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Aspects of Topic and Topicality in Functional Grammar[1]

María Á. Gómez-González

0. Introduction

Many scholars have pointed out the existence of some degree of fuzziness in the pragmatic domain (cf. Dryer 1996; Güblich/Raible 1977; Lambrecht 1994; Gómez-González 1996, forthcoming). This whole area is all the more a matter of debate within the Functional Grammar community, currently concerned with the extension of the model so as to increase its pragmatic adequacy by successfully incorporating it into a wider theory of verbal interaction (cf. Bolkestein 1992; Hannay 1991, 1994a; Kroon 1997; Mackenzie and Keizer 1991; Siewierska 1991; the contributions in Bolkestein & Hannay (eds) 1998).

In an attempt to collaborate on this task, this paper discusses some problems posed by the account of *Topic, Theme and Tail* within FG. I would contend that most weaknesses emerge from using as one and the same thing three different types of criteria, *semantic*, *combining* and *separating*, without solving the problems inherent in these accounts which demand clarification. It will be shown that, although *Topic, Theme and Tail* are said to be approached from a *semantic perspective*, that is, in terms of 'aboutness', on closer inspection they are identified with two not necessarily concurrent notions, *given information* and

(*initial*) *position*, the identificational criteria proposed by *combining* and *separating* analyses respectively. We shall conclude that most drawbacks can be overcome, provided that FG: (i) clarifies the Topic-Theme-Tail definition in terms of 'aboutness'; (ii) reworks the identification of Topic in terms of givenness; and (iii) removes the weaknesses inherent in its separating, or, positional, understanding of the Theme-Topic-Tail distinction.

The paper divides into three main parts. First I will provide an overview of the separating, combining and semantic approaches (section 1). Then, I turn my attention to how FG handles these three interpretations to account for Theme, Tail and Topic, raising a number of a debatable issues (section 2).[2] Finally, section 3 contains the concluding remarks, pointing out ways through which the project of FG might be furthered.

1. Three approaches to pragmatic functions

First of all, let us explain what we mean by *semantic, combining* and *separating* interpretations of pragmatic functions. Whereas it seems that, by and large, a consensus has been reached that pragmatic functions should be described within some kind of functionalist frame, very different positions have been taken on the appropriate criteria for the definition of such functions and on their concrete manifestation on the relevant linguistic level. In Gómez-González (1994, 1995, 1996, forthcoming) I argue at some length that these positions can be narrowed down to three different, though not mutually exclusive, approaches:

(i)   *separating* (SP), emphasising the relevance of (*clause-*) *initial position* (vs. non-initial position);
(ii) *combining* (C), centred on the analysis of *given information* (vs. new information); and
(iii) *semantic* (SM), based on the notion of '*aboutness*'.

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[2] For further details see the accounts in Jiménez Juliá (1981: 340, 342), De Vries (1989: 66-71), Butler (1991: 508), Mackenzie and Keizer (1991), Hannay (1991), Nuyts (1983: 383; 1985: 101-102), Keijsper (1985), Butler (1990: 13; 1991: 507, 511-512).

I concur with Fries (1983) that separating and combining accounts stem from Mathesius's (1939: 234) definition of *základ*, i.e. 'that which is known or at least obvious in the given situation' and 'that (...) from which the speaker proceeds'. Separators separate out these two aspects of Mathesius's definition, the known and that 'from which the speaker proceeds', as two interacting, but distinct, choices. Focusing on the latter, they regard the informational structure of the clause as a bipartite construct consisting of a *point of departure*, or *syntactic Topic/Theme*, and the main issue, or *Comment/Rheme*. Further, linking the concept 'point of departure' with the *linear quality* of language (i.e. the constraint that words must be ordered into sentences and these into texts according to some organising principle), and relying solely on morpho-syntactic structure, separators equate (syntactic) Topic/Theme with the *leftmost*, or initial, constituent of the clause.

Combiners, on the other hand, coalesce the two notions implied in Mathesius's account, the known and that 'from which the speaker proceeds', into a single axis, assuming that both are two different aspects of the same phenomenon, that is, the Given-New distinction. As a result, combiners identify the category of Topic (mainly NPs), that is, the part(s) of a message known to the interactants or that can be deduced from the cotext or the context – in contrast with the unknown or what cannot be deduced from the cotext or context, which receives focal (comment or rhematic) status.

In addition, I would argue for the existence of a third approach, the semantic one, according to which Topic/Theme expresses a *relationship of aboutness*, that is to say, it indicates 'what the message is about'. Grice (1975) calls this relationship the *Maxim of relevance*, 'Make your contribution relevant in terms of the existing topic framework', implying that in order to guarantee successful communication speakers' contributions must fit closely to the most recent elements incorporated in discourse.

As can be seen in Figure 1, while separating interpretations are fairly homogeneous, the other two present different variants: *relational-referential,* in combining interpretations, and *relational-referential-interactive*, in semantic approaches. To clarify these variants, it should be said that, while separating and relational analyses are message-centred and mainly restricted to clause-level

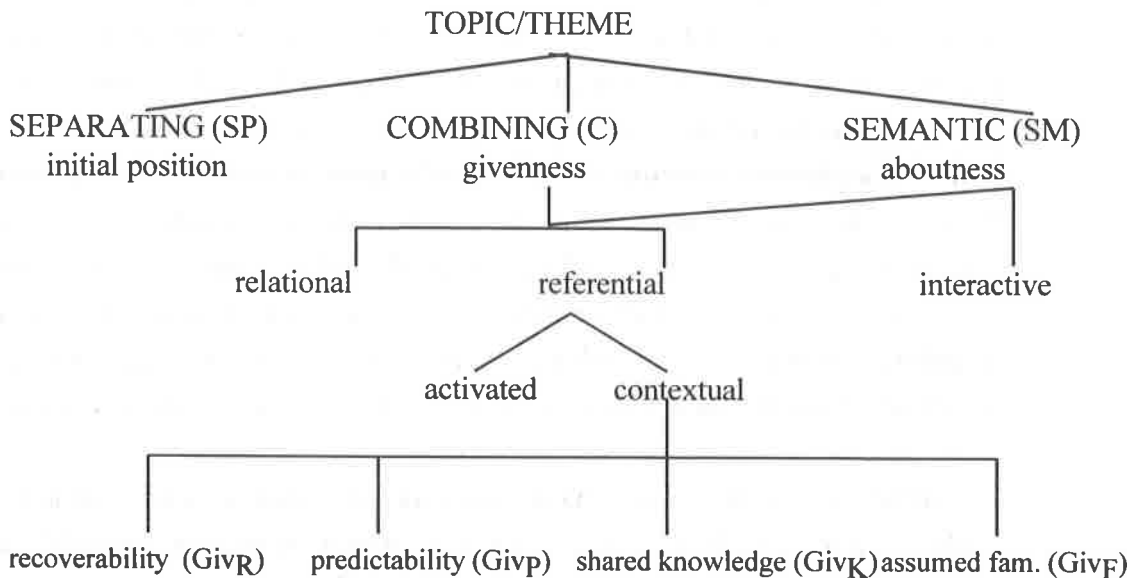analyses, referential and interactive interpretations are context-centred and located at the discourse level.

Figure 1   Different approaches to pragmatic functions (cf. Gómez-González 1996, Gundel 1988: 211-2)

Accordingly, starting with combining approaches, relational variants take Topic or Theme to be Given in relation to Comment or Rheme within the domain – and this is crucial – of individual clauses or utterances (cf. Firbas 1964: 272, 210). By contrast, referential interpretations identify Topic or Theme with a entity that relates the clause or utterance to the discourse co(n)text, evoking, in its activated dimension, information that the participants are not only familiar with, but are also thinking of at the time of the utterance (cf. Chafe 1976; Givón 1992; Lambrecht 1988, 1994). On the other hand, in its contextual variant, Topic or Theme refers to four non-coterminous readings of givenness:

(i)   *recoverability* (Giv_R = information that is recoverable from the cotext and context) (see Halliday 1967);

(ii)   *predictability* (Giv_P = information that is predictable from the cotext and context) (see De Beaugrande and Dressler 1981);

(iii)   *shared knowledge* (Giv$_K$= information that is 'shared' by the interactants) (see Clark and Haviland 1977); and

(iv)   *assumed familiarity* (Giv$_F$ = a gradient notion of given information implying different values of givenness/assumed familiarity) (see Prince 1981: 233-237).

The same picture appears in semantic approaches. Thus, while for relational analyses the clause is a bipartite construct entailing a relation of 'aboutness' between an entity or proposition and a clausal predication or Focus (cf. Halliday 1967; Lambrecht 1994), in referential analyses 'aboutness' relates individual clauses/ utterances to the overall discourse, either as determined by the co(n)text (in the contextual variant) or as processed by the participants' minds (in the activated variant) (cf. Dik 1997; Givón 1992). Finally, interactive semantic interpretations speak about a co(n)text-dependent *relationship of relevance* or *saliency* that is not fixed beforehand, but is continuously negotiated as a dynamic process within the general Topic/Theme framework of the conversation (cf. Sperber and Wilson 1986; Yule and Mathis 1992).

2. Aspects of Topic and topicality in FG: A critical reading

2.1 'Aboutness' and the semantic approach

In the context of the above, I would contend that in FG Topic is in principle described in semantic terms. It refers to an entity about which the predication predicates something, either in relation to Focus, from a relational perspective, as supported for example by Bolkestein (1998), or with regard to the overall discourse as processed by the participant's mind. This latter referential interpretation evokes Dik's (1989: 266-267, n. 5) definition of the Topic as a term that stands in a relationship of 'aboutness', that is to say, is referentially or denotationally linked to, an entity or group of entities in some 'mental world' that show the property of *topicality* (*D-Topics*).

Likewise, Theme and Tail are also defined in semantic terms. Both evoke 'relational aboutness'. Thus, as shown in (1) and (2), Theme is said to present, external and to the left of the predication, an entity or set of entities that the subsequent predication is *going to bear upon* (e.g. ***That man**, I hate him*, Dik

1978: 139 (39) [my emphasis]); Tails, on the other hand, are characterised as typically set off to the right and *bearing upon* the main predication as further specifications or 'repair devices' (e.g. *He's a nice chap*, **your brother**, *John gave that book to a girl*, **in the library**, *We gave the book to him yesterday*, **to your brother** (cf. Dik 1978: 153, Dik 1997: 403).

(1) $(x_i)_{Theme}, (\emptyset \ldots (x_i) \ldots)$ Predication

(2)   Predication, $(x_j)_{Tail}$

In the light of these three descriptions I would argue that, functionally speaking, Topic, Theme and Tail are described in the same *semantic terms*: Topic refers to *referential aboutness* and the other two to *relational aboutness*. Hence, it could be concluded that, though presented as three different pragmatic functions, these are in fact three different realisations of the same pragmatic function. This issue needs further clarification, as it may lead to important misrepresentations.

2.2 Givenness and the combining approach

Despite glossing Topic in terms of 'aboutness', most FG analyses, when identifying topical elements, resort to the notion of givenness (in opposition to newness and focality), which is typical of combining approaches. Admittedly, the correspondence between these two sets of notions is presented as incomplete,[3] which allows for possibilities absent from other combining accounts:

(i)   hybrid pragmatic functions designating: (a) focal elements falling on active discourse referents (as in (3a), (3b), (3c) below); or (b) topical elements

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[3] The incompleteness is based on the grounds that: (1) the functions of Topic and Focus are only assigned to certain constituents – those singled out for '*special treatment*'; (2) the definition of Focus as the *relatively* most important or salient information renders this function a hierarchical rather than discrete notion, which, as observed by Hannay (1983: 214 ff.), does not prevent Topic and Focus from coinciding in the same term, in the same way as not being assigned Focus function is not a sufficient condition for a constituent to be identified as Topic, and vice versa.

which are referentially New (e.g. NewTop as in *There emerged **a problem***, Siewierska 1991: 169 [my emphasis]):

(3)   (a)   Contrast (Siewierska 1991: 174 [my emphasis]):
*Sonia and Joyce came to help me. **Sonia** worked **like mad**, but **Joyce** was **horribly slow***

     (b)   Emphasis: (ibid.; [my emphasis])
A: *I heard that Peter got married.*
B: ***Peter**'s married. (How amazing! I don't believe it!)*

     (c)   Focus on illocutionary point (ibid. [my emphasis]):
*Dali **did** design the bottle, **Do** sit down, I **do** promise to be there, Do **not** be late.*

(ii) clauses/utterances with neither Topic nor Focus (i.e. all-new thetic clauses, as in answers to questions like 'What happened?');

(iii) clauses/utterances with a Topic and without a Focus (i.e. presentative clauses such as *There appeared **a band of poachers with automatic weapons**, In the heart of the tusk there was **a corroded bullet***, Siewierska 1991: 176) [my bold]); or

(iv) clauses/utterances with a Focus and with no Topic, i.e. when there is no term in the Given part of the predication, as in (4):

(4)   ***Anna** has complained. **Ted** has complained and **Lyn** and **Elaine** have complained too*, in response to *Who has complained?* (Siewierska 1991: 176 [my bold]).

However, despite the benefits of this approach, the fact remains that, with the exception of inactivated/unidentifiable *New Topics* (NewTops), identified as a subtype of Focus, Topic status is assigned in FG to Activated given information, that is, to an entity which the participants are thinking of at the time of utterance. This is demonstrated by the fact that the four different subtypes of Topics, *NewTops, GivTops, SubTops* and *ResTops*, are placed along Lambrecht's (1988: 147; 1994) *scale of Topic acceptability* in (5), which suggests that the more active the entity, the more likely it is to become Topic, since it is already in the forefront of the addressee's consciousness and therefore can be retrieved more easily:

(5) The Topic Accessibility Scale

Active	GivTops	MOST ACCEPTABLE
Semi-active	SubTops	
Inactive	ResTops	
Brand New	NewTops	LEAST ACCEPTABLE

Indeed, New Topics (NewTops) are assigned to either Unused or to Brand New referents. A NewTop may be either a definite term (if the Speaker assumes that A – the addressee – knows the identity of the NewTop) or an indefinite term (if S – the speaker – assumes that the entity is unknown to the addressee), as shown in the examples in (6) below (Dik 1997: 315-316):

(6) (a) *I'm going to tell you a story about* ...) (an explicit meta-linguistic statement)

(b) *Once upon a time there was* ... (an existential or locative-existential construction)

(c) *Suddenly, right before our very eyes, there appeared* ... (predicates designating a form of "appearing on the scene").

In turn, Given Topics (GivTops) are associated with Active discourse referents, as in (7), from Dik (1989: 271) [my emphasis]; SubTopic (SubTop) is assigned only to Semi-Active referents, as in (8) (cf. Haviland and Clark 1974 and Hannay 1985); and Resumed Topics (ResTops) are identified with Semi-Active referents assumed to be still in peripheral consciousness, as in (9) (Dik 1989: 277):

(7) 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/Ø* (GivTop) gave me the impression that I was in for some trouble.

(8) Mary got *some picnic supplies* out of the car. *The beer* was warm.

(9) John had a brother Peter and a sister Mary. Peter ... [considerable episode about Peter]. *Now, John's sister Mary, who I mentioned before* ...

In my opinion, this identification of pragmatic functions does not admit of easy empirical verification for a number of reasons. The first is that, as shown, givenness appears to be an elusive notion that can be judged differently depending on:

(i)   what is presented as New, in the relational approach (see Figure 1 above), at individual clause/utterance/single speech act level; or,

(ii)   in connected discourse, the context and cotext (which evokes four non-coterminous nuances of contextual givenness, i.e. recoverability, predictability, shared knowledge and assumed familiarity); or

(iii)   the interactants' minds, according to activated interpretations.

We have seen that the third position seems to be the stand adopted in FG. However, on closer inspection, activated givenness appears to be used within this framework, invoking four versions of contextual givenness: (1) Recoverability (Giv_R), (2) Predictability (Giv_P), (3) Shared Knowledge (Giv_K) and (4) Assumed Familiarity (Giv_F). But these are non-coterminous notions. All types of Givenness assume Shared Knowledge, since in order for information to be presented as recoverable, predictable or salient, the speaker must assume that the hearer "knows" or can infer that information and thus is also likely to be recoverable and/or predictable from the context. However, it is also true that information may be recoverable but not predictable to some speaker. And, likewise, information may be assumed or shared by the participants, but may not be recoverable from the previous context.

Aware of this situation, Mackenzie and Keizer (1991:187) argue that not all GivTops need to be "contextually given" or introduced into the discourse by means of a NewTop, but they can also be "situationally given" (Situationally GivTops) or "generally given" (Generally GivTops) (e.g. *Watch out! The ceiling is caving in!*). Similarly, it should be noted, in contrast to Dik's claims, that not all inferrable elements are inferred from a GivTop or fulfil a SubTopic function. For one thing, many inferrable elements may also act as NewTops since they may be new at contextual level, but given or inferrable with regard to the

addressee's general or situational pragmatic information (e.g. *What did you see in the circus? Well, there was an elephant that amazed us with his tricks...*).

Besides, activated givenness appears to be an inherently unverifiable notion, its subjectivity and therefore difficult objectification being at the same time its major attraction and its failure. Indeed, the notion of 'activation' relies on the interactants' assumptions and, presumably, there is no way one can have access to these. This situation is exacerbated by the fact that what the speaker presents as Given or New might not actually be rendered as such by the co(n)text, and, as a result, there seems to be no way of empirically validating whether an element is Given or not. We are forced, then, to face the problem of how the most topical element can be isolated from the other co(n)textually bound items in discourse.

Syntactic givenness/newness and phonological givenness/newness may not coincide, and not enough quantitative and qualitative evidence has yet been provided to analyse systematically the interaction of both realisational tendencies cross-linguistically or in specific languages. In other words, it is not clear to what extent the Given-New status is determined by the syntactic form of sentences (viz. word order, specific givenness/newness markers such as semantically related or repeated lexical units, certain clausal patterns, pro-forms, etc.) or by the effect of placing the 'focal stress' on a given constituent, or by a combination of both.

De Groot (1981) and Siewierska (1988: 73 ff.) point out some exceptions to the 'one term only' restriction, according to which topicality should be restricted mainly to given NPs; this renders all-new or 'thetic' utterances topicless; other authors disagree with this restriction altogether, arguing that predicates or indeed any type of information may be Topic or topicalized just as well (see H. Dik 1995; Ziv 1997). Furthermore, the 'term restriction' does not state clearly which one is Topic and which one is not in contexts where there is more than one candidate for Topic assignment. For, if it is true that clauses/utterances may contain more than one Given NP and that, generally speaking, only one NP per sentence is perceived as Topic (or Theme), then it follows that additional criteria apart from that of givenness have to be invoked to select among the potential Topics (or Themes).

Likewise, phoric reference, the grammatical means used for maintaining Topic continuity cross-linguistically, needs not indicate topichood either, because

phoric items can be used to refer to contextually given or inferrable entities which need not be Topics, as in (10) below (from Brown and Yule 1983: 183, [emphasis in original]:

(10) There was a car approaching the junction, but the driver didn't stop at *the give way sign.*

Prosodic prominence, in its turn, seems to be equally vague, despite Dik's observations that Topic may be marked by prosodic contour. GivTops do not usually have prosodic prominence (unless contrasted to some other Topic, in which case such prominence does not distinguish them from Focus elements). Conversely, SubTops and ResTops may have some degree of accentual prominence, but this is only 'typical', and applies only to spoken language. Dik seems to suggest that a systemic elaboration of Sgall's (1975) Q-test would bring us nearer to the solution of this problem. However, in my view, this test is also deficient since it merely elicits bound information and proves to be an artificial and uneconomical technique (cf. De Beaugrande 1980: 120; Dressler 1972).

We are then forced to turn to the last 'special treatment' device to mark the function of Topic, namely P1-placement rules, which leads us to analyse the assumptions of separating approaches.

2.3 Position and the separating approach

While recognising some sort of correspondence between them, FG insists that neither given/new information nor pragmatic functions should be identified with pragmatic positions: P1 (the first intraclausal constituent), P2 (the position to the immediate left of the predication, closely aligned with the pragmatic function of Theme) and P3 (the position to the immediate right of the predication related to the pragmatic function of Tail[4]) (cf. De Schutter 1985, 1987).

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[4]Although their typical position is after the clause, Tails may also occur as parenthetical insertions within the clause, set off from it by prosodic breaks or commas (e.g. *I listened to John telling it – the secret – to his sister-in-law*) or even they may follow Themes (e.g. *John – your brother-in-law I mean – is he still in Africa?*).

However, it seems to me that, rather than exploring the interactions between pragmatic locations and pragmatic functions, FG is more preoccupied with the former as the "special treatment"[5] given to the latter, to the extent that in the end they seem to be one and the same thing. Thus, when identifying Topic, Theme and Tail constituents, most FG analyses disregard "aboutness" and opt for P1, P2 and P3 positioning, a clearly separating identification criterion,[6] leaving a number of issues unresolved which equally undermine other separating approaches. Dik (1980: 21) has three strictly ordered P1-placement R-rules, see (11) (cf. also Siewierska 1992: 220):

(11) P1-placement rules[7]

    (R1) P1 -constituent ---> P1
    (R2) GivTopic, SubTop, Focus ---> P1
    (R3) X ---> P1

These rules do not take account of the facts that:

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[5] The *'special treatment' requirement* is the requirement whereby for any pragmatic function to be assigned to a particular constituent in FG this must be singled out by the morpho-syntax as salient with respect to matters of form, order or prosodic properties (cf. also Prince 1981: 233).

[6] Consider, for example, the FG claim that the dependencies between these extraclausal and the Predication run from left (P2) to right (P3), echoing the linear processing of information, that is to say, from the Theme (P2) through the Predication to the Tail (P3).

[7] R1 places in P1 such constituents as question words, relative pronouns, and obligatory subordinators; whereas R3 puts in that same position (obligatorily so in strict verb-second languages) satellite constituents or dummy elements (e.g. English *it, there,* etc.), both cases uncovered by R1 and R2. In contrast, R2 is regarded as inherently optional. Firstly, it makes no prediction as to the ordering of the Topic with respect to the Focus, although the tendency is recognised for highly active, easily identifiable referents (GivTop, ResTop and SubTop) to precede inactive or unidentifiable ones (Focus). And secondly, R2 implies that, if not placed in P1 (or some other special position), then the Topic and Focus will occur in any location consistent with their grammatical and/or semantic relation, and/or their categorical status as assigned in the *language-independent preferred order of constituents* (LIPOC).

(i)   some languages may lack a clearly demarcated P1 position;

(ii)   an element with no pragmatic function may be placed in P1;

(iii) the position may be left unfilled; and

(iv)   as Hannay (1991: 135, 1993) points out, even if it has been decided that P1 will be filled, the rule does not stipulate the conditions under which:

   (a)   P1 is indeed filled by a pragmatic element;

   (b)   a Topic as opposed to a Focus constituent is placed there (e.g. *John and Bill came to see me. JOHN was NICE, but BILL was rather BORing*, where 'the constituents *John* and *Bill* [the second instance] are emphasised [and so qualify for Focus status], although they have already been introduced and may thus be assumed to be Given Topics to A', Dik 1989: 278) [capitalisation in original];

   (c)   constituents are or are not in P1;   and

   (d)   there is a singular or a multiple filling of P1 (as in the case of clause-initial function words, relative pronouns or non-Subject constituents, which demand that either the singular filling assumption be revised or the designated categories be reanalysed as not belonging to P1 in the functional pattern). However, it is my impression that this rule leaves a number of issues unresolved.[8]

Similarly, despite its degree of detail (for English) and given its inclusion of optionality, Mackenzie and Keizer's (1991: 213) reformulation of Dik's model of P1-placement rules, shown in (12) below, seems to suggest that all kinds of

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[8] Mackenzie and Keizer (1991: 193) respond to Dik's proposal for P1-placement rules as follows:

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 [there is only one exception on p. 217 (ex. 18b) *Well, the police* (Subj.) *removed **them*** (Obj-GivTop) *from the platform* [my emphasis]].   Note, however, that dropping the requirement that Topics must be placed in P1 would mean losing the last possibility of giving special treatment to Topic elements in English.

word-order variation may result from one and the same underlying structure, which opens up a number of important issues, such as:

(i)   that word-order variations cannot be controlled by the grammar itself;

(ii)   that R4 and R5 appear to underestimate the specific pragmatic status of level-2 satellites in clause-initial position; OR

(iii) that fronted items may involve both focality or topicality, which leads to the question of whether to accept multiple or single assignment of pragmatic functions to a constituent; and as a corollary, if the former possibility is accepted, the question whether a constituent must have features of all the functions it fulfils, or, if only one pragmatic function can be ascribed to a constituent, then the decision has to be made as to which one of the competing pragmatic functions is relevant.

(12) Mackenzie and Keizer's expression rules for English P1-placement

[R1]   If a clause consists of one constituent only, this constituent must be placed in P1.

[R2]   If a clause consists of more that 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 Vf 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 focalising devices.)

[R5]   Else, place σ_2-satellite (i.e. level-2 satellites) in P1 (optional)

[R6]   Else, place constituent with Subject function (including dummy *it*) in P1 (unmarked case).

In order to resolve some of this controversy, Mackenzie and Keizer argue that, as topical elements may appear in P1 only if other elements have not been chosen, and given that Focus assignment is enough to produce the appropriate ordering of constituents, Topic assignment in English can be dispensed with. To my opinion, however, dropping this function causes a number of useful distinctions to be missed such as, for example, the difference between constructions having Subjects in P1 and those with non-initial Subjects (e.g. extrapositions, frontings, etc.). Trying to provide explanations for these cases, Hannay (1991, 1993) proposes a *system of message modes,* Grounding, Reaction and Neutral, which constrain in a top-down fashion what pragmatic functions may be assigned within the predication. All in all, however, it seems that this hypothesis also leaves a number of matters unresolved, for example:

(i)   the precise relation between the individual message modes and the various cognitive principles that explain word-order tendencies (e.g. the given-new principle and the principle of communicative task urgency);

(ii)   the speaker's motivation for placing a particular constituent initially;

(iii)   how listeners interpret initial constituents.

Now, let us consider the criterion used to distinguish between P2 and P3 (and therefore Theme and Tail) on the one hand, and P1 on the other, that is, the presence/absence of a comma/pause before or after the predication. While this may be a workable criterion, it seems that there may be many factors at work in determining pause placement, not in the least personal style, which need spelling out. A further problem is posed by the fact that (in English at least) what may be seen as intraclausal constituents in semantic terms (e.g. adjuncts) are very often presented as if they were clause-external; and vice versa, what appears to be typically extraclausal in semantic terms (e.g. adjuncts) is not infrequently integrated into the clause. This situation demands clarification as to how to determine what is precisely extraclausal and intraclausal and why.

In this line, Hannay (1994a, 1994b) and Bolkestein (1998) claim that the presence/absence of intonational integration at the beginning or end of the clause

implies the presence/absence of corresponding Topic-Focus spans or message peaks;[9] it seems to me, however, that this issue merits further investigation. Indeed, as illustrated in (13), the present model recognises a vast richness of ECCs both in terms of function (e.g. orientational messages, vocatives, attitudinal markers, circumstantial specifications, etc.), syntactic realisation (ranging from subordinate clauses to non-verbal clauses, all the way down to simple adverbials and dislocated elements) and volume (one clause may contain two or more ECCs constituents); but this richness is not well reflected by simply postulating a single P2 or P3 placement. Hannay's (1994a) idea of replacing P2 by an *orientation field*, housing a variety of grammatical structures that perform a variety of orientational functions with different functional loads, paves the way for further investigation in this area.[10]

(13)   Pragmatic Functions in FG (based on Dik 1997)

    A. ECCs
          1. *Interaction management ECCs*:
               (a) *Greetings* and *leave-takings*
               (b) *Summons*

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[9]As an illustration, see (i. a, b) (from Hannay 1994a) and (ii) (from Bolkestein 1998):

(i)   (a) John first cooked the onions, very slowly

       (b) John first cooked the onions very slowly

(ii)   UNFORTUNATELY, he has GONE

Whereas in (ib) there is only one Topic-Focus span, in the double constructions (ia) and (ii) the addressee is invited to give separate focal emphasis to both cooking the onions and to the fact that John did so slowly (in (ia)), and to one state of affairs (his leaving) and to S's attitude towards the content of this message in (ii).

[10] For FG proposals made in this area, see Dik (1989: 265) on the functions of initiator and address; Hannay and Vester (1987) on the pragmatic function of Orientation; Hannay (1991) and Buth (1994: 217) on (circumstantial) Settings; and Bolkestein (1992) on the relative ordering of satellites relating to the text, the nature of the utterance, and the content of the utterance. Outside FG, other proposals in this field are those by Halliday (1994), Downing (1991) and Gómez-González (forthc.).

> (c) *Addresses*
> 2. *Attitude specification ECCs*
> 3. *Discourse organisers*:
>> (a) *Boundary markers*
>>> (i)   *Initiators*
>>> (ii)   *Shifters*
>>> (iii)   *Push and Pop markers*
>>> (iv)   *Finalizers*
>> (b) *Orientation.*
>>> (i)   *Theme*
>>> (ii)   *Condition*
>>> (iii)   *Setting*
>>> (iv)   *Tails*
> 4. *Discourse execution*:
>> (a) *Responses*
>> (b) *Tags*

B ICCs
> 5. Topic
> 6. Focus

4. Conclusions

We draw three main conclusions. The first is that in order to give a functionally adequate "semantic description" of Topic, Theme and Tail in terms of "aboutness", FG should clarify whether these are *three different functions* or three *different realisations* of the *same* pragmatic function. Secondly, in order to improve the identification of Topic resorting to Givenness, FG should work on the following fronts:

(i)   defining Topic directly (because at the present stage it is accounted for in terms of non-coterminous and elusive readings of givenness, i.e. 'recoverability', 'shared knowledge' and 'saliency');

(ii)   providing a systematic analysis of the realisation of Given/New information within and across languages (i.e. in terms of syntactic form, placement of 'focal stress' on a given constituent, the combination of both, etc.); and

(iii)   expanding the explanatory power of the approach, now mainly restricted to NPs, which poses the problems of: (a) how to identify the Topic of messages containing more than one Given NP; and (b) whether it is true that only Given NPs (terms) qualify for topical status.

And thirdly, I would conclude that FG needs to remove the weaknesses inherent in its separating, or, positional, understanding of the Theme-Topic-Tail distinction by:

(i)   working out operational criteria that systematically identify the P2, P1 and P3 constituents of a message (both at a grammatical level – above, below and at clause level – and at a discourse level – in utterances and texts, explaining the difference, if any, between pragmatic functions and pragmatic positions); and

(2)   demonstrating the grammatical relevance of extraclausal and intraclausal initial and final positions, by determining the formal features and pragmatic motivation of the wide range of structurally and communicatively heterogeneous constructions related to them.

In rounding off this section, it should also be noted that in order to satisfy the three criteria of functional adequacy it sets for itself, i.e. pragmatic adequacy, psychological adequacy and typological adequacy, the FG approach to Topic, Theme and Tail (and pragmatic functions in general) should be able to surmount the theoretical gap existing between the speaker's dynamic forward-looking view of verbal interaction and the static backward-looking perspective mostly adopted by FG analyses, preoccupied with instances of Theme, Tail and Topic (and Focus) assignment. It seems to me that in order to overcome this flaw, FG should produce a model of verbal interaction that represents all ((extra-)linguistic) parameters of the communicative situation that may affect the speech product, i.e. the linguistic expression as the actual linguistic output of the communication: (i) the pragmatic information and intention of the speaker (S) (including her/his assessment of the pragmatic information of the addressee (A)); (ii) the (social) context (e.g., Time (T), Place (P), presence/absence of Bystanders, etc.); and (iii) the previous verbal cotext. This necessity could be viewed as an argument against the assignment of pragmatic functions in the derivation of the layered structure of

the clause. Instead it suggests the necessity of creating a separate pragmatic module to do full justice to discourse phenomena, the importance of which was already stressed in Dik's (1989: 7) claim that 'pragmatics is seen as the all-encompassing framework within which semantics and syntax must be studied' (cf. Bolkestein & Hannay (eds) 1998).

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