

APPELLATIVIZATION OF PROPER NAMES – IN THE PERSPECTIVE OF CORPUS ANALYSIS

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Abstract: The study deals with appellativization of proper names, using as its base selected personal names (surnames). Looking at opinion journalism texts in the Czech National Corpus, corpus SYN, version 11, we investigate aspects of word-formation within appellativization of personal names *Masaryk, Beneš, Hitler, Stalin* – including frequencies of parts of speech and word-formation types (derivation, composition) with respect to their productivity and word-formation potential.

Keywords: appellativization, proper names, personal names, corpus analysis, word formation

1 APPELLATIVIZATION OF PROPRIA

We conduct a corpus analysis of appellativization in Czech, using selected anthroponyms (surnames) of historical figures of modern history as an example. We focus on the diversity found within the appellativization strategies, variations found within parts of speech, and word-formation characteristics connected to the process.

Appellativization is the process by which a proprium (proper name) becomes an appellative lexical unit (a common name), e.g. *Scrooge* becomes a naming of ‘a person who is very unwilling to spend money’, based on the same-name character in Dickens’ story *A Christmas Carol* (1843). A thus created lexical unit acquires the properties of an appellative: it denotes the entire set of objects and it can form the basis of a derivational series. In Czech, in addition, the formal signal of appellativization is the replacement of the initial capital letter by a lower case one (cf. Šrámek 1999, p. 55). Appellativized anthroponyms (personal names) are formed to characterize the external and internal qualities of persons – in general, sources for appellativization are names of mythological and biblical characters, names of historical and contemporary personalities (often politicians; cf.

Děngeová 2010; Jandová 2013), and names of literary characters. To a lesser degree, toponyms (geographical names) serve as bases for appellativization; appellativized toponyms are used mainly to show relations between the place name and a class of objects (e.g. village *Cheddar* > *cheddar cheese*; Pokorná 1978, p. 118).

Formally, appellativization is either direct or indirect. Direct appellativization uses metaphor and metonymy (e.g. *Romeo* > *romeo* ‘a man who has a lot of sexual relationships’; *Watt* > *watt* ‘a unit of measurement’). Indirect appellativization, while still making use of metaphors and metonymies, utilizes derivation and less often composition (a claim we partly dispute in this paper), e.g. *Marx* > *marxism* ‘the teachings of Karl Marx’; *Švejk* > *švejkovat* ‘to behave like Švejk’; *švejkomilec* ‘a fan of Jaroslav Hašek’s novel *The Good Soldier Švejk*’; Hladká 2017; Pokorná 1978; on the forms and changes of word-formation strategies of appellativization in Czech in a synchronic view, see Martinčová 2011, pp. 35–36; cf. also Skujiņa 1989; Superanskaya 2012, pp. 113–122). In onomastics, the terms *deonymization* or *deproprialization* are also used, reflecting that the naming has lost the proprial part – the result of the process is referred to as a *deonymic appellative* (Pokorná 1978, p. 118; Šrámek 1999, p. 55). Not only a number of linguistic studies that appeared at the turn of the 2010s (e.g. David 2009; Děngeová 2010; Martinčová 2011; Harvalík 2012; Michalec 2012; Jandová 2013), but also an assessment of the situation in languages genetically related to Czech show that we can talk about a tendency to use proper names, especially anthroponyms (family names and especially surnames), to form appellative neologisms. Nowadays, this trend has gained momentum, and it can be considered generally Slavic (see Martinčová 2011, p. 22).

2 DATA

The research on appellativization unanimously states that most appellativized lexemes are most often based on anthroponyms followed by toponyms, while chrematonyms (proper names of social events, institutions, organizations, etc.) are used less frequently. These analyses are based on excerption databases, especially from journalism, and/or on texts published on the Internet. These sources, however, may limit the results quantitatively. Our analysis, on the other hand, is based on the set of journalistic texts of the Czech National Corpus, SYN, version 11. Recently, onomastics has adopted corpus-based and generally quantitative analyses to be an integral part of its research (cf. most recently Motschenbacher 2020; David – Klemensová – Místecký 2022; David – Místecký 2023). Despite the fact that in most cases proper names – as complex and often ambiguously defined units – are not tagged in corpora, the quantitative approaches lead to intersubjective and empirically based analyses, especially concerning the grammar of propria.

In formulating the topic of our research, we assumed that a very rich appellative material would be tied to the names of historical figures, in addition to the surnames of politicians. The first step was to select the surnames for our study of appellativization. In order not to choose at random and to avoid potential bias while picking the personal names for our study, we relied on the corpus. In the Czech National Corpus, SYN, version 11, we first restricted the search in the texts via the *KonText* tool, using the attributes `doc.t xtype_group: NFC` (academic literature) and `doc.genre: HIS` (history, biography). Using the query `[tag="N.[FM].*" & lemma="A.*|Á.*|B.*|C.*|Č.*|D.*|Ď.*|E.*|É.*|F.*|G.*|H.*|Ch.*|I.*|Í.*|J.*|K.*|L.*|M.*|N.*|Ň.*|O.*|Ó.*|P.*|Q.*|R.*|Ř.*|S.*|Š.*|U.*|Ú.*|V.*|W.*|X.*|Y.*|Z.*|Ž.*"]`, we got a set of animate masculine and feminine nouns with a capital initial letter. We consider this to be a sufficient grammatical filter for selecting proper names of persons in the given type of texts. Subsequently, we constructed a frequency-based ranking of lemmas (with a frequency of more than 1,000 occurrences) and from that list, we excluded first names and ambiguous or irrelevant cases (e.g. *Jan, Karel, Marie, Evropa, Francie*). On the basis of the criteria above, we obtained a set of four anthroponyms (surnames), which represent four important personalities shaping the modern history of Czechoslovakia and Europe:

- *Masaryk* [the first Czechoslovak president Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk, 1850–1937], absolute frequency 2,600, relative frequency 0.43;
- *Hitler* [German dictator Adolf Hitler, 1889–1945], absolute frequency 2,213, relative frequency 0.37;
- *Stalin* [Soviet dictator Joseph Vissarionovich Stalin, 1878–1953], absolute frequency 1,568, relative frequency 0.26;
- *Beneš* [the second Czechoslovak president Edvard Beneš, 1884–1948], absolute frequency 1,218, relative frequency 0.20.

For these anthroponyms, we analyze the word-formation strategies used to form their derivatives. Thus, we are primarily interested in indirect appellativization.

The next step was to search for lemmas containing the bases of the four surnames in the SYN corpus, version 11; in order to find those, we used the queries `[lemma="*[mM]asaryk.+"]`, `[lemma="*[hH]itler.+"]`, `[lemma="*[sS]talin.+"]`, and `[lemma="*[bB]eneš.+"]`. Subsequently, the results were sorted according to the lemma frequency, and the data out of scope of our research were excluded manually from the set. The following forms were excluded: possessive adjectives (e.g. *Masarykův* ‘Masaryk’s’), expressions that were part of foreign language texts (including Latin turns of phrase such as *ad hitlerum*), cases of transonymization (either pure or extended, e.g. chrematonym *Hitlerjugend*, toponym *Stalingrad*; see Šrámek 2004), and other lemmas that were not the result of appellativization (e.g. the proprium *Benešátko* ‘a nickname Masaryk used for Beneš’). The cleaned data were then further analyzed. We always worked with types; we did not consider the

frequencies of their representation, as we were interested in mapping the appellativization strategies in general.

As for the surname *Beneš*, it was necessary to reduce the data set (using negative filters) and then manually sort it very thoroughly. The reason for this is massive homonymy (the surname *Beneš* is still relatively common – as of 2016, there were 9,431 male citizens with this surname in the Czech Republic; Malačka 2011) and the occurrence of derivations unrelated to Edvard Beneš, but included in the query results. These cases included, for example, forms of the female surname *Benešová*, the toponyms *Benešov*, *Benešovice*, *Benešák*, or the group anthroponyms *Benešovici* (aristocratic family) and the inhabitant names *Benešovan/Benešák*.

Looking at the word-formation potential, there are significant differences among the anthroponyms studied (see Fig. 1), which can be attributed to various factors. The high number of appellativizations of the surname *Stalin* – in fact, twice as many as the other names – is related to the longevity of Stalin's ideology, which underwent various transformations in the 20th century (*stalinizace* 'Stalinization', *destalinizace* 'de-Stalinization', *restalinizace* 're-Stalinization', *neostalinismus* 'neo-Stalinism') and which needed to be set in a broader context (*prestalinismus* 'pre-Stalinism', *poststalinický* 'post-Stalinist'). A certain role should also be attributed to the richness of synonym series (*stalinický*, *stalinovský*, *stalinistický* 'Stalinist'). There are not any similar contextual detours needed for Hitler's Nazism ideology. Furthermore, the appellativization potential of the surname *Hitler* is reduced by the fact that many German composites (e.g. *Hitlerjunge*) – also found in the corpus – are not native to Czech, and cannot thus be considered the result of the word-forming potential of Czech. Therefore, we did not work with them in the analysis.

Similarly to Hitler's, the life of political philosophy represented by the surname *Masaryk* was also limited in time, which, then, was reflected in the small number of word-formation types. The low number of appellatives derived from the surname *Beneš* suggests that this statesman is not perceived as a creator of a distinctive school of thought one needs to agree/disagree with (with the possible exceptions of the Munich Agreement and the Beneš Decrees). The periods of the end of the First Republic (1935–1938) and the Third Republic (1945–1948) are seen as transitional stages the dynamics of which were largely determined by the development of foreign policy and the personalities of Hitler and Stalin.

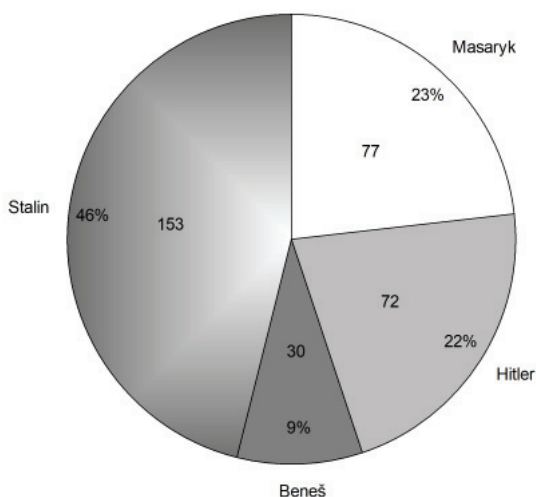


Fig. 1. Frequency of deonymic appellatives derived from the analyzed surnames

3 CORPUS ANALYSIS

As already mentioned above, the quantitative analysis focuses on the word-formation aspects of the appellativization of personal names – the frequency of parts of speech and specific word-formation types with respect to their productivity. We are primarily interested in systemic productivity (potential, langue), but also in real productivity (parole), or latent productivity, realized only rarely (cf. Štícha 2018). Thus, we are paying attention to types here as well.

3.1 Appellativization from the perspective of parts of speech

The overall results, both in percentages and values, are summarized in Fig. 2. The dominance of adjectives is closely related to their ability to form binary and ternary composites “typical of X and Y (or even Z)”. “X” in this case represents the analyzed anthroponym. These adjectives – mostly ignored in onomastic studies (see above) – aim to build up a journalistic compression, to indicate the contemporary context (*masarykovsko-benešovský* ‘Masaryk-Benešian’, *hitlerovsko-henleinovský* ‘Hitler-Henleinian’, *leninsko-stalinský* ‘Lenin-Stalinian’), but also to link different personalities in an innovative way, sometimes with an ironic touch (*masarykovsko-dušínovský* ‘Masaryk-Dušínian’, *kafkovsko-hitlerovský* ‘Kafka-Hitlerian’, *verneovsko-stalinský* ‘Verne-Stalinian’). Although these compound adjectives appear more as occasionalisms and the results – both orthographically and content-wise – are varied, the potential of this word-formation process is considerable: these types of compound adjectives account for almost 70% of all deonymic adjectives in our data set.

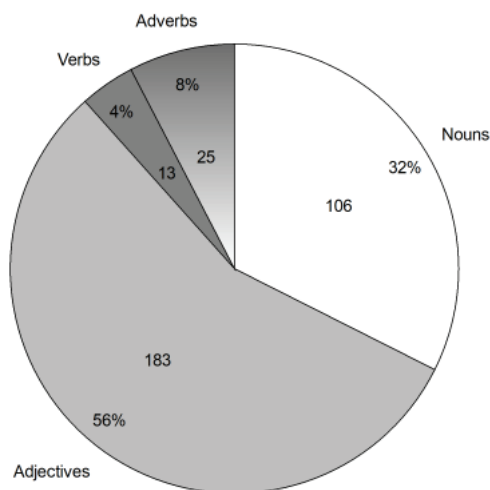


Fig. 2. Deonymic appellatives seen from the parts of speech perspective

The parts-of-speech-based appellativization preferences are shown in detail in Fig. 3. Here, too, there are important differences among individual names, which are related to historical and political circumstances. The predominance of adjectival formation in the case of the anthroponym *Masaryk* is due to his conception of Czech history, which produces a chain of bearers/promoters of his humanitarian ideals (*havlíčkovskomasarykovský* ‘Havlíček-Masarykian’, *husovsko-palacko-masarykovský* ‘Hus-Palacký-Masarykian’), the dispute that resulted from this conception (*masarykovsko-perkařovský* ‘Masaryk-Pekařian’), and his anchoring in the democratic current among the Czech intellectuals (*čapkovsko-masarykovský* ‘Čapek-Masarykian’, *havlovsko-masarykovský* ‘Havel-Masarykian’). However, there are also ironic adjectives bringing Masaryk’s legacy into a new and unconventional light (*masarykovsko-gandalfovský* ‘Masaryk-Gandalfian’, *masarykovskogottwaldovský* ‘Masaryk-Gottwaldian’). Adjectives, on the other hand, are neglected in the case of Adolf Hitler: his appellativization products are dominated by variously formed and deliberately ironic/derogatory nouns for his supporters (*hitlerovec*, *hitlerčik*, *hitleráček*, *hitlerek*, *hitlerka* ‘Hitler-follower’), or for things and phenomena associated with the dictator (*hitlerologie*, *hitlerománie*).

The anthroponyms *Beneš* and *Stalin* are appellativized in a way similar to the surname *Masaryk*. As for *Beneš*, given the relatively low frequency of the appellativized lexical units, what turns out to be prominent are verbs as well (*odbenešit*, *odbenešovat* ‘de-Benešize’) and adverbs (*benešovsky*, *probenešovsky* ‘Beneš-like’, *protibenešovsky* ‘anti-Beneš-like’), which are connected to the development of the situation in the Second Republic.

Adjectives related to the name *Stalin* combine the two factors mentioned above – they contextualize the phenomenon within Stalin’s ideology (*poststalinský* ‘post-Stalinist’, *neostalinský* ‘neo-Stalinist’) and connect the Soviet politician to other personalities or concepts, sometimes in a very complex way (*gestapácko-stalinský* ‘Gestapo-Stalinist’, *marxisticko-stalinistický* ‘Marxist-Stalinist’, *poststalinsko-estébácký* ‘post-Stalinist-Communist-secret-police’, the police being known as StB, read: /estɛːbɛ/).

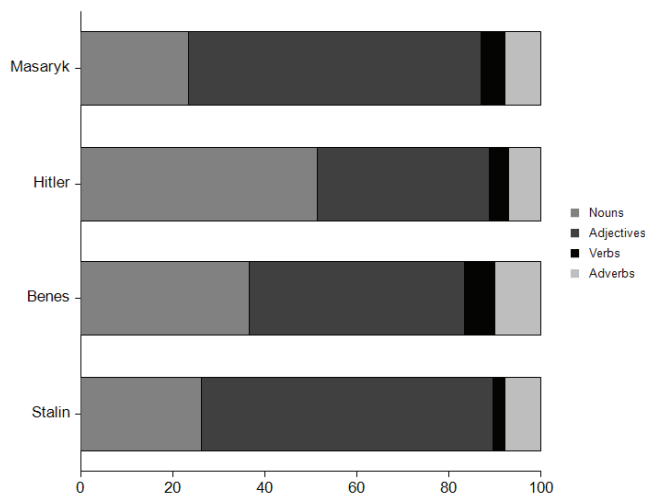


Fig. 3. Deonymic appellatives seen from the parts of speech perspective – detailed analysis

3.2 Appellativization and word-formation strategies

From the point of view of word formation, the products of appellativization were divided into six groups; the main criterion was the mode of formation, with the proprium considered to be the base. We consider this approach transparent and in line with the general idea of the deonymic appellatives originating from the respective proper names. The word formation strategies are thus the following:

- suffixation (*masarykovský* ‘Masaryk.ADJ’, *hitlerovec* ‘Hitler-follower.N’, *benešolog* ‘expert on Beneš.N’, *staliniáda* ‘Stalinias.N’);
- prefixation¹ (*skoro-hitler* ‘almost-Hitler’, *anti-stalin* ‘anti-Stalin’);
- prefixation + suffixation (*anti-masarykovský* ‘anti-Masaryk.ADJ’, *pohitlerovský* ‘post-Hitlerian’, *odbenešit* ‘deBenešize.V’, *exstalinista* ‘ex-Stalinist’);
- composition and juxtaposition (two-member composites: *Hitlerjóga* ‘yoga in the style of Hitler’);

¹ It is to be noted that the prefix/prefixoid and suffix/suffixoid distinctions were not taken into account in our paper and that some words in this category may be considered compounds, such as *skoro-hitler*. In our viewpoint, we considered *skoro-* a prefix, as it is quite productive and can be theoretically added to all sorts of words.

- e) composition + suffixation (two-member composites: *masarykovsko-havlovský* ‘Masaryk.ADJ-Havel.ADJ’, *hitlerovsko-darwinovský* ‘Hitler.ADJ-Darwin.ADJ’, *benešovsko-nejedlovský* ‘Beneš.ADJ-Nejedlý.ADJ’, *gottwaldovsko-stalinský* ‘Gottwald.ADJ-Stalin.ADJ’);
- f) composition + suffixation (three-member composites: *jiráskovsko-masarykovsko-komunistický* ‘Jirásek.ADJ-Masaryk.ADJ-Communist.ADJ’, *benešovsko-gottwaldovsko-stalinský* ‘Beneš.ADJ-Gottwald.ADJ-Stalin.ADJ’, *stalinisticko-nacionalisticko-mafiánský* ‘Stalin.ADJ-nationalistic-Mafia.ADJ’);
- g) blending (Stalin + *noviny* ‘newspaper’ > *Haló stalinoviny* – an occasionalism for the extremist left-wing periodical *Haló noviny*).

Looking on the overall results depicted in Fig. 4, none of the word-formation strategies can be described as dominant. The most frequent ones are composition and suffixation with two-member composites (type d), and prefixation and suffixation (type c). As far as composition is concerned, coordinating composites (*masarykovsko-čapkovský* ‘Masaryk.ADJ-Čapek.ADJ’, *stalinsko-zemanovský* ‘Stalinist-Zeman.ADJ’) predominate, which are, however, relatively rare in the Czech system otherwise (cf. Bozděchová 2018, p. 935). This type became popular in Czech as late as the 19th century; it first appeared for naming of colours, and it gained a certain productivity in the second half of the 20th century only (Šlosar 1999, pp. 66–67). We have already tried to explain the background of these occurrences above (see Section 3.1).

In terms of word-formation strategies, composition is the most prominent in adjectives; it is rarely (only a few lexical units) represented in nouns. It is then mostly used expressively, cf. *masarykobijec* ‘Masaryk-beater’ is attested already before 1918, and we also found expressions clearly influenced by German: *hitlerjóga* ‘yoga in the style of Hitler’, *kulturhitlerismus* ‘cultural Hitlerism’. Composition is represented minimally for verbs (*heilhitlerovat* ‘hail to Hitler’) and adverbs (*masarykovsko-havlovsky* ‘Masaryk-Havel-like’) as well.

In contrast to composition, prefixation and suffixation are standard and continuously productive in the Czech word formation – in the case of the deproprietary lexical units analyzed here, they show an attitude (*protistalinský* ‘anti-Stalinist’, *promasarykovsky* ‘pro-Masaryk’) and contextualize the political ideologies, as discussed above (*protohitlerovský* ‘proto-Hitlerian’, *restalinizace* ‘re-Stalinization’). Some of the prefixes (especially the attitudinal ones *pro-*, *anti-*, *anti-*) were used with all the four analyzed propria; however, there were also differences. Once we speak about the effort to get rid of the given political figure’s influence, for the two foreign politicians – Stalin and Hitler – the foreign prefix *de-* is used (*destalinizátor* ‘de-Stalinizer’), while in the case of the Czech politicians Masaryk and Beneš, the Czech prefix *od-* is predominant (*odmasarykovštění* ‘de-Masarykization’). The richest repertoire of prefixes is exhibited by the appellatives formed from the surname *Stalin*; some of these are found exclusively with this base (*arci-*, *ex-*, *super-*, *ultra-*).

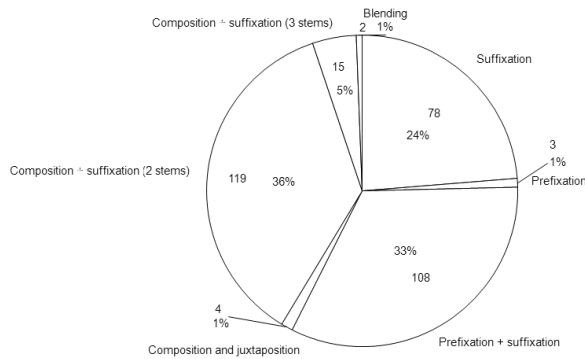


Fig. 4. Word-formation strategies as used with the deonymic appellatives

Fig. 5 provides a more detailed view of the word-formation situation. Unlike the analysis of the parts of speech, where the appellatives formed from the names *Masaryk* and *Stalin* showed some similarities (see Fig. 2), in terms of word formation, each proprium behaves specifically. Terms derived from the name *Hitler* use suffixes very often; this is related to the derivational richness of the names of his followers (see Section 3.1), while in the case of the anthroponym *Stalin*, the prefixal-suffixal and compositional strategies dominate, and we also find here the otherwise rather sparse compositions of three-word bases. The latter type appears both in expected contexts and also in defamiliarizations (*stalinsko-gottwaldovsko-reicinovský* ‘Stalin.ADJ-Gottwald.ADJ-Reicin.ADJ’, *stalinsko-hitlerovsko-náserovský*, ‘Stalin.ADJ-Hitler.ADJ-Nasserian.ADJ’) and is intended to highlight the pervasiveness of Stalinist ideology and to reveal (or construct) its surprising connections. The composition strategy is the most prominent in the name *Masaryk*: it is related to his conception of Czech history and its sources and resonances (see Section 3.1).

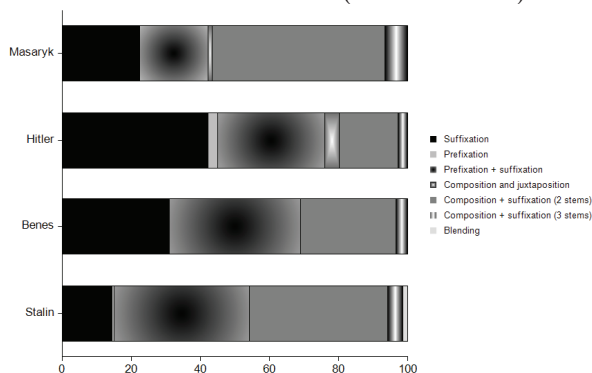


Fig. 5. Word-formation strategies as used with the deonymic appellatives – detailed analysis

4 CONCLUSION

The corpus-based analysis of appellativized names formed from the surnames of the politicians *Masaryk*, *Beneš*, *Hitler*, and *Stalin* has shown several specific features of the appellativization of anthroponyms. In terms of parts of speech, these names predominantly produce descriptive adjectives. The most frequent word-formation strategies are composition and suffixation (two-member composites), and prefixation and suffixation. An important factor influencing the word-forming potential is the prominence/controversiality of the politician in question and the continuous updating of his legacy, as shown by the units formed from the surname *Stalin*.

We would like to compare the conclusions of this study with the process of appellativization in toponyms (cf. e.g. product names such as *Manchester – manchester/manšestr* ‘corduroy’). In their case, we expect both a lower word-forming potential and a significantly limited range of word-forming strategies; we can even expect the absence of some strategies used exclusively for anthroponyms (e.g. pluralization).

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