

Stanley E. Porter\*

# Discourse Analysis and Its Possible Contribution to Bible Translation

DOI 10.1515/opth-2016-0042

Received March 19, 2016; accepted May 17, 2016

**Abstract:** This article examines the possible contribution of discourse analysis to the field of Bible translation. Drawing upon some developments in translation studies regarding discourse, this article proposes that attention to discourse considerations can help Bible translation move beyond the usual opposition of formal and dynamic equivalence.

**Keywords:** translation studies; Bible translation; discourse analysis; Systemic Functional Linguistics; title; structure; heading; cohesion; thematization

## Introduction

The field of translation studies has come into its own as an academic discipline, unbeknownst to many in the field of biblical studies. It is difficult to date the beginning of translation studies,<sup>1</sup> but it is in some ways related, if not beholden, to the pioneers in translation such as Eugene Nida, who published his first book on translation in 1947<sup>2</sup> and continued to publish major works developing his theory of dynamic equivalence translation into the 1960s and later.<sup>3</sup> By the 1960s,<sup>4</sup> there were a number of further works developing theories of translation, but by then the template of translation revolving around literal or formal<sup>5</sup> vs. dynamic or free translation had become well-established and has continued to be used in much discussion of translation. This template has certainly continued to be the operative paradigm for those in biblical studies, even if those translating the Bible in other circles have begun to pursue other translational theories. As illustrative examples, in several recent assessments of various Bible translations, the categories are still essentially

---

1 However, many date it to a paper by Janet Holmes first presented in 1972, entitled “The Name and Nature of Translation Studies,” published in her *Translated!*, 66-80. Holmes may have coined the term “translation studies,” but this can hardly be the beginning of the enterprise.

2 Nida, *Bible Translating*.

3 Nida, *Toward a Science of Translating*; Nida and Taber, *Theory and Practice of Translation*; and Nida and De Waard, *From One Language to Another*. Nida wrote other works as well. The most thorough study of Nida is Felber, *Kommunikative Bibelübersetzung*.

4 E.g., Catford, *Linguistic Theory of Translation*.

5 Literal translation and formal equivalence should perhaps be distinguished (so Hatim and Munday, *Translation*, 40-42), but they rarely seem to be in a substantive way, and not in biblical studies so far as I can tell. The distinction is not necessary for this paper.

---

\*Corresponding author: Stanley E. Porter, McMaster Divinity College, Canada; e-mail: porters@mcmaster.ca

those of literal/formal and functional/free translation.<sup>6</sup> In non-Bible translational circles, the field of translation studies as its own discipline became firmly established by the 1980s with the publication of Susan Bassnett's book entitled *Translation Studies*,<sup>7</sup> and has continued to develop in a variety of ways, moving increasingly away from a more rigid formal vs. functional paradigm (though strong remnants of this opposition remain).<sup>8</sup> Some of the areas of pertinent discussion include:<sup>9</sup> the development of other models and approaches than simply dynamic or functional equivalence,<sup>10</sup> debate over the usefulness of the notion of translational equivalency,<sup>11</sup> the level at which translation occurs,<sup>12</sup> the influence of cultural studies upon translation,<sup>13</sup> debate over how linguistic the production of translations ought to be,<sup>14</sup> and movement away from the source language to the target language and beyond, to the point of focus upon the purpose of translation (the influence of so-called skopos theory).<sup>15</sup> Not all of the developments in translation studies are of equal interest to those involved in Bible translation, but a number of them certainly are. The focus of much non-biblical translation now upon the function or purpose of the translation, not upon its source or even so much upon its target language, is one of these important developments. Despite one's thoughts on these topics, most of the major issues of discussion should be at least examined to ensure that those in Bible translation are aware of the developments outside their relatively narrow field of translational interest, the Bible. The purpose of this article is not to examine these, but to explore how one area of developing translation studies, discourse analysis, may be relevant to Bible translation for those in biblical studies. At this stage in the investigation, I am concerned with raising the possibilities for translation, rather than necessarily answering all of the questions raised.

## Discourse Analysis in Bible Translation

One of the most important and pervasive developments in translation studies over the last forty or so years has been the influence of discourse analysis upon methods of translation. The same cannot be said in Bible translation by those within biblical studies (I am distinguishing this work from that done by those in the field of Bible translation, such as by SIL and Wycliffe). Although there may be occasional reference to discourse analysis in some works on Bible translation,<sup>16</sup> I have not found many of them—Callow being an exception—that refer to particular models of discourse analysis and grasp the significance for translation. I recognize that it is arguable that any attempt at translation—just as any analysis of language—must have some conception of discourse as a semantic notion, and probably includes some consideration of textual features at or beyond the clause. However, an implicit understanding of the notion of text or discourse

<sup>6</sup> E.g., Fee and Strauss, *How to Choose a Translation*, 28; Köstenberger and Croteau, "Short History," esp. 21; and Brunn, *One Bible*, 62-70, where he rules out highly literal and unduly free translations, leaving modified literal and idiomatic translations, which are the equivalent.

<sup>7</sup> Bassnett, *Translation Studies*.

<sup>8</sup> This is not to say that formalism is dead. To the contrary, there are still numerous advocates of it. See, e.g., Hatim, *Teaching and Researching Translation*, 234-35.

<sup>9</sup> An excellent overview of these movements is found in Thoma, *Combining Functional Linguistics*, 23-44.

<sup>10</sup> A number of volumes introduce some of these approaches (besides Thoma's). See, e.g., Neubert and Shreve, *Translation as Text*, 12-32; Munday, *Introducing Translation Studies*; Mojola and Wendland, "Scripture Translation," esp. 13-25; and Pym, *Exploring Translation Theories*. Cf. Hatim and Munday, *Translation*, 8, for a graphic chart of options and their relations.

<sup>11</sup> See Fawcett, *Translation and Language*, 53-63, with functional equivalence being the primary target; Lotfipour-Saedi, "Discourse Analysis," 389-97.

<sup>12</sup> See Newmark, "Application of Discourse Analysis," esp. 115-16.

<sup>13</sup> Pym, *Exploring Translation Theories*, 138-58; Munday, *Introducing Translation Studies*, 126-43. One of the leaders in this area has been Lawrence Venuti. See, e.g., his *Scandals of Translation*.

<sup>14</sup> There has been a backlash against the growing influence of linguistics on translation; see Thoma, *Combining Functional Linguistics*, 24. This has occurred especially in the area of skopos theory, which has many similarities to functionalist and dynamic translation theories.

<sup>15</sup> See Nord, *Text Analysis in Translation*, 5-24.

<sup>16</sup> One of the first is Callow, *Discourse Considerations*, who bases her entire book around it; more recently Ross, "Advances in Linguistic Theory," esp. 146-49; and, refreshingly, Moo, *We Still Don't Get it*, 3-4.

(depending on how these are defined) is not the same as focused attention upon the contribution of discourse analysis to translation theory. From a biblical studies standpoint, one of the latest such attempts to introduce or re-introduce discourse analysis into the discussion was made in an article that I published in 2009 and then revised and refined in 2013.<sup>17</sup> At that point, and because of the venue, I made some basic comments on various types of translations and how they correspond to a rank/stratal view of language. One of the types I identified was discourse analysis.

Even though there are a number of different types of discourse analysis that have established themselves within the wider field of linguistics, it appears, at least from my study of the subject, that Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) in its various forms and permutations has had one of the largest influences upon discourse conceptions of translation, followed by various views of pragmatics and other types of functionalism (e.g. Prague school functional sentence perspective).<sup>18</sup> The influence of SFL has been upon those who have developed SFL-based theories of translation and upon those who have incorporated various elements of the theory into other, often eclectic, models of translation (e.g. cohesion, one of the major contributions of SFL to the wider field of linguistics, is often found in such discussions). There are a number of reasons why SFL may have had the influence that it has had upon translation studies. Some of these might well include: the functional theoretical basis of SFL, in which the functions of language are realized by the wordings of language, thus allowing SFL to find a common orientation with translation, in which the meaning of the source text finds wording in the target text; the various modes or perspectives of SFL, such as viewing any linguistic element from above or below or around (especially the clause), that allow for varying perspectives on elements of language; a comprehensive view of language that provides expandability from smaller units up to and including an entire text; focus upon the clause as an important (though not the only) unit of meaning, at which the major functions are expressed, in keeping with most other non-formalist/literalist translators who also focus upon the clause (rather than the word or even word group); the rigorous development of categories that can be used above the level of the clause, such as cohesion; and a conception of ‘language according to use’ that appreciates and attempts to analyze variation in language according to its context (the notion of register); among possibly many others.<sup>19</sup> There are also other concepts from other schools of discourse analysis that have also come to be featured in various proposals regarding discourse translation, some of which will be incidentally mentioned below, even though they are not my focus of attention.

In this paper, I select some of those discourse features that I believe have special pertinence for Bible translation, and attempt to define and illustrate each one in a way that shows how the discourse feature can and should play a role in translation. This is not an exhaustive list. Nor is it to say that some of these features have not already been taken into account by some Bible translators. Nor is it a list that draws exclusively upon SFL or a narrow view of SFL. However, as I have mentioned above, Bible translators, so far as I know, have not made discourse analytical theories the explicit and widespread basis of their translational practice, and so their use of such features has apparently been ad hoc or even incidental to the entire translational enterprise. My goal is to show that attention to a discourse-based translational method—at least as reflected in the features I illustrate below—has greater promise for translation than simply the occasional recognition of incidental linguistic features.

<sup>17</sup> Porter, “Assessing Translation Theory,” esp. 122-42; and Porter, *How We Got the New Testament*, 174-209. See also Ciampa, “Approaching Paul’s Use of Scripture,” 293-318.

<sup>18</sup> A number of works that have at least strong elements of SFL in their view of discourse and translation include: Callow, *Discourse Considerations*; Hatim and Mason, *Discourse and the Translator*, 36-54, 192-222 passim; Bell, *Translation and Translating*, 117-97, but within an eclectic model; Newmark, *About Translation*, esp. 65-77; Baker, *In Other Words*; Fawcett, *Translation and Language*, 72-100, but within a definite eclectic model; Trosborg, “Discourse Analysis”; Hatim and Munday, *Translation*, 76-85; Thoma, *Combining Functional Linguistics*; Farias de Souza, “Interlingual Re-Instantiation.” Cf. Munday, *Evaluation in Translation*. In Bible translation outside the field of biblical studies, relevance theory has made significant inroads. See, e.g., Gutt, *Translation and Relevance*; Gutt, *Relevance Theory*; and Goodwin, *Translating the English Bible*.

<sup>19</sup> See Thoma, *Combining Functional Linguistics*, 18. There are as one might expect numerous references to Michael Halliday’s work in translation studies that use SFL. See Thoma, *Combining Functional Linguistics*, 287-89, for such a list of works. Especially important is Halliday, *Introduction to Functional Grammar*, 1<sup>st</sup> ed. (since further developed and expanded); and Eggins, *Introduction to Systemic Functional Linguistics*.

## Four Features of a Discourse Analytic Translation

In this section, I select four features within various proposals on discourse analytic translation and illustrate the potential for use within Bible translation. These features include: (1) titles, (2) structure and headings, and, within the notion of register, especially the textual metafunction, (3) cohesion and (4) thematization.

### Titles

The first feature that I select is titles. The classic example of a title is whether the parable in Luke 15:11–31 is called the parable of the prodigal son, the lost son, or the forgiving father, among others.<sup>20</sup> There is, however, more to titles than simply this example. Titles are important for reading and understanding written works, even biblical books. By titles, I include more than the titles of individual units, but titles all the way up to entire books. I do not mean the question of whether one calls the book First Corinthians or 1 Corinthians (either one is correct within its respective context), but more substantive discussion.<sup>21</sup> Some may consider discussion of titles, especially when the titles of biblical books are relatively well established and fixed, peripheral or even unnecessary. However, we realize from our own approach to texts—whether it is picking up a book from a shelf or finding the correct title for our own publications—that titles are hugely important, as they orient the reader to the work that they entitle. In order to find the right title, there are a number of considerations. These include: the purpose of the title, its scope, and its descriptiveness.<sup>22</sup>

For translation of the Bible, we must consider both the entire Bible itself and the individual books within it. We can see that there have been a variety of titles for the Bible itself used throughout the history of Bible translation, some of them more expressive and helpful than others. For example, the title page of Erasmus's first edition of the New Testament (1516) in fact did not mention that it contained the Greek New Testament, but only indicated that it was a Latin New Testament: *Novum Instrumentum omne*. However, the Latin version is inconsequential compared to the fact that the Greek New Testament was the first published. In this instance, the title page was completely misleading and a poor indicator of what was contained within it (a diglot New Testament). William Tyndale's title page of his printed New Testament (1526) states this: *The new Testament as it was written, and caused to be written, by them which heard it. To whom also our savior Christ Jesus commanded that they should preach it to all creatures*. This title contains not only an indication of its content (the New Testament), but a view of how it was written (by those who heard it) and its purpose (proclamation). Coverdale's Bible (1535) states this on its title page: *Biblia: The Bible, that is, the Holy Scripture of the Olde and New Testament, faithfully and truly translated out of Douche [Deutsch: German] and Latyn in to Engliche*, in which the source of the translation (not Hebrew and Greek) is noted. The King James Bible (1611) has the following: *The Holy Bible, Conteyning the Old Testament, and the New: Newly Translated out of the Originall tongues: & with the former Translations diligently compared and reuised by his Maiesties special Comandment*, a title of content, source, and process (newly translated but also compared with former translations, especially, one might note, Tyndale's).<sup>23</sup> Some more recent translations also have titles that bear mention.<sup>24</sup> The translation that followed the principles of Nida was first called *The Bible in Today's English Version*, indicating that it was a version of the Bible for a contemporary English audience, until it was replaced by the title *Good News Bible*, which is a statement of its purpose or content. The replacement Bible for this was *The Contemporary English Version: God's Promise for People of Today*, a different translation that attempted to continue the tradition of the Authorized Version but still following

<sup>20</sup> See Ross, "Advances in Linguistic Theory," 148.

<sup>21</sup> The US political candidate who referred to a letter by Paul as "Two Corinthians" was correct in doing so, despite the hectoring of a number of media commentators who implied otherwise—regardless of what one thinks of the particular candidate.

<sup>22</sup> Brown and Yule, *Discourse Analysis*, 139–40.

<sup>23</sup> The information for these title pages is taken from the photographs found in Daniell, *Bible in English*, between pp. 460 and 461.

<sup>24</sup> I realize that many translations have multiple types and editions. I am using what I think are standard editions of the translations involved. Other versions may have different information provided—an issue that raises its own questions regarding the purpose of titles.

Nida's principles. The Revised Standard Version appeared in 1952 with this title page: *The Holy Bible Revised Standard Version containing the Old and New Testaments, translated from the original tongues being the version set forth A.D. 1611 revised A.D. 1881-1885 and A.D. 1901 compared with the most ancient authorities and revised A.D. 1952*. This title includes the content, the method, something about the process and where it stands in the history of translation—something most translations lack. Many if not most of the standard Bible translations of the modern era, it seems to me, follow a less descriptive path, usually just listing the title Holy Bible and the name of the translation (NIV, HCSB, etc.), although occasionally the contents (e.g. Old and New Testaments and/or Apocrypha/Deuterocanonical books).<sup>25</sup> Some of these names of the translations apparently attempt to be descriptive—such as New International Version—although not nearly as much as some of their predecessors.

To be noted further are the names of the individual books in recent translations. The RSV offers the titles of the various books with: The Gospel According to..., The Acts of the Apostles, The (First, Second) Letter of Paul to..., The Letter to the Hebrews, the Letter of James, etc., and The Revelation to John. In other words, for each of these books, the title includes some indication of the type of literature, often an indication of authorship (whether actually authentic or pseudepigraphal by scholarly opinion), and occasionally content or destination. By contrast, most standard editions used today (e.g. NRSV, NIV, HCSB, CEB) simply list the books with the shortest possible title: Matthew, etc., Acts, Romans, etc., Revelation.

So what do we make of the titles used in most standard contemporary Bible translations? There are several observations that can be made. The first is that it appears that in earlier times (however that might be estimated) there were fuller and more explicit titles provided both for the Bible as a whole and for the individual books. The pattern seems to be from fuller to sparser information on both fronts. One might argue that fuller information was needed in a less information-rich or less well-educated earlier time. However, the RSV seems to have the fullest information on all fronts during an age that probably represents one of the high points in biblical literacy in North America, the 1950s. In the contemporary period, Bibles offer less information, both in their overall titles and in their specific book titles. Second, it is noteworthy that the title system employed by most standard Bibles today follows no established convention that I can determine. The translations tend not to indicate the type of book, authorship, or destination or purpose—all of which would provide helpful discourse information to guide the reader. They neither follow what is found in ancient manuscripts attached sometime in the second century and following (e.g. According to..., and then later Gospel According to...) nor provide the information found in some earlier Bibles. Third, one might speculate on the reasons for the lack of information. These reasons might include critical uncertainty regarding authorship, literary type, and purpose or destination. This might be true of authorship of the Gospels (I do not believe so, but admit that many scholars would doubt traditional attribution), but is there reason to doubt that they are appropriately called Gospels? Can one doubt that Paul wrote Romans? There is admittedly some discussion regarding what type of letters are found in the New Testament, and discussion over whether letter is the proper title for such books as Hebrews or James or some other letters. But is the best solution to this problem not indicating anything regarding their literary type? I doubt it. There are other critical questions that can be raised regarding the titles of the individual books. However, for the most part, such questions are mostly critical questions with which scholars are concerned, not the vast majority of readers of the Bible, for whom guidance by the translators is what they desire (they admit to such by using an English translation, and such guidance is provided by the translation itself). Translators are not meeting their need to address the entire text, by not giving an appropriate title to the work so as to indicate to the reader, even if only in rough terms, the type of literature the reader is going to encounter, something of authorship (even if traditional, as even those translations that doubt authorship use traditional names, e.g., James, Peter, etc.), and possibly destination or purpose. I find it ironic that there are constant efforts to create study Bibles to guide readers when adding an appropriate, even if not definitive, title would be an aid to the reader (though perhaps cause some loss in sales of study Bibles).

<sup>25</sup> The CEB is a pleasant exception: *Holy Bible: Common English Bible, a fresh translation to touch the heart and mind*.

## Structure and Headings

The second topic to consider is the structure of books and their headings. This topic follows directly from the previous one, titles. With an appropriate title, a reader is poised to expect a particular kind of work. The structure of that work should support that title, and in conjunction with that appropriate headings should be formulated that provide further shape to the translation and guidance for its readers. There is admittedly much debate in linguistics, as well as literary theory, regarding the notion of genre. There is even significant debate within SFL regarding genre and register. James Martin's notion of the relationship of genre and register seems to provide the best approach to their relationship. Genres are broad, culturally-based and hence culturally variable categories that encompass a range of different registers, that is, more situationally variable types of instances of language.<sup>26</sup> This definition of genre recognizes several factors. One factor is that genres are not static but are fluid, but are less given to fluidity than registers because they are broad and encompassing categories that express general ways of viewing literature within a given culture. Another factor is that, as a result, as cultures change, their genres may well change also. This requires that genres be seen as specific to a given culture, and not reflective of absolute configurations. Within a given genre, there may well be various instances of language according to use that themselves differ from each other but that might be seen as coherent within the culture. One might argue that such things as gospels, letters, and the like conform to these broad genres. The point is not that one must decide on absolute categories, but that one must find categories that provide useful interpretive frameworks. I would contend that placing all of the Gospels within the category of gospel, but distinguishing the Synoptic Gospels from John's Gospel, provides a useful distinction. I would contend further that placing all of Paul's letters within one category as letters, but recognizing a difference between congregational or communal letters and individual letters might constitute another useful distinction. Some might wish to argue that authentic letters and pseudepigraphal letters should be distinguished, on the basis that their contexts of situation are significantly different (hence they reflect different registers). The context of situation of an authentic Pauline letter reflects the author Paul writing to one of his churches or individuals, whereas the context of situation of an inauthentic Pauline letter reflects a double fictive context of situation (in that the author and the addressees are not those purported by the letter), but a different one nevertheless. The book traditionally ascribed to the Hebrews constitutes a particularly interesting case regarding letter structure in relation to genre. Most translations today, apparently, simply label the book Hebrews. In one sense, this is understandable, as its use does not require designating whether the book is a letter and it simply assumes the traditional ascription of audience. However, this also means that the translators have not fulfilled what I consider their discourse duty, which is to offer the reader some indication of the kind of literature that they think it is as a means of guiding reading. Is this book *The Letter to the Hebrews* or is it *The Sermon to the Hebrews*? Or should we refer to the Hebrews at all? Similar comments could be made regarding a number of other books, such as so-called Acts of the Apostles, James, and Revelation.

The determination of genre (and register; see below for some related comments) is a necessary concomitant to discussion of structure of the individual book. One of the features of discourse analysis is consideration of the entire discourse and the text that instantiates it. This concern with the entire text means that there are a number of structural indicators that should be discernible regarding the individual book that are important in both translating it and presenting it to the reader. Even if the primary focus of translation is the clause, there are features of language beyond the clause that a discourse translation must consider and reflect. Concern for structure of a text, of course, goes back to at least the time of Aristotle with his concern for the beginning, middle, and end of a text—a self-evident observation once one takes a moment to think about it—but requires that the discourse analytical translator go further and attempt a number of structural analyses. These include: identification of the overall structure of the text, designation of the individual units within the text down to the necessary levels of specification, and identification of the points and means of connection between these individual units. The appropriate headings can then be

<sup>26</sup> Martin and Rose, *Working with Discourse*, 8; cf. Thoma, *Combining Functional Linguistics*, 35.

given to these individual units as a means of both showing that the translator had an understanding of the text and providing guidance for the reader as the reader uses the translation.

In one sense, the title of the individual book serves as the overall heading for the entire book. The individual headings within the book are sub-headings that help to enhance what is indicated by the title of the book. Some examples of indications of structure in various books will illustrate the importance of determining structure as an aid to translation and then as a means of providing aid to the reader. There are two examples in particular that are worth noting. The first concerns the macro-structure of a given book, and the second micro-structural patterns.

Macro-patterns involve the overall structural patterns of a given book, and of necessity also indicative headings. I treat them here together. In some ways, this discussion resembles the discussion of the structure of genres or perhaps what Ruqaiya Hasan calls “general structure potential” of a register (and is similar to what cognitive linguists might call scenarios or schemas).<sup>27</sup> I treat letters first. I use the NIV as an example, because it is a recently revised translation (published 2011) and so, if any, should evidence some of the categories that I am discussing.<sup>28</sup> There are several observations to make regarding the way that the Pauline letters are presented that show that the NIV apparently did not take discourse factors into consideration in a systematic way (or at least in a way that I can determine). The NIV provides headings for many, if not most, sections of letters. However, the headings are mostly content headings concerned with the ideas within a given unit. They are not usually or at least consistently concerned with other possible features, such as letter structure. However, this leads to several problems. One of these is the failure to acknowledge letter structure and another is the tendency to include all parts of the letter within what heading-structure is provided. As a result, in the NIV none of the Pauline letters offers a heading for the letter opening.<sup>29</sup> However, a structure heading is provided for some of the closings of the letters, although not consistently so, such as “personal greetings,”<sup>30</sup> “final greetings,”<sup>31</sup> “final instructions,”<sup>32</sup> “final charge to Timothy” (1 Tim 6:11-21), and “final remarks” (Titus 3:12-15). There is no heading attached to a closing in Galatians (6:18 is a grace wish) or Philemon (v. 22 has instructions and vv. 23-25 include greetings and a grace wish). In other words, there are only haphazard structural indications of the opening and closing of the Pauline letters within the NIV. By contrast, the book of Hebrews does have a heading for its opening section (Heb 1:1-4, “God’s Final Word: His Son”) and indicates more detail regarding the closing (Heb 13:20-25, “Benediction and Final Greetings”). Something is being indicated about Hebrews, but since the title is simply “Hebrews,” what is being indicated is left unsaid. James, 1 and 2 Peter, and Jude are treated like Paul’s letters, without a heading for the opening but, apart from 2 Peter, with some kind of closing.<sup>33</sup> 1 John has headings from start to finish and hence is more like Hebrews, while 2 and 3 John have no headings whatsoever, even though they have letter openings and final greetings (cf. Philemon with two headings). Is something being said about these Johannine letters, possibly that they are too short or possibly insignificant to merit attention at the macro-structural level, even though they have such structure? The interior structure of the many letters is only occasionally and inconsistently referred to. These headings include reference to the “thanksgiving” in most letters,<sup>34</sup> but not in Rom 1:8-10 or 15 and possibly 2 Cor 1:3-11. This leaves Romans and 2 Corinthians looking much like Galatians, 1 Timothy, and Titus with regard to the lack of explicitly marked thanksgiving—

<sup>27</sup> Hasan, “Place of Context,” 186.

<sup>28</sup> I realize that some translations, such as the NASB, do not provide any structural indicators, apart from bold verse numbers, perhaps as a matter of principle—except of course for chapter and verse numbers used throughout!

<sup>29</sup> E.g. Rom 1:1-7; 1 Cor 1:1-3; 2 Cor 1:1-2; Gal 1:1-5; Eph 1:1-2; Phil 1:1-2; Col 1:1-2; 1 Thess 1:1; 2 Thess 1:1-2; 1 Tim 1:1-2; 2 Tim 1:1-2; Titus 1:1-4; Philm 1-3.

<sup>30</sup> Rom 16:1-27, but no separate heading for the final doxology in vv. 25-27.

<sup>31</sup> 1 Cor 16:19-24; 2 Cor 13:11-14, but where there are also “final warnings” specified in 13:1-10; Eph 6:21-23; Phil 4:21-23, but where there are also indicated a “closing appeal for steadfastness and unity,” 4:1-3, “final exhortations,” 4:4-9, and “thanks for their gifts,” 4:10-20; Col 4:7-18, the largest such indicated section in the Pauline letters, even though no greetings are said to be conveyed by Tychicus in 4:7-9; 2 Thess 3:16-18, although there are no greetings indicated, but instead a peace wish, a personal greeting and a grace wish; 2 Tim 4:19-22.

<sup>32</sup> 1 Thess 5:12-28, even though there are final greetings in 5:26.

<sup>33</sup> However, Jas 5:13-20 as “The Prayer of Faith” may not provide a suitable closing, especially considering vv. 19-20.

<sup>34</sup> 1 Cor 1:4-9; Eph 1:15-23; Phil 1:3-11; Col 1:3-14; 1 Thess 1:2-10; 2 Thess 1:3-12; 2 Tim 1:3-5; and Philm 4-7.

when Romans and arguably 2 Corinthians have a section performing such a function, even if Galatians, 1 Timothy, and Titus do not (although admittedly for different reasons). There is no indication within the NIV of what might be called the body of the letter, as there is no heading as such and no differentiation of levels of headings, and very little regarding the possible parenesis. The closest that one finds to indication of parenesis is the headings in Ephesians,<sup>35</sup> Colossians,<sup>36</sup> and 1 Thessalonians,<sup>37</sup> as well as possibly 1 Timothy.<sup>38</sup>

I am not necessarily advocating following the standard five-part letter outline as a means of organizing Paul's letters, but I am advocating that some clear and consistent indication of structure should be offered if one is being attentive to discourse considerations. As it stands, one is left to provide one's own identification of the letter opening (except for Hebrews, unless Hebrews is something other than a letter, which we don't know), the only part of any book that is without a heading in the NIV New Testament. The Gospels are not much better than the letters, but at least all of the sections receive headings, even if inconsistent ones (e.g. Luke 1:1-4 is called a "Prologue," but John 1:1-18 is not; and Mark 1:1 is subsumed under John the Baptist). For the letters, some further textual structure is indicated, but it is confined to the thanksgiving (for the most part), but the rest of the parts are not specified. The letter closing is subsumed in many, but not all instances, under the final greetings (sometimes when there are no such greetings!). I fear that, overall, there is little discourse guidance offered to the reader as the NIV headings stand. This situation provides an excellent opportunity for future translators to think anew about the various genres or even register types found within the New Testament, find suitable headings that capture that textual structure, and consistently apply them.<sup>39</sup> There no doubt will be difference of opinion on such matters, but what we find now can hardly be said to provide an adequate solution to the problem.

Micro-patterns are concerned with such things as the use of tense-forms to indicate the structure and shape of a unit of text. Whereas in the previous section on macro-structure I concentrated upon the letters, especially the Pauline letters, in this section I wish to concentrate upon narrative within the New Testament. In Greek narrative, the mainline of the narrative, sometimes called the backbone of the narrative, is carried by the aorist tense-form, as has long been recognized.<sup>40</sup> So much is not readily disputed. What is disputed, however, is whether this usage indicates backgrounded (i.e. placed in the background as the backdrop for other events) or foregrounded (i.e. placed in the foreground as more prominent) material. An instance in English for the sake of illustration might be the use of a present-tense form in the midst of telling about what one previously did, as a means of drawing attention to that particular action (e.g. "I went to the store to buy some milk, but when I showed up, a policeman screeches to a halt in front and gets out of his car. I didn't know what was happening..."). Some have argued, on the basis of supposed linguistic typology, that in narrative the Greek aorist, semantically realizing perfective aspect, is foregrounded because it is mainline, whereas imperfective aspect, such as is grammaticalized in the imperfect tense-form or the so-called narrative present tense-form, is backgrounded material.<sup>41</sup> There are several who have accepted this description in New Testament studies on the basis of typological formulation.<sup>42</sup> However, there are several major problems with it. First, as Dooley and Levinsohn apparently inadvertently suggest (although they do not fully realize the implications), there can be no such thing as a text that is merely foregrounded material,

<sup>35</sup> Eph 4:17-5:20, "Instructions for Christian Living," and 5:21-6:9, "Instructions for Christian Households."

<sup>36</sup> Col 3:1-17, "Living as Those Made Alive in Christ," 3:18-4:1, "Instructions for Christian Households," and 4:2-6, "Further Instructions."

<sup>37</sup> 1 Thess 4:1-12, "Living to Please God."

<sup>38</sup> 1 Tim 4:1-12, "Living to Please God," as well as possibly 1 Tim 2:1-15, "Instructions on Worship," a highly debatable heading.

<sup>39</sup> It might appear that I am relying upon form-critical categories regarding letter structure, as opposed to appropriate discourse analytic categories. I note, however, that form criticism (in the work of Hermann Gunkel) grew out of a recognition that language was used in different ways on the basis of its situational context. Language according to use is the basis of the linguistic notion of register. There is a line of connection between Gunkel's form criticism and what came to be known as register studies (language according to use), mediated by Alan Gardiner and Branislaw Malinowski to John Rupert Firth and then to London school register studies developed especially in SFL. See Buss, *Changing Shape of Form Criticism*, esp. 153-56.

<sup>40</sup> Porter, *Verbal Aspect*, 92-93 and elsewhere.

<sup>41</sup> Hopper, "Aspect and Foregrounding"; and Wallace, "Figure and Ground." Cf. Porter, *Verbal Aspect*, 92. There are numerous other questions to be raised regarding Wallace's prototypical characterization.

<sup>42</sup> E.g., Fanning, "Greek Presents," esp. 172-73. Cf. Ross, "Advances in Linguistic Theory," 147-48.



because to foreground everything means that it is in fact background or non-highlighted material.<sup>43</sup> The second problem is that there is confusion between main- and offline material and grounding. The mainline is the thread that carries the narrative forward and the offline provides supporting or developmental material. There is not an equation of the two. The third is that, whatever value the analysis of aorist as foreground may have for other languages, it does not appear to be a valid description of Greek.<sup>44</sup> If it were the case, then one might well argue that, in a sequence of events in which the mainline is carried by aorist tense-forms, the foregrounded material is “he broke...gave...said...gave... they drank...he said...they departed” (as in Mark 14:22-26, all with aorist indicative tense-forms), in which the offline material is the more important (and foregrounded in various ways). The reality is that the mainline may be developed using backgrounded, foregrounded, and frontgrounded material, as may be the offline material in the same way. For the mainline material, the aorist (perfective aspect) provides the background, against which is set the marked foregrounded material as indicated by the imperfect and so-called narrative present (both imperfective aspect) and the frontgrounded material indicated by the perfect and pluperfect (both stative aspect).

English translations do a relatively poor job of indicating the micro-structure according to the narrative line of the text. An example that illustrates the problem is Mark 14:12-21. In this episode, the mainline is more contoured than the passage cited above. The mainline pattern is as follows (translated with contrasting English renderings to illustrate the point, one possible way of representing the differences, although certainly not the only way in which such contrasts might be rendered to appreciate their differing semantic contributions):

...they say [narrative present]...he sends [narrative present]...says [narrative present]...they departed [aorist]...came [aorist]...found [aorist]...said [aorist]...prepared [aorist]...he comes [narrative present]...he said [aorist]...they began [aorist]...he said [aorist]. (Mark 14:12-21)

We may not readily understand all the reasons for the alterations between the uses of the aorist and the present tense-forms, but the fact that they are used provides narrative contrast within the mainline, with the narrative present tense-forms used to perform such foregrounded functions as introduce participants, actions, or sayings. The basic mainline events, especially as they are simply being sequentially conveyed, use the aorist tense-form, with highlighted events of the mainline using other tense-forms. One must establish grounding on the basis of the entire verbal system, but in this context it appears to confirm that the aorist is used for the backgrounded rather than foregrounded processes. Once this is established, translations must find a way to reflect these differences. Means to be used may differ—including contrasting English tense-forms or providing appropriate textual notes—but the importance of the differences should in any case be reflected in the translation.

An examination of several major contemporary translations reveals that, whether the verbal form is an aorist or a present tense-form, in narrative the translations are very similar, using the English simple past tense:

...said/asked...sent... said/told...went out...came/entered...found...prepared... came/arrived...began/were saddened/said/asked...said/replied/answered (NIV, NRSV, HCSB, CEB, and NASB). (Mark 14:12-21)

There are only two exceptions worth noting (there is some variation in 14:19, but none that affects the point here). In the NRSV and NIV, the use of the present tense-form in Mark 14:13 is translated with the participle “saying/telling.” The second is that the narrative presents are (usually) indicated by an asterisk in the NASB, which notes that “Greek authors frequently used the present tense for the sake of heightened

<sup>43</sup> See Dooley and Levinsohn, *Analyzing Discourse*, 79, cited also in Fanning, “Greek Presents,” 173, but also apparently without realizing the implications.

<sup>44</sup> Porter, *Linguistic Analysis*, 302-303 and note 83.

vividness, thereby transporting their readers in imagination to the actual scene at the time of occurrence,”<sup>45</sup> even though they use the English past tense for stylistic reasons. The earlier versions of the NASB indicated the narrative presents by putting the form in italics.

On the matter of structure and headings, there are indications that translations have generally failed to take into account larger structural patterns and, where these have been recognized, they have not been consistently analyzed and presented. The same can be said of smaller structural patterns, in which the narrative significance of varying tense-forms is muted by the use of similar English expressions.

## Register

The topic of register (see above in relation to genre), or some of its sub-categories, is often invoked in recent discourse analytic translation studies.<sup>46</sup> This use of register, or at least various features of register, is the direct result of the influence of SFL upon discourse analytic translation studies, almost from the beginning (as noted above). There are various discussions of how register might have an impact upon translation, but I wish to examine two areas that have been utilized for some time, but that still hold promise for developing more discourse-sensitive translations. These are cohesion and thematization.<sup>47</sup>

Cohesion.<sup>48</sup> Cohesion within a SFL framework is located around the clause, to use Halliday’s categorical terminology, which means that it involves a variety of linguistic elements that function in various relations to the clause and brings them all into play. Cohesion is concerned with the range of devices that are used to make a text cohesive. These can include a variety of grammatical and lexical features. Grammatical features entail such elements as the repetition of tense-forms, mood forms, verbal person and number, and the like. Lexical features include verbal repetition, semantic repetition (including substitution such as synonyms or words from the same semantic domain or the like), referential chains, and conjunction, among others. A further development in the use of cohesion has been what Ruqaiya Hasan has called cohesive harmony analysis, in which there is the interaction of various cohesive chains.<sup>49</sup> Once cohesive chains (chains are strings of similar cohesive elements) have been identified, the level of cohesive harmony is determined on the basis of the frequency of interaction (and hence in some ways density of interaction) of the elements of the chains. Cohesive harmony analysis, though it has potential as a means of refining analysis of cohesion, continues to be developed and so far as I know has not been widely used in study of the Greek New Testament.

The major example that I wish to examine is the paragraphing within Mark 1-3. Mark makes use of a number of different conjunctions to create cohesion between paragraphs, as indicated in the Greek text. These cohesive devices include: the very frequent use of the conjunction καί, often translated “and”; the use of the phrase καὶ εὐθὺς, sometimes translated “and immediately/then”; and other forms of conjunction, such as δέ (“but”), etc.

If nothing else, the translations lack originality, at least at this point. However, I am less concerned with their originality than I am with evidence that the conjunctions are used to provide cohesion to the discourse, by signaling various types of joining relationships among the units. I work from two assumptions in this analysis. The first is that the paragraphing in the *UBSGNT* indicates the paragraphs. I realize that there are other ways of paragraphing, but all of the translations evidence at least knowledge of, if not outright

<sup>45</sup> NASB, p. v. This is not the best explanation of the narrative or historic present, but it is at least an explanation. See Porter, *Verbal Aspect*, 189-98. I note that the asterisk is “usually” used because, apparently, the NASB is not entirely consistent in doing so (according to the helpful comment of one of the reviewers of this paper).

<sup>46</sup> Fawcett, *Translation and Language*, 75-84; Hatim, *Translation*, 76-85; Thoma, *Combining Functional Linguistics*, 32-35. For a useful summary, see Leckie-Tarry, *Language and Context*.

<sup>47</sup> E.g., Trosborg, “Discourse Analysis,” 199-203, but who also includes text types and genre vs. medium.

<sup>48</sup> See Halliday and Hasan, *Cohesion in English*; cf. Gutwinski, *Cohesion in Literary Texts*; Reed, *Discourse Analysis of Philippians*, 88-101.

<sup>49</sup> Hasan, “Coherence and Cohesive Harmony”; Hasan in Halliday and Hasan, *Language, Context, and Text*, 89-94; cf. Porter, “Cohesion in James.”

conformity with, this scheme.<sup>50</sup> The second assumption is that the Greek conjunctions are purposefully used to indicate cohesive relationships within the discourse. A third assumption—but one that, I recognize, might well be disputed—is that the English translations are attempting at least to approximate the semantics of the Greek conjunction patterns. One need not translate the conjunctions in a literalistic way, but some patterns of similarity and difference should be evident in their renderings so as to reflect the Greek text. On the basis of these three assumptions and examination of the conjunction patterns, it is far from clear that discourse considerations have been taken into account in these selected translations.

Greek NT	NRSV	NIV	HCSB	NASB	CEB
1:1 ἀρχὴ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου	The beginning of...	The beginning of...	The beginning of...	The beginning of...	The beginning of...
1:9 καὶ ἐγένετο	In those days...	At that time...	In those days...	In those days...	About that time
1:12 καὶ εὐθύς	And the Spirit...	At once the Spirit... (not a par. break)	Immediately the Spirit...	Immediately the Spirit...	At once the Spirit... (not a par. break)
1:14 δέ	Now after John...	After John...	After John...	Now after John...	After John...
1:16 καί	As Jesus passed...	As Jesus walked...	As He was passing...	As He was going...	As Jesus passed...
1:21 καί	They went...	They went...	Then they went...	They went...	Jesus and his followers...
1:29 καὶ εὐθύς	As soon as...	As soon as...	As soon as...	And immediately after...	After leaving...
1:35 καί	In the morning...	Very early in...	Very early in...	In the early morning...	Early in the morning... (not a par. break)
1:40 καί	A leper...	A man with...	Then a man...	And a leper...	A man with...
2:1 καί	When he...	A few days later...	When He entered...	When He had...	After a few days...
2:13 καί	Jesus went...	Once again...	Then Jesus went...	And He went...	Jesus went...
2:18 καί	Now John's disciples...	Now John's disciples...	Now John's disciples...	John's disciples...	John's disciples...
2:23 καὶ ἐγένετο	One Sabbath...	One Sabbath...	On the Sabbath...	And it happened that...	Jesus went...
3:1 καί	Again he...	Another time...	Now He entered...	He entered...	Jesus returned...
3:7 καί	Jesus departed...	Jesus withdrew...	Jesus departed...	Jesus withdrew...	Jesus left...
3:13 καί	He went...	Jesus went...	Then He went...	And He went...	Jesus went...
3:20 καί	Then he...	Then Jesus...	Then He went...	And He came...	Jesus entered...
3:31 καί	Then his mother...	Then Jesus' mother... (not a par. break)	Then His mother...	Then His mother...	His mother and brothers... (not a par. break)

As seen in the Greek text above, there are five levels or types of conjunction present in Mark 1-3. These include: asyndeton, καί, δέ, καὶ εὐθύς, and καὶ ἐγένετο (organized according to what I perceive as the relative strength of the connection, from lowest to highest, although my analysis does not depend upon this relative weighting). As a result, I would expect the different translations—however they may choose to render a given conjunction—to indicate by some means when the same conjunction is being used to link units of the discourse, in distinction from the use of different conjunctions—but all reflecting use of conjunctions to make the discourse cohesive.

<sup>50</sup> I realize that adopting the *UBSGNT* paragraphing begs the question of the contribution of discourse analysis to identifying paragraph units. However, identifying such units is not my purpose at this point, but treating cohesion on the basis of conjunctions, where the use of already identified units is appropriate.

There is only one instance of asyndeton (Mark 1:1) and all of the translations consistently render the beginning of the Gospel without any indication of linkage to a previous discourse (or discourse unit). The next type of conjunction uses *καί*. None of the translations uses “and” for this conjunction. The usual means of rendering the conjunction in these examples is with no English conjunction. This is understandable, as *καί* indicates continuity between units. There are two problems, however, with the translation without conjunction. The first problem is that the use of *καί* is not differentiated from the use of asyndeton and the second is that, in such instances, there is no discourse marker in English to indicate the beginning of a new unit connected to the one previous. One must rely upon the headings provided. There are several noteworthy exceptions to this rendering of *καί*. The first is the use of “now” in the NIV, NRSV, and HCSB at Mark 2:18, where the NASB and CEB do not use a conjunction, and in the HCSB at Mark 3:1. The second set of exceptions is that the HCSB uses “then” at Mark 3:13 and 20, and all of the translations except the CEB use “then” at Mark 3:31. The third set of exceptions is the use of “and” by the NASB in Mark 3:13 and 20. Whereas there is some variety in indicating continuative conjunction, there is also much variety. The next type of conjunction uses *δέ*. There is only one use of this conjunction, at Mark 1:14. The NRSV and NASB render it “now,” whereas the other translations do not use a conjunction. The choice of no conjunction is especially problematic, as we then have three different means of conjunction—asyndeton, *καί*, and *δέ*—without differentiated expression in the English translations to indicate types of discourse connections. The fourth use of conjunction is *καὶ εὐθύς*. This conjunction appears twice in Mark 1-3, at 1:12 and 29. There are major inconsistencies at this point as well. In Mark 1:12, the NRSV simply uses “and,” whereas the NIV and CEB use “at once,” and the HCSB and NASB use “immediately.” However, the NIV and CEB do not indicate a paragraph break at this point. All but the NRSV seem to indicate that the conjunction draws attention to the event, but only two of them, the HCSB and NASB, indicate that the conjunction is joining two paragraph units. In Mark 1:29, all the translations except the CEB recognize the use of this same conjunction, even though they render it differently. The NRSV, NIV, and HCSB translate *καὶ εὐθύς* here as “as soon as,” whereas the NASB renders it “and immediately.” None of the translations renders it the way that the same conjunction was rendered in 1:12. The fifth and final use of conjunction is *καὶ ἐγένετο*, as part of a larger structure. This conjunction also appears twice in Mark 1-3, at 1:9 and 2:23. Only one of the translations, the NASB at Mark 2:23, indicates the use of a conjunction by rendering it “and it happened that...” As this particular wording has aroused significant discussion regarding its use in the Gospels, the lack of any discourse manifestation is noticeable to say the least.

I realize that I have not offered a thorough study of paragraph conjunctions within the New Testament. However, the evidence that I have gathered by a random examination of three chapters in one Gospel indicates that there is little attention being given to the discourse function of conjunctions within contemporary English translations. This is seen in their lack of making useful distinctions to show how these Greek conjunctions that are used to join discourse units are translated into English to reflect the cohesiveness of the discourse. In fact, the usual rendering of several of these conjunctions is simply not to render them at all, which leaves the paragraph connections unexpressed and unclarified, and relying upon other factors, such as headings and implied conjunction on the basis of other discourse features, to indicate individual units and their connections. One might well argue in response that the normal form of conjunction in English is not to use an explicit conjunction, and that translations without conjunctions follow this pattern. The problems with this explanation are that English in fact does have a robust conjunction system, even if it is one that is different from that in Greek, and that lack of a conjunction is neither to be assumed in English nor does it make clear the understanding of the Greek text, which does express the conjunction and requires at least some attention to this usage.<sup>51</sup> It may not be possible to standardize the way that Greek conjunctions are rendered in English, especially if one wishes to create natural-sounding English, but the solution is not to abandon such efforts altogether or to appear to not reflect them.

<sup>51</sup> On conjunction in English, see Zandvoort, *Handbook of English Grammar*, 226-28; Leech and Svartvik, *Communicative Grammar of English*, 358-62, esp. 362. Whereas it is recognized that there certainly are instances where asyndeton (or unlinked clauses) is used in English, English grammars pay more attention to coordination, and tend to see asyndeton as the in some ways problematic exception, more typical of speech than writing. The issue of how the English renders the Greek is still not addressed by the use of asyndeton.

Thematization.<sup>52</sup> Thematization is concerned with information flow. The terminology of theme and rheme (also rendered topic and comment and sometimes given and new, and perhaps most closely realizing the original nucleus and peripheral) was first developed by Prague school linguists to speak of material that was placed in a clausal position—usually the first position—to give it thematic emphasis. The rest of the material was called rheme. There have been various definitions of what theme and rheme indicate. For example, in some schemes, theme is sometimes equated with given material or topical material, with rheme equated with new material that comments upon the theme. It is not necessary here to make further distinctions. All agree that the use of theme and rheme is a means of giving status to elements of the clausal message. That is, theme and rheme indicate how material within the clause is organized so as to thematize or focus upon particular material. Whereas in English (and some other configurational languages) theme is usually associated with the first unit within a clause (excluding conjunctions, but including adjuncts), this assumption cannot necessarily be made in Greek, a non-configurational language. This is not the place to argue for a theory of theme/rheme, so I will assume for the sake of argument that the first element (if a clause is divided into its elemental components) constitutes the theme, and the rest constitutes the rheme. Further, the configuration of clausal themes provides a guide to discourse thematization, that is, the theme of a stretch of language. Using this as the template, I wish to examine a sample passage to determine how the thematic structure of the Greek passage is rendered into English so as to analyze the English similarities to and differences from the Greek information structure.

As a test case in this section, I use a passage from one of Paul's letters. Romans 2:1-4 may be organized so as to display thematic material with [ ] and rhematic material with [ [ ] ]:

Διὸ [ἀναπολόγητος] [ [εἶ, ὃ ἄνθρωπε πᾶς ὁ κρίνων]]·  
 [ἐν ᾧ] γὰρ [ [κρίνεις τὸν ἕτερον]],  
 [σεαυτὸν] [ [κατακρίνεις]],  
 [τὰ γὰρ αὐτὰ] [ [πράσσεις ὁ κρίνων]].  
 2 [οἶδαμεν] δὲ [ [ὅτι...]]  
 [τὸ κρίμα τοῦ θεοῦ] [ [ἐστὶν κατὰ ἀλήθειαν ἐπὶ τοὺς τὰ τοιαῦτα πράσσοντας]].  
 3 [λογίζῃ] δὲ [ [τοῦτο, ὃ ἄνθρωπε ὁ κρίνων τοὺς τὰ τοιαῦτα πράσσοντας καὶ ποιῶν αὐτά]],  
 ὅτι [σὺ] [ [ἐκφεύξῃ τὸ κρίμα τοῦ θεοῦ]];  
 4 ἢ [τοῦ πλούτου τῆς χρηστότητος αὐτοῦ καὶ τῆς ἀνοχῆς καὶ τῆς μακροθυμίας] [ [καταφρονεῖς, ἀγνοῶν ὅτι τὸ χρηστὸν τοῦ θεοῦ εἰς μετάνοιαν σε ἄγει]];

In a crude rendering designed to capture the thematization indicated by the Greek, I offer the following:

Therefore, without excuse are you, every person who passes judgment; for in the way you judge another, yourself you are judging, for the same things you are doing, one who passes judgment. But we know that the judgment of God is on the basis of truth upon all those practicing such things. And do you think, person who judges those practicing such things and doing them, that you can flee the judgment of God? Or the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience can you despise, being ignorant that the kindness of God leads you to repentance?<sup>53</sup>

The structure of the Greek text establishes that being “without excuse” is the initial theme of this unit (best analyzed as a thematic equative?), with the next several subsequent themes organized to focus upon the means or objects of such inexcusable actions (Rom 2:1). The shift in thematic structure in Rom 2:2 (hence the translation “but”) to either the predicator or the explicit subject continues until Rom 2:4, where there is a shift back to the complement (object of the action). Hence this unit has three major thematic movements

<sup>52</sup> Brown and Yule, *Discourse Analysis*, 126-44. I note that I am adapting my discussion of theme primarily from the work of Brown and Yule, and secondarily from Halliday, *Introduction to Functional Grammar*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed., 88-133, especially because so much of Halliday's discussion is based directly upon English (e.g. on the components of the verbal group, and thematization of predicators in relation to non-grammaticalized subjects). However, much of what I say here is consistent with his analysis in broad terms.

<sup>53</sup> For a treatment of this passage that reflects some of these considerations, see Porter, *Letter to the Romans*, 71-73.

within it. I now examine several translations to see whether and how they have captured these thematic features.

The NASB reads:

Therefore you have no excuse, everyone of you who passes judgment, for in that which you judge another, you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things. And we know that the judgment of God rightly falls upon those who practice such things. But do you suppose this, O man, when you pass judgment on those who practice such things and do the same yourself that you will escape the judgment of God? Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and tolerance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance?

The NASB misses the thematization of having no excuse, and instead makes “you” the theme. This translation also misses the focus upon the objects of the actions that are being done by those without excuse (apart from the emphasis upon the means in Rom 2:1). The NASB further misses the mild break in Rom 2:2 by translating the conjunction as “and.” This eliminates the division into three thematic movements. The third unit division is also lost when the predicator rather than the complement is thematized.

The NIV reads:

You, therefore, have no excuse, you who pass judgment on someone else, for at whatever point you judge another, you are condemning yourself, because you who pass judgment do the same things. Now we know that God’s judgment against those who do such things is based on truth. So when you, a mere human being, pass judgment on them and yet do the same things, do you think you will escape God’s judgment? Or do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness, forbearance and patience, not realizing that God’s kindness is intended to lead you to repentance?

The NIV heightens the thematization of “you” even further than the NASB by placing the conjunction “therefore” after the subject in the syntax. The thematization of the objects of their actions is also lost. As with the NASB, the three-movement structure is compromised, with the NIV using an adjunct “now” rather than a conjunction and thematizing it. The thematic structure of Rom 2:3 is radically changed, so that “you” is thematized (because English requires an explicit subject), when there is no explicit subject of the Greek verb used as the predicator of the question and a different means of expression is required to reflect this thematization. The final question (Rom 2:4) also thematizes the predicator rather than the complement.

Finally, the CEB reads:

So every single one of you who judge others is without any excuse. You condemn yourself when you judge another person because the one who is judging is doing the same things. We know that God’s judgment agrees with the truth and his judgment is against those who do these kinds of things. If you judge those who do these kinds of things while you do the same things yourself, think about this: Do you believe that you will escape God’s judgment? Or do you have contempt for the riches of God’s generosity, tolerance, and patience? Don’t you realize that God’s kindness is supposed to lead you to change your heart and life?

The CEB not only loses the thematization of being without excuse, but it thematizes the appositional vocative phrase. Whereas the NASB and the NIV maintain the thematization of the second clause, the CEB loses that by thematizing the “you” of the subsequent clause. The further thematization in Rom 2:1 is also lost in the CEB. The CEB also loses the three-fold thematic movement by eliminating conjunction altogether in Rom 2:2. The CEB also divides the content clause of Rom 2:2 into two clauses, and thereby repeats the theme of the content clause. The CEB further introduces a new theme in Rom 2:3 by the use of a conditional structure that in effect thematizes the vocative phrase. The third thematic movement is also lost, and a new theme is introduced by making the final participial clause into a major clause.

I have tried to avoid dealing with the many differences in wording among these three different translations so as to concentrate upon the thematic structure of the clauses. This structure is essentially lost in these three translations on the basis of their conforming for the most part, and especially in the CEB, to standard English word order. One might argue that this is how it should be, with emphasis upon the target text so as to ensure reader understanding. No doubt a case can be made for this. However, whereas the English syntax may be natural and expected, important thematic structure of the Greek text is thereby lost. The solution is not to create artificial English in order to preserve features of the Greek text (as I have

offered above) but to find ways of capturing Greek thematization that is both reflective of Greek thematic structure and idiomatic English. The first step is to recognize Greek thematization before offering various English renderings.

## Conclusion

This paper has attempted to introduce some topics that are being debated and discussed in other areas of translation studies, especially the importance of taking into consideration discourse analytical concerns. One of the shortcomings of most contemporary biblical translation is the retention of and debate over categories of thought now deemed outmoded in many discussions of translation. Whereas biblical studies still oppose formal vs. functional translation equivalence, the discussion within translation studies has moved beyond such a simple disjunction to introduce a variety of other approaches and considerations. Many of these involve fundamental concerns regarding the ability of translations to capture the meaning of the source text and the focus and goal of such translation. I, however, have been primarily concerned with the role of discourse analysis in translation. Discourse analysis has made significant inroads into translation studies, especially discourse analysis based upon some of the major features of SFL. I have not focused exclusively upon SFL concerns, but I have drawn upon a representative number of discourse analytic elements to show the shortcomings of a number of recent translations in their handling of such features. In other words, from the evidence that I have encountered, there seems to be plenty of scope for increased use of discourse analysis in New Testament Bible translation.

## References

- Baker, Mona. *In Other Words: A Coursebook on Translation*. London: Routledge, 1992.
- Bassnett, Susan. *Translation Studies*. London: Routledge, 1980.
- Bell, Roger T. *Translation and Translating: Theory and Practice*. London: Longman, 1991.
- Brown, Gillian, and George Yule. *Discourse Analysis*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983.
- Brunn, Dave. *One Bible, Many Versions: Are All Translations Created Equal?* Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2013.
- Buss, Martin. *The Changing Shape of Form Criticism: A Relational Approach*, edited by Nickie M. Stipe. Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix, 2010.
- Callow, Kathleen. *Discourse Considerations in Translating the Word of God*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1974.
- Catford, J.R. *A Linguistic Theory of Translation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1965.
- Ciampa, Roy. "Approaching Paul's Use of Scripture in Light of Translation Studies." In *Paul and Scripture: Continuing the Conversation*, edited by Christopher D. Stanley, 293-318. Atlanta: SBL, 2012.
- Daniell, David. *The Bible in English: Its History and Influence*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003.
- Dooley, Robert A., and Stephen H. Levinsohn. *Analyzing Discourse: A Manual of Basic Concepts*. Dallas: SIL International, 2001.
- Eggs, Suzanne. *An Introduction to Systemic Functional Linguistics*. London: Pinter, 1994.
- Fanning, Buist. "Greek Presents, Imperfects, and Aorists in the Synoptic Gospels: Their Contribution to Narrative Structuring." In *Discourse Studies and Biblical Interpretation: A Festschrift in Honor of Stephen H. Levinsohn*, edited by Steven E. Runge, 157-90. Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2011.
- Farias de Souza, Ladjane Maria. "Interlingual Re-Instantiation—A New Systemic Functional Perspective on Translation." *Text & Talk* 33.4-5 (2013), 575-94.
- Fawcett, Peter. *Translation and Language: Linguistic Theories Explained*. Manchester, UK: St. Jerome, 1997.
- Fee, Gordon D., and Mark L. Strauss. *How to Choose a Translation for All Its Worth*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007.
- Felber, Stefan. *Kommunikative Bibelübersetzung: Eugene A. Nida und sein Modell der dynamischen Äquivalenz*. n.p.: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2012.
- Goodwin, Philip. *Translating the English Bible: From Relevance to Deconstruction*. Cambridge: James Clarke, 2013.
- Gutt, Ernst-August. *Relevance Theory: A Guide to Successful Communication in Translation*. Dallas: Summer Institute of Linguistics, 1992.
- Gutt, Ernst-August. *Translation and Relevance: Cognition and Context*. Manchester, UK: St. Jerome, 2010 (2000).
- Gutwinski, W. *Cohesion in Literary Texts*. The Hague: Mouton, 1976.
- Halliday, M.A.K. *Introduction to Functional Grammar*. 4<sup>th</sup> ed., revised by Christian M.I.M. Matthiessen. London: Routledge, 2014.
- Halliday, M.A.K. *Introduction to Functional Grammar*. 1<sup>st</sup> ed. London: Arnold, 1985.
- Halliday, M.A.K., and Ruqaiya Hasan. *Cohesion in English*. London: Longman 1976.

- Halliday, M.A.K., and Ruqaiya Hasan. *Language, Context, and Text: Aspects of Language in a Social-Semiotic Perspective*. Geelong, Victoria, Australia: Deakin University Press, 1985.
- Hasan, Ruqaiya. "Coherence and Cohesive Harmony." In *Understanding Reading Comprehension: Cognition, Language, and the Structure of Prose*, edited by James Flood, 181-219. Newark, DE: International Reading Association, 1984.
- Hasan, Ruqaiya. "The Place of Context in a Systemic Functional Model." In *Continuum Companion to Systemic Functional Linguistics*, edited by M.A.K. Halliday and Jonathan J. Webster, 166-89. London: Continuum, 2009.
- Hatim, Basil. *Teaching and Researching Translation*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Harlow, UK: Parson, 2013.
- Hatim, Basil, and Ian Mason. *Discourse and the Translator*. London: Longman, 1990.
- Hatim, Basil, and Jeremy Munday. *Translation: An Advanced Resource Book*. London: Routledge, 2004.
- Holmes, Janet. *Translated! Papers on Literary Translation and Translation Studies*. Amsterdam: Rodolpi, 1994 (1988).
- Hopper, Paul J. "Aspect and Foregrounding in Discourse." In *Syntax and Semantics 12: Discourse and Syntax*, edited by Talmy Givón, 213-41. New York: Academic, 1979.
- Köstenberger, Andreas J., and David A. Croteau. "A Short History of Bible Translation." In *Which Bible Translation Should I Use? A Comparison of 4 Major Recent Versions*, edited by Andreas J. Köstenberger and David A. Croteau, 4-23. Nashville: B&H Academic, 2012.
- Leckie-Tarry, Helen. *Language and Context: A Functional Linguistic Theory of Register*, edited by David Birch. London: Pinter, 1995.
- Leech, G., and J. Svartvik. *A Communicative Grammar of English*. London: Longman, 1975.
- Lotfipour-Saedi, Kazem. "Discourse Analysis and the Problem of Translation Equivalence." *Meta* 35.2 (1990), 389-97.
- Martin, J.R., and David Rose. *Working with Discourse: Meaning Beyond the Clause*. London: Continuum, 2009.
- Mojola, Aloo Osotsi, and Ernst Wendland. "Scripture Translation in the Era of Translation Studies." In *Bible Translation: Frames of Reference*, edited by Timothy Wilt, 1-26. Manchester, UK: St. Jerome, 2003.
- Moo, Douglas J. *We Still Don't Get it: Evangelicals and Bible Translation Fifty Years After James Barr*. n.p.: Zondervan, 2014.
- Munday, Jeremy. *Evaluation in Translation: Critical Points of Translator Decision-Making*. London: Routledge, 2012.
- Munday, Jeremy. *Introducing Translation Studies: Theories and Applications*. London: Routledge, 2001.
- Neubert, Albrecht, and Gregory M. Shreve. *Translation as Text*. Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 1992.
- Newmark, Peter. *About Translation*. Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters, 1991.
- Newmark, Peter. "The Application of Discourse Analysis to Translation." *Revue de phonétique appliquée* 66-68 (1983), 115-30.
- Nida, Eugene A. *Bible Translating: An Analysis of Principles and Procedures, with Special Reference to Aboriginal Languages*. New York: American Bible Society, 1947.
- Nida, Eugene A. *Toward a Science of Translating with Special Reference to Principles and Procedures Involved in Bible Translating*. Leiden: Brill, 1964.
- Nida, Eugene A., and Charles R. Taber. *The Theory and Practice of Translation*. Leiden: Brill, 1982.
- Nida, Eugene A., and Jan De Waard. *From One Language to Another: Functional Equivalence in Bible Translating*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1986.
- Nord, Christiane. *Text Analysis in Translation: Theory, Methodology, and Didactic Application of a Model for Translation-Oriented Text Analysis*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2005.
- Porter, Stanley E. "Assessing Translation Theory: Beyond Literal and Dynamic Equivalence." In *Translating the New Testament: Text, Translation, Theology*, edited by Stanley E. Porter and Mark J. Boda, 117-45. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009.
- Porter, Stanley E. "Cohesion in James: A Response to Martin Dibelius." In *Light from Linguistic Criticism on the Epistle of James: Whole Grains from "Straw,"* edited by James Dvorak and Zachary Dawson. Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, forthcoming.
- Porter, Stanley E. *How We Got the New Testament: Text, Transmission, Translation*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2013.
- Porter, Stanley E. *The Letter to the Romans: A Linguistic and Literary Commentary*. Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix, 2015.
- Porter, Stanley E. *Linguistic Analysis of the Greek New Testament: Studies in Tools, Methods, and Practice*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2015.
- Porter, Stanley E. *Verbal Aspect in the Greek of the New Testament, with Reference to Tense and Mood*. New York: Peter Lang, 1989.
- Pym, Anthony. *Exploring Translation Theories*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. London: Routledge, 2014.
- Reed, Jeffrey T. *A Discourse Analysis of Philippians: Method and Rhetoric in the Debate over Literary Integrity*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1997.
- Ross, L. Ronald. "Advances in Linguistic Theory and their Relevance to Translation." In *Bible Translation: Frames of Reference*, edited by Timothy Wilt, 113-52. Manchester, UK: St. Jerome, 2003.
- Thoma, Chrystalla. *Combining Functional Linguistics and Skopos Theory: A Case Study of Greek Cypriot and British Folktales*. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2006.
- Trosborg, Anna. "Discourse Analysis as Part of Translator Training." *Current Issues in Language and Society* 7.3 (2000), 185-228.
- Venuti, Lawrence. *The Scandals of Translation: Towards an Ethics of Difference*. London: Routledge, 1998.
- Wallace, Stephen. "Figure and Ground: The Interrelationships of Linguistic Categories." In *Tense-Aspect: Between Semantics and Pragmatics*, edited by Paul J. Hopper, 201-23. Amsterdam: Benjamins, 1982.
- Zandvoort, R.W. *A Handbook of English Grammar*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. London: Longmans, 1962.