

LANGUAGE OF THE COMMUNIST TOTALITY IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA: INFLUENCE ON OUR AWARENESS AND ITS PROJECTION INTO REALITY (1952-2010)

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I. Introduction: The Time of the Communist Totality and the Present Time

Originally, the label for the specific post-war period of ‘non-freedom’ was used for the postwar Communist rule only; recently, however, it has been extended to cover the war-time fascist times, too.¹ The adjective ‘totalitarian’ meaning ‘not free, governed or controlled by somebody’, is based on the word ‘total’ and ‘totality’ retains basically, its meaning, that is being devoid of one’s freedom in many respects, too. Necessarily, an important and often the first tool of this control has been the language as the tool of transmission of ideas and influence. Consequently, these had soon begun to reflect both the changing terminology of the times and ways of political thinking behind it, especially in both totalitarian periods. Many words changed their meaning, the use of which changed, too, and new words emerged while some of the old ones, considered to have become ‘uncomfortable’, receded or faded out. New contexts started to point to new words and collocations and their new use.

¹ This chapter is based on a modified version of František Čermák, “Jazyk totality a dneška: jak odráží realitu a ovlivňuje lidské vědomí” [Language of Totalitarianism and of Today: How it Reflects Reality and Influences Human Consciousness], *Jazyk v politických, ideologických a interkulturních vztáchoch, Sociolinguistica Slovaca* 8, ed. by Julia Wacharczyková, Lucia Satinská, and Slavomír Ondrejovič (Bratislava: Veda, vydavateľstvo SAV, 2015), 50-60.

In the following, this will be shown selectively in a *pars pro toto* way on some key terms, or rather, lexemes, standing here as substitutes of many other. In order to be able to estimate properly these new words and expressions of the Totalitarian times, there will be a comparison offered with the lexicon used today. The *Communist totalitarian times* and its language will be represented by a *Corpus of Czech Totality* leading subsequently to *Dictionary of the Communist Totality*² while the present time is represented by the relevant part of the *SYN2010* of the Czech National corpus.³ The first corpus is based on samples from three critical historical periods of the Communist rule (dating in 1952, 1968 and 1977) as published by *Rudé právo* (*The Red Justice*), main Communist daily, made up of over 400,000 words (consisting of 2700 texts, in a representative selection). The second having over 500,000 words is based on the contemporary language (its name suggests the year of its completion, 2010) and is selected in a representative way as the first one, namely from the newspapers (both central and regional ones).

Hence, the time difference between the two periods is, on the average, 37 years and, if the extremes in the dating of the documents included is taken into account, the time gap is 50 years. In the meantime, the Communist language has lost quite a few words preserving very little of other, while many new words and meanings have emerged, being unknown at that time or being less used then. In the following, however, this aspect, though important, will not be taken into account here.

Let us first inspect the nature and order of some of the period words in comparison (see par. II) and then we shall try to analyse briefly some of the words of the period, their usage and meaning, these being jointly common to both periods (III).

II. The Notional Core of Both Periods Illustrated

The most important notions in the core vocabulary of a time, including its propaganda, or, more recently, advertisements are best reflected in its most frequent words (below, absolute frequencies of all the words are given). To get a closer view, in the first approach, 1000 of the most frequent words have been taken up from both periods studied, that of Totality and of Today. A primary attention will be given, understandably, to autosemantic words (i.e. nouns, adjectives, verbs and adverbs) since synsemantic words (grammar words and those remaining) do not reflect changes of the times much. This approach will be divided into two parts, into a smaller lexicon (2.1) and a larger one (2.2), offering two views.

² *Slovník komunistické totality* [A Dictionary of the Communist Totality], ed. by František Čermák, Václav Cvrček, and Vera Schmiedtová (Praha NLN, 2010).

³ <https://www.korpus.cz>, last accessed on 2 May 2019.

II.1. The First View: Sequence of 25 Most Frequent Autosemantic Words and Their Meaning

The most frequent lexemes used in the Totality times (not taking into account their polysemy or homonymy) are the following:

FREQ.	Czech word	English translation
1	<i>být, rok, práce, sovětský, socialistický</i>	to be, year, work, Soviet, socialist
6	<i>nový stát, země, moci, člověk</i>	new, state, country, can, man
11	<i>národní, výrobní, organizace, politický, lid</i>	national, production (adj.), organisation, political, people
16	<i>úkol, pracující, síla, závod, svaz</i>	task, working, force, enterprise/factory, union
21	<i>rozvoj, soudruh, výbor, společnost, den</i>	development, comrade, committee, society, day

As against these the most frequent words used Today are the following:

FREQ.	Czech word	English translation
1	<i>být, mít, rok, moci/moc, člověk</i>	to be, have, year, can, man
6	<i>velký, nový, stát, muset, chtít</i>	great, new, state, must, want
11	<i>český, říci/říct, koruna, místo, město</i>	Czech, say, crown, place, town
16	<i>dobrý, den, strana, hodina, doba</i>	good, day, party, hour, time
21	<i>dítě, poslední, dostat, uvést, firma</i>	child, past, get, introduce, firm

There is not much of imagination needed to realize:

- (A) why the verb 'to have' (*mít*) has not been stressed in its use including related 'property' linked to it (which was not supposed to be eventually private at all). Next to timeless notions of 'year' and 'day' (*rok, den*), notions and a high usage of the terms from
- (B) the sphere of 'work' (*práce*, being the third most frequent word) appear here, including 'work' itself (*práce*), 'task' (*úkol*), 'worker' (*pracující*) and 'enterprise'/factory' (*závod*). These followed by

(C) ‘social and political organisations’ were rather important, notably its words ‘state’, ‘country’, ‘production’, ‘organisation’, ‘political’, ‘people’, ‘force’, ‘comrade’, ‘committee’, ‘society’ (in Czech: *stát, production, organizace, politický, lid, síla, soudruh, výbor, společnost*) where a specific usage is to be seen in the two dominant and almost omnipresent adjectives ‘Soviet’ and ‘socialist’, belonging to stable epithets of the period. Let us remind ourselves, that this interpretation is, necessarily, devoid of context and is related, just like in the case of the verb to ‘have’ (*mít*), to the basic meanings only.

Today’s Lexicon is rather different reflecting, in the order of its words (apparent even from such a narrow selection), very different priorities.

(A1) ‘Property’ is already undisputable (‘have’, *mít*, but compare also ‘firm’ and ‘get’ implying it, i.e. *firma, dostat*) as well as the stress laid on the

(B1) ‘human individual’ as in ‘man’, ‘child’ (*člověk, dítě*) and their needs; see, in connection to this, also much more far-reaching modality signified by verbs ‘can’, ‘must’, ‘want’ (*mocet, muset, chtít*) suggesting that the human being is not only permitted many things, but also that he/she, as a subject, ‘may’ in the democratic times also want something. New topics are already brought in, too, including

(C1) ‘human seat’ as in ‘place’, ‘town’ (*místo, město*) as well as that of

(D1) ‘communication’ between people (as in *say, říct*), including the commercial one, ‘crown’ (*koruna*).

Some words and terms, highly used by the Communist regime, receded, such as ‘work’ (B above) or ‘social’ and ‘political’ (C above). This way, the word ‘people’ (*lid*), very much popular then, has flown into background, while ‘comrade’ (*soudruh*) has almost disappeared (being preferred by certain groups of Today’s society only).

It is then evident that even a simple scrutiny of the words with the highest frequency can tell a lot about preferences of the period which allow for a simple semantic classification.

II.2. The Second View: Nature of some Lexemes and their Relationship

Broadening one's perspective while inspecting both corpora as a whole (about 400,000 and 500,000 words) and selecting only the first 1000 most frequent words, our view will become both finer and deeper. Again, let us look first at the Corpus of Totality and then to the one covering Contemporary time.

In the Totality corpus, it is typical to observe blending and melding of topics related to

(A)

Political and Social Topics with Topics Concerning Work (B and C in II.1). On reading these the Totality period is, rather characteristically, depicted here by both their frequency and social importance.

First of all, the lexeme 'party' (*strana*, devoid of polysemy) is found here predominantly. It is being followed by other:

FREQ.	Czech word	English translation
1	<i>sovětský, socialistický, národní, výroba, politický</i>	Soviet, socialistic, national, production (adj.), political
6	<i>úkol, pracující, závod, svaz, soudruh, výbor</i>	task, worker, enterprise/factory, union, comrade, committee
11	<i>vláda, politika, plán, hospodářský, podnik</i>	government, policy, plan, economic, plant
16	<i>sjezd, socialismus, komunistický, KSČ, třída</i>	Congress, socialism, communist, CPCz (Communist part of Czechoslovakia), class
21	<i>ÚV, stranický, lidový, SSSR, orgán</i>	CC (central committee), party (adj.), people's, USSR, organ (which has soon changed to de-note police)
26	<i>hnutí, komunista, kapitalistický, družstvo, ČSSR</i>	movement, communist, capitalistic, cooperative, ČSSR (Czechoslovakia)
31	<i>USA, pokrokový, zasedání, závazek, us-nesení</i>	USA, progressive, session, obligation, resolution
36	<i>imperialismus, říjnový, třídní, kolektiv, výchova</i>	imperialism, October's, class (adj.), collective, education
41	<i>JZD, proletariát aj</i>	JZD (agricultural cooperative), proletariat, and so on.

Let us recall that words such as ‘reactionary’ (*reakční*) did not enter this frequency selection, since these belonged to the first period around the year of 1952, receding later into background. It is, however, interesting to inspect the words ‘market’ (*trh*, with frequency 2974) and ‘trade unions’ (fr. 2974, being outside of those listed here) in a much narrower meaning than today.

Two interconnected aspects of the time that faced many obstacles were mirrored in the use of ‘question’ (*otázka* with frequency of 15,710) and ‘problem’ (*problém*, fr. 9643), whose solution found its quasimilitaristic way which always used to be ‘fight/struggle’ (*bojovat*) and, eventually, to ‘win’ (*zvitěžit*, see more about this in 3).

This way, the second most important topic of the time becomes evident, namely

(B)

Fight(ing), war and enemy telling that the ruling regime lived in a permanent fear. Again, this quasimilitaristic setting is reflected in a fitting sequence of notions and words, such as ‘fight’/‘struggle’, ‘war’, ‘revolution’, ‘military’, ‘army’, ‘victory’, ‘peaceful’, ‘war’ (adj.), ‘fight’, ‘enemy’, ‘weapon’, ‘win’, ‘armed’, ‘army’.⁴ The underlying Czech expression here are: *boj, válka, revoluce, vojenský, armáda, vítězství, mírový, válečný, bojovat, nepřítel, zbraň, zvitěžit, ozbrojený, vojsko*.

A simple concordance of the lemma *boj* (‘fight’) or *bojovat* (‘to fight’) is enough to enable us to realize how inflationary these terms were and how diluted their original meaning has become. All of these did have an impact on people’s thinking and perception of the world. See, for example, collocations such as ‘struggle’/‘fight for every single grain’ (*boj o každé zrnno*), ‘fight for the flag of the Communist party’s congress’ (*boj o prapor sjezdu strany*), or ‘fight for the recovery of the health in the sphere of popular music’ (*boj o uzdravení v oblasti zábavné hudby*). If comprehensible at all, most of these far-fetched slogans, hanging often in the streets, seem funny and odd today, due to the goals they announced, such as Communist party flag in some sort of competition as a reward, or ill music that must be healed somehow (meaning, probably, that it was considered non-Communist, probably still too western-like).

Two interesting observations may be added here. The modal verb ‘can’/‘be able’ to (see II.1 above) is joined by a second, ‘must’ (*muset*) announcing a necessity and public obligation. Although the second of these two may seem to belong to the periphery, it is, in fact rather characteristic adding the vocabulary of the time, lacking any colour terms, the first one: ‘red’ (*rudý*), an eloquent reminder of the ruling Communist regime [please, clarify].

⁴ See more about this in František Čermák, “Slovník komunistické totality: lexémy, nominace a jejich užití” [Vocabulary of the Communist Totality: Lexemes, Nominations and Their Use], *Slovník komunistické totality*, 16-39.

Of course Today's Lexicon is quite different, and none of the two totalitarian topics above is any longer prominent here, though there appear other topics that are economic, administrative and the perennial topic of sport, too.

(C)

Economy and Trade. Linked to the contemporary world and time, these have, in their content, completely swapped the original socialist economy and trade terms with the contemporary ones. Thus, there are entirely new and modern terms found here, such as 'percent', 'price', 'money' (these not being part of the Totalitarian vocabulary inspected), 'market', 'bank', 'billion', 'financial', 'enterprise'/'factory', 'fund', 'dollar', 'operation', 'share'/'stock' (completely unknown before), 'economical', 'fee', 'customer', 'investment', 'finance', 'euro'. Let us add that the above two terms for 'obstacles' and 'solution' have swapped their order, 'problem' (with frequency 9924) becoming the first followed by 'question' (4879) while 'enemy' disappeared entirely having been replaced by the nonmilitaristic 'rival'. The underlying Czech terms are: *procento, cena, peníze, trh, banka, miliarda, finanční, podnik, fond, dolar, provoz, akcie, ekonomický, poplatek, zákazník, investice, finance, euro*.

(D)

Administrative and political field reflects terms of the modern time. However, central terms such as 'free' (*svobodný*) and 'democratic' (*demokratický*) are missing here, obviously because they are strongly self-evident and obvious, which was not the case of the Totalitarian period. The situation is to be seen from the frequency order of other terms, such as 'police' (Czech *policie*, the word being a taboo one during the Communist times never having discovered a decent substitute for it), 'spokesman', 'court', 'mayor', 'project', 'information', 'parliament', 'citizen's', 'political', 'town-hall', 'right', and so on. The Czech counterparts are: *mluvčí, soud, starosta, projekt, informace, parlament, občanský, politický, radnice, právo*.

(E)

The perennial topic of Sport has become more important, offering now a rich variety of terms, such as 'play', 'player', 'competition', 'match', 'trainer', 'goal', 'race', 'win', 'league', 'rival', 'referee', 'attack' (mostly in a nonmilitary sense), 'tournament', and so forth. The Czech terms are here: *brát, hráč, soutěž, utkání, trenér, branka, závod, vybrát, liga, gól, soupeř, rozhodčí, útok, turnaj aj*.

III. The Third View: Absence of Lexemes in the two Periods

Conclusions that can easily be made on the basis of only basic frequency may also be summed up negatively pointing to major differences, too. Thus, it is remarkable to note that during the Communist period (almost) no trace is recorded of lexemes ‘police’, ‘money’, ‘share(s)’/‘stock’, ‘bad’, ‘private’, ‘may’/‘be allowed’ (Czech *policie, peníze, akcie, špatný, soukromý, smět*).

The absence of such terms as the Czech *kádrový* (‘personell’, ‘viewed politically’) and *uvědomělý* (‘politically’, ‘class-conscious’), is conspicuous, these not even having good counterparts in English. Though these were often used in the very beginning of the Communist period, they somewhat receded later, but their absence may also be due to a random choice from the corpus.

For the Contemporary times, on the other hand, low or hardly any use can be recorded of lexemes, such as ‘comrade’, ‘collective’ (noun), ‘Communist’, ‘Communist’ (adj.), ‘personell’, ‘class-conscious’ (for these, see a note above), ‘class’ (adj.), ‘win’, ‘try to find in shops’, ‘socialistic’, ‘Soviet’, whose Czech original counterparts are *soudruh, kolektiv, komunista, komunistický, kádrový, uvědomělý, třídní, zvítězit, shánět, socialistický, sovětský*.

III.1. An Analysis of Key Terms of Both Periods: Pravda (Truth), Cíl (Goal), Bojovat (Fight), Zvítězit (Win) with their Collocations

Having looked into isolated, though frequency-ordered sample above (being relatively exhaustive from the point of view of the semantic groups identified there), whose meaning and importance become clear only in the frequency company of other by their place in the whole, our next step will be to look at the usage and broader relationship of four basic and, in a sense, timeless notions of *Pravda* (‘Truth’), *Cíl* (‘Goal’), *Bojovat* (‘Fight’), *Zvítězit* (‘Win’). Though their choice is somewhat arbitrary, it is made in an attempt to show many associations they have, as well as the great changes they have undergone during the time. Through their most frequent collocations (standing for minimal context of use) their basic specific use in their microcontexts will be recorded, and, in this way, also their semantics and usage in the period inspected.

Totality Period (the most frequent collocations, in the order 1-75, in decreasing frequency):

<i>Pravda</i>	<i>Cíl</i>	<i>Bojovat</i>	<i>Zvítězit</i>
<i>historická</i>	<i>hospodářský</i>	<i>proti</i>	<i>nad</i>
<i>objektivní</i>	<i>hlavní</i>	<i>za</i>	<i>zaslouženě</i>
<i>vědecká</i>	<i>stanovený</i>	<i>rozhodně</i>	<i>družstvo</i>
<i>hluboká</i>	<i>vytyčený</i>	<i>aktivně</i>	<i>mužstvo</i>
<i>skutečná</i>	<i>konečný</i>	<i>důsledně</i>	<i>tým</i>
<i>známá</i>	<i>společný</i>	<i>nesmířitelně</i>	<i>přátelství</i>
<i>překrucování</i>	<i>dosáhnout</i>	<i>mír</i>	<i>proletariát</i>
<i>psát</i>	<i>politiky</i>	<i>splnění</i>	<i>revoluce</i>
<i>mít</i>	<i>realizace</i>	<i>svobodu</i>	<i>soutěži</i>
<i>poznání</i>	<i>agresivní</i>	<i>zachování</i>	<i>boji</i>
<i>rozvoje</i>	<i>politický</i>	<i>imperialismu</i>	<i>socialismus</i>
<i>poznat</i>	<i>splnění</i>	<i>fašismu</i>	<i>kapitalismem</i>
		<i>nedostatkům</i>	<i>volbách</i>

Today's Time (the most frequent collocations in the order 1-50/75, in decreasing frequency):

<i>Pravda</i>	<i>Cíl</i>	<i>Bojovat</i>	<i>Zvítězit</i>
<i>je</i>	<i>hlavní</i>	<i>proti</i>	<i>zaslouženě</i>
<i>máte</i>	<i>projekt</i>	<i>záchranu</i>	<i>volbách</i>
<i>nepříjemná</i>	<i>jasný</i>	<i>postup</i>	<i>nad</i>
<i>naprostá</i>	<i>konkrétní</i>	<i>o</i>	<i>kategorii</i>
<i>vítězí</i>	<i>programový</i>	<i>titul</i>	<i>rozum</i>
<i>svatá</i>	<i>měnový</i>	<i>život</i>	<i>přehledem</i>
<i>známá</i>	<i>útok</i>	<i>statečně</i>	<i>rozdílem</i>
<i>stará</i>	<i>turisté</i>	<i>svobodu</i>	<i>soutěži</i>
<i>historická</i>	<i>strategický</i>	<i>přežití</i>	<i>anketě</i>
<i>řít</i>	<i>zvýšit</i>	<i>kluci</i>	<i>turnaji</i>
<i>znát</i>	<i>inflační</i>	<i>medaile</i>	<i>těsně</i>
<i>vědecký</i>	<i>politický</i>	<i>udržení</i>	<i>boji</i>
<i>hledání</i>	<i>soutěž</i>	<i>tituly</i>	<i>jednoznačně</i>
<i>rozhodně</i>	<i>dlouhodobý</i>	<i>prvenství</i>	<i>družstvo</i>
<i>mluvit</i>	<i>oblíbený</i>	<i>kürovcem</i>	<i>finále</i>
		<i>korupci</i>	<i>závodě</i>
		<i>krizí</i>	<i>převahou</i>
		<i>zloději</i>	<i>konkurencí</i>
		<i>kvalifikaci</i>	<i>štafetách</i>
		<i>únavou</i>	<i>zlem</i>

Interpreting these, let us add just a couple of notes about their meaning and contexts where they are to be found while more details are easily to be seen in the corpora on the web. This possibility is also the reason why no English equivalents are offered here.

(1)

Truth (*pravda*) is a basic and philosophical term. Since it is strongly linked to the concrete situation that can be interpreted in more than one way, none of the two periods attempts to define it. Nonetheless, its collocations suggest that the communist approach tended to identify it with the prevailing period ideology, hence the collocation ‘objective truth’ (*objektivní pravda*), that is just proclaimed but never explained, and, similarly, ‘historical truth’ (*historická pravda*), the usage of which is quite different in both periods. A subjective and, therefore, alternative approach to other possibility (and not the only one) and its usage is found in Today’s Period, see dialogic expressions, such as ‘You are right’ (*Máte pravdu*), ‘Holy truth!’ (*svatá pravda*) or ‘unpleasant truth’ (*nepříjemná pravda*) suggesting a possibility to express diversity of opinion and subjective stand, which was not imaginable in the Communist period. The favourite Communist expression ‘distorsion of truth’ (*překrucování pravdy*) suggesting the perennial Communist struggle with the Western world (which, by definition, can never see the truth and resorts only to its distorsion since the only truth is that of the Communists) is confronted by today’s typically philosophical ‘search for truth’ (*hledání pravdy*).

(2)

Goal (*Cíl*) is, in contrast to truth, a notion tied entirely to a specific period, reflecting all the more aptly momentaneous preferences of the society and accents placed on these. The Communist goal, or rather goals, are only ‘political’ (*politický*) and ‘economic’ (*hospodářský*), all strictly planned and given centrally from above, that are clearly ‘staked out’ (*vytyčené*) and ‘determined’ (*stanovený*) or even ‘definitive’ (*konečné*), all of these supposed ‘to be realized’ (*realizovat*), ‘fulfilled’ (*splnit*), or ‘attained’ (*dosáhnout*). Modern time is not so clear-cut and definite, there is no suggestion that they are coming, dictated from above, though their relatedness and dependency on a ‘framework’ (*programový cíl*) is noted. Often, these are openly viewed as a search or inspection by collocations such as ‘goal of the project’, ‘competition’ (*cíl projektu, soutěže*). Moreover, next to political and economic goals, other goals are mentioned, too, including those related to ‘sport competition’, ‘tourism’, and so forth (*cíl útoku, cíl turistů*).

(3)

Fight (*bojovat*) is a dynamic notion suggesting a shortcut to developmental problems of many kinds. In the Communist time, one fought ‘against’ somebody/something and

‘for’ something, ‘against an enemy and for a goal’. The enemy was ‘Imperialism’ and ‘Fascism’ usually (*bojovat proti imperialismu, fašismu*), though the enemy could have been conceived of in a rather abstract and collective way, too, such as in ‘deficiencies’ (*bojovat proti nedostatkům*). This goal that was ‘pursued’ (called in the jargon of the time), could be of several kinds, somewhat heterogeneous: ‘freedom’ (*svoboda, bojovat za svobodu*) where it was, primarily, the ‘freedom of the oppressed nations standing outside the Communist world’, ‘peace’ (*mír, bojovat za mír*), but also, rather vaguely, ‘accomplishment’ (*splnění*, as in accomplishment of ‘Communist party congress resolution’, *splnění závěrů komunistického sjezdu*). Here, the way how it must be accomplished has been stressed, being usually ‘intensive’, ‘active’, ‘consequent’ and ‘intransigent’ (*bojovat rozhodně, aktivně, důsledně, nesmiřitelně*, and so on).

Modern times are no longer so straightforward and no simple picture is offered. One is still ‘fighting against’ (*proti*), but much less ‘on behalf of’ (*za*) something/somebody, or rather ‘for’ (*o*) something. Neither is the enemy a personified state of affairs as in the Communist times (‘fight against imperialism’, *bojovat proti imperialismu*), it is merely period-bound or timeless (*bojovat s korupcí*, ‘fight with corruption’). Communist period did not mention corruption at all, and that is why an equivalent term from this time is missing.

However, rather than ‘fighting against’ (*bojovat proti*), a new meaning appears signalling competition and rivalry using the preposition ‘with’ (*s*), cf. ‘fight with thieves’, ‘bark beetle’ (*se zloději, s kůrovcem*), but also with ‘crisis’, or subjectively, with ‘fatigue’ (*s krizí, únavou*). This recent aspect becomes dominant in a different kind of fight, namely in sport. Thus, one ‘fights’, next to the old ‘fight for one’s life’, ‘for freedom’ or, specifically, ‘for the title to be gained’, ‘primacy’ or a ‘medal’ (*o život, svobodu, titul, prvenství, medaili*), and so on.

(4)

Win (*zvíťezit*) makes sense, mostly, if combined with fighting, both must be viewed together. Yet, the usage of this verb is very different in both periods. The Communist time prefers to stress the agent, namely the winner in a victorious fight, offering, for the first time, also winning in sports. Thus, the ‘winner’ may be seen in a ‘team’ (*družstvo*), ‘squad’ (*mužstvo*), but also in a personified ‘movement’ or ‘situation’ (‘friendship’, ‘proletariat’, ‘revolution’, ‘socialism has prevailed’, *přátelství, proletariát, revoluce, socialismus zvíťezil*). An evident goal, hence the object of the fight, is political, primarily (‘defeat the capitalism’, *zvíťezit nad kapitalismem*), but, interestingly, there appears a processual view of the fighting using a different preposition (‘win (in) the fight’, ‘elections’, *zvíťezit v boji, ve volbách*). This usage may suggest an ambiguous, alternative result, which has not been often achieved, however.

Modern time has ‘usurped win’ (*zvíťezit*) dominantly, especially in sports (‘win in a category’, ‘tournament’, ‘finals’, ‘race’, ‘relays’, *zvíťezit v kategorii, turnaji, finále, závodě, štafetách*). A rare exception is represented outside the sport, too, namely, in ‘win inquiry’/‘poll’ (*zvíťezit v anketě*).

A rather unique and solitary, though quite significant, of fight is, next to ‘win the elections’ (*zvíťezit ve volbách*), an ethical and philosophical collocation ‘triumph over the evil’ (*zvíťezit nad zlem*). A similar, though rare case, in contrast to the Communist times, is to be seen in the use and explicit mention of the subject of the fight and, hence, its winner, cf. however, next to the sports use, the ‘team won’ (*družstvo zvíťezilo*), also a general and psychological one ‘common sense prevailed’ (*rozum zvíťezil*).

IV. A Summary and Open Problems

This kind of approach, trying to sketch at least some significant key terms of two different periods and their general nature, prevailing political values and psychological situations involved may be easily criticised. This depends, however, on the point of view and criteria used, it is a matter interpretation. Yet, it seems that this approach is reflected in the language of the two periods up to a high degree. Without a large and indepth probe, that happens to offer itself in the two existing corpora used here (should anyone be interested to undertake it), this cannot be more than a few notes, hints and traces that this approach could offer. It seems, however, that a persuasive and distinctive picture of both periods does loom here.

Author's notes

On the data chosen from two comparable large corpora, one from the period of the Communist Totality, the other from Today, post-totalitarian period, an attempt has been made to compare vocabulary of both periods and some of its typical lexemes as well as collocations. Through this corpus approach both a skeleton picture of both periods as

well as of the current notions, typical of these widely different times, could have been, hopefully, drawn and through that, main features of both periods and society living in them obtained. The research is an off-spin of a Dictionary of the Totalitarian Period published recently and is to be seen as a continuation of it. The Totalitarian vocabulary and the corpus have been based (each around half a million of words), mostly, on the Communist newspapers while a corresponding corpus of the same newspaper type of texts from the Czech National Corpus has been used as a counterweight. Thus, effectively, vocabulary of these two periods spanned over some 50 years.

In two steps, the first probe has concentrated on a simple inventory of the most frequent words of both periods. The initial small probe offered 25 most frequent autosemantic words where a considerable difference, even in such small vocabulary, is already evident. The prevalence of political notions in the Communist period was to be expected with dominant adjectives such as 'Soviet' and 'socialistic'. On the other hand, contemporary vocabulary reveals, among other things, a remarkable presence of words related to private ownership already. The second step has tried to confirm and make more precise the first one, offering a semantic analysis of the most frequent 1000 words from both times. It became more clear to what degree the Communist have been bent on all sorts of fight, struggle or war which reflected their constant uncertainty, a feature not to be found today (if any, fighting is now related to sports). Another prominent feature, dominant today but strongly underrepresented in the Communist time, is one related to economics and business (words such as 'private', 'money', 'investment', 'shares', 'customer'). A contrastive list of lexemes not to be found in one of the periods is offered by way of a summary.

The research has subsequently moved on to typical collocations of some key notions and words, showing thus rudimental semantics of these notions and their associations with other, period-prone words. Four words have been chosen for the comparison of their collocations here, namely 'truth', 'goal', 'fight' and 'win'. A comparison of the use of these four words through their collocations in both periods is shown in a table (having some 50 up to 75 most frequent collocations).

Typically, Communist collocations offered for 'fight' include words as 'against imperialism', 'fascism', 'for peace' while modern times seem to prefer fighting with 'corruption', 'crisis' or even, more personally, 'with fatigue', 'for sport medals'. Similarly, Communists won their fights mostly politically or at war, cf. 'proletariat'/'revolution has won', 'win over capitalism', while today 'win' refers to sport mostly, such as 'in their category'/'in tournament', and so on.

Admittedly, this has been just an attempt which could be easily improved, if more data were used, although it did show some aspects of the public life of both periods.