

**A Two-Step Representational Model of Text Sentences in a
Semiotic-Textological Framework**

PhD Dissertation Theses

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`Introduction

The importance and expansion of research in textology and textlinguistics has been stressed by numerous studies over the past years. The linguistically based study of texts has also brought about an increasing demand for the results of research to be united in a unified and adequate text theory. However, a scientifically well-founded and detailed text theory is not available as yet. This is not to mean that no new models have been - or are being - created. These generally take their origins in earlier linguistic theories and set up their own theoretical framework and adequately operating system of analysis by making use the apparatus of these earlier theories.

My dissertation can be regarded as one of the lastly named models and as a possible method of explicit description of text sentences. In addition, it is also intended to be a contribution to textological analysis of texts.

Consequently, my purpose is to give account of a representational model of text sentences that, by virtue of its theoretical framework and descriptive apparatus, could function as a basis for the complex analysis of texts. This ("two-s") theoretical background for the analysis of text sentences has been set up with regard to the theories, methods, results and deficiencies of different schools of descriptive grammar. To achieve this goal, specific text sentences have been analysed. The model is designed to ensure the explicit representability of text sentences created in any possible way,

In semiotic textology, JÁNOS S. PETŐFI distinguishes the following types of interpretation, arranging them into pairs:

- *"natural vs theoretical:*
interpretation in a so-called 'natural receptive (intuitive, not following the 'algorithimical steps' of an instruction prescribed by a theory of interpretation) situation vs following the instructions of a theory of interpretation;
- *explicative vs evaluative:*
interpretation relating all sign complex constituents (or only one of them) vs qualifying the related constituents with regard to some (stylistic, poetic, social, moral, ideological, religious, etc.) system of norms;

- *first grade vs second grade*:
interpretation relating ‘direct’ (taken in the literal sense) sign complex constituents to a given vehicle (or interpretation evaluating these constituents) vs interpretation relating ‘indirect’ (taken in a symbolic sense) sign complex constituents (or interpretation evaluating these constituents) to a given vehicle;
- *descriptive vs argumentative*:
interpretation restricted to presenting explanation and evaluation vs interpretation accounting for the presented explanation and evaluation;
- *structural vs procedural*:
interpretation restricted to presenting the result of the interpretation process vs interpretation (also) presenting the interpretation process itself” (PETŐFI 1996: 24-25).

Of the interpretation types listed above, the interpreter, as a rule, realizes *natural* – *explicative* – *first grade* – *descriptive* – *structural interpretation*. In taking an analyzing approach to text sentences I rely on *theoretical* – *explicative* – *first grade* – *descriptive* – *structural interpretation*, which correlates with the former.

The attempt to achieve *explicitness* is crucial to the representation of both text organization and text sentences. The explicitness of representation can be explained in two ways. The *weaker interpretation of explicitness means that the result of interpretation is represented explicitly, although our intuition is also used for creating it. What is meant by stronger* explicitness is that the interpretation itself is capable of being deduced from a pre-formulated system of rules. However, we have no firm foundation to realize this simply because in each single case interpretation is the result of the interaction between a vehicle to be interpreted and the interpreting individual’s system of knowledge and presuppositions, where this system can vary from interpreter to interpreter.

Given this condition, the attempt to achieve a possible explicitness in the representation of text sentences means the explicit representation of the kind of interpretation that emerges as a result of individually formulated interpretation.

The structure of the dissertation

By structuring the chapters of the dissertation and arranging them in the given order I hope to lead the reader to interpret the method I have elaborated for the analysis of text sentences as part of a more comprehensive historical survey of theories. It can be concluded from the concrete data and the analyses placed after the presentation of the representational model how the description of text sentences outlined in the dissertation can support the linguistics-based analysis of complete texts or text fragments.

The two-step representational model of text sentences

In the name of the model the attribute “two-step” means that representation is realized in two ways. On the one hand, the first of these is *global* because the text sentence in question and the system sentence correlative with it is given a functional-grammatical, syntactic and (co)referential description, on the other hand this approach is also *semi-formal* because it is taken into account that a text-based textlinguistic description does not make complete formalization possible despite its being intended to achieve it.

The second approach is *canonic*, partly because it treats the given text sentences as manifestations of system sentences that are equipped with pragmatic parameters and can be correlated with the actual structuring of the former, partly because it creates representations in accordance with a canonic system of rules.

The heuristic motivation of the two-step character of the present model lies in its aptitude to create representations analyzable from a critical point of view while taking into account and amalgamating existing sentence-representational procedures.

Both approaches are carried out in a semiotic-textological framework, which means that an important role is played by the communicational situation, the multimodality of the text and the features of the circumstances in which the interpretation is going on.

In the theoretical framework serving as a basis for the analysis of text sentences “representation” means the practicably formalized description of the syntactic, semantic and pragmatic aspects of a text sentence, with special regard to its capability of giving useful information

for the description of textuality both in the verbal formation of the text and in its presentation of reality.

The explicit description of text sentences requires the knowledge of not only text linguistics but also of system linguistics as text sentences can be best characterized in relation to the system sentences they correlate with. The correspondences and differences in the structuring of text and system sentences can be explained in the light of the given co- and/or context. The disciplines taking part in the representation also reflect these interrelations.

The task of **system linguistics** is the study and canonic representation of linguistic structures – system sentences at sentence level – satisfying the criteria of properness set by some linguistic competence. The representation of system sentences is constituted by three main components: an *explicational component*, a *structural component*, which contains a relational and a transformational subcomponent, and a *pragmatic component*, which deals with the conditions defining the adequate use of linguistic elements in co- and contexts.

The basic component of the explicational component is a *thesauristic dictionary*, which gives the meanings of the entries in explications satisfying certain explicational rules. The explicational component is made up by the thesauristic dictionary together with the explicational rules.

From a lexico-semantic, linguistic and logical point of view system sentences are described by the subcomponents of the *structural component*. Phases of how a system sentence is being structured are described by the *relational* subcomponent, whereas the interrelations between the different phases of structuredness are described by the *transformational* subcomponent.

The *pragmatic component*, which deals with the use of the elements of the system, studies and describes what conditions have to be fulfilled for these elements to become part of a co- and/or context. In this branch of linguistics system sentences are transformed into potential text sentences, which means system sentences have no reference, whereas potential text sentences do have potential reference.

The purpose of **textlinguistics** is to represent the syntactic and coreferential structure of text sentences to be realized in the text or as an individual text, proceeding from the representation of system sentences correlative with text sentences. Thus, the representation of text sentences

relies on the linguistic system and the use of its elements as well as on the knowledge of the world. In accordance with this, textlinguistics also comprises three main components: an *explicational*, a *structural* and a *pragmatic* one.

The *explicational* component of textlinguistics is the dictionary component referring to a particular text. In creating this we rely on the thesauristic dictionary component of system linguistics as basis of reference.

The fact that both system linguistic and textlinguistic analysis shows structural as well as pragmatic aspects is indicative of an important feature of text sentence representation as outlined here, namely that the structural analysis of text sentences can be relevant only if their being influenced by pragmatic considerations is also taken into account. This allows the representation of text sentences to be used adequately for text analysis. This is to mean that the interpretation of a text requires a representational model which analyzes text sentences with regard to text organization. In this framework *interpretation* means a structural-descriptive-explicative interpretation which is designed to relate formal and semantic architectonics to the vehicles to be interpreted.

If one proceeds from the definition which considers a text to be a complex sign, it becomes obvious that texts (especially those consisting of several text sentences) cannot be adequately interpreted by a sentence grammar, even if an extended version is used for this purpose. This is so because the description of text phenomena cannot be reduced to purely linguistic aspects. As is well-known, linguistic units of the sentence order are studied by several descriptive trends, some of which draw upon morphological, lexico-syntactic, syntagmatic, etc. research as well. It follows from their purely linguistic theoretical framework that they cannot be properly used for the analysis of phenomena that are dependent on a particular co- and/or context. This statement has encouraged me to attempt to create a representational model of text sentences which could also serve text analysis in general.

Tasks to be solved

In the representation of text sentences the tasks that are to be solved can be divided into two groups:

One of them concerns the *representational model* itself. In this framework we proceed from the supposition that the representational model of text sentences is based on syntax, thereby setting a course for semantic and pragmatic representation in the analysis. From this follows the task to construct a theory of the internal structure and operation of these two latter components. Furthermore, it is no less important to revise the language of representation and to attempt to reach its optimal formalization.

The second set of tasks concerns the *theoretical framework of text sentence description*. In this area it seems to be primarily necessary to elaborate an interdisciplinary theory of analysis which, if founded on the disciplines drawn into the circle of research, would enable an extended semantic and pragmatic approach to be introduced.

Since the extended theory of representation of text sentences is semiotic textology, any further textlinguistic research should focus on four important areas. The first three of them are coreferentiality, the linear arrangement of the text sentence constituents and of text sentences themselves. To this is added the study of text organization in general as fourth. The basic tasks here are as follows:

1. Coreferentiality

For an explicit coreferential analysis it should be ensured that the coreferential elements as well as the coreferential antecedents and/or postcedents to any referential element can be stated. To achieve this, a syntactically based semantic approach will have to be adopted and the discipline-constituents with their descriptive apparatus defined. The semantic basis of this is given by the definition of what the structure of the dictionary explications to be found in a thesauristic dictionary should be like in their form and contents. This question includes tasks concerning explicanda as well as explicants.

The first question to be answered is **what the formal structure of the explicandum should be like**. Since we are convinced that it is proposition cores that are to be taken as dictionary units, the hypothesis that I have set forth of the structure of proposition cores in Chapter Four

of the present dissertation may be of help. A proposition core consists of a functor and its arguments as well as qualifiers and quantifiers that, with their possible modifiers, can be related to the functor. Therefore, an adequate answer should cover all of the following questions: What can be considered to be a functor? Which are the argument slots (argument roles and argument variables) required by a functor and which are the qualifiers, quantifiers and their possible modifiers that are related to the functor in question?

Next, the **structure of explicants** needs to be defined. It follows from the above that a convenient structure should contain both the verbal interpretation of the functor and the semantic characterization of the units that can fill in argument, qualifier, quantifier and modifier slots.

In explicational structures, it should also be pointed out whether a subset not to be explicated can be declared within the set of linguistic elements occurring in the explicants. In other words: does it seem possible to introduce and apply semantic primitives or not?

Explications interpreted in this way allow to disclose thesauristic coreference relations of the most various types.

Concerning coreferential relations, it appears to be important to find an answer to the question as to what degree of explicitness can be achieved in creating rules for the disclosure of the coreferent antecedents and postcedents of referential units.

2. The linear arrangement of text sentence constituents

In my view, there are two questions emerging immediately from the results provided by the text sentence representational model, both of which concern the linear arrangement of the constituents of a text sentence.

The first one refers to the set of initial structures to be related to the text sentence subjected to representation: can one state a rule system that can be used for deducing the set of all possible linear arrangements of text sentence constituents from the structural formula of a text sentence?

The other question is related to the pragmatics of the initial structures: to what extent is it possible to set the conditions necessary for the co- and/or contextual realization of initial structure clusters if the limits of the pragmatic component of system linguistics are not exceeded?

3. The linear arrangement of text sentences

The representation of the linear arrangement of text sentences means actually the description of linearized text organization, which is of necessity closely interrelated with the description of relational organization.

On examining the linear arrangement of text sentences one inevitably comes across the question of whether there exist any text sentence characteristics that influence or possibly define the syntactic and/or semantic and/or pragmatic features of the text sentence (or the text sentences) that can occur in the immediate proximity (that is, before or after) of a particular text sentence. What we mean by raising this question is to what limits the competence of sentence grammar can be extended in the description of text coherence.

The next task directly follows from the interpretation of the two areas belonging to linearization: it should be attempted to find the analogy between the text sentence constituents and the linear arrangement of text sentences.

This research can be based on the well-founded supposition that if a text sentence is coordinate in its structure, the establishment of the possible order of clauses raises the same questions as the examination of how individual text sentences are arranged one after the other.

4. Further aspects of text organization

One of the aims of the model that has been created for the practicably explicit description of text sentences is to provide a starting point for the representation of texts. It follows from this that further tasks and problems of the description of text organization should also be taken into consideration in outlining new directions of research.

The model of text sentence representation is grounded on syntax. Aspects of semantics and pragmatics are enforced inasmuch as it appears to be necessary and sufficient in the given framework.

Accepting the view that in text organization semiotic textology is the wider framework for text sentence representation, we also hold that any examination designed to achieve an explicit description of text sentences requires the semantic and pragmatic extension of text sentence analysis.

To achieve this, what should be considered first is the types of proposition cores that make the distinction of the semantic levels of interpretation possible. Proposition cores can be primarily distinguished by the semantic types of functors to be found in them. According to the semantic nature of functors, proposition cores fall into four categories: **communicative** (“communicates”), **performative-modal** (e.g. “says [something] without any special purpose”, “informs”, “makes a statement”), **world-constitutive** (creating a world of one’s own: e.g. “knows”, “assumes”, “believes”) and **neutral** (e.g. “goes”, “sings”, “cooks”). (PETŐFI 1996: 34).

The analysis of text sentences and text organization raises two interrelated questions concerning proposition core types (and the proposition types derived from them):

- On the one hand: what interpretive operations relate the so-called world-constitutive elements to text sentences;
- On the other hand: this having been carried out, how the events and actions occurring and expressed in the text can be related to the sub-worlds of the individual characters in the text and to those of the person interpreting it. This in fact means the definition of the possible worlds of a particular text, taken not in the logical sense of the word.

After the answers to the questions above have been found, the next one to be raised in connection with interpretations is what conditions

should be fulfilled for argumentative interpretation to be realized with respect to coreferentiality, the linear arrangement of text sentence constituents, the linear arrangement of clauses and text sentences, in other words: what argumentation systems are required and allowed by the representation of these elements.

Although the “further tasks” listed above are not treated in all detail in my dissertation, I took them into consideration while creating the model for text sentence representation, as this appears to be the only way of its organic development.

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