

## TOPICAL SENTENCE POSITIONS IN ENGLISH AND POLISH\*

ANNA DUSZAK

*University of Warsaw*

It is generally believed that topicalization subsumes two distinct processes: Left- and Right-Dislocation on the one hand, and Topicalization proper, on the other.<sup>1</sup> If related to Dik's functional sentence pattern, left dislocation corresponds to his P<sub>2</sub> position, whereas topicalization proper is realized in P<sub>1</sub> position.<sup>2</sup>

The left dislocated element is said to be autonomous, or at best loosely connected with predication proper; some pragmatic relation of relevance comparable to what can be found among Grice's maxims for rational communication (1967) is often formulated. It is separated from the predication proper by a comma in writing and a pause in speech. Such topics are also believed to show a distant kinship with topics "Chinese style" (Chafe 1976) and, as for Indo-European languages, to exhibit far-going similarities in pragmatic functions and grammatical behaviour.

Topicalization proper, on the other hand, is bound to seek compliance with the rules of grammar of a particular language: being located within the limits of the predication, the topic is subject to a number of language-specific constraints. Obviously, the fronting of some topical material is not equally

---

\* This is a revised version of a paper presented at the 18th International Conference on English-Polish Contrastive Linguistics, Białeżyńko, 2-4 December, 1982. The author would like to thank the participants for their critical remarks and comments. Special thanks are due to Professors J. Bańcerowski, N. E. Enkvist, W. Lee and A. Szwedek.

<sup>1</sup> The present paper discusses some problems connected with topicalization as perceived by, e.g., Rodman (1974), Chafe (1976), Li (1976), Dik (1978); Halliday's marked thematization (1967) also falls under the same range of phenomena. Problems of Right-Dislocation are left out.

<sup>2</sup> The stand adopted here complies with Dik's definition of both terms, yet the notation is reverse: his *theme* corresponds to our *topic*. Dik's use seems rather unhappy against accepted terminological conventions.

feasible in all languages hence respective structures show different degrees of pragmatic markedness.

It is argued here that a similar demarcation of the two concepts is at least vulnerable. It seems to have been raised on account of some marginal phenomena, and to disregard of certain empirical counterevidence coming from languages such as, e. g., Polish or Czech. The levelling of the two topicalization processes in Polish is exemplified in Section 1. Section 2 adduces some further evidence undermining the alleged difference between left dislocated topics and the "proper" ones.

It is also claimed that the definition of topic as an element combining definiteness with a vaguely specified property of "setting the frame of individual reference"<sup>3</sup> or "serving as the point of departure", as well as its association with the first constituent in the sentence come across grave difficulties once transplanted on the grounds of, e. g., Polish; some of those are tentatively pointed out in Section 3.

1. A left-dislocated topic is said to be an instance of an explicit foregrounding of an information unit which thus becomes a point of departure for the following message. Since the topic of this kind stands outside the predication proper, usually no special syntactic means are required:

1. As for *music*, John prefers jazz
2. *That boy*, is he a friend of yours?
3. *That book*, I haven't read it yet.

These are also called "emphatic topicalizations" (Dahl 1974) or "contrast cases" (Kuno 1972). Sometimes the topical status of such structures is discussed in terms of categorial judgements as they do not seem to allow "thetic" readings (Kuroda 1972). The topicalized element is taken to be definite: whether we can talk about topicalization in the case of, e. g., (4)

4. *A porter*, you can see one at the gate

is not quite clear at the moment. Dahl (1974:7), e. g., admits topicalization of indefinite noun phrases minus quantifiers:

5. What concerns chairs, there is one in the corridor.

It seems that in such cases the left-dislocated element takes on a definite non-specific interpretation. Such problems, however, will not be investigated here any further.

Of primary interest to the present paper are sentences such as (2) and (3) above; the definiteness of dislocated topics in the English sentences is explicitly marked. As for Polish, it seem, the sentence also tends to resort to some

overt markers of definiteness, otherwise often expedient for the establishment of coreferentiality links. It is arguable whether this topicalizing function is not to be frequently associated with the non-initial particle *TO*<sup>4</sup> which, moreover, often entails the sequence: demonstrative pronoun *ten*<sup>5</sup> (this) + noun, *TO* + pronominal copy of the topic.

The last element — the internal proform to use Keenan's term — may be non-obligatory. The left-dislocated constituent does not exclude further modification. For the purpose of the present paper the *TO* particle will be rendered by the AS-FOR notation in respective English translations.

6. Janek, to on wyjechał w zeszłym tygodniu  
John, AS-FOR he left last week
7. Te pytania, to one były zbyt trudne  
These questions, AS-FOR they were too difficult
8. Ten twój sąsiad, to on upił się wczoraj wieczorem  
This your neighbour, AS-FOR he got drunk last night.

The character and scope of similar structures in Polish — in terms of their syntactic build-up and stylistic motivation — have been studied in some detail by, e.g., Buttler (1971), Paluszkiewicz (1971), Ostrowska (1971) and Wierzbicka (1966). Though relatively rare in standard written Polish, they are widespread in its dialectal variations and still live in colloquial speech. Since some observations made beyond the scope of topicalization studies are pertinent here, they will be presented in brief: these include first of all the function of the demonstrative pronoun on the one hand, and the so called double-subject construction, on the other.

As for the former, Topolińska (1976:48f) emphasizes that on top of its expressive function the demonstrative pronoun also plays an important communicative role: it signals that the referent of the noun was a moment ago in the sphere of our attention either syntactically (deixis) or textually (anaphora). Similar remarks are also made by Pisarkowa (1969), Jodłowski (1973) or Miodunka (1974:53), who points to cases of emphatic identification in sen-

<sup>4</sup> The morpheme *to* (*this*, singular, neuter) can take on a number of functions in Polish. Here it is discussed from the point of view of its pragmatic function, i.e. as the marker drawing a binary division between the topic and the comment. *TO* comes immediately after the topic.

<sup>5</sup> The demonstrative pronoun *ten* (*this*) is inflected in Polish for number and gender. *To* (*this*, singular, neuter) should be kept distinct from the topical *TO* particle. The two may co-occur in one sentence:

To krzesło, to one jest złamane  
This chair, AS-FOR it is broken

Next to *ten* (*this*), *tamten* (*that*) may also occur as a noun premodifier but it does so less frequently.

<sup>3</sup> Temporal and spatial frame of reference is not discussed here.

tences such as:

9. Ten wyraz to on jest przydawka  
This word AS-FOR it is an attribute
10. A Francuzi to oni się w tym specjalizują  
And the French people AS-FOR they specialize in it.

Related observations were made for Czech by Mathesius (1926).

Secondly, from the syntactic point of view the sentences in question are often instances of the so called double-subject: a grammatical device now characteristic of non-standard Polish, once a typical trait of both speech and writing. Discussing 16th century Polish prose, Wierzbicka (1966) sees an explanation for the widespread use of such structures in the then domineering stylistic habits. She argues that the fronting of the most accentuated element in the sentence (logical stress carrier) remained at variance with stylistic preferences which demanded that the sentence initial position be reserved for cohesion devices or discourse links. These conflicting tendencies within the sentence were reconciled by the introduction of a prop — a pronominal copy of the foregrounded element. The element became thus in fact syntactically expedient, and its only task was to make it possible for the sentence to sustain its preferable linear arrangement, i.e. the one compatible with rules of cohesion. Cf.:

11. Przodkowie nasi, jakóż oni w tak skryte rzeczy bez nauk trafiali?  
Our forefathers, how did they arrive at such mysterious things without schooling?
12. Pan Spytek Jordan, wojewoda krakowski, izali on nie jest orator w radzie krótki a słodki?  
Pan (honorific title) Spytek Jordan, the voivode of Cracow, is he not a brief and sweet-mouthed speaker in the council?  
(both examples in 16th century Polish, Wierzbicka (1966:186)).

Discussing such structures Wierzbicka refers to Tesnière's term for related phenomena — "projection des actants" — to notice that contrary to his claim that the pronominal copy of the fronted element may not be left out in French (Wierzbicka 1966:185f), it often proves redundant in Polish. This appears to hold plausibly also in the case of present-day colloquial Polish; the non-obligatory<sup>6</sup> presence of the proform will make *a* and *b* equivalent:

<sup>6</sup> Such pronouns are also found redundant by Dahl (1974:11), who sees no evident connection between the presence of the internal proform and the topic-comment articulation. He quotes some evidence from Arabic to prove the pronoun dispensable unless the function of the topic is taken on by an element other than the subject of the sentence. Dahl's claim, however, finds no support in a number of languages, e.g., English or French. Nonetheless, the relative easiness with which Polish disposes of such internal proforms should not be left unnoticed.

- 13 a. Ten Janek, to on chyba oszalał  
That John, AS-FOR he must have gone crazy
- b. Ten Janek, to chyba oszalał  
That John, AS-FOR (he) must have gone crazy
- 14 a. Janek, to on już śpi  
John, AS-FOR he is already asleep
- b. Janek, to już śpi  
John, AS-FOR (he) is already asleep
- 15 a. Mój brat, to on nigdy nie był nad morzem  
My brother, AS-FOR he has never been at the seaside
- b. Mój brat, to nigdy nie był nad morzem  
My brother, AS-FOR (he) has never been at the seaside.

Furthermore, it seems that the above sentences find very close counterparts in the *c* structures below:

- 13 c. Ten Janek to chyba oszalał  
That John AS-FOR (he) must have gone crazy
- 14 c. Janek to już śpi  
John AS-FOR (he) is already asleep
- 15 c. Mój brat to nigdy nie był nad morzem  
My brother AS-FOR (he) has never been at the seaside.

It seems that the integration of the left-dislocated topic within the predication proper exercises here no significant effect on the pragmatic reading of the sentence. It is also believed that the *TO* particle lays a caesura between the topic and the comment: it thus explicitly demarcates and foregrounds the topical material within the sentence.

Pragmatic relevance of *TO* has been emphasized by Huszcza (1980, 1981). Discussing thematization in Polish Huszcza notices in passing the existence of such structures as:

16. Kawy to jeszcze nie piliem  
Coffee AS-FOR (I) haven't drunk yet
17. Wczoraj to była burza  
Yesterday AS-FOR we had a thunderstorm.

He also notices, which is worthwhile stressing here too, that the *TO* in question should be kept distinct from the same morpheme as often used in sentence initial position when it introduces emphatic rhemes: in such cases Polish sentences receive their best translations as English clefts:<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> In fact the problem is more complex than it might be expected. The initial occurrence of the *to* morpheme may call for an altogether different interpretation. Cf.:

18. To kawy jeszcze nie piliem  
It is coffee I haven't drunk yet
19. To wczoraj była burza  
It was yesterday that we had a thunderstorm
20. To Karol ma zawsze rację  
It is Charles who is always right.

The noninitial — topical — *TO* is according to Huszcza a preposed rheme marker which, at the same time, must be preceded by a theme. Working with isolated sentences Huszcza bypasses all contextual determinants relevant for functional sentence organization. In effect he fails to notice that this obligatory theme in front of *TO* is first of all topical, i.e. given and discourse motivated. Cf. 21a — 21d:

21. (Chcesz tę książkę?)  
(Do you want this book?)
- a. Tę książkę kupił już Janek, więc ją pożyczę od niego  
This book John has already bought, so I'll borrow it from him
- b. Tę książkę to kupił już Janek, więc ją pożyczę od niego  
This book AS-FOR John has already bought, so I'll borrow it from him
- c. Janek kupił już tę książkę, więc ją pożyczę od niego  
John has already bought this book, so I'll borrow it from him
- d. \*Janek to już kupił tę książkę, więc ją pożyczę od niego  
John AS-FOR has already bought this book, so I'll borrow it from him.

(21 d) is unacceptable because *John* as representing new information — though it can still be placed on its own in sentence initial position — may not, however, be followed by the topical *TO*. Secondly, the sentence is also excluded on account of the fact that the communicative interest of the speaker associates not with *John* but with *John's buying of the book*, which runs counter to the exclusive topicalization of *John* as effected by the use of the particle.

The levelling of the distinction between left dislocation and topicalization proper, as propounded in the case of *TO*-marked structures in Polish, finds some support in Dik's reservations as to the real difference between the two topicalization processes. Dik admits namely that languages "may differ from each other in their treatment of the variables marking open term positions: some languages tend to always express these by means of pronominal elements, others leave them unexpressed in different conditions. This means that, alongside of constructions of type (41), we may expect to find languages with

emphatic *to*: To była noc!

What a night it was!

"cohering" *to*: To ja już pójdę

So (in this case) I'd better go

It's time for me to go

constructions such as (42):

(41) That man, I hate him

(42) That man, I hate.

The latter sort of construction, however, would be quite close to a construction like:

(43) That man I hate

which we shall not treat as a construction consisting of a Theme (i.e. topic in our notation — A. D.) and an open predication, but as a construction in which the Obj of the predication has been brought to initial position.

In languages having constructions of type (42), however, we may expect the difference between (42) and (43) to be less sharp than the distinction between (41) and (43) in languages like English" (Dik 1978:140—1).

This lengthy citation exhausts Dik's exposition on this point. The mere statement of the fact that the object "has been brought to initial position" obviously leaves a number of questions unresolved. Once we concede that the  $P_1$  position in languages such as Polish may be an outcome of left dislocation as well as topicalization proper, the separability of the two processes becomes less plausible.

2. The present section points to some facts which, it is believed, further undermine the claim about two different topics.<sup>8</sup> It is usually maintained, for instance, that owing to its fairly loose ties with the predication, left dislocation is particularly appropriate as a means of introducing new topics, or reintroducing "distant" ones, i.e., those which do not belong to the immediate field of communicative concern. On the other hand, topics of instant communicative pertinence, i.e. resumptive themes, are said to be signalled first of all through topicalization proper. Such statements, however, are bound to cause certain difficulties.<sup>9</sup>

First of all, while sidetracking from the main thread of discourse, the speaker is apt to use expressions such as, e.g., *as for*, *concerning*, *with regard to*, etc., which serve as prompts as to where he would like to direct the listener's attention. Incidentally, Dik admits that "bare" constructions may in some lan-

<sup>8</sup> It should be admitted, however, that the present approach ignores differences in intonation contours; left dislocated topics, as an instance of hesitation phenomena, are marked off from the rest of the sentence by a pause in speech.

<sup>9</sup> It might be worthwhile mentioning at this point that Rodman's corroborative evidence does not seem very convincing. In fact both of the examples he adduces strike as odd:

What can you tell me about John?

Nothing. \*But Bill Mary kissed

Nothing. But Bill, Mary kissed him (Rodman 1974).

guages be evaluated as "a substandard or sloppy way of expressing oneself" (1978:140). Stronger reservations at this point are voiced by Quirk, who says that such constructions as, e.g., *Your friend John, I saw him here last night*, are considered by some substandard (1972:9.150). According to him they seem to be "anacolutha, that is to say, they appear to involve an abandonment of the originally intended construction and a fresh start in mid-sentence" (ibidem). Quirk claims further that standard English has a number of expressions for introducing the topic of the sentence initially and substituting a pro-form later in the sentence:

22. Talking of (informal)

To turn now to

Regarding

With respect to (formal)

As for

your friend John, I saw

him here last night.

Secondly, the fact that left dislocations stand outside the performative modality of the predication does not have to restrain them from being used as resumptive themes. Dik (1978:135) maintains, e.g., that a left-dislocated topic can have itself interrogative modality:

23. My brother? I haven't seen him for years

However, his exposition is not quite clear to me: there seems to be no reason why a similar sentence may not be used when the topic resumes a fact of immediate communicative concern. In other words, why should (24 a) be preferable to (24 b):

24. (How is your brother?)

a. My brother I haven't seen for years

b. My brother? I haven't seen him for years

It seems that neither can be excluded. As for (24 b), it is more appropriate when the speaker wants to sound, e.g., apologetic, uncertain, or baffled, hence it is potentially more emphatic and more expressive than the other option.

Equally debatable is the problem of case marking on left dislocations: the absolute (nominative) form is often found preferable and sometimes simply obligatory. The latter is said to obtain in the case of, e.g., English and French:

25 a. That man, we gave the book to him yesterday

b. \*To that man, we gave the book to him yesterday

26 a. Cet homme, nous lui avons donné le livre hier

b. \*A cet homme, nous lui avons donné le livre hier

(both from Dik 1978:135).

Admittedly, Dik does not leave unnoticed the fact that in some languages, or in certain conditions, the topic "may anticipate the semantic and syntactic

role it is going to have in the following predication" (ibidem). Following Comrie, he quotes a Russian example and approves of either of its versions:

27 a. televizory, v étom magazine ix mnogo

televisions<sub>nom</sub>, in this shop of them<sub>gen</sub> many

b. televizorov, v étom magazine ix mnogo

of televisions<sub>gen</sub>, in this shop of them<sub>gen</sub> many

Rodman notices that a left-dislocated topic in German must agree in case with its copy in the main sentence (1974:455f). Sgall (1980:120) approves of both possibilities in Czech:

28. Martin(a), toho jsem včera neviděl

Martin<sub>nom/acc</sub>, him I yesterday did not see.

Incidentally, it might be pointed out that left-dislocated pronouns in English are always in the accusative (Cf. Rodman 1974:456).

29. Me, I like booze

30. Him, he is crazy.

It is argued here that left-dislocations in Polish usually carry a trait of bizarreness unless marked for case. Cf.:

31 a. ?Ten chłopiec, to jego wczoraj nie było

That boy<sub>nom</sub>, AS-FOR he<sub>gen</sub> yesterday was not there

b. Tego chłopca, to jego wczoraj nie było

That boy<sub>gen</sub>, AS-FOR he<sub>gen</sub> yesterday was not there

32 a. ?Janek, to jemu trzeba dać podwyżkę

John<sub>nom</sub>, AS-FOR he<sub>dat</sub> one must give a pay-rise

b. Jankowi, to jemu trzeba dać podwyżkę

John<sub>dat</sub>, AS-FOR he<sub>dat</sub> one must give a pay-rise

33 a. ?Ten twój sąsiad, to jego wczoraj znaleźli pijanego

That your neighbour<sub>nom</sub>, AS-FOR he<sub>acc</sub> they found drunk yesterday

b. Tego twojego sąsiada, to jego wczoraj znaleźli pijanego

That your neighbour<sub>acc</sub>, AS-FOR he<sub>acc</sub> they found drunk yesterday

Needless to say the proforms in b's are redundant hence the sentences exhibit a strong tendency to dispose of such pronominal elements. Finally, an unmarked (absolute) left-dislocation appears acceptable in Polish only as carrier of interrogative modality:

34. Telewizory? w tym sklepie jest ich dużo

Televisions? in this shop there are many of them.

In this way the identification of a left-dislocated topic seems of little consequence for the understanding of topicalization processes in languages; such

topics are basically due to hesitation phenomena in speech. Likewise, their kinship with the topic in a topic-prominent language (Li 1976) is at best disputable: the inadequacy of a "Chinese style" topic for the description of topicalization phenomena in Indo-European languages was anticipated by Chafe (1976).

3. The topics analysed so far — both left-dislocations and topics proper — were signalled by the *TO* particle. There remains the question of whether we can still propound the "levelling" hypothesis in the absence of *TO*; though a similar contention appears intuitively plausible, such considerations will not be followed here any further. What will receive some attention is a problem much more principal for related investigations, and namely: what happens in the absence of *TO*, i.e. whether the element in the first position in the sentence remains equally marked for topicality. The present section will concentrate only on fronted objects in Polish and their estimation in terms of Functional Sentence Perspective. Discussed will be the relationship obtaining between structures such as (35-6a) — with an overtly topicalized element at the beginning — and (35-6b), where position is the only topicality marker:

- 35 a. Kawy to Janek nie lubi  
Coffee<sub>gen</sub> AS-FOR John<sub>nom</sub> does not like  
b. Kawy Janek nie lubi  
Coffee<sub>gen</sub> John<sub>nom</sub> does not like  
36 a. Marię to Janek odwiedzi jutro  
Mary<sub>acc</sub> AS-FOR John<sub>nom</sub> will visit tomorrow  
b. Marię Janek odwiedzi jutro  
Mary<sub>acc</sub> John<sub>nom</sub> will visit tomorrow

It raises no doubt that *a* sentences are pragmatically marked in the sense that they are evidently emphatic and possibly contrastive:

37. Kawy to Janek nie lubi, ale chętnie napije się herbaty  
Coffee<sub>gen</sub> AS-FOR John<sub>nom</sub> does not like, but he won't mind having tea.

All that brings them very close to what Halliday (1967) formulates as conditions obtaining in the case of marked thematization in English:

38. These houses my grandfather sold  
39. The play John saw last night.<sup>10</sup>

A closer look at the  $P_1$  position in Polish sentences appears necessary once we want to find out to what extent the *one-and-first* constituent interpretation of the topic is verifiable against some evidence from "free" word order language

<sup>10</sup> Since Halliday's views are well known, they will not be presented here in any detail.

ges; similar investigations could certainly assist a better understanding of topicalization phenomena in languages. The present paper does not aspire to put forward any conclusive statements: it attempts only at pointing out to some "fuzzy" edges of English- and Polish-style topics.

Studies in thematization and topicalization in Polish are relatively recent and fairly general in solutions. Huszcza (1980, 1981) is right to notice that the thematic-rhematic bipartition of the sentence in Polish is heavily dependent on the position of the verb.<sup>11</sup> Regrettably, however, his further observations are not much revealing as they are basically limited to a mechanical delimitation of isolated sentences. His exposition on the thematic status of fronted objects in Polish can be summarized in the following: (40) and (41) below, due to a different position of the verb, do not have to represent the same distribution of pragmatic functions:

40. Artykuł Jan przepisał  
Article<sub>acc</sub> John<sub>nom</sub> copied  
41. Artykuł przepisał Jan  
Article<sub>acc</sub> copied John<sub>nom</sub>

As for (40), the theme-rheme caesura (/) may run only after the first element, which means combining the subject and the verb into one functional component:

42. Artykuł/Jan przepisał  
Article<sub>acc</sub>/John<sub>nom</sub> copied

Another segmentation of the sentence is untenable on the strength of the fact that the first two constituents, *article* and *John*, are not directly connected syntactically and thus they may not constitute one functional entity, viz. the principle of syntactic continuum.

(41), on the other hand, admits two different interpretations:

- 43 a. Artykuł/przepisał Jan  
Article<sub>acc</sub>/copied John<sub>nom</sub>  
b. Artykuł przepisał/Jan  
Article<sub>acc</sub> copied/John<sub>nom</sub>

In this way the fronting of the same topical material does not trigger the same pragmatic effects: (43 b) may be an answer to the question *Who copied the article?*, and thus act as subject-rhematizing structure. In such cases English would have to put the subject under contrastive stress or resort to clefting: *It*

<sup>11</sup> The medial position is believed to be typical of the Polish verb. Any deviations thereof are taken as signals of pragmatic markedness: verbs in sentence initial position are relatively rare and serve as emphatic rhemes, whereas the placement of the verb at the end of the sentence is associated with an overtone of emphasis and contrastiveness.

was *John who copied the article*. (42) and (43 a), on the other hand, foreground the same topical element, yet display a different organization within their rhematic sections: (42) lays emphasis on the verb, whereas (43 a) highlights the subject. Such effects have obviously much to do with the tendency in Polish to place the new information towards the right-most end of the sentence. And this appears to be the final conclusion to be drawn from similar investigations.

The definiteness of the object in sentence initial position is also pointed out by Szwedek (1981:56), who stresses that the first noun in sentences such as (44) below should be coreferential:

44. *Książkę kupiła kobieta*  
(the) *book<sub>acc</sub>* bought (a) *woman<sub>nom</sub>*

In conclusion of his coreferentiality constraints on word order in Polish Szwedek emphasises that it "is used to express the new/given information distribution which encompasses in a natural way the coreferential ('given') — noncoreferential ('new') distinction of nouns" (op. cit.: 60).

Similar sweeping generalizations are certainly binding for a number of the so called "free" word order languages, where linear modification serves as the primary exponent of Functional Sentence Perspective and information distribution within the sentence. Discussing Czech and Russian, Sgall (1974:30) claims that in Czech participants preceding the verb can be regarded as contextually bound:

45. *Karel vám ten obraz prodá lacino*  
*Charles<sub>nom</sub>* you<sub>dat</sub> this *picture<sub>acc</sub>* will sell cheaply

Related assumptions are laid forward by Kramsky (1972:43), who believes that *vazu* in (46) below implies determinedness:

46. *Vazu rozbila mlada divka*  
(the) *vase<sub>acc</sub>* broke (a) *young girl<sub>nom</sub>*

Such intuitions are by all means frequent as well as well-grounded. It seems that they have been voiced best, though in a somewhat radical form, by Sgall (1982:26): "for Czech, and with some minor changes also for other Slavonic languages, it is possible to state that the modifications (dependent words, participants) standing to the left of the verb belong to the topic, while the rightmost participants belong to the focus". Strong as it certainly sounds, Sgall's claim disposes of a one-constituent topic within the sentence to pro- pound instead a topical section. (See also Firbas for his concept of the thematic and non-thematic section of the sentence, esp. 1964, 1975, 1981).

It appears then that the "English style" topic, i.e. the one associated with one and first constituent in the sentence does not in fact prove verifiable against some evidence from "free" word order languages; in those languages the

delimitation of the first position in the sentence is less conspicuous, so that we can rather talk about a topicality scope. At this point the position of the verb demands further studies; it seems plausible to perceive it as marker of the topic-comment boundary within the sentence. In (47) below the new information comes after the verb and the elements preceding the verb are taken to be given:

47. *Kawę chłopcom po obiedzie podasz w tych filiżankach*  
*Coffee<sub>acc</sub>* boys<sub>dat</sub> after dinner (you) will serve in these cups.

The question that asks itself is whether we can hope for any reconciliation of the "English"- and "Polish"-style topics, so as to work out a concept of topic with a cross-linguistic applicability. Needless to say, a similar attempt would activate a number of problems far surpassing the scope of the present investigations. What seems worthwhile mentioning, however, is the fact that the perception of topicalization in Slavonic languages shows clearly that we may not escape from contextual considerations in Functional Sentence Perspective. Furthermore, it is not all that clear that we can do so in the case of English: despite the autonomy claim for his thematization, Halliday (1967) comes close to admit that theme often coincides with given. Obviously enough his marked theme is in fact not an outcome of an "autonomous" thematization process, but an instance of information structure: it combines with given and is discourse motivated.

It is also worthwhile noticing that all the examples of marked thematization in English known to me cite invariably only bound elements in the pre-verbal section of the sentence. In other words, it might be interesting to check what constraints, if any, are laid on subjects in respective constructions. Cf., e.g., (48—50) below, taken that it is the subject each time that should bring in the new piece of information:

48. ?This hat a young lady has already claimed  
49. ?That book two students asked for  
50. ?That woman over there a man hit and ran away.

The situation seems to change in case of structures in which it is not the subject but some other sentence constituent that becomes the *focus proper*,<sup>12</sup> cf., (51) below:

51. That letter a girl found *under the stairs*.

<sup>12</sup> Incidentally, Polish and English appear to coincide in their treatment of sentences with two information foci:

*Przedstawienie Janek widział wczoraj wieczorem*  
The play John saw last night,

where *the play* is topical, and *last night* is evidently focal. It is also noteworthy that the

Incidentally, it appears that no constraints are laid on generic subjects, i.e. those which are definite but non-specific:

52. This book a girl like me won't read

The subject here is taken to be topical and the new piece of information associates with the fact of *not reading*. Cf., also (53):

53. Such films children shouldn't watch at night.

To conclude, an analysis of topicalization phenomena in English and Polish may not bypass the scope of topicalization; this involves not only the number of sentence positions occupied by topical elements in both languages, but also the presentation of the given/new information distribution. As was pointed out, the placement of an object in sentence initial position in English (marked thematization) highlights the element much more than it is possible to attain by mere fronting in Polish. This is, obviously, by no means surprising since the relative mobility of word order in Polish as well as the lack or non-obligatory presence of coreferential signals weakens similar topicalizing effects. Consequently, the topic in Polish is less evidently linked with, and restricted to, the first position in the sentence: it merges instead into what is intuitively perceived as a topical section.

Conclusion. The main purpose of the present paper was to take a look at some aspects of left dislocation and topicalization proper in English and Polish. It was argued that left-dislocated topics are triggered by basically the same topicalization mechanism. Some empirical facts from Polish and other "free" word order languages can be taken as counterevidence to the general claim that propounds separateness of the two topics. Owing to the operation of some levelling processes, e.g., frequent imposition of case marking on left dislocations, possible redundancy of internal proforms, the transfer of a left-dislocated topic into the proper one is feasible, and often preferable.

The prevailing — and basically well-grounded — contention that word order in such languages as Polish is oriented primarily on the projection of given/new information distribution opens the need for a further specification of the topical positions within the sentence. A high mobility of word order in Polish lessens the perception and the proper recognition among language users

subject-verb order exercises no effect on the pragmatic reading of the sentence in Polish; the distribution of information remains the same:

Matkę kochał Janusz nadzwyczajnie  
Mother<sub>acc</sub> loved John<sub>nom</sub> immensely  
Matkę Janusz kochał nadzwyczajnie  
Mother<sub>acc</sub> John<sub>nom</sub> loved immensely.

The examples are taken from Buttler (1971:406), who cites such structures as the only word order invariants in Polish.

of the pragmatic contrasts effected by such modulations: the topical material is more evidently foregrounded once marked off by the *TO* particle. By and large, it seems disputable whether the association of the topic exclusively with the first position in the sentence can receive any cross-linguistic justification. It might be expected that a better perception of topicalization phenomena can come first of all through scrutiny of related facts in languages more dependent on linearity in the reflection of Functional Sentence Perspective.

Needless to say, topicalization in Polish awaits further studies: the work done so far is relatively scanty and fragmentary. Regrettably, the observations presented here are also only random and tentative.

#### REFERENCES

- Buttler, D., Kurkowska, H., Satkiewicz, H. 1971. *Kultura języka polskiego*. Warszawa: PWN.
- Carroll, J. and Freedle, R. (eds). 1972. *Language comprehension and the acquisition of knowledge*. Washington: V. H. Winston.
- Chafe, W. 1972. "Discourse structure and human knowledge". In Carroll, J. and Freedle, R. (eds). 1972. 41—70.
- Chafe, W. 1976. "Givenness, contrastiveness, definiteness, subjects, topics and point of view". In Li, Ch. (ed.). 1976. 25—56.
- Cole, P. and Morgan, J. (eds). 1975. *Speech acts. Syntax and semantics 3*. New York: Academic Press.
- Dahl, O. 1969. *Topic and comment: a study in Russian and Transformational Grammar*. Göteborg: Acta Universitatis Gothoburgensis.
- Dahl, O. 1974. "Topic-Comment structure revisited". In Dahl, O. (ed.). 1974. 1—24.
- Dahl, O. (ed.). 1974. *Topic and comment, contextual boundness and focus*. Hamburg: Helmut Buske Verlag.
- Daneš, F. (ed.). 1974. *Papers on functional sentence perspective*. Prague: Academia Publishing House of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences.
- Dik, S. 1978. *Functional grammar*. North Holland Linguistic Series 37. Amsterdam: North-Holland Publishing Company.
- Firbas, J. 1964. "On defining the theme in Functional Sentence Perspective". *Travaux Linguistiques de Prague 1*. 267—80.
- Firbas, J. 1974. "Some aspects of the Czechoslovak approach to problems of FSP". In Daneš, F. (ed.) 1974. 11—37.
- Firbas, J. 1975. "On the thematic and the non-thematic section of the sentence". In Ringbom, H. (ed.). 1975. 317—34.
- Firbas, J. 1981. "Scene and perspective". *Brno Studies in English 14*. 37—79.
- Gávon, T. 1976. "Topic, pronoun and grammatical agreement". In Li, Ch. (ed.). 1976. 149—88.
- Grice, H. 1967. "Logic and conversation". In Cole, P. and Morgan, J. (eds). 1975. 41—58.
- Hajičová, E. and Sgall, P. 1982. "Functional sentence perspective in the Slavonic languages and in English". *Juznoslovenskij Filolog 38*. Belgrade.
- Halliday, M. A. K. 1967. "Notes on transitivity and theme in English". *Journal of Linguistics 3*. 199—244.



- Huszcza, R. 1980. "Tematyczno-rematyczna struktura zdania w języku polskim". *Polonica* 6. 57—71.
- Huszcza, R. 1981. *Tematyczno-rematyczna struktura zdania w językach różnych typów*. (The thematic-rhematic sentence structure in languages of different structural types). Unpublished Ph. D. dissertation, University of Warsaw.
- Jodłowski, S. 1973. *Ogólnojęzykoznawcza charakterystyka zaimka* (A linguistic characteristics of the pronoun). *Prace Komisji Językoznawczej* 36. Kraków: PAN.
- Kramsky, J. 1972. *The article and the concept of definiteness in language*. The Hague: Mouton.
- Kuno, S. 1972. "Functional sentence perspective: a case study from Japanese and English". *Linguistic Inquiry* 3. 269—320.
- Kuroda, S. 1972. "The categorial and the thetic judgement". *Foundations of Language* 9. 153—85.
- Li, Ch. and Thompson, S. 1976. "Subject and topic: a new typology of language". In Li, Ch. (ed.) 1976. 457—90.
- Li, Ch. (ed.). 1976. *Subject and topic*. New York: Academic Press.
- Mathesius, V. 1926. "Přivlastkove TEN, TA, TO, v hovorove češtině". *Naše řeč* 1. 39—41.
- Miodunka, W. 1974. *Funkcje zaimków w grupach nominalnych we współczesnej polszczyźnie mówionej* (Pronouns in nominal groups and their function in present-day spoken Polish). *Zeszyty Naukowe Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego* 43. Kraków: PAN.
- Ostrowska, E. 1971. *Bruegel polskiej literatury* (Brueghel of Polish literature). *Studia Staropolskie* 30. Wrocław: Ossolineum.
- Paluszkiewicz, M. 1971. "Podwajanie podmiotu — osobliwość języka mówionego" (Double-subject; a characteristic feature of spoken language). *Język Polski* LI 1. 14—21.
- Pisarkowa, K. 1969. *Funkcje składniowe polskich zaimków odmiennych* (Syntactic functions of Polish inflective pronouns). *Prace Komisji Językoznawczej* 22. Kraków: PAN.
- Quirk, R. et al. (eds). 1972. *A grammar of contemporary English*. London: Longman
- Ringbom, H. (ed.). 1975. *Style and text*. Stockholm: Skriptor AB.
- Rodman, R. 1974. "On left dislocation". *Papers in Linguistics* 7: 3—4. 437—65.
- Sgall, P., Hajičová, E. and Benešová, E. 1973. *Topic, focus and generative semantics*. Kronborg Taunus: Scriptor Verlag.
- Sgall, P. 1974. "Focus and contextual boundness". In Dahl, O. (ed.). 1974. 25—52.
- Sgall, P., Hajičová, E. and Buranová, E. 1980. *Aktualní členění věty v češtině*. Praha: *Studia a práce lingvistické Československá Akademie Věd* 12.
- Szwedek, A. 1973a. "A note on the relation between the article in English and word order in Polish". *PSiCL* 2. 213—25.
- Szwedek, A. 1973b. "Some aspects of definiteness and indefiniteness of nouns in Polish". *PSiCL* 2. 203—12.
- Szwedek, A. 1981. *Word order, sentence stress and reference in English and Polish*. Bydgoszcz: WSP
- Topolińska, Z. 1976. "Wyznaczoność, tj. charakterystyka referencyjna grupy imiennej w tekście polskim" (The referential quantification of a noun phrase in Polish texts). *Polonica* 2. 33—72.
- Wierzbicka, A. 1966. *System składniowo-stylistyczny prozy polskiego renesansu* (The syntacto-stylistic system of Polish Renaissance prose). Warszawa: PWN.