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"For She Loved Much"
Reason Clauses in Translation

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Abstract: This article discusses translation issues that arise in dealing with reason clauses of the types introduced in English by the conjunctions *because* and *for*. *Because*, in its subordinating usage, introduces AT-ISSUE reason clauses, in which both the propositional content of the reason clause and the causal relation itself are part of the main point that is being asserted or questioned. Causal *for* introduces SUPPLEMENTAL reason clauses, which provide secondary or background-type information. An at-issue reason clause expresses a literal causal relation between two propositions ("real-world causation"), whereas supplemental reason clauses allow a wider range of uses, such as providing evidential/epistemic validation (Mark 14:70 "Surely you are one of them, *for* you too are a Galilean") and speech act modification (Luke 12:17 "What shall I do, *for* I have nowhere to store my crops"). Moreover, at-issue reason clauses can have ambiguous interpretations when the main clause is negated, questioned, or contains quantifier words like *few* and *many*. This kind of ambiguity does not arise with supplemental reason clauses.

Because of these differences, translating a supplemental reason clause in the SL with an at-issue reason clause in the RL, or vice versa, will affect the information packaging of the verse, since the reason clause is interpreted as being part of the main point of the utterance in one type, but not in the other. This kind of substitution will also add to or restrict the range of possible meanings of the sentence. In some cases, this can introduce ambiguity into the RL that is not present in the SL. In others, it may even remove the correct, intended meaning of the verse as a potential reading of the RL version.

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1 Introduction

In Luke 7:47 Jesus says, of the sinful woman who washed his feet with her tears, "Her many sins have been forgiven, for she loved much." When I ask people to paraphrase this verse, most of them (including many who hold seminary degrees) produce a rendition which implies that the woman's love caused the forgiveness. However, as the UBS *Handbook* points out, in light of the parable of the two debtors (vv. 41–43) this cannot be the intended interpretation. Rather, "The clause refers to the evidence, or proof, of the fact that the woman's sins had been forgiven...."[1] In other words, Jesus is saying that her great love proves (but does not cause) the reality and magnitude of the forgiveness.

SIL's *Translator's Notes* for this passage also focuses at some length on the evidential interpretation of the reason clause. The point needs to be emphasized because the verse is easily misunderstood. It appears that, cross-linguistically, any conjunction which allows the correct, evidential reading for this verse can also express the incorrect, real-world causation reading. And where the real-world causation reading is grammatically possible, and not in conflict with the immediate context, it tends to be preferred as the primary sense of the causal conjunction. For this reason, both the UBS *Handbook* and the *Translator's Notes* recommend significant restructuring of the passage to clarify the intended meaning, e.g., "the great love she has shown proves that her many sins have been forgiven" (TEV).

There is some disagreement over whether it is desirable to preserve ambiguity in translation when we are unsure which sense the original author intended. However, in this verse there is no doubt as to which interpretation of the reason clause was intended by the author (and the speaker). Moreover, modern readers seem to be prone to choose the wrong interpretation and the difference is theologically significant. So, there is much to be gained, and little to be lost, by translating the verse unambiguously. But this turns out to be a non-trivial task, not only in English but probably in most languages. It seems that one can achieve this goal only by abandoning the reason clause altogether, as in the TEV rendering.

The reason it is difficult to avoid the unwanted reading here is because it arises not from lexical ambiguity, which tends to be language-specific, but from PRAGMATIC AMBIGUITY (Horn 1985; Sweetser 1990), an ambiguity of usage, which tends to apply in similar ways across languages. For this reason, as noted above, any reason clause which can express the desired evidential reading in this context will usually be able to express the unwanted causal interpretation as well.

[1] Reiling and Swellengrebel (1993:324).

In this article, I discuss two basic types of reason clause: subordinate vs. paratactic (section 2). In addition to differences in syntactic structure, the two types differ in the nature of their semantic contribution, and in the range of their semantic functions. Subordinate reason clauses contribute to the "at-issue", propositional content of the sentence. Paratactic reason clauses contribute secondary or "supplemental" information, and may be loosely described as modifying the utterance rather than the core propositional content of the sentence. In terms of semantic functions, there seems to be a very strong tendency across languages for subordinate reason clauses to express real-world causation, whereas paratactic reason clauses allow a much wider range of uses (Sweetser's "pragmatic ambiguity").

Section 3 discusses translation issues that may arise in translating reason clauses. These include dealing with the kind of pragmatic ambiguity illustrated in Luke 7:47 (sec. 3.1); problems that can be introduced if one type of causal conjunction is replaced by the other type (sec. 3.2); and ambiguities that may be present when a subordinate reason clause occurs together with main clause negation, interrogative mood, or certain types of modality (sec. 3.3). Section 4 discusses some additional complicating factors, including other components of meaning that may be attached to certain conjunctions; the fairly common phenomenon of causal conjunctions which are polysemous between the subordinate and paratactic types; and apparent "coercion" effects.

Understanding the differences between these two classes of reason clauses will help the translator to identify and diagnose potential problems, and to decide how best to address these problems.

2 Two types of reason clauses

A brief note by David Cranmer (1984) describes helping a translator for the Themne[2] language of Sierra Leone decide which conjunctions to use in translating reason clauses, the kind of clauses which are frequently marked in English by the causal conjunctions *for* and *because*. Cranmer observes that in English, *because* is used when the author's main point is to assert a "direct cause and effect relationship" between the proposition expressed by the reason clause and the proposition expressed by the main clause, whereas *for* can be used to introduce secondary or supporting information of various kinds.

Adopting the terminology of Wendland (1983), Cranmer refers to the latter type of reason clauses as "digressions". Wendland describes such digressions as parenthetical comments which temporarily interrupt the temporal or logical flow of the discourse. They are not fully integrated into the syntactic structure

[2] David Cranmer, p.c.

or intonation contour of the sentence in which they occur. I will refer to reason clauses of this type as SUPPLEMENTS.[3] Huddleston and Pullum (2002:1350) echo Wendland's comments on the structure of these constructions. They describe supplements as "elements which occupy a position in linear sequence without being integrated into the syntactic structure of the sentence", elements which "represent an interruption to the flow of the clause... [T]hey are intonationally separate from the rest of the sentence."

I will refer to the other type of reason clause, in which the causal relation itself is a central part of the proposition that is being asserted or questioned, as expressing AT-ISSUE content.[4] The distinction between at-issue vs. supplemental reason clauses is defined by the semantic differences between the two types, and this paper will focus primarily on semantic issues. However, cross-linguistically there also seem to be clear syntactic differences between these types of reason clause, and it will be helpful to begin by mentioning these.

2.1 Structural differences

In contrast to supplemental reason clauses, which are not fully integrated into the syntactic structure of the sentence, at-issue reason clauses are (normally) fully integrated into the syntactic structure of the main clause. In other words, at-issue reason clauses are SUBORDINATED to the main clause. This subordinate structure may be achieved by means of a causal conjunction (e.g., *because*), a preposition (e.g., *because of*), the use of an abstract noun (such as *cause* or *reason*) that takes a clausal complement, or (in some languages) by special derivational morphology (e.g., causal nominalization).

As noted above, supplemental reason clauses have the structure of a parenthetical comment. They are not subordinated to the main clause, but normally they are not really coordinated either. They are typically set off from the rest of the sentence by pause and/or intonation break and can be inserted into the middle of another clause, as illustrated for German and English in (1). I will refer to this parenthetical structure as PARATACTIC.[5]

(1) Doch Elymas, der Zauberer **(denn so wird sein Name übersetzt)**, leistete ihnen Widerstand und suchte den Statthalter vom Glauben abzuhalten.
"But Elymas the sorcerer **(for that is what his name means)** opposed

[3] Potts (2005:6); Huddleston and Pullum (2002:1350 ff).

[4] Potts (2005:6).

[5] Hoeksema and Napoli (1993); Jivanyan and Samo (2017).

them and tried to turn the proconsul from the faith."
(Acts 13:8, Schlachter translation; © 2000 Geneva Bible Society)

A complicating factor in this study is the fact that a single causal conjunction may be polysemous between a subordinating at-issue sense and a paratactic supplemental sense. This issue will be discussed in section 4 below, and at that time we will mention some of the ways in which these two structural patterns can be distinguished. But first, let us consider some of the semantic differences between at-issue vs. supplemental reason clauses.

2.2 Semantic differences

An important aspect of the difference between at-issue vs. supplemental meaning has to do with INFORMATION PACKAGING. At-issue content is the main point of the current utterance—what is asserted in a statement or queried in a question—whereas supplemental content is not. Supplemental meaning is secondary. It provides supporting content, contextual information, editorial comments, evaluation, etc. It is "used to guide the discourse in a particular direction or to help the hearer to better understand why the at-issue content is important at that stage" (Potts 2005:7).

This primary difference has a number of semantic consequences which can be used as diagnostics to determine whether a causal conjunction in a particular language is of the at-issue type or the supplemental type.[6] We will illustrate some of these diagnostics here by using them to demonstrate that *because* can, but *for* cannot, be used to introduce an at-issue reason clause. This shows that causal *for* is strictly supplemental in nature, whereas *because* allows an at-issue reading.

a. **Only at-issue content can be the focus (or included in the focus) of a question, that is, the main point being queried**:
   (2) **Romans 6:15**—What then? Are we to sin *because/*for* we are not under law but under grace? By no means!
   - **Exodus 14:11**—"Is it *because/*for* there are no graves in Egypt that you have taken us away to die in the wilderness?"

b. **Only at-issue content can be the focus of an answer to a question**:
   (3) **Romans 9:32**—Why? *Because/*for* they did not pursue it through faith, but as if it were based on works.
   - **2 Corinthians 11:11**—So I refrained and will refrain from burdening you in any way... And why? *Because/*for* I do not love you? God knows I do!

[6] Potts (2005); Scheffler (2005, 2013).

- **1 John 3:12**—And why did he murder him? *Because/*for* his own deeds were evil and his brother's righteous.

c. Only at-issue content can be interpreted under the scope of clausal **negation**:

(4) **Luke 11:8**—I tell you, though he will not get up and give him anything *because/*for* he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him whatever he needs.

- **John 6:26**—[Y]ou seek me, not *because/*for* you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves.
- **John 12:6**—He did not say this *because/*for* he cared about the poor but because he was a thief.
- **2 Corinthians 7:9**—As it is, I rejoice, not *because/*for* you were grieved, but because you were grieved into repenting.
- **1 John 2:21**—I write to you, not *because/*for* you do not know the truth, but because you know it...
- **Deuteronomy 7:7**—It was not *because/*for* you were more in number than any other people that the Lord set his love upon you...

Similarly, only at-issue content can be interpreted under the scope of a possibility modal, or as part of the condition in a conditional clause. At-issue content is often referred to as "truth-conditional" meaning, because it forms the basis for deciding whether a speaker's statement is true or false in a particular situation, and thus can be the basis for challenging the truth of a statement. Supplements are an example of what is sometimes referred to as "use-conditional" meaning.[7]

2.3 "Pragmatic ambiguity"

In addition to the semantic contrasts listed in the previous section, there seems to be a strong cross-linguistic tendency for supplemental reason clauses to have a broader range of uses than at-issue reason clauses. Sweetser (1990:76–78)[8] has identified three common semantic functions which can be expressed by causal conjunctions in a large number of languages: (a) real-world causation, her "content domain" usage, as seen in Matthew 7:25 ("and yet it did not fall, *for* it had been founded on the rock"); (b) the EVIDENTIAL (Sweetser's "epistemic") function, illustrated in Luke 7:47 (above) or Mark 14:70 ("Surely you are one of them, *for* you too are a Galilean"); and, (c) the SPEECH ACT function, in which the reason clause helps to explain the speaker's reason for performing the speech act

[7] Gutzmann (2015).

[8] See also Sæbø (1991).

contained in the main clause. One such example is seen in Luke 12:17 ("What shall I do, *for* I have nowhere to store my crops?").

Cross-linguistically, it appears that at-issue reason clauses only express real-world causation. Supplemental reason clauses, in contrast, can typically express any of the three semantic functions identified by Sweetser.[9]

Sweetser argues that these readings do not arise from lexical polysemy of the conjunction (i.e., three distinct senses). Rather, taking a term from Horn (1985), she describes this situation as a case of PRAGMATIC AMBIGUITY, in other words, an ambiguity of usage rather than an ambiguity of sense. She argues that these conjunctions have a single sense which can operate on three different levels, or domains, of meaning: propositional content, evidential validation, or speech act modification. When the reason clause expresses a real-world cause-and-effect relation, it is part of the propositional content of the utterance. In the evidential reading, the reason clause is used to validate the propositional content by providing the grounds or supporting evidence for the current assertion. A third possibility is to use a reason clause as a speech-act modifier, e.g., to clarify the motivation or intent of the current utterance.

Actually, supplemental causal conjunctions frequently allow more than just the three uses described by Sweetser. For example, they can often be used to provide explanation or clarification even where no causal meaning is involved, as in Acts 13:8: "But Elymas the sorcerer (*for* that is what his name means) opposed them and tried to turn the proconsul from the faith." A similar example is seen in John 21:7: "When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on his outer garment, *for* he was stripped for work, and threw himself into the sea." Here the content of the reason clause ("he was stripped for work") seems to be assumed in the previous clause but has not previously been mentioned in the text. The explanatory parenthetical statement is provided to relieve the reader of the need to "accommodate" this implied information, and to avoid any potential confusion.[10]

Cranmer cites the "prophetic digression" in Matthew 26:31: "Then Jesus said to them, 'You will all fall away because of me this night; *for* it is written, "I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered."'" In this verse the reason clause introduced by *for* does not describe an event or state that causes the disciples to fall away, nor the evidential basis for Jesus' assertion that they will fall away, nor Jesus' reason for making this assertion. Rather, it helps

[9] This appears to be the normal case. However, some languages are reported to have supplemental causal conjunctions whose range of uses is more restricted.

[10] See Kroeger (2019) for a discussion of presupposition and accommodation in translation.

the addressees make sense of this shocking prediction as a fulfillment of prophecy.

In New Testament passages which involve building an argument, the Greek causal conjunctions *gar* and (to a lesser extent) *hoti* often function as sentence introducers, marking the next step in the argument. In these contexts, the conjunction typically has an evidential or explanatory function, but allows a broad range of semantic connections between the current sentence and the previous sentence.[11] One such passage is found in Romans 1:

(5) **Romans 1:14–18** [RSV]:
[14]I am under obligation both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish: [15]so I am eager to preach the gospel to you also who are in Rome. [16]*For* [*gar*] I am not ashamed of the gospel: it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who has faith, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. [17]*For* [*gar*] in it the righteousness of God is revealed through faith for faith; as it is written, "He who through faith is righteous shall live." [18]*For* [*gar*] the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and wickedness of men who by their wickedness suppress the truth...

2.4 At-issue vs. supplemental causal conjunctions in German

Most reason clauses in German are introduced by one of two conjunctions: *weil* or *denn*. Both words can be used to describe real-world causality, as illustrated in (6). However, as demonstrated by Scheffler (2005, 2013), only *denn* can be used for translating reason clauses in the evidential (7a) and speech act (7b) domains; *weil* would be impossible in these contexts.

(6) a.
Ich hatte Angst vor dir,
1SG had fear before 2SG

weil du ein strenger Mann bist.
because 2SG one strict man are
"I was afraid of you because you are a strict man." (Luke 19:21, GNB)[12]

[11] Casson (2020) proposes a unified treatment of the argumentative uses of *gar*, both sentence-initial and sentence-medial, using the Relevance Theory concept of "strengthening".

[12] German versions cited: **GNB** = *Gute Nachricht Bibel*, © 2000 Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft; **HFA** = *Hoffnung für Alle* (Hope for All) © 1983, 2019 Biblica; **Luther 1984** = revision of the

b.
Ich fürchtete mich vor dir,
1SG feared myself before 2SG

denn du bist ein harter Mann.
for 2SG are one hard man
"I was afraid of you, for you are a hard man." (Luke 19:21, Luther 1912)

(7) a.
Es hat mich jemand berührt; *denn* ich habe gespürt,
it has me someone touched for 1SG have felt

daß eine Kraft von mir ausgegangen ist.
that one power from 1SG.DAT gone.out is
"Someone touched me, for I feel that power has gone out from me." (Luke 8:46, Luther 1984)

b.
Wer ist dieser? *denn* er gebietet dem Winde und
who is this for he commands the wind and

dem Wasser, und sie sind ihm gehorsam.
the water and they are 3SG.M.DAT obedient
"Who is this person? For he commands the wind and the water and they are obedient to him." (Luke 8:25, Luther 1912)

The contrast in usage illustrated in examples (6–7) suggests that *weil* introduces at-issue reason clauses, whereas *denn* introduces supplemental reason clauses. This hypothesis is supported by a large body of additional evidence, including examples like those in (8) which show that *denn* cannot be used when the reason clause is at-issue.[13] Example (8a) involves a reason clause which must be interpreted under the scope of main-clause negation, while in example (8b) the reason clause is the focus of the answer to a 'why' question. Both of these are contexts where only an at-issue reason clause is acceptable.

(8) a. **John 12:6**—
Er sagte das nicht etwa, *weil*/**denn* er ein Herz für die Armen hatte, sondern weil er ein Dieb war. [GNB]
"He didn't say this *because*/**for* he had a heart for the poor, but because he was a thief."

Luther Bible, © 1984 Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft; **Luther 1912** = revision of the Luther Bible, public domain.

[13] For additional evidence, see Scheffler (2005, 2013) and references cited there.

b. **1 John 3:12**—
Und warum hat er ihn ermordet? *Weil/*Denn* seine eigenen Taten böse waren, aber das Leben seines Bruders Gott gefiel. [HFA]
"And why did he murder him? *Because/*for* his own deeds were evil, but the life of his brother pleased God."

German is an interesting language in which to investigate these contrasts, because the word order makes it clear which clauses are subordinate and which are not. In subordinate clauses, the tensed verb or auxiliary must appear at the end of the clause, while in other clauses (main, coordinate, or paratactic), the tensed verb or auxiliary occurs in second position, after the first constituent of the clause. Compare the position of the verb *bist* 'you (SG) are' in examples (6a-b). The verb-final word order of the reason clause in (6a) shows that *weil* is a subordinating conjunction, as predicted from the fact that it always introduces at-issue reason clauses. The verb-second word order of the reason clause in (6b) shows that *denn* is a paratactic conjunction, as predicted from the fact that it introduces supplemental reason clauses.

3 Translation issues

3.1 Pragmatic ambiguity

Our discussion in section 2 should help us to understand why Luke 7:47 is a challenging verse to translate, and why both the UBS *Handbook* and SIL's *Translator's Notes* recommend a significant restructuring of the passage. The Greek text for this passage contains a supplemental reason clause: "Her many sins have been forgiven, *for* she loved much." As we have seen, supplemental reason clauses in most if not all languages allow at least three interpretations: real-world causation, epistemic validation, and speech-act modifier. At-issue reason clauses, in contrast, generally do not permit the epistemic and speech-act interpretations. What this means is that any conjunction that allows the (correct) epistemic interpretation ("her love is evidence of forgiveness") must be supplemental, and therefore will also allow the (incorrect) real-world causation interpretation ("her love caused the forgiveness"). And for many people the real-world causation reading seems to be the more prominent.

One reviewer points out that the second half of the verse ("he who is forgiven little, loves little") should help the reader to select the intended reading. This is certainly true. The second half of the verse seems clearly to imply that the love is a consequence of the forgiveness, and by reading the first half in the same way (as intended), the verse as a whole is seen to have a chiastic structure. However, as a practical matter, it seems that even this is not enough to keep

many readers from adopting the wrong interpretation of the first half, and this is reflected in the strong warnings in the handbooks.

According to Sweetser, the ambiguous nature of supplemental causal conjunctions is pragmatic rather than semantic, relating to usage rather than sense; but for the translator, many of the same issues arise with either kind of ambiguity. Disambiguation often requires fairly complex reasoning based on awareness of contextual features (in this case, the meaning of the parable), shared cultural and world knowledge, pragmatic plausibility, etc.

In a monolingual, monocultural situation, ambiguity is rarely a problem. Much of what we hear every day is highly ambiguous, but we are normally not even aware of this unless we hear someone make a pun or some other kind of deliberate play on words. When communicating in our own language and culture, we normally disambiguate automatically and unconsciously.[14] In a second language, or in a cross-cultural setting, disambiguation is frequently neither automatic nor unconscious, and translation is always a cross-cultural situation.

Because translators and consultants spend so much time studying the passages that we work on, there is a danger that we will underestimate the disambiguation challenge for uninitiated readers and hearers. I have heard translators justify ambiguous renderings of various kinds by saying something like, "They will understand it in context." Obviously, this cannot be taken for granted, but needs to be carefully checked.

Pragmatic ambiguity will be a potential issue whenever a supplemental reason clause is used. One reason that Luke 7:47 calls for special attention is that two of the possible readings are equally plausible in the immediate context. In many other cases, one reading will clearly be the most plausible on pragmatic grounds, and this will certainly make disambiguation less difficult. However, even if the reader/hearer is able to correctly identify the intended reading, the very fact that we are dealing with translated material makes it less likely to be an automatic and unconscious process. The danger here is that readers may be sufficiently aware of the unintended readings that they are distracted by them. Of course, we cannot avoid every potential problem, and there are always trade-offs to be made; but as far as possible, I think we want to avoid producing translations that make people giggle every time they read a particular verse (a phenomenon I have witnessed in respected national language translations with other types of ambiguity).

[14] Ravin and Leacock (2000).

3.2 Substitution leads to change of semantic functions

Cranmer (1984) says that while checking the New Testament in a language of Sierra Leone, he noticed that the translator had on several occasions rendered a supplemental reason clause ('for') using an at-issue conjunction ('because'). Based on his knowledge of a related language, he suspected that this could lead to misunderstandings in some contexts, and these suspicions turned out to be correct. Together they worked through every occurrence of 'for' in the book of Matthew, which resulted in a much-improved translation.

Why would replacing a supplemental reason clause with an at-issue reason clause cause problems? Our discussion in section 2 suggests at least two undesirable effects: change of semantic function and change of information packaging.

When a supplemental conjunction ('for') in the source language (SL) is used in the evidential or speech-act functions, translating it with an at-issue conjunction ('because') in the receptor language (RL) will normally force an unintended real-world causation interpretation. This follows from the fact noted above, that at-issue reason clauses generally do not permit the epistemic and speech-act interpretations.

One of the examples Cranmer cites is Matthew 8:8–9 ("But just say the word, and my servant will be healed. [9]*For* I myself am a man under authority, with soldiers under me"). Verse 9 begins with a supplemental reason clause (a causal "digression") functioning as a speech act modifier: it explains the centurion's reason for making the assertion at the end of verse 8. As Cranmer points out, if we translate the supplemental conjunction ('for') with an at-issue conjunction, the plain meaning of the words will be that the centurion's subordinate rank will cause the healing: "But just say the word, and my servant will be healed because I myself am a man under authority..." (with no intonation break after *healed*); or "But just say the word, and because I am a man under authority, my servant will be healed..."

Another example of a supplemental reason clause with the speech-act function is seen in (9a): the magi use it to explain what motivates their question. Replacing this with an at-issue reason clause, as in (9b), forces a real-world causation interpretation: it sounds as if their seeing the star caused the birth.

(9) SPEECH ACT (**Matthew 2:2**):
a. Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? *For* we saw His star in the east...
b. #Where is He who has been born King of the Jews *because* we saw His star in the east?

The supplemental reason clause in (10a) is an example of the evidential function: Jesus uses it to explain how he knows that someone touched him. Replacing this with an at-issue reason clause, as in (10b), seems to force a real-world causation interpretation: His awareness of power going out from him caused the woman to touch him.[15]

(10) EVIDENTIAL **(Luke 8:46)**:
a. Someone touched me; *for* I perceive that power has gone forth from me.
b. #Someone touched me *because* I perceive that power has gone forth from me.

The real-world causation interpretation in examples (9b) and (10b) would be pragmatically highly unlikely, but grammatically it is strongly preferred if not obligatory. Asking readers to override their normal grammatical expectations on the basis of pragmatics is likely to cause significant distraction, if not outright laughter.

When a supplemental conjunction in the source language is used in the real-world causation function, translating it with an at-issue conjunction will not change the propositional content of the verse. However, it does change the INFORMATION PACKAGING: what was secondary, background information in the SL is presented as the main point of the utterance in the RL. Now sometimes this kind of re-packaging is unavoidable in order to communicate accurately the propositional content of the SL. But all other things being equal, most translators will probably favor preserving the information packaging of the SL when that is an option.

The opposite kind of substitution, when an at-issue conjunction in the SL is translated with a supplemental conjunction in the RL, may force a change in "scope" relations and thus produce an incorrect meaning, as discussed in the next section.

3.3 Scope relations

When an at-issue causal conjunction occurs in the context of negation, interrogative mood, or certain types of modality, two readings are (in general) grammatically possible. For example, the two sentences in (11) have the same grammatical structure, and in principle both are ambiguous. However, context makes it clear that the reason clause in (11a), but not (11b), must be understood to be negated. In other words, the reason clause in (11a) must be understood to lie within the SCOPE of the main clause negation, but this is not the intended

[15] But see the discussion of structural ambiguity in section 4.

reading in (11b). We could paraphrase (11a) by saying, "He [Judas] did say this, but not because he cared about the poor." This kind of paraphrase will not work for (11b), because in this case the context clearly requires the reading in which only the main clause and not the reason clause is negated.

(11) a. **John 12:6**—He [Judas] did not say this *because* he cared about the poor...
b. **Luke 9:53**—But the people of the village did not welcome Jesus *because* he was on his way to Jerusalem. [NLT]

In many such cases no special adjustment will be needed, but we need to be aware of this type of ambiguity when it is present, and check carefully to be sure that disambiguation is not causing a problem for the intended readers, just as we do for any other semantic ambiguity.

If an at-issue conjunction in the SL is translated with a supplemental conjunction in the RL, the intended scope relations may be altered, because supplemental conjunctions cannot be interpreted within the scope of main-clause operators such as negation. We can illustrate this problem by returning to John 12:6. As we have just noted, this verse requires the reading in which the reason clause is understood to be negated (12a). If we replace at-issue *because* with supplemental *for*, as in (12b), this reading is no longer possible. Now only the main clause can be understood to be negated, and as a result the continuation ("but because he was a thief") becomes incoherent.

(12) **John 12:6**—
a. He [Judas] did not say this *because* he cared about the poor but because he was a thief.
b. He did not say this, *for* he cared about the poor (*but because he was a thief).

Conversely, if a supplemental conjunction in the SL is translated with an at-issue conjunction in the RL (only possible when the reason clause expresses real-world causation), it may introduce a scope ambiguity into the translation which is not ambiguous in the SL. Example (13) illustrates this point using the parable of the wise builder who built his house upon the rock. In the standard rendering, with the supplemental conjunction *for*, only the main clause can be understood to be negated (13a). Replacing *for* with at-issue *because* as in (13b) introduces a second grammatically possible (but incorrect) reading: "the house did fall, but not because it had been founded on the rock."

(13) **Matthew 7:25**—
a. ... it did not fall, *for* it had been founded on the rock.
b. ... it did not fall *because* it had been founded on the rock.

4 Complicating factors

Up to this point we have focused on differences in semantic type (at-issue vs. supplemental) and range of semantic functions. However, other semantic factors may also be relevant for choosing the right causal conjunction in a specific language. For example, Dutch has two at-issue conjunctions, *omdat* and *doordat*, which both mean 'because'. In some contexts, they are interchangeable, but only *omdat* can be used to express a volitional agent's reason for doing something.[16]

Many languages have special causal conjunctions which mark the reason clause as being presupposed, that is, treated as part of the COMMON GROUND of shared knowledge between speaker/author and addressee. Examples include English causal *since*; French *puisque*; Latin *quoniam*; Dutch *aangezien*;[17] and Spanish causal *como*, *puesto que*. Presupposed reason clauses are like supplements in that they are secondary (not part of the at-issue content), and in their range of semantic functions. The French and Spanish examples in (14) illustrate the speech act use, but evidential and real-world causation uses are also common.

(14) **Luke 1:34**—
Comment cela se fera-t-il, *puisque* je suis vierge?[18]
¿Cómo podrá suceder esto—le preguntó María al ángel—, *puesto que* soy virgen?[19]
"How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?" [NIV]

The main difference between presupposed vs. supplemental reason clauses is that supplemental reason clauses are normally informative, whereas presupposed reason clauses are not. If the content of a presupposed reason clause is not in fact already known by the addressee, the utterance may be judged to be unnatural or infelicitous.[20] See Kroeger (2019) for a discussion of these issues as they relate to translation.

[16] Sæbø (1991).

[17] Pit (2003:26).

[18] La Bible du Semeur © 1992, 1999 Biblica Inc.

[19] Nueva Versión Internacional © 1999, 2015 Biblica, Inc.

[20] Similarly, supplemental reason clauses are typically judged to be infelicitous when their content has been just mentioned in the immediately preceding context, because they are uninformative (Potts 2005). However, it seems to be the case that the more distant the previous mention was, the more acceptable such uninformative supplements become.

4.1 Polysemous conjunctions

Perhaps the most important complicating factor regarding the uses of causal conjunctions is the fact that some of these conjunctions turn out to be polysemous. It is possible, and apparently not at all uncommon, for a subordinating conjunction to acquire a secondary paratactic sense. One widely cited example of this pattern is the French conjunction *parce que* 'because', which in its primary sense introduces subordinate at-issue reason clauses. Over the past thousand years or so, it has developed a secondary sense which shares the supplemental semantics and paratactic syntax of *car* 'for'.[21] *Car* is now rarely used in spoken French, having been largely replaced by paratactic *parce que*. The equivalence between paratactic *parce que* and *car* is illustrated in (15), with an evidential example, and (16) where the reason clause functions as a speech act modifier.

(15) **Mark 14:70**[22]—
a. Vraiment, tu es de ces gens-là, *car* tu es aussi galiléen. [NBS]
"Truly you are one of those people, *for* you too are a Galilean."
b. Certainement, tu es l'un d'eux, *parce que*, toi aussi, tu es de la Galilée. [FCR18]
"Surely you are one of them, *because* you also, you are from Galilee."

(16) **Luke 11:5–6**—
a. Mon ami, prête-moi trois pains, *car* un de mes amis est arrivé de voyage chez moi, et je n'ai rien à lui offrir. [NBS]
"My friend, lend me three loaves, *for* one of my friends has arrived at my house on a journey, and I have nothing to offer him."
b. Mon ami, prête-moi trois pains, *parce qu*'un de mes amis m'est arrivé de voyage et je n'ai rien à lui offrir. [TOB]
"My friend, lend me three loaves, *because* one of my friends has arrived to me on a journey and I have nothing to offer him."

The subordinate and paratactic senses of *parce que* can be distinguished by phonological and syntactic criteria. Paratactic reason clauses are not fully integrated into the main clause. This is marked phonologically by a pause and/or intonation boundary, usually (but not always) indicated in writing with a comma, as seen in (15b) and (16b). No pause precedes the conjunction in at-issue contexts, like those in examples (17a) and (18a). Lack of syntactic integration is also seen

[21] Zufferey (2012), Degand and Fagard (2012).

[22] **NBS** = La Nouvelle Bible Segond, © 2002, Société biblique française; **FCR18** = Nouvelle Français courant © 2019, Société biblique française; **BDS** = La Bible du Semeur © 1992, 1999 Biblica, Inc.; **TOB** = Traduction œcuménique de la Bible, © 2010, Société biblique française.

in the fact that paratactic reason clauses are not eligible to undergo certain syntactic operations which are fully grammatical with subordinate reason clauses. Examples include the various kinds of cleft constructions illustrated in (17b, c) and (18b). The acceptability of these sentences indicates that they involve the subordinate, rather than the paratactic, sense of *parce que*.

(17) **John 6:26**—
a. [FCR18] vous me cherchez, non *parce que* vous avez saisi le sens des signes extraordinaires que j'accomplis, mais *parce que* vous avez mangé du pain à votre faim.
"You search for me, not *because* you have understood the meaning of the extraordinary signs that I perform, but *because* you have had eaten your fill of bread."
b. [TOB] ce n'est pas *parce que* vous avez vu des signes que vous me cherchez…
"It is not *because* you saw signs that you are looking for me…"
c. [BDS] si vous me cherchez, ce n'est pas *parce que* vous avez compris le sens de mes signes miraculeux…
(lit.) "If you are searching for me, it is not *because* you have you understood the meaning of my miraculous signs…"

(18) **John 12:6**—
a. [FCR18] Il disait cela non *parce qu*'il se souciait des pauvres, mais *parce qu*'il était voleur
"He said this not *because* he cared about the poor, but *because* he was a thief."
b. [BDS] S'il parlait ainsi, ce n'était pas *parce qu*'il se souciait des pauvres…
"If he spoke thus, it was not *because* he cared about the poor…"

English *because* also has both subordinating and paratactic uses. The two are distinguished by the comma intonation, which is strongly preferred (if not obligatory) in the paratactic structure but not possible with true subordinate structure, as illustrated in (19). Notice the change in meaning which is forced when the pause is inserted in (19b): the reason clause is no longer understood to be what is negated, and so the final clause no longer makes sense.

(19) **John 12:6**—
a. He did not say this *because* he cared about the poor but because he was a thief.
b. He did not say this, *because* he cared about the poor (*but because he was a thief).

Subordinating *because* will normally be interpreted as contributing at-issue content, and therefore describing real-world causation.[23] Paratactic *because*, which has largely replaced causal *for* in modern spoken English, can be used to express all three of the semantic functions discussed in section 2: real-world causation (20a), evidential (20b), and speech act (20c):

(20) a. **Matthew 7:25**—
...but it did not fall, *because* it had been founded on the rock. [ESV]
...and yet it did not fall, *for* it had been founded on the rock. [NASB]
b. **Matthew 16:2**—
When the sun is setting, you say, "We are going to have fine weather, *because* the sky is red." [TEV]
c. **Luke 19:5**—
"Hurry down, Zacchaeus, *because* I must stay in your house today." [TEV]

However, intonation or pause by itself is not always a reliable guide for distinguishing subordinating from paratactic *because*. More precisely, the presence of the comma intonation does seem to mark the construction as paratactic, but the absence of the comma does not always mean that the speaker or author intends to express a subordinate, at-issue reason clause. Doubtful cases can be clarified by using syntactic tests such as the cleft construction.

The intended reading for the paratactic reason clause in (21a) is evidential (Jesus' awareness of power going out from him is the grounds for his assertion that someone touched him). The real-world causation reading (his awareness of power going out from him caused the woman to touch him) is grammatically possible with the paratactic construction, but in this case pragmatically bizarre.[24] The NLV rendering shown in (21b), which leaves out the comma, looks like a subordinate reason clause. But if this were the case, only the incorrect real-world causation reading would be grammatically possible.

(21) **Luke 8:46**—
a. Someone touched me, because I felt power going out from me. [CEV]
b. Someone touched Me because I know power has gone from Me. [NLV]
c. It was because I know power has gone from me that someone touched me. [invented]

[23] Unless the context strongly requires a different interpretation.

[24] In principle the third, speech act reading is also possible for this sentence, but in this specific example it would be virtually indistinguishable from the evidential reading.

I suggest that (21b) is ambiguous between subordinate vs. paratactic structure, at least when intonation is unspecified. However, only the subordinate structure can be paraphrased as a cleft sentence, as illustrated in (21c). As this example demonstrates, it is difficult to interpret the clefted version as expressing anything other than real-world causation, the normal interpretation for subordinate reason clauses, in spite of the pragmatic implausibility of this reading.

The fact that (21b) allows the correct reading, in contrast to (21c), can be explained in terms of structural ambiguity. However, getting the correct reading seems to require the reader to interpret the two clauses as having separate intonation contours. Reading the whole sentence with a single intonation contour strongly favors the incorrect real-world causation reading, at least in my judgment. I do not claim that the correct interpretation is impossible in (21b); but for a reader with little or no previous knowledge of the Bible, omitting the comma makes the disambiguation task more challenging. In general, when the language makes it possible to avoid the kind of structural ambiguity observed in (21b), it will generally be helpful to do so.

4.2 Coercion effects

Finally, I would like to make some preliminary observations about another complicating factor, one which requires more investigation. It appears that under special circumstances, a subordinating causal conjunction can be "coerced" into taking on an evidential interpretation. (The term COERCION refers to a process which occurs when a word or grammatical morpheme is used in a context which is incompatible with its normal sense, forcing the addressee to identify a modified sense that will be appropriate in that context.[25]) An apparent example is seen in the German example (22a):

(22) **John 9:16**—
a. Dieser Mensch ist nicht von Gott, *weil* er den Sabbat nicht hält. [LU84]
b. This man is not from God, *for* he does not keep the sabbath. [RSV, NIV]
c. Because this man does not keep the sabbath, [we know that] he is not from God. [invented]

[25] The term COERCION was originally coined by Moens and Steedman (1988) in a discussion of tense and aspect. I am using the term in a broader sense which can include even coerced shifts in lexical meaning such as Mark Twain's reference to a certain person as "a good man in the worst sense of the word."

The intended meaning of the reason clause in this verse is clearly evidential/epistemic: the fact that Jesus does not observe some of the sabbath regulations is presented as evidence which demonstrates, and thus provides grounds for asserting, that he is not from God. The English rendering in (22b) is almost a word-for-word gloss of the German, except that it uses the supplemental conjunction *for*, as expected with the evidential reading. The German version in (22a) uses the at-issue conjunction *weil* with verb-final word order, indicating a true subordinate structure.

As discussed in section 2, at-issue conjunctions like *weil* typically do not allow the evidential/epistemic usage. However, German speakers I have consulted say that the intended reading is indeed possible for (22a). I suggest that this is made possible by a type of coercion that involves inferring an implicit epistemic component, that is, a statement of knowing, as suggested in the bracketed material in (22c). (The fronting of the reason clause in (22c) is used to ensure that the sentence involves the at-issue, subordinating sense of *because*.) This epistemic component is made explicit in some German versions with the use of the modal auxiliary *kann* 'can' in its epistemic sense, as illustrated in (23).[26]

(23) **John 9:16**—

Von	Gott	kann	dieser	Mann	nicht	kommen,
from	God	can	this	man	not	come

denn	er	hält	sich	nicht	an	die	Sabbatgebote.
for	he	holds	REFL	not	at	the	Sabbath.commandments

"This man cannot come from God, for he does not keep the Sabbath commandments." [HFA]

The proposed coercion effect is triggered by a combination of factors. First, the expected at-issue interpretation (real world causation) would not make sense here: not keeping the Sabbath now cannot cause him not to have come from God. Second, the immediate discourse context involves a debate over Jesus's identity (is he a true prophet?) based on the interpretation of conflicting evidence (Sabbath violations vs. amazing miracles). This context would tend to make the addressee more ready to choose the evidential reading for the reason clause, even though the grammatical form of the clause suggests a different reading. I think the same kind of coercion might be possible in English as well: "Because this man does not keep the Sabbath, he is not from God." In the context of a debate among the religious leaders, I could imagine this being said as a statement of evidence.

[26] See also the *Gute Nachricht* 'Good News' version.

Another apparent example of this type is seen in the French rendering of Luke 7:47 shown in (24):

(24) **Luke 7:47**—

...ses	nombreux	péchés	ont	été	pardonnés
her	many	since	have	been	forgiven

parce.qu'	elle	a	manifesté	beaucoup	d'amour.
because	she	has	shown	much	of.love

"...her many sins have been forgiven because she has shown great love." [FCR18]

As noted in the preceding section, when (as here) *parce que* is used without a comma it normally expresses the at-issue, subordinating sense, which should allow only a causal interpretation. In order to get the intended evidential reading for this rendering, readers must either apply the kind of epistemic coercion proposed for the previous example or interpret the reason clause as an unmarked paratactic construction. An important difference between this example and the previous one is that in this example, either reading makes good sense in the immediate discourse context. Only by thinking back to the parable in vv. 41–43 can the reader rule out the causal interpretation, which would otherwise be favored by the structure of this sentence.

The first two French speakers that I checked with said they felt that the causal interpretation was the only possible reading for (24). Then I talked with a French pastor who said that the sentence is ambiguous between the causal and evidential meanings; the choice between them would be based on theological factors. My conclusion is that the rendering in (24) allows the correct meaning (possibly via epistemic coercion), but this intended meaning might not occur to readers who do not have a high level of Bible literacy.

5 Conclusion

In summary, we have considered two types of reason clauses: "at-issue" vs. supplemental. An at-issue reason clause expresses a literal causal relation between two propositions ("real-world causation"). Both the propositional content of the reason clause and the causal relation itself are part of the main point that is being asserted or questioned. Supplemental reason clauses, on the other hand, are not part of the main point. They provide secondary or background-type information that the speaker believes will assist the addressee in processing the at-issue content of the utterance.

Supplemental reason clauses can express real-world causation, but even when they do the information that they provide is not interpreted as being part

of the main point. Supplemental reason clauses also allow a range of other uses, among which we have focused on the evidential/epistemic and speech act uses. For this reason, supplemental reason clauses present the addressee (i.e., the reader) with an ambiguity of usage (pragmatic ambiguity). In many contexts it will be clear which reading is intended, but we need to remember that disambiguation is always more difficult in a cross-cultural situation (including translated material) than in our own language and culture. At-issue reason clauses do not normally give rise to this kind of pragmatic ambiguity.

At-issue reason clauses are normally subordinated, i.e., fully integrated into the syntactic structure of the main clause. For this reason, they may give rise to semantic ambiguities of "scope" when the main clause is marked for clausal negation, interrogative mood, certain kinds of modality, etc. Once again, we need to check carefully to be sure that the intended readers of the translation are able to disambiguate without confusion or distraction. This kind of scope ambiguity generally does not arise with supplemental reason clauses because they are not subordinate in structure but paratactic.

Translating a supplemental reason clause in the SL with an at-issue reason clause in the RL, or vice versa, will affect the information packaging of the verse, because in one type the reason clause is interpreted as being part of the main point of the utterance, but not in the other type. However, because different languages have different inventories of grammatical markers and structures for expressing causal relations, there will be situations where this is unavoidable. In such situations, it is important to be aware of how this kind of substitution may affect the range of possible readings. Translating an at-issue reason clause with a supplemental reason clause can introduce an ambiguity of usage, e.g., by making an evidential or speech act reading possible where it is not in the original. It may also block certain interpretations involving scope of negation, questioning, etc., that were permitted in the original. This should not be a problem unless, of course, the correct, intended reading is blocked. Translating a supplemental reason clause with an at-issue reason clause can have the opposite effects.

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