

## PERSONAL PRONOUNS, FUNCTIONAL SENTENCE PERSPECTIVE AND INTONATION

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Most English pronouns have two grammatical cases: the common case (*somebody*) and the genitive (*somebody's*). With personal pronouns (and the relative and interrogative pronoun *who*), the common case is replaced by the subjective case (*I, you, he, she, it, we, you, they*) and the objective case (*me, you, him, her, it, us, you, them*). Personal pronouns in the genitive (*my, your, etc.*) are, in accordance with their meaning, traditionally called *possessive pronouns* and considered an independent class (together with *mine, yours, etc.*). From the syntactic point of view, subjective personal pronouns function primarily as subjects of finite verbs (exx. 1–5), less frequently as subject complements; objective personal pronouns are used primarily as objects (ex. 6) and prepositional complements (exx. 7, 12). In informal speech subject complements (exx. 9, 10), and sometimes – in sentences with an ellipted finite verb – even subjects (exx. 8, 11), are expressed by objective forms instead of subjective forms. (Based largely on Quirk and Greenbaum 1980.101 and 103.)

In the present paper personal pronouns are studied from the viewpoint of functional sentence perspective (=FSP) and intonation. The expression *personal pronouns* always refers to subjective and objective forms only. The two subclasses are compared in regard to their communicative dynamism (see below) and their prosodic prominence. The subjective case and the objective case of the pronouns *you* and *it* (which are identical) have been distinguished by the syntactic function of the pronoun in the sentence analysed and by the distribution of the other personal pronouns.

The functional analysis of pronouns presented in this paper is based on the conception of FSP worked out by Firbas (e. g. 1979, 1985), and supplemented by Svoboda (1981). In this conception, a sentence (clause) is considered a field of distribution of communicative dynamism (=CD); sentence elements serve as communicative units carrying different degrees of CD. (According to Firbas 1979 and Svoboda 1981, the predicative verb represents two communicative units.) The degree of CD of an element is the relative extent to which the element con-

tributes to the development of the communication. The degree of CD is determined by the interplay of linear modification, semantic structure and context; in the spoken language, this interplay is joined by another factor – intonation. According to the degree of CD an element may be classified as one of the following units (starting from the one carrying the lowest degree):

- |  |                                  |
|--|----------------------------------|
| (1) theme proper ( $Th_p$ )                    | (5) transition proper ( $Tr_p$ ) |
| (2) theme-proper oriented theme ( $Th_{(p)}$ ) | (6) transition ( $Tr$ )          |
| (3) diatheme oriented theme ( $Th_{(d)}$ )     | (7) rheme ( $Rh$ )               |
| (4) diatheme ( $Th_d$ )                        | (8) rheme proper ( $Rh_p$ )      |

For the purpose of the present analysis, themes proper and theme-proper oriented themes are grouped together and referred to as themes proper ( $Th_p$ ). Similarly, diathemes and diatheme oriented themes are referred to as diathemes ( $Th_d$ ).

The analysis of prosodic prominence is based on O'Connor and Arnold's *Intonation of colloquial English* (1973). The sources of the statistical data and the examples given in this paper are 'Dialogues for intonation practice', included in the above book, and the dialogues in Arnold and Tooley's reader *Say it with rhythm 3* (1972). The former book is referred to here as *Intonation*, the latter as *Say*. The text of *Intonation* that was analysed consists of 533 sentences (a subordinate clause is considered part of one complex sentence) and contains 353 subjective and 65 objective forms of personal pronouns. The results of their functional and prosodic analyses are given in *Table 1* and *Table 2*. Since the number of objective pronouns does not appear to be statistically conclusive, another 175 objective forms occurring in 1,352 sentences of the first four dialogues of *Say* have been analysed in addition. The results are given in *Table 3*.

*Table 1. Subjective forms (Intonation)*

	Thematic elements		Rhematic elements
	$Th_p$	$Th_d$	$Rh_p$
no stress	319	2	
head		12	
nucleus		1	19
total	319 (95.5 %)	15 (4.5 %)	19 (100.0 %)
	334 (94.6 %)		19 (5.4 %)
	353		

Table 2. Objective forms (*Intonation*)

	Thematic elements		Rhematic elements
	Th <sub>p</sub>	Th <sub>d</sub>	Rh <sub>p</sub>
no stress	49		
unaccented stress	4		
head			
nucleus		3	9
total	53 (94.6 %)	3 (5.4 %)	9 (100.0 %)
	56 (86.2 %)		9 (13.8 %)
	65		

Table 3. Objective forms (*Say*)

	Thematic elements		Rhematic elements
	Th <sub>p</sub>	Th <sub>d</sub>	Rh <sub>p</sub>
no stress	124		
unaccented stress	19		
head		2	
nucleus		5	25
total	143 (95.3 %)	7 (4.7 %)	25 (100.0 %)
	150 (85.7 %)		25 (14.3 %)
	175		

Table 1 suggests that the CD of most subjective forms of personal pronouns in *Intonation* is quite low: out of 353 pronouns there are only 19 (5.4%) Rh<sub>p</sub>'s while the remaining 334 (94.6%) are thematic elements. The majority of the thematic elements – 319 (95.5%) – are Th<sub>p</sub>'s; they are all completely unstressed. Only 15 (4.5%) thematic pronouns represent Th<sub>d</sub>; 2 of them are unstressed, 12 bear head stress, and 1 bears a nucleus. For examples of subjective personal pronouns functioning as Th<sub>p</sub>, Th<sub>d</sub> and Rh<sub>p</sub> and bearing no stress, head stress or nuclear stress, see sentences 1–5 below. The slash marks indicate ends of tone groups.

*Table 2* and *Table 3* show that the CD of the objective forms of personal pronouns is slightly higher than that of the subjective forms. In *Intonation*, the  $Rh_p$ 's represent 13.8%; in *Say* 14.3%. The rest of the objective pronouns, i. e. 86.2% in *Intonation* and 85.7% in *Say*, are thematic elements. In both the texts about 95% of the thematic elements are  $Th_p$ 's and about 5%  $Th_d$ 's; the ratio of  $Th_d$ 's in the group of objective pronouns is similar to that in the subjective pronouns. Objective personal pronouns functioning as  $Th_p$  – unlike subjective personal pronouns – sometimes bear unaccented stress (though unaccented stress only occurs with prepositional phrases and is borne by the preposition (ex. 7)); most of the  $Th_p$ 's are again unstressed.  $Th_d$ 's occur with head stress and – more frequently – with nuclear stress.  $Rh_p$ 's always occur with nuclear stress. It should be mentioned here that, generally speaking, the CD of the objective forms is higher than that of the subjective forms not only because of the higher frequency of rhematic objective forms but also because, of the objective  $Th_p$ 's alone, many could be interpreted as  $Th_{(p)}$ 's (theme-proper oriented themes) owing to the operation of linear modification: in about 40% of the cases analysed the objective form occurring towards the end of a clause is preceded by a subjective form situated near the beginning of the clause and functioning as  $Th_p$ . The degree of CD of the objective form is slightly higher than that of the subjective form (ex. 6). For examples of objective forms of personal pronouns functioning as  $Th_p$ ,  $Th_d$  and  $Rh_p$  and bearing no stress, unaccented stress, head stress or nucleus see sentences 6–12 below.

$Th_p$ , no stress:

(Janet ,mustn't go ,faster than ,thirty,/`surely.//)

1 She's a `learner.// (Intonation 275/31)

$Th_d$ , no stress:

2 'Don't you be^lieve it!// (Intonation 278/27)

$Th_d$ , head:

3 And 'you've been °roped in to ^help!// (Intonation 284/6)

('Poor °old \George!//)

$Th_d$ , nucleus:

('Fifty `minutes,/ap,proximately,// -^Very ap,proximately.//)

4 I make it/fifty ^eight ,minutes,/pre^cisely!// (Intonation 280/7)

$Rh_p$ , nucleus:

(You ,mean she 'really ,does °drive too °fast?//)

5 -I'll say she ,does!// (Intonation 276/1)

Th<sub>p</sub>, no stress:

6 You must 'go there/and 'see it for your`self.//(Intonation 277/15)

Th<sub>p</sub>, unaccented stress:

7 'How disappointing for you!// (Intonation 278/18)

Th<sub>d</sub>, head:

(But 'I `like him/`all the same.//)

8 - Oh, 'me, `too.// (Say 20/20)

Th<sub>d</sub>, nucleus:

(Oh, you mean, 'Bill `whatsisname.//`Anstruther,/,isn't it?//)

9 - Yes, `that's him.// (Intonation 280/21)

Rh<sub>p</sub>, nucleus:

(It 'isn't the <sup>v</sup>television that awastes the time.//)

10 It's you.// (Intonation 275/14)

(`Nobody plays a convention like that.//)

11 'Not even us.// (Intonation 279/8)

(That girl `Isobel, for instance.//)

12 I'magine being mentally stimulated by her!// (Say 61/28)

Due to the interplay of the factors of FSP, the degrees of CD of the underlined pronouns in sentences 1, 6 and 7 are very low. All the other elements in these sentences (except *you* in 6, where *it* is in fact a Th<sub>(p)</sub>) are communicatively more important.

The pronouns in 2, 3, 4, 8 and 9 resemble those in 1, 6, 7 in semantic character and context dependence. Their degrees of CD, however, are higher largely because of emotive intensification (see Firbas 1985), which is signalled by head stress (3, 8), non-intonation-centre nucleus (4, 9; the intonation-centre nucleus is on another – rhematic – element) or the use of the personal pronoun (without any stress) in an imperative clause, where its occurrence is marked (2).

Sentences 5, 10, 11 and 12 contain examples of personal pronouns carrying very high degrees of CD. Semantically, these pronouns are, again, similar to the other – thematic – pronouns above: they, too, denote persons or things referred to in the dialogue. They could even be interpreted as context dependent because the persons they refer to are retrievable from the preceding text. What makes the pronouns function as Rh<sub>p</sub> is emotive re-evaluation in 5 and contextual disengagement in 10, 11 and 12. Sentence 5 is emotively coloured due to marked intonation. The pronoun is analysed as a carrier of emotiveness (which is here irretrie-

vable) and re-evaluated into  $Rh_p$ . (For a detailed study of expressing emotiveness see Firbas 1985.) The person referred to by the pronoun in 10 is put in contrast with *television*, occurring in the preceding sentence, contrast representing irretrievable information and therefore causing contextual disengagement of the pronoun and raising its degree of CD. The irretrievable pieces of information carried by the pronouns in the remaining two sentences are selection in 11 and recapitulation in 12. (For more details on contextual disengagement through contrast, selection and recapitulation, see Firbas 1982 and 1985.) Among the subjective pronouns are 13, showing emotive re-evaluation, and 6, contextual disengagement (19  $Rh_p$ 's altogether — cf. *Table 1*). Among the objective pronouns, 20 show emotive re-evaluation and 14 contextual disengagement (34, i. e. 9+25,  $Rh_p$ 's altogether — cf. *Table 2* and *Table 3*).

It may be of some interest to compare the English examples of emotive re-evaluation and contextual disengagement with their hypothetical Czech equivalents (the intonation centre is denoted by *IC*):

- 5a To bych teda řekl!  
(IC)
- 10a Čas nemaří televize, ale ty!  
(IC)
- 11a Ani my ne!  
(IC)
- 12a Zkus si představit, že ta by tě měla mentálně stimulovat!  
(IC)

Like the intonation centres of 10, 11 and 12, those of 10a, 11a and 12a are placed on the personal pronouns. In this respect there seems to be a certain correspondence between English and Czech. The comparison of 5 and 5a, however, suggests that the means of expressing emotiveness are different in English and Czech. The emotive messages carried by the intensified and re-evaluated personal pronouns of the English sentences seem to be expressed by an intensification of the finite verb and perhaps an additional use of a modal particle in their Czech counterparts. This hypothesis is also supported by the last four examples, two pairs of sentences, 13 and 13a, and 14 and 14a.

- 13 Not very amusing, / I bet. // (Intonation 280/24)
- 13a Ta asi není zrovna zábavná, co?  
(IC<sub>1</sub>) (IC<sub>2</sub>)  
  
(Yes, we are, /, rather. //)
- 14 You know. // (Intonation 283/31)  
(All the usual yearly business. //)
- 14a Však to znáš!  
(IC)

It has been shown in the present paper that due to the interplay of the factors of FSP the communicative dynamism of personal pronouns is comparatively low. It is slightly higher with the objective forms than with the subjective forms. In accordance with their low degree of communicative dynamism, the majority of personal pronouns are unstressed; few bear unaccented stress, head stress, or a non-intonation-centre nuclear stress. A minority of personal pronouns come to convey the rheme proper and to bear the intonation centre of the clause, They do so mainly owing to emotive re-evaluation or contextual disengagement. The comparison of English sentences with their hypothetical Czech equivalents has suggested that there might be considerable differences between English and Czech in the means of expressing emotiveness. An exhaustive inquiry into this problem, however, must remain for the future.

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## OSOBNÍ ZÁJMENA, FUNKČNÍ VĚTNÁ PERSPEKTIVA A INTONACE

Na základě analýzy textů obsahujících zápis prozodických rysů autorka hodnotí anglická osobní zájmena z hlediska jejich výpovědní dynamičnosti a prozodické výraznosti. Výsledky analýzy podává v tabulkách. Osobní zájmena mají poměrně nízkou výpovědní dynamičnost – jsou většinou tematická, jen malá část má funkci vlastně rematickou. U objektových tvarů je procento vlastních rémat vyšší než u tvarů subjektivních. Tematická osobní zájmena jsou většinou nepřízvučná, poměrně malý počet tematických zájmen nese částečný nebo plný přízvuk. Některá diatémata a všechna vlastní rémata nesou nukleární tón. Autorka věnuje zvláštní pozornost zájmenům, která se stala vlastním rématem v důsledku emotivního přehodnocení. Srovnává anglické věty obsahující tato zájmena s jejich českými protějšky. Zdá se, že předhodnocující intenzifikaci anglického zájmena odpovídá v češtině spíše intenzifikace určitého tvaru slovesného a užití modální částice.

