Chamonikolasová, Jana

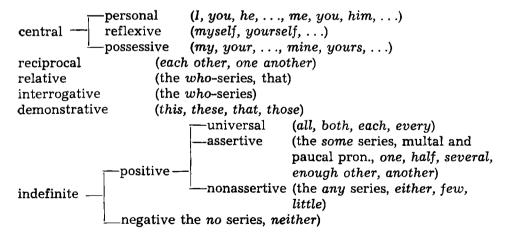**Pronouns, functional sentence perspective and intonation**

PRONOUNS, FUNCTIONAL SENTENCE PERSPECTIVE AND INTONATION

Jana Chamonikolasová

This paper is a sequel to the analysis of pronouns published in BSE 18 (Chamonikolasová, 1990). The previous paper dealt with the communicative dynamism (cf. Firbas 1990) and prosodic prominence (cf. Firbas 1990) of personal pronouns. The present analysis covers all pronominal categories and provides their comparison.

The formal classification of pronouns that has been applied in this paper is based on the conception of pronominal categories given in Quirk et al. 1985:

```
                 ┌─personal      (I, you, he, . . ., me, you, him, . . .)
central  ──┤  reflexive     (myself, yourself, . . .)
                 └─possessive    (my, your, . . ., mine, yours, . . .)
reciprocal           (each other, one another)
relative             (the who-series, that)
interrogative        (the who-series)
demonstrative        (this, these, that, those)
                                ┌─universal     (all, both, each, every)
                                │─assertive     (the some series, multal and
                                │                paucal pron., one, half, several,
             ┌─positive ─┤                enough other, another)
             │                  └─nonassertive (the any series, either, few,
indefinite ─┤                                   little)
             └─negative the no series, neither)
```

Syntactically, the analysis is limited to pronouns implemented as simple noun phrases and functioning as independent sentence elements; it does not deal with pronouns inside a complex noun phrase (premodifiers or headwords), which are only part of a sentence element. The former and the latter show certain differences in functional sentence perspective and

intonation and must therefore be dealt with separately. It is only the former that are discussed in the present paper.

The analysis of prosodic prominence is based on O'Connor and Arnold's conception, offered in their *Intonation of colloquial English* (1973). The tonetically transcribed text of the "Dialogues for intonation practice" included in the above book has served as the source of statistical data, together with a major part of the tonetically transcribed dialogues in Arnold and Tooley's reader *Say it with rhythm 3* (1972). The former book will be referred to as "Intonation", the latter as "Say". Each example will be accompanied by the indication of the page and line on which it begins. Slash marks will indicate ends of tone units.

The analysis of the communicative dynamism of pronouns is based on the theory of functional sentence perspective (=FSP) worked out by Firbas (e.g. 1979, 1985, 1987) and supplemented by Svoboda (e.g. 1981, 1987). According to the FSP theory, clauses (sentences) and semi-clause serve as fields of distribution of communicative dynamism (=CD) over communicative units (sentence elements). The degree of CD of a unit is the relative extent to which the unit contributes to the development of the communication. This degree is determined by the interplay of linear modification, semantics and context and — in the spoken language — intonation. The following is the scale of FSP functions arranged in accordance with a gradual rise in CD:

(1) theme proper	(ThPr)	(4) transition	(Tr)
(2) diatheme	(DTh)	(5) rheme	(Rh)
(3) transition proper	(TrPr)	(6) rheme proper	(RhPr)

This scale may but need not coincide with the actual linear arrangement. (The scale has been simplified as in Chamonikolasová 1989: Theme-proper–oriented themes have been identified with themes proper although their degree of CD is slightly higher. Diatheme-oriented themes have been identified with diathemes although their degree of CD is slightly lower.)

According to Svoboda 1987, different degrees of CD are distributed not only over communicative (distributional) fields provided by clauses or semi-clauses but also (at a lower hierarchic level) over communicative (distributional) fields provided by noun phrases. The two types of distributional field show certain similarities but also a number of differences both in regard to FSP and in regard to intonation. (The distribution of prosodic features within the noun phrase is subordinated to the distribution within the higher verbal field.) In sentences I, II and III below, the communicative units of the verbal field are indicated by a continuous line; the communicative units of the nominal field (constituents of a sentence element in the form of a complex noun phrase) are indicated by a dotted line.

(I)   I'd 'missed my ˎtrain.//
       ‾‾‾‾‾‾ ‾‾‾‾‾‾ ‾‾‾‾‾‾‾‾‾
       ThPr TrPr + Tr   RhPr   (Intonation 280/30)
                        ·· ·····

(II)   'What's been •keeping you ˋthis time?//
       ‾‾‾‾‾‾‾‾‾‾ ‾‾‾‾‾‾‾‾‾‾‾‾ ‾‾‾‾‾‾‾‾‾‾‾‾‾
         DTh   TrPr + Tr   ThPr   RhPr   (Intonation 279/31)
                                    ···· ····

(III) 'None of them •seems at ˋall ˎkeen.//
       ‾‾‾‾‾‾‾‾‾‾‾   ‾‾‾‾‾‾‾‾ ‾‾‾‾ ‾‾‾‾‾
           DTh1   TrPr+Tr RhPr DTh2   (Intonation 278/18)
       ···· ·· ····

The analysed text (consisting of 1,885 sentences) includes 1,345 pronouns in the form of a simple noun phrase functioning as an independent sentence element. Another 618 pronouns occurring in the text as constituents of complex noun phrases have not been analysed. The results of the analysis are given in Table 1 and Table 2 below.

Table 1

Pronominal category	Thematic units	Rhematic units	Total
Central	930 (90 %)	104 (10 %)	1 034
Demonstrative	86 (63 %)	51 (37 %)	137
Interrogative	74 (79 %)	20 (21 %)	94
Indefinite	33 (69 %)	15 (31 %)	48
Relative	31 (100 %)	0 (0 %)	31
Reciprocal	1 (100 %)	0 (0 %)	1
Total	1 155 (86 %)	190 (14 %)	1 345

Table 2

Pronominal category	ThPr	DTh	Total
Central	863 (93 %)	67 (7 %)	930
Demonstrative	2 (2 %)	84 (98 %)	86
Interrogative	0 (0 %)	74 (100 %)	74
Indefinite	3 (9 %)	30 (91 %)	33
Relative	0 (0 %)	31 (100 %)	31
Reciprocal	0 (0 %)	1 (100 %)	1
Total	870 (75 %)	285 (25 %)	1 155

Table 1 shows the occurrences of pronouns serving as communicative units in verbal fields and their FSP functions. Pronuns functioning as ThPr and DTh constitute one group of thematic units. The ratio of ThPr's and DTh's is given in Table 2. The group of rhematic units contains only RhPr's because there was no pronoun functioning as non-RhPr in the text. Table 1 starts with the largest group of 1,034 central pronouns, which represent 77 % of the total number of 1,345 pronuns analysed. All the other categories are less numerous: there are 137 (10 %) demonstrative, 94 (7 %) interrogative, 48 (3.6 %) indefinite, 31 (2.3 %) relative and 1 (0.1 %) reciprocal pronouns.

The following sentences contain examples of central, demonstrative, interrogative, indefinite and relative pronouns occurring in the text, together with their FSP evaluation. (NFA = negation focus anticipator, see Firbas 1990.)

Central pronouns:

1   But   I   have   a 'deep dis╲trust of my₀self.//
    ————— ————————   ————————
    ThPr TrPr+Tr   RhPr   DTh   (Intonation 275/15)

2   Ex╱aggerate?// 'Who's ex╲aggerating?//

     - 'You ₀are.//
       —————————
       RhPr TrPr   (Intonation 280/5)

3 `Oh,,/of `course,,/`yes.// ˅I re₀member.//

⎯⎯⎯⎯ ⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯
RhPr   TrPr+Tr   (Intonation 278/15)

Demonstrative pronouns:

4 'That'll ₀cost a `fortune.//

⎯⎯ ⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯ ⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯
DTh   TrPr+Tr   RhPr   (Intonation 277/19)

5 You could ˅go on to ˅Sky / after `that.//

⎯⎯⎯ ⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯ ⎯⎯ ⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯
ThPr   TrPr+Tr   Rh   RhPr   (Say 47/8)

6 I'd 'like to `listen to ₀one of them,/ ,sometimes.//

   - ˅That's   ₀not ₀difficult.//

   ⎯⎯⎯⎯ ⎯⎯⎯ ⎯⎯⎯ ⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯
   RhPr TrPr NFA   DTh   (Intonation 281/18)

Interrogative pronouns:

7   What's   `up?// - `Robert.// 'Guess `what!//

⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯ ⎯⎯⎯ ⎯⎯⎯   ⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯   ⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯ ⎯⎯⎯⎯
DTh(+TrPr) TrPr RhPr   RhPr   TrPr+Tr RhPr (Say 49/7)

Indefinite pronouns:

8 ⸝Nobody ●ever   tells   me `anything.//

⎯⎯⎯⎯ ⎯⎯⎯⎯ ⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯ ⎯⎯⎯ ⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯
DTh1   DTh2 TrPr+Tr ThPr   RhPr   (Say 3/9)

Relative pronouns:

9 'That's   what   `I   said.//

⎯⎯⎯ ⎯⎯⎯⎯   ⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯
DTh   TrPr   RhPr

                 ⎯⎯⎯ ⎯⎯⎯ ⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯
                 DTh RhPr TrPr+Tr   (Intonation 284/18)

The largest group of central pronouns, exemplified in sentences 1, 2 and 3, consists almost entirely of personal pronouns: there are 1,019 (98.5 %) personal and only 10 (1 %) reflexive and 5 (0.5 %) nominal possessive pronouns. (Though very frequent, attributive possessives have not been included because they are only part of a sentence element.) Table 1 indicates that 90 % of central pronouns are thematic and only 10 % rhematic. Table 2 shows that the most frequent FSP function of central pronouns is ThPr (cf. *I* in ex. 1 above). DTh (cf. *of myself* in ex. 1) is far less frequent than ThPr (and also less frequent than RhPr). The

tendency towards thematicity seems to be in correspondence with the semantic character of central pronouns and the contextual relations in which they occur. (They refer to items present in the preceding context.) Central pronouns may become rhematic either as a result of (partial) contextual disengagement (e.g. by putting one person or thing in contrast with another or by selecting one, cf. *You* in ex. 2 and *I* in ex. 9) or through emotive re-evaluation (cf. *I* in ex. 3). In each case the pronoun becomes a carrier of some irretrievable information (contrast, selection, emotiveness) and acquires a high degree of CD. A more detailed account of the analysis of the most important subcategory of central pronouns — the personal pronouns — is provided in Chamonikolasová 1990. For a full theoretical explanation of the phenomena of (partial) contextual disengagement and emotive re-evaluation see Firbas 1982, 1985 and 1987.

Generally speaking, the demonstrative pronouns (exx. 4, 5 and 6) have a higher communicative importance than the central pronouns. The group consists of 63 % thematic and 37 % rhematic units (cf. Table 1). While central (or personal) pronouns refer to particular things or persons, demonstrative pronouns may (unless used deictically) refer to whole sets of ideas, facts or whole procedures, and hence appear semantically stronger. As a result, the demonstratives display a higher degree of CD than the central pronouns even within the thematic sphere: most of the thematic units are DTh's (cf. Table 2 and *That* in ex. 4 and 9). The percentage of rhematic units within the demonstrative pronouns group (37 %) is the highest among all the prononinal categories examined. Some of the rhematic demonstrative pronouns behave as *that* in ex. 5: they refer to some item, idea or arrangement that the speaker has selected or wants to stress. As many as 70 % of the rhematic demonstratives, however, are cases of emotive re-evaluation similar to the use of *that* in ex. 6. Cases of emotive re-evaluation were mentioned in the account of the central pronouns above and dealt with especially in Chamonikolasová 1990. The sentences containing a re-evaluated demonstrative pronoun are comparable with those containing a re-evaluated personal pronoun (cf. ex. 3 and ex. 6) but seem to be much more frequent. It may be of interest to the reader to compare the following sentences containing demonstrative pronouns.

```
10  That's ˋquite an iˇdea.//                    (Say 47/10)

11  ˋNo. That's ˋnot a ₀good i₀dea.//             (Say 23/16)

12  ˇThat's an i₀dea!//                           (Say 11/16)

13  ˇThat's not a ₀bad i₀dea.//                   (Say 7/8)
```

All the sentences have similar syntactic and semantic sructures. The contexts in which they occur are very similar as well (cf. Say pp. 47, 23, 11 and 7). Yet there are considerable differences in the distributions of CD and prosodic prominence between 10 and 11 on the one hand and 12 and 13 on the other. In 10 and 11, the demonstrative pronouns perform the DTh function and the speaker keeps them unstressed, placing the intonation centre on another element (*idea* and *not*), while in 12 and 13 they are re-evaluated into RhPr, the speaker turning them into vehicles of emotiveness by placing the intonation centre on them.

Emotively coloured sentences are also interesting from the point of contrastive analysis of English and Czech. The following sentences are hypothetical Czech counterparts of some of the English examples given above (the underlined word is the intonation-centre bearer):

```
3a   Už si vzpomínám!
          ―――――――――

6a   To není nic těžkého!
                 ――――――――

12a  To je nápad!
     ――

13a  To není špatný nápad!
     ――
```

It has been suggested (in Chamonikolasová 1990) that the capacity of English personal pronouns to express emotiveness and carry the intonation centre of a clause does not seem to be shared by Czech personal pronouns and that in Czech sentences, emotiveness seems to be expressed by other means, possibly an intonation-centre bearing verb or some particle (cf. 3 and 3a). Emotively re-evaluated English demonstrative pronouns, on the other hand, may sometimes be translated by emotively re-evaluated Czech demonstratives (cf. 12 and 12a and 13 and 13a), but in some cases such correspondence is ruled out (cf. 6 and 6a). It should be stressed here that definite conclusions concerning the prosodic emotiveness of demonstrative pronouns must await a more extensive analysis.

The third largest group of pronouns given in Table 1 and Table 2 is the interrogative pronouns: 79 % of them are thematic and 21 % are rhematic. All the thematic units are DTh's. Examples of interrogative pronouns functioning as DTh and RhPr are given in sentence 7. Co-signalling modality in the interrogative sentences, the interrogative pronouns also participate in the implementation of the TrPr function. (In addition, they act as question focus anticipators; cf. Firbas 1976. This function, however, has not been indicated in the above-offered analyses.)

The group of indefinite pronouns, consisting of 69 % thematic and 31 % rhematic units, comes second after the demonstratives in the ratio

of rhematic units. Most of the thematic units are DTh's. Examples of thematic and rhematic indefinite pronouns are given in sentence 8. Emotive re-evaluation, so frequent within demonstrative pronouns, does not seem to occur within indefinite pronouns very often. Since the number of indefinite pronouns in the text is comparatively low, a conclusive solution must await further research.

To a certain extent the same applies to relative pronouns. At the moment, the corpus available only shows that the relative pronouns are diathematic context dependent elements linking a relative clause with its antecedent. An example of the use of the relative pronoun is given in sentence 9.

There is only one (diathematic) pair of reciprocal pronouns in the text examined and therefore we cannot state any characteristic feature of reciprocal pronouns except their very low frequency.

The above commentary may be supplemented by Table 3 below, which shows the relation between the FSP functions of the pronouns examined and their prosodic features. The prosodic categories — absence of stress, unaccented stress, accented (head) stress and nuclear stress — are taken from O'Connor and Arnold 1973:

Table 3

Prosodic features	ThPr	DTh	RhPr
No stress	842	89	0
Unaccented stress	27	8	0
Head stress	1	167	0
Nucleus	0	21	190
Total	870	285	190

Table 3 suggests that the units carrying the lowest degrees of CD, ThPr's, are in the majority of cases unstressed; a minority bear an unaccented stress or, exceptionally, head stress. The units carrying the highest degree of CD, RhPr's, are all nucleus bearers. More than half of the DTh's bear head stress, one third of them are unstressed and a minority bear nuclear or unaccented stress. (All the nuclei within the diathematic pronouns are low rises preceded by a fall; the low rise is of a lesser prosodic prominence than the preceding fall and indicates an element in the intonation-centre shade, cf. Firbas 1980.)

The purpose of the present paper was to present the results of a func-

tional and prosodic analysis of English pronouns occurring in a printed text of dialogues provided with indications of prosodic features (tonetic marks). In accordance with their most common semantic functions and contextual conditions, pronouns display a strong tendency towards thematicity and little prosodic prominence. This tendency is particularly strong with central pronouns, which in most cases express the theme proper of a clause and remain unstressed. The pronouns of the other categories tend to be diathematic and to carry more prominent prosodic features. All pronouns with the exception of relative pronouns can become rheme proper and bear the intonation centre of a clause. The most dynamic pronominal category is the category of demonstrative pronouns, containing the highest percentage of rhematic elements. The demonstratives seem to be an important means of expressing emotiveness in English. This capacity is shared by central (especially personal) pronouns. The percentage of rhematic elements within the group of central pronouns is quite low. It is worth noting that this very low percentage of rhematic elements only enhances the marked emotive effect. A comparatively high percentage of rhematic elements occurs within the group of indefinite pronouns; indefinite pronouns, however, do not become carriers of emotiveness very often.

The present analysis should be considered a tentative study because the number of elements examined, with the exception of personal pronouns, was not high enough for a serious generalization.

REFERENCES

Arnold, G. F. and Tooley, O. M. (1972). *Say it with rhythm* 3 (London).

Chamonikolasová, J. (1990). Personal pronouns, functional sentence perspective and intonation, *Brno studies in English* 18.67—73 (Brno).

Firbas, J. (1976). A study in the functional sentence perspective of the English and the Slavonic interrogative sentence, *Brno studies in English* 12.9—56 (Brno).

Firbas, J. (1979). A functional view of ORDO NATURALIS, *Brno studies in English* 13.29—56 (Brno).

Firbas, J. (1980). Post-intonation-centre prosodic shade in the modern English clause, *Studies in English linguistics for Randolph Quirk*, ed. by Sidney Greenbaum, Geoffrey Leech and Jan Svartvik, 125—33 (London).

Firbas, J. (1982). "Aktuální členění větné" (,) či "funkční perspektiva větná"? [Is "functional sentence perspective" an equivalent of "aktuální členění větné"?], *Slovo a slovesnost* 43.282—93 (Praha).

Firbas, J. (1985). Thoughts on functional sentence perspective, intonation and emotiveness, *Brno studies in English* 16.11—48 (Brno).

Firbas, J. (1987). Thoughts on functional sentence perspective, intonation and emotiveness, Part Two, *Brno studies in English* 17.9—49 (Brno).

Firbas, J. (1990). Degrees of communicative dynamism and degrees of prosodic prominence, *Brno studies in English* 18.21—66 (Brno).

O'Connor, J. D. O. and Arnold, G. F. (1973). *Intonation of colloquial English* (London).

Quirk, R., Greenbaum, S., Leech, G., Svartvik, J. (1985). *A comprehensive grammar of the English language* (London and New York).

Svoboda, A. (1981). *Diatheme* (Brno).

Svoboda, A. (1987). Functional perspective of the noun phrase, *Brno studies in English* 17.61—86 (Brno).

ZÁJMENA, FUNKČNÍ VĚTNÁ PERSPEKTIVA A INTONACE

Autorka navazuje na svůj předchozí článek o anglických osobních zájmenech (BSE 18/1990). Podává funkční a prozodické hodnocení zájmen všech kategorií, omezuje se však na zájmena, která tvoří samostatnou komunikativní jednotku (větný člen) verbálního pole. Zájmena, která jsou primárně součástí rozvinuté nominální fráze, tj. pole nominálního, nebyla pro odlišné funkční a prozodické vlastnosti do analýzy zahrnuta. Analýza textu, obsahujícího zápis prozodických rysů, ukázala, že výpovědní dynamičnost i prozodická výraznost zájmen je v souladu s jejich sémantickou strukturou a kontextovými vztahy poměrně nízká. Zájmena všech kategorií, kromě vztažných, se však za určitých podmínek mohou stát nositelem nejvyššího stupně výpovědní dynamičnosti (vlastním rématem) i prozodické výraznosti (intonačním centrem). Nejvyšší procento vlastních rémat mají zájmena ukazovací a neurčitá, nejnižší zájmena centrální (zastoupená téměř výlučně zájmeny osobními) a vztažná. Autorka upozorňuje na to, že anglická ukazovací a (v menší míře) osobní zájmena jsou důležitým prostředkem vyjádření emotivnosti. Zdá se, že v češtině je emotivní prozodické přehodnocení ukazovacích a osobních zájmen méně časté a že se objevuje spíše intenzifikace slovesa, případně použití modální částice; emotivní prozodické přehodnocení u ukazovacích zájmen je však i v češtině možné.