

**TUTORIAL**  
**8.11**

# Communication relations

Learners will identify semantic relations between propositions and between larger semantic units.

## Introduction

We have been looking at semantic **concepts** and the meaningful RELATIONS between them. With **event** propositions, the relations between the concepts are called **case roles**. With **state** propositions, the relations are called **state relations**.

Now we are going to focus on relations on higher levels. Our focus has been below the proposition level. Why is the Proposition such a key dividing line? Because the proposition is the smallest unit of Communication.<sup>1</sup> That's why relations between semantic units on the proposition level and higher are called "Communication Relations."

### Propositions within their Context<sup>2</sup>

So far, as we have been looking at propositions, we have considered them outside of their context. When we consider propositions *within* their context, we will discover meaningful relationships between the propositions.

Propositions are joined together by "Inter-propositional Relations," sometimes abbreviated IPRs. Inter-propositional Relations (IPRs) are just one kind of Communication Relation. In this module we will use the broader term "Communication Relation" because it is more inclusive. The kinds of relations that we see between propositions on the proposition level can occur on other levels too.

Propositions often join together to form **propositional clusters**. Propositional clusters are related to one another by some of the same kinds of communication relations that we find between propositions. As propositions and propositional clusters join together, they form semantic paragraphs. And

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., p. 211.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., pp. 299-301.

paragraphs are joined together by communication relations to form larger discourse units.

It is these relations between propositions, propositional clusters, and paragraphs that we will be considering in this tutorial.

## Examples of Communication Relations<sup>3</sup>

Here is a pair of semantic propositions:

- *Mary swept the floor*
- *The floor was dirty*

These two Propositions could be joined together with various kinds of communication relations:

- A **reason-RESULT** relation would be:
  - *Mary swept the floor because it was dirty.*
- A **concession-CONTRA-EXPECTATION** relation (contrary to what is expected) would be:
  - *Even though Mary swept the floor, the floor was dirty.*
- A **condition-CONSEQUENCE** relation would be:
  - *If the floor was dirty, Mary swept it.*

In each of these cases it is the same pair of semantic propositions. Only the relationship between the propositions is changed. Sometimes translators have succeeded in correctly translating the semantic propositions, but failed to correctly translate the relation between the propositions. The relation is part of the meaning that must be translated.

In a semantic structural analysis, a **reason-RESULT** relationship would be marked like this:

[ **RESULT** — *Mary swept the floor*  
**reason** — *(because) it was dirty*

## Head and Support Propositions<sup>4</sup>

Notice that one Proposition is marked with a term in UPPER CASE letters and the other is marked in lower case. The upper case letters represent the HEAD proposition when one is subordinate to the other. The lower case letters represent the support (also called the subordinate) proposition.

In some cases, a pair of propositions may be equal in prominence—not having a **HEAD-support** Relation. Neither proposition is subordinate to the other. In a case like that, both propositions would be described with either UPPER or lower case letters.

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<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 300-301.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 299-317.

Here is an example:

- *Mary does the cleaning*
- *And Jean does the cooking*

## Logical Relations<sup>5</sup>

Many of the Communication Relations we will be dealing with will be what we call **Logical Relations**. Logical Relations are **support-HEAD** relations where there is a **cause-and-EFFECT** relationship between the propositions. Here are some examples:

- **reason-RESULT:**
  - *John washed the car because it was dirty.*

Here is another way to communicate this same semantic relation:

- **reason-RESULT:**
  - *The car was dirty so John washed it.*

These two examples represent the same pair of propositions with the same relation. The only difference is the order.<sup>6</sup>

- **means-RESULT:**
  - *By washing the car, John got it clean.*
- **purpose-MEANS:**
  - *John washed the car in order to get it clean.*
- **concession-CONTRA-EXPECTATION:**
  - *Although John washed the car, it isn't clean.*
- **grounds-CONCLUSION:**
  - *The car is clean, so John must have washed it.*
- **grounds-EXHORTATION:**
  - *The car is dirty, so you wash it, John.*
- **condition-CONSEQUENCE:**
  - *If the car is dirty, John will wash it.*

## Chronological Relations<sup>7</sup>

Sometimes the Relation between propositions is purely based on **time**, without a logically-oriented relation. These Time-based Propositions could be marked as:

- event<sup>1</sup>
- event<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid., pp. 235-51.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., pp. 344-45.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., pp. 309-10.

- event<sup>3</sup>
- event<sup>4</sup>

For example:

*John went home  
he ate dinner  
and he went to bed*

This example is **sequential**. Another kind of time-based relation is **simultaneous**. For EXAMPLE:

*He played the piano  
While she sang*

## Skewing of order<sup>8</sup>

A narrative discourse generally recounts a series of events which occurred in a certain order. However, these events may be reordered in the narrative in such a way that the order is not the same as the actual sequential order. This is a type of **skewing**. The form of the source language text may be non-sequential, but the actual meaning is sequential. No matter how those events happen to be ordered in written or spoken communication, they did occur in a certain sequence.

A translator may need to make adjustments in translation to make sure the correct meaning comes through clearly. In some languages (including many languages Papua New Guinea) it is often helpful to retain sequential order when translating a series of events.

When a translator approaches a complex series of events, written in a way that does not follow the actual sequential order, it may be helpful to think through the situation to figure out the order in which the events actually occurred. Even if the translator doesn't end up reordering the events in the translation, it can still be a valuable exercise to list the events in their true sequential order to paint a clear picture of what happened.

## What is the real order of events in this text?<sup>9</sup>

Below is a sample text in which the events are not all told in their true sequential order:

*John went into the house, leaving the people standing out in the cold.  
He returned to comfort them again, after discussing the whole situation  
with his wife and telling her the whole story.*

Here's written order of the semantic propositions included in this story (non-sequential):

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid., pp. 310-12.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p. 311.

*John went into the house  
 John left the people  
 The people were standing out in the cold.  
 John returned (outside)  
 John comforted them again  
 John discussed the whole situation with his wife  
 John told her the whole story.*

Now, here's the true sequential order of the events in this series of propositions:

*John left the people  
 The people were standing out in the cold.  
 John went into the house  
 John told her the whole story.  
 John discussed the whole situation with his wife  
 John returned (outside)  
 John comforted them again*

The written order is skewed, but the true sequential order is not skewed.

## More Communication Relations

Earlier in this tutorial we noted that some communication relations are **support-HEAD** relations, also called **subordinate relations**, in because one of the propositions (or larger semantic units) is subordinate to the other. We already looked at one kind of **support-HEAD** relation called **logical relations**. With logical relations, there is always a **cause-EFFECT** relationship between the propositions. The Logical Relations we listed are:

- Reason-RESULT
- Means-RESULT
- Purpose-MEANS
- Concession-CONTRA-EXPECTATION
- Grounds-CONCLUSION
- Grounds-EXHORTATION
- Condition-CONSEQUENCE

Now we will consider two kinds of **support-HEAD** relations that are not classified as logical relations: Clarification Relations and Orientation Relations.

## Clarification Relations<sup>10</sup>

When a pair of propositions is said to be linked by a **clarification relation**, the two propositions say basically the same thing from two different angles. The

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid., pp. 324-30.

support proposition expand the information of the HEAD proposition. Below are three kinds of clarification relations:

- **HEAD-equivalence:**
  - The two units convey the same meaning
  - Example: *Believe and do not doubt.*
  
- **HEAD-amplification:**
  - One of the units communicates some of the information that is in the other plus some further information
  - Example: *He practices medicine; he practices at the clinic in town.*
  
- **GENERIC-specific:**
  - The specific part gives more precise detail
  - Example: *He cut up the meat; he chopped the meat into small pieces.*

These three Clarification Relations are closely related with a certain amount of overlap. In some cases, more than one of these three relations may adequately describe the connection between a pair of propositions.

## Orientation Relations<sup>11</sup>

Another category of support-HEAD relations is called **orientation relations**. This includes circumstance-HEAD relations and orienter-CONTENT relations.

### circumstance-HEAD Relations<sup>12</sup>

The circumstance provides some background information related to the HEAD proposition (or larger unit).

- Example: *Walking along the cliff top she saw Bill.*
  - (Could also be called **location-HEAD**)
- Example: *As the sun began to rise they left the village.*
  - (Could also be called **time-HEAD**)

### orienter-CONTENT Relations<sup>13</sup>

Another very important and frequently used orientation relation is **orienter-CONTENT**. The proposition which is the **orienter** serves to introduce the **CONTENT**. There are several kinds of orienter-CONTENT Relations:

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid., pp. 319-23.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., pp. 321-23.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., pp. 321-23.

- Speech
- Perceptual
- Cognitive
- Volitional
- Evaluative

### **Speech orienter-CONTENT relations**

Some sample event words used for to orient **speech** are “said,” “commanded,” “warned,” “promised,” etc.

- *Tell him not to go.*
  - **orienter:** You tell him
  - **CONTENT:** Do not go
- Jesus said, “Pick up your bed and walk!”
  - **orienter:** Jesus said
  - **CONTENT:** You pick up your bed
  - **CONTENT:** You walk

The **orienter-CONTENT** “speech” relation is very common in dialogue.

### **Perceptual orienter-CONTENT relations (The Five Senses)**

Some sample event words used to orient **perceptual** content are “saw,” “heard,” “felt,” “smelled,” and “tasted.”

- *I saw him do it.*
  - **orienter:** I saw him
  - **CONTENT:** He did it
- *I heard them talking.*
  - **orienter:** I heard them
  - **CONTENT:** They were talking

### **Cognitive orienter-CONTENT relations**

Some sample event words used to orient content that is **cognitive** in nature are “knew,” “remembered,” “thought,” “agreed.”

- *Did they agree to go.*
  - **orienter:** Did they agree?
  - **CONTENT:** They will go?
- *I know where the prize is.*
  - **orienter:** I know

- **CONTENT:** where the prize is.

### **Volitional orienter-CONTENT relations**

Some sample event words used to orient **volitional** content are “decided,” “willed,” “wanted,” “purposed.”

- *I want you to come.*
  - **orienter:** I want
  - **CONTENT:** that you come.
  
- *I decided not to go.*
  - **orienter:** I decided
  - **CONTENT:** I will not go.

### **Evaluative orienter-CONTENT relations**

Some sample event words used to orient **evaluative** content are “is good,” “is true,” “is false.”

- *It is good that it rained today.*
  - **orienter:** It is good
  - **CONTENT:** that it rained today.
  
- *It is wrong to lie.*
  - **orienter:** It is wrong
  - **CONTENT:** that someone lies.

When you mark **orienter-CONTENT** relations in the assignment for this tutorial, you do not need to classify the various kinds of orienter-CONTENT relations as **speech, perceptual, cognitive**, etc. Just mark them as **orienter-CONTENT** relations. The specific terms “speech, “perceptual,” etc. are just meant to clarify the scope of orienter-CONTENT relations.

## **Multiple Functions of Grammatical Relation**

### **Markers<sup>14</sup>**

A common mistake that translators make in dealing with communication relations is focusing too much on matching the Receptor Language forms. Focusing on the forms will cause problems because a single relation marker can often be used to represent various semantic relations. We need to make sure we match the semantic relationship—not the form of the relation marker.

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid., pp. 330-31; 348-49.



For example, the relation marker “if” in English, has the primary meaning of “condition” in condition-CONSEQUENCE relations, as in the sentence, “*If the car is dirty, we will wash it.*” However, “if” can also represent “grounds” in the grounds-CONCLUSION relation, as in the sentence, “*If the light is on, Mary must be home.*” The area of meaning of the English word “if” does not match the area of meaning of any single word in many other languages.

Some languages may have separate markers for each of the following:

- If, and it IS true...
- If, and it is NOT true...
- If, and it may or may not be true...

When a translator learning another language discovers the target language word for “if” as it occurs in one of these semantic relationships, he or she may wrongly assume that that form can be used in all other contexts where the English word “if” is used.

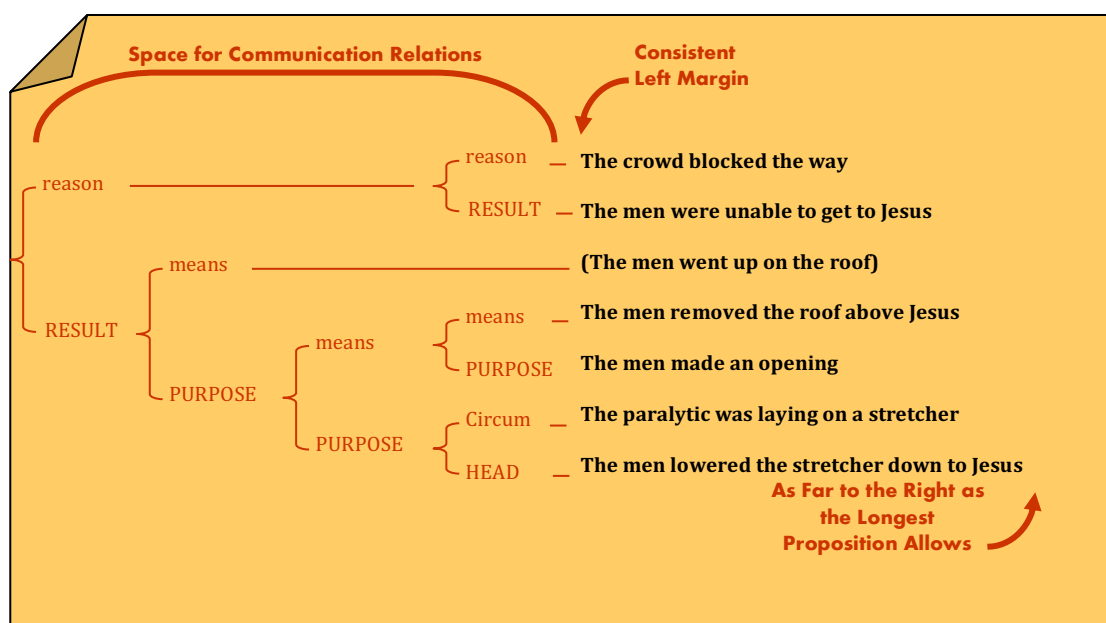
We need to focus on the meaningful semantic relationships—not the specific relation markers. And in Scripture Translation, we need to be careful to faithfully translate all of those semantic relationships because they truly are part of the meaning. If we try to match the form of the target language relation markers, we may actually corrupt God’s inspired meaning.



## ACTIVITIES

### *Communication relations*

1. In this activity you will identify the communication relations for Mark 2:1-12.
  - First, make a copy of your “Rewritten Propositions” in a landscape-orientation
  - Place each proposition on a separate line (See illustration below)
  - Move all the propositions toward the right side of the page
    - Keep a straight, consistent left margin
    - Move the text as far to the right as the longest proposition will allow
    - This will leave space on the left for the Communication Relations
2. **Pause** at each illustration to make sure you understand it before moving on.



### 3. Identifying the Paragraphs

- The first step is to identify and mark the semantic paragraph divisions.
  - *(Remember: There is not just one correct way to divide the paragraphs; English versions do not all divide the paragraphs in the same places.)*
- For this exercise, let's call the first two verses (Mark 2:1-2) paragraph #1.
- And let's call the next three verses (Mark 2:3-5) paragraph #2.
- I will walk you through the process of analyzing some of the communication relations in paragraph #2; then you will work through the rest of the passage on your own.

### 4. Analyze one paragraph at a time

- It is important to identify the paragraph breaks before analyzing the communication relations, and each paragraph must be analyzed individually. Otherwise, you may inadvertently try to link a proposition at the end of one paragraph with a proposition at the beginning of the next paragraph, when they do not connect on that level.

### 5. Here are the steps for analyzing communication relations:

- First divide the passage into semantic units, from the largest (i.e., paragraphs) to the smallest (i.e., pairs of propositions that are directly connected to each other).
- Then define the communication relations starting on the lowest level (i.e., pairs of connected propositions) and working step-by-step through the levels of propositional clusters until you reach the highest level in the passage: the paragraph level.

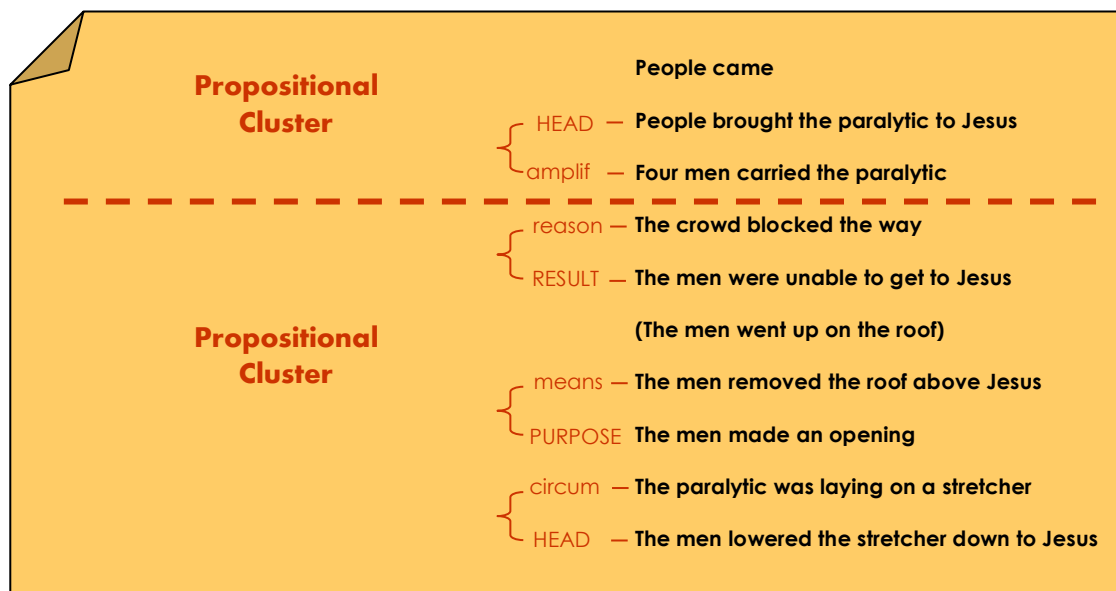
6. Once you have identified the semantic paragraphs, next look for natural divisions within each paragraph indicating the major propositional clusters.
  - I divided this paragraph into 15 propositions (You may have done it differently)
    - The first ten propositions form one major propositional cluster
    - And the next five propositions form another major propositional cluster
7. **Pause** to make sure you understand why I divided it the way I did.

<b>Major Propositional Cluster</b>	People came People brought the paralytic to Jesus Four men carried the paralytic The crowd blocked the way The men were unable to get to Jesus (The men went up on the roof) The men removed the roof above Jesus The men made an opening The paralytic was laying on a stretcher The men lowered the stretcher down to Jesus
<b>Major Propositional Cluster</b>	Jesus saw The men believed (Jesus could heal) Jesus said to the paralytic You have sinned I forgive you

8. Next we will look at each major propositional cluster individually to see where it divides into smaller propositional clusters.
  - The first major propositional cluster (see above) divides into two smaller clusters like this:

<b>Propositional Cluster</b>	People came People brought the paralytic to Jesus Four men carried the paralytic
<b>Propositional Cluster</b>	The crowd blocked the way The men were unable to get to Jesus (The men went up on the roof) The men removed the roof above Jesus The men made an opening The paralytic was laying on a stretcher The men lowered the stretcher down to Jesus

9. We are almost ready to start defining the communication relations. First we need to find pairs of closely connected propositions within these propositional clusters.
  - This is where we will begin defining the communication relations:
    - between pairs of closely connected propositions
  - Then we will work our way up to the higher levels, defining the communication relations on each successive level.
10. There are four pairs of closely connected propositions within these propositional clusters:
  - The first pair is connected by a **HEAD—amplification** communication relation
  - The second is **reason—RESULT**
  - The third is **means—PURPOSE**
  - The fourth is **circumstance--HEAD**



11. **Pause** to consider each of these four pairs of propositions above to make sure you understand why I chose these particular communication relations to describe the semantic connections.
12. Now define the rest of the communication relations within these propositional clusters.
  - Then, define the relations between the propositional clusters themselves.
  - After that, continue defining the relationships, from the lower levels all the way up to the highest levels.

