

# The emerging definite article *ten* in spoken Czech: A further analysis in terms of ‘semantic’ and ‘pragmatic’ definiteness

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My paper proposes a further application of Löbner’s notions of ‘semantic’ and ‘pragmatic’ definiteness to the Czech demonstrative determiner (DD) *ten* in the contexts where *ten* manifests the characteristics typical for emerging definite articles (DA). I follow up on the work of Czardybon and his own application of Löbner’s approach to Polish and, up to a point, other Slavic languages. In my opinion, examples provided by spoken Czech corpora of the Czech National Corpus platform attest the existence of a developing DA *ten* in the contemporary spoken Czech. Yet the grammaticalization process seems far from accomplished as the form does not have all the necessary characteristics of a proper DA. In this respect, the distinction between semantic and pragmatic definiteness seems a reliable indicator to me. It is generally agreed the emergence of DAs from DDs is characterized by a bleaching of the demonstrative semantics (typically the contextual indexation of the referent) including the proximity/distance distinction as well as a phonetical weakening. The process is accomplished once the form becomes systematic in all contexts, including those of semantic definiteness. For Czech, especially its spoken variety, it has been put forward the DD form *ten*, unstressed and neutral as to proximity/distance distinctions, appears in contexts excluding pure DDs. These contexts, pertaining to situational deixis, anaphora as well as recognitional uses, are mostly those of pragmatic definiteness. Relying on a corpus of unformal spoken Czech of more than one million words, not only will I reexamine these uses on concrete empirical material but I will also focus on more ambiguous uses of *ten*, which the ‘concept types and determination’ approach regard as somehow occupying the transition between the two types of definiteness, i.e. with associative anaphora and noun phrases where the extension of the head noun is restricted to its extensity by the presence of certain modifiers, especially establishing relatives, ordinal numerals and superlative adjectives. In the remaining time, I will also address the phenomenon of *ten* appearing with referents which, I will argue, are semantic definites and where the presence of *ten* has to be accounted for by other pragmatic factors, especially the one of expressivity. The core of my argument is that these employs, very extensive in Czech, should a priori not be confused with those where *ten* is on its way to become a DA.