language and that the English translation uses past simple, which is unmarked of aspect. These results show the basic treatment of some of the verb forms of aspect and although they arise from a modest quantity of examples; effectively point out the basic differences of usage of aspect in English and Czech.

I was more than happy while analysing the text, however I still find the category of aspect very difficult to be fully comprehend with all its exceptions and diverse possibilities of explanations in both English and Czech. I now understand that this topic is very complex. It was also interesting to find out about the main difference between the treatment of aspect in these two languages. Unlike in Czech, in which ‘nearly every’ verb conveys some sort of aspectual meaning, English is more concentrated on the duration and time limitation of the action of the verb, thus reducing the number of verbs connected with aspect. In the end I would be more than happy if my effort I had put in this paper would help anyone to better understand the basic treatment of aspect.

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## APPENDIX P I: CZECH EXCERPTS FROM THE NOVEL

### Excerpt 1 CZ (page 15):

Myslím na Tomáše už řadu let, ale teprve ve světle této úvahy jsem ho uviděl jasně. Viděl jsem ho, jak stojí u okna svého bytu a dívá se přes dvůr na zeď protějšího činžáku a neví, co má dělat.

Potkal Terezu poprvé asi před třemi týdny v jednom malém českém městě. Byli spolu sotva hodinu. Doprovázela ho na nádraží a čekala s ním až do chvíle, kdy nasedl do vlaku. O deset dnů později přijela za ním do Prahy. Milovali se spolu ještě téhož dne. V noci dostala horečku a zůstala pak celý týden s chřipkou u něj v bytě.

Pocítil tehdy nevysvětlitelnou lásku k té téměř neznámé dívce; zdálo se mu, že je to dítě, které někdo položil do ošatky vytřené smolou a poslal po vodě řeky, aby je Tomáš vylovil na břeh své postele.

### Excerpt 2 CZ (page 63):

Na začátku onoho románu, který držela pod paží, když přišla za Tomášem, setkává se Anna s Vronským za podivných okolností. Jsou na nástupišti, kde právě někdo spadl pod vlak. Na konci románu se vrhá pod vlak Anna.

### Excerpt 3 CZ (page 88):

Přesto se mu podařilo brzy obnovit i v curyšském bytě starý řád a staré ceremonie. Stejně jako v Praze vyskočil za nimi ráno na postel, aby je přivítal do dne, doprovázel pak Terezu na první ranní nákup a vyžadoval si jako v Praze pravidelnou procházku.

### Excerpt 4 CZ (page, 13):

Je-li věčný návrat nejtěžším břemenem, pak se mohou naše životy jevit na jeho pozadí ve vši nádherné lehkosti.

Ale je tíha opravdu hrozná a lehkost nádherná?

Nejtěžší břemeno nás drtí, klesáme pod ním, tiskne nás k zemi. Ale v milostné poezii všech věků žena touží být zatížena břemenem mužova těla. Nejtěžší břemeno je tedy zároveň obrazem nejintenzivnějšího naplnění života. Čím je břemeno těžší, tím je náš život blíž k zemi, tím je skutečnější a pravidelnější.

Naproti tomu absolutní nepřítomnost břemene způsobuje, že se člověk stává lehčí než vzduch, vzlétá do výše, vzdaluje se zemi, pozemskému bytí, tává se jen napůl skutečný a jeho pohyby jsou stejně svobodné jako bezvýznamné.

### Excerpt 5 CZ (page, 265)

Chvilé defekování je každodenní důkaz nepřijatelnosti Stvoření. Buď, anebo: buď je hovno přijatelné (a potom se nezamykejme na záchodě!), anebo jsme stvoření nepřijatelným způsobem.

Z toho vyplývá, že estetickým ideálem kategorického souhlasu s bytím je svět, v němž je hovno popřeno a všichni se chovají, jako by neexistovalo. Tento estetický ideál se jmenuje kýč.

### Excerpt 6 CZ (page, 15-16):

Zůstala u něho týden, než se uzdravila, a pak zase odjela do svého města vzdáleného dvě stě kilometrů od Prahy. A tehdy přišla ta chvíle, o které jsem jí mluvil a která mi připadá jako klíč k jeho životu: stojí u okna, dívá se do dvora na zeď protějšího činžáku a přemýšlí: Má ji pozvat do Prahy natrvalo? Báł se té odpovědnosti.

Kdyby jí teď k sobě pozval, přijela za ním, aby mu nabídla celý svůj život.

Anebo se jí už nemá hlásit? To by znamenalo, že Tereza zůstane servírkou v restauraci jednoho zapadlého města a on ji už nikdy neuvidí.

Chtěl, aby za ním přijela, anebo nechtěl?

Díval se do dvora na protější zeď a hledal odpověď. Vzpomínal si znovu a znovu, jak ležela na jeho gauči; nepřipomínala mu nikoho z jeho předchozího života. Nebyla to ani milenka nebo manželka.

Excerpt 7 CZ (page, 65):

Povzbuzena ptáky náhod, kteří se jí slétali na ramena, aniž cokoli řekla matce, vzala si týdenní dovolenou a nasedla do vlaku. Odcházela často na záchod dívat se do zrcadla a prosit duši, aby v rozhodujícím dni jejího života neopustila ani na chvíli palubu jejího těla. Když se tak na sebe dívala, lekla se najednou: ucítila škrábání v krku.

Excerpt 8 CZ (page, 170):

Pak si klekla na zem a snažila se odhrabat udupanou zem kolem těla zaživa pohřbeného ptáka. Nebylo to lehké. Zlomila si nehet, tekla jí krev. ... Znovu si klekla na zem a odhrabávala hlínu, až konečně mohla vránu vytáhnout z jejího hrobu. ...

## **APPENDIX P II: ENGLISH EXCERPTS FROM THE NOVEL**

### Excerpt 1 ENG (page 6)

I have been thinking about Tomas for many years. but only in the light of these reflections did I see him clearly. I saw him standing at the window of his flat and looking across the courtyard at the opposite walls, not knowing what to do.

He had first met Tereza about three weeks earlier in a small Czech town. They had spent scarcely an hour together. She accompanied him to the station and waited with him until he boarded the train. Ten days later she paid him a visit. They made love the day she arrived. That night she came down with a fever and stayed a whole week in his flat with the flu.

He had come to feel an inexplicable love for this all but complete stranger; she seemed a child to him, a child someone had put in a bulrush basket daubed with pitch and sent downstream for Tomas to fetch at the riverbank of his bed.

### Excerpt 2 ENG (page 51)

Early in the novel that Tereza clutched under her arm when she went to visit Tomas, Anna meets Wronsky in curious circumstances: they are at the railway station when someone is run over by a train.

### Excerpt 3 ENG (page 72)

Nonetheless, he [a dog] soon managed to re-establish the old order and old rituals in the Zurich flat. As in Prague, he would jump up on their bed and welcome them to the day, accompany Tereza on her morning shopping jaunt, and make certain he got other walks coming to him as well.

### Excerpt 4 ENG (page 4):

If eternal return is the heaviest of burdens, then our lives can stand out against it in all their splendid lightness. But is heaviness truly deplorable and lightness splendid? The heaviest burden crushes us, we sink beneath it, it points us to the ground. But in the love poetry of every age, the woman longs to be weighed down by the man's body. The heaviest of burdens is therefore simultaneously an image of life's most intense fulfilment. The heavier the burden, the closer our lives come to the earth, the more real and truthful they become. Conversely, the absolute absence of a burden causes man to be lighter than air, to soar into the heights, take leave of the earth and his earthly being, and become only half real, his movements as free as they are insignificant.

### Excerpt 5 ENG (page 245)

The daily defecation session is daily proof of the unacceptability of Creation. Either/or: either shit is acceptable (in which case don't lock yourself in the bathroom!) or we are created in an unacceptable manner. It follows, then, that the aesthetic ideal of the categorical agreement with being is a word in which shit is denied and everyone acts though it did not exist. This aesthetic ideal is called 'kitsch'.

### Excerpt 6 ENG (page 6)

She stayed with him a week, until she was well again, then went back to her home, some hundred and twenty-five miles from Prague. And then came the time I have just spoken of and see as the key to his life: Standing by the window, he looked out over the courtyard at the walls opposite him and deliberated.

Should he call her back to Prague for good? He feared the responsibility. If he invited her to come, then come she would, and offer him up her life. Or should he refrain from approaching her? Then she would remain a waitress in a hotel restaurant of a provincial town and he would never see her again. Did he want her to come or did he not? He looked out over the courtyard at the opposite walls seeking for an answer. He kept recalling her lying on his bed; she reminded him of no one in his former life. She was neither mistress nor wife.

#### Excerpt 7 ENG (page 52)

Impelled by the birds of fortune fluttering down on her shoulders, she took a week's leave and, without a word to her mother, boarded the train to Prague. During the journey, she made frequent trips to the toilet to look in the mirror and beg her soul not to abandon the deck of her body for a moment on this most crucial day of her life. Scrutinizing herself on one such trip, she had a sudden scare: she felt a scratch in her throat.

#### Excerpt 8 ENG (page 155)

Then she knelt down and tried to dig up the soil that had been stamped down around the bird to bury it alive. It was not easy. She broke a nail. The blood began to flow. ...  
Once more she knelt and scratched away at the dirt. At last she succeeded in pulling the crow out of its grave.