

Discourse Analysis and Text Perspectives in Translation



Workshop Discourse Analysis

0. Introduction

1. Discourse Analysis & Translation

2. Coherence and Theme Rheme

2.1 Pragmatic Theme Rheme-Analysis: Identification

2.2 The Discourse Dimension: Coherence, Topic Structure and Discourse Preferences

3. Discourse & Text Perspectives

4. Application: Sample Analysis

1 Discourse Analysis & Translation

- **Discourse**
 - process of establishing sense continuity (Habermas 1971)
 - communicative text in dialog form (Wunderlich 1976)
 - involves language use, cognition and interaction (v.Dijk 1997:32)
- **Translation**
 - the communicative act of transfer of ‘material A’ to ‘material B’ as specified in the MuTra concept, i.e.

Multidimensional Translation (cf. Gerzymisch-Arbogast 2007:3)

- Involves source material, e.g. knowledge and text/discourse (in the widest sense), to be '**transferred**' to another material, e.g. another knowledge (system) in text (in its widest sense, incl. e.g. 'discourse') irrespective of whether the translated product is in the same (national) language or not, written, spoken, or signed, in linear or non-linear form, technology-driven and multimedia-supported or not.
- Beyond this conceptual common ground, the following common traits are assumed to apply to all human translation procedures (three phases of translation):
 - texts/discourse need to be understood (= **coherent**) before they are translated (which requires world knowledge, individual understanding and **inferences** being secured by **text/discourse analysis**)
 - translation implies a 'transfer' from one of at least two cultures, languages, modes and/or sign systems (in the widest sense) to another and that
 - text/discourse production in the target culture, language, mode and/or sign system requires reformulation according to a set of parameters (e.g. purpose, norms, recipient type) to be specified in the individual scenario.

1 Discourse Analysis & Translation (cont.)

are interrelated in terms of both involving:

- Language in use and interaction, i.e. communicative acts sharing communicative parameters
(e.g. communicative settings and partners, their background knowledge profiles and perspectives)
- Cognition manifested in text/discourse parameters
(e.g. meanings, inferences, coherence)

2 Coherence and Theme Rheme

Coherence is understood as

- the sense continuity of a text/discourse (de Beaugrande Dressler 1981)
- involving inferences (Bellert 1970) and world knowledge (de Beaugrande Dressler 1981, van de Velde 1981, Hatakeyama et. al 1989)
- with thematic continuity being identifiable via inferences and world knowledge hypotheses acting an indicator of coherence (Mudersbach 2004)

2.1 Pragmatic Theme Rheme-Analysis: Identification

There is a great variety of terms and definitions for the theme-rheme phenomenon (cf. Gerzymisch-Arbogast 2003a)

BENENNUNGSVIELFALT		BEI	BEGRIFFLICHER UNKLARHEIT
THEMA das Alte given info on stage präsupponierte Info	RHEMA das Neue new info off stage fokussierte Info		<u>pragmatischer Ansatz; heute favorisiert</u> → Problem: Was ist unter „given“, „alt“, „präsupponiert“ zu verstehen? → Problemlösung durch Problemverlagerung → Wie erklären sich Initialsätze, Zeitungsoberschriften?
Ausgangspunkt (der Aussage)	Kern (der Aussage)		<u>syntaktischer Ansatz; heute überholt</u> Problem: kann Emphasen nicht erklären vom Typ „den mag ich nicht“
topic Mitteilungsgegenstand topic	comment Aussage focus		<u>semantisch-formaler Ansatz; wird noch diskutiert</u> Problem: liegt oft „quer“ zum „given/new“ Kriterium und lässt sich nur über die Situation erklären (Fragetests)
geringe kommunikative Dynamik	höchste kommunikative Dynamik		<u>kontextueller Ansatz; wird ebenfalls noch diskutiert</u> Problem: Zirkelschluss: man setzt das voraus, was man erschließen möchte (Intonation, Wortstellung)

2 Coherence and Theme Rheme (cont.)

Working hypothesis for **THEME-RHEME** Identification

THEME-RHEME is a *communicative* phenomenon, which needs to be identified by a detailed pragmatic analysis, e.g.

The communicative partners, i.e.

- a speaker who in an individual situation with an individual aim
- sends a message which s/he thinks is new (her/speaker's perspective)
- to a hearer as s/he anticipates him/her (hearer from a speaker's perspective)

A pre-condition for a successful communication is:

- a shared knowledge stock of the communicative partners and
- a shared scope of attention of the speaker/hearer in a given situation
- from which the speaker then selects information which s/he thinks is known to the hearer (theme) and information which s/he thinks is new to the hearer (rheme).

2 Coherence and Theme Rheme (cont.)

Theme – Rheme analysis is therefore not language-specific but a general communication phenomenon. However, the means by which T/R is expressed may vary by language (e.g. permutation or particles in German vs. clefting in English).

2 Coherence and Theme Rheme (cont.)

Example

Rob Roy, real name Robert MacGregor (1671-1734) was a Scottish brigand, sometimes called the Scottish Robin Hood. Known as Rob Roy, or Robert the Red, because of his red hair, he was a member of the outlawed Scottish clan Gregor. After his lands were confiscated in 1712 by James Montrose, 1st duke of Montrose, to whom he was in debt, Rob Roy became a leader of uprisings and a freebooter. He later lived in peace for a time under the protection of John Campbell, 2nd duke of Argyll, taking the name Robert Campbell, but he was imprisoned by the English in the 1720s. The Scottish novelist Sir Walter Scott turned the brigand into a romantic hero in his popular novel *Rob Roy* (1818). In 1995 a movie about his struggle was released called *Rob Roy*.

2 Coherence and Theme Rheme (cont.)

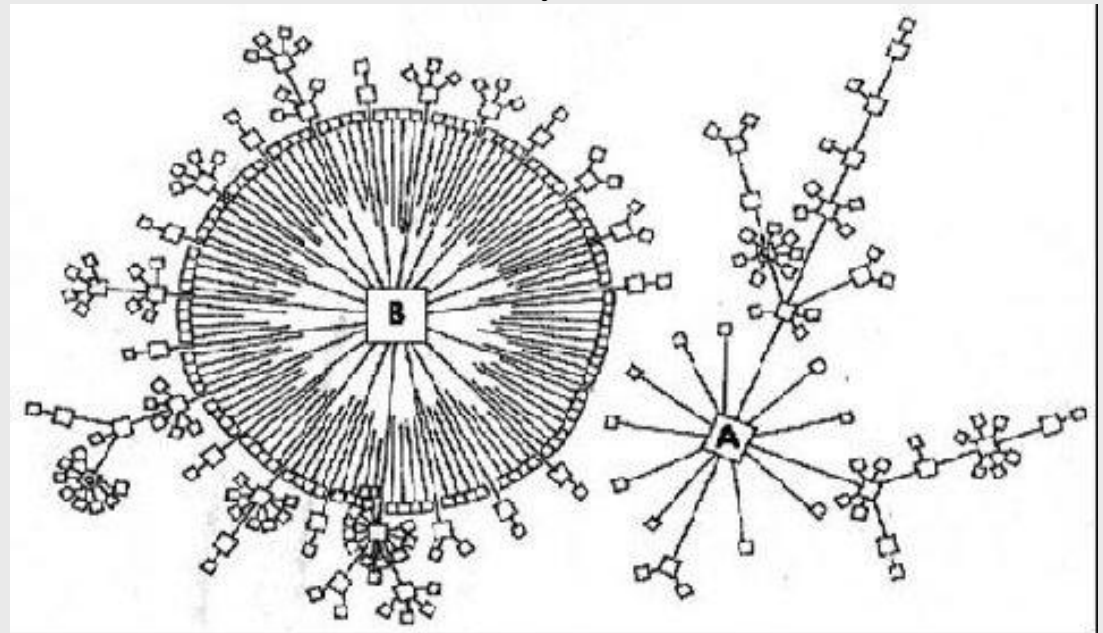
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2 Coherence and Theme Rheme (cont.)

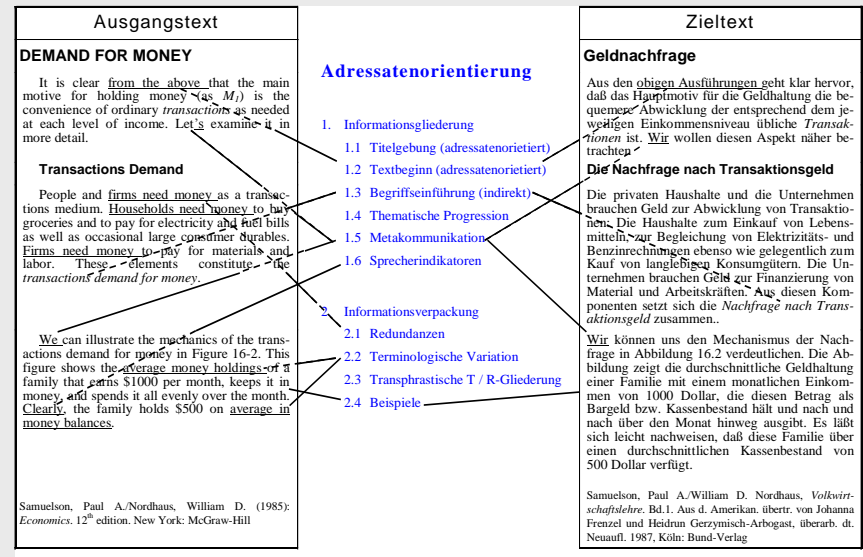
2.2 The Discourse Dimension: Coherence, Topic Structure and Discourse Preferences

Coherence and topic structure are co-established by individual hypotheses and indicated by topic continuity, i.e. the degree of connectedness of utterances as can be visualized by semantic networks (cf. RELATRA, Gerzymisch-Arbogast/Mudersbach 1996). The coherence of texts/discourse is usually a prerequisite for translation.



2.2 The Discourse Dimension: Coherence, Topic Structure and Discourse Preferences (cont.)

Topic structure is useful when determining intercultural discourse preferences, i.e. the way discourse is structured more towards readers or authors (House e.g. 1999) which may be culturally influenced (for an overview of relevant literature cf. Buhl 1999). Theme Rheme related parameters for reader- and author-oriented discourse are ‘Information Structuring’ (e.g. the way titles are formulated, discourse is initiated and ended, the way concepts are introduced, the thematic progression and the use of meta-communication) and ‘Information Packaging’ (e.g. redundancies, use of concretizations and examples, informal speech).



3 Discourse & Text Perspectives in Translation

It is argued that texts and their translations can be viewed from different perspectives, i.e.

- 1) an **atomistic perspective** that views only individual components of a text put together to form the structure of a text, e.g. words like Lego components which form a structure or system
- 2) a **hol-atomistic perspective** that takes the individual components further into the text and looks at their informational strings or semantic clusters and
- 3) a **holistic perspective** which looks at holistic ‘Gestalt’ phenomena, implied background knowledge, cultural attitudes and values in a text.

These perspectives lead to different translation methodologies, i.e. *Aspectra*, *Relatra* and *Holontra* (cf. Gerzymisch-Arbogast/Mudersbach 1996)

3 Discourse & Text Perspectives in Translation (cont.)

The Atomistic Perspective

Analysis on the atomistic level accounts for ‘atomistic’, i.e. smallest individual text/discourse features, and may include all discourse phenomena (from typographical idiosyncrasies, explicitness of reference, metaphorical diversity and/or cultural implications) that do not develop into more complex discourse dimensions. They are identified, listed and systematized as text ‘aspects’ with different ‘values’ and correlated with respective text segments. The resulting aspective matrix allows for transparency of an individual reading and interpretation of a text in its atomistic dimension.

Visualization is by matrix form

		Aspekte					
		1. Terminologie 1.1 Vorhanden 1.2 Nicht-vorhanden	2. Syntax 2.1 Nominalisierungen 2.2 Verbalkonstruktionen	3. Kohärenz 3.1 mit Inferenzziehung 3.2 ohne Inferenzziehung	4. Begriffseinführung 4.1 direkt 4.2 indirekt	5. Autor-Leser-Verhältnis 5.1 inhaltsbezogen 5.2 leserbezogen	6. Sprecherindikatoren 6.1 vorhanden 6.2 nicht vorhanden
0.	Transactions Demand	1.1	—	3.1	—	5.1	6.2
1.	People and firms need money as a transactions medium	1.1	2.1	3.1	—	5.2	6.2
2.	Households need money to buy groceries and to pay for electricity and fuel bills as well as occasional large consumer durables.	1.1	2.2	3.2	—	5.2	6.2
3.	Firms need money to pay for materials and labor.	1.2	2.2	3.2	—	5.2	6.2
4.	These elements constitute the <i>transactions demand for money</i> .	1.1	—	3.1	4.2	5.1	6.2
5.	We can illustrate the mechanics of the transactions demand for money in Fig. 16-2.	1.1	2.1	3.2	—	5.2	6.2
6.	This figure shows the average money holdings of a family that earns \$ 1000 per month, keeps it in money, and spends it all evenly over the month.	1.1	2.2	3.1	—	5.2	6.2
7.	Clearly, the family holds \$ 500 on average in money balances.	1.1	—	3.2	—	5.2	6.1

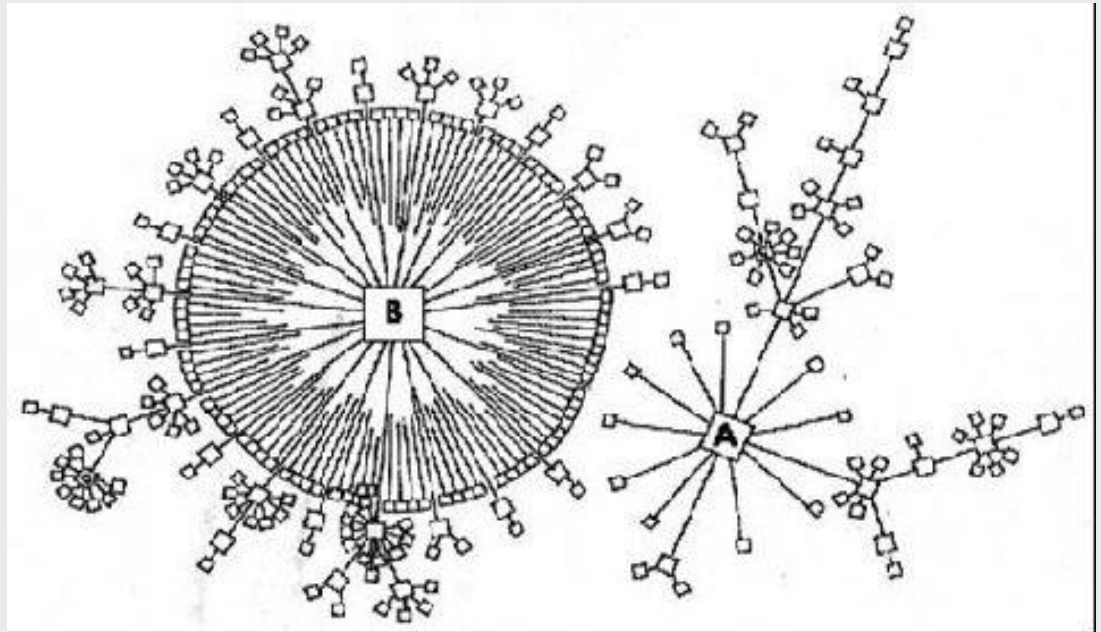
3 Discourse & Text Perspectives in Translation (cont.)

The hol-atomistic Perspective

The hol-atomistic perspective ‘mediates’ between the atomistic and holistic levels. Analysis on a hol-atomistic level identifies features in discourse that extend from the isolated atomistic unit to a more complex dimension in the context of the text as a whole. Examples are the

(linearity or digression of) information structures (theme-rheme analysis) as presented in Gerzymisch-Arbogast/Will 2005.

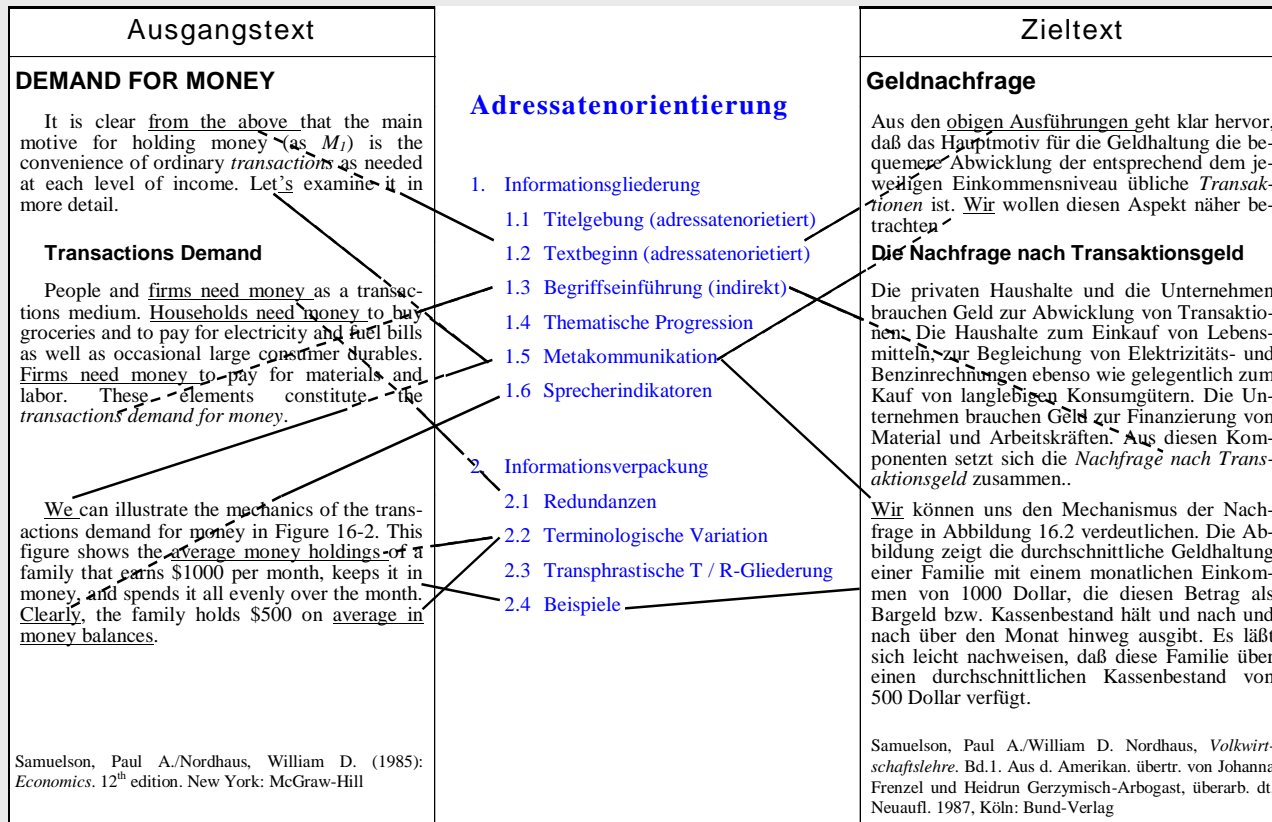
Representation and visualization is by linear or synchroptic semantic networks.



3 Discourse & Text Perspectives in Translation (cont.)

The holistic Perspective

Identifies and structures ‚Gesamtvorstellungen‘ (holistic strata, holons) in discourse. It can thus be said that it operationalizes the ‚Gestalt‘ of texts and makes the hermeneutic process of understanding transparent. These may include (culture-specific) values and identity issues, mentality and/or individual preferences. One such preference that is culturally determined has become known as intercultural discourse preferences (e.g. Juliane House 1999, Gerzymisch-Arbogast 1997). Examples are German vs. English discourse norms (with respect to simultaneous interpreting cf. Gerzymisch-Arbogast/Will 2005). Other examples are the translation of hybrid texts (Ndeffo 2004) or musical texts (Kunold 2007).

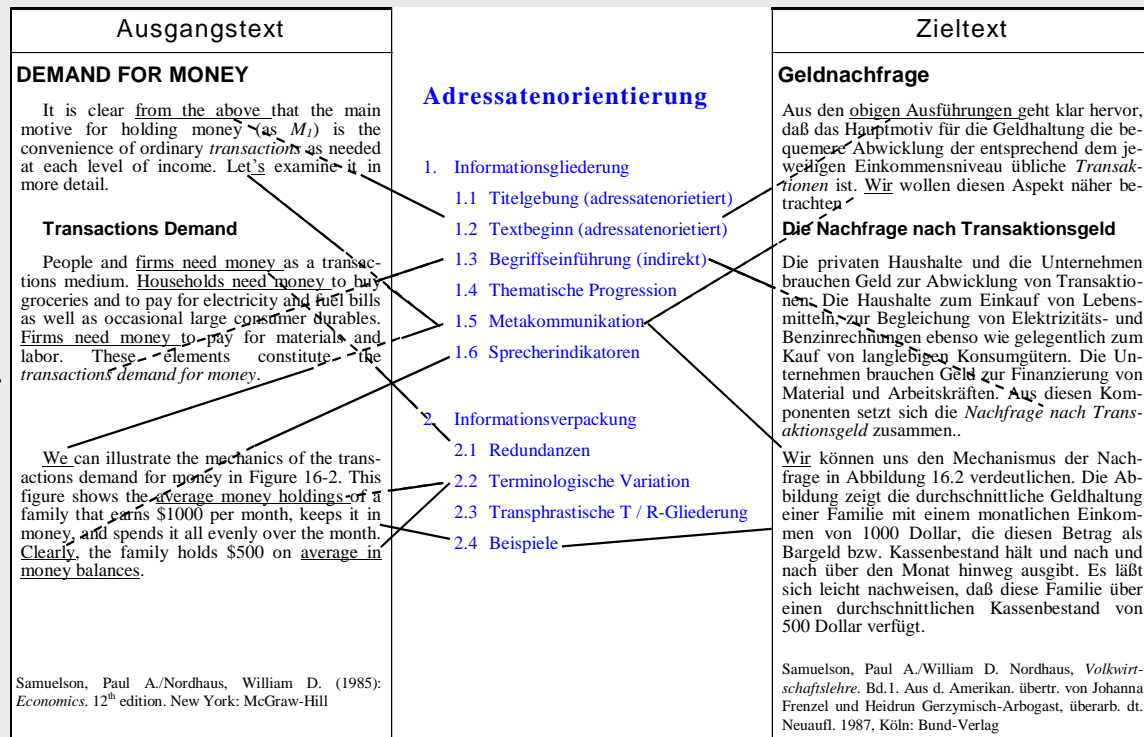


3 Discourse & Text Perspectives in Translation (cont.)

The holistic Perspective

Identifies and structures ‘Gesamtvorstellungen‘ in discourse. These may include (culture-specific) values and identity issues, mentality and/or individual preferences.

One such preference that is culturally determined has become known as discourse preferences (e.g. Juliane House 1999).



References

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