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Given and new information in adverbials: Clause-initial adverbials of time and place

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Abstract

The information status of text-strategically important, clause-initial adverbials of time and place will be investigated using Prince's (1981) taxonomy of given-new information. Typically, such items seem to convey information that may be characterized as *inferable*. Such an intermediate category reflects the multifunctional role that these elements have as crucial signals of text-strategic continuities and as indicators of textual shifts, and as a point of departure for the textual unit they introduce.

From the point of view of iconicity, it seems possible that the hierarchy of text structure may to some extent be reflected in the size of material and in its information status. Hence, more and informationally newer material may be used to indicate the starting point of a major textual unit, while the more local shifts seem to be associated with elements of lesser size that are also more given. Adverbials representing similar entities - for instance, *inferables* - may have a different source of familiarity according to whether

For instance, inerrables - may have a different source of familiarity according to whether they mark a major or a minor shift in the text.



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