

Introduction

Introduction

THE PROCESS OF UNDERSTANDING a text from the narrator's point of view is crucial for the tasks of interpreting and translating the Bible. If the translator's understanding of a narrative from the narrator's point of view is erroneous, then the whole process of translating the message into another language may also fall into error. This poses Bible translators a difficult challenge: "How can we understand the narrator's point of view of the biblical stories which are culturally, geographically, and historically remote from our own?" There is no easy answer to this question. However, from the outset, I presuppose that an African perspective when reading the Scripture complemented by relevance-theoretic parameters may contribute to answering it. Reading Genesis 28:10—35:15 in the light of Hadiyya culture and relevance theory will help in its interpretation and translation.

Understanding the utterance of a discourse must precede the translation process, so I will attempt to explain the intended utterance of Genesis 28:10—35:15 in depth first, before proposing in brief how to translate it. Thus, I wish to show that a correct understanding of the concept of the ancient Israelite vow in the framework of a social institution is fundamental to reading and translating Genesis 28:10—35:15 and this same votive framework will assist us to explain the relevance of Genesis 34 to the Jacob story.

A comparison of different translations of the Jacob narrative unit of 28:10—35:15 in general and the Dinah story in particular show that

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the story has often been mistranslated because the episodes are treated as if they were isolated episodes. One may wonder what is the cause for the mistranslation. The obvious answer is that this narrative unit and its component episodes were misread because of assumptions the readers brought to the text when trying to respond to it. I wish to show that the whole story is a coherent narrative unit and to demonstrate how the coherence of the narrative is developed. Each episode of the story, including the Dinah story, is a componential part or a building block of Jacob's votive narrative. Chapters 3 and 6 will show that an understanding of the institutions of vow and marriage is vital for explaining this coherence.

Many critical readers of the story wonder: "What is the relevance of the Dinah story to the narrative of Jacob?" Different biblical scholars propose different answers to this question as the following examples show: the Dinah story does not have any significant relationship to the Jacob story;¹ it was intended to be an example of banning exogamous marriage;² it was intended to challenge the militant attitude to outsiders;³ etc. However, the question to be asked regarding these answers is, what are the textual evidences provided by the narrator/communicator in this particular narrative discourse?

I argue that Genesis 34 was not thrown into the Jacob narrative accidentally; rather there must be a communicative intention which the narrator wished to achieve by including the Dinah story at this particular location in the Jacob narrative. This presumptive communicative intention must have been manifested through the *ostensive signals of the communicative intention* for including it. This is the question to be addressed.

Hence, since the main reason for the mistranslation and misinterpretation of the story was misreading of the same, most of my discussion is spent explaining that Genesis 28:10—35:15 is a coherent narrative unit of which the Dinah story is an integral part. I believe my explanation will help the translators in a significant way.

It will be shown that the Dinah story is an intentionally included congruent part of the votive narrative of Jacob which comprises Genesis 28:10—35:15. This hypothesis will be substantiated by the close reading of the whole narrative unit from the narrator's point of view as it is manifested by his linguistic/public representation. His mental representation of the story, manifestly represented in his linguistic organization of the

1. Brueggemann, *Genesis*, 274.

2. Parry, *Old Testament Story*, 136.

3. Bechtel, "Shame," 36.

narrative structure of the story, shows that the Dinah story was intended to explain that such a shameful and life-threatening event happened to Jacob, one to whom God had promised protection wherever he went, as a consequence of Jacob's failure to fulfill his vow to God in Bethel. According to the regulations of the vow institution this must be carried out in a place chosen by God (28:10–22).

Scope and Delimitation

The whole Jacob story (Genesis 25:19–37:1, according to the author's view of the narrative unit of the Jacob story) is an interwoven large story or narrative unit. However Genesis 28:10–35:15, giving special attention to the narrative role of Gen 28:10–22 within it, will be the main focus. Genesis 28:10–22 is a foundational passage of the narrative unit, because the promise made by God to Jacob and the vow made by Jacob to God in 28:10–22 raise an expectation of relevance, or a searching for cognitive effects, in the audience which will reach its final fulfilment in 35:1–15. Thus Gen 28:10–22 creates a topical or thematic context for the global and local coherence of the whole narrative. This helps the inferential processing of the rest of the episodes of the narrative unit in these chapters. Genesis 28:10–35:15 is seen as a “*votive narrative*” which concurs with the public representation of other similar votive narratives in the Old Testament (1 Samuel 1:10–2:11 and Judges 11:30–39).

Methodology

I provide a literary analysis of Genesis 28:10–35:15, employing relevance theory parameters (see section 1.5), recognizing the text as a literary document or discourse, but considering the “interdependence between the world of the text and the situation which produced it.”⁴ The biblical writers integrated theological, historical, and literary features in the texts.⁵ However, as a translation-oriented reader, I will treat the biblical data as a literary document without giving much attention to the issues of the historical, redaction, and source criticism. Nevertheless, I will closely examine the situation in which the narrative was produced and the communicative intention of the communicator, which presumably reflects his

4. Hayas and Holladay, *Exegesis*, 68.

5. Ryken, *Guide to the Bible*, 16.

historical and theological view. Adam Jaworski and Nikalas Coupland make a remarkable note about this feature of a text: “Discourse is language use relative to social, political and cultural formation—it is language reflecting social order but also language shaping social order, and shaping individuals’ interaction with society.”⁶

My use of “literary document” is intended to denote the creative and artistic procedures of this narrative discourse-presentation employed by the narrator to make his communicative stimulus more salient.⁷ This is in order to achieve his communicative intention, and must be distinguished from the imaginative art used in fiction. Besides, no dichotomy needs to be created between the intention of the author (author meaning) and text meaning, on the one hand, and reader meaning, on the other, because the reader interacts with the communicative intention of the author through the constraints of the textual stimulus provided.⁸

A synchronic approach to the text is presented. It is analyzed by employing relevance theory parameters, without much worry about the diachronic aspect of the text. However, since discourse is a context-dependent communication, the contributions of the historical and cultural context of the text will be examined closely for their contribution to the process of interpretation and translation here will be no description of detailed linguistic (formal) regularities by making charts of sentences and clauses in order to describe topics, comments, focuses, and other linguistic features of the narrative. Instead, the ostensive linguistic signals that are intended to help the reader infer communicative and informative intention are examined (see section 1.5). Wilson explains that in the right context a hearer can infer from the narrator’s point of view some feature of the intended interpretation of the discourse.⁹ Inferring is pervasive in communication because, as I mentioned earlier, discourse is a complex phenomenon, and one of its complexities is being decisively dependent on its immediate context and on the behavior or attitude of a speaker.¹⁰

Therefore, establishing the context of this utterance is crucial for the understanding of the speaker utterance and deducing appropriate premises and conclusion(s) in order to achieve the cognitive effects exactly intended by the speaker. Consequently this literary analysis requires

6. Jaworski and Coupland, *Discourse Reader*, 3.

7. Powell, *Narrative Criticism*, 4; Alter, *Biblical Narrative*, 179.

8. Alter, *Biblical Narrative*, 179.

9. Wilson, “Metarepresentation,” 429.

10. Blass, *Relevance Relations*.

employing both a description and explanation of the utterances to explain the communicative intention of Jacob's vow to God and God's promise to Jacob at Bethel.

Secondly, this narrative is an institutional narrative. Charlotte Linde recommends the importance of analyzing institutional narratives within the context of the institutions "in which they are told" and the work the narratives were intended to do "in and for that institution."¹¹ This narrative unit will be analysed from the perspective of the institutions of the vow, the chosen people of Yahweh, the chosen place of worship (Bethel in this case), and the promised land of Canaan, which are the cognitive contexts in which the narrative was told from the point of view of relevance theory.

The main feature of the principle of relevance theory is maximization of the ever-increasing relevance of the human cognition in its operation of processing inputs of communicative stimulus until its search for cognitive effects is fulfilled.¹² More specifically, this is a way of examining the importance of the vow of Bethel for fostering the institution of the chosen place of worship (Bethel in this case) within the context of the chosen community of Yahweh, and within the contextual assumptions of the Promised Land. The expectations of relevance this same utterance raises include possible consequences for the failed vow. Relevance theory deals with the speaker, text/utterance, audience, and context of utterance holistically in the course of inferential processing of communications, and this is the model used.

It is worth noting that for translators a textual meaning is more than the meaning of the sum total of the discourse sentences. By interacting with a discourse, we go behind the text, to the communicator's world, but guided and constrained by the communicator's ostensive signals of the intended communication. The biblical text "allows the reader to penetrate the inner world of the biblical character, and reveals the emotional and psychological mindset which motivates them" to write the text.¹³ Communicative meaning is always decisively based on the literary structure and sentences of a text which function as an ostensive communicative stimulus. To answer the question, "why did the narrator tell the story in this way in this particular context?" it will be necessary to examine, describe, and explain it from his/her point of view.

11. Linde, "Narrative," 532.

12. Sperber and Wilson, *Relevance*; Carston, *Thoughts and Utterances*; Blakemore, "Organization," Gutt, *Translation*; Blass, *Relevance Relations*.

13. Levine, "Inner World," 307.

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There is a third new approach for the close reading of the votive narrative of Jacob in general and of the Dinah story in particular. That there is a significant affinity between the Hadiyya culture and ancient Near East (ANE) culture can be shown by an empirical data analysis concerning the institutions of vow and marriage. Finn Rønne observes that there is an affinity between some Ethiopian and ANE cultures; and he specifically remarks about the region of South Ethiopia (which comprises the Hadiyya land) as follows:

South Ethiopia may, in a way, be described as a border district and a meeting place, on the one hand, on African soil and, on the other, in an area which has been subject to influences since the distant past from the northern and eastern parts of present Ethiopia and thus from North Africa, the Middle East and the Mediterranean.¹⁴

This affinity suggests that understanding the Hadiyya vows will help us understand ANE vows and a comparison between them will be helpful. A comparative study of these two cultural worlds regarding the concept of vow and the episode of the Dinah story will show possible different interpretations of the vow and the Dinah story and elicit the role of the narrative for the moral, ethical, and religious value of those societies. The purpose will be to reconstruct contextual assumptions to help us interpret the literary data of the narrative, not to influence it. The understanding of the concept of vow among some other Ethiopian communities will also be considered. In other words, since discourse is totally dependent on the context of the utterance I suggest that the study of the concept of “vow” as understood in the ANE cultural context in the light of current Hadiyya culture will give an insight into the real-life context of ancient Israel and will throw some light on the interpretation and translation of the votive discourse of Jacob in general and the Dinah episode in particular. Other reliable ANE sources and helpful complementary models will also be considered.

The Hadiyya People

The major part of the Hadiyya people group live in southwestern Ethiopia around the town Hossana, about 230 kilometers south of the capital Addis Ababa, the capital city of Ethiopia. Linguistically the Hadiyya people

14. Rønne, “Kontinuitet og Forandring,” 472.

are categorized as the members of the Highland East Cushitic language family. Since 1992 the area has been known as the “Hadiyya Zone” for the administration purposes of the government of Ethiopia.

Hadiyya land extends as far as the Omo River on the west. Some Hadiyya people even live across the Omo River in the area called Boshha mixed with the Oromo people. On the east they are bordered by the Silt'i people who are Semitic, on the south by the Wolaitta people who are Omotic and on the north by the Gurage people who are also Semitic.¹⁵

According to the Ethnologue record of the 1998 census, the Hadiyya population is 927,933.¹⁶ However, according to the National Central Statistical Agency's figure of 2005 the Hadiyya population is 1,506,623. There are four dialects of the Hadiyya language with relatively insignificant differences: Sooro Hadiyya, Leemo Hadiyya, Shaashoogo Hadiyya, and Badawaacho Hadiyya. The Badawaacho dialect is geographically separated from the other groups by the Kambaata, Alaaba, and Tembaro people and the speakers are in a physical contact with the Wolaitta language speakers to the south. So they experience linguistic influence from the Wolaitta people though their language status is not threatened so far.¹⁷

Historical records concerning the origin of the Hadiyya people are limited. Ernesta Ceruli in his survey noted that “the name Hadiyya is derived from that of the Muslim trading state and is spelt similarly in later Ethiopic chronicles.”¹⁸ However, there is not sufficient evidence that this name was borrowed from Muslim traders. On the other hand, some historical records indicate that Hadiyya was mentioned by some Arabic historiographers.¹⁹

The Hadiyya are a religious people who have different religious institutions. Traditional Hadiyya people used to worship for example trees, rivers, stones, mountains, and the sky (they thought that the blue sky is God himself). They also worshipped the sun and moon, by associating

15. There is another Hadiyya group in another district known as Woliso to the north of the Hadiyya people. In the early twentieth century this group used to speak the Hadiyya language; but now they have completely switched to the Oromo language. Sim, *Predicate Conjoining*, also noted that another Hadiyya group live in Bale Province and they also have completely switched to the Oromo language. For the purpose of this work I will focus only on the major Hadiyya group which lives around the Hosana (Waachamo) town.

16. Grimes, *Ethnologue*, 115.

17. For more information about the Hadiyya people see Sim, *Predicate Conjoining*, and Hankore, “Nominalization.”

18. Ceruli, *People of South-West Ethiopia*, 118.

19. Braukämper, “The Correlation of Oral Tradition,” 38.

them with the supreme God, and spirits. However, they do not worship animals. They also believe in some patronal spirits of family gods called *Jaara* which usually possess or indwell a subject (man or woman) who belongs to a particular family. Many families may have this family god *Jaara* who makes his subject prophesy, promise, or give warnings to the family and other clients. People go to such people for consultation. However the community does not build any particular permanent venue for them, although the diviners themselves may build a temporary shelter for divination ceremonies. Such divination practices are forbidden in Christian circles.

There was a particular family group called Anjamma believed to be rainmakers besides having other religious duties. They were consecrated as a special religious group and they received gifts for making rain. Other individuals like diviners (*boroodaano/kiiraano*), and people with special knowledge (*hiraagaano*), were very important figures in religious and social affairs.

Definition of Terms

Relevance theory is a communication theory which is based on a definition of relevance.²⁰ It recognizes that it is the mental faculty of the human being that draws inferences from people's behavior and enables them to communicate with each other.²¹ Communicators exploit this cognitive capacity and do not say everything to their audience when communicating.

In terms of this theory, relevance is a phenomenon "which makes information worth processing for a human being"²² particularly for the audience who presuppose that a speaker gives some unspoken guarantee to his audience that his utterance is worth processing. Such guarantees evoke a certain context, and the audience uses both guarantee and context to draw certain contextual implicatures.

There are two general principles of relevance: the *cognitive* principle that human cognition tends to be primed to maximize relevance, and the communicative principle that utterances and any ostensive communicative stimulus creates the expectation of optimal relevance in the audience.²³ The term "relevance" comprises a property of inputs, produced by the

20. See also Carston, *Thoughts and Utterances*, 12.

21. Gutt, *Translation*, 24.

22. Sperber and Wilson, *Relevance*, 46.

23. Gutt, *Translation*, 31; Wilson, "Metarepresentation," 419.

communicator for the cognitive processes of his audience. This input is analyzed by the audience inferentially “in terms of the notion of cognitive effects and processing effort.”²⁴ When an utterance or any other ostensive stimulus (input) is processed by the cognitive process of the audience in a context of appropriate assumptions, it will result in the intended cognitive effects. For example, I intend my friend to open the window but I say to him “The room is suffocating because the windows are closed.” And then my friend opens the window based on this utterance. My utterance has two propositions: “the room is suffocating” and “the windows are closed.” The procedural marker “because” denotes that the cause of the suffocation is the closed windows. The literal propositional meaning of my utterance expresses a state of affairs in the world, which is a suffocating room because of the closed windows. However, my friend’s action of opening the windows shows that he correctly drew the conclusion: “He requested that I open the windows” inferentially, which is the “implicature” or a cognitive effect, which I did not say explicitly. This example shows that our utterance comprises saying, asking, or commanding, but they are processed according to their relevance, not according to their propositional or literal sense.

As I mentioned above, human communication is geared to maximize relevance because we cannot process everything. We select and maximize relevance based on cost-benefit and cognitive effects are in direct proportion to the relevance of input: the greater the cognitive effects, the greater the relevance of the input; “the smaller the processing effort the greater the relevance of the input.”²⁵ Since relevance is context dependent and there is a huge potential contextual resource in the human cognitive environment selection is inevitable.²⁶ The selection of the context includes keeping the processing effort to a minimum.²⁷ The expected benefit of this effort is described as a contextual effect or a contextual implicature. There are three kinds of contextual effects: drawing a new contextual implication, strengthening or confirming the existing assumption, and eliminating the existing assumption by contradicting.

Some technical terms are used in relevance theory. When reading it will be useful to refer to the how the key technical terms used are understood and these are given a brief definition in what follows.

24. Wilson, “Metarepresentation,” 420.

25. Ibid., 420.

26. Allwood, “Meaning Potentials,” 52.

27. Gutt, *Translation*, 28.

Context is a psychological construct. It is a dynamic and wholistic notion which is described as the “mutual cognitive environment” of the speaker and hearer rather than external and textual.²⁸ It comprises the speaker’s and hearer’s assumptions about the world. Thus the context of an utterance is a set of assumptions or premises employed by our mental processing device in order to interpret the utterance.²⁹ The cognitive environment of a person comprises a huge amount of information which includes “information derived from preceding utterances plus any cultural or other knowledge stored there—and further information that can be inferred from these two sources.”³⁰ Any relevant stored information in the cognitive environment could be retrieved as the context of an utterance.³¹ Therefore, sufficient clues must be provided by the speaker, in order to guide the hearer to choose the intended contextual assumptions from their cognitive environment which will help to avoid misunderstanding.

Interpretive resemblance refers to the shared meaning properties between the original and its companion which comprises implicatures, explicatures, and an interpretive use of a communicative stimulus of the original. Since all human communicators presume the inferential processing capacity of human cognition, not everything is literally expressed by the communicators to their audience. Thus an utterance is an interpretive expression of the speaker’s thought not strictly a literal expression. Accordingly, only sufficient stimulus, optimally relevant or worth processing, is provided to the audience and the rest of the relevant linguistic propositional forms (explicatures) are reconstructed inferentially by the audience. If a representation is literal in an analytic sense (all the logical forms of thought and its representation) and all contextual implication (all what is intended to be conveyed) are the same then it is a limiting case.³² Any descriptive representation of a thought has a propositional form and any propositional form of an expression has also a logical property. Hence, the propositional forms of an ostensive stimulus (companion of the speaker’s original thought) share some logical properties with the propositional forms of the speaker’s thought (which is the original one) and consequently they resemble each other. Such propositional forms are also constrained

28. Sperber and Wilson, *Relevance*, 39.

29. Gutt, *Translation*, 26.

30. *Ibid.*, 27.

31. *Ibid.*, 27.

32. *Ibid.*, 41.

by linguistic forms such as procedurals (*so, after all, anyhow*, etc.) in order to direct the way an interpretation is processed.

The propositional forms of an utterance of a speaker share some, but not all, of the logical properties of the propositional forms of his thought because the “speaker is presumed to aim at optimal relevance not at literal truth” of thought expressed in an utterance.³³ Therefore, the resemblance between the propositional forms of speaker’s thought and the propositional form(s) of his utterance is called interpretive resemblance.

Similarly, any utterance attributed to someone else’s thought or utterance (reported speech) shares some logical properties (which comprise analytic implication or explicatures and contextual implication which the speaker intends to convey) with the original which makes them resemble each other.³⁴ Since reported speech re-uses or represents what someone has already represented it is described as a “representation of representation” or “metarepresentation.”³⁵ The resemblance between the original and representation cannot be perceived as strictly literal or verbatim because it is a common experience that reporters do not exactly repeat the original utterance. Rather they report only optimally relevant logical and linguistic information which enables the audience engaged for the inferential processing to know if the utterance is worth the processing effort. Therefore, since the latter is not related to the former in a strictly literal fashion, but has “some logical properties in common” such as sharing all the logical and linguistic properties of the original speaker’s thought and utterance, the resemblance between the original utterance and metarepresented (reported) utterance is called interpretive resemblance.³⁶ The speaker of such a representation could entertain it as a true thought or dissociate himself from it, simply representing it as someone else’s thought, or he may show that he has a particular attitude toward it. In relevance theory such use is also described as *interpretive use*.³⁷ Relevance theory also explains *translation* (secondary communication) of an original work (primary communication) as an interpretive use. The translation resembles the original interpretively; the original being made to a second audience in a different context. Particularly all modern readers of the biblical text are secondary

33. Sperber and Wilson, *Relevance*, 233.

34. Gutt, *Translation*, 36–39.

35. Wilson, “Metarepresentation,” 411.

36. Gutt, *Translation*, 36.

37. *Ibid.*, 39.

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audiences; thus the effort of reading it in its original context is more difficult. Hence it requires a contextual adjustment.³⁸

Metarepresentation is described as an act of attributing one's utterance or any other public representation and thoughts to someone else's thought or utterance. Such attribution or metarepresentation can be marked in several ways. But the most common ones are employing the device of direct and indirect quotation markers (which also may differ from language to language). The reporter of the metarepresentation may show his attitude toward the original thought—for example, he may endorse it or dissociate himself from it. Making an adjustment to the contextual assumptions between the original and reported utterance might be essential in order to make the resemblance between them accurate, because utterances are context dependent.

An *echoic utterance* is a metarepresentation that uses someone else's thought or utterance interpretively to convey a certain attitude about the thought or utterance which is usually manifested in the interpreter's utterance. For example, according to the narrative representation of 2 Chronicles 18:1–27, the utterance of Prophet Micaiah: "Go up and triumph; they will be given into your hand" is an echoic metarepresentation. He ironically echoes what the other prophets said to the kings, and by this utterance he dissociates himself from the belief of the other prophets. His utterance shows that he has an attitude toward what they told to the kings: he does not believe that what they said is true; they are lying.

Ostension or *Ostensive behaviour* is intentional behavior of a communicator aimed at attracting the attention of his audience to a particular phenomenon.³⁹

*Ostensive inferential communication*⁴⁰ is when a communicator produces a stimulus by the means of an utterance or by any other way through which he intends to make a set of assumptions⁴¹ manifest or more

38. Gutt, *Translation*; Hill, *Communicating Context*; Sim, *Handbook for Translators*.

39. Sperber and Wilson, *Relevance*, 50.

40. See Sperber and Wilson, *Relevance*, 156–59.

41. It is very difficult to describe "meaning." However, relevance theory describes it as a "set of assumptions." According to relevance theory, the communicative intention is manifest by the means of ostensive stimulus employed by the communicator which could be an utterance or any other means. The informative intention is manifest through the communicative intention and "the content of the speaker's meaning is the set of assumptions . . . embedded under the informative intention." When the informative intention of the communicator is made mutually manifest to both the communicator and his audience then transparency is achieved, which is perceived as a meaning (Wilson, "Metarepresentation," 424; Gutt, *Translation*, 24).

manifest to the audience and to himself. The means of making a set of assumptions mutually manifest to both the communicator and his audience is described as “ostensive stimulus.”⁴² An ostensive stimulus aims to attract the audience’s attention to the communicator’s intentions. From the communicator’s side communication is ostensive and from the hearer’s side the ostension is inferential because the communicator does not say everything;⁴³ thus it is sometimes called ostensive inferential communication.⁴⁴ This effort is necessary in communication because communication involves two parties (communicator and audience) and ostensive communication can be successful only if the communicator’s effort successfully attracts the audience to pay attention to the ostensive stimulus.⁴⁵

Raising expectation of relevance is an ostensive act or behavior of a communicator with a tacit guarantee that his utterance or stimulus is relevant or worth processing.

A *Contextual assumption* is any assumption accessible through an utterance or a text employed by the communicator as a stimulus within a particular context to his audience. It is a logical premise formed from a stimulus in a particular context in order to draw a conclusion.

An *implicature* is a thought that the narrator or speaker intended the reader to come to by inference, it is not stated explicitly. Relevance theory describes such intended thoughts as implicatures or contextual effects.

There are two layers of intention: (1) the *informative intention*, which aims to make a certain set of assumptions manifest or more manifest to the audience; and (2) the *communicative intention*, which aims to make the informative intention mutually manifest by the means of an ostensive stimulus.⁴⁶

Informative intention denotes that the intended communication will be accepted by the audience and it will influence their cognitive system such that they will eventually be ready to draw cognitive effects from

42. Wilson, “Metarepresentation,” 423.

43. “A hearer following the relevance-theoretic comprehension procedure should consider interpretive hypothesis in order of accessibility. Having found an interpretation that satisfies his expectation of relevance, he should stop. The task of the speaker is to make the intended interpretation accessible enough to be picked out. Notice that the best way of doing this is not always to spell it out in full. In appropriate circumstances, the hearer may be able to infer some aspect of the intended interpretation with less effort than would be needed to decode it from a fully explicit prompt” (Wilson, “Metarepresentation,” 429).

44. Sim, *Handbook for Translators*, vol. 1, 46–47.

45. *Ibid.*, 52.

46. Sperber and Wilson, *Relevance*, 9–12; Wilson, “Metarepresentation,” 423.

the utterance. Therefore, the communicator's informative intention is described as an intention aimed at modifying the cognitive environment of the audience.⁴⁷ Thus, the informative intention aims to make a set of assumptions of the communicator mutually manifest to both the communicator and his audience.⁴⁸

Communicative intention is when the communicator shows that he wants to communicate and he is heard and understood. Thus, a communicative intention is an effort of making "mutually manifest to an audience and the communicator that the communicator has this informative intention."⁴⁹

An *optimally relevant utterance* is one controlled by the principle of cost-benefit optimization. The effort of achieving intended benefits, which are positive changes to the audience's cognitive environment, presumes that the audience will be geared to look for an ostensive stimulus which is adequate and without unnecessary processing effort. Any effort or utterance that fulfils these requirements is said to be optimally relevant for the audience.⁵⁰

A *commissive speech act* is employed in order to commit to a future course of action for example making promises.⁵¹ This concept is not from relevance theory but is from speech act theory. But it is relevant to my research because it helps to explain the commissive speech act of the vow of Jacob. In the ancient Hebrew context נָשָׁא is much more than a simple act of making a promise as we shall see in chapter 4.

An *ad hoc concept* can be employed and interpreted differently. Depending on a different context it can be used in different times, in different places, and involving different things or people. The inferential conclusions achieved in such contexts through different premises and conclusions are geared by searching for relevance and are varied. Such mental processing is described as *ad hoc* processing. For example, if a husband says to his wife metaphorically and sincerely "you are my honey," on hearing this expression the wife perceives that in this particular context her husband excludes some logical or defining features of the encoded concept "honey" and narrows down to the feature of "sweetness" and at the same time he

47. Sperber and Wilson, *Relevance*, 58

48. Sim, *Handbook for Translators*, vol. 1, 46–47.

49. Ibid., 46–47; Sperber and Wilson, *Relevance*, 61.

50. Sim, *Handbook for Translators*, vol. 1, 52.

51. Levinson, *Pragmatics*, 240; Saeed, *Semantics*, 239f.; Austin, *Words*, 11, 151f., 157f.

broadens the logical or defining features of “sweetness” to cover his wife. There is no apparent semantic relationship whatsoever between “sweetness” and a “woman.” However, searching for relevance (relevance-driven processing) for adequate contextual effects, human cognition creates a new meaning on an *ad hoc* basis by connecting both woman and sweetness by inference.⁵²

Overview

Since the task of translation involves the process of interpretation before conveying the message into another language, in chapters 2 to 6, the communicative intention of the primary communication of Genesis 28:10—35:15 is viewed from the secondary audience’s point of view. And then in chapter 7 I will conclude with remarks on possibly more effective ways of bringing out and conveying the communicative intention of the story in the process of translation (secondary communication).

The boundary of the Jacob story will be defined in chapter 2, which will function as background information for the main argument. In order to investigate the soundness of the hypothesis, the narrative context and structure of 25:19—35:15 will be closely examined, for evidence of the communicative intention of the narrator. The main points of this chapter will be addressed in the following way: firstly, defining the boundary of the Jacob story; secondly, defining the narrative structure of the narrative unit episode by episode in order to describe the role of Gen 28:10–22 for the process of interpreting the narrative unit and in order to explain the relevance of the Dinah story to the Jacob story.

Chapter 3 deals with the Hebrew concept of “vow” and establishes what aspects of the encyclopedic information of the contemporary audience will help us to access the contextual assumptions of the primary audience in this narrative. In order to achieve this objective I wish to examine the concept “vow” in the light of the Hadiyya concept of vow silet, and in terms of the ancient Near East cultural context, the Hebrew Scriptures, and ancient Israelite literature in order to describe or elicit the main encyclopedic entries in the cognitive environment of the original audience. At the end of the chapter, there is a brief comparison between the Hebrew and Hadiyya concept of vow. The discussion in this chapter will significantly assist the task of interpretation for the translation of the concept of vow and the whole narrative unit in which it occurs. Access to the contextual

52. Carston, *Thoughts and Utterances*, 349ff.

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assumptions of the primary audience will play a very significant role in understanding and interpreting the discourse.

In chapter 4 there is a close examination of Genesis 28:10–22, in order to establish its role in the process of interpreting the narrative unit of 28:10—35:15. Thus, the utterances of God to Jacob and Jacob's vow to God in 28:10–22 will be treated as an abstract of the narrative unit because God's promise to Jacob and Jacob's votive plea to God in Bethel raise an expectation of relevance which functions as a topic or a common theme about which the whole discourse makes a meaningful coherence-relation. Therefore, in this chapter I will propose that the utterances in 28:10–22 will be treated as a base episode of the narrative unit because these are the utterances which raise an expectation of relevance in the audience and they will thus be primed to search for relevance in the following episodes until their expectation of relevance is fulfilled or the cognitive effects are achieved. The search for relevance is primed to see whether God has granted Jacob's votive plea. If so, did Jacob fulfill his vow to God? Why did the narrator include the Dinah story in Jacob's votive narrative? All these features will be explained from the narrator's point of view. Thus, the discussion of this chapter will explain why the utterance of the vow at Bethel is relevant to the interpretation of this narrative unit.

In chapter 5 there is an analysis of all the relevant passages of Genesis 29:1—33:20 in terms of the fulfillment of the vow of Bethel in order to explain the relevance of the Dinah story to the narrative of Jacob from the narrator's point of view. "Were the cognitive effects of the votive utterance of Jacob achieved?" In order to answer this question, all communicative clues /ostensive communicative stimuli used in the narrative are investigated in all the episodes in Genesis 29:1—33:20 to see how the expectations of relevance raised in 28:10–22 are fulfilled. Again, as the narrative discourse presented in chapters 29–33 is an evaluative one intended to fulfill the hearer's expectation of relevance (cognitive effects), raised in 28:10–22 the episodes of 29–33 will be treated as an evaluative narrative of the characters (God and Jacob) in terms of fulfilling the expectation of relevance raised in 28:10–22 and describe and explain any linguistic and contextual evidences available in the narrative in order to support this claim.

In chapter 6 the relevance of the Dinah episode to the votive narrative of Jacob is explained. It is also shown that the raised expectation of relevance caused by the utterance of the vow also includes the expectation of possible adverse consequences, if the vow were not to be fulfilled.

Finally, chapter 7 will conclude the book with a brief general summary recapitulating the main supporting arguments for the interpretation and restating new insights. This will be followed by a brief outline of the implications of this interpretation of Genesis 28:10—35:15 for translation into a secondary communication, showing that Genesis 34 is a congruent part of the votive narrative.

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