The Contribution of Linguistics to Bible Translation Yesterday and Today: Part 2

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1. Cross-cultural Semantics

If Noam Chomsky (1987) is correct about our inheriting genetically "a rich and invariant conceptual system prior to any experience", then we should expect translation to be a far more straightforward undertaking than it seems to be. Our problems should be limited mainly to the areas of grammar and syntax. Even there, the problems should not be severe, since Chomsky also presumes languages to have like underlying syntactic structures. With respect to semantic meaning, since both the speakers of the source language and those of the receptor language would share the same invariant conceptual system, our only problem would be to match the lexical items of the source language with those of the receptor language that express the same invariant concepts. Most translators I have talked to have not found this to be the case.

Anna Wierzbicka, who together with her colleagues has spent decades looking into this matter, agrees that some concepts are universal or nearly so. But she disagrees sharply with Chomsky about the number of such concepts. While Chomsky asserts that "the conceptual resources of the lexicon are largely fixed by the language faculty, with only minor variation possible"[1], Anna Wierzbicka considers that "cross-linguistic and cross-cultural variation are not minor, but colossal."[2] In her more recent work she assumes there to be in the neighborhood of 60 very simple universal primitives such as *I, you, someone, something, want, don't want, this, say, become*, *good* and *bad*. According to René Dirven and Marjolin Verspoor[3], the number of universal semantic primes is "almost certainly less than

1) Noam Chomsky, *Language in a Psychological Setting* (Tokyo: Sophia Linguistica, 1987).
2) Anna Wierzbicka, *Human Concepts in Culture: Universal Human Concepts in Cultural-Specific Configurations* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992).
3) René Dirven and Marjolin Verspoor, *Cognitive Exploration of Language and Linguistics*

100 words." Languages take their basic stock of simple universal concepts and organize them into complex language-specific constellations, which are the source of the cross-linguistic variation.

In her 1992 book entitled *Semantics, Culture and Cognition: Universal Human Concepts in Culture-Specific Configurations*, Wierzbicka forcefully argues for the conceptual diversity of human languages and proposes to demonstrate this to be the case by comparing cross-linguistically terms such as *soul, mind, heart, fate, destiny, courage, bravery, recklessness, fear, surprise, shame, embarrassment, humility, pride,* and very many more.[4] However these are "folk" terms taken from English, and Wierzbicka sees no reason whatever to assume that other languages, even closely related ones, will have matching terms. To find this out, however, she needs some way of comparing lexicons that allows her to avoid the trap of ethnocentrism. Obviously one cannot simply ask how to say "shame" in Hausa and then assume that whatever word is given means the same thing as "shame." To get around this, she has devised a Natural Semantic Metalanguage (NSM) based on very simple words taken from her stock of putatively universal semantic primitives.[5]

In the samples of her work that I have had access to, the metalanguage is based on English simply because she is writing in English, but presumably one could base the NSM on any language in the world. Wierzbicka uses the metalanguage to describe the semantic components of a lexical item in a given language. By then comparing the description with that of cognate words in a different language (or even the same language), Wierzbicka argues that we can free ourselves from attempting to get at their meaning through the use of the culture-bound folk terms current in one of the languages.[6]

(Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 1998), 144.

4) In her book Wierzbicka deals with these terms and many more. However they are not simply a random list of words, but rather are organized into conceptual domains, which makes their treatment more useful than it may seem in this brief description of it.

5) Wierzbicka readily acknowledges the tentative nature of her list of semantic primitives, and in fact has modified it numerous times. But she assumes that very simple concepts are more likely to be universal and that, conversely, the more semantically complex a concept is, the more likely it is to be culture-specific.

6) Wierzbicka is not the first to use explication of this type. For a somewhat similar approach, see W. Labov and D. Fanshel, *Therapeutic Discourse* (New York: Academic Press, 1977). See also Michael Bamberg for examples of this type of explication applied to emotion analysis. Semanticist Cliff Goddard, *Semantic Analysis: A Practical Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998) also uses the Natural Semantic Metalanguage in his work.

For example, Wierzbicka maintains that English has no one-word equivalent for the Polish *ẗskni*, which refers to a particular Polish emotion. However, it is possible to *explain* this feeling in English by breaking down the complex Polish concept "into parts whose names do have simple English equivalents."[7] Her description of *teskni* looks like this:

> X *teskni* do Y —>
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> X thinks something like this:
>   I am far away from Y
>   when I was with Y I felt something good
>   I want to be with Y now
>   if I were with Y now I would feel something good
>   I cannot be with Y now
> because of this, X feels something bad

Her description of *teskni* conjures up in the mind of an English speaker words like *homesick, long, miss, pine, nostalgia,* etc. However, Wierzbicka maintains that these words all differ from the Polish word — and from each other — in significant ways, and she proceeds to analyze each of them to show how they differ. In Chapter 4 of her book, on "Describing the Indescribable", she tackles the description of numerous concepts she holds to be culture-specific taken from more "exotic" cultures, such as the Ilongots in the Philippines. Her aim is not just to prove that cultures vary in their concepts, but to show how an analysis of such concepts can reveal a great deal about the cultures themselves. Moreover, she suggests that lexical differences "may not only reflect but also encourage different, culture specific, models of thinking and feeling."[8]

One of the cases she explicates is the concept of "friend." She points out that many languages have a word resembling "friend", and that we blithely translate them from one language into another by means of each other, assuming a high degree of correspondence. However when the meaning of these words is analyzed, enormous dissimilarities appear. For instance, to Anglo Saxons, "friend" refers to someone they are very fond of, want to spend time with, do things with and for, go

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7) Anna Wierzbicka, *Human Concepts in Culture*, 121.
8) Ibid., 124.

places with and confide in. The corresponding Polish word, however, means something very different. It refers to a person who does the same thing you do at the same place you do it. If you sell fish at the market and the fellow across the aisle sells carrots, and the two of you spend many hours together every day talking, complaining about the government, and grousing about the low price of fish and carrots, then you are friends. But it would never cross your mind to invite him to your house or suggest that you go to the beach together. That's what the *family* is for. When I read her description of a Polish friend, I was struck by how similar it was to the meaning of "amigo" in certain parts of Latin America. She attributes the Anglo Saxon concept of friend to this culture's having replaced the extended family with friends.

In the same vein, Richard A. Hudson[9], after providing a number of examples of putative untranslatability between such closely related languages as French and English, says, "The conclusion to which examples like these point is that different languages do not simply provide different ways of expressing the same ideas, but they are also different in the more fundamental (and interesting) sense that the ideas that can be expressed differ from language to language." After examining more "exotic" examples, Hudson adds, "it is hard to avoid the conclusion that semantic relativity is limited only by the limits of cultural variation, and it is at any rate certain that there is much more semantic variation between languages than most of us are aware of."

If it is the case that the differences between semantic structures cross linguistically are indeed colossal as the analyses of Wierzbicka and others suggest, then the implications for a theory of translation would appear to be quite significant. This conclusion is bound to impact certain core assumptions regarding the attainability of equivalence in translation and is doubtless partially responsible for the currently wide-spread assumption among translation theorists that various degrees and types of similarity — rather than equivalence — are what translators can and do actually achieve.

How is a theory of translation to deal with such colossal semantic variation? Hudson[10], though not referring specifically to translation, proposes prototype theory[11] as a way to at least put some limits on the differences. Semantic

9) Richard A. Hudson, *Sociolinguistics*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 82.
10) Ibid., 84ff.

differences between languages seem to diminish "if meanings are examined in relation to prototypes." Hudson mentions several societies such as the Seminole Indians of Oklahoma and Florida and the inhabitants of the Trobriand Islands in which a single term (X) refers to all of these relations:

(1) father
(2) father's brother (English *uncle*)
(3) father's sister's son (English *cousin*)
(4) father's mother's sister's son (English?)
(5) father's sister's daughter's son (English?)
(6) father's father's brother's son (English?)
(7) father's father's sister's son's son (English?)

Where English has a word for these relationships, they do not coincide with (X) except for number (1). So in the strict sense, English has no term which will translate (X) in all or even most of its uses. (X) may well seem chaotic to the speakers of other languages, but in fact all of the uses of (X) can be derived by means of three relatively simple rules.[12] English also has some exceptional uses of the word *father*, such as when it means *priest* or *step father*. But if we ignore all of the derived forms and focus on the prototypical meanings of both (X) and *father*, we will see that they do in fact coincide. This may impose some constraints on semantic variation, but translators can hardly restrict themselves to translating at the level of prototypes. Besides, Hudson readily admits that languages differ even in many of their prototypical concepts, so it seems that translation theory will have to find another way to deal with the problem of semantic variation.

2. Pragmatics

2.1. The Cooperative Principle

A number of philosophers of language and semanticists came to the realization

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11) Developed by psychologist Eleanor Rosch.
12) The three rules are: A. A man's sister is equivalent to his mother. B. Siblings of the same sex are equivalent to each other. C. Half-siblings are equivalent to full-siblings.

that the logical formulation of meaning of a proposition was frequently at odds with the meaning of the corresponding utterance as expressed in natural language. British philosopher Paul Grice came up with the solution to the problem. He pointed out (1975) that much of the meaning of natural language was inferential in nature. We often communicate more than we actually say and understand more than we actually hear. And the problem lies not in the semantic or syntactic rules of natural languages, but rather in the "rules and principles of conversation"[13].

The cornerstone of Grice's approach is doubtless his well-known Cooperative Principle (CP), which consists basically in making one's contribution to a conversation as appropriate as possible at the juncture at which it occurs. He defines "cooperation" in terms of four general categories under which appear one or more maxims:[14]

    1. Quantity
      1) Make your contribution as informative as is required (for the current purposes of the exchange).
      2) Do not make your contribution more informative than is required.
    2. Quality
      1) Do not say what you believe to be false.
      2) Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence.
    3. Relation (Be relevant)
    4. Manner
      1) Avoid obscurity of expression
      2) Avoid ambiguity
      3) Be brief (avoid unnecessary prolixity)
      4) Be orderly

According to Grice, there are five ways in which a speaker can react to these maxims.[15] The first one, of course, is to follow them. The second way is to violate them, as one would do if telling a deliberate lie. Thirdly, a speaker can opt out of a maxim. This is infrequent, and would occur, for example, when someone has information required by the speech event, but has been obliged not to divulge it, as

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13) Ralph Fasold, *The Sociolinguistics of Language* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1990).
14) Relevance theory contends that all of Grice's maxims can be melded into just one: Be relevant.
15) Ralph Fasold's explanation (1990: 130) of the five ways that a speaker can respond to Grice's maxims is extremely reader-friendly, much more than Grice's own.

when a person says, "My lips are sealed." The fourth possibility would be a maxim clash, as when following one maxim implies the violation of another. For example, if a person is unable to fulfill the maxim "Be as informative as is required" without violating the maxim "Have adequate evidence for what you say." The most interesting way to deal with the maxims is to flout one of them. When a speaker flouts a maxim, he or she does not observe it, and yet cannot be accused of violating it because the infraction is so utterly obvious that the speaker knows he or she is not observing the maxim and knows that everybody else involved in the conversation knows it too.

This takes us to the notion of "conversational implicature." Conversational implicatures are what makes it possible for a speaker to communicate to the hearer more than what is actually said. Lets look at one of Grice's examples:

[1] A is standing by an obviously immobilized car and is approached by B and the following exchange takes place:

A: I am out of petrol.
B. There is a garage around the corner.

Literally speaking, B's response is irrelevant. He simply tells A that a certain kind of business is located around the corner, although A has not asked him that. Yet A would assume that B's contribution is somehow relevant and that he is indeed cooperating. But for B's participation to be relevant, it is necessary that he believe that the garage may be open and probably has petrol to sell[16]. The implicature is that A, by walking a short distance, could solve his problem by purchasing petrol at the garage around the corner.

[2] A and B are going out for dinner and are trying to decide where they should go, when the following exchange takes place.

A: Shall we go for Chinese food?
B. I have high blood pressure.

Looking at B's response literally, it doesn't seem like much of an answer to A's

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16) Ralph Fasold, *The Sociolinguistics of Language*.

question. A has asked a yes/no question about what kind of food they should go for and B responds by giving A some information about his health, thereby flouting the maxim of relevance. However A will normally assume that B is being cooperative and will therefore look for some way to make sense of what B has said. Both of them are aware the Chinese food is often high in sodium and that sodium is to be avoided by people with high blood pressure. The implicature then is that B feels that he should not eat Chinese food; that is, his affirmative statement about his health actually constitutes a negative answer to the question.

In general, communication theorists assume today that communication is vastly more inferential than it was ever thought to be a few decades ago. But the inferential capacity that makes understanding implicatures possible requires that the participants in a particular speech event share a large number of assumptions. In example [9], both participants must share the assumptions that Chinese food is high in sodium and that sodium is bad for people with high blood pressure for the implicature to be made and correctly inferred. And it is very likely that one and the same exchange between different sets of participants will generate completely different implicatures.[17]

This brings us to the cross-linguistic application of Grice's maxims. Let's presuppose that the original readers of a text share many assumptions with the author, who was, after all, writing to them. The author adjusts the message to his or her audience and is aware of the kinds of implicatures they will be able to process. However, the readers of a translation of the source text are in a different boat. Depending on how distant they are from the source text culturally, temporally and linguistically, they will share more or less the original author's assumptions. And to the degree that they do not share the author's assumptions, they will be unable to correctly process his or her implicatures. Such cases would seem to necessitate some benign intervention on the part of the translator to help the receptor readership resolve the unreachable implicature.[18]

One might even ask to what degree Grice's maxims are universal. Is it the case that civil dialogue everywhere is governed by the same Cooperative Principle? Certainly some scholars think not. Elinor Ochs Keenan argues that Malagasy

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17) Kempson Ruth, *Presupposition and the Delimitation of Semantics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975).
18) However Ernst-August Gutt (1991: 89) finds little reason to believe that "wrong implicatures can generally be remedied by explication."

speakers (Madagascar) do not observe the maxim, "Make your contribution as informative as is required."[19] She points out that "as informative as is required" means according to Grice, "as informative as is required by the needs of the hearer." It is, after all, meeting the informational needs of one's conversational partner that makes one "cooperative." Yet, Malagasy speakers are regularly uninformative. Ochs Keenan suggests some reasons for this. In Malagasy society, one's life is an open book to other members of the community. They share a common history, carry out the same daily activities, go to the same places, and in general live their lives under the constant unrelenting scrutiny of their neighbors. This places enormous value on the possession of "new information", which therefore is not quickly surrendered. Let's look at another example:

> [3] A encounters B in the street and the following exchange takes place:
> A: Where is your mother?
> B: She is either at the house or at the market.

Members of a typical Western society would assume that B, by not observing the maxim of informativeness, is making an implicature: B does not know for sure where his mother is. However, Ochs Keenan maintains that no such implicature is assumed in Malagasy culture "because the expectation that speakers will satisfy informational needs is not a basic norm"[20]. That is, Ochs Keenan suggests that the maxim "Be informative" is inoperative in Malagasy society.

Another reason for the uninformativeness of Malagasy speakers is their reluctance to commit to the truth of new information. They "do not want to be responsible for the information communicated" because of possible dire consequences in case it turns out to be false. Of course, if it is the case that Malagasy speakers withhold information because they genuinely fear it might turn out to be false, this would not suggest the inoperativeness of "Be informative" so much as it would a clash between "Be informative" and "Don't say that for which you lack adequate evidence."

If Ochs Keenan is correct that B's response in [10] does not communicate to

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19) Elinor Ochs Keenan, "The Universality of Conversational Implicatures", Ralph Fasold and Roger Shuy, eds., *Studies in Language Variation* (Georgetown: Georgetown University Press, 1977).
20) Ibid, 258.

Malagasy speakers the implicature that B doesn't know the whereabouts of his mother, then this would be an example of an exchange that would generate different implicatures for participants of different cultures.

Wierzbicka (1991) also disputes the universality of Gricean type maxims, arguing that they are based on a scandalously Anglocentric view of what is "normal" in civil conversation. I believe there is a need for further research in this area. However, should it turn out that people of different cultures and languages operate with different sets of principles governing conversational civility, this would clearly have implications for translation. For instance, in Matthew 26:63, 64, when Jesus is appearing before the Sanhedrin, the high priest demands that Jesus state under oath whether he is the Messiah, the Son of God. And Jesus' response is simply, "Su eipas" ('you said'). Understood literally, this answer may not seem to provide all of the information requested. That is, Jesus seems to not be cooperating in Gricean terms, and this is doubtless what moved the translators of the NIV to expand the answer thus: *Yes, it is as you* say, making it seem much more affirmative. (But this may well be a matter of speech act formulas.)

2.2. Speech Acts

One of the main interests of pragmatists has been the analysis of speech acts. The philosophers of language Austin and Searle pointed out that when speakers use language, they do not just say things; they also do things. In English some of the things they do are *promise, threaten, request, warn, order, beg, affirm, deny, suggest, complain, acknowledge, admit, explain, remark, apologize, criticize, stipulate, advise, describe, invite*, and *censure.* English has hundreds of such verbs used to name different speech acts and they have been classified in numerous different ways by different linguists. For instance, Bruce Fraser (1975) suggests the following speech act taxonomy:

[4] A. Acts of assertion (accuse, advocate, affirm, claim, comment, concede, conclude)
  B. Acts of evaluation (analyze, appraise, certify, characterize, estimate, figure, judge)
  C. Acts reflecting speaker attitude (accept, acclaim, admonish, agree, apologize, blame) …

> H. Acts of committing (accept, assume, assure, commit, dedicate, promise, undertake, swear. etc.)

There is no consensus regarding specific speech act categories or their number, and there seems to be little likelihood of coming up with any that is both universal and has an acceptably small number of categories[21]. It is clear that there is tremendous diversity in the number and kinds of speech acts that occur cross linguistically. English has an inordinately large collection, while the Mayan languages (Guatemala) seem to get by with very few (*say, tell,* and *ask*).[22] Kaqchikel seems to have no verbs that are similar to *threaten, warn,* and *acknowledge.* Of course lacking names for speech acts does not necessarily mean that a language cannot express those speech acts. Presumably Kaqchikels can warn others of impending danger even though they have no word for *warn.* But it does seem reasonable to assume that a language would have names for those speech acts that are culturally prominent[23]. John Gumperz says, "members of all societies recognize certain communicative routines which they view as distinct wholes, separate from other types of discourse."[24] And he adds, "these units often carry special names."[25] Hymes (1962: 110) considers that, "one good ethnographic technique for getting at speech events ⋯ is through the words which name them."

Wierzbicka considers speech acts to be mini speech genres and the names given to these genres (question, warn, threaten) to be folk taxonomies pertaining to a given language and culture. Probably no one would debate the language-specific nature of speech acts like *christening, absolving from sin* and *proposing matrimony.* Wierzbicka is convinced that speech acts such as *promising, ordering* and *warning* are no less language-specific. In fact, Kaqchikel has no word that corresponds closely to *promise.* The word they use to translate *promise* is the same one they use to translate *offer* and seems to involve a lower level of commitment than *promise.*

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21) e.g., Cliff Goddard, *Semantic Analysis: A Practical Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 1998), 143.

22) However, it may be the case that Mayan languages simply have different speech act verbs. For instance, according to Margaret Dickekman (personal communication), Jakaltek has a speech act verb that lexicalizes "to speak softly next to a river."

23) Anna Wierzbicka, *Cross-cultural Pragmatics: the Semantics of Human Interaction* (Berlin & New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 1991), 150.

24) John Gumperz, 1972, 17 cited in Wierzbicka, *Cross-cultural Pragmatics,* 150.

25) Ibid.

Wierzbicka points out that speech act genres are described in one of two ways: from without or from within. When they are studied from without, researchers discuss issues like: "Blessings and curses in Yakut." When they are studied from within, we find topics more like *namakke, sunmakke, kormakke*[26) in Kuna[27). That is, the speech genres of a given culture are viewed in their own terms. The drawback of the first approach is that it imposes the folk taxonomy of one language onto another. Words such as *judging, acclaiming* and *apologizing* belong to the folk taxonomy of English speech acts, and taxonomies of speech act verbs are culture-specific. So to use them to analyze the speech acts of another culture is to look at the other culture's speech acts through a grid of English speech acts. The drawback to the second approach is that terms like *namakke* or *rapping* are not very accessible to outsiders.

An interesting exercise is to look through the domain of Communication (Section 33) in Louw and Nida's *Greek-English Lexicon* (1988). A surprising number of entries are Greek speech act verbs that have no one-word English equivalent and therefore must be explained. For instance, the verb *paradidÇmi* means "to pass on traditional instruction, often implying over a long period of time." The English glosses that are given are simply "to instruct, to teach", terms which obviously lack the features of "traditional" and "over a long period of time." The verb *sÇphronidzo* is defined as "To instruct someone to behave in a wise and becoming manner." The glosses are "to teach, to train." The verb *entrephÇ* is "To provide instruction and training, with the implication of skill in some area of practical knowledge." The suggested glosses are "to train, to teach", as in the previous case. All three verbs are glossed "to teach." Obviously if we translate all three as "to teach" we are losing a large part of their meaning, plus the fact that they are different verbs. Even if we exploit the glosses to the maximum and translate them as "to instruct", "to teach" and "to train" respectively, we are still no closer to capturing their whole meanings. All we would have succeeded in doing is differentiating them in the translation.

The Greek verb *kauchaomai* is common in the writings of Paul and is usually translated into English as *boast*. But in many contexts this translation sounds forced

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26) These terms refer to specific types of ceremonial speech used in Kuna, (spoken in Panama) only by priests in community meetings. Which one is used depends on there being only one priest present or more than one.

27) Joel Sherzer, *Kuna Ways of Speaking: An Ethnographic Perspective* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1983).

at best (all citations are from the NRSV):

1. You that boast in the law (Rom 2:23)
2. ⋯ and we boast in our hope (Rom 5:2)
3. ⋯ we also boast in our sufferings (Rom 5:3)
4. Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord (1Co 1:31)
5. ⋯ we are your boast even as you are our boast (2Co 1:14)
6. ⋯ since many boast according to human standards (2Co 11:18)
7. If I must boast, I will boast of the things that show my weakness (2Co 11:30)

But because many translators have simple assumed that this Greek speech act verb means essentially the same thing as the English verb *boast*, it has typically been translated that way. However, unlike *boast, kauchaomai* is not always focused on the speaker and it is not necessarily a negative thing to do. Therefore, to consistently translate it as *boast* distorts the text. George Davis, author of a dissertation on 'Boasting in the Writings of Paul', says that *kauchaomai* is often associated with the theme of *trust*, and suggests that in Romans 5:2 we translate *take confidence in* (personal communication). This meaning is quite different from *boast* and the Greek's reference to a speech act is no longer evident. David Baer (personal communication) points out that in the Septuagint this verb and its nominal derivatives frequently translate Hebrew verbs relating to *praise* and *rejoicing*, though they seem not to have had such meanings in Classical Greek. Some translators have in fact translated *kauchaomai* this way inn some contexts. Whatever *kauchaomai* really means, English does not seem to have a similar speech act verb.

Languages not only do not coincide in the speech acts their speakers perform, but they differ as well in the formulas they use even when they do have similar speech acts. English has imperatives, and therefore the possibility of saying directly, "Pass the salt." However most Anglo Saxon speakers are reluctant to use the imperative in most situations, preferring instead a less direct strategy. there are numerous degrees of indirectness: 'Can you pass me the salt?' 'Could you pass me the salt?', 'Would you mind passing me the salt?', 'The soup needs a little salt, don't you think?' Wierzbicka (1991) points out that while it is possible to say, 'Can you pass me the salt?' in both English and Polish, it would be understood as a request only in English. A Pole who was learning English would have to learn both the

propositional meaning of this sentence and the fact that it is used to express an indirect request. Poles do not use questions to make requests, and when English speakers do it, they tend to sound rather wimpish to Poles. Poles are vastly more inclined to use bare imperatives, and therefore come across as quite pushy and overbearing to English speakers. Yet English speakers do not sound wimpish to each other, they sound polite. And Poles do not sound pushy to one another, but just appropriately assertive.

Translators would have to take this into consideration when translating between these two languages. An English translation of a Polish text would be defective if the Poles came across as overbearing. And likewise, a Polish translation of an English text would miss the mark if the normal discourse came across as wimpish. Could this be the reason that Jesus' response to the Sanhedrin seems strangely evasive to us and yet is apparently understood as an affirmation by his judges? Translation teams should not only receive training in basic speech act theory, but also with respect to the particular speech acts and formulas of the source language in contrast to those of the receptor language, which they should be taught to identify.

3. Sociolinguistics

Sociolinguistics can be broadly defined as the study of language use in its social context. Since the biblical text is chock-full of social contexts, it would seem that sociolinguistics would have a great deal to offer a theory of translation particularly in the case of multifaceted texts like those in the Bible. Sociolinguistics can help us relate speakers to communities, tease apart different registers and dialects, get a better grasp of the multilingual world in which the biblical cultures co-existed, seek solutions to the difficult issue of inclusive language and use language to better reflect the nature of interpersonal relationships or social deixis.

The crucial area of social deixis is one that has been traditionally ignored by Bible translators in many parts of the world because it has no clear grammatical marking in the biblical languages. By "social deixis" I mean the grammaticalization of the personal (social) relationships that obtain between interlocutors and even between a speaker and someone who is not present in the speech event. In many languages such as Spanish, Portuguese, German and French there is a two-way split

in the grammar between the so-called "formal" and "familiar" forms.[28] Brown and Gilman (1960), in their seminal article "Pronouns of power and solidarity", use V and T (from the French vous and tu) to represent these two forms respectively.

In languages like Spanish all dyadic relationships between a first and second persons must be defined as a symmetrical V V or T T relationship or, alternatively, as an asymmetrical V T relationship, in the case of interlocutors of unequal social rank. There is no neutral ground, and this is an inescapable aspect of the grammar of Spanish and numerous other languages. Yet, amazingly, before the publication of the Common Language Version, not a single Spanish translation of the Bible had ever taken this sociolinguistic fact into account, rendering all first/second person relationships as symmetrically T T, thereby giving the erroneous impression that the participants of virtually every dialogue that occurs in the biblical text takes place between persons who are either social equals or feel a high degree of mutual solidarity[29]. This practice introduces an enormous amount of distortion into the text.[30]

Translating from a sociolinguistic perspective places the onus of correctly assessing countless biblical relationships squarely on the shoulders of the translator. Often there are clear contextual cues. When Abraham is talking to his servant, there is an obvious asymmetrical master/servant relationship that requires grammatical expression. But even in less apparent cases, an educated guess is far better than simply leveling all the relationships in the whole text.

Some languages pose even more challenging problems for translation. For instance, Peter Cotterell and Max Turner report that in the Mexican language Mixe, a younger person must refer to older persons in one of two ways, depending upon

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28) This is really an oversimplification, since many social forces come into play here. In many of such languages the "formal" forms are used with persons considered to be socially superior or more powerful, while the "familiar" forms are used to denote social inferiority or powerlessness, and this is indeed the way most of these systems began. However, as Brown and Gilman (1960) point out, such systems tend to evolve into others in which the axis is no longer power/powerless, but rather solidarity/non solidarity, and often both axes compete during a protracted period of transition. In this paper I use the notional terms of 'formal' and 'familar' to cover the entire range of meanings these forms can express.

29) L. Ronald Ross, "Marking Interpersonal Relationships in the Today's Spanish Version", *The Bible Translator* 44:2 (1993).

30) In some languages of Southeast Asia, the expression of social deixis is a great deal more complex, involving substantial lexical shifts and many more levels of relative status. I do not know how this issue has been dealt with in those translations.

whether the older person lives uphill or downhill from the younger person.[31] Because the biblical cultures do not grammaticalize this information, it is hard to think of an example in which the source text would give any cues at all. If we frequently have no idea as to the relative age of a pair of interlocutors, we are even less likely to be able to determine the relative positions of their dwellings on a hill. Yet, in the Mixe language every dyadic relation imposes a choice on the translators based on precisely that information.

4. Discourse Analysis

Discourse analysis is the study of how people use human language. This implies that, unlike formal approaches, it takes its data directly from real texts, whether written or spoken. So this approach is based on performance rather than on competence. It also implies that it does not look only to semantics for meaning,[32] that it recognizes the functional differentiation of human language and that it views the structure of speech as ways of speaking and not just a grammatical code[33]. In principle, it looks at discourses of any length and assumes that the chunks of language larger than the sentence are grammatically relevant. Cotterell and Turner[34] describe discourses thus:

> … discourse has a beginning, a middle and an end, and the beginning could not be confused with the end; the parts could not randomly be interchanged and still have a reasonable discourse. Discourse, in fact, is characterized by coherence, a coherence of supra-sentential structure and a coherence of topic. That is to say there is a relationship between the sentences which constitute any discourse, a relationship which involves both grammatical structure and meaning.

More and more linguists are reaching the conclusion that to study only sentences

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31) Peter Cotterell and Max Turner, *Linguistics and Biblical Interpretation* (Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 1989), 237.
32) For example, discourse analysts often talk about a discourse meaning.
33) Deborah Schiffrin, *Approaches to Discourse* (Cambridge: Blackwell Publishers, 1994).
34) Peter Cotterell and Max Turner, *Linguistics and Biblical Interpretation,* 230-231.

is inadequate as an approach to the study of natural language. One of the reasons for the growing rejection of sentence linguistics is the awareness that much of what happens in any real utterance of sentence length is determined by what has been happening in previous sentences and even what is expected to happen in following ones. The willingness of functionalists to look beyond the sentence and to focus on the role of grammatical structures within a context means that the questions they ask are very different from those that a formal linguist would ask. For example, while Chomsky and his disciples are interested in how passive sentences are derived (i.e., what is their underlying structure), discourse analysts are more interested in discovering why a speaker, given a choice of grammatical voices, decides to use the passive voice in a particular context rather than some other voice. What work is the passive voice doing in this particular context? And the answer will nearly always be found outside the sentence of which the passive verb is a part. Therefore, is seems clear that even to do good sentence linguistics, one must, as Joseph Grimes (1975) put it, "peer out" beyond the confines of the sentence itself.[35]

At least as important as accounting for sentence structure is accounting for the myriad structural features of the discourse that cannot even really be seen at the sentence level. For example, participants need to be linked to events they participate in and also to other mentions of the same participants (Grimes, 1975), and the ways participants are tracked through a discourse vary considerably from one language to another. By grammatical means participants are introduced as topics, maintained for awhile and then discarded, often only to be re-introduced later on. It is crucial that the translator be very aware of the strategies used by both the source language and the target language for participant tracking. But these kinds of phenomena can not even been studied seriously if we are shackled by a theory that limits our data to single sentences.

Discourse analysts have long noted that in narrative discourse, some material, and the main events of the story line, are foregrounded while crucial supportive information is backgrounded.[36] Material is foregrounded or backgrounded mainly by grammatical means, but there are also some other ways in which the two are differentiated. For instance, foregrounded text tends more toward action events,

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35) Joseph Grimes, *The Thread of Discourse* (The Hague: Mouton, 1975).

36) In reality the situation is not so simple. There may also be identificational material, setting material, collateral material, flashback material, etc. (See Grimes, 1975 and Hollenbach et al., 1998).

often punctual in nature, whereas the backgrounded part of the narrative is usually more stative. Foregrounded events are normally ordered chronologically, which is not the case with backgrounded events.

Grammatically there are a number of strategies for foregrounding and backgrounding, some of which are described by Paul J. Hopper (1979). For example, in Swahili, at the beginning of the narrative, there is an initial tense marker, usually the preterite affix *-li-*, which seems to define the tense for the following discourse. From that point on, events that constitute part of the main story line and are therefore to be foregrounded are marked with the affix *-ka-*, whereas other events, such as explanatory or concurrent ones, are marked by other verbal affixes such as *-ki-*. Similarly, Hopper pointed out that Romance languages mark foregrounding and backgrounding by means of a contrast in verbal aspect. The central events of the narrative appear in the perfective aspect, while the backgrounded material appears consistently in the imperfective. In some African languages as well as in early Old English, word order, particularly that of the verb and object, is inextricably linked to the tense-aspect paradigm. It would seem likely, therefore, that there would also be a word order strategy of foregrounding and backgrounding.

All of these strategies, and whatever others there may be cross-linguistically, help the listener wend his or her way through the discourse, pointing out those things that are fundamental to the narrative in contrast to those which are merely supportive. These strategies are, then, a key part of the structure of narrative discourse, and would unquestionably have to be taken into consideration in translation. But this requires that the translator be aware of the foregrounding and backgrounding strategies of both the source and receptor languages.[37] And it requires that the translator have a "global" view of the foregrounding/backgrounding structure of the discourse when beginning to translate.

Different languages (cultures) handle time differently in discourse. For instance, Greek does not require that the events of a discourse be narrated in a linear fashion, adhering to chronological order. A passage that has often been cited as an example of Greek leniency in this regard is Mark 6.14ff. However many other languages do insist on a strict linear order structure, and texts are probably easier to "compute" in

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37) For a summary of the foregrounding/backgrounding contrast in Hebrew, see Marchese Zogbo, 1988.

any language if the events are chronologically ordered. Frequently it may be the case that a translator will need to re-order the events in a narrative or make a judicious use of temporal markers if the readers are to grasp the proper sequence of events. But this too would seem to require that the translator come to grips with both the temporal structure of the source text and the temporal requirements of the receptor text before beginning to translate.

Discourse analysts have also contributed to the study of frames and their capacity to determine the interpretation of a text. Gillian Brown and George Yule, for instance, give an example of a text that is interpreted in two radically ways when given two different titles. Granted their sample text is contrived.[38] But a title undeniably provides a frame for interpreting what follows. A parable given the title 'The prodigal son' causes the reader to focus on the reprehensible behaviour of a son who leaves home and squanders his inheritance. The same parable titled 'The lost son' will probably lead the reader to associate this parable with the preceding ones about a lost sheep and a lost coin. Or, were the parable to be called 'The forgiving father', the reader would be more likely to focus on the father in the story as a representation of a forgiving God.

Marchese Zogbo (1988) has written a very useful article devoted specifically to the application of discourse analysis to translation. There she deals with a much wider variety of topics that I can here, and the interested reader is urged to see her article for a fuller view of one of the areas of linguistics that has the most to offer a theory of translation.

5. Information Structure

Space constraints and the inherent complexity of the field make it impossible to give this topic the attention it deserves. What can be done briefly is to describe what the study of information structure is useful for and why it should be taken seriously by translators. Information structure has been studied for quite a long time by a number of linguistics, though not known necessarily by this name. But Knut Lambrecht's Information Structure and Sentence Form has broken new ground and

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38) Gillian Brown and George Yule, *Discourse Analysis* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 139.

is required reading by anyone interested in the field today.[39)] Lambrecht's approach has been adopted by Robert D. Jr. Van Valin and Randy J. La Polla as an integral part of their monumental book titled Syntax.[40)]

Every proposition can be expressed in a multiplicity of ways, and these different ways are not interchangeable, but rather are determined by surrounding discourse. The speaker tailors the syntactic structure of the proposition to the receiver, taking into account the linguistic context, the hearer's presuppositions, his presumed communication needs, etc. At the time of speaking, is the referent of a given noun phrase known to the audience or is it new information? If the addressee is able to identify the referent it may be because he has it in mind at the time, or he may have access to the referent because it is present in the physical environment or because he knows the referent, even though he is not thinking about it at the time of the utterance. The availability of the referent to the hearer is one of the many things that will have an impact on the structure of a sentence because it will determine the status of the referent within the sentence. Can it be considered the topic (old information)? Or is it being introduced into the discourse at the time of the utterance?

The fact that the speaker tailors his utterance to the hearer is a major concern for the translator. Because the translator's audience is different from that of the original author, there is no reason to assume that they possess the same presuppositions, theories and communicative strategies as the primary audience. Therefore, neither is there any reason to assume that they will be able to make the same inferences. So translators will likely need to adapt their text to their own audience in a way that is quite distinct from that of the source text.

The two key elements of information structure are topic and focus. Lambrecht does not define them in the traditional ways, segmentationally, but rather relationally. Further, he does not really tie them to the traditional concepts of old and new information. Topic, rather than the first constituent in the clause, must meet the condition of 'aboutness'. It is what the sentence is about. Focus is the piece of information with respect to which the presupposition and the assertion differ. It is not simply new information, nor is it linked necessarily to a certain segment of the

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39) Knut Lambrecht, *Information Structure and Sentence Form: Topic, Focus, and the Mental Representations of Discourse Referents* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

40) Robert D. Jr. Van Valin and Randy J. La Polla, *Syntax: Structure, Meaning and Function* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

clause, that is, the predicate. Lambrecht distinguishes three different levels of focus and he uses the following examples to illustrate them. The words with "focus accent" are in the UPPER CASE. there is 'narrow focus' in which a single constituent is in focus.

> Question: I heard your motorcycle broke down.
> Answer: My CAR broke down.

Then there are two kinds of 'broad focus'. The first is predicate focus:

> Question: What happened to your car?
> Answer: It BROKE DOWN.

And finally, there is sentence focus, in which the entire sentence is focused:

> Question: What happened?
> Answer: MY CAR BROKE DOWN.

In sentence focus, because the entire sentence is in focus, there is no topic.

Lambrecht compares the way that English, French, Italian and Japanese handle these different kinds of focus, and shows that they all do it differently. Most use some degree of prosodic prominence (i.e. stress), but they use a variety of marked syntactic structures as well. The translator would have to know what kind of focus he is dealing with and how it is encoded in both the source language and the target language in order to appropriately represent the source text. Because of the frequent use of stress as a marker of focus, this would also have important implications for audio translations.

There is much more to information structure than can possibly be dealt with here. Interested persons are urged to read Lambrecht's book themselves, or the shorter version in Van Valin and La Polla (1997) and explore the ways in which a study of information structure can enrich our understanding of translation.

6. Conclusion

Linguistics played an important role in Bible translation in the twentieth century,

the understanding of its domains and tools for analysis ever evolving. Throughout the century, increasingly sophisticated tools were developed for studying language from the sound to the sentence: phonetics, phonology, morphology and syntax. In the last decades of the twentieth century, the level of analysis was carried even higher making possible the an appreciation of the function of various lower-level structures in terms of the texts and the communication situations in which the occur. In this paper we have offered evidence the newer subdisciplines of linguistics such as typology, pragmatics, sociolinguistics, discourse analysis and cross-cultural semantics have an enormous contribution to make in Bible translation, whether for mother-tongue translators or for the consultants who work with them. These disciplines increase the translator's awareness of the fundamental differences between the source and target languages, that, when overlooked, can seriously skew the translation.

<Keyword>
semantics, pragmatics, sociolinguistics, discourse analysis, information structure, translation

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<Abstract>

성서 번역에 대한 언어학의 공헌: 어제와 오늘- 2부

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이 글에서 우리는 언어학에서 발원되어서 성서 번역에서 언어학의 역할을 변화시키는 데 공헌하고 있는 하부 연구 분야 몇 가지를 보았다. 이러한 하부 연구 분야의 대부분은 공통적으로 언어에 대한 그 관점을 문장에만 제한하지 않는다는 점이다. 오히려 이러한 하부 연구 분야에서는 종종 더 큰 본문 단위를 분석한다. 비교 문화 의미론 부분에서는, 언어들이 공통의 의미론적 구조를 공유하지 않는다는 점, 즉 한 언어의 어휘들 대부분이 다른 언어들의 어휘들과 정확하게 동일한 것을 의미하지 않는다는 점이 논의되었다. 물론 이것은 번역에 중요한 함축적 의미를 준다. 화용론의 부분에서, 우리는 이 큰 분야 중에서 단지 두 분야만을 살펴보았다: 화용론이 다루었던 첫 번째 분야의 두 가지는 상호협력의 원칙과 발화 행위이다. 사회 언어학의 경우에서, 우리는 특별히 사회적 직시어(直示語)(*deixis*), 즉 몇몇 언어에서 대인관계가 문법적으로 표현되는 방식들을 살펴보았다. 담화 분석자들은 담화 혹은 본문의 구조, 즉 담화 참여자들과 그들의 역할이 이루어진 방식들을 연구한다. 이들은 또한 상이한 언어의 화자들이 전경과 배경을 다루는 방식과 또한 그들이 시간을 어떻게 관리하는지를 연구한다. 마지막으로, 정보 구조는 화자들이 청자가 예상하는 의사소통 필요들에 근거한 제안들을 구성하는 다양한 방식들을 분석한다. 이것은 언어학적 맥락에 현존하는 정보 혹은 물리적인 환경, 청자의 전제 등을 처리해야만 한다.

(장동수 역)