INFORMATION STRUCTURE OF PETER'S SPEECH IN ACTS 2

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Abstract: This study analyzes the information structure of Peter's speech in Acts 2 using the framework developed for biblical Greek by Stanley E. Porter and Matthew Brook O'Donnell. Refining their approach, the study examines prime/subsequent, theme/rheme, and topic/comment structures to identify grammatically marked and semantically prominent features across phrase, clause, paragraph, and discourse levels of the speech. The analysis identifies five major topics, with the second and third topical units structurally highlighted. The study ultimately discerns the primary topic and concludes with the central message of the speech: "God raised Jesus." (Article)

Keywords: Acts, Speech, Information Structure, Systemic Functional Linguistics, Theme, Topic, Markedness

1. *Introduction*

This study undertakes a linguistic analysis of Peter's speech in Acts 2, focusing on the Greek text's information structure.[1] Its goal is to determine the speech's core message through structural-syntagmatic and functional-paradigmatic analysis.

Scholars have traditionally applied top-down approaches, each reflecting theological emphases. First, a grammatical top-down approach selectively analyzes clauses, words, or morphemes to support an interpretation of the text. Second, some compare pas-

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1.   This analysis of Acts uses the Nestle–Aland 28th edition, whereas Swete's edition is used for discussion of the Septuagint. The study assumes that Old Testament passages quoted in the speech derive from a Septuagint text closely aligned with modern editions. English translations are rendered by the researcher. For convenience, the author of Acts is referred to as Luke.

sages to internal and external texts—particularly canonical, extra-canonical, Hellenistic, Roman, and Jewish writings, even from different contexts. Third, the historical-critical approach seeks to reconstruct the historical context to interpret the text, despite limited direct evidence. Fourth, the literary-critical approach infers meaning through literary devices or macro-structure of the text. Fifth, the ideological-critical approach, though the validity of this label remains debated, interprets meaning through cultural, political, and philosophical lenses. These methods, applied alone or together despite theoretical tensions, have produced numerous interpretations of Peter's speech, often under the influence of theological inclinations. Each approach has strengths suited to specific research inquiries.

I argue that information structure analysis, a bottom-up approach rooted in structural and functional linguistics, helps interpreters minimize theological bias and objectively identify the author's emphasis realized in deliberate language structuring. This claim rests on three premises. First, a text with multiple topics may highlight a single dominant message. Second, if such a message exists, it is signaled by syntagmatic structuring and paradigmatic grammatical choices. Third, while competing linguistic explanations exist, an integrated structural-functional linguistic model offers the most robust analytic tool. Grounded in this conviction, this study applies an information structure analysis, rigorously developed and widely used in biblical Greek studies over the past decade, to identify the core message within Peter's speech in Acts 2.

2. *Debates about the Speeches in Acts*

2.1 *Scholarly Debates*

The relationship among Acts, the Gospel of Luke, and the Pauline Epistles has long captivated biblical scholars, serving as a battleground for diverse interpretations. This discourse likely began soon after the first and second Christian generations passed, but it gained momentum between the eighteenth and nineteenth centu-

ries.[2] These discussions expanded beyond speech content and speakers to critical debates on their historical reliability, theological perspectives, and purpose, all intersecting with broader historicity disputes. F. C. Baur, viewing Acts as a second-century work with limited historical grounding, saw it as reflecting of theological tensions between Pauline and Petrine perspectives.[3] Matthias Schneckenburger, emphasizing similarities between Paul and Peter, attributed the speeches to Luke's editorial efforts.[4] F. F. Bruce, taking a historiographical approach, likened Luke's work to Thucydides and argued that he preserved speech content while modifying style and order.[5] Notably, Bruce, drawing on Charles C. Torrey and J. de Zwaan, identified Aramaisms in Peter's speeches as evidence of source dependence rather than Luke's invention.[6] Building on James R. Harris's insights, Bruce noted that Old Testament quotations and fulfilment formulas in the speeches differed from their use in Luke's narrative sections. He concluded that the speeches represented "either what they actually said or what they ought to have said."[7] Scholars like Colin J. Hemer and W. Ward Gasque also affirmed the speeches' substantial historical reliability.[8] C. H. Dodd acknowledged Luke's editorial role but argued speech reconstructions were based on pre-existing material from the Aramaic-speaking community, highlighting Aramaisms as evidence of historical foundations of the reconstructed speeches.[9] Conversely, Martin Dibelius argued that ancient historians shaped speeches to clarify historical events rather than preserve verbatim records, reflecting the speaker's per-

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2. Even in the third century, Pamphilus of Caesarea perceived Paul's speeches in Acts as dealing with a "thriving teaching about Christ" (Padilla, *Speeches of Outsiders*, 16).

3. Baur, "Die Christuspartei"; *Paulus*, 16–41.

4. Kucicki, *Function of the Speeches*, 3 (citing Schneckenburger, *Ueber den Zweck der Apostelgeschichte*, 52, 156).

5. Bruce, *Speeches*, 6–8. Later, Porter identified seven issues that make it difficult to definitively establish a so-called Thucydidean view (see "Thucydides").

6. Bruce, *Speeches*, 8–9. Cf. Torrey, *Composition and Date*; de Zwaan, "Use of the Greek Language."

7. Bruce, "Speeches in Acts," esp. 59 (citing Harris, *Testimonies*, 80).

8. Hemer, *Book of Acts*, 415–27; Gasque, *History*, 228–32.

9. Dodd, *History*, 73. See also Dodd, *Apostolic Preaching*, 19–27.

spective and character.[10] He viewed speeches as apologetic,[11] particularly missionary speeches, encapsulating the early church's kerygma.[12] He argued that Luke, as a literary historian, framed speeches within a stylistic structure.[13] Henry J. Cadbury considered them Luke's invention or editorial reconstruction.[14] Scholars like Ernst Haenchen, Hans Conzelmann, and Eduard Schweizer likewise viewed them as integral to Luke's compositional framework.[15] Ulrich Wilckens, in his study of missionary speeches, noted that Acts's first five speeches largely omit references to Jesus' death and salvation.[16] Ernst Käsemann argued that primitive Catholicism replaced *theologia crucis* with *theologia gloriae*,[17] while Leon Morris countered that the cross remained central to the speeches. [18] More recently, Marion L. Soards examined the speeches through a narrative lens.[19] Osvaldo Padilla, following the hermeneutical tradition from Dibelius to Soards, analyzed speeches by outsiders, arguing that they reflect Luke's theological perspective while shaping the persecuted Christian community's identity.[20] Janusz Kucicki applied rhetorical criticism to direct speeches and narrative criticism to topical speeches.[21] He asserted that Luke used speeches to interpret events theologically and soci-

10. Dibelius, "Speeches in Acts," esp. 18, 164. For a comparison of Bruce's and Dibelius's views on Hellenistic historians and speeches in Acts, see Porter, "Thucydides," 123–24.

11. Dibelius, "Speeches in Acts," 180.

12. Dibelius, "Speeches in Acts," 165; Padilla, *Speeches of Outsiders*, 28 n. 52.

13. Dibelius, "First Christian Historian." For a comparison of Foakes-Jackson's view that the speeches in Acts contain the disciples' exact words and Dibelius's view that they are largely Luke's creation, refer to Bruce, "Speeches in Acts," 5–6; Foakes-Jackson, *Acts*, xvi.

14. Cadbury, "Speeches in Acts," esp. 417–20.

15. Haenchen, *Acts*, 90–112; Conzelmann, "Address of Paul"; Schweizer, "Concerning the Speeches in Acts."

16. Bruce, "Speeches in Acts," 59 (citing Wilckens, *Die Missionsreden der Apostelgeschichte*, 184, 216).

17. Bruce, "Speeches in Acts," 59 (citing Käsemann, "Neutestamentliche Fragen," 20–21).

18. Morris, *Cross*, 108.

19. Soards, *Speeches in Acts*.

20. Padilla, *Speeches of Outsiders*, 235–36.

21. Kucicki, *Function of the Speeches*, 9.

ologically,[22] classifying Peter's speech in Acts 2 as a kerygmatic proclamation of Jesus as Messiah.[23] He further argued that v. 36 functions as an "early Christian creed containing Christology . . . and pneumatology."[24]

2.2 *What Do You Want to Know?*

Interpreters approach Acts through various methodological frameworks, depending on what they wish to know about Acts. As noted earlier, twentieth-century scholarship has primarily focused on the historical reliability of the speeches, seeking to clarify the author's identity and historiographical methods. These inquiries often extend to the genre and purpose of the speeches. Scholars emphasizing Luke's creative role frequently link the speeches to his theological concerns and the challenges faced by his community. However, extracting theological propositions from the text poses difficulties, yielding diverse and sometimes contradictory interpretations.[25] Another difficulty arises from scholars' tendency to use theological frameworks or textual patterns to attribute to Luke an intention beyond what he likely recognized.[26] This issue persists even when interpreters cannot fully grasp the author's inter-

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22. Kucicki, *Function of the Speeches*, 346.

23. Kucicki, *Function of the Speeches*, 306.

24. Kucicki, *Function of the Speeches*, 63.

25. A notable example is Joel B. Green reaching conclusions opposed to all of Conzelmann's propositions using the same text. This demonstrates how the richness of Acts can generate diverse interpretations. See Green, *How to Read the Gospels and Acts*; *Conversion in Luke–Acts*.

26. I define intention as the overarching expectations an individual seeks to fulfill through their behaviors. Building upon the Hallidayan conception of language as a form of human behavior, I argue that intention operates on multiple levels to realize the goals pursued through language use: *micro-intention* (or *intent*) governs discrete linguistic choices; *macro-intention* orchestrates the holistic deployment of linguistic elements across a text; and *primal intention* reflects the intrinsic impulse to express, even in the absence of explicit social outcomes. Within macro-intention, one may further distinguish between *textual intention*—the anticipated outcome within the linguistic system—and *social intention*—the intended real-world effect, either internal to or transcending the narrative. Discerning these layered dimensions of intention is not a superfluous endeavour but constitutes a critical and intricate task essential to biblical interpreters, one that demands rigorous linguistic analysis.

nal struggles—whether due to multiple, overlapping, or uncon-
scious intentions.[27] Long-standing assumptions often go unques-
tioned, leading interpreters to believe their reading is exhaustive
while dismissing grammatical observations as outdated. This pa-
per challenges that assumption, arguing that re-examining textual
elements, such as syntax, hierarchical sentence structures, paral-
lelism, repetition, and other linguistic features, can yield over-
looked yet significant insights into the author's grammatical inten-
tions.[28] However, the present study does not seek to extract the au-
thor's macro-theology or distill their intent to theological proposi-
tions. Instead, it asks: "Where does the author place the greatest
linguistic emphasis within the text?" In this regard, the analysis
strictly follows the text's boundaries, stopping where the text itself
ceases to provide further testimony. Accordingly, this study ap-
plies linguistic analysis to determine textual emphasis, referring to
this emphasis as *prominence* and identifying the primary message
as *topic*.

3. *Information Structure*

3.1 *Markedness and Prominence*

This study advocates a bottom-up approach to uncover textual em-
phasis in Peter's speech in Acts 2 by analyzing information struc-
ture across rank scales and examining paradigmatic grammatical
choices. To conduct this analysis, it is necessary to delve into the
concept of markedness. In biblical Greek, markedness pertains to
both the selection of lexicogrammatical elements and the arrange-
ment of syntactic structures. The degree of markedness depends
on how much a choice deviates from the standard or unmarked

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27. Many scholars use historical-critical research as an indirect method to
infer intentions by reconstructing the historical context. However, the available
data often fail to yield conclusive results, falling short of the confidence scholars
place in them and making the outcomes less fruitful than expected.

28. While this minimalist premise differs from Baur's historical skepti-
cism and the textual Romanticism, it does not entirely exclude the outcomes
sought by either approach.

form.[29] Among its various types, this study focuses on positional and distributional markedness. The former concerns syntagmatic arrangement, where structural elements attract attention by deviating from conventional Greek word order, while the latter arises from paradigmatic selection, particularly when lexicogrammatical elements stand out through frequent occurrence.[30] Together, these marked elements create semantic features known as prominence—expressions emphasized by the language user.[31]

3.2 *Components of Information Structure*

Analyzing information structure[32] is essential for identifying a text's central focus and core expressions.[33] Speeches, like most lit-

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29. This discussion does not extensively address the Greek verbal system or aspect theory. However, verbal aspect, along with mood and voice, affects markedness and grounding, contributing to prominence. Among various approaches, Porter's verbal aspect theory appears the most linguistically robust. For a detailed analysis of verbal aspect and prominence, see Porter, "In Defence of Verbal Aspect"; *Linguistic Analysis*, 159–74; Campbell et al., *Perfect Storm*.

30. While some scholars argue that distributional markedness is influenced by occurrence frequency and positional markedness by word order, I contend that both are determined by deviations from and adherence to statistically based norms. Additionally, other forms of markedness, such as material, implicational, and semantic markedness, may also be examined. See Porter, "Prominence," esp. 56; Porter and O'Donnell, *Discourse Analysis*, 149–51.

31. Cf. Porter, *Verbal Aspect*, 178–81, 245–51; Porter and O'Donnell, *Discourse Analysis*, 149–51. Prominence, as a semantic component, differs from grounding which concerns "textual significance." In narrative texts like Acts 2, the perfective aspect forms the background, the imperfective aspect represents the foreground, and the stative aspect constitutes the front ground (Porter and O'Donnell, *Discourse Analysis*, 140–43, 152–62 [esp. 140]; Porter, *Verbal Aspect*, 92).

32. Monograph-level studies applying information structure to biblical Greek have emerged primarily in the twenty-first century, using varied terminologies and analytical scopes. The present study mainly adopts the framework of Porter and O'Donnell. For further exploration of related studies, refer to Levinsohn, *Discourse Features*; Runge, *Discourse Grammar*; Kirk, "Word Order"; Buth, "Functional Grammar."

33. Structural analysis derives its strength from the identification of observable and quantifiable formal features of language, enabling systematic and objective description. Among its applications, information structure analysis based on markedness theory not only describes the sequence and flow of a text but also identifies which syntactic elements are marked and which semantic ele-

erary texts, follow a linear information structure realized by component pairs. A fundamental conceptual pair is "topic" and "comment." According to Vilém Mathesius, the topic is what the speaker or author talks about, while the comment provides additional information about it.[34] Another key pair, "theme" and "rheme," was introduced by Hermann Ammann and later refined by M. A. K. Halliday.[35] According to Halliday, the theme is "what is being talked about, the point of departure for the clause as a message," while the rheme encompasses the remainder of the clause, conveying substantive information.[36]

Stanley E. Porter and Matthew Brook O'Donnell expanded these frameworks for analyzing ancient Greek information structure.[37] They integrate the Prague Linguistic Circle's functional linguistic approaches with the framework of Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), proposing a threefold analysis of information structure.[38] At the clause level, "prime" and "subse-

ments are rendered prominent. This characteristic allows for the discernment of the core message through information structure analysis. In particular, for Halliday, a message is understood as a "quantum of information" (*Halliday's Introduction*, 21), and he assumes that "the clause has the character of a message. . . . One part of the clause is enunciated as the theme; this then combines with the remainder so that the two parts together constitute a message" (4, 88). According to this view, the combination of the major theme and rheme can function as a highly significant message.

34. Mathesius, "O pasivu." See also Hockett, *Course*, 201.

35. Ammann, *Die menschilche Rede*, 2.

36. Halliday, "Notes," esp. 212; "Language Structure," 160–62; *Halliday's Introduction*, 88–114. For given and new, see *Halliday's Introduction*, 114–21 (esp. 120); Halliday, "Notes," 206–11. See also Vallduví, *Informational Component*, 36–37.

37. Porter and O'Donnell, *Discourse Analysis*, 96–127.

38. The information structure framework proposed by Porter and O'Donnell differs in many ways from those of other biblical scholars. Its key strengths lie in its bottom-up methodology, starting at the clause level and below, its comprehensive integration of paradigmatic elements, and its strong foundation in formal-functional linguistics. Here, "formal" does not refer to extreme linguistic formalism but to an approach influenced by the Russian Formalists and the Prague Linguistic Circle. Porter and O'Donnell recognize the significance of these traditions before formalism merged with structuralism in North America, distinguishing it from Prague School functionalism and its later influence on the London Linguistic School and SFL.

quent" shape textual organization.[39] The prime is the first element of a clause, excluding conjunctions, while the subsequent consists of all following elements. If an embedded clause precedes the main clause, the entire embedded clause is considered the prime. At the clause level and above, information is structured through "theme" and "rheme."[40] The theme refers to the actor in the main clause, and when multiple clauses share the same theme, they form a "process chain," with the rheme comprising all remaining information. Together, these elements form a thematic unit at the clause complex level. In Greek, where word order is relatively free, the theme and prime may or may not align. When they do, the element is considered marked. At the paragraph level, "topic" and "comment" construct information structure.[41] Topic functions as a semantic environment, shifting when a significant semantic change occurs between paragraphs. If unchanged, all related paragraph information is classified as comment. Unlike theme or prime, determined by specific syntactic-lexicogrammatical conditions, topic is identified through recurring elements such as primes, themes, discourse markers, lexical shifts, and grammatical variations, among other related features.[42]

3.3 *Components of Message Structure*

Examining message structure is crucial for understanding information structure, as it functions alongside it as a distinct structural dimension. Message structure concerns the relational hierarchy of clauses, specifically whether they are linked through hypotactic or paratactic relationships. Its analysis should precede that of information structure, starting at the individual clause level. Clauses traditionally classified as primary or independent are designated as mainline, while secondary or subordinating clauses, along with embedded clauses, function as supporting material, both forming

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39. Porter and O'Donnell, *Discourse Analysis*, 105–7.
40. Porter and O'Donnell, *Discourse Analysis*, 107–15.
41. Porter and O'Donnell, *Discourse Analysis*, 115–23.
42. For discourse markers, see Porter and O'Donnell, *Discourse Analysis*, 123–26.

message structure.[43] Additionally, a clause in a paratactic relation-ship with the mainline may also be classified as mainline. Since message structure governs clause relationships, it directly affects information structure at the clause complex level. In this regard, theme and rheme at this level must be analyzed in relation to mes-sage structure: a thematic unit contains only one theme—the mainline clause's actor—while the rheme comprises the remain-ing parts of the mainline and supporting materials within the clause complex.

4. *Analysis of the Speeches in Acts 2*

4.1 *Analytic Framework*

This study's analytic framework has several distinctive features. First, it examines how the text's rank scale influences information structure. Since information structure extends beyond textual ele-ments to include ideational and interpersonal dimensions, their in-teraction at different text levels is crucial.[44] At lower levels, such as words and clauses, textual components are frequently refer-enced, whereas higher levels require accounting for ideational and interpersonal components. For example, shifts in conversational roles between speaker and audience influence information flow at the clause complex level or higher. Similarly, changes in subject matter within a clause complex or above can trigger topic transi-tions, making them critical points of analysis. Second, deviations from conventional grammatical or syntactic patterns at lower tex-tual levels are considered marked and contribute to prominence

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43.   The term "information structure" is often conflated with "information flow," which concerns the linear arrangement of information. In contrast, "mes-sage structure" refers to the vertical organization of clauses (Porter and O'Donnell, *Discourse Analysis*, 97–99). For further discussion on the distinction between mainline and supporting material, see Porter and O'Donnell, *Discourse Analysis*, 143–45.

44.   SFL identifies three metafunctions that enable language as a communi-cative system. The ideational metafunction concerns what the text is about, the interpersonal metafunction relates to who is involved, and the textual metafunc-tion organizes the text to support the other two. While information structure anal-ysis primarily focuses on the textual component, the other two are inevitably ad-dressed throughout the analysis.

when aggregated with other marked elements. However, repeated references to a lexical item, idea, or participant at the clause complex level or higher also establish prominence. Prime–subsequent analysis aligns with the former premise, while theme–rheme and topic–comment analysis correspond to the latter.[45] Third, while Porter and O'Donnell identify the process actor as the theme, this study contends that any process participant—subject, complement, or adjunct[46]—can serve as the theme within a thematic unit.[47]

45. A unique lexical item, such as a *hapax legomenon*, can enhance the prominence of the section in which it appears. However, while such occurrences increase semantic prominence, they do not necessarily indicate a thematic or topical shift.

46. In SFL, terms for the grammatical subject and object vary based on the metafunction analyzed and the predicate's nature. For convenience, this study defines "subject" as the agent of a process and "complement" as a term for direct and indirect objects. "adjunct" primarily refers to prepositional phrases. These definitions reflect a restricted nomenclature used specifically in this study.

47. According to Halliday, theme is classified according to the three metafunctions: textual, interpersonal, and topical, although Halliday's use of "topical," which is virtually synonymous with "ideational," differs from the notion of topic employed in this study. Among these, it is the topical theme, comprising the clause's ideational components—namely, participant, circumstance, and process—that holds primary significance. While the textual theme facilitates discourse cohesion and the interpersonal theme realizes the speaker's attitude, only the topical theme enacts experiential meaning, thereby completing the message (Halliday, *Halliday's Introduction*, 105, 111–12, 126). Among these ideational components, the participant is the most frequently selected element in topical theme realization (Halliday, *Halliday's Introduction*, 91). Porter and O'Donnell, in their adjusted framework for biblical Greek, refer to the element corresponding to Halliday's "theme" as the "prime" and, in analyzing textual units at the clause level and beyond, conceptualize a modified form of theme that guides discourse development, placing particular emphasis on the process actor—an element of Halliday's topical theme. Given Halliday's emphasis on the experiential dimension of thematic structure—namely, that every clause must contain a topical theme and that the rheme begins precisely where this experiential element concludes (*Halliday's Introduction*, 105)—Porter and O'Donnell's focus on the process actor and its relation to the process chain can be seen as aligning in part with the foundational principles of Halliday's framework. Extending this view, I argue that the participant, as understood in Halliday's model, should not be restricted solely to the process actor. Rather, all types of participants, each closely correlated with the process chain, contribute meaningfully to shaping the information structure of a text. In this sense, the scope of theme should be broadened beyond what is proposed in Porter and O'Donnell's model. The practical utility of this

In cases where theme determination is challenging, the participant linked to the most clauses is designated as the "anchor theme" of the clause complex, while a less dominant participant is the "satellite theme."[48] If multiple participants appear with similar frequency within a thematic unit, the anchor theme is determined by their occurrence in adjacent clause complexes. When a theme recurs across multiple clause complexes, it is classified as a "global theme," increasing the likelihood of it evolving into the paragraph's topic as it integrates with the core content of its associated rheme. Fourth, topic and comment are treated distinctively. A topic is not necessarily a single word; it may take the form of a clause or a concise representation of a clause complex. Rather than summarizing the overarching idea, the topic should align with the most prominent expression. A topic synthesizes the global or most prominent anchor theme with the core expression of its directly related rheme. A significant shift in rheme content may signal a top-

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expanded framework is partially substantiated in the present study's textual analysis.

48.   The proliferation of thematic categories, such as anchor theme, satellite theme, and global theme, finds its theoretical grounding primarily in SFL, which posits two distinct types of rank scale: semantic and lexicogrammatical. First, the notion of "thematic development" suggests the possibility of distinguishing multiple theme types. Halliday identifies three theme types developing within the semantic stratum which mediates between context and lexicogrammar. He identifies the "macro-theme" operating at the text level, a "hyper-theme" at the rhetorical paragraph (or paraseme) level, and a "theme" at the message level (*Halliday's Introduction*, 44–45). The macro-theme, operating at a higher semantic level and guiding the overall discourse trajectory, evokes the concept of the global theme that operates at a higher lexicogrammatical level. Likewise, the hyper-theme parallels the anchor theme, and the message-level theme corresponds to the general clause-level theme. These relationships, however, are not realized in a strict one-to-one mapping of meaning to form; for instance, the anchor theme in this study may operate as a constituent element in the message-level. Second, although this study is based on the modified framework of Porter and O'Donnell, the Hallidayan concept most directly related to its notion of multiple themes is arguably a set of terms such as "paragraph theme" and "clause themes," which operate within the lexicogrammatical stratum (*Halliday's Introduction*, 132). In this framework, the paragraph theme governs how the paragraph unfolds, while clause themes drive the development of each clause. The former is linked to the notions of "global theme" and "anchor theme," while the latter corresponds to "satellite theme," all of which are adapted to Greek information structure.

ic change, even if the theme remains unchanged. Fifth, a discourse may contain multiple topics, with some receiving greater emphasis. A topic supported by extensive supporting materials gains prominence, while frequent mainline shifts without sufficient support reduce it. Topics reinforced by more prominent thematic units become primary topics, while others function as comments relative to the primary topic at the discourse level. In short, the three pairs of information structure components operate through prominence and markedness, realized through recurrence and deviation patterns at different textual levels.[49]

4.2 *Text Analysis*
4.2.1 First Topical Unit

v. 14a <u>σταθεὶς</u> δὲ ὁ <u>Πέτρος</u> σὺν τοῖς ἕνδεκα (S)[50]

v. 14b <u>ἐπῆρεν</u> τὴν φωνὴν αὐτοῦ (M)

v. 14c καὶ <u>ἀπεφθέγξατο</u> αὐτοῖς (M)

v. 14d <u>ἄνδρες Ἰουδαῖοι καὶ οἱ κατοικοῦντες Ἰερουσαλὴμ πάντες</u>, <u>τοῦτο</u> ὑμῖν γνωστὸν ἔστω (M)

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49. The distinctiveness of this study regarding prime and subsequent is relatively minor. An analysis of word order statistics across all speeches in Acts shows the following clause distribution: 604 clauses begin with a predicate, 536 with an adjunct modifying the predicate circumstantially, 379 with a subject as the action's agent, and 116 with a complement essential to completing the process. Thus, when a participant (subject, complement, or occasionally adjunct) appears at the beginning of the clause, it is considered marked to some degree as the prime. Vocatives and relative pronouns cannot function as a prime but can serve as a theme. In clauses introduced by a relative pronoun, the first word following it is designated as the prime. When negation appears at the beginning of a sentence, it is grouped with its associated element, such as the predicate, and the resulting group is designated as a prime. Connecting words are excluded from the analysis but remain in the textual representation.

50. In these analyses, "M" denotes mainline, whereas "S" indicates supporting material. Each verse is divided into clause units, though Greek clause structure sometimes complicates segmentation. Since ambiguous segmentation does not significantly affect overall information structure analysis, detailed discussion of such cases is omitted. Each clause is assigned a letter appended to the verse number for detailed clause-level analysis. The letters do not indicate hierarchical structure. For example, v. 14b is neither supporting material nor a secondary clause; it simply designates the second clause within v. 14. Primes are underlined, themes are double-underlined, and grammatically marked elements are italicized.

v. 14e καὶ <u>ἐνωτίσασθε</u> τὰ ῥήματά μου (M)

From v. 14d, Peter begins his speech by explaining the current sit-
uation. Though nominatives of address[51] precede the main clause,
they are excluded from prime–subsequent analysis as their occur-
rence is conventional. Instead, τοῦτο serves as the prime of v. 14d,
functioning as a cataphoric reference directing the audience's at-
tention to the following content. Verses 14d–14e, containing im-
perative verbs, form a thematic chain with a shared theme. Since
they are paratactically connected, v. 14e is classified alongside v.
14d as part of the mainline, with the imperfective ἔστω in v. 14d
foregrounded.

v. 15a <u>οὐ</u> γὰρ <u>οὗτοι</u> <u>μεθύουσιν</u> (M)
v. 15b ὡς <u>ὑμεῖς</u> ὑπολαμβάνετε (S)
v. 15c <u>ἔστιν</u> γὰρ ὥρα τρίτη τῆς ἡμέρας (S)

The positioning of οὐ at the front of the clause complex in v.
15, negating μεθύουσιν in the primary clause, gives it a certain de-
gree of markedness. All three predicates are in the present tense
form. μεθύουσιν serves as the foregrounded backbone in the main-
line, ὑπολαμβάνετε is foregrounded within supporting material,
and ἔστιν, though aspectually vague, aligns non-disruptively with
this imperfective pattern and supports the cohesion of the clause
complex. This alignment of foregrounded predicates at both struc-
tural levels enhances the clause complex's prominence.

v. 16 ἀλλὰ <u>τοῦτό</u>* ἐστιν τὸ εἰρημένον διὰ τοῦ προφήτου Ἰωήλ (M)

In v. 16, the theme shifts from οὗτοι to τοῦτο, which may func-
tion as an anaphoric reference to the pre-speech phenomenon of
speaking in tongues or as a cataphoric reference introducing the

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51. It has been argued that the vocative is not an independent case but
closely tied to the nominative both morphologically and functionally. Since the
plural shows no distinct paradigm and its use overlaps with the nominative of ad-
dress, the vocative may be treated as a subset of the nominative, or at most as a
"formally restricted" case (Porter, *Idioms*, 88. See also Robertson, *Grammar*,
461). Whether one calls it a vocative or a nominative of address, I do not consider
it prime. This aligns with Halliday, who classifies vocatives as interpersonal
theme, distinct from topical theme (*Halliday's Introduction*, 111–12, 159–60).

prophetic passage in vv. 17–21.[52] In either case, Peter directs the audience's attention to Joel's prophecy, interpreting the pre-speech phenomenon through the prophetic passage. As a phrase-level element, τὸ εἰρημένον introduces the Old Testament citation in vv. 17–21. The lengthy prophetic passage serves as supporting material for the mainline statement in v. 16. Here, τοῦτο, functioning as both theme and prime, is structurally marked. This deictic points to substantial supporting material in the paragraph and thus, together with its rheme, can be considered the paragraph's topic.

Since vv. 17–21 are an excerpt from Joel 2:28–32, their textual structure does not inherently highlight structural emphases by Luke or Peter. Therefore, an information structure analysis of these verses is omitted.[53]

4.2.2 Second Topical Unit

v. 22a <u>Ἄνδρες Ἰσραηλῖται</u>, <u>ἀκούσατε</u> τοὺς λόγους τούτους (M)

v. 22b <u>Ἰησοῦν τὸν Ναζωραῖον</u>*,[54] ἄνδρα ἀποδεδειγμένον ἀπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ εἰς ὑμᾶς δυνάμεσιν καὶ τέρασιν καὶ σημείοις (S)

v. 22c οἷς <u>ἐποίησεν</u> δι' αὐτοῦ ὁ θεὸς ἐν μέσῳ ὑμῶν (S)

v. 22d καθὼς <u>αὐτοὶ</u> οἴδατε (S)

In the first clause of v. 22, the nominative of address appears for the second time since v. 14d, maintaining audience continuity

52.   Note that <u>τοῦτό</u> is both Prime and Theme. At the macrostructural level, if τοῦτο refers to an event outside the speech layer, its exophoric reference links the preceding narrative to the current speech layer, enhancing cohesion between them.

53.   A more insightful approach would be to examine how the author quotes the Old Testament, highlighting distinctive elements. A comparison shows that Peter's quotation in v. 17 emphasizes eschatological imagery by replacing μετὰ ταῦτα with ἐν ταῖς ἐσχάταις ἡμέραις. Additionally, inserting καὶ προφητεύσουσιν at the end of v. 18 allows for interpreting his assembly as God's servants who have received the Holy Spirit, with their multilingual utterances potentially understood as prophecy. Furthermore, v. 19 introduces ἄνω and κάτω, emphasizing heaven and earth as spatial directions. In a symmetrical construction, σημεῖα ("signs") are added on earth, mirroring τέρατα ("wonders") given in heaven. Compared to the Septuagint, these textual variations in Peter's quotation highlight current events as manifestations of the eschatological era unfolding on earth, with particular emphasis on the disciples as God's servants engaged in prophecy.

54.   Note that Ἰησοῦν τὸν Ναζωραῖον is both Prime and Theme.

across paragraphs, enhancing discourse cohesion, and marking the transition to a new paragraph. If the preceding paragraph reinterpreted the present situation—disciples speaking in other languages—Peter's speech now likely shifts toward the main topic, necessitating identification of the primary topic among multiple candidates. The participle ἀποδεδειγμένον in v. 22b indicates a supporting clause, but its stative aspect suggests that it occupies the frontground among surrounding supporting materials. The accusative noun phrase Ἰησοῦν τὸν Ναζωραῖον ἄνδρα is strongly marked, appearing at the start of the forthcoming extended thematic unit after the call for attention in v. 22a. This phrase later serves as the complement (i.e., direct object) of the mainline predicate ἀνείλατε in v. 23b, forming a key element in a distinct thematic chain. Verse 22c, introduced by οἷς, is an embedded clause modifying δυνάμεσιν καὶ τέρασιν καὶ σημείοις in v. 22b, constituting a second-level supporting material. The wonders and signs foretold by Joel are fulfilled through Jesus the Nazarene, according to v. 22c. Verse 22d, introduced by καθώς in a hypotactic structure, further elaborates the previous clause, forming third-level supporting material.

> v. 23a <u>τοῦτον</u> τῇ ὡρισμένῃ βουλῇ καὶ προγνώσει τοῦ θεοῦ ἔκδοτον διὰ
> χειρὸς ἀνόμων προσπήξαντες (S)
> v. 23b <u>ἀνείλατε</u> (M)

The participle προσπήξαντες in v. 23a places this clause at the second level of supporting material, with the prime τοῦτον referring to the accusative noun phrase in v. 22b which forms the first level of supporting material. The mainline predicate ἀνείλατε in v. 23b takes Ἰησοῦν τὸν Ναζωραῖον from v. 22b as its complement, conveying the message, "You executed Jesus the Nazarene." Therefore, despite their division into separate verses in modern translations, vv. 22b–23b should be read as a single, interconnected clause complex. Notably, the grammatically implied actor "you" is not the highlighted theme. Instead, the complement, as the grammaticalized participant in this thematic unit, serves as the more structurally marked thematic element, a pattern that continues in the following verse.

v. 24a ὃν <u>ὁ θεὸς</u> ἀνέστησεν (S)

v. 24b <u>λύσας</u> τὰς ὠδῖνας τοῦ θανάτου (S)

v. 24c καθότι <u>οὐκ ἦν δυνατὸν κρατεῖσθαι</u> αὐτὸν ὑπ' αὐτοῦ (S)

Again, ὃν in v. 24a links to the accusative noun phrase Ἰησοῦν τὸν Ναζωραῖον in v. 22b, showing that this clause remains part of the extended thematic unit beginning in v. 22b. While the preceding clause forms the speech's backbone by asserting, "You executed him," v. 24a, though supporting it, stands in contrast as its antithesis. This contrast effectively highlights the rheme directly tied to the anchor theme, Jesus the Nazarene, conveying the message, "God raised Jesus," reinforced by vv. 31–32 and v. 36.

4.2.3 Third Topical Unit

v. 25 <u>Δαυὶδ</u> γὰρ λέγει εἰς αὐτόν . . . (M)

In v. 25a, the marked element Δαυίδ emerges as a new theme and prime, signaling a paragraph shift. The conjunction γάρ likely indicates that the upcoming Old Testament excerpt is positively related to the statement about Jesus not being abandoned to death. The citation of Ps 16:8–11 (vv. 25b–28) is omitted from analysis, as it aligns with the Septuagint text without variation.

v. 29a Ἄνδρες ἀδελφοί, <u>ἐξὸν εἰπεῖν</u> μετὰ παρρησίας πρὸς ὑμᾶς περὶ τοῦ πατριάρχου <u>Δαυὶδ</u> (M)

v. 29b ὅτι καὶ <u>ἐτελεύτησεν</u> καὶ ἐτάφη (S)

v. 29c καὶ <u>τὸ μνῆμα</u> αὐτοῦ ἔστιν ἐν ἡμῖν ἄχρι τῆς ἡμέρας ταύτης (S)

The impersonal construction of v. 29a, with ἐξὸν εἰπεῖν as the clause's prime, arguably forms a mainline since it functions as a predicate. While no overt subject is present, Peter functions as the implied subject and may be treated as a thematic participant at the clause level. Within the current clause complex, however, a more explicit candidate is David. Although he occurs in a prepositional phrase, the process chain across three consecutive clauses centers on David, thereby establishing him as the anchor theme.[55] In the

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55. The conjunction ὅτι in v. 29b serves as a structural marker, creating a hypotactic relationship with the preceding clause. Verse 29c forms a paratactic

next clause complex, four additional clauses are likewise linked to David, and this cumulative linkage heightens David's thematic prominence.

> v. 30a <u>προφήτης</u> οὖν ὑπάρχων καὶ εἰδὼς (S)
>
> v. 30b ὅτι <u>ὅρκῳ</u> ὤμοσεν αὐτῷ ὁ θεὸς (S)
>
> v. 30c <u>καρποῦ τῆς ὀσφύος αὐτοῦ</u> καθίσαι ἐπὶ τὸν θρόνον αὐτοῦ (S)

Verse 30a serves as supporting material, with προφήτης as its prime. The next clause, in a hypotactic relationship to v. 30a, functions as second-level supporting material, while v. 30c, in a hypotactic relation to v. 30b, constitutes third-level supporting material. Together, they form a thematic unit anchored to David as the anchor theme. These supporting materials align better with the mainline in v. 31b than in v. 29a, given the contrast between their subject matter: the first concerns David's death while the latter focuses on Christ's resurrection.

> v. 31a <u>προϊδὼν</u> (S)
>
> v. 31b <u>ἐλάλησεν</u> περὶ τῆς ἀναστάσεως τοῦ <u>Χριστοῦ</u> (M)
>
> v. 31c ὅτι <u>οὔτε ἐγκατελείφθη</u> εἰς ᾅδην (S)
>
> v. 31d <u>οὔτε</u> ἡ σὰρξ αὐτοῦ <u>εἶδεν</u> διαφθοράν (S)

The one-word clause προϊδὼν in v. 31a serves as supporting material, embedded within the clause complex centered on v. 31b as the mainline. The prime in v. 31b ἐλάλησεν forms the backbone, with David as the anchor theme. While v. 29 presents Peter as the speaker, introducing David as the anchor theme and emphasizing his death, v. 31 shifts David's role to both speaker and theme, introducing Christ as another key participant within the thematic unit. As the passage progresses, the focus gradually shifts from David (anchor theme) to Christ (satellite theme), with Christ emerging as a new anchor theme in the next thematic unit.

> v. 32a <u>τοῦτον τὸν Ἰησοῦν</u> ἀνέστησεν <u>ὁ θεός</u> (M)
>
> v. 32b <u>οὗ</u> πάντες ἡμεῖς ἐσμεν μάρτυρες (S)

relationship with 29b. Together, these clauses function as supporting material, unified by the common theme of David.

In v. 32a, the locus of agency shifts from David to God, while Jesus emerges as the new anchor theme, aligning with the anticipated thematic trajectory. Despite this shift, the thematic unit forms a coherent paragraph. Continuity is maintained by the prime τοῦτον τὸν Ἰησοῦν in v. 32a, a deictic reference to Christ that connects back to v. 31b. Additionally, both verses exhibit strong semantic cohesion through the cognate terms ἀναστάσεως and ἀνέστησεν, addressing Jesus' resurrection and enhancing the prominence of consecutive thematic units. This prominence, operating above the clause complex level, strengthens the paragraph's structural weight, leading to the primary topic. Furthermore, parallel expressions in vv. 24a and 32a, which high-light God as the agent of Jesus' resurrection—a point Peter consistently emphasizes—enhance both paragraphs' prominence. On an interpersonal level, v. 32b introduces the first-person plural ἡμεῖς for the first time. While v. 31b presents David speaking of Christ's resurrection, v. 32b shifts the focus to the disciples as its witnesses. Within this thematic unit, Jesus' resurrection brought about by God stands as the central message to which the disciples testify.

4.2.4 Fourth Topical Unit

v. 33a <u>τῇ δεξιᾷ οὖν τοῦ θεοῦ</u> ὑψωθείς (S)

v. 33b <u>τήν τε ἐπαγγελίαν τοῦ πνεύματος τοῦ ἁγίου</u> λαβὼν παρὰ τοῦ πατρός (S)

v. 33c <u>ἐξέχεεν</u>*[56] τοῦτο (M)

v. 33d ὃ <u>ὑμεῖς</u> καὶ βλέπετε καὶ ἀκούετε (S)

In the preceding paragraph, Jesus' resurrection was the key element of the rhemes across multiple thematic units. The current topical unit shifts focus, omitting any reference to the resurrection. Instead, v. 33a introduces Jesus' exaltation, and v. 33b describes his reception of the promise of the Holy Spirit. Jesus' exaltation and the Holy Spirit's inclusion, though typically regarded as theologically central, do not constitute the focal message of this topical unit. Verses 33a–33b simply supplement v. 33c, introducing new lexical items but lacking notable grammatical prominence. Instead, Peter's speech highlights v. 33d amid the nearby supporting

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56. Note that ἐξέχεεν is both Prime and Theme.

materials. This clause is marked by ὑμεῖς, serving as both the prime and the thematic participant of the secondary clause. Additionally, βλέπετε and ἀκούετε encode prominence through their imperfective aspect. Given these factors, v. 33d holds the highest prominence among nearby supporting materials, supplementing v. 33c. In this regard, Peter's syntactic and lexicogrammatical choices connect his interpretation of the current situation to the audience's direct perception.

    v. 34a <u>οὐ</u> γὰρ <u>Δαυὶδ</u> <u>ἀνέβη</u> εἰς τοὺς οὐρανούς (M)
    v. 34b <u>λέγει</u> δὲ <u>αὐτός</u> . . . (M)

The information structure returns to the theme of David. Verse 34a, serving as the mainline, introduces ἀνέβη, denoting upward movement, similar to ὑψωθείς in v. 33a. This lexical parallel arguably enhances cohesion between the two thematic units, suggesting that despite the thematic shift, they may remain under a common topic. The mention of the right hand of God in vv. 33a and 34c further supports this. Verse 34b, also a mainline, is paratactically connected to 34a and introduces an Old Testament quotation concerning Jesus' exaltation. In the topical unit spanning vv. 33a–35, Peter links Jesus' exaltation with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and contrasts David's non-ascension with his attestation of Jesus' exaltation.

4.2.5 Fifth Topical Unit

    v. 36a <u>ἀσφαλῶς</u> οὖν <u>γινωσκέτω</u> <u>πᾶς οἶκος Ἰσραὴλ</u> (M)
    v. 36b ὅτι καὶ <u>κύριον αὐτὸν καὶ χριστὸν</u> ἐποίησεν ὁ θεός (S)
    v. 36c <u>τοῦτον τὸν Ἰησοῦν</u> ὃν ὑμεῖς ἐσταυρώσατε (S)

In v. 36a, οὖν may indicate a logical connection to the preceding paragraph or function as a discourse marker concluding the speech. The imperative mood earlier in Peter's discourse (vv. 14d, 22a) primarily urges the audience to pay attention. However, in v. 36a, near the speech's end, it likely serves a different purpose.[57] Given its placement, this command can be understood as a call for

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57. The recurrence of the Israelites as the audience, coupled with a command at both the beginning and end of the speech layer, enhances textual cohesion while also signaling a topical shift.

a behavioural response, one Peter intended to elicit through his extended discourse. The adverb ἀσφαλῶς in v. 36a further underscores the weight of this command. The conjunction ὅτι in v. 36b introduces what the Israelites must be certain of. Though functioning as supporting material, this clause plays a pivotal role as the rheme, revealing crucial information not disclosed in the mainline. Verse 36c begins with τοῦτον τὸν Ἰησοῦν, explicitly identifying αὐτόν from v. 36b. Here, Peter declares that the audience killed Jesus, whom God made both Lord and Christ. This structure parallels vv. 23b–24a: the audience is accused of killing Jesus, yet God raised him. This structural repetition heightens prominence. Whereas Old Testament quotations continue after v. 24, from v. 37 onward the hearers intervene in the dialogue without referencing Scripture. This marks the end of Peter's extended speech, transitioning into a new phase of the conversation.

4.2.6 Sixth Topical Unit

v. 38a <u>Πέτρος</u>*[58] δὲ πρὸς αὐτούς φησίν (M)

v. 38b <u>μετανοήσατε</u> καὶ βαπτισθήτω <u>ἕκαστος ὑμῶν</u> ἐπὶ τῷ ὀνόματι Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ εἰς ἄφεσιν τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ὑμῶν (M)

v. 38c καὶ <u>λήμψεσθε</u>*[59] τὴν δωρεὰν τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος (M)

After a brief narrative interjection concerning the audience's reaction, Peter resumes his speech in v. 38b, responding to their question. Until v. 36c, his speech remains predominantly monologic, employing a lengthy style and Old Testament quotations to interpret events surrounding Jesus and his disciples. From v. 38b, the speech shifts, featuring frequent conversational role changes, a more compact mainline structure, and interpersonal and behavioural elements. In v. 38b, Peter's directive clause calls for repentance and baptism, introducing an entirely new lexical set and signaling a major ideational shift. While this section does not encapsulate the full topical scope of the previous speech, it reflects a strong interpersonal focus, as its imperatives directly call for the audience's behavioural response. Verse 38c, with a future-tense predicate, expresses the expected consequences of following

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58. Note that Πέτρος is both Prime and Theme.
59. Note that λήμψεσθε is both Prime and Theme.

Peter's exhortation. Together, vv. 38b–38c form the mainline, establishing a single topical unit centered on Peter's exhortation.

> v. 39a <u>ὑμῖν</u> γάρ ἐστιν <u>ἡ ἐπαγγελία</u> καὶ τοῖς τέκνοις ὑμῶν καὶ πᾶσιν τοῖς εἰς μακράν (M)
>
> v. 39b ὅσους ἂν <u>προσκαλέσηται</u> κύριος ὁ θεὸς ἡμῶν (S)

The theme in v. 39a shifts to ἡ ἐπαγγελία. The reception of the Holy Spirit in v. 38c likely corresponds to the promise in v. 39a. This interpretation is reinforced by the noun phrase τήν ἐπαγγελίαν τοῦ πνεύματος τοῦ ἁγίου in v. 33b, which associates ἐπαγγελία and πνεῦμα. Therefore, v. 39a, as the third mainline clause, remains connected to the preceding clauses, forming a coherent paragraph.

4.2.7 Seventh Topical Unit

> v. 40a <u>ἑτέροις τε λόγοις πλείοσιν</u> <u>διεμαρτύρατο</u> (M)
>
> v. 40b καὶ <u>παρεκάλει</u>**[60] αὐτοὺς (M)
>
> v. 40c <u>λέγων</u> (S)
>
> v. 40d <u>σώθητε</u> ἀπὸ τῆς γενεᾶς τῆς σκολιᾶς ταύτης (M)

In v. 40a, the scene shifts back to the narrative layer. The predicate in v. 40b, expressed in the imperfective aspect, serves as the narrative's foreground. The participle λέγων in v. 40c introduces v. 40d, which contains Peter's final brief remark. The relationship between Peter's exhortation in v. 40d and the earlier exhortations in v. 38b cannot be determined by information structure alone, though both are described as exhortations in the narrative layer of v. 40b. What is clear is that while v. 38b frames its exhortations in relation to Jesus Christ, v. 40d pertains to this generation.

4.3 *Topics of the Speech*

The present study maintains that topic, as the largest element within the information structure, is not merely what the text is about but what the text emphasizes most, a distinction marked by syntactic and lexicogrammatical features of prominence. Based on this perspective, the study identifies seven topics in Peter's speech.

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60.   Note that παρεκάλει is both Prime and Theme; it is also marked.

The first topical unit, covering vv. 14d–16, establishes its topic: "The disciples are not drunk, and their speaking in different languages was foretold by the prophet Joel." The comment is realized through the quotation from Joel, whose textual variations emphasize that these events signify the last days unfolding on earth and that the disciples, as God's servants, are prophesying.

A new topical unit begins in v. 22a, introducing the topic: "You executed Jesus the Nazarene whom God raised." The first part is clarified by the mainline in v. 23b, and v. 24a develops the latter as an antithetical counterpoint. The comment expands on how Jesus' execution was predetermined in God's plan as elaborated through supporting material.

The third topical unit (vv. 25a–32b) is structured around two mainlines both of which constitute the topic: "David spoke about Jesus' resurrection" (v. 31b) and "God raised this Jesus" (v. 32a). The comment consists of David's words from the Psalms and Peter's interpretation of them. These second and third topical units share a particular emphasis on the claim that God raised Jesus.

The fourth topical unit, spanning vv. 33a–35, presents its topic as "The exalted Jesus poured out this, and David who did not ascend into the heavens attested to his exaltation." This reading is supported by the mainline structure in vv. 33c, 34a, and 34b, and reinforced by the repetition of semantically related terms, ὑψωθείς in v. 33a and ἀνέβη in v. 34a. The comment in this unit conveys that Jesus, having been exalted to the right hand of God, received the promise of the Holy Spirit, and the audience sees and hears the outpouring of it. This unit, like the first topical unit, is characterized by its function within the text, highlighting what the audience perceives in relation to the background event of the speech.

The fifth topical unit, consisting of the three-clause paragraph in v. 36, establishes its topic as "Let the house of Israel certainly know that God made Jesus both Lord and Christ, whom you crucified." The mainline gains prominence through the intensifying adverb ἀσφαλῶς and the imperative verb γινωσκέτω. However, the supporting material in v. 36b, which contains crucial information not yet disclosed by the mainline, carries even greater semantic weight. Verse 36b connects to the previous paragraph's discussion of Jesus' exaltation and his designation as Lord, while v. 36c echoes the second topical unit, repeating the phrase "You cruci-

fied Jesus." Furthermore, the entire supporting material mirrors the structural pattern of the second topic, reinforcing its prominence. Consequently, the mainline and supporting material together constitute the topic, leaving no separate comment within this topical unit.[61]

Within the sixth topical unit (vv. 38b–39b), the topic is formed by vv. 38b–38c, marked by directive clauses in v. 38b and by the alignment of prime and theme in v. 38c. Together they convey exhortation and promise to the audience: "Repent and be baptized, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." The third mainline clause in v. 39a and its supporting material in v. 39b function as the comment.

The seventh topical unit, v. 40d, presents a single-clause topic: "Be saved from this corrupt generation." However, this unit does not appear to carry substantial prominence as a standalone topical unit.

The present analysis reveals that the second and third topical units stand out most prominently, as they feature the most prominent mainlines, substantial supporting material, and a recurring structural pattern, all of which can be condensed into the core statement: "God raised Jesus." Therefore, the most prominent information in Peter's speech in Acts 2, revealing the speaker's primary emphasis, is: "God raised Jesus."[62]

61. Establishing a universal structure where a specific part of ancient speech is always highlighted is challenging. Whether the latter portion (*peroratio*) consistently serves as the concluding and most condensed content, structurally marked as in modern scholarly essays, remains subject to inquiry. Alternatively, emphasis may have been placed on both the opening (*exordium)* and closing sections simultaneously or on the central portion (*narratio* or *argumentatio*) of the speech.

62. The fifth topical unit gains prominence through structural and lexicogrammatical marked features, reinforcing structural repetition in parallel with the second topic. However, with fewer supporting materials, it becomes the second most emphasized topic. Nevertheless, expanding the primary topic by integrating the second and third most emphasized topics remains possible. If synthesized with the primary topic, these secondary topics may contribute to forming a global topic through comparison with other speeches. The global topic will be explored in a separate study.

5. *Conclusion*

Scholarly interest in the speeches within Acts has long sparked extensive discussions, generating a range of debates. While some scholars employing historical-critical methods have addressed the authenticity of the speeches—often drawing connections between the speeches and theological or communal concerns—others, adopting more synchronic approaches, have examined their function, with many concluding that their primary function is Christian apologetics. These diverse interpretations each hold value and contribute to scholarly discourse, yet they also present challenges in identifying the text's most emphasized message. To address this issue, this study advocates for a structural-syntagmatic and functional-paradigmatic linguistic approach, systematically analyzing prime–subsequent, theme–rheme, and topic–comment relationships to identify grammatically marked and semantically prominent features at the phrase, clause, paragraph, and discourse levels. Through this analytic framework, the study seeks to determine the primary topic of the speech in Acts 2. In the end, the analysis has identified seven topical units, with the second and third units notably sharing the most emphasized topic, which can be condensed into the core statement: "God raised Jesus."

6. *Appendix*

This table visually represents the information structure of Acts 2, facilitating an understanding of its integrative organization. To this end, the table is presented in English. Supporting materials are indented, while mainlines remain unindented. Primes are underlined, themes are double-underlined, and grammatically marked elements are italicized. An item which is both Prime and Theme is marked with one asterisk (*). An item that is Prime and Theme and also marked is given two asterisks (**). Dotted lines delimit thematic units, while solid lines mark shifts between them. Double lines denote topic transitions. The S-layer refers to the speech layer, distinct from the narration layer. Prominent clauses or clause complexes are shaded for emphasis. Although conjunctive devices are excluded from prime–subsequent and theme–rheme analysis, they are essential for paragraph division and discourse structure

comprehension. Therefore, no textual elements have been omitted, ensuring a holistic view of the discourse's architecture.

Information Structure of Peter's Speech in Acts 2

	¹⁴ᵃ <u>Peter</u> <u>standing</u> with the eleven (S)
¹⁴ᵇ He <u>raised</u> his voice (M)	
¹⁴ᶜ and he <u>spoke out</u> to them (M)	

S-layer	¹⁴ᵈ <u>Men of Judea and all the Jerusalem dwellers!</u> *Let* this be *known* to you (M)
	¹⁴ᵉ and <u>pay attention</u> to my sayings (M)
	¹⁵ᵃ For <u>they</u> are <u>not</u> *drunk* (M)
	¹⁵ᵇ as <u>you</u> *assume* (S)
	¹⁵ᶜ for it <u>is</u> the third hour of the day (S)
	¹⁶ But <u>this</u>* is what was spoken through the prophet Joel (M)
	¹⁷⁻²¹ [Joel quotation]
	²²ᵃ <u>Men of Israel!</u> <u>Listen</u> to these words (M)
	²²ᵇ <u>Jesus the Nazarene, a man</u>* *attested* by God to you by power and wonder and sign (S)
	²²ᶜ that God <u>performed</u> through him in the midst of you (S)
	²²ᵈ just as <u>you yourselves</u> know (S)
	²³ᵃ by nailing <u>this</u> (Jesus the Nazarene), delivered up by the determined plan and foreknowledge of God, through the lawless hand (S)
	²³ᵇ You <u>executed</u> (Jesus the Nazarene) (M)
	²⁴ᵃ whom <u>God</u> raised (S)
	²⁴ᵇ <u>abolishing</u> the anguish of death (S)
	²⁴ᶜ because it was <u>not</u> possible for him to be held by it (S)

25a <u>David</u>* therefore says concerning him . . . (M)

25b–28 [Psalm quotation]

29a Men brothers! <u>It is permitted to speak</u> with confidence to you concerning the patriarch <u>David</u> (M)

29b that also he <u>died</u> and be buried (S)

29c and <u>his tomb</u> is with us until this day (S)

30a As being a <u>prophet</u> and knowing (S)

30b that God swore <u>oath</u> to him (S)

30c to set (one) upon his throne <u>out of fruit of his waist</u> (S)

31a as <u>foreseeing</u> (S)

31b He <u>said</u> concerning the resurrection <u>of Christ</u> (M)

31c that <u>neither</u> he would be forsaken into Hades (S)

31d <u>nor</u> his flesh would see decay (S)

32a God raised <u>this Jesus</u> (M)

32b of which <u>all we</u> are witnesses (S)

33a Being therefore exalted <u>to the right hand of God</u> (S)

33b and receiving <u>the promise of the Holy Spirit</u> from the Father (S)

33c <u>He poured out</u>* this (M)

33d that <u>you</u> also *see* and *hear* (S)

34a For <u>David</u> did <u>not</u> ascend into the heavens (M)

34b but <u>he himself says</u> (M)

34C–35 [Psalm quotation]

36a Therefore, <u>*let*</u> <u>all house of Israel</u> <u>certainly *know*</u> (M)

	^{36b} that God made <u>him both Lord and Christ</u> (S)
	^{36c} <u>this Jesus</u> whom you crucified (S)

^{37a} <u>When heard</u>, (S)

^{37b} <u>they</u> <u>were pricked</u> in the heart (M)

^{37c} and <u>they</u> <u>said</u> to Peter and the rest of apostles (M)

S-layer	^{37d} <u>What</u> should <u>we</u> do? men brothers! (M)

^{38a} <u>Peter</u>* said to them (M)

S-layer	^{38b} <u>Repent and be baptized</u> <u>each of you</u> in the name of Jesus Christ for forgiveness of your sins (M)
	^{38c} and <u>you</u> <u>will receive</u>* the gift of the Holy Spirit (M)
	^{39a} For <u>the promise</u> is <u>to you</u> and your children and to all those far away (M)
	^{39b} as many as the Lord our God <u>summons</u> (S)

^{40a} <u>With other many words,</u> <u>he</u> testified (M)

^{40b} and <u>he</u> <u>exhorted</u> them (M)

^{40c} <u>by saying</u> (S)

S-layer	^{40d} <u>Be saved</u> from this crooked generation (M)

^{41a} Indeed, <u>those who welcomed</u>* his word were baptized (M)

^{41b} and <u>about three thousand souls</u> <u>were added</u> in that day (M)

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