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On the concept of communicative dynamism in the theory of functional sentence perspective

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ON THE CONCEPT OF COMMUNICATIVE DYNAMISM
IN THE THEORY
OF FUNCTIONAL SENTENCE PERSPECTIVE

This session of the Seminar* is to be devoted to problems of what is frequently called topic-comment structure by American scholars and what in Czechoslovak scholars' English papers is usually referred to as theme-rheme structure, or rather functional sentence perspective (= FSP). It would require a special paper to outline the history of research done in this field. Let me therefore at least state that like other Czechoslovak scholars investigating FSP, I, too, have attempted to develop the ideas of V. Mathesius, the founder of the Prague Linguistic School. Mathesius, in his turn, has been strongly influenced by and has developed the ideas of H. Weil, author of an important book on word order, published in Paris as early as 1844. Weil's book bears the title *De l'ordre des mots dans les langues anciennes comparées aux langues modernes.*[1]) Its American translation, published in 1887, is entitled *The Order of Words in the Ancient Languages Compared with That of the Modern Languages.*[2]) Weil speaks of 'le point de départ' (*De l'odre...*, p.21), translated as 'the point of departure' (*The Order...*, p. 30), and of 'le but du discours' (*De l'ordre...*, p. 21), translated as 'the goal of the discourse' (*The Order...*, p. 30). It is not without interest to note that Weil had advanced his ideas twenty-five years before G. von der Gabelentz[3]) set forth his theory of the psychological subject and psychological predicate (cf. *De l'ordre...*, pp. VII—VIII).

In the present paper I propose to concentrate on the concept of communicative dynamism (= CD). I have attempted to develop it in my researches into FSP and I believe it to be one of the basic concepts of the FSP theory. It is in terms of CD that I am defining theme, rheme and other important concepts of the theory.

The concept of communicative dynamism is based on the fact that linguistic communication is not a static, but a dynamic phenomenon. By CD I understand

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[1]) References (*De l'ordre...*) are to the 3rd edition of 1879.
[2]) An English translation (referred to as *The Order...*) by Ch. W. Super, published in Boston.
[3]) G. von der Gabelentz, *Ideen zu einer vergleichenden Syntax. Wort- und Satzstellung,* Zeitschrift für Völkerpsychologie und Sprachwissenschaft 6. 376—84 (1879).

a property of communication, displayed in the course of the development of the information to be conveyed and consisting in advancing this development. By the degree or amount of CD carried by a linguistic element, I understand the relative extent to which the element contributes to the development of the communication, to which, as it were, it 'pushes the communication forward'. Thus, if examined in its unmarked use, the sentence *He was cross* could be interpreted in regard to the degrees of CD as follows. The lowest degree of CD is carried by *He*, the highest by *cross*, the degree carried by *was* ranking between them.

I believe that much valuable light can be thrown on the function of language in the very act of communication by a consistent inquiry into the laws determining the DISTRIBUTION of degrees of CD over linguistic elements capable of carrying them.

The following note will be relevant here. It will answer the question of what linguistic elements can become bearers of degrees of CD. I agree with D.S. Worth[4] that a linguistic element — sentence, noun phrase, word, morpheme, submorphemic segment, etc. — may be singled out in order to establish a sharp ad hoc opposition (contrast): *John WAS winning, Jenda VÍTĚZIL*. The fact that *VÍTĚZIL* may appear in sharp ad hoc contrast to *vítězí* ('is winning') shows that the element *-il* may become the actual bearer of the contrast. Under the circumstances it would be the only element conveying new information (and therefore be contextually independent), whereas all the other elements would convey known information (and therefore be contextually dependent). Normally, the element *-il* would not carry the highest degree of CD as it does in the highly marked example under discussion; but even then, on account of its semantic content, it would have to be regarded as a carrier of CD. All linguistic elements, including morphemes and submorphemic exponents, are capable of carrying degrees of CD, as long as they convey some meaning.

It may have been gathered from the above note that elements become contextually dependent and in consequence carriers of the lowest degrees of CD owing to the operation of the context. They assume this function irrespective of the positions they occupy within the linear arrangement.[5] (I avoid the term 'word order' here, because words are not the only elements concerned.) Strictly speaking, contextual dependence or independence is determined by what I have called the narrow scene, i.e. in fact the very purpose of the communication.[6] Thus in the sentence *John has gone up to the window, the window* may be well known from the preceding context, but the purpose of the communication being the expression of the direction of the movement, *the window* necessarily appears contextually independent. Under the circumstances, it is — to use Halliday's appropriate terms — non-derivable, non-recoverable from the preceding context.[7]

Let me now turn to contextually independent elements. In determining their

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[4] Worth, D. S., *Suprasyntactics*, Proceedings of the Ninth Congress of Linguists 698—704 (The Hague 1964).

[5] Bolinger, Dwight, *Linear Modification*, PMLA 67. 1117—47 (New York 1952). Reprinted in *Forms of English*, 279—307 (Cambridge, Mass. 1965).

[6] Cf. p. 36 of J. Firbas, *K otázce nezákladových podmětů v současné angličtině* [On the Problem of Non-Thematic Subjects in Contemporary English], Časopis pro moderní filologii 39. 22—42, 165—73 (Prague 1957), and p. 246 of J. Firbas, *Non-Thematic Subjects in Contemporary English*, Travaux linguistiques de Prague 2. 239—54 (Prague 1966).

[7] Halliday, M. A. K., *Notes on Transitivity and Theme in English II*, Journal of Linguistics 3.199—244 (London—New York 1967).

degrees of CD, two further factors are in play: (i) the semantic structure, (ii) positions of the elements within the linear arrangement. By the semantic structure of a sentence I understand the semantic contents of the sentence elements and the semantic relations into which they enter.

I will first illustrate the operation of the semantic structure. An object expresses the goal (outcome) of an action conveyed by the accompanying verb. Provided it is contextually independent, it will carry a higher degree of CD than the verb. This is because from the point of view of communication, an unknown goal (outcome) of an action appears to be more important than the action itself. A contextually independent object will carry a higher degree of CD than the verb irrespective of the positions occupied within the linear arrangement. (*I have read a fine book, Ich habe ein schönes Buch gelesen, Četl jsem pěknou knihu.*)[8]

Similarly, a contextually independent adverbial element of place expressing the direction or destination of a motion will exceed in CD a verb expressing the motion. This is because, communicatively speaking, an unknown direction or destination of a motion is more important than the motion itself. (*I flew to London, Ich flog nach London, Ich bin nach London geflogen, Letěl jsem do Londýna.*)[9]

As to the subjects of the two structures discussed in the two preceding paragraphs, each will carry the lowest degree of CD within the sentence provided at least one of the remaining two elements is contextually independent. This is understandable, for a known or unknown agent expressed by the subject appears to be communicatively less important than an unknown action expressed by the verb and/or an unknown goal (expressed by the object or the adverbial element of place) at or towards which the action is directed. (Cf. the examples offered above and also *A girl was reading an interesting book, A girl was travelling to an unknown town, Ein Mädchen hat ein interessantes Buch gelesen, Ein Mädchen ist nach einer unbekannten Stadt gereist.*)

The situation would be different if the subject expressed a person or thing 'existing' or 'appearing on the scene' and if it were accompanied by a verb expressing the notion of 'appearance' or 'existence on the scene'. If under these circumstances it is contextually independent, the subject will carry a higher degree of CD than the verb. This is because, communicatively speaking, an unknown person or thing appearing on the scene is found to be more important than the fact of existence or act of appearing itself. This holds good irrespective of the positions occupied by the respective elements within the sentence. (*A girl came into the room. Ein Mädchen kam ins Zimmer. Ins Zimmer kam ein Mädchen. Ins Zimmer ist ein Mädchen gekommen. Do pokoje vešla dívka.*)[10]

Not all semantic contents and relations, however, are capable of signalling degrees of CD in the way indicated above. There are evidently also such types of semantic content as let the linear arrangement itself determine the degrees of CD. Thus a contextually independent infinitive of purpose carries a lower degree of CD when occurring initially than when occurring finally (*In order to see him, he went to Prague, He went to Prague in order to see him*).[11] Similarly, with the indirect and direct

[8] Firbas, J., *Thoughts on the Communicative Function of the Verb in English, German and Czech*, Brno Studies in English 1. 39—68 (Prague 1959).

[9] Ib.

[10] See papers quoted in Note 6.

[11] Golková, E., *On the English Infinitive of Purpose in Functional Sentence Perspective*, Brno Studies in English 7. 119—28 (Brno 1968).

object, provided they are contextually independent, the one coming later within the linear arrangement carries a higher degree of CD. (*He gave a boy an apple, He gave an apple to a boy.*)

The notes that have just been offered have shown that the distribution of degrees of CD over the sentence elements (the signalling of the degrees) is an outcome of an interplay of three factors: context, semantic structure, linear arrangement. The notes have also indicated that according to the contextual situation, in other words, the contextual dependence, the distribution of degrees of CD over a sentence structure may vary. All the possible variations (realizations of the distribution) constitute the contextual applicability of the sentence structure. Before proceeding further, let me insert a note on the linear arrangement.

Sentence linearity is an indisputable fact. It makes the speaker/writer arrange the linguistic elements in a linear sequence, in a line, and develop the discourse step by step. I believe to be right in assuming that the most natural way of such gradual development is to begin at the beginning and proceed in steady progression, by degrees, towards the fulfilment of the communicative purpose of the discourse. If this assumption is correct, then a sequence showing a gradual rise in degrees of CD (i.e. starting with the lowest degree and gradually passing on to the highest degree) can be regarded as displaying the basic distribution of CD. I also believe to be right in assuming that this conclusion is quite in harmony with the character of human apprehension.

On the other hand, it seems to be equally in accordance with the character of human apprehension that in a discourse made up of a longer string of verbal sentences, the basic distribution of CD in the fullest sense of the word (i.e. one throughout which, gradually, every element becomes a carrier of a higher degree of CD than its predecessor) can practically never be accomplished. Within such a distribution every element would convey new information. But this is not the way the discourse is structured. In order not to jeopardize comprehension, the discourse is continually interspersed with elements conveying information known (derivable, recoverable) from the previous context, i.e. by elements that have been designated here as contextually dependent. It is through these elements that relief from the steady flow of new information is constantly provided.

The field within which the distribution of CD takes place is naturally the entire discourse. This field, which may often become very extensive, is subdivided into fields of lower rank, provided, e.g., by chapters, paragraphs, sentences, subordinate clauses. Remaining within the sphere of complex sentences and structures ranking below them, I subscribe to A. Svoboda's view that distributional fields are provided by grammatical structures that convey either explicit (open) or implicit (hidden) predication.[12]) (Under the latter heading come structures formed by headwords and their accompanying attributive words or phrases.) In providing distributional (communicative) fields, grammatical structure cuts, as it were, longer or shorter sections out of the linear flow of the discourse. As may have been gathered from what has been said before, according to their contextual dependence distributional fields may function in different perspectives. As the sentence is not the only type of structure providing a distributional field, it is — strictly speaking — possible

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[12]) Svoboda, A., *The Hierarchy of Communicative Units and Fields as Illustrated by English Attributive Constructions*, Brno Studies in English 7.49—101 (Brno 1968).

to speak of other kinds of functional perspective than that of a sentence, e.g., that of a subordinate clause or that of an attributive construction.

The mutual relations between context, semantic structure and linear arrangement may be summed up as follows. Determining the contextual dependence of the distributional field, the context overrules the semantic structure and the linear arrangement in the interplay of means signalling the degrees of CD. It will be remembered that the semantic structure and the linear arrangement (in other words, the basic distribution of CD) can effectively perform the signalling function only within that section of the distributional field which has remained unaffected by the context, i.e. that section which has remained contextually independent.

In illustration of the interplay of means in signalling degrees of CD, let me adduce another set of examples. It is taken from E. Bach's paper on German word order.[13] It will perhaps not be without interest to comment on it from the point of view of FSP. (For a more extensive comment on the adduced set, see Firbas, *On the Prosodic Features.*[14])

1. Der Mann gab dem Jungen einen Ball.
2. Der Mann hat dem Jungen einen Ball gegeben.
3. Der Mann wird dem Jungen einen Ball gegeben haben.
4. Hat der Mann dem Jungen einen Ball gegeben?
5. ..., daß der Mann dem Jungen einen Ball gegeben hat.
6. (Ein Mann sah einen Jungen.) Dem Jungen gab er einen Ball.
7. (Ein Mann sah einen Jungen,) dem er einen Ball gab.
8. Wem hat er einen Ball gegeben?
9. Es gab der Mann dem Jungen einen Ball.

Let me first inquire into the share the preceding verbal context (the preceding co-text) has in signalling degrees of CD within the sentences under examination. Even if with none of these sentences such a context has been given, the elements *der Mann* and *dem Jungen* may most naturally be interpreted as known, i.e. as derivable, recoverable from the preceding context — in other words, as contextually dependent. Contributing comparatively little to the development of the communication, they convey very low, in fact the lowest, degrees of CD. They do so irrespective of the positions in the sentence.

As to the share of the semantic structure in producing the FSP of the sentences under examination, it fully comes to light within the sections that have remained unaffected by (independent of) the preceding context. In the above sentences, such sections are constituted by the elements *gab / hat gegeben / wird gegeben haben* and *einen Ball*. With a proviso (to be stated presently), all of them are to be taken as conveying new information, unknown from the previous context. Communicatively most important of this new information is the goal of the action, expressed by the object, *einen Ball*; less important is the action itself, expressed by the notional component of the finite verb; less important still are the modal and temporal indications, expressed by the temporal and modal exponents of the finite verb (= TME's). (As for the proviso, it should be added that, strictly speaking, the indications of

[13] Bach, E., *The Order of Elements in a Transformational Grammar of German*, Language 38.263—9 (Baltimore 1962).

[14] Firbas, J., *On the Prosodic Features of the Modern English Finite Verb—Object Combination as Means of Functional Sentence Perspective*, Brno Studies in English 8.49—59 Brno) 1969).

person and number, expressed by the respective verbal exponents convey items of information already offered by the section affected by the context. Through them, the verb participates in that section.) As the items constituting the section unaffected by the context 'push the communication forward' to a varying extent, they display various degrees of CD. Their mutual relations in regard to these degrees, however, remain the same irrespective of the position in the sentence. They would remain so even if *einen Ball* appeared in front-position. (*Einen Ball gab der Mann dem Jungen, Einen Ball wird der Mann dem Jungen gegeben haben*, etc.) The relations could, however, change through the presence of the adverb *sogar* (even). If contextually independent, *sogar* is a powerful semantic means capable of effectively working counter to the basic distribution of CD; it will signal the element it relates to as carrier of the highest degree of CD. (*Sogar der Mann gab dem Jungen einen Ball, Hat der Mann sogar dem Jungen einen Ball gegeben?*)

In signalling degrees of CD within a distributional field, i.e. in producing its functional perspective, context and semantic structure do not always work counter to, but very frequently in the same direction as the basic distribution of CD. It is worth noticing, for instance, that in the above sentence the elements *der Mann* and *dem Jungen* always precede the element *einen Ball*. The occurrence of *einen Ball* in front position would render the word order emotive. I will come back to this point presently.

As linear arrangement, or roughly speaking word order, is not the only means of FSP, languages may differ as to the degree of conformity to the basic distribution of CD within the sentence. A comparatively very high degree is displayed by Czech non-emotive sentences, a somewhat lower one by the German and a considerably lower one by their English counterparts.

Within the word order system of each of the three languages (the system being constituted by the hierarchy of word order principles), the tendency towards the basic distribution of CD does not play the same role. In Czech it functions as the leading word order principle. Deviations from it render the word order emotive, marked. With certain modifications, the same applies to German; cf. the effect created by the front position of *einen Ball*, an element which under the circumstances carries the highest degree of CD within the sentence. In English, on the other hand, the role of the leading factor is played by the grammatical principle, requiring the order S V O/C. This order is unmarked; deviations from it are marked. This explains why the English sequence *These people I should never betray* is evidently marked, whereas the corresponding German and Czech sequences *Diese Leute würde ich nie verraten, Tyto lidi bych nikdy nezradil* are unmarked, although in all three languages the distribution of CD is approximately the same.

The fact that linear arrangement, or roughly speaking word order, is not the only means through which the distribution of CD is implemented has far-reaching consequences. Word order may perform or at least co-perform other functions than that of signalling degrees of CD. Let me once again mention here the grammatical function of English word order. The fixed positions of the components of the German finite verb come under the same heading. As illustrated by the adduced German sentence types, the finite German verb co-signals syntactic dependence or independence and the interrogative or declarative character of the clausal structure in which it occurs.

Another function of word order may be that of conveying emotiveness. As has also been pointed out, in accordance with the character of the hierarchy of word

order principles, under certain conditions word order becomes emotive, marked, under others non-emotive, unmarked. To illustrate this, let me adduce one more example. Thus in *Pětku dostal i ze čtení* (*Five he-got even from reading, i.e. He was marked five even in reading) and *I ze čtení pětku dostal* (*Even from reading he-got five), the relations between the carriers of CD are practically the same. In each case *pětku* carries the lowest degree of CD, *i ze čtení* the highest, *dostal* carries a degree ranking between the two. In accordance with the character of the Czech system of word order, the second sequence is marked; this is because it shows a conspicuous deviation from the basic distribution of CD. Other functions of word order could be discussed, but perhaps the most important have been touched upon.[15]

In evaluating the fact that the distribution of degrees of CD is signalled by an interplay of means, we may go even a step further. Synchronically speaking, the laws of the interplay of means of FSP are flexible enough to make room for differences between individual languages (English, German and Czech, for instance), or for differences between standards or substandards of one language, or for the stylistic differences within one of such standards or substandards. Diachronically speaking, the laws of the interplay of means of FSP are flexible enough to make room for changes in word order in the course of historical development.[16] Thanks to the adaptability of means of FSP, demands on the system of word order raised by other systems of language in the course of historical development may be met without impairing the purpose of the communication.

It should be emphasized that the degrees (amounts) of CD do not constitute multiples of some basic unit or quantity of information. They are to be understood in terms of the mutual relations of the elements in regard to CD within a distributional field. For certain purposes, it would certainly be sufficient to determine the relation between the elements in regard to the amount of CD they carry. For a better understanding of FSP, however, it has proved useful to analyze a distributional field into theme, transition and rheme. The theme is constituted by an element (elements) carrying the lowest, the rheme by an element (elements) carrying the highest degree(s) of CD within the distributional field. Elements ranking between theme and rheme constitute a kind of transition. In all the nine specimen sentences, *einen Ball* is rhematic (pretty near the rheme comes *Wem* in 8); *der Mann/er, dem Jungen/dem*, together with the verbal exponents of person and number are thematic (so is *es* in 9); the finite verb — with the exception of the exponents just mentioned — is transitional, the exponents of tense and mood functioning as transition proper, i.e. as carriers of the lowest degrees of CD within the transition. (I will come back to this interpretation of the temporal and modal exponents of the finite verb.)

Defining theme, transition and rheme in terms of CD makes it possible to establish a thematic, a transitional and a rhematic section even within distributional fields that are entirely contextually independent. Under this heading comes, for instance, the sentence type *A girl broke a vase* which could certainly occur at the beginning of a discourse. It follows from what has been said so far that contextually

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[15] Mathesius, V., *Základní funkce pořádku slov v češtině* [The Basic Function of Word Order in Czech], Slovo a slovesnost 7. 169—180 (Prague 1941); the same, *Ze srovnávacích studií slovosledných* [From Comparative Word Order Studies], Časopis pro moderní filologii 28. 181—90, 302—7 (Prague 1942); Firbas, J., *From Comparative Word Order Studies*, Brno Studies in English 4. 111—28 (Prague 1964).

[16] Firbas, J., *Some Thoughts on the Function of Word Order in Old English and Modern English*, Sborník prací filosofické fakulty brněnské university A 5. 72—98 (Brno 1957).

dependent elements will be thematic; thematic elements, however, need not always be contextually dependent. Rhematic (or non-thematic, for that matter) elements will always be contextually independent; contextually independent elements, however, need not be rhematic (non-thematic).

As the interpretations of the nine German specimen sentences have shown, neither theme nor transition nor rheme can invariably be linked up with certain positions within the distributional field. Nor can they invariably be linked up with any semantic or grammatical functions. But this by no means forbids inquiries into the ranges (degrees) of coincidence (congruence) between the functions of a linguistic element on the three mentioned levels, i.e. the semantic, the grammatical and the FSP level. Comparing English with Czech, Mathesius[17] has shown that to a markedly greater extent than Czech, English tends to make the subject express the theme. This has recently been convincingly borne out by the studies of M. A. K. Halliday.[18] I. P. Raspopov[19] has gone too far when invariably linking the temporal and modal indications of the finite verb with the transitional function in FSP. I have attempted to modify his statement and to prove that it is only in their unmarked use that these indications, expressed by the temporal and modal exponents of the finite verb, function as transition in FSP. In unmarked use, they function as transition proper; in marked use, on the other hand, as theme proper or rheme proper.[20] (Theme proper and transition proper are constituted by the elements carrying the lowest degree of CD within theme and transition respectively. Rheme proper, on the other hand, is constituted by the element carrying the highest degree of CD within the rheme.) The temporal and modal indications seem to show the highest degree of coincidence between the three examined levels. It is one of the main tasks of an inquiry into the interplay of means of FSP to establish the ranges of coincidence of functions performed by a linguistic element on the three examined levels.

It would not be without interest to compare here various definitions of the theme or rheme. Let me at least compare my conception of theme with that of M. A. K. Halliday. Halliday explicitly states that the functions of 'given' and 'new' are not the same as those of 'theme' and 'rheme' (*Notes...*, p. 205). In my approach, on the other hand, 'given' and 'new' come under the heading of 'degrees of CD'. Halliday views the function of the theme as that of clause-initial position (ib.). Basically, the theme is what comes first in the clause (ib. 212). Halliday regards the theme as the point of departure of the clause as a message (ib.). Thematization structures the clause in two parts: the theme is assigned initial position in the clause, and all that follows is the rheme (ib.). In my approach, thematization would mean rendering an element thematic, making it carry the lowest degree of CD, irrespective of the position within the sentence. (In unmarked use, the structure *I saw him* would have two thematic elements: *I* and *him*.)

[17] Mathesius, V., *Několik poznámek o funkci podmětu v moderní angličtině* [Some Notes on the Function of the Subject in Modern English], Časopis pro moderní filologii 10. 244—48 (Prague 1924); the same, *On Linguistic Characterology*, Actes du Premier Congrès International de Linguistes (The Hague 1928); Republished in *A Prague School Reader*, compiled by J. Vachek (Bloomington 1964).

[18] See his paper quoted in Note 7.

[19] Raspopov, I. P., *Aktual'noye chleneniye predlozheniya* [Functional Sentence Perspective] (Ufa 1961).

[20] Firbas, J., *A Note on Transition Proper in Functional Sentence Analysis*, Philologica Pragensia 8. 170—7 (Prague 1965).

It follows that the phenomena designated as theme by me and Halliday are not the same, although they may frequently coincide. As I see it, each of the two concepts answers a valuable purpose. The use of one and the same term may, of course, be misleading. Not defining his theme in terms of 'given' and 'new' (i.e., more generally speaking, in terms of CD), Halliday is free to link up the phenomenon defined with the beginning of the sentence. K. Boost's approach, on the other hand, is not acceptable. He defines the theme in terms of 'given' and 'new', at the same time linking it up with the beginning of the sentence.[21])

By way of conclusion, let me add the following notes. I believe to be right in assuming that the tendency towards the basic distribution of CD is borne out by the described interplay of means of FSP, which either permits the basic distribution of CD to assert itself, or prevents it from functioning but signals the deviations. True enough there are cases that do not permit of an unequivocal interpretation, to which — in other words — more than one interpretation of the interplay of means of FSP can be applied. This may be due to the fact that in the given act of communication the structure in question is indeed multifunctional, multivalent (to use a term suggested to me by M. A. K. Halliday), i.e. allowing of more than one interpretation; its character is in fact such as to permit of at least two interpretations in regard to the given act of communication.[22]) This is in no way out of keeping with the conception that views language as a system of systems, but does not regard it as a system which is rigid and closed.[23]) On the other hand, the uncertainty about an interpretation may, of course, be due to the interpreter's ignorance. For some time inquiries have been in progress aiming at establishing conditions under which various types of sentences, sentence elements and even morphemes perform certain roles in FSP. But we have perhaps merely crossed the threshold of an unexplored area.

Multivalence is of course vastly reduced in spoken language, in which the prosodic features function as important means of FSP. To a considerable extent, prosodic means can be looked upon as a touchstone, by which the validity of the conclusions arrived at in the non-prosodic sphere can be tested. In two papers examining the functions performed by the prosodic features of the Modern English finite verb on the level of FSP,[24]) I trust to have shown that the diagnoses of the functions of the verb in FSP established in regard to the non-prosodic sphere are fully borne out by an inquiry into its prosodic features.

Considerations of time prevent me from discussing the share the prosodic features have in the interplay of means of FSP. In the two mentioned papers I have attempted to inquire into the correspondence between the gamut of CD and the gamut of prosodic weight. The inquiry substantiates the following view. As FSP (which makes the semantic and the grammatical structures of the sentence function in a definite kind of perspective) plays a decisive role in controlling the intensity of the prosodic features, and above all in determining the location of the intonation

[21]) Boost, K., *Neue Untersuchungen zum Wesen und zur Struktur des deutschen Satzes* (*Der Satz als Spannungsfeld*), Veröffentlichungen des Instituts für Deutsche Sprache und Literatur. Lieferung 4 (Berlin 1955); Firbas, J., *Bemerkungen über einen deutschen Beitrag zum Problem der Satzperspektive*, Philologica Pragensia 1. 49—54 (Prague 1958).

[22]) See Part 4 of J. Firbas, *Non-Thematic Subjects...* quoted in Note 6.

[23]) Vachek, J., *Some Notes on the Development of Language Seen as a System of Systems*, Proceedings of the Eighth International Congress of Linguists 418—9 (Oslo 1958).

centre, the relation of grammar to intonation cannot be determined without regard to FSP.[25])

The final note concerns the formalization of the theory of FSP. Scholars wishing to formalize it may find the definitions that have so far been offered by the FSP theorists not vigorous enough. They may go even the length of saying that the FSP theorists' 'analysis of a sentence into topic and comment is often restricted to a mere labelling of its elements into "thematic" and "rhematic"'.[26]) I do not find such criticism fair. The definitions so far ffered by the FSP theory may not always adequately serve the purposes of formalization. Advocates of formalization, however, would be ill-advised to disregard the insights offered by the theory of FSP into the functioning of linguistic means in the act of communication. Only mutual tolerance, willingness to listen to each other and combined effort can bring about a give and take which can lead to new discoveries within the vast unexplored land of linguistic means and functions lying ahead of us.

K POJMU „VÝPOVĚDNÍ DYNAMIČNOST" V TEORII FUNKČNÍ VĚTNÉ PERSPEKTIVY

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[24]) Firbas, J., *On the Prosodic Features of the Modern English Finite Verb as Means of Functional Sentence Perspective*, Brno Studies in English 7. 11—48 (Brno 1968); see also *On the Prosodic Features...* quoted in Note 15.

[25]) Cf. also Daneš, F., *Order of Elements and Sentence Intonation*, To Honor Roman Jakobson 500—12 (The Hague 1967).

[26]) Dahl, Östen, *Topic and Comment, A Study in Russian and General Transformational Grammar*, Acta Universitatis Gothoburgensis, Slavica Gothoburgensia 4 (Göteborg 1969); cf. also Firbas, J.—Pala, K., *Notes on a Transformational Approach to the Theory of Functional Sentence Perspective* [A review of Dahl], Journal of Linguistics, 7.91—101 London - New York 1971).