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ON SOME BASIC ISSUES OF THE THEORY OF FUNCTIONAL SENTENCE PERSPECTIVE

III

ON DISCRETENESS IN FUNCTIONAL SENTENCE PERSPECTIVE

Jan Firbas

In the flow of communication a sentence structure is perspectived towards one of its elements. It is the element that completes the development of the message conveyed by the structure. In reply to *What about John*, the sentence structure *John has been taken ill* is perspectived to *ill*; but, for instance, in reply to *Who has been taken ill*, it is perspectived to *John*. The element completing the message contributes most to the development of the communication. It is the most dynamic element: it carries the highest degree of communicative dynamism (CD).¹ Of the remaining elements, one starts the development of the communication and the others continue it and gradually come closer to its completion. The relative extent to which an element contributes towards the further development of the communication determines its degree of CD. The distribution of the degrees of CD over the sentence determines the communicative perspective in which the sentence functions, in other words, its FSP (functional sentence perspective). As the two perspectives of the sentence structure under discussion show, the gradual rise in CD does not necessarily coincide with the actual linear arrangement. (A detailed analysis of the gradual rise in CD within the two contextual applications of the sentence structure *John has been taken ill* adduced above will be offered later in the present paper.) This observation, based on inquiry into the way the distribution of CD is implemented, is of paramount importance. It prevents us from regarding the actual linear arrangement of elements as invariably reflecting the development of the communication.

In a session on FSP held in Brno in November 1990, Professor Ján

¹ ALA = actual linear arrangement, CD = communicative dynamism, FSP = functional sentence perspective, IA = interpretative arrangement, PNE = exponent of person and number, TME = exponent of tense and mood.

Horecký raised the question of the discreteness of elements serving as carriers of CD. Some time before, the same question had been posed to me by Professor E. M. Uhlenbeck in a private communication. This question naturally involves that of what is to be regarded as an element. It also involves the problem of the discreteness of signals of CD degrees borne by such elements. I trust that I have dealt with all these questions in my previous writings. It does not, however, seem to be out of place to take them up again and to discuss them summarily under one heading. In addition to them, I shall also touch on a number of other basic questions raised by Professor E. M. Uhlenbeck in the same private communication. (Unless stated otherwise, all references to Uhlenbeck pertain to this communication.)

Any linguistic element conveying some meaning participates in the development of the communication, and hence becomes a carrier of CD. "Any" implies that an element is to be understood here in a wide sense of the word. A sentence itself is a carrier of CD. As for the elements within a sentence, they are realized not only as words, but also as bound morphemes or even submorphemic features on the one hand, and as phrases, semi-clauses or clauses on the other. By a submorphemic feature I understand, for instance, the vowel alteration conveying different temporal indications; cf. *sing*, *sang* and *sung*. By a semi-clause I understand an expanded non-finite verb form and by a clause a subordinate clause with a finite verb. The system of language hierarchizes the linguistic elements, determining their places and mutual relations within the linguistic structures concerned.

In the act of communication, the sentence comes into existence through a double process: that of naming and that of syntactic structuration (see Mathesius' teaching on functional onomatology and functional syntax; e.g., Mathesius 1975). The latter completes the entire process, not merely combining forms as such, but with the aid of formal relations effecting a semantic connection (Reichling 1961.1 and Daneš 1968.51). The outcome of this process is a semantic and syntactic sentence structure fulfilling a communicative purpose and accordingly appearing in a functional perspective. In accordance with this conception, I consider the semantic structure of the sentence to be all the meanings organized through functional syntactic structuration into one whole. Following Trost (1987), I regard the sentence as a field of semantic and syntactic relations.

I concur with Vachek that a sentence constitutes "an elementary reaction by means of language to any extralinguistic reality, concrete or abstract, existing both objectively and subjectively" (Vachek 1989.82) and with Trost that a word that is syntactically unrelated either to what precedes or to what follows constitutes a sentence (Trost 1987.148). As a reaction to an extralinguistic reality, the sentence functions in a communicative perspective, which is brought about by a distribution of degrees of CD. This implies that in regard to the development of the

communication the sentence also serves as a distributional field of degrees of CD. The functional perspective is not imposed upon a sentence after it has been produced; in other words, the semantic and syntactic sentence structure is not produced first and its functional perspective afterwards. As the communicative purpose of the speaker is present at the beginning of the double functional process of naming and syntactic structuration, the functional perspective is implemented in the course of this process.

Developing the idea of the semantic and syntactic sentence structure providing a distributional field of degrees of CD (Firbas 1967:142), Svoboda has established that the syntactic sentence constituents operate as communicative units within this distributional field (Svoboda 1968). He has also established that a communicative unit implemented as a subordinate clause, a semi-clause or even a noun phrase provides a distributional field of CD with its own communicative units and functional perspective (Svoboda 1987). Distributional subfields are created at all levels of syntactic subordination.

In *John is absent because he has been taken ill*, the *because*-clause serves as a communicative unit which in its turn provides a distributional subfield with communicative units of its own. In reply to *What about John?*, the sentence structure is perspectived towards the *because*-clause, which in its turn is perspectived towards *ill*. It is important to note that syntactic subordination does not prevent a communicative unit from conveying a piece of information towards which the distributional field is perspectived; in other words, syntactic subordination does not prevent a communicative unit from carrying the highest degree of CD.

Special mention must be made of the verb, which — as has been established by analyses of texts — operates as two communicative units, one being constituted by the notional component of the verb and the other by its categorial exponents, i.e. such formal signals as those of person, number, tense, mood, voice, positive or negative polarity, etc. The categorial exponents are implemented by separate words (auxiliary verbs), and/or affixes (prefixes, suffixes, endings) and/or submorphemic features.

Viewed as a basic distributional field, the sentence structure *John is absent because he has been taken ill* consists of the following communicative units: *John*, *absent*, *because he has been taken ill* and the two units welded into one word, *is*. The *because*-clause, providing a distributional subfield, consists of the communicative units *he*, *has* + *been* + [submorphemic] *-a-* + *-en*, *tak-*, and *because*. Not forming part of any of the constituents present, the conjunction *because* is regarded as a communicative unit in its own right.

It must be emphasized that a linguistic element conveying some meaning and therefore acting as a carrier of CD does not necessarily constitute a communicative unit but may only form part of one. For instance, the

element *-s* in *has been -a- -en* conveys the indication of person and number (acting as an exponent of person and number) and simultaneously, within *has* and together with *been*, the temporal and modal indications (acting as an exponent of tense and mood). In doing so, it conveys meaning and carries CD, but does not function as a communicative unit. It follows that every communicative unit is a carrier of CD, but not every carrier of CD is a communicative unit. I shall come back to this observation later.

The preceding paragraphs have demonstrated what types of elements form communicative units and mapped out their organization. The possibility of distinguishing between elements serving as communicative units and elements only forming parts of communicative units and the possibility of identifying the place an element occupies within the hierarchy outlined testifies to the discreteness of the elements of whatever type or rank. From the point of view of the double process of sentence production, it is the process of functional syntactic structuration that produces the distributional fields with their communicative units. Let me now turn my attention to the question of the discreteness of the signals of degrees of CD.

In my writings I have endeavoured to demonstrate that the distribution of degrees of CD over a distributional field is the outcome of an interplay of factors — linear modification, the contextual factor and the semantic factor operating both in the written language and in the spoken language, and intonation joining their interplay in the spoken language. An FSP factor is to be understood as a formative force that participates in bringing about the distribution of CD by affecting the communicative value of a semantic content in regard to the further development of the communication and that has means at its disposal which serve as signals.

The operation of linear modification can be illustrated by the following examples: *Mother has gone for a walk with John*, *Mother has gone with John for a walk*, *John has been taken for a walk by Mother*, *John has been taken by Mother for a walk*. Provided that in each case the entire sentence structure either conveys information irretrievable from the immediately relevant verbal and/or situational context or does so with the exception of the subject, which conveys retrievable information, the sentence positions signal a gradual rise in CD. This observation is in harmony with Bolinger's dictum that "gradation of position creates gradation of meaning when there are no interfering factors" (1952.1125). In regard to the further development of the communication, i.e. in terms of CD, this means that if not prevented from doing so by other factors, linearity gradually raises the communicative values of the semantic contents in the direction from the beginning to the end of the distributional field. Step by step, gradation of position brings the message to its completion, gradually raising the degrees of CD thereby.

Retrievability or irretrievability of the information from the immedi-

ately relevant preceding verbal context and/or the immediately relevant situational context constitutes an important circumstance. For it is through such retrievability that the contextual factor, the second of the three FSP factors operating in the written language, manifests itself. This takes place in the following way. An element conveying retrievable information and being in this sense context-dependent contributes less to the further development of the communication than an element conveying irretrievable information and being in this sense context-independent. It carries a lower degree of CD than a context-independent element. It does so irrespective of its sentence position, in other words irrespective of linear modification, as well as irrespective of the character of its semantic content and the character of the semantic relations into which this content enters. If, for instance, in each of the sentence structures adduced above, *Mother* and *John* expressed retrievable information and were therefore context-dependent (they would be replaceable by *she/her* and *he/him*), they would carry lower degrees of CD than the communicative units expressing irretrievable, i.e. context-independent, information. This demonstrates how the contextual factor is capable of working counter to linear modification.

Contextual dependence is signalled by the actual presence of the retrievable information in the immediately relevant preceding verbal context and the repetition of this information in the sentence to be perceived. Though not necessarily identical in form, the expressions conveying such information are co-referential. They establish a predecessor-successor relationship, an essential aspect of the contextual dependence signal. In the case of information retrievable from the immediately relevant situational context, the role of the predecessor is taken up directly by the referent concerned. The concept of the immediately relevant context, verbal and situational, as well as the concept of the retrievability span or sphere, have been discussed and exemplified, for instance, in Firbas 1989 and Firbas, forthcoming. In the text, the retrievability span is constituted by the stretch of text for which a piece of information appearing in the text retains its retrievability without being re-mentioned. In the situational context, the retrievability sphere is the limited section of situational context in which the referent-predecessor may occur. As for context independence, it is signalled through the absence of predecessors.

The semantic factor, the third of the three FSP factors operating in the written language, is also capable of working counter to linear modification, provided it is not overruled by the contextual factor. The signals it yields are the character of the semantic contents (or features of the semantic contents) as well as the character of the semantic relations into which these contents (or features) enter. Within the context-independent sphere of the sentence it either permits linear modification to assert

itself or works counter to it. Provided only the subjects in the four sentence structures adduced above are context-dependent, the verb does not complete the development of the communication and cannot therefore carry the highest degree of CD. It is prevented from doing so in the presence of the adverbial elements, which on account of their semantic characters and their semantic relations to the verb act as its successful competitors. Only if the adverbials were context-dependent could the verb complete the development of the communication and carry the highest degree of CD. As for the semantic relation between the adverbials, the semantic factor permits linear modification to assert itself. The adverbial occurring later proves to be a successful competitor of the one occurring earlier; it completes the development of the communication and exceeds the other adverbial in CD. The semantic contents and the semantic relations into which they enter are not severed from form. It is ultimately the formal implementations of semantic content and semantic relation that provide the overt signals the interpreter goes by.

A successful competitor is an element that in regard to another element comes closer to or completes the development of the communication within a distributional field of CD. Successful competitorship is determined by the interplay of FSP factors. As each factor yields its signals, the degree of CD carried by an element is frequently co-indicated by more than one signal, in other words by a complex signal. The frequent complexity of the signal is also due to the fact that the contextual applicability of a sentence structure is as a rule very wide. A sentence structure can function under different contextual conditions and consequently appear in different functional perspectives. In order to illustrate the concept of complex signal in a more comprehensive way, let me return to the two functional perspectives of *John has been taken ill* mentioned above.

In reply to *What about John?*, the structure *John has been taken ill* becomes embedded in context through the information conveyed by the subject *John*. Repeating information which is actually present in the immediately relevant preceding context, the subject *John* has a predecessor in this contextual sphere and is therefore context-dependent. (Note that throughout the present paper, "context-dependent" is used in a narrow sense: dependent on the immediately relevant context.) It is co-referential with this predecessor, and as there is no danger of ambiguity, it can be replaced by *He*. Successor and predecessor are linked through the same notion they convey. They need not be identical in form; the notion they share may be conveyed by different expressions. Yet the number of expressions capable of expressing the same notion is limited. As a notion cannot be severed from form, the limited number of expressions in fact means a limited number of forms. Even in this way form participates in building up a complex signal of the context dependence of *John*.

Within the context-independent sphere of the sentence the degrees of CD are ultimately determined through the interaction of linear modification and the semantic factor. The least dynamic role within the context-independent sphere is played by the categorial exponents. This is because in the presence of a context-independent notional verbal component and its context-independent absolutely essential amplification expressed by the subject complement, *ill*, they cannot complete the development of the communication. Nor can the notional verbal component do so in the presence of its absolutely essential amplification, *ill*, which proves to be the most successful competitor and therefore carries the highest degree of CD. Successful competitorship is here the consequence of the semantic characters of the communicative units involved and the character of the semantic relations into which they have entered.

With one proviso it can be stated that under the contextual conditions stipulated neither the contextual nor the semantic factor operates counter to linear modification. The actual linear arrangement of the communicative units shows a gradual rise in CD. Recalling the concept of interpretative arrangement, i.e. the outcome of the interpreter's ordering of the communicative units in agreement with a gradual rise in CD, we can say that the actual linear arrangement (ALA) coincides with the interpretative arrangement (IA). The proviso concerns the *-en* of *taken*, which as part of the categorial exponents unit deviates from the actual linear arrangement by being placed by the interpreter before the notional verbal component.

[What about John?] — ALA: John has been taken ill.
IA: John has been -en tak- ill.

In reply to *Who has been taken ill?*, the structure *John has been taken ill* becomes embedded in context through the information conveyed by the categorial verbal exponent of tense and mood, the notional verbal component and the subject complement. All this information is conveyed by predecessors in the immediately relevant preceding verbal context and therefore carries lower degrees of CD than the context-independent subject *John*, which — having no successful competitor — completes the development of the communication. It is evident that under the contextual conditions stipulated the actual linear arrangement does not coincide with the interpretative arrangement.

[Who has been taken ill?] — ALA: John has been taken ill.
IA: tak- ill has been -en John.

The contextual factor conspicuously lowers the dynamicity of the three communicative units, rendering the notional verbal component and the complement fully context-dependent and the categorial exponents unit partly context-dependent. (The phenomenon of partial context dependen-

ce/independence or heterogeneity in regard to context dependence/independence will be commented upon below.) But by radically lowering the dynamicity of *tak-* and *ill*, the contextual factor does not effect their total dedynamization. It induces them to carry lower degrees of CD than the context-independent section of the sentence does, but within the context-dependent section it does not efface their CD relationship co-determined by linear modification and the semantic factor.

The interpretations offered illustrate how the degree of CD carried by a communicative unit is not as a rule signalled by the unit itself. For instance, the context dependence or context independence of *John* is signalled primarily through the presence or absence of a predecessor in or from the immediately relevant preceding context, but context dependence or independence does not suffice to determine the place of the unit in the interpretative arrangement, i.e. its degree of CD. In addition to the signal yielded by the contextual factor, the signals yielded by linear modification and the semantic factor must also be taken into consideration. The signals yielded by the interplay of the three factors present *John* as carrier of the lowest degree of CD in one case, and as carrier of the highest degree of CD in the other. In either case, the degree of CD carried by *John* is indicated by what has been termed a complex signal.

Coming back to the heterogeneity of the categorial exponents of the finite verb in regard to context dependence/independence and in regard to CD in general, let me point out at least the following. (For a more detailed discussion, see Firbas, forthcoming). Whereas the notional component of the verb shows a strong tendency not to complete the development of the communication, but to assume a mediatory position in the interpretative arrangement, the categorial exponents — especially through the TMEs (exponents of tense and mood) — do so invariably. In terms of the development of the communication, the TMEs start building up the core of the message (the non-theme) upon the foundation (the theme). Linking the information provided by the non-theme onto the theme is itself a piece of information unique in character, pertaining to the given distributional field and irretrievable from context. The TMEs convey this unique piece of information and serve as transition proper even if at the same time the temporal and modal indications also conveyed by them are to be regarded as information retrievable from the immediately relevant preceding verbal context and therefore as context-dependent (see the discussion of the FSP function of the categorial exponents unit *has been -en* above). The heterogeneity of the categorial exponents in regard to context dependence/independence and in regard to CD in general can be increased by the indications of person and number, which may point either to the information conveyed by a context-dependent subject carrying a low or even the lowest degree of CD, or to a context-independent subject carrying a high or even the highest degree of CD. The *-s* of *has*

in the sentence structure *John has been taken ill* can serve as an example. (It simultaneously functions as a PNE [exponent of person and number] and a TME.) While in one of the two contextual applications of the structure discussed above, it points to *John* carrying the lowest degree of CD, in the other it points to *John* carrying the highest degree of CD. Categorical exponents are an example of a communicative unit containing a number of CD carriers. They illustrate the conclusion that every communicative unit is a carrier of CD, but not every carrier of CD is necessarily a communicative unit.

Heterogeneity in regard to context dependence/independence and in regard to degrees of CD in general is a phenomenon that, in my view, an inquirer into FSP must take into account. Let me just add some comment on the following passage closing a paragraph in Chapter Six of Katherine Mansfield's short story "At the bay", Ch. 6, end of 2nd par.

It was very pleasant to know that all these bungalows were empty, that everybody was down on the beach, out of sight, out of hearing. She had the garden to herself; she was alone.

She, *herself* and *she* all refer back to the retrievable notion of "Linda", and in this respect are all context-dependent. Nevertheless, *herself* conveys additional information that is irretrievable: Linda's becoming exclusive possessor of the garden for the moment. This additional context-independent information predominates to such an extent as to induce *herself* to function in the same way as if it were entirely context-independent; it even comes to convey the information towards which the communication is perspectived and carries the highest degree of CD. The form of the emphatic pronoun is in harmony with this rise in CD. It could be argued that *alone* repeats the information conveyed by *herself* and is therefore to be regarded as its successor and necessarily context-dependent. The unit *alone* indeed takes up the meaning of "all by herself", acts as successor and is context-dependent in this sense. The repetition, however, serves a good purpose, producing an effective summarizing effect. Summarizing is actually based here on the immediately relevant preceding context, which prepares the way for the final note, but does not contain it. In this respect, the summarizing effect is irretrievable and becomes an important piece of additional context-independent information that under the circumstances predominates. The summarizing effect is enhanced by the end position of the sentence in the paragraph.

I have so far dealt with signals provided by the interplay of FSP factors operating within the written language. In the spoken language, this interplay is joined by intonation. In addition to serving as a distributional field of CD, the spoken sentence also serves as a distributional field of prosodic prominence (PP). The signals yielded by intonation are those reflecting the degrees of PP. Following O'Connor and Arnold, I distinguish between absence of stress, unaccented stress (stress occurring

in the preheads and the tails of tone units), accented stress (stress occurring in the heads of tone units) and nuclear stress (see O'Connor and Arnold 1973). This scale of PP can be extended if the operation of linear modification is taken into account. Of two features of the same rank, for instance two accented stresses or two nuclear stresses, the one occurring later shows a higher degree of PP. The most important modification of this observation concerns a low rise occurring after a fall within one distributional field. Though occurring after the fall, the low rise appears to be prosodically less prominent. It follows that as an FSP factor intonation has at its disposal a wide extensive gamut of features of PP.

I have devoted a number of studies to the relationship between the non-prosodic distribution of degrees of CD and the distribution of degrees of PP. Four of them, Firbas 1980, 1985, 1987a and 1989, which form an integrated whole, and the second part of the synthesis of my inquiries into FSP (Firbas, forthcoming), offer detailed contributions to the problem of this relationship. They adduce copious examples, Firbas 1987a, 1989 and Firbas, forthcoming, also offering analyses of texts. For considerations of space I will just briefly summarize the results of these studies.

As an FSP factor, intonation manifests itself in two, or rather three, ways: (i) it faithfully reflects the non-prosodic CD distribution as determined by the non-prosodic FSP factors, achieving a perfect correspondence between this distribution and the distribution of PP; (ii) it prosodically intensifies a communicative unit, deviating from the perfect correspondence between the two distributions but not affecting the theme-rheme relationship as determined by the non-prosodic interplay of FSP factors; the intensification it effects is therefore referred to as non-re-evaluating; (iii) it prosodically intensifies a non-rhematic communicative unit, deviating from the theme-rheme relationship as determined by the non-prosodic interplay of FSP factors; the intensification it effects is therefore referred to as re-evaluating.

As an FSP factor, intonation does not operate independently of the three non-prosodic FSP factors. The non-prosodic CD distribution determined by them is not obliterated in the spoken language. On the contrary, it is against the background of perfect correspondence between the non-prosodic CD distribution and the PP distribution that the prosodic intensification, non-re-evaluating and re-evaluating, operates. Conveying additional attitudinal meaning, which is to be regarded as a kind of information, prosodic intensification contributes towards the development of communication and effects a rise or rises in CD. An intensifying prosodic feature is therefore to be regarded as a *sui generis* carrier of CD. In general, a prosodic feature, intensifying or non-intensifying, becomes part of a complex signal operating in the spoken language.

The inquiry into the relationship between the non-prosodic distribution of CD and the distribution of PP substantiates the conception of FSP

as a system. Like other systems of language, the system of FSP is not a rigidly closed one. Equivocal interplay of FSP factors, which produces the phenomenon of potentiality (see Firbas 1986:56—7), creates a periphery of the system.

Intonation is a specific means of the spoken language. It does not operate in the written language. The written language, which is implemented through graphic substance, and the spoken language, which is implemented through phonic substance, constitute two language norms (Vachek 1989). The moment intonation joins the interplay of FSP factors, a process is initiated that after Haas (1970) can be characterized as grapho-phonic translation.

Speaking in terms of communicative units and CD carriers, one can hardly say that an intonational (prosodic) feature is capable of serving as a communicative unit. But if producing what has been termed here "prosodic intensification", it conveys or co-conveys an attitude of the speaker. If conveyed, the speaker's attitude represents a kind of meaning (information). As its conveyer or co-conveyer, an intensifying prosodic feature participates in the development of the communication and serves as a carrier of CD.

This brings me to the end of my notes on the discreteness of communicative units, and elements in general, serving as carriers of CD in FSP, and on the discreteness of signals of degrees of CD. I have not exhausted the problem, but I may perhaps claim to have illustrated how through FSP language modifies the communicative value of the semantic contents of elements it employs in order to make them fulfil a communicative purpose. Inspired by Professor Uhlenbeck's suggestions, I shall now add four more notes, two concerning FSP and linearity, one the nature of FSP, and one its implementation in Indo-European and non-Indo-European languages.

The first note on FSP and linearity concerns the notion of "starting point". Comparing the actual linear arrangement and the interpretative arrangement, both accounted for and illustrated above, we can establish two starting points: (i) one opening the actual sequence of the elements of a sentence/clause/semi-clause/phrase and (ii) one opening a sequence of the same elements, but arranged by the interpreter in accordance with a gradual rise in CD. Under these circumstances, the starting point of the actual linear arrangement is constituted by the opening syntactic constituent of the given structure, and the starting point of the interpretative arrangement by the syntactic constituent acting as the communicative unit carrying the lowest degree(s) of CD within the same structure. The two starting points may coincide or differ. The same applies to the rest of the two arrangements. A comparison of languages in regard to these coincidences and differences throws interesting light on the characters of the structures of the languages compared. This is, for instance, borne out by Golková's contribution to the present volume

(Golková 1991), in which she compares the sentence/clause beginnings in English and Czech in regard to syntax and FSP.

Regarding an element as a starting point on account of its actual initial position within a structure does not prevent me from simultaneously describing the character of the element from the semantic, syntactic and FSP points of view. My conclusions that "in its most natural use, the sentence structure *Last night, I was reading a fascinating book while I was waiting for you* would function as communicatively oriented [perspectived] towards the information conveyed by *a fascinating book*" (Firbas 1987b.24), and that "the starting point of the actual linear arrangement is constituted by *Last night*, whereas the starting point of the development of the communication in terms of CD [i.e. the interpretative arrangement] is *I*" (ibid.), do not prevent me from simultaneously drawing the following conclusions: from the semantic point of view *Last night* expresses a temporal indication, from the syntactic point of view it serves as an adverbial, and from the FSP point view it performs the dynamic semantic function of a setting and serves as a thematic (diathematic) element. It is important to add that in my approach I do not invariably link the opening of a distributional field with any semantic, syntactic or FSP function. (For a more detailed discussion of the two starting points defined above, see Firbas 1987b.)

The second note on FSP and linearity concerns the notions of sequence and order. In this connection, let me recall Bolinger's dictum "Gradation of position creates gradation of meaning when there are no interfering factors" (1952.1125), which has been applied as a starting hypothesis in my inquiry into the distribution of degrees of CD within the distributional fields of various ranks. I trust that my research into FSP has corroborated the hypothesis. Linear modification is a formative force in FSP that raises the degrees of CD in the direction from the beginning to the end of the distributional field provided another formative force, i.e. another FSP factor, does not interfere.

Professor Uhlenbeck makes a distinction between sequence and order in the sense that whereas sequence merely refers to the fact that A follows B and has no linguistic significance, order refers to the arrangement that serves a good communicative purpose and is linguistically significant. Bearing this distinction in mind, one could say the following. Out of sheer necessity, the language user simply must put one element after the other in producing sentences. Linearity is an ever-present phenomenon in communication. But applying Bolinger's dictum in the sense accounted for, the investigator into FSP finds that language is capable of making a virtue of necessity, endowing linearity with modificatory power and employing it as one of the factors operating in the development of the communication — a factor participating in the distribution of degrees of CD and so co-effecting a functional perspective. I trust that my previous investigations into FSP have demonstrated the validity of

this observation in regard to Indo-European languages. I can only venture the hypothesis that with due alterations it also holds good for non-Indo-European languages.

In the third note, concerning the nature of FSP, I should like to offer the following comment. In the course of the development of the communication taking place within a sentence, the interplay of FSP factors keeps on modifying the communicative values of the semantic contents of the elements involved. This constant dynamic process of modifying the communicative values of semantic contents has prompted me to say that FSP is ultimately a semantic phenomenon (1984.63). But this formulation is not a fully balanced one. On the one hand, it does not explicitly express and emphasize the dynamic semantic aspect of FSP, and on the other it does not explicitly appreciate the important role functional syntactic structuration plays in co-creating the FSP signals within a communicative field provided by the sentence.

Professor Uhlenbeck is right in not viewing FSP as a semantic phenomenon comparable, for instance, with word meaning or the meaning of word groups, but regarding it as basically a sentence phenomenon which influences, modifies and organizes the cognitive content of the sentence in certain ways. (He refers to his paper "Word group and sentence segment in Javanese"; Uhlenbeck 1975.) As I see it from the point of view of the double process of sentence production (consisting of the onomatological process and that of functional syntactic structuration), mere word or word group meaning enters this process as not yet dynamically modified, becoming subjected to dynamic modification only in the process of functional syntactic structuration. This is in harmony with my distinction between static and dynamic semantics, mere word or word group meaning being regarded as decontextualized and therefore static. I can now recapitulate.

The static meaning is not yet modified by the process of functional syntactic structuration. It is conveyed by the naming units (implemented as words or word groups) before they are subjected to this process. Participating in the process, FSP modifies the meanings of the naming units, which come to constitute or co-constitute communicative units. Through the interplay of FSP factors, FSP determines the positions of the communicative units, i.e. their degrees of CD, in the development of the communication that takes place within the sentence. It is in this manner that meaning acquires a dynamic aspect — that it becomes dynamic.

My last note concerns the implementation of FSP. Professor Uhlenbeck holds that there is always some formal phenomenon expressing FSP. The signals of degrees of CD indeed cannot be severed from form under the heading of which I also place linearity. Yet it must be admitted that it is not merely formal discreteness that is in play. Discreteness understood as a distinction of concept also participates. For instance, the semantic character of a CD carrier is endowed with signalling force.

Languages may, of course, differ in the way the FSP signals are implemented. In the absence of special FSP signals (i.e. signals that exclusively serve FSP, indicating, for instance, thematicity or rhematicity), language has recourse only to signals, complex or simple, that apart from performing non-FSP functions participate in indicating degrees of CD and in this way co-effect FSP. Let me recall, for instance, the English articles, which together with other means form complex signals and participate in indicating thematicity or non-thematicity (see Firbas 1966). A simple signal par excellence is the TMEs, which on their own invariably indicate transition proper; they show perfect functional congruence of their FSP function (that of indicating transition proper), their special pragmatic function (relating the content of the sentence/clause to the extralinguistic reality, including the speaker/writer) and their syntactic function (that of signalling predication). The FSP signalling performed by the articles or the TMEs is not, of course, only a matter of form; their semantic characters are equally in play.

In interpreting the syntactic structure I have applied the classical approach, speaking of such sentence constituents as subject, object, predicative verb, etc., and regarding the predicative verb as the centre of the syntactic relations within the sentence. I regard it as significant that the TMEs of the finite verb have been established as invariably linked with the FSP function of transition proper and in consequence as constituting the centre of the FSP relations within the sentence. It can be well understood that the classical syntactic concepts of subject, object, predicative verbs, etc., may not be applicable to all non-Indo-European languages. (This has been pointed out to me by Professor Uhlenbeck in his private communication, in which he remarks that he would have great difficulty in applying these traditional notions to Javanese, which for instance does not have a finite verb.) I believe, however, that Mathesius' concept of the functional double process of sentence production is applicable to non-Indo-European languages as well. In these languages, functional syntactic structuration may produce different syntactic constituents performing syntactic functions unknown to Indo-European languages. Nevertheless, I venture to assume that even in these languages every sentence necessarily functions in a communicative perspective, and that if this is so, its syntactic constituents serve as communicative units in FSP. In Indo-European languages, the finite verb serves as the centre of syntactic relations and through its TMEs, performing the function of transition proper, acts as the centre of FSP relations. Non-European languages may present another picture. But FSP is an ever-present phenomenon, every sentence element that conveys some meaning participating in the development, of the communication and therefore also in perceiving the sentence in accordance with the communicative purpose of the speaker.

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**K NĚKTERÝM ZÁKLADNÍM OTÁZKAM
FUNKČNÍ PERSPEKTIVY VĚTNÉ
(aktuálního členění větného)**

III

K DISKRÉTNOSTI (ZŘETELNOSTI) VE FUNKČNÍ PERSPEKTIVĚ VĚTNÉ

Autor pojednává o diskrétnosti (zřetelnosti) nositelů stupňů výpovědní dynamičnosti a o diskrétnosti (zřetelnosti) signálů výpovědní dynamičnosti. Připojuje krátké úvahy o sledu („sequence“) a pořádku („order“), o povaze jevů funkční perspektivy větné a o realizaci funkční perspektivy větné v indoevropských a neindoevropských jazycích.