Textual Meanings

Lecturer: Siti Mahripah, M.App.Ling.

Contextual variables

- **field**: what’s going on? — process and domain
- **tenor**: who’s taking part? — roles and relations
- **mode**: what role is language playing?

Textual meaning

- is concerned with the organisation of information
- is used to create relevance in context
- textual resources are used to represent ideational & interpersonal meanings as a flow of information ...
Terminology we’ll meet:
- Theme / Rheme
- topical Theme
- interpersonal Theme
- textual Theme
- unmarked Theme
- marked Theme

Theme in the lexicogrammar:
- gives the clause its character as a message
- the element which functions as the point of departure for the message
- The element which locates the clause within its context
- In English, we give a distinct status to a position in the clause i.e. we put it first

Theme & Rheme
- The lion beat the unicorn all around the town
- All around the town the lion beat the unicorn
- By the lion the unicorn was beaten all around the town
- The unicorn was beaten all around the town by the lion

John could send his assignment by email, but he did not.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Act</th>
<th>Process material</th>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Manner</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>John</td>
<td>could</td>
<td>and</td>
<td>have</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>experiential</td>
<td>Actor</td>
<td>Prepositional phrase</td>
<td>by email</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Finite</th>
<th>Complement</th>
<th>Adjunct</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mood</td>
<td>Residue</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Rheme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>textual</td>
<td>Theme textual</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Diagram: John could send his assignment by email, but he did not.
how to identify Themes

- Theme
  - The starting point for the message in the clause
  - The first element of the clause
- Rheme
  - The part of the clause in which the Theme is developed
  - The Rheme typically contains unfamiliar ("New") information
- Types of Theme
  - Topical (Experiential)
  - Interpersonal
  - Textual

Topical Theme

- is the first element in clause that has an experiential function
  - participant
  - process
  - circumstance

Topical Theme

- Participant
- Circumstance
- Process

- I made about $125 in my first week
- In my first week I made about $125
- Make $125 in your first week!

Clause Theme

- so topical Theme is everything up to & including the first experiential element in the clause
- what if there are elements before the topical Theme? (e.g. conjunctions, modal Adjuncts etc)

textual Themes

- plays a cohesive role in relating the clause to its context
- continutative (e.g. yes, no, well, ah)
- structural elements = conjunctives & wh-relatives (also simultaneously topical Theme)
- conjunctive / cohesive adjuncts

egs of textual Themes

- Continuity Adjuncts
  - oh, well, etc.
  - Oh they haven’t done it.
  - No you wouldn’t.
- Conjunctive Adjuncts
  - and, but, however, therefore
  - So they could actually do it through the T&I office.
  - But we do things differently there.
Typical Theme order

- textual^topical

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>textual Theme</td>
<td>topical Theme</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

... much of the emotional impact is lost...

Translation Quality Assessment: Linguistic Description versus Social Evaluation
Juliane House
University of Hamburg, Hamburg, Germany

The paper first reports on three different approaches to translation evaluation, which examine different concepts of "meaning" and its role in translation. Secondly, a functional-pragmatic model of translation evaluation is described, which features a distinction between different types of translations and versions. Thirdly, the influence of English as a worldwide lingua franca on translation processes is discussed. Finally, the important distinction between linguistic analysis and social judgement in translation evaluation is introduced. And conclusions for the practice (of assessing the quality of a translation) are drawn.

Structural connection: linking clauses: [influent, clause complex]

- so topical Theme is everything up to & including the first experiential element in the clause
- what if there are elements before the topical Theme? (e.g., conjunctions, modal Adjuncts etc)

interpersonal Themes

- Mood signpost at the beginning of a clause
- indicates the kid of interaction between speakers/ writers or the position they are taking

interpersonal Themes

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vocative</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maria</td>
<td>give me an example of an interpersonal Theme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dear teacher</td>
<td>give me an example of an interpersonal Theme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mood Adjunct / Comment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Probably</td>
<td>I could give you an example of an interpersonal Theme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frankly</td>
<td>I just can't think of an example right now</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mood marking</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>polar (yes/no) interrogative</td>
<td>Can, you think of an example?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did you understand the example above?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wh-interrogative</td>
<td>Why does the Mood marking in English have an interpersonal function?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>imperative</td>
<td>Let's think about this together</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>you/me form</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4
Typical Theme order

- textual^interpersonal^topical

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>textual Theme</th>
<th>interpersonal Theme</th>
<th>topical Theme</th>
<th>Rheme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

and unfortunately much of the emotional impact is lost.

Why are these textual & interpersonal items associated with thematic prominence?

"In the most general sense, they are all natural Themes: if the speaker, or writer, is making explicit the way the clause relates to the surrounding discourse (textual), or projecting his or her own angle on the value of what the clause is saying (interpersonal), it is natural to set up such expressions as the point of departure." (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014: 86)

Hungarian Cookery Book Introduction

What do you think of when someone mentions the country Hungary? Gypsies in colourful costumes, singing love songs? Or composers like Franz Liszt and Bela Bartok, whose music embodies rhythmic folk tunes? Perhaps you read about the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the country that played such an important role in European history during the 19th and early 20th centuries. Certainly you think of Hungarian goulash, a savoury soup seasoned with generous amounts of the red pepper paprika.

All these things are part of the heritage of Hungary, a small, central European country with a long, dramatic history. Throughout Hungary’s 1,000 years of existence, its people have endured many invasions by foreign powers and have lived under many kinds of government. In good and bad times, music and food have been important parts of Hungarian life.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Next</th>
<th>textual</th>
<th>interpersonal</th>
<th>topical</th>
<th>sentence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>What</td>
<td>what</td>
<td>do you think of</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>others</td>
<td>someone</td>
<td>mentions the country Hungary?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>(e-D0E)</td>
<td>(e-FOE)</td>
<td>(e-THINK something) colours, clothing, costumes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>(e-T1E)</td>
<td>(e-FOE)</td>
<td>(e-THINK something) singing love songs?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>(e-D0E)</td>
<td>(e-FOE)</td>
<td>(e-THINK something) composers like Franz Liszt and Bela Bartok</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>other</td>
<td>other</td>
<td>involves rhythmic folk tunes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>perhaps</td>
<td>you</td>
<td>heard about the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the country that played such an important role in European history during the 19th and early 20th centuries</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>certainly</td>
<td>you</td>
<td>think of Hungarian goulash, a savoury soup seasoned with generous amounts of the red pepper paprika</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>all these things</td>
<td>you</td>
<td>paint of the heritage of Hungary, a small, central European country with a long, dramatic history</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>throughout Hungarian history</td>
<td>you</td>
<td>people have endured many invasions by foreign powers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>and</td>
<td>(e-T1E)</td>
<td>in people and they live under many kinds of government</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>is good and delicious</td>
<td>you</td>
<td>is good and delicious, music and food have been important parts of Hungarian life</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Theme & Mood (English)

- The choice of unmarked topical Theme varies according to the Mood of the free clause
- marked topical Themes are those which vary from the typical Theme for each Mood

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mood Type</th>
<th>unmarked Theme</th>
<th>marked Theme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| declarative | Subject? | Add to right or make a missing Theme ternary? | Adjust | Non-even: you might or will change themes?
|            | Complement | Subject? | might or will change Themes? |
|            | Predicator | Subject? | might or will change Themes? |
| interrogative | Wh-Subject? | Add to right or make a missing Theme ternary? | Adjust | Non-even: you might or will change Themes? |
|            | Complement | Subject? | might or will change Themes? |
|            | Predicator | Subject? | might or will change Themes? |

Two types of topical Themes

- Unmarked Theme
  - a Theme which is also the Subject in a declarative clause
  - the Wh-element in a wh-interrogative clause
  - the Process in an imperative clause

- Marked Theme
  - a Theme that is something other than the Subject in a declarative clause.
  - adversative group, e.g., today, suddenly, somehow abstractedly
  - proportional phrases, e.g., at night, in the summer, without any warning
  - Complement, which is a nominal group that is not functioning as Subject.

- Never underestimate the effect that reorganising Themes can have on the clarity of your writing ...

Exhibit 1: Examination is a common way of testing students. There are different views on the merits of exams. Some educators are in favor of exams as they consider them to be an effective means of assessing student achievement. Others believe that exams are a source of stress and anxiety for students. The argument is often framed around the idea that exams are the only way to evaluate student performance. However, the debate continues with implications for the education system as a whole.
Theme: Method of development

Themes on different scales ...

Different kinds of Theme

- **messages** (clause Theme)
- **paragraphs** (hyper-Theme)
- **text** (macro-Theme)

Theme
- The first element of a clause
- The point of departure in a clause
- Hyper-Theme
- the first clause or clause complex that sets up the local context of the paragraph
- also known as **paragraph Theme** — traditional ‘topic sentence’
- **Macro-Theme**
- the first paragraph that serves as a Theme for the whole text
- also called **discourse Theme**
### The Fuels of the Body

**expounding: taxonomic report**

- The fuels of the body are carbohydrates, fats, and proteins. These are taken in the diet. They are found mainly in cereal grains, vegetable oils, meat, fish and dairy products.

  **Carbohydrates**

  are the principal source of energy in most diets. They are absorbed into the bloodstream in the form of glucose. Glucose is not needed for immediate use; it is stored in the liver. When the blood sugar concentration goes down, the liver releases some of the stored glucose into the bloodstream.

  **Fats**

  make up the second largest source of energy in most diets. They are stored in adipose tissue and round the principal internal organs. If excess carbohydrates are taken in, this can be converted into fat and stored. The stored fat is utilized when the liver is empty of glycogen.

  **Proteins**

  are essential for the growth and rebuilding of tissue, but they can also be used as a source of energy. In some diets, such as the diet of the Eskimos, they form the main source of energy. Proteins are first broken down into amino acids. Then they are absorbed into the blood and pass round the body. Amino acids [not used in the body] are eventually excreted in the urine in the form of urea. Proteins, unlike carbohydrates and fats, cannot be stored for future use.

### Fuels of the Body

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Reference</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The fuels of the body</td>
<td>expounding: taxonomic report</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The macro-New of a text often corresponds to the last element of the generic structure of the context of situation which the text realizes (for example, the Coda or Moral of a story telling context, the Appeal of an advertising context, the Thesis of an argument context, the summary or conclusion element of an expounding context, the Closing of a business letter context, the Judgement of a reviewing context, the Sales Closure of a service encounter, the (optional) Wrap-up of a news report, the Wrap-up of a gossip context, various forms of valediction in dialogic contexts). However, many contexts — particularly expounding and enabling ones — lack this kind of closure of newsworthiness, and simply end with the last element in a series of elements (like the last detail in a taxonomic report or the last step in a procedure).
The End and Thank you