

FUNCTIONAL GRAMMAR–

chapter SIX

ORGANISING THE MESSAGE

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CHAPTER SIX OUTLINE

- Theme: the point of departure of the message
- The distribution and focus of information
- The interplay of Theme-Rheme and Given-New



THEME: THE POINT OF DEPARTURE OF THE MESSAGE



- Theme and rheme

Theme

1 We

2 By noon

3 Lancaster, but not
Carlisle

Rheme

'll reach Lancaster, but not Carlisle, by noon.

we'll reach Lancaster, but not Carlisle.

we'll reach by noon.

- Unmarked theme and marked theme
- Topic and subject as theme

THEME: THE POINT OF DEPARTURE OF THE MESSAGE (CONT'D)



- Circumstantial adjuncts as themes

Theme

1 We

2 *In London last year,*

Rheme

did a lot of sightseeing *in London last year*.

we did a lot of sightseeing.

- Objects and Complements as themes

Moussaka you ordered, and *moussaka* you've got.

Janet asked me to bring her some tea from London. *This* I did.

- Clauses as themes

1 *As you weren't at home,* I left a message on your answer-phone.

2 *As she stepped off the kerb,* a cyclist crashed into her.

THE DISTRIBUTION AND FOCUS OF INFORMATION



- Information units, tone units
- Given and new information

A. What's NEW then?

B. Well, Jim's bought a new CAR, //, Norma's getting a DIVORCE // and Jamie's got CHICKEN-POX //, but apart from that . . .

- Unmarked focus and marked focus

Pete's just COMPLAINED about it.

Given - - - - New - - - - - Given

SHE didn't make the phone call, ROBERT did.

The kids didn't SIT on the sofa, they JUMPED on it.

THE INTERPLAY OF THEME-RHEME AND GIVEN-NEW

- Thematic progression:

Simple linear: T1 – R1

T2 – R2

Continuous: T1 – R1

T1 – R2

T1 – R3

Derived: Hypertheme: T1 – R1, T2 – R2, T3 – R3,

- Theme-Rheme = Given-New

THE INTERPLAY OF THEME-RHEME AND GIVEN-NEW (CONT'D)

Thematisation/thematic fronting

- Clefting: It-clefts and Wh-clefts

It's MONEY (that) they need (*it*-cleft)

What they need is MONEY (*wh*-cleft)

- Active - Passive alternative
- Extraposition of clauses

Clause as Subject

That the banks are closed on Saturday is a nuisance.

What they are proposing to do is horrifying.

To interfere would be unwise.

Extraposed clause

It's a nuisance that the banks are closed on Saturday.

It's horrifying what they are proposing to do.

It would be unwise to interfere.