Libuše Dušková

Introduction

In the field of linguistics the theories of the Prague School are generally characterized by the term functional structuralism. While the term >structuralism< is common to several linguistic trends initiated by Ferdinand de Saussure's innovating approach to language, the attribute >functional< is regarded as a distinctive feature of Prague scholars. In their conception description and explanation of language phenomena as a structured whole rather than a mechanical agglomerate was not an end in itself: this structured whole - language - should be understood as a functioning means of communication.

This dual aspect of the Prague School approach is fully reflected in the topics of the individual chapters. >Structure< immediately invokes the first generation of the Prague Linguistic Circle. Rather predictably, of its representatives foreign authors concentrated on N.S. Trubetzkoy, while Czech contributors turned to Bohumil Trnka. Among the Czech founders of the Circle it was indeed Bohumil Trnka, with whom the term >structuralism< was primarily associated. The attribute >functional<, on the other hand, embodies the approach of the founder of the Circle, Vilém Mathesius.

Apart from the chapters on Trubetzkoy and Trnka, this part contains articles concerned with the higher levels of the language system, viz. syntax and the utterance level. Chapters dealing with the highest level address different aspects of utterance, in particular information structure, discourse markers and text build-up. Two chapters are devoted to points from the field of lexicology and phraseology.

Both Trubetzkoy and Trnka are the topics of two chapters. Trubetzkoy is presented as a phonologist, phonology having been the leitmotif of his short life. It was his pursuits of this language level that closely linked him with the Circle's spheres of interest prevailing before World War I. Michel Viel's presentation of Trubetzkoy's approach to phonology covers the broader context of his relation to England and the English language. In view of Trubetzkoy's wide knowledge of Caucasian and Slavic languages, in addition to French and German, his command of English was poor. However, this did not prevent him from including the

phonological system of English in his phonological analyses. Trubetzkoy found the English vowel system absurd because it flouts the rule of mutual exclusiveness of quantity and stress as phonological elements. Another vexed problem of the English vowel system was posed by the asymmetry between the system of short and long vowels. Here Trubetzkoy's close association with the Circle is most obvious in his criticism of Vachek's and Trnka's treatments of this point.

In his general appraisal of Trubetzkoy's linguistic merits Michel Viel comes to the same conclusion as the author of the second chapter on Trubetzkoy, Craig Callender: Trubetzkoy was a pioneer with ideas to be drawn on by further research. In Callender's chapter the point under discussion is the segmental status of geminates as viewed by autosegmental phonology on the one hand, and by Trubetzkoy on the other. The author poses the question of whether the representation of geminates within the framework of autosegmetal phonology had a precedent in Trubetzkoy's work. Focusing on medial geminates he argues that Trubetzkoy anticipated the modern approach in his monophonemic conception of geminates on syllable boundaries and biphonemic conception where they occurred on morpheme boundaries. Autosegmental phonology has provided a theoretical model to represent geminates and a vast amount of cross-linguistic data in support of this view.

The two chapters devoted to Bohumil Trnka were both written by his former students. Rostislav Kocourek's comprehensive chapter first acquaints us with Trnka's academic career and achievements, recalls his definitions of linguistic structuralism, and discusses his views on such topics as langue and parole, laws and rules, the language of science and terminology, historical and comparative linguistics and disciplinarity. The main part of the chapter presents a thorough interpretation of Trnka's original and very broad concept of the linguistic sign, its asymmetry and transitivity. The distinctive and semantic sign functions pervade all four hierarchical levels of language, serving, in utterances, as instruments of intersubjective communication. This adds a humanizing aspect to language structure, and constitutes the basis of Trnka's epistemological strategy, namely construction of the language system on the basis of utterances.

The chapter by Libuše Dušková deals with a recurrent point in Trnka's work, the concept of neutralization. According to Trnka neutralization operates on all structural language levels, but in his own work it is mostly elaborated in phonology and morphology. The problem it poses on the higher language levels is the number of features involved. While in morphology neutralization involves form and meaning, in syntax, apart from form (structure) and semantic roles and/or sentence semantics, it also involves syntactic functions. On the utterance level the conditions for the instantiation of neutralization become even more complex, since here the basic units are the functions constituting the functional sentence perspective (the theme-rheme structure, topic-focus articulation),

which are determined by four factors, context, semantics, linearity and intonation, and lack a distinctive realization form. Instances complying with these conditions, if any, are a matter of future research.

The utterance level from the aspect of information structure is the topic of three chapters written, respectively, by Eva Hajicova, Martin Adam and Jana Chamonikolasova.

Eva Hajicova discusses information structure from the viewpoint of the relation of form and function. The reader will welcome an introductory survey of definitions of these two concepts as given by members of the Prague School, collected from different, not readily accessible sources. The body of the chapter is concerned with the communicative role of language and the position of topic-focus articulation in the form - function hierarchy. The author argues that topic-focus articulation is a semantically relevant part of the description of the sentence at the underlying level of language description. As such it belongs to langue, the language system, rather than to parole understood as the domain of communication and discourse. From the point of view of the form - function relation as defined by the Prague School it is not precise to characterize topic-focus articulation (the theme-rheme structure) as an interplay of four factors since linearity and intonation are means or forms in the hierarchy, while semantics and context belong to the underlying level.

Martin Adam's chapter presents an application of the theory of functional sentence perspective (FSP) to a communicative macrofield constituted by a passage of biblical narrative. Whereas the FSP analysis of a basic distributional microfield, the clause, is a horizontal process with syntagmatic relations between the constituent segments, the FSP analysis of a macrofield involves two types of vertical relations, viz. co-referential strings (chains of communicative units with the same referent) and dynamic-semantic tracks formed by all the respective thematic, transitional and rhematic elements of the text. The horizontal and vertical relations ascertained in FSP analysis correspond to Ferdinand de Saussure's basic relations between the units of the system, viz. syntagmatic and associative. The extension of FSP analysis to communicative macrofields appears to enrich the set of methodological tools available to the analysis of text.

An FSP analysis applied to spoken language is outlined in the chapter by Jana Chamonikolasova, who compares accentuation of pronouns in English and Czech. As largely contextually bound elements, pronouns are disposed to function as themes, and hence carry low amounts of prosodic prominence. The author concentrates on instances where they carry the intonation centre (the nuclear tone) and become the rheme proper of the sentence. This is found where the pronoun is contrasted with, or selected from, a set of elements or where the accentuation is motivated by emotive attitude. While the English dialogues under examination display both types of rhematization, the Czech pronouns are

rhematized almost exclusively as a result of contrast or selection, emotive colouring of a message being achieved by lexical rather than prosodic means.

Chapters on the discourse and textual aspects of the utterance level are introduced by a detailed corpus study of the attention-getting devices *look, see* and *listen* by Karin Aijmer. Pragmatic markers of this kind appear to be context bound and indexically linked to a number of sociolinguistic features such as age, class and gender of the speaker. The author concentrates on the question of how adolescents use these devices differently from adults. Young people of equal status use many attention-getters to show that they belong to the same social group or network. Adults use them less frequently especially in the interruptive and floor-seeking function. In adults' speech, *look* and *listen* serve to draw added attention to an utterance, to provide metaphorical urgency for emphasis. In general *look* and *listen* are multifunctional as a result of their grammaticalization or pragmaticalization from imperatives of perceptual verbs. They have meanings related to discourse-management tasks as well as the social function to establish or maintain intimacy and social solidarity.

Pavlína Saldová and Markéta Malá discuss discourse-pragmatic functions of modifying and adverbial participial clauses in non-final positions. Generally, more complex clause elements tend to be positioned after the verb (the principle of end weight), hence participles in preverbal position can be considered marked. The authors *focus on identifying the* discourse-pragmatic factors which cause participial clauses to be placed medially and initially. When considered from the viewpoint of the macro-structure of the text, the non-canonical position of these clauses appears to contribute to establishing and maintaining cohesive ties, to facilitate the introduction of a new topic into the text and may also serve as an explicit means of textual organization. The attachment rule is shown to obtain across the sentence boundary, its non-observance resulting in additional pragmatic inferencing of stronger semantic relations. The interaction between the micro- and macro-structure is pragmatically conditioned, which involves not only cohesive ties but also coherence semantic relations.

Renata Pípalová addresses the content aspect of textual themes. Textual theme is seen as the most static, unifying element embodying the subject matter treated in the respective text. It constitutes a thematic area which encloses three distinct layers arranged from the broadest to the narrowest, resembling a kind of a pyramid. The broadest, most diffuse layer derives from and reflects the comprehensive structure of the communicative event. The central layer of the theme is a complex hierarchized (cognitive) structure, in monologic text selected by the author, whose strategic decisions perspective the content in a particular way. In the narrowest layer the selected item is focused, thus gaining extra prominence. Even if a discourse subject remains the centre of attention throughout the discourse, it is always foregrounded against the respective

background, the broadest and the central layers, which are activated even if only implied.

The last three chapters have meaning in common. Vladislav Smolka seeks to identify the aspects that help resolve ambiguity. The questions he asks are to what extent ambiguities are detected, which factors render one interpretation easier to arrive at than another, whether they always have to be resolved and whether ambiguities in language communication reflect ambiguities in reality. Ambiguities are a matter of perception rather than production and hence are rarely intentional. Ambiguity of a syntactic structure is much more easily identified out of context since in authentic texts a structure is interpreted in a manner that fits into the context. Structural ambiguities are often resolved by semantic and pragmatic factors, including the language users' expectations about what is going to come next. As regards the last two questions, a fine discrimination of meaning is largely unnecessary, underspecification and approximation being the norm in language communication. The author concludes by noting analogies of ambiguous or indeterminate language structure in other fields, even in such as epitomize accuracy and exactitude.

Ambiguity is also dealt with in Stanislav Kavka's chapter on whims of context in the interpretation of idiomatic expressions. As in the case of structural ambiguities, indeterminacy between literal or figurative meaning of idiomatic expressions interpretable in both ways is resolved by the >omnipotent< context. However, here context has to be conceived as a complex phenomenon in which the primary role is played by its co-situational component. The author presents two prototypical cases, one showing the process of biasing interpretation on the interlocutor's part, the key to the interpretation being provided by the context. The other example illustrates the way of selecting a proper idiomatic expression on the speaker's part. The choice from the available synonymous idiomatic expressions is shown to depend not only on the context which calls for a commensurate degree of expressivity, but also on the momentary mood of the speaker which the idiomatic expression reflects.

The chapter that closes the first part of the volume revokes one of Bohumil Trnka's topics, analogy, in regard to its impact on word formation. Ales Klégr and Jan Cermák address the question of whether neologisms of the >on-the-pattern-of< type demonstrate the operation of analogy as a word-formation process. Basing their analysis on the etymology block of the electronic *Concise Oxford Dictionary* they show that presumed analogical formations can be assigned to all major word-formation processes. From these they differ in displaying certain characteristic features: irregularity or unpredictability, morphemic reanalysis and semantic links between the pattern-providing word and neologism, which leads to the formation of lexical fields. The examined sample thus confirms the existence of analogy at two levels, viz. local analogy (the

traditional idea of analogy as a local mechanism) and extended analogy (providing a pattern for a series of formations). The authors conclude that rather than constituting a distinct word-formation type analogy is a motivated way of exploiting all word-formation processes to fill some immediate need.

As a whole the linguistic part of the present volume appears to display a shift of interest from the lower to the highest level of the language system, which reflects the general trends in the development of linguistics since the first decades of the last century. At the same time, it shows the wide coverage of present-day language studies encompassing diverse points outside the mainstream, approached by diverse methodology and from diverse aspects, needed to capture the multifarious nature of language facts.