

When Skopos Meets Logical Meaning in a Korean Bible Translation: implications of using clause combination as an analytic tool¹

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ABSTRACT

In Korean Protestant churches, the *Korean Revised Version* (KRV, first published in 1911) has until very recently been the only Bible translation used for liturgical purposes, despite its archaic structures and expressions. Such longevity stems from criticisms among many Bible scholars of the quality of new translations produced to replace the KRV. Drawing on skopos theory (Nord 1997), this paper attempts to move beyond the endless cycle of faithful versus free translation and points towards the possibility of generating different Bible translations for different purposes and readerships. Using Systemic Functional Linguistics, this paper critically analyses a chapter of a new Bible translation in light of the translation's introductory section to see whether its skopos is satisfied in rendering its logical meaning (how clauses are combined). The main data of this study is Chapter 7 of the Book of John in the New Testament.

KEYWORDS: Bible translation, clause, Korean, logical meaning, skopos, Systemic Functional Linguistics.

Introduction

The Bible translation most widely used in Protestant churches in Korea is the *Korean Revised Version* (KRV). It was produced around a century ago and thus includes many old-fashioned words and sentence structures. Some of them are unintelligible,² and many are understood but are unusual in modern usage.³ This antiquity has led to a desire and a perceived need for a new translation that best suits the demands of modernity and younger generations of churchgoers. Christianity teaches that it is essential for believers to read and understand the

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² For example, in Romans 2:29a, it is practically impossible to determine from the text whether the Chinese-origin word *이면적* means 'reverse side', 'hidden side' or even 'reusable' in collocation with the word 'Jew'. 오직 *이면적* 유대인이 유대인이며 할례는 마음에 할지니 신령에 있고 *의문*에 있지 아니한 것이라 "Only the reverse side of a Jew is Jew and circumcision should be done in heart, it lies in the Spirit, not in the question" (my back translation). The other problematic word *의문* is no longer used to mean 'written code', as in the KRV, but in contemporary Korean is used to indicate a question or a doubt. C.f. 'No, a man is a Jew if he is one inwardly; and circumcision is circumcision of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the written code.' (New International Version).

³ In John 7:52a, the verbal group *상고하다* is comprehensible in the KRV as meaning 'examine', but is now rarely used. 저희가 대답하여 가로되 너도 갈릴리에서 왔느냐 상고하여 보라 "They replied, Did you come from Galilee, too? Examine it scrupulously" (my back translation). In modern Korean, the word *상고하다* is used in a different context (i.e. 'appeal' in a legal context). In addition, *가로대* (speaketh) in the same verse is understood but is usually encountered only in ancient texts. C.f. "They replied: 'Are you from Galilee, too? Look into it.'" (New International Version).

Scriptures to grow in the faith and practice.⁴ If readers cannot make sense of what they read or hear, the word of God can be of no use to them, no matter how wonderful they perceive it to be. In this vein, the new translation should be one rendered in contemporary Korean, while still preserving an accurate meaning of the original texts.

Driven by such a long-felt need for a new translation, the Korean *New Standard Version* (NSV) was first published in 1993, but immediately faced fierce criticisms for being a ‘free’ translation. These criticisms came not only from Bible scholars in Korea but also from several Protestant denominations, one of which even organized a Bible society of its own and commissioned another (unsuccessful) translation. Consequently, the NSV was not widely accepted and so failed in its purpose to replace the KRV. With no new translation planned for the near future, the general congregations in Korea are now left with the most recent revision of the KRV (1998).

So what went wrong with the NSV? To answer this question, this paper examines the introductory section and Chapter 7 of the Book of John of the new translation to ascertain whether the translation meets its ‘skopos’, or purpose. John’s Gospel, a narrative of the life of Jesus Christ that emphasizes Christ as God and the Savior, is often the first book of the Scriptures to be read by mission organizations and church training programs such as the university-based Campus Crusade for Christ, and Evangelism Explosion Training, both of which are worldwide outreach bodies. The reason for selecting Chapter 7 for analysis is that, of the twenty one chapters in John, it shows the greatest difference in clause combination between the two Korean versions (see the subsection ‘Clause combination in the KRV and the RNSV’ below).

The structure of this paper is as follows. Firstly, a brief historical background of Bible translation in Korea is given, centering on its four major translations. Secondly, skopos theory and Systemic Functional Linguistics are introduced as the theoretical framework, and an elaboration is made on how they work together in analyzing data. Lastly, a close, contrastive textual analysis is conducted to ascertain whether skopos is met in the new Korean translation, focusing on how clauses are linked to one another. As a result, it is found that the NSV may have breached a part of its skopos (purpose) by not paying enough attention to how clauses are combined in the process of translation. For this reason, the investigation, originally prompted by considerably different sentence lengths between the KRV and the NSV, will concentrate on the clause combinations of the new translation (how clauses are linked to one another) in comparison with the KRV.

Korean Bible Translations Undertaken by the Korean Bible Society: a brief history

The Korean Bible Society, a member of the United Bible Societies, was organized in 1895 to translate, publish and distribute the Bible Scriptures.⁵ This section describes four major translations undertaken by the Society: the KRV (1961), the *New Translation* (1967), the *Common Translation* (1977, revised in 1999) and the NSV (1993, revised in 2001).

⁴ See for example, the verse: “faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ” (Romans 10:17, *New International Version*).

⁵ See www.koreanbible.or.kr

The first Korean Bible translations date back to 1882 when the Scottish missionary John Ross, in collaboration with John MacIntyre and their first Korean converts,⁶ published translations of two of the four gospels⁷ followed by the entire New Testament in 1887. First rendered from a Chinese version,⁸ Ross's translation was then checked against the Greek original and an English translation for 'accuracy', even as a 'sense-to-sense' translation was adopted as its translation principle (Kim 1993:25). An important feature of this translation was its use of the native Korean Alphabet *Hangul* for the first time since its invention in the fifteenth century.⁹ With *Hangul* treated contemptuously at that time as only fit for the unlearned, Ross's translation was intended to reach out to marginalized groups of people, including women and commoners. This first Korean New Testament Bible laid the foundations for faith amongst the early converts in the Korean community in China – Ross was based in Manchuria – and, later, down into the Korean peninsula.

However, Ross's translation had inherent problems on at least three counts. Firstly, it contained translation errors that resulted from poor rendering (e.g. *my meat* instead of *my flesh*) as well as unidiomatic expressions. Secondly, it used a regional dialect spoken in the northwestern part of Korea; Ross used a phonetic spelling of the dialect rather than the standard language i.e. the Seoul (then called 'Hanyang') and Gyunggi dialect with which most Koreans are familiar. Ross's use of one specific regional dialect appears to be related to his translation strategy that emphasizes a 'free translation' (Kim 1993:25), that is, a strategy intended to free the translation from the typical expectations of using the standard language. However, use of a particular dialect limited its chances of being adopted as the Bible for the whole country. Lastly, Ross' translation used no spacing between words as was the practice at the time following the Chinese writing convention. Although still intelligible in Korean where verbs come at the end of a sentence, readability remains considerably reduced, particularly for modern day readers.

In 1893, the Board of Official Translators was established under the auspices of the British and Foreign Bible Society (BFBS) in Korea to embark on a new translation. The New Testament and the Old Testament were completed in 1900 and in 1910, respectively, and the complete Bible translation was published in 1911, the first Korean translation of both the Old and New Testaments. The translation work of the 1911 version was conducted according to clearly defined guidelines with regard to roles and procedures. Under the instruction of the BFBS, it was to be as 'literal' as possible (Na 1990:64) and the translation process was to include multiple cycles of critiques, revisions and discussions among the board members. The translation was jointly conducted by western missionaries and Korean scholars, with the missionaries referring to the original Hebrew and Greek Biblical texts and English translations¹⁰ while the Korean scholars referred to Chinese and Japanese translations. Although the missionaries depended on the Koreans for their skills, it was the missionaries

⁶ They include Eung Chan Lee, Sang Ryun Soh and Seong Ha Lee (Kim 1993:25).

⁷ There were translations of excerpts from the Bible Scriptures prior to 1882 – the first of them was rendered in the late 18th century – but they are not considered in this paper because they were translated only to form part of the catechism or Bible study materials. Ross's translation is regarded as the first translation of the New Testament as a whole (Kim 1993:24-25).

⁸ The *Delegates Version* (New Testament 1852, Old Testament 1854) was translated by dozens of translators (members of a local committee and the committee of delegates) (Hanan 2003).

⁹ Use of *Hangul* in Ross's translation is three decades ahead of *Mwujeng*, which is regarded as the first modern Korean literary work written in *Hangul* (Na 1990:278).

¹⁰ The *Revised Version* (published in the late 19th century) and the *American Standard Version* (1901) (Na:46, 50).

who took on the main roles in the translation process with Koreans working as assistants without a say in the final draft. Thus, unlike Ross's translation undertaken outside of the country, without the backing of any institutional authority and aimed at a marginalized readership, the emphasis on 'literal' translation and the procedures adopted in the 1911 translation ensured a certain degree of authenticity conferred on the text at an institutional level.

Nevertheless, the haste in which the translation was carried out (Na 1990:48, 52) and the fact that procedural guidelines were not always followed meant that both the Old and New Testaments of the 1911 translation needed revising. A major revision was published in 1938, with further revisions in 1952 (when the modernized Korean spelling system was adopted), 1956 and finally in 1961. Thus the 1911 translation is commonly called *the 1961 Revised Korean Version* (KRV). It is widely used in local churches and well-established in its reputation as the only authoritative Korean Bible.¹¹

Nevertheless, there arose the perceived need for a newer translation. Firstly, the vocabulary and long sentence structures used in the KRV are considered archaic and increasingly obscure and thus unappealing to younger generations. Secondly, the KRV retains a significant number of mistranslations, grammatical errors and unidiomatic expressions arising from the problems associated with secondary translation and the lack of translators well versed in both source and target languages (Jen 1993; Jeng 1994; Min 1996; Lee 2006).¹² It was also felt that new understandings brought about by advances in biblical text studies and scholarship needed to be reflected in a new translation.

Three major newer translations have been published since 1961: the *New Translation* (New Testament only, 1967), the *Common Translation* (1977) and the *New Standard Version* (1993).¹³ As the first translation carried out by Koreans working from the original texts, the *New Translation* uses plain Korean, and was intended for readers unfamiliar with the Bible. Its introduction clearly specifies its purpose (and thus target readers) as "evangelizing young people aged thirty or younger who accounted for more than 70% of the Korean population" (*New Translation* 'Introduction').

In 1968, the United Bible Societies (UBS) and the Vatican Secretariat for Promoting Church Unity made a landmark decision to work across the traditional divides between Protestant and Catholic churches in the joint production of Bible translations worldwide. With this inter-confessional agreement, the Korean Bible Society launched a new translation of the complete Bible, and the *Common Translation* was published in 1977. This translation is considered the first "paraphrased" translation in Korean (Na 1990:75) which is rendered based on "dynamic equivalence theory" (*Common Translation* 'Introduction'), a theory developed by Nida and Tabor (1969).

¹¹ A limited revision of the KRV was published in 1998, and although adopted by some local churches, most still use the 1961 KRV, consolidating its status as the only authoritative translation. No newer translation would seem to be undertaken for the time being because the Korean Bible Society has no immediate plans to produce a new translation. The 1998 revision still has around fifty years of copyright (Joo 2008).

¹² Particularly, the Old Testament translation is found to have heavy traces of the 1901 *American Standard Version* as well as Chinese and Japanese translations.

¹³ Apart from the translations undertaken by the Korean Bible Society, some publishing companies and individuals have produced their own translations. Such translations are excluded from this paper.

Upon its publication, however, the *Common Translation* was harshly criticized by Protestant churches. One of the two main reasons for this was the translation of the word ‘God’ (Yu 1971). The *Korean Revised Version* translates it as *하나님* (*hananim*), focusing on the meaning of God as ‘the one and only God’, while the *Common Translation* renders it as *하느님* (*hanunim*), connoting a ‘God in the heavens or skies’. The other reason the *Common Translation* was rejected by Protestant churches was that it was seen as ‘too free’ (Yun 1977a, 1977b; Na 1990:73). With their belief in the centrality of Scripture to the nurturing of faith, they considered the *Common Translation*, as a ‘paraphrased translation’, to ‘have distorted the original meaning of the Scriptures’ (Na 1990:73-4). Catholics in Korea, however, welcomed the *Common Translation* as their first ever translation of the complete Bible. It was revised in 1999 and continues to be widely used in Korean Catholic churches.

With the *Common Translation* utterly rejected by Protestants, the perceived need for yet another translation remained. The *New Standard Version* (NSV) came into being in 1993 after ten years of work by sixteen Korean Bible scholars, whose translation strategy might be described as a compromise between those of the KRV and the *Common Translation*. This strategy reflects the determination of the Korean Bible Society not to translate ‘too freely’, as the *Common Translation* was thought to have done, while also trying not to be ‘too literal’ like the KRV. Specifically, the new translation attempted to focus on delivering the precise meaning of the original texts into an authentic Korean. Its main features included using modern-day natural language (including inclusive language (Min 2004; Choi 2005)) as well as correcting the KRV’s mistranslations and ‘translationese’ (Min 1996:12).

The intentions of the Korean Bible Society for rendering a new translation are reflected in the introduction to the NSV.¹⁴ The relatively short introduction (three pages) for the NSV is broadly divided into four parts: its translation guidelines, an indication of the particular source texts used in the translation,¹⁵ its application of “Formal Equivalence” and “Dynamic Equivalence” theories (NSV ‘Introduction’), and a guide to the translation of the various names of God. The translation guidelines state that the NSV should not be a revised or edited version of the KRV but a completely new translation, while respecting the conservative spirit of the old version and the traditions of the Korean church. The guidelines discuss five general aspects of translation including readership, translation principles and purpose.¹⁶ Thus,

[f]irstly, translation should be done in today’s language so that anyone with knowledge of Korean, including teenagers and those in their 20s (who comprise the largest proportion of the population), can understand it with ease. [...] Secondly, while expressing the meaning of the original texts, it should be rendered in line with correct usage of Korean. [...] Thirdly, the translation should suit purposes for both church services and Sunday School education. (NSV ‘Introduction’) [my translation]

¹⁴ The original introduction to the NSV is repeated in its revised version, the RNSV, which also contains an additional shorter introduction. The original introduction to the NSV is examined here because it is more extensive and covers broader aspects of translation purpose than the introduction of its revised version.

¹⁵ The *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* (1967/1977) for the Old Testament, and the *Greek New Testament* (third edition) (1983) for the New Testament.

¹⁶ The other two particulars concern transliteration of names of people and places, and retention of terms deemed important by Protestant churches (e.g. Son of Man).

In sum, the introduction emphasizes plain modern-day correct usage of Korean, so that the Bible can be contemporary and understandable to present generations, without disregarding the significance of suiting the style of translation to formal church services. Whether this goal is achieved in the Biblical texts will be investigated below.

Reception of the *New Standard Version* was mixed. Some denominations criticized it as a heresy, calling for all copies to be scrapped (Na 1990:479), and embarking on yet another translation.¹⁷ Others welcomed the NSV even as they were aware that it needed improvements, and still others took (relatively) neutral positions, pointing out both negative (Se 1993) and positive aspects of the translation.

Faced with such strong opposition and without wide support and acceptance, the *New Standard Version* saw a limited distribution, and its sales were suspended two years after publication. A revision, the *Revised New Standard Version*, was published in 2001 with minor corrections, but could not reverse the situation. This is the version investigated in this paper that asks why this ambitious project has failed to be accepted as a liturgical translation.

Skopos theory and Korean Bible Translation

As observed above, Korean Bible translations tend to be evaluated by Bible scholars as either ‘literal’ (*Korean Revised Version*), ‘free’ (*Revised New Standard Version*) or ‘too free’ (paraphrasing) (*Common Translation*) and the debate of literal versus free translation seems to have no end in sight. Skopos theory (Vermeer 1978, Vermeer and Reiss 1984, Vermeer 1986, Vermeer 1989/2000) moves beyond the endless cycle of literal versus free translation. More significantly, it pays particular attention to the target readership, and its translation commission (or translation brief in Nord 1997) provides a direction for “global strategies” (Chesterman 1997:90) for producing a specific translation in a specific context.

The importance of readership in translation was already recognized by Bible translators Nida and Taber (1969) who shifted their attention from word-for-word translation or ‘formal equivalence’ (also called ‘formal correspondence’, Nida 1964) to reader response. ‘Dynamic equivalence’ emphasizes the effect of translation on the readers (Nida and Taber 1969). They argue that literal translation of cultural references, idiomatic expressions or sentence structure unique to an original biblical text can “mislead” or “make comprehension almost impossible” (1969:2), serious repercussions given the purpose of Bible translation in “spreading the gospel to all the world” (e.g. Mark 16:15).

A fundamental distinction between Nida and Taber’s emphasis on readership and that of Vermeer is the notion of equivalence. Vermeer’s skopos theory provides a strong argument against the concept of translation equivalence which, until then, had been a dominant theoretical framework in translation studies. In skopos theory, the purpose of the target text overrides its relationship with the source text (equivalence). Vermeer places intratextual coherence of the target text - “A TT must be internally coherent” - prior to intertextual coherence between the target text and the source text - “A TT must be coherent with the ST” - (Reiss and Vermeer 1984 cited by Munday 2001:80). This allows a separation of the functions

¹⁷ This translation (titled ‘*Palun Sengkyeng*, meaning ‘Correct Bible’), published in 2007, was also not well accepted because of opposition from both inside and outside of the denomination which led the project.

of the target text from those of the source text, and privileges the former.¹⁸ Vermeer even claims to “dethrone” the source text to give priority to the “function the text is supposed to have on the target reader” (Pym 2010:43, 49). By separating the functions of TT from ST, skopos theory offers a platform that liberates and empowers translators in their decision-making, opening up a new horizon for translation theory.

One example of skopos theory as applied to Bible translation is found in de Vries (2001), where two different translation needs and environments are presented in New Guinea and the Netherlands, respectively. The function of the New Guinean translation project is a missionary one and “(g)etting the message across with minimal misunderstanding is of prime importance” (de Vries 2001:306). In the Netherlands, however, there are already many different translations for different groups of people or functions, including liturgical, study, common language and private reading functions. In time, more translations may be produced in local languages in New Guinea and, in the process of doing so, skopos would play a vital role.

Korea is situated somewhere between these two cases. Koreans have more than ten translations of the complete Bible published to date but only one of them, the *Korean Revised Version*, is used liturgically in most Protestant churches. All the others have fallen short in their aim of replacing the KRV as the authoritative, liturgical version.

New versions do not necessarily have to compete against the KRV. The United Bible Society recommends there be more than two versions – a liturgical translation and a common language version,¹⁹ and it is arguably useful to have a range of choices available for church services as in the case of the Netherlands, and as is also the case in Anglophone countries. Any new Korean translation would need to take into account the functions and the readership, or skopos, of the translation from its planning stage.

However, skopos theory has at least two obstacles to overcome in its application to Bible translation. First, skopos theory can be seen as too radical a shift in emphasis away from the source text to the target text. Its consideration of the source text as merely ‘an offer of information’ (putting intratextual coherence before intertextual coherence) is at odds with many Christian communities who greatly revere the source text. Although skopos theory acknowledges cases where ‘fairly literal’ translation might be necessary (for a scientific text) (Vermeer 1982:100 as cited in Shuttleworth and Cowie 1997:156-157), it does not seem easy to avoid strong opposition from those involved in Bible translation who place an absolute authority in the source text. In finding a middle ground for this thorny issue, Nord’s understanding of skopos theory may provide a compromise because it separates the “intended function” of the source text from that of the target text (Nord 2001). In doing so, the source text can be translated considering both the author’s intention and the roles the translated text is expected to play in the target culture.

The other criticism is that skopos theory does not cover the micro-level dimension of grammar. Chesterman aptly points out the blind spot of the theory, arguing that,

¹⁸ Here, a divergence of views occurs between Vermeer on one side, and such scholars as Reiss, Hönl, and Kussmaul, Holz Mättäri, and Nord on the other. Although both sides advocate translating different functions from the source text, Vermeer favors the target text whereas the others never overlook the source text or sever the link between the source text and the target text (see Pym 2010:55).

¹⁹ UBS *Guidelines for Scripture Translation* 3.4. Types of Translation (Korean Bible Society 2005).

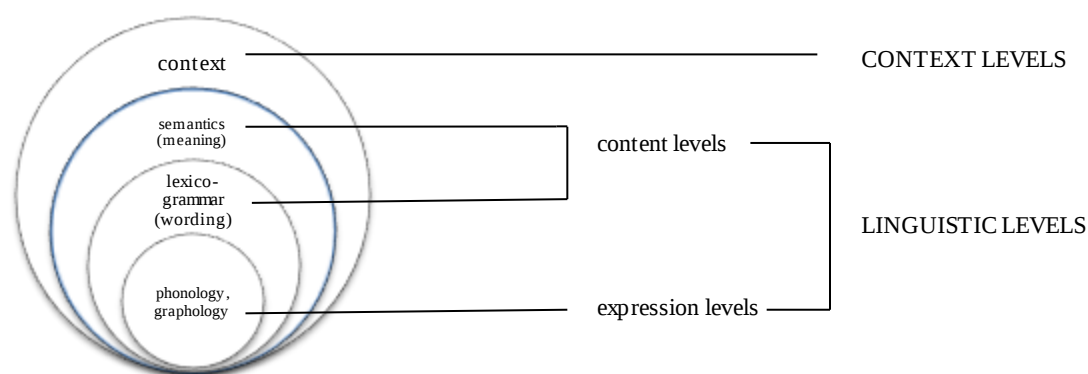
“... even though a translation may indeed fulfill its intended skopos perfectly well, it may nevertheless be assessed as inadequate on other counts, particularly as far as lexical, syntactic, or stylistic decisions on the micro-level are concerned” (1994:153).

This drawback can be rectified by drawing on Systemic Functional Linguistics, a theory that is rooted in a sound linguistic foundation. Skopos theory and Systemic Functional Linguistics seem to be complementary because skopos theory covers macro-level aspects while Systemic Functional Grammar has a well-defined expertise in micro-level realms. The former provides a context (translation brief) and the latter offers efficient tools for analyzing the text at the levels of grammar.²⁰

Logical Meaning in Systemic Functional Linguistics

SFL is useful for analyzing texts in two ways. Firstly, it provides a holistic view of language as “a complex semiotic system, having various levels or strata” (Halliday and Matthiessen 2004:24). It views language located in context,²¹ having semantics (meaning), lexico-grammar (wording), phonology and graphology all working together (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Stratification (Halliday and Matthiessen 2004: 25, adjusted)



The second reason that makes SFL useful for text analysis is that SFL has a particularly well-developed lexico-grammar for an immediate application to texts. This is important because wordings play fundamental roles to realize meanings (semantics) and “without a theory of wordings – that is, a grammar – there is no way of making explicit one’s interpretation of the meaning of a text” (Halliday 1994:xvii). For this reason, this paper uses lexico-grammar (particularly, clause combining systems which realize logical meaning) as the essential device for analyzing meanings situated in a context.

As one of four modes of meaning in SFL,²² logical meaning is encoded in clause combining (or clause complexing) systems which concern relations between clauses. It can provide

²⁰ For details on SFL, see Halliday 1994; Halliday and Matthiessen 2004; and Eggins 2004.

²¹ In SFL, context levels are composed of *situational configuration offield* (what is going on), *tenor* (who is taking part) and *mode* (role assigned to language) (Halliday 1978; Halliday and Hasan 1985).

²² The four modes of meaning (or metafunction) are experiential (one’s experience of the world), logical (relations between experiential meanings) interpersonal (social interaction) and textual (coherent flow).

criteria with which to compare the KRV and the RNSV for different lengths in text resulting from different clause combinations: simple v. complex clauses, and inter-clausal relations (Thompson 2004:22). It also provides a useful device for analyzing what experiential meaning cannot analyze. In Korean Bible translation, much attention is given to ‘who did what’ (e.g. the two different translations of ‘God’ in the KRV and the RNSV) while, as far as I am aware, no research has been conducted from the perspective of logical meaning (clause combination). Yet, logical meaning offers a complementary role to experiential meaning (Matthiessen 2002:30); it governs how experiential events are related, and this can have an overarching impact on the entire text.

Logical meaning is composed of the functional and semantic relations that make up the logic of natural language (Halliday 1994:216). It has nothing to do with the classical logic of truth value, but concerns how clauses are combined and related to one another.²³ Logical meaning is expressed in two systemic dimensions of clause combination. One is the system of interdependency that comprises parataxis (one clause is equal to another) and hypotaxis (one clause is dependent on another). The other is the system of logical-semantic relations of expansion and projection (i.e. inter-clausal relations). In expansion, one clause is elaborated (denoted by ‘=’), extended (for example, information is added; denoted by ‘+’) or enhanced (meaning is enhanced by qualifying a clause in time, place, etc.; denoted by ‘x’) by another clause, while in projection (quoting and reporting) a locution or idea is projected (the content of quoting and reporting as signaled in what is said or thought) by another clause (denoted by “ and ‘ respectively). Paratactic clauses are indicated by numerical notation 1, 2 while hypotactic clauses are indicated by the Greek letter notation α , β . Clause combination is summarized in Table 1 below. (For more details see Chapter 7 of Halliday and Matthiessen 2004).

Table 1: Basic types of clause complex (adapted from Halliday and Matthiessen 2004:380)

		(1) paratactic (equal)	(2) hypotactic (dependent)
(1) expansion	(a) elaboration	1 John didn’t wait; =2 he ran away.	α John ran away, = β which surprised everyone.
	(b) extension	1 John ran away, +2 and Fred stayed behind.	α John ran away, + β whereas Fred stayed behind.
	(c) enhancement	1 John was scared, x2 so he ran away.	α John ran away, x β because he was scared.
(2) projection	(a) locution	1 John said: “2 “I’m running away”	α John said “ β he was running away.
	(b) idea	1 John thought to himself: ‘2 ‘I’ll run away’	α John thought ‘ β he would run away.

Discussion and Interpretation

In creating a text, the author has a choice of combining clauses in different ways: consider, for example, a fast-paced detective story composed mostly of separate simple clauses (a sentence comprising one clause, hereafter called a *clause simplex*), or a legal document comprising multiple clauses (a sentence comprising two or more clauses, hereafter called a *clause complex*). This indicates that rendering messages using different clause combinations is a

²³ In this paper, a clause is the unit of analysis because it is the most fundamental unit in human communication through language (Butt et al. 2000:33), and where all three metafunctions intersect.

meaningful choice (Thompson 2004). In other words, it may make a difference in meaning to place a piece of information either in a clause simplex or in a clause complex. The next two sub-sections investigate how clauses are combined in the two Korean translations, and whether the skopos of the RNSV is satisfied.

Clause combination in the KRV and the RNSV

Skimming through the Book of John, the most noticeable feature of the text is the difference in the length of each chapter between the KRV and the RNSV. On average, the RNSV has 12% more words than the KRV. Of the 21 chapters of John's Gospel, Chapter 7 shows the largest difference (13%) in number of words between the old and the new versions. This can be interpreted as a significant difference and inviting deeper analysis of the chapter, which unveiled a noteworthy difference in clause combination.²⁴ In Table 2, the RNSV, compared to the KRV, comprises around twice the number of sentences (94 as opposed to 49) but it has a similar number of clauses (149 and 154 each). These conflicting figures come from the fact that the new translation has approximately five times more clause simplexes than the KRV with 52 and 11 clause simplexes, respectively. Consequently, the RNSV has exactly half the number of clauses per sentence (1.59) compared to the KRV (3.18). These last two sets of figures (no. of clause simplexes, and no. of clauses per sentence) seem closely related in terms of how differently the two translations combine clauses.

Table 2: Comparison of clauses between the KRV and the RNSV (Chapter 7 of Book of John)

Version	No. of sentences	No. of clauses	No. of clause simplexes	No. of clauses per sentence
KRV	49	154	11	3.18
RNSV	94	149	52	1.59

When compared with two English translations, the *King James Bible* (1611) and the *New Living Translation* (1996), and the Greek original,²⁵ the RNSV has the highest number of clause simplexes (see Table 3), particularly compared to the Greek original that has only seven clause simplexes. Also, the small number of clauses per sentence in the RNSV (1.59) stands out in comparison with the other texts which range from 1.87 (*New Living Translation*) to 3.18 (*Korean Revised Version*).

Within the context of these four translations, the KRV and the RNSV stand at both ends of the cline in terms of number of clauses per sentence. The KRV has more clauses per sentence (3.18) than the *King James Version* (2.81), whereas the RNSV has fewer clauses per sentence (1.59) than the *New Living Translation* (1.87). The original Greek text is the closest to the KJV on all counts (see Table 3).

²⁴ Subheadings and punctuations also make the KRV differ from the RNSV in terms of text length; the old translation does not have them whereas the new one does. In this paper, however, the focus is on the logical meaning.

²⁵ Here, the Fourth Edition of the Greek New Testament (1993) as recommended by the *UBS Guidelines for Scripture Translation* (Korean Bible Society 2005). The use of the English and the Greek texts will be limited as they will be consulted only when necessary.

Table 3: Comparison on clauses among five texts (Chapter 7 of Book of John)

Language	Version/ Text	No. of sentences	No. of clauses	No. of clause simplexes	No. of clauses per sentence
Greek	GNT*	54	162	7	3
English	KJV	58	163	10	2.81
	NLT	78	176	17	1.87
Korean	KRV	49	154	11	3.18
	RNSV	94	149	52	1.59

* GNT is the source text and the others are target texts.

One possible reason for such a significant difference between the two Korean translations in the number of clause simplexes and the number of clauses per sentence is lengthened verbal groups in the RNSV, where sentences are expressed in the more polite form (e.g. *알고 있습니다* *alkoissupnida* instead of *아노라* *anola* for (we) know). Other reasons include making explicit in the new translation what is implicit in the old translation (such as retrieval of Subjects and Objects). However, as can be seen in the two tables above, another reason for a large gap in clause combination between the KRV and the RNSV can be inferred from a high number of clause simplexes in the new version. A more detailed analysis of this last factor will be made using data in the next section ‘Does the Revised New Standard Version satisfy its skopos?’ below.

As discussed above, choices of clause combination are meaningful on the part of authors and translators. Tables 2 and 3 clearly indicate that the translators of the KRV and the RNSV chose different ways of integrating clauses into their respective translations. Among the five texts, the KRV divides the same information into the largest chunks while the RNSV, with its high number of clause simplexes, cuts it into the smallest. The next section examines whether such division of information in the RNSV is related to its skopos, focusing on whether the new translation meets its skopos as elaborated in its introductory section.

Does the Revised New Standard Version satisfy its skopos?

As Table 3 shows, the RNSV has fewer clauses per sentence than the KRV. This is because many of the inter-clausal links in the KRV have been broken in the RNSV. Of these 44 broken connectors in the RNSV, it was found that 37 connectors are removed (84.1%) and 7 connectors remain intact (15.9%) (see Table 4). This indicates that a substantial number of logico-semantic relations in the KRV have disappeared in the RNSV.

Table 4: Disappearance rate of inter-clausal connectors in the RNSV

omitted connectors	retained connectors	Total
37 (84.1%)	7 (15.9%)	44 (100%)

* All the numbers are rounded up from the second decimal point.

The phenomenon can be explained by projection, more specifically, locution (e.g. *John said/thought he would run away*) as shown in Table 5. Of the 37 broken connectives, locution accounts for 75.7%²⁶. In other words, locution accounts for well over half (63.6%) of the total

²⁶ This figure excludes projection sentences already comprising a clause simplex from the total number of sentences.

number of the omitted links in the RNSV (28 out of 44). The high number of omitted locutions in the RNSV might be attributed to the fact that the Book of John is a narrative and frequently uses direct quotations; Chapter 7 covers Jesus' teaching and includes conversational events between people at a Jewish festival. Here, where the KRV organizes direct quotations in projection clause complexes, the RNSV puts them in separate projecting simplexes and projected simplexes (e.g. They asked: "Where is Jesus?").

Table 5: Disappearance rate of projection²⁷

	Projection	Expansion			Total
		Enhancement		Extension	
Relation	Locution	Temporal	Reason	And-coordination	
Share	28 (75.7%)	7 (18.9%)	1 (2.7)	1 (2.7%)	37 (100%)

It is interesting to note that the proportion of the broken links in cases of locution in the RNSV (75.7%) is similar to the proportion of the clause simplexes functioning as projection (78.8%). Out of 52 clause simplexes, 41 are found to be projection the RNSV (see Table 6 below). This means that over three-quarters of all clause simplexes in the new translation are either projecting or projected clauses. This figure of 78.8% is very similar to the disappearance rate of projection (75.7%). While the disappearance rate of projection and the rate of clause simplex functioning as projection do not match each other in all their respective clause simplexes, they share the high proportion of projection clauses. These figures are high enough to be considered significant, and are tabulated as below. As shown in Table 6, projection (locution) is the logical-semantic relation that accounts for the highest number of broken links.

Table 6: Comparison between disappearance rate of projection and clause simplex functioning as projection

Disappearance rate of projection (taken from Table 5)	Clause simplex functioning as projection
28/37 (75.7%)	41/52 (78.8%)

Table 7 below includes examples of projecting and projected clause simplexes which result from broken links in the RNSV. Sentence 1 is a clause complex while Sentences 2-6 are clause simplexes. Here all of them are projection clauses, except Sentence 1:1, where projecting and projected relations are cut off and thus each clause stands alone as a projecting or projected clause simplex.

What is interesting about this excerpt is Sentence 1:2. Before its revision, the NSV had a projection connector between Sentences 1:2 and 2, but as can be seen below, the link is now removed in the RNSV. After the NSV experienced vehement criticism, its revision was carried out by accommodating views and critiques from Korean churches as well as Bible scholars. According to the RNSV introduction, special attention was given in this process to correcting

²⁷ In Table 5, to make the statistics as simple as possible, no distinction is made as to whether the clause combinations are in a relationship of interdependency (i.e. one clause is dependent or independent from the other).

what was unclear, so, judging from what has been altered with Sentence 1:2 and Sentence 2 in the new translation, severing inter-clausal links – even projection relations – may have been considered to make things clearer. If this is the case, it suggests a view in which shorter sentences lead to greater clarity, which ignores the important role of cohesion in creating successful texts (see e.g. Halliday and Hasan 1976).

Table 7: Examples of separated projecting clauses and projected clauses in the RNSV

No. of Sentence	No. of Clause	Logical relation	Revised New Standard Version
1	1	$\times\beta$	성전 경비병들이 대제사장들과 바리새파 사람들에게 돌아오니, <i>sengcen kyengpiyengtuli tayceysacangtulkwa palisaypha salamtuleykeytolaoni</i> , When the temple guards came back to the high priests and the Pharisees,
	2	α	그들이 경비병들에게 물었다. <i>kutuli kyengpiyengtuleykeymwulessta</i> . they asked the temple guards.
2	1		"어찌하여 그를 끌어오지 않았느냐?" "eccihaye kulul kkuleoci anhassnunya?" "Why didn't you arrest and take him?"
3	1		경비병들이 대답하였다. <i>kyengpiyengtuli taytaphayessta</i> . The temple guards answered.
4	1		"[[[그 사람이 말하는] 것처럼 말한]] 사람은, 지금까지 아무도 없었습니다". "[[[ku salami malhanun]] keschelem malhan]] salamun cikumkkaci amwuto epsesssupnita". There has not been anyone [[who spoke just like the way [[he did]]]]
5	1		바리새파 사람들이 그들에게 말하였다. <i>balisaypha salamtuli kutuleykey malhayessta</i> The Pharisees said to them.
6	1		"너희도 미혹된 것이 아니냐?" "nehuyto mihoktoyn kesi aninya?" "Aren't you led astray, too?"

Table 7 is an analysis of John 7:45-47 as it appears in the RNSV to show how distinctively it combines clauses in terms of projection relations. It segregates most projection clauses into different sentences which, therefore, results in a high number of clause simplexes. By separating the projected clause from the projecting clause in a majority of cases, the RNSV displays a significantly different quality, which accumulates with the unfolding of the text when compared with the KRV. The same is also true when it is compared to the two other English versions as well as its Greek source text.

The way clauses are combined in the RNSV might not be problematic in itself; the separation of a projecting clause and its short projected clause cannot necessarily be seen as incorrect Korean usage. However, the RNSV does not seem to have rendered the clause combinations

as such with a specific genre²⁸ or text type in mind. The introductory section of the RNSV does not signal a genre or text type at all, but just briefly mentions a translation principle that “easy modern-day Korean” should be used in the new translation. This is supported by a senior official of the Korean Bible Society and a member of the translation team, who wrote, “I wouldn’t say that a genre is considered when it comes to the (short) lengths of the sentences (in the RNSV) ...”²⁹ [my translation].

Another reason for not regarding a genre as triggering the short sentences in the RNSV concerns auditory features of Korean. In a paper on the editing process of the RNSV, Jeon (1993:53) expresses the difficulties the translation team experienced in trying to accommodate in the RNSV an easy modern-day Korean (i.e. limited use of lengthy-sentences) while at the same time dealing with the emphatic sound of the sentence ending *ta*.³⁰ Particularly, the latter has the implication that a translation with too short sentences would not suit a public reading because too many *ta* at the end of the sentences may not sound very elegant. Also, it may leave little space for breathing when reading aloud before the congregation. In contrast, the KRV is translated as a typical spoken text (an oral narrative) with many clausal links in a sentence and thus reads aloud smoothly and rhythmically in a public service. For this reason, the translation team tried to avoid a long stretch of short sentences in a row in the RNSV while still combining them in appropriate places (Jeon 1993:53). Given this effort in the editing procedure, if the RNSV (or NSV) was intended to function as a particular genre, that genre does not seem to have been any different from that of the KRV.

If the short sentences in the RNSV are considered to be due to adopting a genre, then the type of genre closest, particularly to projection clauses, would be a novel. However, the way the RNSV puts two clause simplexes in two different sentences is significantly different from a novel. In the RNSV, the verbal group of the projecting sentence directly reflects the mood of the projected sentence. For example, if the projecting sentence is a question, then the verbal group of the projecting sentence is *물었다* *asked*. This highly predictable relation in projecting sentences inevitably leads to a limited number of verbal groups in a projecting sentence (mostly *say, ask, answer*). In a novel, however, the relationship between the projecting sentence and the projected sentence is not very predictable (e.g. *She smiled. “What do you mean?”*) because the function of projection is shared between the verbal group (*smiled*) in the projecting sentence and the quotation marks in the projected one. Therefore, I suggest that the many clause simplexes in the RNSV are not the result of adopting a particular genre (novel) or text type.

With regard to the question of whether the RNSV meets its skopos, the RNSV seems to have breached a part of the translation purpose. By separating clause complexes into clause simplexes, the new translation does not breach the part of the translation brief concerning correct usage of contemporary Korean, but appears to overlook the other part of the translation brief (the style of translation that suits a church service), which concerns the sentence ending *ta* in contemporary Korean. In particular, Jeon argues that the contemporary sentence ending *ta* is not for spoken language and so, when spoken out

²⁸ The definition of genre here follows Swales (1990:58): “A genre comprises a class of communicative events, the members of which share some set of communicative purposes. These purposes are recognized by the expert members of the parent discourse community, and thereby constitute the rationale of the genre.”

²⁹ Personal email communication (25 May 2011).

³⁰ *ta* is a sentence ender used for the declarative mood.

loud, it feels “somehow a little uneasy and at least unnatural” (1993:53). This means the overuse of *ta*, or too many short sentences, could attract unwanted attention from an audience who is familiar with the well-flowing and flowery spoken language of the KRV, stemming from various clausal links that combine clauses.

In this vein, the RNSV (as presented in the Book of John) seems to have disregarded the auditory impact that short sentences may have on the audience. Although the editor(s) of the RNSV have become aware of such negative impact during the editing process (Jeon 1993), the final product of the translation appears to have neglected it. As analyzed in this paper, the RNSV cuts into small pieces what the KRV retains. It has a significantly higher number of clause simplexes, and lower number of clauses per sentence than all four texts (KRV, KJV, NLT, GNT). Particularly, it separates most projection clauses. Thus, I argue that the RNSV has violated a part of the skopos indicated in its introduction by rendering a high number of clause simplexes. This outcome suggests the importance of taking logical meaning into consideration when translating. Logical meaning is an integral part of meaning of a text, along with the other three modes of meaning (experiential, interpersonal and textual), and how clauses are combined in a text makes a difference in logical meaning (Thompson 2004:22). If the editor(s) of the (R)NSV were aware of the significance of logical meaning and tried to link it to the negative auditory impact of the sentence ending *ta*, the end product would have been different.

The way clauses are combined in the RNSV in Table 7 is compared below with the *Korean Revised Version* (Table 8), the *New Living Translation* (Table 9) and the *Greek New Testament* (Table 10). These three texts keep all the projection relations intact. (The *King James Version* is not included here because it has exactly the same structure as the GNT: see shaded parts in Tables 8-10 for the KRV, NLT and GNT, respectively).

Table 8: Comparison of Table 7 (RNSV) with KRV

Sentence	Clause	Logical structure		Korean Revised Version
1	1	$\times\beta$		하속들이 대제사장들과 바리새인들에게로 오니 <i>hasoktuli tayceysacangtulkwa palisayintuleykeylo oni</i> When their assistants came back to the chief priests and the Pharisees,
	2	α	1	저희가 묻되 <i>cehuyka mwuttoy</i> they asked
	3		“2	어찌하여 잡아오지 아니하였느냐 <i>eccihaye capaoci anihayessnunya</i> why didn't you arrest and take him?
2	1	$\times\beta$	1	하속들이 대답하되 하니 <i>hasoktuli taytaphatoy ... hani</i> The assistants answered and said – and,
	2		“2	[[[[그 사람의 말하는]] 것처럼 말한]] 사람은 이때까지 없었나이다 [[[[<i>ku salamuy malhanun</i>]] <i>keschelem malhan</i>]] <i>salamun ittaykkaci epsessnaita</i> there has not been any one [[who spoke just like the way [[he did]]]]
	3	α	1	바리새인들이 대답하되 <i>palisayintuli taytaphatoy</i> The Pharisees answered
	4		“2	너희도 미혹되었느냐 <i>nehuyto mihoktoyessnunya</i> have you also been misled?

Table 9: Comparison of Table 7 (RNSV) with NLT

Sentence	Clause	Logical relations		New Living Translation
1	1	$\times\beta$	α	When the Temple guards returned
	2		$\times\beta$	without having arrested Jesus,
	3	α	1	the leading priests and Pharisees demanded,
	4		“2	“Why didn't you bring him in?”
2	1	“1		“We have never heard anyone speak like this!
	2	2		the guards responded.
3	1	“1		“Have you been led astray, too?”
	2	2		the Pharisees mocked.

Table 10: Comparison of Table 7 (RNSV) with GNT

sentence	clause	Logical relation		Greek New Testament
1	1	1		ἦλθον οὖν οἱ ὑπηρέται πρὸς τοὺς ἀρχιερεῖς καὶ Φαρισαίους, Then the assistants came to the chief priests and the Pharisees
	2	+2	1	καὶ εἶπον αὐτοῖς ἐκεῖνοι, and they said to them,
	3		“2	Διὰ τί οὐκ ἠγάγετε αὐτόν; “Why did you not bring him?”
2	1	1		ἀπεκρίθησαν οἱ ὑπηρέται, The assistants answered,
	2	“2		Οὐδέποτε ἐλάλησεν οὕτως ἄνθρωπος. “Never has anyone spoken like him”;
3	1	1		ἀπεκρίθησαν οὖν αὐτοῖς οἱ Φαρισαῖοι, Then the Pharisees answered them,
	2	“2		Μὴ καὶ ὑμεῖς πεπλάνησθε; “Haven’t you also been deceived (, have you)?

Conclusion

The *Korean Revised Version* has long been appreciated as a good and faithful translation of the Bible in Korea. It has been used extensively by the congregations as *the Bible*. But difficult words and long sentences in the KRV are proving problematic for current generations to understand. Three earnest attempts have been made to remedy the problem, but none have been successful. The latest attempt, the *Revised New Standard Version*, has attracted particularly harsh criticism for being a ‘free’ translation. Translation of the Bible in Korea seems to be stuck in these literal versus free translation debates.

This paper suggests skopos theory as an alternative perspective that may move these debates out of the age-old stasis. With skopos, there need not be only one Bible translation; indeed, many translations should complement each other. Depending on readers’ purposes, Koreans should have a number of Bible translations at their disposal. In addition to providing the rationale for producing a multiple number of Bible translations, skopos theory points to the criterion for a broad assessment of a given translation, that is, whether the translation meets its skopos. In this paper, the skopos of the NSV was identified (an easy-to-understand, accurate, modern-day Korean without disregarding the liturgical purpose of the translation) and, drawing on Systemic Functional Linguistics, a sample textual analysis was made to see if this skopos was met.

As a result of the analysis, I argue that the RNSV has failed to satisfy a part of its skopos. By cutting clausal links, the RNSV is easier to understand than the KRV, and the separation of a projection clause complex into two clause simplexes is, in itself, not incorrect usage of Korean. However, its intention for public service use, for which the KRV has long been

appreciated, may not have been achieved. Particularly, when read aloud in the congregation, short sentences may not sound flowing or elegant. Rather, they might make the audience feel disturbed instead of allowing them to listen carefully to the content of the Scripture. Therefore, the RNSV of the Book of John (particularly Chapter 7) seems to contradict a part of the skopos specified in the introduction that the translation should be rendered to suit a liturgical purpose, and this seems to come from the lack of understanding of logical meaning in translation.

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