Applying SFL-based Theme Analysis to Translation between English and Korean

Mira Kim
The University of New South Wales

Abstract: Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) has been used as a theoretical framework in Translation Studies (TS) since its early stages of development (e.g. Catford (1965); House (1977/1997)). However, as Munday (2012: 137) explains, its influence started to become conspicuous from the 1990s when discourse analysis came to prominence in TS (e.g. Hatim and Mason (1990, 1997), Baker (1992/2011), Bell (1991), Steiner (2002, 2004), just to name a few). In spite of the growth in its applications in TS, there is a gap between SFL and TS when it comes to the application of Theme analysis, as pointed out in Munday (2000). A primary reason can be found in the fact that the way Theme is realized differs from language to language and yet descriptions on Theme and its realization in languages other than English are scarce. Korean is one of the languages that have never been seriously studied from a SFL perspective until before Kim (2007b). Against this backdrop, this paper will discuss how SFL-based Theme analysis has been applied in translation between English and Korean with a particular focus on major difficulties in the application and ways in which they have been addressed (Kim 2007a, 2011a, 2011b). It concludes some suggestions for collaboration between SFL and TS scholars.

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