ON THE PROSODIC FEATURES OF THE MODERN ENGLISH FINITE VERB-OBJECT COMBINATION AS MEANS OF FUNCTIONAL SENTENCE PERSPECTIVE

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It was on Professor J. Vachek's suggestion that the work at the problems of functional sentence perspective (=FSP) with special regard to English began at the Brno Department of English more than fifteen years ago. In his Brno university lectures[1]— exemplarily lucid and well-reasoned, well-informed and always thought-provoking—as well as elsewhere,[2] he emphasized the importance of continuing Professor Mathesius's work in that field.

In its first stage, the Brno work at FSP concentrated on written English. But the time has now come to undertake an inquiry into the means of FSP offered by spoken English. It is hoped that such an inquiry will make it possible to test the results achieved on the non-prosodic level and carry the investigation a step further. Of these results, the present paper will put to the test its author's earlier conclusion that in English, German and Czech, and possibly in all Indo-European languages, the object will carry a higher amount of communicative dynamism (=CD) than the finite verb if it conveys new, unknown information, i.e. if it is contextually independent.[3] (This solution had been suggested to the present author by the works of F. Daneš, F. Kopečný and particularly A. Sechehay.[4] Whether an item of conveyed information is known or unknown is to be judged from the point of view of the ad hoc, narrow scene, which is set in accordance with the purpose of communication at the moment of utterance.[5])

The present author's solution is in keeping with M. Schubiger's observation (made in 1935)[6] that the object is usually relatively more important than the verb. The same conclusion has been drawn by F. Trojan.[7] It can also be unmistakably gathered from P. Adamec's study of Russian word order.[8] In the present author's opinion, his own solution is further substantiated by the very historical development of word order, e.g., in Czech and English. In the course of historical development the verb and the object could not have changed their positions to the extent they have if it had not been for the mentioned difference in CD shown by the verb and the object, irrespective of the positions they occupy within the sentence. On account of this, changes in word order could take place without entailing undesirable changes in FSP.

In spite of all these corroborations, however, it appears necessary to test the offered solution by inquiring into how the prosodic features of the verb and the object function in FSP: partly because such a test may contribute to an inquiry into the means of FSP employed by the spoken language; partly because it affords an opportunity not to leave unregarded the comments on the theory of FSP offered by such an eminent scholar as W. N. Francis;[9] partly because the test may contribute towards a statistical analysis of FSP phenomena (a necessity which has been emphasized by B. Trnka[10]).

Lack of space will not permit of dealing with all of W. N. Francis's comments.

A serious criticism of his, however, has already been dealt with—that concerning the concept of transition, which Francis finds not to be established convincingly enough. Now, since V. Mathesius's times the concept of transition has been found useful and employed by a number of scholars (F. Daneš, F. Kopečný, J. Mistrík, V. Šmilauer and others). It has to be admitted, however, that it has never been thoroughly examined. To make amends for it, the present author has taken up the problems in two papers: 'A Note on Transition Proper in Functional Sentence Analysis'[11] and 'On the Prosodic Features of the Modern English Finite Verb as Means of Functional Sentence Perspective (More Thoughts on Transition Proper)'.[12] Inquiring into the problem both on the non-prosodic and the prosodic level, he has found that the temporal and modal exponents of the finite verb constitute a point of high coincidence between the semantic and grammatical sentence structures on the one hand and FSP on the other, in their non-marked use exclusively performing the function of transition proper. This high coincidence provides an important justification of the concept of transition. The present paper may meet W. N. Francis's objection that the conclusion concerning the degrees of CD carried by the verb and the object is marked by a good deal of arbitrary statement.

In this connection, one important point must be made. The indication of the verb or object as contextually dependent or independent is naturally not confined to individual sentences, but necessarily and inevitably depends on the preceding context. This is why in adducing examples not only the page, but also the line on which the example begins will be given. To ensure easy reference, this has in fact been the practice in all our previous papers. We are, of course, well aware that the argument would gain in convincingness could the examples be quoted in their full contexts. Unfortunately, this would mean printing another three or four sentences in each case, which under the circumstances is not feasible. The analysis presented in the present paper is based on P.A.D. MacCarthy's *English Conversation Reader in Phonetic Transcription with Intonation Marks*, Longmans, Green and Co., London 1956.[13] All the finite verb-object combinations occurring in this text have been collected.[14] The method of inquiry is the same as in the two above mentioned papers, where the terms and procedures to be employed by the present one are explained or further references given. In fact, the present paper is a sequel to these two papers.

It will be convenient to start the inquiry by dividing all the collected instances into three groups, respectively containing verbs that are prosodically (i) lighter than, (ii) heavier than, and (iii) equally light as, their objects. Before dealing with each of these three groups, the following explanations must be offered.

As in the 'Prosodic Features', it has not been considered necessary to group separately combinations with a finite verb belonging to a principal clause, and those with a finite verb belonging to a subordinate clause. Nor has it been considered necessary to specify which part(s) of an object bears (bear) the prosodic features in question, irrespective of how complex or compound the object may be. With due alterations, but with one exception, the same holds good for the finite verb: special mention will be made only of those cases in which an auxiliary verbal component functions as the only nucleus bearer within a distributional field.[15]

For the purposes of the threefold grouping, A. C. Gimson's[16] simple gamut of no stress, partial stress, stress, nucleus has been employed. In actual fact, however, elements that are equal in the terms of the mentioned gamut need not necessarily always be so in regard to their functional importance (weight). This will become evident in the course of the following discussion, especially when Group (iii) is dealt with.

Right from the beginning, however, by way of anticipation, which further discussion will justify, a low rise will not be regarded as functionally and prosodically equal to, but lighter than, a fall preceding it within the same distributional field. For the sake of convenience, which further discussion will equally justify, the verb and the object will be regarded as prosodically equal if neither the one nor the other is fully stressed (i.e. unstressed or merely partially stressed), or if one of the two is not fully stressed and the other bears a low rise which within the same distributional field follows a fall occurring on some sentence element outside the verb-object combination.

Group (i)

Out of the total number of the 323 collected finite verb-object combinations, 193 have a finite verb that is prosodically lighter (in the terms stated in the introductory section of this paper) than the object. In 188 cases the finite verb preceded (exx. 1—11 below), in 5 (in 4 special questions [ex. 12] and in 1 exclamation [ex. 13]) followed, the object. Out of the 188 cases, in 141 the object is not followed by any other sentence element; one or more sentence elements follow the object in 47 cases.

In all the 193 cases, the difference in prosodic weight between the finite verb and the object is quite unmistakable. This may be corroborated, in the first place, by a statistical analysis of the 141 cases which form the largest sub-group of (i). (See line A in the statistical table on p.52.) But as it might be argued that the ascertainment of the high degree of prosodic weight of the objects as it follows from the statistical analysis is due to the fact that no distinction has been made between objects of simple and complex (e.g., clausal) structure, the 34 structurally lightest objects of the sub-group have been subjected to a special statistical analysis. (See line B in the statistical table on p.52.) The objects covered by this analysis are non-clausal, mostly non-co-ordinate single nouns or non-co-ordinate nouns qualified by prepositive and/or post-positive attributes. (Objects with attributes constituted by enlarged or non-enlarged infinitives or gerunds have not been included.) It does not seem necessary to subject to a similar statistical analysis the cases in which the object is followed by some sentence element(s). For the prosodic lightness of the finite verb must become even more obvious if the element(s) following the object proves (prove) to be as weighty as, or still weightier than, the object itself.

Group (i) may be represented by the following examples. 1. Well ᴵwait a ˌminute.— 32.22.——2. I ᴵwent and ᴵlooked at the ˌrooms [and ᴵtook them on the ˌspot].— 33.01——3. Have you ᴵever ᴵheard the ᴵsaying: ᴵᴵbrevity is the ᴵsoul of ʹwit?—37.02 ——4. ˌWell, I ᴵdon't ᴵclaim to be an ᵛexpert. --38 05¹⁷——5. ....—if you ᴵwant to be ᵛwitty,[you should ᴵkeep it ˌshort].—37.80——6. It ᴵsaves having to get ᴵout of ˌbed in the ᴵmiddle of the ˌnight to answer it.—48.18——7. It ᴵsaid it was ᴵvery ʹgood.— 30.04——8. I exᴵpect ᴵsome of the rooms'll look a bit ᵛbare in ·places at ·first.—45.25 ——9. I ᴵfind I ᴵdon't get much ·time for ˌreading, ˌactually.—30.20—— 10. I'll ᴵhave a cup of ʹtea ready for you when you get ˌback.—42.21——11. You can be ˌlooking ·over that ·last ʹchapter, whiᴇ the ʹkettle boils.—42.25——12. ᴵWhat ˌother presents did you ˌget?—40.26——13. ᴵWhat a ᴵfunny ˌwriting you've got.—40.04

An examination of the cases constituting Group (i) reveals that the prosodic weight of the objects tallies with their function in FSP. From the point of view of the ad hoc, narrow scene (cf. p. 53), the objects express an unknown (contextually independent) indispensable amplification of the finite verb. In consequence, they offer a more substantial contribution to the further development of the communication, and carry

	Total number	no stress NO NUCLEUS	partial stress NO NUCLEUS	one stress NO NUCLEUS	more stresses than one NO NUCLEUS	A LOW RISING NUCLEUS AFTER A FALLING NUCLEUS		ONE NUCLEUS		
						no stress	one stress	no stress	one stress	more stresses than one
A (see p. 51)	141	47	18[1]	63	12	1[2]		43	86	16
B (see p. 51)	34	13	3	16	2			22	8	8
C (see p. 53)	41	20	4[1]			16[3a]	1[3b]	36	4	

	TWO NUCLEI			THREE NUCLEI			FOUR NUCLEI			MORE THAN FOUR NUCLEI
	no stress	one stress	more stresses than one	no stress	one stress	more stresses than one	no stress	one stress	more stresses than one	with or without stresses
A (see p. 51)	12	8	12	5	1	2	1		2	8
B (see p. 51)			1							
C (see p. 53)	1									

Notes. The bold-faced figures stand for the objects, the light-faced for the finite verbs.

Partial stress occurring together with a nucleus or nuclei has been left unrecorded here.

[1] In 1 case two partial stresses occur.

[2] The fall preceding the low rise occurs outside the finite verb-object combination.

[3a,b] With the exception of 1 case (*'Thank you 'so much for your ,card.* — 24.07), all the falling nuclei occur on the finite verb, i.e. inside the finite verb-object combination. One case with a h i g h rise after a falling nucleus has been classed under the present heading. (*Or I'll 'tell you 'what.* — 27.04). Only one other case of the type occurs in the examined material. It is one of the 9 cases in which the verbal auxiliary bears the functionally weightiest prosodic feature within the distributional field. (*It 'won't take ,more than a couple of 'minutes.* — 42.24.) A definite ascertainment of the function of the type represented by the two examples must remain pending.

a higher degree of CD, than the finite verb. This is in keeping with their higher degree of prosodic weight. (We shall come back to the function of the contextually independent object on the level of FSP once again when treating of Group (iii).)

As the present paper is concerned with the verb-object relation, it is outside its scope to discuss the problem on what conditions an element following the verb-object combination becomes the bearer of the functionally weightiest prosodic feature (and thus weightier than the entire verb-object combination). The problem will occasionally be touched upon, but not dealt with exhaustively. Some comment, how-

ever, must be made on the special questions. Together with those of Groups (ii) and (iii), they will be dealt with summarily on pp. 57—8.

<center>Group (ii)</center>

Out of the total number of the 323 collected finite verb-object combinations, 82 have a finite verb that is prosodically h e a v i e r (in the terms stated in the introductory section) than the object. In 75 cases the finite verb precedes (exx. 14—28), in 7 (in 4 special questions [exx. 29—30] and in 3 relative clauses [exx. 31—2]) follows, the object. (2 of the relative clauses are contact ones, with the zero relative performing the function of the object. Their finite verbs have nevertheless been classified as 'following' the objects.)

Let us add that out of the 75 cases in which the verb precedes the object, 9 have a verbal auxiliary which bears the functionally weightiest prosodic feature within the sentence (exx. 26—8). They form a sub-group of special interest. The remaining 66 cases comprise 41 instances in which no further sentence element follows the object, and 25 instances in which the object is followed by one or more sentence elements. The former sub-group corresponds to that of (i) covered by line A in the statistical table on p.52, and is represented by line C in the table.

The following examples illustrate all the mentioned sub-groups of (ii). 14.... [but I ꞁcan't say] I ꞁreally en^{v}joy it.—50.18——15. Do you ꞁgrind it as you ꞌwant it, or do you ꞁbuy it ꞁready ₎ground?—51.17——ꞁWould you ·just ꞌget it ·for me? —37.15—— 16. We ^{v}tried to do it our'selves to ₎start with,...—47.02——17. [I ꞁthought it would be ꞁnice to have a 'white re₎ceiver,] so I ^{v}asked for one,...—48.05——18. ['They gave me this 'wrist-watch]· I've 'always ^{v}wanted one.—39.22——19...., but I ₎must say ꞁI ₎₎like an ₎open fire.—46.12——20. I'm ₎₎longing for a ₎smoke.—34.29. ——21. ꞁI can't ₎₎bear the cold.—44. 04——22. I'd $^⌃$love to see them—39.13——23. ₎No, we ₎heard they were ₎staying,...—27.45——24. I ꞁnever 'thought about those ₎words ₎all being con₎nected like ·that.—37.11——25. I 'thought I ₎recognized your ₎voice. —24.03——26. I ₎don't think you'd ₎better.—39.27——27. It 'won't take me ₎more than a ₎couple of ꞌminutes.—42.24——28. I 'would like a drop of ₎cream please.— 50.08——29. ꞁWhat do you ₎₎mean?—40.05——30. ꞁWhich ꞁway do they ₎face?— 33.11——31. [That's the ꞁonly ꞁsnag] I could ₎find.—33.14——32. [We've ₎got a most eꞁfficient little ₎mill] that we ꞁpicked up on the ₎Continent the ꞁsummer before ₎last.—51.20.

An examination of the cases constituting Group (ii) reveals that the difference in prosodic weight between the verb and the object is again due to a difference in communicative function. For the present leaving aside the special questions (exx. 29—30), the examination reveals the following: the verb can become prosodically weightier than the object only if the latter is contextually dependent or at least presented as such.

As could be expected, the pronominal form, especially that of a personal pronoun (exx. 14—6), that of the single, unqualified vicarious *one* (exx. 17—8) or that of a relative pronoun (exx. 31—2), is a most efficient signal of the contextual dependence of the object.[18] Not much less efficient in this respect are non-pronominal objects that explicitly repeat or imply with sufficient clearness notions that have been mentioned in the more or less immediately preceding context (or are self-evident from the situation) and can be regarded as known even from the point of view of the ad hoc, narrow scene set in accordance with the purpose of the communication at the moment of

utterance. The degree of explicitness naturally varies. In a comparatively small number of objects coming under the heading of Group (ii), it may be even very small or practically nil. Nevertheless, the objects concerned are to be regarded as contextually dependent, for they are p r e s e n t e d as such. Comments on the examples adduced above will make the raised points clear.

Not much comment is needed on cases of explicit contextual dependence. Exx. 14—8 and 31—2 contain contextually dependent pronominal objects, exx. 19—22 contextually dependent non-pronominal (non-clausal) objects. In its context, ex. 19 is almost immediately preceded by the sentence *Have ˡyou got any "open fires?* Ex. 20 immediately follows after *Then ˌperhaps there'll ˡjust be ˡtime for a cigaˌrette.* Ex. 21 is uttered in reaction to a weather-forecast announcing cold weather. Ex. 22 is said in reply to *I'll ˋshow them ˌto you if youˌlike.* All these examples illustrate explicit contextual dependence (so do also exx. 23, 24, 28) and represent the overwhelming majority of cases. Special attention, however, should be paid to the examples of the comparatively few cases of p r e s e n t e d contextual independence. To begin with, let us compare exx. 23 and 24 with exx. 25 and 26. Whereas in ex. 25 the fact of the people's staying is evidently known from, and the etymological relation referred to in 26 has been explicitly discussed in, the preceding context, the situations in exx. 25, 26 and 27 are less clear. This applies particularly to exx. 26 and 27. (Incidentally, together with ex. 28, they represent the sub-group of 9 cases in which the auxiliary verbal element bears the functionally most important prosodic feature within the distributional field.) ·As to ex. 26, no explicit mention of the advisability or inadvisability of the action concerned has been made in the preceding context. The speaker has evidently rendered the object clause, as well as the notional component of the finite verb, prosodically lighter than the auxiliary component in order to produce the impression that he has given the issue some thought before coming to the disappointing conclusion that his friend 'had better not do it.' The harshness of the refusal is thereby mitigated. (Note the apologetic character of the intonation.) Similarly, in ex. 27, the speaker anticipates the objection that getting a cup of tea ready will take longer than a couple of minutes. By rendering the object (and the notional component of the verb, for that matter) prosodically light, he indicates that the possible objection has been previously considered. The reasons for presenting an object as contextually dependent may, of course, vary.

Spoken language is capable of presenting the object as contextually dependent with particular efficiency. This can certainly be brought into connection with the more general fact that it is capable of coping with multifunctionality on the level of FSP (i.e. with cases not admitting of an unequivocal interpretation of FSP) more efficiently than written language is. It follows that where on the non-prosodic level the degree of explicit connection with the preceding context is low, and that of the resulting uncertainty of interpretation high, an unequivocal signal may be supplied by the spoken language. This certainly applies to the object-verb combination. (Conditions may not be the same throughout the entire system of language.)

Before passing on to Group (iii), it is necessary to come back to the 9 items in which a verbal auxiliary bears the functionally weightiest prosodic feature within the distributional field. It may be asked why they have not been classed with Group (iii), as in each case the notional component of the verb equals the object in prosodic lightness. This has not been done, because the prosodically heavy auxiliary is a component of the finite verb and as such renders the entire verbal form prosodically weightier than the object. As has been shown in 'Transition Proper'[11] and in the

'Prosodic Features', a verbal auxiliary bearing the functionally weightiest prosodic feature within the distributional field is a highly marked phenomenon, signalling special cases of contextual dependence. The two mentioned papers have dealt with some problems arising from this fact.

Group (iii)

Out of the total number of the collected 323 finite verb-object combinations, 48 have a finite verb that—in the terms stated in the introductory section—equals the object in prosodic weight. If 4 special questions are left aside, the remaining 44 cases fall into three sub-groups: (a) in which the verb and the object (possibly together with other elements) have an equal share in carrying the lowest amount of CD, (b) in which the verb carries a higher amount of CD than the object, (c) in which the object carries a higher amount of CD than the verb. It will be shown that these characteristics are by no means at variance with the employed prosodic features.

Sub-group (a) may be represented by the following examples. 33. ᵛOne of the ·rooms ·faces the ·sea.—33.13——34. [ˡThat's the way] the Chi'nese drink it, [I under-ₗstand].—50.15——35. ˋI got a few ₗbooks 'too.—40.28——36. ˡLots of grown-ᵛups have ·writing that's ·hard to ·read.—40.16——37. [About the ˡonly time] ᵛI get for ·reading [is ˡlate at 'night, when ˡeveryone's in ˡbed and a'sleep].—30.23——38. It 'really ˡhardly ˡheats the ˡroom at ₗall.—42.07——39. I'll ₗshow you them to'morrow when you ₗcome to 'tea.—39.16——40. ...and they ₗgave it us ˡsimply be ₗcause we'd had a ˡwhite one be'fore.—48.06.

In sub-group (a) (21 cases in all), both the verb and the object convey information that is known from the preceding context, or—in one or two cases—at least presented as such. The resulting contextual dependence accounts for the prosodic lightness of the verb-object combination. It also accounts for the presence within the distributional field of at least one element that conveys new information, and is in consequence contextually independent and surpasses the verb-object combination in prosodic weight. In exx. 33—37, it is always the subject that is the prosodically (and functionally) weightiest element within the distributional field (in ex. 35, together with the adverb *too*; in ex. 36, in consequence of the entire predicate being presented as contextually dependent). In exx. 38—40, it is an adverbial element that bears the prosodically weightiest feature (in ex. 38, for instance, stating the extreme difficulty of heating the room—a problem spoken about in the preceding context). It should be added that in ex. 37, the object is a zero relative. Its prosodic feature—silence—must naturally be classified as light.

To sum up. In sub-group (a) the verb and the object are prosodically equally light, which perfectly tallies with the predominantly thematic function[19] the combination performs in FSP.

The following examples represent sub-group (b). 41. [..., the ᵛfirst thing] I ·did [was to ˡgo to the infor ₗmation bureau...]—32.05.——42. [...—on that invi'tation] you ₗsent me.—40.07——43. [...with the ᵛfood] they ·give you.—50.20——44. [ₗYes,] and, ₗwhat the ₗhouse agents call "the ˡusual ᵛoffices" on the do ᵛmestic side [are ˡalways so ˡmuch more ex ₗtensive].—46.04——45. [They're ˡall ˡstuck in an ₗalbum] that I ₗgot as a ₗChristmas present.—39.19.

Each of the 7 verb-object combinations constituting sub-group (b) occurs in a distributional sub-field, 6 occurring in attributive clauses (exx. 41—3, 45), 1 in a subject clause (ex. 44).

The attributive clauses open with an object conveyed by the relative *that* (in 1 case; ex. 45) or the zero relative (in 5 cases; exx. 41—3). All the objects are evidently contextually dependent, which cannot be said about the verbs. Unstressed or in fact even silent, the objects are easily exceeded in prosodic weight by the verbs. (Even an unstressed verb is prosodically weightier than a zero relative!) It is worth noticing that in the absence of weightier prosodic features—which may particularly happen in sub-fields —, even light prosodic features are capable of signalling comparatively high degrees of CD. (In fact, in exx. 41—3 partial stresses fall on bearers of rheme proper within the sub-fields.)

In accounting for 44, the discussion in the 'Prosodic Features' may be recalled which deals with the prosodic make-up of the theme-transition section of the distributional field. As has been shown there, the non-prosodic means of FSP are capable of signalling the theme so efficiently as to allow of a prosodic intensification which can make the theme prosodically heavier than the transition, though by no means heavier than the rheme. This explains why the transitional verbs (*call, are*) in ex. 44 are prosodically lighter than their themes. (In the sub-field, *call* is lighter than the thematic ₁*what*, its object.)

To sum up. In sub-group (b), the verbs and objects are prosodically light in the terms stated in the introductory section. A closer examination, however, reveals that even the light degrees of prosodic weight are capable of signalling degrees of CD. Both prosodically and from the point of view of FSP, the verb appears weightier than the object.

The following examples represent sub-group (c). 46. [I 'also pointed ₁out] that we'd ·had a ·telephone be'fore...—48.01——47. ...and ǀtell me ǀmore about it ₁afterwards.—33.17——48. ..., so that you can beǀgin to ǀserve ǀstraight a'way?—34.23——49. Well, I 'did make ᵛsignals, when the 'others got ₁up to ₁leave, ...—54.01——50. I ᵛpromised I ·wouldn't let ·other people 'use it.—39.27——51. ... and ǀI ₁must say we're ǀjolly ₁glad of it.—46.09——52. We've'missed the ǀlast ₁train.—53.07——53. 'Well, I'd ᵛʲlove a 'drink.—34.22

The cases constituting sub-group (c) (16 in all) have the following characteristics. Viewed in the light of the narrow scene, their verbs and objects convey new information and are therefore contextually independent. Prosodically, they are equally heavy: in 1 case they are both partially stressed (ex. 46), in 2 cases they are both fully stressed (exx. 47—8), in the remaining 13 cases (exx. 49—53), they both appear as nucleus bearers. In the 3 cases (exx. 46—8) in which they are not nucleus bearers, they are followed by another, prosodically heavier sentence element. In the remaining cases—with the exception of one (ex. 49)—, no other element follows them.

But in spite of their prosodic equalness, sub-group (c) verbs and objects cannot be considered equal in regard to their function in the act of communication. In adding a new essential amplification to the information conveyed by the verb, the contextually independent object undoubtedly makes a more substantial contribution to the further development of the communication than the verb it amplifies. If, for instance, a contextually independent object conveys the content of a promise, while the verb merely expresses the act of promising, the actual content of the promise will certainly be communicatively more important than the indication of the promise itself (ex. 50). Similarly, a contextually independent element (an object) expressing what is being said is communicatively more important than the element (a verb) merely expressing the act of saying (ex. 51). Or, the contextually independent elements (objects) expressing what one has missed (ex. 52), would like to have (ex. 53),

can begin to do (ex. 48), are certainly communicatively more important than elements (verbs) merely expressing the acts of missing, wishing and beginning. It is worth noticing that objects that function as nucleus bearers cannot be interpreted as contextually dependent. For genuine, or merely presented, contextual dependence would require light prosodic features. (Just cf. *Ī promised I ₁would not let ₁other people ₁use it.*) In sub-group (c), a prosodically heavy object occurring in end-position within a distributional field expresses rheme proper and bears the functionally weightiest prosodic feature.

It remains to explain why the verb can become prosodically as heavy (or light) as its contextually independent object, although its degree of CD is lower than that of the object. The contextually independent object—(contextually independent, or dependent for that matter) verb relation provides a point in the system at which in signalling degrees of CD spoken language may rely on the non-prosodic means of FSP, and intensify the prosodic means, entrusting them with additional tasks. Such prosodic intensification may take place either for purely rhythmical, or for various emotive (attitudinal), reasons. Under the circumstances, it may take place— chiefly affecting the verb—provided the object, which follows the verb, does not become the prosodically lighter of the two. (As a comparison with German shows, the reference to word order—see the reference to the object following the verb— is very important. Suppose the corresponding German sentence structure *Wir haben den letzten Zug versäumt* were to undergo prosodic intensification without impairing the signalling of the object as contextually independent. On these conditions, the German verb could not be prosodically intensified to the same extent as its English counterpart. For a verb equalling the object in prosodic weight and following it would itself become bearer of rheme proper and present the object as contextually dependent. Under the circumstances, it is in the first place the object that is to be prosodically intensified in the German sentence.)

To sum up. In sub-group (c), the verbs and the objects are prosodically light in the terms stated in the introductory section. A close examination, however, reveals that the non-prosodic means of FSP render the object functionally weightier than the verb.

A word must now be added on special questions, the treatment of which has been found convenient to postpone to the very end of the present paper. Their FSP has been discussed in detail in the present author's paper 'Some Thoughts on the Function of Word Order in Old English and Modern English.'[20] Here, the relevant conclusions can be offered only in brief. Standing for the unknown element, which is going to be disclosed as the rheme proper of the reply, the interrogative word of the special (pronominal) question is to be interpreted as rhematic. But unless the rest of the question is entirely contextually dependent, it does not become rheme proper. This is so because, under the indicated circumstances, the degree of CD carried by the interrogative pronoun is not unaffected by its stereotyped character and by its relation to the possible thematic, transitional and rhematic elements of the question (which indicate from which particular angle the question is to be approached and the reply given).

In the light of the above explanation, the adduced special questions may be commented upon as follows. In ex.12, the verb is prosodically ligh t e r than the interrog- ative word. This is in keeping with the fact that the notional component of the fi- nite verb is thematic and its auxiliary expresses transition proper. Both in ex. 29 and 30, the finite verb is prosodically h e a v i e r than the interrogative word. This is in keeping with the fact that the finite verb expresses rheme proper. Finally, in exx. 54

and 55 given below, the verb is prosodically equal to the interrogative word. This is in keeping with the fact that the verb and the interrogative word carry the same or not very different degrees of CD. Thus in ex. 54, the verb and the interrogative word occur in a section that has been presented as contextually dependent; in ex. 55, they belong neither to rheme proper, nor to theme, nor to transition proper. 54. `Now what do we ˌdo?—53.09—55. ˈWhat did you ˈsay to `that?—28.56.

By way of conclusion we may say that the inquiry into the functions performed by the verb-object combination on the prosodic level in FSP bears out the corresponding earlier inquiry carried out on the non-prosodic level. It is hoped that some further light has been thrown on the co-operation of non-prosodic and prosodic means of FSP in putting semantic and grammatical sentence structures into various kinds of functional perspective. In the light of this co-operation, the functions of the finite verbs and objects in the examined 323 cases are as follows: in 209 cases (i.e. 64.7%) the object carries a higher, in 89 cases (i.e. 27.6%) a lower degree of CD than the finite verb; in 25 cases (i.e. 7.7%) the two carry an equal amount of CD.

Cases of multifunctionality removed by the spoken language indicate that within a limited sphere, different speakers may have recourse to different realizations. These different realizations, however, are due to possible differences in individual conceptions of contextual dependence or independence (viewed in the light of the ad hoc, narrow scene set in accordance with the purpose of communication at the moment of utterance) on the part of the speaker. This is by no means at variance with the results of the two inquiries. It may be expected that multifunctionality may not be so successfully removed at all points of the system. If this assumption is correct, it would testify to a very central (non-peripheral) position of the verb-object relation in the system of language.

NOTES

[1] J. Vachek, *Lingvistická charakteristika současné angličtiny* [Linguistic Characterology of Con temporary English] (Prague, 1958).

[2] See, e.g., J. Vachek, *The Linguistic School of Prague* 89—93 (Bloomington-London, 1966).

[3] See the present author's 'Thoughts on the Communicative Function of the Verb in English, German and Czech', *Brno Studies in English* 1.39—68 (Prague, 1959).

[4] For references, see the paper quoted in the preceding note.

[5] Cf. the present author's paper 'Non-Thematic Subjects in Contemporary English', *Travaux linguistiques de Prague* 2.246 (Prague, 1966).

[6] M. Schubiger, *The Role of Intonation in Spoken English* 14 (Cambridge, 1935).

[7] F. Trojan, *Deutsche Satzbetonung, Grundsätze und Übungen* 17 (Vienna-Stuttgart, 1961).

[8] P. Adamec, *Poryadok slov v sovremennom russkom yazyke* [Word Order in Contemporary Russian] (Prague, 1966).

[9] Cf. W. N. Francis's reviews of *Brno Studies in English* 1, 3 and 4 in *Language* 39.533—6 and 42.14—29 (Baltimore, 1953, 1966).

[10] In a private communication.

[11] *Philologica Pragensia* 8.170-6 (Prague, 1965)- For short to be referred to as 'Transition Proper'.

[12] *Brno Studies in English* 7.11-48 (Brno, 1966). For short to be referred to as 'Prosodic Features.'

[13] As has been stated above, in adducing examples page and line are given on which the example begins. (Except the running title, every line on the page counts.) Only examples quoted from pp. 24—9 of the *Reader* are referred to by the number of the page and the number they are provided with in the book.

[14] But indirect objects, co-occurring in a small number of cases and almost always pronominal, have not been considered.

[15] I.e. a section of utterance within which the distribution of CD takes place. The most important distributional fields are provided by sentences and their clauses, a clause functioning, on the one hand, as an element within the field provided by the sentence, on the other hand, as an element providing a distributional sub-field of its own. Cf. the extensive note[40] in the 'Prosodic Features'.

[16] A. C. Gimson, *An Introduction to the Pronunciation of English* 244-5 and 247 (London, 1962). See also the extensive note[30] in the 'Prosodic Features'. But let us repeat here that for the purposes of the present paper, we find it convenient to follow A. C. Gimson and to apply the term 'nucleus' to the prosodic features of a fully stressed syllable which stands out from among its neighbours (stressed, partially stressed and unstressed) in that it displays (at least through initiating it) a change of pitch direction.

[17] The *not* (or *never*) within the finite verb form has been interpreted as part of rheme proper, the other part being constituted by the element to which in the end the negation applies and which becomes bearer of the functionally most important prosodic feature within the distributional field (cf. ˅*expert* in ex. 4, '*time* in ex. 9, ˅*enjoy* in ex. 14, ,,*bear* in ex. 21, '*thought* in ex. 24, '*use* in ex. 50). *Not*, or the form into which it has been incorporated, becomes bearer of this feature if all the other possible bearers have become contextually dependent (cf. '*don't* in ex. 26, '*won't* in ex. 27).

[18] Unless, of course, it conveys some (light or heavy) contrast; cf. e.g., [¹*Thank you* '*so much for your ,card.*] ¹*Did you* '*get ,ours?* — 24.07

[19] The qualification 'predominantly' has been used, because the verb-object combination is entirely thematic with the exception of the temporal and modal exponents of the verb, which are to be interpreted as transition proper. Cf. the 'Probodic Features', passim.

[20] *Sborník prací filosofické fakulty brněnské university* A5.90—3 (Brno, 1957).

RESUMÉ

O přízvukově-melodických rysech anglického určitého slovesa ve spojení s předmětem jako prostředcích funkční perspektivy větné

Článek navazuje na autorovu studii, která se zabývala přízvukově-melodickými rysy anglického slovesa (viz 7. sv. *Brno Studies in English*, Brno 1967). Obě práce zkoumají, do jaké míry studium přízvukově-melodických rysů větných složek potvrzuje výsledky, k nimž se dospělo při zkoumání prostředků funkční perspektivy větné v oblasti jazyka psaného (tištěného). Článek ukazuje, že kontextově nezapojený předmět jeví těžší přízvukově-melodické rysy než určité sloveso. Toto zjištění je plně v souladu s předcházejícími výzkumy v oblasti jazyka psaného. (Viz autorův článek v 1. sv. *Brno Studies in English*, Praha 1959.)