

Czech *onikání*: Phi-mismatches and the transparency of syntax-interface mappings

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In this note I bring out the consequences of a mismatch in the realization and interpretation of phi-features for the nature of the mapping from syntax to its interfaces. The mismatch is *onikání* in early twentieth century Czech: the use of third person plural (3p) pronouns, usually reserved for a plurality of non-discourse-participants, to a single addressee treated deferentially, employed alongside the usual T/V contrast of second person singular (2s) familiar and second person plural (2p) deferential.¹ *Onikání* as embedded in the grammar of Czech sheds revealing light on such mismatches:

- (i) Syntactic constructions reserved to discourse participants show *onikání* to denote the addressee, unlike pragmatic uses of 3rd person for the addressee via identity of reference.
- (ii) There is a rich system of agreement where only finite verbs reflect the plurality of deferential forms to a single addressee; *onikání* fits provided the participle of a formerly synthetic perfect has been reanalysed as the finite verb upon loss of the auxiliary, despite keeping nonfinite morphology, making for opacity in the mapping to PF.
- (iii) *Onikání* originated as 3p, but morphophonological developments have started to differentiate it, including one betraying [2nd] person specification. If so, *onikání* is transparent with respect to the mapping to LF, where addressee is the denotation of [2nd] person feature in syntax, and opaque in the mapping to PF, with 3p forms due to its origin. This asymmetry in syntax-interface mappings converges with other evidence.

1 Mappings and mismatches

Syntactically [2nd] person expressions denote the addressee of a context, $\| [2^{\text{nd}}] \|^{c.g.s} = \mathbf{addressee(c)}$, which evaluates to some individual in the domain of discourse, say **John**. 3rd person expressions denote individuals in the domain of discourse by description, $\| the\ customer \|^{c.g.s} = \mathbf{ix.x\ is\ a\ customer\ in\ s}$, say **John**, or by the variable assignment function, $\| he_7 \| = \mathbf{g(7)}$, say **John** again. The reference of all these expressions may end up as **John**,

¹ *Onikání* was used in Czech until World War II, in a system differentiating nondeferential 2s (T-form, Czech *ty* 'thou' -*kání*) from deferential 2p (V-form, Czech *vy* 'ye' -*kání*), 3s (*on* 'he' -*kání*), and 3p (*oni* 'they' -*kání*). Vaněk (1979) describes this system: briefly, while 2p was used to persons deferred to by virtue of position, age, or status, 3p *onikání* signalled additionally respect due to social consequence, while the rarer 3s reflected social class alone: a servant might use 3p to a respected employer beside 2p, 3s to the employer's children, and all 2p to a young policeman. For the history of *onikání* from its introduction in the sixteenth century from German *Sie* to the end of the nineteenth when displaced by 2p in the speech of elite but not lower urban classes, there is the detailed study of Betsch (2000) and the briefer mentions in Gebauer (1929: 143), Rulfová (1984), Vachek (1986), as well as dialect descriptions cited below. Material here is drawn from **H** *Osudy dobrého vojáka Švejka za světové války* vols. I-IV by Jaroslav Hašek (*1883 Praha – †1923 Lipnice nad Sázavou), and **V** *Švejk v ruském zajetí a revoluci* vols. I-II by Karel Vaněk (*1887 Kostelec nad Černými Lesy – †1933 Praha), authors raised in nonelite urban central Czech. Their use is consistent on the features discussed here, each of which is richly attested in the corpus.

but the routes differ: [2nd] person expressions denote whoever is the addressee of a context, 3rd person ones denote individuals who may happen to be the addressee of a one context but not another one (Heim 2004, 2008, Kratzer 2009).

[2nd] person expressions usually beat 3rd person ones for reference to the addressee, but the latter can be so used with a pragmatic effect.² Some brusquely rupture the dialogue, *Now **you're** in for it. My god, **he's/#you're** in full pursuit of the enemy and **he** gets captured by **his/#your** own patrol! **You'll** be shot for this;* others less so, *I shall tell **you** the story as I saw it; **the reader** will form **her/#your** own opinion;* others even less and are used for deference, *We are preparing **your** dinner; in the meanwhile, would **the colonel** like anything with **her/#your** aperitif?* These uses are available in Czech.³

The use of 3p to the addressee in *onikání* also induces deference, but it proves distinct by denoting **addressee(c)**, as 3rd person expressions do not otherwise do, suggesting an opacity in the syntax-to-LF mapping. However, the morphophonological development of *onikání* shows that it has differentiated itself from its 3p origin in ways that suggest a syntactic [2nd] person feature, leaving opacity in the syntax-to-PF mapping.

2 Addressee meaning

Two structures restricted to expressions denoting discourse participants differentiate *onikání* from indirect uses of 3rd person: imperatives and ethical datives.

Czech like English distinguishes direct imperatives to the addressee, *(You) try it!*, with special 2s/p imperative inflections, from optatives, *May *(she) enjoy her food!*, with the particles *at'/necht'* plus indicative inflections. Uses of 3rd person for the addressee are limited to optatives: *At' si paní dá chutnat* 'OPT Madam SE.D give.3s enjoy.food.INF = May Madam enjoy her food', with nothing like **Dá/*Dají/*Dej/*Dejte si paní chutnat* 'give.3s/3p/IPV.2s/IPV.2p'. In contrast, *onikání* uses 3p indicative without *at'/necht'* for direct commands to the addressee:

- (1) Ale **kouknou, pane obrlajtnant**, Baloun **jich** už vyhlíží, ...
but look.3p, sir lieutenant, Baloun 3p.A/G already look.out.for.3s
But **look, Lieutenant Sir**, Baloun is already on the look out for **you**, ... (V I:24)
- (2) **Pošlou** mu do hospody *Na kocourku* pro nějaký oběd. Jestli už nic není, at' uvaří něco.
Send [send.3p] to the pub *Na kocourku* for some lunch for him. If there is nothing left, **let them cook** [OPT cook.3p] something up. (H II.c2)

Ethical datives have as part of their denotation the speaker or addressee as perspective-takers on the discourse, comparably to expressions like *you see*, rather than as participants in the event denoted by the extended VP, namely core datives like goals and extended datives like benefactors that reflect arguments of predicates in the VP (see

² I use bold for expressions coreferring with the addressee, underline for others under discussion.

³ The uses differ for cataphora as shown; see the references in section 5.

Fried 2011 for Czech, Jouitteau and Rezac 2007 for French, with literature).⁴ In Czech they can be isolated both by meaning, if event participants are sufficiently delimited, and by syntax, such as compatibility with core/extended datives which themselves are limited to one per VP. Thus *Pošleme (jí/ti) knihy k panu Kejřovi* 'sent.3sf her/you.D books.A to Mr.D Kejř.D = We shall send the books to Mr. Kejř (to/for her/you)' allows *jí* 'her.D' or *ti* 'you.D' as goal or benefactive datives or *ti* as ethical 'you see'; but replacing the PP by the dative *panu Kejřovi* absorbs the one allowed dative argument per VP, and then *jí* is out while *ti* is left with the ethical meaning. Pragmatic uses of 3rd person for the addressee behave the same: the same example may be so used, as after *Jestli paní dovolí* 'If Madam permits', with the same constraints on *jí*, and *ti* out because it is not deferential.

For *onikání*, the corpus does not demonstrate ethical datives syntactically, but it does have examples where meaning is a clear enough indicator. In the following passage, *jim* indexes the addressee under *onikání* in the meaning 'you see', precisely as replacing it by the V-form *vám* '2p.D' would. Substituting the sole individuals available in the context, *mu* '3sm.D' for the housekeeper at the first *jim* and *ji* '3sf.D' for the lady at the second, is impossible, because they cannot have the ethical interpretation and there are no event participants as arguments of the VP for them to be, even as vague datives of interest.

- (3) A pak jsem šel s domovníkem nahoru, do pokoje tý slečny; vona to tam měla moc krásně zařízený, všude samej samet a krajky; vona **jim** měla i na noc krajkovéj župan a měla ho připravenej na posteli. ... A najednou **jim, pane obrlajtnant**, někdo votvíra dveře a ke mne jde nákej pán.

And then I went upstairs with the housekeeper, into the room of the young lady; she had it very beautifully set up, all velvet and lace; even for the night she had a lace dressing gown and it was ready on the bed, **you know** [*jim* 3p.D] ... And **imagine** [*jim* 3p.D] suddenly, **Lieutenant Sir**, someone opens the door, and there's this man coming towards me. (V I: 39-40)

Thus 3p pronouns, overt or *pro*-drop, denote the addressee under *onikání*, allowing them to serve as the subject of imperatives and as ethical datives, while pragmatic 3rd person uses for the addressee do not.

3 Addressee agreement

Deferential uses of plural pronouns for a singular individual control plural agreement on the finite verb in Slavic, but beyond it plurality extends differently in different grammars: most commonly to the *l*-participle accompanying the auxiliary in the synthetic perfect, less so to the *n/t*-participle of the synthetic passive, to short-form predicate adjectives, to long-form ones, and very rarely to predicate nouns (Corbett 2000, 2010). Central Czech in all current registers and in the present corpus is at one end of the scale for the 2p V-

⁴ I set aside possible use of the dative reflexive clitic *si* anteceded by 3rd person as ethical dative; to the extent it exists, the meaning includes a discourse participant evaluating the event in the discourse comparably to an ethical dative (Fried 2011). An example would be *A on si mu tu jenom tak nechá zprávu!* 'And he just leaves him [*mu* him.D] a message here, imagine! [*si*]' (<http://147.32.8.168/?q=node/87571>).

form: only the finite verb is plural. This is the endpoint reached in the nineteenth century of development from plurality on participles and adjectives (Betsch 2000; adjacent varieties extend plural farther, see Berger 1996, Betsch 2000: 171-2, Rosen 2007).

Onikání with 3p for the singular addressee follows the same pattern as 2p, with one exception. The *n/t*-participle of the passive, predicate adjectives and nouns, are all singular, but the *l*-participle of the perfect active is plural:

- (4) ...**voni** pane kadet, **nejsou** zrovna **moc hloupej** **človek** a stím by
 they.N sir cadet not.be.3p exactly very stupid.s.N person.N and with.it would
udelali kariéru ... **Voni**, pane kadet, **jsou** ještě **mladej**, a tak by
 make.3p career they.N sir cadet be.3p still young.s.N and so would
tím generálem mohli bejt brzo.
 the.s.I general.s.I could.3p be soon.
 ... **you, Cadet Sir**, are not exactly **a very stupid person** and with that **you would make** a career ... **You, Cadet Sir**, are still young, and so **you could be such a general** soon. (V I: 15)

However, there is an independent difference between 2p and 3p: for 1st/2nd person, the *l*-participle of the perfect active is the nonfinite companion of the perfect auxiliary *be*, whereas for 3rd person, the auxiliary was lost by the seventeenth century, leaving the *l*-participle alone. Two analyses may be given to this state of affairs: the *l*-participle as the nonfinite companion of a covert finite *be*, or as the finite verb. On the latter hypothesis, its plural agreement fits the same pattern as that of deferential 2p: plurality affects only the finite verb, perhaps as the bearer of person agreement (cf. Wechsler 2004 for French). Since otherwise the plurality of 3p *onikání* obeys the same principles as that of the 2p V-form, the *l*-participle seems to have become the finite verb.

This is of consequence for the transparency of the syntax-PF mapping, because the morphology of the perfect is the same for 3rd as for 1st/2nd person: the participle does not paradigmatically contrast tense or person, unlike finite verbs. Morphology alone as guide would suggest positing a silent auxiliary; agreement indicates otherwise.

4 The morphology of *onikání*

Onikání is described as the use of 3p pronouns and associated agreement for the addressee, and by and large this holds true. In fine however, there are two mismatches with 3p morphology, revealing that the use of 3p for the addressee has been grammaticalised with a distinct feature, arguably [2nd] person specifically.

The first divergence is in the verbal morphology of certain dialects, not found in the corpus. *Onikání* normally uses the 3p form of the verb, but in sometimes diachronic development has produced divergence between it and 3p in other uses. This is particularly so for the 3p ending *-ejí*, which underwent such changes as to *-ejí*, *-ej*, *-í*, but remained under *onikání*. Thus Hošek (1900: 74) explicitly notes for one group of Czech-Moravian dialects where 3p *-ejí* > *-í* that "Many people – there are some in all villages – when they use *onikání*, use in 3p the ending *-ejí*", followed by examples directly

contrasting the two, as *Tady má každéj dům dvoji jméno, rozumějí? Dyš chasnici přídou z vojny dom, nic neumí* "Here every house has a double name, **you understand** [understand.3p=*ejí*]? When fellows come home from military service, **they know** [know.3p=*í*] nothing." Similarly for other dialects Hošek (1905: 100), Vydra (1923), Voráč (1955: 64n27), Loriš (1899: 53) (see also Gebauer 1898: 29). The introduction of *onikání* differentiated original 3p endings into regular and addressee uses, and the two have undergone divergent developments.

The other mismatch is systematic in the corpus and telling. It occurs in accusative pronouns, where Czech distinguishes 3p.ACC *je* from 3p.GEN-LOC *jich*. Neighbouring Slavic varieties such as Slovak have given up this contrast in favour of *jich*, partly in relation to the tendency to syncretise accusative and genitive for high-animacy categories generally (cf. Rappaport 2009). In Czech, this syncretism does not affect 3rd person pronouns or nouns in the plural, but it does extend to 1st/2nd person pronouns, so that the opposition of 3p.A *je* to 3p.G *jich* is absent in 1/2p.A/G *nás, vás*. Remarkably, the syncretism emerges under *onikání*, whose accusative is *jich*, indicating that it shares a feature with 1st/2nd person discourse participants.

The corpus richly attests this syncretism, ensuring that *onikání* does contrast with 3p in this matter within one and the same grammar. Accusative *jich* always and only occurs for the addressee and *je* for the nonaddressee, including in sentences with *onikání* and 3p *je* and in dialogues contrasting 3p *je* and *onikání jich*, as in these examples:⁵

- (5) "**Odpustějí**, milostpane, že **jich** víckrát nevidím, poněvadž skočím z okna."
 forgive.3p, master, that them.A/G no.more not.see.1s
Forgive me, master sir, that I shan't see **you** any more, as I'll jump out the widow.
 "... A on je chtěl spolknout ..."
 and he them.A wanted swallow
 And he wanted to swallow them. (H I:c6, same speaker, addressee, context)
- (6) "... a když **je** upomínám, říká vždycky strážmistr: „**Mlčejí**, bábo, nebo **jich** dám zavřít, ...' ... Zejména **mají** se na pozoru před strážmistrem, ..."
 "... and whenever I remind them [them.A], the chief always says: '**Be quiet** [be.quiet.3p], woman, or I'll have **you** [them.A/G] locked up, ...' ... Especially **have** [have.3p] care around the police chief, ..." (H II: c2)

This consistent use of *jich* as the accusative of *onikání* seems to be the endpoint of development from earlier vacillation and still earlier *je*.⁶

⁵ The contrast includes accusative after prepositions where *je, jich* appear as *ně, nich*: *Pane frajtr, když se na nich koukám* 'Corporal Sir, when I look at **them** [*nich* 3p.A/G]' (H IV: c3).

⁶ I have not seen this feature of *onikání* noted, but it seems characteristic of the period of the present corpus. Testing with the accusative-taking preposition *pro* on corpora readily yields central Czech authors of autobiographies and fictions who systematically distinguish *pro nich* under *onikání* from *pro ně* elsewhere, for instance (with reference to an occurrence of *pro nich*): Josef Váchal *1884-†1969 in *Paměti Josefa Váchala, dřevorytce*, ed. by Milan Drápal, Praha: Prostor, 1995: 114; Ladislav Prokop *1843-†1919 in *Zápisky*, ed. by Jindřich Keller, Hradec Králové: Kruh, 1981: 38; Ignát Hermann *1854-†1935, in *Sebrané*

The morphological differences between *onikání* and regular 3p shows that synchronically, *onikání* is not just the use of regular 3p to the addressee under pragmatic identification. The grammatical code itself indicates that apparent 3p forms are being used for a discourse participant: some feature is shared by 1st/2nd person and *onikání* but not 3rd person, arguably [discourse participant] entailed by [2nd] on pronouns in *onikání*. It seems then that *onikání*, starting by recruiting 3p forms in a distancing use, has recoded them as [2nd], with difference from the 2p morphology of the V-form due to additional features relating to its particular deferential status (cf. Rosen 2007).

5 Consequences

The large stake in apparent mismatches between form and interpretation is the transparency of the mapping between the grammatical code – syntax – and its interfaces: interpretation at LF and realization at PF. The mapping is commonly agreed to be more opaque at the PF than at the LF side. Syncretisms conflate syntactically distinct expressions, as [SG/PL [sheep]] in *sheep*, and allomorphy divorces identical ones, as [PL] in *(ox)-en*, *(cow)-s*. The behavior of participial agreement in Czech under *onikání* supports this much opacity: to go by morphology alone, the participle of the active perfect should reflect the same syntactic structure in 3rd person, where the *be* auxiliary has been lost, as in 1st/2nd person, where it remains, but extension of plural agreement to it suggests that the participle has been reanalysed as the finite/person-bearing verb.

On the LF side, there is more debate, often specifically about apparent mismatches in phi-features and about pragmatic coreference, as in *As he_i/I_i examined it, this reporter_i thought back to his_i/??my_i own childhood* or *I could not find (the statue of) myself in the museum*, turning on the extent to which identity of reference requires identity of denotation and identity of denotation identity of syntactic content (cf. Kayne 2003, Culicover and Jackendoff 2005, Baker 2008, Collins and Postal 2011, Rezac 2011).

Onikání gives two hints. One is that there is a distinction between identity of denotation and pragmatic coreference: 3rd person expressions may refer to the same entity in a model as 2nd person ones, but they do not by this denote the addressee as [2nd] person does, and in consequence create a pragmatic effect and fail to occur in syntactic structures reserved to the addressee. There is this much opacity of usage with respect to syntax.

The other result goes in the opposite direction, for transparency, but of the syntax-to-denotation mapping. This mapping could contravene syntactic structure as syncretism and allomorphy do, so that the default mapping of syntactically 3rd person expressions to non-discourse-participants is rerouted to **addressee(c)**; frameworks with rich interface mechanisms like Parallel Architectures allow for this possibility (Jackendoff 2002, Culicover and Jackendoff 2005). It would fit a common approach to person and number mismatches in address systems, linking them to the distancing effect of mere pragmatic coreference. For instance, if the preference for [2nd] to 3rd person expressions derives

spisy vol. 22, Praha: F. Topič, 1923: 22; Eduard Bass *1888-†1946, in *Povídky*, Praha: Československý Spisovatel, 1957: 339. For earlier periods, Betsch (2000: 114) has nice *jich – je* variation from 1791; other examples show *je*, and many are inconclusive due to genitive-accusative variation of certain objects.

from a principle preferring an addressee-dedicated expression as more specific, not using it implies that there is reason to avoid raising addresseehood (cf. Sauerland 2008). Yet in *onikání*, recruitment of 3p for the singular addressee has led to differentiation of its morphology from 3p, with the specific morphological signature of a discourse participant.

There is no logical need for this to reflect a universal generalization. Yet this development of *onikání* turns up elsewhere. In premodern Czech, honorific 3s to the addressee seems to have recruited the infinitive as its distinctive imperative (Betsch 2000: 169f.). In premodern Slovak, *onikání* fails to make gender distinctions that other 3p uses make (Dvornic et al. 1966: 517-8, Betsch 2000: 168n360; cf. Kayne 2000 on markedness of gender for 1st/2nd vs. 3rd person). In Spanish *usted*, another 3rd person use for the addressee, has gained a [discourse-participant] specification as diagnosed by the Person-Case Constraint (Rezac 2011: 6.4). These cases all suggest a transparency of the syntax-to-LF mapping whereby the recruitment of 3rd person expressions for discourse participants automatically results in corresponding featural specification in syntax, eventually reflected at PF. The resulting picture is consistent with invariant mapping from syntax at the LF interface beside a richly parametrisable one at the PF interface (cf. Chomsky 1995: 4.1, 2000: 117f., 2001: 22, Berwick and Chomsky 2011: 37f.).

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