

Lecture 3
Clause as message II

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Identifying the metafunction

- Textual or interpersonal?
  - Yes and No:
    - Interpersonal: POLARITY is an interpersonal system, and when yes or no initiates a response to a yes/no interrogative, it functions as an interpersonal Theme;

A: Did you get a Herald today?
B: No, I didn't. — *No* is interpersonal Theme

- Textual: yes or no may also serve a continuative function, signalling a new move (by the same or a different speaker) simply by maintaining the current polarity.
- Oh, well, now and okay are other textual continuatives, which similarly mark a response move in dialogue or a fresh initiation in monologue.

A: Bad news about Maxine's job.	
B: Yes it is.	*Yes* is textual Theme
A: We won't go to the beach today.	
B: No it's too windy.	*No* is textual Theme

- Adjuncts: It is easy to confuse initial Adjuncts which have a textual, linking function and those which have an interpersonal, modal function.

Table 2.1 Examples of textual and interpersonal Adjuncts

Textual	Interpersonal
in fact	evidently
anyway	broadly speaking
at least	obviously
in conclusion	provisionally

- Interpersonal or topical
  - (i) Time expressions: Expressions of frequency ('usuality' Adjuncts) such as sometimes or often are interpersonal rather than experiential in nature.

Table 2.2 Examples of interpersonal (modal) and experiential Adjunct

Interpersonal (Usuality)	**Topical** (Temporal Location/Extent)
at times...	in the mornings...
often...	on saturdays...
usually...	three times a day...
occasionally...	that particular year...

- Theme predication test to discriminate topical Themes: Only a topical element can successfully function as a predicated Theme:

On Saturdays we used to go jogging.
It was on Saturdays we used to go jogging.
– *On Saturdays* is topical Theme.

Usually Jeremy is too drunk (to drive home).
* It is usually that Jeremy is too drunk.
– *Usually* is not topical Theme.

- (ii) Question words： Interrogative Wh- items such as Where, Why, When, How are both interpersonal and topical. because they play a role both in the interpersonal structure of the clause – as the Wh- function – and in the transitivity structure of the clause, as participant or circumstance. This is true both of direct and indirect (reported) wh- interrogative clauses.

Who	'd even know	who	you were?
interp + topical		interp + topical	
Theme	Rheme	Theme	Rheme

- (iii) Imperative with let's: Let's as an anomalous form of the Subject of the clause and therefore as topical Theme.

Let's	eat out tonight
topical Theme	Rheme

- Textual or topical
  - (i) Relative pronouns: relative items (such as who[m], which, whose) play a role in the transitivity structure of a clause as well as performing a linking function; they are thus topical and textual Themes.

She spoke to Dr. Jones, ||	who	did his best to help her
	textual + topical	
	Theme	Rheme

  - (ii): reference items: although this is certainly textual in its function as a cohesive item, it counts as a topical Theme because it is a participant in the clause structure.

For many years, girls have fared worse than boys in mathematics and science subjects. This has resulted in a number of special programmes...

- (iii) Temporal expressions: It is easy to confuse a textual linker combining two clauses or sentences in a temporal relation with a temporal circumstance specifying a time setting for its clause.

First I put my head on top of the gate – then the head's high enough – then I stand on my head – then the feet are high enough, you see – then I'm over, you see.
As he sat in the barn he watched Bern coming and going about his work. At last the beggar said...

In 1925, the playwright was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature. Between the ages of fifty-seven and sixty-seven, Shaw wrote such dramas as *Heartbreak House, Back to Methuselah, Androcles and the Lion, St. Joan.* During his lifetime he was besieged by offers to film his plays...

Table 2.3 Examples of textual and topical temporal expressions

Textual (see IFG2: 325-6; IFG3: 541 Figure 9.2 [enhancing: spatial-temporal], 544-6)	**Topical**
Previously...	Before breakfast...
Afterwards...	After many trials and tribulations...
Finally...	By the end of the race...
Later...	At 5 o'clock...

Subject it as unmarked topical Theme

type	Subtype/use	example	agnate example
(i) ambient *it*		it's hot	the room's hot
(ii) non-representational *it*	meteorological *it*	it's raining	(rain's falling)
	impersonal projection *it*	it is said that he's a decent fellow	they say that he's a decent fellow : it is said to be the case that he's decent fellow
		it seems that he's a decent fellow	it seems to be the case that he's a decent fellow
(iii) anticipatory *it*	in mental & relational clauses with postposition	it worries us that he has disappeared	the fact worries us that he has disappeared: (the fact) that he has disappeared worries us
		it is irrelevant that she's a woman	the fact is irrelevant that she is a woman: (the fact) that she's a woman is irrelevant
		it is possible that she'll complain	that she'll complain is possible
	in Theme predication	it was the dog that died	the one that died was the dog : the dog died

- Whether or not the item it has any representational value, it will always have the potential for serving as unmarked Theme and when it does, it will give thematic status to the choice of mood – just as any other unmarked topical Theme does in a declarative or yes/no interrogative clause.
  - (i) Ambient it: This it represents the ambient conditions. It serves as Subject and has a role in the transitivity structure of the clause.

It	is	hot.
What	is	hot?
The room	is	hot.

topical	
Theme	Rheme

- (ii) Non-representational it: does not represent some phenomenon of experience and does not serve a participant role. This occurs in 'meteorological' clauses and in the 'imp ersonal' use of it.
  - it is quite regular in its orientation to the mood selection of the clause: as unmarked topical Theme, it serves to give the mood selection thematic status;

It	is	raining today.
It	is	said that he's wealthy.

topical	
Theme	Rheme

Is	it	raining today?
Is	it	said that he's wealthy?

interpersonal	topical	
Theme		Rheme

- it contrasts with marked topical Themes in the same way as prototypical, representational unmarked topical Themes do:

Henry is swimming today : Today Henry is swimming ::
It is raining today : Today it is raining

It is said nowadays that this substance is harmless :
Nowadays it is said that this substance is harmless

- (iii) Anticipatory it (mental and relational clauses): The anticipatory it serves to anticipate an embedded clause occurring later in the structure. Unlike the impersonal projections, these structures have a variant where the embedded clause is Theme.

it worries me that he's not doing his homework :
that he's not doing his homework worries me ::
it is clear that he's not doing his homework :
that he's not doing his homework is clear

- (iv) Anticipatory it in Theme predication: This structure singles out one experiential element to serve as both Theme and New. To indicate the marked status of a predicated Theme, the analysis can be shown as follows:

It was Rabbit	who saw Piglet first
Theme	Rheme

- There is no variant where the embedded clause functions as Theme: Rather, the agnation is with a non-predicated version:

* Who saw Piglet first was Rabbit.
* That the Divine Cowherd was exchanged with the infant daughter of Jasoda was in Mathura.

It was Rabbit who saw Piglet first: Rabbit saw Piglet first.
It was in Mathura that the Divine Cowherd was exchanged: In Mathura the Divine Cowherd was exchanged.



Existential clauses

- There's always a long queue, There was trouble at the mill, There might come a time...
- There functions as unmarked topical Theme, giving the mood choice (of declarative or interrogative) thematic status.
- The meaning is simply that of 'existential' as expressed by there serving as Subject.
- The point of departure is precisely the fact that a participant (such as a long queue or trouble at the mill) is to be introduced. So although there does not itself function as a participant (or circumstance) it can still be regarded as topical Theme.

Recognizing longer Theme units

- (i) Nominal group in Theme position extends beyond the main noun:

  A large black wolf with yellow fangs spoke to Red Riding Hood.
  The teacher who understood him best was Marianne Fawley.

- (ii) Group and Phrase complexes in Theme position. Sometimes more than one nominal group functions as the Theme:

  Jack and Jill went up the hill.
  Nelson Mandela, the newly elected President of South Africa, was invited.

  At Sezana, on the Yugoslav border, they were very naughty, too.

- (iii) Embedded Wh- clause as Theme: The most typical case is when a Wh-clause is set up as Theme in an a relational clause structure of the following kind.

What he said	is	nonsense
What they lacked	was	a business plan

- (iv) Embedded non-finite clause as Theme.

Doing twenty sit-ups a day will improve your tummy muscles

To err is human || to forgive (is) divine

Getting plenty of exercise and eating the right food is important.

- (v) Embedded 'that' clause as Theme.

That the food might not be fresh didn't occur to them.

- Tests to check for longer Themes
  - (i) 'Replace' the expression with a pronoun: If you can 'replace' the expression you're interested in with a pronoun, it serves as a single element

Mice, elephants and humans	are some of the animals we know.
They	are some of the animals we know.
[[Doing twenty sit-ups a day]]	will flatten your tummy.
It	will flatten your tummy.

  - (ii) Make the expression non-thematic

From house to house I went my way : I went my way *from house to house*

Hypotactic clause as Theme

When I was in the concentration camp, || were you lonely in Paris?

Theme	Rheme

When I was in the concentration camp, || were you lonely in Paris?

Text.	Top.		Int.	Top.	
Theme		Rheme	Theme		Rheme
Theme			Rheme		

To strengthen his knee, he did the exercise routine twice daily.
Blinking nervously, he tried to think of something to say.

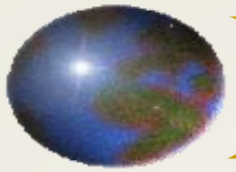
Review and Contextualization

- Defining theme:
  - The system of THEME is a textual resource at clause rank for presenting the clause as a message (piece of text) in the unfolding text. It organises the clause into two parts by specifying a point of departure for the addressee in his/her interpretation of the clause.
  - Theme is realised by initial position in the clause, and is followed by the non-Theme, the Rheme. The Rheme provides the information to be processed within the local environment specified by the Theme.

With penetrating analyses	he illustrates how such psychological entities such as memories, beliefs, values, and meanings are not formed in isolation but in a social or cultural context that is inherently ideological or political.
Theme	Rheme



- Location of Theme within the grammatical resources of English: the intersection of the textual metafunction and the clause
  - The textual system of INFORMATION is complementary to THEME: in the default case, the Theme of the clause falls within the Given assigned by INFORMATION and the New assigned by that system falls within the Rheme
  - Within the clause, THEME is related to CONJUNCTION, a system providing the resources for making explicit the rhetorical relation between the clause and preceding text.
  - It is also related to VOICE, a system which allows a choice as to which participant within the TRANSITIVITY structure will be assigned the status of unmarked Theme.



metafunctional spectrum

rank: constituency potential

		ideational	interpersonal	textual
clause		TRANSITIVITY Construal of experience of goings on as process + participants + circumstances	MOOD Enactment of exchange with role assignment to speaker & listener and assessment, comments (including MODALITY, POLARITY, COMMENT)	**THEME** Resource for presenting [creating as information] interpersonal & textual meanings as a message [quantum of information] in text unfolding in context, setting up local environment for interpreting the message. VOICE Resource for giving one participant in a process configuration the status of unmarked Theme. CONJUNCTION Resource for making explicit a message's rhetorical relation to preceding text.
phrase/ group	prep. phrase	MINOR TRANSITIVITY	MINOR MOOD	MINOR THEME
	adverbial	CIRCUMSTANCE TYPE	COMMENT TYPE	CONJUNCTION TYPE
	nominal	THING TYPE MODIFICATION	PERSON, ATTITUDE	DETERMINATION
	verbal	TENSE	MODALITY	
information unit ↘ tone group			KEY Space between 'polarity known' and 'polarity not known' as further elaboration of MOOD	INFORMATION Differentiation of given and new information

- Theme and metafunction
  - There are three possible components to the Theme of a clause: textual, interpersonal and topical (i.e. experiential).
  - As a general principle, every major, finite clause in English will select an experiential function (typically participant or circumstance) as topical Theme. The first such element in the clause realises the topical theme while any preceding textual or interpersonal elements constitute textual and interpersonal Themes.

Well,	naturally,	most people	don't discuss these things in public.
Textual	Interpersonal	Topical	
Theme.....			Rheme.....

- Theme and Mood: The nature of the unmarked choice of Theme depends on the interpersonal status of the clause – is it dependent or independent, and, if independent, which type of MOOD selection characterises it?

Table 2.5 Unmarked Theme types

MOOD TYPE	Theme		Rheme
	interpersonal	topical (ideational)	
declarative		Subject *You*	*woke up late today.*
interrogative: yes/no	Finite *Did*	Subject *you*	*wake up late today?*
interrogative: wh-	←	Wh† *Wh...* *Wh...*	*...o woke up late today?* *...y did you wake up late today?*
imperative	(Finite) *(Do/Don't)*	Predicator *wake*	*up late today!*



The information unit: Given+ New

- The information unit is a unit that is parallel to the clause and the other units belonging to the same rank scale as the clause: may extend over more than one clause or less than one clause; but in the unmarked case it is co-extensive with the clause.
- The tone group functions grammatically as realization of a quantum of information in the discourse. It is this quantum of information that we have called the information unit.
- Information, in this technical grammatical sense, is the tension between what is already known or predictable and what is new or unpredictable. The information unit is a structure made up of two functions, the New and the Given.



- Structure:
  - Idealized: Given+ New
  - Departures: New only
    - Start of discourse: One is that discourse has to start somewhere, so there can be discourse-initiating units consisting of a New element only.
    - Phoricity: The other is that by its nature the Given is likely to be phoric – referring to something already present in the verbal or non-verbal context; and one way of achieving phoricity is through ellipsis



- Natural realization:
  - (i) the New is marked by tonic prominence:Each information unit is realized as a pitch contour, or tone; This pitch contour extends over the whole tone group. Within the tone group, one foot (and in particular its irst syllable) carries the main pitch movement (tonic prominence): the main fall, or rise, or the change of direction. element with tonic prominence is said to carry information focus.
  - (ii) the Given typically precedes the New, with indeterminate boundary: The tonic foot defines the culmination of what is New: it marks where the New element ends. In the typical instance, this will be the last functional element of clause structure in the information unit. As this implies, the typical sequenceof informational elements is thus Given followed by New. But whereas the end of the New element is marked by tonic prominence, there is nothing to mark where it begins; so there is indeterminacy in the structure.

Text 3-6: Enabling – instructing (spoken, dialogic): the 'Silver Text' showing tonality and tonicity

Manageress: // ^ in / this job / Anne we're // working with / silver // ^ now / silver / needs to have / love // {Anne: // yeah. //} you / know ^ the // people that / buy silver // love it //

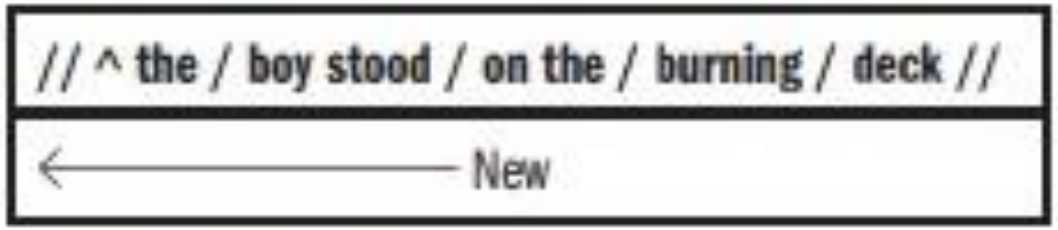
Anne: // yeah // guess they / would //

Manageress: // yeah // mm / ^ well / naturally I / mean to / say that it's // got a / lovely / gleam a/bout it you / know // ^ and / if they come / in they're // usually / people who / love / beautiful / things // ^ so / you / have to be / beautiful / with it you / know // ^ and you / sell it with / beauty //

Anne: // um //

Manageress: // ^ you / ^ I'm / sure you know / how to do // that // ^ // oh but you / must // let's hear / ^ / let's hear / ^ / look / ^ you say // madam // isn't that / beautiful // ^ if / you sug/gest it's beautiful // they / see it as / beautiful //

For example, in Figure 3-15, we know that *on the burning deck* is New, because that is the element on which the prominence falls; but we cannot tell whether the New extends also to *stood* and *the boy*.



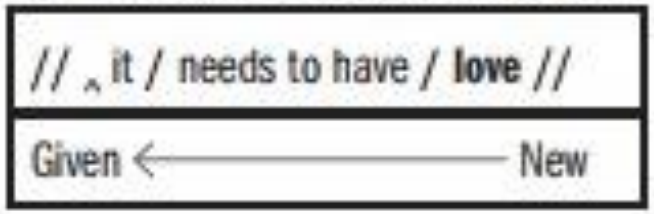
15 Unit with New element only

// ^ now / silver / needs to have / love //

Taken by itself, this also is undecidable: all we know is that at least *love* is New. But given the preceding clause, we know that *silver* was in fact Given; the New element starts at *needs* (see Fig. 3-16).

// ^ now / silver /	needs to have / **love** //
Given →	← New

(a) I'll tell you about silver. It needs to have love.



(b) I'll tell you what silver needs. It needs to have love.

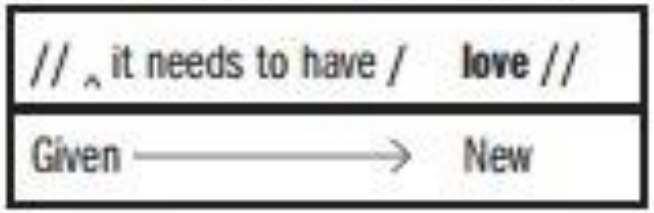


Fig. 3-17 Rhythmic indications of information structure

In (a), *needs* is salient, which indicates that it is the beginning of the New; whereas in (b) it is part of the initial proclitic foot, reflecting the fact that in this instance it is Given, being mentioned in the preceding clause. But not all Given elements are characterized by this absence of salience.)

- The unmarked position for the New is at the end of the information unit. But it is possible to have Given material following the New; and any accented matter that follows the tonic foot is thereby signalled as being Given.

You say 'Madam, isn't that beautiful?' If you suggest it's beautiful, they see it as beautiful.

//∧ if / you sug/**gest**	it's / beautiful
New	Given

// they / **see**	it as / beautiful //
New	Given

g. 3-18 Marked information structure

Text 3-7: Sharing leading into expounding – explaining: the 'North Star' text

Child: Shall I tell you why the North Star stays still?

Parent: Yes, do.

Child: Because that's where the magnet is, and it gets attracted by the earth. But the other stars don't; so they move around.

// shall I / tell you / why the / North / Star / stays / still //

// yes // do //

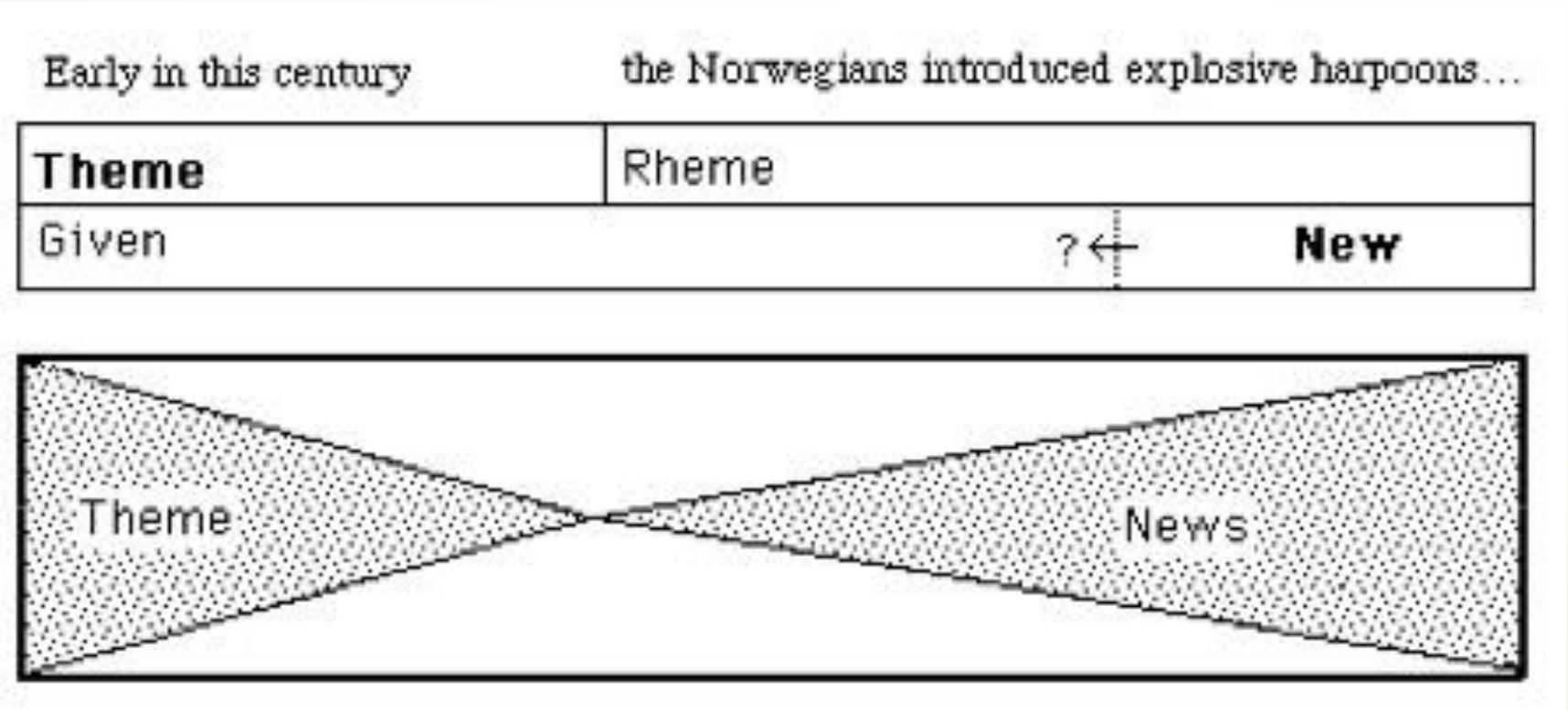
// ^ because / that's // where the / magnet / is// ^ and it gets at/tracted by the // earth // ^ but the / other / stars // don't // ^ so / they // move a/round //

The child begins with an offer of information in which everything is fresh; the focus is in its unmarked place, at the end. The offer is accepted, and he continues with the explanation.

Table 3-9 Given and New elements in the North Star text

	Given	New	
1	because	that's	contrastive
2	where	the magnet	fresh
3	and it	gets attracted	"
4		by the earth	"
5	but	the other	contrastive
6	stars	don't	"
7	so	they	"
8		move around	fresh

- Given+ New vs Theme + Rheme
  - Other things being equal, one information unit is co-extensive with one (ranking) clause ('unmarked tonality'); and, in that case, the ordering of Given ^ New ('unmarked tonicity') means that the Theme falls within the Given, while the New falls within the Rheme.





- But although they are related, Given + New and Theme + Rheme are not the same thing. The Theme is what I, the speaker, choose to take as my point of departure. The Given is what you, the listener, already know about or have accessible to you. Theme + Rheme is speaker-oriented, while Given + New is listener-oriented.
- But both are, of course, speaker-selected. It is the speaker who assigns both structures, mapping one on to the other to give a composite texture to the discourse and thereby relate it to its environment.

Text 3.8: Sharing – casual conversation (spoken, dialogic)

Are you coming back into circulation?

— I didn't know I was out.

— I haven't seen you for ages.

// ^ are / you coming / back into / circu/lation //

// ^ I / didn't / know I was / out //

// ^ I / haven't / seen you for / ages //

are	you	coming	**back**	into circulation
interpersonal	topical			
Theme		Rheme		
←		New	Given	

I	didn't	know	I	was	**out**
Theme	Rheme				
Theme		Rheme			
Given ←					New

'in my opinion + I wasn't out'

I	haven't	**seen**	you	for ages
Theme	Rheme			
←	New		Given	



Thank you!