and the semiotic character of language are two different (though complementary) dimensions. The sign character of linguistic units is subordinated in the hierarchical structure of language to their functional employment. The two sides of the bilateral linguistic sign are operative in common, globally, both as means (in relation to a higher strata unit) and as functions (in relation to the lower strata units). Units on each stratum (with the exception of the substratum of phonemes) have a form and a meaning of their own. In this sense, even the meaning of language units becomes a means with an internal (constructional) function. (It is only the overall complex meaning of the sentence that performs the external, directly communicative function in a speech event, when the sentence is applied (referred), with a certain speaker's intention, to a segment of reality, in the capacity of an utterance. Even the naming function of language units is subservient to the communicative one.)[24]

In this connection, Sgall's "functional generative grammar" deserves to be mentioned. It is not easy, however, to state exactly how the attribute "functional" should be interpreted here. It appears very often in the overall characteristics of the said approach, but very rarely in the expositions themselves (surprisingly enough, in the text of the programmatic article by Sgall & Hajičová on the functional generative description (1973), the term *functional* does not appear at all). The comparatively most explicit explanation of this term appears in Sgall et al. (1969: 6). The authors start from the statement that "the endeavour after an insight into the meanings and functions of the language units has often been characterized as (one aspect of) the so-called functional approach (functionalism) of the Prague School", and, having rejected the teleological interpretation of functionalism[25], they came to the conclusion that "In abandoning the principle of teleology, we need not relinquish the conception of the relation of form and function (meaning)".

Thus it appears that the characteristic "functional" in the approach of Sgall's group only underlies the semantic character of their generative conception, the fact that — in distinction to the classical generative school — they do not neglect the meaning side of language units (including the so-called functional sentence perspective).

At the end of this subsection (4.3.) an interesting observation of Novák & Sgall (1968: 292) might be added. They stated that "the connective link between functions of utterances and functions of language units *in potentia*

seem to be, in the Prague conception "functions of language units *in actu*".

4.4. Other uses of the term *functional*

In this subsection we will briefly comment on two further cases of the employment of the term *function* in PS, namely the *functional load* and the *functional sentence perspective*.

4.4.1. The functional load of linguistic elements

The concept of the "functional load (or yield)" of linguistic elements and units was prompted and elaborated by Mathesius in his paper of 1931. I quote:

> Zur phonologischen Charakteristik einer Sprache genügt es nicht, ihren Vorrat von Phonemen und phonologischen Merkmalen festzustellen; man muß auch die Intensität untersuchen, mit der die einzelnen phonologischen Einheiten in der behandelten Sprache verwendet werden. Allgemeingefaßt kann der Grad der Ausnützung (...) an dreierlei Tatsachengruppen gemessen werden. Es kann sich um ihre Ausnützung 1. im System, 2. im Wort- und Wortgruppenbau, 3. in dem Strom der aktuellen Rede handeln (148).

The structural employments of units should be treated in two different ways, as a "potential employment", or as a "realized employment" and should be, of course, kept apart from the said frequency of units in concrete speech utterances.[26] — This workable concept was introduced into the "Projet" (1931) under the name of *rendement fonctionel* and defined there as "Degré d'utilisation d'une opposition phonologique pour la différenciation des diverses significations des mots dans une langue donnée" (313); it found a very wide acceptance and application in phonological studies, also outside the PS (cf., e.g. recently Szemerényi, 1977). This notion showed its fruitfulness even in the interpretation of other realms of language structure, especially in morphology and word-formation (e.g., the functional load of different formatives, word-formation types, etc.).

4.4.2. The functional sentence (utterance) perspective

The concept of the functional sentence perspective (FSP) was suggested and elaborated, in its essence, by Mathesius (though under the name of *aktuální členění větné*, rendered in the French version of "Thèses" as *division actuelle de la proposition*, and as *Satzperspektive* in a German

article) in the process of his studies on the word-order principles in English and under the influence both of Weil's book on word-order of 1844, and of the dichotomy "psychological subject and predicate", known from some older linguistic approaches (Mathesius, 1939; cf. also Mathesius 1929). Mathesius started from the distinction between the "sentence" as a grammatical (and semantic) structure and the actual use of this structure, its functioning, in an act of speech in the capacity of an utterance (enunciation, message, communication). Such utterance units appear in a context and situation with a certain speaker's intention and with a communicative effect, and it is precisely the regular outcome of the operation of these factors in the sentence that the term *FSP* refers to. Within an utterance (as an elementary communicative unit, enunciation) two portions can be distinguished: the *theme* (what the speaker is speaking about) and the "enunciation proper"[27] (later on called the *rheme* — what the speaker says about the theme). From the point of view of the context, however, another aspect of FSP comes to the fore, namely the fact that one portion of the utterance content represents a piece of information presumably known to the hearer from the preceding context or at least easily derivable from it (or from the situation), called the *known (old, given) information* and representing the "point of departure" of the utterance, connecting it with the context. This is in distinction to that content portion of the utterance which is presented by the speaker as a piece of *new (unknown) information* (seen from the point of view of the hearer). In fact, the two aspects of FSP often partly coincide (theme~known, rheme~new), nevertheless they should, in principle, be distinguished. Mathesius further investigated means of signalling the FSP-structure (word order, intonation and some constructions) and various ways of employment of FSP in utterances and texts of different types.

Mathesius's fundamental ideas have been further developed by a number of Czech scholars, most systematically by J. Firbas and his group (in Brno), who advanced and refined the FSP-analysis by introducing the notion of different degrees of communicative dynamism of utterance components (and who also, in a paper of 1957, replaced the inconvenient English term *actual sentence division* (*analysis, bi-partition*) by the nowadays current term *functional sentence perspective*[28]). Later on the Prague group of P. Sgall began consistently to inquire into FSP, critically following Firbas's suggestions and developing the concept of FSP in the frame-of-reference of their functional generative approach. F. Daneš devoted some of his studies to the investigation of the intonational means of FSP (as a device

complementary with word order) and elaborated the concept of the so-called types of *thematic progressions* in text, thus introducing FSP into the newly developing text linguistics (cf. Gülich & Raible, 1977: 60-89). (This concept has been applied to the analysis of literary texts by Červenka.) — An original monograph on Russian word order (as well as further works) by P. Adamec had a stimulating influence on Russian studies, while the papers of E. Beneš found their echo in German linguistics.

The ideas of Mathesius and his Czech followers have also been developed, mostly in an original way, by some scholars abroad. At least the names of several Soviet scholars (Kovtunova, Lapteva, Sirotinina, Raspopov and some others), of M.A.K. Halliday, and of S. Kuno deserve to be mentioned here. Of course, the influence or response to Mathesius's ideas may be traced in the works of a number of other scholars as well (Dahl, Kirkwood, Enkvist, Kiefer, Dezsö, Ivančev, Bačvarov, Georgieva, Bogusławski, Dressler, Gülich, Haftka, Pasch, etc.), dealing (sometimes under various labels, such as *topic* (*theme*) — *comment* (*rheme*) *articulation, Thema-Rhema-Gliederung*) with the phenomena of FSP.

The development of Chomsky's transformational generative grammar deserves several comments here, since even this approach seems to have been influenced by the ideas of FSP. Such terms as *topic* and *comment, psychological subject* and *predicate* and *stress* appeared for the first time, marginally, in Chomsky's "Aspects of the Theory of Syntax" from 1965. In view of this it seemed to me appropriate to draw Chomsky's attention to the theory of FSP and to ask him several questions. My main idea was that since the topic - comment structure will be systematically signalled by means of the placement of the intonation centre (and by the word order), it appears evident that this kind of semantic information is directly connected with the "surface structure". But this state of affairs contradicts the basic idea of Chomsky's Aspects. viz. that the semantic interpretation of the sentence is determined by its deep structure and has no direct relation to the phonological component (to which intonation evidently belongs). So I asked Chomsky in a letter (February 1966) whether, in view of these facts, he agrees with my conclusion that the whole scheme of the "standard theory" of generative description needs to be reconstructed. But in his reply (May 1966) Chomsky maintained, however, that he did not see the necessity to revise the scheme suggested in "Aspects": he assumed a grammatical operation in the base, which associates the marker "topic" with some appropriate phrase so that the semantic interpretation will make ref-

erence to this aspect of deep structure and the transformational and phonological rules will provide, ultimately, the phonetic realization. "Thus it is true that T-C organization manifests itself in surface structure, but it does not follow that T-C interpretation would be determined by certain properties of surface structure", concluded Chomsky. Nevertheless, further investigation of these (and some other related phenomena), presented in Chomsky's paper "Deep Structure, Surface Structure and Semantic Interpretation", first published in 1969, persuaded him to revise his standpoint of 1966. He suggested and elaborated the notions of "presupposition" and "focus" (roughly corresponding to the "known" and "new" pieces of information, the "focus" being connected with the placement of the "intonation centre") and arrived finally at the following far-reaching conclusion, implying a reconstruction of his theory of grammar:

> we see that there is no reason at all why properties of surface should not play a role in determining semantic interpretation, and the considerations brought forward earlier suggest that in fact they do play such a role.

(But the suggestive writings of the Prague scholars are missing from the bibliography.)

Summarizing, the concept of the functional sentence perspective belongs among the most influential and fruitful ideas of the PS-linguistics. It found a world-wide response and appeared to be not only in full accordance with the interests of the contemporary science of language in the problems of text linguistics and the pragmatico-communicative aspects of language and its use, but also, to a certain extent, a forerunner of these new trends.

4.5. The functional interpretation of language development

The functional (and structural) interpretation of language development (as well as the conception of the nonstatic character of linguistic synchrony) represents one of the most original and productive contributions of the Prague scholars to structural linguistics, mainly in the works of Jakobson, Vachek, Trnka and Havránek. Within this conception, the linguistic change will be interpreted, in fact, as a means of attaining a certain goal, this goal being to restore the balance of the system of language. Therefore these changes are called *therapeutic changes*.

When reading the following passage from Vachek's exposition (1966: 21):

> The (Jakobson's) idea is that the system is always striving after some kind of balance of its elements (...) Now, in Jakobson's view, it often happens that this sort of balance becomes jeopardized in this or that point of the system, and it is found necessary to restore the balance. This restoration is effected by means of some change in the system; this change, however, in doing away with the danger in one section of the structure of language, may lead to the rise of another weak point in some other part of the system so that here again some kind of therapeutic change appears to be indicated, and so on *ad infinitum*,

one recalls three cognate or kindred conceptual systems. First, it is the world of dialectics of Hegel and Engels, an incontestible source in the case of Jakobson (one is inclined to say that Jakobson inoculated de Saussure's ideas with dialectics). — Second, functionalistic conception in sociology, especially the revised version (cf., e.g. van den Berghe, 1963). Let us remember, e.g., the notion of the dynamic balance, towards which a social system is striving as to its limit, the important distinction between 'balance' and 'integratedness' on the one hand, and 'stability' and 'inertia' on the other: what is necessary is a minimum of integratedness (cf. Vachek's notion of integrating peripheral elements into the system), but undue and excessive stability and inertia of certain elements of structure may have as their consequence an increasing unbalance and poor integration. (Examples from the domain of language standardization might be easily presented.) Van den Berghe formulates also a very important question as to how far a system may move towards attaining balance and what degree of non-balance appears as bearable for it. — Third, let us remember some cybernetic notions, such as those of homeostasis, feedback control, self-regulation, anticipation, goal-directedness, etc., after all mentioned also by Jakobson himself (in his synthetizing paper on linguistics and adjacent sciences in 1969).

Some authors made use also of the term *motive* (*motivation*) in this connection. What is meant is a goal seen as an intended effect, as a reason, incentive, or *stimulation* to action. A question arises as to who the subjects (performers) of this action are in the case of the development of language. Such current formulations, as "the language needed ...", "the language strives/attempts (at restoring .../attaining .../to remove...)" will be sometimes criticized. In fact, it is necessary to interpret them as a kind of abridged (short-cut) expression standing for the explicit forms such as "the users of the language felt the need of ...". Generally speaking, we have here to do with the so-called hypothetical subject, i.e. a theoretical con-