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On the Results of the Discussion about the Phenomenon of Linearization of Text Sentences

based on the studies published in the volumes of *Officina Textologica*¹

EDIT DOBI

1. Introduction

This study deals with the issue of linearization which is a phenomenon occurring in both sentence grammar and text linguistics. In terms of the theory of science, this statement raises the question as to where is the border between sentence grammar and text linguistics. This is especially interesting in the case of a phenomenon which reflects more or less the same function of language but on different levels, i.e. on sentence level or text level. Now we might as well discuss the theoretical dilemma of distinguishing the two levels; but our main concern here is the overview and assessment of the results of the research concerning the topic of linearization, and, consequently, we intend to deal with the issues of the theory of science only to a certain depth, when they are closely related to our topic.

The primary aim of this study is to provide a review and assessment of the relevant studies published in the *Officina Textologica* edited by János S. Petőfi, and to present the results, as well as further issues to discuss and problems to solve, of the theoretical discourse and analytical examination, performed in the framework of the polyglot textological-text linguistic research program, concerning the topic of linearization.

The studies to be overviewed were published roughly every year between 1999 and 2003 in the volumes of *Officina Textologica*. This can be important with a view to the scientific context concerning contemporary international research in textology and cognitive linguistics which has been a major impact on the Hungarian textological research in the last few decades. In his monograph on textology published in 2001 Gábor Tolcsvai Nagy set up a scientific framework of two components as a theoretical background, expressing his basic principles both in a functional linguistic and communication system and in a cognitive linguistic framework (Tolcsvai 2001: 10–11). This approach which connects functionality and cognition and, at the same time, takes into consideration the role of the communicative context in influencing linguistic formulation

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increasingly affects the scientific discussion in the volumes of *Officina Textologica*.

Research on the problem of linearization concerning word order and sentence order is of vital importance. As regards the previous volumes of *Officina Textologica*, within the framework of the polyglot text linguistic-textological research program the topic of linearization has been discussed in the following volumes:

Officina Textologica 3. Towards the analysis of the linear arrangement of text sentence constituents. (Analysis of Hungarian texts.) Szikszainé Nagy Irma (ed.). 1999.

Officina Textologica 6. Towards the analysis of the linear arrangement of text sentence constituents. (Analysis of Hungarian texts. 2: Discussion.) Szikszainé Nagy Irma (ed.). 2002.

Officina Textologica 7. Aspects of contrastive text linguistics. (Linearization: theme-rheme structure.) Petőfi S. János—Szikszainé Nagy Irma (eds.) 2002.

Officina Textologica 9. Aspects of contrastive text linguistics. (Linearization: thematic progression.) Petőfi S. János—Szikszainé Nagy Irma (eds.) 2003.

In the following, I will be presenting the various views and the results of the scholarly discussions on the subject of linearization as follows:

– First, I define the phenomenon with the intention of overviewing all aspects of linearization from the theory of sentence structure to textology. In addition to the general definition of the phenomenon, I provide further contributions to the definition, based on a number of review studies, which are valid only in certain theoretical frameworks.

– Second, I survey the studies on linearization in order to form a clear picture of the results of the theoretical and practical research on the topic. Therefore, I arrange the reviews of the studies according to their content and theoretical background rather than their publishing date.

– Third, after a thorough review and evaluation of each study, I give a summary of the results and conclusions based on the examinations performed in the framework of the research program, in addition, I will suggest some directions for further research.

As regards the structure I intend to follow in the reviews of the studies, I have to remark that

– due to size limitations, the equal treatment of the research activities and results of each author is, as a matter of fact, impossible; so I have to point out the studies that I consider as milestones for the research of linearization that has been carried out during the discussion held in the different volumes of *Officina Textologica*.

– the first and second parts cannot be strictly separated because some review studies express definitive conclusions on certain types of linearization (e.g. FSP, thematic progression).

2. Contributions about the definitive characteristics of the phenomenon of linearization

2.1. About the dominant features of the general definition of linearization

The concept of linearization means, both in the theory of sentence structure and in textology, the arrangement of constituents within the actual language and non-language environment (or context and co-text, according to Petőfi). In a sentence grammar framework, this means the arrangement of words within a sentence unit (clause, simple sentence) and the order of clauses within a complex sentence; in addition, in a text linguistics framework, this means the sequence of sentences. Regardless of the complexity of the language elements used, their linear arrangement is determined by their function in the actual communicative context.

Accordingly, in the chapter about linearization in the first volume of *Officina Textologica*, János S. Petőfi defines "the meaning related to the linear arrangement of utterances (text sentences) and/or their constituents" as *communicative meaning*, in addition to referential and mental meaning (Petőfi 1997: 38).

Petőfi attaches great importance to communicative meaning in the process of producing, receiving and interpreting the text. This meaning is related to the theme-rheme (or topic-comment) structure of text sentences, and to the thematic progression in the sequence of text sentences.

János S. Petőfi's model of representing text as a complex sign distinguishes between the relational and linear organization of the formal and semantic composition of the actual vs. extended text vehiculum. Relational organization consists of the formal / syntactic, linguistic – semantic and/or thematic relationships between constituents; and linear organization is based on theme-rheme (topic-predicate) structure and thematic progression (Petőfi S. 2002: 51). As regards the aspect of order, in the definition of linearization Petőfi does not differentiate between theme and topic, and rheme and predicate.

2.2. Additional features of the definition of linearization based on the discussion in *Officina Textologica*

At the present stage of contemporary theory of sentence and textology it is hard to believe that we can define linearization by giving a finite number of

definitive features in a general and acceptable theoretical framework. Rather, we can obtain a more subtle picture of the phenomenon if we analyse in detail the consequences of the different models describing sentence or text, and then try to determine a set of distinctive features to characterize the different phenomena of linearization in general or type by type. Note that, because of the multiplicity of perspectives and approaches of the different schools dealing with the topic, this task might be rather difficult in itself.

At this point let me select some review studies from *Officina Textologica* which contribute significant additions to the definition of linearization.

In the epilogue of the third volume of *Officina Textologica* (entitled '*Towards the analysis of the linear arrangement of text sentence constituents*'), the editor of the volume, Irma Szikszainé Nagy, summarizing the analyses of the studies, makes general remarks on linearization which are fundamental to the definition of the phenomenon. In addition to the general aspects of the theory of sentences and textology concerning linearization which is well-known in the literature, she calls our attention to the dual nature of the phenomenon.

This duality is basically related to the two terms which are used to describe the phenomenon: linearity *and* linearization. *Linearity* occurs more frequently and has two parallel meanings: (a) the process which results in the structure of text; (b) the result of such a process, the linear (possibly continuous) feature of the language object. According to the author, the first meaning can be associated with the term 'linearization' while the second one with the term 'linearity'. From the viewpoint of the theory of sentences and textology, János S. Petőfi uses the term 'linearization'; while he prefers the term 'linear arrangement' when the theme-rheme structure and the thematic progression is concerned, or when speaking in general about the order of words in sentences or the order of sentences in texts.

When speaking about 'order' in Hungarian linguistics, we must mention the fundamental results of László Deme and Imre Békési. Several authors make reference to the two central concepts of Deme, which are 'megszerkesztettség' (approx. 'structurability'; i.e. the sentence has a certain structure based on grammatical rules) and 'beszerkesztettség' (approx. 'incorporativity'; i.e. further grammatical rules apply when sentences are linked and incorporated into a text). These concepts do not completely fit the approach which attributes a central role to the context in the definition of linearization; nevertheless, from a structural viewpoint, they clearly express the dependency of linguistic structures upon a more complex structure. Deme's functional approach attributes communicative role to the sentence as a whole. However, when describing sentence structure he pays careful attention to the thematic organization of text depending on the given context. In his model for the description of sentence structure the duality

of linear progression and hierarchical organization is based on these principles (Tolcsvai Nagy 2002: 13).

In the sixth volume of *Officina Textologica*, Gábor Tolcsvai Nagy's study entitled '*An outline of linguistic research in Hungary on the functional relationship between sentence and word order*' reviews the major ideas about constituent order, within the scope of a sentence as well as in a broader framework, from the viewpoint of contemporary schools of syntax and textology.

Piroska Kocsány's study entitled '*Questions about theme, rheme and text*' deals with the origin and change of the concepts *theme* and *rheme* „from the dichotomy of theme-rheme to the duality of topic-comment” on the basis of the works of the Prague School. The author explores the duality of a syntactic and communicative approach, and discusses various aspects of the issue of order within the scope of sentences and/or texts.

Gábor Tolcsvai Nagy's and Piroska Kocsány's study, complementing each other's thoughts and ideas, give a comprehensive and summary description of the theoretical background of the issue of linearization. In the following we shall overview the main ideas of these studies.

Focusing on the phenomenon of thematic organization, Gábor Tolcsvai Nagy assesses approaches to the theory of sentence that deal with the question of order. The author provides a number of facts about the definition of the phenomenon of linearization, some of which will be summarized below.

Assessing 'Academic grammar',² and the descriptive grammars following and based on it, the author complains that the structural and functional description of word order has been pushed into the background. However, compared to the early structural approach of 'Academic grammar', the new grammatical and structuralist approach of 'Hungarian grammar'³ to the theory of sentence brings about considerable changes, this, however, does not account for the fact that Keszler's approach to grammar does not at all incorporate the systemic description of word order, which is one of the language-specific phenomena of the theory of sentence, into its theory and above all into its practice; so the functional approach to the description of sentence remains in the background.

As regards thematic organization concerning linearization, the author lists, from the Hungarian researches on the theory of sentence, the functional-based

² The author refers to a two volume work on the system of contemporary Hungarian (Deme L.; Farkas V.: *A mai magyar nyelv rendszere I-II*. Budapest: Akadémiai K. 1961.), which has been widely accepted as normative since right after its publication.

³ The author refers again to an authoritative book on Hungarian grammar (Keszler B. (ed.): *Hungarian grammar*. Budapest: Nemzeti Tankönyvkiadó, 2000.)

model of László Elekfi and the transformational generative grammar-based model of Katalin É. Kiss; and from the international literature, the researches of Givón, Halliday, Langacker and Danes.

Tolcsvai Nagy considers László Elekfi as one of the main initiators of the functional description of sentence in the last few decades who built up his functional-structuralist theory of sentence on the basis of the results of the Prague School. In this framework Elekfi calls the two functional sentence elements theme and 'propositum' in order to distinguish them, firstly, from theme and rheme used by the Prague School, and, secondly, from topic and comment used in the generative description of sentence. As regards the relationship between the two functional elements, „the propositum expresses the essence of utterance with reference to the other element of the sentence, i.e. the theme” (Elekfi 1986: 24, cited by Tolcsvai Nagy 2002: 14). However, this relationship between theme and propositum is not valid for every sentence; but when it is, the place and order of the two functional elements in the sentence are not fixed. Therefore in Elekfi's system the theme is the point of reference, the rules regarding the linear arrangement of constituents are incidental, and the order of the two functional elements can be reversed.

In the framework of transformational generative grammar, the categories topic and comment indicate “it is known” and “it is new”, respectively. In the description of the topic-comment structure, the essential generative element is the transformation between the original and the surface structure by which certain elements of the original structure are transferred to topic, comment, or focus position according to certain considerations (Tolcsvai Nagy 2002: 15). Katalin É. Kiss, who, according to Tolcsvai Nagy, has elaborated the most well-known description of the topic-comment categories in the Hungarian generative school, defines the above categories as follows: “Topic is the first nominal and/or adverbial segment of the sentence which is unstressed, while comment is the second structural segment of the sentence which follows the topic, begins with the part of the sentence being stressed, and contains the verb” (É. Kiss 1983: 16, cited by Tolcsvai Nagy 2002: 15). Compared to that of Elekfi, this definition clearly provides much more systemic statements concerning the linear arrangement of constituents.

In her later works Katalin É. Kiss specified the meaning of the category 'focus' by adding that focus expresses exclusive identification, and improved the description of topic-comment categories with special regard to the structure of sentence as follows:

- the structure of a prototypical sentence follows a topic-comment sequence;
- that particular topic-comment structure when the comment starts with a focus is of great importance;

- there are certain structures which have no topic, only comment (or focus followed by the other parts of the comment);
- the two main parts (i.e. the topic and the comment) are not interchangeable; the same sentence constituent in different places of the sentence can be topic or (part of the) comment (É. Kiss 1995: 15, cited by Tolcsvai Nagy 2002: 16).

The adequate description of the problem of linearization can possibly be conceived by combining the results of Elekfi and É. Kiss. The same observation can be made in the relevant international research; both the functional approach of Halliday and Givón, and the cognitive approach of Langacker, although in different theoretical frameworks, deal with the structure of sentence from a semantic viewpoint. They all agree that the description of structure and that of function should be combined (Tolcsvai Nagy 2002: 17).

Halliday's functional grammar (Halliday 1985) introduced for the first time two methods for the description of sentence that can be used together by completing each other: on the one hand, a method "that is formal, identifying sentence constituents directly, and describing phrases"; on the other hand a method "that is functional, classifying sentence constituents, and describing parts of a sentence". The description of the theme-rheme structure of the sentence, according to the Prague School, can then be based on the twofold system of the two above-mentioned methods (ibid.).

In his theory, Givón examines thematic continuity in a sequence of sentences (which can be either a paragraph or a text) which involves studying action and topic continuity. According to Givón, these aspects together determine a larger text unit, e.g. a paragraph.

Langacker's cognitive model deals with the understanding of a sentence and tries to formalize the process of sentence comprehension. One of the clues for this effort can be the interpretation of the topic or topics in the sentence which in itself does not include any rule as to the linear arrangement of the sentence. However, the word order in the sentence can be explained by a so-called 'cognitive path' paradigm based on the scheme 'source – path – target' where the interpretation process can go from the subject (i.e. source) to the direct object (i.e. target) or vice versa. The direction of the process depends on which meaning should be foregrounded (cf. Tolcsvai Nagy 2002: 20).

It can be easily accepted that there are different rules and relationships to be considered within a sentence or a sequence of sentences (or text) concerning the description of the linear arrangement of constituents. Another approach to the question might be that the ratio between grammatical rules and contextual (or situational) effects is different when speaking about a sentence or a text. According to Tolcsvai Nagy, the fact that research in Hungary on thematic progression in the text or in a given part of the text lags behind international research can be explained by the focus on the sentence in the Hungarian

generative research tradition.. The Hungarian theoretical frameworks are based on two models, i.e. Danes' model of thematic progression and É. Kiss' model of the thematic organization of text, respectively (ibid.).

The most concrete conclusion Tolcsvai Nagy draws about the current situation of the description of sentence and text explored in his study is that “the functional sentence perspective is discourse-dependent, therefore the immediate context and situation needs to be modelled for the description to be valid. Consequently, the attempts of textology support, from among the previous theoretical and descriptive approaches, the functional and cognitive approaches, at the same time synthesizing the results of the formal generative theory.” (Tolcsvai Nagy 2002: 21) The slight but noticeable trend changes in the theory of science toward cognitive approaches have verified Gábor Tolcsvai Nagy's observations about dealing with texts, which he expressed more than ten years ago.

Some of the analytical studies published in *Officina Textologica* represent the same tendency toward the examination of the phenomenon of linearization. Exploring systematically the contextual-logical relationships in text, Károly I. Boda and Judit Porkoláb provide a formal description of the theme-rheme relationships and the thematic progression within particular literary texts. Applying the so-called co-reference analysis elaborated by János S. Petőfi, they intend to analyse and formally describe the deeper structure of the meaning of text. (Boda–Porkoláb 2002 and 2003). Other studies compare the linear arrangement of text sentence constituents in Hungarian texts with that of foreign (i.e. non-Hungarian) language texts taking into consideration the cognitive aspects of texts (Csúry A 2002 and 2003; Pelyvás 2002 and 2003; Skutta 2002 and 2003; Kiss 2002).

In her study mentioned above, Piroska Kocsány analyses the dichotomy of theme-rheme and topic-comment on the basis of research by the Prague School concerning sentence and text linguistics. With respect to text, mostly in Danes' research “the theme gets a new accent” which leads to the concept of thematic progression that can be applied to the examination of texts. According to Piroska Kocsány, “in this framework the concept of theme and rheme puts a broader perspective on the different domains of meaning which can be (or to be) interpreted in various ways”.

Piroska Kocsány's train of thought leads to interesting implications for the textological aspects of the theme-rheme phenomenon . Starting from the fact that the syntactic structure of Hungarian sentences is highly constrained, she tries to thoroughly explore and analyse the fundamental issue of whether it is necessary to introduce the theme-rheme operation which can be hard to define, or we should stick to the trichotomy of topic-focus-comment which can be used according to a well-functioning system of rules for describing sentences and can

also serve as a reference point in the description of texts. However, the author points out four areas where the trichotomy of topic-focus-comment, which functions perfectly in the framework of the theory of sentences, cannot be used or can only be used under certain conditions. These areas are as follows: prosody, the question of how to express the intention of the speaker, the question of conveying cognition and style, and the information structure established in the process of producing and processing text (Kocsány 2002: 13). In the remainder of her study the author examines these four areas of language production with a view to answering the question of how best they can be characterized: along the lines of the theme-rheme dichotomy or the topic-focus-comment trichotomy.

As one might guess, the answer is quite difficult and not necessarily definite; however, it is significant from the viewpoint of research on the topic. The author arrives at the conclusion that “for systemic linguistics, the use of the concept of ‘topic-comment’ is safer than the vague concept of ‘theme-rheme’”. For the most part, this statement holds true, and is especially valid for the explanation of (psycho)linguistic questions related to word order or the understanding of sentence in the case of the Hungarian language. Using the ‘topic-comment’ construction can also be useful for prosodic studies even if here we should take certain special cases into consideration the explanation of which are far beyond the limits of systemic linguistics. As a consequence, the ‘topic-comment’ construction, after it has been precisely elaborated, can help us perform certain prosodic studies as well as examine the structure of discourse. However, the main function of the ‘topic-comment’ dichotomy is to structure the text according to contextual factors. As a result, we should go beyond the traditional linguistic concept of ‘theme-rheme’. [...] Since the extended interpretation of the ‘topic-comment’ construction (whether functional or cognitive-based) is focussed either on the cognitive units of the process of producing and processing text or the identification of mental operations, and not merely on language-level facts, it obviously goes outside the functional framework of linguistics.” (Kocsány 2002: 17)

3. About the lessons that can be drawn from the discussion held in the framework of the polyglot text linguistic – textological research program

One definite advantage of the polyglot text linguistic – textological research program is the existence of systematic analyses that methodologically complement the theoretical research. In the first volume of *Officina Textologica* János S. Petőfi, outlining the basic aims of the research program, emphasizes two basic features:

– on the one hand, the program is to be polyglot because we are convinced that the textological – text linguistic characteristics of (the texts of) a specific

language cannot be explored in-depth if we do not examine them from the viewpoint of at least another language;

– on the other hand, the program is to be integrated as far as possible; we would like to encourage scholars from different language backgrounds and interests to study the textological – text linguistic phenomena in question (also from more or less identical — or at least an explicitly comparable — viewpoint. (Petőfi 1997: 7–8)

In harmony with these principles, first, some linguists participating in the scientific discussion (concerning also the topic of linearization) compare the overall characteristic of Hungarian texts with English, German, French, Russian and Italic texts and other language attributes; and second, every research task is part of a well designed and elaborated research project the research methodology of which enables scholars from different theoretical background to cooperate with each other fully.

The studies of *Officia Textologica* dealing with the phenomenon of linearization can be broadly classified into four categories:

1) I have thoroughly reviewed in the foregoing discussion the review articles that have dealt with the theoretical aspects of the 'theme-rheme' structure.

2) Other studies examine word and sentence order in the Hungarian language in comparison with other (i.e. not Hungarian) languages.

3) Further studies analyse the phenomenon of linearization on the basis of a given model or method, and draw conclusions from empirical results.

4) The fourth set of studies extend their investigations concerning the phenomenon of linearization to the more general aspects of text. In these cases the overall assessment of the phenomenon of thematic progression is necessarily beyond the scope of linguistics, although it applies the lessons drawn from the investigations of the structure of sentence.

In the following I will focus on the three remaining groups of studies.

3.1 On the results of the contrastive text linguistic studies

The studies of the seventh volume of *Officina Textologica (Aspects of contrastive text linguistics)*, ed. by János S. Petőfi and Irma Szikszainé Nagy) compare the theme-rheme organization of Hungarian sentences to that of English and French sentences.

Péter Pelyvás studies the theme-rheme organization of English sentences from a cognitive grammatical perspective. He characterizes the relation of the phenomenon of theme-rheme structure to word order and grammatical functions compared with the structural features of Hungarian sentences. The contrastive study of English and Hungarian sentence structures seems to be useful because of the significant difference between the two languages in this respect. A slightly

simplified explanation of the rigid word order in English is that the grammatical function of words is determined by their position in the sentence. On the other hand, the so-called free word order in Hungarian is motivated by the theme-rheme structure because the grammatical functions are determined by grammatical morphemes and not the structural position of words. This fact explains the essential difference in the description of sentence structure between Hungarian and English; in the Hungarian language, the exploration of the theme-rheme structural representation is preferred to the subject-predicate analysis of sentence structure, while the description of the English sentence structure is based on grammatical functions. Analysing certain type of structures (e.g. passive structures, complex transitive predicates, existential sentences, etc.) Pelyvás looks for an answer to the question of “whether the description of English sentence based on the grammatical functions can be replaced with a description which is based on the communicative aspects to a greater extent” (Pelyvás 2002: 20).

The analyses lead to interesting consequences. According to the author, one of the main conclusions is that “the theme-rheme organization is a very important part of the process of building, or being integrated into, a cognitive model” (Pelyvás 2002: 32). In addition, he suggests that we reconsider the traditional theorem that in languages with rigid word order “there is a serious tension between the communicative aspects of the theme-rheme structure and the rules governing the arrangement of grammatical functions within the sentence” because, for example in the English language there are only a few structures that can be used to ease this “tension”. Moreover, the author holds that the traditional notion of the English language having rigid word order needs to be reassessed because certain communicative contexts enable the creation of non-prototypical structures (Pelyvás 2002: 33). In the author’s opinion, holistic cognitive grammar is suitable to describe sentence-level, and preferably text-level, phenomena.

Sándor Kiss and Franciska Skutta study the same tension between the communicative and grammatical aspects of sentence structure in French that Péter Pelyvás examined in English sentences, as we have mentioned before.

The title of Sándor Kiss’s study, “*Parts of speech and theme-rheme structure: the conflict of two structures in French*”, clearly expresses the contrast between grammatical function and communication structure. The author’s starting point is as follows: “French is usually considered as a language having rather rigid word order.” (Kiss 2002: 35) This language feature raises the question of the conflict between the logical-functional structure of sentence and theme-rheme structure. The author mentions two opposite schools in French linguistic science which attempt to handle this conflict. The first approach is the functional view of traditional grammar which considers sentence as “a unit of

functions to be interpreted logically” and takes functional sentence perspective into account only when analysing specially or loosely constructed sentences. The other approach “takes into account the starting point of the message and the aim of the utterance” in the first place (Kiss 2002: 35). Sándor Kiss studies the two views in one and the same framework and examines “the kind of solutions in the theory of sentence that can ensure the preferred handling of the starting and the end point of the message in French presuming that the language user remains within the broad scope of the logical-functional rules concerning the construction of sentences.” The author focuses on three phenomena: “putting the rheme on focus position; the structural position or anteposition of the starting point, i.e. the theme; the constructions that prepare and practically preannounce the rheme (Kiss 2002: 36).” As a final conclusion of his analyses, Sándor Kiss draws the lesson that “there is a one-sided relationship between the logical-functional and communicative organization of sentences; the latter can always be reconstructed in the message, but it does not necessarily determine the former”.

Franciska Skutta’s study examines the thematic organization of complex sentences in French with special reference to the order of clauses. The examination is based on the structural typology of complex sentences and pays special attention to the relationship between clauses and the conjunction expressing this relationship. The author illustrates functional sentence perspective analysing different types of the structure of the complex sentence by an example each. Her analyses confirm the otherwise well-known fact that subordination is essentially a grammatical phenomenon, but the logical relations of coordination lead to the field of textology. According to the author, this difference appears in the theme-rheme structure of the clauses of complex sentences because “determining the theme and pointing out the rheme can in the strict sense be accomplished only in subordination, and the structure can be accurately described by corresponding rules. [...] in the contrastive study of French and Hungarian (or other languages) we might find that subordination structures have more language specific features, and therefore greater differences between languages than coordination which is based on logical relations in the first place.” (Skutta 2002: 64)

In her study entitled *‘The correspondence of Hungarian text sentences having focus in French translation: possible syntactic structures and tendencies’* Andrea Csúry (Nagy) presents a comparative study of French and Hungarian. Limiting the scope of the study, she deals only with positive affirmative text sentences having a constituent which can be interpreted as a focus. The author examines the question of how we can express and determine the focus in the light of comparing the structure of Hungarian sentences with that of their French translations. Using a corpus of text sentences containing verbs with prefix the

separation of which makes it easier to identify the position of focus, the author wants to find “the basic elements in French, considering that it is a rigid word order language, that correspond in translation to the parts of the Hungarian sentences in focus position” (Csúry A. 2002: 65). Analysing the examples she draws the conclusion that “the French language expresses focus essentially in two ways, i.e. with the emphatic syntactic structure and with stress, respectively” (Csúry A. 2002: 73).

The central issue of István Csúry’s research is about the behaviour of connectors. In his study entitled ‘*The syntax of the thematic structure and the connectors in the French and Hungarian language*’ he examines the existence of the relationship between the position of connectors in text sentences (for those connectors that do not have a fixed position) and the thematic structure of text sentences. As regards the issues examined, there are some similarities in French and in Hungarian: on the one hand, “in French, the syntactic rules for adverbial connectors cannot be described without taking into consideration the thematic structure” (Csúry I. 2002: 85–86); on the other hand, “in Hungarian, we should take into account the status of clauses within the co-text, the way that the connection is realized, and the thematic structure, in order to describe the syntax of adverbial connectors, even if the role of these factors is different in the case of various lexical units.” (Csúry I. 2002: 89) According to the author, “the thematic structure of the text sentence, and its aspects concerning word order, should be examined in parallel with the thematic organization of the co-text [...] to answer the syntactic issues discussed here we should first analyse the ways in which connection can, in the given case, be realized, and not necessarily the theme-rheme structure within the sentence” (Csúry I.: 2002: 89).

The four remaining studies of the seventh volume of *Officina Textologica* make valuable, and mainly theoretical, additions to the contrastive and analytical approaches described above.

Károly I. Boda and Judit Porkoláb’s main concern is to examine poetic texts. In their study entitled ‘*Examination of the theme-rheme structure of a selected poetic text using co-reference analysis*’ the authors present a step-by-step methodology for analysing a selected poetic text which, in this case, is a poem by Milán Füst. The main conclusion of the authors is that “co-referential analysis can be effectively applied to explore the theme-rheme structure of a given text” (Boda–Porkoláb 2002: 93).

Edit Dobi’s formulation-based approach to the organization of text sentences is mainly based on structural principles, including semantic aspects of sentence structure, as well. In her study entitled ‘*To the analysis of the division of text sentences on the basis of given and new information*’ she describes, starting from the generative description of sentences, the role of pragmatics in the

representation of systemic and text sentences including the representation of the linear arrangement of constituents and the theme-rheme structure.

Zoltán Szabó's main concern is to explore the status of comparative stylistics in the system of textological disciplines, just as he has accomplished it so far in the case of other disciplines such as contrastive linguistics, translation studies, and comparative literature studies. In his study entitled '*Linearity and comparative stylistics*' he examines the phenomenon of linearization from a stylistic standpoint providing detailed analyses of several examples. These examinations are considered to be significant and justified because stylistics, and especially comparative stylistics has not yet taken enough attention to the phenomenon of linear arrangement.

Olga Murvai's study entitled '*Theme-rheme structure and the question of translation from a textological viewpoint*' deals with the manifestations of the theme-rheme structures of the target language in translations. The author extends the issue of linearity to a textual phenomenon. Her starting point is the topic-focus dichotomy based on the theory of Sanford and Garrod. The author distinguishes between explicit and implicit foci as follows: "explicit [focus] concentrates on a specific entity of the text whereas implicit [focus] concentrates on a script or the background knowledge which characterizes the corresponding entity" (Murvai 2002: 129). Her basic question is "whether the distinction between implicit and explicit foci can be efficiently used in translation" (ibid.). The main conclusion of the author's very illuminating experimental analysis is that the above dichotomy presents an informative basis for translation.

In the final study of the volume entitled '*»This« functioning as cataphora in the English language*', Olga Bársony expounds the idea that the use of 'this' under discussion (instead of using the indefinite article 'a(n)') sends a specific message to the receiver, i.e. that the speaker is inclined (or might definitely want) to provide extra information about the topic, or discuss it. Concerning this phenomenon, the author deals only with its occurrence in the English language and does not compare its parallel to that of the Hungarian language.

3.2 The practical aspect of the text linguistic discussion

As reflected in the previous studies mentioned before, the polyglot research program involves both theoretical discussions and analytical approaches. As we have seen before, the detailed outline of the phenomenon of linearization required theoretical and integrated approaches in the first place, as well as analytical works written as a kind of justification of a particular theoretical hypothesis. In parallel with it, it might be worthwhile, and perhaps interesting as well, to have a good look at those methodological starting points or analytical techniques the application of which can shed light on the various features of

sequentiality. These techniques are represented by particular authors, or groups of authors, in the research program which edits and manages the periodical '*Officina Textologica*'. The approaches followed by the authors necessarily correspond to each other in that the target of the analyses should be considered as a syntactic and semantic structure influenced by its context.

The studies which are intended to carry out an analysis can be basically divided into two groups: the first one contains studies the authors of which have undertaken a given task applying a prescribed methodological framework; whilst the second one contains studies whose authors examine a specific phenomenon that has been established before, applying individual and unique (or at least not uniform) methods.

The studies from the first group can be found in the third volume of *Officina Textologica* entitled '*Towards the analysis of the linear arrangement of text sentence constituents. (Analysis of Hungarian texts.)*'. Based on the works of János S. Petőfi and Zsuzsa Benkes, we call the analytical approach which the authors of these studies follow **creative-productive text processing**. In addition to the fundamental role of the system of grammatical rules concerning the word order in sentences, or concerning the representation of linguistic structures to be more general, the creative-productive approach emphasizes the significance of intuition in the process of producing and processing a sentence or text.

All the authors of the volume have undertaken a (specific variation of a) task of analysing a given part of text assigned to them by János S. Petőfi. In the foreword of the volume, Petőfi says about the research:

“For the target of the analysis, we have selected three different parts of the same literary text, namely the first five paragraphs of 'The lynx', a short story by Lajos Áprily. The selections to be analysed were as follows: (I) the first clause of a compound text sentence; (II) a complete but simple text sentence; (III) a compound text sentence which contains five syntactically independent clauses. The authors have been asked to analyse the possible linear arrangements of the above selections.

We have made special preparations for the analyses. In each case the selection (either a clause or a text sentence) has been deleted from the original text and we gave all the possible linear arrangements of its constituents without telling the authors which was the actual arrangement that occurred in the given context. Giving the authors a creative exercise, the main task of the analyses was to decide which arrangements in each case can be considered acceptable and which cannot.

We have asked three persons for each type of selections; two of them were asked to actually perform the analysis, and one to make his or her students of a seminar do it, and then summarize and evaluate their results.” (Petőfi 2002: 11)

I am convinced that the detailed description of the task was worth mentioning because it determined the method the authors employed. Although the authors of the volume have undertaken an analytical task, they also deal, extensively or meditatively, with theoretical issues; it is because of the nature of the matter discussed which is rather complex and not very well-defined. In the epilogue of the volume, Irma Szikszainé Nagy gives a comprehensive account on the results of the analyses.

In her study entitled '*Thematic progression and linear arrangement*', Franciska Skutta analyses not only the given variations in the order of words in selection (I) but also examines further possible variations. She evaluates the various forms of linear arrangement dynamically, according to the reception of the content. In his study entitled '*The role of prosody in the formation of linear arrangement*', Imre Wacha handles the assigned task uniquely, examining the subject on the basis of prosody which is the main concern of his research. In her study entitled '*Examination of linear surface structures on the basis of five paragraphs selected from the short story »The Lynx« by Lajos Áprily*', Edit Dobi summarizes the results of an experiment conducted by a group of students. Her analysis follows a generative approach taking into consideration the textological aspect that both the given context and the factors of the current communication situation have impact on the linear arrangement of the constituents of a text sentence. The title of Piroska Kocsány's study is '*Variations in the order of words in texts: which are »authentic«?*'. Taking an analytical approach, she focuses on the context that follows the sentence analysed which is rather unique because most analysts prefer the context that precedes the sentence. She concentrates on how the prosodic features of the sentence overwrite the rules of the theory of sentence structure. In her study entitled '*Creation of a fairly acceptable vehiculum for a piece of prose*', Eszter Szikoráné Kovács declares that we should evaluate the information value and stress relationships in each word-order variation in order to select the acceptable one(s). In his study entitled '*A creative-productive exercise in assessing the formation of a selected verbal text*', László Vass summarizes the analysis of a college student group. He points out that the students almost invariably selected the most acceptable variation directly, but when trying to select the least acceptable one the results were more random. In her study entitled '*A creative approach to the possible linear arrangements of text sentence constituents in clauses (or simple sentences)*', Ágnes Domonkosi deals with the manifestation of linearization in text including the characterization of thematic progression. On text level the linear arrangement of logically related sentence constituents (supposing that they are connected without conjunctions and do not include co-referential elements that have an effect on the sequence of the constituents) is far less rigid than the word order in the sentence. According to the author, the acceptability of the different variations

is determined by the direction of the description of the content influenced by various factors (in this case the suggested description of 'the lynx' goes from a general picture to specific details), as well as the rhythmic and syntactic features. In his study entitled '*Analysis of the possible linear arrangement of independent clauses*', János S. Petőfi analyses the factors that determine the order of syntactically independent clauses in a compound text sentence. The author introduces a system called "triple filter" which is built on three pillars: first, he analyses the logical structure of each clause and tries to formulate rules on the order of clauses; second, he examines the rhythmic structure of the possible linear arrangements of the clauses; third, he studies the effect of perception on the possible linear arrangements. In her study entitled '*The analysis of communicative meaning in the linear arrangement of the constituents of a text sentence*', Katalin B. Fejes summarizes the work of a group of students. She reveals that the students' choices have been influenced by logical-semantic factors (e.g. the whole-part relationship between the elements of the description, the order of the general-important and specific-unimportant elements, etc.) and syntactic-rhythmic considerations (e.g. the length of a sentence constituent, the occurrence of the verb as a predicate in a sentence, rhythm, rhymes, etc.).

As I mentioned before, in the epilogue of the volume Irma Szikszainé Nagy presents a summative evaluation of the results of the authors' analyses. She systematizes the methodological and theoretical conclusions and emphasizes the deficiencies to be overcome in the future investigation of the subject. She voices her opinion that a thorough and in-depth examination of the subject must be carried out.

The discussion of the third volume of *Officina Textologica* is included in the sixth volume. The first study of the sixth volume is written by Gábor Tolcsvai Nagy, his conclusions were presented in detail when we were discussing the definition of the phenomenon of linearization. The other studies provide an intriguing extension of the creative-productive approach to text. Except for Zsuzsa Benkes, who in her study carries out a "classical" creative-productive text analysis, the authors complete the approach invented by Petőfi and Benkes with their own views and ideas. (Under the methodological classification scheme mentioned earlier in this study, these studies belong to the second group where the creative-productive approach they adopt is realized in a unique way.)

The authors of the sixth volume continue the analysis on the selected passage by Áprily now making use of the results of the previous studies.

The title of Edit Kádár's study is '*Bábirkó-style wrestling*' which is itself a witty and thought-provoking pun expressing the frequent struggle that linguists, doing their analysis, carry on with the text in order to find some general rules concerning its organization. Within a slightly modified framework of semiotic textology, the author distinguishes between the grammar of the speech product

and speech production grammar (which needs to be elaborated, the author adds), emphasizing that in the speech process text is a product and production at the same time. As regards the first approach (i.e. considering text as a speech product), the author analyses the different variations on the basis of lexico-grammatical and phonetical-prosodic features, and the communicative or thematic organization of text. As regards the second approach, the author attempts to evaluate the communicative intention behind the different variations.

János S. Petőfi's study entitled '*An analytical approach to the linearized structure of texts*' outlines a typology of the organization of text worked out by the author, and provides a step-by-step introduction to the analysis intended to result in an explicit and formal description of text. Petőfi's genuine and brilliant idea is that two different types of organization of text can be distinguished, namely the relational and linearized organization. By analysing these organization types we can describe the hierarchical and linear structure of a given text, as presented by the author projecting the system of organization types onto the text analysed. Finally, he summarizes and raises questions for future research.

In her study entitled '*A creative approach to the linearized structure of texts*', Zsuzsa Benkes reviews the analytical methods which she has developed together with János S. Petőfi in order that, as the author says, our systemic linguistic, text linguistic, and textological knowledge, suppositions, expectations and our knowledge about the world, most of which are usually latent, will be revealed in the analytical processing of text. (Benkes 2002: 71) The author describes two fundamental approaches, namely the creative-productive and the kaleidoscopic approach to text, both involving a corresponding method. The first one can be either constructive or selective, both aiming at a given text to be worked on. The aim of the second one is to process a given text according to certain aspects. The author analyses several examples which clearly demonstrate that the described methods can greatly contribute to a better understanding "how text works", taking either language or other aspects into consideration.

In his study entitled '*Management of distance relationships in a totally lexical grammar*', Gábor Alberti examines the problem of linearization in a narrower framework where the question of word order within a sentence belongs to the domain of generative grammar (and semantics). His theoretical framework is the so-called GASG grammar (Generative / Generalized Argument Structure Grammar) which states that "the information which is required for the building of a sentence structure from words comes more and more from the lexical description⁴ of the (suffixed) words, and not from the general syntactic rules."

⁴ i.e. the description of all the words that might occur in the (potential) grammatical context of each suffixed word (ibid.)

(Alberti 2002: 89) The author demonstrates his ideas analysing two sentence examples.

As we have seen so far, the sixth volume of *Officina Textologica* discussed and analysed further the questions that were raised by the authors of the third volume. As a result, in the sixth volume some new and genuine analytical methods have been invented.

3.3 Linearization in a broader framework. Research on thematic progression

The ninth volume of *Officina Textologica* is about thematic progression. There are eight studies in the volume, all of which deal with the assigned topic of the volume, either following a theoretical perspective, or examining selected texts and drawing inferences from the experiences of the examination.

In her study entitled '*»New« types of progression and two-sided rheme structure*', Andrea Csűry (Nagy) deals with the thematic organization of French-language newspaper articles. In the analysed French texts the author observes a particularly economical construction⁵ which is characteristic of them. She calls this construction a two-sided rheme structure. (Csűry A: 2003: 16)

In his study entitled '*Thematic progression and its absence in English psychotic narrations*', Péter Pelyvás deals with a specific text type, namely narrative texts created by psychotic patients whose task was to give an account of the events seen in a short movie of five scenes.

In her study entitled '*What a fine piece of argumentation! The caricature of thematic progression in Molière's plays*', Franciska Skutta analyses selected passages from two of Molière's plays. The author focusses on the so-called argumentative sequence of the selected passages and draws the conclusion that the distortions of this structure in Molière's texts are caused by "breaks" in the process of thematic progression. (Skutta 2003: 33)

In their study entitled '*Examination of thematic progression in selected texts using co-reference analysis*', the authors present a complex analytical apparatus which has been elaborated in order to analyse, using a formal and algorithmic approach, the co-reference structure and thematic progression of texts. They demonstrate their conception by analysing a selected passage from a poem by Miklós Radnóti. The overall aim of their research is to develop a general tool for the description of texts "which will enable, in a language-independent way, to

⁵ In this construction the thematic progression does not follow the usual, „standard” theme-rheme order; instead, the amount of information related to the theme is doubled by an additional rhematic unit which precedes the theme (ibid.).

represent and examine selected formal and material elements of the analysed texts in a knowledge-based information system” (Boda–Porkoláb 2003: 45).

In his study entitled '*Progressive dialogue? (on the basis of selected texts by Molière)*', Sándor Kiss interprets the meaning of thematic progression in a more general way compared to the usual interpretations. Analysing selected dialogues, the author examines the breaks in the process of thematic progression taking careful attention to the relationship between the characteristics of the analysed text and the events of the represented world of the fiction. (Kiss 2003: 59)

In his essay entitled '*Connectors and thematic progression*', István Csúry raises and examines the question “whether it is conceivable to draw general conclusions from the presence of connectors about the thematic organization of their context” (Csúry 2003: 65). After analysing eight passages from selected texts, the author declares that there *is* connection between the connectors and the thematic structure of the cotext. On the one hand, the connectors, which are essential functional elements of the organization of text, might never be ignored when analysing thematic relationships; on the other hand, the thematic structure plays a key role in interpreting the semantic-pragmatic relationship identified by the connectors.

In his essay '*Thematic progression in the context of the history of style*', Zoltán Szabó, who is a leading scholar in the field of stylistics, demonstrates that the typology of the different trends of style can be systematically explored by analysing thematic progression in carefully chosen examples. He draws the conclusion that simple and complex trends of style can be clearly distinguished on the basis of the different types of thematic progression observed in them. (Szabó 2003: 88)

Following a semiotic textological approach, János S. Petőfi characterizes the different forms of text organization in a unique way, one pillar of which is the thorough examination of meaning. In his study entitled '*Different forms of text organization and the three facets of meaning*', the author studies the relationship between the three facets of meaning he distinguishes (i.e. the conceptual, co-referential, and communicative components of meaning) and the different forms of text organization, analysing a selected poem by László Kálnoky. From this point of view, he also examines the theme-rheme structure and the thematic progression in the poem.

In the foreword of the ninth volume János S. Petőfi, the chief editor of the periodical *Officina Textologica*, summarizes the research work presented in the volume as follows:

“The relevance of the contributions, in addition to their individual merits and the fact that they employ a variety of theoretical approaches and analyse different types of texts, is further enhanced by the fact that all the authors

have participated in all *Officina Textologica* conferences organized so far, and have in this way contributed to the creation and maintenance of a forum for continuous professional discussion.” (Petőfi 2003: 8)

4. Summary

Thanks to the organization of research activity by János S. Petőfi and the participating researchers who have been ready for the mutual exchange of their views and ideas, the *Officina Textologica* has become a unique textological-text linguistic forum for the presentation, analysis and theoretical discussion of specific problems and the publication of the results. The studies presented here, as it clearly appears from their results, have substantially contributed to the definition and discussion of the problem of linearization and, although there is a lot of research being conducted in the field of textology on theme-rheme organization and thematic progression nowadays, the authors of the studies raise several interesting and important questions for contemporary textological research.

List of the studies about the problem of linearization published in the volumes of *Officina Textologica*

- Alberti Gábor: Távolsági kapcsolatok kezelése egy totálisan lexikális grammatikában. [Management of distance relationships in a totally lexical grammar.] In: Szikszainé Nagy Irma (Szerk.) *Officina Textologica* 6. Szövegmondat-összetevők lehetséges lineáris elrendezéseinek elemzéséhez. (Magyar nyelvű szövegek elemzése. Diskusszió). Debrecen, 2002. 88–112.
- Bársony Olga A *this* mint a katafora eszköze az angol nyelvben. [‘This’ functioning as cataphora in the English language.] In: Petőfi S. János–Szikszainé Nagy Irma (Szerk.) *Officina Textologica* 7. A kontrasztív szövegnyelvészet aspektusai. (Linearizáció: téma–réma szerkezet). Debrecen, 2002. 143–149.
- Benkes Zsuzsa: A szövegek linearizált szerkezetének kreatív megközelítése. [A creative approach to the linearized structure of texts.] In: Szikszainé Nagy Irma (Szerk.) *Officina Textologica* 6. Szövegmondat-összetevők lehetséges lineáris elrendezéseinek elemzéséhez. (Magyar nyelvű szövegek elemzése. Diskusszió). Debrecen, 2002. 69–87.
- B. Fejes Katalin: A kommunikatív jelentés vizsgálata egy szövegmondat összetevőinek lineáris elrendezésében. [The analysis of communicative meaning in the linear arrangement of the constituents of a text sentence.] In: Szikszainé Nagy Irma (Szerk.): *Officina Textologica* 6. Szövegmondat-

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- Boda I. Károly—Bodáné Porkoláb Judit: A tematikus progresszió vizsgálata kiválasztott szövegekben korreferencia-elemzés segítségével. [Examination of thematic progression in selected texts using co-reference analysis.] In: Petőfi S. János–Szikszainé Nagy Irma (Szerk.) *Officina Textologica* 9. A kontrasztív szövegnyelvészet aspektusai. (Linearizáció: tematikus progresszió). Debrecen, 2003. 45–58.
- Csűry Andrea: Fókusz tartalmazó magyar szövegmondatok megfeleltetése francia fordításban: szintaktikai lehetőségek és tendenciák. [The correspondence of Hungarian text sentences having focus in French translation: possible syntactic structures and tendencies.] In: Petőfi S. János–Szikszainé Nagy Irma (Szerk.) *Officina Textologica* 7. A kontrasztív szövegnyelvészet aspektusai. (Linearizáció: téma-réma szerkezet). Debrecen, 2002. 65–74.
- Csűry Andrea: „Új” progressziótípusok és kétoldali rémaszerkezet. [‘New’ types of progression and two-sided rheme structure.] In: Petőfi S. János–Szikszainé Nagy Irma (Szerk.) *Officina Textologica* 9. A kontrasztív szövegnyelvészet aspektusai. (Linearizáció: tematikus progresszió). Debrecen, 2003. 9–16.
- Csűry István: A tematikus struktúra és a konnektorok szintaxisa a franciában és a magyarban. [The syntax of the thematic structure and the connectors in the French and Hungarian language.] In: Petőfi S. János–Szikszainé Nagy Irma (Szerk.) *Officina Textologica* 7. A kontrasztív szövegnyelvészet aspektusai. (Linearizáció: téma-réma szerkezet). Debrecen, 2002. 75–92.
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- Kádár Edit: (Bá)birkózás. [Bábirkó-style wrestling.] In: Szikszainé Nagy Irma (Szerk.) *Officina Textologica 6. Szövegmondat-összetevők lehetséges lineáris elrendezéseinek elemzéséhez.* (Magyar nyelvű szövegek elemzése. Diskusszió). Debrecen, 2002. 25–49.
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