

THEMATIZATION AND TOPICALIZATION:  
THEIR FUNCTIONING IN MOVEMENT  
TRANSFORMATIONS IN ENGLISH


by

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Thesis presented to the School of Graduate  
Studies as partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of Master of  
Arts in Applied Linguistics.

University of Ottawa

Ottawa, Canada, 1976

 L. Butters, Ottawa, Canada, 1976

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my thesis director, Professor Thomas Pavel, for his careful guidance and conscious efforts in maintaining my confidence throughout the writing of this dissertation. Special thanks are also extended to Professor Marisa Rivero whose patient counselling provided the primary orientation in the research for this thesis and to Professor Douglas Walker, director of the Department of Linguistics, who convinced me, with his realism, that this undertaking could be accomplished.

## ABSTRACT

This thesis represents a treatment of two separate semantic phenomena, thematization and topicalization, in English. Thematization is the process which organizes the material in a sentence from the point of view of the hearer. Elements conveying information known to the hearer in a specific context are labelled theme, while elements conveying new or unknown information are referred to as rheme. The basic thematization structure of a sentence is such that theme precedes rheme. In the event that this pattern is not adhered to, theme/rheme distribution is said to be non-normal. Topicalization, on the other hand, is the process which organizes the material in a sentence, from the point of view of the speaker, into topic - what the speaker is primarily discussing in the sentence - and comment - what he is saying about the topic. The topicalization structure of a sentence normally exhibits topic-comment order; however, this order is not obligatory and in certain instances topic may follow comment.

The functioning of thematization and topicalization is manifested, in English, through surface structure changes in the order of words in sentences. Fifteen movement

transformations are examined in order to demonstrate that alteration of the thematization and topicalization structures of sentences will engender specific modifications in the semantic representations assigned to the sentences transformed via these rules. It is shown that changes in word order entail significant changes in the thematization and topicalization structures of sentences transformed by the preposing transformations - Comparative Substitution, Participle Preposing, Prepositional Phrase Substitution, Directional Adverb Preposing, Topicalization, VP Preposing, and Negated Constituent Preposing - as well as Left Dislocation, Passivization, Sentence Clefting, Pseudo-Clefting and There-Insertion (in sentences containing definite subject noun phrases). On the other hand, the rules of Right Dislocation, Adverb Dislocation, It-Insertion and There-Insertion (in the case of sentences with indefinite subject noun phrases) do not modify the thematization and topicalization structures so as to bring about changes in the semantic representations assigned to the sentences in which they apply.

Throughout this dissertation, current theories concerning the organization of information in sentences are examined and found to account only partially, and in certain

cases incorrectly, for this organization process. It is seen that an analysis of the phenomena of thematization and topicalization is necessary in order to provide an adequate description of the distribution of information in sentences of English.

It is also shown that root transformations may apply in embedded sentences so long as constraints on theme/rheme distribution and topic-comment ordering, as specified for each of these rules, are complied with. Many sentences which appear unnatural in isolation are seen to be grammatical when found in discourse.

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## CHAPTER 1

### Introduction

In past literature slight distinction, if any, has been made between the thematization and the topicalization structure of sentences. Yet, as will become apparent throughout this paper, these two notions denote individual phenomena, each in turn influencing the syntactic structure of sentences in a separate manner. In this introductory chapter, I will present the basic analysis of these two phenomena which will, thereafter, provide the foundation for the discussions of their functioning in English.

Thematization and topicalization are semantic processes characterizing the different ways in which the information contained in a sentence may be organized to further communication. In speaking of the organization of information, I do not refer to the meanings of the elements in the sentence or the meaning of the sentence as a whole; rather, I refer to the manner in which the elements are arranged in order to convey a message in a sentence.

V. Mathesius, one of the founders of the Prague School of Linguistics, advanced some of the earliest proposals on the organization of information in a sentence. Mathesius was concerned with the functional perspective of a sentence, more precisely, with the ways in which a sentence functions within a discourse as determined by the

distribution of known and unknown information conveyed by the words. His work has been developed and extended by such recent Prague School linguists as J. Firbas<sup>1</sup> and F. Daneš,<sup>2</sup> who have hypothesized upon the hierarchical organization of information in utterances, as well as by P. Sgall,<sup>3</sup> E. Benešová,<sup>4</sup> E. Hajičová<sup>5</sup> and Ö. Dahl<sup>6</sup> who have, among other things, concentrated on formalizing the functioning of topic/comment articulation in the semantic component of a language.

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<sup>1</sup>Jan Firbas, "On defining the theme in functional sentence perspective," Travaux Linguistiques de Prague 1 (1966): 267-280; "Non-thematic subjects in contemporary English," Travaux Linguistiques de Prague 2 (1967): 239-256.

<sup>2</sup>František Daneš, "A three-level approach to syntax," Travaux Linguistiques de Prague 1 (1966): 225-240; "Order of elements and sentence intonation," in To Honor Roman Jakobson (The Hague: Mouton, 1967), pp. 499-512.

<sup>3</sup>Petr Sgall, "Functional sentence perspective in generative description," Prague Studies in Mathematical Linguistics 2 (1967): 203-25; "L'ordre des mots et la sémantique," in F. Kiefer (ed.) Studies in Syntax and Semantics (Dordrecht-Holland: D. Reidel, 1969), pp. 231-40; "Topic, focus and the ordering of semantic representations," Philologica Pragensia 15 (1972): 1-14.

<sup>4</sup>Eva Benešová and Petr Sgall, "Remarks on topic and comment articulation (Pt. I)," Prague Bulletin of Mathematical Linguistics 19 (1973): 29-58.

<sup>5</sup>Eva Hajičová and Petr Sgall, "Topic and focus in transformational grammar," Papers in Linguistics 8 (1975): 3-59.

<sup>6</sup>Östen Dahl, Topic and Comment: a study in Russian and Transformational Grammar (Goteburg: Almqvist and Wiskel, 1969).

Other contemporary linguists, belonging to several different schools, have conjectured upon the nature of the informational structure of sentences. D.W.L. Bolinger proposes that the elements at the beginning of utterances bear broader, more general connotations, whereas elements at the end convey significations of narrower, more specific purport.<sup>7</sup> The latter serve the more important function in furthering communication. W.J. Hutchins, within a case grammar framework, classifies sentences into four thematizational types depending upon their informational structure and the manner in which the message of the sentence is conveyed, i.e. for purposes of emphasis, contrast, or otherwise.<sup>8</sup> N. Chomsky discusses the contribution of intonation and stress in distinguishing between known and unknown information in a sentence,<sup>9</sup> while G. Lakoff attempts to account for the topic/comment articulation of sentences through the use of formal semantic formulae and predicate calculus.<sup>10</sup> Much of the

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<sup>7</sup>Dwight W.L. Bolinger, "Linear Modification" in Forms of English: Accent, Morpheme and Order (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965), pp. 283-307.

<sup>8</sup>W.J. Hutchins, "Subjects, themes and case grammar," Lingua 35 (1975): 101-132.

<sup>9</sup>Noam Chomsky, "Deep Structure, surface structure and semantic interpretation," in D. Steinberg and L. Jakobovits (eds.) Semantics: an interdisciplinary reader in philosophy, linguistics and psychology (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), pp. 183-216.

<sup>10</sup>George Lakoff, "On generative semantics," ibid., pp. 232-297.

material for the following presentation of thematization and topicalization will be based upon the groundwork laid down by the linguists mentioned above.

### 1.1 Thematization

Thematization is the process which organizes a sentence from the point of view of the hearer, into material which is already known or familiar to him on the one hand, and material which is unknown or new to him, on the other. The former is referred to as the theme of the sentence; the latter will be called the rheme.

Defined in this way, thematization is a discourse phenomenon. The thematic elements of a sentence are generally found in initial position and form a bond between what has preceded the sentence and the new information to be conveyed via that sentence. In that it relates specifically either to previous discourse or to the situation in which the act of communication takes place, the theme may be said to be contextually bound.

The rheme, on the other hand, is generally found at the end of the sentence. It derives its informational import from the fact that it cannot be predicted from context. Rather, it introduces new, unexpected information into the discourse. Regard the following conversation:

(1) John: Well Mike, how have you been doing?

Mike: I've been sick with the flu all week.

The constituent 'sick with the flu all week' constitutes new information in Mike's answer, while 'I' functions as theme, already having been signalled through John's direct question.

In sentences which appear to contain only new information, theme will often be identified as that term which initiates the message in the most general way. For example in

(2) There once lived a king.

the thematic word "there" conveys little or no information but merely breaks the way for the presentation of the rhematic information concerning the existence of a king.

Likewise, the elements in a sentence which are identified as rhematic may have already been introduced in the discourse. Their newness will result from their unexpected relation to the rest of the sentence. For instance, "Jack" in the following is rheme although it is assumed to be known to both the speaker and hearer.

(3) Yes Sue, they found out what happened to  
that diamond watch of Sarah's. It was stolen,  
and the one who stole it was Jack.

What makes 'Jack' unpredictable and, hence, new is his identity as the one who stole the bracelet.

The importance of an element in a sentence may be signalled through stress. In this paper I will be concerned with the use of stress, either contrastive or emphatic, as a secondary reinforcement of the informational status of an element which has already been identified as rheme through its position in the sentence or its intrinsic semantic content.

In English, a language in which word order is relatively restricted, theme and rheme often coincide with subject and predicate, respectively. However, it must be noted that theme and rheme are not definable in terms of the grammatical function of the words in the sentence with which they are associated. As will be demonstrated later in this paper, the tendency in English to maintain the theme/rheme distribution of information will often override the grammatical constraints on the order of constituents and serve to account for the movement of these constituents out of their normal positions in the sentence.

To conclude, the primary function of the thematization phenomenon is to reflect the manner in which a speaker uses word order to bring to the hearer's attention significant information in the sentence and to preface it with familiar material in order that the communication between himself and his audience be as effective as possible.

## 1.2 Topicalization

The information in a sentence may not only be arranged from the point of view of the hearer, but also from the point of view of the speaker. The topicalization phenomenon represents the speaker's tendency to choose a topic first, that is, what he is going to talk about, and then to comment on it.

In English, the topic will frequently correspond to the grammatical subject of an utterance. However, the terms subject and topic are not synonymous. The notion of grammatical subject is syntactically defined through its selectional relation to some predicate in the sentence<sup>11</sup> and its categorial function as the left-most noun phrase immediately dominated by a sentence node.<sup>12</sup> Topic, however, does not enter into any specific selectional relation with a verb of the sentence. Nor is it identifiable through its grammatical function in the underlying structure of a sentence since it does not represent a constant category in the syntax of a language.

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<sup>11</sup>Charles Li and Sandra Thompson, "Subject and topic: a new typology of language" in Charles Li (ed.) Subject and Topic (New York: Academic Press, 1976), p. 462.

<sup>12</sup>Noam Chomsky, Aspects of the Theory of Syntax, (Cambridge: M.I.T. Press, 1965), p. 71.

The notion of topic must thus be defined semantically. It functions as the head or information center of the message conveyed in a sentence and the rest of the information is affiliated to it. Topic-comment order, then, represents an internal organization of information in a sentence. Topicalization is a process which operates relatively independent of context since it reflects the speaker's autonomous structuring of the message which is carried in a sentence. Accordingly, in the following sentences the underlined constituents have been designated topic while the rest of the sentence functions as comment.

(4) This book, I've seen it in many stores recently.

John went to school in a mad rush today.

That Mark is sick is very unfortunate.

A message is normally organized so that topic is in left-most position and the comment follows. Nevertheless, this is not necessarily the rule. In example (2) of this chapter, 'There once lived a king.', the topic is found at the end of the sentence, 'a king'. The comment is a statement of the king's existence at some time in the past. Topic-comment order has been disrupted in sentence (2), however, topic is still discernible through its status as the information center of the message and by the fact that the rest of the material in the sentence relates to it.

In the subsequent chapters of this paper, it will be seen that the topicalization structure of sentences will restrict the possible movement of constituents through transformations. On the other hand, however, the identification of topic and comment as defined above will also be found to provide possible explanations for the movement of certain constituents out of their normal grammatical order in a sentence.

### 1.3 Thematization and Topicalization in Terms of Movement Rules

In the chapters which follow I will study the functioning of thematization and topicalization as manifested through changes in the order of words. Fifteen movement transformations will be examined: preposing transformations - Comparative Substitution, Participle Preposing, Prepositional Phrase Substitution, Directional Adverb Preposing, Topicalization, VP Preposing and Negated Constituent Preposing; dislocation transformations - Left Dislocation, Right Dislocation and Adverb Dislocation; also transformations which move constituents toward the end of the sentence - Passivization, It-Insertion and There-Insertion - or into specific syntactic constructions - Sentence Clefting and Pseudo-Clefting.

The constraints on the embedding of root transformations, as proposed by J. Emonds and Hooper and Thompson,<sup>13</sup> will be reviewed. It will be seen that many sentences which appear ungrammatical in isolation, are found to be acceptable when presented in discourse since the thematization structure becomes distinguishable.<sup>14</sup> Likewise a study of the theories of focus and presupposition (Chomsky, Jackendoff), predicate relations between topic and comment (Lakoff), Presentative function (Hetzron), as well as objective content and syntactic prominence (Langacker),<sup>15</sup> will be undertaken in order to demonstrate that these concepts account only for certain aspects of the phenomena of new and old information distribution and topic/comment articulation in English.

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<sup>13</sup>Joseph Emonds, "Root and structure preserving transformations" (Ph.D. dissertation, M.I.T., 1970), reproduced by the Indiana University Linguistics Club, June 1970; J. Hooper and S. Thompson, "On the applicability of root transformations," Linguistic Inquiry 4 (1973): 465-497.

<sup>14</sup>The sentences to be analysed in this paper are not, for the most part, simple sentences. In certain cases the grammaticality status of such sentences, especially when embedded in a discourse, becomes obscured. The reader is, therefore, requested to exercise a certain amount of tolerance when assessing the author's judgements concerning these sentences.

<sup>15</sup>Chomsky, "Deep structure, surface structure and semantic interpretation"; Ray Jackendoff, Semantic Interpretation in Generative Grammar (Cambridge: M.I.T. Press, 1972) Chap. 6, Focus and Presupposition, pp. 229-279; Lakoff, "On generative semantics"; Robert Hetzron, "The presentative movement: or why the ideal word order is V.S.θ.P.," in Ch. Li (ed.) Word Order and Word Order Change (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1974) pp. 346-387; Ronald Langacker, "Movement rules in functional perspective," Language 50 (1974): 630-665.

Through an analysis of the surface structure phenomena of thematization and topicalization, it will be shown that certain movement transformations engender changes in the semantic representations assigned to the sentences in which they apply. These transformations include the preposing transformations, Left Dislocation, Passivization, Sentence Clefting and Pseudo-Clefting each of which modify the thematization and topicalization structure of sentences such that the information content of the messages carried in the transformed and untransformed sentences must be regarded as distinct. Of the four remaining transformations, Right Dislocation and Adverb Dislocation do not motivate modifications in the informational structures of the sentences in which they apply and therefore may not be said to change the semantic representations thereof. It-Insertion and There-Insertion, do not significantly change the semantic representations of the sentences in which they take place although they do fulfill separate communicative functions in English. In the case of the former, the movement of the sentential subject into final position emphasizes the relation between that constituent and the predicate of the sentence. In the case of the latter, the use of there in initial position thematizes the noun phrase which was originally subject of the sentence. For the most part There-Insertion moves indefinite noun phrases which will be seen to convey rhematic information intrinsically. In such instances the

information content of the sentence is not altered. However, in the event that There-Insertion rhematizes definite noun phrases, the meaning and the use of that sentence in discourse changes slightly. It is only when There-Insertion is used in sentences which contain definite noun phrases that a distinction may be made between the information content of the transformed and untransformed sentences.

## CHAPTER 2

## Preposing Transformations

In the following chapter, I will examine seven transformations which prepose constituents into non-subject position at the head of a sentence. The three transformations which prepose elements around be - Comparative Substitution, Participle Preposing and Prepositional Phrase Substitution - as well as the rule of Directional Adverb Preposing will be seen to create analogous modifications in the topicalization and thematization structures of the sentences in which they operate. Likewise, sentences in which Topicalization and VP Preposing have applied manifest similar characteristics with regards to the informational status of the constituents moved and their relation to the rest of the sentence. The rule of Negated Constituent Preposing produces unique theme/rheme and topic/comment configurations; hence, it will be studied as a separate instance of the functioning of thematization and topicalization in preposing transformations.

### 2.1 Comparative Substitution

This transformation moves the comparative predicate adjectival phrase to the head of the sentence and extraposes

the subject noun phrase into the position formerly occupied by the comparative phrase. Subject-verb inversion is, thus, put into effect.

Regard the following examples:

- (5) a. The loss of her puppy was more upsetting.  
       b. More upsetting was the loss of her puppy.
- (6) a. His love for Lucy was just as surprising.  
       b. Just as surprising was his love for Lucy.
- (7) a. Finding food for the patients is equally  
       difficult.  
       b. Equally difficult is finding food for the  
       patients.

The topics of sentences (5), (6) and (7) are 'the loss of her puppy', 'his love for Lucy' and 'finding food for the patients' respectively. In each case the comparative adjectival phrase serves as comment. In the untransformed versions of the sentences it will be noted that the topic/comment articulation is normal; that is, the topic precedes comment. The rule of Comparative Substitution, however, moves the topic of each sentence out of its normal position to the end of the sentence and fronts the comment. This move does not only effect the topicalization structure of the sentences but also modifies the information content of the message carried therein.

Consider the different nuances conveyed by the untransformed versus the transformed sentences in the following contexts.

- (8) The flood which devastated the little town of Kentmoor left many homeless. The oldest citizen of the town, Mrs. McGregor, age 97, said that although she would never be able to replace the treasures she had collected during her lifetime,
- a. the loss of her puppy was more upsetting.
  - b. more upsetting was the loss of her puppy.
- (9) A: I thought that his relationship with Maria was outrageous. In the first place, how could he associate with such a girl?
- B: Yes, but I am certain that a. his love for Lucy was just as surprising.
- b. just as surprising was his love for Lucy.
- (10) I admit that furnishing medical supplies at a time like this is hard but I assure you that
- a. finding food for the patients is equally difficult.
  - b. equally difficult is finding food for the patients.

In context (8) the hearer (reader) of the paragraph is informed that Mrs. McGregor lost both the contents of her house and her puppy, also that her puppy meant more to her. However, by placing the comparative phrase in the final position in (8a) the comparison itself becomes the important factor in the message. The fact that Mrs.

McGreggor lost the puppy is taken as common knowledge between the speaker and the hearer, or at least as not 'new' in the context. It is Mrs. McGregor's sense of priorities which is stressed by the untransformed sentence. The constituent 'more upsetting' is considered unpredictable in that it is unexpected given the circumstances. The hearer (reader) is presupposed, by the speaker, to think that Mrs. McGregor would probably value her 'treasures' more than the dog. Hence, the comparative 'more upsetting' is new information in this context.

On the other hand, in (8b), the constituent 'loss of her puppy' is rheme in the transformed version of the sentence. In moving the subject of comparison to the end of the sentence, the object itself (i.e. 'the loss of her puppy') becomes the important information of the message. The fact that the topic, 'the loss of her puppy', is situated in rhematic position at the end of the sentence also tends to emphasize its significance within the context. The comparative, flanked by the two elements which it juxtaposes in the transformed sentence, is contextually bound. The constituent 'the loss of her puppy' represents new information by virtue of its relation to the constituent with which it is being compared.

The information content of the thematization structure of sentences (5a and b) in context (8), then, follow the basic distribution of theme-rheme. In (8a) the constituent

'the loss of her puppy' is thematic while the comparative phrase is rheme. In (8b) the organization is reversed; the comparative is thematic whereas the noun phrase is rheme.

Similar analysis may be assigned to the transformed and untransformed sentences in contexts (9) and (10). The use of the untransformed sentence in context (9) conveys the notion that the person referred to had in some way a similar relation with Maria and Lucy. The new or important information carried by the sentence is found in the comment that both associations were surprising, which is situated in final position as rheme. In the transformed sentence, on the other hand, 'his love for Lucy' seems to be contrasted with 'his relationship with Maria'. The former constituent is not contextually bound but represents unpredictable new information in the sentence. Its marked topic position (that is, its non-normal position) and its informational status as rheme together represent a possible source for the contrastive nuance underlying the transformed sentence.

In context (10), once again, the comparison itself represents the important information in the untransformed sentence (a) whereas in the transformed sentence (b), the object of the comparative relation 'finding food for the patients' represents the significant information in the sentence.

J. Emonds claims that Comparative Substitution, being a root transformation may not apply in embedded

sentences.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, upon closer examination of the English language, it is evident that numerous counterexamples to this stipulation may be furnished. I will posit that the criteria for embedding sentences which have undergone Comparative Substitution derive from the constraint on the relation between topic/comment order and the distribution of thematic and rhematic information in the embedded sentence. More precisely, the fronted comment must represent information familiar to the hearer and serve the purpose of juxtaposing material presented in previous discourse and the new information conveyed by the topic in the transformed sentence.

Accordingly, Comparative Substitution has applied in the embedded sentences (b) of contexts (8), (9) and (10) without violating the constraints on grammaticality.

Likewise, the sentence

(11) Bill wonders why more important has been the establishment of legal services.

given in Emonds<sup>2</sup> is acceptable in the following context:

(12) It's clear that in the poverty stricken areas of the city the establishment of health centers is a major concern. Yet Bill wonders why, in

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<sup>1</sup>Joseph Emonds, "Root and structure preserving transformations" (Ph.D. dissertation, M.I.T., 1970), reproduced by the Indiana University Linguistics Club, June 1970, p. 21.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

this community, more important has been the establishment of legal services. Little does he realize that one of the gravest hazards to the health and well-being of this group of people is the incredible injustice dealt out by the police who inundate the area.

J. Hooper and S. Thompson<sup>3</sup> challenge Emonds' thesis concerning the embedding of root transformations by demonstrating that root transformations may take place only in complement clauses which convey the main assertion of the sentence.<sup>4</sup> However, this constraint also produces some arbitrary conclusions with regards to their assessment of the grammaticality of certain sentences. As far as concerns the present discussion of Comparative Substitution, I find only one example in their article which may be stated as constituting a doubtfully acceptable sentence. This occurs in sentences in which the complement clause is preposed into subject position as in:

(13) ? That most embarrassing was forgetting my lines  
is true.

In sentence (13) it is indeed true, as Hooper and Thompson state,<sup>5</sup> that the most important element of the

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<sup>3</sup>Joan Hooper and Sandra Thompson, "On the applicability of root transformations," Linguistic Inquiry 4 (1973): 465-497.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 473.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

sentence, hence the rheme, is the constituent 'is true'. Nevertheless, a certain amount of importance must be allocated to the topic of the embedded sentence, in other words to 'forgetting my lines' since Comparative Substitution stresses that element by placing it in non-normal position. The questionable acceptability of sentence (13) derives from the conflict between the rheme of the main sentence and the rheme (marked topic) of the embedded sentence. The former should modify the entire sentence, however the latter draws emphasis to itself which upsets the relationship between 'is true' and the complement as a whole. Extraposing the embedded sentence clears the conflict since it allows both the rheme of the main clause and rheme in the complement to be emphasized.

(14) It is true that most embarrassing was forgetting my lines.

I am disinclined to agree with Hooper and Thompson that (13) is completely ungrammatical. In my dialect, this sentence may be accepted if used in a contrastive context as in:

(15) That most embarrassing was forgetting my lines is true, but falling off the stage was almost as bad.

The emphasis on the constituent 'forgetting my lines' and its contrastive function with relation to 'falling off the stage' places greater importance upon the status of topic in the

embedded sentence than on 'is true'. Hence, the conflict between the two is resolved and the constraints on the use of Comparative Substitution are fulfilled.

## 2.2 Participle Preposing

Examine the following sentences and their transformed counterparts:

- (16) a. Ch. Fillmore will be speaking today at the conference.  
b. Speaking today at the conference will be Ch. Fillmore.
- (17) a. Two talking parrots were held for questioning.  
b. Held for questioning were two talking parrots.

The transformation of Participle Preposing moves the participle and the complement of the sentence into initial position around be and instigates subject-verb inversion so that the subject noun phrase is found in sentence final position. Subject-verb inversion is obligatory since an ungrammatical sentence will result in the event that it is not applied. Furthermore, the predicate phrase of the sentence must be included in the fronting movement; hence, the entire comment of the sentence must be preposed and the topic placed in final position in order for the transformed sentence to be acceptable.

I will contend that the comment in sentences transformed through Participle Preposing is contextually bound; that is, it relates specifically either to previous discourse or to the situation in which the sentence is spoken. The comment thus functions thematically and serves as an introduction to the new information in the sentence conveyed by the topic. Let us look at sentences (16) and (17) in context.

(18) Ladies and gentlemen, I am proud to announce that a. Charles Fillmore will be speaking today at the conference.

b. speaking today at the conference will be Charles Fillmore.

(19) The Central County Pet Shop was robbed yesterday evening at seven o'clock. Police report that a. two talking parrots were held for questioning.  
b. held for questioning were two talking parrots.

Sentence (a) in context (18) conveys the idea that the fact that Charles Fillmore is speaking at the conference is being confirmed, while in sentence (b), the fact that it is Charles Fillmore and not some other guest who is speaking seems to be important. Likewise, in employing sentence (a) in context (19), the constituent 'two talking parrots' is related specifically to the 'Central County Pet Shop' and does not seem extraordinary in the situation described. By moving the topic to the end of the sentence, however, as in

sentence (b), an element of surprise is added since that constituent represents unpredictable information.

The communicative function of Participle Preposing is to signal the hearer of significant information which is presumed to be unknown to him. Sentences, in which this transformation has applied, are initiated by predicate phrases which represent circumstances presupposed to be wholly familiar to both the speaker and his audience. The topic is moved into non-normal position at the end of the sentence where its importance will be emphasized. Participle Preposing may only be employed in contexts where the fronted comment represents known information while the topic conveys some new, unpredictable information to the hearer. Sentences such as (16) and (17) may be embedded only if these constraints are obeyed.

The following sentences, which would be classified by Emonds as ungrammatical, appear to conform to the above constraints perfectly. I will contend, contrary to Emonds' hypothesis, that they are acceptable.

(20) Bill said that speaking today at the conference  
will be Ch. Fillmore.

(21) The police announced that held for questioning  
were two talking parrots.

I will also claim that

(22) ? Bill wonders why speaking today at the  
conference will be Ch. Fillmore.

will be grammatical when used contrastively as in:

- (23) Bill wonders why speaking today at the conference will be Ch. Fillmore rather than J. Emonds.

The fact that in isolation (22) is not totally acceptable stems from the fact that the main verbal phrase 'wonders why' contains the presupposition that Bill has already been told that Ch. Fillmore will be speaking. Hence, the topic of the embedded sentence does not represent new information and Participle Preposing is being applied incorrectly. However in (22) 'Ch. Fillmore', by being contrasted with 'J. Emonds' will resume rhematic status which makes the informational structure of the transformed sentences again admissible.

Another sentence given in Emonds<sup>6</sup> as ungrammatical which appears not to conform to the constraints on the use of Participle Preposing is:

- (24) ? The fact that taking tickets at the door was my old Yale roommate made it easy to get in. Sentence (24) exhibits the same conflict between the rheme of the main clause and the rheme of the embedded sentence which was exemplified in sentence (13) in the discussion of Comparative Substitution. Similar to sentence (13), this

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<sup>6</sup>Emonds, "Root and structure preserving transformations," p. 23.

sentence in isolation is not completely acceptable. However, in a contrastive context where the emphasis and importance is once again placed on the topic of the embedded sentence (24) appears to be grammatical.

(25) I was really worried that they wouldn't let me into the theater because I had left my wallet at home, but the fact that taking tickets at the door was my old Yale roommate and not the director made it easy to get in.

### 2.3 Prepositional Phrase Substitution

This transformation permutes prepositional phrases with subject noun phrases over the verb be. As in Comparative Substitution and Participle Preposing, the topic is moved to the end of the sentence and the comment in the form of the prepositional phrase (PP) is preposed.

- (26) a. John and his brother were among the guilty.  
 b. Among the guilty were John and his brother.
- (27) a. The bedrooms and a private sitting room are upstairs.  
 b. Upstairs are the bedrooms and a private sitting room.

The thematization structure of such sentences follows theme-rheme distribution. The prepositional phrase is contextually bound. In preposed position it does not convey new information but relates intrinsically to the previous

utterances in the discourse. The topic, on the other hand, may not in all cases convey totally unfamiliar information but will represent, in all cases, information which in the circumstances is unpredictable, that is, not bound to the discourse that has preceded it. Hence, 'John and his brother' are not unknown to the interlocutors of the following discourse (28). However, this constituent bears the status of rheme in that, within the context, their mention is unexpected.

(28) As I was telling you Lil, the whole business got out of hand and their underhanded dealings were all found out. They were caught, every one of them and, I know you won't believe it but among the guilty were John and his brother.

Likewise, the existence of a bedroom and a sitting room in a house is taken for granted (at least the existence of bedrooms). In the circumstance of discourse (29), however, they represent information which is newly introduced.

(29) On the main floor of the house we have the living room, kitchen, dining room and a den. Upstairs are the bedrooms and a private sitting room.

Sentences in which the prepositional phrase has been preposed and the subject has been extraposed, are acceptable only if the prepositional phrase represents old information and introduces the new information at the end of the sentence.

Such sentences may only be embedded if this thematization structure is maintained and there is no interference with the informational content of the main sentence into which it is inserted.

An important communicative characteristic of sentences which have undergone PP Substitution is their descriptive function. The prepositional phrase serves as an introductory element which relates the new information in the sentence to what has gone before in the discourse. As we will see in section 2.4, directional adverb phrases when preposed, relate the new information to the speaker of the sentence; prepositional phrases such as locative adverb phrases link the new information directly to the context. The descriptive function of sentences in which the prepositional phrase has been preposed must be preserved in order for the sentence to be natural in a context.

Emonds<sup>7</sup> presents the following two examples as ungrammatical as a result of the fact that the embedded sentence, in each, has undergone Prepositional Phrase Substitution.

(30) I have no idea how often among the guests were  
(sat) John and his family.

(31) I won't be satisfied until upstairs is (lies)  
all the wine we bought in Europe.

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<sup>7</sup> Emonds, "Root and structure preserving transformations," p. 23.

I will claim that these sentences when used in discourse will be acceptable. In isolation, it is impossible to determine the thematization structure of either the main or the embedded sentence. The preposed prepositional phrases, therefore, are not contextually bound introducing new, rhematic information. Rather, the non-normal topicalization structure of the embedded sentence (that is, the fronted comment followed by topic) becomes very apparent making the sentence seem unnatural.

Consider the following:

(32) We often had enormous parties at the old chateau inviting all of the people we knew. I must admit, however, that I have no idea how often among the guests were (sat) John and his family.

(33) I know that you have almost completed the unpacking and the house is fairly neat but I won't be satisfied until upstairs is (lies) all the wine we bought in Europe.

Given the above contexts (32) and (33), sentences (30) and (31) adhere to the constraints on the application of Prepositional Phrase Substitution. The preposed comment of (30) 'among the guests' refers to the constituents 'parties' and 'inviting all of the people we knew' in the preceding sentence. The topic of the sentence 'John and his family' represents new information with relation to the situation described by the comment of the embedded sentence.

Similarly, the comment 'upstairs', in sentence (31), is bound to the previous mention of 'the house', while the topic 'all the wine we bought in Europe' is unpredictable from the context and conveys rhematic information in the sentence.

#### 2.4 Directional Adverb Preposing

Regard the following examples:

(34) a. The pony trotted up the street.

b. Up the street trotted the pony.

(35) a. Alex came in.

b. In came Alex.

(36) a. They ran away.

b. Away they ran.

The modification of the regular topic-comment order of words in these sentences may be viewed as a method of forcing the hearer (reader) into an awareness of the spatial relationship between the speaker and the topic of the sentence. By placing the topic at the end of the sentence, its unpredictability in the context is stressed. As in the case of the aforementioned transformations, Comparative Substitution, Participle Preposing and Prepositional Phrase Substitution, the topic in sentence final position functions as the rheme of the sentence while the preposed constituent is contextually bound to the preceding discourse.

Let us examine the following contexts:

(37) I rang the bell again and waited, startled that no one had appeared. I was just wondering where everyone was when up the street trotted the pony.

(38) Then in came Alex. Wearing a purple robe heavily adorned with pearls and diamonds, she was truly the most impressive woman at the ball.

Both topics, 'the pony' and 'Alex', of the underlined sentences in contexts (37) and (38) represent material somewhat familiar to the speaker and the hearer. In the case of the former, the definite article modifying 'pony' semantically has the function of creating in the hearer's mind the impression that the speaker, at least, is to some extent familiar with the object being referred to. In the case of the latter, the use of the proper name suggests some previous relationship between the speaker and the person in question. In the above two contexts, however, these two topics have been moved into a non-normal position and classified as rheme. In effect, in context (37) the speaker is not expecting 'the pony' to be coming 'up the street' just as in (38) the speaker is not necessarily prepared for the entrance of 'Alex' into the room.

In sentence (36) subject-verb inversion does not occur. Anaphoric pronouns such as 'it', 'he', 'she', 'they',

etc., are generally thematic,<sup>8</sup> since in order to be interpreted they must relate to some object or person already mentioned in the discourse as in the following:

- (39) Billy and Henry looked up in terror into the furious face of Farmer McGregor. They threw down the carrots they had been devouring and away they ran as fast as their feet could carry them.

As a result of their inherently thematic nature, anaphoric pronouns cannot be placed in rhematic position at the end of sentences in which the directional adverb has been preposed. Hence the following are ungrammatical.

- (40) \*Away ran they.  
 \*Up jumped he.  
 \*In came she.

On the other hand, definite nouns and proper nouns, such as those found in (34) and (35), may remain in normal position before the verb:

- (41) Up the street the pony trotted.  
 (42) In Alex came.

Once moved from the end of the sentence, these noun phrases lose their status as rheme and become contextually bound. Note the different readings that contexts (37) and (38) will

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<sup>8</sup>Jan Firbas, "Non-thematic subjects in contemporary English," Travaux Linguistiques de Prague 2 (1967), p. 241.

receive when (41) and (42), respectively, have been inserted in place of the underlined sentences. In context (37) the speaker would appear to be awaiting the appearance of 'the pony'. In context (38) 'Alex's' presence is known; it is her actual entrance into the room which is focussed upon. Thus, anaphoric pronouns may only be found in thematic position in sentences in which the directional adverb phrase has been preposed, while definite nouns and proper nouns may be moved into either thematic or rhematic position depending upon the context in which they are being employed.

Let us examine sentences with indefinite noun phrases as topic:

- (43) a. Up jumped a rabbit.  
       b. \*Up a rabbit jumped.
- (44) a. In came a man.  
       b. \*In a man came.
- (45) a. Here comes a storm.  
       b. \*Here a storm comes.

Indefinite nominals are generally rhematic elements<sup>9</sup> since they do not convey any sense of familiarity between that referred to by the noun phrase and the speaker of the sentence. Hence, the fact that (43b), (44b) and (45b) are ungrammatical derives from the impossibility of thematizing the topics of these sentences.

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<sup>9</sup>Firbas, "Non-thematic subjects," p. 242.

It will be claimed, therefore, that directional adverb preposing will trigger subject-verb inversion only in the case of indefinite, definite and proper nouns (obligatorily in the case of indefinite noun phrases). These noun phrases when extraposed will assume the status of rheme in the sentence. Sentences which have undergone directional adverb preposing may only be embedded in contexts in which the spatial relationship between the topic and the speaker of the sentence is acknowledged, the theme-rheme distribution and comment-topic order is appropriate.

Following from these criteria, the sentence:

(46) I was surprised when up trotted the dog.  
is acceptable and may be inserted quite naturally into context (37), contrary to Emonds' claim<sup>10</sup> that it is ungrammatical. Similarly, sentence (47):

(47)  $\overline{[107]}$  The guide was surprised that beyond  
the next hill stood a large fortress.  
given in Hooper and Thompson<sup>11</sup> as ungrammatical, complies with the constraints outlined above. It is, therefore, acceptable in a context such as:

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<sup>10</sup>Emonds, "Root and structure preserving transformations," p. 12.

<sup>11</sup>Hooper and Thompson, "On the applicability of root transformations," p. 479.

- (48) As we tramped over the fields we received the impression that the area had never been inhabited. Thus, the guide was surprised that beyond the next hill stood a large fortress.

## 2.5 Topicalization

Topicalization moves nominalized phrases from complement position to the head of the sentence. Consider the following:

- (49) a. I really need a walk.  
       b. A walk I really need.
- (50) a. You will not forget this experience too easily.  
       b. This experience you will not forget too easily.
- (51) a. She quite enjoyed working with Dr. Peters.  
       b. Working with Dr. Peters she quite enjoyed.  
       c. Dr. Peters she quite enjoyed working with.

One of the major functions of this transformation is to simplify the topic/comment articulation of sentences. The rule of Topicalization selects as topic an element of the sentence which in the untransformed sentence would possibly be interpreted as belonging to the comment. Since, as pointed out in Chapter 1, there is a tendency on the speaker's part, to organize the sentence into topic first,

followed by comment, the most logical choice for the role of topic falls on the subject noun phrase of the sentence. Upon closer examination of the sentences (49a), (50a) and (51a), however, the potential of the complement noun phrases to function as topic will become apparent. Indeed, the subjects of these sentences 'I', 'you' and 'he' do not seem necessarily to be the information centers of the messages carried within the sentences. If the elements 'a walk', 'this experience' and 'Dr. Peters' or 'working with Dr. Peters' are selected as topic in (49a), (50a) and (51a) respectively, then the topic-comment organization of the elements in the sentence is disrupted. The Topicalization transformation restores this basic organization of the sentence and stresses the element chosen as topic by fronting it and subsequently separating it from the rest of the sentence which will then serve as comment. Thus, the need for normal grammatical order of such sentences is of lesser importance than the striving for normal topicalization structure in language.

Lakoff<sup>12</sup> claims that topicalization is a semantic **notion** **and** should be represented as a two place predicate whose actants are a noun phrase and some proposition, P; something like: concerning (noun phrase, P). For

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<sup>12</sup>George Lakoff, "On generative semantics," in D. Steinberg and L. Jakobovits (eds.) Semantics: an interdisciplinary reader in philosophy, linguistics and psychology (Cambridge University Press, 1971), p. 262.

example,

(52) Concerning this book, it is very good.

According to his grammar, the topic of a sentence will be the subject noun phrase of the proposition. However in sentences such as (49b), (50b) and (51 b and c), which could be represented approximately as:

(53) Concerning a walk, I really need one.

(54) Concerning this experience, you won't forget  
it too easily.

(55) a. Concerning working with Dr. Peters, she  
quite enjoyed it.

b. Concerning Dr. Peters, she quite enjoyed  
working with him.

the topic does not function as subject noun phrase which is a separate constituent in each sentence. Lakoff contends that in such instances, in order for the sentences to be acceptable in the language, the grammar must allow for the existence of two topics in some sentences. This he considers not possible in his dialect.

I will disagree with Lakoff on two accounts. First, sentences (49b), (50b) and (51 b and c) along with (53), (54) and the sentences in (55) would seem perfectly grammatical in my dialect. Secondly, there are not two topics in each of the sentences (53), (54) and in (55). As explained above, the subject noun phrase constitutes a part of the comment in all the sentences.

Sentences which have been transformed via the rule of Topicalization may be employed only in contexts in which the topic represents information familiar to both the speaker and the hearer. The comment will contain new information. Regard the following discourses:

(56) After a fierce quarrel has taken place between A and her mother, A's husband says to her:  
 "Hey, why don't we go outside and walk a little."  
 to which A replies:  
 "Yeah, a walk I really need."

(57) Having just watched his buddy being submitted to a gruelling cross-examination, X turned pale when the director said to him: "I hope that this experience you won't forget too easily."  
 The same will happen to you if you don't follow the rules.

(58) Looking back over the past year's work at the hospital, Shiela had to admit that although they had warned her that he was a tough supervisor, working with Dr. Peters she quite enjoyed.

Dr. Peters she quite enjoyed working with.

The topic, which in each of the above discourses is contextually or situationally bound, is placed in a distinctive position at the head of the sentence (embedded

sentence in the case of (57) and (58)) and yet does not function as grammatical subject.<sup>13</sup>

The communicative function of the Topicalization transformation may be said to signal thematic material in the sentence without conflicting with the important, new information to be situated at the end of the sentence. Both the thematic and rhematic elements in the sentence are therefore readily available to the hearer - the former, through the emphasis created by the particular construction in which it is found and the latter, by virtue of its final position. Sentences which have undergone Topicalization may only be embedded if the emphasis on both the thematic and rhematic elements is functionally appropriate in the context.

Let us examine the following sentences given in Emonds<sup>14</sup> as unacceptable.

(59) I fear that each part John examined carefully.

(60) Are you aware (of the fact) that poetry we try not to memorize?

(61) Do you think Socialist theory many Czechs would deny?

(62) ? That this house he left to a friend was generous of him.

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<sup>13</sup>W.J. Hutchins, "Subjects, themes and case grammar" Lingua 35 (1975), p. 109.

<sup>14</sup>Emonds, "Root and structure preserving transformations," p. 18.

I will claim that sentences (59) and (60) are grammatical when their contexts are defined; that sentence (61) conforms perfectly to the restrictions on the use of Topicalization and is therefore grammatical even out of context; and that sentence (62) is not ungrammatical but only questionable in isolation.

Regard the following contexts:

(63) Your model came up for discussion today. The directors had it dissembled and I fear that each part John examined carefully - obviously too carefully, for he found many discrepancies in design.

(64) My dear young man, you are not still in public school. Are you aware that, at the higher levels of learning, poetry we try not to memorize; rather, we try to understand it.

Sentences (59) and (60) perhaps appear less natural in isolation since the topics of the embedded sentences, 'each part' and 'poetry' are not related to any prior discourse and therefore cannot represent thematic information. The hearer does not know to what the speaker is referring in mentioning 'each part' in (59). Likewise, it is not clear why emphasis is being placed upon 'poetry' and the fact of its memorization in sentence (60). In context, these sentences receive proper interpretation and their topicalization structure appears functionally consistent with the messages conveyed therein.

Sentence (61) requires no context in order to be correctly interpreted. The topic of the embedded sentence 'Socialist theory' represents information familiar (at least it is taken for granted as familiar) to both the speaker and the hearer. The focus of the question falls on 'deny', the last element of the comment, 'many Czechs would deny'. Both thematization structure and topic-comment order is thus preserved in this example and the sentence is acceptable since it accords with all of the constraints on the use of Topicalization.

The difficulty which arises in sentence (62) reflects once again the conflict between the rhematic elements of the embedded and the main sentences that was revealed in both sentences (13) and (24). 'Was generous of him' modifies the entire clause 'that he left this house to a friend'. By placing 'this house' in distinctive position at the head of the embedded sentence to which is attached the comment 'he left to a friend', the relationship between the main clause and complement is destroyed and the communicative function of the topicalized sentence is not appropriate. However, in context (65):

(65) Old Mr. Phips hoarded money and possessions all his life and it was expected that if he passed anything on, it would all go to his only niece. Hence, that this house he left to a friend was extremely generous of him and I may add, quite a surprise.

it becomes clear that 'was generous of him' represents truly unpredictable information and that the comment of the embedded sentences registers a certain amount of novelty with respect to what 'he' did with the house. The emphasis on both rhematic constituents of the embedded and main sentences does not seem misplaced.

## 2.6 VP Preposing

VP Preposing, like Topicalization fronts one element of the sentence to pre-subject position. However, unlike Topicalization, it is not a noun phrase which moves but the verb. Consider the following examples.

(66) a. John says he will learn to walk and he will walk.

b. John says he will learn to walk and walk he will.

(67) a. Once I had convinced myself that I would fail, I did fail.

b. Once I had convinced myself that I would fail, fail I did.

It is important to note that VP Preposing may only take place in conjoined sentences and in sentences in a discourse. Above, the conjoined sentences are 'he will walk' and 'I did fail' in examples (66) and (67) respectively. VP Preposing moves an element representing

known or familiar information to the front of the sentence leaving in final position that element which contains the new information in the sentence. 'Walk' and 'fail', because they are repeated in the conjoined sentences carry no new information and thus are thematic. On the other hand, the notion of voluntariness conveyed by the modal verb 'will' in example (66) and the affirmation of the occurrence of an event conveyed by 'did' in example (67) contribute the important information in the sentences. As a result of the essentially weak character of the verbs 'do' and 'will', when conveying rhematic information in sentences these modals must be stressed. This is indeed the case in both the (a) and (b) versions of (66) and (67). However, by moving the thematic elements 'walk' and 'fail' to pre-subject position, not only do the modal verbs receive emphatic stress but also they are situated in a distinctive position in the sentence, thereby further strengthening their rhematic status.

While respecting grammatical order, the elements in the untransformed conjoined sentences 'he will walk' and 'I did fail' conflict with the basic distribution of theme/rheme in utterances since the modal verbs are rhematic and the verbs themselves are thematic. Hence, the transformation of VP Preposing may be said to serve the principal function of restoring the basic theme/rheme organization of the information in a sentence at the expense of grammatical

order. This fact may be considered an indication that the thematizational structure has primacy over grammatical structure in English as was seen to be the case with the topicalizational structure in sentences transformed by the rule of Topicalization.

VP Preposing may take place in embedded sentences provided that the preposed constituent is bound specifically to preceding discourse and that the notions of possibility (can), voluntariness (will) and affirmation (have, do) conveyed by the modal verbs represent rhematic information in the sentence. Thus the following sentences given as ungrammatical in Emonds and in Hooper and Thompson are acceptable according to the above stipulations.<sup>15</sup>

(68) John intends to make a table and we're afraid  
that make one he will.

(69)  $\overline{[102]}$  Sally plans for Gary to marry her and  
it bothers me that marry her he will.

Hooper and Thompson<sup>16</sup> state that root transformations may not apply in the complements of the verbs 'it is probable', 'it is likely', and 'it is possible'. However, I find that sentences such as the following are grammatical:

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<sup>15</sup>Emonds, "Root and structure preserving transformations," p. 19; Hooper and Thompson, "On the applicability of root transformations," p. 479.

<sup>16</sup>Hooper and Thompson, *ibid.*, p. 478.

(70) John intends to walk and it is likely that walk  
he will.

John intends to walk and it is probable that  
walk he will.

John intends to walk and it is possible that  
walk he will.

None of these verbs, 'it is likely', 'it is probable' or 'it is possible', interfere with John's 'will' to walk.

## 2.7 Negated Constituent Preposing

This transformation preposes negated constituents and instigates obligatory subject-auxiliary or subject-modal inversion. Examine the following examples:

(71) a. I had never seen so much food.

b. Never had I seen so much food.

(72) a. We had seldom had such fun.

b. Seldom had we had such fun.

(73) a. Billy could be found at none of the bars.

b. At none of the bars could Billy be found.

I will claim that the negated constituent, when preposed, functions as comment in relation to the rest of the information contained in each of the above sentences. Furthermore, when employed in discourse, the thematization structure of these sentences is such that the negated constituent conveys the new, important information; what follows represents material already familiar to the hearer.

Let us examine the above sentences in context.

(74) As I entered the room my breath caught and I gasped aloud. There before me was an enormous banquet table laden with the most exotic and sumptuous of culinary delights. I must admit that a. I had never seen so much food.

b. never had I seen so much food.

(75) During our weekend at the seashore the sun shone only once or twice but our spirit for adventure was not daunted. We all agreed that a. we had seldom had such fun.

b. seldom had we had such fun.

(76) Since her son had disappeared, the men had scoured the town for clues to Billy's whereabouts. The first thing they did was search his favorite pubs but a. Billy could be found at none of the bars.

b. at none of the bars could Billy be found.

In intrasentential position, the negated adverbs in sentences (a) of (74) and (75) modify specifically the verb of the sentence. By promoting them to the front of the sentence and stressing them, they modify the whole message conveyed by the rest of the sentence.

Langacker points out that the basic situation described by a sentence denotes the 'objective content' of that

sentence which the 'non-objective content' (negation, tense, etc.) takes a position on.<sup>17</sup> His contention is that the functional purpose of movement transformations, for example those which front constituents, is to move objective content into more prominent positions in the sentence. However, as we see here, preposing transformations also foreground non-objective content. In sentences (b) of (74) and (75), the basic situation portrayed by each may be represented approximately as 'my-seeing-food' and 'our-having-fun', respectively. The negated constituents convey unpredictable and important information concerning the speaker's attitude toward these situations. The objective content of the sentences is thematic, on the other hand, in that the situations have been presented in the preceding discourse.

Similarly, the negated prepositional phrase in sentences (a) and (b) of context (76) contributes important information concerning the situation described by the objective content of the sentence, that is, 'Billy's-being-found-at-the-bars'. The fact that he was found at 'none' of the bars is unpredictable and new in the context, while it is known to the hearer that he is being searched for. Thus, the word 'none' in the constituent 'at none of the bars' is rhematic whereas what follows, 'could Billy be found', is contextually bound and therefore thematic.

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<sup>17</sup>Ronald Langacker, "Movement rules in functional perspective" Language 50 (1974), p. 645.

The topicalization and thematization structures of sentences transformed through Negated Constituent Preposing differ from those of the other preposing transformations which we have studied in that the fronted comment conveys rhematic information and does not relate to the topic of the sentence alone but modifies the entire situation described by the sentence. Thus, both theme/rheme distribution and topic/comment order is modified via this transformation.

It is possible to embed sentences in which Negated Constituent Preposing has taken place as is apparent from the contexts (74), (75) and (76) above. In order for the embedding of such sentences to occur, the constituents on the thematization and topicalization structures must be complied with. The negated constituent must serve as a comment on the entire embedded sentence and convey rhematic information while the basic situation described by the sentence must be familiar information to both the hearer and the speaker.

Thus, the following sentences, although stated in Emonds<sup>18</sup> as ungrammatical, are acceptable according to the above criteria.

- (77) If under no conditions may they leave the area  
then how can they pay their debt?

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<sup>18</sup>Emonds, "Root and structure preserving transformations," p. 11.

- (78) The proof that at none of the beaches are the lifeguards alert, is that there have been many fatalities.

The constituents 'if' and 'the proof that', which introduce the subordinate clauses, portray the fact that the information in the embedded sentences is already known. By moving the negated constituent to the front of the clause and stressing it, the important information in the embedded sentences is emphasized thereby adhering to the constraints on the application of Negated Constituent Preposing in English.

## 2.8 Conclusions

In preposing transformations, with the exception of Negated Constituent Preposing, the constituents moved to the front of the sentence constitute material bound either to previous discourse or to the non-verbal context in which the sentence is uttered. The elements found in sentence final position function rhematically. In the case of Negated Constituent Preposing the negated constituent, representing new information, is preposed in order that it may range over the total situation described in the sentence.

Of the seven preposing transformations, five - Comparative Substitution, Participle Preposing, Prepositional Phrase Substitution, Directional Adverb Preposing and

Negated Constituent Preposing - move the comment to the head of the sentence while the remaining two, Topicalization and VP Preposing, prepose the topic. Sentences in which these transformations have applied may be embedded as long as the constraints on the thematization and topicalization structures as specified for each transformation are complied with.

## CHAPTER 3

## Dislocation Transformations

In the following chapter I will present an analysis of the three dislocation transformations - Left Dislocation, Right Dislocation and Adverb Dislocation. Left Dislocation and Right Dislocation move noun phrases out of their normal position in the sentence leaving pronouns in their place and separating the noun phrases from the rest of the sentence through comma-intonation. In the case of Left Dislocation, the noun phrase is fronted whereas it is postposed by Right Dislocation. Adverb Dislocation, on the other hand, moves originally intrasentential adverbs to the end of the sentence and likewise sets them off by comma-intonation. It will be seen that the functional status of Left Dislocation must be considered distinct from that of Right Dislocation and Adverb Dislocation, in English.

### 3.1 Left Dislocation

Sentences transformed by Left Dislocation exhibit topicalization and thematization structures similar, in certain respects, to those discovered in sentences in which Topicalization (section 2.5) has applied. Examine the following:

- (79) a. That closet was unlocked when I got home.  
b. That closet, it was unlocked when I got home.

- (80) a. This book has all of those recipes you  
wanted in it.
- b. Those recipes you wanted, this book has all  
of them in it.

The noun phrase which is moved to the front of the sentence becomes the information center to which the rest of the material in the sentence is oriented. The dislocated noun phrase functions as topic, therefore, and is emphasized through its non-normal position and by the fact that it is set off from the rest of the sentence. Furthermore, the topic must represent known information to both the hearer and the speaker, or be directly related to the situation in which the sentence is spoken; the comment conveys new, unpredictable information in the sentence. The communicative function, thus, of sentences which have undergone Left Dislocation, is to draw the hearer's attention to the relation between the topic of discussion and some observation concerning it which is expressed in the rest of the sentence.

Left Dislocation may apply in embedded sentences provided that the above specified characteristics of the thematization and topicalization structures of the sentence are realized. Hence, the following sentences given in Emonds<sup>1</sup> as unacceptable, will be considered grammatical according to this thesis.

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<sup>1</sup>Joseph Emonds, "Root and structure preserving transformations" (Ph.D. dissertation, M.I.T., 1970), reproduced by the Indiana University Linguistics Club, June 1970, p. 19.

- (81) I told you that this movie, you wouldn't like it too much.
- (82) They put so much furniture in here that this room, it really depresses me.
- (83) I'm afraid that Bill, you ought to see a doctor.

In each of the above sentences, the embedded topic noun phrase represents theme. 'This movie' in sentence (81) conveys familiar information by virtue of the demonstrative pronoun 'this'. In the case of sentence (82), the use of the demonstrative pronoun modifying 'room' combined with the fact that 'this room' is contextually bound to 'in here' in the main sentence contribute towards the thematic status of the topic noun phrase. 'Bill', the topic of the embedded sentence in (83), is obligatorily thematic as determined by the fact that the speaker is addressing him directly.

### 3.2 Right Dislocation

Regard the following sentences:

- (84) a. I went to see that movie finally.  
       b. I went to see it finally, that movie.
- (85) a. Bill's wife always gets so upset.  
       b. She always gets so upset, Bill's wife.
- (86) a. That book has a picture of a giraffe in it.  
       b. That book has one in it, a picture of a giraffe.

The topic-comment articulation of sentences in which Right Dislocation has taken place is realized independent of the dislocated noun phrase. The role of the dislocated noun phrase in the topicalization structure of the sentence is determined through the status of the pronoun to which it is related in that sentence. The noun phrase which is moved to the end of the sentence by Right Dislocation does not necessarily function as the topic of the sentence. In sentence (84), for instance, either 'I' or 'it' (that movie) could be topic depending upon the nature of the discussion in which the sentence figures. 'She' in sentence (85b) obviously is the topic while in example (86) 'that book' could be considered to function more naturally as the information center than 'a picture of a giraffe'. Thus the topicalization structure of sentences transformed through Right Dislocation is identical to that of the corresponding untransformed sentences.

The communicative function of sentences in which Right Dislocation has taken place may be stated as the following. The speaker utters the sentence containing the anaphoric pronoun with the belief that the hearer knows what he is referring to. Then, at the last minute, the speaker adds the noun phrase just in case he has been mistaken. Hence, the dislocated noun phrase serves to clarify for the hearer, the object, concept or person denoted by the pronoun in the sentence. That pronoun relates anaphorically either to some noun phrase which has been mentioned previously in the

discourse or to some object or person encompassed by the situation described by the sentence.

The informational status of the dislocated noun phrase is determined by the status of the pronoun in the sentence. Consider the following contexts:

(87) Hey Bill, did I tell you that I went to see it finally, that movie? It was really good.

(88) I just can't understand why she always gets so upset, Bill's wife, whenever we play bridge or do anything interesting.

(89) What did you say you were looking for? Oh yes, I am sure that that book has one in it, a picture of a giraffe.

'It' in (87) constitutes part of the rhematic information of sentence (84b). Therefore, 'that movie' is also rhematic in this context. On the other hand, the rhematic information conveyed by sentence (85b) in context (88) is represented by the constituent 'gets so upset'. Hence, 'Bill's wife' is thematic as is the pronoun 'she'. Likewise, in context (89), 'one' represents thematic information in the underlined sentence since it appears that the speaker is aware that the person being spoken to is looking for 'a picture of a giraffe' while the location, 'that book', conveys the important information. It must be noted that the corresponding untransformed sentences (84a), (85a) and (86a) in contexts (87), (88) and (89) respectively, would comprise the same

thematization structures as the transformed versions above. Hence, neither the thematization structure, nor the topicalization structure of such sentences is modified.

Right Dislocation may occur in that-S complements as is evident in (87), (88) and (89). Also, in certain instances it may apply in relative clauses as in the following example given by Emonds.<sup>2</sup>

- (90) He doesn't realize that the girl he bought it  
for, the camera, doesn't like him.

The dislocated noun phrase, in such embedded sentences, is spoken with lower intonation than the rest of the sentence so that it is clear that it is added as an afterthought attached to the sentence directly preceding it.

### 3.3 Adverb Dislocation

Adverb Dislocation postposes only adverbs which modify the entire statement carried in the sentence. Thus, it may apply in the following pairs of sentences:

- (91) a. He evidently studied so hard that he had a  
nervous breakdown.  
b. He studied so hard that he had a nervous  
breakdown, evidently.

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<sup>2</sup>Emonds, "Root and structure preserving transformations,"  
p. 20.

- (92) a. One obviously can't be too sure.  
 b. One can't be too sure, obviously.

whereas it is impossible in

- (93) a. He slowly walked down the street so that  
 they wouldn't notice him.  
 b. \*He walked down the street so that they  
 wouldn't notice him, slowly.

The postposed adverb changes neither the thematization nor the topicalization structure of the sentence it modifies per se. It functions primarily as an afterthought appended to the sentence conveying the speaker's general attitude towards the situation described by the sentence. Hence, as was the case with Right Dislocation, when Adverb Dislocation applies in embedded sentences the dislocated adverb is spoken with lower intonation than the rest of the sentence so as to signal its relation to the clause preceding it. The following sentences, thus, given in Emonds<sup>3</sup> as unacceptable, will be claimed to be grammatical according to this stipulation.

- (94) They gave the only man that could have been  
 replaced, possibly, a tenured position.

The fact that **Mary** didn't answer any questions,  
 wisely, allowed John to avoid prosecution.

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<sup>3</sup>Emonds, "Root and structure preserving transformations,"  
 pp. 114-115.

### 3.4 Conclusions

Left Dislocation must be distinguished from Right Dislocation and Adverb Dislocation. Left Dislocation preposes and emphasizes thematic material which, thenceforth, functions as topic followed by comment - the entire sentence from which it is separated. Right Dislocation and Adverb Dislocation, on the other hand, extrapose elements. In the case of Right Dislocation, the extraposed constituent particularizes material which was initially considered to represent information known to the hearer. Likewise, the adverb moved to the end of the sentence by Adverb Dislocation acts as an afterthought portraying the speaker's attitude towards the statement conveyed in the preceding sentence. The transformations, Right Dislocation and Adverb Dislocation, do not modify the basic thematization and topicalization structure of the sentence in which they occur. When sentences transformed by these rules are embedded, the dislocated constituents are spoken with lower pitch than the rest of the sentence indicating their independent status. Left Dislocation modifies the thematization and topicalization structure of sentences considerably. In order for this transformation to take place in embedded sentences, the constraints on topic-comment order and theme/rheme distribution must be complied with.

## CHAPTER 4

## Postposing Transformations

I will now examine five transformations which incorporate the movement of constituents out of their original position, toward the end of the sentence. These transformations include Passivization, Sentence Clefting, Pseudo-Clefting, It-Insertion and There-Insertion. We will see that It-Insertion and There-Insertion introduce thematic elements into the sentence which offset the thematic constituents without diminishing their informational status. The semantic representations of the sentences in which It-Insertion and There-Insertion (in sentences containing indefinite subject noun phrases) apply are not significantly changed, although the communicative function of the transformed sentences is distinct from that of the untransformed sentences. The movement of elements by Passivization, Sentence Clefting, Pseudo-Clefting and There-Insertion (in sentences with definite subject noun phrases), on the other hand, modifies considerably the information content of the messages conveyed in the untransformed sentences, consequently motivating the assignment of distinct semantic representations to the output of these transformations.

4.1 It-Insertion

This transformation inserts the word 'it' into the subject node of certain sentences and moves the former subject to the end of the sentence into complement position. It-Insertion applies only in sentences in which the inserted 'it' enters into direct anaphoric relation with the complement of the sentence. Consider the following:

- (95) a. Your smoking } bothers me.  
           That you smoke }
- b. It bothers me { your smoking.  
                           { that you smoke.
- (96) a. Your passing } is taken for granted.  
           That you will pass }
- b. It is taken for granted { your passing.  
                                   { that you will pass.
- (97) a. Sleeping in the dark } frightens me.  
           To sleep in the dark }
- b. It frightens me { sleeping in the dark.  
                           { to sleep in the dark.

Expressions such as 'it is worth it', 'it is understood', 'it proves nothing', 'it is a waste of time', 'it irritates me', and certain others, also participate in the same anaphoric relationship.

These 'it-verb' expressions must be distinguished from such phrases as 'it seems', 'it appears', 'it is

likely', etc. First, the expressions with which we are concerned here manifest the characteristic of being able to be employed alone in a discourse. For instance, as in:

(9<sup>c</sup>) a. Lucy: Listen, there is absolutely nothing you can do to make me stop smoking, so accept it.

Mary: I know, but it bothers me.

b. Lucy: I certainly hope that I'll pass this exam. It's terribly important.

Mary: It's taken for granted. They wouldn't have let you try if they thought that you'd fail.

c. Lucy: You're going to have to learn to sleep in the dark at some time. You can't always have a light on.

Mary: I just can't. It really frightens me.

This is not the case with 'it seems' or 'it appears'.

Secondly, It-Insertion takes place only in utterances in which the subject is actually an underlying sentence such as complementizer phrases with 'that' and 'for-to' or gerunds. These sentential subjects are moved from the head of the sentence to sentence final position. I am claiming, thus, that It-Insertion is a root transformation. It-Replacement which creates the expressions 'it seems' and 'it appears' is a structure-preserving rule as argued by

Emonds.<sup>1</sup> It must be noted that in restricting the application of It-Insertion to sentences containing sentential subjects, this transformation is distinguished from Right Dislocation although in the case of gerundive subjects the surface representation is identical.

Furthermore, the 'it' created by It-Insertion is not an empty word<sup>2</sup> but, as stated earlier, functions as an anaphoric pronoun. When the antecedent of this pronoun is not clearly stated, i.e. when the complement of the 'it-verb' sentence is deleted, this pronoun will take as antecedent any phrase which may serve as complement, immediately preceding it in a discourse. As a result of this phenomenon, ambiguity may arise.

(99) Lucy: I'm so afraid of failing this examination  
when I have so much at stake. I just  
hope that I pass. I have studied very  
hard.

Mary: It's taken for granted. They wouldn't  
have let you try it otherwise.

Lucy: What's taken for granted, that I'll pass  
or that I've studied hard?

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<sup>1</sup>Joseph Emonds, "Root and structure preserving transformations" (Ph.D. dissertation, M.I.T., 1970), reproduced by the Indiana University Linguistics Club, June 1970, p. 51.

<sup>2</sup>Dwight W.L. Bolinger, "Ambient 'it' is meaningful too," Journal of Linguistics 9 (1973): 261-70.



as well as the relation between it and the verb of the main sentence. The succeeding sentences are, therefore, grammatical.

- (100) It is true that it bothers me that you smoke.  
 Mark told me that it is taken for granted that  
 you will pass.  
 Why it frightens me to sleep in the dark is  
 something I can't understand.

In proposing that the connection between sentences such as those given in (95), (96) and (97) is realized by the transformation of It-Insertion, I am disagreeing with Emonds' claim<sup>3</sup> that the sentential subjects are found originally in sentence final position and that they are preposed to replace the 'it' subject. Based upon the distribution of theme/rheme in such sentences, it would appear more natural for these sentential subjects, which are intrinsically thematic, to be generated at the head of the sentence.

The movement of the complement clauses to the end of the sentence serves a distinct communicative function in emphasizing the relation between these constituents and the verbs of the sentences. The order of informational units is modified so that thematic material follows the rheme, that is, the verb. Thus the thematization structure of the

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<sup>3</sup>Emonds, "Root and structure preserving transformation", p. 79.

sentences is marked, or non-normal. It is highly **uneconomical** that this marked order of constituents would be generated originally.

#### 4.2 There-Insertion

There-Insertion like It-Insertion introduces into sentences an element which informationally is very low in communicative input. This transformation places 'there' into subject position and extraposes the former subject noun phrase around the verb.

(101) a. A small puppy is in that room.

b. There is a small puppy in that room.

(102) a. Some children may be riding in the park.

b. There may be some children riding in the park.

There-Insertion also occurs in certain sentences containing stative verbs such as 'be', 'lie', etc.

(103) a. Many trees grow in the forest.

b. There grow many trees in the forest.

(104) a. Many extraordinary treasures lie at the bottom of the sea.

b. There lie many extraordinary treasures at the bottom of the sea.

It also applies in sentences in which the main verb is 'appear' and 'occur'.

- (105) a. A young man appeared in the hallway.  
       b. There appeared a young man in the hallway.
- (106) a. An accident occurred here last year.  
       b. There occurred an accident here last year.

In each case the subject noun phrase, which is moved by There-Insertion, becomes stressed in the sentence and represents new, rhematic information along with the material which comes at the end of the sentence. It is significant that There-Insertion applies most readily in sentences containing indefinite noun phrases. As was seen in section 2.4, indefinite noun phrases generally function rhematically in a sentence.

However, There-Insertion may also occur in sentences with definite subjects. Regard the following:

- (107) There lies at the bottom of the ocean the famous treasure of Spanish gold which has been sought by many men.
- (108) There appeared in the room the young man who was wearing the dirty grey topcoat.

In each of these sentences the extraposed noun phrases, in themselves, are familiar as conveyed by the use of the definite article. Nevertheless, that these definite noun phrases are not bound to the immediate context is indicated by their marked position after the verb. Thus, the speaker's mention of the Spanish gold in (107) rather than some other treasure is not predictable; neither is the young man's

appearance on the scene in (108). Note that if these noun phrases are returned to their normal subject position their status in the sentence changes. The predicate phrases then become the rhematic elements of the sentences.

(109) The famous treasure of Spanish gold which has been sought by many men lies at the bottom of the ocean.

(110) The young man who was wearing the dirty grey topcoat appeared in the room.

The message conveyed by sentence (109) would seem to be that the speaker is divulging special information as to the whereabouts of the treasure; information which, until that moment, only he knew. In the case of sentence (110) it is not the young man's appearance alone which is important, but his appearance in the room; the location is unpredictable.

In sentences in which be is the main verb, the morpheme 'there' may change from its primary introductory role to function deictically in sentences in which the subject noun phrase is definite. For example,

(111) a. The girl is playing in the park.

b. There is the girl playing in the park.

In such cases, 'there' is stressed and represents rhematic information. However, under certain conditions, 'there' will retain the thematic status.

(112) a. The girl is still in the waiting room.

b. There is the girl still in the waiting room.

This use of There-Insertion produces sentences which may be employed only in specific contexts. For instance,

(113) Doctor X: Well Nurse B., have we finished?

Nurse B: There is the girl still in the waiting room.

Both the definite noun phrase and the prepositional phrase will be stressed to mark the fact that up until the time of her mention, 'the girl's' presence 'in the waiting room' was unknown or forgotten.

The identity of constituents as topic or comment in all of the above sentences is not modified per se when There-Insertion applies, although the order of these constituents is disrupted. The alteration in the topicalization structure of these sentences is significant only in the event that the topic is a definite noun phrase and is moved into final position, in which case the thematization structure will also be distinctly modified as seen in sentences (107) vs. (109) and (108) vs. (110). In the latter instances only will There-Insertion motivate the assignment of different semantic representations to the transformed and untransformed sentences since they do not have the same information content, and may not be used in identical contexts.

### 4.3 Passivization

The rule of Passivization comprises two major types of movement - Noun Phrase Preposing and Agent Postposing. Consider the following examples.

(114) a. Birds build nests.

b. Nests are built by birds.

(115) a. John sold the book to my brother.

b. The book was sold to my brother by John.

Let us first consider the sentence given in (114). I will assume that the active sentence (114a) portrays normal topic/comment articulation. In other words, the topic of discussion is 'birds' and the comment 'build nests' illustrates some characteristic common to birds in general. In the following context, 'birds' conveys thematic information while 'builds nests' is the new important information.

(116) Teacher: What can you tell me about birds,  
Johnny?

Johnny: Birds build nests.

If Noun Phrase Preposing is applied to the active sentence, the result will be a sentence identical to the output of the Topicalization transformation.

(117) Nests birds build.

'Nests', in this case, will function as the topic of the sentence, while the constituent 'birds build' is comment

according to the stipulations laid out in section 2.5. This topic/comment structure remains constant in the Passivized sentence, that is after the agent has been moved to the end of the sentence. In the following context, 'nests' represents thematic information while 'built by birds' functions rhematically in the sentence.

(118) Teacher: Tell me what you know about nests,  
Johnny.

Johnny: Nests are built by birds.

It will be noted that 'by birds' is stressed in this context and represents restrictive information in the comment 'built by birds' which, in turn specifies some property of nests. Nevertheless, Johnny's answer is incorrect since nests may be built not only by birds but also by turtles, insects and even fish.

Thus, the modification of the topicalization and thematization structure in sentence (114a) engendered by the Topicalizing of 'nests' and the movement of the constituent 'by birds' into rhematized position in the comment, produces a sentence with a distinct semantic reading from that of the untransformed sentence; one which, in fact, is incorrect in certain contexts. This semantic particularity must be determined through the surface structure of the sentences.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>Noam Chomsky, "Conditions on rules of grammar," (unpublished manuscript, M.I.T., 1975), p. 16.

Similar distinctions may be made between the active and passive sentences represented in (115). In sentence (115a) topic and comment will be assumed as 'John' and 'sold the book to my brother', respectively. In the following context 'John' and 'the book' denote familiar information while what he does with the book is unknown and unpredictable from the discourse.

(119) Q: What did John finally do with that old high school book?

A: John sold the book to my brother.

By moving 'the book' to the head of the sentence through Noun Phrase Preposing, it becomes topic. The resulting sentence, once again, is identical to one in which Topicalization has taken place. Since 'the book' represents old information and what follows (i.e. what John does with the book) maintains rhematic status, this sentence

(120) The book John sold to my brother.

fulfills the necessary constraints on the use of Topicalization sentences and may be employed appropriately in context (119).

When Agent Postposing applies, on the other hand, the thematization structure of the sentence is modified. 'By John' is found at the end of the sentence and is stressed representing new information in the discourse. What precedes it functions thematically. Thus sentence (b) of (115) maybe used correctly only in contexts such as

(121) Q: How did your brother manage to procure  
that old high school book?

A: The book was sold to my brother by John.

or

(122) Q: Where did your brother buy that book?

A: The book was sold to my brother by John.

According to the thematization structure of Passivized sentences as above specified, the 'by X' constituent may not function as the antecedent of any pronoun which precedes it in the sentence. For example, in the following sentence spoken with the same intonation as (121) and (122) 'John' and 'he' are not coreferential,

(123) The woman he loved was betrayed by John.

while sentence (124) is ambiguous.

(124) John betrayed the woman he loved.

'By John' in (123) is emphasized and contributes new information in the sentence. What precedes it represents known information. Thus, 'he' in sentence (123) is related anaphorically to some noun phrase mentioned in prior discourse. 'He' and 'John' may be related only if stress falls on the verb in the sentence in which case 'by John' no longer functions rhematically. The verb, then, conveys the important information and 'by John' is subsumed into the thematic fragment of the sentence.

On the other hand, 'he' in sentence (124), unless contrastively stressed, may relate to 'John' since anaphoric

pronouns, as shown in section 2.4 are intrinsically thematic and therefore bound to previous discourse. In this case 'John' would be a natural choice as antecedent, for the sentence is out of context. However, in the following 'he' may also be coreferential with 'Mark'.

(125) Q: Why is Mark angry at John?

A: John betrayed the woman he loved.

Therefore, it is seen that Passivization modifies both the topicalization structure (through Noun Phrase Preposing) and the thematization structure (through Agent Postposing) of the sentences in which it applies. As a consequence of this fact, the semantic representations assigned to Passivized sentences are distinct from those assigned to the untransformed sentences. Furthermore, certain restrictions on coreferentiality are revealed in correlation with the constraints on theme/rheme distribution in Passivized sentences.

#### 4.4 Sentence Clefting

The transformation of Sentence Clefting introduces the expression 'it-be' at the beginning of the sentence and moves a noun phrase into the complement position following be. The rest of the material in the sentence is then relativized with respect to the noun phrase. Hence, given the original sentence

(126) John gave a flower to Mary.

the following sentences result when Sentence Clefting is applied:

- (127) a. It was John who gave a flower to Mary.  
 b. It was a flower that John gave to Mary.  
 c. It was Mary who was given a flower by John.

The noun phrase which is found after the 'it-be' phrase in Clefted sentences is stressed and must represent new information. Regard the following contexts.

- (128) Q: Who gave a flower to Mary?  
 A: It was John who gave a flower to Mary.
- (129) Q: What was it that John gave to Mary?  
 A: It was a flower that John gave to Mary.
- (130) Q: Who was given a flower by John?  
 A: It was Mary who was given a flower by John.

Elements in sentence final position of a Clefted sentence may represent rhematic information only on the condition that they are also stressed in surface structure.

- (131) Q: Who gave a flower to whom?  
 A: It was John who gave a flower to Mary.

Otherwise, what follows the noun phrase, introduced by 'it-be', functions thematically as is evidenced by the fact that in most contexts it may be deleted.

- (132) Q: Who gave a flower to Mary?  
 A: It was John.

(133) Q: What was it that John gave to Mary?

A: It was a flower.

(134) Q: Who was given a flower by John?

A: It was Mary.

The 'it-be' phrase in Clefted sentences serves to initiate communication and contributes little information to the discourse as such. The purpose of this phrase is to counterbalance the rhematic material which, in a Clefted sentence, appears in non-normal position towards the front of the sentence rather than sentence finally.

The transformation of Sentence Clefting alters the basic thematization structure of sentences by placing rhematic material at the front of the sentence in a distinctive lexical frame and situating thematic material in final position. The topicalization structure of the sentence is such that the stressed noun phrase serves as topic, which is qualified by what succeeds it in the sentence functioning as comment.

Sentence (126) spoken with normal intonation (that is, without contrastive or emphatic stress) can serve as an answer only to such general questions as 'What did John do?' or 'What happened?'. 'John' will function as topic conveying thematic information in the discourse, while the rhematic material will be carried in the comment. By applying Sentence Clefting to such a sentence, the information content of the message carried therein is modified considerably.

The readings which may be assigned to each of the Clefted sentences in contexts (128), (129) and (130) have been identified as that of 'exhaustive listing' by Kuno.<sup>5</sup> More precisely, the stressed topic in each case represents the 'one and only' object or person which may be characterized by the comment of that sentence. Hence, in context (130) 'John' and no other person gave a flower to Mary. In context (129) it was 'a flower' and nothing else which John gave to Mary. Likewise, in context (130) 'Mary' and only Mary received a flower from John. No such 'exhaustive listing' reading may be assigned to the neutral sentence (126). We see, therefore, that the rule of Sentence Clefting clearly modifies the semantic representation of sentences in which it applies.

Chomsky and Jackendoff propose that the informational status of elements should be ascertained through a description of the use of stress in a sentence.<sup>6</sup> It is contended that material which contributes new information, called focus, is stressed while the rest of the material in the sentence, referred to as presupposition, represents information

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<sup>5</sup>Susumo Kuno, "Functional sentence perspective: a case study from Japanese and English" Linguistic Inquiry 3 (1972), p. 297.

<sup>6</sup>Chomsky, "Deep structure, surface structure and semantic interpretation," in D. Steinberg and L. Jakobovits (eds.) Semantics: an interdisciplinary reader in philosophy, linguistics and psychology. (Cambridge: Cambridge U. Press, 1971), pp. 183-216; Ray Jackendoff, Semantic Interpretation in Generative Grammar (Cambridge: Cambridge U. Press, 1972) Chap. 6, Focus and Presupposition, pp. 229-279.

familiar to both the speaker and hearer. Thus, in the case of Sentence Clefting, the notions of focus and presupposition are equivalent to the distribution of theme and rheme as discussed above. However, certain nuances in the semantic representations assigned to such sentences as those found in (128), (129) and (130) are not accounted for; I am referring specifically to the 'exhaustive listing' reading in Clefted sentences. This reading may be assigned only subsequent to an analysis of both the thematization and topicalization structures of sentences and the relation between them.

#### 4.5 Pseudo-Clefting

The transformation of Pseudo-Clefting moves constituents to the end of the sentence prefacing them by identification constructions such as 'the one who did x was ...' or ' what y did was ...', etc. Thus, given the sentence

(135) John sold a car to Mike.

Pseudo-Clefting will produce the following:

- (136) a. The one who sold a car to Mike was John.  
 b. What John sold to Mike was a car.  
 c. The one who was sold a car by John was Mike.  
 d. What John did was sell a car to Mike.

The underlined constituents which have been moved into final position of the sentence represent rhematic information. The material which precedes these constituents

is familiar to both the speaker and the hearer of the sentence. Thus, theme/rheme distribution is normal.

Consider the following contexts:

- (137) Q: Who was the one who sold a car to Mike?  
 A: The one who sold a car to Mike was John.
- (138) Q: What was it that John sold to Mike?  
 A: What John sold to Mike was a car.
- (139) Q: Who was the one that was sold a car by John?  
 A: The one who was sold a car by John was Mike.
- (140) Q: What was it that John did?  
 A: What John did was sell a car to Mike.

In each case the WH-element represents the topic of the sentence and is found in non-normal position at the end of the utterance. The identification construction preceding the topic functions as comment. Therefore, while the thematization structure of Pseudo-Cleft sentences is normal, the order of topic and comment in the sentences is disrupted. However, it must be noted that, as was the case in Clefted sentences, the topic is stressed and represents rhematic information. Likewise, the comment is thematic. The relation between the stressed topic and the thematic comment is identical in Clefted sentences and in Pseudo-Cleft sentences. I will claim, therefore, that the 'exhaustive listing' reading must be assigned to the Pseudo-Cleft

sentences above in (137), (138) and (139) just as it was assigned to the Clefted sentences in contexts (128), (129) and (130) as demonstrated in section 4.4. The transformation of Pseudo-Clefting, hence, modifies the semantic representation of the sentences in which it applies, in the same manner as does the rule of Sentence Clefting.

R. Hetzron claims that there exists a phenomenon in language whereby elements which denote new and important material in a sentence are moved to a position toward the end of the utterance, where they will be more available to subsequent discourse.<sup>7</sup> This phenomenon he terms the Presentative function of language. Cataphoric or Pseudo-Cleft constructions, he states, manifest the realization of the Presentative function in English and therefore must be distinguished from Cleft constructions which do not. Hence, he disagrees with the proposal presented by Akmajian that Clefted sentences are syntactically related to Pseudo-Cleft sentences.<sup>8</sup>

As has been shown above, the thematization and topicalization structures of Clefted sentences and Pseudo-Cleft sentences, per se, are distinct since in the former, theme/rheme distribution is normal and topic/comment order is disrupted while in the latter the case is reversed -

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<sup>7</sup>Robert Hetzron, "The presentative movement: or why the ideal word order is V.S.O.P.," in Ch. Li (ed.) Word Order and Word Order Change (Austin: U. of Texas Press, 1974), pp. 346-387.

<sup>8</sup>Adrian Akmajian, "On deriving cleft sentences from pseudo-cleft sentences," Linguistic Inquiry 2 (1970): 149-168.

theme/rheme distribution is disrupted but topic/comment order is normal. Nevertheless, it was determined that the relations between stressed topic and thematic comment in both constructions are identical leading to specific modifications in the readings assigned to the sentences in which the rules apply. Thus, we may conclude that despite Hetzron's suggestion that the Presentative function predicts that Sentence Clefting is not related to Pseudo-Clefting, the notions of theme and rheme, topic and comment appear to indicate that there are significant similarities between the two which must be accounted for in order to correctly anticipate the changes which occur in the semantic readings of the sentences in which they apply.

#### 4.6 Conclusions

The five transformations studied in this chapter comprise the movement of constituents into syntactically distinct constructions and toward the end of the sentence with the purpose of signalling important information which is conveyed by those elements with respect to the rest of the sentence. It-Insertion and There-Insertion generate thematic constituents as introductory elements at the head of the sentence and move the formerly initial elements toward the end of the sentence. In the case of There-Insertion, the postposed elements convey rhematic information while in It-Insertion, the material which is extraposed

contributes new information only by virtue of its specific relation to the predicate of the sentence.

Passivization incorporates two types of movement - Noun Phrase Preposing which moves a noun phrase into sentence initial position to function as topic, and Agent Postposing whereby the former subject of the sentence is moved to final position to become part of the comment and is rhematized. Sentence Clefting and Pseudo-Clefting move constituents into distinct lexical frames in the sentence. These constituents then function as the topic and represent rhematic information while the rest of the material in the sentence functions as comment and contributes thematic information.

It was seen that changes in the topicalization and thematization structure of sentences, which were engendered by certain transformations, motivate the assignment of distinct semantic representations to the transformed and untransformed sentences. Among these transformations are Passivization, Sentence Clefting, Pseudo-Clefting and There-Insertion when applied in sentences with definite subject noun phrases. There-Insertion, taking place in sentences with indefinite noun phrases serving as subject, does not significantly modify the information content of such sentences. Rather, the original informational structure of the sentences is made more explicit. Likewise, the transformation of It-Insertion does not, as such, alter

the status of elements in the sentences through their movement. The communicative function of this transformation is to illuminate the relation between the constituents in the sentences in which it applies. Thus, it is possible to claim that It-Insertion and There-Insertion (in the case of sentences containing indefinite subject noun phrases) do not affect the sentences in which they apply in the same manner as Passivization, Sentence Clefting, Pseudo-Clefting and There-Insertion (in sentences with definite subject noun phrases).

## CHAPTER 5

## Conclusions

In the foregoing dissertation the processes of thematization and topicalization were examined as separate semantic phenomena functioning in English. It was postulated that sentences may be organized from the point of view of the hearer; that is, in terms of what is familiar or known to him (theme) versus what is new or unknown in the sentence (rheme). A sentence may also be organized from the point of view of the speaker; more precisely, in terms of what the speaker is discussing (topic) and what he is saying about it (comment). An analysis was undertaken of the manifestation of theme/rheme distribution and topic/comment articulation in fifteen movement rules in a grammar of English. These movement rules were divided into three groups and conclusions were drawn with respect to each one.

In the case of preposing transformations, it was seen that the movement of constituents produced significant alterations in the informational content of the messages carried within the sentences. Comparative Substitution, Participle Preposing, Prepositional Phrase Substitution and Directional Adverb Preposing move originally rhematic

material into sentence initial position therefore thematizing it and making the formerly thematic material, which subsequently is found at the end of the sentence, rhematic. Thus, what is presupposed to be known in the untransformed sentence is given as new information in the transformed sentence and vice versa. The rules of Topicalization and VP Preposing, on the other hand, move constituents to the front of the sentence which then function as topic of the sentence and contribute familiar information. What succeeds the topic represents new information and functions as comment. The rule of Negated Constituent Preposing is singular in its application in that it moves rhematic material to the head of the sentence in the form of a stressed negated constituent while what follows is thematic. The differences in the orientation of the information contained in the message of the sentence as brought about by each of the above transformations is seen to entail significant variations in the semantic representations and use of the untransformed sentences in question.

In the case of dislocation transformations, it was seen that Left Dislocation functions separately from Right Dislocation and Adverb Dislocation. The latter two do not alter the basic distribution of thematic and rhematic information in the sentence nor do they disrupt the order of topic and comment. Thus, these two rules do not engender

any important changes in the semantic representations assigned to the transformed and untransformed sentences. In contrast to this, Left Dislocation modifies both the thematization and topicalization structures of the sentences in which it applies in a manner similar to the rule of Topicalization. The noun phrase moved to the head of the sentence and dislocated, functions as topic and is contextually bound, while what follows then serves as comment representing new information in the discourse. In consequence of this, the informational content of the transformed sentences varies from that of the untransformed sentences leading to the assignment of distinct readings to both.

Among the transformations which move elements toward the end of the sentence or into syntactically distinct positions are Passivization, Sentence Clefting, Pseudo-Clefting, It-Insertion and There-Insertion. It-Insertion and There-Insertion introduce elements of low informational status into initial position in the sentence, moving the constituents which previously functioned as subject towards the end of the sentence. There-Insertion may apply in sentences containing either definite or indefinite subject noun phrases. When moved out of their normal position in the sentence, definite subject noun phrases convey rhematic information. Indefinite noun phrases generally function rhematically in a sentence; when moved by There-Insertion

the informational status of these elements is not changed but merely emphasized. It-Insertion takes place only in sentences containing subject clauses such as complementizer phrases or gerunds. The 'it' which is inserted into the sentence enters into anaphoric relation with the subject clause of the sentence. By moving the subject clause to the end of the sentence, the informational status of this constituent as theme is not changed; however, the relation between it and the rhematic predicate of the sentences is accentuated.

Passivization brings about significant alterations in the semantic representation assigned to the sentences. The topic/comment articulation of active versus passive sentences is clearly contrasted in sentences with generic nominals. Furthermore, the thematization structure of Passivized sentences is such that coreferentiality is restricted and may not exist between the stressed rhematic 'by x' constituent and anaphoric pronouns which precede it in the surface structure of the sentence. Such a constraint may not be formulated in the case of active sentences.

Sentences transformed by Sentence Clefting and Pseudo-Clefting, likewise, convey distinct information in a discourse which will not be carried by the untransformed sentences. It was seen that the sentences in which these two rules apply bear an 'exhaustive listing' reading

motivated by the relation between rhematic topic and the thematic comment which is identical in both Cleft and Pseudo-Cleft sentences. The syntactic differences between these two constructions are of secondary importance.

Throughout this paper the constraints on the embedding of root transformations as proposed by J. Emonds and J. Hooper and S. Thompson<sup>1</sup> were assessed and in many cases it was found that a presentation of the sentences in discourse would alleviate problems of unnaturalness. Likewise, the notions of focus and presupposition (Chomsky; Jackendoff), Presentative function (Hetzron), objective content and syntactic prominence (Langacker) as well as Lakoff's proposal that topic should be represented as a predicate relation, were examined and found to account only for particular instances of the topicalization and thematization phenomenon as realized in English.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Joseph Emonds, "Root and structure preserving transformations," (Ph.D. dissertation, M.I.T., 1970), reproduced by the Indiana University Linguistics Club, June 1970; Joan Hooper and Sandra Thompson, "On the applicability of root transformations," Linguistic Inquiry 4 (1973): 465-497.

<sup>2</sup>Noam Chomsky, "Deep structure, surface structure and semantic interpretation," in D. Steinberg and L. Jakobovits (eds.) Semantics: an interdisciplinary reader in philosophy, linguistics and psychology (Cambridge: Cambridge U. Press, 1971), pp. 183-216; Ray Jackendoff, Semantic Interpretation in Generative Grammar (Cambridge: M.I.T. Press, 1972) Chap. 6, Focus and Presupposition, pp. 229-279; Robert Hetzron, "The presentative movement: or why the ideal word order is V.S.O.P.," in Ch. Li (ed.) Word Order and Word Order Change (Austin: U. of Texas Press, 1974), pp. 346-387; Ronald Langacker, "Movement rules in functional perspective," Language 50 (1974): 630-665; George Lakoff, "On generative semantics" in D. Steinberg and L. Jakobovits (eds.) Semantics, pp. 232-297.

Chomsky has suggested that, within the framework of Extended Standard Theory, properties of surface structure may be considered to play an important role in determining the semantic interpretation of sentences in a grammar.<sup>3</sup> In this dissertation I have presented an account of the phenomenon of word order change in sentences in English with respect to the distribution of familiar and new information in an utterance as well as the division of sentences into topic and comment. Following from the discussions in Chapters 2, 3, and 4 above, it would appear that an analysis of the functioning of thematization and topicalization reveals that certain movement transformations engender alterations in the semantic representations assigned to sentences in which they take place.

Of the fifteen movement transformations studied, each of the seven preposing rules, Left Dislocation, as well as Passivization, Sentence Clefting, Pseudo-Clefting and There-Insertion (as applied in sentences containing definite subject noun phrases) are seen to modify the thematization and topicalization structure of the sentences in which they apply, so as to motivate the assignment of distinct semantic representations to the transformed and untransformed sentences. The remaining four transformations, Dislocation, Adverb Dislocation, It-Insertion and There-

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<sup>3</sup>Chomsky, "Deep structure, surface structure and semantic interpretation," p. 213.

Insertion (in sentences with indefinite noun phrases as subject), although serving specific communicative functions in English, do not alter the informational structure, *per se*, of the sentences in which they apply; the information content of the message conveyed by the transformed and untransformed sentences remains constant. Thus it may be stated that these four transformations do not motivate changes in the semantic representations assigned to the sentences in which they take place.

To conclude, I posit that the phenomenon of word order change, as examined in this thesis, has definite bearing on the meaning of a sentence if we extend the notion of 'meaning' to include an account of the topicalization and thematization structure of sentences in English.

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