Functional Sentence Perspective: Notional Problems

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Abstract. The article studies the terminology of FSP and its components from the end of the XVIII century to the beginning of the XXI century. The actuality of the theme is determined by the lack of the complex linguohistoriographic study of the formation and development of FSP in general and its constituents in particular. The aim of the article is to describe and compare the components of FSP linguohistoriographically in connection with different approaches in linguistics taking into consideration the presence of various terms for the same notions in different languages in order to provide terminology suitable and universal for all languages.

Keywords: functional sentence perspective, basis of the utterance, nucleus of the utterance, theme, rheme, topic, comment.

Introduction. Functional sentence perspective (further FSP) is no longer so-called as it was defined by V. Mathesius. It is widely recognized by the scientists all over the world and has received a few names in linguistics: actual sentence division, communicative division, theme-rheme division, semantic division, contextual division, predicative division, logiccommunicative division, composition-syntactic division, speech division, syntagmatic division, communicative sentence perspective, functional sentence perspective, communicative sentence structure, the theory of communicative competence, information structure, topic-comment structure, etc. Structural components of FSP also have terminological variants: logical subject and logical predicate, psychological subject and psychological predicate, basis of the utterance, nucleus of the utterance, theme and rheme, given and new, known and reported, topic and comment, etc.

Ö. Dahl supposed that the variety of terms may be explained by the difficulty of creation of acceptable definitions for the terms [25, p. 8]. It means that such notional and terminological confusion occurred as a result of different approaches to the phenomenon of FSP.

A brief review of publications on the subject. The article is devoted to the terminology of the FSP and its components from the end of the XVIII century to the beginning of the XXI century. Of course, there is a wide range of articles and research papers devoted to the development of FSP (K.G. Krushelnitskaya, V.Z. Panfilov, O.A. Lapteva, I.F. Vardul, T.M. Nikolayeva, A.L. Pumpianskiy, I.I. Kovtunova, V.Ye. Shevyakova, V.P. Danilenko, A.P. Zagnitko, Yu.Ya. Burmistrovich, etc.). Some linguists already gave the review of FSP terminology (O. Jespersen, W. Chafe, B.A. Ilyish, etc.). But at the present stage of linguistics they require more precise definition and some additional information.

The actuality of the theme is determined by the lack of the complex linguohistoriographic study of the formation and development of FSP in general and its constituents in particular. The **aim** of the article is to describe and compare the components of FSP linguohistoriographically in connection with different approaches in order to provide terminology suitable and universal for all languages.

Materials and methods. The **object** of the research is the collection of scientific works (on the syntax of Indo-European languages) viewed linguohistoriographically. The **subject** of the research is the concepts of FSP devised by the linguists of the corresponding period. The methodology of our research is based on the principles of historicism, causality, system and general connection of phenomena. Comparative, descriptive and actualistic methods allowed to attain the aim of our study in full.

Results and discussion. The first ideas of FSP can be found in the works of the end of the XVIII cent. – the middle of the XIX cent. They lead to the appearance of the terms *artificial subject* and *artificial predicate* in contrast to *natural* (=grammatical now) *subject* and *natural predicate* (J.Ch. Adelung).

Even though later H. Weil introduced his own terms *point* of departure, initial point (point du dupart, notion initiale) and the tail, the tail part of the utterance (l'enonciation, le but du discours) (which are very close to present-day theme and rheme), G. Gabelenz used the terms psychological subject (psychologisches Subjekt) and psychological predicate (psychologisches Prädikat) which received considerable support not only in German linguistics (H. Paul) but in the Moscow school (F.F. Fortunatov, A.A. Shakhmatov, A.M. Peshkovskiy) as well.

Logical approach with terms *logical subject* and *logical predicate* is characteristic for the works of Ph. Wegener, F.I. Buslaev, O.O. Potebnia, P.V. Smirnovskiy, A.V. Dobiash, L.V. Shcherba.

The term *logic-grammatical division* was used by V.Z. Panfilov, Yu.K. Shcheglov, A.L. Pumpianskiy even after the works of V. Mathesius became popular, well-known and widely supported.

It's necessary to mention that some of these researchers use not only terms *logical subject* and *logical predicate*. For example, Yu.K. Shcheglov goes further and distinguishes *logical subject proper* (the part of the sentence which, after the transformation of this sentence into a question, becomes logical predicate in the question) [18, p. 114]. Not all sentences have logical subject proper because the logical predicate of the question may be a question word which is usually not repeated in the answer.

The linguist also singled out *absolute* and *diffusive logical predicate* [18, p. 117]. Yu.K. Shcheglov defined *diffusion* of the logical predicate as a common phenomenon meaning that it is sometimes difficult to identify the size of the logical predicate for sure – whether it is a word or a group of words. The author believed that such ambiguity cannot be solved on syntactical or intonation level, though some linguistic context or situation may help. *Absolute logical predicate* is the only possible predicate in a certain sentence. The main part of the diffusive logical predicate after any sentence analysis, i.e. it is the minimal possible logical predicate of the sentence. Besides, *diffusive logical predicate* may be *limited* and *unlimited* (when the whole sentence is diffusive).

G.A. Veykhman used terms *predicative division* and *logical-grammatical subject* and *predicate* [3].

In addition, some linguists used terms *lexical subject* (the words which denote the subject of the thought of the whole

utterance) and *lexical predicate* (what is told about this subject of utterance) along with *logical subject* and *logical predicate* (A.I. Smirnitskiy).

O. Jespersen criticized the terms *psychological* (*logical*) *subject* and *psychological* (*logical*) *predicate* and believed that it is better to preserve traditional terms limiting them to their usual sphere [33, p. 119].

We cannot but agree with O. Jespersen and B.A. Ilyish that some terms are absolutely unacceptable because they either foresee the wrong treatment of the phenomenon under consideration or are incompatible with the general principles of analysis of language phenomena. B.A. Ilyish pointed out that adjunct *psychological* transfers FSP to the sphere of individual psychology which lies beyond the boundaries of linguistic research: the aim of the research is to study objective thoughts and not individual treatments of some reader. Terms *lexical subject* and *lexical predicate* transfer FSP to the sphere of lexicology which has nothing to do with this phenomenon [32, p. 191].

Terms *theme* and *rheme* can be first seen in the works of H. Ammann. *Theme* is the topic of the utterance and *rheme* is the new which the speaker wants to tell to the listener about the topic [20, p. 141]. The division of the utterance into theme and rheme is called *theme-rheme division* today.

Some scientists point that terms *theme* and *rheme* have a number of advantages [26; 32; 17]. Firstly, they do not implicate the meaning of previous mentioning. Secondly, they have word building advantage making easily abstract nouns, adjectives and verbs (at least in some languages).

But V.Ye. Shevyakova also pointed the disadvantage of these terms. While *theme* is understood in its usual meaning of subject matter, *rheme* is not always associated with a Latin term meaning *verb* (even H. Ammann called *rheme* a "Reimwort" for theme [20, p. 141]). Thus, rheme is understood like *etc.*: theme, etc.

Ch. Bally used terms *theme (thème)* and *cause (propos)*. The statement contains thought, intention, i.e. cause, and the main contents, i.e. theme [21]. Cause is the aim of the utterance. The researcher also pointed out the cases when the speech contains only the cause, at least externally. This contraction is a result of the tendency for the least effort and effectiveness. Such sentences were called *monorheme*.

The term actual sentence division (aktuální členěni větné) was introduced by V. Mathesius for the Czech language (актуальное членение предложения in Russian translation, актуальне членування висловлення/речення in Ukrainian, die aktuelle Satzgliederung in German along with Thema-Rhema-Gliederung). According to V. Mathesius, actual sentence division takes into account the communicative task in each specific utterance [37, p. 234]. Such task foresees, on the one hand, information which is considered to be known, while on the other hand, some information which the speaker wants to inform about the known and which is considered to be unknown, new. The linguists of the Prague school suggested term functional sentence perspective (along with top*ic-comment structure*) for the English language because the word "actual" has a different meaning in English than in Czech.

As V. Mathesius didn't support terms *psychological subject* and *predicate*, he suggested his own constituents of FSP: *the basis of a statement (základ, východisko výpovědi)* – the thing already known in the given situation or the thing that can be easily understood – and *the nucleus of a statement (jadro výpovědi)* – what the speaker tells about the basis of a statement [36].

The doublets of the terms of V. Mathesius were used by I.P. Raspopov [13]: *the basis of a statement* and *predicated part*. I.P. Raspopov considered the terminology of V. Mathesius to be the most acceptable (except one drawback: the basis and the nucleus are often treated as synonyms) due to their semantic capacity comparing with the terms *given* and *new*, *theme* and *rheme* etc. Naming his own terms, the researcher wanted to emphasize that the components of FSP are at the same time the participants of predicate relation.

Communicative dynamism (*CD*) of J. Firbas supposes gradual division of the sentence: elements follow each other according to their contribution to the development of the communication starting with the lowest degree and gradually passing on to the highest. The elements carrying the lowest degree of CD constitute the theme, those carrying the highest degrees, the rheme, the element carrying the very lowest degree of CD functioning as theme proper, the one carrying the very highest degree of CD as a rheme proper. In addition to the theme and the rheme, there is the transition, which in regard to CD carried ranks above the former on the one hand and the latter on the other [28, p. 240]

Semantic (notional) division foresees the division into known and unknown information, i.e. given and new [8, p. 55]. Given means something already known to the listener and new is something told about the given. It's necessary to mention that these terms were widely supported by M.A.K. Halliday [29] and W. Chafe [22] and western European linguists often refer these terms only to them (for example, K. von Heusinger [30]) without mentioning the works of K. G. Krushelnitskaya which actually appeared earlier. Besides, M.A.K. Halliday named this division information structure.

I.I. Kovtunova described the correlation between *theme*, *rheme* and *given*, *new* [7]. In some cases, the notion *theme* is wider than the notion *given*, in other cases, it is narrower. Given may be known from context or named earlier.

Theme usually expresses given. But it should be taken into account, that something unknown, new for the reader or listener can also be a theme, for example, at the beginning of the story, chapter or passage.

On the other hand, *theme* is narrower than *given*. The elements of given in the sentence play an important role in FSP in some cases, being unimportant in others. the role of given in FSP depends on the place of the elements of given in syntactic sentence structure.

Also, rheme does not always denote something new. For example, rheme may denote given completely, because communicative aim is to confirm or refute the already known fact. Rheme denotes given in those sentences which contain the identification of two known persons or objects.

Terms *given* and *new* are convenient for finding subject and predicate of the thought when the predicate is expressed neither lexically nor syntactically and it must be determined with the help of the context. In such case, given is found first, because it was mentioned in previous sentences or is foreseen by the situation, context itself, and then new is determined by the method of subtraction (that what is not given is new).

Of course this method is not universal. It can be used only in two cases of logical connection between sentences – chain contact and parallel. In case of linear connection, in mixed cases and at the beginning of the story the subject of the thought may be unexpressed in previous context and the term *given*, which is literally understood as something known for sure to the speaker and the listener, may confuse in case of subject beyond the context.

The situation is analogical with the term *new* which is understood too literally – not as a new connection between known notions, but as something absolutely unknown – and changes the essence of the nature of the predicate of thought.

W. Chafe defined *given information* (*given*) as the knowledge which, according to speaker's supposition, is present in listener's awareness at the moment of utterance announcement. New information (new) is something what, in speaker's opinion, he informs the listener of [22, p. 31].

Notions *known* and *unknown* are close to notions *given* and *new*. These both groups are connected with foreseen knowledge of the addressee, but while *given* and *new* deal with the activation of the knowledge, *known* and *unknown* deal with its availability [5, p. 263].

O.A. Krylova compared terms *theme – rheme*, *basis – nucleus*, *given – new* and *known – unknown*. In researcher's opinion, each of these pairs "has the right to exist because it concentrates on different sides of language and speech reality and the volume of the notions they determine does not coincide: *theme* may be either given or new, either known or unknown, either definite or indefinite" [9, p. 8].

O.S. Melnichuk [10] used the notion *syntagmatic division*: according to dynamic composition, the sentence is divided into separate word combinations (syntagmas) which are separated from each other by a real or imaginary pause.

Syntagmatic division of each sentence is not invariable, only possible. The property of oral speech is a considerable variability of syntagma length, which is usually connected with the speech rate. Besides, the sentence pronounced by different speakers may get different syntagmatic division [10, p. 23].

The representatives of the modern Prague school (the term belongs to K. von Heusinger [30]) (P. Sgall, E. Hajičová) introduced terms *topic* and *focus* [4]. *Topic* is a part of sentence taken into account contextually, i.e. those sentence components which are considered not only known to the listener, but present in activated form in his memory as well. *Focus* is a part of the sentence not taken into account contextually. Some parts of the focus do not always bring new information, because the combination of topic and focus itself may be new. Parts of the focus are usually more dynamic than parts of the topic [4, p. 58].

G. Leech and J.A. Svartvic used terms *topic* and *information focus* and distinguished three kinds of topic: emphatic, contrastive and given [35, p. 159].

Term *topic-comment structure* is widely used now for the English language. Terms *topic* and *comment* were introduced by Ch. Hocket [31]. He believed that topic should not be obligatorily theme or given. It is a part of theme (theme proper). Topic is reference: the speaker supposes that the listener knows the referent which is meant. Topic is not determined by the verb, the choice of the topic is done independently from the verb. Topic is located at the beginning of the sentence.

These terms were also used by N. Chomsky, J. Lyons, L. Dezsö, G. Szépe.

N. Chomsky defined *Topic-of the Sentence* as the leftmost NP [noun phrase] immediately dominated by S [sentence] in the surface structure, and the Comment-of die Sentence as the rest of the string [23, p. 221].

Ö. Dahl noticed some weak points of topic-comment correlation and other aspects of linguistic structure [25, p. 9]. Difficulties increase if *topic* is expressed not by subject but by adverbial modifier. The question of *presupposition* is often discussed in generative grammar. Presupposition implies that the whole sentence may be known. Such approach does not simply causes difficulties, but shows the impossibility to divide the sentence into topic and comment, as it does not give an opportunity to investigate the deep structure. In Ö. Dahl's opinion, the structure *topic-comment* should be considered not a surface phenomenon, but a semantic representation of the sentence. It may be viewed as a reflection of some fundamental aspects of semantic representation or logic form of the sentence [24, p. 75]. Besides, one should remember that there are so-called "sentences without topic" [24, p. 76].

While the majority of linguists support the idea of sentence bipartition, some researchers use other approaches. For example, using terms theme and rheme, O.B. Sirotinina also introduced the terms *communicative structure of the sentence, communicatively significant part* and *communicatively not significant part* [15, p. 173].

I.F. Vardul named four components of FSP: *thematic*, *new*, *ascertaining* and *situational* [1].

Two-part communications consist at least of two parts – thematic and new. *Thematic* contains the theme of the communication and *new* contains new information about the theme.

One-part communications consist of *ascertaining* which includes athematically given new information.

Ascertaining and new coincide in the sense of presenting new information, but functionally they are different: new foresees the presence of thematic in the same communication while ascertaining foresees its absence [1, p. 24].

Situational is a part which contains adverbial characteristic of new information. It may be present in both two-part and one-part communication, but it is not compulsory.

Situational coincides with thematic as they both contain initial information. But functionally these parts are different. The presence of thematic foresees the presence of new and vice versa. The presence of situational also foresees the presence of new or ascertaining. But the presence of new or ascertaining does not foresee a compulsory presence of situational.

I.F. Vardul considered thematic, new and ascertaining to be main, and situational to be secondary [1, p. 25].

O.V. Vasylyev [2] also introduced more terms. Firstly, he classified rhemes into rhemes consisting of one word and rhemes consisting of several words. Rhemes consisting of several words always have accented nucleus. Secondly, he distinguished *marked* (by the position in the phrase or emphatic stress) and *unmarked rhemes*.

S.C. Dic used terms *theme* and *tail*. Between these two parts, there is a *predication* [27, p. 130].

G.O. Zolotova used the term *compositional-syntactic division* [6].

E.V. Paducheva singled out not only *theme* and *rheme* in *the communicative structure of the sentence*, but also *independent beginning* (the beginning which does not express given), *notional theme* (the subject of utterance), *stressed notional theme* (a special construction which is used in the situation when the speaker wants to note that it was told about two objects in the previous text, but only one of them is in the centre of attention in this sentence), *normal rheme* (the rheme of the sentence with neutral communicative structure, i.e. the rheme which is naturally determined by the syntactic structure and lexical composition of the sentence), *shifted rheme* (the rheme which is expressed by the group of subject and not predicate), *contrastive beginning* (the initial

group with contrastive, not usual secondary beginning), *emphatic preposition* (the group which contains the word with the main phrase accent, usual or contrastive, and moves to the beginning of the sentence, preserving its accent or increasing it up to contrastive). Moreover, the researcher described two transformations: *the dislocation of compound rheme* (the part of rheme which does not enter the composition of rheme proper and moves on the position before the beginning becomes unstressed) and *contrastive dislocation of the compound rheme* (syntactically main component of the rheme moves to the beginning and receives contrasting ascending accent, and the initial beginning becomes unstressed) [11, p. 117–120].

O. Yokoyama analyzed communication as a process of knowledge transmission from one speaker to another according to the rules of cooperation and used the term *transactional discourse model* [38].

O.N. Seliverstova and L.A.Prozorova distinguished two independent phenomena of "functional-semantic sphere of FSP": communicative perspective and information structure [14].

For the explanation of the communicative perspective of the utterance the researchers used the notion of *proposition* (relational structure made up of the set of elements (agent, patient, locative, predicate) and the net of relations which unite them).

Communicative perspective sets the order of location of the elements of proposition, which shouldn't obligatorily have linear character. It determines the vector of relations which connect the elements and may change their direction. Communicative perspective can also change the field of action of semantic relations which connect the elements of the proposition. As a result, the implication of communicative perspective on the proposition means that the choice between possible positions of the elements is made, all semantic connections received the direction and one of the possible variants of their field of action is realized (if there are several variants).

The elements of proposition built according to communicative perspective were called communicative elements. As semantic relations which unite communicative elements have vector, these communicative elements may be either *characterized* (elements on which the semantic relation is oriented) or *characterizing* (element which gives some characteristic to this relation).

Informative structure (M.A.K. Halliday) is determined by the relation of given and new and can influence the choice of communicative perspective though it is not the same and does not determine it definitely.

T.Ye. Yanko singled out not only theme and rheme, but also peripheral communicative components – *atonic theme* and *wackernagelic theme*. Atonic theme is the component of the communicative structure pronounced with even tone in allegro and without pauses inside this fragment (according to

the plane of expression). It locates after the second stressed component of the communicative structure. According to the plane of content, it is a communicative niche for the information which the speaker considers to be not the most important, which is already known from previous text or attendant to the main utterance. Atonic theme includes speaker's remarks, his motional or probabilistic assessments [19, p. 42]. *Wackernagelic theme* is the atonic theme which goes after the first notional word in the sentence [19, p. 44].

L. Talmy and L.A. Panasenko used terms *Figure* and *Ground*. The theme-rheme division of the sentence, which is a property of the language, is governed by the Figure-Ground Segregation, which is a property of the conceptual system [12].

Cognitive anchoring and semantic asymmetry is governed by the definitial characteristics of Figure and Ground. In simple sentences, the *Figure* is a moving or conceptually moving entity whose site, path or location needs identification. The *Ground* is a reference entity whose setting identifies the Figure's path or orientation.

In complex sentences the Figure is an event whose location in time needs identification, the Ground is a reference event which characterizes the Figure's temporal location. On the level of syntax the Figure-event is represented in the main clause of a complex sentence, the Ground-event – in the subordinate clause.

So, terms *figure* and *ground* are used in cognitive linguistics to denote the degree of importance of the participants of the situation (more for figure and less for ground) [16, p. 463].

Ya.G. Testelets also pointed the existence of separate terms, such as emphase, contrastivity, focus of contrast, focus of empathy, view, etc. which, of course, have not become popular in FSP [16, p. 463].

Contrastivity is usually understood as the emphasizing of sentence fragment with the help of special phrase accent, word order or special constructions. Viewed notionally, contrastivity is close to emphase [16, p. 464].

Notion *view* determines from whose position the event is described. In this case, the choice of predicate, description and diathesis plays an important role [16, p. 464].

Empathy is the acquirement of some qualities of the speaker by the participant mentioned in the situation. Focus of empathy is the participant that concentrates these qualities at the highest degree comparing with other participants [34].

Conclusions. Considering all the mentioned terms, we cannot but agree with F. Daneš, B.A. Ilyish, I.I. Kovtunova and V.Ye. Shevyakova that terms *theme* and *rheme* are the most convenient in usage. But we must admit that scientists and researchers should get acquainted with all variants in order to understand better linguistic tendencies and terms of the XIX and XX centuries. The **perspectives** of further researches are seen in adding the data of various languages in order to provide terminology suitable and universal for all languages.

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Актуальное членение предложения: вопросы терминологии Е. А. Огиенко

Аннотация. Статья изучает терминологию АЧП и его составных частей с конца XVIII века – до начала XXI века. Актуальность темы обуславливается недостаточным лингвоисториографическим осветлением АЧП в целом и его составных частей в частности. Цель статьи – описать и сравнить компоненты АЧП лингвоисториографично на основе различных подходов, принимая во внимание наличие различных терминов для одного и того же лингвистического явления в различных языках, чтобы показать терминологию, подходящую, универсальную для всех языков.

Ключевые слова: актуальное членение предложения, основа высказывания, ядро высказывания, тема, рема, тотик, комментарий.