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**An attempt at a quantitative expression of the communicative value of the verb in English and Czech**

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## AN ATTEMPT AT A QUANTITATIVE EXPRESSION OF THE COMMUNICATIVE VALUE OF THE VERB IN ENGLISH AND CZECH

*Introduction*, pp. 103–104. — *I. Grammatical Functions*, pp. 104–110. — *II. Semantic Functions* pp. 110–111. — *III. Functions in FSP*, pp. 111–114. — *IV. Summary*, pp. 114, 117. — *Notes*, pp. 117–118. — *Bibliography*, p. 118.

The present paper is an attempt at a quantitative expression of some differences in the communicative values as displayed by the English and Czech finite verb forms. The attempt is based on the studies of J. FIRBAS, especially on the series of his three papers on the communicative function of the verb (*Communicative Function*, *More Thoughts*, *Communicative Value*), but also on his *Transition Proper* and *Prosodic Features*. Further, the quantitative analysis of M. RENSKÝ, *The Noun-Verb Quotient*, has been taken into account. In fact, the material investigated in the present attempt is part of the material covered by Renský.

Before any quantitative results can be offered, it is necessary to devise a qualitative analysis suitable for some statistic evaluation. The present paper is concerned primarily with the ways of establishing such suitable qualitative criteria. As indicated above, our analysis is based on the results achieved by J. FIRBAS, particularly on his comparison of the English and Czech finite verbs in regard to the degrees of communicative dynamism (for short, CD) carried by them (see his *More Thoughts*, pp. 75–80). In order to facilitate quantitative expression, our suggestions are more detailed and in some points may slightly differ from J. FIRBAS's classification.

A question deserving special attention before the attempt at the suggested analysis is made is that of what — in regard to the English predicative verb form — to consider a separate word and what not. J. VACHEK's definition of the word<sup>1</sup> requires a word to be separable from other words "by the insertion of some additional, more or less freely interchangeable utterance section". This rule is certainly applicable to the English predicative verb forms, though not to maximum extent. For instance, the form *we have discussed* can show the following insertions: *we, as well as you, have always discussed*. It is, however, well known that the number of types of words or parts of speech that can be so inserted is limited.<sup>2</sup> The question of what is to be considered a word in the English predicative verb form is further complicated by the fact that some finites or its parts are subject to reduction in the spoken language and are very often joined to the preceding noun or pronoun. In this way the link between the (pro)nominal subject and the verb is strengthened, and the question arises all the more urgently whether the personal pronoun is part of the predicative verb form in English (and in analytical languages in general) or not.<sup>3</sup>

For the purposes of the present paper the pronoun is not considered part of the English predicative verb form. The reason for this exclusion of the pronoun

from the predicative verb form is the very fact that the pronoun or the noun is frequently the sole conveyer of the grammatical categories of person and number. If an attempt is made to establish the degree of CD carried by the English predicative verb form, the frequent transfer of the conveyance of the mentioned categories onto a nominal element (which may be closely linked with the verb form) has to be taken into account. It is well known that in contemporary spoken English the so-called subjective forms of the personal pronouns are limited only to pre-verb position; they cannot, however, be considered integral parts of the predicative verb forms because they are not the only parts of speech that occur in that position, which is not infrequently taken up by a noun. In not regarding the personal pronoun as part of the predicative verb form, we concur with H. E. PALMER (cf. his *Grammar*).

From the point of view of grammar we shall try to establish in the present analysis a range of degrees to which the various verbal forms are conveyers of the primary categories of person, number, tense and mood. We shall leave aside the categories of aspect and of actuality in Czech and English, respectively, because they are not strictly comparable. A semantic comparison will provide a basis on which it will be possible to establish — in both languages — groups of verbs with different amounts of meaning. Finally, the material will be analysed from the point of view of functional sentence perspective (= FSP). In other words, an attempt will be made to interpret the functions the examined verbal forms perform in FSP.

In order to express the degree to which a verbal form conveys any of the grammatical categories, the amount of meaning it carries, and the function in FSP it performs, we shall use a scale of points, the highest number of points given being five, the lowest zero.<sup>4</sup>

## I. GRAMMATICAL FUNCTIONS

### 1. Category of Person

#### English Predicative Verb Form

[5] There are only three predicative verb forms in English that can convey the category of person by themselves, in this sense not being dependent on the personal pronoun — AM, IS, HAS.<sup>5</sup> Needless to say, we do not take into account the differences in grammatical gender in the 3rd p. sg., because the verbal forms are neither conveyers nor co-conveyers of this category in English. — For the other forms of the 3rd p. sg. of the simple present, see next paragraph.

[4] He CALLS. This form is dependent on the personal pronoun in the sense that the latter is a necessary indicator of verbal form. This is a consequence of the multi-functional character of the English *s*-morpheme. Taking into account the polysemy of English morphemes and the comparatively little formal distinctness of the English parts of speech, we find it necessary to express the clearly verbal character of such forms as AM in [5], and the 3rd p. sg. of the simple present of the notional verbs by a differentiated quantitative evaluation.<sup>6</sup>

[3] ARE, WAS, WERE. These forms require a (pro)nominal subject for the conveyance of person. They are not, however, neutral to the expression of this category, because the number of grammatical persons that can be

conveyed by them is limited; they cannot convey any of the six grammatical persons (but only some of them).

[2] SHALL, WILL. With this group of verb forms, the actual context must be taken into account in order to decide (a) whether the speaker/writer distinguishes between SHALL and WILL according to grammatical person; (b) whether he uses them as pure, non-modal auxiliaries. As for contexts where WILL is used as tense indicator in all persons or contexts where the SHALL, WILL forms have distinct modal meanings, they are treated under [1].

[1] CAN, MAY and other modal auxiliaries, modal SHALL, WILL, SHOULD, WOULD; 'LL. All the modal auxiliaries and the morpheme 'll are neutral to the category of grammatical person. They cannot, however, be interpreted as not conveying it, because they are still recognizable verbal forms.

[0] I CALL, I CALLED, I shall CALL, I have CALLED, I am CALLING. All these forms, whether finite or non-finite, are quite neutral in regard to grammatical person. Although the choice of the grammatical persons I CALL may convey is limited (as it was the case of ARE etc. in [3]), the formal homonymy with the non-finite form CALL requires its classification in the category of zero conveyers of the category of person.

#### Czech Predicative Verb Forms

[5] VOL-ÁM ('call-I'), VOL-ÁŠ ('call-you') etc.,<sup>7</sup> JSEM ('am-I') etc., PŘIJED-U ('come-shall-I') etc., BUD-U psát ('shall-I to write'-) etc.; BYCH ('would-I'), BYS ('would-you'), BYCHOM ('would-we'), BYSTE ('would-you' pl.); VOL-AL-S ('call-ed-you'). All the present tense forms of all the Czech verbal classes (with the exception of *pros-i* and *trp-i* discussed under [4]), including all the forms of the verb *býti* ('to be') belong to group [5]. This is because they convey the category of person by themselves, unaided by any other element; in short, they are independent conveyers of the category of person. The same holds true for the forms of the future tense of the perfective verbs (PŘIJEDU), while with the imperfectives (BUDU psát) it is the form of the verb *býti* that conveys the category of person. The quoted forms BYCH, ... (special forms of the verb *býti* used to express the conditional mood) are also independent conveyers of the category of person. Out of the preterite forms only VOLALS, which can be found in colloquial Czech, comes under the heading of [6].

[4] volal BY ('called-he would'), volali BY ('called-they would'); PROS-Ě ('ask-he/they'), TRP-Ě ('suffer-he/they'). All these forms indicate 3rd pers., but depend on the form of the notional verb (volal(i) BY) or on the grammatical subject (on/oni PROS-Ě- 'he/they ask') for co-operation in indicating whether it is the 3rd pers. sg. or pl.

[1] VOL-AL ('call-ed masc. sg. '), -A (fem. sg.), -O (neut. sg.), -I (masc. pl.), -Y (fem. pl.), -Ā (neut. pl.). These forms of the preterite are neutral in regard to grammatical person and have to be supplemented either by some form of the verb *býti* or by some (pro)nominal subject.

[0] budu PSÁT ('shall-I to write'), jsem VOLÁN ('am-I called'). The notional verbs here are zero conveyers of the category of person.

As regards the conveyance of the category of person as observed in our material, the differences between the English and the Czech verb have been tabulated below. It has to be remembered that the results of the present

analysis are based on a limited number of instances and can only indicate the general tendencies and the basic differences between the two languages concerned. If therefore some categories show very low frequencies, two or three of them may be grouped together in the tables.<sup>a</sup>

TABLE 1  
The Category of Person

5	4	3	1	0	English
					Czech

## 2. The Category of Number

### English Predicative Verb Forms

[5] AM, IS, WAS, HAS, DOES. The forms show no dependence on the context for the conveyance of grammatical number and may therefore be given the full number of points.

[4] he CALLS

[3] ARE, WERE

[2] SHALL, WILL

[1] CAN, MAY...

[0] I CALL...

As regards the degree to which these forms are dependent or independent in conveying the category of number, the classification of these forms is the same as in regard to the category of person; the only deviations

from the distribution in the category of number are those regarding the forms WAS and DOES.

### Czech Predicative Verb Forms

[5] VOLÁM etc., JSEM etc., PŘIJEDU etc., BUDU psát etc., jsem VOLÁN, jsme VOLÁNI; BYCH, BYS, BYCHOM, BYSTE; VOLALS; VOLAL, -O, -I, -Y. All the forms that have been included in the 5-point group in regard to the category of person belong here. In addition to them, the preterite forms, with some exceptions, and the participle VOLÁN/I are also independent conveyers of the grammatical category of number,

[4] VOLALA This form can refer either to any person singular of the feminine gender or to 3rd pers. pl. neuter.

[1] PROSÍ, TRPÍ; BÝ. All these three forms are neutral in regard to grammatical number and have to be supplemented by some (pro)nominal subject or by a notional verb.

[0] budu PSÁT. The infinitive PSÁT is a zero conveyer of the category of grammatical number.

**TABLE 2**  
The Category of Number

5	4	3	1	0			
					English		
				5	4	1	Czech

### 3. The Category of Tense.

#### English Predicative Verb Forms

[5] AM, IS, ARE, WAS, WERE; DID. All these forms can be classified as independent conveyers of the category of tense. A welcome improvement on the presented classification would certainly be to make it cover the preterite forms functioning as subjunctive and the present tense forms denoting futurity.

[4] he CALLS, I etc. BROKE. The form he CALLS is not considered an independent conveyer of the category of tense because of the previously mentioned polysemic character of the morpheme *-s*. The form I BROKE, as well as the other irregular preterite forms that are different from the respective past participles, is a distinct indicator of the past tense.

[3] I CALL, he PUT. I CALL is in a lower category than he CALLS because of its being homonymic with the infinitive to CALL (cf. p. 105). A similar classification is suggested for other persons of the present tense, with the exception of 3rd pers. sg., which is under the heading [4] above, and with the exception of most forms of the verbs of the type *to put*, discussed in detail under [2].

[2] I CALLED etc., I PUT etc., I HAVE/HAD, he HAS. The degree of independence of the capitalized forms is very low, but they can still be considered co-conveyers. The forms of the verb to HAVE have to be evaluated as weak conveyers of the category of tense because of their multifunctional character. A separate group is formed by the verbs of the type *to put*, i.e. verbs with one and the same form for the present tense, the preterite and the past participle. These verbs are given less points than other verbs because they are more dependent on the context, with the exception of 3rd pers. sg. of the present tense, classified under [4], and of the same person of the preterite, which is given 3 points. With the former form it is the presence and with the latter the absence of the *-s* morpheme that — in combination with the pronoun *he/she/it* (or in combination with a noun) — indicates tense.

[1] I shall CALL. CALL here co-operates only in that it stands in opposition to HAVE CALLED.

[0] I am CALLING, I am CALLED. In these forms the notional components do not co-operate at all in the conveyance of the category of tense.

#### Czech Predicative Verb Forms

[5] VOLÁM etc., JSEM etc., PŘIJEDU etc., BUDU psát etc., VOLAL etc.<sup>9</sup> As in the case of the category of person and number, all the present tense forms

of the Czech verb are included here as independent conveyers of the category of tense. The same applies to the forms of the future and of the preterite. In connection with some of the forms, however, two points should be raised. The first concerns the forms of the present of the verb *býti* ('to be'). These forms in fact fulfil two functions in the Czech verbal system: on the one hand they constitute the present tense of the verb *býti*, on the other they are part of the preterite forms of notional verbs. The latter function, however, is not a full-scale one. As is well known, the forms of the verb *býti* are used only with the 1st and the 2nd pers. sg. and pl., but even there they may be reduced (e.g. VOLALS ('called-you') instead of VOLAL JSI ('called you-are')), or omitted when a personal pronoun is used (*Já to tak nemyslel* ('I it so not-thought')). What is most important about the auxiliary *býti* is that it is used with the preterite not to indicate a tense category but only that of person and number. The second point concerns the forms of the preterite, VOLAL etc. Besides forming the preterite, they also occur in the conditionals. In spite of this, the *-l* forms are classed here as past tense conveyers because they enter into the conditional as forms of the preterite.

[2] BYCH etc. The conditional forms BYCH etc. are more or less neutral to the category of tense: they either occur by themselves (in the present conditional), or are accompanied by another form of the verb *býti* (in the past conditional). As is well known, however, in colloquial Czech the present conditional often replaces the past conditional, the respective functions being indicated by non-verbal contextual means.

[0] budu PSÁT, jsem VOLÁN. The nominal forms PSÁT ('to write') and VOLÁN ('asked') are zero conveyers of the category of tense.

TABLE 3  
The Category of Tense

5	4	3	2		English	
				5	1	Czech

#### 4. The Category of Mood

##### English Predicative Verb Forms

[5] AM, IS, ARE, HAS; I/he WERE, I/he WAS. If analyzed from the point of view of the category of mood, all these forms have to be considered independent conveyers of this category: in Standard English, the forms AM, IS, ARE, HAS occur only in the indicative mood, while the form I/he WERE can be found only in the subjunctive and I/he WAS in the indicative mood.

[4] he CALLS. Although occurring only in the indicative mood, he CALLS is given only four points, the reason being the same as that adduced in the

discussion of the preceding categories — the polysemy of the *s*-morpheme.

[3] I CALL, CALL! I CALL is homonymous with the imperative mood; the same applies to all the present tense forms of the notional verbs, with the exception of 3rd pers. sg. The forms of the imperative are therefore included in the same group as the present tense forms.

[2] he CALLED, you WERE, I MAY, SHALL, WILL (he WAS). In Standard English, the preterite forms of all verbs, except the forms I/he WERE/WAS, grouped above under [5], are used to express both the indicative and the subjunctive mood and are therefore classified very low. Although the form (I) CALL, discussed under [3], can also be found in two different moods, it differs from I/he WERE/WAS in regard to the degree of co-operation of the context in conveying the mood in question. Whereas with (I)CALL it is the absence or presence of a subject that is decisive, with he CALLED and you WERE the subject does not co-operate in conveying the category of mood, the absence or presence of a conjunction, viz. the absence or presence of the conjunction *if*, deciding whether the indicative or the subjunctive mood is conveyed. — I MAY and other verbs used as subjunctive equivalents also require the co-operation of the context in indicating the mood. — The same applies to SHALL/WILL, which in addition to pure futurity can convey meanings constituting the so-called coloured future. — The form I/he WAS has been bracketed, for in substandard English it replaces I/he WERE in the subjunctive mood; in regard to substandard English, all the preterite forms of the verb *to be* would therefore have to be grouped under [2].

[0] I am CALLING, I am CALLED. The notional components are here completely neutral to the category of mood.

#### Czech Predicative Verb Forms

[5] JSEM etc., VOLÁM etc., BUĎ ('Be!'), VOLEJ ('Call!'), VOLALS, BYCH etc. All the forms of the present tense of the verb *bjíti* and of the notional verbs are independent conveyers of the indicative mood, just as the forms BUĎ, VOLEJ are independent indicators of the imperative mood and the form BYCH etc. of the conditional mood. The colloquial form of the 2nd pers. sg. of the preterite is also an independent conveyer of the category of mood, as it can be used only in the indicative.

TABLE 4  
The Category of Mood

5	4	3	2	English
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;"> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin: 5px;">5</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin: 5px;">3</div> </div>				Czech

[3] VOLAL *bych/jsem* etc. As regards the category of mood, the form VOLAL etc. occupies in Czech a position which approximately corresponds to that occupied by (I) CALLED etc. in English. Both the Czech and the English forms can make part of the indicative or of the subjunctive (conditional) mood. The Czech VOLAL is either accompanied by *jsem* etc. in the indicative mood or by *bych* etc. in the conditional mood.

[10] *jsem* VOLÁN. The notional component is quite neutral to the category of mood.

## II. SEMANTIC FUNCTIONS

In this chapter, a scale is suggested which is based on the amounts of meaning conveyed by the verbs.

### English Verbs

[5] Five points are given to English notional verbs with 'full' meaning, i.e. verbs that by themselves, without any necessary co-operation with another element or expression, convey some meaning. Out of the analysed material, two examples can be quoted here. (Comments and examples will further help to specify the 5-point class as well as the other classes.)

1. Blue suit grinned, might even have winked. P 5.12<sup>10</sup>

2. "Everybody knows everybody." P 6.4

Exx. 1 and 2 contain verbs with 'full' meaning. Although it would be possible to differentiate between the verbs of ex. 1 and that of ex. 2 (the latter is accompanied by an object, the former are without objects), the present analysis does not make such a distinction. The verbs of exx. 1 and 2 are interpreted as belonging to the same, 5-point class.

[4] The main representatives of the 4-point class are the phrasal verbs, in which part of the meaning is carried by the particle. For the purposes of the present analysis, no finer distinction is made between the various types of the phrasal verbs. Even a verb-adverb construction may occasionally be interpreted as a 4-point case if it comes close to the sphere of phrasal verbs (cf. ex. 4).

3. "Turn it up, will you," said I ... P 6.—10

4. ... and it was the girl who looked away at first. P 7.—13

[3] Comparing verbs of groups [3] and [4], we find that 3-point verbs display a pronounced shift towards nominal conveyance of meaning, the verb coming very near to a mere conveyer of the grammatical categories.

5. And Strete gave a mocking sketch of a sigh. P 6.14

6. ...[she]... And then turned sulky. P 7.—12

7. "...," said the girl, surprisingly. P 5.—3

Ex. 7 represents a special instance of the use of the verb *to say*. Whenever *to say* or *to tell* is used in connection with direct speech, it is considered semantically weak and grouped with 3-point verbs. If, however, other verbs are used, such as *to mutter*, *to call*, *to shout* etc., they are classed with 5-point verbs.

[2] The main group in this category are the modal verbs. The examples contain some other verbs that are considered to come very near the modal verbs in regard to the amount of meaning.

8. "I couldn't even tell 'em..." P 6.—2

9. "... that I *used to* work in a shop... P 6.—1<sup>11</sup>

10. "If you are in a bad temper, as you *seem to* be, ... P 7.—16<sup>11</sup>

[1] The copulative *to be* and *to have*<sup>12</sup> and the emphatic *to do* belong to this category, while the auxiliary *to be*, *to have* and *to do*, as well as the auxiliary *shall/will*, are given O-point classification.

[0] auxiliary *to be*, *to have*, *to do*, *shall/will*.

Czech Verbs

[5] The type of verb belonging to this class is approximately of the same type as its English counterpart—a notional verb with 'full' meaning:

11. „Neznám, ale slyšela jsem o ní.” P 10.1 (I don't know her but I've heard about her.)

In Czech, however, a verb can frequently take an inseparable prefix which amplifies its meaning.<sup>13</sup> In such a case, another point is added and the verb assigned to a special 6-point subclass.

[4] A lower amount of meaning carried by a Czech verb is instanced by ex. 12.

12. „..., že nám teď z továrny dávají výpověď, ...“ (that we are given notice by the factory) P 10.—1

[2] Like their English counterparts, the modal verbs are grouped as 2-point verbs.

13. „Já chci vědět, co s ní je...” (I want to know what is the matter with her.) P 11.6

[1] The copulas *býti*, *míti* 'to be, to have'.

[0] The auxiliary verbs

As with the grammatical categories, a comparison of the semantic function as performed by the English and the Czech verb in our material can be drawn from Table 5 giving the percentage of the six classes in question.

TABLE 5  
Semantic Functions

5	4	3	2	1	0	English
5	4	2	1	0		Czech

### III. FUNCTIONS IN FSP

For the purpose of the present analysis three main spheres within a sentence (or clause) are distinguished from the point of view of FSP, viz. theme, transition and rheme, further distinction being made in each of these spheres by employing the categories of theme proper, transition proper and rheme proper (cf. Firbas's papers quoted on p. 103).

The verbal forms, however, have to be dissociated, as the case may be, into individual words or morphemes in a manner similar to that employed in the discussion of the grammatical categories. The dissociation results in

two main groups of words or morphemes — the temporal and modal exponents (for short, TME's) and the notional part of the verbal form. As shown by J. Firbas in his *Prosodic Features*, there are six types of function the predicative verb form, i.e. the TME's and its notional part, can perform in FSP. The types are indicated in tables 7 and 8, pp. 115f. As in the preceding chapter, examples will be offered to demonstrate the method of classification.

#### English Predicative Verb Forms

[5] Five points are given to a verbal form which either on account of its TME's or on account of its notional component is to be regarded as rheme proper of the entire sentence. Only one sentence (see ex. 14 below) occurred in the analyzed material which contained a predicative verb form functioning as rheme proper on account of its TME's.

14. "Do you mind?" — "Why should I mind?" P 5.7.

In ex. 14, *should* is considered rheme proper, *why* merely rhematic and the rest thematic.<sup>14</sup>

Besides ex. 14, in all the other cases coming under [5], the notional component of the predicative verb form conveys the most important new piece of information within the entire sentence, and is therefore classified as rheme proper, while the TME's (e.g. *-ed*, *might have -ed* in ex. 15) are within the sphere of transition proper.

15. Blue suit **grinned**, might even have **winked**. P 5.—13

[4] Further down the scale function the two predicative verb forms of ex. 16. They represent forms that have been given four points.

16. ... the girl, who **pushed out** her lower lip and **shook** her head. P 4.—1

The rhemes of the two clauses of 16 are the nouns *lower lip* and *head*. The notional parts of the verbs convey new information, but certainly do not express rheme proper; they are classified as transitional. The TME's (*-ed* and *-oo-*) again constitute transition proper.

[3] Semantically, the predicative verb forms coming under this heading are so weak that they practically function as mere TME's or come very close to them. In FSP they function as transition proper. Exx. 17 and 18 may illustrate.

17. [... in new suits...] The suits were blue, grey and brown. P 2.—11

18. And Strete gave a mocking sketch of a sigh. P 6.—14

The most usual verbs coming under [3] are *to be* and *to have* but ex. 18 shows that there are even other verbs that may belong here. Needless to say, the verbs of the described type perform the function of transition proper in their ordinary, non-marked use in FSP. Under special circumstances (due to special contextual situation), they may become bearers of rheme proper and come under [5].

[2] The notional part of the verb may become theme (proper) of the sentence if conveying information known from the preceding context; see, e.g., *wanted* in 19.

19. [...the girl... who now said she wanted a packet of Players,] though what she really wanted — ... — was to get talking to these chaps. P 4.16

Even here, the TME's are to be regarded as constituting transition proper. Also included in this class are instances where only the auxiliary verb complies with the conditions of classification (cf. note<sup>8</sup>).

[1] At the bottom of the scale are instances in which both the notional part and the TME's are theme proper of the sentence. Out of the very few instances found in the short extract analyzed in this paper, ex. 20 may illustrate.

20. ["But you needn't take it out of us, you know."  
"... and don't you take it out of us either..."]  
"Nobody's taking it out of you..." P 7.17

#### Czech Predicative Verb Forms

What has been said in reference to English is, with due alterations, applicable to Czech.

[5] In the analyzed text, no predicative verb form has been found that has become bearer of rheme proper on account of its TME's. All the verbs coming under [5] function as rheme proper on account of their notional components. Ex. 21 (a Czech version of ex. 15) may illustrate.

21. Modrý oblek se usmíval, možná že i mrkal. P 9.5  
(‘Blue suit grinned-he, maybe that even winked-he.’)

[4] In 21, the transitional character of the notional part of the verb is exemplified.

22. „...“ zeptal se nosatý chlapík a díval se přísně na děvče.  
P 9.2 (‘...asked-he nosy chap and looked-he sternly at girl’)

In addition to the temporal and modal indications (expressed by the morpheme *-l*, which as a TME performs the function of transition proper), the form *díval* certainly conveys new information. There are, however, elements within the sentence that develop the communication much further (*přísně* as an adverb and *na děvče* indicating the object looked at). It follows that the predicative verb is entirely transitional.

[3] As in English, this type is represented by sentences with the verb *býti* (‘to be’), which is the most frequent of the extraordinarily weak verbs found here.

23. „...“, a to je asi důvod, proč je k vám tak upjatý.“  
P 9.—9 (‘... and that is perhaps reason why is-he to you so reserved’)

Both predicative verbs of 22 are practically mere TME's and consequently perform the function of transition proper. As an example of another type of predicative verb grouped here can be adduced *zeptal se* (‘asked-he’) of ex. 21. It follows direct speech and contributes little to the further development of communication. Similarly, the verb *řekl* (‘said-he’) also comes under [3].

[2] The predicative verb forms coming under this heading are of the same type as those in English, most of the instances included in the table being auxiliaries.

[1] The type of sentence in which both the TME's and the notional part of the predicative verb form are considered theme proper is exemplified by ex. 24.

24. [„Nechtěla byste přestat?“... „Nehádáte se s mnou.]  
Hádáte se sama se sebou...“ P 10.13

**TABLE 6**  
**Functions in FSP**

5	4	3	2	1	English
5	4	3	2	1	Czech

For the sake of easy comparison and clearer demonstration of the proposed detailed analysis of the predicative verb forms, all the classes described in the preceding chapter are given in Tables 7 and 8 on pp. 115 and 116.

### VI. SUMMARY

The tables given in the preceding chapters can be supplemented by another one demonstrating that the suggested method of quantitative analysis can be used to indicate the basic differences between the English, predominantly analytical, and the Czech, predominantly synthetic, predicative verb forms. Table 9 covers only the semantically full verb forms of the examined specimens of texts, and shows the degree to which they are dependent on the context for the conveyance of the primary grammatical categories. The non-predicative forms are not covered by this table.

**TABLE 9**

5	4	3	2	1	0	English
5						Czech

There is, however, another way in which the suggested classification of verbal forms may be utilized. It may be demonstrated on an English example, in which a morphologically compound verbal form (consisting of two independent words) is analyzed and the respective values indicated by encircled numbers.

25. "All right. I'm talking out of my turn..." P 7.12

The form *am* is given 20 points for grammar (as an independent conveyer of all the four primary categories), no point in the semantic sphere (being

TABLE 7

A Survey of the Classification of the Discussed English Predicative Verb Forms

Points	Grammatical Functions				Semantic Functions	Functions within FSP	
	Person	Number	Tense	Mood			
[5]	AM IS HAS	AM, IS, WAS, HAS, DOES	AM, IS, ARE, WAS, WERE, DID	AM, IS, ARE, HAS, I /he WERE/ / WAS	GRIN WINK	TME'S or notional part as rheme proper	
[4]	he CALLS	he CALLS	he CALLS I BROKE	he CALLS	TURN UP LOOK AWAY	TME'S transition proper	notional part transition
[3]	ARE WAS WERE	ARE WERE	I CALL he PUT	I CALL CALL!	GIVEASKETCH OF A SIGH TURN SULKY	transition proper	transition proper
[2]	SHALL. WILL	SHALL WILL	I CALLED I PUT I HAVE...	he CALLED you WERE I MAY... SHALL, WILL	MODAL VERBS	transition proper	theme proper
[1]	CAN... modal SHALL, WILL; 'LL	CAN... modal SHALL, WILL; 'LL	I shall I shall CALL	—	COPULAS	theme proper	theme proper
[0]	I CALL I CALLED I have CALLED I am CALLING I am CALLED	I CALL I CALLED I have CALLED I am CALLING I am CALLED	I am CALLING I am CALLED	I am CALLING I am CALLED	AUXILIARIES	—	—

**TABLE 8**  
A Survey of the Classification of the Discussed Czech Predicative Verb Forms

Points	Grammatical Functions				Semantic Functions	Functions within FSP	
	Person	Number	Tense	Mood			
5	VOLÁM etc. JSEM etc. PŘIJEDU etc. BUDU psát etc. BYCH, BYS, BYCHOM, BYSTE VOLALS	VOLÁM etc. JSEM etc. PŘIJEDU etc. BUDU psát etc. jsem VOLÁN jsme VOLÁNI BYCH, BYS, BYCHOM, BYSTE VOLAL, -O, -I, -Y	VOLÁM etc. JSEM etc. PŘIJEDU etc. BUDU psát etc. VOLAL etc.	JSEM etc. VOLÁM etc. BUĎ! VOLEJ! VOLALS BYCH etc.	slyšet	THE's or notional part as rheme proper	
4	BY PROSÍ TRPÍ	VOLALA	—	—	dávat výpověď	TME's	notional part
						transition proper	transition
3	—	—	—	VOLAL etc.	—	transition proper	transition proper
2	—	—	—	—	modal verbs	transition proper	theme proper
1	VOLAL, -A-, -O, -I, -Y, -	PROSÍ TRPÍ BY	BYCH		copulas	theme proper	theme proper
0	budu PSÁT jsem VOLÁN	budu PSÁT	budu PSÁT jsem VOLÁN	budu PSÁT jsem VOLÁN	auxiliaries	—	—

a mere auxiliary verb), and as a time indicator three points in the sphere of FSP. The form *talking* is given no points for grammar, four points for the amount of meaning it carries, and four points for the function within FSP. The total number of points is then 31. A similar analysis could be carried out in regard to a Czech form.

Although the present system of classification does not cover all the functions of the predicative verb — as has been mentioned earlier, the secondary categories have been excluded (which, most probably, detracts more from the quantitative value of the Czech verb than from that of its English counterpart) — and although the method of classification has been applied to a very limited number of instances, the results of such an analysis show that the proposed method can be used for the quantitative evaluation of the communicative value of the verb in English and Czech. Bearing in mind all the provisos stated above, we are aware that our attempt cannot claim definite validity; we believe, however, that in rough outlines at least, it bears out the observation that the communicative value of the English verb has to be rated below that of its Czech counterpart. An analysis of 500 predicative verbs of the English text of our material and of the same number of their Czech counterparts (each predicative verb being taken as a whole including both the auxiliary and the notional component) has yielded the following results: the average quantitative expression of the communicative value of the predicative verb in the Czech version is 28.59 points (18.72 points for grammatical functions, 4.08 points for semantic functions and 5.79 for functions in FSP), while the corresponding value for its English counterpart is 18.00 points (10.16 points for the grammatical functions, 3.57 for semantic functions and 4.27 for functions in FSP).

## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Cf. his *Analytical Trend*, p. 16.
- <sup>2</sup> Although the individual members of a compound verb form are independent words, there is a certain degree of coherence present inside the form. Such verbal forms are therefore regarded as collocations, cf. B. TRNKA, *Rozbor*, II, p. 157.
- <sup>3</sup> A collection of papers devoted to the problems of analytical forms in language has recently been brought out by Russian linguists; see KONSTRUKCII.
- <sup>4</sup> Throughout the paper the numbers of points are printed in little squares: [5], [4] etc.
- <sup>5</sup> The parts of the verbal forms commented upon are capitalized.
- <sup>6</sup> Although due regard is paid to the homonymy of *call*, *n.* — *call*, *v.*, it is not considered necessary to take into account such homonyms as *can*, *n.* 'container' — (I) *can* 'I am able to'.
- <sup>7</sup> For the sake of brevity, 'etc.' is used after the form of 1st pers. sg. to indicate that all the persons, both singular and plural, are to be taken for members of the same group.
- <sup>8</sup> The tables 1 to 9 are based on 500 predicative verb forms for each language. The extracts analyzed were: pp. 1, and 4 to 8 of *Three Men in New Suits* by J. B. PRIESTLEY (London 1945), and pp. 5, and 8 to 12 of the Czech translation *Tři muži v nových satech* (Prague 1947); pp. 23 to 27 of *The Razor's Edge* by W. S. MAUGHAM (New York 1944), and pp. 30 to 33 of the Czech translation *Na ostří nože* (Prague 1946); pp. 197 to 201 of *Bliss and Other Stories* by K. MANSFIELD (London 1927), and pp. 179 to 183 of the Czech version *Blaho a jiné povídky* (Prague 1958). All the examples, however, are drawn from the indicated pages of J. B. Priestley's novel *Three Men in New Suits*. It should be pointed out that the tables 1 to 6 take into account only those verb forms that are independent or dependent conveyers of the categories of tense and mood. The quantitative expression of the communicative value suggested on p. 117 covers the entire predicative verb forms (excluding the pronoun in English).

- <sup>9</sup> As some of the Czech forms can be found in more than one category, their English literal translations are given on their first occurrence in the text.
- <sup>10</sup> The place of occurrence of an example is indicated by the number of the page and the line where it begins. A minus indicates that the lines are to be counted from the bottom of the page.
- <sup>11</sup> The part of the verb form under discussion has been italicized.
- <sup>12</sup> As discussed by J. MACHÁČEK. cf. *his Copulas*.
- <sup>13</sup> Cf. J. FIRBAS, *Communicative Functions*, pp. 85—89.
- <sup>14</sup> This interpretation is a tentative one, for under the circumstances the absence of intonation may permit another interpretation, i.e. that of *why* as rheme proper.

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## SOUHRN

### POKUS O KVANTITATIVNÍ VYJÁDRĚNÍ SDĚLNÉ HODNOTY SLOVESA V ANGLIČTINĚ A V ČEŠTINĚ

Příspěvek je pokusem o kvantitativní vyjádření rozdílů v sdělné hodnotě slovesa v angličtině a v češtině.

Na základě prací J. Firbase jsou detailně rozpracovány stupnice, jež vyjadřují míru nositelství jednotlivých mluvnických kategorií. (V zájmu srovnatelnosti nejsou však do rozboru zahrnuty anglické průběhové časy a české vidy.) Pro oblast významu je navržena stupnice, která má vyjadřovat rozdíly v množství slovního významu u jednotlivých sloves. Konečně třetí část využívá dosavadních poznatků o aktuálním členění větěm. Všechna tři uvedená hlediska — mluvnické, významové a hledisko aktuálního členění — jsou pak aplikována na kratší souvislý text, anglický originál a jeho český překlad. Jednotlivé tabulky ukazují, jak se v konkrétním textu projevují již jinak známé kvalitativní rozdíly mezi českými a anglickými slovesnými tvary.

Pro nositelství jednotlivých kategorií je užito systému bodů, takže je možno pokusit se u každého slovesného tvaru (složené tvary jsou v obou jazycích pojímány jako celek, i když jejich složky mají charakter samostatných slov) vyjádřit číselně jeho komunikativní hodnotu. Průměrná číselná hodnota (po započítání mluvnických kategorií osoby, čísla, času a způsobu, dále po vyjádření množství významu a funkce v FPV) pak vychází pro české sloveso 28,59 a pro anglické sloveso 18,00. Uvedený rozdíl by byl asi výraznější, kdyby byly u českých tvarů započítány rozdíly vidové.