

## *Tanulmány*

Edit Dobi

### **Constringency as the Basic Category of Representing the Semiotic-Textological Meaning of Texts**

#### **Abstract**

In semiotic textology, constringency is regarded to be the single condition for text coherence. In general, it can be stated that a text is constringent if its actual recipient considers the complex of facts or state of affairs relevant to it to be well-formed and coherent. This concept of text meaning attributes significant importance to the creators/senders of texts and (mostly) to the recipients/interpreters of texts, as well as to the mental operations that are characteristic of them. Through this, semiotic textology expands the representation of text meaning undoubtedly towards cognitive semantics and pragmatics.

Although the concept of constringency has appeared in the relevant terminology to complement the meaning representation of the text and its role in meaning representation is often described through its relation to coherence and planes of connectivity in the text meaning, its relative quality in the function of the specific circumstances of interpretation is not emphasized properly.

The present study wishes to call attention to this relativity by listing the points that are assumed or supposed to have an effect on constringency judgments.

*Keywords:* constringency, knowledge databases, potential worlds, types of interpretation

#### **1 Introduction**

Meaning representation in semiotic textology differs from text approaches in the frameworks of text analysis with a similar intent because of the category of constringency. I believe that the situation of this concept in textual terminology can be made even more nuanced, since – although its relationship to other notions used in the characterization of text sense is quite clear in the first place – its even more detailed analysis could be beneficial for the discourse of meaning analyses of texts.

As a point of departure, it can be accepted that the interpretation of texts as complex signs, i.e. the representation of meaning attachable to a complex sign as a process, is definitely the inner cognitive operation of the interpreting individual. The result of this process is interpretation, as text meaning that can be understood as the product of a cognitive operation.

Although the first accessible planes/levels of the complex semiotic-textological sign model designed by János S. Petőfi are the *vehiculum* and the *relatum*, as physical manifestation and reality check that exist independently of users of signs, meaning representation itself qualifies as a process significantly determined by the cognitive operation of the user of signs. The text meaning that is the result of interpretation depends on the judgment of the sender/recipient

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because meaning representation can only be rendered to the text if the state of affairs assumed to be expressed by the physical organization of the text is coherent and well formed according to the judgment of the sender/recipient.

The three basic notions of text coherence – connexity, cohesion and coherence –, which characterize the features of text organization (also) available at the linguistic level, are used in Hungarian textologies in a more or less similar sense, while the foreign/international studies reflect a significantly more diverse pool of approaches.<sup>1</sup> The individual textological frameworks might differ concerning which level they consider to be dominant and what kinds of conditions they recognize in the interaction of the levels of coherence. They usually describe the textuality of the text through the materialization of coherence but they do not necessarily agree on what conditions are required for the impression of coherence in the recipient. In this respect, semiotic textology has generated a notion that is not simply essential but one that also fundamentally transforms textological thinking and discourse. The notion of *constringency* sheds a different light on the representation of texts because it includes in their description the reality assumed to be reflected by them, together with its coherence and well-formed quality. This concept of text sense attaches a more significant role to the sender and (mostly) the recipient of texts, including the mental operations characteristic of them. Through this choice, semiotic textology expands the representation of text meaning undoubtedly towards cognitive semantics and pragmatics.<sup>2</sup>

With the help of the following example of two consecutive sentences, it can be quite well illustrated how the three levels of phenomena available in the linguistic organization of the text are complemented with the category of constringency. This makes it possible to explain textuality even in cases when it cannot be done at the level of the linguistic tools of the text: *I have a headache. A cold front has come through.*

The linguistic tools of the two text sentences do not display any grammatical connection between the units, and there is no semantic connection between the meanings of the individual words either. Thus, the text is neither connective, nor cohesive. Nevertheless, it still qualifies as a coherent text because we can associate a well-formed, i.e., constringent, state of affairs to it on the basis of our theoretical or practical knowledge or experience.

As a matter of course, it is necessary for us to add that the knowledge upon which we base our interpretation of texts comprises a background knowledge that is partly collective, partly individual-sociocultural or absolutely individual. Thus, it is possible that there is simply no constringent state of affairs that could be rendered to the given example among certain geographical, biological and/or anthropological circumstances. Consequently, the example under scrutiny does not qualify as a coherent text, which means that it does not fulfil its function as a text.

In the framework of scholarly appreciations of texts, it is accepted that the intuition of the recipient is a composite of several simultaneous operations. The relationship between meaning and its linguistic code is structural, the connection between meaning and mentalization is cognitive, the tie between meaning and the reality presented is logical, while the link between meaning and communication presupposes a pragmatic approach. The imaging of the coherence components that do not appear at the level of linguistic structures is the end-result of logical, cognitive and pragmatic operations. The linguistic formations responsible for cohesion or connexity (may) strengthen constringency judgments; their lack,

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<sup>1</sup> Csátár & Haase 2011, Dobi 2011, Kiss & Skutta 2011

<sup>2</sup> See also Tolcsvai Nagy 2011 and 2013, or Tátrai 2011.

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however, does not weaken or cancel it, which means that coherence-markers discernible in the linguistic fabric of texts are not preconditions for the constringency or coherence of texts. Petőfi S. puts this the following way: Today, it is quite acceptable to reckon that the coherence (textuality) of a verbal structure does not depend on the interrelatedness – connexity or cohesion – of its linguistic fabric. Instead, it is a function of whether we can accept the state of affairs assumed to be rendered by its linguistic structure to be an organic unit of fact-configuration (fact-combination) or, to use another term, a constringent formation.<sup>3</sup>

We may state that the starting point for sign or text interpretation is the meaning-representational intent of the sender/recipient, while the interpretation of the text is determined by the knowledge available for the recipient in the given interpretation situation at the given moment in time. This knowledge is what János Petőfi S. calls knowledge base. He presents the basic modules of the semiotic-textological approach to text meaning, together with their relations and interactions: the incidental quality of the knowledge bases employed in the context of text creation/interpretation is closely connected to the diversity of the world-creating attitudes characteristic of the sender and the recipient and, parallel with it, to the system of these worlds. The various patterns of these components make it possible to differentiate between individual types of interpretation, the definitive features of which have a fundamental influence on the status of constringency judgments in the various processes of interpretation.

In the light of the above system, it is my intention to give a brief overview below of the components of the issue of interpretation, which constitute formative results of text appreciation according to the views of Petőfi S. and which are instrumental in fine-tuning the status of constringency by offering points of departure as well as notions/concepts for the description of circumstances relevant from the aspect of constringency judgments.

## **2 Knowledge Bases**

Knowledge bases can be divided into three sectors within the framework of semiotic textology. They include the sectors of knowledge/beliefs, assumptions, and expectations. Although Petőfi S. remarks only casually that this order may be interpreted as an attempt to indicate the decreasing degree of inter-subjectivity,<sup>4</sup> this remark highlights one of the most important attitudes of the features influencing the interpretation of communicational situations. The essence of this attitude is that meaning representation is fundamentally determined by the correspondence or inter-operability between the knowledge bases of the communicating parties. It should be noted here that this is the perspective that makes the model of János Petőfi S. suitable for the examination of the text comprehension of individuals with different mental operation patterns. It offers a possibility to take into account the differences between knowledge bases that are due to the discrepancy between the perspectives of the senders and the recipients (or to the possibility of not, or not clearly, understanding the

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<sup>3</sup> „Ma már általánosan elfogadható az a nézet, hogy egy verbális képződmény koherenciája (szövegsége) nem nyelvi szövetének összefüggőségétől – konnexitásától és/vagy kohéziójától – függ, hanem attól, hogy a nyelvi szöveget által feltehetően utalt tényállásokat szerves egységű tényállás-konfigurációnak (tényállás-együttesnek), más kifejezéssel élve konstringens képződménynek tudjuk-e elfogadni.” (Petőfi S. 2009: 69)

<sup>4</sup> „ez a sorrend az interszubjektivitás csökkenő foka érzékeltetéseként értelmezhető” (Petőfi S. 2004: 104)

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sender's perspective, which would restrict the chances for interpretation. (Cf. Dobi 2016, 2017, 2018.)<sup>5</sup>

Petőfi S. lists and arranges knowledge bases in an informative configuration and describes them as follows:

- The typological base comprises knowledge and beliefs concerning the types of communication situations and the types of texts, for which reason it has an outstanding role in the process of interpretation. Whichever elements of the central knowledge base the interpreter decides to choose and employ in the interpretive operations depends on which text type he or she considers the text being interpreted belongs to and how he or she regards the type of the communication situation.
- The central base of interpretation contains all the types of knowledge and assumptions concerning all possible media, medium-specifically arranged in a system. The aspects of arranging knowledge and assumption types in a system – projected to all media – are determined by the types of interpretations, the semiotic components of complex signs, the types of organization, and the levels and units of compositional organization. It is in this way Petőfi S. considers feasible the fulfilment of one of the chief expectations about semiotic-textology text-meaning representation, which is the compatibility of medium-specific systems.
- The system of knowledge bases also contains so-called local bases, the elements of which maintain connections between the knowledge elements selected from the central base of interpretation. Petőfi S. likens the central base to long-term memory and local bases to operative memory, which is responsible for the quick and systematic recalling of the currently mobilized elements of knowledge.

If we consider only knowledge and belief, as the two most important attitudes, the contents of the knowledge and belief sectors of the bases may come from a variety of sources, for which Petőfi S. offers the following examples (where A indicates what he thinks is professional, while B is for individual approaches to texts):

(Aa) The interpreter may try to reconstruct the sender-specific knowledge/beliefs.

(Ab) The interpreter may try to reconstruct the knowledge/beliefs that can be regarded adequate concerning the given *vehiculum*.

(Ba) The interpreter may operate with the system of his or her own knowledge/beliefs, not bothering to check if the latter can be regarded adequate from a historical/philological perspective concerning the *vehiculum* to be interpreted and/or its sender.

(Bb) The interpreter may operate with the system of what he or she assumes to be the knowledge/beliefs of another (existing or merely imagined) interpreter, not bothering either to check if the latter can be regarded adequate from a historical/philological perspective concerning the *vehiculum* to be interpreted and/or its sender.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Considering the decoding characteristics of sounding media, Petőfi S. complements the above concept of knowledge bases by adding that, when interpreting *vehiculum*-s whose reception cannot be repeated, every base has to contain a fourth sector, too, which is the sector of psycho-physical dispositions. For justifying this, he contends that it may not be assumed that the interpreter always has the same degree of perceptual disposition or that he or she always remembers all of the relevant information pieces. [„... nem tételezhető fel sem az, hogy az interpretátor a percepció diszpozíciónak folyamatosan ugyanazon fokával rendelkezik, sem az, hogy folyamatosan valamennyi releváns információra emlékszik.”] (Petőfi S. 2004: 104)

<sup>6</sup> „(Aa) Az interpretátor megpróbálhatja rekonstruálni az alkotóspecifikus ismereteket / hiedelmeket.  
 (Ab) Az interpretátor megpróbálhatja rekonstruálni azokat az ismereteket / hiedelmeket, amelyek az adott vehikulumra vonatkozóan adekvátnak tarthatók.

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From a different aspect, the role of knowledge bases in text interpretation can be explained by applying the concept of background knowledge as well as by applying their sub-categories in meaning representation. The components of knowledge used in the imaging of textual meaning are arranged into conceptual schemas containing elements related to individual key terms, the static components of which form frameworks of knowledge, while its elements with a dynamic meaning constitute scenarios. The role of these networks of expressions is described by Gábor Tolcsvai Nagy as follows: the conceptual schemas set the limits for and mark the ingredients of a textual representation or they incorporate all this as part and parcel of the text. Furthermore, they assist in constructing the notional network of the world of the text; a network that identifies notional links within the text on the one hand, while on the other hand, it establishes a contact between knowledge and the sense of the text.<sup>7</sup> For the observation of interpreting individual texts, the examination of potential scenarios that materialize in the interaction of the sender and the recipient may provide especially useful data, bearing in mind the statement also made by Tolcsvai Nagy which contends that in the course of operating the scenarios, a process of understanding takes place.<sup>8</sup>

### 3 Propositional Attitude and Worlds

On the basis of what has been discussed above, it should be quite clear that the interpretation of texts, i.e. the representation of meanings that can be rendered to them as complex signs, is closely connected to the knowledge available for the recipient during the process of the given imaging of meaning and to what sorts of logical connections the recipient recognizes, assumes, etc. between the individual elements of knowledge. These judgments and conclusions of the recipient compose his or her propositional attitude, which is in fact the cognitive relationship that determines the individual world created by the recipient for him or herself about the sense or meaning of the text.

Attitudes that create worlds expand the interpretation of meaning into a philosophical issue. Within the framework of analytical philosophy, David Lewis uses the explanation of possible worlds for the justification of the role of the interpreting attitude in imaging meaning. (Lewis 2004, and Bács & Kocsis 2011).<sup>9</sup> The influence of this can be discovered in the views

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(Ba) Az interpretátor operálhat saját ismereteinek / hiedelmeinek rendszerével, nem törődve annak ellenőrzésével, hogy azok az ismeretek / hiedelmek történeti / filológiai szempontból adekvátak tekinthetők-e az interpretálandó vehikulumra és / vagy annak alkotójára vonatkozóan.

(Bb) Az interpretátor operálhat egy másik (ténylegesen létező vagy csupán elképzelt) interpretátor általa feltételezett ismereteinek / hiedelmeinek rendszerével, ebben az esetben sem törődve annak ellenőrzésével, hogy azok az ismeretek történeti / filológiai szempontból adekvátak tekinthetők-e az interpretálandó vehikulumra és / vagy annak alkotójára vonatkozóan.” (Petőfi S. 2004: 106)

<sup>7</sup> „a fogalmi sémák kijelölik egy szövegbeli reprezentáció határait, összetevőit, vagy mindezt bennfoglalásként teszik a szöveg részévé, továbbá a szövegvilágbeli fogalmi háló kiépítését segítik elő, egy olyan hálót, amely egyrészt a szövegen belül jelöl ki fogalmi összefüggéseket, másrészt kapcsolatot hoz létre a szövegértelem és a tudás között” (Tolcsvai Nagy 2000: 497)

<sup>8</sup> „a forgatókönyv működtetésekor megértésfolyamat játszódik le” (Tolcsvai Nagy 2001: 76)

<sup>9</sup> Bács and Kocsis, in their study on the possible worlds of Lewis’s philosophy, list the items of the concept that help to understand why certain phenomena (world partners) belong to the same actual world, or what makes a possible world possible. They create a relatively stable ground for understanding the notion of the world by considering spatial and temporal relations. Although Lewis’s philosophy does not include the phenomenon of the world created by the mental imaging of the individual recipient, its theory can be smoothly adapted to the research of semiotic text interpretation.

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of several other thinkers: for example, in the constructivist model created by Árpád Bernáth and Károly Csúri for literary texts, which provides a system of possible worlds (Berháth 1997, Bernáth & Csúri 1981); or in the world concepts of János Petőfi S., through which the knowledge bases essential in interpretation can be grasped (Petőfi S. 1994).

The relevance of thinking in terms of worlds is based upon the comparability of instances of mental imaging occurring in the sender and in the recipient. As it has been mentioned in the discussion of knowledge bases and logical operations, the individual background knowledge of the sender of a text and that of the recipient of the same text are based on experiences determined by their individual socio-culture and upbringing. That is to say, they inevitably contain similar and also different components of knowledge, as a consequence of which there will also be similarities and differences in the sense(s) concerning the mental image of the linguistic formation of a text decoded separately by each one of them as well as in the sense(s) concerning the mental image of the reality assumed to be expressed by the text.

Prompted by Károly Csúri's *possible worlds*,<sup>10</sup> János Petőfi S. incorporates the theory of possible worlds into the explanation of semiotic-textological imaging of meaning, too; naturally, in a much broader and general sense than in Csúri's literature-centered approach (cf. Petőfi S. 1994):

– In a semiotic-textological sense,<sup>11</sup> the *actual world* – despite the association justifiably evoked by the concept – is not an objective reality that exists independently of language, but a world that is assumed to be actual by specific conventions.

– A *text world* is a complex of facts (states of affairs) assumed to be expressed through the physical implementation of the text.

– A *possible world* can be understood in its relation to the actual world: to put it simply, we regard it to be an assumed reality. It is the totality of the utterances of the sender, organized by the propositional attitude, in which the state of affairs of the *text world* qualify to be true or possible for the interpreter/recipient. János Petőfi S. identifies the concept of propositional attitudes with the expressions that make up partial worlds, in which the sender's own attitude is expressed, in which he or she separates and distances his or her own statements from the actual (real) world, as from a basis of reference, and initiates a possible world.<sup>12</sup>

– A *partial world* is one of the components of the world fragment, which we can separate from the rest of the components of the world according to whatever aspect (e.g., the distinguishing marks can be time, place, the actors in a situation, etc.).

The system of worlds is related to the coherence-judgment of the recipient. If the judgment of the recipient can accept a given configuration of state of affairs as a configuration belonging to a possible world, it considers the given configuration of state of affairs constringent; while in the opposite case, it does not consider the given configuration of state of affairs constringent, as a consequence of which it does not regard the given verbal organization coherent, which means it cannot regard it to be a text either. (Cf. Petőfi S. 2009: 67.)

The model of world-concepts interpreted in this way makes it evident that this approach is very similar to the theory of knowledge bases and types of interpretation defined by Petőfi S.

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<sup>10</sup> „lehetséges világok” (cf. Csúri 1987)

<sup>11</sup> Langacker's dynamic evolutionary model can also be relevant here (cf. Langacker 1991).

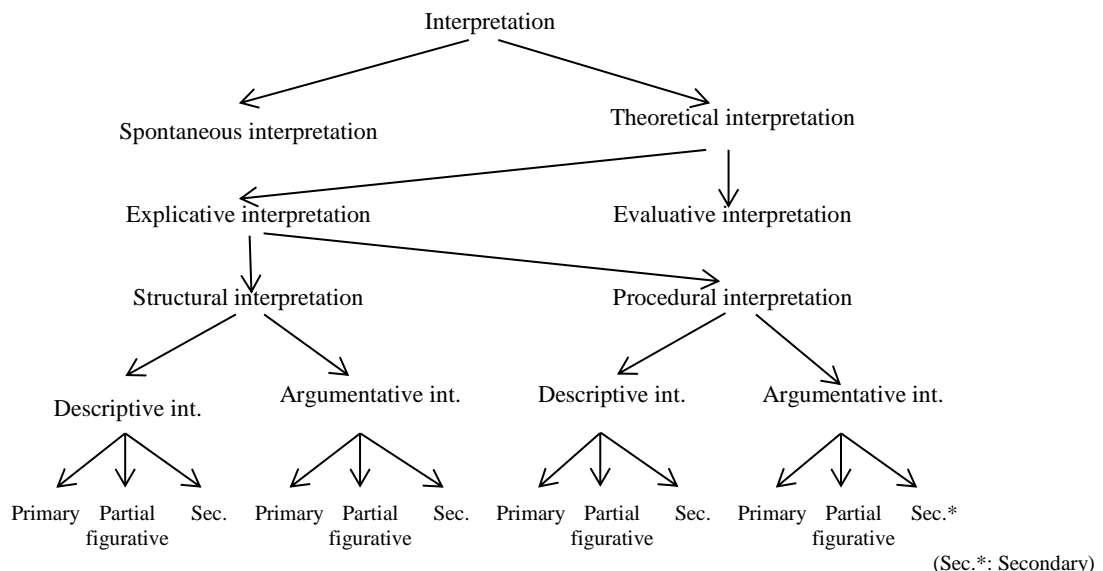
<sup>12</sup> „a saját kijelentéseit a való(s) világtól mint referenciális bázistól elhatároló, eltávolító és lehetséges világot indítványozó magatartása jut kifejezésre” (Vass 1990: 103) Among the world-creating factors, we can find terms such as *to know, to surmise, to suspect, to believe, to assume, to impart*, etc.

and, in effect, it can be viewed as the cognitive theoretical source of the semiotic-textological approach to texts.

#### 4 Types of Interpretation

In his *A társalgás cselei [La pragmatique aujourd'hui. Une nouvelle science de la communication]*, Moeschler and Reboul note the following about research aiming to describe the process of interpretation: The processes of interpretation could be described precisely in only a few cases. Cognitive linguists either use undefined terms such as discourse, coherence, and discursive memory or borrow specific concepts from artificial intelligence research (scenarios, frames, etc.), which they employ in totally blurred senses. We appreciate the efforts of IT specialists, since it is either them or a few logical philosophers that the only acceptable models of the operation of discourse come from. Even so, our impression is that not one of the currently available models would satisfy the requirements imposed on a theory of the operation of discourse. (2000: 229)

Closely connected to offering a system of knowledge types used in the representation of text meaning, János Petőfi S. also intended to classify the salient forms of interpretation as various types. Just like the typology of knowledge bases, this system cannot be complete either; however, it aims to illustrate in accordance with the effort to systematize knowledge bases that the interpreter's intention can also be assumed to be of different types. On the basis of certain recipient attitudes, which are assumed to be generally known, the groups below may be easily distinguishable from one another: we may possibly recognize and identify in ourselves quite easily the recipient attitudes illustrating the types below (cf. Petőfi S. 2004: 94–95):



The terms established for differentiating between various types of interpretation are to be understood as follows:

- Spontaneous interpretation is carried out intuitively.
- Theoretical interpretation – as its name suggests – happens in a theoretical framework, which functions as an aspectual basis.

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- Explicative interpretation connects a formal organization and a corresponding semantic structure to a *vehiculum* (or to any component of a *vehiculum*).
- Evaluative interpretation qualifies the operations performed during the course of explicative interpretation according to a predetermined value system.
- Structural interpretation examines the structure of explicative interpretation as a result, i.e., it represents the static relations between the elements of the structures.
- Beyond the representation of the static relations, procedural interpretation also contains pieces of information that concern the logical, causal and temporal connections of these relations.
- Structural and procedural interpretations are descriptive if they merely represent the result of interpretation without any explicit argumentation concerning why exactly that specific interpretation has been made.
- Both structural and procedural interpretations are argumentative if they also involve an explicit argumentation concerning the nature of the descriptive interpretation.

Regarding explicative interpretation, Petőfi S. highlights a phenomenon that allows further differentiation possibilities. This is the choice of applying either a verbatim or a non-verbatim (figurative, metaphoric, symbolic, etc.) interpretation to the linguistic sign, which is evidently in a close connection with the cognitive approach of the interpreter, too. By using this as a point of departure, Petőfi S. distinguishes between primary, partially figurative, and secondary explicative interpretations.

- In the course of primary interpretations, the interpreter assigns a verbatim meaning to a given *vehiculum*, as an example for which Petőfi S. offers the texts of formal sciences, such as mathematics and logic.
- In the course of partially figurative interpretations, the interpreter assigns a verbatim meaning to some of the elements of a given *vehiculum*, while the rest of the elements are assigned figurative (metaphoric, metonymic, etc.) meanings. Petőfi S. reckons that the interpretation of most of the texts belongs to this category.
- In the course of secondary interpretations, the interpreter assigns a symbolic meaning to a given *vehiculum*, even if a verbatim or figurative meaning of the text is feasible. This interpretive approach is characteristic, for example, of the meaning representation of poetic texts.

These interpretation categories offer a systematic apparatus for describing any interpretation process: for example, the interpretation of a scholarly or scientific article for the purpose of writing a review about it would be characteristically a primary, argumentative, procedural, explicative and theoretical interpretation.

## **5 The Influence of Interpretation Features on the Status of Constringency Judgments**

On the basis of the above, it is clear that the notion of constringency is used to describe the judgment of senders/recipients: a text is considered constringent – and, consequently, also coherent – if the state of affairs assumed to be associated with it by the sender/recipient is well formed according to the judgment of recipient/sender. This motive in meaning representation is in harmony with the theory of the so-called double sign model, in which the mental operations of the users of signs are equally part and parcel of the meaning in the imaging carried out by both the marker (significans) and the marked entity (significatum).



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There are several text examples the analysis of which proves that the constringency – and coherence – of texts is not dependent on the availability of the semantic and grammatical acceptability (cohesion and connexity) of linguistic organization (Nagy 2012, Dobi 2019, etc.).

On the basis of the approaches that prefer the examination of the linguistic organization of texts, it is difficult to form an opinion concerning what kind of impressions and experiences of the recipient are exactly responsible for the factors that constitute the constringency judgment created in the recipient.

Nevertheless, as the differences between the procedures of meaning representations that are characteristic of individual interpretation types can be more or less modeled on the basis of the salient features of the interpretation types, this could serve as an appropriate prompt for contemplating the status of constringency judgments. For this, further points of departure might be our experiences concerning the comprehension and interpretation of texts (of various types) as well as our background knowledge about the results and findings of cognitive linguistics on the given topic.

However, from the aspect of fine-tuning our views on constringency, I believe that highlighting a few circumstances might not be amiss:

- the introduction of this concept can be seen as an effort to further clarify the terminological apparatus that does not adequately serve the purpose of differentiating the phenomenon of text coherence and to aim at detailing the representation of text meaning;
- the constringency judgment embedded in the process of interpretation cannot be regarded as a conclusion of the recipient concerning the state of affairs expressed by the text (as it is suggested by the terminological classification of some overviews in the relevant literature), since its nature is much more complex than that;
- the status of the notion of constringency is closely connected to the markers determining the type of interpretation: the knowledge bases used as points of departure as well as the features that are the cornerstones of the above interpretation typological system.

It is not at all surprising that the most conspicuous difference in the status of the constringency judgment may be surmised between the spontaneous and the theoretical-evaluative interpretations. In the course of spontaneous text comprehension – when the recipient is not consciously aware of the operation of the linguistic tools responsible for the effect of textuality –, the constringency judgment of the recipient is the first impression conveyed by the text sense. This does not assist the recipient during the interpretation process in establishing a receptive attitude towards the linguistic formation that would seek for connections between the state of affairs that can be assigned to the details of the linguistic level. As regards the theoretical-evaluative interpretation attitude in text research, it also contains an awareness of the linguistic manifestations of the connections between the details of states of affairs that can be assigned to the text in addition to the spontaneous constringency judgment. Thus, this explicative attitude does not allow the constringency judgment to be assumed as a primary impression in the process of reception but as part of a much more complex interaction through a sensitization of the linguistic manifestations of the semantic and grammatical coherence. The simple reason for this is that these linguistic phenomena are the components of the textual linguistic value system that represents the theoretical framework for evaluation in the given interpretation situation.

If we compare the descriptive and the argumentative acts of interpretation, we notice that the constringency judgment formed during the course of descriptive interpretation concerns only the issue of how well-formed the state of affairs assigned to the given text is. However,

the constringency judgments in argumentative interpretation are made in accordance with aspects that highlight the process of forming the receptive judgment, together with its cause-and-effect relationships. Accordingly, the constringency judgments formed in the course of these two text interpretation processes are essentially different from one another.

It is also well known in cognitive semantic research that the operations of understanding verbatim and non-verbatim meanings are different, and it concerns not only the process of imaging but also the knowledge components mobilized during the process of understanding. The representation of non-verbatim meaning(s) itself involves several types of operations. The knowledge components required for making sense of irony, humor, ridicule, symbolism, figurative meanings, etc., contribute to the formation of the constringency judgment at various levels of background knowledge. In addition to the neurological development of the recipient, the ability to recognize the perspective of the sender of the message is powered by the experiential knowledge of the individual that derives from communicational situations; while the source of making sense of symbols is often the body of collective knowledge of an entire nation or humankind itself; etc.).

The above train of thought aims to emphasize the fact that the generalized interrelations of the definition of the concept of constringency are applicable to text comprehension processes belonging to different interpretation types according to differing factors. This might make it imperative for us to review and give further considerations to our understanding of the phenomenon of constringency in order to fine-tune its definition in the light of the information concerning the circumstances discriminating between the individual types of text interpretation.

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