

*Zhaboruke O. A.,
(1949–2019), Professor*

*Zhaboruke I. A.,
PhD, Associate Professor,
Associate Professor of the Department of Germanic Philology
and Methods of Teaching Foreign Languages
South Ukrainian National Pedagogical University named after K. D. Ushinsky*

*Talanova L. G.,
PhD, Associate Professor,
Associate Professor of the Department of Romance-Germanic Philology
and Foreign Languages Teaching
International Humanitarian University*

THE GRAMMATICAL STATUS OF “INTRODUCTORY IT” IN MODERN ENGLISH

Summary. The problem of introductory *it* occupies a rather considerable place in contemporary linguistics, notwithstanding a comparatively small number of cases it covers. It can be explained by the fact that this problem directly concerns another, wider problem – the problem of language and speech. Thus, a characteristic feature of the sentences containing introductory *it*, is, that when applied immediately on the logical proposition, they differ structurally from the latter, which provokes a great number of different points of view concerning the status of “*it*”, as well as the element it introduces. According to this standpoint, which, by the way, is more widely spread, the status of the element “*it*” is determined as a purely formal Subject. It means that it lacks any kind of semantic meaning and its role is simply to introduce a real semantic Subject, expressed by infinitive or subordinate clause, etc. without violating the well-established word order characteristic of the English language. Thus, this view declares the presence of two Subjects and one Predicate in a sentence, which in no way can conform to the structure of a logical proposition.

Predicativity exists in two forms – amorphous or clearly structured. The first one is – historically primary form of reflection – reflection on the level of imaginations (impressions). The other, clearly structured form of reflection – reflection in the form of proposition. In logic they are conventionally termed as predication. Predication is nothing other than an analogue of the structural arrangement of the world – the process. With regard to this, speech can only go about a two-member structure of proposition, the assumption about existence of one-member and three-member propositions is groundless.

The complexity of sentences with so called introductory *it* lies in the fact that this type of sentences is not primary.

They originated from the sentences with the so called “impersonal *it*” and are the result of an algebraic operation on the latter. Hence, in order to understand the grammatical essence of introductory *it*, we need to clarify the nature of what is known as impersonal sentences, and, above all, what they correlate with on the level of thinking.

As to the cases of the so called introductory *it*, the element *it*, in our opinion, as well as in the sentences of general concept

of substantiality, should be regarded not a false subject, but a real semantic subject, which also expresses the idea of substantiality. Concerning the status of the elements, which it ostensibly introduces, they function as an apposition to it.

Key words: predication, predicativity, impersonality, introductory *it*, proposition, formal predicate, semantic predicate.

Formulation of the problem. The problem of *introductory it* occupies a rather considerable place in contemporary linguistics, notwithstanding a comparatively small number of cases it covers. It can be explained by the fact that this problem directly concerns another, wider problem – the problem of language and speech. Thus, a characteristic feature of the sentences containing *introductory it*, is, that when applied directly on the logical proposition, they differ from the latter structurally. It provokes a great number of different points of view concerning the status of *it*, as well as the element it introduces. According to this most widely spread viewpoint, the status of the element *it* is defined as a purely formal subject. It means that it lacks any kind of semantic meaning and its role is simply to introduce a real semantic subject, expressed by infinitive or subordinate clause, etc. without violating the well-established word order characteristic of the English language. Thus, this view declares the presence of two subjects and one predicate in a sentence, which in no way can conform to the structure of a logical proposition [1, 229].

According to another opinion, *it* is an actual (semantic) subject of a sentence, while infinitive or subordinate clause is an apposition to it. This idea is supported by B. A. Ilyish, who finds “this view preferable as the division of subjects into formal and real ones, seems hard to justify in general syntactical theory” [2, 199].

Purpose of the investigation. Thus, the above leads to a conclusion that solving the problem of the grammar point of this phenomenon, to a great extent depends on the answer to the question: what exactly do these phenomena reflect and in what way?

Theoretical framework. Let us try to highlight the most important moments of this picture.

“The process of reflection does not go down in a straight line: a subject – its designation. The personality of the one who is reflecting always stands between them” [3, 48; 4, 35]. This is nearly the most important moment of reflection. It means that the essential processes of reflection occur exactly in the connective logical chain. Any direct projection of language phenomena on the reality without taking into consideration the phase of thinking [5, 72], is to be considered if not erroneous, then such that allows for considerable deviations.

Statement of the material. The essence of mental reality processing, i.e., something that is happening on the logical link of reflection, can be roughly characterized as a *synthesis* of objective and subjective. Since among outer semiotic types of this synthesis which are directed at communicating information, propositions which can conditionally be termed as “predicativity” (from *Lat. prae-dico* – “pronounce, recite, state”) dominate. Predicativity exists in two forms – amorphous and clearly structured. The first one is – historically primary form of reflection – reflection on the level of imaginations (impressions). The other, clearly structured form of reflection is reflection in the form of proposition. In logic they are conventionally termed as *predication*. Historically, with regard to the integral (holistic) form of reflection it is its secondary form. It has evolved on the basis of the cognitive evolution of thinking.

With the appearance of predication the first form of predicativity (this term will help us to dissociate it from predication) did not fall into disuse. It is as inherent to thinking of modern man as predication. Both forms are co-functioning harmoniously in human mind being complimentary to each other, and in many cases they flow from one form to another. Predication, being synthesis of subjective and objective, is more perfect, the better developed form of predicativity. It is to some extent its quintessence for, as to its structure and semantics – the concept of substantiality, the specifics of its existence in time – predication is nothing other than an analogue of the structural arrangement of the world – the process. With regard to this, speech can only go about a two-member structure of a proposition, the assumption about existence of one-member and three-member propositions is groundless.

Bearing in itself the general concept of the structure of the universe, the predication is at the same time, the embodiment of subjectivity. The evidence of this is its ability to determine the relative weightiness of the substantial components of the relationship process, the most essential of which acts in it as a subject of proposition. This ability did not pass unnoticed by linguists. In attempting to analyze the deep (semantic) structure of sentences they resort to such oppositional terms as *the subject and the object (of thought)*, *agent – patient*, *the bearer of the process – the complement of the process*, etc. Due to this ability in relationship propositions, the structure of predication can, inter alia, act as a model of human activity, its imitation. Let us compare: the subject of thought – the predicate [(the specificity of relations in time of the subject of thought) + (substantial concept – the complement of relation)] / the subject of activity – the specificity (the type) of activity. So the structure of predication is not only the general formula of the structure of the Universe, but also the model of human relations with it. To other subjective moments, realized by the structure of predication also belong the projection of substantial concept in time, quantitative assessment of the subject of predication, evaluation of relations between conscious and real, personal evaluations of specificity

of concept existence in time (the beginning, the end... the necessity, ability of the process), etc. So as we can see, the structure of predication is the concentration of ontological and subjective information about the Universe, in other terms, the bearer of the meaning.

The correctness of our observations is proved, in particular, by the definition of the notion *meaning*, given by a well-known philosopher S.Vasiljev. Under *meaning* he understands *to be determined (specified)* [6, 85]. According to the scientist this notion is the equivalent of *thought* [6, 19].

Let us compare this definition with the definition which linguists give to the structure of predication. According to A.K. Korsakov, in objective reality, the structure of predication correlates with substance and the specific character of its existence in space, or, in other words – *with a particular elementary process* of objective reality. He states that the structure of predication may refer to “a non-relationship change-of-state non-cyclic dynamic process; a non-relationship action non-cyclic dynamic process. The process is presented with the emphasis on its qualitative limits; a non-relationship-state non-cyclic static processes.” [7, 26] As we can see, the definition of a philosopher and linguists have intersection points: of *the structure of predication*, through its specific being (= being determined) correlates with *thought*.

Taking into consideration this rather reliable point of A.K. Korsakov, concerning the fact that conscious has certain limits and is determined by certain specificity, we can state that the ultimate definition of the structure of predication, will define it as a structure, which serves *the means of expression of a concrete elementary thought*.

An extremely important moment in the process of reflection we should focus our attention on, is the ability of thinking to execute algorithms patterned on algebraic operations. At language (speech) level predicativity is realized in utterances of two types: utterances-non-sentences (mere utterances) and utterances-sentences (sentences). The first type corresponds to holistic reflection (on the level of images), while the other one corresponds to the clearly structured form of reflection (at the level of propositions) and its aim is to express thoughts – elementary and extended.

Now, after we have, in principle, clarified the process of reflection at the level of language and thinking, let us try and shed light on the grammatical nature of some more complicated cases which are the matter of this research.

The complexity of sentences with so called *introductory it* lies in the fact that this type of sentences is not primary.

They originated from the sentences with the so called *impersonal it* and are the result of an algebraic operation on the latter. Hence, in order to understand the grammatical essence of *introductory it*, we need to clarify the nature of what is known as impersonal sentences, and, above all, what they correlate with on the level of thinking.

Since the structure of predication, if compared with predicativity, is a qualitatively different form of reflection, we can assume that there must be a certain form which would be the bearer of this new quality. Such new form is, to our firm belief, the structure of predication. This structure, as well as its mental analogue, should be considered a means of expressing a concrete elementary thought [8, 94–97].

As we have already noted, the proposition is always a two-member unit which is objectively conditioned by its very nature. It is no coincidence that most sentences used in any natural language,

simple and complex, inherently belong to such that contain subject and predicate. It is an evidence of the fact that in most cases, the perception of the surrounding material world by man is not only discrete, that is such, in which each component of the process is perceived separately, but also concrete.

The structural organization of a proposition, presence of complex parts in it, one of which is understood as substantiality, the other one – as a specific nature of its being, enables man to arrange thoughts, and, eventually, express not only concrete processes with clearly perceived elements, but also cases, in which one realizes clearly not the substance itself, but its manifestations in time. As for material substrate it is only perceived in most common images. Sentences with the so called *impersonal it* actually belong to them.

It is clear that to consider *it* semantically empty (which follows from the very term *impersonality* is hardly correct. We cannot regard sentences with *impersonal it* such, that immediately correlate with the processes of objective reality, as, is believed, inter alia, by L.N. Finogina [5, 72], as in such case the specific character of this type of sentences as compared with ordinary two-member ones is obscured. Because the latter also correlate with the processes of objective reality both as a whole and in each of their elements. It is at the logical level that the specific character of *impersonal* sentences with *it* manifests itself, as it was shown before, and is conditioned by dialectical and structural flexibility of a proposition. Taking this into account, let us regard impersonal sentences with *it*, as such, that do not correlate with a process but with a concrete thought (elementary or extended), the subject of thinking in which, conveys the general idea of substantiality. That is why these sentences should not be classified, in our point of view, as *impersonal*, but as two-member sentences with a subject of generalized substantial semantics.

As to the cases of the so called *introductory it*, from our view, the element *it*, as well as in the sentences of general concept of substantiality, should be regarded not a false subject, but a real semantic subject, which also expresses the idea of substantiality. Concerning the status of the elements, *it* ostensibly *introduces*, they function as an apposition in relation to it. The main purpose of this type of sentences is to postpone the naming of the subject of thought (in an utterance this delay acquires a linear character so that it should crystallize completely. No wonder that this type of utterances is characteristic for situations, in which the speaker tries to substantiate and present as the subject of thought something, that is the hardest to substantiate – not the matter itself but its main *attribute*, the specificity of its being in time and space. Rather often another thought or even a certain fragment of it can also act as an object of substantiation. All this cannot but cause certain problems at the level of logic, slow down the process of forming the subject of thought.

It is not accidental that the semantics of *it* is specified in these sentences not by means of substantial parts of speech (noun and pronoun), but also infinitive, gerund, subordinate clause, etc. Slow formulation of the subject of thought in the stream of thinking appears in appropriate arrangement of the nominal units among themselves. At first the components which do not demand time for further reflection are pronounced, then comes the component which, so to say, hinders the forming of a thought.

Conclusions. Taking into consideration the deductive character of the subject of thought – from general to concrete, we propose

to term these sentences the sentences of deductive forming of the subject of thought, or just *deductive sentences*.

Our approach completely eliminates the problem of the so called nominative sentences (they automatically recede to the rank of utterances) Another acute problem of linguistics, the problem of the predicate limits, is also eliminated. The suggested theoretical basis also contains the necessary explanatory potential for the cases with the *problem of impersonality*. [9, 106]

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Жаборюк О.А., Жаборюк І.А., Таланова Л.Г. Граматичний статус вставного it у сучасній англійській мові

Анотація. Проблема вставного *it* займає значне місце у сучасній лінгвістиці, незважаючи на порівняно невелику кількість випадків, де це явище зустрічається. Це пояснюється тим фактом, що ця проблема безпосередньо стосується іншої, ширшої проблеми – проблеми взаємовідношень мови та мовлення. Таким чином, характерною рисою речень, що містять вставне *it*, є те, що при прямому накладанні на логічне судження, вони структурно відрізняються від останнього, що провокує велику кількість різноманітних точок зору, щодо статусу *it* як і елемента, який він представляє. Згідно з цією точкою зору, досить поширеною, статус елемента *it* визначається як чисто формальний підмет. Це означає, що він позбавлений будь якого смислового значення, вираженого інфінітивом або підрядним реченням тощо, без порушення усталеного в англійській мові порядку слів. Отже цей погляд декларує наявність двох підметів і одного присудка у реченні, що жодним чином не відповідає структурі логічного судження.

Предикативність існує у двох формах – аморфній і структурованій. Перша – історично первинна форма віддзеркалення – віддзеркалення на рівні уявлень (вражень). Друга, чітко структурована форма віддзеркалення – віддзеркалення на рівні суджень. У логіці їх традиційно називають предикацією. Предикація це ніщо інше, як аналог структурної побудови світу – процесу. З огляду на це мова може йти лише про двочленну структуру судження, припущення ж щодо можливості існування одно-, або трьохчленних суджень є безпідставним.

Складність речень з, так званим вставним *it* полягає в тому, що цей тип речень не є первинним.

Вони зародилися з речень з, так званим безособовим *it* і є результатом складної мисленнєвої операції на них. Отже, щоб зрозуміти граматичну структуру вставного *it*, ми мусимо прояснити природу безособових речень, і, передусім, з чим саме вони співвідносяться на рівні мислення.

Щодо випадків так званого вставного *it*, то елемент *it*, на наш погляд, як і реченнях загальної субстантивації,

повинні розглядатися не як псевдосуб'єкт, а як реальний смисловий підмет, що теж виражає ідею субстанціальності. Стосовно ж статусу елементів, які він начебто вводить, то вони по відношенню до нього є прикладкою.

Ключові слова: предикація, предикативність, безособовість, вставне *it*, судження, формальний присудок, смисловий присудок.