

TEXTUAL METAFUNCTION (Clause as Message) - Theme and Rheme

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Objectives:

At the end of the lesson you are expected to be able to:

1. comprehend the textual metafunction of SFL (clause as message);
2. identify the Theme-Rheme of a text;
3. conclude the Theme-Rheme pattern of the text.



The textual metafunction

The textual metafunction creates discourse

Of the various structures which, when mapped on to each other, make up a clause, we will consider first the one which gives the clause its character as a message.

This is known as thematic structure.

The textual metafunction

We may assume that in all languages the clause has the character of a message it has some form of organization giving it the status of a communicative event.

But there are different ways in which this may be achieved.

In English, as in many other languages, the clause is organized as a message by having a special status assigned to one part of it.

One element in the clause is enunciated as the theme; this then combines with the remainder so that the two parts together constitute a message.

The textual metafunction

creates discourse

clause as message

the linguistic expression of the other two metafunctions (ideational, interpersonal)

theme vs. rheme

The textual metafunction

The chef is preparing dinner in the kitchen.

Dinner is being prepared in the kitchen.

In the kitchen the chef is preparing dinner.

In the kitchen dinner is being prepared by the chef.

CLAUSE AS MESSAGE

To explore clauses as semiotic resources to express message.

Principles:

- language including clause is linear
- so message is structured linearly
- linearity means it is like a line which has a start and an end

This principles implies that message is structured from beginning to an end.

There are two points of views in looking at clause as message: reader's and listener's point of view and speaker's and writer's point of view.

Message from reader's and listener's point of view

Message is expected to be structured from 'known' to 'unknown'.

Or message is structured from old information and moves to new information.

For example:

My uncle visited me last week

Old → New



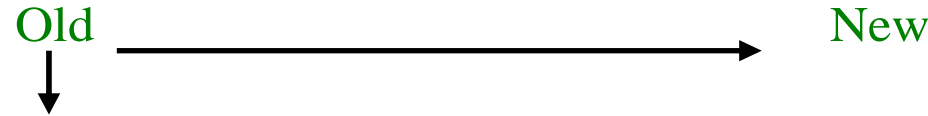
He stayed in my house for 2 days

Old → New

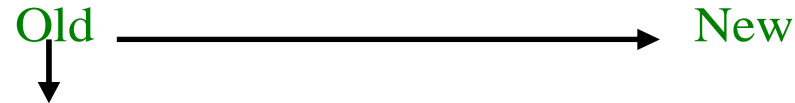
Patterns of old-new information in different genres

Patterns of old-new information in report

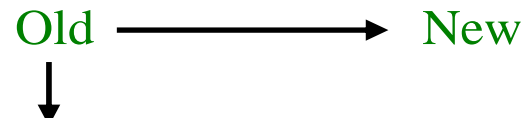
Algae is a single-celled or simple multiple organism.



It can conduct the process of photosynthesis.



It is generally found in water



but it can also be found elsewhere such as in rocks and trees.



Patterns of old-new information in different genres (continued)

Patterns of old-new information in explanation

Medical bill in US have risen outrageously

Old  New

and steps need to be taken to reverse this trend.

Old  New

Or the American will not be able to afford medical care.

Old  New

The major factor of the case has been the dramatic increase of hospital services.

Old  New

But the rise in the cost of hospitalization can only be partly blamed on inflation

Old  New

since the hospital bill in the last two decades have risen at a considerable rate.

Old  New

Message from speaker's and writer's point of view

The beginning is a stepping stone to develop a message

Message is structured from theme (topic) and moves to rheme (tail).

It is used as strategy to develop the message based on the theme or topic they think it is important

For example:

My uncle visited me last week

Theme Rheme

Last week my uncle visited me.

Theme Rheme

Luckily, we got the right bus.

Theme Rheme

Definition of Theme

the starting point of the clause message

realized in English by first position in a clause

must contain a **participant, process** or **circumstance**

includes any element preceding the first participant, process or circumstance

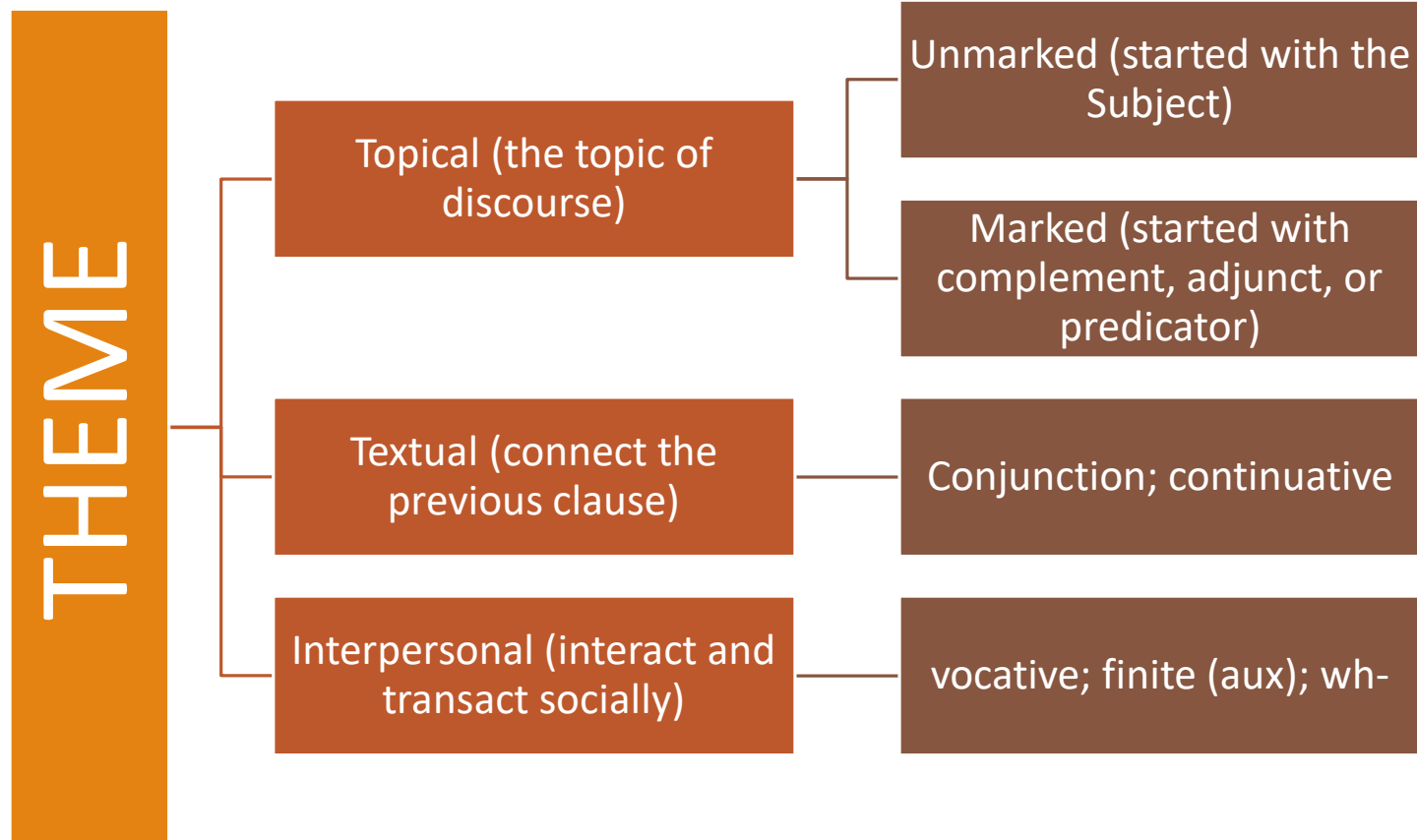
But, John, the teacher gives explanation to the students.

The students were given explanation.

Given explanation the students by the teacher.

In the classroom the teacher gives explanation to the students.

Types of theme



Topical theme

There are two types of topical theme:
unmarked and marked.

The unmarked topical theme is the typical theme in English clauses that are usually started with subject.

The marked topical theme is non-typical theme that is characterized by other than subject such as: complement, adjunct, or predicator

For example:

My uncle visited me last week

Theme Rheme

Unmarked

Last week my uncle visited me

Theme Rheme

Marked

Textual theme

To connect logically the first and second clause

Mostly in the forms of conjunction such: and, then, after, although etc., and continuative such as: Errr..., Emm..., Well...

For example:

But he doesn't understand

Theme Rheme

Text Top

Err... he did it

Theme Rheme

Text Top

Interpersonal theme

To realize the interpersonal meaning of the theme.

Interactional interpersonal theme is realized in vocative

Transactional interpersonal (giving and demanding information and goods and services) theme is realized in finite and wh.

For example:

John, will you be the chairman?

Theme Rheme

Int Int top

Example of combination analysis of mood and theme of English clauses

We	sang	a song
S	F / P	C
Mood	Residue	
Theme: Top Unmarked	Rheme	

How long	must	we	sing	this song?
Wh/Adj.	F	S	P	C
Re-	Mood	-sidue		
Theme: Int/Top Marked	Rheme			

Example of combination analysis of mood and theme of English clauses

What	will	we	Sing?
Wh/C	F	S	P
Re-	Mood	-sidue	
Theme: Int/Top Marked	Rheme		

Be	patient!
P	C
Residue	
Top Marked Theme	

Well	Darling	I	will	take	a rest	for a while
Con	Voc	S	F	P	C	Adj
Re-		Mood		-sidue		
Theme			Rheme			
Text	Int	Top Unm				



u there?