

## I. ROZPRAWY I ANALIZY

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### Anna Christou

Czech Academy of Sciences, Czech Language Institute

ORCID: 0000-0002-4783-0736

e-mail: a.christou@ujc.cas.cz

### Karolína Táborská

Czech Academy of Sciences, Czech Language Institute

ORCID: 0000-0003-0977-3344

e-mail: k.taborska@ujc.cas.cz

# The Cultural Concepts of ZDRAVÍ (health) and NEMOC (illness) in Czech Phraseology\*

## Koncepty ZDRAVÍ (zdrowie) i NEMOC (choroba) w czeskiej frazeologii

**Abstract:** In this study, we aim to describe how the cultural concepts of ZDRAVÍ (health) and its antithesis NEMOC (illness) are conceptualised in Czech phraseology. We focus on the opposition between health and illness, which is one of the constitutive semantic oppositions of traditional Czech linguistic worldview. From the theoretical and methodological perspective, this paper is partly couched within the framework of modern ethnolinguistics and the concept of the linguistic worldview, and partly within cognitive linguistics, especially with regard to the theory of conceptual metaphor. It appears that in Czech linguistic worldview, health is one of the most significant existential values. Its significance becomes apparent mainly against the backdrop of illness, which is located at the antipole of health as its anti-value. The notions of HEALTH and ILLNESS appear in the human cognitive system as opposites, representing contradicting values. In Czech linguistic worldview, the opposition of HEALTH and ILLNESS is significantly tied with other semantic oppositions, especially LIFE and DEATH, YOUNG and OLD, BEAUTY and UGLINESS, MOVEMENT and IMMOBILITY, STRONG and WEAK, WHOLE and INCOMPLETE, COLOURFUL and COLOURLESS, etc. Health is always conceptualised via its preferred attributes (physical strength, resilience, wholeness, movement, youth, beauty, colourfulness), while illness is viewed through opposite attributes (physical weakness, old age, immobility, incompleteness,

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unattractiveness, dullness, death). In Czech idioms, a healthy person is compared to resilient products of nature (mighty trees with hard, durable wood, good roots and cores, as well as strong, agile, quick-moving animals, beautiful unimpaired crops, red flowers, etc.).

**Key words:** ethnolinguistics; linguistic and cultural worldview; values; phraseology; conceptual metaphor; HEALTH; ILLNESS

## 1. Introduction

During the coronavirus pandemic, we have become more aware than ever before of the fact that health is a value that fundamentally influences the quality of life of individual people and the society as a whole. In this article, we aim to describe how the ethnolinguistic Czech cultural concept of ZDRAVÍ, as well as its antithesis NEMOC (hereinafter understood as HEALTH and ILLNESS in English), are conceptualised in Czech phraseology. We focus on the opposition between HEALTH and ILLNESS, which is one of the constitutive semantic oppositions of linguistic worldview, and strive to determine the relationship between them, as well as their relationship to other values by reconstructing how they are understood by Czech speakers.

As previously stated, the study primarily employs data from the field of phraseology, that is, various types of idioms, among which Czech linguistics also includes paroemias (cf. Čermák 2017).<sup>1</sup> Idioms with the components *zdraví* ‘health’, *nemoc* ‘illness’, *zdravý* ‘healthy’, *nemocný* ‘ill’ were excerpted for the research; however, other multi-word lexical units were also included if their definitions were related to both of these terms in question. Especially idioms with the component *zdraví* represent a numerous group in Czech phraseology (cf. Čermák 2009: 1246). Phraseological, explanatory and onomasiological dictionaries were used as sources (mainly *Slovník české frazeologie a idiomatiky* 2009, *Akademický slovník současné češtiny* 2017–2021, *Slovník spisovného jazyka českého* 1989, and *Český slovník věcný a synonymický* 1969–1987), as well as collections of proverbs and similes (mainly *Česká přísloví: soudobý stav konce 20. století* [Czech proverbs: the contemporary state of the late 20th century] 1997 and *Mudrosloví národu slovanského ve příslovích* [Wisdom of a Slavic nation in proverbs] 2000), and the Czech

<sup>1</sup> When using a wide range of phraseological data, a question arises regarding the topicality of some of the idioms. Many of them (particularly drawn from older sources, such as Čelakovský’s *Mudrosloví národu slovanského ve příslovích* [Čel.] and Flajšhans’ *Česká přísloví* [Flajšš.]) are no longer widely used by Czech speakers; rather, those data point to the traditional Czech linguistic worldview than to the current worldview.

National Corpus. With regard to the theory and methodology, this study utilizes principles of modern ethnolinguistics, such as the concept of linguistic worldview (cf. Bartmiński 2009, 2016), and the principles of cognitive linguistics, with a focus on the theory of conceptual metaphor (cf. Lakoff and Johnson 2002).

## 2. Health as value and illness as anti-value in linguistic worldview

As highlighted by Jerzy Bartmiński, axiological parameters are grounded in language as a whole (Bartmiński 2010: 334). Within Czech linguistic worldview (as well as in others), health accounts for one of the most significant existential values. Its leading position on the list of values for Czech speakers is shown, for example, by established social courtesy formulas used as greetings:<sup>2</sup> *Zdravíčko!* (Greetings!), felicitations: *Hodně zdraví!* (Good health!), proposing a toast: *Na zdraví!* (To your health!), etc., which typically include wishes for good, resilient health<sup>3</sup> (cf. Bartmiński 2010: 335). There are also many proverbs and other idioms where health is conceptualised as something of unique value, the likes of which cannot be measured up to anything else (e.g., *Zdraví je největší poklad* [Health is the greatest treasure], *Zdraví nade vše!* [Health before all else!], *Zdraví má člověk jen jedno* [A person has only one health] – SČFI; *Tisíc je nemocí, jen jedno je zdraví* [There are thousands of illnesses, but only one health], *Člověk pro zdraví všechno váží* [A person considers everything when it comes to health], *Zdraví nelze penězi nahradit* [Health cannot be substituted with money] – Bitt. etc.).

Health is typically defined in dictionaries as a normal condition, in which the organism functions naturally, without symptoms of organ damage or failure to perform its functions, while also referring to the condition of physical and mental balance and well-being (cf. ASSČ, SSČ).<sup>4</sup> For the

<sup>2</sup> The Czech lexemes *pozdrav* ‘greeting’, *zdravit* ‘to greet’ themselves are etymologically linked with *zdraví* ‘health’, as their original meanings are ‘to wish someone good health’ or ‘be healthy’ (Rej.).

<sup>3</sup> In the past, social phrases wishing others good health were used to an even greater extent in Czech, e.g., *Zdrávi došli!* (Arrived healthy), *Zdrávi vzkazovali!* (Thanks for the message and be healthy!), *Zdrávi poseděli!* (Stay here and be healthy!), etc. (cf. Karlíková 2018: 65 and ČSVS).

<sup>4</sup> In addition, the meaning of the adjective “healthy” corresponds to this in connection with the abstract terms, where “health” indicates a normal, proportionate condition, free of any extremes, which can be seen, for instance, in the idioms *zdravý rozum* (a healthy wit) (i.e., the ability to access things realistically, SČFI) and *zdravé sebevědomí* (a healthy self-confidence, i.e., proportionate, SČFI), etc.

very reason that health is presented as the normal, natural condition for humankind, it often goes unnoticed: *Zdraví se ocení, až když je ztraceno* (Health is appreciated as soon as it's lost, Bitt). Its value becomes apparent mainly against the backdrop of illness, which, in the languages, represents the antipole of health, i.e., its anti-value. According to dictionary definitions, illness poses as a failure of health (SSČ, SSJČ). It disrupts human natural balance, pulls people out of their usual rhythm, and causes expulsion from normal life as well as weakness, pain, and even suffering and death. Within the context of illness, an important attribute of health can be seen: its volatility, i.e., the fact that it is not constant (cf. Marczewska 2012: 251).

This is why we find an array of evidence in the phraseology, and especially in the proverbs, of how to correctly care for and maintain one's health. These instructions for staying healthy, as well as warnings to keep away from harmful influences, imply the high value of health within the linguistic worldview.

### 2.1. Caring for one's health

Amongst the specific pieces of advice and recommendations for a healthy lifestyle, proverbs that deal with hygiene and healthy eating, as well as a healthy environment for living and mental balance, stand out the most.

An important factor that has a positive impact on one's health condition is maintaining personal cleanliness and clean living environment: *čistota (je) půl zdraví* (cleanliness (is) half of being healthy, ASSČ); *Pořádek a čistota, plná zdraví jistota* (Order and cleanliness make full health a certainty, Bitt.); *Třeba chudobně, jen když čistotně* (Poverty is better than being unclean, Čel.), etc.

A healthy living environment also includes having sufficient sunlight: *Kam nechodí slunce, tam chodí lékař* (Where the sun doesn't shine, that's where a doctor's needed, ŠCFI).

As we already established above, a significant aspect of overall health is mental balance and well-being. Also, proverbs state that having a good mood and positive thinking favourably impact the condition of a person's health: *Veselá mysl (je) půl zdraví* (A cheerful mind (is) half of being healthy, ASSČ); *Na lékaře nemyslí, kdo jest veselé mysli* (He who is cheerful of mind doesn't worry about the doctor, Čel.); etc.

A large group of paroemias contains widely varied dietary advice that primarily deals with a composition of healthy eating practices or warnings against unhealthy food, overeating, etc. Crucial recommendation that appears repeatedly in many proverbs is showing moderation with food: *Jez do polosyta, pij do polopita, vyjdou ti na plno léta* (Only eat until half-full,

only drink until half-quenched, and your life will last many years, SČFI); *Máš dar boží, střídme požij, Kam střídmost nechodí, tam chodí lékař* (You have a gift from God, consume in moderation, Where moderation is absent, a doctor is present, Čel.), etc. There are also warnings against overeating and excessive alcohol consumption, for instance: *Mnoho jídel, mnoho nemocí* (Many meals, many illnesses, Čel.); *Kdo je v jídle hltavý, ten si škodí na zdraví* (He who is gluttonous with food harms his own health, Bitt.); *Kde pítí a hody, tam i choroby* (Where drink and feast aplenty, so is disease, Čel.); *Sklenku píti, zdrávu býti; druhou píti, veselu býti; třetí píti, rozum se osvíti; mnohé však píti, všechno zřítí* (One glass is healthy, a second makes you merry, and a third enlightens intellect; but many drinks destroy it all, Bitt.). Specific kinds of food are also mentioned, as they are either beneficial to one's health, or harmful: *Chléb a ovoce zažehná mnohé nemoce* (Bread and fruit ward many illnesses, Bitt.); *Máslo kraví jez pro zdraví* (Eat cow butter and you'll be healthy, Bitt.); *Kdo cibuli hodně jí, nemoci se nebojí* (He who eats many onions fears no illnesses, Bitt.); *Cibule sedmero neduhův léčí; česnek jich sedmero přivodí* (Onion cures many ailments; garlic brings many of them back, Čel.); *Po nezralém ovoci bývají nemoci* (Unripe fruit typically causes illness, Bitt.); etc. The digestibility of the food is related to the physical displays accompanying digestion. In the proverbs, these displays are not taboo. On the contrary, it is recommended not to suppress them because they are healthy: *Kdo krká a prdí, zdraví si tvrdí* (He who belches and breaks wind enjoys lasting health), *Lepší jeden prd než deset doktorů* (It's better to break wind once than call a dozen doctors, SČFI).

While having an appetite is an important manifestation of health and vitality, the absence of appetite or an altered perception of one's appetite signalise illness: *Dobrá to nemoc, která dá pojísti* (Good illness that let's you eat, Čel.); *Nemocnému vše hořko* (Everything is bitter to the sick, Bitt.); *Chuti nemocného nevěř* (Don't trust the appetite of the sick, Bitt.).

Other proverbs, such as *Nemá se klásti, kdo chce nemoc strásti* (You shouldn't lay down if you want to shake off an illness, Flaš.); *Nohy v teple, nemoc v pekle, Rýma odhání devateru nemoc* (Feet in the heat, illness in hell, A cold drives away many illnesses, Bitt.), etc., belong to the category of so-called "old wives' tales", as ways of warding illnesses.

Aside from the specific recommendations in terms of hygiene, nourishment, etc., individual responsibility for one's health and the necessity to protect it is also emphasised in paroemias. Especially while young, properly caring for one's health is a must, as is the need to maintain it while growing older, a time that is often marked by illness: *Ostříhej čest z mládí a zdraví pod starost* (Be honourable in your youth and care for your health), *K podzimu*

*života zdraví nepřibývá* (Health is no longer gained in the autumn of life),  
*Na starost samá nemoc* (In old age illness itself takes the lead, Bitt.), etc.

### 3. Health and illness in semantic opposition

The terms for health and illness appear in human cognitive system as opposites, referring to contradictory values. Igor Němec (1994) notes the importance of semantic oppositions in the conceptual system in his article on the pre-Christian and Christian model of linguistic worldview. He states that the concepts, which carry great importance for human society, are associated with the system of binary oppositions. This often relates to values of the highest regard and their antipoles, such as life and death, happiness and sadness, etc. The author also draws attention to their interconnection, which was described by the Russian researchers Ivanov and Toporov.<sup>5</sup>

This relationship of opposing interconnection can also be seen in the terms for health and illness. The boundary between health and illness (just as is the case with life and death, see below) is not strict; both semantic spheres penetrate each other, where one becomes the area of origin for the other (see the Czech explanatory dictionaries SSČ, SSJČ, and PSJČ, where illness is defined as the “failure of health”). At the same time, the opposition of health and illness is connected with other semantic oppositions, mentioned below.

#### 3.1. Opposition of life and death

Axiological terms are typically linked by relationships of mutual connections (Bartmiński 2010: 335). In language, the opposition of life and death is superior to other important semantic oppositions, especially health and illness, young and old, beauty and ugliness, joy and sadness, etc., as pointed out by Irena Vaňková in her study of human life from the perspective of linguistic phenomenology. The terms listed as the first members of each opposition metonymically refer to life, in displays of life in its complete, typical form (Vaňková 2016: 41).

Together with life, health is also considered a vital value, located at the top of the value hierarchy. This was shown for Polish by Stanisława Niebrzegowska-Bartmińska in her study of the constitutive values of the

<sup>5</sup> For instance, the components of the opposition “life and death” are linked to the components of the “masculine and feminine” opposition, which is why the names of personified deaths, illnesses, and harmful mythical beings are often grammatically feminine in the language of ancient Slavs (Ivanov and Toporov 1965).

Polish dream book (Niebrzegowska-Bartmińska 2010). These two positive values are in relationship with the opposing concepts of death and illness, which, in terms of the value hierarchy, can be found at the opposite end of the spectrum. In phraseology, the connection between illness and death is manifested more firmly than that between health and life because health, unlike illness, is understood as a natural condition that typically goes unnoticed.

As previously stated, the concepts of ŽIVOT and SMRT (life and death) are semantically interconnected, and this permeability is also obvious in the relevant phraseology. In Czech, when speaking of a severely ill person, we say *potáčí se mezi životem a smrtí* (they are teetering between life and death, SČFI); or we even declare them a *živá mrtvola* (a living corpse, SČFI). A serious illness leaves a mark on the individual's overall appearance, given that they look as if they *vstal z hrobu / utekl hrobníkovi z lopaty, jen ho do hrobu / rakve položit* (rose from the grave / escaped the gravedigger's shovel, just to put him in the grave / coffin, SČFI), that their skin is *na smrt / smrtelně / mrtvolně bledá* (deathly pale / pale as a corpse, SČFI), or their skin can assume other indistinctive colours (see below).

Similar to life, health is considered a gift from God that an average person, as well as doctors, can only control to a limited extent: *Bůh dal život, Bůh dá i zdraví* (God gave life, and God also gives health, Bitt.); *Lékař léčí, bůh uzdravuje* (The doctor treats, God heals, Čel.); *Lékař zdraví slibuje, když moci nemá* (The doctor promises health without the power to make it so, Flajš.); *Čas je nejlepší lékař* (*Time is the best doctor*, SČFI); etc. The semantic proximity of the concepts of LIFE and HEALTH is also supported by the high frequency of coordinated connections of *živý* and *zdravý* ('lively' and 'healthy'), or *živ* and *zdráv* ('alive' and 'healthy') (syn v8).

### 3.2. Oppositions of young and old, movement and immobility, strength and weakness, wholeness and incompleteness

In phraseology, health and illness are typically connected with varying phases in life, a degree of physical strength and activity, and physical proportions, etc. We can witness a distinct interconnection between the terms *zdraví* 'health', *mládí* 'youth', and *pohyb* 'movement', especially in idioms that liken a person's health to quick-moving, agile animals (usually fish or young animals): *zdravý jako ryba / rybička / kapr / línek / mříněk* 'healthy as a fish / little fish / carp / little tench / small minnow', *zdravý jako rys / koloušek* 'healthy as a lynx / fawn', *zdravá jako křepelíčka / srna* 'healthy as a little quail / doe' (ČSVS, Zaor.), etc. For a young person, health comes naturally, however, it is no longer a given once they grow old:

*Ostříhej čest z mládí a zdraví pod starost* (Be honourable in your youth and care for your health, Bitt.). In contrast, we think of the later period of life going hand in hand with illnesses: *Příbejvají léta, příbejvají nemoce* (More years, more illnesses, Bitt.); *Tělo stárne, neduhy mladnou* (The body ages, ailments grow younger, Čel.); *Na starost samá nemoc* (In old age illness itself takes the lead, Bitt.). While a healthy person is active, disease paralyses the sick, preventing their movement: *být upoután / připoután / ukovaný na lůžko* ‘to be restrained to bed / confined to bed / bedridden (SČFI, ČSVS).

The opposition of health and illness is further semantically tied with the oppositions of strong and weak, as well as solid and fragile. In phraseology, physical strength and resilience are linked to health. Deep within its etymology, the lexeme of *zdraví* ‘health’ itself bears the meaning ‘jsoucí z dobrého dřeva’ (‘being made of good wood’, Rej.), i.e., solid, resilient. *Zdraví je síla* (Health is strength, Bitt.), as the Czech proverb goes. However, other proverbs draw attention to the fact that health is not permanent, and they do so via the opposition of strong and weak: *Dnes člověk, že by skály lámal, a zítra by ho větřík povalil* (A man breaks rocks today, only to be knocked over by a small wind tomorrow, Čel.); *Dnes člověk pevnější kamene, a zítra vody slabší* (A man stronger than rocks today, and weaker than water tomorrow, Čel.). In Czech, certain comparisons exist, such as *být jako řimbaba / řimbuch / cvalík* ‘to be like feverbane / flail / podge’, *kluk (je) jako tambor* ‘the boy (is) like a drummer’ (SČFI); *zdravý jako kyrysar* ‘healthy as a Cuirassier’ (ČSVS), etc., which point to the connection between physical health and physical strength and a robust, sturdy physical constitution. Some comparisons can be found with slight variations, such as with the lexemes *zdravý* ‘healthy’ and *silný* ‘strong’, e.g., *zdravý / silný jako býk / dub / buk* ‘healthy / strong as a bull / oak tree / beech tree (SČFI, syn v8). The semantic proximity of the adjective *zdravý* with characteristics such as ‘solid, resilient, hard’ or ‘exhibiting great strength, intensity’ is apparent in the comparisons *zdravý jako skála / vítr / hrom* ‘healthy as a rock / the wind / thunder’ (ČSVS), as well as *má pevný / tuhý / tvrdý koříněk* ‘he has solid / tough / hard roots’ (ČSVS). Hardness and solidity with high resiliency are desirable attributes of health in the idioms *pevné / ocelové / železné zdraví* ‘solid / steely / iron-like health’ (SČFI); *je jako ze železa / z ocele* ‘he’s like iron / made of steel’ (ČSVS), and *sedí v pevné kůži* ‘fitted with hard skin’, *má tuhou kůži* ‘he has tough skin’ (Flajš.). Resiliency and strength are also part of the conceptualisation of mental health, e.g., in the phrases *silný na duchu i na těle* ‘strong in the spirit and the body’ and *silný nejen na těle, ale i na duchu* ‘strong both in the body and the spirit’ (syn v8).



Contrarily, weakness is a typical display of illness. The actual lexeme *nemoc* 'illness' is etymologically linked with impotence, i.e., weakness and powerlessness (Rej.). Also included in the phraseology, illness (or one's condition post-illness) is associated with weakness, vulnerability, fatigue, and being close to death, similar to that of growing old (Vaňková et al. 2005: 283, 288). When speaking of an ill person, we say in Czech that they are *slabého zdraví* 'of weak health' (ČSVS). We also express sick parts of the body or organs similarly, e.g., *má slabé srdce* 'he has a weak heart', *je slabý na prsa* 'he has a weak chest' (SČFI), etc. Physical weakness may be linked with a rapid decrease in weight, which typically accompanies long-term serious illnesses. Thinness as a consequence of disease and suffering is the theme of the following idioms: *mít propadlé tváře* (to have sunken-in cheeks), *být jen kostra potažená kůží* (to be only a skeleton covered in skin), *být hubený / vychrtlý jako kostlivec* (to be thin / scrawny as a bag of bones), *být jak sedm hubených let* (to be like seven thin years), *je ho jen půl* (he's only half of himself), *když se svleče, jako když odejde* (when he undresses it's like he goes away), *do uzlíčku by ho svázal* (I could tie him into a knot), *vypadá jak stín* (he looks like a shadow), *ztrácí se před očima* (he disappears before my very eyes) (SČFI). In these idioms, the change of one's health is conceptualised via the change of one's physical proportions. A person is compared to the entities incomplete, indistinct, and even volatile and unreal.

In this approach to health and illness, another opposition can be seen: wholeness and incompleteness. In the Czech language, something healthy is portrayed as stable, complete, and delimited, while the exact opposite is observed for illness, i.e., unstable, incomplete, non-solid, and even falling apart. The opposition of wholeness and incompleteness is manifested in an array of idioms. Health creates a sort of stable foundation, keeping the human body in balance: *pevné zdraví* 'solid health' (SČFI); *neotřesené zdraví* 'unshakable health' (ČSVS). Disturbing this balance then signals health problems: *mít podlomené / podkopené / chatrné zdraví* 'to have weakened / undermined / flimsy health' (SČFI); *vratké / vrtkavé zdraví* 'wobbly / fickle health' (ČSVS).

While the pivotal semantic traits of completeness and wholeness are central to the conceptualisation of health, incompleteness and disrupted wholeness are signs of illness and injury, see *vyvázl s neporušenou kůží / s celými kostmi* (he escaped with his skin unharmed / with all his bones, ČSVS), compared with *být celý rozlámaný / rozmlácený* (to be completely worn-out / broken to pieces, SČFI); *je ve dva konce* (he's in two pieces, Zaor.); *má hlavu jako střep* (his head's in fragments, Zaor.); *je z něj troska, je nakřápnutej* (he's a wreck, he's cracked, SČFI). Let us also recall our parents'

assurances of *Jsi celý/á* (You're whole / You're all here), which we can remember from our childhoods. Just as with physical health, mental health (or the lack thereof) is also metaphorised: *mít nervy na cucky* (to have your nerves torn to shreds (SČFI)). By overcoming illness or injury, the afflicted body becomes whole again: *dát se dohromady* (to be put back together, Tez).

### 3.3. Opposition of beauty and ugliness, colourfulness and dullness: The appearance of a healthy and ill person

As previously stated above, in phraseology, one's health is distinctly manifested through that person's appearance. One of the significant source domains for metaphors linked with health and illness presents the opposition of beauty and ugliness. Overall, an ill person does not look good, as described in the proverb *Nemoc člověka nekrásí* (Illness uglifies a person, Čel). In terms of a healthy or ill person's appearance, the colouring of the face is an aspect of particular import in the phraseology. We know that colours occupy an important place within linguistic worldview, as they are used to conceptualise an array of varying phenomena, with emotions being a particularly outstanding example (see Vaňková et al. 2005: 195). They participate in the linguistic conceptualisation of health and illness in a fundamental way. The opposition of red and pale, or colourful and colourless, respectively, stands at the centre of this semantic circle, with this theme being present in many idioms.

A significant manifestation of health is the presence of natural (desirable, healthy) colours in the cheeks, whereas a symbol of illness (as well as indisposition and negative experiences and emotions) is found in the loss of these colours, i.e., deficiency in the form of paleness or its alteration. In Czech idioms, a person afflicted with illness may *ztratit barvu* (lose their colour, syn v8); *barva mu nechce sloužit* (colour doesn't want to serve him, SČFI); *je na smrt / smrtelně / mrtvolně bledý* (he is deadly pale / pale to death / pale as a corpse, SČFI); *voskově bledý* či *bledý jako z vosku* (waxy pale / pale as wax, SČFI), or they might be *bledý jako smrt / mrtvola / duch / stěna / křída / papír / mramor / plátno* (pale as death / a corpse / a ghost / a wall / chalk / paper / marble / a cloth (SČFI, syn v8), etc. Oppositely so, a sign of someone returning to a good physical condition (as well as mental and emotional balance) is seen in them regaining their natural physical colours: *dostávat barvu* 'regain colour', *vrací se mu barva do tváří* 'his colour is returning to his cheeks' (syn v8, SČFI).

Apart from paleness, or a loss of colour, colour changing into an undesirable shade is also a display of bad health (disease, indisposition, fatigue, a debilitated organism). Opposite a person in good physical condition having cheeks of a *pěkná / dobrá / zdravá barva* (pretty / good / healthy colour,

SČFI, syn v8), stands the face of an ill person with a *špatná / nezdravá barva* (bad / unhealthy colour, SČFI, syn v8), with that colour being primarily white, green, yellow, or grey, as is apparent in the following idioms: *bílý jako stěna / křída* (white as a wall / chalk),<sup>6</sup> *být žlutý jako citron / vosk* (to be yellow as a lemon / wax, SČFI, syn v8); *být zelený jako sedma* (to be green as the green clubs), *být jako zelinka / zelenka* (to be like a green herb), *být (šedivý) jako popel* (to be (grey) as ash) (SČFI), etc. In the Czech language, these cheeks of various colours are associated with illness, indisposition, fatigue, and exhaustion. In addition, the colour green is associated with short-term psychotic conditions such as anger and rage, while yellow is related to aging, death, and a number of negative emotions (see Vaňková et al. 2005: 207–209).

The opposite of paleness and undesirable colour shades is red-coloured cheeks, which are typically linked with health (as well as life, vital energy, etc.). Idioms where a healthy person is compared to crops, flowers, etc., that are distinguished by their red colour are understood as greatly positive. The Czech language is rich with such comparisons: *zdravý jako řepa / řípa / ředkev / ředkvička / višně / šípek* (healthy as a beet / a sugar beet / a radish plant / a radish / sour cherries / rosehip), *zdravý jako míšeňské jablíčko* (healthy as a Meissen apple, Tez.); *mít tváře (červené) jako květ / růže / mák / jahoda / malina / míšeňské jablíčko / červenka / jiskra / oheň* (to have cheeks (red) as a flower / rose / poppy / strawberry / raspberry / Meissen apple / robin / spark / fire, ČSVS); *mít růžičky ve tvářích* (to have little roses in the cheeks, ČSVS); *mít tváře jako malované* (to have cheeks as they were made-up, SČFI); *mít tváře jako slabikáře* (to have cheeks like an ABC book, syn v8, Tez.); *být krev a mléko* (to have cheeks like blood and milk), *mít tváře / pleť jako broskev* (to have cheeks / skin like a peach, SČFI), etc. Many of these idioms not only denote a desirable, healthy colour but also refer to an overall pretty appearance, typically speaking of girls and young women and their (healthy) physical beauty, attractiveness, and lushness (Christou 2020: 33). Within the semantic oppositions of health / happiness / beauty / youth / life versus illness / suffering / ugliness / age / death, the colour red bears a distinctly positive connotation.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>6</sup> The comparison of *tvář / obličej bílý jako sníh* (cheeks / face white as snow, syn v8), is ambivalent, as it can express the manifestation of illness or the emotion of fright or even horror, as well as being associated with youth, purity, etc.

<sup>7</sup> This does not apply, however, to the conceptualisation of psychophysical conditions, where red is primarily a symptom of anger, aggression, as well as shame (see Vaňková et al. 2005: 204).

## 4. Metaphorical conceptualisations of health and illness

### 4.1. Spatial orientation

The basis of orientational metaphors is the human physical experience. If we are healthy, our bodies take on an upright position, meanwhile, illness forces the afflicted to lay down and assume an unnatural position (does not apply to sleeping, resting, etc.). Lakoff and Johnson cite the following metaphorical statements, among others, as examples of patterns of HEALTH AND LIFE ARE UP, SICKNESS AND DEATH ARE DOWN: *být na vrcholu zdraví* ‘to be at the peak of health’, *vstát z mrtvých* ‘to rise from the dead’, *být ve vrcholné formě* ‘to be in peak form’, *upadnout do nemoci* ‘to fall into illness’ (Lakoff and Johnson 2002: 27-28). In Czech, the metaphors HEALTH IS UP and ILLNESS IS DOWN act as the theme for many idioms: *zdraví hlava všeho* (health is at the head of everything, Bitt.); *postavit se na nohy* (stand up on your feet, Tez.); *být upoután na lůžko* (to be confined to bed, SČFI); *nemoc ho sklátila* (illness has struck him down, Tez.), etc.

### 4.2. Ontological metaphors

In ontological metaphors, abstraction is represented as something concrete, such as an object, substance, container, or person. *Zdraví* and *nemoc* are also conceptualised in many contexts as objects that we can manipulate in various ways: *vrátit někomu zdraví* ‘to return someone’s health’ (SČFI), *přenášet nemoc* ‘to carry illness’ (syn v8), and they have specific properties: *pevné zdraví* ‘solid health’, *těžká nemoc* ‘a weighty illness’ (SSJČ). As we have already established, health is displayed as a valuable object in many idioms: *Zdraví – největší poklad* (Health – the greatest treasure, Bitt.), and it needs to be properly cared for: *pečovat o zdraví* (care for one’s health), *chránit zdraví* (protect one’s health) (syn v8).

Concerning substance and container metaphors, health can be understood as a substance, which fills the container (in this case the body), for instance, in the expressions *být plný zdraví* (to be full of health, syn v8); *kypět / kynout zdravím* (to abound / rise forth in health, SČFI). Human skin plays an important role in this metaphor, as it creates a protective barrier between the container and its surroundings: *má tuhou kůži* (he has tough skin, ČSVS); *sedí v pevné kůži* (fitted with hard skin, ČSVS).

In Czech phraseology, illness, similarly to death, is conceptualised as a person. Many proverbs speak to this point, e.g., *Nemoc na koni přijíždí, ale pěšky odchází* (Illness rides in on a horse but leaves on foot, SČFI); *Nemoci nechodí po horách, ale po lidech* (Illness doesn’t walk on the mountains but

on people, Bitt.); *Nemoc jesiť tovaryš ač nekratochvilný ale věrný* (Illness is a journeyman, not amusing, but devoted, Flajš.), etc. In proverbs, even typical human characteristics are ascribed to illnesses, such as the ability to speak: *Nemá nemoc jazyka a přece mluví* (Illness doesn't have a tongue and yet it speaks, Flajš). In figurative expressions, illness often acts as the antagonist; it may hold a person back against their will, fight against them, defeat them, etc.: *nemocí upoutaný / ukovaný na lůžko* (bound by illness / confined to bed), *zajatý nemocí* (captured by illness, ČSVS); *být sklácen těžkou nemocí* (to be struck down by severe illness, SSJČ); *bojovat s nemocí* (to battle an illness, syn v8); *Žádná nemoc se ho netkne* (No illness can touch him, SČFI), etc.

### 4.3. Health as the backdrop of natural metaphors

Various natural entities and phenomena make for an expansive source of metaphoric expressions regarding health. We have already presented numerous comparisons and other idioms above, with a primary focus on plant- and animal-based metaphors that link health with physical strength and resiliency, e.g. *zdravý jako buk / dub / býk* (healthy as a beech tree / oak tree / bull), *moci skály lámat* (the power to break rocks); quick movements and activity, e.g. *zdravý jako rybička / křepelka* (healthy as a little fish / quail), as well as youth and an attractive appearance, e.g. *tváře červené jako květ / růže / jahoda / malina* (cheeks red as a flower / rose / strawberry / raspberry).

Via other plant-themed metaphors, good health is likened to beautiful, unimpaired crops (often with distinct colours, flavours, or a hard rind or shell), as well as a good, undisturbed core or roots or even the act of blossoming: *zdravý jako řepa / řípa / ředkev / tuřín / křen / cibule / hřib / lusk / ořech* (healthy as a beet / sugar beet / radish / turnip / horseradish / onion / bolete / legume / walnut, ČSVS); *dobrý / zdravý kořen / kořínek* (a good / healthy root / little root, SČFI); *je ze zdravého kořene* (he comes from a healthy root), *je z dobrého jádra* (from a good core), *má zdravé jádro* (he has a healthy core) (ČSVS); *kvést zdravím* (to blossom in health, SČFI); *v tvářích / obličejí jen kvete* (blossoming in the cheeks / face, ČSVS), etc. The frequent metaphor of a good, healthy core or root expresses the overall good, resilient nature of people as a kind of foundation of overall good health.

## 5. Conclusion

The analysis of the phraseology showed that, in Czech, the concept of ZDRAVÍ 'health' is one of remarkably high, unique value, whereas its opposite,

the concept of NEMOC ‘illness’, which is its antipole, acts as the anti-value. In traditional Czech linguistic worldview, the opposition of health and illness is significantly connected to other semantic oppositions, especially life and death, young and old, beauty and unattractiveness, movement and immobility, strong and weak, whole and incomplete, colourful and colourless, etc., whereas health is always conceptualised via its concepts as positive (preferred) attributes (physical strength, resiliency, wholeness, movement, youth, beauty, colourfulness), while illness is viewed contrarily via its own attributes (physical weakness, old, immobility, incompleteness, ugliness, dullness, death). In Czech idioms, a healthy person, in particular, is compared to resilient products of nature, for example, mighty trees with hard, durable wood, good roots and cores, as well as strong or agile, quick-moving animals and beautiful, unimpaired crops, red flowers, etc. Positive characteristics from the above-mentioned oppositions are exercised in these comparisons.

In going forward with the next phase of research, we would like to expand the sources with a current corpus and textual data and perform a comprehensive study that focuses on the conceptualisation of the terms for health and illness, both in the traditional and current Czech linguistic worldview.

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### Koncepty ZDRAVÍ (zdrowie) i NEMOC (choroba) w czeskiej frazeologii

**Streszczenie:** Artykuł dotyczy konceptów ZDRAVÍ (ZDROWIE) i (jako jego antytezy) NEMOC (CHOROBA) w czeskiej frazeologii. Autorki skupiają się na opozycji między zdrowiem i chorobą, czyli na jednej z głównych opozycji semantycznych w czeskim językowym obrazie świata. Pod względem teoretycznym i metodologicznym artykuł częściowo mieści się w ramach współczesnej etnolingwistyki (koncepcji językowego obrazu świata), a częściowo lingwistyki kognitywnej, szczególnie teorii metafory pojęciowej. W czeskim językowym obrazie świata zdrowie to jedna z najważniejszych wartości egzystencjalnych – jej wagę widać głównie na tle choroby, będącej jej antytezą. Pojęcia ZDROWIA i CHOROBY to przeciwstawne wartości w kognitywnym systemie człowieka. W czeskim językowym obrazie świata opozycja ZDROWIE – CHOROBA łączy się z innymi opozycjami semantycznymi, szczególnie ŻYCIE – ŚMIERĆ, MŁODY – STARY, PIĘKNO – BRZYDOTA, RUCH – BEZRUCH, SILNY – SŁABY, PEŁNY – NIEPEŁNY, KOLOROWY – BEZ KOLORU itd. Zdrowie jest zawsze konceptualizowane przez odwołania do jego typowych atrybutów (takich jak siła fizyczna, zdolność powrotu do równowagi, kompletność, ruch, młodość, pełnia kolorów), podczas gdy chorobę postrzega się przez pryzmat atrybutów przeciwnych (fizyczna słabość, starość, bezruch, niepełność, nieatrakcyjność, brzydota, śmierć). W czeskich idiomach zdrową osobę porównuje się do odpornych organizmów, takich jak potężne, twarde drzewa o mocnych korzeniach i pniach; silne, zwinne, szybkie zwierzęta; piękne plony; czerwone kwiaty itd.

**Słowa kluczowe:** etnolingwistyka; językowo-kulturowy obraz świata; wartości; frazeologia; metafora pojęciowa; ZDROWIE; CHOROBA