

# Challenges of Anglophone Language(s), Literatures and Cultures



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Edited by

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## EDITORS' PREFACE

The present volume includes chapters related to the fields of language, literature, and culture, and what can be perceived as challenges within these three fields of Anglophone studies.

**Part 1** offers eight papers on linguistics issues. They fall within two areas: language contact (English-Polish, English-Slovak) and language-culture relationship, and stylistic and syntactic perspectives on the English language. They deal with up-to-date issues and offer interesting analyses mostly of comparative/contrastive nature. The languages compared and contrasted with English are Slovak, Czech, and Polish.

Chapter One (*Introducing FSPML 2.0M: A Markup Language for Multilevel Tagging of Functional Sentence Perspective*) is a contribution to problems connected with the annotation of the information structure of language (IS). It aims to introduce a relatively complex multilevel scheme for the annotation of Functional Sentence Perspective (FSP), an approach to IS developed mainly by Jan Firbas and Aleš Svoboda, with major contributions to the approach by Libuše Dušková and other Czech and Slovak linguists (cf. Svoboda 1989, Firbas 1992, Dušková 2015, and Drápela 2015). The proposed annotation scheme is an expansion of an FSP tagging scheme introduced by the author in his 2008 dissertation (published in 2011). While keeping the annotation tag set as compressed as possible, the multilevel scheme seeks to address the need to provide a sophisticated, human- and machine-readable annotation scheme to capture multifaceted linguistic characterisation of communicative units within communicative fields. This paper describes mainly the FSP subset of the scheme, its relationship to previous systems of FSP annotation used in the Firbasian tradition, and its overlap with Svoboda's 1988 (published in 1989) generalization of communicative units into informemes. The FSP subset allows for the annotation of the degrees of communicative dynamism, the types of communicative units (theme, diatheme, transition proper, transition, rheme), the types of dynamic semantic functions, and the degrees of contextual dependence. The non-FSP subsets of this multilevel scheme, which are introduced here only in condensed form due to their complexity, provide for the annotation of a reduced set of static semantic (participant) functions, syntactic functions, and syntactic forms,

generalized word-class tags, generalized phrase structure descriptors, and selected semantic and discourse roles of communicative units.

Chapter Two (*Changing vocabulary in a changing culture: A study of contemporary culture-related vocabulary*) aims to study such neologisms that reflect cultural changes in the Anglo-American world. The paper investigates which aspects of current Anglo-American culture can be observed through the lens of contemporary vocabulary. The lexemes under analysis were selected from the open databases of Merriam-Webster Dictionary, Macmillan Dictionary and Oxford Dictionaries Online's quarterly updates from 2014 until August 2015. These lexical units were chosen based on whether they could be deemed informative of current culture or whether they denoted new cultural attitudes and values of the Anglo-American world. Lexemes not reflecting current cultural change and lexemes denoting already existing phenomena, products, and proper nouns were not included, as well as those for which synonyms already exist. Key word formation processes involved in creating these lexical units were identified in order to find out what word formation processes are characteristic for this area. These results are compared with the findings of Böhmerová (2014), Hickey (2006), and Szymanek (2005). The paper confirms that neologisms actively respond to cultural change and denote many characteristics of today's Anglo-American culture. Changing gender roles, ethnic, minority and gender discrimination and society's technological dependence all provided for a wide array of lexemes. As this area is quite broad and varied, it included a myriad of word formation processes such as blending, compounding and derivation, but it is not possible to pinpoint a single process that is indicative of this area or these lexical units. The paper also discusses the ephemeral nature of many of these lexical units, as well as their varying productivity. The lexemes collected in this research serve as evidence of current Anglo-American culture and can provide material for cultural studies.

Chapter Three (*Skopos and Translating Slovak Tourist Texts into English*) discusses the issue of Slovak tourist texts and their English translations. It aims to show how English target texts in Slovakia often fail to fulfill their operative function because of the translator's uncritical approach to the source text. Thus, it argues for greater application of *skopos* principles during translation. The study seeks to demonstrate how, because of the different cultural norms and expectations of Slovak and non-Slovak readers, target texts need to be carefully adapted if they are to be successful in their persuasive purpose. Drawing on the results of academic research and a reader survey, it shows how translators of

operative texts should always consider their target audience when making textual decisions.

Chapter Four (*The development of the usage of address forms in business conversation in American English*) calls attention to the address mode in the setting of business talk in American culture. A case study is presented and discussed in order to identify the linguistic relationship between interlocutors, native speakers of American English. The present study is descriptive rather than comparative; conversation analysis and the identification of contextualization cues are applied as tools of inquiry. The analyzed case study evidences the usage of linguistic means conveying informality from the very start, and the speakers' effort to project the image of lesser social distance, greater similarity and common ground. The study hints that, in everyday business talk, the mindset of native speakers of (American) English is set on symmetrical and reciprocal informal linguistic relationships, yet not necessarily on creating social bonds. At the same time it proposes the idea that the usage of first names carries a different meaning and serves a different function in American culture as opposed to the author's native culture. The study calls attention to specific linguistic pointers of informality, which might serve as a benchmark for non-native users of English.

Chapter Five (*Lexico-grammatical Features of English as a Lingua Franca in Slovak and French Academic Settings*) makes it apparent that the introduction of English as a lingua franca (ELF) to our sociolinguistic reality has been followed by numerous theoretical and empirical studies confirming its existence in spoken as well as written discourse. On the basis of the outcomes of two spoken corpora (VOICE and ELFA), one can identify a set of lexico-grammatical innovations characteristic of ELF. Amongst them, dropping the 3<sup>rd</sup> person '-s' in verb forms and the extended use of the progressive are features scrutinized here. The present study aims at revealing the frequency and functions of features drawing on academic discourse written by non-native English speakers with different L1s. Using a corpus consisting of English thesis abstracts written by Slovak and French postgraduates studying management, the corpus analysis employs a frequency-based approach and linguistic interpretation-oriented methods. Interestingly enough, the two investigated features do not appear to be frequent in the corpus of written academic ELF in question; however a higher occurrence of 3<sup>rd</sup> person zero in compound sentences is evident here. As to the progressive, it seems not to be characteristic of the analysed text type in general. More importantly, the qualitative perspective evidences the specific usage of the individual features reflecting the process of avoiding the linguistic redundancy of the morpheme '-s' and the

non-canonical function of the historic progressive and the progressive adding emphasis to the discourse. The investigated features can be thus considered characteristic linguistic tendencies in the chosen settings and demonstrate the rationale behind the study of ELF in academia.

Chapter Six (*Representation of Sexes in Occupational Lexicon: Asymmetry across Languages*) discusses the linguistic encoding of maleness and femaleness, an issue receiving growing attention (particularly within various feminist theoretical frameworks; e.g., Holmes and Meyerhoff 2005, Holmes 2006 a, 2006 b, Pauwels 1998, Romaine 1998). The current research does not primarily seek to explore the nature of bias in favor of men leading to women's linguistic invisibility. Instead, it examines selected ways in which gender asymmetry gets mapped onto the system of occupational terms both in West Slavic languages (Slovak, Czech, and Polish) and English, a representative of so-called genderless languages. The study investigates exceptions to general patterns of symmetrical “transcription” of sex into linguistic choices, including parallel designations for women and men, with semantic differences, e.g. The English word *governor*: the chief executive of a state in the US, an official appointed to govern a colony or territory, or a member of a governing body) – *governess*: a woman employed to educate the children of a private household, the Slovak *kňaz* (masc.): a priest, a clergyman in Christian churches who is authorized to perform various religious rites – *kňazka* (fem.): a priestess in the pagan sense, a non-Christian spiritual leader, the Polish *sekretarz* (masc.): typically a head of an administrative governmental office or international organization – *sekretarka* (fem.): a personal assistant who performs clerical tasks for a boss or an organization, and lexical gaps (Ø), e.g. the Slovak *hlásnik* (masc.), an armed guard or night watchman – Ø (fem.) and the Czech *letuška* (fem.), a person whose job is to ensure the safety and comfort of passengers aboard commercial flights – Ø (masc.). This study draws on research conducted by Micháľková 2009, 2014 a), and 2014 b). The corpus database comprises over 6,000 Slovak personal nouns as identified among 60,000 entries in *Krátky slovník slovenského jazyka*, 2003, as well as Polish, Czech, and English data from various studies.

Chapter Seven (*Syntactic Complexity of English Spoken and Written Text Types*) deals with exploring syntactic complexity and patterns of inter-clausal relations as they are used in an interactional language in different texts of written and spoken English with the focus on the differences in subordination strategies in the two media. The aim of the study is to investigate the form-function dichotomy in the syntax of a small-size corpus (a collection of randomly selected authentic texts comprising four text types: conversation-interviews, academic prose,

newspaper articles, and fiction, all representing contemporary British and American English), and then to compare the obtained data with those from other corpora presented in previous quantitative studies and large reference grammar works of contemporary English, namely Biber's Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written English (LGSWE). Besides a brief account of some results of comparative analyses and views of some authors of comparative linguistic studies, it provides a comprehensive formal and functional corpus-based description of syntactic and semantic functions of different types of subordinate clauses (based on the theoretical framework of Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language (CGEL, 1985, and LGSWE, 1999) in English discourse. On the basis of quantitative as well as qualitative analysis of subordinate clauses of the four different naturally occurring texts of spoken and written discourse, the paper presents frequency counts of three kinds of subordinate clauses (nominal, relative, and adverbial clauses) and also offers functional interpretations explaining why the patterns exist and how they are used. Based on her comparative analysis, the author concludes that the distinctions in syntactic complexity are more likely to be found between text types which indicate the function of the text as well as the degree of formality rather than between its concrete manifestations, the media. The obtained results will serve as a basis for further contrastive studies into sentence structure, clause combining strategies and syntactic complexity in a similar corpus produced by non-native users of English.

Chapter Eight (*Figurative language: the analysis of nautical metaphor*) focuses on the figurative use of the contemporary language. The latter is abundant in expressions referring to diverse specialised areas of human existence. The application of metaphor has been extensively studied by numerous researchers (Lakoff and Johnson 1980; Lakoff 1987; Lakoff and Turner 1989; Cameron and Low 1999; Kövecses 2002; Croft and Cruse 2004; Evans and Green 2006; and many other experts). Metaphorical language is no longer the domain of poetic expression, it is omnipresent in everyday communication and it aims at evoking particular images. Phrases and expressions employing the nautical lexicon are frequently encountered and employed to refer to a diversity of phenomena. The present analysis is directed at investigating the use of such lexical items and their metaphorical extensions. Contrastive analysis is carried out on selected exemplars of such language in English and Polish. English phrases or expressions are discussed and, wherever possible, Polish equivalents are provided. The study aims to search for common underlying concepts as well as point to areas where both languages demonstrate a considerable diversity of linguistic representation. Finally, an attempt is

made at outlining some of the metaphors which motivate lexical representation in the form of exemplified expressions. The explanatory power of conceptual metaphors lies in their linguistic reflection of extralinguistic reality. It seems that English is more abundant in lexical representation pertaining to the maritime world, which might be related to its long naval history. In Polish, many of the equivalent phrases are unrelated to the nautical lexicon, as numerous corresponding meanings seem to have undergone the process of metaphorisation with the application of diverse images.

**Part 2** includes four papers on Literature dealing mostly with twentieth-century American, English, and Australian literature. They focus both on poetry and prose and are concerned with topics of identity, gender, metafiction, postmodern conditions and other relevant theoretical issues in contemporary literature. The extended analyses and original interpretations designated by these papers shed light on the development of these literatures in English during the second half of the twentieth century, on their representative authors and some of the most distinguished work by these writers. The papers often suggest interesting comparative approaches for further in-depth research.

Chapter Nine (*Self-referentiality and Fiction Writing in Martin Amis's 'Money'*) focuses on *Money*, one of the best-known novels by the British author Martin Amis. Its plot revolves around John Self, a British producer of ads, who is about to embark on a seemingly lucrative project in a movie that is to be produced in the US. The study aims to explore the techniques that Amis employs, focusing on metafictionality. It briefly discusses what metafiction (or self-referentiality) is and how it differs from both the realist and the modernist novel. The study also focuses on how Amis discusses such aesthetic issues as realism, reality, fiction, motivation, and morality. The novel is stubbornly metanarrative and draws attention to the fictionality of its text and readers are constantly made aware that they are reading a text, a fictional construction. We see how *Money*, as a self-referential novel, inherently and unavoidably involves a "theorizing" of itself. In it, Amis discusses such issues as the relationship between the author and the text, the relationship between the reader and the text, as well as the relationship between the author and his own creations. In the novel, the writer himself becomes part of the story as a character (called Martin Amis) and he gradually takes over the writing of the protagonist's movie script. In such novels, the "workings" of the fiction are laid bare and the readers become part of the creation process.

Chapter Ten (*Tears behind the Laughter in Alexis Wright's 'Carpentaria'*) presents the contemporary indigenous literature of the Australian



Aboriginal writer, Alexis Wright, focusing on her novel *Carpentaria* (2006). Wright, one of the most appreciated writers of indigenous origin, is inspired by cosmology, various narrative strategies and the oral storytelling tradition of Australian Aboriginals, resulting in her specific style that goes beyond classical Western literary tradition. Many contemporary writers of indigenous origin have introduced a new concept of writing, as they started presenting a different point of view based mostly on the knowledge and experience preserved in oral traditions, the myths and stories of the communities they came from as their reaction against the dominancy of the white world. Among the characteristic features of Wright's novel is her specific kind of humour, irony, and allegory, present on many levels in the novel. The focus of the study is Alexis Wright and her creativity in order to achieve a critical reflection of the situation within the Aboriginal community and the dominant non-Aboriginal community. This is done through the depiction of the characters, the way they act in certain situations, and through observing how the elements of humour serve to confront the reader with contrasts and the tragic reality of Australian Aboriginals.

Chapter Eleven (*The Meaning of the Self in Contemporary American and Albanian Poetry. Being a Woman in the Poetry of Marge Piercy and Natasha Lako*) aims to analyze the complex (poetic) reality of being a woman and the poetic images related to this reality in the poetry of two representative poets in American and Albanian poetry – respectively Marge Piercy and Natasha Lako. The genuine meaning of the self in their poetry and the way a woman (poet) relates to herself and to the world – mainly expressed through references to everyday life, cultural heredity, social contexts, and symbolic and analogical systems widely based on nature, and the female body – is at the core of the analysis. Natasha Lako is the first famous woman poet in Albanian literature and one of the greatest innovators in contemporary Albanian poetry. Her poems are translated into some 14 languages. The focus of the analysis is her poetry during communism and the new perspective displayed in her volumes after the collapse of the regime in the 1990s. On the other hand, Marge Piercy needs very little introduction since she is a key representative of contemporary American literature. The paper focuses mainly on the poems found in her memoir “Sleeping with cats”. Piercy's and Lako's poetry is analyzed in a comparative and hermeneutical approach with emphasis on several aspects of text analysis. This approach to the poetry of two eminent women poets aims to contribute to the study of literature in a transnational, and comparative perspective, which could help to read literatures that are seemingly very distant but nonetheless—through their

similarities as well as differences—shed light on the way we read literature in the globalization age.

Chapter Twelve (*The visual and the verbal in storytelling: writers' (un)controlled deployment of narrative dynamism in semi-visual/hybrid novels and short stories*) uses the 'narrative texture' of Audrey Niffenegger's visual novels and short stories as a springboard for analysing the communicative interplay between two channels that are often torn apart and treated separately, namely the visual and the verbal in hybrid narratives. In her relentless effort to widen the gap between text and image and re-entangle the visible with the readable, Niffenegger has crafted both short and extensive narratives that combine aquatint colours and shapes with prosaic imagery. In each and every story that she fashions in this way, the author subtly—perhaps even unknowingly—deploys varying degrees of what can be termed 'narrative dynamism'. The paper seeks to explore the relative distribution of narrative dynamism between the visual and verbal elements employed in Niffenegger's *The Adventuress*, *Three Incestuous Sisters*, *The Night Bookmobile*, and *Raven Girl*, extending the discussion to other non-comic hybrid narratives that manifest a certain amount of non-verbal imagery, such as those by Edward Gorey or Shaun Tan. Upon closer inspection, some hybrid stories employing images and texts turn out to be driven by forces that may very well lead to endless battles rather than clear-cut victories.

**Part 3** comprises four papers on culture related to the topics of constant interest among scholars of Anglophone studies such as theoretical approaches in Cultural Studies that are vital in today's cultural context especially in Central European universities. Other issues include the Irish language and culture, contemporary cultural phenomena inspired by the growing ubiquity of technological intrusions into various fields of cultural production.

Chapter Thirteen (*The Age of Fragmented Narratives: Challenges for the traditional role of cultural conceptualization and social cognition in digital culture*) investigates the consequences of the unprecedented development and innovation in communication technologies that have already exerted impact on our perception, information processing, knowledge management, social cognition and learning styles. The paper introduces the concept *society of cognitive entities* as the driving force in digital culture and attempts to explain the controversy observed in the operational mode of cognitive entities according to which these active agents of infocommunication do not fully share, let alone negotiate cultural narratives as it used to be the case in the traditional practice of literacy. Instead, they thrive on a plethora of diverse information-sharing

channels in social space. The study proposes a revision of the tenets of mainstream cognitive anthropology and cultural linguistics in order to challenge the traditional role of supra-individual, monolithic cultural conceptualizations and consensual interpretation patterns for “collective life-world narratives” in the digital era. It looks at social cognition as a result of emergent and enhanced competences for contextualized interpretations of fragmented information chunks constituting augmented virtual realities. The research objective is to prove that the digital environment amplifies the cooperation of complex cognitive skills (e.g. skills of selective evaluation, fast-track decision-making, multi-tasking and short-cut reasoning, presumptive argumentation, accommodating virtualization, etc.). It is claimed that such competences are vital for information processing and knowledge management in the digital environment. The study supports the conceptualization of a new type of social cognition which is based on continual participation in the information flow with emergent properties of vibrant interactive behavior. It is claimed that fragmented narratives become flexible building-blocks for novel contexts. The analysis acknowledges the innovative drive which resides in interactive informational frameworks consisting of a multitude of connections of a cognitive personality to other cognitive entities. The paper discusses the changing perception on discourse and interaction and depicts the foreseeable development of new learning styles affecting the role of informal education and secondary socialization. The analysis concludes that the traditional expectation of the outcome of socialization for human beings remains the development of competences for successful social cognition which is bound to be based on participatory engagement, regardless of the physical or virtual nature of the media involved. The paper also intends to point to a possible risk for human literacy called the *digital gap*: enhanced social cognition empowers the citizens in general while the lack of social competences in underprivileged segments of society leads to marginalization and social disintegration of many.

Chapter Fourteen (*Invisible Revelations: Apocalyptic Technologies*) aims to highlight and analyze a number of contemporary cultural phenomena inspired by the growing ubiquity of technological intrusions into various fields of cultural production. The phenomena in question range from diverse embodiments of technologically-mediated media representations to philosophical reflections concerning a redefined concept of Western history. What all of them have in common is their (sometimes involuntary) participation in the discourse of metaphorically appropriated apocalypse, which, in its broadest sense, narrates the demise of traditional Cartesian subjectivity and the emergence of the new, post-industrial

subject whose identity is contoured by electronic technologies. Drawing from such postmodern/post-Marxist theorists as Guy Debord, Jean Baudrillard or Fredric Jameson, the study identifies a radical socio-philosophical change in the contemporary perception of reality which has been significantly extended by virtual environments resulting in a relocation of traditional social activities (communication, exchange, travel) into the realm of representation embodied by the new media culture (spectacle, simulation, cyberspace). As a result, the contemporary Western subject seems to have undergone an irreversible transformation into a post-apocalyptic entity whose social positioning is determined by the global rituals of consumerist circulation and as such has been liberated from traditional identity constraints like locality or even corporeality. This change in turn produced a number of significant cultural consequences of which two seem particularly significant: (1) the popularity of the “recycling” phenomena (sequels, prequels, remakes, film-TV-computer game exchanges, retro-style in industrial design, etc.), all possibly characterized as the zombie products of culture, resurrected or exhumed from the realm of our cultural past and (2) a redefined concept of history whose end might be viewed either as a halted continuum of western social development, or from a post-modern perspective in which history has been absorbed by the timeless and spaceless void of media culture.

Chapter Fifteen (*The Revitalization of the Irish Language in the Republic of Ireland*) deals with the issue of Irish language revitalization in the Republic of Ireland taking into account the importance of language in the context of the cultural identity of the Irish. Language and ethnic revitalization are topical issues nowadays. Although the Irish language is a minority language today, it still deserves attention due to it being an invaluable part of Irish culture and identity. The aim of the study is to present cardinal information about the current state of the Irish language and the process of revitalization in the Eire. The authors focus on particular solutions for how to reverse the process of language death providing the reader with various significant data obtained on the basis of field research realized in the city of Galway and nearby areas. As for methodology, the authors worked in the area of qualitative research through the medium of semi-structured interviews, focus-group discussions and observations. In the final part the results of the research are summarized in the form of specific recommendations which could be possibly applied in the sphere of other minority and lesser used languages' revitalization not only in the European context. All the recommendations are considered to be best practices that could be used in many spheres of life ranging from education to the family environment. The study is based

on a short-term research stay, awarded in 2015, by one of the authors within the National University of Ireland in the city of Galway.

Chapter Sixteen (*Theory, damned theory! The need for a theoretical approach to Anglophone cultural studies*) argues for a coherent theoretical approach to Cultural Studies in universities in Central Europe taking into account the extremely focused approach of universities in the English-speaking world and the broadly based separate “Introduction to ...” cultural courses taught in Central European universities, for example as with the “landeskunde” tradition in German universities. The paper suggests that a coherent theoretical approach be required at Master’s level which, not only introduces specific cultural studies theory, but also examines the cultural assumptions and ideologies that underlie the teaching of longer-standing disciplines such as anthropology, philosophy, history, geography, and their contribution to cultural studies theory. Moreover, the paper argues that clarity in the definitions of culture is essential to any teaching of Cultural Studies. Textbooks, such as Chris Barker’s *Cultural Studies: Theory and Practice* and Simon During’s *Cultural Studies Reader* emphasize the present state of the art and tend to neglect long-standing academic traditions in the disciplines which have contributed to Cultural Studies. There is a concentration on the destination and a paucity of directions on how to get there. To illustrate this claim, the paper briefly examines the history of history in Britain and the USA to show history studies in the education system have been driven by an ideological and political agenda, a strand in Cultural Studies which is not always made explicit. The paper proposes that the appropriate objective for universities in Central Europe is to create awareness in students of the theoretical constructs underlying all the disciplines contributing to Cultural Studies and their interrelationships within that discipline.



**PART I:**  
**LANGUAGE**





# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCING FSPML 2.0M: A MARKUP LANGUAGE FOR MULTILEVEL TAGGING OF FUNCTIONAL SENTENCE PERSPECTIVE

### MARTIN DRÁPELA

#### Introduction

The present study introduces a modest<sup>1</sup> markup language for multilevel corpus annotation, designed by a member of a group of linguists who want "structures to be marked in terms of such notions as 'center', 'theme' and 'rheme'".<sup>2</sup> These notions themselves are to be found among a mesh of differing views and approaches<sup>3</sup> and "as a consequence, it is very difficult to operationalize the concepts used in linguistic analysis to devise an annotation scheme."<sup>4</sup> Considerations of space will not allow me to offer even a rough overview of markup schemes developed and used by other

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<sup>1</sup> In concord with Andrew Hardie, "Modest XML for corpora: Not a standard, but a suggestion," *ICAME Journal* 38, no. 1 (2014): 76, the markup language introduced has been created "by [an] individual researcher[s] for [his] own research interests, with" some expectation that it could be found useful by other FSP researchers.

<sup>2</sup> Roger Garside, Steve Fligelstone and Simon Botley, "Discourse annotation: Anaphoric relations in corpora" (In *Corpus Annotation: Linguistic Information from Computer Text Corpora*, edited by Roger Garside, Geoffrey N. Leech and Tony McEnery, 66-84. London: Longman, 1997), 66.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. esp. Mark Steedman and Ivana Kruijff-Korbayová, "Two dimensions of information structure in relation to discourse structure and discourse semantics" (In *Information Structure, Discourse Structure and Discourse Semantics (Workshop Proceedings)*, edited by Ivana Kruijff-Korbayová and Mark Steedman, 1-9, Helsinki: The University of Helsinki, 2003), 4.

<sup>4</sup> Sandra Kübler and Heike Zinsmeister, *Corpus Linguistics and Linguistically Annotated Corpora* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2015), 134.

approaches to the study of information structure of language despite the fact that a number of such schemes exist today. Furthermore, owing to its relative complexity, the markup language is described below rather summarily, with special attention given only to the part that serves specifically for the annotation of selected aspects of information structure. It is important to realize that this markup language aims at establishing an annotation standard for a relatively narrow group of researchers who favour and/or follow the Firbasian approach to the study of information structure, commonly known in literature under the title *functional sentence perspective*, hereinafter abbreviated to *FSP*. In its current state, the Firbasian view of FSP posits that in written communication information structure of a sentence (clause) is determined by mutual cooperation of sentence linearity, dynamic semantics, and context; in spoken communication by cooperation of all these three factors plus prosody:

... Entering into the flow of communication, the meaning conveyed by a linguistic element acquires the character of information and participates in the development of the communication and in the fulfilment of the communicative purpose. If unhampered by other factors, linear modification produces the following effect. The closer to the end of the sentence an element comes to stand, the greater the extent to which it contributes towards the development and completion of the communication. Whereas the element occurring finally contributes most to this development, the element occurring initially contributes least to it. Elements occurring neither at the beginning nor at the end rank between the two. In this way, the element occurring finally proves to be the most dynamic element within the sentence, for it completes the development of the communication; it is the element towards which the communication is perspectived. The element occurring initially is the least dynamic. The other elements rank between them. In regard to the dynamics of the communication, all elements display different degrees of communicative dynamism (CD). ... I have found that in the written language this power is exercised by the contextual factor and the semantic factor, and in the spoken language also by intonation. Together with linear modification, these factors participate in modifying the communicative value of a linguistic element in regard to its place in the development of the communication, in other words, its degree of CD. The development of the communication is not reflected by language solely through linearity. It is reflected through a distribution of degrees of CD over the sentence constituents. This distribution is determined by the interaction, or rather, interplay, of factors enumerated. It induces the sentence to function in a communicative perspective, referred to as functional sentence perspective (FSP).<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Jan Firbas, "A case study in linear modification (On translating Apoc. 21.6b)," *Brno Studies in English* 22 (1996): 23-24. See also especially Jan Firbas,

The fact that FSP is determined by the cooperation of three or four largely distinct factors makes it especially difficult to define a workable system of FSP annotation entities and annotation procedures. It is nevertheless believed that the annotation scheme introduced in the present chapter can be successfully applied to most annotation scenarios that operate with written communication, and together with a reasonably comprehensive scheme for the representation of prosodic features (not the subject of discussion in the present chapter) also for the annotation of spoken communication. This chapter is divided into two main sections. In the first section, I quickly review some of the most established markup schemes for FSP analysis used in the past and at present. In the second section, I introduce the FSP markup language itself, abbreviated further in the text as *FSPML*. Apart from the usual serif typeface, this study makes use also of a monospace typeface for text that functions as example text to be annotated with FSP entities, such as the monospace sequence “It is a nasty area and the Viet Cong roam it, mostly at night. Today they made an error and got themselves caught, in the open, in daylight. They can be made to make other mistakes.” This sequence is used again further on in the chapter to set immediately relevant verbal context for the clause “[T]oday they made an error.” The present study also uses two types of footnote text: citations of reference work in support of the main text and the author’s comments on the main text.

## 1. Annotating FSP in the past and at present

The roots of the annotation of FSP functions in the Firbasian tradition<sup>6</sup> originate in the work of Vilém Mathesius, who himself actually recognized<sup>7</sup> a much finer segmentation of utterances in terms of their information structure. Contrary to what is commonly known to be asserted by him, namely that

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*Functional Sentence Perspective in Written and Spoken Communication* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), Libuše Dušková, *From Syntax to Text: The Janus Face of Functional Sentence Perspective* (Prague: Charles University, 2015), and Aleš Svoboda, *Kapitoly z funkční syntaxe* (Ostrava/Prague: Pedagogická fakulta v Ostravě/Státní pedagogické nakladatelství, 1989).

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Martin Drápela, “The FSP bibliography,” (In *A Bibliography of Functional Sentence Perspective 1956-2011*, edited by M. Drápela, 33-186, Brno: Masaryk University, 2015).

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Vilém Mathesius, *Čeština a obecný jazykozpyt* (Prague), 238-239.

... [w]hen observing different utterances we find that they are more or less clearly composed of two parts. One part expresses what is given by the context or what naturally presents itself, in short, what is being commented upon. As we already know, this part is called the theme of the utterance. The second part contains the new element of the utterance, i.e. what is being stated about something; this part is called the rheme of the utterance,<sup>8</sup>

as early as in 1939, he clearly identified not only *the theme* and *the rheme*, but also their centers, i.e. *the center of the theme* and *the center of the rheme*, and also *transitional elements* mediating between the theme and the rheme.<sup>9</sup> Thus, apart from the widely accepted polar view of information structure, linguists adhering to the Firbasian tradition frequently—if not predominantly—work with the information structure seen as a scalar concept,<sup>10</sup> which is nonetheless considered to be backward compatible with the polar theme-rheme view of information structure.

In order to illustrate the way the system of FSP tags has developed over the course of several decades within the Firbasian tradition, I shall use an independent clause<sup>11</sup> (highlighted below) and tag it according to FSP annotation nomenclatures as were applied in selected publications of two key representatives of the FSP approach, Jan Firbas and Aleš Svoboda. It is essentially their annotation nomenclatures that have served as the basis for the definition of FSPML2.0M.

It is a nasty area and the Viet Cong roam it, mostly at night. **Today they made an error** and got themselves caught, in the open, in daylight. They can be made to make other mistakes.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Vilém Mathesius, *A Functional Analysis of Present-Day English on a General Linguistic Basis* (edited by Josef Vachek, translated by Libuše Dušková, The Hague/Prague: Mouton/Academia, 1975), 156.

<sup>9</sup> Vilém Mathesius, "O tak zvaném aktuálním členění věty," *Slovo a slovesnost* 5 (1939): 173.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Jarmila Tárníková, "Dichotomies and scales," *Anglica* 2 (2000): 53-64.

<sup>11</sup> For FSP analysis, "a reliable starting point seems to be the communicative field (also called the field of distribution of CD or simply distributional field) which is provided by the independent sentence based on verbal predication. The constituents of this field are such elements as can become carriers of certain amounts of CD". Aleš Svoboda, "The hierarchy of communicative units and fields as illustrated by English attributive constructions," *Brno Studies in English* 7 (1968): 57.

<sup>12</sup> William F. Lee, *The Light Side of Damnation* (Bloomington: AuthorHouse, 2006), 11.

As evidenced by Firbas's papers, it was approximately shortly before 1957 when he began to work with the scalar, three-element distribution of types/degrees of communicative functions over a clause: *theme*, *transition*, *rheme*. In order to delimit these functions in the clause, Firbas used different styles of underlining: dotted, interrupted, and full, respectively, together with subscript letters that "represent the gamut of the communicative dynamism as displayed by the elements within theme, transition, and rheme".<sup>13</sup>

Today<sub>b</sub> they<sub>a</sub> made an error

It is of course important to realize that the notion of a grammatical, not to say pragmatic or even FSP tag, was just in its infancy at that time, so it is obvious that more attention was given to the phenomenon itself rather than to the naming and tagging system which would delimit the phenomenon in the text.<sup>14</sup>

Two years later, Firbas modified his FSP annotation scheme into a system which used only numerals. Despite the fact that this scheme was later on used by Firbas interchangeably with a scheme that is based on abbreviations of names of communicative functions, it is in principle this numerical notation that forms the basis for the annotation of FSP functions in FSPML2.0M, as is shown in the second part of this chapter:

The small figures placed above the line after a word or group of words represent the gamut of CD as displayed by the elements within theme (<sup>11, 12, 13</sup> ...), transition (<sup>21, 22, 23</sup> ...) and rheme (<sup>31, 32, 33</sup> ...) (The numbers <sup>10, 20, 30</sup> are used if no further differentiation within theme, transition, and rheme, respectively, seems necessary.) ...<sup>15</sup>

Today<sup>12</sup> they<sup>11</sup> made<sup>20</sup> an error<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>13</sup>Jan Firbas, *Collected Works. Volume One (1951 – 1967)* (Brno: Masaryk University, 2010), 89. Whenever possible I will refer to the earliest Firbas' papers by quoting from Firbas, *Collected Works*....

<sup>14</sup>Cf. the discussion about pre-electronic corpora, especially the discussion about *the Survey of English Usage* e.g. in Graeme Kennedy, *An Introduction to Corpus Linguistics* (London/New York: Longman, 1998), 17-19, or more recently in Charles F. Meyer, "Origin and history of corpus linguistics - corpus linguistics vis-a-vis other disciplines" (In *Corpus Linguistics: An International Handbook*, edited by Anke Lüdeling and Merja Kytö, 1-14, Berlin/New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2008), 10-12.

<sup>15</sup>Firbas, *Collected Works* ..., 130.

In the mid-1960s, Firbas temporarily abandons this numerical notation in favour of the abbreviations: theme (th), transition (tr), and rheme (rh).<sup>16</sup>

Today(th) they(th) made(tr) an error(rh)

What is really interesting here is the fact that in some of his analyses, Firbas also employed a scheme that makes use of both annotation techniques, of numerals and abbreviations, thus eventually increasing the descriptive redundancy of his tagging scheme:

The functions of the communicative units in the distributional fields are indicated by abbreviations placed beneath the units. The following abbreviations are used: Th/eme/, Tr/ansition/ Pr/oper/, Tr/ansition/ and Rh/eme/. ... Parallel to the abbreviations, FSP functions are also indicated by two-digit numerals added as superscripts to the abbreviations, e.g. Th<sup>10</sup>, Rh<sup>32</sup> ... The highest number within the rheme indicates the rheme proper. If only one rhematic element (indicated by the superscript 30) is present, it is this element that takes over the rheme proper function. Similarly, if more thematic elements than one are present, the element having the highest thematic number serves as the diatheme. However, if there is only one thematic element (indicated by the superscript 10), it can — depending on contextual conditions — serve either as theme proper or diatheme ...<sup>17</sup>

Applied to the example clause, the resultant FSP tags would be rendered in the form of the following stand-off annotation:

Today they made an error  
Th<sup>12</sup> Th<sup>11</sup> TrPr<sup>21</sup>-Tr<sup>22</sup> Rh<sup>30</sup>

In his monograph *Functional Sentence Perspective* ..., which provides a comprehensive description of the FSP approach, Firbas decided not to employ numerals and relied solely on the following annotation scheme which—depending on the degree of detail of FSP analysis—allows an annotator to use either generalized two-letter tags for rough annotation or extended abbreviations which make it easier to distinguish even between -proper-, -oriented-, and non-proper communicative functions:<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Cf. *ibid.* 273.

<sup>17</sup> Jan Firbas, "Thoughts on functional sentence perspective, intonation and emotiveness. Part Two," *Brno Studies in English* 17 (1987): 12-13.

<sup>18</sup> Firbas, *Functional Sentence Perspective*..., xiii-xv.