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**Pragmatic functions: the view from the V.U.  
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**Pragmatic functions: the view from the V.U.**

1.

**Pragmatic function assignment and word order variation  
in a Functional Grammar of English**

Mike Hannay

2.

**On assigning pragmatic functions in English**

J. Lachlan Mackenzie and M. Evelien Keizer



**Pragmatic function assignment and word order variation  
in a Functional Grammar of English**

Mike Hannay



0. *Introduction\**

In Functional Grammar (henceforth FG) (cf. Dik 1978, 1989), the position taken up by constituents in linguistic expressions is dependent upon the interplay between a number of competing principles. In the underlying representation of expressions constituents are in the first instance unordered, but are then assigned by placement rules to specific positions in a language-specific 'functional pattern'; however, various principles can come into play, and as a result constituents may end up in a non-standard position in the pattern. The basic functional pattern for English declarative clauses, both main and subordinate, is given in (1):

(1) P1 S Vf Vi O X

An important feature of this pattern is the clause-initial position P1. P1 is seen by Dik (1989: 348) as a universally relevant position which is used for special purposes, including the placement of constituents with Topic or Focus function. Constituents are placed here according to a special P1 placement rule, the general format for which is given in (2):

(2) P1 ---> designated elements  
          element with pragmatic function (Top, Foc etc.)  
          0

The first part of this rule states that if there is a designated element, then that element should be placed in P1. In the case of English, such designated elements would be question words, subordinators and relative pronouns. However, since the word order variation I will be concerned with in this paper relates solely to declarative main clauses, I will disregard the role of such designated elements here. The rest of the rule then states that P1 may be filled by a constituent with a special pragmatic status, for instance Topic or Focus, but that this is not obligatory. It is not immediately clear how this non-obligatoriness is to be understood, but there are clearly two possible interpretations: either an element with no pragmatic function may be placed in P1 or the position is left unfilled. For the purposes of this discussion I will assume the latter to be always the case; in other words, I will adopt a strong interpretation of Dik's statement that P1 is used for special purposes and accordingly assume that any constituent in P1 will have a pragmatic function.

The most important thing to note about the placement rule in (2) is its optional character. Firstly, it does not stipulate the conditions under which P1 is indeed filled by a pragmatic element, and secondly it does not stipulate the conditions under which a Topic as against a Focus constituent is placed there once it has been decided that the position will be filled. In other words, all the rule says is that, leaving designated constituents aside,

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the P1-position can be filled by any pragmatically marked constituent but need not be. Inasmuch as the general rule does not have a language-specific character, this need not be a problem, since the rule provides space for the possibility of languages with highly divergent rule systems for what can and cannot go into P1. However, once a specific P1 rule needs to be formulated for a language like English, it will be clear that optionality in the rule will have consequences for the grammar. The major implication of the kind of optionality mentioned above would be that any differences between the members of sentence pairs like those in for instance (3-6), which are characterized by variation in the filling of P1, could not be explained by the grammar. Rather, the (a) and (b) sentences in each case will be assigned the same underlying representation, despite the word order variation involved. It is then the task of a broader pragmatic theory of verbal interaction, of which the grammar is seen as a part, to account for this variation, in terms of for instance specific discourse planning activities on the part of the speaker or specific communicative effects.

- (3) Q: Have you thought of going to London?  
(a) No, I hadn't considered London actually  
(b) No, London I hadn't considered actually
- (4) Q: Did you get wet?  
(a) Wet? I was bloody soaking  
(b) Wet? Bloody soaking I was<sup>1</sup>
- (5) Q: What was your reaction to the recent Harrods scandal?  
(a) Well, it didn't really surprise me that the Government were involved in a cover-up  
(b) Well, that the Government were involved in a cover-up didn't really surprise me
- (6) Q: Did you see die Mannschaft get the hammer last night?  
(a) Yes, it was absolutely amazing to be there, wasn't it?  
(b) Yes, absolutely amazing it was to be there, wasn't it?

In (3) it would appear that the two different constituents appearing in P1 are both Topics (*I* and *London*). In (4) we have a Topic (*I*) versus a Focus constituent (*bloody soaking*) in P1; in (5) we appear to be dealing with a P1 Topic constituent (*that the Government were involved in a cover-up*) versus an empty P1; and in (6) we again have a case of an empty P1 but this time in opposition to a Focus constituent (*absolutely amazing*).

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<sup>1</sup>The fronted element may be given prominence in speaking, and in writing there is a tendency to add a comma after the first element. This might lead to a reinterpretation of such expressions in FG terms as involving a single-constituent message (*bloody soaking*), followed by an extra-clausal tail element (*I was*). However, I am assuming here that this is not the basic syntactic analysis in all cases, and that (4a-b), and indeed likewise (6a-b), can continue to be regarded as a similar kind of pair to those in (3) and (5).



If the explanation of such basic instances of word order variation were to be seen as a matter for a broader theory of verbal interaction, then this would constitute a considerable restriction on the power of the grammar. In the context of FG this would be particularly undesirable: after all, it is the primary intention of FG to describe the properties of linguistic expressions as far as possible in terms of how such expressions are used in communication. This means that ideally speaking a FG description should account for word order variation inasmuch as this is associated with the creation of particular communicative effects or with the speaker's discourse planning activities.

Accordingly, the aim of this contribution is to examine how one might seek to account for the kind of word order variation exemplified in (3-6) from within the grammar. Any such alternative account would have to present a placement rule which under specified conditions at least places a Topic constituent in P1, under other conditions a Focus constituent, and under yet other conditions leaves the position unfilled. But it is also more complex than that, since this kind of placement rule would still not be able to handle the pair given in (3), where two Topic constituents appear to be involved.

To try to come to grips with the problems involved in accounting for variation, I will therefore start off in section 1 by presenting an analysis of the Topic and Focus functions, the two clause-internal pragmatic functions recognized in FG. The major conclusion of this analysis will be that, if Topic is to be a valuable concept in the description of linguistic expressions in English, it will be necessary to move away from a purely functional definition and towards an operational one. I will propose a revised definition for Topic in English which retains the original functionality but at the same time allows an operationalization of the concept.

In section 2 I will then proceed to illustrate how, on the basis of this revised definition, the (a) and (b) sentences in (3-6) end up receiving analyses which clearly differ in pragmatic function assignment; in other words, it becomes possible to handle basic word order variation in a neat fashion within the grammar after all.

Finally I will sketch in section 3 a formal framework within FG which creates a broader context for the analysis in the previous section by presenting the word order variations involved as resulting from highly specific placement rules which in turn are triggered by quite distinct strategies involved in what I will call the speaker's message management. Underlying the strategic options that a speaker has are general cognitive principles of constituent ordering.

The advantage obtained from the analysis I propose is twofold: on the one hand it is possible to increase the power of the grammar to distinguish between linguistic expressions which differ with regard to form and with regard to communicative effect; and on the other hand the incorporation of the speaker's message management strategies in the grammar offers the first part of the interface which will be necessary to forge what Mackenzie & Keizer (1990: 1) see as the problematic link between the static, product-oriented theory of grammar and the dynamic, process-oriented theory of verbal interaction.

## 2. *Topic and Focus*

In this section I will first give a brief account of the most recent overview of predication-internal pragmatic functions, namely that in Dik (1989), and then I will go on to look at the application of the Topic function in greater detail. The outcome is an operationalizable, language-specific definition of Topic for English.

Dik (1989) does not provide specific definitions of Topic and Focus along the lines of Dik (1978: 130). In the earlier work these are given purely functional, i.e. non-formal definitions:

- (7) A constituent with *Topic function* presents the entity 'about' which the Predication predicates something in the given setting

A constituent with *Focus function* presents the relatively most important or salient information with respect to the pragmatic information of the Speaker and the Addressee

In Dik (1989: 264f), however, these definitions have been replaced in the first instance by a statement that relates Topic and Focus to the concepts of topicality and focality. Topicality is the property that characterizes 'the things we talk about', whereas focality is what characterizes 'the most important or salient parts of what we say about the topical things'.<sup>2</sup> Topic and Focus are then functions that are assigned to topical and focal elements respectively which are singled out in a specific language for special treatment by means of form, order, or prosodic properties.

Dik goes on to distinguish four kinds of Topic and two kinds of Focus; I will deal with Topic first. To start with, Given Topic (GivTop) relates to an entity already introduced into the discourse and activated at the moment of speech. An example is the italicized constituent in (8):

- (8) I got a phone call from John yesterday. *He* has a new job.

Then we have Sub-Topics (SubTop), which relate to entities that have not been so introduced or activated, but are presented by the speaker as if they have been. That is to say, the speaker assumes that the addressee, on the basis of entities already present in his pragmatic information, can produce a reconstruction of the entity concerned which is a sufficient basis

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<sup>2</sup>This formulation is suggestive of the well-known topic/comment dichotomy, where the comment is seen as a 'commentary' on the topic. However, this is not Dik's intention, since he goes on (1989: 266) to explicitly propose a partial overlap between topicality and focality.

for the speaker to build a message on.<sup>3</sup> An example of a SubTop is *the brakes in Holland* in (9):

- (9) I finally bought a bike yesterday but *the brakes in Holland* are like hidden in the pedals somewhere

The third kind of Topic is called Resumed Topic (ResTop) and refers to the reselection of a GivTop which has not been mentioned in the discourse for some time. The introduction of a ResTop will tend to be in the form of a strong anaphoric reference, is usually accompanied by some indication that the entity has indeed been mentioned before. Dik (1989: 267) gives the following example:

- (10) John had a brother called Peter and a sister called Mary. Peter ... [a considerable chunk of discourse about Peter]. Now, *John's sister Mary*, who I mentioned before ...

Essentially, these first three types are subcategories of the Topic function as originally conceived, namely referring to an entity about which the predication predicates something in the given setting. The newly introduced distinctions serve to point up different relations which a Topic entity may entertain with the preceding discourse.

The matter is complicated somewhat by the introduction of a fourth type of Topic called New Topic (NewTop), which is of a different order altogether, referring as it does to the type of entity that is introduced into the discourse by means of, for example, existentials and other presentative constructions but also by means of the object constituent in certain communicative contexts. Examples are the italicized constituents in (11) and (12):

- (11) And then, all of a sudden, along came *my sister*

- (12) Once upon a time there were *three little bears*

The notion of Topic is only relevant here in as far as a new discourse Topic (D-Topic) is introduced into the discourse; it clearly cannot be understood in terms of the definition in (7) above. In terms of topicality/focality what we have here is rather a subcategory of Focus: the

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<sup>3</sup>Along with Mackenzie & Keizer (1990) I believe it is important to stress that a speaker's judgment that an entity is inferrable does not mean that such an entity is thereby assigned Topic status. Rather, the inferrability of an entity means that the speaker can regard that entity as a candidate for singling out for Topic treatment. In other words, it is important in cases like this to distinguish between the parameter of Topic/Focus on the one hand and the Given/New scale on the other.

introduction of a new discourse entity is the *point* of the communication, not the *starting point* of it.<sup>4</sup>

There is less confusion about the breakdown of the Focus function itself. Focus may either relate to completely new information (NewFoc) or may relate to information which is salient by dint of contrast (ConFoc). In (13) the italicized expression will receive the NewFoc function; in (14) the italicized subject constituents can be seen as having both GivTop and ConFoc functions, while the predicates have both NewFoc and ConFoc.

- (13) Q: Where's John going?  
A: He's going *to the market*

- (14) John and Bill came to see me. *John was nice*, but *Bill* was rather *boring*

Whereas Topic can coincide with ConFoc (cf. also Hannay 1983), GivTop, SubTop and ResTop will not coincide with NewFoc, since the first three types refer to information which forms the speaker's appointed basis for the giving of new information, in other words for the meaningfulness of the utterance.

In the rest of the discussion I will be interested primarily in the fundamental notions of (New) Focus and Topic, the former including the notion of NewTop and the latter undifferentiated with respect to GivTop, ResTop and SubTop. I now want to go on and look in greater detail at the specific features of the Topic function as it is applied in FG.

The first point that must be stressed is that the original definition given in (7) is entirely functional, as against formal, and based on aboutness. This means that, as such, it cannot be readily operationalized in the linguistic description of sentences, even though the grammatical analyst is faced with the task of assigning the function to constituents in underlying representations. A certain degree of narrowing down is possible by appealing to two further principles which are concealed in the definition: (a) because Topic relates to entities, the function can only be assigned to terms, and (b) because there is reference to *the* entity about which the predication predicates something, there is an assumption that no more than one Topic per predication is allowed (an assumption based on the fact that languages which adopt special means of distinguishing Topics tend to distinguish no

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<sup>4</sup>A similar conclusion is arrived at by Mackenzie & Keizer (1990). Cf. also Hannay (1985a), who introduces a purely focal Presentative function which is very similar to what Dik presents as NewTop.

more than one at a time).<sup>5</sup> However, even then there are problems with a case like (15):

- (15) Q: What did you do with my paté sandwich?  
A: I threw it in the wastepaper bin

The response to the question involves two entities (the referents of *I* and *it*) which are activated in the given setting, and which are therefore candidates for Topic assignment.

This problem can now in theory be overcome because the realisation of the Topic function is linked to specific features of form, order or prosodic prominence, as a result of which language-specific operational definitions can be added to the universally valid functional definition. This makes Topic into a device which signals the special treatment of specific information within the framework of the construction of the message. Accordingly, we can talk of a sentence Topic as against a discourse Topic: I follow De Vries (1985) in this respect, who distinguishes between the two by saying that a sentence Topic is a discourse Topic that is marked at the sentence level.

There is a second point that needs to be made concerning the functional definition of the Topic function. Dik (1978: 132) states that 'Topic and Focus are used to capture the organisation that speakers impose on predications with respect to the pragmatic information of speaker and addressee within a certain communicative exchange'. In other words, the assigning of Topic function must be viewed as the reflection of an activity performed by the speaker. Given further that any term of a predication,

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<sup>5</sup>There are exceptions to this principle, and it should therefore be applied with some caution. One such exception, often quoted in the FG literature, concerns Hungarian (cf. De Groot 1981), where the special Topic position P1 can be filled by two constituents. However, it is doubtful whether these constituents ever have the same status, and it may be that two different kinds of Topic would have to be distinguished. In many cases, for instance, one of the constituents has a different status in that it refers to a participant in an embedded predication. In other cases, however, two constituents from the same predication also occur together. Consider (i):

- (i) János Marínak a könyvet adta  
John Mary-dat the book-acc gave  
'John gave the book to Mary'

This sentence is to be understood as 'What John gave to Mary was the book'; there are two Topic terms in P1 (*János* and *Marínak*) and one Focus term in the Focus slot P0 (*a könyvet*). Interestingly, the two Topic constituents can appear in reverse order, but according to De Groot (1989: Ch.1, n.27) the difference is difficult to account for. Again, the suggestion is that the Topic constituent that is mentioned first has a different status from that mentioned second. See in this respect the discussion in Siewierska (1988:73f) of so-called composite topics in Polish, Czech and Russian, where the order of two topic constituents in P1 seems to be determined by the relative degree of predictability.

regardless of its semantic and syntactic function, can qualify for Topic function if it is topical, we must conclude that the speaker has a choice if there are enough candidates.<sup>6</sup> Note also that a linguistic expression may contain given information without there being talk of a Topic at all, as is the case with (16):

- (16) Q: Who went to the market today?  
A: John went

In the response to the question, the subject term *John* carries Focus function, and there are no other terms to which the Topic function could apply. In this we may note a basic difference between Topic and Focus, since every linguistic expression will contain at least one Focus constituent. All this means that a speaker not only can select an element from the topical information available and give it special treatment as the Topic, but he can also presumably choose not to assign a Topic at all.

A third and final point concerns the relation between the sentence Topic, the subject matter of the discourse, and the concept of given information. This can be traced in general terms through the intermediate notion of topicality. Dik (1989: 266) posits a relationship between topicality and focality on the one hand and given and new on the other, but does not specify the nature of the relationship. Given information is information which the speaker estimates to be in the addressee's pragmatic information (textual, situational and general). On the basis of the definition of topicality I accordingly assume that given information will also be topical if (a) it is an entity, and (b) it is estimated to be relevant with regard to the subject matter of the discourse (cf. also Hannay 1985b). The nature of the relation between given information and the Topic function, as relating to a particular topical element, follows on from this.

Before rounding off this part of the discussion there are two additional points that I would like to make concerning topicality. First, topical elements comprise not only given information: they may also comprise information which the speaker believes the addressee can infer from his pragmatic information. Second, I am doubtful about the value of restricting topicality to a property of entities, as Dik does, since such a restriction would make it very difficult to account for the message-building work done by non-term P1 constituents in presentative constructions such as (17):

- (17) *Even more frightening in this respect* is the effect on unemployment in the East German car industry

I will return to this in section 2.1 below.

Summarizing the discussion, I see the three central features of the Topic function as follows:

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<sup>6</sup>This is also assumed in other treatments of Topic outside FG, for instance in Reinhart (1982) and Erteschik-Shir (1988).

- (a) Topic assignment is a device for giving special treatment to elements of topical information (which in turn is always given or inferrable) at the level of the individual message; in other words we can talk of a sentence Topic, or preferably message Topic.
- (b) Topic assignment is a reflection of a decision by the speaker in the course of message and discourse construction: the speaker decides whether to opt for Topic assignment, and he decides what topical element to opt for.
- (c) Topic assignment has a function within the message expression and a function within the broader discourse: within the message it constitutes a particular perspective from which the communication is built up, and with respect to the discourse it provides a perspective which allows the speaker to make a contribution which the addressee can view as relevant to the subject matter.

These features are brought together in the following functional definition:

- (18) Topic function is assigned to a term that refers to an entity which the speaker takes to be part of or inferrable from the shared pragmatic information of speaker and addressee and which the speaker regards as an appropriate foundation for constructing a message which is relevant to the subject matter of the discourse.

With regard to realization in English I will assume from now on that Topic function is associated only with the P1 position, and is not realized by specific formal or prosodic devices. Firstly, English simply has no formal devices to identify a constituent as a Topic (although in the non-FG literature reference is made to special Topic constructions like left and right dislocation; however, in FG these are handled as special Theme and Tail constructions, in other words involving pragmatic function assignment outside the clause). Secondly, the varying degrees of accentuation typically associated with the different types of Topic distinguished in Dik (1989) demonstrate that accentuation is the reflection of the degree of activatedness or predictability of the entity concerned, and has nothing to do with selecting a particular entity for Topic treatment.<sup>7</sup> In contrast, the relevance of the P1 position can be seen in the first instance from cases like (3b) above, where an incontrovertibly topical constituent appears in a position which is demonstrably P1. Moreover, English being a typical P1-S-V-O language, topical constituents with Subject function have a great tendency to occur in clause-initial position.<sup>8</sup> Finally, it may be noted that because P1

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<sup>7</sup>Cf. also the overview of topicality measurement in Givón (1988) and his 'code-quantity principle', which states that 'the less predictable/accessible a referent is, the more phonological material will be used to code it' (1988: 249).

<sup>8</sup>Cf. in this respect Dik (1989: 349), who formulates the following specific principle of constituent ordering:

- (i) Since the Subject is the prime Given Topic candidate, it will often be

in English can only have one constituent, it may be further assumed that Topic function will be assigned to no more than one constituent per predication.

The most crucial feature of this understanding of Topic realization is that, following the principle underlying the use of the P1 position, Topic may indeed always be associated with P1, but P1 is not always associated with Topic. This situation is to be contrasted with the approach taken in for instance Systemic Functional Grammar (cf. Halliday 1985: 39), where the first position in the sentence is exclusively associated with the notion of theme.<sup>9</sup> However, while the Theme-Rheme structure adopted by Halliday is indeed of a quite fundamentally different functionality from Topic-Focus in FG, there is in fact considerable similarity between Halliday's view of the general function of sentence-initial position as the starting point for the message and what we can take to be the FG view on the functionality of P1, given the combination of an alleged universal relevance and its occupation by elements which have been singled out for special treatment. In fact, the advantage of the FG standpoint here is that on the one hand the general functionality of the P1 position can be recognized while on the other hand the opportunity is there to specify the effect of a Topic P1 constituent as against a Focus P1 constituent or indeed an unfilled P1 position in more precise terms than what is possible with the distinction between marked and unmarked theme (Halliday 1985: 45). This will be the subject of the next two sections.

## 2. *Variation in P1*

### 2.0 *Topic and Focus in P1*

The interpretation of the communicative effect of Topics in English can be seen as being founded on the combination of topicality and their prominent position in the linguistic expression. Let us now look at some cases of word order variation and discuss the consequences of adopting an approach that

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placed in P1; this may lead to a reinterpretation of P1 as the unmarked Subject position.

Mackenzie & Keizer (1990: 19) see support in this principle for their claim that the Topic function is in fact not at all relevant for the description of the constituent order properties of English sentences, in that the function of P1 is in the unmarked case to house the grammatical subject. However, in the rest of this paper I will take the stand, reflected in the first part of (i) above, that it is nevertheless the trigger provided by the pragmatic function that is fundamentally responsible for P1 placement.

<sup>9</sup>Another distinct feature of theme in Halliday's work is its association with the sentence-initial position rather than the clause-initial position. The distinction made in FG between the P1 position and the extra-clausal P2 position (Dik 1978: 175f) is thus lost, making a comparison between Topic and theme even more difficult.



limits Topic to the P1 position. Consider again the sentence pairs under (3-6), this time one for one.

- (3) Q: Have you thought of going to London? [*You* unstressed, *London* in Focus]  
(a) No, I hadn't considered London actually  
(b) No, London I hadn't considered actually

According to the P1-Topic restriction, we have two different Topic constituents in (3a) and (3b): the Topic in (3a) is *I* and in (3b) it is *London*. Note that both *London* in (3a) and *I* in (3b) are established D-topics and hence topical, but that there is nothing about their form, position or accentuation that we need a specific message Topic function to explain. However, the extra prominence given to *London* in (3b) has an effect on how the message is interpreted which one might paraphrase as 'ah, you mention London, well as far as that particular place is concerned ...'. In the (a) sentence, on the other hand, the latently present perspective of the speaker is chosen to provide an answer to the question.

In the case of (4) the effect of the P1-Topic restriction is again clear:

- (4) Q: Did you get wet?  
(a) Wet? I was bloody soaking  
(b) Wet? Bloody soaking I was

In (4a) *I* functions as Topic but in (4b) there is no Topic at all. This difference in underlying representation also corresponds to a perceived difference in communicative effect. In (4b) the speaker is more concerned to express his reaction to the suggestion that he may have got wet. In (4a), on the other hand, the opinion of the speaker is presented more indirectly because the message essentially consists of the speaker saying of himself that he was 'bloody soaking'.

Turning to (5), here we see that the (b) sentence has a Topic constituent in P1 whereas the (a) sentence does not have P1 filled:

- (5) Q: What was your reaction to the recent Harrods scandal?  
(a) Well, it didn't really surprise me that the Government were involved in a cover-up  
(b) Well, that the Government were involved in a cover-up didn't really surprise me

Once again the difference reflects a difference in the communicative force of the two messages, such that we can in fact speak of two different messages. The information that the Government were involved in a cover-up can admittedly be regarded as topical in both sentences, on the basis that it is presented not only as belonging to the general pragmatic information of the speaker and hearer, but also as being of relevance in the given context due to its being inferrable from 'the recent Harrods scandal'. However, there is a strong feeling that the (b) sentence comprises a message which is more clearly 'about' this fact because the speaker takes it as his starting point. To formulate the pragmatic relation in semantic terms: the fact that the Government were involved in a cover-up is assigned the

property of not having been surprising to the speaker. In the (a) sentence, on the other hand, the message seems much more to consist of the speaker announcing that there is something that he has a certain attitude to and then saying what that is.

Finally, let us consider (6a-b):

- (6) Q: Did you see 'die Mannschaft' get the hammer last night?  
(a) Yes, it was absolutely amazing to be there, wasn't it?  
(b) Yes, absolutely amazing it was to be there, wasn't it?

These sentences cannot be distinguished with the help of the P1-Topic restriction, since in neither case is there a topical constituent in P1. It will be noted, however, that the patterns of pragmatic function assignment involved here arose in earlier sentences: (6a) has a similar patterning to (5a), while (6b) is similar to (4b). In both cases reference was made to specific aspects of the meaning of the message in terms of communicative effect. Accordingly, if it were possible to capture the specific functionality of these patterns of pragmatic function assignment, then it would also be possible to account for the difference between (6a) and (6b).

### 2.1 Presentative constructions

Before going on to consider how one might capture in the grammar the differences in message meaning which arise from variation in the filling of P1, there is one important area of P1 variation that I have not covered so far and which needs to be looked at. Consider (19):

- (19) CONTEXT:  
I will now turn my attention to various implications of the analysis
- (a) Its influence on Topic assignment is particularly interesting  
(b) Particularly interesting is its influence on Topic assignment

The (a) and (b) sentences here differ from the pairs in (3-6) in that Focus assignment is clearly different: in (19a) *particularly interesting* is to be understood as Focus, whereas in (19b) Focus is assigned to *its influence on Topic assignment*.<sup>10</sup> With respect to topical information the situation is similar: in (19a) *its influence on Topic assignment* can be inferred as one of the various implications mentioned in the previous sentence, and can therefore be chosen as SubTop. What we should do with *particularly interesting* in (19b) is less clear, however. It is, of course, also reasonable to infer that if one announces that one wants to turn one's attention to implications of some matter or other, then the various implications will also

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<sup>10</sup>It will be noticed that two linguistic expressions with such fundamental variation in constituent order but the same semantic content do not necessarily have to share the exact same underlying representation just because they happen to be equally appropriate in a given setting. For discussion of a similar example see Hannay (1985b: 59f).

be interesting; indeed, what the speaker of (19b) does is use this inferencing technique to introduce as particularly interesting one of the various implications referred to in the previous sentence. In other words, we again have topical inferrable information, this time serving as a kind of staging device for the introduction of a new discourse topic. The problem is, of course, that Topic function cannot be assigned because *particularly interesting* is not a term but a predicate, and Topic function can only be assigned to terms. But there is another reason why Topic function would be inappropriate here, despite the topicality of the information concerned. The problem relates to the nature of the Topic-Focus relation: the essential dynamism of a Topic-Focus message is that a Topic entity is presented and some new information is related to it, and this carries with it the strong notion that the Focus is a 'property' of, or a 'comment' on, the Topic. But in presentative constructions like (19b) the discourse strategy of the speaker is totally different: it is a strategy directed towards the introduction of a referent into the discourse, and the role of the topical element is subservient to this (cf. Quirk et al. 1985: 1410-11).<sup>11</sup>

In the light of the particular role played in the construction of the message, and keeping in mind the entity-bound nature of the Topic function, I therefore propose to introduce the pragmatic function STAGER (ST) to handle such scene-setting and potentially non-term P1 constituents (cf. Bolinger (1977) for a discussion of the 'staging' function of the initial constituent in presentatives). I leave undiscussed for the time being the question of whether the spatial and temporal expressions which occur in P1 position in non-presentative constructions should also be seen as functioning as Stagers for the presentation of a whole state-of-affairs, or whether they simply function as a special kind of Topic in these contexts.

### 3. Formalization within the grammar

#### 3.0 Message management within the declarative illocution

Following the discussion of the instances of word order variation in (3-6) and in (19) it would appear worthwhile to consider to what extent we can talk of specific patterns in message construction. If it were possible to formally represent the insight that specific constellations of pragmatic function assignment are the direct result of different planning strategies adopted by speakers, then this would mean a substantial increase in the power of the grammar.

What options does a speaker have for organizing information when formulating a message on the basis of a declarative illocution? I will try and sketch an answer to this question by considering the combined effect of two particular factors. The first concerns topicality and focality, and springs from the idea that the speaker who by means of a declarative

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<sup>11</sup>The difference in terms of discourse strategy between the two sentence types under discussion here relates essentially to the difference between so-calledthetic and categorical judgments. For a discussion of these terms see for instance Kuroda (1972) and Sasse (1987).

illocution instructs the addressee to add the content of the linguistic expression to his own pragmatic information (cf. Dik 1989: 256) will at least include a focal element in the expression he is to formulate, and will have the option of including a topical element. The second factor concerns the linear nature of the expression itself and can be specified as the filling of the P1 position: P1 can be filled or not, and can contain either a Topic constituent or a Focus constituent. By considering the combination of these two factors it should be possible to describe the various forms that information structuring can take within the declarative sentence type. The form that the speaker actually adopts in any particular communicative situation is then the result of what I will call the speaker's message management activities.

Firstly, the speaker must decide whether or not to present his 'new' information in the context of what he assumes to be shared information. If he does not, then the result will be what Dik et al. (1981) call an 'all-new predication'. Given that all the information involved is thus equally salient, I assume that there is no element that needs to be singled out for special treatment by means of word order. Accordingly, P1 will remain empty in such cases and, other things being equal, constituents will be placed in pattern position.<sup>12</sup> I will label this mode of message management the ALL-NEW MODE.

If the speaker does, however, choose to formulate his message on the basis of both topical and focal information, then a number of further options become available. To begin with, he can choose to select one of the topical elements for special treatment as the Topic. In this case we get Topic in P1 and Focus at a later stage in the linguistic expression. This is a very typical form for a message to take and is suggestive of the general principle that speakers in the unmarked situation will proceed from given to new (cf. Siewierska 1988: 67ff; Gundel 1988: 239). Cases like this I take as examples of the TOPIC MODE (see for instance (3a) and (3b) above).

Alternatively, the speaker may choose not to start off his message with a particular topical element at all; rather, the most important focal information may be at the centre of his attention and hence be chosen as the foundation for the message. In such cases the Focus constituent will appear in P1. Topical information may then follow, but it is also possible that the speaker regards this message as complete with the mentioning of just the one constituent. Messages like this frequently appear in response to questions or consist of commentary on something produced immediately prior in the discourse, and as such are examples of what I will label the REACTION MODE. I will return to this mode in greater detail in 3.1 below.

Yet another option open to the speaker is not to make use of the P1 position at all for giving prominence to a particular piece of information; in other words, he does not select any topical element as the starting point for the communication, and just builds up to the Focus. Often what we find here is that the core of the propositional content is captured in a clause-final subject clause and the main clause predicate serves to first introduce

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<sup>12</sup>Formulating things in this way has the same effect as Dik et al.'s (1981) representation of all-new predications as involving no pragmatic function assignment at all.

some kind of speaker attitude. Cases like this, with no initial Topic, no initial Focus and a dummy subject expression, are realizations of what I will call the NEUTRAL MODE. Examples are (5a) and (6a) above.

One special option available to the speaker that in a way is fundamentally different from those discussed so far is to present a new discourse topic. If so, then the presentation may be staged with the help of some scene-setting element in P1, typically but by no means necessarily a spatial or temporal expression; alternatively the speaker may choose not to adopt this staging technique, in which case P1 will remain empty and, in the case of prototypical presentative constructions, the S slot in the basic functional pattern will be filled by a dummy element. In both cases I will talk of the PRESENTATIVE MODE.

Here is an overview of the arrays of pragmatic function assignment associated with each mode:

(20) Mode	P1	Other PF
ALL NEW	-	Foc
TOPIC	Top	Foc
REACTION	Foc	-
NEUTRAL	-	Foc
PRESENTATIVE	(St)	Foc (NewTop)

I suggest that the various modes can be represented formally in the grammar by seeing them as subcategories of the illocutionary operator DECL (Declarative) (for an overview of the place of illocutionary operators in the grammatical model, see Hengeveld 1988 and Dik 1989: 256f). The following abbreviations may be applied:

- (21) DECL-A All-new mode  
 DECL-N Neutral mode  
 DECL-P Presentative mode  
 DECL-R Reaction mode  
 DECL-T Topic mode

A somewhat simplified representation of, say, (3a) would then look like (22) (for the notation, see Dik 1989: 261):

(3a) I hadn't considered London actually

(22) DECL-T  $E_i:[X_i:[\text{Neg Past Perf } e_i:[\text{consider}_{VFoc} (I)_{AgSubjTop} (\text{London})_{GoObj}](e_i)](X_i) (\text{actually})](E_i)$

### 3.1 The reaction mode

I would like to make some more specific remarks concerning Reaction mode declaratives (RMDs), particularly in contrast with Topic mode declaratives (TMDs). With RMDs what we are talking about is what linguists have traditionally called marked, subjective, expressive, or emotive word order, but the problem with these labels is that they are very general, if not

vague. However, if the formulation of a RMD as a particular discourse strategy on the part of the speaker for message management could be given further substance from an analysis of how linguistic expressions of this type actually function in discourse, then it would be possible to attach a more concrete interpretation to such expressions as expressive and emotive word order. I am not aware of any detailed study in this area, and it would be beyond the scope of the present paper to go into any depth on the issue. However, I would like in the present context to offer some initial pieces of evidence to support the fundamental claim that the Reaction mode constitutes a quite distinct form of declarative message.

To start with, it will be apparent that it is not possible to take a random contextualized linguistic expression formulated in the Topic mode, put the Focus constituent in P1, and then expect the result to be an appropriate linguistic expression in the same context. There are two main reasons for this. First, the discourse context must be basically conducive to such a message: the essence of the RMD consists in the speaker expressing a certain attitude towards the content of an immediately prior linguistic or non-linguistic event. Consequently, higher-level discourse considerations may legislate against the basic relevance of such a message form. To start with, the language variety may exert influence; in fact, it has been noted in the literature that the principle underlying the Reaction mode will tend to be generally more relevant in colloquial spoken language (Siewierska 1988: 74f), and at the paragraph level a discourse operation such as listing may render the Reaction mode inappropriate, as in the section after the colon in the third sentence in (23):

- (23) In the present pre-election climate, there are a number of dangers which the East German political parties must keep in mind. Firstly, the conservative Alliance parties must beware not to let the hate of many of their younger supporters towards the PDS get out of hand. And a second consideration is this:
- (a) ??Cautious about overreacting to any smear campaigns the SPD and its allies will clearly have to be
  - (b) The SPD and its allies will clearly have to be cautious about overreacting to any smear campaigns

The second reason for the basic inappropriateness of a conversion from a TMD to a RMD is that the nature of the message will constrain the propositional content. Because the urgent crux of the matter is presented immediately by means of the Focus element in P1, one may expect that relatively little focal information will follow, with for instance a lack of such features as modality and negation. Moreover, the high degree of textual or situational givenness of any topical information will mean that this information, too, is relatively brief. Indeed, a typical RMD would be the answer to a question, the answer containing nothing but the information requested. Finally, the focal information itself will tend to be brief and to the point as well (involving such elements as nominal and adjectival predicates of opinion, as in (6b)). The absence of these formal characteristics of RMDs surely contributes to the inappropriateness of (23a) above.

Support for this general analysis of RMDs comes from the cognitive principle of 'attend first to the most urgent task', formulated by Givón (1988: 252), which subsumes the idea that when the Focus information is particularly important for the speaker, the topical information will be highly predictable and hence less voluminous and less urgent. RMDs can thus be seen as the realization of a very specific type of communicative urgency.

Consider now the examples in (24) and (25), which are appropriate within the mini-discourse context provided:

- (24) Hey! What do you think you are doing?! \$35 that thing cost me
- (25) Let me tell you about my mother. She is still working hard. 69 she is. Every morning she gets up at 7.00, gets the grandchildren ready for school...

In (24) the RMD is in response to an act on the part of the addressee which presumably involves potential damage being done to something which the speaker believes the addressee should realize is valuable. In (25) the reaction mode form clearly marks the message as an aside, as an explanation for the use of *still* in the previous sentence, one of the possible interpretations of which is that the person involved is past retiring age. Note that the choice of a RMD would be less appropriate if some such contextual trigger were less obvious, as in (26):

- (26) ?Let me tell you about my mother. She lives in a small town near the Welsh border. 69 she is. Every morning she gets up at 7.00,...

An important point here is, then, that the Focus of a RMD appears to entertain a specific relation with the Focal information of the previous linguistic expression.

In the contexts provided in (24) and (25) a TMD would be equally appropriate. Note, however, that it would be the realization of a different perspective taken by the speaker. In (27), for instance, the speaker concentrates his attention upon the situationally given referent of *that thing* and proceeds to add relevant information with respect to it.

- (27) Hey! What do you think you're doing?! That thing cost me \$35

The addressee can then, indirectly, draw the same conclusions that in (24) he is being more urgently requested to consider. In such cases as (27) the cognitive principle of 'given before new' overrides the 'first-things-first' principle (cf. Gundel 1988: 229; Givón 1988: 252) to produce a TMD, whereas in the case of (24) one might say that the urgency of the situation governs the reaction, and the 'first-things-first' principle wins out over 'given before new'.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup>Actually, I would prefer to avoid using the metaphors of 'overriding' and 'winning out', which are used in matters like this to allude to the idea of interacting and competing constituent ordering principles. Rather, I would want to lay somewhat more emphasis on the active role of the speaker as

A particular case of the Reaction mode functioning in discourse may be seen in following extract from a contemporary novel.

- (28) The subway stop where he could catch the D train to the Bronx was at Eighty-first Street and Central Park West. He liked to walk across to Central Park West on Seventy-seventh Street and then walk up to Eighty-first, because that took him past the Museum of Natural History. It was a beautiful block, the most beautiful block on the West Side, to Kramer's way of thinking, like a street scene in Paris; not that he had ever been to Paris. Seventy-seventh Street was very wide at that point. On one side was the museum, a marvellous Romanesque Revival creation in an old reddish stone. It was set back in a little park with trees. Even on a cloudy day like this the young spring leaves seemed to glow. *Verdant was the word that crossed his mind.* On this side of the street, where he was walking, was a cliff of elegant apartment houses overlooking the museum. There were doormen. He got glimpses of marbled halls. And then he thought of the girl with brown lipstick ... He could see her very clearly now, much more clearly than in the dream. He clenched his fist. Damn it! He was going to do it! He was going to call her..... (Tom Wolfe, *Bonfire of the vanities*, p.34)

The paragraph concerned provides a description of a scene, from the point of view of the main character. All of a sudden in the middle comes the one sentence (italicized) that provides the character's personal comment relating what he felt when he saw a particular part of the scene. The switch is also reflected in the choice of a RMD. This is suggestive of the claim in Hopper (1979: 220f), illustrated by means of Old English, that foregrounded utterances in a discourse tend to reveal given-new order, while backgrounded utterances used for supporting and commenting on mainline events will often reveal a new-given order of constituents.

As a final illustration of the difference between TMDs and RMDs, consider the following pair of sentences (in (29b) 'Topl' stands for 'topical'):

- (29a) The one we missed<sub>(Top)</sub> was the third one<sub>(Foc)</sub>  
(29b) The third one<sub>(Foc)</sub> was the one we missed<sub>(Topl)</sub>

These sentences are examples of identifying constructions, with one constituent referring to an unidentified, but specific entity and the other providing an identification of that same entity. A distinct feature is that the constituents are reversible, but insomuch as this also means retention of the same information structure (i.e. what is topical and what is focal), as is the case with (29a-b), then it needs to be stressed that the two forms will by no means always be equally applicable in the same setting. For instance, for the Reaction mode to be appropriate, it is clear that the unidentified

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one of the 'controlling managing directors' of the discourse. Such an approach is more in accordance with the mode system of message management proposed here.



referent will have to have already been activated or strongly implied in the (immediately) preceding discourse.

The messages in (29a) and (29b) in fact differ in respect of what the speaker actually does. In the Topic mode, the identifying construction involves a complete two-step operation: the speaker starts by presenting a description of an entity whose identity has not been specified and then proceeds to specify what the identity is. In the Reaction mode, on the other hand, the fact that there is an unidentified referent, as well as the desire to provide an identity for it, have to be already understood; and indeed, the prominence of the focal information goes hand in hand with the relative non-prominence of any topical element. Consequently, there is a clear emphasis on the second step in the identifying process and there is no need for the speaker to single out any topical information for special treatment. Again this supports the crucial difference between the Topic mode and the Reaction mode: RMDs lack a Topic.

In summary, the examples of RMD and TMD discussed in this section have revealed differences in the limits of propositional content, in the linear distribution of topical and focal information, in typical discourse environment, and ultimately differences in communicative effect. These differences provide ample support for the proposal to distinguish two different message types.

### **3.2 Placement rules for P1**

By associating the various constellations of pragmatic function assignment with particular modes of message management, we have the basis for a much less arbitrary treatment within the grammar of the kind of P1 word order variation presented in (3-6). This can now be achieved by formulating placement rules which state the precise conditions under which one basic word order sequence rather than another will be produced.

In line with the process-oriented approach I have adopted in the course of this paper, I will assume that the choice of a particular mode operates as a kind of primary trigger (much in the sense of De Groot 1990) for the pragmatic functions that may be assigned. The mode together with the pragmatic function assignment then combine via the placement rules to produce a particular constituent order. The placement rules for the declarative sentence type in English take the form of (30):

## (30) P1 PLACEMENT RULES

<i>operator</i>	<i>pragmatic functions</i>	<i>what goes in P1</i>
DECL-A	FOC	P1 ---> 0 <sup>14</sup>
DECL-N	FOC	P1 ---> 0
DECL-P	(ST)-FOC	P1 ---> {ST} {0}
DECL-R	FOC	P1 ---> FOC
DECL-T	TOP-FOC	P1 ---> TOP

Note first of all that while the choice of a particular declarative mode entails the assignment of particular pragmatic functions, no prediction is made concerning the constituents to which these functions will apply: there may still be more than one topical and one focal element to choose from. Note also that these rules contain no optionality, except the specification with regard to the DECL-P operator that the Stager function may or may not be assigned. However, the relevant placement rule is to be understood as 'place Stager in P1 if present; if not, leave P1 empty', and this ordering prevents optionality from the grammatical analyst's point of view. Consequently, the conditions have indeed been created for relating each of the basic forms of word order variation discussed in this paper to the assignment of a distinct array of pragmatic functions.

## 4. Conclusion

In this paper I have proposed a means of handling a major area of word order variation in English by incorporating the message management activities of the speaker more clearly into the grammar. It is to be hoped that this might constitute a useful step towards providing an interface

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<sup>14</sup>The idea of an empty P1 position may raise the objection that the non-P1 constituent which appears as clause-initial element in the actual linguistic expression nevertheless might be interpreted as the foundation of the message in some way. An interesting alternative would be to claim that P1 remains filled in the case of all-new, neutral and presentative modes (in other words under all circumstances) and that, instead of zero filling, a placement rule sends the Subject constituent to that position. See in this regard the discussion in Mackenzie & Keizer (1990), who propose that Topic not be recognized for English at all, and that, in the absence of Focus constituents or predicational satellites in P1, there should be a placement rule that sends the Subject to P1 as the unmarked option (cf. also Dik 1989: 349). It should be noted, however, that the P1 placement rules adopted by Mackenzie & Keizer are not capable of solving the problem of optionality; neither do they allow pragmatic function assignment and the relation between P1 and pragmatic function to be viewed in terms of the speaker's message management activities.

between the static, product-oriented theory of grammar and the dynamic, process-oriented theory of verbal interaction.

Specifically, by linking Topic to P1 in English (although P1 is not exclusively linked to Topic) and at the same time adhering to its functional definition, it is possible to make the notion of Topic much more relevant to the actual linguistic description. Its interpretation as relating to topical information which is selected by the speaker for special purposes, together with its realization in English in P1 position, can be understood in terms of a specific application of the general cognitive principle of 'given before new', namely the Topic mode of message management. At the same time, however, a major conclusion of this paper must be that the Topic mode, and hence Topic assignment, is only one of a range of options open to the speaker in constructing discourse.

Finally, handling word order variation in terms of mode selection provides a satisfactory division of labour between the grammar and the encompassing theory of verbal interaction. The grammatical model accommodates the considerations of message management which are directly responsible for formal aspects of the linguistic expression involved, while the interaction model provides a context which allows us to understand the nature of the motivations and goals which guide a speaker to choose one mode of management, or construction pattern, rather than another. All this means a stronger grammar, as well as one which achieves greater pragmatic adequacy.

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**On assigning pragmatic functions in English**

**J. Lachlan Mackenzie and M. Evelien Keizer**





*0. Introduction\**

With the appearance of Dik (1989), linguists have acquired a cogent and lucid presentation of the current state of Functional Grammar (FG). The book provides a broad but also detailed coverage of all fundamental aspects of the model, so that it will be of value not only to theoreticians but also to those concerned with the practical description of languages. In the present article, we have been inspired by the same duality of purpose: our argument is theoretical in nature, but is directed above all at practitioners in our ambition to test the extent to which one of the subsystems treated in Dik (1989) can be applied in the actual analysis of a language. The subsystem in question is pragmatic function assignment, and the language, English.

FG is conceived as being embedded within a wider pragmatic theory of verbal interaction (Dik 1989: 12). Such a theory, the outlines of which are beginning to emerge in the pragmatic literature, will be designed to account for the regularities underlying the structured, cooperative, real-time activities of language users, and will be necessarily procedural in orientation. It will concern itself with language users' plans and goals, their motivations and strategies, their problem-solving techniques, their quest for contexts and for relevance. Contributions may be expected from specialists in cognitive psychology and artificial intelligence, from anthropology and micro-sociology, from semiotics and communication theory, indeed from pragmatics in the widest sense. A theory of verbal interaction will thus be a dynamic theory, a theory of operations and processes.

A grammar, on the other hand, and FG is no exception in this respect, has a fundamentally different orientation: it seeks to describe and explain the **outcome** of operations and processes rather than those operations and processes themselves. It is static, not dynamic, and is essentially atemporal in its attempt to establish relationships between either virtual or attested expressions rather than follow the ongoing production or interpretation of utterances. If there appear to be certain analogies between paths through the grammar and plausible sequences of events in linguistic production, that may increase the 'psychological adequacy' of the model and its 'modules', but the grammar can claim no more than to be written in a 'quasi-productive' mode (Dik 1989: 52). The relationship between FG and the all-embracing theory of verbal interaction is thus problematic in nature, being an interface between a static and a dynamic system.

Now, of all the various subcomponents of the grammar, there are two which obviously stand at the interface with the ambient theory of verbal interaction: one is the analysis of the linguistic expression as a speech act, with an indication of illocutionary force being incorporated into the representation of a clause (Dik 1989: 248; 254 ff.); the other, to be focused on in the present article, is the assignment of pragmatic functions. The very definition of pragmatic functions, as specifying 'the informational value of

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different parts of the clause, in relation to the speaker's estimate of the pragmatic information of the addressee' (Dik 1989: 60), makes it clear that they are partially concerned with a dynamic quantity, i.e. one that can vary in time: the speaker's estimate of the pragmatic information of the addressee.

In the following pages, we will submit Dik's (1989) proposals for the assignment of pragmatic functions (mainly to be found in Ch. 13, pp. 263-287, but also in chapters on constituent ordering and prosodic features) to a careful examination with respect to (a) the theoretical question of how the interface between the static grammar and the dynamic theory of verbal interaction is handled with regard to pragmatic functions; (b) the practical question whether the reader finds a set of proposals that can be operationalized in the analysis of linguistic material. In considering these matters, we will limit ourselves to the two intra-clausal pragmatic functions and their subtypes, i.e. Topic and Focus.

The article will address three problems: firstly, the absence of a link between relevant aspects of the theory of verbal interaction and the pragmatic function assignment component of FG (§1); secondly, the irreconcilability of the Given-New and the Topic-Focus distinctions (§2); thirdly, the lack of any 'special treatment' for Topics in English (§3). Having pointed out the implications of these problems and drawn some novel conclusions, we continue (§4) by applying the proposals for pragmatic function assignment found in Dik (1989) to *The Story of Babar*; the application is successful, but provides further evidence for the conclusions drawn in the preceding section.

### ***1. The interface between FG and the theory of verbal interaction***

The key notion common both to a grammar incorporating pragmatic function assignment and to a theory of verbal interaction is 'discourse'. This term, however, is understood in two different ways, depending on which approach is taken. Firstly, a discourse (usually then a count noun) may be seen as the product of text-creating activity; alternatively, discourse (now usually a mass noun) may be seen as the ongoing text-creating process itself.

Grammarians, with their interest in the outcome of real-time operations and processes, generally take the former view. So also Dik (1989: 266-267), who identifies stories, monologues, etc. as discourses. He cites the product of his own labours as an example, i.e. the book he has written, and its chapters, subsections, paragraphs and ultimately its individual clauses -- all these are discourses, hierarchically organized with respect to one another. Through the identification of the clause as a mini-discourse, Dik paints a picture of a pyramidal structure, with an uninterrupted rank scale from clause to book.

Each discourse so identified stands in a relation of 'aboutness' to an entity or group of entities in some 'mental world' (see also Dik 1989: 46). These entities are termed D-Topics, and have the property of topicality. Dik (1989: 266) further recognizes 'topical elements' in discourses. These are not defined, but we take them to be the particular part or parts of each discourse that is/are referentially or denotationally linked to one or more D

-Topics. Any of these topical elements may (or, importantly, may not) be singled out<sup>1</sup> for special treatment with respect to form, order or prosodic properties. This singling-out is operationalized in FG by the assignment of one of the pragmatic functions Topic or Focus. These have corresponding effects on the operation of the expression rules. Note, as a difficulty, that topical elements are thus determined per discourse (which may be much longer than a clause), while pragmatic functions are assigned per clause.

Alongside this grammarian's approach to discourses as the outcome of verbal activity, Dik (1989: 267, from §13.3, par. 2 onwards) also adopts a view of discourse as an ongoing text-creating process. Here he suggests that as each stretch of discourse<sup>2</sup> unfolds, so a 'topic store', in some unspecified abstract sense, is 'gradually ... filled with D-Topics as these are introduced'. We take it that the unmentioned agent of the two passives in the quotation is the speaker/writer, at work in real time. As Dik's presentation continues, it becomes increasingly manifest that he does indeed intend the reader to imagine discourse production in real time: '... at some point ... for the first time ... then ... go on to talk about ...' (1989, §13.3, par. 3).

Thus, in one and the same section 13.3, Dik both claims that D-Topics are phenomena that can be recognized retrospectively by the grammarian and assumes that the speaker/writer has D-Topics at her disposal, ready to be marshalled in ongoing discourse. Here, then, the reader finds himself at the cutting edge, right up against the interface between FG and the ambient theory of verbal interaction. The notion of D-Topic is, to judge by Dik (1989: 267, n. 5), inspired above all by Brown and Yule (1983: 71). These writers, however, differ from Dik in taking an exclusively process view on discourse (always used as a mass noun in their book). Indeed, they insist that the notion of a speaker having D-Topics at her disposal offers an unrealistic outlook on discourse production. Rather, they are interested in 'the general pretheoretical notion of "topic" as 'what is being talked about' in a conversation. They further find it unlikely that their notion of a discourse topic will be identifiable with one part of a sentence. Brown and Yule's discourse topic is thus in essential respects different from Dik's entity-based notion with its implied correspondence with sentential constituents.<sup>3</sup>

The question now arises whether the real-time approach to pragmatic function assignment taken by Dik on p. 267 is conceptually compatible with most of the rest of FG, which takes the grammatically respectable retrospective view of language structure. As a model, FG is of course characterized by a 'quasi-productive mode', being biased towards production rather than comprehension, but not being designed 'necessarily [to] simulate

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<sup>1</sup>A question we will return to is: singled out by whom?

<sup>2</sup>Here, we assume, discourse is taken to correspond to stretches considerably longer than one clause.

<sup>3</sup>It is not unlikely that the very examples Dik and Brown & Yule choose lead to different conclusions: Dik considers his own book, a highly structured and thoroughly planned written discourse, while Brown & Yule concentrate on informal conversations and hastily composed memoranda.

the various steps that a speaker takes in producing linguistic expressions' (1989: 52). In Dik's account of the assignment of pragmatic functions, however, he appears no longer to observe a *quasi-productive* mode but rather to provide the elements of a theory of ongoing production. To our view, this disturbs the conceptual unity of the model, a point to which we will return in §2, on the incompatibility of the pairs Given-New and Topic-Focus.

The central issue, from our perspective, concerns the relation between the range of available D-Topics and the instances of Topic assignment in the corresponding text. Given that topical elements are determined per discourse (in the clause-to-book sense adumbrated above), while pragmatic functions are assigned per clause, how is it determined which of the available topical elements is chosen as Topic? Let us consider whether either of the two perspectives taken, the retrospective view of the grammarian or the discourse analyst's interest in ongoing processes, offers an answer.

Looking retrospectively at discourses as products rather than processes, and specifically at individual sentences, Dik (1989: 268 ff.) provides a set of criteria with which to identify a Topic, and further to subclassify Topics into four classes. By specifying various kinds of special treatment Topics may receive, he offers the practising linguist guidance in determining whether to assign Topic or not. As for the singling-out of topical elements referred to above, we understand Dik's position to be that it is not the speaker/writer who singles out elements for pragmatic function assignment, but the analyst. It is he who allocates Topic, Focus, etc. to constituents in representations. But his criteria for so doing remain obscure.

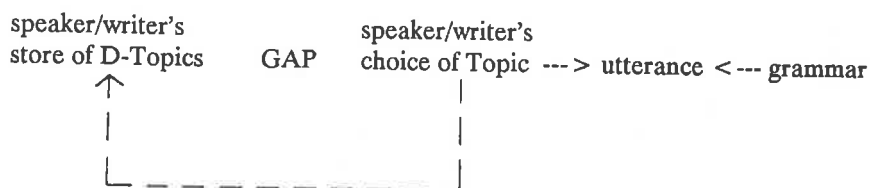
The other tack taken by Dik, which follows the real-time production of utterances in discourse, appears to offer above all a classification of D-Topics (i.e. entities) in terms of the result of their being mentioned. Not everything is fully clear (sec. 13.3, §3): the first *presentation* of a D-Topic is termed a NewTop;<sup>4</sup> an *entity* so introduced is a GivTop (Given Topic); similarly, an *entity* that is mentioned, temporarily neglected and later revived is termed a ResTop (Resumed Topic). Let us conclude, however, that what is intended is a classification of the entities held in the store of D-Topics in terms of their history of use in corresponding discourse.

What neither perspective offers the reader is understanding of the speaker/writer's motivation in choosing one term rather than another as Topic of a particular utterance in discourse. We believe that this is the missing and vital link between the two perspectives adopted, between the two views of language as product and language as process. On the one hand, the grammarian's backward-looking view takes us only as far back in time as the form that results from production. On the other, the discourse analyst's forward-looking view fails to make the jump from the arrangement of D-Topics to the actual choice of Topic. The only connection that is achieved is feedback from choice of Topic to the classification of the store of D-Topics. In outline, we see the interface as follows:

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<sup>4</sup>New Topic; for details of this function, and all the others introduced in Dik (1989: Ch. 13) see section 2 below.

Figure 1



The purpose of this section has been to draw attention to the two lines of approach taken by Dik (1989) to discourse and to the assignment of pragmatic functions. Our finding is that the two lines do not meet, that a gap arises between the set of D-Topics, classified in virtue of their use, and the actual choice of topic made by the speaker/writer per clause.

We note, however, that an attempt to bridge the gap has been made in a recent contribution to FG by Hannay (1990). Hannay adopts a clearly process-oriented approach, distinguishing a number of strategies available to the speaker for conveying information. In his view, there are five modes of message management, each of which induces distinct assignments of Topic and Focus. Such work aims to supply the missing link: it suggests how the speaker's choice of Topic may be constrained, while offering the analyst clear criteria for recognizing the effects of such a choice. This approach, based as it is on strategies, makes selection of Topic dependent upon the speaker's communicative goals. We should not forget, however, that not only such goals but also language-specific constraints may influence Topic-selection strategies, as in Hungarian, where, according to Dik (1989: 363), following De Groot (1981: 45), P1 can harbour one or more Topic constituents.<sup>5</sup> Thus, the speaker's assignment of Topic - and indeed of pragmatic functions generally - will always be a matter of balancing her needs with the specific requirements of the language in which she expresses herself.

## 2. *Topic and Focus function and the Given-New distinction*

### 2.0 *Introduction*

After this general assessment of the approach taken by Dik (1989) to discourse and to pragmatic function assignment, let us turn our attention to his proposals concerning the different types of pragmatic functions. Dik (1989: 265ff) combines in his clause-internal pragmatic functions information concerning the Topichood-Focushood of an entity and its Given-New status. Thus instead of the one-dimensional pragmatic functions Topic and Focus (cf. Dik 1978), he offers us the following range of hybrid pragmatic functions:

<sup>5</sup>An interesting research question would be to determine, for cases in Hungarian where more than one Topic is chosen, which corresponding term would be chosen for Topic assignment in English, given the same communicative setting and goals.

Given Topic, Sub-Topic, New Topic, and Resumed Topic; New Focus and Contrastive Focus.

The exact relation between the Topic-Focus and Given-New distinctions remains, however, unspecified. What is certain is that the pragmatic function Topic will be assigned to topical elements that are singled out for special treatment, the pragmatic function Focus to focal elements singled out for special treatment, and that there is a 'partial correspondence' between the dimensions of topicality and focality on the one hand and the Given-New distinction on the other (Dik 1989: 266). The correspondence presumably results from the fact that both the topicality-focality and the Given-New distinctions are definitionally related (either explicitly or implicitly) to the notion pragmatic information, and is reflected in the fact that topical elements tend to be given, while focal elements are typically new. The correspondence is, however, by no means complete: as will be clear from the list of hybrid pragmatic functions, topical elements may in fact be new, and focal elements may be given. And since Topic and Focus function are only assigned to certain topical and focal elements -- those singled out for special treatment -- the correspondence between Topichood-Focushood and Givenness-Newness may be expected to be even more 'partial'.

In the rest of this section, we will first of all give a summary of the various subtypes of Topic and Focus proposed by Dik, and of the special treatment these are given across languages. Secondly, we will discuss in some detail the differences between the pragmatic functions Topic and Focus and the Given-New distinction. Finally we will draw attention to a number of problems the practising linguist may encounter in the application of the pragmatic functions Topic and Focus in English, problems arising from the combination of two essentially different pragmatic dimensions into one set of complex pragmatic functions.

### 2.1 Types of Topic and Focus

The pragmatic function Topic is divided into four subtypes. First of all, there are New Topics (NewTops). These are described as 'the first presentation of a D-Topic' (Dik 1989: 267); they introduce a topical entity into the discourse. As such, NewTops are at one and the same time topical (in that they introduce a *topical entity* into the discourse) and focal (in that they *introduce* this entity; Dik 1989: 269). Their formal properties include a strong preference for taking late (or at least non-initial) position in the clause, and, in the spoken language, prosodic prominence. Thus, in chapter 18 (Dik, 1989: 391) we read that 'the NewTop constituent captures the most prominent accent of the expression'. The following sentences illustrate the kind of construction typically used to introduce a NewTop:

- (1) I'm going to tell you a story about *an elephant called Jumbo* (NewTop)  
(Dik 1989: 268)
- (2) Suddenly, right before our eyes, there appeared *a huge elephant*  
(NewTop) (ibid.)

Once an entity has been introduced into the discourse by means of a NewTop, it can be treated as a Given Topic (GivTop) in the subsequent

discourse,<sup>6</sup> where it must be "kept alive" through repeated reference. The grammatical means available for maintaining a GivTop include anaphoric reference, syntactic parallelism, switch reference and obviation (Dik 1989: 271-275). As far as their prosodic features in the spoken language are concerned, GivTops are not treated in any special way: they have no accentual prominence (unless contrasted to some other GivTop; see Dik 1989: 391). Finally, GivTops can be given special treatment with respect to order (position in the clause). In chapter 13 no mention is made of a special position for GivTops, but in chapter 16 (on constituent order) we find the following 'specific principle' (Dik, 1989: 348f):

SP4: There is a universally relevant clause-initial position P1, used for special purposes, including the placement of constituents with Topic or Focus function.

The general pattern for the uses made of P1 is described as follows:

- (i) Languages often have designated categories of constituents which **must** be placed in P1 [In English: Q-words, subordinators, relative pronouns]
- (ii) If P1 is not occupied by some P1-constituent, it may be used for constituents with (Given)Topic<sup>7</sup> or Focus function.

The following text provides an example of a Topic chain (with GivTops, in the form of anaphors, appearing in P1)

- (3) Yesterday I got a phone call from *the tax inspector* (NewTop). *He/The man/The joker* (GivTop) wanted me to come to his office, and *he/∅* (GivTop) gave me the impression that I was in for some trouble (Dik 1989: 271)

The third type of Topic is the Sub-Topic (SubTop). SubTop function is assigned to those entities that behave as if they had been explicitly introduced into the discourse (i.e. they behave like GivTops), but which instead are inferred from a GivTop (or NewTop) on the basis of our knowledge of what is normally the case in the world (Dik 1989: 267, 275). Since they behave as if they had been introduced into the discourse, we may assume that SubTops receive the same special treatment as GivTops, except

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<sup>6</sup>There appear to be cases where Given Topics are not (directly) introduced by New Topics, but by Sub-Topics. If the Sub-Topic in question is introduced by (or rather inferrable from) a New Topic, one might say that the Given Topic is indirectly introduced by that New Topic. However, as we will see later (section 2.3), Sub-Topics need not be inferrable from New Topics. In that case the Given Topic is properly introduced by the Sub-Topic.

<sup>7</sup>Not only Given, but also Sub- and Resumed Topics can be found in P1. The restriction, therefore, is surely not that the element must have Given Topic function, but that it must not have New Topic function (since these are typically placed in non-initial position).

that in the spoken language they will 'typically' have some degree of accentual prominence (on account of their having something 'new' and 'contrastive', Dik 1989: 391). Sentences (4) and (5) provide some typical examples of SubTops.

- (4) John gave *a party* (NewTop) last week, but *the music* (SubTop) was awful. (Dik 1989: 275)
- (5) Mary got *some picnic supplies* (NewTop) out of the car. *The beer* (SubTop) was warm. (Dik 1989: 276)

The final subtype is that of Resumed Topics. ResTops are GivTops that have not been mentioned for some time in the discourse. Thus, in addition to their own typical properties (strong anaphoric reference, indication that the entity has been mentioned before, and, like SubTops, 'typically' a degree of accentual prominence in the spoken language), they will receive the same special treatment as GivTops (Dik 1989: 277). Sentence (6) provides a typical example:

- (6) John had *a brother Peter* (NewTop) and *a sister Mary* (NewTop). Peter...[considerable episode about Peter]. Now, *John's sister Mary, who I mentioned before...* (ResTop) (Dik 1989: 277)

The pragmatic function Focus has also been divided into several types which are potentially relevant for the analysis of natural languages. First of all, a distinction is made between New (or Completive) Focus (NewFoc) and Contrastive Focus (ContrFoc). NewFoc is what we find in question-answer pairs such as the following:

- (7) X: Where is John going?  
Y: (a) John is going *to the market* (NewFoc)  
(b) *To the market* (NewFoc) (Dik 1989: 279)

NewFoc is thus assigned to those pieces of information that are assumed to be completely new to the addressee. However, Focus information need not be entirely new; it may also include information already assumed to be available to the addressee, but focused on by virtue of some implicit or explicit contrast. In that case we speak of ContrFoc, of which there are two types. The first of these is Parallel Focus (ParFoc; example (8)); the second type is Counter-presuppositional Focus, which in turn is subdivided into Replacing Focus (RepFoc), Expanding Focus (ExpFoc), Restricting Focus (RestrFoc) and Selecting Focus (SelFoc) (examples (9)-(12)).



- (8) John and Bill came to see me. *John* (ParFoc) was *nice*, but *Bill* (ParFoc) was *boring*. (Dik 1989: 278)
- (9) X: John bought coffee.  
Y: No, he bought *rice*. (RepFoc) (Dik 1989: 283)
- (10) X: John bought coffee.  
Y: Yes, but he also bought *rice*. (ExpFoc) (Dik 1989: 284)
- (11) X: John bought coffee and rice.  
Y: No, he only bought *coffee*. (RestrFoc) (ibid.)
- (12) X: Would you like coffee or tea?  
Y: *Coffee* (SelfFoc), please. (ibid.)

With regard to special treatment, Focus function may manifest itself (cross-linguistically speaking) through one or more of the following focalizing devices (Dik 1989: 278):

- (i) prosodic prominence: emphatic accent [in the spoken language]
- (ii) special constituent order
- (iii) special Focus markers
- (iv) special Focus constructions (to be discussed in Dik (forthcoming))

The first of these, prosodic prominence, is the most common focalizing device. In English it applies to both New (Completive) Focus and to all types of ContrFoc (Parallel, Replacing, Expanding, Restricting, Selecting). In addition, Focus constituents may appear in P1; unlike Topic constituents, they must have prosodic prominence.

## 2.2 Differences between Topic-Focus and Given-New

We already noted that the correspondence between the pragmatic functions Topic and Focus and the dimensions Given and New is only partial. In what follows we will maintain that the two pairs of notions correspond only in that they are both pragmatic in nature, i.e. they concern the informational status of discourse elements in relation to the 'wider communicative setting' in which they are used -- which in turn can be understood in terms of the addressee's pragmatic information at the moment of speaking (Dik 1989: 265). Apart from being pragmatic in nature, the two pairs of notions are, as we will show, essentially different; even to the extent that it is doubtful whether they should (or can) be combined into one set of complex pragmatic functions.

Let us first of all look at the way these notions are defined. In both cases reference is made (explicitly or implicitly) to the term pragmatic information, i.e. to 'the full body of knowledge, beliefs, assumptions, opinions and feelings available to an individual at any point in the interaction' (Dik 1989: 9). The notions Given and New are defined in terms of what is assumed to be part of or inferrable from a person's pragmatic information (Dik 1989: 265-266). The pragmatic functions Topic and Focus, on the other hand, are defined in terms of 'special treatment': they are assigned to those topical and focal elements 'singled out for special treatment with regard to form, order and prosodic properties' (Dik 1989: 266). Topical elements are those elements "about" which information is given in the discourse'; focal elements are 'those pieces of information which are the

most important or salient with respect to the modifications which the speaker wants to effect in the pragmatic information of the addressee' (ibid.).

Thus, unlike the notions Given and New, Topic and Focus assignment involve a selection from the available topical and focal elements. This immediately leads to a difference between the two notions with regard to the problem noted in §1. While in the case of Topic and Focus assignment the failure to fill the gap between the available topical and focal elements and the assignment of Topic and Focus function made it impossible for the two views of discourse -- as the product of text-creating activity and as the ongoing text-process itself -- to connect, this problem does not arise in the case of the Given-New distinction. For although given and new elements are typically expressed in such a way as to reflect their (assumed) Given-New status (in accordance with Clark and Haviland's (1977) 'Given-New Contract'), assigning Given or New status to an element does not involve any 'singling out' of elements for special treatment. As a result there is no 'missing link': the two views of discourse are perfectly reconcilable. The outcome of the text-creating process, which the grammar seeks to describe and explain, may be seen as (superficially) reflecting the text-creating process itself, and 'psychological adequacy' is attained.

Another complicating factor is that the Given-New distinction is not a simple, unitary phenomenon; to distinguish merely between Given and New is to disregard the complexity of these notions. This complexity is first of all reflected in the fact that the distinction between Given and New can be made at various levels. Thus, Given has been defined (in the narrowest sense) in terms of that which can be assumed to be in the consciousness of the addressee at the time of speaking (Chafe 1976). In a somewhat wider sense it includes that which is 'recoverable from the discourse' (Halliday and Hasan 1976, Halliday 1985), that which is 'activated in the discourse' (Brown and Yule 1983) or that which is 'discourse-bound' (Hannay 1985a). In its broadest sense, givenness is defined in terms of what is assumed to be part of knowledge shared by speaker and addressee (Clark and Haviland 1977, Prince 1981). Dik clearly opts for the broadest interpretation: he defines the distinction in terms of the speaker's estimate of the addressee's pragmatic information. This means that Given and New must be understood not merely in terms of what is in the addressee's consciousness, or even in the discourse, but in the addressee's 'full body of knowledge'.

This 'full body of knowledge', a person's pragmatic information, consists of three components (Dik 1989: 9):

- general information: long-term information concerning the world, its natural and cultural features, and other possible or imaginary worlds
- situational information: information derived from what the participants perceive or otherwise experience in the situation in which the interaction takes place
- contextual information: information derived from the linguistic expressions which are exchanged before or after any given point in the verbal interaction

From this it follows that, like pragmatic information, given information can also be divided into three types. Thus, we can distinguish between discourse

entities that are 'Contextually Given' (as in example (13)), 'Situationally Given' (example (14)), and 'Generally Given' (example (15)):

- (13) I saw Mary yesterday. *She* told me *she* had bought a new car.
- (14) Could you pass me *the salt* please.
- (15) *The Prime Minister* has just resigned.

The fact that in examples (14) and (15) the elements *the salt* and *the Prime Minister* are at the same time given (situationally and generally, respectively) and new (contextually) shows that it is not enough to distinguish merely between Given and New.

Another reason for distinguishing different types of givenness is that there seems to be a difference in 'degree of givenness' between the various types. Thus, according to Prince's (1981) Familiarity Scale, generally given entities (Prince's Unused entities) have a lower degree of givenness than contextually and situationally given entities. Moreover, according to what Cruse (1980) calls the 'order of precedence' among the various types, situationally given entities are in turn 'less given' than contextually given entities. Thus, whenever a term has two possible referents, one introduced contextually, the other situationally, the intended (and chosen) referent will normally be the one introduced by means of the context. Similarly, when the referent of a term can be retrieved from the situation or from the addressee's general knowledge, it will normally be retrieved from the situation. This difference in degree of givenness is reflected in the way the different types of entities can be pronominalized: contextually given entities can be referred to by means of both anaphoric and deictic pronouns, situationally given entities only by means of deictic pronouns, while reference to a generally given entity always requires the use of a full description. Moreover, it appears that in certain languages (e.g. the Scandinavian languages) as well as in a number of dialects (the Frisian dialect Fering, the German dialect Amern) there are two different forms of the definite article, one of which is used with textually or situationally given entities, the other with generally given or inferrable entities (Ebert 1970).

In other words, there is sufficient evidence to suggest that a distinction between different types of given and new is necessary. However, no such distinction is made in the two-dimensional pragmatic functions proposed by Dik: Topics are either given, inferrable or new; Focus elements are either new or given (contrastive). To complicate matters even further, topicality (a prerequisite for Topichood) is defined as characterizing those entities about which information is provided in the discourse; focality (a prerequisite for Focushood) as attaching to those pieces of information that are the most salient with regard to the addressee's pragmatic information. In other words, candidates for Topic function must be drawn from the discourse (textual and, possibly, situational information); Focus function, on the other hand, is assigned to the most salient information in the clause, irrespective of whether it concerns textual, situational or general information. In the next section (§2.3) some of the consequences of these discrepancies will be illustrated.

A final difference between Topichood on the one hand and Given-New status (and Focushood) on the other concerns the fact that whereas Given-New status (and Focus function) can be assigned to terms and predicates

(and combinations of the two) alike, Topic function can only be assigned to expressions referring to discourse entities (including terms). This difference, which we take to have been inherent in FG since its inception, follows from the claim that topicality characterizes entities while focality attaches to pieces of information (Dik 1989: 266). As a result, GivTops can only be introduced by other entities (NewTops), and SubTops only inferred from other entities (NewTops or GivTops). However, a person's pragmatic information consists of more than a list of discourse entities. It includes a person's full body of knowledge, beliefs, feelings etc. at a particular moment; i.e. not only entities, but also properties of those entities, relations between different entities, SoAs in which those entities play a role, etc. This knowledge will in part be specific knowledge of particular entities and events; but in part it will be organized in general knowledge structures relating to particular *kinds* of entities and events, constructed on the basis of prior experiences. In addition, our pragmatic information contains plans and goals, motivations and strategies, etc. Comprehension of a discourse involves activation of and drawing inferences from large parts of this knowledge. The following example illustrates both the number and the different kinds of inferences that need to be drawn to comprehend even the simplest messages:

- (16) (Mary and John are having breakfast together. Mary says to John:)  
Pass me *the cereal*, please. (Löbner, 1985: 319)

The definite term *the cereal* may in fact have a number of possible referents: both Mary and John may have cereal on their plates, there will be cereal in the pack (or packs) on the table, and there may even be a spare pack on a shelf nearby. Nevertheless John may be expected to know which cereal to pass on account of his knowledge of what people (in general, or Mary and he in particular) usually do in similar situations, his knowledge of Mary's goals and motivations, and his knowledge of her preference for a particular kind of cereal. Likewise, in the following example, there may be more than one window, only one of which is open. The reference is, therefore, unambiguous, but only on account of the use of the predicate *close* in combination with the knowledge that only open windows can be closed.

- (17) Could you close *the window*, please?

It will be clear that understanding discourse depends for a large part on activation of and drawing inferences from whatever pragmatic information we have available. This inevitably means that many pieces of information may be assumed to be given or inferrable on account of this information (and will be treated as such) which do not qualify for Topichood, either because the particular given or inferrable piece of information is not referred to by means of a term (i.e. is not an entity), or because the information referred to has not been introduced by means of another term (i.e. by means of a NewTop). The consequences of this strict approach to Topic assignment (in particular with regard to SubTops) will be discussed below.

2.3 The relation between Topic-Focus and Given-New: some problems

We will now take the point of view of the analyst, and try to apply some of the subtypes of Topic and Focus described above to English data. We will pay particular attention to problems and/or inconsistencies arising from the combination of information concerning the Topic-Focus function and the Given-New status of discourse elements in one pragmatic function.

*Given Topics*

GivTops, as we have seen, are defined in terms of special treatment of certain topical elements, whereas givenness is defined in terms of the speaker's estimate of the addressee's pragmatic knowledge. Nevertheless, the givenness of GivTops turns out to be restricted to 'contextually given' information, i.e. information that has been introduced into the discourse by means of a NewTop. One might consider, however, that entities introduced by the situation, or present in the general pragmatic information of the addressee are also GivTops: they are given (in terms of pragmatic information), and they (formally) behave like Topics (they may have P1 position without having prosodic prominence). Thus in the following examples

- (18) Watch out! *The ceiling* is caving in!
- (19) (Guide in a museum): *This painting* was painted by Turner in 1844. It is called 'The Great Western Railway'. The painting has been praised for...
- (20) Have you heard the latest news? *The Berlin Wall* has been demolished.

the entities referred to by means of the italicized terms are contextually new. In the theory of Dik, they can therefore only be assigned NewTop or NewFoc function. However, they do not have emphatic accent or the most prominent accent of the expression (though, like SubTops and ResTops they may 'typically' have a certain degree of accentual prominence, on account of the fact that they are contextually new). They do go into P1. Moreover, we can certainly think of these elements as topical elements, as what the discourse is about (see in particular example (19)). In other words, it seems justified to assign these constituents GivTop function. The only difference between these elements and Dik's GivTops is that the entities they refer to have not been introduced by means of the discourse (through a NewTop), but have either been introduced by means of the situation, or are assumed to be available on account of the fact that they are part of the addressee's general information. If so, three kinds of GivTop could be distinguished: Contextually GivTops, Situationally GivTops and Generally GivTops. In that case, GivTop function would be more directly related to the addressee's (contextual, situational and general) pragmatic knowledge.

*Sub-Topics*

SubTops are defined by Dik as 'Topics which may be legitimately inferred from a GivTop on the basis of our knowledge of what is normally the case in the world' (Dik 1989: 275), and are called in full 'SubTops of the GivTop'. Inferrability, however, is related to givenness rather than to Topichood (cf. Prince 1981). Thus an element may be inferrable (in the sense that it can be

inferred from the addressee's entire pragmatic information, including information provided in the discourse), without necessarily being inferrable from a GivTop. There is no reason, however, to assume that such elements are not SubTops, since they do qualify for this function on account of their formal properties. Thus, in the following examples, the italicized terms behave like SubTops. They are not, however, inferrable from other discourse entities (GivTops or NewTops), but from predicates (which, as we have seen in §2.2, cannot be Topics) or certain combinations of predicates and arguments:

- (21) It was dark and stormy the night the millionaire was murdered. *The killer* left no clues for the police to trace (Carpenter and Just 1977; see Brown and Yule 1983: 258)
- (22) Mary dressed the baby. *The clothes* were made of pink wool (Sanford and Garrod 1981)
- (23) We wanted to buy the house straightaway, but *the estate agent* advised us to wait a bit.

What we suggest, therefore, is that SubTops should be defined as 'inferred Topics' rather than as 'SubTops of the GivTop'. Note that in either case SubTops are required to behave as if they were (Given) Topics: they must have P1-position (with at most a 'certain degree' of accentual prominence). This means that, contrary to what is suggested by Dik in footnotes 6 and 12 (Dik 1989: 267, 275), not all inferrables are SubTops. Indeed, it appears that many inferrables are (according to the special treatment requirement) neither (Sub-/Given) Topic nor Focus (see example (24)); they may, however, have NewTop function (i.e. they introduce an entity into the discourse; see example (25), and indeed (26)).

- (24) There was a car approaching the junction, but the driver didn't stop at *the give way sign* (Brown and Yule, 1983: 183)
- (25) A: What did you see in the circus?  
B: Well, there was *an elephant* that amazed us with his tricks. *His name* was Jumbo. *He* could stand on his trunk...

#### *New Topics*

Here, too, New is new at a contextual level. Thus NewTops may at the same time be given or inferrable with regard to the addressee's general or situational pragmatic information, as illustrated by the following examples respectively:

- (26) Yesterday in the pub I met *your sister Mary* (Dik, 1989: 269)
- (27) Look at *that man over there!* He's talking to himself.

#### *Focus*

We have seen that Focus is subdivided into NewFoc and ContrFoc. Once again the term New is rather misleading, as what is meant is not new with regard to the addressee's entire pragmatic information, but new in a textual sense. ContrFoc is, by implication, contextually given (see Dik 1989: 282, schema (43)): the information focused on is not completely (i.e. contextually)

new to the addressee; it is focused on by virtue of some implicit or explicit contrast.

This distinction turns out to be somewhat problematic. In the first place, it appears that ContrFoc constituents need not be contextually given, but may be situationally given (and contextually new, as in example (28)), generally given (and contextually new, as in (29)), or completely new to addressee (as in (30)):

- (28) (guide in a museum:) *This (painting) is almost certainly an authentic Rembrandt. This one has probably been painted by one of his pupils.*
- (29) Have you heard the latest news? *George Bush is going to resign; Dan Quayle is going to succeed him.*
- (30) A: What are you going to buy?  
B: I'm going to buy *a book* for Peter, *a record* for Sally, *some flowers* for my mother...

Secondly, Given Focus elements are not necessarily used contrastively. Thus, in the following example, the given element *her* is clearly the most salient information in the clause. Moreover, it is singled out for special treatment: it has emphatic accent (in spoken language), and it appears in what may be considered a special Focus construction. It is not, however, used contrastively:

- (31) A: What about Rebecca?  
B: It was to *her* that John gave his most precious painting. (Hannay 1983: 214)

The problem thus seems to be that the correspondence between the Given-New distinction and the [ $\pm$ contrast] feature is, once again, only partial. As a result, there is no NewFoc-ContrFoc opposition (as suggested by schema (43), Dik 1989: 282). According to Hannay (1983: 210), the two distinctions (Given-New vs Contrastive-Noncontrastive) actually relate to two different levels. The first level (which Hannay calls 'assertive Focus', cf. De Jong 1981) relates to elements that are new for the addressee in the given setting (cf. Dik's Completive Focus). The second level (which Hannay calls 'Emphatic Focus') relates to information which is 'important' or 'salient' in that it is emphasized in the given setting. These two levels do not represent a dichotomy: both new and given information may be emphasized, whereby Emphatic Given Focus typically, but not necessarily, involves contrast.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>Emphatic Given Focus elements that involve contrast can be further subdivided according to Dik's classification (i.e. into Parallel Focus and Counter-presuppositional Focus). Notice that New (Completive) Focus can also be divided into several subtypes. First of all a distinction can be made between Non-Emphatic New Focus (Assertive Focus, as in example (7)) and Emphatic New Focus; secondly, Emphatic New Focus can be subdivided into Contrastive New Focus (Parallel Focus, see example (30)) and Non-contrastive New Focus, as in:

- (i) John bought *a car* (of all things). (Hannay 1983: 210)

According to such a categorization of Focus types, sentence (31B) would be an example of an Emphatic Given Focus which does not involve contrast.

### 3 Special Treatment

The difficulties one may encounter in the assignment of Topic and Focus are, however, not only due to fundamental differences between the Topic-Focus and Given-New distinctions. In addition, there are problems arising from the requirement that Topic and Focus elements be 'singled out for special treatment'. Thus we run into problems in assigning pragmatic functions in a sentence like (32) (= (8)):

- (32) John and Bill came to see me. *John* was nice, but *Bill* was rather boring (Dik 1989: 278)

In Dik's theory, the contextually given elements *John* and *Bill* are to be assigned ParFoc: they are focal elements singled out for special treatment (prosodic prominence in spoken language, P1 position). They do, however, also qualify for Topic function (they are topical elements placed in P1; the prosodic prominence is due to contrast). This overlap is possible because we are dealing with four different dimensions: givenness in terms of presence in preceding context, focality in terms of salience, topicality in terms of 'what the discourse is about' and Topic-Focus in terms of special treatment. The constituents *John* and *Bill* in the second sentence of example (32) have all these features. Thus it appears that there is not only an overlap between topicality and focality, but also between Topic and Focus. Whether the theory allows us to assign *John* and *Bill* in (32) both Topic and Focus function is not altogether clear. In chapter 13 Dik is rather vague on this point. All he says is that 'the constituents *John* and *Bill* are emphasized, although they have already been introduced and *may thus be assumed to be Given Topics to A*' (Dik 1989: 278; italics are ours). In chapter 18, however, Dik seems to suggest that GivTop function can be assigned to contrasted elements: 'a GivTop will have no accentual prominence (*unless contrasted to some other GivTop*)' (Dik 1989: 391; italics are ours). If, however, constituents can at the same time have both Topic and Focus function, does this mean they should have the special (formal) features of both? And what, in that case, is the use of assigning pragmatic functions? If, on the other hand, constituents can have only one pragmatic function, how does one select the right pragmatic function in a sentence like (32)?

One way to solve this problem would be to redefine Topic and Focus in such a way that they become more consistently applicable. The first step would be to recognize that since special treatment of Topic and Focus may coincide (as in example (32)), both functions must be given a definition that is not solely dependent on special treatment of certain topical or focal elements. Obviously, such a definition would require that the relation between topicality-focality and Topic-Focus be specified. In other words, what is needed is a specification of the speaker's strategies and motivations in singling out certain topical or focal elements for Topic or Focus assignment (possibly in terms of 'relevance' or 'aboutness', see Hannay 1990). If feasible, such a redefining of the pragmatic functions Topic and Focus



would have the additional advantage of providing the 'missing link' referred to in §1.

We are, however, by no means certain that such a definition of Topic and Focus is actually feasible. Therefore we want to offer an alternative solution, which, in our view, will be consistent both with the theory of FG and with the data presented in the preceding sections. The solution we have in mind consists in abandoning the idea of Topic function in English. This may appear to be a radical proposal, but let us consider the evidence. We know that Topic and Focus are defined in terms of special treatment. We also know the forms this special treatment may take across languages (§2.1). Let us now confine ourselves to English. With respect to Focus there does not seem to be any difficulty: although English does not have any special Focus markers, the remaining focalizing devices (prosodic prominence in spoken language, constituent order, special Focus constructions) provide sufficient means by which to single out certain focal elements. With Topics, however, the situation is different. First of all, GivTops do not have prosodic prominence (unless contrasted to some other Topic, but then prosodic prominence does not distinguish them from Focus elements). SubTops and ResTops may have some degree of accentual prominence, but this prominence is only 'typical', and applies only to spoken language. Secondly, of the grammatical means that languages provide for maintaining Topic continuity mentioned by Dik (anaphoric reference, syntactic parallelism, switch reference and obviation), only anaphoric reference seems to apply to English. Note, however, that anaphoricity as such need not indicate Topichood: anaphors can be used to refer to contextually given (or inferrable) entities; these need not be Topic. We may therefore conclude that special treatment for Topic constituents in English consists in placement in P1 (but without prosodic prominence); a conclusion supported by the fact that in the examples provided by Dik the GivTop constituents are indeed always<sup>9</sup> placed in this position. If this is the case, then Topic assignment is necessarily a rather arbitrary affair. After all, P1 position can be filled only once, and thus Topic assignment can only take place in those cases where P1 is not already filled by some other element (either an element that would obligatorily go into P1, such as relative pronouns or subordinators, or, possibly, a Focus element). Obviously, this is not a desirable situation.

One may, of course, object that it is nowhere explicitly stated that Topic elements must go into P1; this is, however, something that must be deduced from what is stated in Dik (1989) about P1 position and from the fact that Topic assignment necessarily involves singling out elements for special treatment. Note, however, that dropping the requirement that Topics must be placed in P1 would mean losing the last possibility for giving special treatment to Topic elements in English.

The next question to ask might be whether our proposal to reject Topic assignment in English also covers NewTops. The answer is 'yes', the reason being that it would be far more consistent, even with Dik's own proposal, to regard NewTop function as a particular kind of Focus. Notice, for instance, that if Topic assignment necessarily involves special treatment, NewTops are, strictly speaking, not Topics. They differ from GivTops, SubTops, and

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<sup>9</sup>With one exception on p. 217 (ex. 18B).

ResTops in that their Topic status does not depend on special treatment (non-initial treatment is 'typical, preferred'; prosodic prominence, relevant only in spoken language, does not distinguish them from Focus constituents), but on whether or not a topical entity is being introduced into the discourse. However, as Dik himself observes, NewTop entities are in this respect both topical and focal; after all, focality is defined as 'attaching to those pieces of information which are the most important or salient with respect to the modifications which S wishes to effect in P<sub>A</sub>, and *with respect to the further development of the discourse* (Dik 1989: 266, italics are ours). And since their formal features do not distinguish them from Focus elements, there does not seem to be any reason not to regard them as a particular kind of (New) Focus (e.g. Presentative Focus<sup>10</sup>).

Finally, let us consider the consequences of our proposal to reject Topic assignment in English for the theory of FG. First of all one may wonder whether it is not inconsistent with the theory to accept that some languages have two clause-internal pragmatic functions, whereas other languages (such as English) have only one. We claim that it is not. In the first place, it seems to add to the descriptive as well as to the typological adequacy of the theory to allow pragmatic function assignment to differ from language to language. Secondly, it brings pragmatic functions into line with, for instance, syntactic functions. After all, Subject and Object function are not relevant in all languages either. Thus, Subject function is only considered relevant if the language in question has an active-passive opposition; and Object function is only deemed relevant if the language allows for a Recipient Object (Dik 1989: 219). Similarly, we may think of Topic and Focus function as relevant only if the language in question provides the means to single out certain topical or focal elements for special treatment. Since English provides only focalizing devices, it follows that only Focus function is relevant.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup>Notice that New Topic is simply another term for Hannay's 'Presentative function', which is defined as follows

A term with presentative function refers to an entity which the speaker by means of the associated predication wishes to explicitly introduce into the world of discourse (Hannay 1985b: 171).

Dik uses the term New Topic 'in order to stress its position in the strategies for introducing, maintaining and renewing "discourse topics"' (Dik 1989: 179). However, since Topic and Focus function are defined in terms of special treatment, and elements with Presentative function are treated as Focus rather than Topic elements, it will be more consistent to regard the pragmatic function Presentative as a subtype of New Focus (Presentative Focus).

<sup>11</sup>Drawing the parallel with syntactic (and also semantic) functions even further, we may consider revising the pragmatic function hierarchy (Dik 1989: 34) in such a way that Focus is presented as more 'central' than Topic (in analogy with Subject and Agent in the syntactic and semantic function hierarchies, respectively). As we have looked at English data only, such a revision can, of course, only be hypothetical. The

As far as the placement of elements in P1 is concerned, our proposal does not seem to have serious consequences either. According to Dik (1989: 349), 'all languages may be supposed to use P1 for special purposes' (see also SP4). In §2.1 we already described the general pattern for the uses made of P1: it is either filled by some P1-constituent, or by a constituent with Topic or Focus function.<sup>12</sup> However, rejecting Topic assignment in English means that in many cases P1 will be occupied by a constituent which has no special pragmatic significance and which is not a P1-constituent. This raises the question of what 'special use' is made of P1 in such cases, and of what determines placement in P1. The answer is provided in Dik's SP5:

SP5: Since the Subject is the prime Given Topic candidate, it will often be placed in P1; this may lead to a reinterpretation of P1 as the unmarked Subject position.

As far as English is concerned, we may therefore assume that in the unmarked case P1-position is filled by the Subject; and that in the marked case it will be filled either by a P1-constituent or by a constituent with Focus function. Thus we conclude that rejecting Topic assignment in English is not incompatible with the theory of FG in general, and pragmatic function assignment and P1-placement in particular.

#### *4. An application of Dik's (1989) proposals*

##### *4.1 Principles of analysis*

In the preceding section, we examined the internal consistency of Dik's (1989) proposals for the assignment of pragmatic functions, and suggested a number of ways in which those proposals might be adapted, specifically by disconnecting the Given-New and Topic-Focus parameters and by making it possible for the assignment of specific pragmatic functions not to apply in particular languages.

In this section, we will attempt to apply Dik's proposals, without any of the major adaptations suggested in §2 and §3, to a passage of running text

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hypothesis is, however, an intuitively attractive one. After all, whenever clauses consist of one constituent only, this constituent, presenting the most salient information, will be assigned Focus function. Similarly, in clauses reduced for reasons of time or space (as, for instance, in telegrams), it is focal information (from which Focus elements are selected) that is expressed rather than topical information (providing candidates for Topic function).

<sup>12</sup>Notice that, for English, SP4 is valid as it stands provided it is understood that Topic assignment is not necessarily relevant in all languages. The same holds, as we will see, for SP5. This principle, too, will still be valid, as long as one accepts that P1 can be interpreted as the unmarked Subject position even for languages in which Topic function is not relevant.

with a view to testing their empirical value. The text chosen is *The Story of Babar*,<sup>13</sup> which has the advantage of containing little syntactic complexity.

In the analysis, all P1 fillers have been indicated in heavy type. Our analysis is based on the following assumptions, which in turn are derived from a reading of Dik (1989):

1. For every finite clause, P1 must be filled (cf. Dik 1989: 362); this also applies to non-finite clauses containing designated categories, such as *while washing the dishes, ...*
2. P1 may contain no more than one constituent of the clause,<sup>14</sup> and this constituent is always the first intra-clausal constituent.
3. Generally, the presence or absence of a comma after candidates for P1-placement has been taken as indicative of P2 (extra-clausal) and P1 (intra-clausal) status respectively.
4. P2 differs from P1 in accepting more than one constituent, as in the following example from *The Story of Babar*:

{(After dinner)<sub>Time</sub>, (because he is very tired)<sub>Reason</sub>}P<sub>2</sub>, he<sub>P1</sub> goes to bed. (ll. 40-41)

5. Clause coordinators such as *and*, *but*, *so* and *for* are analysed as being inter-clausal, and as such not occupying any position in the clausal pattern.

On the basis of these assumptions, our analysis has proceeded as follows:

1. Where P1 is occupied by a question word, subordinator, relative pronoun, satellite, dummy *it* or verbal constituent, P1 is indicated in heavy type; where the P1-filler also carries a pragmatic function, there is an additional indication of that pragmatic function.
2. Constituents not in P1 but bearing a pragmatic function [NewTop or NewFoc] are enclosed in square brackets, with an indication of the pragmatic function in question.
3. In keeping with our reading of Dik (1989), cf. §2.3, we assign GivTop, SubTop and ResTop only to P1-fillers.
4. Focus function is assigned only where there is evidence in the written text for special treatment of the constituent in question (e.g. P1-placement; parallelism; a preceding colon; etc.). Focus would of course be assigned much more frequently in a transcription of a reading of the

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<sup>13</sup>As presented in C. Fadiman (ed.), *The World Treasury of Children's Literature, I*, Boston & Toronto: Little, Brown & Co, 1984, pp. 133-141. The story has been translated from the French; we consider that the text of the translation is such natural English that the fact of its being a translation should not detract from the value of our findings. Furthermore, there are in Fadiman (1984) a number of illustrations to which, from time to time, the text makes allusion. Again, we do not consider that our failure to reproduce these illustrations affects the value of our findings.

<sup>14</sup>In clauses containing only one constituent, that constituent is, given assumption 1, consequently in P1.

story, since prosodic prominence is indicative of the presence of this function.

The analysis is followed by a commentary on each paragraph.

#### 4.2 The Story of Babar analysed

### The Story of Babar the little elephant

Jean de Brunhoff

translated from the French by Merle S. Haas

- 1 In the great forest<sub>NewTop</sub> a little elephant<sub>NewTop</sub> is born. His name<sub>SubTop</sub> is Babar. His mother<sub>SubTop</sub> loves him very much. She<sub>GivTop</sub> rocks him to sleep with her trunk while singing softly to him.
- 5 Babar<sub>GivTop</sub> has grown bigger. He<sub>GivTop</sub> now plays with the other little elephants. He<sub>GivTop</sub> is a very good little elephant. See him digging in the sand with his shell.
- Babar<sub>GivTop</sub> is riding happily on his mother's back when [a wicked hunter, hidden behind some bushes]<sub>NewTop</sub> shoots at them.
- 10 The hunter<sub>GivTop</sub> has killed Babar's mother! The monkey<sub>ParFoc</sub> hides, the birds<sub>ParFoc</sub> fly away, Babar<sub>ParFoc</sub> cries. The hunter<sub>GivTop</sub> rushes up to catch poor Babar.
- Babar<sub>GivTop</sub> runs away because he is afraid of the hunter. After several days, very tired indeed, he<sub>GivTop</sub> comes to a town.
- 15 He<sub>GivTop</sub> hardly knows what to make of it because this is the first time that he has seen so many houses.
- So many things<sub>NewTop</sub> are new to him! The broad streets<sub>SubTop</sub>! The automobiles and buses<sub>SubTop</sub>! However, he<sub>GivTop</sub> is especially interested in two gentlemen<sub>NewTop</sub> he<sub>GivTop</sub> notices on the street.
- 20 He<sub>GivTop</sub> says to himself: "Really, they<sub>GivTop</sub> are very well dressed. I<sub>GivTop</sub> would like to have [some fine clothes]<sub>NewTop</sub>, too! I<sub>GivTop</sub> wonder how I can get them?"
- Luckily, a very rich Old Lady who has always been fond of little elephants<sub>NewTop</sub> understands right away that he is longing for a fine suit. As she always likes to make people happy, she<sub>GivTop</sub> gives him her purse.
- 25 Babar<sub>GivTop</sub> says to her politely: "Thank you, Madam."
- Without wasting any time, Babar<sub>GivTop</sub> goes [into a big store]<sub>NewTop</sub>. He<sub>GivTop</sub> enters the elevator. It is such fun to ride up and down in this funny box, that he rides [all the way up]<sub>ParFoc</sub> [ten times]<sub>ParFoc</sub> and [all the way down]<sub>ParFoc</sub> [ten times]<sub>ParFoc</sub>. He<sub>GivTop</sub> does not want to stop but
- 30 the elevator boy<sub>SubTop</sub> finally says to him: "This<sub>GivTop</sub> is not a toy, Mr. Elephant. You<sub>GivTop</sub> must get out and do your shopping. Look, here<sub>NewFoc</sub> is the floorwalker."
- Babar<sub>GivTop</sub> then buys himself: [a shirt with a collar and tie, a suit of a becoming shade of green, then a handsome derby hat, and also shoes with
- 25 spats]<sub>NewTop</sub>.
- Well satisfied with his purchases and feeling very happy, Babar<sub>GivTop</sub> now goes to have his picture taken.

And here<sub>NewFoc</sub> is his photograph.

Babar<sub>GivTop</sub> dines with his friend the Old Lady. She<sub>GivTop</sub> thinks  
40 he<sub>GivTop</sub> looks very smart in his new clothes. After dinner, because he is  
tired, he<sub>GivTop</sub> goes to bed and  $\emptyset$ <sub>GivTop</sub> falls asleep very quickly.

Babar<sub>GivTop</sub> now lives at the Old Lady's house. In the mornings, he does  
setting-up exercises with her, and then he takes a bath.

He<sub>GivTop</sub> goes out [for an automobile ride]<sub>NewTop</sub> every day. The Old  
45 Lady<sub>GivTop</sub> has given him the car. She<sub>GivTop</sub> gives him whatever he wants.

A learned professor<sub>NewFoc</sub> gives him lessons. Babar<sub>GivTop</sub> pays attention  
and  $\emptyset$ <sub>GivTop</sub> does well in his work. He<sub>GivTop</sub> is a good pupil and  $\emptyset$ <sub>GivTop</sub>  
makes rapid progress.

In the evening, after dinner, he<sub>GivTop</sub> tells the Old Lady's friends all  
50 about his life in the great forest.

However, Babar<sub>GivTop</sub> is not quite happy, for he<sub>GivTop</sub> misses playing  
[with his little cousins]<sub>NewTop</sub> and his friends, the monkeys. He<sub>GivTop</sub>  
often stands at the window, thinking sadly of his childhood, and  $\emptyset$ <sub>GivTop</sub>  
cries when he remembers his mother.

55 Two years<sub>NewFoc</sub> have passed. One day during his walk he sees [two little  
elephants]<sub>NewTop</sub> coming toward him. They<sub>GivTop</sub> have no clothes on.  
"Why," he<sub>GivTop</sub> says in astonishment to the Old Lady, "it's Arthur and  
Celeste, my little cousins!"

Babar<sub>GivTop</sub> kisses them affectionately and  $\emptyset$ <sub>GivTop</sub> hurries off with them  
60 to buy them [some fine clothes]<sub>NewTop</sub>.

He<sub>GivTop</sub> takes them to a pastry shop to eat some good cakes.

Meanwhile, in the forest, the elephants<sub>NewTop</sub> are calling and hunting  
high and low for Arthur and Celeste, and their mothers<sub>SubTop</sub> are worried.

Fortunately, in flying over the town, an old marabou bird<sub>NewTop</sub> has  
65 seen them and  $\emptyset$ <sub>GivTop</sub> comes back quickly to tell the news.

The mothers of Arthur and Celeste<sub>GivTop</sub> have come to the town to fetch  
them. They<sub>GivTop</sub> are very happy to have them back, but they<sub>GivTop</sub> scold  
them just the same because they ran away.

Babar<sub>GivTop</sub> makes up his mind to go back with Arthur and Celeste and  
70 their mothers to see the great forest again. The Old Lady<sub>GivTop</sub> helps him  
to pack his trunk.

They<sub>SubTop</sub> are all ready to start. Babar<sub>GivTop</sub> kisses the Old Lady good-  
bye. He<sub>GivTop</sub> would be quite happy to go if it were not for leaving her.  
He<sub>GivTop</sub> promises to come back some day. He<sub>GivTop</sub> will never forget her.

75 They<sub>GivTop</sub> have gone ... There is no room in the car for the mothers, so  
they<sub>GivTop</sub> run behind, and  $\emptyset$ <sub>GivTop</sub> lift up their trunks to avoid breathing  
the dust. The Old Lady<sub>GivTop</sub> is left alone. Sadly<sub>NewFoc</sub> she wonders: "When  
shall I see my little Babar again?"

80 Alas, that very day, the King of the elephants<sub>SubTop</sub> has eaten a [a bad  
mushroom]<sub>NewTop</sub>.

It<sub>GivTop</sub> poisons him and he<sub>GivTop</sub> becomes ill, so ill that he dies.  
This<sub>GivTop</sub> is a great calamity.

After the funeral the three oldest elephants are holding a meeting to  
choose a new King.

- 85 **Just then** they hear a noise. **They**<sub>GivTop</sub> turn around. **Guess** what they see! {**Babar** arriving in his car and all the elephants running and shouting: "**Here**<sub>NewFoc</sub> they are! **Here**<sub>NewFoc</sub> they are! **Hello**, Babar! **Hello**, Celeste! **What beautiful clothes!** **What a beautiful car!**" }<sub>NewFoc</sub>
- 90 **Then** [Cornelius, the oldest of all the elephants]<sub>NewTop</sub>, speaks in his quavering voice: "My good friends, **we**<sub>GivTop</sub> are seeking a King. **Why** not choose Babar? **He**<sub>GivTop</sub> has just returned from the big city, **he**<sub>GivTop</sub> has learned so much living with men, **let us crown him King.**" **All the other elephants**<sub>SubTop</sub> think that Cornelius has spoken wisely and **eagerly**<sub>NewFoc</sub> they await Babar's reply.
- 95 { "**I**<sub>GivTop</sub> want to thank you one and all," }<sub>NewFoc</sub> says Babar, "but before accepting your proposal, **I**<sub>GivTop</sub> must explain to you **that**, **while** we were traveling in the car, Celeste and I became engaged. **If** I become your King, **she**<sub>GivTop</sub> will be your Queen."
- 100 { **Long**<sub>NewFoc</sub> live Queen Celeste! **Long**<sub>NewFoc</sub> live King Babar! }<sub>NewFoc</sub> cry all the elephants without a moment's hesitation. And **thus**<sub>EmphFoc</sub> it is **that** Babar becomes King.
- 105 { "**You**<sub>GivTop</sub> have good ideas," }<sub>NewFoc</sub> says Babar to Cornelius, "**I**<sub>GivTop</sub> will therefore make you a general, and **when** I get my crown, **I**<sub>GivTop</sub> will give you my hat. **In a week**<sub>NewFoc</sub> I shall marry Celeste. **We**<sub>GivTop</sub> will then have a splendid party in honor of [our marriage]<sub>NewTop</sub> and our coronation." **Then, turning to the birds, Babar**<sub>GivTop</sub> asks them to go and invite all the animals [to the festivities]<sub>NewTop</sub>, and **he**<sub>GivTop</sub> tells [the dromedary]<sub>NewTop</sub> to go to the town and buy [some beautiful clothes]<sub>NewTop</sub>.
- 110 **The wedding guests**<sub>SubTop</sub> begin to arrive. **The dromedary**<sub>GivTop</sub> returns with the bridal costumes just in the nick of time.
- After the wedding and the coronation** everybody dances merrily.
- The festivities**<sub>GivTop</sub> are over, **night**<sub>NewTop</sub> has fallen, **the stars**<sub>SubTop</sub> have risen in the sky. **King Babar and Queen Celeste**<sub>GivTop</sub> are indeed very happy.
- Now** the world is asleep. **The guests**<sub>GivTop</sub> have gone home, happy, **though** tired from too much dancing. **They**<sub>GivTop</sub> will long remember this great celebration.
- 120 **And now** King Babar and Queen Celeste, both eager for further adventures, set out on their honeymoon in a gorgeous yellow balloon.

#### 4.3 Commentary

ll. 1-3: *In the great forest* occupies P1 as a Locative satellite, and *a little elephant* occupies S. *In the great forest* has been analysed as a NewTop, since the great forest is referred to in ll. 62 and 70; *a little elephant* has also been treated as NewTop (ignoring the title) since the D-Topic 'Babar the little elephant' regularly comes back in the later text.

A difficulty is that Dik (1989: 391) appears to exclude more than one NewTop per clause where he says '[t]he general rule will be that *the NewTop constituent* [our emphasis] captures the most prominent accent of the expression'; the first sentence constitutes a counterexample to any such exclusion.



*His name* and *his mother* are clearly SubTops. *She*, in the final sentence, has been assigned GivTop on the assumption (for which no direct support can be found in Dik 1989, but see n. 6 above) that SubTops, which have 'something "new"' about them (Dik 1989: 391), resemble NewTops in being able to 'launch' GivTops. Finally, *while* occupies P1 as a subordinator.

One further issue arises, namely whether (*with*) *her trunk* is to be analysed as a NewTop, as a NewFoc, or as neither. Although it is inferrable, from *elephant* through *mother*, it is not SubTop, since it is not in P1. NewTop is defensible on the basis of l. 76, where the trunks of other mother elephants are referred to: in that sense, (*with*) *her trunk* introduces a D-Topic. If the distance between the two occurrences of *trunk* make this seem too far-fetched (but how is one to decide?), the possibility of NewFoc arises, yet there is no evidence here of special treatment, as would be necessary for NewFoc assignment. On balance, we see no reason to assign any pragmatic function to this term.

ll. 4-6: Three GivTops, all in P1. In the last sentence, P1 is occupied by a verb, indicating an imperative illocution.

It is unclear how the assignment of ResTop function is to be operationalized. If some explicit indication of resumption is required (e.g. *as I mentioned before*, cf. Dik 1989: 277), then *The Story of Babar* contains no ResTops. However, there is another operationalization thinkable, namely that ResTop is assigned whenever there has been a temporary interruption in a sequence of coreferential GivTops and the speaker/writer returns to that GivTop. Then the beginning of the story would be reanalysed as follows:

In the great forest<sub>NewTop</sub> a little elephant<sub>NewTop</sub> is born. His name<sub>SubTop</sub> is Babar. His mother<sub>SubTop</sub> loves him very much. She<sub>GivTop</sub> rocks him to sleep with her trunk while singing softly to him.

Babar<sub>ResTop</sub> has grown bigger. He<sub>GivTop</sub> now plays with ...

Whichever analysis is preferred, the choice, at least in the written language, appears to be without consequences.

ll. 9-11: The assignment of ParFoc is justified by the parallelism of the three asyndetically coordinated clauses (in the sense of De Beaugrande and Dressler 1981: 57: 'reusing surface formats but filling them with different expressions'). Note that *the monkey* and *the birds* also qualify for NewTop (by virtue of *the monkeys* in l. 52 and *the birds* in l. 106), and *Babar* of course for GivTop. It is unclear whether the assignment of ParFoc excludes or overrides the concomitant assignment of a Top function, or indeed *vice versa*. (Cf. the discussion of example (32) in §3 above.)

ll. 12-13: In the second sentence *After several days*, being followed by a comma, is taken to be in P2; *very tired indeed*, by contrast, is assumed to be a non-restrictive modifier within P1 of *he*.

ll. 14-15: We have noted (§2) that the relationship between the assignment of GivTop to a term and the givenness of the information carried by that term can be very indirect. This is particularly clear in these lines, where GivTop



is assigned only to the first but not the equally given second occurrence of *he*; similarly, *this*, although given, cannot be GivTop, for P1 is occupied by *because*. In other words, GivTop cannot be assigned in syndetic embedded clauses, but can occur in asyndetic clauses.

ll. 16-18: We have made two assumptions: that one-constituent utterances have (only) P1 filled; that such P1-fillers may be marked for pragmatic functions. The former assumption follows from the requirement that P1 be filled, a requirement that obtains for no other clausal position; the latter assumption follows from the use of P1 for 'special purposes'.

ll. 19-21: *some fine clothes* has been assigned NewTop by virtue of coreferential anaphoric *them* in the next line, and the inferrable *a fine suit* in l. 23.

Note (again; cf. ll. 1-3) that two Tops in one clause are possible, here one GivTop and one NewTop.

ll. 22-25: As in ll. 14-15, the relation between givenness and GivTop is very indirect: only one of the five pronominal anaphoric references, *she*, counts as GivTop.

ll. 26-32: In the third sentence, P1 is occupied by dummy *it*.

In l. 30, *the elevator boy* is a SubTop. SubTops are defined as being inferred from a GivTop or NewTop. In this case, the term may, at a stretch, be inferred from (*into*) *a big store* (l. 26), a NewTop; yet inference from *the elevator* (l. 27) seems more natural. Note, however, that this is not possible, since *the elevator* is neither Giv/SubTop (not being in P1) nor NewTop (being inferrable from *a big store*). Here too, we perceive givenness and Topic-assignment as being at odds.

In l. 31, *here* is placed in P1 by virtue of NewFoc assignment (cf. *The floorwalker<sub>SubTop</sub> is here.*)

ll. 33-35: The colon after the Object suggests particular saliency of the final constituent. Analysis as NewTop is encouraged by the reference to *his purchases* in l. 36.

ll. 36-37: Cf. the P1-filling in l. 12.

l. 38: Cf. the NewFoc assignment in ll. 31-32.

ll. 39-41: We assume that zero-anaphors, if in P1, carry GivTop.

The question arises whether *he* is correctly positioned in P1. We have assumed that it is preceded by two satellites in P2, separated from each other and from the clause proper by commas. If, however, we were to regard *because he is tired* as a parenthesis interrupting the sequence *After dinner he goes to bed ...*, P1 would then be occupied by *After dinner* and *he* could not be GivTop. Note that, whichever analysis is preferred (and there seems to be no way of establishing which is preferable), the linear positioning of *he* is unaffected. The assignment of GivTop is seen to be vacuous, an observation which we take to support our case for the superfluity of Topic assignment in English.

ll. 44-45: *for an automobile ride* is a NewTop, launching *the car*.

ll. 46-48: *A learned professor* is NewFoc rather than NewTop, since no overt reference is made to him in the subsequent discourse.

Comparing *for an automobile ride*<sub>NewTop</sub> in l. 44 with *a learned professor*<sub>NewFoc</sub> in l. 46, we cannot but come to the conclusion that the distinction between the two functions is ill-founded: whereas the former barely introduces a D-topic into the discourse (the availability of the car), the latter in fact functions as the starting-point for a five-predication paragraph about Babar's lessons, and thus clearly has a topic-introducing role. Nonetheless, the rules for NewTop and NewFoc impose upon the analyst the counter-intuitive assignments we have given.

ll. 49-50: The problem pointed out for ll. 40-41 also applies here.

ll. 55-58: *One day during his walk* is taken to be one constituent, and, not being separated off by a comma, to be in P1.

ll. 59-60: *some fine clothes* is NewTop in anticipation of l. 88. There is here also an element of ParFoc: cf. l. 20.<sup>15</sup>

ll. 62-63: Strictly speaking *the elephants* have not been mentioned before, and as such qualify as NewTop; on the other hand, *Babar* and *the other little elephants* have been mentioned before, so that the totality of *the elephants* may be deduced by a bridging assumption (where there are young animals, there will also be adult animals), and qualify as SubTop. For the status of bridging assumptions, see our comments on ll. 79-80.

ll. 64-65: *an old marabou bird* is analysed as NewTop (although SubTop might have been admissible here, given *the birds* in ll. 9-10). This is justified by the zero-anaphor in the second clause. The assumption that zero-anaphors, if in P1, carry GivTop here has consequences for the choice between NewTop and NewFoc status for the antecedent, since *an old marabou bird* is assigned NewTop despite the lack of any further overt reference to the D-Topic in question; the covert reference, as it were, is made in the representation of the second co-ordinated clause.

ll. 75-78: With Hannay (1985b), we assume that existential constructions introduced by *There* have no P1 position.

*Sadly* is in P1 position as a result of Focus assignment.

ll. 79-80: *The King of the elephants* is a subset of *the elephants* and thus qualifies as a SubTop. It is clear, however, that the notion of SubTop needs more specification than is given in the open-ended list of relations proposed by Hannay (1985a: 53) and Dik (1989: 276). If the notion of 'bridging assumption' is crucial to the definition of SubTop, a *reductio ad absurdum*

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<sup>15</sup>Note that here, as well as in ll. 28-29 (*ten times*), there is parallelism, but no contrast. This suggests that, contrary to Dik's proposals, both contrastive and non-contrastive Focus elements may involve parallelism (see §4.4).

may be applied. Could it not be, say, that *the monkey* and *the birds* (ll. 9-10), to some infinitesimal but real extent, can be linked back by bridging assumption to *In the great forest*, and therefore should be seen as SubTops? Can any term be excluded from bridging assumptions that are not restricted in some principled way?

ll. 81-82: This we take to be a GivTop referring back not to a first-order but to a second-order entity ( $e_i$ : [die (he)]). We assume that NewTop is assignable not only to terms but also to predications. For discussion, see §2.2. above.

ll. 83-84: See, on SubTops, the commentary on ll. 79-80.

ll. 85-88: The linguistic expression *Babar ... car!* may be regarded as 'all new' (cf. Hannay 1985b: 126 ff.), after the preceding *Guess what they see!*. As such, it receives the pragmatic function NewFoc and occupies P1.

ll. 89-94: Compare *eagerly* with *sadly* in l. 77.

ll. 99-101: According to Dik (1989: 282), ContrFoc is either Parallel or Counter-presuppositional. As suggested in §2.3 above, we believe it is necessary also to recognize cases where there is neither parallelism nor negation of presuppositions, but there is salience. One such case is *thus* in l. 100, which we mark, following Hannay (1983: 210), as Emph(atic)Foc.

ll. 102-108: Note that *our marriage* is here NewTop by virtue of later reference to *the wedding guests* (l. 109).

ll. 113-115: There is an alternative analysis of the first sentence with three cases of ParFoc (of the type carried out in ll. 9-10). Such an assignment might well affect the associated prosodic contours, but is without consequences in the written language.

#### *4.4 Conclusions*

The first conclusion to be drawn from the analysis in §4.2, and the commentary in §4.3, is that the analysis is possible. Given the principles of analysis detailed in §4.1, the proposals for pragmatic function assignment and the rules for P1-placement of constituents can be operationalized. We hope and intend that our experience with *The Story of Babar*, as protocolled in our assignments and in our commentary, will be of use to other linguists wishing to employ the theory of FG in the analysis of discourse.

Although we have shown that current proposals can indeed be put into practice, we may also raise questions as to the insightfulness of the resultant analysis. Let us take each of the pragmatic functions in turn.

All 82 instances of GivTop also receive the syntactic function Subj.

Similarly, of the 11 instances of SubTop, 9 are Subj; in the 2 two remaining cases (ll. 16-17), the SubTop is the only constituent and therefore can only appear in P1. Again, P1-placement of Subj would constitute a sufficient rule.

There are no ResTops (*pace* the commentary on ll. 4-6, but, there too, the would-be ResTop is Subj of its clause.).

We take these observations to support our proposal in §3 to do away with Giv/Sub/Res Topic assignment in English and to make P1, if not filled by a prior claimant, a home for Subj. The question arises whether the combination Obj(Giv/Sub/Res)Top occurs in P1 in English, for then P1-placement would be attributable to the Topic assignment and the case for Topic would be restored. Clearly, this is an empirical matter, but our hypothesis is that the combination of Obj, Top and P1 is unknown in English. All constructed examples of Obj in P1 seem to have Foc rather than Top function:

(33) A: Now that you're back from Paris, can I ask you something?  
People react differently to different sights in Paris. What about the Eiffel Tower?

B: The Eiffel Tower I rather liked.

(modified from Dik 1978: 143)

*The Eiffel Tower* does seem to pick up the NewTop in A's question, and therefore could qualify as ObjTop. Nevertheless we suspect that *The Eiffel Tower* will be associated with the 'pronounced prosodic pattern' reserved for ParFoc constituents and will regularly be followed by such continuations as *but the Pompidou Centre I was crazy about*. We further suspect that if the speaker intends no contrast with any other Parisian sight, she will tend to construe *The Eiffel Tower* as Subj-in-P1, e.g. *The Eiffel Tower was one of my favourites*. This issue clearly deserves attention in future research.

We identified 20 instances of NewTop in the text, but failed to find in the written text any formal correlation between NewTop assignment and the placement of constituents so marked. Whereas Dik (1989: 269) claims that NewTops have a strong preference for taking late (or at least non-initial) position in the clause, this is not supported by the analysis of *The Story of Babar*. Of the 20 NewTops, 7 appear in final X position (i.e. after O), but 4 in O, 2 in S, and again 7 in P1. We take this finding to support our proposal in §3 to regard those instances of NewTop where there is some expression correlate of the function assignment (positionally or prosodically) as a sub-type of Focus, namely Presentative Focus. All positionally or prosodically undistinguished instances will be analysed as receiving no pragmatic function at all.

There are 15 instances of NewFoc in our analysis. These all occur in P1. 9 are associated with the secondary functional pattern for English, P1 Vf S Vi O (Dik 1978: 185), 5 with the primary pattern, and 1 constitutes a full expression. Foc is assigned to instances of Subj, Obj, Loc, Man, and Time: these differential assignments justify the retention of the pragmatic function Focus.

There is 1 instance of EmphFoc; it occurs in P1. (For discussion, see §4.3, commentary on ll. 99-101, above.)

There are 7, possibly 10 (cf. §4.3., commentary on ll. 112-114) instances of ParFoc. These occur in various positions; the justification for assigning the pragmatic function to the constituents in question is derived from their participation in parallelism (in the sense of De Beaugrande and Dressler referred to in §4.3 above, ll. 9-11).

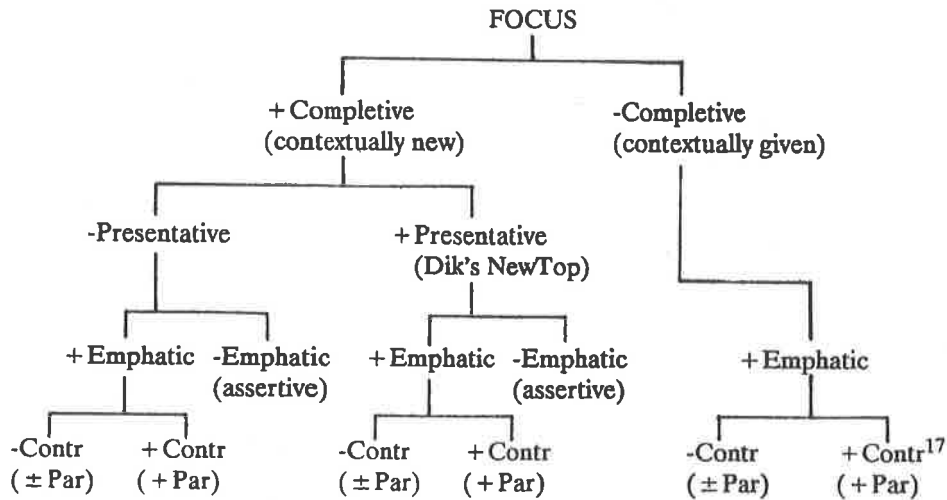
For the reasons stated in §3, we are of the opinion that, unlike Topic, Focus is relevant in English. However, in order to render Focus function

applicable, we propose a classification of Focus according to (at least) the following four dimensions:

- completive (contextually New) vs non-completive (contextually Given)
- presentative vs non-presentative
- emphatic vs non-emphatic
- contrastive vs non-contrastive

The classification we have in mind can be represented as follows:<sup>16</sup>

Figure 2



<sup>16</sup>The classification in Figure 2 presents all possible subtypes of Focus. This does not necessarily mean that all these types are given special treatment in every language. It may, in fact, be an interesting research question to establish which types of Focus are given special treatment in different languages.

<sup>17</sup>According to this classification, -Compl +Emp +Contr Focus (which always involves an element of parallel) covers both Dik's Parallel Focus and his Counterpresuppositional Focus, the reason being that, in our view, all instances of Counterpresuppositional Focus (of which we did not find any examples in the text, but see examples (9)-(12)) involve parallelism.

<sup>18</sup>As will be clear, the specification of the subtypes of Focus could be abbreviated by means of redundancy rules:

± Pres -----> + Compl  
 -Compl -----> + Emph

Examples:<sup>18</sup>

- (34) X: Where is John going?  
Y: John is going *to the market* (+ Compl -Pres -Emph Focus, cf. (7))
- (35) John gave *a party* last week, but *the music* was awful. (+ Compl +Pres -Emph Focus, cf. (4))
- (36) John bought *a car*, of all things. (+ Compl -Pres +Emph -Contr Focus, cf. (i), n. 8)
- (37) It is such fun to ride up and down in this funny box, that he rides *all the way up* ten times and *all the way down* ten times. (+ Compl -Pres +Emph +Contr Focus, see also (28))
- (38) Suddenly, right before our eyes, there appeared *a huge elephant*. (+ Compl +Pres +Emph -Contr Focus, cf. (2))
- (39) *The monkey* hides, *the birds* fly away, Babar cries. (+ Compl +Pres +Emph +Contr Focus, see ll. 9-11 of *The Story of Babar* and our commentary)
- (40) A: What about Rebecca?  
B: It was *to her* that John gave his most precious painting. (-Compl +Emph -Contr Focus, cf. (31))
- (41) John and Bill came to see me. *John* was nice, but *Bill* was rather boring. (-Compl +Emph +Contr Focus, cf. (32))

Summarizing, we conclude that the analysis of *The Story of Babar* provides evidence for:

- (a) abolishing GivTop, ResTop and SubTop as pragmatic functions relevant to English;
- (b) redefining NewTop as a subtype of Focus, relevant only where there is some expression correlate (= special treatment);
- (c) retaining Focus assignment in English, subclassifying it as in Figure 2 above.

### 5. Epilogue

The purpose of this paper has been to explore the consequences of the proposals made by Dik (1989) for the assignment of pragmatic functions. We have attempted to clarify the double assault on this problem undertaken by FG and to indicate ways in which the two approaches can connect. We have examined in detail the partial correspondence of the Given-New and the Topic-Focus distinctions, concluding that the hybrid pragmatic functions that result from their combination lead to problems and inconsistencies. Turning to English, we have suggested that Topic assignment is superfluous, but

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<sup>18</sup>As will be clear, the specification of the subtypes of Focus could be abbreviated by means of redundancy rules:

± Pres	----->	+ Compl
-Compl	----->	+ Emph
± Contr	----->	+ Emph

Focus assignment is necessary, albeit differently subclassified. We have applied Dik's (1989) proposals to a text, concluding that they can be operationalized, but that they yield an analysis that suffers from a number of inconsistencies and unclarities.

Our alternative may perhaps best be summarized by proposing a set of ordered expression rules for the P1-placement of constituents in English:

- (R1) If a clause consists of one constituent only, this constituent must be placed in P1.
- (R2) If a clause consists of more than one constituent, one of which is a P1-constituent (question word, subordinator, relative pronoun), place this P1-constituent in P1.
- (R3) Else, if a clause is interrogative (yes-no question) or imperative, place  $V_f$  in P1.
- (R4) Else, if a clause contains a constituent with Focus function, place this Focus constituent in P1. (Alternatively, Focus constituents may be given special treatment by means of prosodic prominence, parallelism, or any combination of these focalizing devices).
- (R5) Else, place  $\sigma_2$ -satellite (i.e. level 2 satellites, cf. Dik (1989: 206)) in P1 (optional).
- (R6) Else, place constituent with Subject function (including dummy *it*) in P1 (unmarked case).

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