

**A DISCOURSE BASED STUDY ON THEME
IN KOREAN AND TEXTUAL MEANING
IN TRANSLATION**

Mira Kim

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Department of Linguistics

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Abstract

Most linguistic communities have textual resources for organizing experiences into coherent text. The way that the resources are used may not be the same but vary from one language to another. This variation can be a source of translation difficulty in rendering a natural-reading translation. This thesis investigates the question of how the choices of Theme, which is one of the main textual resources, have an impact on textual meaning in translation between English and Korean.

The premise underlying the study is that a translation that is not inaccurate in lexical choices may still read as unnatural to the target readers if a careful consideration is not given to Theme choices at the clause level and Thematic development at the text level in the source and target texts. This assumption is derived from systemic functional linguistic (SFL) theory, which postulates that Theme at the clause level plays a critical role in constructing a text into a coherent linear whole at the text level. This brings in another equally important question of the study: how Theme works in Korean. No research has been done to investigate the system of THEME in Korean from a systemic functional point of view or on the basis of extensive discourse analysis across a range of registers. Therefore, this study investigates the THEME system in Korean using a corpus consisting of a number of authentic Korean texts in three different text types.

These two coherent questions are investigated in five self-contained journal articles included in the thesis. Two of them have been published (Chapters 2 and 5), one has been submitted for publication (Chapter 6) and the other two will be

submitted (Chapters 3 and 4). The journal article format for thesis has recently been introduced at Macquarie University as an approved alternative to the traditional thesis structure.

Chapter 1 introduces a number of preliminary issues for, and information relevant to, the study such as research questions and background, the corpus, the underlying theoretical assumption and anticipated contributions to this area of research. Chapter 2 is a report of a pilot-project that motivated the current study. It discusses how to use text analysis based on systemic functional grammar to analyze translation errors/issues and provides systematic explanations relating to such issues. Chapter 3 reviews issues that have been raised by Korean linguists in relation to the study of Theme in Korean and provides suggestions on how to resolve these issues drawing on systemic functional theory. Chapter 4 describes the features of Korean THEME system based on the analysis of clausal Themes and thematic development of 17 texts of the corpus. Chapter 5 is a discussion about the pedagogical efficiency of using systemic functional text analysis for translator education with a particular emphasis on the textual meaning in translation. Chapter 6 attempts to analyze the readability issue of community translations in Australian context. Chapter 7 concludes the thesis with a number of suggestions for further study.

As the research investigates the question of textual meaning in translation, which has not been rigorously studied, and the question of Theme in Korean, which has never been studied on the basis of a corpus and of discourse analysis, it is anticipated that this work will make considerable theoretical and practical contributions in both fields.

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I hereby certify that the work has not been submitted for a higher degree to any other university or institution, and also that the sources of information used, and the extent to which the work of others have been utilized, have been indicated in the thesis.

Mira Kim

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To my parents

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Romanization System Table

In this thesis, the Yale romanization system is employed when phonetic transcriptions are needed.

Consonants

Korean alphabet	Phonemic value	Phonetic value	Yale	McCune-Reischauer
ㅍ	/p/	[p, b]	<i>p</i>	<i>p, b</i>
ㅍ	/ph/	[ph]	<i>ph</i>	<i>p'</i>
ㅍㅍ	/p'/	[p']	<i>pp</i>	<i>pp</i>
ㅌ	/t/	[t, d]	<i>t</i>	<i>t, d</i>
ㅌ	/th/	[th]	<i>th</i>	<i>t'</i>
ㅌㅌ	/t'/	[t']	<i>tt</i>	<i>tt</i>
ㅅ	/s/	[sh]	<i>s</i>	<i>s</i>
ㅅㅅ	/s'/	[s']	<i>ss</i>	<i>ss</i>
ㅈ	/c/	[c]	<i>c</i>	<i>ch, j</i>
ㅈ	/ch/	[ch]	<i>ch</i>	<i>ch'</i>
ㅈㅈ	/c'/	[c']	<i>cc</i>	<i>tch</i>
ㄱ	/k/	[k]	<i>k</i>	<i>k, g</i>
ㅋ	/kh/	[kh]	<i>kh</i>	<i>k'</i>
ㄱㄱ	/k'/	[k']	<i>kk</i>	<i>kk</i>
ㅁ	/m/	[m]	<i>m</i>	<i>m</i>
ㄴ	/n/	[n]	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>
ㅇ	/ŋ/	[ŋ]	<i>-ng</i>	<i>-ng</i>
ㄹ	/l/	[l, r]	<i>l</i>	<i>l, r</i>
ㅎ	/h/	[h]	<i>h</i>	<i>h</i>

Vowels and diphthongs

Korean alphabet	Phonemic value	Phonetic value	Yale	McCune-Reischauer
ㅣ	/i/	[i]	<i>i</i>	<i>i</i>
ㅑ	/wi, y/	[wi, y]	<i>wi</i>	<i>wi</i>
ㅓ	/e/	[e]	<i>ey</i>	<i>e</i>
ㅕ	/je/	[je]	<i>yey</i>	<i>ye</i>
ㅗ	/we/	[we]	<i>wey</i>	<i>we</i>
ㅛ	/we, ø/	[we, ø]	<i>oy</i>	<i>oe</i>
ㅜ	/ɛ/	[ɛ]	<i>ay</i>	<i>æ</i>
ㅠ	/jɛ/	[jɛ]	<i>yay</i>	<i>yæ</i>
ㅡ	/wɛ/	[wɛ]	<i>way</i>	<i>wæ</i>
ㅡ	/i/	[i]	<i>u</i>	<i>ũ</i>
ㅓ	/ə/	[ə]	<i>e</i>	<i>ǝw</i>
ㅕ	/jə/	[jə]	<i>ye</i>	<i>yǝ</i>
ㅗ	/wə/	[wə]	<i>we</i>	<i>wǝ</i>
ㅏ	/a/	[a]	<i>a</i>	<i>a</i>
ㅑ	/ja/	[ja]	<i>ya</i>	<i>ya</i>
ㅓ	/wa/	[wa]	<i>wa</i>	<i>wa</i>
ㅜ	/u/	[u]	<i>wu</i>	<i>u</i>
ㅠ	/ju/	[ju]	<i>y(w)u</i>	<i>yu</i>
ㅛ	/o/	[o]	<i>o</i>	<i>o</i>
ㅜ	/jo/	[jo]	<i>yo</i>	<i>yo</i>
ㅡ	/i/	[i]	<i>uy</i>	<i>ũi</i>

Reference

Sohn, Ho-Min. 1999. *The Korean Language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.