



POSUDEK OPONENTA BAKALÁŘSKÉ PRÁCE

Studijní obor: **Anglický jazyk a literatura (dvouoborové studium)**

Název práce: ***The semantics of the genitive case in English***

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Stručná charakteristika práce / Short characteristics of the thesis

The purpose of this bachelor thesis was to examine the semantics of the genitive case in English. The thesis draws on three established reference volumes of the English language – Quirk et al. (1985), Huddleston & Pullum (2002) and Dušková (2012) – to clarify the function of the genitive case. After an introduction of the genitive case as a grammatical category, a discussion of the genitive meaning and of semantics is introduced in Section 1.2. The author then sets out to use corpora to classify the semantics of the genitive case and to determine whether the semantic meaning of the genitive case has been treated systematically and exhaustively in the English language.

The Araneum Anglicum Maius corpus is employed to examine the usage and frequency of the genitive case. The author closely examines 290 genitive constructions which she treats under three separate sub-analyses (analysis of common nouns, proper nouns and genitive pronouns). Sections offering a sample interpretation, a discussion of tendencies and of analytically problematic cases follow. The thesis concludes with a proposition of three categories that the author finds relevant to refine the semantic description of the genitive case in English. These are formulated as a genitive of relation, an idiomatic genitive, and a plenary genitive.

The dissertation comprises 51 pages of text followed by Works Cited and an Appendix listing and categorising the genitive constructions analysed.

Celkové zhodnocení / Overall assessment

The goal of this thesis is ambitious and promising as the semantics of genitive constructions is complex and difficult to delineate. In an effort to capture the variety of genitive meanings, grammarians divide the genitive case into a number of semantic categories. The aim of the thesis to go beyond the grammatical description of the genitive case and to contribute to the description of its semantic meaning is therefore very attractive. Unfortunately, already in the opening paragraph of the introduction, the author diffuses the focus of the thesis by reformulating its goal as "to explore the category of the genitive case, the function of the genitive substantive, and the semantic relations within the genitive phrases". A description of the genitive case as a grammatical category subsequently forms a significant part of the literature review with perhaps less attention paid to the studies addressing the issues of genitive case semantics. Although the review is undertaken with a degree of clarity and relevance, it would have been more intriguing as well as appropriate to address the purpose of the thesis more explicitly. The reader, however, has to wait to read Section 1.2 in



which several in literature established perspectives and classifications are introduced. Nevertheless, specification as to which one(s) of these, if any, will form the analytical frame is not provided.

The choice to examine the semantic meaning by scrutinising corpus data is certainly a correct one. The rationale for choosing the corpus Araneum Anglicum Maius is in the description of the research methodology provided only in a limited fashion. In the analysis, the function and genitive meaning are determined for 290 genitive constructions and the semantics of a number of these constructions is discussed somewhat arbitrarily. Although the 290 extracts provide a sizeable data sample, they certainly constitute just a small fraction of the total number of genitive occurrences in the corpus. The actual approach to the analysis would therefore benefit from investing more time in setting out the approach used to select the target data in more detail.

In addition, while it is established that the determinative function is by far the most frequent, it is not clarified in what way this finding contributes to the understanding of the semantic meaning of the genitive case nor how this distinction between the modifying and determinative functions may be reliably established, as in, for example, *God's will vs God's love* (items 194 and 195 of the analysis). Such clarification would shed light also on the analysis of other authentic examples.

Overall, the thesis shows the author's appropriate knowledge of the subject matter. It also displays critical thinking and avoids simplistic description of the grammatical phenomena. The text is organised in a logical manner. It flows naturally and is generally easy to follow. The language use is comprehensible and cultivated perhaps with the exception of the last paragraph of the Introduction. This is written in a very vague and general manner (e.g., p. 7 "The analyses were compiled into overall analysis and the results were evaluated.").

The thesis meets the requirements for BA theses (i.e., formatting, chapters' organisation, length, division into sections, etc.). Sources are cited with general care, punctuation when references are provided is occasionally problematic (e.g., p. 10 Polinsky and Preminger, 2014). There is one occasion where the author introduces a gender confusion when referring to a co-authored publication (p. 47 "Huddleston & Pullum (2002) describes the structure of genitive based more on the function than the semantic relation. Therefore, he... However, his ..."). A complete reference list is provided.

Areas for discussion:

- 1) Please explain the rationale for choosing the corpus Araneum Anglicum Maius (i.e., why this corpus as opposed to another) and review how you undertook the corpus analysis.
- 2) You use Vikner and Jensen's (2002) paper to introduce the complexity of determining the meaning of the genitive case at a pragmatic level. In what ways (if any) did you exploit the corpus to address the constitution of the pragmatic meaning in the selected genitive constructions? Could you, for example, use the expressions *the world's top exporter of coal vs. the world's most powerful commercial jet engine* or *an angel's vessel vs. angel's nonphysical powers* to illustrate your approach?

Práci **doporučuji** k obhajobě.

Navrhovaná klasifikace: **velmi dobře**



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Podpis