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## FUNCTIONAL SENTENCE PERSPECTIVE IN THE SLAVONIC LANGUAGES AND IN ENGLISH

In the present paper, we want to present some of the features of an approach to functional sentence perspective, which connects this patterning with a description of the system of language in the form of a set of levels ordered from a semantic base (the level of underlying structures) through surface syntax to morphemics and phonemics. We present first of short characterization of the phenomena belonging to functional sentence perspective (Sect. 1), then we proceed to the questions concerning the possibilities of the identification of these phenomena in the utterances contained in a coherent text or discourse (Sect. 2) and to a typological discussion (Sect. 3), aiming first of all on a contrastive description of the Slavonic languages in comparison with remarks concerning the structure of the text (Sect. 4).

1.1 The main phenomena belonging directly to the domain of functional sentence perspective<sup>1</sup> are (a) the dichotomy of topic (theme) and focus (comment, rheme), (b) the hierarchy of communicative dynamism, and (c) the difference between contextually bound and non-bound elements.

We are convinced that topic and focus are two parts into which every underlying representation (UR) of a sentence (or of each of the coordinated sentences) can be divided. In this point we differ from those who understand e.g. topic as a single (deep or surface) constituent;<sup>2</sup> our standpoint is corroborated by such examples as the following, in which the time adverbial („for how long”) as well as the adverbial of direction belong to the focus, the agentive with the verb constituting the topic: (*What trip did you have?*) — *I went for the weekend to Mother* (with a possible continuation . . . and not for the whole week to Cannes, as I had planned).

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<sup>1</sup> Following the writings by Mathesius (1929; 1939; 1942), Daneš (1957; 1959; 1968; 1974a), Firbas (1956; 1964; 1971; 1975), Adamec (1966; 1974) we attempted at a detailed discussion of the concerned issues first in Sgall, Hajičová and Benešová (1973), later in Sgall, Hajičová and Buráňová (1980); a formal account was presented in Hajičová and Sgall (1980).

<sup>2</sup> Formulations characterizing topic (theme) as a surface phrase are known from Halliday (1967), and also from Chomsky (1965); later Chomsky (1971) includes topic and focus into his semantic representations, but he still understands focus as a counterpart of a single surface phrase.

In this point we follow the approach that since Mathesius has been widely accepted among Czech linguists, who also have realized that such a view of the dichotomy of the sentence must be connected with a classification or hierarchy of its individual parts, cf. the notions of communicative dynamism and of communicative importance, coined by Firbas.<sup>3</sup> Such a classification (which requires operational criteria and an explicit description) makes it possible to understand that e.g. the sentence *John visited my SISTER* is ambiguous in that the verb belongs to the topic (which includes the Actor of this sentence) in one of the respective underlying representations, while in another the verb belongs to the focus (which in any case includes the Objective of this sentence); there remains perhaps a third possibility, viz. that of a topicless reading.<sup>4</sup> We prefer this account, though, of course, the semantic distinctions between the three SR's often are not directly relevant for their truth conditions; it has been pointed out (see the studies quoted in Note 1) that these distinctions are crucial in some cases of presuppositions connected with the topic, or with respect to Kuno's 'exhaustive listing'.

The analysis of the traditional notions has led to the conclusion that most of them can be defined explicitly on the base of operational, i.e. testable criteria, see Sgall (1979); Hajičová and Sgall (1980). Some of them may be defined on the base of items which must be used in the framework on independent grounds; thus e.g. the notion of temporal or local setting, known from Firbas, can probably be defined, in our framework, as a contextually bound adverbial of time („when”) or place („where”) that does not fill a slot in the case frame of the verb.

The intuitive basis of the notion of topic can be connected either with that of 'given', already known information, or with the items about which something is predicated (the focus). In one of his papers (which was published in an English translation recently)<sup>5</sup> Mathesius conceived topic in the former way, but later<sup>6</sup> he realized that the distinction between these two characterizations is not decisive, since in the language system there is only one distinction corresponding more or less exactly to both of them. We would like to note that topic is not identical with 'given' in that some of the 'given' items are not recoverable (identifiable),<sup>7</sup> and thus cannot be classed as contextually bound (esp. in cases of contrast, e.g. in *He found Her pencil, not HIS one* the pronominalization of the bearers of the intonation centres demonstrates that they convey known information in a sense, but they are used as contextually non-bound in this sentence).

<sup>3</sup> See esp. Firbas (1956; 1971).

<sup>4</sup> Capital letters denote the bearer of the intonation centre. Where the examples are to illustrate general issues, they are formulated only in English; on the other hand, in case a difference between Slavonic and West European languages is at stake, we present Czech examples, the English translations of which are only subsidiary and do not share all relevant features of the Czech sentence. — As for the topicless sentences, cf. Kuno's (1972) „neutral description”.

<sup>5</sup> See Mathesius (1939), now available also in English translation.

<sup>6</sup> See Mathesius (1942, esp. P. 59) and Daneš (1964).

<sup>7</sup> See Halliday (1967) and Chafe (1976).

The relationship between topic /focus and contextually bound/ non-bound can be roughly characterized as follows: every lexical element of a UR of a sentence belongs either to the topic or to the focus. In the unmarked case, those belonging to the topic are contextually bound, while those included in the focus are non-bound. There are, however, marked cases in which the topic includes also embedded elements which are contextually non-bound, or the focus includes contextually bound embedded elements. Thus e.g. the sentence (1), in which there are not such marked elements, has a topic consisting only of contextually bound items, while its focus includes only contextually non-bound ones; in sentence (2) the focus contains also the embedded contextually bound items *I, your, my*, and it may also be assumed that inside the topic there is a contextually non-bound element, viz. *next* (in both cases we consider the verb and all what follows it to belong to the surface form of the focus).

(1) Tomorrow I'll give a student some BOOKS.

(2) Next Friday I'll give your brother some of my BOOKS.

It might be considered non-intuitive that also elements which were not mentioned in the preceding text are called contextually bound here, but let us recall that we do not use this term in its etymological value, and that context is understood here as consituation rather than mere verbal co-text. Elements not having been mentioned in the preceding co-text can enter an utterance as its contextually bound items, if they are determined (made recoverable, identifiable for the hearer) by the situation of the discourse — either in a way including (or similar to) ostension or deixis, or thanks to the fact that the very use of a sentence determines the specific values of the indexical elements the sentence includes. Moreover, a writer often starts his novel or story as if its hero or scene were known to the reader and activated in his memory (i.e. he uses contextually bound items when referring to them in the first sentences of the text); there is then a discrepancy between the 'inner world' of the text and the meanings of its utterances, not between the meaning and the means of expression used in these utterances.

Returning now to the question of the two possible characterizations of topic (as 'given' and as the 'logical subject', we may connect this difference between that of contextually bound elements (which may be, to a certain extent, dispersed in the UR) and topic (which is rather compact, with certain limited exceptions). The lexical elements of an SR which may be characterized as 'given' (i.e. the images of their referents of the speaker and his audience, at the given time-point of the discourse) and also identifiable or recoverable, are called contextually bound in our (broader) sense of the term. On the other hand, the topic may be characterized as 'what is spoken about', or, better, about what something (viz. the focus) is asserted by the given sentence (more precisely, by one of its UR's). In many cases the topic consists, in the contextually bound items of the UR, but, as we have seen, this is not always so. Contextually bound elements appear also as the topics of individual clauses and phrases inside the sentence, where

the assertions or predications about them are depredicated, condensed or embedded, whatever the term will be.

The following examples may illustrate the interplay of contextually bound elements and of the topic of the whole sentence (UR); the parentheses are used here to denote functional words, which are no lexical elements of the UR's with approach, and the superscript *b* marks the (meaning of) the given words as contextually bound in at least one UR of the sentence: *(By the fact that) my<sup>b</sup> brother<sup>b</sup> (did) not<sup>b</sup> arrive<sup>b</sup> (in) time (to the) decisive session (of the) whole negotiations<sup>b</sup>, our family<sup>b</sup> || caused difficulties (to) all (the) inhabitants (of the) house<sup>b</sup>. — John<sup>b</sup> || was surprized, (when) he<sup>b</sup> came home, (by the fact that) he<sup>b</sup> found his<sup>b</sup> cousin Jane, who<sup>b</sup> read (a) book (in) his<sup>b</sup> study<sup>b</sup>, sitting (in the) old armchair. — (According to the) results<sup>b</sup> reached<sup>b</sup> || (in the course of a) tentative analysis (of) English sentences (of) different kinds (it can be) stated (that the) distribution (of the) length (of) words (is) determined (by) several factors, which<sup>b</sup> (have) not yet (been) fully analyzed (in the) quoted framework<sup>b</sup>. — My<sup>b</sup> old friend Jerry returned safely from his<sup>b</sup> Brasil travels yesterday<sup>b</sup>, (after having) experienced (the) life (in the) South American<sup>b</sup> jungle (for) several weeks<sup>b</sup>. — In the last sentence only yesterday belongs to the topic, all the other parts preceding sentences the parts before the double slash belong to the topic, those after it constitute the focus.*

An analysis of large material of Czech texts has confirmed the view according to which a sentence predicates (asserts) its focus as holding (not holding, in the case of a negative sentence) about those items that occur in the nucleus of this sentence as contextually bound<sup>8</sup>. The two intuitive characterizations quoted above do not correspond to two different distinctions in the language system, but to a single one.

In the more simple cases the focus of a sentence consists of the contextually non-bound elements of its nucleus plus the elements dependent (immediately or not) on the non-bound elements of the nucleus. Thus we assume that in one of the UR's of (3) only the verb will be understood as the (the surface form of) focus, with respect to (4) this applies to *my wife's sister*, and with respect to (5) — to the verb and the items standing to the right from it (though in the last two cases the focus includes also the contextually bound elements, *my* and *her*, which are embedded).

(3) I MET Paul in Cambridge.

(4) It was my wife's SISTER who came last night.

(5) My wife's sister came to her neighbour for a new BOOK.

There are, however, also more complicated cases, in which all elements of the sentence nucleus are contextually bound; thus, (6) corresponds (among others) to a UR in which the focus includes a single lexical unit.

(6) The teacher of CHEMISTRY came into the room.

It is also possible that such an embedded focus is even less immediately subordinated to an element of the nucleus (i.e. more deeply embedded);

<sup>8</sup> The term „nucleus” denotes the main verb and all words immediately dependent on it.

e.g. in (7) the possible continuation . . . *not the arrival of the YOUNG man* shows that there is a corresponding UR having only the adjective in its focus.

(7) The incident was caused by the arrival of the OLD man.

1.2 We have come to certain conclusions, which include several rather strong hypotheses. Though, of course, they do not cover the whole domain of word order, intonation and their functions, they appear to present a useful basis for a detailed description of the main features of functional sentence perspective (leaving aside, for the time being, such specific cases as some kinds of contrast, sentences with more than one intonation centre, some non-projective constructions, etc.).

The first hypothesis says that every underlying representation (UR) contains at least one element belonging to its focus, and it may also contain one or more elements constituting its topic (in a more detailed description, see Hajičová and Sgall, 1980, we understand the notion of dynamism derived from that of contextual boundness of the nodes).

According to a second hypothesis, the main verb is always more dynamic than its contextually bound participants (dependent nodes) and less dynamic than the non-bound ones.

A third hypothesis assumes that the non-bound participants are ordered according to their types — e.g. in Czech (also in Russian and probably in other Slavonic languages) within the focus Actor/Bearer precedes (in less dynamic than) Addressee, which precedes Origin, in its turn, precedes Objective (Patient), etc. This systemic ordering of the participants is determined by the grammar of the given language. On the other hand, with the participants included in the topic the ordering of dynamism is not always identical with the systemic ordering; the scale of dynamism of the elements included in the topic may have different shapes, and the speaker's choice depends here first of all in the patterning of the text.<sup>9</sup>

1.3 The semantic relevance of topic, focus and dynamism can be characterized by the following three points:

(i) The scopes of quantifiers are determined, to some extent, by the relative degree of dynamism of noun phrases, cf. (8) to (10) — at least in their primary readings.

(8) (a) *Mnoho lidí čte málo KNIH.* — Many men read few BOOKS.

(b) *Málo knih čte mnoho LIDÍ.* — Few books are read by many MEN.

(9) (a) John talked to few girls about many PROBLEMS.

(b) John talked about many problems to few GIRLS.

<sup>9</sup> Such issues are relevant here as (i) the distinction between the topic proper and a local or temporal setting, (ii) a contrastive topic, (iii) a difference between the surface position of enclitical particles and their amount of communicative dynamism, (iv) the question whether in general the least dynamic element of the topic occupies the first or the second (od the rightmost?) position in the surface word order of the topic (see Rylova, 1980, where the second position is preferred).

(10) (a) Everyone in this room speaks two LANGUAGES.

(b) Two languages are spoken by everyone in this ROOM.

Even without overt quantification there is a similar distinction in the truth conditions of such sentences as (11) and (12).<sup>10</sup>

(11) (a) Na Moravě se mluví ČESKY. — CZECH is spoken in Moravia.

(b) Český se mluví NA MORAVĚ. — Czech is spoken in MORAVIA.

(12) (a) One smokes in the CORRIDOR.

(b) In the corridor one SMOKES.

(ii) If a sentence is negated, then in the primary case it is just its focus that is in the scope of negation; if the verb is contextually non-bound (and thus included in the focus), the event identified by the verb is negated, as in (13), or (14), while if it is contextually bound (and thus included in the topic), it is not negated, as e.g. in one of the readings of (15).

(13) Our defeat was not caused by HARRY.

(14) Jim didn't come because of his wife's ILLNESS.

(15) Jim didn't come because of the topic of today's LECTURE.  
(... He just came to meet MARY.)

The fact that the focus (or, more precisely, its relationship to the topic) is negated in a negative sentence is closely related to the underlying assumption that in the positive counterpart of the sentence the focus is asserted „about the topic”, the topic being assumed as given, i.e. presupposed; these issues are dealt with in Hajičová (1973).

(iii) The phenomenon described by Kuno (1972) as exhaustive listing is connected with focus only, and, moreover, only in specific cases, in which the focus does not include the verb, or it includes only such a lexically void verb as the copula.

While exhaustive listing seems to belong to the layer of Gricean conversational rules, the points (i) and (ii) concern directly the truth conditions of the sentences. As has been pointed out by Sgall, Hajičová and Procházka (1977), the underlying representations (meanings) of sentences may be characterized as a linguistic counterpart of Carnap's intensional structure or of Frege's sense. Two sentences differing in their meaning can correspond to a single proposition (can share their truth conditions, their intension), as is the case in (16) or in (17):

(16) (a) The number of tables in this room equals to an even prime number.

(b) The number of tables in this room equals to the square root of four.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. also such pairs as „This motion must be approved by the COMMITTEE” vs. „This motion must be APPROVED by the committee”; if we are mistaken, the preferred reading of the former sentence does not imply whether it is probable that the motion will be approved, while with the latter sentence the probability of approval is involved.

- (17) (a) Charles sold a car to Tom.  
 (b) Tom bought a car from Charles.

In many cases this identity of truth conditions, though not of meaning, is connected with sentences differing just in their functional perspective:<sup>11</sup>

- (18) (a) John talked to a girl about a PROBLEM.  
 (b) John talked about a problem to a GIRL.  
 (19) (a) Lidé čtou KNIHY. — People read BOOKS.  
 (b) Knihy čtou LIDÉ. — Books are read by PEOPLE.

A procedure of translation between the underlying representations and appropriate representations of propositions is then needed. For the subclass of sentences the focus of which includes just a noun phrase Materna and Sgall (1980) attempt to characterize their counterparts in a language of intensional logic (based on the theory of types and on possible worlds semantics); cf. also Kosík and Sgall (in press).

Our approach characterizes topic and focus in accordance with the presystematic view according to which it is the focus (comment) what is asserted about the topic, when a sentence is uttered. At the same time, however, we characterize these notions by means of the operational tests using negation or question. Thus e.g. (19) (a) can answer the questions (20) or (21), while (19) (b) can answer (22), cf. Daneš (1968):

- (20) What do people read?  
 (21) What is typical for people?  
 (22) Who reads books?

The sentence (18) (a) can be continued in a natural way by (23), while a natural continuation of (18) (b) is (24), cf. Chomsky (1971); a systematic elaboration by these kinds of tests can be found in Posner (1972) and Bogusławski (1977).

- (23) Oh no, he talked to her only about a good news.  
 (24) Oh no, he talked about it only to his father.

2. It is not easy to identify the topic and focus of a printed sentence, especially in such a language as English, where the surface word order is grammatically bound to a great extent, so that in many cases the hierarchy of communicative dynamism is rendered by means of a marked position of the intonation centre in the spoken language, which has almost no counterpart in the written (printed) texts.

In most Slavonic languages, the „free” word order of which reflects the hierarchy of communicative dynamism rather faithfully, the identification

<sup>11</sup> The differences between the Czech and English sentences in (8) and in (19) show that the English passive serves to enable the Objective to be placed before the verb if the Objective belongs to the topic; this function of the English passive (which is not the single one) is well known in European linguistics for several decades, but is still neglected by most American linguist, who often maintain that passivization itself rather than the word order variation is semantically relevant in such cases.



of the boundary between topic and focus can be carried out in a more effective way. Since sentences with so-called subjective (emphatic) word order reversing the primary order of topic and focus are virtually absent from printed texts (with such exceptions as poetic texts or recorded oral dialogues), it is almost certain that all modifications of a verb that belong to the topic stand to the left of those belonging to the focus, in a printed Czech sentence, which is by far not so often in English:<sup>12</sup>

(25) Francouzský ministr včera přijel do ATHÉN. — The French minister arrived to ATHENS yesterday.

(26) Včera v Praze PRŠELO. — Yesterday it RAINED in Prague.

The deviations of the surface word order from communicative dynamism are partly connected with the grammatically determined order of the elements within a noun phrase (adjectival adjuncts primarily precede the governing noun, while nouns dependent on it follow it) and of the enclitical forms (the „weak” pronouns, some forms of auxiliary verbs, etc.) e.g. in Czech or Polish. These cases can be analysed according to the known fact that the adjuncts of a noun primarily are more dynamic than the noun itself, and to the contextually bound character of the enclitical pronouns. Other deviations concern the position of the main verb; in Czech, and to a lesser extent also in the other Slavonic languages the verb, even if it belongs to the focus, can be followed by a word dependent on it and including in the topic; e.g. in (27) *tento týden* constitutes a temporal setting, i.e. part of the topic.

(27) Fakulta přijala tento týden čtyři zahraniční HOSTY. —  
— The Faculty accepted four foreign GUESTS this week.

For Czech, and with some minor changes also for other Slavonic languages, it is possible to state that the modifications (dependent words, participants) standing to the left of the verb belong to the topic, while the rightmost participant belongs to the focus. The appurtenance of the modifications standing between the verb and the rightmost participant can be determined only in that a modification A preceding a modification B, where the systemic order is B, A, belongs to the topic, cf. *Dával jablka DĚTEM.* — *He gave (the) apples to CHILDREN*, or *Dělal kanoe z KLÁD.* — *He made (the) canoes out of LOGS*. As for the verb itself, the situation is similar to that of English, a characterization of which can be formulated as follows.

When attempting to identify the boundary between topic and focus in a written English sentence, it is possible to work with the following assumptions (none of which is valid without exceptions, characterized mostly by a secondary position of the intonation centre in the corresponding spoken sentence):

<sup>12</sup> The placement of the intonation centre in the corresponding oral sentences is denoted here to make the examples more transparent; we are aware that the relation between spoken and written sentences is not one-to-one, i.e. that also other pronunciation is possible, cf. Sgall, Hajičová and Buráňová (1980, 134).

(i) The participants standing to the left of the verb may be understood as belonging to the topic; this concerns the subject as well as the adverbials; exceptions occur with a subject having the indefinite article, which in some cases is included in the focus.

(ii) If there is only one participant standing to the right of the verb, then this participant belongs to the focus.

(iii) (a) If there are more than one participants to the right of the verb and the rightmost of them is a local or temporal adverbial, then it should be checked whether the lexical meaning of this adverbial is specific (its head being to the subject domain of the given text) or general (a pronoun, a broader term); in the former case it is probable that the adverbial belongs to the focus, as in (28) and (29), while in the latter case it rather belongs to the topic, as in (30) or (31).

(28) Several teams carried out experiments with this method during last two YEARS.

(29) Several teams carried out experiments with his method in LJUBLJANA.

(30) Several teams carried out experiments with this METHOD during the last decades.

(31) Several teams carried out experiments with this METHOD in our country.

(iii) (b) If there are more than one participants to the right of the verb and the rightmost one is not a local or temporal adverbial, then this rightmost participant is the most dynamic element of the sentence, its focus proper:

(32) Several teams carried out experiments with this method to find out whether it is ADEQUATE.

(iv) In most cases it is possible to assume that the verb belongs to the focus if it is a lexically specific verb (which a rather narrow meaning); if the verb is general (*be, have, become, carry out, . . .*), then it may be assumed that it belongs to the topic.

Points (i) to (iv) may be useful if only a single sentence can be examined. However, in many cases it is possible to take into account the preceding context. It is then advisable to register the activated (salient) items of the stock of information shared by the speaker and the hearer. This can be done by a method illustrated by Hajičová and Vrbová (in press). The element that was mentioned as the focus proper of the last utterance is the most salient in the given time-point of the discourse, while the elements that were used in other positions of this utterance get a somewhat lower status in the activated part of the stock of shared knowledge, and those that have not been mentioned in one or several subsequent utterances may fade away (if they do not have a specific position of a „hypertopic“, which may concern e.g. those mentioned in the heading). Such a register makes it possible to decide in the unclear cases (in the points (iii) (a) and (iv) above, or in what concerns

the participants standing between the verb and its rightmost modification) whether a given participant belongs to the topic (which is the case when it is contained in the register), or to the focus. It should be noted that also this method has its limitations: on one side the set of activated items includes not only items mentioned in the text, but also their parts, counterparts and other items connected with them by associative relations; on the other side, if a specific contrast is involved, it is possible that also an item included in this set is mentioned as a part of the focus of the next utterance, as not being recoverable (cf. sect. 1.1).

In interrogative sentences the topic-focus articulation is connected with several unclear questions which have been intensively discussed in Czech linguistic writings (by Mathesius, Firbas, Daneš, Křížková-Běličová, Hajičová and others).<sup>13</sup> One of the main results of these discussions consists in the fact that the interrogative formative itself cannot be understood as the only possible part of the focus of these sentences. In *yes-no* questions the interrogative character (as well as the other attitudinal aspects, to the extent in which they are structured by the system of language) may be regarded as the tectogrammatical level as one of the parts of the complex label of the root of the tree (i.e. of the main verb). The topic-focus articulation of these sentences appears to be similar (and conveyed by similar means of expression) as that of declarative sentences.

As for *wh*-questions, in most cases the interrogative element as well as the last word they contain belong to the focus. However, it is not always clear which of them is the focus's proper (the most dynamic part of the sentence), or whether also some other sentence part belongs to the focus. It seems that the interrogative element is the only part of the focus in case it is the bearer of the intonation centre, as e.g. in *WHEN did he come?* or *WHICH cigarettes do you like best?*

3.1 The differences that are most important for the structure of individual language are those that concern such phenomena as the morphemic means expressing grammatical distinctions. As Skalička (1979) showed in his studies, these phenomena are relevant for the typological character of languages. Also in the domain of functional sentence perspective it is first of all the relationship between the perspective itself (belonging to the level of underlying structure) and the means expressing it on the level of morphemics. There are at least three basic combinations of such means, which are typical for different groups of languages:

(i) surface word order in combination with intonation expresses the functional sentence perspective in most Slavonic languages, as well as in the old Indo-European languages; the word order is „free” and in most cases it corresponds to the hierarchy of communicative dynamism; only relatively rarely the intonation centre (carried by the focus proper) is placed elsewhere than on the rightmost participant;

<sup>13</sup> See esp. Hajičová (1976 a, b) and the writings quoted there.

(ii) intonation, word order and grammatical constructions (such as passivization, cleft sentences, *as for*) are combined in English, French and other languages of Western Europe; the word order is highly determined by rules of grammar, so that e.g. passivization or a switch of the intonation centre from its normal position (on the rightmost participant) nearer to the beginning of the sentence are used if this is necessary for the word order to correspond to the grammatical rules — cf. the differences between English and Czech in (8) (b), (19) (b), (25) above;

(iii) specific morphemic means expressing directly the features concerning functional sentence perspective are present in Japanese and in some other language of Eastern Asia and also Africa (cf. esp. Japanese *wa*, marking the topic).

One more difference is characteristic for different groups of languages with respect to functional sentence perspective. This is the interplay of the three important patternings of the underlying structures, namely that of valency, of functional perspective and of the delimitation features of noun phrases. In every language — as far as we know — each of these patternings seems to be structured and to have its means of expression. However, the three patternings are connected by certain preferences (e.g. a definite Actor primarily belongs to the topic, an indefinite noun primarily is included in the focus, etc.). Languages avoid a too high degree of redundancy by backgrounding one of the patternings and expressing it mostly by what can be understood as default rules (cf. also Sgall, Hajičová and Benešová, 1973, 128f, and the writings quoted there):

(a) Valency and delimitation are foregrounded, and functional sentence perspective is mostly not expressed overtly, being determined by the combination of the two other patternings, cf. the following sentences, which are rather typical for English in this respect:

(33) The French colleague found a proof of this assertion.

(34) A French colleague found a proof of this assertion.

The definite subject in (33) clearly belongs to the topic, but its counterpart in (34), having the delimitation feature Specifying (cf. Bierwisch, 1971), belongs to the focus at least in one of the underlying structures of this sentence; it is still an open question whether the intonation centre is obligatorily carried by such a sentence initial subject, or whether a noun with these features can belong to the focus even if not stressed.

(b) Valency and functional perspective are preferred, the word order corresponds to communicative dynamism to a high degree, and the delimitation features are expressed overtly (by pronouns) only if necessary. This holds about most Slavonic languages, Latin, Sanskrit, etc., which have no articles, i.e. no obligatory means to express the delimitation features. In most cases these features are identifiable on the basis of the other patternings. Thus the nouns in the topic are understood as definite, in Czech, if no pronoun corresponding to *some* is present, and often a noun in the focus

is understood as connected with the feature Specifying (the primary meaning of an indefinite article of other languages), cf. the following example:

- (35) (a) Řeka teče rovinou. — The river flows through a PLAIN.  
 (b) Rovinou teče ŘEKA. — Through the plain there flows a RIVER.

If the meaning of *A river flows through the PLAIN* (with a river included in the topic, i.e. more or less equivalent to *one of the rivers*), then the Czech expression would be *Jedna řeka teče ROVINOU* (or . . . *teče tou ROVINOU*).

(c) The third possibility is to foreground the patternings of delimitation and functional sentence perspective, leaving the valency in the background. At least some features typical for this combination seem to be present in Chinese, partly also in Japanese and other languages of Asia.

In this way we face a trichotomy similar to that of (i), (ii) and (iii), as characterized above. It thus seems that the dichotomy of „subject prominent” and „topic prominent” languages, presented by Li and Thompson (1976), should be completed to involve also the difference between (a) and (b), or (ii) and (i). Three types of the relationship between functional sentence perspective, its means of expression and the other patternings thus should be distinguished.

3.2 Returning to the functional sentence perspective itself, as to one of the patternings included in the underlying structures, we can say that the known European languages seem to differ here only in a much lower degree than in the two respects we just discussed. A set of differences has been found in the systemic ordering of Czech (and other Slavonic languages) on one side and of English (French, etc.) on the other. The position of some of the main participants seems to be identical in different languages; this concerns the order Actor — Addressee — Objective (though French seems to involve the reversed order of the latter two, which might be connected by the obligatory presence of a preposition with a noun functioning as Addressee). As for Instrument, Origin, Locative, it seems that English (as well as French) differs from Czech (and other Slavonic languages) in that these three participants follow Objective in English, though they precede it in Czech; in the latter language the systemic ordering can be discovered more easily, thanks to the „free” word order, with which the questions of ordering are more transparent than they are in English, where the differences often are expressed by the placement of the intonation centre.

This can be checked by means of such examples as (36) to (39), in which the position of the Objective after the Dative (and, of course, after the Actor) is the same in Czech and in English (36), while that of Objective before the Instrument (37), Origin (38), and Locative (39) is characteristic for English, though the reverse order is present in Czech. For English, this scale of CD in the (a) examples (which corresponds, in these sentences with normal intonation, to the surface word order) is not conditioned by contextual boundedness; for Czech, this holds for the (b) examples of (37) to (39), and for (36) (a).

Not higher frequency is at stake here, but the fact that the Objective can be included in the focus as contextually non-bound, since each of the (a) examples can answer such a question as *What did he do?*. On the other hand, the English (b) examples, with marked intonation, may not be used as answers to such a question; they correspond rather to a question in which their final NP is contained (e.g. *What does he use these hoes (logs) for?*). This shows that the lower degree of CD of these NP's in (b) (expressed by marked intonation) is conditioned by the fact that they are contextually bound.

- (36) (a) George brought a girl FLOWERS. — Jirka přinesl (jedné) dívce KVĚTINY.  
 (b) George brought flowers to a GIRL. — Jirka přinesl květiny (jedné) DÍVCE.
- (37) (a) He dug a hole with a HOE. — Kopal jámu MOTYKOU.  
 (b) He dug a HOLE with a hoe. — Kopal motykou JÁMU.
- (38) (a) He made a canoe out of a LOG. — Udělal kánoi z KLÁDY.  
 (b) He made a CANOE out of a log. — Udělal z klády KÁNOI.
- (39) (a) He dug a hole in the GARDEN. — Vykopal jámu NA ZAHRA-  
 DĚ.  
 (b) He dug a HOLE in the garden. — Vykopal na zahradě JÁMU.

It need not be surprising that languages differ in such semantically relevant details of their grammatical structures as are these of the systemic ordering. It should be noticed that the language determined structuring of the cognitive content is concerned here, rather than a (psychological) structure of the speakers' „minds” (including mental images of reality). The difference between Czech and English may be connected with the typological properties of the two languages.

4. Our last point concerns the relationship between the topic of a sentence and that „of a text”. It cannot be claimed that every text has a single topic, and even the authors who started with such an assumption have found that such a case is only a specific one. In the general case it is possible to speak only of parts of texts connected by the same topic.<sup>14</sup> The so-called thematic progressions (now see esp. Daneš, 1974; but also e.g. Yuganov, 1979, pointing out that in real texts these progressions often do not appear in a pure form) illustrate the elementary possibilities (the topic of the preceding utterance is retained in the following one, or the focus of the preceding utterance serves here as the topic, etc.). A systematic description of the hierarchy of salience of the items within the stock of information shared by the speaker and the hearer can be useful for a characterization of the role of functional sentence perspective in the structure of a text.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. Marciszewski (1976); Bayer (1979); also Dijk (1977) prefers to speak about the „topic of (a part of) a discourse”, or „the topic for this passage”, etc. (esp. pp. 132–142), rather than to maintain that the text as such (or every text) has its topic.

One of the main open questions in this domain (important also for the question test) is that of the distinction between a „full” and „partially formulated” question. If such a question as (40) is understood as full, then it can be directly answered only by a complete list of all the visitors of Prague at the given day.

(40) Who came to Prague yesterday?

The usual case in a dialogue is that such a question is connected with a non-formulated background restricting the universe of discourse in a certain way (according to the relationship between the speaker and the hearer and to other aspects of the given situation, (40) may be understood as meaning „Who among our common friends . . .”, or „Who among the participants of the conference we organize . . .”, etc.). If (40) was answered by a list, in (41) *who* should be understood as referring only to members included in this list, even if the anaphorical pronoun is not present, if the system is oriented towards the organization of a conference.

(41) Who went to the hotel first?

These and similar restrictions of the „universe of the discourse”, changing during a dialogue or within a text, make it difficult to find whether in the structure of a text (discourse) as a whole there are clear counterparts of such units typical for the sentence (or its underlying structure) as are topic and focus. The discourse, belonging to the domain of the use of language rather than to that of the system of language, is structured in ways different from those present in the sentence. Different kinds of texts display different types of structuring, and thus it is not surprising that beside such kinds of texts as the legal documents are, we have also such kinds of fluent dialogue. In the former the structuring of subdocuments, paragraphs and sections, with each having its own hierarchy of higher and lower topics, is outspoken; on the other hand, in a fluent dialogue the change of topics is by far not so strictly regulated, the interest of the speakers may even switch from what was just spoken about to what just occurred in the surroundings, i.e. situation as well as the verbal co-text is here substantial for the changes in the activation of the items in the stock of shared information.

Praha

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### Резиме

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#### ФУНКЦИОНАЛНА РЕЧЕНИЧНА ПЕРСПЕКТИВА У СЛОВЕНСКИМ ЈЕЗИЦИМА И ЕНГЛЕСКОМ

У овом се раду указује на неке особености разматрања функционалне реченичне перспективе које ову појаву повезују с описом језичког система чије је полазиште у уверењу да овај функционисање као укупност сређених нивоа испољавања — почев од семантичке базе, преко површинске структуре, па све до разина свог морфемског и фонемског отелотворења.

Први део рада (ознака 1) посвећен је краткој карактеризацији феномена на које се примењује назив *функционална реченична њерсејекџива*, у другом (ознака 2) се расправља о могућностима идентификације ових у исказима садржаним у једној кохерентно организованој целини, у трећем (ознака 3) се ови феномени оцењују с типолошке тачке гледишта, док им се у четвртном (ознака 4) приступа у светлости контрастивне анализе словенских језика, уз давање пропратних опаски о законитостима структурирања текстуалних целина.