E. Intermediate Theory of Syntax
1. General Structure of Language
Establish a framework for understanding language.
To evaluate tense and case.
To avoid overreading.
To evaluate Bible translations.
Language and Chess

Chess has a **system** of rules.

Language likewise.

Learn the game.
Aspects of Meaning

Units

Hierarchy

Context
Meaning in Chess

Units
- pieces;
- moves

Context
- games in general;
- rules of chess;
- maxims of strategy

Hierarchy
- move sequences:
- developments;
- openings;
- games;
- matches
Meaning in Language: Unit

Units

Context

Hierarchy

words; sentences

V D
Meaning in Context

Units

Hierarchy

Context

world

utterance

system
Language in God

Plan of the Father

Let there be light.

Particular utterance through the breath of the Spirit

all wisdom in Christ the Logos
Kinds of Context

- World from plan of the Father
- Utterance of the Spirit
- System of wisdom in Christ

Context

World
Utterance
System
Language Needs

**world**
- need to talk about things in world

**utterance**
- need for a medium for communication

**system**
- need for internal systematic regularities
Language Subsystems

Referential system (for talking about world)

Grammatical system (for internal structure)

Phonological system (for using medium of sound)
2. Phonological Subsystem
Origin of Phonology

Referential system
(for talking about world)

Grammatical system
(for internal structure)

Phonological system
(for using sound)
## Phonology of Greek

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>bilabial</th>
<th>dental</th>
<th>velar</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>voiced</td>
<td>αβα</td>
<td>αδα</td>
<td>αγα</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>voiceless</td>
<td>απα</td>
<td>ατα</td>
<td>ακα</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>aspirated</td>
<td>αφα</td>
<td>αθα</td>
<td>αχα</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>b</th>
<th>d</th>
<th>g</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>p</td>
<td>t</td>
<td>k</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

vs. English
### Sounds of Words in English

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Actual words</th>
<th>Might-Be words</th>
<th>Couldn’t-Be words</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>bet</td>
<td>fet</td>
<td>pnet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pet</td>
<td>ket</td>
<td>pset</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vet</td>
<td>shet</td>
<td>kset</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>debt</td>
<td>chet</td>
<td>mnet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>set</td>
<td>slet</td>
<td>shlet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>let</td>
<td>spet</td>
<td>χet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>met</td>
<td>spret</td>
<td>Ñet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>net</td>
<td>get</td>
<td>Ñpet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>get</td>
<td>yet</td>
<td>let</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yet</td>
<td></td>
<td>l&gt;et</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sounds of Words in Greek

Different from English.
Principles for Phonology

Sound system exists.
Phonological system differs among languages.
In writing, a graphic system.
Phonology Contributing

Phonology contributes indirectly, by identifying words. Sometimes directly, through sound play.
Assonance in Isaiah 5:7
3. Grammatical Subsystem
Origin of Grammar

Referential system (for talking about world)

Grammatical system (for internal structure)

Phonological system (for using sound)
'Twas brillig, and the slithy toves
Did gyre and gimble in the wabe:

Normal grammar, but no decipherable meaning!

I can parse.

Poetic for “It was”
There is a grammatical system. Grammatical systems differ.
### Infinitive System in Greek

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aorist</th>
<th>Present</th>
<th>Perfect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>λύσαι</td>
<td>λύειν</td>
<td>λελυκέναι</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

vs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nonprogress</th>
<th>Progressive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>to weave</td>
<td>to be weaving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to have woven</td>
<td>to have been weaving</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3 ≠ 4
Grammar affects overall meaning primarily by contrast.

- aorist
- present
- perfect
- λύσαι
- λύειν
- λελυκέναι

Aorist contrasts with present and perfect. It means, “I’m not present or perfect.”
Aorist as the Default

Aorist infinitive and aorist imperative are normal.

The speaker says, “No further comment.”

Descriptions of “sudden event,” “once-for-all action,” “decisive action,” “point action” are overreadings.
Example of Fine Difference

“I studied Greek for two hours yesterday.”

“I was studying Greek for two hours yesterday.”

Used where you talk about something else simultaneous.
4. Referential Subsystem
Origin of Reference

Referential system (for talking about world)

Grammatical system (for internal structure)

Phonological system (for using sound)
“He does well without studying.”

“Bill seldom has to crack the books.”

Reference deals with content invariant under paraphrase.

same “meaning”

different grammar, vocabulary, sound
Principles for Referential Subsystem

There is a referential system. Referential systems differ. You can say anything if you take enough time.
### Differing Vocabulary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>λαμπάς</th>
<th>“torch”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>κυών</td>
<td>“(oil) lamp”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>κυνάριον</td>
<td>“dog”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5. Hierarchy
Meaning in Hierarchy

Hierarchy
smaller bits into larger groups
Example of Embedding

Sentence:  

Paragraph:  

Section:
Complex Fitting
Kinds of Hierarchy

Units

Hierarchy

Context (systems)

referential

phonological

grammatical

referential

phonological

grammatical
Grammatical Levels

morpheme -ness, -ing
word truthfulness
phrase which of these three
clause when he saw him,
sentence when he saw him,
he passed by on the
other side.
paragraph Luke 10:29-37
monologue
Grammatical Levels in Greek

- morpheme: -ου, -ω
- word: ἀντιπαρῆλθεν
- phrase: τούτων τῶν τριῶν ἰδὼν αὐτόν
- clause: καὶ ἰδὼν αὐτόν ἀντιπαρῆλθεν
- sentence: Luke 10:30, 31, 32
- paragraph: Luke 1:46b-55
- monologue
Phonological Levels

- phoneme: /i/
- syllable: /bit/
- phonological word: the 'man
- phrase group: “When John arrived I fell silent.”
- pause group
- phonological paragraph
- phonological monologue
Phonological Levels in Greek

phoneme /o/
syllable /on/
phonological a proclitic leans on the next
word group but two grammatical
phrase group words.
pause group

marked by punctuation?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>semantic pack</td>
<td>un-, non-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>term</td>
<td>angel,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>the angel Gabriel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>proposition</td>
<td>I have no husband</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>How can this be,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>since I have no husband?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cluster</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>paragraph</td>
<td>Luke 1:30-38</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Interlocking Hierarchies

Phonology

Paragraph
Pause gp.
Phrase gp.
Phon. word
Syllable
Phoneme

Grammar

Paragraph
Sentence
Clause
Phrase
Word
Morpheme

Reference

Paragraph
Cluster
Proposition
Term
Package
6. Implications for Interpretation
Interacting Hierarchies

Phonology  Grammar  Reference

Watch everything.
Burton Indicates Interaction

- Progressive
- General (gnomic)
- Aoristic
- Historical
- For the future
- Past action still in progress

Grammatical

Referential

Present tense in Greek
“All spoke well of him and marveled at the gracious words that were coming from his mouth.” (Luke 4:22a)

In Luke, larger issue of the nature of salvation and of Messiah is at stake.

- referent from context
- narrative time needed
- preceding action
- sounds very good; but see 4:28.
“Already you have all you want! Already you have become rich!”

sounds very good; but see 4:8b.

In 1 Cor., larger issue of the nature of kingdom, of boasting in Christ, and of image of oneself.
Goal in Interpreting Sense

Minimal strain.
At every level in all 3 hierarchies.
What to do with tension?

Not always easy!
Exegesis and Theology

Exegesis
(narrow passage)

Theology
(general biblical teaching)

Remaining tension

Harmony in a verse

Harmony in doctrine

Prefer exegesis because your training biases you toward doctrine.
Ἐγένετο δὲ ἐν τῷ ἐγγίζειν αὐτὸν εἰς Ἰεριχὼ τυφλός τις ἐκάθητο παρὰ τὴν ὁδὸν ἐπαιτῶν.

Exegesis

ἐγγίζειν εἰς

= “draw near to”

preferable

Theology

need harmony with Matt. and Mark

ἐγγίζειν is related to ἐγγύς, “near”
Fuzziness in Interpretation

Understanding is more or less precise.
Don’t detect what isn’t there. (Maximal interpretation is not best.)
You never exhaust meaning.
You can obey God now.
You can obey a command to “stand roughly there.”

Comforting.