
I. ROZPRAWY I ANALIZY

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The Concept of *ZDRAVÍ* [HEALTH] in the Czech Language*

Koncept *ZDRAVÍ* [ZDROWIE] w języku czeskim

Abstract: In this article, the authors present the key findings of a study conducted within the international comparative research EUROJOS-2, on the basis of which they formulate a comprehensive cognitive definition of the concept of *ZDRAVÍ* [HEALTH] in Czech. The research methodology is primarily grounded in modern ethnolinguistics, the theory of linguistic worldview, and the theory of conceptual metaphor. Through the analysis of systemic data (various types of explanatory dictionaries, collections of idioms and proverbs), empirical data (a questionnaire survey conducted among university students), and textual data (folklore, media, professional and other texts), the authors reconstruct the linguistic view of *ZDRAVÍ* in Czech. The study of etymology, phraseology and the most recent media texts confirms that the concept of *ZDRAVÍ* has remained the most valuable asset in the Czech linguistic worldview for centuries. It is perceived as a prototypical manifestation of life, standing in opposition to illness and death. Apart from its connection to the concept of LIFE, *ZDRAVÍ* is closely associated with the concepts of STRENGTH,

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STABILITY, WHOLENESS, MOVEMENT, YOUTH, etc. However, the conceptualization of *ZDRAVÍ* has undergone gradual modifications as well. While in older Czech language *ZDRAVÍ* was primarily understood as a physical condition without pain and illness, granted to humans by God for a limited time, the current generation of Czech speakers emphasize the inseparability of physical and mental well-being, subjective experience, social stability, and individual responsibility.

Keywords: linguistic worldview; ethnolinguistics; cognitive linguistics; EUROJOS; health; value; Czech language; cognitive definition

1. Introduction

ZDRAVÍ [HEALTH] is one of the cultural key concepts in the linguistic worldview and, together with the concept of *ŽIVOT* [LIFE], holds the highest position in the value hierarchy of Czech speakers, but not only among them (cf. Niebrzegowska-Bartmińska 2013; Niebrzegowska-Bartmińska 2010; Cinkrautová, Christou, and Tvrďá, under review). From the linguistic perspective, the concept of *ZDRAVÍ* has so far been primarily examined in ethnolinguistic studies focusing on Polish, Serbian, Ukrainian, Bulgarian, and French (Marczewska 2012; Stefanović 2019; Martinek 2019; Vitanova 2019; Koselak-Maréchal; Underhill 2019). Its conceptualization in English has been explored in several studies as well (Scott 2023a,b). A systematic examination of the Czech conceptualization of *ZDRAVÍ* has so far been undertaken exclusively by the authors of this paper (Christou and Táborská 2022; Cinkrautová, Christou, and Tvrďá 2025; Cinkrautová, Christou, and Tvrďá, under review). The research is theoretically and methodologically grounded in modern ethnolinguistics, the theory of the linguistic worldview (cf. Bartmiński 2010, 2016a), and Conceptual Metaphor Theory (cf. Lakoff and Johnson 2003). This paper builds upon a study conducted as part of the international comparative research EUROJOS-2 (Cinkrautová, Christou, and Tvrďá, under review), summarizes key findings obtained through the analysis of systemic, empirical, and textual data,¹ and aims to formulate a synthetic cognitive definition of the concept of *ZDRAVÍ* in Czech.

2. Systemic data

Several morphologically related lexemes are used in Czech to express the concept of *ZDRAVÍ*. From the perspective of conceptualization, the noun

¹ For a more detailed discussion of the methodology of investigating the linguistic worldview, see e.g. Bartmiński 2016b.

zdraví ‘health’ and the adjective *zdravý* ‘healthy’ are considered fundamental. As a source of material for this study we used Czech monolingual dictionaries (ASSČ; SSČ; SSJČ; PSJČ), Jungmann’s bilingual dictionary (first published in 1835), etymological dictionaries (Rejzek 2012; Machek 2010; Holub and Kopečný 1952) and conceptual and synonymic dictionaries (ČSVS; Tez.; Pala and Všianský 2000). Idioms and paroemias were excerpted from phraseological dictionaries and paremiological collections (esp. SČFI; Bitt.; Čel.; Flajš.).

2.1. Etymology and development of meaning

The lexeme *zdraví* is common to all Slavic languages and has developed from the Indo-European root **su-doruo-* with the literal meaning of ‘(being) made of good wood’ (Rejzek 2012: 777; Holub and Kopečný 1952: 434). According to another theory, it may have originated from the Indo-European root **solvos*, meaning ‘whole, untouched’ (Machek 2010: 713). One of the meanings of the Old Czech lexeme *sdravie* ‘health’ can be interpreted through its contemporary Czech equivalents *život* ‘life’, *žití* ‘living’, *bytí* ‘being’. In Old Czech texts, the distinction between the meaning of *život* ‘life’ and *zdravý stav* ‘healthy state’ is not always clear (Černá 2020: 105). In *Slovník česko-německý* (1834–1839), the noun *zdraví* is recorded with a single meaning: “stav bezbolestný člověka, v němž každý oud k zastávání své služby způsobný jest” (“a painless condition of a person, in which every limb is capable to perform its function”). The adjective *zdravý/zdráv* ‘healthy’ is defined in the same dictionary as “w přirozeném, nepokaženém stavu se nacházející, tak že všichni oudové ku konání své služby způsobní jsou, o živočichu, rostlině a částkách jejich, čerstvý” (“in a natural, unspoiled state, so that all limbs are capable to perform their function, of animal, plant and their parts, fresh”).² In this historical perspective, *zdraví* is viewed exclusively in its physical dimension, primarily as the absence of pain and the proper functioning of the organism or its individual parts.

2.2. Dictionaries of contemporary Czech

The most recent monolingual dictionaries of contemporary Czech (ASSČ; SSČ) define the lexeme *zdraví* with the following core meanings: (1) “subjektivně pocíťovaný / normální stav tělesné a duševní pohody”³ (“subjectively felt / normal state of physical and mental well-being”), and (2) “celkový

² In addition to the lexemes that we consider fundamental to the conceptualization of *ZDRAVÍ*, Jungmann lists numerous other derivatives and compounds, many of which are now obsolete and no longer in use.

³ Subjective evaluation is also emphasized in the PSJČ “stav, při němž se člověk n. jiný tvor cítí úplně zdravým” (“a condition in which a person or other creature feels completely healthy”).

stav organismu bez příznaků poškození orgánů nebo poruchy jejich funkce” (“general condition of the organism without symptoms of organ damage or disfunction”). Additionally, the SSČ and PSJČ list another meaning that could be interpreted as a semantic nuance of (2):⁴ “(zdravotní) stav organismu vůbec (zprav. v určitém období)” (“(health) condition of an organism in general (typically at a specific period)”). ASSČ further includes the figurative meaning “(celkový) dobrý stav fungování nějakého celku nebo systému, prosperita” (“(general) good state of functioning of a unit or system, prosperity”), in which health functions as a source domain metaphorically expressing the stability and prosperity of a system, institution, etc.

The adjective *zdravý* ‘healthy’⁵ is semantically richer than the noun: (1) “(o člověku) mající neporušené zdraví” (“having intact health” (of a person)), (2) “(o orgánech živočišného těla) nezasazený, netrpící žádnou chorobou” (“(of the organs of the animal body) unaffected, not suffering from any disease”) (only in SSČ), (3) “(o rostlinách apod.) náležitě vyvinutý” (“(of plants, etc.) properly developed”) (only in SSČ), (4) “svědčící o zdraví” (“indicative of health”), (5) “prospěšný, příznivý zdravý” (“beneficial, conducive to health”), (6) “prospěšný, užitečný vůbec” (“beneficial, useful in general”), (7) “přírozený, nezkažený” (“natural, uncorrupted”), (8) “neporušený, nepoškozený” (“intact, uncorrupted”), (9) “náležitý, řádný, přiměřený, správný” (“appropriate, proper, adequate, correct”).

The prominent position of the concept in the value hierarchy of Czech speakers is evidenced by courtesy formulas such as greetings (*Zdravíčko!* [Greetings!]), congratulations (*Hodně zdraví!* [Good health!]), toasts or responses to sneezes (*Na zdraví!* [To your health!]), all of which typically express wishes for good, lasting health (cf. Bartmiński 2010: 335).

Thus, in contemporary Czech monolingual dictionaries, the interpretation of health is far more complex. It is defined as a condition in which the organism functions naturally, without symptoms of organ damage or dysfunction, while also being a subjectively perceived condition of physical and mental well-being and balance. This interpretation extends beyond the narrowly defined biological framework captured in older Czech sources.

2.3. **Synonymy, antonymy**

Slovník českých synonym (Pala and Všianský 2000: 353) briefly lists synonymous lexemes for the adjective *zdravý* ‘healthy’ in four senses: (1) *neporaněný* ‘uninjured’, (2) *neporušený, nepoškozený, nezkažený, přírozený*

⁴ This solution comes from SSJČ.

⁵ The interpretation of the meanings and polysemy structure is based on SSČ and SSJČ. Particular attention is drawn to those meanings that have been given in only one of the dictionaries.

‘intact, undamaged, unspoiled, natural’, (3) *řádný, správný, přiměřený, vhodný* ‘proper, correct, adequate, suitable’, (4) *příznivý, prospěšný* ‘favourable, beneficial’. No synonyms for the noun *zdraví* ‘health’ are included in this dictionary. The semantics of health are explored in greater detail in conceptual dictionaries such as *Tezaurus jazyka českého* (2007) and *Český slovník věcný a synonymický* (1974), which list additional synonymous and related words: *vitalita, longevita, statnost, robustnost, pružnost, rozumnost, svěží, mladistvý, čilý, zotavit se, vyléčit se, vzchopit se, sebrat se* ‘vitality, longevity, sturdiness, robustness, flexibility, rationality, fresh, youthful, vigorous, to recover, to heal, to get up, to pick oneself together’, etc.

The antonyms to *zdraví* are the nouns *nemoc, onemocnění, choroba, neduh* ‘disease, ailment, sickness, infirmity’. The opposites of the adjective *zdravý* include not only the negative form *nezdravý* ‘unhealthy’, but also adjectives *nemocný, churavý, chorobný* ‘ill, ailing, morbid/pathological’ (Pala and Všianský 2000: 413; SSČ; SSJČ).

2.4. Derivatives and compounds

The root morpheme *-zdrav-* is highly productive in Czech and forms numerous derivatives and compounds⁶ across various semantic domains: (1) restoring health: *uzdravení, uzdravený, uzdravit se, ozdravný, ozdravovna, ozdravit* ‘recovery, healed, to heal, therapeutic, sanatorium, to restore health’, (2) institutional healthcare: *zdravotník, zdravotnictví, zdravotní, zdravotnický, zdravotvěda* ‘healthcare worker, healthcare system, health-related, medical, health science’, (3) social interactions: *pozdrav, pozdravení, Pozdravpámbu, zdravít, zdravice* ‘greeting, salutation, may God bless you, to greet, salutatory speech’, (4) derivatives with a negative attribute: *nezdravý, nezdravě* ‘unhealthy, unhealthily’, (5) expressive evaluations: *zdravíčko*,⁷ *superzdravý* ‘superhealthy’. The prominent presence of derivatives and compounds related to health recovery and institutional care implies an awareness of health as something impermanent – a state that can be lost but also regained or strengthened. Additionally, the connection between health and social norms is evident in expressions associated with greetings. This diversity demonstrates that health is not merely perceived as a biological condition, but also as a social phenomenon that influences multiple aspects of life.

⁶ In the lexical database *Databáze heslářů* (<https://lexiko.ujc.cas.cz/heslare/>) 119 entries with the component *-zdrav-* can be found.

⁷ A diminutive form with the literal meaning ‘little health’ sometimes used as a greeting.

2.5. Phraseology⁸

Idioms and proverbs stand at the intersection between systemic and textual data and form a fundamental material basis for assessing the axiological significance of a concept. These established multi-word units preserve values, attitudes, principles, and experiences inherent to a particular linguistic community (cf. e.g. Mlacek 1984; Čermák 2017).

In the linguistic worldview, *ZDRAVÍ* forms a semantic opposition with *NEMOC* [ILLNESS], forming an essential part of a broader system of dichotomies, including life – death, youth – old age, beauty – ugliness, movement – immobility, strength – weakness, wholeness – incompleteness, and colourfulness – colourlessness. Within this framework, health is consistently associated with positive values, which are also seen as prototypical manifestations of health (Vaňková 2016: 41), e.g. *Dnes člověk, že by skály lámal, a zítra by ho větřík povalil* (Čel.) (“One day a person is strong enough to break rocks, and the next, a gentle breeze could knock him down”, *vyvázl s neporušenou kůží / celými kostmi* (ČSVS) (“he escaped with his skin unharmed / with all his bones intact”), *mít růžičky ve tvářích* (ČSVS) (“to have little roses in the cheeks”).

In Czech phraseology, *ZDRAVÍ* is conceptualized as something of unique value (*Zdraví je největší poklad, Zdraví nade vše* [SČFI], “Health is the greatest treasure”, “Health above all”), and sometimes even as a gift from God (*Bůh dal život, Bůh dá i zdraví* [Bitt.], “God gave life, God also gives health”, whose maintenance is only partly within human control (*Lékař léčí, bůh uzdravuje* [Čel.], “The doctor treats, God heals”). Physical manifestations of health are commonly expressed through similes. A healthy person is compared to hardwood trees, symbolizing strength and resilience (*zdraví jako dub/buk* [SČFI], ‘healthy as an oak/beech tree’); brightly coloured, often red, flowers and fruits, evoking vitality and freshness (*tváře červené jako růže/jahoda* [ČSVS], ‘cheeks red as a rose/strawberry’); a strong root or kernel, representing inner fortitude (*zdravý jako řípa/křen/ořech* [ČSVS], ‘healthy like a beet/horseradish/nut’); a powerful and robust animal, conveying physical strength (*zdravý jako býk* [syn v11], ‘healthy like a bull’); or a small, agile animal, highlighting liveliness and agility (*zdravý jako rybička/křepelka* [SČFI], ‘healthy like a little fish/quail’). The frequent comparison to a strong core or root reflects the idea of health as an essential foundation for overall well-being and resilience.

Many Czech proverbs contain practical guidance on how to preserve good health, emphasizing proper nutrition (*Jez do polosity, pij do polopita*,

⁸ For a more detailed discussion of the conceptualization of *ZDRAVÍ* and *NEMOC* [ILLNESS] in Czech phraseology, see Christou and Táborská (2022).

vyjdou ti naplno léta [SČFI], “Only eat until half-full, only drink until half-quenched, and you will live a long life”), hygiene (*čistota (je) půl zdraví* [ASSČ], “cleanliness (is) half of health”; *Třeba chudobně, jen když čistotně* [Čel.], “Poverty is better than being unclean”), mental well-being (*Veselá mysl (je) půl zdraví* [ASSČ], “A cheerful mind (is) half of health”), and individual responsibility for preserving health (*Ostříhej čest z mládí a zdraví pod starost* [Bitt.], “Be honourable in your youth and take care of your health”).

3. Empirical data: survey among university students

The survey was conducted in 2024 among Czech university students. We collected a total of 114 questionnaires, with 90 women and 24 men, and the sample included both humanities (71) and non-humanities (43). The questionnaire contained two questions and three incomplete statements, to which the respondents were asked to complete their answers: 1. *What do you think is the essence of true/real health?*; 2. *What do you think is not true/real health?*; 3. *Health also includes...*; 4. *Someone is healthy because...*; 5. *Someone is healthy, but...*

Respondents frequently provided structured answers to individual questions and incomplete statements, often including multiple items or a developed response covering several semantic areas or topics. These longer answers were divided into segments based on thematic focus, which became our analytical units. The result of the analysis of the survey data revealed six semantic aspects that seem to be key to profiling ZDRAVÍ in contemporary Czech.

3.1. Aspect of healthy lifestyle

The aspect of a healthy lifestyle was the most frequently mentioned in the responses (424 response segments).⁹ We divided the answers into several categories, mirroring the principles of a comprehensive healthy lifestyle: **exercise** (*sportuje* ‘playing sports’), **self-care** (*stará se o své tělo* ‘taking care of one’s body’), **diet** (*dostatek pitného režimu, vyvážené stravy* ‘sufficient hydration, balanced diet’), **extremes in lifestyle** (*přehnané diety a počítání kalorií* ‘excessive dieting and calorie counting’), **healthy lifestyle** (*žije zdravě* ‘living healthily’), **rest and sleep** (*dokáže relaxovat* ‘being able to relax’). Less frequently mentioned, but still recurring, were responses in

⁹ The number of segments listed for individual aspects usually exceeds the total number of respondents, which is due to two factors. The first is the first step of the analysis described above, i.e. the division of longer answers into shorter thematic segments, and the second is the way the questionnaires were filled out: respondents often mentioned the same topics in multiple questionnaire items.

categories such as **(preventive) medical care** (*pravidelně navštěvuje lékaře* ‘regularly visiting a doctor’), **avoiding addictive substances** (*nekouřit, nekonsumovat alkohol* ‘not smoking, not consuming alcohol’), **avoiding stress** (*psychická odolnost vůči stresu* ‘psychological resilience to stress’), and **regularity** (*pravidelný režim* ‘regular routine’).

3.2. Psychological aspect

The psychological aspect of health (263 response segments) was evaluated as the second most frequent. Many respondents focused on **psychological well-being** in their answers, which they associated with feelings of satisfaction and happiness or personal well-being¹⁰ (*podstatou je nejen fyzické zdraví, ale i duševní pohoda; být šťastný*, “the essence is not only physical health but also mental well-being; being happy”). Other categories included **mental health** (*zdravá psychika; trpí depresemi a úzkostí* ‘healthy mind; suffering from depression and anxiety’) and a **positive relationship with oneself** (*být spokojený sám se sebou* ‘being content with oneself’).

3.3. Functional aspect: proper functioning of one’s system

The third most frequently represented aspect was the functioning of one’s system (160 response segments), which relates to both the physical and psychological health. We distinguish categories such as **absence of illness, injury** (*život bez zdravotních potíží* ‘life without health problems’), **life without health limitations** (*nic mě neovlivňuje ve vykonávání běžných činností v životě* ‘nothing affects my ability to carry out normal daily activities’), and **proper functioning of the body and mind** (*tělo (a mysl) jsou schopny vykonávat správně svoje funkce* ‘the body (and mind) are able to perform their functions correctly’).

3.4. Holistic aspect

The responses also reflected a relatively common understanding that true health consists of multiple interconnected or interdependent components (126 response segments). Based on these responses, we define the holistic aspect of health, which includes both mental and physical health¹¹. We subdivide it into two categories: **unity of physical and mental health** (*psychická i fyzická zdatnost*, “both psychological and physical fitness”) and **balance of**

¹⁰ For more details on the Czech keyword *pohoda* ‘well-being’, cf. Vaňková 2010.

¹¹ The definition of the holistic aspect of health as consisting only of the physical and mental aspects does not fully correspond to current knowledge, because it does not include the social dimension, see, for example, the World Health Organization’s definition of health: “Health is a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity” (*Health Promotion Glossary of Terms* 2021: 3). Although respondents mentioned the social aspect of health significantly less often than the physical and mental aspects, they did not completely ignore it, see the social aspect of the concept of health below.

physical and mental health (*harmonie mezi duševním a fyzickým stavem*, “harmony of mental and physical states”).

3.5. Social aspect

As mentioned above, the social dimension of health was not as frequently represented in the responses as the physical and psychological aspects, but it was still repeatedly mentioned (53 response segments). The corresponding segments can be divided into two categories: **quality relationships** (*dobré rodinné zázemí, přátelé*, “good family support, friends”) and **integration into social groups** (*schopnost navázat vztahy*, “ability to establish relationships”).

3.6. Aspect of life approach

Within the aspect of life approach (41 response segments), the categories of **living life to the fullest** (*užívá si života*, “enjoying life”) and **hobbies** (*dělá věci, které ho/ji baví a naplňují; má koníčky*, “doing things that make you happy and fulfilled; having hobbies”) are represented more numerously. Less represented are the categories **life vision** (*má světový pohled a ví, kam chce svůj život směřovat*, “having a worldview and knowing where one wants to direct their life”) and **personality development** (*rozvíjí své schopnosti, talenty, vědomosti*, “developing one’s abilities, talents, and knowledge”).

3.7. Conclusion on the survey

The survey results indicate that ZDRAVÍ is a complex concept consisting of several interconnected aspects. It is defined not only by the absence of illness but is also associated with overall personal well-being and quality of life. A healthy person feels well and also functions well in various areas of life. A key finding is that psychological health and emotional well-being are very important for the younger generation. This is evident not only from the responses used to define the psychological aspect of health but also from the fact that these response segments were mentioned across all items in the questionnaire. This is most likely due to the age of the respondents; young people have fewer experiences with physical ailments and limitations, in contrast to psychological issues, which have seen a sharp increase in connection with the COVID-19 pandemic (cf. OECD 2022: 20–46).

4. Textual data

4.1. Linguistic worldview of ZDRAVÍ in contemporary Czech

4.1.1. Corpus data

For analysis, data from the Czech National Corpus were used, specifically the general synchronous written corpus SYN, version 11.¹² The most frequent

¹² The lemma *zdraví* ‘health’ had 614,542 occurrences in this corpus, and the lemma *zdravý* ‘healthy’ had 525,470 occurrences.

word combinations were identified using the Sketch Engine tool, which organizes collocations based on grammatical relationships. The data are categorized according to semantic features.

The fact that *ZDRAVÍ* is a fundamental life value is confirmed by the frequent coordination *zdraví a život* ‘health and life’. Health is also typically found in semantic fields of other highly valued life aspects such as *spokojenost* ‘satisfaction’, *krása* ‘beauty’, *láska* ‘love’, *úspěch* ‘success’, and *síla* ‘strength’. The importance of health for people is apparent from the frequent collocations *zdravý člověk/jedinec* ‘healthy person/individual’ and *zdraví lidí/děti/obyvatel* ‘health of people/children/inhabitants’. In addition to the general state of health, health is also often attributed to specific organs or body parts: *zdraví kostí/očí*, ‘health of bones/eyes’, *zdravé srdce/nohy* ‘healthy heart/legs’.

Given the importance of *ZDRAVÍ*, conscious care is necessary (as also shown by the empirical survey), which is reflected in frequent collocations such as *ochrana zdraví* ‘health protection’, *zodpovědnost za zdraví* ‘responsibility for health’, *péče o zdraví* ‘care for health’, *posilovat zdraví* ‘strengthening health’. Unlike the survey, corpus data show that healthcare is not only an individual matter but often also involves institutional care (*veřejné zdraví* ‘public health’, *sdržení pro zdraví* ‘health association’, *ombudsman pro zdraví* ‘health ombudsman’). The need to protect health is also reflected in highly exposed collocations from the semantic field of threat: *riziko pro zdraví* ‘risk to health’, *hazardovat se zdravím* ‘gambling with health’, *ublížit na zdraví* ‘harm to health’, *strach o zdraví* ‘fear for health’, *zaplatit zdravím a životem* ‘pay with health and life’, *podlomené/chatrné zdraví* ‘weakened/fragile health’. Frequent are also combinations with *nemoc* ‘illness’ and *smrt* ‘death’, which can either be a natural end to life or the result of a threat that has not been eliminated. Other frequent collocations do not directly refer to threats or healthcare but indicate that health is unstable and its quality is subject to various influences that can either threaten or strengthen it: *vliv/účinek na zdraví* ‘influence/effect on health’, *působit/projevit se na zdraví* ‘to impact/manifest on health’.

The importance of the psychological or holistic aspect of *ZDRAVÍ* emerged from the empirical survey and is confirmed by corpus data: *duševní/emoční zdraví* ‘mental/emotional health’. Although health is often viewed from the individual perspective, it also includes a social aspect (see Section 3.5). The corpus analysis shows that health is subject to institutional control (as mentioned above) and legal definition (see Section 4.1.5) and is therefore a matter of interest for entire social systems, not just individuals. *ZDRAVÍ* as an important value in the social context is supported by collocations with

terms such as *rodina* ‘family’, *práce* ‘work’, and *vzdělání* ‘education’. Health is also frequently placed in broader environmental and ecological contexts, such as collocations of *zdraví* ‘health’ with *životní prostředí* ‘environment’ or *příroda* ‘nature’. This aspect of ZDRAVÍ was only marginally recorded in the empirical survey and is not emphasized in systemic data.

Although ZDRAVÍ is a life value that cannot be bought with money, one area of healthcare involves financial investments (see Section 4.1.2). The embedding of health in a consumer context is evident by the collocation *investice do zdraví* ‘investment in health’ and its connection with the terms *peníze* ‘money’ and *spotřebitel* ‘consumer’, indicating that health is also perceived as a commodity.

4.1.2. Advertisements and podcasts

The concept of ZDRAVÍ is used particularly in advertisements¹³ promoting health insurance, pharmacies, and pharmaceutical products. ZDRAVÍ in these commercials is presented as an important life value that must be pursued (*Zdraví je to nejdůležitější, co máme*, ‘Health is the most important thing we have’). Closely related is the idea that health needs to be actively protected and responsibly cared for (*Co děláte pro své zdraví?*, ‘What do you do for your health?’). Other aspects of health featured in commercials include a healthy lifestyle (*Zdravější život začíná u zdravějšího jídla*, ‘A healthier life begins with healthier food’) and life without pain and limitations (*úleva od bolesti*, ‘relief from pain’). Furthermore, in some commercials, ZDRAVÍ is portrayed as not only related to the body but also to the mental and social dimensions of individuals (*Více lásky, péče, chvíl, kdy jsme spolu. I to je zdravý život*, ‘More love, care, moments together. That is also a healthy life’). We also found all of the above-mentioned aspects of ZDRAVÍ in the empirical survey and they are also reflected in the corpus data analysis. The alignment between these findings and the content of commercials is neither accidental nor surprising, as successful advertisements are created with knowledge of the target audience (Vysekalová et al., 2012: 186).

Czech podcasts¹⁴ focusing on health most often discuss new trends in nutrition (*Vyvážená, nejlépe domácí strava, bez polotovarů, doplněná o vitamín D a omega 3 mastné kyseliny*, ‘Balanced, Preferably Homemade Food, without Processed Foods, Supplemented with Vitamin D and Omega-3 Fatty Acids’), dietary supplements (*Nejefektivnější a nejpřeceňovanější suplementy pro sport a zdraví*, ‘The Most Effective and Most Overrated Supplements for Sports and Health’), mental health (*Top tipy pro zdravé*

¹³ A sample of fifteen commercials published on television and the Internet was analyzed.

¹⁴ For the purposes of this study, we analyzed the titles of Czech podcasts, episodes, and their descriptions in the Spotify application.

tělo a duši, “Top Tips for a Healthy Body and Mind”), physical activity (*Necvičíš, zaplatíš. Firmy už chápou, že pohyb znamená zdraví, pochopí to stát?*, If You Don’t Exercise, You’ll Pay. Companies Are Already Realizing That Movement Means Health, Will the State Understand?), or biohacking¹⁵ (*Sledování glukózy: Nutnost pro optimalizaci zdraví, nebo zbytečná panika?*, “Glucose Monitoring: A Necessity for Optimizing Health or Unnecessary Panic?”). The emphasis is on the individual responsibility of each person (*Proč převzít odpovědnost za své zdraví?*, “Why Take Responsibility for Your Health?”).

4.1.3. Songs, rhymes

Even the youngest children in kindergartens are taught about the principles of a healthy lifestyle and hygiene through songs and rhymes: *Zdravě jím a zdravě spím, ničeho se nebojím* (“I eat healthy, I sleep well, I’m not afraid of anything”); *Ten, kdo žije zdravě, / rád si zacvičí. / Proběhne se v trávě / krokem opičím* (“He who lives healthily / likes to exercise. / He runs through the grass / like a monkey”). Health also appears in songs used for birthday greetings, where the phrase *hodně štěstí, zdraví* ‘lots of happiness and health’ is typical. This phrase has also become the Czech translation of the English birthday song *Happy Birthday to You*. Another equally popular way to congratulate someone on a birthday is through the song *Narozeninová* (“The Birthday Song”) (Svěrák and Uhlíř 2019: 136–137). The first two lines of the song are often sung as a standalone greeting: *Franta¹⁶ má narozeniny, my máme přání jediný, / štěstí zdraví, štěstí zdraví, hlavně to zdraví* (“Franta has a birthday, we have only one wish / happiness, health, happiness, health – especially health”).

4.1.4. Professional discourse

In professional medical discourse, the concept of health is often defined as a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being, rather than merely the absence of disease or infirmity, as per the definition in the *Ústava Světové zdravotnické organizace* (Constitution of the World Health Organization, 1948). At the same time, Czech professional literature presents narrower definitions that focus on specific aspects of health. The biomedical approach (cf. Vurm et al. 2007) defines health as the absence of disease or disability, emphasizing measurable indicators. The functional capability perspective defines health as the ability to perform basic daily activities and maintain quality of life, taking into account adaptation to aging and illness (cf. Kalvach et al. 2004). The ecological definition of health considers the relationship

¹⁵ Optimization of physical and mental functions using evidence-based approaches and modern technologies.

¹⁶ The name in the song’s lyrics changes according to the name of the celebrant.

between biological processes and the environment (cf. Hamplová 2019), while the psychosocial approach emphasizes the ability to experience joy in life, to be content with oneself and in relationships with others (cf. Krívohlavý 2003). Thus, in medical discourse, health is a complex and multilayered concept reflecting not only biological aspects but also social, psychological, and environmental factors.

Legal texts also work with the concept of ZDRAVÍ, where it is conceptualized as a key value whose protection is guaranteed for every citizen in the *Listina základních práv a svobod* (Charter of Fundamental Rights and Freedoms, 1993). Additional aspects of this concept are elaborated in individual laws, distinguishing between individual health, the health of specific population groups (e.g., pregnant women, children and adolescents, or people with disabilities), and public health, meaning the health of society as a whole. Legal texts primarily focus on two aspects of both individual and public health – its protection and harm.

In the context of the educational system, the concept of ZDRAVÍ has been analyzed using materials from key curricular documents issued by the Ministry of Education, particularly the *Rámcový vzdělávací program pro základní vzdělávání* (Framework Educational Programme for Elementary Education, 2023). Here, health is understood as a complex phenomenon encompassing physical, mental, and social dimensions, while these documents also reflect that it is one of the most important life values. Accordingly, in schools, children and students are to be guided toward a healthy lifestyle (nutrition, physical activity, mental hygiene, etc.) and to take responsibility for their health. The document also mentions aspects of health that were not observed in systemic, corpus-based, or empirical data, such as protection against communicable diseases, appropriate behaviour in emergencies, and rules for safe conduct, including communication via electronic media.

4.2. The traditional linguistic worldview of ZDRAVÍ

4.2.1. Folk songs

In Czech folk song tradition, the concept of ZDRAVÍ appears particularly in Christmas carols, some of which contain wishes for good health, happiness, and prosperity in the coming year: *Štěstí, zdraví, pokoj svatý vinšujeme vám* (“We wish you happiness, health, and holy peace”) (Erb.), *My tři králové jdeme k vám, / štěstí, zdraví vinšujem vám* (Suš.) (“We three kings come to you, / we wish you happiness and health”). In folk songs, as in proverbs (see above) and traditional culture in general, ZDRAVÍ is conceptualized as a divine gift: *Kdo tu píseň / třikrát zazpívá, / tomu milý pán Bůh / štěstí, zdraví dá* (Erb.) (“Whoever sings this song / three times, / dear Lord God / will grant them happiness and health”). According to this belief, both

health and illness come from God – he grants them, and he also heals (cf. Marczewska 2012: 255). This traditional Christian view contrasts with the modern perception of *ZDRAVÍ*, which emphasizes individual responsibility for maintaining it and the necessity of investing in it (see above).

4.2.2. Fairy tales

ZDRAVÍ also represents an essential life value in folk tales. This is evident from stories in which kings offer rich rewards, most commonly their daughter's hand in marriage and half the kingdom, to whoever can cure a princess of a long illness (e.g., Němcová 1956: 19, 48). In other tales, kings are willing to relinquish great wealth to obtain magical sources such as rejuvenating apples or the fountain of youth, which restore or preserve health (Erben 2011b: 20–23). The protagonists of other fairy tales fail to live happily because they lack health: *Byl jeden král, ten měl tři syny. Ačkoliv bohatstvím oplýval a všeho měl hojnost, přece nebyl spokojen a nic ho na světě netěšilo, protože již kolik let churavěl* (Němcová 1956: 91) (“There was once a king who had three sons. Although he possessed great wealth and had everything in abundance, he was still dissatisfied and found no joy in the world, for he had been ailing for many years”). Here, health is thus a prerequisite for life satisfaction.

5. Conceptual metaphors

The concept of *ZDRAVÍ* is conceptualized through various metaphors: spatial, ontological, etc. At the same time, it serves as a source domain for the conceptualization of other phenomena, such as those in economics and politics.

In their book *Metaphors We Live By*, George Lakoff and Mark Johnson state that LIFE, HEALTH, YOUTH, JOY, and MORE ARE UP, while DEATH, ILLNESS, OLD AGE, SADNESS, and LESS ARE DOWN. Examples of the HEALTH AND LIFE ARE UP schema include metaphorical expressions such as *to be at the peak of health* (in Czech: *být na vrcholu zdraví*) or *to be in top shape* (in Czech: *být ve vrcholné formě*) (Lakoff and Johnson 2003: 14–15). The spatial metaphor HEALTH IS UP is also present in Czech idioms, e.g., *zdraví hlava všeho* (Bitt.) (‘health is the head of everything’) or *postavit se na nohy* (Tez.) (‘to get back on one’s feet’).

Through ontological metaphors, *ZDRAVÍ* is conceptualized as an object (*vrátit někomu zdraví* ‘return someone’s health’, SČFI), often a very valuable one (*zdraví – nejvyšší poklad* ‘health – the greatest treasure’, Bitt.). The container and content schema is also applied to the conceptualization of

ZDRAVÍ, e.g., *kypět zdravím* ‘to brim with health’ (SČFI). Natural metaphors link health with physical strength and resilience, quick movement, youth, and beauty. Health is likened to a whole, undamaged fruit, a kernel, or a root (see Section 2.5 for documentation).

ZDRAVÍ also functions as a source domain, for example, in the phrase *finanční/ekonomické zdraví* ‘financial/economic health’ (syn v11), which in Czech expresses economic stability and prosperity. Similarly, *zdravý rozum* ‘healthy reason’ or ‘common sense’ (SČFI) refers to an adequate assessment of reality. The source domains of ZDRAVÍ and NEMOC are generally used in various types of discourse to denote normal or abnormal states of a system. In political discourse, for instance, the concept of ZDRAVÍ is used to represent the normal state of a state or political party and to indicate the smooth functioning of the economy and political forces (Rycheva 2023: 7).

6. Cognitive definition of the concept of ZDRAVÍ in Czech

ZDRAVÍ [HEALTH]¹⁷

Superordinate Category

[1] is a (natural) state of an organism (system, process) (S)

[2] is the most valuable asset in a person’s life (S, T)

Vital Aspect

[3] is an expression of life, vital force (S, T)

Physical Aspect

[4] is the absence of illness, pain, or organ damage (S, T, E)

[5] manifests as the proper functioning of the organism (S, T, E)

[6] is movement (S, T, E)

[7] is strength, resilience, and stability (S, T)

[8] manifests as a nice, fresh appearance (S, T)

[9] is integrity, wholeness (S)

[10] is characteristic of youth (S)

Psychological Aspect

[11] is the absence of mental illness (S, E, T)

[12] is a feeling of overall physical and mental well-being (S, E, T)

[13] is living life with happiness and fulfillment (E, T)

Social Aspect

[14] is the maintenance of quality interpersonal relationships (E, T)

[15] is both an individual and societal value (T)

Sustainability Aspect

[16] is unstable, and therefore it needs to be protected (S, T)

¹⁷ The structure of the definition of ZDRAVÍ is based on the cognitive definition of the concept MATKA [MOTHER] in Polish (cf. Bartmiński 2016a: 130–131).

[17] can be influenced by an appropriate lifestyle (balanced diet, hygiene habits, etc.) (S, E, T)

[18] is the responsibility of every individual (T)

Ecological Aspect

[19] is influenced by the environment (S, T)

Religious Aspect

[20] is given to people by God (S, T)

Legal Aspect

[21] is a subject of legal protection (T)

The concept of *ZDRAVÍ* in Czech is highly complex and deeply rooted in linguistic and cultural traditions. Historically understood as a divine gift and the absence of illness, modern conceptualization perceives health as a holistic phenomenon integrating physical, mental, social, and other aspects. It remains a core value in Czech culture, closely linked to life, strength, stability, and well-being. The cognitive definition captures these key characteristics and provides a structured insight into the concept of *ZDRAVÍ* in Czech.

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Streszczenie: Autorki przedstawiają kluczowe ustalenia wynikające z badań przeprowadzonych w ramach międzynarodowego konwersatorium EUROJOS-2 oraz formułują kompleksową definicję kognitywną pojęcia *ZDRAVÍ* [ZDROWIE] w języku czeskim. Metodologia badań czerpie ze współczesnej etnolingwistyki, koncepcji językowego obrazu świata i teorii metafory pojęciowej. Poprzez analizę danych systemowych (obejmujących dane słownikowe, idiomy i pareomie), danych empirycznych (badanie ankietowe przeprowadzone wśród studentów) i danych tekstowych (teksty kultury ludowej, medialne i inne), autorki rekonstruują językowy obraz *ZDRAVÍ* w języku czeskim. Badanie etymologii, frazeologii i najnowszych tekstów medialnych potwierdza, iż pojęcie to od wieków pozostaje najcenniejszą wartością w czeskim językowym obrazie świata. Jest postrzegane jako prototypowa manifestacja życia, stojąca w opozycji do choroby i śmierci. Oprócz związku z konceptem *ŽYCIA*, *ZDRAVÍ* jest ściśle powiązane z konceptami *SIŁY*, *STABILNOŚCI*, *CAŁOŚCI*, *RUCHU*, *MŁODOŚCI* itd. Jednak konceptualizacja *ZDRAVÍ* również uległa stopniowym modyfikacjom. Choć w starszym języku czeskim *ZDRAVÍ* było rozumiane przede wszystkim jako stan fizyczny bez bólu i choroby, dany ludziom przez Boga na ograniczony czas, współczesne pokolenie użytkowników języka czeskiego podkreśla nierozłączność dobrego samopoczucia fizycznego i psychicznego, subiektywnego doświadczenia, stabilności społecznej i indywidualnej odpowiedzialności.

Słowa kluczowe: językowy obraz świata; etnolingwistyka; lingwistyka kognitywna; EUROJOS; zdrowie; wartość; język czeski; definicja kognitywna